



**NEWPORT**  
CITY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR DINAS  
**CASNEWYDD**

**NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL**  
**STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024 - 2028**  
**DRAFT CONSULTATION REPORT**

# INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Under the Equality Act (2010), each local authority in Wales must publish a Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) that sets out the objectives it wants to achieve over a four-year period. These priorities are called “Equality Objectives.”

Building on the work delivered in our previous SEPs, this plan outlines how Newport City Council will meet the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and our priorities to advance equality for protected groups, people with care experience and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage in every aspect of our work.

This consultation report introduces Newport City Council’s Equality Objectives and describes the process we undertook to identify them, including the relevant evidence considered and the engagement undertaken to develop draft Equality Objectives.

## OUR EQUALITIES DUTIES

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the general duty (also known as the Public Sector Equality Duty or PSED) and is supported by specific duties which are different in England, Scotland, and Wales.

### PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

**Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions and delivering services we must have due regard to:**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (protected characteristics are explained later in this report).
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When considering how to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don’t, we also need to:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and are connected to that characteristic.
- Meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low. We must also think

about how it will tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

### WELSH SPECIFIC DUTIES

In Wales, the PSED goes further and contains specific statutory duties, also known as the [Wales Specific Equality Duty](#), which public bodies in Wales must comply with. This includes publishing a SEP that sets out the Council’s Equality Objectives to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

The Equality Act 2010 makes it against the law to discriminate against someone because of their protected characteristics, which are characteristics where evidence shows people may experience discrimination.

- ▶ Age
- ▶ Disability
- ▶ Gender Reassignment
- ▶ Pregnancy and Maternity
- ▶ Race
- ▶ Religion or Belief
- ▶ Sex
- ▶ Sexual orientation
- ▶ Marriage and Civil Partnership

### CARE EXPERIENCE

At its meeting in January 2024, our Council unanimously agreed on a motion to adopt care experience as a protected characteristic. Similar to protected characteristics under the Equality Act, we will consider the needs and challenges encountered by people with care experience

# DEVELOPING OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

This section explains how we developed our draft Equality Objectives before they were taken to public consultation.

The development of our draft Equality Objectives started with examining the broad themes identified across the Council's existing strategic documents, including our [Corporate Plan](#) and the [Gwent Well-being Assessment](#). These documents identify prevalent issues and highlight some key areas of focus based on an understanding of local or national need and existing research.

As part of this process, we also considered key external documents, such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) State of the Nation 'Is Wales Fairer' reports (2018 & 2023), which provide a comprehensive overview of equality in Wales and support evidence-based decision making to address inequality. To ensure our draft objectives aligned with national priorities, we also mapped our draft Equality Objectives against the Welsh Government's strategies and plans, which set out actions to deliver a more fair and equitable Wales, including key policy interventions such as the [Anti-racist Wales Action Plan](#) and [LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales](#).

The key themes identified are presented within the Policy Matrix below:

	CORPORATE PLAN 2022 - 27	WELSH GOVERNMENT	EHRC*
Leadership, Governance & Involvement	•	•	•
Customer Services & Access	•	•	•
Representative Workforce	•	•	•
Community Cohesion	•	•	•
Equity in Education	•	•	•
Independent Living	•		•

\*Equality and Human Rights Commission

The following draft Equality Objectives were developed and presented to our Strategic Equality Group (SEG) to use as a basis for further consultation:

- **Equality Objective 1 (Leadership, Governance & Involvement)** - Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement.
- **Equality Objective 2 (Customer Service and Access)** - Newport City Council's services are accessible to everyone in Newport, providing services that are both inclusive and considerate of individual need.
- **Equality Objective 3 (Representative Workforce)** - Newport City Council has a workforce that represents the city and is a workplace with an inclusive culture which recruits, develops and retains staff.
- **Equality Objective 4 (Community Cohesion)** - Newport City Council promotes positive relationships between different communities, supporting integration and effectively identifying emerging community tensions.
- **Equality Objective 5 (Equity in Education)** - Newport City Council supports schools and settings to positively address any inequality in provision, attainment, and early career pathways, of known groups of vulnerable learners.
- **Equality Objective 6 (Independent Living)** - Newport City Council contributes to the city being a great place to live, to grow older and live independently, and has in place a range of services that accommodates people in different situations.

Public engagement and consultation commenced following the Strategic Equality Group's endorsement of our draft Equality Objectives as a basis for consultation.

**Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd cymunedol a fformatau eraill ar gais. This document is available in Welsh, and community languages or other formats on request.**

# OUR CONSULTATION

Public engagement and consultation were undertaken following the endorsement of our draft Equality Objectives as a basis for consultation by the Council's Strategic Equality Group. The main aim of this consultation was to capture the views and opinions of Newport residents, particularly those from seldom heard communities and other key stakeholders on our draft Equality Objectives and Strategic Equality Plan, including their thoughts on what actions we could take to tackle inequality and promote inclusion.

To ensure we got the right balance of views and a complete picture of equality in Newport, we engaged with the public through online consultation exercises aimed at the general public and targeted focus groups with equality stakeholder groups, community partners and other interested parties.

## ONLINE CONSULTATION

Online consultation ran for 12 weeks from the 11 December 2023 until 25 February 2024. This process included an online public-wide SNAP survey for all citizens. The opportunity to participate in our SEP Consultation Survey was promoted on the landing page of the council website for ease of access and advertised across various stakeholder groups, on social media platforms and other channels (in both Welsh and English). The survey and opportunity to participate was also made available in community languages to enable residents who may experience language barriers to participate.

A total of 103 responses were received through our dedicated SEP online public-wide SNAP survey. This survey specifically asked respondents:

- If they agree or disagree with our draft Equality Objectives and why
- If we should consider and include any other Equality Objectives
- If there are any areas of inequality that are not addressed by our draft Equality Objectives
- If our draft Equality Objectives improve outcomes for people in Newport who are socio-economically disadvantaged
- If they think we should focus on any specific measures, initiatives or protected characteristics.
- If they face any barriers when trying to access the Council's services
- What we can do better/what needs to change/what can we do differently
- Any other comments on our Strategic Equality Plan or draft Equality Objectives

While consultation results suggest that our staff and residents thought we were focusing on the right equality objectives, with majority of people agreed with our draft objectives. However, respondents also highlighted the inequalities that exist within local communities and have given us a clear steer on how we can improve our services and advance equality for everyone.

## FOCUS GROUPS

To ensure the involvement of a range of people in developing our SEP, we mapped specific groups across protected characteristics to seek the views of different communities and ensure a good qualitative representation of the lived experiences of communities across Newport. We engaged with a wide range of equality stakeholder groups and sectors throughout our consultation period. However, it is evident while consistent effort was made to engage various stakeholders and arrange targeted focus to seek their views, some did not engage in the process.

It is imperative to note that when asked about barriers to engagement, most stakeholders cited consultation fatigue due to over-consultation as their primary barrier. This may be due to several public sector bodies consulting on their SEPs during this period.

# CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

## EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 1: LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & INVOLVEMENT

*Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement.*

63% of our SEP online survey respondents stated they agreed with this proposed draft Equality Objective.

Statements from online consultation and supporting exercises broadly suggested that we have scope to improve how we promote and demonstrate leadership in the field of equality.

Some respondents expressed specific concerns about a lack of visible leadership in this area, ranging from the Council needing to be more visible in promoting equality (in the community and online) and marking key dates acknowledging the contributions or experiences of Newport's diverse communities. Our survey responses and engagement with our Staff Equality Networks also referenced the idea that the Council needed to show stronger leadership and encourage meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

## EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 2: CUSTOMER SERVICE AND ACCESS

*Newport City Council's services are accessible to everyone in Newport, providing services that are both inclusive and considerate of individual need.*

62% of our SEP online survey respondents stated they agreed with this proposed draft Equality Objective.

Statements from online consultation and supporting exercises painted a mixed picture of the accessibility of the Council's frontline services. Some of our feedback suggests the shift to online services prompted by the global pandemic has modernised the Council's services and significantly improved customer experiences. However, it is evident this has exacerbated the barriers experienced by some groups and that this new service delivery model needed to be more inclusive of customers' individual needs.

## EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 3: REPRESENTATIVE WORKFORCE

*Newport City Council has a workforce that represents the city and is a workplace with an inclusive culture which recruits, develops and retains staff.*

65% of our SEP online survey respondents stated they agreed with this proposed draft Equality Objective.

Statements from online consultation and supporting exercises highlighted the importance of workplace diversity to participants, with some respondents stating that an organisation's visible commitment to inclusion and diversity was important when choosing an employer. Some respondents who agreed with this objective stated they felt it was difficult to enter the organisation as an external candidate and were unsure if they could have a successful career at Newport City Council.

While this objective received widespread support from our Staff Equality Networks and wider staff, all noted that actions needed to include improvements to workplace policies, development opportunities for underrepresented staff, and identifying barriers to retention.

In addition, it is key to note that consultation feedback suggests a lack of understanding of the opportunities available at the Council, especially amongst people from potentially marginalised communities.

#### EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 4: COMMUNITY COHESION

*Newport City Council promotes positive relationships between different communities, supporting integration and effectively identifying emerging community tensions.*

63% of respondents to our online SEP survey stated they agreed with the proposed Equality Objective.

In addition, during focus groups with resident migrants, including Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), participants identified this objective as key to facilitating their integration into the local community.

#### EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 5: EQUITY IN EDUCATION

*Newport City Council supports schools and settings to positively address any inequality in provision, attainment, and early career pathways, of known groups of vulnerable learners.*

65% of our SEP online survey respondents stated they agreed with this proposed draft Equality Objective.

Statements from online consultation and focus groups highlight concerns about the prevalence of identity-based bullying in schools and reporting mechanisms for bullying, harassment, and discrimination, including online hate. Some respondents also felt that the Council needed to do more work within schools to address attainment gaps for vulnerable or potentially marginalised groups of learners.

#### EQUALITY OBJECTIVE 6: INDEPENDENT LIVING

*Newport City Council contributes to the city being a great place to live, to grow older and live independently, and has in place a range of services that accommodates people in different situations.*

52% of our SEP online survey respondents stated they agreed with this proposed draft Equality Objective.

This objective received the least support from respondents. While most participants stated that access to affordable housing was an on-going challenging, this issue was exacerbated by other difficulties, for example, the cost-of-living crisis, multiple levels of deprivation and barriers to accessing support services, including Council services.

## CONSULTATION QUESTIONS

### Equality Objective 1 – Leadership, governance & involvement

“Newport City Council has strong leadership and clear governance around equality, ensuring robust monitoring processes and regular meaningful stakeholder engagement”.

This Equality Objective focuses on the role that Newport City Council can play in promoting equalities, how we can put the agenda at the heart of our decision-making processes, how we ensure that we are delivering against our commitments, and that we involve local people in the decisions that affect them.

2.	<b>Do you agree with the proposed draft Equality Objective 1 (Leadership, Governance, and Involvement) that we have set out?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly Agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

3.	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

1.	<b>I am responding as... (you may tick more than one box if appropriate)</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> A Newport resident
	<input type="checkbox"/> A Newport City Council employee
	<input type="checkbox"/> A Newport City Council elected member
	<input type="checkbox"/> Representing a third sector/ voluntary organisation or community group
	<input type="checkbox"/> Representing a business
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:

### Draft Equality Objective 2 – Customer Service and Access

“Newport City Council’s services are accessible to everyone in Newport, providing services that are both inclusive and considerate of individual need”.

This Equality Objective focuses on the degree to which the services delivered by the council are accessible to the public, it also focuses on how we consider the diverse needs of communities when designing new services or amending existing ones.

<b>4.</b>	<b>Do you agree with the proposed draft Equality Objective 2 (Customer Service and Access) that we have set out?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly Agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

<b>5.</b>	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

#### **Draft Equality Objective 3 – Representative Workforce**

“Newport City Council has a workforce that represents the city and is a workplace with an inclusive culture which recruits, develops and retains staff”.

This Equality Objective focuses on our staff, how we can be more representative of the communities we serve at every level throughout the organisation, and how we can support staff to achieve their potential.

<b>6.</b>	<b>Do you agree with the proposed draft Equality Objective 3 (Representative Workforce) that we have set out?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly Agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

<b>7.</b>	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

#### **Draft Equality Objective 4 – Community Cohesion**

“Newport City Council contributes to the City of Newport being a safe space for all, promoting positive relationships between different communities, supporting integration and effectively identifying emerging community tensions”.



This Equality Objective focuses on building communities that have shared values, where diversity is welcomed and embraced, and where people feel connected to the place that they live.

<b>8.</b>	<b>Do you agree with the proposed draft Equality Objective 4 (Community Cohesion) that we have set out?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly Agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

<b>9.</b>	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

**Draft Equality Objective 5 – Equity in Education**

“Newport City Council supports schools and settings to positively address any inequality in provision, attainment, and early career pathways, of known groups of vulnerable learners.”.

This Equality Objective focuses on how we work with schools to support them in addressing areas of inequality that may exist between different groups of pupils.

<b>10.</b>	<b>Do you agree with the proposed draft Equality Objective 5 (Equity in Education) that we have set out?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly Agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

<b>11.</b>	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

**Draft Equality Objective 6 – Independent Living**

“Newport City Council contributes to the city being a great place to live, to grow older and live independently”.

This Equality Objective focuses on how the council can support people to live more independently, and how we can offer a greater variety of housing-related support that is responsive to individual need.

12.	<b>Do you agree with the proposed draft Equality Objective 6 (Independent Living) that we have set out?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

13.	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

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14.	<b>Do you think we should consider and include any other objectives within the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-2028?</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

15.	<b>Please tell us why you think this and what other objectives could be included.</b>

16.	<b>Do you think there are any areas of inequality that are not addressed by our draft Equality Objectives and that are of particular importance to you?</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

17.	<b>Please tell us why you think this</b>

Under each of the Equality Objectives, our Strategic Equality Plan will list a number of steps/actions that we will take to achieve the objective. Your answers to the next few questions will help us decide what these actions should be.

18.	<b>Are there any problems you face, or think you may face, when trying to access Newport City Council's services? for example, when visiting a council building, accessing information or service, making a complaint, or requesting a service?</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

19.	<b>Please tell us why you think this.</b>

20.	<b>What can we do better/what needs to change/what can we do differently?</b>

21.	<b>Please tell us if you think we need to focus on any specific measures, initiatives or protected characteristics in our 2024-2028 plan, and why...?</b>

**The Socio-economic Duty**

Living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in society can have an even more negative impact on people who face additional barriers of inequality. The Socio-economic Duty requires some public bodies to consider how their strategic decisions might help reduce inequalities for people who are socio-economically disadvantaged. Some examples of inequalities of outcome include lower paid work, poorer educational attainment, and an increased risk of being a victim of crime.

In our previous Strategic Equality Plan, we embedded our responsibilities under the Socio-economic Duty in council processes, including strategic decision-making. This duty will remain an important part of the development and delivery of our new Strategic Equality Plan.

22.	<b>Do you think our Strategic Equality Plan and Equality Objectives will improve outcomes for people in Newport who are socio-economically disadvantaged?</b>	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Partly Agree
	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

23.	<b>Do you have any further comments?</b>

24.

**Do you have any other comments on our Strategic Equality Plan or the proposed Equality Objectives?**

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