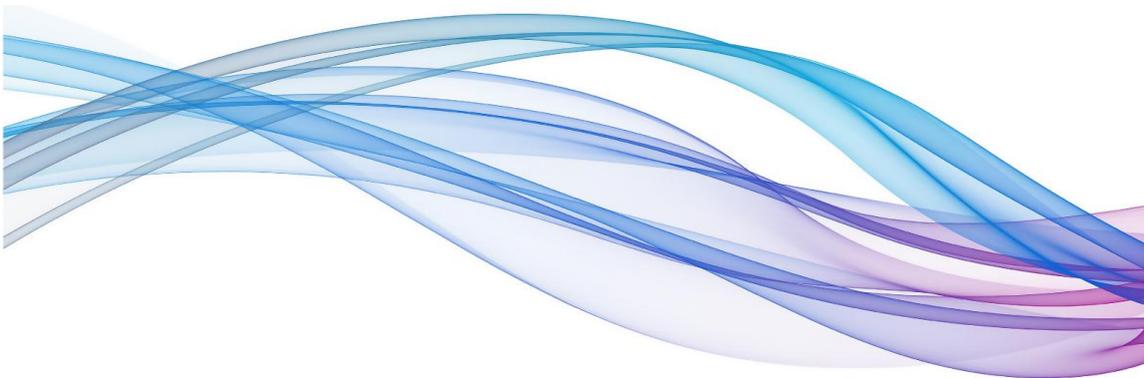


Scottish Borders Council

# Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025

April 2021



You can get this document on tape, in large print, on disc and in various other formats. We can also provide information on language translations and on how to get more copies.

To arrange for an officer to meet with you to explain any parts of this document that may be unclear, please contact us as follows:

Email: [EqualityDiversity@scotborders.gov.uk](mailto:EqualityDiversity@scotborders.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01835 824000 ex 5701



## Foreword by the Chief Executive

This document presents Scottish Borders Council's Equality Mainstreaming Report for the period 2021- 2025.

Whilst the report sets out part of our obligations in meeting the Public Sector Equality and Fairer Scotland Duties, we see tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and promoting good relations both within our workforce and the wider community, as fundamental to how we deliver services.

This Equality Mainstreaming report is for the period 2021-2025 and enables us to further embed equalities and diversity within the Council's services. The COVID 19 pandemic has posed a challenge in the formulation of this report and whilst the report covers a four year period, to ensure that our aspirations are realistic and achievable, the action plan will be reviewed within the next 12 months. We are taking this approach as we need to ensure that as we move forward from the pandemic our priorities and outcomes continue to be relevant and fit for purpose.

This report sets out our ongoing need to work hard to eliminate discrimination, offering equality of opportunity and fostering good relations in relation to the provision of services. This means ensuring equality, diversity and human rights are at the heart of everything the Council does. Mainstreaming equality is about integrating an equality perspective into the everyday functions of the Council, working in collaboration with our Communities and Planning Partnerships.

Finally I would like to thank all of you that have contributed to the formulation of this report. Together we are working hard to ensure that the Scottish Borders meets the needs of all members of our community.

Netta Meadows  
Chief Executive  
Scottish Borders Council



## **Foreword from the Elected Member Champion for Equalities and Diversity**

It is clear that the Scottish Borders is becoming a much more diverse place and there is a growing understanding across Borders communities about the importance of equality matters in their daily lives and in the delivery of services.

This new Mainstreaming Equality Report for the period 2021-2025 sets out the next steps that Scottish Borders Council will be taking in its equalities journey. The outcomes represent what the Council needs to aim for as an employer, a provider of services, a democratic body engaging with local communities and groups and in developing its policies.

Scottish Borders Council is taking Equalities seriously and is making a great deal of progress in embedding Equalities in their decision and policy making across the Council. The Council recently achieved accreditation as a living wage employer and produced an anti-poverty Strategy that is currently out for consultation I was proud to be part of both working groups to achieve these outcomes.

I look forward to seeing the further development of this work in the coming years.



John Greenwell Scottish Borders Council Champion for Equality & Diversity

# Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes 2021 - 2025

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## Introduction and Purpose

Scottish Borders Council is committed to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between groups with different protected characteristics both within our workforce and the wider community. Mainstreaming equality is the process by which we are working towards ensuring equality is at the heart of everything we do as an organisation.

This is considered against the nine protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

This report also addresses The Fairer Scotland Duty, which aims to combat Socio economic disadvantage by looking at the following aspects when making a strategic decision:

- Low income
- Low wealth/no wealth
- Material deprivation
- Area deprivation
- Socio-economic background

Further information relating to the Fairer Scotland Duty can be found in The Fairer Scotland Duty (Socio -economic disadvantage) section of this report.

This new Equality Mainstreaming Report 2021- 2025 replaces the previous Equality Mainstreaming report (2017-2021) and meets Scottish Borders Council's statutory duty to produce such a document.

The development of the Report has taken account of the work the Council has undertaken on equalities, and also legislative, economic and social changes both locally and nationally. It has involved consultation with staff together with a range of Community Partnerships and third sector organisations.

This mainstreaming report sets out the way in which the Council is addressing its responsibilities under the Equality Act. It summarises the progress in mainstreaming equality and sets our new Equalities Outcomes for the

reporting period 2021 – 2025. It demonstrates our continued commitment to developing and embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in culture and behaviours and as a fundamental part of our day to day business and decision making.

## Equality and Diversity in the Scottish Borders - Statistics

2019 population of Scottish Borders - <b>115,510 (National Records of Scotland April 2020)</b> 916 <b>births</b> in the Scottish Borders (10.8. per 1,000 compared to 9.1 for Scotland) 1,299 <b>deaths</b> in the Scottish Borders (9.1 per 1,000 compared to 10.6 for Scotland)																																			
<p><b>Age (Population (2019, National Records of Scotland))</b></p> <p><b>16.5%</b> of the Scottish Borders population is under the age of 15 (16.9% Scotland)</p> <p><b>58.8%</b> of the Scottish Borders population is aged 16 to 64 (64.1% Scotland)</p> <p><b>24.8%</b> of the Scottish Borders Population is aged <b>65 or older</b> (19.1% Scotland)</p> <p>Gender</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 30%;">Gender</th> <th style="width: 35%;">Male</th> <th style="width: 35%;">Female</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age 0 to 15</td> <td style="text-align: center;">50.85%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">49.15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Aged 16 to 64</td> <td style="text-align: center;">48.79%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">51.21%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>65+</td> <td style="text-align: center;">46.58%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">53.42%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">48.58%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">51.42%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Gender	Male	Female	Age 0 to 15	50.85%	49.15%	Aged 16 to 64	48.79%	51.21%	65+	46.58%	53.42%	Total	48.58%	51.42%	<p><b>Life Expectancy 2017-2019 (National Records of Scotland)</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2"></th> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Scottish Borders</th> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">Scotland</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Male</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Female</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Male</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Female</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>At Birth</td> <td style="text-align: center;">79.2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">81.9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">77.2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">81.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>At Aged 65</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18.8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">20.6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">17.7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19.9</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Weekly Pay (SBC Anti-Poverty Strategy 2021)</b>                  In 2020, the <b>median gross weekly pay</b> (workplace based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was <b>£481, £111 below</b> the £593 for Scotland or <b>81% of the Scottish figure.</b>                  In 2020, the <b>median gross weekly pay</b> (residence based) for full time workers in the Scottish Borders was <b>£522, £73 below</b> the £595 for Scotland or <b>87% of the Scottish figure.</b></p>		Scottish Borders		Scotland		Male	Female	Male	Female	At Birth	79.2	81.9	77.2	81.1	At Aged 65	18.8	20.6	17.7	19.9
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<p><b>Disability (Scottish Survey Core Questions 2019)</b></p> <p><b>22.4%</b> of the Scottish Borders population have a long term health condition (deaf or partially hearing impaired; blind or partially vision impaired; learning disability; learning difficulty; developmental disorder; physical disability; mental health condition; or Other Long-term health condition) (<b>Scotland = 25.9%</b>)</p>	<p><b>Ethnicity (Scottish Survey Core Questions 2019)</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;">Ethnicity</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Scottish Borders</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Scotland</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>White: Scottish</td> <td style="text-align: center;">70%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">75.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White: Other British</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25.9%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">17.4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White: Polish</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.3%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td style="text-align: center;">N/A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Ethnic Group</td> <td style="text-align: center;">N/A</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.8%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*SSCQ are based on small sample size and hasn't recorded the extremely small numbers for these groups of individuals. We know from the 2011 Census approx. 1%-2% is non white</p>	Ethnicity	Scottish Borders	Scotland	White: Scottish	70%	75.9%	White: Other British	25.9%	17.4%	White: Polish	1.3%	1.9%	Asian	N/A	2.9%	Other Ethnic Group	N/A	1.8%																
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<p><b>LGBT (Scottish Borders Council Schools.)</b></p> <p>67% of young people in the Borders said they know someone who is either: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.</p> <p>1.4% of adults identify as "LGB &amp; Other" (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other) (Scotland = 2.9%) (<b>Scottish Survey Core Questions 2019</b>)</p>	<p><b>Religion (Scottish Survey Core Questions 2019)</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 60%;">Religion</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Scottish Borders</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Scotland</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>None</td> <td style="text-align: center;">59%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">53.7%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Church of Scotland</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25.5%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">21.5%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Roman Catholic</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4.3%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">13.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Christian</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Religion</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.1%</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3.6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Religion	Scottish Borders	Scotland	None	59%	53.7%	Church of Scotland	25.5%	21.5%	Roman Catholic	4.3%	13.6%	Other Christian	10%	7.6%	Other Religion	1.1%	3.6%																
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<p><b>Child Poverty (DWP (Stat-Xplore) / NRS) 2021</b></p> <p><b>22.5%</b> children live in low-income families in the Scottish Borders, 14 out of the 30 Intermediate Zones have 25% or more of their children living in low income families for 2019/20</p>	<p><b>Fuel Poverty (SBC Anti – Poverty Strategy 2021)</b></p> <p>Around <b>29%</b> of all households in the Scottish Borders are fuel poor, equivalent to approximately <b>16,000 households.</b></p>																																		

## Languages in Schools (SBC Information System for Education SEEMIS)

Top 5 Languages Spoken		
	Number of Pupils	% of School Roll
English/Scots	13,746	95.3%
Polish	365	2.5%
Lithuanian	44	0.3%
Portuguese	35	0.2%
Romanian	31	0.2%

**Snap shot 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

Over **40** different languages are spoken by children within Scottish Borders Schools

Hello	English	Nah-mah-stay	Hindi
Dzien dobry	Polish	Ciao	Italian
as-salām 'alaykum	Arabic	Guten tag	German
Bom-dia / Ola	Portuguese	Ni hao	Chinese
Zdravstvuite	Russian	Bonjour	French
Jambo	Swahili	Hola	Spanish

## Attainment in numeracy and literacy

% of Pupils Achieving Expected Levels in Numeracy and Literacy 2018-19 By Quintile (2019 -20 Not available)					
Stage/Component	Quintile				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>P1</b>					
Literacy	56%	70%	76%	85%	89%
Numeracy	63%	81%	89%	86%	94%
<b>P4</b>					
Literacy	56%	66%	72%	74%	78%
Numeracy	60%	71%	75%	79%	88%
<b>P7</b>					
Literacy	59%	62%	77%	78%	84%
Numeracy	58%	66%	78%	79%	90%
<b>S3 3+</b>					
Literacy	88%	91%	94%	94%	96%
Numeracy	81%	89%	92%	93%	96%
<b>S3 4+</b>					

Literacy	53%	61%	69%	71%	72%
Numeracy	22%	54%	57%	64%	75%

Source SEEMiS

### Free School Meals 2018-19

<b>Total Pupils P1-S6</b>	<b>14,500</b>				
P4-S6	% Q1	% Q2	% Q3	% Q4	% Q5
Receiving Free School Meals	34.1%	17.8%	12.4%	7.9%	4.4%
Not Receiving Free School Meals	65.9%	82.2%	87.6%	92.1%	95.6%

\* based on total number of P4-S6 in each quintile

P1-3 entitled to FSM (*based on total pupils)	23.6%
P4-S6 entitled to FSM (*based on total pupils)	9.1%
P4-6 Not entitled to FSM (*based on total pupils)	67.3%

### Free School Meals 2019-20

<b>Total Pupils P1-S6</b>	<b>14,537</b>				
P4-S6	% Q1	% Q2	% Q3	% Q4	% Q5
Receiving Free School Meals	33.5%	18.3%	12.8%	7.0%	3.2%
Not Receiving Free School Meals	66.5%	81.7%	87.2%	93.0%	96.8%

\* based on total number of P4-S6 in each quintile

P1-3 entitled to FSM (*based on total pupils)	23.3%
P4-S6 entitled to FSM (*based on total pupils)	9.5%
P4-6 Not entitled to FSM (*based on total pupils)	67.3%

## **Equalities and Scottish Borders Council's Plans and Strategies.**

### **Scottish Borders Council's Corporate Plan: "Our Plan and Your Part in it"**

The Corporate Plan sets a direction for Scottish Borders Council for the period 2018 to 2023 in order to:

- make the most of the opportunities we now have
- tackle the challenges we face
- take account of what our Councillors want to achieve for the Scottish Borders
- ensure we respond to national policies and other statutory requirements.

The plan is structured around four key themes:

1. Our services for you
2. Independent, achieving people
3. A thriving economy with opportunities for everyone
4. Empowered, vibrant communities

Equality, and diversity was considered in the development of these themes together with their implementation through plans, policies, processes, action and business plans and projects in line with the Council's Equalities Vision:

**'We seek to embed equality, diversity and human rights into all Scottish Borders Council services, functions and business, enabling the organisation to demonstrate its explicit commitment to equality, diversity and human rights'**

### **Links to other strategies and plans**

Other strategies and plans that support the delivery of the vision and objectives within this Mainstreaming Report includes:

- [Affordable Warmth & Home Energy Efficiency Strategy 2019/2023](#)
- [Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal.](#)
- [Borders Director of Public Health Report 2018](#)
- [Community Justice \(Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017/20](#)
- [Community Planning Locality Plans 2020](#)
- [Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018/21](#)
- [Integrated Children and Young People's Plan 2018/21](#)
- [Local Housing Strategy 2017/22](#)
- [Physical Disability Strategy 2018](#)
- [Scottish Borders Anti- Poverty Strategy 2021](#)
- [Scottish Borders Child Poverty Annual Report and Action Plan 2020/21](#)
- [Scottish Borders Community Plan 2018](#)
- [Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership – Key Priorities/Action Plan 2020/21](#)

- [Scottish Borders Council Digital Strategy](#)
- [Scottish Borders Economic Strategy](#)
- [South of Scotland Enterprise Operating Plan 2020/21](#)
- [Strategic Housing Investment Plan \(SHIP\) 2021/26](#)
- [The Housing Needs and Aspirations of Young People 2019/24](#)

## **The Legal Context**

### **The Equality Duty**

The Equality Act 2010 places an equality duty on all public bodies in the United Kingdom. It consists of a general equality duty, supported by specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation.

The general equality duty requires those subject to the equality duty, in the exercise of their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

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

These are sometimes referred to as the three aims or arms of the general equality duty. The Act details that having due regard to the need to advance equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In Scotland public bodies are required to perform a set of specific duties to assist them in meeting the general duty:

- Report on mainstreaming the Equality Duty.
- Publish Equality Outcomes and report progress.
- Assess and review policies and practices.
- Gather and use employee information.
- Publish gender pay gap information.
- Publish statements on equal pay.
- Consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.

Public bodies must publish Equality Mainstreaming Reports every four years, with update reports in the intervening two years.

## The Fairer Scotland Duty (Socio-economic disadvantage)

The Council has a legal duty to:

- Show that it has actively considered (“pay due regard to”) how it can reduce socio-economic inequalities in the **strategic** decisions that it makes and
- Publish a short written assessment on how it has done this.

“**Strategic**” has been given a broad interpretation in this regard and means:

- High level public sector decisions
- Decisions which affect how a public body fulfils its intended purpose, over a significant period of time

Socio – economic disadvantage can be experienced both in places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion.

Socio-economic disadvantage is focused on:

- **Low income** – cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food clothing
- **Low wealth/no wealth** – enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with unexpected expenditure on provision for the future
- **Material deprivation** – being unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life assurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies
- **Area deprivation** – (including communities of interest and communities of place) – where a person lives, works, visits or spends a continuous amount of time can have an impact i.e. rural areas, accessibility of transport, education and employment, people who have experienced homelessness and/ or the asylum system, those who share an identity and/ or a Protected Characteristic
- **Socio-economic background** – disadvantage that can arise from parents’ education, employment and income – social class in other words.

## Building on Previous Work

Scottish Borders Council has published two Equality Mainstreaming reports covering the periods 2013 – 2017 and 2017 - 2021. These reports set out the approach we will take to mainstreaming the Equality Duty and also contain our Equality Outcomes.

We are required to provide a new report that steers our equality journey for the period 2021 – 2025. This forms the basis of this report.

To help us inform our mainstreaming report and equality outcomes we gathered and considered relevant evidence. Evidence was obtained through:

- Engagement with Community Partnerships and third sector organisations
- Engagement with and attending workshops run by the Equality and Human Rights Commission
- An analysis of:
  - reports and evidence finder tools published by the Scottish Government, National bodies, such as Office of National Statistics, Scottish Survey Core Questions, Scottish Education, Education Management Information System SEEMIS), Annual Population Survey
  - Employee data
  - Staff Survey
  - Service Area Self Assessment – meeting the equality duty

## **The Importance of Mainstreaming Equality**

Mainstreaming equality simply means integrating equality and diversity into the day-to-day workings of our organisation. We aim to do this by taking equality into account as we exercise our functions and deliver our services.

Mainstreaming equality has a number of benefits:

- It helps us to ensure that our services are fit for purpose and meet the needs of our community.
- It helps us attract and retain a productive workforce, rich in diverse skills and talents.
- It helps us work toward social inclusion and allows us to support the communities we serve to improve the lives of everyone who lives in the Borders.
- It helps us to continually improve and perform better through growing knowledge and understanding.

## **Progress on Scottish Borders Council's Equality Mainstreaming Report 2017-2021**

### **Mainstreaming Equality**

The following are examples of how equality is being mainstreamed in our working practices and service provision:

#### **Annual Fostering Conference**

Over the past four years, the Family Placement Team has organised an annual fostering conference and at the last three events there have been conference

workshops which have been planned and facilitated by young people who are looked after and or care experienced, and creative contributions such as art work, poetry and an animation on continuing care produced for the events. The workshops have been very well received at the conference by attendees, and a lot of work was undertaken in the run up to the conference (by a range of staff and foster carers) to prepare and support the young people with their involvement at the event.

### **Better Mental Health Communications & Engagement Plan**

A new approach was developed in late 2019 for the calendar year 2020, improving the co-ordination of linked work and taking opportunities to build key messages around key events and initiatives:

- NHS 24 service 'Breathing Space' – theme **“You Matter... We care – Don't go it alone”**
- **Time to Talk Day – February 2020** – information stands at Borders General Hospital, SBC HQ and Selkirk Pop-Up shop
- **International Women's Day - March 2020** - Information and engagement stands at event in Galashiels
- Planning for the **Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival 2020**

Work on this plan was ceased as we entered the emergency response to COVID 19 in March 2020.

### **Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal**

The Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal (Borderlands) is a new 10 year economic investment programme of great significance for policy, strategy, and practice.

A Heads of Terms agreement for Borderlands was signed on 1 July 2019. This set out the Deal between the Scottish and UK Governments, and the five Borderlands local authorities, i.e. Carlisle City Council, Cumbria County Council, Dumfries and Galloway Council, Northumberland County Council and Scottish Borders Council.

The long-term benefits of the Deal will reach all parts of the Borderlands area, driving inclusive growth and delivering significant and lasting benefits for individuals, businesses and communities.

The Deal is truly distinctive, covering the largest geographical area of any regional growth Deal negotiated with the UK and Scottish Governments and it is the first cross-border deal.

It will bring a transformative step change for the businesses and communities of the Borderlands by increasing productivity, growing the working age population, and delivering a more inclusive economy. The projects of the Deal aim to deliver up to 5,500 jobs and £1.1 billion of additional Gross Value Added (GVA) with a sustainable and inclusive approach to growth.

The Deal will deliver across four themes:

- improving places;
- enabling infrastructure;
- encouraging green growth; and
- supporting innovation, business and skills.

Each theme has an agreed set of projects which will help deliver a step change for the businesses and communities of Borderlands by increasing productivity, growing the working age population and delivering a more inclusive economy.

The projects that are specifically relevant to the Scottish Borders are:

- A Place Programme of investment to stimulate the repurposing and reinvention of towns and town centres.
- A Mountain Biking Project incorporating an innovation centre and an adventure bike park at Innerleithen.
- Improving business infrastructure in Coldstream and Hawick.
- Destination Tweed, which will create a complete and accessible walking and cycling route stretching from Moffat to Berwick-upon-Tweed.
- Maximising the 7Stanes mountain biking network.
- Digital Borderlands, which will invest in cutting edge digital and mobile infrastructure.
- A Borders Railway Feasibility Study, which will assess the feasibility of extending the railway from Tweedbank to Carlisle.
- An Energy Investment Programme, which will deliver inclusive, economic, sustainable, clean growth.
- Natural Capital with the aim of developing a Natural Capital Innovation Zone across the Borderlands area (this also includes revenue funding).
- A South of Scotland Learning Network that will focus on demand-led skills and innovation in opportunity sectors including clean growth, advanced manufacturing, natural capital, and the visitor economy.

## **British Sign Language (BSL) Action Plan**

The Council's BSL Plan was put in place to support the BSL National Plan following Council approval in October 2018.

The BSL plan has 8 holistic actions and represents the Scottish Government's aim "to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

The actions are as follows:

Action 1 – BSL users are empowered to exercise their rights in accessing SBC services and that staff are responsive in support of these rights

Action 2 – To increase awareness of BSL Scotland Act 2015 amongst staff

Action 3 – Monitor information in Equality and Diversity – the idea is to ensure staff, if required can access the support “Access to Work”

Action 4- Ensure all staff have access to relevant and appropriate training on BSL

Action 5 - Ensure BSL is embedded within SBC’s new Customer Strategy –

Action 6 -Establish a clear Translation and Interpretation resource (which includes BSL) accessible by all services –

Action 7- Raise awareness in all schools that BSL is part of the 1 + 2 Language Policy (the 1 +2 Language Policy is where children are taught 2 languages in addition to their mother tongue)

Action 8- BSL users are able to engage and participate in democracy and cultural events

We are currently working through the action plan, and in implementation of that the following activities have been undertaken:

- We have introduced BSL user cards, so they can be used to make appointments and explain easily service users’ communication needs. We have also translated 10 of the most popular webpages into BSL.
- We promote “Contact Scotland-BSL”- on our and social media.
- We have been successful in obtaining financial support accredited directly to the needs of employees who are Deaf or are hard of hearing through Access to Work ( a government scheme that can pay for extra support to help an individual start or stay in work).
- We have delivered four half day sessions on BSL awareness. Attendees included key personnel from the Council, NHS Borders and Borders College.
- BSL is to be embedded within the Council’s Customer Strategy – due to the COVID restrictions, the work in relation to this has been delayed. As soon as it is feasible to do so, embedding BSL into the strategy and its associated policies and practices will be re-visited.
- We have refreshed our translation and interpretation policy and it now includes a comprehensive list of translation/interpretation suppliers and associated services.
- We have raised awareness in all schools that BSL is part of the 1 + 2 Language Policy (the 1 +2 Language Policy is where children are taught 2

languages in addition to their mother tongue). We have learned from our Schools that BSL is the preferred 3<sup>rd</sup> language.

- There is an Education worker undertaking a course in BSL to become an interpreter and be able to offer BSL training to pupils in the Scottish Borders. These will take place after school hours. A 4-week taster session has been held in Peebles High School.
- We also held two events in September 2020, the first arranged by the See Hear Group, a tea and a chat opportunity for people with a sensory loss. NHS Borders and Organisations dealing with sensory loss also attended.
- The second event was to promote Diversity week. People wanting to learn more about BSL were invited to come and have some tea and cake and raise awareness of the deaf community – this event was arranged by LIVE Borders, NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council and was well attended

### **Carer Positive Accreditation**

Carer Positive aims to encourage employers to create a supportive working environment for carers in the workplace.

The Council's aim is to become a Carer Positive employer. Doing so requires us to undertake a self-assessment process to demonstrate how we meet each of the 3 award levels.

As this is the Council's first application we must apply for Level 1 (engaged employer)

This requires us to:

- Have an awareness of carers within the workforce and have made a commitment to support carers through workplace policies/working practices
- Have evidence that systems and processes have been developed to support this
- Demonstrate that Carers are supported to identify themselves as carers and can access support within the organisation to help them manage their work and caring responsibilities

Progress against our self assessment, is almost complete. A recent staff survey provided us with the opportunity to gain an understanding of employees who are carers, and their needs and challenges whilst balancing work and caring responsibilities.

Our Business World system (HR/Finance reporting system) allows employees to declare their caring responsibilities. All staff are encouraged to complete this detail together with all other categories of equal opportunities data such as disability, religion and/or belief and the other protected characteristics.

We have formulated our very first Carer's Policy for Employees. This, together with an Integrated Impact Assessment, sets out the support that the Council will offer to its employees who have a caring responsibility, in order to help them balance their working and caring commitments, and continue to be effective in their job and more importantly help the Council recruit and retain employees with caring responsibilities. The Policy applies to all employees with at least 26 weeks of continuous employment with the Council.

The policy also provides a definition of a carer:

*The definition of a **carer** is a person who provides or intends to provide a substantial amount of unpaid care on a regular basis for another individual.*

*A **carer** is anyone who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. This may be a child or an adult.*

It is anticipated that the accreditation will be awarded during 2021.

## **Catering**

Service provision/ key activities - Free school meals.

The principles behind free school meals -

In 1944, laws were passed which required all Local Authorities to provide free nutritious meals for school children, since the commencement many actions have been introduced to ensure the anonymity of children who qualify for the service, roll on 77 years and Scottish Borders Council catering service still strives to ensure all the principles behind the free school meals still exist.

Both Technology and Council policy play a major part in ensuring customers and staff needs are met. Parents or pupils can order on preloaded Young Scot cards which discreetly hides the anonymity of pupils on free meals as well as the amount of funds available.

Liaising with stakeholders and peer groups helps the service to reach the demands and expectations for service delivery, information gathering through CitizenSpace provided staff with an opportunity to give feedback on the service, previous survey monkey surveys assisted the service with valuable information on future demands. Moving forward the service will continue to engage with stakeholders through mediums such as pupil council and/or parents meetings.

## **Child Poverty**

The Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT) is a joint service and the staff team includes members from both NHS Borders and Scottish Borders Council. A priority area for the team is to have a sustainable, inclusive economy with equality of outcomes for all.

A Child Poverty Strategic Group was established within Scottish Borders in 2019. Members have developed and agreed an action plan which has been submitted to Scottish Government with an activity report.

The Financial Inclusion Group is a sub-group of the Child Poverty Strategic Group and has developed work including:

- Pilot in Galashiels health centre where an Early Years money advisor was present during the midwifery clinic. People accessing this service have increased benefits totalling £76,000
- Health Visitors are now routinely asking about money worries at every contact and refer on to the Council's Financial Support and Inclusion Team (FSIT) where required. This work is supported by a new Money Worries Leaflet (2019) which is used by Health Visitors and Midwives.

From April 2019 - March 2020 the Financial Support and Inclusion Team received 380 referrals for pregnant women and families with young children and increased benefits of £1,002,000. The majority of these were direct referrals from Health Visitors but many came from attendance at the four Early Years Centres and other early years events and benefit surgeries held during the year.

## **Children and Families Social Work**

C & FSW Advocacy Services – we ensure that advocacy is available to families to enable them to understand the systems and processes that they are part of and that their voice is heard within these. A child/young person will also have their own advocate.

The use of FGDM (Family Group Decision Making) – we are actively offering this to families to bring a level of independence. To support them to explore and recognise their own strengths and resources. This creates the “family plan” which families are more likely to engage with and therefore is more likely to generate positive and long lasting outcomes.

Access to services – working in the Borders brings the challenge of managing a rural area with pockets of urban areas where services tend to be centred. This is recognised by practitioners who endeavour to ensure that if a service is identified as a need then the issues of transport are considered as part of this. This prevents a postcode lottery response.

Translation services – We work with a number of different nationalities where English is not their first language or they may not speak English at all. We ensure that this does not prevent them from understanding both verbal and written communication and therefore does not prevent them accessing services they need. We have some families where children are affected by disability and this adds a further layer of complexity. However these families still have access to information they need with specialist information being translated into their language.

## **Community Engagement**

Scottish Borders Council strives to ensure our community engagement processes are inclusive and promote equal opportunities for all. We base our work around the National Standards for Community Engagement and believe that equality is a fundamental principle of community engagement. We understand that people may face recognised barriers to their participation and have very diverse needs and circumstances. A 'one size fits all' approach to engaging with equalities groups will not work. It is important for us to think through the different characteristics of the equalities groups and the specific implications for community engagement practice, particularly to include people who share more than one protected characteristic, e.g. young people with a disability, older people who are gay or lesbian. Considerable efforts are being made to support and engage with equalities groups that represent those with different protected characteristics. These include the Borders Disability Forum, Scottish Borders Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Forum and Young People's groups.

## **Community Hubs**

The new Locality Hub model will build upon the success of the Community Assistance Hubs and the What Matters hubs to provide a single point of contact for support in localities. The Hubs will be made up of staff from across the Health & Social Care partnership (H&SC), the Third Sector along with Resilience staff, Housing, Education, Community Learning & Development and community groups working together to form virtual Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDTs) within localities. The aim is to provide service users with a single point of contact to receive a co-ordinated and 'whole family' response to their needs.

## **Our way of working**

- Person and family centred
- Accessible
- Focus on health and wellbeing outcomes
- Integrated Partnership approach
- Community based and developed with the community
- Use local intelligence to prioritise and shape services
- Empower and Improve the resilience and sustainability of communities
- Ensure consistency of core practices and equity in service provision across Localities
- Continual service improvement/development

## **How the daily H&SC huddles will operate**

- Health and social care colleagues will meet on a daily basis as part of a multi-disciplinary response to health care requirements.
- The daily huddle will discuss shared clients that need support from the team and how to best provide this support in a joined up manner eg

- those waiting for care (including clients from the Matching Unit)
- clients at risk of hospital admission
- clients ready for hospital discharge (START list)
- individuals causing concern within the community
- incoming new referrals from 'What Matters' and other referral pathways.
- A mailbox will also be set up for each locality H&SC huddle, for GP's to be able to share concerns that can be discussed.

### **Community wrap around weekly meetings**

The initial aim of the weekly community wrap around meetings is to enable local Third Sector organisations to share service information, demand/capacity issues and discuss support requests that have come through as a result of the H&SC meetings. This will also be an opportunity for community groups to raise concerns that they may have about an individual that they are working with, which the daily H&SC huddle may be able to support with.

### **Community Justice Partners**

Scottish Borders Council continue to coordinate the Community Justice partners in the delivery of their duty to cooperate, required by the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 in the exercise of their respective functions in relation to community justice.

- The Community Justice Partners are:
- The Council
- Borders Health Board
- The Chief Constable
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Skills Development Scotland
- The Scottish Ministers

A revised local outcomes improvement plan has been endorsed by the Community Planning Partnership and published. In addition to reducing reoffending the needs of victims are also considered. For example, Victim Support are commissioned to assist in cases of antisocial behaviour. The partnership have committed funds to the appointment of a Justice Health Worker to help overcome health inequalities among people in the justice system.

### **Community Working**

Community working is centred on people and communities. Our work enables residents to have a greater stake in the community in which they live. This is about the Council and its partners working together with the community to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Scottish Borders Through our mainstreaming approach we will continue to support community development

and regeneration and work closely with communities, groups and people to address local issues, to promote equality and diversity, to help establish groups and projects that raise awareness of equality and diversity and support local partnership initiatives. We aim to ensure that the 'seldom heard' groups are also supported and presented with opportunities to help Scottish Borders Council to develop and manage its services. We will work with different equality and diversity communities to help identify and meet any specific needs and requirements.

### **Corporate Equality and Diversity Risk**

As part of the Council's compliance with sound corporate governance there is a process in place to identify and effectively manage risks at Corporate, Operational and Programme/Project level across the organisation. During the quarterly cycle of Corporate Risk Reviews in early 2021 there was recognition of a potential risk of not taking a proactive approach to advancing Equality and Diversity and the resultant impacts that this could have.

While compliance with Equality and Diversity legislation is encompassed within a wider Corporate Risk covering all legislation by which the Council must abide, there was acknowledgement that SBC should be aiming to do more to advance the ethos of Equality and Diversity to ensure that it continues to deliver the required cultural changes within the organisation and set a good example to the communities that it serves, the partners that it works with and the businesses that operate within the local area.

Risk development sessions have since been held to identify the exact nature of the risk; its causes and consequences; the internal controls that are in place and their current effectiveness as well as the further mitigating actions needed across the organisation to effectively manage this risk. This new risk will act as an added corporate mechanism through which activities can be monitored, reported on and developed and, through wider engagement with staff and partners, should help to continue to embed a culture of consideration of Equality and Diversity as part of everyday activities while allowing the Council to better develop and deliver services that meet the needs of its communities.

### **Customer Advice and Support Service**

Customer Advice & Support provides a wide ranging amount of services and support to customers throughout the Scottish Borders. As a result of this we ensure we meet the needs of all our customers in everything we do. We have been able to demonstrate (see below), that we can adapt to meet the needs of individuals and as a result continue to progress mainstreaming equality into our service area. The delivery of our services are dependent on customers being able to easily access them, our ongoing work to digitise and improve customer journeys has demonstrated that we will continue to ensure we do not exclude

anyone from accessing services. Our online forms are accessed by advisors so that if a customer can't access them online for any reason they can be supported over the phone. One of the main drivers for our digital work is to free staff up to deal with the most vulnerable in society and ensure equal opportunities are given to those who require more support.

We have embedded into the service mechanisms to ensure we make information accessible, in line with the Equality Act 2010 we ensure that we;

- Produce all information in plain language and a minimum type size 12 point, preferable 14 point.
- Use a clear, easy recognisable, Sans Serif font. Use a matt paper of contrasting colour. Justify type on the left. Don't print sentences in block capitals.
- On request provide information in alternative format such as large print, audio tape, Braille and an easy-to-understand version.
- Use interpreters for people who need to communicate in a sign language or other community language

We have a robust Interpretation & Translation process which is followed and works with external organisations such as, British Sign Language (BSL) and Royal Blind – Scottish Braille Press to ensure we are able to provide our services to all customers.

#### Case Study

A customer was recently assisting a friend with an application for Council Tax Reduction. As part of the application they used the benefit calculator which asks for 'gender' but only gives two options, male and female. There were no other options for 'other' so any non-binary genders were not covered. It also gave no reason as to why this information is being collected, the customer thought this could be removed from the calculator.

As a result of this our team contacted the software supplier for the form (Team Netsol). Our comments were taken on board and changes were swiftly made to the form. For inclusivity they added in the Mx title to the standard list of titles as well as an 'other' option. They also added an 'other'/prefer not to say option to the gender question. These changes were applied to questions relating to the claimant, partner and other adults on the household. For dependents, the gender option is required for the bedroom calculation and has not had the 'prefer not to say' option added.

The above actions fully resolved the customer's complaint. It displays that CASS in this case have evidenced that equality is mainstreamed into our every day practices.

- In this case our everyday service provision / activities is the application and processing of a benefit claim. The customer was using our online platform to apply as well as the online benefit calculator.
- We eliminated unlawful discrimination and demonstrated fairness by ensuring that the protected characteristics of the customer were accounted for.

- This will help CASS in advancing further the mainstreaming of equality in the service as it has given an awareness to our software provider, but also acts as an example for future form building that we carry out in CASS. This ensures we meet the needs of all customers
- Good relations are encouraged as well as togetherness as we are using the same mechanism for applications for all citizens and the advancement in amending the form to be more inclusive is a step to fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- The customer was listened to and quick action was taken to ensure that a positive outcome was reached and their protected characteristics were included on the form built by our software supplier. This is an example of CASS working in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure our communities are cohesive.

## **Domestic Abuse Services**

Council based domestic abuse services were previously funded through a third party income grant. This was due to end in 2019, threatening the future of the service.

Recognising the continued demand for services, Scottish Borders Council reviewed provision and agreed a recurring budget safeguarding support to victims. This aligns with the Scottish Government Equally Safe strategy, work of the Violence Against Women Partnership and a wide key stakeholder network. The Public Protection Committee which has an independent chair retains a close interest in service provision, reporting to our Critical Services Oversight Group.

## **Engineering**

We predominantly deliver infrastructure improvements that in terms of equality focus on accessibility as the built environment tends not to effect someone with respect to the other protected characteristics.

The following details the infrastructure project at Mart Street Hawick where the Council installed new and improved bus interchange services utilising grant funding from Scottish Ministers.

The project involved rendering the existing bus interchange area within Hawick more accessible and attractive to all users.

As part of the design process for this new piece of public infrastructure the design team had several discussions with local Councillors, Community Groups and Bus companies etc to ensure that all general requirements were catered for.

The design itself followed national guidance to ensure the less able members of the public could negotiate the new public realm space.

A new larger and improved bus shelter was added to the scheme and this caters for wheelchairs, and seats set at different heights to suit various users.

As per all infrastructure projects carried out now dropped kerbs and tactile paving were added where required. Bus timetables are on display at various heights to suit all members of the public and an electronic version is available, hopefully at some point in the future to be upgraded to real time information. The team also utilised one of the former shelters for use at the local primary school to provide additional shelter to the children during the covid pandemic.

Thus throughout the design and construction of the project the Council worked to ensure that it provided a suitable facility for all users and through regular communication with key stakeholders and community groups to try and ensure all voices were heard.

## **EU Settlement Status**

Equality has underpinned our approach to optimising the number of EU Citizens who apply for EU Settled Status. The key motivation has been the belief that we have a responsibility to optimise the number of such applications for two reasons:

- To protect the interests of EU/EEA citizens in our region; and
- To protect the contribution these citizens make to the communities and economy of the Scottish Borders.

Our plan of action includes general promotion of the Settled Status scheme through the Council's communications strategy, including working with partners in promoting messages around Settled Status and includes leveraging employers to increase the % of applications from within the EU/EUAA nationals within their workforce. This involves working with the Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) and South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) to ensure that employers are identified, reached and support is provided. We continue to work with CAB and the Citizens rights project in identifying challenges with regards to delivery of their Settled Status support services. The Council also provides assisted digital support for Settled Status through referrals from 'We are Digital.' CAB, Citizens Rights Project and SOSE attend meetings of the Council's Brexit Response Team, allowing problems to be identified and actions taken to address these through collaborative working.

More recently, we have endeavoured to encourage links between CAB and Registered Social Landlords to reach tenants who ought to have applied but have not done so. We also have a budget of around £3000, which we are using to develop the following approaches now that we are approaching the end of June deadline for applications.

- Facebook advertising

- Expressions App –i.e. communicating with the parents of children at Scottish Borders schools.
- Final press release – likely to be from the Convenor.
- Issue of a limited number of flyers on a relatively targeted basis.

## **Finance & Regulatory Services**

The annual budget process for SBC, covering both capital and revenue expenditure plans, ensures that equality is mainstreamed by requiring each of the budget proposals to be fully considered from an equalities perspective prior to implementation. This is standard practice and is evidenced through an Integrated Impact Assessment being undertaken on each budget proposal to ensure that “due regard” is paid to the effect of the relevant policy or practice on the Council’s obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The budget process assesses potential impacts, both positive and negative, on the Council’s duties under the Equalities and Fairer Scotland legislation.

In line with the process adopted in previous years, initial Integrated Impact Assessments were conducted on 83 proposals as an integral part of the 2021/22 revenue and capital budget process. Any potential negative impacts on equalities groups were identified, mitigated and alleviated during their implementation stage. Likewise any positive implications identified were maximised during the planning and implementation stage of the proposals.

A further example is the approach taken to the development of every contract strategy which considers the involvement of supported business or social enterprise as a delivery option. In doing so the Council utilises the Scottish Government Supported Business Framework or our local providers to consider innovative ways of ensuring supported business and social enterprises have the opportunity to work with us. The Council works closely with Scottish Borders Social Enterprise Chamber (SBSEC) to encourage supported business and other third sector organisations to access Council contract opportunities. This active role allows us to keep members updated with contract and community benefit opportunities.

The Council continues to look for opportunities for supported businesses, investigating all procurement avenues to identify appropriate providers and matching them with our contract opportunities. Community benefit clauses also provide an opportunity to direct our third party contractors/ suppliers to consider supported businesses in their supply chain. A good example highlighted in the Council’s procurement report for 2019/20 was the contract awarded to the Borders Green Team. (See Outcome 4)

## **Gypsy/Traveller Community**

As part of the COVID response Scottish Borders Council is following the Scottish Government framework to support the Gypsy/Traveller community during the pandemic. The Council has a designated site for Gypsy/ Travellers in Innerleithen. Facilities at that site have had reduced capacity because of the

COVID 19 pandemic and a decision was taken to use facilities in Selkirk enabling hygiene and other support to be provided. There are a number of young children being accommodated at that location in addition to the adults. While the situation has continued beyond what was ever anticipated the Council's Gypsy/Traveller Liaison Officer has maintained a pivotal role in coordinating support.

## **Hearing the Voices of Men in the Scottish Borders: Developing Connected Communities**

The Joint Health Improvement Team (JHIT) are working with the Scottish mental health and wellbeing charity, Health in Mind, to launch an online campaign to hear the voices of men in the Scottish Borders.

The campaign, called 'Hearing the Voices of Men in the Scottish Borders: Developing Connected Communities', includes an online survey and aims to capture personal stories from men across the Scottish Borders about their experiences around mental health.

Through this campaign we want to understand men's current experiences of mental health within the Scottish Borders. The responses to the survey will help to shape and improve the support available to men – working to ensure they can access the right support and it's delivered in a way that works for them. Work is continuing on the analysis of the survey results, from which a plan of action will follow to address the issues raised.

## **Integrated Impact Assessments**

SBC seeks to involve and inform equality groups and other groups with an interest right from the start of discussions on any new proposals, policies or projects, progressing on to a more structured assessment in any subsequent stages. We are very clear on the need to ensure that the requirements of people with protected characteristics are taken into account during the development and implementation of a new policy or service, or when a change is made to a current policy or service. This is reflected in the Service Design principles.

We have reviewed our Equality Impact Assessment template to include the Fairer Scotland Duty and rebranded the process as an Integrated Impact Assessment. Alongside this, we are keen to ensure that staff have a comprehensive knowledge of obligations under the equalities legislation and we provide a variety of staff training courses to support and enhance this knowledge and awareness.

## **Justice Social Work**

### What JSW does.

Justice Social Work Services (JSWS) act on behalf of Scottish Courts to:

- supervise people aged 16 and over who have been made subject to a community disposal;
- provide reports to courts to assist with sentencing decisions; and
- provide statutory supervision for certain people released from prison.

Delivery of the service is a statutory requirement of the Local Authority. It is responsible for the production of reports including Criminal Justice Social Work Reports, Home Background & Circumstances Reports for Scottish Prison Service and Parole Board to inform decisions about progression, home leave, release on Parole/Non Parole licence and breach notification.

Justice social workers and paraprofessionals manage the supervision and monitoring of people placed on a range of court disposals, post-release orders and licences and other community disposals including diversion from prosecution. Engagement work is targeted at creating behavioural change and the reduction of risk of harm.

#### Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC)

As a profession, Social Workers including Justice practitioners are required to register with the SSSC. As such, they are required to adhere to the SSSC Codes of Practice outlining standards of behaviours and values. The standards include “the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of people who use the service”.

All justice service staff are required to adhere to and deliver in line with SBC Policies and Procedures including the Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Policy.

#### Relationship building is essential in service delivery.

Staff through the undertaking of accredited programme delivery training; including Moving Forward Making Changes (MF:MC) and Caledonian( sex offender and domestic abuse groupwork systems), co-facilitation of service delivery to women through Reconnect, peer review of reports and file scrutiny are in a position to evidence non-discriminatory practice, with line managers raising any issues in supervision and team meetings.

#### Every day service provision

Non-discriminatory/ equality practice is the bedrock of social work. Working with those who are disadvantaged across all protected characteristics, to overcome barriers and stigma, through confidence building, education and challenge to community and professional attitudes is established practice.

Assertiveness work, whether through referral to dedicated support services, 1:1 discussions in statutory supervision or role modelling in day to day business, is delivered to those who lack confidence and require to overcome low self-esteem and/or isolation and exclusion due to previous experiences of discrimination.

#### Good relationships

Good relationships, are essential to drive forward change. Trust is essential in taking people on their journey. Non-judgmental practice combined with

appropriate challenge and open and honest engagement, facilitates the development positive relationships with those who are most vulnerable or who are stigmatised due to the nature of their offence. New thinking and better/safer decision making, has enhanced service users confidence and self-belief.

All justice social workers and justice officers have completed trauma practice training enabling them to further refine their engagement skills, reframing traditional practice delivery to support those affected by trauma, no matter why they are engaging with the service.

## **Local Housing Strategy (LHS) 2017-22**

The Local Housing Strategy (LHS) sets the strategic direction to tackle housing need and demand in the Scottish Borders and informs future investment in housing and related services across the Scottish Borders. The LHS is regularly reviewed and updated every five years. The current Scottish Borders Local Housing Strategy covers the five-year period from April 2017 to March 2022.

The LHS is the Council's primary strategic document on housing. It sets out the vision for housing in the Scottish Borders that 'Every person in the Scottish Borders lives in a home that meets their needs'.

The implementation of the LHS will impact on the whole population of the Scottish Borders in that housing and related services are used by the whole population. According to the UN Office for the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the right to adequate housing entails more than just having a roof over one's head. Housing must be affordable, habitable, accessible, safe, provide legal security of tenure and access to employment and important services, such as schools and healthcare.

Increasingly housing issues are being framed as a human rights matter, acknowledging the immense impact housing has on people's lives in terms of health, wellbeing, disabilities, education, employment and income. The implementation of the LHS will bring many positive aspects for all of the communities of the Scottish Borders. This is at the very heart of the strategy.

The LHS is a high level strategic document, and there are specific strategies that support the delivery of the LHS and cover the four priorities:

1. The Supply of Housing meets the Needs of our Communities.
2. More people live in good quality, energy efficient homes.
3. Fewer People are affected by Homelessness.
4. More People are supported to Live Independently in their own homes.

These specific strategies include the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP), Affordable Warmth and Energy Efficiency Strategy, Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, Older People's Housing Strategy and the Housing Contribution Statement.

## Looked After Children's Review

In November 2018, a feedback questionnaire about children and young people's experiences of attending S.31 Looked After Children (LAC) Reviews, which was initially used for young people in residential placements, was broadened to include other looked after children. The questions include asking them about their understanding of the purpose of the meeting; who will be there and their preparation; how easy it was for them to understand what was being said at the meeting; whether they felt included and able to participate; and, questions about improving the process. Since their introduction in November 2018, 21 questionnaires have been completed. The responses are tabulated below:

Please tick 	 Yes	 No
I understand why there needed to be a meeting about me.	20	1
I knew who was going to be at my meeting.	18	3
I felt prepared for my meeting.	19	1 (and 1 said 'sort of')

Please tick 	 Easy	 Ok	 Hard
How easy was it to understand what people said in the meeting?	11	8	2

Do you think the sentences below are true or false?  Please tick 	 True	 Neither	 False
People asked me what I wanted to happen.	18	2	1
I was able to say what I wanted.	20	1	

People listened to me.	21		
In the meeting, people told me what they would do to help me.	18	2	1
People explained to me what will happen next.	18	1	2
I think things will get better for me because of the things that were agreed today.	17	3	1

Generally the questionnaire responses were favourable with children and young people understanding the reason for the meeting, knowing who would be there and feeling prepared. All children and young people who responded felt people listened to them, however just over half (11) said it was easy to understand what people said in the meeting.

Some of the comments received from children and young people include:

How easy was it to understand what people said at the meeting?

*"I understood what people said at the meeting".*

*"Some words were hard to understand".*

*"I found some of it difficult to understand, particularly at the beginning.*

*Other bits I found fine".*

What would make the next meeting better?

*"Nothing, all went well".*

*"If my dad didn't attend".*

## **Meeting accessibility requirements – websites and mobile apps**

The accessibility regulations ("Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018") came into force for public sector bodies on 23 September 2018. They say we must make our website and mobile apps more accessible by making it 'perceivable, operable, understandable and robust'. We also need to include and update an accessibility statement on our website.

The regulations build on our existing obligations to people who have a disability under the Equality Act 2010. These say that all UK service providers must consider 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled people.

In order to ensure that our website/mobile app is the best it can be, work started on reviewing our current platforms to see where changes were required.

By June 2021 the Council's website had been upgraded to a Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2.1 AA) compliant CMS platform. Additionally the accessibility statement has been published.

### **Mental Health Services (Adult): Information Resource**

An information resource has been created to improve access and support the delivery of integrated care across mental health services. This resource will support achievement of a key priority in The 'Mental Health Strategy: Scottish Borders' (Scottish Borders Health & Social Care Partnership) by mapping out what supports and services are available for adults, and providing brief information on how to access them.

The aim is to make this information accessible to anyone who requires it including those who need help, those affected by someone else's mental health problems, and those who provide help. It can be used as a tool to aid discussion to:

- Help find the most appropriate service
- Access help whilst waiting for other forms of support
- Manage your own health and well-being, and
- Promote the active involvement of people in their own care, and
- Support recovery through reconnecting with local communities.

Information is kept brief to signpost people directly to the most relevant source for more detailed information, and to reduce the need for frequent updates.

This process has been informed by consultation with service users and carers via the Borders Mental Health & Wellbeing Forum, service providers, planners and commissioners. This has included liaison with young people's Mental Health Services to support mutual awareness and inform transitions between mental health services for young people and adults.

The resource is an on-line tool for use by the public and professionals that pulls together information on a range of different services that together support improved mental health. It maps existing supports and services that meet different levels of need, and provides information on each service describing what they offer, how to access them, and contact details for further information. It can be printed out for easier access where helpful.

The map is based on a tiered care model that shows what is available:

- To help people stay well (prevention);
- Where to get support when problems start to develop (early intervention);
- What is available to help address and manage on-going mental health issues; and
- Care and treatment services for those with more severe or complex problems.

Services include those specifically for people with mental health problems (including addiction and trauma), and some that support general health and well-being.

Whilst some services have been given a specific place on the map they are, in reality, cross-cutting and apply at *all* levels, for example health improvement (to prevent, delay or manage illness and support recovery), suicide prevention training, housing and homelessness, financial/benefits advice, carer involvement, social connectedness, and employability.

This resource will be held by individual services listed, as well as at the following places to enable access by the public and those offering direct support:

- [NHS Borders 'Wellbeing Point'](#)
- [Scottish Borders Council: 'Adult Mental Health supports and services and how to access them': h](#)
- [Social Work 'What Matters' hubs](#)
- Via GPs ([Refhelp website](#))
- [Wellbeing College](#)

The reader can click on a service to be taken through to a background document which provides:

- A 'service map' setting out the services available (a glossary of abbreviated names is provided)
- A brief description of what the service provides
- Contact details
- Details for accessing the service (including geographical areas covered, referral routes in, and where relevant, average waiting times).

## **Participatory Budgeting**

In October 2017, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) announced that Council Leaders had agreed that a least 1% of local government budgets would be subject to Participatory Budgeting .by the end of financial year (2020/21).

This aims to give communities more influence over decisions on how funding is spent in their local area. CoSLA and Scottish Government worked together to develop and agree a framework (The Community Choices Framework) which would be used to develop approaches to Participatory Budgeting.

Participatory Budgeting aims to:

- enable active participation by citizens in local decision making;
- establish a shared expectation that elected members, senior officers, civil society and local communities will use Participatory Budgeting to go beyond the current arrangements for consultation and engagement;
- support the longer term strategic aim of public sector reform that can be achieved by applying spend to the greatest areas of need, where social cohesion can be developed or maintained;

- deliver a partnership approach to Participatory Budgeting whereby mainstream funding is identified across a partnership for mainstream services with an aim to shaping how services are delivered in the area; and
- actively involve local people with the intention of making them "less passive consumers of public services and more supportive of new models of delivery".

Nationally, whilst some work continued during 2020, the majority of local Participatory Budgeting activity (planning or delivery) stopped whilst in response to the pandemic. As a result CoSLA and Scottish Government have recognised the exceptional circumstances brought about by the pandemic, and the impact this has had on the ability of Councils to meet the 1% Framework Agreement by the end of March 2021. Scottish Government and CoSLA Leaders have renewed their commitment to meeting the 1% target and the Framework Agreement is currently being revised. This will allow a degree of flexibility in meeting the deadline, alongside the importance of embedding social renewal within future mainstream Participatory Budgeting activity.

Work is currently underway through the newly established national Participatory Budgeting Strategic Group to establish a shared vision for Participatory Budgeting in Scotland which enhances the role of public and third sector partners in Scotland's Participatory Budgeting journey.

Current Status within Scottish Borders Council.

Scottish Borders Council will utilise Participatory Budgeting as part of a suite of tools to enhance community engagement, participation and empowerment and develop the investment strategies linked to place. There are a number of digital opportunities which will be progressed to support the approach to Participatory Budgeting

The Communities and Partnership team will be the corporate lead for Participatory Budgeting delivery at Scottish Borders Council, however it is envisaged that individual services will engage with communities, and manage and develop the delivery of Participatory Budgeting. The group will also consult on this approach with Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership and specifically third sector partners, who may be able to provide additional support in order to build capacity within local communities.

### **Physical Disability Strategy**

The Scottish Borders Physical Disability Strategy, A Fairer Borders for People with a physical disability or long term condition and their carers was approved by the Integration Joint Board in October.

The strategy was developed with the support of key local representatives including:

- health and social care professionals
- members of the third and independent sectors

- housing specialists
- service users and carers

An implementation plan has now been developed and covers seven ambitions.

1. Support services are designed and delivered to support all people with a physical disability to live the life they choose, have control, make informed choices and have support to communicate this when needed at every stage of their lives
2. People with a physical disability are able to participate fully in education and paid employment, enabling their talent and abilities to enrich the Borders. People with a physical disability are supported through transitions in their lives e.g. from school to work.
3. People with a physical disability can live life to the full in their homes and communities with housing designed and adapted to meet their needs
4. People with a physical disability can live life to the full in their communities with transport designed and adapted to enable people with a physical disability to participate as full and equal citizens
5. People with a physical disability are confident that their rights will be protected and they will receive fair treatment at all times.
6. People with a physical disability participate as active citizens in all aspects of daily and public life in Scotland. Physical disabilities are involved in shaping their lives and the decisions that impact upon them
7. Unpaid carers of people with physical disabilities and long term conditions are acknowledged and supported to recognise their rights as a carer.

However, due to the challenges of responding to COVID the implementation plan is currently under review. Whilst the ambitions will remain relevant these will be prioritised in order to ensure that post COVID the implementation plan and its aspirations continue to meet the needs of the communities.

## **Procurement – Achieving our Sustainable Procurement Duty**

Scottish Borders Council aims to be a responsible purchaser of goods, services and works. We set standards to make sure we undertake our activities in an ethical, responsible and sustainable way. The Sustainable Procurement Charter lays out a number of important principles and policy requirements of the Council with which we expect our suppliers to comply.

The Charter builds upon the clear benefits of such an approach and has been developed to play a key role in the promotion of social, economic and environmental best practice. It is an integral part of our procurement activity and delivers compliance with our sustainable procurement duty contained within the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014.

The Charter clearly defines our commitment to suppliers in terms of our practices across important areas such as the importance of equalities, the encouragement of the Scottish Living Wage and consideration of our local market; while including the principles and standards being sought from suppliers covering our zero

tolerance approach to Modern Slavery and human trafficking, compliance with Health & Safety requirements and Data Protection considerations.

## **Resettlement of Refugee Families**

Scottish Borders Council has committed to resettle refugee families through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (Syria). To date nine families have been resettled. This process involves close cooperation with the Home Office and Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) with appropriate support being provided locally. COVID 19 restrictions have resulted in the scheme being temporarily suspended but additional arrivals are expected in the coming months.

## **Roads & Infrastructure**

Service provision/ key activities

- Roads Operations
- SBC Contracts
- Parks and Environment, including Bereavement services
- Engineering, including flooding, bridges and structures and design
- Infrastructure, including, network, asset and street lighting

By their very nature these services impact on the quality of life and enjoyment of the Borders for everyone who lives, works and visits the area. Whether it's through the roads they travel on, the parks that they visit and play in, the construction and maintenance activities undertaken by the service, the lives of our citizens are supported and enabled to do so safely and conveniently across all our communities.

All of our services observe Council policies and procedures to support us in all our activities, from the employment of staff, engagement of contractors and suppliers to the interactions we have with the public. We enable this through training and development of our staff, compliance with business process and continuous improvement initiatives which we undertake as part of our quality management approach ultimately delivering services on time to standard and within budget.

Our workforce is mainly manual and the messages around policy and procedure are reinforced by cascading information through regular meetings and through positive reinforcement across Council channels such as social media and press releases. We use posters, leaflets and handouts in our depots and regular engagement with trades unions to also communicate and maintain standards of behaviour and compliance.

In addition to practicing the policies and procedures, where service changes are proposed and or investment/disinvestment we draft and deliver reports to Council committees, in doing so we complete Integrated Impact Assessments. This process helps shape our thinking and ensure that we consider the impacts on the vulnerable within our society potentially affected by the report/strategy.

Some examples:

- Within our public toilets we have 40 RADAR accessible units, with systems integrated into their design aimed at assisting those less able whilst out and about in our communities. We haven't had a programme of investment into public toilets for over 10 years and so no recent opportunities to modify them to become changing places have presented themselves. However where new build has arisen for example at the Galashiels Transport Interchange, we have incorporated a changing place providing welfare facilities for adults to use with dignity.
- In our play park investment programme we include as part of the procurement the requirement for inclusive play and in favouring rubber surfacing create other opportunities for those less able to access for enjoyment and learning through play. We incorporate inclusive play at the heart of every design and believe ourselves to be one of the leading councils in Scotland when it comes to inclusive play, we are only able to make that claim as a result of the significant investment into outdoor community spaces.
- We interact with all faiths in our non-denominational cemeteries and we cater for their needs including facilitating self-burial for those whose belief systems demand this type of approach within their culture. We have a strong record of enabling and we are proven adaptable at supporting different faith groups at the most distressing of times, sometimes at very short notice.

We support colleagues in community safety when interacting with gypsy travellers, we support the hosting and delivery of the annual St Boswells Fair through the provision of toilet and waste management facilities engaging in planning meetings and responding to pertinent issues and requests made. We engage traditional travelling people with any requirements for waste management enabling them to maintain their dignity in doing so, we restore travelling people's sites once they have moved on.

We enable communities to interact through travel on our roads and footways by whatever means walking, cycling, driving or on public transport. We provide public parking/ bus stops/ cycle racks throughout the Borders and provide and maintain a variety of quality outdoor destinations in which people take exercise and informal leisure.

We engage positively with those of different faiths in our bereavements team and we also reach out and engage with other groups when considering service changes/redesign such as access groups, older people groups and rural communities.

By their very nature our services positively impact on the quality of life and enjoyment of the Borders for everyone who lives works and visits the area.

There are many aspects of the service which aren't mentioned and which go further to reinforce the positive steps played by Roads and Infrastructure:

- Winter emergencies diverting resources to those in need of medical help such as kidney dialysis is regularly undertaken.

- Provision of flood protection products at cost to those most at risk of flooding, the provision of tactile surfaces in our footways to aid those with visibility issues to safely access our communities whilst on foot.
- The work undertaken by Parks & Environment staff is mainly within the public realm and all staff are encouraged to engage with members of the public in a polite, positive way and if necessary Manager's contact the person to discuss specific issues that the member of staff was not able to give an acceptable reply to.

### **Scottish Borders Diversity Week**

In partnership with NHS Borders, the third and private sectors and our community the Scottish Borders has celebrated Diversity Week. The aim of the week is to celebrate diversity, foster good relations, build capital and a sense of belonging and develop cohesive, healthier, happier and informed communities.

With the support of Big Lottery Funding to a grand total of £8,335 the concept of Diversity Week was created. The funding was to secure a community lead approach, facilitate diversity events over 3 years, while building community capacity, and incrementally reducing funding.

Diversity Week has taken place since 2017 and has progressed as follows:

2017 17 events 1275 participants 66 Volunteers £8035 funding	2018 17 events 800 participants 32 volunteers £300 funding	2019 22 events 1067 participants 104 volunteers £0 funding
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Messages promoted Health & Wellbeing and Diversity, whilst awareness was raised on diversity challenges and services available to everyone.

In total 202 volunteers supported Diversity Week events with a combined total of 1,238.5 volunteer hours. The outcome of this process has empowered and enabled all communities to make decisions.

Due to COVID 19 restrictions during 2020 we have not been able to hold our 'normal' events but not to be deterred work behind the scenes has continued to build on increasing engagement, fostering good relations with groups and promoting participation and building cohesion. There is an emphasis on embedding equality and diversity into existing activities, connecting with strategic mental health work and continuing to raise awareness of information and support available.

## **Scottish Borders Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/20 – 2023/24**

The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was set up by the Scottish Government in October 2017 to produce short and long term solutions to end homelessness and rough sleeping.

The cornerstone of HARSAG's recommendations is a transition to a Rapid Rehousing approach. Housing First is a key component of this. Housing First provides general settled housing as a first response for people with complex needs, recognising that a safe and secure home is the best base for recovery, and offers personalised, open-ended, flexible support for people to end their experience of homelessness and address wider needs. All 32 local authority areas in Scotland were asked to produce Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans (RRTPs) by December 2018, for implementation over the 5 years from April 2019.

The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) is a new planning framework for local authorities and their partners to transition to a rapid rehousing approach. The development of the Scottish Borders RRTP has been led by the Borders Homelessness and Health Strategic Partnership (BHHSP). The first iteration of the Scottish Borders RRTP has been produced and is the start of our discussion about how to proceed with Rapid Rehousing in the Scottish Borders. The RRTP will be reviewed, updated and amended on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that it serves as a focused and practical tool to help us to achieve our vision for Rapid Rehousing in the Scottish Borders.

### **Our vision for Rapid Rehousing in the Scottish Borders is:**

- Homelessness is prevented wherever possible but where homelessness cannot be prevented a settled, mainstream housing outcome is secured as quickly as possible.
- When temporary accommodation is needed it will be mainstream, furnished accommodation within a community, and time spent in it will be minimal, with as few transitions as possible.
- Housing First will be the first response for people with complex needs and facing multiple disadvantages. We will work in collaboration with the Health and Social Care Partnership, and other relevant services, to ensure tenancies are supported and sustained.

### **To achieve this vision over the period to March 2024 we aim to do the following:**

- We will continue to improve the quality and integration of our housing, homelessness, social care and health and other support services to maximise housing sustainment, optimise housing options, and prevent homelessness occurring wherever possible.
- We will seek to do so in such a way that allows us to reduce our stock of temporary accommodation
- When homelessness cannot be prevented our aim is to make time spent in temporary accommodation a maximum of 60 days by 2024
- Our temporary accommodation provision will continue to be high quality, mainstream, fully furnished accommodation within the community which

meets the needs and choice of homeless households as far as is possible in a rural context.

- We will continue to make minimal use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation and, if possible, not use it at all.
- We will seek to develop and implement a Housing First model that meets the needs of people with multiple needs in the Scottish Borders and which, as far as is possible in a rural context, conforms with the 7 principles of Housing First.

### **The 7 principles are as follows:**

- People have a right to a home.
- Flexible support is provided for as long as it is needed.
- Housing and support are separated (the choices that people make about their support do not affect their housing security).
- Individuals have choice and control.
- An active engagement approach is used.
- The service is based on people's strengths, goals and aspirations.
- A harm reduction approach is used.

### **Throughcare Aftercare Service**

The service has been active in ensuring participation of care experienced young people. Regular participation events were initiated by a scoping session to gather from attendees their thoughts on how future participation events should be run. In conjunction with an online survey it was decided that themed evenings would give attendees a safe space to discuss the issues that impact on them the most as care experienced young people. The themed events allowed the young people the opportunity to learn and offer peer support, and further themes linked to Outcome Statements in the Team Plan, further allowed young people to shape how the team develops. Perhaps of most importance is that these events were fun and user led. To ensure maximum participation, efforts are made to ensure any potential barriers to participation are removed. In a recent meeting, an on-line quiz was a key element in proceedings. As one of the participants did not speak English as their first language, prior to the event the quiz was translated into the young person's own language to allow greater participation.

### **Virtual What Matters Hubs**

We are trialling a virtual What Matters hub in Teviot and Liddesdale from 22<sup>nd</sup> April for 12 weeks. This will be available from 10am-1pm and will run on a drop in basis. The trial will consist of Customer Advice and Support (CASS) taking initial calls and having an effective conversation there and then with customers. CASS will then transfer video calls through to supporting services (Social Work, Red Cross, Volunteer Centre Borders, Wellbeing, Welfare and benefits, Local Area Co-ordination Service, Employability). This service will be known as "Attend Anywhere/Near Me"

This service is open to all that have a device with chrome/edge or safari, a webcam, speaker and microphone.

## **An Equalities perspective - Waste services**

### **What do we do?**

- Collect, process, and dispose of waste in a cost effective manner whilst minimising risks to the environment.
- Increase recycling rates to help meet Scottish Government targets.
- Utilise Household Waste and Recycling Centres to allow recycling of a wider range of materials than that offered through the kerbside collection service.
- Waste Collection – Regular reviewing of Waste collection routes using Route Optimisation to improve the overall service to all householders
- We raise awareness of our services by communicating frequently with our communities. This includes ongoing education and awareness campaigns for residents, businesses, schools and community groups to minimise waste generation and maximise the effectiveness of Council Waste Services.

### **How do we consult?**

**External Consultation** – Equality Surveys, Public Surveys, Working with external organisation such as Zero Waste Scotland, Sepa. SBC Website page “Have your say”. To ensure a good response from our communities, on request, information can be made available in different formats: Braille, Large Print, audio tape and CD. We can also provide information in various languages including BSL.

- The aim is to provide a Waste Service that is ‘fit for purpose’, financially sustainable which meets customer demand in line with the Council’s statutory duties.

### **2020 and beyond**

The Council looking to improve on its current digital platform with the introduction of more enhanced Route Optimisation and back office integration, improving on customer service, data monitoring and self-service for house holders covering Kerbside, Trade, Food, Bulky, Assisted Lifts. This will enable us to optimise the collection service efficiencies across the Borders as part of the IT transformational programme to enhance services such as Assisted Lifts and Kerbside Collections producing more accurate information against each House hold.

The profile of our workforce is predominantly male but our aim is to be truly representative of all sections of society. Each employee should feel respected and able to give their best irrelevant of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including colour,

nationality, and ethnic or national origin), religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We have recently employed females to fulfil collection and driver roles with opportunities for training, development and progression. We will continue to work actively in attracting women and the other groups who are generally under-represented in the workplace.

## Equality Outcomes

In order to further mainstream equality our Equality Mainstreaming Report contained eight equality outcomes.

These outcomes cover internal matters relating to employees; the Council's approach to its customers; democratic and public involvement and participation; and the reduction of inequalities across the Scottish Borders. There is also a particular requirement to have outcomes for Education.

Progress against each outcome is measured both quantitatively and qualitatively. This is detailed below.

**Outcome 1:** We are seen as an inclusive equal opportunities employer where all staff feel valued and respected and our workforce reflects our community.

PI Code	PI Description	2021 progress update
1_1	% of our workforce aged 16 to 29	10.38% of our staff fall into this age range. This is a slight increase on 2019 where data indicates 9.89%
1_2	% of our workforce who have told us that they have a disability	*2.57% of the workforce report having a disability. This is a slight decrease when compared to 2019 where 2.62% of employees reported a disability.
1_3	Obtain Disability Confident Accreditation	We successfully achieved the accreditation at Employer level and are now working towards the Leader Level of the accreditation.
1_4	% of our workforce who have stated they are LGBT	*1.18% of the workforce report that they are LGBT. This is a slight increase on 2019 data where 1.16% of staff declared their sexual orientation as LGBT.
1_5	% of our workforce who are from an ethnic minority	*0.55% of the workforce have selected Black and Minority Ethnic as their ethnic origin. This is a slight decrease on 2019 data where 0.61% of staff declared their ethnic origin as Black and Minority Ethnic

1_6	Highest paid 5% who are women	During 2019 the percentage of highest paid 5% who are women = 43.75%
		During 2020 the percentage of highest paid 5% who are women = 47.83%
1.7a	Gender Pay Gap (teachers)	The pay gap for teachers 2019 = 3.87%
		The pay gap for teachers 2020 = 2.76%
1.7b	Gender Pay Gap (non teachers)	The pay gap for non teachers 2019 = 13.59%
		The pay gap for non teachers 2020 = 11.57%
1_8	% of our workforce who have completed equality monitoring data	Completions: 2019: 79.06% Completions: 2020 76.67%
1_9	% of workforce who have completed equalities e-learning (new)	The % of workforce who have completed training 2019 = 85%
		The % of workforce who have completed training 2020 = 85%
1_10	Number of employees who engaged in the Work Opportunities Scheme	2018/19: 57 employees engaged in the scheme
		2019/20: 60 employees engaged in the scheme

(Source: Employee data Jan – Dec 2020)

\*It should be noted that whilst all of SBC's employees are encouraged to complete the personnel section of the HR system 'Business World' (BW), it is not mandatory. Numbers remain low for disability, black and minority ethnic origin, LGBT categories. This could be due to the high number of individuals choosing not to record on BW or answer specific questions.

Gender and age are automatically entered onto BW so we have 100% of this information. It is worthy of note that a small number of employees do not have direct access to BW to input the above categories. Work is in hand to address this and it is anticipated that by the end of 2021 all employees will have the ability to input their own information, should they wish to.

### **Children & Families Social Work**

The Children's & Families Social Work team have provided Equality and Diversity training for all foster carers delivered on-line from 2018. This brought foster carers in line with council employees. Although foster carers are not employees, their role is caring for children and young people placed with them by the council. As such providing the same value based Equality and Diversity training (in addition to comprehensive statutory assessment and review of equality and diversity issues within the context of their foster carer registration)

ensures carers are aware of the requirements and expectations placed on them, and on their council colleagues, as corporate parents.

**Outcome 2:** Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to; all members of our community and our staff treat all services users, clients and colleagues with dignity and respect.

The following are examples of how the Council has sought to achieve this outcome:

### **Care Homes SBCares**

Within SBCares care homes we provide high quality residential care to the people of the Borders who have been assessed as needing 24hr care both on a permanent and short term basis across 6 sites from Innerleithen to Eyemouth. Across the care settings, we pride ourselves on the inclusion of families and the tailoring of support plans that are individualised to each service user ensuring that they are receiving the best possible care home experience and that Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to all of our residents, ensuring they are always treated with dignity and respect.

Over the last year due to the COVID pandemic visiting to the home had to be stopped to ensure the safety of service users and protection from the virus. This was a very difficult time for the service users their families and the staff who provide face to face care. Visiting was initially phased back into the homes after a 4-month hiatus. Throughout the process of phasing back in the visiting to the care homes we prioritised service user and family engagement through regular telephone calls and where possible MS teams meeting's. This engagement along with staff input and the guidance released by Scottish Government ensured that we did not discriminate against those using our services.

### **Children and Families Social Work**

We work with a number of families where a learning disability or difficulty is a feature. This can make the assessment process more challenging and complex. A recent case presented with such challenges. There were concerns about both parents (mother has a diagnosed learning disability) and their ability to care safely for their expected baby. There were few family options for support and all came with their own challenges. In order to make a full assessment of the family and to prevent the baby from being placed into a foster placement at birth, the family were able to access an assessment unit commissioned by Children and Families. This allowed a high level of oversight and therefore an in-depth assessment of the family's needs. The services was reviewed and tailored to meet the needs of the family. As the assessment progressed, it changed approaches including assessing the parents together as well as separately. This gave the parents the best opportunity to demonstrate their parenting ability. The assessment has found that neither parent can provide a safe level of care for the baby. However during the time they were being assessed the social worker was also able to assess all family members as part of concurrent planning.

The assessment has provided vital information about the needs of the family and allowed this to be factored into the assessment of the wider family and what roles they can then fill. The perseverance of the social worker also identified other family members whose details the parents had not shared.

There has been an excellent care team in place to support the parents and to support with multi agency decision making.

Although the parents are unable to care for baby alone, following family assessments they are going to be living with family and supported to care for their baby although not as primary carers.

From 2018 LGBTQ+ training has been delivered to foster carers on an annual basis. This provides carers with up to date information to help them provide positive care for young people with gender and sexuality issues. This further ensures that appropriate care, advice and guidance is provided to all looked after children and young people regardless of their specific needs.

### **Children, Young People and Inclusion**

- Our services cover 2 – 18 years. Our 71 schools cover the majority of our communities and we organise universal and bespoke travel to all those that need it, and in recognition of the geographical diversity within our local authority.
- All of our schools and education settings are designed to be accessible to all children, young people and members of the community. This takes into account any access requirements for those with physical disabilities.
- Schools are designed in partnership with communities to allow and encourage access and use of our facilities year round.
- We have additional support for families in greatest need of access through the parental employability support fund. The fund provides intensive family support targeted at those families with multi-generational unemployment. This has been in place for 2 months now, working with 18 families so far.
- Mainstreaming support for our refugee families (who are predominately from the Syrian community based in and around Galashiels). The support includes family learning classes, English as a Second Language classes and access to support to engage with public and community services. The Community Learning and Development team has established a support model for families in the refugee community to further promote this work, in partnership with Burgh Primary School.

- Targeted support for adults who have literacy and numeracy barriers, to enable greater access to all services and opportunities. This is a highly vulnerable, and often invisible group, of adults within our communities

## **Communities and Partnerships**

Equality of PPE availability - by utilising the community assistance hubs, we have been able to ensure fair and equitable access to PPE for those who need this to stay safe. Staff have managed local government PPE provision to ensure that requirements for PPE could be met and that PPE was always available for emergencies meaning no one went without PPE because they could not source or afford to buy it.

Shielding - the community assistance hubs worked with community resilience groups/volunteers to ensure that government food parcels were delivered to those shielding and that informal shopping arrangements were put in place where required so that no one had to go without food and that everyone was able to access the things they needed when shielding.

Protecting Vulnerable Service Users - over the last year, Multi Disciplinary Teams (MDT's) and volunteers have met regularly to discuss vulnerable clients and followed up on these cases to ensure that the needs of these service users were met and they were not disadvantaged as a result of their vulnerabilities.

Access to Care - MDT meetings are held between 3 and 5 times a week in all 5 hubs to discuss clients who are waiting on care provision to ensure that they get the care that best meets their needs and that care is accessible to all who may require care and that no one slips through the net because they have no one to speak for them.

## **Customer Advice and Support Service (CASS)**

Customers who are Deaf or hard of hearing can watch YouTube videos where a member of our team signs the relevant information. There are a number of videos available, one of which relates to a service we provide, free school meals and help with school wear.

Our everyday service provision is to advise customers on help that is available to them, customers who are Deaf or hard of hearing can get information that they could not have accessed via our phone line or at a Contact Centre.

We have been able to eliminate unlawful discrimination by providing a mechanism for customers who are Deaf or hard of hearing to access information in a way that meets their needs.

We have plans in CASS to further this mainstreaming of equality by extending these videos to Council Tax, Housing Benefit etc. This work has been added to our work plan, with a schedule in place.

This is a positive outcome for customers who are Deaf or hard of hearing as they can access information that may be relevant to them in a format that is easily accessed. It allows customers to independently access services with the correct information. CASS will be developing the subject areas available to ensure citizens continue to be provided with the opportunity to make their own choices and lead healthy lifestyles as a result of having information on benefits available etc. readily available.

## **Homelessness Services**

During Covid 19 a customer wanted to apply as homeless but as a key worker they were unable to take time off work to complete the telephone assessment. In order to overcome this a customer version of the form was developed which allowed the customer to return the form by email and emails were used for ongoing communications.

As lockdown continued we saw further incidence of this where people were unable to complete a telephone assessment, either due to communication difficulties where they found this difficult or from people being released from prison, as case officers were no longer able to attend in the prison.

Consequently this self-completed assessment form is now included within a wider package of options to ensure that the service is accessible to all.

Homeless households often face the prospect of spending time in temporary accommodation while they await permanent housing. It is vital that the homelessness temporary accommodation portfolio is able to meet the varying needs of our customers. To do this we

- have 123 temporary homelessness accommodation properties.
- All properties are self-contained and located within all of the main settlements of the Borders.
- Temporary accommodation properties vary in size and type
- This includes a variety of accessible accommodation properties
- With the exception of a small number of young person specific accommodation, the vast majority are ordinary housing within the community.

The benefit of providing ordinary, self-contained housing as temporary accommodation allows a flexible use and increased options for homeless households.

Homelessness services recognise that many of our applicants have different resources, skills and preferences when contacting the service for advice and support around their housing. In order to allow fair access homelessness services have multiple points of contact and communication methods:

- Email
- Web based forms
- Telephone
- Face to face
- We are in the process of introducing Near Me, a video consulting service that enables people to attend appointments from home or wherever is convenient.
- For applicants for whom English is not their first language, Language Line, interpreters and translators are offered.
- An out of hours service is operated to ensure that homeless households can access emergency accommodation whenever homelessness occurs.

Universal Health Assessment informs the allocation policy arrangements within Scottish Borders Registered Social Landlords (RSL's). The process allows for assessment of a person's health needs to inform their housing requirements and awards priority for housing if required.

Homelessness housing support services regularly collate customer feedback in relation to the experiences of homeless housing support services. Development work is currently under way to expand on this to strengthen lived experience as a key element of homelessness service design as we progress the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Below are some comments from our customers about the service they have received;

- *I was not in a good place when first supported I feel that housing support has helped me move onto a better situation*
- *I have made a big step forward and although I still have a way to go, housing support has got me in to a place I am ready to accept help.*
- *He made me feel valued and supported*
- *Very pleased with the house and you listened to my views and understood.*
- *Taken a lot of stress away due to poor mental health and made it easier to get a house*
- *I felt on two or three occasions it would have been easier to go back to jail, it was very overwhelming, thought I would fail and not manage my tenancy. The only thing that stopped this happening was regular support for my support officer. Support officer would keep me informed and explain each step and offer reassurance. I could call support officer any time I felt anxious or panicked and that the support officer would either take steps to resolve the issue or at least explain the process and timescales*
- *I would just like to highlight the fantastic support I received from x this week. He was so helpful and compassionate and it was much appreciated.*

### **Learning Disability Day Service**

The Learning Disability Day Service delivers support to adults in a day service setting and due to Covid 19 and the restrictions on building access service provision has been remodelled and delivered outreach support both in the

community and in the service user own homes. This has ensured people are still able to access our services.

One client requested an outreach service and support at home to maintain skills and to provide respite for her carer who was experiencing daily living extremely challenging. In commencing the request for respite support it was identified that part of the request regards medication would require regulated medication administration records to be kept and the carer was not content with this seeing it as being highly intrusive.

To ensure the service was still accessible, the service worked closely with the client and family to look at outcomes and deliverability of a return to a building based day services as a critical need both for the client and for the carer as respite. Communication through telephone calls and meetings with involvement and participation in the process relieved the anger and stress and has improved relationships with the service and being supported to have a say in her daughters support and being informed of the progression.

Already there is constructive positive and consistent communication a decrease in anxiety and stress and looking forward to structure, routine and being able to have time on her own including self-care.

**Outcome 3:** Everyone has the opportunity to participate in public life and the democratic process.

The following are examples of how the Council has sought to achieve this outcome:

### **Children and Young People**

- Support Young people to attend and input to Local Area Partnerships (each within our 5 localities). The partnerships are our main model of interface with communities, enabling a partnership between elected members and community representatives. We support and encourage marginalized young people to attend and contribute to these.
- Support Young people and parents to attend and input to the Education Executive (parent council forum, young people representatives on the education executive, members of the Scottish Youth Parliament – recruited by Community Learning and Development (CLD))
- Involve parents in policy and strategy development increasingly working with parent council chairs forum and others to have direct input – writing and dyslexia strategy, drug and alcohol work, health and wellbeing group, review of attendance policy, input into home learning approach during the closures of schools because of pandemic
- Parents involved and represented through Parent Councils – involved in schools policy and links to community

**Outcome 4:** We work in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure that our communities are cohesive and there are fewer people living in poverty.

### **Cheviot Hub**

Reducing poverty – distribution of food parcels; promotion and encouraging uptake of grants and benefits e.g. fuel debt grants, promotion of and assistance with digital opportunities and access to equipment.

- Promotion and facilitation of training/jobs opportunities (which is more about enabling people to get out of poverty rather than a short term sticking plaster response). I know Gillian has been working with SDS to access employment for a young man.
- Identification of community solutions
- Supporting communities to respond to local need

### **Children and Young People**

- Work with The Third Sector Interface to support community groups, Development Trusts and Village Halls
- Lead and support the Community Learning and Development Strategic Partnership focusing on employability, health and wellbeing, digital poverty
- Our schools work in close partnership with local community groups and employers to develop shared goals within the school and wider community
- Work across the five Localities through local community partnerships
- Multi agency work in the Community Assistance Hubs focusing on food and fuel poverty
- Address digital poverty through Inspire Learning and home learning approach in partnership with schools and parent councils
- Engaged in the Child Poverty Action plan with relevant agencies
- Children and Young People Leadership Group and Action Plan (leadership group) – partnership group: education, social work, health, key agencies and stakeholders through 4 key high level aims to improve services for all children and young people
- Virtual School developing thematic community of care experienced children and young people working with internal partners and national partners to ensure impact is maximized for care experienced learners from 0-26
- Commission Third sector Youth Groups to work with the most disengaged and vulnerable young people
- Proactively work with partners to promote free school meals support and Clothing Grants.

### **Communities & Partnerships**

The Communities & Partnership Team strive to engage with communities in the widest sense, and a strong focus of our work is to reduce inequalities, both within

the community planning environment in the development of the Community Plan and 5 Locality Plans. Through the work of our team (Locality Development Co-ordinators) within the Community Assistance Hubs, we are currently looking at ways to encourage more diverse communities to engage and participate in community meetings and to get involved.

Attending the following to ensure that we are informed, and to remind ourselves of our equality duties:

- Unconscious Bias Training
- Equality Training
- Disability Awareness Training
- LGBT Borders meetings
- Parent Voice meetings
- Older Adults Forum

Currently mapping out good practice in the following areas:

- Engagement training that is being developed between Angus Council and Scottish Community Development Centre – this may be something that SBC could adopt
- Transcription costs for meetings for those with hearing, visual and other disabilities
- Interpretation via British Sign Language

Arranged for a hearing impairment consultant to attend Tweeddale Area Partnership who gave good practice examples and tips on accessibility and how to encourage those with a hearing impairment attend and be involved in virtual meeting. Also offered practical examples of impact of background/lighting has on being able to be understood on virtual platforms etc. We will arrange for this consultant to attend the other 4 Area Partnerships.

We endeavour to bring communities together at Area Partnerships, and encourage and provide support to communities to work together to apply for funding and deliver projects. The team includes 3 Locality Development Co-ordinators whose main role is to:

- Support, inform and co-ordinate the work of the Area Partnerships to enable effective and constructive strategic partnership working
- Develop key working relationships with Elected Members, partners and officers at a local level to promote, facilitate and support the Area Partnership's engagement with residents, voluntary and community groups and other organisations.
- Resolve problems at a local level with key stakeholders
- Provide a key point of liaison and signposting for advice and guidance for local communities, Community Councils and Area Partnerships
- Support strategic community engagement in respect of the development of Locality Plans
- Build intelligence and information on community needs and priorities to assist in developing community plans and other community led initiatives
- Work with local communities to identify need and to enable the delivery of identified outcomes within the Locality Plans.

The creation of the Community Assistance Hubs in response to the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled our team to work more closely with our communities and to build trusted relationships with those that were previously not known to us.

We have worked closely with Resilient Community Teams, Foodbanks and other agencies and assisted in the co-ordination and delivery of food parcels, prescriptions, supermarket and fuel cards, and through this work gained a better understanding of inequalities and those who are disadvantaged within our communities.

We have been involved in identifying individuals within our communities who could benefit from digital devices through the Connecting Scotland Programme, and members of the team have also become Digital Champions, who have provided one-to-one support to enable those individuals to access online services and reduce social isolation etc.

We have also provided support to the individuals who were shielding during the pandemic by calling on a weekly basis to check in with them, to ensure that they have everything they needed and putting them in touch with any other agencies or partners if required.

## **Finance & Regulatory Services**

In May 2019 the Council awarded a four-year contract, worth £44,000, to maintain gardens for tenants of Scottish Borders Council Homeless Temporary Accommodation, to the Borders Green Team, a Hawick-based social enterprise. Borders Green Team trades as a business with a social and/or environmental benefit.

The service provides a high-quality professional gardening service that includes planting, fencing and Borders Green Team staff carry out weeding, strimming and grass cutting, as well as garden maintenance services at approximately 30 of the homelessness temporary accommodation properties throughout the Scottish Borders area.

“The Directors and management of the Borders Green Team Enterprises are very appreciative to Scottish Borders Council in being awarded the contract of maintaining the gardens for the Homeless Service throughout the Scottish Borders,” said manager, David Oliver. “This enables us to keep a full time supervisor in employment, which in turn helps greatly in the continuation of our core aim of providing work and training placements for our service users with physical and learning disabilities.”

The award of this contract demonstrates that the Council and its staff are committed to supporting the Borders Green Team’s ethos: a valuable service while guiding adults with learning disabilities towards employment.

## **Inspire Care – Digital Transformation in the Care Homes.**

In the build up to Christmas 2020, SB Cares worked with the Councils IT partner, CGI, to provide remote visits to care homes via user friendly video calling on iPads. The project provided iPads to all of the Council run care homes and allowed for our residents to easily meet up with loved ones via video call. The solution worked across platforms and was fully secure.

Whilst it was important to provide video calls during the restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the iPads remain in daily use throughout the care homes. We are looking forward to working with CGI to further develop the use of the iPads with additional apps and functionality.

The iPads and remote visiting brings families together and staff support service users enabling them to use the technology and keep in touch with their loved ones. This will continue to be beneficial well past COVID-19 restrictions as there are a number of families who live some distance away.

Our partners in CGI assisted the Care Homes to produce a video at Christmas which greatly lifted all involved from staff, service users and loved ones and also the wider public as the video was displayed on each care homes Facebook page.

**The youtube link for the video is: <https://youtu.be/gkKaJzo69hE>**

The next step with CGI brings us a Live Quiz which service users, staff and families can join in with and has been developed with local school children bringing together all generations of the community.

## **Justice Social Work**

Delivery of the service is a statutory requirement of the Local Authority. It is responsible for the production of reports including Criminal Justice Social Work Reports, Home Background & Circumstances Reports for Scottish Prison Service and Parole Board to inform decisions about progression, home leave, release on Parole/Non Parole licence and breach notification.

Justice social workers and paraprofessionals manage the supervision and monitoring of people placed on a range of court disposals, post-release orders and licences and other community disposals including diversion from prosecution. Engagement work is targeted at creating behavioural change and the reduction of risk of harm.

The primary disposal managed on behalf of the court is the supervision of Community Payback Orders including Unpaid Work and Other Activity.

JSW staff work closely with other statutory and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector services, including health, addiction and mental health support services, employment and adult learning organisations, the police and housing providers, to ensure pathways to address areas of unmet need are available to those the service works with.

The stigma and barriers experienced by people in the justice system can have a significantly negative impact on their ability to maintain a family life, gain employment and maintain a network of prosocial and supporting community relationships. It is not uncommon for individuals to be further negatively impacted due to gender, religious beliefs or disability. The work undertaken by justice social work is directed at breaking down these barriers.

## **Passenger Transport**

The Council's Passenger Transport Team has a number of operational responsibilities that deliver a wide range of benefits for the region including:

- Delivering Mainstream and Special and Additional needs School Transport
- Supporting local bus services
- Providing Demand Responsive Transport to smaller communities
- Working with Community councils and Community Transport operators to provide community based transport solutions
- Providing transport advice to local transport operators

We also work with colleagues, stakeholders, communities and Community Councils to develop transport solutions to:

- Enhance transport links between communities
- Reduce social isolation
- Reduce Transport Poverty
- Create a safe environment for our service users

Scottish Borders Council views the Borders as a place where everyone matters, has equal opportunities and should be treated with dignity and respect. Everyone has a right to attend work or travel on any of the services we provide without being targeted for who they are. These are values that the transport team have at the forefront of our minds when carrying out our day to day duties.

## **Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)**

As part of the RRTP action to improve digital access successful applications to the Connecting Scotland Programme were submitted, with 10 packages being awarded to homeless households and 237 packages to Registered Social Landlords (RSL) tenants.

Working in partnership is a vital element of homelessness services. Following a stakeholder feedback consultation below are some things that our key partners said about our housing support service.

- *Providing tremendous support for clients and liaising with other agencies etc. to bring everything together for people who are in real need*

- *They are very effective at supporting clients with complex problems into permanent accommodation.*
- *I feel the service is a vital component of homelessness services and we rely on their hard work and expertise to support vulnerable clients in their resettlement. Without them I have no doubt there would be a massive increase in the failure of tenancies and people would struggle to maintain them*
- *Great communication, partnership working, active problem solving and ability to look for solutions out of the norm*
- *Very professional approach and are non-judgemental.*
- *Knowledgeable and practical about helping someone to set up home.*
- *Often go out of their way to provide help in a timely way.*
- *Those I have worked with are non-judgemental and try to do the best for the individual.*

**Outcome 5:** Our citizens have the freedom to make their own choices and are able to lead independent, healthy lives as responsible citizens

The following are examples of how the Council has sought to achieve this outcome:

### **Children and Families Social Work**

The Children and Families Social Work Throughcare Aftercare Team undertook C Card training. The training focuses on enabling professionals to have conversations with young people who were sexually active, and provide advice and access to contraception. All staff in the Throughcare and Aftercare Team (9 staff members) were trained in providing the C Card service in the autumn of 2019, and the team is now a registered C Card access point for our young people. This has improved conversations about sexual health with young people, and there has been significant use of the contraception available in the team office by young people.

### **Children and Young People**

- Through Curriculum for Excellence we develop Active citizenship in our children and Young people.
- Health and well-being is a priority within our curriculum and our direct or commissioned support mechanisms for our C&YP
- Our CLD Adult learning service works with partners to support parents/adults and families to develop life skills and run Health and Wellbeing support activities and learning programmes

### **Justice Social Work Accredited Tools**

Accredited Tools are used by the service to identify both risk of harm and areas of unmet need, e.g. Outcomes Star. The use of the Star requires interaction and discussion with service users. In 2019 paraprofessionals and social workers, role dependent, were trained in the delivery of Outcomes Star. Implementation was delayed due to covid restrictions. The use of the tool increases the services

ability to identify areas of unmet need and to work with the service user and partner agencies to address areas of need, this may include social isolation, mental health, employability, substance use and homelessness issues.

The service has worked with and supported individuals who have identified as transgender during the period of time they were involved with social work, to link into other service providers in order to facilitate assessments and to develop new social connections. MOSAIC case file details were amended to reflect the chosen gender identity and change of name. Case notes and reports consistently identified the individual by their chosen gender. One individual was supported to remain in a programme developed for male perpetrators of sexual offences, following transition planning. Continuation was desired by the individual and considered by the social worker and group facilitator to be required to address the identified risk of harm. It is worth noting that the programme in question is extremely challenging, even more so when attended by a transgender person. The individual completed the programme and has not reoffended.

### **SBCares Home Care**

One client who receives a service is an older adult who lives in a rural location, at home with her husband. The client has lived in the village all her life, brought up her children and ran a successful business all from the same area and keen to stay in the village at home. Her husband is her main carer who is also aging and has health conditions of his own to contend with.

In early 2021, staff were reporting a decline in the client's general health and wellbeing, and a change in behaviours and mood. As a result of these declines and changes the client's husband's own health and wellbeing was declining. An urgent review was requested by carers to Social Work of this client's care package and review of the support in the setting.

Following the initial social work review, additional care hours were agreed and this included some social/respite time for her husband to allow him to lead an independent life and give him the freedom to make choices about how he spent some of his time. The outcomes of this were monitored and a further review was requested as the carer and the client's health and wellbeing was still concerning. A further review was commissioned using a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) approach including the client and family, the GP/ Social worker/ Mental Health Older Adult Team (MHOAT) and SB Cares. The client and her family were keen the client did not end up in 24 hour care and to stay at home.

Through this MDT approach the care plan was adapted further and a worker from the MHOAT worked with the care provider to support and upskill care staff. All staff in team have been provided with dementia skilled practice training, in addition the client's medication was reviewed and changed.

The outcome has been the client's wishes and needs were at the centre of all decisions and the husband is receiving the support needed to support the client and also receive time and space for himself. Staff have been upskilled in terms

of specific training to support the client and carer and the client has remained in her own home which was the outcome the client and her husband wanted which was delivered through an MDT approach with the person at the heart of the decision making through a person centred approach.

**Outcome 6:** The difference in rates of employment between the general population and those from under-represented groups is improved.

PI Code	PI Description	Update	
6.1	% difference pay gap between men and women who are resident in the Scottish Borders	According to the 2020 Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the mean gross weekly full time pay for males who were resident in Scottish Borders was £665.70. For females it was £567, representing a 17.4% difference.  This is a similar pay gap to 2019 (Source: NOMIS)	
6.2	% difference pay gap between men and women who work in the Scottish Borders	According to the 2020 Annual Survey for Hours and Earnings (ASHE), the mean gross weekly full time pay for males whose workplace was in Scottish Borders was £573.50. For females it was £561, representing a 2.3% difference.  This is less than the 4.2% gender pay gap in 2019. (Source: NOMIS)	
6.3a	Economic activity rate aged 16-64 - who have a work-limiting disability	2019: 40.6%	2020: 46.2%
6.3b	Economic activity rate aged 16-64 – who do <b>not</b> have a work limiting disability	2019: 86.9%	2020: 86.1%
6.4	Employment Rate: Females 16-64	2019: 71.7%	
		2020: 76.1%	
6.5	Employment Rate: Males 16-	2019: 80.2%	
		2020: 81.1%	

	64	
6.6	Employment Rate: All aged 16-24	2019: 60.9%
		2020: 57.2%
6.7	Employment Rate: All aged 16-64 Ethnic Minority*	2019: 86%
		2020: 58.1%
6.8	Employment Rate: All aged 50-64	2019: 71.5%
		2020: 77.6%
6.9	Percentage of JSA (Jobseeker's Allowance) claimants who are from an Ethnic Minority*	2019 and 2020: Insignificant numbers in Annual Population Survey
6.10	% of people with no qualifications	No data in Annual Population Survey for Scottish Local Authorities.  Scottish surveys Core Questions estimated the percentage of people in 2020 with no qualifications in Scottish Borders was 14.7%, just under the 15% average for Scotland

Unemployment has increased significantly in the past year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and is likely to increase further due to the end of the UK national furloughing scheme for employees. Young people aged 16-24 have been particularly affected.

The Scottish Government have responded to the problems in the labour market with an additional £100 million to be invested in targeted employment support and training, including:

- £60 million in a Young Person's Guarantee to give all young people access to work, training or education.
- £25 million in a National Transition Training Fund to support those facing redundancy and unemployment, focused on helping those in sectors and regions most exposed to the current economic downturn.
- £5 million to maximise resources for those facing redundancy through Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE).

The UK Government has launched the Kickstart scheme, which provides funding to employers to create new 6-month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long-term unemployment.

In response to the challenges arising from increasing unemployment in the Scottish Borders, the Council's Corporate Management Team has established a Leadership Group on Employability. This is led by the Executive Director, Corporate Improvement and Economy and involves the Service Director Human Resources & Communications, Service Director Young People Engagement and Inclusion, the Service Director Customers & Communities, Employment Support Services Manager and Senior Policy Adviser. Also there is an inter-service Employability Officer group which reports into this Leadership Group.

The Council is also working closely with Borders College to coordinate employability and training across the Scottish Borders. This is undertaken by the Borders Learning and Skills Partnership and this body includes representation from a range of organisations including Developing the Young Workforce, Heriot Watt University, South of Scotland Enterprise Agency, the voluntary sector and national agencies such as the Department of Work and Pensions and Skills Development Scotland. It has links into the employment, skills and training work being carried out at a South of Scotland level, and as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

Scottish Borders Council is also playing a significant role in directly supporting employability measures.

This involves:

- Operating its own all age Employment Support Service, based in Human Resources
- Delivering on Scottish Government funded employability programmes as part of the local No One Left Behind delivery plan. This comprises the Parental Employment Support and Youth Employability programmes.
- Using European Social Fund monies to support the work of the Council's Employment Support Service, and to improve the employability of vulnerable individuals such as people with special needs and care leavers.
- Carrying out a disadvantaged families' initiative led by the Council's Community Learning and Development service with specific funding as part of Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Integrated Regional Employment Services (IRES).

The Council has responded to the Scottish and UK Government's employability programmes and the problems of increasing unemployment particularly facing young people in the Scottish Borders, by taking a leading role in the implementation locally of the Kickstart scheme. It has also taken action in relation to the Youth Guarantee Fund and the enhancement of the PACE Redundancy initiative.

In relation to the UK Government's Kickstart programme, the Council, using its Employment service, has acted as the lead partner (a Gateway Organisation) with other partners from the Borders Learning and Skills Partnership: NHS Borders, Borders College, the Scottish Borders Enterprise Chamber and the Chamber of Commerce and put forward a bid to the Department of Work and Pensions for 90 Kickstart places for young people. This will involve the

arrangement of employment placements with public, private and voluntary sector employers. The Council will themselves take 30 Kickstart placements which will include opportunities within Social Care and Cleaning but will not be restricted to these vocations as choice of job will be important.

The Scottish Government has allocated monies to local authorities to deliver the Youth Guarantee Fund. This programme of work will be delivered by the Council's Community Learning and Development and Employment Support supported by Economic Development.

It is intended that that the delivery plan will support 222 young people. This will be targeted at the following groups

- Young people who face significant barriers to employment
- 16/17 year olds who are not eligible for Kickstart
- Young People who are not engaging with mainstream provision
- Care experienced young people
- Young people who are not in a positive destination
- Those with mental health issues including autism
- Young people from remote rural areas
- Young people with disabilities/ Additional Support Needs.

It is planned to work closely with partners to reach the more vulnerable young people who are most in need of employability support. These partners include the pastoral teams within secondary schools, Skills Development Scotland, Job Centre Plus and third sector specialist service providers.

Local Authorities are also to receive Partnership Action for Continuing Employment (PACE) funding to employ an officer who would be a single point of contact (SPOC) for PACE and a key worker to provide PACE support. In discussion with Skills Development Scotland and other partners it is considered that the most appropriate way to use this money is to strengthen the local PACE team, by appointing a PACE SPOC officer and PACE support worker within the Council. This will enhance services to existing and potential clients.

**Outcome 7:** The difference in educational attainment between those who are from an equality group and those who are not is improved.

PI Code	PI Description	2021 progress update
7_1	Positive 5 year trend in literacy and numeracy outcomes at SCQF levels 4 and 5 for both	% Level 4 Literacy and Numeracy (89.1%) % Level 5 Literacy and Numeracy (68.1%) <b>Source:</b> Insight Data

	males and females	
7_2	Positive destinations for Looked After males and females (LAC) will be an improving trend	83.3%  <b>Source:</b> Data Hub
7_3	To increase the educational outcomes for pupils living in Quintile 1 by 10% at all levels by June 2019	P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CfE level in literacy – 24.9% gap  P1, P4 and P7 pupils combined achieving expected CfE level in numeracy – 28.8% gap  <b>Source:</b> Local Government Benchmark Data (from 2018/2019)

The following are examples of how the Council has sought to achieve this outcome:

### Children and Young People

- Targeted and focused work happening in all schools to identify gaps in attainment and address these.
- Significant impact on attainment for some communities as a result of the pandemic. Although very strong multi-agency support in place for marginalised families during school closures (community hubs, bespoke learning, Inspire learning digital programme, door step visits) the indirect impact of the pandemic on attainment due to impact on families has been significant (family income, family wellbeing, living circumstances, etc.).
- SBC wide learning, teaching and assessment frameworks have supported schools in recognizing the core skills which all young people need to achieve in order to thrive. Developing approaches to enabling targeted inputs for those who are from an equality group to ensure that they approach to implementation is equitable.
- Mainstreaming of protected characteristics within the culture and curriculum schools have early but significant impact, e.g. nurturing approaches, protected characteristics month, anti-racism project, celebration of diversity in English curriculum, and so on.

**Outcome 8:** We have appropriate accommodation which meets the needs of our diverse community.

PI Code	PI Description	Progress to Date		DataSource
		2018/19	2019/20	
8_1	% of the Households receiving Housing Benefit (HB) that are Social Renting	78.1% (May 18)	79.6% (snapshot as of 1st April 2021)	Northgate SBC's Revenues and Benefits System
8_2	% of the Households receiving HB that are Private Renting	21.8% (May 18)	19.0% (snapshot as of 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2021)	Northgate SBC's Revenues and Benefits System
8_3	% of Households experiencing Fuel Poverty	29% (2016-2018)	29% (2017-2019)	Scottish House Condition Survey (SHCS)
8_4	% of Households experiencing extreme Fuel Poverty	15% (2016-2018)	14% (2017-2019)	SHCS
8_5	% of Dwellings where adaptations are required by householders	4% (2016-2018)	2% (2017-2019)	SHCS
8_6	Number of persons receiving aids/adaptations (includes minor repairs, minor adaptations and major adaptations)	515	521	SBC
8_7	Number of new homes completed (include both market and affordable housing)	345	331	SBC

8_8	Number of households approaching the Council for homelessness advice or assistance	843	928	SBC
8_9	Average length of time spent in temporary accommodation by homeless households	128 days	116 days	Scottish Housing Regulator
8_10	Number of site pitches for exclusive use of Gypsy/Travellers	10	10	SBC

The following are examples of how the Council has sought to achieve this outcome:

### **Children and Families Social Work**

Albert Place Supported Accommodation Project for vulnerable young Care Leavers opened on the 10th March 2010. It is a joint Scottish Borders Council (Throughcare Aftercare and Homeless Teams) and Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) initiative which provides semi-supported accommodation for care experienced young people. The project consists of 4 self-contained semi-furnished transitional flats, 1 Training Flat and a Concierge Office. SBC Concierge staff provide tenants with on-site security & support from 6pm to 6am 365 days a year. Along with providing emotional & practical hands on support with a variety of day to day issues, SBHA Transitions staff also provide information, advice & guidance on all aspects of housing options, tenancy management, independent living skills, safe door control & neighbourly respect. Transitions staff also have the lead role in providing support with all the necessary preparations for moving on to more independent living in the wider community, access to other appropriate accommodation & the setting up of their new home.

Albert Place Supported Accommodation project is registered with the Care Inspectorate and is subject to National Health, Social Care & Housing Support Standards.

Albert Place has had significant success in providing support and accommodation for care experienced young people and enabled many of them to sustain permanent tenancies of their own following the period of transitional support.

Since the project opened there have been 39 young care leavers living in Albert Place (16 stayed for 12 months or more, 8 stayed for 6 months, 4 stayed for less than 6 months & the remainder stayed an average of 8/9 months.)

- 37 young Care Leavers have moved on to independent living.
- 1 went on to live with supported carers (accessed their own tenancy after 1 year and sustained their tenancy for 12 months or more)
- 4 went back to live with parents - 3 eventually accessed their own tenancies and sustained their tenancies for 12 months or more.
- 2 moved into temporary homeless accommodation straight from Albert Place. (Both have since accessed their own accommodation and sustained their tenancies for 12 months or more).
- 5 did not manage to maintain their tenancies for the first 12 months on leaving Albert Place. 3 have since managed tenancies for 12 months or more.
- 24 sustained their tenancy for the first 12 months or more straight after leaving Albert Place.
- 1 has not had the time to reach the 12 months mark yet.

Having had the opportunity to take their first steps towards independent living within Albert Place, 33 young care leavers out of 36 have been successful in maintaining a tenancy for 12 months or more. This equates to a success rate of 91.66%.

Albert Place also has a training flat which is used to help young people develop independent living skills. Since August 2017 35 young people have used the flat (524 overnight stays).

The statistics above show that for the vast majority of young care leavers, the opportunities, care and support they received whilst at Albert Place has had a direct and positive effect on their ability to manage their own tenancies out in the wider community and ultimately their long term outcomes.

## **Strategic Housing**

### **Delivery of New Housing**

The delivery of new affordable housing improves access to housing for all. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) sets out the key strategic housing investment priorities for affordable housing over a five year period. The current SHIP 2021-26 sets out ambitious proposals for up to 1,125 new affordable homes in the Borders, with a total investment in the region of £166m for 2021-26. There is likely to be a positive impact on all nine protected characteristics.

### **Means Tested/ Grant Assisted Adaptations**

The Housing (Scotland) Act places a mandatory duty on local authorities to provide assistance to households seeking to meet the needs of a disabled occupant. To help deliver this requirement Scottish Borders Council has a

contract with Borders Care and Repair. The aim of the service is to enable older people and people with disabilities living in the private sector to have warm, well maintained and safe homes.

The Care and Repair service helps achieve this by providing support for improvements and adaptations to the homes of clients – including managing grant application submissions on behalf of private sector clients for adaptation works.

The Service provides a Home Handyperson service to help to support community care groups (prioritising older people and people with disabilities), to continue to live at home through the provision of practical household help and support. All small adaptations within the scope set out for the Handyperson service are being dealt with and most NHS Health offices are using this service. The Handyperson service is fitting all equipment requests from Social Work Services and NHS Care and Repair trained Occupational Therapists

### **Key statistics 2019/20:**

- 116 completed major adaptations at a cost of £408,540.
- Under the Scheme of Assistance, practical assistance was given to 40 cases regarding repair and maintenance including common repair; empty homes advice; support to landlords and tenants and, as a last resort, enforcement. In addition general information and advice was also provided in regard to private property house condition concerns.

### **Extra Care Housing**

Part of the strategy for increasing the numbers of older people that are assisted to live at home, including those receiving more intensive home care or 'extra care' services, will be achieved by increasing the supply and availability of extra care housing as alternatives to current residential care home provision. Progress has been made in achieving this through the delivery of extra care housing schemes across the Borders in recent years.

Extra Care Housing supports higher levels of dependency but also provides an environment for lively and active old age. The Extra Care Housing is based on self-contained flats, rather than small rooms as in residential care, and offers care and support at the same level as residential care, for those that need it, available 24 hours a day. For people with dementia, Extra Care Housing provides an alternative to being cared for at home or going straight into a care home.

There has been considerable progress made in 2020/21 to develop the service specification and contracts between the Council, Eildon and Trust Housing Associations. The first development in the Extra Care Housing programme was completed in February 2021. This was Trust Housing Association's development of 30 flats at Longfield Crescent, Todlaw, Duns. The Council and Trust have developed a joint approach to promote the development, the services provided and allocate tenancies. Meanwhile construction of Eildon Housing Association's

development of 39 flats at Wilkie Gardens, Langhaugh, Galashiels is now well advanced, with completion anticipated in summer 2021. In addition work is beginning at the former Kelso High School site which will provide 36 Extra Care flats for Eildon Housing Association upon completion around December 2022.

### **Wheelchair Accessible Housing**

In March 2019 the Scottish Government issued guidance to Councils requiring them to set targets for the delivery of wheelchair accessible homes across all tenures and to develop plans for meeting these. In response to this, the Council's Housing Strategy Team commissioned consultants to further investigate the need for such housing within Scottish Borders.

Following the delivery of the finalised report titled "A Space to live – Wheelchair accessible housing in the Scottish Borders" by consultants in January 2020, work has continued to engage stakeholders. It is intended that the action plan will now be delivered and integrated with the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 actions through the LHS monitoring and reporting processes.

The final report identified a wide range of issues and challenges which will need to be addressed at national as well as at a local Scottish Borders level by the Council and partner agencies. The core findings indicated that up to 20 new wheelchair accessible homes will be required, per year, across all tenures in order to address current unmet and future need. This target is reflected in the Council's current Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2021/2026. During 2020/21, two new build homes were completed to wheelchair accessible housing standards. These were delivered by Trust Housing Association at the new Extra Care Housing development at Longfield Crescent, Todlaw, Duns.

## **Mainstreaming Equality in Education**

Scottish Borders Council is committed to providing an education service which has a relentless focus on supporting all members of our communities to thrive. We are working hard to ensure that equity, equality and inclusion are at the heart of what we do.

### **Our equality aims:**

1. Improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy for all learners.
2. Positive destinations for all Care Experienced and Looked After learners.
3. Increased educational attainment and achievement for children and young people disadvantaged by poverty.
4. Closure of poverty related attainment and achievement gaps in line with SBC poverty action plan (new).

### **Achievements and progress to date:**

#### **1. Improved outcomes in literacy and numeracy for all learners.**

##### **Embedded SBC literacy & numeracy strategies 2019 – 2025 in all schools and educational settings across Scottish Borders Council**

The strategies form an integral part of our approach to improving literacy and numeracy for all learners, across all stages of schooling. They work in tandem with our learning, teaching & assessment framework and our inclusion framework, empowering schools to rapidly improve outcomes and embed high quality literacy and numeracy for all.

The strategies are designed to ensure that all of learners will experience daily high quality learning, teaching and assessment. It recognises the following research led and evidence-based approaches:

- Literacy & numeracy develop most effectively when schools and settings promote daily opportunities for skills development within both literacy (reading, writing, talking, listening) and numeracy (thinking, talking and recording mathematically).
- Promoting Reading for Pleasure (fiction specifically) can and does raise attainment and improves wider wellbeing. Adults in our schools and community are Literacy Role Models, promoting reading, writing, talking and listening as an enjoyable and engaging experience.
- Conceptual understanding is foundational to creating successful numeracy learners. This understanding is a shared responsibility for all teachers and practitioners, as numeracy for all develops.
- All of our learners experience meaningful and engaging contexts with opportunities to view and experience Literacy and Numeracy as life skills.
- Our schools and settings engage families as partners in learning.

## **Introduction of Inspire Learning**

The Inspire Learning Programme is the Council's strategic education transformation programme which aims to deliver the very best technology to enhance the learning and teaching experience in the classroom. It is a sustainable commitment to technology at the heart of learning with a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people and our communities.

Inspire Learning is transforming teaching and learning across the Borders for the benefit of all teachers, children and young people. This includes the provision of iPads to all P5-S6 pupils.

This programme is aimed at raising attainment and supporting equality and inclusion for all children and young people. It is about investing in the learning of our young people and putting them at the heart of education, improving outcomes and success for all. The effective deployment of digital technology in schools will ensure our children and young people develop a level of general and specialist digital skills that are vital for learning, life and work in an increasingly digital world.

The Programme has been rolled out across all schools, with all learners having access to remote technology. This provided a powerful tool for continued achievement for learners during COVID 19-related school closures, and enabled school teams to continue to engage with their families.

## **2. Positive destinations for all Looked After learners.**

### **SBC Virtual School**

Established in 2019, the Scottish Borders Virtual School acts as a local authority champion to promote the educational achievement, attainment and experience of all of our looked after and care experienced children and young people. As a member of the corporate parenting group, the Virtual School works alongside colleagues in Social Work, Health and other agencies to advocate for learners and provide educational support and direction.

The Virtual School is not a physical school but rather a strategic entity, set up to provide additional oversight and support for children and young people who are care experienced. The Virtual School headteacher (VSHT) role is carried out by the local authority Equity & Inclusion Lead Officer. The VSHT works in partnership with the designated manager in each school to identify needs and support multi-agency partnership working to ensure that we are meeting the needs of all of our care experienced and looked after children and young people, addressing any additional support required and securing positive destinations for all when they leave school.

Current key priorities of the Virtual School include:

- Enabling learner voice of looked after and care experienced learners, to give agency and opportunity to have a say over what support they need.
- Supporting transition meetings for looked after children and young people.
- Targeted support for young people to rapidly increase progress and secure positive destinations.
- Identify opportunities to further develop partnership work with multiple agencies and third-sector organisations.

### **Care Experienced Careers Fair 2019**

One of the inaugural activities of the Virtual School was to hold a careers and skills development event for all looked after and care experienced secondary school pupils in Summer 2019. The event was developed in partnership with Skills Development Scotland, and provided access to skills building workshops and careers information for young people. Feedback from young people and schools was resoundingly positive, and led to increased engagement in positive destinations developments upon their return to school.

### **3. Increased educational attainment and achievement for children and young people affected by poverty.**

As part of our Integrated Children and Young People's Plan, SBC is committed to reducing the poverty-related attainment gap. This is a key focus of all members of the Education Service team. We work alongside colleagues from Education Scotland, SEIC and the Scottish Government to support schools with the development of the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Progress highlighted by Education Scotland in our first five years includes:

The key strengths are:

- Schools have worked together to supplement Pupil Equity Fund plans across clusters.
- Partnership working with Community Learning and Development (CLD) and third-sector partners has helped schools deliver successful programmes for the most disadvantaged children and young people, and their families.
- Improvements in outcomes for care experienced children and young people, for example:
  - Increase in attendance and reduction in exclusion rates;
  - Increasing attainment in literacy for school leavers;
  - A higher proportion of Looked After young people living in Scottish Borders achieving qualifications in the Senior Phase than the national average;
  - Improving trend in the percentage of school leavers entering a sustainable positive destination.
- Improvements in attainment for children and young people living within SIMD quintile 1 (Q1), for example:

- In literacy, attainment is higher than the national average at third and fourth level;
- In numeracy, attainment has increased at early level;
- In the Senior Phase, overall attainment has increased at SCQF levels 5 and 6.
- Progress in closing the poverty-related attainment gap, for example:
  - In literacy, at first level the attainment gap has been reduced and at first, third and fourth level, the gap is below the national average.

The SBC Child Poverty Indicator (CPI) tool has been developed to supplement SIMD data and, taking account of the rurality of the authority, provide a more detailed understanding of how poverty might have an impact on the lives of children and young people in their context. This has been further developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, to attempt to understand the impact that has had on disadvantage for our children and young people, and their families.

Further developments have included action research within the Educational Psychology in Berwickshire High School and Hawick High School. Both of these developments were recognised by HMIE as examples of positive, research led practice in addressing educational disadvantages which are directly linked to poverty.

#### **Further achievements to build on:**

#### **4. Enhanced children's rights within all schools and educational settings, in line with United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC.)**

The UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in the Scottish Parliament on 1st September 2020 and was passed unanimously on 16th March 2021. The main purpose of the Bill is bring the UNCRC into Scots law.

The principles of the UNCRC form part of our equity and equality strategy moving forwards, with a particular focus on the following UNCRC principles:

#### **General principles**

- Right to non-discrimination;
- Right to express views freely.

#### **Civil rights & freedoms**

- Freedom of expression;
- Freedom of thought & association;
- Access to information;
- Right not to be tortured or ill-treated.

#### **Education, leisure & cultural activities**

- Right to education;
- Right to play;
- Right to leisure and to participate in cultural life & the arts.

**Special protection measures:**

- Rights of refugee children;
- Rights of children in the juvenile justice system.

In recognition of the Bill, schools in Scottish Borders have begun to review their approaches to Children’s Rights education to ensure that we are meeting UNCRC requirements – with a particular focus on the principles highlighted above. Over the coming months we will work alongside colleagues in Scottish Government to further articulate how we are meeting UNCRC requirements and create detailed plans for how we will further progress Children’s Rights in line with the UNCRC principles.

**5. Mainstreaming of equalities for all protected characteristics into school curricula.**

Building on the success of our LGBTQ+ work within schools, there is a developing culture of inclusivity which mainstreams protected characteristics so that all children and young people feel a sense of belonging in their school communities. Equality & diversity are increasingly becoming part of school culture in the broadest sense, for example through curricular planning and development, working with learners to give them agency in identifying themselves within their learning and as a part of the school community.

Earlston High School, for example, held an online daily celebration of each of the protected characteristics over the course of a month during the school closure period early in 2021. This further supported the development of an equitable school culture, for all young people to feel included. Other examples include operational structures and processes within schools to ensure that all areas of a school site feel inclusive for all children and young people, for example in the development of inclusive toilets.

**6. Closure of poverty related attainment and achievement gaps in line with SBC poverty action plan.**

The national Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-2022, ‘Every Child, Every Chance’, recognises the importance of preventative measures to improve children’s quality of life and help families manage the impacts of poverty. Building children’s resilience in the face of poverty and other adversity is expected to boost their long-term outcomes.

Research recently published by the End Child Poverty Coalition shows that levels of child poverty have risen in nearly every Scottish Local Authority since 2014/15 once housing costs are taken into account. This is before the impact of

the COVID-19 Pandemic is taken into account, which is likely to make the situation worse.

The SBC poverty action plan includes the following immediate actions to address and mitigate against the gaps in attainment and achievement experienced by children disadvantaged by poverty:

- Family learning programmes in primary schools where there are the highest levels of poverty
- Telephone/online support to parents/carers. This includes support/signposting and learning around financial inclusion and delivering programmes to develop employability skills
- Parental employability support to increase parental income through employment
- Support the reduction of costs of the school day by facilitating and contributing to school uniform swaps and clothing banks
- Draw up individual school plans for targeted intervention to close the poverty related attainment gap
- Roll out poverty related training to all staff in Education Service
- Create an equity network and link to other Local Authorities to share best practice in education for children and young people affected by poverty
- Targeted programmes to support disadvantaged young people to succeed and achieve
- Participate in Scottish Government's Youth Guarantee by the offer of an appropriate study programme for all school leavers who apply

# **Mainstreaming the Equality Duty as an Employer**

## **Human Resources Policies and Practice**

### **HR Policies**

Equality and diversity are fundamental principles in all HR policies and procedures and are actively promoted in the Council. All policies are regularly reviewed and updated to reflect changes in legislation and good practice. All of the Council's Policies have been impact assessed for relevance to the equality duty, including associated protected characteristics, and the Fairer Scotland duty.

SBC will continue to review all policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect SBC's commitment to ensuring that it promotes an equitable and inclusive workplace.

### **New Appraisal & Competency Framework**

The Council has designed a new Appraisal System & Competency Framework to work together and to support the "Fit for 2024" modernisation and transformation agendas through the development of an organisational culture that enables more effective, performing teams and supports and encourages employee to be flexible, customer focused & committed to delivery of quality and excellent services.

Some of the benefits are:

- Better communication between the employee and their line manager to clarify what's expected from the employee and what support they need from their line manager.
- Agreeing and being clear on SMART objectives (goals) and planning for the future.
- SMART objectives will be developmental, role and Competency ('behaviour') related, which will support the overall Service and the Council's aims and values.
- Development plans enabling employees to take more initiative for their personal development and identify a Career Path.

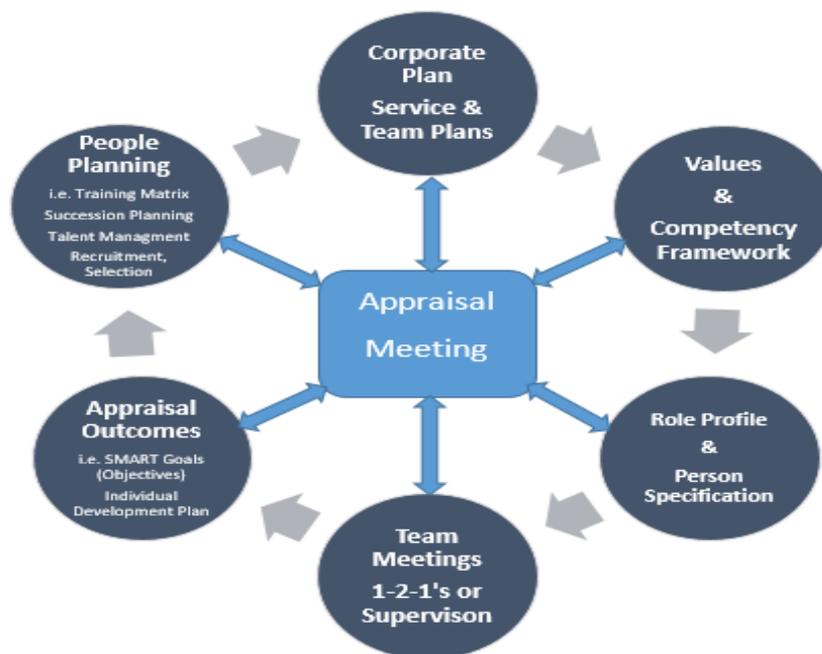
All employees and managers are required to participate in the Appraisal & Competency Framework. The outcomes and development plans are recorded on Business World.

The Appraisal is the method of evaluating employees, along with agreed and monitored individual SMART objectives, producing individual development plans. The Competency Framework sets out examples of the positive standards of behaviours to be expected in roles, which reflect the behaviours of successful,

performing teams in 6 Competencies: Great Service, Change, Working Together, Diversity, Communication and Performance.

The Council's purpose is to deliver Public Services, and everything we do directly or indirectly, underpins Corporate and Service objectives, thereby contributing to delivering and continuously improving our Services, so we can improve outcomes for people in the Scottish Borders.

### How the Appraisal & Competency Framework fits with People Management



### Career Pathways

Recruitment to some professional posts can be difficult so we are looking to design career pathways across the Council. This will enable us not only to attract potential staff to come and work with the Council but also as a gateway for many people across a number of age groups and backgrounds to find employment by supporting them in a career through funding, skilling and educating. This would help those who feel particularly disadvantaged for a variety of reasons including poverty and accessibility to such resources and support. This will allow for a greater pool of diverse talent to be brought into the Council. In turn this will help to address our workforce age profile, and assist with recruitment and retention.

### Disability Confident Scheme

In 2018 the Council became a Disability Confident Employer and this is the level that we continue to retain. The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a

government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. The Council employs the Disability Confident logo to demonstrate that applicants with disabilities are encouraged and welcomed.

### **Living Wage Employer**

In 2019 Living Wage accreditation was achieved and the Council continues to hold this accreditation. This involves a commitment to pay all employees the real living wage, and to impose the same obligation on contractors engaged to provide services to the Council. The living wage is currently £9.50 and is based on cost of living. Research has shown that paying the living wage helps organisations recruit and retain better staff, reduce absenteeism and encourage higher productivity.

### **Mentally Healthy Workplace & Stress Management Policy/Mental Health First Aiders**

The Council is committed to the protection and promotion of the mental health and wellbeing of all staff which is reflected through its Mentally Healthy Workplace & Stress Management Policy. This revised Policy replaces 3 separate policies which covered Stress in the Workplace and Mentally Healthy Workplaces with one policy covering the interlinked areas. The policy takes an holistic approach to continuously improve the mental health environment and culture of the organisation to protect and promote the mental health and wellbeing of all its staff.

It provides for the provision of Mental Health First Aiders, support for Mental Health First Aiders as well as a structured approach to Mental Health Training.

In addition the policy provides a process for ensuring Stress Management assessment is carried out according to the requirements of the HSE's Management Standards which will be led by the Health and Safety Team.

The recently revised policy has been further updated to include supporting guidance for managers and employees.

The guidance provides guidelines on managing stress in the workplace, details symptoms of stress, what to do if you are feeling mentally unwell, what managers should do if an employee reports feeling mentally unwell or if they believe that may be the case, available training and a comprehensive list of support services.

The Policy and its supporting guidance, is published on the internal intranet and external employee pages of the Council's website.

As part of the implementation of the Policy the Council's Mental Health First Aiders have undergone refresher training.

The Mental Health First Aid scheme, provides a first response service to staff who are in mental health crisis.

The scheme is widely promoted through the Council by way of First Aid Notices posted throughout the Council. Furthermore Mental Health First Aiders are easily recognised as all have a distinctive purple lanyard as opposed to the Council's corporate colours of burgundy and white.

Simone Doyle, Mental Health First Aider says: "I am so pleased that I have now finalised my training and am ready and able to help any member of staff that may be experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress. These are certainly trying times and it's becoming obvious that there is a need for such support within SBC and having available trained officers across SBC is a valuable asset".

The scheme is there to help if employees are experiencing a mental health issue or emotional distress, or have concerns about a colleague. It is free and completely confidential.

There are a number of ways to get in touch including telephone, Skype, and email. The helpline is available during office hours. Outside office hours employees are recommended to call one of external sources for emotional support found within the Mentally Healthy Workplace & Stress Management Policy.

## **Recruitment & Employee Data**

The Council collects equal opportunities information at the recruitment stage and from current employees, for the purposes of this report this information can be found in this section of the report together with appendix 1.

It should be noted that completing the Equality Monitoring Form is not mandatory and this can lead to individuals choosing not to fill out the form or only answer specific questions. This is particularly evident when looking at the disability, gender reassignment and carer categories.

In addition, all of the Council's employees are encouraged to complete the personnel section of the HR system 'Business World'. However areas such as sexual orientation, transgender, race, and disability have low numbers of completions.

The Council uses the data it collects in order to better perform the equality duty and to understand the recruitment and workforce profile, enabling us to identify areas of improvement and eliminate any adverse impact on equality when developing or amending HR policies.

Work continues on refining our data collection in order to improve the rates of completion and as such Business World has undergone a number of refinements to ensure that all employees who have access to an internet enabled device have access to the system. Through this employees are encouraged to check their details and update as necessary, including information held on equalities.

There is also the need to develop reporting that will allow us to carry out analysis of employee benefits take up and employee promotions. We will endeavour to complete these improvements during the life span of this mainstreaming report.

### **SBLearn: Video Arts Wellbeing Essentials**

In response to the new ways of working necessitated by the COVID 19 pandemic, we have been delivering our training remotely using Microsoft Teams and other online platforms that staff can access either through the council IT network or via their own internet connection on personal devices. This has allowed a greater degree of flexibility and increased uptake for a number of our courses and staff accessing our training materials.

We have created some entirely new courses to help support colleagues perform effectively in the new working environment, and revised and redesigned some of our existing courses for remote delivery. We have also worked closely with some of our training suppliers to ensure the continuity of training in the online environment. Our eLearning provision has been further developed over the period, and we have launched a package of learning and development videos which have been well received and widely used, which includes a resource focusing specifically on unconscious bias and diversity, which complements our existing eLearning packages on equality and diversity awareness. We have also been promoting mental health awareness and wellbeing through a series of remote training sessions on mental health issues, personal resilience and stress management for both employees and managers.

### **Staff Engagement**

Since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, many of the Council's employees have been working from home. The IT infrastructure was already in place to support remote working, therefore the transition, from a technical perspective, was relatively straightforward. The mental health and wellbeing of all staff is paramount and the Council has supported its staff through the crisis by issuing relevant guidance on topics ranging from homeworking, managing mental wellbeing, eating well and staying active.

## **Staff Support**

Staff support is provided via our Occupational Health provider and as well as referrals to the Occupational Health service they offer a 24 hour professional confidential counselling service. This is part of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which also offers advice on a number of matters, including financial and legal advice.

The EAP can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week either online or through a confidential phone line.

A mediation service is provided to address any issues which may arise between employees, to provide support and improve working relationships within the workplace. The Council has a number of ACAS accredited mediators.

## **Staff Survey**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has radically changed the way the Council and our staff operate and deliver services to residents and communities. Due to the speed with which the pandemic developed these changes had to be made in a very short space of time.

There have been a significant number of developments during our COVID-19 response that have been positive, including widespread effective homeworking and increased use of technology.

As we look to the future, both short term and beyond, it was vital that we understood where services had been able to successfully adapt and work in a new way, and equally where there are challenges as well as where improvements could be made. We also were acutely aware that the pandemic has and continues to create disruption - and with that comes a degree of anxiety felt by many. Some staff are still working in customer and client facing roles, while all of us are impacted by the lockdown which has stopped many of the activities that allow us to recharge and look after ourselves. This makes it important to focus on staff wellbeing.

Staff surveys were undertaken in the May and July 2020 and January – February 2021, focussing on themes such as the Council's response to COVID 19, Home Working and Health, Safety and Wellbeing as well as the impact of caring responsibilities and the Mainstreaming Report and Equality Outcomes.

As a result of the overwhelming feedback that employees wished a blended approach to homeworking, revised guidance on Agile Working and Home Working was made available including a scheme allowing staff to purchase equipment they needed for home working.

In relation to staff Health, Safety and Wellbeing, the majority of respondents felt they had been well supported by the Council and 75% of respondents stated that they felt safe in their working environment. The majority of respondents felt their wellbeing was good and that they had increased their own health & wellbeing during COVID 19

## **Equal Pay Statement**

Scottish Borders Council, as a council, constituted under section 2 of the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994 and as an education authority in terms of S.135(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, is committed to equal pay for all its employees and aims to eliminate any bias in relation to pay systems on any ground, including gender, disability, race, religion or belief, age or sexual orientation.

Our principle is that all employees receive equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent, and for work of equal value. Scottish Borders Council operates and will continue to operate a pay and benefits system which is transparent, based on objective criteria, and free from bias.

Scottish Borders Council believes that in eliminating bias in its pay systems, it is sending a positive message to its employees and the Scottish Borders community. It makes good business sense to have fair and transparent reward systems and it also helps the Council to control costs.

Scottish Borders Council will identify and eliminate any unfair, unjust or unlawful practices that impact on pay as well as taking any appropriate remedial action.

Scottish Borders Council in supporting this commitment to equality in pay will:

- examine existing and future pay practices for all employees to ensure that they comply with best equal pay practice and current legislation
- carry out regular monitoring of the impact of these practices
- consult on all changes to pay policy with employees' trade union representatives
- inform employees of how these practices work and how their pay and benefits are arrived at
- provide training and guidance for those involved in making decisions about pay and benefits
- review progress every four years in accordance with our obligations in terms of the Equality Act 2010 and monitor pay statistics.

## **Gender Pay Gap**

The gender pay gap is the difference between men and women's full-time hourly earnings.

Using guidance and the standard calculation that is set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Council's equal pay gap was calculated using data as at **31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**.

The Standard Calculation is:

$$(a)/(b) \times 100 = \text{Total}$$

$$100 - \text{Total} = (c)$$

$$(a)/(b) = (c)$$

Where;

(a) Average Hourly Rate for Women

(b) Average Hourly Rate Men

(c) Pay Gap

The average basic hourly pay (excluding overtime) between male and female employees has been calculated and further details have been outlined below:

#### Chief Officers and Single Status Staff

- The average hourly rate for women is £12.68 (a)
- The average hourly rate for men is £14.34(b)
- The difference in hourly pay is £ 1.66
- This means that on average women earn (c) 11.57% less than men

Whilst there is a gender pay gap of 11.57% for the Council overall for this cohort of staff, we have further analysed the data based on the grades of individuals. This is shown in the following table: -

Grade Group	Female	Male	Pay Gap
National Minimum Wage	7.9353	6.7592	-17.40%
Grade 1	9.3411	9.3423	0.01%
Grade 2	9.4001	9.6276	2.36%
Grade 3	9.7248	10.5032	7.41%
Grade 4	10.6752	10.6005	-0.70%
Grade 5	11.4017	12.1858	6.43%
Grade 6	12.9488	14.1220	8.31%
Grade 7	15.1254	15.6071	3.09%
Grade 8	17.1907	17.4403	1.43%
Grade 9	20.8544	20.7778	-0.37%
Grade 10	23.9510	24.1320	0.75%
Grade 11	27.4340	27.6318	0.72%
Grade 12	31.3873	31.2680	-0.38%
Chief Officer	44.4388	47.0010	5.45%
Grand Total	12.6896	14.3498	11.57%

The differential in rate is due to placing on scales. Each grade has a number of scale points with new employees being placed on the lowest point on the grade. All employees are then entitled to incremental progression after two years of

service until they reach the top scale point for that grade. These are applied consistently regardless of any protected characteristics.

The Council also reviewed pay for men and women in our Education Department.

Further details have been outlined below:

- The average hourly rate for females is £26.26 (a)
- The average hourly rate for males is £27.00 (b)
- The difference in hourly pay is £1.26
- This means that on average women in Education earn 2.76% (c) less than men.

The reasons for this difference include:

- There are more female probationary teachers than male probationary teachers (73% are female).
- The salary for these new entrants is lower than that for experienced teachers.

Whilst there is a gender pay gap of 2.76% for the Education staff we have further analysed the data based on the grades of individuals. This is shown in the following table: -

Grade Group	Female	Male	Pay Gap
Probationary Teacher	16.7161	16.7161	0.00%
Common Scale Teacher	24.5013	24.1651	-1.39%
Music Instructor	22.9164	23.1002	0.80%
Chartered Teacher	28.9838	28.8787	-0.36%
Principal Teacher	30.9686	31.1023	0.43%
Psychologist	32.4758	33.4933	3.04%
Quality Improvement	37.6863	36.5918	-2.99%
Depute and Head Teacher	36.3032	38.4615	5.61%
Grand Total	26.2608	27.0074	2.76%

It can be argued that there are three main causes of the pay gap between men and women:

- Occupational segregation.
- A lack of flexible working opportunities.
- Discrimination in pay and grading structures.

The Council's job evaluation scheme provides a robust means of achieving a fair and transparent grading structure which is free from gender-bias and which satisfies the principles of equal pay for work of equal value. This is further validated by the grade table analysis shown above.

The Council also offers and provides a number of flexible working practices to employees at all levels, and we advertise our vacancies in a way that attracts the best person for the job, regardless of gender.

We consider that the main efforts in addressing the gender pay gap are best directed to addressing the issue of occupational segregation.

We will also benchmark our gender pay gap against other public authorities.

## **Occupational Segregation**

The Council recognises that occupational segregation, on the grounds of gender, racial group or disability, is one of the key barriers which prevents people from fulfilling their potential, and consequently contributes to the pay gap.

The Council recognises that by proactively addressing equality issues there is the potential to drive excellence in service delivery through more productive, loyal, and motivated employees who can bring a range and diversity of experience to their role to the benefit of the customers to whom we provide services.

There are a number of factors which influence and affect occupational segregation.

People may be drawn to occupations with a traditionally high concentration of people of the same gender or racial group. This can be due to familiarity with that occupation, or conformity with expectation.

There may also be a danger of employers stereotyping on the grounds of gender, race or disability and making assumptions about what roles or occupations people would excel at.

We address these factors through the provision of mandatory Equality and Diversity training for all employees, and seek to improve access to employment through the Modern Apprenticeships and other work opportunities we offer.

Our aim is to be an employer with whom people feel free to pursue their career path of choice regardless of gender, race or disability.

Of our 5856 (includes casual and supply employees), 74% are female and 26% male.

Of those who have disclosed their ethnic origin, 0.55% identify as belonging to a minority racial group. (In accordance with the definition in the Equality Act, we have included the following categories within the definition of "minority racial group": Asian/Asian British - Any Other; Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi; Asian/Asian British - Chinese ; Asian/Asian British – Pakistani; Black/African/Caribbean/British – Car; Black/African/Caribbean/British – Other; Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Black Background; Other Ethnic Group).

2.57% have disclosed a disability.

Further analysis shows that;

- More females than males are in grades 1 & 4 – 10.

The Council has significantly more teachers that are female than male teachers.

- 77% of our teachers are female.

The below provides further details of the Council's data on occupational segregation, however it should be noted that due to the low level of numbers for employees who have declared a disability or identified as belonging to a minority racial group we only show the percentage as this may otherwise identify individuals. Consequently given these low numbers no sub levels of analysis have been included in the following tables.

## Occupational segregation by Gender (non Education)

**Table1**

**TABLE 1 OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GENDER (NON-EDUCATION)**

Gender	Assets & Infrastructure	Chief Social Work Officer Responsibilities	Children & Young People	Customer & Communities	Economic Development & Corporate Services	Finance & Corporate Services	Health & Social Care	Human Resources	Grand Total
Female	471	40	1132	436	43	83	915	62	3182
Male	646	21	159	67	57	59	123	21	1153
Grand Total	1117	61	1291	503	100	142	1038	83	4335

Gender	Assets & Infrastructure	Chief Social Work Officer Responsibilities	Children & Young People	Customer & Communities	Economic Development & Corporate Services	Finance & Corporate Services	Health & Social Care	Human Resources	Total
Female	42.17%	65.57%	87.68%	86.68%	43.00%	58.45%	88.15%	74.70%	73.40%
Male	57.83%	34.43%	12.32%	13.32%	57.00%	41.55%	11.85%	25.30%	26.60%

**Table 2****TABLE 2 OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GENDER/GRADE (NON- EDUCATION)**

Gender	Female	Male
Chief Officer	52.38%	47.62%
Grade 1	81.48%	18.52%
Grade 2	40.69%	59.31%
Grade 3	13.82%	86.18%
Grade 4	84.51%	15.49%
Grade 5	79.54%	20.46%
Grade 6	79.22%	20.78%
Grade 7	70.11%	29.89%
Grade 8	71.15%	28.85%
Grade 9	65.37%	34.63%
Grade 10	53.04%	46.96%
Grade 11	46.43%	53.57%
Grade 12	34.62%	65.38%
National Minimum Wage	71.74%	28.26%
Total	73.40%	26.60%

**TABLE 3 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY AGE/DEPARTMENT (NON EDUCATION)**

Age Group	Assets & Infrastructure	Chief Social Work Officer Responsibilities	Children & Young People	Customer & Communities	Economic Development & Corporate Services	Finance & Corporate Services	Health & Social Care	Human Resources	Total
16 to 29	6.09%	3.28%	11.39%	12.33%	6.00%	13.38%	12.62%	18.07%	10.38%
30 to 44	18.26%	21.31%	26.10%	22.47%	25.00%	28.87%	25.92%	24.10%	23.58%
45 to 59	50.58%	54.10%	43.92%	48.71%	57.00%	45.77%	43.26%	40.96%	46.48%
60 and above	25.07%	21.31%	18.59%	16.50%	12.00%	11.97%	18.21%	16.87%	19.56%

**TABLE 3 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY AGE/GRADE (NON EDUCATION)**

Age Group	Chief Officer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	National Minimum Wage	Total
16 to 29	0.00%	7.67%	3.03%	7.89%	11.42%	11.82%	16.05%	8.38%	7.31%	4.24%	0.87%	0.00%	0.00%	71.74%	10.38%
30 to 44	9.52%	22.75%	16.45%	9.87%	21.30%	24.21%	28.55%	28.49%	29.23%	32.16%	23.48%	7.14%	3.85%	21.74%	23.58%
45 to 59	76.19%	42.86%	42.86%	48.03%	46.53%	45.24%	43.41%	48.60%	50.00%	49.82%	55.65%	71.43%	84.62%	6.52%	46.48%
60 +	14.29%	26.72%	37.66%	34.21%	20.76%	18.73%	11.99%	14.53%	13.46%	13.78%	20.00%	21.43%	11.54%	0.00%	19.56%

**TABLE 4 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED DISABILITY/DEPARTMENT (NON EDUCATION)**

Diversity - Disability(T)	Assets & Infrastructure	Chief Social Work Officer Responsibilities	Children & Young People	Customer & Communities	Economic Development & Corporate Services	Finance & Corporate Services	Health & Social Care	Human Resources	Total
Yes	2.33%	6.56%	2.17%	2.78%	2.00%	2.82%	3.47%	6.02%	2.75%

**TABLE 4 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED DISABILITY /GRADE (NON EDUCATION-)**

Diversity - Disability(T)	Chief Officer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	National Minimum Wage	Total
Yes %	0.0	3.70	0.87	5.26	1.94	4.32	2.53	2.79	2.69	4.59	3.48	3.57	0.00	2.17	2.75

**TABLE 5 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED ETHNIC GROUP/DEPARTMENT (NON EDUCATION)**

Diversity - Ethnicity	Assets & Infrastructure	Chief Social Work Officer Responsibilities	Children & Young People	Customer & Communities	Economic Development & Corporate Services	Finance & Corporate Services	Health & Social Care	Human Resources	Total
Black Minority Ethnic	0.18%	0.00%	1.01%	0.60%	0.00%	0.70%	0.58%	2.41%	0.62%
White Total	73.68%	88.52%	78.78%	85.69%	80.00%	79.58%	74.37%	73.49%	77.30%

**TABLE 5 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED ETHNIC GROUP/ GRADE (NON EDUCATION)**

Diversity - Ethnicity	Chief Officer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	National Minimum Wage	Total
Black Minority Ethnic %	0.00	0.26	0.43	0.00	0.60	0.29	0.84	0.28	1.15	0.71	1.74	0.00	3.85	2.17	0.62
White Total %	71.43	73.54	74.03	71.05	73.10	81.27	79.90	86.87	82.69	80.57	80.87	92.86	65.38	84.78	77.30

**TABLE 6 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GENDER (EDUCATION) - CLUSTER**

Gender	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Grand Total
Female	155	138	194	164	145	171	207	1174
Male	48	40	55	35	37	47	85	347
Grand Total	203	178	249	199	182	218	292	1521

**TABLE 6 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GENDER (EDUCATION) - CLUSTER**

Gender	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
Female	76.35%	77.53%	77.91%	82.41%	79.67%	78.44%	70.89%	77.19%
Male	23.65%	22.47%	22.09%	17.59%	20.33%	21.56%	29.11%	22.81%

**TABLE 7 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY AGE (EDUCATION) CLUSTER**

Age Group	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
16 to 29	17.73%	9.55%	8.43%	16.58%	13.19%	6.88%	5.82%	10.72%
30 to 44	32.51%	38.20%	44.98%	38.69%	43.96%	41.28%	18.15%	35.90%
45 to 59	43.35%	44.38%	40.96%	39.20%	39.01%	45.41%	32.19%	40.17%
60 and above	6.40%	7.87%	5.62%	5.53%	3.85%	6.42%	43.84%	13.21%

**TABLE 7 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY AGE (EDUCATION) GRADE**

Age Group	Chartered Teacher	Common Scale Teacher	Depute and Head Teacher	Music Instructor	Principal Teacher	Probationary Teacher	Psychologist	Quality Improvement	Total
16 to 29	0.00%	12.41%	0.00%	0.00%	0.56%	53.33%	0.00%	0.00%	10.72%
30 to 44	17.65%	35.97%	36.04%	28.57%	41.67%	37.78%	25.00%	0.00%	35.90%
45 to 59	76.47%	35.97%	61.26%	52.38%	50.00%	8.89%	37.50%	90.00%	40.17%
60 and above	5.88%	15.65%	2.70%	19.05%	7.78%	0.00%	37.50%	10.00%	13.21%

**TABLE 8 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED DISABILITY/ CLUSTER (EDUCATION)**

Diversity - Disability(T)	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
Yes	3.94%	1.69%	1.61%	2.01%	1.65%	1.83%	1.71%	2.04%

**TABLE 8 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED DISABILITY/GRADE (EDUCATION)**

Diversity - Disability(T)	Chartered Teacher	Common Scale Teacher	Depute and Head Teacher	Music Instructor	Principal Teacher	Probationary Teacher	Psychologist	Quality Improvement	Total
Yes	5.88%	2.16%	1.80%	0.00%	1.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	2.04%

**TABLE 9 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED ETHNIC GROUP (EDUCATION) CLUSTER**

Diversity - Ethnicity(T)	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
Black Minority Ethnic	0.00%	0.00%	0.40%	0.50%	0.00%	0.92%	0.34%	0.33%
White Total	61.08%	67.98%	70.68%	60.30%	68.68%	73.39%	48.97%	63.71%

**TABLE 9 b OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED ETHNIC GROUP/ GRADE (EDUCATION)**

Diversity - Ethnicity(T)	Chartered Teacher	Common Scale Teacher	Depute and Head Teacher	Music Instructor	Principal Teacher	Probationary Teacher	Psychologist	Quality Improvement	Total
Black Minority Ethnic	0.00%	0.45%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.33%
White Total	73.53%	61.87%	77.48%	61.90%	78.33%	2.22%	62.50%	100.00%	63.71%

## **Mainstreaming Equality SBC Licensing Board**

### **Context**

Scottish Borders Licensing Board is no longer publishing an Equalities Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report as a standalone item. Whilst the Licensing Board is a separate entity, the Board benefits from its members being Scottish Borders Council elected members who are supported by Democratic Services. With such a close relationship, the Board utilises the Council's expertise, knowledge and resources in relation to Equalities and therefore it is deemed appropriate that the Licensing Board's Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report should form part of the full Council report.

### **The Board's Equality Outcomes**

#### **Outcome 1**

Incidents addressed on licensed premises where equality issues may be a factor increased.

To achieve this Licensing Officers have established effective information sharing arrangements with Police Scotland. This has included Licensing Officers attending fortnightly liaison meetings with Police Scotland. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the licensed trade with a vast number of such premises not being able to open due to the COVID-19 restrictions for large parts of 2020 and the first 4 months of 2021. There have been no reported equality issues involving licensed premises which have either required Licensing Officers' intervention or referral to the Board.

#### **Outcomes 2 and 4**

Members of the Board's and Members of the Licensing Forum's knowledge and understanding of equality issues increased.

These outcomes were achieved by the provision of awareness training in December 2018 to both Members of the Board and the Licensing Forum. This training highlighted the issues which may arise and provided the members of both the Board and the Forum with a broad understanding of Equality issues, highlighted how these issues may arise and provided guidance as to how these issues should be addressed within licensed premises.

#### **Outcome 3**

Staff awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and the implications on service delivery on all protected characteristics increased.

This was achieved by all Licensing Officers and all other staff completing mandatory online training. This ensures that all Officers and staff are aware of equality and diversity and its implications.

## **Outcomes 5 and 6**

People with protected characteristics are able to participate in meetings and other statutory processes of the Licensing Board.

The information available from the Licensing Board is accessible to all.

These outcomes have been achieved by the Board's agenda for its monthly meetings being made available publicly on the Council's website. Prior to the Covid-19 lockdown these meetings were held at Council Headquarters where both the building and the meeting room are fully accessible. During the Covid-19 lockdown the Board's monthly meetings have been held virtually online and therefore these meetings continue to be accessible to all members of the public. In addition, Licensing Officers have ensured that all information and assistance is provided to those who wish to apply for a licence. Similarly, this assistance is also afforded to all those who wish to make representations or object to a licence application. This has ensured that the Board has treated all those with an interest either as an applicant or as an objector fairly and respectfully. Furthermore, the Board reviewed its Statement of Licensing Policy in 2018 and its Statement of Gambling Principles in 2019 and the community as a whole was consulted and invited to put forward their views in relation to the updating of both statements. All of this ensures that people with protected characteristics are able to participate and make their views known.

## **Going Forward**

Building on the work that the Board has carried out previously, the Board will strive to maintain the following three outcomes as we come out of the Covid-19 pandemic

**Outcome 1** - Incidents addressed on Licensed Premises where Equality issues may be a factor.

Equality incidents raised and brought to the attention of Licensing Officers will be responded to within 7 days. The Board's Licensing Officers will continue to attend regular liaison meetings with Police Scotland and should any Equality issues arise on Licenced premises, the Board's Licensing Officers will contact the Licence holder within 7 days and provide the necessary advice or alternatively refer the issues to the Board for its consideration.

**Outcome 2** - Members of the Licensing Board and Members of the Licensing Forum's knowledge and understanding of equality issues increased.

The membership of the Board is changed every 5 years and is due to be renewed in May 2022 following the local government election. The concept is that Board members will be provided with annual training. The membership of the Licensing Forum is not subject to any defined periods of change and therefore any new Forum members will be provided with training as soon as possible with all Forum members receiving refresher training every two years.

**Outcome 3** - People with Protected Characteristics are able to participate in meetings and any other statutory processes of the Licensing Board.

The Board will continue to strive to ensure that the Licensing Board is accessible to all, that all information and assistance is provided to those who wish to apply for a licence and that all those who wish to attend a Licensing Board hearing either to make representations in support of an application or to object to an application are able to do so. In addition, the Board will require to renew its current Statement of Licensing Policy in 2023 and its current Statement of Gambling Principles in 2022. In doing so, the Board will require to consult with the community as a whole which will continue to ensure that people with protected characteristics are able to participate and make their views known.

## The Way Forward for 2021-2025

As this report shows, considerable progress has been made in meeting the requirements of the general duty. However, we will continue and increase our efforts in 2021-2025 to mainstream equalities within the Scottish Borders.

It is considered that the recommendations contained within our Equality Mainstreaming Update Report published in April 2019 are still relevant and should be continued with. These include the need to:

- Continue the work in establishing effective performance indicators for Council services.
- Ensure that the business plans for service areas fully embed equalities and equality outcomes.
- Develop a training programme on Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) for Council staff and Councillors.
- Use the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process when carrying out core business functions and have officers trained in the current IIA process and requirements.
- Ensure that Children and Young People continues to link into the Council's overall approach to equalities.
- For Human Resources (HR) to continue to strive to improve the information the Council holds for each of the protected characteristics in respect of employees and to analyse the reasons for the gender pay gap and address these
- Ensure that communities and groups are consulted/involved in the formulation of Scottish Borders Council's strategies/policies

Fundamentally, it was recognised that an essential component of mainstreaming the equality duty is to incorporate it into core business functions of the Council and that it was important to continue with this work.

As stated earlier SBC's Corporate Plan sets the direction for the Council. The Plan is currently under review. It is anticipated that the revised plan will provide:

- A vision and a culture
- A clear set of priorities
- A framework for action
- Alignment with the plans of partners
- A template for engagement with staff and with the public
- A basis on which the Council's progress can be measured and judged.

Equality, wellbeing, and sustainability will remain an integral feature of the revised plan.

In recognition that the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has radically changed the way the Council and our staff operate and deliver services to residents and communities, it is clear that many aspects of life have been changed by the

pandemic and the ongoing need to prevent a re-occurrence. COVID 19 has brought us many challenges that we must overcome. Our transformation programme, Fit For 2024,, provides a platform for meeting these challenges, such as agile working, demands for services, a growing older population, a constantly changing digital world, and addressing customer expectations. These new ways of working provide a real opportunity to place equality at the heart of service delivery ensuring that equality outcomes can be set, monitored and evaluated.

Achieving these aims will help us deliver our equalities agenda.

A high level action plan has been developed.

### High Level Action Plan

<b>Scottish Borders Council Service Area</b>	<b>High Level Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
<b>Strategic</b>	Continue the work in establishing effective performance indicators for Council services/Equality Outcomes	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Ensure that Corporate strategies and plans, and business plans for service areas, fully embed equalities and equality outcomes	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Develop a training programme on Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA)/Fairer Scotland Duty for Council staff and Councillors.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Accreditations obtained: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Confident (Leader status)</li> <li>• Carer Positive employer (engaged status)</li> <li>• Healthy Working Lives</li> </ul>	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Build-up relationships with Equality Groups as part of wider Council engagement	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
<b>Human Resources</b>	Raise awareness of and completion rate of Equalities e-learning.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25

	Incentivise and encourage staff to complete the equality data held within Business World to allow the Council to make improvements to the information held for each of the protected characteristics in respect of employees.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Utilise operational systems that allow the reporting of Employee Benefits Take up and Employee promotions.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	The Gender pay gap is to be analysed and the findings addressed	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
<b>Education &amp; Long Life Learning</b>	Continues to link into the Council's overall approach to equalities.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Continue to ensure that United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC.) requirements are met throughout the life span of this mainstreaming report.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Continued mainstreaming of equalities for all protected characteristics into school curricula.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
	Closure of poverty related attainment and achievement gaps in line with SBC poverty action plan.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25
<b>Licensing Board</b>	Continues to link into the Council's overall approach to equalities.	Continuous throughout the four year period 2021 - 25

## Equality Outcomes

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 requires the Council to publish equality outcomes.

Equality outcomes specify a result that we aim to achieve to further one or more of the needs of the general equality duty:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act •
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due to a change in working practices and the challenges in responding to COVID 19, Outcomes 2, 3, 4 & 5 could not be measured in the same way as in previous years.

A Citizenship Survey was conducted but despite the survey being widely promoted responses received were not at the level hoped for, although issues raised in the responses will be analysed and addressed.

Therefore will we continue with the existing Equality Outcomes.

The actions to positively influence these Outcomes will be monitored through performance indicators.

### Our Outcomes 2021 – 2025

**Outcome 1:** We are seen as an inclusive equal opportunities employer where all staff feel valued and respected and our workforce reflects our community.

**Outcome 2:** Our services meet the needs of, and are accessible to; all members of our community and our staff treat all services users, clients and colleagues with dignity and respect.

**Outcome 3:** Everyone has the opportunity to participate in public life and the democratic process.

**Outcome 4:** We work in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders to ensure that our communities are cohesive and there are fewer people living in poverty.

**Outcome 5:** Our citizens have the freedom to make their own choices and are able to lead independent, healthy lives as responsible citizens

**Outcome 6:** The difference in rates of employment between the general population and those from under-represented groups is improved.

**Outcome 7:** The difference in educational attainment between those who are from an equality group and those who are not is improved.

**Outcome 8:** We have good quality affordable housing which meets the needs of our diverse community

**Outcome 9:** Incidents addressed on Licensed Premises where Equality issues may be a factor.

**Outcome 10:** Members of the Licensing Board and Members of the Licensing Forum's knowledge and understanding of equality issues increased.

**Outcome 11:** People with Protected Characteristics are able to participate in meetings and any other statutory processes of the Licensing Board.