



**Equality Review Report  
2019/20  
(Year ending March 2020)**

# Equality Review Report 2019/20

## 1. Introduction

This is the City and County of Swansea's Equality Review Report for 2019-20. This is our ninth review under the Public Sector Equality Duty and reflects the reporting regulations for Wales, which were introduced in 2011.

This report contains details on:

- The ninth review of progress for our Equality Objectives 2016 – 2020,
- Equality information,
- Employment and training information,
- Additional information relevant to our legislative duties.

Note that COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown affected the latter end of 2019/20 and it is reflected in this report where it had an impact. A big effect was on our work to gather information and data to compile this report; but it is expected that this situation will improve over time and in line with the progress of the pandemic and the Council's Recovery Plan.

## 2. Reviewing the Equality Objectives

The annual review of progress took place during April – May 2020 and all departments provided details of their progress. All of the information can be found at Appendix 1.

Our new Strategic Equality Plan for 2020 – 2024 was adopted by Council in March 2020. Our [Strategic Equality Plan, Easy Read version, Screen Reader version, Engagement report and Statistical Review are available here.](#)

## 3. Equality Information

We have built upon our knowledge of people with protected characteristics living in Swansea by undertaking a detailed Equalities Statistics Review in January 2020. The Review was undertaken to inform our new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24. We also considered the evidence from *Is Wales Fairer 2018 ?*, the findings from a Scrutiny Inquiry into Equalities and feedback from a number of consultation and engagement exercises to inform our new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24.

The main purpose of the review was to examine the diversity of Swansea's population, assess how it has changed and (as far as is possible) explore what may happen in future. The report identifies all relevant data sources and present a summary of key statistics for Swansea (including national comparisons, local variations within Swansea), changes over time and potential future trends. The report contains an analysis of the information for each of group of people with protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We have also maintained and developed demographic information included on the Council's 'Statistics' web pages. This includes local social and demographic data from the Census and other official sources and a summary of recent ONS research containing inter-censal estimates of Swansea's population by ethnicity, country of birth and nationality.

Our local area profiles, which bring together a range of statistical and other information about local areas in Swansea, including data linked to aspects of equalities (where available), were updated in January 2020. Profiles are currently available for the county, the 36 Wards, the local Constituency Areas, Community Areas (as defined in the 2017 Assessment of Local Well-being, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act) and Delivery Areas (former Communities First areas). The content and information sources included in the profiles are regularly reviewed, especially ahead of each new set, and the next versions are due to follow later in 2020.

We continue to use equality information to inform our Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs); this varies according to the EIA subject, relevance and focus. We are also continuing to build upon and improve our Equality monitoring processes to collect and analyse data about our staff and customers. Part of this process has involved encouraging staff and customers to provide information about any protected characteristics and equality issues. All of the information supplied is confidential and anonymised. Although staff and customers are not compelled to disclose any personal information about protected characteristics we are continuing to encourage disclosure and raise awareness about why we need information to ensure that we are treating people fairly. We are building upon our corporate approach to develop an equality lens to all of our core business and decision making, aiming to ensure equality is at the centre of everything we do.

We are committed to respecting the rights of every person, recognising the relationship between rights and equalities, in ensuring an equitable provision of services for all. Human Rights remain integrated in our Strategic Equality Plan, continuing to raise awareness and place rights at the heart of decision making across all directorates of the local authority. Measures to reinforce this include due regard to the UNCRC, existing work on the Dublin Declaration to uphold the rights of older persons and planned work around Human Rights.

#### **4. Employment and Training Information**

Please see Appendix 2 for this information. The Council acknowledges that there remain gaps in our employment and training data, due to the employees right not to provide the information. However we are working with our employees and unions to improve the data and we continue to work on our systems to collect such data. The Council is investing in a new cloud-based employee management system, which will be introduced during 2021/22; this should ensure that information is more readily available as the system is embedded and matures. In addition, although requested, employees are not required to provide information concerning their characteristics and many choose not to do so. We will continue to work with employees to encourage

them to supply this information and the Council will work closely with the Trade Unions to look for other ways to encourage staff to do so.

Our gender pay gap report has been published. Our Gender Pay Gap Report is available here: <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/genderpaygap>

## **5. Additional information**

This section briefly details some of our other work relevant to the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty during 2019-20.

### **5.1 Councillor Champions**

Councillor Champions are continuing to work with, advocate and promote equality issues for groups of people with protected characteristics. They cover a wide range of equality issues including; Disability and Access to Services, Diversity, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), Sanctuary and Inclusion, in addition to wider themes such as Health and Wellbeing, Carers and Domestic Abuse. The Councillors Champions aim to provide a voice for traditionally under-represented groups or issues, which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business and to ensure that they are taken into account when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made. One of the key recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel's inquiry into Equalities was to review the involvement of Councillor Champions in light of the inquiry and develop a clear role and mechanism for communication with the Strategic Equality group and other equality groups and forums.

[For a full list of Councillor Champions click here](#)

### **5.2 Scrutiny Inquiry Panel – Equalities Report**

An in-depth inquiry into equalities was conducted by a Scrutiny Inquiry Panel in 2019. The report was considered by Cabinet in September 2019 and a report with a proposed action plan was subsequently received by Cabinet in November 2019. The action plan outlines the Council's intentions in relation to addressing the 18 recommendations contained within the report and has been used to underpin the our new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24.

Work is currently underway in terms of implementing the action plan from the Scrutiny Inquiry report. Terms of reference for the Future Generations and Equalities Policy Development Committee have been developed and agreed, including a requirement to implement a high-level cross Council Strategic Equality group. The Future Generations and Equality Policy Development Committee have played an active role in the review and development of equality related policy including the development of our new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24, the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy and the Council's Corporate Strategic Co-production Framework.

Work is also underway in relation to the development of a Carers Strategy. A peer led forum for parents and carers of children with disabilities and

additional learning needs was launched in October 2019. The aim of the forum is to give parents and carers a greater voice in the way services in Swansea are run and has been created co-productively with the Council and a range of partners. The West Glamorgan Regional Partnership have also been progressing a Regional Carers Strategy with arrangements to develop a local strategy.

We are also in the process of reviewing the Council's website and are working co-productively with the Disability Liason Group to make improvements. We have improved the accessibility of the Council's website to meet AA standard using W3C 2.1 guidance. We have also introduced tags on all images which are required for screen readers, or when images are not loaded. We have also reviewed and produced new guidance for Web editors to ensure that the content is accessible. For example, only using tables only when absolutely necessary and to keep tables as small and simple as possible.

Work is also underway in terms of developing more easy read and plain English resources. The Public Services Board commissioned some training on how to produce easy read documents and the Departmental Equalities Representative group facilitated a session with Swansea People First on how to produce easy read/plain English resources. Social Services have been working co-productively with Swansea People First to develop a number of Easy Read/ Plain English formats and our revised corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy provides links to further guidance of the production of Easy Read/Plan English documents. Our new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 included an Easy Read version of the plan, questionnaire in both English and Welsh and screen reader versions of documents.

Early work is also underway in terms of piloting our Strategic Corporate Co-production Framework. We are currently in the process of working with Leadership team and Heads of Service to identify pilot areas in the Place Directorate to develop a rolling programme and a toolkit. This approach aims to build upon the work already undertaken by Social Services by adopting a co-productive approach to the review and commissioning of services. We have also developed further opportunities for adults with disabilities, including looking at expanding our social enterprise base. The Commissioning Review of Day Services recommended considering the development of social enterprises as part of a range of future options. We have supported the parents of an individual with a learning disability to establish a Community Interest Company and to develop a social enterprise. We have also made a bid for the Foundational Economy Fund to establish micro enterprises and cooperatives in Swansea. Swansea Working and associated employability programmes have continued to provide personalised 121 employability mentor support for citizens.

Work is also underway to develop an internal communications rolling programme, to promote training, challenge negative views or attitudes and provide positive messages to staff. Our celebrations of Swansea's 50<sup>th</sup> Year as a city have included a number of activities with partners to promote diversity including; the LGBT History Month, International Women's Day,

Black History Month, Holocaust Memorial Day, Swansea Pride, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Swansea Eid in the Park, Deaf Awareness Day, Interfaith Awareness Month and Mental Health Awareness week. Examples of case studies include:

### **Case Study 1: LGBT History Month**

Celebrations included activities to promote diversity across the city during February 2020. The Glynn Vivian opened a new exhibition of works created by Good Vibes LGBT+ youth group from Swansea YMCA in collaboration with Glynn Vivian Associates Artists. The event included the opportunity to join creative workshops, compose poems and turn the poem into text art in a print making workshop. The event also included Tallulah Bandersnatch's 'Alternative Stories' - Gallery Tour, live music by Truly Kaput, tapas and a bar.

### **Case Study 2: Black History Month**

As part of Black History Month Wales, Swansea Grand Theatre Arts Wing hosted an evening of music, storytelling and speakers on the 8th October 2019. The theme for this year was Movers, Shakers and Legacy Makers and aimed to celebrate and showcase young black people and their roles as history makers and custodians of the future. The event marked the contribution of Wales based ethnic minority servicemen and women to World War 1 and 2. The event also included a programme of music and speakers, with African and Caribbean food being served and a drumming workshop for children.

### **Case Study 3: Swansea Pride 2019**

We supported the 2<sup>nd</sup> Swansea Pride celebrations in May 2019. The celebrations prior to the parade included a week of events including; an Arts Festival day at the Glynn Vivian, a Musical Theatre style Pride Cabaret, a Youth Showcase, a Swansea Pride Hits the Dance Floor event and a Pre-Pride Drag night featuring Farrah Moan and other Drag Queens. The Pride Parade included a carnival style parade, live entertainment, stalls, street food, activities, evening entertainment and a festival at the National Waterfront Museum and Museum Green. The parade was the biggest in Swansea and involved more than a 1,000 people in the parade with many more enjoying the spectacle and participating in the event and activities. Data from the National Waterfront showed over 4,710 people took part in the celebrations, which included entertainment and information stalls. The Council's LGBT + staff network participated in supporting arrangements for the parade and raising awareness of the event within the Council.

#### **Case Study 4: White Ribbon Day**

This year, an event to mark White Ribbon Day (also known as the International Day for the Eradication of Violence Against Women) was held in the Grand Theatre on the 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The wearing of the white ribbon stands for never taking part in, condoning or staying silent about violence against women. On White Ribbon Day, men and boys are encouraged to wear the white ribbon for a week or two afterwards to support and highlight that pledge. Swansea Council and Neath Port Talbot Council held a regional awareness raising event, where the public and professionals are invited to come together to show their support and share information of local services. The event included stands from specialist providers from the third sector, police, health and local authorities. Lee Trundle from Swansea City FC also attended to show support, and there was live entertainment from local singers. A group of young people with knowledge of our 'healthy relationships' programme were also invited to take part in our 'hands are not for hurting' campaign.

#### **Case Study 5: Culture and Digital Hub at the Grand Theatre**

This year we have leased the Grand Theatre's Arts wing to the Race Council Cymru in order to support the development of a cultural and digital hub. We have a long standing collaboration with race Council Cymru and have also committed to working with Unities Cities and Local Government in a Pilot Cities programme to develop cultural participation as part of sustainable city making and have developed a long term. The aim of the Culture and Digital Hub is to provide rehearsal and production space to small Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) run arts organisations and to increase the involvement of people with protected characteristics in cultural and arts based activities and programmes. The hub also includes a new provision for community learning/digital experiences.

#### **Case Study 6: Mental Health Awareness Week**

Staff supported Mental Health Awareness week with the Mental Health Foundation between May 13<sup>th</sup> to May 19<sup>th</sup> by wearing something green and posting pictures on social media. The theme this year was Body Image - how we think and feel about our bodies. The event was marked as part of our developing Child and Family Services Well-being and Engagement strategy. The strategy also included three months pilots of well-being offers from team meetings with a twist, make a space, no core hours, massages, sport activities and visits from the Izzy the therapy dog.

### **Case Study 7: Employee mental health and wellbeing – Coronavirus**

A stress management and counselling service to support the mental health and wellbeing of all employees. The service provides quick easy access to telephone counselling and debrief support, referrals relating to front line staff and/ or coronavirus prioritised with a call back within 24 hours, contact for managers to arrange weekly mental health and wellbeing debriefs/check, critical incident debriefs for any employee who experiences or is witness to any traumatic incidents and on-line critical incident.

### **Case Study 8: World Aids Day**

The Staff LGBT+ Group sold red ribbons in aid of the National AIDS Trust (NAT) this World AIDS Day on 1st December each year. It provides an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, to show support for people living with HIV, and to commemorate those who have died from an AIDS-related illness. Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

### **Case Study 9: St Helens Road 50 yrs celebration – Free Street Party**

A free street party in St. Helen Road to mark 50yrs of Swansea's city status held in June 2019. Activities included; live music, performance, street food and free activities such as art, poetry, drumming, rides and games, a 50 year pop up museum, talks and conversation, a local heritage exhibition, tai chi, henna tattoos and a pop up Skate Park. The aim was to engage BAME traders, Swansea Mosque, local Schools and communities to celebrate the cultural diversity of St. Helen Road and their contribution to the City.

### **Case Study 10: Cultural Services: Diversity Pledge**

We, via our Cultural Services, are participating in a 'Culture in Sustainable Cities - European Pilot' programme, led by United Cities and Local Government which aims, through peer learning and collaboration, to embed culture in sustainable 'city making'. A result of the Agenda 21 commitments, the programme has involved us working toward nine core policy commitments, to place culture at the heart of strategies for citizen and government collaboration and participation, in creating a sustainable city; exploring governance, cultural rights, learning, planning and equality for all. Our work to date has resulted in a commitment to create a 'Diversity Pledge', which outlines the ways in which co-production, collaboration and new ways of delivery can promote greater participation and access to culture in our city. During October 2019 we held a Peer Learning Session which focus on the



principles of a 'Diversity Pledge' within the context of Swansea, current challenges and pressures, exploring opportunities to deliver a commitment to all our citizens, especially those most at risk of exclusion due their protected characteristics.

### **Case Study 11: School Swap**

The project aims to address community misconception by replicating the Channel 4 'Great British School Swap' documentary through a community cohesion initiative for young people aged 11-18 across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend. The project also aims to grow social capital amongst different groups of people by exploring cultural and social differences with respectful curiosity through facilitated discussions, resulting in a filmed documentary. The purpose of the project is for young people across the Western Bay region to learn about themselves and others of different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and communities and to provide safe opportunities for facilitated discussions around issues of community cohesion and provide young people with the chance to highlight what issues are important to them and to address these issues collectively with respectful curiosity. Over 50 young people and volunteers took part in the first session in October 2019 where they were encouraged to identify similarities and differences and for their views on Race, Religion, Culture and Social Background.

**Case Study 12: A Better Welcome to Swansea** The "A Better Welcome to Swansea" project helps to welcome refugees and asylum seekers and promote their well-being. The project is a partnership between Swansea City of Sanctuary and Swansea Council for Voluntary Service (SCVS), funded by the National Lottery. Mentors are trained volunteers who can help people to get the things that they need and want to do in Swansea. For example; showing and explain bus routes, cheap places to shop, information on health and social care services, helping to meet other people and finding things to do, for example, football, singing, arts, dance and helping people find English classes and other training and volunteering opportunities.

A great deal of work has already been undertaken throughout the 50th celebrations. The planned promotion of future activities in 2020 will ensure these important issues continue to receive a high profile within Swansea and its communities. This will have to be achieved within existing resources and as part of our teams' existing work programmes.

Overall, good progress has been made in terms of beginning to address the recommendations within the Scrutiny Inquiry report. Further activity is planned

over the next 12 months to build upon existing work and implement the recommendations.

### **5.3 Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)**

EIAs are an integral part of any decision making process and we aim to undertake them as early as possible during any initiative - ideally at its inception. The Council's budget and savings programme are subject to the full EIA process.

We continue to use our comprehensive EIA process, which also takes into account the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the needs of carers, community cohesion, poverty, social exclusion and Welsh language. Our focus has been on ensuring that the process remains user-friendly, effective and workable for colleagues across the Council. Colleagues have access to a series of on-line tools and guidance from early screening of equality implications to completing a full EIA. The Access to Services Team continue to co-ordinate dedicated EIA support via information, advice and the quality assurance of EIAs.

Our Equality and Engagement protocol (to ensure that EIAs are tracked and monitored through the Council's reporting and decision making process) continues to be very useful in ensuring that equality issues are considered and addressed where needed.

[All completed EIA Reports continue to be published alongside relevant corporate reports here](#)

### **5.4 Internal Council Staff Group - Equality Representatives**

One of the key recommendations from the Scrutiny Inquiry report into Equalities was to clarify the roles and expectations for staff acting as Equality Representatives and to ensure that they are linked to a wider knowledge base/support network for advice, guidance and support. The network have continued to meet this year and have received further training from Disability Wales on the Social Model of Disability and how it can be applied in practice. The network have also participated in the review of Corporate Training on Equalities with suggestions about increasing the reach of the training to staff who do not access IT as part of their daily job and how to improve the information on the Council's commitment to equality and diversity in an information pack to all job applicants.

### **5.5 Consultation and Engagement**

We are continuing to support our commitment to consultation by involving residents, other stakeholders and employees in our decision making processes. We have revised our approach to consultation and engagement and developed a draft Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2020-23. The aim of the strategy is to provide a framework for the meeting the Council's consultation and engagement requirements over the next three years and

provides guidance and direction on when the Council should consult and engage stakeholders, the level of consultation and engagement required, principles to consider when undertaking consultation and engagement and the use of consultation and engagement results. The strategy has been designed to support, (not replace), existing statutory and regulatory consultation and engagement processes, long standing consultation and engagement arrangements within service areas, and existing partnership arrangements. A Strategic Corporate Co-production Framework was also produced to align and support the Consultation and Engagement Strategy as one example of a method of engagement. Both the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2020-23 and the Corporate Co-Production Strategic Framework are in the process of being considered by Cabinet and Council.

This year, people have had the opportunity to give their views on a wide range of issues including the Council's budget, our new Strategic Equality Plan, childcare and play sufficiency and rate their overall levels of satisfaction with Council services. In addition, local residents, staff and service users have also had the opportunity to participate in a number of service specific reviews such as the Housing Commissioning Review and the re-structuring of Family Support Services. We have also facilitated a number of Big Conversations with children and young people, older people (50yrs+) and inter-generational forums. The Access to Services team continues to offer advice and support about consultation conducted by the Council, including support in relation to any equality implications and appropriate consultation with hard to reach groups, including groups with protected characteristics.

We are continuing to develop the range and reach of our consultation and engagement methods. As part of our consultation and engagement approach on our new Strategic Equality Plan we produced materials in English, Welsh, Albanian, Arabic, Urdu, Farsi, Mandarin and Tigrinya. We also produced documents in Easy Read, Screen Reader Friendly versions, attended promotional events e.g Swansea's UNCRC Ten Year Celebration Event, promoted the consultation through Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) and provided 'train the trainer' style workshop to enable advocates to promote discussion and participation with people, groups and communities they represent and held a number of public drop in sessions in local libraries.

We have continued to develop our relationship with local community groups:

➤ **LGBT Forum**

The Swansea Bay LGBT Forum continued to meet during 2019-20 and was supported by Swansea Council in partnership with South Wales Police and Swansea University Students Union. Membership included employees or volunteers from local and national organisations who represent the interests of LGBT citizens. This year the LGBT forum supported the second Pride event in Swansea which was much bigger and better than the previous year seeing over 1,000 people march through Swansea City Centre and around 5,000 people taking part in the celebrations.

Our Council Staff LGBT+ Group have continued to meet regularly and provide a peer support network for LGBT+ staff, raise awareness of LGBT+ issues in the workplace and fundraise for LGBT+ charities, including World AIDS Day. The group have explored recording resources with West Glamorgan Archive service to begin recording Swansea's LGBT history and the Council gaining accreditation from Stonewall as an employer. The group are also exploring ways in which the promote awareness of LGBT+ within the Council, recruiting more staff members and facilitating social events.

#### ➤ **South West Wales BAME Forum**

We are continuing to support the work of the regional South West Wales BAME Forum. Swansea hosted another successful BAME forum as part of EYST's All Wales BAME Engagement Programme, with over 25 individuals from 9 organisations in attendance. Much of the discussion focused on the upcoming Hate Crime Awareness week and sharing ideas and plans for activities

This year, EYST also launched the first round on the Welsh Government's BAME Routes to Public Life Mentoring Scheme in February 2019, which matched over 25 Mentees with Mentors including Vaughan Gething AM, Jane Hutt AM, and many more. An evaluation of the first round found that 80% of Mentees stated that the programme had had a 'significant' or 'huge' impact on their aspirations. A second round of the programme started in October 2019 with another 25 Mentees on the programme. Mentors included Lady Monjulee Webb, Suzy Davies AM, and Councillor Huw Thomas, Leader of Cardiff Council.

This year we also supported EYST to run a summer play scheme which ran for two weeks in August and attracted 40 children. Activities included rock painting, making cakes, cards, frames & clay models, an obstacle and circus equipment.

#### ➤ **Disability Liaison Group**

The terms of reference for the Disability Liaison Group have been revised and a new chair elected. The group have agreed to meet at least 5 times a year and that the meeting will be co-produced in line with the Council's Corporate Co-production Strategic Framework. The group have been involved in a consultation on the Council's Strategic Equality plan 2020-24.

We have also worked with the Disability Liaison Group to develop and improve the Council's website and ensure that it is accessible and will meet the W3C AA standard by September this year. Improvements which have been made include the addition of guidance produced by Health to ensure that staff know how to write for screen readers, the refinement of search terms and documents including the use of separate weblinks rather than PDF documents.

## **5.6 Hate Crime**

Victim Support have been commissioned by the Welsh Government to increase the reporting of hate crimes and hate incidents across Wales and to offer support to victims of these offences. Working with other organisations such as the Police, Victim Support aims to prevent further hate offences through local and national targeted interventions. Support is tailored to the needs of each victim which may include emotional support, practical support, advocacy, support with reporting the crime to the Police and attending court. Hate crimes are reported directly to the Police, or confidentially Victim Support or through Report Hate Crime website. Hard copies of forms to report Hate Crimes are also available in District Housing Offices and other Council venues.

The prevention and reduction of Hate Crime and Community Tension Monitoring is one of the five strategic priorities identified in the Safer Swansea Strategy 2018-21. In line with Welsh Government's National Strategy on tackling Hate Crime, 'WG Tackling Hate Crimes & Incidents – A Framework for Action' the Safer Swansea Strategy 2018-21 aims to prevent hate crime, support victims and improve a multi-agency responses to the problem. Our Hate Crime Stakeholder Action Plan' continues to be managed and monitored through the Hate Crime Stakeholder Group and the Safer Swansea Partnership Steering Group. A snapshot of recorded Hate Crime in Swansea between April – September 2019 revealed that there were 171 incidents recorded in Swansea. Three quarters of all the incidents were classified as 'racial'.

This year we continued to raise awareness of Hate Crime through the Hate Crime Awareness in October at Swansea's Waterfront Museum. The event was part of a National Hate Crime Awareness Week event 2019. The theme was 'Spread Love, Not Hate' to reflect upon in the context of imminent EU withdrawal and the increasingly divisive political and media discourse which surrounds it. The event featured information stands, exhibitions and workshops. The event included workshops on Gendered Islamophobia, definitions of Hate Crime, reporting Hate Crime and how to cope with the effects of Hate Crime.

In December 2019, the Welsh Government introduced a Hate Crime Minority Communities Grant scheme. The project aims to support ethnic minority groups, religious organisations and individuals across South and West Wales around hate crime, how to recognise it, report it and speak up for others who are victims of hate crime and will support the engagement of Community champions who will work as a local contact within their communities.

## **5.7 Community Cohesion**

We have continued to implement the Welsh Government Community Cohesion programme during 2019-20 through a range of regional and local community cohesion activities. One of the key areas of work we have undertaken is identifying and mitigating community tensions (hate crime,

extremism, anxiety, anti-social behaviour) relating to Brexit. We have established a Brexit Steering Group which consists of Officers from across the Council and is chaired by the Leader of the Council who also leads for WLGA on Europe. We are continuing to work closely with the WLGA and Welsh Government to ensure there is a collective and consistent approach across Welsh local government in responding to Brexit. In addition, All Heads of Service have completed and returned an EU Exit and Assurance Statement to provide assurance on their preparedness for Brexit and have undertaken a number of actions to mitigate the potential risks to supply chains, the workforce, social care, school food supply, communication and information and community cohesion.

We hosted an open event for EU citizens living in Swansea to learn about what Brexit will mean for them and have a chance to ask questions. The Council has also developed a Brexit webpage on the Swansea Council and have signposted to a number of useful websites that have been set up by the Welsh Government and the UK Government to provide useful, official information about Brexit. We have undertaken a Community Cohesion (Brexit) survey across the Western Bay to develop the evidence base and to better assess the impact of Brexit on communities. A Welsh Government funded Community Cohesion Officer has been appointed – part of the role is to identify any community tensions that may arise as a result of Brexit and to coordinate a multi-agency response in developing community based solutions. The Community Cohesion Officer has established a forum of young people to participate in a School Swap project across the Western Bay region to learn about themselves and others of different backgrounds, cultures, faiths and communities and to provide safe opportunities for facilitated discussions around issues of community cohesion.

We have also undertaken a number of other activities to promote community cohesion in Swansea and across the Western bay region including the promotion and participation in Mosque open days, working with Swansea Interfaith Forum as part of their awareness raising week in November 2019, supporting EYST's BAME Forum and promoting the LGBT+ agenda and the annual Swansea Pride event. We supported the annual Eid Festival which was held in Singleton Park and attended by more than 3,000 people. We are also continuing to work closely with South Wales Police, Swansea University and the Health Board to participate in staff training and promote social, cultural, religious and sporting events such as the Community Cohesion netball cup to promote community cohesion in our communities.

## **5.8 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**

We are continuing to ensure that Children and Young People have the opportunity to be involved in decisions made by the Council which affect them. The Council adopted the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 2014 which means that the Council must perform all its functions in a manner that Children and Young People must be provided with meaningful opportunities to influence decisions concerning their lives.

The Council remains committed to respecting the Human Rights of children, the work of which is set out in our Children and Young People's Rights Scheme. A large element of this has been to ensure effective rights based education is sustainable when financial resources are required. We continue to work with schools, Unicef, the Children's Commissioner's Office for Wales and with learners themselves, to develop models that are most fit for purpose and aligned to the new curriculum, moving forward.

We have continued to disseminate information about the UNCRC through a range of forums, events and projects across Swansea, including an online social media presence and celebrating our 5th International Children's Rights Day in Swansea by presenting our work to over 100 guests from across Wales

We continue to respect the right of every child to be listened to in decisions that affect them through a range of engagement mechanisms that fall within the Big Conversation:

- During 2019-20, 9 county-wide Big Conversations took place involving 795 children and young people and members of the public, exploring topics such as LGBTQIA+, alternative education, ALN codes of practice, city redevelopment, housing and homeless, stronger communities and working with nature. 32 primary schools and 13 secondary schools engaged;
- Big Conversations for those who have experienced care: 67 children took part in forums to let us know what is important for children in care;
- Big Conversations to discuss Community Cohesion: 50 young people took part in opportunities for facilitated discussions around issues such as extremism, rumours in communities, community cohesion, racism and prejudice;
- School Project Work: 609 children worked with through visits to schools, to school councils and other school clubs.

Outcomes of this engagement work include influencing the Scrutiny Equalities Enquiry; Informing ideas on new, alternative education provision in Swansea; Designing initiatives that have informed how period poverty is addressed in Swansea; Co-producing resources for Care Experienced CYP, and young children, participating in the recruitment of senior staff; Developing specific projects relating to priorities young people have voiced, e.g. Counter Extremism.

This year, the age range of participants in the Big Conversations was also extended from 11-18 yrs to 50yr +, including older people at Intergenerational Forums. Members of the public and 50+ Network group, along with residents from care homes and day centres, joined children and young people in structured activities, discussions and explorations of key issues pertaining to people of all ages, including the Council Budget, Children's Rights and Human Rights, commonalities and differences between different age groups and digital assistive technology.

Future plans include;

- a review and refresh of the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme based on academic review, and engagement with children, young people, families, the wider public, members, council staff and wider partners.
- a review of rights based education, with a view to develop sustainable and effective mechanisms for learning about rights,
- a review of mechanisms that fulfil our statutory duty to engage in children and young people in decisions that affect them (Children and Families (Wales) Measure (2010), to ensure that a whole council approach, that is fit for engagement in the current climate, is developed,
- The publication of the Annual progress Report, including recommendations moving forward, will be published upon ratification from all Council Members.

## **5.9 Education and schools**

The new Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 will place new mandatory duties on Local Authorities and other responsible bodies such as Health Boards and Welsh Government to improve support for Children and Young People with Additional Learning Needs, or Learning Disabilities. It is envisaged that it will be implemented from September 2021 and represents a significant change to the nature of provision and support for Children and Young People with ALN (Additional Learning Needs) and Learning Disabilities. Although the new ALNET Act and Code will not replace the duties of the Equality Act 2010, it aims to strengthen provision by increasing the involvement of children, young people and their families in the development of holistic Individual Development Plan and will cover children from the early years up until the age of 25yrs.

We have made good initial progress in raising awareness and starting work with other agencies and the region to develop an integrated local offer that will meet the needs of learners with ALN across the 0 to 25 age range. We have developed an ALN Strategy and Implementation Plan and created an ALN Strategy Steering Group of key stakeholders including parent/carers to oversee the implementation of the Strategy. We are also leading on workforce development for ALNET (Wales) Act 2018 across the region by coordinating a training plan for the region. We are also undertaking a re-structure of the ALN teams within the Local Authority in order to ensure that we can meet the needs of learners in a timely manner and build capacity for ALN within our schools and our specialist teaching facilities. We are also continuing to develop partnership working with Early Years Services, Health and Social Services. For example, this year Additional Learning Needs (ALN) training was delivered by Flying Start staff and Education professionals to the private childcare sector in order to raise awareness about the ALNET (Wales) Act



2018 and to develop more robust relationships between childcare practitioners and schools in relation to transitions.

During 2019-20 we have also continued to work with the Show Racism the Red Card programme and supported a number of workshops and events in schools. We funded specific training, provided by Show Racism the Red Card, for learners and staff across our schools. The sessions explored various issues related to racism, stereotyping, terminology and media influence. Schools from Swansea were also well represented at the annual Show Racism The Red Card Wales creative competition awards. There was a range of categories from clothing design and creative writing to digital media and poster design. Swansea City supported the initiative by wearing anti-racism t-shirts prior to kick off in matches during October 2019.

The Welsh Government has now launched its new guidance on bullying. Nearly all schools in Swansea now use software called My Concern to record safeguarding issues, including all incidents of bullying. We are currently working with My Concern to source software that will provide an overview of all these incidences so that we can plan support accordingly. We are continuing to ensure that schools are directed to relevant Welsh Government guidance so this can be practiced in schools, for example: the provision of counselling, specific equality-related advice and information and any relevant training for school staff, pupils and governing bodies. Schools are all signposted to relevant Welsh Government guidance e.g. revised bullying guidance and counselling is offered across all our schools by The Exchange.

### **5.10 Work with Older People**

We have continued to implement the steps in Swansea's Wellbeing Plan action plan to meet one of our key partnership objectives – Live Well, Age Well and ensure activity is aligned to Ageing Well work.

#### **Live Well Age Well work of the PSB**

This year we have revisited existing steps in Wellbeing Plan under this objective to establish what is business-as-usual and what actions would benefit from a collective approach. We have mapped existing work on Ageing Well into the Live Well Age Well theme to reflect where we have come from and identify key areas of work going forward. The Partnership have identified three priorities; a City for All, Active Travel and Health Literacy. Each priority has a specific working group with a nominated Lead Officer, an action plan with expected outcomes and timelines. The City for All working group has been mapping existing City status and their associated commitments; identifying opportunities, overlaps and commonalities with a strengths based focus. The Active Travel working group has conducted an audit to identify obstacles and barriers to active travel and have explored the use of the OPERAT model (Older People's External Residential Assessment Tool) to assess the suitability of external residential environments for older people (aged 65+ years) with different physical and cognitive capacities The Health Literacy working group has adopted a shared health literacy checklist (

focusing on Dementia, Smoking, Sugar free, Green space, Best Start) and are exploring whether there is a relevant quality mark/standard.

### **Our (Council) Work with Older People**

The Council have initiated Live Well Age Well Forums, aimed mainly at the 50+ age group but open to all. There have been five such events, with the audience increasing each time in line with our strategy of broadening and diversifying our reach. Topics are initiated and voted on by community members from a wide range of groups and individual participants through on-line engagement, community sessions and our “Uk Day of Older Persons” event. The following Forums have already taken place:

- Digital Inclusion and Communication (April 2019).
- Health and Well Being (May 2019).
- Transport and Getting Around (July 2019).
- Staying Safe (Sept 2019).
- Money Matters (February 2020).

Work continues to explore incorporating a rights based approach into staff inductions, on-going training, strategies and assessment tools etc. across adult services. A review of the Ageing Well Engagement Plan is to be carried out over the next few months, incorporating themes and aims from the soon-to-be published, refreshed Welsh Government Strategy for Older People in Wales and also the Older People’s Commissioner for Wales’ key priorities. Our Life Stages Team continues to work with the Commissioner’s Office to support on-going work and campaigns such as #EverydayAgeism etc.

### **Dementia Friendly Generations – Integrated Care Funded Project**

Dementia Friendly Schools:

The project has involved a collaborative digital storytelling project aimed to bring together young and older people in Swansea. This project created an understanding of Dementia and explored issues around being young and old, helping people to learn from each other and celebrate those moments through finding and telling stories. The project delivered a series of Dementia Friends information sessions within pilot schools to teaching staff and pupils at both primary & secondary settings. The pilot project ended with Pontarddulais Comprehensive School being awarded Dementia Friendly School status and being officially recognised by the Alzheimer’s Society. It is the first School in Swansea to receive this award. The project was also shortlisted for a Social Care Accolade. As a result of the successful ICF pilot, 7 more Primary Schools and 2 Comprehensive Schools are working towards Dementia Friendly School status.

Dementia Friendly Home:

As part of the Dementia Friendly Homes element of the project, People Speak Up (PSU) and Sound Memories Radio. We delivered a Dementia Friendly

Generations pilot project 'To be in the Now'. The project was a dementia inclusive life story project empowering 4 older people living in Swansea, their families and their carers to enhance community communication, resilience and connectivity and enable older people living with dementia to be part of their own solution.

We worked in collaboration with Social Services, People Speak Up, Swansea Bay University Health Board Community Resource Team, Local Area Co-ordination and Swansea Carers Centre. Participants and their families had been referred to the project and meetings/sessions had taken place. Several of the participants had completed the pilot with a memory calendar and video produced.

### **5.11 Poverty**

Tackling Poverty continues to be a corporate priority and one of six key objectives within our Corporate Plan. This year we revised the terms of reference for our Swansea Poverty Forum and agreed three priority areas for delivery for 2019/20. The priorities included; employability, financial inclusion and utilising data to target support to tackle poverty. In terms of employability we are continuing to develop employability sessions (pre-year 10) in schools and to develop links with schools and produce a framework that links to employability including work experience across different sectors and all Council. Work is also ongoing in relation to the development of Creative Careers Days and supporting the development of employment routes into creative industries. The "My Choice" website was launched in September 2019 aiming to enable all school leavers to see all the options open to them. Early work is also underway to develop an 8 week programme of volunteering and work placements for Looked After Children. Work is also ongoing in relation to the development of Hubs and Employability and wider support availability in communities / a central hub.

In terms of financial inclusion, we are 1 of 4 Local Authorities in the UK which were selected to participate in a pilot of a Co-ordinated Crisis Support Programme. The aim of the programme is to co-ordinate crisis support for people facing a financial crisis and to prevent the re-occurrence of a crisis. Work is underway to map crisis support and provision in the local area, assess co-ordination capacity and develop programme resources e.g training and raising awareness. The Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee have also developed an Affordable Credit Policy and a draft Corporate Debt Policy. The aim of the Corporate Debt policy is to provide a clear and consistent approach to the Council pursuing debt across the Council, which is firm, but fair and aims to prevent and provide help at an early stage for residents who are in financial difficulties or having multiple debts owing to the Council. The Poverty Reduction Policy Development Committee have also reviewed a range of Council letters sent to residents about debts, aiming to simplify the process and encourage residents to take help early offers of help and support. We are also in the process of undertaking a Financial Inclusion Commissioning Review which aims to

produce a process for offering a timely offer of benefit checks and money advice to residents at various 'life stages' e.g birth of a child or bereavement.

In terms of using data and information to tackle poverty we have built upon our previous work of utilising the data and information to target support. We have worked in collaboration with departments across the Council to target various specific cohorts of people, families and households (e.g mixed age couples, lone parents and low income households) that could benefit from information and offers of specific support relating to their circumstances as identified in the Single Housing Benefits Extract Data set. We have worked with the Revenues and Benefits Section along with other services such as the Welfare Rights Team, Employability Team and Family Resources Services to raise awareness and target support.

This year we have established a Swansea Poverty Truth Commission. The Poverty Truth Commissions aim to bring together key decision makers with those living at the sharp end of poverty to work together towards overcoming poverty. The Commission aims to put people with lived experience of poverty at the heart of decision making. The Swansea Poverty Truth Commission is the first in Wales. SCVS were selected as the host organisation for the Poverty Truth Commission. A start-up group is in place with partners, Council and community representatives. A funding sub-group has been working on securing the funding required for a delivery team to implement the commission

## **5.12 Welfare Rights**

The Welfare Rights Team have continued to increase awareness and knowledge of welfare rights in Swansea by delivering training to staff, providing an advice line, representation at appeals, complex casework, producing publications and self-help guides and policy work. During 2019/20 the Welfare Rights Training Programme delivered training to 262 participants and provided an advice line three days a week. During 2019/20 the Team represented 76 people at appeals (72 were successful), provided advice in relation 881 enquiries and raised £1,416,282.43 overall.

The work of the team has in many of the cases prevented eviction proceedings being enforced and has reduced both rent and council tax arrears. This has impacted on all our services, including Child and Family services because the children are no longer at risk. In some cases an award of a Disability Benefit not only increases income but will prevent claimants moving over to Universal Credit in the short term and when they do, they will receive significantly more income going forward. Benefit under-claiming remains a huge issue and households affected by welfare reform are at risk of becoming high demand users of our costly services, where effective income maximisation could de-escalate their issues.

### **5.13 Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence**

The Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Strategic Partnership Group have reviewed the objectives in the strategy and established actions for 2019/20. These include projects working with young people to ensure they have healthy, safe and equal relationships.

Swansea's Domestic Abuse Hub continues to support children and their families and takes a 'whole family approach' to support. This Hub ensures a more proportionate response and pathway to police PPNs (Public Protection Notices) issued after a police call-out to an incident. As the overwhelming majority of referrals would not necessarily hit the threshold for statutory intervention, the Hub helps to coordinate early intervention, prevention and family support services. This development is enhanced by a Domestic Abuse One-Stop Shop, with open access to anyone (female or male) who has experienced domestic abuse currently or in the past or to anyone looking for information and support.

The Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop (OSS) continues to develop its services through a multi-agency partnership approach. The range of services on offer are across the continuum of need, from crisis drop-in through to the Freedom Programme, Nurturing Programme, and coffee and crafts sessions. Surgeries on a range of issues are on offer including legal advice, substance misuse and debt advice. The OSS services are monitored by the Partnership Group who aim to provide services that cover a continuum of care from prevention, crisis and after care and are accessible by all members of the community. Work is being started to look at implementing specific support for male victims and those from the LGBT community.

A Swansea and Neath Port Talbot commissioning review of domestic abuse provision is underway aiming to ensure that service delivery models are of good quality, financially sustainable, and meet strategic and legislative requirements. The focus of the review will take into consideration the five ways of working and ensure we develop robust data collection across services to evidence impact and ensure there is a continual understanding of client groups and client need. A working group will establish a training package and timetable for delivery. In 2019/20 a new partnership agreement was developed with service users to ensure there is an agreed way of working so people can get the right support at the right time, to enable them and their family to feel safe and not afraid, now and in the future.

The Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) Partnership held its annual White Ribbon Day event to raise awareness amongst professionals and the public of issues around violence against women. This was supported and attended by MPs, Councillors, the Swans, Ospreys and a range of public services

### **5.14 Easy read**

Last year we published our annual review in three formats:

- full report
- summary
- easy-read.

We will do the same this year to ensure the information is accessible as possible.

### **5.15 Wales Interpretation & Translation Service (WITS)**

As a result of our membership of the WITS partnership, we have a co-ordinated approach to all interpretation and translation, including telephone and face-to-face provision. This does not include in-house Welsh-English translation through our translation unit.

The top five languages requested in 2018 – 2019 were:

1. Arabic
2. Polish
3. Kurdish (Sorani)
4. Bengali
5. Romanian

### **5.16 Website**

To help us make the Swansea Council website accessible, Digital Services uses the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1. These guidelines explain how to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities, and user friendly for everyone.

The guidelines have three levels of accessibility (A, AA and AAA) and level AA is the target for the Swansea Council website. We aim to ensure that the site is free of jargon, uses simple, plain English and Welsh, is easy to search and presents information in a logical order. The Web Team provides support to web editors and written guidance via the staff portal (Staffnet) to encourage clearly written, consistent pages. Following on from the work done by Swansea Public Service Board on how to produce Easy Read and Plain English versions of documents, there is now information on Staffnet to which staff can refer.

Digital Services promotes free computer and tablet courses for beginners in Swansea, which are planned and supported by the Digital Inclusion Co-ordinator and delivered by Lifelong Learning tutors. The courses provide a basic introduction to using a device and accessing the internet and provides information on how to keep personal and financial data safe. An important part of the course is teaching attendees how to access money saving deals that are only available online, for example switching energy provider, which supports the Council's anti-poverty agenda. In 2019/2020 there were 302 course attendees, exceeding the target of 300. A grant was successfully bid for and won from The Good Things Foundation to take part in the BT Skills for Tomorrow programme, to help residents with a variety of digital skills through Learn My Way courses, from using a keyboard and mouse to creating a CV

and using social media to keep in touch with others. At present the risk of digital exclusion in Swansea is considered to be low.

The Web Team also helps to promote equality campaigns across the council, including Hate Crime Awareness Week each year and elements of Community Cohesion. Part of this included daily updates from 18 March and also involved rapidly producing Coronavirus advice pages to support shielding residents as well as the wider community. Support was given to the second Swansea Learning Festival with promotion through online advertising as well as facilitating the bookings for various sessions. The Local Well-being Plan pages were updated with easy read documents and promoted both externally and to staff using web banners, and knowledge transfer took place so that the Live Well / Age Well team could use the bulk email system to send their own regular newsletters to their email list.

Staff from Digital Services continued to work with Communications and Trading Standards to raise awareness to staff and Swansea residents about the dangers of scams (including updates on current scams operating in Swansea). Information and regular updates from the Information Security Officer is provided for staff on how to protect their own data and those of our service users both online and offline.

Work started on the new council website and the Web Manager is working with Access to Services and has met with the Disability Liaison group in December and in early 2020 to get advice and guidance. The West Glamorgan Partnership has a new website to go with their rebrand, and as part of this a full accessibility test is being done by the Shaw Trust.

## **6. Concluding comments**

This annual report has allowed us to assess our progress during the final year of our Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2016-20. Progress has been made against all of our Equality Objectives and the amount of additional information we have to report over and above our Equality Objectives continues to grow, which is very positive. This demonstrates both our ongoing commitment to the equality agenda and human rights and the additional progress that is being made, particularly as we celebrate the tenth anniversary and reaffirm our commitment to being a City of Sanctuary. Our new Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) 2020-24 was approved by Council in March 2020. This new plan builds upon the work we have already undertaken and the lessons learnt and outlines our vision and ambition to sustain and strengthen our approach to ensuring that equality issues are embedded in our decision making process and the services we deliver to local people.