

Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2020-24 Annual Review 2023/24

Cardiff Council



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. Mae fformatau eraill ar gael ar gais.
This document is available in Welsh. Other formats are available on request.



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Introduction

In September 2020, Cardiff Council published the [Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2020-24](#), identifying four Equality Objectives which the Council will measure progress against over the next four years. The objectives built on the work that had been delivered in previous Strategic Equality Plans.

This report on the Equality & Inclusion Strategy 2020-24 covers the period from April 2023 to March 2024.

The four Equality Objectives were developed following a programme of consultation and engagement events held with citizens and representatives from protected characteristic groups. Participants had the opportunity to provide their views and help shape the Equality Objectives set for the four-year period.

The four Equality Objectives are:

- 1. To develop and deliver services which are responsive to Cardiff's inequality gap**
- 2. To lead the way on equality and inclusion in Wales and beyond**
- 3. Cardiff is accessible to everyone who is living, visiting, or working in the city**
- 4. To build an inclusive and representative organisation**

This report outlines the progress the Council has made in achieving these objectives during this reporting period as required by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

For further information regarding any of the initiatives mentioned in this Annual Report, please email: Equalityteam@cardiff.gov.uk

Progress Made Against Equality Objective 1: To develop and deliver services which are responsive to Cardiff's inequality gap

Housing

New Council Homes

The Council continues its commitment to increase the amount of affordable, energy efficient, low-carbon housing in the city.

Our house building programme, [Cardiff Living](#), has delivered a total of 1,110 new homes with 284 completed in 2023/24. Sixty-seven sites capable of providing a further 4,567 new homes have been identified.

Work to bring empty homes back into use progresses with the Council on track to meet its target. Ninety-two empty properties have been brought back into occupation as well as twenty-one additional dwellings being created during the last financial year, thereby enhancing available housing stock.

Driving Up Standards in the Private Rented Sector

Shared Regulatory Services issued 1,245 House in Multiple Occupation licences on properties last year. All properties have been inspected for Health and Safety matters. Safety certificates are in place, fire safety concerns have been met, and landlords checked for fitness to operate.

Shared Regulatory Services continue to prioritise robust action against non-compliant owners and landlords and have secured several high-profile prosecutions of landlords for a variety of offences.

Discussions have been held on the implementation of data sharing with Fire Authorities across Wales to ensure safety concerns are shared. Power BI dashboards, providing information about the Private Rented Sector and the performance of Rent Smart Wales, have been published and continue to be released.

Work is ongoing to recruit Welsh language speakers in North Wales to assist in the delivery of the Rent Smart Wales scheme.

Older Persons' Housing

Progress continues in the development of our Community Living Schemes for older people. The schemes provide a safe and secure home environment for older people which in turn allow for larger properties to be made available to those on the housing waiting list.

Addison House, the first of ten planned schemes, delivered 44 high-quality, low-carbon apartments in early 2024, enabling the new residents to live independently. Construction

has commenced on a further two Community Living Schemes at Leckwith Road and Bute Street with the schemes anticipated for handover in February and July 2025 respectively.

Contractors have been secured and are on site in St. Mellons whilst negotiations are ongoing in the development of the Maelfa Community Living Scheme.

Our Vision to End Homelessness

Following an initial increase in the number of people sleeping on the city's streets during the spring and summer of 2023, there has been a marked reduction from approximately 50 individuals in November 2023 to 19 in March 2024.

Extraordinary forces and unwavering demand for homelessness services led to the Council declaring a housing emergency in December 2023. At that time all 1,699 units of temporary accommodation were full, and data showed that 28 more families were entering temporary accommodation than exiting into permanent accommodation each month.

The principal cause of the housing emergency is the lack of affordable housing. Additional pressures include the early release of prisoners to relieve prison overcrowding, reducing levels of home ownership, increasing numbers of students in the city, legislative changes introduced during the Covid pandemic, and those seeking refuge from war and conflict across the globe.

In response to the housing emergency, Homelessness Prevention Services have been strengthened to meet the increasing need for assistance with a focus on early intervention.

Households that do not have support needs are offered private rented accommodation outside the Cardiff area where costs are more affordable. The average monthly private rent in Cardiff is now £200 higher than the Welsh average. Only a small minority of private rented properties are available at or below the Local Housing Allowance rate, the maximum amount of housing-related benefits that can be claimed for those who are renting from a private landlord.

Meanwhile within Cardiff, offers of social housing anywhere in the city are being made, to assist with move-on from temporary accommodation.

Modular homes for homeless families have been developed on the Gasworks site in Grangetown, increasing the supply of temporary accommodation more quickly than traditional methods. Proposals have been agreed in principle for the construction of a further 350 modular units to be delivered via the Cardiff Living Programme. All modular homes comply with the Welsh Development Quality Requirements.

The council bought back 90 former social housing properties during 2023/24 with a further 31 properties signed up to the Leasing Scheme Wales.

An Inclusive and Fair Economy

Into Work Advice Service

The Into Work Advice Service continues to support the progression of local people into work, education or training through innovative programmes which provide insight into the different employment sectors actively recruiting in Cardiff and the surrounding areas.

The Into Work Advice Service is working with Economic Development and Commissioning & Procurement to assess and influence contractors' social value commitments for all developments related to Atlantic Wharf to identify opportunities for the surrounding communities in both the construction and operational phases. Social value requirements are being included within 'Invitations to Tender' obligating contractors in partnership with the Into Work Advice Service, to deliver maximum impact for local communities.

The Bright Start project, which offers six-month paid work experience placements to care-experienced young people, has seen an increase in the number of external placements with 31 additional placements secured during 2023/24. Thirty-seven businesses and twenty-four Council teams now offer placement opportunities. Sectors providing placements for care-experienced young people include retail, beauty, animal care, horticulture, hospitality, administration, music technology, digital & social media, construction, and childcare.

In October 2023, in partnership with Scope, a disability equality charity, the Into Work Advice Service delivered the Cardiff Jobs Fair, and in February 2024, held its first jobs fair for refugees in partnership with Cardiff University. Both events provided jobseekers with the opportunity to meet prospective employers and engage with providers to help explore pathways into work.

Working closely with Adult Services' Learning Disability Team, the Adult Mentoring Team have implemented a referral process to identify individuals who would benefit from employability and skills support and since April 2023 have received 20 referrals from Adult Services.

A decrease in Welsh Government's Communities for Work Plus funding has led the service to fund more services and posts through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). The Into Work Advice Service have reviewed and planned the service offer going into 2024/25 to meet the demand on the service along with the challenging financial climate.

Skills academies will remain a key part of employment delivery in Cardiff, targeting growth sectors. The service is working closely with the regional skills partnership to develop joint services to meet sectors such as fin-tech and green skills, with the aim of creating a pathway to Cardiff Capital Region's procured opportunities.

A Great Place To Grow Up For Children Of All Backgrounds

Provision for Children with Additional Learning Needs

There are almost 4,000 learners in Cardiff with identified additional learning needs, of which around 1,700 require a specialist education setting. In July 2023, plans were approved to progress projects to increase the total number of ALN places, covering a range of ages and complex needs, to 1,755.

Throughout the year, 131 new ALN places were created against a target of 141. An additional 20 places are planned for Eastern High, although these have been delayed due to the specifications still being agreed.

Though the supply of places is close to the annual target, the creation of new places is not keeping up with rising demand. As the number of pupils in specialist ALN provision increases, this increases the cost of home-to-school transport, particularly in cases where the provision is delivered outside of Cardiff.

Supporting Young People into Employment/Training

The Cardiff Commitment continues to work in collaboration with city partners including Cardiff & Vale University Health Board, BBC Studios, Schools Catering, Parks, Accounts, and several construction providers.

It is expected that 300 work experience placements will be secured for young people via Cardiff Council partners.

Supported by partners, Social Value Workshops and 'Care Experienced/Children Looked After – Developing Provision and Opportunities' Workshops have been delivered to over 50 employers to ensure we maximise delivery of social value commitments. Monthly Social Value workshops are taking place for contractors, contract managers and private sector partners.

The Cardiff Council Catering Flexible Supported Employment Pathway has been nominated for two national awards – Finalist for Springboard Awards for Excellence 2024 and Finalist for the Public Sector. The programme is currently being delivered in Cardiff West Community High School and Llanishen High School with pupils from the Specialist Resource Base.

Over 2023/24, 60 partners have received training delivered by Cardiff Commitment, Tarian County Lines Team and South Wales Police Exploitation Teams. This training will support businesses to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities by raising awareness and explaining how to share and report exploitation concerns correctly and confidentially.

Twelve learners from Cardiff West Community High School participated in a 10-week programme designed to develop culinary skills and an understanding of careers in the hospitality industry. Twelve Year 10 pupils followed the programme from November 2023 and attended their graduation event at Cardiff City Stadium in February 2024. During the graduation event, pupils worked alongside professional chefs to produce a three-course

meal for over forty guests. Their achievements were then celebrated during a graduation ceremony where pupils received certificates and a prize.

Corporate Parenting Strategy

Monthly meetings of the Children and Young Person Board have enabled regular reviews of the [Corporate Parenting Strategy 2021-24](#) Action Plan with presentations delivered to various Directorates and positive engagement received from Directors.

A review of Welsh Government's Corporate Parenting Charter is underway with discussions ongoing regarding Cardiff's implementation/adoption of the Charter. Consultations have been held within each Directorate to identify opportunities/support that can be offered to Children Looked After which will be incorporated into the Corporate Parenting Operational Plan.

Young people are also represented at the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee where they can share their experiences directly with Members.

Emotional Health and Wellbeing of Young People

The increase in the number of children with emotional health and wellbeing needs remains an ongoing challenge. There are 1,418 learners with identified emotional health and wellbeing needs. Needs are identified by schools with referrals for specialist support being passed to the Emotional Health & Wellbeing Specialist Support Team.

Plans are underway to secure accommodation for Specialist Resource Bases across the city and to expand the number of Pupil Referral Units.

Youth Justice Strategy

Work to implement the Youth Justice Strategy action plan continues through the implementation of a refreshed Youth Justice Strategy '[Building Safer Futures Together](#)'. There has been a reduction of entrants to the Youth Justice System, from 49 in 2020/21 to 30 in 2023/24. However, the effect of diverting children from the youth justice system has created substantial pressure on other services for children in Cardiff.

Several activity programmes have been delivered and have been well received by both young people and staff, and a successful bid resulted in funding from the Youth Endowment Fund.

Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls

The [Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence \(VAWDASV\) Strategy 2023-28](#) has been refreshed and distributed to all partners along with the Implementation Plan.

A Steering Group has been established to oversee work to address the recommendations of the Safe Lives review of the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in the city. Regional data is collated and reported on at the Steering Group.

A workforce training needs assessment has been undertaken, resulting in new course availability for staff, with 84% of staff having completed Level 1 of the national training framework on Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Work has commenced on drafting a regional data dashboard and once completed, will be presented to the Regional Executive Board.

Progress Made Against Equality Objective 2: To lead the way on equality and inclusion in Wales and beyond

Cardiff Race Equality Taskforce

Work is ongoing to ensure the Council's workforce is representative and inclusive of the communities it services. Governance and oversight arrangements are embedded for the with an annual progress update taken to the Cardiff Race Equality Taskforce for all 31 recommendations across the five thematic areas in May 2024.

The recommendations that remain open and ongoing relating to the Race Equality Taskforce Action plan will be incorporated into the Council's new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024–28 (to be adopted in September 2024) and will be reported on through the Annual Review of the Strategy.

A UNICEF Child Friendly City

UNICEF has awarded Cardiff Child Friendly City status, making the city the first in the UK to achieve this ambition. A Sustainability Plan has been agreed, setting out a programme of work for the next three years. The plan includes two conditional recognition points:

- Developing a comprehensive approach to tackling discrimination.
- Strengthening the 'participation loop' to ensure children, young people and practitioners understand the impact and influence of young peoples' engagement.

The Rights Respecting Schools Approach continues; Cardiff now has 98 Rights Respecting Schools (76.6% of Cardiff schools) with 51 having Gold or Silver School status.

Child Rights training has been completed by 72% of council staff during 2023/24 and to ensure further compliance over the next year, mandatory training has been linked to staff performance via their personal review.

Enhancing Civic Participation

Participation Strategy 2023-27

Public participation is essential to ensuring that the voices of citizens are at the heart of the decision-making process. It provides an opportunity for the needs and aspirations of communities to be heard, aids policy development and allows public service providers to respond.

The Participation Strategy was implemented following Cabinet approval in January 2024. The strategy sets out our commitment to strengthening participation and engagement and sets out a number of actions to ensure that every voice in the city can be heard.

The public were invited to consult on the draft Participation Strategy between July and September 2023 via an online survey or by completing a hard copy of the survey. Information was provided in English, Welsh, Arabic, Bengali and Polish to ensure views

received reflected the diversity of the city. Over 1,300 responses were received with a fifth of respondents (19.4%) stating they had never shared their views with the Council before.

Targeted engagement was also undertaken with stakeholders working with under-represented groups in the Council's consultation and engagement work including children and young people, older people, disabled people and people from local ethnic minority communities.

Accessible Voting Champion

Our Chief Executive Officer became the UK's first local authority chief executive to become an Accessible Voting Champion. We are signatories of the 'My Vote My Voice Charter' which is a national campaign that aims to help end inaccessible voting for underrepresented communities and was developed by United Response, Dimensions, Mencap, Ambitious About Autism and the people who draw on their support and care.

It recognises Cardiff Council's commitment to ensuring all eligible citizens are enabled to register to vote and vote, with anyone needing support with these things, being made aware of the help that is available and how they can access it.

A Living Wage City

Cardiff has gained UK-wide recognition as a Living Wage City and remains amongst the best performing areas. There are now 219 accredited employers in the city. In 2017, 20.7% of the city's workforce were earning less than the living wage. The latest Office for National Statistics survey results show this figure has decreased to 8.2%, with over 13,300 workers in Cardiff now benefitting from the Real Living Wage. This has added an estimated £68m into the Cardiff economy since 2012.

As a result of tough economic conditions, 15 accredited employers in the city have ceased trading and some other organisations made the decision not to renew their accreditation when the current rate of £12 per hour came into effect. This position has been reflected across the UK.

A Cohesive and Welcoming Capital

Community Cohesion

A new Cohesion Fund was launched in June 2023, and promoted widely amongst community groups, resulting in over 100 expressions of interest. Funding was confirmed for 11 projects which included sport and community-focussed groups. All funded projects concluded successfully by March 2024. The Cohesion Fund proved so successful that an expanded round of funding will be delivered in 2024/25.

In co-ordination with partners, several Cardiff Great Winter Get Together events were held with themes including reducing loneliness, increasing positive wellbeing and countering harmful narratives.

A City That Celebrates Diversity and Inclusion Through Music and Culture

Cardiff Music Strategy

Funding secured from the Shared Prosperity Fund has helped to support the delivery of the Cardiff Music Strategy.

A Cardiff Music Officer is now established in post and substantial work is underway to produce the international Cardiff Music City Festival being held in Autumn 2024.

A grass roots music and arts programme is continuing to support the sector and local venues.

Ensuring and Monitoring our Progress

Data Dashboard

The Corporate Performance Dashboard is now live for Council staff, Members, and the public, it is updated quarterly on all steps and key performance indicators from the Council's Corporate Plan. The Dashboard is now well integrated into the Council's performance management processes.

A broader offer to developing data skills is still being developed, and the options being considered include an online module, a facilitated training offer, or a data practitioners' network (or a combination of the above).

The Management Dashboard, a tool to provide managers with the information they need to help better manage their staff, is live and includes datasets on sickness, training compliance, and workforce representation. Work continues to explore additional datasets relating to the Council's workforce, recruitment, and retention, with ongoing discussions to agree priority datasets.

The suite of Performance Management Framework guidance documents has been completed and key elements, including RAG rating guidance and advice on writing new steps and quarterly step updates, have been shared with directorate performance leads.

Progress Made Against Equality Objective 3: Cardiff is accessible to everyone who is living, visiting, or working in the city

A Connected and Accessible City by Design

Replacement Local Development Plan

The Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) will help shape Cardiff for the next 13 years to 2036, ensuring the right development happens in the right place at the right time, benefitting communities and the economy, as well as setting out which areas need to be protected. The preferred LDP Strategy was completed following a 10-week consultation exercise. The exercise included a launch event, facilitated workshops across the city, a series of public drop-in sessions as well as number of “bespoke” meetings with key groups and communities. Three bespoke Scrutiny task and finish groups were also undertaken looking at specific LDP areas (Section 106, Transport and District Centres).

Making our public spaces more accessible for older people, disabled people and those with young children

Age Friendly City

Following the World Health Organization's decision to add Cardiff to the Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities in March 2022, becoming the first Welsh member of the network, the Council launched an Age Friendly Forum in May 2023. The Forum is chaired by the Older Person's Champion for Cardiff and is attended by representatives from older person's groups, associations, and organisations in Cardiff.

A celebration of Age Friendly Cardiff took place on International Day of Older Person's at Cardiff Central Library Hub to mark the first year of World Health Organisation recognition.

The Age Friendly Cardiff website www.agefriendlycardiff.co.uk launched in September 2023. The website provides information which contributes to making the city a better place for people to grow older.

A new in-person drop-in service was established within Hubs across the city. The service aims to help older people live well, keep healthy, and stay independent as they age. People can pop by to ask questions and learn about local services and support which could help them including information on wellbeing, Council services, transport and leisure activities.

Further editions of the Age Friendly Cardiff Newsletter were published, and distributed to networks including GP surgeries, care homes and Community Hubs. Digital channels are also being exploited fully including partner websites and through networks.

Two new Ageing Well specialists were also recruited to provide advice and signpost older people to services.

Dementia Friendly City

A Dementia Friendly Cardiff Festival was held in May 2023 as part of the city's Dementia Action Week activities. The event provided an opportunity for people with dementia and their carers to find out more about services available to them, as well as a chance to take part in some fun activities. A wide range of organisations and services that support people living with dementia and their families attended the event to share information and advice.

The Dementia Friendly compassionate communities programme team produced a Cardiff and Vale pledging process which has seen 261 businesses in Cardiff pledge to take Dementia positive action.

The Council's Dementia Friendly Volunteer Programme has recruited nine ambassador volunteers covering Cardiff, who support the delivery of the dementia friendly organisation initiative, providing dementia friends sessions to pledged organisations and businesses working towards becoming Dementia Friendly.

A dementia prevention handbook has also been produced in collaboration with Public Health Wales and Cardiff & Vale University Health Board.

The [Dementia Friendly Cardiff website](#) is regularly updated and provides links to useful events aimed at supporting those living with dementia and their carers.

Community Hubs and Libraries

The Council continued with our Community Hubs Programme with the aim of enabling Cardiff residents to access the services they need within their own local communities.

Plans for a new Health & Wellbeing Hub at Ely and Caerau are progressing well as are the plans for the development of a Youth Hub within the city centre.

Existing Hubs around the city continue to provide a range of key services to services users within accessible venues in their own communities.

Reducing Social Isolation

The Council continued the Warm Welcome Spaces initiative, supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis and in doing so, helping to prevent isolation. The initiative provides heated spaces in our community buildings, free hot drinks, and information about services available.

Officers continue to provide our Wellbeing Support Service. The service boosts citizens' wellbeing by providing short-term, one-to-one mentoring to help them become more active and engaged in their community. Social isolation and loneliness can be a real issue for some, and the aim of the service is to provide opportunities to counteract this and help as many people as possible become active citizens in their community.

Community Hubs and libraries continue to provide a range of activities and events to help reduce isolation and support wellbeing, these include exercise classes, coffee mornings/

afternoons, craft sessions, Friends and Neighbours groups, cookery classes, game groups and digital classes.

Improving Air Quality

Poor air quality is now considered the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK with clear scientific evidence that air pollution exposure reduces life expectancy. Evidence illustrates that residents in some of the most deprived areas of Cardiff are subject to higher levels of air pollution, and that this disproportionately impacts on residents from ethnic minority communities.

The Council continued to measure air quality across a range of locations within Cardiff during 2023/24 which were all compliant with the relevant objectives for NO₂.

The Council drafted proposals (in discussion with Welsh Government) for an updated Clean Air Strategy and Action Plan.

To improve emissions from taxis, the Council developed a pilot Hackney Carriage emissions reduction grant scheme, and we secured a Department for Transport grant to support further investigation into financial support options.

Enhancing Local Policy Development for a Fairer City

Policy Development Support

The internal Policy Portal continues to be utilised by officers to enable the development of integrated, inclusive, and well-informed policies. It sets out good practice, guidance, and advice for policy development, as well as providing information on how decision-making works in the Council. The Portal includes information on a wide range of impact assessments including Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), Childs Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) and Welsh Language Impact Assessments (WLIAs) and provides the contact details of the lead officer/team for each assessment.

The portal includes an Impact Assessment Screening Tool which helps officers consider statutory requirements, as well as best practice considerations, when developing policies, strategies, and projects.

Public Sector Equality Network

Working with the Cardiff Public Services Board, the Council established a Public Sector Equality Network for Cardiff. The network brings together public service partners to work together to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by focusing on areas of common challenge and shared aspiration. The Network will meet to share knowledge, guidance, best practice, review equality issues common to all, and identify opportunities to demonstrate leadership on equality matters as major public service employers across the city. This will help promote equality within the various workplaces, help in ongoing work to diversify our workforces and support the development of under-represented groups within our organisations.

Equality Impact Assessments

Cardiff Council uses Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to evaluate our proposals, see whether they have the potential to affect people differently and support our decision-making process.

Their purpose is to identify and address any existing or potential inequalities to make what we do as fair as possible and to identify positive impacts as a way of advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different groups.

Internal processes around EIAs have been strengthened. The Corporate Equality Team meet ahead of each public Cabinet meeting with officers from Bilingual Cardiff and the Child Friendly Team to identify which items going before the Council's Cabinet require EIAs, WLIAs and CRIAs. Reports are shared with Senior Managers to ensure directorates are up to date with their EIA processes. Where EIAs are required, officers are offered support, advice, and guidance. Completed EIAs must be provided to Scrutiny Committees, Cabinet and Council to ensure fully informed robust decision-making.

The Corporate Equality Team continue to provide EIA training, and one-to-one advice to all Council service areas to support them in completing high-quality Equality Impact Assessments where they are required.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

The Council committed to becoming a CEDAW City at the very end of 2022/23. This means we will take measures to ensure women's full enjoyment of human rights on an equal basis with men, including:

- Eradicating stereotyped roles for women and men.
- Ensuring women's equal participation in public life.
- Ensuring CEDAW principles are embedded in all decision-making.
- Eliminating violence against women and girls.
- Eliminating discrimination in employment.

Actions have been developed to work towards achieving these aims. The actions will be incorporated into the Council's new Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024–28 (to be adopted in September 2024) and monitored through the governance and oversight arrangements.

Progress Made Against Equality Objective 4: To build an inclusive and representative organisation

Workforce Strategy

The Council's Workforce Strategy for 2023-27 sets out the key priorities to create a culture that supports high performance and enables a flexible, skilled, engaged and diverse workforce. It supports commitments made within 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' including the need for a more diverse workforce which reflects the diversity of the communities we serve. To support the commitment to build an inclusive and representative organisation we launched a pilot Leadership Development Programme with members of our Employee Networks. The programme aims to develop leaders for the future and help to increase the diversity of future managers and senior managers.

As part of the leadership programme, a reverse mentoring programme was developed. The programme allows employees to share their lived experiences, challenges, and potential obstacles to progression, also their individual perspectives, knowledge, and skills with senior managers. Through these conversations, senior managers will become more informed around the barriers that exist to achieving diversity and inclusion within the organisation and in so doing, will be able to identify potential changes to shape the organisation at all levels including senior management.

Supporting and Collaborating with Our Employee Equality Networks

The Council continued to provide support to our five employee-led networks which make a vital contribution to promoting equality and diversity in the workplace. The five networks are:

- The Carers Network
- The Disability Network
- The Ethnically Diverse Equality Network
- The LGBT+ Network
- The Women's Network

Our Networks provide a vital and valuable resource which supports the Council in fulfilling the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 of:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between different groups, and;
- Fostering good relations between different groups.

As a result of working closely with our Employee Networks, the Council has made significant progress in our policy development and creation of specialist guides. This includes the development of:

- Neurodiversity Guidance
- Menopause Guidance
- Deaf Awareness Guidance

- Transitioning Guidance
- A Dignity at Work Policy
- Home working Guidance (Manager and Employee)
- A Special Leave Policy
- A Review and update of the Recruitment and Selection Policy

The Council continued to work with our networks to support our employees and to help identify the support needed for under-represented groups to progress within the Council. The networks hosted a range of webinars, support sessions, workshops and events open to all employees, enabling knowledge and understanding to be shared.

Supporting the Health and Wellbeing of Employees

Council employees have access to Vivup, the Council's new Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) offers:

- Support, advice, and information to help with your mental health and wellbeing
- Independent confidential counselling support provided by caring and suitably qualified personnel
- Assistance with many different issues including Relationships, Finances, Family Difficulties, Anxiety, Bereavement, Stress, Depression, Workplace Issues, and Trauma
- Confidential support for any of life's challenges no matter how big or small.

Resources include:

- A free telephone helpline available 24/7, 365 days a year.
- Debt and financial advice
- Downloadable self-help workbooks
- Podcasts, blogs and more

The Council also delivered Connect 5 training (a mental health awareness programme) to staff, created to better understand and feel confident to have everyday conversations about mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Our Best Practice Accreditation

Race at Work Charter

public commitment to improve race equality, inclusion and diversity in the workplace.

In order to achieve this, we have made the following commitments to:

- Appoint an executive sponsor for race.
- Capture ethnicity data and publicise progress.
- Commit at board level to zero tolerance of harassment and bullying.
- Make equality, diversity and inclusion the responsibility of all leaders and managers.

- Take action that supports Black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically diverse employees' career progression.
- Support race inclusion allies in the workplace.
- Include Black, Asian, mixed race and other ethnically-led enterprise owners in supply chain.

We have delivered on these commitments by:

- Appointing an Executive Sponsor for race.
- Our Two Senior Management Champions meeting regularly with members of the Ethnically Diverse Employee Network to discuss how the organisation can be improved.
- Capturing ethnicity data for reporting purposes and publicising this data annually together with progress on any initiatives.
- Cabinet and Senior Management committing to a zero tolerance of harassment and bullying, which is included in the Council's Resolution Policy.
- Making clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers.
- Providing ongoing support, training, and information for all leaders and managers.
- Working with the Ethnically Diverse Employee Network to listen to and understand the barriers faced in career progression and work on a leadership programme is taking place.
- Working with partners such as Business Wales, Business in Focus and South Wales Chamber of Commerce to improve the skills of local SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) to access public sector business opportunities.

UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter

Cardiff Council became signatories of Unison's Anti Racism Charter. The pledge ensures Cardiff Council's continued commitment as an employer to recognising the disparity that Black Workers face and implement a clear and visible race equality policy, a programme of anti-racism initiatives and actions and strong measures to remove any instances of racial discrimination in all its form. By signing the Charter, we have committed to a number of actions including:

- Our leaders recognising the need and benefit in championing a racially diverse workforce.
- Setting and regularly reviewing strategies to improve racial equality, diversity and inclusion so that our organisation reflects the communities it serves.
- Providing robust equality training for managers involved in recruiting, promotions and investigating allegations.
- Challenging racism internally and externally wherever it arises in relation to our organisation.
- Ensuring our recruitment processes identify and address race disparities in equality of opportunity.

Age Friendly Employer Pledge

The Council was accepted on the Centre for Ageing Better's Employer Pledge scheme, a nationwide programme for employers who are committed to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s. By signing the pledge, the Council demonstrated its commitment to older workers and making our workplaces as age friendly as possible. The pledge shows our own workforce and prospective employees that we value the contribution of our older staff, and the experience and knowledge they bring to their roles. It supports our existing work on being an Age Friendly City.

Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales

Cardiff Youth Services received the Quality Mark for Youth Work in Wales (Silver) by the Education Workforce Council. It is a national award which supports and recognises improving standards in the provision and performance of organisations that deliver youth work services. The award is in recognition for their commitment to inclusive practices, diverse activities, and involving young people in decision-making.

The Quality Mark consists of two distinct elements:

- a set of Quality Standards that youth work organisations can use as a tool for self-assessment and improvement.
- an externally assessed Quality Mark that is a national award demonstrating an organisation's excellence.

Disability Confident Employer (Level 2)

The Council also delivered on our commitments towards being a Disability Confident Employer. This includes:

- Ensuring interview all applicants who identified as being disabled and who met the minimum essential criteria of a role are invited for interview.
- Providing an opportunity on a six-monthly basis through our personal review process for all employees to discuss with their manager what they can do together to develop themselves and use their abilities.
- Committing to providing reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.
- Providing neurodiversity guidance for employees and managers.
- Providing disability awareness training sessions giving employees an opportunity to develop an appropriate level of disability awareness.
- Working with our Disability Employee Equality Network to raise awareness amongst all staff of disability issues.

Stonewall Gold Award

The Council achieved the prestigious Stonewall Gold Award in recognition of work to embed equality, value diversity and demonstrate lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace, and in external engagement and service delivery.

Key achievements included:

- The introduction of unconscious bias training as part of the broad range of equality and diversity training for employees;
- Using gender neutral and inclusive language in Council policies; and
- Having a strong LGBT+ Employee Equality Network supported by new senior management champions.

The award also recognises:

- The Council's procurement approach which ensures that suppliers are LGBT+ inclusive;
- Progress made in LGBT+ equality in the service delivery such as the Foster Service; and
- Collaboration with other Welsh Local Authorities as part of Proud Councils.

Stonewall Top 100 Employers List

The Stronger, Fairer, Greener vision for Cardiff made a clear commitment for us to build on our Stonewall Gold Status award as part of our commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusivity, aiming for us to become a Stonewall top 100 employer and the highest ranked local authority in Wales within the Stonewall Index. We achieved this aim and are the highest ranked local authority in Wales.

Carer Confident Employer (Accomplished)

The Council achieved level 2 of Carer Confident benchmarking scheme. The status is presented to employers across the UK who demonstrate that they have built an inclusive and supportive workplace for staff who are, or will become carers, where carers are recognised and respected and who make the most of the talents that carers can bring to the workplace.

Carer Confident employers recognise the importance of retaining valued members of staff, reducing absence and unnecessary recruitment costs, and increasing staff resilience, engagement and productivity.

Training and Career Progression

A range of equality training packages have been commissioned by the Council's Academy and are available to all employees. They include:

- British Sign Language (Levels 1 & 2)
- Deaf Awareness
- Disability and Equality
- Equality Awareness
- Equality Impact Assessment Training
- Visual Impairment Awareness
- Stonewall Cymru Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Workshops
- Unconscious Bias (which is a mandatory prerequisite of our Recruitment & Selection training).

- Sunflower (Hidden Disability Awareness),
- Micro Aggression,
- Menopause awareness training
- Connect 5 mental health training.

All the training is delivered regularly and evaluated to ensure that it is up-to-date and useful to employees.

Socially Responsible Procurement

The size and scale of the Council's spend affords opportunities to leverage wider social and environmental gain, with a particular focus placed on fair work, delivering community benefits and maximising opportunities for local businesses and communities through Council contracts. In October 2022, the Council published a new Socially Responsible

Procurement Strategy 2022-27, setting out key procurement priorities and the changes that will be made to improve the management of external spend. We continue to work towards meeting our procurement priorities contained within the Strategy.

We launched a new procurement service focusing on socially responsible business purchasing, increased collaboration and greater community impact. The service is part of Ardal (a collaborative procurement partnership with Torfaen Council, Monmouthshire County Council and the Vale of Glamorgan Council). That will harness the skills, knowledge and expertise across all Ardal Councils, and other partners, to develop exemplar solutions of what can be achieved through collaborative, agile procurement.

A key objective of the strategy is to make procurement spend more accessible to local small business and the third sector, we continue to work with partners such as Business Wales, Business in Focus and South Wales Chamber of Commerce to improve the skills of local SMEs to access public sector business opportunities. Throughout 2023/24 approximately 50% of the Council's spend was with Cardiff based organisations, 65% within the Cardiff capital region and 71.5% with Welsh based organisations.

Visibly Celebrating Our City's Diversity

Cardiff Council is rightly proud of Cardiff's reputation of being a diverse city where people from a wide range of backgrounds are welcomed and encouraged to be themselves. We believe it is right to celebrate diversity as a way of building community cohesion, creating cultural awareness, encouraging unity, eliminating discrimination and overcoming stereotypes.

To achieve this, we promoted a number of campaigns and events to employees via the Council's intranet pages and staff information emails. These included:

- Ageism Action Day
- Anti Racism Day
- Anti-Slavery Day
- Autism Pride Day

- Black History Month
- Carers Rights Day
- Carers Week
- Chinese New Year
- Disability Pride
- Dementia Action Week
- Eid
- Hate Crime Awareness Week
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- International Day Against Homophobia Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- International Day of Disabled People
- International Men's Day
- International Non-Binary Peoples Day
- International Women's Day
- Islamophobia Awareness Month
- LGBT+ History Month
- Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) Awareness Week
- Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week
- Pride Month
- Ramadan
- Refugee Awareness Week
- Sands Awareness Month
- Shwmae Sumae Day
- St Davids Day
- Tafwyl
- The Hidden Disability Sunflower Scheme
- Trans Day of Visibility
- Volunteers Week
- Welsh Language Rights Day
- White Ribbon Day (International Day to end Violence against Women)
- World Menopause Day
- World Mental Health Awareness Week