



Equalities Bi-Annual Performance Report 2021 - 23

'A Perth and Kinross where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequalities'

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Introduction

Appendix 1

Our organisational vision is of “*a Perth & Kinross where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequality*”. Equality is at the heart of what we do here in Perth & Kinross Council and we have designed our equality aims and outcomes (2021-25) to make this commitment clear. We have set measurable actions and ensure we are working in partnership with communities to make our aims a reality that support our organisational priorities and values.

This report sets out our progress and activity, for the two year period from April 2021 to March 2023, in delivering our agreed Equality Outcomes across Council services and where applicable as an Education Authority and Licensing Board.

While these outcomes ensure we are fulfilling our statutory obligations in relation to the services we provide and as an employer, we also know that developing and delivering our equalities workstreams is the right thing to do and will help us to meet our strategic key priorities. The aims and outcomes as well as our commitment to progressing in the area of equality and diversity is contained within our [Mainstreaming Report 2021 – 25](#) and remain unchanged after our 2023 review.

As an employer, we continue to drive forward the Fair Work agenda to ensure that fairness and equity is at the heart of all the Council’s employment practices. We are committed to promoting equality and diversity across our workforce and our Equality and Diversity in Employment Report is included in Appendix 2 of this report.

In addition, a full range of workforce data is published on the Council’s website: [Human Resources Management Information](#).

Link to our Corporate Plan 2022-27

Our Corporate Plan sets out our organisational vision of “a Perth & Kinross where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequality” – reflecting the importance of equality in everything we do. To achieve our vision, we have committed to seven key priorities detailed below. Equality and diversity is an integral part of each priority and we continue to work in partnership with our communities and people from all protected characteristic groups to help us tackle inequalities, improve our practices, develop new ways of working and achieve our aims.

Perth and Kinross Council Priorities

-  Tackling poverty
-  Developing a resilient, stronger and greener local economy
-  Protecting and caring for our most vulnerable people
-  Tackling climate change and supporting sustainable places
-  Enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential
-  Supporting and promoting physical and mental wellbeing
-  Working in partnership with communities



A Perth and Kinross where everyone can live life well, free from poverty and inequalities

In addition, to help our workforce further understand the need to consider equalities and diversity in all we do, an internal learning programme has been developed to embed our organisational values of **ambition**, **compassion** and **integrity** and the associated [values & behaviours framework](#).

Equality Protected Characteristics across Perth & Kinross

There are nine protected characteristics in the Equality Act: disability, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and religion and belief.

Age

Disability

Race

Religion and belief

Sex

Sexual Orientation

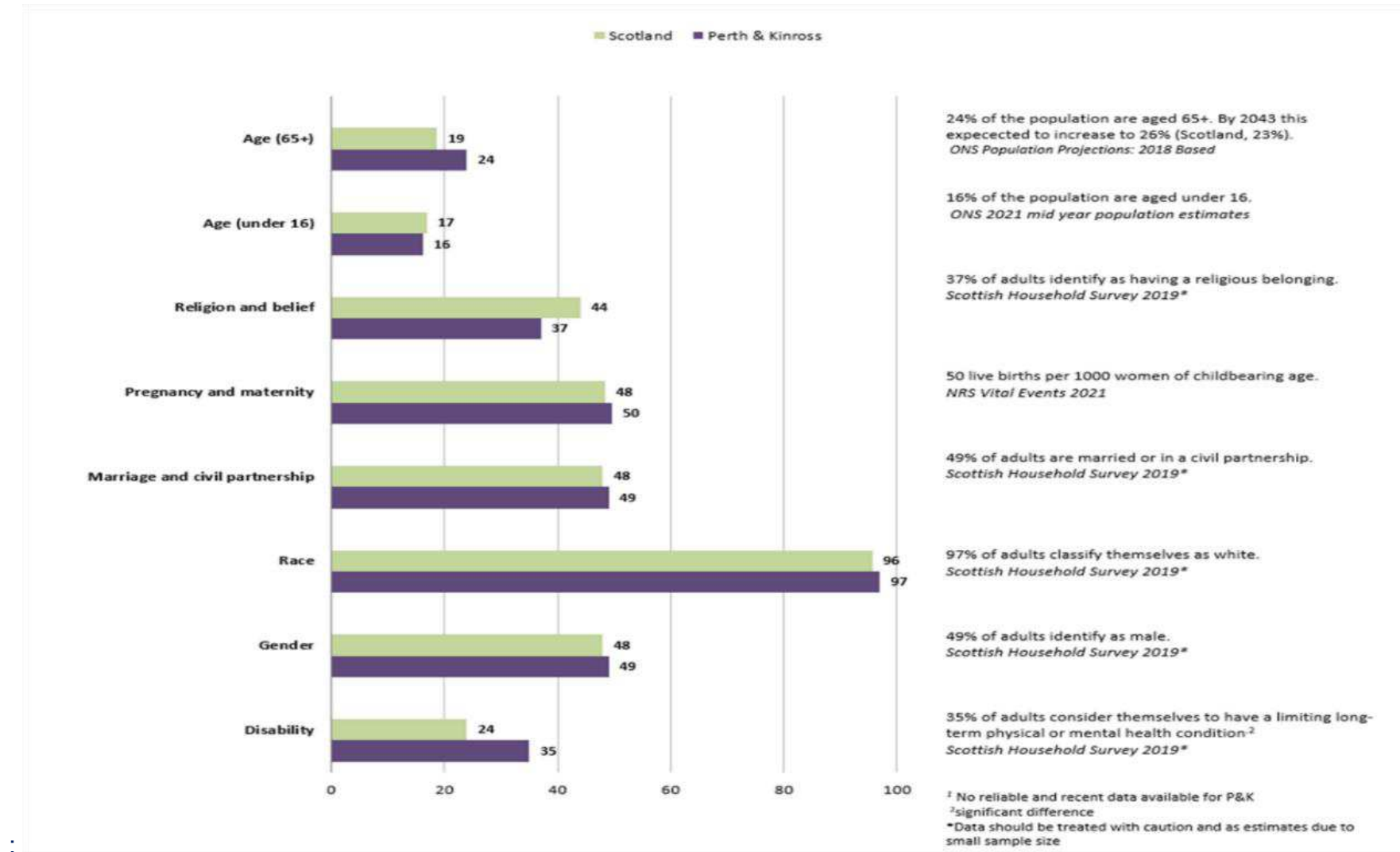
Gender Reassignment

Pregnancy and maternity

Marriage and civil partnership

We inform our approach through local statistics issued by the [Scottish Government Equality Evidence Finder which](#) is updated twice a year with equality data and evidence from a wide range of policy. We are also still awaiting more information which will be available shortly as a result of the 2021 Scottish Census and will ensure that this new data is reflected in our next reporting cycle.

Some notable local statistics associated with the protected characteristics in Perth & Kinross include:



Please note that local information on gender reassignment statistics is not available. The Registrar General maintains a Gender Recognition Register which is not open to public scrutiny, where the birth of a transgender person whose acquired gender has been legally recognised is registered. This shows any new name(s) and the acquired gender, enabling the transgender person to apply for a new birth certificate.

Our equality aims and outcomes - activity from 2021 – 23

Our Equalities Mainstreaming Report 2021- 25 sets out our approach to fulfilling our legal and moral obligations in relation to activity and progress in the area of equalities and with protected characteristic groups. We have set out four clear aims to help us to achieve our commitments to continually improving and developing our equalities work with communities.

- We will keep our community informed and engage with them about our service, opportunities and support available to them.
- Perth and Kinross is a safe, welcoming and accessible area.
- Perth and Kinross visibly celebrate equality and diversity.
- We will increase people’s awareness of equality and diversity.

Each of the aims and outcomes and accompanying aims within the report are linked to a Strategic Priority from the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan which fits in with our mainstreaming approach and is highlighted through this report.

In addition to the four aims, we have 16 specific equality outcomes which set out specific actions to meet the aims, where we concentrate our work to demonstrate progress and increase awareness, internally and externally of equality and diversity issues.

Having these outcomes allows us to report regularly in a clear and measured way and the information below sets out examples, case studies and activities related to our progress over the past two years.

Equality and Diversity action and performance 2021-23

Perth and Kinross is a safe, welcoming and accessible area (LOIP Strategic Priority – Mental and Physical Wellbeing)

Equality Outcome 1 - *People from equality protected groups will be made welcome and respected in the area*

We have an equalities calendar of key dates and events for our diverse communities in place. Events and meetings are always popular and help people from different backgrounds and cultures to have a sense of belonging in the area. We continue to be involved with and encourage our communities to take part in major events such as Chinese New Year, Perthshire Pride and Mela festival. We also provide advice and support to new community led initiatives such as Mela Markets and Ukrainian Independence Day. The lighting of Perth Bridge and other key buildings, in appropriate colours, has been a visible way of highlighting these dates to the wider community and continues to prove extremely popular with equality groups, sending a clear message of inclusiveness, that everyone's experiences, matter, that we are all valued members of the community and everyone is welcome here in Perth and Kinross. Each year, we are experiencing more visitors to these events and hearing increased feedback from our equality groups about the positive impact they are having on community relationships, understanding between cultures and recognition of their local contributions. (see also Equality Outcome 7 for more detail).

As our population becomes more diverse it is important that equality protected groups feel even more welcome and respected. We have established regular groups with third sector organisations and community groups supporting LGBT+ communities (**LGBT+ Development Group**) and Minority Ethnic communities (**Minority Ethnic Community Groups Forum**) whilst a **Community Integration Network** has now been established with third sector and community groups supporting newer communities to the area including refugees and those seeking asylum. The table below highlights the recent changes to our population.

| 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|--|--|
| <p><i>EU Settlement Scheme (as at 31/3/22)</i></p> <p>Applications 11,800</p> <p>3 main applicant countries – Poland (3,970) Romania (2,930) and Bulgaria (1,460)</p> <p>Applications by age - Under 18 (1,930) 18-64 (9,600) 65+ (260)</p> <p>Application decisions - Total concluded (11,440), Settled status (5,900), Pre-settled status (4,650), Refused (360), Withdrawn/void (220), Invalid (230)</p> <p><i>8th highest local authority in Scotland in terms of applications made (and highest of the 3 Tayside local authorities)</i></p> | <p><i>EU Settlement Scheme (as at 31/3/23)</i></p> <p>Applications 12,780 (+980)</p> <p>3 main applicant countries – Poland (4,140) Romania (3,230) and Bulgaria (1,560)</p> <p>Applications by age - Under 18 (2,070) 18-64 (10,430) 65+ (280)</p> <p>Application decisions - Total concluded (12,500), Settled status (6,380), Pre-settled status (4,810), Refused (750), Withdrawn/void (300), Invalid (260)</p> <p><i>8th highest local authority in Scotland in terms of applications made (and highest of the 3 Tayside local authorities)</i></p> |

With regards to our local **sanctuary seeking population**, we have fully participated in three most recent resettlement schemes for people from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine.

Syrian programme – 33 people from 7 families have settled in Perth and Kinross since 2015.

Afghan programme – 15 people from 4 families have settled in Perth and Kinross since 2021.

Ukraine programme – 451 displaced people have settled in Perth and Kinross Council since March 2022.

The table below shows a breakdown by location of where in Perth and Kinross the families have settled, as at August 2023.

| % distribution across PKC | Perth city | Strathmore (Blairgowrie & surrounding areas) | Strathearn (Crieff and surrounding areas) | Kinross & South Perthshire | Carse of Gowrie | Highland Perthshire (Dunkeld, Pitlochry, Aberfeldy and surrounding areas) |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|---|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------|--|
| Syria | 100% | - | - | - | - | - |
| Afghanistan | 100% | - | - | - | - | - |
| Ukraine | 32% | 31% | 11% | 5% | 3% | 18% |

Over the past two years, we have also supported the arrival of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people through the National Transfer Scheme.

In February 2022 the UASC element of the team changed its name to CASA (Children Alone Seeking Asylum) thereby putting the emphasis on these young people being children first and foremost. This fits in with The Promise whereby Local Authorities will be able to “*demonstrate that they are embedding destigmatising language and practices across the way they work*”. We now have 24 young people from 11 different countries with over 14 different languages being spoken by the young people, many of whom are fluent in a number of languages.

People Seeking Asylum – 2 hotels have been used in Perth as part of a Home Office Resettlement programme since December 2021 to provide accommodation for a male population of people going through the asylum process. People Seeking Asylum – 2 hotels accommodating 101 males from 15 different countries as at end of March 2023

CASE STUDY – CASA SUPPORT

Over the past two years, the team based in Youth Services has also led the support for the arrival of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking young people through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS). In February this year the UASC element of the team changed its name to CASA (Children Alone Seeking Asylum) thereby putting the emphasis on these young people being children first and foremost. This fits in with The Promise, whereby Local Authorities need to be able to “*demonstrate that they are embedding destigmatising language and practices across the way they work*”.

The team continued to participate in the National Transfer Scheme on a voluntary basis, receiving young people from Kent and Southeast of England where the number of arrivals via small boats has continued to increase. In October 2021, the NTS became mandatory and all Scottish Local Authorities were directed to participate. This led to increasing numbers of requests to share our model of practice with smaller local authorities who were only just beginning their journey of caring for children alone seeking asylum. The team have provided advice, support and guidance to over 12 Local Authorities.

The team have consistently surpassed their obligations under the rota to place a young person within 10 days of referral. There is no choice over age/gender of young person being transferred via mandated referrals. The team have also placed young people out with their rota turn when vacancies permit.

All of the CASA young people are in positive destinations either in college, ESOL classes or in employment. Bespoke packages of education have been created for those without a full time college place including provision of small group and 1:1 support with an ESOL teacher on Tuesday afternoons at Scott Street. The young people continue to make good use of local resources such as Scott Street drop in, gyms, sports clubs and their free bus pass.

Four workers in the team are now trained to undertake age assessments, having completed a three-day training programme.

CASE STUDY – MUSLIM PRAYER SPACE

Since January 2023 following extensive engagement between representatives of Perth Islamic Association and our Equalities and Safer Communities Teams, a temporary safe prayer space (for males and females) has been offered in our Civic Hall on Fridays. This has allowed the expanding congregation sufficient room to pray while they work to secure new accommodation for their Mosque, as they have outgrown their current premises. Attendance at Friday Prayers has almost trebled over the past year with an average attendance of 133 between January and March 2023. The community have been grateful for the support offered as well as engagement opportunities with the Council Leader, Chief Executive, Elected Members, Safer Communities staff, Police Scotland and CASA Support.

Equality Outcome 2 - Staff from equality protected groups will be made welcome and respected in the Council workplace

Perth and Kinross Councils' commitment to equality in employment, including compliance with the Equality Act 2010, is reflected in our corporate Equalities Policy and our Equal Pay Policy which provide the frameworks within which we work. Information on Equality and Diversity is made publicly available to prospective employees ([Equalities_Leaflet.pdf \(pkc.gov.uk\)](#)) and current employees ([Perth & Kinross Council - Employment information - Employment equality \(pkc.gov.uk\)](#)) as well as forming a core part of the Employee [Induction](#) programme.

During 2022/23 we introduced new guidance for staff on use of pronouns in the workplace with support from members of our LGBTI+ Staff Network.

We continue to commit to important wellbeing partnership workplace initiatives including the See Me in Work programme which has a formal partnership agreement in place. A number of wellbeing initiatives are also promoted regularly to all staff.

Our staff networks to support wellbeing have now increased and we have the following active groups in place:

- Women's Wellbeing
- Men's Wellbeing
- Belong (for staff for are from Black, Asian or other ethnically diverse group)
- LGBTI+ (*for staff who may be LGBTI+ and their allies; and/or staff who have friends or family who may be LGBTI+.*)
- disABILITY (*for staff who have a disability, whether visible or invisible, or long-term health condition or have family/friends with same*)

All of the groups meet on a regular basis to discuss any work related projects, offer support and advice to members who may be experiencing challenges and help drive and influence good practice across the organisation in relation to their specific areas of interest. The groups have increased in membership with employees valuing the time to discuss topics and issues relevant to their lives. The disability group have been involved in the joint project with Perth Autism Support around neurodiverse employees, recruitment and training and their personal experiences have provided an important perspective. A new group around Women's Wellbeing started in 2022 which is being well attended with topics like Menopause and Women's Health being regular features. We will continue to promote these groups internally to grow membership and increase influence in the work we do around these areas.

Equality Outcome 3 - Reduce and remove physical and social barriers for those with disabilities to access public spaces

We continue to work closely with individuals and organisations in the Third Sector such as the Centre for Inclusive Living; Vision PK and Deaf Links to assess the impact of any decisions which will impact on disability groups. Case Study examples below:

CASE STUDY: D-code Project

During 2021/22 we were pleased to introduce an exciting new British Sign Language (BSL) Project in Perth and Kinross. The project offers customer information and virtual tours in BSL for a number of cultural attractions in the area. The customer information is presented in short BSL film clips which are accessible using a QR code.

The project was identified as an initiative to improve accessibility for Deaf BSL users, following the development of a local British Sign Language plan. The project aims to make Perth and Kinross visibly more accessible for people who are Deaf BSL users,

attract new visitors to the area and to assist organisations to make their facilities more accessible. We also ensure staff at all of the cultural attractions involved in tours and visits received Deaf Awareness training to help them to provide a better service and understanding of challenges experienced by those who use BSL.

CASE STUDY: Disability Access Day

Disabled Access Day, the national annual initiative to raise awareness of the importance for inclusive access. To celebrate disabled access day The Centre for inclusive Living PK (CILPK) worked with the Council's Equalities Team to host 2 events.

The first took place in the Civic Hall, on Monday 13th March 2022 between 11am-2pm and was an open event a variety of information stalls showing how CILPK are helping to support services to become accessible. Key speakers included CILPK members sharing their experiences around accessibility and showcased the work of Euan's Guide. There were some great performances from the Makaton Choir and attendees had the opportunity to try out some electric buses hosted by Stagecoach nearby.

A second event took place at the Academy of Sport and Wellbeing at Perth College UHI on Thursday 16th March 2022. This was a free event which encouraged people of all ages with physical, sensory or learning disabilities to try something new and to find out more about what's available in their local community. Some of the activities included Boccia, Fitness and Yoga, supported by Perth and Kinross Disability Sport and Vitalityme.

We have had a lot of positive feedback from attendees at both these events with new skills being learned, connections being made and ideas for further events and projects being generated and agreed.

Equality Outcome 4 - People from equality protected groups have increased confidence to report hate crime and/or bullying incidents

Unfortunately, people still experience Hate Crime and bullying incidents in the local area. The figures provided by Police Scotland in relation to hate crime incidents reported to them locally are detailed below:

| 2021/22 – Reported Hate Crime Incidents | 2022/23 – Reported Hate Crime Incidents |
|---|--|
| <p>121 (increase of 22 from 99 reported incidents in 2020/21)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race - 83 (+18) • Religion – 3 (-2) • Disability – 5 (-1) • Sexual Orientation - 25 (+12) • Transgender – 4 (+2) • Other (multi-strand) – 1 (-7) | <p>118 (decrease of 3 from 121 reported incidents in 2021/22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race - 78 (-5) • Religion – 2 (-1) • Disability – 7 (+2) • Sexual Orientation - 21 (-4) • Transgender – 0 (-4) • Other (multi-strand) – 10 (+9) |

The level of reporting remains steady across the past two years and we have been taking action to reduce and eradicate this type of crime in Perth and Kinross through a number of initiatives. To support individuals who may be experiencing or have experienced any type of hate crime, we sign post to the following third-party reporting centres in Perth and Kinross who provide support and reassurance:

- Centre for Inclusive Living, 90 Tay Street, Perth PH2 8NP
- Perth College UHI, Crieff Road, Perth
- Victim Support Perth, Unit B1, Highland House, St Catherines Road, Perth, PH1 5YA
- PKAVS, The Gateway, North Methven Street, Perth, PH1 5PP
- ESOL Perth, 2nd Floor Drummond House, 6 Scott St, Perth, PH1 SEJ

In addition, people with disabilities can sign up to the Keep Safe Scheme, which also has our own local Safe Place branding. There are 45 organisations currently designated as Safe Places and 121 individuals with Keep Safe cards. The Centre for Inclusive Living PK are working with Police Scotland and I Am Me to increase funding to manage, develop and promote the scheme. A series of drop-in sessions are currently planned to raise awareness of the scheme and plans for staff training in participating venues is underway.

The Equalities Strategic Forum and Safer Communities Partnership also monitor Hate Crime incidents and undertake awareness raising campaigns. Further to this, in November 2022 we formally recognised the definitions of Islamophobia and Antisemitism. This gives support to these important issues, raises awareness within our workforce and communities.

In terms of Schools, our Education and Children’s Service produces an Equalities and Bullying Annual Report. The tables below show reported bullying incidents recorded across schools in Perth and Kinross on the SEEMIS recording system.

| 2021/22 - Bullying Incidents (Actual or perceived) | 2022/23 - Bullying Incidents (Actual or perceived) |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual orientation (e.g., homophobia, bi-phobia) - 18 • Additional Support Needs - 14 • Age - Nil • Body Image and physical appearance - 30 • Disability - Nil • Gender identity or Trans identity 8 • Gypsy/travellers - Nil • Marriage/civil partnership of parents/carers or other family members- 2 • Mental Health - 2 • Not Known- 151 • Other - 35 • Race and racism including culture - 26 • Religion or belief - 1 • Sexism and gender -5 • Socio-economic - Nil | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual orientation (e.g., homophobia, bi-phobia) - 24 • Additional Support Needs - 23 • Age - Nil • Body Image and physical appearance - 50 • Disability - 4 • Gender identity or Trans identity 5 • Gypsy/travellers - Nil • Marriage/civil partnership of parents/carers or other family members- 2 • Mental Health - 3 • Not Known- 232 • Other - 53 • Race and racism including culture - 57 • Religion or belief - 2 • Sexism and gender -3 • Socio-economic - 1 |

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young carer -1 <p>Total - 280</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young carer – Nil • Asylum Seekers or refugee status – 1 • Sectarianism - 1 <p>Total – 461.</p> |
|--|--|

Over the past year there has been a concerted effort by education colleagues and pupils to raise awareness of bullying and its impacts, encouraging children and young people to speak out when they feel they are seeing, hearing or experience bullying. This, along with improved recording mechanisms has seen an increase in incidents that have been reported.

Equality Outcome 5 - *Support is provided to those at risk of or who are survivors of gender-based violence*

Perth and Kinross Violence Against Women (VAW) Partnership co-ordinates activity to eradicate violence against women and girls in the area. It meets quarterly and reports to the P&K Community Justice and Safety Partnership with an annual report presented and published once agreed.

In November 2022, the Violence Against Women (VAW) Lead Officer and the VAW Partnership delivered another successful series of events as part of 16 days of Activism.

Sessions throughout 16 days included:

- “Transforming the response of Older People in Domestic Abuse in later life” seminar. This was the first of its kind for the partnership was very important as in 2019/20 it was reported that in Scotland, 11.6% of females and 3.9% of males aged 60+ years experienced partner abuse (Scottish Crime and Justice Survey).
- A CONSENT session with Perth UHI
- The Universal Story afternoon tea - a safe and welcoming space for Women- Hosted by Lubna Kerr and held at the Birks in Aberfeldy, with performances of poetry, spoken words, true life stories comedy.
- Reclaim the Night and a safety campaign highlighted by Gender Equality Perth on “How safe do women feel in the City Centre”.

A short film was produced [16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence 2022 - YouTube](#). The campaign continues to demonstrate the work of the partnership and the commitment with our partners to eradicate violence against women and girls and shows solidarity with women across the world in addressing violence against women and girls.

Throughout 2022/2023 the VAW Coordinator continued to support partner agencies to review funding following the impact of Covid 19 which has increased waiting lists for women accessing services. This will be reflected in priorities for 2023/24.

Equality Outcome 6 - Pupils from equality protected groups will have a positive school experience and will feel safe and respected in school and when online

We have a Pupil Equity Fund which is allocated directly to schools and targeted at closing the poverty related gap. This money is used to focus on early vocabulary and language, literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing including self-regulation and growth mindset.

| 2021/22 - Pupil Equity Fund Allocation | 2022/23 Pupil Equity Fund Allocation |
|--|---|
| <p>Total allocation to PKC- £2,037,810</p> <p>Highest Primary School allocation – Goodlyburn Primary School £129,623</p> <p>Highest Secondary School allocation - Perth Grammar School £80,312</p> <p>Highest all-through school allocation – St John’s Academy - £111,596</p> | <p>Total allocation to PKC- £1,937,930</p> <p>Highest Primary School allocation – Inchview Primary School £106,575</p> <p>Highest Secondary School allocation – Blairgowrie High School £69,825</p> <p>Highest all-through school allocation – St John’s Academy - £107,800</p> |

We also continue to provide English as an Additional Language (EAL) service in schools, which supports EAL children, age 3 – 18 and sees community bilingual staff (Polish Community Link, Community Learning Assistant (Urdu) and Romanian-speaking pupil support assistant) offer support to families. There are over 1,900 EAL pupils in local schools currently.

In addition, we have started a series of equality conversations with school pupils across Perth & Kinross which will allow us to gather feedback and evidence in terms of how they feel in relation to safety and respect both in school and online.

EQUALITY AIM – PERTH AND KINROSS VISIBLY CELEBRATES EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY (LOIP Strategic Priority – Mental and Physical Wellbeing)

Equality Outcome 7 - Multicultural and equality-related events (including virtual ones) and key dates in the calendar will be visibly celebrated and promoted

We continue to deliver an extensive and popular multi-cultural events and community lunch club programme with our communities and partner organisations in the third sector. We want to celebrate diversity to ensure everyone feels safe and has a deep-rooted sense of belonging. Cultural events are important for helping people to feel part of our community. A successful and visible way that this can be achieved is by lighting Perth Bridge and St Paul's in relevant colours to mark key calendar events.

Events highlighted annually by use of the Lighting Scheme with the Perth Bridge (and other buildings) being lit up in colours included:

- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia
- Eid
- Diwali
- Perthshire Pride
- World Refugee Day
- Gypsy/Roma/Traveller History Month
- World Aids Day
- Polish Independence Day
- LGBT History Month,
- Chinese New Year
- Transgender Day of Remembrance
- Show Racism the Red Card Wear Red Day

During 2021/22 we slowly saw the return of some in-person events on a smaller scale as pandemic restrictions eased. These included the reintroduction Perthshire Pride in the Yard; Chinese Autumn Mooncake Festival; St. Andrews Day Multi-cultural event and food to mark Chinese New Year. In 2022/23 our events were back better than ever with bigger audiences than reported in previous years:

- Chinese New Year – approximately 5000 attendees.
- Ukrainian Independence Day – approximately 1500 attendees.
- Perthshire Pride – approximately 6500 attendees.
- Mela Festival – approximately 7000 attendees.
- Mela Markets – Markets held 4 times a year with approximately 200 –300 attendees.
- Festive Diversity Day – approximately 3000 attendees.
- Sri Lankan New Year - approximately 400 attendees

CASE STUDY: Perth Parrots



Perth Parrots are the LGBTI inclusive Floorball club that formed in 2019 with the vision to offer a safe and welcoming space for the LGBTI+ community in Perth and beyond. They are positive sporting role models and challenge discriminatory behaviour in sport.

On Saturday 3 September 2022, the Parrots were invited to a Civic reception by Provost Xander McDade to celebrate the Launch of their new football kit and entrance into the National Floorball League. The event was attended by friends and family and those who helped, guided, supported and funded the club. The Equalities Team were also represented at this colourful event which featured a performance by the Edinburgh Gay Men's Choir.

The club has also been awarded its Silver Paces Award from Live Active Sport which recognises the club's commitment to self-governance and focus on embedding a sustainable club for the future.

We know the difference the club makes for its members and one told us that:

“To get to this stage in terms of club development, membership development and community impact has been a challenge, but it was eased with the financial support of the PKC Community Investment Fund. I hope that this in some way helps evidence what can be achieved with financial support of this kind and I will always be grateful as this fund was the first grant our club ever received and greatly helped us on this journey. Knowing my fellow Parrots as I do, I was beaming with pride as each of them puffed out their feathers a little and individually glowed as a team as we paraded our new kit. While I wouldn’t want to single anyone one member out, I should highlight that for some, even attending training and conquering social anxiety is an achievement and I know every one of our members has grown a little in self-confidence”

CASE STUDY: Perth & Kinross MELA festival

The first Mela festival post pandemic was held on Sunday 5 June as part of our wider Jubilee celebrations here in Perth & Kinross. Mela originates from the Sanskrit word “gathering” or “to meet” and thousands of people turned up to do just that. The festival is a celebration of our many cultures and diverse communities and the crowds were entertained by a colourful and vibrant parade from Tay Street to the North Inch Park. This is where the festival took place with a variety of music and dance performances throughout the day. Local community members shared their culture including food and clothing with plenty of activities for children and adults throughout the day.

A member of Perth Welfare Society who helped to organise the day told us:

“To have the Mela in your own city is fabulous, it gives so many people the opportunity to learn about other cultures, it gives people who are from ethnic minority communities a sense of belonging. The Mela festival brings so much colour and happiness to many. We are very grateful to be part of this and look forward to many more! The Mela festival highlights the importance of diversity in Perth and Kinross! A multi-cultural city that is being embraced by all. People from other cities are now telling others about Perth Mela – something we wanted for a long time!!



EQUALITY AIM – PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL WILL KEEP OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED AND ENGAGE WITH THEM ABOUT OUR SERVICES, OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO THEM (LOIP Strategic Priorities – Poverty; Mental and Physical Wellbeing; Employability; Digital Participation)

Equality Outcome 8 - People from equality-protected groups are provided with accessible information about the services provided by the Council including crisis support in the event of an emergency

We continue to provide updated [equalities content on pkc website](#) for all and we have a dedicated page providing signposting information and advice to EU citizens and local businesses on the EU Settlement Scheme. We also continue to deliver on our British Sign Language (BSL) Plan and have a dedicated BSL section on our [website](#) detailing what we are doing, the progress we are making with key messages translated into BSL.

We acknowledge that support is needed for those who want to improve their digital skills or who need access to equipment to do this and have set up a Digital Participation Working Group as part of the recovery response to the pandemic (further detail is provided in Equality Outcome 9).

We also offer support from interpreters to access the services that people who do not have English as a first language need and updated our Translation and Interpreting Guidance for staff in January 2023. This coincided with the organisation signing up to the Scottish Procurement Framework for Interpreting, Translation and Transcription services. We also continue to implement the Council's Gaelic Language [Plan](#) and have an Adult Literacies Partnership in place. The top 5 languages currently requested for translation are Romanian, Polish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian and Arabic.

Equality Outcome 9 – People from equality-protected groups will be supported to digitally participate

The multi-agency Digital Participation Working Group established post pandemic met regularly and contributed to the areas of work below:

| 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Digital Inclusion Fund, which is open to applications from groups who either run community facilities or support individuals with digital skills. Over 15 applications were supported in 2021/22 • Commissioned research which completed in June 2022 to provide a baseline on levels of digital participation across P&K, broken down by various demographics and geographies. The analysis of this research will result in the establishment of a new Action Plan for the Working Group to take forward. • Through Housing’s Digital Inclusion Project, we focused on supporting our most vulnerable tenants to become digitally included. 236 devices were purchased along with relevant data allowances. Over 100 tenants have been supported through the Project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/23 grants of over £10k were awarded to community groups for projects, mainly focussing on providing broadband and wi-fi access in community facilities and supporting training for those currently digitally excluded. • A larger grant of £25k was provided to support an increase in the recycling and repurposing of IT equipment, which is ultimately given to those who would otherwise be unable to access digital technology. • 4 community groups which support equality groups received Digital Devices to help support their community activities: Perth Six Circle Project; Centre for Inclusive Living; Rainbow Heartlands and Perth Minorities Association) |

Equality Outcome 10 - People from equality-protected groups are supported to access employment opportunities.

The Council provides an employment support service (Employment Support Team) which assists people with learning disabilities, autism, acquired brain injury, or mental ill health to access employment opportunities.

Employment Support Team Summary 2021- 23

The Employment Support Team supported 172 individuals to prepare for, access or retain paid employment throughout 2021/22. They deliver a successful hybrid supported employment service model, meeting with service users in the community as well as working from home for admin and remote meetings. While we can deliver remote services, face to face contact with people is preferred and found to be most effective. Team bases and hot desks remain in St Catherine's shared base with the Supported Living Team as well as a base at Blairgowrie Adult Resource Centre. There are 4 Team members covering Perth and Kinross localities ensuring service users from all areas are assured of a supported employment service.

Throughout the past few years, there has been a focus on progressing individual referrals awaiting a supported employment service. The number of referrals to the team had accumulated due to ongoing pressures relating to Covid-19. However, the team has worked hard to support over 150 individuals to return to work following periods of absence due to Covid-19 and furlough and this included liaising with employers. They also continued to support others who were made redundant from their work to access alternative employment or development opportunities.

Another important part of the Employment Support Team's role is employer engagement, advice and support. The team have engaged with 138 employers over the past two years. They have also offered the following support to people trying to get back into employment:

- Delivered Work Skills courses for individuals with learning disabilities or to those starting out on their journey into work or preparing to return to employment following a gap from work.

- Produced Easy Read information for numerous services ensuring individuals with disabilities, impairments or sensory loss are provided with information which can be easily read and understood. Here is a link to an example https://www.pkc.gov.uk/media/30861/Easy-Read-Employment-Support/pdf/Easy_Read_General_Guide_Oct_2020.pdf?m=637400940577070000 <https://www.pklearning.org.uk/Planning-A-Better-Future-Together-Easy-Read/>
- Secured short term funding, for people with sensory loss or physical disabilities through the Challenge Fund – (No-one Left Behind) to be able to support ten people through the service. Referrals continue to be received from these client groups from providers and this is now being mainstreamed into the work of the team [No One Left Behind: delivery plan - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](http://www.gov.scot)
- Used social media platforms to share information and engage with individuals and other agencies; the EST has 626 followers on Facebook / 329 on Twitter

Equality Outcome 11 - People from equality groups will be supported to participate in equality conversations around The Perth & Kinross Offer

Our Equalities team hold regular Community Equalities Conversations which aim to better understand the experiences of local equalities groups, identify priorities and develop ways for individuals, communities, public, private and third sectors to work together. This also fits in with our new Corporate Plan key priority to work in partnership with our communities and we remain committed to the principles and ethos of The Perth and Kinross Offer that everyone has something to offer.

From the conversations, we want to find out:

- the extent to which people feel heard and able to influence local decisions.
- the issues that are important to people.

- any barriers or disadvantage that people experience.

The table below demonstrates the breadth of conversations we have held with our diverse communities here in Perth & Kinross. These discussions have resulted in a wealth of information about how people in protected characteristic groups are experiencing life in Perth & Kinross. We have built relationships and working partnerships as a result of the equality conversations and fed back on outcomes as a result to our Community Planning Partners, Executive Leadership Team and Elected Members.

| 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|--|---|
| <p>Equality Conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 21 – Gypsy/Traveller Women’s Group – 2 participants • June 21 – Families Empowering Communities – 3 participants | <p>Equality Conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • July 22- Perth Six Circle – 15 participants • September 22 – Perthshire Welfare Society – 10 participants • October 22 – Perth Minorities Association – 4 participants • November 22 – Perth Chinese Association – 1 participant • December 22 – Jar of Jewels Independent Women’s Group – 2 participants • January 23 – Pitlochry High School – 81 participants • January 23 – Crieff High School – 12 participants • February 23 – Saints in the Community – 4 participants |

Equality Outcome 12 - People from equality-protected groups with lived experience of inequalities will be involved in shaping our policies to tackle poverty and social exclusion

The ongoing cost of living crisis is affecting everyone in Perth and Kinross, but particularly the most vulnerable people in our communities. We play a key role in helping to protect people from escalating costs and undertake a wide range of work to support people who are finding themselves in financial difficulty. We continue to co-ordinate the response to child poverty across Perth and Kinross through our Local Child Poverty Action [Plan](#). This highlights the major partnership effort across the area to help and support families facing poverty. We are also supporting people living in food poverty, working with community organisations and networks across the area and building on the connections we made with local groups during the Covid pandemic. We paid out over £200,000 to our housing tenants who were struggling to pay their rent

through the Tenancy Sustainment Fund. We also distributed over £160,000 to community groups to empower them to support local people who were struggling with food poverty. This vital work will continue and develop as our resident's face rises in the cost of living.

Overcrowding, homelessness, dampness, food and fuel poverty, poor neighbourhood condition, and negative aspects of place and community can have a detrimental impact on our children and young peoples' developmental milestones, educational attainment, emotional wellbeing, and wider outcomes in life. Our contribution includes preventing and responding to homelessness by ensuring that families have immediate access to good quality housing. We recognise that good quality affordable housing, of the right size and close to family networks, employment and education can positively impact on children and young people. We play a significant role in supporting adult and community learning to increase life chances, skills and employability for local people through our statutory Community Learning and Development role as set out in the [Perth and Kinross Community Learning and Development Plan \(pkc.gov.uk\)](http://pkc.gov.uk). Open space allows children and young people to be physically active and challenge themselves, so they sleep and eat well and form healthy habits. We know that children and young people who play outdoors often have better social networks, are more confident and are more involved in their local communities.

Our housing and welfare rights staff also work to identify any particular disadvantages faced by their customers from equality protected groups.

Case Study: Cost of Living Support

In response to the Cost of Living crisis funding was provided to community groups providing direct support to equality groups including Perthshire Welfare Society (for a warm space); Rainbow Heartlands (LGBT+ winter support) and Mangin' Manashees and Rajpot Gypsy/Traveller groups (for a financial insecurity project). Our colleagues at Rainbow Heartlands gave the following feedback:

"We would like to say thank you to Perth & Kinross Council for their support through the Cost-of-Living Community Funding. Without such support, we would not have been able to provide the delivery of services and activities during such a challenging period. It has enabled us to build new approaches to support those within the LGBT+ community. The grateful attitude and kindness from many community members has really helped to build up our ability to interact between groups, individuals, and organisations in quite a seamless way".

EQUALITY AIM – PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL WILL INCREASE PEOPLE’S AWARENESS OF EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY (LOIP Strategic Priority – Skills, Learning and Development)

Equality Outcome 13 - A staff learning and development programme for equality and diversity will be delivered and will be extended to partner organisations.

We ensure that equality issues are a key element of our staff learning and development programme and produce regular Equalities Newsletters for staff and Elected Members. All of our Equalities Newsletters can be accessed [here](#). The table below gives an update on all the equalities learning opportunities available to staff over 2021-23.

| 2021/22 | 2022/23 |
|---|--|
| <p>Equalities Learning and Development opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 21 – Understanding HIV via zoom – 15 participants • May 21 – Deaf and BSL Awareness via zoom – 45 participants • May 21 – Beyond Religion and Belief via zoom – 14 participants • July 21 – Keep Safe Scheme via zoom – 20 participants • November 21 – Why I wear the Hijab via teams – 9 participants • November 21 – Trans Awareness and Inclusion via zoom – 27 participants • December 21 – A Hidden Communication impairment – 28 participants • January 22 - A Hidden Communication impairment – 42 participants | <p>Equalities Learning and Development opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 22 – Deaf and BSL Awareness via zoom – 29 participants • June 22 – Understanding HIV via zoom – 10 participants • October 22 – Beyond Religion and Belief via teams – 15 participants • October 22 – Why I wear the Hijab via teams – 4 participants • November 22 – Inclusive Communication via teams – 14 participants • November 22 – Gypsy/Traveller Cultural Awareness via teams – 24 participants • December 22 – Gypsy/Traveller Awareness for Councillors via teams – 9 participants • January 23 – Disability Awareness via teams – 20 participants • January 23 – Deaf and BSL Awareness via zoom – 17 participants • February 23 – Active Bystander via teams – 5 participants |

| | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of staff completing equalities e-learning modules completed - 747 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February 23 – LGBT Historical Timeline in person – 7 participants • March 23 – Islamophobia Causes and Cures via teams – 10 participants • March 23 – Gypsy/Traveller Hate Crime Awareness via teams – 8 participants • Number of staff completing equalities e-learning modules completed - 1209 |
|--|--|

Equality Outcome 14 - *Our school curriculum will include equality and diversity topics.*

Our schools are enriched with a diverse mix of pupils and staff with lived experiences from different cultures and backgrounds. We strive to promote equality and diversity to ensure that every pupil and staff member is treated with respect, as well as recognising that all individual differences are valued. The promotion of equality and diversity is an important aspect in school curriculum throughout Scotland and every child has the right to be supported by their caregiver, teachers, and staff to grow, learn, and develop throughout their education experiences.

Examples of the work we have been actively working with schools on include the following campaigns: Show Racism the Red Card (39 schools and over 2000 pupils), Nil by Mouth (5 schools and over 300 pupils), Anne Frank Trust (12 schools and around 600 visits to exhibitions) and Heartstone Story Circles (6 primary schools). Show Racism the Red Card told us:

“We are extremely proud to work within a partnership where active Anti-Racism is such a clear and continuing priority. With the continuing diversification of the region, we are determined to support this project and those like it that normalise inclusion, justice and anti-discrimination”.

Equality Outcome 15 - *Our employment policies will reflect that we are a fair and inclusive employer.*

We are committed to developing employment policy and practices that not only support and enable delivery of our corporate priorities for the people of Perth and Kinross but also allow colleagues to feel supported while at work and to have a balance to their working life. Our Equality and Diversity in Employment Report for the same period provides more detail and is included in Appendix A of this report.

Equality Outcome 16 - *People providing externally commissioned, contracted or licensed services on behalf of the Council (including ALEOs) are aware of their responsibilities in relation to equality*

This outcome cannot be achieved without a range of work with partner organisations and we continued to fund previously commissioned equality-related projects totalling £130,000 from the third sector. This includes St Johnstone Community Trust, PKAVS Minorities Communities Hub, Ethnic Minorities Law Centre and MECOPP Gypsy/Traveller Carers Project. These organisations provide regular monitoring information and 'community intelligence', which help us plan our services accordingly. These organisations are represented at the Equalities Strategic Forum along with our partner ALEOs. Specific [procurement equalities guidance](#) for prospective tenderers and suppliers remains in place.

Our Licensing Board ensures that equality issues are given consideration in its decision-making process and Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken for all reports that go to Licensing Board.

Case Study – Wire Women

Perth and Kinross Council commissioned 18 professional makers and creatives from around the region to work with community groups to create new work that was then shown in an exhibition and became part of a summer long trail which was seen by thousands of people. The commissions were awarded on the basis that all projects would be decided and led by the community groups and the artist role was to facilitate. The outcomes were not only the artworks, but all groups learnt new skills, had a renewed sense of place and were given a reason to come back together again post COVID. Members of the groups went on to gain qualifications as part of the project and to return to work after a long absence.

The artists were tasked with ensuring groups were open and welcoming to all and included a group of LGBTQ+ young people, a group who were recovering from addiction, a group who, despite severe disabilities, learnt about glass blowing.

Annex - Fulfilling our Equalities Duties:

Equalities Policy Statement

Perth & Kinross Council is committed to equality of opportunity, both as a service provider and as an employer. The Council values the diversity of the communities in its area and works towards providing services which are inclusive and accessible. The Council recognises that social inclusion and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between different groups can only be achieved by incorporating equalities into the planning, implementation and monitoring processes for all our Services. Perth & Kinross Council are, along with all other Scottish public authorities, legally obliged by the Equality Act 2010 to pay 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation, and harassment; to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations between those people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

By working in partnership to promote equality the Council we will make better use of all available resources leading to increased satisfaction by service users and service providers.

We recognise that discrimination, victimisation and harassment is unlawful and unacceptable and we will take action to prevent this occurring. If this does occur, we will take agreed and appropriate action to deal with it.

We also recognise that, when used legally and appropriately, positive action strategies can help to counteract the adverse impact of past discrimination or other causes of disadvantage. We will therefore implement positive action strategies, where appropriate, to make our services more inclusive. This is required by the Equality Act 2010 which require the Council to have due regards to the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- take steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.

- encourage people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

This policy continues to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. It remains compliant with predecessor legislation as unamended and takes account of the Public Sector Equality Duty stemming from the Act and the Human Rights Act 1998.

The policy should be considered alongside other relevant Council policies, guidance and codes of practice where appropriate but in particular those relating to our duties as an employer.

Assessing our equalities work

Under the Equality Act 2010, we are required to **eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations** between equality groups. Under Part 1 of the Act 'The Fairer Scotland Duty', we are required to actively consider how it can **reduce inequalities of outcome** caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

During 2022/23 the previous Integrated Appraisal Toolkit (IAT) was replaced by the [Impact and Value Assessment](#) of which an Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment remains part, to assess all proposals against criteria for reducing poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between equality groups.

This approach is used at the initial stages of any proposal or policy development to screen for any likely negative or adverse effects in relation to poverty and human rights. If the screening process identifies that there are implications, then a full Equality and Fairness Impact Assessment should be undertaken.

Governance of our equalities work

Our governance arrangements set out the structure we put into place to ensure we are meeting all of our outcomes, aims and legislative responsibilities in relation to equalities work. This ranges from formal Committees that we report into regularly to groups that work directly with our communities and help us to gather and analyse feedback:

The Equalities Governance structure works well in ensuring the needs of all our local communities are heard and understood by the Council and its key partners. The main groups are: -

- **Equalities Operational Group** - led by officers across council services to support the delivery of the Equality Outcomes, mainstream equalities work and measure performance.
- **Equalities Strategic Forum** - provides a platform to ensure that some local equality protected communities of interest, such as minority ethnic communities, LGBT+ communities and disability groups, are still able to effectively influence discussions at a locality level despite not necessarily having a visible or large presence in specific localities. Chaired by Elected Member with Equalities Lead remit.
- **Community Equalities Advisory Group (CEAG)**- driven by community organisations who work with local people from equality protected groups to share their knowledge and experience in relation to equalities. Chaired by Elected Member with Equalities Lead remit.