



West Lothian
Council

Corporate Equality Outcomes Progress Report 2015

1. **Foreword**

This document presents the interim progress report on West Lothian Council's Equality Outcomes for 2013 to 2017. Our Outcomes reflect our commitment to fulfilling both our statutory duties as well as pro-actively meeting the needs of the diverse community that we serve.

The Outcomes set in 2013 were designed as the Council's plan for breaking down barriers to services and employment opportunities and to improving outcomes for everyone who lives, works or does business in West Lothian.

West Lothian Council is committed to focusing our efforts on tackling some of the most persistent challenges of inequality in our society. Our corporate equality Outcomes focus on the issues identified by evidence, and those affected by inequality, as priorities for West Lothian Council.

Through developing closer links with our partners, involving our community and workforce and continuing to improve the way in which we monitor and review our progress, we hope to achieve the outcomes set out in our Plan to 2017 and ensure that equality becomes part of everything we do.

Councillor John McGinty
Leader of the council

Graham Hope
Chief Executive

April 2015

2. Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 contains a public sector equality duty covering the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

The duty is in two parts – the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 itself (often referred to as the ‘general duty’), and specific duties which are made by Scottish Ministers through regulations. The general duty requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other prohibited conduct;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

One of the key specific duties requires public bodies to develop and publish a set of Equality Outcomes, and to report on progress against these Outcomes after two years. The council’s corporate equality Outcomes are outlined in the Appendix. The full detail of the outcomes can be accessed on the council website [here](#).

3. Equality Outcomes Monitoring and Scrutiny

Following the publication of the Equality Outcomes in 2013, the council’s Corporate Working Group on Equality has taken forward responsibility for the monitoring and implementation of measures and actions to work towards the Equality Outcomes. The group is chaired at Head of Service level and reports to the council’s Human Resources Programme Board. The group comprises representatives from each of our Service areas. The group was instrumental in the decisions on our Corporate Equality Outcomes, taking account of the results of evidence review and involvement.

Each Outcome includes performance indicators to highlight progress in working towards the Outcome. Indicators have been mainstreamed and aligned with existing activity towards the Council’s Corporate Plan, People Strategy and the West Lothian Single Outcome Agreement where appropriate. However, in some cases new indicators have been required and relevant services have actioned this as necessary. High level outputs were incorporated within our 2013 outcomes report. However, detailed actions have been developed and are being led by the responsible Service area. Each Outcome has been designated to a responsible Head of Service. The Council’s Equality Outcomes have been built into the council’s performance management information system so that progress can be tracked and managed.

The Employee Equality Networks and Community Forums (representatives of the community by protected characteristics) have an opportunity to be involved in monitoring progress and take on a relevant scrutiny role in relation to Outcomes which relate to particular areas of interest for Forums. Over the past two years the council has implemented an initiative entitled “Let’s Talk Equalities” which has provided an opportunity for key themes in relation to Outcome progress to be considered across protected characteristic areas. This event brings representatives from different forums together on a regular basis and focuses on issues and challenges of mutual interest. More information on the approach to equality outcome

performance management can be found within the councils Equality Mainstreaming Report.

4. Outcome Progress

The Appendix to this report provides an update on progress against each of the ten Outcomes. The update provides details of the equality Outcome and the current position with regard to particular issues, progress or challenges that have been addressed in working towards the outcome.

It should be noted that each Outcome is not relevant to or monitored by all protected characteristics. The full information on which protected characteristics are deemed relevant to each Outcome can be viewed within the original Equality Outcomes report, which can be accessed on the council website [here](#).

If you have any queries on the content of our equality outcomes progress, or wish to discuss any of the issues further, please contact the council Equality Officer via the details below:

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Outcome	Progress Update
<p>Outcome 1: Employability and skills opportunities are accessible and accessed proportionately, by people within the relevant protected characteristics in West Lothian.</p>	<p>The council have entered into a pilot project with Skills Development Scotland to look at tackling occupational segregation and to improve access to work placements, apprenticeships and routes into non-traditional career options. While this is initially focused on promoting gender equality it is hoped the learning of the pilot can be replicated across other relevant protected characteristics.</p>
<p>Outcome 2: The council has a reduced level of gender based occupational segregation.</p>	<p>We are working with the third sector organisations Close the Gap and Engender to identify specific actions which will help to improve employability opportunities and tackle occupational segregation. The pilot is currently scoping the practicalities of how such opportunities are accessed at present within different council services and processes, to consider where positive action on equality can be incorporated. Some examples of actions which are currently being considered include: funding of additional childcare places; provision of CPD for teachers on gender, skills and work; Tailored courses or employment tasters for young people in non-traditional career areas; School classroom based sessions on occupational segregation; Interventions around provision of careers advice and information; Capacity building for policy makers on the issues and links between gender, education, skills and economic development; Provision of equalities training for employers.</p> <p>The pilot is working across all sectors and partners in West Lothian and is attempting to identify a holistic approach to dealing with this issue which impacts on all areas and sections of society. The pilot with Skills Development Scotland, along with the council and other partners, will enable funding opportunities to test and evaluate some of the suggested interventions above. As well as created a good practice case study for the rest of the country it is hoped this work will leave a long-term strategy in place for dealing with occupational segregation specifically for the council.</p> <p>The Council has developed the Steps N2 Work programme, a non-trade apprenticeship scheme. This programme has been specifically developed to offer pathways and alternatives to the traditional trade apprenticeship programmes, therefore breaking down gender stereotypes and tackling occupation segregation.</p>

Outcome	Progress Update
<p>Outcome 3: Improved awareness of violence against women, improved protection against violence within services</p>	<p>In keeping with Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls, the council aims to ensure best practice across all staff and services, based on the four Ps: Protection, Provision, Participation and Prevention. A key identified gap in our approach is the need for a learning framework as a resource to develop and support effective, consistent and coherent partnership and practice in response to violence against women and girls, within a shared ethos of commitment to gender equality. The council has now developed such a framework with the aim to ensure that all workers have the requisite knowledge, understanding and skills to contribute effectively, as appropriate for their role and context, to the multi-agency response.</p> <p>The framework suggests a baseline for standards and competences that can be expected from staff in different roles and settings, whose work brings them into contact with those experiencing/affected by violence against women. The framework provides guidelines to help coherent and consistent approaches across different Council services and context, and to help identify training/development needs for individual staff members, teams and groupings across the Council. The council is currently implementing this framework, and identifying necessary resources for progress.</p> <p>As part of the Equally Safe Strategy, COSLA and the Scottish Government have issued a template Domestic Abuse Policy for Local Authorities to consider against the provisions of any internal policies already in place. West Lothian Council do not currently have a Domestic Abuse Policy and it is our intention to introduce such a policy based on the template provided. However the council plans to extend the remit of this policy to include Violence Against Women in a wider context beyond merely domestic abuse. The council has embarked upon benchmarking with NHS Lothian in this regard.</p> <p>West Lothian Council's Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT), Scotland's only integrated service housed in a local authority, continues to provide a high level of service despite increasing demand related to increased domestic abuse and rape and sexual assault referrals. The service served over 1000 women and children last year, and 95% of women served stated that they felt safer as a result of DASAT support.</p>

Outcome	Progress Update
<p>Outcome 4: People within the relevant characteristics in West Lothian understand the definition of hate crime and are knowledgeable and feel confident about reporting hate incidents</p>	<p>The council hosted a public seminar in 2014 on hate crime in West Lothian. The purpose of this event was to understand the community's views on hate crime, and to identify ways in which to tackle the issue effectively. Representatives of the equality community forums hosted in West Lothian were in attendance and the event was held in partnership with Police Scotland. The results and feedback from this session is informing additional actions to ensure that the public are fully aware of the impact and issues related to hate crime, including identifying effective ways on how to report incidents and promote confidence within the community.</p> <p>Other Hate Crime awareness raising activities undertaken within the council include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Remote Reporting' training delivered by Police Scotland to staff at Almondbank Library in Craigshill with a view to increasing access for people with relevant protected characteristics to make Police reports. • Police Scotland have delivered 3 hate crime awareness sessions for council service users to raise awareness of hate crime, the definition of hate crime and hate incidents, and to build confidence in reporting. These sessions were delivered in conjunction with ESOL (English speakers of other languages) and with Independent Futures Group (disability support). • The Community Safety Unit continues to liaise with MILAN (an Asian women's group) to promote the importance of Hate Crime awareness and provide guidance and support on reporting Hate Crimes. The MILAN group will then share this knowledge within their community. • The Safer Neighbourhood Team have received equality issues training which allows officers to provide advice to members of the community on Hate Crime • P7 school children attend a 'Risk Factory' activity which can be adapted to include Hate Crime Awareness where it has been identified that Hate Crime is an issue within the relevant community/school.

Outcome	Progress Update
<p>Outcome 5: People with disabilities experience greater independence in their lives</p>	<p>Affordable housing is planned through the Council House New build Programme for 1000 new houses. These will be built to Housing for Varying Needs Standards and will include a proportion of bungalows which have been specified as lifetime homes. These homes will accommodate people with disabilities, allowing them to live independently.</p> <p>Close consideration has been given to issues such as the locality of the developments and the landscaping around the houses to ensure accessibility for disabled people. Each bungalow will have in-curtilage parking to allow ease of access to the property for disabled tenants and their visitors. Ground floor accommodation in cottage flats and terraced or semi-detached properties will also provide a flexible house type for people with a range of needs including those with some mobility issues.</p> <p>In addition, core and cluster accommodation will also be provided within the programme for people with learning disabilities to ensure that they can live as independently as possible within the community, with the support they require. A number of units of RSL housing are currently under consideration. These properties will also be for people with particular needs. In particular, the West Lothian Development Alliance and Bield Housing Association plan to use specialist knowledge to provide housing for people with disabilities and for older people.</p> <p>Telecare services are available to disabled, elderly and vulnerable people to allow them to be safe and independent in their own home. Services are available to provide 1:2:1 sessions with service users to deliver personalised support to encourage independence e.g. self-travel, cooking budgeting and ironing.</p> <p>Self-Directed Support now offers an opportunity for people with learning and/or physical disability to look more creatively at care options and individuals and carers are able to exercise choice and control over how their services and support is provided and who provides them using individual budgets.</p> <p>Advocacy services are funded for people with a physical and/or learning disability or mental health problems to enable them to have a greater understanding of the options and choices available.</p> <p>We have also extended the range of courses available to people with a learning disability at West Lothian College.</p>

Outcome	Progress Update
<p>Outcome 6: People within the relevant protected characteristics in West Lothian feel involved in the processes by which the council makes decisions that affect them, and that they have appropriate information and resources to understand and influence those decisions</p>	<p>The council continues to support a network of Equality Community Forums across a range of protected characteristics. The Forum act in a critical friend role, offering audit and scrutiny to council policy and activity around equality and diversity. The Forums also take forward work to promote good relations between groups in the community through hosting community events and campaigns.</p> <p>The Let's Talk Equalities event was introduced in 2013. This initiative brings representatives of each of the Forums and others involved in equality work together to consider issues of mutual interest. This innovation has also enabled the Forums to comment and be engaged in equality work and policy within the council on a more strategic basis. The business case put forward for the introduction of an Equality Involvement Coordinator post was successful and this has enabled consistent support to be offered to the Forums.</p> <p>The Community Planning Partnership is currently exploring the possibility of an Equality Hub model for West Lothian to enhance the support to the Forums and to grow the volunteer base available. Further progress on this will be reported in our next update report.</p>
<p>Outcome 7: West Lothian Council is recognised internally and externally as an equal opportunities employer.</p>	<p>The council is in the process of developing an Employment Diversity Standard. This is a self-evaluation tool to measure our performance in relation to equality and diversity in the workplace. It is based on the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, which the council submits to on an annual basis, and is designed to apply the same rigorous standards to all of the protected characteristics. It is anticipated that the standard will be approved and implemented for the first time prior to September 2015.</p> <p>The councils Equality and Diversity Training Strategy will, for the first time, see mandatory equality and diversity training implemented across the council's workforce. This is a significant commitment and will be a challenging undertaking. The Strategy will be rolled out over three years (2014-17) and will include both an online and face-to-face session. Employee groupings will be targeted over the three year period to ensure those deemed to take priority do so.</p> <p>The council conducted an Employee Diversity Census in 2014. This exercise has substantially improved the equality data we have on individual employee records for council staff.</p>

Outcome	Progress Update
Outcome 7 (cont)	The newly published/ revised Faith Handbook is a very useful tool for identifying and dealing sensitively with, all the relevant festivals and faith requirements of our population, including staff.
Outcome 8: Children and young people within the relevant protected characteristics in West Lothian's schools feel safe, supported and able to be themselves	<p>The Council has commissioned trainers to provide training for trainers (Head Teachers) to support staff in schools to understand their responsibilities as teachers within the equalities legislative framework to promote children's rights and meet the needs of all learners including those with protected characteristics. All Head Teachers will deliver annual training from 2015 onwards.</p> <p>The quality improvement team has widely promoted the use of the Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) Self Evaluation toolkit. During our quality improvement review visits to schools we support them to evaluate how well school systems, culture and practice ensure the well-being needs of all children and young people are being met.</p> <p>All West Lothian Schools are involved in Rights Education and almost all have signed up to Rights Respecting Schools with around 60% having achieved level 1 or 2.</p> <p>Within the ASN continuum of support (staged intervention process) the needs of children and young people with targeted support are identified and addressed in all schools.</p> <p>Our anti-bullying policy gives clear and up to date advice for reducing and responding to all types of bullying including homophobic bullying.</p> <p>We consult and engage with key partners, including Show Racism the Red Card, Stonewall Education and LGBT to support our schools to Get it Right for Every Child in West Lothian.</p>
Outcome 9: Carers in West Lothian recognise an improved awareness of caring related issues amongst council employees when accessing and engaging with council services	<p>In West Lothian, carers are seen as partners in the planning and delivery of care and Carers of West Lothian (COWL) are funded to support WLC in developing policy guidance, improving existing processes and services and developing new services for carers.</p> <p>COWL delivers training programmes "Making the change" and Young Carer Awareness to health and social care staff and to wards and departments within St John's Hospital.</p>

Outcome	Progress Update
Outcome 9 (cont)	<p>COWL have developed and maintain their own website which provides information to both carers and staff. COWL continue to distributed posters and leaflets, and seek press and media coverage to increase awareness of carers' issues by professional staff and the general public. COWL actively represents carers' interests on consultative bodies and local planning and development groups.</p> <p>Staff and pupils in schools have a raised awareness of the issues and needs of young carers through the use of training resources such as DVD's, Information Booklets and from information on the COWL website.</p>
Outcome 10: People within the relevant protected characteristics in West Lothian have an improved awareness of, and access proportionately , income maintenance and maximisation opportunities	<p>The council has produced an Anti-Poverty Strategy which incorporates a number of specific actions in relation to ensuring that people from the relevant protected characteristics have the support necessary to maximise their income, through benefits or other routes. Better Off: The West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy is the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership's plan of how we tackle poverty in West Lothian.</p> <p>The overall purpose of this strategy is to help minimise the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian. Its object is to ensure that people are equipped to cope with the challenges they currently face, in terms of their disposable income, and the impact that this has on their health, education and community involvement.</p> <p>Specific advice and support has been sought and engaged in the development of the plan to ensure that the particular needs of everyone in the community, including those covered by the protected characteristics of the Equality Act, are taken into account in terms of the way that support is offered and received.</p>

هذه المعلومات متوفرة بلغة بريل وعلى شريط وبخط كبير وبلغات الجالية.

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