

Assessing the Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact that any change in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely assessment must be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with a protected characteristic).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to consider the impact that any change in policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure), will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions safeguard and promote the use made of the Welsh language.

From 1 April 2021, the Council has a duty to give due attention to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1 Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy / service in question?

Equality and Inclusion Policy

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy / service that is being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that Gwynedd Council acts on its duty to ensure accessibility for all. It includes include an Equality Policy and Access Policy, which was adopted some time ago by now, and many things, including the Legislation, have now changed. It is therefore time to revise it.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Delyth G Williams, Policy and Equality Officer

1.4 When did you commence the assessment? Which version is this?

04/05/2017. This is the third version.

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners whom we will have to work with to carry out this assessment?

Elected members
Heads of Service
Organisations representing people with equality characteristics
Individuals with equality characteristics

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics?

In 2017, a draft of the document was sent to organisations that represent people with particular characteristics, but no response was received. Therefore, we have used the observations of the specialist group, the Equality Core Group, together with observations from other consultations that the Council have conducted in recent years. These include the consultations on the Equality Plan and What Services Matter to You, which have already taken place. We had also hoped to get more information from the consultation that formed part of Objective 2 of the latest Strategic Equality Plan, but no additional information was identified from the first stage. We have decided to act based on the information we have, and review the document regularly.

2.3 What was the outcome of the engagement?

The observations and issues raised in the various consultations confirmed that we are on the right track and this sort of Policy is needed. We took all observations into account when creating the document.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

We have a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to give due regard to the following:

1. eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. promote equal opportunity between people who have an equality characteristic and people without this characteristic
3. foster good relations between people who have an equality characteristic and people without this characteristic.

Giving due regard to promoting equal opportunities involves

- eliminating or reducing the disadvantages that people experience because of their equality characteristic
- taking steps to satisfy the needs of people from equality groups where these are different to other people's needs
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life

Fostering a good relationship involves tackling discrimination and promoting understanding between people who share an equality characteristic and the rest of society. This could mean treating some people more favourably than others, provided this does not contravene other provisions of the Act.

The Act was revised recently to include a Socio-economic Duty and we have included a chapter on these guidelines.

We also gave consideration to the document titled "Is Wales fairer? 2018" in revising the draft.

Consideration was also given to all the data that has emerged in light of Covid-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

We will use the information gathered from the consultation being conducted on Objective 2 of the Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 to further revise the Policy in 2022 (depending on the revised timescale due to Covid-19).

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must duly address the impact that any changes will have on people with the following equality characteristics. What impact will the new policy/service or the proposed changes in the policy or service have on people with these characteristics? You are welcome to add other characteristics if you wish.

Characteristics	What type of impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. The policy addresses many issues relating to race e.g. the need to consider different languages and being aware of cultural needs. Addressing hate crime, stereotyping and discrimination are also matters being considered. The policy talks about considering people from the gypsy, Roma and traveller race.</p> <p>Race considerations are particularly important in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to assist the Council in ensuring fairness for our staff and improving diversity in our workforce.</p>
Disability	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. Accessibility of all kinds is very important for disabled people with different impairments, which the policy prioritises.</p> <p>Addressing hate crime, stereotyping and discrimination are also matters being considered. The policy is clear that people with all sorts of disability</p>

		<p>must be considered, and we should not think that accessibility is limited to physical access only.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to assist the Council in ensuring fairness for our staff and improving diversity in our workforce.</p>
Sex/Gender	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. Gender issues are addressed in particular in the chapter on employment.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to assist the Council in ensuring fairness for our staff and improving diversity in our workforce. This is particularly important when we consider the fact that data shows that women have borne the majority of caring duties during the pandemic.</p>
Age	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. Accessibility issues are fundamental to older people's independence; therefore, the policy addresses a number of matters that are important to them.</p> <p>Young people also face stereotyping and discrimination, therefore the message that everyone should be treated according to their need is also important to young people.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to strengthen the need to ensure fairness for our staff according to their needs and improve diversity in our workforce.</p>
Sexual orientation	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. Staff are expected to treat everyone according to their need, which is important to people whatever their sexual orientation.</p> <p>Addressing sex crime, stereotyping and discrimination are also important.</p>

		The policy is also expected to strengthen the need to ensure fairness for our staff according to their needs and improve diversity in our workforce.
Religion or belief (or non-belief)	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers.</p> <p>Addressing hate crime, stereotyping and discrimination are also important.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to strengthen the need to ensure fairness for our staff according to their needs and improve diversity in our workforce.</p>
Gender reassignment	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. The policy's message that everyone should be treated according to their need is especially important here.</p> <p>It talks specifically about the need to treat trans people with respect and dignity.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to strengthen the need to ensure fairness for our staff according to their needs and improve diversity in our workforce.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	<p>The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. Providing equal opportunities for women on maternity leave is important.</p> <p>It is also important to provide for members and the public during this time.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to strengthen the need to ensure fairness for our staff according to their needs and improve diversity in our workforce.</p>
Marriage and civil partnership	Positive / negative / none	The policy is expected to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers.

		<p>Having said this, there is no specific mention in the policy about marriage and civil partnership.</p> <p>The policy is also expected to strengthen the need to ensure fairness for our staff according to their needs and improve diversity in our workforce.</p>
The Welsh language	Positive	<p>It is expected for the policy to remind staff of the need to provide services for all and to reduce any existing barriers. The policy addresses the need to consider language under the race characteristic, e.g. the need to consider different languages and being aware of cultural needs.</p> <p>Also, there is a responsibility on the Council to consider the impact of its decisions on the Welsh language under the requirements of the Welsh Language Measure and Welsh Language Standards, and a Language Policy is being implemented to ensure compliance with the Standards and that services are provided bilingually.</p>

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society by advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must duly address the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?*	In what way? What is the evidence?
Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation	Yes	The purpose of the policy is to remind staff of the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The ways to do this is to equip staff with the right information in order to treat people according to their need and with respect and dignity.
Promote equal opportunities	Yes	Again, this is one of the main purposes of the policy. The policy will remind staff of the need to promote equal opportunity for all by ensuring they have the right knowledge, and to treat people

		according to their need and with respect and dignity.
Foster good relationships	Yes	By minimising barriers, the policy will promote good relationships between people with equality characteristics and the rest of society. The policy encourages inclusion of people with equality characteristics when providing and altering services.

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you operate in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English, and that every opportunity to promote the Welsh language is taken (beyond providing bilingual services) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The Council has a Language Policy that is implemented alongside the Equality and Inclusion Policy and ensures that the Council provides services and information in accordance with the need and requirements of the population in terms of language. The principles of the Welsh Language Measure of not treating the Welsh language less favourably than English and taking advantage of all opportunities to promote the Welsh language, are an essential part of that policy. The Equality and Inclusion Policy relates to matters that go beyond the bilingual provision and considers additional needs.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice so as to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language, and to reduce or prevent any detrimental impacts that the policy/practice could have on the Welsh language?

As the Council's Language Policy stands alone and sets the guidance on going beyond the provision of bilingual services to promote and boost the Welsh language, it is not considered that changes need to be made to this specific policy to address the need to have a positive impact on the Welsh language. The Council's language policy is currently being reviewed, and there will be an opportunity to look at improvements and opportunities to have a more positive impact when carrying out an assessment on those amendments.

3.5 How does the proposal show that you have given due regard to the need to address inequality due to socio-economic disadvantage? (Please note that this relates to closing the inequality gap, rather than just improving outcomes for everyone).

By ensuring fairness when receiving services.

By improving diversity and fairness across our workforce, we will also be providing support to people with specific equality characteristics, who are statistically poorer than the rest of society, to obtain better jobs.

3.6 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy / practice to show that you have given due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

We have considered all the factors in creating the policy.

4) Analysing the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significantly positive impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

Yes. The policy's aim is to remove barriers for people who have any of the equality characteristics and to promote equal opportunities. If all Council employees act in accordance with the policy, we can ensure fairness for the residents of Gwynedd.

The policy will also help to secure equal opportunities for our workforce and for those wishing to apply for jobs within the Council.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significantly negative impact on any of the equality characteristics or the General Duty? What is the reason for this?

No

4.3 What should be done?

Select one of the following:

Continue with the policy / service as it is robust	X
Revise the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and abolish the policy as the harmful impacts are too great	
Continue with the policy as any harmful impact can be justified	

4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

N/A. The aim of the scheme is to reduce or mitigate negative impacts on the people of Gwynedd

4.5 If you are not taking any further action to remove or reduce the negative impacts, please explain why here.

N/A

5) Monitoring

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

We will review use of the Policy annually.