



# **Rhondda Cynon Taf Council**

## **Annual Equality Report**

**1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

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Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

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## **1. Introduction**

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Council's Annual Equality Monitoring Report, which represents the Council's approach to providing information on its work in respect of equality and diversity.

The Council is required, under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, to report annually on how it has met the General Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010, and this document contains the information required in order for the Council to meet these duties.

Publishing the information in one report covering all requirements will make it easier for interested parties to identify how the Council is delivering on its commitment to equality, its legal obligations and the action plans contained within its Strategic Equality Plan (SEP).

Each section of the report looks at the Council's progress and the final section contains details of future work the Council needs to do.

Once again Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to make our County Borough a more equal place for people to live, work and access services, however we recognise that there are, and will continue to be, areas for improvement. Publishing this Annual Report will not only help the Council to meet its obligations under the Wales Specific Equality Duties, but will assist you, as citizens to identify these areas and monitor progress on them.

**Councillor Maureen Webber**  
**Deputy Leader / Cabinet Member for Council Business**

## 2. Who We Are

Rhondda Cynon Taf Council covers a wide geographical area and has a population of over 237,700 (Office of National Statistics (ONS) – Census 2021). The Council is the largest employer in the local area and the third largest local authority in Wales, over 79% of employees live within the Council boundaries.

The Council is committed to the principles of equality and diversity and we work to ensure that this is demonstrated in our service delivery and in our employment practices.

The Council reviewed its Corporate Plan in 2020. The Council's priorities set out in the [Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#) are:

- Ensuring **People**: are independent, healthy and successful;
- Creating **Places**: where people are proud to live, work and play;
- Enabling **Prosperity**: creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper.

The Plan puts residents at the centre of what we do.

A new Corporate Plan is being developed for 2024-2030 and will be launched in April 2024. This plan builds on the strong foundations of our previous plans and at the same time recognises the changes we need to make to meet the unprecedented service and financial challenges ahead.

The Council is governed by 75 elected Members and operates a Cabinet system. It has a Senior Leadership Team headed by the Chief Executive and attended by Senior Directors, and employs over 10,000 employees in a variety of service areas and roles based within the following groups:

- Chief Executives
- Community & Children's Services
- Education & Inclusion Services
- Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services.

## 3. Reporting on Equality

The main purpose of this Annual Report is to fulfil the Council's legal duties and obligations to report on its progress in delivering the General and Specific Equality Duties.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires that all public authorities covered under the specific duties in Wales should produce an Annual Equality Report by 31 March each year. This report covers the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023.

### **What the regulations require:**

The Annual Report for 2022-2023 must set out:

- The steps the authority has taken to identify and collect relevant information;
- How the authority has used this information in meeting the three aims of the general duty;
- Any reasons for not collecting relevant information;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the authority's arrangements for identifying and collecting relevant information;
- Specified employment information, including information on training and pay;
- Progress towards fulfilling each of the authority's equality objectives;
- A statement on the effectiveness of the steps that the authority has taken to fulfil each of its equality objectives.

## **4. The General Equality Duty**

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a general duty on the Council (and other public sector organisations) when making decisions and delivering services to have due regard in how to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained below);
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### **Protected Characteristics**

This is the term used in the Equality Act to identify the types of people who are more likely to experience detrimental treatment and/or discrimination simply because of who they are. The law is designed to protect them, they are:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender Reassignment;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership;
- Pregnancy and Maternity;
- Race;
- Religion or Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual Orientation.

When thinking about how to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, the Council also has to think about the need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic;
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Council also has to particularly think about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding. This report includes information on what the Council has done in order to meet the General Duty.

## **5. How We Meet The General Equality Duty**

To demonstrate how the Council has met the General and Specific Duties relevant information is considered, which may include data from local and/or internal sources such as customer surveys, community forums or Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), as well as data from national and/or external sources such as census information, research reports and statistics on hate crime.

### **IDENTIFICATION AND COLLECTION OF RELEVANT INFORMATION**

When considering how to identify what information should be included in this report, the Council first looked at the information relating to it's SEP. This allowed the

Council to reflect and monitor whether the information is still appropriate in assisting the Council to deliver on the General and Specific Duties.

Full details can be found in the SEP which can be accessed on the Council website at: [Strategic Equality Plan](#)

The information identified is still very relevant to the delivery of the General and Specific Duties; internal documents provide statistical information that can be used for determining action and enable comparison to identify improvements or areas for further improvement. Internal strategies and their action plans provide information on how the Council is delivering its priorities. External information, including that with a national context, provides the Council with a raft of data that can assist in developing appropriate and relevant policies and approaches.

The Council recognises that the SEP is not the only area that can identify relevant information and that whilst it is very useful, service areas would also hold information that could assist the Council in identifying how it is meeting the General and Specific Duties.

Many of our service areas have examples of good practice which help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED). The information is obtained through our internal performance management systems. As part of this performance management process, the Chief Executive reviews how individual service areas are demonstrating their compliance and commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duties. Whilst there are some excellent examples of good practice, some of which are highlighted later in this report in the section 'equality objectives', some areas have more to do. Work will continue to raise awareness and understanding of the PSED with the aim of fully embedding equality matters into all aspects of our service delivery.

In addition to the good practice in our service delivery and workplace, ensuring Diversity in Democracy is commitment from our elected Members, and the Council is working to support their [Diversity Pledge](#).

The Council has an EIA process in place, the results of which contribute to the information contained within this report.

Employment monitoring data is provided from the Council's HR system. The previous system 'Vision' has been replaced by 'iTrent' during this reporting period. There have been some challenges in collecting equality monitoring information due to issues with the transfer of data between the systems. It should be noted that employment monitoring information includes teachers and all school-based employees.

## **THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE**

The Council's main strategic plan is the [Corporate Plan](#). This Plan was implemented in March 2020 and sets out the Council's priorities for the 4 years between 2020-2024. The detailed actions to deliver these priorities are monitored and scrutinised by Councillors every quarter as part of the [Council's Performance Reports](#) to Cabinet. At the end of the year, the plans are also subject to more in depth challenge, review and evaluation, the results of which are then included in the Council's annual [Corporate Performance Report](#).

## **NON COLLECTION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INFORMATION**

Whilst considerable relevant information has been collected for this report, it is acknowledged that it is sometimes difficult to collect and monitor all information in a Council as large as Rhondda Cynon Taf. A number of cross-Council networks already exist, such as the Disability Officers Group, to ensure that information and good practice are monitored and shared, however it is recognised that improvements can always be made to encourage a consistent approach in information sharing.

### **Use of Information**

When considering what information should be used it was important that areas of good practice were identified across service areas to demonstrate that a commitment to delivering equality exists throughout the Council. Information used in this report includes:

- The Council's Corporate Plan (2020-2024)
- Service delivery/projects (2022-2023)
- Employment practices
- Consultation and engagement programme
- EIAs (2023)
- Employment monitoring information (2022-2023)
- Monitoring and delivery of the SEP action plan (2022-2023).

## **DELIVERY OF COUNCIL STRATEGIES**

The Council consults and engages with its residents to collect information that is used to plan and prioritise, identify areas for improvement and service change, set and monitor performance standards and measure satisfaction on the quality of the services we provide.



The Council continues to develop and increase engagement through our Let's Talk RCT engagement website [Let's Talk RCTCBC](#). The site has a suite of engagement tools that has enhanced our offer and made our engagements more user friendly

During 2023 just under 12,500 visits were made to Let's Talk RCT pages, with a further 800 made to Dewch i Siarad pages. This led to over 2,600 points of active engagement across multiple projects, the most active of which included Let's Talk Eisteddfod 2024, our annual budget consultation, Let's Talk Waste & Recycling and Let's Talk Local Development Plan.

Examples of the Let's Talk projects we have supported and led on include;

Let's Talk Equalities

Let's Talk Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

Let's Talk Budget 2024-2025 (Phase 1)

Continuing to Talk About What Matters to You

Let's Talk Eisteddfod 2024

Let's Talk Aberdare

Let's Talk About What Matters to You

Let's Talk Southern Gateway

Let's Talk Children's and Young Adult Library Service

Let's Talk Leader's Debate

Let's Talk Taff Trail Trallwn

Let's Talk Budget 2023-2024 (Phase 2)

Let's Talk Climate Change.

During 2023, we supported or managed a large number of services with their consultation and engagement activities and supported a number of face-to-face engagement events.

It is difficult to measure exact levels of feedback from all consultations, due to the different methods used, reporting timescales and the fact that some services are still undertaking consultations themselves. We have though attempted to provide some response levels in the table below.

During 2023 we have supported over 65 service consultations as shown in the table below, with over 10,000 responses received and analysed.

This is in addition to the over 2,500 engaged people via the Let's Talk site.

Note: these figures do not include those we engaged with via our face-to-face methods.

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Number of Consultations</b>	<b>Snap Surveys</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Chief Executive	16	9	2975
Community and Children's Services	28	28	1455
Education and Inclusion Services	6	6	3183
Frontline Services	5	6	2092
Public Health Protection & Community Services	12	12	504
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>10209</b>

Note: higher than normal due to Waste survey

Examples of some of the consultations that we have supported and led on include;

- Dog Fouling
- Flood Alleviation Schemes & Flood Risk Management Strategy
- Learning Disabilities Day Services
- Heritage
- Supported Living Service
- Participation Strategy
- Budget Consultation
- Service Changes
- Corporate Plan
- Strategic Equalities Plan.

Examples of how residents and communities have been involved in the Council's work in 2023 include:

- Engaging with Schools and young people via Instagram and in school settings
- Continued engagement and involvement with residents and communities in service changes that impact them, so that their voices are heard in Council decisions.
- Continued engagement with the Older People's Advisory Group about issues that could support their ability to get out and about. We have a joint SLA agreement with Age Connects Morgannwg and Older Peoples' Advisory Group to support and engage with older people in RCT;
- We provided a freepost and telephone option for those who cannot engage digitally, in addition to our face-to-face approach;
- We linked in with other services whilst undertaking our face-to-face events, from joining up consultations, to providing waste bags and advice and information;

- We have continued to use digital and social media engagement as one of our methods to obtain resident views and promote consultations;
- Continued to make our consultations more accessible to residents by increasing the use and availability of easy to read materials.

All consultations that we undertake we attempt to engage with the widest range of people that we can. We aim to capture the views of all groups that live within the borough and aim to represent all their opinions and concerns. We continue to provide Easy Read versions of all service change consultations and collect demographic equality information for services to use to inform their decisions making and the Impact Assessment Process.

We continue to monitor questions we include in surveys, relating to Equalities and Welsh Language. The data collected is used to inform the Council's decision-making process, an Equality Impact Assessment and a Welsh Language Impact Assessment must be prepared in order to consider the possible relevant impacts from any proposals.

Work has continued throughout 2023 to provide support to officers preparing Equalities & Socio-economic and Welsh Language Impact Assessments for strategy and policy developments. Support has ranged from provision of simple data outputs (largely based upon data from Census 2021 and the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD)) to in-depth research (into, for example, housing conditions and tenure patterns and cross reference to income deprivation and material deprivation indicators) and analysis of qualitative and third-party reporting on different factors.

## **6. Equality Objectives**

In 2019 we launched our Strategic Equality Plan (2019-2022). To aid the development of appropriate and relevant equality objectives the Equality and Human Rights Commission report 'How Fair is Wales 2018' was the main reference source. Equality objectives were aligned to well-being goals contained in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, specifically a 'More Equal Wales' and a 'Wales of Cohesive Communities'.

A comprehensive engagement process was undertaken with the public and targeted engagement was undertaken with community groups that reflect the 'protected characteristics' contained within the Equality Act 2010.

From this engagement and consultation with a number of Council service areas the following equality objectives were identified and published in the [Strategic Equality Plan 2019-2022](#). The equality objectives are:

- Objective 1 To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive;
- Objective 2 To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities;
- Objective 3 To promote safe communities;
- Objective 4 To reduce the gender pay gap;
- Objective 5 To create an inclusive workforce.

An action plan has been developed outlining specific actions in relation to each equality objective. These actions will be monitored through service area delivery plans.

Outlined below, we show our progress towards the equality objectives. It should be noted that not all actions were due to commence in the financial year 2019-2020 and these will be progressed in following years.

### **Objective 1 – To better understand the needs of our communities and understand the barriers they face to thrive**

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

#### **Action 1 - Identify community groups that represent the full diversity of the citizens of Rhondda Cynon Taf and develop accessible communication channels with them.**

The Council has many well established links with community groups across RCT, for example, Youth Forums, Older People's Advisory Groups and the Disability Forum. The focus of this action is to engage with under-represented minority groups and individuals that have not had regular communication routes with the Council.

#### **Community Cohesion Group**

The Community Cohesion Group has a new, wide range of partners invited to attend from varied agencies and backgrounds across Cwm Taf. This has allowed for the sharing of information and allowed us to open up communications in newly identified minority groups. The Co-ordinator of [Valleys Ethnic Minorities Support](#) (VEMS) is now the group Chair and is able to pass on key information about support and events available in RCT to the individuals she comes in to contact with as part of VEMS. New members of the group such as the [Reaching Wider](#) Officer based at the University of South Wales have assisted with the identification of large numbers of Nigerian students who were seeking support from the foodbanks and the local authority in general.

## **Disability Forum**

We held our first face-to-face Disability Forum meeting since the Covid-19 pandemic in November 2022. Following an engagement exercise with members, we now plan to hold Disability Forum meetings regionally across the county borough to make meetings more accessible by public transport and increase the effectiveness of meetings. We plan to hold our first regional meeting in the Cynon area in June 2023.

Facilitating the Disability Forum is very important as it provides a positive space where members are able to raise any issues or experiences with accessing Council services, and Council officers can feedback directly any action taken and improvements to services as a result. In addition, the Forum provides a social element to members which allows them to feel part of a community, and less isolated.

## **General Engagement**

The relaxing of all restrictions post Covid-19 meant that general engagement within the community could recommence. Town centre engagement projects throughout Hate Crime Awareness Week and during other key times of the year in areas such as local libraries, colleges and schools has opened up communication channels with all members of the community. Joint engagement sessions with officers from South Wales Police have taken place on a more regular basis.

## **LGBT+ History Timeline**

In conjunction with Welsh Government, we created an LGBTQ+ History Timeline for RCT. This timeline celebrates RCT from the LGBTQ+ perspective, highlighting people and events that show that LGBTQ+ people have always played an important part in our county's history. The timeline allows all citizens of RCT to contribute to the project, to reflect the ongoing experiences of LGBTQ+ people, in RCT. We received great feedback from attendees at the launch event at Rhondda Heritage Park.

## **Project Unity**

We were very pleased to support [Project Unity](#) (support group/project for those who identify as LGBTQ+) in relaunching in RCT following the pandemic as it offers much needed support and a voice for those who identify as LGBTQ+. Together with the Cohesion team, Project Unity has been able to relaunch and organise several events. These include a memorial event at Aberdare Museum to recognise transgender people who died as a result of discrimination and a transgender awareness event at St Elvan's Church along with regular meetings with the

Cohesion team. At the end of 2022-2023, plans were being made for a large Project Unity Summer event to support Pride month.

### **Safeguarding Week**

We assisted South Wales Police in Operation BETSY across Cwm Taf, which was in line with Keep Safe Cymru. The aim of the operation was to identify people who may be vulnerable (some due to memory loss), who may not be known to services and so may not be receiving adequate care and support. This involved visiting town centres to engage with the public in trying to gather intelligence in relation to the above.

We were able to gather details from a substantial amount of people. We can now arrange for them to be visited by local PCSO's as well as being given information in relation to crime prevention.

### **Town Centre Engagement**

Community Cohesion Officers and South Wales Police Officer's engaged with the general public in town centres throughout National Hate Crime Awareness Week. Officer's encouraged conversation with the public and information packs were put together and distributed to provide education and information on Hate Crime, reporting routes and support services available.

### **Valleys Ethnic Minorities Support**

We continue to work closely with [Valleys Ethnic Minorities Support](#) (VEMS) whose members come from many different countries and have a wide ethnic diversity. The group works to overcome barriers to accessing local services, provide training and employment. VEMS meets weekly and these meetings are regularly attended by both the Cohesion team and the Cohesion officers from South Wales Police. Additionally, the co-ordinator of VEMS now chairs the Community Cohesion Group so is able to give regular updates and liaises with a range of partners when it comes to identifying community members from different cultures and countries.

### **Veterans and Armed Forces Community**

#### **Supporting the Armed Forces Community**

In 2023, the Council's Armed Forces liaison officer had a key presence at veteran socialising and support groups throughout the county borough, ensuring members of the Armed Forces community received the advice and support required.

The Council are proud to have facilitated the establishment of new veteran support groups such as Woody's Lodge and Fighting for Pride, expanding our support

network. Additionally, in partnership with The Lighthouse Project in Tonyrefail, we offer a free lunch to veterans and their partners on the last Thursday of every month. Overall, we provide weekly support to 7 Armed Forces community groups spread across Rhondda Cynon Taf.

We worked with Maerdy GP Surgery to establish a monthly socialising and support group for veteran patients. The group has been a great success and raised awareness among patients about the Armed Forces Covenant and the support/priorities available to them if required. The GP surgery has gone on to achieve its GP-friendly certificate, keeps a record of all its veterans, and writes out to them each month with an update on Armed Forces events and groups taking place in the local area. The surgery has introduced a dedicated veteran webpage: <https://www.ferndalemaerdymedical.co.uk/patients/veterans/> which highlights the importance of informing GP staff of veteran status.

### **Commemoration and Celebration - Month of the Military Child**

We held an event to celebrate 'Month of the Military Child' for service children and their families who live in Rhondda Cynon Taf. This family fun event was held to celebrate our service children and their unique experiences. Working with Forces Fitness, the Council provided free family fun fitness sessions that were conducted at Ynysangharad War Memorial Park, Pontypridd, where 75 children attended. The sessions offered fun and engaging activities that allowed service children the opportunity to celebrate and to meet with other service children.

### **Fighting with Pride**

We have connected with [Fighting with Pride](#), a charity that supports LGBTQIA+ veterans and serving LGBTQIA+ personnel. This has led to the Council adopting the Pride in Veterans standard, recognising the specific needs that LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families face.

### **Served and Proud**

In 2023, the Council launched 'Served and Proud', this project is aimed at supporting LGBTQ+ veterans through a 2 weekly face to face group. We were pleased to welcome Hannah Blythyn MS, the Lead on Armed Forces and Veterans Policy in Wales, at the launch event. The project has gained momentum since its inception, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of supporting our veterans. We continue to actively promote the group, with a particular focus on reaching members affected by the historical 'gay ban'. Members of the group contributed valuable insights to the recent LGBT Veterans Independent Review, enhancing our understanding of their experiences and challenges.

**Action 2 - Identify the number of refugees living in Rhondda Cynon Taf that are not already included in settlement programmes.**

No refugees (excluding those who are part of the resettlement program) became known to the Cohesion team in 2022/2023.

**Action 3 - Undertake an employment needs assessment which will inform specific action points relating to young people, disability and ethnicity.**

The Communities for Work plus (CfW+) programme is a WG funded programme that can support short-term unemployed, long-term unemployed and economically inactive residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf. Individuals with protected characteristics remain the priority target audience of the programme and engagement activity is designed to target under-represented groups, for example, working with the DWP. Disability Employment Advisers (DEA's), the Community Engagement Steering Group, Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) and Over 50s Forums to expand reach and target provision.

The SPF People and Skills Programme is a UK Government funded programme, supporting those furthest from the labour market to engage in community-based activity and those who are employed but experiencing in-work poverty and/or under-employment factors.

Early in 2023, the 2 programmes aligned under the Employability Umbrella of 'RCTCBC Work and Skills', one holistic and inclusive programme using the differing funding streams to ensure all residents of RCT can access employment related support. This holistic programme replaced the previous ESF funded programme, whereby not all residents were eligible for support due to economic status or postcode restrictions placed on the Council by the funder.

Of 1500 participants supported within the 3-year period:

- 550 were aged 16-24 years (33%)
- 3 participants identified as transgender (<1%)
- 151 represented Black or Ethnic Minority groups (10%)
- 539 participants disclosed low or no skills (36%)
- 107 individuals stated migrant status (7%)
- 330 disclosed one or more Work Limiting Health conditions (22%)
- 73 participants were registered as disabled (5%)
- 126 were lone parents (8%).

The Employment Needs Assessment is conducted on an individualised basis. All participants completed a needs assessment prior to enrolling to ensure the most appropriate support/provision could be allocated. This needs assessment would then



be reviewed on a 12-weekly basis and as such, action plans amended or where required, signposting to more appropriate support.

Support is also tailored according to an individual's needs and whilst the expectation is a minimum of fortnightly contact, the pace is determined by the participant and isn't time restricted, for example, a participant may be referred due to social isolation, they can be supported to attend community-based groups and to build confidence prior to 'the employability conversation'. The participant is supported to upskill, gain work experience, and apply for work as applicable and as deemed appropriate by them.

The priority cohorts of participants supported within RCT were largely in line with other Welsh Local Authorities:

<b>Priority Cohort</b>	<b>RCTCBC</b>	<b>Across Wales</b>
16-24	33%	34%
Transgender	<1%	1%
Black or Ethnic Minority	10%	18%
Migrant Status	7%	14%
Work Limiting Health Conditions	22%	20%
Disabled People	5%	9%
Lone Parents	8%	8%

*\*Across Wales statistics provided by WG October 2023*

The number of people supported and the way in which support was offered was impacted significantly due to the pandemic. Unfortunately support ceased entirely early in the pandemic as staff were redeployed to offer support to those who were shielding. When employment support resumed, it was often conducted virtually. The inability to access public venues, particularly Job Centre Plus Offices was a barrier to providing to support at this time.

## **Case Study**

A 46-year-old lady engaged with RCT Work & Skills who had learning difficulties and autism.

### **Background / What is ...?**

LM engaged with RCT Work and Skills after being unemployed all her life due to her disability. She needed an employer to give her a chance after searching for sustainable employment most of her life.

LM lives with her mother in a jobless household in receipt of benefits.

LM was eager to find employment to keep her mind occupied on a daily basis & help her get into a routine.

### **The engagement...**

LM is a re-referral to RCT Work and Skills and previously disengaged due to lack of commitment. During initial engagement, LM was more motivated this time around and was ready to do something for herself. LM eager to start volunteering to gain experience and enhance her CV to find sustainable employment.

We spoke about a confidence course online, but LM informed me she had done these types of courses in the past and they did not work for her. LM felt when she would start volunteering her confidence would improve over time and would help her get into a routine.

We met with a RCT work placement officer in a joint meeting, LM explained she would like to become a cleaner or work in a local café. The RCT work placement officer explained how the volunteering works and gave LM a few options of what was available in Mountain Ash. The one placement that suited LM was in Perthcelyn Community Centre serving refreshments to Mother and Toddler groups that are held at the community centre. LM was also responsible for cleaning the building and locking up the building with another member of staff.

She was volunteering at the Community Centre for 2 days a week for 8 weeks, LM's confidence grew dramatically, and she also completed a Food & Hygiene course whilst at her placement. LM was also attending British Sign Language course at the Community Centre. She was engaging with staff and members of the public weekly.

After supporting LM for a few months, she was then ready to start applying for a part time job as she now had the skills and drive to start moving her life forward. After searching for work with LM an opportunity was emailed through from the RCT Employment Liaison Officer.

The job vacancy was for a cleaning position, 6 hours week in Perthcelyn Office, this position was perfect for LM to start off with. The job vacancy was a Council position, I felt, as a mentor, that this job was perfect for LM with the right guidance and support. I contacted the cleaning manager to explain LM's learning disability and to ask if they would give her a chance. I accompanied LM to an interview and they offered her the job with the view to increasing her hours in the future.

On LM's first week she had training from the Council and was showed what her duties were and what was expected of her.

I have now signed LM off the project as she does not want to increase her hours and feels 6 hours a week is enough for her at the moment. As Perthcelyn is my office base, I keep in regular contact to support LM in any way I can.

### **Good Practice Shared / Lessons Learned**

- Partnership working
- The individual improved in confidence and self-esteem as a result of mentoring.

### **Outcomes**

- Job outcome
- Training outcome

### **Action 4 - A community profile to be undertaken for all library areas to better understand the needs of customers.**

The library service has identified the main catchment areas for each library and then undertaken a profile of each area by using the Community Insights programme which focusses on the following areas:

- population in the wards that fall into the library's catchment area;
- information on children in poverty, people out of work, people in deprived areas, disability, pensioners and other vulnerable groups;
- information on housing characteristics: dwelling types, housing tenure, affordability, overcrowding, age of dwelling and communal establishments;
- information on recorded crime and crime rates;
- information on limited long-term illness, life expectancy and mortality, and general health;
- more information on qualifications, pupil attainment and absences;
- information on people's jobs, job opportunities, income and local businesses;
- information on transport, distance to services and digital services;
- information on physical environment, air quality and neighbourhood classifications.

Analysis of this data creates a good understanding of the differences between the communities each library serves. Use is also made of geographic information available about the level of Welsh speakers in various parts of the borough.

The service also profiles visitor numbers, book issues, downloads, attendance, type and number of events at each library as part of their performance meetings with branches and of course listens to feedback from staff and customers.

All of the above help the service to target help to areas in need and to provide services, outreach and information in those areas. The impact of these interventions can make a real difference to the lives of those accessing the service, examples include:

1. Working with the town BID at Aberdare and Treorchy to provide events that showcase and promote both local businesses and Welsh produce, events have included,

Christmas parade at Aberdare and Treorchy. At Treorchy the event was held on the first Saturday of December, the library would on average see 250 – 300 visitors, on this day 1555 visited.

Comments include:

*“Just wonderful!”*

*“The best Santa we have ever seen!”*

2. Places to connect – to help combat loneliness and isolation brought about by closure of other community venues and the cost-of-living crisis. As part of the Places to Connect programme the service organised several ‘Coffee and Craft’ days across libraries. Community members were invited to spend as much time as they liked at libraries, chatting, having tea and coffee and taking part in crafts such as wreath making, card making or playing board games. Comments after the events included:

*“This was a fab session, there was a good community spirit, I can’t wait for the next one.”*

*“I only intended to stay for an hour but ended up staying all day, it was great to sit and chat to people, I hadn’t seen NAME for years!”*

*“This library is excellent! It’s really given me a lift to be here today.”*

3. As a result of feedback from two Ukrainian settlers who attended the above, a staff member, who first came to the UK over a decade ago and who at the time spoke no English, asked to set up a ‘Chat Club’. The club which aims to encourage community members whose first language is not English to meet up, have a coffee and chat to improve their English language skills meets

fortnightly. Membership has grown steadily and currently has members from the Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Italy and Iran.

4. At one Places to Connect event, a participant mentioned it would be nice to have a puzzle table in the library as people could then spend longer periods of time in the building without feeling self-conscious. As a result of this, and through kind donations from staff, jigsaw tables have been set up in several libraries. A user at Aberdare library has said:

*“We drop in a few times a week, my husband and I spend an hour or two picking books and doing the puzzle, our son and granddaughter have joined us too!”*

Library borrowers have also started to donate puzzles they have already completed and libraries regularly swap and circulate jigsaws to provide variety.

5. The ‘Winter of Wellbeing Scheme’ allowed the e-teens library at Treorchy to set up several craft sessions, the aim of which was to encourage skills such as crochet and knitting and to help the participants to open up, talk and share stories to maintain good mental health and wellbeing, participants commented:

*“I’ve been practicing at home and on the bus. I’ve been making so many things and I’m definitely improving.”*

*“I’ve enjoyed learning crochet and I’d love to do similar things in the future.”*

6. In partnership with the Park and Dare Theatre, Treorchy library hosted a ‘Fun Palace’ event. Both venues were given over to the local community who then hosted events and workshops to show the hobbies and crafts available in the local community. The day promoted these groups as a way of increasing people’s knowledge, health and wellbeing. Events included:

- Clay modelling and sculpture
- Easter Crafts
- Crystal Art
- Book Craft
- Gonk making
- Face painting
- Pastel painting
- Guitar workshop
- Embroidery and sewing

- Planting and potting
- Silent disco

Participants said:

*“Lovely event, well worth attending.”*

*“Brilliant activity, wonderful staff.”*

*“We really enjoyed trying the guitar, gardening and embroidery and took away things to continue at home. Also found out about local events e.g. gardening class. My daughter loved painting.”*

7. Following a recent refurbishment, Treorchy library repurposed the old entrance and reception area into a gallery that is made available to local groups and artists.

Once such person, a 21 year old photographer and digital artist has autism. He has had difficulty communicating for his whole life and found people around him haven't understood the world he lives in and the impact of his autism on him. As a way of trying to get his grandparents and wider family to understand him better, he set about creating visual representations of his internal experience of autism.

He had such a great response from family and friends that he approached the library service to share his work. He was invited to show his collection *Passing by...* at both the gallery at Treorchy and Pontypridd library.

Both exhibitions were highly successful and since then his work has been featured on ITV's Backstage Programme as well as exhibiting in London, Paris, Amsterdam and New York. The artist has recently been awarded a grant from Arts Council Wales as part of the Creative Steps fund which has helped him to further develop his own art practise as well as supporting his mission to help people to understand some of the challenges faced every day.

The gallery at the library is so popular it is booked several months in advance.

8. In recent years RCT libraries has seen a significant increase in people coming to the library for 'non-traditional' reasons. Increasingly, members of the public identify the library as a safe space where they can obtain help, support and advice.

RCT Council has set up Community Resilience Hubs within four libraries and employ a Neighbourhood Network Team who work with the library, other

Council and public sector services, private/voluntary organisations and Community Groups. An example of help given includes:

A person arrived at Aberdare library seeking help. He had previously used the One4all one stop shop within the building and knew it was a place he could come to for advice.

He informed the library staff that he was out of work, hadn't eaten in several days and had no money for food, gas or electricity and wanted help with accessing a local Foodbank.

The library staff knew that the neighbourhood network team work closely with local foodbanks and have emergency food parcels for vulnerable people. The branch librarian made the person comfortable in the library and then spoke to their line manager who contacted the local Community Co-ordinator with their details. Luckily the person had a mobile telephone and although he did not have any credit to make calls, he could receive them.

The Community Co-ordinator was able to contact them within a few minutes and was able to provide them with an emergency food parcel. They were also able to discuss with them further help and support that would be needed.

The Branch Librarian said:

*"Sadly, we are getting more people coming into the library who are really struggling and need our help. It's really good to know that people trust us and will come in. It's also really important to know we can provide the help they require and to know we have colleagues in the Neighbourhood Network Team who we can ring to get immediate support for anyone in need".*

The library service also, as part of the Welsh Library Standards, carries out an adult and separate children's customer satisfaction survey every three years. Information from this survey is used to plan library strategy and to shape services. For example, a need for community space identified in both Ferndale and Hirwaun eventually led to the service to creating a meeting room at Hirwaun library and to include separate meeting and IT rooms in Ferndale library.

As well as all of the above activities, the service uses the information in the 'Community Insight' report to target partnership working with organisations such as, South Wales Police, Transport for Wales, Adult Education and wider government to provide information, drop-in sessions and classes.

**Action 5 - Undertake research as part of the local housing market needs assessment into the demand for housing needs for disabled people.**

The Council applies the data set out in the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) when determining the mix of new schemes/properties that are being built with the use of social housing grant (SHG). The Service continues to apply this method in order to tackle the demand for housing among disabled people. A new LHMA has recently been completed and is in draft form which will shortly undergo quality assurance and internal scrutiny process and will be submitted to Welsh Government by the end of March 2024.

**Action 6 - Undertake a review of the Homestep Scheme to ensure equality monitoring questions are appropriate to identify specific needs with an emphasis on the identification of housing needs for young disabled people.**

The Homestep mailing list sign up process has been re-designed and now has a far easier completion process for potential applicants. This mailing list will be used to inform the next LHMA in 2025.

The Housing Strategy and Investment Service is continuing to work with the Council's Digital Improvement Office to review all mailing lists and application forms to bring these online and these are being worked through in order of priority. When the Homestep mailing list is reviewed with the Digital Improvement Office and an application form considered it will include equality monitoring questions to identify specific needs, including those of young disabled people.

**Action 7 - Improve and develop the collection and recording of customer equality monitoring information across Council service areas.**

In August 2022 the Council launched its internal Equality Monitoring toolkit and standard monitoring form for all staff and service areas to use when conducting monitoring. The purpose of the form and toolkit is to ensure that monitoring practice across the Council is cohesive, and data collected from each service area is robust. As part of the monitoring toolkit and form launch, we held 2 'Lunch and Learn' awareness sessions for managers and staff responsible for monitoring to understand the importance and benefits of equality monitoring, and how to use the new resources.

By standardising our monitoring form and questions asked in equality monitoring across the Council, the data collected as part of monitoring exercises will now be cohesive and easily comparable to a range of external data markers, including the Census. This means that we will be able to tell more easily if our services are accessible and reflect the diversity of our communities. This robust data should also lead to more relevant and local data being used in Equality Impact Assessments,



meaning that we can demonstrate who will be affected by our proposals more accurately.

A standardised monitoring form and questions also means that our monitoring is more inclusive, and as a result more people should feel represented when completing monitoring forms.

**Action 8 - To evaluate the experience of disabled people who are on the Homefinder register to understand any barriers to accessing adapted accommodation and to identify improvements to the process as a result.**

The RCT Allocation Scheme is currently being reviewed and adapted, housing is one of the main areas within this review. We have commissioned consultants to independently review the way that accessible/adapted housing is applied for and allocated. To assist in this process individuals registered with Homefinder were contacted and given the opportunity to comment on the process. Whilst most did not take up the opportunity, valuable feedback was received from 2 current applicants as well as the Community Occupational Therapist Teams who support disabled applicants in their search for suitable housing. We also evaluated the number of applicants seeking adapted/accessible properties and continue to monitor on a quarterly basis the number of allocations to households needing adapted/accessible homes.

**Action 9 - Improve and develop monitoring of customer complaints.**

We have implemented a new Customer Record Management System backed by Power BI which better enables us to understand the needs of customers and communities where there are equality considerations.

In Social Care a similar approach is being used to identify the diversity within our communities to ensure that services are focused and targeted where they are most needed through the Annual Social Services Survey. This is in the early stages and will continue to be developed, with outcomes shared with partners in the third sector to inform their delivery plans.

**Action 10 - Improve local access to information advice and assistance provision for children, young people and families to promote their participation and engagement.**

The **Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS)** has continued to utilise a range of methods to deliver youth work services in 2022-2023, including the provision of information advice and assistance to young people to promote their participation and engagement. The table below shows the Youth Engagement and Participation Service's 'reach' (number of individual young people engaged in open

access activities organised by, and receiving one to one support from, the service) and the number of contacts the service made with anonymous young people during street-based youth work sessions delivered during the year:

<b>Annual reach 2022-23</b>			
<b>11-13yrs</b>			4177
<b>14-16yrs</b>			3860
<b>17-19yrs</b>			999
<b>20-25yrs</b>			191
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>9277</b>
<b>Number of anonymous contacts 2022-23</b>			
			2042
<b>Reach by age 2022-23</b>			
	<b>% population</b>	<b>Welsh average</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>11-16yrs</b>	47%	n/a	n/a
<b>11-19yrs</b>	36%	24%	<b>+12%</b>

In 2022-2023 the Service engaged with 36% of young people aged 11-19yrs, performing 12% above the National Welsh Average.

The Council has continued to invest in mobile youth vehicles utilising core and grant funding to act as hubs in localities where access to a suitable permanent venue is not available. The vehicles are used as mobile youth clubs; as the base for community activities like fun days and street-based youth work; as well as a hub for use at times when an immediate response is required within a community, such as following a serious incident that requires enhanced youth work support. The mobile youth vans continue to prove an invaluable resource, thus a fourth vehicle was purchased in line with the priorities of the Cabinet. The ongoing expansion of the community street-based youth work supported by the YEPS vehicles will remain a priority in line with available funding opportunities. The availability of the vans as a resource has allowed the service to carry out an additional 107 sessions of activities, increasing the number of contacts by 1,719 in 2022-2023.

YEPS uses numerous ways to communicate with young people, parents/carers and community members such as emails, text messaging, posters, leaflets, social media platforms and an app which was launched in 2022. YEPS also has a Youth Officer solely responsible for developing digitalisation and promotion, supported by at least one Social Media Champion in each cluster. Young people have been at the heart of the development of the app, which has transformed user engagement and improved service delivery; as well as promoting the service and its activities and support on offer, the app enables parents and guardians to complete consent forms for off-site

activities. The numbers of followers for each of the social media platforms is steadily increasing year on year as the service continues to promote events, activities and use live streams to engage followers.

<b>2022-23</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Youtube</b>
<b>Number of followers</b>	4, 266 (+814)	2, 917 (+206)	1, 761 (+97)	382 (+12)
<b>Page reach/visits</b>	84, 023	22, 971	36, 046	6, 000 (-4,336)

The YEPS website, was rebranded as YEPS.wales in 2022 aligning with the new app and continues to provide access information, advice and guidance for young people around a number of themes such as money management, travel etc. The website usage data is monitored monthly with 39,700 users accessing the website in 2022-2023 totalling 66,500 views. The Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) section of the website is also growing in prominence as it's continuously updated to ensure young people have easy, 24-hour online access to IAG on several key issues.

The **Family Information Service** plays a key role in disseminating information to service users and families. The Family Information Service (FIS) Facebook page currently has 3,500 followers, proving an effective means to communicate with parents, families and members of the public about information, services and activities available to them. The creation of an Instagram social media page for FIS to appeal to the younger RCT residents has been approved and is with the Council's Communication Team to build.

The **RCT Families Website** is a public facing one stop shop for information related to children, young people and families. It provides an important single point of access for information, advice and signposting for children, young people, parents, community members and practitioners to the range of support on offer, providing the means for members of the public to meet their own information advice and assistance needs. The website [www.rctfamilies.co.uk](http://www.rctfamilies.co.uk) has received 14,483 views in 2022-2023 with 2,400 unique visitors with the 'looking for information' within the Parents/Carer section being the most popular. A series of internal staff demonstrations of the RCT Families website have been delivered to promote it's use amongst professionals and their service users. QR codes have also been generated for service user accessibility that front-facing staff can use in the community.

Work is underway to review the usage of the three **Children and Family Centres** and consider opportunities to increase the use of the buildings and engagement with the wider community linking in with neighbourhood network developments. We continue to work with community and third sector organisations through the Community Support Steering Group. We are also planning to undertake informal

sessions with parents to try and establish parent forums, making sure that any developments meet the needs of the families and the wider communities. As part of the RCT Families website and social media opportunities, the promotion and profile of the Centres is being raised, showing the resources available and signposting to sources of advice and support in community settings.

The first **Your Voice Survey** since the pandemic was delivered this year by YEPS and saw the views of almost 5,000 young people in schools, colleges, youth clubs and other community settings across the county borough, representing the diversity of young people living, being educated or working in RCT. Young people were given the opportunity to complete a series of interactive questions on a range of thematic areas, including health and wellbeing, learning and education, leisure and culture and community safety. The findings have been reported to the Senior Management Teams in Public Health and Protection, Education and Children’s Services as well as Senior Leadership and will be used to inform priorities for the Service and its partners to meet the needs of young people aged 11-25.

YEPS continues to support young people’s participation through **Youth Forum** work. In 2022-2023 YEPS hosted 97 Youth Forum sessions, attended by 204 young people. YEPS’ thematic forums have become well embedded throughout 2022-23; the voice of the young people has influenced several successful service developments which have addressed the needs of 11-25 year olds, as outlined in the table below. However, in an effort to recruit larger numbers of participants and actioning the voice of the young people in the forums, from April 2023, the service amended the organisation of the forums as travel was proving an obstacle to participation for many, with forums returning to localities across Rhondda, Cynon and Taf; each locality has selected a specific focus area, thus the thematic element has been retained.

<b>Thematic forum</b>	<b>Positive outcomes achieved</b>
Equality & Diversity / Cynon Forum	White ribbon event LGBTQ+ weekly meetings Supporting the Festival of Unity Live and Let Pride Art Exhibition
Community Safety / Taf Forum	Anti-Racism Black Asian and Minority Ethnic event Around the World Operation Bang Work with Crime Stoppers and Police Crime Commissioner to ensure young people know how to report crime
Mental Health & Wellbeing / Rhondda Forum	Mental Health animation which has been nominated for a national Youth Excellence award
Environment & Sustainability	Capel Swap Shop Currently organising an event ‘YEPS wears Prada’ (an environmentally friendly fashion show)

	Currently organising a tree planting activity to enhance young peoples' understanding the importance of looking after our local wildlife
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The RCT's **County Youth Forum (CYF)** is the main group for ensuring that the voice of as many young people in RCT can be collated and shared with relevant partners and decision makers. Numbers throughout 2022-2023 remained low and engagement from schools was sporadic; following consultation with young people, the CYF meetings were moved from afterschool sessions when it transpired transport was often an issue, to during half term holidays. This amendment has proven successful with 21 young people now attending, representing 8 schools. However, there is still work required to engage other schools to ensure all young people across RCT are given the opportunity to have their voices heard.

YEPS has developed its **Young Editors Programme** as an additional means to actively promote the work of young people, led by young people. This has steadily become more popular throughout 2022-23, with 8 young people (an increase of 5 from last year) now active members and becoming 'Content Creators'. These young people have produced a short video on young people's rights as part of World Mental Health Day, with further plans to produce content related to various issues affecting young people, including the promotion of YEPS' provision. They have also held interviews with authors for book launches, elected members and young people at the RCT Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic event and visited various youth clubs.

**OBJECTIVE 2 – To reduce inequalities that exist within our communities**

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below:

**Action 1 - A comprehensive review of the recruitment and selection process to increase the diversity of applicants.**

We have created a [careers/jobs microsite](#) to develop our employer brand and attract more applicants to apply for our jobs. Our job description template was also redesigned to complement the website. We appointed a Graduate Officer in Recruitment, Social Media and Marketing who joined us in May 2022. This post developed recruitment marketing by utilising social media and more traditional methods of advertising such as posters, print, roundabout and billboard advertising. Enhanced recruitment campaigns were delivered, and specialist advice was available to managers to advertise posts, attract applicants, increase the use of social media platforms and targeted advertising, including paid Facebook advertising.

In some high priority campaigns, to encourage more applicants, we offered support to complete applications for high priority posts at jobs fairs and focus on training and support available to encourage more people to apply for jobs.

We undertook a recruitment survey with our managers. 82% of recruiting managers were highly satisfied with their recruitment marketing support and 18% satisfied; with the majority of managers recruiting for hard to fill posts (some with multiple vacancies did not fill them all but believed they filled more posts than they would have without the intervention). Managers also reported that they were getting a higher number of applications and better quality in terms of suitability and understanding the role.

LinkedIn has been developed with engagement work and a pilot 12 month subscription package to advertise Council vacancies. The pilot has received positive feedback from managers, in particular regarding recruitment for specialist and technical posts. Some feedback from recruiting managers is listed below:

- “We did get a higher number of more experienced applicants than previously..”
- “Following the adverts you arranged for me earlier this year, we were successful in appointing a senior engineer, so thank you for your input which really helped.”
- “Very helpful supporting my needs to advertise a crucial vacant post that had been difficult to gain interest in.”

Enhanced engagement work in terms of LinkedIn content has also been undertaken to raise our profile as an employer.

An education/schools recruitment microsite is also close to being launched, content written and test pages have been produced, other complimentary content such as video currently in final stages of production.

**Action 2 - Develop and implement an action plan based on the employment needs assessment specifically in relation to young people, disability and ethnicity.**

The CfW+ programme’s Facebook and web pages were redeveloped within the period, with the aim of expanding reach and increasing self-referrals onto the programme.

The Work and Skills teams work closely with DWP, Careers Wales and other Council services to not only generate referrals but to ensure a targeted approach of RCT residents with protected characteristics. Regular meetings with DWP highlight any shortfalls of referrals within specific Job Centre Plus Offices, together with any shortfalls of referrals that fail to represent priority cohorts. This has been difficult at times due to the DWP Commissioned Maximus offer, which targets the same customer groups.

Activity and the usual forward planning, proactive approach to delivery has been impacted by the following factors during the period of the current Strategic Equality Plan.

- funding requirements i.e. ensuring programme delivery is in-line with Government approved delivery plans and a changing eligibility criteria
- the referrals received from third parties, often those closer to the labour market, are referred with the desire to quickly enter employment, as opposed to the intended target audience of those with complex needs or several barriers to employment
- an internal Management of Change process within the period that meant a significant restructuring of staff and changes in funding streams/project guidance
- a reactive approach due to the ongoing difficulties that surrounded the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis and mass redundancies within RCT due to the closure of large employers, such as Garth Bakery and the UK Windows and Doors Group.

That said, activity to reduce inequalities that exist within our communities included:

### **Disability Confident event**

Work and Skills hosted a joint event with DWP at the Rhondda Heritage Park Hotel to raise awareness to employers of the Disability Confident Scheme. 19 employers and partners attended, many of whom were already registered at Disability Confident Levels 1,2 & 3. 5 had no prior involvement in the scheme. By the end of the event all 5 were successfully registered as Disability Confident Level 1. This brought the number of Disability Confident registered employers in RCT to 100, the highest number of DC registered Employers within a Local Authority in Wales.

## **Childcare Choices**

Work and Skills supported the Early Years team to deliver a Pilot Childcare Choices Event, aimed at lone parents wishing to pursue a career that would compliment their own childcare needs. Whilst the event was small, all attendees enrolled for Employment Mentoring to upskill and receive support to enter the sector but also to benefit from the Work and Skills barrier fund, which helped with DBS checks, childcare for the duration of training and travel to the training. Further sessions are planned for 2024.

## **Employment Routes**

The Employment Routes programme is a training programme built around specific employer needs and employment opportunities. The Real Skills programme is a pathway specifically designed for 16–24-year-olds with no/low skills and no work experience. Real Skills offers learning opportunities through hands-on project work, usually within community venues in need of a new lease of life, for example, Pontypridd Foodbank stores had fallen into disrepair, 2 project cohorts supported the redevelopment of the site, making the space more fit for purpose.

## **SPF Service Level Agreement with Leisure and YEPS**

Service Level Agreements were put in place during the inception of the SPF People and Skills to enable both Leisure and YEPS to help Work and Skills achieve targets around improving physical and mental health of economically inactive RCT residents. Low intensity Leisure activities were designed to target less-active individuals and engage them in physical, group-based activities.

YEPS activity under the SLA encourages young people to engage in gaining life skills, to complete volunteering opportunities and to receive support to gain better insight into employer expectations, all of which will contribute to project outcomes whilst maximising the SPF grant through the support of internal Council services.

## **Response to UK Windows and Doors Closure**

When the UK Windows and Doors Group closed suddenly there was extreme concern for the 400+ employees impacted, many of whom who had worked within the same industry and area for 40+ years. The RCT Work and Skills team, together with DWP and Careers Wales, worked quickly to facilitate an Information, Support and Recruitment event. More than 70 employers, partners and training providers attended, with all employers offering live vacancies on the day. More than 300 individuals affected by the closure attended the event. Many of the attendees spoke of hidden disabilities, an inability to read and write that had remained hidden within their lengthy employment, impacted mental health and extreme anxiety as to what



would happen next. Confidential meeting spaces were offered on the day along with follow up support sessions to ensure all individuals could access tailored support to suit their individual needs. 3 attendees left the event having already been offered a job and start date, whilst 50+ attendees had interviews/call backs scheduled. The support of the individuals still facing unemployment continues through 1-1 mentoring.

### **In-Work Support**

The In-Work support element of the programme is also inclusive of anyone who is in paid work and wishing to upskill and/or seek alternative employment. More recent activity has sought to support those who are employed by RCTCBC but facing barriers to conducting their current role. This could be due to changes in physical or mental health. An employee recently took Voluntary Early Retirement (VER) as they were no longer able to conduct their physical role. The development of this piece of work will seek to negate the need for Voluntary Early Retirement/Voluntary Redundancy through retraining and support to diversify in the workplace.

**Action 3 - Recommend within the adapted housing review that the Council commits to increasing the number of adapted and accessible homes being built in the area across all tenures.**

The Adapted Housing Review has been completed and makes a number of recommendations, including increasing the supply of adapted housing across all tenures. The next steps are to incorporate the recommendations into our working practices and other policies and strategies.

**Action 4 - The implementation of the Develop, Invest and Grow project to improve Well-being and equality and diversity outcomes in over 100 small medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Rhondda Cynon Taf.**

Staying Well at Work (formerly Develop Invest & Grow) was led by RCT and part funded by the European Social Fund through the Welsh Government provided support to small businesses and their employees. The support was offered at no cost and focusses on a bespoke range of products to improve employee Health and Wellbeing and businesses to manage employees with disabilities/work limiting health conditions.

Funding for the project delivery ended in December 2022. During its lifetime the project engaged with businesses and individual employees throughout RCT. The project focussed on health and wellbeing and provided support to individuals and businesses in terms of HR support, education and clinical treatment and support. The project provided companies with guidance on Diversity and Inclusion, particularly in relation to policy development and provided training on topics including men's health issues, women's health issues, menopause, mental health and

wellbeing. The project also provided specific support to participants around individual health issues and fitness for work.

**Action 5 - To provide accessible information to the public through a variety of formats with a specific focus on improving accessibility of information for the Deaf community.**

All Customer Care activities are available via the Council's Contact Centre and through its website and online forms. This allows users to access information and perform transactional services through different channels, according to their preference and needs. The Digital Improvement Office works closely with service areas and the Corporate Web and Communication Teams, to ensure that the information available online is of an appropriate level of detail to allow users to self-serve as much as possible, thus providing them with access to information and request services 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, without limitation of Council opening hours.

Analytics show that there is a rising trend in usage of webpages to access information and request services, with a significant increase in the percentage of customer care interactions via the web and mobile devices from 87.9% in 2018-2019 to 94.9% in 2022-2023.

**Action 6 - Undertake development of the use of assistive technology within the Digital Strategy.**

In 2022-2023, the Council has developed its new Digital Strategy for 2022-2026, setting out its vision and objectives for digital and technological opportunities as 'enablers' to help achieve its wider corporate goals. The strategy is formed around 4 key principles, one of which is digital solutions and service design. A key part of this strand of the strategy focuses on the investigation and application of emerging technologies to support services to deliver more effective solutions to their users. This includes the use of assistive technology for use by both staff and service users, to offer greater support and provide insight for targeted intervention where resources are more limited. Such areas being considered include the use of technology to reduce the administrative burden on teams through the application of transcribing technologies to reduce the requirement for minute taking tasks, allowing staffing capacity to be re-directed to other tasks. In addition, the Council is scoping the opportunity to pilot unobtrusive sensors within service users' homes to measure behavioural patterns of basic household tasks and activities. This type of technology will highlight changes in patterns of these activities and offer an alerting mechanism to predict and prevent deterioration in general health, in order to intervene at an earlier point in the service user's decline, improving their chances of a faster recovery.

**Action 7 - To strengthen existing Homefinder processes to take into account equality and diversity best practice.**

Equalities is part of the Allocation Scheme review that is currently being undertaken. Staff from the Diversity and Inclusion team have attended task and finish groups to provide advice and assistance with the application process.

Homefinder operates a face-to-face service in Sardis House for individuals wishing to make an application but do not have access to a telephone or the internet. Homefinder has also improved accessibility for individuals seeking to apply for housing by establishing a presence in One4All Centres in Aberdare and Treorchy every week and these are proving to be successful.

Homefinder continues to attend the Disability Forum and attendees' feedback relevant information from this community network.

**Action 8 - To further develop an inclusive approach to apprenticeships.**

Since 2018, when this action was agreed, we have recruited 2011 apprentices into various service areas across the Council. The Employment, Education and Training team extensively advertise and promote vacancies to internal and external stakeholders. Delivering workshops and webinars to colleges, Department for Work and Pensions, Careers Wales, Communities For Work and supported agencies such as Elite, to encourage individuals from all backgrounds and those with disabilities to apply. Our recruitment process ensures we provide reasonable adjustments to individuals to assist them with the process. For example, we have allocated additional time on assessments, interview questions issued early, delivered virtual interviews etc. The statistics below highlight the success and sustainability of the apprenticeship scheme.

**2018 – 2023**

**Starts                    2011                    Female 92                    Male 119**

<b>Obtained Jobs</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>92%</b>
External employment	15	13%
Internal Employment (RCT Council)	93	80%
Other Outcomes	5	4%
No Outcome	4	3%

**Action 9 - Strengthen the scrutiny process for the Equality Impact Assessment process.**

In last year's report we outlined the introduction of the Review Panel which was established to strengthen the scrutiny of completed equality impact assessments and Welsh Language impact assessments. Senior officers from across the Council sit on the Review Panel to review the impact assessments, checking that relevant data and evidence have been used to inform decision making.

The Review Panel has now become an established governance process which is adding value to the decision-making process. It has helped raise awareness of the importance and relevance of the use of data and evidence in the impact assessment process. Feedback from Council officers has been positive about the value of the process in developing their understanding of equality matters.

To support this process, along with guidance documents and impact assessment examples, a Data Library dashboard has been created, with the help of Data Insights and GIS team, to provide Council officers with relevant information about the people and places within RCT.

**Action 10 - Encourage the uptake of Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement through reviewing service delivery models and an effective marketing strategy.**

All [Catering Services web pages](#) have been updated to promote the uptake of eFSM with easy access hyperlinks for application. The Council's media team continue to share social media messages promoting eFSM take-up.

Posters and links to You Tube videos, promoting the importance of applying for free school meals have been forwarded to all RCT schools.

Here is the Welsh version of the You Tube video <https://youtube.com/shorts/gIqKtJgy0F4>

Here is the English version of the You Tube video <https://youtube.com/shorts/LjbXTxNhCUI>

**Action 11 - Take a strategic approach to our town centres which will benefit from investment to ensure an attractive and accessible environment for local businesses, shoppers, residents and visitors.**

Prosperity and Development's Service Delivery Plan sets out a number of key service priorities for 2022-2023, one of which includes:

**Modernise our town centres** – by building on their role as centres for social inclusion, local economic opportunity and the provision of services. By recognising their changing role from retail centres to social destinations and helping them to adapt to changes in economic and customers' expectations.

In supporting the delivery of local economic activities whilst promoting social inclusivity the Council have continued to engage with a variety of groups and stakeholders in delivering new projects and initiatives across our town centres and to seek their views on implementing appropriate and timely measures.

1. Following a successful informal early engagement exercise to help inform a draft “Strategy for Aberdare Town Centre”, a period of formal consultation was undertaken which sought the views and opinions of a wide range of stakeholders from within Aberdare town centre and the wider communities it serves on the draft strategy. The consultation concluded that the draft strategy was positively received and largely aligned to the towns identified strengths, weaknesses and opportunities. It also largely supported the Strategic Objectives and Investment Themes set out in the strategy which would be used to coordinate future investment in the town. The strategy was formally adopted by the Council and the approach taken in developing the strategy has helped to foster a sense of local ownership and commitment.
2. The Council delivered a series of Christmas Events within 4 of its 8 town centres and worked collaboratively with Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and Town and Community Councils to deliver an event in the 4 remaining town centres. The events provided individuals and families with an affordable festive celebration and delivered increased town centre footfall to support local businesses. The events were supported by free car parking in all Council owned town centre car parks and were well attended and positively received.
3. The Council delivered a programme of free to access family activities in Pontypridd and Mountain Ash town centres during the Summer holiday period. The activities were funded using prize money received from the 2022 Visa sponsored Let’s Celebrate Towns Awards, where Pontypridd won the Champion award and Mountain Ash the Rising Star award for Wales. The Champion award highlights towns that have demonstrated an exceptional ability to create a supportive environment that helps businesses and communities to thrive, whilst the Rising Star award recognises up-and-coming towns that are on their way to transforming the local economic environment and community.
4. The Council have continued to work collaboratively with business groups and other stakeholders to deliver a range of projects and community focused events across our town centres. These include working collaboratively with the Our Aberdare BID to deliver a Summer programme of activities throughout Aberdare town centre and with the Love Treorchy BID to deliver the town’s annual Food & Drink Festival. Additional projects have delivered seasonal town centre floral displays, promotional videos and festive lighting.

5. The Council's Town Centre Team and Employment, Education & Training Team worked collaboratively with the Your Pontypridd BID to deliver a programme that provided a number of work placement opportunities for Children Looked After throughout Pontypridd town centre. The programme, which supports the Council's commitment as a Corporate Parent, was well received and delivered many benefits for both the young people and businesses that took part. The programme in Pontypridd builds upon the successful pilot programme delivered in Treorchy town centre in 2022 and the programme is scheduled to be extended further to include Aberdare town centre in 2024.
6. The Council has commenced a Wayfinding Project in Pontypridd town centre. In collaboration with the Your Pontypridd BID and Town Council the project has developed a Wayfinding Strategy that sets out a number of recommendations for implementation that will improve accessibility and wayfinding for residents and visitors in Pontypridd town centre.

### **OBJECTIVE 3 – TO PROMOTE SAFE COMMUNITIES**

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

#### **Action 1 - Review, develop and re-implement the Hate Crime Strategy.**

In 2022-2023, the Hate Crime strategy was implemented to its fullest following the Covid-19 pandemic. The relaxing of most restrictions made this possible, however, some challenges still remained, such as the amount of community groups and projects that no longer exist due to ending or folding during the pandemic. This has meant having to take a 'starting from scratch' approach to what were annual events and well-established groups etc.

#### **Be My Voice Campaign**

The 'Be My Voice' campaign was launched through the Council's Social Media pages with 2 moving videos of members of the People First charity who spoke about their experience of being the victims of hate crime as a result of their learning disabilities.

The campaign seeks to encourage the wider community not only to recognise Learning Disability Hate Crime, but also to report incidents that they witness to the Police.

In addition to the videos, visits were made to local schools, colleges and businesses to undertake awareness raising workshops with the aim of encouraging understanding and reporting processes. The videos were extremely well received by the public, with Darren’s video receiving almost 4000 views on the Council’s Facebook pages, multiple shares and positive comments and the films were subsequently picked up by Wales Online where the post gained tremendous support.

### **National Hate Crime Awareness Week**

The Cohesion team alongside Cohesion officers from South Wales Police undertook a week long campaign of engagement, events and visits to promote awareness during NHCAW that included:

- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> - hate crime workshop with Aberdare College - distributing merchandise and engaging in meaningful discussions with the students;
- Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> - mobile police station outside Aberdare Library to engage with members of the local community;
- Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> – NHS Training at Tonteg Hospital.

### **School Visits**

We were pleased to be able to initiate more school visits. In October, Cohesion Officers visited Treorchy Comprehensive School and engaged in ‘Hate Crime and Mental Health’ discussions with various year 11 pupils. Additionally, the Youth Ambassador Programme continued at Treorchy Comprehensive School.

### **South Wales Police – Hate Crime data for Rhondda Cynon Taf**

**Table 1a. Hate Crimes by characteristic**

Disability	88
Race	278
Religion	20
Sexual Orientation	147
Transgender	34

**Table 1b. Hate Crimes by area**

Rhondda	139
Cynon	94
Taf	165
Merthyr	145

**Table 1c. Hate Crime by month (2022)**

January	29
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February	41
March	48
April	46
May	55
June	51
July	33
August	52
September	53
October	53
November	43
December	39

### **Action 2 - Review the existing approach to tackling modern slavery.**

Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking is currently an agenda item on the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Serious and Organised Crime Board. Updates are provided by the lead South Wales Police officer for the area. There are established processes in place when modern slavery / human trafficking is suspected.

The Community Safety Partnership review is still taking place and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Board is scheduled to be in place for April 2024.

### **Action 3 - As part of Education's Well-being Strategy we will develop a programme for schools about raising awareness of emotional abuse in relationships.**

We have undertaken a number of projects with young people about healthy relationships.

#### **Spectacle Theatre - Making Monsters**

This project aimed to teach young people about relationships, both healthy and unhealthy, provide an opportunity to talk openly about feelings and experiences, and to promote and identify help seeking behaviour.

Drama techniques have been known to enhance emotional intelligence, communication skills, develop curiosity and confidence. (Van de Water, 2021)

Themes related to healthy relationships were identified from child focus groups:

- How you express feelings and have disagreements
- Trust
- Social connection
- Not responding to peer pressure (sending indecent images of self)



- Sense of safety
- Being supported.

The outcomes of this project:

- Before the project 61% of pupils said they felt they knew where to go for support. This improved to 71%;
- Before the project 68% of pupils said they understand domestic violence. This improved to 95%;
- Before the project 57% of pupils said they are good at listening to someone whose opinions differed. This improved to 82%.
- After the project 100% of adult participants said they were extremely confident or quite confident to support children

### Healthy Relationship Programme – Real love Rocks, Barnardo’s

This resource explores:

- Relationships - What they are and what makes a happy, safe, fair and consensual relationship.
- Child Sexual Exploitation - What it means, the different ways it might happen and where to get help if needed.
- Keeping Safe - Encouraging young people to think about how to stay safe when they are out and about; highlighting the added risk that alcohol, drugs or not being in contact with parents/careers can bring.
- Impact of Watching Porn and Sexting - The impact of watching porn and the possible consequences. The risks involved in sexting and how to stay safe online.

Following the project pupils said they felt far less confused for either a lot of the time or all of the time. This reduced to 5.6% from 31.7% prior to the project. Other pupil data revealed:

	Pre project %	Post project %
Know how emotions feel in their body quite a lot of time	14	29.7
Could <b>some of the time</b> ask someone for help when they were feeling sad, angry or worried	26.31	34.4
Could <b>never</b> ask someone for help when they were feeling sad, angry or worried	7.4	14.3
There are people who care about them <b>all</b> of the time.	41	41.7

There are people who care about them <b>quite a lot</b> of the time.	40	33.3
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- Pupils were asked to name private body parts before and after the project. Post project fewer slang words were used.
- Staff confidence related to teaching pupils about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) was 17% very confident pre project, rising to 100% post project.

10 secondary schools and 7 primary schools participated in this project.

#### **Action 4 - Pilot the PERMA model in secondary schools.**

Embedded in Positive Psychology, Seligman's [PERMA](#) model is suggested as an effective framework for understanding and promoting well-being. Furthermore, PERMA tools are suggested as an easily understood measure which can assess various dimensions of pupil well-being and can account for fluctuations in well-being over time.

16 secondary schools in RCT have now received training and support to use the PERMA wellbeing tool. It has been successfully used in a variety of ways across these schools to meet their bespoke needs and priorities. This includes:

- A mechanism to identify pupils requiring wellbeing support.
- A method to evaluate impact of wellbeing interventions (e.g. [ELSA](#) and Nurture).
- An individual and group intervention using strategy bank.
- PERMA has been used to monitor impact of ELSA intervention.
- PERMA continues to be used as baseline measure for Attendance and Wellbeing Services intervention and support in secondary aged pupils.
- MiSpace wellbeing game now available on all computers not just tablets.
- New Mood tracker functionality introduced and being used by schools to track/monitor pupil mood.

#### **Action 5 - Strengthen collection and analysis of data for bullying incidents in schools.**

The anti-bullying return for schools has been updated to collect information regarding each of the protected characteristics from September 2022.

Data is collected on a termly basis and is reviewed as part of the local authority's termly monitoring of schools. Any concerns regarding particular trends or individual schools are addressed. The findings also inform training and support for schools.

Early last academic year, following a pupil perception survey which indicated there may be a higher incidence of bullying than was being reported, work was undertaken with schools to raise awareness of reporting. It is positive that a higher number of incidents are being reported this academic year as pupils will feel more comfortable and staff more confident in identifying bullying behaviours. The data is likely to be a truer reflection.

The changes to the reporting format mean that we are able to analyse by the type of prejudiced related bullying in the last academic year.

- The total number of reported bullying incidents has more than doubled (172 to 424).
- The majority of bullying incidents take place in Year 7 and above.
- In the academic year 2021-2022 the % of total incidents that were prejudice based was 16% (27 incidents); in the academic year 2022-2023 it was 20% (85 incidents).
- 2022-2023 academic year data information reflecting characteristics of prejudice based bullying showed the most prevalent was race, religion and culture 36%. In academic year 2022-2023 each category will be collected as a separate type. Our Anti-racism strategy and action plan will address this, and similarly to above may lead to an increase in reported incidents as understanding increases.
- With a third of prejudiced based incidents being recorded as 'other' this will need further interrogation.

	Number of reported incidents 2022-23					% of reported prejudiced based bullying
	Through	Secondary	Special/PRU	Primary	Total	
Race religion culture	11	14	0	6	31	36
Homophobic	0	3	1	2	6	7
Biphobic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transphobic	0	1	0	0	1	1
Sexist or sexual	0	0	2	0	2	2
Related to gender identity	0	6	1	0	7	8
Age	0	2	0	0	2	2
ALN or disability	0	0	0	5	5	6
Family status or CLA	0	3	0	4	7	8
Disadvantage	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appearance	0	0	1	9	10	12
Other	0	7	3	4	14	17

20% of all bullying incidents reported in all schools were prejudice based.  
22% of all bullying incidents reported in through-schools were prejudice based.  
21% of all bullying incidents reported in Secondary schools were prejudice based.  
6% of all bullying incidents reported in Special schools and PRUs were prejudice based.  
37% of all bullying incidents reported in Primary schools were prejudice based.

**Action 6 - Further develop the freedom programme with Women's Aid to better understand specific needs for victims of domestic violence from underrepresented groups.**

RCT domestic abuse service, formerly Women's Aid RCT provide a range of projects and services to support those affected by domestic abuse.

All service users are asked to complete equal opportunity monitoring forms. This supports and informs our future services and assists our organisation to identify potential gaps in service delivery.

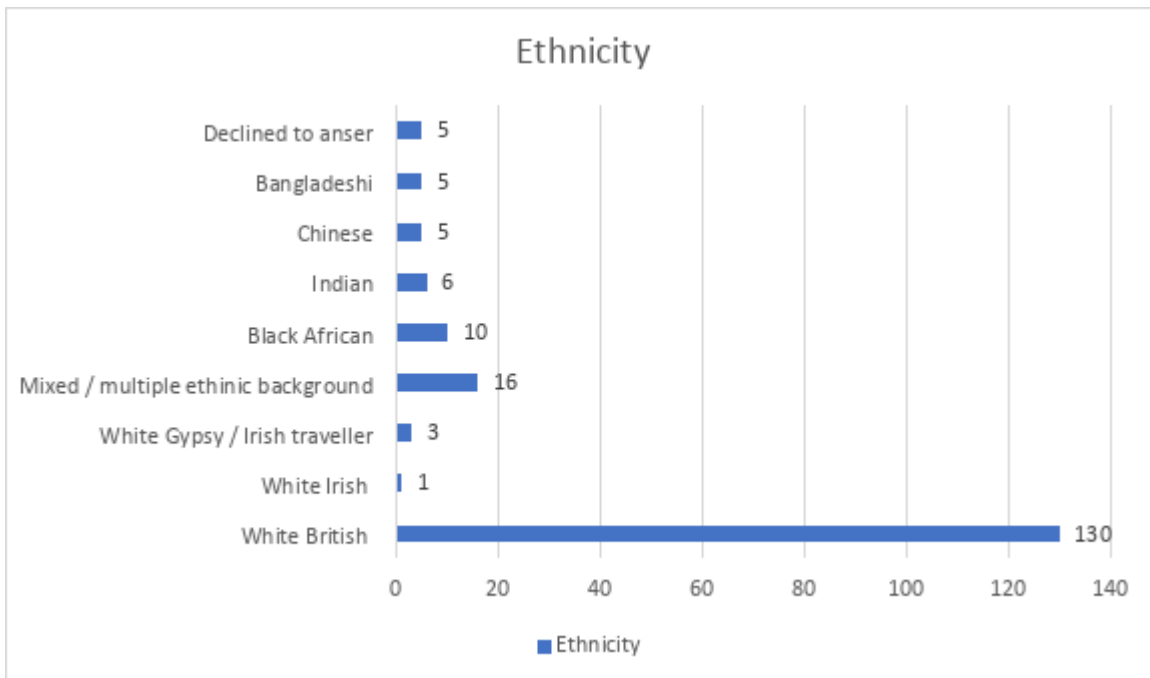
A breakdown of the projects findings for the 2022-23 period can be found below.

Sex and Gender Identity

181 women completed the freedom programme, 3 of which identified as trans female.

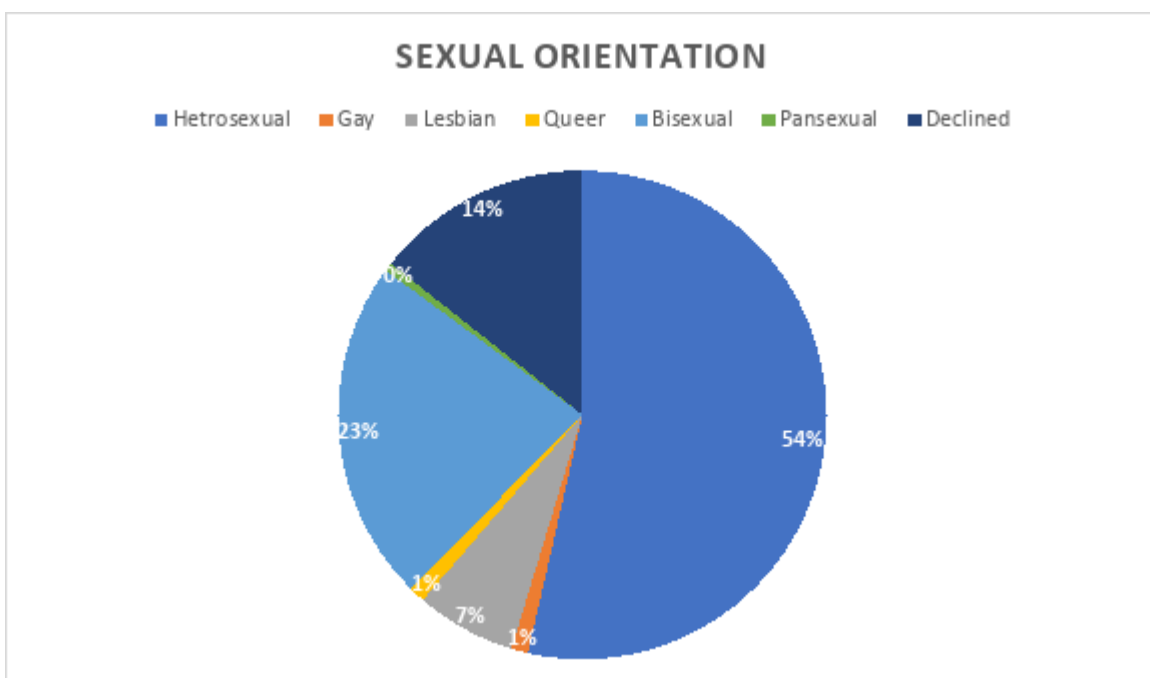
Ethnicity

Our ethnicity data is shown in the chart below. This data seems to correspond with the recent census (2021), in RCT. There is a slightly greater percentage of people identifying from multiple ethnic back grounds, including Black, Chinese, Indian and Bangladeshi accessing services when compared to the census. This could be due to our refuge accommodation attracting people from out of area. Our refuge accommodation will occasionally accept people with no recourse to public funds this often results in a greater ethnic diversity within our refuge accommodation. This feeds/filters into the courses we provide such as the freedom programme.



Sexual orientation

Over time the project has adapted and changed its delivery of the Freedom programme due to participants sexual orientation. Traditionally, the Freedom programme was written to deliver to people in heterosexual relationships; where the female is seen as the victim, and the male is seen as the perpetrator. The need for change has been recognised and alterations have been made to support a model of inclusive delivery. The course has included the recognition of the barriers and the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQIA+ community, is always mindful of its audience and uses gender neutral terms and pronouns.



## Disability

17 people who accessed the course identified as having a physical disability. To help ensure that they were able to access our services, group sessions were delivered in an online format or within our centres or community venues with disabled access.

## Mental health

Due to the nature of our service 90% of those who accessed the Freedom programme felt that they had a mental health support need, such as anxiety, depression, or PTSD. Online group sessions and the opportunity to meet the team prior to attending groups helped facilitate future attendance.

In addition to monitoring the diversity of our client group the project also monitors the effectiveness of our courses including the Freedom programme, using a distance travelled monitoring and evaluation tool.

Of those who attended the Freedom programme

- 90% stated they were able to recognise the early warning signs of abusive behaviour and felt they had increased ability to keep safe within their relationships.
- 90% stated that they felt increased confidence in their ability to create a safe environment for themselves and their family.
- 95% stated an increased knowledge of appropriate agencies from which they could receive support for their emotional and physical well-being.
- 85% stated they felt an increase in their confidence and self-esteem because of attending the sessions.

## **OBJECTIVE 4 – TO REDUCE THE GENDER PAY GAP**

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below.

### **The Gender Pay Gap**

An organisation's gender pay gap is the difference between the average male and female pay rates. It is calculated by dividing the average female hourly pay rate by the average male hourly pay rate.

The Council is required to publish the gender pay gap between male and female employees. It is also required to publish this data separately on employees in Education (teaching employees).

The Equality and Human Rights Commission strongly advise publishing separate full-time and part-time gender pay gaps. It is considered that any pay gap of 5% or more is considered significant and in need of further analysis.

The mean gender pay gap is the difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male full-pay relevant employees and that of female full-pay relevant employees. A positive figure denotes a gap to the advantage of male employees. A negative figure denotes a gap to the advantage of female employees.

The Equal Pay Audit identified the following Equal Pay gaps:

**March 2023**

	Combined	Full Time	Part Time
All Employees	9.49%	-10.54%	3.75%
Non Teaching	10.50%	-9.02%	2.67%
Teaching	4.71%	4.15%	7.50%

The gender pay gap for all employees has reduced from 10.24% to 9.49% in 2022.

The main reason for this was the 2022-2023 pay award for NJC employees of an increase of £1,925 (pro rata) on all grades. This had a more positive impact for employees on the lower grades and as the lower grades are occupied predominantly by female staff the gender pay gap decreased.

The average hourly rate for female employees increased by 7.4% from £12.70 to £13.64 whereas the hourly rate for male employees increased by 6.1% from £14.38 to £15.25.

**Action 1 - Deliver the roll out of the performance review process for staff at all grades, and**

**Action 2 - Improve the monitoring of the performance review process.**

As reported last year, the existing performance review process has been reviewed. Moving forward, the corporate process will be improved by ensuring that all staff who have worked for the Council for 12 months or more will have received an annual performance review. The previous approach of rolling out the review a staff tier at a time was not effective as operationally, a rollout to all staff was never achieved.

Progress on this has been delayed due to the implementation and testing of the new HR Payroll system. Once the system is fully operational the performance review process will be rolled out across the organisation.

**Action 3 - Better understand whether barriers exist regarding the progression of women into senior positions.**

The Women Into Leadership programme ran from September 2021 to July 2022. The programme structure provided delivered elements focussing on a variety of topics specific to leadership combined with networking and facilitated discussions. Barriers that were identified through the programme were around exposure to opportunities, mentoring opportunities and coaching.

**Action 4 - Understand more about what prevents women returning to the workplace following maternity leave.**

A research study was completed which provided a better understanding into the barriers to retention following maternity leave. The study explored social and organisational barriers that contribute to the issue. The recommendations of the study included:

- Undertake further organisational research particularly with women who have returned to work following maternity leave
- Increase awareness and support for women going on maternity leave
- Review and improve monitoring processes
- Provide opportunities for exit interviews.

**Action 5 - Support the EHRC pledge 'Working Forward' and implement its recommendations.**

Due to a number of factors which impact on the resources available to undertake this work it is likely this work will be carried over to the next Strategic Equality Plan.

**OBJECTIVE 5 – TO CREATE AN INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE**

Within this equality objective there are a number of areas that require action. The progress towards these actions is outlined below:

**Action 1 - Develop a programme of sexual harassment training and awareness.**

As previously reported, work in this area was delayed due to the pandemic. We have established a task and finish group to identify key actions and stakeholders. A staff survey was designed and distributed to Council employees. It was important we had



a specific themed survey, and not just included questions in the annual staff survey, to provide a better understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace. We received 602 responses to the survey.

This area of work continues to be a priority, particularly reporting mechanisms. Therefore, we anticipate this area of work will be included in our new Strategic Equality Plan.

## **Action 2 - Undertake a review of all our mental health activities and develop annual plans which provide education, training and interventions.**

This action shifted its focus as the service had to reprioritise its delivery in response to the Covid pandemic. Therefore, a number of staff wellbeing initiatives were introduced which focus on mental health:

- Wellbeing sessions

A range of wellbeing bitesize sessions have been developed and delivered based on staff feedback and absence themes. These include sleep, resilience, stress, anxiety, menopause, finances, women and men's health etc, each session is evaluated separately. 19 wellbeing sessions were delivered during the year.

- Bespoke school counselling service

Funding has been secured to provide a bespoke counselling service for school based staff. Those who require support are contacted within 2 weeks. The service is delivered between 9am to 8pm Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm on Friday, and Saturday morning. This service is designed to provide support for those in work and out of work, and the operating hours enable the least disruption to the school day.

- Referrals and appointments

Occupational health provides a range of appointments to assess fitness for work and support staff. Occupational Health managed 2403 referrals and delivered 8526 appointments. Occupational Health developed a wellbeing assessment as part of our mental health focus. This assessment provides a quick intervention to talk to the client, assess the issues and refer on to specific support interventions. 498 wellbeing assessments were conducted.

- Employee assistance programmes (EAP)

CareFirst - an employee assistance programme that delivers a range of wellbeing activities including 24/7 access to in the moment support, an advice centre for financial and legal rights issues, website for online support and information on many health conditions, weekly webinars and an app that staff can use to monitor their mental health and gain interventions to support.

- Wellbeing

Cari - an artificial intelligence system that enables staff to assess their own wellbeing score confidentially and provides a number of support options. This system enables the organisation to target specific interventions based on the data and provides an overall wellbeing score as an organisation.

- Elected member wellbeing sessions

We delivered a number of wellbeing sessions for elected members to raise awareness on physical and mental wellbeing for themselves and those they support in their communities.

- Cost of living challenges

We created a project group with members from across the various services in the Council. This group shared and discussed plans to support communities and staff through the cost of challenges. A staff newsletter was created to signpost both internal and external support available to staff. The newsletters covered a number of themes such as saving money with staff benefits, support for mental health, where to get advice for debt & finances, planning for your future and union support. We have developed 3 newsletters, further developments have included the newsletter being created for staff of the businesses in RCT. The businesses of RCT received their first copy in December 2023 through the town centre forums.

- Partnerships

We have been developing our partnerships through various procurement frameworks and our partners have delivered a number of wellbeing interventions such as Salary finance, our financial partner through staff benefits, provide a number of webinars and guides to support staff through the cost of living challenges.

- Awards

The Council won 2 prestigious awards from CASE UK for supporting mental health.

### **Action 3 - Source and develop a suite of training for managers on equality and diversity topics.**

A suite of 9 Diversity & Inclusion e-Learning modules have been developed for our workforce. The 9 modules are Dignity at Work, Disability and Discrimination, Diversity & Inclusion in the workplace, Equality Act 2010, LGBTQIA+/ Trans Awareness, Neurodiversity Awareness, Race Awareness, Reasonable Adjustments and Unconscious Bias. These have been trialled with service areas and external consultants to ensure their suitability for Council staff and to make sure they are in line with current thinking/legislation.

Feedback on the training has been positive and has provided excellent opportunities to further develop the training program and its content. Roll out to all staff will take place from April 2024.

### **Action 4 - Become more disability confident as an organisation.**

#### **Autism Aware**

In April 2022, Senior Leadership and Cabinet approved a trial of the Autism Aware certification training, hosted by Autism Wales. The Council's Human Resources team achieved their Autism Aware Certification after completing this training hosted as part of the trial. This training provided officers with key information on how best to support autistic colleagues and members of the public, and how to adapt processes to ensure barriers are reduced.

Following this successful trial, Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's Cabinet Members and Senior Leadership Team also achieved their Autism Aware certification in February 2023, becoming the first Cabinet in Wales to achieve this. Senior Leadership also approved a full roll-out of the training to all Council staff and Elected Members, which is ongoing.

The Council's Digital Improvement Office (DIO) also achieved their certification in February 2023. Several other Council service areas are on their way to achieving their certification this year.

In rolling out the Autism Aware training to our HR officers, officers are now more aware and equipped to support autistic and neurodiverse individuals interacting with the Council, whether internally as a member of staff or externally as a customer or resident. As a result, Autistic individuals and other neurodiverse people should have

better experiences with the Council, where they feel safe and able to access Council services.

### **Disability Confident**

The Council has maintained its Level 2 Disability Employer status under the Disability Confident Scheme and hopes to renew its status in October 2023. The Disability Confident scheme is a recognised standard across the UK. This means that customers and applicants should feel more confident when using our services and know what to expect from the Council.

We continue to improve and provide accessible services for residents and customers and support our disabled staff in the workplace. We continue to develop staff awareness by signposting awareness sessions and training held by the Business Disability Forum, including training on reasonable adjustments.

Ensuring our managers and staff have a good understanding of reasonable adjustments and the Council's reasonable adjustments scheme means that staff who require reasonable adjustments have them implemented efficiently.

### **Action 5 - Undertake workplace equality monitoring.**

Following the implementation of a new HR Payroll system, and as part of our continued efforts to ensure our staff HR data is up-to-date and reflects the diversity of our staff, an awareness email was sent to all staff explaining the new data fields included on the new HR and Payroll system. Following this email, over 600 members of staff updated their information, allowing us to better understand the identities and needs of our staff.

Reliable HR data means that we will be able to identify any gaps in recruitment and employment across service areas. However, we recognise there is still work to do on ensuring we have reliable workforce data.

### **Action 6 - Replicate existing good practice to reflect all protected characteristics.**

We continued to raise awareness of significant days, events and our staff networks through articles in the Diversity and Inclusion team newsletters. We shared relevant videos and we worked to raise awareness of our duty to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace, reporting harassment and discrimination and highlighting important dates in the equality calendar.

### **Carer Confident Employer and Carers Rights Day**

The Council have become a Level 1 Carer Confident employer, accredited by [Employers For Carers](#).

To mark Carers Rights Day, the Carers Team held a virtual 'Carers Caffi' and were joined by Carers Wales. The team also organised a Carers Rights Day Celebration at Llantrisant Leisure Centre.

Earlier this year the Council launched its new Working Carers Guidance and introduced new leave arrangements for those with unpaid caring responsibilities.

For more information on being a Carer Confident Employer, or for any questions about being a Working Carer in the Council, please contact the Working Carers team on [workingcarers@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:workingcarers@rctcbc.gov.uk).

### **LGBTQIA+ inclusion**

Working with Cardiff Council we co-presented a series of internal events covering intersectional aspects of LGBTQIA+ issues including trans and faith with the Reverend Canon Sarah Jones of St Johns Church, Cardiff. The event was attended by 68 people across both Authorities.

Work also commenced on an LGBTQIA+ Education group for our educational psychology and youth support teams. Sharing best practice and current information on relevant subjects to allow them to support their service users.

Our work with [Proud Councils](#) continued. Proud Councils is a partnership of 9 Councils in the South East Wales region; Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr, Newport, RCT, Swansea, Torfaen and Powys. The group supported Pride events in Caerphilly, Merthyr, Newport, Powys and Pride Cymru in Cardiff. Our aim is to demonstrate a unified approach to LGBTQIA+ equality across the South East Wales Region. Proud Councils were delighted to have been a finalist for the Public Sector Equality Award in the Pink News Awards 2022. The award celebrated the exceptional parts of our country's governmental or other public bodies that are making change for the better.

### **Menopause Cafes**

Virtual Menopause cafes have continued to provide a space to learn more about menopause and what it's like to experience it. The cafes provide a space to discuss menopause problems and symptoms, and tips and solutions to help manage these, such as nutrition and exercise.

### **Race Equality**

In March 2022, Cabinet agreed to the Council signing the [BITC's Race at Work Charter](#). This demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving equality of opportunity in the workplace. We have continued to work with BITC, who undertook a listening circle with some of our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff. The findings of this will inform our future strategies.

To mark Black History Month, guest speaker [Marilyn Bryan-Jones](#) discussed 'The Welsh perspective,' and examined the history of Black people in Wales, Black History in the workplace and the education around Black History.

### Senior Diversity Champions

Our Senior Diversity Champions have continued to champion the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda. They are:

Paul Mee Chief Executive	Race Equality
Dave Powell Director of Corporate Estates	Disability Inclusion
Gaynor Davies Director of Education	Gender Equality
Simon Gale Director of Prosperity and Development	LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

### Staff Networks

Our staff networks have continued to grow and develop, providing an instrumental role in providing peer support. Network meetings are still held online. All of our networks (Allies, Disability and Carers, Perthyn LGBTQIA+ staff and Spotlight our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic network) help promote and raise awareness of specific days to all staff to help create an inclusive culture in the workplace.

### White Ribbon

In November we were delighted to partner with local organisations within Cwm Taf for this year's White Ribbon vigil, which seeks to end male violence against women.

During the event we had guest speakers talking about supporting 'Ending violence against women and girls.' Those who attended also had the opportunity to sign the 'White Ribbon' pledge to 'never stay quiet about male violence against women.' You can find more information about [White Ribbon Day online](#) and how you can support.

We also had members from the Council's Youth Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) who supported the event with a very powerful poem reading.

### **Wales Interpretation and Translation Service**

The Council is a partner in the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service (WITS) and has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for delivery of the service provided via the City of Cardiff Council. During 2022-2023 there were 675 bookings made through the service using 23 languages and BSL interpreters.

The 5 most requested languages during 2022-2023 were Urdu, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic and Bengali and Kurdish Sorani as joint 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Overall Progress**

As we conclude work on our 2019-2022 Strategic Equality Plan, we have demonstrated that significant progress has been made in the majority of the equality objectives. As a consequence of the pandemic, much positive and innovative work has been done to improve the accessibility and inclusion of the services we provide across the borough. This positive change will continue to be embedded within our service delivery.

Our work to deliver equality objectives contained in our Strategic Equality Plan helps us to demonstrate how we are contributing to a more equal Wales - 'a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances'. It also seeks to support all the well-being goals including a Wales of Cohesive Communities and a Prosperous Wales.

## **7. Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)**

The Council has had an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process in place for a number of years which is carried out under the following circumstances:

- Where new policies or practices are developed (including corporate plans, annual business plans and the annual budget);
- Where changes to existing policies or practices are proposed, and when conducting expenditure reviews and programme evaluations;
- Where there are proposals to withdraw from or discontinue an existing policy or practice;
- Where the business planning process has identified relevance to or implications for equality.

The process is regularly reviewed and takes into account the protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010.

The table below includes a snapshot of EIA's carried out in financial year 2022-2023.

### Equality Impact Assessments

Think Climate RCT – The Council's Tackling Climate Change strategy 2022-2025	June 2022
Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (Formerly 21st Century Schools) – Proposal to Amalgamate Cefn and Craig Yr Hesg Primary Schools to Create a New Community Primary School	June 2022
Community Wardens	June 2022
Pontypridd Town Centre Placemaking Plan – Public Consultation Feedback and Project Updates	June 2022
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council – Draft Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-2026	July 2022
Redevelopment Proposal: Former Bronllwyn Residential Care Home	July 2022
Sustainable Communities for Learning (Formerly 21st Century Schools): Mutual Investment Model – Project 2	July 2022
A Report Proposing the Introduction of a New Solar Panel Grant and the Extension of the Domestic Heating Grant	September 2022
Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-2023 to 2025-2026	September 2022
The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf 2022-2027	October 2022
A Report on the Council's Local Housing Market Assessment 2022-2037	October 2022
New Empty Homes Strategy for 2022-2025	October 2022
Council Tax Premiums – Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes	December 2022
Waste Services – Revised Waste Management Strategy	January 2023
Service Review of the Community Meals Service	January 2023
Council Run Nursery Provision – Revised Service Delivery Arrangements	January 2023
Council Fees and Charges Proposals 2023-2024	January 2023



The Council's 2023-2024 Revenue Budget	February 2023
The Council's 3 Year Capital Programme 2023-24 to 2025-26	February 2023

Full details of decisions are included in Cabinet reports which are available on the following link:

<https://rctcbc.moderngov.co.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1&LLL=0>

## 8. Employment Monitoring Data

The Council must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of:

- people employed by the authority on 31 March each year by protected characteristic;
- men and women employed, broken down by:
  - job;
  - grade (where grading system in place);
  - pay;
  - contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts);
  - working pattern (including full-time, part-time and other flexible working patterns).
- people who have applied for jobs with the authority over the last year;
- employees who have applied to change position within the authority; identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not;
- employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application;
- employees who completed training;
- employees involved in grievance procedures either as a complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made;
- employees subject to disciplinary procedures;
- employees who have left an authority's employment.

All of the information above must be presented for each of the separate protected groups. The exception to this requirement is the data on job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern, which must be broken down only in relation to women and men.

This information is attached at Appendix 1 - Employment Monitoring Data.

## 9. Procurement

The Council operates the SPD (Single Procurement Document) which is part of the [National Procurement Website](#).

The SPD is a standard form, which replaces pre-qualification questionnaires, and should make the process of bidding for a public contract easier and contains a set of core questions commonly asked at the selection stage.

The SPD delivers a number of benefits:

- Increased efficiency for both suppliers and buyers, by allowing standard questions and keeping the number of questions to a minimum, and also by encouraging buyers to only seek information from suppliers if they can be clear about exactly how the information will be used;
- Greater standardisation of the selection stage, whilst also allowing for tailoring of questions to meet the specific requirements of the procurement;
- Increased transparency of the selection process and how responses will be evaluated – so that suppliers are able to work out easily whether or not they wish to bid for a particular opportunity, how to optimise their proposal and how to present it in an effective way;
- Improved opportunities for small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) and local businesses to compete on a more equal footing as a result of a carefully considered question set that removes some of the barriers to entry for them.

It includes a section on equal opportunities and is in line with the guidance on procurement published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

## 10. Accessible Information

The Council produces information in a wide variety of formats according to need. Service areas record requests for alternative formats from service users to ensure that these are provided.

Accessibility Guidelines are available to employees on the Council's Intranet, these provide information on the types of accessible information available, what it is and does and includes a list of suppliers so that employees can source requested formats.

The Council has adopted the RNIB Clear Print Guidelines to increase readability of its documents.

## **11. Future Work**

As we have come to the end of the current SEP, our future work will focus on developing our next SEP and embedding existing good practice. We will seek to undertake relevant engagement and gather evidence to develop our new equality objectives.

## **12. Contact Details**

Rhondda Cynon Taf welcomes comments on all aspects of this report, both in what it contains and what it may not make clear enough about the work and progress in delivering equality and removing discrimination.

If you have any comments or want to know more about the work the Council is doing please contact:

Melanie Warburton  
Diversity and Inclusion Manager  
Rhondda Cynon Taf Council  
Ty Elai  
Dinas Isaf East Industrial Estate  
Williamstown  
Tonypandy  
CF40 1NY

Telephone: 01443 444531

email: [equality@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rctcbc.gov.uk)

### **Employment Monitoring Data**

Equality monitoring information is stored against all employees' records in the Council's payroll and human resources information system (Vision). The information is requested at the recruitment stage and entered on to their record at that point.

The Council encourages all employees to provide this information and an equality monitoring survey is carried out on all employees every two years in an attempt to increase the information held.

In preparation for the extended employee monitoring requirements being introduced as part of the Equality Act 2010, the Council carried out an equality monitoring survey of all employees in 2011. This survey included questions that covered all protected characteristics except pregnancy. This question was not asked as it was felt that information on pregnancy and maternity would already be held on employee records and the time period allowed for return could mean that the information provided would be out of date.

The Diversity and Inclusion Team worked with other service areas to identify other useful information which resulted in the questionnaire including sections on the use of British Sign Language, Welsh language ability and whether or not an employee had caring responsibilities. This information was provided statistically to the service areas to inform their work and strategies.

Statistical analysis of the information is contained in the following tables and covers all Council employees including teachers and school based employees.

### **People Employed by Protected Characteristic**

The following information has been provided using employees' national insurance numbers; this ensures that where an employee may work in more than one job their details will be included only once to avoid duplication of information. It includes teachers and school based employees. Some comparisons will be made to the local demographic of the borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf as over 80% of employees live in the Council area.

## **EQUALITY MONITORING DATA FOR THE YEAR 2022-2023**

### **Gender**

The table below shows the gender breakdown of employees:

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Workforce</b>
Male	2764	25.5%
Female	8065	74.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>	

This table clearly indicates that women make up the majority of the Council workforce, this has been consistent for a number of years.

### **Age**

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by age group:

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Workforce</b>
16-24	617	5.7%
25-34	1954	18.0%
35-44	2584	23.9%
45-54	2938	27.1%
55-64	2325	21.5%
65+	411	3.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>	

This table indicates, as the figures did last year, that over half of Council employees are within the age range of 35-54.

### **Disability**

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by disabled and non disabled:

<b>Identification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of Workforce</b>
Disabled	270	2.5%
Non Disabled	9270	85.6%
Prefer not to say	15	0.1%
Information not held	1274	11.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>	

Information is held on almost 88% of employees. A small percentage of employees have indicated that they are disabled but this is unlikely to give the true picture of disability in the workplace.

## National Identity and Ethnicity

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by ethnicity:

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Number</b>
Asian	6
Asian Bangladeshi	1
Asian British	9
Asian Chinese	4
Asian Cornish	1
Asian Indian	3
Asian Other	5
Asian Pakistani	2
Black	1
Black African	15
Black British	2
Black Other	2
Black Welsh	1
Chinese	4
Gypsy/Romany/Irish Traveller	1
Mixed Other	13
Mixed White & African	3
Mixed White & Asian	9
Mixed White & Black Caribbean	12
Other Ethnic Group	29
Prefer Not To Say	19
White	3961
White - British	2792
White - Cornish	2
White - English	68
White - Irish	11
White - Northern Irish	1
White - Other	15
White - Scottish	6
White - Welsh	2396
Not Known	1435
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>

Information is held on 87% of the workforce. Staff identifying themselves as an ethnic minority other than White is 1.1% of the workforce. This is not representative of people living in RCT as the Census 2021 highlighted the ethnic population of RCT as:

96.7% of people identified as White.

1.5% identified as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh.

1.0% identified as from Mixed or multiple ethnic groups.

0.4% identified as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean, or African.

0.3% identified themselves as from other ethnic groups.

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by national identity:

<b>National Identity</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
African	2
American	1
Any other Asian background	2
Any other Mixed background	2
Any other White background	9
Australian	2
Bangladeshi	2
British	1871
British Virgin Islands	1
Burundi	1
Canadian	1
Chinese	4
Chinese/Tibetan	3
Croatian	1
Dutch	1
English	211
European	11
German	1
Greek	2
Indian	5
Irish	18
Nigeria	3
Northern Ireland	1
Norwegian	1
Other	4
Polish	8
Portuguese	2
Romanian	3
Scottish	21
Spanish	3
Sri Lankan	2
Thai	1
Ukrainian	2
Welsh	5157
White and Asian	3
White and Black Caribbean	1
Not Known	3466
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>

Information is held on 68% of employees with the majority of employees identifying themselves as Welsh followed by British.

## Religion or Belief

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by religion or belief:

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Total</b>
Christian	2853
Muslim	17
Hindu	6
Buddhist	14
Sikh	1
Catholic	1
Other	98
<b>% of workforce identifying with a religion</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
No Religion	3661
Prefer not to say	417
Information not held	3761
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>

Information is held on 65% of employees.

## Sexual Orientation

The table below shows the breakdown of employees by sexual orientation:

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Heterosexual	4624
Gay Man	57
Gay Woman/Lesbian	51
Bisexual	49
<b>% of workforce identifying a sexual orientation</b>	<b>44.1%</b>
Prefer not to say	276
Information not held	5772
<b>Total</b>	<b>10829</b>

Information is held on 47% of employees.

## Pregnancy and Maternity

As at 31 March 2023 there were 139 employees on maternity leave. During the year 2022-2023, 293 employees had been on maternity leave during this period of time.



## **Gender Reassignment**

Specific information has not been published due to the possibility of identification. The Council has a Gender Reassignment Policy in place which was developed some years ago as a result of an employee asking for support. Since that time the policy has been accessed and support provided as and when required by employees.

## **Regulation Nine - Gender Specific Information**

Regulation Nine of the Specific Equality Duties in Wales requires the following specific information to be provided in respect of gender breakdown.

The number of employees employed at 31 March 2023 broken down by:

- Job
- Grade
- Pay
- Contract type
- Working pattern.

This information has been provided on the basis of actual job numbers so that those employees who work in more than one job are included in all the jobs they are employed in so the numbers may be different to those in the previous section. Once again the information includes teachers and school based employees.

The following table/s provides the specific information required:

## Breakdown of Employees by Gender and Job

There are over a thousand job titles within the Council so for ease of demonstration they have been broken down into job families within the competency framework.

Job Family	Female	Male	Grand Total
Administrator	951	265	1216
Ancillary	1263	492	1755
Assistant Headteacher	41	31	72
Community and Social Care	1258	236	1494
Deputy Headteacher	81	38	119
Frontline and Customer Care	383	270	653
Headteacher	99	48	147
Middle Manager	192	95	287
School Support	1668	103	1771
Skilled Manual Worker	46	109	155
Strategic Manager	37	41	78
Supervisor	126	194	320
Teacher	1329	394	1723
Technical, Specialist & Professional	550	433	983
Unqualified Teacher	41	15	56
<b>Total</b>	<b>8065</b>	<b>2764</b>	<b>10829</b>

As last year, the data provides very few surprises with the majority of women working in 'traditional' female areas, particularly in the Community & Social Care, Ancillary and School Support settings; this will be more closely examined as part of the Gender Pay Objective within the Strategic Equality Plan.

## Breakdown of Employees by Gender & Grade

The Council operated the following grading systems as at 31 March 2023.

- Chief Officers (Head of Service and above)
- National Joint Council for Local Government Services
- Soulbury (including Heads of Service)
- Teachers/Education

The tables below set out the breakdown of employees by gender and grade:

### Employees by Gender & Grade – Chief Officers

Grade	Female	Male	Total
Chief Executive	0	1	1
Deputy Chief Executive & Group Director	0	1	1
Director Level 1	2	5	7
Director Level 2	1	1	2
Service Director Level 1	1	2	3
Service Director Level 2	3	9	12
Head of Service – Soulbury	4	2	6
Head of Service Level 1	10	7	17
Head of Service Level 2	11	9	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>69</b>

There has been no significant change since the previous year, whereby the majority of Chief Officer posts are held by males. Those held by females are largely on the lower end of the Chief Officer grades.

### Employees by Gender and Grade – National Joint Council

Grade	Female	Male	Total
GR1	245	69	314
GR2	752	56	808
GR3	444	124	568
GR4	694	212	906
GR5	836	399	1235
GR6	1181	271	1452
GR7	679	229	908
GR8	342	152	494
GR9	245	129	374
GR10	277	184	461
GR11	191	104	295
GR12	178	73	251
GR13	135	71	206
GR14	61	15	76
GR15	37	38	75
GR16	2	0	2
GR17	15	2	17
GR18	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>6314</b>	<b>2128</b>	<b>8442</b>

## Employees by Gender and Grade – Teachers/Education

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Education Psychologists and Advisers	102	32	134
Leadership Group/Headteachers	98	45	143
Deputy & Assistant Headteachers	127	72	199
Teachers	1353	400	1753
<b>Total</b>	<b>1680</b>	<b>549</b>	<b>2229</b>

The figures above indicate that females make up 75% of the education profession.

Individual salary grades of Education is complex to summarise but on analysis there is a fairly even split of male/female across all salary points with no obvious discrepancies in respect of ability to move through the grades. The grades and salary points are based on nationally agreed pay scales and there are specific requirements for each grade and how employees move through them.

## Employees by Contract Type/Working Pattern

<b>Contract Type</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Permanent Full Time	2622	1864	4486
Permanent Full Time Term Time	144	21	165
Permanent Part Time	1391	211	1602
Permanent Part Time Term Time	2155	95	2250
Temporary Full Time	445	219	664
Temporary Full Time Term Time	12	1	13
Temporary Part Time	100	48	148
Temporary Part Time Term Time	573	69	642
Casual	623	236	859
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8065</b>	<b>2764</b>	<b>10829</b>

For permanent members of staff the breakdown of female/male is comparable to the overall workforce. Although 74.5% of the overall workforce is female, a much higher percentage of those females compared to males are working on part-time or term-time only basis.

## Applicants for Employment and Promotion

There were a total of 426 vacancies advertised during the year 2022-2023. The following table indicates the results of the recruitment monitoring for the same period.

## Applicants for Employment and Promotion by Protected Characteristic

	Applicants	Shortlisted	Appointed
<b>Disabled</b>	320	164	32
<b>Female</b>	3163	1608	469
<b>LGB</b>	457	160	50
<b>Male</b>	1534	783	186
<b>Minority Ethnic</b>	335	149	17
<b>Non Binary</b>	7	2	1
<b>Prefer not to say</b>	20	11	4
<b>Transgender</b>	4	3	0

## Leaving Employment

Information gained from the iTrent System shows that a total of 1324 employees left the employment of the Council in 2022-2023, which included 6 employees who were made redundant. It should be noted that these employees were school based, where the decision on redundancy rests with the relevant school in accordance with School Governance Regulations. The tables below indicate the number of leavers and reasons for leaving during 2022-23.

## Reasons for Leaving by Gender

Reason for Leaving	Female	Male	Total
Age Retirement	67	26	93
Death in Service	7	2	9
Dismissed	3	2	5
Early Retirement (Teachers)	3	1	4
End of Contract	191	77	268
Failed Probationary Period	6	1	7
Ill Health	23	2	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	1	1
Mutual Agreement	92	26	118
Redundant	6	0	6
Transfer to another Council	38	14	52
Voluntary	515	153	668
Voluntary early retirement and redundancy	39	5	44
Voluntary redundancy	17	7	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1007</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>1324</b>

## Reason for Leaving by Age

Reason for leaving	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Age Retirement	0	0	0	0	30	63	93
Death in Service	0	0	4	1	3	1	9
Dismissed	1	0	0	3	1	0	5
Early retirement (Teachers)	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
End of Contract	45	91	53	32	37	10	268
Failed probationary period	3	3	1	0	0	0	7
Ill health	0	0	0	1	19	5	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Mutual agreement	0	9	9	20	58	22	118
Redundant	0	1	1	1	3	0	6
Transfer to another Council	2	18	21	11	0	0	52
Voluntary	76	202	170	126	80	14	668
VER + Redundancy	0	0	0	0	34	10	44
Voluntary Redundancy	0	7	4	3	7	3	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>263</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>1324</b>

## Reason for Leaving by Disability

Reason for Leaving	Total
Age Retirement	5
End of Contract	14
Ill Health	1
Mutual Agreement	6
Voluntary	15
VER + Redundancy	4
Voluntary Redundancy	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>

### Reason for Leaving by Ethnicity

Reason	White	Ethnic Minority	Not Known	Total
Age retirement	85	1	7	93
Death in service	9	0	0	9
Dismissed	5	0	0	5
Early retirement (Teachers)	3	0	1	4
End of contract	204	7	57	268
Failed probationary period	4	0	3	7
Ill health	24	0	1	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	102	0	16	118
Redundant	5	0	1	6
Transfer to another Council	39	0	13	52
Voluntary	562	9	97	668
VER + Redundancy	43	0	1	44
Voluntary Redundancy	21	1	2	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>1106</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>1324</b>

### Reason for Leaving by Religion or Belief

Reason	Christian	Hindu	Muslim	No Religion	Other	Prefer not to say	Sikh	Not Known	Total
Age Retirement	38	0	0	14	2	2	0	37	93
Death in Service	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	7	9
Dismissed	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	5
Early retirement (teachers)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4
End of contract	67	2	3	112	3	19	0	62	268
Failed probationary period	0	0	0	4	0	3	0	0	7
Ill health	6	0	0	4	2	2	0	11	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	31	0	0	19	1	2	0	65	118
Redundant	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	6
Transfer to another Council	16	0	0	15	0	1	0	20	52
Voluntary	159	0	1	264	2	41	1	200	668
VER + Redundancy	17	0	0	14	0	0	0	13	44
Voluntary Redundancy	7	0	0	8	0	0	0	9	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>1324</b>



## Reason for Leaving by Sexual Orientation

Reason	Hetero- sexual	Gay/ Lesbian	Bi- sexual	Prefer not to say	Not Known	Total
Age retirement	45	0	0	2	46	93
Death in service	0	0	0	1	8	9
Dismissed	1	0	0	1	3	5
Early retirement (Teachers)	2	0	0	0	2	4
End of contract	139	3	5	15	106	268
Failed probationary period	4	0	0	3	0	7
Ill health	8	0	0	2	15	25
Inability to Attend Work	0	0	0	0	1	1
Mutual agreement	40	0	0	1	77	118
Redundant	2	0	0	0	4	6
Transfer to another Council	20	1	0	3	28	52
Voluntary	261	8	7	26	366	668
VER + Redundancy	29	0	0	0	15	44
Voluntary Redundancy	12	0	0	0	12	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>1324</b>

## Training

Equality monitoring is carried out in respect of attendance at internal training courses only and has been undertaken by the use of equality monitoring forms that now monitor all protected characteristics.

Identification of the need for training, learning and development is carried out through the Council's workforce planning and performance review systems. During personal development interviews managers will discuss with employees their training, learning and development needs which are aligned to the performance review and job competencies. The results of these feed into a departmental training plan.

The Council does not currently monitor whether training requests are refused as the process used to identify training does not lend itself to this type of monitoring.

There were a total of 25 equality monitoring forms returned in 2022-2023. This is significantly less than previous years. Discussions took part with the Learning and

Development Team to ensure equality monitoring forms were distributed on training courses.

### Training by Sex

Group	Female	Male	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	10	2	0	12
Community & Children's Services	6	2	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	4	0	4
Education & Inclusion	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by Gender Identity

Group	Non-binary	Trans	Other	Prefer not to say	None of these	Total
Chief Executives	1	0	0	0	11	12
Community & Children's Services	0	0	1	1	6	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	0	0	0	4	4
Education & Inclusion	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by Age

Group	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	5	1	6	0	0	0	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by National Identity

Group	British	Cornish	English	Irish	Northern Irish	Scottish	Welsh	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	2	0	1	0	0	0	8	1	0	12
Community & Children's Services	6	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by Ethnicity

Group	Arab	Asian	Black	Gypsy / Traveller (inc Sinti & Roma)	Mixed / Multiple	White	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	1	0	0	0	11	0	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by Religion or Belief

Group	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Non-religious	Sikh	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	6	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	12
Community & Children's Services	0	4	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by Pregnancy and Maternity

Group	Are currently pregnant or have been pregnant during last 12 months	Not currently pregnant, nor have been during last 12 months	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	1	11	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	8	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	4	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

### Training by Sexual Orientation

Group	Bisexual	Gay man	Gay woman / Lesbian	Heterosexual / Straight	Other	Prefer not to say	Total
Chief Executives	0	1	0	10	0	0	12
Community & Children's Services	0	0	0	8	0	0	8
Corporate & Frontline Services	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Education & Inclusion	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>

### Disciplinary & Grievance

Disciplinary and Grievance cases are recorded and monitored through the Vision System. There were a total of 139 cases covering disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work and disciplinary action resulting from sickness absence in 2022-2023. The tables below provide equality monitoring information for these cases:

#### Gender

	Total	Discipline	Sickness Absence	Grievance	Dignity at Work
Male	62	36	20	2	4
Female	77	35	21	12	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

**Age**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Sickness Absence</b>	<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Dignity at Work</b>
16 – 24	<b>3</b>	3	0	0	0
25 – 34	<b>18</b>	9	8	0	1
35 – 44	<b>34</b>	14	14	2	4
45 – 54	<b>50</b>	29	11	6	4
55 – 64	<b>31</b>	13	8	6	4
65+	<b>3</b>	3	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

**Disability**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Sickness Absence</b>	<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Dignity at Work</b>
Disabled	<b>6</b>	3	3	0	0
Non Disabled	<b>115</b>	59	35	12	9
Information not held	<b>18</b>	9	3	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

**Ethnicity**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Sickness Absence</b>	<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Dignity at Work</b>
Asian	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Black	<b>3</b>	3	0	0	0
Chinese	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Mixed	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
White	<b>116</b>	60	37	9	10
Other	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Information not held	<b>20</b>	8	4	5	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

**Religion or Belief**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Sickness Absence</b>	<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Dignity at Work</b>
No Religion	<b>49</b>	27	20	0	2
Christian	<b>30</b>	16	5	5	4
Other	<b>0</b>	0	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	<b>7</b>	5	2	0	0
Information not held	<b>53</b>	23	14	9	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>

**Sexual Orientation**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Discipline</b>	<b>Sickness Absence</b>	<b>Grievance</b>	<b>Dignity at Work</b>
Heterosexual	<b>60</b>	34	18	3	5
Gay/Lesbian	<b>2</b>	1	1	0	0
Bisexual	<b>1</b>	1	0	0	0
Prefer not to say	<b>6</b>	4	2	0	0
Information not held	<b>70</b>	31	20	11	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13</b>