

Cynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol Strategic Equality Plan

2024 - 2028

“Trin pawb fel unigolion”

“Treating everyone as individuals”

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd



Anyone can access **The County Conversation** to share views and ideas about the County or your local area.



Here's the link to our [County Conversation webpage](#)
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Foreword

Welcome to Conwy County Borough Council's (CCBC) Strategic Equality Plan 2024 - 2028. This document, and the supporting action plan, set 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, economy, culture and the environment. We have responsibilities for planning, building control, parks and gardens, highways, waste and recycling collections and much more. 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 of 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 quality of life for everyone in our community. By delivering the equality 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, which includes delivering on other equality action plans such as the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan.

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 in, working in and visiting our County.

Our Strategic Equality Plan aims to publicly state our commitment and drive to be an organisation that actively seeks to improve the lives of people with different protected characteristics. Our Corporate vision is to be a progressive county creating opportunity, and in order to achieve this we want to help create a more inclusive society that tackles discrimination and actively promotes equality and diversity. We cannot achieve this alone and we will continue to work with communities and other organisations to create real and meaningful change.

Signature
Rhun ap Gareth
Chief Executive

Signature
Charlie McCoubrey
Leader of the Council

Executive Summary and Introduction

This is our fourth Strategic Equality Plan since the introduction of the Equality Act 2010 and it builds on the work of previous plans and 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 General Duty in the Equality Act 2010 is reinforced in Wales through the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011 (referred to as the Specific Duties). This Strategic Equality Plan sets out how Conwy will continue to meet these General and Specific Duties.

The equality agenda is extensive and it is not something that a single 4 year plan can address all at once. Our strategic equality objectives are long term and so have been fairly consistent for a few years now. We shape the areas to focus on during the life of the plan by identifying priority action areas beneath each equality objective. We adopt an evidence based approach in developing and reviewing our Strategic Equality Plan. We do this by reviewing relevant data available, reviewing what progress has been made, taking into account the priorities identified by the Equality and Human Rights Commission as well as information obtained from relevant surveys, reports, consultation and engagement with our communities and our staff.

6 of our top level equality objectives are regarded as still applicable. Having reviewed relevant data as well as the recommendations from the Equality and Human Rights Commission: EHRC Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023 report, the priority action areas beneath each equality objective have been revised and are supported by a new action plan.

Through engagement and consultation with stakeholders, organisations and individuals representing all protected characteristics, as well as staff, management and trade union representatives, this latest plan continues the work towards achieving our equality objectives for the period 2024-2028.

The relevant data that has contributed to informing our equality objectives and the amended priority action areas are set out within this plan. The updated 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. The action plan is not a complete list of everything that we will do over the next 4 years in the area of equalities as inevitably there will be new work necessary during that period, but it captures an overview of the steps we will be taking towards achieving our equality objectives. To consider this further, we will undertake a review annually alongside our Corporate Plan.

We will report on our progress annually and will publish these updates on our website via our [Annual Progress Reports](#) and our [Employment Monitoring Reports](#).

Some of the key contextual events and factors which have influenced the development of this current plan include:

- The aftermath, and recovery from, the Covid-19 Pandemic and the impact that this had on our residents, service delivery, and delivery of our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
- The publication, and implementation, of Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan (2022) and LGBTQ+ Action Plan (2023)

- The cost of living crisis and inflationary pressures, which are having an impact on our residents as well as our own budgetary pressures and service delivery challenges

The work identified as relevant to Conwy from Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales and LGBTQ+ Action Plans has been captured in the action plan that supports this Strategic Equality Plan and those actions are also published separately as shown in Appendices 5 and 6.

Our Plan is focused on achieving positive outcomes for people who live, work and visit Conwy. We have tried to achieve this, whilst also aiming to ensure that equality is mainstreamed throughout our policies, functions and service delivery.

We aim to make all our practices and policies fully inclusive, eliminating discrimination, promoting equality, embracing diversity and fostering inclusion 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, according to their needs.

We recognise that public services in Wales are continually evolving and will continue to do so through the life span of this plan. Recent legislative changes which have influenced the development of this plan include:

- Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014
- Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The Socio-economic Duty element of the Equality Act 2010, which was commenced by Welsh Government in 2021
- Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023

Introduction of further legislation and action plans, such as through the work of Welsh Government's Disability Rights Taskforce or as a result of the ongoing UK-wide Covid inquiry, along with feedback from the public, service users, employees and from monitoring progress on the action plan, may result in changes to our corporate priorities. This means that changes to our plan may be necessary and we will consult on any changes as appropriate.

We strive to improve fairness, inclusivity, transparency, access and equity for all in both service delivery and employment, whilst ensuring that we manage our budgets and resources efficiently in a continuously challenging and ever changing environment. This Plan will support us in transforming our commitment into action to ensure equity 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 114,800 residents (Census 2021). About 38% of the area and 4% of the population are within Snowdonia National Park.



Image: Map of Conwy County

Population density is low, at 1.0 persons per hectare across the County borough. 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, with population density rising to over 30 persons per hectare in some urban areas on the coast. 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, tourism is an important part of the Conwy economy, with an estimated value to the local economy to be worth £739.53million, supporting over 8,783 jobs in the county (STEAM 2021 data, *note: estimated value and visitor figures from 2021 data could be influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic*).

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 9.79 million visitors in 2019 (STEAM data), and making it the leading destination area in North Wales.

1.2 People of Conwy

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) released the first results of the 2021 Census during 2022, with further data releases in 2023. The information below shows the latest available information from the 2021 Census, and includes comparisons with the previous Census in 2011 to show the change.

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

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

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

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

The 2021 Census highlighted the following changes in terms of ethnicity in the county of Conwy's population, with the figure in brackets referring to the change from the 2011 Census data:

- 94.1% White Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish or British (1.3% decrease)
- 2.8% White Irish, Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or White Other (0.5% increase)
- 1.4% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (0.3% increase)
- 0.2% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (no change)
- 1.1% Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups (0.3% increase)
- 0.3% Other ethnic group (no change)

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

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

The Census 2021 data showed that 48.4% of Conwy's population was male and 51.6% female (a 0.3% increase since 2011).

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

Age	Percentage of Population (2011)	Percentage of Population (2021)	Percentage Change
15 years and under	16.6	16.0	-0.6
16 to 64 years	59.0	56.6	-2.4
65 years and over	24.4	27.3	+2.9

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

The 2021 Census provided updated figures around **disability** in line with the Equality Act definition of disability (people who assessed their day-to-day activities as limited by long-term physical or mental health conditions or illnesses). The data has been age-standardised to account for differences in population size and age structure. In Wales, in 2021, a smaller proportion and a smaller number of people were disabled (21.1%, 670,000), compared with 2011 (23.4% 696,000).

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

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

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

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

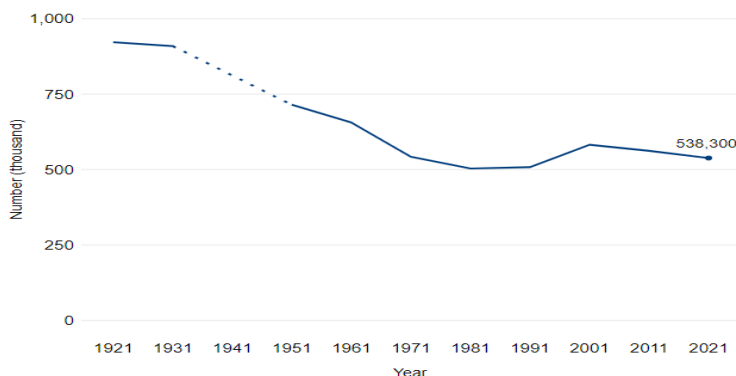
There were 950 babies born to residents of Conwy in 2020.

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

The **life expectancy** of females (at birth) in 2020 was 83.1 compared to males at 78.4 (4.7 years difference). The life expectancy for someone who is 65 is a further 19.0 years for males and 21.8 years for females (a difference of 2.8 years).

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

In terms of the overall population of Wales, the 2021 Census highlighted a decrease of around 23,700 (1.2%) of usual residents aged three years or older who reported being able to speak Welsh and was the third lowest recorded in a census:



[\(Census 2021\)](#)

The 2021 Census included questions on both **sexual orientation and gender identity** for the first time. The questions were both voluntary and were only asked of people aged 16 years and over. In Wales 3% of people aged 16 and over identified with an LGB+ orientation (compared to 2.5% in Conwy), and 0.41% aged 16 and over reported that their gender identity was different from their sex at birth (compared to 0.27% in Conwy), with a breakdown provided for both Wales and Conwy below:

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

	Conwy (%)	Wales (%)
Straight or heterosexual	89.2	89.4
Gay or lesbian	1.4	1.5
Bisexual	0.9	1.2
Other sexual orientation	0.2	0.3
Not answered	8.3	7.6

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

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

An overview of how life changed in Conwy between 2011 and 2021 is available here: [How life has changed in Conwy: Census 2021](#).

1.3 Government Democracy within Conwy

1.3.1 Council

Council consists of 55 elected members or Councillors and they are democratically accountable to residents of their electoral ward. 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 they have been elected to serve a term of office. At the time of publishing this plan, the gender make-up of the current Council is 63% male and 37% 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 as applicable 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. Cabinet make the final decision on the approval 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 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 through the Equality Impact Assessment process. 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, the Finance and Resources 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 Governance and Audit Committee, the General Licensing Committee, Licensing Sub-Committee and the Statutory Licencing 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 Finance and Resources, Strategic Director Social Care and Education, Head of Law and Governance, Head of Environment, Roads and Facilities, Head of Education Services and Head of People and Performance. 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 business 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. SMT are consulted on the Strategic Equality Plan and Annual Reports which are approved by Cabinet

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 through the Service Performance Review process which involves a panel made up of Members, Corporate Performance and Improvement and a Strategic Director.

1.4.4 Corporate Plan

The [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#) 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. Therefore it is vital we work in partnership with communities and other public sector organisations to make the improvements happen.

Our plan also reflects changes that we've all had to make as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and it addresses how we can help people, businesses and communities through a time of uncertainty and the rising cost of living.

The priorities were developed through discussion with communities through the ongoing County Conversation. There are challenges ahead but we will continue to put our communities at the heart of everything we do. We therefore review this plan each year to ensure it reflects what our communities have told us.

Our Vision

Conwy – a progressive County creating opportunity

We are working in a changing and demanding environment. Our vision is to be progressive in managing change and to use it to create opportunities; to safeguard what we have, and to build on this to accommodate change. This vision is a shared endeavour.

Our Values

Our values represent the beliefs of our organisation and the expected behaviour from everyone working for Conwy County Borough Council.

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

Our Priorities

Our [Corporate Plan 2022-2027](#) focuses on the following priorities:

Outcome 1: People in Conwy value and look after the environment

- Outcome 2:** People in Conwy live in a county which has a prosperous economy with culture at its heart
- Outcome 3:** People in Conwy are educated and skilled
- Outcome 4:** People in Conwy have access to affordable, appropriate, good quality accommodation that enhances the quality of their lives
- Outcome 5:** People in Conwy are safe and feel safe
- Outcome 6:** People in Conwy are healthy
- Outcome 7:** People in Conwy live in a county where the use of Welsh is thriving and people can participate in all aspects of community life through the medium of Welsh
- Outcome 8:** People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to and can actively contribute to a community where their background and identity are valued and respected
- Outcome 9:** Conwy County Borough Council is resilient

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

1.4.5 Public Services Board

In April 2016, the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 established a statutory board, known as a Public Services Board (PSB), in all local authorities in Wales. Conwy and Denbighshire have used the power within the Act to merge 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 Conwy and Denbighshire PSB published a [Local Well-being Plan \(2023-2028\)](#) which sets out the local objectives that the Board will take to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental well-being of the area. Through the Local Well-being Plan, the PSB will focus on **making Conwy and Denbighshire a more equal place with less deprivation**, and this is supported by four key themes:

- **Well-being:** Communities are happier, healthier and more resilient in the face of challenges, such as the Climate Change and Nature Emergency, or the rising cost of living
- **Economy:** there is a flourishing economy, supported by a skilled workforce fit for the future
- **Equality:** Those with protected characteristics face fewer barriers

- **Housing:** There is improved access to good quality housing

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 Police 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 other long-term strategic plans link with our Strategic Equality Plan.

...image to follow...

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

Discrimination is not always obvious and can be subtle and unconscious, this is known as **unconscious bias**. This stems from a person's general assumptions about the abilities, interests and characteristics of a particular group that influences how they treat those people. Such assumptions or prejudices may cause people to apply requirements or conditions unwittingly that put those in particular groups at a disadvantage.

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 the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share protected characteristics and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

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 seeks to demonstrate 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 strengthen the requirements placed on public bodies in Wales. 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

Note: A review is underway by Welsh Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission of the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011. We will monitor the progress of this review and will ensure that any relevant changes are enacted accordingly.

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 in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 but was not enacted until 31st March 2021. Its aim is to ensure that public bodies take socio-economic disadvantage into account by giving it due regard when making strategic decisions.

Training was delivered locally to support the implementation of the duty at the time and this is now integrated with the Equality Impact Assessment training. We have developed a seventh equality objective and corresponding priority action areas in this Plan to reflect the significance of this duty.

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 on our Welsh Language Standards internet pages [here](#).

Officers are required to consider the Welsh Language Standards when undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment on policies and practices. Issues relating to Welsh or English are likely to be covered under the protected characteristic of race. Specific sections of the Equality Impact Assessment form relate to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards which require an impact assessment in their own right.

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. We also ensure that people are able to receive services in their language of choice when they contact us, be that Welsh, English or another language. This is provided by our internal Translation service for Welsh and English translation, by [Interpreterslive!](#) for British Sign Language and by The Big Word for alternative languages.

2.7 Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

The Welsh Government published an [Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan](#) in 2022 with the objective of taking action to make Wales an Anti-racist nation. Adopting an anti-racist approach requires us to look at the ways that racism is built into our policies, formal and informal rules and regulations and generally the ways in which we work. The development of this action plan involved many discussions and conversations with ethnic minority people and wider, which concluded the need to take an anti-racist approach.

The action plan outlines actions for Welsh Government and the public sector (including local authorities) in a range of areas, including: Leadership within Welsh Government and across public services, Education and Welsh Language, Culture, Heritage and Sport, Health, Social Care, Homes and Places, Local Government, Employability and Skills (including Social Partnership and Fair Work and Entrepreneurship), Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, Crime and Justice, and Childcare and Play.

We will implement the relevant parts of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan as part of the work on our Strategic Equality Plan and action plan.

2.8 LGBTQ+ Action Plan

Welsh Government published an LGBTQ+ Action Plan in 2023, with the aim of making Wales the most LGBTQ+ friendly nation in Europe, supporting all LGBTQ+ people in Wales to live their fullest life: to be healthy, to be happy, and to feel safe.

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

We will implement the relevant parts of the LGBTQ+ Action Plan as part of the work on our Strategic Equality Plan and action plan.

2.9 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 1.4.5.

2.10 Strategic Equality Plan

A Strategic Equality Plan is a comprehensive framework setting out how a public organisation will comply with the General and Specific Duties to ensure that policies and practices are fully inclusive, eliminate unlawful discrimination, 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

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 and this collaboration has continued since then.

Conwy continues to be part of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN) 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, Eryri National Park (Snowdonia), North Wales Police and the Office of the North Wales 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 purpose of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network is to mainstream and advise on equality across North Wales through shared objectives, engagement with communities, collaboration and facilitation.

To deliver this, the network work together to:

- Improve access to information and services that meet the needs of, and improve the life chances and outcomes for people living in North Wales
- Maximise opportunities for holding joint public consultation and engagement events
- Discuss and share equality best practice in a creative and supportive environment
- Consider partnership / multi-agency working on equality and diversity issues to support the delivery of equalities objectives in member organisations' equality strategies and plans
- Work together to support and develop the role of staff leading on equality issues and share best practice, information, skills and knowledge

- Identify opportunities for sharing best practice in the area of training and development relevant to equality and human rights
- Use skills within the group to facilitate workshops on equality issues and to provide case studies for the benefit of other group members
- Develop equality understanding and information by arranging updates from relevant speakers by invitation and as agreed by the group e.g. Equality Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Stonewall, North Wales Regional Equality Network,, Welsh Government, Community Groups etc.
- Provide a voice within Wales for North Wales based Equality Officers to raise issues on behalf of people with different protected characteristics. For example, making representations or recommendations to the EHRC, Welsh Government - including group responses to national consultations / inquiries as appropriate
- Influence the work of Public Services Boards in North Wales in respect of developing a strategic vision for Equality and Human Rights
- Liaise with other Equality Groups, local organisations and neighbouring Public Sector Organisations as appropriate
- Regularly review these aims and objectives

As part of developing this Plan, we have worked with NWPSSEN partners to review the latest evidence on equality issues through jointly producing an Equality in North Wales Data and Evidence Report in conjunction with the North Wales PSBs; by conducting a survey of our joint stakeholders, asking them to reflect and feedback on our current equality objectives and priority actions areas, seeking their input on any other priorities we should be considering; and by analysing consultation feedback with NWPSSEN to consider necessary changes to our joint, evidence based, equality objectives and priority areas.

3.2 Relevant Equality Information

Listening to people with lived experience, and collecting and using relevant information is critical to meet our commitment to equality and 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 also 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:

- Listen and learn from people with lived experience
- 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

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, e.g. ONS, annual population surveys, etc.
- 2021 Census
- Equality and Human Rights: preliminary data from 'EHRC Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023'
- Regional stakeholder and local engagement and consultation

In formulating this Plan, and reviewing our equality objectives and priority areas, the North Wales Network updated their 'Equality in North Wales Data and Evidence Report' using current local (where available), regional and national research. The document highlights developments and changes since the last report undertaken 4 years previously, includes the latest research in 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 in this document, and in Appendix 2, to measure our progress towards meeting our Equality Objectives. We know we still have work to do and recognise that the equality and diversity agenda has evolved significantly since the previous plan was developed, both in terms of prominence and approach. This is a positive development in Wales' collective commitment to equality, but there is still much to do. This Strategic Equality Plan outlines the continuing inequalities that we are aiming to address to continue this journey.

Data has been drawn from a wide range of sources (e.g. EHRC Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023, How Coronavirus Has Affected Equality and Human Rights report, Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales Action Plan, LGBTQ+ Action Plan and Locked Out report). 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 Performance and Improvement data
- Analysis of feedback from Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment workshops

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 to ensure they are inclusive. We recognise the need to involve people who represent all of the protected groups within our population as part of that process. We have tried to do this through various means when developing this Strategic Equality Plan and we will continue to evolve our approach in order to strengthen both trust and relationships with the diverse communities we support.

The Specific Duties within the Public Sector Equality Duty 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. Since the introduction of the Socio-

economic Duty in 2021, which is set out in Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, public sector organisations must also involve those with lived experience of socio-economic disadvantage in making strategic decisions.

The Council's [Community Involvement Strategy \(2021-2027\)](#) aims to support strong, active and inclusive communities that can influence and shape the county in which they live, work and visit. Listening, communicating, engaging with and involving our local communities, citizens, staff, elected members and partners is a central part of delivery of services and supports us to achieve our Corporate Plan outcomes.

The Community Involvement Strategy aims to build on the good practice and lessons learned through the ongoing County Conversation, which was launched in 2016. Through the County Conversation, communities in Conwy have told us what is important to them and they have shared their ideas for change. Covid-19 lockdowns necessitated a shift to online discussions and in general communities have become adept in online communication. Whilst this will never replace face-to-face communication completely and could risk digitally excluding some people, it is anticipated that this model will continue to some extent as one option amongst many for sharing community ideas. Digital platforms have also opened up access and provided opportunities for people that usually would not have got involved, and the Community Involvement Strategy has been updated to reflect the change in digital engagement.

Through the strategy our objectives are to:

- **Strengthen, develop and maintain opportunities** for local people and groups to influence what happens in their communities as part of an on-going conversation
- Support opportunities for communities to **shape** and **influence** the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities
- Better **coordinate** community engagement activities to ensure consistency, quality and partner participation to avoid duplication
- Encourage involvement **from all sections** of the **community**, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of community engagement activities
- Improve **feedback** to participants about the outcomes of consultation and community engagement
- Promote **variety, flexibility** and **choice** in community engagement activities
- Develop a forward work plan so citizens and local communities can **choose** how and when they want to get involved
- **Listen** and **learn** from our own and others' experience and share community involvement skills and knowledge of putting the citizen at the heart of decision-making

The principles set out in the strategy are to be:

- **Accessible and inclusive** – all people within our community have the choice and opportunity to get involved
- **Clear and professional** – establishing trust, reliability and credibility
- **Targeted** – the right people get the right information to be involved
- **Open, honest and transparent** – having a clear purpose and we are honest about any limitations
- **Timely and relevant** – giving people enough time and notice to get involved
- **Sustainable** – to ensure ongoing mutually beneficial relationships
- **Two-way** – we will have a conversation, listening, not just talking

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. We have tried to address this by working collaboratively with the community cohesion teams across North Wales and sharing our engagement feedback with other organisations so that the anonymised community views we have heard, are shared as widely as possible for all organisations to learn from.

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 ensure that we take advantage of opportunities as they arise and work with partners to share information and good practice and avoid consultation fatigue.

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.

3.3.1 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. In response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic working practices have been reviewed and adapted for consultations on new and proposed policies and strategies.

In addition to the community engagement undertaken to formulate our Corporate Plan in 2021, between June 2023 and September 2023, in conjunction with our NWPSSEN partners, we undertook a survey of our stakeholders who represent all protected characteristics. The survey aimed to explore whether our existing Equality Objectives and priority areas were still relevant and to identify what more needs to be done. In total, we had 59 responses to the survey. Summary findings from this engagement has been published on our website as an Appendix to this report (Appendix 3).

As part of work to look at recruitment and employment barriers we also undertook some engagement on the theme of Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment. We carried out this work alongside partners from the North West Wales and North East Wales Community Cohesion teams, with support from the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership and the North Wales PSB groups. There were two workshops on the 12th July 2023 via Zoom which were aimed at discussing the following questions:

- What barriers do people from diverse communities face when applying for work, and how can we work together to overcome those barriers?
- What barriers – and opportunities – do you see for diverse communities applying for employment in the Public Sector?

Alongside the workshops there was a survey, hosted on the North Wales Regional Skills Partnership website, which asked a series of questions on a similar theme. A report was produced and information from this work has also informed our priority action areas in Objective

2, and has been used as part of reviewing our recruitment processes. A copy of the report summarising the experiences and views shared as part of this work is attached in Appendix 4.

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

- Attended various meetings with local groups representing different protected groups
- Consulted with our internal Equality Champions Group
- Consulted with Heads of Service and relevant officers within the Council, including via our Manager's Forum
- Consulted with our Cabinet Member who holds responsibility for the Modernisation Portfolio, and other interested Members by attending the Member Development and Information Meeting
- Consulted with the public via social media to target all groups
- Provided the draft Strategic Equality Plan by email to key stakeholders for comment and feedback
- 6 week period of public consultation between the end of 2023 and early 2024

The information obtained from all the consultation and engagement outlined above has been incorporated into the priorities and actions in this new Plan.

3.4 Equality Objectives

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 are required to focus on achieving measurable equality outcomes through specific improvements in policies and the way our services and functions are delivered.

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 Learning and wellbeing are Improved
- **Objective 2:** We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps
- **Objective 3:** We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics
- **Objective 4:** We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes

- **Objective 5:** We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice
- **Objective 6:** Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making
- **Objective 7:** Tackle socio-economic disadvantage by offering inclusive services to minimise inequalities of outcome

We have mapped the equality objectives below against the protected characteristics they are likely to include actions on. Please note that while each objective relates to specific protected characteristics, other protected groups will also benefit from the actions identified under each objective:

Age

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and wellbeing are Improved;
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps;
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the living standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics
- Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes;
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice

Disability

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and wellbeing are Improved;
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps;
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics;
- Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes;
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice;
- Objective 6: Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making

Gender Reassignment

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and wellbeing are Improved (Secondary Schools);
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps;
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics;
- Objective 6: Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making

Marriage and Civil Partnership

- No specific objectives on this protected characteristic although data is still gathered in this area and employment policies will give consideration of all protected characteristics when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments.

Pregnancy and Maternity

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

Race

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and wellbeing are Improved;
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps;
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics;
- Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes;
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice;
- Objective 6: Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making

Note: We have included relevant actions from the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan in the action plan that supports this Strategic Equality Action Plan but there is separate action plan showing those actions and reporting on all actions will form part of the Annual Equality Report (see Appendix 5).

Religion or Belief

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and wellbeing are Improved
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice

Sex

- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps;
- Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes;
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice

Sexual Orientation

- Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and wellbeing are Improved (Secondary Schools);
- Objective 2: We will take action to ensure we are an equal opportunities employer and reduce pay gaps;
- Objective 3: We will take action to improve the Living Standards of people disadvantaged by their protected characteristics;
- Objective 4: We will improve Health, Wellbeing and Social Care outcomes;
- Objective 5: We will improve Personal Security and Access to Justice;
- Objective 6: Increase Access to Participation and improve diversity of decision making

Note: We have included relevant actions from the LGBTQ+ Action Plan in the action plan that supports this Strategic Equality Action Plan but we will also publish a separate action plan showing those actions. Reporting on progress will form part of the Annual Equality Report (see Appendix 6).

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 EHRC Monitor: Is Wales Fairer? 2023. 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.

Socio-economic disadvantage is not a protected characteristic as such, even though we have a duty to give it due regard when making strategic decisions under the Equality Act 2010. We have identified a specific objective in this area as we know a number of the protected characteristics are particularly affected by socio-economic disadvantaged.

3.5 Equality Objective Action Areas

Seven Equality Objectives have been identified with a number of key priority areas under each objective. Some of the North Wales Local Authority partners in our North Wales Public Sector Equality Network have adopted these Equality Objectives for their organisations. Conwy has subscribed to the following action areas because of the inequalities identified below:

Objective 1: Outcomes in Education Learning and Wellbeing are Improved

Priority Areas – Learning and Wellbeing Outcomes (Education)

- 1.1 All Children and young people attend schools regularly and achieve their learning potential
- 1.2 Children and young people educated in childcare settings through to early education achieve their learning potential
- 1.3 Children and young people are safe and feel safe at school, have equal opportunities, and are encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle
- 1.4 To support young people to become positive role models within their communities and society
- 1.5 To support everyone under the age of 25 to access an offer of work, education, training, or self-employment

Relevant Data:

- 1.1. A 50% attainment gap was reported in Wales in foundation phase (Years 3-7) between children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children with no SEN (2019), with a 35.9% gap for school leavers achieving 5 GGSEs A*-C (Year 11)
- 1.2. Indian, Pakistani and Chinese ethnic groups achieved the highest attainment rates in the early years (Years 3-7), and ethnic minority pupils consistently achieved higher attainment rates as school leavers (Year 11) than white British children

- 1.3. In Wales, in the year ending July 2021, A2 outcomes (final year of A-levels) fell steeply for learners with Black, African, Caribbean, Black British ethnic backgrounds
- 1.4. 79.8% of children in Wales not eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieved GCSE grade A*-C (level 2), compared to 52.5% of children on FSM - with a gap of more than 30% between girls not on FSM and boys on FSM
- 1.5. Girls still outperform boys in educational attainment at all levels of education. This is the case across North Wales and Wales in general.
- 1.6. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children achieved the lowest attainments in the early years (Years 3-7) across Wales
- 1.7. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are excluded from school at higher rates overall than white pupils, with males more likely to be excluded
- 1.8. 54% of LGBT pupils and 58% of cisgender LGB pupils aged 11-19 reported being bullied in school/college due to their sexual orientation. Twice as many LGBT+ young people and 3 times as many black LGBT+ young people were likely to contemplate suicide than non-LGBT+ young people
- 1.9. According to the organisation, Show Racism the Red Card, a quarter of teacher/teaching assistant respondents in Wales observed, responded to or had a pupil report racial discrimination in the last year, with 3 in 10 pupil respondents admitting to being racist or using racist language towards another pupil
- 1.10. During the pandemic the mental health of children and young people who identified as neither boy or girl declined faster than amongst other young people, with 2 in 5 agreeing they felt supported in school but a decline in their families supporting them
- 1.11. Girls are more likely to be the victims of cyber and in-person bullying, whereas boys are more likely to be the perpetrator. 35% of secondary school pupils in North Wales had experienced bullying (compared to 33% in Wales). 33% of male pupils in North Wales reported being bullied at school compared to 37% of female pupils. 59% of pupils noting 'neither word describes me' reported being bullied
- 1.12. 4% of pupils aged 5+ in Welsh-medium schools were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (not White British) in April 2021, compared to 15% in English-medium schools
- 1.13. 17.2% of children in Conwy were receiving care and support with mental ill health in 2021

Feedback from consultation:

- 1.14 Schools need to have better policies and procedures on bullying and act on it instead of ignoring (acknowledging it, understanding it, containing it) and share good practice
- 1.15 Wellbeing is paramount for the mental health of children and young people - discriminatory behaviour can impact on children's wellbeing and their perception of school - all learners need to have a voice heard and representation - support networks should be the norm within our educational settings.
- 1.16 When considering education on gender recognition and identification, remember that the messages picked up by some pupils may be confusing, e.g., for autistic children who may think that 'being born in the wrong body' explains all their problems.
- 1.17 Prevent the sexual harassment of girls in school - provide healthy relationships courses and equality debates in classes to focus on inappropriate behaviour
- 1.18 Provide more support for developing social, interpersonal, face to face skills for all students as well as life skills (healthy relationships, healthy weight, importance of exercise and sport, budgeting, etc)
- 1.19 Encourage girls to study STEM subjects

- 1.20 Support young people with disabilities and additional needs, eg, autism provision (inconsistently applied)

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

Priority Areas - Employment and Pay:

- 2.1 Address gender, ethnicity and disability pay differences
- 2.2 Review our flexible working practices to ensure equal opportunities at all levels
- 2.3 Ensure effective policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment and other forms of harassment
- 2.4 Increase the number of disabled people in work
- 2.5 Reduce gender segregation (the unequal distribution of men and women working in traditionally gender specific roles)
- 2.6 Improve participation of women, ethnic minorities and disabled people across apprenticeships
- 2.7 Consider the use of positive action measures in recruitment campaigns where specific groups are under-represented
- 2.8 Implement a programme of anti-racism and anti-discrimination within the organisation promoting the value of positive relationships, diversity and inclusion
- 2.9 Address the barriers to employment for diverse communities

Relevant Data:

- 2.1 Across Wales, disabled people are consistently much less likely to be employed (39.1%) than non-disabled people (75.3%). In Conwy 82% of non-disabled people are employed compared with 47% of disabled people (similar across North Wales)
- 2.2 White minority groups have the highest rate of employment in Wales with white British the lowest, however, ethnic minority groups are more likely to be in insecure employment. In North Wales, the employment rate in 2021/22 was lower for ethnic minority people than white people (68% compared with 74%) and in Conwy, 75% of white groups were in employment compared to only 50% of the ethnic minority population
- 2.3 Ethnic minority groups are more likely to report experiences of discrimination and bullying in the workplace, with particular issues identified in [health and social care](#)
- 2.4 Across Wales, 34% of LGBTQ+ staff reported hiding or disguising their identity at work for fear of discrimination, rising to 45% for transgender and non-binary people

- 2.5 Unemployment rates are higher amongst males in Conwy (4.9%) than females (1.8%) and there are more disabled people unemployed in Conwy (8.1%) than non-disabled (2.6%). Unemployment is highest in the 16-24 year olds and some indicators show poorer quality of employment.
- 2.6 Childcare and caring responsibilities are key barriers for women in education and employment, especially marginalised women such as sanctuary seekers
- 2.7 The gender pay gap in the county of Conwy is 10.8%, with the median (average) for males being £14.30/hour compared to £12.75/hour for females. However, when looking at full time workers alone, the pay gap increases to 11% in Conwy and when looking at part-time workers alone, in Conwy, women are paid more than men and there is a negative pay gap of 11.8%
- 2.8 Within Conwy County Borough Council there is a mean gender pay gap of 4.18% (men are paid on average 4.18% more than females), with a median gender pay gap of 8.75%
- 2.9 The disability pay gap for Wales in 2021 was 11.6% with disabled employees earning less than non-disabled employees. There is no data by local authority area but within Conwy County Borough Council there is a mean disability pay gap of 0.73% across all grades (non-disabled people are paid 0.73% more than disabled people)
- 2.10 In 2019, the ethnicity pay gap in Wales was 1.4%. This means that on average, ethnic minority employees in Wales were paid 1.4% less per hour than White British employees. There is no data by local authority area but within Conwy County Borough Council there is a mean ethnicity pay gap of 8.84% across all grades (non-ethnic minority staff are paid 8.84% more than ethnic minority staff)
- 2.11 The proportion of women with higher paid occupations is higher in Conwy, with 35.9% females earning high pay (£?) compared to 29.1% males. Conversely the proportion of women in low-pay occupations is higher than the proportion of men in all North Wales local authority areas
- 2.12 Whilst Census 2021 data shows a higher percentage of females have degree level qualifications in North Wales (also seen in the Census 2011), in work women earn less money than men
- 2.13 Apprenticeships – the majority of female apprentices are in healthcare and public services (60%) whereas male apprentices are in construction and engineering (95%) and females are more likely to hold a level 4 qualification (HNC) or above. In Conwy (county) 60.7% of apprenticeships were filled by females, 97.2% were white and 4% were disabled
- 2.14 In an Ethnic Minorities Youth Support Team Wales 2018 All Wales Survey 60% of (143) respondents thought that ethnic minorities are treated unfairly in the workplace
- 2.15 The pandemic has undermined the confidence of disabled people, particularly young people. Leonard Cheshire report 42% of working age disabled people had experienced a negative impact on their future career ambitions as a result of the pandemic

Feedback from consultation:

- 2.16 Address sexual harassment in the workplace
- 2.17 Need to be proactive in supporting the disability confident award - unemployment for people with vision impairment is high, due to perceptions of what people with disabilities are capable of, inaccessible equipment and software or buildings etc.

- 2.18 Training needs around accessibility for non-binary and trans people, and neurodivergent people who often need reasonable adjustments in the workplace

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

Priority Areas - Living Standards:

- 3.1 Take action to address disproportionate negative impact on people with different protected characteristics
- 3.2 Support disabled people and older people's right to independent living including adequate accessible and adaptable housing and related support
- 3.3 Better engagement with disabled people when renovating and designing buildings to ensure full accessibility
- 3.4 Improve access to services for Gypsy Travellers and improve engagement to develop trust
- 3.5 Ensure that housing, homelessness and asylum services are inclusive of the specific needs of minority groups including LGBTQ+ people, ethnic minority people and disabled people

Relevant Data:

- 3.1. Over 75% of ethnic minority people in the UK do not believe their human rights are equally protected compared to white people
- 3.2. Disabled people in Wales persistently face barriers to achieving a similar standard of living to non-disabled people, with 27.3% of disabled people living in relative poverty compared to 17.9% of non-disabled people
- 3.3. Household overcrowding is higher for ethnic minority households
- 3.4. Shortage of Gypsy/Romany/Traveller pitches – many in unsuitable locations
- 3.5. Poor quality accommodation for asylum seekers and refugees is impacting on their health
- 3.6. LGB young people may be at greater risk of homelessness (due to family breakdowns, bullying in school and mental health issues, higher hate crime, engaging in sex work, substance misuse)
- 3.7. 87% of those aged 75+ were home owners, compared to 59% of 16-24 year olds but households in fuel poverty are generally older.
- 3.8. 9 out of 10 single parent households are headed by women and are significantly over-represented in homelessness cases
- 3.9. The number of Gypsy & Traveller caravans on authorised sites in Conwy was 4 in 2022 with 7 on unauthorised sites, compared to a total of 186 and 85 respectively across North Wales
- 3.10. In 2021/22 459 grant applications were approved for Disabled Facilities Grants across North Wales with 390 completed, with Conwy accounting for over a quarter (123 and 112 respectively)
- 3.11. 292 refugees have resettled in North Wales since 2016, with 17 in Conwy

- 3.12. 4.6% of persons aged 5 and over provided 19 hours or less unpaid care a week, 2.1% provided 20 to 49 hours and 3.5% provided 50 hours or more unpaid care. Those aged 50-64 were the highest proportion (16.9%) of unpaid carers with 11.7% of all females (compared to 8.6% males), 10.3% of white people and 5.2% ethnic minority people (Census 2021)
- 3.13. The number of people at risk of abuse or neglect in Conwy rose from 286 in 2016/17 to 552 in 2018/19, a rise of 17.9% compared to a rise of 8.7% overall in Wales
- 3.14. Across North Wales, Conwy reported the lowest % of very good health (44.5%) and the second highest % of very bad health (1.5%) with the numbers of people with bad or very bad health being increasing in each age category. The ethnic group with the highest proportion of people with bad or very bad health was White (6.2%), with the lowest proportion for Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (2.0%). A higher proportion of the female population were in bad or very bad health (6.4%) compared to males (5.7%).
- 3.15. The UK offered protection, in the form of asylum, humanitarian protection, alternative forms of leave and resettlement, to 14,734 (including dependants) in 2021, which was 49% higher than the previous year, and similar to levels seen from 2015 to 2018

Feedback from consultation:

- 3.16. More needs to be done on adapting housing for disabled people
- 3.17. It is clear that debt is an increasing issue and with interest rates impacting on mortgages costs debt advice is more required than ever. Without this support we will see an increase in further demand on social housing

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

Priority Areas - Health, Wellbeing and Social Care:

- 4.1 Ensure health and wellbeing needs of carers are met
- 4.2 Support the Regional Suicide and Self-harm Prevention Board to implement the relevant Welsh Government strategic plan to reduce suicide and self-harm, especially those with protected characteristics who are at higher risk
- 4.3 Evaluate progress on mental health to ensure we are meeting the needs of people with different protected characteristics
- 4.4 Use Social Model of Disability principles in policy and decision making
- 4.5 Implement specific awareness and support for people with neurological conditions
- 4.6 Address barriers to exercise and wellbeing
- 4.7 Increase confidence and support Social Care and other staff to highlight and address racist and other discriminatory behaviour experienced whilst undertaking their role

Relevant Data:

- 4.1. Over 60% of black people in the UK do not believe their health is as equally protected by the NHS compared to white people
- 4.2. The death rate for black women in childbirth is 5 times higher than for white women
- 4.3. Higher infant mortality rates and over-representation in child death for ethnic minority groups
- 4.4. A higher proportion of disabled people report poor mental health
- 4.5. Disabled people are much less likely to participate in sport or physical activity than non-disabled people
- 4.6. Those whose gender identity is not the same as the sex registered at birth are less likely to report good or very good health
- 4.7. Between 2021 and 2022 the number of Children Looked After (7,245 in 2021) in Wales decreased by 2.3%
- 4.8. North Wales local authorities were in the top 7 areas with the highest healthy-life expectancy but whilst women live longer than men, they spend more of their life in poor health
- 4.9. Life expectancy in Wales is 82.1 years for women and 78.3 years for men – Conwy has one of the highest life expectancies in North Wales at 83.1 for females (66 for healthy life expectancy)
- 4.10. Adults in Wales consistently take part in sport or physical activity at below the recommended levels, but women are less likely than men to do so
- 4.11. Welsh data from 2017-2021 notes that suicide rates were highest in the 45-64 age group (14.9 per 100,000) followed by the 18-44 age group (14.8 per 100,000). The rate was lowest in the 10-17 age group (1.7 per 100,000) with far higher rates in males (19 per 100,000) than females (5.7 per 100,000). The rates of dying by suicide were higher for disabled people than non-disabled people and suicide rates were highest in White and Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups and lowest for Arab ethnic group.
- 4.12. Adults in Wales consistently take part in sport or physical activity at below the recommended levels, but women are less likely than men to do so
- 4.13. The percentage of people participating in any sport or physical activity in the last 3/4 weeks (at the time of asking) has decreased in Conwy with 32% of males and 27% of females taking part in 2021/22
- 4.14. 29% of people in Conwy volunteered in 2019/20 with more males (35%) than females (25%)
- 4.15. 24% of Conwy's population estimated anxiety levels as being poor
- 4.16. One in four LGBTQ+ people (23%) have at one time witnessed discriminatory or negative remarks against LGBTQ+ people by healthcare staff
- 4.17. 36% of Asian/Asian British pupils do not frequently participate in sports compared to 28% of all pupils
- 4.18. We live in an ableist society and, as such, disabled people routinely encounter barriers in their day-to-day life.
- 4.19. Unpaid carers require further assistance (including higher pay) and without them, the NHS (and Social Care) would be under more pressure
- 4.20. 14.5% of ethnic minority staff (around 14,000 people) reported experiencing discrimination from a manager or other colleagues, compared with 6% of White staff

Feedback from consultation:

- 4.21. We should be looking after our communities better especially the elderly
- 4.22. Little thought given to disabled people's needs when organisations close down staffed services, e.g., ticket booths, impacting on mental health and wellbeing
- 4.23. There are so many people / families who are disadvantaged due to their financial situation, age and other characteristics and we need to work together to provide secure / appropriate housing, opportunities for work and education and access to healthcare when the need is there
- 4.24. There has been an increase in poor mental health and social anxiety after the pandemic and with the growing use of social media and a general lack of provision

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

Priority Areas - Personal Security and Access to Justice:

- 5.1 Work with our North Wales partners to increase awareness of Hate Crime and increase confidence in reporting
- 5.2 Work with North Wales partners to reduce incidents of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV)
- 5.3 Improve awareness of personal safety and safeguarding responsibilities

Relevant Data:

- 5.1. 85% of black people do not believe that they would be treated the same as a white person by the police (91% women vs 77% men)
- 5.2. Disabled people are more likely to experience domestic abuse and hate crimes against disabled people are increasing
- 5.3. Race-based hate crime (resulting in a charge) is the most commonly recorded hate crime in Wales, followed by disability hate crime
- 5.4. Black people and those with mixed ethnicity are more likely to have experienced sexual assault in the past year than white, Asian or other ethnic groups
- 5.5. 40% increase (from 173 to 249) crimes recorded against Trans between 2020/21 and 2021/22. Research by Stonewall in found that the majority of trans people don't report incidences to the police, and so this is underreported
- 5.6. The number of rape offences recorded against women has increased but the proportion of charges has decreased
- 5.7. 73% of all domestic abuse victims are women
- 5.8. Female adults are significantly less likely to feel safe in their local community than male adults in 2022 than they did in 2017
- 5.9. In North Wales, of hate crimes recorded in 2021/22, 914 (58%) related to race, 334 (21%) to sexual orientation, 248 (16%) to disability, 50 (3%) to transgender identity and 40 (3%) to religion – all categories of which have increased since 2016/17 with sexual orientation and transgender hate crime showing the largest increases

- 5.10. 14,147 domestic abuse-related crimes were recorded by North Wales Police between April 2021 – March 2022 (20.6 per 1,000 population) compared to the rate for Wales (15.2 per 1,000). 20.9% of all crimes reported in North Wales were domestic abuse-related (17.6% for Wales).
- 5.11. There were 13,340 recorded stalking and harassment offences in North Wales, a rate of 19.0 per 1,000 population. This is higher than the Wales wide rate of 15.1
- 5.12. There were 298 alleged cases of financial abuse reported for adults aged 65 and over in 2018/19 in North Wales with more female victims (169/57%) than male (129/43%) across North Wales which has increased since last reported. There were 81 cases in Conwy, of which 46 were female victims.
- 5.13. A 2020 Galop survey with LGBTQ+ survivors of sexual assault and found that 23.5% of respondents reported that the perpetrator 'intended to convert' or punish their LGBTQ+ identity.
- 5.14. Nearly half (46%) of respondents to Stonewell Cymru's 2020 survey stated they had been subjected to verbal harassment in the year prior, while 26% had suffered online abuse or harassment and 13% experienced the threat of physical or sexual harassment and violence in the same period

Feedback from Consultation:

- 5.15. Hate crimes increased after the Brexit vote and the increasingly difficult conditions engendered by the cost of living crisis might mean that we see more of it
- 5.16. Support is needed for LGBTQ+ people and disabled people reporting hate crimes or domestic violence. Advocates to help in official settings who are informed in LGBTQ+ and disability/neurodivergence matters, along with protection for non-binary people
- 5.17. In terms of hate crimes perceptions, stereotypes and derogatory language needs to be assessed and acted upon. Further education and training needs to be given, and people need safe places to explore their own misconceptions and beliefs
- 5.18. More resources on stopping/reducing stalking and harassment is needed to improve lives of our citizens

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

Priority Areas - Participation and diversity in decision making:

- 6.1 Increase awareness of the importance of diversity in political representation and decision making bodies
- 6.2 Ensure engagement is inclusive to provide a sense of belonging and community
- 6.3 Access to services should be supported by appropriate language support including Welsh, BSL and other languages
- 6.4 Improve access to services by ensuring an offer of alternative means to technology to prevent digital exclusion

Relevant Data:

- 6.1. 25% of Black voters in Great Britain are not registered to vote compared to a 17% average across the population
- 6.2. Voting rates remain lower for ethnic minority adults and there continues to be an under-representation of religious minorities in elected local government positions
- 6.3. People from ethnic minority backgrounds are significantly under-represented at all levels of government, facing barriers including differing forms of racism
- 6.4. 7% (1077) of Local Government Candidates were LGB or other sexual orientation with 6% (309) elected as County Councillors (compared to a population in Wales of 3%)
- 6.5. Disabled people faced disproportionate social exclusion during the pandemic
- 6.6. Adults from ethnic minority groups are less likely to agree that they belong to their immediate neighbourhoods when compared to white British adults
- 6.7. Older age groups report a stronger sense of belonging to their area and have lower levels of reported mental health issues
- 6.8. Welsh speakers are more likely to be employed, and to feel they belong to their local area
- 6.9. Chwarae Teg's State of the Nation Report (2023) includes data for Wales noting female representation in Welsh Politics. This report notes that in Wales 43% of MSs are women, 36% of councillors are women and 35% of Welsh MPs are women. It also notes that at that in Wales, 23% of Council Chief Executives are women and 18% of Council Leaders are women.
- 6.10. A National Survey for Wales in 2021/2022 reported on the opportunity for civic participation and ability to influence decisions in the local area and 31% of Conwy respondents stated they tended to agree, 16% were neutral and 49% tended to disagree or strongly disagreed. Only 12% of respondents had contacted their councillor in the last year although 46% of respondents agreed that their councillor worked closely with the local community and 87% stated they were very satisfied (52%) or fairly satisfied (35%) with their ability to get to local services.
- 6.11. The percentage of people who attend or participate in arts culture or heritage activities three or more times a year has reduced in all local authority areas between 2017/18 and 2019/20 – in Conwy there was a reduction of 4% to 70%. 70% of females and 69% of males participated in Conwy, the highest percentage attendance or participation by age was the 25-44 age group, closely followed by the 45-64 age group with the 75+ age group least likely to participate (53%).
- 6.12. Further focus is needed on the digital requirements of disabled people who have encountered significant barriers accessing on-line services, as well as isolation and loneliness (Welsh Government Social Isolation Steering Group, 2020) with digital poverty influenced by geography, income, education, disability, age, gender and ethnicity and accessibility.
- 6.13. Household internet access in 2021/22 for Conwy increased to 91% from 86% in 2018/19 with increased usage shown during the same period. Welsh Government notes that the people at increased risk of being digitally excluded are: older adults (although increasing), disabled people or those with long-term health conditions, people with lower educational attainment, people or families with lower income, rural

- populations, Welsh speakers, people who are not English first language, people who are socially isolated or lonely and people who are homeless
- 6.14. Evidence from surveys of disabled people suggest isolation, already twice as high amongst disabled people of all ages, is now even more acute. Digital exclusion has been a contributory factor, including limited access to broadband, computer technologies and skills (GDA, April 2020). The same survey reported that “Over 90% said they want disabled people’s voices to be heard in decisions about their own lives, and the evolving COVID response”
 - 6.15. Welsh Language: Estimates from the National Survey for Wales 2019-20 noted that 98% of ethnic minority adults aged 16 or over did not use the Welsh language in their everyday life. This was similar for adults from a ‘White – other’ ethnic background, where 97% noted that they did not use Welsh in their everyday life. For ‘White – Welsh, English, British etc.’ adults, 89% noted that they did not use the Welsh language in their everyday life

Feedback from Consultation:

- 6.16. For the ordinary person, standing as a local Councillor is not an affordable option. The remuneration is insufficient to live off, and for those who try and do it alongside a full-time job, end up failing as it is too much of a time commitment. Until this situation is rectified, you will continue to attract mostly white, males who have retired.
- 6.17. Inclusion is the key to strong resilient communities. It is important to understand diverse communities and their strengths can help improve services.
- 6.18. Allow people to participate in discussions about matters that directly affect them, such as having disabled people on panels
- 6.19. How can we meaningfully support and foster engagement from a more diverse group of people, in a way that doesn't drain them personally or become tokenistic?
- 6.20. Stop digitalising everything - some people can't access online platforms - think about our elderly who are turned away from Doctors because they can't make an appointment online!
- 6.21. Electric charging points are often not accessible for wheelchair users and are often not designated for disabled drivers. Many disabled people are using their government Personal Independence Payment (PIP) benefit to get cars from the Motability charity, who promote electric vehicles over diesel/petrol - they require a smaller deposit and are less expensive but they can't be charged at a public facility.
- 6.22. No alternative available public transport, ie, taxis cost more and not many are wheelchair accessible and buses do not take you direct to your destination

Objective 7: Tackle socio-economic disadvantage by offering inclusive services to minimise inequalities of outcome

Priority Areas - Socio-economic disadvantage and minimising inequalities of outcome:

- 7.1 Increase awareness of the links between poverty and ill health with different protected characteristics

- 7.2 Address anti-social behaviour
- 7.3 Remove barriers experienced by people due to socio-economic disadvantage
- 7.4 Increase support for children and young people living in poverty to improve outcomes

Relevant Data:

- 7.1. Material deprivation and ill health are interlinked. Females in the most deprived areas of Wales are expected to live more than a third of their lives with an activity-limiting illness
- 7.2. 18.5% of North Wales' population with bad or very bad health fall under the socio-economic classification of those who have never worked and/or are long-term unemployed
- 7.3. Ethnic minorities are more likely to be living in poverty than their white British counterparts
- 7.4. Children (28%) are more likely to be living in poverty than adults and 30% of young adults (16-24 year olds) have low food security
- 7.5. There are 8,230 young carers (5-17 years old) in Wales and they are more likely to live in deprived areas, have poorer educational outcomes and are more likely to be NEET (not in Education, Employment or Training)
- 7.6. Lone parents and single women are consistently most likely to be living in poverty – 9 out of 10 single parent households are headed by women
- 7.7. When looking at suicide rates broken down by deprivation in Wales in 2017-2021, the highest suicide rate was noted in the most deprived fifth (7.1 per 100,000) and lowest in the least deprived fifth (3.9 per 100,000)
- 7.8. The percentage of the population who live in households without access to a car or van in North Wales is 12.5% (13.2% for Conwy households). This is higher for disabled people (23.0%) than non-disabled people (9.8%); and highest for Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African people (27.1%) and lowest for White people (12.3%); highest for those in bad or very bad health (29.8%) and lowest in those in very good or good health (9.5%); and highest for the aged 65 and over age group (17.6%) and lowest in the 50 to 64 age group (8.9%). This could be a particular issue for people living in rural areas
- 7.9. Non-white ethnicity is linked with a greater likelihood of relative income poverty. For the period between 2015-16 and 2019-20 (an average of 5 financial years) there was a 29% likelihood of people whose head of household comes from a non-white ethnic group living in relative income poverty. This compares to a 24% likelihood for those whose head of household comes from a white ethnic group. However, because the vast majority of households in Wales have a head who is from a white ethnic group, most people (97%) who were living in relative income poverty were from such households
- 7.10. 8% of people in Conwy in 2021/22 were living in households in material deprivation compared to 11% for Wales
- 7.11. Disabled people were already known to experience significant and well documented socio-economic disadvantages pre-pandemic that have been further amplified by

COVID-19. The Marmot reviews (2010; 2020) established the indivisible links between socio-economic circumstances and health outcomes:

- 7.12. 37% of children who lived in a household with a disabled person were in relative income poverty, compared with 24% of children who lived in households where no-one was disabled.
- 7.13. 31% of working-age adults who lived in a household with a disabled person were in relative income poverty, compared with 18% of those who lived in a household where no-one was disabled
- 7.14. A report by Citizens Advice (2020) found 1 in 6 disabled people (16%) fell behind with their bills during the pandemic, compared to fewer than 1 in 10 non-disabled people (7%), suggesting pre-existing inequalities and levels of poverty have been further exacerbated.
- 7.15. In North Wales 27.9% of pupils eligible for free school meals achieved Level 2 inclusive in Year 11 in 2018/19, compared with 58.5% of pupils who were not eligible for free school meals

Feedback from Consultation:

- 7.16. Socio-economic disadvantage is often behind various anti-social behaviours, including radicalisation, youth crime, drug use and distribution and others. This is one of the most important objectives that you should focus on to improve the wellbeing of residents of this area
- 7.17. This is badly needed in the current economic climate - the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest in society is getting wider and people are suffering with the cost of living crisis
- 7.18. Poor people are at a huge disadvantage in this society and often achieve much lower success rate due to many factors such as childcare, lack of resources and affordable support

The Strategic Equality Action Plan 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 Equality in North Wales Data and Evidence Report (see Appendix 2). We will report on our progress towards achieving these objectives annually.

The actions are integrated into our Service Delivery Plans which are monitored every 6 months through our Service Performance Review process 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 minority 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 publishes an annual Employment Monitoring Report on our website covering overall staff numbers, job applicants through each stage of the recruitment process, staff training, disciplinary, grievances and leavers figures, all broken down by protected characteristic. Our Employment Monitoring Report monitors the workforce and potential workforce. This information is used to review the effectiveness of our employment policies and practices and to consider whether there is a need to review our processes and policies where there is 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 during the lifetime of this plan will be reported upon 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 gradually improved the position in respect of each protected characteristic – as shown in the Table 4.1 below.

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 that 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 to inform our work and we give reassurances around confidentiality and meeting the needs 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 anonymised.

Since the publication of our last Strategic Equality Plan in 2020, the equality monitoring data that we hold for our workforce has changed as follows:

Protected Characteristic	Equality Monitoring Data – 2019/20	Equality Monitoring Data – 2022/23
Sex	100%	100%
Age	100%	100%
Disability	48.4%	54.1%
Race	53.0%	58.5%
Marital/Civil Partnership Status	99.6%	99.4%
Religion/Belief	43.0%	51.1%
Sexual Orientation	42.8%	50.9%
Gender Reassignment	36.8%	47.7%
Pregnancy/Maternity	-	-

Table 4.1 – Comparison of Equality Monitoring Data Held in 2019/20 and 2022/23

To date we have encouraged staff to complete the data using the self-service facility. However, we are reviewing our approach to increase our data, and to ensure that staff understand why this information is important and how we will use this anonymised information to improve our workforce diversity.

4.1.2 What we need to do

In their current form 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 the 31st 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 all of the above categories. Our latest Employment Monitoring Report is available on our website under the Equality and Diversity section: [Employment monitoring](#).

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 job evaluation scheme has been robustly maintained since then.

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) for the first time. This audit included a before and after analysis by gender of old grades and proposed new grades. We have undertaken Equal Pay Audits periodically since then, we publish our pay gap annually in our Annual Equality Report and we also publish a pay policy statement every March. We reviewed our Job Evaluation process and policies during 2023 and have undertaken refresher training for all staff involved in the Job Evaluation process.

Our latest Equal Pay Audit provides data for the 5-year period from 2018 to 2023, particularly concentrating on gender, ethnicity and disability. The findings from this work have been used to inform relevant areas of the supporting action plan – particularly in relation to Priority Area 2.1 Address disability, ethnicity and gender pay differences.

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. Single status pay reviews in recent years have continued this by weighting the higher % increases to the lowest paid which has also kept us ahead of the increasing national living wage.

We have regularly tracked pay gap data since 2009 and this can be seen in the table below, which shows the progress since then on the pay gap using the same calculation for gender, disability, race and latterly age.

Pay Gap	2009 Pre JE	2009 Post JE	31.3.11	31.3.15	31.3.19	31.3.22	31.3.23
Gender Pay Gap range between Grades G01-G12			+1.1 - 0%	+0.8 - +1.9%	-1.85 - +1.2%	-1.37 - +1.18	-1.67 - +1.29%
Total Gender Pay Gap Grades G01-G12			+13.1%	+9.3%	+5.5%	+6.0%	+4.9%
Gender Pay Gap – All Posts	+16.2%	+15.8%	+8.8%	+6.5%	+2.8%	+3.9%	+3.5%
Disability Pay Gap Grades G01-G12						-14.7%	-10.4%
All Posts Disability Pay Gap			-10%		-0.9%	-3.26	+0.7%
Ethnic Minority Grades G01-G12					-5.0%	-11.5%	-2.9%
All Posts Ethnic Minority Pay Gap			+2.45%		+8.07%	+2.9%	+8.8%
Age Pay Gap: Under 50s as % of 50+					-2.2%	-3.1%	-2.9%
Age Pay Gap: 50+ as % of Under 50s					+2.2%	+3.0%	+2.9%

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

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) recommends that pay gaps of 5% or more should be treated as significant, in which case we should consider why this difference exists and take action as appropriate.

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 on the anniversary of their start date (unless they are fast-tracked for outstanding performance or retention purposes with the prior agreement of the relevant Head of Service and the Head of People and Performance, 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 and this has been the case since Job Evaluation was implemented in 2010.

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

We do not operate performance or competence related pay (other than described above within grade). New starters are expected to start on the bottom scale of the post unless there is a justifiable reason for them to commence on a higher scale within grade. In those circumstances, approval must be given by a Human Resources Manager or Business Partner. 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.

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

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

In Conwy, we employ significantly more women (75%) than men (25%) and slightly more of our staff are part-time than full time which demonstrates that we offer greater employment flexibility, but this does have an impact on the pay gap and we would not want to remove that flexibility that so many of our staff value in achieving a work-life balance.

Gender Pay Gap

If we look at Grades G01-G12, in the most recent figures, the gender pay difference between grades is fairly constant between -1.67% and +1.29%. Indeed in Grades G01, G02, G05, G07, G08, and G09, pay marginally favours women, suggesting that there is no substantial gender pay gap between individual Grades G01-G12 and the gap of 4.9% for all single status grades G01-G12 is likely to be attributed to the large number of women being employed in G01 roles (as of the 31st March 2023, 29.1% of people employed in G01-G12 roles are women in G01 roles, down from 41.2% when the 2020-2024 Strategic Equality Plan was published).

This is not uncommon in the public sector due to the labour intensive nature of the work undertaken. Using the same calculation, there is an overall gender pay gap of 3.5% when including all staff employed by Conwy County Borough Council. The gender pay gap for all posts in Conwy Council had decreased year-on-year since 2009, until the start of the pandemic. The figure decreased again between the 31st March 2022 and the 31st March 2023.

On 6 April 2017 The Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 came into force, requiring all organisations employing 250 or more employees to report their Gender Pay Gap, using a prescribed calculation, on their website and on the designated government

website at <https://www.gov.uk/report-gender-pay-gap-data>. In Wales, public sector organisations have been exempt from this requirement as they already have the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011 which requires them to report on the pay gap not only for gender but also for the other protected groups.

Conwy County Borough Council has calculated its gender pay gap using the prescribed calculation in the 2017 Regulations as at 31 March 2023 which shows a slightly different figure to those above as follows:

Gender Pay Gap National Calculation as at 31 March 2023

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

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

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.

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 -1.49% to +2.61% which is negligible and similarly the gap in the over 50s as a percentage of the under 50s ranges from -2.68% to +1.47%. Head of Service level posts show a pay gap in favour of those over 50 of 0.65%. Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Teaching staff on Soulbury conditions show a pay gap in favour of over 50s which ranges from 3.78% to 11.63%. The overall pay gap shows that employees under 50 are positively favoured by 2.9%, while 58.5% of positions are held by people below 50 years of age.

Ethnic Minority Pay Gap

Historical data shows fluctuations in the pay gap for ethnic 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. However, staff do have the right to state that they 'prefer not to say' with regards to equality monitoring data.

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 awareness 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. This training has recently been updated to reflect the 2021 Census data and also draws attention to the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and LGBTQ Action Plan. This updated module will be reissued.

In addition to this basic awareness training, we target training at specific issues to meet identified needs. Recent examples include training to support the implementation of the Socio-economic Duty, training on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Awareness, Positive Action, Equal Pay, Anti-Racism training and through various employment policy training where equalities is particularly relevant, for example, Recruitment and Selection, Attendance Management, Capability, Safeguarding etc. 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. At the time of writing this plan, we are seeking further resources to extend delivery of training more widely.

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 strive to 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. We have recently updated our business planning framework (e.g. submitting business cases and saving proposals) and have strengthened the reference to Equality Impact Assessments as part of this work. Equality and Diversity is covered in our Corporate Induction and it is a regular feature of our Corporate Risk Register which ensures it receives regular attention and consideration.

Following a review of our Performance Development Review process the Conwy Conversation was launched in 2023. The Conwy Conversation process promotes regular check-in conversations around four main elements:

- Objectives
- Development
- Feedback
- Wellbeing

Training needs are identified during the Conwy Conversation through discussion of topics such as tracking progress towards objectives and key milestones, discussing areas for development and future skills needs and identifying challenges which might prevent progress. Services are requested to provide feedback on their training needs to inform future Learning and Development plans.

Section 5: Policy and Process

5.1 Equality Impact Assessments

The requirement to assess the impact of policies and practices, as set out in the Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011, means that the Council should ensure it has sufficient evidence to consider whether decisions taken around policies and practices could have a disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more protected characteristic. 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 decisions on 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 process to assist officers undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment. The current template, which incorporates guidance on how to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment to assist officers when they are going through the process, was developed jointly with the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network partners. The template also includes consideration of both the Socio-economic Duty and the Welsh Language Standards, and takes steps to ensure that we take account of the cumulative impact of our decisions.

Equality Impact Assessment training is provided to officers responsible for writing policies and making strategic decisions. Briefings for Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees are also provided.

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 requires officers to ensure any actions identified from the process are included in Service Plans.

We also have an Integrated Impact Assessment in place 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. Equality Impact Assessments are published and available through the Committee Papers for relevant decisions on our website.

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
- Possible negative impact and how this has been removed and/or mitigated
- The results of the assessment and any decision taken in relation to these results

Following the publication of the Audit Wales report [Equality Impact Assessments: More Than a Tick Box Exercise?](#), we have been reviewing our approach to Equality Impact Assessments and implementing actions to ensure that the process is carried out in a meaningful way, and that recommendations from the report (e.g. in relation to quality assurance, ensuring that both positive and negative impacts are identified and addressed, and reporting and monitoring impacts) are used to shape our process. For example, we have developed a checklist that looks at some of the key areas that the Equality Impact Assessment needs to address and can be used by officers completing the assessment or by officers 'spot-checking' assessments to ensure that the document goes beyond a 'tick box exercise'. We have undertaken spot-checks

in our Equality Champions meetings from time to time and are considering how we digitise the whole process.

5.2 Procurement

The Council regularly works in partnership with external organisations to share the responsibility for service delivery. When doing this, the Council must ensure that money spent on goods, works and services meet the diverse needs of the customers we serve.

Our customers deserve a high quality service regardless of who provides the service. 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 due regard to whether it would be appropriate for the award criteria for that 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 duty 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 of which are regulated by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

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. When the provision of a service is contracted out we remain responsible for meeting the General Duty.

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.

The Council must have due regard at all stages of the procurement process to the need to advance equality, for example:

- Advertising and selecting who to invite to tender
- Drafting the invitation to tender and evaluation criteria
- Drafting contract specifications and conditions
- Monitoring, managing and enforcing contracts

To encourage partners to value diversity and promote equality, the Council will:

- Incorporate equality principles in terms of reference to ensure that we embed equality within strategies, plan and projects, including identifying responsibility for equality impact assessments
- Lead by example, incorporating the principles of equality in all that we do
- Work together with our partners to embed and mainstream equality within our work

5.3 Equality Information

5.3.1 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, 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 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.

Workforce information is published in our annual Employment Monitoring Reports on our website: [Employment monitoring](#)

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 Democracy and Governance Portfolio Member, who is also the lead Council Member for Equality and Diversity. There are other Member Champions who have a role including Disability Champion, Children and Armed Forces Champion, Mental Health Champion, Age Friendly Champion, Ethical Employment & Anti-Slavery Champion, Poverty Champion.

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 success of this plan rests with all Elected Members and Managers. Co-ordination of the Plan rests with the People and Performance service. The HR Services Manager (Employment & Equality) and the HR 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 Reports
- Annual Employment Monitoring Reports
- Equality Impact Assessments deemed to have a substantial impact as identified through published democratic reports
- 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 via monthly Team Briefs and email notifications.

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, Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. 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 if they are no longer relevant or applicable 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's priorities and different communities' needs on an ongoing basis - as our last plan did, particularly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the period 2024 to 2028, 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, which was particularly highlighted during the pandemic and more recently by recent inflationary pressures and the 'cost of living crisis'. Whilst what we have set out in the Action Plan is believed to be achievable at the time of writing, we will continuously have to prioritise and reprioritise what we do to adjust to these ever increasing pressures. We will review 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.

We will undertake a comprehensive review of this Plan in 2027-2028. In the intervening period we will carry out an annual review alongside the Corporate Plan annual review. Any changes will be published on our website following appropriate evidence gathering, engagement and consultation.

Section 7: Communication and Accessibility

It is vital that people have access to information concerning our work in regard to equality and diversity. It is equally important for people to be able to access information concerning the different services we provide. We currently provide information to a wide range of stakeholders including employees, service users, 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 X (formerly 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](#)
- **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.



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 People and Performance Equality Team as stated below:

Phone: 01492 574213 / 01492 576301

Post: People and Performance Equality Team
 Conwy County Borough Council
 PO Box 1
 Conwy
 LL30 9GN

E-mail: equalities@conwy.gov.uk

Website: www.conwy.gov.uk

Appendices

Appendix 1: Strategic Equality Plan - Action Plan

Appendix 2: North Wales Public Sector Equality Network: Equality in North Wales Data and Evidence Report

Appendix 3: NWPSSEN Survey results on 2020-2024 equality objectives

Appendix 4: Empowering Diverse Communities into Employment engagement

Appendix 5: Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan – Conwy Actions

Appendix 6: LGBTQ+ Action Plan – Conwy Actions

Appendices are available from the Equality & Diversity section of the website at [Equality and Diversity](#).

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