

CYNGOR GWYNEDD - Report to Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Title of Item:	Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28, Annual Report 2025-26
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Llio Owen, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support
Relevant officer:	Gwenno M Griffith, Equality Officer
Date of meeting:	13 October 2026

1. Decision Sought:

The Cabinet is requested to note the content and approve the 2025-26 Annual Report and the 2024-28 Equality Plan.

2. The reason why the Cabinet needs to make a decision:

Reporting annually on the progress made on the Strategic Equality Plan is a duty in accordance with the 2010 Equality Act as implemented in Wales. It is also good practice within the Council for the Cabinet to be aware of the progress.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background/Introduction

The intention of the Annual Report is to note the progress made in relation to the Action Plan for the 5 Equality Objectives that were worked on during 2025-26, as noted in the Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28. The Cabinet is requested to approve this progress.

3.2 Rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The purpose of the Strategic Equality Plan is to reduce inequality between people with protected characteristics and people without those characteristics in accordance with our duty under the Equality Act 2010. The Ensuring Fairness for All Project (namely the Equality Plan) has been identified as one of the priority projects within the Council Plan by the Cabinet. It fulfils the need in the Well-being of Future Generations Act to ensure "a more equal Wales" and complies with the 5 sustainable ways of working by looking to the future, preventing discrimination, including our staff and the public, promoting fairness and working collaboratively across the Council and with the public.

This is the second Annual Report for the 2024-28 Equality Plan, and it reports against the 5 objectives noted in it. It can be noted that the vast majority of the work earmarked for the first year has been achieved.

The report also includes additional details in accordance with the guidelines of the Equality Act 2010 as it is implemented in Wales, including a report on our workforce's equality characteristics.

An Impact Assessment on the Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Socio-economic Deprivation had been prepared for the 2024-28 Strategic Equality Plan, and no reason was identified for it to be changed during this inaugural year.

3.3 Next steps

The work will progress next year in order to complete the action points noted.

4. Observations of the Statutory Officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

I am satisfied that approving the Annual Report of the Equality Plan will not create additional spending commitments. I support the report, and I do not have further comments from the perspective of financial propriety

4.2 Monitoring Officer

I welcome this Annual Report on performance against a duty which is relevant to all the Council's activities

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Cyngor Gwynedd Equality Annual Report 2025/26

Foreword

I am very proud to be able to present the 2025-26 Annual Review for Cyngor Gwynedd's Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28, which is the second report from this Plan.

I am pleased to say that the majority of the action points within the Objectives have been completed within the Plan period.

It is my pleasure to state that the Council Staff Equality Forum continues to develop and meets regularly and identifies important matters within the workplace. Work has also progressed on the creation of an equality data dashboard, which serves as a portal for all equality data we have, so that it can be shared with staff.

In addition, the Equality Training Framework has progressed with a clear action plan and additional titles on specific fields.

I am also glad to say that since the new equality impact assessment template has been in place, Equality officers have commenced the work of promoting and raising awareness.

In addition to these objectives, the Plan also looks at different services, including museums. I am happy to say that a lot of work has been done by this service during the year by using alternative methods to secure a better experience for the Gwynedd public.

I now look forward to seeing this progress continuing over the remainder of the Strategic Equality Plan period, up to 2028.

Introduction

In March 2024, the Council published the 'Cyngor Gwynedd Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28', to continue with the work of ensuring fairness for all. This fulfils public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010 as implemented in Wales.

The Act has been designed to reduce inequalities between specific groups by asking public bodies to give due attention to the need to:

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

The Plan looks at fairness in terms of nine protected characteristics, i.e.:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Sex
- Race (including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality)
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief - including a lack of belief
- Marriage and civil partnership
(Equality Act 2010)

The 2010 Equality Act has also included the Socio-Economic Duty since 2021. The expectation is for public bodies to take socio-economic disadvantage into account when making strategic decisions.

This Plan describes the work that will be a priority for the Council in the equality field for the four years in question (2024-28), which has been divided into five objectives, namely:

- Objective 1: **Employment - Acting to improve equality in the workplace**
- Objective 2: **Information - Improving our data about people with equality characteristics**
- Objective 3: **Systems - Ensuring that the Council is an anti-discriminatory organisation, by improving our internal systems**
- Objective 4: **Services - Ensuring equality within our day-to-day work**
- Objective 5: **Schools - Improving equality within education**

One of these objectives, namely Objective 1, refers to employment and includes actions on the pay gap, as required by the specific duty.

The specific duty also requires us to have objectives on each protected characteristic. Our decision has been to produce thematic objectives, and every objective works towards equality for each of the protected characteristics. This reduces duplication and makes it easier to identify factors that come from a cross-section (i.e., the extra barriers that people with more than one specific characteristic face).

In this report we outline, per objective, the action points we have committed to in our Strategic Equality Plan, how the objectives respond to the requirements of the act, and the difference that we intend to make by the end of the Equality Plan 2024-2028 period.

Objective 1: Employment: Acting to improve equality in the workplace

Relevant actions for the year:

1.1 Establish a staff forum(s) to discuss equality issues, so that our employees can contribute to the equality field within the Council.

1.3 Set the aim of working towards being a leading employer in this field, including addressing the following matters:

- To not include unnecessary requirements in our job descriptions when advertising jobs to give as many people as possible the opportunity to apply.
- How and where we advertise jobs.
- Our image as an employer in our communities - be proactive when trying to attract people from every part of a community to work for Cyngor Gwynedd.

1.4 Continue to take steps to fully develop the awareness of managers and staff of this field, including equality, inclusion, neurodiversity, sexual harassment, respect and dignity in the workplace.

1.6 Hold an annual pay gap audit and consider what steps to take to try and close the gap. Reach a situation where we can also hold a pay gap audit on the grounds of disability and race.

What have we done

Objective 1 relates to improving equality in the workplace, to benefit our staff and job applicants, ensuring that the Council is an equal opportunities employer. One of our main priorities for the first year of the Plan was to come to understand the perspective of staff and receive their feedback in relation to equality matters, by establishing a Staff Equality Forum. By now, many meetings have been held, and the group meets regularly every quarter to discuss workplace-related matters. On-going work is being done to secure support for the group and get attendees and discussion items in place and develop the group. After establishing this group, further developments have been made in the field and another staff forum, namely the minority ethnic forum, has now been formally established. It provides a structured platform to represent the experiences and voices of minority ethnic communities across Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy. Further conversations will be held during the next operational year on the ongoing development of the Equality Staff Forum, with officers re-advertising it, and holding conversations on any other staff forum, as required.

Much of the work around being a leading employer falls within the scope of the Council's Workforce Planning work programme, which looks at all elements of the process of recruiting and appointing staff. The milestone associated with this project has slipped into 2026-27 due to capacity challenges, but with work done to draw-up a draft strategic plan that will set the direction in order to move forward, led by a cross-departmental group of officers. Furthermore, the Human Resources Advisory Committee has been collaborating with some services over the year in order to identify key jobs and analyse the profile of the teams' workforces and to identify the potential risks to staffing levels and skills needs. These feed into the action plans of those services, and there will be a need to formalise arrangements moving forward, rectifying and expanding arrangements across the Council.

Further to the work involved with being a leading employer, we continue to take steps to develop the awareness of managers and staff of this field in full, including equality, inclusion and so forth. As a part of this, an amended Whistleblowing Policy has been adopted by the Council this year, which also includes sexual harassment as grounds for reporting through whistleblowing.

This ensures the ability to be able to share serious concerns about malpractice in a safe and confidential way and promote transparency and accountability. It also provides legal protection to individuals in accordance with the Employment Rights Act (2025)

There is also a specific duty for the Council to publish statistics of our workforces' equality characteristics annually, including the gender pay gap, investigate and consider what steps can be taken to close the gap. We have established arrangements and systems which allow us to conduct a timely audit every year, based on gender in the first instance. The Payroll Unit is working on the core data to report a gender pay gap figure for March 2025. The Council is looking at being able to strengthen the data when moving to the new payroll and HR system over the coming year.

No pay review has taken place during the past year (2025-26) and it will slip to the next operational year. The Council will look to commission an independent advisor to carry out the work.

How do the objectives respond to the requirements of the Act?

We look at our progress against the three elements of the duty, as well as consider socio-economic deprivation as noted at the beginning of the report, to measure the success of the objectives and how it responds to the specific requirements.

Continuing to develop the equality forum for staff is an important element in responding to the need to promote equal opportunities between people with a relevant protected characteristic and those without such characteristics, encouraging them to participate in the workplace's public life. Bringing people who share different characteristics together creates and strengthens their connections and provides an equal opportunity to report back to the Council on equality matters and fostering a good relationship.

By looking at planning our workplace for the future, we consider many aspects within the employment field. For example, the project looks at reviewing job requirements, being proactive in attracting diversity to the workplace, understanding the barriers that applicants face and our recruitment processes in general. By drawing up a draft strategic plan that will set a long-term operational direction, the work as a whole will respond to the requirements of the three goals above to ensure fairness for staff and applicants. It will also address the consideration of socio-economic deprivation by seeking to support people into work and at work.

Holding a pay gap survey, and considering what steps to take to try and close the gap, also responds to the requirements by letting us look at any systematic indirect discrimination and ensures that how to close the gap is an ongoing discussion. This review works towards the objective of promoting equal opportunities between people with a relevant protected characteristic, namely gender, and particularly considers reducing the socio-economic disadvantage gap. By monitoring the pay gap, it ensures that we can identify and seek to respond to any socio-economic disadvantage.

What difference do we expect to make by the end of the Equality Plan 2024-2028 period?

We have started to establish steps where staff are able to take part and offer ideas on how Cyngor Gwynedd as an employer can improve things for people with equality characteristics. We also ensure that they understand other needs by providing training on specific characteristics. We are taking practical steps to develop our image as an employer for people with equality characteristics, and aim, in the long-term, to be innovative in the field. We will also ensure that our managers and staff have access to information to support them when dealing with employment matters that are associated with the field.

Objective 2: Information - Improving our data about people with equality characteristics

Relevant actions for the year:

2.1 Update our engagement procedure to avoid duplication, by creating a better way of working and sharing results. Also strengthen diversity within the Citizens Panel.

2.2 Create an easier and more accessible system of storing our equality data. The aim is to make it easier to use when amending policies and creating plans.

2.3 Improve and update the data we have on Gwynedd in the Equality in North Wales document, filling in any gaps if possible.

2.4 Identify any gaps in the information we collect about the users of care services and then work to fill them. This will ensure that we collect data that is as complete as possible.

What have we done

Objective 2 specifically looks at data and how, as a Council, we could improve our data about people with equality characteristics. By now, an Engagement Officer has been appointed after a period when the post has been vacant, and therefore work has been able to move ahead within this objective. Work has been done arrange having a cross-departmental Engagement Group, in order to avoid work duplication and being able to share results and good practice, has moved on. However, unfortunately, after a trial period, it was realised that the Group has not achieved its purpose. Therefore, a decision was made to end the Group. This allows for the commencement of new arrangements, which is to attend a Forward Programme meeting, which identifies the consultations on matters that are put before committee. The Engagement Officer will establish a network of staff

across the Council's services, in order to meet regularly with them to discuss potential engagement work. Planning for this has commenced with the Engagement Officer making enquiries and arrangements, and will discuss this on individual consultation level with relevant officers, moving forward.

To strengthen diversity within the Citizens Panel, the current analysis of the Panel's membership has been updated, in order to understand what needs to be improved. Work to check the Panel's membership was completed in 2025, but instead of increasing the Panel's membership, further consideration is being given to establish a 'panel' separately by means of the Council's Equality Core Group, in order to be able to engage with them regarding consultations.

The work of developing a data dashboard was commenced in order to improve and update the data we have on Gwynedd, creating an easier and more accessible procedure for keeping our equality data, work has commenced on developing a data dashboard. This includes creating a portal for all equality data we have, starting on using the information from the last census and equality information reports, which are already available.

A core dashboard has already been created, but not yet live, and development work will continue in the long-term, through the period of the Strategic Plan. The information will be used to steer Equality Impact Assessments and other work, ensuring that decisions are based on robust evidence. This will enable the Council to ensure that our policies and procedures will be fair for all and see what needs improving.

The next action point looks specifically at the care field, including identifying any gaps in the information that we gather about the users of care services and the work to fill them.

This will ensure that we are gathering data as comprehensively as possible and ensure that we have a suitable recording system to be able to identify equality characteristics to ensure that our services are accessible and anti-discriminatory. A tender has been awarded for a new system to store service user data with an action plan progressing to plan the system and migrate from the current system. The new system is in the process of being developed to replace the current system against the next operational year. In addition, the service has held discussions with our social workers to identify barriers when asking and receiving information on the protected characteristics of those receiving a service. Discussions have been held on this as a part of the work to look at forms, but there is a need for further conversations on a whole-service level in order to be able to decide on the most suitable way of discovering this information. Discussions have also been held more broadly across Care services to understand the best way of recording the information, with the intention of re-looking at the forms as a whole with the development of the new social care system. By now, the decision has been made to wait for further specialist guidance and therefore the work will continue in the next operational year, to coincide with the introduction of the new system and adapting the case review forms, which will include questions on equality characteristics.

How do the objectives respond to the requirements of the act?

We look at our progress against the three elements of the duty, as well as consider socio-economic deprivation as noted at the beginning of the report, to measure the success of the objectives and how it responds to the specific requirements.

When responding to the requirements of the act, this objective makes a substantial contribution by focusing on improving the quality, accessibility and consistency of equality data across the Council, enabling us to assess progress against the three elements of the duty as well as considering socio-economic deprivation, by identifying the barriers that exist and where attention is required.

In addition, the work of updating the analysis of the Citizens Panel membership and considering establishing further contact with the Equality Core Group contributes to promoting equal opportunities and fostering good relationships, by ensuring that various voices are being represented in consultations. The focus is on strengthening diversity and ensuring more inclusive methods, reflecting a commitment to note and address any gaps in representation or participation which responds to every element of the duty.

Developing an equality data dashboard is a key step which responds to the requirements of the specific duties by improving the way that key information is collected, organised and used. By creating a central portal to capture data, the Council strengthens its ability to note trends, assess the impact of policies and make evidence-based decisions. The dashboard will support Equality Impact Assessments and enable the Council to identify any fields where individuals with protected characteristics could experience disadvantage or discrimination, including any links socio-economic disadvantage, as this will be something that will be added to the dashboard. It will be possible to look at the link between equality characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage on a deeper level.

The work in the care field shows a further commitment to ensuring that data about service users is complete and accurate, enabling the Council to ensure credibility and fairness in the provision. This will contribute towards preventing discrimination, harassment and unlawful victimisation in the long-term. The process of developing a new social care system, as well as discussions with social workers to understand barriers when collecting information on protected characteristics, contributing to improving the quality of data and ensuring that services are anti-discriminatory.

What difference do we expect to make by the end of the Equality Plan 2024-2028 period?

We intend to improve the data we have in order to use it when creating or amending a policy or ways of working and to provide a better service to the people of Gwynedd. We will also ensure that we obtain suitable input from people with protected characteristics without overwhelming them by questioning them often. It is important to have an overview and a clear understanding of the main problems facing people with different protected characteristics.

Objective 3: Systems: Ensuring that the Council is an anti-discriminatory organisation, by improving our internal systems

Relevant actions for the year:

3.1 Continue with the training framework to give our staff the resources and confidence on all levels within the Council to respect diversity and deal with a range of needs suitably. Ensure that the training framework is extended to include a variety of equality characteristics / broad topics.

3.2 Raise Council staff awareness of the new Equality Impact Assessment procedure and provide support, information and training to ensure the quality of work.

3.3 Make our website more accessible by creating an action plan and acting on it. This will include working towards getting rid of the use of PDF documents.

3.4 Continue to work to reduce Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

What have we done

Objective 3 looks at equality within the council's internal systems and how we can continue to be an anti-discriminatory organisation. The first action point looks at internal training systems for our staff. A dashboard has been created, and is now live, which gives Heads of Department a live picture of the number of staff who have completed mandatory training, including the equality training.

The percentage of individuals who have completed the Equality title since March 2025 has increased from 35.5% to 62.8%. This follows encouragement to all Council staff to complete mandatory training titles. This encouragement continues as a result of appointing a new officer within the service, where the Corporate Safeguarding Promoter will encourage staff across the departments to complete mandatory training and support staff who face any barriers when doing so.

Work will continue throughout the period of the plan to ensure that staff members complete the training.

We are also reviewing the content of the training programme regularly to include courses on a variety of equality characteristics. This work is continuous, working towards being a leading authority in this field. During this operating year, the Council has identified priority areas from the Welsh Government, namely anti-racism, LGBTQ+ and disability, and a plan has been prepared to arrange sessions in these core fields.

The LGBTQ+ training will continue to be offered to managers and staff, and 9 sessions have been arranged during the operational year in question, 7 for all Council staff and 2 for Elected Members, with very positive feedback on how the session increases staff confidence and awareness. These sessions continue for the next operational year, with some dates already determined.

During the operational year, work on the rest of the training framework was ongoing, with the Equality Officer working with the Learning and Development Team to create adverts and a brief to identify providers for Disability training and Anti-racism training. By now, an external provider has been identified to run the pilot session for the Disability training, with the intention of offering a series of sessions, available to all staff and managers, if successful. Two dates were determined for running the pilot session within the operational year, but unfortunately, both events had to be

rearranged due to circumstances that were out of the Council's control. By now, another date has been determined for May 2026.

A specification was also sent out, through the procurement process, to procure Anti-racism training. By now, we have decided to look again through our existing contacts so that we can identify providers. However, during March, Gofal Cymru added an E-learning Anti-racism course on our intranet for all staff members in the meantime.

In addition, 2 Unconscious Bias sessions were held, which is important to enable staff to identify and avoid automatic assumptions that can lead to unequal treatment. Once again, these were open to all, including managers.

There is no specific training for managers developed to date, but every training course within the framework are open to them. However, to further support Managers on this, further information and resources are available to them on the Equality and Diversity Leadership and Management Hub.

The Council is also continuing with the Women in Leadership developmental sessions with another group commencing in September 2025.

The second action point for this year is specifically about our equality impact assessment process, which is to create a new system, promote it and ensure support for staff to complete the assessments effectively. Equality officers have been working on raising staff awareness on all levels in the Council of the new Equality Impact Assessment, providing support and information to ensure the standard of the work. Further to the support being provided continuously on a one-to-one level, the equality officers have started to visit departments to present information to the management teams and some sub-teams, with more arranged for the next operational year. The session provides background information on equality, before focusing on impact assessments and displaying the new digital procedure. The service has also been able to make changes on the impact assessment system, based on feedback, when needed, to ensure understanding and further support.

Continuing to look at our internal systems, the next action point looks at accessibility and how to make our website more accessible over the plan period. As part of this work, a temporary Accessibility Officer has been appointed on a 12-month contract in January 2025. Following this, work has progressed to redesign the website's homepage to get rid of several accessibility problems identified, and to look more specifically at the accessibility of PDF documents. This includes many elements that are still in progress, such as approving the design and looking at user testing. During the next operational year, adaptations will be made following user testing to build the final page on the live website. The hope is that this work will be completed, with the website live, by the end of the next operational year. As a second part to the action point, new content has been created on the website to be more accessible and we have managed to get rid of around 1,000 PDF documents, by creating new documents or deleting them completely as they were no longer relevant.

Looking at our internal arrangements, the final action step looks at our White Ribbon plan which has already been part of the council's strategic plans and has been transferred from the Equality Plan 2020-24 to allow us to continue working to reduce Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence. Work from last year continues to encourage staff to complete safeguarding training to ensure that they have an understanding and awareness of the safeguarding arrangements. The training is promoted as one that needs to be completed as a part of the work of promoting training courses in general by the Organisational Learning and Development Service. Having appointed a Corporate Safeguarding Promoter, the work is progressing to encourage more staff to complete the

Safeguarding training, with the figure raising to 75.6%. Four departments have been identified with lower figures than other departments and identifying the barriers to getting front-line staff to complete training is a priority for the Corporate Safeguarding Promoter. The first step with this was to create a video, which shares the same message and is used as an additional training method.

As another part of the work of reducing Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence, officers have investigated the development of safeguarding and domestic abuse information in other languages, and are aware of the resources available, but there is a need to understand more about the local linguistic need and identify the priority languages first, therefore the investigation work will continue into the next operational year.

The collaboration with the Gwynedd and Môn Community Safety Partnership has continued in 2025 and 2026, and continuously through the plan period. As last year, violence against women is a priority within the partnership's annual plan, and cross-departmental work across the Council is integral to this. Collaboration has taken place within the training field, with officers from the Corporate Services Department and the Gwynedd and Môn Community Safety Partnership co-delivering training for Elected Members in the field of Violence against Women, Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. Alongside that, collaboration has taken place for White Ribbon Day, to raise awareness and participate in the campaign. During this year, the flag was raised in November with a statement published and training on Bystander Intervention for Council staff arranged for that day.

In addition to the above, the Gwynedd and Môn Community Safety Partnership held a stall at Ysbyty Gwynedd. Messages were shared amongst Council staff and amongst the Elected Members.

How do the objectives respond to the requirements of the act?

We assess the progress against three elements of the duty, and consider socio-economic deprivation noted at the beginning of the report to measure the success of the objectives and how they respond to the specific requirements.

Objective 3 helps the Council to fulfil its equality duties by focusing on improving internal systems to ensure that it acts as an anti-discriminatory organisation. By continuing with a comprehensive training framework which includes a variety of equality areas and characteristics, including LGBTQ+, disability and anti-racism, the Council gives staff on every level the ability to respond to various needs. This strengthens the effort to prevent unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to promote equal opportunities, and raising awareness, and therefore strives to nurture good connections.

Promoting the Equality Impact Assessment process, particularly for managers and management teams, also meets the requirements, ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities and are able to make inclusive decisions, which look at these three elements of the act specifically and on socio-economic disadvantage. The impact assessment template emphasises the importance of considering any socio-economic impact, as well as protected characteristics and therefore fulfils the need to comply with the duty, specifically when making strategic decisions.

In addition, promoting campaigns such as the White Ribbon Day and continuing to work to reduce Violence against Women, fosters good relationships, creating a proactive culture, which also seeks to reinforce the prevention of discrimination, harassment and unlawful gender-based persecution.

What difference will we make by the end of the Equality Plan 2024-2028 period?

Our aim is to ensure that the Council's arrangements consider all equality characteristics and that our staff understand and accept their responsibilities in the field. We will ensure better understanding of the rights and needs of people with various characteristics by creating a variety of training titles. In addition, that consideration of equality characteristics is given the place it deserves when creating and changing policies and ways of working through our Equality Impact Assessment process. We will ensure that people receive the information that they need by making our website more user-friendly. Promoting the White Ribbon plan also provides support for staff to understand their responsibility in the field.

Objective 4: Utilities: Ensuring equality within our day-to-day work

Relevant actions for the year:

4.1 Investigate the accessibility of the Council's services, then create an action plan and acting on it (payments system, collaboration with age-friendly)

4.2 The Museums and Arts Service will support the communities of Gwynedd by: Providing inclusive programmes for our diverse communities, whether they are an exhibition, an activity, events, promotion opportunities, projects and grants

4.3 Services of the Housing and Property Department: Fulfil Cyngor Gwynedd's Housing Action Plan activities who has the aim of "Ensuring that the people of Gwynedd have access to a suitable home of a high standard, that is affordable and improves their quality of life".

What have we done

Under Objective 4, the first point relates to looking at Council services and how to improve accessibility of access. The equality officer will work with the Customer Care and Registration Service as this is the "front door" for members of the public. The challenges they face when collaborating with other services when serving the public were considered. Team members have received face-to-face training on equality matters, which gave them an opportunity to discuss specific matters.

The remainder of the action points look at three specific services / departments, to ensure equality within everyday work. The first service is Museums. Throughout the plan period, the Museums Service has been assessing the accessibility of the services they provide, with the aim of working towards removing any barriers. This has addressed operational matters arising in general equality questionnaires introduced in the first year of the plan, and any matters that have been raised through complaints or other feedback. Discussions continue on improving accessibility arising from the barriers.

Planning programmes that include equality objectives are an integral part of the work, and it is an ongoing process. For example, as a part of the Storiell programme in 2025/26, there is a museum collection on the "House of Memories" plan, designed to support individuals with dementia from various cultural backgrounds as a part of the Welsh Government's Anti-racism plan. In addition, with grant support from the Museums and Galleries Federation, a workshop was arranged to investigate different heritage, including India, Africa and Mexico, which led to an exhibition jointly curated for the community, as well as a cultural event to celebrate this work. The organisation aims to continue with this method of working to be inclusive and diverse.

In addition, receiving further training and mentoring continues to be an important element of the service's development, and Storiell has already received training by Our Visual World/BSL and aims to arrange an audit by Disability Arts Wales in 2026. All of this work has helped them recognise elements that need amending, such as the mission statements of both museums, and this will be addressed in 2026/27 with work already in progress. In addition, specific projects are developed which requires applying for grants and funding to realise different aspects of the work; for example, the 2024/25 SPF grant has supported the Engagement and Learning Officer role in Storiell, and a further grant for 2025/26 has been secured, extending this support up to March 2026.

The second service / department that is part of this objective is the Housing and Property service. They are working on Cyngor Gwynedd's Housing Action Plan which complies with the Equality Plan period. The work which started during the first operational year of the plan established a One Stop Shop, to enable Council officers to assess customer needs and refer one enquiry to several different units according to the advice the Council can offer, now completed, with the service operational since 15th September 2025. Additionally, the work of updating the website has been completed to coincide with the development. 433 units have been built as a part of the Social Housing Development Programme with the Council, aiming to ensure that Gwynedd housing is beneficial to the environment and offer energy efficiency advantages to residents. In addition, during this period, 5,788 energy vouchers to the value of £239,565 were distributed, and 943 properties have seen an increase in their energy performance certificate through the ECO4 plan, with 1,802 applications approved.

How do the objectives respond to the requirements of the act?

We assess the progress against the three elements of the duty, as well as consider the socio-economic deprivation noted at the start of the report to measure the success of the objectives and how it responds to the specific requirements.

This objective coincides with the requirements of the Act by contributing to each of the three elements of the duty and considers socio-economic disadvantage. By assessing the accessibility of the museums service, responding to feedback and identifying barriers, the work supports the duty to remove discrimination and to ensure that services are fair and accessible to all. The programmes and projects that focus on representing various cultures by contributing towards a "House of Memories" plan, which promotes equal opportunities by ensuring that people from diverse backgrounds are represented and included in the cultural work. In addition, these activities foster good relationships by fostering an understanding between communities and encourages the celebration of diversity. The focus on training, mentoring and reviewing mission statements show a commitment to improving in-house practices and to ensure that the service continues to develop in an inclusive and

anti-racist way. Under socio-economic disadvantage, the work of ensuring accessibility, providing inclusive programmes and ensuring grant funding, helps to reduce barriers and enables people to participate in cultural activities, ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds can benefit from the services.

The next objective also coincides with the requirements of the Act, by contributing to each of the three elements of the duty and considering socio-economic disadvantage. By developing the Housing Action Plan and establishing the One Stop Shop, the Housing and Property Department contributes towards removing discrimination and ensuring that every customer has equal access to support, reducing the risk of inconsistent treatment between different groups. This method of assessing individual needs and of referring to a range of services promoting equal opportunities, ensures that people with protected characteristics obtain appropriate and timely support. Additionally, the work of building social housing units, improving energy efficiency, and distributing thousands of energy vouchers, contributes towards reducing the socio-economic disadvantage gap by supporting residents in a fair, inclusive and responsive way to their needs. These steps make a substantial contribution towards reducing the financial pressure on low-income households by improving housing standards, reducing energy costs, and ensuring that support is accessible to all.

What difference do we intend to make by the end of the Equality Plan 2024-2028 period?

We will look at how accessible our services are to everyone and work to reduce any barriers. Our Museums and Arts Service will also build on what is already in place to ensure that communities can contribute their voices to the narrative in our museums, to have more opportunities, fewer barriers and enable them to participate more in their culture and experience enjoyment, learning and health and well-being improvements. People have told us the importance of housing and transport for individuals with specific equality characteristics and those living under socio-economic disadvantage, and we have action points in these fields too to improve people's living standards.

Objective 5: Schools: Improve equality within education

Relevant actions for the year:

5.1 Collect, analyse and act on data relating to cases of bullying and hate crime:

- Identify training needs for school staff by analysing data/trends of bullying that are reported by schools.
- Collaborate with welfare officers, the youth service, the police and other agencies to respond to findings/trends of bullying by providing training and prevention work to staff in the schools.

What have we done

The main priority during this year was to establish an Authority wide system to collect data on the different categories of bullying that are recorded at the school. Gwynedd schools are in the process of transferring to a new data system. Subsequently, every school will use an electronic system, and the Education Department will be able to collect and analyse the data easily. Because most of the basic and strategic work determined in the Plan was completed during the first year of the Equality Plan, the service now focuses on maintaining, refining and building on the processes and systems

already at work, ensuring continuity and consistency in the provision. Work is continuing on to look at and analyse all research work and collect data from the previous year.

How do the objectives respond to the requirements of the act?

We assess the progress against three elements of the duty, and consider socio-economic deprivation noted at the beginning of the report to measure the success of the objectives and how they respond to the specific requirements.

Establishing a procedure across the authority to collect data on various types of bullying at Gwynedd schools makes a direct contribution towards noting and responding to behaviours associated with discrimination or harassment. The new system data will enable the department to monitor patterns, note schools or groups where there is a higher risk, and take steps to reduce discrimination of any type. The objective also ensures equal opportunities across every school by ensuring that policy and resource planning decisions are evidence-based, helping improve equal access and fostering good relationships between parents, pupils and schools by showing commitment to monitor and address inequalities.

What difference do we intend to make by the end of the Equality Plan 2024-2028 period?

Our aim is to ensure equality of education and opportunity for all pupils, staff, parents and carers who receive services from our schools, irrespective of their protected characteristics and their needs. By improving equality within education, we will develop a culture of inclusion and diversity where every child who is linked with Gwynedd schools feels proud of their identity and are able to participate fully in school life. Pupils' attainment will be monitored, and we will use the data to support the pupils, raise standards and ensure inclusive education. We will tackle discrimination by facilitating and supporting schools to positively promote equality, challenging bullying and stereotypes and create an environment that fosters respect towards all. In Gwynedd we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by everyone within and outside the schools.

Further Information

In accordance with the guidelines of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, Cyngor Gwynedd is required to report annually on the information we gather in the field of equality.

Staff Equality Details Monitoring

As filling the form is optional (in accordance with the guidelines), not enough people have completed it. We have recognised this and are working to encourage more people to complete it (Objective 1, Action Point 1.8). When we have sufficient information, we will be able to identify pay gaps, on a wider level than merely gender-based (Action Point 1.6) to implement to improve variety in our workplace. 51.6% of the workforce completed the questionnaire on 31 March 2026; the information about our workforce's equality characteristics can be seen in [LINK](#)

Complaints and concerns

27 complaints were brought to the attention of the equality officers because they included allegations of discrimination, or because of some other link to equality matters. Seven of these were considered valid (2 informal, 5 formal). Most of them (6) related to disability issues - namely beach access, access to the libraries service, more support in the education field and better communication. Disability issues also arose in the complaints that were considered invalid - such as parking, and beach access again. We will feed this information into the work that we will be doing on access in Objective 3 and Objective 4. The subject of another complaint related to the equality processes more broadly. The other invalid complaints were regarding an allegation of racism because of nationality in housing and communication matters, broader parking issues, officer conduct, access to beaches and support to pay Council tax.

Engagement

Gathering information, especially through engagement, is a very important objective within the Equality Plan. We want to ensure that sufficient information is easily available for officers when formulating impact assessments, in order to ensure that due attention is being given to the 3 goals of the general duty and the socio-economic duty. We also want to ensure that good use is being made of the information collected, therefore, the engagement work we did between 2023 and 2024 fed in and steered the current plan, with over 600 people participating. We continue to collaborate with the Council's Equality Core Group regularly throughout the year to gather their views on several subjects. In addition, during the current operational year, we have also started to engage regularly with the Council's staff, by means of the staff forum. We will continue to develop this forum for the rest of the Plan period.

Quantitative Data

The current Strategic Equality Plan includes a specific objective on quantitative data. Work is progressing to create a local dashboard for Gwynedd in order to build on and develop our plans. This data will also be available for staff to use for impact assessments, to draw up policies and improve services. We have included this Objective as we identify the importance of gathering suitable data to improve these types of services. We already gather information on pay differences regarding protected characteristics and publish it annually, see the appendix. We are also aiming to carry out an audit on the gender pay gap every three years or so. As part of the North Wales Public Sector Equality Network, we have commissioned the "Equality in North Wales: A Data and Evidence Document" from our Data and Information Service, which has brought vast information together to be able to form the current Plan and give us a better understanding of equality in North Wales. We use this document as a basis for the data dashboard (see above).