

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report

2020 – 2024

Year 2: 2021 - 2022

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd



1. Introduction

This is the second Annual Report on Conwy's Strategic Equality Plan (2020-2024), for the period 2021-2022.

The General Duty, set out in the Equality Act 2010, requires us to have due regard to:

- eliminating unlawful discrimination;
- advancing equality of opportunity;
- and fostering good relations



The Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011, often referred to as Specific Duties, requires us to report on the following areas, to demonstrate we have given due regard to the Act:

- 1.1 The steps we have taken to identify, collect and use **Relevant Information**, and the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 1.2 **Progress towards fulfilling each equality objective**, including a statement on the effectiveness of the steps taken
- 1.3 **Specified employment information**, including information on staff, recruitment, training and pay

The remainder of this report will cover these three main areas.

2. Relevant Information

We used equality-related evidence to help set our equality objectives contained in our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 and we also use relevant data when carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on new and revised policies and practices. Some of this data will be linked to national statistics and wherever it is available, we try to use local and regional data as this is more relevant to us in North Wales and Conwy.

We also take into account information obtained from engagement and consultation.

When we developed our Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024, we revised our Background Data and Research document which sets out the relevant data that we used when revising and agreeing our current equality objectives and this is available on our website [here](#).

Other information referred to when making decisions includes:

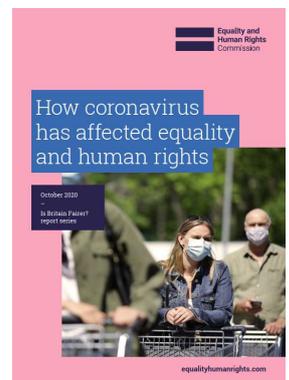
Is Wales Fairer? 2018

The Equality Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018' which revealed that there were still many persistent inequalities with a rise in poverty leading to an even starker gap between the experiences and opportunities of some protected groups, which has been exacerbated even further during the pandemic. The EHRC identified recommendations under 6 themes: Education, Work, Living Standards, Health, Justice and Personal Security and Participation and these were considered and compared to relevant data held in Conwy when establishing the objectives and priorities in our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024. The EHRC are currently working on an updated version of this report, which is due to be published by the end of 2023.



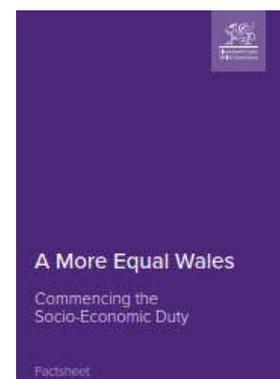
EHRC Report: How Coronavirus has affected equality and human rights

This 2020 report highlighted that the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic had been unequal, entrenching existing inequalities and widening others. The groups most affected by the rise in poverty include young people, ethnic minorities and disabled people, who are already closest to the poverty line. Some groups have been disproportionately negatively affected by changes in the labour market (also increasing in-work poverty), interruptions to education, access to care (particularly older people, ethnic minorities and some disabled people) and there has been an increased reliance on unpaid carers, who are more likely to be women. There has been a rise in reported domestic abuse and there are concerns about the ability of survivors to access justice.



Socio-Economic Duty

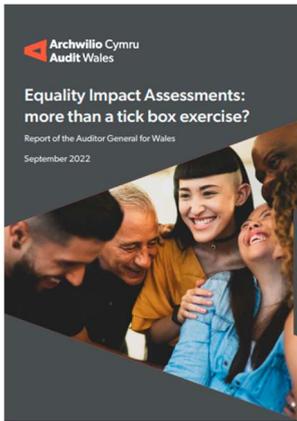
The enactment of Part 1, Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, the Socio-economic Duty (SeD), came into force on the 31st March 2021. The Duty requires public bodies, when making strategic decisions, to consider how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities of outcome associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Data was published by the EHRC showing the persistent inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage: parents' socio-economic status continues to be the primary predictor of which children prosper in adult life; the poverty gap is increasing for those living in workless households; 23% of all people living in Wales are living in poverty, of which 29% are children; social gradient in health outcomes is closely linked to socio-economic status, including lower life expectancy; people living in material deprivation feel less safe and are more vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse. All of these issues were compounded during the pandemic.



Locked out: liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19

This report, published in July 2021 by Welsh Government's Disability Equality Forum, suggests that decision-making during the early response to the pandemic largely undermined the social model of disability and reverted back to the medical model of disability. This led to disabled people being referred to as "vulnerable", being excluded from public spaces, socially excluded and a failure to take account of different accessibility requirements, with reduced access to transport and health service. Once identified, many issues were subsequently rectified, but the report raises a concern that the social model was not the starting position and that the clock was turned back on any progress in adopting the social model. Following publication of this report Welsh Government set up a **Disability Rights Taskforce** to take forward work in multiple areas, including: Embedding and Understanding of the Social Model of Disability; Access to Services; Independent Living: Social Care; Independent Living: Health and Wellbeing; Travel; Employment and Income; Children and Young People; and Affordable and Accessible Housing. These work streams have commenced during 2022 and we will monitor progress and any actions identified as the work of the Taskforce is made available.



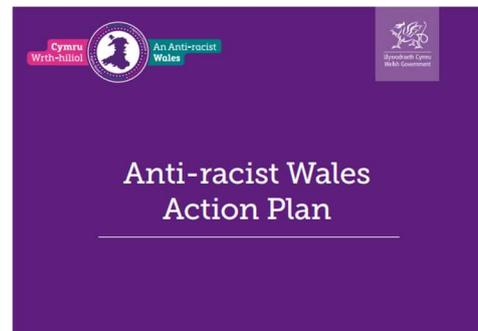


Equality Impact Assessments: more than a tick box exercise?

Audit Wales published a review of the Equality Impact Assessment process within the public sector in 2022. Seven key areas of improvement were identified within the report for organisations across Wales, including: greater clarity over which types of policies and practices must be impact assessed; greater clarity around the arrangements for assessing the impact of collaborative policies and practices; greater clarity about expectations to consider the Public Sector Equality Duty as part of an integrated impact assessment; more timely identification of the practical impacts of decisions on people and how different protected characteristics intersect; more engagement and involvement of people with protected characteristics; better monitoring of the actual impacts of policies and practices on people and a shift in mind-sets and cultures to move equality impact assessments away from being seen as an add-on ‘tick box’ exercise. This report, and the recommendations within it, will be included in our work to evaluate the updated Equality Impact Assessment process which was introduced in Conwy in 2021.

Anti-racist Wales Action Plan

Following consultation on a draft Race Equality Action Plan, Welsh Government published the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in 2022. The plan outlines actions for Welsh Government and the public sector (including local authorities) in a range of areas, including: leadership within Welsh Government and across public services, Education and Welsh Language, Culture, Heritage and Sport, Health, Social Care, Homes and Places, Local Government, Employability and Skills (including Social Partnership and Fair Work and Entrepreneurship), Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Crime and Justice, and Childcare and Play. We will implement the relevant parts of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan to compliment the work already underway through our current strategic equality objectives and action plan.





EHRC Strategic Plan 2022-2025

In March 2022 the EHRC published their strategic plan for 2022 to 2025, setting out how they aim to protect and promote equality and human rights over the three-year period. There are six priority areas within the plan: equality in a changing workplace; equality for children and young people; upholding rights and equality in health and social care; addressing the equality and human rights impact of digital services and artificial intelligence; fostering good relations and promoting respect between groups; and ensuring an effective legal framework to protect equality and human rights. These priorities have been identified using data and evidence to understand the equality and human rights challenges facing Britain as it emerges from the pandemic and as we start looking to formulate Conwy's strategic equality objectives for 2024 and beyond we will use this report to help inform our decisions.

Age Friendly Wales

Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society was published by Welsh Government in October 2021 to consider steps to be taken to make use of the potential of today's older people and support an ageing society. The strategy reflects projections which suggest that by 2038 1-in-4 of Wales' population will be over 65. There are four main aims identified within the strategy: enhancing well-being; improving local services and environments; building and retaining people's own capability; and tackling age related poverty. Work to produce a delivery plan to support the strategy is underway.



Other Sources of Information

Our Corporate Information and Research team annually publish on our public website a document called "Equality Statistics Research Bulletin" which provides the latest equality data available on the makeup of people in our County. This information is referred to by officers when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments and consultations. The Research team also supports services when they are undertaking consultation in analysing the data gathered from such activities.

Census Data

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the first results of the 2021 Census throughout 2022, with further data releases scheduled for 2023. Where it is available, we



have updated the information below to include information from the 2021 Census, and have included some side-by-side data for 2011 and 2021 data.

We use data about the population of Conwy to compare against our own equality monitoring data collected (for people using our services as well as our own staff) to see how closely it matches our local community make-up.

On Census Day 2021, the size of Conwy's usual resident population was estimated to be 114,741, a decrease of -487 (-0.4%) from the census in 2011. Overall, Wales saw a population increase of 1.4% and England and Wales saw an increase of 6.3%.

In terms of ethnicity, the population of Wales has grown increasingly diverse since 2011. In the 2021 Census usual residents in Wales identified as follows:

Ethnic Group	Percentage of Population (2011)	Percentage of Population (2021)	Change (%)
White	95.6	93.8	-1.8
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	2.3	2.9	+0.6
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	1.0	1.6	+0.6
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.6	0.9	+0.3
Other ethnic group	0.5	0.9	+0.4

The latest Census data highlighted the following changes in terms of Conwy's population, with the figure in brackets referring to the change from the 2011 Census data. The ethnic groups that people in Conwy identified with in 2021 were:

- 94.1% White Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British (1.3% decrease)

- 2.8% White Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or White Other (0.5% increase)
- 1.4% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (0.3% increase)
- 0.2% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (no change)
- 1.1% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (0.3% increase)
- 0.3% Other ethnic group (no change)

The ethnicity of pupils in school in Conwy in 2022, according to the latest Pupil Level Annual School Census, was as follows:

- 92.1% White Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
- 2.5% White Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or White Other
- 1.2% Asian, Asian British or Asian
- 0.2% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African
- 2.7% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
- 0.5% Other ethnic group
- 0.8% Unknown

The Census 2021 data showed that 48.4% of Conwy's population is male and 51.6% female. This is an increase of 0.3% in terms of the female population in comparison to the 2011 Census data.

In terms of age, there has been an increase in the proportion of people aged 65 years and over in the county, when comparing Census data from 2011 and 2021:

Age	Percentage of Population (2011)	Percentage of Population (2021)	Percentage Change
15 years and under	16.6	16	-0.6
16 to 64 years	59.0	56.6	-2.4
65 years and over	24.4	27.3	+2.9

In 2021, the average (median) age in Conwy was 49 years. This is higher than the median age of 42 years in 2011. The local authorities in Wales with the highest average (median) age were Powys (50 years), Conwy and Monmouthshire (both 49 years). The median age in Wales in 2021 was 42 years, and 40 years in England and Wales.

The 2021 Census provided updated figures around disability in line with the Equality Act definition of disability (people who assessed their

day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses are considered disabled). The data has been age-standardised to account for differences in population size and age structure. In Wales, in 2021, a smaller proportion and a smaller number of people were disabled (21.1%, 670,000), compared with 2011 (23.4%, 696,000).

Within Conwy, the breakdown in terms of people with a long-term health problem or disability, including conditions or illnesses relating to old age in 2021, was as follows:

Disability (age-standardised)	Conwy Population (%)
Disabled under the Equality Act: day-to-day activities limited a lot	9.2
Disabled under the Equality Act: day-to-day activities limited a little	11.3
Not disabled under the Equality Act	79.5

Approximately 10% of Conwy's population provided at least some unpaid care each week according to the 2021 Census (compared to approximately 12% in the 2011 Census). The breakdown, in terms of hours of unpaid care provided per week, was as follows:

Hours of unpaid care provided per week	Conwy Population (%)
Provided no unpaid care	89.8
Provides 19 or less hour unpaid care a week	4.6
Provides 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week	2.1
Provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week	3.5

There were 950 babies born to residents of Conwy in 2020.

The most accurate data about religious affiliations comes from the 2021 Census. Within Conwy people identify or connect with the following religions 51% Christian (14% decrease from 2011), 41% no religion (15% increase), 0.7% Muslim (0.2% increase), 0.3% Buddhist (no change), 0.2% Hindu (no change), 0.1% Jewish (no change) and 0.5% other religion (0.1% increase). 6.4% of people did not answer the question on religion in 2021, compared to 7.8% in 2011.

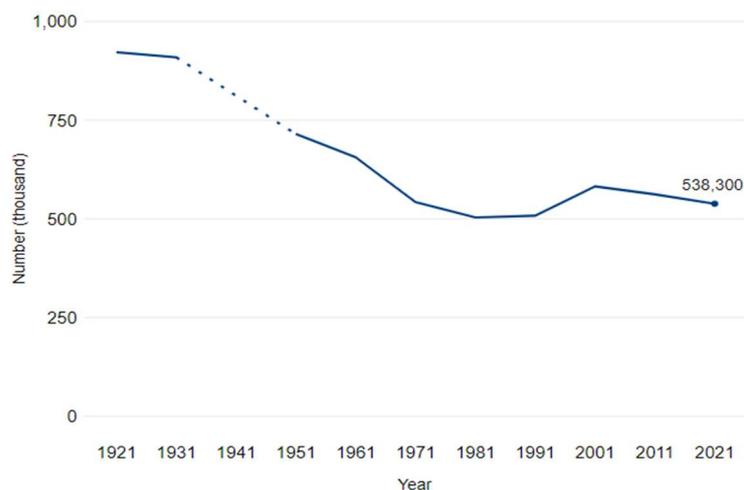
The life expectancy of females (at birth) in 2020 was 83.1 compared to males at 78.4 (4.7 years difference). The life expectancy for

someone who is 65 is a further 19.0 years for males and 21.8 years for females (a difference of 2.8 years).

The percentage of Welsh speakers in Conwy fell from 27.4% in 2011 to 25.9% in 2021. In 2021, there were around 1,600 fewer Welsh-speaking Conwy residents (over the age of three years) compared with 2011. The number of people who did not speak Welsh increased by 1,700.

In terms of the overall population, the 2021 Census highlighted a decrease of around 23,700 (1.2%) in the number of usual residents in Wales aged three years or older who reported being able to speak Welsh.

The number of people aged three years or older who reported being able to speak Welsh in 2021 was the third lowest recorded in a census:



([Census 2021](#))

The 2021 Census included questions on both sexual orientation and gender identity for the first time. The questions were both voluntary and were only asked of people aged 16 years and over. In Wales 3% of people aged 16 and over identified with an LGB+ orientation, and 0.41% of people aged 16 and over reported that their gender identity was different from their sex at birth, with a breakdown provided below for both Conwy and Wales:

Sexual Orientation of Population as a percentage, from the 2021 Census

	Conwy (%)	Wales (%)
Straight or heterosexual	89.2	89.4
Gay or lesbian	1.4	1.5

Bisexual	0.9	1.2
Other sexual orientation	0.2	0.3
Not answered	8.3	7.6

Gender Identity of Population as a percentage, from the 2021 Census

	Conwy (%)	Wales (%)
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	92.93	93.28
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given	0.10	0.16
Trans Woman	0.04	0.07
Trans Man	0.06	0.08
Non-binary	0.04	0.06
All other gender identities	0.03	0.04
Not answered	6.81	6.32

In addition to the publications listed above, consultation has taken place on an **LGBTQ+ Action Plan** to tackle inequalities experienced by LGBTQ+ people and communities across Wales. The outcomes of this work will, in due course, contribute to our work in seeking to create a “More Equal Wales”.

Complaints Linked to Equalities

Our Corporate Information and Customer Services Unit monitors the number of compliments and complaints received. During 2021/2022, there were 321 compliments (from external bodies or members of the public), a decrease of 4.86% on the previous year. 312 complaints were received, an increase of 1.94% on the previous year. There were no equalities related complaints. 27 complaints were referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. 2 complaints received Public Services Ombudsman for Wales intervention. 22 referrals did not merit investigation and 2 received early resolutions.



There were 17 formal complaints received by Social Care for the period 01/04/2021 – 31/03/2022, 15 of these complaints concluded at Stage 1 and 2 formal complaints concluded at Stage 2. 6 cases were referred to the Ombudsman with 4 not requiring an investigation, 1 successfully resolved at the ‘early resolution’ stage and 1 deemed

premature. None of the complaints were directly related to equality issues or claimed to be due to discrimination because of a protected characteristic. There were 122 compliments received in Social Care during the same period.

Where we can, we will take steps to influence the improvement of data capture nationally as well as improve our own local data sets. It is anticipated that better disaggregated equality data from the Census will provide a solid base to measure our progress by protected characteristic when available.

3. Progress towards fulfilling each Equality Objective

Conwy's Equality Objectives are outlined in detail in our Strategic Equality Plan. Our equality objectives for 2020-2024 are as follows:

- Objective 1: Outcomes in **Education** attainment and Wellbeing in Schools are Improved
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an **equal opportunities employer** and reduce pay gaps
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the **Living Standards** of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics
- Objective 4: We will improve **Health, Wellbeing and Social Care** outcomes
- Objective 5: We will improve **Personal Security and Access to Justice**
- Objective 6: Increase **Access to Participation** and improve diversity of decision making
- Objective 7: Develop our knowledge and understanding of the **socio-economic duty**

Each Equality Objective has a number of priority action areas and our Action Plan sets out specific activities that will achieve these objectives and priorities.

Each service area in Conwy County Borough Council has an Equality Champion who co-ordinates the completion of actions identified for their service area. Equality Champions meet quarterly to discuss a wide variety of equality issues, raise awareness and to review progress on the Strategic Equality Action Plan.

In the remainder of this section we have provided details of the progress made on Year 2 of our action plan and other relevant work that has been underway during the year which has contributed to improving the lives of people with different protected characteristics living and working in Conwy.

Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Attainment and Wellbeing in Schools are Improved

Priority Areas:

- 1.1 Address attainment gaps for children and young people to maximise their potential
- 1.2 Reduce high exclusion rates for disabled and ethnic minority children
- 1.3 Collate bullying data by protected characteristic to enable each school to identify relevant objective(s)
- 1.4 Tackle gender segregation by improving representation of girls and women on STEM courses (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and expanding range of subject choice
- 1.5 Address mental health for pupils in schools

1.1.4 Improve results at key stages of education, with a focus on groups of learners such as Looked After Children and pupils on free school meals

The new school improvement framework ensures that learner progression and wellbeing is at the centre of all our efforts to deliver high standards and aspirations. It also encourages collaboration rather than competition between schools and provides a clear separation of assessment from accountability.

National Categorisation of schools will be replaced by a robust self-evaluation system where good practice can be shared and, when improvement is needed, can be urgently addressed via tailored, high-quality support from the regional consortia and local authorities. Schools will be supported to complete self-evaluations by improvement advisers, with a suite of information and support available through the National Resource on Hwb.

A summary of each school's improvement priorities and development plan will be made public and will provide parents with better, more detailed information.

Following the release of the school improvement framework from Welsh Government, GwE will be working with schools to ensure this is implemented consistently across Conwy and will:

- Make available to schools any information they hold which would be beneficial for schools' self-evaluation (e.g. attendance analysis' produced by the local authority), as part of a culture of partnership working
- Share relevant information and intelligence about schools between each other, reinforcing their professional partnership
- Consider school level evidence and information to help determine schools' support needs and capacity to support others; and to contribute to their own self-evaluation of their services to support schools (e.g. direct support; professional learning; use of intervention powers)

1.1.8 Young people (up to the age of 25) are able to access education provision locally to meet their additional learning needs

There is a partnership project in place with Coleg Llandrillo which has been developed over several years and is ongoing. The project has had a benefit in terms of local provision and there are reduced applications to Welsh Government for specialist residential college placements out of county. Work is currently underway on extending this provision with the development of the Dinerth Road site.

1.4.6 Young Ambassador Programme

The Actif Conwy team have undergone a restructure and are planning to restart the Young Ambassador Programme in September 2022. The programme has undergone a review during this time and there has been a shift in focus into community based support and provision.

1.5.1 Focus on Adverse Childhood Experiences / support to parents through a multi-agency approach

We continue to make best use of available grant funding to provide a range of services to children, families and vulnerable adults. This activity has been embedded in the service as 'business as usual' and has been completed.

Edge of Care, multi-agency panels are now fully embedded into practice and take place on a weekly basis. There is regular commitment from CAMHS, Family Centres, Youth Services, the Family Intervention Team and the Strengthening Families Team.

In terms of **Early Intervention Panels**, the Edge of Care Coordinator and the Team Manager provide early intervention multi-agency consultation panels once per month. The purpose of these meetings is to focus on how to support families on the brink of entering managed care services. It is also an opportunity to consider whether some families would benefit from the managed care process. As a result some cases have been prevented from going through to managed care services.

The **Strengthening Families Team** and the **Family Intervention Team** work with parents and children affected by adverse childhood experiences on a daily basis, delivering therapeutic interventions which address their individual circumstances. The five **Family Support Teams** all offer a weekly timetable of activities on four different levels:

- Open Access Groups, often delivered in partnership with other agencies such as health and third sector organisations
- Information, advice and assistance, including referrals to other organisations and joint working with them
- Targeted group work (Parenting Programmes), sometimes delivered in partnership with other agencies such as CDC, health and third sector organisations
- One to one support from a Family Worker, involving multi-agency meetings where needed

The **Family Support model** continues to focus on early intervention and prevention through multi-agency approaches. The five **Family**

Support teams all offer a weekly timetable of activities. Each area team provides:

- Domestic Abuse Services (through commissioned service)
- Family Breakdown: family relationships support and family counselling (through commissioned service)
- Access to mental health support
- Access to bereavement support
- Abuse: clear pathways to ensure support for families affected by abuse; positive parenting courses and one to one support
- Building resilience: Family Wellbeing Profile, a collaborative tool with an emphasis on empowering families and increasing resilience; open access and peer support groups to build resilient communities; promotion of the 5 Ways to Wellbeing

Work is carried out with the North Wales Police Early Action Together programme, offering an alternative pathway for seeking support for families who do not require a safeguarding referral. The focus of the training has been on understanding of vulnerability and the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

1.5.2 Healthy Image Project

The Youth Service appointed an additional worker to the Healthy Image Project, funded by additional Welsh Government grant funding, with an emphasis on delivering wellbeing activities, primarily in schools but also in community provision. Delivery in schools has been sporadic due to the pandemic. However, activity surrounding support on mental health issues has increased through social media platforms, digital delivery and outreach. The work has now been fully integrated into service delivery.

1.5.6 Work to get the balance right – as well as being IT literate, young people need to be able to play and be physically literate

Conwy schools have been able to restart some of their pre-pandemic activities (e.g. school swimming) and have been delivering a range of programmes, including building on good practices developed during the pandemic.

Actions 1.5.7 and 1.5.8 (both below) highlight work that Actif Conwy have done with both primary and secondary schools to support them to deliver physical activities and sports sessions for their pupils.

Primary schools have restarted school swimming lessons, focusing on intensives for Year 5 and 6 pupils mainly. Leisure centre swimming lessons (after school time) are being delivered at almost full capacity. There has been an ever increasing waiting list for the service as a direct result of the pandemic. Measures, such as hiring Rydal Penrhos swimming pool, have been brought in to try and minimise the waiting list, although staffing levels continue to be a challenge.

Online 'Active Family Wellbeing' classes, focused on Active Start for 0-3 year olds, continue to be delivered twice weekly via Facebook Live.

1.5.7 Advise, challenge and support primary schools to deliver a broad and balanced range of activities

Although 'business as normal' was impossible as a result of the pandemic, there has been a range of support delivered to primary schools in being able to provide physical activities for their pupils. Actif Conwy developed a new support programme for primary schools in Conwy, called Back to School / Active Together. The purpose of the programme is to assist schools with providing physical activity and sports sessions for all their pupils. Every primary school in Conwy has been offered a day per week for half a term with an outdoor instructor and/or sports coach.

725 pupils have taken part in the Leisure Development Multi-Sport Sessions. 516 pupils have taken part in Outdoor Learning Sessions. 1,241 pupils have benefited from the support in total. A total of 7,450 pupil sessions have taken place. Feedback from schools has been positive and it has been noted that they would like more support like this in the future.

1.5.8 Support secondary schools in delivering a broad and balanced range of extra-curricular physical activities

The Actif Conwy team provided funding for secondary schools throughout the 2020/21 and 2021/22 Academic Years in order for schools to provide activity programmes for their learners. Work was also carried out with secondary schools to evaluate programmes that could be delivered throughout the year.

1.5.9 Work with Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) through delivery of a joint action plan

The group involving Social Care and CAMHS continues to meet to identify improvements. The joint working group launched workshops

in 2021, which facilitated joint understanding and awareness of each agency's roles, responsibilities and thresholds (including the impact of external pressures). The membership was also updated this year to ensure that the relevant personnel from both agencies are in attendance. The group's Terms of Reference were updated as well.

1.6.2 School Development Plans meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty

Schools continue to work with GwE to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. They discuss their School Development Plans with their designated GwE School Improvement Advisers each year and report annually on progress to their Governing Bodies.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Education Objective:

- Over 2,000 families received free school meal payments and roll-out of Welsh Government's Universal Free School Meals scheme to primary school pupils is underway
- Maintained comprehensive monitoring processes for all schools. External inspections and quality assurance indicate that education attainment has improved from the previous year, despite the continuing challenges of the pandemic
- Continued to increase and improve the provision of IT equipment in schools, with more than 1,000 items of hardware delivered during the year (including end user devices and digital screens to support delivery of the new curriculum)
- Improved the sustainability and management of the teaching assistant provision for additional learning needs by integrating the service into school settings
- Reviewed and improved the process for recording school staff training, resulting in improved quality of school staff safeguarding training completion data

Deferred Actions

Despite the progress highlighted above there are some actions within the plan which have been deferred owing to factors including: staff vacancies and a work backlog as a result of shifting priorities during the pandemic. The actions below will be re-evaluated and progressed in 2022/23 and/or 2023/24 subject to capacity and funding:

1.2.1 School Support Plans to review Exclusions

- 1.3.2 Implement All Wales Anti-Bullying Guidance
- 1.3.3 School Support Plans to feed bullying actions into business planning
- 1.3.4 Work with Show Racism the Red Card (work that commenced last year is delayed due to a change in staff)
- 1.3.6 Work with North Wales Local Authorities to share best practice in seeking to address identity based bullying in schools
- 1.4.3 Promotion of technical work experience placements (delayed due to working from home)

Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps

Priority Areas:

- 2.1 Address gender, ethnicity and disability pay differences
- 2.2 Review our flexible working practices to ensure equal opportunities at all levels
- 2.3 Ensure effective policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment
- 2.4 Review Pregnancy and Maternity Provision in the Workplace
- 2.5 Ensure any use of insecure employment contracts (eg, casuals) adequately protects their rights as workers
- 2.6 Increase number of disabled people in work
- 2.7 Reduce gender segregation (the unequal distribution of men and women working in traditionally gender specific roles)
- 2.8 Improve participation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people across apprenticeships
- 2.9 Consider the use of positive action measures in recruitment campaigns where specific groups are under-represented

2.1.1 Equal Pay Audit

We undertake an Equal Pay Audit every 12 months for gender, ethnicity, disability and age. The outcomes are published in the Strategic Equality Plan annual report (see section 4.2 of this report for this year's figures). We have developed a separate, more comprehensive, Equal Pay Audit report which covered a three year period up to 2020-21 and provides more detailed analysis of the data for gender, ethnicity, disability and age. This is currently being updated to include 2021-22 and a separate action plan will be identified.

The Equal Pay Audit also covered work in relation to the following actions from the action plan:

- 2.1.2 Identifying where there are gaps above 5% in line with EHRC guidance and publishing actions and outcomes in the SEP Annual Report
- 2.1.5 Reviewing pay gap data for ethnicity to understand the reasons for the increasing gap and for disability to understand the reasons for the fluctuations
- 2.1.6 Reviewing any unexpected patterns for staff working unsociable hours relating to their protected characteristics as part of the Equal Pay Audit

2.2.2 Review Flexible Working and Family Friendly Policies

Following ongoing reviews of flexible working practices throughout the pandemic (e.g. the temporary removal of parameters around daily and weekly minimum hours, core times and settlement periods) a full review of the Flexible Working policy was carried out this year and, following engagement, the amended policy has been published. The updated policy is supported by guidance which sets out the Council's approach to hybrid working which supports the Council's strategy of adapting to, and thriving within, the new working environment following the pandemic. The guidance recognises that hybrid working is not sustainable for all employees or job roles but notes that remote working is now part of normal working practice. As we continue to embed a hybrid model of working, many of our family friendly policies have been reviewed as part of this work and Equality Impact Assessments undertaken to ensure equality of opportunity.

2.2.4 Raise awareness of the facilities and activities available to parents in Conwy that staff can access

Messages continue to be shared with staff about family support facilities and activities through a variety of methods. Messages have been included in the monthly staff brief about family support available,

including support available while working from home. Links with Community Wellbeing and HR Business Partners are being developed further to ensure that messages reach staff from a variety of routes.

As part of events held to mark Time to Talk Day (see 2.6.3 below) an online drop-in session was held with Conwy Family Information Service which provided staff with an opportunity to learn more about facilities and activities available to parents in Conwy.

2.4.1 Review of Maternity, Breastfeeding and Adoption Policy into a combined policy

There have been delays due to other priorities emerging as a result of the pandemic and in order to ensure that developments from the Workwise project could be taken into account as part of one review rather than carrying out multiple reviews. However, work on the policy has progressed during this period, with a view to a draft being completed for consultation and engagement by the end of the financial year.

2.4.4 Develop a Menopause Guidance Document

A Menopause Guidance document has been developed and published to support the health and wellbeing of staff. There is recognition in the guidance that the menopause can have a significant impact not just on individuals experiencing the menopause transition themselves, but potentially their families and work colleagues as well. The guidance provides comprehensive information about who is impacted by the menopause as well as outlining the responsibilities of senior management teams, managers/supervisors, individuals, occupational health, HR, trade unions and Menopause Champions / support groups. There are possible workplace adjustments suggested within the guidance and there is signposting to other policies to refer to (e.g. Flexible Working Policy, Additional Unpaid Leave Policy and the Attendance Management Policy). The guidance was launched on World Menopause Day and a series of drop-in and information sharing sessions have been arranged for staff and have been made available to watch on-demand if staff are not able to attend the live sessions. Both Time to Change Champions and Equality Champions were approached about acting as Menopause Champions in the workplace and both groups have agreed to do so. This Guidance has been very well received by staff at all levels within the Authority.

2.5.1 Review of Casual Worker Policy

The review of the Casual Worker Policy is underway but has been delayed due to other priorities in HR as a result of the pandemic and

while further clarification is sought about recent case law which impacts this policy.

2.6.3 Time to Change Pledge to support mental health

The Time to Change Wales pledge was signed in December 2021 and a launch event took place in February 2022 on Time to Talk Day. The launch event involved a series of sessions about mental health and activities to support mental health including yoga, healthy eating, reading, walking, and a Nordic walking session amongst others. Over 30 Time to Change Employee Champions were recruited and trained in January 2022 to support with tackling stigma and discrimination around mental health across and a series of regular meetings were setup to discuss future activities and embed the scheme in all service areas. The Time to Change Employee Champions meet quarterly to discuss activities that all can use in their areas and to maintain the momentum of this important work, whereby everyone is encouraged to talk about their mental wellbeing and to recognise the value and benefits of keeping communication channels open.

Further activities have been held by HR and the Employee Champions since the pledge was signed, including: events and information sharing sessions to mark Mental Health Awareness Week, a series of guided walks open to all staff over the summer, a free yoga session for staff and a Time to Change Wales stand in Coed Pella reception on World Mental Health Day to promote what Conwy is doing to support positive mental health and wellbeing for all staff.

2.7.1 Guide on avoiding biased and stereotypical language in the recruitment and other employment processes

Draft guidance has been produced on avoiding biased and stereotypical language in recruitment and other employment processes. The guidance covers topics such as unconscious bias, biased (e.g. gendered) language, and the interviewing and shortlisting process. The work will be developed further and incorporated into the wider recruitment project.

A large amount of recruitment has taken place in terms of senior posts, and training has been provided to the Senior Employment Committee prior to each appointment.

2.7.2 Review Job Evaluation Score form to avoid stereotypical language

The Job Evaluation supporting information form was reviewed as part of the recruitment project's work. A new document was drafted and consultation on the work has begun.

2.7.3 Review of Job Adverts to avoid stereotypical language

Guidance has been drafted in relation to this action and will be issued with the new recruitment information as part of the ongoing recruitment project.

2.7.4 Improving Attraction, Recruitment and Retention of Social Care Workforce

There is a range of activity taking place around attraction, recruitment and retention of the Social Care Workforce as local staffing pressures continue to mirror the pressures and effects seen on a national level. As well as supporting the national 'We Care' campaign work has been carried out within Social Care around:

Conwy Social Work Traineeships: A programme was introduced to address social work recruitment challenges through a 'grow your own' approach, as trainees remain in their substantive post and gain their qualification via the Open University. For the first two years of the programme two employees were supported per year, in the third year financial support for the programme was increased to raise the number of trainees to three per year. In recognition of the increased recruitment difficulties resulting in intensified pressure on existing staffing resources, five additional social work traineeship places have been offered.

Social Work Students and Newly-Qualified Social Workers: Conwy is a tri-partner of the Bangor University MA in Social Work course, hosting students twice a year. Recognising pressures on our existing pool of Practice Educators we have invested heavily in supporting experienced Social Workers to undertake the Practice Educators accredited award. Within the tri-partnership workshops have been hosted with our Social Workers and Bangor University to make amendments to the teaching content on the MA course, to ensure that social work students' theoretical models of social work and their practice is aligned to current best practice in social work.

Social Care Wales data evidence that a third of appointed Social Workers are newly qualified. As such, staff are required to complete the First Three Years in Practice Framework (Social Care Wales). Our Practice Coordinator takes a lead role in supporting both the new employee and their manager through the framework, including completion of 'Consolidation Continued Professional Education and Learning'.

Supporting recruitment to the Social Care sector in Conwy: We have resourced a new service (WeCareWales.Conwy) to support people into employment across the care sector, with a new Community Employment Mentor post to support it. The service works closely with the Conwy Employment Hub to ensure that the Social Care sector benefits from Welsh Government employment programmes. Collaboration is undertaken with Coleg Llandrillo and Social Care employers to coordinate Health and Social Care student work placements.

Ongoing and future workforce plans within Social Care will look to:

- Focus on staff health and wellbeing in the recovery from the pandemic, including retention and sharing best practice
- Delivering a refreshed workforce strategy that incorporates learning from the pandemic
- Embracing new, more productive ways of working that create opportunities for staff to work flexibly
- Explore the pressures created by workload volume across the department
- Promote social care as a career field of choice

The Conwy Employment Hub collaborated with Social Care to deliver an Introduction to Social Care course. Of the 121 participants who secured full-time employment following engagement with the Employment Hub, 8% secured employment within Social Care.

It is anticipated that the work carried out as part of the recruitment project, which is reviewing all aspects of the Council's approach to attracting and recruiting prospective employees, will also contribute to this action and will help to promote Social Care as a career field of choice going forwards.

2.7.5 Raise awareness of Engineering and Technical opportunities and career paths in STEM subjects

Workshops and engagement activities have been carried out as much as resources have allowed. There will be work to secure large scale funding prior to April 2023 but all funding streams will be subject to a great deal of competition. We continue to attend school careers days to talk about the wide variety of jobs available in a local authority. Our Engineering team have recently designed a model bridge construction package that gives school children the opportunity to gain hands-on experience of bridge construction which is being used when visiting schools to raise the profile of engineering and technical opportunities.

2.8.1 Support skills development, including apprenticeships, to equip people to be ready for work opportunities in the region

Community Renewal Funding was accessed for 5 Skills and Employability projects under the Skills and Recovery for Growth Programme as follows:

Confidently You: a pre-employment project which focuses on reducing social isolation, building resilience, increasing confidence / self-esteem, developing soft practical, financial, digital and employability skills, volunteering, gaining qualifications, improving physical and mental health.

Therapeutic Counselling: Short-term work-focussed counselling and coaching to support people to overcome mental health barriers to employment.

Mental Health Recovery College: Developing the Recovery College concept to evaluate the impact on individuals' mental health / wellness, employability, community cohesion and social prescribing.

Pathway and Development Courses: delivering a range of pathway and development training courses incorporating sector specific accredited qualifications, employability skills and work placements in growth and priority sectors in Conwy. These include Security, Construction, Reuse/Recycling, Green Industries and family learning activities.

Libraries as Community Hubs: A feasibility study with a number of work packages in order to identify and pilot an implementation model based on local research and good practice across the UK. This will include identifying potential service providers, looking at examples of good practice and producing terms of reference for establishing a multi-agency Digital Inclusion group to coordinate digital participation within the community. It will also cover identifying digital barriers and approaches to tackle digital inclusion locally and identifying training requirements for staff. The project will culminate in running a pilot project at Llanrwst Library to test the proposed Community Hubs and the Recovery College models, including reading-for-wellbeing projects.

Delivery continued on a range of national and regional employability programmes to upskill, prepare and support young people and people of working age into employment or training, as well as in work support. All these programmes incorporate skills and training courses to support development and progression into employment.

A Hospitality Jobs Fair was held in Llandudno in partnership with the DWP to promote opportunities within the sector. 16 Employers attended with 300+ jobs on offer:

- 76 customers came through the door
- 4 Kickstart applications made
- 1 Kickstart start confirmed
- 92 jobs applied for or will be applied for
- 34 interviews lined up and 5 trial shifts at local restaurants
- 2 job starts
- 8 customers signed up for Communities for Work
- 3 customers signed up for hospitality courses

A Jobs Expo was held in Colwyn Bay, attended by over 170 jobseekers, including young people. 70 local and regional businesses attended to promote a wide range of opportunities including apprenticeships and self-employment support. The Expo also included CV and Interview Skills workshops ran by Careers Wales.

A virtual course, We Discover, was piloted for young people aged 16-24 years including Care Leavers, ran by We Mind the Gap, a North Wales based charity. The 10-week virtual programme helped young

people from Conwy to discover and build a positive future for themselves. Topics included: New confidence, Self-esteem, Friendship, Broadened horizons, Fun Role models, new skills, support with writing CVs and cover letters. All participants enrolled into an alumni programme.

A series of workshops and activities were run to engage and support young people who had been adversely affected by Covid-19 to improve their resilience, mental health and reduce social isolation. These included online cookery workshops / accredited skills in the hospitality / catering industry including Level 2 Food Hygiene, Yoga / Mindfulness and confidence building development sessions at Adventure Parc Snowdonia.

2.8.2 Expand opportunities for work placements / work experience for people from different protected characteristics

Work has been undertaken with colleagues with regards to the Kickstart Scheme (providing funding to employers to create jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit). Equalities data is collected as part of this work to monitor whether people from groups with protected characteristics are accessing these opportunities.

2.9.2 Equality Monitoring Data

We continue to encourage staff to complete equality data through regular messages to all staff, via email to personal email addresses and at every opportunity when updating other records on iTrent. The Equality Monitoring forms on the Intranet were updated during the period, with a shorter, 'Ready to Use' version and a longer, 'Full Options' version now available for staff to use as appropriate.

2.9.3 Pre-employment Workshops

Work on this action was delayed as a result of the pandemic however the work has started. An outline / agenda for pre-employment workshops has been drafted and the workshops are currently being discussed with partners from the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network, Regional Community Cohesion teams and Employability Leads, with a view to carrying out workshops on a regional basis.

2.9.7 Positive action measures in recruitment

Guidance on positive action is being developed with the aim of increasing confidence in using positive action when appropriate. The work has now been incorporated into the recruitment project and will form part of this work.

2.10.2 Mechanisms and tools for managers when managing staff reductions / increased workload to ensure positive mental wellbeing when dealing with change

We have comprehensive policies and guidance to support managers undertaking restructures to accommodate fluctuating circumstances. This includes formal consultation guidance and support for staff through management, HR and Trade Unions to ensure mental wellbeing is considered during difficult and challenging times. We continue to make available our Employee Assistance programme for staff which they are regularly reminded about, as it also provides a 24/7/365 confidential counselling service for our staff members and their families. During the pandemic there has been a wealth of information, guidance and signposting of mental health support for staff, which is regularly highlighted in team briefs, staff meetings and individual meetings.

2.10.5 Framework for employability projects and initiatives within the Youth Service

With funding from the Youth Support Grant we have been able to fund a fulltime Youth Engagement Grant Coordinator until March 2025. The Co-ordinator is responsible for all elements of data collection, attending national meetings, the link officer with Careers Wales and monitoring the grant spend.

As a Youth Service we have also been successful in creating an in-house project, which supports young people aged 11 – 25 who are experiencing barriers which prevent them accessing social settings, education, employment or training. The staffing of the progress project has been integrated within the Youth Service core delivery and budget to ensure longevity of the support offered.

A Homelessness prevention and support project has also been developed, called Oak Tree. The Oak Tree project supports young people experiencing or likely to experience homelessness. This project works in partnership with Social Care, Housing and Education. The project provides accredited awareness sessions within schools

and community provisions, including sessions on budgeting, food to fork and life skills.

Conwy Employment Hub and Cynnydd/Progress Project ran a programme of events targeting mental health and emotional wellbeing, and building resilience for the young people of Conwy having secured funding from the Welsh Government Youth Support Grant. Working in partnership, a number of events were held including:

- An Adventure Day at Adventure Parc Snowdonia, which included the high-thrills of the Ninja Assault, Extreme Slides, Indoor Adventure Climb, Zip Line and free-falls
- An online cook-along entitled 'Live Well', which taught participants how to cook healthy dishes from around the world, improve their budgeting skills and get support with nutrition
- Yoga for Anxiety, which focused on health with simple mindfulness and yoga techniques to help manage stress

All of the events were free, and open to any young person aged 16-24 living in the county.

In response to the recent Welsh Government Youth Guarantee and updated Youth Engagement and Progression guidance, Conwy is in the process of updating the local authority's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework. This includes the responsibilities and pledge of key partners such as Careers Wales, Further Education Services, Employability, Central Education, Social Care and Housing.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Employment Objective:

- Work is underway on the recruitment project. This will continue going forwards and the scope has expanded to look at all aspects of the recruitment process
- Piloted compressed hours working arrangements across Social Care teams and explored expanding these arrangements to teams in other Services
- Launched our Coaching Culture, a digital learning platform to equip our managers with essential coaching skills
- Developed our Workwise Framework and office hybrid working model

- Resounding success for the Conwy Employment Hub as it exceeded expected job outcomes across all three Welsh Government Employability programmes, and was highlighted as the best across Wales for the Communities for Work programme
- Communities for Work exceeded the number of job starts for participants aged 25 and over by 215% and 238% for NEETS
- Communities for Work+ exceeded the number of job starts by 101%
- PaCE (supporting people who are finding childcare costs are preventing them from training or working) exceeded the aim of helping people return to work by 179%.
- 93% of participants on the PaCE programme successfully gained employment, with the remaining 7% undertaking training to develop their skill set before seeking employment

Deferred Actions

Despite the progress highlighted above there are some actions within the plan which have been deferred owing to factors including: staff vacancies and a work backlog as a result of shifting priorities during the pandemic. The actions below will be re-evaluated and progressed in 2022/23 and/or 2023/24 subject to capacity and funding:

- 2.1.3 Pay gap and job segregation section in Staff Survey (the staff survey has been delayed and this will be taken forward when the survey is carried out)
- 2.3.1 Review of Harassment Policy
- 2.3.4 Review of Grievance Policy
- 2.4.3 Develop a Fostering Policy
- 2.5.5 Encouraging other employers when we commission work to anonymise applicants in early stages of recruitment process (carried over as part of recruitment project)
- 2.6.4 Provide written feedback for disabled applicants who don't get shortlisted/employed to explain why and explain the process (carried over as part of recruitment project)
- 2.6.5 Adopt the Same but Different pledge: "Rare Aware Charter" to create a supportive working environment for employees who have a rare disease or have a close family member affected
- 2.6.6 Options for sharing vacancies with disability groups (carried over as part of recruitment project)

- 2.6.7 Community work experience for disabled people (delayed due to Covid-19 but remains part of the Service Plan)
- 2.8.3 Collect equality data from work placement applications
- 2.8.4/5 Expand opportunities for work experience, apprenticeships, including for our Looked After Children
- 2.10.6 Transgender Policy

Objective 3: We will take action to improve the **Living Standards** of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics

Priority Areas:

- 3.1 Take action to address disproportionate negative impact on people with different protected characteristics
- 3.2 Support disabled people’s right to independent living including adequate accessible and adaptable housing and related support
- 3.3 Better engagement with disabled people when renovating and designing buildings to ensure full accessibility

3.1.1 Equalities Impact Assessments are undertaken

Work continues to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken as and when required, and at a time when they can influence decision making. Support is provided to services on the completion of Equality Impact Assessments and guidance is given on completing the revised impact assessment form, which includes the Socio-economic Duty. Training on carrying out Equality Impact Assessments is delivered quarterly. This is a regular agenda item at the Equality Champions meetings and from time to time we review good examples and those that need improvement so that Equality Champions can feed back to their services. A check on whether impact assessments have been done is also made by reviewing the Report and Review Group agenda to ensure that where they were necessary, they have been undertaken.

A session on equalities was carried out with Elected Members following the elections and this included highlighting the importance of considering Equality Impact Assessments as part of their decision making responsibilities in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Socio-economic Duty.

3.1.7 Tackling the underlying causes of Homelessness

Homelessness is a complex issue and as such needs a co-ordinated response and a multi-faceted approach to advise and support services and there continues to be demand and pressure on the service due to the pandemic. Some highlights to join up service delivery and offer a holistic approach to tackling homelessness over the past year include:

- Commissioning a Mental Health Support Officer via the Housing Support Grant to support clients open to the Homeless Prevention Team
- A number of Service Level Agreements are now in place for key partners around service delivery and referrals, this includes Citizens Advice, Shelter Cymru and DASU

3.1.8 Awareness raising Campaign in relation to Homeless Prevention

Conwy experiences high levels of housing crisis and persons or households presenting as homeless. To try and better understand this we monitor the reasons why people are presenting in a housing crisis. Our analysis establishes that in nearly all instances the reason for presenting as homeless on the day is genuine and there are few, if at all any, instances of people not knowing who to contact if a risk of homelessness has been developing in the weeks prior. We remain committed to better promotion of our services to raise awareness of the importance of early identification of triggers or risk factors which can contribute to a greater risk of homelessness.

There is a planned restructure of the Homeless Prevention team and it is envisaged that an Early Intervention & Prevention team will form part of the new structure, enabling the Service to intervene much sooner when households are at risk of homelessness. There is now a Youth Homelessness Co-ordinator, based within Youth Services and linking in closely with Housing Solutions. Some of this work is around prevention focused on young people, including work in schools and it is hoped that the work will also give an idea of some of

the key drivers of homelessness and how interventions can be put in place at the earliest stage.

3.1.9 Work with Children's Services to develop housing and support options that avoid the need to place 16 and 17 year olds in B&B accommodation

The previous update highlighted that the Coed Pella supported accommodation project is now operating – including the provision of an emergency bed and the establishment of 2 shared houses for care leavers (in conjunction with Social Care). There are now two new actions which have been identified and are in place which relate to this – the development of a Housing Needs Assessment / Housing Support Programme Strategy, and an action to End Youth Homelessness in Conwy by 2027.

3.1.10 Resources to target tackling homelessness amongst prison leavers

Due to ongoing demands a new set of tasks to achieve this action are yet to be agreed. There continues to be a dedicated Homeless Prevention Officer who works exclusively with prison leavers. Access to accommodation and support continues to be an issue for this client group but this has been identified as a priority within the Housing Support Grant programme. The Housing Support Grant team are in the process of preparing to commission a new supported housing scheme for prison leavers.

3.1.11 Work with partners to increase the supply and quality of appropriate accommodation in the independent care sector

We have maintained regular contact with all providers throughout the Covid pandemic and collate regular information on the number of vacant beds within the sector. Covid has had a significant impact and we are seeing a large number of vacancies arise within both residential and nursing homes in Conwy. The situation is being monitored closely and we have had joint meetings with Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and with the hardest hit providers to investigate the reasons and consider solutions and support.

Given the impact of Covid, we are no longer considering an increase in supply at this time, although improving quality remains a priority. Under new guidance there are requirements to produce a Market

Stability Assessment that will assess the current situation and inform our strategy and actions going forwards.

3.2.2 Pilot a different approach to dementia care in people's own homes

A team of eight specialist support workers is now fully staffed. There is evidence that the team has enabled individuals living with dementia to continue living at home, avoiding unnecessary admission to hospital or residential care, or delaying the need for such services. There is also evidence that care packages are more stable and health problems are identified earlier to avoid crisis. Virtual pets and other technological/digital interventions have been introduced to some individuals which has had a positive impact on their lives. There have been some limitations on the original intentions of the pilot (e.g. accessing additional respite support via Llys Elian EMI Resource Centre) as a result of the pandemic and ongoing pressures across the care sector but the work continues to deliver good outcomes and enable individuals living with dementia to remain in their own homes.

3.2.3 Support people to live well with dementia

As a result of changes to funding available the 5 Dementia Support Workers have been made permanent. They continue to support individuals with dementia and their carers to remain in their own homes and are integral to and valued members of the CRT. A Dementia Forum has recently been established and membership includes key staff from Health, Social Care and the voluntary sector. Representation from the Care Forum Wales has also been requested. The forum has been formed as an operational group to foster open and collaborative discussion for those involved in the development, implementation and reporting of dementia care across Conwy.

3.2.9 Ensure we implement Part M of the Building Regulations requiring house builders to construct new housing to accessible standards for disabled people

Building Control continue to apply and enforce the requirements of Approved Document M – Access and Facilities for Disabled Visitors or Occupants on all new housing schemes. There have been several occasions this year when improvements have been requested in terms of property access, including: level or compliant ramped access, low access thresholds and ground floor WCs. There is close

work with developers to ensure that the access and of new housing is compliant.

3.2.11 Effective and efficient Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Application Process

Following on from work last year in reviewing the Disabled Facilities Grant process, a new Adaptations Policy has been developed.

3.2.12 Healthy Homes Checks

The Housing Improvements team continues to work with Warm Wales to provide advice to homeowners on how they could save money and have a warmer, safer home, as well as working with Nest and Eco Flex Grants.

3.2.13 Children's Residential Assessment Centre Project

The Bwthyn y Ddol (previously known as Meadow Lodge) project is supported by dedicated project management and partnership work is ongoing. Regular scrutiny is provided via the Bwthyn y Ddol project board and reporting is carried out through the democratic process on both progress and in relation to key decision making points.

The multi-disciplinary team is operational and embedded as part of the service offer to children and families in the Central Area. The capital aspect of the project (construction of the Assessment Centre) has been delayed as a result of the contractor going into administration. Negotiation has taken place with Welsh Government and this aspect of the project has a revised delivery date of April 2023.

3.2.15 Shared Customer Care Standards for adaptations

All recommendations from the Audit Wales Housing Adaptations report have been completed and signed off by the Council's Governance and Audit Committee.

3.2.18 Enforcement of Planning and Building Control to keep communities safe

Adaptations continue to be made to keep the service going while working from home, with technology (e.g. Google Streetview) being used to assist with investigations. Planning enforcement has been difficult in many respects, such as lack of tradespersons to address issues found, agents being very busy and financial issues. A careful and considered approach has been adopted in this light but as things

return to 'normal' the team have a backlog of cases they are working through. Reportable performance measures continue to appear positive but this is not currently taking account of the backlog and as the team concentrate on the backlog it impact of performance measures.

3.2.20 Increase the supply of appropriate market housing

The Local Development Plan is currently progressing to Deposit Consultation. 4,500 market units and 1,200 affordable units are currently proposed with appropriate land allocations to meet the needs. A pause and review will be required following the release of the Census data this summer to ensure the planned level of housing is correct over the next 15 years. There has been an improvement in the identification and proposed allocation of lands to meet these future needs up to 2033 via a bespoke Site Assessment Working Group and shared Database alongside key stakeholders.

The Town Centre first study is underway to assess all options for housing delivery. The work will result in amendments to policy to provide greater flexibility for town centre housing alongside the needs for retail, business and community uses. A Town Centre workshop is planned with key stakeholders prior to progressing amended policies and designations via the political process.

The affordable housing viability study has been further reviewed to take account of increased development costs, DQR and new national policy requirements, such as the costs associated with net-benefit in biodiversity on site. The final viability work will be presented to the Affordable Housing Workshop planned for July prior to Cabinet approval.

Improved knowledge of the second/holiday homes impact on communities/housing supply is being progressed with the intention of bringing forward a 'Principle Residence Policy' restricting all new build residential to local market/affordable housing. Subject to the release of Welsh Government's amendments to the Use Classes Order and Census Data, the policy will be progressed via Cabinet later this year prior to RLDP Deposit consultation.

The new Local Housing Market Assessment indicates a need of 1,700 affordable units that need to be delivered via the planning process.

Strategic planning policy are working with Welsh Government, RSLs and developers to increase the current allocation in the Local Development Plan from 1,200 affordable units to meet this need by 2033. This work is subject to a consultation process and workshop with key stakeholders to identify and allocate additional sites to increase affordable housing.

Progress Groups have been established between the RSLs and Developers to progress and enable the remaining Local Development Plan sites in the currently adopted Local Development Plan. This has resulted in progression of the three sites consisting in a mix of market and affordable housing.

3.2.22 Enable people who have profound and multiple learning disabilities to develop to their full potential

Following delays as a result of the pandemic, work re-started on developing the Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities strategy. The Disability Service, with Llandrillo College and Health, are engaged in the development of the Dinerth Road site to offer bespoke accommodation for those currently using Canolfan Marl.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Living Standards Objective:

- Continued to deliver flood alleviation and coastal defence schemes county-wide, reducing the risk of flooding to a further 252 properties
- Improved/extended the flood awareness and preparedness information through a range of communication media to further support and educate vulnerable communities
- Completed active travel improvement schemes in Towyn, Kinmel Bay and Abergele
- Continued to work with community groups to improve and protect our parks and green spaces
- A comprehensive needs assessment was undertaken to inform the priorities set out in the Housing Support Programme Strategy
- Delivered 133 units of affordable housing, an increase from the previous 2 years and exceeding our annual target of 123 units
- Published the first Local Authority Prospectus, providing information to stakeholders about where to search for land and property to deliver new affordable housing

Deferred Actions

Despite the progress highlighted above there are some actions within the plan which have been deferred owing to factors including: staff vacancies and a work backlog as a result of shifting priorities during the pandemic. The actions below will be re-evaluated and progressed in 2022/23 and/or 2023/24 subject to capacity and funding:

- 3.2.4 Service area specific performance indicators to increase take up of Direct Payments (a mini structure of Direct Payments has been approved so there are plans in place to increase take up in 2023)
- 3.3.1 Produce a guide for non-public organisations on disability access (delayed due to pandemic)

Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes

Priority Areas:

- 4.1 Ensure health and wellbeing needs of carers are met
- 4.2 Improve access to services for Gypsy Travellers and improve engagement to develop trust
- 4.3 Increase uptake rates of people with learning disabilities taking up annual health checks
- 4.4 Suicide prevention plan Talk to Me 2 is fully evaluated and new action plan to reduce suicide in middle aged men in Wales
- 4.5 Evaluate progress on mental health to ensure we are meeting the needs of people with different protected characteristics
- 4.6 Use Social Model of Disability language
- 4.7 Implement specific awareness and support for people with neurological conditions

4.1.1 North Wales Carers Strategy and Needs Review

Carer's services continue to be under heavy demand within the county. It remains a complex delivery environment with increasing demand and reducing resources. A self-assessment has been undertaken against the Action Plan, linked to Welsh Government's new Carers strategy, and actions continue to be delivered from it. The priorities are to identify and value unpaid carers, to provide information, advice and assistance to them, and identify support services such as respite and emotional support. A new priority has been identified to support unpaid carers in education and the workplace. Plans are being made for Young Carers Day 2023.

4.1.2 Quarterly Carers Group Reviews

The strategic 'Approach to Carers' group has continued to meet via Zoom and has been useful in terms of recognising the ways in which services have adapted to delivering support to carers during the Covid period and planning for the impact of winter pressures on Carers (e.g. promoting flu jabs for carers).

4.4.3 Action plan to target the improvement of mental wellbeing in farming communities

A strategy is now in place and a regular hub has been devised in Llanrwst, which was identified as a pilot area as its location is beneficial in terms of picking up issues relating to mental health and wellbeing in rural and farming communities.

4.5.4 Supporting Mental Health and Preventing Homelessness

Partnership working with mental health is an area of particular challenge due to the demand on mental health services. Housing Support Grant funding has been agreed for the recruitment of a complex / mental health prevention officer and support worker. This area of work will receive more attention as the team works towards enhancing the early intervention / prevention approach with partners and with the shift to rapid rehousing.

4.5.6 We will develop approaches to encourage people to take part in physical activity

Prom Xtra returned as a live event with taster sport activities in cricket, rugby and paddle boarding worked into the programme. The events team ran the Tour of Britain in September, which included activation for getting out on your bike. We have also actively marketed Ffit Conwy offers to the public during the year.

We continue to maintain high quality parks and green spaces, which provide attractive environments, free of charge, for people to experience, in spite of stark funding shortages. Continued investment in maintaining and improving this infrastructure is crucial in providing the right environment for citizens and customers to look after their physical and mental wellbeing.

The recently developed Corporate Learning and Development Plan includes a section on encouraging a healthy lifestyle. This provides staff with a number of initiatives that they can take part in, including walks. As highlighted earlier in the report, Time to Change Wales was a new initiative launched in February 2022 to support mental wellbeing. There are a number of staff benefits including the cycle to work scheme and Carefirst Zest which support colleagues to take part in physical exercise.

The Authority had a revalidation assessment in March with a view to maintaining and extending our Corporate Health Standard Silver Award. Our revalidation was successful and our Silver award will be extended for another 12 months. There was also an acknowledgement from the assessor of the phenomenal work that Conwy has done over the last 12 months and how a lot of the work we have been doing is equivalent of the Gold standard.

4.5.7 Co-produce inclusive mental health services in the community for LGBTQ+ groups, adults with autism and carers

The development of a collaborative Mental Health Recovery College that will support mental health in the community through an educational approach is underway. The College will evaluate impacts on individuals' mental health / wellness, employability, community cohesion and social prescribing. Learners will be enrolled and supported to identify their goals, plan their personal development and access learning opportunities, with a commitment to a recovery-focused, compassionate approach.

One of the key tasks initially as part of this work will be the establishment of a Service User Forum to co-produce and influence the content of the courses to ensure that it reflect the needs of communities. The group will be fully inclusive and will be responsive to the mental health needs of individuals regardless of diagnosis or protected characteristics.

In addition to this, there has been a transition to the Mental Wellness Team to help improve the impact of poor mental wellbeing on Conwy residents. The development of the team was carried out in response to what people were telling us about mental health services.

Current data demonstrates that there has been a 40% increase in demand for mental health services across both Health and Social Care. The Mental Wellness Team works to the ethos of 'No Wrong Door', so it doesn't matter which service an individual contacts, the team will assist to get that person to the right place.

Wellbeing is a core factor in the delivery of the team. There is work underway to develop green spaces, a Recovery College (as mentioned above), in-person and virtual hubs and to look at other ways that the team can work at a grass root level. Within this work there is recognition of how much communities have to offer and there is ongoing work to bring awareness to existing services in the community.

4.7.2 Implementation of Sunflower Lanyard scheme to support hidden disabilities

The hidden disabilities scheme, and recognising the Sunflower lanyards, has been adopted in our Theatre venues. Recognition of the Sunflower Lanyard scheme has been included in a draft revision of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy which is set to be reviewed by stakeholders (e.g. Trade Unions) and will need to go through the approval process.

4.7.3 Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Code of Practice

The Conwy ASD lead officer participated in the Welsh Government task and finish group. The ASD Code of Practice on the Delivery of Autism has been published. A task and finish group was established within Conwy to deliver an action plan internally to respond to the code, specifically to ensure that we have clear pathways for service users. The group produced an implementation plan which has been approved by the Head of Service.

In view of capacity restrictions approval was given to recruit a Conwy & Denbighshire ASC (Autism Spectrum Conditions) Officer for two years to take forward implementation plans in both Local Authorities. A task and finish group has been established to take forward the implementation plan, to be chaired by the new ASC lead. Some key actions in relation to training the workforce are already in progress with the Social Care Training team.

4.8.1 New models to promote health & wellbeing so that people are less reliant on health and social care, working collaboratively and looking at future trends

An in-house review of the National Exercise Referral Scheme has been started as this is also being done nationally by Public Health Wales. The internal review will identify areas for improvements as the national review could result in lower funding towards the scheme at a local level.

Meetings have taken place with Education and Social Care. Leisure have developed a junior membership which has seen good take up in membership. There has been investment in facilities which will support Education with changes to the PE curriculum which will be more focused on health and wellbeing and not just sports. Leisure is also exploring opportunities within the Social Care service including family hubs and play.

4.8.4 Launch and deliver a pathway into Step Up To Care

In terms of supporting unemployed people to work in Social Care two, two-day courses were run focusing on the key skills / knowledge required to apply for posts across the care sector in Conwy. Vacancies and applications are submitted through the We Care website and are advertised within 24 hours of submission. The importance of promoting the use of the We Care platform amongst care providers has been identified.

Further information about the steps taken to promote social care as a career path, including work with full-time education students, can be found against 2.7.4 Improving Attraction, Recruitment and Retention of the Social Care Workforce.

4.8.5 Support national 'We Care' campaign to encourage more people into care work

Social Care hope to recruit to some targeted roles within the Social Work and Reablement teams to help combat waiting lists and support the increased demand in the community. The national 'We Care' recruitment campaign aims to raise the profile of Social Care as a rewarding career choice, whether that be with the Local Authority or with a private provider. As well as hoping to capitalise on the national campaign, work is being carried out in terms of recruitment and retention in the following areas: Conwy Social Work Traineeships, Social Work Students and newly-qualified Social Workers, and supporting recruitment to the Social Care sector in Conwy. More

detail regarding this work can be found against 2.7.4 Improving Attraction, Recruitment and Retention of the Social Care Workforce.

4.8.8 Become a Dementia-friendly organisation

Conwy is a Dementia-friendly organisation. An annual progress report has been submitted to the Alzheimer's Society, which will determine whether the status as a Dementia Friendly organisation will be retained. The steering group are continuing to meet on a regular basis and are working on an ever evolving action plan. Work will be undertaken to ensure that every department from within the Authority is represented on the group and is fully engaged in the process.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Objective:

- Over £2 million has been paid out in direct payments
- A Workplace Awareness sheet 'Understanding Autism', produced by the National Autism Society, was shared with Managers Forum to mark World Autism Acceptance Week
- Delivered 92 Social Care wellbeing activities, with 700 people taking part
- Increased Ffit Conwy memberships back up to 94% of pre-Covid levels
- Increased provision of swimming levels back up to 98% of pre-Covid levels
- Delivered a range of wellbeing activities through our libraries, including Tai Chi, Yoga and dementia-friendly anxiety management classes
- Set up a health hub with a Mind information point at Glasdir Library

Deferred Actions

Despite the progress highlighted above there are some actions within the plan which have been deferred owing to factors including: staff vacancies and a work backlog as a result of shifting priorities during the pandemic. The actions below will be re-evaluated and progressed in 2022/23 and/or 2023/24 subject to capacity and funding:

4.7.1 Neurodiversity Policy (carried over to Year 3)

Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice

Priority Areas:

- 5.1 Work with our North Wales partners to increase confidence in Hate Crime awareness and reporting
- 5.2 Address VAWDASV by implementing relevant areas of the strategy by 2021
- 5.3 Improve awareness of personal safety and safeguarding

5.1.4 Maintain links with the North Wales Community Cohesion Team to support initiatives to improve community cohesion

Liaison with the Regional Cohesion team has continued over the past year around issues such as tensions due to Covid and hate crimes. Additional funding has been given to employ additional cohesion staff and this will see local project work increase when this has been appointed to. Campaigns shared in the past year include Hate Crime Awareness Week and Modern Slavery Awareness Day. This work continues.

5.2.1 Safeguarding Training

Basic safeguarding training is mandatory for all staff and must also be renewed periodically. There are different levels of safeguarding training depending on roles within the organisation. Communication has been carried out with Departmental Training Managers, Designated Safeguarding Managers and Managers Forum to emphasise the importance of employees renewing their training and ensuring all new employees also complete the training as part of their induction. Corporate Learning and Development send reports to Services of employees who are required to complete the training to enable a targeted approach.

A due diligence report was requested in December 2021 and presented to Finance & Resources Scrutiny in March 2022, which highlighted the areas where further improvements can be made and the work we will be completing to improve mandatory training for Level 1. Significant progress has been made with Level 2 training thanks to support from the Workforce Development Team in enabling the purchase of trainer time. A total of 795 employees received VAWDASV Level 2 training in the last 12 months. A follow up report was circulated to Members in November 2022.

5.2.2/3/5 Domestic Abuse Awareness

A vigil was held in Rhyl on the 25th November to support International Domestic Abuse awareness raising day and landmarks across the region were changed to white for one hour.

We continue to work in partnership to manage the levels of repeat victims of Domestic Abuse through the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) process, which has seen an increase in cases but which enables the support of victims at an earlier stage. We continue to fund 4 full time Independent Domestic Violence Advisors across Conwy and Denbighshire and there is also a Young Person's sexual advisor based within the assault referral centre.

5.2.6/3.2/3.7 Support actions on the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy

A Welsh Government Communication Grant for £5,000 was spent on Live Fear Free merchandise which was left in GP Practices and Pharmacies in both rural and coastal areas. The merchandise was also sent to North Wales Police for distribution during the Christmas campaigns in licensed premises. The White Ribbon campaign continues to be supported across the region and healthy relationship sessions are held in youth clubs and schools.

Local employers have been sent information and advice on how to address violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence within their workforce. A Needs Revenue Funding Grant for £20,000 was awarded for the Caring Dad's perpetrator programme and a support worker to work with mothers and children of those attending the programme.

£20,000 of the VAWDASV Core Regional Revenue Grant has gone towards the funding of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Community Advocates, to support the mainstream specialist services to tailor provision to the specific needs of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic victims. During the year the Community Advocate conducted awareness raising sessions to a wide range of agencies, as well as supporting 12 people with significant and complex needs.

£252,000 Capital Funding was secured from Welsh Government to provide three additional disbursed units for victims of domestic abuse

with additional complex needs (particularly focused on substance misuse and mental health issues). The Regional Team is working with Local Authorities to reinvigorate the whole school approach group, to map current delivery of interventions in schools and identify gaps, focusing on the need to challenge gender norms and stereotypes, and include bystander interventions. Work is now underway with School Beat to coordinate delivery in schools. One-to-one support is being delivered in schools, in other safe locations and on Zoom. Programmes being delivered for children and young people include Break4Change, parent to child bonding sessions and gender based group work. Support packages include emotional support, safety planning, therapeutic interventions, healthy relationship work, support with educational needs, work around feelings and addressing issues such as stress, anxiety, fear, worry, sleep problems and looking at coping strategies. There are interventions in place around 'safety', self-harm and suicidal ideation, with links with children and young people such as school welfare.

Specialist Domestic Abuse / Sexual Violence services are all trained in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and a number offer ACE Recovery as part of their suite of services. All specialist services in North Wales work in a trauma informed, victim focused way.

5.3.1 Adopt 'Ask Angela' and 'Safe Places' national network initiatives

The Workplace Policy on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence was finalised and published in November 2021. The updated policy incorporates information about initiatives such as:

Ask for Angela, which all Conwy premises who operate Pubwatch or are part of the Best Bar None Scheme have adopted.

The **Best Bar None App**, which includes advice and guidance with regard to keeping safe in the night time in Conwy.

The **Bright Sky App**, a free to download app providing information on domestic abuse, sexual violence and consent, stalking and harassment.

5.3.4 Continue to raise awareness of Telephone Fraud

Trading Standards continue to use social media to raise awareness of all scams. Officers are involved with training Police community support Officers (PCSOs), as well as being part of the Scam Nasty network and liaising with North Wales Police with regard to scams and doorstep crime. There is additional PCSO training planned for 2022/23.

5.3.5 Work with partners to implement a plan to help prevent exploitation

Two multi-agency Contextualised Exploitation forums will be set up to bring partner agencies together to discuss those young people who are vulnerable and at risk of exploitation. The aim of the forum is to bring multi-agency professionals together on a six to eight-week basis so that information can be shared to help reduce those who are vulnerable and/or at risk of all forms of exploitation in Conwy.

The forum aids an early identification, prevention and creation of disruption strategies, but also aids the sharing of information for people of concern open to Authorities or agencies where concerns already exist. The forums will be launched in March 2022 to coincide with Child Exploitation day and will continue on a six to eight-week basis. We will review them after twelve months to consider the purpose, any positive outcomes and identify any emerging themes that may need to be addressed.

5.3.6 Promote and signpost people of all ages to relevant resources which will enable them to stay safe online

Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions the Safeguarding Unit arranged online events to mark Safeguarding Week 2021. Two sessions were offered to all Council staff (with 54 members of staff attending), which covered:

- Safeguarding is Everybody's Business
- Child Sexual Abuse action plan and the launch of new web pages
- Raising safeguarding awareness around older people abuse

The 'I'm Worried About Somebody' page, launched on the Council's website, contains a sub-section entitled Internet Safety with a range of information and advice about keeping safe online. This was an important piece of work given concerns that were raised about online safety during the pandemic. The pages contain information about:

- Parental Controls (a step-by-step guide to help parents set up the right controls and privacy settings on networks, gadgets, apps and sites)
- Safe Search (and child friendly search engines)
- Social Media and Apps
- Online Gaming
- ACT Early – Support and advice for preventing terrorism
- Keeping Safe Online – Hwb (gov.wales)

5.3.8/3.9 Work in partnerships to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour

There has continued to be partnership working on a number of anti-social behaviour issues in the County. There has been an increase in Youth Anti-Social Behaviour since Covid measures have been lifted. Numerous partnership meetings have been held to discuss and manage issues. The North Wales Police Anti-Social Behaviour multi-agency tasking meeting, chaired by the Chief Inspector for Partnerships, continues to take place every month and is an action focused meeting.

5.3.10/11/12/14 Reduce Crime and Disorder

We have continued to work with Victim Support to promote reporting of crime, and campaign messages have been sent out to encourage reporting and about provision of support for victims.

CCTV are actively working with the Police and other partners on the Home Office priority 'Violence against Women and Girls', with the aims of making Conwy's streets and communities safer. The team have actively supported the Covid Response and Compliance team in monitoring public spaces hotspots throughout the County and provided evidence to support the road closure of Conwy Quay to provide safer crowd management during the summer period. Following an audit, Conwy CCTV has been re-accredited with best practice by the Surveillance Camera Commission for our use of public space cameras. New cameras have been installed at several locations, including four cameras being installed in Colwyn Bay as part of the Safer Street Project, and the CCTV team have a live camera link with North Wales Police control room. The team provide significant real time, high quality evidence for criminal cases for both North Wales Police and the Council. Conwy have become the only Local Authority in Wales to be accredited as a gold standard alarm receiving centre within the National Security Inspectorate and the only Local Authority control room in the UK to meet BS EN 50518.

We continue to attend the Offender Management Groups, and have expanded the monitoring to cover repeat domestic abuse offenders. We have managed to continue restorative justice conferences remotely and have found them very useful in lower level crimes, in supporting the victim to move forwards from incidents.

Home security is promoted via the new community alert system, supported by North Wales Police. As a Community Safety Partnership we are supporting the roll out of this system to encourage residents to sign up for the alert service, which will highlight any crime issues in their area. We continue as a partnership to promote safety at every opportunity. There have been a number of regional events online that we have supported and we continue to promote how safe Conwy/North Wales is whilst also raising awareness of any emerging issues, always working alongside other authorities in ensuring a consistent message is sent out via all of our networks.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Personal Security and Access to Justice outcome:

- Introduced constructive leisure sessions with the Youth Service to engage young people in positive leisure activities, where anti-social behaviour dispersal notices were higher. This led to a decrease in the number of anti-social behaviour incidents and the number of yellow cards issued by North Wales Police

Objective 6: Increase Access to **Participation** and improve diversity in decision making

Priority Areas:

- 6.1 Increase awareness of the importance of diversity in political representation and decision making bodies
- 6.2 Public transport providers* to provide training to staff to ensure they meet the needs of disabled people (**Note: Conwy County Borough Council does not provide public transport but is involved in some non-commercial routes and community transport*)
- 6.3 Ensure engagement is inclusive
- 6.4 Access to services should be supported by appropriate language support

6.1.2 Support Diversity in Democracy programme as appropriate

Ahead of the local elections in May 2022 there was a lot of activity to promote standing for election, particularly amongst under-represented groups. This included social media campaigns, promotion of the 'Be a Councillor' website (generally and amongst established community/network groups), encouraging political groups to appoint Diversity Ambassadors to champion diversity expectations during their selection processes, pre-election briefings for potential candidates (which were attended by the Council Leader, Council Chair, Head of Law and Governance and Head of Democratic Services). The sessions covered what the Council does, how it does it, what being a councillor entails and the process for becoming nominated.

The Council has also signed the Diverse Council Declaration and a supporting action plan is in place which is monitored by the Democratic Services Committee. As a result of this work, and that of the political groups, improvements were seen in the diversity of the elected membership following the local elections.

Following a change in Welsh Government legislation a series of engagement activities were delivered to encourage young people (16 and 17 year olds) and qualifying foreign nationals to register to vote and engage in the election process. This resulted in an increase in the number of newly enfranchised individuals participating in this democratic process.

6.1.9 Carers Voice in Decision Making

Services that support carers use effective engagement methods to work in person-centred ways and to gather insights which steer ongoing service development. A recent example would be the local delivery of the Welsh Government Carer respite grant, which has involved partner organisations who have consulted with carers regarding their preferences around short breaks, with a view to providing a more flexible range of tailored short breaks according to individual need. Recent national campaigns via Carers Wales have been promoted to raise awareness of Carers Rights across the sector.

The Council continues to appoint Elected Members as 'Champions' to provide a voice for traditionally under-represented groups or issues which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business. Many of these Champion roles are subsumed within the role of the appointed Cabinet Member, but for some cross-cutting themes there are specifically identified Member Champions, e.g. Carers Champion, Disability Champion, Age Friendly Champion, Mental Health Champion, Welsh Language Champion and Armed Forces Champion.

6.2.2 Support for Taxis Licensed by Conwy

The Licensing teams have reviewed the Taxi and Private Hire policies which now include equalities and future generation's elements. This action is ongoing with taxis now being a devolved function to Welsh Government, bringing significant changes and a taxi review project team has now been assigned.

6.2.6 Review of transporting the public and access to services

There is a strategic review being undertaken by Transport for Wales in respect of the transport network and Welsh Government have recently produced 'Bus Cymru' which outlines the overall aspirations of an accessible network. The Fflecsi service has been introduced in the Conwy Valley as part of a national pilot scheme. The service has greatly improved accessibility of transport and continues to grow.

Further information is currently awaited from Welsh Government about the future of public transport nationally.

6.3.5 Encouraging learning and speaking Welsh

Council staff have been able to take advantage of an innovative scheme to learn Welsh thanks to a partnership with the National Centre for Learning Welsh, as part of the 'Work Welsh' programme, with lessons being delivered online during the pandemic. The 'Work Welsh' scheme is a specific programme to strengthen Welsh skills in the workplace throughout Wales and offers fully funded appropriate, flexible training. This has been an exciting development and the courses have made a massive difference to provision of Welsh lessons for Council staff, especially due to having a full-time Welsh tutor working with us with a Council e-mail account, which has meant more contact between the tutor and Welsh learners.

6 courses led by the tutor were held on foundation and intermediate levels between April 2021 and March 2022, and 42 members of staff attended these courses during the year. As well as the above, 3 self-study courses on Entry 1 and 2 levels were held, with 48 learners registering for these courses during the year. All classes in the Scheme include staff from a range of Council services, with many of them working in front-line services such as Social Services, Education, Environment, Roads & Facilities and Regulatory Services. All classes also include individuals from various levels of authority within the Council.

Using Welsh in the Workplace and beyond is constantly being encouraged. As part of the supporting learners scheme, the tutor has set time aside during the lessons to discuss how the learners have used their Welsh skills during the past fortnight, and also, to encourage them to try to find opportunities to use the language during the upcoming fortnight. These opportunities can be relevant in the workplace or beyond.

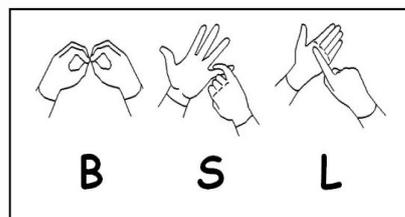
During the year, information was shared with the learners about National Welsh events (Shwmae Su'mae Day, Welsh Music Day) and virtual supporting learners events provided by Learn Welsh North West, Menter Iaith Conwy, the National Centre for Learning Welsh and others, e.g. Gwyl Ddarllen Amdani (reading festival). As well as this, the learners were invited to attend Saturday Chatting Sessions,

New Year, Easter and Summer Courses by Learn Welsh North West, Bangor University during the year.

At the beginning of 2021, we launched a Speaking Welsh in the Workplace Scheme, where a learner on Intermediate level is paired with a fluent Welsh speaker in order to chat informally. At the moment, 12 pairs meet regularly as part of the 'Sgwrsio' Scheme and learners have flourished throughout the year as they come to the end of their current levels of Welsh lessons.

6.4.2 British Sign Language (BSL) Provision

We continue to provide BSL interpreter service via Sign Solutions and the icon is pinned to the top of every page on our website. The InterpreterLive! contract was renewed again in December 2021. During 2021/22 the service continued to be mainly accessed via the website as council buildings have been closed for extensive periods.



6.4.3 Review of The Big Word provision for interpreter and translation facilities for languages other than Welsh and English

The provision of The Big Word arrangements was reviewed during the year and the updated information is available on the Council's intranet pages for services to use when they need translation into languages other than Welsh and English. This includes an online booking system for translations. Information was circulated to all managers to remind them of the service and where to access it.

6.4.7 Sensory Impairment Awareness Training

Sensory Impairment Awareness training has been incorporated into the Corporate Learning & Development Plan and is held regularly. A Deaf Awareness e-learning module has been made available to staff via the Learning@Wales platform. There will be continued work at appropriate opportunities to promote this training to increase the take up amongst staff.

6.4.9 Implement standard wording on correspondence regarding alternative formats

A Corporate Style Guide has been produced, setting out guidelines that make sure all communications in different formats have a clear and professional appearance that is accessible and builds trust.

A web accessibility project to support the accessibility of digital content across the Council reviewed the website content and adapted content accordingly.

6.5.1 Delivery of the Culture Strategy

Following an initial delay due to Covid-19, a Culture Strategy (Creu Conwy 2021 - 2026) has been produced and engagement has been carried out with a number of stakeholders and has now been launched following a period of public consultation. Information and updates about the delivery of the strategy are regularly added to the Conwy Culture website.

6.5.3 Improve the information available to parents using the Home to School transport service

An information brochure was issued to parents prior to the start of the school year in September 2022. The brochure included pictures and contact details for the School Transport team, information about what their roles are and what parents can expect from the team.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Participation Objective:

- Implemented hybrid meetings for all public meetings to improve accessibility and in compliance with legislation
- Implemented hybrid meeting technology within our Council offices to improve the flexibility and accessibility of internal and democratic meetings
- Engaged with communities in developing our new 5 year Corporate Plan 2022-2027
- Delivered local full fibre network coverage to 34 sites, including 11 Town and Community Councils, improving their digital connectivity and expanding free Wi-Fi provision within our communities
- Developed the new library at Glasdir, featuring one of Wales' largest and best-equipped children's libraries, heritage exhibitions, museum object displays, meeting space and external seating
- Provided a range of cultural, heritage and Welsh language activities through our theatres, museum and libraries, with more than 136,000 people participating
- Implemented the Conwy Culture Portal, providing online access to heritage information

Deferred Actions

Despite the progress highlighted above there are some actions within the plan which have been deferred owing to factors including: staff vacancies and a work backlog as a result of shifting priorities during the pandemic. The actions below will be re-evaluated and progressed in 2022/23 and/or 2023/24 subject to capacity and funding:

- 6.1.4 Positive Action (currently being considered as part of the recruitment project)
- 6.3.2 Equality Impact Assessment Policy update (deferred to Year 3 / 4)
- 6.3.4 Annual meeting with Conwy Deaf Translation Support Service (CDTSS) and Vision Support Sight Loss Group to feedback on progress on Equality Objectives

Objective 7: Develop our knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic duty (when guidance becomes available) to identify the key areas of impact to be addressed under each of our other 6 objectives

7.1.4 Delivery of Events Strategy

Events have re-opened but are not yet at pre-pandemic levels. When planning for events efforts are always made to look to offer free activities that cater to the whole population as well as paid activities, and external event organisers are actively encouraged to do the same.

A National Events Strategy for Wales was published by Welsh Government in July 2022. One of the key aims of the national strategy is All of Wales: maximising existing assets, spreading events across Wales / across the year and aiming to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion. Following the publication of the national strategy a draft of Conwy's updated Event Strategy is nearing completion however the level of ambitions within the associated action plan are currently being reviewed in light of the Council's financial position. It is anticipated a final draft will be brought through the democratic process in 2023.

7.1.8 Equality & Diversity Policy

A review of the Equality & Diversity Policy has been carried out and the policy has been updated (including a title change to Equality,

Diversity and Inclusion Policy). The updated policy takes into account the Socio-economic Duty, which was implemented on 31st March 2021, alongside other legislative changes. There will be a consultation / approval process undertaken before the updated policy goes live on the Council's website.

7.1.9 Contribute to the implementation of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment action plan, ensuring provision of childcare to enable parents to work

The Conwy Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) 2022-2027 has been published on the Council's website. There are three main themes in the latest assessment: Accessibility, Affordability and Sustainability. The CSA provides an in-depth view of childcare in the local authority including the supply and demand for childcare and the barriers which may exist to parents accessing the childcare of their choice, including barriers faced by working parents.

Other actions and outcomes of note under the Socio-economic Duty Objective:

- Administered £4.9m in Covid grants, helping 2,433 businesses respond to the challenges of the pandemic
- Established a business fund, where businesses can apply for a grant of up to £5,000 to help them recover from the pandemic, reduce their carbon emissions or contribute to town centre/high street development
- Secured Community Renewal Funding to deliver 5 skills and employability projects (Confidently You, Therapeutic Counselling, Mental Health Recovery College, Pathway and Development Courses and Libraries as Community Hubs)
- Held a hospitality jobs fair in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions, attended by 16 employers offering more than 300 jobs
- Administered a number of Welsh Government grants for our residents and businesses related to the pandemic and cost of living crisis, including:
 - 3,254 Covid self-isolation payments, totalling £2.1m
 - 37,000 cost of living support scheme payments
 - £41,775 food poverty / household support grants to the County's food banks

4. Specified Employment Information

4.1 Employment Monitoring Reports

Conwy Council's annual employment monitoring reports are published on our website each year. The Specific Duties, set out in the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011, require public organisations to report annually on the following areas for each protected characteristic:

- Employees working for us on 31 March each year
- Applicants for employment over the last year
- Employees who have applied internally to change position (tracking successful and unsuccessful applicants)
- Applicants for training and how many succeeded
- Employees who completed the training
- Employees who are involved in grievance procedures as a complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made
- Employees subject to disciplinary procedures
- Employees leaving and reasons for leaving

In addition, public organisations must compare men and women employed, broken down by Job, Grade, Pay, Contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts) and Working patterns (including full time, part time and other flexible working patterns).



These reports are used to review the effectiveness of our employment policies and practices and to consider whether there has been any potential lack of fairness or discrimination. Data which indicates this could be the case in the application of a policy or practice is investigated in more depth and if necessary, remedial action taken to remove it by reviewing the relevant policy or practice. We review all our policies periodically and carry out Equality Impact Assessments using the data from our latest Employment Monitoring Report.

We have taken steps to improve data capture on equality monitoring for our staff, whilst accepting that we have to respect that not all employees wish to provide this personal or sensitive information. We

believe that it is important to give employees the opportunity to be counted if they wish. Both the paper application form (now only used for accessible reasons) and online application form provide an explanation as to why equality monitoring data is collected and how it will be used, providing reassurances around the Data Protection Act, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and confidentiality.

Applicants are required to complete our equality monitoring form as part of e-recruitment and this section is mandatory, although we allow people to state: “prefer not to say”. We have expanded the use of our “self-service” facility which allows staff to amend personal details about themselves at any time and we continue to seek additional ways of improving further the equality data we hold for staff.

Our latest Employment Monitoring Report for 2021–2022 is available on our website under the Equality and Diversity section, which can be found [here](#).

We hold the following equality monitoring data for staff in Conwy:

Protected Characteristic	2020-21 (%)	2021-22 (%)
Sex	100	100
Age	100	100
Marital/civil partnership status	99	99
Race	54	55
Disability	49	52
Religion/Belief	45	47
Sexual Orientation	44	47
Transgender	39	43

Data captured in all categories has improved further during this period even though this is slow progress. These figures show the percentage of staff who have provided information on each protected characteristic, not the actual number of people in that group (which is shown in the Employment Monitoring Report). Work continues to improve data collection.

Our latest report for 2021-2022 shows that we employ 4,112 permanent or fixed term contract staff (64 more than last year), of whom 75% are female and 25% are male; 53% have stated they are married or in a civil partnership; 2% have a disability; 1% are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual; 1% are Ethnic Minority.

Our casual workforce is made up of 1,910 staff (64 more than last year), comprising 80% female and 20% male. Not all casual staff included in this count will be physically in work at the same time, as they are normally called to work as and when required. These numbers reflect the actual number of people we had on our books on 31 March 2022. The people we employ may fill more than one post and we had 4,504 permanent/fixed term posts filled by 4,112 people, and 2,549 casual posts filled by 1,910 people.

We continue to employ more part-time staff (51%) than full time staff (49%). 58% of full time permanent staff are female, and 88% of part-time staff are female in permanent or fixed term contract posts. 76% of full-time Fixed Term Contract (FTC) staff are females and 87% of part-time FTC staff are female. Casual posts are also predominantly occupied by female staff at 80%.

There were 3,972 applications for the 1,022 positions advertised during 2021-2022, giving an average of 3.89 applicants per vacancy, which is lower than last year when we had 4.49 applications per vacancy, a decrease of approximately 14%. 64% of all applicants were female and 36% male. We attracted 4.03% (160) disabled applicants, which is an increase in the number and percentage of disabled applicants last year. We attracted 2.42% Ethnic Minority applicants, equating to 96 applicants, which also represents an increase on the previous year.



As a baseline, 49% of applicants were shortlisted after applying for vacancies. 49% of female applicants were shortlisted and 46% of disabled applicants were shortlisted (3.77% of the total shortlisted). 25% of Ethnic Minority applicants were shortlisted (1.06% of the total shortlisted). 739 appointments were made during the year, of which 69% were female and 31% male, 3.65% of appointments were disabled, up from 1.9% in the previous year and compared to 1.58% in the workforce. 1.89% of appointments were Ethnic Minority (compared to 1.05% in the workforce).

Overall, the number of Sickness, Grievance/Bullying and Disciplinary Capability cases is similar to last year (185 cases this year compared to 187 cases last year). 58% of all Sickness, Grievance/Bullying and Disciplinary/Capability cases this year involved female employees,

which is lower than the workforce profile of 75% female and 25% male.

In comparison to the workforce profile, a high proportion of Sickness, Grievance/Bullying and Disciplinary/Capability cases involved employees within the 55-64 age range (37.3% of cases, compared to 22.8% of the workforce). This is higher than last year, when the proportion of cases involving employees within the 55-64 age range was 26.2%. The proportion of cases which involved employees within the 45-54 age range fell from 27.27% in 2020-21 to 17.84% in 2021-22.

Males represented a larger proportion of Grievance/Bullying and Disciplinary/Capability cases this year. 100% of Grievance/Bullying cases and 64% of Disciplinary/Capability cases involved males, which is high in comparison to the workforce profile of 25% male.

63.2% of Sickness Absence cases were female which is slightly lower than the workforce profile of 75% female. This proportion is similar to last year (63.3%).

There were significantly more voluntary leavers this year than in the previous year (439 vs 267). Voluntary leavers made up 83% of all leavers, of which 68% were female, which is slightly lower than the workforce profile. Of those who left involuntarily, 64% were staff whose temporary contract had come to an end, 4% left due to compulsory redundancy, and 31% were dismissed. Of those dismissed, 71% were on ill health grounds.

In terms of a further breakdown:

- 14 disabled employees left during the period (2.6% of all leavers), 12 voluntarily
- 18 Ethnic Minority employees left during the period (3.4% of all leavers), 16 voluntarily
- 9 LGB employees left during the period (1.7% of all leavers), 8 voluntarily.

Full details and analysis of the data can be found in the Employment Monitoring Report 2021-2022, available on our website [here](#).

4.2 Equal Pay and Pay Differences

The Equality Act 2010 requires that women and men are paid on equally favourable terms where they are employed on 'like work' or 'work rated as equivalent' or 'work of equal value'. Conwy Council carried out



an extensive process of job evaluation which was concluded during 2010/11 with the objective of equalising pay in line with the defined terms above.

We conducted an Equal Pay Audit in 2009 as part of the Equality Impact Assessment when undertaking Job Evaluation (JE). This audit included a before and after analysis by gender of old grades and proposed new grades.

In 2010 when the current grading system was implemented, a conscious decision was taken as part of the pay modelling exercise to weight the available budget to lower grade posts on implementation, in recognition of the high number of staff in lower paid jobs, the majority of whom are women. This was welcomed by all Unions at the time.

We have regularly tracked pay gap data since that time and this can be seen in the table below, which shows the progress since then on the pay gap using the same calculation for gender, disability, race and latterly age.

Pay Gap	2009 Pre JE	2009 Post JE	31.3. 2011	31.3. 2015	31.3. 2019	31.3. 2020	31.3. 2021	31.3. 2022
Gender Pay Gap range between Grades G01-G12			+1.1-0%	+0.8-+1.9%	-1.85-+1.2%	-1.9 -+1.08	-1.74 -+1.33	-1.37 -+1.18
Total Gender Pay Gap Grades G01-G12			+13.1%	+9.3%	+5.47%	+5.47	+5.57	+6.01*
All posts Gender Pay Gap	+16.2%	+15.8%	+8.83%	+6.5%	+2.8%	+3.72	+3.99	+3.94
Disability Pay Gap Grades G01-G12						-9.6	-13.01	-14.71

All Posts Disability Pay Gap			-10%		-0.9%	-0.38	-2.07	-3.26
Ethnic Minority Grades G01-G12					-5.0	-3.65	-2.83	-11.49
All Posts Ethnic Minority Pay Gap			+2.45 %		+8.07%	+8.37	+9.90	+2.88
Age Pay Gap : Under 50s as % of 50+					-2.21%	-1.12 %	-3.37	-3.08
Age Pay Gap 50+ as % of Under 50s					+2.16%	+1.11 %	+3.26	+2.99

[Note: a negative (-) pay gap demonstrates that the pay gap is favourable for that group when compared to the rest of the group whereas a positive (+) denotes a negative pay gap]

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) recommends that pay gaps of 5% or more should be treated as significant.

*Please see **Gender Pay Gap** section on page 65 for further explanation of the gender pay gap of 6.01% within grades G01-G12.

With effect from 1 April 2019 a revised pay structure was implemented following the National Joint Council pay settlement for 2018 and 2019, which has reduced the time for lower graded staff to reach the top of grade to reflect that the work is less complex and therefore takes less time to gain the relevant experience. Therefore, our lowest grades: Grades G01, G02 and G03 only have 2 bands meaning staff will normally progress to the top of scale after 12 months. Grade G04 has 3 bands within grade which means they go to top of grade after 12 months. The remaining Single Status salary bands have 4 bands within a grade, meaning staff will rise to the highest band after 3 years. Progression from one band to the next within grade is dependent upon staff performing satisfactorily but the norm is that people progress on an annual basis (unless they are fast-tracked for outstanding performance or retention purposes with the prior agreement of the Head of Service and Head of People &

Performance, but even then, they remain within the Grade for the post).

There are changes and discussions taking place at a national level which may impact our local pay structure and we will monitor and evaluate any potential impacts in terms of our equal pay and gender pay gap figures as appropriate. Considerations include:

- Potential pay modelling in response to national living wage pressures (particularly in relation to maintaining headroom over the national living wage) highlighted by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services
- The deletion of Scale Point 1 (currently used within G01) from 1 April 2023 following the Pay Agreement 2022-23
- Welsh Government's commitment to implementing a real living wage for social care workers

We have no bonus schemes in place for this group of staff as they were removed with the implementation of Single Status Terms and Conditions in 2010. Staff receive enhancement payments if they work unsociable hours but this is applied uniformly to all staff in the Council and is automatically paid based on timesheet data.

We have a Market Supplement Policy to ensure that if our Job Evaluated posts fall behind the market rate for specific posts, we can apply a supplement to the grade to bring it in line with market rates. Any such arrangements are objectively justified by reference to clear and transparent evidence of relevant market comparators using appropriate data sources from both inside and outside Local Government. It is the Council's policy that any such additional payments are kept to a minimum and are reviewed on a regular basis so that they may be withdrawn where no longer considered necessary. There are no known market supplements operating currently.

We have acting-up and honoraria arrangements for staff who carry out all or some parts of another job on a temporary basis. These payments are linked to a job evaluated post. Our policy requires that a fair process is applied when offering opportunities for staff to take on additional responsibilities temporarily.

We do not operate performance or competence related pay (other than described above within grade). New starters are expected to start on the bottom scale of the post unless there is a justifiable

reason for them to commence on a higher scale within grade. In those circumstances, approval must be given by Corporate Human Resources. Pay protection arrangements exist where there is a redundancy situation and in accordance with the Council's policy, staff are entitled to 12 month's pay protection if their salary is reducing by one grade or where the job has changed as a result of a minor restructure which affects their Job Evaluation score by one grade. Any redeployment to a post with a decrease of more than one grade will result in redundancy or the revised pay for the grade being implemented on commencement in the new post.

We pay stand-by and call out allowances as and when staff are required to work outside of their normal hours and work has been undertaken to standardise payments.

Equal pay is about paying people the same for work of equal value. Through the implementation of our Job Evaluation Scheme, we are confident in being able to state that we do not have an equal pay issue in Conwy



County Borough Council. All our jobs under Single Status are scored using the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Scheme which measures posts according to the level of supervision, knowledge, creativity required, complexity of contacts with others, the resources they are responsible for, the level and impact of decisions they make and work context. Similarly our Chief Officer posts are scored under HAY and pay for Teachers is negotiated nationally.

We have recently produced an Equal Pay Audit Report for the period 2018-2021 which further analyses pay data by protected characteristic, and we will be reviewing this work to incorporate data for 2021-22.

A **pay gap** relates to the difference in pay between groups of people with different protected groups, e.g., the difference between what men typically earn in an organisation compared to what women earn, irrespective of their role or seniority. Therefore any pay gap is more a reflection of our workforce profile than about unequal rewards for people with different protected characteristics doing the same job.

In Conwy, we employ significantly more women than men (75%) and more of our staff are part-time (51%) than full time which demonstrates that we offer greater employment flexibility but this does have an impact on the pay gap and we would not want to

remove that flexibility that so many of our staff value in achieving a work-life balance.

Gender Pay Gap

If we look at Grades G01-G12, the gender pay difference between grades is fairly constant at between -1.37% and +1.18%, indeed in Grades G01, G04, G05, G07, G08 G09 and G12, pay marginally favours women, suggesting that there is no substantial gender pay gap between individual Grades G01-G12. The gap of 6.01% for all single status grades G01-G12 is likely to be attributed to the large number of women employed in G01 (women in G01 account for 32.45% of all staff employed in grades G01-G12). This is not uncommon in the public sector due to the labour intensive nature of the work undertaken. Using the same calculation, there is an overall gender pay gap of 3.94% when including all staff employed by Conwy County Borough Council. This shows a small decrease of 0.05% on last year but still remains above pre-2021 levels and will be monitored in relation to the 5% benchmark that the EHRC recommends should be considered significant.

On 6 April 2017 the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force, requiring all organisations employing 250 or more employees to report their Gender Pay Gap, using a prescribed calculation, on their website and on the designated government website at <https://www.gov.uk/report-gender-pay-gap-data>. In Wales, public sector organisations have been exempt from this requirement as they already have the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011 which requires them to report on the pay gap not only for gender but also for the other protected groups.

Conwy County Borough Council has calculated its gender pay gap using the prescribed calculation in the 2017 Regulations as at 31 March 2022 which shows a slightly different figure to those above, as shown below:

Gender Pay Gap National Calculation as at 31 March 2022

	Female Hourly Rate (£)	Male Hourly Rate (£)	Difference in Hourly Rate (£)	Mean Gender Pay Gap as a %	Median Gender Pay Gap as a %
Mean (Average) Gender Hourly Rate	12.72	13.97	1.25	+8.98	

Median (Middle) Gender Hourly Rate	10.99	12.11	1.12		+9.25
(With Teachers)	Upper Quartile	Upper Middle Quartile	Lower Middle Quartile	Lower Quartile	Total
% of Males	26.73%	30.06%	21.00%	20.79%	
Number of Males	378	425	297	295	1,395
% Females	73.27%	69.94%	79.00%	79.21%	
Number of Females	1,036	989	1,117	1,124	4,266

(With Teachers)

The mean gender pay gap uses an average calculation using the prescribed categories of staff to include. The median calculation puts all staff in a column from lowest to highest paid and takes the middle hourly rate for both men and women and compares the difference. Whilst we have followed the calculation set out in legislation, ACAS has also published guidance on what to include and exclude in this calculation which differs which means that organisations may still not be applying a consistent calculation to make fair comparisons.

We have identified further actions in our Strategic Equality Plan action plan to explore the issues around job and gender segregation, which we believe is one of the main reasons why a gender pay gap still exists.

Age Pay Gap

We have split the age data into two categories, those below 50 years of age and those 50 and above. In Grades G01-G12, the pay gap in the under 50s as a percentage of over 50s ranges from -2.06% to +2.71% which is negligible and similarly the gap in the over 50s as a percentage of the under 50s ranges from -2.78% to +2.02%. Head of Service level posts show a pay gap in favour of those under 50 of -1.54%. Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Teaching staff on Soulbury conditions show a pay gap in favour of over 50s which ranges from 7.30% to 13.34%. The overall pay gap shows that employees under 50 are positively favoured by -3.08%, while 58.95% of positions are held by people below 50 years of age.

Ethnic Minority Pay Gap

Historical data shows fluctuations in the pay gap for Ethnic Minority staff ranging from 2.45% in 2011 to 9.90% in 2021. The pay gap for

Ethnic Minority staff in 2021-22 was 2.88%. The number of positions held by Ethnic Minority staff dropped significantly this year (from 104 to 67), particularly the numbers in G01 posts which fell from 33 to 15. We have previously seen an element of occupational segregation in this area as 75% of Ethnic Minority staff in 2020-21 were employed in Grades G01-G05 (compared to the total workforce of 67% in the same grade span). In 2021-22 approximately 63% of Ethnic Minority staff were employed in Grades G01-G05, which is similar to the total workforce (where 66% of positions were G01-G05). These figures are more susceptible to large changes because we only hold monitoring data for 55% of the workforce on race, and the number of positions held by Ethnic Minority staff is low. As the numbers in this area are so low it is difficult to draw any statistical conclusions from the data but this has been given consideration in our three-year Equal Pay Audit and will be reviewed further when we update this work. We will also be working with Community Cohesion, North Wales Public Sector Equality Network and Employability partners in 2023 to develop and deliver a workshop aimed at addressing employment and recruitment barriers on a regional basis.

Disability Pay Gap

Historical data shows fluctuations in the pay gap for disabled people ranging from -10% to 0% demonstrating that if anything, the pay gap for disabled people favours disabled people. However, the reliability of this data is affected by the fact that we only hold disability data for 52% of our workforce and therefore it is difficult to draw any statistical conclusions from the data.

We do not have pay gap data for the remaining protected groups as the data set is very small and is therefore less meaningful. We will continue to work on improving our collection of data where there are gaps to improve reporting. However, staff do have the right to state that they 'prefer not to say' with regards to equality monitoring data.

5. Conclusion

This reporting period has continued to present difficulties for Local Government in ensuring delivery of services, as many services have continued to face disruptions, shifting priorities and a backlog of work as a result of the pandemic. For the second year of our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024, we identified 141 actions, some of which were one-off and some to be undertaken over a longer period and

were regarded as long term. 117 actions (83%) were completed successfully and/or regarded as ongoing, and a further 13 actions (9%) were started but not finished. 11 actions (8%) were not started, mainly due to other workload pressures as a result of the pandemic, and these have been carried over to Year 3 or 4. Progress has also been reported on actions which were carried over from Year 1 throughout the report and where this was not possible actions have been carried over to Year 3 or 4 as appropriate. The four year action plan for SEP 2020-2024 identified a total of 253 specific actions to help achieve our Equality Objectives. Over the course of the plan, further actions are likely to be identified as issues affecting different protected characteristics are highlighted in Conwy through consultation and engagement and, as has been the case during the pandemic, through the reports referred to in Section 2, which will include other equality actions, such as the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, which has now been published, and the LGBTQ+ action plan being developed by Welsh Government.

As a large and complex organisation, we are also likely to identify further actions as a result of other Plans and Strategies developed over the course of this Plan, including our recently published Corporate Plan covering the period 2022-2027 and the upcoming Revised Local Development Plan, as well as various audits and other needs identified during the period covered by the plan, and these will also have their own reporting processes. We have therefore, in this report, given a flavour of the work we have been doing but this is by no means an exhaustive list of the exceptional work we do every day to support our citizens.

We recognise that the pandemic amplified many of the inequalities in our communities and we remain committed to continuous improvement in the area of equality and diversity. We will strive to improve fairness, inclusivity, transparency, access and equity for all in both service delivery and employment, whilst ensuring that we manage our budgets and resources efficiently and support our communities in an increasingly challenging financial climate and ever changing environment.

