

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



The Vale 50+ Strategy Forum recognises the diverse needs of the community and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity through its work.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy sets out how we will promote equality of opportunity and the importance we place on respect, inclusivity and accessibility. We will work together and with our partners to ensure that local people have a voice and that we understand their needs and aspirations.

The purpose of this policy

We have agreed this policy to show:

- we think equality is important;
- we will work towards ensuring equality in the way we work; and
- how we want people to behave.

Legislation

Our work is guided by legislation including:

- The Equality Act 2010 (including the Public Sector Equality Duty);
- The Equality Act (Authorities subject to the Socio-economic Inequality Duty) (Wales) Regulations 2021
- The Welsh Language Act 1993

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



- Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011
- The Human Rights Act 1998

These laws and duties protect us all and there may be other laws which protect us in similar ways to these. We have a duty to think about the different needs of people including:

- those with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010;
- those who experience socio-economic disadvantage;
- Welsh language users.

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 lists protected characteristics as:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marital or civil partnership status;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion and belief or non-belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



You can find details of what these mean in Appendix 1.

We all have several protected characteristics. We may experience disadvantage due to one or more of these characteristics. For example, disabled women may be more adversely affected by a policy or practice than disabled people in general.

As well as protected characteristics, this policy also covers socio-economic disadvantage, appearance and the Welsh Language. You can find definitions in Appendix 1.

We recognise and appreciate that people may be affected by different concerns as they get older such as hearing loss, vision impairment, or mobility issues. We are committed to supporting people impacted by the aging process.

Socio-economic Duty

The Welsh Government commenced the Socio-economic duty on 31 March 2021. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who experience socio-economic disadvantage.

Appearance

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



Appearance is not covered under the Equality Act 2010 but there have been cases of people being treated badly because of their appearance, for example, being denied services.

Welsh language

We support the promotion of the use of the Welsh language and recognise the need for people to be able to access information and services in Welsh.

What does equality mean to us in the Forum?

In our actions, we will treat everyone fairly and try to meet their needs. This means not treating someone worse because of who they are or what they look like. If we did, that would be **discrimination**. We will not intimidate, humiliate or degrade anyone. We will not be hostile or offensive to anyone. If we did, that would be **harassment**. We will not treat anyone badly because they have complained about unfair treatment or harassment. If we did, that would be **victimisation**.

We will treat people from different protected groups fairly and we will help people from different protected groups to get along well.

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



We will promote equality of opportunity and challenge any behaviour or practices that we think are unfair – locally and nationally. We will provide a voice for the over fifties in the Vale and ensure that their needs and aspirations are not overlooked by service providers across all sectors.

Equality is about meeting people's needs so that they can use our Forum and become active members. This can mean making adjustments to ensure equality of access. We will ensure that meetings, events and the information we provide are accessible. We recognise that many of our members and the wider community are vulnerable and may need more support and assistance than others.

We have adopted the social model of disability. This model says that we, as a society, cause disability by the way we organise things. It looks at ways of removing barriers that restrict life choices for disabled people. When we do this, disabled people can be independent and equal in society. It gives people choice and control over their lives.

We will promote equality of opportunity in our work, we will challenge others and we will encourage fairness and respect. This will include:

- challenging unfair beliefs about people;
- challenging overly simple ideas about people (stereotypes);
- challenging opinions based on too little knowledge or irrational feelings (prejudices);

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



- challenging institutional discrimination – when their ways of working are unfair; and
- promoting a culture that respects and values diversity and individuality.

Training, Support and Advice

As part of our commitment to promoting equal opportunities, we will ensure that regular training opportunities are provided for Forum members and that equal opportunities is a key element of the induction programme for new Executive Members.

Where necessary we will seek advice and guidance from the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Glamorgan Voluntary Services and other bodies to ensure the effective promotion of equal opportunities.

Appendix 1

Protected Characteristics

We explain the meaning of the different protected characteristics below.

Protected characteristic	What this means
Age	People of different ages. This includes young and older people.
Disability	<p>People who have a physical or mental impairment which has a big and long-term impact on how they can carry out normal day-to-day activities. This includes disabilities that you can see, for example, if someone uses an aid like a guide dog or a wheelchair.</p> <p>It also includes disabilities that you cannot see such as diabetes, dyslexia, autism, Asperger syndrome, poor mental health, and learning difficulties.</p> <p>It also includes people who are deaf or hard of hearing or experiencing hearing loss.</p>
Gender reassignment	People who change the way they appear to others.

	<p>This includes anyone who proposes to, starts, is going through or who has completed a process to change their gender.</p> <p>A person does not need to have medical procedures for the law to protect them. For example, the law protects a woman who decides to live as a man without going through any medical procedures. It includes a person's own view of their gender and how they choose to present themselves (gender identity). This might fall outside or be a mix of male and female.</p>
Marital or civil Partnership status	People who are married or who have a civil partner.
Pregnancy and maternity	Women who are expecting a baby, who are on a break from work after having a baby, or who are breastfeeding. They are protected for 26 weeks after having a baby whether or not they are on maternity leave.
Race	People of a different race or nationality.
Religious belief or non-belief	People with a religion or personal value system, for example, atheism or a belief. Also, those without a religion, value system or belief.
Sex	Women and men.

Vale 50+ Strategy Forum

Equality and Diversity Policy



Sexual orientation	<p>People who are attracted to other people of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the same sex (lesbian or gay); • the opposite sex (heterosexual); • both sexes (bisexual). <p>Some people do not identify as male or female or they may identify as a mix of both. They may be attracted to people regardless of their gender identity or sex (pansexual).</p>
---------------------------	--

As well as the above characteristics, this policy also covers socio-economic disadvantage, appearance and the Welsh Language.

Socio-economic disadvantage	People living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society.
Appearance	This is about how someone presents themselves. For example, people who wear gothic clothes, or hooded clothes.
Welsh Language	People who communicate using the Welsh language.