

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2015-2019

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020



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Contents

FOREWORD	3
Section 1 – Equality Legislation	5
Section 2 - Progress	7
Section 3 - Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties	20
Section 4 - Review of the Strategic Equality Plan	26
Section 5 - Have your say	28
Section 6 - Performance Measures	29

FOREWORD

In times of great uncertainty there are not many things we can be sure of, however, the need to work to address the many facets of inequality faced by our residents and our workforce is one of them.

This is the final annual report on the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 and while reporting progress on work undertaken to meet the equality objectives, the focus of our work during 2019-2020 has been the review of the Strategic Equality Plan, our equality objectives and the actions identified to meet them.

During 2019-2020 we made good progress to improve people's lives this inequality; through specific work to meet our equality objectives as well as with our work in the knowledge of and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty. We produced a revised 'Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy' and implemented a 'Safe Leave' policy for staff who are affected by any form of domestic abuse. In December 2019 we launched the Hospital to Home (H2H) Service to support patients who require ongoing support after leaving hospital; since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak this has developed into a Rapid Discharge Service. In February 2020 we become a dementia friendly organisation. With an increased understanding of how dementia affects people we are better able to provide more appropriate support to those living with dementia. More progress is outlined later in this report.

Unfortunately the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic towards the end of March 2020 disrupted many services which has affected data collection and reporting.

The inexorable challenges faced by us all over the last 12 months have been unprecedented and have tested us all. We began the work of revising the strategic equality plan during 2019 little knowing or fully understanding the changes that would take place before its completion in 2020.

With the delays in finalising our revised Strategic Equality Plan, necessitated by the outbreak of COVID-19, we had the opportunity to revisit our equality objectives, and associated actions, in light of the unfolding impacts it and the Black Lives Matter movement had on our communities. The Strategic Equality Plan, along with our equality objectives was published in October 2020 with the associated actions, which required a more detailed review, published in February 2021.

However, what has become more apparent is that there is so much more work that needs to be undertaken before we can truly say we have made a difference to people's lives. It is not always the big grand actions that can make a change for the good but small actions that when considered together really do make a difference.

Section 1 – Equality Legislation

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010, brought together and replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation, simplified and strengthened the law, removed inconsistencies and made it easier to understand for everyone. By implementing the Act our aim is to work towards creating a fairer society, improving public services, addressing entrenched inequalities and ultimately improving people's lives.

The Council, along with other public bodies, is required under the Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst and between people of different protected groups (known as the Public Sector Equality Duty).

The protected groups, or characteristics, are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- sex
- race
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the need to eliminate discrimination)

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

In Wales specific duties have been introduced to help us carry out the public sector duty and these include the production of a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and the development and publication of equality objectives.

This Annual Report is prepared under Section 16(1) of The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and sets out the progress made against each of our equality objectives contained within our Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019.

Welsh Language Measure 2011

The Measure gave the Welsh language official status in Wales, established the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner, created a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards and made provision regarding promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language amongst other provisions. The Welsh Language Commissioner's role is to promote the Welsh language, and improve the opportunities people have to use it, by emphasising the language's official status in Wales, and by placing standards on organisations.

Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015

These Regulations, imposed on county councils and county borough councils, national park authorities and Welsh Ministers, include a range of standards of conduct in respect of the Welsh language. The standards were grouped into the following areas:

- service delivery
- policy making
- operational
- promotion
- record keeping

A [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report for 2019-2020](#) has been produced, in accordance with these Regulations, which details how we have complied with the standards during the year.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This legislation also places duties upon the Council to set well-being objectives and to work in a sustainable way to achieve a fairer and more equal Wales. The Council has recently revised its integrated impact assessment tool to assist officers in weaving together all of the duties that arise in relation to equality.

Section 2 - Progress

During 2019-2020 our main focus was that of reviewing, revising and further developing equality objectives and actions in readiness for the new Strategic Equality Plan for its anticipated publication date of April 2020. However, we didn't lose sight of the work that was ongoing to meet the equality objectives and to integrate our equalities work with our wider Corporate Plan.

During this last year of the 2015-2019 Plan we continued to make made progress on meeting our equality objectives while turning our focus to reviewing and revising our equality objectives and developing new actions to better meet our commitment to reducing inequality in Neath Port Talbot.

The financial constraints we have all experienced over recent years continue as does the inequality and inequity within Neath Port Talbot, and beyond! However we, as a Council, continue to work towards reducing, and wherever possible eliminating, this inequality and the development of our new Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives along with better alignment with the Corporate Plan, will help us ensure this becomes a reality.

Equality Objective 1 - Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

1. Increase awareness and reporting of hate crime

- As in previous years we promoted and supported activities during Hate Crime Awareness Week in October 2019, including the Hate Crime Awareness event held by the Police Hate Crime Officer at Port Talbot YMCA.
- Our Supporting People Section commissioned a study to better understand the need of the local Gypsy and Traveller community in Neath Port Talbot, the findings of which were shared at an event in October 2019, which will help inform policies and practices going forward.

2. Strengthen partnership work to tackle domestic abuse and establish multi-agency mechanisms to support people at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime

- The roll out of the Welsh Governments National Training Framework for Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence continued throughout 2019-2020, which raises awareness of all form of domestic abuse, and ensures organisations are better placed to recognise signs of domestic abuse and act appropriately.
- We have been working with a range of partners, including Calan DVS, Hafan Cymru, and the South Wales Police Schools Liaison to develop and/or realise the implementation of healthy relationship lessons for schools.
 - 162 pupils at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School received lessons developed in partnership with Calan DVS and the Relationship and Sexuality Education Group
 - 'It's Your World' Wellbeing Workshops, developed in partnership with South Wales Police Schools Liaison piloted in Ysgol Bae Baglan and Dwr y Felin Comprehensive School, with a total of 500 Year 8 pupils attending.
 - Hafan Cymru's Spectrum project currently deliver Healthy Relationship lessons within eight Neath Port Talbot schools.
- We held our annual Crucial Crew event in June 2019 with 1600 Year 6 pupils participating in a range of sessions on topics including internet safety, cyber-crime and healthy relationships.

- Additional sessions to complement Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) training were held with staff and partner organisations, giving a more localised picture of the terrorist threat across Wales. Feedback from these sessions was very positive, giving people a better understanding of the need to refer to the Channel Panel anyone that they may have had concerns about.

Equality Objective 2 - Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

1. To improve the Council's website content

- We updated our education webpages to help promote Welsh medium education in Neath Port Talbot and work to further enhance the website is planned.
- We continue to update our website to ensure we give relevant advice in relation to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payments. The use of digital channels is encouraged with residents and more online forms are being developed and a new online DHP (Discretionary Housing Payment) form is now live.

The availability of support is also promoted on all relevant documentation and signposting to support agencies is also provided.

- Our dedicated 'Website Survey' page invites the public to give us their views on our website to help us improve our content and ensure it continues to meet their needs.
- Consultations are posted on our 'Have your say' webpage which enables the public to comment on proposals etc. at a time and manner suitable to them as well as enabling us to reach as many people as possible and ensuring our proposals for plans and services are fully informed. While we aim to be 'digital first' we recognise that not everyone is able to access online consultation and so we continue to make alternative arrangements.

2. To increase the accessibility of information/documentation

- We continued to work with the Digital Accessibility Centre to ensure our website is accessible to as many people as possible, regardless of technology or ability.
- Many of our older PDFs and Word documents on the website do not meet accessibility standards, for example they may not be accessible to a screen reader, and we are working to address this through the ongoing review of our website. We ensure that all new documents uploaded to the website are accessible and content is current.

- Our Digital Inclusion Ambassador has continued to promote the importance of digital inclusion to third sector organisations. He has also worked with many community groups through the year, building interest and confidence particularly amongst the elderly to use the Internet with some groups subsequently securing funding for digital infrastructure to take their work forward. A presentation on the benefits of accessing digital services has been delivered to a total of 352 individuals from 10 different community groups.
- The Public Services Board (PSB) agencies have made a commitment to designing online services with an understanding of the digital profile of the customers who need to access services. In March 2020 the PSB Digital Inclusion Steering Group was awarded full Digital Inclusion Charter accreditation.

Equality Objective 3 - Improve access to services by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

Improve access to the provision of Social Services

- A 'Single Referral' form was finalised for use by both Children and Young People Services and Adult Services. This referral form emanated from collaboration between cross-sections of Social Services and Health staff. The form, launched in February 2020, facilitates the opportunity to capture adult safeguarding concerns which were previously recorded separately and is being implemented across partner agencies.
- Work continues across the region to review the types of services that are provided in the community to enable more people to retain their independence. We have already completed a mapping exercise to identify those people that are anticipated to require support and accommodation services and have secured funding to develop 14 units of accommodation and an extra care facility for people with complex needs.
- In December 2019 we launched the Hospital to Home (H2H) Service. This service supports patients who require ongoing support to leave hospital as soon as they are well enough to do so. It is expected that this new approach will see a reduction in the number of delayed discharges as assessments to determine a patient's longer-term care needs will be undertaken in their own home, rather than in a hospital bed. Since the COVID-19 outbreak the service has developed further into a Rapid Discharge Service.
- There is now an identified Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) lead in place to implement the ASD strategic plan within the county borough. The lead is meeting with relevant professionals, parent, carers and people with ASD to ensure that the plan is implemented to improve the lives of people with Autism, their families and carers.
A 90 day consultation was due to begin in March 2020 but had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The consultation will now commence as soon as is practicable.
- We continue to offer carers an assessment and for those who do not take up the offer are provided with access to information, advice and assistance as well as services provided by Neath Port Talbot Carers service.

Equality Objective 4 - Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

Develop robust monitoring systems within services

- The collection of our employment data continues to be challenging. However, with the self service employee portal now accessible to more staff more accurate data is available. It is anticipated that further improvements in data collections will continue to be made with the introduction of the new HR system during 2021.
- There were 218 respondents to the Community Cohesion (Brexit) Survey, undertaken in 2019 as part of the Western Bay Community Cohesion Programme; 6 respondents were members of our BAME communities. A report of the findings was produced in May 2020. The survey has provided information about people's experiences when they are accessing public sector services, how difficult or easy they are find engaging with people from other backgrounds and if they have been a victim of a hate incident/ hate crime in the area. Going forward this information will be vital to our work in developing policies and services for our residents
- There are 68 different languages and dialects spoken in our primary and secondary schools across Neath Port Talbot with 720 pupils out of 21,238 speaking languages other than English and Welsh as a first language; Bengali, Polish, Arabic and Romanian amongst the top 10 languages spoken. NPT has one of the largest Traveller communities/sites in Wales with 76 children in our schools. (Pupil level annual school census (PLASC) January 2020)

Equality Objective 5 - Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements

- A total of 1349 staff undertook training on specific equality topics including:
 - Understanding & Responding to Human Trafficking & Slavery
 - Home Office accredited WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent)
 - E-learning Prevent training
 - Dementia Awareness & Responding to Distressed Behaviours
 - Virtual Dementia Tour
 - Hidden Disabilities and Making Reasonable Adjustments
 - Equalities in the Workplace

- Guidance has been developed in partnership with our trade unions, to help line managers consider and agree reasonable adjustments at interview and when considering the best applicant for the post, ensuring a fair and transparent process.

Equality Objective 6 - Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

- Works to develop the Plaza cinema as a community hub are underway and will include a café, offices, a multi-purpose hall, multi-purpose rooms, a gym, two retail units and car and cycle parking. The following features have been incorporated into the design to assist with access:
 - Consent has been given by CADW to introduce a platform lift to the main entrance steps.
 - A passenger lift is being installed for access between the ground floor and first floor.
 - There will also be a platform lift between the first and second floors.
 - There is limited parking within the curtilage of the premises however three disabled spaces are being provided at the rear of the building.
- We commenced work to further develop the visitor facilities at Afan Forest Park. While already having accessible pathways to the visitor centre, disabled parking spaces and an accessible public convenience, a children's play area is planned to include fully accessible elements, both physical and sensory, which will enhance to visitor experience.
- New handrails were installed at Aberavon Seafront to improve disabled access to the beach.
- The Biodiversity Team are working in partnership to create an inventory of accessible greenspaces within Neath Port Talbot. Once completed the research/data will feed into the green infrastructure assessment to establish evidence for the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP). The assessment enables us to develop a clear approach to improving well-being through increased access to green infrastructure whilst enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecological resilience. It will provide an information baseline with which it can develop a greenspace strategy and policies for the LDP.
- We were awarded £334k active travel core funding for further design work, minor improvement works, land negotiations and promotion of schemes. A number of schemes to improve access to various paths and footbridges are being progressed across the county borough: works include resurfacing, new signage, the removal of barriers and some access control measures and the installation of dropped crossings/tactile paving.

- The bulk reissue of the concessionary bus cards commenced in September 2019, following changes in the Guidance for Community Transport the same month. To date over 14,000 applications have been successfully processed. We continue to work closely with bus operators and third sector partners organisations to assist in the roll out of concessionary bus card replacements.

Equality Objective 7 - Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

As progress is reported for the academic year 2019-2020 the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 has impacted full reporting on this objective. Information that has been made available for the period August 2019-March 2020, unless indicated otherwise.

1. To raise levels of attendance of pupils with the protected characteristics at school

- We provided over 1,350 devices for pupils who have no suitable device or Wi-Fi connection at home to continue with their studies from March 2020.
- Attendance figures in primary schools in the academic year 2019-2020 were affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on figures up to 13 March 2020 overall attendance was fairly consistent with that of the previous academic year (93.83% compared with 94.02% 2018-2019).

However, there is a significant difference in attendance amongst traveller pupils (77.92% compared to 84.58%). Although no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have disrupted support and confidence amongst families; and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference.

- Secondary school attendance figures were similarly affected (92.51% compared to 93.46% 2018-2019). Again attendance amongst traveller pupils is significantly lower than in the previous academic year (65.65% compared to 76.62%). Again while no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have disrupted support and confidence amongst families; and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference.
- There were a total of 13 permanent exclusions during the academic year 2019-2020, a reduction on the 18 exclusions in the previous academic year. The number of primary school exclusions increased to three (two boys and one girl) while the number of secondary school exclusions decreased 10 (six boys and four girls).

More significantly the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) across both sectors who were excluded fell from 14 to 11.

2. To reduce the gaps in educational performance attainment between boys and girls at Foundation Phase and Key Stages (KS) 2, & 3

With the disruption to learning and assessment during the latter part of the academic year it is not possible to provide a true comparison between academic years in respect of levels of attainment. While no Foundation Phase, key stage 2 or key stage 3 assessments were gathered by the Welsh Government during the academic year 2019-2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, teacher assessments were carried out for key stage 4, details of which can be found on page 36.

- A specific Neath Port Talbot Leadership section has been developed on Hwb which provides a toolkit of valuable resources for school leaders, including resources to support leaders to strengthen their self-evaluation processes and to make them more pupil-centred.
- Our Legacy youth workers continued to support secondary schools with tailored support provided to each school. A combination of group work and one to one support has proved to be successful within schools, and projects in the local community have given young people a range of exciting opportunities. Between 1 April and 30 September 2019, 608 young people (343 males and 265 females) were supported by the Legacy Team.
- The numbers of Gypsy/Traveller pupils on school rolls remained fairly constant with 76 pupils (Pupil Level Annual School Census 2020) for the academic year 2019-2020.
- As of September 2019 the Cam Nesa team had worked with 321 young people with 131 of them gaining employment. Cam Nesa is a project to help reduce the number of NEET young people, among 16-24 year olds across the South West Wales region.

Equality Objective 8 - Ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.

- We were awarded the Silver Award for Gender Diversity by Chwarae Teg in recognition of our clear commitment to making a difference to the recruitment, retention and progression of women in the workplace.
- We signed up to the Time to Change Wales Campaign's Employer Pledge in September 2019, which provides a framework for employers to support employees with their mental health. We have held a number of events to raise awareness of mental health, as well as signposting staff to advice, guidance and support. A network of Champions recruited from our workforce, will help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and encourage employees to talk about their mental wellbeing.
- We became the first local authority in Wales to implement a 'Safe Leave' policy for staff who are affected by any form of Domestic Abuse, allowing them the opportunity to access support services, legal advice, alternative housing or medical help in a safe, planned way.

Gender Pay Gap Objective - To further develop pay/employment data to better understand the reasons for the gender pay gap and to identify any actions which may be feasible to close the pay gap.

- In our gender pay gap report published in December 2019, the difference between the average pay of the men and women who work in the Council reduced to 3.93% at March 2019. Whilst encouraging, the Council is committed to further reduce this gap.
- Chwarae Teg have helped us to develop a Gender Equality Action Plan, which includes specific actions to reduce the Council's Gender Pay Gap. There is specific consideration within the action plan to the lowest paid female employees, particularly important, as whilst the Council's overall gender profile is 70% female, 97% of those employed on Grade 1, the Council's lowest pay band, are female employees
- As part of the Fair Play Employer Scheme, which we joined in February 2019, Chwarae Teg has been supporting us in delivering gender equality and so achieve all the benefits of a truly balanced workforce.

Section 3 - Meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties

In working to meet the equality objectives we were conscious of the ongoing financial challenges, reduced capacity, greater expectation and the changing demographic in Neath Port Talbot. We have undertaken our work in the knowledge of and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We placed a strong emphasis on ensuring equality and celebrating diversity across the range of our activities. There is also recognition of and work to address inequalities in all its forms, whether in relation to statutory duties concerned with people of protected characteristics, inequality caused by disparities in income, or by virtue of whether children and young people are cared for by their own families or the council.

We were keen to work towards a more holistic approach to our work which has included attempts to better align our equality objectives and corporate improvement priorities, so that any progress made is complementary to both. Progress against our improvement priorities and the wellbeing objectives can be found in the [Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019-2020](#).

We continued our work to realise our commitment to the Welsh language and the rights of those who wish to use Welsh when dealing with us or using our services. Recent years have seen relatively small numbers of staff who are willing, and able, to use their Welsh language skills, limited recruitment opportunities and ever reducing budgets which have all impacted on our Welsh language service.

Our [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020](#) was published on 31 July 2020. Publication was delayed due to the outbreak of the global coronavirus pandemic and the Council's response to ensure its residents and staff were supported during the first lockdown period.

In light of the changes necessitated as a consequence of and our response to the COVID-19 outbreak it is likely service provision post COVID-19 will look different and will provide an ideal opportunity to review our Welsh language service more effectively.

The [Welsh Language Promotion Strategy progress report](#) for the period October 2019 – March 2020 highlights progress on the various actions the Council and its community groups partners agreed to take forward to help support the Welsh Government’s aim of creating one million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Identifying and collecting relevant information

We continued to engage with members of the public, partners, local communities and interest groups to gather information, which helped shape our various strategies, policies and plans as well as influencing the delivery of our services.

The identification and collection of information remains a key element particularly of the impact assessment process and by gathering relevant information as part of service provision we are better placed to understand the complexity of our county borough and utilise this information in developing policy and services.

We continue to see improvements in the collection and analysis of employment data as a result of the roll out of the Employee Portal where staff are able to update their own individual records. As a result we are able to better understand our workforce and so develop internal policies that are informed by more robust information.

The Community Cohesion (Brexit) Survey, undertaken in 2019 as part of the Western Bay Community Cohesion Programme, sought to establish an evidence base and to understand the impact of Brexit on our communities. The survey has provided information about people’s experiences when they are accessing public sector services, how difficult or easy they are find engaging with people from other backgrounds and if they have been a victim of a hate incident/hate crime in the area. Going forward this information will be vital to our work in developing policies and services for our residents.

Some examples of our other work during 2019-2020 to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty

- We supported and promoted events and workshops across the county borough and Swansea aimed at assisting European citizens with information on and access to the EU Settlement Scheme. Information and links to a number of useful websites that have been set up by the Welsh Government and the UK Government to provide useful, official information about Brexit is also available on our website.
- The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Strategy '[Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities](#)' was reviewed but its publication was delayed until May 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The strategy, which has a new set of agreed objectives and actions, was developed in partnership with local service providers and survivors of VAWDASV.
- We held a Smart and Connected 2020 event in March 2020 to explore how a more digital approach could benefit our service areas. Just a few weeks later this was put to the test with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic which saw an increase in the number of staff providing services using remote technology, from an average of 50 per day to over 1,500 per day.
- Our Youth Service supported many activities and initiatives across the county borough including targeted support to young carers, LGBTQ+ young people, young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), young people with emerging mental health issues amongst others. In addition the Youth Service and the Think Family Partnership were the first in Wales to sign up to the National Participation Charter and received the National Participation Kitemark for the way they encourage children and young people to have their say in the design and planning of the services they deliver. A more [complete update](#) on the work the service has undertaken during 2019-2020 was reported to Members in January 2020.
- We became a Dementia Friendly organisation in February 2020. With an increased understanding of how dementia affects people we are better able to provide more appropriate support to those living with dementia. Unfortunately, the event planned for April by the Older Persons Alliance, at which the award would have been presented and at which the Older Persons Commissioner was due to attend could not take place due to the COVID 19 outbreak.

- We continued to provide inclusive sporting opportunities across the county borough: four fully inclusive week long sports camps as well as a weeklong camp for disabled children were held during 2019-2020, along with an accessible community sport program for children with disabilities.
- The use of the Welsh language at early years setting increased with Welsh story sessions and story resource packs offered to all providers. CAMAU learn Welsh scheme for early years' education and childcare continues to be promoted.
- During 2019-2020 the Vulnerable Learners Service (VLS), which supports groups of vulnerable learners supported 11 learners and two parents to achieve 13 first language qualifications (Thai IGCE, Mandarin GCSE, Arabic GCSE and Arabic Advanced Level).
- We entered into an agreement with Swansea Bay University Health Board with regards to processes for developing and commissioning new schemes for people with complex needs.
- In order to gain a clearer insight into the impact of welfare benefit reforms on local people we commissioned Policy in Practice to develop a Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT) for Neath Port Talbot. Using household level data and advanced analytics the tracker will enable us to identify the scale of the impact changes to welfare reform will have on residents. The knowledge that we have learned from this work will also enable us to better understand the impacts on our residents affected by financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- A multi-agency Poverty Symposium was held in September 2019 to facilitate discussion about what more we can do to protect those at greatest risk of financial crisis. A follow up, multi-agency poverty workshop took place in January 2020. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 outbreak further work has been postponed but will be progressed as soon as possible.
- Resurfacing, improved signage and road markings and drainage improvements in an underpass on the cycle route alongside the Swansea Bay Golf Course at Fabian Way were completed and now provides a safer, more accessible route for both cyclists and walkers.
- In November 2019 a Menopause Drop in Session was piloted as a joint initiative between HR and Occupational Health and as a result of positive feedback this was to become a regular offer in 2020. However due to the

disruption to working practices since March 2020 this this has not been possible although a suite of guidance and advice documents is available on our intranet.

- A First 1,000 days workshop event was held for key service managers and partners in June 2019. Ahead of the scheduled event, online engagement with parents was conducted in order to understand parent experience during their child's first 1,000 days. Over 230 parents responded to the online questionnaire and their feedback informed the workshop. Following the workshop and feedback a delivery plan was produced to take forward identified actions. These will form part of the Early Years Integration Pathfinder programme.

Further events were held in NPT and Swansea during December 2019 to identify support services available and to understand the process that link services and tiers of needs. A regional follow up event was held in March 2020 to review the mapping and to identify opportunities for regional work.

Focus groups with parents were planned for end of March 2020 but these have been delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We continued to deliver the Council's [Digital Strategy](#) (Smart and Connected) - embracing the benefits of digital technologies to improve the way the council works to better meet the needs of our residents and to make the county borough attractive to potential business investors. However we have not lost sight that many people are unable for a variety of reasons to embrace the digital world and we continue to make alternative arrangements.
- With the Rector of Aberavon and Police, we held an Equality in the Workplace Transgender Awareness Day in February 2020. The aim of the event was to raise awareness amongst local employers. Guest speakers, themselves transgender, highlighted the issues they had faced as well as the support given by friends and employers.

Integrated Impact Assessments

We reviewed and revised our equality impact assessment process to include our new legal duties introduced by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 as well as maintaining the focus of equalities and the Welsh language. The aim has been to develop a more integrated approach to assessing

the impact of our policies and services not only on people who share protected characteristics but also on the wider community, both now and in the future.

The revised integrated impact assessment process was introduced across all service areas in April 2019.

The Council's Executive and Non-Executive/Regulatory Report Guidance was also updated to reinforce current and reflect new legislative requirements. This update of the report guidance also provided an opportunity to reinforce the way in which impact assessments are reported to members. This was circulated to relevant staff and along with the integrated impact assessment documents are available on our intranet for all staff to access.

A review of the success of the implementation of the integrated impact assessment process was scheduled to be undertaken in May 2020 but this has been delayed due outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The requirements of the socio economic duty, now to be introduced from April 2021, necessitates a further revision of the assessment process. While the principles of the socio economic duty are currently considered in the assessment process some minor amendments have been required to explore the impact of the duty when making strategic decisions more explicitly.

Specific Employment Information

Equalities Employment Information for the period 2019-2020 was reported to the Equality and Community Cohesion Group during the latter part of 2020 and will be published in due course.

The data will be for the 12 month period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020, or where appropriate, a snapshot of the workforce on 31 March 2020.

We recognise that gaps remain in the information available as providing this data is voluntary. Data collection is low in relation to the following protected characteristics: gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion and belief and sexual orientation. However, the employee portal has provided staff with an opportunity to update their own

personal records, including the ability to update their protected characteristics, securely and in confidence. The number of staff accessing the employee portal at 31 March 2020 was 3377.

Our [second gender pay gap report](#), published in December 2019, set out the difference between the average pay of the men and women who work in the Council for the years 2018 and 2019. The pay data has been taken from the Council's workforce at:

31 March 2018, 3,741 employees which represents 1,256 (33.57%) males and 2,485 (66.43%) females

31 March 2019, 3,784 employees which represents 1,277 (33.75%) males and 2,507 (66.25%) females

The pay data excludes casual employees and all schools' employees.

Section 4 - Review of the Strategic Equality Plan

On 30 October 2019 Cabinet approved an extension to the Strategic Equality Plan 2015-2019 to April 2020 to allow sufficient time to improve its alignment with our Corporate Plan, to better explore the requirements and impact of the then soon to be introduced socio economic duty as well as to take on board the outcomes of various projects/initiatives such as the Poverty Symposium held in October 2019.

Work to review our equality objectives and produce a revised Strategic Equality Plan had begun early in 2019 taking into account various national and local publications/research findings; latest data available to the Council and issues raised by local equality groups during meetings of the Equality and Community Cohesion Group.

Following a period of public consultation in January and February 2020 the newly revised Strategic Equality Plan, along with the draft equality objective and actions, was set to begin its journey through our reporting process ready for publication in April 2020. However, this came to a halt with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 it became increasingly apparent that while all communities had been affected, Black, Asian and minority communities had been affected disproportionately in matters of health, as key workers, with the severe effects on employment as well as in relation to accessible education for children and young people.

The brutal killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020, along with other events in our recent history as well as the devastating impact the pandemic has had on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities brought into sharp focus the deep seated attitudes and behaviours that remain towards people from these communities.

As a consequence it was recognised that the equality objectives and actions would need to be reviewed to ensure we fully addressed the impact of these events on our local communities.

Having reviewed the objectives, and taking into account recent evidence as reported to various government committees, the equality objectives were considered to be still relevant. The [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#), along with the equality objectives, was published by 1 October 2020 (the revised publication date as advised by the Equality and Human Rights Commission).

Actions, however, fell short and alternative [actions](#) to better meet these objectives in the current circumstances were developed with the involvement of our workforce and our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. These were published as part of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 following approval by Council on 27 January 2021.

We recognise that this is not the end of our work. Not only do we need to implement and make progress but we are mindful that the actions, like our ever changing society and circumstances, are not set in stone. They will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain relevant and appropriate to the needs of our communities.

This work has already begun with the consideration of the survey findings of the BME Community Association's recent work to help inform the Welsh Government's Race Equality Plan, as well as ensuring they fit with and are embedded into a comprehensive approach to recovery. Consequently, timelines for actions, and any new or amended measures, will be added when the detail of this work becomes clearer.

Section 5 - Have your say

We welcome feedback on the information contained with this Report via:

Email: policy@npt.gov.uk or post: Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Port Talbot, SA13 1PJ

We also have a number of consultation/engagement events about various services which we promote in the press and on the website which you can access via the following link: <http://www.npt.gov.uk/haveyoursay>



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

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Section 6 - Performance Measures

Performance Key	
↑	Performance has improved
↔	Performance has been maintained
↓	Performance has declined.
-	No comparable data (data not suitable for comparison/no data available for comparison)

Equality Objective 1: Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
1	EQ1.1	Number of hate crime reports	162	145	-
2	EQ1.2	Number of hate crime reports – Disability	19	18	-
3	EQ1.3	Number of hate crime reports – Race	106	95	-
4	EQ1.4	Number of hate crime reports – Religion	3	4	-
5	EQ1.5	Number of hate crime reports – Sexual Orientation	24	23	-
6	EQ1.6	Number of hate crime reports – Transgender	12	7	-
<p>It is always challenging to predict the exact number of hate crime, as there still seems to be people who are not reporting hate crime due to many reasons.</p> <p>The recent Community Cohesion (Brexit Survey) has specifically asked questions about the hate crime and its reporting. The survey results have already been shared with our Police partners and other key stakeholders.</p>					
7	EQ1.7	Number of referrals to the Channel Panel	2	6	-

Equality Objective 1: Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
<p>Following on from the work to promote the referral pathway into Channel and the continued roll out of WRAP training across the authority, we have seen an expected rise in the number of referrals.</p> <p>It is important to note, that many referrals are not accepted into Channel, as they may be deemed inappropriate for this level of intervention by WECTU (Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit).</p> <p>Referral figures do continue to rise with the more training and awareness raising that takes place across the authority and within partner organisations.</p>					
8	EQ1.8	Number of new referrals to Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference/ specialist domestic violence agencies	2650	1967	-
<p>This figure comprises victims at all risk levels from low-medium risk to very high risk and victims may be supported across more than one area e.g. open to the IDVA service and known to specialist provider or MARAC.</p> <p>It is impossible to give a particular reason for the decrease in referrals during the period. Having the confidence to report or disclose is a longstanding concern in this area of work. We encourage disclosure, through Communications and Engagement, through training, and continue to challenge the stigma that surrounds domestic abuse, but ultimately it is very much a personal choice to disclose and engage.</p> <p>It is likely that the number of referrals will increase for the period 2020-2021 not only a result of the continued roll out of training and awareness raising work being undertaken but also with the impact of the various lockdowns experienced during the period during which there has been a huge spike in demand across all agencies.</p>					
9	EQ1.9	Number of repeat referrals to Independent Domestic Violence Advisor Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference/specialist domestic violence agencies	617	731	-

Equality Objective 1: Address harassment, discrimination and other threats to personal safety experienced by people due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>Victims of domestic abuse can often struggle to engage with support due to the nature of the abuse and the controlling/coercive behaviour patterns of an abusive partner. For this reason, victims may disengage with a service but then present again at a later stage. Alternatively, some victims will fully engage with support and no longer require any services.</p> <p>However, there are a cohort of people with complex needs who struggle to engage with services and will continually access multiple services with very poor outcomes. There is ongoing work being conducted to better understand the approach in these instances and whether an alternative approach would be more appropriate and lead to better outcomes.</p>			

Equality Objective 2: Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
11	EQ2.2	% of website pages available in Welsh	100%	100%	↔
14	EQ2.5 (DBC/007)	% of customers very satisfied/satisfied or Ok with improvements made to service available on-line – general look and feel	100% (21 out of 21)	79% (23 out of 29)	↓
15	EQ2.6 (DBC/008)	More of our customers find the website easier to use: % very satisfied/satisfied or Ok with ease of getting around site	85.71% (18 out of 21)	83% (25 out of 30)	↓
16	EQ2.7 (DBC/009)	More of our customers can access the information and find the website easier/service they want (on our website) first time: % very satisfied/satisfied or Ok with ease of finding information/services	88.1% (18.5 out of 21)	82.7% (24 out of 29)	↓
We are in the process of revamping parts of the website based on data analytics and customer feedback. Feedback from customers and the user journey play a major part in the website design.					
17	EQ2.8 (DBC/010)	Number of customers assisted to use self-service options by Customer Services One Stop Shop staff	23	-	-
Due to changes in working arrangements and limited staff resources data for this measure was not collected during 2019-2020.					

Equality Objective 2: Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
18	EQ2.9 (DBC/001)	% of transactions completed on line (new services)	76.4%	78.2% (75,958 of 97,168)	↑
<p>Data for this measure includes information for the following services: requests for Bulky waste collection and refuse and recycling equipment, location based reporting for dog bins and grit bins, missed waste collections, Pest control appointment booking, and van permits. The demand for online provision in these services continues to grow in line with the Corporate direction. Data for other online transactions will be included as measures are finalised</p>					
19	EQ2.10 (DBC/002)	Number of new services available on line	16	22	↑
<p>New and upgraded services introduced during 2019-20 include: Child Care offer, applications for free school meals, Fly Tipping, Margam Park membership, skip and scaffolding permits, ordering Registrar's birth, death and marriage certificates, Free School Meals, Business Grants, Health and Safety Reporting and Green Space Mapping</p> <p>Additional use of Gov Notify services (SMS, Email and Letter) include: Blue Badges, Parent Coordination, Children and Family Services, Social Services Commissioning, Workways, Building Services, Council Tax/ Revenues and Benefits, Electoral Services and Education Services.</p>					

Equality Objective 2: Improve access to information by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
21	EQ2.12	Number of complaints upheld in relation to compliance with the Council's Welsh Language Scheme/Standards	1 out of 5	1 and 1 in part out of 8	↑
<p>A total of eight complaints were received during 2019-2020; seven via the Welsh Language Commissioner and one direct to the Council. Of the seven received via the Welsh Language Commissioner, one was upheld, five did not require investigation and one continues to be investigated.</p> <p>The complaint direct to the Council was in two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Welsh language email was replied to in English – a misunderstanding by staff over the details of a Welsh language database which has been addressed through staff training. • a concern over a lack of Welsh language service provision – although the only Welsh speaker no longer employed in the service arrangements had already been made to ensure we were able to continue to offer a Welsh language service. <p>More information on complaints can be found in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2019-2020.</p>					

Equality Objective 3: Improve access to services by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people - Social Services					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
22	EQ3.1	Number of adults receiving services from adult services at 31st March	2,721	2,626	-
	The cause for the reduction is suggestive of increased support being available in the community and from preventative services, reducing the need for people to require care and support, although the exact reason for the reduction is not identified.				
23	EQ3.2	Number of children receiving care and support from Children's Services at 31 March	1,182	1,154	-
24	EQ3.3	Number of carers who were assessed as at 31 March	287	216	-
	The Carer's service undertake assessments on behalf of the Council, however many carers do not take up the offer of assessment. All identified carers will, however, receive information and advice from the service to support them in their role.				

Equality Objective 4: Monitor information and data effectively in order to identify disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
25	EQ4.1	Number of equality impact assessments undertaken and reported to the relevant Cabinet Board	6	13	↑
26	EQ4.2	Number of people actively participating in: Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Association	10	9	↔
BME Community Association – the figure quoted is the number of trustees on the Executive Committee. The reduction in the number of trustees was as a result of the death of one of its trustees in March 2019.					

Equality Objective 5: Deliver staff training in line with the Equality Act requirements					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
27	EQ5.1	Number of staff attending training on specific topics	1876 (1485 of which were NPT staff)	1349 (NPT Staff)	-
<p>A number of specific courses were delivered during 2019-2020 including Equalities in the Workplace and Hidden Disabilities and Making Reasonable Adjustments.</p> <p>Other scheduled courses e.g. Unconscious Bias/ Equalities in the Workplace/Introduction to Transgender Issues were postponed due to impact of Covid-19.</p>					

Equality Objective 6: Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
28	EQ6.1	Number of complaints received in relation to accessibility	0	0	↔
29	EQ6.2	% of complaints upheld in relation to accessibility	0	0	↔
30	EQ6.3	% of adults aged 60 or over who hold a concessionary bus pass	87%	68.82%	-
Between September 2019 and March 2020, Welsh Government via Transport for Wales undertook the bulk renewal of all Concessionary Travel Cards in Wales. This was a large piece of work which encouraged people to apply online for their new and replacement cards. Prior to this work being started It was anticipated that following the renewal process there would be far fewer cards in circulation.					
31	EQ6.4	Number of mobility scooter trips facilitated by Shopmobility			
		Neath	1,555	1,319	↓
		Port Talbot	2,402	2,137	↓
32	EQ6.5	Number of customers enrolled with Shopmobility			
		Neath	164	89	↓
		Port Talbot	202	146	↓

Equality Objective 6: Improve access to the environment by meeting the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>The following information has been provided by Shopmobility: Neath continues to be significantly impacted since the move to the multi-storey car park site in 2016. There was a continued decline in usage due to being located much further away from the main shopping area than at the previous location and so are more impacted by adverse weather conditions. As Port Talbot Shopmobility is located in Aberavon Shopping Centre itself it is largely unaffected by weather for car users. At the previous location free onsite parking was available for shopmobility users, and although a small number of parking spaces are allocated for shopmobility users in the Neath multi-storey car park, these are not free and the cost of parking is becoming prohibitive for many. This is reflected not only in the decline in daily usage but also in the number of new registrations at both Neath and Port Talbot.</p>			

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
33	EQ7.1	% of girls attaining Outcome 5+ in literacy at Foundation Phase	77.12%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Outcome 5+ in literacy at Foundation Phase	65.29%	N/A	-
34	EQ7.2	% of girls attaining Outcome 5+ in numeracy at Foundation Phase	76.58%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Outcome 5+ in numeracy at Foundation Phase	70.77%	N/A	-
35	EQ7.3	% of girls attaining Level 4+ literacy at Key Stage 2	89.27%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 4+ literacy at Key Stage 2	81.38%	N/A	-
36	EQ7.4	% of girls attaining Level 4+ numeracy at Key Stage 2	87.64%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 4+ numeracy at Key Stage 2	85.25%	N/A	-
37	EQ7.5	% of girls attaining Level 5+ literacy at Key Stage 3	90.16%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 5+ literacy at Key Stage 3	80.48%	N/A	-
38	EQ7.6	% of girls attaining Level 5+ numeracy at Key Stage 3	86.27%	N/A	-
		% of boys attaining Level 5+ numeracy at Key Stage 3	80.00%	N/A	-
39	EQ7.7	% of girls attaining Level 2 literacy at Key Stage 4	76.12%	80.35%	-
		% of boys attaining Level 2 literacy at Key Stage 4	52.55%	64.05%	-
40	EQ7.8	% of girls attaining Level 2 numeracy at Key Stage 4	60.81%	70.32%	-
		% of boys attaining Level 2 numeracy at Key Stage 4	57.12%	63.14%	-

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		<p>No Foundation Phase, key stage 2 or key stage 3 assessments were gathered by the Welsh Government during 2019/20 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>From 2018/19 the Welsh Government no longer publishes 'Level 2' key stage 4 data although figures have been included which are gathered from the Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Directorate Data Unit's analysis spreadsheets. Key stage 4 literacy includes both language and literature; numeracy includes mathematics and numeracy</p> <p>2019-2020 figures are based on teacher assessments due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>			
41	EQ7.9	% of pupil attendance in primary schools:	94.02%	93.83%	-
		girls	94.20%	94.04%	-
		boys	93.86%	93.62%	-
		pupils identifying as non-white British	93.63%	92.76%	-
		pupils identifying as white British	94.07%	93.93%	-
		pupils with special educational needs	92.70%	92.24%	-
		pupils with no special educational needs	94.55%	94.41%	-
		traveller pupils	84.58%	77.92%*	-
		non-traveller pupils	94.07%	93.92%	-
<p>2019-2020 attendance data was available up to 13 March 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>*Although no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have</p>					

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
		disrupted support and confidence amongst families and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference			
42	EQ7.10	% of pupil attendance in secondary schools	93.46%	92.51%	-
		girls	93.51%	92.49%	-
		boys	93.41%	92.53%	-
		pupils identifying as non-white British	94.40%	93.44%	-
		pupils identifying as white British	93.43%	92.50%	-
		pupils with special educational needs	91.47%	90.05%	-
		pupils with no special educational needs	94.23%	93.37%	-
		traveller pupils	76.62%	65.65%*	-
		non-traveller pupils	93.49%	92.92%	-
		2019-2020 attendance data was available up to 13 March 2020 due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic *Although no particular reason can be identified there are a number of factors that could have contributed to this decrease; families becoming more transient than usual; pressures from within the Traveller community and cultural tradition; changes in the Vulnerable Learner Service and Education Welfare Officer service may have disrupted support and confidence amongst families and with low numbers of pupils the withdrawal of a few children is likely to see a greater percentage difference			

Equality Objective 7: Reduce gaps in the educational performance experienced by pupils due to their protected characteristics

No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
43	EQ7.11	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year in primary schools	1	3	↓
		Boys	1	2	↓
		Girls	0	1	↓
		SEN	1	3	↓
		Travellers	0	0	↔
		BME	0	0	↔
44	EQ7.12	The number of permanent exclusions during the academic year in secondary schools	17	10	↑
		Boys	13	6	↑
		Girls	4	4	↔
		SEN	13	8	↑
		Travellers	0	0	↔
		BME	0	1	↓

Equality Objective 8: Ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.					
No	Ref	Measure	2018-2019	2019-2020	Direction of Improvement
45	EQ8.1	Number of staff attending recruitment training	29	49	↑
46	EQ8.2	% of participants of training sessions that considered their knowledge had increased	100%	100%	↔
47	EQ8.3	Number of recruitment complaints	0	0	↔
48	EQ8.4	Number of new starters commencing above the minimum point of the grade	35	27	↑