

# Aberdeenshire's Equality Outcomes

## Progress Report 2015



**Equalities – it runs through everything we do**

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# EQUALITY OUTCOMES 2015 PROGRESS REPORT

## 1. Background

On 25 April 2013 Aberdeenshire Council approved the report entitled "[Aberdeenshire's Equalities Mainstreaming Report and the Equality Outcomes](#)" ("The Report"). On 29 April 2013 the three Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards approved The Report and on 23 May 2013 the Aberdeenshire Education, Learning and Leisure Committee also approved The Report. The full text can be accessed from the Council's website.

We are required to publish the following information:-

- a fresh Mainstreaming Report no later than 30 April 2017 and subsequently at intervals of not more than two years;
- a report on the progress made to achieve the equality outcomes no later than 30 April 2015;
- fresh Equality Outcomes no later than 30 April 2017.

This report highlights the progress towards our Equality Outcomes which has taken place since April 2013. We are committed to meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and Specific Duties. We will ensure that we:

- take effective action on equality;
- make the right decisions, first time around;
- develop better policies and practices, based on evidence;
- are more transparent, accessible and accountable;
- deliver improved outcomes for all in the community; and
- ensure our equality outcomes have a positive impact.

The Equality Outcomes set a focus on how Services will use their resources most effectively to make that tangible difference to our residents and meet the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Census data provided in [Aberdeenshire's Mainstreaming Equalities Progress Report 2015](#) provides the equalities context within which Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeenshire Education Authority and Licensing Boards operate and which informed the development of our six Equality Outcomes as published in April 2013, which are outlined below:

1. Aberdeenshire Council employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority have an increased understanding about the challenges facing people from different groups and will respond to their requirements.
2. Members of the public are able to access our Services with ease and confidence.
3. Aberdeenshire Council is an inclusive workplace where employees are respected and have an equal opportunity to achieve their full potential.



4. Communities and businesses understand, welcome and respect diversity.
5. Everyone enjoys equal access to education, training and employment.
6. Access to life opportunities is enhanced by reducing barriers.

Within each we specified which protected characteristic each Outcome applies to, and which aspect of our duty it will help us to meet:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization;
2. Advance equality of opportunity; and
3. Foster good relations.

## **2. Our Journey So Far: Working towards our Equality Outcomes**

### **2.1 Working towards our Equality Outcomes – Service Action Plans**

From April 2013 Services represented at the Corporate Equalities Group including the Education Authority and Licensing Boards considered the example actions set out in The Report identifying relevant linkages to Service plans and workstreams to ensure progress towards the Equality Outcomes was integral to the Council's operations. Services continually review their actions and these will contribute to revising the Council's action plans from May 2015 in respect of the example outputs and measures to ensure we can continue to evidence progress towards achieving our Equality Outcomes.

### **2.2 Community & Employee Engagement of Equality Outcomes**

In recognising the importance of engaging with our residents in relation to the Equality Outcomes and to seek ways to address any inequalities we have worked in partnership with Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) who promote and champion equality and diversity in the North East of Scotland. Its mission is to work with others to ensure that everyone is valued for who they are and is able to contribute with encouragement, and without fear of discrimination or unfair treatment. GREC have undertaken engagement work with residents on our behalf.

During 2013/14 five community engagement events were held across key areas within Aberdeenshire. Disappointing turnout at these events led to a different approach being adopted to engaging the community on our equality outcomes during 2014/15 whereby engagement opportunities were integrated to planned community events. Whilst these resulted in an increased level of participation it did not provide robust statistical data upon which to assess our effectiveness at meeting the Equality Outcomes.

We were able to utilise data available from the Council's established feedback mechanisms. The Reputation Tracker, a survey conducted on our behalf by an external partner. Each month 150 residents are contacted by telephone and asked a range of questions relating to satisfaction with Council Services. Collection of this Service-level data began in January 2014. Citizen's Panel surveys and the Council's employee survey provide information in relation to how people with protected characteristics respond to topic specific questions and surveys. In the case of some groups, however, numbers of



responses are too low to provide robust information however it still enables us to gather valuable feedback which will continue to inform our approach and actions. Access to the Citizen Panel surveys and reports are available from the Council's website. From May 2015 we will be revising our approach and developing plans to further engage our communities in seeking feedback on our progress towards the Equality Outcomes.

### 2.3 Performance Model to monitor Performance of Equality Outcomes

Progress towards achieving the Equalities Outcomes will be monitored within 'Aberdeenshire Performs', our performance improvement framework. Performance reporting cascades from the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership's Single Outcome Agreement, through the Council Plan 2014 - 2017 to Service, Business and Team Plans.

There is regular reporting to committee and Directorate Management Teams against these plans. The most up to date performance reports are available on the Council's website within the performance pages. In addition, annual performance reports providing 'at a glance' summaries of how we are doing are available online. Benchmark information, where available, for example through the Local Government Benchmarking Framework, provides data to inform evaluation of performance. Further information about the framework and how the Council makes use of it is available from the Council's website.

We have created a model to record the progress of the Equality Outcomes on our current performance system, Covalent. Services have identified performance indicators from current Service strategies, Service plans and business plans which are currently meeting the priorities of the Equality Outcomes in Aberdeenshire.

The model allows case studies to be uploaded to show how we have made that difference to the community. This can highlight the Services' project work such as Tackling Inequalities – Support for the Equality and Global Citizenship Peer Support Programme. It also allows Services to update future actions which will identify the resources they use in order to meet the Equality Outcomes for Aberdeenshire.

Progress on our equalities actions are reported primarily to our Corporate Equalities Group, the Equalities Strategy Board and the Policy & Resources Committee, committee reports are available from the Council's website. The Community Planning Partnership Board also receive regular reports on areas such as community safety and tackling poverty and inequalities which have been recorded in the Equality Outcomes model on Covalent.

Progress on our Equality Outcomes and future reports on mainstreaming and employment duties will continue to be reported to committee. Progress updates will be made as part of the annual performance review of the Council Plan 2013-2016.

A range of indicators have been identified that will help Aberdeenshire evidence how we are delivering the Equality Outcomes and these will be developed further. Examples include:



- percentage of the highest paid 2% and 5% of earners among Council employees that are women;
- percentage of working age population on benefits and increase in percentage of working age population in employment;
- number of pupils falling into More Choices, More Chances category;
- number of housing applicants where specified needs are appropriately addressed (e.g. re-lets, adaptations and provision of suitable stopover sites).

As with all Councils, the Council must ensure that Service users, residents and communities are given an honest and balanced picture of how we are performing. The Council publishes a wide range of performance information on the Council's website.

The future challenge is to ensure further measurements and performance targets are inbuilt on Covalent, our performance management system, to demonstrate the relevance between Service performance indicators and the Equality Outcomes. By increasing the number of quantitative and qualitative measures we have in relation to equality we will be in a stronger position to identify issues and prioritise resources to meet these challenges.

## 2.4 Current Progress towards our Six Equality Outcomes

The following provides evidence to demonstrate the Council's progress towards each of its six Equality Outcomes. A combination of data is provided which includes examples of Service delivery and performance data extracted from Covalent. It should be noted that Outcomes One and Three are relevant to Mainstreaming and therefore reference is made to the content provided in the [Mainstreaming Equalities 2015 Progress Report](#).

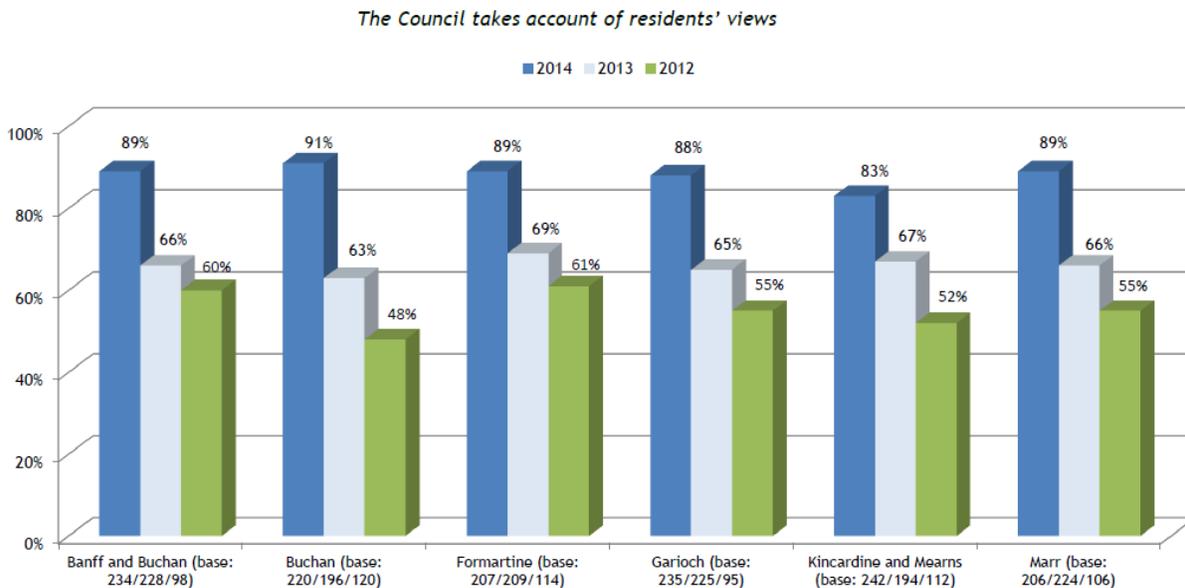
### 2.4.1 Equality Outcome One - Aberdeenshire Council Employees, Councillors, the Aberdeenshire Licensing Boards and the Aberdeenshire Education Authority have an Increased Understanding about the Challenges Facing People from Different Groups and will Respond to their Requirements.

We are making good progress towards Equality Outcome One. Considerable steps have been taken in meeting the requirements set out in the Public Sector Equality Duty as is evidenced in the [Mainstreaming Equalities 2015 Progress Report](#) particularly in relation to the activities underway to enable employees and Councillors have an increased understanding of the different issues faced by individuals from different groups. Specifically the Respecting Diversity Training and Equality Impact Assessment Training which is currently being rolled out across the Council, Education Authority and Licensing Boards.

The graph at Figure 1 demonstrates a significant percentage increase in residents, by Council area, agreeing that the Council takes account of their views.

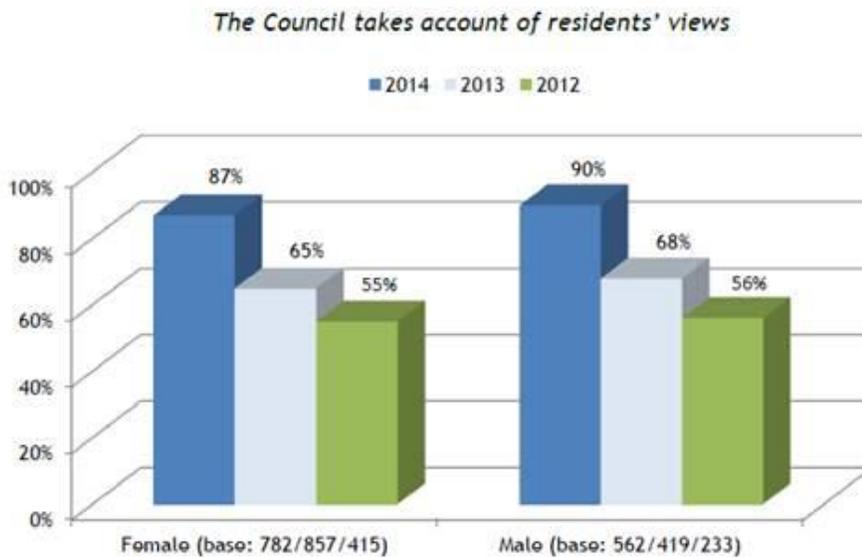


**Figure 1 – “The Council takes account of residents’ views”**



Source: Citizen Panel

**Figure 2 – “The Council takes account of residents’ views”**

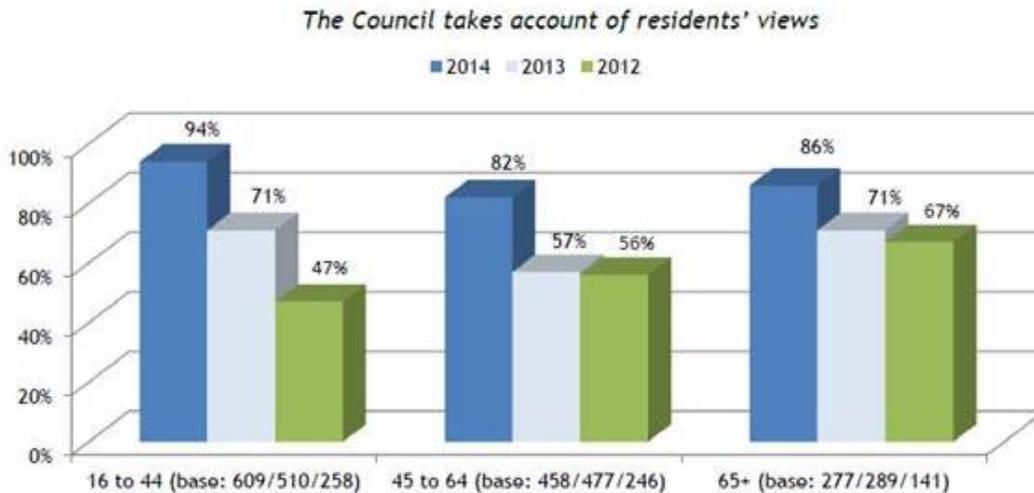


Source: Citizen Panel

The graph at Figure 2 provides a breakdown of residents’ feedback by gender which highlights a 3% difference in views between males and females. It is anticipated that by developing the way in which we gather community feedback in relation to this Equality Outcome we will be better able to understand the reason for this difference and to identify any further actions which are required to address this.



**Figure 3 – “The Council takes account of residents’ views”**



Source: Citizen Panel

Figure 3 above demonstrates a percentage increase in the level of satisfaction across all age bands from 2013 to 2014. However 20% of customers aged 45-64 believe that Aberdeenshire does not take account of their views. It is anticipated that by developing the way in which we gather community feedback in relation to this Equality Outcome we will be better able to understand the reason for this difference and to identify any further actions which are required to address this in order to resolve any inequalities.

#### **2.4.2 Equality Outcome Two - Members of the Public are able to Access our Services with Ease and Confidence**

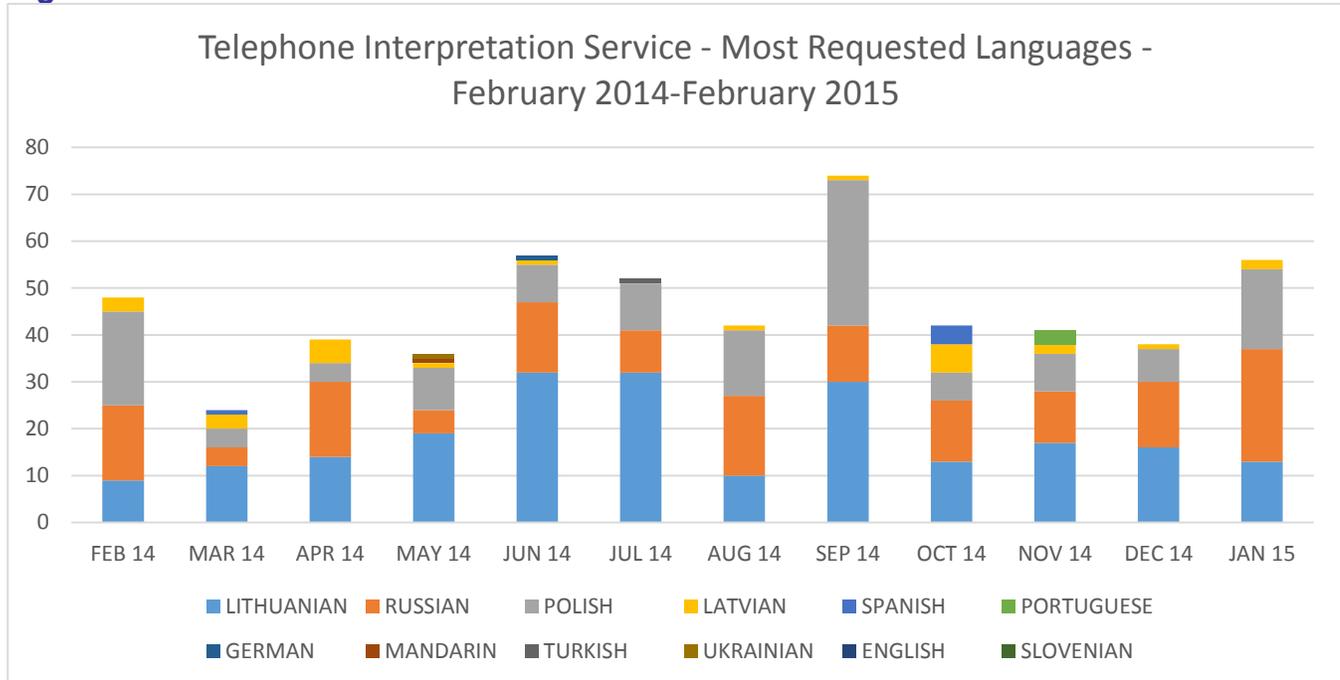
We are making good progress towards Equality Outcome Two. A wide range of developments have been taken in order to increase the ability of the public to have access to our Services with ease and confidence.

The Council has in place an Interpretation and Translation Policy in place. Translation and interpretation services are provided by Aberdeen City Council and telephone interpretation services are provided by Language Line Solutions. Figure 4 below provides a breakdown of the most requested languages and Figure 5 demonstrates the increasing usage between February 2014 and February 2015.

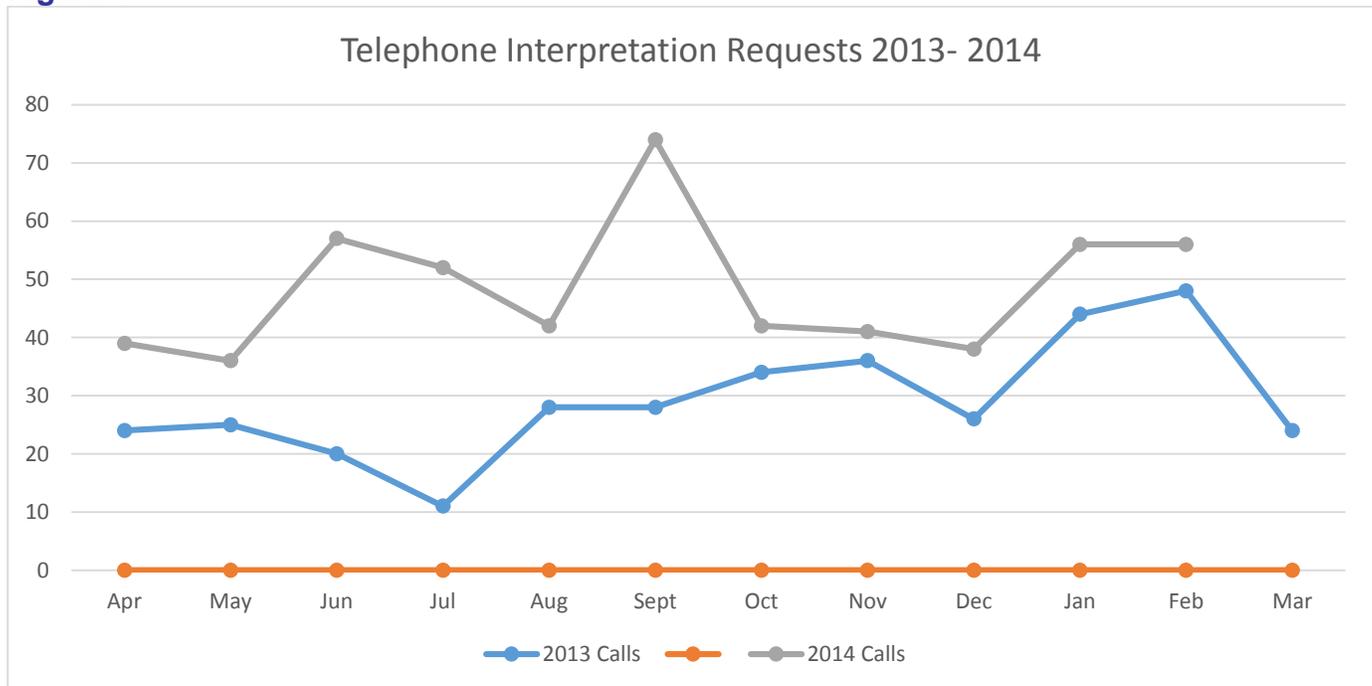
All Services ensure that employees are able to communicate with customers in order to meet their needs in relation to housing, benefits and education. The Council has seen an increase in the use of interpreters and translation service which ensures those with race as a protected characteristic are able to access housing, benefits and education. Housing are the highest users of the telephone interpretation service.



**Figure 4**



**Figure 5**



Source: Language Line Solutions, 2015

Examples of the actions taken forward are stated below with relevant Performance Indicators provided to demonstrate the satisfaction levels across a range of Services.



## **Projects supporting:**

### **Communities Service - Facilities for Mobility Scooters in Sheltered Housing**

The Housing Service has provided facilities for storing and recharging mobility scooters in recent Very Sheltered Housing conversions, recognising the needs of those who use them. This has been a welcome provision for tenants who require the use of the mobility scooters.

### **Communities Service - Housing Stock Improvement Programme**

Dedicated Housing Occupational Therapists are involved in assessments linked to the Capital Programme, ensuring that required adaptations are incorporated within upgrades such as kitchens and bathrooms. This has proved to be a very positive and welcome initiative for both tenants and the Service as adaptations can be put in place during the upgrade works, involving minimal disruption and waiting time.

### **Communities Service - Private Sector Housing Information Leaflets**

Private Sector Housing Information Leaflets are available in Russian, Portuguese, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish and Mandarin, the most commonly used languages, to assist Ethnic Minority people who live in private sector housing. There is a recognition that many Ethnic Minority people access housing through the private sector, as well as through the social sector and in view of this the decision was taken to make information on housing in the private sector available to tenants in the most commonly used languages.

### **Infrastructure Service - Loop Systems in Sheltered Housing Common Areas**

Hearing loop systems are currently being trialed and will ultimately be provided in all sheltered housing complex common lounges, to assist those with hearing difficulties allowing service users to engage more easily and comfortably.

### **Infrastructure Service- Aberdeenshire Community Transport Initiative (ACTI)**

Aberdeenshire Community Transport Initiative (ACTI) grants provide funding of up to 75% of project costs for the provision of community based rural passenger transport such as community buses, dial-a-trip services and voluntary car schemes. ACTI currently provides grant funding to seven local groups. The budget for 2014/15 is £440,000 per annum. These groups provide services to help address issues associated with rural isolation that affects less mobile groups such as the very young, older people and disabled people.

### **Infrastructure Service - The Ranger Service**

Guided walks are regularly arranged for people with different protected characteristics including a group who have learning difficulties coming from North East Scotland College to learn about the natural history of Bennachie; a group from Cornerstone who works with adults and children with learning difficulties and people from NHS Healthy Minds/Royal Cornhill Hospital Walking Group which is for a group of adults with mental health problems. The Service also arranges events for school pupils including a Scottish Traditional Skills Course. The Ranger Service was



approached by the Social Work team to work with a client group involved in an allotment scheme. These clients were from disadvantaged groups and include people with cognitive impairment and physical disabilities. The Rangers take groups through the John Muir awards which aims to connect people with nature and usually involves an exercise in the Cairngorms. The activities included planting up areas with wild flowers, and making bird boxes and feeders.

### **Infrastructure Service- Disability Access Compliance**

The Equality Act 2010 compliance work is part of the "Footways" works within the maintenance programme. There is a rolling programme which was agreed with certain disability groups and is concentrating on town centre improvements such as dropped kerbs and tactile pavements. Property Service employees are trained to carry out access audits which enables a list of remedial works to be compiled. Funding has been allocated to a programme of remedial works in the Capital Plan, which is now 90% complete. The remaining 10% will be completed as the office accommodation realisation programme is rolled out. The office rationalisation programme is progressing well with the new Buchan House office premises in Peterhead due to open in April 2015, providing improved access to Council Services.

### **Infrastructure Service- Disabled Go**

Property and Planning are working with Disabled Go to get some of our properties and non-Council buildings/facilities surveyed with a view to providing a clearer picture of access issues. It provides people with a fuller picture of what they can expect before they arrive at the various properties. Funding has been obtained for the next 4 - 5 years along with private sector sponsorship which will enable the Council to take this forward in partnership to enhance the information available.

### **Business Services - Improving the Customer Experience Project (iCE)**

The project aims to increase customer choice and accessibility for service users for customer Services and information requests by allowing them to access this content at a time and in a way that meets their needs. iCE applies a "digital by choice" approach that ensures that whilst online service delivery is the preferred channel, the traditional means of contact such as phone and face to face will continue to be available for those that require them. Customers can select their preferred method of contact and should experience a similar level of service delivery irrespective of channel. Particular benefits and opportunities attaching to online service delivery include increased accessibility to Services, particularly for those with mobility, visual impairment, literacy, or for those where English is not their first language as the project and associated technology develops.



The initiatives that have been implemented to date include:-

- Blue Badge Scheme
- Feedback Service
- Roads Faults Reporting
- Car Park Fault Reporting
- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Trade Waste
- Online Benefits
- Recruitment
- Housing Medical Needs Assessments

## PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The performance indicators at Figure 6 below show good satisfaction levels across Council Services. Two areas are shown as Amber in relation to community care and access to leisure facilities, and two red indicators for attainment for Looked After Children and are further expanded at Figure 7.

Figure 6 – Scorecard of Performance Indicators

Outcome 2: Members of the public are able to access our servic...	2	2	12	4	Objective	
ECSSP1J 1.8 A'shire - Attainment: Average Tariff Score of LA...					74	PI
ECSSP1K 1.9 A'shire - Attainment: Average Tariff Score of E...					273	PI
ECSSP2lg 2.8 A'shire - Number of users of sports facilities (...)					430	PI
ECSSP4l 4.6d % satisfaction with Leisure Facilities					88.0%	PI
HSWSP4Ag 4a) A'shire - Percentage of community care as...					83.5%	PI
HSWSP5B 5b) Children/Young People engaged with Throu...					73.2%	PI
HSWSP5Cg 5c A'shire - Percentage of over 65s with intensi...					29.4%	PI
HSWSP5Eg 5d) A'shire - Percentage of occupational therap...					91.9%	PI
HSWSP8 8a)i Aberdeenshire - Percentage satisfaction of s...					83.62%	PI
HSWSP8a 8a)ii Aberdeenshire - Percentage satisfaction of ...					87.1%	PI
ISSP7D 7.4 Percentage of adults satisfied with refuse collec...					75%	PI
SC&L05d % of adults satisfied with leisure facilities					70.0%	PI
SCHN09 Balance of Care for looked after children: % of chil...					94.0%	PI
SPI1CM01a Percentage of residents who agree with the sta...					81.0%	PI
SPI2SP01a The average time taken to process new benefit ...					22	PI
SPI2SP02a The percentage of single shared assessments...					96.4%	PI
SPI2SP02ci Percentage of carers satisfied with their involv...					87.10%	PI
SPI2SP02cii Percentage of users satisfied with their involv...					83.62%	PI
SW04 % of adults satisfied with social care or social work s...					56%	PI
SW05b Number of long-stay residents aged 65+ supported...					1,370	PI



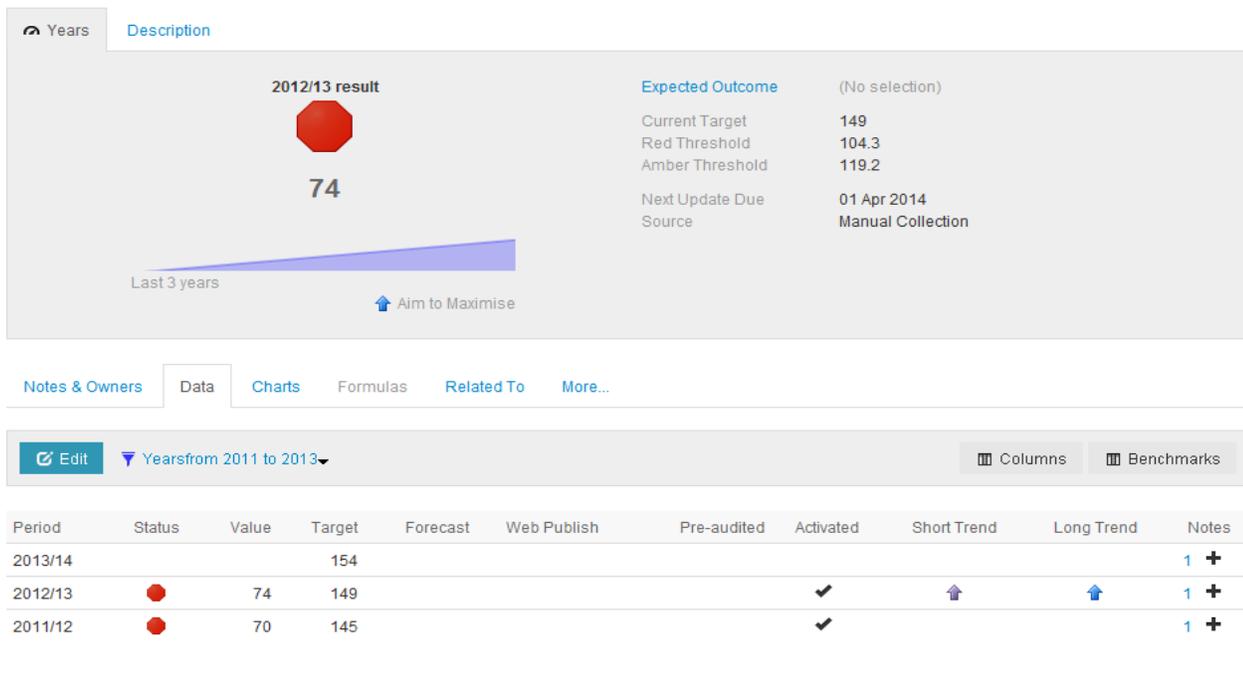
In terms of the indicators sitting at Amber and Red in Figure 4 above, the points below provide additional detail:

**Indicator: ECSPPIJ - Attainment: Average Tariff Score of LAC leavers (LAC – Looked After Children)**

2013/14 Looked After Children leavers’ attainment measures will be reported later in the reporting cycle once leavers data published on Insight. More detailed breakdown is provided at Figure 7 below.

**Figure 7 – Aberdeenshire – Attainment: Average Tariff Score of Looked After Children Leavers**

**ECSSP1J 1.8 A'shire - Attainment: Average Tariff Score of LAC leavers**



A breakdown of satisfaction levels with overall Council Service provision, by gender and by age, is provided at Figure 8 and 9 respectively. Both data sets evidence improving satisfaction levels in the Services provided.

**Indicator: HSWSP4AG - Percentage of community care assessments completed within target timescales.**

Total Assessments completed in the period were 369, however 139 of these could not be included in these figures due to recording processes in the transition to Self-Directed Support. The longer term trend for Care Management assessments remains positive, with a slight improvement over the last quarter.

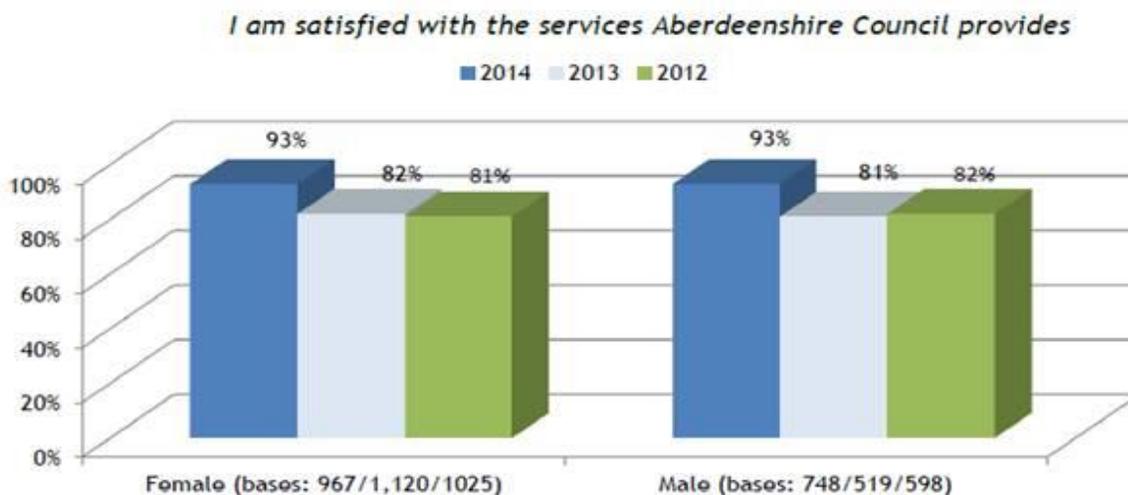
## Indicator SC&L05d: Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities.

Satisfaction with Aberdeenshire leisure facilities has decreased slightly. This is in line with the national trend however it should be noted that satisfaction in Aberdeenshire is below the Scottish average. The Council is ranked joint 25th with Scottish Borders, a member of the family group. Elsewhere in the group, only Argyll & Bute and Dumfries & Galloway have lower satisfaction at 65% and 67%. Satisfaction is highest in Orkney and Shetland (both 93%). Family group performance for this indicator is particularly interesting as it highlights some of the challenges with satisfaction data. A common perception is that high levels of spending equate to customer satisfaction. However, Dumfries & Galloway spends more on leisure than the majority of Scotland yet has the lowest satisfaction. Expenditure in Shetland is the second lowest in Scotland, while satisfaction is the highest and has been in all years.

This figure is taken from the Scottish Household Survey, a national survey conducted on an annual basis. The Council is now monitoring satisfaction with leisure Services on a monthly basis via the Reputation Tracker, Recent figures suggest satisfaction may be higher than is indicated by the Local Government Benchmarking Framework results (Jan-Mar 2014 = 88%). Work will be undertaken with the Community Engagement Officer to further explore the reasons for the variance between values in the Scottish Household Survey and the Reputation Tracker. The Council will continue to regularly monitor satisfaction, taking action where appropriate to address negative perceptions.

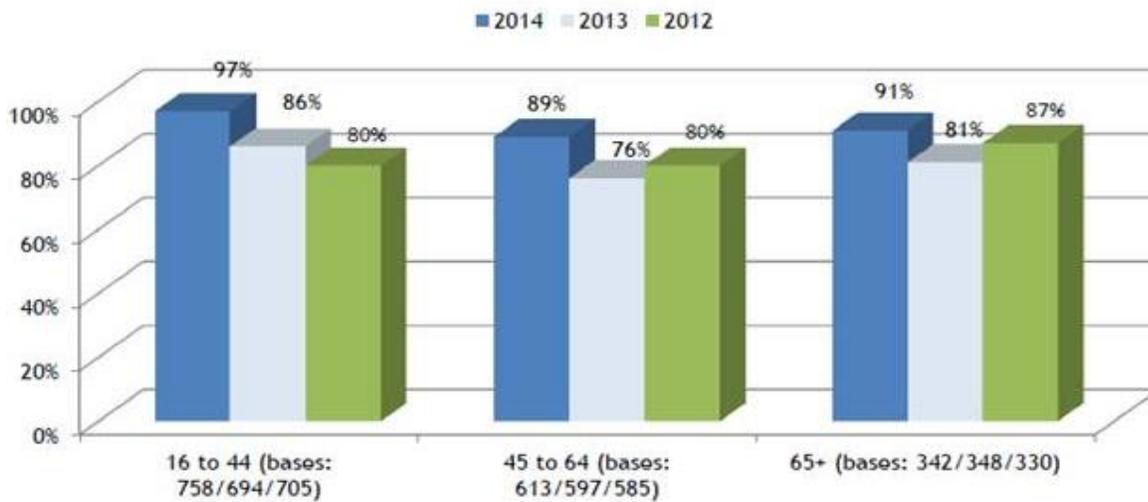
SP125PO2cii "Percentage of users satisfied with their involvement in the design of care package" Whilst this is indicated as red this is due to a change in the way data is gathered. In previous years the data for this SPI was obtained from the Change Fund survey. 2013/14 data has been obtained from a survey conducted by the company IBP on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council. The number of users who took part in this survey is significantly higher than the number who took part in the Change Fund survey. The figures were verbally given as the survey has still to be finalised and published. Paper evidence will be supplied on completion.

**Figure 8 – "I am satisfied with the Services Aberdeenshire Council provides"**



**Figure 9 - “I am satisfied with the Services Aberdeenshire Council provides”**

*I am satisfied with the services Aberdeenshire Council provides*

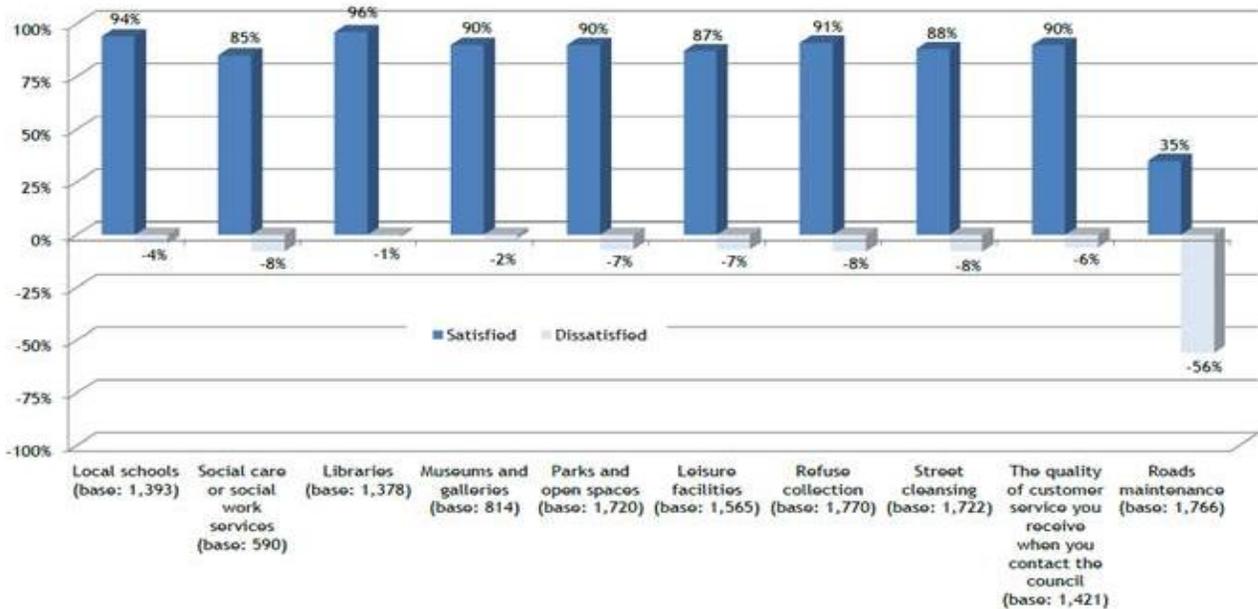


Source: Citizen Panel

Figure 10 provides satisfaction levels by specific Service where many have scored high on satisfaction but low on roads maintenance. The Census 2011 data did highlight that Aberdeenshire has the highest car ownership and it is a rural area covering 6313km<sup>2</sup>. Therefore there would be reliance on the roads for many of our residents *as they may have to travel on the roads via their cars or public transport to access Services across Aberdeenshire. It is important that the roads are maintained in order to promote equality of opportunity for all protected characteristics.* As part of the Infrastructure Service plan, roads are a priority and will continue to be monitored.



Figure 10 - "I am satisfied with the Services Aberdeenshire Council provides"



Source: Citizen Panel

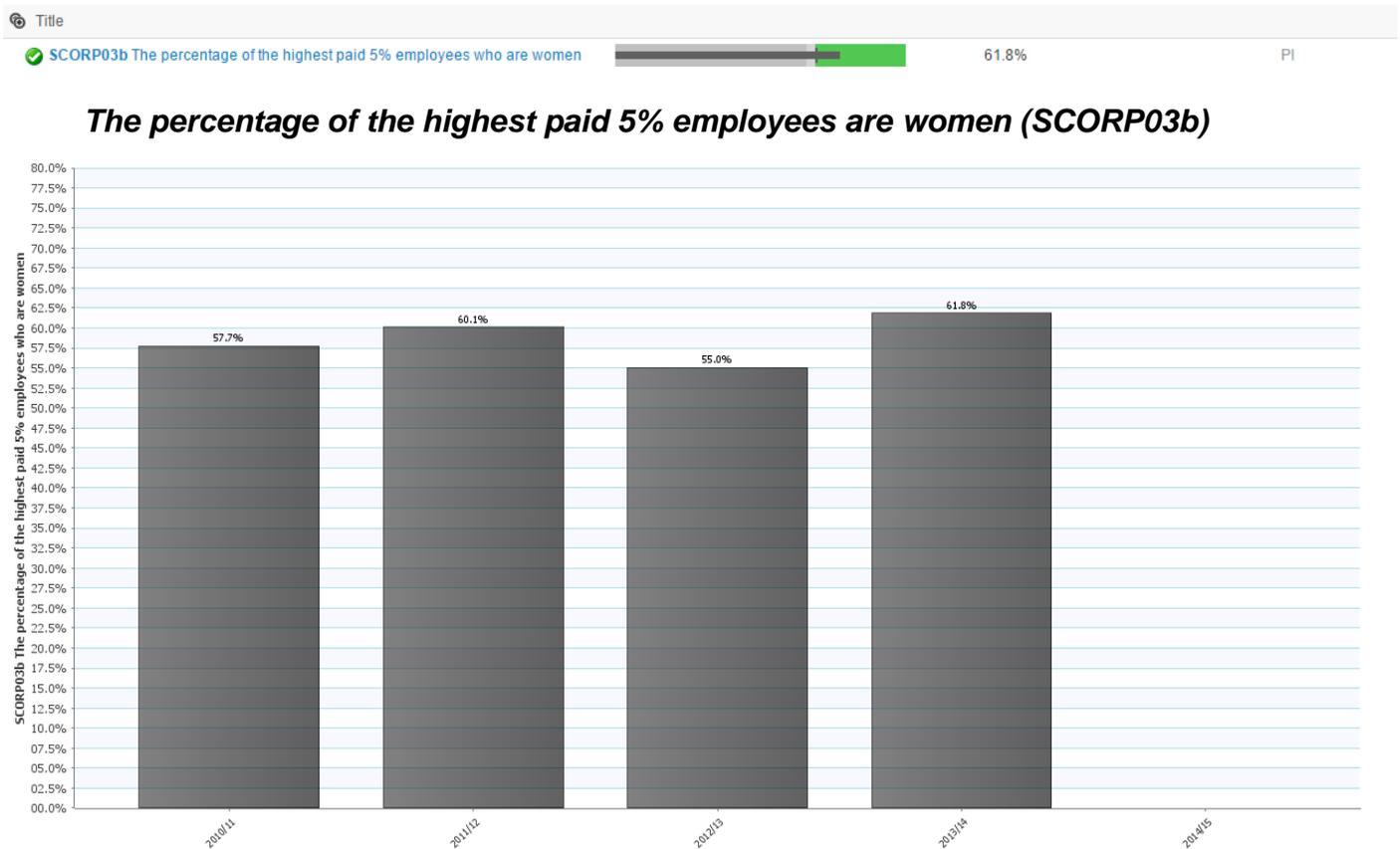
#### 4.2.3 Equality Outcome Three - Aberdeenshire Council is an Inclusive Workplace where Employees are Respected and have an Equal Opportunity to Achieve their Full Potential

We are achieving progress towards Equality Outcome Three. The HR information and the mainstreaming actions in relation to inclusive workplace are within the Mainstreaming Progress Report here. The HR information will be used to inform activities in the Council aimed at employees and building knowledge and awareness of the Council's specific duties in respect of protected characteristics. New systems will replace the current employee management information system and iGrasp in 2015 which will result in more flexibility in reporting data on the protected characteristics in the future.

In addition to this evidence, Aberdeenshire Council records, as a performance indicator, the percentage of the highest paid 5% employees are women (see Figure 11 below). This achieved 61.8% for 2013/14 which is an increase from 55% in 2012/13. Whilst the Council has a high percentage of females in the workforce, whereby 70% are female and 30% male, the nature of the posts and also the number of females who are part-time workers may account for the percentage of females in the top 5%. Ongoing monitoring of this performance indicator will take place and developments will be reported in April 2017. The gender pay analysis reported in 2013 and 2014 categorises posts into different professional groups. It shows a move towards closing the gap although work will continue to address the differences.



**Figure 11 – Scorecard of Performance Indicators**



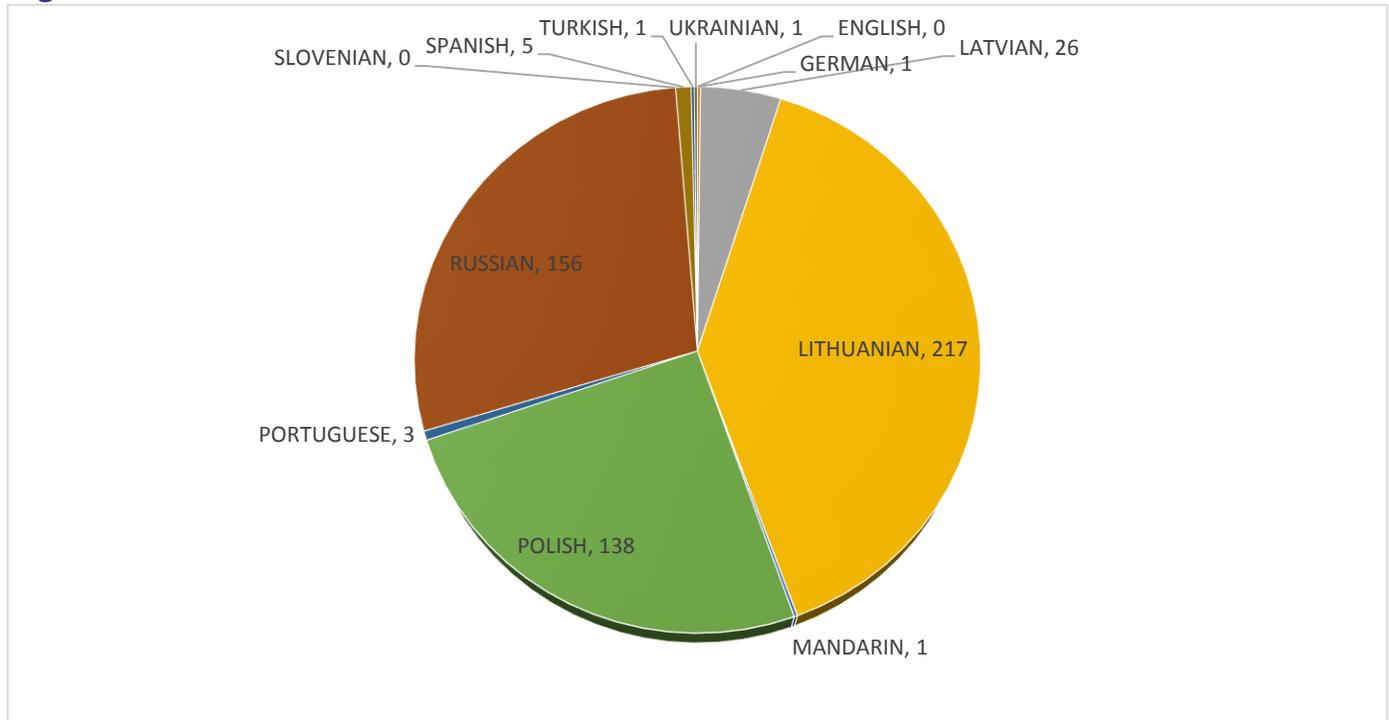
The introduction of a new HR information management system will change how information in relation to the nine protected characteristics is gathered. This will also enable Services to access their own employee data to understand the demographics of their workforce in order to make that comparison to their customers in Aberdeenshire and identify any occupational segregation in the Service. The project is ongoing and implementation of the new system is underway. Implementation priorities are allocated to the payroll functions, following which employee data information and reports will be developed for management use.

**2.4.4 Equality Outcome Four - Communities and business understand, welcome and respect diversity.**

The inequality evidence reported in April 2013 highlighted a lack of understanding and suspicion between groups who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Figure 12 depicts the four top languages in Aberdeenshire translated are Lithuanian, Russian, Polish and Latvian between February 2014 – February 2015.



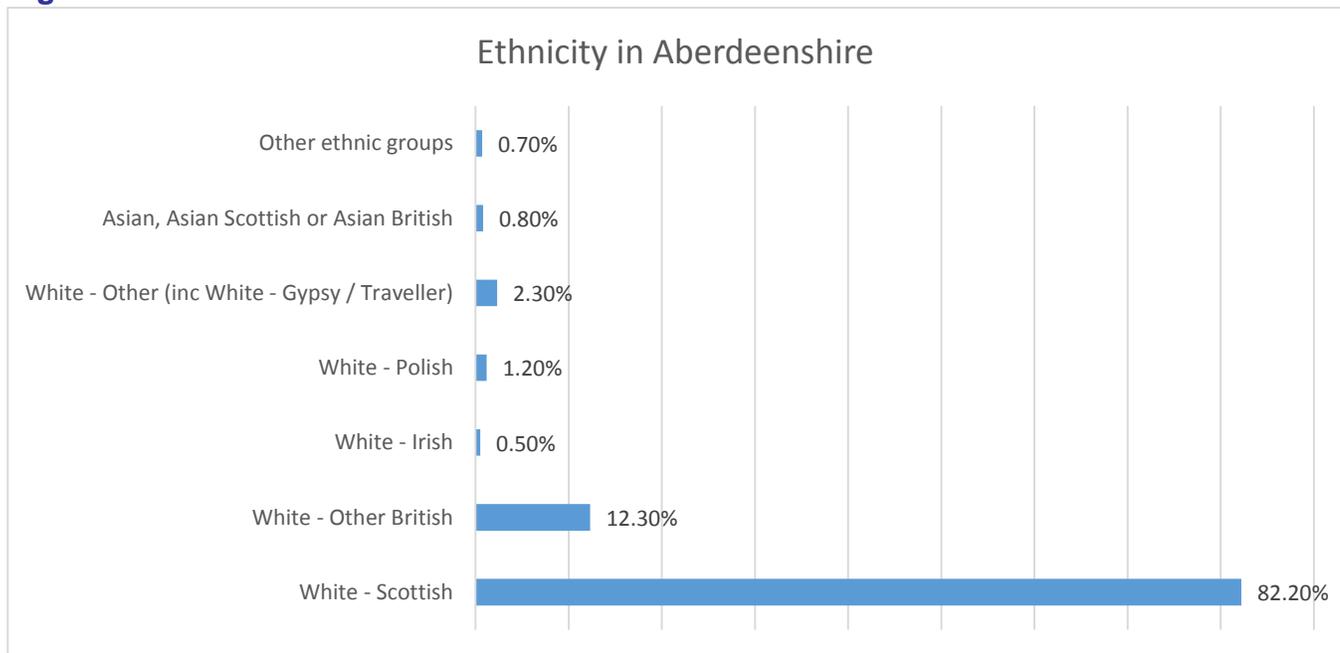
**Figure 12**



Source: Language Line Solutions, 2015

Census 2011 chart below at Figure 13 shows the ethnicity in Aberdeenshire. This highlighted an increase in Polish and White –Other. The Council are continuing to monitor trends and will develop plans to support business and communities understand and welcome diversity.

**Figure 13**



Source: Census, 2011



Racism was reported as a significant problem and communication and language barriers when accessing Services, in addition there was evidence of bullying at school and in higher education. A range of projects have been taken forward, as noted below, to have communities and business understand, welcome and respect diversity with considerable work underway in relation to supporting communities with protected characteristics (Age Older, Age Younger, Race, Gender, Disability). There is a need however to review our action plan to improve progress, particularly in relation to potential issues of racism and prejudice incidents related to the changing local population as per Census 2011 data.

## **PROJECTS FROM ACTION PLAN – MAKING THAT DIFFERENCE TO THE COMMUNITY**

### **Community Substance Misuse Services – Access to Community Resources**

Service users are encouraged to use community facilities where possible, to aid their recovery. This includes access to leisure facilities where possible. The Service can allocate gym and swim passes for a three month period. Some people also qualify for bus passes that allows them to access Alcohol Anonymous /Narcotics Anonymous and SMART Recovery. Where appropriate, service users access volunteering, college and work opportunities. During the summer of 2014, the Community Substance Misuse Service ran an Art Project. The final models were on display as part of the large Fraserburgh Art Project that was open to the public for a number of weeks.

### **Communities Service - Community Substance Misuse Services – Confidence to Cook Groups**

Aberdeenshire Council's Community Substance Misuse Services have a number of 'Confidence to Cook' Groups running currently. The Banff group is run in the local Church Centre. This is based in a central location and members of the community will often look in to see what the participants are cooking that day. Service users with drug and alcohol issues are often stigmatised and these groups are helping to break down barriers. On completing the course, participants work with the college to attain basic certificates in Health and Safety, First Aid, Moving and Handling, and Food Hygiene. They also link with the local Volunteering group, who then assist the participants to find volunteering opportunities within the local community. The Peterhead group also do the above but prior to going into the 'Confidence to Cook' group, service users attend the Longside Greentracks Project. The Community Substance Misuse Service has a large allotment in the local village and this has developed and expanded over a number of years. During this time, a number of local volunteers from the community have assisted as well as the local Rangers Service. This year the group worked towards the John Muir Awards. Residents from the local area often walk past the allotment and comment on the developments there. This has helped to build relationships within the community and reduce stigma.

### **Communities Service - Women in the Criminal Justice System.**

The Criminal Justice Service recognises the specific needs and risks that affect women offenders and the importance of gender responsive and holistic intervention. Aberdeenshire's approach is to develop strong and robust relationships with partners, whereby colleagues from other disciplines are fully aware of the specific needs and issues that female offenders often have, and can work in partnership with criminal justice to provide a 'wrap around' service that will specifically target the factors that have been shown to be associated with reoffending in



women. It is important to be mindful of the impact of maternal criminal justice involvement on families and children. Clinical Psychologists will train criminal justice staff and small numbers of staff from other Services so that practice can be more specialised with the proportion of women who are affected by trauma, substance misuse, and personality disorder. There will also be Aberdeenshire wide briefing sessions in the first half of 2015 that will give a more general overview of the needs of female offenders, and guidance for those in any Service who may jointly work with these women. This will not just serve to reduce reoffending, but should also improve life outcomes for women and their families.

### **Communities Service - Dementia Friendly Communities**

Funding from the Change Fund has been used to employ part-time development workers in Huntly and Stonehaven to work with local businesses, Services, facilities and community groups to raise awareness of the effects dementia can have on their existing and potential customers, clients and members, encouraging them to be welcoming, supportive and inclusive. These projects will end in March 2015 but will be evaluated to form the basis for funding applications to develop dementia-friendly communities in other areas of Aberdeenshire. The projects come under the remit of the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

### **Communities Service - Be Part of the Picture**

Aberdeenshire Council's Placemaking initiative "Be Part of the Picture" has been established to promote the area's strengths and sense of place. It looks to share information on what Aberdeenshire has to offer, and aims to help in attracting new visitors and businesses to Aberdeenshire, which ultimately benefits everyone.

### **Communities Service - Development of Gypsy/ Traveller Stopover sites - February 2014**

An options appraisal was carried out in relation to the development of a Gypsy/Traveller Stopover site and a public meeting held on 5th February 2014 to consider and discuss these options. Further reports were presented to Buchan Area Committee and Policy and Resources Committee in February 2014 for their consideration. Infrastructure Service were also involved in this project. Solutions continue to be explored in order to address ongoing challenges to ensure the balance of need between Gypsy/Travellers and local communities are recognised.

### **Infrastructure Service - Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 Main issues Report**

This is a consultation on the Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan 2017 Main Issues Report. All equality groups have the opportunity to engage on the future local development plan through this consultation. They have the chance to shape the discussion on what they consider main issues to be addressed in the proposed plan. For external service users, this assessment has enabled Planning and Building Services to identify that there are significant populations of protected characteristics in Aberdeenshire and the potential of the proposed plan to discriminate against multiple protected characteristic groups. By identifying gaps in the population of protected characteristics as well as specific negative impacts particularly for Age (younger and older), Disability and Race (including Gypsy Travellers), it has set out an agenda to limit the



risks. A major difference that this consultation document (i.e. the main issues report) will make is the opportunity it gives all groups of people to have their say in the forthcoming local development plan.

By requesting Community Councils to play a major role in informing all local people to attend consultation meetings particularly within community Council venues, will ensure that all protected characteristics have equal opportunity to be engaged in the planning process at locations accessible to them. Otherwise reliance on public meetings, public libraries and the internet as a means of communication will discriminate against those who cannot drive due to age, or for whom new technologies have not been adopted.

By making it clear on all publications that a reader will be available for the consultations, it ensures that complex language used in the consultation may not be a barrier to people for whom English is not their first language. It would also ensure that oral methods used in presentation may not be a barrier to those who have hearing difficulties. Otherwise reliance on printed form of consultation documents and on map based information could become a disadvantage to those with sight difficulties. Moreover, highlighting the availability of translation Services on the documents will also make a difference to other Service users. Besides, continued use of online consultation would make a difference in engaging with the younger age groups.

### **Communities Service - IDEA Project**

The review of day Services for people with disabilities (IDEA project) is making good progress with five of the seven Locality Development Groups now having completed action plans setting out how we will respond to the feedback from IDEA community engagement meetings. These actions plans are being taken to each local community planning group with the actions being integrated into Local Community Plans. This means that a whole range of organisations and partners are involved now in looking for ways to make sure that people with disabilities are included in their local communities and have access to the same opportunities as everyone else. Aberdeenshire Council has allocated additional money from the 'Invest to Save' fund to support projects in every part of Aberdeenshire which will provide more community opportunities, work experience and training for people with disabilities.

### **Tackling Inequalities - Support for the Elderly**

Progress of Garioch Community Kitchen which is used by a wide and varied section of the community and has been progressing with a local youth forum an intergenerational project to bring older people into the kitchen through holding coffee mornings. An increasing range of diagnostic and treatment Services are available in local surgeries and community hospitals. Action Learning Sets involving local health and social care team managers and practitioners met over a period of a year to problem-solve issues around the health and social care system identifying a number of local solutions.



## Tackling Inequalities - Early Years Project

The Garioch Community Kitchen, used by a wide and varied section of the community e.g. primary schools/ academies, also provide classes for parents & children, out of schools, healthy weight management and more recently fun events such as “canna cook winna cook”.

## Best practice in recruitment - Aberdeenshire Social Work in collaboration with local business

On 26th September 2013 at Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, the Spotty Bag shop in Banff received The Northern Star Business Diversity Award. This category, which is part of the annual Aberdeen and Grampian Chamber of Commerce event, rewards businesses which show their recruitment practices to be fair and open, resulting in the employment of people with diverse backgrounds and abilities. The Social Work Employability Team organises the recruitment on behalf of Aberdeenshire Council.

## Inclusive Inverurie

This community planning initiative brings together groups of people with disabilities or age-related conditions and local businesses to ensure equal access to facilities, shops and businesses. The initiative has improved local understanding and awareness of disability access issues and has linked these to economic benefits.

## Performance Indicators

Figure 14 – Scorecard of Performance Indicators

Title	Progress	Value	Target
✓ SCHN08b The gross cost of “children looked after” in a community setting per ch...		£235.00	PI
✓ SCHN09 Balance of Care for looked after children: % of children being looked a...		94.0%	PI
✓ SPI2SP02a The percentage of single shared assessments carried out within agr...		96.4%	PI
✓ SPI2SP03b Percentage of offenders offered community service-placement withl...		51.06%	PI
▲ SPI2SP04a Number of participants in youth work, adult learning and community ...		22,453	PI

Figure 14 above identifies 10,613 registered learners (a 3% increase) and 710 active volunteers (a 108% increase). A registered learner is someone we are working with and who has consented to data being held on them in order to track participation and progress. Aberdeenshire Council has a total of 19,237 unknown learners of whom 6762 are young people who have accessed information and advice through digital learning - these have been excluded from the reported total as we have not included virtual engagements.

## Prejudice Incident Reporting

There has been a decrease in the number of prejudice incidents and hate crime in Aberdeenshire. There was a reduction in hate crimes from 2013 to 2014, race and homophobia are still high across Aberdeenshire. The newly recorded Civil Partnership data reported two incidents in 2014.

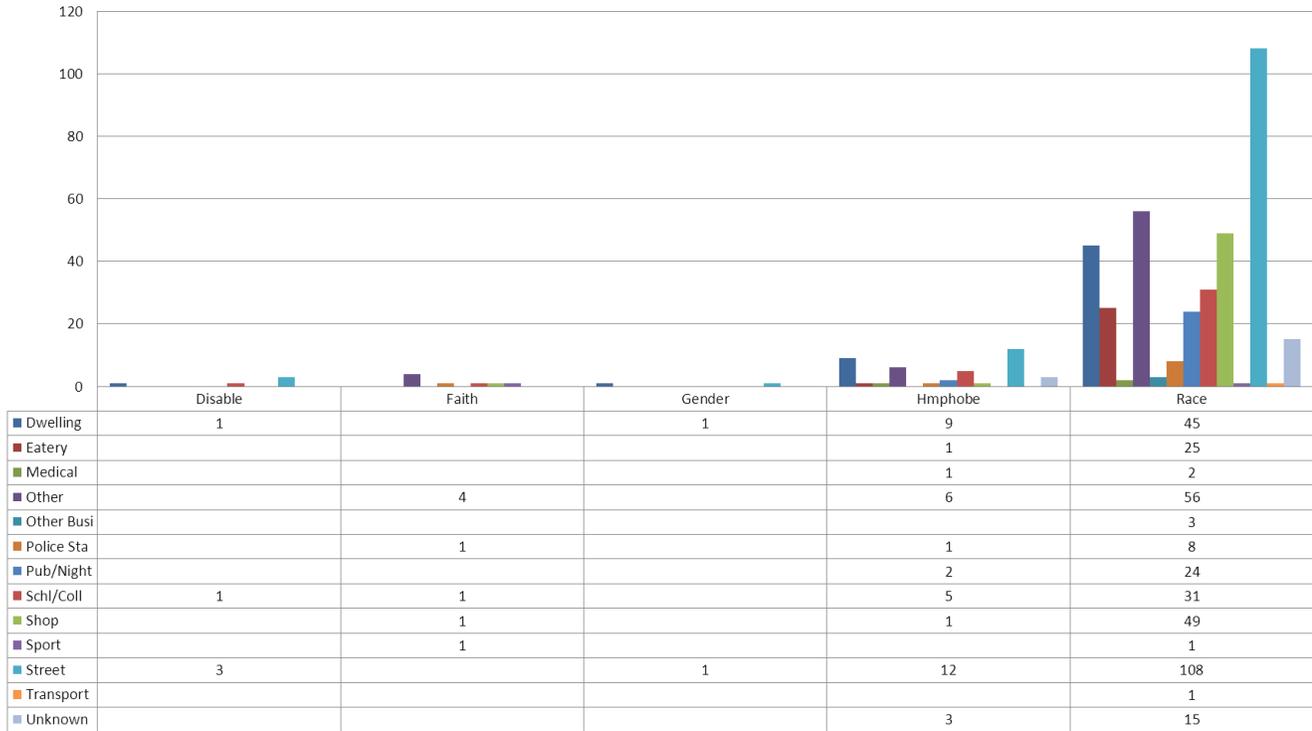


No homophobia incidents were reported in schools and colleges in 2014 compared to five incidents in 2013. The Education Authority have worked with the Stonewall Education programme and ambassadors within schools providing peer support. These actions may have contributed to the reduction in incidents. Aberdeenshire’s Equalities Mainstreaming Progress Report 2015 provides detailed information in relation to Stonewall and the ambassadors’ programme.

Through the Integrate Grampian forum which include partners from Police Scotland, NHS Grampian, Aberdeen City Council, actions are being identified to raise community awareness of the prejudice incidents reporting process and further work within communities will be taken forward, which may go some way to improve the identified area of concern (see Figure 15 and 16 below) in engaging youths, adult learning and communities.

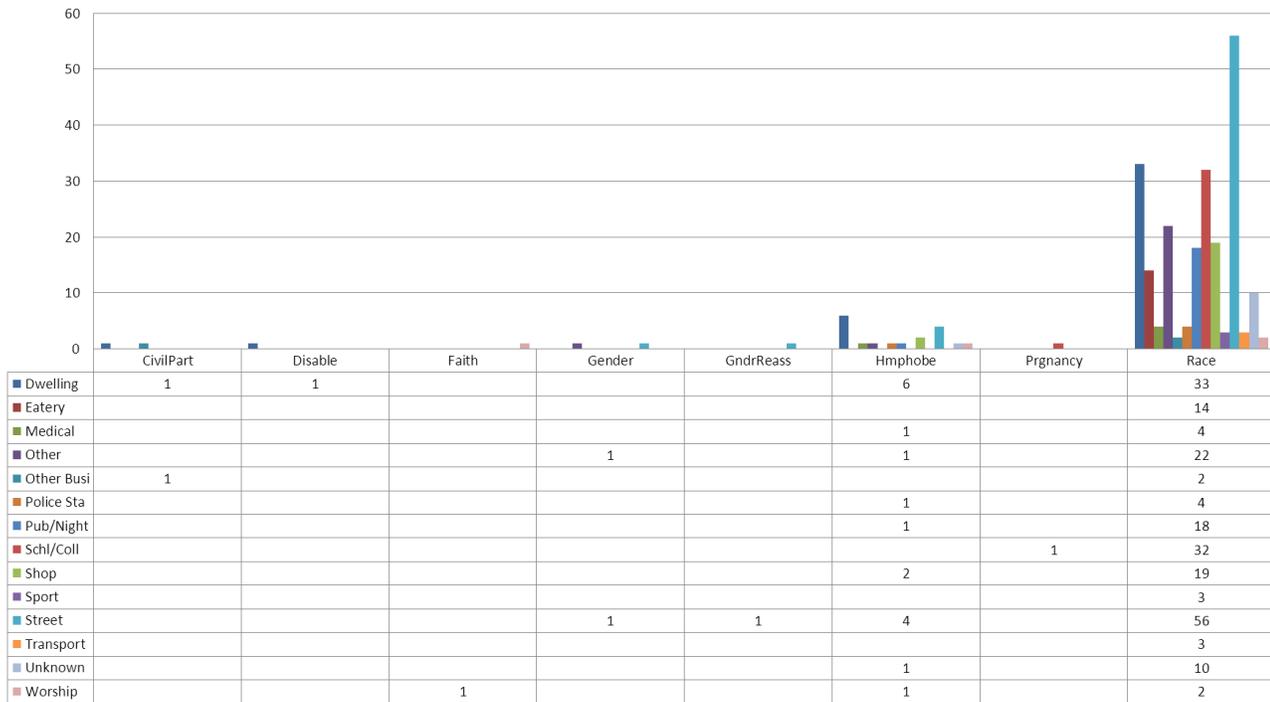
**Fig 15 –Number of Prejudice Incident Reported in 2013**

**Hate Category + Location comparison for Aberdeenshire 2013**



**Fig 16- Number of Prejudice Incident Reported in 2014**

**Hate Category + Location comparison for Aberdeenshire 2014**

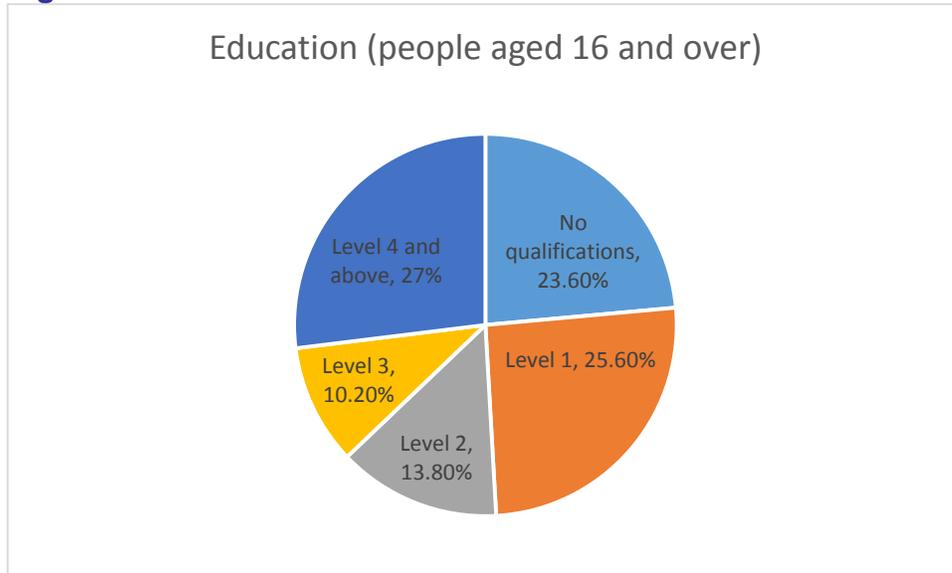


**2.4.5 Equality Outcome Five - Everyone enjoys equal access to education, training and employment.**

We are making progress towards this Outcome with areas for improvement identified, particularly in supporting Looked after Children to achieve positive destinations. Census 2011 data below shows the level of education attained by Aberdeenshire residents below at Figure 17.



**Figure 17**

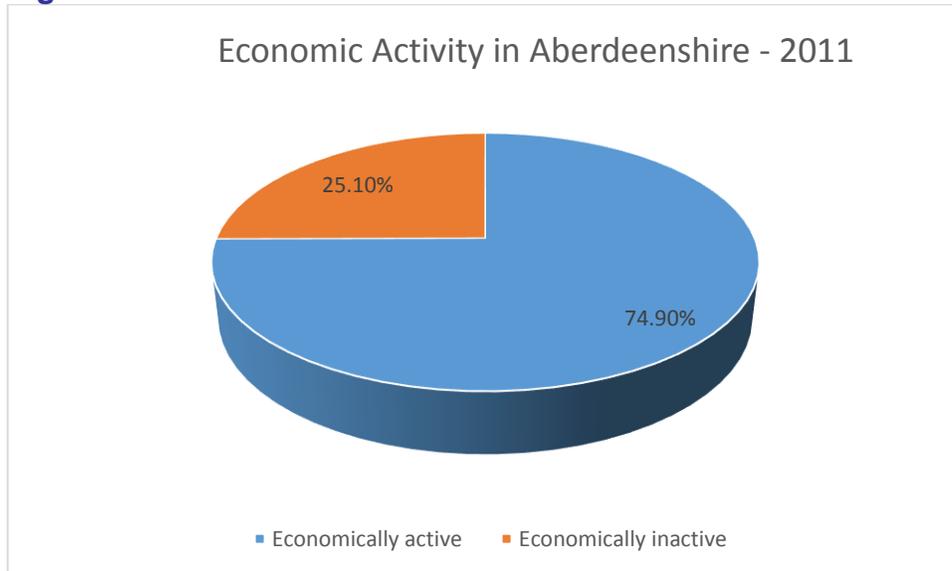


Source: Census, 2011

Aberdeenshire Council, the Education Authority and the Licensing Board are committed to ensuring all residents in Aberdeenshire enjoy equal access to education, training and employment. The evidence in 2013 suggested a lack of understanding between groups with different protected characteristics, this is a continuing issue with a lack of understanding in relation to disability and sexual orientation in accessing employment. Positive action initiatives are being taken forward to provide opportunities for everyone to participate in society.

Census 2011 shows that 74.90% of residents in Aberdeenshire are economically active in Figure 18 below.

**Figure 18**

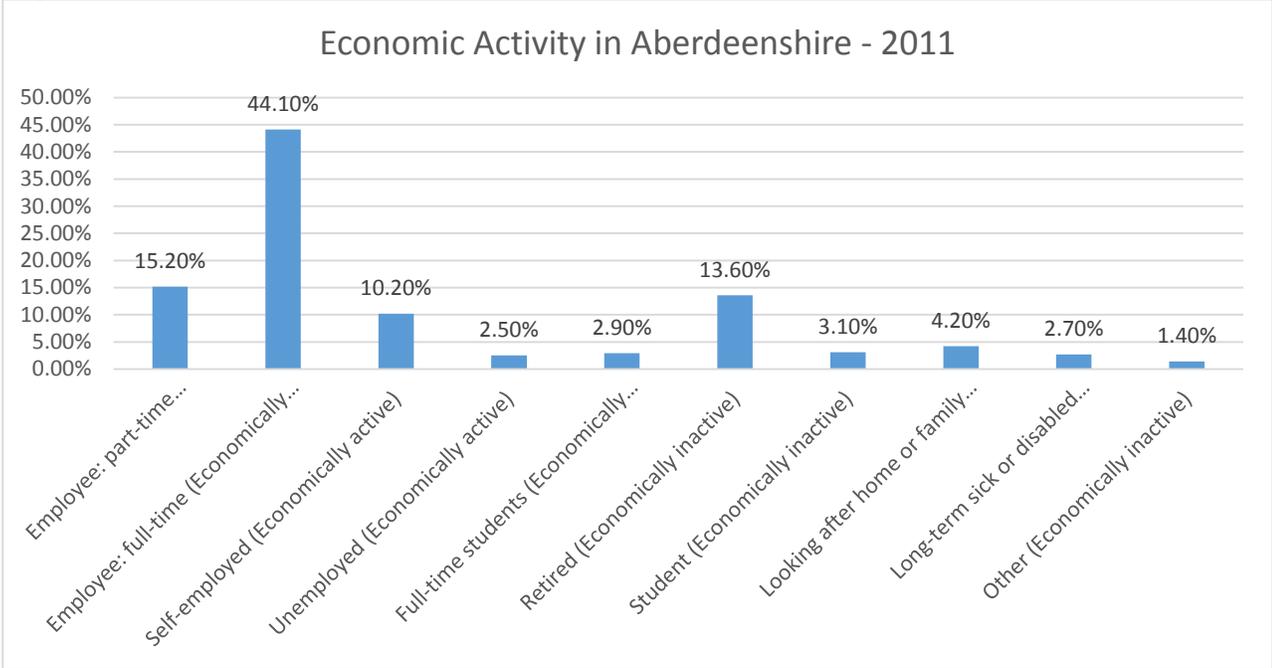


Source: Census, 2011



The chart below at Figure 19 breaks this down to highlight whether the resident works full-time, part-time or retired. Most Aberdeenshire’s residents are in full-time or part time employee which is 59.30% and retired at 13.60% of the population. As the Census releases more information, this will be analysed to identify how many of the protected characteristics as age and disability are working to identify any trends and where to focus resources.

**Figure 19**



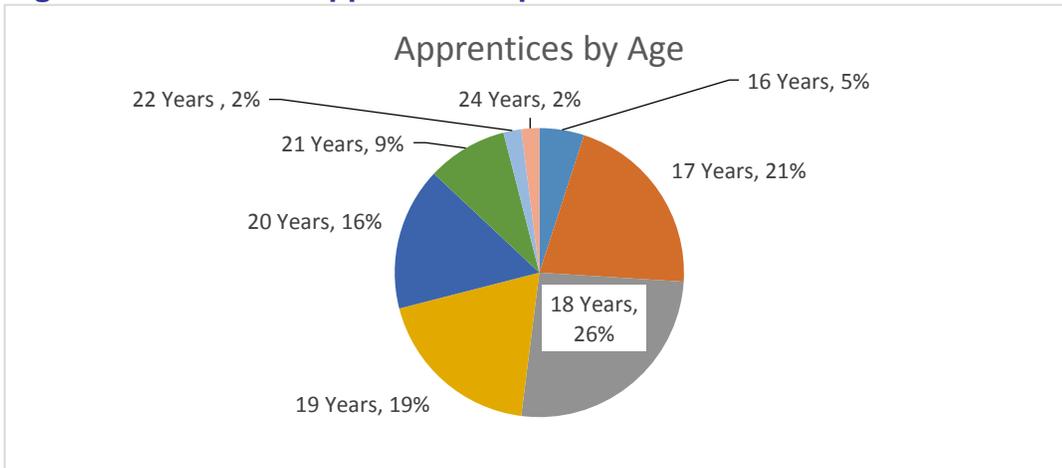
Source: Census, 2011

**Aberdeenshire Council - Projects from Action Plan  
Business Services - Modern Apprenticeship Scheme**

Human Resource & Organisational Development continue to increase the promotion of the Modern Apprentice scheme; ensuring this continues to be available to applicants of all ages, whilst actively promoting the scheme amongst the population under the age of 19 and encouraging Services to fill vacancies with Modern Apprenticeship posts. There are currently 17 Modern Apprentices already participating in the scheme with an additional 5 individuals due to join in the near future. The detail is depicted at Figure 20 below. In addition to Modern Apprenticeships the Council currently employ Craft Apprentices. These will become skilled crafts people which will contribute to addressing the skills shortage across Aberdeenshire which finds retention difficult when competing with jobs in the oil industry. Overall there are 43 apprentices within Aberdeenshire Council.

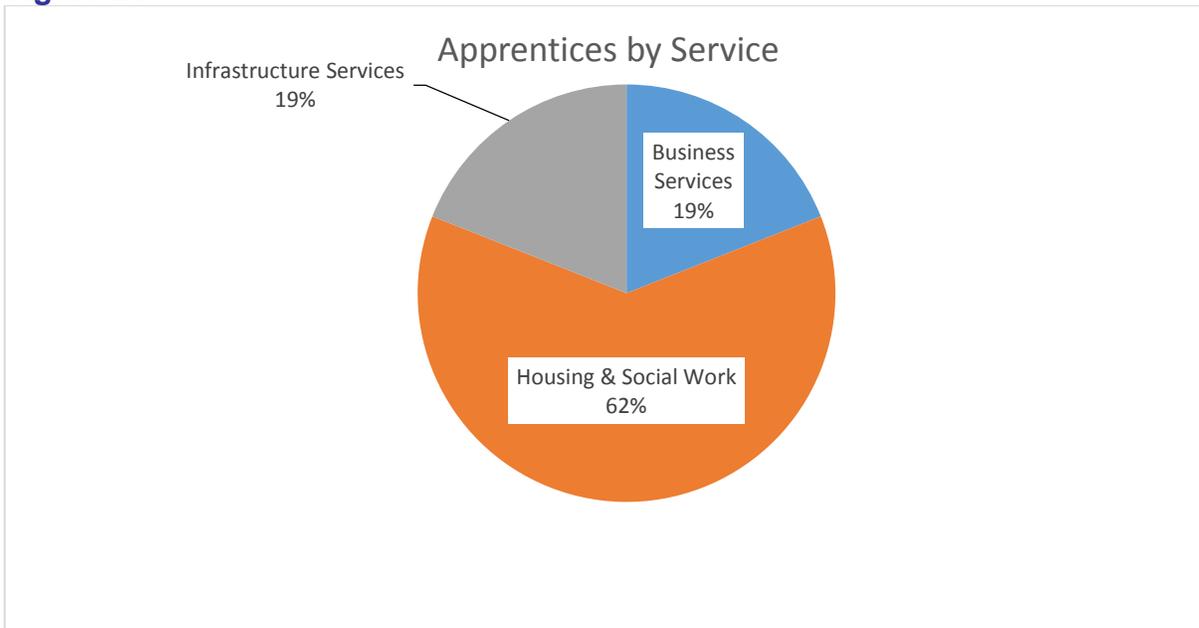


**Figure 20 – Modern Apprenticeships**

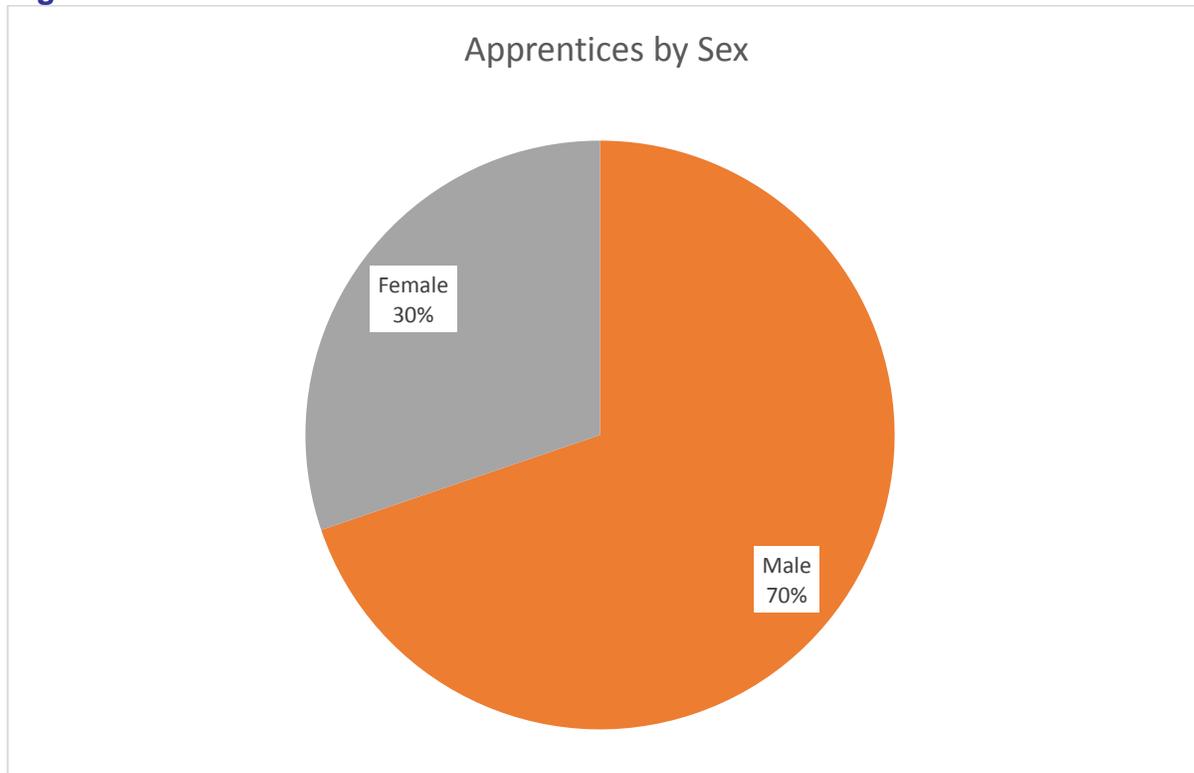


Aberdeenshire Council will allocate resources for modern apprenticeships wherever possible within Service budgets which compliments the employment of Craft Apprentices. Percentage of Apprentices by Service are shown at Figure 21 and Figure 22 providing breakdown by gender.

**Figure 21**



**Figure 22**



### **Communities Service - Huntly Employability Group**

In Huntly it was identified there was little support for service users, particularly people with disabilities, to explore their employability aspirations. This resulted in a group of agencies agreeing to jointly work together such as Jobcentreplus, Skills Development Scotland, Aberdeenshire Employability Service, Working for families and Lifelong Learning workers from Community Education to support a job club group every Thursday in Huntly. The initial aims were to network and share information about employability support and to promote opportunities locally. The group delivers a six week rolling programme. The aims of the job club are to address identified barriers to employment including housing, wellbeing and confidence issues and lack of life skills. Employers are invited to attend to promote local job opportunities and support recruiting processes. Universal job match, CV work and applications are done via laptops. Additional opportunities for specific support with life skills, including cooking and financial education are offered alongside the job club Service at separate times. People accessing the job club get help tailored to their specific requirements in a local setting.



## **Communities Service - Support for Unpaid Carers to Gain Qualifications**

Effective community care is highly dependent on unpaid carers, of whom it is estimated that around 80% are female. Unpaid carers may find it difficult to access training or employment due to their caring responsibilities. Aberdeenshire Social Work has appointed an SVQ Assessor to help them, if they wish to gain a qualification to recognise formally the caring that they already do. This means when their caring role changes or ends they have a formal qualification that will assist them to gain employment.

## **Communities Service - Project Search - Supporting Individuals with Learning Disabilities**

Project Search is an intense model that supports people with learning disabilities, autism and Asperger's to learn skills in a sheltered environment that will enable them to get paid employment outside of that environment. Aberdeenshire Council funds four places each year within the project. 'Inspire', which is a voluntary organisation, supports their training that takes place at Aberdeen University. The University provides the training room and work experience and the North East of Scotland College (NESCOL) provides a tutor to deliver an employability course. Three Aberdeenshire students obtained jobs at NESCOL, Fraserburgh, University of Aberdeen and with Aberdeenshire Council

## **Communities Service - Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ)**

Since May 2014 to January 2015, a total of 19 unpaid carers have registered to undertake the SVQ award. Eleven have registered on the Social Services & Healthcare (Adult) qualification, and eight have registered on the Social Services (children and young people) qualification. An unpaid carer contacted Aberdeenshire Council after hearing about the opportunity to undertake an SVQ Level 2 in Social Services and Healthcare. She cares for her husband who had a stroke a number of years ago, and wanted the opportunity to gain a qualification while carrying out her caring role in her own home environment. This carer commenced the qualification in May 2014, and completed it in January 2015.

## **Communities Service - Shared Lives**

Shared Lives is a unique and flexible support scheme providing short breaks, day support and long term placements for people over sixteen with a physical and/or learning disability, mental health issues or older people. Support is provided from a Shared Lives carer's own home and as part of their family. Being a real part of the community is important to all. This scheme ensures that people with disabilities can take part in the same activities as others in the community by being provided with the individual support they need.



## Communities Service - Older Peoples Charter in Aberdeenshire

An Older Peoples Charter for Aberdeenshire was published in July 2014, supported by Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, voluntary organisations, local communities and older people. Monitored by the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership, it outlines the principles and aims and expectations that all agencies and citizens should have in the delivery of support for older people across communities, under the headings of:

- Having a Voice
- Information and Advice
- Transport
- Residential accommodation
- Day Care
- Living at Home
- Communities
- Health

## Communities Service - Work with School

CLD teams are working closely with school colleagues to identify young people who may find the school setting a challenge through social or learning issues. CLD staff contribute to flexible learning packages which enable young people to participate fully in learning. Community based activities supported by Education and Children's Services staff have included sessions to support very young children with disabilities. Rainbow Rogues is a group which provides high quality play experiences for children in a small group setting, which their siblings can also attend.

## Communities Service - Literacy and numeracy

CLD staff, volunteers and partners support individual learners who ask for assistance with their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners mainly are supported through one to one learning sessions. In the Peterhead area when workers recognised that most participants were female they developed a men only literacy group which has had a positive role in engaging with new learners.

## Tackling Inequalities - Active Labour Market Project

A partnership approach to delivering 16 + Options to ensure all young people, including Looked After Children, who are not in a positive and sustainable destination have an activity agreement. Employer engagement that delivers skills training which meets their needs and ensures that appropriately trained people are available for hard to fill vacancies. Delivery of sector-based skills academy in construction, care, retail, hospitality, digital facilitation, and rural skills. As a response to the introduction of Universal Credit the partnership will increase provision in relation to Money and Debt advice. This will support individuals to take responsibility and to promote work as a way out of poverty. Increased employment opportunities will be sought by using Community Benefit Clauses through the procurement process. Delivery of the Youth Employment Scheme across Aberdeenshire. Support those who are at risk or are made



redundant through PACE. Delivery of Priority 5 project Work 4U to support individuals in work and continue to up skill the local workforce.

## Tackling Inequalities - Early Years Project

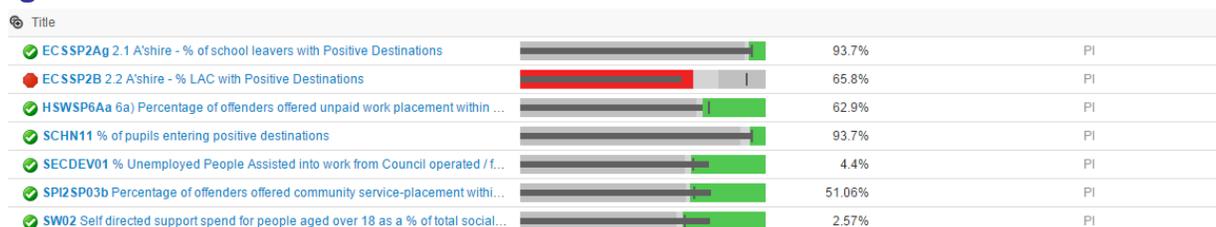
Delivery of Early Years Strategy and development of the Child Care Partnership. The development of up to ten centres which offer early intervention and preventative facilities for children aged 3-5 and the development of two centres which offer early intervention Services to children aged 0-3. Parents have the necessary support to be economically active where appropriate and provide wider benefits to the Aberdeenshire economy through the availability of high quality, flexible, accessible and sustainable early years and childcare Services. Increased support for financial inclusion, income maximisation and to sustain education, training and employment.

## Communities Service - Skills and Talent Attraction

Ensuring a consistent stream of talent for local businesses and inward investors is of paramount importance to future growth in the region. There are two aspects to talent attraction; attracting new talent from the UK or overseas and retaining and maximising the potential of indigenous talent, including creating pathways for young people from school to jobs. Led by Skills Development Scotland Regional Skills Assessments have been prepared for the region in 2014, primarily to inform the single outcome agreements for the new regional college structure in Scotland. ACSEF has played a key role in inputting to and helping shape the RSA for AC&S. Based on these findings ACSEF has now agreed to develop a Regional Skills Strategy.

## Performance Indicators

Figure 23



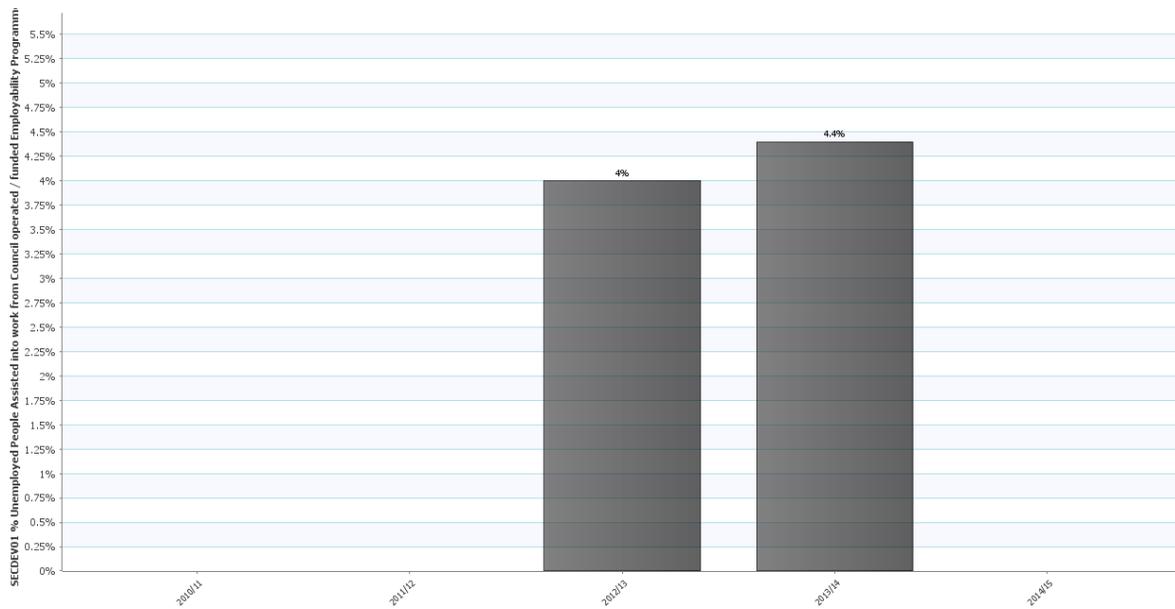
The percentage of school leavers with Positive Destinations (ECSSP2...2.1) above in Figure 23 confirms 93.7% proceed to positive destinations. This is a slight reduction in 2013 figures (see Figure 26 and 27) which indicates 94%. This figure will continue to be monitored by the Education Authority.

The numbers of unemployed people assisted into work from the Council Operated/Funded Employability Programme (SECDEV0) shows an increase above at Figure 24 and Figure 25 respectively. Feedback from community engagement suggested that Aberdeenshire Council still need to continue assisting more people into work. Particular groups at disadvantage can be

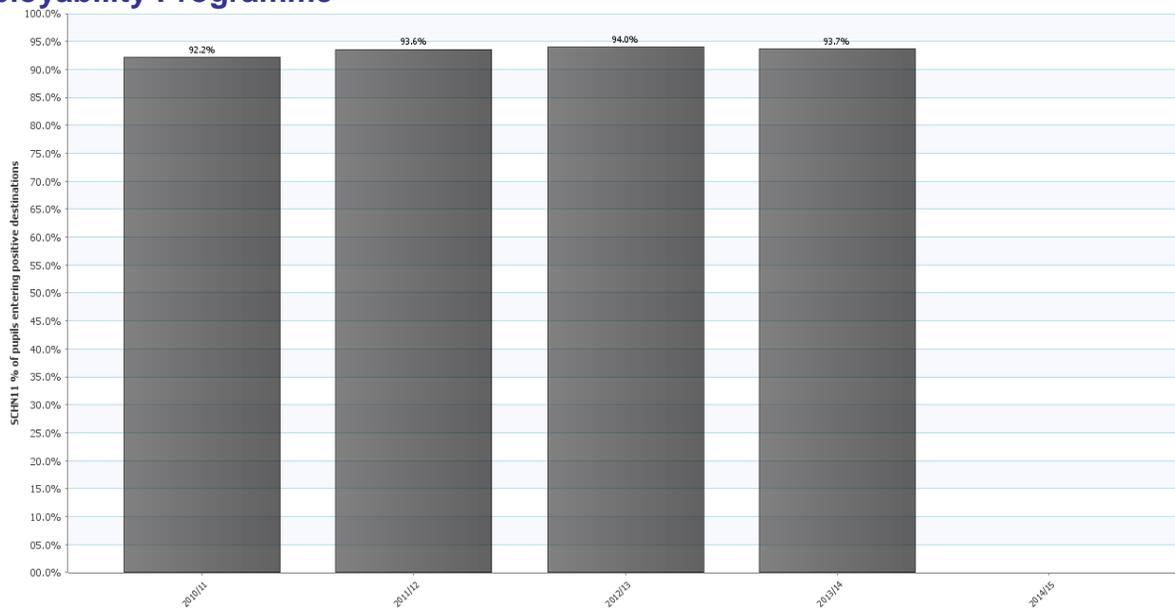


disability and young people. The Education Authority with the Communities Service will identify ways to improve the access to education, training and employment in Aberdeenshire.

**Figure 24**



**Figure 25 - Unemployed People Assisted into Work from Council Operated/ Funded Employability Programme**



**FUTURE PROJECTS DELIVERING EQUALITY OUTCOMES**

**Equalities – it runs through everything we do**



In continuing to ensure effective progress towards our Equality Outcomes each Service continues to progress different projects and identify new areas to achieve improved outcomes for residents and service users. One such project is being taken forward in Communities Service. The Tackling Inequalities programme have undertaken an Active Labour Market Project. This is a new on line tracking system is being developed to ensure individuals are matched to the appropriate job / opportunity. The development of an Oil and Gas Academy (OGAS) between Banff & Buchan College, Aberdeen College, RGU and the University of Aberdeen to help address the skills shortages in the energy. This ensure opportunities are available to all individuals with protected characteristics but primarily young people.

## **THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY - PROJECTS & PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Education Authority in partnership with the Communities have undertaken projects to support young people with special needs to access work. Project Search is an employability initiative delivered at the University in Aberdeen for young people with special needs, focusing solely on ensuring the young people have the confidence and skills to apply for jobs. The partnership that supports this initiative is Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City, Inspire, Aberdeen College and the University of Aberdeen. For one year the young people attend the University, participate in an employability course and at the same time also go on Work placements throughout the University Campus. Twelve young people graduated from Project Search at Aberdeen University on 3rd July 2014 with most being successful in getting employment.

### **Global Citizenship Peer Support Programme**

Have now established the Aberdeenshire Global Citizenship Peer Support Programme (GCPSP). A total of 25 teachers have enrolled as peer supporters across Aberdeenshire. Peer supporters support colleagues in developing their whole school approach to Global Citizenship through focused continuing professional development and the creation of local support networks. The GCPSP is an important strategy in helping schools mainstream equalities focusing on citizenship education, challenging attitudes and celebrating diversity and understanding difference. It impacts specifically on attitudes to each of the protected categories.

### **Raising attainment and achievement for children and young people**

Projects targeted at raising attainment continue to be a priority in Education & Children's Service's improvement plan. Active Literacy has been introduced in additional schools. All schools have access to in-Service training on collaborative teaching approaches. Educational Psychological Services continue to provide high quality learning opportunities including those provided in the new eLearning training format. The success of all is routinely celebrated. Aberdeen Performs was held for the second year in June 2014 and featured a further cohort of young people, including those from protected categories.



## An audit of pupil support has been carried out across all 17 Children’s Services Networks (CSNs) in Aberdeenshire.

A review of enhanced provision is nearing completion. The review aims to ensure equity and consistency of provision across Aberdeenshire schools. One expected outcome will be that the needs of pupils from the protected categories are identified as early as possible and effective interventions planned. The review of enhanced provision is a key component of Education and Children’s Services’ strategy to close the attainment gap between the highest and lowest attaining groups of pupils.

### Affordable Childcare

The availability of high quality, affordable childcare has been cited as a barrier to participation by protected groups. In 2014 Aberdeenshire Council expanded wrap around provision for vulnerable youngsters who were identified as likely to benefit from early intervention support. Aberdeenshire now has centres in all school Children’s Service Networks offering fulltime pre-school education and childcare.

### Additional Support Needs Manual

The Service has developed an electronic Support Manual which allows staff involved with children and young people to easily access advice and resources. Work has been completed to develop a directory of support for families of children with additional support needs. These initiatives include advice related to the nine protected characteristics. Advice has now also been provided for schools to ensure all Coordinated Support (CSP) plans and Individualised Educational Programmes (IEP) are carefully prepared and reviewed when appropriate. Comprehensive CSP and IEP guidance has been issued.

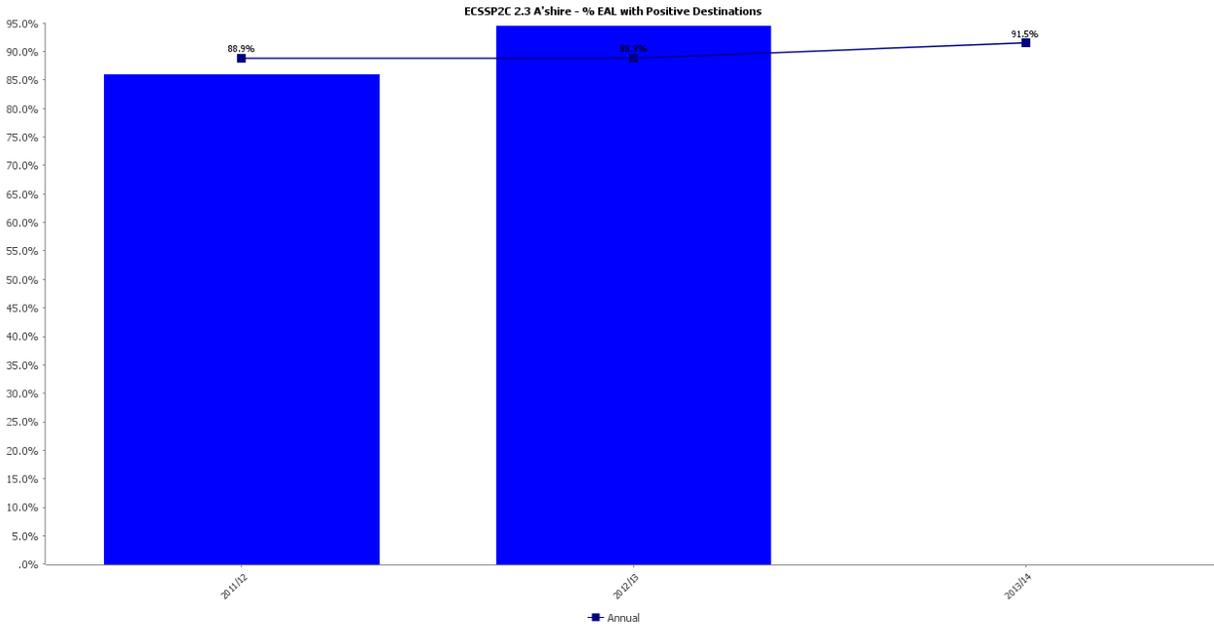
**Figure 26 - Percentage of Pupils entering Positive Destinations**



## SCHN11 Performance Indicator

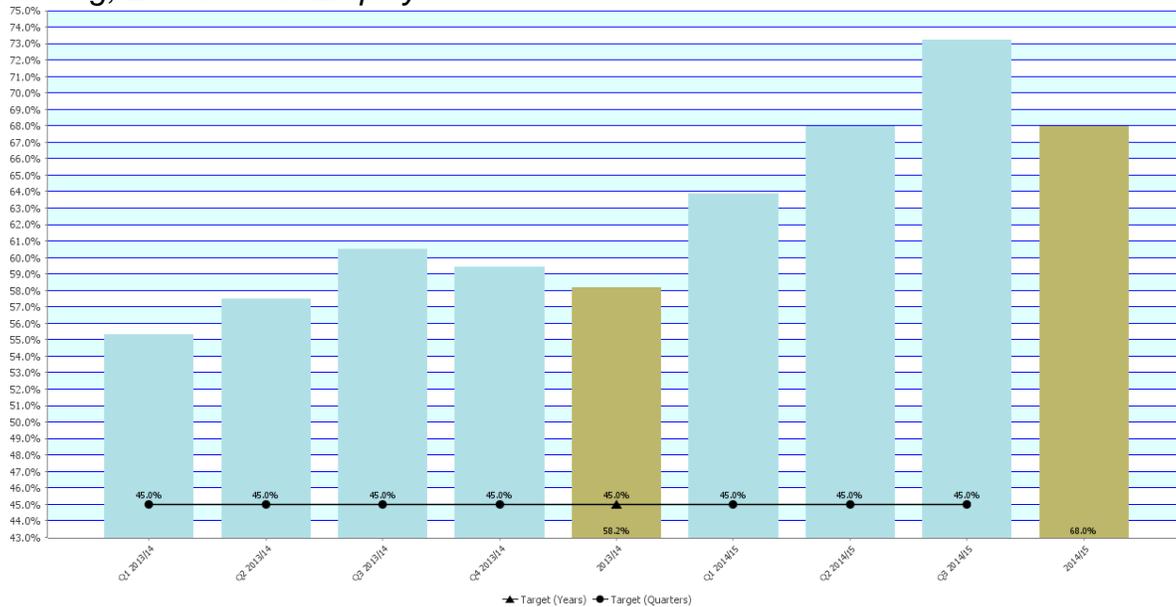
The percentage of pupils entering positive destinations is high as noted above in Figure 26. The Education Authority will continue their target in each Council area; Banff & Buchan, Buchan, Garioch, Marr, Formartine and Kincardine & Mearns.

**Figure 27 - Aberdeenshire Percentage English as Additional Language with Positive Destinations**



## Figure 28 - Performance Indicator - ECSSP2C

Children/ Young People engaged with Throughcare and Aftercare Service who were in Training, Education or Employment



## Performance Indicator: HSWSP5B

There has been a steady increase in the number of young people engaged with throughcare and aftercare Services who were in training, education and employment as evidenced at Figure 28 above.

## THE LICENSING BOARD

The Licensing Board within their action plan to achieve this equality outcome was to support and encourage equalities mainstreaming in the Licensing Trade. Equalities has been embedded with their policy statement. They regular consult with their customers. The mainstreaming report has details of the employee training.

## Equality Outcome Six - Access to life opportunities is enhanced by reducing barriers

The key issues raised in relation to this equality outcomes were a lack of suitable affordable housing and poor health outcomes for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups and geographical areas of deprivation. The consultation is there can be prejudiced views in relation to Gypsy Travellers. It is important to ensure access to life opportunities is available to all and promote awareness of different groups.



## PROJECTS FROM ACTION PLAN

### ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

#### Communities Service - Adult Care Management – Self-Directed Support

Self-Directed Support is becoming more embedded in Adult Care Management. This allows people to focus on the outcomes they want to achieve, and we offer personalised budgets to meet outcomes, as opposed to being Service driven. Service users now have much more control over what they want to do and how this is done. This allows them increased access to life opportunities, enhanced by reducing barriers. Currently, the majority of people supported by Adult Care Management under the Self-Directed Support Model are in Learning Disability Services. However, considerable work is ongoing to review and refine the Self-Directed Support Pathway within Mental Health and Community Substance Misuse Services to ensure that it meets the requirements for the practitioners and people who require support from these Services. This work is almost complete and it is anticipated that an increased number of people will benefit from Self-Directed Support in Adult Care Management.

#### Housing Education – Homelessness

Education and Housing have worked together to develop a collaborative approach to housing education in Aberdeenshire Council in order to prevent homelessness and better equip young people with the knowledge and skills to cope if they are at risk of becoming homeless.

Homelessness Action Scotland provided updated resource material in the form of the, “I’m Offski” resource to be used within secondary schools. To enhance the delivery of this education resource, and recognising our young people as assets, we worked with Service users who have first-hand experience of housing and homelessness Services to create a film documenting their experiences of being homeless. Their genuine and thought provoking depiction results in a powerful portrayal of the difficulties and challenges that can be encountered on the homeless journey and offers young people an opportunity to look at ways of preventing homelessness.

This collaboration between Services and service users within the Local Authority results in a locally relevant, trusted and credible source of information. The outcome is a sustainable model of delivering housing education in schools whilst celebrating the contribution that our young people can make to our organisation and our communities.

The resource is designed to provide equity of provision across Aberdeenshire but also has the ability to be flexible in its delivery based on need and demand. The resource can be used in a class environment but also on a one to one basis with vulnerable young people thus balancing the difficulties of a demanding and busy curriculum with the needs of our pupils. This resource has the potential to be used in other settings such as Through Care and Aftercare, community groups and the approach could be replicated for use in wider Services such as Criminal Justice. This project has been in receipt of a Bronze COSLA award in the category of ‘Achieving Better Outcomes’.



## Support to Speakers of Other Languages.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) continue to provide support the learners whom are looking to improve their understanding and delivery of both written and spoken English. While this is the main focus of learning the learners also gain social skills, employability skills and understanding of culture. Since the beginning of 2014, CLD have delivered 50 language projects with a total of 458 learners. The Service has aimed to increase the accreditation opportunities for learners. 107 learners have been supported and have completed core skills awards in communication, ICT, Problem Solving and Working with Others.

## Empowering families and young people

Staff members have and continue to work with groups of parents who have children with additional needs. Families have been supported to develop support networks. One such network is Mearns Allsorts. It meets regularly and plans activities to support the families and young people.

## Community Oil Buying Club

In early 2014 a project steering group was established to explore how savings from oil buying clubs could be made widely available to residents with all protected characteristics in Marr, especially those living in fuel poverty. The steering group involved a partnership between a number of local organisations including Aberdeenshire Council Fuel Poverty Officers and the Marr Area Office, North East Scotland Credit Union (NESCU), Council for Voluntary Services Aberdeenshire and Gordon Rural Action. The steering group decided to adopt a model which involved entering into a partnership with Highland Fuels who have five years' experience of running commercial and community oil clubs and who have a dedicated fuel club officer able to carry out the administration of the club. NESCU is a key partner in the project and will also be directly involved in offering their Services to oil club members in financial hardship. The aim of this link is to ensure that the cost savings available from being a member of an oil club are open to all, irrespective of their financial situation. They will be able to help members with a low interest loan to allow them to use the oil club as well as providing budgeting advice.

## First fill of heating oil for tenants

The Housing Management Team agreed a procedure in early 2014, which assists tenants who are experiencing financial difficulty, to obtain a first fill of oil (as a recharge). Oil central heating is the only heating type where a substantial upfront payment is required before the customer can enter in to a payment plan / direct debit agreement with a supplier. Tenants will be referred to SCARF (an energy efficiency organisation) in the first instance so that a member of HEAT (Home Energy Advice Team) can arrange a home visit to give free, impartial advice on energy efficiency. Their advisors can also help with any fuel bill concerns and provide advice on choosing the best supplier. In addition to this, tenants will be required to approach a reputable lender (e.g. Credit Union, Bank, Post Office or Building Society) to obtain a loan. If they are unable to secure a loan and can provide proof of this, they can then contact the Tenancy Management Team to request a first fill (500 litres) as a recharge. Provided the tenant has no outstanding housing debt, they will be considered for a one-off fill of 500 litres as a recharge. If



they are eligible for this, they will be asked to sign a declaration form agreeing to pay back the recharge within 6 months. A Fair Processing Notice will be issued to and signed by the tenant to advise what their information will be used for and who it will be shared with. They will be provided with the cost of the 500 litre fill and invoiced after delivery. Subsequent fills thereafter will be the tenant's own responsibility. Both new and existing tenants can ask to be considered for a first fill as a recharge. Tenants can only receive a fill of oil (500 litres) once during their tenancy. The procedure was discussed with members of the Planning for the Future Group in May 2014 and was well received. Although there have been a few enquires about the First Fill as a Recharge, to date, no request has been processed.

## **Care & Repair**

Aberdeenshire Care and Repair provides a free service to owner-occupiers and tenants of private landlords who live within Aberdeenshire, offering advice and assistance with repairs, improvements and adaptations. Clients must be either over 60 and/or have a disability. The Private Sector Housing Team in Housing (Communities) is responsible for the delivery of Care & Repair in Aberdeenshire. Care and Repair report quarterly on general satisfaction figures and it is anticipated that in the future, analyses will be carried out on feedback to further inform the delivery of the Service.

## **Affordable Housing**

As of January 2015, the Affordable Housing Team has adopted the Corporate Equalities Monitoring Form to monitor equalities in relation to all applications and nominations for new Low Cost Home Ownership schemes as well as the Empty Homes Loan Fund.

## **Sheltered Housing Remodeling**

To support the Shifting the Balance of Care Agenda for older people, the housing Service is working on proposals to remodel existing sheltered housing complexes across Aberdeenshire to become Very Sheltered Housing (VSH) complexes, which will consist of independent flats with 24 hour care and support, tailored to meet people's individual needs on site 365 days a year. (Currently work to upgrade two complexes is progressing; Pleyfauld House, Inverurie and Hamewith Court, Alford. Work is expected to be complete in both complexes by spring 2014 when VSH designation and the criteria for allocating VSH will commence.

## **Tackling Inequalities - Support for the Elderly Project**

Falls screening for people at risk of falls, involving Care and Repair staff., and use of falls 'bundles'. RVS funded to provide befriending and support to people prior to and following discharge from community hospitals. Kincardine and Deeside Befriending funded to support older patients ready for discharge from Kincardine Community Hospital. Post funded in Inch to develop community capacity in support for older people. 3 link worker posts funded with Alzheimer Scotland linking outreach post-diagnostic support for people with dementia to community provision. Signposting Service funded:



- 1) to develop volunteers in GP practices to signpost older people to community-based support and activities.
- 2) to connect older people with common cultural interests to share in activities

RVS funded to develop shopping services. Funding provided to assist in development of Mens Shed in Westhill. Funding support for performing arts projects for older people and arts for people with dementia. 3 posts established to develop local community based meals provision with selected sheltered housing complexes. Funding to 'Walking to Health' and Grampian 50+ Network to develop a walking strategy. Development of innovative short break provision for carers of older people. Support housing to deliver housing priorities for older people (all tenures), including transforming selected sheltered housing complexes into very sheltered housing. Implementation of Aberdeenshire Accommodation with Care Strategy. Roll out Social Prescribing across Aberdeenshire and further develop Garioch social prescribing opportunities.

### **Tackling Inequalities - Early Years Project**

Increased access to a range of Services which support families and individuals to increase their wellbeing e.g. through Cash In Your Pocket database, initiatives to reduce fuel poverty. Harm is prevented by a reduction in alcohol and other drugs and a culture of safe, sensible drinking. Further develop child healthy weight programmes in nursery and schools.



## THE EDUCATION AUTHORITY

### Infant Mental Health Training

During session 2012/13 extensive continuing professional development for Education, Learning and Leisure staff and multi-agency colleagues focused on increasing staff capacity to support children and young people's mental health. We have now delivered the first series of further sessions focusing on infant mental health. Staff across Aberdeenshire will participant in a series of eight linked sessions which explore how to support positive mental start in young children. Mental health was reported as a key concern across the protected characteristics.

## THE LICENSING BOARD

The Licensing Board work with partner agencies and the community organisations to promote equalities. They have equalities embedded into policy statements and review regularly. More information in relation to the Licensing Board, can be found in the Mainstreaming Report.

### Performance Indicators

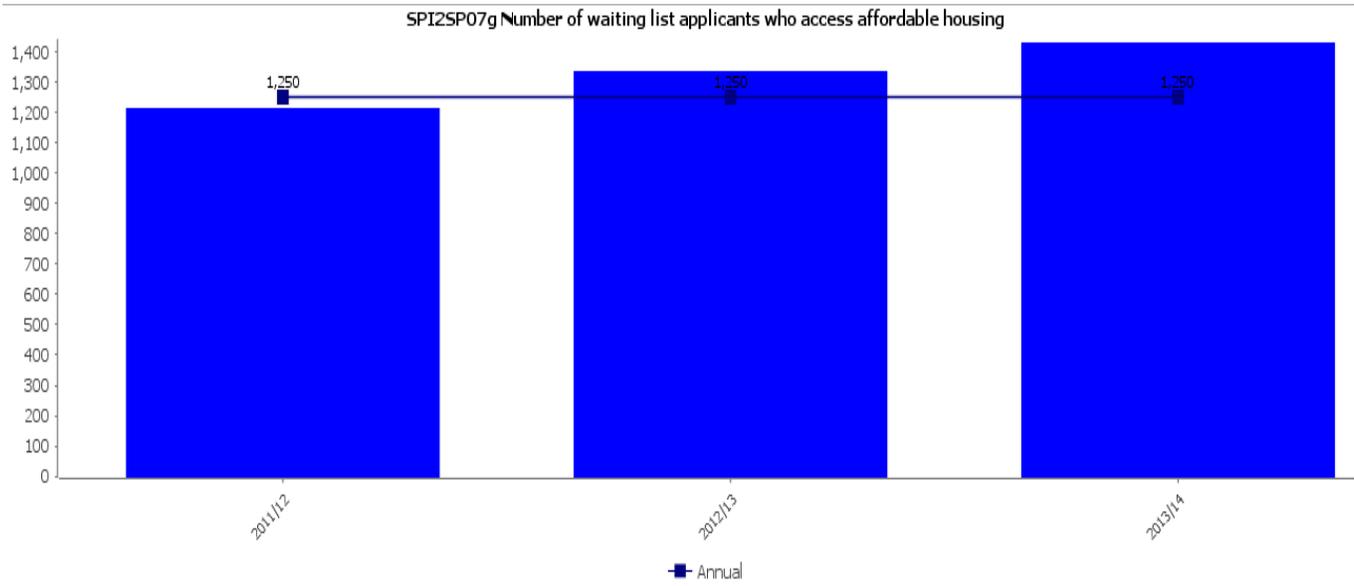
Figure 29 and 30 below indicates the level of applicants rehoused in the fourth quarter is well above target and is also showing an improvement on same point in time last year (1336). This has been influenced by a higher than expected turnover of Council & RSL properties resulting in more allocations and nominations for waiting list applicants. Aberdeenshire Council will continue to priorities affordable housing as part of the Housing Strategy and ensure opportunities for residents are able to access housing.

### Figure 29 – Number of Waiting List Applicants who Access Affordable Housing

Title			
✓ HSWSP1B 1b) Number of waiting list applicants who access affordable housing		965	PI
✓ SPI2SP07g Number of waiting list applicants who access affordable housing		1,430	PI



**Figure 30 - Number of Waiting List Applicants who Access Affordable Housing**



## **FUTURE ACTIONS**

Communities will be recording the protected characteristics of their tenants and housing applicants in order to ensure all the different characteristics whether race or disability are able to access housing in Aberdeenshire.

