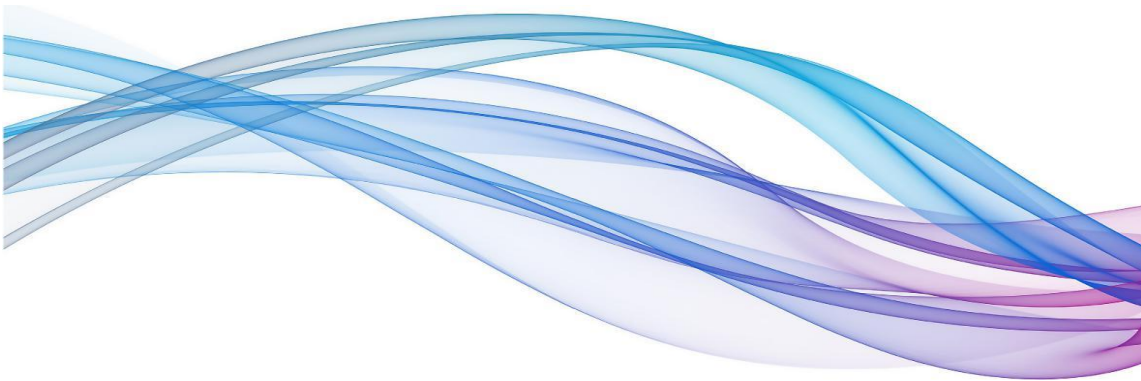


Scottish Borders Council

# Equality Mainstreaming Update Report 2023 - 2025

June 2023



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

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# FOREWORD FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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

The Council is committed to tackling discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and promoting good relations both within our workforce and the wider community.

Mainstreaming equality is the process by which we will work towards achieving this as an organisation. Mainstreaming equality is about integrating an equality perspective into the everyday work of the Council, involving managers and policy makers across all council services, in collaboration with our Business & Community Partners.

Equality mainstreaming is a long term approach that aims to make sure that policy making within the Council is fully sensitive to the diverse needs and experiences of everyone affected. The approach will help to provide better information, transparency and openness in the way we make decisions about our services and resources.

This report sets out our approach to eliminating discrimination, offering equality of opportunity and fostering good relations in relation to provision of services and as an employer. This means ensuring that equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights are at the heart of everything the Council does. The report also includes progress updates from SBC's Education Service and Licensing Board together with the next steps which we will take as we continue to work to embed the Equality Duty within all of our services.

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



David Robertson

Scottish Borders Council Chief Executive

# FOREWORD FROM Councillor Mark Rowley -Executive Member for Service Delivery & Transformation including Equalities/HR

I took up my duties as Scottish Borders Council's Equality Champion in 2022.

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

The Mainstreaming Equality Report 2021– 2025 set out the steps that Scottish Borders Council will be taking in its equalities journey.

In the last two years the Council has taken some significant steps forward to meeting the Equality Duty as highlighted within this report. It is important however that we continue to work together and show leadership to ensure we build upon this important work.



Councillor Mark Rowley  
Executive Member for Service Delivery & Transformation

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# Introduction: The Context

## **The Equality Duty**

The Equality Act 2010 places an equality duty on all public bodies in the United Kingdom.. In summary, those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

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

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

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

## **Mainstreaming the Equality Duty**

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

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

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

## **Scottish Borders Council's Approach**

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has published three Equality Mainstreaming reports covering the periods 2013 – 2017, 2017 – 2021, and 2021 – 2025. These

reports set out the approach we will take to mainstreaming the Equality Duty and also contain our Equality Outcomes.

You can find our mainstreaming reports here:

[https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies\\_plans\\_and\\_policies/928/equality\\_and\\_diversityfairer\\_scotland\\_duty/4](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20062/strategies_plans_and_policies/928/equality_and_diversityfairer_scotland_duty/4)

We are required to provide an update on the progress we have made over the last two years. This forms the basis of this report.

### **SBC's new Council Plan. April 2023**

Additionally, we have adopted a new [Council Plan](#) that sets out our strategic framework for action. In developing our plan we wanted to ensure that it:

- is short and simple but clear in its actions and aims.
- sets a strategic framework for Council decision-making and operations and for the Council's Financial Plans.
- operates in sync with the Council's Budget Setting Process.
- is informed by strong engagement with Elected Members.
- is effectively linked with a Performance Management Framework and an embedded culture of continuous improvement.

The Council Plan is based on six outcomes that we aim to deliver for the Scottish Borders.

Five of the outcomes focus on improving the wellbeing of citizens within the Scottish Borders and making our region a more sustainable and better place to live, work in and to visit.

The sixth outcome is about developing a Council that is as effective and efficient as it can be – we need to do this in order to deliver on the other five outcomes.

#### **FOCUS**

#### **OUTCOMES**

Improving the wellbeing of citizens within the Scottish Borders and making our region a more sustainable and better place to live, work in and to visit

1. Clean, green future
2. Fulfilling our potential
3. Strong inclusive economy, transport and infrastructure
4. Empowered, vibrant communities
5. Good health and wellbeing

Developing a Council that is as effective and efficient as it can be

6. Working together improving lives

A key part of our Council Plan remains the recognition that, if the Scottish Borders is to successfully meet future challenges and grasp future opportunities, this requires everyone to play their part - from us delivering services to volunteers supporting communities throughout the Scottish Borders; from us

reducing our greenhouse gas emissions to residents seeking to reduce their waste and to put the right things in the right bins.

Working with you and our partners, we are committed to improving lives. This is a shared endeavour



# Equality and Diversity in the Scottish Borders - Statistics

2021 population of Scottish Borders - **116,020 (National Records of Scotland Mid 2021)**

852 **births** in the Scottish Borders in 2021 (10.1 per 1,000, compared to 8.7 for Scotland)

1,488 **deaths** in the Scottish Borders in 2021 (12.6 per 1,000 compared to 11.6 for Scotland)

**Population by Age** (2021, National Records of Scotland)

**16.2%** of the Scottish Borders population is under the age of 16 (16.7% Scotland)

**58.3%** of the Scottish Borders population is aged 16 to 64 (63.8% Scotland)

**25.6%** of the Scottish Borders Population is aged **65 or older** (19.6% Scotland)

Gender and age band - % of total population

Gender	Male	Female
Age 0 to 15	8.3%	7.9%
Aged 16 to 64	28.4%	29.9%
65+	12%	13.6%
Total	48.7%	51.3%

## Disability or health condition

In the **2019 Scottish Survey Core Questions**, **22.4%** of the Scottish Borders population said they had a long term health condition or disability. (**Scotland = 25.9%**)

The older but more accurate information from the **2011 Census** found that **29.8% of Scottish Borderers had at least one** long-term health condition or disability. (**Scotland = 29.9%**)

The biggest disability/LT Health condition groups among the 113,870 respondents were:

- 7.5% deafness/ hearing loss (**6.6% Scotland**)
- 6.1% physical disability (**6.7%**)
- 3.5% mental health condition (**4.4%**)
- 2.5% blindness/ sight loss (**2.4%**)
- 1.9% learning difficulty eg dyslexia (**2%**)
- 0.6% developmental disorder eg autism (**0.6%**)

**Life Expectancy** (National Records of Scotland)

2019-21	Scottish Borders		Scotland	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
At Birth	79.7	82.5	76.5	80.8
At Aged 65-69	18.8	20.6	17.4	19.7

## Causes of death by gender

The **leading cause of death in Scottish Borders males** in 2021 was **Ischaemic Heart Diseases**, accounting for 16% of all male deaths. Other leading causes of death for males were: **Dementia and Alzheimers, prostate cancer, stroke and lung cancer**

The leading cause of death in Scottish Borders females in 2021 was **Ischaemic Heart Diseases**, accounting for 9.4% of all female deaths. Other leading causes of death for females were: **Dementia and Alzheimers, Stroke, lung cancer and respiratory disease**

## Ethnicity and National Identity

The **2019 Scottish Survey Core Questions** found that **70%** of respondents in the Scottish Borders were **White Scottish (Scotland = 75.9%)** and **25.9%** were **other British (17.4%)**. This is based on a small sample of respondents.

The older, but more representative, **2011 Census** found the following:

- **78.8%** of the 113,870 respondents were **White Scottish (Scotland = 84%)**
- **16.4%** were **White Other British (7.9%)**
- **0.7%** were **White Irish (15%)**
- **1.1%** were **White Polish (1.2%)**
- **1.7%** were **Other White ethnicities (2%)**
- **0.6%** were **Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British (2.7%)**
- **0.6%** were **Other ethnic groups (1.3%)**

**National identity (2011 Census):**

- 0.5% learning disability eg Down's Syndrome (**0.5%**)
- 18.1% with another long term health condition (**18.7%**)

### Health

The **2019 SSCQ** found that:

- **74.4%** of adult respondents said their general health was **good or very good (72%)**
- **18.2%** said it was **fair (19.8%)**
- **6.9%** said it was **bad or very bad (8.1%)**

The older, but more representative, **2011 Census** found that:

- **84.1%** of the Scottish Borders population (113,870 people) said their health was **good or very good (82.2%)**
- **4.2%** of the Scottish Borders population said their health was **bad or very bad (5.6%)**
- **81.5%** of the Scottish Borders population said their life was **not limited at all** by a long-term health problem or disability (**80.4%**)
- **10.6%** said it was **limited a little (10.1%)**
- **8%** said it was **limited a lot (9.6%)**

### Unpaid Care

The **2019 SSCQ** found that **17.6%** of adult respondents provided unpaid care to a relative or friend (**Scotland = 16.1%**)

The older, but more representative, **2011 Census** found that:

- **9.1%** of people in Scottish Borders provided unpaid care (10,346 people (**Scotland = 9.3%**))
- **59%** of these were female (**59.2%**)
- **54.4%** were employed (**53.2%**)
- **22.4%** were aged over 65 (**19.3%**)
- **1.8%** were aged under 16 (**2%**)
- **5.6%** of all respondents (113,870 people) provided 1 to 19 hours of unpaid care a week (**5.2%**)
- **0.8%** provided 20 to 34 hours of care a week (**0.9%**)
- **2.7%** provided over 35 hours of unpaid care a week (**3.3%**)

- **57.7%** of the 113,870 respondents identified as **Scottish only (62.4%)**
- **10.7%** identified as **British only (8.4%)**
- **16.9%** identified as **Scottish and British (18.3%)**
- **2.6%** identified as **Scottish and something else (1.9%)**
- **5.6%** identified as **English only (2.3%)**
- **3.3%** identified as **other combinations of UK identities (2%)**
- **3.2%** identified as **something else other than the above (4.7%)**

**Out of all the 2011 Census respondents born outside the UK (5,858 people):**

- **47.3%** had been in the UK for **more than 10 years (37.4%)**
- **21.5%** had been in the UK for **two to five years**
- **19.4%** had been in the UK for **five to ten years (18.8%)**
- **11.9%** had been in the UK for **less than two years (22.1%)**

**Out of all the 2011 Census respondents aged 3 and over (110,514 people):**

- **98.9%** spoke English very well (**98.6%**)
- **3.3%** used a language other than English in the home (**3.9%**)
- **1%** did not speak English well (**1.2%**)
- **0.3%** were able to speak Gaelic (**1.1%**)
- **0.1%** did not speak English at all (**0.2%**)

**Competency in English – Scottish Borders pupils**  
**A February 2023 snapshot of the Scottish Borders school roll for 2022-23 showed that of the 14,276 pupils:**

- **94.5%** spoke English as a first language
- **2.5%** were competent or fluent in English
- **2.7%** were developing competency, new to English, in the early acquisition stage or had limited communication in English

### **LGBT (Scottish Borders Council Schools)**

67% of young people in the Borders said they know someone who is either: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.

### **1.4% of adults identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other (Scotland = 2.9%) (Scottish Survey Core Questions 2019)**

Following the relaxation of Coronavirus restrictions, there was just **one same-sex Civil Partnership registration** in the Scottish Borders in 2021, compared with **20 mixed-sex Civil Partnerships** and **606 marriages**.

### **Financial wellbeing in adults**

The **2019 Scottish Household Survey** found that:

- **60%** of adults said they **manage very or quite well for money (Scotland = 56%)**
- **33%** said they **get by alright (36%)**
- **7%** said they **don't manage well or are in financial trouble (9%)**
- **17%** of respondents earning **less than £15k p.a.** said they did not manage well (**17%**)
- **5%** of respondents earning **between £15-30k p.a.** said they did not manage well (**9%**)
- **3%** of respondents earning **over £30k p.a.** said they did not manage well (**4%**)
- **Working-age adult households of any size** were more likely to not manage well (**11%**) than **families (7%)** or **pensioner households (3%)**
- Households in the **social rented sector** were more likely to not manage well (**13%**) than **owner-occupied households (2%)**
- **Households dependent on welfare benefits** were more likely to not manage well (**15%**) or **just get by (42%)** than **households with earnings (6%/ 35%)**
- **Households where the highest earner is female** were more likely to not manage well (**11%**) than where they are **male (5%)**
- **29%** of Scottish Borders households said they **had no savings (Scotland = 22%)**

### **Religion**

In the **2019 Scottish Survey Core Questions**, **59%** of Scottish Borders adult respondents said they had **no religion**. **This is based on a small sample of respondents.**

In the older, but more representative, **2011 Census**:

- **39.4%** of the 113,870 respondents identified with **Church of Scotland (32.4%)**
- **6.3%** identified as **Roman Catholic (15.9%)**
- **7.6%** identified as **Other Christian (5.5%)**
- **0.2%** identified as **Muslim (1.4%)**
- **0.7%** identified with **another religion (1.1%)**
- **37.8%** said they had **no religion (36.7%)**

### **Child Poverty**

- **19.5%** children **lived in poverty** (after housing costs) in the Scottish Borders in 2020-21 (**Scotland = 20.9%**) (LGBF)
- **7.5%** of Scottish Borders children lived in the **most income-deprived quintile** in 2020, **significantly lower than** Scottish average of **19.7%** (ScotPHO OPT)
- **12.1%** of **Scottish Borders children received free school meals** in 2020, **significantly better** than the Scottish average of 17.5%. This has **remained consistent for the past five years**, but these figures from Scottish Government Statistics pre-date the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Overall, 14.6% of P6-S6 pupils** in the Borders **received means-tested free school meals** in 2022-23 (SEEMIS)
- **40.4% of Scottish Borders P6-S6 pupils from Deprivation Quintile 1** received means-tested free school meals, compared with **3.9% of P6-S6 pupils from Quintile 5**, a gap of **36.5 percentage points**
- **Overall, the uptake of universal free school meals in P1- P5 was 17%. Free School Meals are offered to P1- P5 pupils, regardless of circumstances.**
- **Scottish Child Payment** is a new benefit of a £10-per-week "top-up" for children aged under 6 in low-income families
- **4,980 applications** have been received by Scottish Borders families for **Scottish Child Payment** between February 2021 and December 2022, **2,730 (87%)** of which were authorised
- **This amounts to 36,160 payments worth £2,739,955**, made to Scottish Borders

- **12%** said they had **savings of less than £1k (13%)**
- **54%** said they had **savings of more than £1k (56%)**
- **3%** of respondents said they had **no bank account (Scotland = 1%)**

This was prior to the Covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis, and is based on a small sample size.

#### **Regional Pay Gap (Nomis, 2022)**

- In 2022, the **median gross weekly pay** for full time workers working in the Scottish Borders (workplace based) was £571.30, £69.20 less than the £640.50 for full-time workers working elsewhere in Scotland. This is **89% of the Scottish figure**.
- In 2022, the **median gross weekly pay** for full time workers living in the Scottish Borders (residence based) in the Scottish Borders was £617, **£23 below** the £640 for Scotland or **96% of the Scottish figure**.
- The regional pay gap between Scottish Borders and Scotland has improved since 2020.

families, between Feb 21 and Dec 22  
**(ScotGov)**

- Scottish Child Payment statistics are **expected to increase from December 2022** since the benefit was **increased to £25 per week and includes all children aged under 16** from low-income families

#### **Fuel Poverty**

According to the 2021 **SBC Anti – Poverty Strategy**, around **29%** of all households in the Scottish Borders are fuel poor, equivalent to approximately **16,000 households**.

In the 2017-19 SCHS, **28.6%** of Scottish Borders households were living in **fuel poverty (Scotland = 24.4%)** and **13.6%** were living in **extreme fuel poverty (11.9%)**

#### **Gender Pay Gap**

Source: NOMIS/ ASHE 2022 (Office of National Official Statistics Labour Market/Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings)

- In 2022, the median (average) gross weekly wage for **male full-time workers working in Scottish Borders was £577.20** (Scotland £678.40).
- **For females it was £533.70** (Scotland £604.50), **a gender pay gap of £43.50 a week** (Scotland £73.90).
- The median gross weekly wage for **male full-time workers living in Scottish Borders was £625.80** (Scotland £675.10).
- **For females it was £577.80** (Scotland £607.70), **a gender pay gap of £48 a week**. (Scotland £67.40).
- These gender pay gaps **appear less severe than the Scotland average**, but there is **also a regional pay gap** between Scottish Borders and the Scottish average.
- This means that it is **harder for workers living and working in the Scottish Borders** to find average-or-above-average-paid work by Scottish standards, and, **for women, the challenge is even worse**.

# Mainstreaming Equality

Our 2021– 2025 Mainstreaming Report contained a high level action plan that when implemented would help us mainstream equality within the Council and across the Scottish Borders. Whilst work continues on the action plan the following are examples of how equality is being mainstreamed in our service provision and working practices.

The report concludes with a list of our Equality Outcomes, and examples of how these Outcomes are being met.

## **Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children**

The National Transfer Scheme whereby all local authorities are required to take a percentage of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) arrivals was made mandatory for all local authorities in November 2021. As a result, as with other Scottish local authorities, the Scottish Borders saw a significant rise in the number of UASC over 2022. At the beginning of 2022, 2 UASC and 2 trafficked young people were looked after by Scottish Borders Council. At the end of the year there were 11 UASC and 3 trafficked young people. This significant increase has led to the need to adapt and build services to meet their needs. Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children cannot be treated as a homogeneous group. The unique experiences of UASC and the associated trauma related to their displacement are important considerations in their day to day care. All UASC will be subject to an holistic statutory assessment of their needs.

To best meet the needs of this group of young people, the Children and Families Social Work Throughcare/ Aftercare Team took on the primary responsibility for UASC. In order to do this effectively, in addition to a Social Worker with previous experience of working with asylum seekers, the team also created a new Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Support Worker post. The post holder is also experienced in working with asylum seeking young people. Their role is primarily one of individual support and includes accommodation/independent living support tasks; financial support; support around education, training and employment; health in accessing health provision; familiarisation of local community; provision of an advocacy and mentoring role; and support with formal meetings, Home Office interviews, etc.

The post holder started work in November 2022 and immediately made a significant impact on working directly with unaccompanied asylum seeking young people in helping them access a range of supports and services which best meet their needs.

Additionally, services have developed to meet the overall needs of UASC: the Scottish Borders Fostering Service recruited 2 fostering households specifically for UASC and continues to recruit and assess specific carers.

Work and liaison has also taken place with local Registered Social Landlords to provide appropriate accommodation for UASC as they reach 18 years of age and move to independence.

Also, joint funding arrangements have been put in place between Scottish Borders Council and Borders College to enable UASC who do not meet the funding criteria for further education due to their individual immigration status to continue their studies. Development of service provision for unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people will continue over 2023.

## **Participation**

Over 2022 significant work and development went into developing participation approaches to care experienced children and young people, in line with the Fundamentals of the Promise. Work began in this area in late 2021. The Scottish Borders Champions' Board was established with the Statement of Purpose to "provide a platform for care-experienced young people to raise and discuss key issues that have affected them whilst being a looked after young person in the Scottish Borders, and to develop strong relationships with their corporate parents to ensure that together we can improve the care system by tackling and overcoming the issues discussed." The group's underlying principles were developed by the group members and are those of:

- Accessibility
- Valuing Expertise
- Mutual Learning
- Trauma Responsive
- Transparency

The Champions' Board itself meets regularly in central Borders however, to ensure the Champions' Board is more accessible to a wider range of care experienced children and young people across the Scottish Borders (given the large geographical area and the diverse range of individual need), other approaches to participation are in place. There are currently 2 in-school Champions' Boards where care experienced children and young people meet to discuss their experiences and express their views. A 'Champions Connect' group is in the early stages of development. This is a 'virtual' participation group for children and young people from the Scottish Borders whose care placements are outwith the local authority area. One-to-one individual support is also provided to care experienced young people who do not feel comfortable in attending formal participation groups.

Participation and involving children and young people in decision making across the agencies who provide services for them in the Scottish Borders still needs further development and embedding, but topics such as implementing the Promise, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Corporate Parenting have all been discussed and the involvement of care experienced young people at the board level of governance for children's services is actively being developed for implementation in 2023.

## **Armed Forces Families - Education**

In every Scottish local authority there are military families in residence and children and young people in their schools. Every local authority has an agreed Community Covenant that aims to encourage local communities to support the Service community in their area and to nurture understanding and awareness amongst the public of issues affecting the Armed Forces Community. It is intended to encourage local authorities to take action to address disadvantage. Schools and educational settings in Scottish Borders will now track and monitor the educational progress of Armed Forces children in the same manner as care experienced children and young people, those with additional support needs and those entitled to free school meals. We currently have around 350 children in our schools and settings who have parents/carers serving in the Armed Forces or have been serving (Veterans).

The Association of Directors of Education Scotland (ADES) has asked each local authority to identify a key contact person, who will assume responsibility for educational issues related to children and young people in families with parent(s)/carer who is serving in the Armed Forces (Regular or Reserves) and those in families with parent(s)/carer who has been serving (Veteran). One of our education officers will regularly attend this network of professionals from a number of local authorities and schools who have significant experience of transitions and supporting the educational progress of learners from Armed Forces families. The members collaborate on identifying processes and systems which are successful as part of transitions development and strategy in their own authorities, as well as sharing good practice and resources, highlighting areas of need and raising awareness.

These actions also assist SBC to meet its statutory obligations under the [Armed Forces Covenant Duty](#).

## **Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support Service (DAAS)**

The DAAS service takes referrals from all agencies in the Scottish Borders, and will work with both male and female adult victims of domestic abuse: the sole purpose of the DAAS service is to identify the risk of further harm, safety plan and harness the multi-agency response to tackling domestic abuse.

Clients who are referred to DAAS are asked a range of questions at Intake in relation to the protected characteristics, and the service adapts accordingly. For example: clients are offered face to face meetings, or a “key” worker to remove any barriers caused by language, ethnicity, culture or ability.

In 2022, DAAS overhauled the case management database to make recording protected characteristics part of the Intake process, and reminders are set to ensure this information is collected prior to case closure. This is the point that any need for interpreters, translators is identified.

DAAS work to empower clients to integrate with the existing community supports, and have a wide reach to many organisations which support the diverse community in Scottish Borders. Referrals to organisations such as Border Women's Aid's 'Own My Life' programme enables clients to start their recovery irrespective of any additional barriers, the programme is responsive and inclusive, being delivered across the Scottish Borders using a peer-led approach to enable women to connect with others with lived experience, thus reducing feelings of isolation.

**Case Example:** Contact from a support worker working with the resettled Ukrainian community in Tweeddale, asking for advice on how to make a referral for a Ukrainian woman and her family. DAAS information leaflets were provided in Ukrainian and Russian and the worker talked through how to explain the service. A referral did not ensue, but the client now knows there is help available and she is entitled to live free of fear and that there are people who can help in the community

**Case Example:** Contact from a deaf client asking for a face to face meeting, DAAS checked the need for a BSL interpreter but the client could lip read and did not require one.

Responding to referrals for those with protected characteristics has enabled DAAS to be more flexible, creative and inclusive in managing risk. A current development is the creation of a toolkit on domestic abuse for those with learning difficulties, designed to be easy to use, and in conjunction with a Talking Mat version of the risk assessment tool.

### **Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR)**

The CEDAR Groupwork programme enables mothers to spend time with peers with lived experience to explore the impact of domestic abuse on their relationship with their children. A concurring children's groupwork programme enables children to develop a better understanding of their experience, how to stay safe, how to communicate their emotions etc. There is no exclusion criteria for the group other than "safety" to attend. Mothers with children under four years old can attend an "early years" groupwork programme focussing on attachments and play therapy. All travel to groups is paid for, and there is a strong focus on "barrier free" access: language barriers can be overcome by conducting the group sessions via an interpreter or on a 1-2-1 basis with staff. All venues are accessible and materials can be translated.

Mothers are supported to continue their recovery by linking into community supports in their area, being introduced to key workers in different organisations etc.

All specialist services working with families experiencing domestic abuse are reporting a considerable impact of the cost of living increases, energy cost increases etc and many families are experiencing increased hardship. Financial control is a key tactic in domestic abuse and the cost of leaving an



abusive relationship incurs additional costs, potential loss of employment, and issues accessing benefits etc. Very often finances are controlled and victims manage in the safest way possible for them and their families, and this often means food/necessities are micro-managed and budgets very stretched.

Supermarket vouchers have been issued to all specialist services from the SBC Hardship funding, and a total of £22,000 has been distributed since June 2022.

## **Shared Lives**

The Learning Disability Service (LDS) has developed a local Shared Lives scheme as part of their commitment to offering a variety of accommodation and support arrangements to the people they support as per the [LDS Strategic Commissioning Plan](#).

Shared Lives is a regulated form of social care which has historically been used primarily for people with learning disabilities. In long term arrangements it has diversified across the UK to support other groups including: older people, people living with dementia, people with mental ill health, young people in transition, women fleeing domestic abuse, parents with learning disabilities and as a home from hospital alternative.

In Shared Lives, an adult who needs support or accommodation is matched with an approved Shared Lives carer, who supports and includes the individual in their family and community life.

Shared Lives can provide long term live in, short breaks and day support options for the local population.

Shared Lives supports people to live or spend time in a family home embedded in a local community. This approach generates significant positive outcomes for people who use Shared Lives, their family carers and Shared Lives carers. Over the years Shared Lives Plus has commissioned a number of independent reviews and collected internal surveys and feedback from the people using Shared Lives and our members. Listed below are some of the benefits observed.

### **The benefits for people who use Shared Lives:**

- Living a good life in a place of my choice
- Relationships with people who are not paid to be in my life
- Developing links & networks in my community
- Learning new skills, having new experiences
- Extended network of family, friends and community
- Can go out in the community on my own
- Going on holiday
- People know me and look out for me
- Doing things that are not just for disabled or older people

### **The benefits for family carers:**

- Reduced stress related to carer role
- Reduced likelihood of carer breakdown
- Build a supportive relationship with Shared Lives carer family

**The benefits for Shared Lives carers:**

- Mutual relationship – sharing and learning from each other
- Valued role as a carer in my community
- Make a real difference in someone’s life
- Trying new things I wouldn’t have done otherwise, having great experiences that I wouldn’t have done on my own
- Learning new things about myself – communication, patience, skills that change my approach to life
- Quality of life – slowing down and taking time to do the things that are important

**Outcomes:**

Shared Lives has now been in place for 3 years. The scheme has achieved its outcomes set for the first 3 years, which was to provide 25 matched placements. We are looking to expand the contract for a further 2 years providing a further 15 matched placements.

**Equality in Technology Enabled Care (TEC)**

In June 2022 Lorna McGregor and Neil Crowther from the University of Essex published "A Digital Cage is Still a Cage - How can new and emerging digital technologies advance, rather than put at risk, the human rights of older people who draw on social care?".

We are implementing the recommendations arising from this report to support the rights-based agenda in the area of digital TEC. Addressing the human rights of older people ensuring equality and fairness is at the forefront of how we operate as a service.

In doing so we intend to collaborate with Social Work and NHS colleagues to devise and implement equality and fairness framework strategies that–

1. Develop a rights-based model for the delivery of TEC
2. Overcome digital divides
3. Identify red lines in the design, development or deployment of new and emerging technologies for Social Care
4. Establish clear Safeguarding Standards

An example case study - Mrs A is observed as living in the community and is denied the possibility of leaving her home without permission and is subject to close supervision by her husband due to her dementia. Mrs A is at huge risk of getting lost if leaving her home by herself.

Her living arrangements are comfortable, and make her life as enjoyable as it could possibly be, but her husband is suffering burn out and is finding it mentally challenging to constantly ensure Mrs A is not leaving the house without him.

We have provided a suite of TEC for Mrs A including a falls detector, door monitors, a wearable GPS device and dementia friendly reminders all of which are reducing the risk for Mrs A, enabling her husband to reduce his burnout and improve his mental wellbeing by knowing that this technology is in place to safeguard his wife.

This type of TEC can be seen by some as having a negative impact on the rights of a client to live freely without being monitored, but by implementing and using the above strategies, we have been able to safeguard the rights of Mrs A, treating her fairly whilst mitigating potential risk.

### **Ukrainian Displaced People**

SBC is committed to supporting the Ukrainian displaced people living within the Scottish Borders. The use of Language Line (LL) has reduced the language barriers particularly when officers are providing support to ensure they are claiming the relevant benefits and receiving the support they require.

In addition to this telephone service, SBC is currently in the process of acquiring dedicated tablets from LL, this will provide a more enhanced service. Officers will take the tablets to meetings and via the tablet can request a video conference with a linguist who speaks Ukrainian. At any meeting the Ukrainian guest, the officer and the linguist will all be able to see and hear each other.

As part of Scotland's commitment to support asylum seekers and refugees from other countries, our officers will be able to use this technology to hold video conferences with guests and arrange a linguist in any of the known languages.

### **Scottish Borders Council's British Sign Language (BSL) Implementation Plan – March 2023**

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

The BSL plan has 7 holistic actions and represents the Scottish Government's aim "to make Scotland the best place in the world for BSL users to live, work and visit.

There follows a list of the actions and a brief description of how each is being addressed.

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

How- Updating the Council’s Interpretation, Translation and Transcription guidelines to ensure people who needed assistance to access services with the assistance of an interpreter can access this. Important documents can also be transcribed for people who request this

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

How- Promoting “ContactScotland-BSL” and providing deaf awareness training for Council and NHS Borders staff

**Action 3**- Ensure all staff have access to relevant and appropriate training on BSL

How – Unfortunately COVID had an impact on arranging training. However, there was a session last September and another one in February. Both sessions were in high demand – A further session was organised for Councillors in January 2023

Also the British Deaf Association has offered training for staff and this is currently being explored

**Action 4** - Ensure BSL is embedded within SBC’s Customer Strategy 2018 - 2023 –

How - The strategy ensures that the ways in which the Council is contacted will be fully accessible to anyone requiring additional support for example British Sign Language (BSL).

Technology will reduce the number of times a person needs to repeat their contact details if they require access to a number of different services

**Action 5** -Establish a clear Translation and Interpretation resource (which includes BSL) which is accessible by all services –

–How - Previously there were two sets of guidelines which have been amalgamated into one. These are uploaded to the intranet for use by staff

**Action 6**- Raise awareness in all schools that BSL is part of the 1 + 2 Language Policy

How - we have purchased a package for BSL 1+2 which our Teachers of the Deaf are rolling out to identified schools at present with a view to then offering this training to a wider group of schools. This is a packages which, once trained how to use it and having basic information on hand shaping/ the role of BSL, teachers are then able to work through independently.

**Action 7-** BSL users are able to engage and participate in democracy and cultural events

How– a meeting for BSL users was arranged at Council Headquarters in October 2022 and a few actions came out of the meeting with the British Deaf Association (BDA) – in particular Councillor Elaine Thornton – Nicol’s role as Deaf Champion

A poster highlighting the BSL helpline received from BDA has been shared with Council staff on Yammer

Live Borders also arranged for Ray Bradshaw a deaf comedian to perform at the Heart of Hawick on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### **What Matters Conversations**

For around 5 years a limited group of staff have been having What Matters conversations with customers who contact us for support from Social Work. The conversations were used to determine what is most important to them or those they are contacting us about, what’s going on at the moment, what is or isn’t working in their lives and what they are hoping to get from their contact with us.

Training on What Matters conversations has recently been provided to all frontline staff to allow them to feel confident in dealing with all queries from customers which may be upsetting or stressful for the customer. The training was provided as a result of the cost of living crisis to support staff dealing with difficult and emotional conversations with customers. In these situations our customers aren’t always sure where to go for help, what help they really need or who was best to speak to.

However, What Matters conversations can be used to deal with most enquiries to Customer Advice & Support Service (CASS) and helps us get to the root cause of the problem, and not just solve the issue they contact us about. For example, someone might call us with Council Tax arrears and instead of just making a payment arrangement with them we would encourage them to discuss why they’ve struggled to pay their Council Tax and we could identify that they’re entitled to benefit or refer them for support with their energy bills.

Having a conversation with the customer instead of just asking questions where you may get limited information often leads to them being more open and honest with how things are and how they feel, as they aren’t pressured to answer multiple questions. We can pick up on things that the customer may not think are relevant or subtle comments that can be talked about further. The conversation helps us build a rapport with the customer and treat them fairly and with empathy, and typically leads the customer to feel more supported regardless of their situation. All of this helps us build a better understanding of their needs so that we can provide them with better advice and support, hopefully leading to a better outcome for them.

Going forward this training will be provided to all new members of frontline staff to allow customers to get the same level of customer service regardless of who they speak to.

We are dealing with customers the same way, but adapting the conversation to their needs and circumstances. The more staff use this technique the more confident they become in having difficult conversations of a sensitive nature with customers. These conversations allow customers time to think instead of reacting to set questions and are a more natural way of interacting with us, they don't feel rushed or pressured to answer questions and so they're less likely to feel judged. This in turn means they're less likely to react negatively to us and encourages them to open up more, leading staff to give the best advice possible.

### **Carers Act Monies**

The Carers (Scotland) Act was passed in 2016. The Act gives carers rights to an adult carer support plan or young carer statement if they are providing or intend to provide care to another. This reflects a preventative approach to identify each carer's personal outcomes and needs for support through meaningful conversations with individual carers. This preventative approach is also reflected in the further requirement to provide information and advice services to carers. The third sector is well placed to help deliver information and advice and in Scottish Borders both Borders Carers Centre and Chimes are commissioned to support adult and young carers.

The Act introduces a duty to set local eligibility criteria frameworks in each local authority area. These frameworks will help local authorities determine the level of support to provide to carers based on their identified needs with budget allocated from carers act monies being used to fund resources best suited to meet positive outcomes for carers.

Following a contract review of Borders Carers Centre in November 2022 which included scrutiny over Carers Act existing budget commitments and projected spend, an inequity in delegation of funding was identified. Having established the full budget amount and sourced information on the client group, it could be seen the vast bulk of the budget was allocated to support adult carers with this including parent carers. Little budget was afforded to support children and young people who held caring responsibilities.

Research supports that being a young carer can have a big impact on the things that are important when growing up. Young carers are likely to have significantly lower educational attainment than their peers. With the additional challenges related to schooling during COVID-19, young carers have missed out even more on education and support is required to ensure they are not further disadvantaged. Caring can be an isolating experience, however having the right support in place can give young carers a better chance of succeeding in all parts of their lives.

While budgets allocated to adult carers can be used to purchase replacement care (to give the carer a short break), the allocation of money directly to young carers

can prove difficult. Engagement with Chimes supports that activities and breaks, peer and community support, age appropriate information, emotional support and advocacy, and whole family involvement all promote young carer well-being.

Having identified an inequity in budget allocation, this was brought to the attention of Social Work Chief Officers and a proposal presented as to how the budget could be shared more fairly.

### **Community-led support roll out**

Community-led support commenced in Scottish Borders in 2017 but was discontinued in March 2020 following lockdown. The Hubs resumed in February 2022: Resumption has demonstrated that equality is advanced by making access easier.

### **What Matters Hubs**

- The service had established a number of WhatMatters Hubs, located in public spaces not usually associated with access to public services e.g. theatres and cafes. Hub presence has been rolled out using training, a re-launch event and the appointment of a full time co-ordinator
- Whatmatters Hubs were staffed by social work and occupational therapy paraprofessionals and assistants and third sector presence continues to evolve and improve advice given
- WhatMatters Hubs enhance customer experience by providing contact with dignity and respect. Hubs are held at the same venue, at the same time and with the same personnel
- Hubs demonstrate that everyone can participate in public life. An easily accessible venue provides a safe space for service users, their families and friends with no need to be referred via a health care professional or hospital discharge service
- What matters Hubs work closely with third sector colleagues and other agencies, such as Social Security Scotland and local housing providers
- 

### **Inter-agency approach**

- Following the resumption of face-to-face contact with clients in March 2022 the Hubs resumed and included representatives from the Red Cross, Alzheimer's Scotland and Social Security Scotland and have started to engage with NHS colleagues with representation at NHS clinics
- In addition to centrally located Hubs in the larger towns, satellite Hubs have been arranged in smaller villages, to improve access to people living in rural locations, thereby enhancing equality to all

The Hubs encourage good relations between people and between agencies delivering public services. Service users can attend the Hubs and achieve

more than one outcome. e.g. have an occupational therapy aid supplied and enhance their household income via a welfare benefit form being completed.



**Hannah Page Modern Apprentice Human Resources Case Management Team**

**Hannah says “To anyone considering an apprenticeship just go for it!”**

A modern apprenticeship may seem daunting for some but Hannah, who came through the process at SBC says “to anyone considering an apprenticeship just go for it. It’s the best thing that I have done.”

Hannah is just one of the many Modern Apprentices that SBC has supported to help gain employment.

For the last 11 months Hannah has been a Modern Apprentice in the HR Case Management Team having completed her SCQF Level 6 Business and Administration Award in 8 months.

We asked Hannah to share with us some of her experiences as a Modern Apprentice. This is what she told us.

**Q What has being a Modern Apprentice meant to you?**

Being a Modern Apprentice means that I am learning whilst gaining real life work experiences. Being a MA also allows me to learn on the job and earn at the same time.

**Q What did you do before you became an MA?**

I was a student at the University of Edinburgh. Studying Biochemistry, however I only completed 4 months, I quickly realised University wasn’t for me.

**Q What attracted you to apply for the role at SBC?**

I realised whilst at university that I didn’t want a career in the field I was studying. This apprenticeship has allowed me to try something I had never even considered before. It has allowed me to realise that there is so much more to learning, development, and career progression than spending four years at University. There are also so many other jobs out there that I hadn’t even considered.

**Q How easy was the recruitment process?**



The recruitment process was nothing like anything I had done previously. However, after watching some videos on My World of Work (careers advice) it was easy enough to get my head around. I had never done an interview before so that is the part I found the most daunting. My interview at SBC was comfortable yet slightly frightening and something that I won't forget – for all the right reasons.

**Q What do you do in your role? – What to you like best/least?**

The role is varied. I have learnt how to use email, word, voice mail... and much more. I manage the ask HR mail box (general HR enquiry mailbox) it's a busy task with lots of variety of enquiries. Lots of the time is identifying who could answer and deal with the query along with another MA Gracie. I support the HR advisors with the general aspects of their roles. I help them with things such as phone calls, taking notes of meetings, keeping case notes up to date, and electronic filing. I have also been involved in project work for example when we changed from Pam Assist to VIVUP (our Employee Assistance Programmes) I was involved in gaining quotes for services that were offered. I like helping and speaking to people.

**Q What would you say is your greatest achievement? How does this make you feel?**

My greatest achievement at SBC is completing my College Award and South of Scotland fuel challenge award which resulted in a presentation that discussed improving railway transport links for farming in the South of Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders). I have also passed my driving test. I can now travel totally independently which makes it so much better for getting around especially when living in the Borders.

**Q What would you say was your biggest challenge and how have you overcome this?**

The biggest challenge I faced was adapting to the constant changes that followed after the Covid-19 pandemic. Switching between in person meetings and online meetings; shifting from in person learning to online learning. I found the drastic changes to the way I had previously scheduled and operated challenging at first but have since adapted to the change.

**Q What new skills have you learnt?**

Definitely resilience. For example dealing with difficult phone calls and adapting to change, and getting better at it. Just because it's difficult you can't give up it's the world of work.

**Q How are you supported in your role?**

Yes, I feel very well supported in my role. I am supported by a team of very experienced and understanding advisors as well as my line managers and Gracie my co – Modern Apprentice. I can ask anyone in my team for help and it's not a problem for me or them.

**Q Do you feel as if you are part of the team?**

Yes. We regularly catch up at weekly Team meetings. At Christmas we all got together and that was grand – I certainly felt part of it all.

**Q What would you say to other would be MA applicants thinking of joining SBC as a MA?**

I would tell them to go for it. I have learnt more here in a year than I learnt anywhere else. There are jobs out there that I didn't even know existed before beginning this role.

**Q Where do you see yourself in the future? - Has being a MA helped you with your aspirations/goals?**

My time at SBC as an MA in HR Case Management has almost come to an end - However, I will be staying on at the Council - I was the successful applicant for a clerical role in Learning and Development/Organisational development and am excited to join a new area of Human resources.

**Q Why would you come back to SBC?**

I have enjoyed my modern apprenticeship and I have always seen myself living and working in the Scottish Borders. It is home to me and I would like to do everything I can to improve the area I grew up in and live in

## **Drumlanrig PS winners of Scottish Farmhouse Picnic Competition**

Congratulations to Drumlanrig PS on being announced winners of the Scottish Farmhouse Picnic Competition, an exciting new initiative run jointly by the Royal Highland Education Trust, Scottish Borders Countryside Initiative and our own Catering Department.

Primary pupils from across the Borders have been busy working on their entries over the past few weeks. P1-3 pupils were asked to come up with a project based on the theme of 'Our Favourite Picnic' while P4-7 pupils were tasked with inventing a variety of sandwiches that they would like to serve at a picnic.

The seven schools who made it through to the finals were Swinton PS P1/2, Broughton PS P1/3, Broughton PS P4/7, Newlands PS P6/7, Morebattle PS P1/2, Langlee PS P3/4 and overall winners, Drumlanrig PS P1.

Representatives from each school were invited to an event at Council HQ on Thursday 23 February where they were presented with their certificates by Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Lesley Munro. They also received a free farm visit for their class. A farmhouse picnic will be served in school and they'll also get a book token.

*Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Lesley Munro, said: "Well done to all the finalists. Their submissions were outstanding and it made the job of choosing an overall winner very difficult. Special congratulations to Drumlanrig on being named overall winner and to all the P1 pupils at the school who took part."*

## **Community Led Support Workshop - Adult Social Work**

Adult Social Work hosted an event on 14 March in partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) in the Volunteer Hall, Galashiels from 10am-3pm.

Over eighty delegates representing 22 different organisations or departments within the Health and Social Care Partnership attended, taking part in a range of lively, interesting and worthwhile presentations and discussions

As the theme for World Social Work Day on 21 March is '**Respecting diversity through joint social action**', the opportunity was taken to promote the idea of Community Led Support, inclusion and a re-launch of What Matters Hubs throughout the Borders.

Community Led Support is a way for organisations to work together, promoting people's health, wellbeing and independence and listening to local people about what is important.

The programme had been devised to consider:

- why Community Led Support works in general
- how it has worked well in the Borders previously
- challenges and opportunities
- the formulation of implementation plans.

The discussion groups aimed to cover issues such as:

- value-led support
- strengths-based approaches to work and commissioning
- the use of good and effective conversations
- the move away from dependency-creating services.

Discussions also focussed on what might be required to reinvigorate the development of this approach, which sees health and social work teams working with local voluntary and community organisations, housing and other partners to design what they can do differently to better support people by having local connections and joined up support.

In the coming months, the aim is to develop more What Matters Hubs, welcoming places in our communities where people can go when they need support and advice and have conversations that seek to resolve issues and connect people to things going on in their community, enabling people to stay living well for longer.

## **Young people led action in Kelso!**

The Kelso Skatepark Light Project presented to and gained support from Kelso Community Council.!

The project has gained funding to work with Alan Jones, Planning Consultant, to take forward their planning application.

This is their story to success....

We are the Kelso Skatepark Lighting project there are 3 members of this project, Harvey, Jack and Niamh.

We are trying to get lights at our local skatepark, there will be benefits because everyone can use it longer when it's dark.

It will be safer at night instead of using a flashlight or your phone light. Another benefit is that we would like CCTV so we can stop any vandalism, fights or disruption in the future.

The lights will turn off at 10pm so it's a reasonable time, it's not too early but not too late. We are looking to get a shelter to stop crowding at Kerfield Court when it's raining.

We are looking into getting a first aid kit to help people when they cut themselves. There will be plasters and medical wipes to clean them up. And for them not to buy them at shops or go home. So, once you are cleaned up you can go back to using the skatepark.

### **What we have done**

We started the project in January 2022 and made a survey through social media on Microsoft forms. The link was shared through our Instagram account and in school. The total responses were 95, 89 were a yes to having lights and 6 were a no.

We have spoken to Ali Hay the lease holder of Kelso Skatepark. He has helped us get an understanding of how to get more people involved with our project and to promote it.

We spoke to Essex Youth Project. They told us how they got their lights and gave us an idea on the prices of the lights and mentioned about getting CCTV.

We also spoke with our local police officer. We asked how CCTV would work and if it would be a good idea. And how we would get access to it if we did. The officer offered to take their community contact van to the skatepark to speak to people about our project and what they think about it. We also got in contact with a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament who was really supportive, and offered help if we needed it.

We did a survey with the residents and spoke to the warden at Kerfield Court. We asked them if they would like to meet with us and if they had any questions. We got 12 responses 9 people said yes to a meeting to discuss about getting the lights 3 people had no objections as they can't see it from their window. So, it was positive feedback from the residents.

Here are a few questions from the residents of Kerfield Court and these are our answers.

### **How would you stop vandalism?**

We would like to get CCTV installed which would help stop or identify who done it. When there is vandalism or graffiti Ali Hay explains on Facebook that vandalism has a knock on affect. And he says he will not be having it.

### **Would it become a hangout place?**

Yes we want it to become a place to socialise and a place for people to take part in the sport and not to cause mischief

### **What time would the lights be turned off?**

Lights would be turned off at 10pm every night.

### **Who will be paying for the lights?**

My answer is the council. We hope we will get funded by the Place Based Investment Fund from the council.

### **Would there be portaloos?**

No. This may also encourage anti-social behaviour and would need maintained.

### **Funding**

We are pleased because we got £5000 from the Cheviot Area Partnership and the council parks department are also giving us funding of £3600 and Ali Hay has also given us funding of £1000.

This is going to help us do the planning application and manage the project with Alan Jones, Planning Consultant.

### **A big Thank you**

We thank Councillor Tom Weatherston and Councillor Parker and Ali Hay for the help and money to get us a good start and get this project fully running.

Big thanks to Christine Hamilton from Kelso Community Council, for helping us prepare for this meeting and she got the meeting to happen.

# Mainstreaming Equality in Education

Scottish Borders Council is committed to providing an education service which has a relentless focus on supporting all members of our communities to thrive.

We are working hard to ensure that equity, equality and inclusion are at the heart of what we do.

We are committed to reducing inequality by targeting resource and energies to reduce barriers to participation, close attainment gaps, improve positive destinations (care experienced and SIMD (*Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation*) Quintile 1) and achieve the aspirations of The Promise (Care Review).

## Our equality aims:

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

## Achievements and progress to date

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

#### **Continue to embed SBC literacy and numeracy strategies in all schools and educational settings across Scottish Borders Council**

The strategies form an integral part of our approach to improving literacy and numeracy for all learners, across all stages of schooling. They work in tandem with our learning, teaching and assessment framework and our inclusion framework, empowering schools to rapidly improve outcomes and embed high quality literacy and numeracy for all. The strategies are designed to ensure that all learners will experience daily high quality learning, teaching and assessment. The framework has supported 88% of our schools to develop their own context specific guidance to ensure high quality learning, teaching and assessment. This guidance should ensure a positive impact on playroom/classroom practice.

Early literacy and numeracy frameworks have been successfully piloted. High quality professional learning opportunities have supported pedagogical approaches to literacy and numeracy and the implementation of the strategies. This has supported consistency in approach and improved outcomes for children. The strategies and resources have been made available to all practitioners through the school house Teams channel. Initial feedback from settings has been very positive and practitioners report improved knowledge and understanding of pedagogy and practice. In addition to creating a shared standard through more robust moderation, the frameworks and supporting strategies are intended to enable stronger transitions between settings and

develop stronger partnerships between early learning and childcare settings and schools.

In addition, following the return to school learning post COVID 19, 88% of schools have adapted and refreshed their curriculum rationales to reflect the renewed focus on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing.

### **Inspire Learning**

The implementation of Inspire Learning was accelerated during the closure of school buildings due to Covid-19 . It was an invaluable tool for remote learning and allowed digital skills to improve overnight. We will build on this success to further improve practice, approaches and experiences through robust staff development programmes as well as new learning opportunities for children.

New ways of delivering services were adopted during school building closures. We will build on these to further improve engagement and involvement of children, families and staff.

Good progress has been made with the continuation of Inspire Learning. We now have:

- All education staff have an iPad : teachers, Early Years and additional support
- All P4-S6 have a 1:1 iPad for learning at schools and at home
- ELC-P3 have access to class sets of shared iPads

### *Inspire Cluster Leads*

A group of seconded teachers have been supporting their schools and cluster areas to improve the confidence and skills of staff in using technology for learning, teaching and assessment. This support has included:

- Coaching and mentoring
- Team teaching
- Collaboration with senior staff
- Delivery of professional learning

### Impact on Learners

Learners have benefitted from encouragement, knowledge and support in trying out new technology in various ways to enhance their learning experiences.

Learners have been able to use apps and technology to suit their own likes and needs, bringing more personalisation and choice in lessons and the lessons of the teachers and schools the team have supported.

*“I have particularly seen a growing confidence in the learners and their abilities to problem solve, think more creatively around how to solve issues with the technology and also perform more creatively using technology to meet learning outcomes. I have certainly seen a marked increase in pupil engagement in areas where teachers have engaged with coaching and training.”*

## Stretch Aims

Following the refresh of the Scottish Attainment Challenge in March 2022, local authorities are now required to submit stretch aims which are shared annually with the Scottish Government as part of statutory plans and reports. Specific ‘core’ stretch aims are to be submitted for improving outcomes for all while closing the poverty-related attainment gap, these should be both ambitious and achievable within local contexts. These include:

- a. Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence Levels (ACEL) in literacy combined and numeracy combined in Primary 1, 4 and 7;
- b. Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 5;
- c. Proportion of school leavers attaining 1 or more pass at SCQF level 6;
- d. The proportion of 16-19 years olds participating in education, employment or training;
- e. A locally identified aim for health and wellbeing; attendance

CORE STRETCH AIM	OVERALL LEVELS	SIMD QUINTILE 1	SIMD QUINTILE 5	GAP (Q1 – Q5)
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Literacy Combined	75%	60%	87%	27%
ACEL P1, P4, P7 Numeracy Combined	80%	65%	89%	24%
Achieved 1 or more Qualification at SCQF Level 5 (leavers)	88%	75%	96%	21%
Achieved 1 or more Qualification at SCQF Level 6 (leavers)	66%	45%	86%	41%
Participation measure (16-19 in education, employment or training)	94%	89%	98%	9%
HWB: Attendance – Primary	95%	95%	95%	0
HWB: Attendance – Secondary	95%	95%	95%	0



## 2. Positive Destinations for all Care Experienced and Looked After learners.

Established in 2019, the Scottish Borders Virtual School acts as a local authority champion to promote the educational achievement, attainment and experience of all of our looked after and care experienced children and young people. The Virtual School Headteacher (VSHT) continues to support and challenge schools and partners to ensure improved outcomes for care experienced pupils, such as positive destinations.

New monitoring and tracking procedures for our care experienced school leavers have been developed to ensure learners are supported into a positive and sustained destination. These include:

- Monthly 14+ multi agency monitoring meetings with partners and secondary school staff for all learners who may require additional support in reaching a positive destination
- Annual collection of care experienced leavers qualitative data from schools
- Monthly monitoring and tracking meetings with Skills Development Scotland and Borders College to ensure our care experienced school leavers are sustaining their positive destination and identifying support where young people face challenges

Borders College and our Virtual School have worked in partnership to establish a new mentoring service for care experienced school leavers who did not meet the age criteria for an existing mentoring programme. This ensures that learners receive ongoing support during the transition from school to their first year of college and have access to dedicate mentoring support.

Our work related to ensuring care experienced school leavers reach and sustain a positive destination has been recognised as effective practice by CELCIS and a case study is available here: [Scottish Borders case study: Creating a pathway to success](#)

As a result of this work we are helping to achieve better outcomes for care experienced school leavers reaching and sustaining a positive destination. A snapshot of our 2021 school leavers showed that:



In partnership with Developing Young Workforce Borders and Skills Development Scotland, we anticipate the return of our highly regarded careers and skills event for care experienced and other learners in S2 and S3.

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

Attainment evidence demonstrated that Scottish Borders continues to address the attainment gap while improving attainment for all. Milestone data in 2020-21 demonstrates the proportion of children residing in SIMD Deciles 1-4 achieving their milestones:



#### Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC)

In March 2022, Scottish Government launched the refreshed Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) with its mission to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap. The development of our previously mentioned stretch aims, sets ambitious targets for our local authority to close the poverty related attainment gap at pace. Schools have also been supported to develop their own stretch aims and these are monitored throughout the academic year. To ensure our SAC funding from Scottish Government has maximum impact and to improve outcomes at pace for children and young people impacted by poverty, the Education Equity Strategy 2021 – 2026 was developed. This includes the

establishment of the Equity Strategic Board to oversee and provide governance of SAC funds and their use.

#### *Pupil Equity Funding (PEF)*

As part of the Attainment Scotland Fund schools in Scottish Borders received £2.1 million in 2021/22 and £1.9m in 2022/23 to support interventions intended to reduce the poverty related attainment gap. Interventions varied but mainly focussed on literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. In some schools, a partnership approach with youth work, community learning and development and members of the community helped contribute to targeted support for learners impacted by poverty.

In order to intensify our work to reduce the poverty related attainment gap, new guidance, support and planning was issued to schools. This included a PEF sharing effective practice event, supported by our Attainment Advisor and PEF support clinics for headteachers.

#### *Scottish Attainment Challenge Schools Programme*

Scottish Government announced in March 2022 that funding for the SAC schools programme would cease in year 2021-22 and be replaced with a Strategic Equity Fund. Hawick High School and Burnfoot Community School have been supported through this programme for several years. In the final year of the fund, £173,000 was granted to these schools to support their work in raising attainment for all and closing the poverty related attainment gap.

Burnfoot Community School employed an Additional Needs Assistant and Early Years Practitioner to support the embedding of nurture principles in the school and running the targeted nurture support.

Hawick High School employed 2.45 FTE youth work staff and an Inclusion Officer to support education recovery and accelerated progress in numeracy and literacy. The school established a targeted nurture provision for S1 and S2 young people. Eleven learners accessed the nurture support aimed at improving their social and emotional skills, self-confidence and engagement with learning.

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

##### *Scottish Borders Council Education Priorities 2022/23*

Closing the poverty related attainment gap is at the centre of the education service improvement plan 2022/23:



### *Strategic Equity Funding (SEF)*

As part of SAC funding, Scottish Borders will received incrementally increasing funds annually until 2025/26 to support strategic work to close the poverty related attainment gap. In 2021/22, year 1 of this funding, additional strategic resource in the form of depute headteacher posts have been provided to our 3 primary schools with the largest SIMD Quintile 1 population; Burnfoot Community School, Langlee Primary School and Philiphaugh Community School.

Phase 2 of SEF Funding is in the planning stages but will aim to involve a multi-agency and community led consultation and decision making process to ensure the best use of these funds to narrow the poverty related attainment gap.

### *Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)*

Support is targeted in our ELC settings to make best use of Excellence and Equity Leads (EELS) to close the poverty related attainment gap. All our ELC children received a free school meal and snack at no cost to parents. Additional resource has also been provided to Burnfoot, Philiphaugh and Langlee schools and settings in the form of a Senior Early Years Officer and Early Years Practitioner in primary 1

### *Thematic School and ELC Reviews: Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap*

Our thematic school and ELC reviews are a response to our relentless focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap in Scottish Borders. Our aim in session 2022/23 is to work with our 7 primary and 3 secondary schools and settings who contribute to our SIMD Quintile 1 attainment, to provide support and challenge and to help ensure significant progress is being made in recovering from the impact of COVID 19 and in achieving the mission of the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

Purpose of review

- To evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic approach to closing the poverty related attainment gap and improve health and wellbeing in our quintile 1 schools and ELC settings.
- To identify highly effective practice which can be shared across schools and ELC settings
- To support and plan for maximum impact of resources available through the Scottish Attainment Challenge Fund.
- To create agreed action development plans with schools and ELC settings

### *Positive Destinations*

The 16-19 year old participation gap between SIMD Quintile 1 (most deprived) and Quintile 5 (least deprived) has decreased to 11.7% in 2020/21, a significant improvement from 15.1% in 2019/20. Education continues to be represented in the Young Person's Guarantee Partnership and is committed to continued partnership working to improve outcomes for school leavers.

## **Additional Work Related to Mainstreaming Equality in Education**

### *Early Years Centres (EYC)*

EYCs are located in 4 areas where there is the most need in our communities: Burnfoot, Eyemouth, Langlee and Philiphaugh. The centres provide a family friendly environment open all year round where families can grow and learn together. Centres provide direct support, signposting and a 'one stop shop' of advice for families. Weekly drop in sessions help build relationships and provide an informal platform for visiting professionals to meet with parents in a relaxed atmosphere. The centres work both universally and with a targeted approach. The EYC Manager works directly with groups and individuals and manages and facilitates other professionals to work in and from the centres. The work of the centres is responsive to the needs of the families. EYCs work with parents:

- To feel empowered, supported and listened to
- To feel positive and skilled about making healthy choices for their family and themselves
- To be able to guide and support their children to thrive, grow, develop and learn.
- To bring families together, model good practice and support parents to play and learn with their children

EYCs offer food through local food banks to families, parenting groups and other supports. Referrals to the Early Years Welfare Benefits service for the year 2021/22 exceeded 500 which represented a 35% increase over the previous year's figure. The total gains for families in the Borders as a result of these referrals in 21-22 was £1.25m. Work has been carried out to link better with schools and Citizen's Advice Bureau in extending communication about benefits and referral processes to parents/carers with primary age children as they don't

have the same opportunities to get information from and be referred by NHS staff as families with children under school age. Information is now being added to the recently developed NHS Money Worries App where it can be easily accessed.

EYCs Guidance on the operation of the centres is being updated and will embed the principles of equality, dignity and respect for all service users. EYCs are aiming to develop outreach services, including support for families in Jedburgh with funding from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Project in collaboration with partners and families.

### *Wellbeing*

Incidents of bullying in schools and settings are tracked and recorded under protected characteristic and dealt with by schools in line with [RespectME](#) guidance.

Our Respectful Relationships Policy is being updated to ensure it is enhanced with the voice of young people, the UNCRC and protected characteristics. We will focus on how we work with children and young people to build respectful relationships and take the appropriate action when relationships go wrong.

The [Partnership with Parents Framework](#) has been updated. All schools have continued to work closely with parents and have built on new ways of engaging with parents that were established during lockdown. The Psychology of Parenting Programme (PoPP) continued to be successful with almost all parents reporting an improvement in their child's behaviour at the end of the programme. During periods of restriction (due to Covid 19) PoPP groups were held online ensuring that parents were able to access vital support during this stressful time at home with their children.

### *Nurturing Approaches*

As outlined in our [Nurturing Approaches Guidelines](#), all school staff have undertaken a 3 year nurture training programme and nurture bases have been established in all secondary schools. Identified groups of young people in S1 and S2 have had access to targeted Nurture Groups or classes in our secondary schools. These have been led by trained practitioners. Schools have reported that nurture groups have been effective in supporting emotionally vulnerable young people to engage more in their mainstream classes. We continue to ensure a commitment to nurture and progress rollout of targeted nurture bases in schools.

Schools and settings self-evaluate their approaches to nurture and can evidence progression in embedding the nurture principles. We aim that all school and settings evidence improved practice in line with the revised Respectful Relationship Policy.

### *Inclusion*

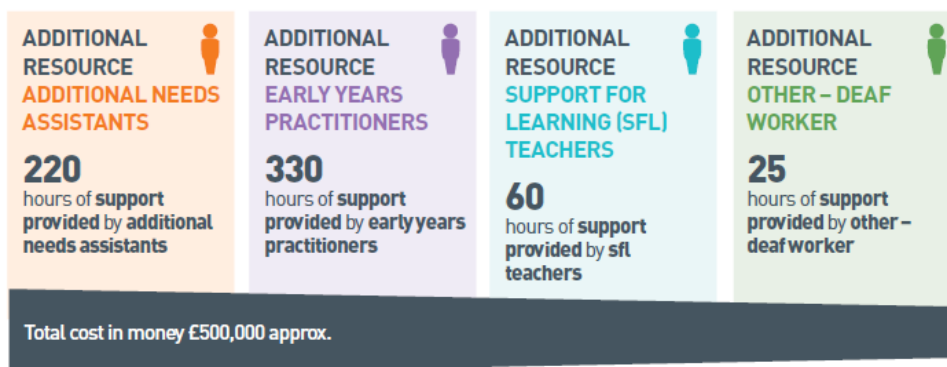
Our Inclusion and Wellbeing Service continues to support children and young people with additional support needs (ASN) in schools/settings and the Leader Valley enhanced provision is providing education for children with additional complex needs.

We improved our systems and supports for accessing additional support including resource and professional advice. Due to an increase in needs, the Inclusion and Wellbeing Service adapted the service to a school-based model to support consistent approaches for learners in their local community. The development of a summary document “Accessing Additional Support: A Guide for Schools” has been provided to all Headteachers.

The Equity, Moderation and Advisory Group (EMAG) exists as a process for additional resource and advice to schools regarding children with ASN. Grants can also be given to funded ELC providers to enable them to meet additional support needs of identified children. The aims and purpose of this group are to:

1. Ensure equity and tracking of centrally funded ASN resources across our Local Authority (Stage 2/3)
2. Provide advice and recommendations for individual complex cases – including current young people in a Scottish Borders Council establishment or new complex buffering cases
3. Allocate exceptional Additional Support Needs funding where required.

In 2021/22, EMAG allocated additional support to schools and settings as detailed below.



In addition, total grants of £190,000 were given to ELC funded (equivalent to approximately 520 hours of support).

#### *ADES/Education Scotland Collaborative Improvement Review*

A Collaborative Improvement review of inclusive practice in SBC schools and settings with Education Scotland and Association of Directors of Education Scotland was held in September 2022. This has resulted in the implementation of Cluster Lead Headteachers to be pathfinders for developing a ‘team around the cluster’ model in our communities.

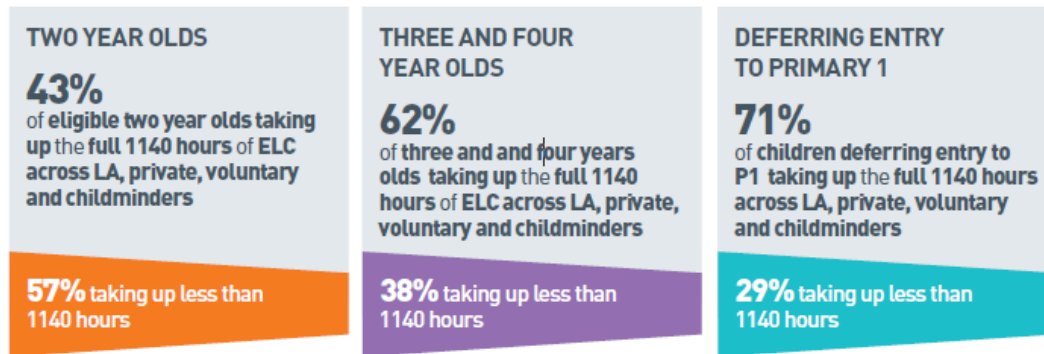
#### *Early Learning and Childcare (ELC)*

The expansion of ELC included a requirement for all providers to comply with the National Standard for Early Learning and Childcare. The National Standard sets out what children and families should expect from their early learning experience regardless of where they access their child’s funded hours. All ELC providers are required to demonstrate that they meet the National Standard before they can



access funding to deliver the funded hours, whether they are in the public, private or third sectors or childminders.

### *Delivering 1140 hours*



### *LGBT Youth Scotland Charter Awards*

Eight of our nine secondary school settings have achieved awards through the LGBT Youth Scotland scheme; 3 charters awards, 3 bronze, 1 silver and 1 gold. The aim is that our secondary schools will achieve a further bronze, silver and gold award moving forward.



# Mainstreaming Equality as an Employer

## **HR Policies**

SBC continues to regularly review all HR policies and procedures to ensure that they reflect SBC's commitment to ensuring that it promotes an equitable and inclusive workplace. The review also ensures that the policies remain legally compliant, relevant, up to date and follow best practice.

When reviewed, all policies are also assessed via an Integrated Impact Assessment which assesses any implications on our duties under the Equalities Act and Fairer Scotland Duty (socio – economic disadvantage)..

SBC introduced a Parental Bereavement Leave policy, which gives all employees the right to two weeks' paid leave if they suffer the loss of a child. This is in addition to five days' leave provided under the Special Leave policy.

The Parental Bereavement Leave policy was introduced by SBC before it became a legal requirement and provides for two weeks' leave with contractual pay rather than statutory parental bereavement pay.

We have also signed the [Pregnancy Loss Pledge](#) , demonstrating our commitment to supporting staff through the trauma of miscarriage.

## **Staff Survey**

SBC is committed to understanding the different perspectives and experiences felt by employees across the organisation. Holding an annual staff survey is one of the ways SBC achieves this.

The survey gives the opportunity to all staff to communicate their thoughts, feelings and experiences of working at SBC. Survey results are shared at an organisational and directorate level to better understand how engaged teams are and to enable SBC to improve.

The survey results are used to produce an action plan to improve employee engagement and experience at SBC at directorate and organisational level.

## **Employee Assistance Programme**

As part of our commitment to the holistic health and wellbeing of our employees, SBC provide an Employee Assistance Programme for all employees.

The Programme includes a free, confidential helpline open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and offers a range of support and advice including debt advice, stress counselling and other health related advisory services.

Other resources available are self- help workbooks, a range of podcasts and blogs and specific advice on debt management and domestic abuse.

### **Mental Health First Aiders**

The Mental Health First Aid scheme, provides a first response service to staff who are in need of support with their mental health.

Mental Health First Aiders are Council employees who have been formally accredited as Mental Health First Aiders.

There are a number of ways employees can get in touch including telephone, skype, and email. There is a dedicated helpline available during office hours and a dedicated mailbox.

### **Employee Wellbeing & Health Handbook**

Available to all staff, the Handbook provides a comprehensive list of well-being material and additional resources, covering both professional and personal life.

### **Career Pathways**

Recruitment to some professional posts can be difficult so we are designing career pathways across the Council to support existing and prospective employees. These offer a wide range of opportunities to embark upon and progress in a career regardless of background or environmental circumstances. This will enable us not only to retain staff but to attract potential staff to come and work with the Council and also act as a gateway for many people across a number of age groups and backgrounds to find employment by supporting them in a career through funding, upskilling and educating. This will help those who feel particularly disadvantaged for a variety of reasons including poverty and accessibility to resources and support. This will allow for a greater pool of diverse talent to be brought into the Council.

This will help to address our workforce age profile, and assist with recruitment and retention.

One of the pathways currently under way is the Social Work “Grow your Own” scheme. This allows colleagues to pursue a career in Social Care/ Social Work, continuing their studies while working and potentially becoming fully qualified Social Workers.

### **Disability Confident Scheme**

SBC has been an accredited Disability Confident Employer since 2018 The Disability Confident Employment Scheme is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with

health conditions. The Council employs the Disability Confident logo to demonstrate that applicants with disabilities are encouraged and welcomed.

As a tangible show of commitment, any job applicant who meets the essential criteria for the role is guaranteed an interview.

### **Living Wage Employer**

SBC has been an accredited Living Wage Employer since 2019. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 payment of the real living wage had been extended to Modern Apprentices.

### **Employee Benefits**

The Council has a range of employee benefits available that are available to all employees, subject to statutory eligibility criteria for those that are provided under a Salary Sacrifice arrangement. The benefits include Shared Cost AVC, Car Salary Sacrifice and Cycle to Work, along with access to employee discounts via our online portal and the employee assistance programme. These benefits of employment are promoted to all employees of the Council and prospective employees as part of our recruitment process.

## Recruitment & Employee Data

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

It should be noted that completing the Equality Monitoring Form is not mandatory and this can lead to individuals choosing not to fill out the form or only answering specific questions. This is particularly evident when looking at the disability, gender reassignment and carer categories. In addition, all of the Council's employees are encouraged to complete the personnel section of the HR system 'Business World'. However areas such as sexual orientation, transgender, race, and disability have low numbers of completions.

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

Work continues on refining our data collection in order to improve the rates of completion and Business World can be accessed by all employees who have access to an internet enabled device. Through this employees are encouraged to check their details and update as necessary, including information held on equalities.

## Gender Pay Gap

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

Using guidance and the standard calculation that is set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, the Council's equal pay gap was calculated using data as at **31<sup>st</sup> December 2022**.

The Standard Calculation is:

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

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

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

Where;

(a) Average Hourly Rate for Women

(b) Average Hourly Rate Men

(c) Pay Gap

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

## Chief Officers and Single Status Staff

- The average hourly rate for women is £14.05 (a)
- The average hourly rate for men is £15.53(b)
- The difference in hourly pay is **£ 1.48**
- This means that on average women earn 9.53% (c) less than men

Whilst there is a gender pay gap of 9.53% for the Council overall for this cohort of staff, we have further analysed the data based on the grades of individuals. This is shown in the following table: -

Grade Group	Female	Male	Pay Gap
National Minimum Wage	8.0958	8.4401	4.08%
Grade 1	10.8500	10.8500	0.00%
Grade 2	10.8736	11.0873	1.93%
Grade 3	11.0740	11.8902	6.87%
Grade 4	11.7872	12.0690	2.34%
Grade 5	12.7783	13.3408	4.22%
Grade 6	14.3232	15.1651	5.55%
Grade 7	16.0969	16.6925	3.57%
Grade 8	18.4934	18.6421	0.80%
Grade 9	22.0429	22.1271	0.38%
Grade 10	25.3908	25.3649	-0.10%
Grade 11	28.9161	29.2575	1.17%
Grade 12	33.3509	33.2167	-0.40%
Chief Officer	44.2162	46.0857	4.06%
Grand Total	14.0534	15.5331	9.53%

The differential in rate in this table is due to placing on scales. Each grade has a number of scale points with new employees being placed on the lowest point on the grade. All employees are then entitled to incremental progression after two years of service, subject to satisfactory performance, until they reach the top scale point for that grade. These are applied consistently regardless of any protected characteristics.

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

Further details are outlined below:

- The average hourly rate for women is £26.76 (a)
- The average hourly rate for men is £27.82 (b)
- The difference in hourly pay is **£1.06**
- This means that on average women in Education earn 3.84% (c) less than men.

The reasons for this difference include:

- There are more female probationary teachers than male probationary teachers (87.50% are female).
- The salary for these new entrants is lower than that for experienced teachers.

Whilst there is a gender pay gap of 3.84% for the Education staff we have further analysed the data based on the grades of individuals. This is shown in the following table: -

Grade Group	Female	Male	Pay Gap
Probationary Teacher	17.0900	17.0900	0.00%
Main Grade Scale Teacher	25.0538	24.9063	-0.59%
Music Instructor	23.7976	23.8746	0.32%
Chartered Teacher	29.9242	29.9047	-0.07%
Lead Teacher	29.2176	29.2176	0.00%
Principal Teacher	31.6562	31.8273	0.54%
Psychologist	33.1995	32.8108	-1.18%
Quality Improvement	37.8541	35.4674	-6.73%
Depute and Head Teacher	37.3158	38.6780	3.52%
Grand Total	26.7618	27.8298	3.84%

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Occupational Segregation

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is also Recruitment training, which is mandatory for Council officers involved in recruitment.

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

Of our 5961 employees (including casual and supply employees), 75.09% are female and 24.91% male.

Of those who have disclosed their ethnic origin, 0.62% identify as belonging to a minority racial group. (In accordance with the definition in the Equality Act, we have included the following categories within the definition of “minority racial group”: Asian/Asian British - Any Other; Asian/Asian British – Bangladeshi; Asian/Asian British - Chinese ; Asian/Asian British – Pakistani; Black/African/Caribbean/British – Car; Black/African/Caribbean/British – Other; Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups; Other Black Background; Other Ethnic Group).

2.35% have disclosed a disability.

Further analysis shows that;

- More females than males are in grades 1 & 4 – 11.
- The Council has significantly more teachers that are female than male teachers - 77% of our teachers are female.

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



## Occupational segregation by Gender (non Education)

**Table1**

TABLE 1 OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY GENDER (NON-EDUCATION)										
Sex	Capital Strategic Lead	Education & Lifelong Learning	Finance & Corporate Governance	Infrastructure & Environment	People, Performance & Change	Resilient Communities	Social Work & Practice - IJB	Social Work & Practice - SBC	Strategic Commissioning & Partnerships	Grand Total
Female	2	1202	126	514	81	380	143	166	699	3313
Male		151	65	685	30	49	29	53	92	1154
Grand Total	2	1353	191	1199	111	429	172	219	791	4467

Sex	Capital Strategic Lead	Education & Lifelong Learning	Finance & Corporate Governance	Infrastructure & Environment	People, Performance & Change	Resilient Communities	Social Work & Practice - IJB	Social Work & Practice - SBC	Strategic Commissioning & Partnerships	Grand Total
Female	100.00%	88.84%	65.97%	42.87%	72.97%	88.58%	83.14%	75.80%	88.37%	74.17%
Male	0.00%	11.16%	34.03%	57.13%	27.03%	11.42%	16.86%	24.20%	11.63%	25.83%

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

<b>Grade</b>	<b>2022</b>	
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
Chief Officers	55.00%	45.00%
National Minimum Wage	63.46%	36.54%
Grade 1	85.45%	14.55%
Grade 2	42.80%	57.20%
Grade 3	14.38%	85.62%
Grade 4	84.31%	15.69%
Grade 5	78.43	21.57%
Grade 6	78.13%	21.87%
Grade 7	74.03%	25.97%
Grade 8	71.02%	28.98%
Grade 9	70.53%	29.47%
Grade 10	55.08%	44.926%
Grade 11	60.00%	40.00%
Grade 12	29.17%	70.83%

<b>TABLE 3 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY AGE/DEPARTMENT (NON EDUCATION)</b>										
Age Group	Capital Strategic Lead	Education & Lifelong Learning	Finance & Corporate Governance	Infrastructure & Environment	People, Performance & Change	Resilient Communities	Social Work & Practice - IJB	Social Work & Practice - SBC	Strategic Commissioning & Partnerships	Grand Total
16 to 29	0.00%	15.37%	16.23%	9.34%	19.82%	17.25%	8.14%	8.22%	15.93%	13.54%
30 to 44	100.00%	27.57%	26.18%	20.52%	22.52%	21.91%	33.14%	31.05%	28.45%	25.52%
45 to 59	0.00%	39.54%	42.41%	47.29%	49.55%	44.99%	43.60%	48.86%	39.70%	43.14%
60 and above	0.00%	17.52%	15.18%	22.85%	8.11%	15.85%	15.12%	11.87%	15.93%	17.80%

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

Age Group	Chief Officer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	National Minimum Wage	Total
16 to 29	0.00%	9.87%	7.60%	13.73%	13.10%	14.29%	22.34%	12.99%	10.60%	4.91%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	84.62%	13.54%
30 to 44	10.00%	27.27%	14.80%	11.76%	23.14%	26.53%	27.81%	33.51%	30.74%	34.04%	30.51%	16.00%	4.17%	13.46%	25.52%
45 to 59	85.00%	41.82%	37.20%	43.14%	43.35%	42.27%	40.00%	43.38%	45.58%	48.77%	53.39%	68.00%	87.50%	1.92%	43.14%
60 +	5.00%	21.04%	40.40%	31.37%	20.41%	16.91%	9.84%	10.13%	13.07%	12.28%	16.10%	16.00%	8.33%	0.00%	17.80%

<b>TABLE 4 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED DISABILITY/DEPARTMENT (NON EDUCATION)</b>										
Disability	Capital Strategic Lead	Education & Lifelong Learning	Finance & Corporate Governance	Infrastructure & Environment	People, Performance & Change	Resilient Communities	Social Work & Practice - IJB	Social Work & Practice - SBC	Strategic Commissioning & Partnerships	Grand Total
Yes	0.00%	1.85%	2.09%	2.67%	2.70%	3.03%	4.65%	2.74%	2.78%	2.53%

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

Disability	Chief Officer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	National Minimum	Total
Yes %	0.00%	2.86%	2.80%	3.27%	1.66%	3.21%	2.50%	3.38%	2.83%	4.91%	0.85%	0.00%	0.00%	3.85%	2.53%

<b>TABLE 5 a OCCUPATIONAL SEGREGATION BY DECLARED ETHNIC GROUP/DEPARTMENT (NON EDUCATION)</b>										
Ethnicity	Capital Strategic Lead	Education & Lifelong Learning	Finance & Corporate Governance	Infrastructure & Environment	People, Performance & Change	Resilient Communities	Social Work & Practice - IJB	Social Work & Practice - SBC	Strategic Commissioning & Partnerships	Grand Total
Black Minority Ethnic	0.00%	0.81%	0.00%	0.17%	2.70%	1.17%	0.58%	2.28%	0.63%	0.72%
White	100.00%	76.57%	86.39%	74.48%	72.07%	84.38%	81.40%	76.71%	61.57%	74.61%

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

Ethnicity	Chief Officer	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	National Minimum Wage	Total
Black Minority Ethnic %	0.00	0.78	0.40	0.00	0.47	0.87	1.41	0.52	0.35	1.05	0.85%	0.00	4.17	1.92	0.72
White %	70.00	72.47	69.20	71.24	68.02	78.72	78.59	84.42	83.75	78.25	83.90%	92.00	62.50	76.92	74.61

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

Sex	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Grand Total
Female	166	140	197	153	141	168	198	1163
Male	44	32	53	45	34	44	79	331
Grand Total	210	172	250	198	175	212	277	1494

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

Sex	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
Female	79.05%	81.40%	78.80%	77.27%	80.57%	79.25%	71.48%	77.84%
Male	20.95%	18.60%	21.20%	22.73%	19.43%	20.75%	28.52%	22.16%

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

Age Group	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
16 to 29	20.00%	15.70%	11.60%	16.67%	17.71%	10.38%	11.55%	14.46%
30 to 44	31.90%	37.21%	44.40%	38.38%	38.86%	38.21%	26.71%	36.21%
45 to 59	42.86%	41.28%	40.00%	40.40%	37.14%	45.28%	29.96%	39.16%
60 and above	5.24%	5.81%	4.00%	4.55%	6.29%	6.13%	31.77%	10.17%

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

Age Group	Chartered Teacher	Main Grade Scale Teacher	Depute and Head Teacher	Lead Teacher	Music Instructor	Principal Teacher	Probationary Teacher	Psychologist	Quality Improvement	Total
16 to 29	0.00%	15.66%	0.00%	0.00%	5.26%	4.82%	72.92%	0.00%	0.00%	14.46%
30 to 44	14.81%	37.61%	30.36%	83.33%	31.58%	39.16%	18.75%	37.50%	20.00%	36.21%
45 to 59	85.19%	34.79%	66.96%	16.67%	42.11%	49.40%	8.33%	37.50%	70.00%	39.16%
60 and above	0.00%	11.93%	2.68%	0.00%	21.05%	6.63%	0.00%	25.00%	10.00%	10.17%

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

Disability	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
Yes	3.81%	1.74%	1.20%	1.01%	1.14%	2.36%	1.44%	1.81%

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

Disability	Chartered Teacher	Main Grade Scale Teacher	Depute and Head Teacher	Lead Teacher	Music Instructor	Principal Teacher	Probationary Teacher	Psychologist	Quality Improvement	Total
Yes	7.41%	1.91%	1.79%	0.00%	0.00%	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.81%

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

Ethnicity	Berwickshire	Cheviot	Eildon East	Eildon West	Teviot & Liddesdale	Tweeddale	Various	Total
Black Minority Ethnic	<b>0.48%</b>	<b>0.58%</b>	<b>0.40%</b>	<b>0.51%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.47%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.33%</b>
White Total	<b>60.95%</b>	<b>64.53%</b>	<b>68.00%</b>	<b>57.07%</b>	<b>66.86%</b>	<b>68.87%</b>	<b>47.29%</b>	<b>61.31%</b>

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

Ethnicity	Chartered Teacher	Main Grade Scale Teacher	Depute and Head Teacher	Lead Teacher	Music Instructor	Principal Teacher	Probationary Teacher	Psychologist	Quality Improvement	Total
Black Minority Ethnic	0.00%	0.36%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.33%
White Total	74.07%	59.38%	77.68%	33.33%	52.63%	77.71%	2.08%	62.50%	100.00%	61.31%

## Our Equality Outcomes

### Equality Outcomes

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

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

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

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

### **Our Outcomes 2021 – 2025**

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

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

#### **Emma Gibson - My MA Journey:**



In April 2016 I joined SBC as a Modern Apprentice within the HR Shared Services Department. Through this opportunity I completed an SVQ Level 2, Business & Administration qualification through Borders College, whilst learning on the job. I then progressed in the department to be a HR Administration Assistant. In September 2021, I started my second apprenticeship within the HR



Case Management Team, working towards a CIPD Level 3 HR qualification whilst receiving on the job training from my experienced colleagues. This opportunity enabled me to gain a permanent HR Advisor role. I would thoroughly recommend the modern apprenticeship route to anyone, it opens up great opportunities and the bonus is you get to earn and learn.

The following case study also contributes to this Outcome – for full details see the Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Hannah Page Modern Apprentice Human Resources Case Management Team

*Employee Data:* (Further comprehensive data can be found in the Mainstreaming Equality as an Employer section and Appendix 1 of this report).

Of our 5961 employees (including casual and supply employees):

- 75.09% are female and 24.91% male
- Of those who have disclosed their ethnic origin, 0.62% identify as belonging to a minority racial group.
- 2.35% have disclosed a disability
- 43.49% are aged between 45 – 59 years
- 86% of our employees who have completed annual Equality and Diversity Online training
- The difference in the average hourly rate between men and women is £1.48 per hour (non teaching) whilst the difference in teaching staff is £1.06 per hour

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

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

### **PINGO Demand Responsive Transport**

Pingo is a demand-responsive transport (DRT) service currently being trialled in the Berwickshire area. DRT is a user-oriented form of passenger transport, characterised by flexible routes and smaller vehicles than most scheduled buses, operating in shared-ride mode between pick-up and drop-off locations according to passengers' needs.

DRT services can be used either to transport passengers directly to their destination, or to transport interchanges such as bus corridors, rail and bus stations.

Pingo is a fully flexible and accessible service, providing on-demand transport anywhere within its operating area seven days per week, from 07:00 – 21:00. Customers can book Pingo services using a mobile phone application or through a call centre, up to a week ahead of the planned journey. Pingo services do not follow predetermined routes and take passengers to their required destination by the quickest available route.

The Pingo vehicles are 16-seater accessible minibuses with the capacity to carry bicycles. They operate throughout the Berwickshire locality of the Scottish Borders Council (SBC) area and to the northern part of Berwick-upon-Tweed to enable access to employment and services and to promote interchange with other bus services for access to the wider region.

Pingo also provides the opportunity to interchange with rail services at the new Reston station, which opened in May 2022.

Since Pingo commenced operation in May 2022, there have been almost 9,500 journeys made with the service being on target to exceed 12,000 journeys by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

Scottish Borders Council recently commissioned Jacobs Consultancy to carry out an evaluation of the service which is being finalised however initial findings have concluded that the service has had a positive impact in the Berwickshire area.

The data gathered from the pilot will be used as part of the wider transport network review to inform how Demand Responsive Transport works as part of the wider bus network, particularly in a rural context.

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## **Free Bus Travel**

Following the introduction of free bus travel for under 22's, it quickly became apparent that the GetYourNEC system was not easy for everyone to use and also did not suit everyone due to strict identification criteria. Therefore, we created an online form which uses the school system Seemis for ID verification purposes and then allows Customer Advice and Support Services (CASS) to process the cards for free travel. This really helped customers apply via an easier method as some parents did not have the relevant documents for providing ID such as passports so this helped the more vulnerable groups. A grandparent applied via GetYourNEC but were rejected as their name was not on the child's birth certificate but they were the legal guardian of the child. We advised them to apply using our online form and as they were listed as the guardian for the child on the school system we were able to process the application.

## **CA R Portal**

We are preparing to launch the CA-R Portal; an online service to allow customers to view their Council Tax account details in real time, set up Direct Debits, and view their bills and account activity as and when they want. Initially a soft launch to staff will ensure any issues are ironed out before launching to customers. Although customers can access this service by contacting us by phone, this service is providing more accessibility to a variety of customers, when and where they require it.

The following case studies also contribute to this Outcome – for full details see the Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Shared Lives
- Carers Act Monies
- Community-led support roll out Matters Hubs
- Community Led Support Workshop Adult Social Work

An educational perspective to meeting this outcome:

- Updating Respectful Relationships Policy through community of practice
- Inclusion and Wellbeing Service supporting children and young people with additional needs in schools/settings
- Leader Valley enhanced provision providing education for children with additional complex needs
- Continue to ensure a commitment to nurture and progress rollout of targeted nurture bases
- Schools / settings provide support for children and young people with additional needs based on individual needs
- Incidents of bullying are tracked and recorded and dealt with by schools in line with RespectME
- IEPs/CSPs in place for pupils who require additional support
- EMAG (Equity, Moderation and Advisory Group) process for additional resource and advice to schools regarding children with ASN
- Grants given to funded ELC providers to enable them to meet additional support needs of identified children
- Support and challenge from Attainment Advisor and Education Scotland colleagues
- Comprehensive professional learning for staff in school and settings
- Support and challenge schools / settings to improve outcomes for identified groups of children and young people with a particular focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap
- Implementing the recommendations of the Inclusion National Collaborative Improvement by appointing cluster headteachers as pathfinders for a 'Team around the Cluster' model
- Early Years Centres

Other actions include:

- All service buses are fully DDA compliant,
- Scottish Borders Council provides financial support to Community Transport operators,
- Mandatory training for Drivers and Passenger Assistants,
- Engaging with family groups to improve travel arrangements
- Developing care villages across 2 sites which are being designed to support individuals with a range of needs e.g. dementia, learning disabilities, sensory impairments, while supporting ongoing community input and engagement.
- Supported young people coming through transitions to access adult services and to be involved in creating a plan of support that reflects their aspirations, choices and interests.
- Identifying and supporting opportunities for young people with a learning disability to fully engage and participate in meaningful activities and relationships within their local community.
- Developed an Inclusive corporate website
- Delivered 'Positive Communication' sessions at 5 Area Partnerships – information sessions on supporting those that have difficulties hearing to access community based meetings online.
- Funded 7 groups that directly have a positive impact on Protected Characteristic groups
- Created a Veterans sub group – involving ex members of the armed forces

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

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

### **'HAVE YOUR SAY' SURVEY**

As part of the budget Communication Strategy, the survey was used as a way of engaging with communities on their spending priorities. The survey was made available to members of the public via the Council website with the aim of asking participants to:

- complete a new survey and help shape the next Council budget, due to be set in February 2023.

- provide feedback on a number of other areas, including public transport, health and social care and the development of local plans within communities.

- 

Up to the date the consultation closed, 866 respondents gave feedback on their priorities.

Following this feedback headline budget proposals include protecting frontline services, including education, social work and roads, the latter with investment of £21.9m over the next three years.

The following case study also contributes to this Outcome – for full details see Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Young people led action in Kelso!

Other actions include:

- IPad survey carried out to engage with residents and carers to establish what is important to them to enable them to continue to participate as fully as possible in aspects of public life that are important to them.
- Night support consultation carried out to engage with current service users and members of the public to support us in establishing the most efficient use of resources while maintaining positive outcomes for individuals
- Young people at Peebles High School participated in Participatory Budgeting to determine school spend. Young people had to allocate £7k to projects that best suited their needs.
- Provided £150k to support the Connecting Borders programme which provides digital access to some of the most excluded in our community
- We have been involved in discussions with Borders Trans group in helping to support the forming of this group and continue to engage

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

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

- Carrying out the outcomes of the education equity strategy 2021 - 2026 to close the poverty related attainment gap
- Working with partners in the Cost of Living Crisis Operations group to develop further provision for breakfast clubs in targeted schools/settings
- Support and challenge schools/ settings to raise attainment through analysis of data, improved professional judgements and target setting for all cohorts of learners
- Support schools to make best use of Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to close the poverty related attainment gap
- Support targeted Early Learning settings to make best use of Excellence and Equity Leads to close the poverty related attainment gap
- building capability and capacity for senior leaders and staff in schools/ settings in the use of tracking and monitoring tools, including Insight and BGE Benchmarking and the ability to interpret data to identify areas of need
- Carrying out reviews of our schools with the highest number of children living in SIMD Quintile 1 to ensure the strategic approach to closing the poverty related attainment gap is effective.
- Work closely with other Corporate Parents through the operational group
- Work closely with The Promise Implementation team and Champions Board
- Child's Plans and Meeting Around the Child (MAC) process
- Early Years Centres offers food through Food banks to families, parenting groups and other supports
- Referrals to the Early Years Welfare Benefits service for the year 2021-22 exceeded 500 which represented a 35% increase over the previous year's figure. The total gains for families in the Borders as a result of these referrals in 2021-22 was £1.25m.
- Implementing the recommendations of the Inclusion National Collaborative Improvement by appointing cluster headteachers as pathfinders for a 'Team around the Cluster' model
- Provision of a free school meal and snack for all ELC children At no cost to parents.
- Work in partnership with local transport operators to improve transport opportunities across the region ,

- Contribute towards local area partnership meetings,
- Implementation of Berwickshire DRT service,
- Regular meetings with partner agencies and local communities to ensure transport needs are met as best as can be
- 15 partners involved in the Cost of Living Strategic and working groups set up as a Cost of Living response.
- Community meetings across 5 localities that encompass all partners along with members of the public.
- As a member of the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP) we are working with partners to deliver identified actions, through our 2022/23 Work Plan, which address poverty:
  - CPP to work collaboratively to identify barriers and work towards developing a plan to remove them in order to support parents into employment i.e., childcare barrier, transport etc. ·
  - Partnership to develop plans for paying the living wage –and encouraging contractors and sub-contractors to also do so
  - Explore a partnership approach to Community Wealth Building - CPP partners to work collaboratively to develop community wealth building plans.
- Delivering the Warm and Well fund in partnership with The Third Sector Interface
- Involved in a partnership approach to Credit Unions, which will encourage ethical saving and access.
- We have partnership arrangements with Registered Social Landlords and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) send referrals for financial assistance providing a holistic approach to addressing financial difficulties. The review of an individual's circumstances include a benefit entitlement check, income maximisation, budgeting support and money advice.
- We work in partnership with CAB to develop processes and share good practice. We have regular meetings with CAB to monitor progress which included developing a discretionary fund for all members of the community. This enabled assistance, which was not otherwise available, promoting inclusion for various groups including people from abroad, those with disabilities, older people and families. Examples include a single parent who required assistance with childcare to stay in employment and helping a family under pressure to reduce outgoings and assist with expenses to attend a school trip which would not have been available otherwise.
- SBC have a partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support. This includes exchanging good practice with other local authorities providing similar support. Staff attend the Margaret Kerr unit at Borders General Hospital and provide face to face assistance with people receiving support as visits and telephone support. Clients may be also be signposted to other services and organisations. Some recent successes include an individual who received over £1,500 as a lump sum and increases in income of over £200 per week. Another was unable to afford heating and couldn't get out due to mobility issues. After a benefit check their income was increased by £30 per week but their outgoings were reduced by over £100 per month as well



as providing funding for a mobility scooter. This led to increased independence and the ability to be able to afford to heat their home.

- The Council's Financial Inclusion Team share good practice and awareness with practitioners groups such as Macmillan Community of Practice, Rights Advice Scotland and IRRV practitioner groups. This has benefitted in gaining knowledge to allow staff to support applications for the recently introduced Adult Disability Payment and Child Disability Payment.
- The Council also works in partnership with Social Security Scotland (SSS) and DWP. SSS extended the eligibility for the Scottish Child Payment on 14 November 2022 to parents of children from six to sixteen years old. The Council led a take up campaign in partnership with SSS (who provided information about eligibility and applying) using data held by SBC to notify over 1,000 parents that they were likely to be eligible and encouraging them to make an application.
- The Financial Inclusion team provides assistance to all groups to maximise their income and also assists with appeals and specialist advice. In particular this advice is provided to those with disabilities, older people, persons from abroad and families. Recent work also included using existing data to identify people on low income who were not receiving Pension Credit but who were likely to be eligible. If awarded, this provides the recipients with an increase in weekly income, up to £900 in Cost of Living Payments and free TV licences for those over 75.
- The Council provides members for the Financial Inclusion Group (chaired by NHS) and have an officer who specifically assists with benefit checks and advice to pregnant women and those with a child up to 8 years old. After receiving support from the officer, one parent received a £500 lump sum and an increase in income of over £100 per week.

The following case studies also contribute to this Outcome – for full details see the Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Shared Lives
- Community-led support roll out – Matters hubs
- Drumlanrig PS winners of Scottish Farmhouse Picnic Competition
- Community Led Support Workshop Adult Social Work

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

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

### *Millar House – Supported accommodation for adults experiencing Mental Ill Health*

The Health and Social Care Partnership, Carr Gomm and Eildon Housing Association (Eildon) have collaborated to set up a new Community Rehabilitation service within Eildon's supported accommodation development located at Millar House, Melrose.

#### *Community Rehabilitation Team*

- Our Community Rehabilitation Team (CRT) consists of a multidisciplinary team including Consultant Psychiatrists, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Health Care Support Workers, Peer Workers, and Administrative staff.
- They care for a population of around 110 patients across the Scottish Borders.
- The patients in their care have a severe and enduring mental health condition such as psychosis, Schizophrenia or Bi-polar Disorder.

#### *Supported accommodation*

- As part of the service, the Health and Social Care Partnership commission an organisation called Carr Gomm to provide 24-hour support to a core number of patients in supported accommodation in the centre of Galashiels. They also support patients in their own private tenancies in and around the Galashiels area. This service is referred to as core and cluster.
- The CRT and Carr Gomm work in partnership to provide ongoing care and treatment to the patients within the current core and cluster model.

#### *Grade 4 and Grade 5 accommodation – a new model*

- Following a review of the core and cluster model, it was deemed appropriate to consider enhancing the available accommodation and introduce a Grade 5 level of supported accommodation.
- Grade 4 accommodation is a descriptor of the current core and cluster model; Grade 5 can be described as intensive community rehabilitation providing earlier discharge from Grade 6 (in patient ward) or be an alternative to hospital admission.
- The new model would also see a repatriation of a small number of patients who have been required to be admitted to specialist hospital facilities out with the Scottish Borders.

#### *Millar House, Melrose*

- As part of continued strategic discussions between Eildon Housing Association and the Health & Social Care Partnership, Millar House, Melrose was identified as a potential location for the new service model, fulfilling the needs of the review and being able to provide an enhanced level of accommodation and Grade 5 provision.

- Millar House is a former sheltered housing development comprising a Grade C listed villa with four flatlets and shared communal facilities, and nine self-contained one-bedroom cottages. Although the development is of a high standard, the design and size of the development created both service delivery and financial challenges. Following completion of an options appraisal, Eildon's Board agreed in December 2019 to decommission the service and support tenants and staff to transfer to other care services managed by Eildon. The sheltered service ended in January 2022.
- Millar House is located in a quiet residential area of Melrose. Once information is made public, concerns may be raised about the changing use of the development and potential risk to the community. The design of development (which includes large garden areas), coupled with the 24/7 on site support team should offer reassurance to local residents that the service being developed is similar in nature to the service previously delivered by Eildon i.e., high quality supported accommodation.
- The review included service user and carer involvement, including a site visit to Millar House and questionnaires completed with the aid of BIAS advocacy service to gather views and opinions on the potential relocation.
- The consultation proved positive and together with Eildon, the Health and Social Care Partnership progressed to developing a business case to support the redesign and move which was subsequently agreed by the Integrated Joint Board.
- The model sees a relocation of nine patients to the individual cottages located in Millar House. The main house will be used to support four patients within the Grade 5 element of the model. Carr Gomm will continue to provide ongoing 24-hour support with the addition of a Community Mental Health Nurse and Occupational Therapist employed to support the Grade 5 element, Monday to Friday.

Other actions also include:

- Bus Network Review
- Promote Active Travel Opportunities

The following case studies also contributes to this Outcome – for full details see the Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Shared Lives
- Community-led support roll out – WhatMatters Hubs
- Millar House – Supported accommodation for adults experiencing Mental Ill Health
- Community Led Support Workshop Adult Social Work

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

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



**Young Volunteer of the Year Award.** A Wonderful Achievement!

Macauley, (pictured) a former [#EyemouthHighSchool](#) student has overcome many, many barriers in his life so far, but has shown that you can go onto achieve, with the correct support and attitude.

Macauley started volunteering with Splash, in the Eyemouth Community Cafe and Larder, as part of his Nobody left behind (NOLB) Stage 1 journey. From the first day in

the Cafe, Macauley made quite an impression on the other volunteers and

in the community, with the manager feeding back to his Key Worker that he was, "*One of the best volunteers we have ever had*".

When he moved to Stages 2 and 3, with the [#EmployabilitySupportService](#), Macauley made it clear that he wanted to remain in his volunteering role, and worked around his commitments to make this happen, successfully completing Stages 2 and 3, where he also managed work placement in the Co-op.

Macauley has now successfully gained paid employment in the Co-op, whilst also continuing to volunteer in Splash Brunch Hub too! What a great example and wonderful young man!

Actions include:

- Adopted a flexible and creative approach to managing rotas to accommodate the availability and needs of currently non-working parents who have restrictions around childcare, and/ or DWP benefits.
- Worked alongside HR to identify employment opportunities for refugees.

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

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

## **Education and Lifelong Learning**

- Continued targeted and focused work happening in all schools to identify gaps in attainment and address these.
- Implemented a new thematic school review on closing the poverty related attainment gap for our ten schools with a significant SIMD Quintile 1 population
- A recovery curriculum was implemented by schools in order to try and mitigate for lost learning during school closures in the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Updated guidance to schools and monitoring of Pupil Equity Funding following the Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh in April 2022
- Improved monitoring and tracking procedures with schools and partners regarding care experienced school leavers to increase the opportunities for positive destinations.
- Virtual School Headteacher continues to support and challenge schools and partners to ensure improved outcomes for care experienced pupils and young carers, such as positive destinations and access to learning
- The development of government required local authority stretch aims and school stretch aims to support work to narrow the poverty related attainment gap
- A Collaborative Improvement review of Inclusive practice in SBC schools and settings with Education Scotland and Association of Directors of Education Scotland. This has resulted in the implementation of Cluster Lead Headteachers to be pathfinders for developing a 'team around the cluster' model.
- Themed advice notes to schools to ensure our Inclusion policy and framework are carried out in practice
- SBC wide learning, teaching and assessment frameworks continue to support schools in recognizing the core skills which all young people need to achieve in order to thrive. Developing approaches to enabling targeted inputs for those who are from an equality group to ensure that their approach to implementation is equitable.
- Development and implementation of the Education Equity Strategy 2021 – 2026, including establishing an Equity Strategic Board to ensure governance of Attainment Scotland Funding Streams
- Continued mainstreaming of protected characteristics within the culture and curriculum of schools. Examples include: . nurturing approaches, protected characteristics month, anti-racism project, celebration of diversity in the English curriculum.
- Early Years Centres, specifically: -
  - Deliver Family Learning activities designed to enable parents to learn how to support their children's learning
  - Provide a safe, non-judgmental place where it is okay to ask for help and support and know it will be available
  - Facilitate access to specialist programmes and signpost and refer onto further support

- Evidence-based early intervention and prevention programmes for improving the mental health and wellbeing of children and families. All cluster areas deliver this for their families

Other actions include:

- £60,000 available to community groups and schools to offer a free breakfast club with the aim of raising attainment

The following case study also contributes to this Outcome – for full details see Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Carers Act Monies

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

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

Key achievements in 2021/22 (taken for the Local Housing Strategy Annual Report 2021/22):

- 314 affordable homes delivered across the Scottish Borders in 2021/22
- Recruitment of an Empty Homes Strategy & Policy Officer
- SBC received £1.78m Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme funding for the 2021/22 scheme year and allocated £1.8m for 2022/23
- 6,391 advice interactions with Home Energy Scotland
- 94% of households assessed as unintentionally homeless, where there was a known outcome, secured settled accommodation.
- Thirteen applications to the Housing Intervention Fund were approved in 2021/2022, the total spend within this fund since launch has been £30,598.
- Homelessness services have distributed 20 iPads, 28 Chromebooks and 51 MIFI devices to 56 households in 2021/2022 through Connecting Borders.
- 39 Extra Care Housing units completed by Eildon Housing Association at Wilkie Gardens, Galashiels
- Delivered 48 wheelchair standard homes

- During 2021/22 a total of £129,273.37 was spent on adaptations in the private sector with 33 major adaptations delivered

### *Delivery of New Housing*

The delivery of new affordable housing improves access to housing for all. The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) sets out the key strategic housing investment priorities for affordable housing over a five year period. The current SHIP 2023-28 sets out ambitious proposals for up to 1,320 new affordable homes in the Borders, with a total investment in the region of £268m for 2023-28. There is likely to be a positive impact on all nine protected characteristics.

### *Means Tested/ Grant Assisted Adaptations*

The Housing (Scotland) Act places a mandatory duty on local authorities to provide assistance to households seeking to meet the needs of a disabled occupant. To help deliver this requirement Scottish Borders Council has a contract with Borders Care and Repair. The aim of the service is to enable older people and people with disabilities living in the private sector to have warm, well maintained and safe homes.

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

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

Key statistics: 2021/22:

- 33 major adaptations completed at a cost of £129,273
- 199 Small Repairs & Adaptations
- 3,931 Handyperson Jobs were carried out, including 1,943 grab rails
- Under the Scheme of Assistance, practical assistance was given to 38 cases regarding repair and maintenance including common repairs; empty homes advice; support to landlords and tenants and, as a last resort, enforcement. In addition general information and advice was also provided about concerns regarding the condition of private accommodation.



### *Extra Care Housing*

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

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

There has been considerable progress made in 2021/22 with 39 units completed by Eildon Housing Association at Wilkie Gardens, Galashiels in November 2021.

Following Covid related reprogramming, the next project is now underway at the former High School in Kelso which is being converted and remodelled by Eildon Housing Association to form 36 flats. Current information estimates that this will complete in summer 2023.

### *Wheelchair Accessible Housing*

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

Following the delivery of the finalised report: "A Space to live – Wheelchair accessible housing in the Scottish Borders" by consultants in January 2020, work has continued to engage stakeholders. The action plan is now integrated with the Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 actions through the LHS monitoring and reporting processes. These actions will be carried forward and integrated in the new Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028

The final report identified a wide range of issues and challenges which will need to be addressed at national as well as at a local Scottish Borders level by the Council and partner agencies. The core findings indicated that up to 20 new wheelchair accessible

homes will be required, per year, across all tenures in order to address current unmet and future need. This target is reflected in the Council's current Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023/2028. During the period 2021-2022, Registered Social Landlords delivered 48 wheelchair accessible homes. These were located as follows, 2 houses at Beanburn Phase 1 in Ayton by Berwickshire Housing Association, Eildon Housing Association delivered 7 flats at Huddersfield Street Galashiels and all 39 flats within the Wilkie Gardens Extra Care Housing development in Galashiels.

#### *Local Housing Strategy 2023-2028*

Work has begun on the next Local Housing Strategy to cover the period 2023-2028. This new plan will build on the significant progress made on the issues identified in the current LHS 2017-2022 and will address newly arising housing matters particularly in response to the publication of new LHS guidance and the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are four stages to the preparation and delivery of the next LHS:

- Stage 1 – Preparation
- Stage 2 – Early engagement and evidence gathering
- Stage 3 – Preparation of first draft
- Stage 4 – Formal consultation

The Council has a duty to consult widely on the LHS, and in that consultation, involve the wider community to ensure that equality duties are met. A significant amount of engagement has taken place throughout 2022. This includes:

- Early engagement survey
- Resident and Stakeholder Workshops and Surveys
- Gypsy Travellers Engagement and Needs Analysis
- Key Worker Survey
- Private Landlord Survey

The LHS will then go out for a three month formal consultation and peer review assessment before it is finalised.

At the start of the development of the LHS 2023-2028, the Integrated Impact Assessment has been built into the development process. A Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment are also being carried out.

### *Gypsy travellers*

Gypsy Travellers are recognised as a distinct ethnic group by the Scottish Government. There is a large body of evidence, both in Scotland and in the UK, which shows a lack of access to culturally appropriate housing which is a major contributory factor in poor health, education and societal outcomes experienced by Gypsy Travellers.

While there is a lack of reliable accurate data to show the number of Gypsy Travellers, national estimates would suggest that 1.5% of Scotland's population of Gypsy Travellers reside in the Scottish Borders.

Currently, there is no legal requirement for local authorities to produce assessments of accommodation need for Gypsy Travellers. However, local housing strategies set out council's plans and priorities for housing and housing related services, including those for the Gypsy and Traveller community.

SBC recently commissioned consultants to carry out a piece of work on the Gypsy Traveller community in the Scottish Borders, this was part of the early engagement work of the forthcoming LHS. The key aim of this work was to identify the housing needs and requirements of the Gypsy Traveller community in the region.

The assessment was undertaken by conducting a review of the following data sources:

- 2011 census data
- Information from SBC regarding pitch provision and supply
- Information from SBC regarding authorities' encampments
- Information from key stakeholders and neighbouring authorities
- A survey of households residing in site based accommodation across the Scottish Borders
- A community survey of those attending the St Boswells Fair
- One response to an open survey made available on SBC's website and advertised on Twitter and Facebook

The findings of the assessment indicate an estimated unmet need for an additional site provision of 28 pitches. Estimated additional household formation identifies an anticipated future need for 3 additional pitches. The estimated identified need in the analysis undertaken should be taken as a starting point, but also as confirmation that provision, in some form, is required.

The following case studies also contribute to this Outcome – for full details see Mainstreaming Equality section of this report.

- Shared Lives
- Millar House – Supported accommodation for adults experiencing Mental Ill Health
- Community Led Support Workshop Adult Social Work

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

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

- Any issues which arise on licensed premises are dealt with by Licensing Officers within 14 days of the incident, with the involvement of Police Scotland where appropriate.
- In the period covered by this report no equality issues have been raised with the Licensing Officers.

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

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

- Equalities training was delivered to all members of the Licensing Board and Licensing Forum in November 2022.

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

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

- Licencing Board meetings are publicised on the SBC website.
- All meetings take place in an accessible building.
- Meetings are also now held in a blended format so people can participate in meetings remotely.
- The public part of Licencing Board meetings is also live streamed so anyone can watch online.

