

Strategic Equality Plan

2016-2020



Treating
everyone as
individuals





Conwy County Borough Council

Strategic Equality Plan

2016 - 2020

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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 2016 - 2020. 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 supporting the Well-being of Future Generations Act Goals.

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
Chief Executive



Dilwyn Roberts
Leader of the Council

Executive Summary and Introduction

This is our second 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 the Plan to tackle every issue all at once. Therefore in 2011-2012 we identified 6 top level objectives with accompanying action areas which were identified as priority areas at that time and published in our first Strategic Equality Plan. At that time we adopted an evidence based approach which came from relevant data available and took into account the main priorities that representatives of our community suggested we tackle. For this current Plan, our starting point was to ask the people of Conwy County Borough, other relevant organisations and individuals, our employees, management and trade unions, whether the overall objectives were still relevant. It was concluded from this work that the Objectives and Action Areas identified and published in 2012 remain largely relevant although with some suggested amendments to a few existing action areas and a small number of additional Action Areas. These are set out within this 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 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.

We recognise the future of public service in Wales is changing and evolving, in particular with the introduction of the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as well as the potential for future reshaping of Local Government boundaries in Wales. We will ensure we remain alive to these changes and our Strategic Equality Plan will be an integral part of future developments. Our Plan will be amended as necessary if feedback from the public, customers, employees, or from monitoring progress on the action plan indicates any imbalances in equality or if our corporate priorities change as a result of developing other strategies.

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

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 115,228 residents ¹(2011 Census). About 38% of its area and 4% of its population are within the Snowdonia National Park. Key strategic towns include; Conwy, Llandudno, Colwyn Bay, Llandudno Junction, Abergele and Llanrwst.

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. Rural Conwy is an attractive, mainly agricultural area with limited alternative employment. Its population is widely dispersed and is predominantly Welsh speaking. The main settlement in terms of population numbers is the market town of Llanrwst.

Conwy County Borough is an area of outstanding landscape ranging from extensive sandy beaches and headlands to sheltered valleys, open moors and rugged mountains. Not surprisingly, its economy relies heavily upon tourism. Tourism is an important part of the Conwy economy, supporting 10,820 full-time equivalent jobs directly or indirectly, bringing £559m revenue to the County's economy annually (25% of the All Wales total); and supporting 70,000 bed spaces (24% of North Wales stock). As such it is one of the mainstays of Conwy's economy and is a major source of employment and revenue.

The principle means of access to, from and within Conwy County Borough is the A55 coast road, the parallel railway from Manchester and London to Holyhead and the A5 road to the South.

1.2 People of Conwy

There is a fairly even split of males and females living in Conwy. In 2011 48% (55,749) were male and 52% (59,479) were female ²(2011 Census). 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

¹ 2011 Census, Office for National Statistics

² Statistical Bulletin for Wales, 2011 Census

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 2013 report that Conwy County Borough has the largest proportion of residents over the age of 65 in Wales at 26% of the population. ³(2013 mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics).

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. In 2011 there were 67,940 people of working age (16-64) in Conwy County Borough. This makes up 59% of the population, compared to 63.5% in Wales. 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. Conwy County Borough has experienced the largest inflow of net migrants from England in comparison to its North Wales neighbours, and is also affected by the largest number of net outflow of young adults aged 16-24 years old. ⁴(Statistics for Wales, Migration Statistics, Wales 2011).

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. In 2015 94.2% of pupils were White British and 5.8% were: other white (including Gypsy Traveller), mixed race, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Chinese, other ethnic group, refused to provide information / information not obtained or from New EU accession countries ⁵(Pupil Level Annual School Census 2011).

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. There is a register of

³ 2013 mid year population estimates, Office for National Statistics
<http://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2015/150625-mid-year-population-estimates-2014-en.pdf>

⁴ Statistics for Wales. Migration Statistics, Wales 2011

⁵ Pupil Level Annual School Census, 2011

physical and / or sensory impaired people and people with learning disabilities who use social services, but this only captures information about those people who use the Council's services.

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. The Integrated Household Survey which is produced by the Office for National Statistics does produce estimates at an all-Wales level, but data is not released for Conwy as the sample size is too small to be representative. These are experimental statistics and so they are not yet fully developed and have not been passed as a National Statistic. The Integrated Household Survey on Sexual Identity in Wales (2013) reported that 93.5% of the population of Wales are heterosexual, 1.4% are gay, lesbian or bisexual, 0.4% reported as other and 4.7% refused to answer or didn't provide a response. It should be noted however, that the Equality and Human Rights Commission believe these figures are likely to be an undercount.

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 Democracy within Conwy

1.3.1 Council

Council consists of 59 elected members, known as Councillors, each one is 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 community councils within the 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.

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 under 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.

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 community of Conwy. There are 4 Overview and Scrutiny Committees: Principal Scrutiny, Partnerships, Customers and Communities, 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. 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 Committee and the Licensing & Regulation 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 Senior Leadership Team

The Senior 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 One Conwy

One Conwy sets out a clear direction for all Public Service agencies to improve the lives of the people of Conwy. In 2012, following consultation and engagement with a range of stakeholders, the Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board (LSB), in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council, committed to endorsing 8 outcomes to improve the lives of our citizens in Conwy. The Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Local Service Board represents both Conwy and Denbighshire. The members representing Conwy consist of the Chief Executive and Leader from Conwy County Borough Council, Welsh Government, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Grŵp Llandrillo Menai, Community and Voluntary Support Conwy, Snowdonia National Park Authority, Natural Resources Wales, Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, National Probation Service, Wales Community Rehabilitation Company, Public Health Wales and Registered Social Landlords (currently represented by Cartrefi Conwy). One Conwy is the LSB's long term vision for the future of Conwy County Borough and covers the period up to 2025.

The Strategic Equality Plan links closely with One Conwy. The eight outcomes identified by the people of Conwy are:

1. People in Conwy are educated and skilled
2. People in Conwy are safe and feel safe
3. People in Conwy live in safe and appropriate housing
4. People in Conwy are healthy and independent
5. People in Conwy live in a county which has a thriving economy
6. People in Conwy live in a sustainable environment
7. People in Conwy live in a county where heritage, culture and the Welsh language thrive
8. People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to

1.4.5 Corporate Plan

Following discussions with the community, the Council developed and published a Corporate Plan for 2012-2017. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's key priorities where we want to focus special attention to support the needs of the people who live in, work in and visit the County Borough of Conwy. Delivery is reported on annually. The Strategic Equality Plan has been developed linking closely with the Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan has utilised the framework of the eight outcomes set out in One Conwy. Where appropriate, equality actions are mainstreamed into the Corporate Plan to strengthen the impact we can have on our community.

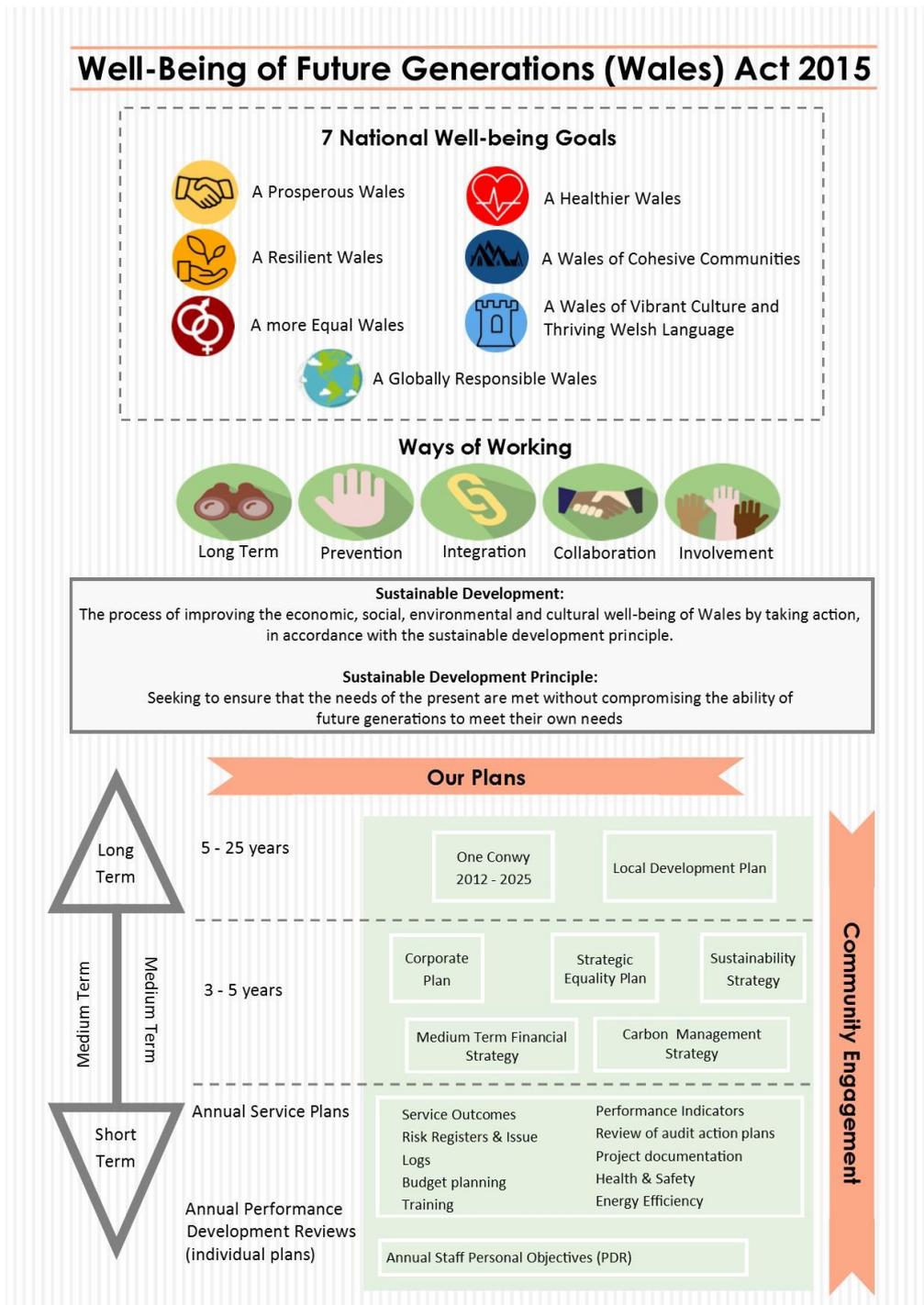
1.4.6 Public Service Board

The Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board consists of partners across the Public Sector. The PSB was established in April 2016 and aims to be ambitious, innovative and motivated to work together to find sustainable service solutions. They have the responsibility for implementing an assessment of Well-being and a Strategic Well-being plan by March 2018.

The Partners include; Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Natural Resource Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Public Health Wales, Conwy Voluntary Service Council, Denbighshire Voluntary Service Council, Welsh Government, National Probation Service, Police and Crime Commissioner Office and the Wales Community Rehabilitation Company.

1.4.7 Long Term Strategic Links

This diagram explains how our long term strategic plans of the Corporate Plan, One Conwy, Strategic Equality Plan and the Local Development Plan link together.



Please see Appendix 4 which shows where our long term Equality Objectives fit into other long term local and national strategies and goals.

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

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

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 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 or English when they contact the Council.

2.6 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 (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

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 is part of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network 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, Coleg Cambria and Community Rehabilitation Company. This group has grown in recent years and is well reputed across Wales in Equality circles as an effective collaboration.

The objectives of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network are to:

- 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 group, we have reviewed evidence on equality issues; considered what the priority areas should be; set up a group of stakeholders representing all protected groups and arranged regular engagement events to obtain their input into what our priorities should be; tested what we are doing at intervals and sought an input into future activities 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. The Council has used equality-related evidence and feedback from relevant stakeholders through consultation and engagement to set meaningful objectives. The Council ensures that relevant equality-related evidence is sought and consultation processes followed when carrying out informed 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 and the causes of any such differences, between employees who have a protected characteristic and those that do not
- Publish relevant information that we hold, unless it would be inappropriate to do so

The 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 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
- Equality and Human Rights: ‘How Fair is Britain?’ (2011) and their recent update on this review ‘Is Britain Fairer?’
- Equality and Human Rights Commission ‘How Fair Is Wales?’ and preliminary results from the draft ‘Is Wales Fairer?’
- Regional stakeholder and local engagement and consultation

In formulating the new SEP, equality objectives and action areas, the North Wales Network updated their original document prepared in

2011/2012 entitled 'Background Data and Research Document' using current national and regional research. The document highlights developments and latest research in the relevant areas and has been used in seeking evidence on priority areas and developing the equality objectives and action areas for the new SEP. For further details see Appendix 3.

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 and Partnership Strategic Plans
- Analysis of Corporate Research and Information Data

3.3 Engagement

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 October 2015 in conjunction with our North Wales Public Sector Equality Network partners, we held a third stakeholder engagement event with organisations and individuals representing each of the protected characteristics, where we sought their involvement in identifying what our new Equality Objectives should include, for the

period 2016-2020. A report outlining the feedback from this stakeholder group will be published on our website by April 2016.

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.

The Council's Community Involvement Strategy aims to enable a corporate approach to consultation within Conwy and make sure that we provide opportunities to the people of Conwy to be informed, included and listened to. This ensures that the approach taken is effective, inclusive, co-ordinated and reduces the occurrence of duplication or consultation fatigue.

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 form a very important part of the information considered when decisions are being made. A guide has been produced for the public to explain the importance of becoming involved in the work of the Council, 'How to Have Your Say: Statement of Community Involvement'. A staff guide has also been produced providing guidance on how to involve and engage with our local communities.

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 2 October 2015
- 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 Communication Portfolio and other interested Members
- Held various individual and group meetings
- Consulted via our website with the public on the relevance of the previous 2012-2015 Equality objectives and whether they remain a priority in formulating the 2016-2020 objectives or whether new priority areas should be added
- Consulted with the citizens of Conwy by providing information about the consultation in the Winter bulletin delivered to each Conwy household in October 2015
- 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 November and December 2015 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 six long term Equality Objectives, which are subscribed to by all partners in North Wales, 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.

- Address **Health** inequalities
- Address unequal outcomes in **Education** to maximise individual potential
- Address inequalities in **Employment and Pay**
- Address inequalities in **Personal Safety**
- Address inequalities in **Representation and Voice**
- Address inequalities in **Access** to information, services, buildings and the environment

For further details see Appendix 2.

3.5 Equality Objective Action Areas

6 Equality Objectives have been identified with a number of key action areas under each objective. Each partner in our North Wales Public Sector Equality Network has adopted the Equality Objectives and relevant Action 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:

Objective 1 - Address Health inequalities

Action Area 1.1

Increase the number of people, in under-represented groups, choosing healthy lifestyles.

What the data tells us:

- Obesity is greater in men than women even though the gender gap has narrowed in the past 4 years
- Men are more likely than women to smoke, however the gender trend for smoking is reversed in children and young people
- Smoking rates are higher in the more deprived areas of Wales
- Tobacco products are used more commonly in minority ethnic groups
- Physical activity is still less for women and girls than men and boys
- Generally poorer levels of physical health in the older generations
- Health inequalities result from social inequalities – people from lower social positions have poorer health
- The health status of Gypsy and Travellers is much poorer than the general population

Action Area 1.3

Improve dignity and respect in care for everyone, particularly older people, vulnerable people, transgender and lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

What the data tells us:

- The pace of change and improvement in dementia services is too slow
- Older people have identified that there is a lack of awareness of dementia amongst staff and lack of understanding of the challenging behaviour it can bring
- Poor continence management identified is a key concern
- Local authorities support fewer older people in residential care than in the past as more are cared for in the community
- WRVS report that 68% of women surveyed are concerned about loneliness in relation to ageing
- 1 in 3 over 65 year olds live on their own (and 1 in 2 85 year olds)
- Trend for delays in transfer of care is rising (26 days delay from acute wards and 41 days delay from mental health facilities)
- Limited number of support networks leading to isolation
- Further need to meet the cultural requirements of an aging Black Minority Ethnic (BME) population
- Poor experiences of older people due to communication problems

- between professionals and older people
- 65% of Trans people report experiencing ‘negative interactions’ within general health services
- Only a quarter of LGBT people felt they had received advice relevant to their sexual identity
- LGB disabled people reported concerns about staff care and maltreatment
- 31% of LGB people expect that they would be treated worse than heterosexual people by care home staff if they were a resident. Interestingly, 35% of those were over the age of 50
- Almost a third of Trans people who have used mental health services report feeling that their gender identity was not seen as valid but as a symptom of mental ill-health
- Many lesbian, gay and bisexual people report that they have experiences or fear discrimination because of their sexual orientation which they say creates a barrier to receiving appropriate care and treatment
- There are significant differences between the health needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people and those of heterosexual people – LGBT do not feel able to access the health services they need
- Preventative work with the Trans community is insufficient and health screening is not sufficiently targeting Trans people

Action Area 1.5

Better address the rights and aspirations of people with Mental Health issues and Learning Disabilities.

What the data tells us:

- Investment in preventative work relating to mental health is generally regarded as insufficient
- People with learning disabilities die younger and have poorer health than the general population
- People with learning disabilities are at greater risk of exposure to social determinants of poorer health such as poverty, poor housing, unemployment and social disconnectedness
- People with learning difficulties often have communication difficulties and reduced health literacy
- At least 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives
- 1 in 12 children and young people deliberately self-harm
- Poor mental health results in lower educational achievement, higher levels of physical disease and mortality as well as violence/relationship breakdown and poor community cohesion

- Approximately 40,000 cases annually of self-harm by children and young people result in hospitalisation
- Patient suicides in Wales rose from 57 in 2008 to 104 in 2012
- Unemployment for people with serious mental health illness is 4 times that of people with no mental ill health
- Mental health is the largest single source of disability in the UK
- Men with a mental health condition will die 20 years earlier and women 15 years earlier than the general population

Action Area 1.6

Work in partnership with other public bodies in North Wales to maximise our combined efforts to address health inequalities wherever possible.

What the data tells us:

- The need for more collaboration and partnership work between public bodies in all areas related to people's health, in particular in preventative health measures
- The implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 will bring profound changes to the way we work across the public sector, and in wider partnership

Action Area 1.7

Increase the immunisation coverage of vulnerable older people and children in deprived communities.

What the data tells us:

- Immunisation rates are improving, however there is still room for improvement
- Less affluent communities have lower vaccination coverage, contributing to health inequalities
- Statistics show that there is a 71% flu uptake in the over 65's and a 51% flu uptake in the at risk groups

Objective 2 - Address unequal outcomes in Education to maximise individual Potential

Action Area 2.1

Reduce the educational attainment gap between different groups.

What the data tells us:

- All Wales statistics show boys, black, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and

- disabled pupils underperform against other groups
- Over 60% of Gypsy and Travellers aged over 16 had no qualifications – nearly 3 times higher than the rest of the population (23%) (ONS, 2014)
- In Wales, Gypsy and Traveller pupils are the lowest achieving group. In 2013 only 12.3% of Gypsy/Gypsy Roma pupils achieved level 2 (GCSE A*-C) compared with 51.5% of all pupils)

In Conwy in 2014 :

- 94.26% boys and 97.07% girls achieved Level 1 (A*- G GCSE) and 63.07% boys achieved Level 2 (A*- C GCSE) compared to 73.89% girls
- 93.47% of BME pupils achieved Level 1 (A*- G GCSE) and 89.13% achieved Level 2 (A*-C GCSE) compared to 96.69% and 86.52% respectively for all pupils
- 96.99% of children on Free School Meals achieved Level 1 and 75.30% achieved Level 2
- 100% of pupils undertaking English as an Additional Language achieved level 1 and 92% level 2
- 83.67% of Children on Special Education Need register attained Level 1 and 62.24% Level 2
- 69.23% of Looked After Children achieved Level 1 and 15.38% achieved Level 2

Action Area 2.2

Reduce identity based bullying in Education.

What the data tell us:

- Bullying is a significant problem for children who are disabled, lesbian, gay or transgender and for those from lower socio-economic groups
- Girls report bullying as lies or rumours and more often this involves social networks
- Boys report physical bullying in primary. In secondary, homophobic bullying is more likely
- Children are at a higher than average risk of bullying if they are disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, from minority ethnic or religious background, or if from lower socio-economic groups
- There has been a rise in cyber bullying in relation to protected characteristics
- Between 20% and 50% of pupils in Wales are estimated to have experienced bullying at some point in their school lives (Estyn, 2014)
- There has been a 100% increase in children and young people seeking support from CAMHS but spending on this has remained static

- In 2014, 315 bullying cases were reported in schools in Conwy (down by 100 since 2010) (7 racial, 5 homophobic, 0 gender, 2 disability)

Action Area 2.3

Young people are supported in making the transition between Education and Employment

What the data tell us:

- Young people are more likely to live in overcrowded accommodation
- Those leaving care are more likely to be homeless or living on the streets
- Young people are likely to experience material deprivation
- Unemployment in the 16-24 year old group rose from 18% in 2008 to 20% in 2013
- Young people experienced the biggest decline in pay from £7.30/hr in 2008 to £6.50/hr in 2013
- The strong educational performance of girls has not translated into rewards in the workplace with women's pay continuing to be concentrated in low wage sectors
- Young people's employment has decreased markedly while employment rates amongst older age groups increased, creating a substantial gap between younger and older people

Objective 3 – Address inequalities in Employment and Pay

Action Area 3.1

Identify and address inequalities within recruitment, retention, training and promotion processes.

What the data tells us:

- Disabled people are more likely to be employed now than they were in 2002
- In 2013, the UK employment rate among working aged disabled people was 49%, compared to 91.8% of non-disabled people
- Average full-time weekly earnings in North Wales were below the Wales average in 2014
- Welsh Government reported that during the period April to June 2015, the UK employment rate for those aged 16-64 in Wales was 71.5%, slightly below the UK rate of 73.4%. In Conwy, in the year up to 2014 employment increased by 1%. Over the last year, the employment rate fell in North Wales whilst the unemployment rate was unchanged and economic activity increased. There were 305,000 people in

employment in North Wales in the year to September 2014, down 4,800 (or 2 per cent) over the year.

- Disabled people are as likely, if not more likely to be shortlisted for a job but less likely to be offered a post
- 14% staff discriminated against, 16% harassed by a colleague, 24% by a customer (Staff Survey 2010 - to be updated for 2015)
- There are still major gaps in our employment equality monitoring data
- In most years, there are more men than women who are subject to the disciplinary process
- A better understanding of reasonable adjustments and Access to Work support is needed
- Unemployment amongst 16-24 year olds increased so that they are now more than four times as likely to be unemployed as those aged 35-54
- In Wales in 2013 Muslims had the lowest employment rate of any group
- For disabled people, less than half (42%) were in employment in 2013 compared with nearly three-quarters (71%) of non-disabled people

Action Area 3.2

Identify and address any pay gaps between people with different protected characteristics.

What the data tells us:

- National research indicated that the gender gap in favour of men in terms of pay of graduates remained high, even when they had studied the same subject
- Male graduates achieved better employment and pay outcomes than female graduates
- Pay in (real terms) declined. Those affected most were: men, young people, African/Caribbean/Black ethnic group, Non-Christian Religions especially Sikhs
- Bangladeshi men had the lowest pay of all ethnic groups and Black men and their families have seen the lowest regressions in pay and income since 2010
- The number of Black and Asian workers in low paid jobs has increased
- Gender pay gap is below 5% for most grades except Head and Deputy Head Teachers, Soulbury staff and Directors
- Job evaluated posts (G01-G012) have a maximum gender gap of 1.9%
- Combined gender pay gap for G01-G012 reduced to 9.3% in 2015 from 13.1% in 2011
- 32.5% of all female employees are in grade G01

- The overall gender pay gap in 2015 is 6.5%
- Age pay gap shows employees 50+ are marginally positively favoured (+1%)
- 68% of the workforce are below 50
- We have no meaningful data for the remaining protected groups due to the small numbers involved

Objective 4 - Address inequalities in personal Safety

Action Area 4.1

Increase the reporting of hate crime and harassment and take steps to reduce incidents of hate crime and harassment including on-line abuse and bullying.

What the data tells us:

- Findings from the All Wales Hate Crime Research Project indicate that progress has been made, however it is clear that hate crime is still a daily reality for many people in Wales
- The protected characteristic most commonly perceived by the victim as an offender's motivation for committing a crime was the victim's race
- Religiously motivated hate crime is an issue for Mixed/Asian groups
- Homophobic hate crime remains a serious issue in Britain with 1 in 6 LGBT people experiencing a hate crime over the past 3 years
- There was a higher proportion of hate crimes in 2013/2014 against young people, disabled people, ethnic minorities, religious minorities and people who have never worked

Within Conwy:

- During the period April 14 – June 15 there were 46 occurrences of hate crime reported to Victim Support Wales

Action Area 4.2

Increase the reporting of domestic abuse and take steps to reduce domestic abuse.

What the data tells us:

- In Wales a total of 4514 women were referred to domestic abuse services
- 7 out of the 10 abuse types are rising, including increased reports of emotional abuse, physical abuse and forced marriage
- 29718 calls made to the Domestic Abuse Helpline in 2014/2015
- 7% increase in Domestic Abuse/Sexual Violence in 2014/2015

- 7.1% of women and 4.4% of men affected
- Partner abuse and stalking were most common of the separate types of intimate violence
- Increase in the amount of women in refuge who experience mental health issues

Action Area 4.3

Increase awareness in vulnerable communities around telephone and on-line fraud.

What the data tells us:

- Increase in telephone and on-line fraud incidents requiring greater awareness in the community regarding use of social media and the importance of protecting personal information

Objective 5 - Address inequalities in Representation and Voice

Action Area 5.1

Decision making bodies become more representative of the communities they serve.

What the data tells us:

- In Wales, 32% of elected councillors were females in comparison to 31% of unelected candidates
- The majority of elected councillors were over the age of 60
- The majority of elected councillors were white at 99.4%
- 2% of elected councillors identified as lesbian, gay or bisexual and 14% considered themselves to be disabled
- In 2012, 9% of Wales local authority leaders were female
- Political representation in Wales remains under-represented at all levels of politics with women, disabled people, young people, ethnic minorities, religious minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people

In Conwy:-

- 27% of Councillors are female (16)
- 64% of Councillors over age of 60 (38)
- 51% of Councillors over age of 65 (30)
- 98% of Councillors are white (58)
- 2% of Councillors consider themselves disabled (1)
- 10% of the Cabinet is female (1)
- 50% of the Chairs of Scrutiny are female (2)

Action Area 5.2

Consultation and engagement is improved through strengthening links between the Public Sector and local and national groups representing people from all protected groups.

What the data tells us:

- There is strong demand for a more co-ordinated approach to be taken by the public sector to ensure it involves the public effectively to empower people from all groups
- Engagement feedback was that engagement needed to be meaningful and organisations should look at a model of co-production
- In Wales less than one in four people feel that they are able to influence decisions affecting their local area
- Older people and women feel less able to influence decisions than some other groups

Objective 6 - Address inequalities in access to information, services, buildings and the environment

Action Area 6.1

Improve access to information and communications and the customer experience, in particular for people with sensory loss and for those whose first language is not English or Welsh.

What the data tells us:

- The number of people in Wales aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 50% between 2012 and 2037
- The number of people in Conwy aged 65 and over is projected to increase from 298,500 in 2013 to 381,300 in 2030
- The percentage of older people living in Conwy is higher than all other counties in Wales meaning access issues will have greater emphasis
- The National survey for Wales found that 95% of people aged under 45 years old used the internet, compared with only 22% of people aged 75 and over
- Barriers include British Sign Language interpretation provision, language (other than Welsh or English); catering for people with visual impairments
- 70% of people over 70 have a hearing loss

Action Area 6.2

Improve physical access to services, transport, the built environment and open spaces.

What the data tells us:

- Two thirds of single pensioners in Wales do not have a car and half of all households without a car consist of individuals aged 60 and over
- 17% of older people have seen a reduction in the number of public transport services in their area
- Access to public and community transport affected by funding cuts – in Wales 179 bus routes have been cut, altered or withdrawn
- 23% of disabled people had to turn down a job due to lack of accessible transport
- A recognised need for planners and designers to have a greater understanding of access needs
- Physical barriers remain for people with visual impairments

The Strategic Equality Action Plan (see Appendix 1) outlines what we will do to remove 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 3). 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. 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.

Section 4: Employment

4.1 Employment Monitoring

4.1.1 What we have done

Conwy has published annual employment monitoring reports for a number of years covering overall staff numbers, applicants through each recruitment stage, training, disciplinary, grievances and leavers. Past Employment Monitoring Reports are published on our website. 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 potential lack of fairness or even discrimination. Data which indicates there may be potential for lack of fairness or discrimination in the application of a policy or practice is investigated in more depth and if necessary, remedial action is taken to remove it by reviewing the relevant policy or practice.

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

Over the past 3 years we have taken steps to improve our position regarding equality monitoring data that we hold for all our staff. 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. Both the paper application form and online application form provide 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.

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.

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 have some key gaps in our employee data for a number of the protected characteristics and have an ongoing action in our Action Plan to address this. Over the past few years we have been developing our HR/Payroll system to introduce an on-line application form. This will assist us in our collection of recruitment data that we must collect to meet our Specific Duties under the Equality Legislation, tracking both internal and external applicants, successful and unsuccessful candidates, and their protected characteristics. The project is currently still ongoing and the new on-line application form system is expected to be launched by December 2015.

The recent HR/payroll system upgrades have included the development of a “self-service” system to enable staff to access their own records and update/edit accordingly. Approximately a third of employee equality data has so far been collected. There are still further developments ongoing with this aspect of the system and the next upgrade of iTrent will include greater emphasis on self-service so staff can log into the system and update all fields themselves. As part of the forthcoming developments of self-service, publicity of this new facility will be arranged and a process identified for staff who do not have access to a PC.

Our latest Employment Monitoring Report for 2014-15 is available on our website under the Equality and Diversity section.

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 equally favourable terms where they are employed on ‘like work’ or ‘work rated as equivalent’ or ‘work of equal value’. Conwy Council carried out an extensive process of job evaluation which was concluded during 2010/11 with the objective of equalising pay in line with the defined terms above.

The Specific Duties 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 between men and women

We have analysed our employment information in regard to:

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

4.2.1 What our information told us

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 of old grades and proposed new grades. A **gender pay gap** of 16.2% was evident before the Job Evaluation exercise (which included bonus payments). Once new job evaluated grades were applied, the gender pay gap reduced to 15.8%. 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.

An interim equal pay report was run in 2011 and the gender pay gap had reduced to 13.1% purely based on Grades G01-G12. When we added the whole workforce, the overall gender pay gap for Conwy County Borough Council equated to 8.83%.

This equal pay report was updated in preparation for our next Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 and the pay gap appears to have reduced in 2015 from 13.1% to 9.3% for grades G01 to G12 only (that is for posts which were subject to Job Evaluation in 2009). If we combine all posts in the organisation, then the overall gender pay gap for Conwy County Borough Council currently stands at 6.5%, demonstrating a progressive improvement over the past few years. A summary of the figures are set out in the table below:

Posts In Structure	2009 Pay Gap	2011 Pay Gap	2015 Pay Gap
G01-G12 only		13.1%	9.3%
All Posts	15.8%	8.83%	6.5%

The Equality and Human Rights Commission recommends that pay gaps of 5% or more should be treated as significant. If we look at Grades G01-G12, the pay difference between grades is fairly constant at between 1.9% and 0%, indeed in Grades G01, G05, G06, G09, G10 and G11, pay marginally favours women.

Our salary bands have a maximum of 4 points within a grade, meaning staff will rise to the highest band within 4 years. This 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, 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. 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.

There are no market rates in operation, pay protection ends on 31 March 2012 (although these calculations discount pay protection), we do not operate performance or competence related pay (other than described above within grade). The only other pay protection arrangements that exist are where there has been 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. Any redeployment to a post with a decrease of more than one grade will result in the pay for the grade being implemented immediately.

We pay stand-by and call out allowances as and when staff are required to work outside of their normal hours. These arrangements are currently under review and we are in a period of consultation on revised arrangements intended to adopt a consistent approach. This appears in our 2012-2015 Action Plan.

Analysis of this data suggests that there is no substantial pay gap between individual Grades G01-G12 and the gap of 9.3% is not attributed to unequal pay but rather to the vast number of women (32.5%) being employed in G01, which is not uncommon in the public sector due to the labour intensive nature of the work undertaken. We have identified some actions in our new action plan to explore the issues around job segregation.

We have reviewed the **age pay gap** and split the staff into two categories, those below 50 years of age and those 50 and above. In Grades G01-G12, the range of pay gap is from 0.7% to 1.8% and those over 50 are marginally favoured in most grades. Chief Officer level posts show a pay gap in favour of those over 50 to the tune of 12% and Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Teaching staff on Soulbury conditions show a pay gap in favour of over 50s of between 3% and 7%, compared to a range of 9% and 12% in 2011. The overall pay gap shows that employees over 50 are only very narrowly positively favoured to the tune of 0.57%, while 68% of the total workforce is below 50 years of age.

We do not have pay gap data for the remaining protected groups as the data set is very small and is therefore less meaningful.

4.3 Equality Training

In relation to the duty on employee training, we are required to:

- Promote knowledge and understanding of the general duty and specific duties amongst its 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 and Councillors has been one of our priorities over the past few years and we have the commitment of our Senior Management Team who have mandated that all employees undertake equality and diversity awareness training.

We provide a base level of equality training through an e-learning module Engaging Diversity which employees can undertake at their own computers and we also run group sessions for staff who do not have access to a computer. 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. 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, raising awareness of maternity legislation and so on.

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 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.

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.

Section 5: Policy and Process

5.1 Equality Impact Assessments

5.1.1 Assessing the impact

The requirement to assess impact means that the Council should ensure it has sufficient evidence to consider whether the decision would have a disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more protected characteristics. It must consider relevant evidence in order to understand the likely or actual effect of policies and practices on protected groups. According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission Assessing Impact Guidance, the Council needs to:

- Ensure the policy or practice does not unlawfully discriminate
- 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

Each new or proposed policy or practice requires an assessment of the impact on protected groups and human rights issues. An Equality Impact Assessment is a way of deciding whether an existing or proposed policy or practice does (or may) have an adverse impact on different groups within the community. The adverse impact may often be the result of not taking into account the different needs of different groups of people.

5.1.2 What we do in Conwy

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. The Equality Impact Assessment process identifies a mechanism for ensuring that actions are lifted from the completed form into Service Operational 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 Equality Impact Assessments, we have adopted a two-step process of Screening the policy/practice to consider if a full Equality Impact Assessment is required. This will be the case when it is identified that there is likely to be adverse impact 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 and we will publish all full Equality Impact Assessments on our website.

5.2 Reporting on Assessments

The Council is required to publish reports of the assessments where the assessment shows there is likely to be a substantial impact on an authority’s ability to meet the General Duty. The report must set out:

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

The Council is required to comply with engagement provisions as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process to improve our understanding of the impact our proposed policy or practice will have on protected groups and to have a due regard to the information the authority holds

and ensuring that we use relevant information to assess the overall impact.

5.2.1 What we do in Conwy

Where it is clear from the Equality Impact Assessment that the likely impact on the authority's ability to meet the General Duty for any protected groups which is regarded as substantial, meaning that a full Equality Impact Assessment must be undertaken, the full Equality Impact Assessment will be published unless publishing would be likely to contravene the Data Protection Act 1998.

Our current process in line with our Policy is that all full Equality Impact Assessments undertaken by Conwy County Borough Council, which have been deemed to be regarded as substantial, are published on our website as they are completed and approved. Copies of approved Equality Impact Assessments will be released to members of the public upon request.

5.3 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.

5.3.1 What we do in Conwy

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 policies 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, equality monitoring is not yet common place or it has raised particular issues. We recognise that many people may be reluctant to share this type of 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
- Give assurance regarding confidentiality

Within Conwy, we have developed an equality monitoring guidance document, to 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 reports do not disclose the identity of individual people. If a report identifies trends which give cause for concern, we look into this in more detail to decide 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 and breaks this down into each protected characteristic from data that is available. It presents the latest data and provides some commentary on what the data shows, as well as where data is still lacking.

Workforce information is detailed in Section 4: Employment.

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 Communication 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 by December each year
- Annual Employment Monitoring Reports by December each year
- 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. Employees are informed when new equality information is added to the website.

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.

The Annual Strategic Equality Plan Report will be presented to the Senior Management Team, Principal and Overview 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
- 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.

Between 2016 and 2020, we anticipate that the financial constraints placed upon Conwy County Borough Council, along with all other public bodies in Wales, will be even greater than they have been in the previous 4 years. 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 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. We are engaging with relevant representative groups and partners in developing our future plans in this regard.

If we review our approach to our Strategic Equality Plan before 2020, 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 and consultation.

We will completely review this Plan in 2020.

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, sending a 'Bulletin' twice a year to every household within Conwy, producing various leaflets, brochures and reports and making them available in all our buildings. 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 formats we use to meet the diverse communication needs of our customers and employees:

- **Type Talk** – this service allows communication with 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** – officers have access to a free service provided by British Telecom (BT) to enable communication with people who have a hearing or speech impairment
- **British Sign Language Interpretation (BSL service)** – if service users require BSL translation provision we will arrange for this, although it needs to be pre-planned
- **Induction Loops** – our glass fronted public reception desks are equipped with an audio induction loop
- **Braille** – a system of raised dots that some Blind and partially sighted people can read. We have translated a number of documents into Braille and continue doing so on request
- **Audiotape/Audio CD** – the information can be recorded onto audiotape or CD-ROM on request

- **Large type** – all our information will be provided in large type on request
- **Easy Read** – some of our publications can be presented in Easy Read format for people with learning disabilities
- **The Big Word translation and interpretation service** – officers have access to this service for immediate translation and interpreters can be booked 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.

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:

By phone: 01492 576225 or 01492 576301

Fax: 01492 576135

By Post: Corporate Human Resources Equality Team
Conwy County Borough Council
Bodlondeb
Conwy
LL23 8DU

By e-mail: equalities@conwy.gov.uk

Website link: www.conwy.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1. Strategic Equality Action Plan

**Appendix 2. North Wales Public Sector Equality Network:
Shared Equality Objectives**

**Appendix 3. North Wales Public Sector Equality Network:
Background Data and Research Document**

Appendices are available from the Equality & Diversity section of the website at www.conwy.gov.uk