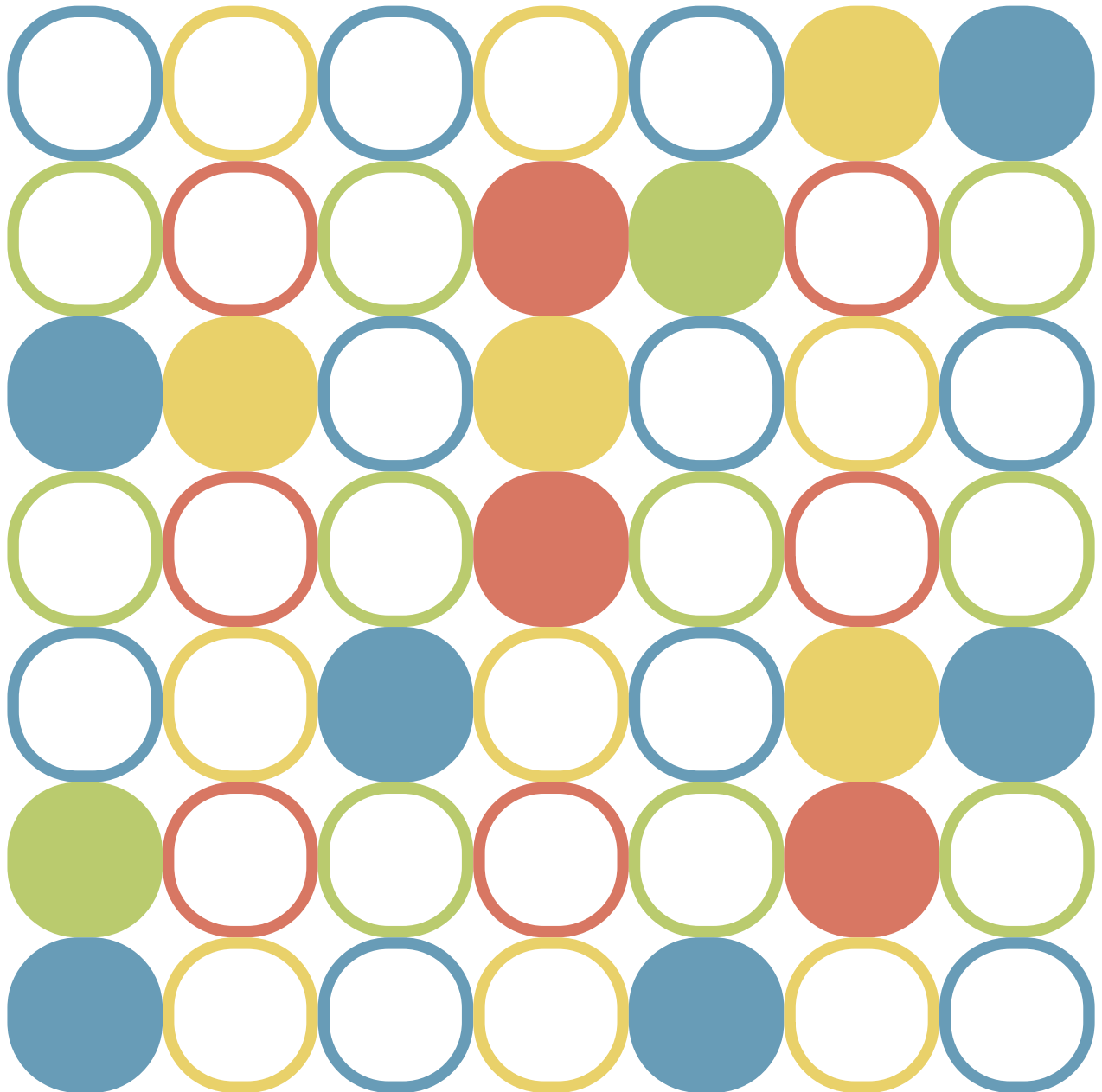


Towards a Fairer and More Equal Falkirk

Falkirk Council Mainstreaming Report

Update 2023



1. Introduction.

Falkirk Council's refocused vision in its Corporate plan is to have:

- **Strong communities where inequalities are reduced, and lives are improved.**

How it intends to achieve this is through the following revised priorities:

- **Supporting stronger and healthier communities.**
- **Promoting opportunities and educational attainment and reducing inequalities.**
- **Supporting a thriving economy and green transition.**

Our Council of the Future (COTF) change programme is the Council's framework for Transformation and Improvement. Our COTF projects will support the delivery of our vision and priorities by doing things in a more Responsive, Innovative, Trusted & Ambitious way. These priorities are set to deliver significant financial and transformational benefits, moving at pace, as we continue to embrace new ways of working and new models of service delivery.

As part of this we aim to ensure that equality, diversity, and inclusivity are at the heart of everything we do and to support this we will implement a programme of culture change activities to ensure we are a Council of the Future that meets all our communities needs.

The Legal Context

Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 came into force in April 2011, introducing a new Public Sector Equality Duty that became law across Scotland. The Public Sector Equality Duty has three parts which must be complied with. It requires public bodies such as Falkirk Council, to have due regard (or to consciously consider) the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between those who have protected characteristics and those who don't.**
- **Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who don't.**

What are Protected Characteristics?

Everyone is protected by the Act. Every person has one or more of the protected characteristics, so the Act protects all of us against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

1. **Age.**
2. **Disability.**
3. **Gender reassignment.**
4. **Marriage and Civil Partnership.**
5. **Pregnancy and maternity.**
6. **Race - this includes ethnic or national origin, colour, and nationality. This also includes Gypsy/Travellers.**
7. **Religion or belief - this includes a lack of belief.**
8. **Sex.**
9. **Sexual orientation.**

The Equality Act 2010. (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012

The Scottish Government has introduced a set of specific equality duties to support the better performance of the general duty by public bodies. These duties include requirements to:

- **Publish a report on mainstreaming the Equality Duty.**
- **Publish equality outcomes and report on progress.**
- **Assess and review policies and practices.**
- **Gather and use employee information.**
- **Publish gender pay gap information.**
- **Publish an equal pay statement.**
- **Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.**

We are required to publish the following information:

- **A fresh Mainstreaming Report no later than 30 April 2023 and subsequently at intervals of not more than two years.**
- **A report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes no later than 30 April 2023.**
- **Fresh Equality Outcomes no later than 30 April 2025.**

Falkirk Council remains committed to integrating equalities into our business, using tools such as Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment (EPIA), and by ensuring that equalities feature explicitly and proportionately in business planning, committees, or other decision-making, reports and through all other policy development and review mechanisms.

The Council continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 recovery and whilst it is facing significant financial challenges in the years ahead, it is committed to redesigning services to support the most vulnerable citizens and to raising awareness about the impact that poverty and other structural inequalities have. It is important that everyone working and living in Falkirk have the skills to challenge stereotypes and to value and respect diversity. If there is improved understanding of the needs of our different communities and more opportunities to bring people together to celebrate difference and diversity, we can achieve our aim of having a fairer and more equal Falkirk.

This report sets out how the Council has mainstreamed this work across our services, the way we procure our services, as a Licensing Authority, as an employer and as an Education Authority. Our equality outcomes try to take account of the priorities within the Corporate Plan to ensure that the needs of our marginalised communities are addressed.

Mainstreaming simply means that equality is intrinsic in the way the Council works; the way decisions are made; the way people who work for and on behalf of us behave; how we perform and even in the way we improve our services. In other words, how we make sure that equalities are a key component of our work and not an afterthought.

2. Mainstreaming Equalities- a refreshed approach 2023.

Falkirk Council is committed to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties. To support this, the Council states in its Equal Opportunity Policy that it is committed to:

- Promoting equality of opportunity for all persons.
- Promoting a good and harmonious working environment in which all persons are treated with respect.
- Preventing occurrences of unlawful direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Fulfilling all our legal obligations under the Equality Legislation and associated codes of practice.
- Complying with our own Equal Opportunity Policy and associated policies.
- Taking lawful affirmative or positive action, where appropriate and in accordance with legislation

This Policy states that, "overall responsibility for ensuring the promotion of equality rests with elected Members and the Chief Executive. Service Directors also have specific responsibility for ensuring equality of opportunity and equity of access in employment matters and service delivery. Individual departmental responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the policy rests with Heads of Service".

The Leader of the Council has a specific role in relation to Equalities, providing strategic oversight and commitment to the implementation of the policy; however, all Elected Members have a role to consider whether Equality has been mainstreamed effectively in the Council's policies and practices.

One of our Elected Members is the designated Council Equality Champion, who will work to embed equality by:

- Making sure that equality and human rights are considered when developing policy or making decisions.
- Promoting Equality and Human Rights inside and outside the Council.
- Asking questions about performance and resourcing for Equality and Human Rights.
- Raising the profile of the area and make the Authority aware of good practice.
- Promoting effective communication and positive working relationships both within the Council and with community groups and other stakeholders.
- Engaging with external bodies who work to deliver Equality and Human Rights.
- Engaging with other officers and Elected Members in relation to the role, providing positive support to officers in driving forward the Council's agenda on Equality and Human Rights.
- Engaging with community groups with an interest/stake in Equality and Human Rights.
- Reporting action to the Council.
- Foster cross-party co-operation on Equality and Human Rights.
- Placing appropriate items on relevant agendas.
- Keep up to date with knowledge and developments on Equality and Human Rights.

Assessing and Reviewing Policies and Practice

At the time of our last mainstreaming report our Internal Audit department had reviewed the Council's approach to mainstreaming Equality. Gaps in our approach were identified. Some of the actions identified were:

- A need to further embed equalities within the Council's corporate structures.
- Developing a corporate approach to Equalities, supporting, and complementing the work of Services, and monitoring progress, through the establishment of an Equalities Governance Framework, and an awareness raising launch of the Equalities Governance Framework once it has been established.
- Performing an Equalities Self-Assessment to evaluate the extent to which Equalities are embedded across the Council and develop Self-Assessment Action Plans to drive the future corporate approach.
- Reviewing the Equality Outcomes in place to ensure that key prioritised areas relating to the Council's core functions are included, with regular reporting of progress and impacts/shortfalls established.
- Providing a more joined up approach to the completion of Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments which would see the introduction of quality assessments and an Equality and Poverty Impact Assessment Toolkit.

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the Council taking an immediate response to this. This lack of progress was highlighted in a Best Value audit. A Best Value action plan was developed to ensure that the Council took steps to improve its approach to Equalities. The two action plans have been combined to ensure that the Council has the proper process and governance arrangements in place to deliver on its Equality Outcomes and its approach to mainstreaming.

It is recognised that there is still some way to go to be where the Council needs to be in relation to a consistent approach to mainstreaming Equality and delivering on our Equality Outcomes. The full action plan for this is attached as an action plan as Appendix I.

Important first steps have been taken:

- **Equality and Human Rights Strategy Group**

An Equality and Human Rights Strategy group has been established to take this work forward and to implement the actions from both the Internal Audit Action Plan, the Best Value Action Plan and to develop a more consistent approach to mainstreaming and delivering on our Equality Outcomes. This includes developing a performance and reporting mechanism established to reflect the improvement plan and requirements of the Equality Duty 2010.

- **Equality and Poverty Impact Assessments**

Elected Members and senior managers have undertaken training on the importance of understanding the requirement to ask for and to ensure that EPIAs provide the evidence necessary to make decisions. This in turn has led to an increased awareness amongst officers of the requirement to carry out EPIAs in relation to decision making. This means that EPIAs are being undertaken consistently to support decision making. It is hoped that through time and by supporting Council Officers the quality of these impact assessments will improve. Some of the steps that currently need to be taken to improve the quality of EPIAs include:

- **Improved data sources.**
- **Improved data gathering and collection in relation to protected characteristics.**
- **Improved analysis of protected characteristics**
- **Developing a systematic approach to consultation and engagement across the Council that recognises the needs of particular protected characteristic groups can be understood and services improved.**
- **Training for all staff so that the needs of protected characteristic groups are understood.**

3. Mainstreaming Service Delivery

Whilst the Council is working to take a more consistent approach to mainstreaming across the Council it is still taking steps to take account of people's protected characteristics in its day-to-day service delivery. This next chapter sets out what each service/ division is doing to mainstream Equalities. This section is separated as follows:

- **Mainstreaming in the Education Authority.**
- **Mainstreaming in the Licensing Board.**
- **Mainstreaming as a Procurer of Services.**
- **Mainstreaming as an Employer.**
- **Mainstreaming across the Council:**
 - **Transformation Community and Corporate Services.**
 - **Children and Family Social Work.**
 - **Place Services.**

3.2 Mainstreaming Equalities across the Education Authority

Learning and teaching

To support schools with their focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap, Education Team Managers engaged with all the Head Teachers to discuss attainment information for different groups of learners in their settings. Each school was provided with an attainment performance summary which focused on overall attainment information as well as performance data for children and young people in both Quintiles 1 and 5. This information supported senior leaders to reflect on what the data is demonstrating and how this can be developed further to improve outcomes for all whilst focusing on closing the poverty related attainment gap overall. In the secondary sector, discussion focused on what key actions have been identified from both Broad General Education and Scottish Qualifications Authority data. In relation to the stretch aims, the data has also shown that a clear focus was required on improving achievement and attainment of children and young people who are care experienced; particularly those looked after at home.

In session 2022-23, our evidence gathered demonstrated that we needed to support our settings to focus more on learning, teaching, and assessment across the authority. Our Education Team Managers and associated Head Teachers are engaging in a range of visits to settings across Falkirk focusing on the processes in place to ensure that learning, teaching, and assessment meet the needs of all learners. This should also help to support the expectations set out in our refreshed Learning to Achieve policy document. This review will help us as a service to identify what is working well for all our children and young people as well as identifying clear next steps to further improve all children and young people's experiences.

Within our ASN team, staff support the removal of barriers to enable children with a disability to engage in learning e.g., providing physical building adaptations, providing specialist equipment, funding board maker licences, providing exceptional SFLA hours, or placing children in specialist provisions in accordance with the staged intervention approach. Our team also offer gypsy traveller service provision, and the English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Asylum seekers service support to ensure that these identified groups of children and young people have equal access to learning. In addition, we provide the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme in 5 High Schools in our authority, and we have 3 staff trained as Trainers.

Health and wellbeing

Within our ASN service, officers provide support to settings to look at bespoke approaches to meet the wellbeing needs of children and young people. This helps to ensure that children and young people have equal access to the curriculum. One example of this is a child in one of our Enhanced Provisions (EP) receiving a physiotherapy offer so they can participate in mainstream schooling. Normally this physiotherapist would work within our specialist provisions only, but agreement was made to expand the model. EP staff were trained as therapy partners and physiotherapy time was allocated at this EP as part of the Service Level Agreement with Physiotherapy. Children whose health needs and health and wellbeing needs are met have improved mobility and pain management and can therefore better engage in communication and learning. This was a test of change and has been a real success. The child is thriving, and parents are happy that their child is included in mainstream through the bespoke adaptations and partnership support.

Pastoral deputies along with one of our central officers are currently engaging in an authority audit of Personal and Social Education (PSE) from 3 - 18. There has been discussion around a more diverse curriculum as stated in the 2018 national review. Some Falkirk mainstream secondary schools are engaging with Rape Crisis Scotland on gender-based violence works and in 2023 - 2024, all have agreed to pilot the streamlined Preventing Sexual Violence programme. Pupil voice within the secondary sector has also identified the needs for CLPL for staff around LGBTQ+ rights.

Across our secondary school, LGBTQ+ work featured in the following ways across the curriculum:

- Groups to provide a safe space to form friendships and community.
- LGBTQ+ History Month: poster campaigns/displays/lessons.
- Black History Month: Black history/LGBT intersectionality research project/campaign.
- PSE lessons on "How to be an ally" for BGE pupils.

CASE STUDY

Building Racial Literacy is part of the Braes High School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2022 - 2023. The Faculty Head of Humanities introduced a "test of change" where staff and young people undertook anti-racist training focused on understanding language and bias. Following this introduction, the pupils young people audited the S1 and S2 History and Modern Studies curriculum for racial diversity and gave suggestions on where examples could be included. This approach, with staff and young people working alongside each other to review the curriculum, elevates pupil voice to pupil agency under the UNCRC and pupil participation. Our next step is to increase staff engagement with the review and resulting curricular developments identified.

- **Staff training: In-service days/staff workshops/CLPL on supporting LGBTQ+ pupils/speakers.**
- **Awareness/ Visibility posters and Tweets.**
- **Policy: Pupil involvement in developing school policy in relation to anti-bullying and name/pronoun changes.**
- **More diverse books in the library.**
- **Purple Friday: Bake sales, poster campaign, drama performances, art projects.**
- **Pride Month: Pride picnic, Police Scotland Liaison, poetry competition.**
- **Holocaust Memorial Day event: Persecution of gay individuals.**

CASE STUDY

In one primary school, a clear priority was identified in relation to LGBTQ+. This was an individual school proposal but is given precedence by national drive and expectations surrounding the incorporation of LGBTQ+ inclusive education in schools.

Staff were largely on board as project was being completed as a whole school and staff didn't feel like they were on their own in participating. There were positive discussions with children, particularly in Second Level classes, where teachers were able to develop children's understanding.

Feedback suggested conversations about LGBTQ+ went easier than colleagues anticipated. In addition, there were not as many questions from parents and children as staff were anticipating. Children were generally accepting of learning and embraced the theme of respecting Equality. All staff gave positive feedback about the quality of the CPD sessions which they felt provided useful advice, ideas, and signposting to resources.

Across the upper school, the P6 teacher reported that the learning has led to less silly behaviour and a reduction in the use of homophobic language. In P7, the class teacher reported that it has helped individual students to feel more included and comfortable talking about their own gender.

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing service offers counselling services from a range of agencies to support children and young people's mental wellbeing. These supports and services are provided to children and young people who benefit from additional help to promote, manage, and improve their mental health and wellbeing and to help them develop coping strategies and resilience. This support may be required for a variety of reasons and circumstances and should be holistic, recognising that children and young people may have several needs. The service is an open-access model and referrals are made by those who work with and support children and young people. Crucially, children and young people are also able to self-refer to the service.

With the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill in the process of becoming law in Scotland, services have a responsibility to act compatibly with the Rights of the Child. The new law will mean that every child and young person under 18 years old has Children's Rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities, or any other status, which is Article 2 of the UNCRC.

Part of Falkirk Council's strategic approach to embedding the rights of the child within the education system is through the Rights Respecting Schools Award. To date, thirty-seven schools across the authority are engaged in the RRSa process. There are four key areas of impact for children at a Rights Respecting school; wellbeing, participation, relationships, and self-esteem; all of which has a positive impact on the children, young people, and their communities.

CASE STUDY

Amy came to FDAMH struggling with high levels of anxiety, low mood, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, and difficulties accepting a new diagnosis of autism. She had been unable to attend school for a long period of time and rarely left the house. In our sessions, we began work via online and telephone appointments as she felt too anxious to leave the house. We have worked together on ways to improve mood, manage urges to self-harm, challenge anxiety and boost self-confidence. This week she attended an in-person appointment (a huge achievement for her) and we completed further one-to-one work on challenging anxiety. She explained that she has been feeling proud as she has no longer been experiencing urges to self-harm or suicidal thoughts and has been feeling much better and happier in herself. She has been spending more time with friends and now has a clear goal of what she would like to do with her life. Prior to our sessions, she struggles with low confidence/self-esteem, she has worked so hard and now practices lots of self-care and self-love. She is looking forward to continuing sessions in person until these come to an end.

Policy development

Within our ASN service, central officers are beginning to consult with a range of stakeholders to develop our Accessibility strategy for the next three years. To improve educational outcomes for all children and young people throughout Falkirk we will ensure that the particular needs of children and young people with a disability or ASN, are recognised and we will:

- **Strive to deliver services that are accessible to all.**
- **Reduce communication barriers to accessing services and facilities across our education provisions.**
- **Reduce physical barriers to accessing services and facilities.**

An action plan is currently being developed to look at how we meet our objectives and ensure equality of access for all.

As identified by secondary headteacher colleagues, support was required to ensure clarity for all schools in supporting transgender children and young people. Central officers as well as staff from Education Scotland worked with an identified group of teaching staff across all sectors. They created guidance and support materials to help school staff access appropriate information to support them when working with transgender

children and young people. The guidance aims to minimise the distress and disruption to pupils and schools by helping to:

- **Ensure staff engage with transgender children and young persons in an inclusive manner.**
- **Promote inclusion for all within education by improving services for children and young persons who are or may be transgender.**
- **Outline how best education staff and others can support, inform, protect, and enable children and young persons who are or may be transgender to achieve their full potential.**

As well as guidance, staff are also supported through relevant case studies as well as a frequently asked questions which are designed to help staff deal confidently and appropriately with transgender children and young people.

As part of our refreshed Learning to Achieve policy, the voice and opinion of children and young people is at the heart of what we do. To do this, we need to ensure that all learners are included, engaged, and involved in the life of their setting. All young people within our learning provisions should be treated fairly, with respect and have their rights upheld and promoted,- this will help to enable all young people to reach their true potential. Children and young people were fully involved in creating the Learners Entitlements which are detailed below:

- 1. Learn about their local environment and history.**
- 2. Take part in a range of school outings including overnight trips.**
- 3. Be involved in arts, sports and other out of school events.**
- 4. Participate in creative, business, and fund-raising activities.**
- 5. Take part in projects about our world and how to look after it.**
- 6. Engage in community and local activities.**
- 7. Regularly take part in outdoor learning activities.**
- 8. Use age-appropriate digital technology.**
- 9. Be included in decision making.**

- 10. Take part in work-based learning linked to real life throughout their education.**
- 11. Develop teamwork, social, leadership and other life skills.**
- 12. Have experiences which are educational, social, and linked to work.**
- 13. Have input from relevant partners and people within the local community.**
- 14. Have influence and involvement in deciding their next steps and how they learn best.**
- 15. Learn about and communicate with young people around the world to develop an understanding of other cultures.**
- 16. Have opportunities to take suitable breaks throughout the day.**
- 17. Use spaces and support which help them to feel safe, calm, and happy.**
- 18. Be involved regularly in learning that is fun, well planned and varied.**
- 19. Have their beliefs, opinions and belongings respected.**
- 20. Learn in healthy spaces which are clean and well equipped.**

As part of our Senior Leadership Empowerment Strategy, our Inclusion and Equalities group have created draft policy to support settings with clear expectations linked to inclusion and equalities. The policy emphasises the importance of developing positive relationships, equality, acceptance, and inclusion at all levels. The following guiding principles have been developed which should begin to underpin all our work:

- 1. Relationship-based practice will be the core value in all our establishments.**
- 2. Pedagogical approaches should be flexible, creative, and inclusive to meet pupil needs so that everyone can participate.**
- 3. Our supports and strategies focus on tuning the physical and social environment. Establishing structures, routines and implementing learner-centred approaches to enhance motivation and engagement will be vital.**

4. Everyone is aware of the legal duties with regards to equality, children's rights, ASN legislation and the ongoing professional development supports this.
5. Measures are in place to support the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act.
6. The 'Lens of Inclusion' will be used to establish a shared understanding and measure the impact of this approach on the outcomes for children and families.
7. We use encouraging and inclusive language. Derogatory or discriminatory language is always challenged.
8. Children and young people from all backgrounds can see themselves reflected without bias, judgement, or stereotypes. Everyone feels they belong and can be themselves.
9. Staff and young people feel safe and empowered to talk about any issues they may have and to challenge issues or language related to equality and inclusion.
10. Children and young people participate in decision making that supports their wellbeing, equality, inclusion, and learning.
11. Support and resources are available for staff, children, young people, and families, to help them promote equality, inclusion, and children's rights.
12. Practitioners are supported to develop and improve their inclusive practice through effective use of the Falkirk Staged Intervention Framework.

Professional Learning

Our ASN team have worked to produce guidance to schools which links our staged assessment process to relevant professional learning opportunities. This is designed to ensure staff have the appropriate skills and expertise to meet the differing needs of children and young people in our schools. In addition, the team also offer, deliver, and coordinate a variety of other professional learning opportunities for staff (teachers and SFLA's) e.g., our Windsor Park training offers for HI and VI children, ASN Outreach training offers e.g., Sensory, EAL, ILS, GT; our SCERTS training; FC Moving and Handling trainers (SFLA's) offer twilight training which we also offer to Clacks as they don't have their own trainers.

Central officers are supporting our Regional Improvement Collaborative to design professional learning for all practitioners linked to Building Racial Literacy. The focus is on supporting all practitioners to be racially literate, effective at dealing with racism and confident in leading anti-racism.

Central officers with responsibility for professional learning are planning to support all central staff to reflect on accessibility for the different protected characteristics when planning, delivering, and promoting professional learning. This should help to ensure that any offer made reflects the needs of all delegates. Staff will be asked to consider both the practicalities and content of what they deliver in order to ensure this meets the needs of all participants.

3.3 Mainstreaming Equalities across the Licensing Board

Falkirk Council Licensing Board deals with the granting of licences for the sale and supply of alcohol and for various gambling activities. The members of the Board are local members who are appointed by Falkirk Council. Applications are made to the Licensing Section who provides the day-to-day administrative support to the Board.

The requirement for Licensing Boards to produce an Equality Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes report lies in the Equality Act 2010 and the specific duties which are imposed by The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. Falkirk Licensing Board has adopted Falkirk Council Outcomes for the period of 2021-2025.

Statement of Licensing Policy

Is a statutory requirement for the Statement of Licensing Policy to be reviewed within 18 months of the new Licensing Board being appointed, which set outs the date to publish the Statement of Licensing Policy in November 2023.

Digital

There has been changes to the website and the format of Licensing information online is fully accessible now. In addition to this, the papers from the Licensing Board can be requested in other languages for those who do not have English as first language.

With the Covid Pandemic, the format of the Licensing Board meetings had to change and these meetings became fully online. After the end of the restrictions, Licensing Board meetings kept being fully online because it was clear that this constitutes a more transparent and accessible way to carry the Board discussions that affect license holders and the public. To ensure access to everyone that is interested in the discussions that take place in the Licensing Board, the meetings are livestreamed on Falkirk Council YouTube Channel.

Equality Data

Statutory notifications are issued in relation to mandatory refresher training for personal licence holders and they include an equalities survey which is to be completed and returned to the Licensing Section. Licensing has received a very low response rate and is working on identifying appropriate actions to increase the response rate. Since 2014, Equality surveys have been sent to Personal Licence holders who are required to advise the Board that they have completed mandatory refresher training. This survey was hard copy and the percentage of surveys have been low. Since the pandemic the responses have been nil. In order to approach this in a different manner with the aim of a higher return it is proposed to have an equalities survey as part of a dedicated Equalities Licensing Board web page. The survey will capture equality information from all licence holders. It has to be recognised that Premises Licences are held by not only individuals, but Members Clubs, Limited Companies and Partnerships.

Training

Licensing Board Members understand and are aware of the general and specific equality duties. Members can access Falkirk Council's equality e-learning package in Olle and all have undertaken the training, being now familiar with the equality legislation and how it impacts on decision making.

Areas of strength continue to be the attitude of staff and their awareness of equality issues. This is demonstrated by the positive feedback from licence holders and the lack of complaints to the service relating to equality issues.

All licensing staff and Licensing Standards Officers will undertake training on equality and diversity using the Council's OLLE Training Package. All licensing staff, and Board Members, have access to the Council's intranet site, which provides information and guidance on equality to increase awareness. They can also access guidance on HR policies relevant to equality.

CASE STUDY

Licensing Standards Officers (LSO's) are in direct contact with license holders. Therefore, it is important that LSOs are aware of the barriers that people with different protected characteristics may experience and that they are responsive to different needs. When license holders who do not have English as a first language or learning difficulties/different access needs have difficulties with understanding licensing related legislation, LSOs will provide the support needed that people understand the legislation.

Whilst carrying out a site visit to a licensed premise, the LSO realised that the license holder, who had a disability, needed extra support to understand the information provided. The LSO listened to the concerns raised by the licence holder and found out the best way to help the licence holder. The LSO suggested moving to a quiet place in the premises to continue the discussion. By doing so, they were able to communicate in a more effective way. This experience has strengthened the relationship between the LSO and the licence holder.

CASE STUDY

To amend premises licences, licence holders require to complete forms. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Licence Board encouraged that the forms were completed digitally. While this measure was brought in place, to comply with the Covid-19 restrictions of the time, and to ensure staff safety, we recognised that some groups, particularly older people, may experience digital exclusion. There was an instance when an elderly licence holder explained that technology was being an issue for amending the licence. In response, one of the LSOs made an appointment to attend the premises in order to assist with the understanding of the licensing processes and the completion of the forms. This helped this person to access digital services in an alternative way.

3.4 Mainstreaming Equalities as a Procurer of Services

The Corporate Procurement Unit (CPU) strives to secure Best Value through professional, planned and sustainable procurement, which best meets the needs of our communities and supports the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan goals.

CPU supports Services in satisfying the supply and service needs of Falkirk Council and its citizens.

By striking a balance between cost, quality, and sustainability, we endeavour to achieve value for money through the implementation of contracts. We also aim to deliver savings and increase collaborative contract arrangements with other public sector organisations, where benefits for the council can be realised. The main areas of work for CPU are:

- **Establishing contracts which deliver Best Value.**
- **Delivering financial savings and adding value to Council contracts via detailed contract negotiation and evaluation.**
- **Delivering additional benefits for the Council and our citizens through contract delivery.**
- **Providing professional procurement guidance and advice.**
- **Monitoring compliance with Falkirk Council Contract Standing Orders**
- **Ensuring compliance with applicable Scottish, National and European procurement legislation.**
- **Promoting the idea of Sustainable Procurement through Life Cycle Costing.**
- **Promoting the use of electronic procurement processes.**

When Falkirk Council proposes to procure a relevant contract or framework agreement on the basis of the most economically advantageous offer, it has regard to the equality duty in terms of the specification, the Single Procurement Document, and the award criteria. Regard is had to the type of contract and proportionality to the subject matter. By way of some examples, the Single Procurement Document (which is the document that contains questions used at the

selection stage of a procurement exercise i.e., it allows procurement officers to ask questions to identify suitably qualified and experienced bidders for their procurement) asks bidders to confirm they have not breached their obligations in the field of social law.

The Council considers the Sustainability Test flowing from the Sustainable Procurement Duty provided for in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. Users of the test are asked to determine whether environmental and socio-economic risks and opportunities are relevant to the subject matter of the contract, to help inform contract requirements. The intent is to think, before buying anything, how it can improve the social, environmental, and economic wellbeing of the area, with a focus on reducing inequality. A question asked is: "Are there potential opportunities to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality outcomes relevant to the procurement (consider users of the contract, employees of the authority, the wider community, those working on delivery of the contract and the supply chain workforce, as appropriate)?"

Fair Work First principles form standard evaluation criteria in the Council's procurement exercises and cover matters such as action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Particular regard is had to the Equality Duty in the context of social care contracts and framework arrangements which contain, as standard, provisions in relation to equality and discrimination issues. This is reflective of the close relation of the needs of those requiring social care to the duty.

The Council's Procurement Strategy 2020 to 2023 is currently being reviewed with a view to a strategy being agreed that will cover the upcoming years. It is expected that the PSED will be a key consideration in the strategy and the Council can build and improve on the work it has been doing to date.

CASE STUDY

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

A recent example of a successful outcome is from a significant demolition contract procured by the Council. The Council asked bidders to explain what community benefits they could offer. The successful contractor engaged closely with the Council's Employment Training Unit. A job description and person specification was developed and following engagement of Employment Training Unit staff, Jobcentre Plus and SDS Careers, the contractor was able to select four candidates for on-site opportunities. Two of these were aged over 55 years and one met disability classification. Three of the four remain in employment with the contractor.

3.5 Mainstreaming Equalities as an Employer

Background

Falkirk Council is the largest local employer in the Falkirk area. We believe that the recruitment and employment of our employees, at all levels, is an important activity through which mainstreaming can be achieved. By having a higher quality and more diverse workforce, which represents the diversity of our citizens, the Council can provide better quality services to our citizens.

We gather information on the makeup of the workforce and analyse this. The breakdown of protected characteristics helps us to meet our equality duties and provide the best support to our employees.

Employment Data

The data is collated from a number of different sources, including our Payroll and Human Resource system (Resourcelink) and the Council's Recruitment Portal (Talentlink). We are working on linking these systems which may improve the employee data held.

We continue to ask our employees to tell us about their protected characteristics but recognise there are still gaps in our data. In 2017 our HR system was updated which meant that some employees could input their own equality information. This significantly increased the number of returns, and we continue to encourage employees to update this.

We have recently started working with CEMVO through the Race for Human Rights Programme with an aim to encourage employees to share their protected characteristics and further reduce the gaps in data.

Our workforce profile information is noted in APPENDIX II. While we previously reported on returned data only with gaps excluded, we have changed our approach this year and are now reporting the gaps where appropriate to make the data more accessible. The following areas are covered:

- Workforce profile including gender split of Top 2% and 5% of workforce.
- Applications for employment and training.
- Employees involved in discipline and grievance issues.
- Leavers from the Council, including dismissals.

MyJobScotland is updating systems to record where applications are being made for promoted posts so this should allow future reporting.

Children's Services (Education) is part of Falkirk Council, therefore is included within our workforce profile information. The data is based on a headcount of 7874 (as of 31st December 2022).

The Council works closely with Trade Unions when implementing policies and conditions to ensure equality matters are addressed. An agreed consultation process is in place and all policies are impact assessed prior to approval. This information is shared with Trade Unions.

Job Segregation

The majority of the workforce, in common with other parts of the public sector, is female: females make up 75% of the organisation. Of the overall total females in employment, 43% are represented in the lowest 5 grades (Grades A-E). In relation to SJC staff only, 81% are represented in Grades A-E, demonstrating that females are less well represented in the more senior positions in the Council.

Within the Teaching profile there is a significantly higher number of females (1522) in post which equates to 81% of teaching employees. Other significant roles with female dominance include Support for Learning, Cleaning, Catering, Clerical Assistants and Homecare.

Male employment is focussed on the traditional male dominant Craft and Manual Worker categories. The occupational segregation is strong with these roles reflecting broader occupational segregation experienced across the Local Government sector.

Pay Gap: Gender, Disability and Ethnicity

Within Falkirk Council, regular equal pay audits have been conducted since the implementation of Single Status in 2006. The Council also calculates and publishes the gender pay gap as part of our Audit Scotland KPIs. The term gender is being used in line with EHRC guidance. These figures are based on 31st March each year and provide details relating to the previous year. The recent figures from our Audit Scotland submissions on Gender Pay Gap are noted below.

All the figures below are based on total hourly rate divided by the total number of employees. Calculation = $(A-B)/A \times 100$.

Figures for 2022 do not include the teacher's pay award as this had not been processed by the time of the report being produced. It is anticipated that this will further reduce the pay gap.

Gender Pay Gap

Mean Hourly Rate of Pay			
Year	Female (B)	Male (A)	Difference in mean hourly rate
2020	£15.56	£16.31	4.6%
2021	£16.06	£16.88	4.9%
2022	£16.45	£17.38	5.4%

Ethnicity and disability pay gap information has also been included in our Equal Pay audits since 2017.

Disability Pay Gap

Mean Hourly Rate of Pay			
Year	Disabled (B)	Non-Disabled (A)	Difference in mean hourly rate
2020	£14.67	£15.44	5.0%
2021	£15.37	£15.92	3.5%
2022	£15.51	£16.37	5.2%

Ethnicity Pay Gap

Mean Hourly Rate of Pay			
Year	BME (B)	White (A)	Difference in mean hourly rate
2020	£16.07	£14.92	-7.7%
2021	£16.76	£15.46	-7.5%
2022	£16.90	£16.01	-5.56%

Equal Pay Statement

Falkirk Council is committed to equal opportunities across all protected characteristics. We are committed to the principle of equal pay for all employees and aim to eliminate any sex bias or any form of discrimination in all pay structures and systems.

We believe pay is one of the key factors affecting motivation and relationships at work and therefore consider it important to develop pay arrangements that reward employees fairly and are free of unlawful bias. We are 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.

We work with Trade Unions to develop fair and non-discriminatory pay and progression systems which are understood and accepted by employees and by the managers who operate the systems.

All aspects of the pay package will be reviewed and monitored regularly to ensure it delivers equal pay. Any pay inequalities identified which cannot be justified will be eliminated.

In accordance with the Employment Act 2002, employees have the right to request information in relation to equal pay from their employer. As such, we will respond to Equal Pay Questionnaires quickly and transparently, whilst maintaining the privacy of others.

To meet this aim, SJC and Craft jobs are evaluated using the appropriate Job Evaluation Scheme. Those employees working with the scheme at local level are trained in job evaluation and equality. For Teachers, the Council complies with the nationally agreed job sizing toolkit and pay and conditions of service.

The Council's equal pay objectives are to:

- Regularly monitor and review existing pay and conditions.
- Conduct regular equal pay audits to monitor pay and job segregation.
- Eliminate any pay inequalities identified which cannot be justified.

Job Evaluation Scheme and Pay Structure

The Council implemented the 3rd Edition of the Scottish Joint Council Job Evaluation Scheme in August 2016. Following the approval of the 3rd Edition, all job evaluation processes and documentation within Falkirk Council have been reviewed in line with the updated guidance to ensure best practice and compliance to the new Scheme.

The introduction of the 3rd Edition was implemented in two stages:

- Stage one involved the assessment of current processes and training on the new scheme to facilitate the introduction of all future grading using the new 3rd Edition. This was concluded in August 2016.
- Stage two of the process is a specific piece of work to ensure job evaluation results and grading remains fit for purpose.

It is recognised that some years may have passed since evaluations were undertaken and some jobs may have changed during that period. A sample of jobs was therefore identified for re-evaluation to ensure robust grading continues to remain in place. There were 60 posts identified in agreement with Trade Unions however this has reduced to 53, as some posts have been graded through service restructures. This range ensured inclusion of a mix of male and female dominated posts throughout the grading structure. These posts are in addition to the normal grading process that takes place within the Council. Managers and employees are participating in the evaluation process to facilitate the re-assessment of jobs under the 3rd Edition. Human Resources and Trade Unions have an agreed process in place for this work and a Grading Group to ensure appropriate oversight. This project has continued in 2021/22 and is now 70% complete.

The pay structure has been reviewed for Grades A-D. The revised structure maintains separate grades, provides for incremental progression in Grades B-D and ensures a reasonable level of longevity for the pay structure. The Living Wage has now been embedded in the grading and pay structure.

Work has started on reviewing the pay structure for the remaining SJC Grades E-O to ensure it remains fit for purpose and to address recruitment and retention issues. Detailed costing work has been commenced and options will be discussed with Trade Unions.

CASE STUDY

SENSORY SUPPORT

In the Falkirk Council area, citizens requiring sensory support can be referred by NHS to the Falkirk Council Sensory Services team for assessment and support. The team has recently assisted a few Falkirk Council employees with sight and hearing impairments.

An example of this is an employee (Mr A) who was registered as severely sight impaired after experiencing sudden onset glaucoma. He was referred to the Sensory Services Team for specialised input as he was finding it difficult to come to terms with his visual loss and this was having a huge impact on his everyday living. He was allocated to a Visual Impairment Rehabilitation Officer for support and guidance, who could work with him to regain his independence at work, home and in the community.

Initially, Mr A had a full visual impairment assessment within his home and was supplied with equipment and training which allowed him to regain his confidence when carrying out everyday tasks safely and independently. The next step was to help him to mobilise safely and confidently within the local community. He went on to have long cane training, that consisted of orientation and mobility sessions, and he now walks daily to the shop and is able to travel safely, alone, to visit friends and family. Additionally, Mr A was relying on family to transport him to and from his place of work so he was provided with advice about the Government funded Access to Work Scheme and he now has funding in place for a taxi service that can meet his travel needs when carrying out his employment. His manager provided him with a bespoke computer software package, which supports his visual needs and will allow him to continue to carry out his role effectively. Mr A also received an environmental assessment in his workplace and subsequently received equipment to enable him to mobilise around the office environment and to make sure he was able to use canteen facilities safely and effectively. It was suggested to Mr A that his colleagues could be offered visual impairment awareness, which would allow them to understand his condition, but he has declined this. Mr A has also been signposted to the RNIB Sight Loss Counselling Team to support his mental wellbeing due to the emotional impact of

ongoing treatments and sight loss. Overall, Mr A's rehabilitation input has had a positive impact on both his work and home life, with the assurance that the Sensory Services Team will be on hand to offer any further support and guidance he may need.

Another employee was working in a reception area and had a hearing impairment. She had been offered headphones to assist in her work however these had not been appropriate for her needs. The Rehabilitation Officer was able to assess the employee and her work requirements. They advised on types of equipment that may help her hear on the phone and possible solutions to other noise issues she was having in her office, such as doors banging. The Rehabilitation Officer also gave her information and advice about Access to Work who would help pay for the equipment. The employee gave consent to the Rehabilitation Officer to contact audiology for a review appointment as it was some time since she had a hearing test although her hearing aids had been renewed not so long ago. The Rehabilitation Officer also assessed the employee at home to ensure she is safe, able to hear smoke alarms and be able to hear her TV at an acceptable level for her husband. Again, this has had an extremely positive impact on this employee who is now fully equipped to do her job. These types of referrals have prompted the Sensory Services team to think about an internal referral process for Falkirk Council employees. Along with HR and Health, Safety and Wellbeing teams, an information campaign will be started to let employees know that this support is available to them. This will be built into the DSE assessment process so that specialist support can be accessed more easily when required. Training and support will be put in place when specific employee needs are identified.

A further example of sensory support in the workplace is a new employee who requires the assistance of a hearing dog starting employment with the Council. In advance of this, information from Assistance Dogs UK and frequently asked questions have been circulated to employees based in that location to ensure that employees understand what they should and shouldn't do and to provide best support to the new employee.

Recruitment and Retention

When applying for a job in Falkirk Council, applicants have to complete an online application form on MyJobScotland. We recognised that some people may find this process difficult so are currently trialling an option for people to answer a few questions about their personal details and then upload their CV instead of having to complete the full application process. We will get feedback from applicants to the new process, adapt if needed and then provide this as an option for recruiting managers.

A number of flexible working options are in place in the Council, which more recently include the introduction of the Hybrid Working Policy. The policy was put in place following consultation with employees and Trade Unions and has allowed improved flexibility in working hours, locations, and work life balance.

Wellbeing

In support of Falkirk Council's commitment to health and wellbeing, a Menopause Policy was developed to establish awareness of the menopause, support for employees experiencing menopause and accessible resources. This was further complemented by a menopause training course to support women experiencing symptoms associated with the menopause and providing line manager guidance.

We issue regular wellbeing updates to employees and managers on a range of topics from menopause, health issues, mental health, exercise, and general wellbeing. We have a range of support information available for employee wellbeing including Occupational Health resources, Employee Assistance Programme and have recently introduced new mental health e-learning courses. We have also retained our Disability Confident Employer status.

We are working with Salary Finance, Credit Union, and the Council's debt advice team to provide tools and education, affordable loans, and savings to support employees in taking practical steps to take control of their money and become more financially resilient and can help employees to remain at work, rather than go off sick.

3.6 Mainstreaming Equalities across the Council

3.6.1 Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services.

Transformation, Communities and Corporate Services is a relatively new Council service bringing together a number of Council services including, Human Resources, Procurement and Licensing that are required to provide separate reports as part of the Equality Duty, these are listed above. The remaining divisions in this service are Governance, Finance, Housing and Communities and these reports follow on.

Governance

This division's supports the decision-making structure of the Council, including the management of the Council's Committee process, Community Council liaison, support for the Area Support Team and Valuation Joint Board and works with both officers and elected members to do this. This service also provides support to the Council with its corporate approach to Equalities and Gender-Based Violence. This includes ensuring that there is a provision to support those for whom English is not their first language, monitoring and facilitating the EPIA process and providing support to the Gender Based Violence Partnership.

One of the divisions main roles is to support participation at Committee and Council meetings. Prior to the pandemic, elected members had to physically attend the meetings and the only way for the public to view proceedings was by attending in person. Lockdown brought challenges in terms of member's participation and in running public meetings that were accessible, and a virtual approach to meetings was taken, allowing members to join remotely and Council meetings to be livestreamed on YouTube and to keep the recordings in the Council's YouTube Channel to watch anytime. This increased transparency in decision making, allowing members of the public to understand the arguments and the rationale around the decisions and agreements taken. Meetings were fully remote initially but as lockdown restrictions eased, Council moved to hybrid meetings which allowed physical or remote participation. Elected members are able to join meetings physically or virtually. Members of

the public can also watch meetings online or attend physically. This blended approach ensures that everyone can access the meetings in the most convenient way for them. Being able to join meetings from anywhere, means that elected members are now able to fit their other working commitments around Council duties, and elected members with disabilities, who are pregnant/on maternity leave or who have caring responsibilities have the opportunity to join Council meetings in a way that better suits their needs. This helps Falkirk Council comply with the general Equality Duty because advances equality of opportunity between those who shared a protected characteristic and those who don't, potentially removing barriers for underrepresented groups to become elected members. This approach to Council meetings also guarantees easy and wider access for the public, with the same benefits for members of the public who work or have caring responsibilities because they can watch the meetings anytime; and for those members of the public with disabilities, as they can watch the meetings in a way and time that better suits their needs; ensuring transparency in decision making and engaging more with the community.

Housing and Communities

The Housing and Communities Division brings together several services. The Housing Service determines the needs of the community in relation to housing and provides a range of social housing options for those living in our community. This service also provides Housing Support services to those who require it. It also works to reduce homelessness working in partnership with several partners to ensure the support needs of our vulnerable communities are met. This service also provides associated front-line services like our welfare benefits support service, libraries and revenues and benefits. This service also co-ordinates the Council's approach to poverty as detailed within the Falkirk Plan The Falkirk Plan 2021 - 2030 and the Council's work with refugees and those seeking asylum. It also offers a range of services like garden aid, and a handyman service to those who need it.

The Housing Strategy Team sits within Housing Services and are involved in the following:

- **The Housing Need and Demand Assessment :** This an evidence base for the Local Housing Strategy and the Local Development Plan . It provides an assessment of housing provision and related services within the Council wide area. This is informed by the needs of all our communities and the service takes care to ensure that the protected characteristics of our communities are considered This in turn informs the Local Housing Strategy.
- **Local Housing Strategy :** The Local Housing Strategy contains agreed outcomes and an action plan, including performance indicators which will be monitored throughout the five year period of the strategy document. An update will also be completed each year to show how the Council is progressing in meeting the outcomes identified. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan sets out how investment in affordable housing will be used to achieve the Local Housing Strategy outcomes. The plan shows how needs and priorities in relation to affordable housing will be tackled. The Strategic Housing Improvement Plan concentrates on new housing provision by the Council's Registered Social Landlords and takes account of any new council house building programmes the local authority wish to deliver. A copy of the plan can

CASE STUDY

AMENDMENT TO THE STANDING ORDERS IN LINE WITH THE EQUALITY DUTY.

The Standing Orders of the Council determined that elected member should stand when addressing the Provost. In practice. Provosts had allowed members to remain seated should that be their preference. However, in 2021 it was suggested that rather than be the exception to the rule, the rule should change and that Standing Orders should be changed to remove the requirement to stand. It was suggested that this presumption of standing did not help the Council to comply with the general Equality Duty as it could be discriminatory from a disability point of view, and the orders were duly amended. This has helped to remove barriers for those who share a protected characteristic.

also be found on our website under LHS. The strategy and development team also work with colleagues in Place Services and developers where a site comes under the Affordable Housing Policy. An Older People's Housing Plan considers demand for the current model of housing with care, carrying out focus groups and surveys along with older peoples' groups and stakeholders in housing and social work.

Falkirk Council's housing service provides high quality homes and services to nearly 17,000 households, satisfaction is high amongst our tenants and demand is high for our homes. We have identified the following as our key drivers and priorities:

- **Delivering high quality, value for money services to tenants that are responsive and person-centred;**
- **Meeting aspirations of current and future tenants and delivering tenant investment priorities;**
- **Supporting stronger and healthier communities by delivering housing services that reduce homelessness, support people to sustain tenancies and provide good quality affordable homes;**
- **Supporting health and social care objectives**

The Service is committed to the wellbeing of its tenants and as such is embedding poverty informed practice and income maximisation into its day-to-day delivery of housing services and has increased staffing levels to ensure this can be achieved.

Housing Needs Service

Homelessness

Falkirk Council delivers a range of services ensuring it addresses the key aims of the Scottish Government in respect of homelessness, with a focus on the prevention and alleviation. Addressing homelessness is also a key part of fighting poverty and inequality. The service fulfils its statutory responsibility by ensuring that homelessness advice and assistance is available to everybody in our area, including homeless prevention and debt advice, free of charge.

We work in partnership to ensure that we deliver a person-centred approach to meet our customers needs and prevent the reoccurrence of homelessness, providing advice, assistance and support We know that our customers can often present with vulnerabilities and complex needs which will require a multi-agency whole systems approach and we have delivery models in place to achieve this.

CASE STUDY

Our Supported Temporary Accommodation supported a young woman called Jane* who was fleeing domestic abuse. Jane had recently entered the country to stay with her partner but was subjected to horrific physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. Jane was able to contact the police and remove herself from that situation.

Jane was placed with our Service whilst more suitable accommodation was sought, this provided Jane with a flat of her own with all the amenities she required. Jane spoke limited English so we worked with the police and translating services to ensure we could provide her with everything she needed to ensure she could settle in for the night. Through this collaborative, person-centred approach, we were able to source Jane suitable clothing, food, and toiletries as well as a new mobile phone so she could access support services.

Our first and most important area of support was to ensure that Jane had access to the right support for her circumstances and we began liaising with a charity that specifically supported women in Jane's situation. We worked with this charity to ensure that a strong partnership was formed allowing for the quick progression of an asylum request and to also ensure that Jane was receiving the emotional support she needed following her abuse.

Our Service also secured additional funding to purchase more clothes for Jane, we introduced supports with staff and Jane to take walks around the local area to identify amenities and to support her mental wellbeing. To prevent social isolation Jane received an iPad and internet dongle from the Connecting Scotland initiative.

Due to having no recourse to public funds, close working was required between our Service and Falkirk Council's Housing Needs Team to ensure that Jane was able to remain safe whilst her immigration status was being confirmed. Through the support Jane received from Housing; Falkirk Council and partner agencies, she was able to receive a right to reside in the UK and accessed appropriate accommodation and the right support for her to start a new life in Scotland.

*A pseudonym has been used to protect the anonymity of those involved.

Temporary Accommodation

We provide a range of temporary accommodation options to meet our customers' needs ensuring our stock is not only fit for purpose however meets the requirements of the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and the recent ruling surrounding the provision of temporary accommodation (Lord Ericht). This includes making sure that accommodation meets specific needs to assist our customers with complex needs for example recovery and/or minimise trauma, considering the best resource that not only assists the customer however our tenants and wider community.

We expect further demand on the service and temporary accommodation due to an increase in homeless presentations and anticipated further increase due to the re-introduction of evictions and cost-of-living, as well as the demand for housing via immigration, refugees and those finding themselves destitute as they have No Recourse to Public Funds.

CASE STUDY

Previously Falkirk Council's Housing Needs Service provided supported accommodation to a young vulnerable Vietnamese person who was found on the streets in Falkirk by police. CID confirmed that they thought it to be a trafficking case.

Falkirk Council's Access to Housing Service (Housing Needs Service) agreed to accommodate the young person in the supported unit to allow for the case to be investigated and to provide support. The young person received a letter from the Home Office regarding the circumstances of his case which concluded there were reasonable grounds to believe that he had been a victim of human trafficking and he had 45 days to recover and consider his options during which he would be entitled to safe accommodation and support. The young person spoke no English and was supported to attend an interview at Guardianship, Scottish Refugee Centre in Glasgow to give him advice and assistance.

Falkirk Council's Housing Needs Service continued to provide accommodation at Seaforth House. During this time multidisciplinary meetings were arranged with the young person which included, Housing Needs Service, Social Work, Leaving Care Loretto and representation from the Guardianship scheme.

Ensuring the young person received person centred support that promotes equality and human rights issues was paramount, and support was tailored to achieve outcomes that included;

- Applying for Asylum in the U.K where he was represented by a solicitor.
- Support to find family.
- Support to attend meetings in Edinburgh with the Scottish Guardianship.
- Support to explore eligibility for student allowance via the college for travel costs etc.

- Financial assistance through a weekly allowance from Leaving Care.
- Attendance at the Champions Board to meet other young people.
- Support to continue to establish friendship group in Edinburgh.
- Referred to Life Coach via Leaving Care Team.
- Support to attend all routine health appointments including GP, Dentist, and eye examination.
- Referral submitted to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services to explore what specialist trauma support could be offered.
- Support to attend College in Edinburgh to complete his English for Speakers of Other Language course.

Later the Housing Needs Service recognised the cultural challenges the young person was dealing with in the current accommodation managing shared living. Agreement was reached with other agencies that a move to alternative temporary supported unit may help remove barriers for engagement that could introduce other support options including supported cooking in his own home.

Inclusion within the new service promoted equality issues ensuring the young person had access to the same services other young looked after care leavers accessed. Single occupancy provision within the unit supported the young person to embrace his own cultural norms that shared living could not.

The young person was given indefinite leave to remain in the UK and was awarded Homeless status with the Housing Needs Service entitling him to permanent housing. Thus ensuring the same options were available to him as other young people accessing services which continues to promote inclusion, Equality and fundamental basic Human Rights.

Prevention of Homelessness

Scottish Government are introducing a legal duty to local authorities and wider public bodies to prevent homelessness. In preparation of this Falkirk Council have identified a required need to develop our prevention services introducing a more targeted, person-centred approach.

We need to break the cycle of homelessness and to achieve this, we must recognise that, where trauma has affected a person/household's situation, we deliver a service that has a trauma-informed approach at its centre. By moving towards a case management approach to deliver prevention services, we will achieve more positive, person-centred housing outcomes for households, reducing additional, unnecessary trauma caused by periods of homelessness or insecure housing whilst easing pressure for temporary accommodation and minimising Bed & Breakfast use.

We also want to look beyond those who may be threatened with homelessness and look at those who may be at risk of being threatened with homelessness. Early intervention at a point where there is a crisis in the individual's life that can impact on their housing situation is key to circumventing or supporting the crisis.

To assist this approach, we have developed the Homeless Prevention Fund, which can provide small-scale, one-off payments, to help prevent a household becoming homeless, or to rapidly re-house them to their permanent tenancy. The Fund is currently open for referrals from Housing Services and the Community Advice Team. The fund will normally cover payments:

- That are one-off and relatively small-scale payments of between £50 and £1,000 to prevent homelessness or rapidly re-house a homeless household.
- For rent in advance and/or a deposit normally the equivalent of 1 months' rent where this is not obtainable through an initial application for a discretionary housing payment, the Deposit Guarantee Scheme or the applicant is not eligible for benefits assistance.

Allocations

The Allocations Service will be transformed by the implementation of the new NEC system and its capabilities. These changes to the system will aid our applicants in making informed choices surrounding properties, it is anticipated that this approach will assist tenancy sustainment. We will develop a portfolio for each property including the facility to undertake a virtual viewing which can be viewed by housing staff, contractors, and tenants anytime, anywhere. These tours can be used to reduce emissions, speed up allocation of lets and allow for reinvestment of savings into key areas. The portfolio will provide additional information surrounding the costs of the property (Council Tax and utilities) along with floorplans and proximity to amenities.

We are also in the process of identifying properties that are suitable for Adaptations as part of our buy back scheme. Our Housing Occupational Therapist is undertaking work that identifies early on for suitability of adapting ground floor properties prior to advert, to ensure our most vulnerable customers' needs can be met in a planned and strategic way and reducing impacts on other key services for example health.

The new automated provision within the system will also impact on the necessity for staff input into the Function Needs Assessment process which will free up staff to allow staff to work with customers to ensure that they and their family's needs can be met in a timely way and providing advice, assistance and access to accommodation that meets their needs.

Resettlement Team

The UK Government has made a commitment to support and safeguard vulnerable people who seek protection in the UK through resettlement and asylum routes and the Scottish Government has committed to supporting New Scots. The people participating in resettlement schemes are reliant on the support of local authorities to support their needs. With that in mind Falkirk Council has developed a Resettlement Team to embed its commitment to providing safe and inclusive communities through participation in the refugee resettlement schemes and recognises the valuable impact this team has on the lives of those affected.

Fairer Falkirk Section

This Service works to co-ordinate the Council's approach to poverty and to providing a library service.

Household Support Fund

Our Household Support Fund provides direct cash support to low-income households, on referral from one of our trusted partners. Typically, these are other Council services as well as Citizen's Advice Bureau and other social landlords operating in the Falkirk area. In most cases, those referred are individuals already known to the supporting service. To try to understand the barriers experienced by minority ethnic households in accessing support, we engaged with Al Masaar, which is a local organisation supporting our local Muslim community. Al Masaar work in close partnership with many other organisations throughout the Falkirk area. This identified lack of awareness and difficulty accessing services due to language and in some cases culture as potential barriers.

Working with our development team, we created a simple self-referral form which would in effect allow people to indicate for themselves that they needed support (i.e. they did not already have to be known to services). We also held an information session with Al Masaar raising awareness of the fund

and the simple self-referral process, which immediately led to requests for support through the fund from households who had not previously reached out for support. We have since used this model to also target other groups, particularly those in our tackling child poverty priority groups who face significant socio-economic disadvantage. Our school holiday food and activities fund provides support to local organisations to deliver activities and food to children and young people from low-income families throughout the school holidays. The funding is predominantly intended to reach children and young people from the child poverty priority family groups including families with disabilities, single parents, the vast majority of which are women, and ethnic minority households. In recent times funding has been provided to organisations to support a variety of activities designed to support people in these groups. This service has been expanded to support our Resettlement team who are supporting Ukrainian families with events designed to ensure children and young people are made to feel included in their community, helping to establish and form new relationships as well as providing food.

CASE STUDY

The Children with Disability team has consistently provided activities for children and young people with disabilities during the school holidays, with support from the fund. This helps support those who may otherwise find it difficult to participate in activities, and who would find it difficult being out of their normal routine. Children and young people have participated in activities including swimming, cinema, museum visits and others. Some parents with disabled children have noted that they do not have the confidence to take their children out on trips themselves, but the experience and support of volunteers let them have great days out.

Libraries

Public libraries provide access to services free at the point of entry to all. We are committed to addressing universal barriers - physical, financial, and cultural - to enable equity of access. Inclusive services including stock and recruitment policies ensure individuals and communities feel represented in collections and programming.

Libraries are critically placed to support communities and ensure that no-one is excluded and left behind. Falkirk Council Libraries have committed to supporting all library staff in achieving digital champion status in 2023 with a planned programme of practical activities to embed staff skills and confidence. Free access to digital equipment and staff support for digital skills empowers individuals to become digitally confident and included.

Libraries provide free access to Wi-Fi, internet, and digital infrastructure, including STEM-related activities to support digital learning. Falkirk Libraries switched in 2023 to the Council provided Meraki Wi-Fi solution enabling all secondary school pupils with a school smart device to automatically log on to Library Wi-Fi on entering their local library. This offers great opportunities to promote connected learning and offer community library-based homework clubs, self-study, creative investigation, and relaxation in a safe space with trained staff and a bank of hard copy and virtual resources on hand.

In 2022/23, Falkirk Libraries removed financial penalties for overdue loans for all borrowers. Overdue fines were shown to be the major barrier to individuals joining the library in a report by Robert Gordon University due to apprehension over potential mounting financial penalties.

In 2023, work is being carried out to remove outdated stock control barriers which created physical obstacles at library entrances and were problematic to navigate for individuals with mobility issues or with prams and buggies. The barriers also created a visual barrier and presented an ethos which is not in line with the safe, welcoming, and accessible space for all that libraries provide.

Libraries act as a central point in communities where people can collect free period products.

Where food banks and/or communities have requested the facility, libraries act as a collection point for food bank donations. As the cost of living became a crisis and fuel prices increased, Libraries wanted to promote more prominently the warm, welcoming space that they have always offered and extend an invitation to individuals and communities to use the space that belongs to them simply to come and relax, keep warm and socialise. From January 2023 Libraries have been able to offer free hot drinks to all customers and we have invested in extra power banks to enable visitors to charge their smart devices safely while in the library - when money is tight this might be the difference that enables someone to keep a phone charged for emergencies or a laptop charged for work. We know that for individuals experiencing homelessness their mobile phone is a lifeline and the ability to keep it charged is critical: without a contact phone number or email address (via a smartphone) it is extremely difficult to register for access to housing, Universal Credit, and other forms of emergency support.

Friendly welcoming library staff and library space, the core library offer e.g. promoting reading, digital skills support and the addition of a tailored health and wellbeing service or activity e.g. reminiscence sessions, cancer and dementia support, signposting etc. combine to deliver significant health and wellbeing outcomes for individuals: Physical and mental health benefits, improved wellbeing, improved health literacy and a positive contribution to health self-management.

In addition to a wealth of health self-management and information resources, individuals in Falkirk can access meditation sessions, Knit and Natter groups, book groups, craft sessions. These warm, safe spaces with groups and activities are critical in combatting social isolation which in turn leads to better outcomes for health and wellbeing. Libraries also supply a range of materials in alternative formats to support customers who are blind or who have a visual impairment: We have a large selection of large print books, audio and e-audio books and e-books for adults and children. In addition, Falkirk Council Libraries have implemented the PressReader service this year which offers free online access to library members to over 100 UK and international newspapers and magazines in

over 65 languages. The service has excellent accessibility features enabling users to have articles read aloud, translated, or displayed in various formats.

The ability to get around independently is critical for health and wellbeing and Falkirk Council Libraries are the place to apply for or renew your bus pass. All bus passes are now supplied by appointment at Falkirk Library which enables library staff to communicate with individuals prior to the application. The paperwork, identification and proof required is often overlooked and having the opportunity to discuss this with individuals prior to their appointment helps to prevent frustration and wasted journeys which can be costly in terms of effort, health, and finance.

Our Home Library Service (HLS) provides a delivery service for individuals who can't travel to the library due to disability, illness, recent operation, or caring responsibilities. The HLS also makes deliveries to the common rooms of residential care homes in the Falkirk area. In addition to providing books, our HLS staff also provide digital skills support – installing library e-services on personal devices, guidance with Living Well assessments, IT taster sessions at home, etc. They act as befrienders and a listening ear when they are often the only visitor in a week and can deliver replacement hearing aid batteries and even prescriptions when necessary. The Home Library Service also run reminiscence sessions, and two reading groups (one online) with fully accessible materials as a significant percentage of the Home Library customers are registered blind or have a visual impairment.

Public libraries are vibrant local venues which provide varied opportunities to access culture. Development beyond traditional, programmed culture is encouraged towards more diverse, representative, and inclusive spaces. Libraries work in partnership with communities to create ideas and build capacity to take them forward, to celebrate local identity and heritage.

Over the last year, Falkirk Council Libraries have celebrated various national cultural events e.g. Black History Month, Keep the Heid and Read, Holocaust Memorial Day, International Women's Day etc. as well as more local activities e.g. Grangemouth 150: an

annual programme of local history talks to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Grangemouth, a range of author visits including most recently two Scottish authors - Alan Dapr , author of Porridge the Tartan Cat books for children, and William McIntyre author of the Best Defence legal thrillers, Spoken word poetry while you, Denny writers group, Code club.

This year, Falkirk Libraries have committed to under 5s early learning and school readiness by implementing the Scottish Government approved Every Child A Library Member (ECALM) delivery method. We are, working in partnership with Registrars to collect information from parents/guardians when they register a child's birth. Children can now be enrolled as library members and begin to benefit from resources and services to help with reading, numeracy, play, speech development and bonding from birth.

Parents and guardians of new babies are also supported by Bookbug, another national programme which supports the formation of reading as a lifelong habit, speech development, rhyme and phonics, numeracy, and bonding. Bookbug. Weekly sessions run in every library with children attending from birth to four years with an adult. Libraries work in partnership with Health Visitors and Early Years establishments to ensure children receive Bookbug book gifting bags at key development stages of their life until they reach primary school. This gifting programme is supported by Bookbug Sessions in libraries and the Bookbug Collector Card scheme which encourages children to borrow a book every time they visit the library in exchange for a stamp on their card until they have collected enough stamps to win their own miniature Bookbug. In 2022/23 Falkirk Council Libraries and Falkirk Council Library Resource Service jointly purchased a full-size Bookbug costume to enhance Bookbug sessions and he visits libraries, nurseries, and playgroups across the area to enable all children to connect with books and reading for pleasure in a fun and exciting way. This year, library staff have worked with CVS Falkirk and with Falkirk Council Housing Support to provide Bookbug sessions and information for Ukrainian refugees - we have a stock of books in Ukrainian for parents and children.

CASE STUDY

LIBRARIES FOR WELLBEING

Falkirk Libraries have been shortlisted twice in national awards in 2023 for their Libraries for Wellbeing project: SLIC Award for Project Excellence and EDGE2023 Award (Social Category). This project received funding from the Scottish Government Covid Recovery Fund, administered by Scottish Library and Information Council.

Libraries for Wellbeing achieved its aims by carrying out a wide-ranging training programme for staff, by creating new Words for Wellbeing groups, and by running outreach sessions to connect more deeply with our communities and encourage the use of libraries as welcoming safe spaces for everyone. We trained some of our staff in bibliotherapy, so they felt confident to set up fortnightly Words for Wellbeing (bibliotherapy) groups in our libraries. Many partners were extremely enthusiastic about the project and keen to refer attendees to our groups: changing the ethos to one where the wellbeing of our staff and communities is at the heart of our service. The Words for Wellbeing groups that are running in all 8 of our branches have continued after the end of the original project and are now considered to be a core part of our library offer, with consideration being given to adding extra groups where there is most demand. The groups provide much needed meeting places for socially isolated people and have brought in non-library users as well as those who were already regular users. We will continue with our links with local charities and NHS services so they can signpost more people to our services and will review how we can work with them further in the future.

3.6.2 Children and Justice Social Work

Approach to mainstreaming

Children and Justice Social Work Services provide a wide range of services to safeguard, protect, support, and promote wellbeing of all service users including the most vulnerable people. The functions of the service are wide ranging, from assessing need and providing care and protection to vulnerable children and families to implementing measures of control for those who may be at risk to themselves or the wider community via public protection measures. Services are provided to meet the needs of a broad range of service users from early intervention to high-risk intervention. In doing this we need to be aware of the individual needs of those in our communities who might face additional barriers in relation to their protected characteristics.

We face rising demographic pressures, a growing child population and a significant increase in demand for specialist provision for children with a variety of additional support needs and migrant children in need of support. Most of our work is undertaken in partnership with other agencies, communities, service users and their families, parents or carers. We take service users' views into account when planning and delivering our services and we are responsive to the needs of all groups of people who use our services. We are committed to ensuring that our performance is measured and managed and that continuous improvement is an integral part of our service. Service improvement will be delivered through the re-design of services in ways that mean our services focus on our priorities and are targeted towards supporting those in greatest need including those with protected characteristics.

The digital and technology vision for our Service is that we will seek to provide digital access to services wherever that is possible. This will ensure our service users can access services at a time which suits them, using easy to understand and manageable systems. Our management information systems are vital to our Service as they manage all interactions, we have with our service users. We are in the process of replacing the main social work information system with a new management information system which will help to ensure appropriate information is shared across the

Service. This will enable us to fully support all of our service users using the latest technology and for our social work staff to work from any location at any time allowing them to make services more accessible to all groups but in particular those that are less able to travel to an office location

Fostering and adoption

When recruiting for foster carers and adoptive parents, our priority is that people have capacity to care for children, regardless of their background or individual characteristics. We are mindful about the wide range of people that represent Falkirk in our communities and the growing diversity in the area. To ensure we reach people from all areas of the community, we build bridges and opportunities with many diverse groups, including LGBTQ+, cultural and ethnic organisations, religious establishments and community projects that connects us with people from different backgrounds. We have had some recent success in preparing and approving foster carers and adopters from minority communities and thus having within us a wide range of skills that can serve the needs of our children that are becoming more and more diverse.

CASE STUDY

A and N are a couple from a Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) background who live in Falkirk. They have come forward and offered to provide foster care through short breaks, giving children in the community they come from, a chance to have a safe and welcoming experience. They plan to do so by offering short breaks to other foster carers, kinship carers and by helping a child in a residential setting gain experience of family life.

D and H are a couple - D Scottish and H is from a BME background. They have come forward with the view to adopt a sibling group, offering a family for life to brothers and sisters in our community and bring with them experience of caring and a wide range of diversity and inclusion.

G and F - are a European same sex couple, who are currently undergoing assessment to become adopters and give a child a family for life

CASE STUDY

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

M is a 14-year-old young person. She is a cheerful and sociable person who thrives on one-to-one attention. M is currently supported via the Children with Disability Team's Activity Scheme; Befriending Scheme; and Short Breaks Service.

As a result of M's additional support needs and communication differences, historically she was unable to participate in mainstream activities which resulted in her becoming socially isolated and reduced her opportunity to develop her independent living skills.

The Activity and Befriending Schemes are based on the ethos of active participation and equality of opportunity and have provided M with access to mainstream community based resources. Which in turn have allowed her to develop her independent living skills, particularly her social and communication skills. M currently accesses a number of community-based activities, such as swimming and is supported to use public transports, with train travel being a particular favourite of hers. M also loves helping others and always offers to undertake any shopping for the Activity Scheme and her peers. This task focused opportunity has allowed M to develop her organisational and communication skills with support from our activity workers.

Our activity workers and befrienders are committed to their ongoing development to ensure that they can support our young people. They are supported to achieve this via a robust training and support programme provided by the Activity Scheme Coordinator, with a focus on communication and advocacy. An aspect of the activity worker role is to be advocate, this includes supporting our children and young people to challenge discrimination when they feel confident to do so, but to do this for them when they are unable to.

Community Justice Services

The Caledonian System is an integrated approach to address men's domestic abuse and to improve the lives of women and children we support. The women's service helps women understand domestic abuse and how it affects them. It is the role of the women's service to convey to a woman that, no matter her vulnerabilities or choices, she is not to blame for her partner's violence or abuse. This is achieved through the ethos of the service and the clear messages that all Women's Service Workers give about domestic abuse.

Falkirk Council has also rolled out 'Safe and Together' training across services to increase awareness and understanding of issues of gender-based violence. Our Team Leader of the Women & Children's Service is an accredited 'Safe and Together' trainer. Caledonian Women's Workers engage with opportunities to raise awareness of issues of Gender-Based Violence with the public and partner agencies and have direct work with women and children affected by Gender-Based Violence providing specialist, practical and emotional support to improve their wellbeing and safety, as well as providing direct input into the perpetrator groupwork programme.

Our Caledonian Women's Service picks up cases at first referral from court into the system and a women's worker is allocated. Contact is made quickly with the woman to assess her needs and work on creating and developing a safety plan for her and her children. Referrals are made to Children's Services to ensure that they are alerted to the family situation and the involvement of the Caledonian Women's Service Team. Appropriate information sharing with all relevant agencies involved with the family supports risk management planning and ensures interventions are effectively managed across services. We have access to a wide range of support services either co-located within Justice Services or through commissioning arrangements with partners or via universal services. For example, our women's workers can access our co-located services such as the Justice Psychiatric Nurse (CPN); Justice Keepwell Nurse; and 'Tackling Inequalities and Improving Outcomes' Project to support women with health, wellbeing and

social inclusion needs. Referrals can be made to our commissioned partner Cyrenians to support employability needs. By working in partnership our Caledonian Women's Service is able to provide not only specialist domestic abuse emotional/practical support and safety planning but also bespoke, needs led interventions, to help and support the women and children to improve their wellbeing and safety. The Caledonian Women and Children's service is available to the woman and her children for the duration of the man's Community Payback Order (CPO) even if he disengages or is breached. Engagement is voluntary.

We gather feedback from the women who use our service to assist us to evaluate and develop the services we deliver. Through feedback received we worked with our third sector partners to develop additional support services for 2022/23 such as our outreach worker who can provide additional support over weekends, as well as opening up access to our other services noted above which had initially been commissioned to support those subjected to community sentences or licence supervision. We identified a need for a Children's Worker post as part of our Caledonian Service and worked with HR colleagues to develop a post to recruit to.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how we deliver the Caledonian System. In the difficult and highly unusual circumstances it is through the creativity of the workers concerned that we have and will continue to offer a high-quality safe intervention and support service. All court assessment requests were completed and women contacted were offered advocacy, safety planning and support. Women's Service Workers proactively contacted women throughout the man's order. Women were given the opportunity to engage with the service at a time that is right for them. The Women's Service Workers worked closely with case managers to risk assess contact during lockdown.

The Women's Service have seen an increased reliance on digital technologies since the pandemic started and that the negative consequences of being digitally excluded in the current context can be greater than ever. Households with lower incomes, are less likely to have home internet access and electronic devices. The transition from face-to-face to

distance home and online schooling proved stressful for women due to lack of electronic devices and broadband connections. Children had to share a computer or smart phone as well as limited space at home with other family members. Women had to play a crucial role in home-schooling and the Women's Service Worker's sourced local and national agencies who provided Chromebooks/tablets/laptops and payment for broadband to enable children to continue home learning.

The Caledonian Women & Children's Service has returned to face-to-face contact with woman as well as phone and video calls. We utilise council buildings and spaces as well as third sector agency rooms and areas where safe to do so.

CASE STUDY

High risk case supporting a woman (P) and her 2 children. P decides to end the relationship and discovers she is pregnant with twins. She is coerced by her partner and his mother to remain with him and one of her twins dies in the womb due to the stress of the continued abuse. The man uses substances and introduces the woman to heroine. Following the birth of her premature baby he overdoses the woman with heroin and administers Naloxone to 'bring her back'. He uses this situation to keep control by making threats to contact Children and Family Social Work to discredit her parenting and reminding her he saved her life. The man is subject to ongoing Risk Management Reviews with Justice Services and the Police and information is shared on risk. The man received a short period of time in prison and P decided to end the relationship. With support from the Women's Service Worker, housing and Children and Family Social Work, P moved to an address unknown to the man. The Women's Service Worker liaised and advocated with relevant agencies to secure the home. On his release from prison the man's mother updated him to where the woman and children were living. He does not accept the relationship is over and uses contact with his children as an opportunity to further abuse P verbally, emotionally, and physically. The man was arrested when he assaulted P. He is now serving a longer jail sentence and P and her children have been moved again. The children were placed on the Child Protection Register and the man will have to engage with Children and Family Social Work on his release to discuss any contact with the children in the future. Children and Family Social Work regularly consult with the Women's Service Worker in relation to how they can safely support P and children while being aware of the dynamics of Domestic Abuse and coercive control. For now, the family feel safer and safety plans are in place for the man's release.

3.6.3 Place Services

Place Services is a relatively new directorate that brings together a wide range of statutory and other vital service areas focused on delivering the Council's vision of creating strong communities where inequalities are reduced and lives are improved. Some of the broad areas of service for which Place Services is responsible include:

- **Land use planning, development management and building standards.**
- **Climate change, environmental health, and consumer protection.**
- **Economic development, employability, and Council property.**
- **Waste, fleet, and estates management.**
- **Roads, transport, and infrastructure.**

Equalities considerations are integral to the delivery of all of the above services, particularly regarding public safety and physical access to services. The service is organised into three divisions to manage and deliver this broad range of services, all of which are committed to embedding equality considerations into their business and decision making to ensure that all members of our community are treated fairly and with respect. We recognise that everyone has different needs, circumstances, and abilities, and we aim to ensure that our policies, programmes, procedures, and practices are inclusive and accessible to all. All of our employees are encouraged to embrace cultural diversity and have been briefed or trained in Equality & Diversity Awareness.

Environment & Operations

The Environment and Operations division is responsible for a variety of front-line operational Council functions, including roads maintenance, waste management, fleet maintenance, and housing repairs..

Roads Design (including Road Safety and Active Travel schemes)

The Engineering Design unit are responsible for Council's core roads design service, including any road safety and active travel schemes. The unit is committed to ensuring that our road and bridge schemes are designed with regard to the Equality Act 2010

and other relevant legislation, seeking to ensure that they are inclusive and accessible to all. We recognise that road schemes can have a significant impact on communities and individuals, and we aim to ensure that our designs are fair, non-discriminatory, and meet the needs of all users.

Improvement schemes for public roads, bridges and footways are designed using best practice regarding access for people with mobility difficulties. Pedestrian crossings are upgraded to meet best practice in provision for people with mobility difficulties and when undertaking road works and pedestrian diversions for people with mobility difficulties are provided when requested.

We follow the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges as well as the Scottish Government's Designing Streets guidance, which sets out best practice for designing streets that are safe, accessible, and inclusive for all users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers. The guidance emphasizes the importance of considering the needs of all users, including those with protected characteristics, such as older people, people with disabilities, and people from ethnic minority communities.

Our road scheme design process seeks to determine the potential impacts of our designs on different protected characteristic groups. This involves engagement with members of the affected communities and stakeholders, to gather feedback and ensure that their perspectives are considered. We also work closely with our partners, including local authorities, community groups, and disability organisations, to ensure that our designs are inclusive and accessible.

Growth, Planning & Climate

The Growth, Planning & Climate division is responsible for a range of functions that are essential to the sustainable development and growth of the local community. This division is responsible for a variety of functions, including land use planning, development management, building standards, climate change, environmental health, consumer protection, economic development, employability, and transport policy.

Employment & Training

The Employment and Training Unit (ETU) supports local people, from school leaving age through to retirement, who are experiencing barriers to employment to improve employment and career opportunities through equal access to training and fair work, reducing unemployment and inactivity rates and increasing the skills of the workforce within Falkirk. Services are designed and delivered around the needs and aspirations of those using our services including those experiencing social and economic inequalities, unemployment and low earnings, physical and mental health issues, disabled participants, those with learning difficulties, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disengaged young people and lone parents.

The ETU continues to adapt to the needs of local people increasing access to support interventions, personal development, health, and wellbeing provision in addition to core skills improvement, individualised and group training programmes that contribute to overall confidence, self-esteem and self-worth aiding the journey into employment. Specialist support is provided through utilisation of internal and external funding that support local priorities and National policy intent.

All participants have a dedicated keyworker and are registered on the programme that best meets their circumstances and needs such as; DFN Project Search, Fair Start Scotland, Supported Employment, Individual Placement Support (IPS), No One Left Behind 25+, Young person's Guarantee, Parental Employment Support, Modern Apprenticeship, ESF Employability Support Programme, Employer Engagement & Fair Work Incentives. The team has further developed its collaboration with resettlement teams and Department for Work and Pensions to support those from a minority ethnic background including refugees and displaced Ukrainians.

Culture & Helix

The Culture & Helix unit delivers a range of cultural opportunities and experiences for a wide range of groups across its venues. These are primarily targeted at young carers, young people, people with disabilities, older people and their carers, women, and members of minority ethnic communities. The unit also deliver a range of opportunities for people to participate in the arts and engage with their cultural heritage. Those designed for children and young people in particular, aim to break down barriers to participation and build individual confidence and self-esteem. Current opportunities include:

- **Youth Music Initiative (YMI) - a nationwide funding programme administered by Creative Scotland and encompassing all 32 local authorities. YMI was established to support and develop the provision of opportunities for music making and tuition for young people across Scotland. We work closely with Falkirk Council Children's Services on the delivery of the Falkirk YMI programme, which has three strands:**
 - **Outreach: Weekly music provision in all primary and nursery schools in the FC area.**
 - **Tune In: Targeted music development support to pupils within school-based SEN areas as well as the Additional Support for Learning schools in the Falkirk area.**
 - **Falkirk Trad Music Project: Offering pupils from P4 - S6 the opportunity to learn a traditional Scottish instrument, with instrument loan and tuition provided at no cost. We currently offer after-school lessons taught by our team of musicians in the Mandolin, Chanter, Accordion, Whistle, Bagpipes, Fiddle and Bodhran. Within the project there is opportunity for pupils to progress into one of our Trad Bands.**
- **Hippodrome/ HippFest: The Hippodrome programmes regular screenings for young people with Autism and their families. At these screenings the film and the cinema environment within the Hippodrome will be suitable for children with autism spectrum disorders and/or sensory**

hypersensitivity. The screenings are priced as normal, and everyone is welcome to these screenings, but the following modifications are observed:

- **No adverts / trailers**
- **Modified lighting (brighter lit in the auditorium).**
- **Reduced volume.**
- **A relaxed approach to moving from your seat.**
- **The option to bring your own refreshments if specific dietary requirements are not available from the Hippodrome café.**
- **If there are any other ways that we can assist you and your child at the film, just ask one of our team.**

A service for deaf and hard of hearing audience members providing subtitles to enable understanding of the film's dialogue and off-screen action. Captioning includes the text of all onscreen dialogue as well as off-screen sounds, enabling people with varying hearing loss access to the full cinema experience. We also offer an infra-red sound facility for the hard of hearing. The Hippodrome also accepts the CEA Card, which entitles the card holder to a free ticket for the person accompanying them to the cinema.

A wide range of activity has been delivered during 2022/23, including:

- **Hippodrome Silent Film Festival (HippFest) 2023: Presented the premiere of a new commission by Sonic Bothy, award-winning Glasgow based inclusive music ensemble that explores, composes, and performs experimental and contemporary music. The commission was to provide music accompaniment to the screening of the film 'The Blue Bird' (1918) on the opening night of the festival.**
- **All screenings, panel discussions, guest presentations at the HippFest (in the cinema and online) were BSL supported.**
- **Targeted programmes of activity and projects: We have undertaken several projects over the past two years targeted at children and young people currently living in poverty including a youth music project (with funding from Creative Scotland) working towards production of CD of original music and end of project**

performance; a programme of targeted heritage activities support by funding from Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS). The activities were targeted at those living in poverty; those from diverse backgrounds; families recently settled in Scotland; We have just finished an intergenerational heritage project at Callendar House involving young carers producing filmed 'loan boxes' exploring different aspects of Callendar House for people living in care homes across the district (again funded by MGS).

- We raised funding (Fairer Falkirk and David Morton Demolition Ltd) to provide tickets for those living in poverty to attend the 2022 panto at FTH Theatre, *Sleeping Beauty*, and worked with a range of organisations to distribute the tickets effectively.
- We scheduled two relaxed performances for the panto 2022 (unfortunately they had to be cancelled due to the heating issues at FTH Theatre).
- Working with Neatebox to support access to our cultural venues (Callendar House, the Hippodrome cinema, Kinneil Museum).
- In autumn 2021 we commissioned D/deaf consultant, Charlotte Little to complete an audit of HippFest/ the Hippodrome to help us determine any modifications to our existing practice, help us to understand what barriers to participation face D/deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences at the festival / the Hippodrome and to understand where change is needed internally to remove these.

The unit also has responsibility for managing the Helix Park. We have recently introduced Sensory Bags at the Helix Visitor Centre. These are available for families to borrow for the duration of their visit from the Visitor Centre reception desk. The bag contains a variety of sensory toys to help children cope in our busy visitor centre environment (flashing spikey ball, stretchy figure, kaleidoscope, slinky, colouring book/sheet, crayons/pencil, and bubbles) along with a fluffy toy that they can keep.

We try to ensure our outdoor events programme is as accessible as possible. For example, at our Luminarium event in August 2023 we will be hosting dedicated accessible and dementia-friendly sessions for those who prefer a more controlled environment.

In addition to our Accessible Toilet, we introduced a Changing Places Toilet at the Helix Main Car Park in January 2020. As well as toilet facilities, this has a ceiling mounted track with electric hoist, an adjustable hand wash basin and a shower. The Changing Places Toilet is part of the UK radar system which visitors can access with their own radar key. Visitors can also borrow a key from our Car Parking Attendants when they are working.

The Helix team is working in partnership with Cycling Without Age Scotland to bring the "Trishaws in Iconic Places" project to The Helix. This helps visitors with mobility issues fully access and enjoy Helix Park and beyond.

Transport Planning

The Transport Planning unit is responsible for procuring, monitoring, and managing transport services provided by the Council. These services include school transport contracts for both mainstream school pupils and pupils with additional support needs, as well as transport arrangements organised on behalf of our Social Work Services for vulnerable adults and children. Most of the vehicles contracted by the Council are fully accessible.

The unit also administers the Blue Badge scheme for our residents, providing on-street parking concessions for disabled people experiencing the greatest barriers to their mobility. The scheme allows badge holders to park without charge or time limit in Council owned car parks and in otherwise restricted on-street parking environments. The Unit are also responsible for the provision of additional support services for disabled residents and administer funding for:

- **Shopmobility:** Membership is available to anyone with a temporary or permanent physical impairment that presents difficulties in getting around the shops and provides the loan of scooters, powered chairs, and manual wheelchairs.
- **Dial-a-Journey:** Provides affordable and accessible door-to-door transport for people who have mobility difficulties and cannot use conventional public transport.
- **Taxicard:** Membership is available to anyone unable to use conventional bus services and provides subsidised taxi journeys.

CASE STUDY

The Transport Planning Unit recently undertook extensive public consultation to support the development of a new set of Local and Active Transport strategies. Focus groups were conducted to gain in-depth data about the main issues in the local area. The Forth Valley Sensory Centre facilitated two focus groups, one for those with hearing loss and one for those with vision impairment. An interpreter was at focus group for hearing loss and power point slides were used to aid the session. Focus groups were also conducted with Dates n Mates Falkirk, a dating and friendship agency for adults with learning disabilities. Additional focus groups were also conducted with THRIVE, a local women's group. A similar style of interview was conducted at three food pantries across the council area: Namely Camelon food pantry, Hallglen food pantry, and Langlees food pantry. Each food pantry was visited, and semi-structured interviews were conducted with people to understand their issues with the local transport system. Finally, telephone interviews were conducted with members of the Falkirk Disability Access Panel. The consultation revealed a number of issues primarily related to cost and the accessibility of both services themselves but also information on those services. Officers were able to use this information to inform their strategy development process and were able to build-in mechanisms to address the issues raised. This included committing to working with local bus and taxi operators to set standards concerning the proportion of vehicles that are wheelchair accessible and ensuring public transport information is provided in a wide range of accessible formats.

Planning Service (incl Development Management & Building Standards)

Planning service is split organised into different teams that deal with local land use planning, development management and building standards. The Development Management team encourages applicants to consider equalities considerations at pre application stage. All reports on handling in respect of planning applications include consideration of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equalities Act 2010 when making recommendations.

New or revised planning policies are the subject of comprehensive public and community consultation including with local equality groups who have consented to be part of our consultees list and particular efforts have been made to reach out to children and young people through specifically tailored surveys and dedicated public events

Our Building Standards team recognise new building and alteration works should be designed and constructed to take cognisance of the safety, welfare, and convenience of building users. An inclusive environment is one within which everyone, regardless of disability, circumstance, or age, can make use of facilities safely, conveniently and without assistance to the best of their ability.

Building Standards ensure all new building works subject to building warrant approval are designed and constructed to meet building regulations relating to accessible facilities and access to and within buildings so far as reasonably practicable. Where an application for Building Warrant is lodged to alter or extend a dwelling to provide facilities for disabled people the application will be designated with a zero-fee rating.

Building standards will provide pre-application advice and this includes any advice relating to equalities having regard for personal circumstances of the person doing work subject to building warrant approval and the nature of building works to be carried out.

Environmental Health & Trading Standards

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards unit are responsible for the following statutory functions:

- **Environmental Health (Food Health & Safety and Public Health).**
- **Trading Standards.**
- **Animal Health and Welfare.**
- **Animal Control.**

As part of its prevention, detection and early intervention approach, the unit is actively undertaking the following initiatives and activity:

- **True call: A call blocker device aimed at eliminating nuisance callers to vulnerable persons.**
- **Think Jessica: Campaign raising awareness of the long-term isolating impact of scam mail.**
- **Buy with Confidence: A National Trade Approval Scheme to promote health and wellbeing and protect vulnerable adults from financial harm.**
- **Working with Police Scotland and other partners to tackle doorstep crime.**
- **Carrying out test-purchase operations to deter retailers from selling tobacco products to individuals under the age of 18.**
- **Market surveillance at Grangemouth Port to prevent non-compliant and unsafe consumer goods being imported into Scotland, protecting consumers from harm.**

Invest Falkirk

The Invest Falkirk division is responsible for driving sustainable economic growth in our area through targeted infrastructure investment and the effective management of our corporate property estate. This work is critical to supporting businesses and communities in Falkirk, and we are committed to ensuring that our investments and estate management practices promote equality, diversity, and inclusion. We recognise that access to high-quality infrastructure and property is essential to creating a level playing field for all, and we are working to ensure that our investments benefit all members of our community, regardless of their background. By working with our strategic partners to prioritise the needs of our communities and consider the impacts of our investments on equality, we are helping to create a more equitable and prosperous future for Falkirk and the surrounding settlements.

Infrastructure Investment

We are committed to ensuring that our strategic infrastructure investment programmes and projects are developed in compliance with the Equality Act 2010. We recognise that infrastructure investment decisions can have a significant impact on communities and individuals, and we aim to ensure that our investment decisions are fair, inclusive, and non-discriminatory. We believe

that by demonstrating compliance with the Equality Act 2010 in our strategic infrastructure investment programmes and projects, we can create infrastructure that is fair, inclusive, and accessible to all, and contributes to a more equal and just society.

Council Property

We also recognise the importance of ensuring that our corporate property estate is managed and invested in with regard to the Equality Act. We are committed to creating an estate that is fair, inclusive, and accessible to all, and that supports the wellbeing and productivity of our employees, visitors, and the wider community.

We aim to ensure that our corporate property estate is accessible and usable by all users, including those with protected characteristics. Our design and investment proposals provide accessible features and facilities such as wheelchair access, accessible toilets, and hearing loops, and we ensure that all information and communications are accessible to everyone.

Through our commitment to the Equality Act 2010, we aim to create a corporate property estate that reflects our values and contributes to a more equal and just society. We believe that our estate should be a positive reflection of our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, and that it should support the wellbeing and productivity of everyone who uses it.

4. Falkirk Council Equality Outcomes April 2021- 2025 Progress Report

4.1 Our current Equality Outcomes are:

- Improve the response given to people experiencing domestic abuse.
- Reduce identity-based harassment and all hate crime within Falkirk
- Improve the response given to our BME communities
- Reduce the impact of Covid-19 on the groups that are most affected.

4.2 Our progress in relation to these outcomes and our outcomes as an employer are set out in the tables that follow,

OUTCOME ONE - Improve the response given to people experiencing domestic abuse progress report

Outcome One: Improve the response given to people experiencing domestic abuse.

Priority Groups: BME Women, Women with disabilities

Actions	Responsibility	Measured By	Progress to Date
<p>Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) is a peer mentoring programme that gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin all forms of gender-based violence in our society. The programme addresses a range of behaviours including physical violence, name-calling, sexting, coercive and controlling behaviour and harassment. Individuals are not looked on as potential victims or perpetrators but as empowered onlookers with the ability to support and challenge their peers whilst keeping themselves safe</p>	<p>Education</p>		<p>All secondary schools (bar Carronrange as the materials still need more differentiation) are now trained.</p>
<p>Domestic Abuse Training provided by OLLE</p>	<p>People Services</p>		
<p>Services support the delivery of MARAC, MATAAC and DSDAS - multi agency forums for the protection of women and children and the risk management of perpetrators</p>	<p>All services</p>	<p>Number of meetings: MARAC (Police Scotland monthly) MATAAC (Police Scotland monthly) DSDAS (fortnightly meeting)</p>	<p>MARAC self assessment being progressed to ensure our processes and systems robust</p>
<p>Supporting the work of the Gender Based Violence Partnership in delivery of Equally Safe</p>	<p>All services</p>		<p>Partnerships self assessment being undertaken to ensure that the partnership focussed on work of Equally Safe</p>

Outcome One: Improve the response given to people experiencing domestic abuse.

Priority Groups: BME Women, Women with disabilities

Actions	Responsibility	Measured By	Progress to Date
Establish a dedicated Equalities Licensing Board web page and use the page to promote any anti-violence and abuse campaigns.	Licensing Board	Publish information relating to domestic abuse on Licensing Equalities web page	Licensing is planning on adding a new Equalities web page to the Licensing Board webpages that will include any campaigns/ information related to domestic abuse.
Justice Services to deliver the Caledonian programme which is an intervention programme for perpetrators of domestic abuse.	Justice Services	Number of individuals completing the programme.	
Justice Services via the Caledonian Woman's and Children's Service to provide support to the families of perpetrators on the Caledonian programme.	Justice Services	Number of women supported and children supported.	
Services grant funded to provide a response to women and children	Housing Services	Joint Working Agreement with CEA with defined outcomes and objectives	This is an ongoing annual agreement
Ensure accessibility to Housing Services by revisiting front line delivery options/premises.	Housing Needs Service	Increased footfall to services and early interventions to mitigate risk. Increase in safety equipment provided.	Staff are in Central HUB, once additional staff are recruited staff will be in various locations across the area
Develop and implement Domestic Abuse Housing Policy (in line with CIH Take a Stand)	Housing Service	A comprehensive DA policy co- produced with those with lived experience and partners that provides a comprehensive response and meets the housing and support needs of those experiencing domestic abuse	Consultant to be appointed to progress this piece of work

OUTCOME TWO - Reduce Identity Based Harassment and all hate crime within Falkirk - progress report

			Progress to Date
Establish a dedicated Equalities Licensing Board web page and use the page to promote any identity-based harassment and all hate crime campaigns.	Licensing Board	Publish information relating to identity-based harassment and all hate crime on Licensing Equalities web page	Licensing is planning on adding a new Equalities web page to the Licensing Board webpages that will include any campaigns/ information related to identity-based harassment and all hate crime.
Justice Services to support research into Hate Crime in Scotland.	Justice Services	Participation in research when undertaken	Awaiting on research to commence
Consider staff training around hate crime - ensuring this is delivered on an annual basis.	Housing Needs Service	Staff can identify hate crimes, report them accordingly and ensure support to those affected.	Appropriate training being sourced
Continue to ensure schools record and monitor incidents to identify trends which help to guide improvements in policy and practice and inform any interventions. This should help support self-improvement.	Education	Children and young people feel increasingly safe and secure to acknowledge, discuss and challenge unacceptable behaviour.	Continual monitoring of incidents allows schools to respond appropriately with relevant supports and interventions. These can be targeted at individuals as well as looking at work to support children and young people at key stages or whole school.
Local authority staff monitor recorded incidents on a termly basis to identify emerging themes or trends. This should help to support the identification of good practice as well as any relevant training opportunities for frontline staff.	Education	Improved targeted support and interventions are in place which recognises the unique context of different settings.	Continual monitoring of incidents allows schools to respond appropriately with relevant supports and interventions. These can be targeted at individuals as well as looking at work to support children and young people at key stages or whole school.
With the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill in the process of becoming law in Scotland, services have a responsibility to act compatibly with the rights of the child. The new law will mean that every child and young person under 18 years old has children's rights, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities, or any other status, which is Article 2 of the UNCRC. Part of Falkirk Council's strategic approach to embedding the rights of the child within the education system is through the Rights Respecting Schools Award.	Education		To date, thirty-seven schools across the authority are engaged in the RRSa process. There are four key areas of impact for children at a Rights Respecting school; wellbeing, participation, relationships, and self-esteem; all of which has a positive impact on the children, young people, and their communities.
All staff increase their knowledge to identify and reduce identity-based harassment and all hate crime by completing training on OLLE	All Services	Number of people undertaking training (Olle) Number of staff undertaking Public Sector Equality Duty for Managers (Olle)	

OUTCOME THREE: Improve Response so that we meet the needs of our BME communities

Outcome Three: Improve response so that we meet the needs of our BME communities.

Priority Groups: The BME community, including Gypsy/Travellers.

Actions	Responsibility	Measured By	Progress to Date
<p>To develop a Customer Satisfaction survey that will be available on the dedicated Equalities Licensing Board webpage.</p> <p>The data will help to conduct equality analysis to determine if there are any issues which affect people from particular protected groups.</p>	Licensing Board	<p>All surveys issued by Licensing collect equality data.</p> <p>Results of surveys used to improve the service.</p>	Licensing is planning on developing a Customer Satisfaction survey that will be available in the Equalities webpage of the Licensing Board.
<p>Use collected data to ensure that service provision meets the needs of our communities including accessibility</p>	Housing Needs Service	Increase in BME approaching service	<p>Recent consultation exercises have targeted specific groups to ensure that those who are easy to miss are consulted with and their views sought to shape service provision. We have also developed how to videos on the implementation of our new Housing Online system to ensure accessibility</p>
<p>Increase the uptake of staff across all sectors in the Education Scotland Building Racial literacy professional learning offer. This should help identified practitioners to build their confidence in discussing and challenging racism.</p>	Education	<p>An increase in anti-racist behaviours and processes in practitioners' everyday practice</p> <p>Increased confidence in dealing with racism</p>	<p>We have four teaching staff who have completed Education Scotland training across both primary and secondary sectors. Need to consider how we might look to increase this through both the national and local offer.</p>
<p>RIC Building Racial literacy workstream – focus on supporting all practitioners to be racially literate, effective at dealing with racism and confident in leading anti-racism.</p>	Education	<p>An increase in anti-racist behaviours and processes in practitioners' everyday practice</p> <p>Increased confidence in dealing with racism</p>	<p>Regional Improvement collaborative workstream is at the early stages of creating a resource for practitioners which will support both awareness of anti-racism as well a providing further professional learning and practice I support. The plan is to have this online by August 23.</p>
<p>Reflect on Education Scotland Equalities Impact assessment when planning, delivering, and promoting Professional learning to ensure this reflects the needs of all protected characteristics.</p>	Education		<p>Central officer who deliver professional learning will be engaging in training by our CLPL coordinator in March 23. This should help to ensure that they consider different protected characteristics when planning and delivering sessions with staff.</p>

OUTCOME FOUR : Reduce the impact on the impact of Covid-19 on the groups that are most affected

Outcome Four: Reduce the impact of the impact of Covid-19 on the groups that are most affected.

Priority Groups: Older people, young people, people with disabilities, women, BME people.

Actions	Responsibility	Measured By	Progress to Date
The Covid-19 pandemic has meant that we are required to use technology to host Licensing Board meetings and make them accessible to everyone.	Licensing Board	Meetings of the Licensing Board are well attended.	Currently all Licensing Board meetings are online, they are livestreamed in YouTube and they are kept on Falkirk Council Channel.
Recognise that BME people are more likely to be self-employed than other ethnic groups and will therefore have been impacted by Covid-19 restrictions placed on licensed premises. Licensing should communicate sources of support for premises impacted by Covid-19 and target communication to BME people who are licence holders as BME people have disproportionately been affected by Covid-19. Ensure that BME licence holders who do not have English as a first language can access support with confidence.	Licensing Board	Premises licence holders are aware of Covid-19 support.	Updates on Scottish Government guidance was published on the Licensing Facebook page.
Prioritise to see children on the Child Protection Register weekly	Children's Social Work Service	Recording of weekly visits	100% of children on the Child Protection Register were seen weekly during the pandemic
Embed tackling poverty into our everyday practice. We will undertake financial health checks when interacting with our tenants/customers, ensuring staff are trained and aware in fuel poverty and equipped to provide advice and assistance, identifying additional supports, and undertaking referrals.	Housing Services	Amount of financial health checks done Increase in benefits uptake (both income and in kind) Increase in communities' wellbeing/health improvements	Income Maximisation Strategy developed and at Committee in April Additional staff identified to undertake these checks
Provide support and challenge to educational settings schools to: - Accurately identify pupils needs. - Implement appropriate interventions to ensure improved outcomes for learners.	Education	Settings make effective use of data to identify and support the needs of all learners.	Education Team Managers have engaged with all senior leaders focusing on attainment data and interventions in place to support different groups of interest. A clear focus of discussions have been on closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Outcome Four: Reduce the impact of the impact of Covid-19 on the groups that are most affected.

Priority Groups: Older people, young people, people with disabilities, women, BME people.

Actions	Responsibility	Measured By	Progress to Date
Provide support to all educational settings to make effective use of a range of data to ensure children and young people's needs are identified and met.	Education	An increase in learner's needs being met at an earlier stage.	Education team managers are continuing to monitor the attainment of identified groups of learners and providing further support and challenge to senior leaders to ensure relevant progress is being made.
Work with practitioners to develop shared expectations of what inclusion and equalities look like across settings.	Education	Practitioners demonstrate a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities linked to inclusion and equality.	Our Senior Leadership Empowerment strategy has supported groups of senior leaders to create an inclusion and equality framework for schools. This will be launched officially at the beginning of next session and will be supported by a range of relevant professional learning for all staff.
Support local people to improve employment and career opportunities, targeting those from priority groups actively experiencing social and economic inequalities	Place	Key performance indicators (KPI's)	In the three years from 2019/2020 to 2021/2022 ETU have continued to expand reach to vulnerable priority groups supporting 3611 participants over the course of this 3-year period.

Falkirk Council as an Employer Equality Outcomes Action Plan

Outcome One: Improved quality of employee data across all equality protected characteristics.		
Action	Measures / Evidence	Progress
<p>Data Gathering: Identify gaps in employee equality data and continue to increase monitoring information that we hold</p>	<p>Increased protected characteristics information available/reduce gaps in information.</p> <p>Annual PI reports</p> <p>Evidence of communication to employees.</p>	<p>We continue to encourage our employees to provide their personal equality information. We have recently started working with CEMVO through the Race for Human Rights Programme with an aim to encourage employees to share their protected characteristics and further reduce the gaps in data.</p> <p>We have updated our HR systems so that employees can select Mx as title in their personal details.</p> <p>Systems are being developed to allow information gathered on My Job Scotland to be transferred to our HR System which should improve employee data.</p> <p>We have reviewed the policy consultation process to ensure that equality information is requested from those responding to the consultations.</p> <p>We will review this outcome going forward to identify key areas of priority based on data gathered. We will carry out further analysis of employee data for all protected characteristics and identify what support/guidance can be put in place for particular groups. Evidence of this will be examples of good practice and implementation of support to employees, for example ageing workforce.</p>

Outcome 2: Increased representation of minority ethnic groups, disabled people, young people aged 16 - 24 and LGBT people across Falkirk Council workforce		
Action	Measures / Evidence	Progress
<p>Recruitment Monitoring: Analysis of reports for the application stage of the recruitment process to compare applicants against equality characteristics of Falkirk Council area.</p> <p>MyJobScotland Webpages: Update web pages to support recruitment from BAME and other protected groups.</p>	<p>Stats are reflective of Falkirk Council area stats.</p> <p>Increased applications from identified areas.</p>	<p>We are continuing to review information provided on MyJobScotland (MJS) recruitment website to publicise information relating to Disability Confident, Living Wage, health & wellbeing policies, flexible working practices and physical activity strategy. We will work with communications to tie in with employer branding to improve information available.</p> <p>We are trialling a CV option on MJS for applicants to answer a few questions about their personal details and then upload their CV instead of having to complete the full application process. We will get feedback from applicants to the new process, adapt if needed and then provide this as an option for recruiting managers.</p> <p>The Graduate Programme continues with ongoing networking sessions in place to share experience, provide support and feedback - the most recent one was attended by the Chief Executive.</p> <p>We have retained our Disability Confident Employer status, are a Living Wage employer and have also signed up to the Scottish Government Young Person's Guarantee.</p>

Outcome 3: Reduced job segregation and pay gaps.

Action	Measures / Evidence	Progress
<p>Equal Pay:</p> <p>Continue to monitor the pay gap.</p> <p>Carry out JES project to check grading of posts identified through equal pay claims.</p>	<p>Equal pay audits.</p> <p>JES outcomes that are robust and equality approved</p>	<p>We continue to make good progress with our JES project. There is a robust process in place and outcomes are approved by Trade Unions.</p> <p>The pay structure has been reviewed for Grades A-D. The revised structure maintains separate grades, provides for incremental progression in Grades B-D and ensures a reasonable level of longevity for the pay structure. The Living Wage has now been embedded in the grading and pay structure. We are also a Living Wage Accredited employer.</p> <p>Work has commenced on reviewing the pay structure for the remaining SJC Grades E-O to ensure it remains fit for purpose and to address recruitment and retention issues. Detailed costing work has commenced and options will be discussed with Trade Unions.</p> <p>We publish pay gap data as part of the mainstreaming report and carry out regular equal pay audits.</p>
<p>Occupational Segregation:</p> <p>Undertake an initial analysis of the current picture and identify options to address issues identified.</p>	<p>Report produced and options identified</p>	<p>A report has been produced which includes recommendations which are being considered through e.g., graduate and intern scheme, review of recruitment and induction processes. We will continue to monitor this and look at a case study approach.</p> <p>We continue to participate in Equally Safe at Work Shadow Group.</p>

Outcome 4: Increased awareness and understanding of equality and diversity within the workforce.

Action	Measures / Evidence	Progress
<p>Review online equality/diversity training and ensure all managers complete the course in the following 12 months.</p>	<p>Training completed.</p>	<p>Online equality/diversity training has been reviewed. Reminders will be sent to Services to encourage completion.</p>
<p>Undertake a short survey of managers on race/unconscious bias. Results will be discussed at a future leadership session and appropriate actions developed.</p>	<p>Survey completed and appropriate actions developed and agreed.</p>	<p>Unconscious bias survey was sent out. Although there were limited responses the feedback was that further awareness was required in this area. This will be discussed at a future leadership forum.</p>
<p>Register interest in equally safe workforce development framework.</p>	<p>If selected training completed by agreed number of employees within the remit of the project.</p> <p>If not selected will take onboard feedback and implement learnings from other local authorities.</p>	<p>We were selected to participate in the Equally Safe in Practice pilot and rolled out 3 modules to 5th & 6th tier managers. The employee feedback was very positive and a review has been undertaken across all participating Councils. Next stages will be to roll this out across the wider workforce.</p> <p>A Corporate Equality & Human Rights group has been set up to consider equality issues in a more joined up way across the Council.</p>

Appendix 1








Equalities Self-Assessment and Improvement Plan

	Table 1 - Legal Compliance Ratings	Table 2 - Best Practice Ratings	Change	
	Non-Compliant	Doesn't meet Basic Practice		Improved
	Partially Compliant	Basic Practice or Better Practice		Reduced
	Fully Compliant	Advanced Practice		No Change
	Not yet rated - needs more review			New

PART 1: EQUALITIES - SELF-ASSESSMENT AGAINST SPECIFIC LEGAL DUTIES

(Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012)

(Actions - either insert comments or cross refer to relevant section in Table 2 - Equalities Self-Assessment)

	Specific Legal Duties	Compliance	Status - What is in place?/ Key Reports / Evidence	What actions can be taken to improve practice?
	To report progress on mainstreaming the equality duty.		The mainstreaming report is essentially a report on the progress the Council has made to make the general equality duty integral to its work.	Actions 1.1 -2.5
	To publish equality outcomes and report progress.		Equality Outcomes progress report is an opportunity for the Council to promote the progress made against the outcomes as well as identify the challenges where progress has been slow.	Actions 1.1-2.5
	To assess and review policies and practice.		As policies and processes reviewed by services EPIA's should consider any particular impacts on protected characteristic groups and mitigate the policies and processes accordingly	Actions 1.1-2.5
	To gather and use employee information.		Annual employee information presenting the equality profile of the workforce. This information should be captured and analysed so that improvements can be actioned	Actions 3-1-3.2
	To publish statements on equal pay.		Gender pay gap information the specific duties require that this is reported on every 2 years.	Actions 3.1-3.2
	To consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.			
	To publish in a manner that is accessible.			

PART 2 - SELF ASSESSMENT AGAINST AUDIT SCOTLAND EQUALITIES TOOLKIT

	Audit Scotland Criteria	STATUS	What actions can be taken to improve practice?	How this links to Internal Audit Actions? (abbreviated)
Equalities Self-Assessment - Other Actions (in addition to those covered above)				
Section 1 - How effectively does the organisation understand the diversity and inequality within its communities?				
1.1	How effectively does the organisation understand the diversity and inequality within its communities?	Basic Practice	<p>Create a centralised source of the data currently held across the organisation in relation to protected characteristics.</p> <p>Data should be gathered in relation to protected characteristics and held in centralised portal and used to inform service development and improvement.</p> <p>Data on customers should be analysed according to protected characteristics to establish service needs and gaps.</p>	<p>Action 4: Equalities Self Assessment</p> <p>Action 7: Address EPIA issues</p>
1.2	How effectively does the organisation engage its diverse communities to understand their needs?----	Basic Practice	<p>Recognise that engagement with all our communities on decisions is a requirement in relation the Equality Act (2010) as well as good practice.</p> <p>Develop a systematic approach to consultation and engagement across the council which recognises the need to engage and build capacity within community groups so that the needs of particular protected characteristics can be understood, and services developed accordingly.</p>	<p>Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment</p> <p>Action 5: Address EPIA issues</p> <p>Evidence: Corporate Plan EPIA's Data gathering on customers Participation and involvement of people with particular protected characteristics</p>

	Audit Scotland Criteria	STATUS	What actions can be taken to improve practice?	How this links to Internal Audit Actions? (abbreviated)
2. Do the organisations and its partners lead improvements in equality effectively?				
2.1	To what extent do senior officers and elected members/board members promote and lead an equality improvement agenda?	Basic Practice	<p>What actions can be taken to improve practice?</p> <p>Refresh existing equalities working group with identified equalities leads for each directorate to complete self-assessment and an improvement plan, in line with best practice, subject to regular review and scrutiny to meet statutory requirements.(BV)</p> <p>Establish strategic leadership and leadership at all levels across the council. (BV)</p> <p>Develop an ambition to address inequality in every aspect of our work and undertake benchmarking work to learn from good practice in other organisations.(BV)</p> <p>A refreshed approach to equalities practice, including training and performance monitoring.(BV)</p> <p>Develop the vision for Falkirk with reducing inequality at its heart.(BV)</p> <p>Embed 'equalities first' approach to policy, planning, budget, and service redesign. (BV)</p> <p>Appoint an Equalities and Human Right Champion</p> <p>Equality Outcomes to be integrated into all projects, strategies and plans as they are reviewed and included as part of EPIA process.</p> <p>Action plans need to be developed in relation to Equality Outcomes and a reporting framework established to meet in the first instance reporting duties in 2023.</p> <p>Mainstreaming Report should be updated to reflect agreed actions and new governance arrangements.</p> <p>Equality Outcomes and commitment to mainstreaming should be contained within Corporate Plan and supporting plans.</p> <p>Provide Training to all current and new Elected Members</p>	<p>How this links to Internal Audit Actions?</p> <p>Action 1: Develop Equalities Governance Framework</p> <p>Action 2: Launch Equalities Governance Framework</p> <p>Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment</p> <p>Evidence: Governance Framework Training and Briefings</p>

	Audit Scotland Criteria	STATUS	What actions can be taken to improve practice?	How this links to Internal Audit Actions? (abbreviated)
2. Do the organisations and its partners lead improvements in equality effectively?				
2.2	How well is the commitment to improving equality outcomes reflected in policies, strategic objectives, and actions?	Basic Practice	<p>An Equalities Self-Assessment should be undertaken by members of the Equalities Working Group.</p> <p>The Group should develop Self-Assessment Action Plans (tracked on Pentana) to progress / implement actions.</p> <p>The Group should provide regular progress reports to CMT and elected Member.</p> <p>Action plans need to be developed in relation to Equality Outcomes and a reporting framework established to meet in the first instance reporting duties in 2023.</p> <p>Develop an Equality scheme - this should set out how the Council and its partners are making progress in relation to equalities i.e. What are its plans for it is making progress in relation to mainstreaming and its equality outcomes and how it monitors this progress?</p> <p>Those making decisions should ask to see EPIA's or information on impact of actions/decisions on protected characteristics.</p> <p>Change where the equalities section is in the report as suggestion this should be at start of report.</p> <p>Improving the equalities information within all reports to committee, project boards and CMT reports including operational decision making.</p> <p>Identify and highlight examples of good practice in relation to EPIA reporting.</p> <p>We need to develop a culture where equalities is used at the forefront of service delivery and considered at the start of service developments and revisited regularly to identify further opportunities for improvement. Culture shift needed for this. Need to better understand the needs of particular communities and if they don't use services why not - perhaps need to reconsider how our services are provided to meet the needs of our changing community.</p>	<p>Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment</p> <p>Action 5: Address Equality Outcomes issues</p> <p>Evidence: Mainstreaming Reports Equality Outcome Action plans and inclusion in Pentana for services An approach to mainstreaming agreed by council Committee Reports (including Plans and Strategies) EPIAs Policy and Project Documentation</p>
2.3	How effectively is equality built into decision making and scrutiny arrangements?	Basic Practice	Benchmark other Local Authority webpages to see what they are reporting and how they are publishing it.	<p>Action 1: Establish Equalities Governance Framework</p> <p>Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment</p> <p>Action 7: Address EPIA issues</p>

	Audit Scotland Criteria	STATUS	What actions can be taken to improve practice?	How this links to Internal Audit Actions? (abbreviated)
2. Do the organisations and its partners lead improvements in equality effectively?				
2.4	To what extent is equality embedded in a culture of continuous improvement?	Basic Practice		Action 4: Equalities Self-Assessment to be developed
2.5	How effectively does the organisation report on equality to the public?	Basic Practice	Review equalities page on FC website and make the link more accessible from the home page.	Action 4: Equalities Self-Assessment to be developed Action 5: Equality Outcomes Issues to be addressed Action 6: Publish Licensing Board Mainstreaming Update
3. Does the organisation provide equality of opportunity within a diverse workforce?				
3.1	To what extent does the organisation value diversity in its workforce and provide equality of opportunity for all staff?	Basic Practice	What actions can be taken to improve practice? Managers to encourage teams to complete their equality data on my view (reinforcing confidentiality). Need to ensure that equalities is being mainstreamed into strategies / business as usual.	How this links to Internal Audit Actions? Action 1: Establish Equalities Governance Framework Action 2: Establish Equalities Governance Framework Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment Action 5: Address Equality Outcomes issues
3.2	How well are staff supported in meeting the organisation's equality and diversity goals?	Basic Practice	Need for awareness raising for managers to encourage broader teams to undertake mandatory training. More strategic approach to equality training to incorporate all PCs. Identify what are resource would be available for training and where this sit. Training needs to focus on understanding and becoming aware of the structural and institutional barriers that prevent people using or approaching services (language that is used - seldom heard or easily ignored?). E&D training is currently mandatory but not enforced - managers to monitor. Consider a leadership forum for an Equalities relaunch	Action 1: Establish Equalities Governance Framework Action 2: Launch Equalities Governance Framework Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment

	Audit Scotland Criteria	STATUS	What actions can be taken to improve practice?	How this links to Internal Audit Actions? (abbreviated)
4. Does the organisation deliver positive outcomes for its diverse communities?				
4.1	To what extent are services delivered in ways that meet the needs of their diverse communities?		<p>What actions can be taken to improve practice?</p> <p>Identify opportunities to revisit foundations of Council's services to address structural and institutional inequality using data gathered by services on service users</p> <p>Gain a better understanding of the scope of customer satisfaction data collected across the Council and what improvement action is taken to meet needs of particular groups.</p>	<p>How this links to Internal Audit Actions?</p> <p>Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment</p> <p>Action 5: Address Equality Outcomes issues</p>
	How effectively can the organisation demonstrate improved outcomes for diverse communities?	Basic Practice	<p>Need a performance information that allows soft indicators so service can report on individual examples of good practice.</p> <p>Need to work with those who undertaking the review of performance reporting.</p> <p>Consider whether the information gathered during Covid can assist with this review.</p>	Action 4 : Equalities Self Assessment

Appendix 2

FALKIRK COUNCIL - WORKFORCE EQUALITY INFORMATION

While we previously reported on returned data only, with gaps excluded, in response to external feedback, we have changed our approach this year and are now reporting the gaps to make the data more accessible.

The Council has been developing a new reporting system to allow us to capture a wider range of information. However, due to the ongoing development there are areas of reporting still to be concluded. There are therefore gaps at present in some of the 2022 information, at present relating to Leavers and Training. Once this information is available it will be added.

AGE

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of workforce who are 16-24	5.7%	5.5%	5.5%
Percentage of workforce who are 25-34	19.3%	20.4%	19.7%
Percentage of workforce who are 35-44	21.5%	21.9%	22.9%
Percentage of workforce who are 45-54	27.1%	25.7%	25.4%
Percentage of workforce who are 55-64	23.3%	23.5%	23.3%
Percentage of workforce who are 65-74	2.7%	2.8%	2.8%
Percentage of workforce who are 75+	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%

The age breakdown of the workforce has been steady over the past few years with over 50% of the workforce in the 45+ category. Whilst this has dropped slightly over the past couple of years it still remains the highest percentage of employees in this age category. The % in the 16-24 age range has remained stable but under-representation in this category is still evident.

DISABILITY

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of workforce to have indicated they have a disability	2.8%	1.6%	1.8%
Percentage of workforce who did not wish to disclose they have a disability	Not recorded	41.1%	46.7%

The data shows an increase in the number of employees indicating they have a disability.

We have seen an increase in the gaps relating to returns and will continue to encourage employees to provide this information. However, further

Work will be required to encourage employees to disclose their disability status. Information for comparison with the local population is limited but we will continue to monitor as this becomes more readily available.

ETHNICITY

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Ethnic breakdown of the workforce - percentage who are white	96.5%	72.6%	64.4%
Ethnic breakdown of the workforce - percentage who are BME	3.5%	2.6%	2.5%
Percentage of the workforce who did not wish to disclose their ethnicity	Not recorded	24.8%	33.1%

The BME % has remained steady over the past couple of years. There is an increase in the % of employees not wishing to disclose theirs.

Ethnicity. Whilst it is positive that employees are returning the relevant information, more work is required to encourage them to disclose the information. We have recently started working with CEMVO through the Race for Human Rights Programme with an aim to encourage employees to share their protected characteristics and further reduce the gaps in data.

GENDER

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
The percentage of employees in the workforce who are female	75.1%	75%	75%
The percentage of employees in the workforce who are male	24.9%	25%	25%

The gender make up of the workforce has remained steady over the past few years with a slight decrease in the % of females working in the Council. over the past couple of years. This is fairly comparable to the gender make up of job applicants.

RELIGION AND BELIEF

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of workforce who identified as Buddhist	0.13%		0.6%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Church of Scotland	24.31%		20.36%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Hindu	0.07%		0.03%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Jewish	0.04%		0.03%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Muslim	0.26%		0.29%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Roman Catholic	11.16%		9.99%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Sikh	0.07%		0.05%
Percentage of workforce who identified as Other Religion	4.68%		3.98%
Percentage of workforce who identified as None	30.04%		27.53%
Percentage of workforce who did not wish to disclose their religion and belief	29.24%		37.62%

Due to issues with the reports provided for equality statistics in 2021, we are unable to provide a summary of this information. However % of responses have been fairly comparable to those from 2020.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees who have identified as bisexual	0.6%	0.26%	0.25%
Percentage of employees who have identified as gay or lesbian	1.4%	0.64%	0.72%
Percentage of employees who have identified as heterosexual	97.3%	45.39%	40.86%
Percentage of employees who have identified as Other	0.7%	0.34%	0.33%
Percentage of employees who did not wish to disclose their Sexual Orientation	Not recorded	53.37%	57.84%

Whilst there has been a slight improvement in the data figures collected for sexual orientation over the past couple of years it has evened out since 2020 and an area which still requires continued improvement and scrutiny.

TRANSGENDER

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees who have identified as Transgender	0.02%	0.03%	0.03%
Percentage of employees who did not wish to disclose their Transgender	Not recorded	86.7%	85.97

Transgender status remains relatively unchanged over the past year.

TOP 2% OF WORKFORCE

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees in Top 2% of workforce who are female	57%	62.5%	61%
Ethnic breakdown of employees in Top 2% of workforce who are white	96%	95%	66.1%
Ethnic breakdown of employees in Top 2% of workforce who are BME	4%	5%	2.8%
Percentage in Top 2% who did not disclose Ethnicity	Not recorded	Not recorded	31.1%
Percentage of employees in Top 2% of workforce who indicate they have a disability	1%	1%	0.6%
Percentage in Top 2% who did not disclose disability status	Not recorded	Not recorded	40.1%

TOP 5% OF WORKFORCE

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees in Top 2% of workforce who are female	64%	64%	62%
Ethnic breakdown of employees in Top 2% of workforce who are white	96%	96%	71%
Ethnic breakdown of employees in Top 2% of workforce who are BME	4%	4%	3%
Percentage in Top 2% who did not disclose Ethnicity	Not recorded	Not recorded	26%
Percentage of employees in Top 2% of workforce who indicate they have a disability	1%	1%	1%
Percentage in Top 2% who did not disclose disability status	Not recorded	Not recorded	34%

For the Top 2% and 5% of the workforce, the data in relation to Gender has again remained fairly static over the couple of years.

The figures for ethnicity and disability have not changed significantly.



DISCIPLINE

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees involved in disciplinarys who were male	50%	47%	57%
Percentage of employees involved in disciplinarys who were female	50%	53%	43%
Ethnic breakdown of those involved in disciplinarys who are White	100%	100%	41%
Ethnic breakdown of those involved in disciplinarys who are BME	0%	0%	0%
Percentage of those involved in disciplinarys who did not disclose ethnicity	Not recorded	Not recorded	59%
Percentage of employees involved in disciplinarys who have identified that they have a disability	4.8%	0%	0%
Percentage of employees involved in disciplinarys who did not disclose a disability	Not recorded	Not recorded	69%

GRIEVANCE

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees involved in grievances who were male	43%	67%	65%
Percentage of employees involved in grievances who were female	57%	33%	35%
Ethnic breakdown of those involved in grievances who are White	100%	100%	57%
Ethnic breakdown of those involved in grievances who are BME			0%
Percentage of those involved in grievances who did not disclose ethnicity			
Percentage of employees involved in grievances who have identified that they have a disability	0%	0%	0%
Percentage of employees involved in grievances who did not disclose a disability	Not recorded	Not recorded	43%

This data is based on any current employees as of 31st December who were involved in disciplinarys or grievances. Leavers are no longer included.

It is difficult to assess any particular trend as the make up of employees involved in either disciplines or grievances will change each year. It is also important to note that the numbers are not always comparable to the workforce as the statistics are only based on those directly involved in disciplines or grievances and not the overall workforce.

HEALTH & SAFETY INCIDENTS

Indicator		2021	2022
Percentage of employees involved in accidents/incidents who were male		19%	13%
Percentage of employees involved in accidents/incidents who were female		81%	87%
Ethnic breakdown of those involved in accidents/incidents who are White		70%	17.8%
Ethnic breakdown of those involved in accidents/incidents who are BME		3%	0.2%
Percentage of employees involved in accidents/incidents who did not wish to disclose ethnicity	Not recorded	27%	82%
Percentage of employees involved in accidents/incidents who have indicated they have a disability		0.8%	0.4%
Percentage of employees involved in accidents/incidents who did not wish to indicate they have a disability	Not recorded	43%	83%

It is difficult to assess any particular trend as the make up of employees involved in accidents and incidents will likely change each year.

LEAVERS

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of leavers who were male	29%		
Percentage of leavers who were female	71%		
Ethnic breakdown of leavers who were White	97%		
Ethnic breakdown of leavers who were BME	3%		
Percentage of leavers who did not disclosed their ethnicity	Not recorded		
Percentage of leavers who indicated they had a disability	3%		
Percentage of leavers who did not disclosed if they had a disability	Not recorded		

DISMISSALS

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees dismissed who were male	30%		
Percentage of employees dismissed who were female	70%		
Ethnic breakdown of those dismissed who were White	100%		
Ethnic breakdown of those dismissed who were BME	0%		
Percentage of dismissals who did not disclosed their ethnicity	Not recorded		
Percentage of dismissals who indicated they had a disability	7%		
Percentage of dismissals who did not disclosed if they had a disability	Not recorded		

TRAINING

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of employees applying for training who were male	0%		
Percentage of employees applying for training who were female	0%		
Percentage of employees accepted for training who were male	34%		
Percentage of employees accepted for training who were female	66%		
Percentage of employees refused training who were male	0%		
Percentage of employees refused training who were female	0%	0%	
Ethnic breakdown of those who have applied for training who are White	0%		
Ethnic breakdown of those who have applied for training who are BME	0%		
Ethnic breakdown of those who have been accepted for training who are White	98.00%		

It is difficult to assess any particular trend as the make up of employees involved attending training will change each year.

There have been very few external training courses run over the past year, however, online courses have still been available.

Given the amount of online resources and training now available to employees, these can be accessed at any time and do not require applications for training and refusals are therefore currently at 0%.

JOB APPLICANTS

Indicator	2020	2021	2022
Percentage of job applicants who are male	22%	31%	22%
Percentage of job applicants who are female	78%	69%	77%
Percentage of job applicants who did not wish to disclose gender/sex	Not recorded	Not recorded	1%
Ethnic breakdown of job applicants - percentage who are White	91%	84%	92%
Ethnic breakdown of job applicants - percentage who are BME	9%	16%	6.3%
Percentage of employees who did not wish to disclose ethnicity	Not recorded	Not recorded	1.7%
Percentage of job applicants who have indicated they have a disability	6%	7%	3.5%
Percentage of job applicants who did not wish to disclose a disability	Not recorded	Not recorded	1.83%
Percentage of job applicants who have identified as bisexual	2.5%	2.7%	2.5%
Percentage of job applicants who have identified as gay or lesbian	2.3%	2.8%	2.1%
Percentage of job applicants who have identified as heterosexual	95%	94.4%	91%
Percentage of job applicants who have identified as Other	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Percentage of job applicants who did not wish to disclose sexual orientation	Not recorded	Not recorded	4.3%
Percentage of job applicants who identified as Transgender	0.8%	0.4%	0.06%
Percentage of job applicants who did not wish to disclose Transgender	Not recorded	Not recorded	1.19%
Percentage of job applicants who were aged 16-24	18%	28%	15%

The overall number of job applications is lower than previous years which may be due to some recruitment being paused due to current recruitment freeze.