



Strategic Equality Plan
Annual Monitoring Report
1st April 2023-31st March 24

Introduction and Policy Context

This annual monitoring report covers progress during the year ending March 2024. It reports progress on the Council's Strategic Equality Plan which was approved by Council on the 5th of March 2020. 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

This 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:

- Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Cymraeg 2050 (1 million Welsh speakers by 2050)
- Strategaeth Mwy na geiriau/More than words strategy
- Monmouthshire Local Development Plan 2011-21
- Strategy for Older People Wales
- 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.

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

This report provides an update on progress against these objectives. It also contains links to other documents like the gender pay report.

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

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

Protected Characteristics

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

Actions

Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Progress
Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being	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 in particular those with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).	Head of Children's Services	<p>We have set up a multi-agency panel to receive and discuss children where concerns have arisen about their wellbeing or potential family vulnerabilities. The panel members include services provided by the council (such as social care, education and youth services); health services (including Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service) and a range of third sector and voluntary organisations (such as Action for Children). The panel approach has resulted in a coordinated response to referrals which helps to ensure that the family receive the right help, first time from the service that is best placed to provide it.</p> <p>We have developed the Building Stronger Families Team to work with families in a voluntary capacity around family goals</p>

			<p>and outcomes. This has resulted in children and families receiving preventative support in situations where initial concerns have been identified, helping to divert the need for statutory intervention.</p> <p>We have also commenced a Welsh Government funded pilot - Early Years Integrated Transformation Programme. The pilot is a county wide programme for children aged 0 to 7 including prenatal support. This partnership pilot aims to devise a new early years system that removes the geographical and age barriers currently in place for Flying Start. It also embraces the Marmot approach of proportionate universalism for families with young children ensuring that support is provided by the right person, at the right time by using a “what matters” approach. More information about the Marmot approach is available here: Fair Society Healthy Lives (The Marmot Review) - IHE (instituteofhealthequity.org)</p> <p>All MCC schools (bar one) have at least one trained Emotional Literacy Support Assistant supporting pupils, in total we have around 70 active ELSAs making daily impact on the lives of pupils.</p> <p>This work is ongoing.</p>
Children attain their full potential	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.	Head of Achievement and Attainment.	<p>The majority of our schools have engaged positively with the regional Tackling Aspects of Poverty (TAP) strategy led by the Education Achievement Service. As a result, many schools have developed a range of effective strategies to support FSM pupils. These have been shared with other schools at regional events.</p> <p>Estyn reinstated their programme of inspections in April 2022. Estyn reports from that date indicate that vulnerable learners, including pupils eligible for free school meals, are making good progress in their learning. However, improving the attendance of FSM pupils in has been highlighted as a recommendation in both secondary schools inspected.</p> <p>Attendance of FSM pupils continues to improve across both</p>

			sectors and the last data collection point at the end of the spring term 2024, primary FSM attendance in primary schools is 89.4% and 80.0% in secondary schools.
Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being	Develop an effective 0 - 25 Partnership for Children and Young People	Strategic Partnership Manager	<p>A draft framework has been produced in anticipation for a newly formed Children & Young People's (CYP) Strategic Partnership structure. This will be developed alongside a collective wellbeing offer for the county, for which the mapping and review is currently underway.</p> <p>The implementation of the new CYP Partnership structure is also paused whilst the Gwent Public Services Board agrees its priority workstreams. This is to ensure that the required structures will be developed appropriately and will be fit for purpose, ensuring there is synergies with regional structures and work programmes, it will minimise duplication, and ensure alignment of delivery, whilst maximising resources available.</p> <p>It will also be key to ensure that the development of a Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) approach has due regard for Monmouthshire Corporate and Community plan and Welsh Governments Child Poverty strategy, 2024.</p>
Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being (narrowing the gap outcome)	Continue to develop the Community Focused School Scheme	Community Partnerships and Wellbeing Lead	<p>A Community Focused Schools Coordinator is in post. They are developing various projects to support schools and communities in Monmouthshire, such as Grub Club, Fun Family Fitness, intergenerational experiences, and funding applications.</p> <p>Schools are working to become more community focused by collaborating with local organisations, churches, businesses, and groups to provide surplus food, clothing, equipment, and musical instruments to the community. They are also working with the Educational Achievement Service (EAS) to achieve a Heart in the Community Award.</p> <p>Schools and communities are supported with the cost-of-living crisis and mental health issues: The coordinator signposts schools to organisations or sessions that can help families with</p>

			<p>financial and emotional challenges. Four 'Schools and Communities Together' events are planned at the four comprehensive schools. A project with the Sustainable Food Partnership team is offered to schools with a low uptake of free school meals.</p> <p>A new Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead is now in post. The lead is meeting the cluster head teachers to address the needs of schools and their communities in Monmouthshire.</p>
Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity	Carry out an annual Play sufficiency assessment.	Play Development Lead	<p>The latest annual play sufficiency assessment was carried out in June 2022 and is available at on the Council's website.</p> <p>Annual reviews and action plan were submitted in June 23. Another annual review and updated action plan will be completed in June 24. The full assessment needs to be completed again in 2025 and so work has begun on planning for consultations and competition.</p>
Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity	Deliver the playmaker leadership programme to year 5 and 6 pupils to support confidence, motivation, well-being and promote active citizenship	Sports & Community Team Lead	<p>We have delivered a continual roll out of the Sports Leaders UK playmaker programme to all year 5 pupils on an annual basis for the last 6 year period. This has resulted in circa 6,000 young people being given the opportunity to attend the workshop and support health and wellbeing provision across primary education before transitioning to secondary education and our associated leadership academy pathway to post 16 employment. This is a rolling part of our delivery plan to provide these opportunities.</p>
Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity	Reduce the inequalities in physical activity rates between males and females with the Girls Can and Ladies Stronger Together programmes	Sports & Community Team Lead	<p>We have delivered a targeted series of programmes focused on participation for underrepresented groups. This has seen an increase in participation, membership update and direct pathways to support physical activity. This is a rolling part of our delivery plan to provide these opportunities.</p>
Children and young people are supported to	Working in partnership with the regional DSW officer. Working in	MonLife Sports Development/Play	<p>Disability Sport Wales has moved to a regional delivery model, and we work closely with them to provide case studies and</p>

<p>improve their well-being. Children with disabilities are able to access sporting activities</p>	<p>partnership with local health services to sign post referrals from the health pathway to community provision in Monmouthshire.</p>	<p>Team</p>	<p>signpost referrals from health partners. This programme is monitored and monthly catch ups are held with the relevant officers.</p> <p>Our commitment to fully inclusive provision remains and we have seen significant progress in fully inclusive schemes, such as the Action For Children Playschemes, to support this ongoing priority. Through holiday provision we are working closely with MCC children’s disability team and organisations such as Ready, Steady, Go to provide inclusive holiday activities.</p>
<p>Young people who are threatened with homelessness have improved access to accommodation and support</p>	<p>Establish a positive pathway to identify potential homelessness at an early stage.</p> <p>Review services through Housing Support Grant</p>	<p>Housing and Communities Manager</p> <p>Flexible Funding Manager</p>	<p>The Housing Support Gateway (HSG) services are being reviewed and will be recommissioned in 2024-2025, taking into account the needs of young people.</p> <p>The Compass project, which provides support and accommodation for young people, has been restructured and integrated into the HSG team. The Compass coordinator is also working to support neurodivergent young people.</p> <p>Additionally, the Monmouthshire Youth Homelessness Information Panel met to map the homelessness journey of young people and identify improvements.</p> <p>An Early Identification Tool has been developed and implemented in secondary schools to identify young people at risk of homelessness.</p> <p>Monmouthshire has adopted a Rapid Rehousing approach to homelessness, with a strong emphasis on prevention. The website has been improved to provide more information and resources for young people and homelessness prevention.</p>

Objective 2: Overcome inequalities in access to economic prosperity

Protected Characteristics

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

Actions

Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Progress
More people have access to high-speed broadband	Increase the availability and take up of broadband across the county to address digital exclusion.	Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships	<p>The ability to access broadband is an imperative for many citizens, particularly in terms of reducing travel costs and carbon impact or to access online services to address the cost-of-living crisis.</p> <p>The last Open Market Review data revealed a much-improved situation in Monmouthshire, with further improvements to be made over the next three years.</p> <p>From 2010, UK Government policy focused on the roll-out of 'superfast' broadband – usually defined as broadband with download speeds of 30 Megabits per second.</p> <p>In 2019 2,494 or 5.1% of all premises in Monmouthshire (our 'digital deprivation rate') did not have access to broadband at over 30 Mbps. By 2021 this had improved to 1,238 or 2.5% of households. This is around half of the Wales average which stood at 5.1% in 2021. These are the latest figures released by Welsh</p>

			<p>Government as they only conduct the exercise on a sporadic basis.</p> <p>Several broadband providers, including BT, Sky and Virgin Media, offer cheaper long term tariffs for those receiving benefits such as Universal Credit and Pension Credit.</p> <p>There are also new operators e.g. Voneus and Telet who, are seeking to address rural broadband connectivity issues in the County.</p>
People have the opportunity to raise their household income	Work as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to attract high skill, high wage jobs	Chief Officer, Communities and Place	<p>The Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership continue to work with employers to understand their needs and advised Welsh Government on future prioritisation – with the goal of stimulating innovative approaches to maximising the impact of future skills activity and funding.</p> <p>Gross weekly pay for Monmouthshire residents was £695.30 in 2023 compared to £731.70 in 2022, 4.79% reduction. However, Monmouthshire still maintains the highest average earnings in Wales and above the Great Britain average. The Welsh Average in 2023 was £636.10 compared to 2022 was £604.30. The male average reduced slightly to £699.20 in 2023 compared to £771.20 in 2022. The Welsh average for males slightly increased to £671.30 in 2023 compared to £633.10 in 2022. The female average in 2023 is £653.00 compared to £621.00 in 2022, a slight increase of 5.15%.</p> <p>The Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 7th February 2024. One of the objectives is to equip people with skills and qualifications to enter employment and enable employment progression. Progress will be monitored through the strategy action plan.</p>
People have the opportunity to raise their household income	<p>Delivery of UK Gov't SPF projects (CELT+ & Multiply) and Welsh Government's Communities for Work + programme to:</p> <p>Support Economically Inactive people close to the labour market through a number of interventions (mentoring,</p>	Adult Employment & Skills Lead	<p>Continue providing Employability support and upskilling opportunities through externally funded programmes that run until March 2025.</p> <p>In the last year the following projects have delivered:</p> <p>Communities for Work+</p>

	<p>upskilling, counselling) (CELT+)</p> <p>Support unemployed people who are ready to work with mentoring and training opportunities to upskill. (CfW+)</p> <p>Support people who do not have a C at GCSE/lost confidence in Numeracy to upskill through a variety of interventions (GCSE's, Budgeting Workshops, 1:1 support, support for parents with KS1 children to support with Numeracy) (Multiply)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagements - 201 • Number of people supported in to work – 115 <p>CELT+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagements – 165 • Outcomes (various) – 131 <p>Multiply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagements - 330 • Participating in a course - 208
Households are able to maximise their incomes and minimise their outgoings	Continue to deliver activities which seek to address inequality and poverty in the County, in line with the objectives of the Community and Corporate Plan.	Head of Economy, Employment and Skills	<p>A new cost of living campaign has been developed offering localised support and information. Regular social media campaigns have been sent out through the authorities' social media accounts. We have seen an increase in the number of "engagement clicks" through social media campaigns and visitors to the cost-of-living pages. Localised flyers and posters are also now available to distribute across the County.</p> <p>The existing Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan (2020) is also being refocused to align with the Community and Corporate Plan. This will include the work already started with the refocusing of the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Network and Tackling Poverty and Inequality Dashboard.</p>
A reduction in the number of people not in education, training or employment (NEET)	Provide learning, training and employability opportunities for 11 to 24 year olds	Youth Employment and Skills Lead	<p>NEET figures vary annually and range between 1% -2% across all year groups (and have done since 2016). An example of this, during Covid, the figures were close to the 2% margin due to Year 13's not going to University. Our aim is to drive down NEET numbers year on year but they do fluctuate between this 1-2% (for example in Year 11, 8 students = 1%).</p> <p>What we have done:</p> <p>Each school has a dedicated full time Inspire Engagement Worker –</p>

			<p>who's role it is to support 14-16 year olds to maintain attendance and help in identifying and supporting Post 16 opportunities (College, Sixth Form, Traineeships, Apprenticeships and Employment).</p> <p>For individuals (and there have been a significant rise since Covid) who attend school less than 50% we have an outreach inspire worker going into homes to support with post 16 options).</p> <p>If they have identified as NEET (or become NEET during Year 12-13) our Post 16 worker works closely with Careers Wales to support young people back into a provision.</p>
More people with disabilities and care leavers in employment	Provide access to the labour market for disabled people and care leavers	Apprentice Graduate and Intern Co-ordinator.	We have introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for Monmouthshire care leavers, as long as they meet the basic criteria of the person specification. This is still continuing. We have the same scheme in place for disabled people. We have also achieved level 2 of the Department of Work and Pensions Disability Confident Employer scheme.
Overcoming the barriers to accessing transport in rural areas	Work with technology companies to develop digital solutions for rural transport in Monmouthshire using funding from the Cabinet Office GovTech Catalyst Programme.	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	<p>Following investment from the Cabinet Office a private sector technology company was awarded a contract to conduct research and development to develop a digital solution. This included an integrated transport planner, a booking system for demand responsive community transport and a ride-share scheme.</p> <p>The work was disrupted by the pandemic and, in a separate decision the UK Government discontinued the programme. The user research and testing concluded that the product would not be commercially viable. Other products have now been made available by alternative providers and would be available to the authority should we choose to use them. The research identified useful lessons which can be applied to future projects.</p>

Objective 3: Create cohesive communities

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		

Actions

Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Progress
Better data is available about hate-based bullying	Improve recording of incidents of hate-based bullying and piloting appropriate interventions.	Healthy Schools and Bullying Inclusion Group	A spreadsheet has been issued to schools to record Rights, Respect, and Equality (RRE) issues. Schools that have trialled the spreadsheet have found it beneficial, as it allows for filtering by various parameters and proactive and preventive use of data. The aim of the spreadsheet is not to show zero reports of bullying or other issues, but to ensure that schools have a system in place to recognize and address such concerns. Training on RRE anti bullying is part of the Vulnerable Learner Lead (VLL) offer. Four online sessions were offered in Autumn 2023 and Spring term of 2024. The training will move to being recorded, and on the SharePoint Inclusion training portal and so available at all times to all those
Increased awareness of the effect of hate-based bullying amongst young children in school	Hold awareness sessions in the Chepstow cluster initially. Then arrange for the sessions across the county.	As above with Connected Communities Manager / Community Cohesion Officer	

			with a staff Hwb email.
Increased awareness of the consequences of hate and discrimination in society	Hold an annual Holocaust Memorial Commemorative event in Community Hubs	Community Hub Officers	Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) has continued to be commemorated annually in Monmouthshire with presentations and guest speakers. The most recent event, held on Saturday 27 th January in line with HMD, was hosted by Friends of Monmouth Library and supported by the Library Service and Monmouth Comprehensive School.
Increased awareness amongst children of the dangers of bullying in all of its forms	Promote Anti-Bullying Week on an annual basis	Communication and Engagement Team. Children and Young People Directorate	This is supported by schools and informed by their own school councils etc. It is also promoted by the lead for wellbeing with a termly diary of events and newsletter promotion. Working jointly with Educational Achievement Service (EAS) consortia and also input from Safeguarding board, via the Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Education. The Education Welfare Service (EWS) also support in terms of their role. The Local Authority Children and Young People Vulnerable Learner Lead approach is around the Rights Respect and Equality agenda and promotes the recording of concerns regarding bullying and one-off incidents against protected characteristics and preventative strategic work on a year round basis, not just the anti-bullying week. There are also links into other teams to analyse the act of parental choice reasons for moving schools via in year transfer applications, via the access (admission) team.
A reduction in the effects of loneliness and isolation	To deliver the outcomes under the Connected Monmouthshire Plan.	Community Development Team	An on-going programme of work is being delivered through Community Development Coordinators. The team have recently been redesigned to the Community Development Team, now operating geographically across the County. The team operate as North, Central and South, offering localised support focusing on early intervention and prevention.

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

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		

Actions

Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Progress
Ensure that we consider our diverse audience when we communicate as a council.	Continually adhere to the National Principles of Public Engagement	Communications and Engagement Team	During 23/24 we have published our participation strategy content online which talks to various elements of engagement - more information can be seen here (Participation Strategy - Monmouthshire). Any communication is issued in a variety of formats to ensure maximum reach. Where consultations and engagement take place a combination of digital, face to face and written formats are encouraged to increase participation. A digital 'communications team briefing form' has been developed for internal use to provide consistency of message across services. As a team we are currently exploring new digital systems to explore amplifying our reach and expect progress in this space throughout 24/25. At all times adhering to and embedding the national principles of public engagement is

			at the forefront of our work.
A fully accessible website providing information about council services	Refresh the council's website to ensure it meets the latest web content accessibility guidelines	Digital Marketing Officer	This year saw the new Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) introduced around the UK - Significant progress has been made improving the accessibility of the council's website. We now track the progress of this project monthly using the free Silk Tide index tool. Our continued updates to the site see us improving month by month. However, there are still some problems with the site, most notably the issues with PDF files on the website, details can be viewed here: https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/accessibility/
More services are available digitally thereby improving accessibility	Continue to make more services available digitally through the council's app and the Chatbot	Digital Programme Office Manager,	<p>More services have been made available via the My Monmouthshire app and usage has remained high, albeit users have expressed some frustrations with the design of forms. We have conducted a review of customer service and are actively working through steps to improve the experience.</p> <p>In late 2023, we moved over to the GDS (Government Digital Service) to be in line with the Government design principles. This maintains a clear, easy to navigate, welcoming front door to Monmouthshire.</p> <p>The Council's chatbot has around 1600 unique users each month but there is a limit to the range of questions that can be answered by the Artificial Intelligence so there remains a reliance on agent 'takeovers'.</p> <p>The authority continues to promote and resource access to services through community hubs and its telephone contact centre.</p>
New and improved face-to-face access to council services	Open a new Community Hub in Abergavenny with significantly improved access	Head of Commercial and Landlord Services	The new Community Hub opened in the refurbished Abergavenny Town Hall in the autumn of 2022 offering improved access to an integrated service offer in the heart of Abergavenny. The Hub continues to remain open.
Residents of	Continue to fund Monmouthshire	Chief Officer	The authority continues to provide grant funding to Citizens

Monmouthshire have access to independent advice	Citizens Advice Bureau Work closely with the Disability Advice Project to access advice from the Big Lottery funded project	People, Performance and Partnerships Equality and Welsh Language Officer.	Advice Monmouthshire. Their latest impact report shows that the service increased incomes by £838,261 in the fourth quarter of 2023-24. The project assisted 987 people with 3834 problems solved), 56% were female and 44% male. 8% of those assisted had a disability.
Improved services for dealing with mental health in Monmouthshire	Continue to work with MIND on delivering the rural mental health project. Improve the support for workforce mental health	Human Resources Manager Organisational Development Lead	Mind Monmouthshire was successful in winning a grant from the National Lottery Community Fund for an innovative Rural Workers Project. The project supports those in the farming community and allied industries in a wide range of issues. An increased range of support is available for staff including counselling, the 'Go-To' group of staff who offer peer-to-peer support and a self-directed resources such as https://www.melo.cymru/ . These are referred to through Human Resources and Organisational Development.
Support for women suffering from post-natal depression	Deliver the Flying Start – 1000 days project.	Flying Start Manager	The Early Years Integration and Transformation Programme (EYITP) is providing increased funding for prenatal and perinatal care in Monmouthshire, with a focus on infant and maternal mental health. The program is supporting community groups and maintaining a supply of infant formula for families in financial crisis. A new Early Years Core Programme is being co-delivered, with support available for mothers both through referral and self-request. An evidence-based antenatal program is now available to all parents in the authority, with positive results so far. A Dads Advisor has also been recruited to provide support and advice.

Objective 5: Create a diverse and inclusive workforce

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		

Actions

Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Progress
Those working in key sectors such as home care are less likely to experience in-work poverty	Continue to pay the living wage to all council employees	Chief Officer, Resources / Chief Officer Social Care, Health and Safeguarding	<p>Monmouthshire County Council introduced the Real Living Wage in April 2014 and continues the ongoing commitment to pay at least in line with the Real Living Wage. The pay policy captures this commitment (refer to section 18 – discretionary payments) and is available on our website.</p> <p>All staff that fall under NJC (National Joint Council) terms and conditions (local government employees), have seen pay awards in recent years that have been based on a lump sum increase across all pay scales. The effect of this most recent pay award (2023-24) has seen the lowest paid employees having a 22 per cent (£4,033) pay rise in the two years since 2021.</p>
More people with	Deliver the action plan to attain	Equality and Welsh	Disability Confident Employer status was attained in 2022 and runs

disabilities are applying to work for the county council	Disability Confident Employer status	Language Officer	through to 2025. Officers are presently developing an action plan to achieve level 2 status, to be completed by June 2024 and new status applied for.
People are able to access more services fully using the Welsh language	Proactively target new job opportunities at Welsh speakers	Equality and Welsh Language Officer.	Key front-line posts, and those which are Welsh language essential are advertised in Welsh language publications and we have seen an increased number of applications from Welsh speakers where vacancies are targeted in this way. We had approx. 649 vacancies in 23/24, 24 Welsh Essential (3.70%) and 625 Welsh Desirable (96.30%). We received 16 Welsh Application Forms for Welsh Schools via E Teach.
A more diverse workforce	Introduce more graduate and intern and cadetship opportunities to increase workforce diversity	Apprentice Graduate and Intern Co-ordinator.	We introduced the Apprentice Graduate and Intern Strategy (AGI) to support and increase the number of opportunities across the council. Work continues on this as an integral part of strategic workforce planning.

Objective 6: Reduce the gender pay gap in Monmouthshire County Council

Protected Characteristics

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

Actions

Outcome	Action	Responsibility	Progress
Contribution towards breaking the cycle of Gender Stereo-typing that exists in society and has a negative impact on gender pay equality.	<p>Publish an annual Gender Pay Report</p> <p>Look at alternative ways of recruiting staff to break down the barriers of gender stereotyping.</p>	<p>Human Resources Manager</p> <p>Equality and Welsh Language Officer.</p> <p>Communication, Marketing and Engagement Manager / Human Resources Manager.</p>	<p>The gender pay report is published annually and reported to Council, based on a snapshot on 31st March each year. Mean earnings for males were £13.66 compared to £12.93 for females, a gap of 73 pence. This is slightly lower than 2022 (0.1%).</p> <p>The pay gap is strongly affected by the make-up of the Council's workforce and its distribution. The majority of the Council's employees are in the lower grades. This is particularly evident across social care, cleaning and catering service areas which have 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 Grounds as an example, who tend to work full time hours. Therefore, the Gender Pay Gap is as much a societal gap as a pure pay gap.</p> <p>There is now a gender balance amongst elected councillors which acts</p>

			<p>as a positive signal to potential recruits.</p> <p>The new Manager Reset/Training will include consideration of gender equality.</p>
Understand Gender pay differences in our organisation	Gather and analyse gender data	Head of Human Resources / Head of Organisation and Workforce Development	The publication of the annual gender pay report provides a better understanding of pay differences. The full report is available at Gender-Pay-Gap-Report-2024 - Monmouthshire
Equal pay for work of equal value	Revise the People Strategy ensuring gender pay gap data is used to inform the strategy.	Head of Organisation and Workforce Development	The People Strategy is currently being revised following the adoption of the new Community and Corporate Plan by Council in April 2023. The gender pay report will be a key part of the evidence base.
Reduced gender pay difference in the County	Measures added to the Community and Corporate Plan	Head of Human Resource	A new Community and Corporate Plan was approved by Council in April 2023. It contains measures covering the gender pay gap and a commitment to disaggregate more data to identify differences in the experiences of, and services provided to groups of people who possess different protected characteristics.