

Ceredigion County Council

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025



Author: Partnership and Performance, CM
Approved by Cabinet: 02/09/2025

Strategic Equality Plan Annual Report

April 2024 – March 2025

This report outlines the progress made towards achieving our five key equality objectives for the period April 2024 to March 2025. Our Equality objectives are set out in our [Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28](#). They focus on promoting equality, fostering good relations, ensuring engagement and participation, providing fair and inclusive education, and ensuring dignity, respect, and access to services.

There are 34 actions in the Plan. A ‘BRAG’ system shows us how well an action is performing or being delivered. BRAG status totals are shown below:

| BRAG status | Definition | 2024-25 |
|-------------|--|---------|
| Blue | Completed | 2 |
| Red | Not started/there are concerns that it will not be completed | 2 |
| Amber | Slightly behind target | 6 |
| Green | Progressing to plan | 24 |

This summary highlights the key achievements, challenges, and future priorities across these objectives. A full report is available at [Appendix 1](#).

Equality Objective 1: To be an Exemplar Equal Opportunities Employer

Key Achievements:

- Revised recruitment application process to attract a diverse talent pool.
- Reviewed HR policies to reflect community needs.
- Promoted graduate schemes and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Launched our Workforce Survey 2024 to inform decision-making.

Challenges:

Encouraging proportional representation in the workforce.
Finalising the Graduate Scheme implementation.

Future Priorities:

Continue developing training modules and workforce engagement activities.
Enhance recruitment strategies to attract diverse candidates.

Equality Objective 2: To Foster Good Relations and Tackle Prejudice

Key Achievements:

- Monitored and provided advice on Integrated Impact Assessments.
- Accepted into the Age Friendly network.
- Supported the monitoring of community tensions.

Challenges:

Limited progress in developing teaching resources based on our museum collections due to capacity.

Future Priorities:

Increase training and support for Integrated Impact Assessments.
Implement our commitment to the Hate Crime Charter.

Equality Objective 3: To Ensure Engagement and Participation

Key Achievements:

- Increased representation at Ceredigion Disability Forum meetings.
- Hosted events celebrating diversity and heritage.
- Developed online engagement platforms and improved feedback mechanisms.

Challenges:

Achieving diverse representation in local politics and decision making.
Limited capacity to develop stakeholder forums.

Future Priorities:

Enhance engagement strategies to include diverse community voices.
Strengthen partnerships to support stakeholder forums.

Equality Objective 4: To Ensure Dignity, Respect and Access to Services

Key Achievements:

- Promoted Welsh language development opportunities.
- Increased inclusive play and physical activity for disabled children.
- Supported registered childcare providers.
- Worked with partners to provide housing that meets community needs.

Challenges:

Funding for transport favours densely populated areas in Wales, limiting our ability to offer sustainable, affordable travel.

Responsibility for public toilets is in the process of being transferred from the County Council to community groups.

Future Priorities:

Continue enhancing the accessibility of documents published on our website.

Develop sustainable travel solutions in partnership with stakeholders.

Equality Objective 5: To Provide Fair and Inclusive Education**Key Achievements:**

- Implemented anti-bullying policies reflecting updated guidance.
- Opened new specialist resource centres for pupils with additional needs.
- Supported older people and disabled people in digital inclusion.

Challenges:

Recruitment challenges for diverse school governing bodies.

Awaiting Welsh Government's national trans guidance.

Future Priorities:

Enhance educational provision for children with additional learning needs.

Promote diversity in school governance and leadership.

Our Corporate Equalities Working Group meets every three months to monitor the progress of our Strategic Equality Plan and to discuss other issues related to equality. The group is chaired by our Equalities Champion, who is a Ceredigion County Council Cabinet member.

Our annual progress report is presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee for scrutiny and then to Cabinet for approval before being published on our website.

Appendix 1 – Strategic Equality Plan Monitoring Report 2024 - 2025

The following sections detail the updates and actions taken under each objective.

Equality Objective 1: To be an Exemplar Equal Opportunities Employer

1. We will publish an annual gender pay gap report and take action to encourage a more even mix of men and women in lower-grade and higher-grade jobs.

2024–25 update: We have revised our recruitment application process to attract a broader and more diverse talent pool. Enhancements to our careers site continue to support this goal. The annual gender pay gap report is being finalised and will be published on the corporate website shortly.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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2. We will publish an annual workforce equality report and take action to encourage proportionate representation in our workforce, particularly in social care and senior management.

2024–25 update: The workforce equality report is being finalised and will be published on the corporate website shortly.

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3. We will review HR policies and recruitment literature to reflect the needs and diverse identities of our community.

2024–25 update: The Recruitment & Selection Policy was recently reviewed in consultation with recognised Trade Unions. An integrated impact assessment was conducted to ensure the policy meets the needs of our diverse communities.

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4. We will continue to develop and deliver a range of cultural awareness and equalities training.

2024–25 update: The mandatory Equality and Diversity eLearning module is currently under review. We continue to offer training that supports equality, diversity, and inclusion across the organisation.

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5. We will promote our graduate scheme and develop a coordinated approach to work experience and apprenticeship opportunities.

2024–25 update: Final approval for the Graduate Scheme is pending, with recruitment planned for summer. Guidance documents for a coordinated approach to work experience are in the final stages of development. The Apprenticeship Scheme remains well established, with service areas supported by the Learning & Development team in recruiting apprentices.

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6. We will build on our employee engagement activities and ensure all workforce voices inform decision-making.

2024–25 update: In addition to ongoing engagement with Trade Unions, we launched a new People Survey in 2024. It explored key areas including:

- Job satisfaction and support
- Management and leadership
- Development opportunities
- Health, safety, and wellbeing
- Workplace relationships (inclusion, conflict, etc.)

The findings have been shared with staff, senior managers, and leaders, and will inform future decision-making.

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Equality Objective 2: To Foster Good Relations and Tackle Prejudice

1. We will monitor the use of, and provide advice on, Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs).

2024–25 update: A total of 35 Integrated Impact Assessments and 6 Community Impact Assessments were submitted alongside Cabinet reports to support decision-making. Two Cabinet reports were submitted without an accompanying IIA. Although the Community Impact Assessments followed the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code, they were initially deemed insufficient. These were subsequently revised and re-published on our website. One-to-one advice and support on IIA is available, and an information session was delivered to all services in February 2025. Further training is planned for 2025–26.

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2. We will implement our commitment to Victim Support’s Hate Crime Charter and use the Hate Crime Charter Trustmark where appropriate.

2024–25 update: We achieved the Hate Crime Charter Trustmark in February 2024. A message was shared with all staff to encourage the use of the Trustmark logo in email footers and promotional materials. Victim Support presented the Trustmark certificate to Elected Members at a full Council meeting in September 2024. Our next steps include monitoring the impact of our commitment and ensuring appropriate use of the Trustmark logo.

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3. We will ensure that relevant collections, particularly those used as part of curriculum delivery, celebrate diversity and encourage anti-racist engagement.

2024–25 update: The “For the Curious and Interested” project, funded through the Welsh Government Action Plan in 2024, enabled us to examine parts of our collection in relation to colonialism, racism, and slavery. However, we have not yet had the capacity to develop these insights into teaching resources.

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| Amber | Slightly behind target |
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3. We will support the Regional Community Cohesion Team to monitor community tensions.

2024–25 update: The Regional Community Cohesion Team holds weekly multi-agency meetings to monitor community tensions and shares relevant updates with Council departments. These updates are a standing item at meetings of the Council’s Corporate Equality Working Group and the Ceredigion Public Services Board (PSB) Refugee Resettlement Group. Following the stabbing incident in Southport during summer 2024, the team provided regular updates and guidance in response to far right and anti-immigration protests and unrest.

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4. We will support the Regional Community Cohesion Team to deliver an annual media campaign to promote awareness, celebrate diversity, and commemorate relevant historical events.

2024–25 update: We supported and promoted a range of awareness events and campaigns:

Disabilities and Health

- Autism Awareness Week
- Okur-Chung Neurodevelopmental Syndrome (OCNDS) Awareness Day
- Parkinsons Day
- Mental Health Awareness Week
- Suicide Prevention Week
- Mental Health Day
- World Autism Day
- World Menopause Day
- Developmental Language Disorder Awareness Day
- International Day of People with Disabilities

LGBTQ+

- International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia
- LGBTQ+ Pride Month
- Transgender Remembrance Day
- LGBTQ+ History Month
- LGBTQ+ Adoption and Fostering Week

Other

- Refugee Week
- Black History Month
- Older People's Day
- National Hate Crime Awareness Week

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5. We will join the Age Friendly network and implement an action plan that reflects the needs of our ageing population.

2024–25 update: We completed a self-assessment and have been accepted into the Age Friendly network. Implementation of the action plan has begun and will continue to evolve over time.

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Equality Objective 3: To Ensure Engagement and Participation

1. We will support programmes and plans to increase representation in local politics and decision-making, particularly by young people, women, disabled people, LGBTQ+ people, and people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

2024–25 update: The next Senedd election is scheduled for 2026. We have developed a timetable of awareness raising sessions, which will be delivered to underrepresented groups during 2025-26. With the next local election scheduled for 2027, we will produce a promotional leaflet in 2026–27 to encourage a diverse range of candidates.

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2. We will develop the membership of the Ceredigion Disability Forum to better understand good practice and the lived experiences of disabled people.

2024–25 update: Forum attendance has gradually increased, with average participation rising from six to eight disabled individuals. A Charter has been developed, outlining a process for the Forum to respond to consultations with a unified voice. Cabinet Members and relevant Council officers now attend meetings to hear directly from Forum members. The Forum has also been designated a Phase 1 consultee for Council-developed Traffic Regulation Orders.

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3. We will work with partners to establish a stakeholder forum to better understand good practice and the lived experiences of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

2024–25 update: Progress has been limited. However, in October 2024, we partnered with Hywel Dda Health Board and Aberystwyth University to host a cultural celebration event. The event attracted around 350 attendees and received positive feedback, with many expressing an interest in future events. Unfortunately, current capacity and funding constraints limit our ability to build on this momentum.

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| Red | Not started/there are concerns that it will not be completed |
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4. We will work with partners to establish a stakeholder forum to better understand good practice and the lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people.

2024–25 update: We engaged with several LGBTQ+ groups and individuals throughout the year. A draft website was developed to centralise relevant information. In February 2024, we hosted an LGBTQ+ History Month event, which, although attended by only six people, provided valuable insights and new connections. The Equality and Inclusion team has funding to support similar activities, but current capacity limits the level of engagement needed for broader success.

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| Amber | Slightly behind target |
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5. We will develop and improve our use of online engagement platforms and non-digital engagement methods.

2024–25 update: The number of people that have signed up to be kept updated on Ceredigion Council consultations via email from our My Account platform is increasing. Paper copies of current consultation campaigns can be collected from our Libraries and Leisure/Wellbeing Centres and posters are created to promote our campaigns. Face to Face focus groups, stakeholder meetings and drop-in sessions take place when appropriate. We have established a digital response form to gather feedback from people that contact our Clic contact centre by email; our average satisfaction score is 7.5 out of 10.

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6. We will improve how we provide feedback to those who participate in our engagement and consultation campaigns.

2024–25 update: Our Engagement Toolkit advises officers to inform stakeholders of consultation outcomes via email, though this is not consistently implemented due to capacity. However, our corporate Engagement and Consultations website has significantly improved. Closed consultations are now clearly marked as either ‘Closed – awaiting decision’ or ‘Closed – decision made,’ with decisions published alongside the original consultation for full transparency. The importance of feedback will be further emphasised in upcoming training on the Engagement and Consultation Toolkit.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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Equality Objective 4: To Ensure Dignity, Respect and Access to Services

1. We will continue to actively promote Welsh language development opportunities to meet service delivery needs and support our bilingual culture.

2024–25 update: Our Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2024–2029, published in December 2024, outlines ambitious goals to help the language thrive across the county. Ceredigion Bilingual Futures Forum (Dyfodol Dwyieithog) has revised its remit to align with this strategy. A Welsh Language Working Group has been established to address workplace language issues, including the ALTE Language Framework, recruitment, and Work Welsh lessons. #Gwena e-newsletter continues to be published monthly, promoting the Welsh language among staff.

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2. We will continue to offer inclusive and specialised play and physical activity opportunities for disabled children and young people.

2024–25 update: Our Primary School Disability Specific festivals and Insport festivals have provided accessible, enjoyable sporting experiences for children with learning disabilities. Our Play for All programme is now embedded across five ALN units, offering weekly sessions for secondary aged children that support both physical and social development. Young Ambassadors help lead these activities.

We've expanded provision with new weekly disability-specific clubs in the north, mid, and south of Ceredigion. A new PAN Disability Football session in Cardigan further increases access to inclusive, community-based sport.

Through collaboration with health professionals, we've launched the Health Disability Activity Programme (HDAP). This is a formal referral pathway linking young people with disabilities to suitable physical activity opportunities in their communities.

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3. We will continue to support registered childcare providers to meet the needs of children and young people who are disabled or have additional learning needs.

2024–25 update: Funding is available through Cynllun Cyfeirio for children needing additional support in pre-school settings, and through the Ymuno scheme for those in registered out-of-school provision. A 7-module Additional Learning Needs course was delivered in 2024–25, with 8 practitioners participating. An evening Elklan course, aimed at childminders and supporting speech and language development, was completed by

10 attendees. Additionally, 12 children received support through the Additional Support Grant under the Childcare Offer.

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4. We will consider the needs of disabled people when maintaining or improving footways and carriageways (e.g., dropped kerbs and disabled parking).

2024–25 update: All maintenance and improvement works follow the Department for Transport’s Inclusive Mobility guidance. However, limited funding and resources mean that improvements cannot always be implemented as quickly as desired.

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| Amber | Slightly behind target |
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5. We will work towards achieving a AAA accessibility rating for our website.

2024–25 update: Achieving this rating is a significant undertaking requiring cross-departmental commitment. An action plan has been agreed, and the project is now a workstream within the Digital Plan 2024–2026. An awareness workshop was delivered to all corporate managers, and the Senior Management Group has committed to regular progress monitoring.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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6. We will continue to develop the methods we use to communicate with the public.

2024–25 update: Our website is the main way that we communicate with the public; this is updated regularly. Council activities are communicated via social media and press releases. The number of people that follow us on social media has increased to:

- **Facebook (Welsh):** 2,886
- **Facebook (English):** 18,596
- **Instagram – Caru Ceredigion:** 1,988
- **X (Welsh):** 2,559
- **X (English):** 8,383

We have established a Council newsletter that is sent by email to over 1,000 people that have signed up to receive this via our My Account platform.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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7. We will provide housing that meets the needs of our communities.

2024–25 update: We continue to build new social housing aligned with current demand, maximising grant funding. We have also purchased housing stock to meet specific family needs that would otherwise be difficult to address through existing properties.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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8. We will review our Toilet Strategy so that it reflects the needs of our changing population where reasonably and practicably possible.

2024–25 update: The Public Toilet Strategy has been updated and now includes a Public Toilet Strategy Action Plan 2025–2026, outlining key actions to meet evolving community needs. The updated strategy has not yet been published. As part of a broader restructuring effort, the management and responsibility for public toilets are in the process of being transitioned away from the County Council.

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| Blue | Completed |
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9. We will work with partners to develop sustainable and affordable travel solutions.

2024–25 update: Discussions are ongoing with Transport for Wales in relation to developing a ‘bridge to franchising’ and identification of a base and future network. However, uncertainty around passenger numbers not recovering to pre-Covid levels, driver availability, operator willingness to provide desired service levels and future funding levels is complicating the discussions. There have been enhancements to the Traws Cymru T1 and T2 routes and upcoming enhancements are expected to the T5 service which will increase journey opportunities on these strategic routes.

The Mid Wales Regional Transport Plan has been submitted to Welsh Government for approval.

Ceredigion was successful in delivering a programme of bus infrastructure improvements along the Traws Cymru corridor in 2024/25 and has secured further grant funding to deliver more bus infrastructure enhancements including real time information and funding for WelTag assessments related to the Cardigan Bus Interchange at Finch square

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| Amber | Slightly behind target |
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10. We will ensure that the principles of the Welsh Language Standards underpin the way the Council delivers its services, enabling service users to access services naturally in Welsh, if they choose.

2024–25 update: Our Welsh Language Policy Officer plays a key role in supporting services to comply with the Welsh Language Standards. Regular campaigns, internal communications, and presentations raise awareness and promote conscientious compliance across the workforce. This year, we improved how we consider the impact on the Welsh language during public consultation and engagement. A corporate workshop and interdepartmental information sharing have helped embed this process more widely. We also maintain regular engagement with the Welsh Language Commissioner, attending workshops and participating in Compliance Programmes to ensure we meet all regulatory requirements.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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Equality Objective 5: To Provide Fair and Inclusive Education

1. We will adopt and implement Welsh Government’s national trans guidance for schools.

2024–25 update: This action has not yet commenced, as the Welsh Government has not released the national trans guidance.

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| Red | Not started/there are concerns that it will not be completed |
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2. We will work towards ensuring that school governing bodies reflect the diversity of the pupil population.

2024–25 update: Recruiting individuals to join school governing bodies remains a challenge, and adding diversity criteria increases this difficulty. However, governors have been invited to attend two DARPL (Diversity and Anti-Racist Professional Learning) conferences and have access to self-directed personal learning resources.

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| Amber | Slightly behind target |
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3. We will ensure that anti-bullying policies in schools reflect Welsh Government’s updated guidance, ‘Rights, Respect, Equality’.

2024–25 update: Our current policy reflects the latest guidance. Welsh Government are currently consulting on new guidance. We are responding to the consultation and will

ensure that our guidance and policies are in line with Welsh Government's revised anti-bullying guidance when it is available.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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4. We will implement our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022–32.

2024–25 update: Specific action points guide the prioritisation of WESP objectives. The annual report is approved by Welsh Government and shared with the Local Authority's Language Committee and the Bilingual Future Forum.

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| Blue | Completed |
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5. We will improve educational provision and outcomes for children with additional learning needs (ALN) and reduce the attainment gap.

Updated action:

Due to data limitations, this action has been revised to: We will review and improve educational provision and outcomes for children with ALN.

2024–25 update: Two new Specialist Resource Centres (SRCs) have been opened; one for secondary-age pupils in the south of the county and one for primary-age pupils in the centre. These centres provide localised support for pupils with severe and complex needs. The Local Authority is also working with mainstream schools to develop tailored provisions and enhance staff capacity to deliver high-quality, inclusive teaching.

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| Amber | Slightly behind target |
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6. We will continue to support older people and disabled people to take advantage of digital technologies and recognise the benefits of being online.

2024–25 update: Free weekly basic digital skills classes are available in Aberystwyth, Lampeter, Cardigan, Bronant, and Llandysul. Additional workshops on online safety are also held in community venues.

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| Green | Progressing to plan |
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