

Bridgend County Borough Council

Annual Monitoring Report – Corporate Equality Scheme

1. Introduction

This report outlines the progress that the Council has made in implementing its Corporate Equality Scheme during the financial year 2009-10. It has been prepared in accordance with the monitoring and reporting framework outlined in the Scheme.

The Council is pleased with the progress that has been made, but is not complacent about what work is outstanding. We are pleased to have continued building a positive relationship with local partners in the public and voluntary sector on community cohesion issues and promoting equality awareness within the Council.

2. Progress against timetable

The following chart summarises progress, measured against the corporate equality objectives and disability, race and gender equality priorities set out in the Scheme.

Equality Objectives and Priorities 2009-10				
Number of Directorate actions	Green	Amber	Red	Total
	No	No	No	No.
Resources	4	1	2	7
Legal & Regulatory Services	0	1	0	1
Children's	0	2	0	2
Corporate Development & Partnerships	12	21	6	39
Communities	3	0	0	3
Wellbeing	4	0	0	4
Total	23	25	8	56

Red	Situation not progressing as per objective. There is real cause for concern. Worse than 10% off target.
Amber	Situation progressing but not in line with objective. There is potential cause for concern. Equal to or less than 10% off target.
Green	Situation in line with objective. There is no known cause for concern. Target achieved or exceeded.

Good progress has been made in some areas but in other areas delivery has been inhibited due to capacity issues and impacted on by changes in corporate strategic priorities and national policies. There are some actions that will be re-assigned because of regrouping within the authority.

The results suggest that:

- 23 of the planned actions are on track;
- 25 of the planned actions are progressing but not at the pace originally planned;
- 8 of the planned actions are giving cause for concern.

3. Progress against equality objectives and priorities in 2009-10

Below is a summary of the progress the Council has made against its corporate equality objectives and disability, race and gender equality priorities in the current year.

Customers are treated fairly and with respect

The Council's Customer Service Centre includes a revamped reception area at the Civic Offices which has greatly improved the physical access for disabled customers and parents with children.

To improve access for deaf people and people with a hearing impairment the service centre has a text phone service, there are hearing loops in the interview rooms and portable hearing loops are available for use in meeting rooms. Customer Service Centre Advisors have attended a BSL Basic course. In addition a BSL Interpretation Service is accessible by prior arrangement for deaf customers.

Language interpretation and translation services are available through the Big Word service which provides over-the-phone interpretation in more than 100 languages. Advice and guidance about the service is available to staff on the intranet.

Private interview rooms are available in the Customer Service Centre to help ensure that customers' privacy, dignity and cultural sensitivities can be respected.

The Council website is a key element for customers accessing our services and it has been re-designed in line with SOCITM standards to make it easier to navigate around. There are features on the top-bar of the website that make it accessible for visually impaired people, including text only feature, text magnification options and a contrast button that changes text to yellow on black background. The website also now includes "Browse Aloud" software to make it accessible for visually-impaired people, people with learning disabilities and also people for who English is a second language. The Council was one of the first organisations to make this facility available bilingually.

Further improvements will be progressed through the Council's Web Development Project.

New Corporate Branding Guidelines are being developed that will include advice on making documents accessible and available in alternative formats for disabled people.

Community and employee involvement and customer feedback

Customer feedback

The Citizens' Panel forms part of the Council's Engagement framework and is part of its plans to forge an on-going dialogue with its citizens and put their needs at the centre of its service delivery. The outcomes of the survey undertaken in the summer of 2009 were reported to Directorates and Cabinet in November 2009 and subsequently to the Cabinet Equality Committee (January 2010).

In the summer of 2009 the Council conducted a citizen panel survey to find out about people's confidence in fair treatment for different groups by the Council.

Key findings from the survey

- Over three-quarters (76.9%) of respondents were confident that they personally would receive fair treatment from the Council.
- Respondents were most confident that black or ethnic minorities (78.7%), women (78.7%) and men (77.7%) would receive fair treatment from the Council. Respondents felt least confident that Travellers/Gypsies would receive fair treatment from the Council.
- Those aged under thirty-five (84.4%) felt most confident that they would receive fair treatment from the Council followed closely by female respondents (79.3%) and respondents with children in their household (78.0%).

In the same survey, people were asked about their satisfaction with Bridgend County Council.

Key findings from the survey:

- Four-fifths (80.0%) of respondents were satisfied with Bridgend County Borough as a place to live.
- Those aged over 55 (82.1%) were most satisfied with Bridgend County Borough as a place to live
- More than half (55.3%) of respondents expressed satisfaction with the way the Council is responding to the needs of the area.
- Those aged over 55 (57.7%) expressed most satisfaction with the way the Council is responding to the needs of the area.
- Almost half (49.5%) of respondents agreed with the statement '*the quality of Council services is good overall*'.
- Almost half (41.2%) of respondents felt that the Council kept them either very well or fairly well informed about the services and benefits it provides.

However the survey did show lower levels of confidence and satisfaction among those who are permanently sick or disabled in terms of receiving fair treatment from the Council, the way we are responding to the needs of the area and keeping people well informed about the services and benefits it provides.

To help address these issues presentations about the Council's Customer Service Charter were made to members of Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People, Bridgend Deaf Club and Bridge Visual Impairment Society to seek their views on how access to services can be improved in the future.

Feedback from these meetings informed the Citizens' Panel survey carried out in January 2010 on customer service. This included specific questions about physical and communication access needs. In addition an internal survey on customer service and training needs is being carried out to

establish what information Directorates collect about customers such as equality data, linguistic needs and access needs.

The Corporate Complaints Team are making good progress with improving the way we monitor corporate complaints for equality issues and making the procedure more responsive to the access requirements of individuals using the procedure.

The customer feedback gathered through these different routes will inform the development of the Council's Customer Access Strategy. This will look at how we can improve the way the authority captures customer information and feedback on equality issues to inform the way we make our services more accessible to the whole community.

Community Involvement

We have continued to support and develop the role of Bridgend Equality Forum. The forum is chaired by the Deputy Leader of the Council and meets on a quarterly basis. The forum is working with local partners in the public and voluntary sector to develop a shared vision of equality and community cohesion for the county borough. This supports the Community Strategy aim to enhance every resident's sense of safety, citizenship and belonging.

The forum has agreed new terms of reference and taken steps to improve its working arrangements with the Bridgend and District Community Cohesion Group.

Membership of the forum has been extended to include representatives from Glamorgan Deaf Club, Glamorgan Muslim Association and Bridgend County Gweini Council (representing the Christian voluntary sector). The council has secured funding from the Welsh Assembly Government new "*Community Cohesion Fund*" to promote awareness of the forum.

In 2009-2010 the forum received presentations on a variety of topics including:

Organisation	Topic
Safer Wales	Reporting Hate Crime
VALREC	Tackling Economic Inactivity among Black & Minority Ethnic People Programme A Voice in the Valleys Project
South Wales Police	The Police Pledge and public confidence
British Deaf Association	British Sign Language Charter
Shelter Cymru	Homelessness among Eastern European migrants
Safer Bridgend	Community cohesion and counter terrorism

Other forums that represent specific groups who are involved in planning and implementing our services, such as the Bridgend Carers Forum, Bridgend Domestic Abuse Forum, Youth Council and Shout (Forum for Older People) have also been supported.

A positive equality and diversity culture in the council

Considerable progress has been made in delivering training to managers and employees on equality and diversity:

- 150 managers attended the equality and diversity module of the Leadership & Management Development Programme. The programme will continue to run until Summer 2010.
- 204 employees attended 12 sessions of general equality and diversity training.
- 161 employees attended 12 sessions of dignity at work training

In addition the following E-learning modules are now available on-line:

- Introduction to equality and diversity
- Disability and discrimination
- Dignity at work
- Tackling racial discrimination in housing

The Authority's Performance Management Framework set out equality and diversity measures in the management standards.

A number of staff (16), including play groups workers and social care workers from adult and children's services, have attended a BSL Basic course.

The Valleys Regional Equality Council was commissioned to deliver equality and diversity training for school governors in March 2010 and this group will be prioritised in 2010 - 11.

In addition an internal survey on training needs is being carried out to establish what additional training managers and employees need on customer services, Welsh language, and equality and human rights.

Monitoring equality in our workforce

The Council has put in place arrangements to monitor equality in our workforce and use the data to identify ways to promote equality in employment.

The council's integrated human resource and payroll management system (TRENT) enables the council to capture, update and report on employee data but work is being done to improve data collection. Periodic anonymised employment equality monitoring reports are submitted to the Cabinet Equalities Committee.

Below is a statistical overview of employee data held on the Council's employment data system (Trent) as at 30th September 2009. The data as collated places employees into one of the following four categories:-

- **Full Time** - Any employee with a position that has a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) = 1. The employee may also have additional casual or part time posts.

***Example:** A full time System Technician with Resources who also has a part position of ICT Coordinator with Adult Education.*

- **Part Time** - Any employee with one position that has a FTE of greater than zero but less than 1.

Example: A Learning Support Officer at a school.

- **Multi Part Time** - Any employee who has more than one part time position.

Example: A Supervisory Assistant and a Cleaner at a school.

These reports show that as at 30th September 2009 our workforce total was 6,661 with the following equality breakdown, excluding casual/relief workers:

	Full-time	Part-time/Multi part-time	Sub-total	% of Total Workforce
Gender				
Female	2052	3033	5085	76.34
Male	1400	176	1576	23.66
Age Group				
16 - 25	173	229	402	6.04
26 -35	790	557	1347	20.22
36 – 45	935	987	1922	28.85
46 – 55	991	929	1920	28.82
56 - 65	557	460	1017	15.27
65+	6	47	53	0.80
Ethnicity				
White	2836	2467	5303	79.61
Mixed race	9	5	14	0.21
Asian or Asian British	6	16	22	0.33
Black or Black British	5	3	8	0.12
Chinese or other	4	10	14	0.21
Not declared	592	708	1300	19.52
Disability				
Disabled	49	25	74	1.11
Non-disabled	2299	1991	4290	64.41
Not declared	1104	1193	2297	34.48
Carers				
Unpaid carers	147	114	261	3.92

Below is an analysis of the current workforce based on gender and pay grade as at September 2009 based on workforce of 6,661, excluding casual/relief workers:

Pay grade	Male	Female	Sub-total
Scale 1 - 6	839 12.60%	3618 54.32%	4457 66.91%
Senior Officers	122 1.83%	109 1.64%	231 3.47%
Principal Officers	231 3.47%	323 4.85%	554 8.32%
Chief Officers	9 0.14%	8 0.12%	17 0.26%
Soulbury & Youth Officers	26 0.39%	56 0.84%	82 1.23%
Teachers	349 5.24%	971 14.58%	1320 19.82%
Total	1576 23.66%	5085 76.34%	6661

These figures show that:

- 76.34% (5085) of our workforce are female and 23.66% (1576) are male.
- 79.61% (5303) of our workforce are from a white ethnic background and 0.87% (58) are from other ethnic backgrounds. 19.52% (1300) have not declared their ethnicity.
- 1.11% (74) of our workforce are disabled and 64.41% (4290) are non-disabled. 34.48% (2297) have not declared their disability status.
- 3.92% (261) of our workforce provide unpaid care to a partner, child, relative, friend or neighbour.
- 6.04% (402) of our workforce are aged between 16-25 and 0.80% (53) are aged over 65.

However under-reporting by employees on ethnicity, disability and carer status and job applicants remains a problem. The following actions are being taken to further improve our reporting capabilities in this area to allow more meaningful data analysis:

- The new on-line recruitment process includes mandatory collection of equal opportunity data.
- An employee data collection project will be undertaken to up-date employee personal details, including Welsh language skills and equal opportunity data. This information will be collected on a voluntary basis but employees will be encouraged to participate in the project.
- Work has been undertaken to update records of disabled employees who have self-declared and are recorded in TRENTE.

The Council has also developed the following local performance indicators:

- Percentage of leadership posts occupied by women
- Percentage of employees who consider themselves to have a disability
- Percentage of employees aged 50 or over
- Percentage of Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) employees in the workforce

Monitoring this information will help the authority to identify risks of discrimination and opportunities to promote equality in the workplace. We are taking measures to improve our performance in this area.

Promoting equality as an employer of choice

Good progress has been made by the Council in line with its aim to become an employer of choice, including:

- Becoming a Disability Symbol user and making a commitment to follow a number of standards in relation to the employment of disabled people.
- Developing guidelines to help managers involved in recruitment and selection of job applicants to make them more aware of equality and access issues.
- Developing a protocol and guidance on domestic abuse which sets out how we will provide a workplace response to domestic abuse. This deals with the practical issues affecting managers and employees who may have to deal with issues arising from incidents of domestic abuse within the workplace or employees who may be a victim of Domestic Abuse.
- A number of flexible working options are open to enable staff to balance work and home commitments. While the needs of staff are balanced with business needs, options available include home working, reduced hours, part-time and flexi-time working.

Equality impact assessments have been carried out on the following employment policies:

- Discipline
- Grievance
- Management of absence
- Capability
- Dignity at work
- Domestic abuse
- Appraisal
- Work Experience Placements
- Apprenticeship Programme
- Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions

Promoting strong relationships between people from different backgrounds in our community

Significant progress has been made on our objective to promote strong relationships in our community. The Local Service Board is providing collective leadership on community cohesion based on the Community

Strategy theme - *Bright Future, Strong Communities: Enhance every resident's sense of safety, citizenship and belonging.*

New partnership arrangements and terms of reference have been developed for the Bridgend Equality Forum and the Bridgend and District Community Cohesion Group. The Community Cohesion Group is a community led and police administered group who collectively look at hate crimes, stop and search accounts, community tensions, reducing extremism. It also helps to monitor the needs of minority groups and act as a critical friend to the police.

Bridgend Community Safety Partnership, working closely with the Community First Partnerships and the voluntary sector, made 15 successful project bids for the new Welsh Assembly Government Community Cohesion Fund. These included:

- BAVO ran 'Respect' training sessions to help voluntary organisations and community groups to increase their awareness of community cohesion. These included training on equality and diversity, race and cultural awareness, and an introduction to human rights. Voluntary sector organisations were given an opportunity to develop appropriate policy statements with support from BAVO.
- BAVO worked with the Extending Entitlement Network (EEN) to bring together young people from the Communities First areas into 'Umbrella' workshops that used a story telling format to look at equality and respect issues at the community level.
- Valleys Regional Equality Council ran a series of community cohesion workshops with Communities First Partnerships and Bridgend Community Safety Partnership. These culminated in a 'Diversity Day' to bring together the findings from the workshops. The event was hosted by the Mayor and Youth Mayor and guest speakers included the Director of the Equality & Human Rights Commission in Wales and the Children's Commissioner.
- The Community Cohesion Group are running a recruitment drive to attract new members from the local community to get involved with the work of the Group and Bridgend Equality Forum. They also ran a marketing campaign to raise awareness about hate crime.
- Creation Community Development has set up a Street Ambassador Scheme in Pontycymer to tackle anti-social behaviour issues and encourage local people to become active citizens in their neighbourhood. The scheme will recruit older people and younger people so that there is intergenerational work taking place from the start.
- Bridgend People First have run a Creativity Project involving adults who have a learning disability in the creation of an expressive art display at Bettws Life Centre as part of a community project giving them the opportunity to learn new skills to help build individual empowerment and freedom of expression.
- Valley & Vale Community Arts have worked in partnership with Bridgend Women's Aid to develop 'What about me?' DVD and resource pack about

teen dating abuse. This involved running workshops with local young people looking at controlling and violent behaviour in relationships.

- BAD Bikes Young People's Project ran a '*Encouraging Active Citizenship*' project that aimed to promote community cohesion by bringing people together from different ethnic backgrounds and different age groups to take part in a series of activities. This included Indian cooking, dance sessions, Indian drumming and a visit to a youth facility in Southall where community members of all ages, ethnicities and abilities will be able to meet their peers. The host organisation will be invited to pay a return visit to the ward of Blackmill.

This has strengthened the links between Community Safety Partnerships and Communities First Partnerships and means that the Council and its partners are making a very positive response to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) "*Getting On Together – A Community Cohesion Strategy for Wales*" which was launched on 3rd December 2009.

Citizens' Panel Survey on Neighbourhood and Community

In the summer of 2009 the Council conducted a citizen panel survey to find out about people's attitudes towards different groups of people in our community. 972 surveys were returned representing a response rate of 64%. The outcomes of the survey were reported to Directorates and Cabinet in November 2009, and subsequently to the Cabinet Equality Committee (January 2010) and Bridgend Equality Forum (February 2010).

Key findings from the survey

- Respondents felt that all social groups (e.g. disabled, ethnic minorities, religious minorities) were more likely to experience prejudice and/or discrimination in Britain than in Bridgend County Borough itself.
- The two groups that respondents felt were most likely to experience prejudice and/or discrimination both in Britain and Bridgend County Borough were Refugees/Asylum seekers and Travellers/Gypsies.
- Around two-fifths of respondents personally feel less positive towards Travellers/Gypsies (42.8%) and Refugees/Asylum seekers (37.3%). In contrast, three-tenths of respondents (27.9%) when asked who they felt less positive towards responded 'Nobody'.
- Three-tenths of respondents felt that newspapers/television (29.1%) or a personal experience (28.2%) had influenced them in feeling less positive about certain groups. A further one-fifth (22.9%) had been influenced by law and public policy.
- Older people (43.3%), disabled people (40.9%) and younger people (36.9%) were the three groups that respondents felt the Council should be working more closely with to eliminate any prejudice or discrimination.
- Almost three-fifths of respondents (57.7%) agreed that they would be worried if more refugee or asylum seekers came to live in Bridgend County Borough, followed by 43.8% who were concerned about foreign workers.

- Further analysis shows that almost two-thirds (66.2%) of respondents aged under thirty-five would not be worried if more Black or Asian people came to live in Bridgend County Borough.
- Respondents were most confident that black or ethnic minorities (78.7%) would receive fair treatment from the Council. Respondents felt least confident that Travellers/Gypsies would receive fair treatment from the Council.
- Over three-quarters (76.9%) of respondents were confident that they personally would receive fair treatment from the Council.

The survey has provided a useful picture of attitudes towards different groups of people who are protected under the equality legislation and issues that may impact on community cohesion in our county. It will inform the community cohesion mapping exercise the Council will be undertaking in the coming months.

Hate crime reporting

A hate crime is defined as “a crime where the perpetrator’s prejudice against any identifiable group of people is a factor in determining who is victimised”. A victim of hate crime does not have to be a member of a minority. For example, the friends of a visible minority ethnic person or a disabled person may be victimised because of their association with that person.

The following information has been provided by South Wales Police on hate crime incidents reported in the county borough for the period April 2009 – March 2010:

	Reported incidents	Repeat victims
Racist	155	16
Disability	72	10
Religion	2	1
Sexual orientation	47	5

The following steps have been taken to improve the way hate crime incidents are responded to in our community:

- South Wales Police are delivering an intensive course of training on diversity and hate crime for Response Officers and Police Community Support Officers across the county borough.
- South Wales Police are improving the way incidents are reported to the Bridgend and District Community Cohesion Group and are working with partners at the neighbourhood level to improve the response and support given to repeat victims.
- Articles have appeared in the Glamorgan Gazette and a road show has been run to promote the Bridgend and District Community Cohesion Group and to raise awareness about how people can report hate crime incidents.

- Safer Wales self-reporting leaflets and posters (*'Hate Crime: It's our problem'*) have been distributed at council and community venues across the county borough and there is a link to the Safer Wales confidential reporting website on the Council's website.

The Council marked Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2010 with a special event in the council chamber featuring a woman from South Wales who escaped Prague in 1939 on the last *'Kindertransport'* out of the city. The event was hosted by pupils from Porthcawl Comprehensive and Ysgol Gyfun Llanhari. A wide cross-section of the community attended the event, including the First Minister and Bridgend AM Carwyn Jones.

Recognising equality and fairness as part of our business performance

Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken with the aim of mainstreaming equality, Welsh language and human rights issues across the Council. They will form the basis of a frank assessment of potential best practice that could be built upon, identifying areas for improvement, and barriers to improvement that need to be tackled.

- 96 managers attended the EIA training and the programme will continue to run until Summer 2010.
- The Equality Impact Assessment toolkit and manager's guidance is available on the intranet.

Equality impact assessments have been carried out or are currently in progress on the following:

- Choice in Accommodation policy
- Adult Social Care Commissioning Plan
- Disabled Children & Young People Strategy
- Family Support Strategy
- Carers Strategy
- Corporate Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding Children Residential Services Review
- Bridges Into Work Project
- Working Skills for Adults Project
- Customer Access Strategy
- Library Services Review

Communicating Positive Messages on equality and diversity

Progress has been made by the Council to use photography and other forms of illustration in our publicity materials to challenge assumptions about disability and promote awareness of the achievements of disabled people, including:

- There has been some progress with this in terms of publicity material being produced by the authority, for example in the new Community Strategy, and this new library of images will be used to make future publications more reflective of the diverse community of the county borough.

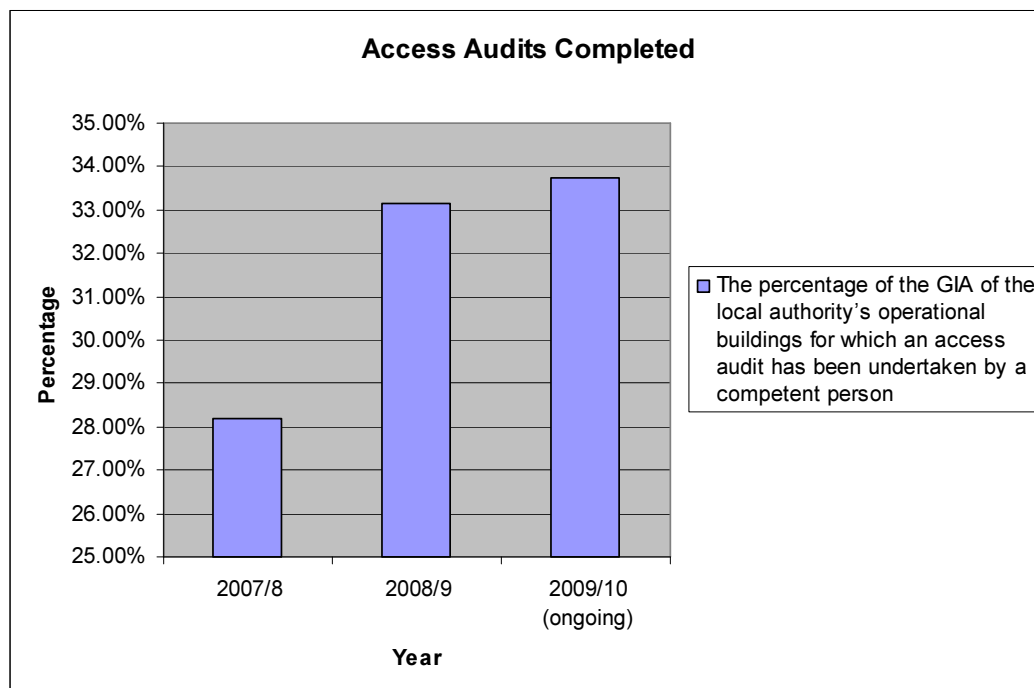
- A new Adult Social Care brochure is being sent out to people enquiring about our services and it was promoted at Vulnerable Adults and Older People events in the county. The brochure includes details of how to contact the council, and includes SMS texting. It will be available on the Council's website.
- The Council are introducing Talking Mats available to people with dementia. These are a communication aid that will enable people to have a voice and to express their preferences and opinions about day to day issues that affect them and the content of their care plans.

Access audits and physical improvements to council property

Good progress has been made by the Council in improving physical access to its properties. The Council's Asset Management Plan (AMP 2021) identifies that accessibility will be a primary consideration for all operational property. This will be achieved by the following:

- Accessibility being considered at the feasibility stage of property reviews.
- A DDA programme of works being progressed linked to the AMP process.
- An annual planned programme of accessibility audits to be undertaken.

Accessibility is identified as a critical success factor in the delivery of the AMP 2021. This is measured by the Consortium for Local Authorities Wales (CLAW) by the following Corporate Health Asset Management core performance indicator which has shown ongoing improvement for the Council:



To date 165 accessibility audits have been completed on our assets. A further 306 assets have been identified as requiring access audits and these will be implemented as the programme rolls out across the county.

An annual budget of £150,000 per annum was agreed for the period 2004-2011 and to date 27 schemes have been completed. High profile schemes have included Bridgend Library and the Grand Pavilion, Porthcawl.

The prioritisation process for DDA schemes links in with those schemes identified by the Corporate Property Group. In 2009-10 priority was given to making access improvements to public conveniences in the county in direct response to consultation with local disabled people. The AMP Access Officer will continue to involve disabled people in the prioritisation process for 2010-2011. A Property Access Strategy is also being developed as part of the AMP 2021 action plan which encompasses these key links in the prioritisation process.

Improving services for victims and families experiencing domestic abuse

Domestic Abuse is defined as *‘the use of physical and/or emotional abuse or violence, including undermining of self confidence, sexual violence or the threat of violence, by a person who is or has been in a close relationship.’* It can also include violence inflicted on, or witnessed by, children. Domestic abuse is not a “one-off” occurrence; it is frequent and persistent. It is known that this remains very much a hidden crime and those who report it are more likely to have been a previous victim prior to reporting any incident.

The Council’s Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator is based in the Community Safety Partnership and works with local partners to provide support services to victims of domestic abuse.

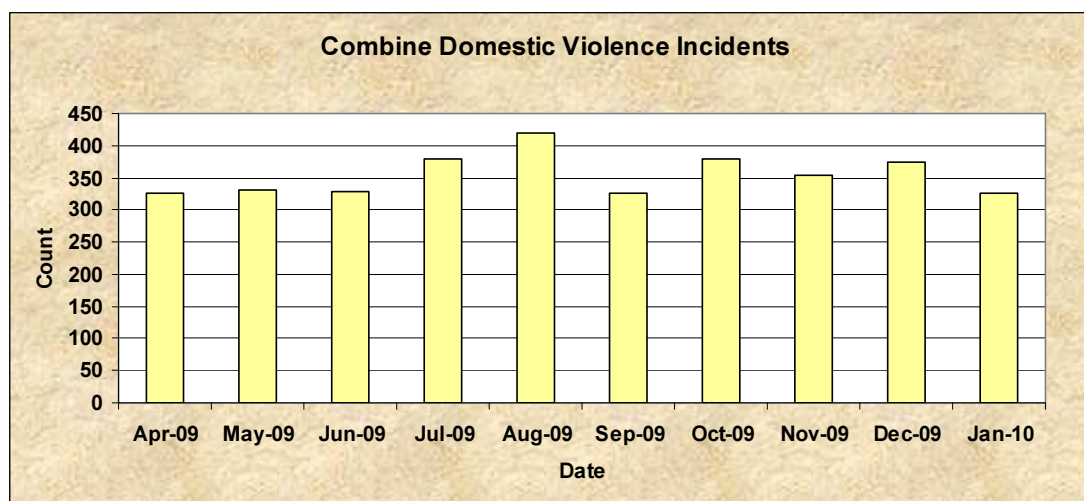
The following information has been provided by South Wales Police on domestic abuse incidents reported in the county borough:

Month	Number of D.A. incidents (non verbals)	Number of D.A. incidents (verbals)	Number of D.A. involving repeat victims	Arrests arising from incident (all DA)	Arrests arising from incident (non verbal)	MARAC Referrals	Total
Apr-09	79	184	12	33	30	24	362
May-09	75	194	7	18	17	20	331
Jun-09	67	166	16	28	27	25	329
Jul-09	81	191	8	33	29	36	378
Aug-09	89	182	12	58	52	26	419
Sep-09	59	168	13	41	33	12	326
Oct-09	66	176	27	46	40	24	379
Nov-09	65	164	11	47	43	23	353
Dec-09	68	195	2	53	40	16	374
Jan-10	74	146	4	49	43	10	326

These figures show that between April 2009 and January 2010:

- 723 domestic abuse incidents (non-verbal involving actual physical assault) were reported;
- 1,766 domestic abuse incidents (verbal) were reported;
- 406 arrests arose from domestic abuse incidents reports;
- 216 domestic abuse incidents resulted in a referral to MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).

The following graph uses the data from the above table, to show peak periods for domestic violence incidents occurring in the county borough:



There is an increase during the summer months. This may reflect periods when people tend to socialise more and consume alcohol, a contributing factor in domestic violence incidents. This data is being considered in the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment 2010.

The following steps have been taken to improve the way domestic abuse incidents are responded to in our community:

- During 2009-2010 the Bridgend Domestic Abuse Forum was established to improve the way agencies work together to tackle domestic abuse in the county borough.
- An information leaflet has been created explaining the role of the Independent Domestic Abuse Adviser (IDVA) with useful contact numbers. The IDVA gives independent support to male or female high risk victims through the criminal or civil justice systems. This includes constructing an individual safety plan, completing an in-depth risk assessment and signposting to relevant agencies. The IDVA has built good working relationships with various partners and attends the MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) on a regular basis.
- The housing and voluntary sector play a very important role in providing services in partnership with the Council. Tai Hafan and the Wallich provide 14 units of temporary accommodation for women fleeing domestic abuse. Bridgend Women's Aid offers free, confidential and non-judgmental services to women and children who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse. This includes refuge, supported accommodation, training and outreach work for families.
- A successful *White Ribbon Campaign* was run in November 2009 to mark the UN International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women. Information packs were distributed to partner agencies across the county borough and the Council hosted a campaign stall in the Customer Service Centre in the Civic Offices. The campaign was supported by Bridgend Ravens Rugby team.
- The Special Domestic Violence Court (SDVC) continues to run in Bridgend Courts every Friday.

- Valley and Vale Community Arts presented a play called '*Sarah's Story*' that tackled domestic abuse issues.
- Steps are being taken to strengthen the links between the Bridgend Domestic Abuse Forum and the new Domestic Abuse Management Group that will sit within the Bridgend Community Safety Partnership.
- The Domestic Abuse Annual delivery plan for 2010-2011 is being updated.

Improving services for carers

Good progress has been made by the Council to improve services for carers, including:

- Consultation has taken place to involve carers and the Carer's Forum in the development of a revised Carer's Strategy.
- A new carers booklet is being sent out to people and organisations across the county setting out what services are available to support carers. It will be available on the Council's website.
- The Council has provided training on carer's assessment for care management staff and carer's champions have been identified in all social work teams who will receive additional training.

Improve representation and participation rates of disabled children and young people through the Children & Young People's Participation Strategy

The Council has continued to make good progress in the way it involves children and young people in service planning and delivery:

- The Youth Council celebrated its 10th successful year in March 2010.
- A Schools Council for pupils on the autistic spectrum has been set up and has participated in a recent Schools Council Conference.
- A social networking site has been set up by young disabled people and this is being monitored by the Youth Service. This site has been noted as an example of good practice and is being developed on a regional basis for use by young people on the autistic spectrum across mid and west Wales as part of WAG's Autistic Spectrum Disorder Strategy.
- Disabled young people have been working on the Disabled Children and Young People's Strategy document and have designed the consultation proforma for young people.
- The Children and Young People Commissioning Toolkit will integrate equality and human rights into the guidance and will positively promote participation of disabled young people.
- The Family Support Strategy will promote the participation of disabled children and young people.
- Children and Young People Plan service level agreements with third party suppliers include a specific condition about the participation of disabled children and young people.

Encourage greater take-up of Youth Service activities among disabled young people

Some progress has been made to encourage disabled children and young people to take-up Youth Service activities, including:

- Youth Services continues to support and exchange ideas about promoting involvement with the Bridgend Disability Sports Officer and local disability sport organisations such as Bridgend Dream Team and Pumas.
- Youth Services hire or purchase adapted equipment and will be training staff in coaching and working with disabled young people to make activities more inclusive.
- Research is being undertaken into the feasibility of opening a Youth Centre for young people with learning and/or physical disabilities.
- The Youth Service has organised multi-activity taster days for local young people to make them more aware of the services and activities that are available to them across the county borough.

4. Management & administration of the Scheme

The Cabinet Equalities Committee provides political leadership, democratic accountability and an overview on all equality issues including the Welsh language. This comprises all Cabinet members, and cross-party representation on an advisory basis. It is chaired by the Deputy Leader – who is the Council’s WLGA Elected Member Equality Champion. This Committee receives the Annual Monitoring Report.

The Chief Executive has overall accountability for the Corporate Equality Scheme. Implementation is co-ordinated by the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Development & Partnerships), assisted by the Corporate Equalities Management Group. Corporate Directors and Heads of Service are responsible for complying with the Scheme’s requirements and require the Directorate representatives to the Corporate Equalities Management Group to monitor and report on the implementation of the scheme.

In addition, implementation of Corporate Equality Scheme has been incorporated in the Council’s corporate business planning process (please refer to 4.22 of the Corporate Statement of Intent).

7. Complaints

No complaints relating to the Council’s Corporate Equality Scheme were received during the financial year 2009-10.