



# Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Annual Report **2023**



Equality

## Welcome

During 2023, we saw some amazing work on addressing inequalities and promoting inclusion across the borough.

Within our New Era work (page 14), we saw a renewed focus on equality, as public services, businesses and community organisations of this borough come together to deliver two key missions:

- **Fair opportunities for children, families, residents and businesses.** Together we will break down barriers that create financial, health, education and environment inequalities in our borough.
- **Shape places and neighbourhoods that enrich our communities.** Together, we will support our communities to fulfil their potential and create opportunities that maximise their wellbeing.

We also saw the launch of the 'All different, All equal' engagement project, this project builds on the New Era conversations to identify the next steps in working together for a better borough. The Wigan Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering group (a voluntary, community, faith, public and social enterprise network to champion equality within the borough), supported by Wigan Council, and the projects facilitators (Happy Smiles CIC and Everything Human Rights) are hosting this engagement project to build a fairer and more inclusive borough. I look forward to the outcomes of this work during 2024 and would like to take this opportunity to thank the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group and to everyone who participated.

**Cllr Paula Wakefield**  
Lead Member - Equality and Domestic Abuse





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## Our duties and responsibilities

### Equality Act 2010

The Equality Duty is a legal duty in the Equality Act 2010 that applies to most public bodies across Great Britain. It requires those public bodies and others carrying out public functions to take account of equality, discrimination and good relations between different people in the way they make policy, deliver or buy goods and services, and employ people.

The Equality Duty is intended to ensure that equality forms part of the day-to-day decision making and operational delivery of public bodies and so prevents discrimination and advance equality of opportunity in practice.

The Equality Duty has two parts: a general duty and specific duties to promote better compliance with the general duty.

#### **The general duty**

Section 149 of The Equality Act 2010 says that public bodies, when carrying out their functions, must have due regard to all three needs/aims. These are the needs 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 people who do not share it.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.



## The specific duties

- publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the Equality Duty annually. This information must include information relating to employees.
- prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives (at least every four years) which will help us further any of the aims of the Equality Duty.

In 2023, Central Government produced updated guidance on [Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities](#).

## Protected Characteristics

Having a protected characteristic means you have a right not to be treated less favourably, or subjected to an unfair disadvantage, by reason of that characteristic.

The Equality Duty covers all the following protected characteristics:

- age.
- disability.
- gender reassignment.
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity.
- race – including ethnic, national origins, colour or nationality.
- religion or belief – including lack of religion or belief.
- sex.
- sexual orientation.



Wigan Council chose to adopt four local additional protected characteristics:

- carer.
- armed forces personnel.
- Socio-economic disadvantaged.
- looked after children and care leavers.

The three aims of the general duty apply to all protected characteristics apart from marriage and civil partnership, which is only relevant to the first aim (eliminating discrimination).



## Our commitment

As a Council we have identified the importance of ensuring everyone has the access to opportunities and people feel like they belong and are included in the borough.

A strong focus on equality and inclusion continues to be more important than ever. We have renewed our commitment, alongside our partners to create two borough missions. One of these missions is:

**Fair opportunities for children, families, residents and businesses.** Together we will break down barriers that create financial, health, education and environment inequalities in our borough

We have strong and resilient communities. The ethos of equality and inclusion is a key contributor to that vision in our local communities, where we consider diversity as a source of great strength.

We also celebrate the strength in diversity of our workforce (many of whom are also residents). We are working with staff to ensure they are valued for their skills and experiences and bring their diversity of experience into co-designing and delivering excellent services.

We are constantly reviewing how we approach Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, looking at our approaches and how we embed Equality across everything we do.



## Our equality objectives

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Local Authority to publish one or more equality objectives and review these at least every four years. Our equality objectives help set the strategic focus for the council's work on equality and inclusion to ensure that we:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct.
- advance equality of opportunity for all.
- foster good relations.

We will continue to drive forward our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion aims and objectives originally set out in 2021, until the new Wigan borough equality approach is developed:

## Aims and Objectives for 2024

### **1. Listen deeply – Recognises that communities know best about what matters to them and design public services together**

- Improve the quality of the Equality and Diversity information we collect and how we use it.
- Strengthen our approaches to engage and collaborate with residents and communities ensuring that they feel valued and included. (Having different conversations, understanding lived experiences in the borough and inclusive engagement).
- Build effective relationships with voluntary/community groups and Greater Manchester Combined Authority equality panels and boards to ensure a joined-up approach to equality issues, progress any shared actions and identify local priorities.





## **2. Show our love and pride - celebrate and respect diversity in Wigan borough**

- Promote events and education tools that celebrate diversity and address discrimination
- Work with stakeholders, including schools, to promote social cohesion.
- Continue to build on our asset-based approaches to embed early intervention and prevention.

## **3. Know this place - gather robust equalities evidence and ensure transparency in our actions**

- See the person – Take a person-centred approach by putting people at the heart of every conversation, recognising their assets and strengths.
- Continue to identify and review inequalities for all protected characteristics and take action to identify causes and barriers to address any impact.
- Ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is considered in the development of our future strategies, policies, and transformation / recovery plans.

## **4. To ensure our community health and wealth building approaches are inclusive and that they promote equality and diversity**

- Reducing socio-economic disadvantage and poverty, by building wealth and opportunity for all our communities.

## **5. Recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse and representative workforce**

- Improve the quality of workforce equality and diversity information we collect and how we use it.



- Develop and improve staff's equality and diversity skills, ensuring staff have the confidence to support and engage the diversity of service users in the Borough. For example, create learning opportunities for our workforce connected to people with lived experiences.
- Support staff to embed fairness and inclusivity in all their work as a key principle of Deal 2030.
- Understand and improve staff experience and staff voice on equality issues.
- Ensure equality of opportunity, so that all staff have the right support and opportunities to reach their full potential.



## Knowing our community

The new census data (2021) give us a large refresh of community data.

We developed [an interactive dashboard](#), so you can easily search for insight into the diversity of Wigan borough.

However, a summary of how Wigan borough has changed since 2011 are as follows.

### Population

- Between the last two censuses (held in 2011 and 2021), the population of Wigan increased by 3.6%, from just over 317,800 in 2011 to around 329,300 in 2021.

### Age

- The average (median) age of Wigan increased by one year, from 40 to 41 years of age. Wigan borough has a slightly higher average age than the Northwest and England (40 years).
- The number of people aged 50 to 64 years rose by just under 7,700 (an increase of 12.7%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by just under 9,100 (12.6% decrease).

### Disability

- 9.4% of Wigan residents were identified as being disabled and their day-to-day life is limited a lot. This figure decreased from 12.3% in 2011. These are age-standardised proportions<sup>1</sup>.
- Just under one in nine people (10.8%) were identified as being disabled and limited a little, compared with 11.3% in 2011.
- The proportion of Wigan residents who were not disabled increased from 76.4% to 79.8%.

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<sup>1</sup> Age-standardised proportions are used throughout this section. They enable comparisons between populations over time and across geographies, as they account for differences in the population size and age structure.



- The decrease in the proportion of residents who were identified as being disabled and limited a lot was greater in Wigan (2.9 percentage points) than across the Northwest (2.1 percentage points, from 11.2% to 9.1%). Across England, the proportion fell by 1.6 percentage points, from 9.1% to 7.5%.

However, Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived their health status and activity limitations, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.

## **Unpaid care**

- In 2021, 4.4% of Wigan residents (aged five years and over) reported providing up to 19 hours of unpaid care each week. This figure decreased from 7.0% in 2011. These are age-standardised proportions. This decrease is like the decrease matches Northwest and England.
- In 2021, 2.3% reported providing between 20 and 49 hours of unpaid care each week, compared with 1.9% in 2011.
- The proportion of Wigan residents that provided at least 50 hours of weekly unpaid care decreased from 3.5% (2011) to 3.4% (2021).
- Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond. Also, caution should be taken when making comparisons between 2011 and 2021 because of changes in question wording and response options.



## Religion

- In 2021, 30.3% of Wigan residents reported having "No religion", up from 15.3% in 2011. Slightly higher increase compared to Northwest and England.
- In 2021, 62.8% of people in Wigan described themselves as Christian (down from 77.8%), while 4.7% did not state their religion (down from 5.5% the decade before).
- The census question about religious affiliation is voluntary and has varying response rates, caution is needed when comparing figures between different areas or between censuses.

## Marriage and civil partnership

- In Wigan, the percentage of adults who were married or in a civil partnership decreased from 47.6% in 2011 to 43.8% in 2021.
- The percentage of adults who had never married or registered a civil partnership increased from 32.9% to 37.2%
- The percentage of adults who had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership decreased from 9.9% to 9.8%.

## Ethnic groups

- In 2021, 1.8% of Wigan residents identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category, up from 1.1% in 2011. Across the Northwest, the percentage of people from the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" ethnic group increased from 6.2% to 8.4%, while across England the percentage increased from 7.8% to 9.6%.
- In 2021, 95.0% of people in Wigan identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 97.3% in 2011)
- In 2021, 1.3% identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category (compared with 0.9% in 2011).
- The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category increased from 0.5% in 2011 to 1.2% in 2021.

## Progress with Unity - A new era for Wigan Borough

As a council, one of our most important responsibilities is to work in partnership with our communities to support and enable people to meet and overcome the challenges they face and to make the most of and create opportunities.

Over the last 10 years, we've been trying to do this through what we've called The Deal - a way of doing public services based on the council having a deep understanding of local communities and what matters to them; staff being positive, accountable and having the courage to do things differently; and enabling communities to do what they do best by valuing the strengths and talents of communities.



Over the summer of 2023, the Council embarked on a process to take stock and re-set how to work together for the good of our borough, to understand the context we're operating in now and to build on the learning of the last ten years and 'The Deal'.

Collaborate CIC and IPPR North undertook an engagement process including conversations with people from our community, colleagues in the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprises (VCFSE), staff, politicians and partners, and online surveys for residents and staff, to seek to understand what people think the 'New Era' should look like and what it will take to get there.





On 21 November, people who had been part of that engagement process came together at the 'Building a New Era for Wigan Borough' event. At the event, we reflected what we learned and shared the developing thinking about where to go from here. This was an opportunity for a range of stakeholders to continue to input into the development of a collaborative approach as well as building connections with peers and partners from across different sectors.



More events and conversations to discuss the findings and develop the plans for the future also took place with other partners and stakeholders.

**We heard** that residents want us to focus on core services and to provide equitable support and investment across the borough.

**We heard** that people want the council to be more responsive to communities and to build long-term relationships with community partners built on trust.



**We heard** from public and private sector partners about addressing basic needs within our communities and tackling economic inequality, and that partnership working was central to addressing these issues.

We then worked with our partners and stakeholders to set out two missions which as a borough partnership we will unite to tackle in the decade ahead.

- **Mission one:** Fair opportunities for all children, families, residents and businesses. Together we will break down the barriers that create financial, health, education and environmental inequalities in the borough.
- **Mission two:** Shape places and neighbourhoods that enrich our communities. Together we will support our communities to fulfil their potential and create opportunities that maximise their wellbeing

We will be inspired in these missions by the collective spirit instilled at the outset of Wigan Borough 50 years ago when 14 towns were brought together to create our borough. This spirit was captured in the borough's motto 'Progress with Unity'.

Summaries of the feedback we received from residents, our community connectors group, partners and voluntary and community sector are set out in detail in the documents that can be found [here](#).





## Our progress

In 2023, Wigan Council carried out a wide range of work that challenged discrimination, valued diversity and advanced equality of opportunity and promoted inclusion.

**This report does not seek to capture everything that is undertaken in relation to Equality and Diversity. Instead, it highlights some key achievements during 2023.**



# Understanding our community



## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group**

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Group is a network of public, voluntary, community, faith organisations and social enterprises. The group comes together regularly to influence and direct action to address inequalities in the borough. The group has a wide range of expertise and diverse lived experience. The group will act as the project board for the large engagement project to codesign a new Wigan borough equality approach.

Overall, the group serves to:

- Connect communities to policy makers, and vice versa.
- To assist with strategic equality and diversity work within Wigan.
- Establish a pan-equalities (i.e., cross-cutting) approach.
- Tackle the root-causes of inequalities.

We would like to thank all members for their continuing hard work and dedication.

### Ekhaya Empowerment CIC

A Wigan CIC, to alleviate poverty amongst women from marginalised communities through education, empowerment and integration.

### Embrace Wigan and Leigh

A user-led charity dedicated to supporting disabled people and their families. We have a range of projects that aim to enhance the lives of the people we support.

Co-Chair of the Greater Manchester Disability Equality Panel.

### Everything Human Rights

A Community Group offering a variety of services with the aim of promoting the wellbeing and integration of migrant ethnic minorities living in Wigan and Leigh.



## GMB Union

Trade union that represents members at various workplaces in both the public and private sector, including the NHS and students in the region.

## Happy Smiles Training CIC

A Wigan CIC which provides interactive training workshops, focusing on many aspects of disability awareness and social inclusion, facilitated by Inclusion Champions – young adults who experience disability daily.

## Healthwatch Wigan and Leigh

Independent champion for people who use health and social care services, to understand the needs, experiences and concerns of people and to speak out on their behalf.

## Masjid al-Furqan (Leigh Mosque)

Provide the local Muslim community a place of worship without objection and prejudice. A place to come (Muslim or non-Muslim) and learn about Islam, which will help to eliminate any misunderstandings and promote a healthier atmosphere.

## Royal National Institute of Blind People – Northwest

Sight loss charities and the largest community of blind and partially sighted people.

## Unison

Trade union.

## Wigan Access Committee for the Disabled

Promotes and improves access and facilities, outside the home and within the beneficial area by raising awareness of the needs of disabled residents.



## Wigan and Leigh Carers Centre

A local registered charity supporting unpaid carers who look after people living in Wigan borough.

## Wigan and Leigh Deaf Children's Society

A local registered charity supporting families with deaf children in the Wigan borough, by arranging regular activities for deaf children and their families.

## Wigan and Leigh Pensioners Link

Provides support for the over 50s, such as finance, friendships, disabilities, feelings, wellbeing, learning and social activities.

## NHS Greater Manchester Integrated Care

For [more information](#).

## Wigan Borough Wide Peer Support Group

A group who come together to share knowledge to overcome challenges. They offer disability awareness training, lobby on disability rights and injustice.

## Wigan Caribbean and African Health Network CIC

A Black-led organisation set up to address the wider social determinants to eradicate health disparities for Caribbean and African people.

## Wigan Council

Local Authority.

## Wigan Parish Church

A living centre of worship.

## Wigan Parents Carers Forum

Collective voice of parent carers of children and young people aged 0-25 years old in the borough with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).



## Wigan Unison Black Members Self Organised Group

Challenging the racism experienced by Black members in the workplace and in wider society.

## Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

A major acute trust serving the people of Wigan and Leigh. The trust provides the best possible healthcare for the local population.

## **All different, All Equal engagement project**

A decade ago, Wigan Council re-imagined our relationship with our residents and our approach. A movement for change emerged - 'The Deal'.

A key principle cross-cutting all priorities is fairness and inclusion, ensuring everyone has the same opportunities and people feel like they belong and are included.

The All different, All equal engagement project, builds on the new era conversations to identify the next steps in working together for a better borough, the Wigan Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering group (a voluntary, community, faith, public and social enterprise network to champion equality within the borough), supported by Wigan Council, and the projects facilitators (Happy Smiles CIC and Everything Human Rights) have hosted this engagement project to build a fairer and more inclusive borough.

The difference it will make:

- The engagement project aims to co-design a new Wigan borough approach to address inequalities, celebrate diversity and promote inclusion by:
  - understanding our communities better
  - understanding where inequality exists, how it is experienced and how we can work together to address it



- to agree a set of boroughwide priorities we can work on together

There were many ways that individuals and community groups could get involved.

- Phase one, was open conversations with all residents and partners to collect initial ideas, thoughts and hopes. This was done through a survey, outreach engagement, talks with community groups and stakeholder conversations.
- Phase two, was an event and further targeted conversations to learn more about the key themes heard during phase one.
- Phase three, is the current phase, we are carefully analysing all the insight gathered and creating a detailed analysis report whilst identifying the desired outputs from the engagement project.

For more information, please visit the [information page](#).

## **Utilising insight from the GM Equality Panels.**

The Greater Manchester Equality Panels and Boards offer a great advisory function and an opportunity to work together to ensure equity and fairness in public services, and tackle inequality and prejudice in society:

- |                                   |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Tackling Inequalities Board     | • Race Equality Panel             |
| • Equality Alliance               | • Ageing Hub                      |
| • Youth Combined Authority        | • Faith and Belief Advisory Panel |
| • Disabled People's Panel         | • Older People's Equality Panel   |
| • LGBTQ plus Panel                |                                   |
| • Women and Girls' Equality Panel |                                   |

Some of our EDI Steering group members, sit on the GM equality panels, therefore offering a great link between the panels and local action.



## **Autism Engagement Group**

Our Wigan Autism Engagement Group was established in Spring 2022 and the monthly sessions offer an opportunity for autistic people to be involved in conversations and feedback experiences aligned to our Autism Strategy, Partnership Board and all our work areas. The group feedback at the Board, highlighting some of the main challenges being faced and what would help improve the quality of care and support being received. Some of the key achievements made over the last year include:

- better understanding of issues with accessing health services and better understanding of reasonable adjustments.
- challenges to employment, how we can reduce barriers and develop employability skills.
- Improvement of Council webpages promoting information, guidance and support for autistic people.
- Involvement in The Deal / New Era engagement
- Developing of post-diagnostic support for autistic adults.

## **Global friends**

Global Friends is a youth group that is run by Wigan Council Targeted Youth Support Services in partnership with Everything Human Rights Community Group.

Global Friends has made a huge impact by directly engaging between 28 to 35 individuals. These are young people are all from ethnically diverse backgrounds and socio-economic disadvantaged communities.

They have been busy with several activities this year. Some examples are, as part of Black History Month, the young people were invited to tell us about an inspirational Black Female in their lives (the national theme for this year's awareness month), and they all chose their mums.





The group have also taken part in the All Different, All Equal engagement project which will codesign a new approach to equality in the borough.

Members planned an end of year party with games, refreshments and an awards presentation. On the 19th December we had a party and young people came up with four awards for attendance, best behaved, most helpful and all round star. Young people nominated themselves for the award categories and voting took place to find out the winners who received a prize



Young women asked for opportunities to have 'pamper' sessions at Global Friends. Through Everything human Rights, we managed to get some resources via The Brick so young people could partake in several accredited beauty sessions learning about skin care, manicures, hygiene and mental health and wellbeing.



Young people, some of whom are in alternative education, expressed interest in going boxing. They were given opportunities to attend the ABC Boxing Club in Leigh and develop their skills in the ring.

Also, 20 Young people aged 14 to 18 years got involved in workshops with MMU to discuss the causes of youth violence, where and when it happens, what makes young people feel safe and what can be done to address violence.

Some feedback from the year included:

*“Global friends have been the best thing that ever happened to me. I have had ups and downs this year, but the club has helped me get through these times. Especially when we do fun stuff like going out on a trip (not very often) and playing games. I am so grateful for this club and the workers that have helped and supported me in many ways and my friends at the club. This has been such a good year and hope more of these good activities will come next year” member aged 15 years old.*

*“I feel like everyone in the club comes for each other. Especially Mahmood and Farai because everything they do is for our best and for us to be happy and confident in ourselves. They teach us to be caring for each other and to trust our own self. I’m really happy to be part of Global Friends and since I have been here, I learned a lot of good things and gained knowledge about things. I am happy and proud to be part of this family. I’m really glad to be here, I made new friends and I think I’ve made a lot of progress since then” member aged 14 years old.*



**The BYOU project Wigan and Leigh**, is a young person's action group that campaigns for positive change for young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their sexuality or gender identity (LGBTQ).

The group held 11 sessions in the year and gained seven new members.

*"At my first session at BYOU I felt included because I could speak freely about my experiences with people, I had only just met for the first time"*



Wigan Life Museum and Archives approached BYOU to contribute to a display they were putting up for LGBTQ+ History Month. They wanted to get some stories from the LGBTQ+ community about LGBTQ+ past and present, and so stories were obtained about situations where young people from BYOU had felt accepted, included, liberated, and seen. Some of these include... (see attached spreadsheet for full stories):



Young people were offered the opportunity to get some professional photograph portraits for a project around Wigan History. This also gave the young people a chance to open discussions about Wigan's past, and how it has developed over time, and ideas for how it will look in the future.

## **Children in Care Council - Million Voices**

A participation group for Wigan young people in care and care leavers aged 11-18. This group meets fortnightly. The young people complete induction training and interview training in addition to the group meetings. They also regularly meet with the Corporate Parenting Board and Senior Managers in Children's Services to influence policy and practice.

Throughout the year, the group took part in many engagement projects, has several invited guests/speakers and took part in several activity sessions.





## Care Leavers Forum - Connected Families

A participation group for Wigan's care leavers supported by the councils leaving care team. The group meets fortnightly and has a combined peer support element to reduce any feelings of isolation. The Forum has a dedicated Participation Lead in post and their agreed priority task is to focus on a consultation with Care Leavers around emotional wellbeing and how they access support.

The groups above are just a selection, with a full list available on the [Wigan Council website](#).

## Engagement with young people

The above young people groups are all supported via the [Children's Social Care Participation Strategy 2022-25](#) which was co-produced with Wigan and Leigh children and young people.

The strategy fully aligns with the nationally recognised Lundy Model of participation and is dedicated to upholding our responsibilities under Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - every child has the right to express their views, feelings



and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

## **Emerging capacity within the Community, Voluntary, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector in Wigan Borough**

UKSPF- E11 investment provided an opportunity to build up some much-needed VCFSE infrastructure capacity. Each borough of Greater Manchester was allocated funding to identify, address gaps and share good practice.

Wigan Borough was allocated a £160k budget for 2022/2025, without an infrastructure organisation, to act as an advocate / representative, we wanted to explore opportunities and new ways of working to connect and strengthen the sector.

An opportunity was promoted throughout the sector, seeking passionate, articulate individuals interested in building relationships and making connections to ensure Wigan Borough is accessing support and funding locally, regionally, and nationally. The opportunity provided a bursary of £5,000 per organisation per year for 2 years for up to 12 Organisations. A group of 12 individuals have been working together to establish a strong network of leaders within the sector, they are working towards the same shared understanding:

The VCFSE can achieve more together, working together to develop relationships and find opportunities to connect and work together in ways that benefit communities. This might range from helping connect local groups to enable them to share resources, through to contributing thoughts to help shape a borough wide approach to neighbourhood working. We will share learning with the VCFSE, council and wider partners to demonstrate the value of partnership working, share practical insights and help advocate for what is needed to enable meaningful partnerships.

As of May 2024, the group will be known as the Wigan Borough VCFSE Accord Group. The Accord is a three-way collaboration



agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the GMVCSE Sector, represented by the GM VCS Leadership Group. Representation from Wigan Borough is currently managed by Colin Greenhalgh and Dave Baxter. The agreement is based in a relationship of mutual trust, working together, and sharing responsibility. Its purpose is to further develop how we work together to improve outcomes for Greater Manchester's communities and residents.

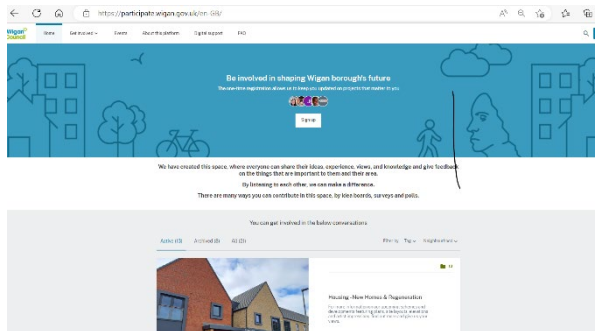
A small working group has been set up to develop a localised version of the Accord, that represents Wigan Borough and articulates our own principles and priorities.

To date, the priority of the leadership group has been about relationship building and building trust, the time has been spent getting to know each other and finding their place and purpose. The group is becoming a real network for peer-to-peer support and shared learning.

### **Membership of the group:**

- Liz Douglas, Roots and Branches
- Chris Hamnett, Embrace Wigan and Leigh
- Gemma Atkinson, Douglas Valley Communities
- Jo Carby, Wigan and Leigh Hospice
- Farai Nhakaniso, Everything Human Rights
- Steve Eastwood, Wigan Athletic Community Trust
- Alice Coren, ReMade Wigan
- Sally Carr, Street Games
- Bryonie Shaw, Age UK Wigan Borough
- Martin Green, Green Room Creative
- Keely Dalfen, The Brick
- Colin Greenhalgh, Groundwork
- Dave Baxter, Wigan and Leigh Community Charity
- Nicola Rigby, Wigan Council

## Transforming online engagement



We created a new online space, where everyone can share their ideas, experience, views, and knowledge and give feedback on the things that are important to them and their area. There are many ways you can contribute in this space, by idea boards, surveys and polls.

As part of the registration process, all equality monitoring questions (optional questions) are asked, to track whether our engagement is collecting a diverse voice and identify any potential exclusion barriers.

This allows individuals, who face barriers in attending face-to-face engagement events, to contribute and influence decisions.

This engagement is in addition to face-to-face engagement.





# **Celebrate and respect diversity in Wigan Borough**

## Raising awareness

Over the past year the Public Relations team have supported, celebrated, and helped raise awareness of a number of themes linked to equalities. These included:

- An event to mark International Women's Day in March
- Marking the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia in May
- Promoting and celebrating community events and sharing local people's stories and messages for Refugee Week in June
- Wigan Pride in August and Pride in Leigh in July
- Marking Black History Month in October by lighting up the town halls and sharing stories and information about local events
- Acknowledging Disability History Month in December by sharing the achievements and views of local groups.



We have also marked significant cultural or religious days on our social media channels including Lunar New Year, Ramadan, Eid, Passover, Diwali and Hannukah alongside our traditional festivals of Easter, St. George's Day, and Christmas.

We have made sure that a diverse range of community voices have been included in other events and coverage, including making sure that any Q and A panels, performances, or quotes in our media

releases and social media posts, represent the borough's diverse community whenever possible.

## **Culture, Arts and Heritage, Wigan Council**

Our work strives to provide equality of opportunity and provide platforms to celebrate difference. Our venues, the Museum of Wigan Life, The Turnpike Gallery and Archives Wigan and Leigh are community resources and in addition to the core programmes, support a number of community groups and activities that support this agenda, examples of this include but are not limited to, our work with Manchester Camerata and the music cafes at the museum which provide creative respite for local residents living with dementia and our hosting of Happy Place at the Turnpike Gallery, a community led programme that provides creative activity as a means of enhancing well-being, positive mental health, and meaningful connections.

## **Turnpike Gallery**

Our updated exhibitions policy acknowledges the Equality Duty and our ambitions to deliver a varied programme of art exhibitions which reflects the diversity of artists and our communities and enables the widest possible access to our service.



With the support of Arts Council England National Lottery Funding, Creating Place (summer 2023) celebrated the diversity in Leigh by working with people from migrant and refugee communities. Artworks

on the theme of home were shown in the gallery and a welcoming, active, and creative space was developed with local and regional professional artists including Beena Nouri, Mohammad Barrangi, Hattie Kongauruan and Ahmed Elzber. The exhibition grew over the summer as visitors could also contribute their own creations, with over 800 people taking part in artist-led art and craft activities.



Targeted work in partnership with Sheba Arts and SWAP (Supporting Wigan Arrivals Project) successfully engaged over 20 families from migrant and refugee communities, including Black African families (21%), families from (16%), Iran (12%), Sudan (12%), China (8%). In addition, 'Welcome Home' signs made in the gallery by participants and visitors shared 22 different languages, including Arabic, Kurdish, Romanian, Polish, Latvian, Tigrinya, Yoruba and Urdu and were a talking point for people to speak about their own heritage.

The culmination of Creating Place saw a celebratory event at the end of the exhibition with performances by Portia Gwanzurah and Moonraker Foundation, and Dana Ismaili. Originally from Zimbabwe, Portia made her home in Leigh over 20 years ago, and Kurdish musician Dana Ismaili, now lives in Lowton.

## **Archives Wigan and Leigh**

The Archives hosted three long-term volunteer placements for people with learning disabilities, working in partnership with local charities Incl. True Colours.

The team successfully applied for an access to work grant to help a member of staff with visual impairment participate in off-site work.

As a member of the GM Archives network, the team are working on a joint priority to diversify borough collections. This has been built into the service's forward plan (2023-26) as a core objective and work has started to connect with communities and groups to guide and support us in this process over the next 3-years.

The council's collection policy, which covers both the museum and archives collection was updated in 2023 with a provision for greater involvement of communities on what is included in our collections.

## **Streets Apart Festival**



Streets Apart Festival was the culmination of the 3-year project that was delivered in partnership with the council and local cultural organisations celebrating the heritage of King Street in Wigan. Bringing together the final project commissions, and additional funding from Emergency Exit Arts (EEA) in partnership with Historic England, the festival was an outdoor street celebration for the whole community.

The main commission for the festival, chosen by the partnership was Darren Pritchard, a Manchester born and based artist with 20 years of experience in the fashion, theatre, television and performing arts industries. Renowned for his inclusive club nights and celebratory community events, Darren curated a programme centring on LGBTQ+.





The festival attracted 12,000 attendees and Darren worked with the festival communications team to develop a Safer Spaces Policy which was adopted by all festival partners.

*“I lived in Wigan as a child, and it was such a difficult environment to be who you wanted to be. Seeing things like this fills me with so much joy and hope for future generations who grow up in Wigan.”* Streets Apart Festival, Saturday audience member.

## **Hate Crime Week**

Throughout the week, partners came together to address hate crime in Wigan. Staff from the Wigan Prevention Hub, a collaboration between the Council and GMP, visited repeated victims of Hate Crime to offer ongoing support. Police Community Support Officers held surgeries at Sunshine House Community Centre and the Wigan Armed Forces Hub. These sessions were delivered to staff at the two community centres and VCFSE groups as well as visitors and residents. A day of action was also undertaken by PCSOs at Wigan bus station which has been identified as a hotspot for hate crime incidents.

Using £10,000 given to the Council by GMCA as part of Hate Crime Awareness Week, the council awarded this to community groups who wished to run events during Hate Crime Awareness Week 2024. £5,000 was allocated to six community groups. Applications for the fund were reviewed by representatives from the local authority, GMP and elected portfolio holder for Police Crime and Civil Contingencies. The six groups that were awarded the funding were

- Aspull Olympic Wrestling Club
- Leigh Youth Hub Steering Group
- Pete Shelly Memorial Campaign
- Everything Human Rights
- Fempowered Together
- Wigan Athletic Community Trust.



### **Aspull Olympic Wrestling Club**

*"We ran a session on Monday with our kids and we couldn't have hoped for it to go as well. It ended up with parents and coaches getting involved too.*

*We did a discussion around Hate Crime Awareness, and we gave out the free items to everyone. We then concentrated the session on the importance of language and the impact that it has.*

*We also added on some extra things such as laminated cards with positive affirmations and words. Each child then was given an opportunity to pick ones out that they felt described themselves and they then chose words for each other. They then also wanted to give them to their parents. The positive affirmations were then given to the parents and coaches to give out to the children.*

*They each collected 10 cards and then chose their favourites, and this was then written on them, and a photography session done. They then were all able to take the laminated cards home as a reminder.*

*It was so lovely to see their faces light up during the session. This included the parents and coaches too.*

*We also had negative cards which were available, and we got the opportunity to have some really proactive conversations with not just the children but also their parents about the importance of words and what they say to their children. The session flagged that often things can be said in the guise of humour but to a child they cannot always be received that way and so we discussed the value that a child can feel from switching to positive praise."*

## Wigan Athletic Community Trust

• Last week, we ran Hate Crime Awareness workshops across all of our #PFLKicks sessions for #HateCrimeAwarenessWeek!  
• Massive well done to all who took part in important discussions surrounding the topic of hate crime and learned how to report it.



15 sessions across Wigan and Leigh Premier League Kicks sessions have all received a workshop before the Kicks session at the side of the pitches. The participants aged 8-18-years old discussed what hate crime is, examples they have witnessed and ways they can help to tackle it. The coaches had open discussions on way that as a Trust, all the Premier League Kicks sessions can be full inclusive, and tackle hate crime to make everyone feel welcome. Using examples from professional football also helped to show how in football terminology can be used in the wrong way and can have such a wider impact.

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February over 40 participants aged 11-14 years old attended Stadium Way Kicks representing their area. The participants took part in a workshop within the tournament on ways we can tackle it, report it and make Kicks football sessions more fully inclusive across all locations. The tournament had great engagement including open discussions around examples they hear and see on a regular basis.





**Gather robust  
equalities evidence  
and ensure  
transparency in our  
actions  
and  
Community health  
and wealth building  
approach**



## **Working with GMCA and our nine Greater Manchester Local Authorities.**

We have worked collectively with GMCA and our neighbouring Greater Manchester local authorities in 2023. Actions have included:

- Progressing the Armed Forces Covenant Delivery in Greater Manchester. In this [update](#) the mayor states “*We believe the Wigan Veterans Hub represents outstanding practice and will support other boroughs to replicate it*”.
- Responding to the 2022 Big Disability Survey. An update can be found [here](#).
- Development of a new [Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy 2024 – 2034](#)
- A new [Greater Manchester Faith, Belief and Interfaith Covenant](#).
- The development of a [Greater Manchester Race Equality Framework](#).

## **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme**

The programme, which is jointly delivered by Be Well and Start Well Public Health, aims to ensure eligible children and young people:

- eat healthily over the school holidays
- be active during the school holidays
- take part in engaging and enriching activities which support the development of resilience, character and wellbeing along with their wider educational attainment
- be safe and not to be socially isolated
- have a greater knowledge of health and nutrition
- be more engaged with school and other local services

In 2023, over 8,000 children and young people (of which 1587 had special educational needs and disabilities) took part in the programme, in which 47,000 meals and activities were provided.

Wigan Borough has been allocated £1.3m per year from Department for Education (DfE) for three years to support our 12,000 plus families

eligible for benefit related free school meals during the school holidays through the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme.

## Care Hub

The Hub itself has been both inspired by and designed by young people. Young people have been instrumental in designing The Hub, including taking part in a session with an artist to design a mural for their room to 'chill out' in. There are lots of hidden messages in the painting, that are representative to young people of climbing mountains and overcoming barriers to achieve their ambitions.



Our Care Leavers Hub was opened in late 2022 and during 2023 we have been working collaboratively with young people to ensure that The Hub provides the safe space that care leavers told us they wanted. The Hub also provides a base for partners to work collaboratively with each other and with care leavers.

The Hub is open 5 days a week and offers a safe warm space for care leavers to use to seek advice and support from their PA's and other partners. Drop-in sessions are offered from a range of partners including health and sexual health, educational, employment and training support, emotional wellbeing support, and relationship support.



Our Connected Families Group runs weekly, this is a forum for care leavers to spend time with each other and to take part in engagement and co-production to influence the service. Connected Family care leavers group has been set up as a constitution, so that young people can raise money and apply for funding and grants to be received into their own bank account. Young people then choose how to use this money, for example the new furniture for their rooms at the Hub.

Care leavers co produce a monthly newsletter, the Hub has its own Instagram account, an idea that came from young people, as an additional way to share with people what is happening at the Hub, as well as a platform to create and share videos to support independent living skills.

The Parenting Offer is a wide range of support, including a stocked baby pantry, schedule of sessions for parents, and casual catch ups. Start Well workers attend some timetabled sessions, with the workers locality being the same as young people attending the sessions so to build some positive relationships and encourage young people to attend Start Well groups in their local area.

We have worked with The Shoebox Fairies, a local Wigan based charity working with vulnerable mothers to provide them with Baby Box (items for baby like nappies, babygrows, knitted cardigans, dummies, wipes, toys etc) and a New Beginnings Box (items for Mum, like toiletries, pjs, treats). We have been working with them throughout 2023 and they have even supplied us with boxes for male Care Leavers' partners expecting a baby and even a 'new beginnings' box for male Care Leavers.

We have developed a lovely reciprocal working relationship with them, we have supported their Christmas Shoe Box appeal and they have visited the Hub and supported our appeals.

The Hub also offers digital support, emotional wellbeing support and employment, education and training offer.

## **Monday Club (Wigan Youth Zone)**



A large engagement group for young people aged 8 to 17 to participate in a diverse range of activities. The session is held every Monday, 4pm to 5.45pm, at Wigan Youth Zone in Wigan. Young people also participate in light engagement work.

They have enjoyed many activities, such as baking club, roller disco, making milkshakes, different sports activities, team-building activities, arts and crafts, karaoke and beatboxing.

## **Thursday Club (Children in Care Activity Sessions)**



Thursday Club is a targeted activity session for young people in care. This session is a smaller provision for young people who are struggling in placement with social, emotional and mental health or emotional and behavioural difficulties needs. The session offers a



variety of activities such as informal education, large and small group games, life skill sessions (e.g., bakery, shopping, water/road safety). The sessions will also feature some light engagement work that has been cascaded down from A Million Voices (Children in Care Steering Group)

## **Supporting residents with Autism**

The Wigan All-Age Autism Partnership Board is committed to ensuring that the Wigan Borough is an autism-friendly place where autistic children and adults can live independent, fulfilling lives, accessing support as and when it is needed. We work as a team of people and organisations to give adults and children with autism better choices and opportunities in their lives.

We evidence progress made via bi-monthly reviews and updating our implementation plan.

In 2021, the Board and our local autistic community, co-produced the [Wigan All-Age Autism Strategy 2022/2026](#). Following our engagement with local people and key service representatives, we were able to identify a series of actions aligned with seven focus areas as listed below.

1. Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society and make communities more autism inclusive.
2. Improving autistic children and young people's access to education and supporting positive transitions into adulthood.
3. Supporting more autistic people into employment.
4. Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people.
5. Building the right support in the community and supporting people in inpatient care.
6. Improving support within the criminal and youth justice systems.
7. Developing an inclusive menu of housing options.





In January 2024, the Board took the opportunity to review the Wigan All-Age Autism Strategy, looking at what we have achieved over the previous two years, challenges faced, and identified areas for improvement.



Attendees included service representatives and people / family members with lived experience of autism, and Autism Partnership Board Members.

The Autism Engagement Group helped set the agenda for the session.

Attendees shared some reflections of the day and their involvement of strategic plans

*“Have learned that progress is being made in quite a few areas. Training is going well, and things look promising for the future of Wigan.”*

*“Value the opinions and experiences of all who attended.”  
“I definitely do feel involved and make a contribution whether it is contributing to the progress reports to attending the different areas or attending the autism groups.”*





*“Session was informative, great for networking. Everyone’s contribution was listened to and valued. I feel we are able to shape services – it just takes time to see the changes. Working together – services need to communicate more with each other.”*

*“A lot of energy in the room. Able to contribute and feel my opinions were valued. I feel I can make a difference and contribute to forums.”*

We plan to update the Autism Strategy to reflect discussions, look at online platforms for service leads to connect better and update on action plan, look at future opportunities for workshops to ensure we continue to energise the work we are doing, and additional conversations required to develop a thorough evaluation process for the autism strategy.

## **Help to Claim – Income Maximisation**

Our Joint Intelligence Unit and our Customer Experience and Support have created a single view of residents at a household level, to identify and provide support to those most impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The new data led approach enabled customers most likely to be entitled to unclaimed welfare benefits, reductions, discounts, and exemptions to be supported through claim processes.

Customers are contacted by phone and may be invited to face-to-face bespoke events, with experts in welfare rights and advice in attendance. The events offer holistic conversations in a safe setting facilitated by our own staff and partner organisations resulting in many positive outcomes putting money in customers pockets.

Our Income Maximisation team have been traveling around the borough providing advice and support to make claims. So far the team have helped over 1,000 residents claim approximately £2.7 million of additional income.

After being invited to and visiting one of our events, a pension age couple in poor health received a lifechanging financial boost thanks to our support and advice, helping to improve their general health, wellbeing and finances.



After attending our Income Maximisation event they now receive an additional income of over £400 a week, they did not know they were entitled to claim.



Details of upcoming events can be found at [here](#).

## Housing Disrepair Works

The Housing disrepair team meets weekly with the Legal Team to identify and hard target all the Hazard 1 Category 1 and 2 cases. We track all urgent cases and order any urgent work required to bring it

out of the hazard status i.e., mould sterilisation, loose handrails, live leaks, faulty or ineffective external facing doors, slips trips and falls, any gas related issues and many more.

Our data set is currently being reviewed through our in-house analyst to enhance our collaboration with Legal to provide a live dashboard.

Damp and mould leaflets have been produced to keep our tenants informed on how best to alleviate mould and condensation related problems which are handed out by Property Inspectors. These leaflets are also on the [Wigan Council webpage](#). A hard copy has been made available at both Wigan and Leigh Life Centres.

Our Sensors Pilot provides live data on what is going on inside our tenant's homes. They catalogue Co2 levels, relative humidity, due points, and the internal air temperature. This is in an early pilot phase.

## Digital Communities Partnership



Our Digital Communities Partnership is a collaboration between organisations and partners to focus on supporting digitally excluded residents by working together on initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide. This includes joint events, sharing resources, or developing new features to enhance digital skills for our residents in the borough. It is to encourage growth and engagement, offering digital literacy training programs and support services to ensure all residents of the borough can participate and benefit from digital services.

We gifted Ekhyaya Empowerment CIC, 10 Samsung mini tablet devices. These devices will support them in making their vision of a digital media centre a reality and will go far in supporting their service users and other local community groups with basic digital skills and inclusion.

This is a brilliant example of collaboration and partnership working, and perfectly epitomises the effectiveness of the Digital Communities Partnership.

## **Supporting our Sheltered Accommodation Schemes**



Many residents who live in our sheltered accommodation schemes are within the at-risk demographic for digital exclusion. The Digital Inclusion team are working hard with our sheltered colleagues to bridge the digital divide together.

Digital Inclusion team attended all three of the Sheltered Accommodation Forums at Wharfdale, Withington Grange and Kildare Grange. They spoke about the digital inclusion services currently on offer to Wigan residents which include one to one TechMate support, TechMate Tea Party drop-in sessions, Tablet Lending Library and the National Databank.

On top of spreading awareness of current services, the team are also working with individual sheltered schemes and getting them to each join our Digital Communities Partnership, offering bespoke TechMate digital champion training, allowing residents to run their own digital sessions in their own community areas and lounges. The Rowans



Sheltered Scheme have received pop up basic digital skill sessions for residents and training to run their own, as well as a project loan of tablet devices for residents to use in their own sessions.

## **Target Hardening**

This service is provided to support people who are vulnerable and could be subject to Domestic Abuse, the brief specification of works we carry out is listed below.

- Lock changes/secure doors.
- Additional locks fitted to doors/windows.
- Supply and fit external solar powered security lights.
- Supply and install dummy cameras.
- Supply and fit spy hole and door chains.
- Provide window alarms.
- Provide panic alarms.

## **Resettlement support**

Our resettlement service support new residents in the borough. Some examples of their work are:

### Tailored support

- Developed personalised support plans addressing the specific needs of refugees relating to health, education, employment, and housing.

### Inclusive Employment support

- Partnered with other organisations such as Breaking Barriers and Maximus to create employment opportunities and promote workplace diversity
- Worked collaboratively to offer tailored employment support to meet the needs of refugees and other non-UK residents

### Language and Education support

- Ensured non-native speakers have access to English classes and learning materials
- Assisted with the enrolment onto educational programmes





## Collaboration and Partnerships

- Worked with local and regional organisations and community groups to provide support to vulnerable service users
- Established effective referral mechanisms into healthcare, education, employment agencies and community groups to support vulnerable service users

## Empowerment and Advocacy

- Supported asylum seekers and refugees to understand their rights and provided support to effectively integrate into mainstream society
- Signposted to legal assistance and resources to navigate the asylum process when necessary

## Promoting Participation

- We have facilitated opportunities for asylum seekers, refugees, and other non-UK residents to participate in community activities such as those held at SWAP to enhance social integration
- Been involved in workshops and events such as Refugee Week to celebrate cultural diversity

## Feedback

- Encouraged feedback from service users and acted on feedback to continuously improve service delivery and address any identified issues

## Equality of Access

- Our team have ensured vulnerable service users without recourse to public funds, and refugees have access to services without discrimination based on race, gender, disability, religion, age, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic
- Provided interpreters and translated materials to overcome language barriers



- Provided training inputs to other teams on our services and the sensitivity around the unique experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, and general non-UK residents

## **Case Study**

A female asylum seeker (no recourse) with two young children in the Wigan borough who was a victim of domestic abuse. This lady was extremely isolated from services and society. We began multi-agency working with other Council services and the third sector to support, safeguard, and create equal opportunities for this family.

We worked with this lady to ensure she had access to services such as health, housing, education (initially English support), legal assistance, emotional support.

This lady has now received a positive decision on her asylum claim, successfully graduated from ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages), has been enrolled onto an entrepreneurship program supporting her to start her own business in the borough, is an advocate and volunteer at local voluntary and religious provisions supporting ethnic minority survivors of abuse, and is waiting to move into secure accommodation. Her children are both thriving at school.

## **Access to Muslim Burials**

To support our Muslim residents' funerary customs, we support them to bury their deceased quicker compared to other religions. The requirement falls outside of our normal routine burial processes. To facilitate the burial in the required timescales, 10 precast concrete graves have been installed at Howe Bridge Cemetery – Leigh and





Gidlow Cemetery – Wigan. This complements the processes in registrars to register and bury within required timescales.

## **Assisted Bin Collection**

Some older residents and vulnerable residents may struggle with presenting their bins for collection. Residents can [register](#) to be assessed for assisted bin collection where the wheeled bins are collected from within the property curtilage and returned following emptying.

## **Eyes and Ears Training**

800 front line staff including Waste operatives, Council house repair staff and streetscene staff attended training to improve their awareness of safeguarding issues for residents.

The training included identification and awareness of protected characteristics and how to identify any signs of potential safeguarding issues.

Staff were provided with an accessible way of reporting any suspected issues.

## **Womens Alcohol Prehab**

[‘We are with you’](#) in Wigan and Leigh is the commissioned drug and alcohol treatment provider.

‘We are with you’ and BAC O’Connor work in partnership to deliver several projects in Wigan and Leigh that are designed to support people to stop, reduce or maintain their abstinence from drugs and/or alcohol. In September 2023 using grant funding, the women only community prehab launched. Data highlights less females access treatment due to many different reasons. The prehab offers a different route into treatment for women who would traditionally not engage in treatment. The prehab creates a female only safe space, with a peer support environment which is a vital part of someone’s recovery journey. Feedback shows some people don’t want to be seen walking



into the traditional service base in the town centres, the prehab location reduces the stigma associated with this.

The aims of the prehab are to encourage inclusion of women accessing treatment and reduce the stigma of addiction by providing a community setting surrounded by nature, animals and lovely scenery. The alcohol prehab is a 12-week programme based at Standish Equestrian centre for women who want to make a positive change to their alcohol use. The programme runs three days per week, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 10am-2pm. The times allow women with school children to access the programme and the location promotes a confidential space in the neighbourhood. Working with My Life at the equestrian centre allows access to diversionary activities such as volunteering at the centre, tending to the animals and gardening.

A trained facilitator and therapist lead the 12-week course, which aims to empower women by providing them with information and tools to support their mental health and wellbeing, relapse prevention, and goal setting.

Quotes from some of the women on the programme

*“A safe space for all women to begin and maintain their journey to recovery. We have the freedom to speak our minds and discuss issues that we couldn’t speak about with men present.”*

*“It’s made me realise it’s not just me. I get so much strength from hearing other people’s stories. We’re not afraid to show our emotions and we feel safe enough to do that here.”*

*“In such a short space of time, being here has changed my life. I’m back at work, I’ve got better friendships, I have a better relationship with my mum, and most importantly, I’m there for my son. I love my life now because I’ve finally got a life. “*



*“I love attending a women’s only group. I can be myself and really open up about my recovery as I feel safe and no judgement. We can chat about all sorts of personal issues which really empowers me to continue my sobriety. It’s brilliant!”*

## **With You – Accessible Guides**

As part of the collaborative working with both the All-Age Autism Partnership Board and Learning Disability Partnership Board it was identified through ongoing conversations that there was an appetite for supportive information to be created around the subject of drugs and alcohol for people with a Learning Disabilities and/or Autism.

Working with More Than Words, the service created and printed accessible ‘About the service’ guides to ensure people have access to easy read information to ensure equity. More Than Words is a not-for-profit community organisation in Wigan who support children, young people and adults with disabilities and/or autism. The guides promote accessibility and allow people to make informed choices.

The Accessible Guides have been distributed throughout Wigan and Leigh to services that can offer them in a supportive way such as GMP Custody Suite, Wigan and Leigh Youth Zones, RAEI, Wigan and Leigh College. We also asked Community Link Workers to distribute to the community-based settings, clinics, and GP Surgery’s that they access. We also sent them to our Quality Performance Officers to distribute amongst all the supported and residential settings within the borough.

## **Sexual Health Recommissioning**

Sexual ill health can affect all parts of society and people’s needs change throughout the life course. Sexual health, reproductive health and HIV services make an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.



During 2023, Wigan Council undertook a review of sexual health service provision across the Borough, linked to the ending of our specialist service contract, but also in response to a changing pattern of need amongst residents following the COVID pandemic, challenges in accessing contraception, and increases in some sexually transmitted infections.

A wide range of evidence was gathered to inform the review, including a public consultation, needs assessment, evidence reviews, patient journey mapping, focus groups and conversations with stakeholders. This allowed us to understand more about our residents' needs, particularly in relation to the experiences of groups of residents that may be most at risk of poorer sexual health outcomes.

The evidence gathered through the review work was used to design a new, innovative delivery model for specialist sexual health provision in the borough. The revised delivery model will aim to provide an increased contraception offer in the borough to address geographic and socio-economic inequalities in access to contraception. It will also provide a blended model of access to Sexually Transmitted Infection testing and treatment, as well as preventative and outreach offers into our communities with the highest level of need.

To ensure this delivery model would not negatively impact any protected group within the borough, a comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment was carried out, confirming no adverse effect on any group of residents.

Following the outcome of this process, Wigan Council successfully commissioned Locala CIC to deliver specialist sexual healthcare in the Borough, which it commenced doing so from 1st April 2024.



## **Ageing In Place Pathfinder - Worsley Mesnes, Hawkley Hall, and Goose Green**

We aim to improve residents' quality of life as they grow older, working together with older people in the neighbourhood to deliver resident-led partnerships that deliver positive and lasting change. Over four-years we have investment in the Ageing in Place Pathfinder. This is made up of external philanthropic grant funding and matched contributions from a wide range of partners, including our Lead Pathfinder Organisations.

Local demographics, mapping and insight have informed identification of these areas. Our focus will be on engaging older residents to gain an understanding of their lived experience of what it is like to age in these communities.

Engagement with residents has taken different forms from hosting community engagement events, held in accessible venues where people use them at key times. Talk and walk sessions facilitated by a local SWAN Primary Care Network. Residents conducting a walking route audit (WRAT) to assess the current condition and suitability of a walking route for both walking and wheelchair users, this has proven to be a successful project whereby we have been working with colleagues in Wigan Councils planning and highways to implement change. Hosting micro-residency art and creative workshops and recruiting residents to be part of the partnership group which will drive and make change.

Older people are really valuing being a part of something and coming together to make a change to the local area, to make it better for others today and in years to come. We have an outdoor space called Scotman's Flashwhich, with support of the partnership group, are hoping it will become a space that older people will use to connect, learn and share experiences.



Through the numerous engagement session's key themes have started to emerge:

- Communication and information – Improving the way messages get out to people, highlighting digital skills and exploring community reporters.
- Outdoor space - Pavements, benches – uneven pavements and opportunities to rest whilst walking. gardening and socialising opportunities.
- Social participation - Local History, places for people to be, like the 'warm hubs' model, activities for all to be involved in, a place to be not necessarily to do an activity.





## **Case Study - Resident and Ageing in Place Member**

"I am 58 years old a full-time wheelchair user. I have been involved with the Aging in Place Partnership group since June of 2023. This group has been put together as local people to advise on positive acquisitions to assist residents to help them become more independent and thus so reducing financial burdens on the NHS and social care.

I have been involved with is assessing the safety aspects of 'Walking and Wheeling Project'. The reason for this is, as a wheelchair user it is important to see things from a wheelchair users' perspective. With partnership from the council, we did an audit to show up the improvements that can be made for residents' safety and highlighting the trip and accident issues that could be so easily resolved.

I am not just a resident in this area, I am an expert in assessing access issues for disabled people including the elderly to ensure they can walk around their local area without the problems of feeling unsafe or at risk of falls. Because I do this job voluntarily not many people understand the high level of qualifications and experience, I have in this field and therefore my self-esteem and confidence can deteriorate dramatically. Being in this project has reversed this and my confidence and self-esteem has risen greatly, and I feel that I have contributed to my local area and my neighbours and friends to their advantage. Being a wheelchair user not many people see disabled people as a valuable source of knowledge, this is not the case within this group and their leaders. It is not what you do that makes you valuable, it is how other people gratefully receive your gifts and skills that makes you valuable. This team does that very well and should be a shining example for the future.

### Videos

- [State of Ageing 2022-24 report reactions: Wigan - YouTube](#)
- [The Importance of Place in Worsley Mesnes, Wigan \(youtube.com\)](#)



## **Here for You – Supporting our People in an Emergency**

Wigan Council is a Category 1 Responder as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. These responders need to be ready to identify residents who are most likely to be at risk in a wide range of emergencies, some of which come with a warning period, such as a storm that may cause flooding or property damage, while others require an immediate response, such as a terrorist incident, utility outage or the accidental release of dangerous substance. Those residents at risk due to certain factors may be less able to help themselves in an emergency. Those people who might be classed as vulnerable will vary depending on the nature of the emergency, but plans should consider:

- Individuals who may struggle with their mobility e.g., need physical support.
- Individuals who may struggle with cognition and may need additional support to understand the situation.
- Individuals with a sensory disability.
- In all cases, those that live alone with risk factors are flagged but living alone is not a risk factor in itself.

Information sharing during an emergency is necessary so that responders can make the right judgements. Wigan Council holds and owns data about people which can identify vulnerabilities and higher risk locations on numerous systems. In the last twelve months Wigan Council has implemented a system that uses the data it holds on residents which can help to identify risk factors of residents to identify vulnerable people and their home address and higher risk locations across the Wigan Borough.

Planning the use of data well in advance of an emergency has enabled all these processing activities to be designed and implemented legally, ethically and transparently.



## **BeWell**

Be Well Wigan has a clear vision

*'To create a culture of health and wellbeing across our neighbourhoods'.*

BeWell's mission is to transform our services for those who need us most in our communities; establishing partnerships and providing personalised life-changing support that enables local people to live longer, lead better lives and Be Well.

Performance indicators track additional impact including our ability to tackle specific health conditions or target the Top 20% most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the country.

We know we are making a difference because:

Pivot to Active Wellness – our Award winning (APSE 2023) approach to transforming our leisure assets into community hubs. Our flagship Pivot site is Robin Park Leisure Centre. From an initial meeting with the Wigan North and Central Primary Care Networks in January, three health roadshows were run by May providing the evidence to invest in four Pivot Rooms.

The health roadshows provided blood pressure checks to 500 patients who had not visited the GP in the last two years. As a result, 41 patients are on a 'watch list' and from the 100 patients

At the second event, four patients were identified to be in hypertensive crisis and one with arterial fibrillation - Essentially five lives saved!

By August, Pivot rooms were at 90% occupancy offering health checks and other non-clinical services. £70k has been secured to upgrade Pivot Room 1 to be Clinical Quality Commission (CQC) compliant and host infant and adult vaccinations, pre- and post-natal checks, full health and cervical screening (including targeting underrepresented patient groups such as Learning Difficulties and LGBTQ+).

The financial impact of the roadshows alone on the local health system is £15,500 income (£30 per appointment) to re-invest in health improvement services. The 512 appointments saved over 85 hours of GP surgery time enabling patients with more serious health conditions



to get an appointment in a timelier manner. The number that failed to show up for their appointments was negligible.

Closer collaboration has resulted in Be Well services linked in to earlier stages of clinical pathways which has seen health professionals advocating physical activity as a fundamental option for health improvement.

Across the Wellbeing targeted services, the top four health conditions recorded by participants are overweight/obesity, musculoskeletal, arthritis and hypertension, but our services are now being embedded in other pathways such as Falls Prevention and Cardiac rehab. The Be Well service now features on the Wigan Healthier Partnership website for 'Waiting Well'

A total of 4,582 new participants have taken part in targeted services since April, with 546 converting to wellbeing direct debit memberships and a high proportion continuing to take part on a pay as you go basis.

Swimming, £25k funding for free swimming targets non-swimmers in Years 8 and 9 who missed out on attaining curriculum standards by the end of Year 6 due to the Covid-pandemic.

Junior Fitness, we became the first borough in Greater Manchester to offer fitness memberships to 11–14-year-olds this year. It is proving a popular addition with 1,241 young people taking up this membership. 104 Looked After Children or Care Leavers access free leisure provision.

Work force development - BeWell Assistant, collectively as a management team we believe it is instrumental to the success of our services that we have a diverse workforce that represents our neighbourhoods. To achieve this BeWell will be taking a new Innovative approach by creating a new role within our establishment, BeWell Assistant.

The newly created BeWell Assistant role will be tailored to the skills and attributes of the individual. This will give BeWell and the successful candidates the opportunity to flex across numerous roles (recreation assistant, coaching, receptionist, outdoor, health etc) within BeWell to develop their skills and enhance our service delivery.



Accessible Facilities - Water Wellbeing, as a Wellbeing service we recognise the unique benefits of being active in our local pools and it's the ideal place for people of all ages and level of ability to exercise. To ensure all our pools are accessible to our residents we are working with Swim England to ensure all our swimming facilities are welcoming, inclusive and can meet the needs and aspirations of everyone who accesses our facilities.

Swim England have developed the 'Water Wellbeing Accreditation' model which includes all the essential components, to be able to offer the best possible experience for people who are inactive and/or have long term health conditions, to become physically active in water.

The Water Wellbeing accreditation process will hold us accountable and ensure as a BeWell service we continue to demonstrate high standards and quality of support both to health partners and members of the public.

To become a recognised Water Wellbeing Accredited service, we need to achieve and demonstrate impact in three key areas:

- Stage 1, Accessible and Inclusive.
- Stage 2, Personalised Delivery.
- Stage 3, Demonstrating impact.

We decided to start the Accreditation process at Ashton Leisure Centre (ALC) and expect this to be completed by Summer 2024. We will use this opportunity to strengthen our customer relationships and ensure we are creating opportunities to access a pool for the 'hard to reach residents'. Following the completion of the Accreditation at ALC, we will then roll this out across all our leisure facilities that host a swimming pool.

Pool-Pod Lift, as part of BeWells Commitment to inclusion we have been exploring a few avenues on how we improve accessibility to our pools. Poolpod investment will be installed at Howe Bridge leisure Centre as part of the pivot to wellness. The Poolpod will continue to offer access to our diverse communities and create access to individuals who are currently unable to access the pool at Howe Bridge.



The new innovative approach will give the users the opportunity to operate the Poolpod independently or if they prefer the lift can be controlled by the lifeguard on duty.

The required 32k funding has been jointly supported by BeWell, Adult Social Care and LDP (local delivery pilot).

## **Procurement**

Many of the services tendered in 2023 were considered from an Equality Impact Assessment perspective (as part of the Council's democratic process) to review the impact of the policy decision on protected characteristics.





# **Recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse and representative workforce**



For more information on our workforce, please see appendix A.

**We have improved staff experience and staff voice on equality issues, through:**

- Supporting the creation of new staff networks across all the protected characteristics and building on current networks, using their ideas, and lived experience to drive forward future inclusion plans. In addition to working closely with all networks to align senior sponsorship and help inform future workforce inclusion priorities.
- Ensuring new starters are made aware of what support is available to help them feel a sense belonging in the workplace – using the new staff and manager induction to signpost to our inclusion hub pages and staff network information.
- Continued promotion of key awareness days across the organisation such as National Inclusion Week, Autism Week and Black History Month encouraging staff to get involved and have their say to shape our future plans during these weeks.
- Launched our new Supporting Attendance approach which provides a framework for asset-based conversations that focus on what an individual can do and enable the right support at the right time.
- We're continuing with our inclusive approach to engage with staff, The Big Conversation to make sure we have the right tools, support and policies in place. The first theme focussed on Wellbeing and we've since launched several initiatives including an enhanced Mental Wellbeing Offer to address the key concerns and trends which includes TRiM (Trauma Risk Management) and Schwartz Rounds. The second theme focussed on rewards and benefits and we've since launched several initiatives because of feedback from staff including a free will writing service and a refreshed Paternity Leave Policy, increasing our paternity pay from one weeks' full pay and one week's statutory pay to two full weeks' pay.



- Staff attended listening sessions with the Leader and Chief Executive as well as their director to get involved and have their say on key priority areas of focus.
- Launched Shape our Wellbeing survey to evaluate wellbeing support needs.
- Ongoing support for our approach to hybrid working - from 'my place' (home) 'your place' (council buildings) and 'our place' (the local community).
- Ensuring our approach to engagement and consultation between senior managers and trade unions is embedded through regular, open, and meaningful conversations - resulting in quicker and more effective outcomes for our workforce and residents.
- Continue to work closely with our carer's champion network to provide support to working carers across the workforce, alongside continuing to promote and embed the additional workplace support available – such as carers leave and the carers passport.

We are also:

- Launching a new staff survey so that we can get to know our workforce better and understand how it feels to work at Wigan Council, what we do well and where we could improve. Maintaining our culture of open and continuous communication is important so we're providing various methods of communication so that staff can share their thought, ideas and feedback on important topics. This includes a digital, anonymous survey, virtual ideas board and face-to-face sessions. The survey will also collect EDI data to ensure we can understand our workforce better and focus on what needs to be a priority.
- Working alongside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to help support the development of the wider People Inclusion Standards across Greater Manchester.
- Progressing our Disability Confident journey by working with colleagues in Supported Employment to achieve 'Disability Confident (Level 3)' accreditation.



- Reviewing our existing policies, procedures, guidance, toolkit and letters, whilst cocreating workforce policies based on lived experience to ensure they are person centred and asset based.

**We are providing fair and equal opportunities, ensuring the appropriate support is available for staff to reach their full potential:**

- Launched the Team Wigan Experience, which is an innovative and immersive learning experience for all staff. It has been designed to meet all learning styles and is very Inclusive, we ensured that access was straight from the ground floor, that all doorways would suit wheelchair access. We created a Quiet room for anyone who may feel overwhelmed or anyone who finds noise, lights and crowds challenging. We have seating available throughout for anyone who requires a seat. We have put in an Induction Loop and are making adjustments for our Deaf colleagues by ensuring that they are fully involved.
- Continued to deliver a series of wellbeing sessions and training, including enhanced mental wellbeing support for staff and managers raising awareness and inspiring staff to care for their health and wellbeing and regularly promoted our wellbeing offer to staff.
- Continued to develop our recruitment processes to promote fairness and equality including guaranteed assessment status for veterans, carers, care leavers and people with disabilities.

We are also:

- We are reviewing our current leadership development offer, placing a stronger focus on inclusive leadership, and providing managers with the appropriate tools, guidance, and training to take a person-centred approach to supporting their staff.
- Refreshing policies and procedures to include a statement of intent to reinforce our commitment to EDI.
- Creating an asset-based approach in developing and enhancing every employee's ability, through a 'supporting potential framework'. This new approach will work alongside the existing 1-2-1 'My Time' and will help both managers and



employees take accountability for their work and support managers to grow and enhance the potential and skills within their teams to ensure we are delivering the best services.

- Further developing opportunities to grow and nurture talent by taking an inclusive and person-centred approach to development conversations, supporting managers and staff to recognise that everyone has different talents, skills, and aspirations.
- Developing tools and guidance to support managers with succession planning. Whilst pulling together key employee data and metrics to help us further grow and develop 'Talent Talks' conversations across directorates – ensuring managers are taking an inclusive approach to knowing their teams' skills, talents, and aspirations.

**We have improved the quality and collection of workforce Equality and Diversity information, ensuring we use this data to develop systems and inform key strategic workforce inclusion plans:**

We are continuing to work closely with our staff networks and managers to encourage our workforce to update their personal records, through communicating the benefits of sharing this information. We have:

- Updated how we capture sensitive data on 'My Job' to ensure all data is captured in one place, making this easier for our workforce to input their information.
- Improved how we capture sensitive data and transfer this to our database to ensure we have a 'tell us once' approach from the recruitment stage, right through to onboarding.
- Worked alongside colleagues in JIU and application support to develop a data dashboard that holds key workforce data, including equalities data, to support managers and HR and OD to influence workforce plans.



We are also:

- Developing a bespoke campaign with our staff networks to encourage staff to share their personal EDI data with us, sharing how we are going to use this data to inform EDI plans.

**We have developed and improved staff's equality and diversity skills, ensuring staff have the confidence to support and engage with the diversity of colleagues and service users in the Borough, through:**

This year we have:

- Worked with local community groups Happy Smiles and Everything Human Rights to launch 'Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Awareness Sessions' for our managers. The sessions were designed to provide managers with a general understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusions, what this means for Team Wigan and why it's important.
- Celebrated national inclusion week across the organisation to promote what we are doing to drive inclusion and how else staff can get involved.
- Continued a wealth of support and awareness around the menopause including our 'Lets Pause Menopause' network group.
- Trained a large number of staff to be Mental Health First Aiders and Mental Health Aware.
- Have several trained TRIM assessors to support someone if they have experienced a work-related incident or trauma.
- Offered a range of training opportunities for awareness and knowledge focusing on learning disabilities and autism.
- Our staff network 'The Collective' (staff members and allies from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities) have launched a 'Reverse Mentoring' pilot in Adults Services – with a view to providing increased cultural awareness to our senior leaders and making positive changes within the service that promote equality.





- Having successfully launched Supporting Attendance, ongoing quarterly support is offered to managers who are new to managing sickness.
- Ensured EDI is captured as part of our core eLearning modules, that all staff must complete with regular refresher points. In addition to providing staff with access to other online training modules around equality, diversity and inclusion including Disability Awareness, LGBTQ+ Awareness and Unconscious Bias.

We are also:

- Following completion of our manager sessions, making sure that our 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Sessions' are made available to all staff and that this is embedded across the workforce.
- Updating our inclusion intranet hub pages - working with our staff networks to cocreate content to ensure this is relevant, appropriate, and supportive.
- Developing a drug and alcohol awareness session for managers so they're equipped to offer support/sign posting to the right services.

### **Community Wealth Building**

We have continued to support Community Wealth Building through our workforce by providing high quality and diverse opportunities for residents to engage with Team Wigan and access sustained employment. Our Employment Pathways Team in HR and OD coordinate programmes to reach both young people and adults with a specific focus on removing barriers for those furthest away from the labour market and on ensuring college and university educated young people are retained within the borough. In the last year we have:

- Delivered bespoke employability sessions to groups of local young people to raise awareness of Council opportunities and improve the quality of applications reaching recruiting managers. This includes a new co-ordinated approach to work experience working with local schools for Year 10 students.



- Entered a civil partnership agreement with Wigan and Leigh College and Edge Hill University to support student pathways into the organisation.
- Delivered student workshops in partnership with local colleges and sixth form.
- Provided over 140 high quality industrial placements from September 2022 to September 2023 for local young people to support their achievement on T Level and BTEC qualifications.
- Continued to provide high quality Social Work placement opportunities to support Wigan residents on a social work pathway through our partnership working with the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy and Edge Hill University.
- Continued to develop the Step into Care Traineeship with in house and local adult care providers for young people not yet ready for an Apprenticeship or work. This year we have delivered two cohorts, the first supports young people aged 16 to 18, and the second 19 plus. 12 trainees participated in the traineeship.
- Refreshed our Care to Join us campaign to attract local higher education students looking for well-paid work experience in adult social care. In the first month we received 1364 job applications. The campaign provides a flexible workforce to support our services and ethical care providers and provides an excellent opportunity for young people to enhance their employability through our commitment to community wealth building.
- Created a job vacancy bulletin and guidance for young people applying for entry level roles which has been distributed to education partners and practitioners supporting young people not in education, employment, or training linking in with education providers at the appropriate times through the academic year to maximise job vacancies.
- Created a higher education student internship role and have successfully appointed 2 young people to these positions for paid work experience which has led to other internship opportunities for this year.



**Between January and December 2023, we've had 116 new apprenticeships begin studying their qualifications and we have also continued to develop new and different ways to recruit into different roles. This includes:**

- Practising anonymised recruitment where possible, but also being inclusive in other ways by recruiting differently.
- Having a real focus on growing our own and offering as many new or development opportunities to existing members of staff by advertising most vacancies internally in the first instance.
- Recruiting on our Team Wigan behaviours in addition to knowledge, skills and experience required for the role.
- Continue to challenge how we bring people to Wigan by offering different ways to recruit for harder to fill roles with high numbers of vacancies, such as virtual recruitment and fast track recruitment enabling a quicker interview and application process.
- Included an inclusion strapline on all our job adverts to inform all potential candidates of our approach to EDI here at Wigan.
- Offer a variety of application routes including CV application upload for a speedier process.
- Linked to our Community Wealth Building agenda, placing a refreshed focus on recruiting local people with lived experience to our roles by hosting community recruitment events at various locations across the Wigan borough in partnership with other local organisations, such as WWL and the NHS. In 2023 we delivered 9 events across Wigan and Leigh reaching approximately 700 residents.
- Expanding the reach of job adverts by continuing to explore and implement alternative advertising options, such as boards at all our Leisure Centres across the borough and bespoke advertising for specific roles.
- Shortlisted for the LGC Workforce Awards in 2023 for our approach to inclusive recruitment.



## Contact us

Everyone can take a step to promote equality. We all need to be open to learning and valuing differences. Together we will ensure that everyone has the same opportunities and potential to be happy and fulfilled.

A focus on inequalities will remain at the heart of Progress for Unity to ensure a borough where opportunity exists for all. Throughout the themes of The Deal 2030, we will work hard to include people who might otherwise be excluded or experience inequalities. Regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, socio-economic status, looked after child or care leaver, or whether you are carer or armed forces personnel, we will take steps to provide what you need to succeed.

If you are an individual, a business, VCFSE or public body who would like to know more or become involved in our work to progress equality in Wigan, please visit our [webpages](#), which we will be updating with our work.

For more information on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, please visit [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#).

## Appendix A - Wigan Council staff

At the reporting date of 31 December 2023, there are **5237 employees** (excluding schools) at Wigan Council. The following data is intended as a snapshot of the Council workforce on this day in time.

Data related to the protected characteristics is based on 'known data' where employees have self-disclosed and selected a choice which they feel best describes them. However, if they do not want to answer a specific question then they have the option of selecting 'prefer not to say.'

### Workforce by gender

	Headcount	% Of total workforce
<b>Female</b>	3638	69.47%
<b>Male</b>	1599	30.53%
<b>Total</b>	5237	100%

The gender split of employees is not equal, with the majority (69.47%) being female, which is recognised as being typical of local authority workforces.

Although the figures in this section classify employees as 'men' or 'women', it is recognised that this does not fully encapsulate the different gender identities employees may associate themselves with, such as non-binary or whether they consider their gender identity to be different to the sex they were assumed to be at birth.

### Workforce by age breakdown

	Female	Male	Total	% Of total workforce
<b>Aged 16-24</b>	203	138	341	7%
<b>Aged 25-34</b>	603	285	888	17%
<b>Aged 35-44</b>	882	310	1192	23%

<b>Aged 45-54</b>	949	354	1303	25%
<b>Aged 55-64</b>	873	424	1297	25%
<b>Aged 65-74</b>	120	84	204	4%
<b>75 plus</b>	8	4	12	0.23%

Age information is held for 100% of the workforce. Employees at Wigan Council have a diverse and varied age range, ranging from 16 to over 75 years of age. Representing the highest proportion of the workforce is age band 45-54, accounting for a quarter of staff at 25% though this is marginal. There is little quantitative difference with those aged 35-44 and aged 55-64.

#### Workforce by ethnicity grouping

<b>Ethnic Grouping</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>% Of total workforce</b>
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	24	0.46%
<b>Black or Black British</b>	41	0.78%
<b>Mixed</b>	45	0.86%
<b>Other Ethnic Groups</b>	12	0.23%
<b>White</b>	4293	81.97%
<b>Not Stated</b>	822	15.7%

Ethnicity data is held for 84.3% of the workforce, which is a 1.86% increase from December 2022. At present, 2.1% of total employees are from other ethnic groups (excluding white minorities). Staff from other ethnic minority backgrounds tend to be represented within directorates that are focused on user services, e.g., adult and children's services, rather than in corporate services.



## Workforce by disability

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>% Of total workforce</b>
<b>Yes</b>	177	3%
<b>No</b>	3852	73%
<b>Not Known</b>	113	2%
<b>Not Recorded</b>	1095	21%

Disability data is held for 78% of the workforce which is 1.6% increase on 2022. 21% of employees have not recorded an answer which is an improvement in disclosure rates from 2022.

## Workforce by religion or belief

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>% Of total workforce</b>
<b>Buddhist</b>	6	0.11%
<b>Christian</b>	1944	37.12%
<b>Hindu</b>	8	0.15%
<b>Muslim</b>	19	0.36%
<b>No Religion</b>	1132	21.62%
<b>Other</b>	76	1.45%
<b>Prefer Not to State</b>	71	1.36%
<b>Not Recorded</b>	1976	37.73%
<b>Sikh</b>	1	0.02%
<b>Jewish</b>	4	0.08%

Although we ask employees to state their religion or belief, 39.09% of employees either prefer not to state or record their answer. Of the 3,190 employees who chose

to provide their religion or state they had no religion, Christianity is the religion or belief most prolific, amounting to well over one-third of the total workforce.

#### Workforce by sexual orientation

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>% Of total workforce</b>
<b>Bisexual</b>	38	0.72%
<b>Gay Man</b>	40	0.76%
<b>Heterosexual/ Straight</b>	2313	44.17%
<b>Lesbian</b>	35	0.67%
<b>Not Stated</b>	2731	52.15%
<b>Prefer Not to State</b>	80	1.53%

Data on employees' sexual orientation is held for 47.85% of the workforce which is nearly a 6% increase from 2022. The data is not robust enough (high levels of unknowns) with the majority of the workforce (52.15%) not having recorded their data. Work needs to be undertaken to improve reporting in this category and ensure that the confidentiality of the data and the purpose for collecting it, is reinforced.

#### Gender reassignment

<b>Gender Re-assignment</b>	<b>Headcount</b>	<b>% Of total workforce</b>
<b>No</b>	2033	38.82%
<b>Not Stated</b>	3183	60.78%
<b>Prefer not to state</b>	14	0.27%
<b>Yes</b>	7	0.13%

Although we currently monitor the number of employees who have undergone gender-reassignment surgery, the data is not robust enough (very high levels of

employee data is unrecorded). We also do not currently monitor the number of employees who are in the process of transitioning.

Workforce by types of contracts

Contract type	Headcount	% Of total workforce
Full-Time	3269	61.62%
Part-Time	1963	37%