

Strategic Equalities Plan

Annual Report 2022-23



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Foreword to the Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2022-23

We are pleased to present Carmarthenshire County Council's Annual Report for 2022-23 detailing the implementation of our Strategic Equality Plan and our Strategic Equality Objectives.

The main purpose of this Annual Report is to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties. The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an annual report - this report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

As part of our report, we will demonstrate our progress against our Strategic Equality Objectives, which are:

1. Being a leading employer.
2. The needs and rights of people with Protected Characteristics shape the design of services.
3. Safe and Cohesive communities that are resilient, fair, and equal.
4. Improving access to our services and access to our environment.

Our aim is to make Carmarthenshire a more equal place for people to live, work and access services, however we recognise that there are, and will continue to be, areas for improvement. Publishing this Annual Report will not only help the Council to meet its obligations under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, but will assist you, as our residents to identify these areas and monitor progress on them.

Towards the end of 2022-23, we have started the journey to revise our Strategic Equality Plan in readiness for publication in April 2024. This work is planned with our Public Sector colleagues across Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys. Our work will include a survey across the region to gain feedback from our residents, alongside community-based involvement.

Councillor Philip Hughes

Cabinet Member for Equalities (Policy and Workforce)

Councillor Ann Davies

Cabinet Member for Equalities (Communities)

Section 1 - Introduction

Introduction and background

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.

Protected Characteristics

This is the term used in the Equality Act to identify the types of people who are more likely to experience detrimental treatment and/or discrimination simply because of who they are. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation.

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.

Section 2 - Identifying, collecting, and using relevant information

2.1 Our communities

Statistical background

2021 Census

The Carmarthenshire population had grown by just over 4,000 (2.2%) to a total of 187,900 since the last census in 2011, compared to 44,000 (1.4%) for the whole of Wales and by just over 3.5m in England and Wales (6.3%). The largest population increases in Wales are in Newport (9.5%) and Cardiff (4.7%), with Ceredigion seeing a fall of 5.8%. Carmarthenshire continues to have the fourth highest population in Wales.

There were 96,200 women (51.2% of the population) and 91,700 men (48.8%) in Carmarthenshire. This is a similar split to the previous Census and comparable to Wales and England & Wales. There is one person for every football pitch-sized piece of land in Wales. There were about 150 residents per square kilometre in Wales in 2021, up from 148 residents per square kilometre in 2011. As of 2021, Carmarthenshire is the fifth least densely populated of Wales, with an area equivalent to around two football pitches per resident.

The majority of people in Carmarthenshire identify as English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/ British (94.0%). Although this has decreased from the 2011 Census where 95.6% of people identified within this group.

- The Ethnic groups identified with the least in Carmarthenshire was 'other black' and 'Roma' (0.0%), with only 69 people selecting this as their ethnicity.
- The 'Roma' ethnic group was included in the Gypsy or Irish Traveller figures for the 2011 Census.
- The total of those identifying themselves as 'white' has increased by 1.3% since 2011.
- 2021 sees a proportional percentage increase in most of the ethnic groups since 2011.
 - o 'Any other' group: 0.1% increase
 - o 'Arab' group remains the same
 - o 'Mixed or multiple ethnic groups': 0.3% increase,
 - o 'Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African' group: 0.1% increase
 - o 'Asian' group: 0.2% increase.

The proportion of residents' main language being English, or Welsh has decreased by 0.3% from 97.9% (2011) to 97.6% (2021). Languages such as Polish and Romanian have had marginal increases, which is in line with the increase in migration from these countries.

Sign language as a main language has seen an increase in Carmarthenshire, which is consistent with national trends, although the County exhibits a slightly higher proportion than national levels.

The proportion of households whereby all members speak the same language is higher in Carmarthenshire at 67.7% than it is nationally.

For the first time, the Census asked people about their sexual orientation and gender identity. These new figures will be vital in helping shape services in years to come.

89.7% (139,511) of Carmarthenshire's population identified as straight or heterosexual, this is higher than in Wales, and England and Wales with both at 89.4%. Carmarthenshire has just over 3,600 (2.4%) people that identified with an LGB+ orientation ("Gay or Lesbian," "Bisexual" or "Other sexual orientation"), this increases to 76,800 (3%) in Wales, and to 1.5 million people (3.2%) in England and Wales.

Just under 500 (0.3%) people living in Carmarthenshire identified with a gender different from their sex registered at birth, compared to 262,000 (0.5%) living in England and Wales.

The percentage of residents that have a limiting disability has reduced slightly in Carmarthenshire and nationally. 11.3% of these are limited a lot to achieve their day-to-day activities.

Carmarthenshire has the highest proportion of households that have 2 or more people disabled under the Equality Act with 9.4% compared to 8.4% in Wales and 6.7% in England and Wales.



As a local authority, we can access a wealth of data. As we revise our Strategic Equality Plan, this insight will also reflect on the [Is Wales Fairer?](#) Report, due to be updated and published by the Equality & Human Rights Commission in the autumn 2023.

2.2 Our staff

Carmarthenshire County Council has been collecting employment data for several years and has developed specific resources to explain to staff why the information is collected and how the data can influence our workplace policies and support for staff. Our detailed Workplace Profile Report can be viewed on our corporate website. Following the publication of the Equality Act 2010, the People Management division have been working to improve the collection of workforce data and we recognise that this is a continuous process. The collection of data during recruitment will be enhanced by the introduction of a new recruitment system which will provide us with easier and more detailed reporting tools.

In addition, data is collected and reported on via the Pay Policy and Equal Pay Audits which are published every year.

Equality impact assessments are undertaken on employment policies and regular monitoring of pay and grading/job evaluations is also in place.

Workforce Planning sessions for service managers have been rolled out and workforce plans consider the workforce profile with a view to actions being put in place to ensure the workforce reflects the community it serves.

Section 3 – 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 strategic decisions. Heads of Service and Budget Managers are required to complete an assessment of all policy decisions as part of the budget setting process. 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.

As a Council, we are moving towards the use of an Integrated Impact Assessment, which includes the Equality Act, the Welsh Language Measure and the Socio-economic Duty. This will ensure that when making our strategic decisions, we have taken due diligence and have evidenced the potential impact of our work.

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.

During the year, we have also promoted the following opportunities through Learning@Wales

- Trans and Non-binary awareness
- Inclusion essentials
- Sexual Orientation
- Transgender awareness.

And a specific module on Community Cohesion through our internal Learning Pool.

Section 5 – Procurement arrangements

The Policy and Involvement Team work closely with the Procurement Unit to ensure compliance. One of the key documents is the Selection Questionnaire used in procurement tender exercises.

Information in relation to Equalities is included in the questionnaire and all potential suppliers must complete the section. The questionnaire 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.

Welsh Government Code of Practice – Ethical Employment in Supply Chains

The Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Policy was approved by Cabinet on the 8 November 2022.

We have uploaded the Council's Modern Slavery Statement under the Council and Democracy pages.

Below is the link where the Statement can be found and downloaded.

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-democracy/equality-diversity/>

The Cabinet have also nominated an Ethical Employment Elected Champion.

Strategic Equality Objective - Being a Leading Employer

Case Study 1: Mental Health First Aid within the authority

Mental Health and well-being have been on the rise in recent years: demonstrated through Occupational Health and wider statistics with an emphasis on stress, anxiety and low mood. Following growing concerns of the rise of such, the Health & Well-being Coordinator researched courses and support available. The first course previewed to the authority was a 'Mental Health Awareness' course. Following the demand and success of this course and the growing popularity of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), we researched courses available. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an internationally recognised training course, designed to identify the signs and symptoms of mental health conditions and provide help on a first aid basis for anyone who may be experiencing a mental health issue, or potentially a mental health crisis.

The scoping work for MHFA began in 2020 providing a Level 1 Mental Health First Aid course to the whole authority, run between January and March 2020. Over a course of three months we had 194 attendees: with the Mental Health First Aid training course piloted and proving successful, our aim was to offer a more in-depth and detailed training to staff and roll out an accredited course throughout the authority. Whilst scoping for the training we considered cost, the timing, and the commitment to the role; gaining quotes from various companies to compare. This training was unfortunately put on hold due to Covid-19 and the lockdown, as the courses were previously completed in person and it was deemed that this full two-day course would be too in-depth to deliver remotely.

However, following further investigations many companies began delivering the courses online. We decided the course provider based on the cost to the authority and the ability to complete the course remotely. During this time, the Health and Well-being Coordinator (Mental Health) post was extended to ensure we were able to continue providing robust and resilient support. The roll out to the authority finally began in June 2021 with an agreement to hold one course every quarter with up to 14 delegates on each course, the course layout is over 12 hours with 6 hours self-directed e-learning and two 3-hour live webinar sessions. On completion of the course, each delegate is a qualified MHFA and holds this qualification over 3 years. The promotion of this course was targeted through our intranet pages, emails and communications in newsletters to all staff, alongside Learning & Development department.

Once qualified, all MHFA are added to our intranet pages with contact details, including their email, teams or phone number, as well as if they are Welsh speaking or learning, giving the caller an option to speak in their preferred language and preferences. To support the MHFA a Teams channel has been created with weekly conversations, tips and advice; a monthly networking session is planned for every third Wednesday of the month with any updates or training that may be useful. Recently, we held our first in person networking meeting, which proved successful and beneficial to the MHFA whereby we went for a walk and discussed the support available to employees, as well as themselves as Mental Health First Aiders. We also discussed the reading well for mental health offer and how we could

promote this more for self-help and education for individuals around various mental health topics. A peer-to-peer group has also been created for the MHFA to converse and support one another and meet with each other on a regular basis.

To understand the volume of calls the MHFA are receiving for advice, a triage form alongside a guidance checklist has been developed, outlining the callers concerns and how the MHFA supported, whilst always maintaining confidentiality. The purpose of the form is not only to support the MHFA further with advice in specific fields but also to create a reactive service, having support in place for specific departments or utilising e-chats to combat these concerns. These triage forms are easily accessible via our intranet pages and are linked to the MHFA intranet page.

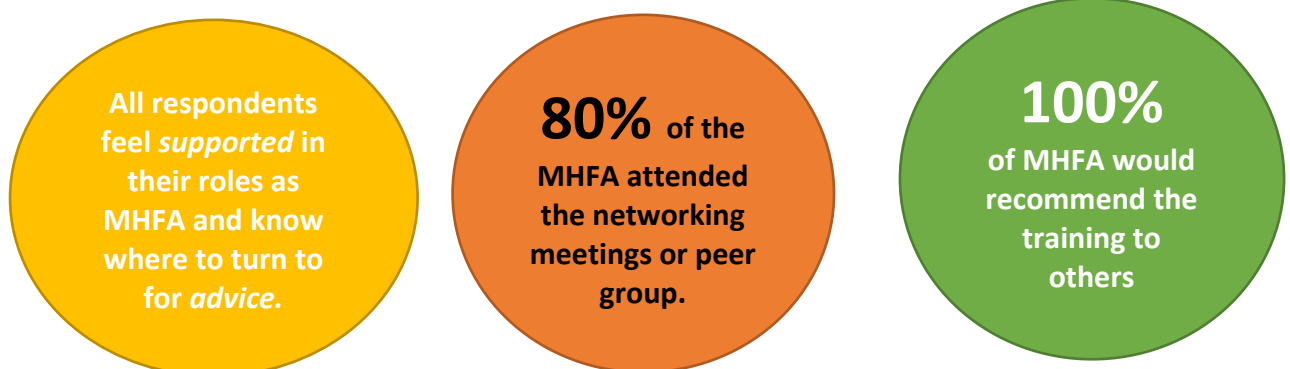
Initially the course was targeted to all employees, however, through use of sickness statistics, discussions with and feedback from managers we quickly realised that there was a need for specific targeted support and began running managers only courses, encouraging managers to share their own experiences in an anonymous and safe environment, as well as best practice. With the figures of poor mental health and stress continuing to rise, we are taking a proactive approach and using MHFA as Mental Health Champions to encourage, share and support the wider authority.

Statistics

- 194 attendees at Level 1 Mental Health First Aid between January and March 2020;
- 103 delegates will be qualified by September 2023, with a projected 14 delegates by year end;
- 22 managers trained to date;
- The largest concerns arising from the MHFA screening forms are low mood and anxiety.

Feedback

Feedback is obtained regularly from the MHFA via a Microsoft Forms to ensure the success of the course and how it has been utilised so far. It is also an opportunity to pick up on any areas we were overlooking and to learn ways to improve. However, feedback from employees has been very positive at every stage. Please see outcomes below:



"I think it was interesting to see the scope of the training and how much it covers regarding Mental Health. It is beneficial just to get that knowledge as an individual as well."

"It is helpful in terms of guiding you on how to support someone who may be having difficulty with their mental health. It gives a wide range of information on mental health and ways of seeking support. It can save lives"

Moving forward

- Develop Mental Health Champions throughout the authority.
- Continue improving mental health provisions through e-chats, training and awareness.
- Continue procuring for further training and recruiting for future MHFA.
- Further promotion within the authority to ensure everyone is aware of the MHFA, their roles and how to get in touch.

Strategic Equality Objective - Being a Leading Employer

Case Study 2: Learning & Development

During the year, the Learning & Development team have led and supported several initiatives to support our services and staff:

- We have alternated the times of delivery for development sessions to enable staff with care and childcare responsibilities opportunities to attend development sessions.
- We have provided a number of courses to Social Care staff and foster carers in matters such as Transgender Awareness, Autism and various mental health topics.
- Our bitesize mental health courses for the third sector and independent sector proved particularly popular, encouraging a range of accessibility for people with mental health issues.
- We now monitor applications for all of our learning and development opportunities, to ensure that there is no disproportionate impact on any protected characteristic.
- In the development of our online learning, training has been provided to the learning & development content creators, to ensure representation of different protected characteristics in our learning content.
- Accessibility for digital learning is a priority, therefore the learning and development team have been developing our awareness to support the production of digital learning and promote accessibility.
- Learning & development have also been working through our existing e-learning provision to ensure that all learning is accessible.



The image shows the cover of a document titled 'Accessibility Guide'. At the top left is the logo for Prifysgol Cymru / Y Ddrindod Ddiwy Sant / University of Wales / Trinity Saint David. Below this is the title 'Accessibility Guide' in a large, bold, dark blue font. Underneath the title is the subtitle 'Practical advice to help you create accessible and effective content.' in a smaller, dark blue font. A dark blue button with the word 'Start' in white is positioned below the subtitle. At the bottom left is the logo for Cyngor Sir Gâr / Carmarthenshire / County Council, featuring a stylized dragon. On the right side of the cover is an illustration of two people, a man and a woman, standing in front of a large digital screen displaying text. The woman is holding a large blue circle with a white checkmark inside it.

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Ddrindod Ddiwy Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Accessibility Guide

Practical advice to help you create accessible and effective content.

[Start](#)

Cyngor Sir Gâr
Carmarthenshire
County Council

In our work to support disabilities

- One of our new starters in home care is dyslexic with mild learning disabilities. To support this new starter, one of our Learning & Development Advisers worked with this employee on a face-to-face basis to support completion of the digital induction.
- One of our student Social Workers has degenerative visual impairment. In order to support this person on the placement and the associated training, we provided hardware (a 44-inch screen and large laptop). This person is also dyslexic, therefore we provided software to enable them to be supported at home as well as in the workplace. Reasonable adjustments were also put in place for reading time, doubling the normal reading time permitted. This support has enabled the student Social Worker to maintain the placement to return for next year.
- One of our employees has a visual impairment, and we have been working with the University provider for the course that we are supporting, to ensure all materials for learning are available in an accessible format. We have also been working with this employee, who is assisting the learning and development function to develop and test training content to ensure accessibility.
- One of our Welsh language learners is dyslexic, therefore we worked with the employee on a 1:1 basis to understand their needs, following which, in agreement with the employee, we transferred the employee onto a course which delivered sessions in an alternative delivery method, which enabled them to continue their Welsh language journey.

Strategic Equality Objective – Being a Leading Employer

Case study 3: – Equality and Diversity guidance for staff and managers

As a Council, we are responsible for delivering a diverse range of services to the community that we serve. Our success depends on the people we employ and being able to draw on their different perspectives and experiences. By attracting, recruiting and developing people from the widest possible pool of talent we can develop a better understanding of our customers' needs now, and in the future to ensure our success.

During the year, the People Management Division have refreshed and promoted our Equality and Diversity guidance documents for staff and managers. These include:

- Guidance on Disability and Reasonable Adjustments
- Our commitment to the Zero Racism Wales campaign and promotion of our Behavioural Standards guidance
- Guidance on Religion and Belief
- Guidance on Supporting Lesbian, Gay and Bi Staff
- Guidance on Supporting Transgender Staff

In addition, we have been encouraging staff to voluntarily declare their ED&I data so that we may monitor more effectively the impact of our people management policies and procedures.

SUPPORTING TRANS AND NON-BINARY PEOPLE AT WORK: A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

Supporting trans and non-binary people at work: a guide for managers

Who is it aimed at?

All Staff

What are the objectives?

Knowing how to support your trans and non-binary people and create a respectful and safe environment for them is key to promoting their own personal well-being and ensuring that your organisation manages to harness and nurture the very best talent. Comprising original drama, personal testimony and an in-depth case study featuring leading UK insurance company LV=, this course provides an essential toolkit for managers in managing and supporting trans and non-binary staff at all levels of an organisation.

How will it make a difference?

This is an externally provided course and is only available in English. It is only accessible to staff who work within Carmarthenshire County Council.

Delivery method:

eLearning

We are all different. Our different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives mean that we think about issues in different ways and can identify new solutions and opportunities to improve. These skills are important for us all so that we can deliver the best possible service to the public.

Strategic Equality Objective - The needs and rights of people with Protected Characteristics shape the design of services

Case study 4: Carmarthenshire Public Services Board Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan

During the year, we have also been supporting the Carmarthenshire Public Services Board to prepare the Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires each of the Public Services Boards across Wales to develop and publish a Well-being Assessment. The Assessment will serve as a statement of well-being for each respective county area. In addition to the importance of reflecting quantitative data (e.g. from the Census and other official sources), the guidance stresses that significant engagement with people is critical in adequately making the assessment of well-being.

In the interests of collaboration and making best use of resources, the Public Services Boards of Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, and Pembrokeshire worked together on their well-being assessments.

A survey was developed, and a series of questions were formulated under the 7 National Goals of prosperous, resilient, equal, healthier, cohesive, vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and a responsive Carmarthenshire.

The survey was available in Welsh, English, Polish, Romanian, and Arabic. An Easy Read version of the survey was also available in Welsh and English.

Detailed demographic questions were also included as part of the survey (respondents could not be identified) to ensure that we heard the voices of all of our communities in our engagement work. This information also enabled us to analyse feedback from specific communities and protected groups on their social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

In turn, this feedback formed parts of our evidence in the development of Well-being Objectives and the Well-being Plan during 2022-23. In setting the Objectives, specific involvement took place with some of seldom heard groups. This included community-based involvement through People Speak Up, who are based in Llanelli and also with Carmarthenshire People First, who support individuals and families with additional learning needs.

The Local Well-being Assessment and supporting documents can be viewed on [The Carmarthenshire We Want](#) website.

Strategic Equality Objective - Safe and Cohesive communities that are resilient, fair, and equal

Case study 5: Community Cohesion 2022-23

Community Cohesion 2022-23

The Mid and South West Wales Community Cohesion team are one of 8 regional teams, funded by the Welsh Government. The team covers Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire and Powys and consists of a Coordinator and 2 Officers. Community Cohesion has worked on areas including Hate Crime, Cohesion Campaigns, Work with minority groups such as Refugees and the Gypsy Traveller Community, Community Tensions and training opportunities. The team also coordinate a Small Grants scheme for community projects with a focus on Cohesion.

Hate Crime Awareness

Hate Crime Awareness Week (HCAW) was in October 2022 and the Cohesion Team took part in a Regional working group to ensure initiatives were coordinated and mapped. Partners included OPCC, Dyfed Powys Police, Victim Support, Race Council Cymru and the Cohesion Team. The Cohesion Team took the lead on several regional initiatives:

- Virtual Coffee Morning, in collaboration with Victim Support
- Social Media slots with Local Authorities
- Pre HCAW online events in collaboration with Victim Support
- Facilitated a training session about online hate and the impacts that online hate and harms have on individuals and communities. Content included looking at misinformation and myths on social media and highlighting cases in Wales. The session also looks at the links between online and offline hate, Counter Narratives and Reporting routes via Police and VS, connecting with the CCT when there are concerns about local tensions.

Training and campaigns

- As part of Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) History Month and in collaboration with Travelling Ahead the team facilitated an awareness raising session for professionals working with the GRT Community. The purpose of this session was to support colleagues by enhancing their understanding and equip them to better meet this community's needs. Two sessions were held on **Tuesday 28 June** and approximately 70 people (multi agency) from across the region attended.
- Supported Carmarthenshire County Council with the appraisal for Richmond Park School becoming a School of Sanctuary. Cohesion Officer attended the presentation ceremony on 20 June. [Richmond Park School celebrates becoming a School of Sanctuary during Refugee Week 2022 \(gov.wales\)](#)
Working with the Local Authority to encourage further schools to take part in the process.
- As part of Countering Hateful Extremism Week (CHEW), the Mid and South West Wales Community Cohesion Team in collaboration with Victim Support coordinated a session **designed for professionals working with young people**. The session

included presentations from a range of experts in their fields and will cover a wide range of relevant topics that fit under the umbrella term of 'Extremism', these include the rise of the Far Right, a brief overview of groups of interest, the growing threat of the Incel Movement, an understanding toxic masculinity and its associated themes, why graffiti and stickering can be such a problem when tackling extremist concerns, the issue of online hate and information on a fascinating case study funded by the Home Office and headed up by Ceredigion County Council.

- LGBTQ+ Inclusion workshop, which will be held online on Monday 27 February 2023 to celebrate LGBT History Month.

Aimed specifically at professionals working in front line roles and teams in the area, this workshop will:

- Demystify terminology and explain common misconceptions.
- Help you to understand LGBT hate.
- Explore routes of support (including being an Active Bystander, reporting to Police, Independent Specialist Support services, Local Authority and Grass Root Groups).

Community tensions

The Cohesion team Chair weekly multi agency Tension Monitoring meetings in four Local Authority areas. This is useful for understanding issues and hotspots of tensions within our communities, and where appropriate develop mitigation. Partners include Dyfed Powys Police, Special Branch, Hywel Dda University Health Board, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Victim Support, Race Council Cymru, University of Wales Trinity Saint David and various departments within the Local Authority.

Small Grant funding for Cohesion Projects

The team made available a third round of grant funding to develop projects which support cohesion principles. Work included supporting the development of online events, resources materials or other initiatives which improve relations within our communities. Applications were encouraged which sought to carry out activities to bring together communities who may otherwise never get to meet online or (if appropriate) in person – for example new arrivals in neighbourhoods getting to know people who have lived in the area for a long time, twinning projects with other communities in different parts of Wales where areas have a different diversity profile, or intergenerational work.

Christmas Around the World

The project was delivered by Foothold Cymru. 'Christmas Around the World was an international celebration of food and community' and took place on the 3 December 2022.

The event offered exhibitors the opportunity to share their national, seasonal celebration food and demonstrate Christmas traditions from around the world and attracted foodie representation from over 13 countries including Wales, Poland, Ukraine, Syria, Nepal, Indonesia, Korea, Japan, Catalonia (Spain), Chile, Portugal Italy and Romania.

The event proved to be a popular family day out, attracting over 500 visitors over a 4-hour period. The event promotional materials were produced in Welsh, English, Polish and Ukrainian and the event celebration banners represented 12 international languages.

A film was produced during the opening of the event: <https://youtu.be/9FnkftPvOnY>

The event had over 500 attendees from the Llanelli and Carmarthenshire community – this exceeded the anticipated numbers by significant numbers.

From the perspective of the stall holders and entertainers, feedback suggested that this event gave them a sense of being part of a cohesive community and a sense of pride in being able to highlight and share their cultural heritage.

Cymuned Cymraeg

Cymuned Cymraeg was a fortnightly opportunity for Welsh learners to practice functional Welsh in a supportive, relaxed and LGBTQ+ friendly environment in Llandeilo.

The project aimed to combat the divide between Welsh learners and first-language speakers by building the confidence of the former and developing patience and encouragement in the latter, demonstrating through integration that although we use Welsh in different ways ultimately it is a language for everyone.

Cymuned Cymraeg allowed its attendees to learn inclusive customs and progressive Welsh grammar such as pronoun sharing at the beginning of sessions, normalising the use of 'nhw' (they/them) in the singular and using non-gendered endings newly developed by Bangor University.

It is also stated that the very essence of the project is to bring people together with a focus on inclusivity and this interaction between LGBTQ+ people and the wider community will destigmatise trans and non-binary existence within public environments.

Primarily the organisers wish to focus on creating a safe space for the LGBTQ+ community who are learning Welsh.

In addition to the meetings that will take place twice a month, the Cymuned Cymraeg project held a full day's event in February to coincide with the UK's LGBTQ+ History Month and Dydd Miwsig Cymraeg (Welsh Music Day), to celebrate queer identities, the Welsh language and the intersectionality between the two cultures.

LGBTQ+ Hate Crime Awareness

This project, run by well-known LGBTQ+ charity CETMA was to run an online LGBTQ+ Coffee morning, in partnership with Victim Support's Hate Crime Team during Hate Crime Awareness week (8 – 16 October 2022) and to also hold a Winter Pride event. The organisers stated that they would intend to use their existing staff and format from successful Pride events held in the summer, to provide a community well-being event in the quieter, more isolated winter period.

On 10 October 2022 a virtual coffee meeting was held, this comprised of a presentation by Victim Support's Hate Crime Team with an interactive Q&A session. This event had a special support focus on Hate Crime Issues. A total of 14 people attended this event, and it contained some lively debates and conversations. The 90-minute session contained information on the current UK and Welsh Hate Crime statistics with an explanation on how

to understand the data and interpret it for local application. An emphasis was placed on being an “Active Bystander” - how to mitigate incidents whilst not becoming involved in them. This was followed by a Q&A session, where several delegates shared life experience for the benefit of all participants. Feedback was positive and participants asked for further sessions of a similar nature to be held in the future.

A large-scale pride event took place was planned with over 100 people attending at the campus of the University of Trinity Saint David’s in Carmarthen. The event featured 18 stall holders and community social groups with cabaret entertainment. The Mayor of Carmarthen also attended as a guest speaker, who gave a speech about inclusivity and local cohesion. The event was well received with very positive feedback, which was sent to us with the final report. 56% of attendees commented that the event met expectations and 44% said it exceeded expectations. 83% of respondents were very likely to recommend the event in future. The organisers helpfully analysed data of the demographics of those that attended which demonstrated a wide diversity of ages of attendees, with 11% under 18 and the largest group being 33% aged 18-30. More mature age groups were also represented with 31% being over 50 years old. In terms of gender, 50% of attendees (of feedback surveys completed) were female or non-Binary with the other 50% identifying as male.

Strategic Equality Objective – Improving access to our services and access to our environment

Case Study 6: Age-Friendly Communities

We hosted our Ageing Well event on the 2 March 2023 at the National Botanic Garden of Wales. 240 people attended the event. The premise was to highlight the resources and support available to Carmarthenshire residents, through talks, stalls, and workshops. The event also gave us the opportunity to demonstrate the array of work ongoing around this important topic.

Hosting this event enabled us to gather some answers around members' needs, gaps in service provisions, promoting the rights of the older population, challenging discrimination, and establishing local 50+ groups to better understand the issues and inform our future plans.

The biggest attraction was the information stalls, which provided a range of ideas and advice of what Carmarthenshire residents can do to age well. 20 stalls from various partner organisations were present, with a constant stream of participants visiting and asking questions.



Stalls	Stalls
Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales	Age Cymru Dyfed
Community Project Manager HDUHB, (DEWIS, Padlets, Connect Platform)	Fflecsi Bwcabus / Trafnidiaeth Cymru (Transport for Wales)
Care and Repair Carmarthenshire	Older People's Commissioner for Wales
Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub	Carmarthen Stroke Group
Dinefwr Ramblers and Walking Well	Coed Lleol Carmarthenshire
Carmarthenshire County Council Trading Standards - Financial Exploitation Safeguarding Scheme (FESS)	Amgueddfa Cymru -Museums Inspiring Memories
Actif Adults and 60+ Carmarthenshire	Social Prescribing Service Carmarthenshire
Llesiant Delta Well-being	Bydd Iach Hywel Dda Be Well Service (NHS)
Home First Team	Nordi Cymru
People Speak Up	Scottish Highland Dancers
Releasing Time To Care	Cynllun Gyrrwyr Hŷn

Age Cymru Dyfed organised the workshops, which included:

- Digital
- Buddy
- Mental Cognitive Stimulation Therapy
- Information and Advice.

To weave in with the themes of the workshops the talks covered the following topics:

- Digital support
- Craft activities
- Guide dog assistance
- Welfare benefits talk

'People Speak Up' also ran workshops that provided support to residents on how to age well.

Practice Solutions provided an update on the Ageing Well mapping work undertaken across the County in preparation of joining the World Health Organisations Ageing Well Framework.



Photos by photographer, Celf Calon

Deputy Minister Julie Morgan MP and Heléna Herklots CBE, Older People's Commissioner for Wales joined us throughout the day, giving us a good opportunity to discuss our work in the county and our aim for Age-Friendly Communities.

Reflecting on the event, it was extremely successful, with positive feedback received, and we look forward to hosting it again next year whilst recognising opportunities to learn and improve.

Contact details

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