

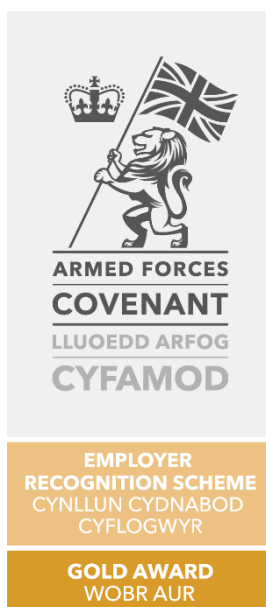
Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2023/24

*Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh*

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Strategic Equality Plan

Annual Report 2023/2024

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Executive Summary

Welcome to the fourth and final annual report for Flintshire County Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 which sets out the progress we made to achieve our seven equality objectives during 2023/24. The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan is to reduce inequalities experienced by people with protected characteristics.

During 2023/24, we maintained our status as a Disability Confident Employer, a scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

Our commitment to equality is also reflected in our schools. We were delighted when students from our schools decided to work with the Youth Service to organise their own Pride event to raise awareness of issues facing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people and to celebrate being different.

We continued to work with the University of Manchester, piloting a new tool for impact assessments. Implementing a new approach to impact assessments will be a priority for 2024/25.

Going forward we will focus on implementing our new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028, which incorporates actions from Welsh Government Anti-racist Wales Action Plan and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan. We will also work towards achieving the Trust Mark for Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter.

Neal Cockerton
Chief Executive

Councillor Linda Thomas
Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2023/2024

1. Introduction

1.1 This annual report for the Council's [Strategic Equality Plan](#) (SEP) 2020-2024 covers the period April 2023 to March 2024. The report sets out progress to meet our [equality objectives](#) and provides a summary of achievements during this time.

1.2 The Equality Act 2010 introduces a public sector duty to

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

1.3 The protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are:

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

Our commitment to the Welsh language and treating English and Welsh languages on the basis of equality are set out in the [Welsh Language Compliance Notice](#). The action we have taken to meet our statutory responsibilities for Welsh language are covered in a separate [report](#).

The specific equality duties also require public bodies to: -

- publish objectives to address pay differences;
- publish a statement setting out the steps it has taken or intends to take to meet the objectives and how long it expects to take to meet each objective;
- produce an annual report by 31st March each year, which will include specified employment information, including information on training and pay;
- engage with people from protected groups;
- assess impact of new and revised policies on people from protected groups; and
- publish and use equality information.

The purpose of the equality objectives is to reduce specific areas of inequality which were identified using both qualitative and quantitative evidence. We have also worked with the other public bodies across North Wales to identify regional equality objectives.








1.4 Alongside the [SEP](#) our work on equality is supported by a [Diversity and Equality Policy](#), and Plain Language Guide and delivered as part of various Council documents such as the Council Plan and Customer Strategy.

2. Progress

2.1 Our [equality objectives](#) and [Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24](#) were published in March 2020. The action plan to meet the SEP is provided in Appendix 1; this also highlights the progress made to meet each action.

2.2 The following table sets out our performance towards achieving the actions we set ourselves. For each objective, we have assessed ourselves using the following criteria:

- R** **Limited Progress** - delay in scheduled activity; not on track
- A** **Satisfactory Progress** - some delay in scheduled activity, but broadly on track
- G** **Good Progress** - activities completed on schedule, on track

Equality Objective	Progress
Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.	
Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being	
Ensure equal pay within the workplace by having in place fair, open and transparent grading and salary strategies in place	
Improve personal safety for all protected groups	
Increasing access to services and decision making for all protected groups	
Improve living standards of people with different protected characteristics	
Develop our knowledge of the socio-economic duty to protect people from poverty	

3. Meeting our Equality Objectives 2023/24

3.1 This section sets out our key achievements to meeting our seven equality objectives during 2023/24.

Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.

During 2023/24:

- Managing Anxiety courses were offered to employees to support them to manage their mental health.
- A Mental Health First Aid course was available for employees, which aimed to promote understanding of mental health issues and to provide the skills to respond appropriately to others, who may need support.
- Through Carers Wales, “Me Time”, on-line support sessions were offered to carers.
- We participated in [Time to Talk Day](#) encouraging employees to talk about mental health.
- A Catch, Challenge and Change your Negative Thinking course was offered to employees. This looked at how thinking impacts stress and anxiety and explored the unhelpful thinking styles that can become habit forming and the negative thoughts that can impact daily lives.
- Managing Stress at Work courses were provided to employees, in addition to Well-being, Resilience and Mindfulness workshops. These provided an opportunity to learn about and experience mindfulness skills to help employees notice and become more self-aware of unhelpful patterns of thinking; developing the ability to self-regulate response to stress.
- During the Christmas period, information on support available to employees who felt unable to cope or who were lonely was promoted to the workforce.
- Alongside Jobcentre Plus we organised a successful Health and Well-being event which brought together local health care providers from a wide range of service providers to support individuals in Flintshire who live with a health condition, or who care for someone with a health condition. It gave local people the opportunity to meet these services face to face and access advice about what is available to assist with an existing health condition.
- A Team of Mental Health Champions has now been established within the Streetscene and Transportation Portfolio. The role of the Champions is to be the “Go – To” people who can listen to employees concerns and signpost to effective support.

Making a difference

Introducing mental health champions

The majority of employees in Streetscene are male and initiatives have been introduced to support their mental health. [Mental Health UK](#) report that mental health outcomes for men and women are not equal - 75% of deaths by suicide are males.

Employees have volunteered to become Mental Health Champions in our Streetscene and Transportation Portfolio. They meet quarterly and include as a standing agenda item "Word on the Streetscene" allowing any emerging trends to be discussed during the meeting. Mental Health Champions received training on Vicarious Trauma to provide support and resilience to our public facing workers who respond to emergency and critical incidents.

The Champions have developed a calendar to promote mental health initiatives, this includes providing a "Blue Monday", where Streetscene employees can talk over tea and bacon sandwiches.

The outcomes of the initiatives to promote mental health in Streetscene include:

- Employees feel listened to.
- Proactive rather than a reactive response
- Greater visibility of mental health.
- Awareness of where to get help.

Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being

During 2023/24:

- Three additional schools participated in [Show Racism the Red Card's](#) "Leaders of Now" project. The aims of the programme are to:
 - Empower young people to be actively anti-racist in their own communities.
 - Create a self-sustaining network of anti-racism activists.
 - Enable ongoing longer-term conversations about racism and anti-racism.
 - Enable young people to feel confident in challenging racism within their own spaces.
 - Gather intelligence on what young people want/need from us and be pupil-led.

- Give pupils a voice that is heard by senior school leaders.
- The Inspire Pride Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) youth group continued to run and face to face meetings are now being held.
- There has been a comprehensive offer of support to Refugee families moving into Flintshire. This has included support to access and engage with education along with wrap around services to support the whole family to integrate successfully with the wider community.
- A pre-school pathway working group has been established to create seamless pathways through childcare to education, and to ensure children with needs are supported on this journey.

Making a difference

Celebrating Being Me!!

School students worked with our Youth Service to organise a Pride event, “Celebrating Being Me” for all secondary schools in the county. This event involved workshops on hate crime, digital resilience, self-esteem and body image. The “Celebrating Being Me” event took place as part of Pride Month (June). It was attended by approximately 250 pupils from secondary schools across the county supported by staff from 25 different charities and organisations with an affinity to the LGBTQ+ community.



Objective 3: Ensure equal pay within the workplace by having in place fair, open and transparent grading and salary strategies in place

During the past 12 months:

- We have started to review our pay model to ensure it continues to be fair.
- We have maintained [Disability Confident](#) employment status, this is a UK Government scheme for employers to take action to improve how they recruit, retain and develop disabled people.
- We have continued to work with Hft to support people with learning disabilities or autism to find paid employment. Hft are contracted by the Council to deliver and develop Day and Work opportunities across the county for adults with a learning disability.
- 10 people from Ukraine completed the Clean Slate course during 2023/24. Clean Slate supports people find employment in the construction industry.
- We have continued to offer flexible working patterns to support our employees maintain a work life balance.

Making a difference

Supporting disabled people into work

We have formed a partnership with HfT and Deeside Business Forum to support individuals with mental health issues, neurodiversity and learning disabilities, to secure paid employment in their local community.

In February 2024, a reverse jobs fair was held at Coleg Cambria, with support from Next Steps and HfT. The event was well attended by over 50 individuals and organisations. Following on from the event, one individual has been approached regarding paid employment, and another individual is setting up their own business with support from Big Ideas Wales.

The 'EmployAbility Hub' has also been launched on the Deeside Business Forum website, which lists all the supported individuals who are seeking paid employment.

Next Steps provides support and guidance for people to enter education, training, voluntary work and employment.



Objective 4: Improve personal safety for all protected groups

During 2023/24:

- A part of our commitment to Victim Support’s Hate Crime Charter, Victim Support offered on-line and face to face hate crime awareness training enabling more employees to recognise hate crime, understand the impact of hate crime and know how to make a report. Courses included:
 - On-line hate crime
 - Migrant Rights
 - Hate crime Awareness.
- The Regional Community Cohesion Team also provided a course “Hate Crime and Vulnerability in North Wales” which looked at how employees could support people who had been victims of hate crime.
- There were 193 reports of hate incidents in Flintshire during 2023/24.

Type of incident	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Racially motivated	99	92	126	151	111
Homophobic	40	39	61	58	35
Disability Related	20	38	65	39	22
Transphobic	4	7	7	10	11
Religious	5	7	6	13	14
Total	168	183	265	271	193

There was a decrease in reporting of hate crime during 2023/24 compared to the previous year. North Wales Police report that figures for Flintshire are consistent with the regional and national picture.

- Members of North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN) worked together to encourage reporting of hate crime during Hate Crime Awareness week in October. We also published messages on social media alongside other public bodies to encourage people to report hate crime.

- 1,067 employees completed the e-learning module on Hate Crime Awareness.
- Victim Support continued to provide Hate Crime training, which our employees attended.
- We raised the Trans Flag on 20th November to commemorate the Transgender Day of Remembrance in memory of all Trans people who have lost their lives to Transphobic violence.
- We raised the Rainbow flag during LGBT History month to highlight our commitment to equality. The Rainbow flag is a symbol recognised as the celebration of the LGBTQ+ community.
- We supported the White Ribbon Campaign for an end to violence against women.
- 1,013 employees completed the Modern Slavery e-learning training.

Making a difference

Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter

We signed up to Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter during 2022/23 and have been working towards gaining the Trust Mark for demonstrating delivery on the pledges in the Charter.

The Charter sets out the rights of victims, and the commitments of organisations. These include tackling hate crime, providing support and information for victims, and raising employees' awareness of hate crime.

We have been working with Victim Support to raise awareness of hate crime and support employees to recognise hate crime and take action to support victims.

Our next steps are to review relevant policies to ensure they explicitly reference hate crime and support available to the victims, so that we can achieve the Trust Mark.



Objective 5: Increasing access to services and decision making for all protected groups

During 2023/24:

- We launched an innovative service for residents of Flintshire where volunteers from across the organisation, [the Digital Support Squad](#), provide face to face support to give people confidence to use digital technology free of charge.
- The Recycling service has produced a number of informative recycling and environmental documents in multiple languages so that essential information is readily available and accessible to residents who do not speak English or Welsh. As part of the 2024 Resource and Waste Strategy review, we have committed to continuing this practice.
- Vision Support reviewed the Council website to ensure accessibility for people with visual impairments.
- North East Wales Community Cohesion Team funded, facilitated and co-produced nine creative projects for North East Wales (N.E.W.) Futures. This is an initiative to hear the voices of diverse communities in Wrexham, Flintshire and Denbighshire. The projects included supporting self-advocacy through developing a short film about the discrimination experienced by people with a learning disability.

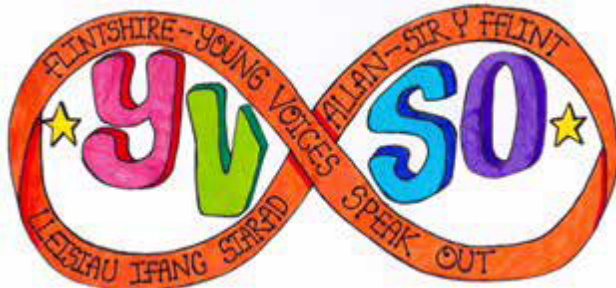
Making a difference

Pride of Flintshire

Pride of Flintshire took place in June 2023. This event celebrates the achievements of our children looked after, including an award ceremony hosted by the young people themselves, and a range of fun activities for children of all ages.

The event is organised and hosted by Flintshire Young Voices Speak Out participation group. The group offers children looked after in Flintshire the chance to have their voices heard, to contribute to developments of the service, give their feedback on policies and procedures within the local authority and attend the Children's Services Forum.

The group welcomes guest speakers including the Police, Looked After Children's Nurses and Housing.



Objective 6: Improve living standards of people with different protected characteristics

During 2023/24:

- Campaigns to promote support with maintaining housing tenancy, managing money, keeping homes safe and accessing benefits were promoted to the workforce and members of the public. These campaigns included information on self-referral to the Housing Support Grant Team.
- We successfully brought a [prosecution](#) against a landlord for not meeting his House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) license conditions, which put the residents, including families and young children, at risk. Residents had complained to the Council about conditions, which we investigated and took action against the landlord.
- 1050 adaptations were made to support disabled people to continue living at home.
- 327 households received energy efficiency improvements.
- We have continued to support Refugees from Syria and Afghanistan and people from Ukraine.

Making a difference

Short-term Emergency Accommodation for young people with learning disabilities

Social Services now has four properties available to support people who find themselves homeless, or in need of accommodation urgently. The most recent addition is a bedsit which has been used to accommodate a young person with autism who was at risk of homelessness.

The Progression Service have supported this young person to engage in the community locally and visit another supported living establishment to build natural friendships. As a result, the young person feels they can live independent of a formal package of support and are being supported to find long term accommodation in the area as they wish to continue building on the networks and friendships they have made.

Objective 7 Develop our knowledge of the socioeconomic duty to protect people from poverty

We continued to support people living in poverty during 2023/24.

During 2023/24:

- We implemented a pilot project “Parents into Employment”, this is aimed at parents who were ready to begin their transition from benefits into the world of work, the programme identified barriers preventing them looking for employment before supporting them to address these issues .
- UK Energy discounts were promoted to the workforce and members of the public to encourage people to claim extra financial support towards energy costs.
- The process for claiming a School Essentials Grant (formerly Uniform Grant) was improved and simplified, reducing the need for form-filling, and speeding up the process of issuing the payments.
- A Financial Well-being course was offered to employees, to help employees strengthen their financial wellbeing by enabling them to make informed decisions when it comes to their financial planning. The course looks at four key areas to support overall financial wellbeing:
 - Understand income and plan spending.
 - Review and keep track of borrowing.
 - Plan financial goals and prepare for those unexpected costs.
 - Start to plan for life beyond work whenever that may be.
- A Pre-Retirement Seminar was offered to employees considering retirement and those who have just started to think about retirement plans, covering lifestyle changes, income and pension.
- 2,103 young people aged 8-18 were able to order sanitary products of their choice from a selection available, up to three months’ supply in one delivery with discrete packaging.
- 484 primary and secondary age children took part in the Food and Fun Scheme during the Summer holidays. Over the 12 days of the programme, the children participated in a broad range of engaging activities focused on health, happiness, and wellbeing. Children attending enjoyed a healthy breakfast, snack and a hot lunch. The scheme helps parents with meeting childcare costs and offers paid employment to local people.

Making a difference

Food and Fun Programme,

Children attending Food and Fun during the summer holidays enjoyed a healthy breakfast, snack and a hot lunch provided by NEWydd Catering and Cleaning. Children also took home recipe cards and ingredients to feed a family of four.

Food and Fun has a keen focus on nutrition education, with children encouraged to try new foods and take part in practical food activities each week. Aura Leisure delivered a wide variety of sporting activities and interactive games alongside a broad offer of enrichment activities coordinated by each school. The children have enjoyed dancing, circus skills and drumming.

The Food and Fun programme benefit pupils long after it ends. School staff build on the relationships they have made with providers and the skills that they have gained from the training undertaken. An example of this can be seen in two schools who have invited the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) dieticians to work with parents on 'Come and Cook' sessions.



4. Collating information and engagement

4.1 Systems have been developed within portfolios and services to capture and monitor the profile of our customers by protected characteristic. However, all the services are different and not all protected characteristics are captured on each system. There is insufficient data available for detailed analysis for most services. It is an ongoing action to improve data capture across services.

4.2 Categories used to collate diversity data are taken from the [Census 2021](#).

4.3 Despite the challenges in collating data, improvements have been made to our processes, we are now:

- Recording the ethnic details of Social Service users. This is now a mandatory field on the Social Services client database.
- Monitoring the profile of tenants, homelessness applicants and people on the housing waiting lists.
- Recording the profile of school pupils and school attainment levels.
- Recording and monitoring diversity data to ensure there is no disproportionate representation of service users of the Youth Justice Team.

4.4 Research has been undertaken by Cyngor Gwynedd for the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN), a network of all North Wales public bodies' Equality Officers, to help identify the inequalities experienced by protected groups. This information is available for use by services.

4.5 NWPSSEN has developed an exemplar equality monitoring form with a Top Ten Tips Guidance Note. This helps ensure consistency amongst the equality monitoring categories used by public bodies across North Wales and will contribute to more effective benchmarking.

4.6 Qualitative data is collated through other means such as surveys and focus groups and through engagement with local groups such as:

- Flintshire Disability Forum
- Flintshire Youth Forum
- Faith contacts
- Older People's Forum
- North Wales Regional Equality Network
- School's Councils
- Stonewall Cymru
- Travelling Ahead who work with Gypsies and Travellers
- Unique transgender group
- 50 plus Action Group

4.7 We have continued to collaborate with the Regional Community Cohesion Team to strengthen engagement. During 2023/24 the Community Cohesion Team provided financial support to Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam to promote Saint David's Day to people who did not speak English or Welsh and encourage them to participate in the celebrations. The Regional Community Cohesion Team continued to facilitate an interfaith forum and a multi-cultural hub. The Team engaged with different communities on different themes to help identify potential equality objectives. They also facilitated a workshop with people from ethnic minorities on barriers to employment with public sector bodies.

Using information to meet the general duty.

4.8 The profile of customers/service users is compared against the profile of the community to identify areas of over/under representation or under achievement which enables services to set targets for improvement. An example of this is the work being undertaken by the Youth Offending Team. Analysis of data of referrals to the Team are regularly analysed to identify disproportionality. This work is also supported by surveys of the young people who have been referred to ensure there has been fair treatment.

4.9 Using data in this way helps services to identify potential and actual areas of discrimination and advance equality of opportunity, through setting improvement targets which will be incorporated into the [SEP](#). This information has also been used to identify the [Council's local equality objectives](#).

4.9 Comparisons of satisfaction levels and complaints and information from focus groups is also used to identify any areas of potential and actual discrimination and areas of community tensions which in turn contribute to identifying opportunities for advancing equality and for fostering good relations.

Employment Information

4.10 A full diversity profile of the workforce is published separately and includes information required by the specific duties of the Equality Act 2010. This can be found on our website. **A profile of the workforce can be found at Appendix 2.**

As can be seen from the following tables, during the past four years, there has been a small reduction in the number and percentage of employees who did not complete the employee diversity audit or who have selected the “Prefer not to say” option. An action to improve the equality data of the workforce is included within the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.

Comparison of the number and percentage of employees who did not complete the diversity audit in 2019 and 2024.

Year	2019		2024	
	Not stated		Not stated	
Protected characteristic	No. of employees	% of workforce	No. of employees	% of workforce
Ethnicity	2031	33.14	1977	32.26
Disabled	2083	33.99	1980	32.31
Sexual orientation	3378	55.12	2815	45.93
Religion and /or belief	2867	46.78	2495	40.71
Marital status	2446	39.91	2379	38.82

Comparison of the number and percentage of employees who selected the “Prefer not to say” option of the diversity audit in 2019 and 2024.

Protected characteristic	2019		2024	
	Prefer Not to say		Prefer Not to say	
	No. of employees	% of workforce	No. of employees	% of workforce
Ethnicity	73	1.19	74	1.2
Disabled	160	2.61	147	2.4
Sexual orientation	160	2.61	148	2.4
Religion and /or belief	158	2.58	147	2.4
Marital status	39	0.64	28	0.46

4.11 Qualitative information is gained through feedback from Trade Union representatives at the Joint Trade Union Consultative Committee.

4.12 Qualitative and quantitative information is used to inform equality impact assessments on HR policies and practices and to identify areas of potential/actual inequalities which require further investigation.

5.0 Equal Pay

5.1 Equal pay is the equal payment of men and women for doing equal work as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

There are three kinds of equal work:

- Like work is the same or broadly similar. It involves similar tasks which require similar knowledge and skills, and any differences in the work are not of practical importance.
- Work rated as equivalent has been rated under a valid job evaluation scheme as being of equal value in terms of how demanding it is.
- Work of equal value is not similar and has not been rated as equivalent but is of equal value in terms of demands such as effort, skill and decision-making.

5.2 A detailed analysis of the annual Equal Pay Audit by gender, disability, ethnicity and religion as at 31st March 2024, is published separately on our website. A summary of the gender pay gap since the Strategic Equality Plan 2020 - 24 was published is set out in the following table.

Gender Pay Gap	March 31 st 2020	March 31 st 2021	March 31 st 2022	March 31 st 2023
Overall	13.11%	13.75%	13.71%	12.76%
NJC/ Green Book	15.00%	15.37%	15.47%	13.99%

6.0 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

6.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) are one of the methods being used to mainstream equality and to support services identify specific equality targets.

6.2 A regional EIA template has been developed by NWPSen which includes equality, Welsh language, and socio-economic impacts. This was shared with both the Equality and Human Rights Commission and Welsh Language Commissioner to seek their feedback before being adopted by NWPSen members. This has now been incorporated within our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) developed to capture the relevant information required for a range of impact assessments- including environment, health, poverty, and Welsh language. Guidance notes are available for each protected characteristic to support IIA authors.

6.3 We are working with the University of Manchester piloting a new tool for IIAs, the Carbon and Co-benefits Decision Making Support Tool. The university is now at the evaluation stage, interviewing IIA authors and decision makers to understand how this influences and improves decision making. IIAs must be included within all our strategic committee reports to ensure decision makers understand the impacts of their decisions.

6.4 Periodic reviews of committee reports are undertaken to sample impact assessments to:

- Ensure they are being completed by report authors for relevant reports.
- Sample the quality of the content.
- Ensure they are available for decision makers.

The outcome of the review is reported to the Council's Chief Officer Team with recommendations for improvements.

6.5 Bespoke impact assessment training is available for teams in addition to an e-learning programme.

7.0 Training

7.1 Details of how we promote understanding and knowledge about equality is set out in the [SEP](#). There are two mandatory e-learning packages specifically on equality:

- Equality Act 2010 – completed by 710 employees.
- Equality in the Workplace – completed by 630 employees.

7.2 These are supported by e-learning packages on:

- Modern slavery – completed by 766 employees.
- Hate crime – completed by 1,067 employees.

7.3 Diversity and equality is also included in:

- Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programme at all levels.
- E-learning modules for new managers.
- Corporate induction

7.4 During 2023/24, in addition e-learning programmes and workshops were provided on: -

- Vision Impairment Awareness course delivered by Vision Support.
- Hate Crime awareness training was delivered by Victim Support.
- Unconscious Bias training -attended by 31 employees.
- Autism Awareness (online completed by 72 employees and 39 employees attended in person workshops).
- Menopause Awareness attended by 29 employees.
- Violence Against Women e-learning module completed by 722 employees.
- Neurodiversity at work as part of Neurodiversity week 2024.

As part of Intentional Women’s Day 2024, Confidence Skills for Women and Influencing Skills for Women courses were made available to employees.

8.0 Procurement

8.1 Details of how equality is embedded into the procurement process is set out in the [SEP](#). Equality questions are included within our pre-qualification questionnaire (PQQ) for all tenders. In addition, Modern Slavery has been included as an element of the PQQ, this looks at actions potential contractors are taking to eliminate modern day slavery within their workforce and supply chains. Furthermore, social value clauses are included within contracts over £1 million; contracts of £10,000 include an element of social value in the scoring methods.

8.2 We have signed up to Welsh Government’s (WG) Code of Practice: Ethical Employment in Supply Chains. We have committed to a set of actions to tackle illegal and unfair employment practices. We publish an annual [Modern Slavery statement](#), this sets out the actions we will take to ensure there is no modern slavery within our supply chains.

9.0 Conclusion


9.1 This report outlines the progress we are making to meet both the general and specific public sector equality duties. It is however clear that collating some data to monitor progress has been challenging. Our priorities are to:



- Establish a Data Group to develop and improve employee and customer data collection and analysis across the Council.
- Improving the quality and number of IIAs that are completed and establish a new Quality Assurance Group to oversee this.
- Implement our new SEP 2024-28 which incorporates actions from Welsh Government's Anti-racist Wales and LGTQ+ Action Plan within the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.



**Thank you for reading our Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report
2023/24.**


Appendix 1 Strategic Equality Plan Action Plan 2020- 2024


2023/24 Progress


Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
Setting up a registered Children’s Home to help avoid the need for residential placements outside Flintshire	Senior Manager Children’s Services	Flintshire’s commitment to developing a programme of Children’s homes to help avoid the need for residential placements outside of the county is ongoing. Over the last 12 months, we have been successful in registering four of our five new Childrens’ Residential Homes with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). We continue to work with CIW around the registration process for the last of the fifth home. 
Continue to develop services to support the reduction of the number of children looked after by the Local Authority through the recommissioning of current services.	Senior Manager Children’s Services	The development of an in-house, Special Guardian Order service, now has two dedicated members of staff who support to develop Special Guardianship Order options.



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>Recommissioning is due to commence for Families First Services to begin in April 2025.</p> <p></p>
Continuing to grow our in-house fostering service to support more looked after children, measured by the increase in new foster carer approvals in the year	Senior Manager Children’s Services	<p>The Foster Bear campaign was launched in January 2023 in collaboration with Primary Schools across Flintshire to raise awareness of local authority fostering and outline the urgency to recruit more foster carers in the county.</p> <p>So far, thirteen primary schools have welcomed Foster Bear into their classrooms, and children are given an activity pack that contains a Foster Bear teddy and activity book to take home.</p> <p></p>
Plan to provide additional placements for ‘discharge to recover and assess’ in the in-house provision	Senior Manager Adults Services / Commissioning Manager	The final design plans for Tŷ Croes Atti have been approved and construction work is well underway on the site which previously housed the Flint Cottage Hospital. This will increase capacity for step down care within our in-house provision, 12




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>step-down Discharge to Recover and Assess (D2RA) beds have been agreed at Tŷ Croes Atti, which will increase the provision across Flintshire from its current level of 16 to a total of 28. We anticipate that this facility will be completed and operational by April 2025</p> <p></p>
Continuing to grow the Microcare market, measured by the increase in Microcare providers. Baseline data from 2021/22 is 24 with the target by 2023 to be 34.	Commissioning Manager	<p>There have been an additional 14 Micro-Care enterprises setup during this financial year. This has grown the number of active Micro-Carers to 50 with a further 16 potentially in the pipeline. We are now also able to commission support from Micro-Carers</p> <p></p>
Continuing to grow our in-house homecare service to support more people to live at home, measured by the rate of increasing the rate of those people over 65 who are helped to live at home from 33 in 1,000 to 34 in 1,000.	Senior Manager Adults Services / Commissioning Manager	<p>Flintshire continues to utilise a rolling scheme of recruitment to grow our in-house homecare service to support more people to live well at home. However, recruitment across social care continues to be a challenge. To rise to this challenge, the homecare service has a designated task team</p>




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>looking at new and innovative ways to attract applicants to the service, and a recruitment event was held in March 2024. This work is ongoing and will support the service to grow and expand the offering to people living in our communities.</p> <p></p>
Developing an Early Years Strategy to ensure that all our children ages 0-7 have the best possible start in life and can reach their full potential.	Senior Manager Children's Services	A draft Early Years Strategy has been completed. However, as WG notified closure of the Early Years Pathfinder funding late December, 12 months earlier than anticipated, a decision is to be made by the Flintshire Early Years Board (June 2024) and Regional Partnership (April 2024) on the way forward. This will include the prioritisation of exiting projects.
Work to the action plan to further improve compliance with the National Autism Code of Practice.	Commissioning Manager	We have developed a local Implementation Plan which aims to ensure compliance with the Autism Code of Practice. This Plan is currently being evaluated as part of WG's national evaluation of compliance with the Code of Practice.

Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>WG have evaluated the Plan and work continues to ensure compliance in all actions.</p> <p></p>
Continue to develop carers services through partnership with Third Sector providers	Commissioning Manager	<p>North East Wales Carers' Information Services (NEWCIS) has several Winter Warm boxes available for carers to support them with heating costs. The boxes include radiator reflectors, window film, items of warm clothing and fleece blankets. NEWCIS has also gained funding to buy some electric throws which again helps to keep the heating turned down low.</p> <p>Courses are being arranged with Scottish Power and Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) which will support carers with high energy costs. The courses will look at energy saving methods and financial help that is available to carers.</p> <p>Work is in progress to review our currently commissioned services to understand what is working and where there may be gaps that we</p>



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>need to fill to support our carers. We are working to ensure that what will be commissioned is co-produced with carers themselves ensuring that they have input into the services available.</p> <p></p>
Establish a Dementia Strategy Implementation Group, to include representation from people with lived experience.	Commissioning Manager / Senior Manager Adults Services	<p>A Dementia Strategy Project Board was established in 2022 to implement the key actions identified in the Flintshire Dementia Strategy. The actions align with the implementation of the All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards.</p> <p>The Project Board meets every two months and receives input and feedback from citizens by linking to the Dementia Friendly Community Chairs Group.</p> <p>The Board's current focus is on supporting the implementation of the new North Wales Dementia Friendly Community Recognition Scheme and the priorities identified by people with</p>




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		lived experience during the recent Dementia Listening Campaign. 
To promote the creative use of direct payments with individuals and carers to meet their outcomes.	Senior Manager Adults Services	The Direct Payments Support Service continue to encourage both citizens and social care practitioners to focus on and develop bespoke, outcomes focused solutions to meeting assessed social care needs and to help people to achieve agreed well-being outcomes. Carers reported that the Direct Payment Scheme contributed positively towards their wellbeing and that of the cared for. Carers felt that they were able to be sustained in their caring role and maintain supporting their cared for living at home. 
Further development of Young Carers Service and the Young Carers ID Card	Senior Manager Children’s Services	Our Young Carer ID card has been launched successfully and engagement and uptake has been increasing. We now have more than 400 Young Carers across Flintshire


Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		registered with the scheme. Work is ongoing establishing links with local businesses to encourage them to offer discounts and benefits for young people carrying the Young Carers ID Card. This acts as a thank you for the work they do as a Young Carer. 
Work in partnership with Aura and Street Games to deliver free on-line fitness session for LGBT young people	Information and Involvement Officer	The sessions were offered face to face to high schools across the County. One secondary school made a video to showcase their work. This project has now ended. 
Develop and implement an action plan in response to the research we have commissioned into the health needs of Travellers.	Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer	The report has been published and the recommendations will be considered and included in the new SEP 2024 – 28, where applicable, going forward. 
Develop a transit site for Travellers to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments at unsafe and unhealthy locations and improve access to health services.	Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer	Location of a transit site has been agreed, waiting on approval to progress planning application.


Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 1: Improve health, well-being and social care outcomes including outcomes for older people and disabled people.		
Action	Who	Progress
		Reporting to seek approval has started. 
Work with Community Midwife Team and Vaccination Team to increase take up of Traveller children receiving MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine	Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer	Offer of MMR has been made to all families in Flintshire. A video message has been shared by leaders from the Travelling community to encourage take-up. 
Implement a Health and Well- being strategy for our employees and introduce initiatives to improve our employees' mental health	Senior manager HR and OD	Additional annual leave was introduced in October 2022. 




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
Implement an electronic system to record and report on identity-based bullying in schools	Learning Advisor, Health, Well-being and Safeguarding	A Challenging Bullying Online Reporting platform for schools to notify the Council of incidents is in place. Between April 2023 and March 2024 there were 28 incidents reported by schools. 17 reports were completed by 10 primary schools.11



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		reports were completed by 3 secondary schools. 
Monitor Estyn Inspection Reports and identify any equalities issues in schools to target support to school	Senior Manager School Improvement	Progress against recommendations is monitored by GwE and the Local Authority. Only one recommendation (in one school) has identified any equality issues –improving diversity in the curriculum. 
Monitor compliance by all schools on the Wales Government Respecting Others (statutory guidance)	Learning Advisor, Health, Well-being and Safeguarding	As part of schools safeguarding reporting to the local authority, they are asked to disclose whether they have in place up to date relevant policies, including Respecting Others. This exercise is now annual and by monitoring schools in this way, they can be followed up should they not have an active policy / require additional support. Schools' engagement with the online Respecting Others reporting platform is also a means of monitoring schools' compliance with the guidance.


Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		
Monitor school exclusion rates by protected groups to target support to schools.	Senior Learning Advisor Engagement	On-going. Education and Youth Overview and Scrutiny committee has recognised the progress being made with this target. 
Monitor persistent school absenteeism by protected characteristic	Senior Learning Advisor Engagement	Regular data reviews were undertaken half termly to identify vulnerable individuals. The Inclusion Welfare Team visited any children identified as vulnerable. Inclusion Welfare Officers (IWO) have been trained to profile attendance trends within secondary school bases. A new information technology system was implemented in January 2024, and this has resulted in some technical issues regarding profiling absenteeism. 
Ensure all schools access modern slavery training.	Learning Advisor, Health, Well-being and Safeguarding	The Home Office offers 2 free e-learning courses on modern slavery: First responder training. This course provides guidance on:


Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how to identify indicators of modern slavery • how to refer people to the National Referral Mechanism <p>Child victims of modern slavery. This course covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child-specific indicators of modern slavery • the safeguarding process • best practice for referring children to the National Referral Mechanism <p>Courses are 45 minutes duration each and Designated Safeguarding leads and deputy leads in schools are being encouraged to undertake both courses.</p> 
Reduce the gap and educational attainment level for those eligible for/receiving free school meals.	Senior Manager School Improvement	WG restarted the reporting of key stage 4 outcomes at a school level using the approach adopted prior to the pandemic. All benchmarking, comparisons with other establishments, and the placing of schools and local authorities in rank




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>order is no longer acceptable or possible. The only comparative data available to local authorities in these key stages are the national averages. WG’s expectation is that performance information is used to support schools and local authorities to understand their own context and improve their own offer. It should not be used in isolation to judge performance or compare schools. At key stage 4 2022/23, Flintshire pupils not entitled to free school meals scored higher in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) with 375.5 points than pupils eligible for free school meals with 287.4 points. The gap was slightly smaller at 88.1 points compared to the national gap of 88.8 points.</p> <p></p>
Continue to grow/expand LGBT Youth Group	Information and Involvement Officer	The LGBT+ group continues to run during term time delivered by Theatre Clwyd in Mold and Youth Service promote the group via social media





Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		and sign post young people to the group. 
To develop a partnership with Viva to offer an additional LGBT+ group which will meet in the evenings	Information and Involvement Officer	Youth Service are working in partnership with Viva and Pride Cymru to deliver a LGBT+ youth club twice a month during term time. The sessions are promoted via Youth Service's social media and the Information and Involvement officer drop-in sessions. 
Monitor Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people entering youth justice system	Youth Justice Manager	Ongoing monitoring through the services' Disproportionality Action Plan and reports to the Youth Justice Service Management Board 
Monitor the impact of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) delegated to schools to close the attainment gap for pupils receiving free school meals.	Senior Manager School Improvement Systems	At key stage 4 2022/23, Flintshire pupils not entitled to free school meals scored higher in the Capped 9 indicator (interim measures version) with 375.5 points than pupils eligible for free school meals with 287.4 points. The gap was slightly smaller


Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		at 88.1 points compared to the national gap of 88.8 points. 
Raise profile of STEM subjects to pupils from a Black and minority ethnic background	Senior Manager School Improvement	Work to further promote STEM subjects is included where relevant in the support plans for individual schools. 
Provide revised Trans policy guidance and resources to schools	Learning Advisor, Health, Well-being and Safeguarding	Local Trans Guidance for schools remains on hold pending WG Guidance. A WG consultation is expected on their guidance in 2024. Publication will take place thereafter. This will inform how the local policy will be revised to ensure they align. Schools have been attending Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) training opportunities throughout the year including the establishment of RSE clusters with primary and secondary schools working together to meet the requirements of the RSE Code. The mandatory RSE Code supports schools to design their RSE. The




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 2: Reduce gaps in educational attainment between protected groups and implement strategies to improve well-being		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>content is set within the context of broad and interlinked learning strands, namely: relationships and identity; sexual health and well-being; empowerment, safety and respect. Clusters have been provided funding to access training and resources to support the learning strands.</p> <p></p>





Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 3 Ensure equal pay within the workplace by having in place fair, open and transparent grading and salary strategies in place		
Action	Who	Progress
Undertake an annual equal pay audit and develop an action to reduce the pay difference between men and women and other protected groups.	HR Policy and Reward Officer	<p>Report for 2022/23 published in March 2024, in line with statutory reporting timeframes. Report for 2023/24 has not yet been published.</p> <p></p>
Support people with learning disabilities to gain paid employment through Project Search.	Planning and Development Team	<p>The last 12 months have been an exciting time for the local Project SEARCH programme in terms of innovation and development of the local service. Within Flintshire, the programme expanded to offer two</p>

Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 3 Ensure equal pay within the workplace by having in place fair, open and transparent grading and salary strategies in place		
Action	Who	Progress
		distinct programmes and became the first Project SEARCH scheme in the UK to offer a dedicated programme for adults aged over 25. The expansion offering two schemes has proven to be a real success. Two graduation ceremonies have been held for students to celebrate completing their internships with their family and friends. 
Achieve Level 3 Disability Confident Leader – DWP Disability Confident Employer	HR Policy and Reward Officer	We have maintained level 2 status of the Scheme. 
Continue to work with the “Clean Slate Cymru” project, an initiative funded by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) to support refugees and Travellers secure employment.	Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer	Additional course was facilitated by Careers Wales which was attended by refugees at Mold. 
Continue to collate diversity data from employees to increase response rate	HR Business Information Officer	Diversity data continues to be collated and increases year on year. Non-school data is captured at recruitment stage. However, there are still gaps in school data. ICT are progressing two factor authentication to enable roll out of Employee Self




Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 3 Ensure equal pay within the workplace by having in place fair, open and transparent grading and salary strategies in place		
Action	Who	Progress
		Service to school employees which will enable recording of diversity data. 
Undertake annual workforce equality monitoring and develop an action plan to address and reduce any inequalities.	HR Business Information Officer	Report has been completed for 2023/24 but not yet been published. 
Identify opportunities to use positive action to reduce inequalities.	HR Business Information Officer	Analysis to take place following publication of report. 
Develop a strategic and consistent approach to embedding social value in the procurement process to increase apprenticeship opportunities to disabled people, people from a Black and minority ethnic background and women.	Social Value Development Officer	Contracts over £25k are assessed to identify whether social value can be added. It is mandatory for contracts over £1M. Recruitment of disabled people and people from a Black and ethnic minority background is included as a social value option for contractors. 
Increase the number of employees who complete the equality e-learning modules.	Strategic Policy Advisor	The e-learning modules for equality are mandatory and process is now in



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 3 Ensure equal pay within the workplace by having in place fair, open and transparent grading and salary strategies in place		
Action	Who	Progress
		place advising managers of who has not completed the modules. This means that there is now an increase in completion rates. Over 65% employees have completed this training module. 



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 4: Improve personal safety for all protected groups		
Action	Who	Progress
Continue training employees in key teams to recognise and report a hate motivated incident and hate crime.	Regional Community Cohesion Officer	Regular Hate crime training is provided through the Victim Support 
Raise awareness of hate incidents and hate crime in schools through the Welsh Government, Community Cohesion Grant	Strategic Policy Advisor /Regional Community Cohesion Officer	Training was delivered across schools in Flintshire. 
Develop initiatives to promote community cohesion through the Regional Community Cohesion Grant	Strategic Policy Advisor /Regional Community Cohesion Officer	A range of activities were undertaken by the Regional Community Cohesion Team including the Diverse Together project, bringing people from different backgrounds together virtually. 

Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 4: Improve personal safety for all protected groups		
Action	Who	Progress
Participate in LGBT History month.	Strategic Policy Advisor	A virtual celebration was held through raising the Rainbow flag and promoting through social media and a press release. 
Participate in the annual hate crime awareness week to increase reports across all protected characteristics.	Strategic Policy Advisor	We worked with the North Wales Public Sector Equality Officer Network promoting information through social media. 
Increase the number of employees who complete the Welsh Government’s Domestic Violence against women e-learning modules.	HR Business Information Officer	Over 83% employees have now completed the training. 
Increase the number of employees who attend Modern Slavery training.	Strategic Policy Advisor	Over 64% employees completed the Modern Slavery e-learning training. 

Strategic Equality Plan – Action plan		
Objective 5: Increasing access to services and decision making for all protected groups		
Action	Who	Progress
Put in place equality monitoring processes in key services to identify potential barriers to access	Strategic Policy Advisor	This action is being included as part of the Anti-racist Wales action plan and being taken forward.

Strategic Equality Plan – Action plan		
Objective 5: Increasing access to services and decision making for all protected groups		
Action	Who	Progress
		
Complete review of website to ensure it meets accessibility standards	Digital Solutions Architect	Weekly checks are being completed to check compliance. A Council wide Web Group has been established to ensure the website meets the accessibility standards. 
Review opportunities to improve access to public transport for disabled and older people	Transport Manager	Fflecsi service has been introduced in Holwell to great success. Local travel arrangements are currently being reviewed following procurement exercise. All Active Travel Schemes for 2023/24 have been completed as well as a package of crossing facilities at historic School, Crossing Patrol sites. Safer Routes in Communities schemes are progressing following recent successful award of funding from WG. 
Develop an activity plan for the new model of Archive Services which positively targets the engagement of protected groups.	Principal Archivist	Submission for Heritage Lottery funding, which included a draft Activity Plan, has been successful. The Activity Plan is currently in the process of development.



Strategic Equality Plan – Action plan		
Objective 5: Increasing access to services and decision making for all protected groups		
Action	Who	Progress
		
Secure Welsh Government funding enable WiFi on Traveller sites including the transit site.	Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer	Application has been submitted to WG. Awaiting outcome from WG. 
Work with Aura (leisure services) and Street Games to provide organised sports activities on our own Traveller sites	Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer	An application has been made to the Serious Violence Fund to support this activity. Two youth engagement officers have been employed to work with Gypsy, Roma, Travellers and refugee children for twelve months



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 6: Improve living standards of people with different protected characteristics		
Action	Who	Progress
Develop plan for a transit site for Travellers.	Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer	Location of transit site has been agreed, waiting for formal approval to proceed with planning application. 
Become a resettlement area for Asylum Seekers and Refugees		We are now supporting ten families in Flintshire who are residing in Dispersed Accommodation. The Home Office target for 2024/2025 is 377 bed spaces in Flintshire. 



Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan

Objective 7 Develop our knowledge of the socio-economic duty to protect people from poverty

Action	Who	Progress
<p>Ensuring access to period products, free of charge and accessible in the most practical and dignified way possible to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• all learners in all schools;• those who menstruate; and• prioritising those from low-income households.	<p>Learning Advisor – Health, Well-being & Safeguarding</p>	<p>All female pupils in Flintshire schools (x78) have access to a selection of sanitary products in school. Period products are being distributed through each Foodbank in the county. All youth groups have been provided with a selection of period products. Aura Leisure Officers carry period product first aid kits with them and products are promoted across toilet facilities in leisure centres and libraries. Products are also distributed through 15 adult community learning venues. Education staff and community staff have had period product training to support having effective conversations with those who menstruate and understanding more about the products available. Community events held online for parents/carers of young people to raise awareness on period products and menstrual health. Reusable period products online ordering programme for young people aged 8 – 18 years old ran throughout March 2024.</p>

Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 7 Develop our knowledge of the socio-economic duty to protect people from poverty		
Action	Who	Progress
		
Maximise the numbers attending the Food and Fun programme (previously known as School Holiday Enrichment Programme) in the school summer holidays.	Learning Advisor – Health, Well-being & Safeguarding	484 children benefitted from Food and Fun at 13 schools during the Summer of 2023 including two special schools. Children attending enjoyed a healthy breakfast, snack and a hot lunch. Food and Fun has a keen focus on nutrition education and physical activity, with children encouraged to try new foods different physical activities each week. 496 ‘Bag Bwyd’ (pantry ingredients) to feed a family of four, were provided to the parents of children attending 
Continue to raise awareness of Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) and ensure that all low-income households are aware of what they are entitled to and how they can make a claim.	Team Manager – Benefits Assessment	Take Up actions have included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated correspondence issued to all applicants for Disabled Facilities Grants, Free School Meals and School Essential Grants to advise they may also be eligible for CTRS.

Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 7 Develop our knowledge of the socio-economic duty to protect people from poverty		
Action	Who	Progress
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created Cost of Living Hub to allow customers to easily access information in relation to all Benefits and Grants including CTRS. • Contacting customers who are claiming Housing Benefit only to see if they wish claim CTRS. • Promoted to all Council Tax paying households as part of annual billing. • Promotion at local hubs/network events. 
Continue to raise awareness of the Welfare Reform Team who can support any customers impacted by Welfare Reform changes or who are simply struggling financially.	Welfare Reform Team Manager	<p>Referrals continue to be received due to the continuation of the impacts of the cost of living. It is envisaged that figures will continue to rise with the increased costs of energy bills and general cost of living expenditure.</p> 
Continue to raise awareness to ensure all low-income households are aware they may be eligible to receive Free School Meals and a uniform Grant.	Team Manager – Grants and Performance	<p>Take Up actions have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting all eligible Free School Meals (FSM) customers who had not claimed the School Essential Grant to advise of their eligibility

Strategic Equality Plan – Action Plan		
Objective 7 Develop our knowledge of the socio-economic duty to protect people from poverty		
Action	Who	Progress
		<p>and where necessary provide help to complete the application form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting via website and schools. • Promotion at local hubs/network events. <p></p>
Provide holistic and financial support to those customers who find themselves in financial difficulty before they fall into poverty.	Welfare Reform Team Manager	<p>Ongoing advice and support forms part of the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) application process even if a DHP is unsuccessful. Support is promoted at local hubs/network events.</p> <p></p>

Appendix 2 Profile of the workforce (including school employees) as at 31st March 2024

Profile of employees by Ethnic Origin

2024		
Ethnic Origin	Total employees	% employees
BME	54	0.88%
White	4024	65.66%
Not Stated	1977	32.26%
Prefer Not to Say	74	1.20%
Totals	6129	100.00%

Profile of employees who classify themselves as disabled.

2024		
Disabled employees	Total employees	% employees
No	3818	62.29%
Not Stated	1980	32.31%
Yes	184	3.00%
Prefer Not to Say	147	2.40%
Total	6129	100.00%

Profile of employees by Sexual Orientation

2024		
Sexual Orientation	Total employees	% employees
Bi-Sexual	33	0.54%
Gay Man	19	0.31%
Gay Woman/Lesbian	27	0.44%
Heterosexual / Straight	3072	50.12%
Not Stated	2815	45.93%
Other	15	0.24%
Prefer Not to Say	148	2.41%
Total	6129	100.00%

Profile of employees by Religion and Belief

Religion or Belief	2024	
	Total employees	% employees
Buddhist	7	0.11%
Christian	1955	32.06%
Hindu	1	0.02%
Jewish	2	0.03%
Muslim	5	0.08%
None	1435	23.41%
Not Stated	2495	40.71%
Other	71	1.16%
Prefer Not to Say	147	2.40%
Sikh	1	0.02%
Total	6129	100.00%

Profile of employees by Marital Status

Marital Status	2024	
	Total employees	% employees
Divorced or in a Dissolved Civil Partnership	200	3.26%
Married or in a Civil Partnership	2115	34.51%
Not Married or in a Civil Partnership	1311	21.39%
Not Stated	2379	38.82%
Widowed or Surviving Civil Partner	96	1.57%
Prefer Not to Say	28	0.46%
Total	6129	100.00

Profile of employees by Sex

Sex	2024	
	Total employees	% employees
Female	4630	75.54%
Male	1499	24.46%
Not stated	0	0.00%
Total	6129	100.00%

Profile of employees by Age

Age Range	2024	
	Total employees	% employees
16 – 24	224	3.65%
25 – 34	1051	17.15%
35 – 44	1423	23.22%
45 – 49	766	12.50%
50 – 54	908	14.81%
55 – 59	877	14.31%
60 – 64	598	9.76%
65 – 69	215	3.51%
70 – 74	49	0.80%
75 and over	18	0.29%
Totals	6129	100.00%

Appendix 3 Profile of Adult Social Services users by protected characteristic 2023/24.

Data taken from annual data collection 2023/24: all individuals aged 18 plus who were provided with advice and assistance during the year.

Profile of Adult Social Service users by sex and age

Age	Female		Male		Non-Binary		Grand Total	
	No.	% of all Adult Social Service users	No.	% of all Adult Social Service users	No.	% of all Adult Social Service users	No.	% of all Adult Social Service users
18-64	996	19.45%	767	14.98%	13	0.25%	1776	34.68%
65-74	367	7.17%	265	5.17%	0	0	632	12.34%
75-84	792	15.47%	510	9.96%	0	0	1302	25.42%
85+	871	17.01%	540	10.54%	0	0	1411	27.55%
Grand Total	3026	59.09%	2082	40.66%	11	0.25%	5121	100%

Profile of Adult Social Service users by ethnic background

Ethnic background	No.	%
Black and Minority Ethnic background	39	0.76%
White British	2544	49.68%
Not obtained	2538	49.56%
Grand Total	5121	100%

Profile of Adult Social Service users by language

Language	No.	% of all adult service users
Bengali	1	0.02%
Bulgarian	1	0.02%
English	5093	99.45%
German	1	0.02%
Hungarian	1	0.02%
Italian	1	0.02%
Lithuanian	1	0.02%
Other	2	0.04%

Pashto/Pakhto	1	0.02%
Polish	5	0.10%
Portuguese	1	0.02%
Romanian	1	0.02%
Ukrainian	1	0.02%
Welsh	11	0.21%
Grand Total	5121	100%

Profile of Adult Social Service users by religion

Religion	No.	%
Atheist	5	0.10
Buddhist	1	0.02
Christian	661	12.91
Jehovah Witness	9	0.18
Muslim	2	0.04
No Religion	110	2.15
Other	51	1.00
Pagan/Druid	1	0.02
Unknown	4281	83.60
Grand Total	5121	100.00

Appendix 4

Profile of school pupils by protected characteristic

Profile of school pupils by sex

Sex	Primary		Secondary	
	Total no. of all school pupils	% of all school pupils	Total no. of all school pupils	% of all school pupils
Male	6983	50.80%	5126	50.28%
Female	6762	49.20%	5069	49.72%
Total	13745	100.00%	10195	100.00%

Profile of school pupils who receive Free School Meals (FSM) by sex.

Sex	Primary			Secondary		
	Total no. of all school pupils	No. eligible for FSM.	% FSM recipients	Total no. of all school pupils	No. eligible for FSM	% FSM recipients
Male	6983	1228	50.56%	5126	891	51.89%
Female	6762	1201	49.44%	5069	826	48.11%
Total	13745	2429	100%	10195	1717	100%

Profile of school pupils by ethnic background and those receiving FSM

Ethnic background	Total no. of all school pupils	% of all school pupils	No. eligible for FSM.	% FSM recipients
Black and ethnic minority background	1781	7.44%	154	3.71%
White British	20741	86.24%	3757	90.62%
Other	156	0.65%	7	0.17%
Unknown	1262	5.27%	228	5.50%
Total	23940	100%	4146	100%