

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE – EQUALITIES

2 APRIL 2015

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - RESOURCES

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet Committee with an update on equality and diversity learning and development for council employees.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priority

- 2.1. The Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme are statutory and cross-cutting and impact on the work of the whole Council. They are linked to the Community Strategy and the Customer Care Programme.

This report also supports the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2013 – 2017:

- **Priority 2:** Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement;
- **Priority 4:** Working together to help vulnerable people to stay independent;
- **Priority 6:** Working together to make the best use of our resources.

Both the Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme outline training objectives to ensure that the council's duties can be met and to ensure staff are aware of customers' diverse backgrounds and the impact this may have upon service need.

3. Background

- 3.1 The requirement for training is outlined in the Public Sector Equality Duty and Welsh Language Scheme. There is a clear need for managers and staff to have an awareness and understanding of equality and diversity issues when preparing EIAs and policy and when delivering frontline services. Welsh language training and awareness is based on identified business need for front line services.

4. Current situation / proposal

The Strategic Equality Plan and Welsh Language Scheme outline a commitment to implement, evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of equality, diversity and Welsh language training for staff covering the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation related to job roles. Welsh is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act but Welsh language learning for appropriate employees must be considered by the council.

4.1 A 3 year learning and development plan, approved by Cabinet Equalities Committee in October 2014, is in place outlining the levels and types of training to be provided, together with targeted numbers of staff (based on business needs identified by Directorate Business Managers).

4.2 The delivery of equality and diversity training is a mix of E Learning, face to face provision and partners such as Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People and comprises:

- **Welsh Language Awareness / Promotion of culture;**
 - E: Learning to be launched and available to all employees in April/May 2015;
- **Welsh Speaker and Learner Practice Sessions;**
 - Groups/face to face sessions to be launched following conclusion of the employee data collection project;
- **More than just words (Shwd dych chi heddiw?);**
 - Classroom setting facilitated by University of South Wales, to be coordinated by the Social Care Workforce Development Team;
- **Welsh in the workplace;**
 - Classroom setting facilitated by University of South Wales, targeted at employee groups to be identified by service managers;
- **Equality and Diversity (basic and advanced);**
 - E: Learning package in place followed by face to face training session facilitated by Equality and Engagement Officer;
- **Equality Impact Assessments;**
 - E: Learning package in place followed by face to face training session facilitated by Equality and Engagement Officer;
- **Focussed awareness training sessions;**
 - To be facilitated by representative groups at team meetings and covering specific issues around disability, sexuality; British Sign Language, mental health awareness;

4.3 Equality and Diversity training will also inform the ongoing development of the council's workforce plan.

4.4 It is hoped from the information provided within this report that Members are reassured from the progress being made, that gaps in employees' knowledge and skills are being identified and addressed.

4.5 Equality and Diversity training:

Between November 2014 and February 2015 a pilot Equality and diversity training programme was held comprising employees from the Resources Directorate. During the pilot phase, 70+ employees attended one of 6 sessions preceded by Equality and Diversity E: Learning. Services represented by these employees were Communications, Marketing and Engagement, Human Resources, Customer Services, Taxation, Benefits, Project Management, Customer and Community Support Unit and Finance.

A summary of feedback from employees is:

	Number	%
Course quality	Excellent/good: 61	97%
Course amount	Excellent/good: 58	92%
Relevant now	Relevant/useful: 60	95%
Relevant for future	Relevant/useful: 58	92%
Facilitator	Excellent/good: 61	97%
Structure	Excellent/good: 61	97%
Did course achieve what hoped?	Completely: 51	81%

Following the success of the pilot phase, the programme will now be delivered to other service areas within BCBC.

4.6 Equality Impact Assessment training:

There has been a steep increase in the number of Consultations being undertaken across the council by service areas and the Marketing and Engagement Team. An integral element of consultation and engagement is the Equality Impact Assessment process. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been identified as a training need for all service managers and employees responsible for developing or reviewing policy. EIA training is in development and builds on the Equality and Diversity training programme being rolled across the council. An EIA training pilot programme will be developed within the Resources Directorate. EIA training will then be introduced across all other service areas from April 2015.

4.7 Elected Members:

Elected Members have previously received equality and diversity awareness training. However, a number of Members were elected after that training was provided. This meeting of Cabinet Equalities Committee will canvass the views of Elected Members on whether a further Equality

and Diversity training programme should be delivered to them. The programme would cover an overview of points such as:

- Protected characteristics
- Stereotyping
- Discrimination
- Prejudice
- Responsibilities

and would be facilitated by the Equality and Engagement Officer.

4.9 **Welsh Language:**

- **More Than Just Words:** working in partnership with the University of South Wales, BCBC's Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) is developing More Than Just Words training for frontline social care employees within Bridgend County Borough (all sectors);
- **Welsh culture and language E: Learning:** BCBC's E: Learning package offering advice and guidance on Welsh culture and language has been reviewed and updated;
- **Welsh at work:** the new Welsh Language Standards (due to be introduced in 2015) highlight the requirement for BCBC's customers to undertake their business with us in the language of their choice. Whilst there is no requirement or recommendation for all frontline employees to be fluent in the Welsh language, customers and visitors can expect an initial meet and greet (and some basic business) to be conducted through the medium of Welsh. BCBC is working with the University of South Wales to develop a programme of Business Welsh which will be delivered to all employees whose roles include a public interface such as the Customer Contact Service. A pilot comprising a number of service areas will be developed following which consideration will be given to rolling the training out across all services during spring/summer 2015. This training will be preceded by the Welsh Language and Culture E: Learning package.

5. **Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules**

- 5.1 As this is an information report there are no proposals requiring consideration involving changes to the Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 No equality impact assessment has been carried out this report as it provides the Cabinet Committee with information which will positively assist in the delivery of the Authority's equality duties.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Equality and Diversity training costs will be met mainly from the Engagement Team budget; however, where service areas identify a specific business need for Welsh at Work, costs will be met from Departmental budgets. Delivery of this training will help the Authority to mitigate exposure to risk over its responsibilities.

8. Recommendation

8. It is recommended that the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this progress report.

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16 February 2015

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Background documents:
None