

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES

19 MAY 2014

CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

6 MONTHLY REPORT ON EQUALITY IN THE WORKFORCE

1. Purpose of Report

To provide the Cabinet Equalities Committee with data on the council's workforce, together with comparative information and an update on employment related developments.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

Analysing and using workforce data helps the council meet its statutory equality duties and support the following Corporate Priorities:

- **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.

3. Background

3.1 Reliable workforce data enables us to:

- assess our performance in relation to the statutory duties set out under the Equality Act and the council's Welsh Language Scheme;
- work within the WLGA's Equality Improvement Framework;
- provide meaningful information aiding decision making.

3.2 The council is also required to include employee monitoring data by protected characteristic in its SEP annual report.

4. Current situation / proposal

4.1 Workforce data

4.1.1 Appendix 1 provides half yearly profiles and a data analysis of the contracted workforce from 30 September 2012 until 31 March 2014. From 31 March 2014, the profile now includes data relating to the number of employees disclosing as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender captured following the recent data collection exercise and also a more detailed breakdown of employees' Welsh speaking, reading and writing skills.

4.2 Developments

4.2.1 A revised data capture project is underway with a fresh approach to “marketing” the project to employees. The revised focus is on the benefits to employees of completing the questionnaire and disclosing sensitive information. Asking employees to declare sensitive data is different from asking them to be open about their sexuality or disability. The project has an end date of 30 September 2014. The benefits to the council and its employees include:

- an opportunity to better understand our employees and help create better workplaces;
- support for BCBC objectives to address inequality in the workplace and treat people with dignity and respect;
- help in setting up staff networks and improve employee training on diversity;
- publicise “zero tolerance” approach to bullying and harassment in the workplace;
- BCBC credibility enhanced by openly recognising diversity;
- Positive messages sent to employees.

4.2.2 Four employee information packs have been developed and published on the council’s intranet site. The packs comprise:

- Pregnancy and maternity including partners and adoptive parents;
- Support for employees who are carers;
- Retirement, and;
- Domestic abuse.

Additionally, edited versions of these packs (for use by the general public) have been published on the council’s public facing website and made available on the screens in the Customer Contact Centre.

4.2.3 Work is underway to meet the four actions in the “Council’s Role as an Employer” objective which are due for completion in 2015. These relate to:

- staff networks;
- equality and diversity learning and development for staff;
- equality and diversity learning and development for managers, and;
- employee policy updates.

4.2.4 Following Council's appointment of the Deputy Leader as Mental Health Champion, work is now underway to raise awareness of mental health issues amongst employees. Statistics show that one in four employees are likely to be affected by anxiety, depression and stress every year. However, research shows that if supported, they will become more loyal, engaged and motivated. Talking about mental health in the workplace helps to tackle discrimination which can have a significant effect on workplaces and employees. The council's Mental Health team is supporting developments by advising on:

- raising awareness of mental health issues amongst employees;
- supporting employees with experience of mental health problems;
- talking to employees who are distressed and;
- making arrangements for 'mental health checks'.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules but is required to effectively implement the council's statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

Whilst no Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out, this report provides the committee with information which will positively assist in the delivery of the authority's equality duties.

7. Financial Implications

None

8. Recommendation

8.1 That the Cabinet Equalities Committee receives and considers this workforce report.

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Date: 1 May 2014

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Background papers: None.