

# Bridgend County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan

## Annual Report 2011/2012

(Covering the period 6.4.11 – 31.3.12)



Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol



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## Introduction and background

As an authority our aim is 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 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 which put 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.

There is no requirement for the council to formally report on progress at this stage but we consider it important to do so and also take an opportunity to reflect how our achievements in this area go beyond simply complying with regulations.

This annual report therefore:

- 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.

We also engaged with:

- The Assistant Chief Executive (senior lead equalities officer);
- The Deputy Leader of the council (political equality champion);
- The Equalities Cabinet Committee who are responsible for approving the Strategic Equality Plan.

The council has an overall quarterly performance monitoring process called the 'Corporate Performance Assessment' (CPA). As part of this process senior 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 LGBT 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 and Action Plan will be updated accordingly.

## 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 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.

### 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;
- We are reviewing our bank of publicity images to ensure that it is fully representative of all protected characteristic groups;
- We have become members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Excellence Centre. Membership helps us to access useful information so that we can better understand the issues facing LGBT people.

### The council's role as an 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.

### Data

- We have begun a data collection exercise to gather up to date equalities data relating to all our employees;
- To improve the quality of our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process, a revised EIA toolkit is being piloted within all services. Feedback from officers will help inform further refinements and training;
- 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.

## 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:
  - How we deal with complaints;
  - Social services complaints;
  - Customer Services Charter;
  - Corporate complaints; Get Yourself Heard.
- British Sign Language interpreters now regularly attend council hosted public events;
- In September 2012 we became the first public body in Wales to be awarded the Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID), 'Louder than Words' charter mark;
- A small number of our public facing employees such as those at the customer contact centre have received Start to Sign training and a number will soon be undertaking further British Sign Language Training.
- We have also produced a guide for our employees regarding accessible communications.
- In December 2012 we developed an equalities consultation and monitoring guidance toolkit outlining the reasons why surveys, engagement events and the monitoring of service delivery and responses must include an equalities perspective.

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, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership needs further attention.

## Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

EIAs have been conducted 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 and will be trialled in early 2013. We will publish our final version later in the year.

This current toolkit (revised) has already proved effective on a number of high profile EIAs including those on our new customer charter, the council budget for 2013 – 2014 and the relocation of Bridgend Library.

From April 2013 we will be publishing all of our EIAs on our website. EIA training continues to be provided, with further training sessions planned underlining our commitment to equalities.

## 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.

In developing our programme of training we aim to deliver:

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

An e-learning module that looks 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 updated toolkit and 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 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 needs improving;
- An equalities questionnaire forms part for 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 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 2012 by gender and pay scale

	Male	Female	Total
Scale 1 – 6 (£12,145 - £23,708)	850	3847	4697
Senior Officers (£24,646 - £28,636)	130	138	268
Principal Officers (£27,849 - £41,616)	227	251	478
Chief Officers (£73,080 - £122,323)	8	7	15
Soulbury & youth officers (£26,799 - £85,632)	31	51	82
Teachers, Head, Deputy, and Assistant Head Teachers (£21,558-£110,418)	330	956	1286
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1576</b>	<b>5250</b>	<b>6826</b>

**People employed by us on 31 March 2012 by (where known) protected characteristic**

Description	Schools	Other Services	Total	%
Headcount			6826	
Full Time	1357	1999	3356	49.1%
Part Time (one post held)	1116	1831	2947	43.2%
Multi Part Time	369	154	523	7.7%
Male	509	1067	1576	23.1%
Female	2333	2917	5250	76.9%
Disability Declared	10	66	76	1.1%
Carer Responsibilities	56	153	209	3.1%
Ethnic Minority **	23	40	63	0.9%
Welsh Speaker	155	105	260	3.8%
Age Profile: 16 - 25	207	257	464	6.8%
Age Profile: 26 - 35	651	712	1363	20%
Age Profile: 36 - 45	890	1031	1921	28.1%
Age Profile: 46 - 55	733	1229	1962	28.7%
Age Profile: 56 - 65	342	715	1057	15.5%
Age Profile 65 and over	19	40	59	0.9%

\*\* Ethnic Minority groups include:

Asian / Asian British

Black / Black British

Mixed Race

White

## People who applied for jobs with us

Description	Applicants	
	No	%
Total Job Applications	2073	100
Male Applicants	746	36
Female Applicants	1327	64
<b>Total by gender</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>100</b>
Disability declared/recorded:	95	4.6
Of which: Learning Disability	20	
Mental Health Condition	9	
Physical/mental Impairment	17	
Long Standing Illness/condition	28	
Not known, prefer not to say, other	21	
Welsh Reader	315	15.2
Welsh Writer	253	12.2
Welsh Speaker	218	10.5
Age Profile:- 16 – 25	923	44.52
26 – 35	484	23.35
36 – 45	364	17.56
46 – 55	231	11.14
56 – 65	71	3.43
65+	0	0
<b>Total by age profile</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>100</b>
Sexual Orientation		
Heterosexual	1924	92.82
Bisexual	14	0.67
Gay	13	0.63
Lesbian	10	0.48
Prefer not to say	112	5.4
<b>Total by Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital Status		
Married	574	27.69
Living with Partner	380	18.33
Same Sex or Civil Partnership	2	0.1
Separated/divorced	97	4.68
Single	994	47.94
Widowed	7	0.34
Prefer not to say	19	0.92
<b>Total by Marital Status</b>	<b>2073</b>	<b>100</b>
Ethnic Minority	63	3.04%

### **Employees who applied internally for a different job and those that were successful and those that were not.**

We are currently unable to report on this data. However, developments to our HR/payroll system will enable us to fully report in 2012 – 2013.

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

The council currently records all of the formal post education and training applications we receive from our employees.

- The ability to report on our employees who applied to undertake training and how many of those applications were successful is possible; however, reporting on this by protected characteristic is currently unavailable but will be for the 2012/2013 Annual Report.
- A process is being developed which will enable us to record any employee whose request for training is refused from 2012/2013.

During 2011/2012, 13 employees were successful in their application for post entry training and development. Of these 13 employees:

- Eight were female, five were male;
- One employee disclosed a disability, one preferred not to disclose disability related information and 11 declared as not disabled;
- Three employees were aged between 16 and 25, one was aged between 26 and 35, seven were aged between 36 and 45 and two were aged between 46 and 55;
- No formal applications for post entry training and development were refused in 2011/2012.

### **Employees involved in a grievance or disciplinary procedure**

All our grievance and disciplinary cases are recorded on a central case management system. However, until recently, it has not been possible to record the protected characteristics of our employees as part of this process. This will be included in the 2012/13 Annual Report published in 2013/14.

#### **Grievances 2011/2012**

19 employees were involved in a grievance procedure. This figure only represents 'the person about whom a complaint has been made'. Next year this figure will include any employee involved in a grievance process whether as a person making a complaint or as a person about whom a complaint has been made.

#### **Disciplinary procedures**

61 employees were involved in a disciplinary procedure.

The number of people who left our employment

Reason for Leaving	Number
End of contract	178
Ill health	18
TUPE	471*
Dismissed	4
Resignation	344
Age retirement	89
Redundancy (Voluntary)	32
Death in service	5
Capability (Performance)	3
Capability (Health)	24
Redundancy (Compulsory)	19
Total leavers	1187

\* The 471 TUPE leavers resulted from the transfer of our leisure services to the Social Enterprise Halo Leisure.

The equalities data we currently hold on our employees is not up to date or complete. However, the ongoing data collection project will put us in a position to report fully on this in the 2012 / 2013 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

The council aims 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





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