



Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Report 2017-18

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Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-18

We are pleased to present Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report for 2017-18 detailing the implementation of our Strategic Equality Plan and our Strategic Equality Objectives. This report outlines our key responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and further detail regarding the implementation of our Strategic Objectives can be found in Appendix 1.

During the year, the Equalities portfolio has been allocated to Cllr Cefin Campbell, as the Executive Board Member for Communities and Rural Affairs, therefore this report is presented by both Executive Board Members.

Strategic Equality Plans (SEPs) are important documents that set out how public bodies will consider the needs of groups with 'protected characteristics', as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. This is intended to ensure that all individuals receive just and equitable treatment in respect of service delivery and strategy/policy formulation.

As a key employer in the county, we have made the transition from the Disability Two Ticks Scheme to being a Disability Confident Employer. **As a Disability Confident Employer we:**

- have undertaken and successfully completed the Disability Confident self-assessment
- are taking all of the core actions to be a Disability Confident employer
- are offering at least one activity to get the right people for our business and at least one activity to keep and develop our people.

As an Executive Board, we have a dedicated Disability Champion, which is Cllr. Jane Tremlett. During the year we have continued to develop the **Carmarthenshire Disability Partnership**, with members of the Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition for Action. Our aim is to discuss key issues and ensure that the Coalition are involved at the early stages of service planning and delivery and that we as an Authority support the group to develop further expertise and knowledge. I look forward to seeing this partnership develop further in the future.

We continue to host a **Community Cohesion Co-ordinator** who co-ordinates the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan. We also continue to host **Equality Carmarthenshire** as a group of organisations who represent the protected characteristics and a range of public service providers.

To end, we want to report on arrangements for consulting on the **Council's budget**. It is well known that budget pressures are intensifying. I am firmly committed to making sure that, as far as is possible, budget reductions are fair to all groups. In view of this, arrangements were put in place to consult widely, including with the 50+ Forum and others on which Council services were considered most important. Later in the process, a **budget consultation survey** was developed and all sectors of the community were encouraged to take part. This included representatives of

Equality Carmarthenshire. The survey asked people demographic profiling questions, meaning that the views of people from different groups could be understood separately. In summary, this activity helped ensure fairness was integral to the Council's budget decisions.

Naturally, our legal duties are central to all planning and delivery of services, and our workforce has a key role to play in promoting diversity and addressing unfairness.

As a local authority, we recognise that there is more work to be done and we look forward to developing partnerships with our communities and with the protected groups in order to learn more.

**Councillor Linda Evans & Councillor Cefin Campbell
Executive Board Members (Equalities)**

Section 1 - Introduction

1.1 Introduction and background

Public Sector Equality Duties

The General Duty

The aim of the General Duty is to ensure that public authorities and those who carry out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities.

Public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Specific duties in Wales

The Equality Act 2010 made provision for Welsh Ministers to be able to make regulations that place specific public sector equality duties on relevant Welsh public authorities listed in Part 2 of Schedule 19 of the Act.

The duties have been developed to be proportionate in design, relevant to need, transparent in approach and tailored to guide relevant Welsh public authorities towards better performance of the general duty. The ambition is to better meet the needs of the citizens of Wales relying on the services provided to them by the public sector.

The Specific Duties in Wales are set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and came into force on 6 April 2011 and note that the listed bodies will undertake and develop the following requirements:

- Objectives
- Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessing Impact
- Equality information
- Employment information
- Pay differences
- Staff training
- Procurement
- Annual reporting (by Public Authorities and Welsh Ministers)

- Publishing
- Review
- Accessibility

Carmarthenshire County Council

Carmarthenshire County Council published its second Strategic Equality Plan in April 2016 and this review bought an opportunity to look at what has been achieved and to look anew at our priorities as a Council.

Our complaints and compliments procedure is also key to ensuring better services. We will ensure that any complaint, compliment or comment regarding equality is recorded as those relating to equality and we will monitor the situation and report on progress in dealing with them. We intend to strengthen these links and we will ensure that communities, key stakeholders and individuals / groups that represent one or more of the protected characteristics are aware of our procedure.

The Policy and Partnerships team works closely with the People Management Division and all council departments to promote the Strategic Equality Plan and to continue to gather evidence which will contribute to the work. The team also works closely with stakeholders over the county, and meet regularly with groups such as the Carmarthenshire Disability Partnership and Equality Carmarthenshire.

Well-being objectives 2017 - 18

Following consultation, Carmarthenshire County Council drafted a set of Well-being/Improvement Objectives. These were approved at County Council on 8 March 2017. We usually publish our Improvement Objectives with evidence including, but by no means limited to, performance indicators and targets in order to monitor their delivery. However, this year we have incorporated our Improvement Objectives into our new Well-being Objectives Plan.

They were reconfirmed following the local elections in 2017 and detailed Action Plans are in place to support each Improvement/Well-being Objective. These will be monitored and reported on through our Performance Management Framework. The Annual Report for 2018 – 19 will show the progress we have made in meeting these Objectives.

The following table shows the Carmarthenshire County Council Well-being Objectives and their contribution to the 7 National Well-being goals. Further details regarding the direct contribution towards the ‘More Equal’ and ‘Cohesive Communities’ goals can be seen through the detailed planning documents on the Council’s corporate website.

7 National Well-being Goals

Carmarthenshire's 2017/18 Well-being Objectives / KIOPs		Prosperity	Resilience	Healthier	More equal	Cohesive Communities	Vibrant culture & Welsh Language	Global responsibility
Start Well	1	Help to give every child the best start in life and improve their early life experiences.	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	2	Help children live healthy lifestyles	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	3	Continue to Improve learner attainment for all	✓	✓		✓		✓
	4	Reduce the number of young adults that are Not in Education, Employment or Training	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	5	Tackle poverty by doing all we can to prevent it, help people into work and improve the lives of those living in poverty	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	6	Create more jobs and growth throughout the county	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Live Well	7	Increase the availability of rented and affordable homes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	8	Help people live healthy lives (tackling risky behaviour & obesity)	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	9	Support good connections with friends, family and safer communities			✓	✓	✓	
	10	Support the growing numbers of older people to maintain dignity and independence in their later years	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	11	A Council-wide approach to support Ageing Well in the county	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	12	Look after the environment now and for the future	✓	✓	✓			
In a Healthy Safe Environment	13	Improve the highway and transport infrastructure and connectivity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	14	Promote Welsh Language and Culture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
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1.2 Any other information relevant to meeting the duties

Our role as an Employer

Time to Change Wales

Time to Change Wales is the first national campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. The campaign is needed because although mental health problems are very common, it can still be a taboo subject. People who experience mental illness often face stigma and discrimination in the workplace, socially and within families. This can make life with a mental health problem more difficult than the symptoms themselves. The aim is to improve knowledge and understanding about mental illness and, most importantly of all, get people talking about mental health.

The Employee Well-being Team lead on our corporate commitment to the national campaign and have hosted various awareness campaigns such as the 'Time to Talk Day' and the Pledge Cards with the Chief Executive and Elected Members.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy

The Council recognises that its employees, men or women, will be amongst those affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence, either as victims/survivors of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence; friends, family or colleagues of victims/survivors; or perpetrators of domestic abuse and/or sexual violence. We have prepared and published a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Policy, which is available to view in the HR Policies and Guidance Section of the intranet, or via line managers, Trade Union Representatives or the Occupational Health Unit.

Carmarthenshire County Council is committed to ensuring that any member of staff disclosing domestic abuse and/or sexual violence will be listened to and supported.

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 is a landmark law, the first of its kind in the UK. One of the key mechanisms for delivering the Act in Wales is to ensure that everyone working in Welsh Public Service is aware the nature and impact on those affected by this whatever their gender.

The Learning and Development team have ensured access to the mandatory Welsh Government e-learning module on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence for all staff. This e-learning provides awareness of the issues and importantly provides an understanding about how staff might help in tackling them.

The Corporate Management Team are committed to ensuring that every part of our workforce has the opportunity to receive the awareness training with alternative arrangements being made available for those who cannot access e-learning. Additional training was also provided for those undertaking professional/specialist roles.

Our role as a provider of services

Wales Interpretation and Translation Service

The authority is a partner in the Welsh Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS). This body acts as a “one-stop-shop” designed to improve access to public services for vulnerable people whose first language may not be English or Welsh. WITS provides the Authority with access to trained, accredited, fully security vetted translators and interpreters covering approximately 135 languages.

Inequalities in Education

All schools are required to publish **Equality Objectives** and a **Strategic Equality Plan** that records how the school is responding to equality issues. The purpose of the objectives and plan is to enable the delivery of measurable equality outcomes which improve the lives of individuals and communities.

Carmarthenshire Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS)

This year we have seen only a small rise in our English/Welsh as an Additional Language (EAL/WAL) population. We currently have in excess of 1,200 EAL learners on our register and support 400+ A-C Stage learners in 40 schools throughout Carmarthenshire. This year we have been able to increase our support in Welsh medium schools.

The MEAS team currently consists of 4 EAL Specialist Teachers, 2 Polish Bilingual TAs and 3 Arabic Bilingual TAs who work with refugee children and their families.

Carmarthenshire Traveller Achievement Service

This year the service has been able to support 6 secondary schools and 7 primary schools. We currently have 171 children on our register, not all of whom are currently receiving support.

There has been an overall improvement with attendance from Traveller children over the past year. This has impacted slightly on improving their attainment levels in primary schools.

Housing Related Support Service

Housing Services have developed a new Housing support service for people over the age of 55 and people with dementia irrelevant of age. This will be across tenure (private or public) and be given where the need for housing related support has been identified.

If someone has housing support needs they will receive support irrelevant of whether they are a Carmarthenshire County Council tenant or not. This will be a much fairer service, extending to those who are home owners or private tenants. The service will be a floating support service for Older People which will provide housing related support to enable people to develop the skills and confidence needed to live independently in their own homes.

Our role as a Community Leader

Syrian Resettlement Programme in Carmarthenshire

To date, Carmarthenshire has welcomed 20 families, with a total of 87 people, under the Syrian resettlement scheme, as follows:

Llanelli	7 families
Ammanford	1 family
Llandeilo	1 family
Pontyberem	2 families
Kidwelly	2 families
Carmarthen	6 families
Garnant	1 family

All school-age children are attending school, except one who is waiting for a specialist placement. All adults are attending English classes.

As well as individual support, we also hold family information sessions around every two months. Relevant agencies come to speak to the families together, with interpretation available throughout the event. The focus for the next event will be on preparation for Universal Credit, and routes into employment.

One family has moved out of Carmarthenshire to take up employment. Their home is to be re-let to another family arriving this month.

Projected number to arrive in 2018/19 is 12 families (approximately 55 people). Earlier this year the Home Office consulted on what the resettlement programme should look like after March 2021. We will continue to monitor this; however, there are signals that the intention is to continue to carry out resettlement on a planned basis. It is also likely that separate schemes will be combined for simplicity. Syrian refugees would then be in same position as refugees from other Middle Eastern countries, Afghanistan, Eritrea and Sudan.

We have a multi-agency task group which meets every two months, to ensure that all relevant agencies are working together to deliver the scheme effectively.

Membership includes Housing, Education / Children's Services, Communities First, Hywel Dda University Health Board, Dyfed Powys Police, Department for Work and Pensions, Coleg Sir Gâr, Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services, Ethnic Youth Support Team. This group is chaired by the Executive Board Member for Housing.

Carmarthenshire has set up and delivered an effective support system for the Syrian families, and is well-placed to meet our commitment of receiving 60 families within five years. We have compensated for a lack of experience in this area of work by bringing all the relevant agencies together, and a willingness to learn from others. Our success to date has been recognised by mentions in recent reports by Welsh Government and the British Academy.

Community Cohesion

A Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator has continued to be funded by Welsh Government from the Community Cohesion Fund to work with Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Powys and Pembrokeshire County Councils.

The Co-ordinator facilitates the regional implementation of the Community Cohesion National Delivery Plan and creates numerous links with organisations working across the region. During the year we have been able to access learning and development opportunities, focusing on Hate Crime awareness and also supporting the resettlement programme for the county.

Equality Carmarthenshire is a group of organisations who represent the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act and local service providers.

During the year, Equality Carmarthenshire has continued to build on its network and its information sharing between organisations. There has also been work to develop an annual calendar of activities to coincide with various diversity celebration days.

Equality Carmarthenshire has also circulated and contributed to several consultations during the year, including the Hywel Dda University Health Board consultations on Transforming Mental Health Services and Transforming Clinical Services Engagement.

Carmarthenshire Disability Coalition and Partnership

The Council continues to support the work of the Coalition and benefits from its feedback and advice. For instance, work has been undertaken to improve the accessibility of information, this includes work to ensure that the Council's website is fully accessible to screen reader software, electronic documents are now published in single language versions and improvements have been made to the format of printed letters to help accessibility.

Relationships between the Council and the Coalition have been enhanced through bi-monthly meetings of the Carmarthenshire Disability Partnership, chaired by the Executive Board Member for Disabilities, Cllr Jane Tremlett.

Pride Cymru, Cardiff

Carmarthenshire were represented as part of the Proud Councils stand, a network of 10 councils across South Wales, including Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr, Cardiff, Caerphilly, Swansea, Newport, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. Proud Councils has committed to promote equalities in public services and remove the barriers faced by LGBT people.

During the event, visitors were asked for feedback to help improve council services now and in the future. Members of the LGBT community were asked to describe the main barriers they faced when accessing public services, what LGBT focused activities and services they'd like to see in their communities, and how councils could encourage more involvement from the LGBT community to help shape local services.

The survey also asked about people's experience of hate crime, how they reported it or what prevented them from reporting it.

Those who responded to the survey would like to see more support groups as well as gender neutral toilets. They also called for more support in the form of community groups, events to help raise public awareness, and more education in schools. Many cited that fear of criticism or judgement was another issue they face.

Section 2 - Identifying, collecting and using relevant information

2.1 Our communities

Statistical background

Carmarthenshire has an estimated population of 184,681 and a population density (population count/area in sq km) of 78 people per square km. The County is very diverse and rural. It consists of 58 Electoral Wards with 74 Elected Members. Demographic Profiles have been produced of each of the Electoral Wards and for the County which provides a picture of life in the individual communities as well as valuable local information. The profiles will give you information such as:

- Population Statistics
- Population density
- Birth and Death rate
- 2011 Census Data
- Housing Information

The Ward Profiles can be accessed through the Council's corporate website.

Statistical information provides us with a useful baseline of information; however, the Census results do not provide information on all protected characteristics.

As a local authority, we are able to access a wealth of data. Our key aim during the preparation of the evidence report was to identify data to support the General Duty in:

1. Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2.2 Our staff

Carmarthenshire County Council has been collecting employment data for a number of years, on the groups required at the time. Our Workplace Profile Report can be viewed on our corporate website. Following the publication of the Equality Act 2010 and the Specific Duties for Wales 2011, the People Management division have been working to update our recruitment monitoring forms and our Resource Link software, in order to collect the new data on the wider protected characteristics. This is a continuous process.

Section 3 – Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments are a key element of the Strategic Equality Plan and objectives and are integral to all budgetary, policy and strategy decisions. Heads of Service and Budget Managers are required to complete an assessment of all policy decisions as part of the Priority Based Budgeting decisions and all assessments. It is also key that assessments are undertaken as part of all policy and strategy developments and that the Organisational Change template is completed when there are HR considerations.

During the year, the Policy and Partnership Team have been leading on the preparation of a draft Integrated Assessment. This is due to the fact that the Council has a statutory requirement to complete impact assessments under a number of new and existing legislation.

These requirements are legal obligations for the Council and failure to meet these duties may result in the Council being exposed to legal challenge.

This integrated assessment incorporates the requirements of the following Acts into one Impact Assessment:

- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Public Sector Equality Duty and the Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) & Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty

Section 4 – Training

The Council's Learning and Development Team prepare an annual Learning & Development Plan which outlines all the training and development opportunities available - including Equality and Diversity opportunities. Line Managers are required to discuss learning and development opportunities as part of staff appraisal and ensure that staff have opportunities to develop professionally. All new members of staff are required to complete "Engaging Diversity", an on-line learning module within six months of appointment. All Managers and Senior Managers are required to attend the Behavioural Standards in the Workplace training and, if involved in recruitment activities, Recruitment and Selection Training.

Section 5 – Procurement arrangements

Procurement arrangements

The Policy and Partnership Team work closely with the Procurement Unit to ensure compliance. One of the key documents is the Supplier Qualification Information Database (SQuID). This Information is a template provided by the Value Wales Division of the Welsh Government.

The SQuID has been designed to simplify and standardise the selection stage of procurement whilst improving transparency. This approach also makes it easier for small businesses to tender for public sector contracts. Information in relation to Equalities is included in the SQuID documents and all potential suppliers must complete the section. The SQuID template specifically asks prospective suppliers for information in relation to any findings of unlawful discrimination by an Employment Tribunal, an Employee Appeal Tribunal, or any other court and/or any complaints upheld following an investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission or its predecessors (or comparable body in any jurisdiction other than the UK) on grounds of alleged unlawful discrimination. The guidance clearly notes that any prospective suppliers, who hold any findings against them, will not be selected to tender, unless they have provided adequate evidence that they have taken appropriate action to stop it happening again.

Section 6 – Contact details

For further information on Carmarthenshire County Council's Strategic Equality Plan, please contact:

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