

West
Dunbartonshire
Council
**Equalities Mainstreaming
and Outcomes Plan
2025-29 Draft**

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Foreword

As Chair of the West Dunbartonshire Equality and Diversity Working Group, I am pleased to present the Equality Outcomes Plan for 2025-2029.

Before the launch of our last plan in 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharper focus pre-existing and persistent inequalities especially for younger people, Black minority ethnic people, severely disabled people, and women. Since then, the cost of living and housing crisis, alongside reduction in resources available to the Council and rest of the public sector, have exacerbated these inequalities.

This means advancing and protecting equality and human rights is more important than ever. Reflecting on this, our new plan has an emphasis on using the resources and information we have as efficiently and effectively as possible to help us deliver services and be inclusive employer.

We have identified the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Areas using input and feedback from consultation and information gathering undertaken over the last two years. This has come from a wide range of sources and groups, as well as a review of our own progress.

The focus we have adopted for 2025-2029 on increased participation for less heard groups, better use of the information and feedback from our communities, on accessible and transparent information, and increased digital inclusion will help tackle important inequalities.

We will continue to work with Community Planning partners, making sure that we contribute a strong equalities and human rights perspective to add value to joint working on key issues such as reducing child poverty, and tackling other issues driven by inequality.



Councillor Fiona Hennebry
Chair of the West Dunbartonshire Equality and Diversity Working Group

West Dunbartonshire Council Equality Statement 2025-29

We are committed to fulfilling the three key elements of the general equality duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct.
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; this means removing barriers, meeting different needs, and encouraging participation.
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; this includes tackling prejudice and building understanding.

Protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment,
- pregnancy and maternity
- race, this includes ethnicity, colour and national origin
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage/civil partnership (for which only the first duty is applied)

Everyone has 'protected characteristics', but it is the treatment individuals and groups receive, the level of autonomy they have, and the positive or negative outcomes for them, that are the focus. Therefore, the Council will:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- Meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low
- Develop better policies and practices, based on evidence
- Be transparent, accessible and accountable
- Deliver improved outcomes for all

As well as being legal requirements, these steps contribute to fairer, more efficient and more effective services.

Equality Challenges - Scotland and West Dunbartonshire

Poverty in Scotland

Rates of both adult and child poverty have increased over the past decade. Ethnic minorities and LGBTQ+ adults experience higher rates of poverty. Those living in the most deprived areas have lower life expectancy and face significant health challenges.

Disabled adults are significantly less likely to be in work compared to adults without disabilities and are more likely to earn a lower hourly wage, with the pay gap between disabled and non-disabled people in Scotland widening. Increased levels of employment are not translating into improvements in living standards, with the proportion of disabled adults in poverty also increasing. Similarly, ethnic minority workers also experience consistently lower hourly earnings and higher levels of insecure work and lower rates of employment.

Latest data from Nomis shows that West Dunbartonshire has an economic inactivity rate of 24.4%, which is higher than both the rate for Scotland (23.4%) and Great Britain's (21.6%).

At 23.9% West Dunbartonshire has a higher proportion of workless households, which is higher than both the rate for Scotland (17.4%) and Great Britain (13.9%).

The figure for people who are economically active in West Dunbartonshire (75.6%) is lower than both Scotland (76.6%) and Great Britain (78.4%), while Gross Weekly Pay overall in West Dunbartonshire (£723.6) is also lower than both Scotland (£740) and Great Britain (£729.8).

Of those in employment, there is a higher proportion in West Dunbartonshire reliant on part-time work (36.4%). This is higher than the figure for Scotland (32.7%) and Great Britain (31.2%).

In 2023, 25.6% of children in West Dunbartonshire lived in low-income families compared to 20.2% in Scotland overall.

Women in Scotland

Women in Scotland face multiple discrimination, including disabled women, women from Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities, refugees and asylum seekers, lesbian, (LGBT+) bi and transwomen and transmen, and older women. In the labour market, women were unequal in pay, participation and progression due to drivers including occupational segregation, job evaluation, discrimination, and time available to work.

In West Dunbartonshire, we know that women face the same challenges. Domestic abuse is a particular issue in our area and in 2023/24, rates of incidents per 10,000

population in West Dunbartonshire was 153, above the national average of 116, and the second highest in the Scotland.

In addition, the latest data for 2024 highlights a 16.7% median pay gap between men and women in the area, well above the Scottish figure of 9.4%.

Health in Scotland

Health outcomes have stagnated or declined for people with certain protected characteristics. Disabled people, ethnic minorities, lesbian, gay and bisexual people, and trans and non-binary people all continue to experience barriers in accessing healthcare. Lengthy waits to access treatment have detrimental effects on mental health.

People in more deprived areas experience disproportionately high levels of poor health, early death, and greater barriers to health services.

One in three adults in West Dunbartonshire report having a long-term limiting condition or illness, rising to nearly three in four (73%) of those aged 75 or over.

One in six adults in West Dunbartonshire report feeling isolated from family and friends – lower than the finding for the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde (NHSGGC) area as a whole.

Drugs to treat anxiety/depression/psychosis are also prescribed at a higher rate in West Dunbartonshire, with 24.2% compared to Scotland at 20.9%.

The percentage of adults claiming incapacity benefit /severe disability allowance in West Dunbartonshire is 8.4% compared to Scotland at 6.1%.

Across West Dunbartonshire, 66% of adults assess their health as good or very good compared to 72% in Scotland.

Women in West Dunbartonshire live on average, four years longer than men. The estimates of both male and female life expectancy in West Dunbartonshire are lower than the Scotland average.

Children and Young people in Scotland

Although overall educational attainment has improved, there remains a significant attainment gap between the most and least deprived pupils. Looked-after children are particularly disadvantaged, being more likely to be excluded and less likely to pursue further education or employment.

The Scottish Government pupil census data shows that the percentage of school pupils who had an Additional Support Need (ASN) due to a condition included in the learning difficulty or developmental disorder categories in the census increased between 2010 and 2021.

The percentage of pupils who had an ASN due to dyslexia increased from 1.3% in 2010 to 3.6% in 2021. The percentage who had an ASN due to an autistic spectrum disorder increased from 1.0% in 2010 to 3.4% in 2021. The percentage who had an ASN due to a learning disability was unchanged at 1.7%.

West Dunbartonshire is ranked lowest in Scotland for the percentage of children who have reached expected development milestones by their 27–30 month review, at 72.3% compared to 82.1% for Scotland.

Child Poverty Data indicates an estimated 28% of children aged 0-15 years in West Dunbartonshire are living in households with below 60% median income after housing costs, compared to 24% in Scotland.

National Policy Context

Tackling inequality is central to Scottish Government policies.

The Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Strategy

This Strategy is fundamental to achieving positive change and a fairer, more equal, society in Scotland. It is key to tackling persistent inequality in society and sustaining equality of opportunity for all of those who live in Scotland.

The Strategy provides a framework so that the Scottish Government and the wider public sector can apply a consistent focus on equality and human rights in policy and service delivery.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

In July 2024, the United Nations Convention on the rights of the Child (UNCRC) became legally binding on Scotland's public authorities, meaning they can be held accountable by the Government and Courts if these rights are not fulfilled. The Council has integrated consideration of UNCRC rights, along with equality, human rights, Fairer Scotland Duty and health in our approach towards equality impact assessments (EIAs). An EIA is completed ahead of policy formation, changes to service provision, and for financial decisions where these are relevant.

Our Council's Commitment to Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming is about consideration of equality as part of everything we do. By bringing an equality perspective we can add value to our existing work, such as tackling child poverty, to make interventions and longer-term changes more effective and sustainable. Only by considering the intersection of external factors and the ways in which they affect different people can help make sure we identify the best interventions.

We recognise that without intervention, women, BME, disabled people and young people are more likely to continue to be more disadvantaged over the short, medium and long term.

We have made advances in mainstreaming equalities during 2021-2025, as detailed in appendix 1, and continued focus will ensure further progress in the next four years.

Council Mainstreaming Goals 2025-29

- Mainstreaming Goal 1: Increased use of a range of accessible information formats and approaches such as Easy Read as an integrated part of communications
- Mainstreaming Goal 2: Increased use of intersectional data to better inform decision making
- Mainstreaming Goal 3: Refresh approach to equality and diversity in employment

Licensing Mainstreaming Goals 2025-29

- Mainstreaming Goal 1: Increased use of a range accessible information formats and approaches such as Easy Read as an integrated part of communications
- Mainstreaming Goal 2: Increased use of intersectional data to better inform policy and service planning, provision, monitoring and assessment

Equality Outcomes 2025-29

We are committed to pursuing objectives that make real improvements for people by reducing inequalities and increasing inclusion, whilst fostering good relations and building bridging connections within and between communities.

Our equality outcomes are designed to focus on the areas that we consider most important, and that we have a power to realistically influence in the next four years as an employer, a service provider, and a partner with communities and other statutory organisations.

While developing the outcomes we consulted with the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum on the areas they considered important. In addition, we reviewed national evidence and local information to inform our choices which included information from recent community consultations that are relevant to equalities such as those for the creation of our BSL Action Plan, and information gathered for Equality Impact Assessment processes during the last two years. All of this was considered by our Equality and Diversity Working Group which is comprised of Elected Member and Council Officers from across services.

The three sets of outcomes have been designed to work together.

We note the following outcomes do not cover all protected groups and that is because we have assessed the most pressing inequalities in West Dunbartonshire, and the groups subject to these, and the outcomes we think we can influence the most and focused on them.

Through our mainstreaming goals detailed in the rest of the report, we will continue to take forward the public sector equality duty, across all of the protected characteristics, using Equality Impact Assessments informing policy design, implementation and monitoring.

Council Equality Outcomes 2025-29

- Equality outcome 1 - Increased participation of younger people in participative processes in West Dunbartonshire
- Equality outcome 2 - Increased participation of under-represented ethnic groups in participative processes in West Dunbartonshire
- Equality outcome 3 - Increased digital inclusion of groups less likely to be digitally literate, including people over 65, disability people, older Deaf people, Gypsy/travellers.

Education Equality Outcomes 2025-29

- Equality Outcome 1 - Our schools, are safe, accessible and inclusive
- Equalities Outcome 2 - Young women, disabled and Black and minority ethnic young people are supported and leave school with positive destinations.
- Equalities Outcome 3 - Raise attainment in male pupils in literacy and numeracy

Licensing Equality Outcomes 2025-29

- Equality Outcome 1 - Increased representation and engagement of under-represented groups on the Licensing Forum
- Equality Outcome 2 – Our licensing policies and procedures remove barriers to access

Council Equal Pay Statement

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

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to ensuring that men and women 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 and 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 will operate a pay system which is transparent, based on clear criteria and free from unlawful bias through the application of the nationally agreed job evaluation scheme and relevant legislation, for all Chief Officers, Local Government Employees. For Teachers and Craft Operatives the Council will comply with nationally agreed pay and conditions of service.

West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to ensuring equal pay structures for all of its employees and will continue to:

- Conduct regular audits to monitor the impact of its pay structure;
- Provide training and guidance for those involved in determining pay;
- Inform employees of how their pay is determined;
- Respond to grievances on equal pay in accordance with the council's Grievance Policy;
- Work in partnership with its recognised trade unions to ensure that the Council provides equal pay; and
- Review progress every 4 years

Appendix 1 - Council mainstreaming progress 2021-25

Mainstreaming Equality in Council Services

Leadership

Our Elected Members have responsibility for championing and promoting equality and diversity within the Council and externally. They engage and listen to the views of our local communities in a number of ways, allowing them to take a more collective approach to addressing inequalities in West Dunbartonshire.

The Chief Executive leads the Strategic Leadership Group which has collective responsibility for ensuring accountability of the whole organisation in delivering our equality duties.

Co-ordination and scrutiny - Equality and Diversity working Group

The Council's Equality and Diversity Working Group (EDWG), chaired by an Elected Member, is a key vehicle for ensuring strategic implementation and coordination of plans to improve equality locally. The Equality and Diversity Working Group meets quarterly and is made up of Elected Members and Council Officers from across services. As a working group it provides space for discussion on priorities and actions, and critical appraisal of the equalities work. Its remit includes evaluating progress on our equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Actions.

Community participation and Involvement

To strengthen the profile of equalities in the community, the Council supports the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum. This is a forum for statutory organisations such as Police Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership and community organisations with a focus on equality, such as ISARO Community Initiative, Y- Sort-It, West Dunbartonshire Ethnic Minority Association, West Dunbartonshire Access for All, Women's Aid, West Dunbartonshire Council for Voluntary Service.

Assessing Impact

To drive fairness and to help policy to be as co-ordinated as possible, West Dunbartonshire Council's approach goes beyond the legal requirements of the Specific Equality Duties in Scotland, and integrates Human Rights, Children's Rights, Health and Socio-Economic ('Fairer Scotland Duty') considerations. From April 2025 we have also integrated consideration of the Scottish Consumer Duty into our assessments. We have been building a more intersectional approach into our assessments; continuous improvement in how we assess and mitigate against adverse impacts will continue beyond 2025.

We provide specific training, guidance and support for those involved in impact assessment. You can view our [published Equality Impact Assessment records](#) on our website.

Raising and Maintaining Awareness

It is important for mainstreaming equalities that the Council takes every opportunity to build and maintain awareness of our duties as an employer and provider. This helps deliver on our ambition to support the aspirations of our communities. Members of the Council's Performance and Strategy Team provide briefings to elected members, senior managers and colleagues including members of the Equality and Diversity Working group on Equality and Human Rights matters.

Training, learning and development

All employees joining the Council undertake induction which includes equalities awareness, and the Public Sector Equality Duty. This is complemented by specific equalities training online courses, and themed and tailored face-to-face sessions.

Year	Number of people trained
2021/22	742
2022/23	404
2023/24	631
2024/25	517

Feedback from training and learning events has been positive with all employees who started the courses completing them. Learning has been blended with a series of follow up webinars.

Sports and fitness

West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust (WDLT) is a partner with East Dunbartonshire Leisure, Inverclyde Council in providing the Disability Sports Finder designed to help people of all age find activities in their local area. WDLT has produced British Sign Language (BSL) titled orientation videos for all three of their major facilities. During 2021-2025, WDLT has increased the number of online learning courses including on Disability Equality, Neurodiversity and Deaf Awareness.

Tackling gender-based violence

West Dunbartonshire has historically one of the highest rates of domestic abuse reports to the Police in Scotland. We introduced 'No Home for Domestic Abuse' a zero tolerance policy on domestic abuse within our properties; these measures ensure those experiencing abuse have immediate access to practical help and specialist legal assistance and support.

West Dunbartonshire has put in place Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) to support people at high risk. West Dunbartonshire Council continues to participate in Equally Safe at Work shadow group, for their pilot participation programme supporting the implementation of Equally Safe, the Scottish Government and COSLA joint strategy to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls. The Council developed specific guidance for managers and employees for anyone experiencing abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tackling gender-based violence will remain a focus for 2025-2029.

Case Study: Diversity Monitoring

Since 2021, we have greatly increased diversity monitoring of consultation and engagement exercises so that nearly all surveys have the standard Council question set, with an optional set on preferred communications, as laid out in our refreshed Corporate Guidance. Using this data, we have been better able to gauge need and demand for some communication methods e.g. Easy Read. We have been better able to tell who is and who is not engaging with these processes.

Gaps identified included people aged 16-34; we started work in 2024 to address this gap which will also be represented in our 2025-29 outcomes and mainstreaming actions. We were also able to detect under representation of some ethnic groups locally, which will also be a focus for the next four years.

British Sign Language Action Plan 2024-30

We met with local Deaf people in March 2024 to discuss the desirable content for the Council BSL Plan. One area discussed was BSL video content on our website. Whilst feedback from those who had accessed the videos was good, many older users had not accessed these and said that they would not know how. As a result of this our 2024-30 BSL Plan has a focus on increasing Digital inclusion.

We are also trialling new ways of communicating with Deaf residents and have added an option to be contacted by text rather than email about consultation meetings. We will also be taking forward suggestions about communications with services - the Council's new repairs policy has already taken feedback on board, and a BSL video has been posted that reflects this.

Case Study: Videos about our services in BSL

During 2021-2025 we expanded the width and depth of information available in BSL video. These now covers a wide range of topics including applying for a Council house, asking for repair, what our Library Service offers, Participatory Budgeting, Education services, our housing repairs policy, and tenant participation. We have linked to BSL information on external websites. We directly contacted BSL users and publicised the work through the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum, and through The British Deaf Association Scotland.

We will further expand the range of information available about services in BSL video, from 2025-2029, and actively promote this content to BSL users as well as giving BSL users an opportunity to suggest further content.

Mainstreaming Equality in Education

Developing Inclusiveness of our schools

The Children's Rights Officer has continued to develop Council-wide approaches to ensuring the Rights of the Child are understood and upheld. The Rights Respecting Schools Programme continues to be implemented across our service, and it is anticipated all of our schools will have achieved the Bronze level of award by March 2025, with many achieved or progressing towards Silver.

We have a fully established network of Children's Rights Ambassadors in all establishments and curriculum resources have been prepared for use which can be tailored for appropriateness.

The Rights Advisory Board is now operational. The board has met with a member from the Council's Planning department and will meet with the Food and Nutrition Coordinator. This is an evolving group and will be a source of views from children and young people for services. The Board is also undertaking a raising awareness campaign for children's rights and the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC), starting with creating an information short film.

The Children's Rights Officer supports professional learning and trained this year's Newly Qualified Teachers. 92% of participants rated training as successful in improving knowledge and feeling more confident in engaging with rights-based practices.

In collaboration with the Citizens Advice Bureau and Glasgow Caledonian University a programme of learning for secondary school pupils around the theme of Poverty Anti-stigma was developed and implemented. There are 20 young people participating and their views and classwork have directly influenced the shape of the contents of the lesson pack.

Develop skills of staff in supporting and developing inclusive practices

Our ASN Strategy continues to develop staff knowledge, skills and delivery of inclusive practices, supporting all learners. Notable progress has been made in the following:

In Years 1- 3 of the Child Inclusive Research into Curriculum Learning Education (CIRCLE) implementation, all schools have committed a representative to work as a CIRCLE Champion to facilitate the development of the framework in all of our mainstream schools. The 37 CIRCLE Champions engage in collaborative planning within local learning community groups to enhance the integration of inclusive practices through planning, joint working and the sharing of good practice.

Recent emphasis on parental engagement further strengthens the progression of the framework by ensuring that parents are informed, empowered, and actively involved in processes, reinforcing the school-home partnership critical for pupil success. The

sustained commitment of all stakeholders is key to realising the long-term aims and impact of CIRCLE on creating fully inclusive educational environments.

The implementation of Social Communication, Emotional Regulation, Transactional Supports (SCERTS) in five out of seven specialist settings has ensured consistent approaches to using the SCERTS framework with parents/carers at review points for their children. Within each of the 5 specialist settings 'SCERTS Brew & Blether' sessions have been effective in supporting parental engagement and understanding of SCERTS. Feedback from all sessions has been very positive with attendees agreeing that sessions have positively impacted on their understanding of the framework in supporting their child. Parental feedback highlighted SCERTS for enhancing their children's well-being, academic progress, social skills, and confidence whilst supporting effective home/schools' collaboration.

Work is underway to support our care experienced children and young people through tracking of attendance and attainment with targeted interventions to address gaps. Through the Central Support Service (CSS) bid process, an acting principal teacher and class teacher provide enhanced support to 23 care experienced young people across nine primary and two secondary schools. Care Connections, a partnership approach to support with Y-Sort-it, are providing additional support to 12 pupils across nine schools and CSS, Care Connections and the Senior Phase team work in partnership to coordinate provision and improve outcomes with a focus on improving engagement, attainment and destinations.

The Keeping the Promise Award is rolling out to Early Learning and Childcare Centres (ELCCs) and school establishments via a Train the Trainer model with the aim of all teaching staff completing it over the next two years. Most ELCC leads, primary and secondary leads have engaged in the Train the Trainer sessions, four primary and four ELCCs trainers have received I Promise certificates and one secondary school has gained the We Promise Award at establishment level. Teaching staff will be supported in developing their knowledge of the priorities of The Promise in education and their duty as corporate parents. It promotes the use of non-stigmatising language around care and an understanding of how educators can work together to improve outcomes for care experienced young people.

Supporting Young People during the Covid pandemic

During the pandemic Council services, Community Planning Partners and third sector organisations worked together to meet the needs of the people of West Dunbartonshire including children and young people.

The Crisis Support Team developed a holistic checklist to explore the emerging needs with people from families affected by COVID-19. This approach allowed the Council to provide direct and speedy access to welfare rights (benefit maximisation); debt management, employment support (furloughed/redundancy support); and emergency food supplies while exploring other emerging issues.

In January 2020, the Thrive programme was started by the Council's Working 4U Team to help young people taking their first steps into employment. The programme is open to any person aged between 16 - 24 providing one to one support to with the basic tools required to begin seeking employment. Over 240 people have engaged up to March 2025.

The addressing digital exclusion initiative supported disadvantaged households who did not have broadband, or experienced high costs for digital connectivity during the pandemic and lockdown periods. This complemented the 'Connecting Scotland' programme where equipment was distributed to families, assisting them to overcome challenges in accessing vital services

In January 2021, Educational services produced a Remote Learning Policy to support everyone involved in children young people's education, including young people, parents and carers, teachers and support staff.

Our Child poverty reports from [2020/21](#) and [2021/22](#) detail steps taken to mitigate the effects of COVID 19, including helping make sure children had access to free school meals, and addressing wider food insecurity.

Following COVID 19, Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) school Mentor Support Teams have been re-established in all five mainstream high schools and staff have participated in MVP training led by Education Scotland.

Mainstreaming Equality in Licensing

Although the Licensing Board has a separate legal status from West Dunbartonshire Council it is resourced entirely by the Council. The Licensing Board staff are employees of the Council and benefit directly from the Council's attempts to build awareness of the Council's actions, already taken or proposed by the Council with regard to equalities.

The close connection between Board and Council allows the Board to benefit directly from actions already taken or proposed by the Council's Equality Mainstreaming Report.

This means equality is into account by the Board, and its supporting officers, during the course of its business to ensure fairness for all.

Examples of work during 2021-25 include the consultation work on the potential licensing of Sexual Entertainment Venues, and ensuring joint working on related agendas, for example the West Dunbartonshire Substance Use Prevention Strategy.

Routine licensing inspections are now taking place across all licence regimes. Officers are considering customers' protected characteristics when carrying out inspections and feeding back to licence holders as appropriate in relation to action points.

We involved young people in the Licensing Forum meetings so as to capture their views around how the sale of alcohol impact on them. We also arranged for Health colleagues to share the Planet Youth survey data which dealt with the sale of alcohol with the Forum

Four new policies during that time were subject to robust EIAs - short-term lets, gambling, sexual entertainment venues and alcohol. In particular, the working group of the Licensing Forum looked closely at matters that may impact on children and young people.

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Appendix 2 - Equality Outcomes progress 2021-25

Council Equality Outcomes progress 2021-25

In 2021 West Dunbartonshire Council set itself an ambitious set of outcomes which matched its commitment in this area. Outcomes 1 on participation and 2 Gypsy/travellers accommodation have been progressed well. This is also the case for Outcome 5 on reducing the disability pay gap. Outcome 3 on increasing employment diversity has shown some progress on increasing the proportion of BME people in the workforce. Progress on Outcome 4 has remained challenging.

1. Council Equality Outcome 1 - Increase participation of BME people, disabled people and young people in Community Empowerment and Capacity Building, and Community Budgeting in West Dunbartonshire

We facilitated engagement between the Gypsy/Travellers community, including members of the community now living in mainstream housing, and our Planning colleagues during preparation of the Local Development Plan. We are extending this consultation to include the next plan for the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority, with officers from the Authority invited to meet with the group. This kind of engagement will be particularly useful in assessing need for additional sites and the nature and location of required stopping points.

We met with three groups of young people during our Budget Conversation session in 2024. Feedback was reported to Council and was also used to inform Equality Impact Assessment work. Engagement with young people could still be improved and this will remain a priority for 25-29.

Engagement with BME people and disabled people has been strong, through the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum, and in terms of responses to our Citizen's Panel and Budget surveys. Diversity monitoring has revealed an under representation of some ethnic groups, and increasing their participation will be a focus for 25-29.

2. Council Equality Outcome 2 - Better meet accommodation needs of Gypsy/Travellers travelling through and staying in West Dunbartonshire

We engaged with residents of the Gypsy/Travellers site at Dennystoun Forge, and satisfaction with the Council as a landlord increased from 91.7% to 94.1% between 2020/21 and 2023/24. We have invested in the site and have full compliance with the Scottish Government minimum site standards with regular site inspections and follow up works to ensure we continue to meet these standards.

A co-ordinator with responsibility for the site works closely with the residents and the Council's Tenant Participation team, to ensure on site standards and improved communication and relationships. We have built a relationship with Minority Ethnic Carers of Older People Project (MECOPP) supporting engagement with tenants to build awareness of opportunities and make them easier to access. We hold monthly meetings and provide the minutes in a newsletter style developed in conjunction with the residents.

A wholesale renewal of the Dennystoun Forge Gypsy/Traveller site has been identified as a priority in the West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2025/26 – 2029/30. We are working closely with the community to develop detailed plans for the site.

3. Council Equality Outcome 3 - The Council aims to attract more diverse talent by reviewing our policies and practices to ensure that there are no barriers to entering employment for these groups

We support disabled applicants into employment through guaranteed interviews for people with a disability who meet the essential criteria of a post and also offer reasonable adjustments. Prospective employees can talk to us about flexible working at the recruitment stage which supports with the removal of some barriers for applicants who are disabled. We have a Flexible Recruitment Scheme and have signed up to and advocate the Family Friendly Working Scotland campaign "Happy to Talk Flexible Working."

Flexible working is offered from day one, where this can be accommodated. The Council is a 'Disability Confident Employer' highlighted in job adverts. The scheme aims to help employ and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. It was developed by employers and disabled people's representatives to make it rigorous but easily accessible. My Job Scotland have also confirmed that following an internal audit, the Council have achieved the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 which demonstrates reasonable accessibility for disabled candidates to be able to apply.

The proportion of BME staff increased from 0.34% to 0.7% from 20/21 to 24/25. The Council recognises that our current workforce profile still shows an under representation of BME employees in comparison to the West Dunbartonshire demographic which is currently 1.5%.

The recruitment of BME people remains a challenge nationally and work carried out through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework did not identify any good practice in the recruitment process that the Council have not already adopted. A working group will review the Council's recruitment practices as part of the 5-year People First Strategy on Employee Lifecycle. Year 1 focused on recruitment and as part of actions to attract and recruit more candidates from Black Asian and Minority Ethnic groups. Looking at workforce profile and collection of and use of equality data will also be a focus.

4. Council Equality Outcome 4 - The Council will aim within the next four years to reduce occupational segregation within predominantly male/female roles

The Council recognises from its current Equalities annual report, and from horizontal and vertical segregation analysis, that there are roles that are predominantly occupied by either males or females. During the 2022/23 Recruitment Audit no barriers related to the Council's recruitment and selection process were identified impacting on females accessing full-time employment or undertaking traditionally male-gendered roles. Through the analysis, it was identified that occupational segregation remains a challenge for both male and female dominated roles. Action to address horizontal occupational segregation formed part of the 2022/2023 Equal Pay Audit and Statement which included as part of the recommendations a review of Terms & Conditions which contribute to pay differences between male and female employees.

132 of the 213 highest wage earners in the Council, which equates to 62% are female. Actively promoting the availability of different types of flexible working options in Senior Management posts could help to increase this and align with the workforce profile which is 72% female. The work undertaken to attain the Equally Safe at Work accreditation will further support this. Ensuring that job profiles are free of gendered language and unnecessary selection criteria will support the Council in attracting the best candidates.

5. Council Equality Outcome 5 - Reduce the Disability pay gap

The table shows data from an analysis exercise carried out on disability pay gaps for our workforce. A gap as close to zero as possible is most desirable. A negative figure denotes a gap in favour of disabled employees.

2022/2023	2023/24	2024/25
3.68%	1.07%	-0.2%

Disabled people are represented across most grades suggesting that there are no significant barriers to disabled individuals accessing professional level roles. The increase in disclosure rates of equalities monitoring information will have influenced this figure as it is subject to significant change if there are small changes to numbers in this group. Although there has been an increase in disclosure, the Equalities Monitoring report over the last three years shows that disability status is unrecorded for just under 40% of the group and, as with all employee groups, unknowns could denote that employees have disabilities that they have chosen not to disclose which may impact the Disability pay gap figures.

As part of the Employee Wellbeing Group, guidance has been developed to support managers support disabled people to enter and remain in employment for example, the use of disability passports is promoted. The Council will continue to develop its practice, and we remain a disability confident employer.

Education Outcomes Progress 2021-25

In the area of Education, we set ourselves stretching outcomes.

1. Education Equality Outcome 1 - Young women, disabled and Black and minority ethnic young people are supported and leave school with positive destinations

All Head teachers undertook professional learning related to these outcomes and the tracking, monitoring and targeted interventions required to improve transitions. Specialist and mainstream transition guidance and good practice was developed and shared.

There has been a significant rise in female students undertaking Foundation Apprenticeships in 'Engineering' from 14.2% to 18.2% between 2021/22 and 2023/24.

Using the Skills Development Scotland data on the participation measure, which includes 16 -19-year-olds, who are participating in employment, education, or other training or development, the percentage of those identifying as disabled who did not participate in West Dunbartonshire fell from 9.8% in 2021 to 8.5% in 2024.

Data from BME groups for 2024 showed a non-participation rate of 3.7% (with 2% for Scotland) compared to 5.3% (4% for Scotland) for white groups, data for earlier years is not available for BME groups due to low numbers and therefore confidentiality at Council area level.

Non-participation rates for females and males varied as shown in the table below

	Female WD	Female Scotland	Male WD	Male Scotland
2024	4.6%	3.4%	6%	3.9%
2023	4%	3.4%	5.8%	4.0%
2022	5.4%	3.5%	6.8%	4.4%
2021	4.5%	2.8%	5.2%	3.6%

2. Education Equality Outcome 2 - Raise Attainment in Male pupils in Literacy and Numeracy

The difference between females and males in primary achieving the appropriate in numeracy has decreased in 2024, such that males are now performing similarly to females in numeracy, which is a continuation of an ongoing trend since 2023.

The difference between females and males in S3 achieving Third or Fourth level in numeracy has decreased in 2024, such that males are now performing better

than females in numeracy, which is a continuation of an ongoing trend since 2022.

3. Equalities Outcome 3 – Raise Attainment in BME pupils in Literacy and Numeracy

Attainment at primary school level has in general seen improvements over the last four years. Comparatively, BME groups are still below the Scottish and West Dunbartonshire average for literacy; in relation to numeracy the gap between the West Dunbartonshire average and BME groups has narrowed although both are still lower than the Scottish average.

BME students attaining national levels at Primary schools compared with WDC overall and Scotland overall

	WDC BME Literacy	WDC Overall Literacy	Scot* BME Literacy	WDC BME Numeracy	WDC Overall numeracy	Scot* BME Numeracy
2023/24	69.8%	72%	76%	79.4%	79%	83%
2022/23	68.2%	73%	75%	76.4%	80%	82%
2021/22	61.2%	71%	73%	72.7%	78%	81%
2020/21	61.1%	62%	70%	68.1%	72%	79%

In three of the four sets of results there has been significant progress over the last four years, numeracy at secondary school level fell in 2022/23 however it recovered similar levels the in 2023/24. Literacy levels in 2023/24 for BME groups was higher than the Scottish average, however in relation to numeracy these are slightly below the Scottish average.

BME students attaining national levels in Secondary schools

Considerable progress was made by BME pupils in literacy and numeracy, by the end of the period BME pupils had exceeded the overall attainment rates for West Dunbartonshire in both areas. BME in West Dunbartonshire pupils exceeded the Scotland rate for literacy and nearly matched the Scotland rate for numeracy.

	WDC BME Literacy	WDC Overall Literacy	Scot* BME Literacy	WDC BME Numeracy	WDC Overall Numeracy	Scot* BME Numeracy
2023/24	95.3%	92.0%	91%	93%	85.2%	95%
2022/23	80.8%	87.1%	91%	88.5%	87.9%	95%
2021/22	78.4%	82.4%	88%	94.6%	88.1%	94%
2020/21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) was not collected for secondary schools in 2021 due to COVID.

Licensing Outcomes progress 2021-25

In the area of Licensing, we identified the following key priorities.

1. Licensing Equality Outcome 1 - We will work with license holders, partners and other Council services, to ensure inclusive and safety behaviour and environments on and around license premises, supporting community safety priorities

Following the pandemic, we assisted in the re-establishment of Pub Watch meetings and attended to share good practice around licensing matters. These meetings are an important forum for sharing best practice between operators and to exchange information around incidents.

Licensing Standards Officers have carried out inspections of licensed premises across West Dunbartonshire to make sure that the premises operate in accordance with their premises licence which is vital to making sure that the premises are safe.

When developing its new statement of licensing policy, the Licensing Board consulted widely with a range of stakeholders so to take into account a wide range of voices.

2. Licensing Equality Outcome 2 - Widen participation in shaping services among underrepresented groups

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament have joined the Licensing Forum and provide regular updates to the Forum around issues that impact on young people. The Licensing Forum has a role in keeping the functions of the Licensing Board under review.

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.



British Sign Language users can contact us via contactSCOTLAND@BSL, the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service on 01389737198

Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaighinn ann an cànanan eile, ann an clò mòr, agus ann an cruth claisneachd ma thèid iarraidh

Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formacie audio.

Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

Ukrainian

Цей документ також доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та в аудіоформаті за запитом.

Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔



West Dunbartonshire Council, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL



equalities@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

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