



Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Report 2016 – 2017



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Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

The Equality Act was introduced in 2010, bringing together and replacing previous anti-discrimination laws with one single Act. The Equality Act 2010 includes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), also referred to as the 'General Duty', which requires Public Authorities 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.

In 2016, Blaenau Gwent Council published its Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 which sets out how it aims to deliver against the General Duty, which covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age;
- Sex;
- Race – including ethnic and national origin, colour or nationality;
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief;
- Disability;
- Sexual orientation;
- Gender reassignment;
- Marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to eliminate discrimination in employment; and
- Pregnancy and maternity.





The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duty) (Wales) Regulations 2011, sets out a number of 'Specific Duties' to support the Council in their performance of the General Duty. As such Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is required to produce and publish an annual equalities report by 31 March each year, on its Strategic Equality Plan (SEP)¹.

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has identified four equality objectives. These are:

1. Make equality vital in decision making and service provision;
2. Be an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of, and understands the equality agenda;
3. Do our best to engage, protect and support those people in our community that need it the most;
4. Promote understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities.

This is the first Annual Report of progress made against the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020. The report covers the period 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017 and will set out:

- the steps the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- how the authority has used information in meeting the aims of the general duty;
- any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- a statement on the effectiveness of the authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- progress towards fulfilling each of the authority's equality objectives;
- a statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives; and
- specified employment information.

Throughout the report we will include other relevant developments and progress across our strategic equalities objectives, against the requirements of general and specific duties from a Local Authority, Education and Community perspective.

¹ A copy of the Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 for Blaenau Gwent can be found at <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Equalities/StrategicEqualityPlanActionPlan2016-2020.pdf>





Chapter 2 – The Steps the Council has taken to Identify, Collect and Evaluate Relevant Equality Information

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council continues to identify, collect and evaluate equalities information to evidence and inform its decision-making in relation to its employment policies and practices. This approach will helps us to:

- understand the effect of policies, practices and decisions on staff with different protected characteristics and to plan more effectively;
- identify where there is a risk of discrimination and identify action to remedy this;
- identify possible steps to further advance equality or foster good relations;
- identify key equality issues for the organisation;
- identify whether the workforce reflects the community it serves;
- develop equality objectives and measure progress;
- make practices more transparent and help to explain how and why decisions are taken;
- demonstrate to the public an authority's equality achievements as an employer; and
- demonstrate to public sector regulators and inspectorates that an authority understands its staff composition and is monitoring its performance.

Identifying and Collecting Equality Data

Preparing this Annual Report has shown us that our ability to collect and the availability of comprehensive data on protected characteristics can be improved. The Council has a number of challenges to overcome which include: carrying out resource intensive high-quality sample surveys; reluctance of people to disclose their protected characteristics; and a lack of understanding why the Council would want to collect information on people's protected characteristics.

The limited data available by protected characteristics makes it difficult to effectively assess the potential impact of our decision-making, strategies, policies and practices on protected groups. Nevertheless the Council will continue to make every effort to strengthen its research and evidence base through key action identified under its Strategic Equality Objective 1.





Further we will continue to develop and employ Equality Impact Assessments on strategies, policies and Financial Efficiency Projects; and through its engagement and consultation with the communities. Further, the Council recognises the opportunity the combination of the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 brings to advance equality in a more strategically aligned way.

Blaenau Gwent Council identifies its commitment to improving systematic data collection of its staff through its Strategic Equalities Objective 2.

Identifying and Collecting Data: Local Authority

The Council's primary equalities data collection on staff happens at the recruitment stage, where all applicants have an opportunity to complete a set of equality specific questions, all of which offer a range of responses, which include 'prefer not to say' for any of the non-mandatory questions, should applicants not want to disclose.

Following recruitment, employees are encouraged to share relevant information at different points of their employment, for example, through training and development opportunities, and where individual circumstances change and the implementation of our Organisational Development policies new information.

Nevertheless Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council acknowledges that it cannot require any employee or member of the public to provide any information in relation to their protected characteristic, if they choose not to do so. As a result, there are noted information gaps across the range of protected characteristics.

Using the corporate Establishment List, the Council's organisational data is monitored by protected characteristic on a quarterly basis, and where opportunities for data development are identified steps are taken to address any issues. Whilst the Council makes every effort to collect equalities information from its staff, it is noted that the Local Authority only collects limited equalities related information on its Elected Members.





Identifying and Collecting Data: Education

Every January, all maintained schools are required to provide Welsh Government with pupil and school level data to ensure more accurate targeting of funding and to help them develop and monitor policy. The Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)² is mandatory for all sectors including nursery, primary, middle, secondary and special.

An integral part of the PLASC dataset is collected in alignment with the following protected characteristics: Age, Sex, Ethnicity, Disability (within the context of Special Educational Needs). Analysis of the full data from PLASC, in conjunction with pupils' Key Stage and examination results, provides schools, Local Authorities and central agencies with a range of information and supports the drive to raise school standards.

An overview of the key PLASC data that relates to pupils aged 5 and above across Blaenau Gwent Schools, between 2016 and 2017 is outlined below. The data on local education provision aims to support a more accurate targeting of education funding, support and resources. Information identified and collected across the protected characteristics is also used to inform the content of school's Strategic Equality Plans.

Identifying and Collecting Data: Community

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is a statutory partner of the area's Public Services Board (PSB) introduced under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The PSB must prepare and publish a Well-being Assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area and set out how it intends to deliver against the seven well-being goals: A more prosperous Wales; A resilient Wales; A healthier Wales; **A more equal Wales**; A Wales of cohesive communities; A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; A globally responsible Wales.

² <http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolhome/schooldata/ims/datacollections/pupillevelannualschoolcensus/?lang=en>





The well-being goals are an integrated set and therefore equality and inclusion are not solely connected with 'A more equal Wales' goal but also cross-fertilise with the other well-being goals. The PSB looks at how life is for people who may be discriminated against and the Well-Being Plan will set out how it will make the lives of those who may be discriminated, better which in turn will help Wales to be more equal.

The PSB draws on a broad spectrum of economic, social, environmental and cultural expertise, facilitated by the PSB Strategic Support Group. This Group oversees engagement and consultation activity with the Citizen's Panel, which is made up of a diverse range of residents who provide their views on key local and national issues, as well being supported by the Youth Forum, School's Grand Council, 50+ Forum and Access for All Forum. Over and above this data, the Council is able to collate equalities-relevant data from engagement activities open to the public, namely "Blaenau Gwent We Want".

Beyond the quantitative data, these engagements provide a rich source of qualitative evidence which captures people's opinions and perceptions as well as giving context to quantitative data (the story behind the data).

The Well-being Assessment for Blaenau Gwent, which was developed in 2016/17, provides relevant information relating to equality and diversity³.

Evaluating Relevant Equality Information

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council must collect and publish the number of:

- people employed by the authority on 31 March each year by protected characteristic – men and women employed, broken down by:
 - job/grade (where grading system in place)
 - pay
 - contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts)
 - working pattern (including full time, part time and other flexible working patterns)

³ <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Partnerships/WellBeingAssessment.pdf>





The below information must be presented for each of the different protected characteristics:

- people who have applied for jobs with the authority over the last year
- employees who have applied to change position within the authority, identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not
- employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application
- employees who completed the training
- employees involved in grievance procedures either as complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made
- employees subject to disciplinary procedures
- employees who have left an authority's employment.

The following section in part sets out how the Council has used the relevant equalities information it identifies and collects in meeting the three aims of the general duty, as it seeks to understand its workforce and community it serves.

The following section looks to evaluate the collected equalities related data and in doing so meets the requirement to ***provide specified employment information, including information on training and pay.***



Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

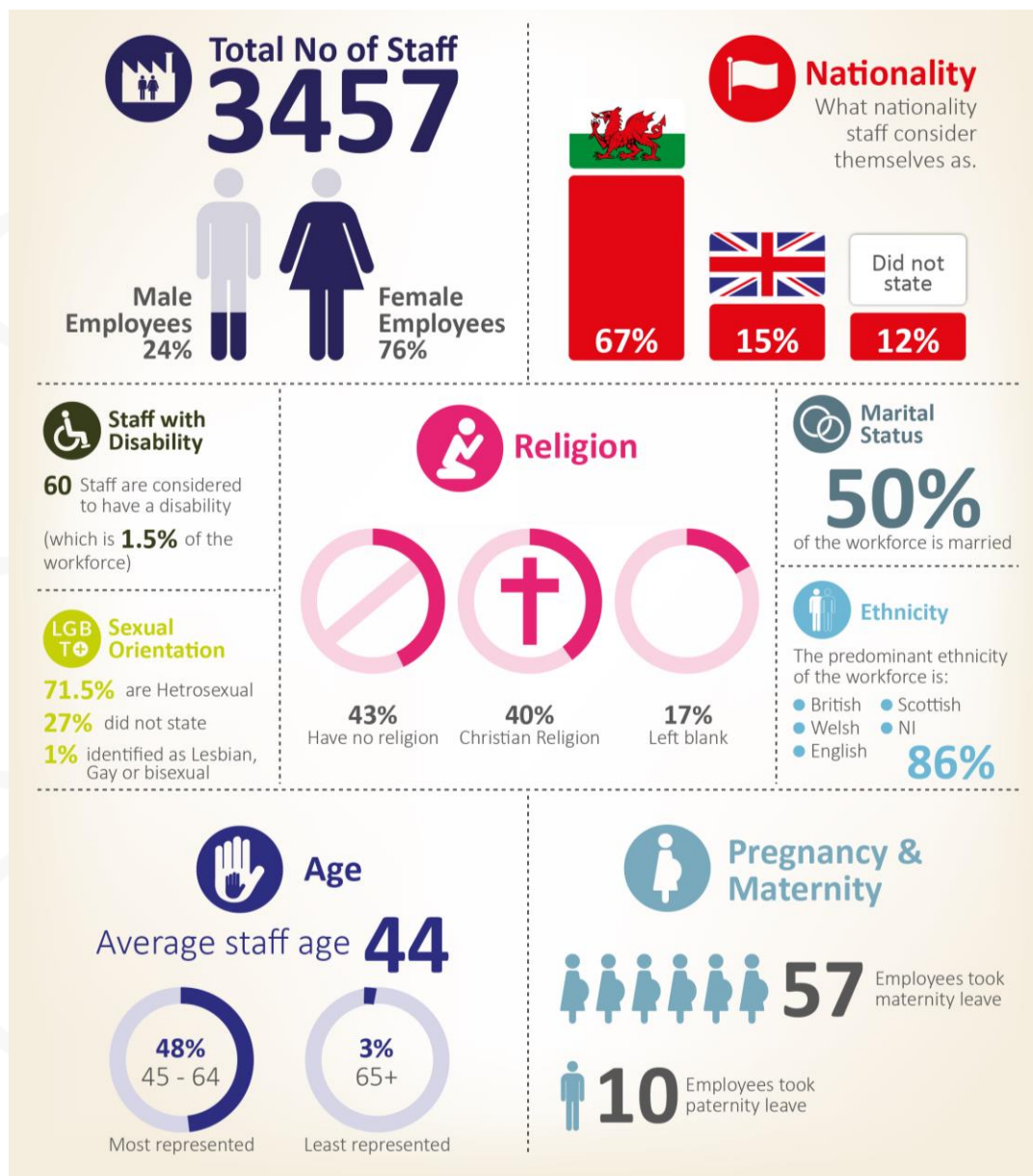
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Analysis of the Employment Data: Local Authority

The following evaluated employment data is drawn from the Council's Establishment List, which is stored on the internal human resources database, iTrent. On the 31st March 2017, Blaenau Gwent Council employed 3,457 staff in total, which was a less than 1% decrease (547) of employees from the year prior, during which 4004 staff were employed. Figure 1 below represents the Council's workforce by protected characteristics.

Figure 1: Infographic of Local Authority Data by Protected Characteristic (2016-17)



The Council recognises that there is limited data available for some protected characteristics, particularly in relation to sexual orientation and gender reassignment. Consequently, there are limited opportunities to reduce potential discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between and within these groups. This will be considered through existing actions set out under Strategic Equality Objective 1 and 2.

Local Authority: Job/Grade/Pay by Percentage of Male and Female Employees

Figure 2 below represents the percentage gender breakdown by Job/Grade/Pay of the 3,347 workforce. More staff are paid at a Grade 5 (653 staff) and of those staff, just under 21% are male and 79% are female; this broadly reflects the overall gender split within the workforce 24% male and 76% female.

Figure 2: Gender Pay Differential by Each Pay Grade (2016/17)

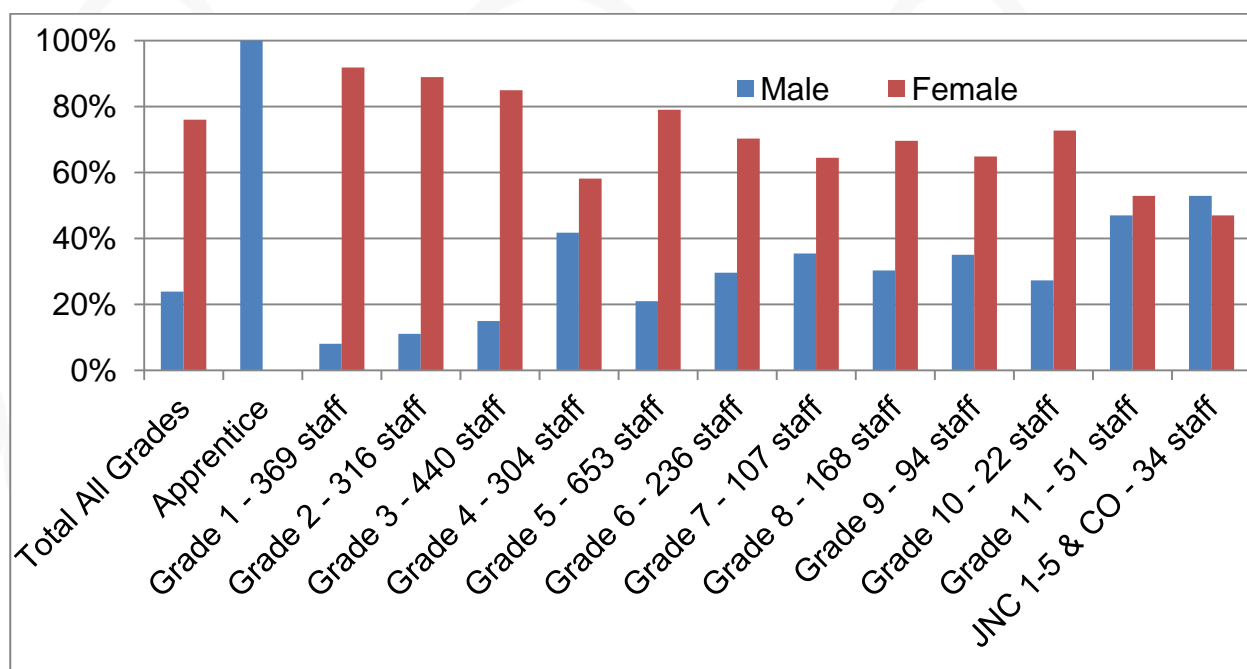
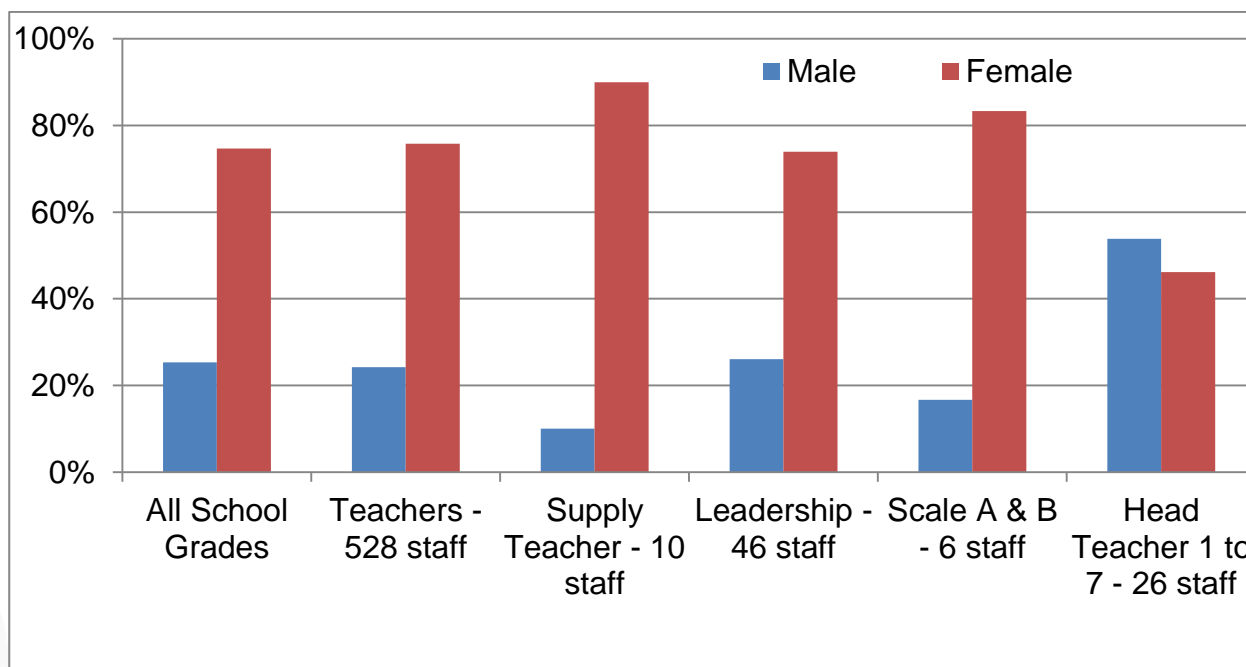


Figure 2 also shows that there is a significant variation at Grades 4 (304 staff) and Grade 11 (54 staff), where the Pay Gap is less pronounced. The most noted differential is seen at the highest Grades of JNC1-5 & Chief Officer; whilst accounting for less than 1% of the workforce (33 staff), 55% of the posts are occupied by males. All Apprentice positions in 2016/17 were occupied by males.

Education: Job/Grade/Pay by Percentage of Male and Female Employees

A total of 616 teaching staff are employed in Blaenau Gwent's 24 Schools, with a similar gender balance to the Council, 25% males, 75% females. Similar to the Council, females feature in significant volume across all pay grades due to the gender variance. Again there is a similarity to the Council in that the gap significantly reduces at the top end of the pay/grade scale, where there is more of a gender balance.

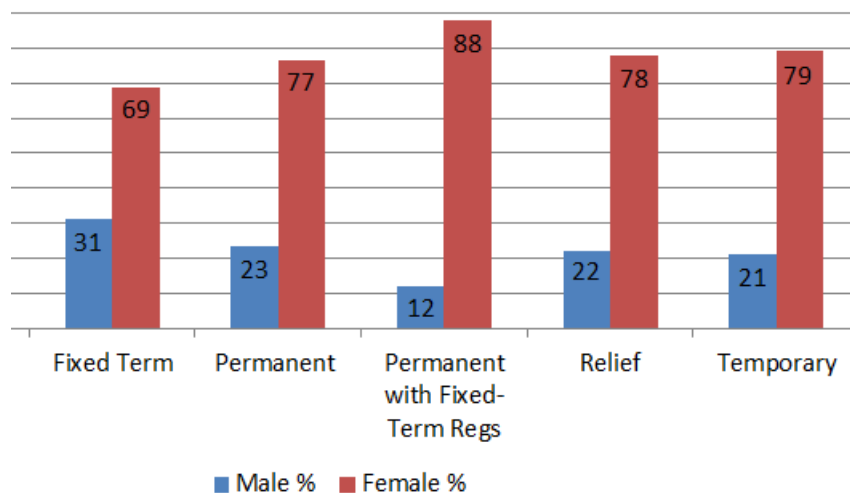
Figure 3: Gender Pay Differential in Education by Each Pay Grade (2016/17)



Gender Pay Gap - Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017

The Gender Pay Gap information required under the statutory requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017 is presented and published through the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2018/19.

Figure 4: Contract type Broken Down by Percentage of Male and Female Employees



Of the 3,457 staff employed in the Council, just over three-quarters (n2640), were employed on a Permanent contract; males accounted for 23% and females 77%. The Fixed Term (n366), Relief (n243) and Temporary Contracts (n175) broadly followed the gender variance for the workforce as a whole (males 24% / 76% females). The most noted differential was in relation to those 33 staff employed under Permanent Contracts with Fixed Terms arrangements, where 29 (88%) females held these posts.

Working Pattern Broken Down by Percentage of Male and Female Employees

In terms of working pattern, just over half (n1783) employees are contracted on a **Part-Time** basis (51.5%) of which 89.5% were female; a total of 1669, 38% of which were males were on **Full Time** contracts; 5 employees were under **Job Share** arrangements.

People who have applied for jobs with the authority over the last year

There were 4,109 applicants for Council positions between 2016-17. Whilst all applicants disclosed under the 'Disability' question not all applicants disclosed against the remaining protected characteristics, as a consequence the base figure used for analysis may vary.





Nearly a third of applicants were 25-34 years of age (32%), this contrasted with 20% of the employed workforce. We note significant variances between 20% of the employed workforce being 55-64, and yet only 5% of applicants came from this same age group. Applications by Gender broadly reflected the employed workforce profile at 25% male and 74% female. A small number of applications were received from people identifying themselves as transgender.

A total of 64 applicants identified as 'other' race. This is a significant number given the overall employed workforce identifies only 28 'other' employees who disclosed their Race/Ethnicity. 60% of applicants identified as 'no Religion', which is significantly higher than the 43% in the employed workforce. 104 applicants identified their religion as 'other', and again this is significantly higher than the 35 employed workforce.

Just over 2% of applicants (94 people) disclosed a Disability compared to 1.5% of the workforce, and 25.4% of the resident population (Census 2011).

A notable 187 of applicants (4.7%) identified their Sexual Orientation as being 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual' which is above the existing level of our employed workforce (1%).

55% of applicants identified as being 'Single' (1,864 people) or 'Separated' (264 people), which contrasted against the employed workforce, which stands at 33%.

Employees who have applied for, been successful and completed training

The equality training programme which was in place in previous financial years through a Service Level Agreement (e.g. 2014/15/16) was terminated by the training provider (Caerphilly County Borough Council) during this reporting period From January 2017 when SLA came to an end, arrangements were that individuals access the extensive modules of training via the Workforce Development Team (see Appendix 6).

The Council also provide equalities related training to elected members via Member Briefing Sessions, and via a range of training opportunities for employees with key examples being Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence; and Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent.





Employees involved in grievance procedures either as complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made / Employees subject to disciplinary procedures

All the grievances are recorded against those employees who have raised the grievance. The Council does not record grievances against the alleged 'perpetrator' until it is concluded that the complaint is to be upheld. Where a case is upheld and misconduct has taken place then it becomes a Disciplinary. Between 2016 and 2017, there were 32 grievances and 76 disciplinary cases, which could be for a number of different reasons. Of those subject to grievances 78% (25 staff) were from males. For disciplinaries, women accounted for 82% (62 staff), though given they account for 76% of the workforce this is not deemed a significant variance.

Over 80% of both disciplinaries and grievances involved British employees. The most significant theme emerging from both the disciplinary and grievance data in relation to Race/Ethnicity, Religion, Disability, Sexual Orientation, and Marriage/Civil Partnership, was the amount of data identified as 'not known'.

Employees who have left the authority's employment

Between the 1st April 2016 and the 31st March 2017, 416 staff left the authority. The largest group by age band was 25-34 years, numbering 118 staff, and making up 28% of all leavers, 24% were males and 76% females which, reflects the employee gender demographic for the Council. This is significant given that there were only 684 employees in the workforce within the 25-34 age band. The most noted variation in age was seen in the 65 and over age category where 16 males and 17 females left the authority. In relation to Gender 116 males (28%) and 300 females (72%) left the authority.

The highest group of leavers were unsurprisingly, given Blaenau Gwent's workforce demographic, British (Welsh/Scottish/English/Northern Irish) with 86% (n386) compared with 5 employees from 'other' *Race/Ethnicities*.





The majority of leavers identified as having 'no Disability' (349 people), whilst a significant 14% 'declined to specify'. Ten individuals, who left the authority, were identified as disabled, of which the majority were male (6).

Three-quarters of leavers were 'heterosexual' (75%), however nearly a quarter of leavers (97 people) 'preferred not to say' or their Sexual Orientation was 'unknown'. Five leavers were identified as 'Lesbian/Bisexual' all being women.

Just over one-third of leavers (162 people) were employed on Full-Time contracts, whereas the majority of leavers from the authority during this period were employed on Part-Time contracts, amounting to 263 (63.8%) employees.

The data analysis indicates that a high proportion of employees left the authority due to the end of their contract, the majority of which were female 117 (87.9%), which indicates a disproportionate amount of women are employed on temporary or fixed term contracts. Furthermore, there was a significant increase of women exiting employment due to end of types of contract between 2016 – 2017, compared to 2015 – 2016 (72.1%) data, which is a difference of (15.8%).

At the point of recruitment, there are a significant number of 'not known' entries for non-mandatory questions. Over and above this there are also a significant number of 'prefer not to say' on the mandatory questions. Therefore, these discrepancies in the data limit our ability to fully understand and present the diversity of the workforce. This makes it difficult for the Council to understand fully the differential impacts of its decisions when considering its policies and practices as well as its financial efficiency saving projects etc.

We acknowledge that people are far more likely to disclose information on their identity if they know what the information is going to be used for and as such the Council will look to improve this under its Strategic Equality Objective 2.





When comparing employee data with community data, there are two protected characteristics where there are noted variations. In relation to disability it is noted that 25% of Blaenau Gwent residents (Census 2011) have a self-identified disability yet the Council only employs 1.5% of the workforce who identify a disability. Through our Disability Confident Committed scheme, we continue as an organisation to support disabled people in to employment and retain disabled people in the workforce.

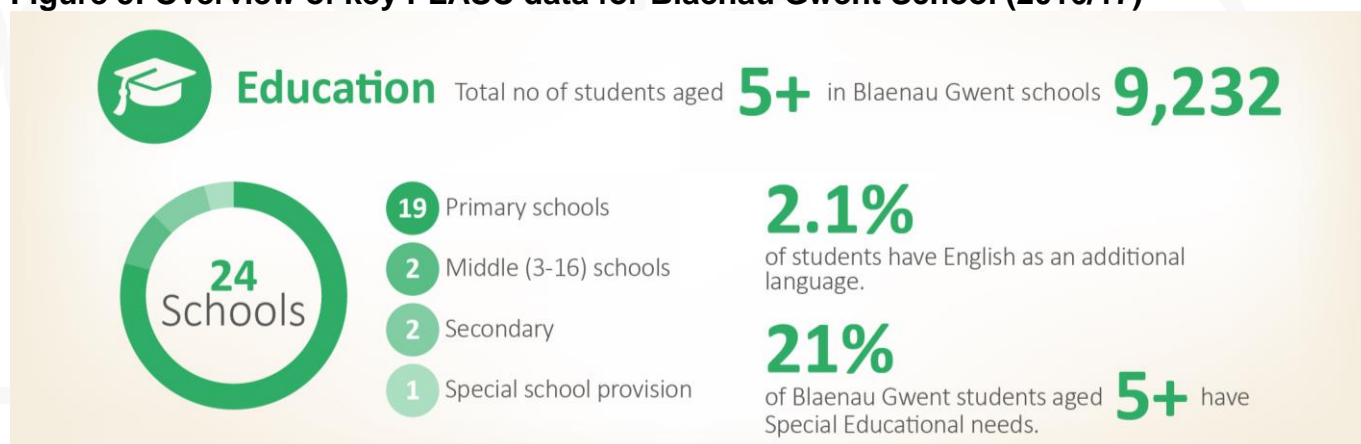
Similarly, the Council employs significantly more staff within the 45-54 age group (48%), and less staff within the 17-24 age group, in comparison to Blaenau Gwent residents within these age demographics.

Education Data

In Blaenau Gwent, there are 24 schools of which 19 are Primary, 2 are Middle Schools (3-16 years), 2 are Secondary Schools without middle school provision and there is an additional specific Special Educational Needs School (Pen-y-Cwm).

Figure 5 provides an overview of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)⁴, during the 2016 – 2017 where there were a total of 9,232 students on roll aged 5 years and over across all 24 schools.

Figure 5: Overview of key PLASC data for Blaenau Gwent School (2016/17)



⁴ Pupil Level Annual School Census Data can be found via Stats Wales site

<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Pupils/pupils-by-localauthorityregion-schoolgovernance> data for this period was captured on the 31st January 2017.





Of the 9,232 students, 50.6% were male (4,678) and 49.4% were female (4,554); though inconsequential this is the opposite when compared to the Blaenau Gwent population gender variance of 49% male and 51% female.

The PLASC data around ethnicity is relatively consistent with data in the wider community with the majority of students of a White British background (47.6% male students and 50% female students), with an additional 2.4% of students from another race/ethnicities, which includes, but is not limited to Polish, Portuguese, Turkish and Romanian.

2.1% students have received specific language support in their school setting, and additional support is available regarding the language needs of their parents and/or carers through the provision of English as a Second Language (ESOL) courses within Coleg Gwent in Ebbw Vale. ESOL classes are easily accessible within the College, and aims to improve the skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in English.

Students who have a Special Educational Needs (SEN) statement in education have additional learning needs, or a physical/learning impairment which may affect their ability to read, write, concentrate, and their level of understanding. Just over 3% of students in Blaenau Gwent (264 people) have a SEN statement and are in mainstream provision, or through Pen-y-Cwm Special school provision. Each school has an Accessibility Plan to address the SEN of students, which sets out the extent to which disabled students can participate in the school's curriculum, to improve the physical environment and to improve overall accessibility to education. Accessibility Plans are monitored along with the needs of SEN students.

Further Protected Characteristic Information from Blaenau Gwent

The PLASC data provides a limited view of student data by protected characteristic. The level of data required from the Welsh Government is minimal within an equalities context which in turn limits any meaningful analysis and conclusions to be drawn. However, locally held data shows that 46 students (24 male/22 female) during 2016 and 2017 were Gypsy or Gypsy Roma students. Additionally, there is protection against discrimination extended to pupils who are pregnant or have recently given birth, or who are undergoing gender reassignment.



Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan

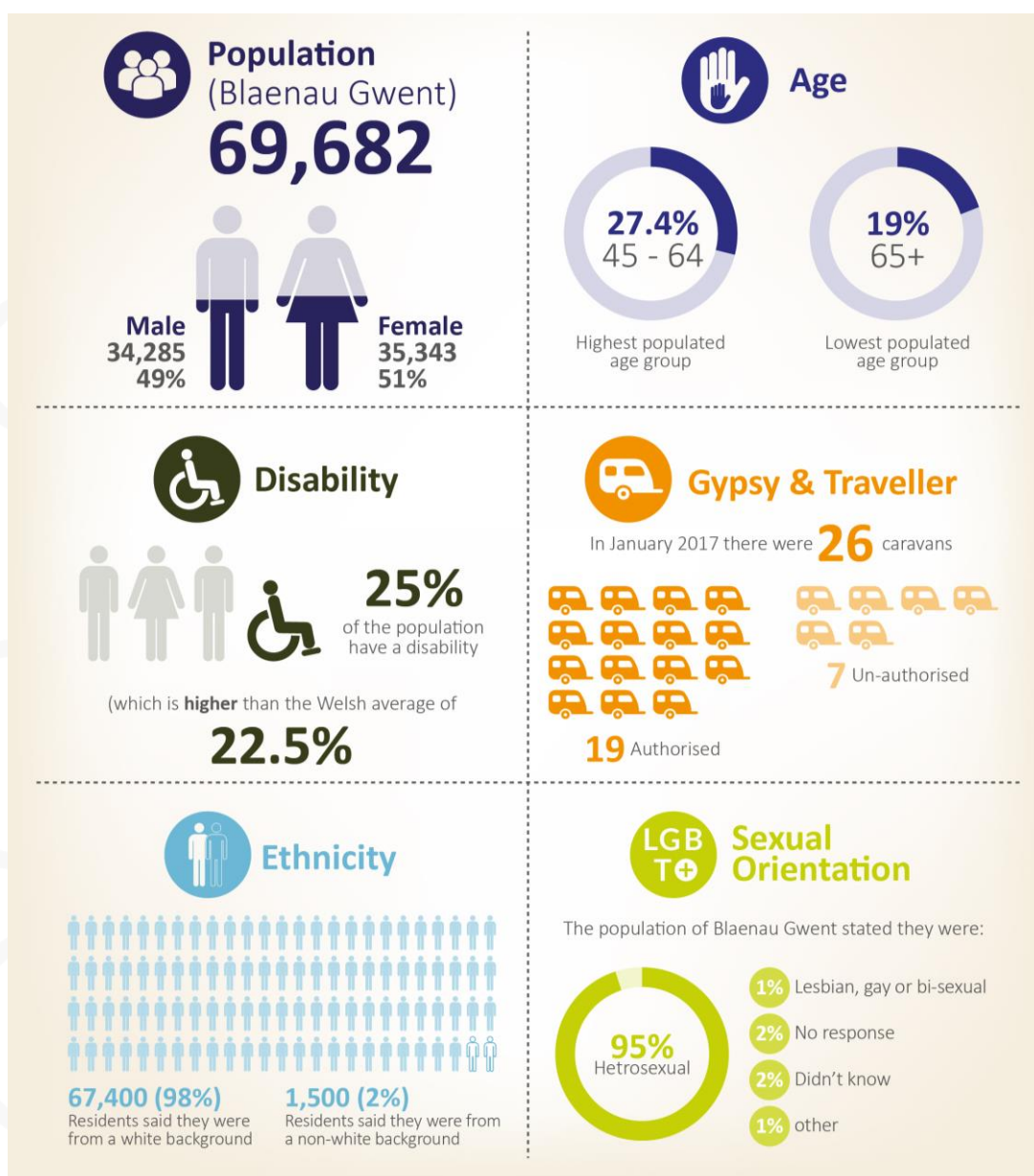
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Community Data

Key equality data is highlighted below which represents an overview of protected characteristics across the local population⁵ between 2016 and 2017. Most of the data presented has remained relatively consistent with the 2011 Census data outlined in the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20.

Figure 6: Infographic of Community Data by Protected Characteristic (2016-17)



⁵ Statistics were taken from the Equality & Diversity section of Stats Wales data specific to 2016 and 2017 population statistics <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Equality-and-Diversity>





Race

Whilst the Annual Population Estimates (APS) show 1,500 residents (figure 6) were from non-white backgrounds, this is unreliable as it is based on a small sample size. The 2011 Census statistics showed Blaenau Gwent's Black and Ethnic Minority population to be just under 1,900. This equates to 2.6% of the total population and well below the Welsh average of 6.7%. Blaenau Gwent has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in England and Wales.

In the 2011 Census, 72 residents living in Blaenau Gwent identified themselves as Gypsy or Irish Traveller. The 2015 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, notes that Blaenau Gwent Council⁶ has one permanent site at Cwmcraehen, Nantyglo and a Gypsy settlement has been in this area for over 200 years. The site provides 20 residential pitches, 19 of these pitches provide individual amenity units for the residents. The site is being considered for additional pitches.

The Population Needs Assessment Gwent Region Report⁷ identified that Travellers also face challenges in accessing services either due to the location of the sites (or due to transient nature of being in an area). Not having access to transport (particularly related to women who often cannot drive) to reach services is another reason for low use of services as well as low levels of health literacy of what services they are entitled to use or how to access them.

Religion and Belief

The 2011 Census showed that half of people in Blaenau Gwent stated their religion to be Christian (50%). Just over 1% of people in Blaenau Gwent stated that they were of another religion such as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh etc. Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion (compared with 43% of the Council's workforce), above the Welsh average of 37%. This is a notable increase compared to 2001, with respective levels of 25% and 19%. A further 8% of people in Blaenau Gwent did not state their religion.

⁶ <https://www.blaenau-gwent-homes.org.uk/Data/Pub/PublicWebsite/ImageLibrary/Gypsy%20and%20Traveller%20Accommodation%20Assessment%202015.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.newport.gov.uk/documents/Care-and-Support/Population-Needs-Assessment/Population-Needs-Assessment-Gwent-Region-Report-May-2017.pdf>





Using Information to Achieve Equality

Through our Strategic Equality Plan, Blaenau Gwent Council has used equality information to facilitate the participation of people with protected characteristics, in local community engagement events, and in shaping the services they receive to ensure inclusivity, fairness and accessibility. The engagement programme undertaken in the development of the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment and subsequent Well-being Plan which will follow, has been a leading example of the steps the authority has taken to achieve the aims of the General Duty.

The establishment of the local Citizens Panel, and other local community forums, illustrates the effectiveness of enhancing the equality of opportunity between people with protected characteristics as a result of their efforts to address issues experienced by protected groups. In recognising the areas of good practice in our efforts to achieving the General Duty, we also recognise where improvements need to be made. Increasing data collection in the community and encouraging the development of under-represented groups is an on-going priority, and this will continue to be reviewed and progressed under the Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020.





Chapter 3 - Progress on Blaenau Gwent's Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020

This chapter fulfils regulation 16(2)(d) of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, which requires us to report on the progress we have made to fulfil each our equality objectives. It is retrospective and covers the financial year 2016-2017, which is year one of the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020. The Strategic Equality Plan identified the below four Equality Objectives each with a detailed action plan.

Blaenau Gwent's strategic equality objectives for 2016 – 2020 are:

- 1. Make equality vital in decision making and service provision*
- 2. Be an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of and understands the equality agenda*
- 3. Do our best to engage, support and protect those people in our community that need it the most*
- 4. Promote understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities*

Each equality objective introduced a number of subsequent actions to help achieve equality and diversity across the organisation and within the wider community. Blaenau Gwent's Strategic Equality Plan was developed as part of a flagship consultation event inclusive of the Access 4 All Forum, Council employees, the 50+ Forum, and other community groups within the authority.

Consequently, the proposed equality objectives were put forward for formal consultation between January and February 2016, during which feedback on the proposed objectives was provided by relevant stakeholders, partnership organisations and the wider public, and subsequently the agreed objectives were formalised in the main Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20.

An update on each equality objective is outlined in detail in the Action Plan (Appendix 5), however below sets out some of the highlighted areas of work. Progress on each equality objective is given from a local authority and education perspective reflecting the supporting action plan.



Objective 1: Make equality vital in decision making and service provision

Local Authority Update

Equality Impact Assessment Framework

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Council must have 'due regard' to its statutory equalities duties. The Council can demonstrate this 'due regard' when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) to understand both the positive and adverse impacts on protected groups, when considering its decision-making in relation to strategy and policy development, financial efficiency planning, service delivery and working practices. In undertaking EQIAs the Council ensures its strategies, policies and practices better meet the needs of the people of Blaenau Gwent and in doing so it takes every opportunity to advance equality and inclusive outcomes for all local citizens.

Improving Equality Impact Assessment

We acknowledge that the limited evidence and local data available for particular protected characteristics (such as, but not limited to, religion and belief, and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups etc.) is having an adverse effect on our ability to fully understand the impact of our decisions in some key areas. In light of these information gaps, we will develop and strengthen our evidence collection with a sharp focus on the protected groups.

Monitoring the Impact of our Policies and Practices

The Council must ensure it monitors the impact of its policies following an Equality Impact Assessment. We recognised an opportunity to strengthen our current EQIA processes, and are undertaking a review of our Equality Impact Assessment Framework that will include but not limited to:

- An action plan and review date requirement on developed policies.
- At the point of review, the original assessment of impact on protected characteristics will be reconsidered and evaluated.
- Where new impacts are identified, or evidence has been gathered which supports our original assessment of impact, these will be incorporated into the assessment.





Equality Impact Assessment of the Financial Efficiency Projects Savings

As austerity continues, the Council has had to make many very difficult decisions to secure financial efficiencies, which in some cases affects employees and in others, service users and the communities of Blaenau Gwent. In these instances each Financial Efficiency Project was screened and where relevant assessed on the significant differential impacts of proposals on the protected groups in Blaenau Gwent through integrated EQIA in each business case. The review of the Equality Impact Assessment Framework will strengthen our current approach.

Blaenau Gwent's Youth Forum

Between 2016 and 2017, Blaenau Gwent's Youth Forum met on over 20 occasions. The majority of the Youth Forum discussions have centred on the well-being process brought in via the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This helped to ensure that the views of young people have influenced the development of the overall process (mainly the Well-being Assessment in 2016/17). Highlights of the year have included an inauguration ceremony for the newly elected Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor. The Youth Forum will continue to be a key mechanism to ensure the views of young people in relevant Council decision making processes.

Education Update (Schools)

School Strategic Equality Plans

Schools in Blaenau Gwent have individual Strategic Equality Plans, all of which utilise a generic template that is aligned with the corporate template to ensure consistency in presenting the objectives and actions from respective schools. The School SEPs are locally monitored on the Education Policy Tracker. Between 2016 and 2017 the Education Directorate worked with schools to promote equality through the development of their equality plans, and to also ensure parity and alignment with the Blaenau Gwent SEP Equality Objectives.





Each School Council was given the opportunity to contribute to the priorities in their school's Strategic Equality Plans and therefore shape the decision-making and planning process in the context of equality and diversity.

Children's Grand Council

A number of meetings have taken place with the Children's Grand Council comprising of representatives from all 24 School's Councils in Blaenau Gwent. Areas of discussion between 2016 and 2017 included '*Improving the health and well-being of young people*', '*The Well-being Plan*' and '*Perceptions of safety and what the policing priorities should be*'. The key highlights of these priorities will be reviewed and reported on annually to demonstrate children and young people's contributions to the overall decisions made within the Council.



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Objective 2: Be an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of and understands the equality agenda

Local Authority and Education Update

Blaenau Gwent as a Disability Confident Employer

In August 2016, Blaenau Gwent Council became a 'Disability Confident Committed' employer. The Disability Confident scheme is voluntary where the Council aims to successfully employ and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. Becoming a Disability Confident employer has allowed us to lead the way in supporting disabled people in to employment within our community, and will encourage a commitment to supporting the additional needs of our employees and all relevant applicants for Council positions.



Data Collection by Protected Characteristic

Blaenau Gwent Council continues to collect data specific to the Protected Characteristics of employees where possible. This data is analysed on a quarterly basis with the intention of identifying any trends, and reducing any inconsistencies or potential discrimination as a result of the themes within the data analysis.



Training Staff in Blaenau Gwent Council

The Council continues its commitment to providing equality related training to its workforce. Courses are offered for any staff member to attend, or courses can be tailored as requested by Directorates when the need arises. A full range of available equality related training modules is at Appendix 6.





Data covering the period 2016-17 identified 290 employees and staff attended the following training courses: Autism: An Introduction; Hate Crime; Supporting People with a Learning Disability who Self Harm; Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent Extremism; Introduction to Sensory Loss; Wales' Introduction to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking; Substance Misuse; Medication Awareness for the Treatment of Mental Health Problems; Culture Change in Dementia Care; Dementia – Introduction; Human Rights in Social Care; and Introduction to Working with people with a Learning Disability.

Operating a Corporate Equality Network

The Council is committed to mainstreaming the equalities agenda, supported by a dedicated Equalities Officer, an elected member Equalities Champion and a well-established Corporate Equality Network.

The Corporate Equality Network (CEN) is made up from representatives from each of the Council's Directorates and key Departments. The aim of the CEN is to consider any new research or best practice, any changes in the equalities legal and policy frameworks, the continuous monitoring and development of the Council's Equality Impact Assessment Framework, Welsh Language, Departmental progress against the Strategic Equality Plan's Action Plan. Members of the CEN also act as equality advocates ensuring equalities is mainstreamed in all areas of their business.



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Objective 3: Do our best to engage, support and protect those people in our community that need it the most

Local Authority Update

Regional Community Cohesion and Community Safety

In 2016, a number of regional public reassurance and awareness events took place in collaboration with the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator, Equality Officers, Community Safety Officers and Corporate Communications, in the wake of the recent EU Referendum. These events were coordinated in partnership with Victim Support who worked across Gwent to identify perceptions of local trends in order to reduce incidences of hate crime and thus, increase community cohesion within local areas. In the lead up to Hate Crime Awareness week, Gwent police held a community engagement event with the view of exploring two themes with the community, which were 'Inclusion' and 'Refugees and Asylum Seekers'. Two Syrian Refugee families have resettled in the Blaenau Gwent area via the Syrian Refugee Resettlement programme, both of which have been active in their engagement in local and regional cohesion events.

Access 4 All Engagement Events 2016

Blaenau Gwent's Access 4 All Forum was developed with the view of becoming the focal point for engagement with local residents with protected characteristics. The forum meets regularly and creates a forum to debate issues affecting people. In April 2016, a wider Access 4 All engagement event took place with the view of presenting two key relevant areas of support.

Both Victim Support and Hafal Cymru presented at the event and offered an overview of their services, and the way in which people can access their information and support. Hafal is a pan-Wales organisation providing mental health support to people. Support groups are offered across Gwent, and Access 4 All members were encourage to access further information on accessing their facilities. Similarly, Victim Support provided an overview of the support they offer across Gwent, and outlined their vision to support victims of hate crime through developing a safe and accessible platform for them to report incidences.





Assessing Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation

Between January 2016 and July 2017 there has been a very slight decrease in the total amount of authorised and unauthorised caravan sites across Wales, and a similar picture has been recognised in Blaenau Gwent. In January 2017, there were 26 caravans⁸ in the Blaenau Gwent area, 19 of which were authorised and 7 were unauthorised. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, was carried out for the Council to consider within this period.

Education Update (Schools)

Support for Gypsy and Traveller Community in Schools

A Gypsy and Traveller support worker is employed by the Council to offer tailored information and support to Traveller students attending mainstream school. The average schools pupil attendance (2016 – 2017 academic year) for pupils from Gypsy and Traveller Communities was 83.4%, a 2.4% increase from the previous academic year. Similarly, within the given period there were 7 exclusions, which is a positive reduction from the previous year of which there 11 exclusions specifically recorded for pupils from Gypsy and Traveller Communities.

A number of other initiatives were implemented during this period to support the educational attainment pupils from our Gypsy and Traveller Communities. In addition to a pupil drop-in service, there was a coffee morning for teachers and families, additional training sessions for the pupils, and a highly effective literacy project was implemented for Traveller students to improve functional levels of literacy. These projects will continue to operate with the aim of increasing engagement of Gypsy and Traveller Community, and the attendance of pupils at mainstream schools.

⁸ For the purpose of the report, the term 'caravans' are used generically to define accommodation considered to be populated by the Traveller community.



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Objective 4: Promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities

Local Authority Update

Engaging People in the Blaenau Gwent We Want Engagement Events

A number of engagement activities have taken place between 2016 and 2017 in the development of the Public Service Board's Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment and Plan.

This effective engagement process involved a number of phases delivered in partnership with under the brand "Blaenau Gwent We Want".



The PSB Engagement Group consulted with the wider community including specific protected characteristic groups, on the development of Well-being Assessment⁹. Throughout the establishment of the Well-being process, in excess of 3,000 people were involved through various local engagement events, including focus group activities with community members from the Dementia Café, Blaenau Gwent Stroke Group, the Joint 50+ and Access 4 All Forum, as well as the Children's Grand Council.

The Engagement Group continues to work collaboratively in the implementation of the Well-being Plan, and will continue to contribute to a 'more equal Wales' through the engagement with people with protected characteristics.

⁹ A copy of the PSB Wellbeing Assessment can be found here: <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Council/Partnerships/WellBeingAssessment.pdf>



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Celebrating Cardiff Pride Event in 2016

In 2016, representatives from Blaenau Gwent Council attended the Cardiff Pride weekend in partnership with other local authorities (Caerphilly, Camarthernshire, Merthy , Rhondda Cynnon Taf, Swansea and Torfaen). During the event, all local authorities engaged with participants to present a brief questionnaire which was intended to gather feedback on the level of support and provision provided for the LGBT+ community in and around their local community.

The consultation exercise also presented a question around the ways in which improvements can be made to the services in their area. Similarities in the responses were acknowledged and several themes were identified, which has formed a basis for future engagement and support with the LGBT+ community, some key themes are illustrated below.



Gender Neutral Toilets Focus on Schools
Promote Equality Educate the Community Equality Diversity
Support for LGBT Young People
Address Bullying Accessible & Visible Better Promotion
Local Support Groups Increase Accessibility
Awareness More Local Events Homophobia Hate Crime Acceptance



Dementia-Friendly Communities

In 2016-17 Blaenau Gwent was leading the way in creating dementia-friendly communities by piloting a new approach to support people living with the disorder and their carers. Supported by the Alzheimer's Society the development of a Dementia Friendly Community involves the whole community improving their understanding of the condition and becoming 'Dementia friends'. Young people became involved and learned more as part of dementia friendly sessions held in school.





Education Update

Recognising Racism Creative Writing Completion

An 11 year old student from Deighton Primary School, Tredegar, won a Creative Writing Award at the Show Racism the Red Card award ceremony, for her inspirational creative writing article called 'Lonely Girl'.

Deighton Primary worked with Show Racism the Red Card to support their students to submit their work around anti-racism in various categories. Over 400 children and young people across Wales entered the competition between 2016 – 2017 and the student from Deighton Primary won first place in the category for 'Creative Writing', a proud achievement for the student, her family and the school.

Middle School LGBT+ Group

A local school has worked with its students to develop an in-school LGBT+ group, which is student-led and supported by the teachers. The group, which is open to all students whether they identify with the LGBT+ Community, or whether they are an ally of the community, meet weekly to discuss any issues experienced by the community, and to generally offer a friendly, informal environment to meet and share ideas and experiences.

The group have been inspirational to their peers, and to the LGBT+ community, and have been recognised as good practice in leading the way to ensuring ongoing support is provided to the LGBT+ community among young people, a priority also of which the Youth Forum has recognised for the upcoming academic year. We aim to continue working with the in-school LGBT+ support group and hope to support the development of similar groups in ensuring young people have support and information to feel safe and accepted as an LGBT+ member of their community.



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Appendix 1: Organisational Data by Protected Characteristic

Gender	Total	%
Male	827	23.9
Female	2630	76.0

Age	Total	Male	Female	%
15-24	175	61	144	5.0
25-34	684	137	547	19.7
35-44	805	152	653	23.2
45-54	998	239	759	28.8
55-64	687	198	489	19.8
65+	108	40	68	3.1

Considered Disabled	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Disabled	54	1.6	24	44.4	30	55.5
Not Disabled	2863	82.8	671	23.4	2192	76.5
Not Known	540	15.6	132	24.4	412	76.2

Ethnicity	Total	Male	Female	%
African	1	1	0	≤1
Other Mixed Background	2	1	1	≤1
Other White Background	15	1	14	≤1
Bangladeshi	1	0	1	≤1
British/Welsh/NI/Scottish/English	2981	716	2265	86.2
Caribbean	2	0	2	≤1
Chinese	1	1	0	≤1
Did Not State	448	105	343	13
Indian	3	1	2	≤1
Irish	2	0	2	≤1
White & Asian	1	1	0	≤1

Sexual Orientation	Total	Male	Female	%
Bisexual	*	*	*	≤1
Gay	*	*	*	≤1
Lesbian	*	*	*	≤1
LGB (sub total)	34	9	25	≤1
Not Known	948	196	752	27.4
Heterosexual	2475	622	1853	71.5





Religion/Belief	Total	Male	Female	%
Any Other Religion	23	10	13	≤1
Buddhism	*	*	*	≤1
Christianity	1382	313	1070	40
Left Blank	561	127	434	17
Hinduism	*	*	*	≤1
Islam	*	*	*	≤1
None	1479	373	1105	42.7

Marital Status	Total	Male	Female	%
Civil Partnership	51	14	37	1.4
Did Not State	65	17	48	1.8
Divorced	157	26	131	4.5
Married	1733	420	1313	50.1
Other	178	36	142	5.1
Prefer Not to Say	54	17	37	1.5
Separated	57	11	46	1.6
Single	1079	274	805	31.2
Widowed	37	4	33	≤1
Blank	46	8	38	1.3

* Due to low numbers, all figures suppressed to avoid disclosure





Appendix 2 – Job Structure Information

<u>Contract</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>
Fixed Term	366	10.5	114	31.1	252	68.8
Permanent	2640	76.3	619	23.4	2021	76.5
Permanent with Fixed-Term Regs	33	0.9	4	12.1	29	87.8
Relief	243	7	54	22.2	189	77.7
Temporary	175	5	36	50.5	139	79.4

<i>Job Pattern</i>		<u>Total</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>%</u>
	Part Time	1783	51.5	186	10.4	1597	89.5
	Full Time	1669	48.2	640	38.3	1029	61.6
	Job Share	5	-1	1	-1	4	-1
<i>Contractual Information</i>	Fixed Term	366	10.5	114	31.1	252	68.8
	Permanent	2640	76.3	619	23.4	2021	76.5
	Fixed Term with Permanent Arrangements	33	-1	4	12.1	29	87.8
	Relief	243	7	54	22.2	189	77.7
	Temporary	175	5	36	50.5	139	79.4



Appendix 3 – Leavers and Applicants by Protected Characteristic

Leavers by Protected Characteristic 2016 – 2017						
1. Age Range	Total Leavers	%	Male	%	Female	%
15 - 24	45	10.8	13	28.8	32	71.1
25-34	118	28.3	31	26.2	87	73.7
35-44	77	18.5	24	31.1	53	68.8
45-54	63	15.1	12	19	51	80.9
55-64	80	19.2	20	25	60	75
65+	33	7.9	16	48.4	17	51.5
2. Marital Status	Total Leavers	%	Male	%	Female	%
Not Known	43	10.3	13	30.2	30	69.7
Separated ¹	28	6.7	2	7.1	26	92.8
Single	169	40.6	51	30.1	118	69.8
Married / Civil Partnership	176	42.3	50	28.4	126	71.5
3. Ethnicity	Total Leavers	%	Male	%	Female	%
Not Known	53	12.7	18	33.9	35	66
Other Inc. Mixed Background	5	1.2	1	20	4	80
British (Welsh/Scottish/English/NI)	358	86	97	27	261	72.9
4. Sexual Orientation	Total Leavers	%	Male	%	Female	%
Lesbian / Bisexual	5	1.2	0	0	5	100
Not Known	82	19.7	23	28	59	71.9
Prefer not to Say	15	3.6	3	20	12	80
Heterosexual	314	75.4	90	28.6	224	71.3
5. Religion	Total Leavers	%	Male	%	Female	%
No Religion	186	44.7	53	28.4	133	71.5
Not Known	59	14.1	20	33.8	39	66.1
Other	7	1.6	1	14.2	6	85.7
Christianity	164	39.4	41	25	123	75
6. Disability	Total Leavers	%	Male	%	Female	%
Disabled	10	2.4	6	60	4	40
Not Disabled	349	83.8	90	25.7	259	74.2
Declined to Specify	57	13.7	20	35	37	64.9





Applicants by protected characteristics 2016-2017		
Age Range	Number	%
Total Responses	3993	97
Under 18	1296	32.5
18-24	976	75.3
25-34	756	77.5
35-44	655	86.6
45-54	209	31.9
55-64	97	46.4
Over 65	4	4.1
Gender	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	3996	97.2
Males	1015	25.4
Females	2979	74.5
Transgender	2	≤1
Race/Ethnicity	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	3901	94.9
White (Welsh/English/Scottish/British/NI)	3675	94.2
Other	64	1.6
Did not answer	162	4.1
Religion	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	3864	94
No Religion	2326	60.1
Christianity	1390	35.9
Other	104	3.6
Not known	44	1.1
Disability	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	4109	100
Disabled	94	2.2
Not Disabled	3791	92.2
Not known	224	5.4
Sexual Orientation	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	3931	95.6
Heterosexual	3595	91.4
Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual	187	4.7
Prefer not to say	115	2.9
Other	34	5.6
Gender Reassignment	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	0	0





Applicants by protected characteristics 2016-2017 (continued)

Marriage/Civil Partnership	Number	%
Total Responses Provided	3882	94.4
Single	1864	48
Married/Civil Partnership	1434	36.9
Separated	264	6.8
Other	320	8.2



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Appendix 4 – Disciplinary and Grievance by Protected Characteristic

Disciplinary and Grievance by Protected Characteristic 2016 – 2017				
Protected Characteristic	Disciplinary	%	Grievance	%
1. Ethnicity				
British	63	83%	28	87%
Unknown	13	17%	4	13%
2. Religion				
No Religion	34	45%	13	41%
Not Known	14	18%	6	19%
Christianity	27	35%	13	40%
Other	1	2%	0	0%
3. Marital Status				
Married or CP	31	41%	23	72%
Not Known	2	3%	4	13%
Separated	8	10%	2	6%
Single/Other	35	46%	3	9%
4. Sexual Orientation				
Gay or Bisexual	2	3%	0	0%
Not Known	24	31%	8	25%
Heterosexual	50	66%	24	75%
5. Gender				
Male	14	18%	25	78%
Female	62	82%	7	22%
6. Disability				
Not Disabled	59	77%	28	87%
Not Known	15	20%	4	13%
Disabled	2	3%	0	0%



Appendix 5 – Strategic Equality Plan 2016 – 2020 Action Plan Update

NB: Reporting arrangements for education proposed to be separated for future reporting cycles i.e. all action in bold with a suffix 'E', e.g. 1E, Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required

<u>Objective 1 – Make equality vital in decision making and service provision</u>			
<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Update</u>
1	Advise and guide Council staff on equality issues as required	2016/20	Blaenau Gwent Council staff receive advice and guidance on equality issues primarily through the Corporate Equality Network. Employees of the Council also maintain communication with the Equalities Officer in order to receive guidance on any equality related issues as and when the need arises. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
1E	Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required	2016/20	School based staff receives support and guidance on equality issues as and when required through the Local Education Authority. Information is received through the CEN, following which education representatives disseminate across the wider education workforce where necessary.
2	Promote the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives	2016/17	Blaenau Gwent's Strategic Equality Plan and subsequent objectives has been promoted through relevant forums, in addition to local partnership boards and other collaborative working arrangements following a process of engagement and consultation on the development of the plan. <i>* This action is now complete but will continue 2017/18</i>

2E	Promote the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives in schools	2016/17	Blaenau Gwent's Strategic Equality Plan and subsequent objectives are promoted in schools through the development of individual school based SEP's. School's SEP's and objectives are aligned to the corporate equality plan.
3	Annual reviews of progress against Strategic Equality Plan and related Action Plan	Annually	<p>This first Annual Report for the 2016 – 2020 SEP has been completed in line with the relevant EHRC guidance. This reporting process will be repeated prior to each required annual reporting and publishing date.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
3E	Annual reviews of progress against individual School Strategic Equality Plans and related Action Plans	July 2016 thereafter annually	Annual reviews of school's individual SEP's, and related action plans will be undertaken in isolation of the corporate plan and will be managed by Education for future reporting purposes.
4	Report on progress of Strategic Equality Plan through Council political and professional structures	Annually	<p>This first annual review of the 2016 – 2020 SEP will be presented to all relevant internal political and professional structures in preparation for publishing within the required timeframe. This will be repeated in line with each required annual reporting and publishing dates.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
4E	Report on progress of School Strategic Equality Plan through individual Governing Bodies	Annually – Autumn term	The first annual review of the 2016 – 2020 SEP for education will be progressed through the internal professional and political process in readiness for publishing on the 31 st March, along with the Corporate update.

5	Hold Elected Member Briefing Session on relevant equality topic	Minimum one session held in 2017/18	<p>There is no update for this action due to the proposed timescale for the action falling outside of the current reporting period.</p> <p>NB: An Elected Member Briefing session was held on 29/01/2016 on Equality and Diversity, linked to the preparation of the 2016/20 SEP.</p>
6	Promote the equality agenda through Blaenau Gwent Public Services Board Strategic Partnership structure – subject to partnership rationalisation	2016/20	<p>Working towards a 'More Equal Wales' is an ongoing priority for the Public Service Board (PSB) as one of the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015), which underpins the work we do through the PSB and supplementary action groups. During 2016/17 extensive work was carried out to ensure equality and diversity was considered and evidenced via the Blaenau Gwent Well-being Assessment published in May 2017.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
7	Work with Blaenau Gwent partner organisations to raise profile of equality agenda, and develop understanding of partner contributions	2016/20	<p>Equality is promoted through the ongoing engagement with the wider community as part of the priorities of the PSB's Engagement Group. In addition, the Corporate Equality Network progresses the agenda through its work to mainstream equalities in all relevant strategic processes.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
7E	Work with individual school communities to raise the profile of the equality agenda, and develop understanding.	2016/20	<p>There are elements of good practice highlighted within the report identified from school communities, which are recognised and celebrated to encourage equality and diversity in schools.</p>

8	Develop the role and work programme for the Elected Member Equality Champion	2016/20	<p>The development of the role and work programme of any Elected Member Equality Champions will be considered following the outcome of the local elections due to take place in 2017.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
8E	Establish the role and work programme for Equality link governor in schools	2016/20	<p>School's Governing bodies will be encouraged to consider ways to divide Governor's additional responsibilities. Governing bodies will be encouraged to decide which role they fulfil in line with the priorities from the School Development Plan, in addition to the recommendations from Estyn inspections. The development of an equality link Governor role will be progressed for implementation in the next annual report.</p>
9	Corporate Equality Network Members to champion equality agenda across the Council	2016/20	<p>The Corporate Equality Network continues to meet quarterly to discuss the collective efforts to mainstream equalities within relevant Council processes, in addition to other key areas of equality which is relevant to all service areas within the organisation. The network is representative of each department within the Council, the respective members of which Champion the equality role in their individual service areas.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
10	Utilise research and statistical sources to help build a better picture of equality	2016/17 2018/19	<p>Research and statistics relevant to equalities is monitored regularly to identify any proportionate themes, and continuous efforts are made through the CEN to improve the level of qualitative and quantitative data collected on equality, both within the community and within the organisation. Further research will be undertaken to ensure a systematic approach is used to collect and analyse equality data.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>

11	Undertake research on specific protected characteristics to improve understanding	2016/20	<p>Research on protected characteristics is undertaken primarily through the Equality and Human Rights Commission website, however extensive research is sourced from regional and national organisations to inform our local equality practice and to improve our understanding of the needs of people with protected characteristics.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
12	Work with partners to improve data and information on equality and diversity	2016/19	<p>The PSB's Engagement Group is developing an effective data collection mechanism through the community members engaged, and through the Citizens Panel it supports. Where possible and necessary, equality data is collected on the community members we engage and improvements continue to be made to the way in which we present these questions to encourage disclosure of equality information, thus ensuring people with protected characteristics are included.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
13	Utilise research and statistics in carrying out Equality Impact Assessments	2016/20	<p>Managers are encouraged to utilise research and statistics when preparing Equality Impact Assessments to inform the professional and/or political decision-making processes.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
13E	Utilise research and statistics in carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for school population	Annually in autumn term commencing 2016	<p>The Equality Impact Assessment framework is generic within the Council and it is recommended that schools utilise the same framework for continuity, therefore, schools are advised in the same way as all other Council staff when utilising statistical research to inform any assessments.</p>

14	Evaluate the effectiveness of the equality training programme	2016 – 20	Mid-way through the reporting period our Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Caerphilly Council for the delivery of Equalities and Welsh Language training for Blaenau Gwent employees came to an end. After that, employees were encouraged to access the extensive equalities-related modules on offer via the Workforce Development Teams (Appendix 6) <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
14E	Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the governor training programme regarding equality issues	Autumn term 2016 and then annually thereafter	Due to the review of the SLA with Caerphilly Council in relation to Equality and Welsh Language training, the governor training programme will have also been affected. Additional and future training for School Governors will be built in to future training calendars to accompany the online training portal and will be promoted through the commissioned school improvement service Governor support function.
15	Review the Equality Impact Assessment Framework.	June 2016 / Dec 16	This action is being carried forward to the 2017 – 2018 period and will be updated in the next annual report.
16	Ensure that the procurement process takes into account Equality considerations	2016/17 and ongoing	The procurement process recognises its duties under the Equality Act 2010, and demonstrates commitment through the use of the Supplier Qualification Information Database (SQulD) to ensure all potential contracts outline their ability to meet equalities requirements. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
17	Ensure the relevant Equality web pages of the Council website contain good quality, up-to-date equality information	2016/17 and on-going	The externally facing Council website is populated with up-to-date equality information, and includes links to the previous and current Strategic Equality Plans, as well as annual reviews on each plan. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>

17E	Ensure the relevant Equality web pages of school websites contain good quality, up-to-date equality information	2016/17 and on-going	This action is being carried forward to the 2017 – 2018 period and will be updated in the next annual report.
18	Monitor the Council Complaints and compliments procedure for equality issues	2016/20	Any equality specific Council complaints are received and dealt with effectively within the given Corporate Complaints framework. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
18E	Monitor school Complaints and compliments procedures for equality issues and report to the Governing Body and the Corporate Director.	Annually Autumn term for previous academic year beginning 2016	School based complaints managed in accordance with the agreed regional school complaints policy that is based on the WG model. Information on schools complaints policies are displayed on individual school's websites.
19	Assess customer services data collection methods to ensure relevant equality information being collected	2013/14 Note Change: 2016 - 2020	A full review of the data collected through relevant customer service methods will take place between 2017 and 2018. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>

Objective 2 - Be an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of, and understands the equality agenda

Ref.	Action	Timescale	Update
20	Develop databases to collect information across all protected characteristics	2016 / 18	<p>A database has been successfully established to collect and analyse protected characteristic specific data within an organisational context, where information is received and scrutinised quarterly. Further actions will be identified following the results of this annual report and will be presented in a new action plan.</p> <p><i>* This action is now closed and will lead to a new revised action.</i></p>
21	OD strategy - Ensure the Council's recruitment process collects the relevant equality information	2016-20	<p>The Council's recruitment process includes an equal opportunities section, which is reflective of relevant questions relating to each protected characteristic. Information is collected and analysed by each protected characteristic, which presents a picture of equality in the organisation.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
22	Identify and assess Council's Organisational Development Policies, Procedures and Functions for equality impact assessment	2016/20	<p>Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken on any policies under review identified by OD. A matrix is being developed to identify policy development and review to ensure a process of assessment for equalities takes place.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
22E	Identify and assess Schools' Organisational Development Policies, Procedures and Functions for equality impact assessment	2016/20	School's policies are held under organisational development and are usually reviewed alongside Council's policies. A similar approach for reviewing schools policies from an equalities perspective is utilised alongside the corporate process.
23	Update information from staff to help address	2016/18	The employee Wellbeing Group is the central point for reviewing the

	workforce equality issues by carrying out a staff questionnaire		wellbeing needs of staff within the organisation. This network meets quarterly to discuss any issues relating to the wellbeing of the wider workforce, inclusive of equality and diversity issues. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
23E	Update information from staff to help address workforce equality issues by carrying out a staff questionnaire on equality information	2016/18	The update for this action is reflective of the above action update (Ref.23). Teaching staff are included in the discussions of the wider staffing structure.
24	Developing, implementing and reviewing relevant equality focused Organisational Development policies and procedures	2016-20	Any equality specific policies and procedures that require review or development are done so in collaboration with OD and are discussed through the internal political and professional processes. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
25	Monitor recruitment and promotions process to ensure equality of opportunity	2016-20	Recruitment is monitored by protected characteristic to ensure equality of opportunity between protected groups is achieved. Through the annual reporting process, new actions have been identified in relation to categorising internal applicants and promotions by protected characteristics. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
26	Monitor training and workforce development to ensure equality of opportunity	2016-20	In all previous equality training and workforce development opportunities, the level of uptake is monitored to ensure equality of opportunity. Training and workforce development is encouraged throughout all Council departments, however, training opportunities and therefore monitoring has been minimal for this annual report due to the tenure of a SLA with Caerphilly Council. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
27	Monitor discipline and grievance policies to	2016-20	Information specific to disciplinary and grievances within the Council are

	ensure equality of opportunity		<p>monitored through OD by protected characteristic and any themes or discrepancies in the data analysis are reviewed and monitored. Grievances are monitored by complainant and a full breakdown by protected characteristic can be found in Appendix 4.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
28	Offer a range of generic equality and diversity training opportunities including intranet focused e-learning pool, seminars, training courses and conferences	2016-20	<p>Equality and diversity training and information sessions are offered to Blaenau Gwent staff, primarily through the Social Services workforce development and training programme. Blaenau Gwent also offers an online portal through which Councillors, Governors and inductees are able to access standardised training, all of which cover equalities.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
28E	Offer a range of generic equality and diversity training opportunities including intranet focused e-learning pool, seminars, training courses and conferences	2016-20	Professional development activities are organised by schools themselves in line with the needs identified in their individual school development plan. As such, schools commission their own training relevant to their needs and can be provided through a range of sources including but not limited to the commissioned school improvement service and corporate equality training officer
29	Encourage staff in specific roles to undergo equality and diversity training e.g. frontline staff, customer service staff, key policy makers	2016/2020	<p>Any available equality and diversity training is disseminated throughout the organisation's Workforce Development portal, as well as the CEN, to ensure staff from within different roles are encouraged to access training opportunities. Each attendee is asked to complete basic registration information for monitoring purposes.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
29E	Encourage staff in specific roles to	2016/20	Professional development activities are organised by schools

	undergo equality and diversity training e.g. frontline staff, customer service staff, key policy makers		themselves in line with the needs identified in their individual school development plan. As such, schools commission their own training relevant to their needs and can be provided through a range of sources including but not limited to the commissioned school improvement service and corporate equality training officer.
30	Promote and encourage attendance at specific equality courses offered by regional and national agencies and organisations e.g. Equality and Human Rights Commission and Welsh Government	2016-20	Information specific to regional and national training opportunities is shared to employees within the organisation on an ad hoc basis, those staff in specific roles and professions are encouraged to participate to increase their workforce development opportunities. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
31	Provide effective counselling support to staff	2016-20	Staff with equality specific queries and issues are supported effectively through the current Counselling services <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
31E	Provide effective counselling support to staff	2016-20	All schools purchase the OD Service Level Agreement (SLA) and have access to a range of policies. The Attendance Management Policy provides a framework for Headteacher and line managers to operate within. In addition, this policy includes access to a counselling service.
32	Proactively encourage staff with protected characteristics to become involved in equality forums	2016-20	There are currently no equality forums within the organisation, however this is an ongoing discussion within the staff Wellbeing group. Staff have access to all internal policies should they need to access support and information on equality issues. Further, the Council employs an Equalities Officer who provides support and guidance on equality issues where necessary. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>

32E	Proactively encourage schools to become involved in equality forums	2016-20	Similar to Ref. 32, school staff have access to all Council policies should they wish to access support and information on any matters relating to equality. Further, the Council employs an Equalities Officer should staff wish to discuss equality issues directly.
33	Investigate option to introduce an equality focused staff panel	2016-20	There is no update on this action, however this is an issue which will be addressed as a future discussion point on the staff and Wellbeing group. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
34	Carry out staff opinion surveys with staff on relevant equality and diversity issues	2017-19	Due to the proposed timeline, an update on this action will be provided within the next reporting cycle. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
34E	Carry out pupil opinion surveys on relevant equality and diversity issues	Annually commencing in Spring term 2017	Due to the proposed timeline, an update on this action will be provided within the next reporting cycle.

Objective 3 - Do our best to engage, support and protect those people in our community that need it the most

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Update</u>
35	Working with partners to promote the reporting of hate incidents e.g. implementation of Safer Wales project	2016/20	Data on hate crime is provided regionally through Victim Support and is disseminated via the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator. No data has been provided within this period, however any updates will be reported during the next annual reporting cycle. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
35E	Work with schools to promote the reporting of inclusion and safeguarding data through Inclusion and Safeguarding matrices.	2016/20	In line with the agreed Safeguarding protocol, schools are reminded at termly intervals to provide safeguarding information to the Directorate so that it can assure itself of the appropriateness of safeguarding arrangements.
36	Working with partners to offer training on tackling hate crime such as disability, race, homophobic, gender, age etc	2016-20	The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator works with Blaenau Gwent Council and relevant partners to identify any specific training needs. Victim Support provide regular Hate Crime information, and matters arising from any themes in the data are discussed on both a local authority and regional basis if necessary. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>

37	Continue to offer support services to the Gypsy Traveller Community in Blaenau Gwent	2016-20	<p>Blaenau Gwent Council employs a Gypsy and Traveller worker to support Traveller children and young people in mainstream education (P.21). An additional Gypsy and Traveller Support worker is also employed to work with the wider Traveller community including children, young people and their families in order to provide tailored support and provision.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
37E	Continue the development of the Gypsy Traveller Service to provide specialist support to the Gypsy Traveller Community in Blaenau Gwent.	2016/20	<p>Between 2016 and 2017, there were 46 Gypsy and Traveller students on roll across all 24 schools in Blaenau Gwent, 24 of which were male and a further 22 were female. For an update of the support provided to Traveller students during this period, see the main body of the report.</p>
38	Continued implementation of the Assisted Collections Policy for elderly and disabled members of the public	2016-20	<p>Assisted collection for elderly and disabled members of the public are offered through the Environment and Regeneration department, and is done so on an application basis. Community members undertake a brief assessment of need, and assisted collection is secured as a result, therefore reasonable adjustments are provided to community members deemed in need of additional support.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
39	Challenge bullying and harassment in schools	2016-20	<p>Each school has developed their own systems to identify and challenge bullying in their schools, which is coordinated through the authority's Anti-Bullying Strategy. Support is offered to schools on any equality related matters including issues with conflict and bullying. An anti-bullying focus group will be developed through the CEN and will be reported within the next annual reporting cycle.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>

39E	Continue to monitor, support and challenge bullying and harassment in schools through the use of Inclusion Matrix data and the development of the Anti-Bullying Strategy.	Termly	Support is offered to schools on any equality related matters including issues with conflict and bullying. An anti-bullying focus group will be developed through the CEN and will be reported next reporting cycle. There is no update for this action.
40	Work with partner organisations to provide a proactive service to vulnerable or under represented people and groups	2016/20	During the development of the Wellbeing Assessment and subsequent Wellbeing Plan, the PSB's Engagement group has undertaken wider consultation and engagement activities to inform the development of an accessible and proactive service for all community members, inclusive of people with protected characteristics. The plan is due to be published in May 2018, and annual progress will be provided thereafter. * This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis
40E	Work with Officers and/or partner organisations to provide an effective service to meet the needs of vulnerable learners	2016/20	There is no update for this action.
41E	Maintain, deliver and develop Youth Service programmes of work across the borough, to meet identified local and national need (2016/17) and beyond	2016/20	There is no update for this action.
42E	Continue to implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (NEETs) (2016/17) and beyond	2016/20	There is no update for this action.

43	Implement the Community Safety Partnership Domestic Abuse Action Plan – Support the Gwent VAWSVDA Action Plans – also roll out the Domestic Abuse National Training programme	2016/20	<p>Responsibility for the delivery of the Community Safety Partnership Domestic Abuse Action Plan was delegated to the Gwent Regional Violence Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategic board, who continue to meet the VAWDASV requirements including roll out of training.</p> <p>* This action is now closed and will lead to a new revised action.</p>
44	Support the work with Blaenau Gwent Domestic Abuse Service (BGDAS) – Continue to work closely with 3 rd Sector Service Providers i.e. Gwent Domestic Abuse Services and Hafan Cymru etc	2016/20	The update for this as above in Ref. 43. This action will be updated in the New Action Plan 2017-18.
45	Review the Workplace Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy	2017/19	This action will be carried forward to the next reporting cycle due to the required reporting timelines. A full update will be provided on the next annual reporting cycle.
46	Gather information on the barriers which prevent people from becoming involved with public service providers	2016/18	<p>Through the Public Service Board's Engagement group, a process of engagement and consultation has taken place with the wider community to explore any barriers in accessing local services, community members were also asked they would like local services shaped going forward to. The Wellbeing Plan will be published in May 2018 and will be inclusive of the results of the Blaenau Gwent We Want consultation process.</p> <p>* This action is now complete and therefore can be removed</p>

47	Encourage members of the public with protected characteristics to attend Council meetings	2016/20	Through Blaenau Gwent's Engagement group, a local Citizen's Panel has been developed to ensure an inclusive approach for community members to discuss and influence decisions surrounding Council matters. <i>An additional action will be developed moving forward 2017-18</i> <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
48	Working with local and regional partner organisations to explore innovative ways of encouraging people to become involved with the Council e.g. Stonewall Cymru, Diverse Cymru, Disability Wales	2017/19	This action will be carried forward to the next reporting cycle due to the required reporting timelines.
49	Engage with members of public with protected characteristics on how the Council does its business	2016/20	Blaenau Gwent Council continues to engage as widely as possible on relevant Council matters with members of the public, including equality specific groups. An example of some of the networks include, the Access 4 All Forum, through which people with disabilities are engaged, the 50+ Forum, as well as the Citizens Panel. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
50	Actively promote the Council 's complaints and compliments policy to members of public with protected characteristics	2016/20	Information on the Council's complaints and compliments policy can be found on the Council's website and is accessible to the wider community. Any complaints relevant to equality continues to be monitored through the process outlined within the policy. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>

51	Continue to support engagement events, e.g. Access 4 All Forum and 50+ Forum	2016/20	Support for both the Access 4 All and 50+ the Forum is ongoing and Blaenau Gwent Council continues to promote access to all members of the community. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
51E	Continue to support and develop Talk it Up – the Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum and Blaenau Gwent Grand School Council	2016/20	An update on the progress of the Youth Forum and Children’s Grand Council can be found in the main body of the report.
52	Actively promote the engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics	2016/20	The Citizens Panel offers an ideal platform for the engagement of community members who share protected characteristics. A range of engagement opportunities are provided through the panel to ensure inclusivity and proportionate engagement. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
53	Offer home visits to elderly or disabled people who are unable to visit the Civic Centre to access the Benefits service	2016/20	Elderly people are offered a home visiting service to support in any Benefits support needs through the Council. This system is being effectively maintained through the Council’s Resources Department. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
54	Use approved interpreters service to allow people with little or no English to communicate in the language of their choice	2016/20	A bank of language interpreters are available through the procurement framework, and are sourced when the need arises. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>

54E	Use approved interpreters to allow people with little or no English to communicate in the language of their choice	2016/20	There is no current update for this action.
55	Develop effective ways to ensure information is collected from people in appropriate and sensitive ways	2016-20	The Council continues to develop creative ways to collect equalities related information, whether internally or externally accepting that it cannot mandate people or its employees to disclose.
55E	Continue to develop ongoing and project work with GEMS on ethnic minorities in Blaenau Gwent, especially within the school environment	2016-20	Engagement with GEMS is part of an ongoing partnership arrangement which is supported through the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator and is built in to the Equality and Inclusion Grant framework. Project work with GEMS is developed on an ad hoc basis. There is nothing to report for this period.

Objective 4 - Promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities

<u>Ref.</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Timescale</u>	<u>Update</u>
56	Produce equality focused communication e.g. stories and articles for CONNECT magazine and the Council website	2016-20	Key equality events are promoted through the Council's Website as well as the Council's social media sites, including Facebook and Twitter. Blaenau Gwent Council also promotes its work to support consultation at the annual Pride festival through the Fyne Times magazine to suit a wider audience. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
56E	Produce equality focused communication e.g. school newsletters, website etc.	2016-20	The internally facing Managing Director Newsletter is shared with schools via the weekly bulletin. The school bulletin is further populated via officers request on specific equality issues, for example, Holocaust week.
57	Produce equality focused communication e.g. stories and articles for staff via Intranet and BG Issue	2016-20	Key equality events are promoted to staff via the internal communication process. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
58	Facilitate positive equality stories and articles for local and regional media and press	2016-20	Positive stories are shared, where possible through both internal and external communication platforms with the intention of raising the profile of the equalities agenda and facilitating conversations on relevant matters in order to advance equality and foster good relations between people with protected characteristics. These stories are shared and discussed among our equality specific forums. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
59	Research equality related campaigns and	2016-20	Blaenau Gwent Council, where possible, promotes the celebration of key

	promote appropriately. e.g. International Women's Day, Holocaust Week, UN International Day for Older People Celebration		International Celebration events including but not limited to Hate Crime Awareness week, White Ribbon Week etc. Blaenau Gwent Council plans to continue to support international equality events at a local level, with the aim of focusing on celebrating the equality of women. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
59E	Research equality related campaigns and promote appropriately. e.g. International Women's Day, Holocaust Week, UN International Day for Older People Celebration	2016-20	Holocaust Week is promoted across all school settings and compliments school's individual work on equality related matters as detailed in the main body of the report. For example, the work done around supporting the LGBT community within the school.
60	Work in partnership to provide equality and diversity awareness sessions within Blaenau Gwent School	2016-20	Blaenau Gwent Council supports schools in accessing appropriate services to deliver equality and diversity specific sessions reflecting any issues identified within the school environment. <i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i>
60E	Work in partnership to provide equality and diversity awareness sessions within Blaenau Gwent Schools	2016-20	There is no update for this action.
61	Utilise digital stories from Equality and Human Rights Commission (and others as appropriate) to raise awareness of diversity in Wales	2016-20	There is no current update for this action. <i>* The action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i>
62	Work with local and regional partners to	2016-20	The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator supports Blaenau Gwent

	promote community cohesion in Blaenau Gwent, building on Community Cohesion Strategy		<p>Council and provides ongoing support in the implementation of the Community Cohesion Strategy. The Coordinator represents the agenda on various partnership networks to ensure the ongoing review of the objectives and subsequent actions within the strategy.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis</i></p>
63	Communicate the intention of the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan to members of public, key stakeholders and partner organisations	2016/17	<p>Blaenau Gwent's SEP and subsequent action plan was presented to residents through its publishing on the Council website following a detailed process of consultation and engagement.</p> <p><i>* This action is now complete and therefore can be removed</i></p>
64	Proactively publish the equality information required as part of the Council specific duties e.g. Equality Impact Assessments, Staff information etc.	2016-20	<p>Information and outcomes resulting from Council's Equality Impact Assessments are published online through the strategic processes to demonstrate how the Council reached its decisions based on the assessment of potential impacts on any protected groups. This information as well as any other relevant information will continue to be published.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>
65	Investigate best practice approaches to challenge issues, such as engaging hard-to-reach groups, gathering information on specific protected characteristics e.g. Gender Reassignment	2016/17	<p>Best practice approaches are predominantly cited through the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which develops and publishes the most up to date research and good practice relating to Protected Characteristics. Items of significance are discussed through relevant partnership networks and forums to ensure Council functions are considered appropriately.</p> <p><i>* This action is relevant to future proposed actions under the SEP and however the priority is complete for this action and it can therefore be removed.</i></p>
66	Developing projects which encourage people	2017/18	<p>There are several individual networks representing people with protected</p>

	to get on together such as inter-generational, people from different religions, race, language sessions		<p>characteristics, as are their priorities within partnership arrangements to continue to build networks for different groups. Moving forward, the intention will be to encourage people representing relevant protected groups to merge and share ideas and experiences to produce a more cohesive and diverse forum.</p> <p><i>* This action is relevant to future proposed actions under the SEP and however the priority is complete for this action and it can therefore be removed.</i></p>
66E	Developing projects which encourage people to get on together such as inter-generational, people from different religions, race, language sessions	2017/18	There is no update for this action.
67	Support the Syrian Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programme	2016-20	<p>Blaenau Gwent Council continues to support the Syrian Refugee and Asylum Seeker Programme, through which two Syrian families were successfully resettled in the area. Ongoing support is being provided to the families via the programme.</p> <p><i>* This action is ongoing and will be reported on an annual basis.</i></p>

Appendix 6 – List of Equality Related Training

Age Awareness
Autism Awareness
Basic Skills Awareness
British Sign Language (BSL) Taster
BSL Introduction and Foundation level classes
Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness
Cultural Awareness
Deaf Awareness
Deafblind Awareness
Debt and Mental Health Awareness
Dementia Awareness
Disability Awareness
Disfigurement Awareness
Dyslexia Awareness
Easy-Read Awareness
Equality Act 2010 - Employment Law
Equality in Policy Development (Consultation, Engagement and Impact Assessments)
Equalities Awareness
Equalities Awareness for Private and Social Landlords
Financial Capability - Helping your clients
Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence
Gender Awareness
General Equalities Awareness
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Awareness
Hard of Hearing Awareness
Hate Crime Awareness
Human Trafficking Awareness
Importance of the Welsh language in Service Delivery (Language sensitivity, history, statistics etc)

Intergenerational Working Awareness
Involving Older People Awareness
Learning Disability Awareness
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Awareness
Modern Day Slavery Awareness
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness
Race Equality Awareness
Religious Awareness
Self-harm and Thoughts of Suicide in Young People
Sensory Loss Awareness
Sexual Orientation Awareness
Show Racism the Red Card Training
Sophie Lancaster Training (Respect and understanding of subcultures in our communities)
Transgender Awareness
Welfare Reform Act – Implications on Clients
Welsh Language Awareness
Welsh Language Standards – An Overview
Welsh Language - Taster Courses
Welsh Language - 30 week courses (Mynediad, Sylfaen, Canolradd, Uwch)
Welsh Language - One-day and Weekend Schools
Welsh Language - Magu Hyder (For Welsh speakers who lack confidence with their skills)
WRAP Awareness (Awareness of the Home Office's Prevent Agenda/Counter-terrorism)