



Equality & Diversity Progress Report

2021-2022

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Policy & Performance Manager

Foreword

“BCP Council plays a vital role as an employer, service provider and community leader.

“We are committed to demonstrating respect for difference, working proactively to eliminate discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity for all, and building positive relationships and understanding between people of diverse backgrounds who live, work, or visit the communities that we serve.

“Our aim is to exceed our duties under equality legislation and in doing so establish a community where everyone matters, feels safe, can participate in public life and achieve their full potential feeling they are treated with respect and fairness.”



Councillor Drew Mellor
Leader of BCP Council



Councillor Bobbie Dove
Portfolio Holder
Community & Regulatory Services

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1.Introduction

The Corporate Strategy for BCP Council, together with the Big Plan sets out BCP Council's vision, mission, ambition, and priorities, as well as the values which underpin the way BCP Council develops and delivers its services.

The principles of equality are embedded in the Corporate Strategy to ensure that fairness and the progression of equality are central to our development as we continue to grow as a new council, and they become part of the DNA of the organisation to make sure people remain central to everything we do. This is increasingly evident in our organisational culture and is further demonstrated through [Our Values](#), and our approach to 'business as usual'.

Five major concepts make up the Big Plan. They show how we deliver our commitment to improve people's lives and recognises the council's commitment to understanding and valuing the diversity of our communities.

In July 2021 we introduced an Equalities Footprint which contributes to monitoring and measuring our progress on equality and our obligations as a public authority as community leaders, service providers and a major employer. It also enables us to track progress of our vision, how we advance equality and is an indicator of how well we are doing in meeting our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

For the first time we have assessed performance against the six domains of the Equality and Human Rights Commissions (EHRC) Performance Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights. This framework helps to show the outcomes or difference that we have made to people's lives because of our continued commitment to ensure equality & diversity is embedded in the way that we deliver develop and design our services and gives a clearer indication whether we are accomplishing the equality objectives that are embedded within the Corporate Strategy. Although we have used the EHRC performance measurement framework to track our progress we are still mindful and pay close attention to each of the protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010, and the impact of intersectionality when considering equality impact sand outcomes. The EHRC framework provides a systematic way to assess a broader variety of improved outcomes that contribute to the reduction of the equality gap.

This report provides a snapshot of the work over the past 18 months from across the Council that is driving our equality agenda forward and gives an indication of our direction of travel on our journey to date. We recognise that our residents and customers do not all have the same experience or access to our services and as we continue to learn and understand more about the changing needs of our increasingly diverse communities, we have responded by adapting and changing our policies and procedures, practices, and processes, and the design and delivery of our services and employment practice.

The needs of our residents and staff have been central to our approach. There is a different feel to equality within BCP Council which is evident from the shift in organisational culture that has taken place since our inception.

There is more understanding and confidence among our staff and councillors.

There is far greater understanding of the importance of equality and the application of the public sector equality duty in business as usual and the reduction of reputational and financial risk.

Going forward, other ways will be found to make the overall picture of progress clearer still and evermore transparent. This will help us improve more outcomes for people that reduce inequality, so we narrow the equality gap further still.

2. The Big Plan

The Big Plan consists of five themes that will deliver big changes across the whole area including the creation of jobs, improvements in the local economy and better standards of living. The five themes are underpinned by the work we are doing with communities, culture and children. We have committed ourselves to the delivery of clean, safe and affordable housing; improved lifelong wellbeing, good jobs, and financially sustainable livelihoods for our residents. We are redefining our culture and entertainment offer so they are more inclusive to enhance the sense of belonging across all age groups and communities. We will ensure that BCP area becomes one of the best places in which to live and grow up as a child, through the provision of better health & wellbeing and education from early years through to adulthood. We will create an environment in which people have the opportunity to flourish and reach their full potential.



Iconic: We will increase participation and accessibility to transport to our urban and natural environment. By working with our partners, we will increase diversity in employment opportunities and community life.



Seafront: We will improve our facilities and access to our seafront. We will support people to make healthier life choices so more people can access our beautiful city region and some of the best coastlines in the world. We will support our restaurants and hospitality industry, famous for the quality and imagination of their international food offering and the excellence of their service.



Rejuvenate Poole: We will rejuvenate Poole, bringing a vibrant, attractive, and sustainable mix of residency, business, hospitality, retail, culture, and green spaces within the historic town and on the Quay, creating new employment opportunities.



Infrastructure: We will invest in the physical and digital infrastructure of our coastal city region. We will reduce internet poverty by providing superfast broadband and digital connectivity through exploiting the full potential of digital infrastructure to make BCP a genuinely smart city region. We will use digital data to plan, manage and deliver better services for our residents and businesses.



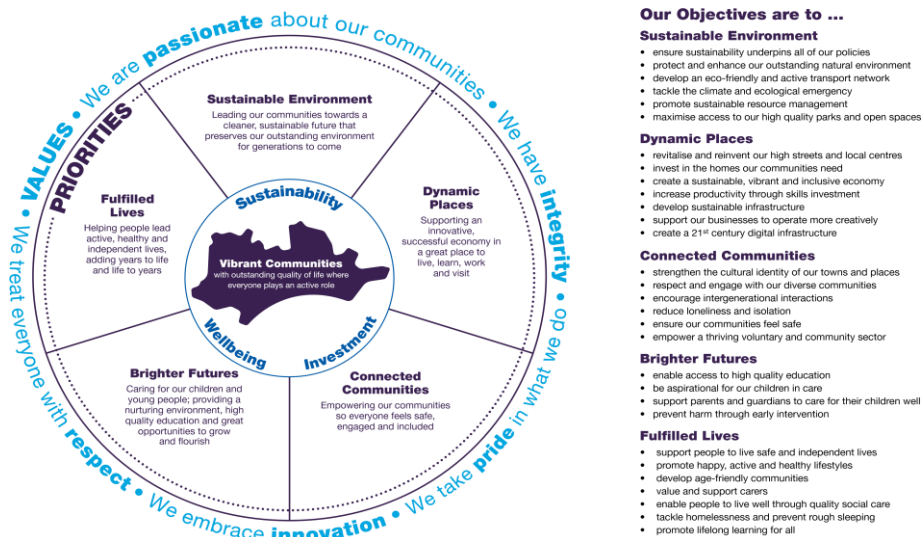
Act at scale: We will use census data to invest in the development of new homes making sure that social housing includes accessible homes for life along with an investment in a sustainable mix of affordable and high-end apartments and houses. Central to the delivery of the Big Plan are Community, Culture and Children.



Community: We will introduce and advance the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) through a whole system approach of better engagement to inform decision making and the development of services. The principles of ABCD allow the council to use lived experiences; individual and collective knowledge; and places people at the centre to co-produce and codesign our services

3. The Corporate Strategy

Our equality objectives are embedded in [The Corporate Strategy](#) as adopted by Cabinet in February 2022.



Fundamental to the councils vision is the building of vibrant communities and the creation of an environment where there is increased participation and where everyone can play an active role in our ambition to build a fairer and more levelled society across the conurbation.

More recently there has been a renewed focus on equity of outcome and the inequality of opportunity. As we rebuild the post covid economy, we are maximising the collective potential of our communities, we are capitalising on the talents of all BCP Councils communities, improving on fairness and are increasingly transparent. We have continued to protect the most vulnerable people; and are reducing the inequality gap in the process.

The advancement of equal treatment and equal opportunities for all peoples requires a deviation from uniformity. It demands that we give everyone equal access and promote the absolute right of all people to be treated fairly as individuals and, to recognise and respond to individual needs and abilities to enable all equal of opportunity to progress.

For each of the five priorities, we have actions, activities and set objectives. We have tangible measures to show improvement and progress to signal where we are succeeding and indicate where we need to improve which can be seen in the following sections.

4. Equalities Footprint

In June 2021 we introduced an Equalities Footprint to help monitor and measure our progress on equality.

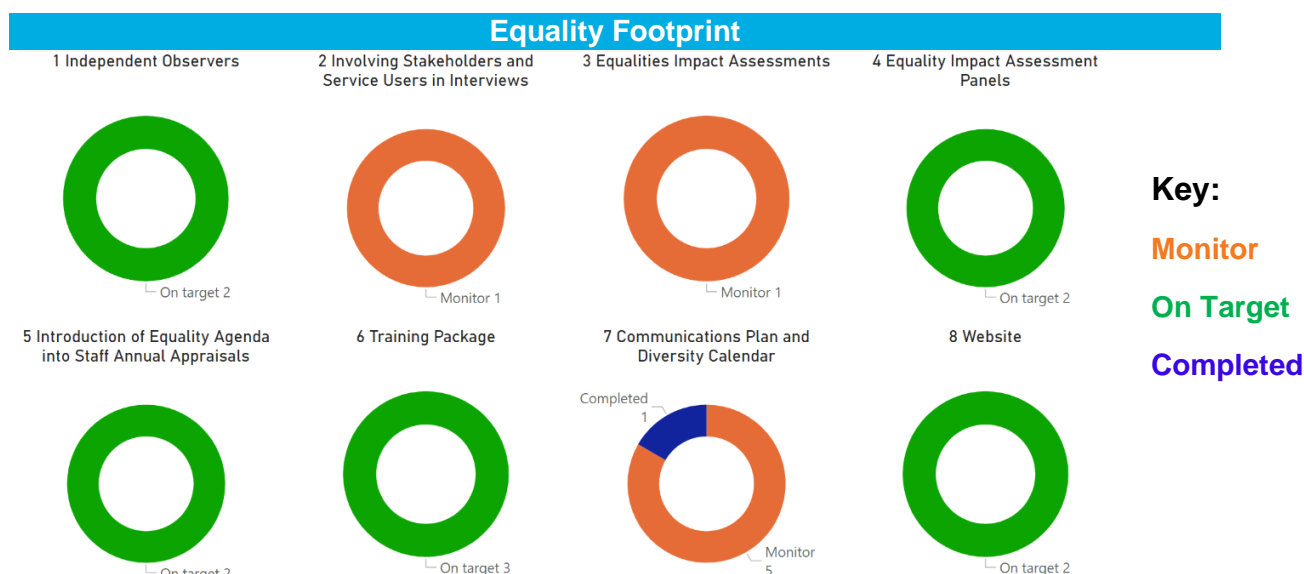
An Equalities Footprint is defined as:

The activities undertaken by the council in accordance with our role that contribute to the delivery of BCP Council's equalities agenda and the duties of the council at individual, team, and service levels.

The equality footprint is informed by eight actions that the council are taking forward:

1. The introduction of independent observers for appointments to posts that attract a salary more than £40,000 per annum, Heads of Service or above, including promotions and secondments to these positions.
2. The inclusion of stakeholders or service users on interview panels, (if appropriate), for all interim, permanent appointments, secondments, or internal promotions to positions that sit within the Senior Leaders Network.
3. The undertaking of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) at the point of registering committee reports and portfolio holder decisions on BCP Council's ModGov system
4. The introduction of EIA Panels
5. The requirement to demonstrate fulfilment of the requirements of the PSED in annual appraisals process enabling staff to evidence how they are contributing to the council's Equalities Footprint and Corporate Strategy.
6. Development of a new hybrid training package that is fit for purpose and takes account of variation in learning styles to enable officers and councillors to understand and discharge their responsibilities under the PSED during their work
7. The delivery of an equality and diversity communication plan and diversity calendar, and production of accessible communication standards
8. Completion of a user-friendly website that conforms to the [public sector accessibility requirements](#) and is easy to read, navigate and access.

The Equalities Footprint not only ensures equality and diversity is at the heart of the council but enables BCP Council to conduct more inclusive decision making and 'joint' delivery of services for those who work, live, and visit BCP area.



The Equality Footprint dashboard above shows that good progress is being made.

A total of nine Independent Observers have been recruited of which seven have been trained in the Councils Recruitment and selection procedures. Additional expressions of interest have been received and further recruitment and training will be undertaken at the right time to ensure that sufficient capacity is available to service recruitment panels as the process becomes embedded throughout the organisation.

Stakeholders and service users have been involved in Children Services interview processes but there are still opportunities to develop this further.

The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process has been improved. Practice and procedure have been amended to ensure EIA prompts are included in all committee reports. Work is ongoing to develop an online EIA tool in line with the Sustainability Decision Impact Assessment tool.

In June 2021, EIA panels were introduced across BCP Council to ensure consistency of approach in the development of EIAs and to provide assurance at all decision gateways, not just committee decisions, that we were meeting our public sector equality duty.

The panel meets weekly. They are made up of independent Service Unit Equality Champions (SUECs), to ensure officers are not marking their own homework and supported by the E&D Policy lead and policy officers.

Feedback from the panel members has been positive. Participants have found them helpful for improving not only their understanding of how to practically discharge the public sector equality duty but given them a wider understanding and respect for all the different ranges of work going forward across the council.

Officers are required to present their EIAs to the panel outlining any changes to a service/policy and demonstrate they have considered the equality implications of the change

and whether they will be positive or negative and who will be impacted and how. Most importantly officers are required to show what mitigating actions can or will be taken to remove or reduce any negative impacts on equality if any are found.

Each EIA is given a RAG rating and an outcome form is completed and returned to the presenting officer, SUEC and Service Director with any observations, comments, or suggestions for improvement.

A review of feedback and learning will be carried out so that good practice can be shared with SUECs to help reduce the risk of non-compliance with the Public Sector equality Duty (PSED). A summary of the panel's activity is presented opposite.

There has recently been a noticeable improvement in the number of EIAs that come out of a panel with a green RAG rating.

A review of the Council's equality and diversity training offer has been conducted, and a training needs analysis has been undertaken. The Council's E-learning training courses have been refreshed and a variety of bespoke training commissioned to develop staff and Councillors to meet the organisation's needs and reduce the risk of non-compliance with the PSED and the possibility of judicial review.

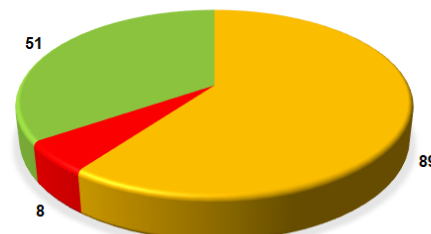
Some aspects of equality training are mandatory for officers; and accessibility to training has improved as the training options now take account of the variance in learning styles among officers and Councillors. All equality and diversity related courses are supportive of continued professional development and enable the council to build a more skilled, knowledgeable and equality confident and competent workforce.

Demonstrating fulfilment of the requirements of the PSED is now an integral part of the Council's annual appraisal process. This encourages staff to evidence how they are contributing to the council's Equalities Footprint and Corporate Strategy and acts as a prompt for discussion between officers and line managers where this needs further exploration.

The development of the Diversity Communication Plan and calendar continues. New events and celebrations are built into the calendar for the year ahead and are being supported with full communication plans.

The Council continues to develop its user-friendly website and a recent accessibility audit confirms that it meets the relevant standards, meaning it is easy to read, navigate and access.

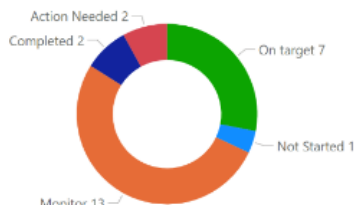
OUTCOME OF EIA'S PRESENTED TO THE EIA PANEL SINCE JUNE



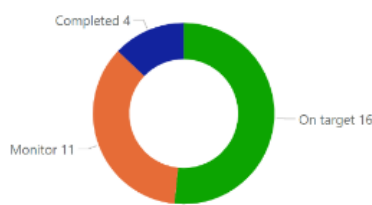
5.Equality Framework for Local Government

Equality Framework for Local Government

1 Understanding and working with your communities



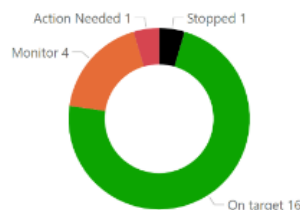
2 Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment



3 Responsive Services and Customer Care



4 Diverse and Engaged Workforce



KEY:

Action Needed

Monitor

On Target

Completed

Not Started

Stopped

More detailed updates of progress under each of the improvement modules of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) are presented below.

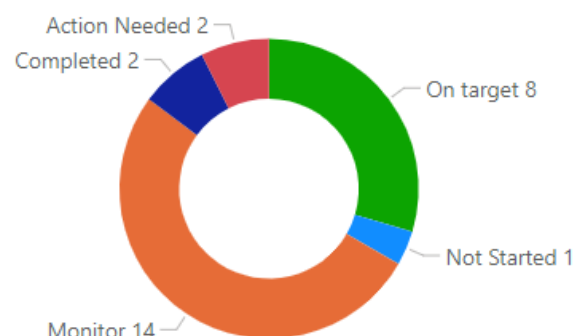
5.1 Understanding and working with your communities

A total of 27 actions included in the Corporate Strategy, the Equalities Footprint and the Equality & Diversity action plan have been identified as contributing to this improvement model of the EFLG.

Progress is promising, suggesting that the council has a good understanding of its communities.

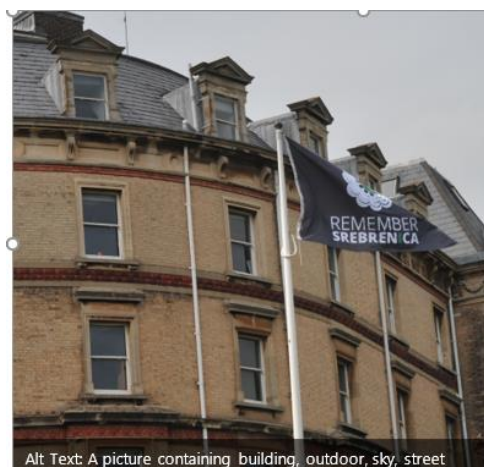
Support provided to community-based groups and to promote events that raise awareness and celebrate diversity across the BCP area has improved as result of increased resources having been made available.

This has led to improved community engagement and stronger participation from the council in community events which promote inclusion and positive relationships between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.



We have increased the resources to promote and support a variety of equality related community-based events which include:

- Poole Museums Gypsy and Travellers Display
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- The Chinese and Jewish New Years
- Holocaust Memorial Day for Gypsy and Travellers
- International Men's Day
- International Women's Day
- LGBTQ History Month
- World Mental Health Day
- Disability History Month
- International Day Against Homophobia
- Bourne Free,
- Black History Month,
- Worlds Aids Days



Alt Text: A picture containing building, outdoor, sky, street

We held a memorial service in our council chambers bringing Muslim, Jewish and other communities together to make sure we continue Remembering Srebrenica whose name has become synonymous with those dark days in July 1995 when, 8,372 men and boys were systematically murdered and buried in mass graves. The victims, who were Muslim, were selected for death based on their identity. This was the worst atrocity on European soil since the Second World War and we continue to show demonstrable support to the people of Ukraine by flying the Ukrainian flag outside of Civic Offices.

We will shortly be hosting an event to celebrate the achievements of women.

Nevertheless, despite the progress that has been made, further action is required to improve the percentage of equality data collected from our customers and staff. This is critical in understanding how accessible our services are and to the development of robust EIAs and further improvement of our decision-making processes.

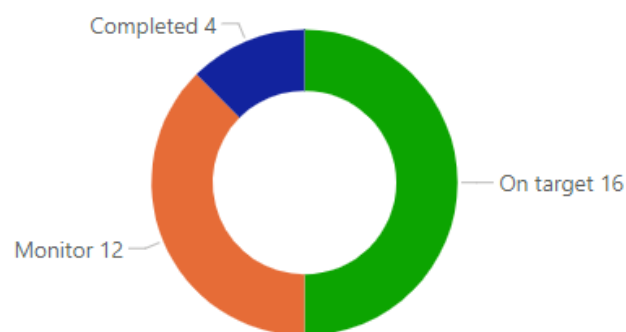
It will also help ensure that there is equity of opportunity in recruitment selection and progression of all people with BCP Council. We are encouraging all staff to ensure their personal equality monitoring data is up to date on our central HR system as this will enable us to connect with colleagues, we want to engage with about issues affecting them in the workplace

Our next steps will be to undertake a mapping exercise to understand and identify the profile of the occupants of key roles in public life across the BCP Council area.

5.2 Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

A total of 32 actions included in the Corporate Strategy, the Equalities Footprint and the Equality & Diversity action plan have been identified as contributing to this improvement model of the EFLG.

The Equality Governance and Delivery Framework, which sets out how equality and diversity is managed across the council, has been reviewed to reflect the roles of the Equality Action Commission, the Equality Impact Assessment panel and to clarify the roles of other supporting services in the Council.



The governance framework is still led by the Strategic Equality Leadership Group, who provide the strategic direction for equality.

The Equality Action Commission is an independent working group, made up of representatives of the Community, Trade Union Congress, and Elected Members.

The governance framework is underpinned by three implementation groups.

- Service Unit Equality Champions (SUECs)
- Staff Network Groups (SNGs)
- Community Equality Champions

SUECs have a key role in helping their services understand and discharge the public sector duty and are key to ensuring the robustness and quality of EIAs and holding others to account at EIA panels.

There is a more comprehensive update of progress with staff network groups later in this report and really good progress has been made here. CMB are currently identifying SNG champions for each of the groups.

Community Equality Champions provide the link between the council our diverse communities. We would like to do more to recognise and celebrate the contribution this group make in supporting communities and helping services respond to their needs.

Specialist support is also provided through the Corporate Support Group, which consists of staff from Policy and Research, Human Resources, Legal, Communications and Marketing teams. The council works in partnership with several agencies to discharge its PSED. This includes the Armed Forces Covenant Agreement which is integrated into decision making processes to support the wider delivery of the Covenant Action Plan.

The council has adopted a Voluntary and Community Strategy which aims to enable a thriving, sustainable and dynamic voluntary community sector and improve the lives of individuals and communities across the BCP area.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in November 21 found there were emerging Green Shoots in relation to the progression of equality. The responding action plan highlighted some steps the council plans to take to improve this perception ahead of their return visit in the autumn 2022.

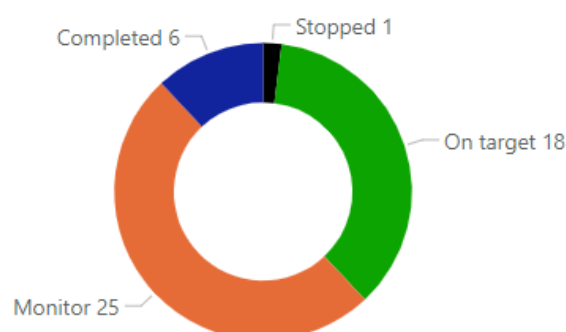
The review noted that there was scope to strengthen some partnerships across BCP communities and elements within the voluntary and community sector. Councillors from all parties have a critical role to play in engaging with communities to improve accessibility to support services and raise awareness of and access to information.

The Councils planning and reporting processes will be monitored more closely to ensure they are equality benchmarked and clear targets are set for improvement. Implementation of the suicide strategy and the delivery of the lifelong learning strategy will be embedded within the councils' partnerships, a point picked up during the Peer Review who recommended that:

"The Council should also consider involving partners earlier in discussions around policy development and priority setting, being clear on the joint outcomes they want to achieve."

5.3 Responsive Services and Customer Care

During the response to COVID-19, the Council demonstrated how quickly it can adapt to introduce new working practices and challenges. The Council developed impactful multi-agency work across the public and voluntary sectors to support those in need, including to bringing those rough sleeping inside. The Council's responsiveness and agility should be applauded with Members, Officers, partners, and communities working effectively and efficiently together. In all 50 actions included in the Corporate Strategy, the Equalities Footprint and the Equality & Diversity action plan are known to have contributed to this improvement model of the EFLG.



Most come from the delivery plan actions in the corporate strategy under the Connected Communities; Brighter Futures and Fulfilled Lives priorities and are a further demonstration of the Council's commitment to embracing and embedding equality and diversity in everything we do.

For our young people, we are working with young minds and key partners to ensure young carers increase the take up of services available to support their needs.

We continue to work with schools to ensure we track young people with disabilities and special educational needs to ensure that those who require Adult Social Care support receive this at the earliest opportunity.

Steps are being taken to make sure the views of children, young people, and their families are fed into the design and delivery of the services they access, so the council has a better understanding of the experience of children and families and the quality of services they provide to them.

We continue to engage with adult carers to encourage them to access support, information and advice and we are actively exploring options for increasing our short break offer.

We are on target to expand the number of dementia friendly communities which will be further supported the appointment of an Age Friendly Communities Coordinator.

We have adopted a Community Engagement & Consultation Strategy which is designed to empower and engage our diverse communities and help us provide more responsive services.

Skills and Learning are continuing to promote access to Career Education Information and Guidance appointments. These are particularly for people where English is not their first language and for people with learning disabilities who want to improve their skill base or improve their confidence and knowledge for everyday life.

Two practical examples, not captured in other updates of how the Council's Community Services coordinate and source support, help community groups and galvanise responsive services are set out below.

Helping families from Afghanistan

In September 2021, BCP Council were notified that 23 Afghanistan Families would be arriving in Bournemouth within 24 hours to be temporarily housed in a hotel for up to three months as part of a resettlement scheme.

Using our community contacts, arrangements were put in place to ensure that their arrival was as smooth and welcoming as possible. This included arranging for the Imam from the Bournemouth Islamic Centre and Central Mosque to attend the hotel to welcome the arrivals. The local Muslim community was contacted, and arrangements put in place for the donation of clothes, shoes and other items that were identified as needed.

Using our business contacts, JP Morgan donated funding to enable the purchase of mobile phones and sim cards so that the families could contact family members remaining in Afghanistan. We worked with the hotel to create a prayer room with prayer mats and Koran's and arranged for transport to the Town centre mosque for Friday afternoon prayers. Through our knowledge and relationship with our communities within Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole we were able to support the Afghan families and hopefully reduce some of the strain of the situation.

Helping families from Ukraine

A significant amount of support is underway for people fleeing the war in Ukraine. There are formal ESOL classes available through Skills and Learning are offering with peer support and language centres/teachers. When individuals register for Universal Credit, their English levels are assessed, and they are referred for ESOL support as required.

There is a dedicated support network on social media for guests and sponsors in the BCP and Dorset area and members of the Community Team have twice weekly meetings with them and other community leaders to update them on offers of support, job opportunities, or any changes in guidance etc as they arise.

They also hold a weekly Q&A with their members to collate questions (lots around schools' admissions and uniforms for example) and funnel these through to us for a response which they then share with their members- it has helped to significantly reduce the number of repeat enquiries we have received. These groups are incredibly organised and have compiled a wide range of resources for new members to access as required.

Staff from the Community team are members of this group and can monitor the interactions picking upon any issues that arise in between meetings. We are setting up a mailchimp email newsletter for sponsors so that they can receive updates as they arise and are also proposing to CMB the recruitment of a Ukrainian translator to work across services (housing, childrens etc) to help with complex cases- for example where see Ukrainian refugees presenting as homeless where sponsor or family relationships have broken down.

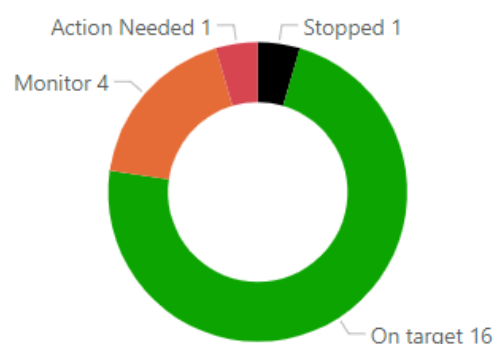
5.4 Diverse and Engaged Workforce

The Council has made quick progress in its aim to advance equality in the workplace. A total of 22 actions included in the Corporate Strategy, the Equalities Footprint and the Equality & Diversity action plan have been identified as contributing to this improvement model of the EFLG and we are on target for most of them.

We have carried out a series of Q&A sessions for our staff through conversations with the Chief Executive and other senior leaders which have:

- improved recruitment practices
- provided wider and improved training offers for our staff
- improved engagement and understanding of the PSED through the EIA panel process
- improved recognition and understanding among staff of the relevance and importance of equality & diversity through the appraisal process
- made significant and positive progression and development of our staff network groups, which is explained in further detail below.

The roll out of the new Enterprise Resource Planning system with a new HR system will help with collecting staff equality monitoring data and improving our understanding of the diversity of our workforce.



Staff Network Groups

A total of five networks groups have been put in place and are progressing well. The value of staff networks is often undervalued, and their purpose misunderstood. The networks perform several distinct functions. However, the four main aims effective staff networks provide are:

1. A safe space for discussion of issues related to an identity or protected characteristic.
2. They help to raise awareness of issues within the wider organisation
3. They provide a source of support for individual staff who may be facing challenges at work.
4. They provide a forum for a collective voice from unique perspectives from the workforce to management

To fulfil the fourth aim above of staff networks above – providing a collective voice for staff to management – it is essential that buy-in to the work of the networks from senior leaders at the very top of the organisation is secured. Therefore, our leaders are engaging with our staff networks, and we have been assigning network champions from within our Corporate Management Board to give the networks a voice on the councils Leadership Team. All equality champions are expected to promote and raise awareness of equality issues and provide feedback to SELG and drive progression of the council's equality objectives.

Disabled Staff Network Group

The Disability staff Network group have provided qualitative data as 'experts' by experience that has been invaluable in enabling the council to identify where there are opportunities to improve employment practice and enhance its reputation and the experiences of disabled customers and staff.

The staff survey shows that those who live with a disability are consistently less satisfied than those who do not.

As a result of the input from disabled staff Neuro disability specific training has been commissioned to ensure managers are better prepared to provide support to disabled staff so the full potential of this group of staff is maximised and the accessibility of services and access to employment improved

LGBTQ+ Staff Network Group

The group have held frequent six weekly virtual meetings including some face-to-face meetings to bond the group and created a social network-group. Members report they have appreciated this, and it has supported emotional well-being. The group has been grown to 30 members of LGBTQ+ staff and their allies.

Over the past year there has been wider involvement of staff in the group meetings and in progressing their work e.g. planning for the Bourne Pride event funded by an investment of £4,500 from an uplift in the corporate equalities budget for 2022/23.

The increased budget was used for a variety of items which included T-shirts for staff to wear with the Councils equality branding and logo, and to purchase bunting that was placed



around the balcony of the Civic Offices and around the town centre to demonstrate our commitment to the LGBTQ+ community. Lanyards designed by this group are worn by staff at all levels including senior managers which sends a powerful message of an accepting and inclusive workplace to staff and potential employees. Senior managers and Councillors also attend the pride event.

The Local Government Peer Challenge was influenced by their attendance, and members of the group are in regular dialogue with the Chief Executive.

The LGTBQ+ groups progress is one example of the changing and more inclusive culture in BCP Council's evolution as a new organisation and adds value to its credentials as an equality opportunities employer.

It is apparent that the LGBTQ+ Staff Network are influencing the developing culture of BCP Council through both their presence and work and are having a positive impact on the wellbeing of its members.

Over the next year the group aim to increase distribution of its rainbow lanyards and t-shirts not only because they are proving popular but to also to reinforce BCP Councils support to its LGBTQ+ communities and staff, and determination to be an inclusive employer that attracts the best talent and have staff who are proud of who they work for and are.

The lanyards are also worn by staff who are 'straight allies' and serve to support delivery of the public sector equality duty.

The group are advocating for staff to be able to add the rainbow logo to their BCP e-mail signature and are also working towards improving their support for trans colleagues.

Councils LGBT group, alongside the portfolio holder for equalities, has been critical in arranging the Councils participation and visible presence in Bourne free 2022. This was attended by approximately 30 staff including members of the Corporate Management Board and the Leader of the Council.



Council staff who attended Bourne Free Pride event also promoted BCP Councils' services and handed out over 1000 stickers during the parade to members of the public. This reinforces and demonstrates the organisational commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion to residents and visitors alike.

It is important that our commitment to equality is demonstrated within our communities, so we fly the Rainbow flag from our Civic Centre on International Day Against Homophobia on the 17 May and during Bourne Free Pride Festival in July. Our support for our LGBTQ+ communities and friends must be seen to be done as our communities include one of the proportionately largest in the UK.

Such activities are key to improved community engagement and are known to have a positive impact on underrepresented and minority groups. It improves trust and confidence and leads to better community relations, enhances reputation and is supportive of our ambition to be an employer of choice.

The LGBTQ+ Staff Network Group were instrumental in the introduction of pronouns as part of email signatures across the organisation. They were one of the groups who facilitated workshops at the Senior Managers Equality themed network meeting in September 2021 and contributed to the review of the results of the staff engagement surveys and the development of action plans.



Race & Cultural Diversity Staff Network Group

The Race & Cultural Diversity Staff Network Group (RCDSNG) has made considerable progress over the past twelve months. The group was instrumental in securing recognition from and support for Jamaican Independence Day and Black History Month in 2021 sharing life stories through exhibitions and presentations to other local authorities and international organisations such as Barclays Bank.

They have also developed and conducted a skills survey amongst its membership which has identified a wide range of untapped experience, knowledge, and skills that the council can draw on and are planning to put in place a mentoring scheme to support and develop its members.

The group has also recorded a variety of staff from across the organisation who detail their role and to show that there is diversity within the organisation and to provide a more diverse cohort of staff who can be used in council publications and media to, so they are more representative of the Councils workforce and the communities we serve.

The RCDSNG are hosting an event to celebrate Black History Month in October 2022, to recognise the contributions and achievements of those with African or Caribbean heritage across Dorset and the UK. It also provides an opportunity to gain experience more about the effects of racism and practical tools to show how to challenge negative stereotypes or build resilience to discrimination. The theme of the event is "Reflecting on the past – Daring to dream" and aims to inspire particularly young black and as well as other minority ethnic

people and will highlight examples of excellence, with a focus on future opportunities for young people in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole.

The group has also developed partnerships with other public sector organisations who are supportive of advancing equality such from the private and community sectors successfully attracted sponsorship in support of the event from Unison, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, Dorset Police, and Dorset Police Crime and Commissioners Office, and local businesses such as Turtle Bay Restaurant.

The group has also planned a social event and have extended it all the councils staff network groups to bring all together to further strengthen the networks, build partnerships and to increase council community engagement among minority and underrepresented groups.



Religion and Belief Staff Network update

The Religion and belief network have been impacted by the low number of attendees to meeting which has adversely affected our ability to deliver the agreed core actions.

The R&B network plans to invite Councillor Bobbie Dove to a future meeting in order to have an update on the Equalities Footprint.

The R&B network have attended meetings with the Council regarding the equality calendar and highlighted specific events in the religious calendar.

We have support BCP Council in the development of information handouts on different religions including Buddhism, Christianity, Humanism, Islam and Judaism.

We have offered to be primary consultees in relation policy development and Equality Impact Assessments.

We participated in the Equality Senior Managers Network, highlighting the need for staff to complete monitoring data which will allow for improved recognition of any adverse or positive impacts for 'Protected Characteristics'.

The future plans for the group will be dictated by the member participation, this needs a significant increase in member attendance.

Womens Staff Network Group

Following the tragic murder of Sarah Everard Enhanced safety measures were discussed following the subsequent vigils that took place where powerful messages made it clear that women do not feel safe on the streets. BCP Council has recognised that change needed to happen to on 15 March 2021 the Leaders of the council put forward a motion on several initiatives to work towards the change that was being called for. One of which was to develop an internal woman's staff group to understand the experiences of colleagues in and out of the workplace. Given that approximately two-thirds of the council's workforce are women the concerns were of significant relevance to them.

A successful Womens Staff Network Group (WSNG) has since been formed of which they are currently more than 120 members making it the largest membership of the network groups. Meet frequently and have made considerable progress since their foundation.

The group offers a safe space and a supportive environment in which women can share experiences, discuss opportunities, and develop broader links across the council.

The womens group is unique female only environment and as such is considered by its members as a safe space to process emotions – feedback received from members is that sessions are fun and morale-boosting (some have said they are akin to 'self-care') whilst still tackling serious issues that perpetuate female gender inequality.

The WSNG has set up several sub-groups to address Health & Wellbeing, Flexible Working and Equality-Driven Change. They have held an in-person meet-up for International Women's Day and forged strong links with other staff network groups both within and external to the Council.

The WSNG has have been critical to the councils review of its approach to menopause and menstruation awareness, training, and support – and is working in collaboration with the Corporate HR Wellbeing Lead, NHS and CCG groups, and Menopause Support Groups to develop BCP's offer for its staff. The group also has ongoing input to delivery of BCP's accommodation strategy/Town Hall refurbishment.

In addition to the WSNG facilitated breakout groups at Senior Managers Network meeting on Equalities and developed the content for the BCP intranet Menopause wellbeing page

The group has also made submissions to the Government consultation on flexible working and had input to several corporate HR policies and contributed to the staff survey review

The staff have invited both internal and external speakers address their meetings including a local Soroptimist Group, their Equality Champion/sponsor from the Corporate Management Board, and the councils Estates & Accommodation Project Lead.

The WSNG plans include training development to support members with the return to office spaces, including on how workspace accommodation can better support women's needs and address concerns around personal safety

The continuance of support to address health and wellbeing considerations that impact women (e.g. personal safety, support for carers, etc) and to continue to engage with BCP decision-making process as stakeholders (e.g. by facilitating engagement sessions so that Service Directorates and senior management can engage and consult with their members).

Further Training and Development

We are committed to the continuous professional development of our staff and invited inspirational speakers as subject matter professionals to attend a Senior Managers Network meeting. Equalities was the theme of the day and the key aims were to enable managers to:

1. understand and summarise the planned BCP equality journey
2. be able to link identified equality issues and therefore understand how to improve performance and a range of areas within BCP Council
3. have a clear understanding of issues relating to Gender Identity and how the subject matter relates to BCP Council
4. have a clear understanding of the BCP Equality Footprint and provide them with the ability to explain how this relates to their specific workspace.

Other outcomes were to equip managers with knowledge which enabled them to understand the rationale for the creation of staff networks, improve understanding of how equality can be the conduit between internal communication and improved community confidence.

An increasing number of staff and customers identify as Transgender.

This is also the most complex of all protected characteristics to understand and respond to. In recognition of the need to improve support for managers and staff a subject matter professional Ayla Holdom was brought in to provide an interactive session which enable us to raise the levels of knowledge and understanding of what many see as the most complex area of equality and dispel some of the myths about transgender people and a protected characteristic that is broadly misunderstood.

“Thank you. I think that this has been the most engaging and influential hour in my professional life for a very long time.

Your courage, candour and integrity are an astonishing example for all of us”.

The event was attended by over 150 members of the Senior Leadership Group and received extremely positive feedback from the attendees.

“Thank you very much for sharing your experiences with us. Your presentation was truly inspirational. It is absolutely critical that as an organisation and individuals we take the opportunity to listen, talk and in turn educate ourselves and others with regards to discrimination of any kind. Without exception, I believe we are all now a little bit better informed than we were at 9.00am this morning”.

This is in addition to the Disability Awareness training that DOTS Disability have been commissioned to deliver and the specialist Neurodiversity disability awareness coaching, mentoring, and training that has been commissioned to be delivered to staff and councillors as appropriate to their role or need.

Cultural Awareness Training- Gypsy Roma and Travellers

Cultural Awareness training was delivered to teams from Museum and Housing and attendees included staff, volunteers as well as Community Curators. Unfortunately, front of house staff were unable to attend the session due to working patterns, however many were able to access recording of the training either at home or through a special session set up at the museum.

The training included a conversation and conflict management tool which can be applied when challenging inappropriate behaviour using the CUDSA model. CUDSA encourages all parties to make choices that increase the chances of the cause of the conflict being resolved in a constructive rather than destructive manner and consists of five stages. It also helps avoid the escalation of conflicts through misunderstanding:

1. **C**onfront or challenge
2. **U**nderstand the others position
3. **D**efine the problem(s)
4. **S**earch for or evaluate alternative /language/solutions
5. **A**gree/implement best solution

Below are some of the headline comments of the impact and effectiveness of the training, its added value to staff development and potential impact on improved customer and community relations. These are presented against the Arts Council Generic Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge and Understanding

"It is good for everyone to take some time out to focus on Equality & Diversity"

"It was brilliant"

"...I think everybody in BCP should have the opportunity part of this training..."

"...really interesting and thought-provoking"

"I have learnt a lot"

Skills

"...made me feel more confident in challenging. It didn't feel a confrontational approach but a positive one..."

"I found CUDSA really helpful so will put it into practice if I need to"

"I definitely would challenge, understand, define, etc."

Attitudes and Values

"I will remember to look
'beyond the cover' of the
book!!!"

"I have a different feeling and approach towards
travellers and other cultures"

"Absolutely brilliant training"

"I will be more open-minded in my thinking of all travellers and try to encourage others to
do the same".

Enjoyment, Inspiration & Creativity

"Absolutely fascinating!"

"Brilliant thank you!"

"Thanks, Excellent session"

Action, Behaviour and Progression

"the training was incredibly comprehensive and detailed
but did not feel overwhelming in terms of the quantity of
content, and was highly memorable"

"It has reinforced my
confidence in my ability to
support cultural awareness"

"...the practical advice given for how to have difficult conversations is something that has
genuinely empowered me to make a difference..."

The Equality Action Commission

The commission aims to help improve the way we work with and support Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) individuals and communities.

The commission also aims to review our current practices and what we could do to improve our understanding of the needs and vulnerabilities of BAME communities and individuals.

We have reviewed the Terms of Reference our ensure that the EAC to ensure our original aims and objectives are achieved as planned, including giving us the level of challenge that we need to continue to improve our performance on the progression of our equality agenda.

Going forward we will focus on how deep dives into our organisation can work best so the EAC has unfettered access to information and the level of detail it needs to bring forward recommendations to the Council.

This will help us to reset the EAC and its work to bring forward the challenge to the Council that will drive continued improvement at pace.

The EAC has been instrumental in helping us make so much progress to date and in challenging our performance and were key partners in assisting the Council and Public Health to improve take up rates of vaccines among minority ethnic communities who were among the most disproportionality impacted by the pandemic.

6.EHRC Measurement Framework

According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) there are six domains or areas of life where efforts should be made to improve outcomes as this leads to a reduction in inequality overall.

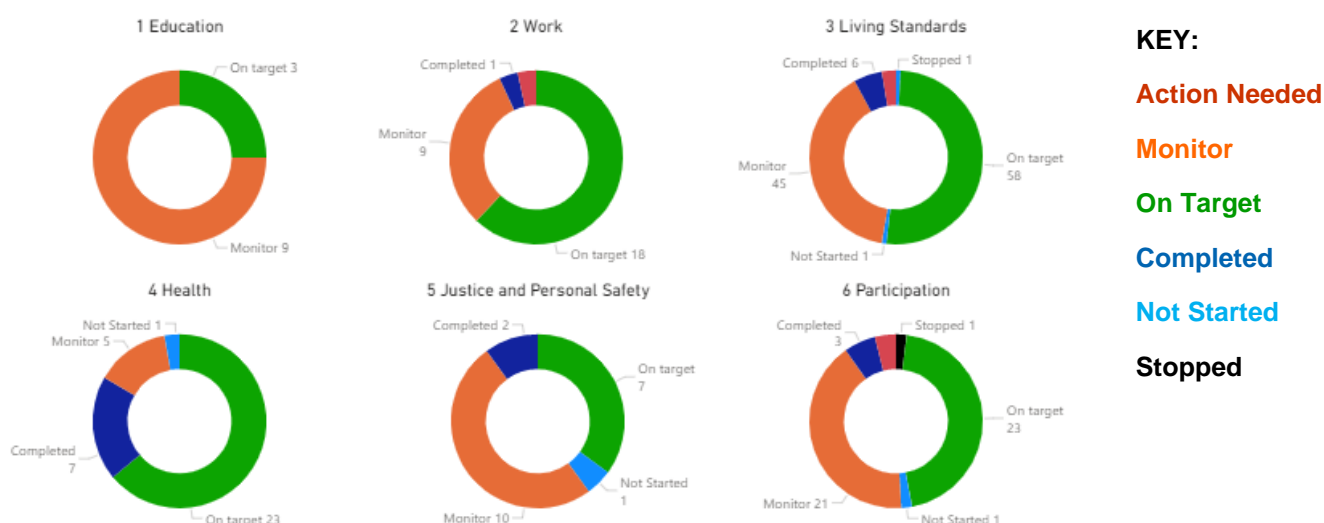
Comparing ourselves to the EHRC Measurement Framework allows us to have a more holistic view of our progress in advancing equality as it takes account of the range of activity across the council.

We have mapped the updates we have gathered from across the council to create an EHRC dashboard to try to show how we are reducing the difference in experience between diverse groups of people.

The [EHRC framework](#) set out 10 reasons for mapping progress against it:

1. It has strong theoretical foundations (equality, inequality, capability, human rights, vulnerability and intersectionality) that are applied to equality and human rights monitoring in a practical way.
2. It translates the central and valuable freedoms and opportunities, or critical things in life that people can actually do or be (capabilities), into outcomes for the future of Britain.
3. It has precise indicators and topics to monitor whether we are making progress in achieving the future we want.
4. To assess whether there has been progress, regression or stalling in relation to these indicators and topics, it provides detailed guidance on what structure, process and outcome evidence to look at.
5. It is exemplary in relation to data disaggregation and equalities analysis.
6. It champions a new approach to vulnerability and people who are at higher risk of harm, abuse, discrimination or disadvantage because they face adverse external conditions and/or have difficulty in coping due to individual circumstances.
7. It uses intersectionality as a practical, analytical tool to show the distinct forms of harm, abuse, discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people when multiple categories of social identity interact with each other.
8. It brings consistency to our equality and human rights monitoring, by replacing the different frameworks that had previously existed with a single framework that can be applied across England, Scotland and Wales.
9. It is compatible with major policy and statistics frameworks across the UK and globally.
10. It can be used to drive social change and, ultimately, achieve progress towards equality and human rights (Figure 1.1 illustrates the way in which we view the Measurement Framework as driving social change in terms of progress towards equality and human rights).

EHRC Performance Management Framework



Education

The EHRC dashboard shows that we are beginning to see some progress, however three quarters of the actions that impact equality across the area of education need closer monitoring and focus. Some of this work has already commenced where activities with schools and work across public, private, and voluntary sectors have been developed. These are currently coordinated through a variety of projects such as the mentoring programmes. These encourage intergenerational interactions and enable the sharing of skills and experience, fostering good relations between those who share a characteristic and those who do not.

The PfA Team continue to support young people through a strengths-based approach and by raising aspirations to improve outcomes for young people. The team can evidence case examples of the successes that young people have achieved. The team now effectively track young people in year 10 special school placements to ensure those who required ASC support receive this at the earliest opportunity. Year 1 review currently underway, Progress across most areas and a tiered training offer is also available for staff and external providers.

In early years education, the percentage of children attending a school setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted is 98.10% which exceeds the target of 97% that was set. This is also the case for the number of children attending primary schools which is 95% which exceeds the target of 85% that had been set.

We are promoting lifelong learning for all and delivered a lifelong learning strategy with partners which provides a broad learning offer for work, wellbeing, culture, and arts.

Conversely, the scorecard reveals that three quarters of objective that that would positively impact the progression of equality within this domain requires though it is worthy of note that some objectives under this area of life are delayed due to the pandemic.

Work

Two-thirds of the objectives which fall under this domain are on target to be achieved. Action is required around several actions that impact equality and almost a third need to be monitored more closely as they are amber.

There is targeted work to ensure care leavers, disadvantaged boys, and young people with the greatest barriers to learning and work join apprenticeships.

Work is in progress with Bournemouth & Poole College to provide taster sessions for apprenticeships and vocational courses aimed at vulnerable students. Partnership working with local colleges is underway to offer a course that prepares Children In Care and Care Leavers for education/apprenticeships in horticulture and employability skills.

Living Standards

Over half of the actions identified under the Corporate Strategy's Delivery Plan are on target and will contribute towards improvement of living standards for BCP residents.

The support for people to live safe and independent lives is improving and there has been an increase in the proportion of adults with a learning disability with care and support needs who can live in their own home. Year-end performance was above the target which was 80.4%. An Accommodation Review Programme is currently underway, and its delivery will increase availability of supported accommodation, and reduce over reliance on residential care.

We are assisting people to live well through access to better quality social care. We have developed our outreach support with GPs in community-based settings to facilitate earlier engagement and improve the quality of life for those residents at risk of worsening health outcomes. Our ASC Contact centre and fieldwork teams are working closely with primary care to support clients in community settings with a focus on early intervention and prevention. Managers are developing links with primary care networks and a pilot has taken place to embed a care manager within a GP practice. Some aspects of the work have, however, been set back by the pandemic and we are awaiting development of Integrated Care Board to better understand how further integration with primary care can be progressed.

A new first point of contact service for adult social care to improve online information and advice and support residents' wellbeing and independence has been implemented. The Adult Social Care Contact Centre is established as the single first point of contact. Further work to develop online information and enhance website content will be undertaken within the corporate Customer workstreams over the following 12 months.

We are tackling homelessness and reducing rough sleeping by increasing access to suitable accommodation and re-modelling a range of sustainable housing support pathways. We have on-going programmes of activities which target prevention of rough sleeping, reducing the dependency on emergency accommodation and are reviewing and providing updated housing pathways for people with additional and complex needs through an additional Government grant.

We are working with the NHS, through the Homefirst programme, to improve the range and effectiveness of services which support people to live well in their own homes and reduce the need for hospital admissions. “Our Dorset” are working in partnership to ensure we have a sustainable future model which will enable people across BCP and Dorset to lead independent lives in their own homes, avoiding admitting them to hospital unless necessary and getting them back home with the right support following an admission.

We are preventing harm through early intervention and have developed a BCP Council Housing Strategy which addresses the needs of vulnerable young people and their families.

Health

We are promoting happy, active, and healthy lifestyles and have improved parental and family mental health by identifying families needing additional support through mandatory checks for children up to 5 years of age. Health Visitors are conducting mandatory checks between birth and age 3.5 prior to starting school. Families are identified via Family Hub Operational meetings and referrals from Health to the parenting programmes.

As part of our commitment to partnership working on suicide prevention, we have implemented a BCP Council strategy and action plan a review of the plan is currently underway. We have seen progress across the tiered training offer for staff and external providers. Some objectives of the strategy have invariably been delayed due to the pandemic.

We are improving the health of our residents and have improved the provision of smoking cessation services focusing on areas with the highest prevalence and need, through the LiveWell Dorset service. There is an increase in the proportion of people living in the most deprived quintile within BCP Council area where access to smoking cessation services rose during the period 2019 - 2022. The total number of smokers who successfully quit in BCP Councils area was 432.

The proportion of people with dependency successfully accessing alcohol and drug treatment services is increasing. Numbers in treatment have increased in all domains. Data between 2021 to 2022 shows 2,413 individuals accessed treatment – 1,337 opiates, 446 Non opiates, 630 primary alcohol and 102 young people. Targets for 22-23 are 2,510 in treatment – 1,400 opiates, 460 non opiates, 650 primary alcohol and 110 young people. All Local Authorities have been given targets to increase the numbers in treatment by 20% for the 2024/25.

Justice & Personal Security

We are continuing our support for people to live safe and independent lives and promote and have extended the use of assistive and digital technology to enable independence and enhance people’s quality of life. Authorisation has been given to progress to a full options appraisal to inform the future model for BCP.

To ensure our communities feel safe we are delivering on our action plan to tackle rogue traders who target vulnerable people in their homes.

In addition to the above we are collaborating with partners including Dorset Road Safe to reduce the number of persons killed or seriously injured on our highways by at least 40% by 2030. A New Dorset Road Safety Strategy 2021 to 2030 has been developed to tackle KSIs based on partnership review of trends. By 2030 the aim is to have less than 88 KSIs. The targets for 2020 and 2021 were 146 and 137, respectively. And the actuals for those years were 106 and 109 (provisional). However, these periods did include Covid related restrictions, hence, which is reflected in the amber rating which requires us to keep a close eye on progress against this objective.

We have also developed and implemented our Domestic Abuse Strategy and action plan.

We supported the most vulnerable in our communities during the Covid 19 pandemic through the Together We Can Community Response and although now operationally concluded, the partnership continues as a means of supporting communities through covid recovery.

The free school meals programme during school holidays has allowed us to identify the most vulnerable in our communities and ensures that we can deliver targeted support as we enter the cost-of-living crisis.

We are reducing harm through early intervention by ensuring risk is appropriately identified and measures put in place to mitigate it by improving the quality of our social care, and early help assessments of need.

We continue to tackle all forms of child exploitation, including County Lines, early and effectively through preventative initiatives and effective cross Council working and collaboration with partner organisation such as the police.

Participation

A variety of new crossings have been delivered as part of the transportation related capital programmes. During 2021/22 16 new pedestrian crossings of varying types (e.g. Zebra, Puffin and Toucan) were installed to increase participation and access for older people and users of mobile scooters and pushchairs.

We have worked with carers to improve access to information and advice ensuring it is delivered at the right time and tailored to the individual carer though we recognise that we have fallen short of our target. However, we encourage carers to have an assessment and we train staff to support identification of need and uptake. We actively engage with carers to improve the information and advice we make available to them.

We have improved the accessibility, quality, and range of information available to young carers to increase take up of the services to support their needs. We have worked across the partnership during the Carer's services review with Young Minds, Children's Services, and other key partners to ensure our offer is attractive to young carers, including information available on CRISP website.

We are promoting happy, active, and healthy lifestyle and increased leisure provision and residents' leisure discount schemes to enable greater participation in activities.

The cultural identity of our towns and places has been strengthened to be more inclusive of the diversity of the cultural identity of our local communities. It is shaping our cultural infrastructure and will influence the development of the Local Plan.

We have built on the findings of the Cultural Enquiry in developing a Cultural Compact and a Cultural Strategy that supports diversity in community arts and culture to make them more inclusive and broaden participation.

7.Next Steps

The Council undertook its first Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2021.

Peer challenges are a tool used by council as an improvement tool and provides opportunities to gain experience good practice from other councils across a wide variety of business areas. Peer teams function as 'critical friends' and where councils are performing well and where there are areas for improvement.

The peer review team recognised that the council has long-term ambitions for its place agenda and has a resolute focus on its community leadership role for the whole area that it serves. It also noted that the council had a clear understanding of the challenges as well as the opportunities in the BCP area.

The dedication of staff, their commitment to delivering the best outcomes for residents and visitors and their widespread understanding of customers' needs is akin to their enthusiasm to deliver the councils ambition and vision for the BCP area and was commended by the Peer Challenge team. The team concluded that equality and diversity was not sufficiently embedded into the organisation's culture however, we are anticipating that this is likely to be viewed differently when the peer review team return in November 2022.

Since our establishment we have made significant progress with our E&D agenda. We have been decisive in our response following feedback from the corporate peer challenge and increased the resources available to expedite progress on equality to move from outputs to the delivery of tangible outcomes, so it is apparent that we are committed to ensuring equality and diversity is embedded into our organisational culture.

We therefore reviewed our Equality & Diversity Governance Framework and the terms of reference for each of the implementation groups which underpin the Strategic Equality Leadership Group, to ensure they have easy access to the SELG and a review of the Council's Equality & Diversity Policy is imminent and will be brought before council for approval.

Additional funding and support, has been set aside to promote and encourage wider participation in our Staff Network Groups, improve the availability and range of equality related staff training. We have increased the level of the Councils support for community events that support the three aims of the public sector equality duty bring people who share a characteristic and those who do not together to make our communities stronger.

Members of the Corporate Management Board will accept roles as Equality Champions in turn sponsors each of our Staff Network Groups which are representative of the key protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010, so they have a voice at the Corporate Management Board and at our most senior meetings.

We are embedding our Equality Footprint and have successfully launched an EIA panel and process which provides assurance and confidence at decision gateways. This also ensures meaningful consideration is given to the impact on equality that our decisions may have, maximises any positive benefits and reduces or removes those that may have an adverse impact on any particular protected characteristic or group.

We have recruited and trained Independent Observers who we encourage and welcome them to join in our recruitment processes.

We will be taking professional pictures of our Independent Observers to be shared internally and externally to the Council, so they are known to recruiting managers and our communities.

This will improve trust and confidence among our minority groups and take positive action to achieve a workforce that is more representative of the communities we serve.

We are seeking to gain a clearer understanding of how our staff contribute to and understand the delivery of the public sector equality duty and E&D, through the annual appraisal processes.