

## Equality and diversity within the Council - Introduction

We are committed to celebrating diversity and promoting equality in everything we do, to improve the quality of life for everyone living, working and visiting Denbighshire.

Our vision of the future for the council was developed in partnership with local communities and partners. Our strategic aim is to be a high performing council, closer to the community.

Our Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 incorporates our equality, diversity and human rights activities taking place throughout the council. Equality and diversity is embedded throughout all our services in the Council.

Our equality objectives within the Corporate Plan were developed through engagement with our communities; reviewed in terms of what local data informs us about inequalities; and in response to recommendations made by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in a document called 'Is Wales Fairer? 2018'. These objectives (or pledges) focus on community led dialogue and consultations with our 'County Conversation engagement, and were then incorporated into the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027.

During 2024 we have revised our Corporate Plan to respond to the worsening financial environment, and that this document has likewise been updated to reflect those changes. Taken together, both documents constitute our revised Strategic Equality Plan for 2024 to 2028, as approved by Council on February 27, 2024. We have also met the requirements of the Act's Engagement Provisions through our annual Stakeholder Survey (most recently between September 2023 and February 2024) where we have consulted widely with stakeholders in our communities on the content and relevance of our Corporate Plan objectives, particularly around the issue of equality and fairness.

Please click on the link here for the [Council web page for the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027](#)

The council believes that the way people behave within the organisation towards each other, and to those that we come into contact with, is crucial to ensuring effective performance in the delivery of services. The values that the council has adopted provide

the basic principles that guide our interactions with everyone that we come into contact with, both inside and outside of the organisation. Our values are:

- **Pride** - We aim to create a sense of pride in working for our organisation.
- **Unity** - We all work for the same organisation.
- **Respect** - We aim to treat all people equally and with fairness, understanding that there are views and beliefs that differ from our own.
- **Integrity** - We aim to manage ourselves to maximise performance, act with high standard of conduct and present a positive image of Denbighshire.

## **Legislation**

The Equality Act (2010) (referred to as the Act in the rest of this document) makes it easier for us to understand and abide by equality and diversity legislation. Under the Act, local authorities in Wales must publish a Strategic Equality Plan that sets out the objectives the organisation wants to achieve over a four-year period. These priorities are called Strategic Equality Objectives. The Council incorporates equality objectives in to its Corporate Plan.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty – the General Duty**

Within the Act, there is a General Duty. The aim of the General Duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and that they are kept under review. This will achieve better outcomes for everyone.

When making strategic decisions and providing services, under the General Duty, public bodies are required to have due regard for:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and

- Fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

This guidance refers to these three elements as the three 'aims' of the general duty and so when we discuss the general duty we mean all three aims.

The Act lists a number of characteristics which must not be used as a reason to treat some people worse than others. These are called the '**protected characteristics**'. There are nine protected characteristics and these are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – including lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The phrase 'protected group' is sometimes used to refer to people who share a protected characteristic.

The Act covers employment and the provision of goods and services, and includes both staff and members of the public who use our services. When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't, we also 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.

We also have to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

## **Specific Duties**

As well as the General Duty, public authorities in Wales have some additional specific duties, which are set out in the Act. The Welsh Government published regulations that introduced the Specific Duties for Wales in March 2011, these set out the actions the Council must take in order to comply and demonstrate that they are meeting the General Duty and include the following areas:

- **Accessibility** – make council information fully accessible, including equality information.
- **Annual reporting** – Denbighshire County Council will do this using the Annual Performance Review which is a statutory requirement, and which will cover equality and diversity.
- **Assessing impact** - carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (Denbighshire County Council call ours Well-being Impact Assessments – WIAs -) and publishing the results if there is a substantial impact on the Council. We have a list of published Well-being Impact Assessments on our website. [Click here to access the list.](#)
- **Employment information** - publish employment monitoring data annually. This is in the form of our PSED annual report which is published on our website.
- **Engagement** - ensuring we engage with people who have an interest in how the Council's decisions affect them.
- **Pay differences** - Set a gender pay equality objective where a gender pay difference is identified. This is reported in our annual Gender Pay Gap report.
- **Procurement** - think about including conditions relevant to the General Duty in its procurement processes, which DCC does undertake.

- **Publishing** - collecting and publishing information relevant to compliance with the General Duty. This is included in our Annual Performance Review.
- **Staff training** - promote knowledge and understanding of the General Duty amongst its employees and use its performance assessment procedures to identify and address the training needs of its employees in relation to the General Duties.
- **Strategic equality plans** - setting equality objectives and publishing a Strategic Equality Plan, with annual review (for us this is in our Annual Performance Review)
- **Welsh ministers' reporting** and responding to consultation on equality and diversity matters from Welsh Government.

## **Socio-economic duty**

In addition to the protected characteristics above, there is a Duty under the Act, effective from March 2021, to consider those people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage / poverty. This is referred to as the Socio-economic Duty; it encourages better decision making, ensuring more equal outcomes for people, reducing inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.

We also have responsibility, when making strategic decisions and policies, for taking into account the Socio-economic Duty which encourages better decision making, ensuring more equal outcomes for people, reducing inequalities associated with socio-economic deprivation.

Please read the general information from Welsh Government to raise awareness of the Duty, contributing to a more equal Wales. [A More Equal Wales: The Socio-economic Duty \(Welsh Government website\)](#).

## **Intersectionality**

Within our commitment to equality, the Council seeks to recognise the impact of intersectionality where people who share more than one protected characteristic are at risk of multiple disadvantage, inequity, discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The impact of intersectionality may vary and it is difficult to quantify, however it is important to

recognise the concept in terms of developing policy and practice, promoting equality and addressing discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

## **Description of Denbighshire County Council**

### **Demographics of Denbighshire as a county**

With information compiled by the Office of National Statistics (ONS), related to the Census 2021, the following information is available, related to the county of Denbighshire.

The Census was undertaken during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may influence how people perceived and managed life, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond to the Census 2021.

The population for the county is 95,800 as per the Census 2021; Denbighshire was home to around 0.8 people per football pitch-sized piece of land at that time.

Between the last two censuses, the average age of Denbighshire increased by three years, from 44 to 47 years of age. The number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by just over 2,100 (an increase of 19.9%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by just over 3,100 (16.7% decrease). 21% of the population is 0 – 18 years old, with 28.4% population aged 19 to 43.

- The percentage of Welsh speakers in Denbighshire fell from 24.6% in 2011 to 22.5% in 2021.
- The proportion of people who identified as "Welsh only" increased from 44.1% in 2011 to 44.7% in 2021.
- 56,400 Denbighshire residents said they were born in Wales. This represented 58.8% of the local population.
- 1.1% of Denbighshire residents identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, up from 0.8% in 2011.
- 96.5% of people in Denbighshire identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 97.4% in 2011).

- 1.7% of people identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category (compared with 1.5% the previous decade).
- 42.1% of Denbighshire residents reported having "No religion", up from 26.8% in 2011.
- 49.3% of people in Denbighshire described themselves as Christian (down from 64.1%), while 6.7% did not state their religion (down from 7.7% the decade before).
- 47.0% of Denbighshire residents described their health as "very good", decreasing from 47.3% in 2011. Those describing their health as "good" rose from 31.5% to 32.4%.
- 1.6% of people described their health as "very bad" (similar to 2011), while those describing their health as "bad" fell from 5.5% to 4.9%.
- 11.7% of people identified as being disabled and limited a little (increased from 10.9 in 2011).
- Of Denbighshire residents aged 16 years and over, 34.3% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 30.5% in 2011.
- In 2021, just over 4 in 10 people (44.5%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 48.3% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Denbighshire that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership increased from 10.5% to 10.9%.
- These figures above include same-sex marriages and opposite-sex civil partnerships in 2021, neither of which were legally recognised in England and Wales in 2011. Same-sex marriages have been legally recognised in England and Wales since 2014 and opposite-sex civil partnerships have been recognised since 2019.
- Those respondents who were on furlough because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic were asked to classify themselves as "temporarily away from work" to ensure they remained in the economically active population.

- Denbighshire saw Wales' largest percentage-point rise in the proportion of privately-rented homes (from 15.9% in 2011 to 20.0% in 2021).
- Denbighshire saw Wales' largest percentage-point fall in the proportion of households including a couple but no children (from 17.6% in 2011 to 16.0% in 2021).
- On 30 June 2022, there were 55,465 working age people resident in Denbighshire. This is 57.4% of the total population. This compares to 60.9% for Wales. #
- In 2021, 6.3% of working age people resident in Denbighshire had no qualifications. This compares to 8.2% for Wales. #
- Between November 2015 and November 2016 the percentage of working age people who are benefit claimants in Denbighshire has decreased by 1.2 percentage points from 16.6% to 15.4%. Once up to date information is available this document will be revised. #
- Between 2016 and 2017 in Denbighshire the percentage of year 11 school leavers that are NEET has decreased from 1.9% to 1.1%. Once up to date information is available this document will be revised. #
- In 2017 there were 12 school leavers from year 11 classed as NEET in Denbighshire There were 11 school leavers from year 13 classed as NEET in Denbighshire for the same period. Once up to date information is available this document will be revised. #
- Between 2016 and 2017 in Denbighshire the percentage of year 13 school leavers that are NEET has increased from 1.5% to 2.2%. Once up to date information is available this document will be revised. #
- 4.2% of people were economically inactive because they were looking after their family or home (from 3.1% in 2011).
- 9.0% of Denbighshire residents aged 16 years and over and in employment said they worked 15 hours or less per week. This figure was the same in 2011.



- 4.6% of Denbighshire residents (aged five years and over) reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week. This figure decreased from 7.2% in 2011.
- Multiple Deprivation in West and South West Rhyl in particular is among the highest in Wales and encompasses worklessness, low incomes, and poor educational outcomes amongst other things. Rhyl West 1, Rhyl West 2 and Rhyl South West 2 are identified by the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) as areas of 'deep-rooted' deprivation. Areas with 'deep rooted deprivation' are those that have remained within the top 50 most deprived – roughly equal to the top 2.0% – small areas in Wales for the last five publications of WIMD ranks.
- 15.7% of all local business units on 10 March 2023 were in the 'Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing' industry. This was the largest business industry classification, followed by 'Construction' (13.1%) and 'Accommodation & Food Service' (9.5%). #
- In Denbighshire, 19.4% of the working population in 2021 had an occupation classed as 'SOC2 - Professional occupations', which was the largest occupation classification, followed by 'SOC5 - Skilled trades occupations' (13.2%) and 'SOC3 - Associate prof & tech occupations' (12%). #
- Between November 2023 and December 2023 the percentage of working age people who are claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Denbighshire has not changed at 0.2%. #
- Between June 2023 and September 2023 the percentage of economically active people who are unemployed in Denbighshire has decreased from 2.5% to 1.8%. People defined as economically active are people who are either in employment or actively seeking employment. #
- In 2022, the average weekly gross pay for full time workers in Denbighshire was £538.80. This figure has increased by 10.1% since 2018.

# all of the above marked were sourced from Data Cymru June 2022 ([infobasecymru link](#)) and Well-being Assessment ([click here for link](#)).

## **Employees**

Denbighshire County Council is a complex organisation employing approximately 4782 posts. The Council has a wide range of functions which provide and/or commission a wide range of essential services. The approach to remuneration levels may therefore differ from one group of employees to another to reflect specific circumstances at a local, Welsh, UK national or professional level. It will also need to be flexible when required to address a variety of changing circumstances whether foreseeable or not.

Denbighshire County Council operates a total reward approach to attract, retain and motivate suitably skilled employees so the council can best perform. In this context it does need to be recognised that at the more senior grades, in particular, remuneration levels need to enable the attraction of a suitably wide pool of talent (which will ideally include people from the private as well as public sector and from outside as well as within Wales), and the retention of suitably skilled and qualified individuals once in post. It must be recognised that the Council will often be seeking to recruit in competition with other good public and private sector employers.

## **Council structure**

### **Corporate Executive Team**

The Corporate Executive Team (CET) meets weekly and comprises Chief Executive, Corporate Directors, and Head of Finance and Property (also Section 151 Officer).

### **Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) comprises Chief Executive, Corporate Directors and all Heads of Service. SLT is responsible for six monthly monitoring and intervention of Corporate Plan targets, forward planning for the Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny committees, agreeing policies, strategies and changes to business plans and sharing good practice, problem solving and working with Elected members.

## **Cabinet**

The Cabinet is made up of nine councillors, including the council Leader and their Deputy. Each of the nine members has responsibility for a specific policy area, known as a portfolio. Cabinet meets every six weeks to determine policy and make decisions on how services are provided in Denbighshire.

The Leader of the Council is elected by full Council and provides effective political leadership and strategic direction for the council, and acts as the political spokesperson for the council.

## **Corporate Plan**

Our Corporate Plan (2022 – 2027) also serves as our Well-being Plan and our Strategic Equality Plan. We believe we are able to take this integrated approach because the Plan equips the Council to deliver significant progress for all, by addressing current inequalities. The principles of equality are embedded throughout the council's functions and services.

The integrated plan is intended to ensure fair treatment for all, and to eradicate the risk of unfair or unequal treatment, such as harassment, victimisation or unlawful discrimination, in our work and service delivery. This includes our internal processes and treatment of employees, as well as services delivered to the public, and treatment of the public. We aim to foster good relations and equality of opportunity, and contribute to positive outcomes for all the people of Denbighshire.

During the lifetime of the Corporate Plan and beyond, we will ensure that all new projects and areas of work will:

- Engage, where appropriate, with groups that represent people with protected characteristics.
- Consider limitations to physical access, in particular with new builds, but also with regard to access to information and services.
- Consider the appropriateness of the facilities that we have available within the council's estate for use by those people with protected characteristics.

- Engage, challenge and, where possible, remove barriers to opportunities (including work) for those with protected characteristics.
- Condemn hate related bullying and harassment

[Read our Corporate Plan in full.](#)

## **Corporate Plan Reporting Process and Outcome Monitoring**

[Please visit our web page for monitoring the Corporate Plan.](#) All projects follow the Corporate Project Management methodology which requires clear identification of project outcomes, expected benefits, measurement indicators and timescales for reporting on these.

## **Equality objectives and Action Plan (aligned with Corporate Plan Priorities)**

The purpose of a Strategic Equality Plan is to document the steps a listed body is taking to fulfil its specific duties. The Strategic Equality Plan can usefully reflect a number of elements of the specific duties beyond those that are legally required. For example, a listed body is required to publish reasons for not having an equality objective in relation to a protected characteristic. Our Corporate Plan highlights those objectives which relate to equality and diversity. As well as involving Denbighshire residents in the development of objectives, consultation and engagement with those with protected characteristics was commissioned on a North Wales basis, and led by Wrexham County Council. Engagement was framed around The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, therefore also covering equality and each of the protected characteristics. We haven't published the notes from all engagements events, instead analysing the results to produce a single report on the consultation that's on our website (The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has transformed the way social services are being delivered, in supporting people to achieve well-being and independence by promoting greater choice and control).

Objectives are based on a mixture of evidence that was collected for the statutory Local Assessment of Well-being, and also the in-depth conversations for the associated engagement exercise. We should note that the priorities of people with protected characteristics including race, sexual orientation and disability included housing, access to services, etc. We have also produced an updated Local Assessment of Well-being that, again, involves in-depth conversations with our residents, including those with protected characteristics.

With respect to protected characteristics, the above research raised some issues particularly around age and disability, race, religion or belief.

Explicit data didn't tell us that we needed to focus on marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sex or sexual orientation.

In the main the consultation brought about the need for us to concentrate on:

- good quality housing
- employment and income
- community safety and resilience
- quality learning and training
- good road infrastructure and transport links
- become a Net Zero Carbon organisation by 2030
- Address deprivation and reduce inequality
- promote diversity and community cohesion
- be a county where Welsh is a living, thriving language
- To be a council that gives consistently good customer service

All of the above areas are covered within the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 where Council services apply.

We enhanced involvement through linking with service users in decisions about the services they individually receive (using service user surveys) and asking those service users how they thought we could improve service design, widening their involvement in decision making, and decision making bodies to reflect the diversity of our area.

We enhanced our use of evidence through ensuring those involved in service design, commissioning and delivery had the latest intelligence on equality issues nationally and locally.

We ensured our Well-being Impact Assessments (our integrated impact screening tool, which includes equality) are used for service change.

The resounding message from engagement work carried out at local, regional and national levels is that we need to improve in terms of involving people in the decisions that affect their lives and communities and work to reduce deprivation.

We were already making progress in these areas, particularly in relation to social care and community support services. Initiatives have focused on developing service user independence, introducing direct payments and personalised budgets, and to provide community members with information on the full range of support services available from community, voluntary and statutory agencies in their area.

These are the key areas of focus for The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and will continue as vital elements of delivery of social care services into the future. Many of the perspectives that inform the Act and our ongoing work were developed within the campaigns, research and publications of disabled campaigners and organisations. The approach, based on individual choice and tailored services, is designed to facilitate the development of social care solutions that can take into account the full range of protected characteristics that make up an individual's identity. This approach aims to improve the chances that specific requirements that may arise can be met.

By evaluating these initiatives, we hope to garner 'lessons learned' which can be used in the application of this approach in other service situations. Our project management methodology is designed to ensure that such lessons are captured and disseminated.

We recognise that this journey is not over and that we need to continue to improve the way we involve community members in the proposals that affect them.

While we have begun to enhance involvement in general terms it is clear that some protected groups remain under represented. This includes participation in decision making organisations and bodies (including the County Council and City, Town and Community

Councils) and in the wider processes that support decision making (including participation in Well-being Impact Assessment and consultation and engagement exercises).

We believe our decisions should be evidence based and that decision makers should be informed by relevant research material on the relevance of and potential implications for protected groups of the themes within the subject they are examining.

Much insight will be gained directly from local people active in the new engagement processes we have used above. However, there is also a place for referring to expert publications and examining best practice from other areas.

Many organisations representing protected groups have substantial expertise, access to a wide range of knowledge and experience and produce regular publications.

Organisations such as the Children's Commissioner for Wales, Chwarae Teg, Disability Wales, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Interfaith Network, Older People's Commissioner for Wales, Race Council Cymru and many others produce research, bulletins and publications. These often directly tackle service delivery issues and frequently include advice and guidance that would benefit decision makers and those delivering service change projects.

## **Protected Characteristics not directly within the Plan (and why)**

We have identified equality objectives that specifically cover four of the nine protected characteristics; these are age, disability, race, religion or belief and though we do not have specific objectives covering marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, sex or sexual orientation, this is because there have been no recommendations, explicit data or areas of concern raised either from local data or engagement with people from different protected groups. However existing actions in our plan will not exclude these group when we are seeking to improve equality for all sections of our community, and they will continue to be considered as part of our Well-being Impact Assessment process. We will be working with Welsh Government initiatives, such as the Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan, and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan, to further enhance our understanding of support for people with protected characteristics.

## How we publish our information and where

The Corporate Plan is published on our accessible website. [Click here to link to the Corporate Plan](#). Our performance management for the Corporate plan is available on a separate page called '[reviewing the Council's performance](#)'. All documents are bilingual. Currently all our equality and diversity information is stored on a separate web page. [Click here to link to the equality and diversity page](#).

The Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027 can be made available in a range of accessible formats upon request including:

- Audio - web and CD versions
- Braille documents
- British Sign Language DVD
- Electronic information
- Easy-read and pictorial documents
- Large Print (Arial 18+) documents
- Languages other than English and Welsh

[Please contact us if you would like our information in one of the above formats.](#)

For customers who would like to communicate with us in other languages we can arrange for an interpreter. We can also arrange a range of face-to-face communication support such as British Sign Language interpreters.

## Measuring our performance

Listed bodies are required to publish the progress made towards fulfilling the objectives in their annual report. It may be helpful for a listed body to embed the equality objectives into its main organisational documents; for example, corporate or strategic plan. Our Annual Performance Review, which meets all our statutory obligations in terms of corporate plan and equality and diversity objectives is published annually. [Please click here to link to the most recent Self-Assessment Performance Update reports](#).



Our six-monthly reports on the Corporate Plan for our Corporate Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team offer information on the progress we are making in meeting our priorities and objectives, and show indicators, measures, activities and projects under the Corporate Plan. Keeping progress under review helps us in identifying where there may be a need to examine insufficient progress, and where we may need to revise our approach in supporting priorities.

Qualitative as well as quantitative evidence may be used to gauge progress and measure outcomes. We are likely to hold some of this information e.g. staff surveys, residents' surveys, service user surveys, analysis of complaint letters and feedback forms. We now have an annual stakeholder survey process that we run in Denbighshire where we ask residents, partners, local businesses, town and community councils, staff and trade unions how they feel the council is performing against its functions. This includes questions around the relevance and suitability of our objectives, and how fairly and equally people feel they are treated.

We will continue to revise and renew our strategic equality objectives every four years, aligned to requirements from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and we will report on the Corporate Plan through our statutory Annual Performance Review, as explained above. If these objectives need to be revised, where monitoring indicates there are emerging areas of inequality which need addressing, we will publish a revised plan. Our most recent plan was agreed February 2024 by Council.

We have a performance management system called Verto which we use to report upon our corporate plan.

We also publish an annual report, meeting all our statutory duties including equality and diversity. This annual report, the [Self-Assessment Executive Summary](#), is published on our website with relevant equality information included. The report is examined and endorsed by CET, SLT, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committees and Full Council before it can be published. Regular [Performance Self-Assessment updates are also available on our website](#)

## Engagement and consultation

Listed bodies, like the Council, must prepare and publish equality objectives every four years. In developing their equality objectives, authorities must involve people who represent the interests of people who share one or more of the protected characteristics and have an interest in the way that the authority carries out its functions.

Denbighshire County Council uses an [engagement portal](#) and engagement events under the '**County Conversation**'.

Engagement under County Conversations includes workshops and focus groups for the general public, council personnel and members, open to everyone, asking people to consider what is working well for them at present, what could be done better, and what may stand in the way of better progress. Findings from the ~~most recent~~ consultation informed our ~~new~~ Corporate Plan for 2022 – 2027, and our incorporated Strategic Equality Plan. Our revision in 2024 revisited these findings and looked to more recent engagement work from our Stakeholder Survey. This offers a proportionate approach to assessing needs and to ensuring we comply with the Equality Act by reviewing the way in which our strategic objectives meet the regulations of the Wales Specific Duty. We clearly demonstrated integration with our corporate priorities and equality and human rights in the process of creating the Plan.

We, as a Council, ensure we are as up to date as possible in terms of new legislation and new action plans which arise, contributing towards, for example, the All Wales Race Equality Action Plan, the LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales.

## Personnel Pay

The Council uses the nationally negotiated pay spine as the basis for its grading structure. This determines the salaries of the majority of the non-teaching workforce (NJC Terms and Conditions), together with the use of other nationally defined pay rates where relevant. All other pay related allowances are the subject of either nationally or locally negotiated rates, having been determined in accordance with collective bargaining machinery and/or as determined by Council Policy.

## **Gender Pay Gap Report**

At Denbighshire County Council we support the principle of diversity and equality as we need people from diverse backgrounds to help ensure that we are representative of the County we serve. We are committed to providing equal pay for work of equal value and aim to provide an equitable pay structure. Public Services are required to regularly audit their pay systems and assess the equality of pay.

We are aware of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, which gives women and men a right for equal pay for equal work, and the requirement to carry out a Gender Pay report annually. Within our annual (statutory) published gender pay report we demonstrate our continuing commitment to be a fair and equitable employer; an employer that ensures its employees are not subjected to unfair discrimination.

A gender pay report is a review of the average earnings between men and women within an organisation. The gender pay gap calculation may show that there is a difference in the pay of men and women, but it does not necessarily mean that this difference is unfair or that they are being paid unfairly. It could be that there are a higher number of men in higher paid roles and more women in lower paid roles across the organisation.

Our culture of flexibility, openness and trust has ensured that staff are able to achieve a better balance of home and work life and for us, as an employer, means that we are able to recruit and retain from diverse backgrounds.

We are achieving a better gender balance in our overall pay gap, including an increase in the number of women at senior level. This demonstrates that the practices, processes and culture that we have in place are all contributing towards a more inclusive and fairer workplace.

Since 2017 gender pay reporting legislation now requires employers, with 250 or more employees, to publish statutory calculations every year showing their gender pay gap. The gender pay gap differs from equal pay. Equal Pay deals with the pay differences between men and women who carry out the same jobs, similar jobs or work of equal value.

Whereas gender pay gap shows the differences in the average pay between men and women.

We are aware of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, which gives women and men a right for equal pay for equal work, and the requirement to carry out a Gender Pay report annually. The additional purpose of this report is to consider and compare the findings of this report to the previous year's report to establish if there have been any changes and to analyse any areas of concern if necessary. [Please click here to link to the Equality and Diversity page for the council where the most current Gender Pay Report is available.](#)

## **Public Sector Equality Duty report**

In Wales, the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011 place upon public authorities in Wales a specific legal duty that requires the Council to have effective arrangements in place to monitor equality and have effective arrangements in place to gather, analyse and publish employment monitoring data.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an annual equality report each year.

The report explains how the Council is compliant with the Equality Act 2010 general duty across our employment functions. It summarises the equality employment monitoring data for employees at the Council from 1 April to 31 March each year. Our report also includes commentary to explain the information, including discernible trends against national published external data where identified.

## **Knowledge / training**

The Council wishes to ensure all its personnel are aware of equality and diversity issues to ensure they have the knowledge and skills and understanding to meet the general and specific duty.

We ensure that all personnel undertake mandatory training which includes equality and diversity in the form of e-learning. These training modules have to be completed by all new starters, and include:

- Safeguarding awareness
- Violence against women
- Data protection
- Welsh language awareness
- Equalities
- Whistleblowing
- Code of conduct
- Carer awareness
- Mental health awareness

We offer some bespoke workshops, for example the Socio-economic Duty when introduced in 2021, we offered sessions for Members and personnel, to ensure that the most up to date information was made available to everyone who may be involved in decision making processes which may affect socio-economic disadvantage. We have offered long standing and new councillors equality training this year, and there is a dedicated page for equality training for them on the Welsh Local Government Association training page.

Our county council website has designated pages for equality and diversity, which offers guidance for working with people with protected characteristics.

For 2022 onwards we created a Strategic Equality and Diversity Group, comprising Lead Members and Senior Officers, which meets quarterly to provide guidance to Council services in terms of an overview of equality and diversity elements of our work. Activities include critical friend reviews of Well-being Impact Assessments, and consideration of external equality plans and our commitment and contributions to them (such as Welsh Government's Anti-Racism Wales Action Plan, and the LGBTQ+ Action Plan).

## Procurement

Within our procurement policy we give due regard to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations when spending public money. This is embedded within our procurement processes, regardless of the value of any contract and our policy sets out the standards of compliance required for contracts. There is a significant section in our procurement tender documentation which asks specific questions about equality; without completion of these questions, or if scores in the evaluation methodology are low, contracts are not accepted. Early 2024 saw the introduction and implementation of new legislation for procurement, [The Procurement Act 2023](#), and training sessions have been offered to support all officers who are involved with procurement to ensure we are fulfilling our obligations.

Key to accepting tenders, the Council must have evidence that contractor organisations, in the last three years, have not had any finding of unlawful discrimination by an Employment Tribunal, an Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or tribunal; have not had any formal investigation by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, or complaint of unlawful discrimination upheld. We also need assurances that there have been no findings of unlawful discrimination against anyone with protected characteristics made against organisations by any civil or criminal court.

Tender documentation requires that in relation to the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Council (the buyer):

- will not select contractors to tender if they have been found to have unlawfully discriminated in the last three years, unless they have provided adequate evidence that they have taken appropriate action to stop it happening again.
- will only select organisation to tender if they are able to demonstrate successful corrective action has been taken to resolve any judgement.
- may not select organisations to tender if they do not have in place adequate vetting processes to check their subcontractors' and consortium members' record on compliance with equalities legislation.
- may only select organisations to tender if they train relevant staff appropriately.

- Suppliers who provide goods and services to or on behalf of the Council are expected to provide training in Equal Opportunities for staff.
- may only select organisations to tender if they train relevant staff appropriately.
- may only select organisations to tender if they can demonstrate their ability to deliver services in the Welsh language. Where particular experience is required, the buyer will specify this. This should include the provision of bilingual signage (both for publicity purposes and on construction sites), publicity material and in dealings with the general public.
- Equal Opportunities Policy: If organisations are selected as preferred bidder they will be expected to produce the relevant policy document. Failure to provide the document may mean that they will not be awarded any contract following this exercise.

## **Promoting equality**

The council works to support equality and diversity in a plethora of ways. With regard to promoting our work, and that of our partners, we often use our intranet and internet, our Denbighshire Today internal communication system and our residents' County Voice to good use to promote initiatives. For example, White Ribbon Day.

We have signed up to the Zero Racism Wales initiative confirming the Council is not willing to tolerate racism in any form and supports Zero Racism Wales' calls for all organisations and individuals to promote racial harmony and implement commitments within the workplace and in their day to day lives.

We promote, along with all our North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN) colleagues, national awareness initiatives such Hate Crime Awareness.

## **Impact assessment**

Public authorities are required to set out clear methods of assessing impacts on policies and practices to ensure fairness, and due consideration to the decisions made on services and provisions and how they may affect the needs of all, including protected groups.

A Well-being Impact Assessment (WIA) screening tool is used by Denbighshire County Council. We want to be sure that we consider the impact of proposals on a range of issues. Our approach, the 'Well-being Impact Assessment', has been designed to assess the likely impact of proposals on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world. It integrates requirements to assess impact on equality, the Socio-economic Duty, the Welsh language, environment, economy, health, and so on.

The Well-being Impact Assessment highlights any areas of risk and maximises the benefits of proposals across all of these issues, including equality. It helps us to ensure we have considered everyone who might be affected by the proposal. It also helps us to meet our legal responsibilities under the general equality duties (Equality Act 2010), the Welsh Language Standards, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and access to information legislation. There is also a requirement under Human Rights legislation for Local Authorities to consider Human Rights in developing proposals. Our approach to impact assessment will help us to strengthen our work to promote equality. It will also help to identify and address any potential negative or disproportionate impacts before introducing something new or changing the way we work. The WIA is embedded within all our project management documentation and committee papers; this is our performance tool to gauge how we are addressing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals, which includes equality. This tool ensures we are able to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to inform other objectives, activities and projects which improve outcomes for all community members.

The impact on the Welsh Language is examined in our Well-being Impact Assessments (WIA) used during the process of Council decision making.

Our [website has a page](#) that gives access to a wide range of well-being impact assessment reports that have been completed by Denbighshire County Council. The webpage takes users to the committee papers that precede the assessment report



## Collaboration

The council works in collaboration with many organisations including the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network (NWPSSEN), the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), the Conwy and Denbighshire Public Service Board (PSB), the Children's Commissioner for Wales, the Older People's Commissioner for Wales. We have multi-agency groups in existence to further engage on equality and diversity, for example an Aging Well in Denbighshire group whose work aligns to a Strategy for an Ageing Society and the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly Communities initiative, as well as Welsh Government strategies to support multi-generational activities.

## Equality and Human Rights Commission

In 2023, the [Equality and Human Rights Commission \(EHRC\) published 'Is Wales Fairer?'](#) – a comprehensive review of how Wales is performing on equality and human rights. The report provides data and evidence to support us to, as a public body, reduce inequality in Denbighshire, and in Wales. The findings of the report are published, split into chapters for the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. It provides a complete picture of people's life chances in Wales today.

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

The [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) sets out a duty to carry out sustainable development with a view to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It contains seven well-being goals to make Wales a prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal and globally responsible country with cohesive communities, a vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language. These well-being goals are indivisible from each other and explain what is meant by the well-being of Wales. The seven well-being goals are:

- a globally responsible Wales
- a prosperous Wales
- a resilient Wales
- a healthier Wales

- a more equal Wales
- a Wales of cohesive communities
- a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

This Act also requires public bodies to reflect the diversity of the population in applying the Sustainable Development principle. The principle is made up of five key ways of working. We must:

- look to the **long term** so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
- take an **integrated approach** so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their priorities;
- **involve** a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them;
- work with others in a **collaborative** way to find shared sustainable solutions; and
- understand the root causes of issues to **prevent** them from occurring and examining whether how we currently deploy our resources should change.

The well-being goals, and the five ways of working will guide our work in developing our Equality Objectives and the actions that will help ensure we fulfil them.

## **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014**

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into force in April 2016. This law gives people a say in the care and support they receive.

The Act has transformed the way social services are being delivered, in supporting people to achieve well-being and independence by promoting greater choice and control.

Integration and simplification of the law also provides greater consistency and clarity to:

- people who use social services
- their carers
- local authority staff and their partner organisations

- the courts and the judiciary

The Act promotes equality, improves the quality of services and enhances access to the provision of information people receive. It also encourages a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention.

Find out more about the [Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014 on the UK Legislation website \(external website\)](#).

## Human Rights

We have a duty under the [Human Rights Act 1998 \(external website\)](#) to act compatibly with the rights under the European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms. In the courts the Equality Act 2010 (and all other primary UK legislation) is interpreted in ways that are compatible with the Human Rights Act.

The Human Rights Act is derived from the European Convention on Human Rights and became law in November 1998. It enabled any person who considers they have been a victim of a human rights violation to challenge a public authority in the courts or tribunals.

The purpose of the Human Rights Act is to support a culture of respect for everyone's human rights and a feature of everyday life.

## Welsh Language Standards

The Welsh language, in terms of promotion and use, is not included in the Equality Act as a protected characteristic because it is covered by the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires public sector organisations to conform to a set of 'Standards' and to treat Welsh and English equally. [Find out what we're doing to protect and promote the Welsh language](#). It is recognised that the equality and Welsh language policy agendas complement and inform each other and is further supported through the goal within the Well-being of Future Generations Act – A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Our intention is to sustain and reinforce that principle

through our new Strategic Equality Objectives and ensure they serve to promote and protect the Welsh language and are included in our Corporate Plan.

## Annual reports

We have mentioned all of our annual reports which are used to report upon performance and our commitment to well-being, equality and diversity throughout the document. As a reminder, the following are key documents used, and published:

- Annual Self-Assessment Executive Summary
- Cabinet / Council / Scrutiny Committee reports, which require accompanying Well-being Impact Assessments for new projects or amendments to policy.
- Corporate Executive Team / Senior Leadership Team reports.
- Public Sector Equality Duty Report
- Pay Gap Report.

## Contact information

For more information, or to let us know what you think about anything in this report, contact us:

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**By TELEPHONE:** 01824 706291

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn Gymraeg / We welcome telephone calls in Welsh.

**By POST:**

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We welcome correspondence in Welsh. There will be no delay in responding to correspondence received in Welsh.

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14 March 2024