

Caerphilly County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2021-2022

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**This report is available in Welsh, and in other languages or formats on request.
Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.**

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Introduction

A key part of our collective 'Team Caerphilly' ethos is to create an organisation – and a wider community – where everyone is treated equally and fairly in all aspects of everyday life.

We believe that nobody should be discriminated against or placed at a disadvantage because of their identity or background. It is important that we reflect this approach in everything we do, at all levels across the organisation.

This key strategic document has been developed to provide a robust framework, which will help ensure there are no barriers to prevent anyone accessing our services at any time.

I would like to thank all those involved in developing this strategy and we must now focus on implementing the key actions that will help deliver positive outcomes for all.

As we look forward, we will continue to strengthen our approach to equality and diversity through staff training and development, adopting good practice from elsewhere and by learning from partners.

Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive, Caerphilly County Borough Council

The needs of our communities are constantly changing, so it is important that we are able to adapt and flex as an organisation accordingly.

Diversity is at the heart of this change agenda and we have a collective duty to tackle all types of discrimination and encourage greater community cohesion. We must work together to create communities where everyone feels respected and safe from harassment.

As one of the area's biggest employers, we are also committed to achieving equality across all our services through positive employment practices, effective policies and learning from others.

This plan will help us achieve this and it is important that we continuously monitor and review our progress, as well as keeping all our key stakeholders updated to help raise awareness of the all the positive work that is being done.

We will continue to build on our success and take positive steps to promote equality, diversity and respect in all that we do.

Cllr. Sean Morgan, Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council

About Us

The Caerphilly county borough covers an area stretching from the Brecon Beacons National Park in the north, to Cardiff and Newport in the south. It is bordered to the north by Merthyr Tydfil, the west by Rhondda Cynon Taff, and to the east by Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen local authorities.

The area lies at the heart of both the South Wales Valleys and the Cardiff Capital Region. The Caerphilly county borough occupies some 108 square miles (28,000 hectares) of the Valleys area of South East Wales. It is a little over 18.6 miles long and nearly 11 miles wide, and is formed by the valleys of three rivers: the Rhymney, Sirhowy and Ebbw. The county borough has 180,000 residents living across a mixture of urban and rural communities. Three quarters of the county borough is used for agriculture and forestry. The Council is the fifth largest local council in Wales and is the largest employer in the area.

The Council employs nearly 8,500 staff with 73% of them living in the county borough. They are employed into a variety of different roles within service areas, which make up the following Directorates:

- = Corporate Services and Education
- = Social Services and Housing
- = Economy and Environment

The Directorates are headed by Corporate Directors and together with the Chief Executive make up the Corporate Management Team who oversee the strategic management of the Council's business. The Council operates a cabinet style of local government which is led by a Leader and who is supported by nine Cabinet Members. We have 69 elected Councillors who have a variety of roles including agreeing the Council's policy framework, Council Tax and budget.

Our vision and values are an integral part of our Transformation Strategy Team Caerphilly - Better Together. Its aim is to transform the way in which we have previously delivered services. It will examine how services are prioritised, how they can become more business efficient, explore new opportunities for greater customer focus and digital delivery, consider alternative delivery models and seek commercial opportunities.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependants or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

Respect for diversity is a key issue as our communities change and develop in the 21st century. We must respect what has been before and the achievements up to that point, but we must also accept and respect that things have changed and continue to evolve. We must be respectful for every individual who lives or works here, who represents or who visits the county borough.

Context and Legislation

The Strategic Equality Plan 2020- 2024 has been developed to primarily demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

It highlights links to legislation and regulations covering the Welsh Language Standards and Human Rights issues and how it supports four of the seven aims of Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015; A healthier Wales, A more equal Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities and A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It also outlines how the council will meet its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, to advance equality and inclusion for all protected groups.

Building on our previous equalities work the plan explains to staff, citizens, stakeholders and elected members, how Caerphilly County Borough Council intends to deliver its equalities commitments whilst continuing to be an inclusive organisation that does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

To assist us in writing our Plan, we engaged with our citizens, staff, stakeholders and elected members. We also used a range of equality information, which supported us in defining what would be our equality objectives for the next 4 years, and by listening to them, we hope that these objectives are both meaningful and achievable for us to deliver.

We looked at what priorities there were to consider both nationally and at a council level, and based them on what evidence we had available to us to support the work. A lot of work has been undertaken over the years into assessing our progress against the Public Sector Equality Duty through service plans and the self-assessment process.

We considered external sources of information such as reports by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Welsh Government, policies and priorities, research reports and other relevant statistics available to help us. A number of external reports undertaken by the Equality and Human Rights Commission have supported and influenced the development of our new equality objectives.

The Covid-19 pandemic created difficulties for every resident, community and business across the county borough. As we continue to deal with the changes this has brought to the way in which we deliver services we are mindful of the implications for people who hold one of the protected characteristics to ensure that they continue to receive services from the council equally and are not disadvantaged because of their personal circumstances. As we look forward to recovery over 2022-2023 and beyond we will continue to ensure equity of provision for all our residents and recipients of our services.

How we meet the duty

The Council's equalities statement makes its commitment clear:

The Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL and other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

Respect for diversity is a key issue as our communities change and develop in the 21st century. We must respect what has been before and the achievements up to that point but we must also accept and respect that things have changed and continue to evolve. We must be respectful for every individual who lives or works here, who represents or who visits the county borough.

Council services must reflect these diverse needs and Caerphilly County Borough Council already has a strong background in delivering accessible services in a sensible, measured and cost-effective way. Local government finances are increasingly under challenge and any changes have to take into account the impact on the most vulnerable in society through Integrated Impact Assessments, which carry the full authority of the Strategic Equality Plan. As we proceed with the new socio-economic duties, we will be changing the way we carry out impact assessments.

This Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report evidences the monitoring undertaken to review the impact of the progress we have made to meet the actions of the Equality Objectives. Relevant information is collected from internal and external sources including public consultation exercises, Census data, local hate crime data or Integrated Impact Assessments. This report once approved, will be published and promoted widely both internally and externally in order to raise awareness of the work being undertaken.

Collection of Council Performance, Data and Information

The Council's Performance

The Council continues to deliver against the actions set in the [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#), focussing on making services as accessible as possible and to engage more with our residents.

The Council developed an [Integrated Impact Assessment Template](#) in April 2021, in accordance with the Socio-economic Duty. This has helped ensure that services understand and consider the impact any proposals have on protected characteristics, the Welsh language, the Socio-economic Duty, and the Future Generations Act. By linking the assessment to the reports going forward for a decision, it ensures that decision-makers are well informed and able to understand the impacts when it comes to our decision-making process. However, the Council will benefit from providing further support to Elected Members in understanding the purpose of impact assessments and to ensure that they are adequately scrutinised as part of the decision-making process.

The Council has integrated equalities and Welsh language into the Directorate Performance Assessments (DPAs) so that when reporting on progress by directorate, there is an integrated view of service delivery.

The [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022](#) showed that we received one Welsh Language complaint during this financial year. The complaint raised a number of issues, the complaint could not be dealt with in Welsh by telephone, the complaints webpage only provides an email address as contact details and the Chatbot does not work properly on the website. The Council is addressing the points raised.

The Council reviewed and updated its [Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022](#) and this can be viewed on the website along with all supporting documentation.

There was a slight increase in the number of Welsh speaking staff recorded on our HR system for 2021-2022 across all three directorates, however, a significant dip in the number of staff learning Welsh was recorded with only thirty-five registered. This is the lowest figure the Council have recorded since it began collecting this data back in 2001.

There is some work that needs to be done here; especially at a time, when having staff with Welsh Language skills is so important to deliver bilingual services. Following the Welsh Language Commissioner's annual audit, the Council is now addressing a number of non-compliance issues. The Council's recruitment process was a particular focus with the Commissioner requiring an action plan, which you can see in our [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022](#)

It is evident from the content of the report that there has been some progress during 2021-2022. Over the next 12 months, the Council will be ensuring services are being delivered in line with the Welsh Language Standards. The Council will also work with service areas to identify and address any Welsh Language training or Welsh Language skills requirements to deliver services.

Collection of Relevant Information

When considering and gathering information to include in the annual report, we used the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 Action Plan as a template. Service areas hold information that could assist the council in identifying how it is meeting the General and Specific Duties, Heads of Service were contacted and asked to provide a progress update for their service area against each of the relevant actions.

We looked at council reports that had been written during the 12 months to gather relevant information to provide the bigger picture of the work undertaken, and which shows equalities at the heart of the decision-making process. Most council reports had a completed Integrated Impact Assessment to evidence the equalities considerations of the proposal.

We also used employment monitoring data, which is provided via the council's HR system. The employment data provided within this report also includes teachers and school-based employees.

The Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan can be accessed via the Council's website: [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 - CCBC](#)

Sources of information

When considering what information should be used, it was important that areas of good practice were identified across service areas to demonstrate that a commitment to delivering equality exists throughout the Council. Information used in this report includes:

- The Council's Corporate Plan (2018-2023)
- Service delivery/projects (2021-2022)
- Employment practices
- Consultation and engagement programme
- Integrated Impact Assessments (2021-2022)
- Employment monitoring information (2021-2022)
- Monitoring and delivery of the SEP action plan (2021-2022)
- Annual Self-Assessment Report (2021-2022)

Non-Collection and Effectiveness of Information

We embedded equalities and Welsh Language into the Directorate Performance Assessment across all Directorates of the Authority. We held workshops to choose specific data to aggregate up to the Corporate Performance Assessment (Welsh Language stats, Complaints with an equalities and/or Welsh language element), which then fed into the Self-Assessment report, a measure of the Council's performance. The Self-Assessment was approved at Governance & Audit Committee, Joint Scrutiny and Cabinet as part of our commitment to 'mainstream' inclusivity as part of our day-to-day activity.

Joint Scrutiny identified they would like more data on the gender balance across the workforce in the Corporate Performance Assessment. Therefore, our future development is to expand the type of data collected and the analysis that goes with it, and ensure the learning lessons from Equality and Welsh Language data that formed our first annual Self-Assessment is part of routine monitoring through 2023.

Inclusive Engagement and Participation (Equality Objective 4)

Throughout the pandemic, the Council endeavoured to continue to engage both internally with our staff and externally with our communities and partners across the borough. The shift towards digital engagement was accelerated, with a greater use of social and digital media but we recognise that digital engagement presents difficulties for some people and have adopted a creative approach to ensure that everyone is still able to get involved in a way that best suits their needs. This approach continues as we move in the new 'normal' and we began to re-engage with our communities face-to-face wherever this is appropriate and possible. This is particularly important for those "seldom heard", including those with protected characteristics, those who are economically disadvantaged and those who are digitally excluded. Face-to-face engagement allows us to gain a deeper insight into understanding what matters to our communities. We continue to work with existing networks and groups using their established methods of engagement.

Work has continued to deliver on the Team Caerphilly 'Consultation and Engagement' Framework.

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/Consultations/Consultation-and-Engagement-Framework.aspx> Endorsed by the Council's Cabinet in February 2020, the framework sets out our approach for a common understanding to further improve engagement and outlines the principles and standards for how we will engage. The principles within the framework are:

- We will empower our residents to have greater influence over the issues that affect them
- We will increase and strengthen the role of communities in how we live, work and visit Caerphilly county borough
- This will help us to understand the needs of our communities, which in turn, will help to ensure the services we deliver meet those needs, and that available resources are used effectively and in line with agreed priorities
- We will support communities to take action, by helping them identify needs and support them in developing community led solutions.

The strategic principles of the Equalities Act 2010 and Wales specific duties and the National Principles of Public Engagement in Wales are embedded throughout the document.

Key actions that have helped in the delivery of this objective during 2021-22 include:

- The appointment of an Engagement Project Officer who joined the Transformation Team in July 2021. This work further supports the work of the Transformation Lead – Insights and Intelligence and the Consultation and Public Engagement Officer to ensure a joined-up approach and ensure that the differing needs of individuals are reflected in any changes as the council continues to transform.
- Following the introduction of a new Socio-economic Duty in April 2021, a new Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process was introduced. It highlights the importance of consultation and data in the IIA process and helps ensure that these are considered throughout.

- Training resources to support officers with the IIA process have been made available internally (including a recording of training delivered in March 2021)
- Effective Consultation and Engagement – 4 training sessions were held in May 2021
- Making information easy to read and understand, training was delivered by Learning Disability Wales in May 2021
- The Co-production Network delivered a two-day Co-production Champions training to key officers from across the Council in November 2021. The Council has since become a member of the Co-production Network and will receive ongoing training and support
- An internal Engagement and Consultation Working group has been set up to share good practice and coordinate activities across directorates

Public facing consultation and engagement activities continue to be promoted proactively on the front page of the Council's website, as well as across its digital channels. Further details of current engagement activities (including links to live surveys where appropriate) and the outcomes of recent engagement activities are also recorded on the website.

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations.aspx>

During 2021-2022, the Council carried out a number of key consultation activities both internally and externally including:

The Caerphilly Conversation

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Join-the-Caerphilly-Conversation-2022>

Every year the Council must deliver a balanced budget that provides essential services that meet the needs of our residents. Before planning our budget spend for 2022/23, the Council wanted to know if residents think we are still on the right tracks. The Caerphilly Conversation gave local people the opportunity to share their priorities and observations so that we can effectively manage and prioritise the limited funds available. This consultation exemplifies how the Council uses a variety of approaches to encourage participation, promote consultations and ensure that all sectors of the community are enabled to have their say.

Active Travel Consultation Stage 3 Consultation

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Active-Travel-INM-Consultation-Stage-3-Consultatio>

All Local Authorities in Wales needed to resubmit their Active Travel Network Maps to Welsh Government by 31 December 2021. Seeking to enable more walking and cycling journeys throughout Caerphilly Borough to allow a healthier lifestyle and help us towards cutting carbon emissions, residents views were sought on removing barriers to Active Travel.

Survey of Visitors to Caerphilly County Borough Town Centres

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Public-Survey-of-Visitors-to-Caerphilly-County-Bor>

Scrutiny Committee Members at Caerphilly County Borough Council have

established a task and finish group to review town centre car parking charges, in view of the effects of the pandemic on the high street economy. The survey included questions relating to accessibility to ensure consideration for those with protected characteristics.

Draft Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Welsh-Language-Strategy-2022-2027>

The aim of the strategy is to set out actions on how we intend to promote the Welsh language, increase the number of Welsh speakers and the use of Welsh in the county borough. A consultation on the Action Plan for this strategy was undertaken in October 2021.

Public Spaces Protection Orders relating to dog control

[https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Public-consultation-on-the-making-of-a-Public-\(2\)](https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/involved/Consultations/Public-consultation-on-the-making-of-a-Public-(2))

Caerphilly County Borough Council invited local people and stakeholders to have their say on the proposal to amend the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) relating to dog control in Caerphilly County Borough to include the exclusion of dogs from marked sports pitches/areas. As part of this consultation, particular consideration was given to how any changes would affect those with protected characteristics.

Snapshot of key decisions

The following section highlights a brief snapshot of some key decisions the Council put in place during the last 12 months and as we recover following the Covid-19 pandemic, they demonstrate our compliance and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Kickstart Scheme

Young people have been particularly disadvantaged by the Covid-19 pandemic, in terms of the reduced employment opportunities available to them as a result of the subsequent economic downturn. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Kickstart scheme presented a very real opportunity to address this issue, with the Council being well placed to offer placements to local young people.

The Kickstart Scheme is a new initiative funded and administered by the DWP as a response to the current problem of rising youth unemployment, as a result of the pandemic. The scheme provides funding to employers to create job placements for 16 to 24-year-olds on Universal Credit, who are at risk of long-term unemployment. Placements are funded at National Minimum Wage based on 25 hours per week, for 6 months (including associated National Insurance contributions); and further funding is also available to cover additional costs including training, IT, uniform and PPE etc.

As the largest employer in the County Borough, the Council has a responsibility to tackle the serious issue of worsening youth unemployment within the pandemic. The authority is well placed to offer opportunities (in the form of placements) to young people via the Kickstart scheme, across a range of delivery areas. The Council already hosts a range of employment support programmes, including Communities for Work (CfW), Communities for Work Plus (CfW+), Bridges into Work 2 (BiW2), Working Skills for Adults (WSfA), Inspire 2 Work (I2W) and Nurture, Equip, Thrive (NET); all of which provide an existing infrastructure to refer potential Kickstart participants.

The Caerphilly Academy pilot was also approved in April 2020, with the aim to coordinate placement and apprenticeship opportunities offered within the Authority via a single gateway, with additional relevant support provided to mentor participants. Whilst full rollout of the pilot has been impacted by the pandemic, the programme is now active and a dedicated Academy mentor has been appointed who would also be available to provide ongoing mentoring and support to all participants (and their Managers) whilst undertaking a Kickstart placement.

Academy and Employment Support staff within the Regeneration and Planning service area supported the Kickstart process from start to finish, assisting managers through the process of developing suitable placement opportunities and providing additional mentoring to placement employees (where required), to maximise the likelihood of successful outcomes.

Employment support staff supported managers to submit applications for Kickstart posts and provide any additional support to managers, where required, whilst individuals are in placements; whereas the Academy mentor will provide any

necessary support to the individuals completing the placement.

Employment mentors supported suitable candidates on their existing caseloads to apply for placements, as well as providing wraparound employment support at the end of the placement period, for any individuals that found themselves unemployed following completion of their Kickstart placement.

This scheme directly and positively contributed towards a number of actions under Equality Objective 2: Education, Skills and Employment – Improve education opportunities for all.

Asylum Dispersal and Afghan Relocation

The authority has been involved in the resettlement of Syrian refugee families since late 2015 at the request of the Home Office and in response to the humanitarian crisis facing people displaced by the war in Syria. Since that time, seven families comprising 35 individuals have been settled in the county borough. The local authority receives direct funding, tapering over 5 years, from the Home Office to support integration in communities, with resettled families being granted Refugee Leave status giving them the right to work and claim benefits. Families have been resettled at a rate and volume, which has been at the discretion of the local authority. The main hurdle to settling more families has been the lack of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector.

In addition, Children's Services Social Services Teams are involved in a regional response to providing accommodation for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under the National Transfer Scheme from arrival local authorities, mainly in the South East of England.

In February this year, the Deputy Minister asked, at the behest of the Home Office, for a widening of asylum dispersal in Wales. Welsh Government declared 'Nation of Sanctuary' status for Wales to welcome people through safe and legal routes who need help on humanitarian grounds to rebuild their lives. Currently five of the twenty-two local authorities are asylum dispersal areas, with Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham having been working on asylum dispersal for many years. There are significant pressures in the asylum system and as of December 2020, 2996 asylum seekers were accommodated in Wales with the majority, 1441, in Cardiff. Limited movement through the system due to the pandemic and the location of asylum seekers in unsuitable and unsafe accommodation at the old Penally Barracks in Pembrokeshire had prompted discussion with local authority Leaders and Chief Executives on widening the support among more local authorities for reasons of fairness and equity, and to alleviate pressure in the system. A few local authorities have entered into the discussion positively and Caerphilly Council gave an 'in principle' agreement to becoming an Asylum Dispersal Area working in partnership with the Home Office, as a coordinated and proactive approach was felt to be preferable.

Since that time officers have been meeting with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership (WSMP) - the Home Office funded support coordination team based at the WLGA, the Home Office and their commissioned provider Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) to understand what the implications would be for the local authority

and services in becoming an ADA. In addition, discussions have been held on an all-Wales basis and with the current areas directly to further understand the practicalities of the scheme. The recommendations in this report have been informed by those discussions.

Participation in the Syrian Resettlement Programme/Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and its successor the UK Resettlement Scheme has been largely positive for the local authority and has supported 35 displaced people to make their homes in the county borough. Two parents have begun nursing degrees; another family have started a local launderette business, with the help of the provider commissioned by the local authority, Displaced People in Action.

Asylum Dispersal is also supported by managed contracts, with Clearsprings Ready Homes and Migrant Help, and while there will be additional pressure on housing supply the recommendation to start small and evaluate after 12 months will provide assurance that asylum-seeking families can be absorbed within the capacity of services. Should the Asylum Dispersal Scheme go well consideration could be given to working in partnership with the Home Office to bring more properties in the private rented sector online and the extension of the scheme to asylum seeking individuals.

This scheme supports actions under Equality Objective 3: Community Cohesion – Promote and facilitate inclusive and cohesive communities.

As we write this report, we are acutely aware of the crisis in Ukraine. Our work to support the cohort began right at the end of this annual reporting period and is continuing apace, we will be able to set out our activity in more detail in our 2022/2023 annual report. We are working closely with colleagues and organisations to put measures in place where we can support the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Work is also being undertaken by the regional Cohesion Team to map local Ukrainian and European communities to support leadership teams in preparation for possible future arrivals regarding the Family Visa Scheme for Ukraine.

NEETs Strategy

The new NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) strategy aligns with other strategies and guidance both locally and nationally and, for example, complements the content of the Inclusion Compendium, particularly in identifying the pitfalls of young people's exclusion from school and in the wider sense, and the national Engagement and Progression guidance to which all local authorities work.

Above all, the new NEETs strategy aims to support not just young people at risk of becoming NEET but the efforts of all participating services and agencies and of course, Secondary schools.

The NEETs Strategy acknowledges existing strands of work and outlines the criteria for successfully developing this work within the context of the Engagement and Progression Framework priorities.

The six defined Engagement and Progression priorities are listed below –
1) Identifying young people most at risk of disengagement

- 2) Better brokerage and coordination of support
- 3) Stronger tracking and transition of young people through the system
- 4) Ensuring provision meets the needs of young people
- 5) Strengthening employability skills and opportunities for employment
- 6) Greater accountability for better outcomes for young people

The local authority and its partners are intent on securing better outcomes for our young people. In order to achieve these, we must collectively challenge our approaches and explore more effective ways to engage all those in the business of education to improve existing practices where necessary and relevant. Young people, rather than institutions and services, are the focus underpinning our NEETs priorities and the strategy assists us all to maintain this focus.

This strategy contributes to Equality Objective 2: Education, Skills and Employment – Improve education opportunities for all.

Five-Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027

The Welsh Language Standards require the authority to develop a Five Year Welsh Language Strategy that sets out how it intends to promote the use of the Welsh language, and facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in the area. The strategy must include a target (in percentage terms) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the 5-year period. In addition, the strategy must include a statement setting out how the target will be met. The strategy must be reviewed and renewed at the end of each 5-year period (Standard 145).

At the end of each 5-year period, the authority must assess the extent to which the strategy has been followed and the target met. The assessment, which must be published, must include the number of Welsh speakers in the area and the list of activities that have been undertaken to meet the aims of the strategy (Standard 146). Progress against the current strategy will be appended to the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2021-2022 later this year.

The new strategy and associated actions have been developed in conjunction with members of the Caerphilly Welsh Language Forum, key stakeholders and council service areas and schools. The strategy can only be effectively delivered in collaboration with other organisations operating in the area who also have a remit, through either legislation or organisational policy, to increase and support the use of the Welsh language.

The strategy proposes a target of 4% increase in Welsh speakers over the 5-year period. The target however will be reviewed once we have Census 2021 data available to us, which is expected sometime in 2024. This target is recognised as aspirational and the actions within the document are a direction of travel for the local authority and its key stakeholders. It is set against the backdrop of the draft Welsh Government strategy – Cymraeg 2050 to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales to 1 million by 2050.

A Welsh Language Profile for Caerphilly county borough 2021, which was developed by Menter Iaith Caerffili, supports the strategy. This profile examines the

position of the Welsh language in Caerphilly County Borough, the provision for Welsh speakers by a range of organisations and the way in which Welsh speakers in the area are using Welsh in their communities.

The structure of the document follows six strategic areas:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1. The Family | four. Welsh Language Services |
| 2. Children and Young People | 5. The Workplace |
| 3. Communities | 6. Infrastructure (Policies and Practices) |

The Council undertook a range of evidence gathering and pre-consultation engagement activities to develop a revised set of actions for the strategy. These actions will enable us to plan how we will promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of the language locally to increase the Welsh speaking population over the next five years.

The Welsh Language Forum, in partnership with the local authority, will monitor progress against the actions set out in the strategy. The 2021 Census will be the next official measure of the number of Welsh speakers in the area.

The implementation of the Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 ensures the Council is meeting its legal obligation under Standards 145 and 146 of the Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015. The actions contained within the strategy will enable the Council, in partnership with key stakeholders, to promote the Welsh language and facilitate its use in the county borough for the next five years.

This strategy contributes directly to Equality Objective 5: Welsh Language – To ensure the Welsh speaking public can access services that comply with the statutory requirements.

Summary

Detailed examples of what went well in 2021-2022 are detailed in the Council's Annual Self-Assessment 2021-2022. To view the report click [here](#).

Equalities Promotion Work and News Stories

In 2021-2022, the Council marked a number of awareness days either by raising awareness through press releases and or social media posts. The following were celebrated/marked either publicly or internally with staff:

May 2021

- [Mental Health Awareness Week](#)
- [Foster Care Fortnight](#)
- [Dementia Action Week](#)
- Goodwill Day (Yr Urdd)



June 2021

- [Carers Week](#)
- [World Blood Donor Day](#)
- [Armed Forces Day](#)



➤ Pride Month

TUA'R GOLEUNI

AT THE HEART OF IT ALL, IS OUR PUPILS' SUCCESS.



PRIDE

In June, for the first time ever here at Cwm Rhymni, we gave pupils the opportunity to wear colours of the rainbow to acknowledge 'Pride month'. Our 'Rights' sub-committee raised the theme during a sub-committee meeting and felt that it was important that we celebrate everyone's differences and this seemed like a great way to start.

We would like to thank the members of the sub-committee for their ideas. Thank you also to Caerphilly Council for providing the school with rainbow coloured lanyards to share with pupils and for the selfie frame, which went down a storm! Thank you also to the students and staff who dressed in bright colours for the day.

Thanks to all who had their photo taken with the @CwmRhymni selfie!

Heolddu Learning Support
@Heolddu_ALN

Thoroughly enjoy our first pride awareness day today! It was wonderful to see all of our pupils showing their support for the LGBTQ+ community

#PrideMonth2021
@CaerphillyCBC @HeoldduCS
#inclusion



18:39 · 30/06/2021 · Twitter for iPhone

August 2021

➤ Pride Cymru

Caerphilly County Borough Council
3 Aug 2021 ·

Competition closes 10th August 2021.

Are you 11 - 18? Live in Wales? Proud Councils want to hear from YOU!
Take part in our LGBTQ+ competition for a chance to win £100 of vouchers!

To enter: Send your entry to equality@rctcbc.gov.uk with your name and the county you live in. Winner will be announced 24th August 2021 on Proud Council's Twitter.

Dyddiad cau'r gystadleuaeth yw 10 Awst 2021

Ydych chi rhwng 11 ac 18 oed? Yn byw yng Nghymru? Mae Cyngorau Blach eisiau clywed gennych CHI!

Cymerwch ran yn ein cystadleuaeth LHDT+ a gallwch chi ennill gwerth £100 o dalebau!

I gystadlu: E-bostiwch eich cais i cydraddoldeb@rctcbc.gov.uk gyda'ch enw a'r sir rydych chi'n byw ynddi.. Bydd yr ennillydd yn cael ei gyhoeddi ar 24 Awst 2021 ar gyfrif Twitter Cyngorau Balch.

Are you 11 - 18? Live in Wales? Proud Councils want to hear from YOU!
Take part in our LGBTQ+ competition for a chance to win **£100 of vouchers!**

Create a piece of art that we can share on social media to celebrate our LGBTQ+ community, themed on:
'Becoming me'
OR
'How adults can be an ally of young LGBTQ+ people'

To enter: send your entry to equality@rctcbc.gov.uk with your name (or avatar if you wish to stay anonymous) and the county you live in.
Competition closes 10th August 2021. Winner will be announced 24th August 2021 on Proud Council's Twitter.

Ydych chi rhwng 11 ac 18 oed? Yn byw yng Nghymru?
Mae Cyngorau Balch eisiau clywed gennych CHI!
Cymerwch ran yn ein cystadleuaeth LHDT+ a gallwch chi ennill gwerth **£100 o dalebau!**

Ewch ati i greu darn o gelf y gallwn ni ei rannu ar y cyfryngau cymdeithasol i ddathlu ein cymuned LHDT+ ar y themâu:
'Dod yn fi fy hun'
NEU
'Sut y gall oedolion fod yn gynghreiriaid i bobl LHDT+ ifainc'

I gystadlu: e-bostiwch eich cais i cydraddoldeb@rctcbc.gov.uk gyda'ch enw (neu lun eich cymeriad rhydwir os ydych chi'n dymuno bod yn anhysbysu a'r sir rydych chi'n byw ynddi)
Dyddiad cau'r gystadleuaeth yw 10 Awst 2021. Bydd yr ennillydd yn cael ei gyhoeddi ar 24 Awst 2021 ar gyfrif Twitter Cyngorau Balch.

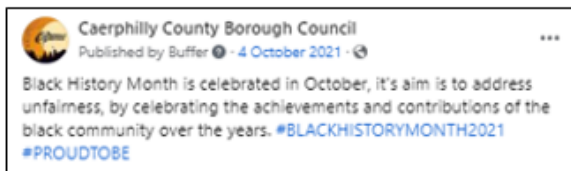
September 2021

- Macmillan Coffee Morning (internal)



October 2021

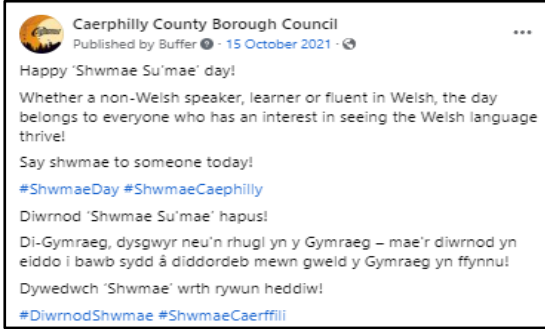
- [Black History Month](#)



- [Hate Crime Awareness Week](#)



➤ Diwrnod Shwmae



The Library Service also promoted Diwrnod Shwmae posting a video - Sut ydych chi'n '#Shwmae'? | How do you '#Shwmae'? – <https://fb.watch/cwS5NZkDkW/>

November 2021

- White Ribbon Day
- Anti-Bullying Week

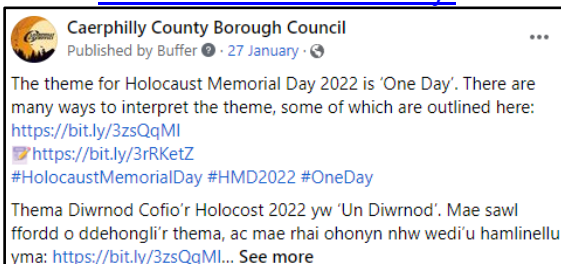
December 2021

- Welsh Language Rights Day



January 2022

- Holocaust Memorial Day

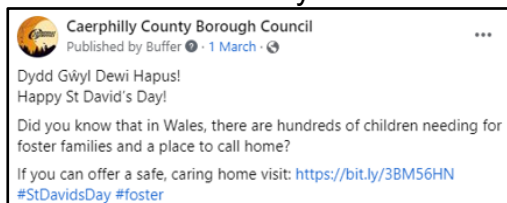


February 2022

➤ [LGBTQ+ History Month](#)

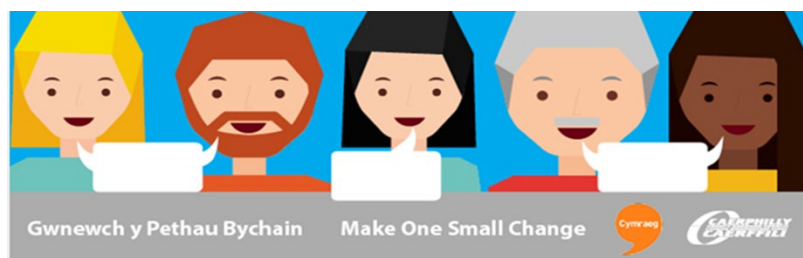
March 2022

➤ St David's Day



➤ Make One Small Change Campaign

On St David's Day we launched a campaign where colleagues and members of the public, through a year-long engagement campaign, were encouraged to 'make one small change' to further their use and understanding of Welsh language and Equalities matters. The campaign also used national awareness days linked to equalities and consultation throughout the year, encouraging people to consider how they could 'make one small change' in these important areas too.



Our '[Make One Small Change](#)' campaign will share ideas, tips and encourage people to make a pledge about small changes we can all make to develop a county borough that has the Welsh language, equality and engagement even further at its heart.

Here is a video of the campaign launch: <https://fb.watch/cwMq8Zi8Rh/>

➤ [International Women's Day](#)



To view the Council's other news stories please click on the link to search - [Caerphilly Council - News Centre](#)

Case Studies

The following case studies are examples of key local authority services delivering and making a difference to people's lives and taking the time to support vulnerable people and families to be independent, and to seek training and employment opportunities, as well as housing and benefits advice. The last case stud

Case Study 1: Nurture Equip and Thrive (NET)

NET aims to increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills across the workforce through community based provision. Helping to improve the opportunities for low skilled workers to sustain employment and increase their earning potential. NET specifically targets underemployed participants.

The current economic situation in the UK is making finding sustainable employment much harder. NET is working across the Caerphilly borough to help people increase their in work opportunities and reduce underemployment.

Angela joined the NET project in March 2022. She worked as a supervisor for Track and Trace (TTP) with Caerphilly Council and the NHS through Acorn agency, on a fixed term contract due to end in June 2022.

Angela was looking for support to find a new role in something more supportive than her previous jobs. She had previous experience of working in the private sector for many years mainly within sales and debt collection. After working for TTP, Angela realised the rewards of having a supportive role and was keen to pursue this type of career. However, she also had a family to support and needed to earn as much or more than her current role.

They started by looking for public sector roles in a support environment and found a few that Angela was interested in. They went through some applications and job descriptions so that Angela had support with what employers were looking for in an application. They went through the STAR (Situation, Task, Action and Result) technique and the importance of covering all criteria within the job description. Angela was very quick to learn and started to complete applications well.

Due to Angela being busy in her TTP role, she did not make the deadline for one job she was interested in, but then we found a role for a resettlement coordinator job, which sounded ideal. Angela completed the application and with a few revisions, the application was good to go. Angela was pleased that she had taken on board everything that she had been supported with and felt much more confident about completing applications.

Angela and her mentor spent the next month or so finding appropriate job roles and applying for them but Angela was not getting much response. Angela put her new CV on various websites including Acorn. Acorn saw Angela's CV and they contacted Angela regarding an admin job for the NHS, which she was very interested in. Although this was not exactly the supportive role she had expected, Angela had

always thought of working for the NHS and the salary would be an increase in her current wage. Angela attended an interview and was offered the role on a temporary basis.

Soon after Angela started her new job, she was also offered an interview for the resettlement job within CCBC. Angela was still considering this role because although it was less money, it was more in line with what she wanted to do. They went through the pros and cons of the two jobs and Angela decided to attend the interview.

In between her interview, Angela had a meeting with her new manager with the NHS who explained that her current role will be made permanent for her, and after training, they would be looking to promote Angela to include Business Analysis, which would be an increase in salary as well.

Angela was offered the resettlement job but after much consideration decided that the NHS was too good an opportunity to pass up. The mentor agreed and Angela turned down the other job.

In their final meeting, Angela thought that the project was fantastic and had helped her to achieve her full potential within the NHS. She thanked the mentor for all the support and advice and feels so much more confident in her own abilities after taking on the advice and guidance of the mentor.

In Angela's own words, *"I truly believe that Ian's help has really helped me."*

Case Study 2: Inspire 2 Work

Inspire two Work is an exciting project in Caerphilly county borough to help people into education or employment. It provides a boost to individuals and opportunities for improving skills in areas that are in demand by employers.

Help and support includes:

- Individual support with your advisor
- Support to improve your confidence, motivation and self-esteem.
- Free vocational courses
- Additional support for those facing barriers to working, such as work limiting health conditions, childcare needs and transport.

Yulia Bond, a refugee from Ukraine, arrived in Wales in April 2022. Job Centre Plus (JCP) referred her for extra support with employment. Back in Ukraine, she was regional head of the environmental political party and took an active role in society. Before that, she worked as an English teacher and tutor.

An article about Yulia was published in the Caerphilly Observer - <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&url=https://caerphilly.observer/news/1010972/caerphilly-refugee-yulia-bond-shares-experiences-of-ukraine->

[war/&ved=2ahUKEwjW0276tj6AhULiFwKHUvIDKsQFnoECAgQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1DFKILgQzyPHiFrvoFcAep](https://www.google.com/search?war/&ved=2ahUKEwjW0276tj6AhULiFwKHUvIDKsQFnoECAgQAQ&usg=AOvVaw1DFKILgQzyPHiFrvoFcAep)

As a new arrival she didn't know the systems in the UK, she felt lost, lacked confidence and was worried about her employment. Her job mentor helped her to update her CV and to upload it onto the top job search websites. They spoke about various job opportunities within the local area and her mentor helped her with job applications.

However, she took any opportunities to help Ukrainian refugees in Wales by volunteering as an interpreter for JCP, Caerphilly County Borough Council, and freelance. She set up an English Conversation Club for Ukrainians in Caerphilly voluntarily. The mission of this club is to help Ukrainians improve their English skills as well as to get some guidance and support. Yulia really wanted to try her to use her skills to help others.

Eventually, she became aware of a vacancy for a full-time Ukraine Arrival Liaison position with Caerphilly County Borough Council. She applied for this position and was shortlisted for a job interview. Her mentor helped to prepare Yulia for her interview. Yulia was informed that she had been successful and started her dream job in October.

She is currently trying to develop professionally as well as studying the course "Professional Conduct in the Public Service Interpreting" run by Cardiff University.

"I am grateful to my job mentor Debra Barnett-Whitty for her help and guidance. It has greatly improved my confidence and helped me to start my career as Ukraine Arrival Liaison in Caerphilly County Borough Council."



Case Study 3: Caerphilly Veterans Hub



Caerphilly Veterans Support Hub was launched in June 2021 to deliver high quality, person-centred support to veterans from the military and ex-military community. It empowers veterans and those in transition from military to civilian life, to help

themselves, and to integrate into local communities. It is fundamental in reducing social isolation and loneliness.

The Support hub is designed to:

1. Develop a greater awareness of the support and services available to service and ex-service personnel and their families in their local community.
2. Provide individual veterans and service personnel with the confidence, knowledge and skills to access the help they need, where and when they need it.
3. Reinforce people's self-reliance, confidence, esteem and self-empowerment after they leave the services and improve the long-term health and well-being of the ex-services community.
4. Be a place where Veterans feel they "Belong" (comradeship)
5. Offer opportunities to engage with the local community and undertake activities

The sessions are held in the heart of the borough in the Centre of Sporting Excellence in Ystrad Mynach, Caerphilly, CF82 7PG, which is easily accessible by car, train and bus routes. It is open every Saturday 1000-1200 to ensure that working members of the AFC can also access the advice, support and courses available. Additionally access to training on issues such as Stress Management, Panic and Anxiety, managing difficult thoughts and mindfulness is available to the Armed Forces Community.

The hub is going from strength to strength and has on average 40-60 Veterans and their family visit each week. Outside agencies such as Citizens Advice, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Cornerstone Support and Woody's Lodge attend periodically to offer support and guidance. Guitar for Heroes Wales attend to offer free guitar lessons (and supply the guitar) to help combat PTSD.

The hub has arranged many trips including a visit to the Imperial War Museum, National Arboretum and even a weekend Veterans Retreat to combat loneliness and isolation. The hub ensures that it has a family feel and enjoy peer to peer support. Welsh Government have funded a cook for one year to ensure the Council's Armed Forces Liaison Officer and support officer can spend time with veterans on the day.



CAERPHILLY VETERANS SUPPORT HUB
SATURDAYS 10-12

The hub is open every Saturday 10-12

Loads of Support and Services Available:

- Housing
- Benefits
- Mental Wellbeing
- Guitar lessons
- Cuppa & a chat
- Breakfast Rolls!

Find us at:
Dragon Suite
Centre of Sporting Excellence
Ystrad Mynach
Caerphilly
CF82 7EP

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT FUND TRUST
CAERPHILLY
Welsh Government

The photograph shows a group of veterans and their families sitting around a long table in a meeting room, engaged in a discussion. A guitar is visible on the table, and a man is standing and speaking to the group.

Case Study 4: Disability Sport Caerphilly

Disability Sport Caerphilly aims to provide sporting opportunities for adults and young people with a disability in the local community.

They work closely with Disability Sport Wales to provide access to leisure centres, community clubs, school holiday schemes and the insport programme.

The Sport and Leisure Team at Caerphilly County Borough Council were accredited with the insport Ribbon Award, which recognises all that they do to create inclusive sporting opportunities for disabled people. Their school holiday programme provides young people with the opportunity to try new and exciting sporting activities delivered by their specialist coaches and volunteers.

Disability Sport Caerphilly recognises each young person as an individual so the holiday programme can be tailored to that individual's needs and requirements.

The insport programme accredits clubs to provide inclusive, quality coaching sessions to disabled people in the community. For a list of disability sport clubs head over to the Club Directory.

Within Caerphilly there are currently existing clubs and provisions offering a variety of sporting activities for people with disabilities, ranging from wheelchair basketball, tennis, trampolining to swimming.

A key event in the Disability Sport Caerphilly calendar is the Disability Six Nations Rugby Festival. The last festival was held in 2019, with plans already underway to run the festival again in October 2022.

The 2019 saw the event being hosted for the 14th year with 320 pupils from 22 schools taking part. The aim of the event is to include everyone from a mixed range of disabilities and gives them the opportunity to physically experience their love for rugby.

Former Wales International and British and Irish Lions player Ryan Jones has been attending the event since it started 14 years ago with only around 15 children in attendance.



Employment Monitoring Data

The following information is high-level data of what the *iTrent* payroll system holds as at 31st March 2022 regarding the Caerphilly CBC workforce profile, in terms of protected characteristics and language ability of staff.

- Gender, Ethnicity and Disability data is currently shown by Directorate.
- Religion or Belief and Sexual Orientation data is currently shown by corporate total only. Data has improved during the last financial year.
- Language Ability is available by Service Area but the data is provided here as Corporate totals for information.
- Other information has not been presented as the categories are currently showing zero records.

Gender by Directorate	Male	Female	Undisclosed
Economy & Environment	962	1112	1
Education & Corporate Services	861	3900	0
Social Services & Housing	475	1435	0
Authority Total	2239	6108	1

Ethnicity by Directorate	White	BME	Undisclosed	Unwilling to declare
Economy & Environment	1866	13	193	3
Education & Corporate Services	3800	40	917	4
Social Services & Housing	1793	27	89	1
Authority Total	7088	74	1178	8

Disability by Directorate	Disabled	No	Undisclosed	Unwilling to declare
Economy & Environment	62	1815	198	0
Education & Corporate Services	68	3756	937	0
Social Services & Housing	61	1747	102	0
Authority Total	179	6960	1209	0

Sexual Orientation (totals)	Numbers
Bisexual	29
Gay	31
Heterosexual	3158
Lesbian	26
Other	28
Undisclosed	4984
Unwilling to Declare	92
Authority Total	8348

Religion or Belief (totals)	Numbers
Buddhist	6
Christian (All Denominations)	1223
Hindu	4
Jewish	1
Muslim	2
Sikh	2
Humanist	9
No Religion	1818
Undisclosed	5179
Unwilling to Declare	58
Other	46
Authority Total	8348

Nationality	Numbers
British (Not Channel Islands or IOM)	1132
English	84
Northern Irish	3
Irish	6
Welsh	2324
Scottish	5
Cornish	1
Other	37
Undisclosed	4747
Unwilling to Declare	9
Authority Total	8348

Language Ability (Other than English)	Numbers
Braille	2
BSL (British Sign Language)	38
Dutch	2
French	29
German	9
Greek	1
Hebrew	1
Hindi	2
Italian	1
Makaton Sign Language	1
Malayalam	2
Spanish	11
Tamil	1
Turkish	1
Welsh	1968

*(No staff total is recorded as some staff speak more than two languages)

Welsh Language Skills**

Total Staff*	8348
Welsh Speakers*	1968
Percentage of Workforce	23.57%

* The Total Staff and Welsh Speakers do not equal the overall workforce total due to some members of staff having more than one post within the organisation and those posts are within different service areas.

** These totals includes teachers and school-based employees.

Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024

The Strategic Equality Plan was developed to primarily demonstrate the Council's commitment to meeting the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. It highlights links to legislation and regulations covering the Welsh Language Standards and Human Rights issues and how it supports 4 of the 7 aims of Welsh Government's *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*; *A Healthier Wales*, *A More Equal Wales*, *A Wales of Cohesive Communities* and *A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language*. It also outlines how the council will meet its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty, to advance equality and inclusion for all protected groups.

Our new plan was due to be approved at the end of the 2019-2020 financial year, however the pandemic and the immediate response required by the Council meant that it was not formally agreed until October 2020. We chose seven Strategic Equality Objectives, and, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, we have been able to show good progress against them. The following summary includes information that we gather to meet the reporting requirements of our 4-year plan. Our chosen objectives are:

Equality Objective 1 – Service Planning and Delivery – Understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing services

Equality Objective 2 – Education, Skills and Employment – Improve education opportunities for all

Equality Objective 3 – Community Cohesion – Promote and facilitate inclusive and cohesive communities

Equality Objective 4 – Inclusive Engagement and Participation – Engage with citizens to encourage participation, to have their voices heard when planning service delivery

Equality Objective 5 – Welsh Language – To ensure the Welsh speaking public can access services that comply with the statutory requirements

Equality Objective 6 – Inclusive, Diverse and Equal Workforce – Create a workforce which reflects and respects the diversity of the communities within the county borough

Equality Objective 7 – Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

Progress against the Objectives and Actions:

Equality Objective 1 – Service Planning and Delivery – Understand and remove the barriers people face when accessing services

This objective focuses on the provision of accessible and inclusive services to the citizens of the county borough. We will achieve this by continuing our engagement with service users to identify and eliminate barriers to services.

Barriers experienced by groups and individuals may include, accessing information in appropriate formats to suit their needs, mental health difficulties, transport, unemployment or accessibility to technology. Service areas should implement plans and strategies collaboratively to successfully address and remove identified barriers.

Education, health and mental health services, housing, social services and transport are areas which we wish to improve upon.

Empowering groups with protected characteristics to be able to access the services they need is a key focus for the Council.

Action 1

Deliver on the principles in the Customer and Digital Strategy - connect technology and knowledge to deliver excellent customer experience and opportunities

Progress

All services and processes are developed and delivered with a customer focus. Forms follow a standardised approach, so customers are familiar with the design.

Customer Services Standards are embedded and these are used as part of Customer Services coaching.

Automation is being used across the authority to deliver services quicker, improve social value and allow staff to support the residents who need us most.

Digital Leadership Group is in place to ensure consistency, including the decision-making process.

Digital Solutions Board set up.

	Followers	Posts	
Twitter	21,145	3,457	(50% are in Welsh)
Instagram*	3,847	51	(Bilingual and Welsh)
Facebook	30,343	3,584	(Bilingual and Welsh)
LinkedIn	7,391	635	(Bilingual and Welsh)

***Depends on content, if accompanied by a poster / graphic posted separately)**

Another method the Council uses to convey messages is a free subscription service for Gov Delivery Email Bulletins. By registering for this service, residents receive key Council information direct to their email address, with hyperlinks included to take the reader to further information.

Gov Delivery, email bulletin stats for 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2022

Welsh

- 249 email bulletins sent
- Subscribers have increased from 691 to 766
- Engagement rate (those who opened and clicked on a link in a bulletin) 54.86%
- Impressions 7155 (clicks on links) (+116% increase on previous year)
- 1471 subscriptions +194 +15.20%

English

- 269 email bulletins sent (20 were internal, for staff only)
- Subscribers have increased from 39,734 to 42,020 (+5.75%)
- Engagement rate (those who opened and clicked on a link in a bulletin) 69.50%
- Impressions 1.36million (clicks on links)
- 175,243 subscriptions +11,149 +6.79%

Action 2

Ensure our staff have the necessary skills to deliver digital services – *linked to Staffing, Skills and Development Theme*

Progress

The Information, Insight & Intelligence Corporate Review includes a Software Skills workstream, aiming to ensure that we have a workforce that has the software skills needed to effectively carry out their roles. Outputs due around April will be a skills audit and gap analysis, based on a survey of staff for their current skills and needs, and then an action plan for the provision of software skills training. It will inform the forward work programme for both the Workforce Development team and the IT Training team, including content for the DigiHub on the staff intranet.

Action 3

Explore and consider adopting the Communication Access Symbol to ensure information is provided using different formats and languages including BSL

Progress

Unfortunately, the member of staff with BSL skills working within Customer and Digital Services left the authority. The Council has a Translation and Interpretation Framework in place and service areas request translation or interpretation services via the approved providers on the framework. The framework will be out to tender in spring 2023.

The Housing strategy is available in an Easy Read format.

Action 4

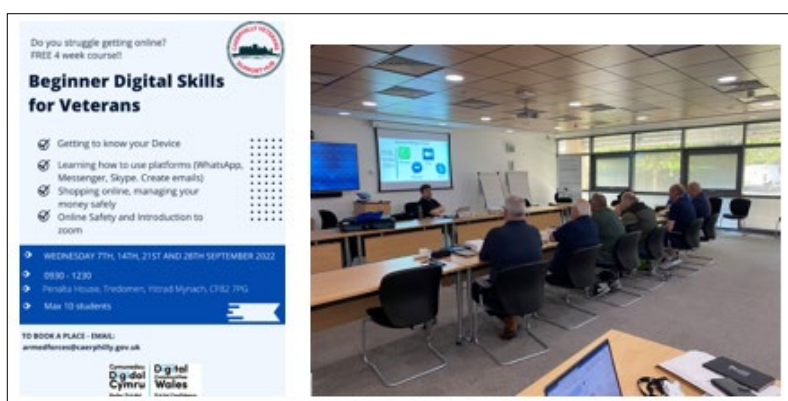
Upskill citizens to enable greater use of digital technology to address digital exclusion

Progress

The academic year 2021-2022 saw 131 enrolments for Digital Literacy/ICT courses.

A Device Loan Scheme was set up whereby learners/participants could loan laptops/iPads/Chromebooks whilst on a Caerphilly Adult Community Learning (ACL) learning programme/engaged with European Social Fund provisions. Devices were purchased through Welsh Governments funding. Several International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) learners were loaned devices to allow them to enrol and complete the course.

Members from the Caerphilly Veterans Support Hub were given the opportunity to learn new skills with Digital Skills Wales. Supported by Cwmpas, seven Veterans were loaned an iPad with a free sim card and shown how to get online safely. This was a great success with many stating this has been instrumental in changing their lives. A follow up course on how to use the internet to support them with the Cost-of-Living Crisis has been scheduled.



The Tenant and Community Involvement Team have provided tablets on loan to some of our involved tenants to help them become more digitally involved

Action 5

Identify service needs of specific user groups; what barriers prevent access; and what actions are required to remove those barriers – use complaints and compliments

Progress

The Tenant and Community Involvement Team have been involved in a project with the RNIB to train staff to be aware of tenants with sight loss issues and be able to offer assistance; it is called "Vision".

Caerphilly Adult Community Learning (ACL) are in the process of working with the Council's Communications team to pull together a consultation regarding ACL and the engagement/recruitment of adult learners.

People Services will continue to review complaints and compliments and look for learning opportunities relating to barriers to our service. HR and Communications will

support other service areas as appropriate.

A new complaints database has been developed and is currently in demo mode for the Council's complaints officers to have time to fine-tune the system before it goes live. This will standardise the approach to complaints across the authority, and will monitor that complaints are being dealt within timescales. The system will also produce the information we need to learn from complaints and improve our services as an authority.

An additional column has been included to our complaints database to identify which complaints and compliments include equalities or Welsh language issues.

Equalities and Welsh language complaints data forms part of the quarterly reporting to the Governance and Audit Committee as part of the Corporate Complaints process where appropriate, and the Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language) now sits on the corporate *Learning from Complaints Group* that meets quarterly to discuss specific and cross-cutting complaints.

Corporate complaints are those that are due to failure of process or failure to operate Council policy correctly. These are complaints that could ultimately be forwarded to the Public Services Ombudsman or Welsh Language Commissioner for example. Code of conduct issues around staff behaviour or attitude are dealt with via internal HR processes.

During 2021-2022, we received six equalities and Welsh language related complaints and they are broken down as follows:

Category	Detail	Outcome
Welsh	Complaint regarding an English web link in the Welsh version of correspondence from Electoral Services and contact details on website require updating.	Upheld
Disability	Resident claiming disability discrimination regarding access to rights of way and public footpaths.	Not Upheld
Disability	Refuse crew leaving emptied refuse bins on public highway preventing people from parking. Resident is disabled and is unable to move bins.	Stage 1 – Not Upheld Stage 2 – Not Upheld
Disability	Complaint regarding the Active Travel Scheme and the use of barriers and cyclists dismount signs on cycle routes.	Stage 1 – Not Upheld Stage 2 – Not Upheld
Disability	Staff at Household Waste Recycling Centre being rude and abusive towards resident using an adapted mobility vehicle.	Not Upheld
Disability	Refuse workers laughed at disabled resident as they collected their emptied bin from down the street.	Not Upheld

Also recorded were nine equalities and Welsh language service requests, and they

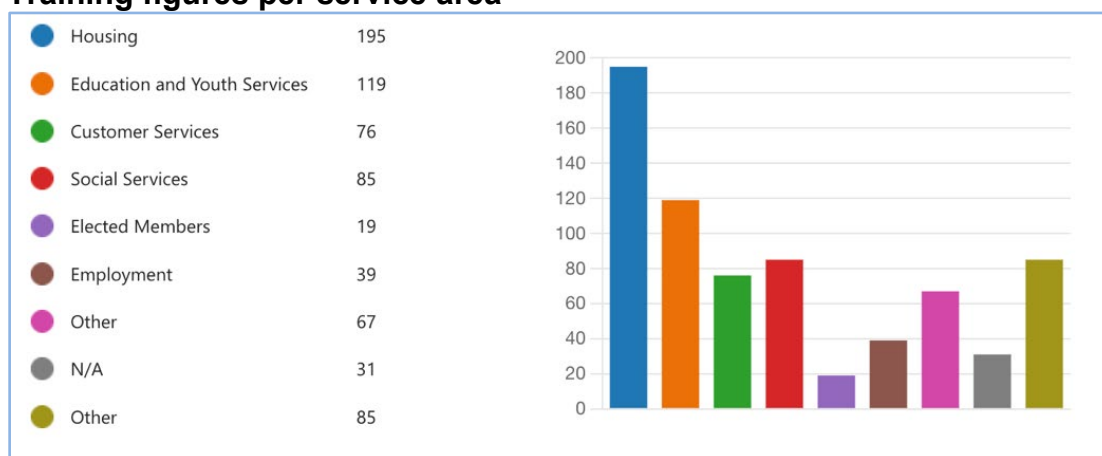
are broken down as follows:

Category	Detail	Outcome
Welsh	New road signs erected which breach the Welsh Language Standards	New sign erected
Welsh	Road Sign corrected but now has a typing error	Road sign corrected
Welsh	Welsh correspondence from Electoral Services with the English address being used	Entry on the LLPG system has been updated and the Welsh name will be displayed on future correspondence.
Welsh	Member of the public not happy that road signs are bilingual and that they receive bilingual documentation	Explained the legal requirement for local authorities to comply with Welsh Language Standards, which include road signage and documentation. Provided contact details of the Welsh Language Commissioner should, they wish to take the issue further.
Welsh	Typos in the News Online article regarding case of TB at Blackwood Comprehensive School. Also questioned when recruitment pages would be bilingual on the website.	Informed the member of the public that the post belonged to Public Health Wales but that we would notify them of the errors. In regards to the recruitment information, we explained that the software was awaiting an upgrade, which would support both Welsh and English languages.
Disability	Issues regarding a disability discount and lack of access to accessibility swimming sessions in our leisure centres.	Policy was reviewed and updated. Lack of access was due to Covid operating measures, which have now been removed.
Disability	Resident refused access to Household Waste Recycling Centre due to driving a mobility-adapted vehicle.	Stage 1 – Not Upheld Stage 2 – Not Upheld Ombudsman Decision – Not Upheld
Disability	Resident received correspondence regarding the service request above which suggested they carry a permit to use the facilities. Being penalised for the vehicle they drive.	Stage 1 – Not Upheld Stage 2 – Not Upheld Ombudsman Decision – Not Upheld
Disability	Resident refused access to the Household Waste Recycling Centre due to driving an adapted mobility vehicle, and were asked to request a permit.	No further correspondence was received from the resident.

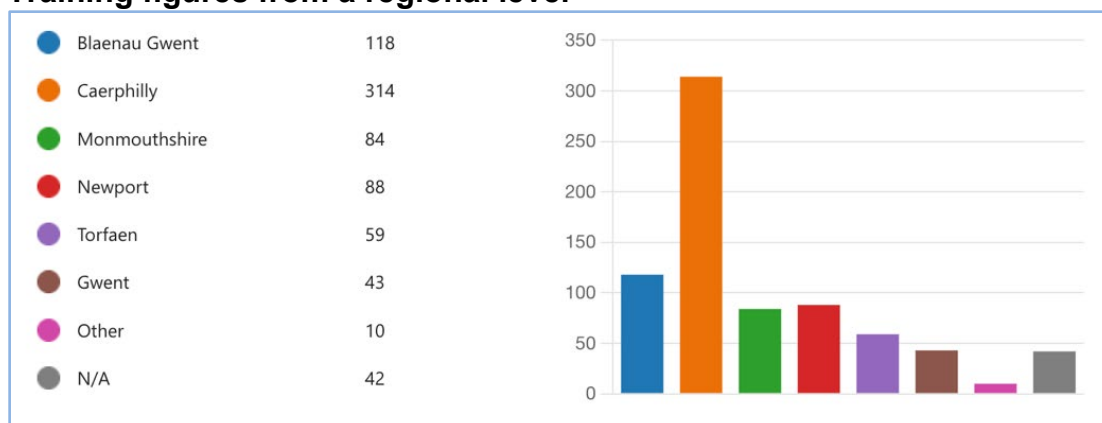
Armed Forces Covenant training continued to be delivered via Microsoft Teams. The training provides an overview of the unique challenges of Service life and how staff can help support the Armed Forces Community. It will help staff understand and apply the principles of the Covenant at a local level. It includes sources of further information and support, including:

- What the Covenant is
- Who the Armed Forces Community are and what challenges they face
- How the Covenant is applied in real-life scenarios
- Armed Forces Covenant legislation – What is Due Regard?
- Sources of Support

Training figures per service area



Training figures from a regional level



Action 6

Ensure the Council's website and intranet is accessible so that people with disabilities can still engage

Progress

Our web team have undertaken work to improve the accessibility of the Council's website – we are currently at 91%, although we are acutely aware that there are still aspects that still require work. Our primary focus is currently on removing the large number of non-accessible PDF documents on the site, with the aim of replacing

them with HTML format text. To support this, we have developed a tool to allow staff to create accessible, HTML 'web documents' using Microsoft Word.

We are working to achieve full compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA. Sourcing testing software to assist with this process. Preparation for the redevelopment of the Council's website is underway with compliance with WCAG 2.1 AA a key driver. To further facilitate full compliance, we are currently looking at a replacement website.

The Council's Communications Team, who will have full responsibility for this product going forward, has procured a new intranet site. Accessibility standards compliance was a key specification requirement.

The Council created an internal Accessibility Working Group of officers from across different service areas to meet, discuss and share good practice of accessibility issues. The group developed intranet pages for members of staff to refer to for further guidance and training information to enable them to develop literature in an accessible manner.

Over the last 12 months, we have trained 75 members of staff, some of them acting as 'gatekeepers' within the organisation, to check documents are accessible and to prevent inaccessible reports going through the system.

We have delivered presentations on the subject at a range of sessions including Management Network of the importance of accessibility, and we are currently piloting a tool to convert text into HTML for the web.

Each member of the group is an Accessibility Champion and is available to help other members of their departments to deal with queries and promote learning. There are plans in the pipeline around induction and report writing for new employees starting work within the organisation.

Accessible Communications

We want our communications to be 'accessible' and inclusive to all our citizens when we provide and receive information, we want our communications to be understandable and reach all potential audiences.

In September 2018 legislation came into place that placed a duty on all public services to make its digital information 'accessible'. [Read More](#)

What is accessibility?

Web accessibility, or eAccessibility, is the inclusive practice of ensuring there are no barriers that prevent interaction with, or access to, websites on the World Wide Web by people with physical disabilities, situational disabilities, and socio-economic restrictions on bandwidth and speed." – Wikipedia.

"1 in 2 people will be disabled at some point in their lifetime"

one arm arm injury new parent DEAF EAR INFECTION BARTENDER

permanent situational permanent situational

There are 14.1 million disabled people in the UK, 8% are children, 19% are of working age adults and 46% are of pension age. More than 6.3 million people are dyslexic, 1.5 million have a learning disability and 2 million live with sight loss – SCOPE UK.

Action 7

Improve the collection and recording of equalities monitoring information of our citizens across council services

Progress

The equalities monitoring section for public consultation exercises has been updated and standardised and shared with officers (November 2021 - made available to staff in a Microsoft Forms template). **See Annexe A**

To improve the collection and recording of equalities monitoring information within the Housing Service, equalities monitoring questions are asked as part of the Common Housing Register (CHR) and Private Sector Housing process.

Action 8

Collect equalities monitoring information for compliments and complaints

Progress

Complaints officers have been advised that an additional column will be added on our complaints database to identify which complaints / compliments include equalities/Welsh language issues.

The Tenant and Community Involvement Team provide an annual report to Cabinet identifying relationships to Equalities and /or Welsh Language. The 2021-2022 statistics are below if required:

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period for Housing, which specifically relate to Equalities and/or Welsh Language.

Characteristic Strand	Count - Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	0
Disability	7
Gender Reassignment	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	1
Race	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0
Sex	0
Sexual Orientation	0
Welsh Language	0
Totals	8

Extracts from cases linked to the Disability characteristic:

- Sister contacted on applicant's behalf as applicant has been in band 2 for 5 years and is still waiting for a property despite supporting letters from doctors.
- Unhappy by the way housing application has been handled and it is affecting the mental health of the applicant.
- Applicant offered a house and as soon as additional cost was involved the offer was taken away – applicant feels disability is being used against them.
- Advocate for applicant questioning why we are not carrying out adaptations to their property rather than suggesting the residents move.
- Applicant felt the adaptations should have been planned before they moved into property.
- Grant application delayed and applicant feels this was unnecessary.
- Tenant reporting alleged harassment from neighbour for a number of years.

Extraction from the case linked to the Pregnancy and Maternity characteristic:

- When tenancy began the property had a shower, not a bath and the tenant was heavily pregnant and requested a bath be fitted as soon as possible. Tenant now advises after months of waiting her baby has now outgrown the baby bath and there is not a job booked in on the Housing Repairs system to fit a bath in her property in the near future.

Action 9

Survey the council's building stock (and schools) in relation to accessibility using the Local Access Group

Progress

The Council owns and manages 10,700 properties. We assess the level of accessibility of each home before it is let and best match properties with those that require the assessed level of accessibility. We also carry out adaptations to those home to improve levels of accessibility where our tenants require them.

Action 10

Survey polling stations in relation to accessibility using the Local Access Group

Progress

Polling station inspectors surveyed all polling stations during the Local Council Elections in 2022. 88% were accessible and 12% were not. It is important to note that many polling stations are based within buildings not owned by the council.

All polling stations will be reviewed as part of a statutory polling station review from October 2023 and a decision made on future use.

See **Annexe B** as an example of the survey undertaken

Equality Objective 2 – Education, Skills and Employment – Improve Education Opportunities for All

The primary aim of this objective is to ensure that our communities are well equipped to secure sustainable and well-paid employment as a means of preventing poverty. Through ensuring our citizens are ready to enter the working environment we will prevent long-term problems associated with low skills and un-employability.

‘Improve Education opportunities for all’ as detailed in the Council’s Corporate Plan, will be delivered using outcomes identified within the Shared Ambitions 2019-2022 Strategy. This strategy outlines the Council’s commitment to work with schools and the Education Achievement Services (EAS) to improve educational attainment and achievement.

Increasing the number of citizens accessing education, training and employment will positively contribute to creating cohesive and resilient communities that will thrive. The skills agenda is fundamental to the economic development and economic prosperity of the nation, Cardiff Capital Region and Caerphilly County Borough.

Key to this will be focussing our work on reducing the number of young people who are not in employment, education and training, eliminating the economic inactivity gap; identify the skills gaps and shortages in priority sectors, increase the number and quality of apprenticeships and improve people’s perception of apprenticeships as a route into well-paid employment.

Action 1

Improve the skills of citizens by providing opportunities to gain qualifications and support to obtain employment

Progress

The Rent Section work in partnership with the CCBC Employment Team, refer tenants who are work ready to the Employment Team. The Rent Section have also worked in partnership with the employment teams to look at barriers to employment. A key barrier was the worry that all benefits would stop and tenants would be worse off by accepting the employment opportunity.

The team accepted referrals and carried out “what if” and ‘better off’ calculations, which highlighted the impacts on benefits over a series of scenarios, e.g. 10 hours worked, 20 hours 30 hours etc.

The delivery of the Innovative Housing Programme funded pilot sites in Trecenydd and Trethomas created 11 employment opportunities. The investment also delivered 11 apprenticeships and 4 traineeships.

The Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Local Action Group (LAG) provided funding for RecRock to deliver art, music, creative writing, skill and confidence building workshops for residents over the summer and autumn of 2021. Many of the services they deliver engage with have additional needs to participate fully with a range of services. The evaluation of their project outlined engagement skewed towards economically inactive (65.9%) with a significant number of participants having a

physical or mental health issue (43.2%). 2.3% of participants were non-binary, 50% female and 47.7% male. 86% of participants joined the course to gain confidence or skills. There are some case / participant studies if anyone is interested.

Additionally, LAG funded Regener8Cymru to deliver skills sessions on behalf of the LAG to support more people into support work through mentoring, confidence development and core skill training. This funded support (80% RDP/20% Regner8) created 16 jobs outcomes, 30 participants entering further learning, 5 participants entering volunteering.

The Council's Employability projects provide all participants with the opportunity to gain work related qualifications and appropriate courses in line with their chosen employment route. They also provide the opportunity for participants to improve their basic skills via the Adult Community Learning team.

Fair work principles are embedded in our employability support projects, which seek to match people with protected characteristics, carers and adults with responsibility for children with opportunities and working hours that suit them.

For 2021-2022, the Adult Community Learning (ACL) service delivered enrolments for the following courses:

Coleg Y Cymoedd Franchise:

- Independent Living Skills (ILS – adults with additional learning needs) – 80+ enrolments

Coleg Gwent Franchise (Essential Skills):

- Digital Literacy – 106 enrolments
- ESOL – 39 enrolments
- Literacy – 124 enrolments
- Numeracy – 71 enrolments

Please note that some individuals attended more than one course.

A Welsh Government funded summer school took place and crossed over 2 academic years (20/21 and 21/22) and included art, computers for beginners, confidence building, cookery, cupcake decorating, digital skills, English for all, ESOL, history, family history, sewing/embroidery, maths for all, pottery, pre-ICDL, restart the heart, singing for health, sugar craft and woodcarving. Over 100 enrolments (past, current, and new learners).

Highfields Courses:

- 60 vocational tutor led short courses/qualifications (first aid, Health and Safety etc.) per year (360 learner qualifications per year)
- 114 online learners registered, completing over 200 online qualifications/awards, such as, stress management, Covid awareness, fire safety, confidence building and working in a team.
- 1 Education and Training course Level 3 took place with four learners passing.

See **Equality Objective 1: Action 4** for work undertaken with Armed Forces Veterans to upskill to enable access to goods and services.

Action 2

Develop support for Adult Community Education to deliver digital literacy courses that will support local employability programmes

Progress

Coleg Gwent Franchise (Essential Skills):

- Digital Literacy/ICT (online) - 71 enrolments through 19 courses delivered

Action 3

Aim to reduce the impact of poverty by supporting citizens into improved employment opportunities and conditions

Progress

The CCBC Employability projects support participants to improve their employability skills, confidence, motivation and to manage their expectations in relation to finding sustainable employment. The projects also assist participants to progress in employment by increasing their work related skills and help those who are underemployed to find work more suited to the skills and experience, or to increase hours or levels of responsibility.

Participants on the CCBC Employability Programmes will be invited to attend group information sessions held in partnership with partner organisations such as the DWP to apply for jobs in a variety of sectors – for example Care, Hospitality. Participants will meet employers and then be supported to gain qualifications and the skills along with interviews to fill the gaps in specific sectors.

Participants will be supported by the team of mentors to reach their goals and reduce barriers to gain qualifications that make them more employable to apply for jobs in their chosen career pathways.

All CCBC Employment programmes will be advertised in different formats for participants to access information so they can self-refer or be referred by a third party for support to upskill or gain sustainable employment.

The suite of employment support programmes available seek to support and empower individual participants to achieve fair work; or in the case of Working Skills for Adults (WSfA) and Nurture, Equip and Thrive (NET), to upskill and improve the employment opportunities for those that are already in work. In particular, the NET programme aims to increase the ownership of generic, transferable skills across the workforce through community-based provision, helping to improve the opportunities for low skilled workers to sustain employment and increase their earning potential.

NET outcomes within CCBC vary from finding new jobs for individuals, either increasing hours or pay, or both, in addition to contractual improvements such as moving a more stable contract.

From April 2021, the breakdown of the types of support offered by the NET project (towards achieving fair work) are as follows:

- 17 participants achieved an increase in wage/hours/responsibility as a result of a new role
- 1 participant had improved contracts including a move to Permanent or Full time hours
- 8 participants were supported to achieve increased wage/hours/responsibility or promotion in their existing role
- 2 participants achieved improved wellbeing due to changes in their employment, including greater flexibility etc.
- 2 participants were supported to gain an additional role to supplement existing employment hours

In addition to NET, the Working Skills for Adults (WSfA) project provides support in terms of upskilling opportunities for participants across the Borough who are in work and have either no qualifications or low-level qualifications, as a route to progression (including progression towards fair work).

Communities for Work (CfW), Communities for Work Plus (CfW+), Bridges into Work (BiW) and Inspire 2 Work (I2W) programmes also support *unemployed* individuals to secure work, through the provision of intensive mentoring to address barriers, source relevant training and improve employability skills.

Whilst the types of work that individuals may secure is varied and wide-ranging, the aim of employment mentors will always be to support participants to access employment that is sustainable and fair. This will be done at the point of job searching and application (through close working with the Business Liaison team), but also through the provision of ongoing in-work support for a period after commencing work, to support with any issues that may arise in the first weeks. The support can include support with issues related to fair work (such as health and safety concerns, salary or working hour negotiations, accessibility etc.). Often this support may be in the form of empowering the individual to address these issues directly with their employer, but it may also constitute working with the Business Liaison team to contact the employer.

Support for customers with disabilities and work limiting health conditions – the Caerphilly Employment programmes have continued to provide excellent support for customers with disabilities and work limiting health conditions for both unemployed and underemployed residents. For example, the NET Project supported 15 participants with work limiting health conditions.

Caerphilly County Borough Council are Gold on the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and offers a Guaranteed Interview Scheme for members of the Armed Forces Community if they pass the essential criteria. Members of the Armed Forces Community are encouraged to work with the local authority's employment team to support into employment.

The Wales Employment Fair for the Armed Forces Community is returning to Gwent in 2022.

Action 4

Meet the targets set within the local employability programmes by upskilling and supporting citizens into well-paid work

Progress

All projects have continued working well towards their targets and we have resumed our service delivery format of face to face support although we are now able to provide more of a hybrid approach where required. The UK government initiative with Serco has continued to impact on participant engagement numbers throughout the period April 2021- March 2022.

The Council's Employment Managers continue to hold positive meetings to build positive relationships so no duplication is delivered across all programmes in Caerphilly with other funded Employability Programmes. Meetings are held on a quarterly basis to discuss, caseloads, targets, any concerns or issues.

Whilst the employment programmes as a whole have found it difficult to engage with economically inactive participants and long term unemployed aged 25+ following the impact of the Pandemic and DWP statutory provision, support for our NEET young people (aged 16-24) has been on profile over the last year. Work related qualifications and vocational training to improve employability prospects and upskill our residents have considerably improved this year with almost half of those supported gaining a qualification.

The following headline figures represent stats from all of the Council's employment programmes (funded by both WG and ESF):

- Total Participants Supported 697
- Qualifications Gained 336
- Voluntary Placements 3
- Job Entries 299 *(includes improved labour market situations for underemployed residents)*

(Please note: these figures may include some double counting of participants due to customers becoming eligible for different programmes at different stages; however, each outcome claimed represents a separate event).

Regular meetings continue to be held with the Managers and Partnership Manager from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to support participants to the right programme, so they are eligible for the right support and supported into paid work.

Employment Managers have continued to attend the Regional Skills Partnership meetings to work in partnership with other Local Authorities to address needs and paid opportunities across the Cardiff Capital Region.

Through working closely with the Council's Employment Support Team and the DWP's Kickstart programme, 11 apprenticeships were offered together with four traineeships. Participants in both pathways were also equipped with generic employability skills as part of the programme and their Construction Skills Certificate Scheme cards. In addition, Willmott Dixon donated 'prepare for work' and hygiene packs to the participants in the scheme but also to those who took part in construction taster sessions.

Action 5

Through investing in our educational and housing stock, and providing apprenticeships, training opportunities and work placements within our organisation, we will increase the number of local citizens who are skilled and qualified workers and contributing to Community Benefits.

Progress

Bedwas and St Martin's Comprehensive Schools established and delivered STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) workshops undertaken together with support from Willmott Dixon and their supply chain to the Council's annual foodbank appeal and the Free School Meals deliveries.

Housing Repair Operations did not take on any apprentices in 2021. To date 19 have been employed in 2022.

Action 6

To further develop an inclusive approach to apprenticeships

Progress

In 2022, the Council ran an apprenticeship programme where the focus was very much on inclusivity and creating opportunities for all. As part of the programme, new bilingual recruitment pages and a range of accessible media to market the positions was developed.

To accompany these developments, a new application form to enable multiple applications in a single form was created and our job descriptions were redacted and simplified, which facilitated an easier process.

The changes resulted in a very successful programme where the Council received circa 700 applications from approximately 300 individual applicants. All applicants who disclosed details of disabilities or association with the armed forces were guaranteed an interview, providing they met the essential criteria on the person specification.

Candidates were supported through interview events to enable the attendees to have an opportunity to meet with the service areas and have a more informal opportunity to showcase themselves to the Council. 29 apprentices were appointed covering a range of services and job types.

Equality Objective 3 – Community Cohesion – Promote and facilitate inclusive and cohesive communities

Community cohesion as defined in Welsh Government's Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan 2016-17 (latest document) is described as the ability of all communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict. It aims to build communities where people feel confident, that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others, particularly with different people and people with different protected characteristics.

Caerphilly adopts the principles that a cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities;
- the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued;
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities;
- strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

When we refer to 'communities' we are often describing a geographical neighbourhood, but the term community may also be used to define individuals who share a protected characteristic (for example ethnicity or culture, age group, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, gender) or interests.

Action 1

Raise the profile for discriminatory incidents reporting in schools through further staff training

Progress

Discriminatory incidents reporting training has been delivered to new head teachers and is part of the next presentation to primary and secondary heads. A short presentation on Welsh Government's Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan is being delivered in November at a head teachers meeting.

Schools should record and report all discriminatory incidents to the Local Authority (LA). All schools provide data at the end of each term and any schools not providing a response are followed up. The LA collates the data to explore trends and to provide support to any schools which provide data of concern. Data collection was significantly disrupted in 2019-2020 due to the impact of diverting resources to managing the pandemic, so this data has not been included in the table below. The LA recognises that the number of reported incidents is unlikely to reflect the actual number of incidents across our schools for several reasons, including a mismatch between pupils' experiences and their willingness to share their experiences (as highlighted by a number of external reports based on pupils' experiences across Wales).

The LA has made efforts to raise awareness of the need to report incidents and the thresholds for reporting. The following table shows the data collated.

Type of discrimination	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2020/21	2021-22 (2 terms)
Caring for/Cared for	0	2	0	0	0	0
Cultural	3	3	18	3	6	7
Disability	3	2	2	5	2	1
Gender	6	5	7	4	3	5
Homophobic	28	27	31	26	24	29
Language	1	3	14	2	4	0
Nationality	5	11	8	5	6	7
Pregnancy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Race	69	54	57	71	47	70
Religion or belief	5	4	7	15	6	2
TOTAL	120	111	148	129	99	121

Action 2

Evolve the regional integrated approach, to improve the health and well-being of individuals and families subjected to violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWSASV)

Progress

The Council is collaborating closely with colleagues across the region through Gwent VAWDASV to develop improved training solutions to upskill the workforce and raise awareness.

Training for Group 1 VAWDASV has been included in the induction process and recruiting managers are requested to ensure all new staff access the eLearning through our Learning@wales pages.

Further work is required to ensure the volume of Group 2/3 training keeps pace with the Group 1 training.

In relation to monitoring community tensions, we work closely with both internal and external partners to ensure awareness is raised of any concerns and we co-ordinate an appropriate response. Internally, Private Sector Housing and Caerphilly Cares are important partners to achieve this objective.

The annual review of the Common Housing Register, which had not been undertaken since the pandemic due to staff resource and other pressures within the service, has now been completed. This has triggered a number of assessments that now need to be undertaken to review the accessibility and physical need of some applicants on the register and we are working closely with our Housing Occupational Therapists to complete this and also ensure that properties as they become vacant are coded to ensure best match for suitability.

We are also working closely with our colleagues in private sector where we have applicants living in unsuitable accommodation and where they have a physical housing need that cannot be met in the borough are working with our Registered Social Landlords (RSL) partners to ensure that when new developments are coming on line these accommodation needs are being considered.

In addition, we have recently submitted our Rapid Repair Transition Plans (RRTP), which outlines CCBC, will tackle the WG agenda for making homelessness rare, brief and non-reoccurring and how we plan the transformation of Temporary Accommodation for the Local Authority and reduce dependency on this.

Supporting People service has been commissioned and is in place and is accessible to anyone who requires support and we have also set up pathways with Caerphilly Cares, our Caerphilly Homes rents teams and our RSL (Registered Social Landlords) partners for early referral and discussion regarding preventative measures for homelessness.

Awareness of incidences of Domestic Violence affecting our tenants has been reduced since the discontinuation of the Domestic Abuse Conference Call several years ago, although officers are now expected to make welfare calls to offer support when they become aware of such instances. All staff have received safeguarding training appropriate to their role and are aware of the Duty to Report. We also offer target hardening if there is no ongoing relationship between the parties, and support transfers. The introduction of the Renting Homes Wales Act will enable us to further assist victims due to the ability to approve the removal of contract holders from a joint tenancy, without bringing the whole contract (tenancy) to an end.

The Housing Advice Team are currently looking, as part of the RRTP, at reconfiguring one of our current refuge provisions to a wet house and then identifying with Llamau alternate sites for dispersed refuge provision within the borough. One site with Llamau has been identified to initially support the transition and this will remain an ongoing development cation based on data analysis for need.

Work and discussion on this have already started and is a key objective for us to deliver in 2022/2023 subject to no unexpected delays.

Further discussions are being held with Llamau to recruit a Domestic Abuse support worker to be based within the Housing Solution team, to support and provide advice to those who present as part of a holistic assessment and to prevent homelessness where possible.

The use of local lettings policies is relevant for both new developments within existing communities and those existing communities where we are aware of concerns as to community cohesion. The Operation Bang for bonfire night and our work within the community following the murders at Long Row would be examples of partnership working, together with the use of management discretion to facilitate emergency moves for tenants.

Action 3

Advocate community diversity work with services and partners to celebrate equality of difference by championing commemorative and celebratory dates (i.e. Refugee Awareness Week, Holocaust Memorial Day, and Hate Crime Awareness Week)

Progress

Since October 2021, Gwent Police has been holding an **LGBTQ+ Get Together** at Coffi Vista in Caerphilly. This is an opportunity for the local LGBTQ+ community to come together, meet new people in a safe space and discuss issues or concerns with Gwent Police.



The Cohesion Team led on the promotion of key equalities dates over this period, which include Hate Crime Awareness Week and Black History Month, LGBT History Month, Interfaith Week and Refugee Awareness Week.

The Cohesion team have recorded a series of regional podcasts, which provide a platform for lesser-heard voices, sharing local stories from minority community members from a variety of background focusing on Trans issues, Black and Asian minority communities and refugees.



Valleys Voices Podcast

The Cohesion Team have collaborated with Gwent Dragons to promote Hate Crime Awareness Week (HCAW) during October. This included match day programme information, tannoy announcements, HCAW banner picture with players before kick-off. This also includes sponsoring match balls, selling HCAW t-shirts from last year's competition and presenting winners of this competition with Gwent Dragons merchandise.

Funding was allocated to five third sector organisations and supported them deliver their activities.

- Cwmbran Centre For Young People
- BGFM radio which includes VS interview
- Menter Iaith Caerffili
- Torfaen Gypsy and Traveller association
- CRAI Scouts

Promoted awareness weeks through our Communications Teams and through our partners' social media accounts.

Aside from the social media content, the Community Cohesion Team in partnership with Gwent Police and Youth Services across West Gwent held a poster competition for children and young people aged 11 – 25. The winner from each local authority received a voucher donated by Gwent Police.



The Cohesion Team coordinated the Hate Crime for schools project across West Gwent, alongside the rollout of our regionally commissioned Show Racism the Red Card project – The latter of which is providing a broader opportunity to a wider range of schools within the region – this also included training for school staff.

The Cohesion Team developed an e-learning equalities module for the region – this has been shared across the region for use to raise awareness of equalities internally.

They also engaged community members and faith leaders in the lead up to interfaith week. During the week we hosted an interfaith event in partnership with Gwent Police which brought community leaders together and helped promote the importance of faith within communities, particularly given the pandemic, the event also helped provide a voice for community groups that are less visible in our communities.

In the lead up to this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, and in memory of Anne Frank, school pupils were asked to write their own diary entry expressing their thoughts and feelings on the story of Anne Frank, drawing on the own experiences gained throughout the pandemic, exploring themes of; isolation, the importance of

togetherness, community and belonging. In addition, the Regional Cohesion Team secured a Holocaust survivor to give a pre-recorded talk to all members of the local authority.

The team also arranged for prominent buildings across the West Gwent region to be illuminated for example: Blackwood Miners Institute, Tredegar town, Pontypool Civic Centre all illuminated to show an act of solidarity. A number of libraries such as Caerphilly, Blackwood, Bargoed and Newbridge also displayed pupils' work from primary schools across the borough.

During the latter part of October, they continued to promote activities surrounding Hate Crime Awareness Week. Press releases were distributed across the region and the Community projects (which were supported by the small-scale grant funding that the cohesion team made available in the lead up to hate crime awareness week) were all completed.

Below is an overview of some of the other work that has been progressed:

Press releases across the region:

- [Dragons Rugby support Welsh Governments 'Hate Hurts Wales' campaign](#)
- [Gwent Dragons drive anti-hate message | Torfaen County Borough Council](#)
- Social media posts throughout the week with hashtags #NationalHCAW #HateHurtsWales #No2Hate #NHCAW22-

Throughout this period they also launched an online meeting for minority communities, this will be an opportunity for those who are isolated to build relationships with others.

Further support has been provided to some authorities within the region on their Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) surveys this included raising awareness across the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities regarding the importance of engaging in this consultation, as such the Regional Cohesion Team visited sites and disseminated information, we have also assisted with recommendations in the final report(s).

During this period the Regional Cohesion Team also worked with colleagues across West Gwent to support the messaging and participation of hard-to-reach communities with regards to the Census – in particular communities who may experience challenges in participating due to literacy or language. This has involved liaising directly with communities such as the refugee cohort, working with Communications Teams on issuing materials in different languages, conducting mapping of EU nationals - used to support the knowledge base of on the ground census staff, and engaging local religious establishments. We also organised the illumination of civic buildings to increase awareness of the census - pictures of which have been shared via social media platforms.

Action 4

Engagement – develop a minority communities citizens panel as a means to improving the engagement with lesser-heard voices

Progress

Due to Covid, we have needed to concentrate on engaging with seldom-heard groups through existing networks where good relationships have already been established. We have established good relationships with several groups e.g. Caerphilly People First, Caerphilly Parent Network, Menter Iaith Caerffili etc. and will continue to expand these network contacts across a wider range of groups to ensure all those protected characteristics groups are engaged more effectively.

Action 5

Community cohesion team will work with LEA (Local Education Authority) and partners to develop improved equities practices and anti-discrimination work in schools. (This will include training to staff, raising the profile of discriminatory incident recording, support for schools to develop the inclusion of equalities work in the curriculum through schools workshops and a schools swap project linking a local school to one in a different and contrasting area)

Progress

Last year the Regional Cohesion Team put together a Ramadan live event for schools, this was a collaborative project with colleagues from Newport and a local imam (Islamic leader).

This year as part of the Schools Twinning activity, we a partnered with two schools from Cardiff, St Paul's Primary School (Grangetown) and St Mary the Virgin Primary School (Butetown). Both are diverse schools with a high number of Muslim pupils. Our activity this year was to design giant Eid cards (A2) and send them to the schools in celebration of Eid. All schools were welcomed to take part in this activity.

We also set up a virtual lesson called 'where we live' between the Cardiff and West Gwent schools, this was a meet and greet opportunity for years 5 and 6. It requires a commitment from teachers to support with the planning arrangements of this activity. We distributed a number of other activities across the network of schools, including:

- Provided useful resources to all schools which look at: the origins of Ramadan
- Provided an understanding on why Muslims fast for a month
- Discussions regarding the importance of observing Ramadan in the UK
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zpdtbkb/articles/zjc2bdm>

A guide to the School Twinning Programme Guide was also developed for the West Gwent region – See **Annexe C**.

The Regional Cohesion Team continues to liaise with Victim Support on the roll out of Victim support training – we are now in discussion to hold a session for Youth Offending teams across the region.

We continue to deliver our in-house anti-discrimination workshop to a number of primary schools across the region.



Further Emphasis has been placed on promoting inclusion online – the below video generated over 30,000 clicks on Facebook alone.

[Instagram Inclusion togetherness video](#)



EU nationals are identified on the Common Housing Register.

Action 6

Engage with EU nationals with regards to the EU Settlement Scheme

Progress

The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is now closed.

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator (RCCC) has provided briefings for key officers in the lead up to the launch of the Settled Status scheme. Migration mapping, reflecting inward migration into each authority, has also supported local authorities (LAs) in their Brexit resilience building.

We continued to prioritise awareness raising of the EUSS and worked collaboratively with partners such as Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Ethnic Youth Support Team (EYST) and Local Education Authorities (LEAs), alongside Police and Registered Social Landlords. Utilising local networks, resident newsletters and social media to increase awareness. Supported via the Cohesion budget, we also printed EUSS literature available in multiple EU languages which have been distributed across the region to all departments, schools and community buildings.

During this reporting period, we worked with libraries and partners to host drop in sessions to promote the scheme, and utilised the EUSS funding made available by Welsh Government to purchase additional hard copy resources. Additionally the Regional Cohesion Team commissioned a EUSS Radio Advert on Capital Radio, which was broadcast for 6 months in the lead up to the EUSS deadline. We also established the 'We are digital' services in all boroughs of West Gwent, meaning local libraries were able to assist those making an application.

Overview of progress;

- Facebook campaign via Facebook Marketing
- Regional radio campaign (i.e. Capital radio)
- South Wales Argus (advert Paper and Website)
- Resident newsletter
- Regional drop in sessions

Whilst large-scale migration is not experienced in the West Gwent Region the possible impact of EU nationals leaving the area had been explored within local resilience forums. As part of this discussion the RCCC mapped all economic migration across West Gwent LAs – highlighting the communities where EU migrants have settled. This has supported readying the local economy to promote the settled status scheme in areas which have experienced higher levels of inward migration.

The RCCC has held discussions with the Inclusion and Equality organisation (Victim Support) on the collation of data, crime trends and stats have been shared with lead officers at the community tension monitoring group.

Private sector housing have been involved in sourcing and assessing suitability of accommodation for the Afghan and Syrian resettlement schemes and more recently for Ukraine.

Action 7

Monitor community tensions – link with Partners and take proactive steps to mitigate tensions from escalating in the community

Progress

Throughout this period the Regional Cohesion Team focused efforts on improving awareness of hate crime and the available reporting channels, this has included;

- The coordination of Hate Crime Training for elected members and youth services across the region

- In collaboration with Victim Support, we have adapted training to different audiences and delivered sessions to Blaenau Gwent's Youth Service, Torfaen Youth Service, and Caerphilly elected members.

Hate incidents are discussed as cases at Partnership Tasking meetings. Any cases that come to the attention of the partnership are monitored and dealt with. The majority of these are reported to police and are dealt with accordingly by police action. The Regional Cohesion Team monitors these incidents to look at emerging trends, hotspots etc. and put plans in place when trends are identified.

Housing have taken the lead with the Homes for Ukraine scheme and provided additional accommodation via the Transitional Accommodation Capital Programme Project Board (TACP).

Action 8

To continue support for the LA's engagement with the UK Resettlement Scheme

Progress

The Regional Cohesion Team has mapped local Ukraine and European communities to support leadership teams in preparation for possible future arrivals regarding the Family Visa Scheme for Ukraine.

We have worked with Communications Teams across the region in respect of the **Homes for Ukraine Scheme** and the publishing of accurate information on council websites and via social media.

Equality Objective 4 – Inclusive Engagement and Participation – Engage with citizens to encourage participation, to have their voices heard when planning service delivery

The availability of information in various formats is essential in ensuring that all citizens are able to participate in any or all engagement exercises. Whilst advances in technology enable us to provide information in digital formats, there continue to be barriers that prevent citizens from engaging. Transport, mental health, socio-economic status, low literacy and numeracy skills and particular difficulties experienced by seldom heard groups, are some of the barriers that continue to prevent citizens from engaging with the council and wider support services.

This Objective is reflected in one of our Corporate Objectives that looks at how we can 'Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being'. It includes supporting people to help themselves by providing comprehensive advice and guidance including signposting to other services. It is about having meaningful conversations with people to help them identify what matters to them, which will inform services to suit their needs.

Action 1

Support citizens to 'help themselves' by providing comprehensive advice and information, including signposting to other services

Progress

Employability projects have continued to sign post service users to many other services including internal partners e.g. Supporting People, Caerphilly Cares, Community Education as well as external partners Job Centre Plus, Careers Wales, MIND, Remploy and many more.

Within Social Services, the Information, Advice & Assistance Team provide comprehensive guidance and signpost to alternative and more appropriate services and the Dewis Cymru website aims to help people with their well-being and provides information and advice for adults and their carers.

The Early Years Integration Transformation Programme has been moving forward to implement a borough wide early years model for antenatal to 7 years. The Early Years Hub now incorporates the Family Information Service team and wider professionals to support families have the right support at the right time to meet their needs. Frontline staff have trained and are implementing What Matters conversations with families to support a strength-based approach with interventions to meet the family's needs and not just give a menu of services to meet wishes. The What Matters approach aims to build a relationship with the family to understand root causes and not just superficial symptoms to support the building of family resilience and move away from reliance on services.

The Early Years website has been developed from the family perspective to ensure information is easy to find and linked to wider partner sites to ensure families have the most relevant updated information. Dewis is now being used for Family Information Service Childcare and family activity searches to ensure a

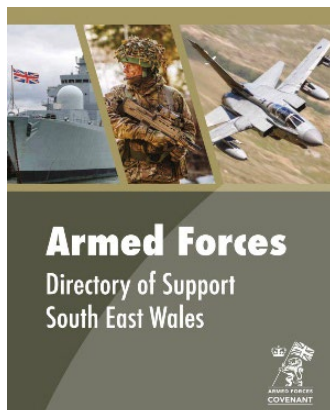
comprehensive national database for searching beyond the Caerphilly borough boundaries. Both the website and Dewis database will continue to evolve to ensure families have comprehensive information available. In addition, we are working with midwifery to implement Badgernet Midwifery notes in 2023 which will push information directly to families antenatally across Gwent and ensure families have the information direct to their phone.

The Early Years model is now borough wide to ensure families who need support living outside of Flying Start areas are able to access the support for their child's development and family circumstances. While there is not yet funded childcare placements for all families, there is access to antenatal programme, family support, early language development, child development and early support for developmental delays. This has removed barriers for many vulnerable families who lived outside of Flying Start areas. In addition Welsh Government has announced Flying Start expansion Phase 1 which in Caerphilly was the New Tredegar area, and a further expansion of Flying Start childcare provision (phase 2) will start in April 2023 enabling access to funded part time childcare for many more vulnerable families.

The development of the Early Years model has been part of a system thinking approach in the last two years. Families and stakeholders have helped us to design the values and principles of the early years system, through sharing their own lived experiences, explaining what they valued from the support they had accessed, and highlighting the aspects which showed less value, duplication, or bureaucracy. The family and stakeholder involvement were critical in developing a system based on values and principles and avoiding assumptions which caused unnecessary bureaucracy / paperwork. Families continue to inform the system change as it is implemented.

Advice provided on website and the Common Housing Register. In addition, Estate Management Officers, Rent Officers and Tenancy Enforcement Officers make appropriate referrals and signpost customers.

A new and updated directory of services for the Armed Forces was created for South East Wales covering nine local authority areas. The directory includes information on housing and education policies, as well as local and national support agencies.



Action 2

Have 'meaningful conversations' to help citizens identify what matters to them to inform outcome focussed planning

Progress

Caerphilly Conversation. Embrace a co-production approach as appropriate – training etc. Progress has been delayed due to Covid.

We undertook a consultation on Rent Affordability, Value for Money and Cost of Living Crisis. We received over 200 responses via completed surveys, online and face to face sessions with tenants.

Our involved tenants were asked their views on the WHQS II consultation, which was included in the Caerphilly Homes' feedback to Welsh Government.

Tenant Information Exchange held every 6 to 8 weeks (online/face to face) opportunity to find out what is happening in Housing and share their views. Guest speakers have covered topics such as Cost of living support available, Renting Homes, Net Zero and WHQS Environmental programme. There have also been regular emails to involved members, providing details of opportunities for them to participate with both Caerphilly Homes and TPAS Cymru.

In 2021, Caerphilly Homes carried out a comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey which allowed tenants to have their say about their home, the services they receive and to set a baseline to measure future improvements.

The results of the survey are as follows:

Bench Mark	2021 Results
81%	77% satisfaction overall
80%	75% quality of home
83%	80% safety and security of home
73%	69% repairs & maintenance overall
83%	77% neighbourhood as a place to live
82%	76% value for money of rent
68%	76% value for money of service charge
82%	79% easy to deal with
68%	54% listens to views and acts on them
62%	54% dealing with anti-social behaviour
58%	50% taking part in decision-making
55%	52% having a say in service management
76%	73% trust Caerphilly Homes

Caerphilly Homes will use the results to plan service improvements. We plan to undertake the survey every two years and ask similar questions so we can track whether we are improving, and take action if we are not.

Early Years – See response against Equality Objective 4 Action 1

The Cwm a Mynydd Rural Development Programme team engage in dialogue with a broad section of Caerphilly residents and organisations through the Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent Local Action Group, a partnership of third sector, private sector and public sector members. The group has an eligible voting membership of 23 and is comprised 52%Male 48%Female 0%other. The group is an active forum for the development and funding of projects and interventions targeted at rural communities that are often experience greater isolation, poverty and greater access to service provision than more urban populations.

Action 3

Identify and support carers

Progress

Carers Rights Day to be held in person November 2022. To support individual carer's well-being, we have:

- 168 leisure memberships provided for adult carers
- 28 leisure memberships provided for young carers
- Organised over 50 activities for all carers
- Launched YC ID card scheme (38 provided so far)
- Provided 105 carers and their families with respite opportunities via the Winter of Wellbeing scheme
- Provided 59 carers and their families with respite opportunities via the Summer of Fun scheme
- Number of carers attending organised and individual activities – 1388 (some may have attended more than one)
- Helped carers to access PPE and tests to keep them and their loved ones safe
- Increased number of carers on mailing list from 1303 to 1727
- **Increased number of carers accessing Facebook groups from 723 to 860**
- Carried out 174 carers' assessments
- Paid out approximately £28k in direct grants via the Small Grants Scheme, administered by The Care Collective

Action 4

Embed the *Consultation and Engagement Framework* into all consultation exercises undertaken by council services to ensure key stakeholders are consulted with and given time to respond

Progress

The framework was adopted in February 2020. Training on Effective Consultation and Engagement was delivered in April 2021 to the Management Network and other officers involved in public engagement work across the organisation.

Action 5

Identify service needs of specific user groups; what barriers prevent access, and what actions are required to remove those barriers

Progress

Early Years – See response against Equality Objective 4 Action 1

The service needs and barriers of the participants form part of the initial assessment process in the employability projects and subsequent action plans are put in place to remove barriers through 1-2-1 support. Communications will continue to support work driven by service areas.

It is recognised that veterans are particularly susceptible to loneliness and social isolation. To combat this many trips have been organised to afford the opportunity that veterans can attend such outings free.



A tablet loan scheme was developed working with Digital Wales and has provided support to assist tenants to join us at online sessions using their own equipment. In addition, set up dial out so could telephone those who were unable to join us online.

A lack of transport and other issues (such as caring responsibilities) may prevent someone from taking part in our activities. We offer expenses e.g.: travel mileage, carer costs or we can arrange transport (taxis). We have also provided an escort previously for someone who needed assistance leaving their home. We are providing a support worker to assist one of our tenants with sight loss to attend a 2-day housing conference.

We ensure that all our meetings and events are accessible, from making sure the building is accessible, when meetings are face to face, to ensuring we meet people's language preferences and providing translation services such as BSL, Punjabi and a live-captioner. We are now able to offer online activities for those who prefer to engage this way and offer sessions at different times for those tenants who are working or need to meet during school time. We have spoken to tenants about how they like to be involved so that we can identify their needs and remove any barriers that are in place where possible.

We are currently working on project to support tenants with sight loss so we can assist them to access both our services and other organisations. We are part of the RNIB Vision Friends project and are hoping to provide training for more Caerphilly Homes staff in the New Year.

In May 2022, we had an online Rent and Affordability discussion session and someone who had sight and hearing loss approached us. We arranged for a live captioner to join the session to enable the person to participate. By offering the option to participate online as well as in person enables more opportunities for people to be involved.

We are currently working on the Customer Portal, which will provide tenants with the opportunity to, for example, log a repair online etc. This would remove the barrier for tenants with hearing loss as an example to access services in a way that is suitable for them.

The service needs and barriers of the participants form part of the initial assessment process in the employability projects and subsequent action plans are put in place to remove barriers through 1-2-1 support. Communications will continue to support work driven by service areas.

Action 6

Review and update our key stakeholder groups within the county borough that represent protected characteristic groups

Progress

We have undertaken a thorough stakeholder analysis and maintain a stakeholder database that represent protected characteristic groups. This is regularly reviewed and updated. This database is shared with officers undertaking consultation exercises across the service areas.

Contact made using social media and Tenant & Resident Association groups to try to recruit more volunteers from the protected characteristic groups. However, we do not currently monitor these characteristics within our engaged tenant list.

A contact form is being sent out to all tenants shortly asking about support requirements, contact preference etc. Going forward it may then be possible to access 'Capita Customer Experience' to see if any of the tenants we engage with have protected characteristics.

We are aware of some characteristics e.g. age and disability but do not monitor as part of our day-to-day activity or store data. We ensure that where we are aware we offer opportunities to participate e.g. attend specific networks e.g. Tenant Participation Advisory Service Cymru Disability network. Caerphilly Homes is a member of Tai Pawb, an organisation which promotes equality and social justice in housing.

Action 7

Review and strengthen internal processes for undertaking Integrated Impact Assessments and related consultation

Progress

The Council developed an Integrated Impact Assessment during 2020 to include Socio- economic Duty. See above. We also updated the questions asked around impact on Welsh Language in line with guidance published by the Welsh Language Commission relating to the Policy Making Standards.

The Armed Forces Covenant was passed as law in December 2021 for Housing, Education and Health. Staff will have to apply 'due regard' in respect of the Armed Forces Community. Caerphilly was the first local authority in England and Wales to include consideration for Armed Forces Community as a category under the Socio-economic Duty section. Presentations have been delivered and the section shared with a number of local authorities as an example of good practice. Due regard must be considered in the following circumstances:

- How obligations and sacrifices affect access to requirements of my public service?
- Are the Armed Forces Community disadvantaged compared to the end user experience of local civilians?
- If so, should I mitigate/resolve this disadvantage?
- Can disadvantage only be resolved through Special Consideration?
- Guidance will be provided but has to go through parliament for approval
- Due Regard must be in place by the end of 2022

Action 8

Ensure that activities related to service change and transformation embed the principles of good consultation with communities as part of 'The Caerphilly Conversation'

Progress

Caerphilly Conversation survey was the starting point for a new dialogue with communities. Many people put themselves forwards to assist in a new 'relationship' with the council. However, the intended face-to-face focus groups were delayed due to Covid, but there are plans later in 2022 to consult and engage with the public on what services to prioritise over the next few years.

Housing will follow all corporate guidance and where necessary consult with our Consultation and Public Engagement Officer.

Equality Objective 5 – Welsh Language – To ensure the Welsh speaking public can access services that comply with the statutory requirements

The Equality Act 2010 does not cover Welsh language issues but have a set of standards under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011. These are detailed in the regulations approved by Welsh Government as the Welsh Language Standards (No. 1) Regulations 2015.

Internal working practices continue to evolve to ensure that the principle of language equality is respected in every aspect of service provision. To assist the council in meeting the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards and to meet the needs of the Welsh speaking population of the county borough, we work in partnership with organisations such as; Menter Iaith Caerffili, Fforwm Iaith, Welsh medium schools etc. This work is detailed in the county borough's Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022.

Cabinet approved the new Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 for the county borough on 9 March 2022, details of which are on page 12 under '**Snapshot of Key Decisions**'.

We must comply with all agreed Welsh Language Standards as detailed in the Council's Compliance Notice to ensure that the Welsh-speaking population, whether they be staff, citizens, students or visitors can access the council's services in Welsh.

Our progress is recorded each year in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report, which is published below for 2021-2022. The council's Cabinet approved publication of the report on 15 June 2022. To view the 2021-2022 report click [here](#).

Action 1

Raise awareness amongst staff that come into contact with children and young people of the need to foster positive attitudes towards the Welsh language

Progress

During 2021-2022, the Council's 5-year Welsh Language Strategy was reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders. Internal stakeholders included the Youth Service, Early Years and Library Service.

The Welsh Language Standards require the council to develop a 5-year Welsh Language Strategy that sets out how it intends to promote the use of the Welsh language, and facilitate the use of the Welsh language more widely in the county borough.

The strategy must include a target (in percentage terms) for increasing or maintaining the number of Welsh speakers in the area by the end of the 5-year period. In addition, the strategy must include a statement setting out how the target will be met. The strategy must be reviewed and renewed at the end of each 5-year period (Standard 145).

In developing the new strategy the council undertook a range of evidence gathering and pre-consultation engagement activities to develop a revised set of actions of the draft 5-year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027. These actions will enable us to plan how we will promote the Welsh language and facilitate the use of the language locally to increase the Welsh speaking population over the next five years.

Activities include:

- A review of legislative requirements
- A review of external reports and guidance, including Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050: our plan for 2021 to 2026', and the Welsh Language Commissioner's guidance 'Standards relating to promoting the Welsh Language'
- A review of the Council's current Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- An analysis of local and national datasets
- Engagement with service delivery managers within the Council
- Engagement with Caerphilly Welsh Language Forum and Welsh in Education Forum

We worked in collaboration with our partners to develop a strategy that builds on our past successes, meets the needs of the Welsh speakers and learners in the county borough, meets the legislative requirements and most importantly, is meaningful, appropriate and achievable for everyone involved. A full list of the partners involved can be viewed in the strategy.

The strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2022 and was published on our website on 31 March 2022. To view the strategy and the supporting appendices please click on the following link: [5-Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027](#).

At the end of each 5-year period, the council must assess the extent to which the strategy has been followed and the target met. The assessment, which must be published, must include the number of Welsh speakers in the area and the list of activities that have been undertaken to meet the aims of the strategy (Standard 146). Progress against the 5-Year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 can be viewed [here](#).

For Children's Services, all children that we work with are encouraged to engage in education and training and in relation to Children Looked After; their carers are clear about the need to promote Welsh language skills in line with the National Curriculum in Wales.

Action 2

Develop bilingual leadership skills amongst young people to help them become community champions of the language within their communities

Progress

A recent project involving books for schools have been created bilingually and workshops conducted through the Welsh language were delivered in the development process. The book - Ein Llyfr – Ein Hanes: Llewellyn Bren was co-produced with local historian Dr. Elin Jones and school children to showcase and chart the life of Llewellyn Bren and engage school children across the county with local history. The book has been distributed to every primary school in the county borough.

Action 3

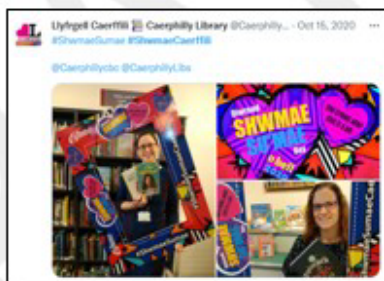
Promote the availability of bilingual services by ensuring Welsh speakers and learners within service areas wear an appropriate lanyards /badges

Progress

We keep a stock of 'laith Gwaith' lanyards and badges for staff to request. They are requested on a regular basis and officers are aware of whom to contact to receive them. All our frontline service officers have been given these resources to use.

We celebrated Diwrnod Shwmae on 15 October 2021 with an online campaign to raise awareness of the significance of the event. Service areas with social media accounts were encouraged to use #shwmaesumae and #shwmaecaerffili. See page 20.

For the third year, we celebrated Welsh Language Rights Day on 7 December 2020. Again social media presence was key in raising awareness of the event and the rights of Welsh speakers when accessing services.



Action 4

Support the development and promotion of a directory of Welsh medium services available locally

Progress

The Early Years Hub offers a bilingual service to families and has all available registered childcare including Welsh medium available to the public on the Dewis database search engine. Early Years commissions Menter laith to support our English medium settings to improve the Welsh offered in the setting as well as support Welsh learners to improve language in Welsh medium settings. Early Years provision has been mapped and actions to improve Welsh language provision are given priority.

Action 5

Ensure that Welsh medium events and activities are a part of the Council's community events programme

Progress

This year the Countryside Service carried out the following to support Welsh language events in the country borough:

- three Welsh walks for Menter laith Caerffili,
- two activities at Picnic in the Park at Riverside
- attended Menter laith Caerffili's Christmas Fair at Llancaich Fawr

The Summer of Fun grant actively supported Urdd and Menter Iaith to offer summer activities through the medium of Welsh for children and young people.

The Strategy and Planning Officer in Early Years is actively engaging with members in the Early Years team to support their access to Welsh language courses and support Welsh learners to increase their confidence to use Welsh in the workplace. In addition, the workforce audit across Early Years has identified Welsh speakers who are happy to support Welsh learners to use their Welsh in settings and the workplaces increasing confidence.

We are also working with Mudiad Meithrin to develop Ti a Fi around the borough to improve access to provision for families.

A number of events provided by Menter Iaith Caerffili are run in partnership with council services, for example the Welsh medium Walking Group is supported by a Ranger from Countryside Services, and the Summer of Fun grant actively supported Urdd and Menter Iaith to offer summer activities through the medium of Welsh for children and young people.

Action 6

Promote Welsh language as a recognised objective for managers, to enable them to map Welsh language provision across their service area and increase capacity where necessary

Progress

Early Years – See response against Equality Objective 5 Action 6

During 2021-2022, the Rural Development Plan team employed a first language Welsh speaker to complement the existing first language and an additional proficient Welsh language speaker in our development team. Two team members participated in Welsh language classes within the reporting period. Welsh language provision and requirement was considered throughout the recruitment process for new staff during the period.

All of our printed material is bilingual, and the Welsh text precedes the English text.

Relevant targets set out in the Council's Five-year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027, which include a change in the internal culture and acceptance of the Welsh language in delivering services.

Web recruitment at the Council directs the applicant to the Welsh Recruitment landing pages advising that 'Our people are at the heart of everything we do'. Application forms are encouraged to be submitted in the Welsh Language and applicants are signposted to learn about our Benefit and Rewards; Equality and Diversity; Apprenticeships and Trainee Programmes and our commitment to support Employee Wellbeing.

Applicants who choose our job pages in English are also notified of the option to submit their application in the Welsh Language. All jobs in the Council are advertised as Welsh Desirable, if not Welsh Essential.

The Council's targeted audience in this context is the vast job market from which we encourage Welsh Speakers to join us.

The employability programme delivers qualifications through the medium of Welsh should the participants require and internally, the Welsh language will continue to be promoted with staff wherever possible and we will continue to encourage increased capacity.

Action 7

Consider the impact on the Welsh language when planning housing developments, in particular Welsh medium school places, street names etc.

Progress

The majority of historical street names are monolingual. New street names are allocated on a 50/50 basis, however at present the bias is to Welsh street names to rectify the historic imbalance. The gazetteer can hold both English and Welsh addresses and where a street name is bilingual, i.e. it has a bilingual street plate, and it is held in both languages.

A report to standardise Welsh place names is being drafted following work undertaken in partnership with the Welsh Language Commissioner to ensure a standard list of place name spellings for the county borough.

Action 8

Ensure the council's website is bilingual and pages are monitored and updated in both languages on a rolling programme basis

Progress

A working group meets on a quarterly basis to discuss any issues or concerns regarding the Council's bilingual website content. The Website is bilingual and no information is published without translation. It should be noted that there are very rare occasions where, due to the urgent nature of a communication, the English will be published first whilst awaiting translation, but these situations are infrequent.

Action 9

Ensure the council's Intranet has a Welsh interface and menus in line with Standard 126

Progress

The new Digital Workspace (new intranet) will be fully bilingual – specification has been signed off and about to go to tender. Ongoing conversations with Communications Unit.

Action 10

Create a campaign to attract young Welsh speaking citizens into youth work, sport and art activities as leaders

Progress

This is an action in the five Year Welsh Language Strategy. It requires partnership working.

Action 11

Work with young people to raise awareness of the Welsh language as a valuable skill for training and employment

Progress

Over the past 12 months we have been working closely with Careers Wales to try and build links with our secondary schools, raising awareness of careers with the council but in particular how important having Welsh language skills is in the workplace.

The Senior Policy Officer – Equalities and Welsh Language recorded two videos (Welsh and English versions) to be used in our secondary schools during the lockdown period.

<https://twitter.com/cwcardiffbea3/status/1397210046036054020?s=21&t=iRIlpOpOqS66NCX1SQClnw>

In November 2021, the Senior Policy Officer – Equalities and Welsh Language was invited to attend a 'World of Work Day' at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni. The day consisted of delivering a number of presentations during the school day to Year 11 students, promoting career opportunities with the council. The presentation focussed in particular on how important and valuable having and using Welsh language skills are in the workplace. Students were encouraged to wear the 'iaith gwaith' orange speech bubble badges and lanyards to show employers and members of the public that they can speak Welsh.

<https://twitter.com/cwcardiffbea3/status/1456234952459227147?s=21&t=iRIlpOpOqS66NCX1SQClnw>

Action 12

Hold an annual Welsh language jobs fair to raise awareness of the value of the language to employment in the Welsh public sector and the ability to contact the council in Welsh by telephone, face to face and by written communication

Progress

See response to Action 11. We are slowly moving towards forming a Welsh language jobs fair, but that requires collaboration to materialise.

Equality Objective 6 – Inclusive, Diverse and Equal Workforce – Create a workforce which reflects and respects the diversity of the communities within the county borough

Creating a workplace, which is safe and inclusive, promotes a positive working environment where staff feel valued and empowered, enabling them to provide high quality services to our citizens.

We need a greater understanding of the diversity of our workforce. To achieve this, collection of equalities monitoring data is crucial. Data must be captured at the beginning of the employment process, cleansed, and updated on a regular basis.

Fairness at work and good job performance go hand in hand. Tackling discrimination helps to attract, motivate and retain staff and enhances an organisation's reputation as an inclusive employer.

Equalities and Welsh language training equips staff with the skills and understanding required to engage with citizens sensitively. Upskilling staff to have an awareness of protected characteristics ensures that citizens with specific needs, receive services that are accessible and compliant.

The Council's HR system has been upgraded so that it can record language skills of staff and be able to pull reports should they be required.

Action 1

Develop online equalities training which will be mandatory for all staff and elected members

Progress

We delivered Unconscious Bias Training, sourced through Academi Wales. Funded via the Community Cohesion budget, 500 places were shared with Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent Councils. Of the 167 places allocated, 156 officers have taken up the course.

The enhanced provision of equalities training courses for staff and managers is one of the actions identified within the Workforce Development Strategy 2021–2024, with a timescale of Q3 2021-2022. Work is ongoing to achieve this target. The recently created Workforce Development Team will coordinate this work.

Action 2

Implement the National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence (VAWDASV).

- % of workforce who have completed Basic Awareness training (Group 1) / No of staff completed Basic Awareness training (Group 1)
- % of identified staff who have completed Ask and Act training (Group 2)
- % of identified staff who have completed Enhanced Training (Group 3)
- Implement Refresher training when available and appropriate

Progress

The number of staff who received VAWDASV training is as follows:

<u>Staff Trained</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
3541	42%
650	43% Based on figures estimated pre-COVID
161	54% Based on figures estimated pre-COVID

Training records are being reviewed and reminders being sent to managers for renewals to be completed.

All Housing staff are offered and undertake all relevant training.

Action 3

Disability Confident – improve on our current standard

Progress

Working collaboratively with our Trade Union colleagues, we are exploring alongside our wider inclusive policy development (i.e. Leave of Absence and Sickness Policies), the benefits that a new disability passport launched by the TUC to help people with a disability who fall out of work or switch employers to get the support they need may add. Policy consultation and further consideration of the ‘disability passport’ is underway.

In accordance with the action plan within the Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021 – 24, both areas below are progressing:

- Working with the Trade Unions, continue to raise awareness of all forms of discrimination and the requirement to effectively challenge prejudice at source.
- Upgrade our membership of the Disability Confident Scheme.

Action 4

Ensure compliance with the *Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties)(Wales) Regulations 2011* and encourage disclosure:

- the publishing of pay differences by protected characteristic groups,
- the annual publication of our employment data, and
- work linked to improve staff disclosure rates of employment data, either through recruitment or via iTrent Self-Service

Progress

The cloud based service for our HR / Payroll system with additional modules that we are moving to will provide the opportunity to improve these disclosure rates.

Action 5

Re-establish our membership to support Stonewall's Workplace Diversity Champions Index

Progress

Re-establishing our membership of Stonewall Cymru is one of the actions within the Employee Wellbeing Strategy 2021–2024, with a timescale of 2022.

Action 6

Work collaboratively to build the brand 'Proud Councils' to support Pride events

Progress

Caerphilly is an active member of the Proud Councils partnership, which brings together several councils in South Wales in a visible and unified way, to support and promote equality for LGBTQ+ communities.

The purpose of Proud Councils is to improve support offered to LGBTQ+ staff within local authorities in Wales and ensure that local government across Wales is a visible leader in the field of LGBTQ+ rights and actively championing LGBTQ+ inclusion in our communities.

In 2022, 'Proud Councils' was a finalist in the PinkNews Awards 2022, for the Public Sector Equality Award.

"Representation in the public sector is paramount to creating a better future for minorities. That's why the Public Sector Equality Award celebrates those exceptional parts of our country's governmental or other public bodies that are making a change for the better." - [PinkNews Awards nominees 2022: Full list \(thepinknews.com\)](https://thepinknews.com/pinknews-awards-nominees-2022/)

Action 7

Ensure appropriate Welsh language training is available to staff, from basic to advanced levels

Progress

Caerphilly CBC has provided conversational Welsh courses for staff and elected members since 2001. Courses are also accessible to members of the public and staff members from partner organisations to attend. The courses range from basic taster courses for beginners to courses, which cater for those who are now fluent Welsh speakers. All courses moved to being held online during the initial lockdown, and from September 2020 onwards, all courses now run online.

The data for the courses offered and attended by Caerphilly CBC staff for the academic year 2021-2022 is as follows:

COURSE OFFERED	NUMBER OF COURSES OFFERED	NUMBER OF STAFF ATTENDING
30 Week	58	33
Online 10 Hour Course	1	0
Online 120 Hour Self Study Course	1	1
Say Something in Welsh - Online Welsh Course	1	1
Summer School	1	1
Residential Course	7	1
Withdrawn	N/A	1

During 2021-2022, staff were given two opportunities to attend a Welsh Language Awareness course, which disappointingly only attracted 10 attendees across the two sessions. This course must be provided for staff in line with Standard 132:

You must provide training courses so that your employees can develop –

- a) awareness of the Welsh language (including awareness of its history and its role in Welsh culture);*
- b) an understanding of the duty to operate in accordance with the Welsh language standards;*
- c) an understanding of how the Welsh language* The Welsh Language Awareness courses can be very effective in changing attitudes and explore the following points:
 - 1. Why do we need to give attention to the Welsh language?
 - 2. What do we need to know about the language and its speakers?
 - 3. How can we act in a way that facilitates the use of the Welsh language?

Staff who attended the sessions gave very positive feedback and a selection of the feedback is below:

- a) I really enjoyed this afternoon's session with Huw but cannot believe the poor uptake!*
- b) Huw was both informative and entertaining, providing light humour and a brief history of the Welsh language. I would recommend this course to others. Thanks.*
- c) I surprised myself with how much I enjoyed the course and the confidence it has given me to practice the little Welsh I know and the enthusiasm to learn more. I will be recommending the course to others.*
- d) I really enjoyed the course. It was informative and interesting and has provided me with the motivation to continue learning Welsh. It was also good to listen to the experiences of others and hear about their exposure to the Welsh language.*

Menter Iaith Caerffili facilitated an awareness session to the Youth Service entitled *The Welsh Language in Youth Work* and was attended by 8 people.

In accordance with Standard 128, the council must provide training to staff through the medium of Welsh in the following areas:

You must provide training in Welsh in the following areas, if you provide such training in English –

- (a) recruitment and interviewing;*
- (b) performance management;*
- (c) complaints and disciplinary procedures;*
- (ch) induction;*
- (d) dealing with the public; and*
- (dd) health and safety.*

No requests from staff were received for any of the above listed courses to be delivered through the medium of Welsh, therefore there are no staff training figures recorded. The above information is published here to provide continuity with previous reports.

Action 8

Provide opportunities for staff to improve their existing Welsh language skills for business use

Progress

There are a number of courses available for staff to improve their Welsh language skills along with the promotion of activities run by Menter Iaith Caerffili and Welsh Language Forum partners of events and activities Welsh speakers and learners of all levels can attend and put their skills to use, regardless of level of standard.

All staff in Early Years are encouraged to take up conversational Welsh courses as well as the opportunity to do Mynediad or Sylfaen. Staff are encouraged to use their Welsh in the workplace especially in childcare and in Canolfan Blant Integredig Parc y Felin. With the increasing availability and diversity of courses, staff are more encouraged to access the courses and are being supported by various Welsh speaking members of the team.

Action 9

Provide opportunities for Welsh speaking staff and learners to use their language skills in the workplace

Progress

In line with the Welsh Language Standards, staff are given opportunities to use their Welsh Language skills in the workplace. This includes answering the telephone bilingually, producing bilingual social media posts or drafting bilingual correspondence. Staff are aware that all services the Council provides must be provided bilingually, and are supported by the Equalities and Welsh Language Team who provide advice, support and resources.

Table showing the number of Welsh speakers working for the Council in 2021-2022:

Total Staff	Welsh Speakers	%
8296	1825	21.99

Welsh speaking members of staff are nominated when a customer asks to converse in Welsh.

Equality Objective 7 – Reducing the Gender Pay Gap

We are required to look at gender pay differences within the council and identify an objective that will address any identified difference.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties Wales) Regulations 2011, the Council is required to collect and publish annual employment data across a number of protected characteristics. Information regarding the number of people employed by the council, arranged by, job, pay, contract type and working pattern, should only be broken down in relation to women and men. In addition, the Council must publish data on pay differences and their causes, between employees with and without protected characteristics.

As a Council, we are confident that our gender pay gap does not stem from paying male and female employees differently for the same or equivalent work. The gender pay gap is the result of roles in which male and females currently work and the salaries that these roles attract.

Our gender pay gap is reflective of the causes of gender pay gap at a societal level. For example, research has identified that, although parents are increasingly flexible, the responsibility of childcare still falls disproportionately upon women. It is a fact within this data that females hold the vast majority of part time posts and that these are the posts that attract salaries in the lower quartiles. To view the Council's Gender Pay Gap Statement 2021 click [here](#).

Action 1

Review the data relating to the workforce and determine actions required to meet the general duty as laid down in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011

Progress

Gender pay gap reporting will continue with 2022 data due March 2023.

Encouraging disclosure and increasing disclosure of staff with protected characteristics (Objective 6, Point 4) will enable us to provide more meaningful data aligned to meeting the general duty as laid down in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Action 2

Publish employment information as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties)(Wales) Regulations 2011

Progress

We continue to publish information as required by the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to refining and increasing our reporting aligned to the investment in the upgraded HR / Payroll system.

Action 3

Use the *My Time* appraisal process to develop female staff

Progress

The majority of the Social Services workforce is female and the Directorate continue to operate Supervision and Appraisal processes rather than *My Time* in order to meet Regulatory and Registration requirements.

Embedding the *My Time/My Time Extra* programme and training managers to deliver effective conversations is one of the actions within the Workforce Development Strategy 2021-2024, with a timescale of Q3 2021-2022. The process is embedded and the training needs now needs to take place.

Within Customer Services all staff have regular 121's and all end of year *My Times* booked with team members.

Action 4

Raise awareness of job and business opportunities to non-traditional groups (i.e. not stereotyping jobs to gender)

Progress

Underpinned by service planning - Online Recruitment, Targeted Recruitment, Social Media Sourcing, Tailored Recruitment Solutions, Hybrid Recruitment and effective networking are used to recruit the right individuals with the right skills and capabilities to deliver the Council's goals.

Apprenticeship programmes; Career pathways, working with Kickstart Wales and with Schools, Colleges and Universities enable the Council to raise awareness of job opportunities and encourage applicants from non-traditional groups.

Action 5

Review and update HR policies regularly to include matters such as flexible working, part-time or job-share options, shared parental leave etc.

Progress

A review of HR policies is underway with the first suite supporting agile working. The policies are progressing through the consultation framework and governance process of the Council. The policies include Agile Working Policy, Annual Leave Policy, Flexi Scheme and Mileage Scheme. All policies support equity and encourage flexibility.

Annexes

Annexe A – Equalities Monitoring Form 2021

Annexe B – Example of Polling Station Survey

Annexe C – Guide to School Twinning Programme

Contact

If you have any comments or would like to know more please contact:

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