

**Torfaen County Borough Council  
Annual Strategic Equality Monitoring Report  
2022 – 2023**



**OUR COUNCIL VALUES  
“Supportive – Fair - Effective”**

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## Our Equality Statement

“Torfaen County Borough Council is committed to achieving greater equality as an employer and in the performance of all aspects of its business. The Council will ensure that the community we serve, and current and potential members of staff have equality of opportunity to access all our services and opportunities”.

The Council will seek to ensure that no one receives less favourable treatment as a result of possessing a specific protected characteristic. Where it is evident that there is inequality of treatment or outcome the Council will actively take steps to address such inequality.

We will focus upon identifying the inequality issues within Torfaen and how we will work towards achieving better outcomes for people where there is evidence of inequality in our service provision. We believe all Torfaen citizens can expect to be treated fairly and with respect when using or coming into contact with Council services and we will work closely with the public and our partners to resolve issues where such standards are not evident.

Ensuring our services help and support vulnerable people within our communities is an important priority for the Council. We will work towards improving and maintaining our services, so they assist and protect the rights of the people and groups covered by the Equality Act.”

## Introduction

We can only provide an effective service if we recognise the diversity that exists within our communities and enable our workforce to meet the needs and concerns of all our citizens. Equality and fairness underpin the work and ethos of the Council at all levels. Despite the harsh economic circumstances that we have faced as a Council we have continued to strive to achieve fairness in all our services and activities.

The Council’s Annual Equality Report on our progress on the Strategic Equality Plan (2020 -2024) is one of the ways in which the Council makes visible the extent to which it is meeting its obligations to recognise diversity and promote greater equality. It tells much of the story of our progress in relation to the five equality objectives that the Council had set for itself, but it still will not be the whole story. Many achievements and progression have been made on the issues that affect the broader well-being of our community, particularly amongst those who face disadvantages through the promotion of our well-being objectives and priorities under the Council’s County Plan.

In this report we outline the activities that have had a greater significance to the Council’s progress in promoting greater equality and in meeting the Council’s responsibilities under the public duties contained within the Equality Act 2010, during 2022-2023.

## Context

The Annual Strategic Equality Report is Torfaen County Borough Council’s progress on the Strategic Equality Plan. This report is for the financial year **April 1<sup>st</sup> 2022 – March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023**, and is the third of four annual reports for the Strategic Equality Plan 2020 - 2024.

The report focuses on the 5 Strategic Equality Objectives and explores the work that is being done against the actions that sit under each one.

Despite the highly challenging financial circumstances that the public sector continues operating in, the pressures still being experienced from the Covid-19 pandemic and our adaption and response to the developing cost-of-living crisis, the Council has nevertheless been able to make real progress in numerous areas of its Equality Objectives, often through partnership working, harnessing local adaptability and integrating our work to develop a coherent approach to delivering for Torfaen.

## **The Equality Duty**

The Equality Act 2010 brought together and replaced the previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. The majority of the Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Act includes a **public sector equality duty** (the 'general duty'). This came into force on 5 April 2011.

### **What is the general duty?**

The aim of the general duty is to ensure that public authorities and those carrying out a public function can consider how they can positively contribute to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in their day-to-day activities. The duty ensures that equality considerations are built into the design of policies and the delivery of services and then kept under review. This will achieve better outcomes for all.

The council is required under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 to produce an annual monitoring report on the steps it has taken to meet the public sector equality duty and its own Equality Objectives. The Welsh Government was the first government to impose specific duties on public services over and above those required by the Act. The Act places a duty on public bodies to consider how to positively contribute to a fairer society through the delivery of services having due regard to eliminating discrimination.

Public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This guidance refers to these three elements as the three 'aims' of the general duty and so when we discuss the general duty, we mean all three aims.

The general duty covers the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment

- Marriage and civil partnership\*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

\*It applies to marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of the requirement to eliminate discrimination in employment.

The phrase 'protected group' is sometimes used to refer to people who share a protected characteristic.

## Our Equality Objectives and Our Progress

There are five objectives that we work towards in our Strategic Equality Plan, they are:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective 1</b> <i>Torfaen County Borough Council is an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of and understands the importance of equality and diversity</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective 2</b> <i>Ensure that people and communities have their rights respected and feel safe from violence and abuse</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective 3</b> <i>Work to eliminate the disadvantages and barriers that make it hard for people to access the same opportunities as everyone else</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective 4</b> <i>Involve people and communities in matters that are important to them and the decisions that we make</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Objective 5</b> <i>Ensure the council complies with its statutory equality and Welsh language duties</i></p>

There are **58 actions** across the five objectives. Progress towards the Strategic Equality Plan's objectives is a whole council approach and is dependent on all service areas displaying a commitment to their actions.

This reporting year we asked the lead officers:

- What progress was made during 2022/23?
- What challenges were experienced?
- What are your goals for 2023/24?

By asking these particular questions we are able to understand the main achievements of the year, whether there is a collective challenge for officers in this area and to set out the ambition for the next reporting year.

### Key Achievements for 2022/2023

Key achievements in this reporting year can be highlighted as:

- A recruitment training module has been designed that all managers will be required to undertake before they conduct interviews. This covers best practice and processes.
- A Workforce Strategy has been agreed which includes a Wellbeing Framework that has an emphasis on Mental Health. A bulletin is being produced monthly that looks at aspects of wellbeing and a dedicated webpage has been set up to provide resources for staff.
- A wellness action plan is being developed that will support mental well-being in the workplace.

- We have reduced the NEET numbers for 2022/3 and the numbers of unknown young people leaving year 11.
- During 2022/23 the Council delivered over £800,000 of cost-of-living support to at risk residents. Support was targeted at priority groups including those in receipt of free school meals and older residents in receipt of community meals.
- The Regional Partnership Board team hosted the Gwent Dementia Friendly Communities Annual Conference in September 2022, which was the first one since the pandemic. This provided an opportunity for professionals, experts by experience and communities to get together and share learning, ideas, and collaborate to improve awareness, inclusion, and support. The event had 135 attendees and a further 34 attended our evening webinar conference.
- Phase 1 of the Torfaen Youth Alliance (TYA) project has been successfully completed with Phase 2 introduced from March 2023.
- In 2022/23 the Financial Inclusion Team raised/saved their clients £86,633.76 via benefit claims, grant applications, reducing outgoings etc. The Team prevented 19 cases from becoming homeless as a result of their interventions.
- Officers have worked closely with Torfaen Access Forum and other stakeholders to ensure effective and best use of resources in addressing issues in the built environment.

### **Key Challenges Experienced in 2022/2023**

The key challenge across the local authority for the reporting period have been highlighted as:

- Lack of capacity within teams.
- Lack of information/support from other agencies regarding areas of change.
- Engaging successfully with all members of our communities

## Progress Towards the Objectives

<b>Objective 1</b>	
<i>Torfaen County Borough Council is an equal opportunity employer, with a workforce that is aware of and understands the importance of equality and diversity</i>	
<b>Objective: 1 Action: A</b>	Develop a suite of training on equality and diversity topics.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
An equality e-learning module was produced in 2021/22 and is ready for mandatory roll out to staff.	
<b>Objective: 1 Action: B</b>	Develop the staff induction process and ensure that the values detailed in The Way We Work (including fair behaviour) are embedded in supervision and annual work appraisals.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tracy Harris
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Whilst the induction process has been developed and implemented and includes equalities content, there has been little progress on embedding the values into supervision and annual appraisal processes.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
There have been other priorities over the last 12 months and a lack of resource to commit to this piece of work.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Annual appraisal and supervision sessions need to be redesigned and formatted to take into consideration the changes to the way staff work since the pandemic. This piece of work will be considered with the priorities for 2023/24.	
<b>Objective: 1 Action: C</b>	Explore best practice in recruitment processes and conduct a review to ensure that we are recruiting as fairly as possible.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Angela Rogers, Tina Hulme and Tracy Harris
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
A Recruitment Training module has been designed that all managers will be required to undertake before they conduct interviews. This covers best practice and processes. The module is due to be implemented in the summer months.	
A new recruitment module has been purchased and work is in progress to develop and implement an electronic recruitment module which will ensure that candidate selection is improved.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
No challenges noted.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
A piece of work is planned with the waste service as part of their wider improvement plan, which will consider how we recruit to more manual type roles ensuring that we consider different skills and requirements. This will be used to inform current recruitment processes.	



<b>Objective: 1</b> <b>Action: D</b>	Develop our knowledge of our workforce by improving the collection of workforce data to enable us to eliminate any inequalities.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Angela Rogers
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
No progress was made towards this action during 22/23.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Lack of staff resource.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Will be considered as part of the HR workplan for 2023/24.	
<b>Objective: 1</b> <b>Action: E</b>	Promote Welsh Government's vision and principles of the Gender Equality Review to strive for the equal sharing of power, resources and influence for all women, men and non-binary people.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tina Hulme
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
No progress was made towards this action during 2022/23.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Lack of available resource.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Will be considered as part of the HR workplan for 2023/24.	
<b>Objective: 1</b> <b>Action: F</b>	Gender Pay Gap – progress gender equality in pay within the workforce.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tina Hulme
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
No progress was made towards this action during 2022/23.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Lack of available resource.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Will be considered as part of the HR workplan for 2023/24.	
<b>Objective: 1</b> <b>Action: G</b>	Implement the Mental Health Strategy.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tracy Harris
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
A Workforce Strategy has been agreed which includes a Well-being Framework that has an emphasis on Mental Health. A bulletin is being produced monthly that looks at aspects of well-being and a dedicated webpage has been set up to provide resources for staff.	
A wellness action plan is being developed that will support mental well-being in the workplace.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	

Availability of staff resource.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To implement further aspects of the Wellbeing Framework.	
<b>Objective: 1</b>	Develop and implement the Workforce Strategy.
<b>Action: H</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Tina Hulme
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
The Workforce Strategy has been developed and agreed by Council. It has a plan to be implemented over the next 5 years.	
<b>Objective: 1</b>	Promote awareness campaigns linked to Protected Characteristics.
<b>Action: I</b>	
<b>Reporting Officers:</b>	Sarah Tipping/Chris Hunt/Harriet Leek/Mike Morgan
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
We continue to promote as many awareness campaigns as possible linked to protected characteristics however this reporting year proved difficult due to numerous roles being vacant within the teams. Communication campaigns around key equalities dates and campaigns over this period included Hate Crime Awareness Week, Black History Month, LGBT History month, Interfaith Week and Refugee Awareness week.	
<b>Objective: 1</b>	Continue to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion and strive to be an inclusive workplace for Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, and Transgender staff.
<b>Action: J</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
We continued our membership with Stonewall during this reporting period. We also attended the Pride Cymru parade and inaugural Pride in the Port (Newport) events as part of the Proud Councils network to show our commitment to being an inclusive workplace.	
<b>Objective: 1</b>	Develop and implement Disability Confident action plan.
<b>Action: K</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Angela Rogers
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
No progress this year.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Lack of staff resource.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Will be considered as part of the HR workplan for 2023/24.	

<b>Objective 2</b> <i>Ensure that people and communities have their rights respected and feel safe from violence and abuse</i>	
<b>Objective: 2</b>	Increase awareness of individual's rights.
<b>Action: A</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Paxton
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>Increased promotion of people's rights and access to independent advocacy. We try hard to cover the whole spectrum of advocacy from peer advocacy through to professional independent advocates. Torfaen are part of the Gwent Access to Advocacy Service (GATA). This is a free, grant funded service that offers advice and a referral pathway so people can seek help and the correct advocacy from a provider to suit their needs. We also contract with Age Cymru Gwent to receive referrals for Advocacy covering a wide range of issues that people may require for their voice to be heard. We can also call on Mental Health First Aid Wales (MHFAW) to provide a Relevant Person Representative, often for Care Home residents who also require assistance in expressing their views. We continue to provide information, advice and assistance to Carers and participate in Carers Rights Day that highlights carers rights to help unpaid carers in their caring role.</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
<p>Unfortunately, the Torfaen People First group ended during 2022/23. This was a valuable service that offered self-help and peer to peer advocacy for people with Learning Difficulties.</p>	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
<p>To re-establish the LD Advocacy group in Torfaen. To continue to promote advocacy in all its forms to ensure that people are aware of their rights and have a strong voice to express their views and wishes. To continue to reach out to unpaid carers in the community to assist them when needed, in their caring role.</p>	
<b>Objective 2</b> <b>Action: B</b>	
<b>Objective: 2</b>	Provide support to schools to embed fairness and equality in their schools plans and policies.
<b>Action: B</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Alison Dally
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>Healthy Schools provide model policies for Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Substance Misuse Education (English language only). Draft model Nutrition and Physical Activity policies have been shared with TCBC Catering Department and Sports Development for comment.</p> <p>All policies are fair, equitable and based on the most recent Welsh Government guidance. Healthy Schools and PSE Officer delivered anti-bullying presentation at Strategic Equality Plan training 10.01.2023.</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
<p>Sourcing free, reputable, bilingual resources to support health and well-being policies.</p>	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
<p>Translation into Welsh of model Substance Misuse Education and Nutrition and Physical Activity policies.</p>	

<b>Objective: 2</b>	Ensure all Torfaen schools have clear strategy for improving the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in secondary schools, to reduce within school variation so all pupils, including boys and vulnerable learners, make appropriate progress over time.
<b>Action: C</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andy Rothwell
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2023/23?</b>	
<p>4 schools are providing holistic support for teaching to other schools.</p> <p>7 schools are providing professional learning support to other schools across the EAS region in a variety of curriculum areas as Learning Network Schools.</p> <p>All schools are involved in the cluster curriculum assessment and progression programme which supports developing approaches based on focus and coherence.</p> <p>4 Secondary schools engaged in Secondary Design Network, supporting schools to share approaches to professional learning and curriculum design.</p> <p>St Alban's RC are involved in the development of a pan- Wales assessment toolkit with University of Glasgow.</p> <p>2 schools receive bespoke support to develop Teaching and Leadership</p> <p>1 school in Estyn category compared to 4 schools in 2020/2. 1 school was removed from a category in 2022/23.</p> <p>6 schools lead professional learning supporting teaching and leadership across the EAS</p> <p>Every school is involved in the National Professional Enquiry project focusing on one of five main themes.</p> <p>Nearly all schools (96%) have engaged with Schools as Learning Organisations survey to support their development as learning organisations. This compares well with other regions as being the highest % of schools engaging with the survey.</p> <p>The Curriculum for Wales 'Teaching and Learning Group' enhances school's ability to network and share practice. Membership in Torfaen stands at 30 members out of 380 members across the region.</p> <p>Abersychan School has been part of the Talent Management Framework pilot to identify 10 future aspirational leaders</p> <p>16 leaders (16% of regional total) have trained as National Facilitator Coaches.</p> <p>18 leaders have engaged in the national Coaching and Mentoring programme (9% of total population)</p> <p>12 Headteachers in Torfaen are engaging in system leadership across the region as School Improvement Partners</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
<p>Both LA and EAS have needed to remain sensitive and responsive to the needs of school as they have continued to face challenges resulting from the pandemic. Evidence suggests that the pandemic has affected some groups of learners more than others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable and disadvantaged learners and those with ALN</li> <li>• Learners I post-16 and into post-16 provision – where pressure and uncertainty may have affected confidence</li> <li>• Early years where learners risk missing key developmental milestones for language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development</li> <li>• Specific challenges for Welsh immersion learners in English speaking households, including learners transitioning from Years 6-7.</li> </ul>	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	

- Build upon what has worked well – particularly with aspects of work that were successful as part of the virtual environment offer.
- Continue to support schools with an offer that aligns to LA and WG expectations and links to emerging research.
- Avoid the ‘snapback’ and seize opportunities to explore innovative ways of working that deliver meaningful learning experiences.
- Continue multi-agency meetings for secondary schools in special measures. This follows a growing number of case studies evidencing examples of school improvement and turnaround leadership.
- Fully engage with Team Around the School (TAS) Meetings. These meetings between the school, LA and EAS not only monitor progress and support received but can also serve to provide opportunities for problem-solve and develop actions for improvement as well as challenge under performance.
- Provide professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce through the universal, targeted and bespoke provision offer from the EAS.



<b>Objective: 2</b>	Improve reporting of identity-based abuse, bullying and harassment in schools
<b>Action: D</b>	and take appropriate action as necessary.

<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Alison Dally
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**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

The annual Torfaen Anti-Bullying Survey opens during Anti-Bullying Week and runs throughout the autumn term. The purpose of the survey is to ascertain learners’ perceptions of bullying. Participating schools are presented with an individual bullying report. The report is used by schools to identify patterns and trends in bullying behaviour and inform future anti-bullying work.

The survey collects data around the protected characteristics e.g., age, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation and bullying around disability. However, the most common box ticked by learners in the survey is “Other”. This included bullying because “my dad... is not in my life”, “saying my dog is dead”, “they fort I was a norty boy”, “someone telling me to shush”.

21 out of 25 primary schools participated in the survey, generating 2,405 responses.  
4 out of 8 secondary schools participated in the survey, generating 1,259 responses.

Members of the Torfaen Young People’s Forum revealed inconsistencies in how school staff responded when incidents of bullying were reported (e.g., issues not taken seriously, no satisfactory outcome). To address this and to reinforce the importance of recording and reporting confirmed incidents of bullying, Positive Vibes International was commissioned to deliver a series of five workshops (held 13.10.21, 16.02.22, 30.03.22, 24.05.2022, 30.06.2022). The sessions included an update on current approaches to understanding bullying. A dedicated group of primary school staff attended the workshops and developed a Positive Relationships infographic to encourage consistency in responding to bullying across the local authority. Primary school staff received training on how to use the infographic consistently (23.11.2022).

Positive Vibes International was again commissioned to deliver two workshops “Creating a shared definition of bullying”. The first workshop took place on 28.02.2023 and was well attended by 22 members of school staff. The second workshop is scheduled to take place on 06.06.2023.

To date, Autumn Term 2022 – Spring Term 2023, 82 cases of confirmed bullying have been reported by school staff.

To address harmful sexual behaviour the following documents, resources and training were shared with schools:

Estyn review “We don’t tell our teachers” Experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales (December 2021)

“Everybody’s affected. Peer on peer sexual harassment among learners”. Welsh Parliament, Children, Young People and Education Committee (July 2022).

Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) statutory guidance (February 2022).

<https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/designing-your-curriculum/cross-cutting-themes-for-designing-your-curriculum/>

RSE statutory Code (February 2022). - [curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf \(gov.wales\)](#)

“Keeping Safe Online” Hwb - [Keeping safe online - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#) Topics include: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes; Online relationships; Online sexual harassment; Online grooming.

“Identifying and responding to harmful sexual behaviours” – Education practitioners training session and pack, Hwb – Gwent VAWDASV [Repository - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#).

School staff were invited to attend the following training sessions delivered by Brook sexual health charity: A Whole School Approach to RSE (03.05.2022), Sex, pressures and social networks (23.05.2022), Teaching RSE and sensitive subjects [e.g., consent, pornography] (07.06.2022) and Sexual behaviours and the Traffic Light Tool (16.06.2022 and 15.11.2022).

**What challenges were experienced?**

Despite the above actions, school staff appear reluctant to report confirmed incidents of bullying to the local authority.

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

Create a shared definition of bullying with learners and school staff.

Review and revise “Torfaen Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidance for Education Settings.

<b>Objective: 2</b>	Monitor the levels of hate incidences / crime in Torfaen via the Community Safety Hub. Implement any necessary actions.
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<b>Action: E</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cath Jones

**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

No hate incidents were reported to partners and discussed at hub. Hate crimes are discussed at hub during the tasking session and multi-agency plans in put in place if necessary.

**What challenges were experienced?**

None reported.

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

Ensure all hate incidents are discussed at hub and recorded appropriately.

Continue to work with partners to support victims of hate incidents.

<b>Objective: 2 Action: F</b>	Provide staff training that raises awareness of equalities and Welsh language issues, empowering staff to identify and tackle discrimination and stereotyping.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Completed in 2021/22.	
<b>Objective: 2 Action: G</b>	Work with local and regional partners on existing violence against women, domestic abuse, and sexual violence issues to identify and tackle incidents. This includes issues of domestic abuse and sexual violence against men.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Kate Williams / Amy Thomas (VAWDASV)
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Providing dedicated resource for the implementation of the National Training Framework across the local authority</li> <li>▪ Continued to be a member of the VAWDASV Strategic Delivery Group (which drives forward the implementation of the regional and national VAWDASV strategy)</li> <li>▪ Supported the regional Domestic Homicide Review Planning Group as a key group member, in reviewing, sharing and disseminating learning from Domestic Homicides</li> <li>▪ Supported the effectiveness of MARAC processes to provide protection and support for victims</li> <li>▪ Co-facilitated Housing specific Communities of Practice for frontline VAWDASV practitioners; supporting enhanced and holistic response for victims and survivors</li> <li>▪ Collaborated with strategic leaders across the region to plan for the sustainability of the regional IDVA service</li> <li>▪ Undertook campaigns around White Ribbon Day, National Stalking Awareness Week and Elder Abuse Awareness Day</li> <li>▪ Engaged as key partners in the regional VAWDASV Comms &amp; Engagement subgroup, raising awareness around VAWDASV, misogyny and harassment</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective: 2 Action: H</b>	Work with partners to prevent and raise awareness of violent extremism.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Cath Jones
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
We have worked with education over a 2-year rolling programme for safeguarding leads to complete the training that raises awareness of violent extremism and how to refer concerns to the appropriate agency.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Awaiting decision for mandatory training. We awaited new e-learning from Home Office, which is now available but the face-to-face training is not ready.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Roll out training to all front facing staff, using online and face to face training.	

Continue to develop the Channel panel and lead on Prevent for Gwent. Implement a local Torfaen risk assessment based on the Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP) and identified potential risks from the newly established Protect Safety Preparedness Group (PSPG)

<b>Objective: 2</b>	Advocate community diversity.
<b>Action: I</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Chris Hunt

**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

The Community Safety and Community Cohesion teams continue to work on small projects that promote community cohesion in Torfaen, engaging with minority communities and involving them in developing initiatives to promote community cohesion based on the needs of that community and the wider community.

The Cohesion Team hosted a further social event with Ukrainian guests, which brought together over 150 guests (and their hosts) who have been resettled into the West Gwent region. Lunch and refreshments were made available alongside children’s activities; inflatables and music, which helped in creating a fun afternoon where guests and their hosts met to network, share experiences and to build peer support groups to continue strengthening their wellbeing.

During Q4 the Cohesion Team held a careers and employment event at Cwmbran Stadium. This event, supported by over 60 local employers from across the Gwent and great Southeast Wales region, raised awareness of job vacancies, employment and training opportunities available in the area. Interpreters were on hand to support conversations with employers and locally resettled cases from across the spectrum of resettlement schemes. Promoted across all social media channels, the event further strengthened the work we have been delivering in assisting new arrivals gain greater independence and longer-term prosperity.

Promotion of key equalities dates over this period have included; Hate Crime Awareness Week and Black History Month, LGBT History month, Interfaith week and Refugee Awareness week;

The Cohesion team have recorded a series of regional podcasts which provides a platform for lesser heard voices, sharing local stories from minority community members from a variety of background focusing on Trans issues, Black and Asian minority communities and refugees

Aside from the social media content, the Community Cohesion Team in partnership with Gwent Police and Youth Services across West Gwent held a poster competition for children and young people aged 11 – 25. A winner was awarded from each local authority and each winner received a voucher donated by Gwent Police.

The Cohesion Team have coordinated the Hate Crime for Schools project across West Gwent, alongside the rollout of our regionally commissioned Show Racism the Red Card project – The latter of which is providing a broader opportunity to a wider range of schools within the region – this also included training for school staff.

The Cohesion Team, in liaison with the Partnerships, Policy and Equalities and Organisational Development teams, developed an e-learning equalities module in 2021/22. This was adapted for the region and has been shared across the region for use to promote equalities issues and responsibilities internally.



<p>We have also engaged community members and faith leaders in the lead up to Interfaith Week. During the week we hosted an interfaith event in partnership with Gwent Police which brought community leaders together and helped promote the importance of faith within communities, particularly given the pandemic. The event also helped provide a voice for community groups that are less visible in our communities.</p>	
<p><b>What challenges were experienced?</b></p>	
<p>Engagement with hard-to-reach groups remains a challenge</p>	
<p><b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b></p>	
<p>Continued emphasis on fostering good relations by developing events to bring people from across different communities together, whether virtually or in person.</p>	
<p><b>Objective: 2</b></p>	<p>Monitor community tensions.</p>
<p><b>Action: J</b></p>	
<p><b>Reporting Officer:</b></p>	<p>Chris Hunt</p>
<p><b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b></p>	
<p>We continue to understand ongoing and emerging community tensions and put in place processes and procedures to address them as required.</p> <p>Work to support tension monitoring and sharing of information with partners continues. We engage with biweekly partnership tasking, multi-agency meetings, CONTEST and Prevent groups. This also involves meetings set up with Gwent Police's Cohesion Unit and our East Gwent counterparts where we exchange information on tensions within the area and on a Pan Gwent basis.</p> <p>A separate Ukraine Response meeting remains in place. The cohesion team are a constant presence at these meetings, providing a brief of the local participation of communities in the Homes for Ukraine Scheme as well as providing an overview of any community tensions that we have been made aware of.</p> <p>The Cohesion Team also attend the regional Contest board</p> <p>Key roles in the group include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update on cohesion tensions</li> <li>• Undertake an exercise to map out training opportunities</li> <li>• Monthly tension reported - submitted by the regional Police force analyst.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>What challenges were experienced?</b></p>	
<p>None reported</p>	
<p><b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b></p>	
<p>To provide consistent tension monitoring reports through agreed channels, including monthly overview to the Welsh Government and ad-hoc incident reports, as far as practicable. More frequent reports may be required in response to major issues or incidents.</p>	
<p><b>Objective: 2</b></p>	<p>Engage with EU nationals with regards to the EU Settlement Scheme.</p>
<p><b>Action: K</b></p>	
<p><b>Reporting Officer:</b></p>	<p>Chris Hunt</p>
<p><b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b></p>	

The EUSS is now closed

The Regional Community Cohesion Coordinator (RCCC) has provided briefing for key officers in the lead up to the launch of the Settled Status scheme. Migration mapping, reflecting inward migration into each authority, has also supported LA's in their Brexit resilience building.

We continued to prioritise awareness raising of the EUSS and worked collaboratively with partners such as CAB, EYST and LEAs, alongside Police and Registered Social Landlords. Utilising local networks, resident newsletters and social media to increase awareness.

Supported via the Cohesion budget, we also printed EUSS literature available in multiple EU languages which have been distributed across the region to all departments, schools and community buildings.

We worked with libraries and partners to host drop-in sessions to promote the scheme. And utilised the EUSS funding made available by WG to purchase additional hard copy resources. Additionally, the Cohesion team commissioned an EUSS Radio Advert on Capital Radio that was broadcast for 6 months in the lead up to the EUSS deadline. We also established the 'We are digital' services in all boroughs of West Gwent, meaning local libraries were able to assist those making an application.

Overview of progress;

- Facebook campaign via Facebook Marketing
- Regional radio campaign (i.e. Capital radio)
- South Wales Argus (advert Paper and Website)
- Resident newsletter
- Regional drop in sessions

Whilst large scale migration is not experienced in the West Gwent Region the possible impact of EU nationals leaving the area had been explored within local resilience forums. As part of this discussion the RCCC mapped all economic migration across West Gwent LA's – highlighting the communities where EU migrants have settled. This has supported readying the local economy to promote the settled status scheme in areas which have experienced higher levels of inward migration.

**What challenges were experienced?**

Significant challenges experienced in brokering awareness raising within a small EU community sporadically resettled across the borough.

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

Not applicable - the EUSS is now closed

**Objective: 2** Continue the LA's engagement with the UK Refugee Resettlement Scheme.

**Action: L**

**Reporting Officer:** Chris Hunt

**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

The cohesion Team manages all Resettlement schemes in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen and support is extended where needed to Caerphilly.

- RCCC continues to engage with housing partners with the intension of supporting further cases via the ACRS/ARAP scheme in during the remainder of 2023, honoring the existing pledges made in 2021.
- We have seen a number of local expressions of interest in the Homes for Ukraine scheme – with a number of local residents offering up accommodation (spare rooms or second homes).
- LAs continues to play an active role in supporting sponsors/host and their guests to access services and to integrate into their new lives in Wales – managed and coordinated by the Cohesion Team
- Recommendations made by the Cohesion team are now in place to provide £1,500 additional financial support for guests who have been initially hosted into the borough - to assist them in progressing into the Private Rental Sector (PRS) accommodation (supported by the Home Office tariff). In addition, we are also providing a top up to the national ‘Thank you’ payment, to incentivise hosts to continue their hosting arrangements until 24 months – a similar support package is in place in neighbouring authorities (supported by the Home Office tariff).
- Move on (from hosts) into independent living (within the PRS) has been secured for a number of families, meaning their longer-term accommodation remains secure. Continuing support remains in place for all other hosted cases.
- A local campaign was conducted by the Cohesion team over Dec/Jan (2022/23) to continue awareness raising of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and to draw on any further local expression of interest to host. Further to this, a WG campaign was also launched (March 2023). Resulting from these campaigns we have received several additional host offers and are progressing with matching hosts with suitable cases (i.e. with those who have arrived under WG’s Super Sponsor route).
- In May 2022 all local authorities and the Welsh Government agreed the [Homes for Ukraine Accommodation Framework](#). This set out how Ukrainians, who arrive via the Welsh Government Super Sponsor route, and who are accommodated at Welcome Centres, would be dispersed across Wales. We continue to explore more offers of hosting within the borough and have engaged numerous private sector landlords to complete the population share expectation.
- Since the introduction of the full Dispersal model we are now seeing properties become operational and we will soon be welcoming asylum seekers into the Torfaen Borough
- Via the population share (*similar to that of the Super Sponsor Homes for Ukraine expectation*) all local authorities will be expected to support a ‘target number’ of newly established bedspaces
- UKG funds are available for any newly established and occupied AD bedspaces - £3500 per bedspace (a one off funding) made available to the local authority – Cohesion Team are supporting LA as to the most suitable approach in utilising these funds to support new arrivals and increase local capacity within services (i.e. education and language support) which will assist longer term
- We remain engaged in discussions with CRH and our partners to ensure all appropriate support - for those that have been accommodated into the borough and the future planning of others – is in place.
- The Cohesion team coordinates the delivery of the Asylum Dispersal scheme in Torfaen and Blaenau Gwent.

#### What challenges were experienced?

The most significant issue remains the affordability and availability of onwards accommodation within the private and social housing sectors	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To continue to support all resettlement programmes and progress onward accommodation for all local Homes for Ukraine cases.	
<b>Objective: 2</b>	Undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
<b>Action: M</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Adrian Wilcock
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
No progress made.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
The draft Torfaen Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment: 2020-2025 which also covers accommodation needs up until 2033 (to coincide with the Torfaen RLDP Plan period) which was submitted to the Welsh Government (WG) in February 2020 not yet signed off by the Welsh Minister (understood to be due to WG staffing issues) - but see note below.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Given Council/Welsh Minister approved the withdrawal of the Torfaen RLDP (2018-2033) in April/May 2023, a new Torfaen GTAA 2023-28 will need to be produced and submitted to WG to cover the new 15-year Torfaen RLDP plan period up until 2037.	

<b>Objective 3</b>	
<i>Work to eliminate the disadvantages and barriers that make it hard for people to access the same opportunities as everyone else</i>	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Improve the Torfaen community's built environment and the wider accessibility of the Council's public buildings and places of work within affordable means.
<b>Action: A</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Paul Evans
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
We are delivering an ongoing programme of building improvements to ensure the main places of work across the borough ie: Civic Centre, Ty Blaen, public libraries, schools and Pontypool Market etc. are accessible to all. Through support from Facilities Management, the Property Maintenance Team and school/site supervisors we have carried out numerous actions to ensure where possible and practicable that there are no barriers to accessing services and buildings. Examples of such work include the maintenance of accessible toilets, re-marking of accessible car spaces attached to buildings etc.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Insufficient resources, financial restrictions, and staffing	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To maintain the high standard already achieved.	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Continue the prioritisation process so that improvements will be made within the available resources and that the improvements are targeted to provide the greatest community and inclusive benefit.
<b>Action: B</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Paul Evans

<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Property maintenance/improvement priorities across the entire Council estate are reviewed/revisited at least annually. This prioritisation process serves to ensure, as far as possible, that potential barriers to accessing facilities are identified and prioritised for funding/action where resources allow.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Insufficient resources, financial restrictions, and staffing	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To continue the work necessary to complete an accessibility survey of the Council's public and non-educational buildings. Work has been undertaken to consider potential DDA requirements within schools.	
<b>Objective: 3 Action: C</b>	Continue the prioritisation process to be operational and address accessibility issues within the Council's renovation and repair programme.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Paul Evans
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Through support from Facilities Management, the Property Maintenance team and school/site supervisors, the Council's renovation and repair programme is helping to remove barriers to services and buildings. Where possible, our planned maintenance works ensure that buildings are accessible including ensuring new doors are wide enough, contrasting colours are used in redecoration schemes, lifts/induction loops/automatic doors are maintained regularly and kept in good operational condition, use of wayfinding signage, etc.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Insufficient resources, financial restrictions, and staffing	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To maintain the high standard already achieved.	
<b>Objective: 3 Action: D</b>	Continue implementation of a number of schemes. Typically, these will be the removal of physical barriers to access buildings across the Council's building asset. Also apply to community settings effecting the mobility and access of disabled people on public highways and public walkways. For example, the introduction of dropped crossings using the Council's own capital funding and via other funding sources for schemes including Safe Routes in Communities.
<b>Reporting Officers:</b>	Donna Edwards-John/Pat Bates/Mark Panniers/Paul Evans
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p><b>Various Dropped Kerbs</b> have been installed making the network more accessible through Active Travel Funding. The locations have been chosen through an Active Travel prioritisation assessment. Dropped kerbs have also been installed from the TCBC Capital budget in response to specific enquiries received and individually assessed.</p> <p><b>A new shared route into Llantarnam CP</b> which is fully accessible has been installed through Active Travel Funding and SRiC funding and we have received feedback from parents it has made the journey to school significantly easier for children with physical and hidden disabilities.</p>	

**The Highway, Croesyceiliog** has undergone accessibility improvements in the form of dropped kerbs, reprofiling of junctions for easier crossings, bollards have been installed to stop access being blocked from parked cars from adjoining paths onto main route. Torfaen Access Forum (TAF) helped shape the scheme through the consultation process highlighting where improvements were needed through Active Travel Funding.

**Edlogan Way, Croesyceiliog.** Shared use scheme included dropped kerbs, path widening and improved accessibility of crossing points, signage and bus stops. Extra seating was identified via consultation for less mobile users and added to the scheme through Active Travel Funding.

**Cwmbran Drive** shared use scheme, included widening the route, dropped kerbs and improved signage through Active Travel Funding.

**Barrier removal/adjustments.** Barriers have been adjusted after receiving feedback from residents at the following locations:

- Pentre Lane Mon & Brecon Canal Newport side, adjusted A Frame to maximum to allow access.
- Two A Frame barriers at Blaenavon have been identified by a ward member and are currently being adjusted to maximum to allow access.
- Two barriers at Henllys LNR have been identified via a resident which have caused issues and will be adjusted to a mobility gate to use a Radar Key for access.
- The cycle track will be undergoing an audit of the barriers in place and will need to be part of a consultation to replace/remove any barriers identified.

Regular attendance by the Active Travel Team to Torfaen Access Forum (TAF) takes place to gather feedback on routes, and onsite meetings to walk through routes take place when requested and to look at any issues. It is important part of active travel to consult with all abilities to encourage fully inclusive active travel.

<b>Objective: 3</b>	Through building physical accessibility improvements into the standard estate management process.
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<b>Action: E</b>	Paul Evans
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<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Paul Evans
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**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

12 schools had works carried out:

- Blaenavon Heritage – Handrails, fencing works
- New Inn Primary – Visually impaired works
- Garnteg Primary – Formation of new ramps to classes, handrails, visually impaired works
- George Street – Provision of Baronmead stair lift
- Griffithstown Primary School – Creation of safe and secure (accessible) areas, including fencing works
- Maendy Primary – Visually impaired works
- Our Lady of Angels - Formation of new ramps to classes, handrails
- Pontnewydd Primary – Works to Special Needs Resource Base, creation of safety surface, making safe external wall

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St Albans – Visually impaired works</li> <li>• St Davids – Creation of ramp and flat play area to accommodate wheelchair</li> <li>• Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw – Visually impaired works</li> <li>• Ysgol Panteg – Visually impaired works</li> </ul>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
The time frame when working in the school holiday periods	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To deliver a further programme of accessibility improvements across Council buildings/sites as part of the 23/24 Property Management programme(s) of work, to include planned priority DDA works within schools.	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Monitor young people who are not in education, employment or training
<b>Action: F</b>	(NEET), or who are “at risk” of becoming NEET and provide support programmes to help individuals secure employment, education or training.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gareth Jones
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
We have reduced the NEET numbers for 2022/3 and the numbers of unknown young people leaving year 11. We have continued to manage a process to liaise directly with schools and other partners to target those most at risk of becoming NEET. We have attracted a new work based learning provider ACT to target and work with young people principally in the North of Torfaen.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Some links to school were variable. Numbers of young people not attending school have increased significantly or they haven’t returned since the COVID virus issues. Funding for some projects targeting those who are NEET or at risk of NEET was uncertain with the closure of ESF funded projects but that has now continued with additional SPF funding.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To reduce the number of NEET young people and unknown young people in Torfaen. To establish a more effective system of schools and post 16 learning providers working together to target those most at risk of NEET. To increase the number of work based learning opportunities for 16 year olds in Torfaen.	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Deliver economic development and regeneration interventions which have a focus on creating socio-economic opportunities for younger residents and for our most deprived communities.
<b>Action: G</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Leech
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
The Council was successful in its application for Levelling Up funding from the UK Government, securing £7.6M for 3 regeneration projects in Pontypool Town Centre. These will be designed in 2023/24 and delivered in 2024/25. The Council has also continued to deliver the Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme, with a £2.5M grant to support significant regeneration in Gwent Square, Cwmbran and with the development of several smaller projects in Blaenavon and Pontypool Town Centres through the Placemaking Programme. Each of these	

<p>projects will lead to new employment opportunities (food and drink, leisure, construction, culture).</p> <p>These projects are all delivering against our Placemaking Plans which captured the priorities and challenges of younger residents in all 3 towns.</p> <p>In addition, the Council has allocated Shared Prosperity Funding to continue delivering employability and NEETs programmes.</p>	
<p><b>What challenges were experienced?</b></p>	
<p>The financial implications of the cost-of-living crisis and Covid pandemic have continued to affect property owners' ability to invest in regeneration schemes.</p> <p>Economic inactivity continues to be a priority with an increase in older residents leaving the labour market and an increase in long-term ill health following the pandemic.</p>	
<p><b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b></p>	
<p>To deliver the approved Transforming Towns and Levelling Up funding projects.</p>	
<p><b>Objective: 3</b> <b>Action: H</b></p>	<p>Deliver a comprehensive library service which increases young people's access to quality learning materials, supports the most vulnerable to manage their own health and wellbeing, and support vulnerable job seekers to access opportunities online and access skills development and job opportunities.</p>
<p><b>Reporting Officer:</b></p>	<p>David Leech</p>
<p><b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b></p>	
<p>The number of book issues has increased in the library service following a substantial decline during the pandemic. In addition, activities for families and children continue to be a focus with continued strong performance of sessions such as story and craft and baby rhyme time.</p> <p>The libraries service has maintained its support for job seekers with computer access and IT skills sessions, now reinstated fully following the pandemic.</p> <p>In addition, Cwmbran library hosted the pilot of the Employability Hub in 2021/22. This project – funded by Community Renewal Fund –has led to the expansion of the hub into a unit in town. The hub provides employability support and advice to customers</p>	
<p><b>What challenges were experienced?</b></p>	
<p>It remains to be seen whether the reduction in library lending will fully recover to pre-pandemic levels. The significant increase in digital issues suggests that some customers are engaging with the libraries service in a different way.</p>	
<p><b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b></p>	
<p>Further strengthen the connections between the libraries service and customer care functions</p> <p>Further strengthen the connections between the libraries service and the council's wider employability provision</p>	
<p><b>Objective: 3</b> <b>Action: I</b></p>	<p>Support, protect and enable vulnerable people to achieve positive outcomes and well-being.</p>



<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Paxton
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Continued focus on 'What Matters' that enable people through collaborative conversations to identify personal outcomes. Working closely with our community's division looking at prevention and early intervention across the whole system to enable people to use their hierarchy of support to find their own solutions. Our reablement hub at Ty Glas y Dorlan opened and has been delivering reablement, respite, and information, advice and assistance in partnership with stakeholders	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Workforce pressures particularly in the domiciliary care market have meant that at times there have been delays in being able to provide care and support from the right part of the system and this impacts on outcomes and choice.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
As part of the Integrated Services Partnership Board plan we intend to increase the focus on reablement across the whole system to develop an integrated reablement system which will promote independence, social inclusion and positive risk taking. Adult Services has (April 2023) joined the communities division and we are contributing to the communities strategy, and prevention and early intervention. We are seeking to redesign the Adult Social Care front door improving access to information, advice and assistance.	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Promote safeguarding issues and engage more widely with disabled and vulnerable children.
<b>Action: J</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Claire Worlock
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
The Disabled Children's team have one child currently registered on Torfaen's Child Protection Register. This is a positive reflection of the strengths based, multi agency support provided to disabled children and their families. The team are proactive in identifying and addressing need through access to a wide range of services. This ensures proactive responses to risk and risk management and prevents an escalation of safeguarding concerns.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Limited resource of support services has been a significant barrier to meeting need.  The recruitment of experienced social work practitioners has resulted in staff shortages and an impact upon service delivery.  Effective multi agency working with partner agencies has been problematic when assuming responsibility for specific high risk needs i.e. what is a social care need / what is a health need? This has resulted in barriers to the provision of direct payments and access to appropriate support.  The recruitment of Direct Payment Personal Assistants has been problematic and had an impact upon service delivery.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To recruit a stable social work team.	

To develop more effective partnership working with partner agencies with roles and responsibilities agreed.	
To recruit Personal Assistants to meet identified need.	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Integrate consideration of the socio-economic duty into strategic decision-making processes.
<b>Action: K</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Completed.	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Reduce the economic disadvantage and poverty faced by those with a specific protected characteristic (e.g. disability, age) as a result of reduced access to the opportunity for work and insufficient welfare support.
<b>Action: L</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	David Leech
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>The Welfare Reform Project Group has been given a strong new focus around Community Resilience with a renewed commitment from all project partners.</p> <p>During 2022/23 the group has finalised its terms of reference, identified financial resilience, homelessness, energy insecurity, and food insecurity as its main priorities and prepared an action plan to deliver.</p> <p>During 2022/23 the Council delivered over £800,000 of cost-of-living support to at risk residents. Support was targeted at priority groups including those in receipt of free school meals and older residents in receipt of community meals.</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
The cost-of-living crisis has had an impact on residents of Torfaen with an increase in debt reported and increased pressure from energy and food costs.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To adopt the Community Wellbeing Strategy</li> <li>• To enrol a further 700 residents onto our employability support programmes delivering 271 qualifications</li> <li>• To secure 383 job entries from our Communities for Work and Shared Prosperity Fund programmes which are focussed on those living in the most deprived areas of Torfaen.</li> <li>• Secure qualifications for 125 at risk of NEET young people; and reduce the risk of becoming NEET for 120 young people.</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Assist individuals facing hardship to access appropriate benefits and secure income with a view to enabling them to sustain accommodation.
<b>Action: M</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley Groves
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
The Housing Service has a dedicated Financial Inclusion Team who provide advice and support to households in financial difficulty, most of whom are struggling to manage the costs	

associated with their current home. During 2022/23 the Financial Inclusion Team supported 89 clients (50 of these commencing support during 2022/23).

In 2022/23 the Financial Inclusion Team raised/saved their clients £86,633.76 via benefit claims, grant applications, reducing outgoings etc. The Team prevented 19 cases from becoming homeless as a result of their interventions.

**What challenges were experienced?**

The rising cost of living is proving to be a real challenge for many people who are finding it more and more difficult to meet the basic costs associated with maintaining a home.

The service continues to receive a high number of referrals but a significant number of these do not engage in the offer of support.

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

Continue to work with clients in maximising their incomes, accessing available grants and supporting them to achieve a more manageable budget to enable them to sustain their accommodation and prevent potential homelessness.

Continue to explore new grant/funding streams to support our clients.

Engage with the Housing Support Gateway and Commissioning Team to continually improve the referral processes to reduce the number of clients failing to engage in support services.

Maintain positive working relationships with local Housing Associations to ensure referrals are received in a timely manner and that tenants/contract holders are supported at the earliest point to prevent arrears from escalating and resulting in eviction.



<b>Objective: 3</b>	Assist individuals to access suitable, affordable accommodation based on their needs and requirements.
<b>Action: N</b>	

<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley Groves
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**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

In 2022/23 the Homeseeker Team processed and activated 1,460 applications joining the housing register which were carefully assessed and prioritised according to their needs.

During that time 542 households were accommodated with one of our partner Housing Associations.

**What challenges were experienced?**

We are seeing smaller numbers of properties becoming available via our Housing Association partners which is resulting in longer waiting times for people seeking homes.

There is a greater reliance on the social rented sector due to the growing difficulties people are facing in sourcing affordable options elsewhere in the housing market (due to growing costs of purchasing and renting a home).

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

Work with our Homeseeker partners to ensure we continue to make best use of the limited resource of social housing stock to help those most in need.

Continue to work with developing partners to deliver the Social Housing Grant programme, properties will be delivered to meet the needs of the current local housing market assessment, consideration will be given to include adapted/supported and shared accommodation	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Ensure individuals faced with homelessness are provided with support and assistance to prevent homelessness where practicable to do so.
<b>Action: O</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley Groves
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Housing continued to receive a high number of presentations from households who were under the threat of homeless. In 2022/23 981 households were assisted. The housing Solutions team offered advice and assistance to prevent homelessness as much as possible however during the past year we have experienced a high number of private landlords withdrawing from the rental sector which resulted in prevention of tenancies not being possible. The high increase of presentations caused pressure on the limited resources of temporary accommodation and permanent accommodation options	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
<p>The most significant challenge has been the introduction of the Rented Homes Act in December 2022. This saw many private sector landlords withdrawing properties from the rental market or increase the rents to levels which were not sustainable for many families. Along with this Torfaen has seen an increase in prison leavers presenting as homeless; often with this cohort of individuals sourcing suitable accommodation in the right location can be difficult, resulting in longer periods of time spent in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>The private rented sector is now inaccessible to many people/families in Torfaen which creates even greater pressure on social housing waiting lists.</p> <p>Due to the increased pressure on social housing and the decrease in numbers being advertised this has prevented people/families moving on into permanent accommodation and spending longer periods in temporary housing.</p> <p>The impact of the Rented Homes Act has also impacted on the supply of temporary accommodation (private sector leasing scheme) as many of the landlords withdrew their properties from the scheme, approx. 50% of the portfolio was lost in 2022/23</p>	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deliver WG rapid rehousing plans</li> <li>• Continue to offer advice and support to all households who are threatened with homelessness.</li> <li>• To work with RSLs and private landlord to increase the supply of temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• Work closely with private landlords to increase opportunities for people/families on lower incomes to access private rented sector</li> <li>• Work closely with RSLs to ensure empty social housing is processed and made available in a timely manner</li> </ul>	
<b>Objective: 3</b>	Ensure that those in need of accessible accommodation have assistance to secure accommodation suitable for their needs.
<b>Action: P</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley Groves
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
As at the 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 there were 272 active applications on the register for people with an assessed need for adapted/accessible accommodation. The Homeseeker Team continue to	

work closely with Occupational Therapists in Social Care to ensure the needs of Torfaen residents are appropriately assessed to understand their needs. 86% of the 272 applicants above have either been assessed by OT or are awaiting an assessment following referral (75% at the same point last year).

In 2022/23, 125 applicants with an assessed need for accessible/adapted homes were rehoused via the Homeseeker register.

In 2022/23, 73 properties were advertised by our partner Housing Associations specifically giving preference to applicants with a need for accessible/adapted homes.

**What challenges were experienced?**

As with wider general needs housing stock, we continue to see a reduction in the numbers of properties becoming available for applicants in this cohort requiring a new home.

In addition to barriers around affordability for this cohort in accessing accommodation in the private rented sector, private landlords are often reluctant to allow adaptations to their properties via the DFG process creating a further reliance on a limited social rented sector.

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

Continue to improve the data held to understand the needs of residents seeking rehousing to inform wider strategy/policy development.

Continue to work with RSL partners to ensure properties that benefit from specific adaptations/features suitable for people with mobility needs are utilised to meet those with an applicable need, for example allocating wheelchair accessible homes to those that require a wheelchair accessible property.



<b>Objective: 3</b>	Seek to provide positive outcomes for rough sleepers in addressing their accommodation, support, social and health needs.
<b>Action: Q</b>	

<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Lesley Groves
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**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

No progress to report.



<b>Objective: 3</b>	Improve the progress that FSM pupils make across all key stages, particularly key stage 4 by ensuring LA services compliments and supports regional provision.
<b>Action: R</b>	

<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Andy Rothwell
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**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

4 schools are providing holistic support for teaching to other schools.  
 7 schools are providing professional learning support to other schools across the EAS region in a variety of curriculum areas as Learning Network Schools.  
 All schools are involved in the cluster curriculum assessment and progression programme which supports developing approaches based on focus and coherence.  
 4 Secondary schools engaged in Secondary Design Network, supporting schools to share approaches to professional learning and curriculum design.

<p>St Alban's RC are involved in the development of pan- Wales assessment toolkit with University of Glasgow.</p> <p>2 schools receive bespoke support to develop Teaching and Leadership</p> <p>1 school in Estyn category compared to 4 schools in 2020/2. 1 school were removed from a category in 2022/23.</p> <p>6 schools lead professional learning supporting teaching and leadership across the EAS</p> <p>Every school is involved in the National Professional Enquiry project focusing on one of five main themes.</p> <p>Nearly all schools (96%) have engaged with Schools as Learning Organisations survey to support their development as learning organisations. This compares well with other regions as being the highest % of schools engaging with the survey.</p> <p>The Curriculum for Wales 'Teaching and Learning Group' enhances school's ability to network and share practice. Membership in Torfaen stands at 30 members out of 380 members across the region.</p> <p>Abersychan School has been part of the Talent Management Framework pilot to identify 10 future aspirational leaders</p> <p>16 leaders (16% of regional total) have trained as National Facilitator Coaches.</p> <p>18 leaders have engaged in the national Coaching and Mentoring programme (9% of total population)</p> <p>12 Headteachers in Torfaen are engaging in system leadership across the region as School Improvement Partners</p>
<p><b>What challenges were experienced?</b></p> <p>Both LA and EAS have needed to remain sensitive and responsive the needs of school as they have continued to face challenges resulting from the pandemic. Evidence suggests that the pandemic has affected some groups of learners more than others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable and disadvantaged learners and those with ALN</li> <li>• Learners I post-16 and into post-16 provision – where pressure and uncertainty may have affected confidence</li> <li>• Early years where learners risk missing key developmental milestones for language, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development</li> <li>• Specific challenges for Welsh immersion learners in English speaking households, including learners transitioning from Years 6-7.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build upon what has worked well – particularly with aspects of work that were successful as part of the virtual environment offer.</li> <li>• Continue to support schools with an offer that aligns to LA and WG expectations and links to emerging research.</li> <li>• Avoid the 'snapback' and seize opportunities to explore innovative ways of working that deliver meaning learning experiences.</li> <li>• Continue multi-agency meetings for secondary schools in special measures. This follows a growing number of case studies evidencing examples of school improvement and turnaround leadership.</li> <li>• Fully engage with Team Around the School (TAS) Meetings. These meetings between the school, LA and EAS not only monitor progress and support received but can also serve to provide opportunities for problem-solve and develop actions for improvement as well as challenge under performance.</li> </ul>

- Provide professional learning and support for the development of leadership and teaching across the entire workforce through the universal, targeted and bespoke provision offer from the EAS.



<b>Objective: 3</b>	Work productively with partners to ensure our communities are Dementia Friendly.
<b>Action: S</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Erin Roche

**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

We have continued to work with schools, colleges, charities, community groups and partners across Gwent, providing online and in person Dementia Friends sessions and supporting online connections with communities. **1,468 Dementia Friends** have been made across **98** sessions during **2022 – 2023**. ABUHB have also delivered Dementia Friend’s session to all new staff as part of their induction programmes.

The Gwent Intergenerational programme of work continues to grow, with schools being supported with Dementia Friends workshops/sessions, and then linked to care homes, community support and hospitals to share activities and learning to improve social inclusion and reduce isolation.

Our Gwent Dementia Friendly Communities group currently has over 170 partners and members of the community as part of the network. Membership continues to increase as all Dementia Friends session attendees are offered the opportunity to join. The group champions dementia awareness, inclusion, and support across Gwent.

We continue to support the national Get There Together project in Gwent, the national group are currently developing and trialling an App for people living with dementia and their carers which will hold all the resources and allow people to make more bespoke content to support loved ones.

Dementia Friendly Communities Gwent are supporting the Dementia Board with the readiness stage of the All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards, ready for implementation next year. Part of this work has been engaging with communities in the Newport area to find out what dementia care looks like for them. We have worked in partnership with Dementia leads to provide ‘bespoke’ webinars for people who are Deaf, people from ethnic minority communities, carers, people who identify as LGBTQ+ and also facilitated evening and daytime engagement opportunities. We have been supported to engage with diverse groups by British Sign Language interpreters, LGBTQ+ national leads, ethnic minority champions and Welsh Language Leads. 150 people participated in the Webinars to date, and more are planned for 2023.

We have supported ABUHB and partners to adopt the Dementia Friendly Hospital Charter for Wales. This will support and drive quality improvement across hospitals, to support better care and experience for people living with dementia, their family, and carers as part of the National Dementia Pathway of Standards work. The following animation has been created to further raise awareness of the charter and it’s aims: English <https://youtu.be/KudreUFNZ-E> / Welsh <https://youtu.be/8gu4AB5VFLM> Through using Twitter, Facebook, internal intranet and external web pages, ABUHB have described the improvement plans that support both the

Dementia Friendly Hospital Charter and overall dementia care including John's Campaign, patient bedside boards, dementia volunteer companions, Dementia Champions, and carers information.

As part of Dementia Action Week 2023, Gwent Dementia Friendly Communities partnered with Digital Community Wales to offer free online training sessions for people living with dementia, their family, friends, carers, and professionals. The sessions provided an opportunity to increase dementia awareness and understanding within the community and provide people with practical knowledge to help support people to live well with dementia in the community.

6 sessions were held in total including:

- Inspiring Digital Activities (24 attendees)
- Digital Storytelling (24 attendees)
- Digital Tools to Support People Living with Dementia (16 attendees)
- Reminiscence (18 attendees)
- Smart Speakers and Devices (15 attendees)
- How Digital Tools can Support People with the Cost of Living (9 attendees)

***"Thank you for the training sessions this week – they have been very inspiring!" – Member of Gwent DFC's***

A social media communications plan supported the advertisement of the free training sessions across the RPB's Twitter and Facebook accounts. A blog post was also produced with DCW to highlight the partnership, Dementia Action Week and the training itself – <https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/blog/dementia-action-week-2023-free-digital-skills-training-to-help-people-living-with-dementia/>

We held the Gwent Dementia Friendly Communities Annual Conference in September 2022, which was the first one since the pandemic. This provided an opportunity for professionals, experts by experience and communities to get together and share learning, ideas, and collaborate to improve awareness, inclusion, and support. The event had 135 attendees and a further 34 attended our evening webinar conference. The afternoon was dedicated to the Purple List, A Gay Dementia, and this performance/training was hosted by Libby Pearson and Ian Baxter. The training was a stand-alone piece of theatre, used as a training tool to highlight a range of issues regarding dementia and diversity for those working in social care and for those caring for, or involved with people living with dementia.

***"Very emotive!" – DFC Conference Attendee***

#### **What challenges were experienced?**

There have been many challenges during 2022/2023 with a number of changes taking place within the Alzheimer's Society, with the Dementia Champion role changing to the Dementia Ambassador model as in England. This has affected both Dementia Friends, and the 'Working towards become Dementia Friendly' accreditation process for Dementia Friendly Schools/Organisations. We have worked alongside Alzheimer's Society and communities to ensure that changes have been implemented smoothly, providing opportunities for partners and community members to discuss the changes and raise queries and concerns via Gwent Dementia Friendly Community meetings.



Changes regarding the Dementia Champion to Dementia Ambassador role have resulted in a reduction in Ambassador numbers within Gwent and we are working hard to link with previous Champions, to onboard them as Ambassadors, as well as increase overall numbers across the region. We are collecting a waiting list of partners wishing to become Dementia Ambassadors ready for when the Alzheimer’s Society release new training programme dates.

The Alzheimers Society ‘Working towards become Dementia Friendly’ accreditation process for Dementia Friendly Schools/Organisations will cease as of the end of 2023. We are working with the Alzheimer’s Society, the Gwent Dementia Friendly Community network, and the wider communities to understand what these changes will mean for Gwent and developing a legacy programme to continue this work.

**What are your goals for 2023/24?**

We will continue to support our communities and are currently mapping out the support available across Gwent as part of The All-Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards work, so we can see where there are gaps in support provision.

We will continue to work with Dementia Board leads, to ensure Dementia Friendly Communities in Gwent plays a key part in current and future work.

With the Alzheimers Society ‘Working towards become Dementia Friendly’ accreditation ceasing at the end of 2023, as of 2024 a ‘Dementia Friendly Gwent’ (DFC) accreditation process will be developed and commence to continue the work of DFCs across the region and provide an opportunity for us to engage with and recognise the fantastic work that goes on within the community.

The Gwent Population Needs Assessment (PNA) has highlighted the care and support needs of people living with dementia, their families, and carers. The Area Plan was developed to reflect the actions we will take to meet these needs and help improve the lives of those affected by dementia. The Area Plan forms the regional work programme for dementia across Gwent and this is monitored on a regular basis, to ensure we are progressing this work.



<b>Objective: 3</b>	Work to support various individuals and groups with disabilities i.e., Motor
<b>Action: T</b>	Neurons Disease.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Stuart Lawrence

**What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?**

Throughout 2022/23 disabled members were polled as what they would like to do or see created.  
 Disability dance was created in partnership with Able and its members and members of the community are now able to attend on a pay and play basis.  
 Shadow Valley Crossfit have attended an adapted disability coaches course and now run adapted sessions.  
 5 people have attended the disability cycling course for adapted bikes and a second course is being run to get the disability sessions up and running over the summer period.

**What challenges were experienced?**

Disability Sport Wales no longer fund a specific officer and now inclusion has been included in generic officer roles.

<b>Objective 4</b> <i>Involve people and communities in matters that are important to them and the decisions that we make</i>	
<b>Objective: 4</b>	Ensure that all consultations are communicated as widely as possible.
<b>Action: A</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Louise Day/Steven Honeywill
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>Consultations continue to be communicated as widely as possible. In 2022 our new platform for consultations was introduced, called Get Involved Torfaen. We have actively increased the number of participants registered on the site, which currently stands at 547. We have developed a newsletter which gets sent to all registered participants to notify them of current and forthcoming consultations.</p> <p>Our engagement officer has relaunched the Torfaen People’s Panel group and held two face-to-face meetings to discuss the work of the council, including the Future Torfaen: A County Plan. She has also been a regular contributor to the three 50+ forums and Torfaen Access Forum to inform them about consultations.</p> <p>Our contribution to engagement on the Public Services’ Board’s Well-being Plan for Gwent included focus groups with an LGBTQ+ youth group, a new dads’ group and the RPB Regional Care Providers Forum, as well as attending meetings of the Gwent Citizens Panel and the 50+ forums, ensuring we received views from demographics we know are less likely to respond to online surveys. We also provided Easy Read consultation materials at Learning Disability Wales’ annual conference.</p> <p>All face-to-face engagement sessions are promoted on the Get Involved Torfaen platform, social media and the Torfaen Council website. We have produced leaflets promoting the platform for those residents who do not routinely follow the council’s online channels.</p> <p>We issue press releases to local newspapers and in March 2023, the council relaunched its community newsletter Torfaen Talks, which was distributed to every household in Torfaen, and included details of future consultations such as the Raise the Recycling Rate survey.</p>	
<b>Objective: 4</b>	Carry out a mapping exercise of the make-up of groups that share a specific protected characteristic. E.g., Older people, LGBT people.
<b>Action: B</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>During this reporting year Gwent PSB went out to consultation on its Well-being Plan. As part of the engagement process for the plan all partners agreed to map and approach community groups that represented individuals with protected characteristics to ensure that all voices in our communities are heard. This work has allowed us to engage with different groups and build contacts and strengthen relationships which we can use in the future within Torfaen and regionally.</p>	

<b>Objective: 4</b> <b>Action: C</b>	Improve engagement with groups that share a specific protected characteristic. E.G., Older people, LGBT people.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
As highlighted above, we carried out engagement work based around protected characteristics in 2022 which has given useful contacts and feedback for future engagement work.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Engagement with all groups in our communities continues to be a challenge post CV-19 as we respond to changing behaviour patterns.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To continue to broaden our reach in all engagement activity.	
<b>Objective: 4</b> <b>Action: D</b>	Ensure young people have the opportunity to have a say on issues that affect them (Article 12 UNCRC).
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rhiannon Bennett
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>The involvement of children and young people in decision making processes has been positive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torfaen Young People’s Forum took the initiative to create user-friendly resources raising awareness about the new Additional Learning Needs Act</li> <li>• Collaborating with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, members of Torfaen Young People’s Forum successfully organized and ran a well-attended ‘Gwent Youth Question Time’ event held at the Torfaen Learning Zone, in Cwmbran. This event featured an opening speech by the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The event provided a platform for over 100 young people to directly address key decision makers with their questions.</li> <li>• The Public Health Wales ‘Youth Ambassador’ scheme has been ongoing with three dedicated members from Torfaen.</li> <li>• Additionally, three young individuals were supported to attend the Gwent Regional Youth Forum, fostering their engagement in regional youth matters.</li> </ul> <p>In Cwmbran, two workshops were conducted involving 18 young people who provided their valuable insights on the Cwmbran ‘Placemaking Plans’. Their perspectives were carefully considered, further emphasizing the importance of youth involvement in shaping the community.</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
There has been plenty of work to get involved with. However, capacity remains fairly low as we come out of the pandemic.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To support more service areas to involve young people in designing services and having their say.	
<b>Objective: 4</b> <b>Action: E</b>	Encourage services working with children and young people to adopt the National Participation Standards for Children and Young People in Wales.

<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rhiannon Bennett
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>In pursuit of promoting meaningful youth engagement, the Torfaen Public Participation Strategy has successfully incorporated the National Participation Standards for Children and Young People.</p> <p>To ensure high quality engagement, service providers are encouraged to complete a 'Participation Protocol' form (which aligns with the Standards) when involving young people in their work. This form was utilised in significant initiatives such as the Additional Learning Needs Strategy and Torfaen Economy and Skills Placemaking consultations.</p> <p>The Torfaen Corporate Parenting Panel has also embraced the Standards whilst drafting their new Corporate Parenting Strategy.</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
National guidance and support to implement the Standards has been poor.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
A recent update from Children in Wales has informed us the Standards are now on hold and are being reviewed. They expect the refreshed Standards and accompanying resources will be available from November 2023.	
<b>Objective: 4 Action: F</b>	Increase engagement of seldom heard young people in local authority and partnership consultations to improve our understanding of their needs and values.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rhiannon Bennett
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
<p>12 ambassadors have been appointed across the region to facilitate the launch and training for the Additional Learning Needs resources. The short awareness raising film and animated PowerPoint presentation was shared with the Education Scrutiny committee on the 2nd of February 2023. The positive reception has prompted the scrutiny to encourage other services to adopt a similar approach.</p> <p>Furthermore, the ALN Vision and Strategy has been presented to members of Torfaen Young People's Forum. Recognizing the importance of accessibility, the youth forum members have agreed to design an easy-read/accessible version of the document. A completion date of July 2023 has been set for this important task.</p>	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
School refusers and difficulty accessing groups due to external pressures has meant there has been some inconsistencies in delivery.	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Reconnect and support diverse groups to reengage.	
<b>Objective: 4 Action: G</b>	Develop the Youth Parliament for Torfaen.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rhiannon Bennett

<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Phase 1 of the Torfaen Youth Alliance (TYA) project has been successfully completed with Phase 2 introduced from March 2023. A comprehensive schedule of delivery can be found in the Children and Young People's Participation action plan.	
The Torfaen Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) has had an active year carrying out her duties which included running a youth ballot to find out what issues mattered most to young people in Torfaen. The results showed mental health and wellbeing and the cost-of-living crisis are high on the list of concerns for young people in Torfaen. The MYP also acted as the debate lead for Wales in the UK Youth Parliament's annual sitting in the House of Commons. As part of her portfolio, she has funded a 'Resilient me' project for pupils in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
TYA meetings can be sporadic, which hinders opportunities to build relationships and sense of purpose of the group	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
To deliver a Torfaen wide youth alliance session	
<b>Objective: 4</b>	Implement the Children's Right's Impact Assessment tool.
<b>Action: H</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rhiannon Bennett
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
No progress made.	
<b>Objective: 4</b>	Develop further opportunities for involvement in decision making.
<b>Action: I</b>	
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Rhiannon Bennett
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
VAWDASV, Gwent Safeguarding Boards Engagement and Communication Sub Group the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and Gwent Citizens Panel have all identified opportunities for young people to have their say. Work is being carried out with young people on how this should look.	
Torfaen Corporate Parenting Panel is writing its strategy and producing pledges. A series of workshops have been delivered to hear the views of young people in a bid to incorporate them into the vision and ensure the vision is meaningful and relevant. 3 young people are also engaged in the work of the Panel.	
<b>What challenges were experienced?</b>	
Embedding quality processes and proving engagement opportunities that are accessible and meaningful for the young people can be time consuming	
<b>What are your goals for 2023/24?</b>	
Young person representation on the above groups	

<b>Objective 5</b>	
<i>Ensure the council complies with its statutory equality and Welsh language duties</i>	
<b>Objective: 5 Action: A</b>	Publish annual reports on time, after due internal consideration and scrutiny.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
This action is completed every year.	
<b>Objective: 5 Action: B</b>	Embed the Socio-economic Duty into the Well-Being Impact Assessments.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
This action was completed during 2019/20.	
<b>Objective: 5 Action: C</b>	Ensure that sufficient consideration is consistently given to equalities aspects within Well-Being Impact Assessments.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
Well-being Impact Assessments (Integrated Impact Assessments) were reviewed and improved. TCBC officers are required to consider all protected characteristics and explain potential positive and/or negative impacts when producing reports for Council and Cabinet. Members are requested to carefully consider these impacts and challenge where necessary before decisions are taken.	
<b>Objective: 5 Action: D</b>	Equalities team to advise on practices and clauses (including their evaluation) that advance equality that can be incorporated into procurement exercises and also monitor their compliance in conjunction with the relevant service managers managing the ongoing contracts following a procurement exercise.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping
<b>What progress has been made for this action in 2022/23?</b>	
The equalities team provides ongoing advice and support to all areas of the council.	
<b>Objective: 5 Action: E</b>	Assess the number of complaints that contain an Equalities or Welsh Language element.
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Sarah Tipping / Alan Vernon-Jones
<b>Complaints received in 2022/23</b>	
<u>Stage 1 (dealt with by TCBC)</u> COR22/S1/005 – Complaint from a member of the public on the 22/05/2022	

No cross-promotion on the Council's social media accounts from English to Welsh and vice-versa

Welsh Language Commissioner

There were 3 Investigations initiated by the Welsh Language Commissioner.

CS1070 - Complaint from a member of the public on 17/10/2022

The English language appears first, before the Welsh text, in a weekly newsletter from the Council - 'Torfaen Weekly News Bulletin'.

CS1121 - Complaint from a member of the public on 03/03/2023

Parent will have to remove her daughter from education within the Welsh medium into an English-speaking school as there is one closer to her address and within a suitable and safer walking route.

CS1130 - Ongoing - Complaint from a member of the public on 27/03/2023

English only cycle path sign located on the junction of Ty Coch Way and Hollybush Way in Cwmbran.

## **Additional information**

### **Public Services Board**

The Gwent Public Services Board was established in September 2021 under the well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and comprises the Leaders and Chief Executives of local public services.

The Public Services Board (PSB) completed an Assessment of Well-being in May 2022. It is a comprehensive assessment of place and provides information for the PSB and all other public services to inform and develop local strategies and plans; following the assessment a Well-being Plan was created and is due to be published in June 2023.

Information about the Gwent PSB – its membership, meetings, the assessment and the plan - can be found on the web site at: <http://www.gwentpsb.org/>

### **County Plan**

In 2022 our new County Plan was published. It can be accessed here:

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/AboutTheCouncil/ImprovingTorfaen/County-Plan/County-Plan-2022-2027.aspx>