



Rhondda Cynon Taf Council

Annual Equality Report

1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

Contents

Page No.

1. Introduction	3
2. Who We Are	4
3. Reporting on Equality	5
4. The General Equality Duty	6
5. How We Meet The General Equality Duty	7
6. Equality Objectives.....	11
7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's).....	39
8. Employment Monitoring Data	41
9. Procurement.....	43
10. Accessible Information	43
11. Future Work	44
12. Contact Details	44
APPENDIX 1	45
Employment Monitoring Data	45

1. Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Council's Annual Equality Monitoring Report for 2023/24, which represents the Council's approach to providing information on its work in respect of equality and diversity.

The Council is required, under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, to report annually on how it has met the General Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, and this document contains the information required in order for the Council to meet these duties.

Publishing the information in one report covering all requirements will make it easier for interested parties to identify how the Council is delivering on its commitment to equality, its legal obligations and the action plans contained within its Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

Each section of the report looks at the Council's progress and the final section contains details of future work the Council needs to do.

Once again Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to make our County Borough a more equal place for people to live, work and access services, however we recognise that there are, and will continue to be, areas for improvement. Publishing this Annual Report will not only help the Council to meet its obligations under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, but will assist you, as citizens to identify these areas and monitor progress on them.

Councillor Maureen Webber

Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Council Business

2. Who We Are

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council covers a wide geographical area and has a population of over 237,700 (Office of National Statistics (ONS) – Census 2021). The Council is the largest employer in the local area and the third largest local authority in Wales, over 79% of employees live within the Council boundaries.

The Council is committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion and we work to ensure that this is demonstrated in our service delivery and in our employment practices.

The Council reviewed its Corporate Plan in 2020. The Council's priorities set out in the [Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) were:

- Ensuring **People:** are independent, healthy and successful;
- Creating **Places:** where people are proud to live, work and play;
- Enabling **Prosperity:** creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

The Plan is designed to put residents at the centre of what we do.

Our new Corporate Plan 2024-2030 '[Working with Communities](#)', was agreed by Council in April 2024. This plan builds on the strong foundations of our previous plans and at the same time recognises the changes we need to make to meet the unprecedented service and financial challenges ahead. It sets out 4 Well-being Objectives and underpinning priorities. Our Well-being Objectives are:

1. People and Communities - supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
2. Work and Business - helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
3. Nature and the Environment - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

The Corporate Plan also sets out our Vision for an RCT where:

'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future'.

The Council is governed by 75 elected Members and operates a Cabinet system. It has a Senior Leadership Team headed by the Chief Executive and attended by Senior Directors, and employs over 10,500 employees in a variety of service areas and roles based within the following groups:

- Chief Executives
- Community & Children's Services
- Education & Inclusion Services
- Finance, Digital and Frontline Services.

3. Reporting on Equality

The main purpose of this Annual Report is to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an Annual Equality Report by 31 March each year. This retrospective report covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

What the regulations require:

The Annual Report for 2023-2024 must set out:

- The steps the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- How the authority has used this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty;
- Any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- Specified employment information, including information on training and pay;
- Progress towards fulfilling each of the authority's equality objectives;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives.

4. The General Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a general duty on the Council (and other public sector organisations) when making decisions and delivering services to have due regard in how to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained below);
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Protected Characteristics

This is the term used in the Equality Act to identify the types of people who are more likely to experience detrimental treatment and/or discrimination simply because of who they are. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

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

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, the Council also has to think about the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic;
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Council also has to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding. This report includes information on what the Council has done in order to meet the General Duty.

5. How We Meet The General Equality Duty

To demonstrate how the Council has met the General and Specific Duties relevant information is considered, which may include data from local and/or internal sources such as customer surveys, community forums or Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), as well as data from national and/or external sources such as census information, research reports and statistics on hate crime.

IDENTIFICATION AND COLLECTION OF RELEVANT INFORMATION

When considering how to identify what information should be included in this report, the Council first looked at the information relating to its SEP. This allowed the Council to reflect and monitor whether the information is still appropriate in assisting the Council to deliver on the General and Specific Duties.

Full details can be found in the SEP which can be accessed on the Council website at: [Strategic Equality Plan](#)

The information identified is still very relevant to the delivery of the General and Specific Duties; internal documents provide statistical information that can be used for determining action and enable comparison to identify improvements or areas for further improvement. Internal strategies and their action plans provide information on how the Council is delivering its priorities. External information, including that with a national context, provides the Council with a raft of data that can assist in developing appropriate and relevant policies and approaches.

The Council recognises that the SEP is not the only area that can identify relevant information and that whilst it is very useful, service areas would also hold information that could assist the Council in identifying how it is meeting the General and Specific Duties.

Many of our service areas have examples of good practice which help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). The information is obtained through our internal performance management systems.

As part of this performance management process, the Chief Executive reviews how individual service areas are demonstrating their compliance and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duties. Whilst there are some excellent examples of good practice, some of which are highlighted later in this report in the section 'equality objectives', some areas have more to do. Work will continue to raise awareness and understanding of the PSED with the aim of fully embedding equality matters into all aspects of our service delivery.

In addition to the good practice in our service delivery and workplace, ensuring Diversity in Democracy is commitment from our elected Members, and the Council is working to support their [Diversity Pledge](#).

The Council has an EIA process in place, the results of which contribute to the information contained within this report.

Employment monitoring data is provided from the Council's HR system iTrent. It should be noted that employment monitoring information includes teachers and all school-based employees.

THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE

As previously mentioned, the Council's main strategic plan is the is the [Corporate Plan](#). The detailed delivery actions contained in this plan are monitored and scrutinised by Councillors every quarter as part of the [Council's Performance Reports](#) to Cabinet.

NON-COLLECTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION

Whilst considerable relevant information has been collected for this report, it is acknowledged that it is sometimes difficult to collect and monitor all information in a Council as large as Rhondda Cynon Taf. A number of cross-Council networks already exist, such as the Disability Officers Group, to ensure that information and good practice are monitored and shared, however it is recognised that improvements can always be made to encourage a consistent approach in information sharing.

Use of Information

When considering what information should be used it was important that areas of good practice were identified across service areas to demonstrate that a commitment to delivering equality exists throughout the Council. Information used in the 2023/24 report includes:

- The Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024)

- Service delivery/projects (2023-2024)
- Employment practices
- Consultation and engagement programme (2023-2024)
- EIAs (2023-2024)
- Employment monitoring information (2023-2024)
- Self Service Evaluations (2023-2024).

DELIVERY OF COUNCIL STRATEGIES

The Council consults and engages with its residents to collect information that is used to plan and prioritise, identify areas for improvement and service change, set and monitor performance standards and measure satisfaction on the quality of the services we provide.

The Council continues to develop and increase engagement through our Let's Talk RCT engagement website [Let's Talk RCTCBC](#). Within 2023-2024 we increased the use of a past consultations page on Let's Talk which allows visitors to look at the consultations and other projects in the past 12 months that have now closed. Where possible we have linked decision notices, reports and other resulting information from those project pages, increasing the transparency of the consultation and engagement process and providing a route for participants to understand the impact of their taking part.

We have also worked on developing a better understanding of how people interact with the Let's Talk site, including which tools are most engaged-with, which formats seem to be better received and what feedback we receive that can be more widely used.

Examples of the Let's Talk projects we have supported and led on include;

Let's Talk Equalities;
 Let's Talk Budget;
 Let's Talk Eisteddfod 2024;
 Let's Talk Aberdare;
 Let's Talk About What Matters to You;
 Let's Talk Climate Change.

During the year, we supported or managed a large number of services with their consultation and engagement activities and supported a number of face-to-face engagement events. We supported over 80 service consultations as shown in the table below, with over 11,000 responses received and analysed.

This is in addition to the over 2,500 engaged people via the Let's Talk site.

Service Area	Number of Consultations	Snap Surveys	Number of Responses
Chief Executive	7	2	691
Education and Inclusion Services	6	6	2,248
Highways, Streetcare & Transportation Services	5	5	2,950
Human Resources	3	3	733
Legal & Democratic Services	5	5	525
Prosperity & Development	2	1	293
Public Health Protection & Community Services	25	24	2,146
Social Services	28	25	2,284
TOTAL	81	71	11,870

Note: these figures do not include those we engaged with via our face-to-face methods.

Examples of some of the consultations that we have supported and led on include;

- Dog Fouling - Public Space Protection Order;
- Flood Alleviation Schemes & Flood Risk Management Strategy;
- Learning Disabilities Day Services;
- Heritage Strategy;
- Participation Strategy;
- Budget Consultation;
- Corporate Plan;
- Home to School Transport.

Examples of how residents and communities have been involved in the Council's work include:

- Engaging with Schools and young people

- Continued engagement and involvement with residents and communities in service changes that impact them, so that their voices are heard in Council decisions.
- Continued engagement with the Older People's Advisory Group about issues that could support their ability to get out and about. We have a joint SLA agreement with Age Connects Morgannwg and Older Peoples' Advisory Group to support and engage with older people in RCT;
- We provided a freepost and telephone option for those who cannot engage digitally, in addition to our face-to-face approach;
- We linked in with other services whilst undertaking our face-to-face events, from joining up consultations, to providing waste bags and advice and information;
- We have continued to use digital and social media engagement as one of our methods to obtain resident views and promote consultations;
- Continued to make our consultations more accessible to residents by increasing the use and availability of easy to read materials.

All consultations that we undertake we attempt to engage with the widest range of people that we can. We aim to capture the views of all groups that live within the borough and aim to represent all their opinions and concerns. We continue to provide Easy Read versions of all service change consultations and collect demographic equality information for services to use to inform their decision making and the Impact Assessment Process.

We continue to monitor questions we include in surveys relating to Equalities and Welsh Language. The data collected is used to inform the Council's decision-making process, an Equality Impact Assessment and a Welsh Language Impact Assessment must be prepared in order to consider the possible relevant impacts from any proposals.

6. Equality Objectives

In 2019 we launched our Strategic Equality Plan (2019-2022). To aid the development of appropriate and relevant equality objectives the Equality and Human Rights Commission report 'How Fair is Wales 2018' was the main reference source. Equality objectives were aligned to well-being goals contained in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, specifically a 'More Equal Wales' and a 'Wales of Cohesive Communities'.

A comprehensive engagement process was undertaken with the public and targeted engagement was undertaken with community groups that reflect the 'protected characteristics' contained within the Equality Act 2010.

From this engagement and consultation with a number of Council service areas the following equality objectives were identified and published in the Strategic Equality Plan 2019-2022. The equality objectives are:

- Objective 1 To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive;
- Objective 2 To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities;
- Objective 3 To promote safe communities;
- Objective 4 To reduce the gender pay gap;
- Objective 5 To create an inclusive workforce.

An action plan was developed outlining specific actions in relation to each equality objective. These actions were monitored through service area delivery plans.

As the Council now has a new Strategic Equality Plan for 2024-2028, this is the last annual equality report based on the above-mentioned equality objectives. In respect of the old plan, consistent progress on many of the equality objectives were hampered by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the aftermath of the pandemic resulted in a shift of priorities and differences in the way we operate. Nonetheless, all equality objectives remained in focus and in nearly all cases positive outcomes have been achieved.

The Strategic Equality Plan we are reporting on ended in 2022, and while we contemplated our new equality objectives, we felt it was important to ensure that key strategic documents align to ensure the best outcomes for our communities and staff. This alignment meant a delay in producing and publishing the new Strategic Equality Plan (referenced above), as we wanted to align with the production and publishing of the Council's new Corporate Plan.

We made contact with the Equality and Human Rights Commission to discuss through our intentions and provided them with assurance of our commitment to ongoing equality work. The majority of equality objectives are already embedded into organisational practise and are monitored regularly through the Council's performance framework.

Development of New Key Council Strategies

The year 2023-2024 involved a significant effort in engagement and evidence gathering towards the development of the new Council Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality Plan.

Corporate Plan 2024-2030

Our new Corporate Plan 2024-2030 '[Working with Communities](#)', was agreed by Council in April 2024, and sets out 4 Well-being Objectives and underpinning priorities. Our Well-being Objectives are:

1. People and Communities - supporting and empowering RCT residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
2. Work and Business - helping to strengthen and grow RCT's economy.
3. Nature and the Environment - A green and clean RCT that improves and protects RCT's environment and nature.
4. Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language - Recognising and celebrating RCT's past, present and future.

The Corporate Plan also sets out our Vision for an RCT where:

'All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future'.

Our Vision, Well-being Objectives and priorities can only be delivered by a well-run Council. This means, a Council that has a positive organisational culture, that values its staff, manages its resources wisely and looks to continually improve what we do to have the best impact for residents and meet the many challenges we face. Within the Plan, we have also set out commitments to residents, staff and partners.

Regular feedback from our residents and staff through conversations and surveys helped shape this plan. In addition, we put in place a new conversation 'Let's Talk about what matters to you' to check that we were on the right track. The majority of responses supported our Vision and Well-being objectives and highlighted the strong feeling people have about public services generally and how much they are valued within communities.

Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028

Our new [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#) was agreed by Cabinet in March 2024 and sets out 3 Equality Objectives and underpinning priorities.

Our Equality Objectives are:

1. We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into every aspect of service delivery.
2. We will attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions.
3. We will respect, value and listen to all our employees by embedding a culture of inclusion.

These Equality objectives directly align to the Corporate Plan's vision for RCT, specifically an 'inclusive County Borough'.

To ensure the development of our equality objectives was evidence based we engaged with residents and our workforce through face-to-face meetings, focus groups, surveys, manager's briefings and on-line sessions as well as analysing community and workforce data. Ensuring our objectives were evidence based means we not only reflected significant societal issues and trends but the regional issues that affect and matter to our residents and staff.

We established an on-line Let's Talk equalities conversation and ideas board which allowed respondents to post open suggestions for improvement and comment on ideas posted by others. The online engagement was promoted in a number of ways such as direct messaging to equality organisations as well as posters being widely displayed at community venues. Direct engagement was held with a number of community meetings such as the Disability Forum, Valleys Veterans, Taff Ely Veterans, Innovate and Valleys Ethnic Minority Support Group.

Through feedback from our staff we recognised that we had some work to do to ensure that the Council has an inclusive and positive organisation culture. Whilst most our staff report the Council is a good place to work, some staff reported that they had experienced inappropriate language and behaviours in the workplace.

Progress on Equality Objectives

Below is a brief overview of how we continued to meet the equality objectives contained in the Strategic Equality Plan 2018-2022.

Objective 1 – To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

Action 1 - Identify community groups that represent the full diversity of the citizens of Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop accessible communication channels with them.

We have many well-established links with community groups across RCT, for example, Community Cohesion Group, Disability Forum, Older People's Advisory Groups, Youth Forums, Project Unity, Served and Proud, Taf Ely Veterans, Valleys Veterans, Youth Group. Officers meet with these groups regularly to explore and support issues that affect them.

During the course of this SEP, we have established [Neighbourhood Networks](#). These are local partnerships of Council services, organisations and local groups that are working together to deliver services and activities to develop communities further. Neighbourhood Networks are focussed around Community Resilience Hubs and can influence development within communities.

Action 2 - Identify the number of refugees living in Rhondda Cynon Taf that are not already included in settlement programmes.

We have continued to monitor and support the number of refugees living in the area as follows:

- Homes for Ukraine Scheme - despite significant housing challenges, the Resettlement Team successfully moved on Ukrainian guests from the 2 Welcome Centres located in RCT. This included 9 families from Dare Valley Country Park and 34 guests from the University of South Wales into private rented properties. A weekly coffee morning for Ukraine Community living in RCT is held.
- Resettlement - throughout all of the Resettlement Schemes, we have encouraged refugees and displaced people residing in RCT to participate in community activities such as coffee mornings and sewing club. This has helped with inclusion and helped to reduce social barriers. We work with the Welsh Local Government Agency (WLGA), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) providers and other councils to establish a women only ESOL online class. The recent appointment of a translator to assist the team in working and communicating with our Ukraine guests helps considerably with inclusion and equality to service provision.

Action 3 - Undertake an employment needs assessment which will inform specific action points relating to young people, disability and ethnicity.

We have continued to offer a wide range of provision which provide positive outcomes that focus on disabled people, people who are vulnerable due to a range of issues or who are affected by poverty. Participants are supported as part of their provision which focusses on improving the lives of those who are disadvantaged through ill-health, disability and economic circumstances.

The Employment Needs Assessment is conducted on an individualised basis. All participants complete a needs assessment prior to enrolling to ensure the most appropriate support/provision could be allocated. This needs assessment would then be reviewed on a 12-weekly basis and as such, action plans amended or where required, signposting to more appropriate support.

Support is also tailored according to an individual's needs and whilst the expectation is a minimum of fortnightly contact, the pace is determined by the participant and isn't time restricted, for example, a participant may be referred due to social isolation, they can be supported to attend community-based groups and to build confidence prior to 'the employability conversation'. The participant is supported to upskill, gain work experience, and apply for work as applicable and as deemed appropriate by them.

More information on the programmes and support offered as part of this provision is outlined later in this report under Objective 2, Action 2 'Develop and implement an action plan based on the employment needs assessment specifically in relation to young people, disability and ethnicity'.

Action 4 - A community profile to be undertaken for all library areas to better understand the needs of customers.

As previously reported, the library service has identified the main catchment areas for each library and then undertaken a profile of each area by using the Community Insights programme which focusses on the following areas:

- population in the wards that fall into the library's catchment area;
- information on children in poverty, people out of work, people in deprived areas, disability, pensioners and other vulnerable groups;
- information on housing characteristics: dwelling types, housing tenure, affordability, overcrowding, age of dwelling and communal establishments;
- information on recorded crime and crime rates;
- information on limited long-term illness, life expectancy and mortality, and general health;
- more information on qualifications, pupil attainment and absences;

- information on people's jobs, job opportunities, income and local businesses;
- information on transport, distance to services and digital services;
- information on physical environment, air quality and neighbourhood classifications.

The findings from the community profiles are embedded into the [Library Service and Strategy and Action plan 2022-2025](#) ensuring the library service not only improves the library experience for all customers but also reflects customer needs in a rapidly changing environment.

Action 5 - Undertake research as part of the local housing market needs assessment into the demand for housing needs for disabled people.

The Council applies the data set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) when determining the mix of new schemes/properties that are being built with the use of social housing grant (SHG). The Service continues to apply this method in order to tackle the demand for housing among disabled people. A new LHMA has recently been completed and submitted to Welsh Government and is awaiting sign off.

The LHMA, amongst other key plans and strategies has contributed to the development of [RCT Housing strategy 2024-2030](#).

Action 6 - Undertake a review of the Homestep Scheme to ensure equality monitoring questions are appropriate to identify specific needs with an emphasis on the identification of housing needs for young disabled people.

The [Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026](#) embeds a number of actions in relation to supporting young people in relation to future accommodation needs.

The Housing Strategy and Investment Service has worked with the Council's Digital Improvement Office to review all mailing lists and application forms and these have now all been brought online. The Homestep mailing list will be further reviewed with the Digital Improvement Office to include equality monitoring questions to identify specific needs, including those of young disabled people.

The Homestep mailing list sign up process has been re-designed and now has a far easier completion process for potential applicants. This mailing list has been used to inform the next Local Housing Market Assessment in 2025.

Action 7 - Improve and develop the collection and recording of customer equality monitoring information across Council service areas.

We previously reported that in August 2022 we launched our internal Equality Monitoring toolkit and standard monitoring form for all staff and service areas to use when conducting monitoring. The purpose of the form and toolkit is to ensure that monitoring practice across the Council is cohesive, and data collected from each service area is robust.

Some service areas have statutory requirements around data collection, whilst other areas monitor equality data as best practise, however all data is used to improve service provision. We have numerous digital platforms relevant to the service areas that collect data. One example is:

- the Homelessness Arbritas module records the ethnicity of service users and those subject to immigration controls. Given the complex needs of many of these service users, including those with disabilities and who may be digitally excluded, the service provides an outreach approach wherever needs are identified. The new Housing and Support Team (HAST) in particular spend the majority of their time at the Council's temporary accommodation provision in order to provide an easily accessible linkage with the service for those who are in financial hardship or who do not have access to digital means.

Action 8 - To evaluate the experience of disabled people who are on the Homefinder register to understand any barriers to accessing adapted accommodation and to identify improvements to the process as a result.

We have continued to maintain service targets, including offering a face-to-face service at Ty Sardis and in community hubs. The Allocation Scheme Review has commenced, and it is aimed to be implemented during 2025-26. Despite increased service demand, in 2024 Homefinder processed 6441 housing applications.

One of the main areas for review within the RCT Allocation Scheme is adapted housing. Advice and support has been well received from the Council's Diversity and Inclusion team and Occupational therapy team as part of the Allocation review. We have consulted with service users and obtained their views about how the allocation of adapted properties works for them. Their feedback through lived experience, has been incorporated into the proposed amendments to the Allocation Scheme. Homefinder continues to attend the RCT Disability Forum regularly to assist with the understanding of issues experienced by disabled people within the community. Homefinder regularly attends local hospitals to assist customers in hospital who are preparing for discharge, without access to technology who need assistance with rehousing upon discharge. Other customers who are digitally excluded are able to apply to Homefinder by telephone, however for some applicants who require more support to make an application a face-to-face appointment is available in Sardis House, Aberdare, and Treorchy libraries.

Action 9 - Improve and develop monitoring of customer complaints.

We have implemented a new Customer Record Management System backed by Power BI which better enables us to understand the needs of customers and communities where there are equality considerations.

We ensure effective and efficient multi-channel delivery of the Council's customer experience, providing easy access to information and services, ensuring enquiries, requests and feedback are efficiently dealt with and where possible resolved at the first point of contact; and check that customers are satisfied with their experience.

We have implemented a new contact centre platform which has introduced new technology such as webchat, call in queue return calls and automated resident satisfaction.

In 2020 we developed a customer satisfaction survey in relation to operational services provided via the Service desk. Consistently most respondents rate the service as Excellent, where service is rated 'Poor' we contact every customer to understand why they believed their experiences were not to the standard they would expect. This information is recorded, so that we may seek to learn any lessons.

For statutory complaints timescales to responds to complaints are set in legislation i.e. Stage 1 – 15 working days, Stage 2 – 25 working days. For statutory complaints, performance is reported to Corporate Parenting Board, Adult and Children's Quality Assurance Board and annually as part of the Directors report.

Statutory Complaints:

Year	Number of Complaints	%Resolved in Timescale
21/22	110	48%
22/23	63	52%
23/24 (Qtr. 1-2)	62	50%

% for statutory are stage 1 (15 working days).

Statutory complaints are generally complex in their nature, statutory guidance advises that there must be face to face or direct contact with complainant as part of the resolution. These lead to longer resolution times. For non-statutory complaints the timescales are set in line with the Model Complaints Policy. Stage 1 – 10 workings days, Stage 2 – 20 working days. Performance is monitored and reported regularly.

Non-Statutory Complaints:

Year	Number of Complaints	%Resolved in Timescale	% in 20 days
21/22	545	60%	75%
22/23	582	59%	72%
23/24 (Qtr.1-2)	471	57%	69%

Complaints are recognised as positive opportunities for the Council to learn from and inform future practice. Work also continues to develop our Customer Feedback Scheme approach to “You said” “We did,” with positive progress being seen across certain departments but recognition that further work is required to embed the process and encourage wider adoption across the Council.

Action 10 - Improve local access to information advice and assistance provision for children, young people and families to promote their participation and engagement.

There have been considerable improvements in this area over the period of this strategic equality plan. Most recently:

- We have engaged with parents to gather their opinions of Early Years services for 0-7 year olds across the region, where a short online survey was completed by 240 parents/carers (64% from RCT, 19% Merthyr Tydfil and 17% from Bridgend). Work focused on the development of a regional communication framework. This framework will be used across the region to bring clarity and consistency to communicating information regarding early years services to families, professionals and the general public.
- We have hosted a range of Service Level Agreements with third sector organisations that deliver open access play provision within their local areas. As part of the agreement, these providers are expected to actively promote their play offer both within the geographical area it is operating and also via social media. These promotional materials are also submitted to the Council Play Development Team, who share the information via the Corporate website and social media platforms for maximum exposure. The Family Information Service re-post/tweet these details so that families can access the details from a variety of sources. The RCT Families website now features Open Access Play timetables that are updated prior to each school holiday period.

- Work is underway to review the usage of the Children and Family Centre buildings and consider opportunities to increase the use of the centres and wider community engagement linking in with neighbourhood network developments. We continue to work with community and third sector organisations through the Community Support Steering Group. We are also planning to undertake informal sessions with parents, to try and establish parent forums making sure that any developments meet the needs of the families and the wider communities. As part of the development of the RCT Families website and social media opportunities, the promotion and profile of Centres is being raised, showing the resources available and signposting to sources of advice and support in community settings.
- Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) uses numerous ways to communicate with young people, parents/carers and community members such as emails, text messaging, posters, leaflets, social media platforms and an app which was launched in 2022. YEPS also has a Youth Officer solely responsible for developing digitalisation and promotion, supported by at least one Social Media Champion in each cluster. Young people have been the heart of the development of the app, which has transformed user engagement and improved service delivery; as well as promoting the service and its activities and support on offer, the app enables parents and guardians to complete consent forms for off-site activities. The numbers of followers for each of the social media platforms is steadily increasing year on year as the service continues to promote events, activities and use live streams to engage followers.
- The YEPS website is also a primary method of communication and continues to grow in popularity with the number of views to date in 2023-24 already exceeding the total for the full year of 2022-23; this is especially important given that the website is now used, alongside the app to view and book activities on offer.
- The Information, Advice and Guidance section of the website is also growing in prominence as it's continuously updated to ensure young people have easy, 24-hour online access to information, advice and guidance on several key issues. This was a key piece of feedback from the Your Voice Survey. The priority is to continue to work with other services and external partners to ensure all information and signposted links are current and relevant.
- The Family Information Service (FIS) Facebook page currently has 3,500 followers which is a 48% increase compared to the previous year. In 2022-

2023, our Facebook posts reached 381,130 Facebook accounts which is a 280% increase compared to the previous year. This suggests that this is still an effective means to communicate with parents, families and members of the public about information, services and activities available to them. The creation of an Instagram social media page for FIS to appeal to the younger RCT residents has been approved and is with the Council's Communication Team to build.

- YEPS thematic forums have become well embedded throughout; the voice of the young people has influenced several successful service developments which have addressed the needs of 11-25 year olds, as outlined in the table below.

Thematic forum	Positive outcomes achieved
Equality & Diversity / Cynon Forum – nominated for a national Youth Excellence Award	White Ribbon event 2022 and 2023 LGBTQ+ weekly meetings Supporting the Festival of Unity Live and Let Pride Art Exhibition nominated for a national Youth Excellence Award
Community Safety/Taf Forum	Anti-Racism event Around the World Operation Bang 2022 and 2023
Mental Health and Wellbeing/Rhondda Forum	Mental Health animation which has been nominated for a national Youth Excellence award
Environment and Sustainability	Capel Swap Shop – 'YEPS wears Prada' – an environmentally friendly fashion show

In addition to the above, we established a YEPS Neurodiversity Youth Forum for young people aged 11-25 years, the first of its kind in Wales.

OBJECTIVE 2 – To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below:

Action 1 - A comprehensive review of the recruitment and selection process to increase the diversity of applicants.

We have not been as successful in this area as we had intended due to a number of factors, including priority changes during the Covid-19 pandemic and capacity issues.

We did however:

- create a [careers/jobs microsite](#) to develop our employer brand and attract more applicants to apply for our jobs;
- redesign our job description template to complement the website;
- developed recruitment marketing by utilising social media and LinkedIn in addition to more traditional methods of advertising such as posters, print, roundabout and billboard advertising;
- offer enhanced recruitment campaigns and specialist advice to managers to advertise posts, attract applicants;
- increase the use of social media platforms and targeted advertising, including paid Facebook advertising;
- launched an Education/Schools microsite.

We successfully hold bi-annual careers fairs, and as part of this we undertook a bespoke Social Media campaign for Children's Residential Services. Through our career's fairs, for social care roles we have undertaken interviews on site and successful candidates have been supported to complete the recruitment process to commence in employment.

We continue to monitor our recruitment data and the Employee Monitoring Data shown in Appendix 1.

Since the implementation of this SEP in 2018 we have seen our gender balance remain consistent at 74% female staff and 26% male staff. Numbers of minority ethnic staff has increased from 0.8% to 1.3%, and disabled staff from 1.8% to 2.4%. However, we must be cautious about the disability and ethnicity data due to potential gaps in equality monitoring data. Appendix 1 highlights detailed Employee Monitoring Data.

Attracting and retaining a diverse workforce remains a priority for us and is an action in the Council's new [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#).

Action 2 - Develop and implement an action plan based on the employment needs assessment specifically in relation to young people, disability and ethnicity.

This is an area of provision which has seen much change over the duration of the SEP due to changes in grant funding streams. We offer a wide range of provision which provide positive outcomes that focus on disabled people, people who are vulnerable due to a range of issues or who are affected by poverty. Participants are supported as part of their provision which focusses on improving the lives of those

who are disadvantaged through ill-health, disability, economic circumstances as follows:

- 'Learning Steps' is delivered by the Adult Community Learning team for people with moderate to severe learning disabilities.
- Specific vulnerable groups are targeted for employment support through the CfW+ programme as set out in the Welsh Government Plan for [Employability Skills: Stronger, Fairer, Greener Wales \(2022\)](#).
- The Community Services Manager continues to be actively engaged in the transformation programme for people with learning disabilities and will form part of a working group looking at work placement and employment opportunities for identified day centre clients.
- The Adult Community Learning Partnership in RCT continues to engage with a high percentage of people from the most disadvantaged areas in the borough.
- We work with Coleg Y Cymoedd to support Nigerian students and their family members to find work locally.
- The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF): People and Skills programme is structured so that specific interventions target various customer groups e.g. people who are economically inactive - including those with a disability, young people, ex-offenders, prisoners, parents, people in low paid and low skilled work. As such, our new SPF People and Skills Engagement Team deliver or work with partners to deliver pre-employment life skills activities e.g. physical and mental wellbeing programmes.

We deliver courses and learning opportunities to young people in school that are at risk of exclusion.

Action 3 - Recommend within the adapted housing review that the Council commits to increasing the number of adapted and accessible homes being built in the area across all tenures.

The Adapted Housing Review has been completed and makes a number of recommendations, including increasing the supply of adapted housing across all tenures. The next steps are to incorporate the recommendations into our working practices and other policies and strategies.

Action 4 - The implementation of the Develop, Invest and Grow project to improve Well-being and equality and diversity outcomes in over 100 small-to-medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Staying Well at Work (formerly Develop Invest & Grow) was led by RCT and part funded by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government provided support to small businesses and their employees. The support was offered at no cost

and focusses on a bespoke range of products to improve employee Health and Wellbeing and businesses to manage employees with disabilities/work limiting health conditions.

Funding for the project delivery ended in December 2022. During its lifetime the project engaged with businesses and individual employees throughout RCT. The project focused on health and wellbeing and provided support to individuals and businesses in terms of HR support, education and clinical treatment and support. The project provided companies with guidance on Diversity and Inclusion, particularly in relation to policy development and provided training on topics including men's health issues, women's health issues, menopause, mental health and wellbeing. The project also provided specific support to participants around individual health issues and fitness for work.

Action 5 - To provide accessible information to the public through a variety of formats with a specific focus on improving accessibility of information for the Deaf community.

The Contact Centre provides a service to customers who are Deaf or have hearing loss via the dedicated Sensory Line. Whilst all Customer Care activities are 'universal' and fully inclusive to customers, providing support for our residents to access services across a range of channels. e.g. digital and telephony, we recognise we must continue to improve to offer consistent accessible information to the Deaf community, as well as easy read and non-digital formats. This was highlighted during consultation for the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028. Therefore, an action is included in the [Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28](#).

Action 6 - Undertake development of the use of assistive technology within the Digital Strategy.

Through the [Digital Strategy 2022-2026](#) we are seeking to ensure that services are fully inclusive, easy to use and no-one who wishes to participate is left behind.

We provide opportunities for people within our communities and organisation to develop their digital competency, confidence and provide access to assisted digital support, so that they are better equipped to access and use technology productively. We continued to support the digital skills and inclusion agenda, with ICT & Digital playing a key role in supporting key initiatives such as Digital Bitesize, 'Digital Fridays' and Get online in RCT. It is currently difficult to effectively baseline digital excluded numbers and we will need to work towards an effective measurement so that we may gauge improvement.

To support access to digital information, free public Wi-Fi is provided at approximately 90 Council and community buildings and also at our principal town centres. Public access PCs are available at several locations such as, libraries leisure and community centres. All PCs within libraries were refreshed with new devices during 2021-2022. The Council website does though need to be refreshed to ensure all WiFi enabled buildings are effectively communicated.

Digital Adoption and Bitesize sessions for our employees continue to be well received. In 2023-2024 we provided 21 Bitesize sessions with 230 staff attending – topics included I-Trent, Android Device Accessibility, Cyber Awareness, Office 365, Goss and MS Forms.

Action 7 - To strengthen existing Homefinder processes to take into account equality and diversity best practice.

As previously reported, equalities is part of the Allocation Scheme review that is currently being undertaken. Staff from the Diversity and Inclusion team have attended task and finish groups to provide advice and assistance with the application process.

Homefinder operates a face-to-face service in Sardis House for individuals wishing to make an application but do not have access to a telephone or the internet. Homefinder has also improved accessibility for individuals seeking to apply for housing by establishing a presence in One4All Centres in Aberdare and Treorchy every week and these are proving to be successful.

Homefinder continues to attend the Disability Forum and attendees' feedback relevant information from this community network.

Action 8 - To further develop an inclusive approach to apprenticeships.

Our award-winning apprenticeship scheme has delivered many successful outcomes. Since 2018, we have recruited 161 apprentices into various service areas across the Council. The Employment, Education and Training team (EET) extensively advertise and promote vacancies to internal and external stakeholders. Delivering workshops and webinars to colleges, Department for Work and Pensions, Careers Wales, Communities For Work and supported agencies such as Elite, to encourage individuals from all backgrounds and those with disabilities to apply. Our recruitment process ensures we provide reasonable adjustments to individuals to assist them with the process. For example, we have allocated additional time on assessments, interview questions issued early, delivered virtual interviews etc. The statistics below highlight the success and sustainability of the apprenticeship scheme.

2018 – 2024

Female 66

Male 95

Obtained Jobs	152	94%
External employment	25	15%
Internal Employment (RCT Council)	127	79%
Other Outcomes	5	4%
No Outcome	4	4%

In addition to the apprenticeship scheme, we have an award-winning traineeship programme for young people with learning disabilities. The programme is a multi-partnership between RCT Council, Coleg y Cymoedd, Elite Supported Employment and Learning Disability Wales. The programme is designed to support interns with a learning disability and/or autistic spectrum disorders on their final year in education, providing work placement opportunities in RCT Council to help with the transition from education to employment.

We also deliver Care2Work and Step into the Right Direction. The programmes provide young people aged 15-25 years who are care experienced, care leavers and/or those with care and support needs with encouragement and support to identify and access a range of training and employment opportunities.

More information about the above-mentioned programmes and participant success stories is available [here](#).

Action 9 - Strengthen the scrutiny process for the Equality Impact Assessment process.

In last year's report we outlined the introduction of the Review Panel which was established to strengthen the scrutiny of completed equality impact assessments and Welsh Language impact assessments. Senior officers from across the Council sit on the Review Panel to review the impact assessments, checking that relevant data and evidence have been used to inform decision making.

The Review Panel has now become an established governance process which is adding value to the decision-making process. It has helped raise awareness of the importance and relevance of the use of data and evidence in the impact assessment process. Feedback from Council officers has been positive about the value of the process in developing their understanding of equality matters.

To support this process, along with guidance documents and impact assessment examples, a Data Library dashboard has been created, with the help of Data Insights

and GIS team, to provide Council officers with relevant information about the people and places within RCT.

Action 10 - Encourage the uptake of Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement through reviewing service delivery models and an effective marketing strategy.

All [Catering Services web pages](#) have been updated to promote the uptake of eFSM with easy access hyperlinks for application. The Council's media team continue to share social media messages promoting eFSM take-up.

Posters and links to You Tube videos, promoting the importance of applying for free school meals have been forwarded to all RCT schools.

Here is the Welsh version of the You Tube video

<https://youtube.com/shorts/glqKtJgy0F4>

Here is the English version of the You Tube video

<https://youtube.com/shorts/LjbXTxNhCUI>

Action 11 - Take a strategic approach to our town centres which will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive and accessible environment for local businesses, shoppers, residents and visitors.

When developing new strategies or projects relating to town centres we strive to engage effectively with the widest range of potential customers, service users and stakeholders. This helps us to achieve an inclusive end result that effectively meets the needs and opportunities of the whole community, inclusive of people of all ages and disabled people.

The development of [Aberdare Town Centre Strategy](#) included a programme of engagement with the public, stakeholder organisations and local interest groups in order to inform Strategy development. As an integral part of this we undertook a rigorous Welsh Language Impact Assessment and an Equalities and Socio-Economic Duty Impact Assessment. The completed impact assessments will be used as a tool to support the effective delivery of the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy following its adoption. The impact analysis and evidence which is set out in detail in the impact assessment will be used as a baseline for monitoring and evaluation of delivery. The design and development of the delivery has been positive in its approach to inclusive participation of the community and stakeholders. This will be carried forward into the delivery phase using the good practise engagement approach that has informed work on the Strategy to date.

When formulating any new plans or strategies for town centres, more engagement with protected characteristic groups will be considered and advice taken to ensure all areas are covered. We will use the impact assessments which are now in place to support the Aberdare Town Centre Strategy to improve the way we engage with our business customers, and when we are working with them to support their investment and growth proposals so that they and their customers get improved outcomes in terms of equality and accessibility. We will evaluate where improvements can be made and consider how these can be rolled out to other areas.

OBJECTIVE 3 – TO PROMOTE SAFE COMMUNITIES

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

Action 1 - Review, develop and re-implement the Hate Crime Strategy.

Last year we reported the challenges of implementing the Hate Crime strategy in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. The relaxing of most restrictions made implementation possible, however, some challenges still remained, such as the amount of community groups and projects that no longer existed due to ending or folding during the pandemic. This has meant having to take a 'starting from scratch' approach to what were annual events and well-established groups etc.

We have since worked in partnership with Cwm Taf People First, which is an advocacy charity for people with a learning disability to launch [RCT Safe Places](#). This initiative aims to create a Safe Place for any vulnerable individual who may need to access a safe space and or place of refuge during a period of crisis.

To mitigate any safeguarding concerns, it was decided that the only places awarded safe place status would be Council run libraries. All libraries have now become registered as 'Safe Places,' and have received training from our Cohesion Officer, People First staff and a member of People First who has lived experience of a learning disability.

We held a full programme of activities for Hate Crime awareness week. This involved visiting Coleg Y Cymoedd and local secondary schools to discuss with pupils what hate crime was and how they can report it. We had discussions around the protected characteristics and the creation of Safe Places.

Hate crime data and action plans are regularly reported to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Community Safety Partnership Board. More information about this Board is outlined in the next action point.

Action 2 - Review the existing approach to tackling modern slavery.

There are established processes in place when modern slavery / human trafficking is suspected.

Following a review the Cwm Taf Morgannwg CSP Board is now in place and the strategic priorities for the Board are:

1. Preventing violent crime including domestic abuse and serious violence;
2. Promoting Cohesive Communities;
3. Creating safe spaces.

Action 3 - As part of Education's Well-being Strategy we will develop a programme for schools about raising awareness of emotional abuse in relationships.

Last year we reported on Barnardo's and Spectacle Theatre projects, and the ongoing work our schools undertake that has positive outcomes for young people. Spectacle Theatre's In the Dark Woods project has continued to be rolled-out across schools, with 228 pupils from 10 schools in RCT participating in the project. Additionally, this year we launched our new Community Domestic Abuse Project which is funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund. The project consists of a service specific vehicle and a small project team which raises awareness of domestic abuse within our local communities. The Project has also funded the conversion of a second vehicle (both vehicles converted from the Council's former decommissioned Library buses) in partnership with the YOS to support their Youth Engagement Project.

The project team will work with YOS colleagues in engaging young people in awareness raising of Domestic Abuse and promoting Healthy Relationships to meet requirements under Objective 2 of Welsh Government's [Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence \(VAWDASV\) Strategy 2022-2026](#) – 'Increase awareness in children, young people and adults of the importance of safe, equal and healthy relationships and empowering them to positive personal choices'.

Action 4 - Pilot the PERMA model in secondary schools.

Embedded in Positive Psychology, Seligman's [PERMA](#) model is suggested as an effective framework for understanding and promoting well-being. Furthermore, PERMA tools are suggested as an easily understood measure which can assess various dimensions of pupil well-being and can account for fluctuations in well-being over time.

Following the successful pilot of PERMA 95 schools have been set up to use the PERMA wellbeing tool which is used in a variety of ways in schools to meet their bespoke needs and priorities. Annual data shows improved wellbeing in all areas of PERMA for the second consecutive year at an LA level.

Action 5 - Strengthen collection and analysis of data for bullying incidents in schools.

Concerns have been highlighted regarding the low number of incidents of bullying being reported to the Local Authority that did not align to the bullying survey undertaken with secondary school aged learners in schools in Autumn Term 2022. Joint workshops were held in schools with YEPS to gain further insight into this and, positively there has been a 44.49% increase in the number of reported incidents of bullying in 2023-2024 compared to 2022-2023. This is considered to be more reflective of the outcomes of previous surveys and discussions at workshops regarding bullying.

Academic Summary	2022 - 2023	2023 - 2024	Difference	% Difference
Incidents of Bullying	454	656	202	44.49%

Bullying	Number	% Percentage
Primary	94	14.33%
All Through	50	7.62%
Secondary	208	31.71%
Special/PRU	304	46.34%
Totals	656	100%

Action 6 - Further develop the freedom programme with Women's Aid to better understand specific needs for victims of domestic violence from underrepresented groups.

RCT domestic abuse service, formerly Women's Aid RCT continue to provide a range of projects and services to support those affected by domestic abuse. Embedded into the process, all service users are asked to complete equality monitoring forms. This has been effective in supporting and informing future services.

Additional methods of engagement have been sought, with the implementation of the Council's new Community Domestic Abuse Project, as already highlighted earlier in Action 3.

OBJECTIVE 4 – TO REDUCE THE GENDER PAY GAP

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

The Gender Pay Gap

An organisation's gender pay gap is the difference between the average male and female pay rates. It is calculated by dividing the average female hourly pay rate by the average male hourly pay rate.

The Council is required to publish the gender pay gap between male and female employees. It is also required to publish this data separately on employees in Education (teaching employees).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission strongly advise publishing separate full-time and part-time gender pay gaps. It is considered that any pay gap of 5% or more is considered significant and in need of further analysis.

The mean gender pay gap is the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees. A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

The Equal Pay Audit identified the following Equal Pay gaps:

March 2024

	Combined	Full Time	Part Time
All Employees	8.85%	-8.70%	5.54%
Non-Teaching	10.47%	-7.94%	3.38%
Teaching	3.46%	3.62%	0.35%

The gender pay gap for all employees has reduced from 9.49% to 8.85%.

The main reason for this was the 2023-2024 pay award for NJC employees of an increase of £1925 (pro rata) on all grades. This had a more positive impact for employees on the lower grades and as the lower grades are occupied predominantly by female staff the gender pay gap decreased.

The average hourly rate for female employees increased by 8.2% from £13.64 to £14.76 whereas the hourly rate for male employees increased by 7.5% from £15.25 to £16.40.

Over the period of the Strategic Equality Plan the gender pay gap for all employees has reduced from 10.41% to 8.85%.

Action 1 - Deliver the roll out of the performance review process for staff at all grades, and

Action 2 - Improve the monitoring of the performance review process.

Following the launch of the corporate Individual Performance Review staff annual appraisal process, the following has been delivered to advise managers of mandatory requirements and support available:

- communication emails were distributed and specific manager briefings held between March 2023 and June 2023. Around 500 managers have attended the specific briefings.
- Following manager feedback from the briefings, a 3 hour 'Carrying out Effective 121s and Performance Reviews' Masterclass was created. This manager training is delivered on a regular basis via Teams. Over 250 managers have attended sessions.
- Managers can contact relevant Human Resources staff direct with queries and there is a dedicated query inbox.
- Bespoke support and coaching are available to service areas facing challenges to undertake reviews.
- Global emails have continued to be distributed to remind managers of their responsibilities.

Following this successful launch, this process is embedded into management practice and into [Council's Workforce Plan 2023-2028](#).

Action 3 - Better understand whether barriers exist regarding the progression of women into senior positions.

Last year we reported that the Women Into Leadership programme ran from September 2021 to July 2022. The programme structure provided delivered elements focussing on a variety of topics specific to leadership combined with networking and facilitated discussions. Barriers that were identified through the programme were around exposure to opportunities, mentoring opportunities and coaching.

During the time of this plan, we have seen a shift in women progressing to more senior roles, however, more analysis needs to be undertaken to understand the full picture.

Action 4 - Understand more about what prevents women returning to the workplace following maternity leave.

As previously reported, a research study was completed which provided a better understanding into the barriers to retention following maternity leave. The study explored social and organisational barriers that contribute to the issue. The recommendations of the study included:

- Undertake further organisational research particularly with women who have returned to work following maternity leave
- Increase awareness and support for women going on maternity leave
- Review and improve monitoring processes
- Provide opportunities for exit interviews.

Action 5 - Support the EHRC pledge 'Working Forward' and implement its recommendations.

Unfortunately, this area of work did not progress due to a number of factors, including a shift in priorities during the pandemic, Welsh Government actions relating to equality priorities and operational resources.

This area of work was not highlighted during engagement and consultation during the development the new Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028, therefore it is not included as an action going forward.

However, the Council continues to ensure that employees are treated fairly during pregnancy and maternity, with HR policy and practice which is fully compliant with employment legislation.

OBJECTIVE 5 – TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below:

Action 1 - Develop a programme of sexual harassment training and awareness.

As previously reported, work in this area was delayed due to the pandemic. We have established a task and finish group to identify key actions and stakeholders. A staff survey was designed and distributed to Council employees. It was important we had a specific themed survey, and not just included questions in the annual staff survey, to provide a better understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Whilst we anticipated the additional duties relating to sexual harassment, which came into force in October 2024 within The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, there are some additional measures that must be considered, such as risk assessment. Therefore, further work on policy and process is required. Therefore, this area continues to be a priority and is an action in the Council's [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#).

Action 2 - Undertake a review of all our mental health activities and develop annual plans which provide education, training and interventions.

We recognise supporting staff wellbeing is essential for us, therefore we continuously improved the offer of activities and support for our staff. Over the period of the SEP, we have developed and implemented a Well-being Strategy that supports a healthier and more resilient workforce. Interventions have included:

- improved data reporting;
- Mental Health training for managers;
- introduction of an Employee Assistant Programme;
- continued Occupational Health and Well-being support including Counselling service and specialist advice;
- bespoke School Counselling Service offered for school based staff;
- well-being bitesize sessions regularly offered, including menopause café, anxiety, sleep, financial wellbeing, men and women's health;
- menopause support group;
- RCT Staff Walking challenge;
- Staff Football Tournament;
- supporting National Health Campaigns;
- cost of living newsletters.

This area of work is now embedded into the [Council's Workforce Plan 2023-2028](#).

Action 3 - Source and develop a suite of training for managers on equality and diversity topics.

A suite of 9 Diversity & Inclusion e-Learning modules have been developed for our workforce. The 9 modules are Dignity at Work, Disability and Discrimination, Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace, Equality Act 2010, LGBTQIA+ Trans Awareness, Neurodiversity Awareness, Race Awareness, Reasonable Adjustments and Unconscious Bias. These have been trialled with service areas and external consultants to ensure their suitability for Council staff and to make sure they are in line with current thinking/legislation.

Whilst it has been possible for a small amount of our staff to undertake the modules, the roll out of the training has been delayed due to system developments of our e-learning platform. The roll out will take place in financial year 2024-25.

This ongoing area of work is highlighted in the Council's [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#).

Action 4 - Become more disability confident as an organisation.

Over the duration of the SEP, we have continuously improved disability awareness across the organisation. This has included:

- maintaining Level 2 Disability Employer status under the Disability Confident Scheme;
- improving and providing digital and physical accessible services for residents and customers;
- developing an Accommodation Strategy Workforce Plan;
- facilitating awareness sessions on reasonable adjustments to management teams, managers briefings and employees;
- supporting the Disability and Carers staff network;
- supporting the Neurodiversity network;
- appointing a Senior Diversity Champion for Disability;
- facilitating an external Disability Forum;
- service areas becoming Autism Aware;
- delivery of Neurodiversity awareness events and sessions;
- signposting information and training by Business Disability Forum.

Despite the above, we have seen a growing number of complex reasonable adjustments queries. In some cases employees can be stressed or anxious and relationships with the manager is strained. We have particularly seen a rise in reasonable adjustment queries relating to neurodiverse conditions. This is partly in response to neurodiversity being discussed at the managers briefings but also a greater awareness of neurodiversity generally. Although we have been proactive in delivering awareness sessions on reasonable adjustments, we recognise that this is an area that could improve. Therefore, an action is included in the [Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28](#).

Action 5 - Undertake workplace equality monitoring.

There were some delays on this action due to the implementation of a new HR Payroll system. However, following implementation of Employee Self Service (ESS), a significant number of employees have updated their equality monitoring data. However, there are still gaps in data and there is more to do in raising awareness of

ESS, especially to those employees who are digitally excluded. Therefore, an action is included in the [Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028](#).

The Employee Monitoring Data shown in Appendix 1 indicates the gaps in data.

Action 6 - Replicate existing good practice to reflect all protected characteristics.

We continually strive to achieve an inclusive workplace. Over the duration of this plan we have supported and continued to develop a number of initiatives that have created awareness, education and provided under-represented groups with visibility and voice.

- Awareness Days, Equality Clinics and Events

We continuously raise awareness with our staff and communities with the aim of developing an inclusive culture and communities, but also signposting support available. These are sometimes done in partnership between different service areas or with other Councils and agencies. Below is a snapshot of some of the topics that have been explored:

- Anti-Racism
 - Black History Month
 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month
 - Holocaust Memorial Day
 - Inclusive Language
 - LGBT History Month
 - Reasonable Adjustments
 - Staff Networks Day
 - White Ribbon
 - Working Carers.
- Accreditations and Pledges
- Armed Forces Covenant
 - Autism Aware
 - BITC Race at Work Charter
 - Care Confident Employer
 - Defence Employer Recognition Scheme – Gold Award
 - Disability Confident
 - Stonewall Diversity Champion
 - Time to Change Wales
 - Zero Racism Wales.

- Collaboration

We work with a number of organisations to ensure that we have the most relevant and up to date equality information [including Business Disability Forum](#), [Business in the Community](#), [Stonewall Cymru](#) and [Tai Pawb](#).

[Proud Councils](#) is a partnership of 9 Councils in the South East Wales region; Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr, Newport, RCT, Swansea, Torfaen and Powys. The group support Pride events in Caerphilly, Merthyr, Newport, Powys and Pride Cymru in Cardiff with the aim to demonstrate a unified approach to LGBTQIA+ equality across the South East Wales Region.

- Senior Diversity Champions

Our Senior Diversity Champions have continued to champion the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda. They are:

Dave Powell Director of Corporate Estates	Disability Inclusion
Gaynor Davies Director of Education	Gender Equality
Simon Gale Director of Prosperity and Development	LGBTQIA+ Inclusion
Louise Davies Director of Public Health Protection and Community Services	Neurodiversity
Paul Mee Chief Executive	Race Equality

- Staff Equality Networks

We have grown our Staff Equality Networks with the creation of 2 new networks: Spotlight – a network for all racial and cultural backgrounds, who are passionate about making organisation change, and the ND Network – led by Neurodiverse Council staff, supporting the journey to accept, protect and celebrate neurodiversity within the workforce.

- Wales Interpretation and Translation Service

Over a number of years we have seen a steady growth in the number of instances needed for interpreters. We are a partner in the Wales

Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) and have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for delivery of the service provided via City of Cardiff Council. During 2023-2024 there were 755 bookings made through the service using 28 languages and BSL interpreters.

The 5 most requested languages during 2023-2024 were Russian, Polish, Urdu, Dari and Mandarin.

Overall Progress

This report has highlighted the significant progress the Council has made to meet the PSED and equality objectives contained in the Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2019-2022. It is recognised that many challenges existed during this time, and there was much change in the way we delivered our services. Where expected progress has not been made, or where priority areas remain, this work has been included in the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028.

We have explained the reason for the delay of production of the new SEP, however, during this time we continued to meet our equality duties and undertook extensive efforts to engage with people in respect of our new equality objectives.

Our work to deliver equality objectives contained in our SEP helps us to not only demonstrate how we meet the equality duties but also demonstrate how we are contributing to a more equal Wales - 'a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances'. It also seeks to support all the well-being goals including a Wales of Cohesive Communities and a Prosperous Wales.

7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)

The Council has had an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process in place for a number of years which is carried out under the following circumstances:

- Where new policies or practices are developed (including corporate plans, annual business plans and the annual budget);
- Where changes to existing policies or practices are proposed, and when conducting expenditure reviews and programme evaluations;
- Where there are proposals to withdraw from or discontinue an existing policy or practice;
- Where the business planning process has identified relevance to or implications for equality.

The process is regularly reviewed and takes into account the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.

The table below includes a snapshot of EIA's carried out in financial year 2023-2024.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Council's Office Accommodation Strategy Workspace Plan: Fit for the Future - Operating Model and Working Arrangements Policy	May 2023
Pontypridd Placemaking Plan – Southern Gateway Project Progress Update	May 2023
Proposals To Develop a New Special School in RCT	June 2023
Commencement of Statutory Consultation of the Authority's Review of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy And Action Plan	July 2023
Renovation and Redevelopment of the Rock Grounds Buildings, Aberdare	July 2023
Subsidised Bus Travel Schemes Across Rhondda Cynon Taf During the 2023-2024 Financial Year	July 2023
Review of the Local Toilet Strategy 2019-2023	September 2023
Proposed Extension to RCT's Dog Control Public Spaces Protection Orders	September 2023
Commissioning of Domiciliary Home Care Services	October 2023
Learning Disability Day Services Offer	November 2023
Proposal To Close Rhigos Primary School with Pupils Transferring to Hirwaun Primary School	December 2023
Consultation on the Proposals to Realign Additional Learning Needs Mainstream Learning Support Class Provision within RCT	December 2023
Aberdare Town Centre Strategy – Formal Consultation Feedback	December 2023
Day Services for Older People	December 2023
Proposal To Declare a New Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation In 2024	December 2023
Continuation of Free Breakfast Club Provision in Primary and Special Schools with the Introduction of a Charge for the Additional Childcare Element	January 2024

Proposals to Develop a New Special School in RCT	January 2024
The Council's 2024-2025 Revenue Budget	February 2024
Review of the Council's Home to School Transport Policy	March 2024
'Working With Our Communities' The Council's Draft Corporate Plan 2024-2030	March 2024
Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028	March 2024

Full details of decisions are included in Cabinet reports which are available on the following link:

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=132&Year=0&LLL=0>

8. Employment Monitoring Data

The Council must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of:

- people employed by the authority on 31 March each year by protected characteristic;
- men and women employed, broken down by:
 - job;
 - grade (where grading system in place);
 - pay;
 - contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts);
 - working pattern (including full-time, part-time and other flexible working patterns).
- people who have applied for jobs with the authority over the last year;
- employees who have applied to change position within the authority; identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not;
- employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application;
- employees who completed training;
- employees involved in grievance procedures either as a complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made;
- employees subject to disciplinary procedures;
- employees who have left an authority's employment.

All of the information above must be presented for each of the separate protected groups. The exception to this requirement is the data on job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern, which must be broken down only in relation to women and men.

This information is attached at Appendix 1 - Employment Monitoring Data.

9. Procurement

The Council operates the SPD (Single Procurement Document) which is part of the [National Procurement Website](#).

The SPD is a standard form, which replaces pre-qualification questionnaires, and should make the process of bidding for a public contract easier and contains a set of core questions commonly asked at the selection stage.

The SPD delivers a number of benefits:

- Increased efficiency for both suppliers and buyers, by allowing standard questions and keeping the number of questions to a minimum, and also by encouraging buyers to only seek information from suppliers if they can be clear about exactly how the information will be used;
- Greater standardisation of the selection stage, whilst also allowing for tailoring of questions to meet the specific requirements of the procurement;
- Increased transparency of the selection process and how responses will be evaluated – so that suppliers are able to work out easily whether or not they wish to bid for a particular opportunity, how to optimise their proposal and how to present it in an effective way;
- Improved opportunities for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and local businesses to compete on a more equal footing as a result of a carefully considered question set that removes some of the barriers to entry for them.

It includes a section on equal opportunities and is in line with the guidance on procurement published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

10. Accessible Information

The Council produces information in a wide variety of formats according to need. Service areas record requests for alternative formats from service users to ensure that these are provided.

Accessibility Guidelines are available to employees on the Council's Intranet, these provide information on the types of accessible information available, what it is and does and includes a list of suppliers so that employees can source requested formats.

The Council has adopted the RNIB Clear Print Guidelines to increase readability of its documents.

11. Future Work

As we have come to the end of the current SEP, our future work will focus on the delivery of our new equality objectives, which are:

- Objective 1 - We will embed equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) into every aspect of our service delivery.
- Objective 2 - We will attract applicants that represent the diversity of our communities, enriching our organisational capability to meet our ambitions.
- Objective 3 - We will respect, value and listen to all our employees by embedding a culture of inclusion.

12. Contact Details

Rhondda Cynon Taf welcomes comments on all aspects of this report, both in what it contains and what it may not make clear enough about the work and progress in delivering equality and removing discrimination.

If you have any comments or want to know more about the work the Council is doing please contact:

Melanie Warburton
Diversity and Inclusion Manager
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council
Ty Elai
Dinas Isaf East Industrial Estate
Williamstown
Tonypany
CF40 1NY

Telephone: 01443 444531

email: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

Employment Monitoring Data

Equality monitoring information is stored against all employees' records in the Council's payroll and human resources information system (Vision). The information is requested at the recruitment stage and entered on to their record at that point.

The Council encourages all employees to provide this information and an equality monitoring survey is carried out on all employees every two years in an attempt to increase the information held.

In preparation for the extended employee monitoring requirements being introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, the Council carried out an equality monitoring survey of all employees in 2011. This survey included questions that covered all protected characteristics except pregnancy. This question was not asked as it was felt that information on pregnancy and maternity would already be held on employee records and the time period allowed for return could mean that the information provided would be out of date.

The Diversity and Inclusion Team worked with other service areas to identify other useful information which resulted in the questionnaire including sections on the use of British Sign Language, Welsh language ability and whether or not an employee had caring responsibilities. This information was provided statistically to the service areas to inform their work and strategies.

Statistical analysis of the information is contained in the following tables and covers all Council employees including teachers and school-based employees.

People Employed by Protected Characteristic

The following information has been provided using employees' national insurance numbers; this ensures that where an employee may work in more than one job their details will be included only once to avoid duplication of information. It includes teachers and school-based employees. Some comparisons will be made to the local demographic of the borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf as over 80% of employees live in the Council area.

EQUALITY MONITORING DATA FOR THE YEAR 2023-2024

Gender

The table below shows the gender breakdown of employees:

Gender	Total	% of Workforce
Male	2696	25.6%
Female	7843	74.4%
Total	10539	

This table clearly indicates that women make up the majority of the Council workforce, this has been consistent for a number of years.

Age

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by age group:

Age Group	Total	% of Workforce
16-24	768	7.3%
25-34	1954	18.5%
35-44	2568	24.4%
45-54	2823	26.8%
55-64	2103	20.0%
65+	323	3.1%
Total	10539	

This table indicates, as the figures did last year, that over half of Council employees are within the age range of 35-54.

Disability

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by disabled and non-disabled:

Identification	Total	% of Workforce
Disabled	254	2.4%
Non-Disabled	9024	85.6%
Prefer not to say	12	0.1%
Information not held	1249	11.9%
Total	10539	

Information is held on almost 88% of employees. A small percentage of employees have indicated that they are disabled but this is unlikely to give the true picture of disability in the workplace.

National Identity and Ethnicity

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by ethnicity:

Ethnicity	Number
Asian	7
Asian Bangladeshi	3
Asian British	8
Asian Chinese	6
Asian Cornish	1
Asian Indian	4
Asian Other	7
Asian Pakistani	1
Black	1
Black African	24
Black British	9
Black Welsh	1
Chinese	4
Gypsy / Romany / Irish Traveller	1
Mixed Other	11
Mixed White & African	2
Mixed White & Asian	11
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	12
Other Ethnic Group	25
Prefer not to say	17
White	3707
White - British	2722
White - Cornish	4
White - English	58
White - Irish	11
White - Northern Irish	2
White - Other	12
White - Scottish	6
White - Welsh	2367
Not Known	1495
Total	10539

Information is held on 86% of the workforce. Staff identifying themselves as an ethnic minority other than White is 1.5% of the workforce. This is not representative of people living in RCT as the Census 2021 highlighted the ethnic population of RCT as:

96.7% of people identified as White.

1.5% of people identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh.

1.0% of people identified as from Mixed or multiple ethnic groups.

0.4% of people identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African.

0.3% of people identified themselves as from other ethnic groups.

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by national identity:

National Identity	Number of Employees
Afghanistani	2
African	2
American	2
Any other Asian Background	1
Any other Mixed Background	3
Any other White Background	10
Bangladeshi	3
British	2001
British Virgin Islands	1
Burundi	1
Chinese	4
Chinese/Tibetan	3
Croatian	1
Dutch	2
English	205
European	11
French	1
German	1
Greek	1
Indian	5
Irish	17
Nigeria	17
Northern Ireland	2
Norwegian	1
Other	4
Philippino	1
Polish	8
Portuguese	2
Romanian	3
Scottish	20
Spanish	2
Sri Lankan	4
Tanzania	1
Thai	1
Ukrainian	5
Welsh	4934
White and Asian	2
White and Black Caribbean	1
Not Known	3254
Total	10539

Information is held on 69% of employees with the majority of employees identifying themselves as Welsh followed by British.

Religion or Belief

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by religion or belief:

Religion	Total
Christian	2813
Buddhist	15
Hindu	4
Jewish	1
Muslim	20
Sikh	1
Other	102
% of workforce identifying with a religion	28.0%
No Religion	3764
Prefer not to say	384
Information not held	3435
Total	10539

Information is held on 67% of employees.

Sexual Orientation

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by sexual orientation:

Sexual Orientation	Total
Heterosexual	4665
Gay Man	54
Gay Woman/Lesbian	55
Bisexual	57
% of workforce identifying a sexual orientation	45.8%
Prefer not to say	258
Information not held	5450
Total	10539

Information is held on 48% of employees.

Pregnancy and Maternity

As at 31 March 2024 there were 127 employees on maternity leave. During the year 2023-2024, 296 employees had been on maternity leave during this period of time.

Gender Reassignment

Specific information has not been published due to the possibility of identification. The Council has a Gender Reassignment Policy in place which was developed some years ago as a result of an employee asking for support. Since that time the policy has been accessed and support provided as and when required by employees.

Regulation Nine - Gender Specific Information

Regulation Nine of the Specific Equality Duties in Wales requires the following specific information to be provided in respect of gender breakdown.

The number of employees employed at 31 March 2024 broken down by:

- Job
- Grade
- Pay
- Contract type
- Working pattern.

This information has been provided on the basis of actual job numbers so that those employees who work in more than one job are included in all the jobs they are employed in so the numbers may be different to those in the previous section. Once again the information includes teachers and school-based employees.

The following table/s provides the specific information required:

Breakdown of Employees by Gender and Job

There are over a thousand job titles within the Council so for ease of demonstration they have been broken down into job families within the competency framework.

Job Family	Female	Male	Grand Total
Administrator	962	261	1223
Ancillary	1242	453	1695
Assistant Headteacher	43	30	73
Community and Social Care	1137	215	1352
Deputy Headteacher	82	39	121
Frontline and Customer Care	407	294	701
Headteacher	96	47	143
Middle Manager	199	101	300
School Support	1579	84	1663
Skilled Manual Worker	49	107	156
Strategic Manager	38	40	78
Supervisor	114	189	303
Teacher	1309	388	1697
Technical, Specialist & Professional	545	431	976
Unqualified Teacher	41	17	58
Total	7843	2696	10539

As last year, the data provides very few surprises with the majority of women working in 'traditional' female areas, particularly in the Community & Social Care, Ancillary and School Support settings; this will be more closely examined as part of the Gender Pay Objective within the Strategic Equality Plan.

Breakdown of Employees by Gender & Grade

The Council operated the following grading systems as at 31 March 2024.

- Chief Officers (Head of Service and above)
- National Joint Council for Local Government Services
- Soulbury (including Heads of Service)
- Teachers/Education

The tables below set out the breakdown of employees by gender and grade:

Employees by Gender & Grade – Chief Officers

Grade	Female	Male	Total
Chief Executive	0	1	1
Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director	0	1	1
Director Level 1	2	5	7
Director Level 2	2	1	3
Service Director Level 1	1	3	4
Service Director Level 2	2	7	9
Head of Service – Soulbury	3	2	5
Head of Service Level 1	14	8	22
Head of Service Level 2	8	8	16
Total	32	36	68

There has been no significant change since the previous year, whereby the majority of Chief Officer posts are held by males. Those held by females are largely on the lower end of the Chief Officer grades.

Employees by Gender and Grade – National Joint Council

Grade	Female	Male	Total
GR1	270	67	337
GR2	761	41	802
GR3	397	120	517
GR4	693	245	938
GR5	719	363	1082
GR6	1114	264	1378
GR7	698	231	929
GR8	354	148	502
GR9	215	108	323
GR10	281	180	461
GR11	192	104	296
GR12	175	68	243
GR13	136	81	217
GR14	61	15	76
GR15	39	39	78
GR16	2	1	3
GR17	16	4	20
GR18	0	0	0
Total	6123	2079	8202

Employees by Gender and Grade – Teachers/Education

Grade	Female	Male	Total
Education Psychologists and Advisers	98	34	132
Leadership Group/Headteachers	97	46	143
Deputy & Assistant Headteachers	128	70	198
Teachers	1335	395	1730
Total	1658	545	2203

The figures above indicate that females make up 75% of the education profession.

Individual salary grades of Education is complex to summarise but on analysis there is a fairly even split of male/female across all salary points with no obvious discrepancies in respect of ability to move through the grades. The grades and salary points are based on nationally agreed pay scales and there are specific requirements for each grade and how employees move through them.

Employees by Contract Type/Working Pattern

Contract Type	Female	Male	Total
Permanent Full Time	2633	1846	4479
Permanent Full Time Term Time	146	23	169
Permanent Part Time	1240	197	1437
Permanent Part Time Term Time	2060	80	2140
Temporary Full Time	446	193	639
Temporary Full Time Term Time	19	3	22
Temporary Part Time	88	33	121
Temporary Part Time Term Time	506	47	553
Casual	705	274	979
Grand Total	7843	2696	10539

For permanent members of staff the breakdown of female/male is comparable to the overall workforce. Although 74.4% of the overall workforce is female, a much higher percentage of those females compared to males are working on part-time or term-time only basis.

Applicants for Employment and Promotion

There were a total of 598 vacancies advertised during the year 2023-2024. The following table indicates the results of the recruitment monitoring for the same period.

Applicants for Employment and Promotion by Protected Characteristic

	Applicants	Shortlisted	Appointed
Disabled	368	230	43
Female	3823	1836	473
LGB	286	144	33
Male	1682	826	174
Minority Ethnic	587	264	37

Leaving Employment

Information gained from the iTrent System shows that a total of 1340 employees left the employment of the Council in 2023-2024, which included 10 employees who were made redundant. It should be noted that these employees were school based, where the decision on redundancy rests with the relevant school in accordance with School Governance Regulations. The tables below indicate the number of leavers and reasons for leaving during 2023-24.

Reasons for Leaving by Gender

Reason for Leaving	Female	Male	Total
Age Retirement	80	22	102
Death in Service	8	6	14
Dismissed	2	6	8
Early Retirement (Teachers)	3	2	5
End of Contract	118	41	159
Failed Probationary Period	1	1	2
Ill Health	16	9	25
Inability to Attend Work	1	0	1
Mutual Agreement	91	34	125
Redundant	9	1	10
Transfer to another Council	31	11	42
Tupe Transfer to Outside Organisation	35	14	49
Voluntary	480	151	631
Voluntary early retirement and redundancy	81	15	96
Voluntary redundancy	68	3	71
Total	1024	316	1340

Reason for Leaving by Age

Reason for leaving	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Age Retirement	0	0	0	0	43	59	102
Death in Service	0	0	5	3	6	0	14
Dismissed	0	3	1	3	1	0	8
Early retirement (Teachers)	0	0	0	0	5	0	5
End of Contract	23	72	30	13	13	8	159
Failed probationary period	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Ill health	0	0	1	5	13	6	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Mutual agreement	0	7	12	27	42	37	125
Redundant	0	1	0	4	5	0	10
Transfer to another Council	0	7	22	10	3	0	42
Tupe Transfer to Outside Organisation	0	4	13	10	18	4	49
Voluntary	62	177	156	144	74	18	631
VER + Redundancy	0	0	0	0	80	16	96
Voluntary Redundancy	1	6	19	29	9	7	71
Total	86	278	260	249	312	155	1340

Reason for Leaving by Disability

Reason for Leaving	Total
Age Retirement	1
End of Contract	7
Failed probationary period	2
Ill Health	3
Mutual Agreement	5
Tupe Transfer to Outside Organisation	1
Voluntary	18
VER + Redundancy	4
Voluntary Redundancy	3
Total	44

Reason for Leaving by Ethnicity

Reason	White	Ethnic Minority	Not Known	Total
Age retirement	93	2	7	102
Death in service	14	0	0	14
Dismissed	5	0	3	8
Early retirement (Teachers)	5	0	0	5
End of contract	119	4	36	159
Failed probationary period	2	0	0	2
Ill health	23	0	2	25
Inability to Attend Work	1	0	0	1
Mutual agreement	105	1	19	125
Redundant	8	0	2	10
Transfer to another Council	27	0	15	42
Tupe Transfer to Outside Organisation	45	0	4	49
Voluntary	534	24	73	631
VER + Redundancy	93	0	3	96
Voluntary Redundancy	64	1	6	71
Total	1138	32	170	1340

Reason for Leaving by Religion or Belief

Reason	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	No Religion	Other	Prefer Not To Say	Not Known	Total
Age Retirement	0	40	1	0	15	0	3	43	102
Death in Service	0	2	0	0	6	0	0	6	14
Dismissed	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4	8
Early retirement (teachers)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	5
End of contract	0	37	1	0	77	0	14	30	159
Failed probationary period	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Ill health	0	8	0	0	4	0	1	12	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	0	35	0	1	25	2	5	57	125
Redundant	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	5	10
Transfer to another Council	0	7	0	0	11	0	3	21	42
Tupe Transfer to Outside Organisation	0	9	0	0	19	0	1	20	49
Voluntary	2	147	0	3	287	6	36	150	631
VER + Redundancy	0	33	0	0	24	0	2	37	96
Voluntary Redundancy	0	18	0	0	32	0	0	21	71
Total	2	341	2	4	507	8	66	410	1340

Reason for Leaving by Sexual Orientation

Reason	Hetero- sexual	Gay/ Lesbian	Bi- sexual	Prefer not to say	Not Known	Total
Age retirement	46	0	0	1	55	102
Death in service	7	0	0	0	7	14
Dismissed	4	0	0	0	4	8
Early retirement (Teachers)	1	0	0	0	4	5
End of contract	59	0	1	9	90	159
Failed probationary period	1	0	1	0	0	2
Ill health	8	1	0	0	16	25
Inability to Attend Work		0	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	49	0	0	4	72	125
Redundant	3	0	0	0	7	10
Transfer to another Council	9	0	0	1	32	42
Tupe Transfer to Outside Organisation	20	1	0	1	27	49
Voluntary	274	13	3	27	314	631
VER + Redundancy	49	1	0	4	42	96
Voluntary Redundancy	44	0	1	1	25	71
Total	574	16	6	48	696	1340

Training

Identification of the need for training, learning and development is carried out through the Council's working planning arrangement and Individual Performance Review (IPR).

During IPR meetings managers will discuss with employees their training, learning and development needs which are aligned to the performance review and job competencies. The results of these feed into a departmental training plan.

The Council does not currently monitor whether training requests are refused as the process used to identify training does not lend itself to this type of monitoring.

Disciplinary, Grievance and Dignity at Work

Disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work cases are recorded and monitored through the iTrent system. There were 206 cases covering disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work and disciplinary action resulting from sickness absence in 2023-2024. The tables below provide equality monitoring information for these cases:

Gender

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Female	123	48	54	13	8
Male	83	44	23	11	5
Total	206	92	77	24	13

Age

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
16 – 24	3	2	1	0	0
25 – 34	35	11	15	7	2
35 – 44	58	24	24	5	5
45 – 54	50	28	12	7	3
55 – 64	53	25	21	5	2
65+	7	2	4	0	1
Total	206	92	77	24	13

Disability

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Disabled	16	3	9	4	0
Non-Disabled	174	78	64	20	12
Information not held	16	11	4	0	1
Total	206	92	77	24	13

Ethnicity

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Asian	0	0	0	0	0
Black	0	0	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0	0	0
Mixed	0	0	0	0	0
White	185	78	73	23	11
Other	2	2	0	0	0
Information not held	19	12	4	1	2
Total	206	92	77	24	13

Religion or Belief

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Christian	60	26	18	11	5
No Religion	76	31	35	7	3
Other	2	2	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	9	5	3	0	1
Information not held	59	28	21	6	4
Total	206	92	77	24	13

Sexual Orientation

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Bisexual	3	0	1	2	0
Gay/Lesbian	3	0	1	0	2
Heterosexual	92	36	37	12	7
Prefer not to say	5	2	2	1	0
Information not held	103	54	36	9	4
Total	206	92	77	24	13