

**Bridgend County Borough Council  
Corporate Equality Scheme  
2009 – 2012**

**DRAFT**

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This Corporate Equality Scheme is available online at [www.bridgend.gov.uk](http://www.bridgend.gov.uk)

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## Foreword

We are pleased to present Bridgend County Borough Council's Corporate Equality Scheme.

The Scheme outlines how we plan to develop the Council's services to be accessible to the whole community and meet our equality duties. The scheme provides local people, partner organisations and national organisations with an overview of the Council's priorities and planned actions on equality for the coming three years. It embodies the Authority's commitment to be *Fair, Ambitious, Customer-focused and Efficient*.

Our vision is to be a provider of the highest quality customer services in the public sector in Wales. Achieving this will improve the quality of life for all those living and working in the county borough. We want Bridgend to be a county where all citizens, families, and communities are able to live life to the full and can take advantage of the wide variety of opportunities on offer in our society. In addition, as a Council we aim to be an employer of choice and a good place for our staff to work. Treating our citizens and employees fairly and with respect is essential if we are to achieve this vision.

We are committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity through our roles as community leader, service provider and employer. It is critical that equality is integrated into our service delivery arrangements and underpin all aspects of our work. We have made a commitment to make progress toward achieving the WLGA Equality Improvement Framework to ensure that we are meeting our equality duties.

We are determined to build on the progress that has been made in promoting equality in the county. It is an exciting time for Bridgend County Borough Council and we are confident that over the lifetime of this Scheme we will significantly improve our services and promote equality for everyone.

SIGN OFF TBC

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## **1. Who we are and what we do**

The Council has 54 elected Members that represent 39 wards. It is responsible for the provision of a diverse range of local government services and employs approximately 7,900 people.

Service delivery arrangements are managed through four directorates, each having responsibility for specific functions and two Assistant Chief Executives have responsibility for specific corporate and regulatory functions. The Council's organisational structure is set out in Appendix 1.

We deliver our services from a wide range of locations spread across the county borough, including our main offices in Bridgend town. These include libraries, leisure centres, sports fields and community venues, such as The Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl.

The Council has a Leader and Cabinet model of local government. The Cabinet is made up of six councillors - four members with responsibilities that reflect the Council's directorate structure, the Deputy Leader with a cross-cutting responsibility and the Leader of the Council.

The Cabinet members are drawn from the Council's majority party and their decisions are examined by five Scrutiny Committees; the Chairs of which belong to opposition parties. The main purposes of Overview and Scrutiny Committees are to hold the Executive to account, to act as a consultee on policy proposals and to conduct investigations into policy areas.

## 2. Our Vision and Values

Our vision is to be the provider of the highest quality customer services in the public sector in Wales.

Elected Members and employees of Bridgend County Borough Council are the **FACE** of the Council and should always be:

**Fair** - taking into account everyone's needs and situation

**Ambitious** - always trying to improve what we do and aiming for excellence

**Customer focused** - remembering that we are here to serve our local communities

**Efficient** - delivering services that are value for money

This vision is further articulated in the Council's Customer Services Charter which reflects our belief that all our customers should receive the best possible standards of Customer Service.

To make sure they receive a high quality service, we will:

- Put the customer, at the heart of everything we do;
- Promote equality and treat you fairly and with respect; give you choices about how and when to contact us;
- Be friendly, approachable and professional;
- Create a welcoming atmosphere in our public buildings;
- Answer your enquiry at the first point of contact whenever possible;
- Provide straightforward information about our services;
- Deal with enquiries and complaints carefully, quickly and openly;
- Make sure that services meet your needs by listening to what you say;
- Correct things promptly if they go wrong, and learn from complaints; and
- Develop and support our staff to deliver these commitments.

The Charter states that we want our services to be accessible to all our community, regardless of individual circumstances and access requirements. We welcome contact in Welsh, Braille, via text phone and alternative formats. If access requirements make it difficult for you to visit our buildings we will arrange an alternative. We will ensure that privacy, dignity and religious and cultural beliefs are fully respected.

### 3. Our equality statement

The Council is committed to promoting equality and fairness through all of our roles as community leader, service provider and employer. We want to treat our customers and our staff fairly and with respect. Our core values include a commitment to be FAIR and take into account everyone's needs and situation. This requires us to be:

- F** *Friendly, approachable and professional*
- A** *Accessible to the whole community*
- I** *Inclusive of the diverse community we serve*
- R** *Respectful of people's differences*

We know that being 'fair' does not simply mean treating everyone the same. It means understanding and tackling the different barriers that people face so that everyone has a fair chance to fulfill their potential. We want to create opportunities for communities to live, work and learn together by reaching out and engaging with all of our citizens.

We know that being 'fair' means that we embrace the diversity of our county and challenge discrimination wherever it exists in our communities, whether it is based on a person's gender, race, disability, faith, sexual orientation, age or social status. We want to make our services accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of the people who live, work and visit the county borough

#### **Our commitment to the social model of disability**

The Council is committed to working to the social model of disability. The social model of disability makes the important difference between 'impairment' and 'disability'. It recognises that impairments are only part of the problem and identifies three social barriers which prevent disabled people achieving equality. These barriers are:

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Attitudinal   | Assumptions and stereotypes about people's ability, capacity and competence to play a part in society.   |
| Institutional | Basing decisions about how services will be delivered on these attitudes so that people are prevented from achieving independence and autonomy in society. |
| Environmental | Building public places and delivering services in a way that prevents people accessing them fully.   |

These barriers can prevent disabled people from participating in everyday activities and living life to its full potential. This scheme sets out what the Council will do to remove these barriers.

## **4. Our equality duties**

This Scheme sets out how we will promote equality and treat our customers and our staff fairly and with respect. It sets out the responsibilities of our elected members and our employees and the actions we will take to ensure compliance with our equality duties.

The requirement to publish a race equality scheme arose from the Macpherson Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence. The public equality duties on race, disability and gender are based on an acceptance of the potential risk of institutional discrimination by public sector organisations.

### **Our legal responsibilities**

As a public authority we have legal responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities relating to gender, race and disability. These are our public equality duties.

Our legal duties are set out in the following legislation:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 amended by the Equality Act 2006
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005

There are different requirements set out in the different legislation. Below we have listed the requirements for each public equality duty:

#### **Gender**

We have a duty to pay due regard to how we will:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate unlawful harassment, and
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women;

#### **Race Relations**

We have a duty to pay due regard to how we will:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- promote equality of opportunity, and
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

#### **Disability**

We have a duty to pay due regard to how we will:

- promote equality of opportunities between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life, and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons



### **Specific duties**

We also have specific duties which provide a framework to guide us in meeting our public equality duties. These include:

- Publish a scheme that shows how we intend to meet our equality duties, including disability, race and gender equality objectives.
- Gather information on employment and service delivery to monitor for any adverse impact on the promotion of equality.
- Make arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of our functions and policies on the promotion of equality.
- Include a statement about how we have involved disabled people in developing the Scheme.
- Train our staff in connection with our equality duties.
- Use this information to inform our Scheme.
- Publish the results of our employment monitoring, assessments and consultation activities.
- Produce an annual report on our scheme and review the scheme at least every three years.

### **Our wider legal responsibilities**

As an employer and service provider we will ensure that no individual is discriminated against, or receives less favourable treatment, by virtue of their:

- Age
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

This scheme links closely to our commitments to promote the rights and inclusion of Children and Young People (people aged under 25 years) and Older People (people aged over 50 years).

As a public body we have a duty under the Human Rights Act 1998 to protect and promote the human rights contained in the European Convention of Human Rights. Everyone is entitled to enjoy these basic human rights without discrimination. Our human rights include a right to life, right to free elections, right to education, right to respect for private and family life and freedom of thought, expression and assembly.

The implementation of this scheme also links to national and international legislation including:

- Section 120 of the Government of Wales Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 2004
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Principles for Older Persons
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons
- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women

## 5. Our general equality objectives

Our aim is to ensure that, as a minimum, we comply with relevant legislation and that we effectively promote equality and fairness in our services and workplaces.

To achieve this our general equality objectives are:

- To attain '*improving authority*' status under the WLGA Equality Improvement Framework for Welsh Local Government
- To recognise that promoting equality and fairness is critical to our business performance.
- To regularly monitor, review and report on our equality performance and are able to deliver continual improvement in line with the Wales Programme for Improvement.
- To treat our customers fairly and with respect and make our services accessible to the whole community, taking into account people's different access needs and changes in our local communities.
- To promote effective community and employee involvement and support the role of equality representative organisations in the delivery of our equality scheme.
- To learn from customer feedback and complaints.
- To promote a positive culture of equality and diversity, with members, managers and staff visibly demonstrating their commitment to achieving equality outcomes in service delivery and our workplaces.
- To ensure that our employees are competent to promote equality in their work by providing adequate training, information and supervision.
- To comply with our statutory duties to monitor equality in our workforce and use the data to identify risks of occupational segregation and ways to promote equality.
- To identify opportunities to promote equality and eliminate discrimination in the workplace in accordance with our aim to be an employer of choice.
- To recognise that valuing diversity is critical to community integration.
- To ensure that our partners, suppliers and contractors are aware of our equality duties and that they conduct their activities so as to promote equality and we encourage supplier diversity.
- To provide adequate resources and relevant management arrangements to ensure the effective delivery of this scheme.

This scheme will be reviewed and revised as necessary in line with our statutory duties.

## **6. Our priority equality objectives**

In order to take forward our commitment to deliver on this scheme we have identified a number of priority projects that will meet our public equality duties. These priorities were identified following consultation with our community and staff.

### **Our disability equality priorities:**

- Disabled people are more aware of our Customer Services Charter.
- Disabled customers are able to inform and shape the delivery of services to ensure we meet their needs
- Deaf and hard of hearing customers are more aware of the interpretation and communication support services available and better able to access our Customer Service Centre.
- We promote positive attitudes and images of disabled people through our work.
- More disabled people take up training and employment opportunities in the Council.
- More of our buildings and car parks are physically accessible to disabled people.
- Our website is more accessible to disabled people.
- Disabled young people and young carers have more opportunities to be involved in their community.
- Information about our social care services is more accessible to disabled people.

### **Our race equality priorities:**

- We promote community cohesion and positive attitudes towards people from different ethnic backgrounds through cross-community events.
- Young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds have more opportunities to access and take up sport and cultural activities in the county.
- Our staff have greater awareness about our customers' cultural and religious differences.
- Customers who are speakers of other languages are more aware of the interpretation and translation services available and better able to access our Customer Service Centre.

### **Our gender equality priorities:**

- Victims and families of domestic abuse are able to access quality co-ordinated support services.
- Carers are able to access quality co-ordinated support services.
- Our Customer Service Centre continues to be responsive to family and carer responsibilities.
- Parents have better access to childcare services in our community.
- Our employees are able to enjoy a work life balance through our flexible working patterns and arrangements.
- Women and men have more opportunities to choose non-traditional employment and enterprise routes.

## 7. Our recent achievements

- Opening the new Customer Service Centre in the Civic offices has improved access for all.
- Customer service staff are more aware of the access and communication needs of deaf customers.
- The Benefits Bus makes it easier for people to access advice about housing and council tax benefits and claim what they are entitled to.
- The new Mobile Rapid Response Team support older people and disabled people in their own homes.
- Physical access has been improved to council buildings, including the Grand Pavilion in Porthcawl and our libraries in Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg.
- The Access to Leisure programme has helped people on means tested benefits to access a range of leisure activities.
- We received an Excellence Wales Award for our cross-service work involving children and young people.
- Schools have been provided with new guidance on anti-bullying policies and information leaflets for pupils and parents.
- We have developed a new protocol to promote the smooth transition of disabled young people to adulthood with partner agencies.
- A Mental Health Race Equality Action Plan has been developed with partner agencies.
- The Breakaway Care Centre helps carers by offering short, medium and longer-term respite care for adults with learning disabilities.
- Over 1,000 economically inactive parents have been able to take up training opportunities through our Genesis Project, including 865 women and 156 men.
- Bridgend Youth Service ran a successful Opportunities Unite Activity Day that gave young people a chance to take part in equality awareness workshops run by the Valleys Regional Equality Council.
- A new Youth Bus brings arts, media and information-based services and activities to hard-to-reach young people in our communities.
- A new mental health resource centre is being built in Bridgend town centre.
- Helping to set up the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People.
- Continue to support local equality organisations including the Bridgend Equality Forum, the Valleys Regional Equality Council and the Carers Forum.

## 8. Our individual and collective responsibilities

The successful delivery of this scheme needs a commitment from everyone throughout our organisation. Every member, manager and employee has a part to play in promoting equality and treating people fairly.

High-level leadership is crucial to promoting good equality practice. To give leadership on equality the Council set up a Cabinet Equalities Committee. The Committee advises and make recommendations to Cabinet and to Council on how the Council can mainstream equalities into its work.

The Chief Executive will have overall accountability for the Corporate Equality Scheme. Implementation will be the responsibility of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Development & Partnerships), advised by the Corporate Equalities Management Group. Corporate Directors will be responsible for implementing the Scheme within directorates and will designate the Directorate representatives to the Corporate Equalities Management Group to monitor and report on the implementation of the Scheme.

The Corporate Equalities Management Group objectives are to:

- Create a positive culture; set standards and challenge behaviour
- Be equality advocates for their part of the organisation
- Promote equality for our staff by creating a diversity friendly workplace
- Mainstream equality and fairness into all functions of our business

However, everyone has a part to play in the successful delivery of this Scheme:

**Elected Members** By ensuring that their decisions and actions have due regard to our duty to promote equality and fairness.

**Managers** By demonstrating clear commitment to equality improvement and through positive leadership on equality and fairness.

**Employees** By seeking to promote equality, fairness and respect through their work and relationships with customers and colleagues.

### Schools

Our equality duties include the Council's role as the Local Education Authority. We have a responsibility for ensuring that schools have due regard to the public equality duties and we provide support services for schools to assist with this. Each state-maintained school has a responsibility for meeting specific equality duties to produce the following:

- Race equality Plan
- Accessibility Plans
- Disability Equality Schemes

It is the responsibility of each school's Governing Body to decide their priorities and make arrangements for the application of resources to staffing, supplies, services and administration to meet these specific duties.

Everyone has a part to play in promoting equality in schools:

School Governors	By ensuring that they are aware of their duties and responsibilities under the relevant equality legislation.
Head teachers	By ensuring that appropriate policies and plans are developed and implemented in schools.
School staff	By seeking to promote equality, fairness and respect through their work and relationships with pupils and colleagues.

## **Procurement and commissioning**

Not all services are provided directly by the Council. Many are provided on behalf of the Council by outside agencies or contractors. The Council will ensure that third party contractors fully understand and implement, wherever possible, the commitments of its scheme when operating on behalf of the Council. The appropriate aspects of the Scheme will be incorporated into the tendering documents, contracts, agreements and conditions and, where appropriate, statements on how services will be delivered to conform with the Council's scheme. Where relevant, accessible service provision needs will be specified within contracts. We have incorporated equality sections into the vendor appraisal process.

Corporate Directors are responsible for ensuring that third party contractors are aware of their responsibilities under the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme and monitoring compliance. The Council will develop advice and guidance on promoting equality in procurement for relevant staff and how to monitor compliance with the scheme.

## **Funding and grants**

Where the Council administers funding or grants it will encourage organisations to consider the need to promote equality and accessible services to the public, as far as is practicable.

## **Delivering our services in partnerships**

The Council works in partnership with public bodies, voluntary sector organisations and other agencies. The Council is committed to strengthening partnership working to improve outcomes for local people.

The Council works on many levels when working with others and will seek to promote equality in the following ways:

- When the Council is the strategic and financial leader within a partnership, it will ensure that the public service provision has due regard to relevant equality duties.
- When the Council joins a partnership in which another body is leading it will encourage all parties to have due regard to the relevant equality duties.
- When the Council is a partner in a consortium, it will encourage the consortium to adopt an equality statement. When acting publicly in the name of the consortium, the Council will act in accordance with its Corporate Equality Scheme.

# The Community Strategy

The Community Strategy sets out a vision of built on principles of equal opportunity, social justice and the health and well-being of local citizens. The Local Service Board is revising the Community Strategy and it will include the following themes:

- **Strong Communities**

The strength of our communities underpins Bridgend County. We will protect, preserve and promote the areas in which we live, work and play and enhance every resident's sense of safety, citizenship and belonging.

- **Young Voices**

Our youngest citizens are the future leaders, teachers, entrepreneurs and shapers of Bridgend County. We will provide opportunities for their education, training and personal growth, and ensure their voices are heard as they move towards their bright future.

- **Proud History**

We value our heritage and history of working together. We will celebrate our past and learn from our experiences to steer us towards a bright future.

- **Green Places**

The quality of our environment is an asset, that brings benefits to all who live, work and visit our communities. We will value, promote, sustain and protect our natural, built and historic environment for the future.

- **Healthy Living**

The physical and mental wellbeing of our residents is vital for them to enjoy a happy and healthy future. We will support individuals, employers and key services to achieve healthier, active and positive lifestyles and a greater quality of life for all.

- **New Opportunities**

Our bright future depends on skilled and reliable employees which businesses can feel confident in. We will build on our place in the knowledge economy by developing our workforce, enhancing our skills base and supporting local companies.

The Local Service Board will make sure that equality and fairness are mainstreamed into the development and implementation of the Community Strategy. This will be done by the key strategic partnerships carrying out impact screening on the programme briefs that are developed for each of the themes set out above. The screening process will help to identify potential risks of discrimination and opportunities to promote equality and community integration.

## 9. OUR COMMUNITY AND OUR WORKFORCE

As at 2008 around 132,600 people live in Bridgend County Borough. The following information is taken from the Census 2001, the National Assembly for Wales Key Statistics Report (April 2008) and the Office of National Statistics annual survey of hours and earnings:

### **Key facts about our county borough:**

- 64,833 (48.9%) of the population are male.
- 67,751 (51.1%) of the population are female.
- 25,589 (19%) children aged under 15 years live in the county.
- 26,516 (20%) retired people live in the county.
- 33,146 (25%) people have a limiting long-term illness.
- 45% of households have one or more persons with a limiting long-term illness.
- 12% of people provide unpaid care to family or friends each week.
- 98.6% of the population are from a White ethnic background.
- 1.4% of the population are from a Black or minority ethnic background.
- 70% of people describe themselves as Christian.

### **Key facts about women and men in our county borough:**

- In 2007 57.9% of girls achieved five or more good GCSEs compared to 47.4% of boys.
- In 2007 66.3% of girls achieved 2 or more A-levels (grades A-C) compared to 60.4% of boys.
- In 2007 1.4% of boys left school with no qualifications compared with 2.6% of girls.
- In 2008 the average the gross weekly pay for male full-time workers is £498.90 compared with £345.80 for a female full-time worker.
- 30,200 women and 34,300 men are economically active.
- 3,300 women and 2,300 men who are economically inactive want a job.
- 326 men and 3,521 women live in lone parent households with children.
- 1,839 men and 2,569 women provide over 50 hours of unpaid care a week to family or friends.
- In 2008 79 men and 115 women aged between 16 and 25 registered with the Authority as homeless.
- In Wales 85% of domestic violence incidents the victims are women.



**Key facts about disabled people in our county borough:**

- 1 in 5 people of working age have a long-term limiting illness.
- 1 in 7 people of working age receive disability-related benefits (11,480).
- 3994 people are registered with the Authority for services related to their disability.
- 10% of people over 16 experience mental illness problems.

**Key facts about our race relations in our county borough:**

- 0.2% of people belong to the Islamic faith
- 0.2% of people belong to the Buddhist faith.
- In 2007 540 non-UK nationals registered for national insurance numbers in the County Borough. The majority of people were from Poland.
- Local employers have recruited migrant workers to fill skills shortages and we now have a notable number of families from the Republic of the Philippines living in the county.
- Approximately 30 settled Irish Traveller families live at the authorised site on the border of the county borough.

**Key facts about different age groups in our county borough:**

- 1 in 6 men are over 65 (10,000)
- 1 in 5 women are over 65 (12,900)
- 3,432 men and 5,735 women are over 75.
- 6,275 men and 5,933 women are aged between 16 and 25.
- 14% of people aged over 60 receive pensions credit.
- 1 in 3 people aged between 50 and 60 years of age provide care to family or friends on a weekly basis.
- 1 in 7 households are occupied by a single person of pensionable age.
- In 2008 nearly 200 people aged between 16 and 25 registered homeless.
- Rest Bay has the highest proportion of the population over 65 years of age (32%) and Brackla has the lowest (6.6%).

**Key facts about our workforce (as of December 2007):**

- The Council employed 7931 people.
- 24% men compared with 76% women
- Less than 1% of the workforce are from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- 26% of the workforce did not declare their ethnicity
- Just over 1% of the workforce have a disability
- 42% of the workforce did not declare whether they had a disability or not
- 3.8% of the workforce stated that they provided unpaid care to family or friends

**Sexual Orientation**

There are no population statistics available in relation to sexual orientation at present. The UK Government estimate that between 5 – 7% of the adult population are gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transsexual. Based on this estimate there are estimated to be over 5,000 gay, lesbian, bi-sexual or transsexual people living in our local community.

## **10. How we developed our Scheme**

To develop our scheme we looked at the progress we had made under our previous equality schemes and the equality priorities developed by the Equality and Human Rights Commission in Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government. We then put those priorities in the local context to find out what we could do locally to contribute to tackling inequality in Wales.

Directorate Equality Action Plans will be developed to support the delivery of the equality objectives and priorities set out in this Scheme.

### **How we have involved people**

We wanted to make sure that we listened to many different individuals, organisations and members of our staff. Their views were important to us, not just in helping to decide what actions we should be taking but also in shaping the longer term outcomes that the Council should be aiming for.

Between November 2008 and March 2009 we carried out a programme of involvement and consultation activities, including internal events for staff and external meetings for organisations across the county.

- We held staff focus groups at our offices.
- We emailed a survey about the scheme to teams and staff across the Council.
- We invited local partners and equality organisations to attend a consultation event hosted by the Bridgend Equality Forum.
- We wrote to local and national organisations, including town and community councils to ask for their views.

### **Involving disabled people**

The disability equality duty requires us to do more than simply consult stakeholders and staff. It gives us a duty to involve disabled people to identify our priorities. Involving disabled people is not a one-off, 'tick box' exercise. We want to benefit fully from disabled people's views, experiences and ideas, and from organisations that represent disabled people, in order to plan action now and in the future.

We held an event in November 2008 to produce our disability equality priorities for this scheme. The event was run in partnership with Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People, Bridgend College, Bridgend Local Health Board and Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University NHS Trust. The event was opened by the Deputy Leader of the Council and attracted over 60 disabled people from across the county with a range of impairments, plus representative organisations.

This was the second such event held by the local public sector partners. The Council is committed to working with all local partners to improve equality outcomes for local people and will aim to develop this approach in its future equality activities.

## **Our on-going commitment to involve**

We are not complacent about our involvement work. Developing this Scheme gives us the opportunity to examine how we can work with disabled people in future to meet our responsibilities under the disability equality duty and how we can apply what we learn more broadly. We want to go beyond the standard consultation processes to engage with a wide range of people and organisations in different ways and through different mechanisms, for example:

- Learning from our customer complaints
- Monitoring take up of our services

We also want to achieve a system of long-term, supported engagement with our local community and our partners in the public sector. This will include our customers, our staff and local community groups.

The action plan includes the steps we will take to improve our consultation process and develop it into fuller involvement. This includes developing an involvement project to support the monitoring and review of our scheme.

## **11. Our arrangements for training**

We are committed to training Members, managers, staff and school governors so that they understand and are able to promote equality.

We carried out an independent audit of our equality and diversity policy and practice in 2008. This identified staff training on equality as an immediate priority and a general equality training programme has been put in place to address this. The training will target Members, management and front-line staff, and school governors. In addition we are building equality into our new Management Development Programme.

We will include targeted training on equality impact assessments in our internal training programme. This will include considering how day-to-day decisions can affect equality as well as outlining our approach to carrying out equality impact assessments.

## **12. Our arrangements for monitoring impact**

### **What we will assess**

We will assess our policies to ensure that they do not have a negative effect on any particular group of people and also to ensure that we are not missing opportunities to do more to promote equality and fairness.

We have identified a priority list of policies and services to be assessed in the first year of this Scheme and this is set out in Appendix 2. The process will be reviewed at the end of this period to ensure it is fit for purpose.

Changes to services and new policies will be identified and we will develop a timetable for carrying out impact assessments based on relevance to our general equality duties. The EIA list will be put on the Council's website and up-dated regularly. Progress on this process will be reported as part of the annual monitoring for the Scheme.

## **Screening and impact assessment**

In this section, we use the term 'initiative' as a shorthand term to cover policies, practices, decisions, programmes, projects, functions and strategies.

We need to think about how our work does impact on different groups of people or how it may impact on them. There is a formal process for doing this which is called Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).

Equality Impact Assessments help the public sector to assess the likely impact of an initiative on certain groups of people who are protected under anti-discrimination law. The aim is to identify potential risks of unlawful discrimination and opportunities to promote equality and fairness. To do this we need to look at what impact attitudinal, institutional and environmental barriers are likely to have on people's opportunities to access our services and realise their potential.

We have revised our approach to this process and have developed a toolkit that will be used to assess our policies and service delivery arrangements. There are 2 levels to this new approach.

### **Level 1 - Impact Screening Workshops**

We run facilitated workshops to identify the sustainability, health, equality and community safety impacts of major initiatives. The workshops give managers and staff involved in the delivery of these initiatives an opportunity to consider what actions will need to be taken to mitigate the risk of any negative impacts on our community. The workshops provide the basis for deciding whether the initiative requires an Equality Impact Assessment.

Workshops have taken place on the following initiatives to identify potential equality impacts:

- Health, Social Care and Well-being Strategy
- Regeneration Strategy
- Information and Communication Technology Strategy

### **Level 2 - Equality Impact Assessment Toolkit**

The toolkit looks at the potential impact of an initiative across all our equality duties and how we can promote community integration. The toolkit is designed to find out how relevant the initiative is to our equality duties and what proportionate action we can take to mitigate any risk of discrimination and to promote equality and fairness.

**Stage 1** will screen the policy or service to estimate its relevance to our general equality duties and its likely impact on people covered by equality legislation.

**Stage 2** involves carrying out a more detailed assessment to identify opportunities within the policy or service to promote equality and community integration. This includes looking at the following:

- What involvement and consultation has been done and what is going to be done as a result of this exercise.
- What information has been collected and what further information needs to be collected. Our monitoring categories are based on the census.
- Assess and analyse the policy in terms of how it will impact on our customers and its potential to cause unlawful direct or indirect discrimination; to promote equality of opportunity and community integration.
- Where necessary identify options for improvement to reduce adverse impact and promote equality.
- Consider the obligations that our partners and external contractors have when working with us.
- Develop an action plan resulting from the above and how the results of the equality impact assessment will be published.

The process has been piloted on the following initiatives:

- Customer Service Centre
- Local Housing Strategy
- Community Legal Advice Network
- Mental Health Race Equality Action Plan

This has informed the development of guidance for officers undertaking Equality Impact Assessments.

## **Equal opportunities monitoring**

Our Customer Service Charter states that we want our services to be accessible to the whole community, regardless of individual circumstances and access requirements. To do this we will look at what customer information we currently gather to establish how we can improve our performance and identify relevant equality outcome measures. Primarily this will be through using equal opportunity monitoring to collect, store and analyse data about people's different access requirements in a confidential way.

We will use the EIA process to identify relevant performance indicators and customer information to collect disaggregated data on equality in line with recommendations from the Local Government Data Unit. This will help us to ensure that our services meet the diverse needs of all those living, working and visiting the county borough

## **Comments and complaints**

Monitoring and learning from complaints is another way of gathering information to see whether we are meeting our equality duties.

Members of the public who feel that they have experienced discrimination in the way the Council has treated them may make a complaint through its Corporate Complaints procedure.

We have grievance and disciplinary procedures in place and a policy on dealing with complaints of harassment relating to employees.

We also have a 'whistleblowing' procedure, which extends the protection for employees who want to report bad practice without fear of being victimised as a result.

The Members' Code of Conduct and Standards Committee deals with complaints about the conduct of elected members.

We will take all complaints seriously and will not tolerate any form of discriminatory behaviour.

## **Publication of results**

The results of our impact assessments will be published in our annual report on the scheme.

## 13. Our arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress

The Scheme enables all of our partners, our staff, our customers and our community to hold us accountable for the delivery of our action plan.

We will report our progress each year and take steps to ensure that stakeholders can comment on our performance against the Scheme. A summary of the consultation and involvement carried out will be included in our annual report. We will also show what has changed as a result of involving disabled people. The annual report for this Scheme will include an update on the Equality Action Plan.

We have made a commitment to achieve '*improving* authority' status under the Welsh Local Government Association Equality Improvement Framework (EIF). The framework has been developed to promote, manage and improve equality within local government in Wales and sits within the Wales Programme for Improvement.

The Wales Programme for Improvement includes a requirement that we conduct annual assessments of what progress we are making towards our equality objectives. The assessment will set out:

- How our equality objectives contribute to achieving our strategic vision and aims;
- How the objectives reflect the different needs of the diverse community we serve;
- How we will address any shortfalls, including any need for capacity-building work; and
- Evidence of equality outcomes for different equality groups.

A full review of the Scheme, detailing progress and identifying key areas for action across the council will be undertaken by the Corporate Equalities Management Group on a three yearly basis and presented to the Corporate Management Board and the Cabinet Equalities Committee for approval and publication.

We will inform the public and employees about this information through:

- 'Bridgend Bulletin', the Council's newsletter which is delivered to all homes in the County.
- 'Bridgenders', the Council's newsletter for employees.
- Relevant voluntary organisations, community groups and representatives.
- The Equalities section within the County Council's website and intranet.



The Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development & Partnerships is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Scheme and will make provision to include it within the arrangements for monitoring services generally. His contact details are:

David MacGregor  
Assistant Chief Executive - Corporate  
Development & Partnerships  
Bridgend County Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Angel Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 4WB

Telephone: (01656) 643687  
Email: [David.MacGregor@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:David.MacGregor@bridgend.gov.uk)

## **Complaints**

Complaints relating to this Scheme will be dealt with in accordance with the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

The Council's Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory Services is responsible for monitoring complaints and legal compliance. His contact details are:

Andrew Jolley  
Assistant Chief Executive – Legal & Regulatory  
Services  
Bridgend County Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Angel Street  
Bridgend  
CF31 4WB  
Telephone: (01656) 643106  
Email: [Andrew.Jolley@bridgend.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.Jolley@bridgend.gov.uk)

## Appendix 1 Organisational structure

The Council has 54 elected Members representing 39 wards. It is responsible for the provision of a diverse range of services and employs approximately 7,900 people. The Council delivers services through the following directorates:

<b>Bridgend County Borough Council Organisational Structure</b>	
<p><b>Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate Development &amp; Partnerships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional &amp; Partnership Working</li> <li>• Business Planning</li> <li>• Scrutiny</li> <li>• Community Strategy</li> <li>• Corporate Plan</li> <li>• Policy Development/Research</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Equalities</li> <li>• Welsh Language</li> <li>• Consultation</li> <li>• Electoral Services</li> </ul>	<p><b>Assistant Chief Executive – Legal &amp; Regulatory Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Monitoring Officer</li> <li>• Trading Standards</li> <li>• Consumer Advice</li> <li>• Environmental Health</li> <li>• Democratic Services</li> <li>• Licensing &amp; Registration</li> <li>• Registrar</li> <li>• Mayoral Office</li> <li>• Member Services</li> <li>• Corporate Complaints</li> </ul>
<p><b>Corporate Director - Wellbeing Adult Social Care</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older People</li> <li>• Physical Disability</li> <li>• Mental Health</li> <li>• Learning Disability</li> <li>• Sensory Impairment</li> <li>• Substance Misuse</li> </ul> <p><b>Healthy Living</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leisure</li> <li>• Health promotion</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Culture</li> <li>• Adult Learning</li> <li>• Libraries</li> <li>• Sport &amp; Recreation</li> <li>• Schools Music Service</li> </ul>	<p><b>Corporate Director - Children Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Access &amp; Inclusion</li> <li>• Special Education</li> <li>• Education – other than at school</li> <li>• 14-19 services</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategy Partnerships &amp; Commissioning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrating Services</li> <li>• School Modernisation</li> <li>• Children and Young People Partnerships</li> <li>• Service Planning</li> <li>• Commissioning</li> <li>• Home To School Transport</li> <li>• School Meals</li> </ul> <p><b>Safeguarding &amp; Family Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child Protection</li> <li>• Looked-After Children</li> <li>• Children in Need</li> <li>• Youth Service</li> <li>• Education Welfare Service</li> <li>• Psychological Services</li> <li>• Youth Offending</li> </ul>

<p><b>Corporate Director - Resources</b></p> <p><b>Property &amp; Finance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountancy</li> <li>• Revenue/Benefits</li> <li>• Internal Audit</li> <li>• Exchequer Services</li> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Property/Asset Management</li> <li>• Building cleaning</li> <li>• Physical Assets</li> <li>• Architectural Services</li> <li>• Building Maintenance</li> </ul> <p><b>ICT &amp; Customer Contact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT Services</li> <li>• Customer Services Centre</li> <li>• CCTV</li> <li>• Facilities management</li> </ul> <p><b>Human Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Corporate Director - Communities</b></p> <p><b>Regeneration &amp; Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Housing and Community Regeneration</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Planning &amp; Building Control</li> <li>• Countryside &amp; Tourism</li> <li>• Sustainable Development</li> </ul> <p><b>Street Scene</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Planning</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Fleet</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Car Parking</li> <li>• Engineering</li> <li>• Waste</li> <li>• Parks and Green Spaces</li> <li>• Bereavement</li> </ul>
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**Please note that the following Appendix are subject to further consultation with relevant Directorates and partners and will be completed prior to publication of the final scheme:**

<b>Appendix 2</b>	Equality Impact Assessment Schedule 2009-2010	<b>TBC</b>
<b>Appendix 3</b>	Our equality action plan	<b>TBC</b>