**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

**Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020**

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**Introduction**

We are delighted to present Brecon Beacons National Park Authority’s second Strategic Equality Plan (SEP), the first being produced in March 2012. The strategic equality plan sets out how we will ensure that our Authority will embrace diversity and promote equality to make this National Park accessible and inclusive to residents and the wider community.

The Brecon Beacons National Park is a single purpose Local Authority charged with delivering the National Park purposes as defined by section 61 of the Environment Act (1995)

* To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the National Park; and
* To promote opportunities for the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the National Park

These twin purposes are underpinned by the Sandford Principle which asserts the primacy of the first purpose over the second in cases of irreconcilable conflict.

In addition to the two statutory purposes, Section 62 (2) of the same act places a duty onto the National Park to ‘foster the economic and social well-being of local communities, within the National Park’.  This duty should be fulfilled in the pursuit of the National Park purposes.

Brecon Beacons National Park Authority values the rich diversity and creative potential that people with different backgrounds, skills and abilities bring to the National Park. We recognise that we have a key responsibility for ensuring that all our Members, Officers (staff) and volunteers promote equality, fair treatment and social inclusion at all times. As part of this vision, we have produced this document which explains how we plan to meet our statutory duties in relation to the Equality Act 2010. This document then provides a clear starting point to be applied across our Authority to ensure we deliver high standards of service fairly across all sectors of our communities, user groups, businesses and visitors. To make that vision a reality, we are determined to promote diversity, inclusiveness, and equality of access and eliminate inequalities in everything that we do.

Our values are central to the way we provide our National Park services.

We are committed to challenging the way we work by being innovative and dynamic in tackling the issues that have a direct impact on how people experience our National Park. In addition to this, we hope to build on the relationships we have already nurtured with disabled groups, Black and Minority Ethnic groups and other groups inside and outside the National Park’s boundary. Through their experiences and valuable knowledge of the Park we have an ambition to improve these relationships and develop new ones which demonstrate our commitment to making a fundamental difference to the lives of different people experiencing our National Park and accessing our services.

We see this Plan as a living, breathing document which we hope will continue to evolve through our commitment and multi-faceted partnership work. As part of the feedback we welcome the views of all interested individuals, partner organization, user groups and stakeholders so that we may influence the Plan’s development in the years to come. We look forward to hearing from you.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Julian Atkins Chief Executive | Edward Evans Chair of the National Park Authority | Emily DurrantMembers Equality & Diversity Champion |
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**The Equality Act 2010**

**The general duty:**

The Aims of the Act:

Local Authorities and other public bodies are required to have due regard to the need to:

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

From the Act, having due regard for advancing these equality aims involves:

* Removing or minimising disadvantages experienced 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 with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in.
* Other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This will include the type of community cohesion activities developed by Local Authorities and Community Safety Partnerships in the past as well as initiatives such as intergenerational projects which may not have been linked to the equality agenda previously.

**The specific duty:**

Each of the specific duties outlined in the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 applies to Local Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities and the National Parks in Wales. The requirements for National Park Authorities are detailed below:

* Develop and publish Equality Objectives and a Strategic Equality Plans.
* Assessing impact.
* Collect Equality Information.
* Publish relevant information.
* Employment information.
* Pay Differences.
* Member and Staff Training.
* Procurement.
* Annual Reporting and publishing.
* Accessibility.
* Review.

**Background and Overview**

**Brecon Beacons National Park Authority**

**Overview**

The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority is a single purpose public authority that is made up of 120 employees (March 2016), including full time, part time and seasonal posts and is governed by 24 Members, 16 elected Members representing the Constituent Local Authorities and 8 Members appointed by the Welsh Government. The Authority is also the local planning Authority for the National Park, therefore is responsible for the production of the National Park Management Plan and Local Development Plan and for determining planning applications.

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Within the remit of the National Park Authority we have identified 2 key areas where we as an Authority can engage with individuals that share a protected characteristic:

1. Promoting equality of access.
2. Promoting understanding and enjoyment

The Well-being of Future Generations Act. “The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (The Act) puts in place 7 Goals and a ‘sustainable development principle’, five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the well-being goals

Public bodies including are required to take this into account when making decisions. BBNPA is committed to all the Goals including A More Equal Wales : A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances). “



 **Our customers**

The Park is home to 33,334 people with Brecon the largest settlement (7,834) and together with Crickhowell, Gilwern, and Hay on Wye and Talgarth account for approximately 46% of the Park’s inhabitants. In addition around 4 million people each year visit the Brecon Beacons National Park and the work of the National Park Authority reflects the needs of residents and visitors combined with the delivery of the Statutory purposes and duty.

Administratively, the Brecon Beacons National Park includes 7Unitary Authorities (Blaenau Gwent, Carmarthenshire, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, , Powys, Rhondda / Cynon Taf and Torfaen. Powys accounts for 66% of the Park’s geographical area and 50 Community Councils. We are indebted to the Welsh Government, Demography, Heritage and Equalities Statistics Department of the Statistics Directorate who produced the following information for the Authority.

**Our Employees**

The Authority is committed to ensuring equality in its workforce and to continuing to create opportunities for all to access the workforce and to create a workforce with a greater understanding and awareness for Equality.

**Employment information - Our staff:**

The duty requires the following information on employment:

A listed body in Wales must collect and publish on an annual basis the number of:

* People employed by the Authority on 31 March each year by protected characteristic
* Men and women employed, broken down by:
* Job
* Grade (where grading systems in place)
* Pay
* Contract type (including permanent and fixed term contracts)
* Working pattern (including full time, part time and other flexible working patterns)
* People who have applied for jobs with the authority over the last year
* Employees who have applied to change position within the authority, identifying how many were successful in their application and how many were not
* Employees who have applied for training and how many succeeded in their application
* Employees who completed the training
* Employees involved in grievance procedures either as complainant or as a person against whom a complaint was made
* Employees subject to disciplinary procedures
* Employees who have left an authority’s employment

All of the above information must be presented for each of the separate protected groups. The exception to this requirement is the data on job, grade, pay, contract type and working pattern, which must be broken down only in relation to women and men.

**Remuneration Policy**

There are currently two remuneration schemes operating in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. The Authority implemented Single Status in 1997 and the Authority’s non-Chief Officer Grades and salary levels continue to be determined using the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation scheme. Salaries for Chief Officers were evaluated using the Hay Scheme in 2007 and all new Chief Officers roles are evaluated under this Scheme. The Authority also acknowledges the Living Wage.

**Member and Staff Training**

The Authority is committed to a programme of Training for staff and members.

Members of the Authority receive a training in the following and are able to access the training offered to staff as set out below.

**BRECON BEACONS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY: MEMBER INDUCTION AND CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK 2016 - 2020**

The Authority has also provides staff training in the following areas:

* Social inclusion
* Equality Impact assessment training
* Disability awareness
* Sign language
* Deaf awareness
* Welsh language
* Dementia Awareness
* Mental Health Awareness
* Child Protection and Safeguarding
* Welsh Language Training

**Welsh Language**

The Authority commitment to the Welsh Language falls under separate Legislation, however, we feel this fits into the wider approach to equalities, ensuring employees and the public are able to use the language of their choice when dealing with the Authority and that the wider community of residents and visitors have the opportunity to understand and enjoy the Welsh culture, of which the language forms a part.

**Procurement**

The Authority takes account of the Welsh Government policy statement on procurement by inviting potential suppliers to bid for all contracts worth more than £25,000 through Sell2Wales, using Welsh Government procurement frameworks where possible. It has developed partnerships with local and Welsh businesses such as tourism enterprises, outdoor activity providers, craftspeople, groundworks contractors, the Welsh Books Council, designers and printers among others.

The Authority is also committed to prompt payment of businesses and seeks to comply with the requirement to pay supplier invoices within 30 days of invoice receipt. Over 95% of invoices were paid within 30 days in the last financial year. As provided for in the Welsh Government’s Policy Statement and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Authority takes into consideration the wider impact of a particular contract on sustainability, the local economy and its duty to foster sustainable economic development when setting the criteria for evaluating tenders.

 **What the National Park Authority currently does**

Within the National Park Authority we have a number of strategic documents and policies that require consultation across a wide spectrum of interested parties and organisations. During the preparation and consultation stage of the National Park Management Plan 2010 – 2015 and the Local Development Plan we invited comments from a large number of organisations including the following: Welsh Government, County and Town and Community Councils, Abergavenny Shop Mobility, Black Environment Network Wales, Brecknock Access Group, CAIR (Monmouthshire Disablement Association), Equality & Human Rights Commission, Disability Wales/Anabledd Cymru, Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Disabled Ramblers, Ghurkha Welfare Association, Gypsy Council, Mosaic and Mosaic Cymru, Organisation for Disabled People, The Disabled Ramblers, Travellers Law Reform Project who have been asked to contribute and provide comment on the proposed strategic documents.

The Local Development Plan is currently in review. The Authority has published a Community Involvement Strategy which clearly sets out the Authority’s commitment to involving all stakeholders and individuals in this review. It is the intention of the Authority to ensure that decisions about future development are made collaboratively genuinely empowering communities to have a say in the future growth of their villages and towns

Within the National Park Authority a number of Departments currently and have previously provided services and activities tailored towards specific groups including:

* Improved access to our Visitor Centres, Baby changing and breast feeding facilities.
* ROWIP “Rights of Way Improvement Plan (“ROWIP”) –

The Authority is currently reviewing its ROWIP (to be published in 2019) and, as part of that work, it must specifically consider the accessibility of its rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems. It must also assess opportunities to contribute to Well-being objectives and opportunities to contribute to the delivery of other plans and priorities.

The Authority has undertaken wide ranging consultation thus far on the ROWIP with more to follow. It has consulted RNIB Cymru, Wales Council of the Blind, Sight Cymru, Visual Impairment Breconshire, MIND Brecon, Powys People First, Gwalia, Brecknock Access Group, CAIR (Monmouthshire Disablement Association), Disability Wales, The Disabled Ramblers, Abergavenny U3A, Black Environment Network Wales, Brecon and District MIND, Brecon U3A, Dementia Friendly Brecon, Gilwern U3A, Grassroutes Cymru, Gurkha Welfare, Hay U3A, PAVO and County and Community Councils to name but a few. Many other organisation have been consulted and will be consulted again.”

In June 2007 the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority published its ROWIP. The ROWIP was the means by which the Authority identified, prioritised and planned for improvements to the rights of way network and access provision in the National Park for the subsequent 10 years. The ROWIP set out the priorities and objectives for access to the countryside and provided the basis for work on the rights of way network and on access land.

Whilst the Authority has direct responsibility for managing access land the responsibility for managing the public rights of way network lies with the unitary authorities. However, the National Park Authority has, since 1996, had formal arrangements with its seven constituent unitary authorities to manage their respective rights of way networks on their behalf. As a result, it was considered that the National Park Authority was best placed to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (“ROWIP”) for the National Park. The ROWIP therefore covered sections of the counties of Powys, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire and the county boroughs of Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen.

* Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Strategy and Action Plan including policy and initiatives addressing 4 key areas: Organisational change to mainstream social inclusion, supporting an inclusive local agenda, promoting inclusive opportunities for the understanding and sustainable enjoyment of the special qualities of the Parks and contributing to the eradication of Child Poverty in Wales.
* Provision of information including: printed material, signage attributes, email responses, physical access around and within properties, etc.
* Our Education Team work with local schools and special needs groups within and outside the National Park boundary from a wide range of ages and abilities from pre-school to University to provide educational services and promote understanding and enjoyment.
* Our Interpretation, Information and Tourism teams have produced a range of services specifically aimed at a younger audience including *“Explosive times’”* interpreting the gunpowder works at Pontneddfechan; *“Trails and Tales for Families”* in Abergavenny and *‘Goblin Gwladus’* an audio trail interpreting the industrial heritage along Afon Nedd fechan and ‘Walking with the Romans’ and award winning App, research has been conducted as to the audience that have downloaded and used the App.. Walking with Romans which is an award winning App and have conducted research into how younger and older generations interact with the Act.
* Our Sustainable Development team provide a service to socially excluded communities and groups within and outside the National Park boundary including Inspironment, Geocaching Project, Rural Skills project and our Easy Access Guide which is produced in and available in a printed and online version.
* Our Sustainable Development team lead training projects designed to enable young people who would otherwise be unable to access land management training to benefit from paid accredited training and work experience opportunities
* Development proposals which would result in the creation of 10 or more residential units or 1000sqm floor space is created are required to provide a Design and Access Statement. These statements set out how inclusive access considerations have helped inform the design of the development.
* Place plans – enabling communities to work with the National Park to develop a plan of action to address future needs. These plans are produced within the community, based on an understanding of wider community needs and help define their future development. The Authority has committed to adopt these documents into the planning framework by bestowing them with Supplementary Planning Guidance status where they both demonstrate extensive community consultation and are compliant with the adopted development plan.
* Employees - The Authority’s employment policies include Equality, People with Disabilities, Work Options (Work Life balance), compassionate and emergency leave, flexible working patterns, family friendly policies including maternity, paternity, partner, adoption and parental leave and now the new shared parental leave. The Authority is registered and supports the Disability Confident scheme to encourage the recruitment of people with disabilities. The Authority has developed a close partnership with the local Mind charity and committed to raising awareness of mental health in the workplace.
* IT & Communications –
	+ All web site development work is done with attention to the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)’s guidance and standards on delivering websites that are usable by people with disabilities.  An overview of these subjects is available here <http://www.w3.org/WAI/users/Overview.html>
* The team that develops the Authority’s websites has a solid grounding in these standards and a track record of delivering highly accessible sites for the Authority

and other customers.

* + Whenever new website work is being considered by the Authority the WAI guidance is used to inform these considerations and any subsequent specification.
	+ The website is used to promote all the work the Authority does on making the Park more accessible to people with protected characteristics.

The Authority currently partners with Brecon Beacon Tourism to deliver a destination website.

**Summary of service delivery to groups with protected characteristics**

Note\* where we have indicated partial, the Authority promotes activities and services to families whilst not specifically pregnancy or maternity related.

**Consultation and Engagement**

**Engaging communities**

The Authority directly engaged with public sector bodies, Community Councils and interested groups between May 2018 and the end of July 2018. We received few in response from interested parties and the responses and Authority comments are provided in **Appendix 1.** However, as mentioned previously there are a number of consultation exercises which incorporate our equality principles in the line with the work we do on projects and our ROWIP and Local Development Plan.

The Authority has engaged with and sought additional support and guidance from Monmouthshire and Powys County Councils, the Equality and Human Rights Commission and we would like to thank these bodies for their support. The Authority is engaged in a research partnership between Cardiff University and USW to increase knowledge, understanding and evidence to inform NPA strategy and action planning. For example Current research include a PhD study with Cardiff University School of Social Sciences “Gender, Health and Sustainability in using natural resources: A case study in two National Parks in Wales”. (See Research below) work with leading researchers and students to conduct research in the National Park.

Visitor Survey 2016-17

Active Ageing Event

**Research**

* National Park Management Plan.
* Well being of Future Generations Act. BBNPA is part of Powys and Carmarthenshire Public Service Boards. Officers have been involved in the Wellbeing Assessments and Wellbeing Planning, gaining a deeper understanding of current and emerging issues and the role the Authority does and can play in enabling wellbeing particularly for excluded groups including those with protected characteristics.
* Is Wales Fairer?
* Equality Impact Assessments as required through legislation the Authority assess the impact.
* Engagement in a research partnership with Cardiff University, USW and others. Current research include a PhD study with Cardiff University School of Social Sciences “Gender, Health and Sustainability in using natural resources: A case study in two National Parks in Wales”. This is in order to better understand the relationships between gender and use of the natural environment, particularly the National Park, for health, in order to inform future policy and practice.

**Equality Action Plan 2016-2020**

The Authority has received the previous Equality Plan and considered the available evidence and consultation, our new equality plan will look at the following objectives over the next four years. **(Appendix 2)**

* Promote positive action to provide an accessible National Park and continue to work to remove barriers identified for access to the Brecon Beacons National Park.
* Promote Equality awareness amongst, members and staff to support a diverse, committed workforce Promote Equality in recruitment.
* Promote equality in pay through the use of data to inform management policy.
* Promote Volunteering opportunities.
* Promote physical and intellectual access to the National Park Promote and encourage equality in communities and rural areas.
* Promote and encourage equality in communities and rural areas opportunities.

**Equality Impact Assessment**

The Authority is required to assess the impact of a proposed or revised policy or practice in order to comply with general duty.

All staff whom are involved with introducing a new or revision policy or practice are trained to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.

A full impact assessment will be completed if the impact is likely and a report produced.

**Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring and reporting are Specific duties for Wales. The Brecon Beacons national Park Authority will monitor our priorities and objectives on a regular basis. Our ***Annual Equality Report*** will provide evidence on what has been achieved in the preceding year. The Report is presented to Authority Members and it will be updated and reviewed every four years.

The strategic plan will be in place for four years and will be reviewed as necessary.

For further information contact

HR@beacons-npa.gov.uk

HR Department on 01874 620426

1. **What are we looking to do in the future?**

**Strategic Equality Action Plan**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Objective | Detail | Outcome | By when |
| 1. | Promote positive action to provide an accessible National Park and continue to work to remove barriers identified for access to the Brecon Beacons National Park.  | Through the Social Inclusion and Child Poverty Action Plans the Authority will work inclusively in local partnerships to reach a wider audience and include organisations with skills and experience in working with excluded groups (B1) We will work with a greater  number of groups with protected characteristics to increase their participation and improve their skills including:Small Steps - mental health project in partnership with Powys Teaching Health Board.Inspironment - well-being project supporting excluded groups including Cardiff People FirstActive Ageing - older peoples project accessing social prescription of greenspace for health and wellbeing in partnership with PAVO Community Connectors and health agenciesUpland Path Volunteers – volunteer partnership programme with Gwent Drug and Alcohol services.* Fair Play – project enabling schools from disadvantaged areas to access and experience the Brecon Beacons National Park on educational visits
 | **Provide an environment that is accessible, inclusive and safe.****Wider access and use of the National Park directly contributing to Health and Well-being of Future generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Healthier Wales**  |  March 2020 |
| 2. | Promote Equality awareness amongst , members and staff to support a diverse, committed workforce | Continue mandatory training i.e. deaf awareness training, disability training, dementia awareness training and social inclusion training.Continue our commitment to begin a dementia friendly workplaceWork with Brecon Mind to raise awareness of Mental Health in the workplace.  Revisit the Authorities Bullying and Harassment Policy Introduce a Sexual Harassment Policy.Providing further access to support services.Develop an Authority Behaviour Statement. | **Create and maintain a diverse community of staff and volunteers who are able to reach their full potential.****Equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the organisation**  |  |
| 3. | Promote Equality in recruitment | Continue to support the Living WageContinue to develop trainee schemesSupport Disability Confident policy Support  and retain employees with reasonable adjustments under DDA | **Create a diverse and inclusive workforce** | OngoingMarch 2020September 2018Ongoing |
| 4. | Promote equality in pay through the use of data to inform management policy | Continue Commitment to Living WageAssess pay Annual Pay Policy statementAnnual Equality review | **Create equality of pay for all staff**  |  Ongoing Annual reviews |
| 5. | Promote Volunteering opportunities  | Promoting access to Volunteering opportunities.Recognition and retention of Volunteers for variety of groups.Investing in training of our Volunteers - providing accredited training for our volunteers.  | **Create and support a diverse community of volunteers.****Receive recognition through the UK National Park Annual  Volunteer Awards** | March 2020Ongoing |
| 6. | Promote physical and intellectual access to the National Park | Physical - provide outreach and community training programmes to address perceptual, confidence, experience and knowledge barriers.Intellectual – remote visitors can access the National Park though improved digital resources including digital apps, audio and video content. | **Provide an inclusive range of physical and digital access** **Meet the aims of groups supporting those with protected characteristics.** | March 2020 |
| 7. | Promote and encourage equality in communities and rural areas | Support a range of local community resilience and inclusion schemes through the National Park Sustainable Development Fund.Including accessible buildings, services for children and young families and supported employment for disabled young people. | **Create equal access to services and facilities within local communities.** |  |