

Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) Annual Report 2024/2025

Mae'r ddogfen hon hefyd ar gael yn Cymraeg .
This document is also available in Welsh.



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

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If you require this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Corporate Policy Team on **07805 771506** or email: **policy@npt.gov.uk**

Introduction

We are pleased to share Neath Port Talbot Council’s Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report Summary for 2024/2025.

Published in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, this report outlines how we are fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty. It highlights the progress made between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 against the equality objectives and actions set out in our Strategic Equality Plan 2024/2028 and supports the deliver of the Corporate Strategy 2025/2028: Working towards a more prosperous, fairer and greener NPT.

This is the first annual report for our Strategic Equality Plan 2024/2028, which was published in September 2024.

While progress is generally reported on an annual basis, in some cases data is presented using academic years or other timeframes, which are clearly indicated throughout the report.

While we have a legal duty to comply with equalities legislation, our commitment goes far beyond meeting statutory requirements. To truly become an inclusive council, it is essential that our policies and strategies genuinely reflect the diverse communities we serve.



We are NPT

The average (median) age of Neath Port Talbot residents is **43** years of age



12.9% of residents identify as having a disability

49.9% residents report having no religion – **42.1%** report their religion to be Christianity



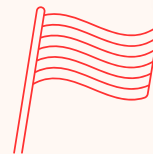
45.9% of residents self-report their health to be very good

0.4% of residents are Black, black British, black Welsh, Caribbean or African



4.8% of Neath Port Talbot residents are unpaid carers

1.1% of residents are from mixed or multiple ethnic groups



2.8% of residents self identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other



1.6% of residents are Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh

Developments

Updates on each action in the plan can be found in Appendix 1 - Progress Against Objectives. However, some key elements of work during 2024/2025 included:

Employee Network Groups

The council's employee network groups actively supported learning, policy development, and recruitment, including involvement in the appointment of the new Chief Executive. A Staff Disability Network was launched in February 2025, with growing membership and elected leadership.

The Ethnic Employee Network hosted several successful events in partnership with community organisations, focusing on Anti-Racism, Allyship, and Black History 365. The LGBTQ+ Staff Network held its first event in November 2024 to mark Trans Day of Remembrance, in collaboration with NPT Pride and Western Bay Community Cohesion.

Website Accessibility

The council's corporate website was ranked among the top ten UK council websites for accessibility by the independent Silktide Accessibility Index - making it the highest-ranked Welsh authority. Silktide assesses websites based on their compliance with international accessibility standards (WCAG).

Over the past year, the council has reviewed and streamlined its web site, reducing the number of pages by 50% by removing outdated content in collaboration with service areas.



Launch of the Staff Disability Network - February 2025



Trans Day of Remembrance - November 2024

Targeted Benefits Campaign for Pensioners

In 2024/2025, Pensioners across Neath Port Talbot received almost £250,000 in extra benefits after being told they were eligible for pension credit. The success was part of a targeted benefits campaign being run by Neath Port Talbot Council in conjunction with social policy software and analytics company, Policy in Practice, financial support for the scheme is coming from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund. Neath Port Talbot Council is the only council in Wales currently taking the targeted benefits approach.



Windrush Day Celebration - August 2024

Anti-Racism Strategy

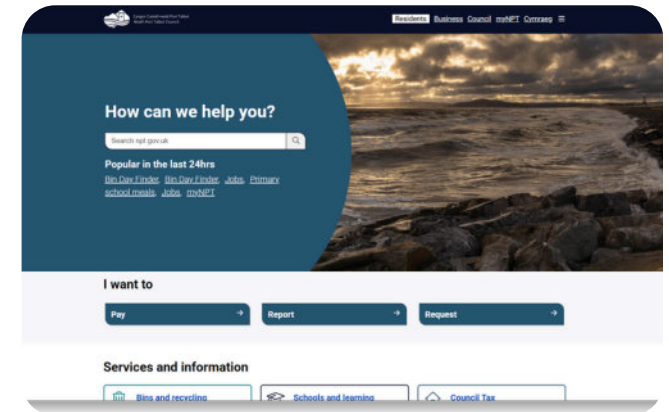
As part of Neath Port Talbot Council's ongoing commitment to becoming an Anti-Racist Council, a workshop was held in January 2025 involving representatives from each Directorate and members of the Ethnic Employee Network. The session identified key themes that will shape the forthcoming Anti-Racism Policy and accompanying Strategy, which is scheduled to be presented to Cabinet in Winter 2025/2026.



Unison Anti Racism Event, May 2024

Digital Independence

Over 300 Neath Port Talbot residents have benefited from a free service aimed at helping them stay independent at home through the use of technology. The Council’s Digital Enablement Service provides home visits to assess how technology can support individuals with everyday tasks. Each visit is tailored to the person’s needs, abilities, and interests. The service also includes a “Digital Solutions Suite” based at Cimla Health and Social Care Centre, offering further support and demonstrations.



Gender Pay Gap

Our gender pay gap data continues to show encouraging progress, with a steady reduction in the mean gender pay gap over recent years—reflecting positive steps toward pay equality. However, the rise in the median gender pay gap in 2024 highlights that some underlying challenges remain and need to be addressed to ensure consistent and sustained improvement.



Eisteddfod Yr Urdd at Margam Park - May 2025

Free entry to the Urdd Eisteddfod Lower income Families

Ahead of the Urdd Eisteddfod Dur y Mor in May 2025, Urdd committed to offering free entry to local families in receipt of low incomes.

In the lead-up to the Eisteddfod, the Urdd worked in partnership with Neath Port Talbot Council, the Welsh Local Government Association, and local organisations supporting low-income families to raise awareness of these free ticket options.

Equality Objective 1 - Education

To ensure children and young people are the best they can be

Executive Summary

Neath Port Talbot continues to deliver strong outcomes for children, families, and schools through integrated early years, inclusion, and youth services. Innovative transition models such as Ready, Steady School and Digital Stories enhanced early identification and collaboration.

Youth Services reduced NEET to 1.1%, delivered 835 accredited outcomes, and strengthened Welsh language engagement. Community Focused Schools expanded Family Engagement Officers from 3 to 28, driving improvements in attendance, behaviour, and parental involvement, with Welsh Government recognising NPT's equity-focused approach as sector-leading.

Throughout 2024/2025 schools saw a significant reduction in exclusions, with staff seeking a more effective solution to analysing bullying data but they continue to receive and monitor the number of racial incidents in schools.

Feedback reveals that staff understanding of children increased by 35% with the addition of an 'I am' Digital Story, and parents have expressed high appreciation for this support. An article detailing this work has been submitted to the 'Societal Impacts' journal. Additionally, Evidence from monitoring highlights how many schools have developed a curriculum that reflects the multi-ethnic nature of Wales. This is reinforced by Estyn inspections which have identified strengths in this area. For example: 'Pupils are given a range of opportunities to develop their awareness of diversity. For example, activities have been developed in a range of subjects linked to the theme of 'Belonging'. Pupils benefit from learning about the experiences of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in assemblies, drop-down days and health and well-being sessions, as well as in lessons'. (Llangatwg Comprehensive School).

Flying Start exceeded Welsh Government targets, supporting over 2,000 children and increasing provider participation by 89%

The Inclusion Service provided extensive ALN-focused training to over 1,800 staff, supported 169 looked-after learners, and achieved 100% successful post-16 transitions.

Families First delivered 1,719 referrals and supported 1,702 parents

Equality Objective 2 - Health & Wellbeing

To promote wellbeing and good mental health within the workplace and tackle mental health stigma and discrimination

Executive Summary

Mental health remains the leading cause of sickness absence across the Council, with initiatives such as 33 Employee Mental Health Champions and the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) improving access to support and engagement.

A revised Recruitment and Selection Policy, approved in September 2024, strengthens inclusivity and reduces bias through measures including anonymous applications and neurodiverse-friendly interview guides.

81% of Neath Port Talbot Schools are now action planning on emotional wellbeing.

Play Sufficiency work has enhanced play spaces and accessibility, with a new Action Plan due in 2025-2026, and holiday provision reached 1,730 children, with the aim of reducing holiday hunger. All youth workers completed Mental Health First Aid training, 634 referrals for Early Intervention were recorded following migration to Mosaic, the new integrated social care IT system.

The Armed Forces Liaison Officer made 140 multi-agency referrals, reinforcing our support for the Armed Forces community.

The Staff Supervision Service expanded to 41 schools, supporting 153 staff and delivering significant wellbeing improvements.

Equality Objective 3 - Personal Safety

To ensure people and communities are safe, respected and free from violence and abuse

Executive Summary

In 2024–2025, the Community Safety team delivered a wide-ranging programme to raise awareness of domestic abuse and promote support options beyond police reporting, including national helplines and local services. Key initiatives included the annual White Ribbon campaign, ‘Heads Up’ for the hair and beauty sector, and ‘Safe Spaces’ with local businesses.

Specialist service provision was reviewed following public consultation, and Calan DVS opened the new STAR Centre in Neath to support victims of sexual abuse and trauma. Community Cohesion events, hate crime awareness campaigns, and staff training strengthened engagement and inclusion.

Internally, the Thinqi learning platform was launched to improve access to training. Work also progressed on the Risk Outside the Home (ROTH) pathway, with MOSAIC development underway to enable data monitoring and full implementation.

During the year 59% of our workforce were compliant on VAWDASV training, with 30% compliant on Prevent duty training. It is anticipated that these figures will increase with the continued roll out of the Thinqi learning platform.

Over 3,000 children received healthy relationship education through schools and Crucial Crew events.

The Community Safety Team organised training and awareness days for council staff and partner agencies to help increase their knowledge of hate crime and community tension related matters

Equality Objective 4 - Employment

To ensure our workforce is more reflective of our community, our policies are fair and equitable and gender pay gaps are reduced

Executive Summary

In 2024/2025, the council advanced its commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion to ensure a workforce reflective of the community. Key achievements include establishing the LGBTQ+ and Disability Employee Networks to provide safe spaces and drive cultural change, alongside reviewing and updating the Trans Equality Guidance.

The council signed the Age-Friendly Employer Pledge and strengthened support for carers, reducing staff turnover linked to caring responsibilities from 5% to 1%. Recruitment initiatives included a Recruitment Fair for people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and partnerships with Job Centre Plus to attract candidates over the age of 50.

Equalities training was embedded in the Corporate Training Programme, covering topics such as unconscious bias, anti-racism, neurodiversity, and mental health. Work progressed on developing an Anti-Racism Strategy and delivering on commitments under the Unison Anti-Racism Charter and Zero Racism Wales pledge. Despite a slight decrease in ethnic minority representation (1.7%), targeted actions aim to improve workforce diversity and reduce gender pay gaps.

The council's Gender Pay Gap for 2024 was 3.81%, compared with 3.28 in 2023 and 3.56 in 2022

A tick box was added to iTrent the council's HR and payroll platform to make it easier for employees to indicate if they are unpaid carers

Equality Objective 4 - Employment *(cont.)*

To ensure our workforce is more reflective of our community, our policies are fair and equitable and gender pay gaps are reduced

Executive Summary

In 2024/2025, the council continued to embed equality, Welsh language, and workforce development across the organisation. Employee survey results show strong inclusion, with over 80% of staff feeling comfortable talking about their background and cultural experiences with their colleagues, and able to be their authentic selves.

Welsh Language Awareness eLearning was accessed by 2,407 employees, alongside initiatives such as “Welsh Words of the Week” and increased uptake in Welsh learning. Intersectionality guidance was developed for launch in Winter 2025.

Apprenticeship programmes supported 300 participants, with 51 gaining qualifications and 35 securing employment, underpinned by positive case studies demonstrating career progression. The Horizons Youth Work Team supported 120 young people into education, training, employment, or voluntary work, reducing NEET risk.

Recruitment initiatives, including anonymised applications, LinkedIn Recruiter, and flexible working, aim to further improve diversity, supported by programmes such as Ment2Be and events like International Women’s Day.

The Horizons Youth Work Team supported 120 young people to transfer to alternative provision without becoming NEET.

Feedback from the 2024 Employee Survey indicated that 81% of respondents agreed that people of all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected in the council.

Equality Objective 5 - Participation

To ensure services are accessible for all and people and communities are able to better influence decisions that affect them

Executive Summary

In 2024/2025, Neath Port Talbot Council strengthened accessibility, digital inclusion, and community engagement. Our website ranked among the UK's top 20 for accessibility, supported by GOV.UK and Welsh Government standards and bilingual design.

Public participation was enhanced through hybrid, bilingual meetings, youth engagement, and staff training, alongside governance improvements and equalities training for elected members. Cultural and equality initiatives included major events with BME and LGBTQ+ partners, Welsh language promotion during the preparation for, and lead up to the Urdd Eisteddfod.

Heritage and tourism were boosted through Levelling Up investment at Gnoll Country Park, Richard Burton centenary celebrations, and £1.9m SPF funding. These actions reflect our commitment to inclusive services, cultural engagement, and stronger democratic participation.

We strengthened engagement and accessibility across Neath Port Talbot with improvements to the My NPT platform and council website enhanced digital access. Building accessibility issues were addressed, and transport concerns identified through wellbeing assessments are informing a public transport consultation with Transport for Wales. Cabinet has approved the Youth Council's 'Change Starts With You survey' to run biannually, ensuring continued youth involvement.

Digital Inclusion Officers delivered sessions to 228 individuals

The number of registered users for MyNPT the council's online resident account and self-service portal grew to 1,746 users.

The Armed Forces Liaison Officer made a total of 68 referrals to support organisations within 2024/2025.

Equality Objective 6 - Living Standards

To work to reduce poverty and support independent living

Executive Summary

Neath Port Talbot Council launched a new supported accommodation scheme for young people in Neath, strengthening our commitment to ending youth homelessness and promoting independence. The Safe & Well Service closed in June 2025 after supporting 2,400 individuals, while lifeline services transitioned to digital and expanded through reablement pilots.

Digital Enablement supported 404 adults with online skills, and transport improvements included increased community funding, a fully subsidised bus network, and active travel upgrades. These initiatives reflect our focus on housing, wellbeing, and accessible services for all residents.

During summer 2025, 18 schools offered the Food and Fun programme, promoting healthy eating and wellbeing.

The Horizons Team supported 120 young people, helping prevent them from becoming NEET.

Additionally, parents engaged in cooking classes within schools, fostering practical skills and healthier lifestyles.

The LIFT scheme remains a vital resource, with campaigns resulting in £449,544 claimed in Pension Credit.

Through the Food Poverty Grant, 41 eligible applications were funded, including 33 Warm Hub projects.

1,183 young people accessed youth clubs in NPT in 2024/2025



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