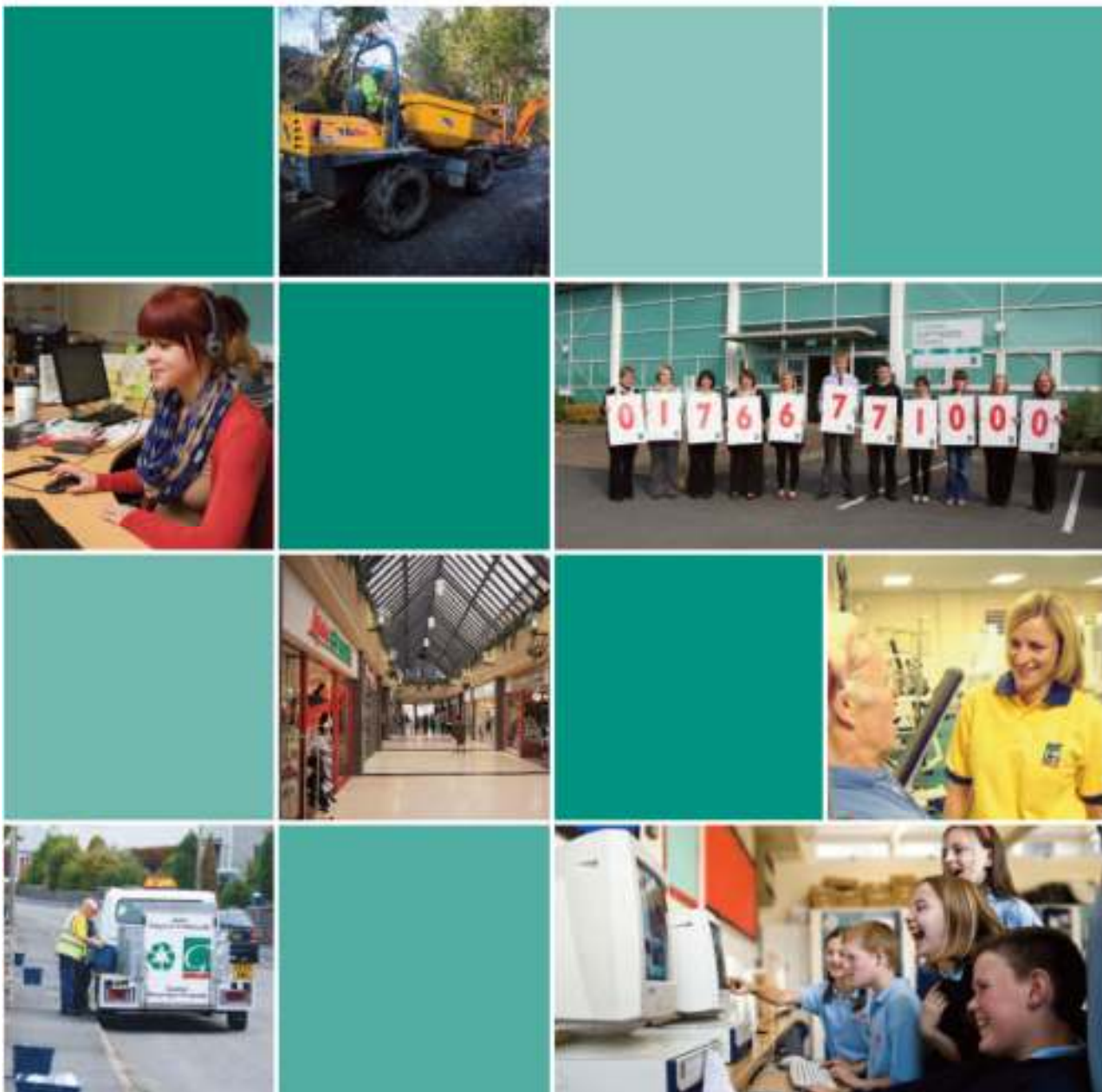


Gwynedd Council Strategic Equality Plan 2016 -20 Annual Report 2016-17



The Purpose of the Report

In March 2016, the Council published its Strategic Equality Plan for the period of 2016-20 in order to reduce inequality between people who have equality characteristics and the rest of society. These characteristics are:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Gender
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief - including lack of belief
- Marriage and civil partnership

(Equality Act 2010)

In the Strategic Equality Plan, the Council noted four objectives to work towards over the next four years. The objectives were chosen based on a variety of evidence including internal information, the voice and participation of members of the public and data on equality characteristics. The objectives are:

- Improve our arrangements to discover and use the opinion of people who share equality characteristics
- Improve our equality impact assessment arrangements
- Create circumstances for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing in an election to become an elected member
- Identify any employment and pay inequalities and take action to reduce them.

The purpose of this document is to note some of the most important things that Gwynedd Council has done during the year from April 2016 to March 2017 in the field of equality.

Action Plan

Strategic Equality Plan 2016-20

Objective 1	
Improve our arrangements to discover and use the opinion of people who share Equality characteristics	
What the Council will do during 2016-20?	What is the timescale?
1.1 Strengthen the Council's link to specific groups and establish an equality core group and share the information that comes from the group throughout the Council.	2016-17
1.2 Share information from opinion poll exercises on the Council's intranet so that it is available to all. (Further consideration to be given to discover the best method)	Ongoing
1.3 Strengthen the equality element in the Engagement Handbook based on good practice to ensure that the services are reminded of the benefit that comes from receiving the views of people with equality characteristics as well as the duty to do so.	2016-17
What has happened during 2016-17?	
<p>Although the work of contacting the specific groups commenced in 2016-17, it was not possible to complete it as the relevant Officer was away on long-term sickness absence. The work will be completed during 2017-2018.</p> <p>Information from the main Council opinion poll exercises are already available on the public website. A link to this information will be placed on the equality page.</p> <p>An initial meeting about the Engagement Handbook has taken place but, due to the long-term sickness of the relevant Officer, the work will be completed early in 2017-18.</p>	

<p>Objective 2</p> <p>Improve our equality impact assessment arrangements</p>	
<p>What the Council will do during 2016-20?</p>	<p>What is the timescale?</p>
<p>2.1 Give assistance and training to officers to ensure that they have information about their duty towards people with equality characteristics. This should include ensuring that impact assessments are a part of the development of any policy, project or procedure before any decisions are made.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>2.2 Ensure that the messages that come from seeking input from groups and individuals with protected characteristics are shared throughout the Council so that they can be included in impact assessments.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>What has happened during 2016-17?</p>	
<p>A draft of a new e-module has been completed and the e-module will be published during 2017-18.</p> <p>The work of updating the impact assessment forms has commenced for use in 2017-18.</p> <p>Information is being gathered and prepared to be placed on the intranet to provide assistance to officers in the equalities field.</p> <p>We have reported on 2.2 in point 1.</p>	

<p>Objective 3</p> <p>Create the circumstances for people from different backgrounds to represent the people of Gwynedd by standing in an election to become an elected member.</p>	
What the Council will do during 2016-20?	What is the timescale?
3.1 Conduct a local survey to identify the elements that prevent individuals from standing an election to become a local councillor.	2016/17 – 2017-18
3.2 Act (where possible) on the outcome of the above to remove obstacles.	2016/17 – 2017-18
3.3 Various methods to raise the awareness of the people of Gwynedd of democracy and the opportunities to represent as a local councillor.	2016/17 – 2017-18
What has happened during 2016-17?	
<p>Questionnaires were used to obtain views on what prevents people from standing for election. The questionnaires were available electronically and on paper. The Council used a number of ways to inform people about them.</p> <p>After seeing what people had to say when answering the questionnaire, the website that explains how to stand as a candidate was changed and more information was included on the role of a Councillor.</p> <p>A number of ways were used to draw people's attention to this information. These included two videos (with an associated competition), awareness raising sessions, posters, etc.</p>	

Objective 4	
To identify any employment and pay inequalities and to take action to reduce them	
What will the Council do during 2016-20?	What is the timescale?
4.1 A campaign to fill in gaps in the equality characteristics data	Commencing in June 2016
4.2 Complete a pay audit	2016/17 – 2019/20.
4.3 Act based on the evidence from the pay audit and any other relevant information	2016/17 – 2019/20
What happened during 2016/17?	
<p>The work of getting more people to fill in the gaps in their equality information, or to let us know that they do not want to complete the information, has commenced. An e-mail was sent out to every employee with a computer at work and this has meant that 40% more completed the form.</p> <p>The work of carrying out a pay audit has commenced.</p>	

Has the Council done anything else?

As you have seen above, Gwynedd Council has done work on the four objectives of the Strategic Equality Plan, although one or two things are slightly late. We will catch up with the work during 2017-18.

But, of course, this is not the only work that has happened during the year in the equalities field. The Council is eager to put the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do. Therefore, considering the various needs of groups is part of the day-to-day work of Council staff. Here are some of the things that have happened during the year:

Refugees

Gwynedd Council has accepted 20 refugees during the year. The Council is working with key partners such as North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Coleg Menai and the Department of Work and Pensions to help them settle down in Gwynedd. Some of the things being done is providing information in a suitable language, ensuring that volunteers are available to provide assistance and arrange events at the Mosque in Bangor for people from North Wales.

Ysgol Hafod Lon

Ysgol Hafod Lon, which educates children and young people with additional learning needs from the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas, has opened in Penrhyndeudraeth. The school provides places for up to 100 children and it replaces the former Ysgol Hafod Lon which has served a generation of children from its previous home in Y Ffôr. The new school has modern classrooms with the latest resources, as well as a hydrotherapy pool, therapy rooms, sensory equipment and an open-air play area and teaching facilities. There is a residential respite unit there as well. A garden and café are also a part of the school, and this provides an environment for older pupils to develop their business and enterprise skills.

Toilets

The Council has been working with partners such as Community and Town Councils in an attempt to keep the majority of the county's public toilets open.