

Argyll and Bute Council
Equalities Mainstreaming
Report and Equality Outcomes 2023

April 2023

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1.3 Mainstreaming Equality within Argyll and Bute

Mainstreaming equality means integrating equality into an organisation's day-to-day working. This means taking equality into account when acting as an employer, or planning and providing services.

1.4 Key Documents

Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan.

Currently, the council's corporate outcomes are aligned to the outcomes of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, referred to within the area as

Employee Code of Conduct

Section 20 of the Employee Code of Conduct deals specifically with Equality and Diversity. It sets out the council's commitment to equalities and signposts readers to the council's Equality and Diversity Policy, Equalities Mainstreaming Report, and Dignity at Work Policy. Paragraph 20.4 states:

The Council will promote an ethos in which self-respect and respect for others are of the utmost importance. All individuals will be valued equally and therefore be given every opportunity to fulfil their maximum potential in society. The Council insists that those who suffer discrimination, whether direct or indirect, receive fair treatment and adequate remedies and affirms that it will address appropriately all sources of discrimination.

Paragraph 3.18.5 makes clear that 'any instances of discrimination, harassment or victimisation at work will be viewed as a serious matter'.

The [Employee Code of conduct](#) is available to all staff on the Council's employee website, My Council Works. It is also appended to the [Council's Constitution](#) (as Part F part 3), which is publically available on the Council website. .

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

The purpose of the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy is to make sure that the organisation, employees and elected Members do not unlawfully discriminate against people with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act. It also ensures that we oppose and avoid all forms of unlawful discrimination, and ensures equality, fairness and respect for all in the council's employment. [The Equality.](#)

- x To ensure that our contract terms require suppliers to support the health, safety, welfare and rights of their employees and supply chain – ensuring that the Council does not support human trafficking or modern slavery.

Education

The council's website contains key documents and information relating to the following topics:

- x [Anti-Bullying Policy](#)
- x [Additional Support Needs](#)
- x [Argyll and Bute's Autism Strategy](#)
- x The work of the [Corporate Parenting Board](#) and a link to the Corporate Parenting Strategy.
- x [Mental health](#): guidance about mental health and wellbeing in children and young people.
- x [Argyll and Bute Children and Young People's Service Plan](#)
- x [School uniform scheme](#): describes how Argyll and Bute Council is working with its schools and third sector partners to roll out an innovative scheme that sees school uniforms children have outgrown

The Violence Against Women and Girls Partnership also delivered a number of training events in 2022; delivery will continue into 2023/4.

Within Education, Connect Membership has opened up training opportunities for Parent Councils and broader parent forums in relation to equality issues such as Children's Rights, Engaging Refugee and Asylum Seekers, and Reaching out to All Families.

In addition to professional learning offered to staff via the [Equality and Diversity Sway](#), newly qualified teachers now receive equality and diversity training as part of their wider probationary training.

LGBTQ+ Scotland delivered a professional learning twilight session to staff to raise awareness of how support children and young people can be supported within schools and inclusive environments created. Education continues to support the work of the LGBTQ+ Network's Outreach Worker, who is also a lead for Oban Pride. The outreach work supports schools in developing an inclusive curriculum, supports pupils, and develops staff capacity. The Outreach Worker also organised a Purple Friday Conference which engaged 30 people from across the local authority, including education staff and partners. This event helped to relaunch the LGBTQ+ Network as part of our recovery planning.

Two members of staff from the Education department have participated in Education Scotland's Building Racial Literacy Programme. Links have been established across to other local authorities to develop this learning in partnership with one another.

We continue to develop knowledge of children's rights across our schools. In November 2022, Head Teachers participated in a day of professional learning: UNCRC: Rights at the Heart.

We support schools in engaging with the Rights Respecting Schools Award; presently we have 31 (one partner provider) schools and ELCs which have achieved Bronze, 10 which achieved Silver (one partner provider), and four which have achieved Gold. This enables staff, learners, parents, and communities to develop their understanding of children's rights.

Work developed by the Education Psychology team around Our Children Their Nurturing Education is linked to the rights of the child and ensures we are creating an inclusive environment in which children and young people can thrive.

1.6 Workforce

Workforce planning has been embedded across the organisation.

Workforce planning requires we understand the current profile of our workforce and identifies how we can make sure it will meet the future needs of the organisation. Key outcomes of the workforce plan include ensuring we have a balance between younger and older employees and the health and wellbeing of our employees is supported.

Workforce planning meetings are held twice a year, during which HR Talent and Performance officers and Third Tier managers discuss the make-up of the workforce. Ahead of these workforce planning meetings, Services are provided with a dashboard showing the profile of their workforce. Because we have an ageing workforce, age is a key area of focus. Gender is discussed when there is an uneven gender balance within the team.

We also monitor the workforce through regular Health of the Organisation reports.

To meet challenges around recruitment, several areas of action are currently underway. See under equality outcomes 1 and 2 for more information.

1.7 Partnership working

Examples of partnership working and groups include the following:

- x Community Planning Partners are invited to attend the council's Equality Forum meetings.
- x We have an active Violence Against Women Partnership operating within the area.
- x Ukrainian Multiagency Resettlement Group.
- x Rural Growth Deal Equalities Steering Group.
- x Employability Partnership.
- x UNCRC implementation group.
- x Ukrainian Resettlement Group.
- x Child Poverty Action Group.
- x Financial Inclusion Advisory Group (FIAG).

Much of the work relating to socio-economic disadvantage within Argyll and Bute is managed through the FIAG and the child poverty action group.

Membership of the FIAG is drawn from elected members, council officers and partners. The FIAG fulfils an anti-poverty role, covering and taking account of the Fairer Scotl and Duty. The FIAG formed a group to focus on cost of living issues in 2022.

The HSCP (Health and Social Care Partnership) shares the Council's approach to Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessments, thereby bringing Council and HSCP processes into closer alignment.

1.8 Equality Forum

The council's Equality Forum was set up in 2013, with the Terms of Reference for the forum subsequently being reviewed and updated in early 2018 and again in 2023.

- x A multi-agency group has been working to ensure Children's Rights Reports are embedded in the work around the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- x Trade Union Liaison Group.
- x Strategic and Departmental Management Team meetings.
- x LGBTQ+ Network (Education led).
- x Mentors in Violence Prevention Steering Group (Education Led).

Education has continued to work with partners across the local authority in relation to Child Poverty. Key initiatives have been the development of a [single-page sketch version of the Child Poverty Action Plan](#) designed to make the plan more accessible to young people.

The My Tribe Period Product initiative has been key in addressing the accessibility of free period products for all.

Other examples of partnership working are given in Sections 1.5, 3 and 4.

Section 2: Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

2.1 Review of our Equality Impact Assessment process

The council has carried out Equality Impact Assessments for a number of years.

Equality and Diversity Impact Assessments were first developed and approved in the 2000s. These were subsequently updated in light of the Equality Act (2010) and an updated Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was approved by council in December 2012.

In light of changes to legislation, as well as a review of how effectively the previous EqIA was being used, the council's EqIA process was been reviewed and updated again, in 2018. This review has resulted in the Equality and Socio-Economic Impact Assessment (EqSEIA) process (see [Equality legislation and reporting](#)).

The EqSEIA process was most recently reviewed in autumn 2019, after twelve months of implementation. Based on that review, the guidance was amended to make it clearer when an EqSEIA should be carried out.

We are again reviewing our EqSEIA processes to check their effectiveness and to ensure they will continue to be fit for purpose in light of ch (e1c 11.361 0 Td ()TI)-1 (eg)5.1 ancslvon and

Additionally, individual schools carry out awareness raising activities.

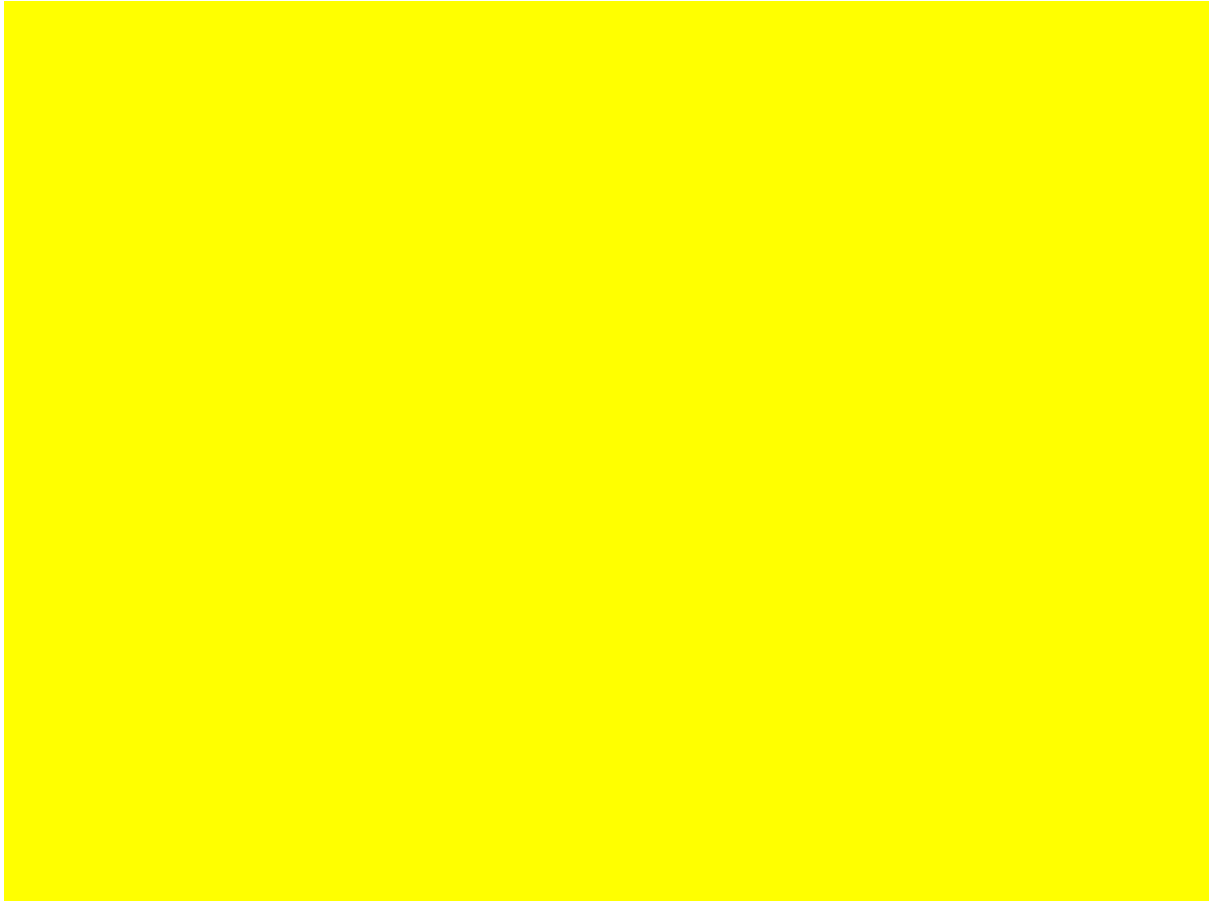
and Girls project work and Safer Together

Section 5: Equality Outcomes (2019-2023)

5.1 Argyll and Bute's Equality Outcomes (2019-2023)

The Council, Education Authority and Licensing Board developed Equality Outcomes for the period 2019-2023. These are set out in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Equality Outcomes (2019-2023).



Workforce:

We support our workforce, encouraging participation across all age groups

Duty: Advance equality of opportunity

Protected characteristics: All, with particular attention to age

Purpose: We believe that all employees, including those from all the protected

The Community Planning Partnership continues to encourage young people to be actively involved in Community Planning.

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament are included on the Community Planning Management Committee. Their attendance at the meetings is supported by having pre meetings to go through the papers in advance; the young people are actively encouraged to engage by alternative means if preferred, for example through the use of video updates rather than paper reports. Feedback shows the Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament feel heard and valued. See, for example, [Cameron Garrett MSYP CPP Presentation June 2021 - YouTube](#)

Throughout the consultation period for the identification of the Argyll and Bute Outcome Improvement Plan's new priorities, the community development team monitored participation in its survey, which was made available in languages other than English. The team took into consideration protected characteristics and geography (e.g. islands, remote rural areas) of respondents. This enabled the community development team to ensure relevant population groups were targeted and gaps which had been identified were addressed.

Adaptations were made to the consultation survey to enable non-digital engagement and engagement with hard to reach groups. For example, when some youth organisations were first approached, including one with young people with disabilities, feedback suggested they would not find the consultation as developed engaging. Working with those groups, more suitable alternative materials were developed. These materials improved the experiences of those engaging with the consultation.

Face-to-face engagement activity included engaging with young people and young people with disabilities. Appropriate materials were developed in conjunction with third sector organisations.

Over 1,900 people participated in the consultation and over 40 groups engaged in face-to-face engagement activity.

Democratic processes and elections:

In terms of work on elections, we engage with young people to encourage participation in local democracy, using them to use their voices, and register to vote at earliest opportunity.

Welcome to Your Vote Week is an annual campaign carried out in January of each year. We engage with schools to promote this and to encourage a focus on democracy, promote voter registration, and participation in democracy for young people.

We take action to reach those affected by homelessness and we support them to participate in elections. We do this by directly approaching housing associations and service providers with information highlighting the ways that those without a fixed address can register and use their vote.

We work to reach anonymous voters, including those affected by the likes of domestic abuse, by proactively reaching out to service providers.

- x Helensburgh Waterfront Development engaged widely in design process of new Leisure Centre including with disability groups like Enable.
- x We have involved the local access group in the initial discussions for the development of Mossfield Stadium. We also had discussions and agreed in the partnerships with Friends of Oban Play Group regarding the Atlantis play area, all-inclusive equipment.
- x The Scottish Government Play Park funding has given us an opportunity to engage with communities as well as disability forums. We are in the process of doing this to identify the best way to provide improvements to our play park infrastructure.
- x Liaison with rural and island communities on ferry services transport links, and out of hours emergency cover.
- x Liaison with communities regarding relief vessels during disruption and maintenance periods.
- x Consultation event in Fionnphort: we are providing transport to the venue from the ferry for protected groups and those without transport. During consultations hard copies were provided at locations for participants with barriers to online access. .

Services:

People with protected characteristics have improved experiences of services

Duty : Advance equality of opportunity; foster good relations

Protected characteristics: All

Purpose: We aim to make sure that, as far as possible, our services meet the needs and aspirations of people from protected groups and that we work to improve their experience of our services.

Website accessibility

See above.

Refugees:

See section 2.6.

Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Our new Marriage Civil Partnership website is aimed at the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnerships. We have introduced Gaelic Blessings to our wedding ceremonies. (See [Marriage and Civil Ceremonies.](#))

Other

- x To address specific accessibility issues relating to islands communities, we have retained uneconomic service points. We also support the Scotland Loves Local card and other anti

- x We offer an assisted Bin Pull Out Service to customers unable to move their bins to the kerbside themselves.
- x Assistance has been provided for mobility restricted customers at Rothesay Harbour

Education's

The Education Management Team have worked alongside Education Scotland Attainment Advisor to support schools to produce robust Pupil Equity Fund plans. The Education Management team have helped identify schools for supporting visits to discuss plans in detail.

The Argyll and Bute Corporate Parenting Board provides leadership and direction to the Corporate Parents of Argyll and Bute in working together to improve the outcomes and

We have recently completed the recruitment process for a Virtual Head Teacher within Argyll and Bute. Our expectation is that the post holder will work collaboratively with Head Teachers in each establishment and offer support and robust challenge around data and the strategies in place to secure better outcomes for each and every one of our care experienced children.

Section 6: Workforce Monitoring

6.1 Our workforce

On the basis of the data we currently hold, along with a comparison with other data, we can make the following comments with regard to the workforce:

- The most obvious difference between the workforce profile and working-age population of the area more general relates to the high proportion of females (approximately three-quarters) within the council and Education workforces. The predominance of females is particularly noticeable in Education.
- When compared to the age profile of the wider working-age population (NRS 2021 Mid-Year Estimates), our workforce appears to be skewed towards the older end of the working-age range. Our workforce shows a lower percentage of people aged 16-24; however, this is not unexpected as this cohort covers the final year of secondary education and the period when many people go on to higher education. At 49 years, the average age of our workforce is several years higher than the average age of the working age population across the area (around 44 years).
- It is hard to make comparisons between 2011 Census data and our workforce data with regard to sex, disability and religion because of the high proportion of missing data and 'prefer not to says' within the workforce data. This is a position shared with other Councils in Scotland.
- Limited information is available about sexual orientation. Data from 2019 ([Scottish Surveys Core Questions 2019](#)) suggested that around 95% of

Table 1: Coverage rates for protected characteristics among our workforce.

Protected characteristic	Coverage rate (as of January 2023)
Age	100%
Gender (sex)	100%
Gender identity	19.7%
Sexual orientation	32.7%
Disability	97.3%
Nationality	100%
Ethnic origin	54.7%
Religion	33.5%

(Note: this is coverage by post, not by employee. Some employees will hold more than one post. These figures also include casual posts.)

There have been changes to the way data is collected and recorded in both ResourceLink and TalentLink.

The data, itself, is reported in Appendix 2.

6.3 Workforce reporting

Our [detailed workforce reporting](#) has been published separately.

6.4 Workforce Planning and Health of the Organisation reporting

In 2018 the Council approved a Strategic Workforce Plan, and put in place a programme of workforce planning activity. Included in this has been team profiling across the council. All third tier managers have been supplied with data highlighting the proportions of their staff aged 50 and over, and under 25. They have also been provided with information relating to the male / female split in their workforce.

Interview sessions between Talent and Performance officers and Third Tier Managers are now embedded. During these sessions, potential issues are highlighted, and managers are asked to develop actions to address them. Issues include areas where gender segregation may be a particular challenge to the organisation. In turn, this helps to deliver on our outcome, we promote diversity across occupational groups.

The Council also has procedures in place to monitor the 'Health of the Organisation'. This is designed to enable better monitoring of issues and changes in the workforce, and for interventions to be made in a timely manner.

6.5 Policy Statement with regard to Equal Pay:

Argyll and Bute Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities in employment to ensure that employees are not discriminated against irrespective of their age, race, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender re-assignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, religion or belief.

Argyll and Bute Council is committed to ensuring that that all staff, irrespective of gender should receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent and for work of equal value.

The Council's equal pay objectives are to:

- Eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay;
- Take appropriate action to address these accordingly;
- Regularly monitor and review the application of policies and procedures and;
- Conduct an equal pay review to monitor existing pay practices in line with the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equal Pay Statutory Code of Practice.

In order to achieve equal pay for employees, the Council operates a pay scale 6e-1.7 (e.)JT.0444 (P)1.3 (

Table 2: Gender pay gaps including and excluding casuals (from Equal Pay Audit 2022)

Summary – Gender Pay Gaps – Basic Pay		
Group	Total Workforce (Inc. Casuals)	Total Workforce (Excl. Casuals)
	Mean	