



Equality, Diversity and Human Rights

Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025

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Introduction

The Equality Act 2010 sets out the public sector general equality duty requiring public authorities to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations. These requirements apply across the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership. The Scottish Government also introduced specific duties requiring Councils to publish a set of Equality Outcomes by 30 April every four years, and publish progress towards the outcomes every two years.

This document presents the Council's next four years of equality outcomes covering the period 2021-2025, builds on the previous outcomes set in 2017 and highlights some achievements over the past four years as well as establishing some new priorities. These outcomes are not meant to encompass all the work the Council does to reduce inequality but set out what are considered to be the priorities.

It is worth highlighting here that the spread of Covid 19 since the beginning of 2020 has had a significant impact on everyone's lives globally and locally. The impact on some people has been more severe than others and particularly so on some of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act. In relation to the Fairer Scotland Duty, there has also been a socio-economic impact on individuals and groups. This document therefore takes account of the current circumstances in which we are living and sets out the equality outcomes and actions which the Council will take forward over the next few years.

Context & Challenges

Public Sector Equality Duty

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 3 parts which all public authorities need to comply with. The 3 parts are called the general duty and public authorities need to consider each of these:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who have a protected characteristics and those who do not
- Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – this includes ethnic or national origin, colour and nationality. This includes Gypsy Travellers
- Religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The public sector equality duty under the Equality Act requires the Council to:

- **Mainstream** – How the duty is being integrated into other functions undertaken by the Council.
- **Set equality outcomes** – The results which the authority wishes to achieve. The outcomes must have been set with the engagement of protected characteristics and/or evidence relating to the protected characteristics.
- **Involve** all protected characteristics - and anyone else the local authority considers represents the interests of people with protected characteristics.
- Consider **relevant evidence** relating to people with protected characteristics.
- **Assess** and review policies and practices.
- **Gather** and use employment information.
- **Publish** a revised set of outcomes within a reasonable timescale.

Fairer Scotland Duty

The 'Anti-Poverty Impact - First Stage Report' produced in December 2020, highlighted concerns around poverty and its variations across Fife. The report states that Fife tends to track national trends in income and employment deprivation but shows an increase in health deprivation. Particular issues remain in the mid-Fife area and western Fife, but small pockets of deprivation are seen throughout Fife and child poverty also shows an increasing trend. Some information from the report worth noting includes:

- In 2018/2019, there were 15,641 families living with relative low income in Fife. The majority (61%, 9,531 in total) were working families.
- In May 2020, there were 1,704 people (1,075 men, 627 female) who claimed Jobseeker's allowance in Fife:
- 1,403 were from White ethnicity, 208 were unknown, 66 preferred not to say, 19 Asian and none were Black or Mixed ethnicity.
- In November 2020, 35,317 people were on Universal Credit in Fife, with the majority (63% - 22,278 people) not in employment:
- 1 in 3 claims lasted between 6 months to 1 year
- There were 17,059 claims from males, of which 33% (5,630 people) were in employment.
- There were 18,244 claims from females, of which 41% (7,404 people) were in employment.

The Council is working in partnership with various third sector and statutory agencies to address poverty and there are actions highlighted in this report which aim to reduce poverty for vulnerable individuals, including those from the protected characteristics such as disabled people.

Equalities Profile

Age:

- The population of Fife is growing slowly and was estimated at 373,550 as of June 2019.
- 17% of the Fife population is under 16, 63% of working age (16-65) and 20% are aged 65 and over.
- The 45 to 64 age group is the largest, with a population of 104,664, representing 28% of Fife's population.
- The 75 and over age group is the smallest, with a population of 32,754, representing 8.8% of Fife's population.
- In 2019 8,940,303 concessionary travel journeys were made by bus or train in and out of Fife, whereas in 2020 4,029,809 similar journeys were made as the pandemic and lockdown took effect

Migration:

- The total In-migration (people coming to Fife) in 2018/2019 was 11,860, the total out-migration (people leaving Fife) was 9,560, giving a net migration of +2,300 people.
- Most people coming to Fife were in the 15 -19 age group (900), while those leaving were mainly in the 20-24 age group (423).
- The resulting increase in population Fife over 2018/2019 was of +1,640.

Disability:

- In 2018/2019, it was estimated that one in three (34%) of residents have a long-term physical or mental health condition, an increase of 13% since 2014.
- In May 2020, 10,190 residents were entitled to Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in Fife. The majority (43%) were over State Pension age (4,618 people), 30.8% were children (3,142) and 23.8% were of working age (2,430).

Gender Reassignment

- There is still only limited data about gender reassignment.
- Recent estimates give a range between 4.6 and 9.2 per 100,000 people who are transgender. For the size of the population in Fife, this would give a figure of between 17 and 34 residents.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

- In 2018/2019, 1,490 marriages were registered in Fife, marking a slight increase, compared to the figure for Scotland where the numbers of marriage continue to reduce yearly.
- The number of Civil Partnerships similarly continued to decrease and there were two male and no (0) female civil partnerships recorded during the year.

Pregnancy and Maternity

- The number of babies born in Fife and Scotland continues to decrease slowly every year. In 2018/2019, there were 3,325 births in Fife - 1,726 were male and 1,599 were female.
- The lowest number of teenage pregnancies (145) was also recorded that year, and most women who were pregnant (1,016) were in the 30 to 34 age group.

Race

- It is estimated that 79.1% of Fifiers were born in Scotland, 11.7% the rest of the UK, 5.1% from the EU27 and 3.8% from the rest of the world.
- The population of Fife is mainly (91.2%) of White ethnicity, 80.1% being White Scottish and 11.1% White Other British. Minority ethnic groups constitute 8.6% of the population, much lower than the Scotland average of 11.5%.
- Estimates for minority ethnic groups in Fife are 4.9% (18,300 people) White Other (this includes Irish, Gypsy/Travellers), 2% (7,500 people) White Polish, 0.6% (2,240 people) Asian and 1.1% (4,100 people) from all other ethnic groups.
- From the 2011 Census, we also know that 1,282 people speak Gaelic in Fife, with 123,205 people speaking Scots at home.
- There were 167 charges of racially aggravated crime (94 in Kirkcaldy and 73 in Dunfermline) by the Procurator Fiscal Office in 2019/20

Religion and Belief

- It is estimated that the majority of people in Fife (62.3%) have no religion or belief; this is higher than the average across Scotland (53.7%).
- The main religions are 17.2% Church of Scotland (68,800 people), 9.7% Roman Catholic (36,200 people) and 8.2% from other Christian denominations (30,600 people).

Sex

- In 2018/2019, there were more women than men living in Fife, with an estimated 192,136 women and 181,414 men. This represents 51.4% of Fifiers being female and 48.6% male.

- In Fife, life expectancy at age 65-69 is higher than at Scotland level for both females and males by 19.9 and 17.6 years respectively.
- The leading cause of death for males are ischaemic heart diseases (14.8% of all male deaths) while for females it is dementia and Alzheimer's disease (14.7%).
- On average, male full-time workers in Fife earn £15.03 per hour and female full-time workers earn £14.32.

Sexual Orientation

- It is estimated that in 2018/2019, 94.7% of the population, in Fife are heterosexual and 3.4% (12,700 people) are Lesbian, Gay or other.
- There were 67 charges of sexual orientation aggravated crime (45 in Kirkcaldy and 22 in Dunfermline) by the Procurator Fiscal Office in 2019/20.

Impact of Pandemic on Protected Groups

Covid-19 has prompted sudden and substantial changes in employment, schooling and other day-to-day activities. Although everyone has been affected by the pandemic and lockdown restrictions, it is increasingly clear that impacts vary for different population groups. Highlighted below are some of the impacts being felt by people from the protected characteristics.

Impact on Women

Women's experiences are significantly different to men's. They continue to play a significant role in terms of having caring responsibilities, more likely to be in lower paid employment and working part-time and more likely to be furloughed compared to men.

- Where women are working during the lockdown, they are spending fewer hours doing paid work than men and more hours on childcare and housework
- Women are consistently less likely than men to feel comfortable with the resumption of 'normal' activities, such as sending children to school, travelling on public transport or visiting a bar or restaurant, with implications for the government's recovery plans.

A survey published by [IPSOS Mori and the Fawcett Society](#) found that the emotional toll of Covid-19, particularly during lockdown, was having the greatest impact on women. There has also been a global surge in domestic abuse during lockdown restrictions, leading the [UN secretary general to call on governments](#) around the world to put in place policies to tackle violence against women and girls and ensure safe refuge for victims.

Impact on Ethnic Minorities

People from ethnic minorities are at a higher risk of dying from coronavirus, [according to a report by Public Health England](#). It shows that age remains the biggest risk factor, while being male is another. But age and sex apart, the report states people of Bangladeshi ethnicity have twice the risk of death than people of white British ethnicity. The impact of Covid-19 is also disproportionate for other Asian, Caribbean and Black ethnicities. But it remains unclear why.

Impact on LGBT Communities

['Community Matters - The Impact of Lockdown on Scottish LGBT+ Communities'](#), released as part of the Rainbow Responders programme managed by Pink Saltire, details a worrying number of LGBT+ people are dealing with mental health challenges, with many turning to drink and drugs to help them cope.

The information presented above has set out some concerns regarding the impact of the pandemic particularly on some protected characteristics. The pandemic has also exacerbated and / or brought to light some issues such as increasing unemployment, financial and health inequalities (particularly mental health). The equalities profile data has also shown a changing picture for our communities. The Council cannot address all the concerns, inequalities and changes within our communities in isolation. Working in partnership with other statutory and third sector organisations, the outcomes presented later in this document aim to advance equality of opportunity and reduce socio-economic disadvantage for many of the protected characteristics and wider community.

Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

Equality & Diversity Scheme 2017 – 2021: Progress on Equality Outcomes & Actions

The Council's commitment to equality and diversity goes beyond the equality outcomes which are set in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty. Much of the work carried out is not included in the outcomes and actions, but Council services continue to provide services to communities (including people from the protected characteristics) that are not captured in this document. However, this section will highlight some of the achievements over the past four years in relation to the outcomes. Progress has also been reported annually to Committee and published online – a copy of these reports is available by contacting enquiry.equalities@fife.gov.uk

The previous set of equality outcomes was as follows:

- People are able to access our services with ease and confidence
- People feel safe and supported and are able to live free from incidents motivated by hate
- The Council and its partners lead improvements in equality, diversity and human rights
- The Council and partners have up to date evidence and information in relation to the protected characteristics to better plan services
- Raising educational achievement and attainment particularly for those in their early years or in early learning and childcare

Impact Assessment

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires the Council to assess the impact of changes in policy and practice in relation to the nine protected characteristics. Similarly, the Fairer Scotland Duty requires a written assessment (in relation to strategic decisions) of how inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage can be reduced. Fife Council has incorporated the requirements of the latter into the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance, and assessments are required as part of the committee reporting process. Report writers are required to: provide an assessment of the equality impact of a policy or practice in relation to the protected characteristics; if there is no equality impact then an explanation is provided of how the policy or practice complies with one or more of the three General Duties under the Equality Act; and an assessment is provided of how the policy or practice will reduce socio-economic disadvantage.

Budget decisions also require the above assessments to be undertaken and impact assessments are available online, in line with the PSED publication requirements.

British Sign Language Plan

Fife Council made the BSL Plan available on the Fife Council website and Health and Social Care Partnership Web pages including their Facebook page. A BSL implementation group (BSLIG) was established with people who use BSL, working together with Fife Council and partner agencies. The purpose of the BSLIG is to provide a forum to discuss

and monitor the progress of the BSL Local Plan by the partners and BSL members of the group. The Chair of the BSLIG presents update reports to Fife's Health and Social Care Partnership Clinical and Governance Committee.

Hate Incidents Policy & Procedure

The hate incident policy and procedure was approved by the Senior Equalities Group in 2019 and circulated to Services along with detailed guidance forms on reporting and recording hate incidents. Fife Centre for Equalities also raised awareness of the procedure for hate incident reporting through a number of community workshops and focus groups. Despite the revised policy and procedure, the majority of incidents motivated by hate against a protected characteristic tend to be hate crimes and reported to the Police. Nevertheless, the Council and partner organisations, including Fife Centre for Equalities, will continue to raise awareness of how hate incidents can be reported.

Gaelic Language Plan

The Gaelic Language (Scotland) Act 2005 requires local authorities to put in place actions which promote the Gaelic language and gives it equal recognition to that of the English language. Fife Council's Gaelic Language Plan (GLP) has been in place since November 2015 and sets out a number of commitments to promote Gaelic within the corporate structure, within the community and within schools. The 2011 Census showed that 87,000 people in Scotland had some Gaelic language skills and current estimates show that 5% of Gaelic speakers live in Fife. Since the Plan has been in place, much has been achieved to promote Gaelic within the community and in schools. Some of the achievements worth noting are:

- Gaelic engagement in schools and communities has been targeted at some of the most vulnerable communities in Fife; national funding has been secured to ensure there are no barriers to participation and those wishing to engage can do so within their own communities, often for free.
- Gaelic engagement and development in Fife is a partnership effort. Fife Gaelic Development Group is a small voluntary organisation which works to complement the Gaelic Language Plan at community level and advocate on behalf of the Gaelic community when required. There is also a multi-agency steering group, the Partnership Group for Gaelic in Fife, which brings together smaller voluntary organisations, advocates in the Gaelic community, national organisations and other key stakeholders to work collectively to achieve shared aims for Gaelic development across Fife.
- Staff and volunteers within Fife Council have been able to attend Gaelic awareness training which highlights the barriers to language use and the challenges that face all minority languages. Staff are supported to engage with Gaelic as part of their existing roles and language learning is being rolled out.

Raising Educational Achievement and Attainment

The level of child poverty is increasing in Scotland but there is evidence that poverty in Fife is increasing at a faster rate. For example, outcomes for the vulnerable and most disadvantaged, including those registered for free school meals and/or having an additional

support need, were significantly lower than those for an 'average child'. Equity remains a significant challenge for Fife, as for Scotland and many other nations.

However, despite the challenges, Education and Children's Services have made significant progress:

- closing the equity gap across a range of measures, including literacy and numeracy skills;
- 76 positive destinations and participation post-school;
- supporting more children and young people who had a social work involvement at home, or within Fife.

Going forward, the focus for Education and Children's Services will be:

- a targeted focus on those who are most disadvantaged;
- nurturing approaches and trauma-informed practice in helping to recognise and meet individual needs;
- supporting the emotional wellbeing of young people, families and staff;
- valuing choice and participation, allowing young people a greater voice; and
- mitigating the impact of poverty.

Supporting EU Citizens

EU citizens have until the end of June to apply under the EU Settlement Scheme for Settled Status (SS) to continue to live and work in the UK. In partnership with third sector organisations, the Council continues to raise awareness with staff and EU citizens in the community of the need to apply for SS and support them in making an application where language or other support is required. Work carried out to date has included:

- Regular updates in staff bulletins to encourage EU colleagues to record their nationality and apply for SS if they have not done so;
- Third sector organisations such as CARF, Fife Migrants Forum and Fife Centre for Equalities providing individual support and raising awareness, particularly with larger employers;
- The Council's Customer Support Centres will also support EU citizens with applications (by appointment only). As at March 2021 13940 Fife applications have been concluded under the SS scheme.

Corporate Working Group on Equality

The Council has a Senior Equalities Group (SEG) which oversees the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Scheme. The Group is currently chaired by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and meets quarterly with representation drawn from across the Directorates and trade unions. The remit of the SEG is as follows:

- To promote equality and diversity within everything Fife Council does
- To ensure senior managers are engaged in equality and diversity issues in line with legislation and best practice requirements
- To monitor the strategic and corporate impact of the integrated equalities action plan, suggesting amendments as required to improve performance

In terms of monitoring and reporting, an annual progress report is provided to the Council's Policy and Co-ordination Committee. The reports are also published online at fife.gov.uk.

Fife Centre for Equalities

Fife Centre for Equalities (FCE) was established in 2016 as an independent third sector organisation to support Fife Council's engagement with the protected characteristics. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with FCE to undertake certain activities (components) which include the following:

- Ensuring the needs of older people (irrespective of protected characteristics) are better understood and acted on by key services.
- Increasing awareness of and enabling communities to access support for reporting hate incidents to Fife Council and other partners.
- Providing training, guidance and support to private, public and third sector organisations to help improve their employment and service delivery practices.
- Ensuring individuals belonging to the protected characteristics have the confidence to engage with council services to ensure that their needs and priorities are met.
- Collate, analyse and disseminate data on the protected characteristics to inform service providers of any disparities and highlight any emerging issues.

Some of FCE's achievements during the life of the previous Equality and Diversity Scheme include (from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020):

- The Let's Leave No One Behind report, a research on Poverty and Protected Characteristics conducted in partnership with Fife Council, was launched on 25 November 2019. 17 organisations took part in the survey, 23 participants attended focus groups and 4 personal stories were added to the final report. 27 participants attended the report launch and 170 accessed the report on FCE's website.
- Our Equality in Fife, statistical report on protected characteristics, was updated in July 2019. The report was also accompanied by individual facts on different protected characteristics. The report and individual factsheets were accessed by 583 online users.
- Four specialist briefings accompanied by lunchtime workshops were provided covering topics on legal definitions of Gypsies and Travellers as an Ethnic Group; Equality in Fife: Main themes; Equal Opportunities Monitoring and Census 2021; Paygaps, Lifegaps and Inequality.
- Twelve awareness raising sessions on hate incidents were delivered to 124 participants.
- Twelve training sessions were provided to 178 people – topics covered included: understanding gender identity; understanding diversity; inclusive communication; overcoming unconscious bias.
- Seventeen people aged 55+ took part in the Different Paths video interviews, a collection of life stories to improve understanding of the different experiences of moving through life for people with protected characteristics.
- Eighteen organisations registered with Equality Pathfinder Scheme, a voluntary and non-competitive recognition scheme leading the way in making Fife a fair, equal and inclusive place to live, work and study.

- Equality Collective brought together 310 members of different protected characteristics in four events; Women and Hate Crime, T with Trans, Spotting Signs of Human Trafficking, and Transport in Fife.
- The EU Settlement Scheme referral page was accessed by 738 people. Posters about the Fife EU Settlement Scheme Partnership were distributed widely in public events and social media. FCE's EU Settlement Scheme Partnership social media posts reached 23,049 people.
- FCE's Equalities Monthly newsletter has 1,435 subscribers. In addition, 35 people signed up to receive communications via text.

Procurement Duty

To meet the requirements of the specific duty, a public authority must be able to demonstrate that it has had due regard to whether the award criteria and conditions relating to the performance of a relevant agreement should include considerations to enable it to better perform the equality duty.

Applying 'due regard' means that when making decisions about procurement, an authority subject to the duty must consciously consider the need to: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations.

Any award criteria or conditions related to the performance of a relevant agreement must, in accordance with the [Public Contracts \(Scotland\) Regulations 2015](#), be relevant to and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract or framework agreement.

The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in Scotland in April 2018. This requires public authorities, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to how they can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

Promoting Equality within the Education and Children's Services Directorate

(see outcome 5 below)

Fife's Education and Children's Services Directorate is the second largest in Scotland. The Directorate provides high quality education and social work services to children, young people and families and in relation to criminal justice. The Directorate's vision is to **improve life chances for all**.

The Education and Children's Services Directorate plays a key role in taking forward the wider aims of the Council by:

- Supporting the delivery of the Plan 4 Fife
- Playing a lead role in strategic planning across the wider Children's Services Partnership
- Working collaboratively with local authorities across the South East of Scotland through the South East Improvement Collaborative

The Directorate's approach is founded on the values of:

- Compassion
- Ambition
- Respect
- Equity

Since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic the Directorate has been implementing alternative ways to raise attainment, ensure inclusion, improve the learning environment, while supporting and protecting the most vulnerable.

The priorities for improvement are:

- **Delivering the Promise** for Fife's vulnerable children & young people
- **Closing the Attainment Gap** for the most disadvantaged
- **Improving Opportunity** for all children & young people
- **Empowering all** through place-based leadership

The commitment in practice will ensure that:

- the most effective practitioners are attracted and recruited, and their professional learning and practice is developed.
- effective partnerships are developed, and services are integrated in a child and family-centred way.
- efforts are focused on prevention, early intervention to break the cycle of disadvantage and protect the vulnerable.
- outcomes improve for all, with a clear focus for targeted support on those facing the greatest equity gaps in outcomes.

Equality & Diversity in Employment

Equality and Diversity in Employment (see outcome 4 below)

Employee Information

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2012 place specific duties on the Council to gather, use and publish employee information and publish pay gap information every two years. It also requires the Council to publish an equal pay statement every four years.

Equal Pay Statement 2021-25

Fife Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity in employment. We aim to ensure a fair, open and transparent approach to the determination of pay and conditions of employment which does not discriminate unlawfully and is free from bias across all of the protected characteristics including sex, race and disability.

We believe that all employees should receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent, or for work of equal value.

We will:

- Use a robust framework of job evaluation which allows an objective and reliable measure of the size and relative worth of each job. The framework is underpinned by equal opportunities practice ensuring that there is no bias related to any of the protected characteristics.
- Ensure that all those involved in decisions about pay and benefits are appropriately trained.
- Allow employees to appeal against job evaluation outcomes.
- Monitor pay statistics regularly.
- Consider the impact of pay practices on the roles, levels and distribution across the Council on the basis of sex, disability and race. We will do this by monitoring areas of occupational segregation of these characteristics.
- Assess and review the findings of monitoring activities and take action where necessary.
- Continue to work in partnership with the recognised Trade Unions on equal pay and equalities in employment.
- Inform employees of how our pay practices work and how their own pay is determined.
- Respond appropriately to all enquiries concerning fairness in pay. We believe that the actions set out above will help ensure we avoid unfair discrimination and reward, in a fair and transparent way, the skills, experience and potential of all employees.

The Council meets the specific duties in relation to the publishing of information about the workforce and pay practices within Equality in Employment Reports (available on fife.gov.uk). These reports provide employee information across all of the protected characteristics including recruitment, training, dismissals, discipline and grievance. The

appendix of these reports also provides information about gender, race and disability pay gaps as well as occupational segregation. Key statistics are provided below:

Key Statistics - Workforce Profile as of 31st March 2020

- The percentage of our workforce aged 24 and under continues to slightly increase and this group now represent 5.3% of our workforce.
- The age profile peaks between ages 45 to 59.
- The percentage of our workforce declaring a disability remains below 2%.
- The gender split has remained static with females making up 72% of our workforce.
- 48% of employees are married or in a civil partnership.
- Less than 2% of our workforce are from a Black and Minority Ethnic background.
- 66% of our employees have not disclosed their religion. 19% have no religion. 15% said they belong to a Christian denomination. Fewer than 1% told us they were Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish Hindu or Sikh.
- 69% of our workforce have not disclosed their sexual orientation. 30% told us they are heterosexual. Less than 1% said they were lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- 86% of our employees did not answer the question on gender identity. Fewer than 1% of employees told us they identify with a gender other than the one assigned to them at birth.

Previous Workforce Actions

The Council's Equality and Diversity Scheme 2017-21 set out equality outcomes and within the outcomes we embedded specific workforce related actions. Most of these actions contributed to the Council's outcome to: "work in partnership to lead improvements in equality, diversity and human rights". We said we would:

- Migrate to the new 'Disability Confident' scheme and build on the best practices from the 'Positive About Disabled People' model.
- Improve managers' awareness and understanding of mental wellbeing to help us support employees with mental health issues.
- Put in place the recommendations from the Investors in Young People (IiYP) to help us attract, retain and develop young people.

We also said we would promote reporting of hate incidents experienced or witnessed by staff. This was part of the Council's outcome that: "People feel safe and supported and are able to live free from incidents motivated by hate".

Below is an update on our actions.

Migration to the new 'Disability Confident' scheme

The Council achieved 'Disability Confident' status following a full assessment in December 2017. The self-assessment process was repeated in 2019, extending our scheme membership until December 2022. This scheme builds on the best practices from the 'Positive About Disabled People' model.

Improvement of managers' awareness and understanding of mental wellbeing

In 2019 we introduced a wellbeing programme which included mental health awareness training for managers, a Supporting Mental Wellbeing at Work Policy and refreshed Return to Work documentation specifically tailored for those employees returning to work following an absence related to their mental health.

Mentally Healthy Workplace training was developed by NHS Healthy Working Lives specifically for managers and supervisors. Employees have been trained to deliver the training course to all managers and supervisors.

Other actions include a network of trained individuals across the Council to act as Mental Health First Aiders who provide support and signposting to those experiencing mental health crises.

Following the recommendations from the Investors in Young People (IiYP).

We achieved Investors in Young People Gold accreditation in 2018.

Support and empowerment of young employees and the wider young people of Fife is high on our agenda and will continue to be a priority. Recommendations from IiYP included a Young Person's Network – which is now being run by young employees themselves, with support. We also have a newsletter targeted to young employees as well as guidance for managers to improve support for young employees.

Young employees benefit from the Mentoring Programme for Young Employees which pairs them up with experienced colleagues from another part of the organisation who provide coaching support.

Promote reporting of hate incidents experienced or witnessed by staff.

In 2018 the Council implemented a new policy and procedure to record and respond to hate incidents reported by members of the public. Within this we signpost staff to the appropriate process should they experience or witness another member of staff experiencing a hate incident. We collect details of any incidents relating to violence, aggression or threat toward employees and regularly monitor this information. These reports allow the individuals to record whether it was related to any of the protected characteristics within the Equality Act.

Pay Gaps

Gender Pay Gap

The gender pay gap across the whole Council has fallen to 0.66% (as at 31st March 2020) and continues to be below the Scottish Local Authority average (3.9% as at 31st March 2020).

Within the Education Authority the gender pay gap continues to be wider than that for the whole Council (although it has fallen slightly as it was 26.01% last the time it was reported in 2019 and is 25.38% as at 31st March 2020.)

The overall gender split of employees within the Education Authority is 86% female and 14% male. However, male employees tend to be focussed within the higher and teaching grades with the lower graded Single Status posts occupied by predominantly female employees. This is not unexpected given many of these posts are Pupil Support Assistants and Early Years Officers – occupations which have high levels of gender segregation. We continue to challenge traditional perceptions for example by using recruitment adverts showing male employees in early years settings.

Women in Senior Positions

Over the last few years we have seen an increasing number of women in the top 5% of earners. As at 31st March 2019 63.93% of those in the top 5% of earners were female and as at the 31st March 2020 this figure had increased to 64.79%, (72.15% of the total workforce as at 31st March 2020 is female).

Disability Pay Gap

The pay gap between our disabled employees and our non-disabled employees for the Whole Council has increased from 9.89% in 2019 to 12.63% in 2020.

In our Education Authority there is a negative pay gap, where on average disabled staff earn more than non-disabled staff.

However, it is important to remember that from anecdotal evidence it is likely that the number of our employees with a disability is higher than the number who have disclosed a disability. We must therefore be careful about drawing conclusions from a limited data set. We will continue to encourage employees to disclose this information.

Race Pay Gap

The “white minority ethnic pay gap” demonstrates any inequality for white minority ethnic staff. It is the difference in average hourly pay between white Scottish and white other British employees when compared to white ethnic minority employees.

As at 2020 our white minority ethnic mean pay gap was –12.50%. This tells us that on average white minority ethnic employees earn more than white Scottish and white other British employees.

The mean “non-white minority ethnic pay gap” was -3.92%. This tells us that on average employees from a BME background earn more than white Scottish and white British employees.

Again, we acknowledge that as disclosure rates of ethnicity is low we cannot rely on the accuracy of these figures.

Disclosure Rates

We acknowledge that more work is needed to improve the percentage of equality information disclosure that we receive from our employees.

We have moved to a new HR/Payroll system, which will allow us to retain equality information submitted as part of the recruitment system and bring it within our core HR data. Previously we had to ask employees to complete equality data in various systems and at various points of the employment life cycle.

As part of our new action “Work to improve the information we hold about employee’s equality information” we will seek to increase the number of employees completing the full equality question set. We will launch an awareness-raising campaign about why this information is collected, and how we use it, to encourage disclosure.

Equality Outcomes 2021-2025

As mentioned in the introduction, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires Councils to develop and publish a set of equality outcomes for the next four years. The equality outcomes that are set out later in this document: demonstrate which part of the three General Equality Duties under the Equality Act are being fulfilled; relate to the Fairer Scotland Duty and make a link to one or more of the Plan for Fife priorities.

In setting the equality outcomes, the following areas of work have been taken into consideration as being important and follow through into the actions which will be taken to implement the outcomes.

Fife Council's Budget Priorities

The physical and mental ill-health caused by COVID-19, together with the economic impacts, including loss of businesses and jobs, have greatly impacted people's standards of living and caused financial insecurity for many more with the risks of poverty and homelessness which this brings. There have been significant consequences for education and communities have felt the economic impacts sharply in how they travel, live, work, and shop. In recognition of these impacts, £72.6m was invested in health and social care and mental health services that are delegated to integration authorities. This additional funding includes a contribution to continued delivery of the Living 52 Wage (£34m) (£2.436m for Fife); uprating of free personal and nursing care payments (£10.1m) (£0.695m for Fife) and implementation of the Carers Act.

Plan for Fife

The Plan for Fife was originally approved in 2017 for a 10-year period. A three-year review was initiated by Fife Partnership in August 2020 and agreed four recovery and reform priorities, in response to the impact of the pandemic and the recovery work required across the partnership. The recovery and reform areas are:

- **Tackling poverty and crisis prevention** – With 11.9% of Fife's population income deprived before the pandemic, Covid-19 is likely to have increased poverty levels for this group and people who were managing or 'just about managing' prior to the pandemic have become reliant on additional financial support or support with basic items, such as food. Partnership work in this area will focus on reducing duplication and improving resource allocation to support vulnerable families and individuals and address issues relating to poverty and food insecurity.
- **Leading economic recovery** - Many areas in the UK are looking at building more sustainable economic development through community-based approaches. These rely on working with 'anchor institutions' to: redirect spend through progressive procurement of goods and services; build local capacity through grants and investment in community assets; and promote fair employment and just labour markets. Fife will be taking a similar approach to leading economic recovery.
- **Sustaining services through new ways of working** - The Covid-19 emergency has required employers to adopt new ways of working both to maintain the delivery of essential services and to respond to the urgent needs of individuals and families.

Reform work in this area will focus on working more flexibly and efficiently across the Fife Partnership.

- **Addressing the climate emergency** - The Covid-19 emergency provides an opportunity to accelerate efforts to reduce carbon emissions through local action in areas such as transport, energy and housing, and by changing the consumption patterns of local citizens.

The Council's outcomes and actions will support partnership work in relation to the reform areas, particularly in tackling poverty and crisis prevention and leading economic recovery.

Social Renewal Advisory Board

The Social Renewal Advisory Board (SRAB) was set up by the Scottish Government in 2020 as a short-term group to come up with transformational ideas on how to deliver real change as Scotland embarks on its journey of renewal after the pandemic. The Board was not set up to suggest small improvements to make some things better and some things "less bad". Rather, the SRAB was calling for a fair and equal society, underpinned by a strong commitment to human rights and economic justice and using existing mechanisms rather than creating anything new. The Board emphasised that social renewal will not be real unless communities of people, of identity and of place have more say, power and influence.

Enslavement Education Group

In September 2010, a motion was passed at full Council requesting the establishment of a working group to look at Fife's historical links to slavery and develop an action plan. The Group met five times between October 2020 and May 2021 and developed an action plan with input from various speakers from the Universities of St Andrews, Glasgow (Beniba Centre) and Heriot Watt. The action plan includes work to inform children, young people and communities about enslavement, its historical links and how the past continues to manifest itself in today's society in areas such as higher unemployment for ethnic minority.

The action plan and report on the work of the group can be found [here](#).

Tackling Poverty and Crisis Prevention

Fife Council and Partners have been working together for some time to tackle poverty and reduce inequality. The report Tackling Poverty and Crisis Prevention brought together previous work in this area combined with lessons learned from the pandemic with a view to looking at how things could be improved and/or changed. The impact of the pandemic meant that services and partners had to quickly adapt and react to a changes in what communities needed and deal with crisis situations.

The report concluded that a combination of social and financial challenges are driving the need to re-think approaches to supporting community wellbeing. Over the last ten years, public services have come under increased pressure, both financially, from the implementation of austerity measures, including a series of welfare reform changes, and socially, from increased need and demand for mitigation and crisis services.

The pandemic has shown the willingness of communities to work together, highlighting that a sense of place matters more than any particular service or area of work. The Multi-

Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) established in each of the seven areas have been recognised as being key to the effectiveness of Fife's crisis response to the pandemic. In June 2020, the Council reviewed the initial experience of the Covid-19 response and noted that MDTs were a key contributor to nurturing a common purpose, clear focus and appetite to remove barriers. The report highlighted the role of MDTs as cross-partner groups.

During the early months of the pandemic, the Council and partners established services including the COVID Community Helpline and Fife Voluntary Action's Helping Hand initiative to provide a range of support to people. Community support was coordinated across seven areas through Community Assistance Hubs. These new services involved substantial changes to the way the Council and partners was operating, with many staff undertaking essential roles that were different to their normal duties. Staff reported feeling empowered and able to make educated decisions and managed risks without the need to ask for permission, which allowed them to respond to the emergency and demonstrate leadership on the front line.

Considering elements like an individual's wider situation, particularly their family circumstances and local area, could provide intelligence for building individually targeted support. The community teams reported that in responding to specific requests they got to know individuals and families better and could see where other supports would help.

This **no wrong door approach** is also being developed through reform work on Homelessness and other housing related issues.

Consultation, Engagement and Monitoring

Over a three-week period in March 2021, Fife Centre for Equalities undertook a consultation on the Council's draft equality outcomes. The survey questions were widely circulated through social media, newsletters and the weekly and monthly FCE bulletins, 276 responses were received providing feedback on the following main questions:

- Did people agree with the outcomes?
- Could the outcomes be worded differently?
- Any actions which could be included as part of the outcomes.
- Any other suggestions for actions which could be included in the outcomes.

Many of the responses received overlapped across the different outcomes. A summary of the consultation responses is provided below..

Summary responses:

- There was majority agreement to all of the outcomes and actions proposed with some suggestions on how the outcome and/or action could be reworded to make it clearer
- Respondents were keen to stress that communities (including individuals and groups) should be supported so they can be involved and influence decision making or access services which they needed;
- Services and information should be readily and easily accessible;
- The Council should be speaking to and not at communities with routine involvement and engagement using a variety of methods as not everyone has digital access. However, digital use including social media was also a way of reaching younger and a wider range of people who prefer this method so should be used in addition to other methods of engagement;
- There should be a community led approach to designing services and that includes speaking with community organisations which will reach a larger group of protected characteristics;
- In relation to violence and abuse, people were keen to stress that support should be available for anyone experiencing abuse and education has a key part to play particularly for children and young people to value and respect relationships and be supported if they have experienced trauma;
- With regard to partnership working, respondents suggested that organisations can work together to offer work placements, internships particularly for ethnic minority people to address skills shortages. Respondents also stressed the need for partnership working to involve all people and listen to their voices and be open and accountable in decision making;
- In relation to the workforce outcome, respondents were keen to stress that the Council should undertake to understand its workforce better and that it was a true reflection of the community. In addition, there was also a suggestion that the staff currently employed should be better supported and their specific needs recognised. Respondents also expressed concern that perhaps workforce needs were not better understood and to accurately respond to the question Council and general population demographics would need to be made available;
- Respondents also suggested that there should be a robust recruitment process which was open and transparent, with impact assessments undertaken to address gaps and plans to address workforce diversity;

- In relation to the outcome around raising educational attainment, a number of respondents suggested that at a younger age, wellbeing and play were more important as was outdoor play than a focus on attainment. There was also a suggestion that raising educational attainment should be in partnership with parents to raise attainment across all age groups and individuals (including young people with learning difficulties) using measured, holistic and diverse methods of achievement.
- Respondents also suggested that there should be more funding in early years and for pupil support and increasing the school starting age to 7 years. Respondents also expressed concern about poverty and that if children's basic needs were not met, they would not be able to learn.

By keeping respondents engaged with the Council's outcomes and the implementation of the actions, the full set of outcomes and narrative will be shared widely, including through Fife Centre of Equalities, and by providing regular updates on progress. Respondents should be able to see their suggestions included in the outcomes and actions at the end of this document.

There is a requirement to report and publish progress against the outcomes every two years. Progress will be reported to the appropriate Council Committee and published online at fife.gov.uk.

Previous outcomes and actions have set out measures and timescales for achievement. However, going forward, the actions will be embedded into renewal and recovery plans which Council services are now focussing on having had to adapt their services over the past year and a half.

Equality Outcomes – 2021 – 2025

Outcome 1: Fife’s communities are provided with services and information accessible to them particularly those who face barriers through disability, language and digital exclusion.	
Ref.	Actions
1.1	Provide Council information in a range of formats including BSL and community languages on request
1.2	A range of engagement and consultation tools are provided (including use of social media) to seek the views of people who do not normally engage with the public sector. All consultations to be set out and made available in the Consultation Diary
1.3	Provide documents in a range of formats to ensure they are accessible (e.g. using appropriate layout, headings, colour contrasts and font size for use with screen readers)
1.4	More information to be channelled through the Community Portal to enable citizens to keep up to date with local news
General Duties: Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advancing equality of opportunity; fostering good relations Fairer Scotland Duty: Reducing socio-economic disadvantage Plan for Fife priority: Sustaining services through new ways of working; Leading economic recovery	

Why we have prioritised this outcome

The Council recognises that there will be people from the protected characteristics and other vulnerable groups who are not able to use digital forms of communication and do not take part in decision making. The pandemic has shown that people, for example, from low income households do not have digital access and ethnic minority and disabled people may have missed out on communication about the pandemic. We therefore want to ensure that, using a range of communication methods, the Council provides access to information and services that meets people’s different needs. Being able to take part in democracy and decision making is also important and the Council will ensure that different engagement methods (including online, social media, face to face) are used to ensure that people are engaged at the right time.

Outcome 2: Women and girls live free from all forms of violence and abuse – and the attitudes that help perpetuate it	
Ref.	Actions
2.1	<p>Consult with women, children and young people with lived experience of VAW including those in contact with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VAW specialist services, • Fife Women’s Tent and • Equality Collective <p>and use this information to inform service design</p> <p>FVAWP and individual partners to liaise with local equality groups and identify opportunities for collaborative working including Fife Equalities Forum.</p>
2.2	<p>Fife Council to work with FVAWP to progress actions within the Equally Safe at Work framework addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership • Data • Flexible working • Occupational Segregation • Workplace culture • Violence against women • Share learning with FVAWP partners • Fife Council and Partners to highlight VAW policies in context of Covid-19, recognising the impact Covid-19 has had on staff working from home and additional risks.
2.3	<p>Revised Equality and Diversity Scheme to reflect impact of Covid -19 including identifying inequality of outcome and disadvantage on women, children and young people.</p> <p>Share and highlight Supplementary Guidance with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities Fife Partnership • Community Managers • Communities and Wellbeing Partnership • Child Poverty Group
General Duty: Advancing equality of opportunity; fostering good relations	

Fairer Scotland Duty: Reducing socio-economic disadvantage
Plan for Fife: Tackling poverty and crisis prevention

Why we have prioritised this outcome

Throughout 2020, Covid-19 has hugely impacted on those with lived experience of violence against women and the way services have been offered. In recognition of the particular risks for women and children the Scottish Government, CoSLA, Public Health Scotland and the Improvement Service published [Covid-19 Supplementary VAW Guidance](#) which recognises that the pandemic has, and will continue to, place women, children and young people experiencing all forms of VAWG at increased risk of harm for the foreseeable future. This includes women and children experiencing domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault, commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), trafficking, forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Fife has agreed a more detailed plan to address Violence Against Women ([FVAWP action plan](#))

Fife Council and partners are committed to addressing crime across all protected characteristics, including all forms of hate crime and hate incidents – this is included in Outcome 3.

Outcome 3: Fife’s communities (including people from the protected characteristics) have increased confidence to participate in decision making, their human rights respected and have an improved quality of life	
Ref.	Actions
3.1	Monitor and receive regular reports around harassment and bullying motivated by hate
3.2	In partnership with Police Scotland, raise awareness with public sector employees of third party reporting centres as an additional method of reporting hate incidents
3.3	Develop a partnership approach to participation in decision making e.g. through a lay-persons People’s Panel
3.4	Use the People and Place local arrangements as the building block of a stronger community led approach
General Duty: Eliminating bullying, harassment & discrimination; fostering good relations Fairer Scotland Duty: Reducing socio-economic disadvantage Plan for Fife: Tackling poverty and crisis prevention	

Why we have prioritised this outcome

Fife Council made the BSL Plan available on the Fife Council website and Health and Social Care Partnership Web pages including their facebook page. A BSL Implementation Group (BSLIG) was established with people who use BSL, working together with Fife Council and partner agencies. The purpose of the BSLIG is to provide a forum to discuss and monitor the progress of the BSL Local Plan by the partners and BSL members of the group. The Chair of the BSLIG presents update reports to Fife’s Health and Social Care Partnership Clinical and Governance Committee.

NHS Fife also hosts a copy of the BSL local plan, this can be found on the equality and human rights pages available for staff and public.

Outcome 4: The Council understands its workforce better and it reflects the diversity of the local population	
Ref.	Actions
4.1	Work to improve the information we hold about employee's equality information.
4.2	Engage with local communities about our workplace practices in partnership with Fife Centre for Equalities.
4.3	Engage with young people in our workforce to identify and act on ways to attract and support other young people (aged 16 - 24) into training and employment opportunities with the Council.
4.4	Demonstrate our commitment to equality of opportunity for trans people throughout recruitment and employment, including supporting trans employees through a transitioning process.
4.5	Further our support to recruit and retain disabled employees.
4.6	Review employee training relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.
4.7	Develop new workstyles to provide support for more flexible and inclusive working across the Council.
<p>General Duty: Advancing equality of opportunity (including for employees with a disability and staff undergoing gender re-assignment), eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying and fostering good relations</p> <p>Fairer Scotland Duty: Reducing inequalities of outcome</p> <p>Plan for Fife: Leading economic recovery; Sustaining services through new ways of working</p>	

Why we have prioritised this outcome

The Council recognises that as one of Fife’s largest employers we have a responsibility to model fair and inclusive workplace practices. To be better able to support our employees, we need to work harder to improve our data to know our staff and their needs. We also pledge to do more to engage with our local community to understand any perceived barriers to employment with us and identify any improvements we can make to our processes.

Outcome 5: Raising educational achievement and attainment particularly for those in their early years or in early learning and childcare	
Ref.	Actions
5.1	Pupils provided with opportunities to understand Fife’s historical links to slavery
5.2	Improve educational achievement and reduce the attainment gap for individuals with protected characteristics
5.3	Improve educational achievement and reduce the attainment gap for individuals living in SIMD quintile 1 and for the Care Experienced, in support of the National Improvement Framework and the Promise
5.4	<p>Improve early years development of children in Fife</p> <p>Increase participation of parents living in SIMD 1&2 in a range of universal family learning opportunities</p> <p>Improve the coordination of family support services targeted at families with wellbeing needs and vulnerabilities</p>
5.5	Increase the participation of individuals living in SIMD 1&2 in a range of evidence based employability and training programmes
5.6	Increase the uptake of eligible two year places in Fife, in line with Scottish Government stretch aim
5.7	Provide access to 1140 hours of ELC, supporting the principles of funding follows the child, to encourage parents to enter or return to work
<p>General Duty: Advancing equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and reducing socio-economic disadvantage for all protected characteristics including Gypsy Traveller children, ethnic minorities, disabled pupils (including Deaf and visually impaired learners) and those who have multiple barriers to employment.</p>	

Fairer Scotland Duty: Reducing inequalities of outcome; Leading economic recovery
Plan for Fife: Tackling poverty and crisis prevention

Why we have prioritised this outcome

- The Fairer Fife Commission report stated that the Fife Partnership should require all schools to develop and deliver a plan for significantly reducing the educational attainment gap.
- Fife Partnership should be inspired and invest in a local programme to reduce financial barriers affecting participation and experiences at school for children from low income households.
- [Scottish Government Statistics School Education Statistics](#)
- [Opportunities Fife statistical data \(Fife Online Referral Tracking\) System](#)

Relevant Strategies and Plans

Fairer Fife Commission
Early Years Strategy