

Blaenau Gwent Council

# Strategic Equality Plan

2016 - 2020



*“A more equal Wales”*



# **Blaenau Gwent Council**

# **Strategic Equality Plan**

## **2016 to 2020**

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# Foreword

We are pleased to present Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2016 to 2020.

The Council has a legal obligation to produce this plan under the Equality Act 2010. This Act places all anti-discrimination laws into one simplified and strengthened piece of legislation. This makes it easier for people to understand, and also easier for us to comply with.

This plan sets our 'Equality Objectives' for the next four years (2016 to 2020) and contains an action plan setting out what we intend to do to meet those objectives. It looks to build on all the good equality and diversity work carried out by the Council over recent years, particularly our first Equality Strategy.

The Equality Objectives we take forward in this plan will also be vital, to show how this Council is responding to the new legislation 'Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015'. This will be particularly important for the Wales' national Well-being Goals for 'a more equal Wales' and 'a Wales of cohesive communities'.

The Council is fully committed to deliver against this plan. To make sure we are delivering, we will continually monitor and scrutinise the plan as a key part of Council business, through integrating our actions into the business planning process. We will also report on our progress every year, in-line with the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010.

We wish to thank everyone who has been involved in the development of this Plan, including members of the public, staff, key stakeholders and partner organisations.



Councillor Stephen Thomas  
**Leader of the Council**



Stephen Gillingham  
**Lead Director/Head of Paid Service**

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## **Our Equality Objectives 2016 to 2020**

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

# Introduction

Over the last 50 years, the UK has had a wide variety of laws aimed at tackling equality issues such as equal pay, employment equality, disability discrimination, and race relations.

One unintentional outcome of this was an overly complicated legal framework for equality in the UK. As a consequence of this, the UK government passed an Act of Parliament in 2010, with the primary purpose of consolidating the complicated and numerous Acts and Regulations which formed the basis of equality law in the UK. This was the **Equality Act 2010**.

In 2016 equality is a key policy area in Wales, and is seen as a key area for public service bodies as they look to strengthen democracy and continually improve public services.

This was strengthened by the National Assembly for Wales in passing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This important, new legislation puts sustainable development at the heart of public service delivery in Wales.

One of the duties is that public service bodies in Wales have to work together to achieve seven national well-being goals. These seven goals are: A 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; and A globally responsible Wales.

Each public service body in Wales will need to establish objectives which outline how they will contribute to achieving these goals.

Also, in discharging their duties and functions public services need to take appropriate consideration of the impact of the decisions they will take for the present without comprising the needs of future generations.

It is the intention that this Strategic Equality Plan will play a crucial role in outlining how this Council will meet its requirements in contributing to making 'a more equal Wales'.

The new plan will follow the same approach used in our first 'all-in-one' Strategic Equality Plan 2012 to 2016, and will take an approach where the Council will continue to work with its partners, communities and citizens to make a difference.





# An Overview of Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent is located in South-East Wales. It is approximately 20 miles from Newport, and 30 miles from Cardiff, and directly south of the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The area is relatively small geographically, being at most 15 miles long, and 8 miles wide, and is the smallest of the Welsh local authorities in terms of land area, at about 10,900 hectares. The area is physically defined by high hillsides dividing the three main valleys. These valleys are home to towns and villages which seem to merge together into one. However, each community proudly maintains its own character and traditions. The five main towns and settlements are seen as Abertillery, Brynmawr, Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo and Blaina, and Tredegar.

## Providing an accurate statistical picture

It is widely recognised that there are significant challenges when it comes to collecting accurate information relating to equality and diversity, particularly for some protected characteristics e.g. Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment. The remainder of this section will present some relevant statistics to help establish an overall picture of equality and diversity in Blaenau Gwent. The information will be presented in such a way that it links closely to the **Protected Characteristics** defined by the Equality Act 2010.

## People

Blaenau Gwent is estimated to be home to around 69,700 people in 2014, making it one of the smallest Welsh local authorities in terms of population numbers. Even so, due to its relatively small geographical size, it has the 5th highest population density behind Cardiff, Newport, Torfaen and Caerphilly.

Population projections from the Office of National Statistics (mid-2011 based) suggest that compared to 2015 the population of Blaenau Gwent is

projected to decrease by 1.7% over 10 years and 5.6% over 20 years, although projections become less reliable over more extensive time periods. The projected population decrease in Blaenau Gwent is in contrast to a picture of projected increases in general across other regions of Wales. The population of Wales as a whole is projected to increase in population by 4.1% over the next 10 years and 6.7% over 20 years.

Although life expectancy is increasing in Blaenau Gwent, reduced birth rates and net outward migration (albeit modest) contribute to the projected downward trend over the next 20 years.

## Gender

As is the case across Wales and the rest of the UK, the 2014 mid-year estimates show that there are slightly more females (51%) than males (49%) in Blaenau Gwent. There is also little difference from the Welsh average when considering gender split across each of the key age bands, varying by no more than 2%.

## Age

Table 1 shows the Blaenau Gwent and Wales population broken down into key age bands. Analysis of the population by age band shows no significant differences from that of the Welsh average.

**Table 1: Blaenau Gwent and Wales population by key bands**

	Blaenau Gwent			Wales		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
<b>0 to 15</b>	6,230	6,018	12,248	284,608	270,233	554,841
<b>16 to 24</b>	3,953	4,026	7,979	190,822	179,452	370,274
<b>25 to 44</b>	8,583	8,707	17,290	367,922	370,554	738,476
<b>45 to 54</b>	9,297	9,475	18,772	398,449	415,249	813,698
<b>55 to 64</b>	3,762	3,908	7,670	164,338	174,110	338,448
<b>65 to 84</b>	1,974	2,248	4,222	88,498	108,935	197,433
<b>85 and over</b>	475	1,018	1,493	26,678	52,188	78,866
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,274</b>	<b>35,400</b>	<b>69,674</b>	<b>1,521,315</b>	<b>1,570,721</b>	<b>3,092,036</b>

## **Disability**

The 2011 Census showed that 28% of all people who live within Blaenau Gwent stated they had a limiting long-term health problem or illnesses, where day-to-day activities were limited. This was higher than the Wales average (23%), and was the 2nd highest level (behind Neath Port Talbot with 28%) in Wales.

In 2011 the Annual Population Survey showed that of Blaenau Gwent's population of working age (males aged 16-64 and females aged 16-59) an estimate of 3,100 people had a Physical Disability, 2,600 with Respiratory or Heart Problems and 1,400 with Long Standing or Progressive Illness. As well as this, 4,000 people had 'other' health problems such as Sensory Impairments and Learning Difficulties.

More recent statistics from the Annual Population Survey year ending 31st March 2013 showed that Blaenau Gwent continues to have above average levels of disability with a total of 25.4% of working age people being defined as disabled compared to 22.5% for Wales.

The latest available disability-related registration figures from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council show the following:

- Just over 100 children known to have a disability;
- Just over 600 people known to have a sensory impairment; (this includes visual impairment)
- Almost 450 people known to have a learning disability;
- Almost 5,000 people were registered for Blue Badges

These comparably high levels of disability in Blaenau Gwent means there are a high proportion of people claiming disability-related benefits, as shown below:

- 12.3% of working aged people in Blaenau Gwent claimed EAS or Incapacity Benefit, compared to 8.5% across Wales (May 2015).
- 9.5% of all people in Blaenau Gwent claimed Disability Living Allowance, compared to 7.0% across Wales (May 2015).

## **Race**

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%. In 2001 the percentage of people in Blaenau Gwent from minority ethnic groups was 1.8%, approximately 1,300 people, therefore, a notable increase from 2001 to 2011. Even so, Blaenau Gwent still has one of the lowest levels of people from minority ethnic groups in Wales.

Long term international migration statistics provide estimates of the number of usual residents moving in or out of the UK. This set of statistics is probably the one most quoted when discussing international migration. They include only those intending to change their place of usual residence for 12 months or more.

Figures from ONS reveal relatively small annual increases in the number of Long-Term International Inflow per 1,000 resident population in Blaenau Gwent since 2010. Small increments have been experienced since a 0.8 per 1,000 residents' inflow over 12 months to June 2010 up to 1.5 for the same period in 2014. This equates to an annual average international inflow of 1.2 per 1,000 residents locally compared to 4.5 per 1,000 residents across Wales. This inflow has been offset by a local average annual international outflow of 0.9 per 1,000 residents.

Over a longer term period of 10 years Blaenau Gwent has experienced an international inflow of 1,024 people and outflow 697 people. This is a net inflow of 327, or an average of 33 people each year.

Over the same 10 year period there were 1,379 National Insurance Number (NINo) Registrations in Blaenau Gwent from adult overseas nationals aged 16-64.

According to the Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Count conducted by local authorities in Wales, as of July 2015 there was one authorised gypsy traveller site in Blaenau Gwent and 20 residential occupied pitches.

However, Census 2011 figures suggest a wider spread of occupancy throughout the borough in varying accommodation types as there were 72 Gypsy or Irish Travellers living throughout the borough in 27 different output areas within 11 wards.

## **Religion and Belief**

The 2011 Census showed that half of people in Blaenau Gwent stated their religion to be Christian (50%), below the Welsh average of 59%. This has shown a notable decrease since the 2001 Census, with respective levels of 64.0% and 71.0%

Just over 1% of people in Blaenau Gwent stated that they were of another religion such as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish and Sikh.

Just over 41% of the Blaenau Gwent population stated they have no religion, 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. Table 2 provides details.

**Table 2: Religion in Blaenau Gwent, Census 2001**

	<b>People</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christian	44,973	49.9%
Buddhist	112	0.2%
Hindu	72	0.1%
Jewish	8	0.0%*
Muslim	179	0.3%
Sikh	39	0.1%
Any other religion	253	0.4%
No religion	28676	41.1%
Religion not stated	5670	8.1%
<b>All People</b>	<b>69,814</b>	

\* Less than 0.049%

Further analysis showed that people under 24 (56%) and people aged 25 to 49 (51%), were more likely to state they had 'no religion' than people aged 50 and over (20%).

### **Sexual Orientation**

Statistics on sexual orientation for Blaenau Gwent are not available with any level of accuracy. However, the Integrated Household Survey includes data on sexual identity for Wales on a calendar year basis. In 2014 this survey shows that in Wales, 93.9% of people identified as heterosexual or straight, 1.5% as gay/lesbian or bisexual, and 0.4% as 'other' while 1.1% of people did not answer this question (1.1% simply didn't respond and 3.0% didn't know or refused to answer the question, compared to 1.8% and 2.9% respectively in 2013). The results are similar to the results for the UK as a whole, though the non-response rate for Wales was lower than for the UK.

## **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

In Wales, in 2014 there were 67 civil partnerships. The highest levels in Wales were in 2006 - the year following the law changes, when there were 560 civil partnerships.

In Blaenau Gwent in 2014 there were 97 marriages and no civil partnerships.

## **Gender Reassignment**

As was the case in 2012, statistics on gender reassignment for Blaenau Gwent are not available. However, the Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) does suggest estimates for gender dysphoria, which is the medical term for the condition with which a person who has been assigned one gender (usually at birth on the basis of their sex), identifies as belonging to another gender, or does not conform with the gender role their respective society prescribes to them.

GIRES outline that a low estimate for the UK would be 8 people per 100,000, and a high estimate would be 21 people per 100,000. Taking this into account Blaenau Gwent would expect to have between **5 to 14 people** with Gender Dysphoria.

## **Other Relevant Statistics**

As well as the above equality specific statistics, Blaenau Gwent also experiences:

- High levels of unemployment and economic inactivity;
- Low levels of new businesses starting up;
- High levels of people depending on benefits;
- Low levels of qualifications;
- Below average educational achievement ;
- Lower than average life expectancy; and
- High levels of poor health.

# **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is one of 22 unitary authorities in Wales, which were formed in 1996 following the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994. The area was formerly part of Gwent County Council.

Blaenau Gwent is made up of 16 electoral wards which are represented by 42 members (councillors) who are elected every four years by the people of Blaenau Gwent. The Council operates a Cabinet system, which is led by the Leader of the Council. The cabinet is made up of eight executive portfolios and four scrutiny committees.

As of December 2015, there were 3,282 paid employees of the Council. Of these, 1,076 (27.3%) were male and 2,870 (72.7%) were female. This makes the Council the largest employer in Blaenau Gwent.

A corporate management team, consisting of the Lead Director/Head of Paid Service, Corporate Directors covering Social Services, Education, and the Environment, and the Chief Financial Officer lead on the strategic management of the Council's business.

The last Staff Opinion Survey carried out in 2014, which was completed by approximately one-quarter of staff, showed that of those completing the questionnaire, 36% were male and 64% were female; 8% were 16 to 24; 18% were 25 to 34 ; 56% were 35 to 54; and 16% were 55 and over.

Over 99% of the respondents indicated that their ethnic group was White (this includes, White British, White Irish and White Other).

The results showed that the vast majority of respondents considered their first language to be English (98%). The remainder either stated that their first language was Welsh (2%), they had another first language or that they were bilingual (Under 1%).



The Council's has a Corporate Improvement Plan, which sets out the organisations priorities over a four-year period, in-line with the Blaenau Gwent's Single Integrated Plan. The current Corporate Improvement Plan covers 2012 to 2017, and is reviewed and adapted on an annual basis.

### **Relevant Council Policies relating to Equality and Diversity**

The Strategic Equality Plan is not a stand-alone plan, it links closely to a number of key Council and Partnership strategies, plans policies and frameworks, such as the: -

- Single Integrated Plan
- Corporate Improvement Plan
- Strategy for Older People in Blaenau Gwent
- Welsh Language Scheme
- Corporate Performance Framework
- Organisational Development Policies, Procedures and Protocols

# **Equality Work in Blaenau Gwent**

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council has shown a commitment to equality and diversity work over the period of the previous Strategic Equality Plan (2012-2016) and for a long time before this. Below are some key areas of work which demonstrate the progress made.

## **Equality focused officers**

For a number of years the Council has had both an Equalities Officer and an Access Officer. This has ensured that the Council not only considers equality and diversity when developing strategies and policies and when planning and delivering its service, but also when ensuring that buildings and assets are accessible to people.

## **Strategies schemes, policies and procedures**

The Council has implemented and delivered a number of successful strategies, schemes, policies and procedures - some of these have been specifically focused on equality and others which have included equality as a key theme. Examples being:

- Welsh Language Schemes (1998, 2005, 2011).
- Corporate Linguistic Skills Strategy (2009)
- Corporate Race Relations Scheme (2001, 2009)
- Corporate Disability Strategy (2010)
- Learning Disability Strategy (2011) & Mental Health Strategy (2011)
- Organisational Development Policies such as the Adoption and Surrogacy Leave Policy (2015), Critical Illness and Working Guidelines (2013), Dignity at Work Policy (2015), and the Disabled Parking Policy for staff (2010)
- Partnership Strategies such as the Community Strategy (Making a difference) 2010 – 2030 ; and the Blaenau Gwent Single Integrated Plan (2013 to 2017).

## **Equality throughout our partnership planning**

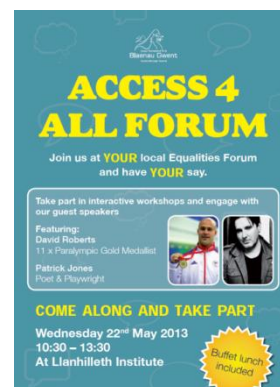
Equality was a central strand of the planning process for the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Partnership. The engagement and consultation events looked to encourage as many people as possible to participate. This included work through existing mechanisms such as the Access for All Forum, Youth Forum, Schools Council, Social Care and Older People Networks, as well as using social media such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

## **Equality Champion**

The Council has nominated an elected member as the Equality Champion in order to promote the equality agenda at political level across the Council.

## Engaging through equality networks

The Council has had a disability focussed network since 1996 which has evolved into the **Access 4 All Forum**. The Forum's fundamental aim is to engage with people of all protected characteristics in Blaenau Gwent with the purpose of raising awareness and empowering its members.



In the previous three years, every protected characteristic has been on the agenda accompanied by some wonderful and inspiring speakers, e.g. Stonewall Cymru, Mencap, The Office of the Older Person's Commissioner, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Paralympian Champion and multiple Gold Medal winner David Roberts CBE, Lama Rabasang (a Buddhist Monk), BG People First, Chwarae Teg and many others.

Access for All has been noted as an example of good practice by the Equality and Human Rights Commission and also by the Welsh Local Government Association in a publication entitled *Delivering Equality Outcomes: Establishing and maintaining effective corporate working groups*.

One-third of the population in Blaenau Gwent are children and young people. Blaenau Gwent has effective participation mechanisms, which include the '**Grand Children's Council**' and '**Talk it Up**' - the Youth Forum.

The **50+ Network** was set up in Blaenau Gwent to involve older people in issues and decisions that affect them. People involved in the 50+ Network played a key role in developing the Older People's Strategy for Blaenau Gwent.



The **Corporate Equality Network** acts as the overarching equalities and Welsh language group for the Council, with a purpose to ensure that the Council as a whole is able to meet both general and specific duties placed on it by the Equality Act 2010. The network is made up of key officers representing a range of departments/divisions of the Council with the responsibility of taking forward the equality agenda for the Council.

## Equality Impact Assessments



The Council has been undertaking **Equality Impact Assessments** (EQIA's) for several years, and has developed distinct toolkits to cater for our different needs e.g. policies, procedures and functions; service based assessments; and proposed financial saving decisions. The Corporate Equality Network has the overarching responsibility for overseeing the EQIA's produced.

Some fundamental improvements relating to EQIA between 2012 to 2016 have been the inclusion of the EQIA in to the business planning, the corporate reporting mechanism and all financial saving proposals, which are presented to the Council. This has been fundamental in improving the value of the EQIA given that proposals are often focussed around services provided to the public. It is crucial that all of our citizens are considered when decisions are being taken and the EQIA is there to support that decisions are taken with appropriate consideration to all protected characteristics.

## Equal pay

Following the completion of the Equal Pay project (associated to the Strategic Equality Plan 2012 to 2016), a new pay and grading structure was developed, using a country wide consistent job evaluation and pay modelling criteria. This also aligned the salaries of male and female dominated roles in order to remove any historical discrimination that may have been. New and amended roles continue to be Job Evaluated to ensure that this fairness continues.

## Organisational Development Policies

The Council is committed to be an employer that supports all members of staff. These policies protect staff in the workplace from colleagues and managers, in addition to unacceptable conduct by members of the public. This has been strengthened by the Council in 2015 adopting an Organisational Development Strategy with one of the key strategic themes of the strategy being **Equality and Diversity**.



## **Equality training and raising awareness**

The Council is committed to providing equality training to its workforce. We operate a Service Level Agreement with neighbouring Caerphilly County Borough Council's Equality Training Team to coordinate our equality and Welsh language courses. Courses are offered for any staff member to attend, or courses can be tailored as requested by departments when the need arises.

In recent years, courses have included Equality Impact Assessment Awareness, Equality Awareness, British Sign Language, Dignity at Work, Dementia Awareness, Welsh Language Awareness and a variety of others. The Service Level Agreement has allowed Council staff access to a wide range of established courses and training providers.

2015/16 saw almost 400 staff members attending training courses which demonstrates their value. Seminars have also been held for staff and/or elected members on matters such as Universal Credit, Personal Independent Payments, and Age Concern.

## **Working in partnership on equality issues**

In addition to the Service Level Agreement held with Caerphilly Council on equality training, the Council works with many other partner organisations. This can mean utilising the expertise of organisations such as Stonewall (LGBT), Mencap Cymru (Learning Disabilities) or Chwarae Teg (Gender) to support us, or working with other organisations on projects, pieces of work or events, e.g. Councils in Partnership hosting a stall at Pride Cymru, hosting courses/seminars across-boundaries etc.

Working in partnership has allowed us to push our boundaries further in terms of all of the protected characteristics in turn with providing services effectively and efficiently in light of recent austerity measures.

# Understanding our responsibilities



## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into operation on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2011. The Act replaced 116 previous different pieces of law relating to equality, and puts them all together into one piece of legislation. The Act strengthens the law in important ways, and in some respects extends current equality law to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Council, as a public body in Wales, has a requirement under the Act to meet both general and specific duties.

## Our General Duty

The **general duties** are that in exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to:

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

## Protected Characteristics

The general duty covers the same people that were covered by previous legislation, but strengthens and consolidates it into one Act. It introduced 'protected characteristics' which replaced phrases such as 'equalities strands'.



The protected characteristics – as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission are:

**Age** - A person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

**Sex** - A man or a woman.

**Gender reassignment** - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

**Disability** - A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

**Pregnancy and maternity** - The condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.

**Sexual orientation** - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

**Race** - This refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

**Religion or belief** (including lack of belief) - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

**Marriage and civil partnership** - Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. The Equality Act 2010 applies to this characteristic, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.



## **The Specific Duties in Wales**

The broad purpose of the specific duties is to help public bodies, such as the Council, in their performance of the general duty, and to aid transparency. In Wales the specific duties are set by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. Guidance on the Specific Duties to relevant bodies in Wales from the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Welsh Local Government Association outline the following specific duties:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Employment information, pay differences and staff training
- Procurement
- Reporting and Publishing

### **Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans**

The purpose of the objectives and plans is to enable the delivery of measurable equality outcomes which improve the lives of individuals and communities. The Council is required to develop and publish Equality Objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan. This is the second Strategic Equality Plan and will run between 2016-2020.

### **Engagement**

Understanding the diversity of the Blaenau Gwent population will allow the Council to shape service provision in the best way. The Council must carry out meaningful engagement, gathering relevant information when engaging people, and involve people who represent the interests of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and have an interest in the way that the Council carries out its functions.

## **Assessment of impact**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is carried out when a service, policy or practice is developed or being reviewed, and looks for evidence of adverse and positive impacts against people or groups from the nine protected characteristics. The Council must carry out Equality Impact Assessments on policies, procedures, functions, service delivery and financial savings proposals.

## **Equality information**

Strategic Equality Plans, Equality Objectives and Equality Impact Assessment, as prescribed by the Equality Act 2010, must be based on robust evidence. An important part of that relevant information will come from engagement with people who share protected characteristics. Engagement should take place early enough to influence the setting of priorities.

## **Employment information, pay differences and staff training**

The Council must collect extensive employment information which includes data on recruitment and retention, promotion, training opportunities, and grievance and disciplinary actions on an annual basis. This information must be collected for **each** of the protected characteristics. Data is also required with regard to male and female employees on job roles, pay and grading, contract type and working pattern. It is important to note that the Council cannot require an employee to disclose information in relation to the protected characteristics and should provide an 'unknown' or 'prefer not to say' category.

## **Procurement**

This specific duty applies when Councils are procuring works, goods or services from other organisations on the basis of a 'relevant agreement'. Relevant agreements include the award of a 'public contract' or the conclusion of a 'framework agreement' which are regulated by Public Sector Directive (Directive 2004/18/EC) / Public Contracts Regulations (2006).

The specific duty requires Councils to consider whether it would be appropriate to include specific stipulations relating to the general duty, in the award criteria and / or in conditions relating to the performance of a contract of this type.

## **Reporting and Publishing**

The Council must publish an Annual Equality Report in which it will detail how it has identified and collected relevant information, and utilised this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty.

The report will also contain a statement on the effectiveness of the authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting information and the reasons why any identified information has not been collected.

It will also give an update on how the Council is doing in relation to achieving its Equality objectives and the action plan and will also report on the employment information detailed above.

# **Developing the Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan**

## **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Approach**

To ensure the Council was prepared to meet its general duties and also its specific duty relating to equality objectives and a Strategic Equality Plan, the Council developed a specific action plan. This action plan contained all the key elements necessary for the Council to develop an equality plan including: research and training; establishing organisational buy-in through professional and political support; involvement and engagement to identify equality issues and priorities; drafting strategic objectives; formal consultation formal adoption; and monitoring and review.

Furthermore, the Corporate Equality Network continued act as the overarching equalities group to ensure that the Council as a whole is able to meet both general and specific duties placed upon it.

## **Gathering intelligence and developing a draft framework**

Key staff from the Council have undertaken desktop research into the Equality Act 2010 and each of the protected characteristics, as well as sourcing advice and guidance from relevant regional and national organisations such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

This included:

- Gathering briefing papers and guides on the Equality Act 2010
- Understanding each protected characteristic, by researching definitions, gathering statistical information - where available, and relevant information and stories.
- Regular attendance of the WLGA led Equality Officers Network and the South East Wales Equality Officers Network.

- A variety of equality courses and conferences including courses on the Specific Duties, Evidence Gathering, Impact Assessing, and Equality Championing; and
- On-going Elected Members Briefing Session on Equalities.
- Briefing sessions for strategic lead officers across the Council

By gathering relevant intelligence and building our professional understanding, the Council was able to develop a proposed framework for its equality objectives and this Strategic Equality Plan. The proposed framework was not overly prescriptive, but was developed to help stimulate thoughts and create discussions on the top equality issues facing Blaenau Gwent.

### **Involvement and Engagement**

A flagship Access for All and Older People's engagement event for key stakeholders, staff and interested parties was held on Thursday 1 October 2015. The aim was to launch the involvement and engagement activity the Council had planned to help shape the equality objectives and Strategic Equality Plan – Let's Talk about Equality and Diversity. The Event also celebrated The United Nations International Day of Older Persons in Blaenau Gwent.

This flagship event was also supported by a six week open engagement process through October and November 2015, where participants were encouraged to outline what equality and diversity issues were important to them and what they would like to see in the council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020. This was carried out via an open bilingual consultation (electronic and paper based) which was also publicised through council network, key groups and networks.

Following this process a draft Strategic Equality Plan was developed for formal consultation.

### **Formal Consultation on the Equality Objectives and the Proposed Approach for the Strategic Equality Plan**

The assessment of our previous Strategic Equality Plan (2012-2016), and feedback from engagement activity were used to develop a proposed approach for the Council's Strategic Equality Plan.

The proposed approach, including the equality objectives were released for formal consultation for a four week period from Monday 18 January 2016 to Monday 15 February 2016.

The bilingual consultation set out the proposed approach and asked members of the public, key stakeholders and partner organisations a set of closed and open questions.

All respondents either **strongly agreed** (11%) or **agreed** (89%) with the proposed approach set out, and all the respondents either **strongly agreed** (11%) or **agreed** (89%) with the four draft equality objectives suggested.

Constructive written responses were received via the open questions. All the information received was considered, and where appropriate this has been used to improve the document.

The consultation process looked specifically for key and consistent messages; therefore not all the comments have been included as part of this document. A key recurring theme was the importance of engagement and of engaging with everyone/all protected characteristics. This has led to some of our actions changing as a consequence.

Additionally, this Strategic Equality Plan has been aligned with the Organisational Development Strategy and Education Equality Objectives. This way all actions are incorporated in to this one overarching Equality Plan.

The proposed approach and equality objectives were presented to the Corporate Overview Scrutiny Committee of the Council on Monday 15 February 2016. There was overall support, and a recommendation for the Council's Executive to approve the approach and equality objectives.

## **Approach for this Strategic Equality Plan 2016 to 2020**

### **Explaining the Approach**

This approach provides the framework for the Council to deliver against its Strategic Equality Plan 2016 to 2020. It focuses around 4 key equality objectives, all of which have been developed through engagement with members of the public, key stakeholders and partner organisations. This builds on the previous plan, in that it follows the same structure and framework, which also includes an overarching action plan for 2016 to 2020 – which will be reviewed annually.

### **'Thematic not 'specific' equality objectives**

The Council **will continue in not having** an equality objective for each of the 'protected characteristics'. The reason for this is that it is clear that many of the key issues were not isolated to one specific protected characteristic. Also, by isolating actions to specific equality objectives, the plan might not capture the wide variety of equality activity which the Council continues to work on.

However, to ensure that the Council is able to continue to monitor and review its progress against each protected characteristic, an action plan has been developed and each action states which of the protected characteristics it impacts on. This will allow for the Council to be able to effectively understand the progress it has made for each protected characteristic and, as part of an annual review, make any new actions for the following year.



## **What we want to achieve – Our Outcome**

The Council is committed to working with its partners, communities and citizens to contribute to the national well-being goals. We want to support the equality agenda in Wales and **help** to achieve:

*“A more equal Wales”*

The approach we take will also help contribute to the other six national well-being goals.

## **What we need to do to help achieve the outcome – Our Aims**

The Council is committed to meeting the general duties set within the Equality Act 2010 and, as a consequence, we will aim to continue to work towards:

- 1. Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisations*
- 2. Advancing equality of opportunity*
- 3. Encouraging good relations*

## **How we intend to achieve our aims – Our Equality Objectives**

The Council intends to work towards these aims collectively through our ‘Equality Objectives’, which we have a specific duty to develop under the Equality Act 2010. Our Equality Objectives from 2016 will be to:

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

## **Equality Objective One - *Make equality vital in decision making and service provision***

This equality objective contributes to the Council delivering against the following of its specific duties:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Employment Information, pay differences and staff training

### **Examples of the projects and activities that will help to deliver this objective**

This is not meant to be a complete list, but just gives an idea of some of the things that will help us achieve this strategic objective:

- Set effective strategic plans, policies and procedures;
- Strengthen Equality Leadership;
- Champion the Equality Agenda both politically and professionally;
- Carry out primary and secondary research and analysis to gain a better understanding of equality issues;
- Evaluate the results of equality work, and other work which impacts on equality;
- Equality Impact Assessments processes for policy development and review, service review, corporate reporting and financial efficiency projects
- Equality and Diversity in the Council's Performance Management Framework, including Business Planning processes.
- Work in partnership with key stakeholders and interested parties on a local, regional and national level to be more efficient and effective

- Engage people from across each of the protected characteristics in engagement events which help shape the Council's decision-making processes.
- Proactively promoting the involvement of people from protected characteristics to participate in consultation and engagement activity.
- Ensure equality and diversity is effectively mainstreamed into the business of Blaenau Gwent Strategic Partnership.
- Continue to implement the principles of the Equal Pay project, where new and amended roles continue to be Job Evaluated ensuring fairness continues.

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

This equality objective contributes to the Council delivering against the following of its specific duties:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Employment information, pay differences and staff training
- Reporting and Publishing

## **Examples of the projects and activities that will help to deliver this objective**

This is not meant to be a complete list, but just gives an idea of some of the things that will help us achieve this strategic objective:

- Collecting quality information that allows us to understand the needs of our staff and address workforce equality issues;
- Developing, implementing and reviewing relevant Organisational development policies and procedures
- Offering training opportunities;
- Actively encouraging officers in specific roles to undergo equality and diversity training;
- Continue to deliver and strengthen equality of opportunity in our recruitment process;
- Effectively monitor our promotion, training, discipline and grievance procedures to ensure equality of opportunity;
- provide counselling support to staff;
- Providing timely Occupational Health Services to staff where appropriate
- Ensure staff have the opportunity to share their views on equality issues
- Maintaining 'Equal Opportunity Employer' status
- Encouraging staff to actively participate in the Access for All Forum

### **Equality Objective Three - *Do our best engage, protect and support those people in our community that need it the most***

This equality objective contributes to us delivering the following specific objectives:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Procurement
- Reporting and Publishing

## **Examples of the projects and activities that will help to deliver this objective**

This is not meant to be a complete list, but just gives an idea of some of the things that will help us achieve this strategic objective:

- Working with partners to offer training on tackling hate crime such as disability, race, homophobic, gender, age etc
- Support the development of strategies, plans and services to tackle specific issues such as learning disability, mental health, frailty and dementia etc
- Working with partners to promote the reporting of hate incidents
- Offering appropriate support to carers who play a vital role in looking after vulnerable people, by engaging in the Carers Forum;
- Providing specialist support and services to the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Working with partner organisations to provide a proactive services to vulnerable or under represented people and groups
- Working to challenge bullying and harassment in schools and our communities;
- Working with partners to develop a solution to young people Not in Employment, Education, or Training (NEETS);
- Continuing to develop work programmes to challenge and tackle Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence
- Provide home safety and fire safety services to vulnerable victims of crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic violence
- Protect, support and empower those who are vulnerable to exploitation by those involved in supporting violent extremism or terrorism

- Protect, support and empower those who are vulnerable to human trafficking and modern slavery
- Provide training to public sector and third sector partners on Preventing Violent Extremism and Modern Slavery



## **Equality Objective Four**

### **Promote understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities**

This equality objective contributes to us delivering the following specific objectives:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Procurement
- Reporting and Publishing

#### **Examples of the projects and activities that will help to deliver this objective:**

This is not meant to be a complete list, but just gives an idea of some of the things that will help us achieve this strategic objective:

- Actively communicating the Council's plans for equality to promote the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act 2010;
- Raising awareness and understanding of relevant equality issues by communicating with staff and the public through available media;
- Looking for best practice approaches to challenging issues, such as engaging hard-to-reach groups, gathering information on specific protected characteristics e.g. Gender Reassignment;
- Look for opportunities to utilise targeted campaigns on important and relevant equality issues e.g. equality week, specific religious events;
- Continue to work with schools to offer appropriate learning opportunities around relevant equality and diversity issues;

- Developing projects which encourage people to get on together such as inter-generational, people from different religions, race, language sessions
- Utilising the Access 4 All Forum to continue to champion the rights of people across the protected characteristics
- Provide training to council employees to raise awareness on the differences between migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees i.e. Introduction to Modern Slavery, Working With Asylum Seekers and Refugees etc
- Support the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme
- Working in partnership to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Raising awareness of citizenship and civil ceremonies carried out in Blaenau Gwent

Blaenau Gwent

# Strategic Equality Plan

2016 - 2020

## Action Plan



*Blaenau Gwent is a fair and inclusive  
place to live, work and visit.*



How this action plan is set out

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Ref No	Action	Timescale	Responsibility	Impact on Protected Characteristics			
				S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Understanding the Acronyms

S = Sex  
A = Age  
D = Disability  
R = Race  
R&B = Religion and Belief

SO = Sexual Orientation  
GR = Gender Reassignment  
M & CP = Marriage and Civil Partnership  
P & M = Pregnancy and Maternity  
W = Welsh Language

# Equality Objective One

## Make equality vital in decision making and service provision



Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
1	Advise and guide Council staff on equality issues as required	2016/20	Policy & Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
1E	Advise and guide School based staff on equality issues as required	2016/20	Education	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
2	Promote the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives	2016/17	Policy & Research, Strat Business Unit Corporate Equality Network Equality Champion	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
2E	Promote the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives in schools 46	2016/17	Education	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

3	Annual reviews of progress against Strategic Equality Plan and related Action Plan	March/April 2016; March/April 2017; March/April 2018; March/April 2019	Policy & Research, Strategic Business Unit Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
3E	Annual reviews of progress against individual School Strategic Equality Plans and related Action Plans	July 2016 thereafter annually	Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
4	Report on progress of Strategic Equality Plan through Council political and professional structures	Annually	Policy & Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
4E	Report on progress of School Strategic Equality Plan through individual Governing Bodies	Annually – Autumn term	Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
5	Hold Elected Member Briefing Session on relevant equality topic	Minimum one session held in 2017/18	Policy & Research, Strategic Business Unit Democratic Services, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
6	Promote equality agenda through Blaenau Gwent Local Service Board Strategic Partnership structure – subject to partnership rationalisation	2016/20	Head of Policy, Performance and Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
7	Work with Blaenau Gwent partner organisations to raise profile of equality agenda, and develop understanding of partner contributions	2016/20	Policy & Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
7E	<b>Work with individual school communities to raise the profile of the equality agenda, and develop understanding</b>	2016/20	<b>Schools</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
8	Develop the role and work programme for the Elected Member Equality Champion	2016/20	Elected Member Equality Champion Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
8E	<b>Establish the role and work programme for Equality link governor in schools</b>	2016/20	<b>EAS Governor Support &amp; Schools</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓



Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
9	Corporate Equality Network Members to champion equality agenda across the Council	2016/20	Corporate Equality Network Members	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
10	Utilise research and statistical sources to help build a better picture of equality	2016/17 2018/19	Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
11	Undertake research on specific protected characteristics to improve understanding	2016/20	Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
12	Work with partners to improve data and information on equality and diversity	2016/19	Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
13	Utilise research and statistics in carrying out Equality Impact Assessments	2016/20	All Council Departments	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
13E	Utilise research and statistics in carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for school population	Annually in autumn term commencing 2016	Performance team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
14	Evaluate the effectiveness of the equality training programme	2016 - 20	Policy and Research, Workforce Development Training specialist across Council	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
14E	Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the governor training programme regarding equality issues	Autumn term 2016 and then annually thereafter	EAS Governor Support	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
15	Review the Equality Impact Assessment Framework	June 2016 / Dec 16	Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
16	Ensure that the procurement process takes into account Equality considerations	2016/17	Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit Procurement Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
17	Ensure the relevant Equality web pages of the Council website contain good quality, up-to-date equality information	2016/17 and on-going	Policy and Research, Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
17E	Ensure the relevant Equality web pages of school websites contain good quality, up-to-date equality information	2016/17 and on-going	Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
18	Monitor the Council Complaints and compliments procedure for equality issues	2016/20	Policy and Research, Corp Support Mgr Department Lead Officers Policy Team Leader	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
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	Schools Education ? who	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
19	Assess customer services data collection methods to ensure relevant equality information being collected	2013/14	Policy and Research Customer Service Lead Officer	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

## Equality Objective Two

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



Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
20	Develop databases to collect information across all protected characteristics	2016 / 18	Strategic Business Unit Finance Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
21	OD strategy - Ensure the Council's recruitment process collects the relevant equality information	2016-20	Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
22	Identify and assess Council's Organisational Development Policies, Procedures and Functions for equality impact assessment	2016/20	Equality Officer  Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
22E	<b>Identify and assess Schools' Organisational Development Policies, Procedures and Functions for equality impact assessment</b>	2016/20	<b>HR Strategic Headteachers' Group</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
23	Update information from staff to help address workforce equality issues by carrying out a staff questionnaire	2016/18	Organisational Development Policy & Research Wider CMT	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
23E	Update information from staff to help address workforce equality issues by carrying out a staff questionnaire on equality information	2016/18	Education & Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
24	Developing, implementing and reviewing relevant equality focused Organisational Development policies and procedures	2016-20	Policy Team Leader Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
25	Monitor recruitment and promotions process to ensure equality of opportunity	2016-20	Equality Officer Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
26	Monitor training and workforce development to ensure equality of opportunity	2016-20	Equality Officer Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
27	Monitor discipline and grievance policies to ensure equality of opportunity	2016-20	Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
28	Offer a range of generic equality and diversity training opportunities including intranet focused e-learning pool, seminars, training courses and conferences	2016-20	Policy & Research Workforce Development Manager Department Training Officers	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
28E	<b>Offer a range of generic equality and diversity training opportunities including intranet focused e-learning pool, seminars, training courses and conferences</b>	2016-20	<b>Organisational Development Schools</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
29	Encourage staff in specific roles to undergo equality and diversity training e.g. frontline staff, customer service staff, key policy makers	2016/2020	Policy & Research Wider SMT Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
29E	<b>Encourage staff in specific roles to undergo equality and diversity training e.g. frontline staff, customer service staff, key policy makers</b>	2016/20	<b>Schools</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

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	Equality Officer Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
31	Provide effective counselling support to staff	2016-20	Organisational Development	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
31E	Provide effective counselling support to staff	2016-20	<b>Schools to access through Organisational Development</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
32	Proactively encourage staff with protected characteristics to become involved in equality forums	2016-20	Policy & Research Corporate Equality Network Wider Senior Management Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓



Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
32E	Proactively encourage schools to become involved in equality forums	2016-20	Education and Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
33	Investigate option to introduce an equality focused staff panel	2016-20	Policy & Research Organisational Development Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
34	Carry out staff opinion surveys with staff on relevant equality and diversity issues	2017-19	Policy & Research Organisational Development Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
34E	Carry out pupil opinion surveys on relevant equality and diversity issues	Annually commencing in Spring term 2017	Engagement Team Lead & Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓



## Equality Objective Three

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

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
35	Working with partners to promote the reporting of hate incidents e.g. implementation of Safer Wales project	2016/20	Equality Officer Community Cohesion Partners Policy Team Leader	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
35E	<b>Work with schools to promote the reporting of inclusion and safeguarding data through Inclusion and Safeguarding matrices.</b>	2016/20	<b>Lead Officer for Inclusion Safeguarding Manager</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
36	Working with partners to offer training on tackling hate crime such as disability, race, homophobic, gender, age etc	2016-20	Policy & Research Community Cohesion Partners Policy Team Leader	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
37	Continue to offer support services to the Gypsy Traveller Community in Blaenau Gwent	2016-20	Policy Team Leader Education Gypsy and Traveller Working Group	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
37E	<b>Continue the development of the Gypsy Traveller Service to provide specialist support to the Gypsy Traveller Community in Blaenau Gwent.</b>	2016/20	<b>Gypsy Traveller Service Officer</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
38	Continued implementation of the Assisted Collections Policy for elderly and disabled members of the public	2016-20	Environment	S	✓	SO	
				A	✓	GR	
				D	✓	M & CP	
				R		P & M	
				R&B		W	
39	Challenge bullying and harassment in schools	2016-20	Education	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
39E	<b>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.</b>	Termly	<b>Lead Officer for Inclusion</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
40	Work with partner organisations to provide a proactive service to vulnerable or under represented people and group	2016/20	All Council	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
40E	<b>Work with Officers and/or partner organisations to provide an effective service to meet the needs of vulnerable learners</b>	2016/20	<b>Lead Officer for Inclusion, EAS and Schools</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
41E	<b>Maintain, deliver and develop Youth Service programmes of work across the borough, to meet identified local and national need (2016/17) and beyond</b>	2016/20	<b>Youth Service Manager</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	
42E	<b>Continue to implement the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (NEETs) (2016/17) and beyond</b>	2016/20	<b>Youth Service Manager</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	
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	Policy Team Leader Social Services	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
44	Support the work with Blaenau Gwent Domestic Abuse Service (BGDAS) – Continue to work closely with 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector Service Providers i.e. Gwent Domestic Abuse Services and Hafan Cymru etc	2016/20	All Council Policy Team Leader	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	
45	Review the Workplace Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy	2017/19	Organisational Development Policy Team Leader , Social Services	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	
46	Gather information on the barriers which prevent people from becoming involved with public service providers	2016/18	Engagement Team Lead Equality Officer	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
47	Encourage members of the public with protected characteristics to attend Council meetings	2016/20	Strategic Business Unit	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
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	Policy & Research	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
49	Engage with members of public with protected characteristics on how the Council does its business	2016/20	Strategic Business Unit Finance	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
50	Actively promote the Council 's complaints and compliments policy to members of public with protected characteristics	2016/20	Equality Officer Corporate Support Manager Department Complaints Leads	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
51	Continue to support engagement events, e.g. Access 4 All Forum and 50+ Forum	2016/20	Strategic Business Unit Social Services	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
51E	<b>Continue to support and develop Talk it Up – the Blaenau Gwent Youth Forum and Blaenau Gwent Grand School Council</b>	2016/20	<b>Engagement Team Lead</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
52	Actively promote the engagement opportunities aimed at members of public who share protected characteristics	2016/20	Policy & Research Partner organisations	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
53	Offer home visits to elderly or disabled people who are unable to visit the Civic Centre to access the Benefits service	2016/20	Resources	S		SO	
				A	✓	GR	
				D	✓	M & CP	
				R		P & M	✓
				R&B		W	
54	Use approved interpreters service to allow people with little or no English to communicate in the language of their choice	2016/20	All Council	S		SO	
				A		GR	
				D		M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	
				R&B		W	✓
54E	<b>Use approved interpreters to allow people with little or no English to communicate in the language of their choice</b>	2016/20	<b>Education</b>	S		SO	
				A		GR	
				D		M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	
				R&B		W	✓
55	Develop effective ways to ensure information is collected from people in appropriate and sensitive ways	2016-20	Policy & Research Organisational Development Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
55E	Continue to develop ongoing and project work with GEMS on ethnic minorities in Blaenau Gwent, especially within the school environment	2016-20	Education Policy and Research	S		SO	
				A	✓	GR	
				D	✓	M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	
				R&B	✓	W	





## Equality Objective Four

### Promoting understanding and acceptance of diversity within our communities

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
56	Produce equality focused communication e.g. stories and articles for CONNECT magazine and the Council website	2016-20	Equality Officer Communication Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
56E	Produce equality focused communication e.g. school newsletters, website etc.	2016-20	Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
57	Produce equality focused communication e.g. stories and articles for staff via Intranet and BG Issue	2016-20	Equality Officer Communication Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
58	Facilitate positive equality stories and articles for local and regional media and press	2016-20	Equality Officer Communication Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
59	Research equality related campaigns and promote appropriately. e.g. International Women's Day, Holocaust Week, UN International Day for Older People Celebration	2016-20	Equality Officer Communication Team Corporate Equality Network	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
59E	<b>Research equality related campaigns and promote appropriately. e.g. International Women's Day, Holocaust Week, UN International Day for Older People Celebration</b>	2016-20	<b>Schools Education</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
60	Work in partnership to provide equality and diversity awareness sessions within Blaenau Gwent School	2016-20	Equality Officer Education Blaenau Gwent Schools	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
60E	<b>Work in partnership to provide equality and diversity awareness sessions within Blaenau Gwent Schools</b>	2016-20	<b>Education Blaenau Gwent Schools</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
61	Utilise digital stories from Equality and Human Rights Commission (and others as appropriate) to raise awareness of diversity in Wales	2016-/20	Policy & Research	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
62	Work with local and regional partners to promote community cohesion in Blaenau Gwent, building on Community Cohesion Strategy	2016-20	Policy & Research GAVO Community Cohesion Partners	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
63	Communicate the intention of the Blaenau Gwent Strategic Equality Plan to members of public, key stakeholders and partner organisations	2016/17	Policy & Research Communication Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
64	Proactively publish the equality information required as part of the Council specific duties e.g. Equality Impact Assessments, Staff information etc.	2016-20	Policy & Research Organisational Development Communication Team	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
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	Policy & Research	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓

Ref No.	What are we going to do?	What is the timeframe?	Who will lead in making it happen?	Considered Impact on Protected Characteristics			
66	Developing projects which encourage people to get on together such as inter-generational, people from different religions, race, language sessions	2017/18	Policy & Research Community Cohesion Partners Policy Team Leader	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
66E	Developing projects which encourage people to get on together such as inter-generational, people from different religions, race, language sessions	2017/18	<b>Schools Policy &amp; Research Community Cohesion Partners Policy Team Leader</b>	S	✓	SO	✓
				A	✓	GR	✓
				D	✓	M & CP	✓
				R	✓	P & M	✓
				R&B	✓	W	✓
67	Support the Syrian Refuge and Asylum Seeker Programme	2016-20	Policy & Research Community Cohesion Education	S	✓	SO	
				A	✓	GR	
				D		M & CP	
				R	✓	P & M	
				R&B	✓	W	