

# Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report

2020 – 2024

Year 3: 2022 - 2023

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd



## Executive Summary

The Annual Report 2022-23 provides an update on actions undertaken to deliver on our seven equality objectives, developed and published in our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24.

On the whole 2022-23 saw the resumption of a lot of face-to-face activities following the easing of pandemic restrictions (which had a significant impact during 2020-21 and 2021-22). However, there continues to be significant budgetary pressures throughout Local Government, which continue to grow each year and have an impact on all of our services. Despite the resource and capacity issues that these pressures bring, our staff continue to work hard to ensure that we are an inclusive employer and service provider.

Some of the key updates from this report include:

- We have reviewed and developed provision for vulnerable learners under the Additional Learning Needs Act (Objective 1)
- Monthly reports continue to show a positive trend to reduce young people who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and Conwy were at a percentage of 5%, which is below the national target of 8% (Objective 1)
- Worked with partners in Anglesey and Gwynedd (project leads) to deliver the STEM Gogledd project, to increase take up and attainment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects in secondary schools (Objective 1)
- Delivered 1,500 universal free school meals per day and remained on track to offer a free school meal to all primary learners from September 2023 (Objective 1)
- Work has progressed on a Foster Friendly Policy, which is aimed at supporting Conwy staff who are / who would like to become Foster Carers by looking at reducing potential barriers. The policy will form part of a wider agenda of work carried out by Foster Wales Conwy (Objective 2)
- Activities were delivered throughout 2022 and 2023 as part of the Time to Change Wales programme to tackle stigma around mental health (Objective 2)
- Engaged with individuals and organisations across North Wales to identify good practice in terms of inclusive recruitment (Objective 2)
- We adopted the UNISON Anti-racism Charter at full Council and anti-racism training was delivered to the Senior Management Team

and the Manager's Forum group, as well as a separate session for Elected Members (Objective 2)

- Menopause Awareness sessions for managers, champions and staff – including lunch and learn sessions – to further embed Menopause Guidance which launched in October 2022 (Objective 2)
- 2022-23 was another busy year for the Conwy Employment Hub, which supported 253 participants in to work and/or attending training courses (Objective 2)
- Launched the Conwy Conversation (our new approach to individual performance management, encouraging regular dialogue and increased trust between employees and managers) (Objective 2)
- Established a Conwy Dementia Services Forum (Objective 3)
- Adapted 103 properties enabling 103 additional vulnerable residents to live independently in their own homes (Objective 3)
- Delivered 523 units of affordable housing via the social housing grant programme which includes 61 affordable housing units delivered by bringing forward 5 council owned land/assets (Objective 3)
- Established the Housing and Homelessness Programme to ensure there is a partnership and corporate approach to preventing homelessness and increasing the supply of affordable housing in the County (Objective 3)
- Gypsy and Traveller Cultural Awareness training was commissioned (via the North West Wales Community Cohesion team) and delivered in 2023 (Objective 4)
- The joint Conwy and Denbighshire Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment was completed (Objective 4)
- Work has started on a Neurodiversity in the Workplace Guidance, with a first draft being shared with staff with lived experiences (and professional interest) to seek their views (Objective 4)
- The Autism Bus Experience was delivered to staff and architects who work with the Council to support their understanding of the need to consider autism in new build designs (Objective 4)
- Completed the construction of Bron y Nant Respite Centre and registered the centre with Care Inspectorate Wales (Objective 4)
- Delivered 406 packages of reablement which reduced the need for support, maintained the same level of support or mitigated the need for support. This is a really positive outcome when considering the ongoing demand on the service (Objective 4)
- Increased support to victims and survivors of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (Objective 5)

- Equality monitoring data was collected as part of the induction process for elected members following the May 2022 elections. The information gathered through this will provide a benchmark for future elections and we will use feedback to identify any barriers experienced during elected member's term of office (Objective 6)
- A wide range of initiatives were delivered to support the learning and speaking of Welsh and to support the national priority of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Objective 6)
- Creu Conwy (Culture Strategy) successfully delivered cultural opportunities and experiences to more than 6,000 people across the county (Objective 6)
- Infrastructure support was provided for the first Colwyn Bay Pride event which was organised by Together for Colwyn Bay (Objective 6)
- Delivered events for LGBTQ+ History Month and an LGBTQ+ Pride exhibition (e.g. at the Conwy Culture Centre) (Objective 6)
- Hosted a training session on anti-racist library collections for library and information professionals working across North Wales (Objective 6)
- Developed a training package for staff on meeting website accessibility standards and incorporated this into the corporate learning and development plan (Objective 6)
- Provided free showers at our leisure centres, cook and eat sessions at our family centres and the Warm Hub scheme within the community (Objective 7)

The updates provided throughout this report highlight some of the progress that we have made against our equality objectives - but this is by no means an exhaustive list of the exceptional work our staff do every day to support our citizens.

## Looking Forward

During 2022-23 we started to develop our equality objectives (and corresponding plan) for April 2024 to March 2028. During this development period we have been reflecting on where we are heading in terms of our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.

We have started an initial review of our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training provision (e.g. mandatory training provision), with a view to exploring new options – both in terms of training sessions offered and self-directed learning resources. Anti-racism sessions were recently delivered to the Senior Management Team and Manager's Forum groups, and we

are looking at how we rollout this training to a wider audience within the limited resources available.

As part of the training review, we have recently launched a new Diversity and Inclusion e-learning for managers via the Coaching Culture platform. SLT have recently made the decision that the training is mandatory for managers and we have communicated this decision across all services. The training is made up of six parts:

- An Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion
- Creating a psychologically safe environment
- Unconscious bias
- Inclusive leadership
- Coaching for belonging
- Scenarios

As we move forwards we are keen to ensure that the focus remains on people and their lived experiences, rather than just focus on our obligation to comply with legislation. We are aiming to embed a culture of awareness and individual responsibility amongst staff that no matter your background or experiences, we all have a collective responsibility to promote equality, diversity and inclusion. We want all staff to understand 'it doesn't have to happen to you, to matter to you' when it comes to creating an inclusive environment.

To support this approach we have established a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group, which started meeting in early 2024. The Steering Group, chaired by our Chief Executive, is made up of staff with a diverse range of lived experiences and professional interest. We are also looking at developing more capacity, via an additional post, to support our equality, diversity and inclusion work moving forwards.

## **1. Introduction**

This is the third Annual Report on Conwy's Strategic Equality Plan (2020-2024), for the financial year April 2022 to March 2023. At the time of writing we are consulting on a new draft plan for 2024 to 2028.

As an employer and service provider Conwy is committed to creating a community for all people who live in, work in and visit Conwy in which difference is valued and harassment and discrimination is not tolerated.

We recognise that what we do every day within Conwy plays an important part in people's lives and we have a key role in enhancing the quality of life for everyone across our communities.

This report highlights some of the actions that we've taken during the period as part of our commitment to being an inclusive employer and service provider – a commitment that is outlined in more detail in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

Alongside our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion the General Duty, set out in the Equality Act 2010, requires us to have due regard to:

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

The Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011, often referred to as Specific Duties, requires us to report on the following main 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 - we also use relevant data when carrying out Equality Impact Assessments on new and revised policies and practices. Some of this data is linked to national statistics and wherever available, we try to use local and regional data as this is more relevant to us in Conwy and North Wales.

We also take into account information obtained from engagement and consultation, for example through the Empowering Diverse Communities

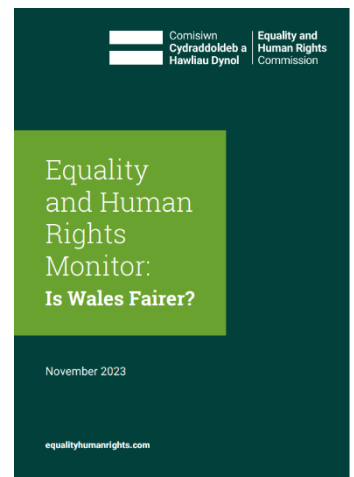
into Employment engagement we carried out in 2023 (see action 2.9.3 below for a more detailed update on this work).

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: [Equality in North Wales: Data and evidence report](#).

As well as the information referenced in previous reports, other information referred to when making decisions this year includes:

### Equality and Human Rights Monitor 2023: Is Wales Fairer?

The Equality Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published the 2023 version of their '[Is Wales Fairer?](#)' report, which revealed many persistent inequalities against the background of the impact of the pandemic, the UK's departure from the European Union, as well as the economic impact of periods of high inflation. The report was presented under nine protected characteristic headings (as opposed to the themes used in previous versions) and includes key findings and recommendations under each group, as well as some developments affecting multiple groups. Findings and recommendations from the report will be incorporated into the development of our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.



#### Equality in North Wales: Data and evidence report



#### North Wales Public Sector Equality Network



### Equality in North Wales: Data and Evidence Report

This report was commissioned by the North Wales Public Services Board Officers Network as an update to the previous report completed in 2019. The aim of the report is to gain a deeper understanding of equality data at a local level in North Wales, with a primary focus on themes identified in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Is Wales Fairer?' 2018 report. The Equality in North Wales report compares the latest data available with data included in the 2019

version of the report to review progress and include any new sources of data as applicable. We are currently working on our next set of equality

objectives, covering the period from 2024 to 2028, and an updated version of the background data document has been produced and will be available as part of this work.

## 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 - which sets out a vision to make Wales an anti-racist nation by 2030. 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
- Childcare and Play

We will implement relevant parts of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan to complement the work already underway through our current strategic equality objectives and action plan and will publish it separately to ensure it is easily accessible and visible.



## LGBTQ+ Action Plan

Welsh Government published an [LGBTQ+ Action Plan](#) in 2023, with the aim of making Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe, supporting all LGBTQ+ people in Wales to live their fullest life: to be healthy, to be happy, and to feel safe. The plan is a framework for LGBTQ+ policy development across

government and with partners, setting out an overarching vision to



improve the lives of, and outcomes for, LGBTQ+ people. It includes a wide range of policy-specific actions relating to human rights, education, improving safety, housing, health and social care, sport, culture, and promoting community cohesion. It sets out the concrete steps necessary to strengthen equality for LGBTQ+ people, to challenge discrimination, and to create a society where LGBTQ+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves. The action plan outlines actions for Welsh Government and the public sector (including local authorities) in a range of areas, including: recognition of trans and non-binary people; safety; home and communities; health and social care; education and lifelong learning; workplace; and supporting the COVID-19 response.

### **Previously Referenced Sources of Information**

Sources of information referenced in previous versions of this annual report include:

- [Is Wales Fairer? 2018](#) (EHRC)
- [How Coronavirus has affected equality and human rights](#) (EHRC)
- [The Socio-economic Duty](#) (Welsh Government)
- [Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond COVID-19](#) (Welsh Government)
- [Equality Impact Assessments: More than a tick box exercise?](#) (Audit Wales)
- [EHRC Strategic Plan 2022-2025](#)
- [Age Friendly Wales: Our Strategy for an Ageing Society](#) (Welsh Government)

### **Other Sources of Information**

On our public website we publish a document called “Equality Statistics Research Bulletin” which provides equality data on the makeup of people in our County. This information is referred to by officers when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments and consultations.

### **Census Data**

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the first results of the 2021 Census throughout 2022, with further data releases in 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.



Interactive maps of the latest Census data are available here: [Census Maps](#). These maps provide an overview of various areas (e.g. Local Authority, Wards) in terms of topics such as:

- Population: People, their living arrangements and where they come from
- Identity: How people identify themselves and their beliefs
- Health: People's general health and caring responsibilities
- Education: People in education and qualifications they hold
- Housing: Types of homes and the people living in them
- Work: All about people's jobs and employment

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. Detailed Census data can be found in Appendix 1: Conwy Census Data.

### **Complaints Linked to Equalities**

Our Corporate Information and Customer Services Unit monitors the number of compliments and complaints received. During 2022-23, there were 321 compliments (from external bodies or members of the public), the same as in the previous year. 346 complaints



were received, an increase of 34 complaints (10.9%) on the previous year (a trend which is in line with the Ombudsman Complaints Standards Authority Data for 2022-23). 33 complaints were referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales and 35 were closed (3 carried over from the previous year). Of these, 22 complaints did not merit investigation, 8 complaints were premature (a complaint is categorised as premature if the complaint has not first made a complaint to Conwy, as the service provider, or if a response period for a formal complaint has not yet elapsed), 4 complaints received an early resolution and 1 complaint received maladministration. There were no equalities related complaints during this period.

There were 22 formal complaints received by Social Care for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. 20 of these complaints concluded at Stage 1 and 2 formal complaints concluded at Stage 2. 5 cases were referred to the Ombudsman with 2 not requiring an investigation and 3 deemed premature by the Ombudsman's Office as the Local Authority's

processes had not been concluded. None of the complaints were directly related to equality issues or claimed to be due to discrimination because of a protected characteristic. There were 151 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 3 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.

### **Deferred Actions:**

Despite the progress highlighted below there are some actions within the plan that have been deferred owing to factors including: staff vacancies, budgetary pressures and a work backlog as a result of shifting priorities during the pandemic and as a result of the cost of living crisis.

As part of developing the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 we have been reviewing deferred actions and incorporating them into the draft action plan as capacity and funding allows, taking into account increasing workloads and budgetary pressures.

## **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

## Relevant Updates:

### 1.1.2 Review and develop provision for vulnerable learners under the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act

The approach to supporting children with additional learning needs has now changed. Welsh Government passed new legislation, called the Additional Learning Needs (Wales) Act 2018, and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Code 2021, which replaced all existing legislation and guidance about special educational needs.

The main changes included:

- Bringing together all existing systems into a new, single system for ALN
- Being more learner-centred.
- Providing learners with the same rights and entitlements whatever their age or setting.
- Improving transition between settings.
- Providing Welsh language provision where needed.
- A fair and transparent system for all

Since September 2021 the new Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system has gradually replaced the previous Special Educational Needs (SEN) system. Under the new system, all children with Additional Learning Needs will have an Individual Development Plan that will replace their SEN Statements, Individual Education Plans and Learning and Skills Plans.

Learners with any level of Additional Learning Need who require Additional Learning Provision to be made for them, will be entitled to an Individual Development Plan outlining their support needs. This new system will protect the rights of all children, regardless of the extent of their additional learning needs.

Conwy's ALN service is on track to transfer pupils within all mandated year groups for those children whom the Local Authority has responsibility under the Act on to this new system. The service continues to support schools to transfer children for whom they have responsibility under the Act, and indications are that they are on track to transfer relevant pupils.

Central services continue to support schools and settings to be compliant with their new duties and a review of ALN provision has begun in accordance with the authority's new statutory duty to keep ALN under

review. A further action to implement the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act to ensure that all learners with ALN (aged 0-25) are supported to overcome barriers to learning and achieve their full potential was identified in our [Corporate Plan 2022-27](#).

For more information on Conwy's Additional Learning Needs Service (including more information about the changes to the approach in Wales), please see here: [Additional Learning Needs Service](#).

### **1.1.5 Progress on figures for pupils who are not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

This is a project for under 16 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). In May 2023 the TRAC Project moved under the responsibility of youth service, remaining in Education Services. This now strengthens our NEET support offer as all services for aged 11-25 year olds are integrated, which will strengthen the transitioning process. Monthly reports continue to show a positive trend to reduce young people who are NEET and Conwy were at a percentage of 5%, which is below the national target of 8%.

Through the TRAC Project we have wellbeing workers based in all secondary schools and pupil referral units. The aim is the early identification of potentially NEET young people. Once identified, and depending on their age, support can be given on a variety of points, such as attendance, behaviour and/or skills. Work experience placements can be sought as well as exploring skills required to advance into employment.

### **1.4.3 Promote the availability of work experience placements on technical work placements**

We continue to engage in local events to promote the Authority as an employer of choice (e.g. events in Bangor University, an all schools event in the Kinmel Manor Hotel, a Seren Academy event at Venue Cymru). Corporately we promote all work placements available within the Authority and invite colleagues from relevant services to join us at awareness raising events, where they have been able to promote opportunities including work experience and training posts.

### **1.4.4 Deliver the STEM Gogledd project (led by Gwynedd Council) – to increase the take up and attainment in STEM subjects amongst 11-19 year olds in North West Wales**

The overarching aim of STEM Gogledd (a project funded by the European Social Fund) was to increase take up of and attainment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects amongst 11-to-19-

year-olds in north-west Wales (specifically Gwynedd, Conwy and Ynys Môn), through a range of interventions that complemented mainstream education and other extra-curricular activities.

The project started in late 2018 and was intended to last for approximately four and a half years, with engagement with schools initially scheduled to end in July 2022 with project closure by the end of 2022. However, the Operation was extended to June 2023 (with delivery in schools continuing until March 2023), primarily to allow for the team to make up for time lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

STEM Gogledd was identified as a project to address an ongoing need to improve uptake of STEM subjects, and attainment within them by learners.

Initiatives included:

- STEM Mentors: who coordinated extracurricular activities for schools and one-to-one engagement with learners
- Engagement with industry, which was popular with learners - particularly visits to sites outside of school
- A STEM Link teachers in schools (although this placed a significant time and commitment burden on the teacher)
- Information about case studies, events (e.g. digital careers events) and further resources were provided via a website/hub

The final evaluation report for the project (carried out by Miller Research Evaluation Consulting) concluded that:

“The objectives of the Operation have been appropriate. They have included a mix of hard targets (e.g., numbers of young people continuing to study STEM subjects post-16), and softer targets, such as increasing awareness of STEM career opportunities. While the Operation’s aim to achieve effects against “soft” outcomes has presented challenges for evaluating success, these outcomes are no less important than more quantifiable outcomes.

Management and governance of the Operation have been sufficiently effective, with the delivery partners and stakeholders involved working well together. The Operation faced challenges with staff leaving posts towards the end of its timescale, however delivery was able to continue to a high standard.”

STEM Gogledd worked with all 26 secondary schools located in Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, and Conwy.

The following figures were provided in the final evaluation report:

Progress against targets based on number of interventions and gender, June 2023:

Factor	Achieved	Target	% vs target
Number of Females with 3+ Interventions	332	216	153%
Number of Males with 3+ Interventions	267	144	185%
Total No. of Participants with 3+ Interventions	599	360	166%

Progress against targets based on number of learners that have entered STEM subject post-16, June 2023:

Factor	Achieved	Target	% vs target
Number of Females entered STEM post-16	163	126	129
Number of Males entered STEM post-16	121	84	144
Total No. of Participants entered STEM post-16	284	210	135

### 1.5 Improve Mental Health for pupils in Schools

The local authority, GwE, Public Health Wales and schools are working together regionally to further support a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing. A Health and Wellbeing Development Officer has been appointed within Conwy, which has enabled improved analysis of learner wellbeing surveys and allowing effective and relevant interventions to be implemented. A Microsoft Teams channel has been established



across all schools, sharing information and resources as part of implementing the 'whole school approach' to mental health and wellbeing.

All Conwy schools have wellbeing leads who communicate regularly to discuss progress and share best practice/case studies that help to ensure a consistent and equal offer of support is available to all Conwy learners. This approach has also been supported by offering Youth and Adult Mental Health First Aider training to all schools in Conwy through our partnership with the CAMHS InReach Team.

### **Other actions and outcomes of note under the Education Objective:**

- Delivered 1,500 universal free school meals per day and remained on track to offer a free school meal to all primary learners from September 2023 – delivering a range of benefits, including: helping families with cost of living pressures, promoting healthy eating and improving social skills, behaviour and attainment
- Started a review of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision in line with our statutory duty and continued to support schools and other education settings to be compliant with their ALN duties
- Supported 267 young people experiencing poor mental health through our Conwy Youth Service wellbeing clubs
- Conwy Youth Service worked to become a Rainbow Flag Award holder - highlighting a commitment to improve the lives of all the young people they work with, as well as the LGBTQ+ young people in their care, those from LGBTQ+ families and LGBTQ+ staff members
- Delivered 870 free activities as part of the *Summer of Fun* programme, with more than 10,000 people taking part
- Set up the *Reflect Project* working with parents on setting future goals and aspirations to re-integrate young people back into education or employment, to break the cycle of repeated removals of children and give them a purposeful life
- A new 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan has been approved by Welsh Government and fully ratified by Conwy. All schools will be part of a move to increase Welsh medium provision across our education providers. This will ensure we also have a professional development offer to improve the ability of our workforce to ensure that our learners are offered the most suitable Welsh provision – supporting Welsh Government's vision for a million Welsh speakers by 2050
- We have continued to provide effective support to schools in implementing the Curriculum for Wales, through dedicated link

education improvement officers ensuring swift access to advice, guidance and support for schools

**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 (e.g. 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

**Relevant Updates:**

**2.1.1 Equal Pay Audit**

The draft Equal Pay Audit has been updated to include data from 2021-22, and now covers a 5-year period. The draft will be finalised and a set of actions/recommendations to address any disability, ethnicity and gender pay differences will be identified early in 2024. Conclusions from the audit will be included in the next iteration of this report, when the Equal Pay Audit has been finalised.

The Equal Pay Audit also incorporates 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

### **2.2.1/3 Review our Flexible Working Policy, Recruitment Policy and job advert process to consider a range of flexible working options**

Working practices have changed significantly in recent years and we have been building on changes that took place during the pandemic. There have been regular communications of the flexible working options available (e.g. in monthly staff briefs, via the Intranet, rollout of updated and new policies, e.g. Flexible Working Policy, Hybrid Working Policy). Communications will continue going forwards around new developments (e.g. communicating any changes that take place as a result of new flexible working laws coming into effect in April 2024).

Flexible working options are promoted in job adverts and candidates are encouraged to discuss this with recruiting managers throughout the recruitment process. The Flexible Working Policy was updated in 2022 and draws attention to the range of options available as part of our approach to flexible working, including: flexible working requests, flexi-time, part-time working, hybrid working, permanent homeworking, job-sharing and family friendly and special leave policies.

### **2.3.1/2/5 Review Harassment Policy / Review our current Bullying Policy**

Work has started on updating both the Harassment and Bullying policies and it is intended that the updated policies will make it clearer what support is available and how complaints will be handled. The revisions will include more information about topics such as sexual harassment, microaggressions and anti-racism.

**Note:** Within Objective 2 there are numerous actions across the life of the plan relating to Policy updates/reviews. Increased capacity to update

policies has been identified as a need within the People and Performance service and we are currently exploring increasing resources in this area via a fixed-term Policy Officer. Part of this role would be to review and update policies through an anti-discriminatory lens.

#### **2.3.4 Review Grievance Policy**

The Grievance Policy has recently been reviewed and presented to our Senior Management team. At the time of writing the policy was being presented for democratic approval. The revisions to the policy make it clearer what wellbeing support is available both during and post complaint.

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

Work on drafting a combined Maternity, Breastfeeding and Adoption Policy has started but has been delayed due to other work demands/priorities. This work will be progressed as capacity allows (see 2.3.1).

#### **2.4.3 Developing a Fostering Policy**

Work has progressed on a Foster Friendly Policy, which is aimed at supporting Conwy staff who are / who would like to become Foster Carers by looking at reducing potential barriers. It is also intended that development of the policy will help to support Welsh Government's 'eliminating profit' agenda. The draft policy was recently shared with Trade Union Representatives as part of the consultation process. It is intended that the policy will be progressed for approval (through the democratic process) and relevant communications will be shared with staff when the policy is finalised and approved.

The policy will form part of a wider agenda of work carried out by Foster Wales Conwy, who are working to inform and educate anyone considering becoming a foster carer on why fostering for your Local Authority is advantageous to children and young people. Face-to-face recruitment activity has returned, as well as re-engaging with communities following the Foster Wales Conwy re-branding. Community recruitment events have proved successful in engaging with the public, promoting community support and getting Foster Wales Conwy talked about and understanding what a rewarding role this can be to support and enrich young people's lives.

This past year saw the return of face-to-face gatherings, and our bi-monthly support group for general foster carers is well attended. These

are an opportunity for informal support, developing peer support and networking with other colleagues. In October 2022 we held our first ever Appreciation Day to recognise our foster carers' achievements and contributions on a day of reflection and celebration.

### **2.5.1 Review of Casual Worker Policy**

Reviewing of the Casual Worker Policy has been delayed due to other work demands/priorities. This work will be progressed as capacity allows (see 2.3.1).

### **2.6.1 Develop an action plan to work towards Disability Confident Leader**

We successfully maintained Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status in 2022 and we will aim to work towards Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) status at the time of next renewal (2025). This has been factored in during development of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 and it is anticipated that there will be a range of relevant actions as part of embedding Welsh Government's Disability Rights Action Plan that is current in development. We continue to promote the Disability Confident Employer scheme (e.g. via the Guaranteed Interview Scheme in recruitment) and look at ways to support disabled employees in the workplace.

### **2.6.2 Undertake consultation to consider if it would be appropriate to introduce a Reasonable Adjustments Passport**

Initial consultation has taken place via the Equality Champions group and with staff during the development of the draft Neurodiversity in the Workplace guidance. There has been some interest in developing the passport further, but it has been highlighted that the purpose of the passport will need to be made clear and that adoption of a passport will be voluntary and should be instigated by the staff member.

Additional consultation will take place as the proposal develops further, including around the idea of expanding the passport concept to include a wider range of workplace adjustments (e.g. caring responsibilities) alongside existing reasonable adjustments.

### **2.6.3 Time to Change Pledge to support mental health**

Activities were delivered throughout 2022 and 2023 as part of the Time to Change Wales programme, which is now established with Champions across most service areas. Activities that took place included:

- ‘Talk, Bake, Donate’ for Time to Talk Day 2023 – encouraging teams across the Council to meet up for a coffee and chat about mental health and wellbeing, via a cake baking competition
- Guided walks and a ‘Step Count Challenge’ to mark National Walking Month 2023
- Time to Change Champion stall in Coed Pella on World Mental Health Day
- A range of in-person sessions (e.g. exploring learning opportunities, The Paint Republic, Academi Wales) and online information sharing webinars (e.g. Care First, Moneyworks Wales) for Mental Health Awareness Week 2023

### **2.9.1 Review our recruitment process to include more information about what we do to encourage a wider section of our community into work**

We have reviewed and updated our [recruitment pages](#) to include more information about recruitment processes, including:

- A [‘Need help getting into work?’](#) page – information about the support, advice and guidance available when looking for work
- [Employee Journeys](#) – outlining a range of employment routes taken by current staff and how Conwy supports staff in employment
- [Onboarding information for new employees](#) – giving new staff (and applicants) access to a range of information introducing them to the organisation (e.g. what to expect on your first day, useful contacts)

The Job Search function has also been reviewed and updated. Applicants can now create Job Alerts so they receive an update whenever a job matching the criteria they set is advertised.

Further work in this area will be informed by the *Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment* engagement work carried out in 2023 (more detail in 2.9.3 below), and has been identified as an ongoing priority during development of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.

### **2.9.3 Pre-employment Workshops**

Working in collaboration with the North Wales Community Cohesion teams and Conwy & Denbighshire Public Services Board, we held a conversation with residents, service users and interested parties across North Wales (via survey and two online workshops) on the theme of *Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment*. The valuable lived experiences and insights shared with us via the work will support our implementation of our next Strategic Equality Plan, our Anti-racism Action Plan and our LGBTQ+ Action Plan. We have shared the report with public sector organisations across North Wales so that all partners can learn from the feedback.

The work was focused on exploring how public sector organisations in North Wales could take steps to make sure they are welcoming and inclusive of everyone in recruitment and retention processes. Four overarching themes were identified by participants in terms of barriers to employment:

- Language Barriers
- Qualifications and Experience
- Cultural Differences
- Access and Processes

A full copy of the report produced via this work can be requested via the People and Performance team (by emailing [equalities@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@conwy.gov.uk)). A variety of actions and good practice in relation to recruitment and retention were identified, which will be taken forward via our recruitment project. We are currently looking at how this conversation is continued going forwards, using a similar collaborative approach.

### **2.9.4/5 Review training and development (including coaching and mentoring) opportunities for under-represented groups at senior levels within the workforce with a view to equipping them for internal progression**

As part of our published People Strategy 2022-2027 we have committed to 'Explore and develop Leadership development for senior leaders and future leaders'. Our current focus is on exploring the development of a Talent Scheme and a business case has been submitted to commence the scheme. In addition, we have trained managers in Workforce Planning.

We will be building upon workforce data to incorporate diversity information. We know we need to increase the number of staff who provide us with equality monitoring data. Whilst acknowledging a colleague's right to state they prefer not to say will always be respected, we will aim to better explain why this data is important so that we can consider positive action where appropriate in retention and development opportunities.

We will continue to target areas for improvement identified via our Equal Pay Audit 2018-2023 (to be completed in 2024).

### **2.9.7 Positive action measures in recruitment**

An external training session on *Positive Action in Recruitment* was delivered in 2023 to People and Performance/HR Link Officers/Equality Champions. Information from the training session will be used to inform the guidance which is currently in development. When finalised, this guidance will be rolled out and made available to staff to increase confidence in using positive action measures in recruitment and retention processes. Part of this work will include considering how we make the evidence base (e.g. employment monitoring data) available to managers in an accessible format during the recruitment and selection process to help inform when positive action measures would be appropriate.

### **2.10.4 Continue to deliver Communities for Work projects targeting people aged 25+ who are economically inactive or long-term unemployed, and people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training, to overcome barriers to skills and employment**

2022-23 was another busy year for the Conwy Employment Hub, which supported 253 participants in to work and/or attending training courses as well as helping those overcome significant barriers into work that included:

- 31% who had a work limiting health condition
- 17% who had care or childcare responsibilities

The data for the year shows that the majority of participants (36.5%) had been out of work for less than six months with only 3% having never worked. 12% of participants had been out of work for six to twelve months, the same proportion as had been out of work for five years or more.



The breadth of our mentors' experience enabled the Hub to secure employment for participants across the diverse industry sectors found within the county:

31% secured a role in the Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Sector with other notable sectors being Logistics, Construction, Retail, Social Care, Healthcare, Public Sector, Green/Low Carbon/Recycling, Passenger Transport, Security, Agriculture and Energy/Utilities.

The Hub also played a significant role in addressing the many of the skills shortages with targeted training programmes for key sectors.

Tackling inequality in all its forms remains a key priority of the Welsh Government and in recognition of the challenges that lie ahead the Hub has secured additional funding for the Communities for Work Plus Programme.

A full update on the work of the Conwy Employment Hub is available here: [Annual Report 2022-23](#).

#### **Other actions and outcomes of note under the Employment Objective:**

- Equality Act training and Anti-racism training for Elected Members
- Delivery of anti-racism training for the Senior Management Team and the Manager's Forum group in January 2024
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller awareness training in combined staff and Elected Members sessions
- Adoption of [UNISON's Anti-racism Charter](#) at full Council
- Menopause Awareness sessions for managers, champions and staff – including lunch and learn sessions – to further embed Menopause Guidance which launched in October 2022
- Worked with a local provider to deliver Bet You Can Help Now / Practical First Aid for Gambling Related Harms sessions for managers and employees to raise awareness of resources and support available in relation to gambling related harms
- Produced / shared materials with staff to acknowledge various equality-related awareness days, including: Hate Crime Awareness Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, World Menopause Day, Brew Monday and Time to Talk Day

- Mapping of Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan as part of initial development of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28
- Cumulative Equality Impact Assessment on the Council's 2023/24 budget
- An initial review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training provision (e.g. mandatory training), with a view to exploring new avenues such as Allyship and Active Bystander training going forwards. As part of this review we have recently launched a new Diversity and Inclusion e-learning for managers via the Coaching Culture platform. SLT have recently made the decision that the training is mandatory for managers and we will be communicating this decision across all services. The training is made up of six parts which cover:
  - An Introduction to Diversity and Inclusion
  - Creating a psychologically safe environment
  - Unconscious bias
  - Inclusive leadership
  - Coaching for belonging
  - Scenarios
- The recruitment project has so far achieved:
  - New branding and materials for recruitment (#JoinTeamConwy)
  - Promotional videos and staff stories to encourage people at different life stages to apply with us
  - Started piloting different ways to recruit (and will look at this further in terms of inclusive recruitment)
  - A new look webpage and easier ways to search for jobs and benefits
  - Simplified and clearer Welsh language level requirements for each vacancy
  - Introduction of a hub page for onboarding (for new starters, e.g. what to expect on your first day)
  - Training on writing better job adverts
  - Guidance for improved job descriptions and person specifications
  - Introduction of a simpler application form for some vacancies, simplification and digitalisation of parts of the application process
- Launched the Conwy Conversation (our new approach to individual performance management, encouraging regular dialogue and increased trust between employees and managers)

- We are looking to develop ideas around employee voice (e.g. via Staff Forums) as part of being an inclusive employer

**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

**Relevant actions:**

**3.1.7 Tackling the underlying causes of Homelessness**

This work is a key strand and aim of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which has been drafted, and working through consultation at the moment. It is recognised that partnership working is key and all services need to see homeless prevention as a collective responsibility and not just a housing issue. This area of work will progress over the following 12 months, once the plan has received approval and final submission to Welsh Government.

There is also partnership working within the team. A colleague from the Probation service is working within the team once a week to support the Homeless Prevention Officer for Prison releases. Nacro (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) are also working within the team to assist with private rented sector access and support. Shelter Cymru have weekly advice surgeries in the offices. We are now looking to bring back Citizen's Advice colleagues and Domestic Abuse Safety Unit colleagues to strengthen partnership working further.

### **3.2.3 Support people to live well with dementia**

To support the development and delivery of dementia services locally we have established a Conwy Dementia Services Forum. This is an operational group which aims to foster open and collaborative discussion for those involved in the development, implementation and reporting of dementia care across Conwy. The group will also drive and oversee the innovative implementation and delivery of the Dementia Strategy across the County.

Within the Social Care Department we have utilised Regional Integration Fund money to appoint a Dementia Support Worker (DSW) within each of our five locality teams. They support Health and Social Care staff in the Community Resource Teams, enhancing our multi-disciplinary approach to supporting people to live well with dementia whilst staying in their own homes. This in turn supports the development of the team around the individual approach referenced in the Dementia Action Plan and provides more person-centred and coordinated care, as well as support and treatment as required. The DSWs provide a key point of contact for families to help them navigate the complex Health and Social Care System, and also deliver:

- Flexible, personalised outreach support, using a 'team around the individual' approach from first diagnosis
- Community navigation (signposting to other services) and advocacy support for people with dementia and their loved ones
- Support which responds to need, rather than dictated by rotas
- Support to access overnight and day respite services at Llys Eliau residential home as needs escalate
- Extra support for those where traditional domiciliary care is failing, and more support is needed to maintain independence
- Support and training for families and unpaid carers, including the promotion of the use of digital technology
- Links with district nursing around end of life care, and the wider Community Resource Team

Further information on developments of our dementia services is included in the [Social Care Annual Report 2022-23](#).

### **3.2.4 Take up of Direct Payments**

Restructuring of the Direct Payment section is due to be concluded during 2023-24. The responsibility of the new section will be to raise the profile of

Direct Payments with all eligible citizens known to Social Care who wish to take control over how their support is provided. This will be done by development of web pages, social media, community talks and ensuring that frontline staff are skilled and confident to discuss the benefits of Direct Payments with citizens.

The team will provide a support, information and advice service to those interested in learning more about the scheme – scheme recipients, department staff and Health colleagues will be involved in the process. They will keep abreast of the changing national political agenda, ensuring that all changes are incorporated into scheme developments.

### **3.2.6 Explore extra care housing (ECH) opportunities in the Colwyn/Central area**

Opportunities have been identified to deliver extra care housing opportunities in the Colwyn/Central area under the Colwyn ECH, Health and Well-Being Hub Development Programme.

The programme is a partnership between Conwy, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Grwp Llandrillo Menai, working in collaboration to establish a new Extra Care Housing Scheme and Health and Wellbeing provision in the Colwyn/Central area. This is a large-scale project and work is progressing to identify and finalise the scope requirements so that relevant business cases can be developed. Further updates will be available as the work progresses further (the action has been included in the draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28).

### **3.2.19 Increase the supply of affordable housing which meets identified need and assists in mitigating the impact of the UK Government's welfare reforms, focusing on gaps in supply**

To achieve the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) vision, it is important the right homes are delivered in the right places and at the right time. To understand what type of affordable housing is needed and where, it is important to have an up-to-date Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) in place. In February 2022, Conwy's interim LHMA was approved. The interim assessment was prepared in line with the Welsh Government guidance 'Local Housing Market Assessment Guide (2006)' and supplementary guidance 'Getting started with your Local Housing Market Assessment (2014)'.

The Welsh Government issued new guidance in April 2022 and a consistent timetable for all local authorities in Wales to complete their LHMA, in line with the recommendation set out in the independent review of affordable housing supply in Wales 2019. Conwy's LHMA is being updated accordingly.

In addition to the LHMA, Conwy published the second Local Authority Prospectus, in line with Welsh Government guidance, in March 2023. The Prospectus provides housing associations and other stakeholders with the information they need to make informed decisions about where to search for land and property to deliver new affordable housing. The Prospectus is updated and published bi-annually.

To build on the work of the social housing development programme and increase the supply of affordable housing at pace, two projects groups have been set up, these include the 'Council Owned Sites' project and 'Housing Quality, Acquisition and Adaptation' project. Both groups sit under the Housing and Homelessness Programme Board. The aim of the Council Owned Sites project is to identify and bring forward opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing by using Council owned land. To support this work an affordable housing framework has been established, which allows CCBC to work with a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) development partner by 'direct award' or by holding mini competitions for sites. The aim of the Housing Quality, Acquisition and Adaptation (HQAA) project is to identify and bring forward opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing by using existing Council buildings which are no longer in use, and/or open market acquisitions. This group is also looking for temporary accommodation opportunities, to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

The groups are currently working on a list of Council owned assets that have been identified as potential opportunities for affordable housing.

### **New build (private planning applications)**

To ensure affordable housing is delivered as part of all new private residential developments Conwy's Affordable Housing Officer is consulted on all planning applications. Housing need data is shared with applicants to ensure the correct housing tenure and mix is developed. In total 116

planning applications/pre-app enquiries have been responded to this financial year (2022-23).

### **Existing stock (social housing)**

We are working to make best use of existing social housing stock to meet housing need. Rightsizing is the term used when a tenant moves to a property that meets their current housing needs.

In 2021 a regional rightsizing strategic group was set up to develop a consistent approach to rightsizing activities and communication across North Wales. The role of the group is to implement the recommendations set out in the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Tyfi Tai report 'Right place, right home, right size?', a report commissioned by the group in late 2020, to understand tenant and officer's perceptions on rightsizing and what work was currently being done to encourage and promote rightsizing. This year the following has been achieved to date:

- Agreed rightsizing principles
- Developed a 12 month action plan
- Set-up a tenant group to support the implementation of the action plan
- Quarterly monitoring of rightsizing data and rightsizing activities

### Specialist Housing Panel

The Specialist Housing Panel consider social housing applicants in band one whose needs cannot be met from the available stock. The role of the panel is to explore options to increase the supply of adapted properties to meet the needs of applicants on the housing waiting list. This includes keeping an up-to-date record of the supply and demand.

This year 47 affordable housing units were allocated to people in need of an adapted property.

### **Existing stock (private sector)**

### Leasing Scheme Wales

Leasing Scheme Wales (LSW) is a new initiative set-up by the Welsh Government in April 2022 and builds on the success of the Wales Government 'Private Sector Leasing Scheme Pathfinder' pilot launched in August 2020. The scheme offers property owners access to a grant in order to undertake works to meet the scheme's property standards, a guaranteed monthly rent and a housing management and day-to-day maintenance service. In return, the property is leased by the Council for between 5 and 20 years and is let at Local Housing Allowance rent levels to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Conwy, was one of three authorities that took part in the pathfinder pilot, having successfully bid for the opportunity. Conwy's participation in the scheme was in partnership with Denbighshire Council, however Conwy was the lead authority and held the head lease for each property. Properties added to the scheme ended in March 2022, with a total of 16 properties being leased by Conwy for a 5 year period; 9 in Conwy and 7 in Denbighshire. These properties are all occupied by households who were owed homelessness duties, with support being available to them as required throughout the period of their tenancy. As the pilot ended and all local authorities were encouraged to individually take part in LSW, on 1 April 2023 the head leases for the 7 properties in Denbighshire taken on as part of the pathfinder pilot, were transferred to Denbighshire Council.

Since the launch of LSW in April 2022 Conwy has taken on 8 properties; 3 are leased for a 5 year period and 5 for 15 years. All 8 properties joining the scheme in 2022/23 were long term empty properties. For 23/24 the acquisitions target is 9 properties, and the scheme will continue to target long term empty properties in order to bring them back in to use as affordable accommodation. The target is to acquire 92 properties within 5 years.

All properties leased under both schemes (pathfinder pilot and LSW) are managed by Cartrefi Conwy on our behalf.

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

- Adapted 103 properties enabling 103 additional vulnerable residents to live independently in their own homes



- Delivered 523 units of affordable housing via the social housing grant programme which includes 61 affordable housing units delivered by bringing forward 5 council owned land/assets
- Established the Housing and Homelessness Programme to ensure there is a partnership and corporate approach to preventing homelessness and increasing the supply of affordable housing
- Published our Rapid Rehousing Plan, setting out how the Council will work to make homelessness 'rare, brief and unrepeatable'
- Continued to improve active travel routes with the development of 9 active travel schemes county-wide, including: Glan Conwy RSPB link; Conwy bridge; Betws y Coed to Llanrwst; construction of Dolgarrog bridge; Towyn to Kinmel Bay; Marl Lane in Llandudno Junction and a feasibility study on the Toll Bar roundabout in Penrhyn Bay
- Supported six care homes through the escalating concerns process to improve standards for vulnerable residents

**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

## Relevant actions:

### **4.1 Ensure health and wellbeing needs of carers are met**

Contracts are in place with a range of providers to ensure unpaid carers are able to access support and appropriate respite and Social Care maintains an internal Carers' Team. With the support of our Commissioning and Quality Standards team we will clarify the strategy that will be developed to ensure a clear pathway for support is in place, working with existing and potential providers to ensure that unpaid carers are able to avoid crisis and breakdowns in care provision.

We have reviewed the approach taken by the Carers' Team to better support individuals waiting for carer assessments and thus increased access to support. Waiting times for support have been reduced and where crisis is a recognised risk the team actively prioritise support. We routinely co-manage the caseloads for the sitting service with the provider, to ensure provision is proportionate to needs, and to maintain capacity throughout the year.

In turn, the Community Wellbeing Team has seen an increase in the number of carers who are participating and engaging in ongoing activities around the community. This increase (over 50%) has been as a result of both referrals from the Carers' Team and self-referral. Individuals accessing the sessions are also telling the team that they are carers when they book sessions and have ensured that they are provided with more targeted information from carer organisations. Feedback from the community is that carers wish to be able to access community activities safely, rather than have carer specific groups. The team has also managed to engage male carers and retain their engagement in activity. Our third sector carer organisations provide regular information to carers to raise awareness of wellbeing resources within their communities and online.

A regional contract is now in place to provide support for people living with dementia and their carers, which provides a pre and post-diagnosis support element. This is supporting carers in many ways, including connecting to appropriate support to maintain their own wellbeing.

### **4.2.1/3/4 Work collaboratively with the Gypsy and Traveller community and neighbouring authorities to update the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) and deliver any newly identified site requirements**

In order to meet community needs it is essential that we listen to communities and their lived experiences. The Chief Executive met with community representatives in November 2023 to hear their views to help understand what support can be put in place. In addition, Gypsy and Traveller Cultural Awareness training was commissioned (via the North West Wales Community Cohesion team) and delivered earlier in 2023. The training was delivered to a mixture of frontline staff, managers and elected members – with approximately 40 attendees across two sessions.

The joint Conwy and Denbighshire Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment has been completed. The assessment has identified that there is not a need for a permanent transit site in Conwy and has identified the need for one additional residential pitch. The assessment also identified a need for an additional 8 pitches for Travelling Show people over the life of the RLDP. The Housing Strategy team remain the single point of contact for reporting unauthorised encampments and welfare assessments are completed for encampments.

The Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment 2022 was scrutinised via an established Task and Finish Group prior to approval by Cabinet in February to submit the assessment to Welsh Government. Upon receipt of confirmation from Welsh Government the Task and Finish Group will be re-established to progress the land option(s).

#### **4.4.2 Be a key partner and stakeholder of the Regional suicide and self-harm prevention board in a coordinated response to the new/updated action plan of Talk to Me 2 (or subsequent policy)**

Conwy's Vulnerable People service continue as a key partner and stakeholder of the Regional suicide and self-harm prevention board, which provides a coordinated response to the Talk to Me 2 (suicide prevention) strategy. There are 6 objectives outlined within this Wales-wide strategy, delivering an early and appropriate response to crisis; workforce development; responding to those bereaved; responsible reporting in media, reducing access to means and promoting learning, information and monitoring systems.

The board are currently focusing on developing rapid response processes, which are evolving across Wales, involving the Police and engaging Safeguarding and other partners to determine the impact of a death by (suspected) suicide. A Standard Operating Procedure is being developed in conjunction with the Police. Additionally, a specific multi-professional

site of concern sub-group is meeting and self-harm sub-group will be instigated in February 2024.

#### **4.7.1 Neurodiversity Policy**

Neurodiversity in the Workplace draft guidance has been shared with staff with lived experiences (and professional interest) to seek their views. Information from staff consultation sessions, email feedback and attendance at the Conwy and Denbighshire Autism (ASC) Stakeholder Group meeting is currently being used to shape the draft, with a view to finalising the guidance in 2024.

Consideration is being given to the rollout of the guidance once finalised, including delivering of Autism Bus Experience sessions (funding dependent) and awareness raising sessions for managers and staff.

#### **4.8.6 Work to support the priorities of making Wales the best place in the world to grow older: Older People's Commissioner Strategy 2019-2022**

Following publication of Welsh Government's 'Strategy for an Ageing Society' Conwy has committed to becoming an age-friendly community and we have started working towards gaining this status.

An age-friendly community (as defined by the [World Health Organisation](#)) creates an environment that enables people of all ages to age well by providing opportunities to be healthy, active and get involved in community activities. They are particularly important for enabling older people to feel valued and respected and to:

- get out and about
- do the things they want to do
- stay informed
- lead healthy and active lives
- have their voices heard

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales has committed to supporting age-friendly communities to be developed throughout Wales. A page has been created on our website ([Age-Friendly Communities](#)) which will be updated as we progress towards achieving age-friendly status.

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

- Delivered inter-generational ‘cook and eat’ sessions in our family centres for vulnerable people to help them learn how to cook and make the most of ingredients to save money
- Supported the national *Warm Hub* scheme, offering safe and warm places within the local community where people could go to keep warm during winter. 38 community groups took part, offering free hot drinks and a place to socialise, helping to bring people together and tackle isolation for those living alone. We also provided 236 free showers in our leisure centres during the winter.
- Delivered the Autism Bus Experience to staff and architects who work with the Council to support their understanding of the need to consider autism in new build designs
- Established the Conwy Dementia Services Forum, working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the third sector to deliver the County’s Dementia Strategy
- The number of 11-16 year olds with Ffit Junior Membership increased significantly from 56 at the end of 2021-22 to 488 by the end of 2022-23. Overall, Ffit Conwy is at its highest ever membership level, with a total of 6,631 at the end of the year – compared to 5,204 mid-year
- The Covid-19 pandemic had a negative effect on the mental health and confidence of older adults, leaving many vulnerable to increased social isolation and loneliness. To combat this the Community Wellbeing Team has offered support to help individuals reconnect with their communities and step back out with confidence by organising a range of outdoor activities such as social strolls and themed walks
- Virtual Dementia Bus Tour – in August 2022 our Staying Well team hosted a Virtual Dementia Bus tour at the Conwy Business Centre, giving people an experience of what dementia might be like and an understanding of simple changes to practices and environments to improve the lives of people with dementia
- Completed the construction of Bron y Nant Respite Centre and registered the centre with Care Inspectorate Wales
- Delivered 406 packages of reablement, which reduced the need for support, maintained the same level of support or mitigated the need for support. This is a really positive outcome when considering the ongoing demand on the service.

- Full Social Care Annual Reports (including for 2022-23) are available here: [Social Care Annual Reports](#)

## **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 Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) by implementing relevant areas of the strategy by 2021
- 5.3 Improve awareness of personal safety and safeguarding

### **Relevant actions:**

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

Our Community Safety and Equalities teams have continued to work closely with the North Wales Community Cohesion teams. See update 2.9.3 for an example of the work carried out collaboratively this year.

The Community Safety team continue to liaise with the Regional Cohesion team to manage any issues being raised in the community (e.g. via their links with Welsh Government). There are regular campaigns around Hate Crimes and Modern Slavery Awareness. The Regional Cohesion team recruited another officer during the period so it is hoped that additional project work will be increased.

#### **5.2.1 Safeguarding Training**

A significant amount of work has been undertaken in relation to safeguarding training. A due diligence report highlighted areas where further improvement could be made and we have been working to improve completion rates for Level 1 (general awareness) mandatory training which all staff must complete. We have progressed significantly with Level 2 training (generally for managers), working closely with the Social Care Workforce Development Team. A total of 795 employees have received VAWDASV Group 2 training in the last year (2022-23).

## 5.2.6 Support actions on the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy

This year saw a large increase of referrals to the specialist sector, as victims and survivors found the confidence to seek support following the lifting of restrictions linked to the Covid-19 pandemic. Services saw referral increases of up to 50% and waiting lists inevitably increased for some specialist and therapeutic services. However, it was also a year of increased resource, not just from Welsh Government but also funders such as the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office, so North Wales saw the largest amount of VAWDASV funding coming into the region since regionalisation.

The National Training Framework became fully embedded within the annual training plans of North Wales Local Authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, with completion rates rising rapidly. Ask and Act Champions (Welsh Government scheme aimed at ensuring that within each Local Authority there are a number of 'champions' trained to [Ask and Act](#) in relation to domestic abuse and sexual violence) were still slow in coming forward, but this has gradually increased over the 12 months.

The [IRIS pilot](#) (a training, referral and advocacy model to support clinicians to better support their patients affected by domestic violence and abuse) in the South Denbighshire cluster of GP surgeries has been a resounding success, with over 100 GPs and staff receiving enhanced training and support to recognise domestic abuse and make referrals for early intervention. We hope to see this rolled out across the Conwy and Denbighshire region in 2023/24 and then across the wider North Wales region over the next 2 years, although sustainable funding is always a concern.

The North Wales VAWDASV Needs Assessment was completed during this period, showing the rapid increase in referrals to the specialist sector and the need for increased joining up of funding to ensure efficient and effective commissioning of services. A wider range of provision is available than ever before, with recovery programmes embedded into the existing provision across the region.

Children and Young people affected by VAWDASV have been a priority over the last year and there are now specialist Children and Young People's Workers embedded within more of the services than ever before.

They offer a wide range of support, including one to one support, as well as play therapy within refuges and targeted group programmes in many schools across North Wales.

Many families have been forced to stay in local hotels if refuges don't have space and this means they have no kitchen facilities, space for pets etc. The capital funding for disbursed units was used to families fleeing abuse over the weekend or out of hours. There is now a specific building allowing large families to have a real "home" environment while they wait for appropriate longer-term provision. This increases the chances of them making the final move away from an abusive person, but also gives them the opportunity to function as a family unit within their own space.

### **5.3.2 Increase awareness of children, young people and adults of safe, healthy and equal relationships**

The regional team have been working with Local Authorities to reinvigorate the Whole School Approach group to map current delivery of interventions in schools and identify gaps. They have been focusing on the need to challenge gender norms and stereotypes and include bystander interventions.

Child workers across the region have been delivering one-to-one support in schools, 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. Interventions are in place around safety, self-harm and suicidal ideation, with links to children and young people networks such as school welfare.

### **5.3.10/11/12/14 Reduce Crime and Disorder**

We continue to work in partnership on anti-social behaviour issues in the community and there have been a number of subgroups established to manage hotspot areas. There has been a reduction in anti-social behaviour, however there are pockets of issues which are more difficult to manage.

We continue to promote home security via the new community alert system supported by North Wales Police. As a Community Safety Partnership we are supporting the rollout of this system to encourage residents to sign up for the alert service which will highlight any crime



issues in their area. The Police and Crime Commissioner has set up a victim's forum so people's experiences can be captured and changes can be made. The information captured is sent to each local area for review.

We attend the Offender Management Groups and have expanded monitoring to include 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 victims to move on from incidents. Repeat offending figures have reduced over the last 12 months.

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

- Aligned Council job roles to the national safeguarding training, learning and development standards
- Successfully completed an assessment of CCTV surveillance camera systems and achieved a certificate of compliance from NSI (National Security Inspectorate)
- Made all 10 libraries into *Safe Places* as part of a pilot and developed guidance on this

**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

**Relevant actions:**

**6.1.1 Collect equality monitoring data as part of the induction for locally elected councillors**

Equality monitoring data was collected as part of the induction process for elected members following the May 2022 elections. The information gathered through this will provide a benchmark for future elections and we will use feedback to identify any barriers experienced during elected member's term of office. A comparison of the 2022 data against the 2017 data shows a small increase in the overall number of candidates and the gender split:

- **2017:** 131 candidates, 87 male (66.4%) and 44 female (33.6%)
- **2022:** 151 candidates, 95 male (62.9%) and 56 female (37.1%)

We are working on producing a series of 7 videos focusing on the role of the Councillor. These will be used to raise awareness of what a Councillor does, particularly in the run up to the 2027 Local Elections.

**6.1.5 Review the Government Public Appointment Diversity Action Plan 2019 to consider what good practice we can adopt locally that is relevant to us in our recruitment process**

There were four overarching objectives identified in the UK Government's Public Appointments Diversity Action Plan 2019: improving data and reporting on diversity; raising awareness and tapping into talent; improving the public appointments recruitment process and supporting and developing public appointees. Work that has been/will be carried out as part of the recruitment project.

- All applicants through iTrent must complete equality monitoring data (although they retain the option to answer 'Prefer Not to Say') as part of the recruitment process. This has naturally led to an increase in the equality monitoring data that we hold and we are working on a survey to fill in gaps / update the information that we hold for existing staff
- We have simplified the recruitment process and including more information on our webpages to support potential candidates
- We have created a booklet on job roles to improve awareness of job opportunities
- We are listening to views on people's experiences and changing our processes, such as simpler forms, better explanations of job roles and easy read webpages
- We now share our onboarding pages and Learning and Development Plan so prospective candidates can see what support is available to develop members of staff

HR Colleagues have completed job evaluation and anti-discriminatory practice refresher training, as well as positive action training and anti-racism training. Workforce planning data has been rolled out and we aim to build upon this with equality data to inform when positive action may be appropriate.

### **6.3.5 Encouraging learning and speaking Welsh**

In 2022/23 a wide range of initiatives were delivered to support the learning and speaking of Welsh and to support the national priority of a million Welsh speakers by 2050. This included:

- 612 Welsh promotion activities delivered within our libraries and schools, including: weekly bilingual story time in our libraries; events in support of Merched y Wawr; school visits aligned to Cwricwlwm I Gymru; staging the Cyw pantomime at Venue Cymru and screening to schools across Wales

- Three Heads of Service (who are Welsh learners) have participated in the Welsh Government Leading in a Bilingual Country Programme.
- Establishing a Welsh learners' forum to support staff and elected members learning Welsh
- Continued the Welsh Work Scheme, supporting an additional 75 staff members to learn Welsh
- Developing a Welsh in Education website to provide parents with information about Welsh education and the advantages of being bilingual
- Published a newsletter for staff called 'Celebrating the Welsh Language in Conwy', with the first edition aligned to the Wales football team playing in the World Cup and promoting Welsh lessons available to staff
- Conducted a Welsh language and a visitor welcome feasibility study, engaging with more than 200 visitors and 8 businesses to produce a prioritised action plan for enhancing the use of the Welsh language to support the visitor experience and sense of place

#### **6.4.6 Promote opportunities to encourage staff to take up part-time courses in British Sign Language in partnership with Llandrillo College**

We are currently looking at promoting the British Sign Language opportunities that Llandrillo College offer through our annual Learning and Development Plan, as well as promoting the opportunities that are available to staff internally.

The Sensory Impairment workshop, delivered internally by staff from Social Care, resumed this year following restrictions delivering the face-to-face training during the pandemic. This provides a workshop for employees who have contact with the public to equip them to have positive interaction with people who have a sensory impairment. 46 people have undertaken this training since delivery started in 2019 and the training is promoted to staff through our Learning & Development Plan each year.

Deaf Awareness e-learning is offered through the Learning@Wales Platform. The Introduction module aims to raise awareness about the needs of profoundly Deaf people; their language, needs and culture. The module also aims to help staff understand the various communication methods used by Deaf people and the technology available, as well as an understanding of cultural differences and stereotypes hearing people may have. The Alphabet and Basic Signs and Words modules provides video demonstrations of how to sign the different letters of the alphabet and

basic signs and words along with opportunities to see how much you have learned and remembered along the way. Although the Deaf Awareness e-learning is not mandatory, since it launched in 2019 it has been completed by 541 members of staff.

### 6.5.1 Delivery of Creu Conwy (Culture Strategy)

In its first year the Strategy successfully delivered cultural opportunities and experiences to more than 6,000 people across the county. During 2022 Creu Conwy developed the following new projects and programmes:

- **Amdani! Conwy**, a flagship project for the Creu Conwy Partnership which will open up cultural volunteering opportunities to a wider audience and will support at least 300 volunteers to participate in the work of the Creu Conwy partner organisations. The project has an emphasis on supporting equitable access to volunteering for disabled, d/Deaf and neurodivergent people
- **Winter Sounds** music festival, a pilot free music festival that celebrated Welsh music, local talent and smaller venues
- **Enhanced Open Doors** (European Heritage Days) – community engagement and mapping project (Casglu) to capture local perceptions of culture and create a blueprint for future community project work
- **'This is Me'**, an Oriel Colwyn exhibition which photographed older Cartrefi Conwy tenants and gathered their stories (nominated for the Arts and Business Cymru Award)
- **Oriel Colwyn's 35 Summers** exhibition celebrating 35 years of music industry photography – profits from sales of signed prints were used to purchase food for Conwy food bank
- **Imagine Trail 2** – a digital skills and employability project in Colwyn Bay that worked with more than 300 participants to co-produce content for the Imagine Colwyn Bay Heritage Trail App, resulting in 22 accreditations and 6 young people going on to employment or further training
- **Welsh Language and the Visitor Welcome** feasibility study that spoke with more than 200 visitors and 8 businesses to produce a prioritised action plan for enhancing the use of the Welsh Language to support the visitor experience and sense of place

**Other actions and outcomes of note under the Participation Objective:**

- Provided infrastructure support for the first [Colwyn Bay Pride](#) event which was organised by Together for Colwyn Bay
- Started consultation and development of our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 (internally and externally) – including development of Conwy specific Anti-racism and LGBTQ+ Action Plans
- Working with the North Wales Regional Equality Network to share resources from their [People Like Us](#) exhibition (funded by Welsh Government as part of delivery of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan), with a full display of the exhibition at Coed Pella being planned for 2024
- Developed a training package for staff on meeting website accessibility standards and incorporated this into the corporate learning and development plan
- Achieved 36% of registered 16-17 year olds who voted in the local elections
- Continued to provide bilingual communications, translating 1.4 million words per month from English to Welsh
- Services have been exploring translation options for non-English/Welsh translation alongside The Big Word (e.g. WITS – the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service) to ensure there are a range of options in place that staff can use to ensure service delivery in people’s language of choice as much as possible
- Worked with the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan to survey collections within the Museum and Archives service. The online exhibition to celebrate Black History Month was used as an exemplar on how to present black history
- Delivered events for LGBTQ+ History Month and an LGBTQ+ Pride exhibition (e.g. at the Conwy Culture Centre)  
Hosted a training session on anti-racist library collections for library and information professionals working across North Wales

**Objective 7:** Develop our knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic duty to identify the key areas of impact to be addressed under each of our other 6 objectives

**Relevant actions:**

The cost of living crisis has caused levels of poverty to escalate in the county. The Council recognises the key role we play in helping people out of poverty and leading healthy and fulfilling lives. During the year, we

delivered a number of services to help people who were struggling as a result of rising food and energy costs, including providing free showers at our leisure centres, cook and eat sessions at our family centres and the Warm Hub scheme within the community. The Council has established a group focused on tackling poverty in the longer term to ensure the action it takes is effective and long lasting.

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

- The Conwy Tackling Poverty Working Group has now been established and is mapping the current tackling poverty work being undertaken across services before identifying gaps. An action plan will be developed bringing together existing work and future work to meet gaps and deliver the vision and this will include awareness raising and training for both staff and members
- Creating a webpage containing ideas to help staff with the cost of living and energy crises
- Conwy assisted Welsh Government with a number of schemes to support the community. These included £407,000 in self-isolation payments, £2.64m in winter fuel support payments and £1.12m in Cost of Living Discretionary Scheme payments made to individuals and food banks

## 4. Specified Employment Information

### 4.1 Employment Monitoring Reports



Conwy Council's annual employment monitoring reports, which help us to monitor whether our workforce is reflective of the diverse communities we serve, are published on our website each year. Public organisations must also 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.

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.

We are currently developing a survey to help ensure that the data we hold is up-to-date and complete, as far as possible. We will review the data captured when the survey has been completed to consider any further actions necessary to improve continued data capture (e.g. seeking to further understand why staff might choose to 'prefer not to say' when asked to disclose this information).



At the moment we hold the following equality monitoring data for staff in Conwy:

Protected Characteristic	2021-22 (%)	2022-23 (%)
Sex	100	100
Age	100	100
Marital/civil partnership status	99	99
Race	55	59
Disability	52	54
Religion/Belief	47	51
Sexual Orientation	47	51
Transgender	43	48

Data captured in all categories has improved further during this period. These figures show the percentage of staff who have provided information on each protected characteristic, not the number of people in that group (which is shown in more detail in our Employment Monitoring Report).

Our latest Employment Monitoring Report for 2022–23 is available on our website under the Equality and Diversity section: [Employment Monitoring](#)



#### 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’. We carried out an extensive process of

job evaluation that 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. The Job Evaluation Policy and Procedures were reviewed and updated in 2023.

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	31.3.11	31.3.15	31.3.19	31.3.22	31.3.23	Trend
Gender Pay Gap range between Grades G01-G12			+1.1 - 0%	+0.8 - +1.9%	-1.85 - +1.2%	-1.37 - +1.18	-1.67 - +1.29%	-
Total Gender Pay Gap Grades G01-G12			+13.1%	+9.3%	+5.5%	+6.0%	+4.9%	
Gender Pay Gap – All Posts	+16.2%	+15.8%	+8.8%	+6.5%	+2.8%	+3.9%	+3.5%	
Disability Pay Gap Grades G01-G12						-14.7%	-10.4%	
All Posts Disability Pay Gap			-10%		-0.9%	-3.26	+0.7%	
Ethnic Minority Grades G01-G12					-5.0%	-11.5%	-2.9%	
All Posts Ethnic Minority Pay Gap			+2.45%		+8.07%	+2.9%	+8.8%	
Age Pay Gap : Under 50s as % of 50+					-2.2%	-3.1%	-2.9%	
Age Pay Gap 50+ as % of Under 50s					+2.2%	+3.0%	+2.9%	

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

Key:

Green Arrow = pay gap decreased during the period

Orange Arrow = pay gap increased during the period, remains below 5%

Red Arrow = pay gap increased during the period, above 5%

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

Of the latest figures, this applies to: All Posts Ethnic Minority Pay Gap

The ethnicity pay gap for all posts fell to 2.9% in 2021-22 before rising to 8.8% in 2022-23. There could be a number of reasons for this, including:

(a) because we only hold monitoring data for 59% of the workforce on race and the number of posts held by ethnic minority people is low, therefore there can be greater year-on-year fluctuations;

(b) there is an element of occupational segregation as 70% of our ethnic minority staff are employed in Grades G01-G05 (compared to the total workforce of 66% in the same grade span);

(c) there are some wide fluctuations in average pay in the non-Single Status workforce (e.g., Teachers), which also only include a small number of ethnic minority staff, which can impact the figures

As well as working to improve our equality monitoring data to create a more accurate picture of our workforce, we have identified actions from our Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan aimed at addressing this pay gap. For example, creating Conwy-specific positive action guidance, to increase knowledge and confidence to use positive action as appropriate in recruitment, retention and development processes.

The Equal Pay Audit 2018-23 (5-year period) further analyses pay data by protected characteristic. We are aiming to finalise this in 2024 with a set of recommendations that will aim to address any specific issues identified.

We have no bonus schemes in place for 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. During 2023 we have reviewed and updated our Standby Policy to strengthen these arrangements across our varied services.

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 avoid equal pay claims 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 and other staff under Soulbury terms are negotiated nationally.

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 and more of our staff are part-time 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 -1.67% and +1.29%, indeed in Grades G01, G02, G05, G07, G08 and G09, pay marginally favours women, suggesting that there is no substantial gender pay gap between individual Grades G01-G12. The gap of 4.9% for grades G01-G12 is likely to be attributed to the large number of women employed in G01 (women in G01 posts account for 29.12% of all posts 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 3.5% when including all staff employed by Conwy County Borough Council. This shows a small decrease on last year but remains above pre-2021 levels and will be monitored in relation to the 5% benchmark set out by the EHRC.

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 2023 which shows a slightly different figure to those above, as shown below:

### Gender Pay Gap National Calculation as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023

	Female Hourly Rate (£)	Male Hourly Rate (£)	Difference in Hourly Rate (£)	Mean Gender Pay Gap	Median Gender Pay Gap
Mean (Average) Gender Hourly Rate	15.63	16.31	0.68	4.18%	
Median (Middle) Gender Hourly Rate	12.03	13.18	1.15	-	8.75%

	Upper Quartile	Upper Middle Quartile	Lower Middle Quartile	Lower Quartile	Total
% of Males	26	34	28	14	25
Number of Males	318	426	350	175	1,269
% Females	74	66	72	86	75
Number of Females	926	818	894	1,069	3,707

(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 -1.49% to +2.61% which is negligible and similarly the gap in the over 50s as a percentage of the under 50s ranges from -2.68% to +1.47%. Head of Service level posts show a pay gap in favour of those over 50 of 0.65%. Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Teaching staff on Soulbury conditions show a pay gap in favour of over 50s that ranges from 3.78% to 11.63%. The overall pay gap shows that employees under 50 are positively favoured by 2.9%, while 58.5% 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 2022-23 was 8.84%. The number of positions held by Ethnic Minority staff increased significantly this year (from 67 to 121). 70% of positions held by Ethnic Minority staff were in Grades G01-G05 in March 2023, the comparative figure for the total workforce was 66%. These figures are more susceptible to large changes because we only hold monitoring data for 59% of the workforce on race, and the number of positions held by Ethnic Minority staff is low and we will be working to improve workforce diversity. As the numbers in this area are so low it is difficult to draw any statistical conclusions from the data but this will be given further consideration in our five-year Equal Pay Audit.

In 2023 we worked in partnership with the North Wales Community Cohesion teams to engage on the theme of *Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment*. The work focused on engaging residents, service users and interested parties across North Wales (both individuals facing barriers to employment and professionals working with individuals) as part of a conversation to make sure that public sector organisations are welcoming and inclusive of everyone in their recruitment and retention processes. A full summary report from the work has been produced and actions will be taken forward as part of our recruitment project and via delivery of our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 which is currently being developed.

## **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 favours disabled people. However, the reliability of this data is affected by

the fact that we only hold disability data for 54% 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

On the whole 2022-23 saw the resumption of a lot of face-to-face activities following the easing of pandemic restrictions (which had an impact during 2020-21 and 2021-22). However, there continue to be significant budgetary pressures throughout Local Government, which continue to grow each year and have an impact on all of our services. Despite the resource and capacity issues that these pressures bring, staff continue to work hard to ensure that we are an inclusive employer and service provider. The updates throughout the report highlights the progress that we have made in key areas and moving forwards we will be looking to expand our resources in this area if possible to demonstrate our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Due to the long-term nature of the plan, more actions were identified in years one and two than in the later years – although there have still been a significant level of activities during 2022-23. For the third year of our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24, we identified 24 actions (not including ongoing actions and actions that were undertaken in response to changes, e.g. publication of Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ+ Action Plan, some of which we have updated on in the report). 15 actions (63%) were completed successfully and/or regarded as ongoing, and a further 7 actions (29%) were started but not finished. 2 actions (8%) were not started, mainly due to other workload pressures as a result of the pandemic and budgetary pressures, and these will be reviewed during development of the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28. The four-year action plan for 2020-24 identified a total of 253 specific actions to help achieve our Equality Objectives.

During the course of the plan, further actions have been identified, such as the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, and the LGBTQ+ Action Plans that have been published by Welsh Government. In this report we have given a flavour of the work we have been doing to progress work in these areas



but this is by no means an exhaustive list of the exceptional work our staff do every day to support our citizens.

Moving forwards we will continue 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.