



Cynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol

2020 – 2024

Strategic Equality Plan



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Version Control

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Alternative Formats

This document is available on the Council's website at

www.monmouthshire.gov.uk

Also it is available upon request in hard copy, large print, Braille, audio version, word format for screen readers etc. Please contact:

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Introduction and Foreword

Welcome to Monmouthshire's County Council's new Strategic Equality Plan. The publication of strategic equality objectives is a legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010 but that's not the thing that motivates us. We believe in putting social justice at the heart of everything we do and are committed to a fair and equal society.

Monmouthshire County Council is a values based organisation with a clear purpose to build sustainable and resilient communities. Public services are facing challenging times, we can only help people and communities achieve their potential if we work with everyone, drawing on the diversity of expertise, experience and energy that Monmouthshire is blessed with.

The plan builds on the work delivered in the previous strategic equality plans and since the last plan was published the council has:

- Shown clear commitment to social justice with the creation of a new Cabinet portfolio to lead on this. This includes responsibility for equalities and you will see clear synergies between this plan and the Strategic Equality Plan which we produced in 2016.
- Gathered extensive evidence through the Well-Being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment. As a result this plan is built on a strong evidence base drawn from data, policy and community engagement.
- Used the Equality and Human Rights Commission's "Is Wales Fairer 2018" report to highlight many issues that are pertinent to Monmouthshire and which are addressed within in this plan.
- Included poverty as part of the impact assessments undertaken on all council policy decisions – ahead of the new socio-economic duty
- Developed cumulative impact assessments of our annual budget process looking at the combined impact of budget decisions on different households.

Monmouthshire is the lowest funded local authority in Wales which means we have to think differently and make some difficult decisions. The key is to do that without adversely affecting the most vulnerable in our society or those with protected characteristics. This plan, together with our Social Justice Strategy demonstrates our whole-hearted and unambiguous commitment to fairness and equality for the people and communities of Monmouthshire.



Councillor Sara Jones
Cabinet Member for Social Justice
and Community Development

Our Foundation: Purpose and Values

Our Purpose:

We want to help build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.

This purpose is at the heart of everything we do to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Monmouthshire and we share this with our public service partners as part of the Public Service Board (PSB). We will consider sustainable development in how we plan and deliver the action set in this plan.

Our Values

We can only achieve great things for our place through the people who live and work here, those on our payroll and those in Monmouthshire's communities including the countless volunteers and groups that give this place a richness and vibrancy. Our values reflect who we are, how we do things and how we are shaping the future. We try our best to apply these in everything we do.

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will leverage all of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

Our Corporate Plan

Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Plan sets out the things we will be working on in the medium term. The plan sets out our five Organisational Goals (also our well-being objectives) supported by the 22 commitments to action up to 2022. The Strategic Equality Plan is aligned to the direction set in the Corporate Plan. The Plan is underpinned by a clear policy framework that sets out in more detail our work to enable the delivery of the plan (see appendix). We shape our activity in the corporate plan in line with the goals and ambitions of our partners in other public services who are part of the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB). It is worth noting that the Corporate Plan is going to be the subject of a mid – term review. The aspiration and objectives set for Monmouthshire by the PSB and Council are:

Purpose: Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities	
<i>Public Service Board Well-being Objectives</i>	<i>Monmouthshire County Council Goals & Well-being Objectives</i>
Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life	The best possible start in life
Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change	Lifelong well-being
Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change	Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment
Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.	Thriving and well-connected county
	Future – focussed Council

Our Social Justice Strategy

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

The strategy has three objectives:

- Give Children the Best Start In Life, Overcoming Barriers To Attainment and Opportunity.
- Overcome Inequalities in Access to Economic Prosperity
- Tackle The Scourge of Loneliness and Isolation

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

National Policy Context

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 that came into operation on the 6th April 2011, replaced 116 previous different pieces of law relating to equality, and put them all together into one piece of legislation. It strengthens the law in important ways, and in some respects extends current equality law to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Council, as a public body in Wales, has a requirement under the Act to meet both general and specific duties.

The **general duties** are that in exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance 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 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 Act also sets out a number of **Specific Duties** that public bodies are required to comply with:

- publish sufficient information to demonstrate its compliance with the general duty across its functions
- prepare and publish Equality Objectives and detail the engagement that has been undertaken in developing them.
- publish a Strategic Equality Plan.
- set out how progress will be measured

The Specific Duties as applied 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:

- Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plans
- Engagement
- Assessment of impact
- Equality information
- Employment information, pay differences and staff training
- Procurement
- Reporting and Publishing

The Protected Characteristics

The general duty covers the same people that were covered by previous legislation, but strengthens and consolidates it into one act. It introduces 'protected characteristics' which replaces the phrase 'equality strands'.

The protected characteristics – as defined by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are:

Age - A person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Sex - A man or a woman.

Gender re-assignment - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Disability - A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Pregnancy and maternity - The condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, it gives protection against maternity discrimination for 26 weeks after giving birth, and includes treating a woman unfavorably because she is breastfeeding.

Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Race - This refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion or belief (including lack of belief) - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism).

Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Marriage and civil partnership - Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Same-sex couples can have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. The Equality Act 2010 applies to this characteristic, but only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination.

The Socio-Economic Duty





The Equality Act places a 'due regard' duty on public bodies, to ensure that advancement of equality of opportunity is a key consideration when carrying out their functions. However, this has been dormant on the statute book. The County Council has introduced *poverty* as an additional characteristic in the impact assessments carried out on key policy decisions. This should ensure a focus on the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome that result from socio-economic disadvantage.


At the time of writing the Welsh Government was consulting on commencing the socio-economic duty in Wales. Our approach to discharging this duty will be informed by developments at a national level and will build upon work already underway through our commitment to social justice.

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is the fundamental legislation that requires us to carry out a sustainable development assessment. The Act requires us to improve social, economic and environmental wellbeing, in accordance with the sustainable development principle which seeks to ensure that present needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Welsh Government have set 7 wellbeing goals which we need to ensure our activity contributes to.

The table below explains how we have applied the sustainable development principles under the act in developing the strategy.

Sustainable Development Principle	How have these principles driven the development of the policy
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>This timescale for this plan is medium term and identifies objectives that are broader and take a much more long-term perspective supported by shorter-term activity. The objectives have been informed by a range of evidence to identify the areas we need to progress equalities in Monmouthshire.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>A range of key sources of evidence have been used to inform this plan including the Public Service Board well-being assessment, Equality and Human Rights Commission publication – “Is Wales Fairer” 2018 and the Social justice strategy. This plan acts as the council's response to addressing the issues particularly related to equalities in Monmouthshire, many of the individual actions will be developed collaboratively with partners.</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The plan has been developed from an extensive evidence base which involved a range of views for example an Equality symposium for Council officers and evidence from the previous Our Monmouthshire community engagement work which informed the well-being assessment. The plan will be subject to formal consultation in January 2020, this will include via the council website, targeted e mail distribution to all stakeholders and posted on the Councils' Facebook and Twitter accounts. As well as specific consultation with organizations/groups.</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The aim of each of the objectives is about taking action now in order to prevent problems occurring or getting worse in the future. For example, give children the best possible start in life overcoming barriers to attainment and opportunity.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	How have these principles driven the development of the policy
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>Many of the objectives are integrated with each other and objectives for the County set in other strategic plans for example the PSB well-being plan and social justice strategy. The objectives contribute to a variety of the national well-being goals in particular the goal of “A more equal Wales”. The impact each objective will have on specific protected characteristics has been identified. The development of the objectives has taken account of this and it is important that as individual actions are developed we understand how they integrate with other plans. The Council will work together with other partners to help deliver many aspects of the objectives.</p>

We made a decision to amalgamate the Future Generations assessment (FG Assessment) with our existing Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) in order to provide one comprehensive assessment of our decisions on future generations and those with protected characteristics.

Links to other strategies and legislation

The Strategic Equality Plan is not a standalone plan and has close links to a number of key Council, Partnership and Wales-wide strategies, plans, policies, frameworks and legislation. Some of these have been specifically focused on equality and others which have included equality as a key theme. Examples being:

- People, Place, Prosperity: A Strategy for Social Justice 2017-22
- Corporate Plan 2017-22
- Local Development Plan
- Monmouthshire Domestic and Sexual Abuse Action Plan
- The Well-being of Future Generations Act
- Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014.
- The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Welsh Language Standards introduced under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- More Than Words: Welsh Government Welsh Language Strategy
- Cymraeg 2050 (1 million Welsh speakers by 2050)

Evidence of Inequality

Monmouthshire is often perceived to be leafy and affluent and in many aspects it is. However, some of the differences within and between communities are stark, especially when they exist side-by-side.

- There are wide variations in exam results between people from different social backgrounds who attend the same schools.
- There are many high earners living in our County but wages available locally are lower than other parts of Wales.
- Many people experience in-work poverty and there is a notable wage differential between men and women.
- Many of our citizens are getting older, suffering ill health and at risk of becoming lonely and isolated.
- The costs of living in our rural county and accessing very basic services, such as transport and health provision, are greater than the costs for people living in urban conurbations.

There are many existing sources of evidence produced in recent years that have been used to inform the development of this plan

- **The Well-being Assessment** (Well Being of Future Generations Act)
- **The Population Needs Assessment** (Social Services and Wellbeing Act).
Both highlighted the strengths and opportunities within our communities and used an extensive evidence base to draw out some of the challenges individuals and communities will face in the future.
- **Is Wales Fairer 2018** – a document prepared by the EHRC that highlights areas that they suggest council's in Wales need to address.

Informed by the above, an Equality Symposium for council officers was held on the 29th of November 2019, where council officers from across service areas identified themes and began to identify key strategic objectives for Monmouthshire.

We know that the issues that are highlighted in the above documents are symptoms of complex problems and we also know they cannot be solved by one organisation alone. Public, third and private sector must work together. And, most importantly, we must support people and communities in developing their own solutions that are sustainable and which can deliver both immediate and long-term benefits.

This being the third version of the SEP for Monmouthshire, it is worth noting that the first two SEP's established a platform for trying to embed the principle of equality and diversity. This third version has taken in to account the very rigorous evidence base provided in the form of the Well being Assessment, Population Needs Assessment and the EHRC's "Is Wales Fairer 2018" report. This plan is far more focussed on addressing issues that have been identified as existing in Monmouthshire and involve a considerable element of partnership working to achieve those outcomes.

Involvement and Participation

The Well-Being Assessment was developed through extensive community engagement using the *Our Monmouthshire* process, combined with a detailed analysis of data, statistics, research and policy. As a result, the assessment has been used as one of the key evidence bases for this new Strategic Equality Plan. This is in conjunction with the evidence presented in the EHRC's publication – "Is Wales Fairer" 2018 and relevant issues highlighted in our Social Justice Strategy.

This strategic equality plan has been put out for formal consultation from week commencing 10th January and ending on the 20th February 2020. This has been done in numerous ways; via the council website, with a targeted e-mail distribution to stakeholders and posted on the Councils' Facebook and Twitter accounts. Specific organisations/groups that have been consulted are as follows:

- Monmouthshire Inclusion Group: Two task-and-finish groups made up of officers from MCC.
- Access 4 All Forum
- 50+ Forum.
- Monmouth Visually Impaired Group.
- SEWEG – South East Wales Equality Group.
- Members of the Public Service Board (PSB).
- Strong Communities Select Committee (scrutiny).

Strategic Equality Objectives

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to building sustainable and resilient communities. This is our clear and unifying purpose, running through everything we do. We can only achieve this by valuing and making the most of the abilities and contributions of everyone in our communities, irrespective of age, gender, race, sexual orientation of any of the other characteristics that make us who we are.

These objectives and the actions outlined on the following pages are the things that we are committed to delivering over the next four years to ensure that everyone in our county is able to achieve their full potential.

- **Objective 1:** Give children the best possible start in life overcoming barriers to attainment and opportunity
- **Objective 2:** Overcome inequalities in access to economic prosperity
- **Objective 3:** Create cohesive communities
- **Objective 4:** To provide services that are accessible to our public and support our workforce.
- **Objective 5:** Create a diverse and inclusive workforce
- **Objective 6:** Reduce the gender pay gap

Each of the sections below lists some of the evidence that has informed the development of the plan and should help explain why we identified these particular objectives. It also indicates which of the groups possessing protected characteristics will benefit directly from the activity.

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

Why This Matters/Evidence

- One in five reception age children in Monmouthshire are overweight or obese ⁱ;
- There is a gap in the educational attainment between children who are in receipt of free school meals and children who are not ⁱⁱ;
- 14.2% children in Monmouthshire live in low income households ⁱⁱⁱ;
- There are a lack of opportunities for children with disabilities including play provision, travel to access education and multi-agency support ^{iv}.
- There are issues of lack of availability of accommodation and support for young people with complex needs that present as homeless

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	Timescale	Responsibility
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).	Completed	Head of Children's Services

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.	This is an ongoing piece of work that will continue through the lifetime of this plan and beyond – 2020 – 2024.	Head of Achievement and Attainment.
Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being	Develop an effective 0 - 25 Partnership for Children and Young People;	The Integrated Youth Offer (IYO) group is continuing to develop a county wide Youth Support Services (YSS) Network,	Community and Partnerships Manager
Children, young people and families are supported to improve their well-being (narrowing the gap outcome)	Develop the Community Focussed School Scheme	Ongoing during 2021 - 2022	Community and Partnerships Manager
Children & young people have sufficient opportunity to participate in play and physical activity	Carry out an annual Play sufficiency assessment.	June 2022. Carried out every 3 years	Community Infrastructure Co-ordinator
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	Delivered to every year 5 cohort on an annual basis.	Youth Support and Active Travel Manager

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	This is delivered based on insight and need identified annually	Youth Support and Active Travel Manager
Children with disabilities are able to access sporting activities	Put an action plan in place to achieve the Disability Sports Gold Award	Action Plan in place. Phase 1 Vision for insport Development Gold by 31 st March 2022	Disability Sports Officer.
People who are homeless or threatened with homelessness have improved access to accommodation and support	Implement the Homeless Transition Plan under the wider Social Justice Strategy Review services through Housing Support Grant	December 2023 October 2021	Housing and Communities Manager Flexible Funding Manager

Objective 2: Overcome inequalities in access to economic prosperity

Why This Matters/Evidence

- Digital deprivation rates in Monmouthshire are 12.5% compared to 4% in the Cardiff Capital Region as a whole ^v
- 1 in 4 adults are in poverty in Wales.
- 23% of children living in poverty in Monmouthshire after housing costs. The figure is 14% before housing costs are taken into account ^{vi}
- There are low levels of access to the labour market for people with disabilities. 85% of people with learning disabilities want to work but only 4% do ^{vii}
- 34.6% of disabled people not in employment in Wales ^{viii}
- There is a lack of availability of buses and taxis (accessible and otherwise) and trains. ^{ix}
- Gender stereo-typing in employment is prevalent and leads to a gender pay gap ^x;
- The highest rate of unemployment is in the 16 – 24 years of age range ^{xi}

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	Timescale	Responsibility
More people have access to high speed broadband	Increase the availability and take up of broadband across the county to address digital exclusion.	An updated Digital Infrastructure Action Plan went to Cabinet July 2020	Head of Enterprise and Community Animation
People have the opportunity to raise their household income	Work as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to attract high skill, high wage jobs	Monthly update meetings held with Capital Region	Chief Officer, Enterprise
People have the opportunity to raise their household income	Deliver the communities for work programme to reduce the number of people in, or at risk of, poverty	March 2022	Youth Enterprise Manager
Household are able to maximise their incomes and minimise their outgoings	Continue to develop a tackling poverty plan for the county aligned to the aspirations of the Social Justice Strategy	Plan with action plan approved by Cabinet March 2021	Head of Enterprise and Community Animation
A reduction in the number of people not in education, training or employment	Provide learning, training and employability opportunities for 11 to 24 year olds	Inspire2achieve and Inspire2work funded until December 2022	Youth Enterprise Manager

More people with disabilities and care leavers in employment	Provide access to the labour market for people with disabilities and care leavers	People with disabilities and care leavers are part of the Guaranteed interview process (3 rd March 2020)	Apprentice Graduate and Intern Co-ordinator.
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.	September 2021	Head of Policy and Governance

Objective 3: Create cohesive communities

Why This Matters/Evidence

- There has been an increase in Race Hate Crime ^{xii}
- There is an increase in identity based bullying and sexual harassment in schools ^{xiii}
- Loneliness and Isolation can have a profoundly negative effect on people.

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	Timescale	Responsibility
Better data is available about hate-based bullying	Improve recording of incidents of hate-based bullying and piloting appropriate interventions.	September 2022	Healthy Schools and Bullying Inclusion Group
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.	April 2023	As above with Connected Communities Manager / Community Cohesion Officer
Increased awareness of the consequences of hate and discrimination in society	Hold an annual Holocaust Memorial Commemorative event in Community Hubs	Event organised annually by the Hub officers in partnership with the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust	Community Hub Officers

Increased awareness amongst children of the dangers of bullying in all of its forms	Promote Anti-Bullying Week on an annual basis	Promoted annually by the Corporate Communications Team	Communication and Engagement Team. Children and Young People Directorate
A reduction in the effects of loneliness and isolation	To deliver the outcomes under the Connected Monmouthshire Plan.	Ongoing pieces of work under the plan that will be carried out that will contribute to a lessening of loneliness and isolation	Communities and Partnership Development Leads
Overcoming the barriers to accessing transport in rural areas	(GOVTECH) Two companies are working in partnership with MCC to provide the foundations for improved connectivity.	September 2021	Head of Policy and Governance

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

Why This Matters/Evidence

- Council communications need to be more accessible in all forms (fonts, language, colours, contrasts, design, presentations, alternative formats)
- 26.8% of adults in Wales report poor mental health ^{xiv}.
- Disabled people are three times more likely to report mental health issues ^{xv}.
- One in five women suffer from post-natal depression ^{xvi}.

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	Timescale	Responsibility
Ensure that we consider our diverse audience when we communicate as a council.	Continually adhere to the National Principles of Public Engagement	Ongoing engagement utilising all available engagement platforms	Communications and Engagement Team.
A fully accessible website providing information about council services	Refresh the council's website to ensure it meets the latest web content accessibility guidelines	WCAG 2.1 Accessibility project funding extended for a year through to April 2022	Digital Marketing Officer
More services are available digitally thereby improving accessibility	Continue to make more services available digitally	Integration with Monty and MyMonmouthshire Forms March 2022	Digital Programme Office Manager,

	through the council's app and the Chatbot	<p>Provide online payment options for MyMonmouthshire Forms March 2022</p> <p>Move all Highways/Flood Management Forms online November 2021</p> <p>Launch of Alexa skill for Know your bin day/Missed Bins August 2021</p>	
New and improved face-to-face access to council services	Open a new Community Hub in Abergavenny with significantly improved access	New Hub opened on the 14 th September 2020	Head of Commercial and Landlord Services
Residents of Monmouthshire have access to independent advice	<p>Continue to fund Monmouthshire Citizens Advice Bureau</p> <p>Work closely with the Disability Advice Project to access advice from the Big Lottery funded project</p>	<p>Grant funding provided on an annual basis</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Head of Policy and Governance.</p> <p>Equality and Welsh Language Officer.</p>
Improved services for dealing with mental health in Monmouthshire	<p>Continue to work with MIND on delivering the Rural mental health project.</p> <p>Improve the support for workforce mental health</p>	<p>PSB has agreed to continue support as this is a priority area of focus</p> <p>Provision of the following now in place: Occupational Health, counselling, peer to peer support, Go to Group,</p>	<p>Community and Partnerships Manager</p> <p>Human Resources Manager</p>

		coaching and mentoring.	
Improve services available to families during the first 1001 days of their child's life	Develop universally accessible support for post-natal mothers and children in the very early years including infant feeding and child development intervention.	March 2022	Flying Start Manager

Objective 5: Create a diverse and inclusive workforce

Why This Matters/Evidence

- There is a lack of diversity of the workforce ^{xvii}
- There is a lack of diversity in apprenticeships ^{xviii}

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	Timescale	Responsibility
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	Council approved its commitment to the living wage on the 11 th March 2021	Chief Officer, Resources / Chief Officer Social Care, Health and Safeguarding
More people with disabilities are applying to work for the county council	Deliver the action plan to attain Disability Confident Employer status	Disability Confident (DC) Committed status achieved March 2021. DC Employer status target April 2023	Equality and Welsh Language Officer + Disability Inclusion Group.
People are able to access more services fully using the Welsh language	Proactively target new job opportunities at Welsh speakers	Ongoing process	Equality and Welsh Language Officer.

A more diverse workforce	Introduce more graduate and intern and cadetship opportunities to increase workforce diversity	The AGI Strategy is being implemented over the period 2021 - 2024	Apprentice Graduate and Intern Co-ordinator.
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Objective 6: Reduce the gender pay gap in Monmouthshire County Council

Why This Matters/Evidence

- Gender stereo-typing in employment is still prevalent and leads to a gender pay gap.
- There is inequality between female and male wage levels^{xix}
- Scarcity of public transport and the high cost of running a car can be a barrier to females maximising their earning potential.

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	Timescale	Responsibility
More people are able to use demand responsive public transport to access employment An integrated approach to addressing and improving rural transport options in the county	Pilot the use of technology-led solutions to improve access rural transport through the GovTech Catalyst which increases access to job opportunities	September 2021	Head of Policy and Governance / Head of Enterprise and Community Animation

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>Published annually as required by the Equality Act 2010 through the annual monitoring report.</p> <p>Ongoing process. Unconscious bias training for managers September 2021 onwards</p>	<p>Human Resources Manager</p> <p>Equality and Welsh Language Officer.</p> <p>Communication, Marketing and Engagement Manager / Human Resources Manager.</p>
Understand Gender pay differences in our organisation	Gather and analyse gender data	The Gender Pay Report aims to address any areas of concern as a part of the annual monitoring report.	Human Resources Manager / Organisational Development Manager
Equal pay for work of equal value	Revise the People Strategy ensuring gender pay gap data is used to inform the strategy	September 2022	Organisational Development Manager
Reduced gender pay difference in the County	Measures added to the Corporate Plan	This is an ongoing issue, using our status as the largest employer in the county to influence other	Human Resources Manager / Organisational Development Manager

		employers in the gender pay arena	
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ⁱ Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment, <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire/>

ⁱⁱ Is Wales Fairer 2018 + Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment.

ⁱⁱⁱ Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment, *ibid*

^{iv} Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment, *ibid*

^v Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment + Population Needs Assessment.

^{vi} <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/poverty-in-your-area-2019/>

^{vii} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{viii} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{ix} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^x Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xi} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xii} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xiii} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xiv} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xv} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xvi} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xvii} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xviii} Is Wales Fairer 2018, *ibid*

^{xix} Earnings by place of work – Male 563.6, Female 562. ONS annual survey of hours and earnings – October 2019

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/placeofworkbylocalauthorityashetable7>