



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot  
Neath Port Talbot Council

# Let's Be Fair

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council  
Draft Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028

# Contents



Introduction	1
Who we are	2
Structure of the Council	3
The Legislative and Strategic Context	4
Assessment of Impact	8
Training	9
Our Equality Objectives	9
Evidence and Data	12
Monitoring and Review	16
Equalities and Procurement	16
Actions to meet the Equality Objectives	17

If you require this information in larger print or in an alternative format, please contact the Corporate Policy Team on **01639 xxxxxx** or **email: [policy@npt.gov.uk](mailto:policy@npt.gov.uk)**



# Introduction



Welcome to Neath Port Talbot Council's Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2024-2028.

Local councils touch the lives of people in very many ways, delivering valuable public services to our communities, day in, day out. To do this effectively, we must consider and provide for the wide range of needs and aspirations of everyone living and working in our county borough.

Councils in Wales have a legal duty to develop equality objectives and produce a Strategic Equality Plan. Our plan has been produced to meet this requirement, but more importantly to reflect and deliver on our determination to promote genuine equality of opportunity, tackle discrimination and create a fairer and more equitable Neath Port Talbot.

This, the fourth such plan produced by the council, will build on what we have already achieved and set out our equality objectives for the next four years, together with an action plan for delivering on these.

As one of the largest employers in the county borough, promoting equality starts with our own workforce. We have a genuine commitment to equality of opportunity and aim to ensure our workforce is reflective of the communities we serve, so diversity, equality and inclusion is something we take very seriously in order to provide the best services.

We have called our plan 'Let's be fair' as this is something the council can't do alone. 'Let's be fair' is an invitation to everyone in the county borough to join with us, partners, residents and other stakeholders to work together to make NPT a fairer and more equitable place to live.

The publication of the Plan builds upon the progress we have already made.

We welcome people's views and comments throughout the life of the SEP and will consider them, along with those received through other engagement activities, when reviewing our equality objectives and associated actions.

We are proud to present Neath Port Talbot Council's Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028.

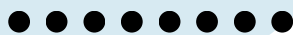


Karen Jones  
Chief Executive, Neath Port Talbot Council



Councillor Steve Hunt  
Leader, Neath Port Talbot Council

## Who We Are



Neath Port Talbot is located on the coast between Swansea to the west and Bridgend to the east. Neath Port Talbot also shares boundaries with Carmarthenshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taff and the Brecon Beacons National Park. Covering an area of over 44,217 hectares, the physical characteristics of the county borough are broadly divided into the coastal corridor and the valleys.

According to the Census 2021, Neath Port Talbot has a resident population of 142,300 and has the 11th highest population density of the 22 local authorities across Wales. This includes 30,131 people over the age of 65.

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 identified that 14% of Lower Super Output Areas (areas with a population of between 1,000 and 3,000) in Neath Port Talbot are in the top 10% of the most deprived areas in Wales. The WIMD is designed to identify those small areas where there are the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation; income, employment, health, education, access to services, housing, community safety and physical environment.

According to the 2021 Census, black and minority ethnic groups account for 3.4% of the population in Neath Port Talbot, compared to 6.2% in Wales.

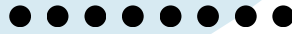
Data from our schools indicates that the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds (non-white British) is 8.8% compared to the all Wales percentage of 13.6%.

At the 2021 Census, of those people indicating a religion, faith or belief, 42.15% described themselves as Christian, 0.75% Muslim, 0.28% Hindu, 0.26% Buddhist, 0.11% Sikh, 0.02% Jewish and 0.44% indicating 'other religion'. 49.8% of people indicated that they have no religion while 6.12% did not answer the question on the Census.

Neath Port Talbot has one of the largest Gypsy and Traveller Communities in Wales with (according to the NPT Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment - 2022) a population of 212. There are three authorised gypsy traveller caravan sites in the county borough with 67 pitches.

At the time of the Census 2021, over three quarters (76.4%) of adults living in Neath Port Talbot considered their health was good/very good, which is slightly lower than the Wales average of 79.1%. 8.5% of adults surveyed felt that their health was bad/very bad, which is a little higher than the average across Wales (6.7%), with 15.1% having a fair standard of health (Wales average 14.1%). 24.7% of our residents indicated that their disability limited their day-to-day activities while the provision of unpaid care (ranging from between one and over 50 hours a week) in Neath Port Talbot is 13.95%.

# Structure of the Council



Within Neath Port Talbot there are 34 electoral wards returning 60 elected members and we operate a cabinet model of local government with a Leader who is supported by nine cabinet members (the Executive). All executive decisions are taken through the Cabinet. Scrutiny Committees monitor the performance and decisions of the Executive and make reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery.

Each Cabinet Member has responsibility for a broad range of matters. The cabinet member for Finance, Corporate Services and Social Justice is our designated Equality Champion, while the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Health is our designated Older Persons' Champion. Further Cabinet Members have portfolios which are associated with the equalities agenda, for example, children, education and community safety.

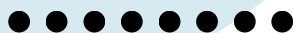
The importance we give to equalities is reinforced by the fact that policies and plans relating to equalities and the Welsh language are amongst the limited number that require approval by full Council.

A senior management group, consisting of the Chief Executive and Corporate Directors oversees the strategic management of the council's business. Heads of Service have individual operational responsibility for services, as well as providing strategic support to senior management.

At the time of writing, we are in the process of reviewing and revising our equalities oversight arrangements at a service level to ensure they remain as effective as possible; these revised arrangements will be detailed in the 2024-2025 Annual Report.



# The Legislative and Strategic Context



## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and replaced previous anti-discrimination legislation, simplified and strengthened the law, removed inconsistencies and made it easier to understand for everyone. By implementing the Act our aim is to work towards creating a fairer society, improving public services, addressing entrenched inequalities and ultimately improving people's lives.

The council, along with other public bodies, is required under the Act to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations amongst and between people of different protected groups (known as the Public Sector Equality Duty).

The protected groups, or characteristics, are:

- age
- gender reassignment
- sex
- race
- disability
- pregnancy and maternity
- sexual orientation
- religion and belief
- marriage and civil partnership (but only in respect of the need to eliminate discrimination)

## Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

In Wales, specific duties have been introduced to help us carry out the public sector duty and these include the production of a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and the development and publication of equality objectives.

## Welsh Language Measure 2011

The Measure gave the Welsh language official status in Wales, established the role of the Welsh Language Commissioner, created a procedure for introducing duties in the form of language standards and made provision regarding promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language amongst other provisions. The Welsh Language Commissioner's role is to promote the Welsh language, and improve the opportunities people have to use it, by emphasising the language's official status in Wales, and by placing standards on organisations.

# The Legislative and Strategic Context (*cont...*)

## Welsh Language Standards (No1) Regulations 2015

These Regulations, imposed on county councils and county borough councils, national park authorities and Welsh Ministers, include a range of standards of conduct in respect of the Welsh language.

The standards were grouped into the following areas:

- service delivery
- policy making
- operational
- promotion
- record keeping

Details on how we have complied with the Welsh language standards are reported on each year in accordance with these Regulations. The latest [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report 2022-2023](#) is published alongside other relevant information on the [Welsh Language pages of our Website](#).

## Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This legislation places duties upon the council to set well-being objectives and to work in a sustainable way to achieve a fairer and more equal Wales. The council has recently revised its Integrated Impact Assessment tool to assist officers in weaving together all of the duties that arise in relation to equality.

## Socio Economic Duty

The Welsh Government introduced this duty on 31 March 2021 and we, along with other public bodies, are required to consider the impact of policy decisions on socio economic grounds more formally than had been done previously. In readiness of the introduction of the duty, our Integrated Impact Assessment tool was revised to include a specific section and thus consideration of the socio-economic inequalities in our area. With the continuing and deepening cost of living crisis along with the national and global economic situation, consideration of and addressing socio economic inequalities has never been so vital.

## Welsh in Education Strategic Plan - Update

We recognise that language and culture are essential parts of an individual's identity and are therefore committed to promoting and celebrating the Welsh language and culture in a pro-active and inclusive way across all our schools.

Our [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022-2032](#) is the cornerstone for this vision and details how we plan to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools and in the wider communities and how we plan for future growth.

# The Legislative and Strategic Context (*cont...*)

## NPT Armed Forces Covenant

We are very aware that veterans of the Armed Forces who, by the very nature of their service involvement, can experience poor mental health and/or physical disabilities. Their experiences not only affect the individual but also impact on family and friends, straining relationships, causing distress, sometimes leading to even more critical situations for all concerned. The strain on family life is not confined to families of veterans but can be experienced by families of those currently serving in the Armed Forces.

As part of our commitment to this work we have signed the UK Government's Armed Forces Covenant and encourage our strategic partners to do so too. Locally, we have signed an Armed Forces Covenant with the Armed Forces community in the county borough and our local strategic partners. Signatories to the Covenant agree to help support the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available. In addition, the Armed Forces community is encouraged to do as much as it can to support its community and promote activity that integrates the service community into civilian life.

We have attained a silver award under the Employer Recognition Scheme while two of our schools, Baglan Primary and Ysgol Cwm Brombil, were awarded gold and bronze status respectively in the Armed Forces Friendly Schools Cymru scheme in recognition of the support given to their service children by embedding good practice into the daily running of the school and creating a positive environment.

We offer a guaranteed interview scheme for Armed Forces veterans (who meet the required criteria), which is included within our application process, providing recruiting managers with clear instruction of any applicants who are eligible. We provide guidance on this process as part of our recruitment and selection training for managers. We continue to provide the Career Transition Partnership (the Ministry of Defence's official provider for supporting leavers of the Armed Forces transitioning from the military into civilian life) with a weekly list of current vacancies.

We are mindful of our responsibility for 'due regard' to ensure that the members of the Armed Forces community are not disadvantaged in relation to health, education and housing and have ensured staff attended the Ministry of Defence online sessions in May 2023 which provided further information on this new requirement.





# The Legislative and Strategic Context (*cont...*)

## Digital Inclusion

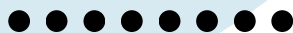
Our new Digital Data and Technology (DDaT) Strategy aims to build on the foundations put in place by our previous digital strategy (Smart and Connected 2018 - 2022). It sets out our strategic vision, aims and delivery themes, demonstrating how we will embrace new approaches and emerging technologies to provide our users with the best value, user-centred products and services.

Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) is fundamental to the successful delivery of council services. We are committed to adopting the best DDaT to transform the services we provide to our residents, businesses, elected members, staff and visitors. However, we remain fully committed to helping our digitally excluded people access the benefits of being online. We understand that there are a wide range of reasons why people may find it hard or impossible to stay connected with family and friends (including skills, affordability, availability of broadband connectivity, personal choice etc.), recognising that this also prevents them from being able to benefit from accessing key services from government channels to online shopping.

We have committed to the Digital Inclusion Charter which aims to help digitally excluded people enjoy the benefits of being online – particularly older people, people with disabilities, unemployed people, social housing tenants, families in poverty and ethnic minority communities.



# Assessment of Impact



The Socio-Economic Duty (Equality Act 2010) which came into force on 31 March 2021 requires councils, when taking strategic decisions such as setting priorities, to consider how their decisions might help to reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

The consideration of the impacts of socio-economic disadvantage had to a degree been part of our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process from the outset. However, with the introduction of the duty a more considered approach was required and the IIA process was revised to ensure its full consideration alongside our other statutory duties.

During 2021-2022 three audits were undertaken by our internal audit service, an external consultant and Audit Wales. These audits considered the completion of and compliance with legislation surrounding Integrated Impact Assessments, the quality of the assessments undertaken and the way that public bodies undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) and what impact this has on decision making, respectively.

In spring 2023, in response to the audits' recommendations, an action plan was developed and is being progressed to ensure the assessment process is as robust.

Training on undertaking impact assessments is a key element in the action plan and as such has been incorporated into the corporate training programme as a mandatory course for leaders, managers and principal officers.

Completed Integrated Impact Assessments form part of decision reports and are published on our website as part of the reports pack for Cabinet. The intention of the Integrated Impact Assessment is that Members have a good understanding of how decisions proposed to be taken impact on people who share protected characteristics, or other factors, enabling them to make safe and informed decisions.

## Training



Training is an important element of our work, not only in helping us meet our equality objectives but also as a key feature in the personal development of employees and Elected Members. As a result a training programme was developed, informed by an assessment of existing provision and feedback from a staff survey, in spring 2023, to help better promote equality in the workplace. The training programme includes general equalities awareness, as well as more specific training on topics such as unconscious bias; awareness training in relation to specific protected characteristics; health and wellbeing as well as Welsh language awareness and Integrated Impact Assessment training.

In addition to specific training to help better promote equality in the workplace, equality issues are also included as a component in other training, e.g. for complaints officers, performance management and performance appraisal for managers training etc.

# Our Equality Objectives



A significant period of time has passed since our last Plan yet the challenges, inequalities and injustices apparent then are no less so now. Our communities continue to face increasing pressures due to the consequences of global conflicts; inequities caused by the impact of the pandemic, inflation and energy prices; more people are seeking help from social services; more people presenting as homeless and more children are needing extra help in school and in travelling to school.

It was against this backdrop that we reviewed our equality objectives and found they remained relevant to our communities in Neath Port Talbot. Changes that were required were in relation to actions to meet these objectives; changes primarily due to the completion of actions; outdated actions/actions of their time; a shift in focus to more relevant actions.

## Our equality objectives, therefore, remain as:

- **Education:** To ensure children and young people are the best they can be
- **Health and Wellbeing:** To promote wellbeing and good mental health and tackle mental health stigma and discrimination
- **Personal Safety:** To ensure people and communities are safe, respected and free from violence and abuse
- **Employment:** To ensure our workforce is more reflective of our community, our policies are fair and equitable and gender pay gaps are reduced
- **Participation:** To ensure services are accessible for all and people and communities are able to better influence decisions that affect them
- **Living standards:** To work to reduce poverty and support independent living

Details of the progress made against these actions during the period 2020-2024 can be found in the various [annual reports](#).

While working to meet the objectives has been key, we have been mindful of our wider responsibilities with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**Youth Mayor:** the positions of Youth Mayor and Deputy Youth Mayor are elected annually by Neath Port Talbot's Youth Council to ensure young people are given a voice and have a say on local issues that matter to them.

**NPT Council LGBTQ+ Employee Network:** this network for council employees who are part of the LGBTQ+ community was launched in 2024. It has been established with agreed terms of reference and a chair and vice chair appointed by its membership. The network provides an opportunity for LGBTQ+ employees to unite, share experiences, seek guidance, and contribute to the enhancement of our workplace environment.

## Our Equality Objectives (cont...)

**NPT Ethnic Network Group:** this council employee group was established with agreed terms of reference and a chair and vice chair appointed by its membership. The Network has been key in helping progress the anti-racism agenda in the council, including helping with the development of actions, and continues to provide valuable insight for our work.

**Our Digital Inclusion and Enablement Project** focuses on reducing digital inequality for disadvantaged groups. By increasing access to digital technologies, the project aims to enhance daily living, support ageing well, and enable digitally excluded residents to access essential services. The project offers support in two ways; regular digital drop-in sessions at various community venues across Neath Port Talbot as well as digital home visits, for those unable to attend community venues due to health or mobility reasons.

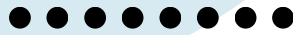
Our continuing work to address poverty experienced by many in our area has included signposting to what help and advice is available; administering the help and support which has been made available and working with partners to see what more we can do, recognising there is already a lot going on at the community level and identifying where we could add value.

**A Memorandum of Understanding** was signed between Swansea University and NPT Council to help work more closely on vital areas of common interest including education, the labour market and in particular helping to boost employment and skills, as well as an emphasis on continuing to find ways to help improve an ageing population's quality of life.

**Our Early Years & Flying Start Team** registered more than 300 two year olds on the Flying Start Programme. The programme helps families with young children in the most disadvantaged areas, offering high quality, funded, part-time childcare as well as parenting support, enhanced health visitor support and support for speech, language and communication where needed.



## Evidence & Data



The following are some of the key documents referred to in the review of the equality objectives and associated actions:

**‘Is Wales Fairer?’** - while the report, published in November 2023, is structured around the nine protected characteristics the data and information contained under each is still relevant to and supports our equality objectives developed in 2020. The report has also supported findings from locally gathered data and it is against this background that our actions have been developed.

**Public Participation Strategy 2023-2027** - we are strongly committed to fostering a culture of partnership with local people and communities, encouraging and supporting them to participate in local democracy, and keeping them informed about how their participation has influenced decisions. Our four year Strategy outlines the council’s objectives, approach and mechanisms for encouraging and enabling public participation, together with information on how local people can influence decision-making.

**Healthy Relationships for Stronger Communities Strategy 2023-2026** - the revised strategy outlines the priority areas and strategic direction around healthy relationships and the implementation of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015 within Neath Port Talbot. Developed with the involvement of partner agencies and survivors, it aims to tackle all forms of violence in relationships, responding to the growing number of referrals being received by specialist providers; reducing harm and improving the lives of those affected.

Having a co-ordinated approach to addressing **“Violence Against Women”** does not mean this neglects abuse directed towards men and boys or other groups and individuals who experience these forms of violence, or that this neglects to deal with violence perpetrated by women, where this occurs.

The strategy identifies the strengths and challenges for our area and sets out a series of achievable actions to help us to realise our long-term vision:

***“To prevent and eradicate gender-based violence by promoting: equality; safety; respect; and, independence to enable everyone to live free from abuse and the attitudes that perpetuate it.”***

**Time to Change Wales Campaign Employer Pledge** - Time to Change Wales is a national campaign to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems. By committing to the Time to Change Wales Campaign’s Employer Pledge the council has publicly declared that we as an organisation want to step up to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination. The associated action plan provides a framework for us to support employees with their mental health, as well as support for training and access to a range of resources.

## Evidence & Data (cont...)



**Access Denied:** Older people's experiences of digital exclusion in Wales - 'The rapid shift towards digital and the digital divide this has created has left many older people in Wales feeling inadequate, that they are not valued by society and that they are being left behind, affecting the ways people feel about themselves and about growing older.' The commentary based on the experiences of older people alongside the work undertaken by public bodies to address digital exclusion amongst this community is the fundamental theme of the report produced by the Older People's Commissioner. Full consideration is being given to the recommendations in the report.

**Cost of Living and Poverty Prevention Steering Group** - this partnership Group was established in 2022 to support people through the cost of living crisis and to develop a longer term approach to poverty prevention in Neath Port Talbot. Work is ongoing to develop a longer-term action plan and an anti-poverty strategy, taking on board developments and work already being undertaken by partners.

**Equalities in Employment** - our latest Annual Equalities in Employment Report provides information collected and published as part of our legal requirements under equality legislation. This annual snapshot, disaggregated by protected characteristics and by specified categories, provides an overview of our workforce.

**Gender Pay Gap** - in our latest gender pay gap report (2023) the mean gender pay gap shows that on average, women earn 3.67% per hour less than men; a decrease from 4.26% since 2022. Over the last four years we have partnered with Chwarae Teg on initiatives to support women in the workplace and to reduce our Gender Pay Gap. We have a Gender Equality Action Plan containing actions to support women in the workplace. We have the opportunity for our managers to use anonymised application forms to improve gender balance in the recruitment process (and in relation to all protected characteristics). We have also won a Chwarae Teg Gender Equality Award for our work in relation to our Mentoring Scheme 'Ment2Be NPT' aimed at supporting low paid women in the workforce to access career development. Whilst Chwarae Teg has now sadly closed, the work to deliver the action plan that we developed in partnership with them will continue, as will our commitment to achieving gender equality in our workplaces.

## Evidence & Data (cont...)



**Welsh Language** - working to meet the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards is key to our work and while we do not always get it right we are committed to the principle of the Welsh Language Measure 2011. Providing a Welsh language service with a limited number of Welsh speakers is challenging. However, we are continually looking at ways to overcome this in order to provide a more effective and responsive service. Our Welsh Language Standard Annual Reports detail how we are meeting the standards.

**Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2023-2028** - the Strategy embodies our vision - 'By 2028 the Welsh language will be more audible and visible in our communities and used by an increased number of people in their daily lives'. It complements and builds on the vision and actions of our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2023-2032; it helps raise the profile of the Welsh language; helps ensure people can participate in society in their language of choice and provides a strong base for developing an environment where people can respect, accept and take pride in the Welsh language.

**NPT Armed Forces Covenant** – as part of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, our Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer (who works across Neath Port Talbot, Swansea and Bridgend) has been key to the various initiatives and projects undertaken in the county borough and regionally; these included the annual Mayor of Neath Port Talbot's Armed Forces Festival, Armed Forces awareness training, Armed Forces village and flag raising at the Wales Air Show.

The Covenant is a promise from the nation ensuring that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.



## Evidence & Data (cont...)



**Neath Port Talbot Corporate Plan** – with our Corporate Plan 2024-2027 we have taken the opportunity to take stock and to reset the council’s priorities in light of the new context we are working within. The refreshed corporate plan describes the next set of actions we believe we need to take to balance the needs of our communities in the present, with the opportunities we will need to grasp if we are to create a more prosperous, fairer and greener future for everyone over the long term.

As part of our review process we have concluded that our purpose, vision and values remain relevant and describe the kind of council we want to become.

Our four well-being objectives set in 2022 are drawn directly from our vision and remain our focus:

- All children get the best start in life
- All communities are thriving & sustainable
- Our local environment, culture & heritage can be enjoyed by future generations
- Local people are skilled and access, high quality, green jobs

**Let’s Keep Talking** - In 2021, we launched a public engagement exercise ‘Let’s Talk’ to inform our corporate priorities as we emerged from the pandemic period. We heard from almost two thousand people as part of that work, including people from different parts of the county borough and people from all sorts of backgrounds.

We repeated the exercise with ‘Let’s Keep Talking’ during the summer of 2023, to ensure we had a good understanding of what matters to people now and to have clear insight about what has changed in people’s lives since the original exercise back in 2021 - 2022.

Audit Wales commented ‘The council has positively engaged with its communities through its Let’s Talk and Let’s Keep Talking initiatives’.





## Evidence & Data (cont...)



**Anti Racism Action Plan for Wales** - The Plan builds on previous Welsh Government initiatives on race equality. The urgency of the Plan was laid bare and intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and by the unparalleled visibility and reaction of the world to the killing of George Floyd in the USA.

To achieve the Welsh Government's vision for a 'Wales which is anti-racist' by 2030 involves concentrating actions in priority areas:

- Leadership within the Welsh Government and across the Welsh public sector
- Education and Welsh Language
- Culture, Heritage and Sport
- Health
- Social Care
- Homes and Places
- Local Government
- Employability and Skills, including Social Partnership and Fair Work and Entrepreneurship
- Nation of Sanctuary – Support for refugees and asylum seekers
- Crime and Justice
- Childcare and Play

**LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales** - the Plan is the framework for LGBTQIA+ policy development across government and with our partners. It sets out the concrete steps Welsh Government will take to strengthen equality for LGBTQIA+ people, to challenge discrimination, and to create a society where LGBTQIA+ people are safe to live and love authentically, openly and freely as themselves.

We have also considered various national and local research findings; latest data available to the council and issues raised by our NPT Ethnic Minority Network and other local equality groups as well as feedback from recent consultations.



## Monitoring & Review



Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 requires the council to publish an annual report of progress made in meeting its equality objectives. The first annual report on this new Strategic Equality Plan, will be for the period 2024-2025 with an anticipated publication date of Autumn 2025.

As our Corporate Plan contains aims and strategic priorities that complement those identified to meet the equality objectives, we will report on progress against these Plans simultaneously in order to provide a more holistic assessment of progress.

The annual report will be presented to Cabinet and once approved will be published on our website and communicated using a range of different media in line with our [Public Participation Strategy](#). The annual report will be made available in alternative formats on request.

## Equalities & Procurement



When procuring works, goods or services from other organisations under a relevant agreement, the council must give due regard to whether it would be appropriate:

- for the selection and award criteria for that contract to include considerations to help meet the general duty.
- to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the general duty the council is required to pay ‘due regard’ at all stages of the procurement process to the need to advance equality, from the design and planning of specifications, advertising, evaluation of submissions and to monitoring and enforcing contracts.

The design and planning of specifications plays a crucial part in determining how promotion of equality may be built into an individual procurement project.

This will shape the equality content of the specification and/or contract conditions and will influence the weight given to equality considerations in selecting tenderers and in tender evaluation. During the monitoring of a contract, the council will act promptly if it becomes aware of poor or non-performance regarding the equality requirements of a contract and will also make appropriate arrangements to promote knowledge and understanding of the general and specific duties for suppliers amongst their employees.

**Procurement Strategy** - at the time of writing, the council is in the process of finalising a Procurement Strategy in readiness for new legislation coming out of the forthcoming procurement law reform at UK and Welsh Government level.

The new strategy will set out how the council’s procurement policies and practices will adhere to a range of additional legislative requirements including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). It will ensure that equality is considered throughout our procurement cycle and that the PSED is applied to all contracts regardless of value, aiding us in undertaking procurement in a socially responsible way. Reference will also be made to how we will work with contractors, where applicable, to ensure they meet the requirements of the PSED and ensure that all contractors take steps to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010.

# Actions to meet the Equality Objectives

## Education



To ensure children and young people are the best they can be

**Priority 1.1** All Children and Young People will have improved levels of attainment by accessing an education that inspires them to learn and develop the skills they need for the future they want.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will work with the childcare sector and partners to develop a more equitable Early Years offer to ensure our youngest learners transition into education successfully.	All early years children transition into education successfully.	Regular monitoring and evaluation of the number nursery/reception aged children accessing education successfully.
We will work with children, young people and families, including Armed Forces families, to access the help they need from services at the earliest opportunity.	All children, young people and families access the early help and support they need.	Regular monitoring and evaluation of early intervention programme outcomes, including Families First and Flying Start.
We will continue to work with year 11 pupils who require enhanced transition support into a successful post 16 destination.	Young people will successfully transition from school into a post 16 destination.  Our young people will be better prepared to transition from school into post 16 destinations.	The number of year 11 pupils who are Not in Education, Employment or Training or whose status is unknown as shown in the Careers Wales destination data snapshot.  The number of young people who state on their Legacy evaluation forms that they are better prepared for the future.

<b>Action</b>	<b>What will be the outcome?</b>	<b>How will we measure it?</b>
We will offer accredited opportunities in non-formal settings.	Young people will have the opportunities to achieve accredited outcomes in a non-formal setting.	The number of young people who are awarded accreditations from the Youth Service.
We will deliver the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme to young people.	Young people will have the opportunities to achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at all levels.	The number of young people who achieve the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
We will provide opportunities for young people to develop their Welsh language skills in non-formal settings.	Young people will be given opportunities to learn about the Welsh language and culture outside of formal education and through recreational, social and non-formal educational sessions and activities.	The number young people who used the Welsh language in a social or recreational setting. (taken from youth service evaluations) The number of young people attending Welsh language provisions.
We will work with schools to reduce barriers to learning and provide an equitable and inclusive education offer to all pupils, particularly those most vulnerable and from low income families.	All pupils will receive an equitable and accessible education and achieve good outcomes related to their ability.	Improved outcomes for all children and young people.
We will work with early years services, parents and schools to identify those children with ALN who require specific support to engage in education successfully.	All early years children will transition successfully into school and receive early intervention and support when required.	Regular monitoring and evaluation of the children's progress.
We will fully Implement the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice 2021 across the Local Authority and in schools within Neath Port Talbot raising standards across our education system.	All pupils will be successfully moved from the old SEN system to the new ALN within the WG timescales.	The number of pupils who have been successfully moved from the old SEN system to the new ALN system.  Performance indicators relating to issuing of new and converted statutory plans.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will ensure that Children Looked After (CLA) receive an equitable education offer and are not disadvantaged as a result of their care status. Learners will be supported to reach their full potential.	All CLA pupils will receive an equitable and accessible education and achieve good outcomes related to their ability.	Regular monitoring and evaluation of CLA progress.
We will work with partners to ensure the Local Authority (LA) fulfils its statutory duties in delivering an equitable offer of post 16 provision for young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN).	We will reduce the number of young people with ALN who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).	The number of young people who successfully transition into post 16 education, employment or training with ALN.
To provide training for teaching in the Curriculum for Wales.	Pupils will make progress towards the four purposes of the Curriculum.	Through a range of self-evaluation activities (lesson observations, learning walks, data analysis, pupil interviews).
To provide leadership pathways at both a local and national level.	Leaders in NPT schools are highly effective.	Through evaluations conducted during regular school visits as well as a range of external verifications (e.g. National Professional Qualification for headteachers).
To provide a range of professional learning opportunities for school staff that supports progress for all learners.	Teachers will develop in key areas identified through effective self-evaluation that benefits the learners in school.	Through self-evaluation activities pupil progress in learning as a result of effective professional learning.
To ensure parents are involved in pupil learning.	A range of community focused school projects will be developed across the LA.	The number of parents involved in activities over time.

**Priority 1.2** All children and young people will be engaged in their learning and have a greater sense of belonging throughout their educational journey

<b>Action</b>	<b>What will be the outcome?</b>	<b>How will we measure it?</b>
We will work with families and communities to encourage engagement in childcare and early education to help more children prepare for a lifetime of learning.	An increased number of children will engage in childcare and early education.	Early Years and Childcare Development officers will monitor and evaluate the number of children engaged in childcare and early education.
We will continue to work with pupils, parents/carers and schools to reduce the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions.	Fewer pupils excluded.	Number of pupil exclusions by vulnerable group (e.g. ALN / CLA / Forces).
We will collect data from schools and support schools to address bullying and harassment in all its forms and work with them to address trends/issues.	Data collated and analysed.	Reports by schools on any issues regarding bullying and harassment.
We will work with schools and other relevant settings to support pupils who are victims of bullying and work with perpetrators of bullying.	Victims and perpetrators supported.	Feedback from victims and perpetrators on the success of intervention and support from a multiagency approach.

<b>Action</b>	<b>What will be the outcome?</b>	<b>How will we measure it?</b>
schools and other relevant settings to ensure that their learning environments are safe and nurturing, where there is respect and due regard to equality, diversity and inclusion.	implement a pedagogically appropriate approach that ensures learning environments are nurturing, safe and inclusive.	Education officers will monitor and evaluate the quality of learning environments.
We will work with schools, children, young people, families and partners to continue to develop the Community Focused Schools approach.	More parents will be engaged in learning and use the assets within the school. Parents will have a greater understanding of their children's progression.	Number of parents involved in the participating schools.
We will work in partnership with schools and local organisations to ensure our children and young people 'are knowledgeable about their culture, community, society and the world now and in the past and respect the needs and rights of others, as a member of a diverse society'.	Every school will produce a vision statement that reflects their approach to providing a diverse curriculum.	Education Support Officers will evaluate the extent to which schools are making progress towards the four purposes of the Curriculum and challenge leaders on the extent that they are realising their vision statement.
We will work with schools and local organisations to ensure teaching of the new curriculum reflects the multi-ethnic nature of Wales.	Every school will produce a vision statement that reflects their approach to providing a diverse curriculum.	Education Support Officers will evaluate the extent to which schools are making progress towards the four purposes of the Curriculum and challenge leaders on the extent that they are realising their vision statement.
We will provide targeted group support to young carers, LGBTQ+ young people, young people with speech, language and communication needs and electively home educated young people to reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences.	<p>Young people will be given the opportunity to access needs led youth work support.</p> <p>Young people will report an improvement in their wellbeing as a result of accessing provision.</p>	<p>The number of young people attending targeted groups.</p> <p>The number of young people who state on their evaluation forms that they have improved wellbeing or feel better about themselves.</p>

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will offer youth work caseload support via a range of provisions to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of young people.</p>	<p>Young people will be offered support by a family's first youth worker via an Early Intervention and Prevention Panel referral.</p> <p>Young people will be offered support by a Wellbeing youth worker via a Legacy or risk of homelessness referral.</p>	<p>Number of young people supported.</p> <p>Number of young people stating that they have improved wellbeing.</p>
<p>The Youth Service will deliver Relationship Sexuality Education (RSE) to year 7 pupils and to young people via the Relationship Advice Drop-in Service (RADS) in community-based settings.</p>	<p>Young people will be given the opportunity to attend RSE and RADS sessions which cover topics such as puberty, safe relationships, contraception, pregnancy, abortion, sexually transmitted infections, LGBTQ+ etc.</p>	<p>Number of young people attending RSE sessions in schools and RADS sessions in the community.</p> <p>Number of young people who state that they are now enabled to make positive life choices.</p>





# Health & Wellbeing



**To promote wellbeing and good mental health within the workplace and tackle mental health stigma and discrimination**

**Priority 2.1** Our Staff will be supported and appropriate services promoted

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will deliver our Mental Health Strategy in partnership with Time to Change Wales.</p>	<p>We will raise awareness and provide information about mental health and signpost to support services, as well as providing training and resources for staff to help reduce the stigma associated with Mental Health.</p> <p>We will continue to provide a network of mental health champions.</p>	<p>Sickness Absence Data Employee Survey Data from the Employee Assistance Programme Number of employees who undertake Mental Health First Aid Training.</p>
<p>We will develop actions to support neurodivergence in the workplace: this year we will review and implement our Recruitment Policy to consider neurodivergence in recruitment. We will also provide line manager training sessions in relation to Neurodivergence in the workplace.</p>	<p>Managers will have guidance in relation to inclusive recruitment practices. This will support our recruitment procedures, making us an employer of choice in supporting those with neurodivergent conditions through the recruitment process.</p>	<p>We will report the numbers of managers who have attended the training. Feedback from candidate journey questionnaire.</p>
<p>We will support the wellbeing of school staff through high quality staff supervision.</p>	<p>Improved wellbeing for school staff.</p>	<p>YP Core scores pre and post supervision.</p>
<p>We will continue to support the wellbeing needs of school staff through a Staff Counselling Service.</p>	<p>Improved wellbeing for school staff.</p>	<p>YP core scores pre and post counselling.</p>

**Priority 2.2** The emotional health and wellbeing needs of Children and Young People will be improved.

<b>Action</b>	<b>What will be the outcome?</b>	<b>How will we measure it?</b>
We will work closely with schools and partner agencies to ensure that the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing is embedded across the Authority.	Schools will implement and embed the whole school approaches to addressing the needs of learners with emotional health and wellbeing needs.	Number of schools fully implementing the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing.
We will encourage and enable our children and young people to enjoy the green, natural and open spaces in their communities for the benefit of their physical health and emotional wellbeing.	All children and young people have access to green, natural and open spaces in their community.	Local Authority Play Sufficiency Implementation Group to monitor and review the number of open play spaces across the local authority.
We will work with partners to develop a high-quality and diverse range of play, physical activities and recreation opportunities.	There will be an increased number of high-quality and diverse play, physical activities and recreation opportunities across Neath Port Talbot.	Local Authority Play Sufficiency Implementation Group to monitor and review.
We will ensure that all youth workers will have mental health first aid training.	Young people will be able to access mental health qualified youth workers.	Number of youth workers who are mental health first aid qualified.
To ensure that children and young people receive the right support, at the right time, for their emotional wellbeing ('No Wrong Door' principle).	Children and Young people access appropriate support across the region.	The development of a regional access point for emotional health and wellbeing (current work stream under the Children and Young People's Partnership Board).
Continued development of early offers of help for emotional health and wellbeing.	Young people will have access to support at the earliest opportunity, and prior to crisis.	Number of young people who access Early Intervention Prevention services through education and EIP panel.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will offer children the opportunity to engage in activities in the community.	<p>Children will be supported with their emotions through group activities.</p> <p>Children will be given the opportunity to attend social activities.</p>	<p>Number of children attending the Caesar Programme.</p> <p>Number of children to attend organised activities through Team Around the Family.</p>

**Priority 2.3** Our Communities that need support will be able to access appropriate services

Actions	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will contribute to the Public Services Board's work to reduce suspected suicide rates in the county borough.	Increase awareness and understanding of suicide across the region.	Number of suspected suicides reported per year.
We will honour our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, by supporting members of the Armed Forces Community (veterans, those currently serving and reservists), and their families to help ensure that they are not disadvantaged by their service, when accessing health and wellbeing support and services.	<p>Members of the Armed Forces Community (veterans, those currently serving and reservists) will be signposted to relevant services.</p> <p>Where needed/ appropriate, we will advocate with these services on behalf of members of the Armed Forces Community via our Armed Forces Liaison Officer (AFLO).</p>	<p>Number of members of the Armed Forces Community signposted to services by our AFLO.</p> <p>Number of contacts made by AFLO to advocate on behalf of members of the Armed Forces Community.</p>

# Personal Safety



To ensure people and communities are safe, respected and free from violence and abuse

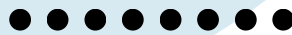
**Priority 3.1** People feel safe in their homes

Actions	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will increase the reports of Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in Neath Port Talbot, through awareness raising and challenging attitudes.</p>	<p>More people will be confident to report incidents.</p>	<p>Increase or decrease in reporting incidents of domestic abuse to SWP (data dependent on SWP).</p>
<p>We will increase awareness in children and young people of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and that abusive behaviour is always wrong.</p>	<p>More children and young people will be aware of healthy relationships.</p>	<p>Number of children who receive an age appropriate Healthy Relationship lesson.</p>
<p>Provide all victims with equal access to appropriately resourced, high quality, needs-led, strength based, gender responsive services across Neath Port Talbot.</p>	<p>Services are appropriate and available/accessible to all.</p>	<p>Narrative around developing provision or changes to services.</p>

### Priority 3.2 People feel safe in the community

Actions	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will provide mandatory training for all staff on Group A of the Violence against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.</p>	<p>This will meet requirements set out in the statutory guidance for the National Training Framework (NTF) for Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV).</p> <p>Our employees will have increased awareness of issues that impact on our communities and can take action that is appropriate to their job.</p>	<p>Number of staff trained.</p>
<p>We will provide training on the Prevent duty.</p>	<p>All staff will know what Prevent is and understand why Prevent is important, understand how Prevent applies to their role, will be able to identify the emotions and behaviours that might make someone susceptible to radicalisation.</p> <p>Staff will understand how to apply the notice, check, share procedure.</p>	<p>Number of staff trained.</p>
<p>We will work with members of local equality groups, partners and our communities to encourage the reporting of hate incidents/crime and ensure people get support which is fit for purpose.</p>	<p>An increased confidence amongst communities in reporting hate incidents/ crimes.</p>	<p>Increase or decrease in the reporting of hate crime (data dependent on SWP).</p>
<p>We will develop an action plan in response to our review of harm outside the family home.</p>	<p>Children and young people will be protected from harm outside the family home.</p> <p>Increased awareness of what is harm outside the family home across key partnership group and statutory services .</p>	<p>Number of referrals received in relation to harm outside the family home.</p>

# Employment



**To ensure our workforce is more reflective of our community, our policies are fair and equitable and gender pay gaps are reduced**

**Priority 4.1** Our workforce reflects our diverse communities and is supported by our policies

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will join the Proud Councils Partnership.	As a Council we be supporting the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer (LGBTQ+) community.	Confirmation of the partnership. Participation in LGBTQ+ activities.
We will work with staff to determine the appetite to establish an employee LGBTQ+ network.	As a Council we will be supporting the LGBTQ+ community and ensuring their voices are heard.	Qualitative feedback and establishment of the network.
We will work with staff to determine the appetite to establish an employee Disability network.	As a Council we will be supporting our disabled employees and ensure their voices are heard.	Qualitative feedback and establishment of the network.
We will review our gender reassignment policy.	To have a policy in place to support our employees and ensure they can be themselves at work, ensuring it is also reflective of legislation.	We will take feedback from our employees to ensure the revised policy is appropriate, supportive and easy to access.
We will sign up to the Age-friendly Employer Pledge, a nationwide programme for employers who recognise the importance and value of older workers.	To commit to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s and taking the necessary action to help them flourish in a multigenerational workforce.	Number of employees in the workforce aged 50 and over.  Number of applicants, shortlisted and appointed aged 50 and over.  Signing of the pledge.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>As members of the Carers Wales, Employers for Carers Subscription Membership, we will work towards the 'Carers' Confident Benchmark' and develop our Carers' Policy arrangements.</p>	<p>This scheme assists to build a supportive and inclusive workplace for carers that makes the most of the talents that carers can bring to the workplace, and ensure that employees who are carers feel supported, have access to information, advice, assistance and support.</p> <p>Training will be provided for HR Officers and line managers on how to support carers.</p>	<p>We will carry out a survey to identify carers in our workforce and an initial consultation and diagnostic session to enable us to develop an action plan. We have also added functionality in iTrent Employee Self Service for employees to identify themselves as 'Carers' which will be monitored.</p>
<p>We will develop and deliver a programme of Equality and Diversity Training across our workforce which will include an Introduction to Anti-Racism, Hate Crime and Modern Slavery Awareness, and Multicultural Awareness.</p>	<p>Staff will be aware of the need to provide equal opportunities to everyone and how to protect people from being discriminated against.</p>	<p>Number of staff trained.</p>
<p>We will develop an anti-racism Strategy, in partnership with the Council's Ethnic Employee Network Group, developing a set of evidenced based actions linked to the commitments of the Unison Anti-Racism Charter, with the aim of improving equality and diversity amongst the Council's workforce and employment opportunities for residents.</p>	<p>Improving the working lives and employment opportunities of employees and job applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p>	<p>Number of employees/ applicants from ethnic minority backgrounds.</p> <p>Work in partnership with Ethnic Employee Network Group to deliver an Anti-Racism Policy including clear guidance on dealing with racist incidents.</p> <p>Hold initiatives such as targeted recruitment events for people from ethnic minority backgrounds annually.</p> <p>Provide Anti-Racism Training to our employees.</p>

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
Increase the use of Welsh in the workplace.	To improve the Welsh language skills of the workforce by providing and promoting Welsh language skills training courses.	Number of attendees taking up Welsh language courses.
Increase the number of Welsh speaking employees.	To increase the number of employees who feel competent to use the Welsh language in the workplace to improve service provision.	<p>Number of employees attending Welsh language training courses.</p> <p>Number of employees reporting their Welsh language skills.</p>
We will, in the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant, look to extend our guaranteed interview scheme for Armed Forces veterans to include those currently serving, reservists and their spouses) and ensure this is implemented across the council.	Guaranteed Interview scheme will be updated and published and recruiting managers will be aware of the scheme.	Number of members of the Armed Forces Community who receive an interview for positions within the council.
We will seek to achieve Gold award status for Neath Port Talbot Council in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).	NPT Council will be recognised as an employer that pledges, demonstrates or advocates support to defence and the armed forces community, and aligns its values with the Armed Forces Covenant.	Gold award ERS status achieved by 2028.



**Priority 4.2** We assist and provide support to members of our communities to enter employment (NEW)

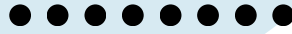
Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will provide high quality apprenticeship, traineeship and work experience opportunities within the council's workforce, including opportunities to use the Welsh language in the workplace.</p>	<p>Our young people will be better prepared to enter the world of work and will be more attractive to future employers.</p>	<p>The number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Traineeships</li> <li>• Work experience opportunities</li> </ul> <p>Number of recognised qualifications achieved by those on formal apprenticeship schemes.</p> <p>Number on formal apprenticeship schemes gaining employment in the council.</p>
<p>We will offer opportunities to young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) to help them gain experience and skills in order to enter the world of employment.</p>	<p>More young people not in employment, education, or training (NEETs) will be better prepared to enter the world of work.</p>	<p>Number of NEETs taking up opportunities to gain experience and skills</p> <p>Number of NEETs entering employment.</p>
<p>We will, in the spirit of the Armed Forces Covenant, offer opportunities to young people from the Armed Forces Cadets to help them gain experience and skills in order to enter the world of employment.</p>	<p>Armed Forces Cadets will be better prepared to enter the world of work.</p>	<p>Number of armed forces cadets undertaking work experience with the council.</p>
<p>We will provide accessible training/skills sessions for young people and adults to upskill/undertake skills training.</p>	<p>More young people and adults will have additional skills to support their return to work / entering employment.</p>	<p>Number of young people and adults who access our training courses.</p> <p>Number of young people and adults who gain employment as a result of additional training</p>

### Priority 4.3 Our Gender Pay Gaps are reduced

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will address the gender pay gap within the council through actions set out in the Gender Equality Action Plan, developed in partnership with Chwarae Teg via the Fair Play Employer Scheme.</p>	<p>The ultimate aim is that the Council has no gender pay gap.</p>	<p>We monitor this through the Gender Pay Gap Annual Report and Annual Equalities in Employment Report.</p>
<p>We will review the career mentoring scheme 'NPT Ment2Be' for low paid women, giving consideration to feedback from the initial cohort.</p>	<p>The aim of this scheme is to support the career progression of low paid women within the workforce but will be promoted to other groups and protected characteristics.</p>	<p>We will demonstrate progress through recruitment data and pay data.</p> <p>We will also measure qualitative data through feedback from mentors and mentees and the numbers of those taking part in the scheme.</p>
<p>We will roll out the implementation of anonymised application forms in our recruitment process.</p>	<p>The aim is to eliminate bias in our recruitment process.</p>	<p>We will monitor this via the recruitment data in the Annual Equalities report.</p>



# Participation



To ensure services are accessible for all and people and communities are able to better influence decisions that affect them

**Priority 5.1** Our services, digital and traditional, are accessible to all

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will continuously review and update our website to improve accessibility.</p>	<p>Improved accessibility for all web content, making it easier for users to access and engage with the content they require, in turn reducing contact via non-digital channels.</p> <p>Compliance with the minimum AA standard, which all public sector websites must comply with.</p>	<p>We use best practice accessibility tools such as Silktide to monitor our website for accessibility issues and continue to iterate our website to ensure it meets this standard. We are currently ranked by Silktide in the top 20 UK Council websites for accessibility. Specific corporate reporting metrics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· NPT corporate Website User Satisfaction score</li> <li>· WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) accessibility compliance score against 'AA' standard</li> <li>· NPT website Content score (Quality of content on the website).</li> </ul>



Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will travel to locations across the county borough to ensure transport barriers and ICT equipment is overcome for those who do not have direct access.	Greater participation due to less barriers.	No of people attending drop in sessions/workshops Attendance lists, feedback forms, case studies.
Digital Inclusion Ambassador to complete a mapping exercise regarding current delivery and gaps identified.	Robust understanding of needs in communities.	Report completed.
We will deliver the Public Participation Strategy Action Plan.	Our communities will be more informed and involved in local democracy.	Progress against actions in Public Participation Plan by 2027.
We will ensure that the services provided by the council to the Armed Forces Community under the Armed Forces Covenant are accessible online, but also by telephone and email via the Armed Forces Liaison Officer (AFLO), and by signposting to the website and telephone number for the Veteran Gateway.	Up-to-date and accessible information will be available on the council's channels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on relevant webpages and other channels updated.</li> <li>• Analytics for relevant webpages</li> <li>• Number of emails and calls dealt with by AFLO</li> <li>• Analytics for relevant social media posts.</li> </ul>
The Democratic Services Committee will undertake a focussed piece of work on 'Diversity in Democracy', via a specific Task and Finish Group.	<p>A reviewed and updated Diversity in Democracy Action Plan.</p> <p>A clear, public commitment from the council to improving diversity.</p>	The Diversity in Democracy Action Plan will contain SMART measures and will be reported to Council for approval and be monitored by the Democratic Services Committee as per the agreed timescales.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will consider how to communicate more effectively with our various communities e.g. social media and young people, use of QR codes and videos etc. for people who struggle with letters and the written word.</p>	<p>Our reach to our various communities will improve.</p>	<p>Social media - Insights on the relevant platform to measure reach, clicks, impressions etc...</p> <p>Young people – Insights on social media to track age of people viewing content.</p> <p>QR codes – Google Analytics to track the use of QR codes (will need assistance from Digital services)</p> <p>View content – Social media insights and YouTube analytics to measure number of views, length of time watched.</p>
<p>All new builds will be compliant with building regulations (Part M).</p>	<p>Building Regulation will be met for all new builds.</p>	<p>Buildings will be accessible for all with appropriate facilities.</p>
<p>Our buildings will continue to be assessed and reasonable adjustments made in improve accessibility.</p>	<p>Improvements will be made across Authority buildings to ensure they are accessible for all.</p> <p>Maintenance and renewal projects would look to address and accessibility issues.</p>	<p>Buildings accessible for all.</p>

**Priority 5.2** Our communities will enjoy increased social and community cohesion

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will support local groups, including the BME Community Association and the Neath Port Talbot LGBTQIA+ Group, to develop community activities and events.</p>	<p>An increase in relevant community activities and events.</p>	<p>Number of relevant community activities and events.</p>
<p>We will provide information and a signposting service for those who wish to learn English and/or Welsh.</p>	<p>Information on relevant training courses and other less formal opportunities are more readily available to our residents.</p>	<p>The number of hits on the relevant pages of our website.</p>
<p>We will understand the needs of our ageing community and facilitate the development of a NPT Ageing Well Strategy and strengthening of policies to respond to these needs.</p>	<p><b>Broad</b> The ability for people of all ages to live healthy, safe and fulfilling lives. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear understanding of the needs of our ageing community.</li> <li>• Development of a Neath Port Talbot Ageing Well Strategy and Action Plan.</li> <li>• Local policies are underpinned by the WHO Ageing Well Principles Local policies are underpinned by the concept and Ageing Well.</li> </ul>	<p><b>High level</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An approved NPT Ageing Well Strategy and Action Plan.</li> <li>• An increase in the number of policies locally that recognise and respond to the needs of our communities by ensuring individuals can age well.</li> </ul> <p><b>Broad</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of individuals feeling more informed / empowered.</li> <li>• Reduced sense of loneliness and or social isolation.</li> <li>• Individuals reporting an increased sense of health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Improved access to public or private transport links.</li> <li>• Improved sense of belonging.</li> <li>• Improved digital access and inclusion.</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>What will be the outcome?</b>	<b>How will we measure it?</b>
<p>We will develop a rights-based approach to our work, with a focus on children’s rights working with Youth Mayor, Youth Council amongst others.</p>	<p>The Youth council will carry out an annual survey with young people and feed the results back to Cabinet.</p>	<p>The number of young people completing the survey and any actions taken on the issues identified.</p>
<p>We will revise our Consultation and Engagement Strategy and strengthen our existing engagement mechanisms, e.g. the Let’s Keep Talking activities and the NPT Citizens’ Panel, and use responses to ensure that the Council’s policy making, and service development is informed by what matters to people.</p>	<p>The revised Consultation and Engagement Strategy (and accompanying toolkit) will set working standards for consultation and engagement activity across the council. This will help ensure that our consultation and engagement is effective, robust, consistent and accessible, so that everyone in our communities can have the opportunity to have their say on the decisions that affect them.</p> <p>The NPT Citizens’ Panel will be reviewed and refreshed.</p>	<p>Revised Consultation and Engagement Strategy and toolkit published in 2024/25.</p> <p>Increase in membership of the NPT Citizens’ Panel.</p> <p>NPT Citizens’ Panel will more closely represent the profile of residents in the county borough in terms of geographical spread and protected characteristics.</p>
<p>We will work with organisations that support the Armed Forces Community to help reduce isolation and loneliness, which is felt by many when they leave the services or by a member of the family when the serving family member is deployed on active service or training.</p>	<p>Members of the Armed Forces Community will be more aware of and will be referred to relevant information and support to help reduce isolation and loneliness.</p>	<p>Number of people from the Armed Forces Community referred by the Armed Forces Liaison Officer to relevant organisations for support.</p>

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will work in partnership with relevant groups to address our shared history and explore ways to better express this within our communities.</p>	<p>We will make more creative and cultural use of existing public space to encourage participation, increase access, and promote a vibrant Welsh culture and language, including public art installations and signage inside and outside existing cultural venues and within new civic and commercial developments.</p> <p>We will continue to bring to life Neath Port Talbot's Welsh cultural offer and contemporary stories that create resonance and connection with our people today. We will make outstanding use of signage and interpretation to help every resident feel that the Welsh language and culture is important to them, and every visitor feel that they have visited somewhere with a proud and distinct identity.</p>	<p>Percentage of targets met within the Culture Strategy action plan.</p>

### Priority 5.3 Decision making

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will develop an equalities training programme for elected members.</p>	<p>Informed and legal decisions continue to be taken in which all the various statutory duties etc. are considered.</p>	<p>Number of members attending training sessions.</p>



# Living Standards



## To work to reduce poverty and support independent living

**Priority 6.1** People and communities will benefit from interventions to alleviate poverty

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
We will utilise LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) to ensure support is directed to those in most need.	People are aware of what help is available and how to access it.	Number of people accessing support following LIFT campaigns.  Value of benefit claimed (where appropriate).
We will continue to coordinate the Food & Fun provision to help tackle holiday hunger and support those families, children and young people to have a more positive summer holiday.	Young people will be given opportunities to access free fun activities and food during the summer holidays.	Number of schools offering the food and fun provision.  Number of young people attending food and fun provisions.
The youth service will provide support to 16-18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).	Young people will be offered person centred support to help them overcome their barriers.	Number of young people who enter employment, education or training.
The youth service will provide support to 15-18 year olds who have been identified as being at risk of becoming homeless.	Young people will be offered person centred support to help avoid the need to access housing and homelessness services.	Number of young people who receive support.  Number of young people who are better prepared for independent living.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
The youth service will provide community-based youth clubs and detached or outreach activities to young people.	<p>Youth clubs will offer low cost or free activities to young people.</p> <p>Youth clubs will offer a warm space for young people in a range of locations.</p>	<p>Number of youth clubs open.</p> <p>Number of young people accessing youth clubs.</p> <p>Number of detached and outreach sessions provided.</p>
To support families to purchase essential items.	Families will have access to essential items.	Number of successful grant applications.
The Working Together Service will support families to improve their home environment.	Families will reside in an appropriate and safe environment.	Number of families who successfully achieve their outcome.
Care experienced young people are not disadvantaged in society.	To support care experienced young people in being financially independent.	Number of care experienced young people in higher education, apprenticeships and/or employment.

**Priority 6.2** People will benefit from programmes and support to live as independently as possible

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>Care experienced young people will be prepared to live independently.</p> <p>To support young people to develop independent living skills through groups facilitated by Participation and Engagement officers.</p>	Care experienced young people will live happy and fulfilled lives.	Number of care experienced young people accessing independent living groups.
Care experienced young people will have suitable accommodation.	Care experienced young people will have safe and stable accommodation.	Number of care experienced young people who live independently.

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will support the Regional Partnership Board to develop and continue to provide a sustainable range of services that meet demand, enabling individuals to remain at home maintaining their independence for as long as possible receiving appropriate support at times of need.</p>	<p>Individuals are supported by having access to relevant services allowing them to remain in their communities for as long as possible.</p>	<p>As part of the Local and Regional Partnership Boards we will review performance against agreed objectives to ensure services are effective.</p>
<p>Adult Services will continue to develop and deliver Safe and Well Volunteering to those aged 18+ who are experiencing, and at risk of chronic social isolation and loneliness.</p>	<p>Reduced Social Isolation and improvement in overall wellbeing.</p> <p>Enhanced community cohesion.</p> <p>Reduction in social isolation leading to better health outcomes and reduction in healthcare costs.</p>	<p>Number of Volunteers recruited.</p> <p>Number of people supported by Safe and Well Volunteering.</p> <p>Number of Volunteer Hours Provided.</p> <p>Number of social groups supported by Safe and Well Volunteers.</p>

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will continue to develop and deliver a range of assistive technology services to support people aged 18+ to achieve personal outcomes, support progression, and promote a digital first approach where appropriate.</p>	<p>People will be enabled to stay safely at home for longer using technologies.</p> <p>Reduced Social Isolation and improvement in overall wellbeing due to facilitated communications/interactions using technology.</p> <p>Facilitate carer/family to support their loved ones, reducing carer burnout.</p> <p>Enhance capacity of care/support services.</p> <p>Prevent, reduce or delay escalation of care needs for older people and adults with disabilities.</p>	<p>Number of people utilising assistive technologies to support independence.</p> <p>Number of packages of care enhanced/enabled with technology.</p> <p>Number of people (including staff) better informed of how digital technologies can support independence and safety at home.</p>
<p>We will provide young people with opportunities to enhance their independent living skills by supporting young parents.</p>	<p>Young parents will be able to access free youth work support and sessions, which will raise awareness of housing and employability related topics.</p>	<p>Number of young parents supported.</p> <p>Number of young parents who state that they now know where to go for help and support.</p>

**Priority 6.3** Transport links are maintained or enhanced

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>We will support community transport initiatives.</p>	<p>Our Passenger Transport section continue to support community transport operators and look for new opportunities to expand their services.</p> <p>Increasing the transport choice for local residents.</p>	<p>Annual review and monitoring of new community transport initiatives introduced.</p>
<p>We will work in partnership with regional transport officers, Welsh Government and Transport for Wales to improve local transport and regional connectivity.</p>	<p>Bringing a host of partners together to design and implement a new a transport network which serves the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses.</p> <p>The outcome will be a new Bus Franchise for South West Wales by spring 2026. Further enhancements to the council’s Active travel Network to integrate with transport hubs.</p> <p>A Regional Transport Plan 2025-2030.</p>	<p>This will be a long-term project over a number of years. Work is ongoing with regional partners to explore schemes with Transport for Wales that will improve transport links throughout the region.</p> <p>Annual reports will be presented to Cabinet to monitor progress on Active Travel and the implementation of a Regional Transport Plan and Local Bus Network via the Franchise.</p>
<p>We are working in partnership with WG and TFW on the new franchised network which WG are leading on.</p>	<p>To improve the bus network, running bus routes that work for our local communities.</p>	<p>Quarterly updates to be produced for Welsh Government.</p>

Action	What will be the outcome?	How will we measure it?
<p>At highway locations where maintenance, structural renewal is a priority, or active travel and safe routes in communities are planned the Council will endeavour to address any local accessibility issues at the same time, such as the need for dropped crossings and ramps.</p>	<p>Promoting active travel and further develop the County's walking and cycleway network ensuring accessibility for older and disabled people.</p> <p>Improved accessibility for all. Ensuring new developments are accessible.</p> <p>Working with business in Town Centres to improve accessibility from the highway.</p>	<p>Improvements to walking networks.</p> <p>All improvements made in line with Active travel guidance.</p> <p>Active Travel Delivery Plan quarterly updates to be produced for Welsh Government.</p>
<p>We will provide transport for young carers to enable them to access the young carers group.</p>	<p>Young people and their families will be offered free transport to the young carers group to make accessing the group easier for families.</p>	<p>Number of young carers accessing the free transport.</p>