

Cydraddoldeb ac
Amrwyiaeth
Equality and Diversity



Strategic Equality Plan
Annual Monitoring Report
2020 – 2021



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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Version Control

Title	Strategic Equality Plan Annual Monitoring Report 2020 – 2021
Purpose	Legal document required under the Equality Act 2010
Owner	Equality and Welsh Language Policy Officer
Approved by	Not yet finalised
Date	18/11/2021
Version Number	1.0
Status	Not yet approved
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	18/11/2022
Consultation	To be considered by Strong Communities Select Committee

Alternative Formats

This document is available on the Council's website at

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity>

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Introduction and Policy Context

This annual monitoring report covers progress during the year ending March 2021. It is the first for the council's third Strategic Equality Plan which was approved by Council on the 5th of March 2020 and this plan builds upon the work carried out in the previous two.

You can access the latest Strategic Equality Plan on the council's website at:
<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

Links to strategies

The Council's third Strategic Equality Plan 2020 – 2024 was approved by Council on the 5th of March 2020. It is important to note that it is not a standalone plan and has close links to a number of other key council, partnership and national strategies, plans and policies. Some of these are specifically focussed on equality and others have included equality as one of the key themes. Examples being:

- Social Justice Strategy 2017 - 2022
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Cymraeg 2050 (1 million Welsh speakers by 2050)
- Strategaeth Mwy na geiriau/More than words strategy 2011 and 2016
- Monmouthshire Local Development Plan 2011-21
- Strategy for Older People Wales Phase 3
- Monmouthshire County Council Well-being Plan 2018
- Well Being of Future Generations Act 1st April 2016
- Social Care and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

The Equality Act 2010 not only requires the Council to comply with its general and specific duties highlighted below, but also provides an opportunity for it to demonstrate its commitment to the principles of equality which have been a feature of its functions prior to the implementation of the Act.

Our Social Justice Strategy

The Council's Social Justice Strategy demonstrates our commitment to address inequalities and improve outcomes for the county's people and communities. It has been driven by the council's desire to tackle the inequality highlighted in the well-being and population needs assessments carried out by local authorities and health boards following the passing of The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The strategic equality plan dovetails with this strategy, providing greater detail on some of the activities we will deliver to address inequality in the county

Monmouthshire's strategic equality objectives 2020-2024

The strategic objectives that have been agreed in the new Strategic Equality Plan are:

- Give children the best possible start in life overcoming barriers to attainment and opportunity
- Overcome inequalities in access to economic prosperity
- Create cohesive communities
- Provide services that are accessible to our public and support our workforce.
- Create a diverse and inclusive workforce
- Reduce the gender pay gap

Legislative Context

The General Duty of the Equality Act 2010

In exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to:

1. eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
2. advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
3. foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Specific Duties in Wales

The broad purpose of the specific duties is to help public bodies, such as this Council, in their performance of the general duty, and to aid transparency. In Wales the specific duties are set by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

The following are the specific duties:

- Setting equality objectives and publishing strategic equality plans
- Engagement
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Employment information, pay differences and staff training
- Procurement
- Reporting and publishing

Strategic Equality Objectives: Progress 2020-21

This section describes some of the specific things we have done which are aligned with the objectives set in the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024 and we have also included some examples of good practice that fall under the broad umbrella of the objectives.

Strategic objective 1: Give children the best possible start in life overcoming barriers to attainment and opportunity

Desired Outcome: Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being

Action: Develop an integrated early intervention and prevention pathway to support children and families at the earliest opportunity and reduce the need for statutory intervention to keep people safe those with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Progress: completed

Desired Outcome: Children attain their full potential.

Action: Map the current provision to support pupils eligible for Free School Meal (eFSM) through the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and Monmouthshire; identify any gaps and work with the EAS and wider partners to develop a cohesive strategy to raise the attainment of FSM pupils and close the gap between FSM and non FSM pupils.

Progress: This is an ongoing piece of work that will continue through the lifetime of this plan and beyond – 2020 – 2024.

Desired Outcome: Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being (narrowing the gap outcome)

Action 1: Develop an effective 0 - 25 Partnership for Children and Young People.

Action 2: Develop the Community Focussed School Programme.

Progress 1: The Integrated Youth Offer (IYO) group is continuing to develop a county wide Youth Support Services (YSS) Network, which draws together all the providers of services and activities for children & young people. This network will enable us to better understand the 'offer' for our children & young people and ensure that we are offering parity of services across all areas, and that we understand what support and assistance we can offer to the providers in our YSS network to help them continue to deliver activities in our communities.

Progress 2: The Community Focussed Schools Programme is an ongoing programme and will continue to develop as time goes on.

Desired Outcome: Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity

Action: Carry out a Play sufficiency assessment. (PSA)

Progress: The previous play sufficiency action plan gained approval in May 2019 and progress has been good (a full report is now available). A new plan is in place for 2021/22 with the next full 3-year review scheduled for 2022. A new target has been identified which relates to increasing the number of fixed play opportunities for wheelchair users.

Outcome: Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity

Action: Deliver the playmaker leadership programme to year 5 and 6 pupils to support confidence, motivation, well-being and promote active citizenship

Progress: Delivered to every year 5 cohort on an annual basis.

Desired Outcome: Children with disabilities are able to access sporting activities.

Action: Put an action plan in place to achieve the Disability Sports Gold Award.

Progress: MonLife's Health, Communities & Inclusion Development Officer is establishing the starting point for the pathway to Gold through reflections and review of feedback from Silver accreditation and developing a consultation process and Monmouthshire's Vision for Gold. Four sector partners identified as being key areas for progress are, Education, Health, Social Services and Mon Life's wider service area. The action plan is in place and the target is to achieve the Phase 1 Vision for InSport Development Gold by the 31st

Desired Outcome: Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity

Action: Reduce the inequalities in physical activity rates between males and females with the Girls Can and Ladies Stronger Together programmes

Progress: Delivered to every year 5 cohort on an annual basis.

Desired Outcome: People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness have improved access to accommodation and support

Action 1: Implement the Homeless Transition Plan under the wider Social Justice Strategy

Action 2: Review services through Housing Support Grant

Progress 1: The Transition Plan will be carried out between 2021 – December 2023.

Progress 2: Following a review and needs analysis, Housing Support working in collaboration with Children's Services are upgrading the current hostels and moving to High, Medium, and Low provision. Work is currently ongoing with an expectation to go live in October 2021

Good practice: To provide information and raise awareness amongst children of more taboo subjects (anxiety, grief, bullying etc) and the wide range of diagnosed conditions that exist and how they manifest themselves in terms of behaviours etc.

Action: Reading Well Books on Prescription for children was launched in Wales on World Mental Health Day 2020 (7th April).

Progress: The books deal with topics from anxiety and grief, to bullying and internet safety, to how to cope with events in the news. The booklist also explores living well with a range of diagnosed conditions including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), dyslexia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and physical disabilities.

The booklist is targeted at children in Key Stage 2 and includes titles suitable for a wide range of reading levels to support less confident readers, and to encourage children to read together with their siblings and carers. The books are available from any of our libraries

Good practice: supporting young people who are struggling with their sexuality, exploring or are an ally to those who are LGBTQ+.

Action: The Youth Service run LGBTQ+ support groups across the county.

Progress: Each session held is person centred where the agenda is directed by the young people, with qualified Youth Support Workers supporting them. In addition the SHIFT project is seeing an increase of referrals with young people who require support for LGBTQ+ issues – most of which involve advocacy and representation to parents who are struggling to come to terms with their child sexuality, changing gender and not conforming to a gender (non-binary).

Good practice: Giving young people a voice.

Action: Young people meeting with Monmouthshire County Council Cabinet

Progress: Within the Wales wide Make Your Mark Young People Survey, young people voted transport to be the top priority for young people. They challenged why is the cost of public

transport the same for a young person as it is for an adult. Engage to Change Youth Forum has discussed this with cabinet members and have challenged them to lower the price to make Monmouthshire Greener for young people. Comparably, the over 65's in Wales have free public transport, and the Forum have asked for there to be a reduction and for it not to be free of charge.

Good practice: Giving young people a voice.

Action: Running the Leadership Scheme

Progress: The main objective of the Leadership Scheme is to provide children with the opportunity to grow their confidence. By inspiring children at a young age, it will hopefully encourage them to present their ideas and share those of their peers to create impact. Through the pandemic there were monthly meetings held with year 6 ambassadors to share their good practice and create new ideas with others.

Protected Characteristics

Age	x	Religion or belief	
Disability	x	Sex	x
Gender reassignment	x	Sexual orientation	
Marriage or civil partnership		Welsh Language	
Pregnancy or maternity		Poverty	
Race			

Strategic objective 2: Overcome inequalities in access to economic prosperity

Desired Outcome: More people have access to high speed broadband

Action: Increase the availability and take up of broadband across the county to address digital exclusion.

Progress: An updated Digital Infrastructure Action Plan went to Cabinet July 2020

Desired Outcome: People have the opportunity to raise their household income

Action: Work as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to attract high skill, high wage jobs

Progress: There are regular monthly update meetings held with the Director of the Cardiff Capital Region. These meetings attended by our Leader, Chief Executive, Chief Officers for Resource and Enterprise and Head of Enterprise and Community Animation discuss further opportunities for inward investment and job growth in the County

Desired Outcome: People have the opportunity to raise their household income

Action: Deliver the communities for work programme to reduce the number of people in, or at risk of, poverty

Progress: This programme will be in place by March 2022

Desired Outcome: Households are able to maximise their incomes and minimise their outgoings.

Action: Continue to develop a tackling poverty plan for the county aligned to the aspirations of the Social Justice Strategy.

Progress: The Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan was presented to Cabinet for approval on 3rd March 2021 as part of the third revision of the Social Justice Strategy. The action plan is initially for one year 2021 – 2022 but will roll forward into subsequent years.

Desired Outcome: A reduction in the number of people not in education, training, or employment

Action: Provide learning, training and employability opportunities for 11 to 24-year olds

Progress: Inspire2achieve and Inspire2work funded until December 2022

Desired Outcome: More people with disabilities and care leavers in employment

Action: Provide access to the labour market for people with disabilities and care leavers

Progress: People with disabilities and care leavers are part of the Guaranteed interview process (this was implemented on the 3rd of March 2020)

Protected Characteristics

Age	x	Religion or belief	x
Disability	x	Sex	
Gender reassignment		Sexual orientation	
Marriage or civil partnership		Welsh Language	
Pregnancy or maternity	x	Poverty	
Race	x		

Strategic objective 3: Create cohesive communities

Desired Outcome: Better data is available about hate-based bullying

Action: Improve recording of incidents of hate-based bullying and piloting appropriate interventions.

Progress: The Bullying Inclusion Group has decided to introduce the Welsh Government recording process across the county. This process will be discussed with Headteachers with the aim of trying to ensure a level of consistency in the data collected. Once the process is finalised and agreed it will be rolled out to all schools.

Desired Outcome: Increased awareness of the effect of hate-based bullying amongst young children in school

Action: Hold awareness sessions in the Chepstow cluster initially then arrange for the sessions across the county.

Progress: Awareness sessions in the form of a puppet group took place in the Chepstow cluster and was largely well received. Covid has delayed the roll out of further sessions although it is anticipated that further sessions will be arranged for 2021-2022.

Desired Outcome: Increased awareness of the consequences of hate and discrimination in society

Action: Hold annual Holocaust Memorial Commemorative event in one of the Community Hubs

Progress: The council held an online Holocaust events this year on the 27th of January in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Trust. This event is to remember the millions killed in the Holocaust, under Nazi persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.

Desired Outcome: Increased awareness amongst children of the dangers of bullying in all its forms

Action: Promote Anti-Bullying Week on an annual basis

Progress: This is promoted annually by the Corporate Communications Team.

Desired Outcome: A reduction in the effects of loneliness and isolation

Action: To deliver the outcomes under the Connected Monmouthshire Plan.

Progress: Engagement with Town and Community Councils were key in understanding local approaches to supporting those affected by this agenda – what exists and where does it take place, who attends and conversely, what does not exist, why not and who needs it. Engagement with our older population has been straightforward and pre- Covid, there were many opportunities for this cohort to stay engaged and take part in community activities of interest to them. Similarly, engagement with our younger people has taken place via our Monmouthshire Youth Forum and other youth groups. This has been an easy process to undertake.

It has been widely acknowledged that we need to better understand those that sit in the middle of these two cohorts; our working-age population. Steps have been taken to try and understand the ‘measures of loneliness,’ and a survey was developed with two themes on loneliness and isolation (L & I):

1. within the work environment,
2. within the community where individuals live

The demographics have been analysed to measure whether there is any correlation between the two.

Council employees were utilised as the ‘pilot’ for the survey and there was approval given by all relevant Trade Unions for this approach. There have been several attempts made to push the survey out across all teams and departments, recognising that not all staff have access to digital communications. The current situation is that the survey is still open, and all colleagues are welcome to participate, anonymously, to help inform possible actions the council may need to implement.

Desired Outcome: Overcoming the barriers to accessing transport in rural areas

Action: Develop digital solutions to increase access to rural transport solutions using the GovTech challenge fund scheme funded by the Cabinet Office.

Progress: The appointed supplier, Box Clever Digital, has developed a digital platform called thrive which combines a journey planner, secure lift sharing scheme and booking for demand responsive transport schemes. Testing has been delayed by the pandemic.

Good practice: Supporting young people going through gender re-assignment

Action: Support from the SHIFT Project

Progress: The Shift Project is supporting more young people through gender-reassignment. In addition to this the young people who are going through their transition have been accessing the open access provisions across the county. This has been possible as the Shift Team have been able to help boost self-esteem where young people who are living in their chosen gender feel confident to 'come out' in a social setting.

Good practice: The Girl and Boy Project

Action: The Youth Team to providing support to groups of young people on specific areas of well-being.

Progress: The Youth Service offer a GIRL and BOY project is a targeted group that offers support for groups of young people to discuss topics such as sexual health, social anxiety, school issues and other issues that are effecting their well-being. The purpose of offering support to specific genders is to enable young people to openly discuss experiences and issues in an environment where they feel comforted, supported, and reassured.

Protected Characteristics

Age	x	Religion or belief	x
Disability	x	Sex	x
Gender reassignment	x	Sexual orientation	x
Marriage or civil partnership	x	Welsh Language	
Pregnancy or maternity	x	Poverty	
Race	x		

Strategic objective 4: To provide services that are accessible to our public and support our workforce.

Desired Outcome: Ensure that we consider our diverse audience when we communicate as a council.

Action: Continually adhere to the National Principles of Public Engagement

Progress: Ongoing engagement utilising all available engagement platforms

Desired Outcome: A fully accessible website providing information about council services.

Action: Refresh the council's website to ensure it meets the latest web content accessibility guidelines.

Progress: The council website has been subject to a website accessibility project called WCAG 2.1. The results show a measurable increase in its accessibility rating according to the scoring criteria. Funding has been made available to enable this excellent project to continue for 2021 – 2022.

Desired Outcome: More services are available digitally thereby improving accessibility

Action: Continue to make more services available digitally through the council's app and the Chatbot

Progress: More forms have been made available increasing people's ability to self-serve, increasing accessibility of services. This should free-up staff capacity enabling greater capacity in face-to-face and telephone services although the pandemic has disrupted this and led to significant increases in phone calls.

Desired Outcome: New and improved face-to-face access to council services

Action: Open a new Community Hub in Abergavenny with significantly improved access

Progress: A new Hub based in the Abergavenny Town Hall opened on the 14th September 2020. We continued to run the UKs only local authority Post Office to maintain this vital service for the residents of Usk

Desired Outcome: Residents of Monmouthshire have access to independent advice

Action 1: Continue to fund Monmouthshire Citizens Advice Bureau

Action 2: Work closely with the Disability Advice Project to access advice from the Big Lottery funded project

Progress 1: Grant funding is provided by the council on an annual basis

Progress 2: The Access for All Forum which is chaired by a member of the Disability Advice Project has not met since the Covid outbreak. It is hoped that this group will meet again soon, and the project can then be rolled out to Monmouthshire residents.

Desired Outcome: Improved services for dealing with mental health in Monmouthshire

Action 1: Continue to work with MIND on delivering the Rural mental health project.

Action 2: Improve the support for workforce mental health.

Progress 1: The PSB has agreed mental health will continue to be a priority area of focus moving forward. We are continuing to work with our colleagues in PHW to promote the Melo website which provides foundation tier universal, evidence based mental health & well-being self-directed support tools and information and, signposting to services where necessary.

Progress 2: There is a range of support that is accessible to all colleagues e.g. – counselling/ the GO TO group/ informal peer- to - peer conversation / coaching/ mentoring/ counselling/ Occupational Health.

Desired Outcome: Improve services available to families during the first 1001 days of their child's life

Action: Develop universally accessible support for post-natal mothers and children in the very early years including infant feeding and child development intervention.

Progress: The target date for achieving this target is March 2022.

Protected Characteristics

Age	x	Religion or belief	x
Disability	x	Sex	x
Gender reassignment	x	Sexual orientation	x
Marriage or civil partnership		Welsh Language	
Pregnancy or maternity	x	Poverty	x
Race	x		

Strategic objective 5: Create a diverse and inclusive workforce

Desired Outcome: Those working in key sectors such as home care are less likely to experience in-work poverty.

Action: Continue to pay the living wage to all council employees.

Progress: MCC's Pay Policy for 2021/22 states the council's commitment to the Living Wage. This was ratified by the 11th of March 2021.

Desired Outcome: More people with disabilities are applying to work for the county council.

Action: Deliver the action plan to attain Disability Confident Committed status

Progress: After discussions with colleagues from DWP, we have achieved Level 1 Committed and can begin work towards progressing to Level 2 Employer status. DWP have agreed to act as a critical friend in this process and to assist us in attaining level 2.

Desired Outcome: People can access more services fully using the Welsh language.

Action: Proactively target new job opportunities at Welsh speakers.

Progress: There has been a recent review taken of the council recruitment process and the ability to speak Welsh is now included in the standard person specification section thus enabling those skills to be counted towards the scoring process for the shortlisting stage. Welsh language training will also be available for staff who are lacking confidence or need to enhance existing skills in order to increase the number of Welsh speakers that can provide a service to Welsh speaking members of the public.

The Equality and Welsh Language Officer is currently in the process of discussing with managers of front line services about arranging a pilot for 10 members of staff to take part in a fast track Welsh Language course thus further adding to the existing members of staff who speak Welsh.

Desired Outcome: A more diverse workforce

Action: Introduce more graduate and intern and cadetship opportunities to increase workforce diversity

Progress: The Apprentice Graduate Intern (AGI) Strategy is being implemented over the period 2021 – 2024

Action: Guaranteed Interview Scheme for reservists, veterans, and spouses.

Progress: This has been agreed by Council and is now in place to assist the above people in beginning a career with the council

Protected Characteristics

Age	x	Religion or belief	x
Disability	x	Sex	x
Gender reassignment	x	Sexual orientation	x
Marriage or civil partnership	x	Welsh Language	x
Pregnancy or maternity	x	Poverty	x
Race	x		

Strategic objective 6: Reduce the gender pay gap

Desired Outcome: Contribution towards breaking the cycle of Gender Stereo-typing that exists in society and has a negative impact on gender pay equality.

Action 1: Publish an annual Gender Pay Report

Action 2: Look at alternative ways of recruiting staff to break down the barriers of gender stereotyping.

Progress 1: This report is published annually as a requirement of the Equality Act 2010 through the annual monitoring report. The council's pay and grading system is based on 'equal pay for equal value work' and via our job evaluation process male and females are paid (the same) for the job role they perform. We as an employer want our staff to perform the work that is best suited to their abilities and receive the same respect & consideration, regardless of gender. If we can support both male and females who work in gender atypical roles, as a society perhaps we can become less likely to de-value some workers based on arbitrary and old-fashioned gender stereotypes

Progress 2: The council are careful to ensure that we do not reinforce gender stereo typing and our recruitment campaigns consider such issues. For example, we understand that language and word choice in an advert and visuals in a campaign are crucial to avoid unintentional gender bias. As a consequence, we are seeing changes across previously male – and female – dominated fields ... we are seeing an impact in the make-up of the workforce in some areas and we are working towards becoming more balanced. Although demographic workforce shifts are occurring, entrenched social roles and stereo types are slower to evolve. Awareness is key & we recognise that training for managers can help so on a wider note, in addition to our safer recruitment training, we are introducing unconscious bias training in 2021 as part of our Training Plan to support people leaders.

Outcome: Understand Gender pay differences in our organisation.

Action: Gather and analyse gender data.

Progress: There is a statutory requirement within the Equality Act 2010 to report annually on the Gender Pay Gap. This report aims to address any areas of concern as a part of the Strategic annual monitoring report and is published on the council website.

Outcome: Equal pay for work of equal value.

Action: Revise the People Strategy ensuring that data on the gender pay gap is utilised to inform the strategy.

Progress: The Single Status Agreement and Job Evaluation process ensures equal pay for equal value work. The People Strategy is due for review in September 2022 and our gender pay gap data will be utilised to inform this.

Desired Outcome: Reduced gender pay difference in the County

Action: Measures added to the Corporate Plan

Progress: This is an ongoing issue, using our status as the largest employer in the county to influence other employers in the gender pay arena

Protected Characteristics

Age	x	Religion or belief	x
Disability	x	Sex	x
Gender reassignment	x	Sexual orientation	x
Marriage or civil partnership	x	Welsh Language	x
Pregnancy or maternity	x	Poverty	x
Race	x		

Discharging the Specific Duties

The broad purpose of the specific duties is to help public bodies, such as this Council, in their performance of the general duty, and to aid transparency. In Wales the specific duties are set by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. This section describes how we have discharged these duties.

Setting equality objectives and publishing strategic equality plans

The strategic Equality Plan is part of the Council's Policy Framework within the constitution and must be approved by full council. The Strong Communities Select (Scrutiny) Committee annually reviews the annual monitoring report. A Social Justice Advisory Group has also been established, chaired by the Cabinet member, this group gives direction to the agenda and ensures that the council is progressing in its agreed aims.

Engagement

A detailed overview of the engagement undertaken with groups with protected characteristics, is contained as appendix 2 of this report. Specific groups (both external and internal with external partnership representation) that we engage with include:

Access for All Forum, Action 50+ Abergavenny, Monmouth Visually Impaired Group, Monmouthshire Autism Stakeholder Group, Monmouthshire Action Group (Tackling the effects of inequality)

The Access for All Forum has over the past 7 to 8 years acted as a valued critical friend to the council and allowed disabled groups and individuals to discuss issues that affect them and ask questions of the council.

The 50+ Forum is externally organised and affords the members the opportunity to be a 'voice' for older people in Monmouthshire through consultations, questionnaires, surveys, dissemination of information, interaction between service users and service supplier, relating to the development and delivery of service.

Assessment of impact

Since the Equality Act introduced the requirement for organisations to conduct impact assessments of its decisions the council has regularly updated its guidance, templates and challenge processes to ensure that assessments are robust, up to date and cognisant of any new developments. The current version includes the following legislative requirements to become an integrated assessment document:

- Equality Act 2010 and the consideration of the needs of those with Protected characteristics,
- Well Being of Future Generations Act April 2016,
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Corporate Parenting

- Safeguarding
- Poverty (updated to reflect Socio-Economic Duty during 2020-21)

To ensure that the Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are sufficiently robust to allow elected members to make properly informed decisions a sub group consisting of the Equality and Welsh Language Officer, the Sustainability Policy Officer, the Performance Manager and the Scrutiny Manager are consultees on all reports sent to Cabinet, Council or Single Member decisions. They review and advise on the quality and robustness of all EQIA's accompanying reports requiring a decision. The group meet monthly to conduct further quality assurance checks and communicate with the authors if the assessments require additional information

This small group plays a key role in scrutinising the proposals for savings in the annual budget setting process advising senior officers and managers on the quality of their reports, EQIA assessments and also the potential negative cumulative impact brought about by increases in fees and charges upon those least able to pay. This important piece of work was introduced due to the new Socio-economic Duty.

Equality information

For the Council the collection of relevant equality information is essential when it comes to knowing our service users, their needs and shaping the services that we need to provide. There remain significant challenges when it comes to collecting accurate information in relation to equality and diversity, particularly for some of the more "sensitive" of the protected characteristics such as sexual orientation and gender reassignment. We have developed a database on our intranet site to improve the availability of information on groups with the protected characteristics to improve the quality of our integrated impact assessments. The Council has remained firm in its support of the principles of the Equality Act 2010.

Employment information, pay differences and staff training

We have an on-line data collection system which provides all the information the council needs to understand the makeup of its staff in respect of the protected characteristics. Information on new starters is automatically entered on the system which in itself is sufficiently robust; however the historic records are missing some key information where staff have not completed monitoring forms fully resulting in an incomplete understanding of the number of staff who have protected characteristics. All the information that we are required to publish can be found on the council's website in the Equality and Diversity section at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/>

Discipline and Grievance information 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021: -	
Number of employees who raised grievances	3
Number of employees had grievances raised against them	12
Number of employees subject to discipline procedures	16

Appendix 1 at the end of this document is the Council's Gender Pay Report for 2020 – 2021.

The Council's staff induction programme and Managers Training sessions which are both run several times a year have a specific timeslot which deals with the Equality Act 2010, equalities in general and the Welsh Language Standards. During the Covid-19 pandemic, face-to-face training was replaced by online training through the Microsoft Teams platform.

Procurement

The Council's Procurement process uses the documentation of the Welsh Purchasing Consortium which has been developed to be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Also, the council are signed up to the Code of Practice Ethical Employment in Supply Chains

Reporting and publishing

This report is being published as per the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and will be available in alternative formats upon request.

Covid 19

The Coronavirus pandemic which began taking a hold in early to mid-March 2020 continues to pose unprecedented challenges to well-being and people's way of life. Planned activity was paused as staff were redeployed and spending targeted towards the council's coronavirus response.

It has been vital that every person or family in crisis were aware that they could access support.

In the last year our purpose has continued to evolve to reflect the new challenges presented by the pandemic, strategic aims developed to address the challenge, and the organisation were tasked with delivering these. These have included the following key services:

- providing hub schools for the children of key workers during lockdown,
- telephoning all 3000 + of the shielded households in the county,
- delivering in the Track Trace and Protect service operated in partnership between local government and the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board utilising the expertise of the Monmouthshire and Torfaen Public Protection Teams.
- paying millions of pounds in grants to support local jobs businesses
- the deployment of the extensive community volunteering network.
- Hundreds of members of staff were also re-deployed so that the council could continue to safely deliver core services like waste collection and home care.

Appendix 1

People Services

GENDER PAY GAP REPORT 2021

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Introduction

The Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations require all employers with 250 or more employees to report their Gender Pay Gap annually, publishing on a national Government website as well as the organisations website. The Gender Pay Gap Information Regulations apply to employers in the public and private sector.

In addition to these new regulations, employers in the public sector are subject to a specific public sector equality duty in respect of their functions - The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

The regulations apply to all employers with 250 or more employees on the "snapshot" date. The "snapshot" date for the public sector is 31 March each year. Therefore, the Council is required to publish its gender pay gap for each year on the Monmouthshire County Council website and on the Government website (GOV.UK), no later than 31 March of the following year. Therefore, for the "snapshot" date of 31 March 2021, the findings must be published no later than 31 March 2022.

The purpose of Gender Pay Gap reporting is to achieve greater gender equality across the UK and increase pay transparency. The gender pay gap is an analysis of gender distribution across the workforce.

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to the principle of equal pay for all employees by ensuring that it meets the requirements of the Equality Act. To achieve this the Council introduced Single Status and uses the Greater London Provincial Council (GLPC) job evaluation scheme to assess the value of all National Joint Council (NJC) jobs across the organisation, which provides evidence in support of the banding of each job within our grading structure. Salaries are paid according to band and incremental annual progression within the band occurs irrespective of an employee's gender.

What do we have to report?

The regulations require employers to publish the following information:

- The mean gender pay gap;
- The median gender pay gap;
- The mean bonus pay gap;
- The median bonus pay gap;
- The relative proportions of male and female employees in each quartile pay band.

Workforce Profile

As of the 'snapshot date' of 31 March 2021 the Councils workforce profile for the purposes of this report was as follows:



Male 32.9% Female 67.1%

The Full Time and Part Time gender ratios was:



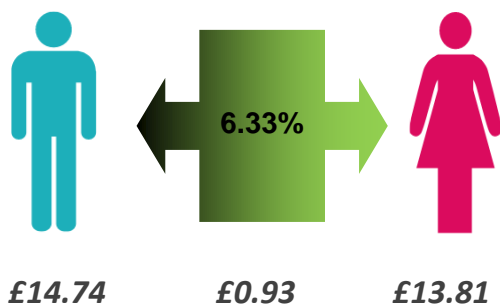
Part Time 4.31:0.23



Full Time 1.01:0.98

Mean Gender Pay Gap

UK mean (average) Gender Pay Gap is **18.2%** which is a 7.9% increase since April 2020.



The mean gender pay gap is the difference between the average hourly earnings of men and women.



Median Gender Pay Gap

UK 2020 median gender pay gap was 15.9%. In 2021 it has risen slightly to 16.2%.



The median pay gap is the difference between the mid points in the ranges of hourly earnings of men

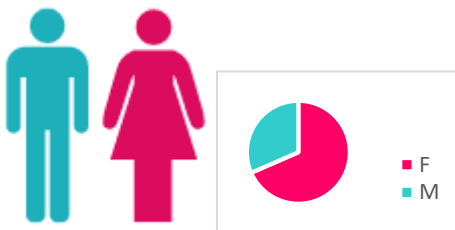
Bonus Pay

Monmouthshire County Council has not operated any bonus schemes since 2009 - upon the introduction of Single Status.

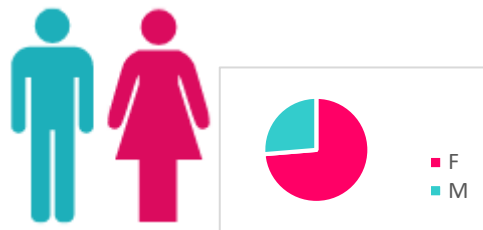
Bonus Pay Gap 0%

Quartile Pay Bands

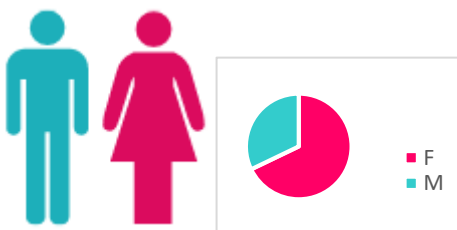
Lower Pay Quartile
£8,026.00 - £21,322.00



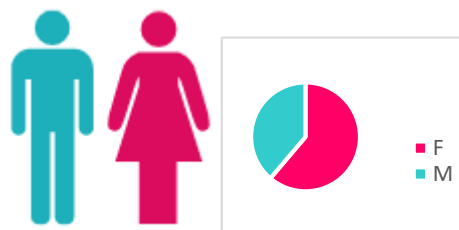
Lower Middle Pay Quartile
£21,322.00 - £23,541.00



Upper Middle Pay Quartile
£23,541.00 - £31,346.00



Upper Quartile
£31,346.00 - £119,955.00



Conclusions

The Mean Gender Pay Gap for all workers at **31 March 2021** was **6.33%**, a difference of **£0.93** per hour between the sexes.

UK 2021 mean (average) Gender Pay Gap is 18.2% which is a 7.9% increase since April 2020.

The Median Pay Gap for all workers at **31 March 2021** was **7.64%** some way below the 2021 ONS survey, which was **16.2%**. An actual difference in hourly rates of **£0.99**.

UK 2020 median gender pay gap was 15.9%. In 2021 it has risen slightly to 16.2%.

Quartile Analysis shows, that in the Lower Middle there has been an decrease in the percentage of males from 33.21% to 27.39%, however there is a relatively stable proportion of female to male as you would expect based on the overall proportion of workers being 32.86% male to 67.14% female. The proportion of males to females increases in the Upper quartiles.

Factors affecting the Gender Pay Gap

The pay gap is strongly affected by the makeup of the Council's workforce and its distribution.

The majority of the Council's staff are in the lower grades, this means that the overall pay gap is distorted, reflecting workforce composition rather than pay inequalities. This is particularly evident in Cleaning, Catering and Social Care, which has a large female workforce who in general terms work more part time hours, as opposed to roles dominated by males in areas such as Highways, Waste and Landscape who tend to work full time hours. Therefore, the Gender Pay Gap is as much a societal gap as a pure pay gap.

The Council has a very stable workforce and for **2020/2021** had a low turnover rate at **7.69%**, meaning there are only a few vacancies that give an opportunity for changes in the makeup of the workforce.

What we have done

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to equality in the workplace having already taken several measures to ensure that it is a fair and equitable employer by:

- Ensuring equal pay for work of equal value using job evaluation.
- Monmouthshire County Council's grading structure has 13 grades with 5 increments in ten of the grades, 3 increments in two of the grades and 4 increments in one of the grades. Grades span across SCP 1- 51 with associated salaries from £17,842 (SCP 1) to £55,195 (SCP 51). More information about the GLPC and the grades can be found in the Council's Single Status Collective Agreement.
The implementation of the new pay spine in 1 April 2019 introduced a minimum spinal column point of £9.00 per hour, which was in line with the rate set by the Living Wage Foundation. The minimum spinal column point with effect from 1 April 2020 is £9.25 per hour.
- Promoting and supporting a number of flexible working practices for employees within the organisation, irrespective of gender. These include job share, part time working and term time working. HR policies such as Family Leave represent opportunity for all employees to access a range of family friendly arrangements. Across many business areas there is scope for employees, irrespective of gender, to be able to work in a flexible agile way, to work from different locations.

The Council is therefore confident that its gender pay gap does not stem from paying male and female employees differently for the same or equivalent work. Rather its gender pay gap is the result of the roles in which male and females work within the Council and the salaries that these roles attract.

Appendix 2

Communications to Monmouthshire residents with protected characteristics 2020-21

May 2020

- Social media campaign encouraging members of the community invited to part take in volunteering to support the vulnerable and elderly during the lockdowns. People from all backgrounds encouraged to help with shopping, picking up prescriptions and offering friendly calls to check in on neighbours.
- VE day celebrations including a video featuring residents of all ages singing We'll Meet Again.

June 2020

- EU settlement livestream webinar to engage people impacted by the changes brought on by Brexit
- Publicity through social media aimed at highlighting funding opportunities available for places of worship to help safeguard against hate crime
- Support for parents and young people about the return back to school after lockdown
- Content to keep young people engaged while at home
- Campaign for Armed Forces Week acknowledging the excellent contributions of Armed Forces colleagues including women who have served/are serving.
- Social media alongside Race Equality First promoting a competition to create an anti-racism poster
- Carers week campaign centred on support for all unpaid carers. Campaign featured a young carer who helps look after her young brother who has Down Syndrome and requires high level support. Campaign also included a livestream talk about unpaid caring and what support was available to people who care for a loved one, and a thank you video for all the work unpaid carers do.
- Ongoing COVID-19 advice and support for residents and businesses

July 2020

- Fostering campaign highlighting a number of activities young people can do over the summer holidays while promoting foster caring.
- Livestream event thanking volunteers who have supported elderly and vulnerable during the pandemic.
- Ongoing promotion of the excellent work carried out by volunteers including a video featuring a young person who was volunteering their time to support foodbanks in Chepstow.
- Promotion of the reopening of services and facilities including shops/play parks for children.
- Ongoing COVID-19 advice and support for residents and businesses

August 2020

- Campaign and publicity around Virtual Pride Week and the celebration of diverse communities in the county.
- Fostering campaign highlighting a number of activities young people can do over the summer holidays while promoting foster caring.
- Video campaign reaching out all age demographics recruiting people to become therapeutic foster carers
- Ongoing COVID-19 advice and support for residents and businesses
- Active travel consultation
- Engagement around the reopening of leisure centres and encouraging people of all ages to access the services once again

September 2020

- Launch of Community Fridge project to help reduce food waste and in turn help those facing poverty in Monmouthshire County Council
- European settlement scheme engagement livestream held.
- Fostering campaign encouraging people to become foster carers and support vulnerable young people. Included, q and a video and livestream
- Video providing support and advice on school counsellors available to support young people in school
- Be Mighty Recycle campaign to encourage recycling and waste reduction
- Opening of new Abergavenny Community Hub

October 2020

- Stay safe messaging around Halloween season.
- Call for volunteers to support vulnerable during winter months, including video demonstrating excellent work of volunteers.
- Engagement around support from businesses to support young people into work with apprenticeships
- Promotion of the return of the MonGames aimed at keeping young people active during the half term break
- Monmouthshire County Council's support of Show Racism The Red Card's Wear red day
- Promotion of "Hate Crime Week" with advice and support for anyone experiencing any sort of hate crime.
- Promotion of Wear Yellow to support mental health awareness
- Ongoing COVID-19 advice and support for residents and businesses

November 2020

- Annual "We Care Week" campaign aimed at recruiting more people into social care jobs
- Launch of Christmas #Shop Local campaign
- Firebreak lockdown support for businesses
- Walking challenge for Children in Need launched to raise money for the charity over £6000 raised by schools and colleagues in Monmouthshire
- Promotion of Caring apprenticeships in Monmouthshire and how it helps support the most vulnerable residents in the county
- Remembrance Day content across social media, including COVID safe ceremony published on social media
- Safety advice around Bonfire night

December 2020

- Budget settlement announcement
- Shop Local livestreams held across the county.
- Support and advice to residents during festive period
- Ongoing COVID advice
- Help Us to Help Your communities – calls to support vulnerable during winter months

January 2020

- Support around mental health during January
- Winter weather updates
- Business advice livestream sessions to support businesses during the challenging period

- Budget engagement – Livestream sessions to answer questions, online consultation, press release
- Revised Local Development Plan engagement
- Video with first resident in Monmouthshire to receive the COVID vaccine, 93-year-old Charlotte Jones was also first woman GP in Monmouth.

February 2020

- Encouraging young people to vote in the Senedd election campaign
- Winter weather updates
- Apprenticeship week promoting apprenticeships for young people in Monmouthshire
- Budget engagement

March 2020

- Vaccination advice and support
- “Autism Awareness week” promotions
- Election engagement ensuring residents have all the information they needed for the upcoming elections in May
- Encouragement campaign to get people to fill in the census.
- Support for local businesses