

**Treating everyone as**

**individuals**



**Strategic Equality Plan**

**2020 - 2024**

We are happy to provide this information in alternative formats



Mae’r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg

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# **Foreword**

Welcome to Conwy County Borough Council’s Strategic Equality Plan 2020 - 2024. This document and the action plan sets out how we will continue to improve equality outcomes for the people of Conwy and our employees.

Conwy County Borough Council provides services across a broad range of areas including; education, housing, social care for adults, children and young people. We have responsibilities in planning, building control, environment, parks and gardens and waste collection. We are also one of the main employers in the area and we take seriously our duty to provide inclusive and fair services that are as flexible and dynamic as the communities we serve.

As a Local Authority responsible for delivering services to the people who live, work in and visit Conwy, we are committed to equality of opportunity for everyone. As an employer we are also committed to building an organisation that makes full use of the talents, skills and experience of current and potential staff. 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 wellbeing of everyone in Conwy. By delivering the objectives set out in this plan we are also supporting the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act Goals as well as our own Corporate Plan commitments.

We recognise the benefits of a diverse community and will integrate equality considerations into the day to day activities that we carry out, to support the wellbeing of everyone, especially the most vulnerable people, living and working in our County.

**Iwan Davies Sam Rowlands**

**Chief Executive Leader of the Council**

# **Executive Summary and Introduction**

This is our third Strategic Equality Plan since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and it builds upon the work of previous equality schemes that have been in place within Conwy since 2003. This Plan describes the work that has been undertaken to identify our equality objectives in relation to each of the protected groups, and the steps that need to be taken to achieve them.

The Equality Act 2010 brought into force a new single public sector General Duty. In Wales, to reinforce the General Duty, the Welsh Ministers created the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011 referred to as the Specific Duties. This Strategic Equality Plan sets out how Conwy will continue to meet the General and Specific Duties.

The equality agenda is enormous and it is not possible for a single 4 year plan to tackle every issue all at once. In 2011-2012 we identified 6 top level objectives with accompanying action areas which were identified as priorities. We adopted an evidence based approach by reviewing relevant data available and we took into account the main priorities that representatives of our community suggested we tackle. We continued with these 6 top level objectives in our second plan (2016-20) following a further review of relevant data and as suggested from consultation and engagement. Whilst the objectives were still relevant, the action areas beneath each objective were revised and supported with a new action plan.

When we started consulting on this, our third Strategic Equality Plan for 2020-2024, the general consensus was that the top level objectives were still largely applicable. We reviewed the relevant data as well as the recommendations from the Equality and Human Rights Commission: ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ 2018 report and we amended our equality objectives to capture the latest ‘Is Wales Fairer?’ themes which build on our past plans. These changes have been supported through engagement and consultation with stakeholders, relevant organisations and individuals representing all protected characteristics as well as management and trade union representatives. The key data that has contributed to informing this work, our new equality objectives and the new priority areas are set out within this Strategic Equality Plan. The Action Plan outlined in Appendix 1 shows how we intend to achieve these equality objectives with the aim of improving the experiences of all our citizens.

We will report on our progress towards achieving these objectives annually.

The legislation requires that our Plan is focused on achieving positive outcomes for employees and customers. We have tried to achieve this, whilst also aiming to ensure that equality is built in (mainstreamed) to our policies, functions and service delivery. We aim to make all our practices and policies fully inclusive, eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and embracing diversity in everything we do. We will continue to challenge the way we provide services, develop policies and employ and retain people to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

With the introduction of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, we recognise that public services in Wales are evolving, and will continue to do so during the life span of this plan. The planned introduction of the Socio-economic Duty into legislation in 2020 and the UK Exit from the European Union, along with feedback from the public, customers, employees and from monitoring progress on the action plan, may result in changes to corporate priorities. This may mean that changes to our plan will be necessary and we will consult on any changes as appropriate.

This Plan will enable us to transform into action our commitment to promote equality and diversity for all.

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| **Section 1: About Conwy** |

**1.1 County Overview**

Conwy County Borough is centrally located in North Wales. The County Borough has an area of 113,000 hectares and a population of 117,150 residents (mid-2018 population estimates, ONS). About 38% of its area and 4% of its population are within the Snowdonia National Park.

Population density is low, at 1.0 persons per hectare across the County borough as a whole, but rises to over 30 persons per hectare in some urban areas on the coast. The narrow coastal belt contains over 85% of the County Borough’s population with Llandudno and Colwyn Bay as the two main settlements in terms of population numbers. The population of rural Conwy is widely dispersed. The main settlements are the market town of Llanrwst and the scattered villages of Betws-y-Coed, Betws-yn-Rhos, Eglwysbach, Llanfairtalhaearn, Llansannan, Llangernyw Pentrefoelas and Cerrigydrudion. Rural Conwy is an attractive, mainly agricultural area with limited alternative employment. Its population is widely dispersed and is predominantly Welsh speaking.

Conwy is a diverse county, with varied geography ranging from the coast through into the heart of the Snowdonia National Park, thus offering a range of scenery and leisure opportunities. Not surprisingly, its economy relies heavily upon tourism. Tourism is an important part of the Conwy economy, with an estimated value to the local economy to be worth £887.62 million, supporting over 12,319 jobs in the county (STEAM 2017 data).

Conwy links East, West and Mid Wales and has easy access to two international cities and airports in Liverpool and Manchester and an international cruise and ferry hub linking Ireland. In addition, Conwy’s position astride the A55 (East to West) and A470 (North to South) routes makes road links to Ireland and England seamless. There is also good access to rail links with Llandudno Junction a key station that connects London to the county in less than 3 hours and Cardiff in just under 4 hours.

Conwy’s location means that it has a visitor catchment that, within 3 hours driving time, encompasses almost all the major Northern English

conurbations and a huge part of the UK population. This, along with its geography and continually developing tourism offering, means the county is a tourism hotspot, attracting 9.50 million visitors in 2017 (STEAM data), and making it the leading destination area in North Wales.

**1.2 People of Conwy**

The size of the resident population in Conwy County Borough at 30 June 2018 was estimated to be 117,150 people (57,000 male and 60,150 female). There is a fairly even split of males and females living in Conwy, although when comparing the male to female ratio of 100:106, this is higher than the UK average of 100:103, meaning that we have a greater proportion of women in our population than the nation as a whole. Key statistics from the 2011 Census report that young people (0-15) account for 16.6% of the population. This compares with an all-Wales figure of 18.2%, slightly below the national average. Those aged 16-64 years account for 59% in Conwy County Borough and those aged 65 years and over account for 24.4% in the County, much higher than the all-Wales average of 18.4%. Mid-year population estimates from the Office for National Statistics in 2017 report that Conwy County Borough has a higher proportion of those aged 65+ within the population than any of our neighbouring authorities, and a much higher rate than the UK average, which is 18.2%. Similar high proportions of the post-pension age population are only found in areas known to be retirement locations, such as the south west coast of England.

The high proportion of older people within our population also leads to the proportions of children (aged 0-15) and residents of working age (aged 16-65) being significantly below the Wales average and UK averages. In 2017 there were 66,200 people of working age (16-64) in Conwy County Borough. This makes up 56.6% of the population (lower than the Census reported in 2011), compared to 61.5% in Wales and 62.9% in the UK. The number of people in the working age population group in the County Borough is particularly affected by the out-migration of young adults in the 18-24 age group.

Since 2007 the population of Conwy County Borough has increased by 3,100, which is 2.7%, an average of about 0.3% per year, though rates of change have not been evenly spread across the period. In the same period the population of Wales increased by 4.0% and the population of the UK grew by 7.7%.

The most reliable data for ethnicity figures for the population of Conwy County Borough is the 2011 Census. 95.4% of the population in Conwy County Borough in 2011 were White British, 0.1% were Gypsy or Irish Traveller, 2.2% other white, 0.8% were from a Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Group and 0.8% were Asian / Asian British, 0.2% were Black/Black British and 0.3% were Chinese. The most up to date information is provided for school pupils educated in Conwy County Borough by the Local Education Authority. Figures from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (2018/19), categorised using the Census categories indicated that 93% of pupils were White British, 6.5% included Gypsy/Traveller, Other White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese and Other Ethnic Group, and 0.5% were unknown.

There is no comprehensive source of data about disability in Conwy. The 2011 Census provides information on limiting long term illness and unpaid carers in Conwy and revealed that 24.3% of people in Conwy County Borough have a limiting long term illness. Unitary authorities in Wales keep a register of social service clients with learning, physical and or sensory disabilities. However, as the registers only contain people who have accessed services, they are an undercount of people with disabilities.

The only source of data about religious affiliation in Conwy County Borough is the 2011 Census. Christianity is the main religion in Conwy with 64.7% of people in Conwy being a Christian. 35.3% of other people citing: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, any other religion, no religion or not stating a religion. The percentage increase in religions other than Christianity is a substantial increase from the 2001 census.

Statistics about sexual identity are not available at Conwy County Borough level. Experimental Official Statistics on sexual identity in the UK in 2016 shows that estimates from the Annual Population survey (APS) showed that 93.4% of the UK population identified as heterosexual or straight and 2.0% of the population identified themselves as lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). This comprised of: 1.2% identifying as gay or lesbian, 0.8% identifying as bisexual and a further 0.5% of the population identified themselves as ‘other’. A further 4.1% refused or did not know how to identify themselves.

No data about people who are transgender is currently available at unitary authority or national level.

The 2011 Census is the most reliable and detailed source for data on Welsh speakers. It states that 27.4% of the population aged 3 years old or over are Welsh speakers – considerably above the all-Wales figure of 19%. The ability to speak Welsh is most prevalent amongst those of school age; 49.2% of 5-15 year olds can speak Welsh in Conwy County Borough, compared with 40.3% in Wales. In general, the incidence of Welsh speaker’s increases towards the west, and as one travels inland from the more highly populated coastal strip. Ability to speak Welsh is at a peak in the rural southern ward of Uwchaled (71% Welsh speaking), and at its lowest in the eastern coastal community of Towyn and Kinmel Bay (less than 12%).

**1.3 Government Democracy within Conwy**

**1.3.1 Council**

Council consists of 59 elected members or Councillors and they are democratically accountable to residents of their electoral division. Local Councillors are elected by the community to decide how the Council is run. Many of the Councillors are also elected to Town or Community Councils within their area. They represent public interest as well as individuals living within the electoral division in which he or she has been elected to serve a term of office. At the time of publishing this plan, the gender make-up of the current Council is 75% male and 25% female.

**1.3.2 Cabinet**

Cabinet comprises of 10 Councillors including the Council Leader who chairs meetings of the Cabinet. Each Cabinet Member has a specific area of responsibility in their portfolio. They are expected to oversee and monitor the services and functions allocated to them and the Cabinet has a key role to play in the approval process for policy development and amendment. They will consider equality impact assessments that have been carried out on key policy work during the decision making process and have a responsibility for ensuring the delivery of this Strategic Equality Plan. At the time of publishing this plan, the gender make-up of the Cabinet is 60% male and 40% female.

**1.3.3 Scrutiny**

Conwy County Borough Council has a strong Member led overview and scrutiny function which prides itself in having a very positive and constructive ethos, aiming to improve services to the population of Conwy. There are 4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees; Economy and Place, Education and Skills, Finance and Resources and Social Care and Health , all of which have an important role to play in the Council’s decision-making process by scrutinising the policies and services provided by the Council and therefore improving the Council’s performance. The individual Scrutiny Committees also have a key role to ensure that the impact on equality issues has been considered on new policies and in meeting statutory obligations and that Equality Impact Assessments have been completed satisfactorily. Scrutiny Committees can commission independent research and expertise to assist them with their enquiries, as well as holding members of the Cabinet and chief officers to account for their decisions and service performance.

In respect of this Strategic Equality Plan our Principal Overview and Scrutiny Committee will continue to monitor the action plan and scrutinise progress through the Annual Equality Reports.

**1.3.4 Regulatory Committees**

By law, some Council decisions cannot be taken by Cabinet. So in addition to the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Council also has a number of Regulatory Committees: The Planning Committee, the Audit and Governance Committee, the General Licensing Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and the Statutory Licencing Committee. The Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education, Conwy Harbour Advisory Committee Each Regulatory Committee has been assigned particular functions and powers to complement the way we work. All of the committees also advise Cabinet on any resource or organisational issue which may arise from the exercise of their functions.

**1.4 Business Administration**

**1.4.1 Strategic Leadership Team**

The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) comprises the Chief Executive, Strategic Director Economy and Place, Strategic Director Finance and Efficiencies, Strategic Director Social Care and Education, Head of Law and Governance, Head of Environment, Roads and Facilities and Head of Human Resources. Its function is to consider key strategic and operational issues across the Council and to look at national, regional and local issues.

**1.4.2 Senior Management Team**

The Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and all Heads of Service are part of the Senior Management Team (SMT). Officers present reports to SMT for consideration and approval. This is part of the internal management approval process. SMT discuss and debate cross cutting issues facing the Council and service related matters. The Strategic Equality Plan and Annual Reports are approved by this Team.

**1.4.3 Service Performance Management**

Each Head of Service is responsible for ensuring that actions outlined in the Strategic Equality Action Plan are completed in accordance with the timescales set out in the action plan. Heads of Service are responsible for integrating equality actions into operational activities. This will be done by adding equality actions into their individual Service Plans. The Performance Management Framework ensures that there is appropriate accountability across all service areas and involves setting clear outcomes and measuring improvement by monitoring and reporting on performance through self-assessment of performance. Progress on Service Plans are reviewed corporately every six months by a panel made up of Members, Corporate Improvement Development Team Officer and a Strategic Director.

**1.4.4 Corporate Plan**

The Corporate Plan 2017-2022 sets out our values and the priority areas Conwy County Borough Council wants to focus on during this period. The priorities aim to be progressive and forward thinking, but they cannot be

met by Conwy County Borough Council alone, particularly in such challenging financial times, and therefore it is vital we work in partnership with communities and other public sector organisations to make the improvements happen. The priorities were developed through discussion with communities through ‘The County Conversation’.

**Our Vision**

* Conwy – a progressive County creating opportunity

**The Way We Work - Our Values**

* We care about what we do
* We are fair to all
* We are innovative
* We are team players

Our Corporate Plan focuses on the following outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Are educated and skilled

**Outcome 2:** Are safe and feel safe

**Outcome 3:** Have access to affordable, appropriate, good quality accommodation that enhances the quality of their lives

**Outcome 4:** Are healthy and active

**Outcome 5:** Live in a county which has a prosperous economy

**Outcome 6:** Value and look after the environment

**Outcome 7:** Live in a county where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive

**Outcome 8:** Contribute to their community. They are informed, included and listed to.

The Strategic Equality Plan links closely with the Corporate Plan priorities.

**1.4.5 Public Service Board**

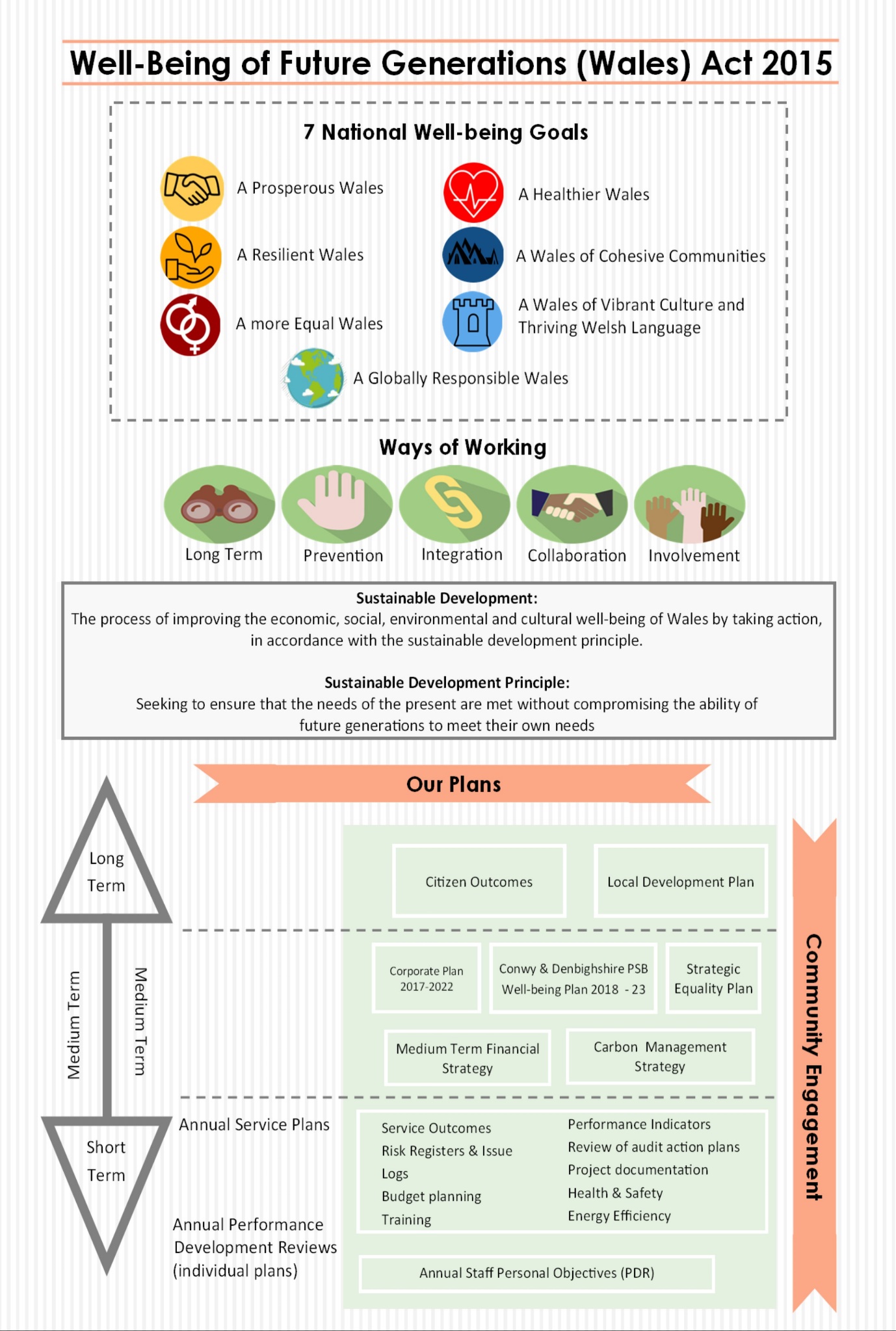
In April 2016, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 established a statutory board, known as a Public Service Board (PSB), in each local authority in Wales. Conwy and Denbighshire have used the power within the Act to merge both of their separate PSBs into a single PSB for the Conwy and Denbighshire region. The PSB is a collection of public bodies working together to improve the well-being of their county. This means that as a group the Conwy and Denbighshire PSB must improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of the Conwy and Denbighshire area by working to achieve the 7 well-being goals:

* A prosperous Wales
* A resilient Wales
* A healthier Wales
* A more equal Wales
* A Wales of cohesive communities
* A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
* A globally responsible Wales

The statutory members on the board are; Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, Natural Resources Wales and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Other partners include; Community and Voluntary Support Conwy, Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council, National Probation Service, North Wales Policy and Crime Commissioners Office, North Wales Police, Public Health Wales, Wales Community Rehabilitation Company and Welsh Government.

**1.4.6 Long Term Strategic Links**

The diagram below explains how our long term strategic plans link with our Strategic Equality Plan.



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| **Section 2: Equality Legislation** |

### 2.1 Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The legislation provides protection to people who have ‘protected characteristics’, these are:

* Race
* Sex
* Gender Reassignment\*
* Disability
* Sexual Orientation
* Religion or Belief
* Age
* Marriage and Civil Partnership
* Pregnancy and Maternity

\*Gender Reassignment includes the intention to, commencing, or completion of reassignment of gender.

### 2.2 Types of Discrimination

Discrimination can come in one of the following forms:

* **Direct discrimination** - treating someone with a protected characteristic less favourably than others
* **Indirect discrimination** - putting rules or arrangements in place that apply to everyone, but that put someone with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage
* **Harassment** - unwanted behaviour linked to a protected characteristic that violates someone’s dignity or creates an offensive environment for them
* **Victimisation** - treating someone unfairly because they’ve complained about discrimination or harassment
* **Discrimination by association** – treating someone less favourably than others, because of someone they are associated with
* **Discrimination by perception** – treating someone less favourably than others because of a protected characteristic they are thought to have, regardless of whether this perception by other is actually correct or not
* **Discrimination arising from a disability** – treating a disabled person less favourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability and the treatment cannot be objectively justified
* **Failure to make reasonable adjustments (Disability only)** – a disabled person can experience discrimination if the employer or organisation doesn’t make a reasonable adjustment

### 2.3 General Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010 all public authorities in Wales when carrying out their functions have a statutory duty, known as the General Duty, to have due regard to the need:

* To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act
* To advance equality of opportunity between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not
* To foster good relations between those protected groups

This means taking action to eliminate discrimination whenever we encounter it in carrying out our public functions and as an employer. We positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations in the delivery of all our services and functions. This Strategic Equality Plan goes some way towards demonstrating how we will do this in Conwy and our policies and practices will be reviewed to ensure this is adhered to through our Equality Impact Assessment process.

The Act explains that having a due regard for advancing equality involves:

* Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
* Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
* Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low

We are required to have due regard to the General Duty when we deliver our core functions of:

* Policy development
* Service design and delivery
* Decision-making and employment
* The exercise of statutory discretion
* Enforcement
* Services and functions that have been contracted out

The Equality Act 2010 outlaws discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities or services on the basis of a protected characteristic.

### 2.4 Specific Duties

In order to meet the General Duty, Specific Duties have been developed in Wales to outline the requirements placed on public bodies. These are set out in the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011. The Specific Duties in Wales identify key activities that public organisations must evidence are being undertaken and how they are being undertaken in relation to service delivery, policy-making and employment. The Specific Duties require us to:

* Identify and publish equality objectives
* Identify, collect and publish relevant equality information
* Engage with people who represent one or more of the protected groups and who have an interest in how an authority carries out its functions
* Assess the likely impact of proposed policies or practices on protected groups and publish reports where they show a substantial impact
* Collect and publish employment information on an annual basis
* Identify and collect information about pay differences for employees who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
* Publish an action plan in regard to gender pay
* Promote knowledge and understanding of the Duties and identify and address training needs of employees
* Have a due regard to include equality considerations to help meet the Duty when procuring, goods or services from other organisations

### 2.5 Socio-Economic Duty

Socio-economic disadvantage involves a complex interaction of a wide range of factors from poverty to health, education, limited social mobility, housing and low expectations. Someone who experiences socio-economic disadvantage may be income deprived, live in a deprived area and/or belong to a community of interest that disproportionately experience poverty and social inequality.

The socio-economic duty was written into legislation as Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, with the aim of ensuring that public bodies take socio-economic disadvantage into account when making strategic decisions. In 2010 it was decided not to implement the socio-economic duty but Welsh Government have committed to implement the Socio-economic duty into legislation from 1 April 2020. Guidance will become available from the Welsh Government for Public Sector Bodies at this time and during the life of this plan we will review what this means to us in Conwy.

### 2.6 Welsh Language Standards

Our commitment to the Welsh Language is set out in our Welsh Language Policy which includes all aspects of the Welsh Language Standards.  Further details can be seen in our Welsh Language Standards Policy document.

Officers are required to consider the needs of Welsh Language when Equality Impact Assessing policy and practice. It is acknowledged that issues relating to Welsh or English are likely to be covered under the protected characteristic of race.

The Council has always been committed to not treating the Welsh language any less favourably than the English language when providing services to the public and internal Council staff.  It also ensures that the public and internal staff are able to receive services in the language of their choice, be that Welsh, English or other language, when they contact the Council.

### 2.7 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act requires public bodies to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change by working towards the Well-being Goals as described under Section 1.4.6

### 2.8 Strategic Equality Plan

A Strategic Equality Plan is a comprehensive framework setting out how public organisations will comply with the General and Specific Duties to ensure policies and practices are fully inclusive, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality and embrace diversity. The Plan outlines how the Council will deliver measurable equality outcomes which will improve the lives of individuals and communities within Conwy.

Within Conwy’s Strategic Equality Plan, we include:

* Our long term equality objectives and priority areas (including pay objectives and action plan)
* The steps taken or that we intend to take to meet these objectives and timescales within the lifetime of each 4 year plan.
* Our arrangements for monitoring progress and effectiveness of meeting equality objectives
* Arrangements to collect, identify and publish relevant information
* Arrangements for assessing the likely impact on protected groups of any proposed new or revised policy and practices
* How we will promote knowledge and understanding of the General Duty and Specific Duties
* Any other information relevant to meeting the General Duty

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| **Section 3 : Equality Objectives** |

### 3.1 How we approached this work

The introduction of the Equality Act 2010 presented an opportunity for public sector organisations in North Wales to work collaboratively to advance the equality agenda and to tackle issues on inequality that cut across the public sector organisations in North Wales. Conwy continues to be part of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSEN) which comprises the Equality Leads in all six North Wales Local Authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust, Snowdonia National Parks Authority, North Wales Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. This group has grown in recent years and is well reputed across Wales in equality circles as an effective collaboration.

The mission of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network is:

To mainstream and advise on equality across North Wales through shared objectives, collaboration and facilitation.

To deliver this mission, the network work together in:

* Identify North Wales Equality Objectives
* Work collaboratively in relation to raising Equality Issues and providing a voice for Equalities in North Wales
* Work collaboratively in relation to areas of practice common to all organisations including:
  + gathering and sharing equality data
  + equality training
  + equality impact assessment processes
  + equality monitoring guidance
  + engagement and consultation events

As a North Wales equality network, we have reviewed the latest evidence on equality issues; considered what the priority areas should be; set up a group of stakeholders representing all protected groups and with whom we arrange regular engagement events to obtain their input into what our priorities should be. We test with that group what we are doing periodically and seek their input in order to identify and develop our equality objectives which set the direction of our future work. This is explained further in the sections below.

**3.2 Relevant Equality Information**

Collecting and using relevant information is critical to meet the General and Specific Duties. We have used equality-related evidence and feedback from relevant stakeholders through consultation and engagement to set meaningful objectives. We ensure that relevant equality-related evidence is obtained and consultation and engagement takes place when carrying out equality impact assessments. Publishing this information evidences to our community how policies are being developed and why decisions are being made.

As a Local Authority we will continue to:

* Make appropriate arrangements to ensure that we periodically identify relevant information we hold, and identify and collect information that we do not have
* Make appropriate arrangements to identify and collect information about differences in pay according to protected characteristic and the causes of any such differences
* Publish relevant information that we hold, unless it would be inappropriate to do so

The NWPSEN Network has undertaken extensive research from national information, local information and from the engagement activities of member organisations. , to develop evidence based equality objectives at a North Wales Local Authority level.

Relevant equality data was sourced from:

* Information held by North Wales Public Sector partners including organisations such as regional Health, Education, Employment and Police statistics
* National information and statistics, eg ONS, annual population surveys, etc
* Equality and Human Rights: ‘Is Wales Fairer? (2018)
* Regional stakeholder and local engagement and consultation

In formulating the new SEP, equality objectives and priority areas, the North Wales Network updated their ‘Background Data and Research Document’ using current local (where available), national and regional research. The document highlights developments and latest research in the relevant areas and has been used as evidence to develop our priority areas for action and the equality objectives for our new SEP. For further details see Appendix 2.

We will use the data included in this document and in Appendix 2 to measure our progress towards meeting our Equality Objectives. Whilst there have been some improvements since we implemented our first Strategic Equality Plan in 2012, for example, attainment at GCSE (A-G) for our Looked After Children has increased from 75% to 100% and the gap between boys and girls has reduced, there are still gaps in attainment to address. Similarly, the pay gap has reduced from 16% in 2009 to 2.8% in 2019 but a gap nevertheless remains to be tackled. We know we still have work to do and this Strategic Equality Plan outlines the continuing inequalities to address to continue this journey.

We have also taken into consideration local data relevant to Conwy in developing our action areas and action plan including:

* Analysis of existing equality data held within Services
* Analysis of Employment Monitoring Report data
* Analysis of Council Strategic Plans
* Analysis of Corporate Research and Information Data

**3.3 Engagement and Consultation**

Conwy County Borough Council recognises the need to have access to a wide range of opinions and views in carrying out its decision making and service planning processes. We also recognise the need to involve the general public, including each of the protected groups within our population, as part of that process and we have done this when developing this Strategic Equality Plan.

For the purpose of the engagement provisions within the Specific Duties the term ‘Engagement’ refers to involving certain people (as a requirement) and consulting certain people (as appropriate). The Equality and Human Rights Commission Engagement Guidance for listed public authorities in Wales defines effective engagement as, ‘a sustained process of collaboration between a public body and people with an interest in its work.’

The Specific Duties require Local Authorities to involve people who it considers representative of one or more of the protected groups and who have an interest in how an authority carries out its functions.

In May 2018 in conjunction with our North Wales Public Sector Equality Network partners, we held a fourth stakeholder engagement event with organisations and individuals representing each of the protected characteristics. The focus of the event was to test whether our Equality Objectives were still relevant and identify what more needs to be done. A report outlining the feedback from the stakeholder group is published on our website and has been used to identify our new equality objectives and priority areas.

**3.3.1 What we have done in Conwy**

The Council uses a variety of consultation methods including questionnaires and surveys, focus groups, online engagement, service user forums and panels, as well as ad-hoc public consultation events and ad-hoc consultation with specific community groups. These methods have been adapted and adopted to consult on new and proposed policies and strategies and has been built into the process when new and proposed policies and strategies are being developed.

An example of this was when we revised our Recruitment and Selection Policy and introduced on-line recruitment. We had planned to apply this single on-line option. However, as a result of engaging with disability groups, we amended our approach and continued to allow disabled people to apply using traditional (paper-based) methods for applications. We also improved our offer of support on our website and trained our staff so that they know what to do to support disabled applicants.

The Council’s Community Involvement Strategy (2018-2022) aims to support strong, active and inclusive communities who can influence and shape the county in which they live, work and visit. Communicating to, engaging with and involving our local communities, citizens, staff, elected members and partners is a central part of our day to day running and supports us to achieve our 8 citizen outcomes in our Corporate Plan.

We are committed to place our citizens at the heart of our decision-making and ensure that all sections of the community have an opportunity to get involved at a level and in a way that suits them. We are committed to listening and responding to our customers, communities, staff and partners when shaping decisions, services and policies that affect them, and that this is seen as an essential part of the decision making process within the Council. The involvement and engagement of the people of Conwy forms a very important part of the information considered when decisions are being made.

The Community Involvement Strategy provides detail on the importance of becoming involved in the work of the Council, and explains the various ways in which we aim to encourage effective community involvement. As an ongoing engagement tool, we have developed The County Conversation, which is a platform for the community to share ideas or to get involved in making positive change in the community.

Engagement with minority groups is not always easy due to the low numbers involved. In some cases people choose not to be part of a group or community and we have to respect their choice in this regard.

Many local community groups that are considered to be representative of one or more of the protected groups are registered charities or are voluntary organisations with limited resources. We therefore need to improve how we take advantage of opportunities as they arise and work with other partners to share information and good practice and avoid consultation fatigue.

In preparing our Strategic Equality Plan we have undertaken the following engagement activities:

* North Wales Public Sector Equality Network: Regional Stakeholder Event on 24 May 2018
* Attended various meetings with local groups representing different protected groups
* Consulted with the Employee Equality Champions Group
* Consulted with Heads of Service and relevant officers within the Council
* Consulted with our Cabinet Member whom holds responsibility for the Modernisation Portfolio and other interested Members by attending the Member Development and Information Meeting
* Held various individual and group meetings
* Consulted with the public via social media including Twitter and Facebook to target all groups
* Provided the draft Strategic Equality Plan by email to key people from the Stakeholder Event and placed it on our website during December 2019 for public consultation.

Engagement is also an integral part of the Equality Impact Assessment process within the Council.

Please see section 5.1 for further information on Equality Impact Assessments.

### 3.4 Equality Objectives

We are required to focus on achieving measurable equality outcomes through specific improvements in policies and the way our services and functions are delivered. As a public body we need to ensure that everybody has equal access to our services and is treated fairly by our services. The fundamental principles of human rights also need to be at the core of service delivery.

We have taken into consideration feedback received from consultation and engagement and we have assessed our corporate priorities. We have considered data we collect in carrying out our services and functions and we have considered national and local equality data. The priorities set out in this Strategic Equality Plan have been developed following an analysis of this equality information.

The following seven long term Equality Objectives have been adopted for Conwy. These long term objectives have been developed through engagement with communities and will aim to prevent inequality through working collaboratively with our North Wales partners :

* **Objective 1: Outcomes in Education attainment and Wellbeing in Schools are Improved.** This objective will concentrate on the protected characteristics of Race, Religion/Belief, Disability and Sexual Orientation (secondary schools only).
* **Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps.**  This objective will concentrate on the protected characteristics of Gender, Race, Disability, Maternity/Paternity and Gender Reassignment.
* **Objective 3: We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics.**  This objective will concentrate on the protected characteristics of Disability and Age.
* **Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes.** This objective will concentrate on the protected characteristics of Race, Gender, Age and Disability.
* **Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice.** This objective will concentrate on the protected characteristics of Race/Religion, Gender, Disability, Sexual Orientation and Age.
* **Objective 6: Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making.** This objective will concentrate on the protected characteristics of Race and Disability.
* **Objective 7: Develop our knowledge and understanding of the socio-economic duty** (when guidance becomes available) to identify the key areas of impact to be addressed under each of our other 6 objectives. This objective is likely to be relevant to all the protected groups and will be determined as this duty becomes clearer.

Please note that whilst each Objective above relates to specific protected characteristics, other protected groups will also benefit from the actions identified under each Objective.

We have identified Objectives that specifically cover 8 out of the 9 protected characteristics. We do not have a specific objective covering Marriage and Civil partnership because there have been no recommendations or areas of concern raised either from local data or engagement with people from different protected groups or from Is Wales Fairer? 2018. However existing actions in our plan will not exclude this group when we are seeking to improve equality for all sections of our community and will continue to be considered as part of our Equality Impact Assessment process.

**3.5 Equality Objective Action Areas**

Seven Equality Objectives have been identified with a number of key priority areas under each objective. Each of the North Wales Local Authority partners in our North Wales Public Sector Equality Network have adopted the Equality Objectives and relevant Priority Areas for their organisation, by taking account of local data and engagement. Conwy has subscribed to the following action areas because of the inequalities identified below:

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| **Objective 1: Outcomes in Education attainment and Wellbeing in Schools are Improved** |

**Relevant Data: Education**

1. In Conwy in 2018:

* 92.8% boys and 94.07% girls achieved Level 1 (A\*- G GCSE)
* 59.3% boys achieved Level 2 (A\*- C GCSE) compared to 69.1% girls
* 97.5% of BME pupils achieved Level 1 (A\*- G GCSE) and 55.0% achieved Level 2 (A\*-C GCSE) compared to 97.6% and 68.1% respectively for all pupils
* 94.3% of children on Free School Meals achieved Level 1 and 37.7% achieved Level 2
* 100% of pupils undertaking English as an Additional Language achieved level 1 and 33.3% level 2
* 93.1% of Children on Special Education Need register attained Level 1 and 34.7% Level 2
* 100% of Looked After Children achieved Level 1 and 27.3% Level 2

1. In North Wales in 2017/18, attainment to Level 2 was achieved by 27.8% of children on Free School Meals (FSM), compared to 57.9% of those not on FSM (a similar gap is reflected in Conwy’s results)
2. School exclusions in 2015/16 per 1000 pupils equated 33.1 per 1000 pupils in North Wales. In Conwy in 2016/17 exclusions amounted to 26 (compared to the average in North Wales of 32.6 (the all-Wales figure was 36.6 per 1000 pupils).
3. In Wales in 2015/16 there were 32.6 exclusions per 1000 pupils with 101.3 SEN (Special Education Needs) pupils excluded compared to Non-SEN of 11.6. There were also 86.3 per 1000 FSM pupils compared to 20.9 Non FSM pupils.
4. The School Health Research Network 2017/18 suggests that in North Wales 17% of pupils in years 7-11 had bullied others in school. 20% were male and 14% female.
5. 37% of Year 7-11 pupils reported some experience of being bullied (40% female and 33% male).
6. In Conwy in 2018, 391 bullying cases were reported in schools in Conwy (4 racial, 0 homophobic, 5 gender, 8 disability)
7. 13.1% of 16-24 year olds in North Wales were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) in 2018. However, 1.3% Year 11 leavers reported to be NEET in Conwy in 2017.
8. In 2011 (Census), 29.3% of people in North Wales aged 25-64 held a degree (27.6% males and 31% females). In Conwy this was 30.8% males and 32.6% females.
9. In 2011 29% of White Welsh/White British in north Wales had a degree compared to 46% of Asian people, 43.5% of Black people, 32.5% Mixed Race and 30.5% of White Other.

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| **Priority Areas – Education :**   * 1. Address attainment gaps for children and young people to maximise their potential   2. Reduce high exclusion rates for disabled and ethnic minority children   3. Collate bullying data by protected characteristic to enable each school to identify relevant objective(s)   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   5. Address mental health for pupils in schools |

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

**Relevant Data: Employment and Pay**

1. In Conwy in March 2019, 52.9% of the population was in employment (58.4% males and 47.7% females) – the lowest rate in North Wales (the highest was Wrexham at 61.6%) with 54.7% of 16-24 year olds in employment, 84.3% of 25-49 year olds and 68.3% of 50-64 year olds
2. In March 2019, the percentage of over-65s in employment in Denbighshire (13.3%), Anglesey and Gwynedd (both 13.2%) was significantly higher than in Conwy (7.9%)
3. 80.7% of the ethnic minority population was employed, compared to 73.7% of the white population in Conwy in March 2019
4. 49.2% of disabled people in Conwy in 2019 were employed compared to 82.4% who were not disabled which is a similar pattern across North Wales
5. The unemployment rate in Conwy was 3% in March 2019 with male unemployment running at 3.2% compared to female unemployment at 2.9% (one of the lowest rates in North Wales)
6. The highest unemployment in Conwy (2019) is in the 16-24 age group at 7.2% (ranging in North Wales from 7.0% - 18.8%). This group are also twice as likely to be in insecure employment
7. 3.1% of people in Conwy are unemployed in the 25-49 age group, 2.1% in the 50-64 age group and none reported in the 65+ age group.
8. 9.5% of disabled people in Conwy were unemployed (March 2019) compared to 3.2% of all unemployed in Conwy. This is slightly higher than the all Wales figure of 8.8% but less than Gwynedd or Wrexham
9. Median hourly earnings for Wales in 2018 was £12.61 for men and £10.60 for women showing a gender pay gap of 15.1% compared to the Conwy population median hourly earnings of £11.10 for men and £11.54 for women showing a -4% pay gap
10. Conwy Council’s staff median hourly rate in 2019 was £10.91 for men and £9.73 for women showing a 10.82% gap compared to a mean gender pay gap of 4.48% (£13.82 for men and £13.20 for women)
11. The proportion of people employed in high-pay occupations (managerial and professional) in Conwy in March 2019 was 27.1% men and 27.9% women
12. Conwy Council’s representation of female decision makers include Chief Exec/Director level: 50% female, Senior Management: 53% female and Remaining Management: 55% female
13. EHRC report that 7 out of 10 mothers have had a negative or possibly discriminatory experience during pregnancy, maternity leave or on returning to work following maternity leave (no data currently available about the experiences of Conwy Council staff)
14. In 2017/18, 98.1% of Apprentices identified as White, 0.5% Black, 0.5% Asian, 0.5% Mixed Race and 0.5% as Other, with 1.9% stating they were disabled reflecting EHRC’s report that ethnic minorities and disabled people are under-represented in apprenticeships

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| **Priority Areas - Employment and Pay :**   * 1. Address gender, ethnicity and disability pay differences   2. Review our flexible working practices to ensure equal opportunities at all levels   3. Ensure effective policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment   4. Review Pregnancy and Maternity Provision in the Workplace   5. Ensure any use of insecure employment contracts (eg, casuals) adequately protects their rights as workers   6. Increase number of disabled people in work   7. Reduce gender segregation (the unequal distribution of men and women working in traditionally gender specific roles)   8. Improve participation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people across apprenticeships   9. Consider the use of positive action measures in recruitment campaigns where specific groups are under-represented |

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

**Relevant Data: Living Standards**

1. Disabled people face a shortage of accessible and adaptable homes and long delays in making existing homes accessible (IWF 2018)
2. In 2017/18, 132 of the 716 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) completed in North Wales were in Conwy
3. Single night “snapshots” indicate the number of rough sleepers in Wales has risen since 2015 by 44% to 345 in 2017
4. 1 in 4 people were living in relative poverty in 2015/16
5. 1 in 3 children in Wales were living in poverty in 2015/16
6. Single men, care leavers, ex-offenders and those experiencing multiple issues were most likely to have unmet housing needs
7. There is a lack of disaggregated equality data on homelessness
8. During 2016/17, 9210 households in Wales were threatened with homelessness of which 62% were successfully prevented for at least 6 months
9. 67.3% of those in Conwy assessed in 2018/19 as threatened with homelessness were female and 32.7% male compared to those being given assistance because they were homeless being 53.9% men and 46.1% women
10. In 2015/16, 21.1% of people aged 16-59 in Wales experienced severe material deprivation compared to 17.8% GB-wide
11. Wales has the highest rate of poverty in Britain and is more reliant on welfare
12. Department of Work and Pensions data shows that some groups of claimants are more likely to be sanctioned than others, eg, disabled people, younger people, men and some ethnic minorities and that this may not be effective in encouraging disabled people into work (IWF2018)
13. In 2015/16 disabled people were more likely to be living in poverty (32.1%) than non-disabled adults (22.4%)
14. In 2015/16 disabled people aged 16-59 were nearly 3 times as likely (40.5%) to experience severe material deprivation than non-disabled people (15.3%)
15. Refugees who are refused asylum are at risk of destitution with no right to housing, benefits, employment or recourse to public funds unless temporarily detained (IWF2018)
16. Refugees who have been granted asylum are vulnerable to destitution following 28-day ‘move on’ period if they are unable to secure accommodation or employment in that time (IWF2018)
17. 13% of women compared to 5% men live in food insecure households (IWF2018)
18. 33.8% of all households in Conwy were occupied by one person (2011 Census)

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| **Priority Areas - Living Standards :**   * 1. Take action to address disproportionate negative impact on people with different protected characteristics   2. Support disabled people’s right to independent living including adequate accessible and adaptable housing and related support   3. Better engagement with disabled people when renovating and designing buildings to ensure full accessibility |

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

**Relevant Data: Health Wellbeing and Social Care**

1. 32% of people in Wales were living as carers in 2016/17 with 42% of 45-64 year olds being carers and 34% of women and 30% men (IWF2018)
2. 57% of unpaid carers in North Wales are women and 42% are men (Population Needs Assessment)
3. 29.2 adults in 1000 aged 18+ in 2016 were receiving support from social care in Wales
4. 80.6 adults in 1000 over 65 in 2016 were receiving support from social care in Wales
5. Wales has the largest and fastest growing population of older people in the UK – in 2017 (mid year population survey) 31.3% of the population in Conwy was 65 or over compared to 23.2% for Wales
6. Mental health provision in Wales is not meeting demand – the number of people waiting for treatment has doubled in the past 6 years (IWF2018)
7. In 2015, 7% of adults in Conwy were being treated for a mental illness compared to 10% across North Wales and 12% Wales wide
8. In 2018 of the 224 patients in mental health units in North Wales, the majority (57.6%) were male and 2.2.% of them were under 18, 41.5% aged between 18-44, 23.2% 45-64 and 33% over 65
9. Disabled people in 2015 reported poor mental health more frequently (48%) than non-disabled people (16.9%)
10. Younger disabled people reported higher rates of poor mental health (66.6%) than older people 75+ (34.4%)
11. Disabled children reported good health less frequently (62%) than non-disabled children (87.4%) while 49.2% children with other impairments and 68.5% with mental health conditions reported good health (NSPCC 2015) with 10-15 year olds having the highest percentage
12. Looked after children are at greater risk of experiencing poor mental health than children in the general population with 49% being reported by Local Authorities in Wales
13. Whilst Welsh Government in 2005 advised not to use face-down restraint, in 2014/15 in Wales there were 382 cases recorded (MIND 2015)
14. In 2016/17 there were 1766 admissions under the Mental Health Act 1983 of which 94% were detained without criminal court involvement; Section 2 admissions increased to 1246 and 206 patients were subject to Supervised Community Treatment (SCT) involving 117 men and 89 women.
15. Severe lack of disaggregated data across all areas of health means the health outcomes and barriers in access to health for some of the most disadvantaged people in society are unknown
16. Provision of mental health services in Welsh is inadequate and poorly developed (Mental Health Foundation)
17. In 2016, men in Wales were more than 4 times more likely to die by suicide than women
18. Between 2013 and 2017 there were 8 suicides per 100,000 adults in Conwy which is the lowest in North Wales, with Gwynedd being the highest at 14.6 compared to 12.4 for all Wales
19. Men living in deprived areas of Wales have an 8 years lower life expectancy (73.6 years) than those living in least deprived areas (82.5 years)
20. Between 2014-16 life expectancy in North Wales was 78.8 for men and 82.6 for women (similar to Conwy)
21. Between 2014-16 disability-free life expectancy in Conwy was 60.9 for men and 59.5 for women whereas the number of additional years expected to live with limiting long term physical or mental condition was 17.9 years for men and 23.5 years for women
22. The 2011 Census reported that Gypsy or Irish Travellers reported the worst health from all ethnic minority groups and they were also the highest providers of 20 hours or more unpaid care in North Wales
23. The majority of people with a learning disability in Wales do not receive an annual health check
24. Welsh Government investigation into experiences of homeless people in 2016 found a third of homeless people stated their homelessness was caused by a health problem and nearly a quarter who were admitted to hospital said they were discharged to the streets or unsuitable accommodation (IWF2018)
25. Poor access to health provision, combined with a mistrust and reluctant uptake of health services, is still a major issue affecting Romani and Traveller health in Wales (March 2017)
26. 56.2% of adults in North Wales had reported in the National Survey for Wales in 2016/17 that they had participated in sport in the previous 4 weeks (69% of 25-34 year olds; 69% of 35-44 year olds; 64% of 45-54 year olds; 52% of 55-64 year olds; 45% of 65-74 year olds and 18% of 75+ year olds)

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| **Priority Areas - Health Wellbeing and Social Care :**  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 |

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

**Relevant Data: Personal Security and Access to Justice**

1. Hate crimes across all protected characteristics has increased in Wales with spikes in race and religion hate crimes following trigger events such as terrorist attacks and the EU Referendum
2. 75% of recorded hate crimes in Wales in 2016/17 were motivated by race or religion, a 47% increase since 2013/14 which is also reflected in North Wales (ONS have stated that action taken to improve recording and reporting is likely to be a factor in this increase: Home Office 2017)
3. 681 offences in North Wales in 2017/18 were recorded as Hate Crimes, of which 64% related to race, 20% to sexual orientation, 9% to disability, 6% to religion and 1% to transgender identity
4. In 2016/17 Police reported 461 sexual orientation, 338 disability and 45 transgender hate crimes
5. There has been a sharp increase in sexual and domestic violence offences since 2015 and in North Wales in 2018/19 there were 2723 sexual offences reported and in 2017/18 there were 9449 domestic abuse related offences (which was 18% of all offences in that period)
6. The rate of violence against the person domestic abuse related offences per 1000 population in 2017/18 was 11 in North Wales compared to 9 across Wales and 8 across England and Wales.
7. Inappropriate use of Police Stations as a ‘place of safety’ has decreased but there has been a slight increase in detentions under the Mental Health Act 1983
8. The majority of LGBT people (82%) who had experienced a hate crime did not report it (Stonewall 2017)
9. 5 in 6 victims of sexual assault (83%) do not report their experience to the Police (Crime Survey for England and Wales)
10. 7.6% of people in Wales experienced domestic violence and abuse (2016/17). This rose to 13.8% for those aged 16-24; 18.6% for LGB and others (compared to 7.3% for heterosexual); 25.9% for those with visual impairments; 17.2% with a mental health issue; 20.3% with a learning or understanding disability (compared to non-disabled people at 7.2%)
11. 92% increase in sexual offences against children between 2013/14 and 2016/17 rising from 26.6 to 51.1 offences per 10,000 children
12. In 2016/17 of 9215 cases of abuse reported for those aged 65+, 1430 (15.5%) were for financial abuse (WG 2017)
13. In 2016/17 65.6 per 100,000 of adults in North Wales were detained formally under the Mental Health Acts (74.8/100,000 male and 56.9/100,000 females)
14. In 2017/18 23 youth custodial sentences were given to children in North Wales of which 7 were in Conwy
15. There were 282 cases of alleged financial abuse reported in North Wales 2017/18 where the victim was 65 or over and 65% of the victims were women (64 cases in Conwy of which 65% were women)

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| **Priority Areas - Personal Security and Access to Justice :**   * 1. Work with our North Wales partners to increase confidence in Hate Crime awareness and reporting   2. Address VAWDASV by implementing relevant areas of the strategy by 2021   5.3 Improve awareness of personal safety and safeguarding |

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

**Relevant Data: Participation and diversity of decision making**

1. In the 2017 election 69.9% of the population voted (90.2% of the female population (a 30% rise) and 56.8% of the male population (IWF2018)
2. Local Government Elections 2017 candidates included 34% women, 98% white, 94% heterosexual, 15% disabled and a further 21% with an illness or disability affecting daily lives
3. 26% of councillors in Wales were women following the 2017 Election
4. 41.7% Assembly Members were women in 2016
5. 25% of Elected Members in Conwy are women
6. Women remain under-represented among local election candidates in Wales and in public appointment with limited data on other protect characteristics (in 2015/16 female appointments to Chief Executives reported 14% in Local Government, 42% in the largest charities in Wales, 60% in the NHS and 60% Head Teachers)
7. In 2015/16 there were 112 public appointments to boards of public bodies in Wales, held by 47.2% women, 3.9% ethnic minorities, 3.7% disabled people.
8. Between 2014 and 2017 Diversity in Democracy resulted in 65 mentors, 51 mentees from under-represented groups; 16 mentees stood for election and 4 were elected.
9. Since 6 April 2017 designated taxi and private hire vehicles are obliged by law to transport wheelchair users in their wheelchair, provide passengers with assistance and charge the same as non-wheelchair users (Equality Act 2010 section 165) but reports from disabled groups say this is not happening
10. Poor transport and digital infrastructure in rural areas is affecting people’s ability to participate in all aspects of life, particularly households without cars, older people in rural areas and disabled people
11. Loneliness, isolation and a reduced sense of belonging are some of the most significant issues facing particular groups including older people, disabled people, carers, new parents, LGB people and people from some ethnic minorities
12. In 2014/15 20% of people in Wales agreed they could influence decisions affecting their local area (Welsh Government 2017)
13. Two thirds of pensioners have no car making them vulnerable to lack of accessible transport
14. Disabled people have poor access to taxis and private hire vehicles, long waits for pre-booked taxis and being refused journeys (Disability Wales 2017 and Conwy Access Group 2019)
15. Wales continues to have areas of digital exclusion due to lack of infrastructure, particularly in rural areas
16. In 2016/17 85% of people in Wales used the internet at home with 75+ year olds being the lowest proportion of users (WG 2017)
17. The risk of digital exclusion is exacerbated by the closure of high street banks
18. A quarter of older people in Wales reported being lonely or socially isolated (National Assembly for Wales Health & Social care and Sport Committee 2017)
19. Other groups experiencing isolation included: younger people, service veterans, disabled people and people with long term health conditions, carers, young or new parents, LGBT, some ethnic minorities (relating to language) and those living in rural areas (National Assembly for Wales Health & Social care and Sport Committee 2017)
20. Concerns expressed about the quality of translation services such as Language Line and Wales Interpretation and Translation Services (WITS) for migrants, refugees and asylum seekers which is a barrier to accessing services and participation (IWF 2018)
21. 20.6% of people in Conwy over the age of 3 speak, read and write Welsh with a further 4.1% who speak Welsh but don’t read or write Welsh (2011 Census)

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| **Priority Areas - Participation and diversity in decision making :**   * 1. Increase **awareness of the importance of** diversity in political representation and **decision making bodies**   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)*   3. Ensure engagement is inclusive   4. Access to services should be supported by appropriate language support |

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

**Relevant Data: Socio Economic Duty**

1. UK reforms on social security and tax since 2010 have had a disproportionate negative impact on the poorest in society, particularly affecting women, disabled people, ethnic minorities and lone parents in Wales.
2. 4.7% increase in people living in poverty in Wales (IWF 2018)
3. 1 in 4 living in relative poverty in Wales compared to 1 in 5 across Britain
4. 1 in 3 children living in poverty in Wales (34.1%) - likely to increase by 8% by 2022
5. Child poverty is almost 1 in 2 if living with lone parents
6. More people in Wales rely on welfare than in England or Scotland pulling more women, disabled people and ethnic minorities into poverty (IWF 2018)
7. Rising employment rate has not improved the picture due to low pay which does not guarantee an adequate standard of living
8. Hidden homelessness is an issue including sofa surfing
9. Socio-economic disadvantage are linked to poorer outcomes in Education and Health
10. 1 in 5 (20.6%) children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) will achieve 5 GCSEs at A\*-C
11. Ongoing and intergenerational poverty is entrenching disadvantage and shortening the lives of men by nearly 10 years.
12. Disabled people in Wales are twice as likely to be unemployed and the number of disabled people in low pay occupations has increased meaning disabled people are falling further behind

The Strategic Equality Action Plan (see Appendix 1) outlines what we will do to address these inequalities and to achieve each of these top level equality objectives. The action plan specifies the timescales involved. We will measure how we are progressing by using the measures outlined in the Background and Research document (see Appendix 2). We will report on our progress towards these objectives annually.

These actions are integrated into our Service Delivery Plans which are monitored every 6 months through our Service Performance Review meetings held for each service.

Available equality data has revealed that certain groups within our identified equality objectives and action areas are more adversely affected than other groups and we have therefore stated where different protected groups will be targeted on our action plan. However, we will not exclude any protected groups from these actions because (a) we are aware that even though equality data may not be available for small groups, this does not mean those groups do not face inequality, and (b) we believe that all groups can benefit from the actions we have identified under each action area. Where there is a lack of data, we will seek to rectify this.

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| **Section 4: Employment** |

**4.1 Employment Monitoring**

**4.1.1 What we have done**

Conwy publishes annual employment monitoring reports on our website covering overall staff numbers, job applicants through each recruitment stage, staff training, disciplinary, grievances and leavers, all broken down by protected characteristic. Our Employment Monitoring Reports monitor the workforce and potential workforce. This information is used to review the effectiveness of our employment policies and practices and to consider whether there has been any possibility of discrimination. Any indication of the potential for lack of fairness or discrimination in the application of our policies or practices is investigated in more depth and if necessary, remedial action is taken to remove it by reviewing the relevant policy or practice. Any other actions arising from these reports are reported on in the following year’s annual equality report.

We have used past employment monitoring information to:

• Develop equality objectives

• Identify any key equality issues which require specific action

• Identify whether the workforce reflects the community it serves

• Provide a mechanism to measure progress year on year

• Identify possible steps to further advance equality or foster good relations

We continue to take steps to improve our position regarding equality monitoring data that we hold for all our staff and we have improved the position in each protected characteristic although progress has been slow. However, we have to respect that not all employees wish to provide this personal or sensitive information but we believe that it is important that we give employees the opportunity to be counted if they wish. We also allow space for people to state they “Prefer not to say”. Our application form provides an explanation as to why equality monitoring data is collected. We explain how it will be used and give reassurances around the Data Protection Act and confidentiality which has been strengthened further with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

If the Employment Monitoring Report contains any information that due to low numbers would have the potential to identify that individual, those specific figures are not published.

Over the past few years we have been developing our HR/Payroll system and in 2015 we introduced an on-line application process. We continue to offer a paper application process for disabled people upon request. In 2016/17 we added those schools included in our Service Level Agreement to our HR/Payroll system. On-line applications enables us to mandate the completion of equality monitoring information which is helping to improve our data collection.

During 2017/18 we also introduced a “self-service” upgrade to our HR/Payroll system to enable staff to access their own records and update/edit accordingly.

**4.1.2 What we need to do**

The Specific Duties, set out in the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011, require public organisations to report annually on the following areas for each protected characteristic:

• Employees working for us on 31 March each year

• Applicants for employment over the last year

• Employees who have applied internally to change position (tracking successful and unsuccessful applicants)

• Applicants for training and how many succeeded

• Employees who completed the training

• Employees who are involved in grievance procedures as a complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made

• Employees subject to disciplinary procedures

• Employees leaving and reasons for leaving

In addition, public organisations must :

• Compare men and women employed broken down by:

- Job

- Grade

- Pay

- Contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts)

- Working pattern (including full time, part time and other flexible working patterns

Our Employment Monitoring Report each year reports on each of the above categories.

We still need to promote wider, the self-service facility and look at other avenues to encourage staff to provide equality monitoring data. We will concentrate our efforts now on those staff who have been employed for longer and who have not completed an application form for a long time as well as non-office based staff.

Our latest Employment Monitoring Report is available on our website under the Equality and Diversity section: [Employment monitoring](https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Equality-and-diversity/Employment-monitoring.aspx).

**4.2 Equal Pay and Pay Differences**

The Equality Act 2010 is the current legislative source on equal pay for the protected characteristic of sex. It requires that women and men are paid on equal terms where they are employed on ‘like work’ or ‘work rated as equivalent’ or ‘work of equal value’. Conwy Council carried out an extensive process of job evaluation which was concluded during 2010/11 with the objective of equalising pay in line with the defined terms above.

The Specific Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011 in respect of pay differences are aimed at achieving:

* Better and more equitable pay outcomes for all protected groups
* Encouraging transparency on any differences in pay for people who have a protected characteristic and those who do not
* Specifically prompting actions to address pay gaps

We analyse our employment information in regard to:

* Differences of pay between those employees that have a particular protected characteristic and those who do not
* Differences of pay between men and women to analyse any gender pay difference

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

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

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Pay Gap** | **2009 Pre JE** | **2009 Post JE** | **31.3.**  **2011** | **31.3.**  **2015** | **31.3.**  **2017** | **31.3. 2018** | **31.3.**  **2019** |
| Gender Pay Gap range between Grades G01-G12 |  |  | +1.1-0% | +0.8-+1.9% | -1.8-+0.4% | -1.8-+0.39% | -1.85-+1.2% |
| Total Gender Pay Gap Grades G01-G12 |  |  | +13.1% | +9.3% | +7.53% | +7.15% | +5.47% |
| All posts Gender Pay Gap | +16.2% | +15.8% | +8.83% | +6.5% | +4.39% | +3.56% | +2.8% |
| Disability Pay Gap |  |  | -10% |  | 0% | -9.78% | -0.9% |
| BME Pay Gap |  |  | +2.45% |  | +6.35% | +5.10% | +8.07% |
| Age Pay Gap :  Under 50s as % of 50+ |  |  |  |  | -1.37% | -2.47% | -2.21% |
| Age Pay Gap  50+ as % of Under 50s |  |  |  |  | +1.35% | +2.41% | +2.16% |

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

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

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

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

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

We 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.

It is important to note the difference between equal pay and a pay gap. **Equal pay** is about paying people the same for work of equal value. Through the implementation of our Job Evaluation Scheme, we are confident in being able to state that we do not have an equal pay issue in Conwy County Borough Council. All our jobs under Singe Status are scored using the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) Scheme which measures posts according to the level of supervision, knowledge, creativity required, complexity of contacts with others, the resources they are responsible for, the level and impact of decisions they make and work context. Similarly our Chief Officer posts are scored under HAY and pay for Teachers is negotiated nationally.

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

In Conwy, we employ significantly more women than men (75%) and more of our staff are part-time (52%) 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 -1.85 and +1.2%, indeed in Grades G01, G04, G05, G09 and G12, pay marginally favours women, suggesting that there is no substantial gender pay gap between individual Grades G01-G12 and the gap of 5.47% for all single status grades G01-G12 is likely to be attributed to the large number of women being employed in G01 (41.2% of those employed in grades G01-G12). This is not uncommon in the public sector due to the labour intensive nature of the work undertaken. Using the same calculation, there is an overall gender pay gap of 2.8% when including all staff employed by Conwy County Borough Council. The gender pay gap for all posts in Conwy Council has decreased each year since 2009.

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 2019 which shows a slightly different figure to those above as follows:

**Gender Pay Gap National Calculation as at 31 March 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Female Hourly Rate** | **Male Hourly Rate** | **Difference in Hourly Rate** | **Mean Gender Pay Gap as a %** | **Median Gender Pay Gap as a %** |
| Mean (Average) Gender Hourly Rate | 13.20 | 13.82 | 0.62 | 4.48 |  |
| Median (Middle) Gender Hourly Rate | 9.73 | 10.91 | 1.18 |  | 10.82 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Upper Quartile** | **Upper Middle Quartile** | **Lower Middle Quartile** | **Lower Quartile** | **Workforce profile (2019)** |
| % of Males | 28.7% | 35.9% | 24.8% | 18.7% | 26.6% |
| Number of Males | 387 | 486 | 334 | 251 |  |
| % Females | 71.3% | 64.1% | 75.2% | 81.3% | 73.4% |
| Number of Females | 963 | 866 | 1013 | 1090 |  |

The mean gender pay gap uses an average calculation using the prescribed categories of staff to include, and 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, it appears that ACAS has also published guidance on what to include and exclude in this calculation which differs so regrettably it appears that organisations may still not be applying a consistent calculation to make fair comparisons. More work is therefore intended to refine this calculation before we publish it on the Government website.

We have identified further actions in our 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 -1.32 to +2.26 which is negligible and similarly the gap in the over 50s as a percentage of the under 50s ranges from -2.31 to +1.29. Head of Service level posts show a pay gap in favour of those over 50 of 6% and Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Teaching staff on Soulbury conditions show a pay gap in favour of over 50s of around 7%. The overall pay gap shows that employees over 50 are narrowly positively favoured by 2.16%, while 62% of the total workforce is below 50 years of age.

**Black Minority Ethnic Pay Gap**

Historical data shows fluctuations in the pay gap for ethnic minorities ranging from 2.45% to 8.07%. This latest figure shows an increased pay gap between minority ethnic and white categories. However, we only hold monitoring data for 51.7% of the workforce which will affect the accuracy of this figure.

**Disability Pay Gap**

Historical data shows fluctuations in the pay gap for disabled people ranging from -10% to 0% demonstrating that if anything, the pay gap for disabled people favours disabled people. However the reliability of this data is affected by the fact that we only hold disability data for 47% of our workforce.

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.

**4.3 Equality Training**

In relation to the duty on employee training, as a public sector employer, we are required to:

* Promote knowledge and understanding of the general duty and specific duties amongst all our employees
* Use any performance assessment procedures to identify and address training needs of employees in relation to the duties

We recognise that a single intervention on equalities training is not sufficient to ensure that our employees maintain an up to date awareness and understanding of equality issues. Equality training for all employees is mandated and we provide a base level of equality training through an e-learning module: Equality and Human Rights which employees can undertake at their own computers and we also run group sessions for staff who do not have access to a computer. This forms part of the induction process for new employees and we provide managers with quarterly reports advising them of the numbers of staff who have undertaken the training and those who are still outstanding. We raise this regularly at our Equality Champions meetings to ensure staff are still undertaking this training. The training module has been updated several times since its inception.

In addition to this bespoke training, we target training at specific issues to meet identified needs. Past examples include training on equalities in procurement, equalities in planning, as well as through various employment policy training where equalities is particularly relevant, for example, Recruitment and Selection, Attendance Management, Capability, Safeguarding and so on. We have also delivered a comprehensive programme of training over the past 2 years around Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence as well as Modern Slavery and more recently have been running regular courses on Sensory Impairments and British Sign Language awareness.

Equality Impact Assessment training is delivered on a quarterly basis and is a standard course on the Corporate Training and Development Plan. Ad-hoc sessions are also arranged where the need is identified. Training is tailored towards the need of the officers attending and one-to-one meetings are also held to support officers through the impact assessment process.

We ensure that equality is mainstreamed within business practices, for example, managers are signposted to the need to carry out Equality Impact Assessments within the Project Management process. Equality and diversity is covered in our Corporate Induction and it is regular feature of our Corporate Risk Register which ensures it receives regular attention and consideration.

We hold Performance Development Reviews with our employees every twelve months with a review after six months and any training needs are identified through that process.

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| **Section 5: Policy and Process** |

**5.1 Equality Impact Assessments**

The requirement to assess the impact, as set out in the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011, means that the Council should ensure it has sufficient evidence to consider whether policy or practice decisions could have a disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more protected characteristics. Where evidence is not available, we should put in place arrangements to collect data, disaggregated by protected characteristic. Relevant evidence also includes ensuring we comply with the duty to engage with those affected (or with those representing those affected) in order to understand the likely or actual effect of new or revised policies and practices on each of the protected groups. The Equality and Human Rights Commission Assessing Impact Guidance states the Council needs to:

* Ensure the policy or practice does not discriminate unlawfully
* Identify any adverse impact on people with protected characteristics
* Consider how the policy or practice could better advance equality of opportunity
* Consider whether the policy will affect relations between different groups

Conwy has an Equality Impact Assessment Policy and Guidance document to assist officers in undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment. Equality Impact Assessment training is provided to officers of the Council responsible for writing policies and making strategic decisions. It is recommended in our training and in the policy that at least one of the officers undertaking the Equality Impact Assessment has been trained in the process.

The Corporate Report template contains guidance explaining when an Equality Impact Assessment is required and requires the author of reports to bring to the attention of the decision makers, any issues that have been highlighted as a result of the Equality Impact Assessment and this process is monitored to ensure services are doing this. The Equality Impact Assessment process identifies a mechanism for ensuring that actions are lifted from the completed form into Service Plans. This ensures we mainstream equality into everyday service activities and provides a system to monitor those activities.

In order to fulfil the legislative requirement relating to publishing “substantial” Equality Impact Assessments, we have a screening tool to help consider if a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. This will be the case when it is identified that there is likely to be any adverse impact identified on one or more of the protected groups. If this is found to be the case, then the policy/practice is deemed to be regarded as “substantial” and will require a full Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken. We publish full Equality Impact Assessments on our website once translated.

The Equality Impact Assessments published need to set out:

* The purpose of the assessed policy or practice (or revision) that has been assessed
* A summary of the steps taken to carry out the assessment (including engagement activities)
* A summary of the information taken into account in the undertaking the assessment
* The results of the assessment and any decision taken in relation to these results

With the introduction of a Socio-economic duty, we will be reviewing our Equality Impact Assessment process to take account of the cumulative impact of our decisions.

**5.2 Procurement**

Local Authorities often contract with external organisations for the provision of works, goods or services. In the context of this Plan, procurement is the contractual process by which a public authority agrees for another organisation to carry out works and/or to provide goods and/or services on its behalf.

The Equality and Human Right Commission Procurement Guidance states that when procuring works, goods or services from other organisations on the basis of a relevant agreement the Council must:

* Have a due regard to whether it would be appropriate for the award criteria for the contract to include considerations to help meet the General Duty
* Have due regard to whether it would be appropriate to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the General Duty

The Specific Duties on procurement only applies to contractual arrangements that are relevant agreements, which in this context means either the award of a public contract or the conclusion of a framework agreement. Both are regulated by the Public Sector Directive (Directive 2004/18/EC).

The Council has a due regard to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations when spending public money. This applies to all procurement regardless of the value of the contract. We must have a ‘due regard’ at all stages of the procurement process, to the need to advance equality.

Conwy’s procurement toolkit sets out the standards to be adhered to during the procurement process. The tender process asks specific questions around equality and the pre-qualification questionnaire requires evidence from contractors on specific equality information, upon which they are assessed for suitability.

**5.4 Equality Information**

**5.4.1 What we do in Conwy**

Conwy County Borough Council is committed to ensuring that it is operating fairly and equitably in both Service Delivery and Employment. Equality Monitoring is the process used to collect and analyse data about people’s backgrounds and identity to help us understand if our equality polices and plans are working and if we are treating people fairly and according to their needs. The purpose of equality monitoring is to help us identify equality risks and prevent inequality. This information helps us to understand the impact of our decisions on different people.

For some protected groups, the collection of equality monitoring data is more sensitive and people may be reluctant to share some of their personal information with us. Whenever we ask our customers or staff for this information we always make it clear:

* Why it is important to us
* What we will use the information for
* How it will be stored in line with the Data Protection Act and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations) 2018
* Give assurance regarding confidentiality

We have an equality monitoring guidance document to help services improve the development, collection and use of our customer equality monitoring information. The guidance document outlines why the information is important and explains how the monitoring information can be used. It also provides detailed guidance on monitoring sensitive information and examples of appropriate questions that can be asked when collecting equality information.

Steps are also being taken to improve the quantity and quality of the equality monitoring data that we hold about our employees. We use this information to produce annual statistical employment monitoring reports. Care is always taken to ensure that monitoring reports do not disclose the identity of individual people. Where a report identifies trends which give cause for concern, we will take action if we need to improve or change our policies or practices to remove any possible unfair treatment.

On an annual basis the Corporate Research and Information Unit produces statistical information about Conwy, in particular, the Equalities Annual Research Bulletin. This report looks at the profile of Conwy County Borough from the latest available, reliable, data and breaks this down into each protected characteristic where this is available at a disaggregated level. This report also provides some commentary on what the data shows, as well as where there are still data gaps.

Workforce information is published in our annual Employment Monitoring Reports on our website : [Employment monitoring](https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Equality-and-diversity/Employment-monitoring.aspx)

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| **Section 6: Responsibility, Publishing, Reporting and Reviewing** |

**6.1 Responsibility for the Plan**

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the achievement of our Strategic Equality Plan and will work closely with the Strategic Leadership Team and the Senior Management Team to ensure progress is made towards achieving our equality objectives and delivering on the action plan. Political accountability rests with the Cabinet through the Modernisation Portfolio Member, who is also the lead Council Member for Equality and Diversity.

Each Service has nominated a dedicated Equality Champion to oversee the development of the equality and diversity work within their Service and to ensure that their Service delivers the actions defined in the action plan. They will assist with gathering evidence of progress towards achieving identified actions and assist in creating an environment that goes beyond meeting the needs and aspirations of all service users, breaks down barriers and truly values the diversity of our staff and the community.

All employees are responsible for implementation of the actions from the action plan as advised by their managers. Employees should work in a manner that is respectful of the different requirements and needs of their colleagues and service users. This will facilitate the compliance with the current equality duties placed on public bodies by the Equality Act 2010.

Responsibility for the co-ordination of the Plan rests with Corporate Human Resources. The Human Resources Business Partner (Equalities) and the Human Resources and Equality Officer are specifically responsible for advising and supporting Services in delivering the equality agenda.

**6.2 Publishing the Plan**

We will publish the following information on our website:

* The Strategic Equality Plan, Action Plan and Appendices showing relevant data (including our action plan to address gender pay difference)
* Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report
* Annual Employment Monitoring Reports
* Equality Impact Assessments deemed to have a substantial impact as identified
* Relevant Equality Data from time to time

Employees and the public have access to this information on [**www.conwy.gov.uk**](http://www.conwy.gov.uk). Employees are informed when new equality information is added to the website via Team Brief, email notifications and Equalities Newsletters.

**This information will be available in alternative formats upon request.**

**6.3 Annual Reports**

The Strategic Equality Plan and Action Plan will continue to be monitored by the Senior Management Team and the Principal Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the Council. It will be reported on annually to demonstrate the progress being made towards achieving the equality objectives and specific actions that we have set. New actions may be identified during the reporting period based on the changes in legislation or supporting guidance at that time. Similarly, existing actions may be amended or deleted as no longer relevant and this will be reported on in our annual reports as appropriate.

The Annual Strategic Equality Plan Report will be presented to the Senior Management Team, Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet prior to being published on our website.

Within the annual report we will set out:

* The steps we have taken to identify and collect relevant information and any reason for not collecting relevant information
* How we have used our relevant information in meeting the General Duty and Specific Duties
* The progress the authority has made in order to fulfil each of its equality objectives
* A statement of effectiveness of the authority’s arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information
* A statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives

**6.4 Reviewing the Plan**

In regard to revisions within the Strategic Equality Plan we are required to:

* Have due regard to relevant information held by the authority
* Use other information that the authority considers would be likely to help to review
* Revise the arrangements, objectives or the Strategic Equality Plan if the annual reporting findings evidence the need for an amendment
* Engage and consult with people representing the protected characteristics in developing the plan and objectives
* Publish these changes as soon as possible in an accessible way
* Review all equality objectives at least once every four years.

This Plan will be a working document which will inevitably have to evolve to reflect the Council and different communities needs on an ongoing basis.

In the period 2020 to 2024, we continue to anticipate that the financial constraints placed upon Conwy County Borough Council, along with all other public bodies in Wales, will remain extremely challenging. We also acknowledge that this has to be set against a background of increasing inequality and poverty. Whilst what we have set out in the Action Plan attached to our revised Strategic Equality Plan is believed to be achievable at the time of writing, we will continuously have to prioritise and reprioritise what we do to survive these ever increasing pressures. We will review and/or remake our equality objectives during this period if it becomes necessary due to financial constraints or due to Welsh Government decisions outside our control.

The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires all public bodies named within the Act to embed the Equality agenda into their Strategic planning and this work is now embedded in what we do.

If we review our approach to our Strategic Equality Plan before 2024, we will engage with relevant groups as part of this review and the revised approach will be published on our website following appropriate evidence gathering, engagement and consultation.

We will completely review this Plan in 2024.

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| **Section 7: Communication and Accessibility** |

It is vital that our customers have access to information concerning the work of the Council in regard to equality and diversity. It is equally important for our customers to be able to access information concerning the different services we provide. We currently provide information to a wide range of stakeholders including employees, the general public, Local Businesses, Town and Community Councils, Voluntary Organisations, other Public and Private Sector organisations.

We do this by using a number of methods such as publishing information on our Website, signposting via Facebook and Twitter, producing various leaflets, brochures and reports. We also have a Corporate Style Guide which provides guidance to officers when producing documents for the public which includes accessible formats.

The following are some of the alternatives we use to meet the diverse communication needs of our customers and employees:

* **Type Talk** – this service allows communication with d/Deaf and hard of hearing people through a call centre by means of a key pad and the centre staff will then communicate with the service provider by telephone and relay the conversation back in typed form to the caller as the conversation continues
* **BT Text Relay Service** – Customers with hearing or speech impairments can contact any Council service by dialling 18001 before the number they require.
* **British Sign Language Interpretation (BSL service)** – offered through a real-time translation facility using skype. For information on how to down load the app: [Sign Solutions](https://www.signsolutions.uk.com/contact-sign-language-interpreter/)
* **Induction Loops** – available in all our public buildings
* **Braille** – a system of raised dots that some Blind and partially sighted people can read. We can arrange for documents to be translated into Braille on request
* **Audio** – where information can be recorded on request
* **Large type** – all our information will be provided in large type on request
* **Easy Read** – some of our key publications will be presented in Easy Read format for people with learning disabilities
* **The Big Word translation and interpretation service** – to facilitate the language needs of our customers

The above is not an exhaustive list and we aim to ensure we cater for the needs of all our service users upon request.



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| **Section 8: Contact** |

**8.1 How to Contact Us**

If you would like to comment or have any questions about this Strategic Equality Plan please contact the Corporate Human Resources Equality Team as stated below:

 Phone: 01492 576225 or 01492 576301

 Post: Corporate Human Resources Equality Team

Conwy County Borough Council

PO Box 1

Conwy

LL30 9GN

 E-mail: [**equalities@conwy.gov.uk**](mailto:equalities@conwy.gov.uk)

[](http://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=images&cd=&ved=&url=/url?sa%3Di%26rct%3Dj%26q%3D%26esrc%3Ds%26source%3Dimages%26cd%3D%26ved%3D%26url%3Dhttps://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/icon-of-a-globe-for-website-or-mobile-application-vector-18823705%26psig%3DAOvVaw0RQJtEtBXUnYSmyZxD0wCs%26ust%3D1575039765153913&psig=AOvVaw0RQJtEtBXUnYSmyZxD0wCs&ust=1575039765153913) Website link: [**www.conwy.gov.uk**](http://www.conwy.gov.uk)

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| **Appendices** |

# Appendix 1: Strategic Equality Action Plan

# Appendix 2: North Wales Public Sector Equality Network: Background Data and Research Document

# Appendix 3: Equality Objectives Mapped against Relevant Plans

**Appendices are available from the Equality & Diversity section of the website at** [**Equality and diversity**](https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Equality-and-diversity/Equality-and-diversity.aspx)