

**Wrexham County Borough Council**  
**Strategic Equality Plan**  
**Annual Report April 2017 – March 2018**

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### **Accessible Formats**

This document and supporting documents will be published on the Council's website in English and Welsh in Microsoft Word and PDF formats in Arial font size 12 as standard. Other accessible formats including large print, Braille, British Sign Language DVD, easy-read, audio and electronic formats, and other languages will be available upon request.

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE  
BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL

**Wrexham County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan  
Annual Report 2017-18**

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# **Wrexham County Borough Council Strategic Equality Plan**

## **Annual Report 2017-2018**

### **Foreword:**

This is the second annual report for the Council's Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016-20:

[https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/equality/2016/strategic\\_equality\\_plan\\_2016\\_2020.pdf](https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/equality/2016/strategic_equality_plan_2016_2020.pdf)

It covers the period April 2017 to March 2018. The report sets out:

- how the Council is meeting its general duties under the Equality Act 2010;
- how the Council is meeting its specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011; and
- progress against the equality objectives and actions set out in the plan.

Our key focus for 2017-2018 remained to:

- mainstream the equality agenda across the Council;
- embed the corporate equality objectives within departmental service plans;
- share knowledge of equality and diversity across the organisation;
- support staff to fulfil their responsibilities in relation to the public sector equality duties; and
- continue to deliver services that meet the needs of our customers.

We have implemented the commitments made in the previous Annual Report (2016-2017):

- Continue to prioritise and enable equality of opportunity through the reshaping of Council services;
- Continue to support and enable departments to meet the corporate equality objectives;
- Support the integration of equality and diversity into the Wrexham Well-being of Future Generations Plan;
- Support and enable Syrian refugees to resettle in Wrexham as part of the Council's humanitarian support for people in extreme need;
- Support the regional co-ordination of activities to tackle discrimination and foster good relations in relation to Prevent and Modern Slavery;
- Support improvements in the quality of Equality Monitoring across the Council and in schools;
- Continue to improve equality impact assessments; and
- Provide targeted equality training to Elected Members.

Our Council Plan and Well-being Plan set out the objectives we are working to as a Council, and as a partner on Wrexham Public Services Board. This strategic equality planning process encourages and allows us to consider and address the different impacts our priorities and work has on different people and communities.

I am pleased to say that progress has continued to be made this year due to the collective commitment and hard work of all Council departments. However, it is important to recognise and tackle on-going areas for improvement if we are to properly address inequalities.

**Councillor Andrew Atkinson**

**Lead Member for People – Youth Services and Anti-Poverty**

## 1. **Executive Summary:**

- 1.1. The Council has a legal duty to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
  - Advance equality of opportunity; and
  - Foster good relations.
- 1.2. We must also ensure that we have the proper processes in place to promote equality and monitor the equality impact of our work.
- 1.3. The Strategic Equality Plan [SEP] 2016-20 sets out the equality aims and objectives we identified as being really important for the people of Wrexham. We have identified key people in the Council including the Lead Member for Equality and Diversity, Heads of Departments and Equality Improvement officers, to help guide the implementation of our Plan and to ensure that we develop a culture of continuous improvement.  
[https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/equality/2016/strategic\\_equality\\_plan\\_2016\\_2020.pdf](https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/equality/2016/strategic_equality_plan_2016_2020.pdf)
- 1.4. This report describes the progress we have made during 2017-2018 to implement the SEP and any additional actions described in the previous annual report, and the processes we have put in place to help us.
- 1.5. Overall we have made good progress implementing our SEP Action Plan 2017-2018; the Equality Act 2010 General Duty and the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011.
- 1.6. While good progress has been made there is much that remains to be done. In addition to the objectives already contained in the SEP 2016-20 we will also take forward the following in 2018-2019:
  - Continue to prioritise and enable equality of opportunity through the reshaping of Council services;
  - Continue to support and enable departments to meet the corporate equality objectives;
  - Support and enable Syrian refugees to resettle in Wrexham as part of the Council's humanitarian support for people in extreme need;
  - Support the regional co-ordination of activities to tackle discrimination and foster good relations in relation to the Prevent Duty and Modern Slavery Duty;
  - Support the work of the North Wales Hate Crime Tactical Group;
  - Support improvements in the quality of workforce equality monitoring and analysis across the Council;
  - Continue to improve equality impact assessments;
  - Provide targeted equality training to Elected Members; and
  - Begin to build a suite of equalities training available via e-learning and face to face methods and develop an associated training plan.

- 1.7. Further details are contained within the main report. If you would like to comment on it please contact us on:

Telephone: 01978 292261, Email: [telluswhatyouthink@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:telluswhatyouthink@wrexham.gov.uk)

## **2. Introduction and background:**

- 2.1. Equality means:

‘An equal society protects and promotes real freedom and opportunity to live in the way people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish. An equal society recognises people’s different needs, situation and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and be.’

[WLGA, Equality Improvement Framework for Wales, 2012]

- 2.2. The Equality Act 2010 brought together a number of different pieces of legislation to provide a single legal framework to more effectively tackle discrimination and disadvantage. The Act sets out groups of people which are specifically listed as having ‘protected characteristics’:

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Race;
- Religion and Belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marriage and Civil Partnership; AND
- Pregnancy and Maternity

- 2.3. The Council’s Welsh Language Scheme was replaced on 30 March 2016 with Welsh Language Standards. These were introduced as part of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 with the purpose of setting a consistent level of service that Welsh speakers can expect to receive in Wales. These form an important part of the Council’s equality and diversity work and are reported separately. Further details are available at:

<https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/welsh-language-standards.htm>

- 2.4. In April 2011 a statutory ‘general duty’ was introduced for all public bodies in England and Wales to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not.

2.5. Public bodies in Wales, including the Council, also have specific legal duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) regulations 2011:

- Publishing a Strategic Equality Plan and equality objectives every 4 years;
- Engagement and involvement activities for groups with 'protected characteristics';
- Ensuring all published material is accessible;
- Assessing the impact of relevant policies and plans;
- Training and the collection of employment information;
- Promoting knowledge and understanding of the Equality Act across the organisation;
- Addressing unfair pay differences;
- Using procurement practice to contribute to the delivery of equality objectives; and
- Reviewing progress in implementing the Strategic Equality Plan and related action plans.

### **3. Wrexham Council Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016-20:**

3.1. The Council prepared its SEP during 2016 following engagement with a wide range of local and regional groups representing people with protected characteristics. This enabled us to identify local equality objectives. We also worked with the other public bodies across North Wales to identify regional equality objectives. The evidence base used to identify these objectives is detailed within the SEP.

<http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/equality/equality.htm>

3.2. The evidence for delivery against these objectives was located in the Council's SEP (local and regional equality objectives) and departmental service plans. **Appendix a** demonstrates how the equality objectives underpin all the work of the Council Plan.

3.3. Actions to deliver the SEP are contained within departmental service plans. Information at **Appendix b** highlights the progress made in relation to each of the corporate equality objectives.

3.4. The Council's overall work on equality is supported by the Welsh Language Standards [http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/welsh\\_language\\_scheme.htm](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/welsh_language_scheme.htm) and the Customer Services Strategy which is detailed at:

<http://www.internal.wrexham.gov.uk/MinutesData/ExBoard/Reports/hccs5814.pdf> A new Customer Services Strategy will be developed during 2018-2019.

### **4. Wrexham Public Service Board:**

4.1. Wrexham Public Services Board (PSB) is a statutory body established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016 as a result of the enactment of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Representation at the PSB includes all public sector organisations working in Wrexham and the Wrexham Council for Voluntary Services <http://www.wrexhampsb.org/about-us/>

- 4.2. The purpose of the PSB is to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wrexham County Borough. In pursuing this purpose the Board will contribute to seven national well-being goals, as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:
- A prosperous Wales;
  - A resilient Wales;
  - A healthier Wales;
  - A more equal Wales;
  - A Wales of cohesive communities;
  - A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language; and
  - A globally responsible Wales.
- 4.3. On 31 March 2017 the PSB prepared and published an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wrexham County Borough. <http://www.wrexhampsb.org/the-wrexham-we-want/> On 28<sup>th</sup> May 2018 the PSB published a Local Well-being Plan for Wrexham County Borough setting out local objectives and the steps it proposes to take to meet them.
- 4.4. In developing and implementing the Wrexham Well-being Plan, partners are also required to take account of the sustainable development principle by applying the following **5 ways of working**:
- Looking to the **long term** so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
  - Taking an **integrated** approach so that public bodies look at all the well-being goals in deciding on their well-being objectives;
  - **Involving** a diversity of the population in the decisions that affect them;
  - Working with others in a **collaborative** way to find shared sustainable solutions;
  - Understanding the root causes of issues to **prevent** them from occurring.
- 4.5. It is clear that together the Well-being goals and the 5 Ways of Working have the potential to significantly address local inequalities. It is clear that together the Well-being goals and the 5

ways of working have the potential to significantly address local inequalities. The development of the Wrexham Well-being Plan ensured equalities were fully considered and the Wellbeing Plan reflects the equality issues identified in the Strategic Equality Plans of all the partners.

- 4.6. The Well-being Plan has four cross cutting themes of: Poverty, **Equality**, Climate Change and Welsh Language. This will help guide the PSB to consider Equalities in all of the work to deliver on the Well-being Plan.
- 4.7. A planning principles assessment tool has been developed for the authority, promoting active consideration of the Council's planning principles in decision making and service delivery. This includes a focus on prevention, prioritising the most vulnerable and the 5 Ways of Working from the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

## 5. **Equality leads, champions and networks**

- 5.1. The Lead Member for People – Youth Services and Anti-Poverty has the lead role in promoting and overseeing the Council's work on equality and diversity. Strategic support in 2017-2018 was provided by the Head of Finance. The Customers, Performance, Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee receive monitoring reports and the Council's Executive Board are responsible for formally approving the annual SEP update report.
- 5.2. The Partnerships Team provided support to mainstream equality and diversity across the Council including via the corporate Equality Improvement Group [EIG].

## 6. **Internal delivery and monitoring processes**

- 6.1. **Delivery** of the Strategic Equality Plan is achieved through our existing Council and departmental strategies and plans. The Council Plan is the Council's overarching strategy. It sets out the seven planning principles that will be considered in the planning and provision of all Council services:
  - **Prevention** comes first
  - Prioritise the most **vulnerable**
  - Plan for the **long term**
  - Consult and **involve** local people
  - **Integrate** services
  - **Collaborate** services
  - Services and information should be equally available in **Welsh** and English
- 6.2. The Plan also sets out three strategic well-being themes that the Council will work towards:
  - **Economy** – supporting a sustainable, thriving and more equal economy
  - **People** – supporting sustainable, active and self-reliant communities whilst safeguarding those at risk
  - **Place** – supporting a sustainable and bio-diverse environment

- 6.3. These are underpinned by a fourth, corporate well-being theme of '**Organisation** – building an efficient and effective organisation that can best support local well-being'.
- 6.4. The well-being themes are described in detail in the [Council Plan \(2017-22\)](#) together with a high level summary of the actions and activities that the Council will undertake to improve local well-being, and the measures and targets that will be used to judge progress.
- 6.5. The approach to equalities in Wrexham has been one of mainstreaming across everything that we do. We know that the way that services are planned and delivered can impact differently on different groups of people, therefore we monitor and consider the impact of services on people with different protected characteristics to promote fair and equitable outcomes. By mainstreaming equality considerations across Council and departmental strategies, plans and service proposals we can identify where discrimination could potentially occur in the delivery of our services and take steps to mitigate it.
- 6.6. The purpose of our equality **monitoring** is to better understand who is, and who is not accessing our services as well as establishing what people need from services. This information will help us to target resources where they are needed most; prioritising the most vulnerable in our communities. Equality information can be found at **Appendix c**. Improving equality monitoring across our workforce and services including schools remains a key area of development for the 2018-2020 period.

## **7. Progress against the general duty under the Equality Act 2010**

- 7.1. A range of activities were taken forward in relation to each of the general duties during 2017-2018. These included, for example:
- 7.2. **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation:**
- There were 125 reported hate crimes during the period 2016-2017. This increased to 159 hate crime reports in 2017-2018. In the previous annual equality report reference was made to a short term spike in hate crime reports that returned to a more normal baseline level. Current data however shows a sustained increased in hate crimes reported this year to date;
  - A Regional Tactical Hate Crime Group was introduced in 2018. It aims to identify trends/patterns in relation to hate crime reporting, develop action plans to respond, ensure effective support for victims and to resolve barriers that could prevent the effective prosecution of perpetrators. The Council links into this group via Regional Community Cohesion Co-ordinator;
  - A detailed analysis of hate crime data at both a Wrexham County Borough and ward level has been commissioned from the community safety data analysts. This report will inform discussions and actions as appropriate led by the Community Safety Partnership for Wrexham;
  - The Partnerships Team and Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator continued to embed the National Framework for Tackling Hate Crime;
  - A regional Hate Crime Awareness Week communications pack was used to raise awareness during Hate Crime Awareness week – includes briefings for

senior managers and elected members, articles for intranet and internet and social media feeds;

- Hate crime is referenced in the Corporate Safeguarding Policy;
- The Community Cohesion Co-ordinator and Partnerships Team continued to support the development of a North Wales regional approach to tackling Modern Slavery;
- The Partnerships Team, in conjunction with Workforce Development have coordinated Prevent awareness raising training to Community Councillors staff and schools;
- The Community Safety Team continue to prioritise tackling anti-social behavior;
- The Procurement Team have embedded the WG Ethical Code as a key principle of the Council's new Commissioning Procurement and Contract Management Strategy;
- WCBC Recognised White Ribbon Day to promote awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence;
- WCBC recognised the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia (IDAHOT) promote greater awareness and support for sexual and gender diversity;
- WCBC recognised and promoted Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017.

### **7.3. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not:**

- The Partnerships Team continued to develop a range of guidance and briefing documents in relation to Equality and Diversity e.g. equality monitoring guidance;
- The Partnerships Team contributed to the development of the Wrexham Wellbeing Plan;
- Our customers can choose to conduct their business with the Council in English or in Welsh. For customers who need to communicate with us in other languages we can arrange for a telephone interpreter. In addition, we can arrange a range of face-to-face communication support such as British Sign Language interpreters;
- Our website has a range of tools to improve accessibility including the ability to listen to pages on our website using Dixerit Plus;
- The Education Department has supported a continued reduction in the numbers of Year 11 leavers who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) reduced again in Wrexham from 1.4% in 2016 to 1.1% in 2017. This is amongst the lowest percentage of NEETS in Wales. The TRAC project is supported by a team that liaises closely with schools to identify children in secondary school who are at risk of becoming NEET;
- The support for Gypsy and Traveller pupils has been restructured to ensure more challenge to schools in their expectations of this group of learners. Bespoke packages of support to promote wellbeing have been delivered in order to bridge the gap between school and home, to enhance parental

- engagement;
- Recent Outreach Worker appointments through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme funded by the Home Office has promoted inclusion and wellbeing for this vulnerable group by working with the wider community, as well as with targeted schools;
- The Governor Support Team is working to encourage a diverse range of people to become school governors;
- The Procurement Team ensured all tender exercises over £1m in value include a standard clause in relation to community benefits which helps to improve the quality of life for people from diverse backgrounds by opening doors to career and skills development opportunities;
- As part of the Welsh Government's Play Sufficiency Duty, specific consideration is given to children who may experience barriers to play beyond those reported by most other children, with particular attention paid to the play needs of disabled children, looked after children, young carers, children from traveller families and those from other minority ethnic groups;
- All schools have completed an accessibility audit;
- The Healthy Schools Team continued to support schools to deliver the Healthy Schools Award including through the school health days;
- The Education Department delivered the Insport Development Programme. This is part of the broader insport project, which aims to support the physical activity, sport and leisure sectors delivering inclusively of disabled people;
- The Education Department offers a significant range of well-coordinated support to children and young people to address their wellbeing, including counselling and advocacy. The authority provides a universal Second Voice Advocacy Service to young people aged 11 to 25. In 2016-17, the service received 109 referrals with 72% of planned case closures reporting that they had been helped with their issue. This provision and partnerships with health services are a significant strength;
- The Participation Team and Senedd yr Ifanc effectively facilitates work across both the statutory and voluntary sector, providing both training and development opportunities for young people and professionals. As a result, three members of the Senedd have been members of the Public Health Wales commissioning group to develop The Young Persons Annual Quality Statement 2016/17 and have recently won an Award by the Patient Experience Network National Awards (PENNA).
- The local authority strongly promotes equality and inclusion through partnerships with organisations such as Show Racism the Red Card and Stonewall Cymru. This has included facilitating a conference on homophobic bullying and transgender issues, and the rollout of transgender guidance for Wrexham schools.

#### **7.4. Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not:**

- The Partnerships team and Equality Improvement Group continues to work to embed the equality impact assessment process across Wrexham County

Borough Council.

- On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018 the Secretary of State for Portuguese Communities, Mr José Luís Carneiro, signed a Co-operation Protocol with Wrexham Council. The signing was the first of its kind in the UK and only the fifth in Europe. The Co-operation Protocol recognises the working relationship between the Council and local Portuguese groups and its role in contributing to the well-being of Portuguese nationals in Wrexham. Guests included representatives from the two Portuguese run community groups in Wrexham – Associacao da Cultura Portuguesa Gra Bretanha and the Comunidade de Lingua Portuguesa de Wrexham.
- The Council flew the Rainbow Flag to demonstrate support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender [LGBT] History Month;
- The Council recognised and promoted awareness of International Womens Day
- The Education Department is a member of the Wrexham Adult Community Learning Partnership which prioritises English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL);
- In adult and community learning provision, a learner voice survey carried out amongst partner organisations in 2015-16 indicated that “Learners are supportive of each other in classes, demonstrating mutual respect, care and concern for others” and “There is a wide range of social backgrounds in many classes and learners show respect for this diversity which fosters an environment conducive to learning.”
- The Performance Improvement and Partnerships Team encouraged volunteering through the Together in Wrexham programme assessment criteria;
- The Tenancy Support Team provided mediation support between tenants where necessary; and
- The Housing Department provided a forum, events and drop-ins to support tenant engagement and participation.

## **8. Progress against the specific duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Wales) Regulations 2011**

- 8.1. Details of progress against each of the specific requirements under the Wales Regulations, including Employee Equality Monitoring, is provided in sections 4 – 10 of this report.
- 8.2. Effective monitoring of the SEP has been limited because there continues to be a focus on processes and outputs rather than on outcomes. It is planned to review the approach with a view to introducing an outcome focused approach during the review of the Strategic Equality Plan which will take place during 2019-2020. We will aim to address this by:
  - Encouraging equality outcomes to be explicitly identified in departmental Service Plans and linked to the Council Plan;
  - Increased alignment of needs assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation with Corporate Performance;
  - Encourage the use of the online performance management system Sycle,

where appropriate, to further link the corporate, departmental and equalities processes.

8.3. Within the Strategic Equality Plan performance management structure from April 2020 we aim to further address this by:

- Agreeing outcome focused Strategic Equalities Objectives (outcomes);
- Agreeing key performance indicators for each high level outcome;
- Agreeing key performance measures for identified actions within the plan.

## 9. **Engagement**

9.1. Departments across the Council record and monitor the profile of customers accessing their services. The process for this is not consistent across the Council. A number of resources have been developed to support improvements:

9.2. In 2018, the Council adopted its new 'Involvement Strategy'; the vision of which is that all people have the information they need to influence the planning and delivery of services. They are engaged and consulted with on decisions which affect them, and where possible we work together to design and deliver services.

<http://www.internal.wrexham.gov.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Involvement-Strategy-2018-2022.pdf>

9.3. Involvement is one of the Council's key planning in line with the implementation of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Therefore the new Involvement strategy will focus on three areas of involvement: Consultation, Engagement and Co-production, and continue to ensure equality of access and service across all customer groups. A number of guidance documents have been developed by the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network, of which Wrexham County Borough Council is a member, including:

- Top Ten Tips – Equality Impact Assessments and Due Regard;
- Top Ten Tips for Equality Monitoring;
- Top Ten Tips for Accessible Events;

9.4. A range of data sources are used by the Council. These include Office for National Statistics, [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) NOMIS, Infobase Cymru, Stats Wales, regional and national research and reports. The Council also uses Your Voice Wrexham, an [online engagement hub](http://yourvoicewrexham.net) which is owned by Wrexham Public Services Board [PSB]. This provides a co-ordinated approach to consultation and engagement across all PSB partner organisations in Wrexham. <http://yourvoicewrexham.net>

9.5. Some communities with protected characteristics have relatively small populations and therefore statistical analysis can be very difficult. However, where key differences in responses are indicated by particular groups, these are highlighted in findings and presented to decision-makers. The Council may also use national and regional research in order to better

understand the issues in relation to these groups of people.

9.6. The Council circulates opportunities for engagement as widely as possible, and where appropriate, will try to engage particular groups through existing and established fora/networks, such as:

- Wrexham Islamic Cultural Association
- BAWSO
- North Wales Regional Public Sector Equality Network
- Wrexham VI Voices
- Wrexham Over 50's Forum
- Wrexham Senedd Yr Ifanc (Young People's Parliament)
- School Councils
- Portuguese Community Group
- Unique Transgender Group
- VIVA LGBT
- Trans Positivity Wrexham
- Tangnefedd (North East Wales Interfaith Forum)
- Association of Voluntary Groups in Wrexham (AVOW) and its member organisations

9.7. In order to support our equality impact assessment process, we will consider ways that we can further increase the understanding of potential impacts for protected groups through engagement with stakeholders; for example an equalities reference group.

9.8. We also recognise that engagement with our workforce is important. The Human Resources & Organisation Development Team in the Corporate and Customer Services Department uses various groups, eg Virtual policy group, employee forum, Senior Leadership Team, Senior Managers group, when feedback is required for workforce policy development/changes. We also consult with the recognised Trade Unions who are representing the wider workforce.

## 10. **Using information to meet the general duty**

10.1. Departments are encouraged to use service data to understand the profile of their customers and potential customers. Census data may also be used to identify under or over representation of groups with protected characteristics within specific service areas. This supports departments to be able to agree actions and set targets.

10.2. Analysis of satisfaction rates and complaints helps to identify areas of potential discrimination and proactively address potential community tensions e.g.

- Customer services surveys include equality monitoring;
- Analysis of customer complaints by departments identifies potential areas of discrimination which are then addressed; and

- Potential community tensions are collected, reviewed and addressed through co-ordinated action with local community safety partners.

10.3. Information gained through Equality Impact Assessments is used to inform service developments. Further work is needed to share this information across departments.

## 11. **Wrexham Council Employees**

11.1. The term “equality monitoring” describes the process used to gather, store, and analyse this information, which is used to improve our services, policies and procedures.

11.2. The latest Employment Equality Monitoring report for the 2016-2017 period was published in August 2018. It includes information on the various protected characteristics we are able to report on. The data relates to individuals directly employed by the Council. Data excludes those who work with us but are engaged on a casual, interim or agency basis.

11.3. Work is underway by HR to analyse this information in order to inform our work to address inequality.

11.4. The Council will be reporting on the following, where current systems will allow;

- Employees of the Council on 31 March annually by protected characteristic
- Male and female employees, broken down by:
  - job
  - grade
  - pay
  - contract type
  - working pattern
- Applicants for jobs with the Council over the last year by protected characteristic;
- Employees who have applied to change position within the Council, identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not by protected characteristic;
- Employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application by protected characteristic;
- Employees who completed the training by protected characteristic;
- Employees involved in grievance procedures either as complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made by protected characteristic;
- Employees subject to disciplinary procedures by protected characteristic; and
- Employees who have left the Council’s employment by protected characteristic.

11.5. Employment Equality Monitoring Reports can be found at:

[http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/top\\_navigation/equality.htm](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/top_navigation/equality.htm)

11.6. Diversity is important because it helps the Council to maintain a workforce that has a wide range of skills, qualifications and experiences. We are committed to ensuring that all our employment policies and practices for employees are fair, advance equality of outcome, eliminate discrimination and foster good employee relations. As a public authority the Council is committed to take steps to

promote equality of opportunity and combat discrimination and to gather information about employees regarding their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership.

- 11.7. These reports monitor the workforce and potential workforce and this information is used to review the effectiveness of our employment policies and practices and to consider whether there has been any potential lack of fairness or even discrimination. Data which indicates there may be potential for lack of fairness or discrimination in the application of a policy or practice is investigated in more depth and if necessary, remedial action is taken to remove it by reviewing the relevant policy or practice. We review all our policies periodically and carry out Equality Impact Assessments where this is relevant.
- 11.8. We use employment monitoring information to help us identify any key equality issues which require specific action; whether our workforce reflects the local community; to measure progress year on year; to identify possible steps to further advance equality or foster good relations and when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments. We have taken steps to improve data capture on equality monitoring for our staff, whilst accepting that we have to respect that not all employees wish to provide this personal or sensitive information. We believe that it is important to give employees the opportunity to be counted if they wish. Both the paper application form (now only used for accessible reasons) and online application form provide an explanation as to why equality monitoring data is collected and how it will be used, providing reassurances around the Data Protection Act and confidentiality. Applicants are required to complete our equality monitoring form as part of e-recruitment as that section is mandatory, although most fields allow staff to state: "prefer not to say".
- 11.9. We are expanding the use of our "self-service" facility so that staff can log on from the internet at home, which should further improve the equality data we hold for staff. Our latest Employment Monitoring Report for 2016-17 is available on our website under the Equality and Diversity section. [http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/top\\_navigation/equality.htm](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/top_navigation/equality.htm)

## **12. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

- 12.1. The online EIA process has been developed in collaboration with the Equality Improvement Group. This includes a combined screening and assessment tool. Key features include:
- EIA identification numbers which also reference the authoring department;
  - Intuitive design that has eliminated the need for training on completing the form;
  - Format includes the identification of positive impacts as well as potential negative ones;
  - Format enables electronic links to relevant consultation and other documents;
  - Integral review process for updating EIAs following implementation of decisions;
  - EIA summary information is a mandatory part of all Scrutiny Committee and Executive Board reports; and
  - EIAs can be accessed electronically by Elected Members. Training on accessing the EIA system was most recently provided in March 2018.

- 12.2. The Council's approach to equality impact assessments is to include groups of people which are specifically listed as having 'protected characteristics':
- Age;
  - Disability;
  - Gender reassignment;
  - Race;
  - Religion and Belief;
  - Sex;
  - Sexual orientation;
  - Marriage and Civil Partnership; and
  - Pregnancy and Maternity
- 12.3. In addition, we recognise that individuals and communities are under increased pressure because of caring responsibilities, the economic environment in the UK, changes to the Benefits system, and expected reductions in public, voluntary and community services. Therefore within our local EIA system we also consider as additional characteristics for the purposes of Equality Impact Assessments:
- Poverty;
  - Caring; and
  - Welsh Language
- 12.4. By taking a wider view of the protected characteristics we encourage a more holistic approach to the needs of all communities in designing or delivering our services.
- 12.5. To assist the EIA process a series of 'This is Wrexham' data sheets have previously been developed in collaboration with the EIG and the Performance Improvement and Partnerships team [PIPS]. There is one sheet for each protected characteristic plus Carers, Welsh Language and Poverty. In addition, a census analysis sheet has been prepared to assist departments in analysing service user data in relation to each of the protected groups.
- 12.6. Corporate consultations request equalities information from respondents and are analysed by protected characteristics groups to ensure that any specific data / opinions from these groups are reported to decision makers and included in equality impact assessments.

### **13. Quality Assurance Process:**

- 13.1. As part of the internal quality assurance process, members of the Equality Improvement Group [EIG] have developed internal quality assessment criteria for equality impact assessments.
- 13.2. Members of the EIG reviewed a sample of departmental equality impact assessments [EIAs] against criteria previously agreed by the Group. The basis for the assessment criteria is the legal duty to demonstrate 'due regard'. Considerable progress has been made since the introduction of the EIA tool in Wrexham:

- All budget related decisions were subject to an EIA;
- Examples of good practice have been identified in all departments;
- The process for publishing EIAs as part of Executive Board and Committee reports is working well.

13.3. In relation to 'due regard' a number of strategic and operational issues were identified. Steps to address these will be taken forward corporately and by departments during the remaining period of the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020.

13.4. The Equality and Human Rights Committee [EHRC] guidance on EIAs states that public organisations should have internal systems to ensure EIAs are happening, are of a sufficient quality and that such mechanisms are proportionate to the public authority's size and resources, and are supported at senior levels. The officer Senior Partnerships Officer has reviewed progress against the EHRC guidance:

<b>EHRC Guidance</b>	<b>WCBC Procedure – 2017-2018 position</b>
Identify relevant person, unit or team to support the authority's work on equality (and specifically EIAs)	Customers, Performance, Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee Community Diversity Team (as was) Partnerships Team Equality Improvement Group Departmental Senior Management Teams
Dedicated equality officer to coordinate and provide advice (or identified an existing staff member who already has responsibility for coordinating activity)	Previously Community Diversity Manager / Officer; now Senior Performance, Partnerships, Improvement and Scrutiny Officer.
Introduce a standing agenda item for their board on EIAs and the duties more broadly	Customers, Performance, Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee annual report. Executive Board annual report Feedback to the Senior Leadership Team and to Departmental senior management teams
Convene an internal working group, chaired by a member of the senior management team, with representation from each department or directorate to monitor organisation-wide progress on EIAs and wider duties performance	Equality Improvement Group

Carry out spot checks on a sample of EIAs in order to test the quality of the assessments	<p>A Quality Assurance procedure has been developed with guidance from the EIG and Internal Audit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIG members to undertake assessments twice a year;</li> <li>• Review to be undertaken in December to inform Annual Equality Report, Service Planning and the Annual Governance Statement; and</li> <li>• EIG to consider and challenge a selection of assessments; overview report to be prepared for Heads of Department.</li> </ul>
EIA templates adapted to include a sign-off section	Online EIAs are electronically linked to their authoring department.
Ensure that relevant policies and EIAs are signed off by equality leads and a member of senior management,	<p>Delegated authority from Heads of Department to officers completing individual EIAs. Internal Assurance Statements. Head of department control. Executive Board / decision making boards report template amended to include EIA</p>
Introduce a 'critical friends' panel of local senior-level experts to provide a robust challenge to officers regarding EIAs.	<p>Equality Improvement Group. We will consider ways that we can further increase the understanding of potential impacts for protected groups through engagement with stakeholders; for example an equalities reference group.</p>

## 14. Compliance

14.1. The responsibility for carrying out EIAs rests with Heads of Department and they should put in place systems to ensure that this is done. As they are a key element of the governance framework, the Council's equality arrangements will be subject to regular, but not necessarily annual, audits which will provide independent assurance on the effectiveness of the controls put in place by the Head of Department. Such audits may include compliance checks on EIAs, but this will be dependent on an Internal Audit assessment of risk at the commencement of the audit. The results of the audit will be reported to the relevant Head of Department, Senior Management Team and the Audit Committee. The Internal Audit Section provides guidance to assist the Council and Heads of Department in ensuring that there are effective internal controls in place in relation to equality and diversity.

## **15. Equality Impact Assessment of Budget Proposals 2017-18**

- 15.1. The Council is keen to ensure that equality and diversity is built into the budget setting process in order to minimise any detrimental impact on front line services, vulnerable people and people with protected characteristics.
- 15.2. The Council has used the significant reshaping of services as a result of budget cuts across the public sector as an opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to prioritising vulnerable people. Therefore the 2017/18 budget was opened up to public consultation through online and hard copy surveys. Information gained from this process informed budget proposals and helped the Council listen to our citizens in order to more effectively target resources.
- 15.3. EIAs were completed on all the budget proposals for 2017/18 and are published on the Council's website.

## **16. Training and Awareness Raising**

- 16.1. It is acknowledged that further work is needed to ensure all members of Council staff understand their responsibilities in relation to the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 16.2. During 2017-18 some specific training and awareness raising has been provided:
- Member training on the Housing Act Gypsy and Traveller requirements in conjunction with Housing Strategy Team;
  - Modern Slavery training was provided by the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator for Public Protection staff in Flintshire; this was also opened up to Wrexham Public Protection Staff;
  - Councillor training on equality and equality impact assessments, including how to use the online tool was delivered at the request of Scrutiny Committee;
  - 1:1 Equality and Diversity awareness raising sessions were held with Heads of Services;
  - Equality training was delivered for Schools, head teachers and school governors;
  - Modern Slavery Tier 2 training for social services staff was organized in conjunction with workforce development;
  - Prevent training for staff and schools was coordinated in conjunction with workforce development; delivered by North Wales Police;
  - Safeguarding training that included reference to Modern Slavery and Prevent was provided to Elected Members;
  - A regional Modern Slavery e-learning module for all local authorities across North Wales began development. Work is being led by the Regional Community Cohesion Coordinators and Wrexham County Borough Council's Workforce Development Team;
  - A review of the regional Prevent e-learning module was initiated to produce a tailored Wrexham training package with associated referral pathway.
- 16.3. In addition to this training, diversity and equality is included within the:
- Induction workshops for all new elected members; and

- Annual equality awareness raising for all elected members within the annual Member development programme.

16.4. Furthermore, Adults and Children's Social Care Departments have revised their training programme:

- Workforce Development (Corporate) have equality and diversity as the golden thread throughout all of their face to face training. Each presentation makes reference to the Equality Act 2010;
- eLearning modules include Equalities in the Workplace and the Equality Act 2010.
- All contracts with external training providers make reference to the Councils commitment to Equalities and the relevant policies and procedures;
- Workforce Development (Social Care) training programme reflects the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- The core values within the Social Care Training programme and Code of Professional Practice are to respect the views and wishes, and promote the rights and interests of individuals. To establish trust and confidence of individuals and promote their well-being, voice and control;
- Promoting the Social Care Wales Social Care Induction Framework which aims to embed a sound value base and promotes equality and diversity of individuals in receipt of services;
- Implementing the Social Care Wales Code of Professional Practice for Social Care which sets the standard for social care workers ensuring they promote the rights, interests and wishes of individuals and carers, and ensure their actions promote equality, diversity and inclusion;
- All Social Care workers and managers who undertake Health and Social Care qualifications are required to demonstrate understanding of equalities issues.
- Welsh Language training continues to be available to Council employees and the wider social care sector;
- The Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) for 2018/19 continues to include training on equality matters such as best practice in dementia, safeguarding, person centered practice and outcome focused practice;
- We have invested in Community Care Inform and online social care learning resource with a vast range of training materials covering equality and cultural issues.

16.5. Individual staff performance monitoring is achieved through the Performance (PRD) process. Annual work related objectives are set for all members of staff and these are reviewed six monthly. Equality objectives are a mandatory section of the PRD template. This will help us to progress our corporate equality objectives and to identify training needs. Further monitoring and analysis is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of this approach.

16.6. Although equality and diversity training and awareness sessions have made a positive contribution towards ensuring that the Council meets its statutory duties, we recognise that further work is needed to promote greater understanding of the duties across all staff groups. To support this mainstreaming approach a number of e-learning packages have been developed:

- Equality Act 2010;
- Equality in the workplace;
- Equality Impact Assessments;
- Tackling Hate Crime;
- Prevent Duty;
- Community Tension Monitoring.

16.7. These have been designed to reflect the Council's statutory equality duties and are available to all staff that have access to a computer. Separately a PowerPoint training modules covering these equality responsibilities has been developed for use by managers with peripatetic staff e.g. Street Scene.

16.8. Departmental training needs in relation to equality and diversity are collated by members of the EIG. Further promotion of the available packages and a review of those that are mandatory will be undertaken during 2018-19 period.

16.9. Finally, where training needs are identified through the year through feedback or observation, collaboration between the Partnerships Team and Workforce Development Team takes place to ensure that where appropriate provision is sourced.

## 17. **Procurement**

17.1. Details of how equality is embedded into the procurement process are set out in the SEP. In brief, the Council has adopted the 'SQuID' (Supplier Qualification Information Database) model for public procurement introduced by the Welsh Government. This approach aims to deliver a number of benefits related to promoting equality and diversity by asking a number of key questions:

1. Have any of the following circumstances applied to your organisation in the last three years? - A finding of unlawful discrimination by an Employment Tribunal, an Employment Appeal Tribunal or any other court or tribunal (or comparable proceedings)?. If yes, provide a summary of the findings or judgement and explain what action you have taken to prevent similar circumstances from recurring.
2. If you use sub-contractor(s), what processes do you have in place to check whether any of the above circumstances apply to them?
3. Do your staff with management responsibilities receive equalities training?
4. Do your staff with service delivery responsibilities receive equalities training?

17.2. Guidance on equality is available from the Council's Procurement Team with best practice information being made available to officers via the Welsh Government's Procurement Route Planner. In addition, contract specifications and contracts contain specific equality clauses relating to the Council's equality objectives and legal duties as relevant and proportionate to the contract. The Procurement Team facilitates commissioning processes that actively involve people with protected characteristics in the commissioning and co-production of services

17.3. In addition, all tender exercises over £1m in value include a standard clause in relation to

community benefits; 'Training and employment opportunities - provide 52 weeks apprenticeships, work experience, training and / or employment for disadvantaged groups for every £1m spent.

17.4. The WG Ethical Code is a key principle of the Council's new Commissioning Procurement and Contract Management Strategy.

## 18. **Conclusion and key actions for 2018-2019**

18.1. This report outlines the progress made so far in implementing the Council's Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) and in meeting both its specific and general equality duties.

18.2. Whilst good progress has been made, there is much that remains to be done. In addition to the objectives already contained in the Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20, during 2018-19 we will also:

- Continue to prioritise and enable equality of opportunity through the reshaping of Council services;
- Continue to support and enable departments to meet the corporate equality objectives;
- Support and enable Syrian refugees to resettle in Wrexham as part of the Council's humanitarian support for people in extreme need;
- Support the regional co-ordination of activities to tackle discrimination and foster good relations in relation to Prevent and Modern Slavery;
- Support the work of the North Wales Hate Crime tactical group
- Support improvements in the quality of equality monitoring and analysis;
- Continuing to improve equality impact assessments; and
- Provide targeted equality training to Elected Members;
- Begin to build a suite of equalities training available via e-learning and face to face methods and develop an associated training plan.

18.3. Additionally, a key priority during 2019-20 will be to further improve the use of performance data to inform and support the development and monitoring of our next set of Strategic Equality Objectives. The process to review and agree revised Strategic Equality objectives will begin in April 2019, with the objectives taking effect from April 2020.

18.4. **Thank you for reading our Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report 2017-18.**

18.5. Your views and suggestions for our annual report are welcome. Please contact us on:  
Telephone: 01978 292261                      Email: [telluswhatyouthik@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:telluswhatyouthik@wrexham.gov.uk)

## 19. **Appendices**

- a. Equality objectives that underpin the Council Plan, the Wrexham PSB Plan and achievement of the Welsh Government national Well-being Goals.

- b. Strategic Equality Action Plan
- c. Equality Information
- d. Glossary of term