

Mae'r ddogfen hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.
This document is also available in Welsh.



Equality Review Report 2020/21

(Year ending March 2021)

Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2020/21

1. Introduction

This is the City and County of Swansea's Annual Review of Equality and Diversity 2020-21. This is our tenth review under the Public Sector Equality Duty and reflects the reporting regulations for Wales, which were introduced in 2011. The Council adopted a new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 in April 2020 and this is the first year of reviewing this plan.

Our Strategic Equality Plan, Easy Read version, Screen Reader version, Engagement Report and Statistical Review are available [here](#)

The Annual Review of progress took place during April - May 2021 and all departments across the Council, were asked to provide details of the progress they have made in terms of delivering the steps in our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24. Departments were also asked to define intended outcomes, measures of success, identify intended and planned actions for the next three years; 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 and to map steps in relation to their fit with the Council's well-being objectives, the Council's Tackling Poverty strategy priorities and the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals. This information provides a framework and an action plan to monitor the delivery of our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 and our Equality Objectives. All of the information can be found in Appendix 1.

This report contains details on:

- The tenth review of progress for our Equality Objectives, and the first year of review for our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24,
- a summary review of the emerging evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on Equalities and people with protected characteristics,
- our Corporate work on Equalities including work on our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), the implementation of the Socio-economic duty, Human Rights, Employment and Training data and information and a follow up to our Scrutiny Inquiry Panel into Equalities,
- our consultation and engagement work in relation to Equalities and with people with protected characteristics,
- a series of case studies to highlight our work on Equalities in relation to policy and practice,
- actions we have taken to ensure our information accessible.

2. The Covid-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 Pandemic has placed significant and unprecedented pressure on Council services, staff and our citizens. A number of non-essential services were suspended in order to redeploy resources and refocus services to areas where they were most needed. The unprecedented nature of the Covid-19 pandemic has seen a re-evaluation of the role and functions of Local Authorities and how they deliver services. During the 1st wave of the Pandemic more than 4,500 Council staff moved to work from home using digital technology. More than 520 members of staff were re-deployed / repurposed into essential/support services. Work focused on the rapid re-resign of Council services, supporting the NHS, expanding social care, supporting key workers and vulnerable people, providing additional help to homeless people, the development of the Test, Trace and Protect (TTP) service and meeting the cost of Covid-19.

Although the Covid-19 pandemic caused unprecedented challenges for many people, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in disproportionate effects for some people with protected characteristics. Research conducted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission into the impact of the pandemic - How Coronavirus has affected Equality and Human Rights (2020) - demonstrated that disabled people, ethnic minorities, people living in poverty, older people, young people and women have experienced the most significant and disproportionate effects from the pandemic. Moreover, the report suggest that the impact of the pandemic has entrenched some existing inequalities and widening others.

Whilst our ability to gather information and data for this report has been hampered to some extent by the pandemic and the re-focusing of some services, we have made progress in terms of delivering our Equality Objectives. In addition, some of our unplanned actions in relation to responding to the Covid-19 pandemic have provided with alternative opportunities to work on and promote Equality issues. Moreover our commitment to embed Equality issues in our core business has been incorporated in the Council's recovery approach "Swansea - Achieving Better Together, Transformation Strategy and Programme Framework 2022-26 " in an attempt to ensure that no one is left behind as we move through the recovery process from the pandemic. .

3. The Covid-19 Pandemic and Equalities: Emerging Evidence

The full extent of the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects and implications on the economy, local communities, health and other aspects of people's lives, will not be known for some time. However, there is a range of emerging evidence which suggests that the effects of the pandemic have been disproportionate and unequal for some people with protected characteristics.

3.1 Disability

The Welsh Government commissioned an enquiry into disabled people's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic - *Locked Out: Liberating disabled people's lives and rights in Wales beyond Covid-19 (2020)*. A key stark finding from the review showed that 68% of all deaths from the Covid-19 pandemic were among disabled people in Wales. Moreover, the enquiry concluded that there was "nothing inevitable about this statistic" and that "social factors including discrimination, poor housing, poverty, employment status, institutionalisation, lack of PPE, poor and patchy services, inaccessible and confusing public information and personal circumstances, significantly contributed to this figure". Overall, the enquiry concluded that changes in legislation brought in as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Human Rights of disabled people and the social model of disability was largely ignored. The enquiry drew on more than 300 pieces of evidence and found that despite the legislation and policy put in place to protect disabled people, some disabled people were unable to get access to all the medical help, public services and social support they needed. Many disabled people's physical and mental health deteriorated and many disabled people felt frightened, confused, isolated and alone.

3.2 BAME

Analysis recently published by the Office for National Statistics ONS shows that the risk of deaths involving COVID-19 among some ethnic groups, in England and Wales, is significantly higher than that of those of White ethnicity. Data for deaths in Wales involving COVID-19 between March and June 2020, accounted for a higher proportion of all deaths in BAME groups (35%) period compared with those in the White group (23%). The analysis suggests that the difference is partly explained socio-economic factors, geographical location and other circumstances, but part of the difference remains unexplained.

The First Minister commissioned a BAME Covid-19 advisory group chaired by Professor Emmanuel Ogbonna in light of the disproportionate numbers of BAME people in Wales contracting and dying from Covid-19. The research found that the poor quality of ethnicity data had resulted in poor health planning decisions and people from BAME communities faced a higher risk of catching and dying from the disease. The research also found that experiences of racism were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the communication of health information to some BAME people was ineffective and many health and social care services were culturally unsuitable. The report

also suggested that low income and employment insecurity, overcrowded housing and a poor environment in addition to problems caused by migration status and domestic violence also contributed to structural and systemic racism and disadvantage.

3.3 Women

Research undertaken by Chwarae Teg – COVID-19, Women, Work and Wales (2021) – found that whilst there was no singular female experience during the pandemic – many women were disproportionately hit by the pandemic in terms of their employment status and caring responsibilities for children and adults. The research showed that women were more likely to be key workers, doing low paid work, employed on insecure contracts, or in shut down sectors of the economy. The research also revealed that women on average spent double the amount of time on home schooling than men and were also more like to take on the burden of the additional burden of supporting people who were “shielding” such as older parents.

3.4 Domestic Violence

Research conducted by Welsh Women’s Aid (2020) found that there was a significant increase in the number of people seeking help for domestic violence. Out of the 16 support organisations surveyed by Welsh Women’s Aid, 94% said that there had been an increase in the demand for one or more service. The number of referrals out of Wales’ VAWDASV helpline – Live Fear Free increased by 137% and there was a 150% increase in crisis calls where emergency services were required for the safety of the survivor and a 175% increase in safeguarding referrals made by the Helpline due to risks to vulnerable adults or children. During the first lockdown period, calls to national helpline rose by 49% and call times trebled with those making contact to the helpline often reporting more frequent abuse with shorter escalation periods. The research also highlighted some the key challenges providers encountered in relation to the continuity of key services such as refuges, difficulties in obtaining personal, protective equipment (PPE), unplanned additional operating costs, lost funding and staffing issues.

3.5 Children and Young People

The Welsh Parliament’s Children, Young People and Education Committee undertook an enquiry into the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people. Although their final report (March 2021) concluded that children and young people have been less susceptible to Covid-19 than adults, the report concluded that “there is little doubt that the wider effects of the pandemic and the measures taken to manage it, have impacted their lives and their rights significantly”. Moreover, the enquiry highlighted that the impact of the pandemic had not affected all children and young people equally with differing impacts experienced according to age group, economic background and health status.

The enquiry also found that there has been a substantial disruption to schooling and variability in both access to remote learning and the quality of remote learning. The enquiry also found that there was a growing concern about the impact of the ongoing pandemic on children and young people's mental health. A survey of almost 25,000 children and young people undertaken by the Children's Commissioner – Coronavirus and Me (2021) – found that almost half of all participants were worried about Covid-19 to some extent on the day that they took the survey. Almost a third of 12-18 yr olds reported that they were "worried most of the time".

3.6 Older people

Age Cymru, Cymru Older People's Alliance (COPA), Welsh Senate of Older People, Active Wales, National Pensioners Convention Wales, and Pensioners Forum Wales conducted some research into the experiences of Older People during the first Covid-19 lockdown. The research - Experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales during the first Covid-19 lockdown and the road to recovery (2020) - found that more than 70% of participants had a negative experience of accessing health care during the lockdown. The research revealed that a fifth of Older People had a healthcare appointment cancelled and only 17% had a positive experience of accessing healthcare during the lockdown. The research also revealed that over a third of Older People said that they had felt lonely during the lockdown which increased to over 50% for those who lived by themselves, or had a disability. Over a third of Older People reported that they had difficulties with their physical health during the lockdown and 44% reported problems with their mental well being. The research also found that some Older People had reported problems with accessing food, picking up prescriptions, money and other support services the lockdown.

3.7 Poverty

Research undertaken by the Bevan Foundation (2021) - Different experiences of Poverty in Winter 2020' - found that the Covid-19 pandemic was having a significant impact on those already experiencing poverty and was increasing the risk of people falling into poverty. The report found that almost 1 in 4 households had seen their income drop and just over 1 in 3 households had seen their living costs increase. The research also showed that many households had experienced a drop in living standards and had to cut back on their spending. A relatively small but significant proportion of households reported that they had cut down on essentials such as food (15%) and utilities such as heating (14%). The report also highlighted growing levels of personal debt and borrowing with 1 in 10 households reporting that they had fallen behind with one or more bills since the pandemic and 15% of households reporting that they had borrowed money following the inception of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report concluded that the economic effects of the pandemic were not equal and that some groups of people such as disabled people, people with long term health conditions, people who rent their homes, lone parents and single parents were all disproportionately affected.

3.8 Local Data and Information

We are continuing to build upon our knowledge of people with protected characteristics living in Swansea and undertook a detailed Equalities Statistics Review in January 2020. This year we have reviewed and developed demographic information included on the Council's 'Statistics' web pages. This includes local social and demographic data from the Census and other official sources and a summary of recent ONS research containing intercensal estimates of Swansea's population by ethnicity, country of birth and nationality. The initial 2021 Census results are due to be published by ONS before March 2022, and this will provide a comprehensive update to our evidence base around protected characteristics.

We have also reviewed our local area profiles, which bring together a range of statistical and other information about local areas in Swansea, including data linked to aspects of equalities (where available). Profiles are currently available for the county, the 36 Wards, the local Constituency Areas, Community Areas (as defined in the 2017 Assessment of Local Well-being, as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act) and Delivery Areas (former Communities First areas). We are also in the process of updating our evidence base by reviewing all the relevant data sources and key statistics for Swansea as part of our Well-being assessment for our Local Well-being plan

3.9 Conclusions

Although the full effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will not be known for some time, it is becoming increasingly clear that the effects of the pandemic have been disproportionate for some vulnerable groups of people with protected characteristics. It is also not clear about the effect of the pandemic on *all* groups of people with protected characteristics and the impact of intersectionality for people who share more than one protected characteristic. As we recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, we will endeavour to use national research and evidence – in addition to our local information and data, to ensure that we ensure that all our key decisions, plans and strategies embed the needs of people with protected characteristics on our road to recovery. How we worked to support people during the pandemic is set out in the pages that follow.

4. Our Corporate work on Equalities

This section of the report outlines some of the key developments we have undertaken in relation to our Corporate work on Equalities.

4.1 Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA)

We continue to use equality information to inform our key decision making and policy development process. This year we revised our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process and developed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process. The purpose of developing an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process was to bring together a range of impact assessment duties into one single coherent framework, in order to reduce duplication and complexity. Our Integrated Impact Assessment was designed to meet the requirements of existing and new Welsh legislation such as the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Well Being Act of Future Generations Act (2015) and the new Socio-economic duty (2021). Our IIA process also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

Our IIA process has been systematically developed to examine whether any new or existing functions, services, policies, procedures, strategies, plans or projects affects any person or group of persons disproportionately. The process has been designed to help decision makers balance the needs of the long term against the immediate pressures of the short term and give decision makers better information about the likely impact of their decision on vulnerable groups. The purpose of our IIA process is to consider whether a proposal balances immediate needs with the well-being of future generations, analyse policies and practices to determine whether they are likely to discriminate or disadvantage people and assess whether proposals will result in any adverse impacts

IAs are an integral part of any decision making process and we aim to undertake them as early as possible during any initiative - ideally at its inception. Our IIA process includes an initial screening form and guidance for staff to use to assess the impact on equalities and a full report and guidance for staff to use when it is required. The Council's Access to Services Team co-ordinates dedicated IIA support by providing information, advice and quality assures all completed IAs.

4.2 Implementation of the Socio-economic duty

Our dedicated Access to Services Team have been leading on the implementation of the new Socio-economic duty (2021). A number of training and awareness raising sessions on the new duty have already been held with the Council's Corporate Management Team, Leadership Team, Cabinet, Councillors and staff from a cross-departmental Poverty Forum. E-learning

modules have been updated and a new module created on Equalities and IIAs for decision makers and managers. These training modules are mandatory. Work has also been completed on the development and application of a five stage process for implementing the Socio-economic duty and a checklist for decision makers and managers in relation to “strategic decisions” and how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. Work is currently underway in relation to reviewing the use of the IIA process with Leadership Team, monitoring the new duty, developing more specialised training on the Socio-economic duty and promoting the new duty through local partnerships such as Swansea’s Public Service Board (PSB). Future plans include embedding the new duty in all new strategic documents and within our approach to meeting the new requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act (2021).

4.3 Human Rights

The Equality and Human Rights Commission conducted a reviewed into how Covid-19 has impacted upon Equalities and Human Rights. The review - How coronavirus has affected equality and human rights (2020) - found the impact of the pandemic to be unequal, entrenching existing inequalities and widening others. The review recommended that Equality and Human Rights are integrated into the Welsh policy response to the pandemic.

In June 2019 Swansea’s Public Services Board (PSB) agreed a Statement of Intent to work towards becoming a Human Rights City. Although progress on Swansea becoming a Human Rights City was temporarily put on hold because of the pandemic, Swansea’ Public Service Board have recently reconfirmed their commitment to becoming a Human Rights City. All core members of Swansea’s Public Service Board have agreed to sign a declaration of intent to work towards becoming a Human Rights City, agreed to the development of a body to oversee the work and commit a resource to lead on the development of a Human Rights City for their organisation and oversee the development of the Human Rights City approach through the Public Services Board. In addition, the Council have funded a dedicated post to support the co-ordination of activities to deliver the Council’s Strategic Equality Objectives and become a Human Rights City.

4.4 Employment and Training Information

In our role as a major employer in the local area, we are continuing to support and promote Equalities across our workforce by reviewing and developing new policies for staff and by improving the data and information we hold about staff, aiming to ensure we can effectively monitor the impact of policies on staff.

In relation to our Recruitment and Selection policy, we are building upon the work undertaken by Chwarae Teg in order to embed inclusive working practices and support the recruitment, retention and progression of working women. We have secured an agreement with Chwarae Teg to further support

our ongoing review of our Recruitment and Selection approach. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has been put on hold with the intention to take place in the Autumn 2021.

We have also established a Project Group to consider ways of better attracting candidates into roles from across all communities in Swansea and to help support the Council's "Employee Value Proposition. The group has improved the use of social media to advertise and promote jobs and careers in the Council and made improvements to the accessibility of the job application process. The Service Centre Workforce team have also developed an i-recruitment solution which has incorporated the monitoring of equalities data at the start of all job applications, encouraging all applicants to complete this section, before finalising their job application. Further work is ongoing in relation streamlining our approach to recruitment and we are planning to improve links with representatives from the BAME and disabled communities, aiming to identify the ways in which we can reach out and promote jobs and careers in the Council.

In terms of training we are reviewing all our training opportunities to ensure they are fit for purpose and monitoring the completion on equalities training. We have also issued reminders to managers to ensure that they are aware that equalities training is mandatory for all staff and that a 100% completion of mandatory training is a Council objective. Work is underway in relation to specific training to support the implementation of the Socio-economic duty.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we have put in place a range of measures to support staff and offered specific support to BAME workers by directly contacting them in confidence, offering support and advice. We have also worked with Trade Unions to develop a specific risk assessment for BAME workers which has been shared across all Welsh Local Authorities as an example of good practice.

We are continuing to report on the gender pay gap and plan to analyse other pay gaps such as disability and BAME, as well as gender, in future.

Please see Appendix 2 for a breakdown of our workforce by protected characteristics information. In addition, our gender pay gap report has been published. Our Gender Pay Gap report is available [here](#)

4.5 Accessible Information

This year we have continued to develop and improve the Council's website. Content has been transferred to the new site and reworded using the principles of clear English / Welsh. PDF usage has been reduced where possible by taking important information out of PDFs and adding it to webpages, to make it accessible and easier to find in search. Design elements and styling are being added with accessibility and ease of use in mind. The Web Manager worked with representatives from the Disability Liaison group in December and early 2020 to get advice and guidance in order to improve the accessibility of the Council's website. This year we

removed the content on Swansea's Grand Theatre from the Council site and built a stand-alone website to improve accessibility and ticket sales once COVID-19 restrictions were lifted. We continue to promote and use the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 which explain how to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities, and user friendly for everyone.

We have continued to provide a co-ordinated approach to all interpretation and translation, including telephone and face-to-face provision through our memberships of the Wales Interpretation and Translation Service. This does not include in-house Welsh-English translation through our translation unit.

As a result of our membership of the WITS partnership, we have a co-ordinated approach to all interpretation and translation, including telephone and face-to-face provision. This does not include in-house Welsh-English translation through our translation unit. The top five languages requested in 2020 – 2021 were: Arabic, Polish, Kurdish (Sorani), Bengali, Romanian

Swansea Council remains committed to the Welsh Language Standards. Our Welsh Language Standards Report 2020-21 outlines how we have met these standards and contains examples and highlights of new projects and activities. This report also includes work or actions as a result of any feedback, investigations, or monitoring work by the Commissioner, or as a result of complaints received directly from the public. The report is available [here](#)

4.6 The Final stage of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel into Equalities

The final stage of the Scrutiny Inquiry Panel into Equalities took place in January 2021. The purpose of the final stage of process was to assess the impact of the work in relation to implementing the recommendations from the inquiry. In responding to the inquiry, an action plan was drawn up showing what steps would be taken to implement all of the scrutiny recommendations agreed by Cabinet

Overall good progress has been made in relation to implementing some of the recommendations from the inquiry. Examples of the progress made includes;

- **High Level Strategic Equality Board.** We have established a High-Level cross Council Strategic Equality group and secured a resource to help co-ordinate and deliver the action plan of the board. We have appointed a Strategic Equality and Human Rights Co-ordinator to deliver our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24, working with departments across the Council, as well as supporting the Equality & Future Generations Board. The focus of this post is to help embed equalities across the organisation by supporting the Board to enable the delivery of good quality and accessible services to all residents and contribute to the goal of Swansea becoming a Human Rights City.

- **Regional Carers Strategy and Co-production Strategy for Social Care.** Our Regional Carers Strategy and Co-production strategy for Social Care have both been co-produced. Carers have been fully involved in the Regional Strategy Development Group and our Regional Carers Strategy. The Co-production Strategy for Social Care has also been co-produced with many carers who are part of the Co-production Network. Although, the timing of the development of our Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24 meant that a fully co-productive approach to its development was not possible, significant consultation was undertaken before and after the development of the new Equality Objectives, which included face-to-face consultation as well as surveys; different languages and formats were also used where possible to help maximise involvement.

Although our work on a corporate approach to Co-production was temporarily halted as a result of the COVID pandemic and the re-prioritising of resources, work is now underway to implement our Corporate Co-production approach across the Council. Members of the Council's Recovery and Future Generations Policy Development Committee have played a key role in the development of our Strategic Corporate Co-production Framework and continue to monitor and make policy recommendations in relation to co-production and the Council's revised draft Consultation and Engagement strategy.

- **Recruitment policies and procedures.** We have undertaken a review of a number of staff policies in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, including a review of our Recruitment and Selection policy. Work is ongoing in relation to building on the recommendations made by Chwarae Teg an internal Project Group established to identify improvements to the process and ICT developments. The next steps will include further discussion with the internal staff equality group about developing links with representatives from the BAME communities and disabled people to seek their views, before engaging more widely on the policy to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- **Council website and accessibility of information.** The Web Manager met with the Disability Liaison Group in January 2020 to discuss the new Council website and co-production opportunities. This was a very productive meeting, but unfortunately then COVID-19 workload impacted the Web Team's timescales around the new site and curtailed further meetings. However, the Disability Liaison Group meetings will be resuming online this year and the Web Manager will be attending to progress the co-production of the site. More guidance has been produced on Staffnet and existing content updated so it's suitable for all users. A series of news articles was promoted in January 2021 to raise awareness of accessibility across the Council, not just confined to the web contributors. Accessibility tests have been carried out on various new apps during November – January 2020, including the new Civica payment functionality. This will provide a

mobile responsive payment facility which will be going online in the near future.

Some progress has also been made with implementing some of the other recommendations from the Scrutiny Inquiry into Equalities, albeit more limited as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the refocusing and re-prioritising of resources. For example, the Leadership team held a discussion about the Equality Forums and were encouraged to engage with the Forums more in the future. An initial list of proposed areas that would be subject to engagement with the Forum was produced, however the Covid-19 pandemic means that this list now needs to be reviewed. Covid-19 has posed a significant challenge in the continuation of our Equality Forums, however we have adapted and our forums have begun meeting again. Ensuring we have good engagement mechanisms in place for priority groups has been highlighted as a key priority for the new Strategic Equality and Future Generations Board and going forward we can address this action with the support of the Board.

The Covid-19 pandemic has transformed the range of activity undertaken by departments and the Communications team to ensure the Council's response to the pandemic is properly promoted to staff and to the wider public. Many planned activities celebrating Swansea's diversity and zero tolerance for discrimination could not be commemorated as originally intended. However, we continued to provide support for on-line events such as the Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month, White Ribbon Day, the Change Makers' Festival and Interfaith Week. We also provided support to on-going activity by the Council to support those affected by Domestic Abuse during the pandemic. We have also supported a new helpline which was established to help BAME during through the pandemic. The was delivered by EYST, Women Connect First, Henna Foundation, ProMo Cymru and Wales TUC and aimed to to offer a first port of call to individuals from BAME backgrounds. The multi-lingual helpline provided support from staff who could speak 11 languages and arrange interpretation into other languages as required

Our communications activity has also focussed on highlighting to staff new Council services which have made a real difference in ensuring that the most vulnerable in our communities have access to the support they need during the pandemic.

The full report on the follow up to the Scrutiny Inquiry into Equalities can be viewed [here](#)

5. Consultation and Engagement

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

engage stakeholders, the level of consultation and engagement required, principles to consider when undertaking consultation and engagement and the use of consultation and engagement results. The strategy has been designed to support, (not to replace), existing statutory and regulatory consultation and engagement processes, long standing consultation and engagement arrangements within service areas, and existing partnership arrangements. The Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in the need to update the strategy to reflect the lessons learnt from the Council's response to Covid-19. The strategy is due to be considered by the Councils Corporate Management Team and the new Strategic Equalities and Future Generations Board, before wider consultation and proceeding to Cabinet.

This year, people have had the opportunity to give their views on a wide range of issues including the Council's Budget, their overall level of satisfaction with Council services, the Council's Climate Change Charter and the development of the Council's County wide Green Infrastructure strategy. People have also been invited to give their views on different aspects of the Council's Regeneration programme within the city centre including the development of the Copr Bay, the new city centre arena, proposals for Castle Square and the re-imagination of Swansea's Wind Street. Staff surveys have also been undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic to examine the impact of working at home, to review the effectiveness of the Council's support to facilitate home working and to inform the future development of workforce policies as we recover from the pandemic.

Although many of our planned face to face engagement activities with our Equalities Forum, work with Children and Young People and work with Older people have not taken place as planned, as a result of the pandemic, we have continued to engage on-line whenever possible, or develop alternative approaches.

5.1 Children and Young People

During the Covid-19 pandemic it has not been possible to engage in face to faces groups with Children and Young People through mechanisms like the Big Conversation. Since 2014, the Big Conversation has offered opportunities for nearly 10,000 children and young people aged 5 - 25years to engage in accessible and meaningful opportunities to be heard. The pandemic meant that thought had to be given on how and where we engage with children and young people, in this new and unprecedented time of working. Reflecting upon the learning from engagement during the pandemic, a review and repurpose of the team with remit for the co-ordination of the Children and Young People's Rights Scheme was undertaken. A refined focus on partnership, rights-based policy and involvement of stakeholders was established and a Children and Young People's Partnership & Involvement Officer was recruited.

This year we drafted a Children and Young People's Rights Scheme (2021-2023), incorporating National Principles for a Rights Based Approach to Children, which takes account of previous consultation work with children,

young people and practitioners. Consultation on the revised Scheme is planned to take place in May 2021. The plan on a page Children's Rights Scheme has been developed and aligns to the Right Way principled approach that is being embedded nationally. Alignment to the National process means opportunity to provide clear guidance, and tangible benchmarks for Council departments to embed a whole council approach and evidence outcomes.

On the 20th of November 2020 (Universal Children's Day) we re-launched Swansea's Children's Rights Network. The Network comprises of over 80 organisations, and aims to facilitate a whole authority approach to embedding children's rights in County work, split into two elements; involvement and policy. The involvement strand focused on supporting structures to enable children & young people (0-25) to have their voice heard on issues that affect their lives, both locally & nationally and the policy strand focused on supporting the development and implementation of Swansea's Children and Young People's Rights Scheme and progressing actions within its action plan; An education working group has also been established to explore the most effective approaches to teaching and incorporating rights into the curriculum in Swansea. Work has included exploration of a Right of the Month approach, developing responses to Coronavirus and Me, and establishing a plan to support Challenge Advisors to incorporate the UNCRC in their thinking when developing new curricula with local schools.

5.2 Older People

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the Ageing Well Forum was re-focused into an on-line Ageing Well Information Network. The aim of the Network was to provide information and a continued opportunity for engagement. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way in which we engaged with Older People, we have continued to support the engagement of Older People through a regional engagement panel with the Older People's Commissioner, our Local Area Co-ordination service, our Lifelong Learning service, our Call Centre Hub (a point of contact for community responses through COVID-19), our Electronic Library service and our Home Delivery services.

This year we have also re-established the Aging Well Steering Group and appointed an Older Person's Partnership and Involvement Officer to ensure that we have effective and inclusive participation mechanisms in place to enable the participation and engagement of citizens aged 50+ yrs. Both the Aging Well Steering Group and the Older Person's Participation and Involvement Officer will have a key role to play in shaping our Aging Society Strategy in line with the recommendations within the Older Person's Commissioners "Leave No-one Behind" report (2021).

A plan on a page (mirroring the Children's Rights Scheme) has been developed for citizens 50+ and aligns to the Right Way principled approach that is being embedded nationally and noted in the Welsh Government draft strategy for an "Ageing Society". Alignment to the National process means opportunity to provide clear guidance, and tangible benchmarks for Council

departments to embed a whole council approach and evidence outcomes relating to the eight domains of the “Age Friendly City” criteria. In November 2020, the PSB met with the Older Person’s Commissioner for Wales and formally committed to work towards “Age Friendly City” status in Swansea. We are continuing to work closely with the Older Person’s Commissioner’s Office and CADR at Swansea University to ensure meaningful mechanisms for engagement of citizens 50+ within the “Live Well, Age Well Forum”. Similar to work on engagement with Children and Young People, we have reflected upon our learning from engagement during the pandemic and refined the focus of our work on partnerships, rights-based policy and involvement of stakeholders.

5.3 Hate Crime

The prevention and reduction of Hate Crime and Community Tension Monitoring is one the five strategic priorities identified in our Safer Swansea Strategy 2018-21. In line with Welsh Government’s National Strategy on tackling Hate Crime, ‘WG Tackling Hate Crimes & Incidents – A Framework for Action’ the Safer Swansea Strategy 2018-21 aims to prevent Hate Crime, support victims and improve a multi-agency responses to the problem. Our Hate Crime Stakeholder Action Plan’ continues to be managed and monitored through the Hate Crime Stakeholder Group and the Safer Swansea Partnership Steering Group. A snapshot of recorded Hate Crime in Swansea between for 12 months up until April 2021 revealed that there were 339 incidents recorded in Swansea. Almost 70% of all recorded incidents were classified as ‘racial’ and just over 10% were related to disability and a further 10% were related to sexual orientation. A Community Cohesion (Brexit) survey (2020) conducted with local residents in Swansea revealed that 13% of respondents had been the Victim of a Hate Crime, but only 43% reported it.

This year we have continued to promote Hate Crime training opportunities for staff and e-learning package. In addition we have worked to raise awareness of Hate Crime and reporting pathways with our partners and in local communities. A snap shot of the Council staff training showed that 588 members of staff had completed the e-learning Hate crime training on the Council portal from January 2020 to the end of February 2021. More than 60 people attended the virtual Victim Support training in March 2021 which focused on an introduction to Hate Crime in Wales across all of the groups with protected characteristics and provided participants with a greater understanding of the challenges facing these groups when experiencing and reporting hate crime.

The Council continued to support Hate Crime awareness week in October 2020 and signed up to Victim Support’s Charter. The Charter sets out in detail the rights of victims, and the commitments of organisations such as the Council in tackling Hate Crime, providing support and information for victims, and raising awareness of Hate Crime. The Charter marks the Council’s commitment to ensuring that all staff and volunteers comply with the Charter’s promises whenever they come into contact with those affected by Hate Crime and work to build strong and inclusive communities.

5.4 Community Cohesion

We have continued to implement the Welsh Government Community Cohesion programme during 2020-21 through a range of regional and local community cohesion activities. Although many of our planned face to face engagement activities with our Equalities Forum, have not taken place as planned, as a result of the pandemic, we have continued to promote Community Cohesion through a range of on-line events such as National Hate Crime awareness week, Welsh Government Hate Crime campaigns, Interfaith week, LGBT+ History month, Black History month and the Holocaust Memorial day.

This year we also worked to promote awareness of the EU settlement scheme (EUSS) to encourage EU nationals and their family members to apply for “pre-settled” or “settled status” to ensure that they are eligible for access to public services. We have support the delivery of a number of EU Settlement Information sessions for Councillors, front line staff and key partners. Almost 8,000 people in Swansea have applied to “settled” or “pre-settled” status up to March 2021. We have also continued to work with our local partners including South Wales Police to monitor tensions and hot spots, co-ordinate a multi-agency response to reduce tensions, undertake preventative work and continue to work with communities to better understand the impacts of Brexit on communities, In May 2020 we published the results of a Community Cohesion (Brexit) survey with local residents. The survey aimed to establish a local evidence base on community cohesion and Brexit, explore the views of local residents on the impact of Brexit and to assess perceptions of safety and well-being in communities. The survey found that although almost 80% of respondents had felt welcomed by people from their local community in Swansea, over half of the respondents thought that the decision to leave the EU would have a negative effect on them personally, on their community and felt nervous about their own future prospects with the UK’s departure from the EU.

5.5 Domestic Violence

Prior to the COVID pandemic, the Swansea Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) governance structure, leadership group and subgroup was reviewed. Work was also carried out with key leads from Neath Port Talbot Council and Swansea Bay University Health Board to ensure that subgroups were regionalised where appropriate, and that the local strategies were aligned, with shared objectives. Following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic hit, there were frequent reports in the media of heightened domestic abuse rates, however this was not reflected in number of police reports or referrals into specialist services. Domestic abuse helplines were seeing record numbers of contacts, but this was not reflected locally and there were concerns that victims of domestic abuse were ‘staying put’, or feared that the ‘stay at home’ messaging would prevent them from leaving. In response to this, we prioritised awareness raising campaigns with a strong

message that help was available and we developed multimedia campaigns linking to national campaigns and signposting to local support services. We also ensured that large scale posters were on display in supermarket car parks and other public areas. The VWASDV Practice Lead worked with Microsoft to develop the first domestic abuse Chatbot in Wales, which allowed professionals and members of the public to access round the clock information, advice and details of local support services in an interactive, anonymous way. We also secured funding to provide IT equipment and SMART phones to families affected by domestic abuse and additional target hardening equipment to reinforce the safety of the homes of high risk domestic abuse victims. We also worked closely with the Welsh Government, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office and other partners to identify funding opportunities and alternative ways to increase resilience of projects, including training wider staff to assist and opportunities to increase resource.

During the first lockdown we held weekly meetings with specialist VAWDASV providers across Swansea, to share data on any emerging trends, and to identify any gaps or barriers to accessing services and worked with Swansea University to secure some temporary emergency housing provision. As the first lockdown started to lift, there was a surge in referrals to the IDVA project (who support high risk victims of domestic abuse). During 2020-21, the IDVA Project received 1398 referrals for high risk Domestic Abuse victims and the Domestic Abuse Hub received 4,376 referrals for incidents of domestic abuse where a child was linked. Just over 2,200 of these already had an allocated lead worker or social worker and 2,121 were provided with information, advice or assistance by the Domestic Abuse Hub.

This year we have re-structured our early help offer in Swansea which includes representation from South Wales Police as part of the Early Action Together programme and representatives from Health and Education. The aim of our re-structured early help offer is to complete proportionate and timely assessments, in order to ensure that children and young people are able to access the right support at the right time, from the right service to prevent escalation of need. We have continued to offer Domestic Abuse training to our staff. More than 1,000 members of staff have completed our training on Domestic Abuse awareness training and we have also developed a new draft Special Leave policy for staff who have suffered from Domestic Abuse.

5.6 Poverty

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, we had been working with partners to develop a Swansea Poverty Truth Commission, which was the first Poverty Truth Commission in Wales. The aim of our Poverty Truth Commission is to place those affected by poverty at the heart of decision making about poverty. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has delayed the pace of delivery, a Commission has been established which includes a mix of Community Commissioners with lived experience of poverty and key decision makers,

known as Civic/Business Commissioners. The Facilitation Team has been recruited and is hosted by SCVS (Swansea Council for Voluntary Service). Work is currently under way to identify the themes which the Poverty Truth Commission will focus on.

Our Tackling Poverty service and other repurposed Council staff drawn from other Council service areas which were temporarily stopped or re-focused during lockdowns, have been instrumental in responding to the Covid-19 crisis and the distribution of food parcels to vulnerable and shielding people. Over 8,500 residents were identified as part of the Shielding programme and we delivered more than 500 food boxes to shielded and vulnerable people every week during the first wave of the pandemic. We established a food supply and distribution network and supported the expansion of the food bank network in Swansea. We expanded the Local Area co-ordination network to cover all areas of Swansea and responded to over 20,000 enquiries and requests for help. The Tackling Poverty Service administered more than 40 Food Poverty grants to support the network of food banks and food aid projects across Swansea. Building upon the impetus of partnership working and the new connections we made, we established the Swansea Food Poverty Network in October 2021 which aims to develop and sustain our collective approach to addressing food poverty and food insecurity in Wales. Members are currently considering the development of a Community Food Growing Policy and the ways in which the Council can help promote and support local residents and communities to grow local produce. This year we have also administered a series of grants to organisations in order to support our Period Dignity campaign and our Men's Shed project which aims to reduce the social isolation and increase the well-being of men.

This year we have also been working with Swansea Council for Voluntary Service to roll out a Community Calling campaign in Swansea in partnership with Hubbub and O2. The project aims to deliver around 700 donated phones distributed to people who are digitally excluded in Swansea with O2 providing 12 months of free data and unlimited calls and texts. So far, around 150 residents in Swansea have benefitted from the scheme. Phones have been requested for individuals by referral organisations for a number of reasons including; staying connected with friends and support services, help to look for jobs to get back into work, access to English language courses online, accessing services such as online banking and health appointments, contacting family abroad to feel less isolated and help to study online.

We have continued to implement our Poverty Strategy and ensure that tackling poverty is everybody's business through our Poverty Forum. The Swansea Council Poverty Forum is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive and facilitates cross departmental working and development, through the sharing of information and best practice. Work is underway to co-produce the revised Tackling Poverty Strategy which will incorporate some of the lessons learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic and responding to emerging message about the effects of the pandemic from the wider evidence base.

5.7 Councillor Champions

The Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities has now taken on “Champions Liaison” as part of the portfolio and meets with Champions regularly to discuss the role, collaborative working and promotion. Councillor Champions are continuing to work with, advocate and promote equality issues for groups of people with protected characteristics. They cover a wide range of equality issues including; Disability and Access to Services, Diversity, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), Women, Domestic Abuse, Carers, Poverty, Vulnerable and Older People, Sanctuary and Inclusion, in addition to wider themes such as Health and Wellbeing. Councillors Champions work to provide a voice for traditionally under-represented groups or issues, which need to be kept at the forefront of Council business and to ensure that they are taken into account when Council policy is being developed and decisions are made. Following up one of the key recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel’s inquiry into Equalities, a role description for Councillor Champions is currently being developed to clarify responsibilities. Work is also underway to improve the alignment of Councillor Champions with consultative forums and the Strategic Equality and Future Generations Board.

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

5.8 Internal Council Staff Group - Equality Representatives

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were beginning to revise the terms of reference of the group in relation to the development of the new Strategic Equality and Future Generations Board. Heads of Service were also asked to review membership from their area. The group had also met and were given information on the development of easy read/plan English resources and were in discussions about co-production. Work had also begun in February 2020 about how to directly involve Councillor Champions in our Disability Liason Forum. However, the Covid-19 pandemic meant that work in this area was temporarily halted as resources were directed to other areas. We are now currently revisiting the terms of reference for the group to take into account the implications of Covid-19 with a view to holding regular meetings as directed by the Strategic Equality and Future Generations Board.

6. Case Studies: Examples of our Equalities work

This section of the report outlines a number of case studies across Swansea which demonstrates the range of different ways in which we are embedding Equality issue across the Council in terms of both policy and practice.

Case Study 1: Black Lives Matter – Place Review

In July 2020, Swansea Council agreed a motion to “take action, where possible, to remove offending names or public realm items that have confirmed links to slavery or exploitation, commission a deeper review of place names and public realm items that may have links to slavery and exploitation and develop resources and accurate information on our links to the slave trade and exploitation”

An in-depth review was undertaken by the Council’s Cultural Services who had already completed a significant programme of work as part of its commitment to Agenda 21, Culture in Sustainable Cities, which resulted in the development of a Diversity Pledge. The review found that there were relatively few public statues in the city and none are known to be, or have any family links to the transatlantic slave trade or slave ownership. However, the review also found that there was a significant gap in the city’s representation of diversity in its public realm ‘honours’. For example, there is no statue celebrating any woman or disabled person in Swansea, or a member of any minority ethnic or LGBT+ community. The Review also found that during Swansea’s greatest period of expansion in the nineteenth century, Swansea named many of its new streets after prominent local industrialists, significant members of the local gentry, and Welsh and British military heroes. Coincidentally, some of these figures had direct or indirect involvement with the British slave trade, owned slave plantations or were connected with slave-owning families.

The Review concluded that there was a need to undertake further research and work to contextualise some of Swansea’s street names with potential links to slavery and to identify other individuals in Swansea’s history who have not previously been recognised to present a more balanced and full picture of Swansea’s history. The report also recommended working with a range of community representatives to identify a range of individuals - including those with protected characteristics - who have made a positive contribution to Swansea to be considered as a reference tool for current and future opportunities in destination / street naming in Swansea’s regeneration programme and to help inform the Council’s future arts strategy, events and creative programmes, blue plaque and other cultural activities.

A full copy of the Review at the Cabinet meeting March 2021 can be found [here](#)

Case Study 2: LGBT+ History Month

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic the Council continued to celebrate LGBT+ history month by lighting Civic Buildings in the colour of the rainbow on the 25th February 2021 and hosting a series of on-line events. The events included a series of podcasts and films by local artist and activists such as Joan Jones who performed a poetic journey along the streets and byways of

Mayhill called 'Gloomy Mayhill Walk' and Roy Efrat and Catrin Webster who talked about their recent exhibition exploring the word 'Pansy' and associated meanings and themes. Former Swansea East MP Sian James also talked about the Miners' Strike in 1984/85 when the people of the Dulais Valley were supported in their fight by LGBT+ activists from London and was the inspiration behind the Bafta Award winning 2014 comedy-drama 'Pride.' The celebrations included a series of Change Makers videos which recounted some of the personal stories and experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the local area who felt compelled to make local communities a fairer and more equal for everyone.

Robert Francis-Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism said he was proud of Swansea's commitment to celebrating the contribution made by local communities to the life of the city. He said:

"Swansea is a place of equality and diversity. It's essential that our cultural venues support diversity and that we increase the visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, their history, lives, experiences and contribution to society. Swansea has a vibrant and growing LGBT+ community and usually we'd normally be putting on a range of events and performances as part of the celebrations. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic that's not been possible this year, but in the meantime we've put a whole host of events online for people to enjoy."

Case Study 3: Us Girls

US Girls is a programme for girls aged 8 to 14 yrs which aims to increase the number of young females participating in sports and physical activity. The programme runs as a series of Girl Camps in Penlan, Penyrheol and Cefn Hengoed across the City and County Swansea. The camps take place during school holidays between 9am to 4pm, offering a mixture of sports, physical activity and emotional health workshops along with opportunities for the girls aged 8 to 14 to socialise and give feedback about their experiences. Some of the most popular activities from the camps include swimming, mountain boarding, rebound sessions, weightlifting and zumba.

Participants are encouraged to try a wide range of activities, although no one is forced to do any activity they don't want to and girls are welcome to just turn up and watch, or help set up equipment. This provides continuity for the girls who have been introduced to the venue through the camp, have got to know the instructors, and have become familiar with what to expect from the sport or activity. This gives them access to an opportunity in a safe comfortable environment where they can maintain their activity levels.

The sessions go beyond the provision of sport and physical activity and included educational and emotional support. For example, the programme

provides the girls with opportunities to discuss issues with the staff and to participate in workshops focused on mental health, and how physical activity can combat stress and nervous energy. The programme also provides girls with the opportunity to try something new and entertaining motivating them to be active – without highlighting sport and physical activity as the focus and goal of the day.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an average of around 115 girls attended the clubs on a weekly basis. Demand to participate in the programme was particularly high at Penlan Leisure centre and was often over prescribed with more than 100 girls expressing an interest to participate. Around 50% of the girls who attended were not involved in clubs outside of camp, so there was limited duplication or displacement of activity – showing some success in reaching new participants and not simply providing more for those who are not already active elsewhere. As the COVID-19 restrictions have been lifted, the programme has been re-structured to provide more outside opportunities and targeted at specific age groups and focusing on the most popular sports and activities.

Case Study 4: Domestic Abuse: You are Not Alone campaign

During the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic, there were frequent reports in the media of heightened domestic abuse rates, however this was not reflected in number of police reports or referrals into specialist services. Domestic Abuse helplines were recording record numbers of contacts, but this was not reflected locally. The concern was that victims of Domestic Abuse were 'staying put', or feared that the 'stay at home' messaging would prevent them from leaving. In response to this, Swansea Council prioritised awareness raising campaigns with a strong message that help is still available. We developed multimedia campaigns involving staff from Child and Family services, supporting national messaging such as #youarenotalone, and ensured that local information on support services was regularly promoted. In recognition that not everyone can access social media, the Community Safety team ensured that large scale posters were on display in supermarket car parks and other public areas. As part of its You Are Not Alone campaign, we developed a chatbot using AI which is now live on the service's website [here](#). It is a way of ensuring that people at risk of domestic abuse have access 24/7 to assistance and the reassurance that they are not alone, and help is available. The bot asks the user a series of questions to help direct them to the most appropriate support a pilot which we are looking to extend and promote wider.

Case Study 5: Case Study – Dylan Thomas Centre Literature and Trauma

Swansea Council's Dylan Thomas Centre was awarded a national UK award by the Museums Association's Museums Change Lives programme in 2020.

The award was given for the Best Small Museum and its works with asylum seekers and refugees to promote a positive social impact. The Literature and Trauma was a writing project for refugees and asylum seekers in Swansea, which enabled people to tell their unique stories through poetry and prose. The aim of the project was to create a sense of place and belonging, working to counteract poverty of access to culture, and promote wellbeing and community cohesion. The project involved a series of workshops which were led by Cameroonian writer Eric Ngalle Charles, whose personal experience of displacement and asylum provided a safe space for participants to express themselves, a Learning Space which enabled participants to experience the exhibition and a dedicated safe play space for their children.

Robert Francis-Davies, the Council's Cabinet member for Investment, Regeneration and Tourism said:

"Our arts and culture team develop projects on a number of themes for visitors and residents throughout the year. They are enjoyed inside and outside of our venues and I welcome this latest much deserved recognition of the work's community benefits. Outreach projects help reduce perceived barriers to participating in our artistic and cultural offer. They help residents become more familiar with the work that takes place across the city. With this particular project I was pleased that we could work with newcomers to our city, people who may have faced great difficulties and continue to need support. The project helps them to link in with one another, share a cultural understanding and establish themselves as part of a wider community. We're delighted that this work has earned the service a national UK award."

Case Study 6: Swansea's Cultural and Digital Hub

Swansea Council have a long standing collaboration with Race Council Cymru following extensive research that high-lighted under representation across cultural venues in Swansea and nationally. Creating the Culture and Digital Hub addresses ambitions for co-production and collaboration with the voluntary sector, but also contributes to the implementation of the National Arts Policy, based on research that shows that the arts across Wales (and the UK) are not reaching and involving enough people with protected characteristics. The gap is particularly apparent in the very low number of disabled people and those from BAME backgrounds. In response, Arts Council of Wales is developing specific initiatives to address these gaps. The Cultural and Digital hub whilst recognising the separate needs of some groups specifically will actively support and promote cross sectional engagement in which all members of the community will be encouraged to participate. This includes recognising the interconnected, interdependent nature of social categories whereby individuals and groups do not experience their diversity/protected characteristics in isolation, but as a set of interrelated situations and conditions.

Case Study 7: Big Build Surfing Facility

The crew of the BBC DIY SOS and dozens of local volunteers were welcomed to Swansea for the official start of their latest Children in Need Big Build. Swansea Council Leader Rob Stewart and Cllr Robert Francis Davies formally welcomed Nick Knowles and the rest of the production team to the latest development site at Caswell Bay where a state of the art adaptive surfing facility was created for people with disabilities. The new building was built with skill and speed in just nine days, replacing an ageing storage unit currently used by charity - Surfability UK, who have operated an adaptive surf school from the unit for the last seven years.

Rob Stewart, Swansea Council Leader, said: *"We're very pleased to be able to support the DIY SOS team with their plans to create a brand new surfing facility for people with disabilities. We've already carried out lots of improvements at our beaches to make them more accessible, including the creation of new sections of coastal paths between beaches along our coast line. This new facility will further enhance what we offer to residents and visitors to our wonderful coastline and will make a huge difference for those that need extra support to go surfing."*

Nick Knowles, said: *"Surfability UK is becoming a world renowned in terms of adaptive surfing - working with charities across the globe including Australia and the US. They are looking after around 500 people who get support to go surfing. The new facility will be something that Swansea and the rest of Wales can be extremely proud of and with the support of the Council, they're going to have a much better facility - and a world beating facility."*

Robert Francis Davies, Cabinet Member for Investment, Regeneration & Tourism, said: *"It's great to have DIY SOS back in Swansea to do this project which will make surfing accessible to everybody. Caswell Bay is a beautiful bay and it's extremely important for people with disabilities to be able to access this beach and take part in sports that more able bodied people do freely."*

Ben Clifford runs the adaptive surfing facility in Caswell Bay. Ben said:

"Adaptive surfing provides the opportunity for people with mobility problems - wheelchair users, with the chance to experience surfing and have a lot of fun. I'm so excited about the plans for the new facility. Our existing building is literally a storage facility which floods regularly. We run a very special service which requires a building that has more room than we currently have so that we can make it more comfortable for the people coming here. As far as I know, this will be the first custom built adaptive surf centre in the UK."

Case Study 8: Hate Crime Charter

Swansea Council signed up to the Victim Support Hate Crime Charter in October 2020 which reaffirmed its commitment to support and promote the rights of victims and communities when hate incidences and crimes take place. The Charter sets out in detail the rights of victims, and the commitments of organisations such as the Council in playing a part in tackling Hate Crime, providing support and information for victims, and to raise awareness of hate crime among Council staff and the communities the council works with. Hate Crimes are crimes perceived by the victim or other people to be motivated by prejudice or hate, whether it's because of age, disability, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, or gender identity. Victim Support's charter has been compiled with the experiences of service users and what matters to them the seven points are aimed to ensure that victims of Hate Crime and communities have: the right to be heard, the right to report Hate Crime, the right to be treated with respect, the right to information, the right to free and confidential support, the right to make a complaint and the right to privacy. Organisations that adopt the charter are committing to ensuring that staff and volunteers are all expected to abide by the charter's promises whenever they come into contact with those affected by hate crime and work to build strong and inclusive communities.

Cllr Alyson Pugh, Swansea Council's Cabinet Member for Supporting Communities, said: *"Swansea was the first City of Sanctuary in the UK and I'm very proud Swansea Council played its part in this. "Swansea is a multi-cultural, vibrant city where everyone is welcome - regardless of their age, race, sexuality, gender identity or disability. "While the number of hate crimes in Swansea is small in comparison with other cities across the UK, any incident of hate crime here is one too many and as a Council we fully support Victim Support's Hate Crime Charter."*

Case Study 9: Interfaith Week

Our annual event normally sees hundreds of people from many different faiths and beliefs getting together in each other's meeting places to build relationships and stage discussions and events. Due to the pandemic this year's occasion was rather different with most events taking place online.

Swansea Interfaith Forum is an informal group and is made up of people who come from many different faiths and cultures. The forum works together for to share and build knowledge of each other's faiths and beliefs and arrange events to celebrate and promote inter-faith dialogue. The purpose of Interfaith Week is to build good relationships and working partnerships between people of different faiths and beliefs and to welcome of no particular faith who want to find out more. On-line activities this year included; an Interfaith photo competition, simple cooking, Interfaith stories, morning prayers & meditation,

lectures and discussions, an LGBT+ faith gathering, a Remembrance service and social quizzes.

Cllr Alyson Pugh, Swansea Council's Cabinet member for Better Communities, said:

"We're proud to be working with our faith communities and supporting the various activities planned by the Swansea Faith forum which will be delivered throughout the week. "Our partnership with the Interfaith Forum will strengthen our community fabric and will provide the opportunity to people from different backgrounds, faiths and non-faith to work together towards a strong Swansea. I am grateful to all those who made this happen."

Case Study 10: International Women's Day and Women's History Month

On Monday (March 8) the Guildhall was lit purple during the evening to mark International Women's Day. During the month of March 2021, the Council's Cultural Services team undertook a range of themed online activities to celebrate Women's History Month. The Dylan Thomas Service used its collection to explore female writers, artists and photographers and it is also posting a series of blogs looking at Dylan's mother Florence Thomas. The Glynn Vivian Art Gallery presented a month-long programme of social media posts featuring artworks, film, and audio from female artists that have previously shown at the gallery as well as highlighting of two current exhibitions featuring Welsh female artists Kathryn Ashill and Anya Paintsil. Swansea Museum presented online material from its 2018 exhibition looking at the passing of the 1918 Representation of the People Act, which gave votes to women over 30 and is also posting vignettes of women associated with the museum's own history. Swansea's Library Service used its social media accounts to showcase 10 must-read books from female writers or about inspirational women, plus it was posting daily on influential Swansea and Welsh women and related books from collections. The Council's Sport & Health team also profiled female winners from last year's Swansea Sports Awards; highlighting the Us Girls programme; and celebrating historic achievements of Swansea's women in sport and physical activity. Cultural services also posted a blog about inspirational Swansea women including Amy Dillwyn, Emily Phipps, Clara Neal, Jessie Donaldson, the Ace Sisters and Val Feld.

Swansea Council's Cabinet Member for Better Communities, Louise Gibbard, said:

"The theme of this year's International Women's Day is Choose To Challenge and there are many women in Swansea who have done just that. "As a Council we are committed to honouring and continuing their work. Through the work of Domestic Hub we will always challenge domestic abuse and violence against woman and during the pandemic we became the first council in Wales to develop a hi-tech chatbot so that support is available 24/7. We are

also challenging period poverty in Swansea by providing grants to foodbanks and community groups who are getting pads, tampons and reusable options to those who need them so that no one has to suffer the indignity of going without these essential items. We are also unveiling a blue plaque in the city centre in honour of Swansea woman Jessie Donaldson who travelled to America 170 years ago where she bravely fought and challenged slavery."

6. Concluding comments

Overall, despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic we have started to make some good progress in relation to implementing our new Strategic Equality Plan 2020-24. Whilst some of our services were stopped or temporarily halted as a result of the pandemic and the re-focusing of services and repurposing of staff, our response to the pandemic has resulted in a number of unplanned ways in which we could continue our Equalities work in both policy and practice. Although some good progress has been made, we will need to fully embed Equalities in our approach to recovery and take on board the key messages from the emerging evidence as we begin to more fully understand the impact of Covid-19 and the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on people with protected characteristics to make sure that "no one is left behind."