

Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024: Actions to meet the Equality Objectives

Education - to ensure children and young people are the best they can be

Priority 1.1 All Children and Young People will have improved levels of attainment

Actions:

- We will work with schools to identify those children who require specific support at foundation phase and key stages.
- We will provide targeted support to families in need, including Armed Forces families, to reduce the potential for children to have an adverse childhood experience
- We will continue to work with schools and other relevant settings to support and provide access work experience, training and professional development opportunities for those who are at risk of becoming not in education employment or training (NEETs) post 16
- We will work with schools to ensure all pupils, particularly those from low income families and those where Covid-19 has had particular impact, can access appropriate digital devices
- We will work with schools to identify those children who require enhanced non- academic support as a consequence of the impact of COVID-19 to help them to fulfil their potential

Priority 1.2 All children of school age will have improved wellbeing and a greater sense of belonging

Actions:

- We will continue to work with pupils, parents/carers and schools to reduce the number of instances of non-attendance and exclusions in all our schools
- We will continue to work with parents/carers of pre-school children to ensure that they are prepared for school
- We will collect data from schools and support schools to address bullying and harassment in all its forms and work with them to address trends/issues
- We will work with schools and other relevant settings to support pupils who are victims of bullying and work with perpetrators of bullying
- We will continue to work with schools and other relevant settings to ensure that their learning environments are safe and nurturing, where there is respect and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion
- We will work with schools to explore the benefits of employing family liaison officers or similar roles, including a cluster approach, out of delegated budgets in order to support pupils and parents to overcome challenges that impact negatively on learning and wellbeing.
- We will work in partnership with schools and local organisations to ensure our children and young people 'are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world now and in the past and respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society'.
- We will work with schools and local organisations to ensure teaching of the new curriculum reflects the multi-ethnic nature of Wales

Health and Wellbeing - to promote wellbeing and good mental health and tackle mental health stigma and discrimination

Priority 2.1 Our Staff will be supported and appropriate services promoted

Actions:

- As an employer we will raise awareness of mental health and support services
- As an employer we will update and implement policies to address mental health in the workplace
- We will provide information to employees about mental health and signpost to support services
- We will continue to implement our Time to Change Wales Employer Pledge Action Plan
- We will provide training and resources for staff to help raise awareness of mental health issues and help reduce the stigma associated with mental health

Priority 2.2 Our Children and young people can access appropriate support

Action:

- We will redesign our systems relating to Emotional, Mental Health Wellbeing support to provide a simpler integrated access to services

Priority 2.3 Our Communities that need support will be able to access appropriate services

Actions:

- We will honour our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, ensuring that no veteran, or family member of serving personnel or a veteran, is disadvantaged by their service, when accessing health and wellbeing support and services
- We will contribute to the Public Services Board's work to reduce suicide rates in the county borough
- We will provide information to the public about mental health and signpost to support services from our website
- We will work with Public Health Wales and Swansea Bay University Local Health Board to help address the impact of COVID-19 on health and social care staff
- We will work within the regional NHS Test, Trace, Protect (TTP) Service to engage all people, including those with protected characteristics in the health protection programme and we will also ensure that all people who need to access the TTP service can do so, ensuring access caters for all

Personal Safety - to ensure people and communities are safe, respected and free from violence and abuse

Priority 3.1 People feel safe in their homes

Actions:

- We will increase the reports of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Neath Port Talbot, through awareness raising and challenging attitudes
- We will increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong
- Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs led, strength based, gender responsive services across Neath Port Talbot

Priority 3.2 People feel safe in the community

Actions:

- We will work with members of local equality groups, partners and our communities to encourage the reporting of hate incidents/crime and ensure people get support which is fit for purpose
- We will support the use of the BME Community Association Access Card (to help breakdown language barriers when accessing service)
- We will support the BME Community Association to build on the work already undertaken in the Community Profiling exercise as well as to extend its scope
- We will develop an action plan in response to the feedback from the Community Cohesion Survey
- We will continue to work with the BME Community Association to further understand the lived experiences of members of our BAME communities, particularly in relation of their experiences of hate incidents/crimes

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

Priority 4.1 Our workforce reflects our diverse communities and is supported by our policies

Actions:

- We will ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process that encourages a wider talent pool and facilitates a more equal gender balance
- We will promote, facilitate, analyse and monitor flexibility in the workplace at all levels, to enable women to progress and to ensure compatibility with a multi-generational workforce
- We will collect and monitor data in more depth related to flexible working
- We will scrutinise the Shared Parental Leave uptake to monitor gender balance and encourage uptake across genders
- We will, in the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant, include a guaranteed interview scheme for recently discharged members of the Armed Forces.
- We will consider how our policies and practices impact on our staff who are employed on casual and temporary contracts and part time contracts.
- We will develop a BAME Equality and Diversity Action Plan, developing a set of evidenced based actions with the aim of improving equality and diversity amongst the Council's workforce
- We will work to improve our Corporate Culture, to ensure each member of staff is valued and respected
- We will work with staff to determine the appetite to form a BAME Employee Forum to help ensure voices are heard

- We will offer opportunities to young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) to help them gain experience and skills in order to enter the world of employment
- We will revisit staff training on equalities, particular re-visiting people's understanding of disability, including non-visible disabilities

Priority 4.2 Our Gender Pay Gaps are reduced

Actions

- We will implement the Fair Play Employer Scheme Gender Diversity Action Plan
- We will address the gender pay gap within the Council by implementing the Fair Play Employers Action Plan

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

Priority 5.1 Our services, digital and traditional, are accessible to all

Actions:

- We will continuously review and update our website to improve its accessibility
- We will work to address the barriers people and organisations face to participate on-line
- We will work to identify the opportunities across the County Borough for citizens to improve their digital skills and understanding
- We will work through the Community Safety Partnership and the Safeguarding Board to prevent Cybercrime and protect people against exploitation
- We will improve physical access to the committee facilities in both Neath and Port Talbot Civic Centres
- We will ensure that the many services available to the Armed Forces Community are accessible on line, but also by telephone through the Veteran Gateway.
- We will work with local businesses and organisations to explore alternative arrangements in accessing retail services for those experiencing difficulties due to limited digital access etc.
- We will continue to support the key principles as contained in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill: including programmes to support disabled candidates standing at elections, and the production of a public participation strategy

Priority 5.2 Our communities will enjoy increased social and community cohesion

Actions:

- We will support local groups, including the BME Community Association, to develop community activities and events
- We will further develop our links with our faith communities
- We will provide information and a signposting service for those who wish to learn English and/or Welsh
- We will develop/strengthen policies to respond to an aging population and support the formation of a new group to address this
- We will work with members of the Trans community to help raise awareness
- We will develop a rights based approach to our work, with a focus on children's rights working with Youth Mayor, Youth Council amongst others
- We will establish engagement mechanisms, for example a new Citizens' Panel, and use responses to ensure that the Council's policy making and service development is informed by what matters to people
- We will work with organisations that support the Armed Forces Community to help reduce isolation and loneliness, which is felt by many when they leave the services or by a member of the family when the serving family member is deployed on active service or training
- We will implement the action plan in support of the Digital Charter Award for which we have recently been recognised
- We will work in partnership with relevant groups to address our shared history and explore ways to better express this within our communities
- We will support local small businesses in implementing the ever changing requirements of the Welsh Government's guidelines in response to the COVID-19 outbreak

Living standards - to work to reduce poverty and support independent living

Priority 6.1 People and communities will benefit from interventions to alleviate poverty

Actions:

- We will develop an action plan to address the issues for those with low net disposable income.
- We will embrace the new socio economic duty
- We will ensure those families entitled to free school meals continue to receive support throughout the school holidays in line with Welsh Government guidelines.
- We will work with local organisations and local businesses to explore how to maintain access to appropriate cultural foods during periods of restricted movement/lockdown going forward.

Priority 6.2 People will benefit from programmes and support to live as independently as possible

Actions:

- We will support the Regional Partnership Board to develop and continue to provide a sustainable range of services that meet demand, enabling individuals to remain at home maintaining their independence for as long as possible receiving appropriate support at times of need
- We will continue to help people to learn and interact with others so they can be part of their communities
- We will help support people to live as independent a life as possible
- We will consider the continuation of the Safe and Well scheme to help support vulnerable members of our communities

- We will improve communications with our vulnerable groups through a wide range of formats to better inform and support them to live as full a life as possible during the current coronavirus outbreak

Priority 6.3 Transport links are maintained or enhanced

Actions:

- We will support community transport initiatives
- We will lead the regional transport work with the Swansea Bay City Deal

Measures

The measures will be reassessed as actions are reviewed and further developed and will be amended or replaced as appropriate.

Education

- Number of school leavers that go into further education, employment, training (disaggregated)
- Key stage attainment (disaggregated)
- Reduction in the number of exclusions/forced home schooled/ transfers to other schools (disaggregated)
- Number of incidents of bullying in schools — primary and secondary (disaggregated)
- Number of schools which regularly involve faith/ethnic/disabled groups in lessons/assemblies
- Number/percentage of children who consider their understanding of different faiths/ethnicity and disability has improved following such involvement

Health and Well-being

- Number of children and young people are accessing emotional support/counselling services
- Number of children/adults/older people report they are happy
- Number of reports of suicide
- Number of days lost due to stress related sickness
- Number of referrals through the 'front door' of social services

Personal Safety

- Number of people accessing IDVA/support services
- Increase or decrease in reporting incidents of domestic abuse
- Increase or decrease in the reporting of hate crime
- Number of people who report they feel safe
- Cyber crime – appropriate measure to be considered
- Hate crime and resolution - appropriate measure to be considered
- People feeling part of their community (national survey for Wales)

Employment

- Equality data – information from the Annual Equality in Employment Report
- Number of people who have taken up opportunities with the Council on employment schemes such as Kickstart
- Gender pay gap - information from the Annual Equality in Employment Report
- Number of staff joining staff fora

Participation

- Number of Council services accessed online
- Number of people accessing Council online services
- Number of people participating in Council customer surveys and questionnaires
- Number of people accessing 'free' services/Community groups; New groups/initiatives created; Local Area Coordinator activity

Living Standards

- Number of people who require residential care
- Number of carers known to Social Services
- Number/percentage of children accessing free school meals
- Number/percentage of Department of Work and Pensions appeals tribunals supported by the Welfare Rights Unit and won
- Number of people supported through the Welfare Rights Unit
- Number of people helped with training and more opportunities for employment
- Child poverty data levels
- Number of people accessing food banks