

POLICY & RESOURCES CABINET BOARD

4TH SEPTEMBER 2008

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES –
G. JONES**

INDEX OF REPORT ITEMS

PART 1 – Doc.Code: PRB-040908-REP-CE-GJ

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ANNUAL HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT – 2007/2008

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with a summary of Health and Safety performance during the 12 months ended 31st March 2008.

2. Background

- 2.1 Enclosed herewith for Members' consideration is an annual Health and Safety Report for 2007/2008.
- 2.2 The report has been circulated at officer level within the Authority and was also submitted to a recent meeting of the Authority's Staff Council.
- 2.3 The report reflects the year on year improvements being made by the Council in terms of Health and safety performance. However, as always, further improvements are being continually pursued.

3. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Report be **NOTED**.

FOR INFORMATION

4. List of Background Papers

- 4.1 None

5. Wards Affected

- 5.1 All

6. Officer Contact

- 6.1 For further information, please contact Graham Jones, Head of Human Resources on 01639 763315 (e-mail g.jones@npt.gov.uk).

Or

Shaun Burgess, Corporate Health and Safety Manager on telephone: 01639 861936 (e-mail s.a.burgess@npt.gov.uk).

7. **Appendix 1**

7.1 Annual Health & Safety Report – 2007/2008.

Health and Safety Annual Report

2007 - 2008



OHS 508155

Committed to providing a safer working environment

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1.0 Introduction

The intention of this annual report is to provide an overview of specific projects undertaken by the Corporate Health and Safety Section (CHSS) and to reflect on the health and safety performance of the Authority for 2007/08.

The Section forms part of the Chief Executive's Office and is currently located in Cymric House, Port Talbot.

It provides the Authority with a full range of health and safety services including the role of Construction Design and Management Co-ordinator to all Services inclusive of Schools.

In order to maintain the best possible level of service delivery, CHSS will continue to make improvements in efficiency in line with the Authority's aims and objectives.

Over the past few years the Council has committed a significant amount of time and resource towards developing a comprehensive health and safety Management System that includes both practical policies and supporting guidance.

This commitment has been used to good effect in the provision of a safer working environment for employees, stakeholders and service users. This

is demonstrated by the reduction in total accidents over the last two years.

The Council recognises that people are its key resource and their health and safety is of great importance if we are to maintain the process of continual improvement.

It is about laying the foundations now for a safety culture that will be robust enough to meet the future demands placed upon the Authority.

2.0 Corporate Health and Safety Section

The challenge that originally faced the Corporate Health and Safety Section (CHSS) at the beginning of February 2006 was to develop a strategy that was neither biased nor isolated from the practicalities of the front-line services.

To date these challenges have now started to be achieved.

The Authority continues to invest significant funding in developing and maintaining a safer place to work.

The Health and Safety Section is staffed by 1 Manager, 1 Manual Handling Advisor, 4.6 Health and Safety Officers, 1 CDM coordinator, 1 Trainee Officer, 1 Administration Officer and 2 Clerical Assistants who cover the whole authority inclusive of Schools.

Unfortunately there was a resignation earlier this year where one of the officers was offered an opportunity to pursue his life long ambition of becoming a commercial airline pilot.

This post was temporarily filled for a period of eight weeks, but a permanent post holder is now in place. This position was filled through the Authority's re-deployment scheme and the individual has already started the process of gaining formal qualifications in health and safety.

As a result of such recruitment, we are now able to provide a wide diversity of skills that has actively encouraged complementary team dynamics and provided the Authority with a wealth of experience.

The benefits are far reaching with the section constantly looking to introduce new ideas and new working practices which allow both pragmatism and flexibility to the Authority.

3.0 Progress towards OHSAS 18001

This section provides an update on the Authority's progress towards achieving the Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series 18001 (OHSAS 18001)¹ across the whole Authority.

In last years annual report it was stated that NPTCBC were moving towards gaining the internationally recognised OHSAS 18001 management system specification.

The progress towards registration has been swift and has resulted in NPTCBC becoming the first local Authority within the UK to achieve OHSAS 18001 registration with BSI.

The route towards registration followed a number of independent BSI audits over the preceding two years that included 47 audit days throughout all Services inclusive of Schools.

This was achieved on a phased basis starting with the Chief Executive's Office and Finance and Corporate Services, followed by the Environment, Education and Life Long Learning Services and finally Social Services Health and Housing.

¹ *OHSAS 18001 is an internationally recognised safety management system that is based on a process of continual improvement and subject to an external audit process by a UKAS registered organisation.*

Pleasingly, our Schools have also embraced this process with very positive results.

The 18001 Health and Safety Standard recognises that the Council:

- Promotes a Safer and Healthier working environment;
- Meets the stringent standards set by BSI;
- Has the necessary Health and Safety management arrangements in place to achieve further improvement.

The benefits to the Council are a safer working environment for all our employees and also a safer community for everyone who accesses our services.

Registration to 18001 is a significant achievement given the strict time frame and it is to the credit of the Members, managers and staff within this Authority in their willingness to actively embrace change with a positive attitude.

It should be noted that whilst the last two years has seen a considerable improvement in the management of Health and Safety within this

Authority, it is by no means a guarantee of future success; neither does it mean that the Council has no Health and Safety issues.

our Health and Safety management arrangements are robust enough to facilitate year on year improvements.

It does mean however that minimum standards are being achieved and that



 **Certificate of Registration**

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This is to certify that:

Neath & Port Talbot County Borough Council
Occupational Health & Safety Section
Civic Centre
Penllergaer
Swansea
SA4 9GH
United Kingdom

TM

HSI

Holds Certificate No: OHS 508155 and operates an Occupational Health and Safety Management System which complies with the requirements of OHSAS 18001:1999 for the following scope:

The provision of services of the Chief Executive Directorate, Finance and Corporate Services Directorate, the Environment Directorate, the Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate and Social Services Health and Housing Directorate to the community and citizens of Neath and Port Talbot County Borough Council.

For and on behalf of BSI:


Head of Compliance & Risk (UK)

Originally registered: 07/12/2006 Latest Issue: 04/12/2007 Expiry Date: 07/02/2010

Page: 1 of 1

This certificate was issued electronically and remains the property of BSI and is bound by the conditions of contract. An electronic certificate can be authenticated [online](#). Printed copies can be validated at www.bsi-global.com/ClientDirectory

The British Standards Institution is incorporated by Royal Charter. Management Systems (UK) Headquarters: P.O. Box 9000, Milton Keynes MK14 6WT, Tel: 0645 080 9000

4.0 OHSAS 18001 to BS OHSAS 18001 and Process Review

As part of this sections ongoing process review we are constantly looking at removing unnecessary bureaucracy from the Authority's arrangements for health and safety.

The purpose of these reviews is to streamline existing processes and procedures and focus its attention onto the operational activities without compromising the standard of service delivery.

As a result of the experience and knowledge gained in achieving OHSAS 18001 the Authority is now preparing for the transition to BS OHSAS 18001².

The purpose of the new standard is to enhance Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) risk management and align itself more closely with ISO 14001: 2004 and make it more compatible with ISO 9001: 2000³.

Revised definitions will be included within existing documents to clarify

² *OHSAS 18001 now refers to itself as a standard, not a specification, or document, as in the earlier edition. This reflects the increasing adoption of OHSAS 18001 as the basis for national standards on occupational health and safety management systems.*

³ *ISO 9001:2000 is a quality management system*

the scope of the new OH&S Management System.

In aligning the standard with ISO 14001 and ISO 9001 the language throughout makes the details more explicit.

The first transitional steps by this Authority have already been taken following the revision of policies, procedures and other safety documentation.

This was to identify any potential gaps in aligning the specification to the standard so that any necessary actions can be prioritised.

It is envisaged that transitional arrangements for the Authority will be complete by April 2009.



OHS 508155

5.0 Construction Design and Management Project Work

During April 2007 the new Construction (Design & Management) Regulations came into force throughout the UK. During the same year, CHSS performed the function of the CDM coordinator⁴ for over sixty five construction projects that were notifiable⁵ to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

In addition to notifiable work CHSS provide support and advice for many smaller projects that whilst they fall into the category of CDM, do not cross the threshold of being notifiable.

To support this function, the corporate procedure was revised prior to the implementation of the updated CDM Regulations. As a result, the Authority is now able to demonstrate consistency in the way it manages its construction projects by channelling the necessary documentation through the CHSS.

⁴A CDM Coordinator is appointed by the client to ensure health and safety is embedded into a construction project from its earliest stage.

⁵Construction projects are notifiable to the HSE if they are expected to;

(a) last more than 30 working days, or (b) involve more than 500 person days, for example 50 people working for over 10 days.

In order to facilitate the changes in legislation and ensure continuity of advice, a decision was made to introduce a CDM Surgery at the new Quays building in Baglan.

The Surgery provides a weekly attendance of one of the Health and Safety Officers to assist and develop close working relationships with officers from the Environment Services to ensure legal compliance with the new legislation.

The involvement from CHSS with construction projects ranges from 'renewal area' projects that are EU funded, refurbishment of Authority owned properties and new build projects such as the new primary school at Abergwynfi.

It has been an extremely busy year in this area, with even greater challenges facing us in 2008 with more than £30 million of Capital expenditure.

Large Welsh Assembly Government funded projects such as Phase 2 of the Peripheral Distribution Road (PDR) are also being undertaken.

6.0 Manual Handling Update

A Manual Handling Steering Group has been established over the last 12 months consisting of a number of representatives from each Service.

Its function is to coordinate the development of safe working practices in manual handling activities throughout the Authority.

This is to be delivered in accordance with the Welsh Local Government Association Manual Handling Forum; responsible for developing the 'All Wales Manual Handling Passport Scheme'.

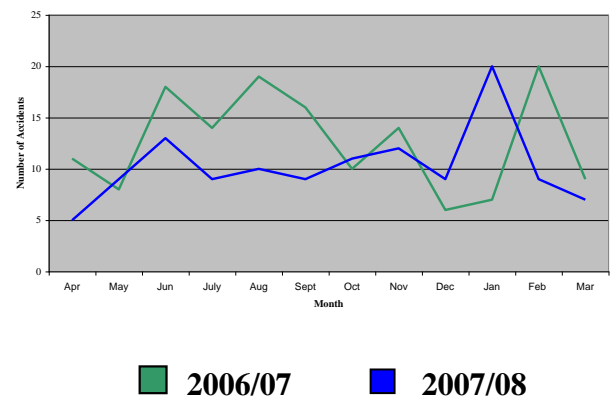
The Steering Group has been instrumental in developing and promoting the Corporate Client Manual Handling Risk Assessment through the delivery of Risk Assessment Workshops.

In addition to these activities, a number of internal and external manual handling audits on the Authority have also taken place which have identified further areas for improvement, and fits with the Council's commitment towards a process of continual improvement.

This commitment is further supported by the Corporate Manual Handling Advisor who is responsible for both the coordination of the Steering Group and the provision of specialist

advice to the various service providers.

**Comparison of Manual Handling Accidents
2006/07 and 2007/08**



Manual Handling Accidents	
2006 - 2007	152
2007 - 2008	123

7.0 Lone Working Project Group

NPTCBC is working in partnership with Carmarthenshire Council, Ceredigion Council and Pembrokeshire Council to form a Lone Working Project Group. The Group has been set up with the aim of establishing a uniform approach to dealing with staff who lone work.

NPTCBC is the only Authority within the Group that already has an Authority wide, automated system in place for its lone workers, i.e. Guardian 24⁶.

The introduction of the Guardian 24 service within this Authority has taken a great deal of time and effort. Since introducing this service, a good relationship has been forged with the Guardian 24 Team and CHSS. Regular contact takes place with the Guardian 24 Team to ensure that the service continues to meet the requirements of NPTCBC.

The involvement of NPTCBC on this working group has been extremely valuable as we have been able to bring a great deal of knowledge of the requirements of a lone worker system to the Group, as well as having first hand experience of such an automated system in operation. This has enabled the Group to make a realistic

comparison with the services being offered by other providers.

Due to the amount of work already undertaken within NPTCBC on this issue and the benefits the Authority's membership has brought to the Group, the final decision on the choice of an effective system will be greatly influenced by this Authority.

⁶ *Guardian Angel is an automated service that monitors the lone working activities of our employees*

8.0 Potentially Violent Person Register

A Potentially Violent Persons Register (PVPR) has been developed by CHSS for employees of this Authority and is subject to the 'Data Protection Act'.

This Register will enable authorised employees to access a corporate database that will hold information on potentially violent persons.

The PVPR has been developed as a platform to provide information on known violent persons who have the potential to affect the safety of an employee of NPTCBC.

The PVPR can be accessed by the members of staff who need to gather information prior to undertaking their duties, e.g. site visits, interviews etc.

The data held on the PVPR will enable managers and employees to implement specific control measures in order to protect the front line staff.

The Register will be updated and reviewed by CHSS on a monthly basis or where there is a need.

In order to determine if a potentially violent person is to be added on to the database, a panel meeting has to take place. The panel meetings are chaired by CHSS and consist of Service Senior Managers and Senior

Personnel Officers who have been nominated to attend the meetings.

The purpose of the meetings is to discuss each case and decide on whether the potentially violent person is added onto the PVPR.

These panel meetings will also discuss the effectiveness of the PVPR and determine whether any additional improvements can be made.

9.0 Safety Advisory Group

The Safety Advisory Group (SAG) has recently been reviewed and has been provided with a stronger management chain.

A revised protocol document and events booking system has been developed with input from the various interested parties.

The purpose of these documents will allow SAG to:

- a) Provide better terms of reference for the group to function as an advisory body to events organisers;
- b) Will provide detailed guidance to events organisers on how to plan and prepare their events.

The protocol document will further better working relationships with other agencies such as the Police and Fire Service.

SAG has dealt with a wide variety of events in 2007/08, from all sections of the community as well as NPTCBC organised events.

These have included but not limited to the following:

- Road races / Fun Runs x3
- Fire Work Shows x 5
- Christmas Parades x3
- Motor Clubs / Shows x3
- Street Parades x 4
- Beach Festivals x1
- Music Festivals x 3
- Football / Rugby Tournaments x 3
- Equestrian x 2
- Carnivals x 1
- Boxing Events x 1
- Fairgrounds x 3
- Other Sporting Events x 5

Major events – supported by SAG:

- Record Breakers Day
- Pontardawe Festival
- Neath Carnival
- Neath Great Fair
- Port Talbot Festival
- Katherine Jenkins in the Park
- Wales Rally GB
- Cwmtawe 7's.

The events listing for the year 2007/08 was comprehensive and reached approximately 150 individual events.

10.0 Safer Routes in and around Schools

In October 2005 the HSE visited NPTCBC to inspect traffic arrangements in and around Schools.

They visited six schools in total which were selected as being representative of typical education establishments within this Authority.

The findings of the HSE report were discussed across Services involving representatives from the Education and Environment Services and CHSS. This group was to be known as the Schools Traffic Advisory Group (STAG) and met on a monthly basis.

It was agreed by the group, that the management and operational issues within these six schools should be addressed promptly to respond in a positive manner to the HSE observations.

It was also decided that the findings should be expanded to encompass all Schools within the Authority. This would permit the Authority to undertake a risk analysis of traffic arrangements and allocate the necessary resources for the operational requirements on a prioritised basis.

It was agreed that in order to undertake the analysis that a smaller operational team should evolve from

the main group. This team would be known as the School Traffic Improvement Group (STIG) and would assess each School on an individual basis.

This analysis was to be undertaken by prioritising schools in geographical cluster groups and since September the areas covered have been, Pontardawe, Dulais Valley, Neath Valley and the Cymmer Valley in all, over 30 schools have been assessed.

At the conclusion of the assessment a programme will be developed to carry out work to improve school traffic issues over a 5 year period.

11.0 NPTCBC Performance set against Government targets

June 2000 saw Central Government and the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) jointly launch a national strategy to revitalise health and safety in the workplace.

Last year's annual report identified that CHSS historically reported on 4 key areas within the strategy, those being;

- To reduce the working days lost from work related injury and ill health by 30% by 2010.
- To reduce the incidence rate of cases of work related ill health by 20% by 2010.
- To reduce the incidence of fatalities and major injuries by 10% by 2010.
- To achieve half the improvement under each target by 2004.

The baseline year is 2001/02 and the target date for these reductions is set for 2009/10. Based on the year end figures, it is encouraging to note that over the last twelve months there has been a general decrease in the key areas identified within the table below, for the years 2005/06, 2006/07 2007/08.

The figures highlighted in the last two columns are representative of the general accident statistics set between April 2007 and March 2008. The 2006/08 reduction coincides with the authority's decision to introduce the OHSAS 18001 specification and the pragmatic approach undertaken by CHSS.

This moves the Authority closer to achieving the objectives set by the HSC in June 2000.

Whole Authority	Year 2005/06	Year 2006/07	Year 2007/08	Increase / Decrease + / - %
Total Accidents	841	767	736	- 4.0%
Lost Time	168	128	133	+ 3.9%
RIDDOR Reportable	104	101	98	- 3.0%

12.0 Accident Information

The statistical information contained in this report relates to all accidents involving employees of NPTCBC as reported to CHSS from the 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008.

This information is used to identify trends and accident patterns that may require remedial action.

Incident / Accident Report Forms enable further investigations to take place where necessary and assist in identifying the need for additional training or review of risk control measures.

A total of 736 employee Incident / Accident Report Forms were dealt with by CHSS during this period.

It can be seen from the above chart that there has been a decrease of 4% in the number of total accidents from 2007 to 2008 which is comparable to the previous year which demonstrated a 9% reduction for the period 2006 to 2007.

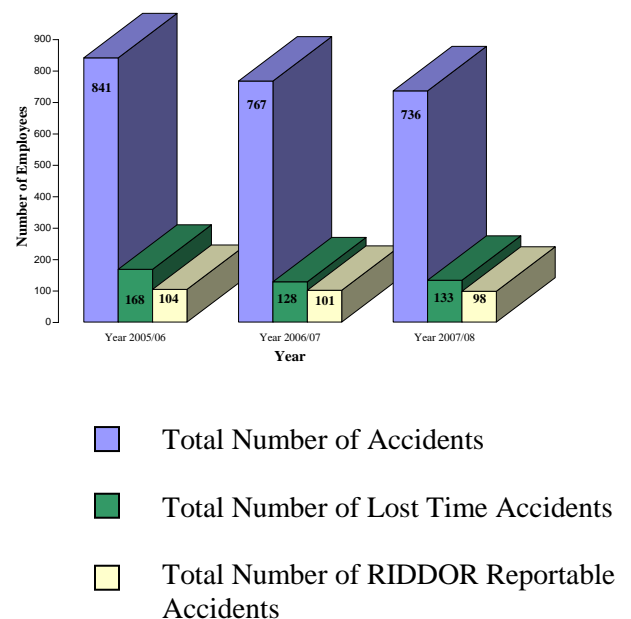
Based on the year end figures, it is encouraging to note that there has been a general decrease in the two key areas identified within the graph for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

This is particularly encouraging especially with regards to a further

3% reduction with regards to RIDDOR Reportable accidents compared to last year. Unfortunately there has been an increase in lost time accidents of 3.9%.

Whilst figures for 2007/08 have demonstrated a steady decline in some areas of the Authority when compared to previous years and further builds upon the improvements made in 2006/07 they also act as a reminder for the need of further improvements.

**Comparison of Accidents over 3 year period
2005/06 – 2007/08**



13.0 HSE Audits

The period between 2005/06 saw the HSE audit both the Streetcare and Refuse and Recycling sections of Environment Services. The audit was overall very complimentary, but did make some recommendations for improvement, which have since been implemented during 2006/07.

In December 2007 the HSE revisited the Environment Services to close off the recommendations made in the earlier report and all recommendations have now been addressed.

Manual Handling Audit

Additionally the HSE visited again in February 2008 in order to measure the Authority's compliance with the Manual Handling Operations Regulations.

During the audit the HSE inspector observed the following:

- Waste Management, Fleet Management, The Gnoll Park and the Community Transport section of Environment Services.
- Building services, Abbey View, Brynamlwg LD Day Centre, Caewern, Dan y Bryn Residential Care Centre and the Reablement Team of Social Services Health and Housing.

- Maes y Coed Special Needs School, Tywyn Primary, Princess Royal Theatre and Margam Park of Education, Leisure and Life Long Learning Services.
- Occupational Health Unit.

The authority was able to demonstrate that it had developed policy and procedures with regard to manual handling and had implemented risk assessments for any significant risks posed by manual handling activities

The feed back from the HSE on their findings is to date informal, the formal report is still being collated and is expected in due course.

The overall informal feedback from the HSE is positive, however, there is still progress that needs to be made with regard to manual handling.

14.0 Conclusion

The adoption of a comprehensive Corporate Health and Safety Management System based on the criteria of OHSAS 18001 from August 2006 is the foundation upon which future progress will be based.

Continued active support for this initiative from all employees, and effective management arrangements have resulted in reductions in general accident figures.

Whilst this annual report has noted both quantitative and qualitative improvements in health and safety performance it is no guarantee of future success and there is still a need for further improvements to be made.

The important thing is that the Authority remains committed to the process of continual improvement so that health and safety is deemed an integral part of the functionality of the Council.

The Authority have clearly defined safety management responsibilities and have procedures for managing occupational risks.

We are setting clear improvement targets focused on the principal areas of risk.

The Authority must retain this focus at all times to achieve a dynamic and positive health and safety attitude.

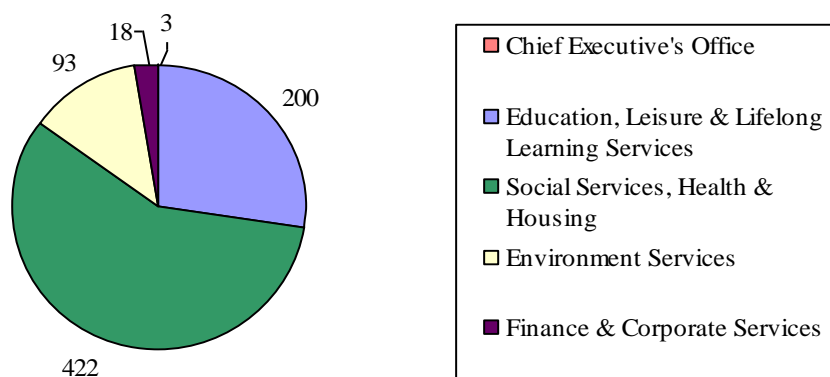
Shaun Burgess

Corporate Health and Safety Manager

Appendix A

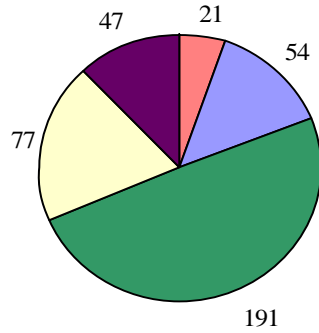
Total Number of Accidents (per Service) 2007/08	Total
Chief Executive's Office	3
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services	200
Social Services, Health and Housing	422
Environment Services	93
Finance and Corporate Services	18
Total Accidents	736

Total Number of Accidents (per Service) 2007/08



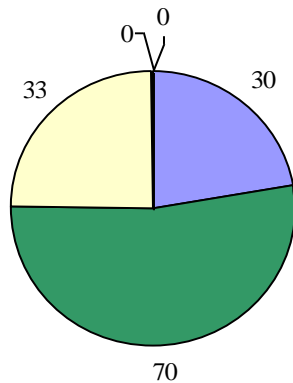
Total Number of Accidents (per 1,000 employees) 2007/08	Total
Chief Executive's Office	21
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services	54
Social Services, Health and Housing	191
Environment Services	77
Finance and Corporate Services	47

Total Number of Accidents (per 1,000 employees) 2007/08



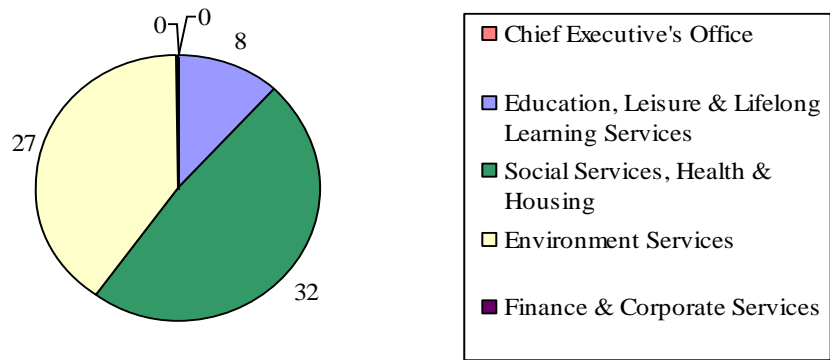
Total Number of Accidents resulting in Lost Time (per Service) 2007/08	Total
Chief Executive's Office	0
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services	30
Social Services, Health and Housing	70
Environment Services	33
Finance and Corporate Services	0
Total Accidents	133

Total Number of Accidents resulting in Lost Time (per Service) 2007/08



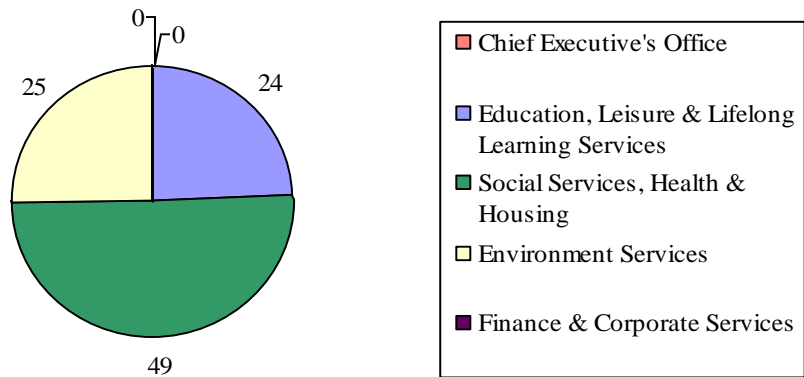
Total Number of Accidents resulting in Lost Time (per 1,000 employees) 2007/08	Total
Chief Executive's Office	0
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services	8
Social Services, Health and Housing	32
Environment Services	27
Finance and Corporate Services	0

Total Number of Accidents resulting in Lost Time (per 1,000 employees) 2007/08



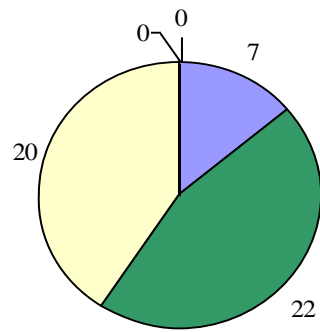
Total Number of RIDDOR Reportable Accidents (per Service) 2007/08	Total
Chief Executive's Office	0
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services	24
Social Services, Health and Housing	49
Environment Services	25
Finance and Corporate Services	0
Total Accidents	98

Total Number of RIDDOR Reportable Accidents (per Service) 2007/08



Total Number of RIDDOR Reportable Accidents (per 1,000 employees) 2007/08	Total
Chief Executive's Office	0
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning Services	7
Social Services, Health and Housing	22
Environment Services	20
Finance and Corporate Services	0

Total Number of RIDDOR Reportable Accidents (per 1,000 employees) 2007/08



Appendix B

Accident Statistics by Causation 2007/2008

Accident Type	CHEX	EDLLL	SSHH	ENV	F&CS	Total (per Accident Type)
Contact with moving machinery	-	-	-	2	-	2
Contact with material being machined	-	1	-	-	-	1
Hit by moving, flying or falling object	-	27	23	9	-	59
Hit by moving vehicle	-	-	-	1	-	1
Hit something fixed or stationary	-	12	26	6	1	45
Injured while handling, lifting or carrying	-	21	77	25	-	123
Slip, trip or fall on same level	3	51	68	21	2	145
Fall from height	-	2	4	3	-	9
Trapped by something collapsing	-	1	-	-	-	1
Exposed to / contact with harmful substance	-	1	2	2	-	5
Contact with electricity	-	-	2		-	2
Injured by animal	-	3	7	2	-	12
Physically assaulted by service user / pupil	-	49	82	2	1	134
Physically assaulted by another person	-	-	2	1	-	3
Verbal Abuse	-	7	50	-	14	71
Sharp object	-	2	12	3	-	17
Needle Stick	-	1	5	1	-	7
Jam	-	1	6	1	-	8
Burn / Scald	-	6	6	1	-	13
During control and restraint	-	-	18	-	-	18
Collision with colleague / pupil	-	5	3	-	-	8
Road Traffic Accident	-	2	8	5	-	15
Medical Condition	-	-	-	2	-	2
Other	-	8	21	6	-	35
Total Accidents (per Service)	3	200	422	93	18	736

Appendix C

Accident Statistics by Injury Type 2007/2008

Injury Type	CHEX	EDLLL	SSHH	ENV	F&CS	Total (per Injury Type)
Fracture	-	7	6	3	-	16
Sprain / Strain	3	21	75	19	-	118
Abrasion / graze	-	3	6	3	-	12
Bruising	-	40	65	11	1	117
Laceration	-	16	43	15	1	75
Neck Injury	-	-	-	-	-	0
Back Injury	-	5	1	1	-	7
Scald / Burn	-	6	15	2	-	23
Eye Injury	-	2	2	-	-	4
Puncture	-	1	3	4	-	8
Needle Stick	-	-	3	1	-	4
Fume Inhalation	-	-	2	-	-	2
Jam	-	-	1	1	-	2
Scram / Scratch	-	3	10	1	-	14
Bump / knock / blow	-	12	39	6	-	57
Lost coconsciousness	-	1	-	-	-	1
Electric shock	-	-	2	-	-	2
Torn ligament / tendon / muscle	-	4	5	2	-	11
Jar	-	-	6	1	-	7
Bite / pinch / punch / kick by service user / pupil	-	14	26	1	-	41
Irritation / Allergy	-	-	1	2	-	3
Other	-	26	21	13	-	60
Hospital - Over 24 hours	-	-	-	-	-	0
Not specified	-	19	12	1	-	32
No injury	-	20	78	6	16	120
Total Accidents (per Service)	3	200	422	93	18	736

ANNUAL EQUALITIES IN EMPLOYMENT REPORT – 2007/2008

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Members with a summary of the Authority's performance in relation to equalities issues during the 12 months ended 31st March 2008.

2. Background

- 2.1 Enclosed for Members' consideration is the Annual Equalities in Employment Report for 2007/2008.

3. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the Report be **NOTED**.

FOR INFORMATION

4. List of Background Papers

- 4.1 None

5. Wards Affected

- 5.1 All

6. Officer Contact

- 6.1 For further information, please contact Graham Jones, Head of Human Resources on 01639 763315 (e-mail g.jones@npt.gov.uk).

Or

Sheenagh Rees, Strategic Human Resources Team Leader on telephone: 01639 763012 (e-mail s.rees5@npt.gov.uk)

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Annual Equalities in
Employment Report –
2007/2008

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Appendix 1

Equalities Working Groups and Forums at NPTCBC

Section One

1. **Workforce Profile**

The Council employs 7688 members of staff (figures based on 2007/2008 averages).

1.1 **Gender Profile**

Women make up 54.7% of all NPTCBC employees, including teachers and schools-based employees. This figure is slightly higher than the proportion of economically active women in the local population (50.9%) and the proportion of women in the local population (51.7%). However, it is lower than the national average for local government, where women make up 72% of the workforce (LGE Digest – April 2008).

Across the Council, there is considerable variability in the proportion of women within each service area (see figures below). However this pattern of variability is consistent with historical trends of gender specific jobs. These demonstrate a higher proportion of women occupying the types of jobs performed within Social Services, Health & Housing compared to those in Environment Services.

Gender Profile by Directorate

Directorate	Female employees percentage
Social Services, Health and Housing	71.2%
Chief Executive's	67.3%
Finance and Corporate	59.4%

Services	
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	51.7%
Environment	31.1%
Corporate Average	54.7%

Looking at the proportion of women at different levels within the Council, women occupy 51% of all posts graded scp 4 to 13 (£11,577 to £14,882 p.a.) and 60.7% of all posts graded scp 14 to 34 (£15,153 to £27,594 p.a.). Representation at these levels is therefore fairly consistent with the overall proportion of women employed. Women occupy 47.2% of all management and professional posts (£28,172 to £40,101 p.a.), but only 8% of Head of Service and Director (senior management) posts. The recent appointment of a female Head of Service will increase this figure to 12%. However, it is a matter of continuing concern that since the formation of NPTCBC in 1996, the representation of women at the most senior levels has never exceeded 12%.

It is therefore necessary to break down in more detail the group immediately below Head of Service, currently earning £34,991 to £42,870, as the most obvious source of future “home-grown” Heads of Service. With women occupying just 34% of the posts at this level, the gender imbalance amongst Heads of Service seems likely to continue.

Full Time/Part Time by Gender

As of 31 March 2007, 42.1% of the Council’s workforce was employed in part time (i.e. contracted to work less than 37 hours a week) jobs. This is 1% lower than last year and therefore nearer to the national average for local government, where part time positions make up 39% of jobs (LGE Digest – April 2008).

The breakdown of the Council’s jobs by gender and hours is set out below:

	Full Time	Part Time
Male	25.6%	5.0%
Female	32.3%	37.1%

1.2 Ethnic Profile

The ethnic categories are those used in the 2001 Census. For analyses purposes the data has grouped and the term Black and minority ethnic (BME) has been used to include all ethnic groups apart from White British (including Welsh, English and Scottish).

The number of black and minority ethnic employees has increased slightly from an average figure of 45 employees (0.6% in 2006/2007 to 58.5 employees (0.8%) in 2007/2008. This is also the case when schools- based staff are excluded from the figures, where the average figure for 2006/2007 of 39 (0.8%) has increased in 2007/2008 to 43.5 (1%).

The breakdown of the Council's of black and minority ethnic employees is as follows:

Breakdown of BME Employees by Ethnic Group

Ethnic Group	Percentage of BME Total
Other Ethnic Group	18.4%
White & Asian	15.6%
Irish	11.9%
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	9.2%
Black British	7.3%
Asian Other	7.3%
Indian	7.3%
Mixed White & Asian	6.4%
Black Caribbean	5.5%
Chinese	2.8%
Bangladeshi	2.8%
Pakistani	2.8%
Black – African	0.9%
Black – Other	0.9%
Mixed White & Black African	0.9%

According to the 2001 Census, 2.4% of the local population are from a Black or minority ethnic group, as defined above. The largest groups are “Other White” (0.9%) and Irish (0.5%), followed by Indian (0.18%), White & Black Caribbean (0.16%) and Bangladeshi (0.12%) and Chinese (0.12%).

In 2004, eight former communist countries, including Poland which accounts for 60% of the applicants to the UK's Worker Registration Scheme, joined the European Union. The effect of this on the population of Neath Port Talbot is not yet known.

The proportion of Black and minority ethnic employees ranges from 0.3% in Chief Executives to 0.6% in Finance & Corporate Services and Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning respectively, 0.9% in Environment and 1% in Social Services, Health and Housing.

The distribution of Black and minority ethnic employees by grade over the past year was 1.5% for posts graded 35 and above, 0.7% for posts graded scp 14-34 and 0.7% for posts graded scp 4-13. There are no BME Directors or Heads of Service.

1.3 Disability Profile

In 2007/2008, 1.6 % of the workforce (121 employees) considered himself or herself to have a disability.

Comparable figures relating to the percentage of disabled employees are available for last year (2006/07). The average figure for Welsh councils was 1.5%. A selection of the highest and lowest, together with a few neighbouring authorities, is set out below:

Rhondda Cynon Taff	3.2% (highest in Wales)
Blaenau Gwent	2.0%
Carmarthenshire	1.3%
Bridgend	0.9%
Anglesey	0.2% (lowest in Wales)

It is worth noting that there may be some under-reporting by disabled employees or prospective employees, due to fear of discrimination, or a feeling that such information is too personal/confidential. Some people, whose physical or mental impairment meets the definition of disability as set out the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, do not consider themselves to be disabled. In other cases, particularly where the disability is progressive or age-related, the impairment develops during the course of employment and there is a delay in this information reaching the employee record. It is

necessary to ensure that employees feel positive about reporting their disability.

The population Census identified that, in 2001, 24.1% of people of working age in Neath Port Talbot considered themselves to have a limiting long-term illness (defined as “any long-term illness, health problem or disability, which limits daily activities or work”). This figure includes people who are permanently unfit to undertake any type of work, for example, people who receive incapacity benefit. However, the fact that Neath Port Talbot has the third highest proportion of limiting long-term illness in Wales, suggests that measures to support the employment of disabled people should be a priority.

Since the number of disabled employees within the Council is small, it is difficult to identify any strong profile patterns. However, the figures show that Finance & Corporate Services employ the largest proportion of disabled employees (4.2%), followed by Chief Executives and Social Services, Health & Housing (both 2.5%). The lowest proportion is in Environment (1.8%) and in Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (0.7%).

Across all Council services, disabled employees currently hold 2.3% of posts graded 35 and above, 1.4% of posts graded scp 14-34 and 0.3% of posts graded scp 4-13. There are no disabled Heads of Service or Directors.

1.4 Age Profile

Over 2007/2008, the average age breakdown of the Council workforce was as follows:

Workforce by Age Band

Age Bands	Percentage including schools	Percentage excluding schools
16-21	2.4%	2.9%
22-30	11%	15.3%
31-40	18%	22.2%
41-50	25.8%	31.1%
51-60	20.2%	25.2%
61-65	2.8%	3.1%
65 +	0.3%	0.2%

There is a predominance of age groups 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60, with the greatest number of employees in the age band 41-50. The Council has an ageing workforce, as 23%* is aged over 50, whereas only 13%* is aged between 16 and 30.

*These percentages are exactly the same as those recorded for 2006/2007.

The breakdown of these key age bands by Directorate is as follows:

	CEX	ELLL	F&CS	SSHH	ENV
16-30	33%	9.5%	21.6%	15.3%	17.3%
51-65+	18.8%	17.3%	20.4%	28.9%	33.1%

Overall, the age of employees increases as the grades are more senior. The table below shows that the proportion of employees aged over 50 generally increases with grade:

Proportion of Employees Aged Over 50 by Grade

Grade	Percentage
Scp 4-13	18%
Scp 14-34	27.3%
Scp 35-49	32.5%
HoS/Director	69.3%

1.5 Welsh Language Profile

As of July 2007, 7.5% of the workforce (636 postholders) had classified himself or herself as either a “fluent Welsh speaker” or a “fluent Welsh speaker and writer.

The 2001 Census recorded the following results, as a percentage of people aged 3 and over, for Neath Port Talbot:

Speaks but does not read or write Welsh	3.26%
Speaks and reads but does not write Welsh	1.69%
Speaks, reads and writes Welsh	12.83%
Total	17.78%

Comparisons between the workforce and the Census should be considered in the following context:

- there is no reference to fluency in the Census questions, which means that the “fairly fluent” and learners might have been included in the figures above
- the Census refers to people aged 3 and over, whereas the workforce statistics refer to those aged 16 and over. Due to the popularity of Welsh Medium schools, it is reasonable to expect a higher level of fluency amongst children than in the population as a whole
- there might be some under-reporting by Welsh speaking employees or prospective employees, due to a lack of confidence that their Welsh is of an acceptable standard or a reluctance to be identified as a potential facilitator

Since the number of Welsh speakers is small, it is difficult to identify any strong profile patterns. However, the figures show that Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning employ the largest proportion of fluent Welsh speakers (10.7%), followed by Social Services, Health & Housing and Environment (4.2%), Chief Executives (3.2%) and Finance and Corporate Services (2.6%).

For the purposes of analysis, the categories of “Fairly Fluent Speaker” and “Fairly Fluent Speaker & Writer” have been grouped together. The overall proportion of these in the Council workforce is 8%. The figures show that Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning employ the largest proportion of fairly fluent Welsh speakers (8%), followed by Social Services, Health & Housing (7.6%). The lowest proportion is in Environment and Finance & Corporate Services (5.8%).

The largest proportion of Welsh Learners (14.2%) are employed in Chief Executives Directorate, followed by Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning (13.9%), Social Services, Health and Housing (10%), Finance and Corporate Services (7.3%) and Environment (7%). The overall proportion of employees who have classified themselves as Welsh Learners is 11.5% (980 postholders).

**Note: The Welsh Language workforce data is based on “postholders” (overall total 8491), rather than the “headcount” (overall total 7688) data used throughout the remainder of this report – see paragraph 2 above for further details.*

1.6 Location of Welsh Speakers

As stated in the Welsh Language Scheme, the Census showed a great variation in percentages of Welsh speakers across the county borough, ranging from 7%* (approx.) in Taibach to 68%* approx. in Cwmllynfell.

(* NB these figures include people who understand spoken Welsh but have no other skills in the language)

The Scheme “offers the public the right to choose which language they use in their dealings with the Council.” (Welsh Language Scheme). “To achieve this it acknowledges the need to develop a complement of strategically placed Welsh speaking employees”.

For this reason, managers are issued with guidance, in which they are asked to consider whether fluency in Welsh language is a skill that essential, desirable or not a requirement, whenever they are seeking to advertise a vacancy. They are asked to consider the need in the local population to communicate in Welsh and whether they have sufficient skills in the team to meet that need.

Section Two

2. Employment Activity Profile

The figures shown below refer to the period 1 April 2007 to 31st March 2008.

2.1 *Whistle Blowing*

HR Services were not notified of any formal referrals.

2.2 *Disciplinaries*

There were a total of 54 cases requiring formal action under the Disciplinary Procedure, split by Directorate as follows:

Directorate	Number of Cases
Social Services, Health and Housing	34
Environment	14
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	3
Finance & Corporate Services	2
Chief Execs	1

Men were the subjects of 46% of disciplinary cases, which is proportionate to their representation in the workforce (45%). In contrast, last year, they were the subjects of 70% of disciplinary cases requiring formal action.

There were no cases involving disabled or BME employees.

The age profile of the subjects of formal action under the Disciplinary procedure is as follows:

Age Band	Number of Cases
16-21	3
22-30	7
31-40	15
41-50	21
51-60	8
61-65	0
65+	0

2.3 **Grievances**

There were a total of 12 cases reported as requiring formal action under the Grievance Procedure, split by Directorate as follows:

Directorate	Number of Cases
Social Services, Health and Housing	10
Education, Leisure &	1

Lifelong Learning Environment	1
Finance & Corporate Services	0
Chief Execs	0

Women make up 55% of the workforce, but lodged only 25% of the grievances. In contrast, last year, women lodged 57% of all Council grievances. There were no cases involving BME employees and one case involving a disabled employee.

The age profile of the subjects of formal action under the Grievance procedure is as follows:

Age Band	Number of Cases
16-21	0
22-30	0
31-40	4
41-50	6
51-60	2
61-65	0
65+	0

2.4 **Capability**

There were no cases requiring formal action under the Capability Procedure.

2.5 **Harassment at Work**

There were a total of 7 cases reported as requiring an interview with a Support Officer, leading either to a Stage 1 meeting (i.e. Option A, B or C of the procedure) or a decision to take no action but keep a written record of events for future use. The cases involved complainants from the following directorates:

Directorate	Number of Complainants
Environment	3
Social Services, Health and Housing	3

Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	1
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The complainants chose the following options:

Stage 1 Options	Number of Complainants
Option A, i.e. speak directly to alleged harasser	0
Option B, i.e. communicate via supervisor/manager	0
Option C, i.e. communicate via TU rep/colleague	1
Option D, i.e. take no action but keep a written record of events for future use.	5
Undecided	1

Last year there were 12 cases, 8 of which involved Stage 1 meetings with the alleged perpetrator. The popularity of Option D this year is worrying, as it implies that employees who felt they were being harassed or bullied chose not to address the situation.

71% of the complainants were female. None of the complainants were recorded as being from a BME community or having a disability, but Support Officers do not usually ask complainants for this information. The age profile of complainants was as follows:

	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60
Number of complaints	1	1	2	3

The nature of the alleged cases of discrimination or bullying was as follows:

	Sexual	Racial	Disability	Sexuality	Religion /Belief	Age	Bullying	Other
Number of complaints	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	1

There were two Stage 2 formal investigations in 2007/2008, both of which involved female complainants. They are in the age ranges of 31-40 and 41-50 respectively. In contrast, in the previous year there were 7 Stage 2 investigations.

2.6 **Sickness**

Formal Sickness Interviews

There were a total of 510 formal sickness interviews between 1 April 2007 and 31 March 2008, split by Directorate as follows:

Directorate	Number of Cases
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	90*
Social Services, Health and Housing	249
Finance & Corporate Services	6*
Chief Execs	2
Environment	163*

*N.B. The data for the last quarter is unavailable from ELLL and Environment and the data for the last two quarters is unavailable from F&CS

Women make up 53.9% of the workforce, but were the subject of 67% of the interviews. This disparity may be partly due to the gaps in data outlined above. Where levels of individual sickness absence cause concern, they are classified as either “short term” or “long term” under the Council’s Sickness Absence Management Policy. Women represented 54% of employees who reached the Policy’s short term trigger points during 2007/08. The majority of sickness management interviews relate to long term absence.

At 0.8%, the percentage of BME employees receiving an interview reflected exactly their representation in the workforce. Disabled people make up 1.6% of the workforce and were the subject of 1.8% of the interviews.

The age profile of the subjects of formal sickness interviews is as follows:

Age Band	Number of Cases
16-21	11
22-30	55
31-40	111
41-50	145
51-60	168
61-65	10
65+	1

2.7 Recruitment

Internal Promotions

The Council does not operate a promotions scheme. All posts are filled through competitive recruitment. However, employees wishing to take different posts can apply for advertised vacancies across the Council. There is prior consideration for employees under notice of redundancy or dismissal on health grounds. A breakdown of equality data on internal appointments is not yet available.

Recruitment Monitoring

The recruitment monitoring figures are incomplete, as recruitment data inputting in Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning took place in the last quarter only. They are based on 5628 applications submitted (and just 69 appointments) to the Council over the last year, across all directorates. They show the following recruitment trends:

	Percentage of all applicants	Percentage of applicants on shortlist	Percentage of applicants appointed
Female	59%	66%	68.8%
BME	2.1%	1.7%	1.9%
Disabled	1.8%	2.1%	3.1%
Age 16-21	20.8%	14%	15.5%
Age 22-30	34%	28.1%	34.2%
Age 31-40	18.3%	23.2%	19.6%
Age 41-50	16%	20.7%	23.4%
Age 51-60	8.1%	12%	6.1%
Age 61-65	0.4%	0%	1.3%

Age 65+	0.1%	0%	0%
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The data above is incomplete and must be developed, in future, to include all Council vacancies. It will then be appropriate to analyse the data in more detail (including BME breakdowns by ethnic group and gender), and on a directorate by directorate basis. However, if the Council's workforce is to become more representative of the community it serves, it will need to attract and appoint a greater proportion of, for example, disabled and BME candidates.

Section Three

3. What have we done over the last year?

3.1 Equal Pay Review

The Council is committed, under the terms of a national agreement for Local Government Services, to completing job evaluation and an equal pay review.

The project commenced three years ago, and work is still ongoing, due to the unprecedented complexity, scale and cost of the task. As at July 2008, negotiations at officer level between the Council and local/regional trade union representatives are nearing completion, prior to the trade unions conducting a ballot of all their members, hopefully before the end of 2008.

Set out below are details of the current position.

- (a) **Equal Pay** – The Council made equal pay compensation claims to over 2,300 employees at a cost of approximately £7.7million, by 31st March 2007.
- (b) **Job Evaluation (JE)** – A Rank Order of around 1,200 posts covering over 7,000 employees has been “signed off” by Joint TU/Management Panels. In addition, arrangements are being put in place to ensure that any new or changed posts are job evaluated, as they arise.
- (c) **JE Appeals** – Procedural arrangements for informal conciliatory meetings and formal JE Appeal hearings have been agreed in principle with the trade unions.

- (d) **New Pay Structure** – A Joint TU/Management Pay Modelling Team has been meeting on a weekly basis for over 12 months with the aim of creating an equality-proofed pay structure, based on the JE scores which have created for some 1,200 different posts occupied by around 7,000 employees. Negotiations are nearing completion and a proposed new Pay Structure has been agreed in principle with local and regional trade union representatives. This will be subject to an independent equality-proofing exercise and to union approval at national level.
- (e) **Conditions of Service** – The proposed revised conditions of service package, which has been developed and negotiated over a period of 18 months, is mostly agreed in principle with local trade unions.
- (f) **Market Pay Scheme** – A market pay scheme has been developed which will enable market pay supplements to be payable in limited specific circumstances, subject to a rigorous review of the relevant “pay market” and sound evidence also being available.
- (g) **Pay Protection and Employee Support Programme** – An Employee Support Programme (ESP) has been developed to support those employees who are adversely affected by the new Pay and Conditions package. The ESP, amongst other measures, makes provision for Pay Protection to be provided on a “frozen pay” basis.
- (h) **Workforce Communications** – A joint officer/trade union working group is developing a communication strategy which will not only enable a complex package of pay and conditions changes to be communicated to some 7,000 employees, but will also seek to ensure that the subsequent ballot of TU members results in a “yes” vote.
- (i) **Timetable** – If elected Members and local trade unions approve “in principle” the package of pay and conditions during summer 2008, this will be followed by extensive communications with all employees during early Autumn and a TU ballot result by early December 2008. However, as stated above, the package is complex and subject to agreement by various different parties, which means that the timetable may change.

3.2 **Gender Equality Scheme**

The Equality Act 2006 amended the Sex Discrimination Act to place a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their function, to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote equality of opportunity between men and women

This is known as the ‘general duty’ and came into effect on 6th April 2007.

To support progress in delivering the general duty, the Council prepared and published a gender equality scheme, effective from 30 April 2007 for a period of three years, showing how it will meet its general and specific duties and setting out its gender equality objectives. This followed consultation with the trade unions on the Council’s employment gender equality priorities.

The Scheme includes an action plan covering all employment issues related to gender. It was recognised by both sides that the objective of establishing “a fairer and more transparent system of pay based on the principle of equal pay for work of equal value, free of all forms of discrimination and bias” was going to continue to dominate the work of both the management and trade union sides during 2007/2008. This work is now likely to extend to a minimum of December 2008 (see Equal Pay Review timetable above).

Two of the projects set out in the action plan were completed during 2007/2008, namely the introduction of a Childcare Voucher Scheme and the development of a Workstyle Portal, and further details of these are provided in paragraphs 3.6 and 3.8 below.

3.3 Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 introduced the Disability Equality Duty, which aims to get public authorities to think and act proactively on disability equality issues. The Council published its Disability Equality Scheme on 4th December 2006, setting out how it would:

- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and others
- Eliminate discrimination and harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people

- Encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- Take steps to take account of disabled people's disability, even where that involves treating disabled people more forwardly.

The Scheme is implemented via an action plan, which includes employment issues related to disability. Progress is reported annually and the Scheme will be reviewed every three years.

Consultation on the content of the Scheme was focussed around a Have Your Say event, which included an employment workshop, on 20th October 2006. The workshop failed to attract any Council employees who are disabled. The Scheme's action plan therefore included a requirement to meet with disabled Council employees to give them a further opportunity to express their views. This led to the establishment of the Disabled Employees Forum (see paragraph 3.4 below).

The Scheme commits the Council to taking a proactive approach to recruiting and employing disabled people, together with reviewing HR procedures in relation to disability equality. These are being addressed via the Impact Assessment Process (see paragraph 3.7 below) and the work of the Forum, which has already started to recommend changes to employment practices.

3.4 Disabled Employees Forum

All disabled employees were invited, via payslip message, Intranet, HR Bulletin and email to senior managers, to attend a meeting on 5th June 2007. Attendees agreed to set up a Disabled Employees Forum, which would hold regular meetings, based around one topic of interest per meeting. The overall aim of the Forum is to ensure that NPTCBC is an exemplary council in disability matters, evidenced by:

- An increase in the percentage of Council employees who have a disability (currently 1.6% of the workforce)
- Improved recruitment and retention of disabled employees
- Improved, or better communicated, employment policies, which are disability aware.

During 2007/2008, the Forum undertook the following activities:

- a) **Disability Leave** – recommended a scheme to the Council for approval;
- b) **Access to Work** – the Council had a scheme in place, but it was neither documented nor widely understood. As a result of raising this concern, the scheme is now available on the Intranet and senior HR staff have been briefed;
- c) **Disability Equality Officer** – recommended that such a post is created to assist the Council in promoting disability equality and addressing discrimination. A job description and person specification were drafted in support of the recommendation;
- d) **Amendment to Job Application Form** – As part of the Council’s annual Disability Symbol User Review, the health section of the Council’s job application was identified as discouraging to disabled applicants. The form has since been amended to make a distinction between disability related and non-disability related absence. The Forum acted as a sounding board for this amendment.

3.5 **Harassment at Work Support**

The Harassment at Work Policy has been operational since 2000. It involves the employment of up to 12 Harassment Support Officers, drawn from the existing workforce, to assist employees facing harassment or bullying at work. It was intended that Support Officers meet on a quarterly basis as a group to share experiences, in confidence, and offer on-going support to one another. It was also intended that they would receive refresher training sessions. Regular meetings were revived in 2006/2007 and refresher courses for Support Officers were run on 24th October 2007 and 8th April 2008 respectively. The Strategic HR Unit has continued to provide Support Officers with a source of ongoing advice.

3.6 **Childcare Vouchers**

Following a successful tendering exercise, Kiddivouchers was appointed to administer a childcare voucher scheme on behalf of the Council with effect from 2 January 2008 for an initial period of three years.

Childcare vouchers are a method of paying for registered childcare, under which the employee gives up or “sacrifices” part of his/her pay in exchange

for Childcare Vouchers. The vouchers are non-taxable and exempt from National Insurance (N.I.) contributions, saving each parent up to £55 per week. The introduction of this benefit makes childcare more affordable and provides support to working parents.

Kiddivouchers assisted in publicising the scheme, via payslip messages, global email, Internet articles and roadshows, throughout the Council and invited interested employees to make contact. Kiddivouchers advise and guide employees through the eligibility criteria and application process.

It was hoped that the scheme would attract about thirty employees. It is therefore pleasing to report that sixty-one employees currently participate in the Scheme and that its administration has been extremely smooth.

3.7 Equality Impact Assessments

Under race, disability and gender legislation, the Council has a duty to undertake impact assessments on all its current and future functions and related policies and procedures. As further legislation comes into force it is anticipated that all equalities areas will follow suit.

In 2007/2008, employment policies and procedures were prioritised to decide which employment activities had the greatest potential impact on potential and existing employees. As a result, draft impact assessment questionnaires have been completed for the following employment activities:

Recruitment & Selection	Sickness Management
Capability	Medical Redeployment
Disciplinary	Retirement
Grievance	Parental Leave
Harassment at Work	Annual Leave
Maternity Leave	Special Leave

3.8 Work Life Balance – NPT Workstyle

During 2007/2008, the Council launched the NPT Workstyle portal for processing applications for 5 work styles, as follows:

- Flexible Office (default)
- Mobile
- Home Based (= 3+ days at home a week)
- Occasional Home User (= 1-2 days a week at home)
- Fixed Desk

The portal was initially used for all employees who were relocated to the Quays, in Briton Ferry. It is being made available to other employees, as other major relocations are carried out, starting in the Social Services, Health & Housing directorate. With its streamlined application process, it has the potential to substantially expand the amount of flexible working undertaken across the county borough, which should benefit all office-based employees, including those with caring responsibilities. Sixteen employees have so far been approved, via the portal application process, for home working, i.e. as Home Based or Occasional Home User workers.

3.9 **Welsh Language Scheme**

The Council's Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board (WLB) on 27th July 2007. It amended and replaced the original Scheme which was approved in 1997.

The WLB has been conducting risk assessments for all councils to help them to avoid failing to comply with commitments given to the public in a Welsh Language Scheme. Attention was given to arrangements for monitoring language skills levels and to examples of innovation to ensure an increase in those levels. The risk assessment for Neath Port Talbot took place on 2nd May 2007 and the resulting report included both recommendations for improvement and examples of good practice identified during the assessment.

The recommendations arising from the WLB report were incorporated into the Welsh Language Scheme's Action Plan. The first of these tasks, to revise and publicise the Employee Guidelines for the Welsh Language Scheme, was completed in 2007. Work for 2008/2009 will focus on implementing the remaining tasks, as set out in paragraph 4.7 below.

3.10 **Welsh Language Courses**

The Council has continued to run four levels of Welsh Language courses, as set out below, for its employees. In return for a commitment to attend all

sessions, the employee receives paid leave of up to 60 hours per year for course attendance.

For the academic year 2007/2008, the numbers of employees committed to attend the Council's language courses has been as follows:

Beginners	16
Intermediate	9
Advanced	13
Advanced Plus	11

3.11 Positive Action Initiatives

(a) *“Play schemes – It’s not all paint and glitter”*

Every year the Play Development Team recruits approximately 45 summer play workers to run play schemes in parks across the county borough. It is important that the schemes run a range of activities which will attract both boys and girls. However, there has never been more than a handful of male play workers in the Team.

In February 2008, the Team ran a publicity campaign involving rugby star, James Hook, with the message that male applicants were encouraged to apply. He appeared on recruitment posters and in the local press. The campaign was successful in attracting and recruiting male play workers and, for the first time, the Team has one male working in each of its fifteen schemes.

(b) *Age is No Barrier for Social Care Careers*

In partnership with other organisations, NPTCBC organised a “50+ New Beginnings” event on 24th October 2007, including 25 stalls, to provide information and advice about job opportunities in the social care sector. The aim of the event was to promote the message that age is no barrier to working in social care.

© *Women into construction*

In December 2007, the Council's housing and renewal adaptation service

was commended by Construction Skills for its achievements in employing and promoting females in non traditional roles. The £200 STEP support funding award followed a series of events county borough wide organised by the Council to give young people a real life perspective of the industry through school visits, presentations or activities

3.12 Workways

Workways is a Council-supported project which aims to help people into long term employment through training and paid work experience. The Council has acted as host provider for a number of Workways trainees. The trainees are employed for up to 30 hours a week, for a maximum of one year, in return for which they receive the National Minimum (hourly) Wage, together with the training and experience necessary to seek more sustainable employment.

During 2007/2008, the Council hosted 90 Workways trainees. The breakdown by directorate is as follows:

Directorate	Number of Trainees	Percentage of Total
Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning	46	51%
Environment	23	26%
Social Services, Health and Housing	16	18%
Finance and Corporate Services	3	3%
Chief Executive's	2	2%

59% of the trainees were male and 41% female. The results of the equalities monitoring forms indicated that 18% of trainees considered him/herself to have a disability, four were from a minority ethnic group and three were Welsh-speaking. Nine chose to work less than 30 hours a week.

The age profile was as follows:

	Age Bands						
	16-21	22-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-65	65+
Percentages	16%	37%	24%	19%	4%	0%	0%

Section Four

4. What are we going to do in 2008/2009?

The following list is a summary of the new initiatives and major tasks the Council anticipates undertaking during 2008/2009. The additional work created by the Equal Pay Review during the previous year means that some tasks have been carried over from 2007/2008, as indicated by a footnote to that effect. Ongoing tasks, such as the provision of Welsh Language courses for employees, have been excluded from the list, but will appear in the end of year report.

The Council supports a number of equalities working groups and forums (see Appendix 1 for a full list), which have a role in advising the Council on how to make its services and job opportunities more accessible to all communities. This means that priorities may change, as the year progresses.

Overall equality priorities are determined by the Council's Heads of Service Equalities Group, which meets on a quarterly basis.

4.1 Equal Pay Review

As stated earlier, work is being undertaken to ensure that job evaluation and an equal pay review are completed during 2008/2009. The tasks of agreeing and implementing a new pay structure and harmonised conditions of service, together with undertaking an equality impact assessment, establishing future joint monitoring arrangements and securing significant additional funding will dominate the work of HR Services during this period.

4.2 Women in Senior Management

Given the Council's low percentage of women in senior management (8%) and the impact this might have on decision-making, the Council will start to review this area* once the Job Evaluation exercise has been completed. This might include investigating the causes of, and potential remedies (including

positive action) to, this under-representation. This work has been programmed within the Council's Gender Equality Scheme to be concluded by 2008/2009.

**Task rescheduled from 2007/2008 to 2009.*

4.3 Carers Policy*

The Council recognises that caring is a growing responsibility affecting its current, and potential, workforce. According to the 2001 Census, Neath Port Talbot has the highest percentage of carers per population throughout the whole of the UK. The Council will investigate additional ways of supporting employees with caring responsibilities, including ensuring that they are made aware of the full range of support options available.

**Task rescheduled from 2007/2008 to 2008/2009.*

4.4 Domestic Abuse Strategy

The Council recognises that the many of its employees, especially women, are likely to experience domestic abuse. It will investigate ways of supporting employees who experience domestic abuse, including ensuring that they are made aware of the full range of support options available.

**Task rescheduled from 2007/2008 to 2009.*

4.5 Equality Training Initiatives

The Council has allocated a budget of £5000 to deliver equalities training during 2008/2009. Whilst the majority of senior managers have received equalities training, this has not been extended to the remainder of the workforce. The scale of this task and the limited budget means that the training options will have to be carefully prioritised.

4.6 Harassment at Work

As in the previous year, the Council's monitoring figures for 2007/2008 show that the majority of allegations of bullying and harassment relate to bullying (86%). This is typical of findings in other organisations, as evidenced in the CIPD's research report entitled "Working Life: Employee

Attitudes and Engagement 2006” which found that bullying allegations represented 77% of reported cases. As bullying has extremely negative repercussions for both the employee and the employer, a top priority for all managers has to be the eradication of all forms of bullying and harassment from the workplace. The Council is therefore considering whether to develop, in the future, a course to improve the knowledge and skills of line managers in dealing with bullying and harassment in the workplace.

4.7 Welsh Language Scheme

The Council’s Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board (WLB) on 27th July 2007 and includes, in its action plan, recommendations arising from the WLB’s risk assessment report of 2nd May 2007.

Work for 2008/2009 will focus on implementing the remaining tasks from that action plan, specifically to review and publicise the Council’s Guidance on the Designation of Posts and to improve the availability and analysis of employee Welsh Language data.

4.8 Equality Impact Assessments

In 2008/2009, the impact assessment questionnaires for the twelve prioritised employment activities (see paragraph 3.7 above) will be finalised and considered in detail. Equality Impact Assessment are intended to equality-proof the Council’s policies and procedures and to identify any necessary improvements. It is hoped that any such changes will also be implemented in the forthcoming year.

4.9 The Equality Improvement Framework for Wales

The Equality Improvement Framework for Wales (EIF) was launched in January 2008, as an updated version of the Equality Standard for Local Government in Wales (launched in 2002). The Council had broadly attained Level 2 of the Standard in Employment and Training, which was noted by Committee on 2nd April 2007. Following a national review of the Standard, the EIF has been designed to replace the Standard and focus on outcomes, local needs and risk assessment in line with the principles of the Wales Programme for Improvement.

The EIF has been developed by the WLGA to promote, manage and improve equality within local government. The framework is intended to establish the

basis for mainstreaming - that is, making equality a guiding principle in local governance – and lead to continuous improvement in equality in services, policy and employment. The EIF offers a common approach for dealing with equality for race, the Welsh language, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age.

The Council will consider whether to commit to the EIF, once guidance has been published by the WLGA in Autumn 2008.

Appendix 1

Equalities Working Groups and Forums at NPTCBC

Heads of Service Equalities Group

This Group meets on a quarterly basis to keep under review external equality-related developments, approve corporate equality documents, monitor progress on the implementation of corporate equality policies and action plans and share and develop expertise and experience. It receives minutes from specialist equalities working groups such as DPAG. Its members take a lead in their respective directorates in equality issues and commission corporate equalities training.

Welsh Language Officers Group

This Group develops, and monitors the implementation of, the Council's Welsh Language Scheme. The Group comprises directorate representatives and a representative from Menter Iaith. Good practice is developed or shared.

Neath Port Talbot BME Forum

The BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) Forum was established in 2005 to better understand Neath Port Talbot's BME communities and aspirations. The forum meets three times a year and focuses on issues raised by the BME representatives.

Neath Port Talbot Older Persons Council

Neath Port Talbot's Older Persons Council was established in July 2005, in order to give older people an opportunity to have a formal say about issues that affect their daily lives.

Neath Port Talbot Youth Council

NPT Youth Council is a project designed to empower young people to have their voices heard. It continues to visit young people all over the county borough, in order to set up youth forums in as many areas as possible. In addition to bringing youth issues to the attention of politicians, it offers valuable opportunities for personal development to young people involved, which can improve their employment prospects.

Disabled Persons Advisory Group (DPAG)

This Group comprises representatives from each directorate, the Disability Forum, the CVS and Shaw Trust. It provides an opportunity to raise and address any barriers encountered in addressing Council services or employment. It considers future disability initiatives/events and is currently developing a revised Disability Strategy.

Harassment Support Officers Group

Support Officers meet on a quarterly basis to share experiences in confidence, offer on-going support to one another and receive training. They also contribute to the on-going development of the Harassment at Work Policy and Procedure.

Disabled Employees Forum

Formed in June 2007, this is the Council's only employee-orientated forum. The overall aim of the Forum is to ensure that NPTCBC is an exemplary council in disability matters, as outlined in paragraph 3.4 above.