

Annual Equality and Diversity Review June 2023

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North
Tyneside
Council

1. Introduction

As stated in our [Equality and Diversity Policy](#), North Tyneside Council aims to ensure that:

North Tyneside becomes a place where people feel safe and no one experiences discrimination or avoidable disadvantage because of their protected [characteristics](#), background or personal circumstances.

Our strategic plan, the [Our North Tyneside Plan](#), is focused on ensuring that the council works better for residents, as highlighted in our commitment to:

work to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination and ensure the social rights of the people of North Tyneside are key to council decision making.

As one of the borough's leading service providers and employers, we are committed to developing North Tyneside to be an inclusive place in which to live, work, visit and invest; and we seek to achieve this through implementation of our Equality and Diversity Policy, which states that:

North Tyneside Council will proactively embed equality and diversity considerations in everything we do and challenge others to do the same.

Therefore we are working to make equality and diversity everyone's business. Our work is led by our Corporate Strategy and Customer Service Directorate and is supported by our Cabinet Member responsible for the Environment, which includes the Equality and diversity strategy; our Senior Leadership Team (SLT); Corporate Equality Group; our Staff Networks; the Young Mayor and Member of the UK Youth Parliament; our People and Organisational Development Service, trades unions, business partners, and the North East Regional Employers' Organisation's regional network of equality officers.

This review outlines what we have done to progress our equality work and how we will continue to seek to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, and our Equality and Diversity Policy commitments, during the coming year. We will achieve this through the delivery of our Corporate Equality Objectives, as part of our Embedding Equality Programme.

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Our highlights

Since our last Equality and Diversity Review was published in June 2022 we have:

- Launched Phase 2 of our Embedding Equality Programme, helping to deliver our equality policy commitments and objectives by making equality everybody's business.
- Delivered a range of awareness raising events and campaigns in line with the Authority's Equality Calendar for 2023.
- Ran bespoke Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) training for our senior decision makers in Cabinet and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Created a Cultural Strategy that commits to addressing equality, diversity and inclusion in the cultural sector and inequity in accessing culture.
- Enhanced the support we offer to voters with disabilities when visiting our polling stations and taking part in our electoral processes.
- Unveiled a blue plaque on Holocaust Memorial Day to mark the location of a home created in 1939 by the Newcastle Jewish Refugee Committee for 20 Jewish girls who had arrived via the Kindertransport.
- Unveiled a blue plaque on International Women's Day to commemorate the bravery of Air Raid Patrol Warden Ellen Lee in rescuing 32 people trapped in an air raid shelter following bomb damage.
- Delivered key improvements recommended during the AccessAble reviews of 34 of our buildings in 2021/22 and completed a further ten building reviews with AccessAble focusing on our Killingworth Site, Registrars and cemeteries.
- Made a successful bid for £100,000 to the government's Changing Places Fund for two more changing places facilities to be located in Richardson Dees Park and the Rising Sun Country Park.
- Created three new roles to support the delivery of our Embedding Programme- Colleague Engagement and Inclusion Partner, Colleague Engagement and Inclusion Manager, Equality Engagement Advisor.
- Had the Local Government Association ask all local authorities who are involved in the National Graduate Development Programme use the reasonable

adjustment guidance and workplace support profiles developed by the Authority – as best practice.

- Introduced more appropriate signs when undertaking external works.
- Become the first Northern Authority to sign up to The Disability Employment Charter, encouraging the government to improve employment for disabled people.
- Through our Employability Team, we:
 - created drop in and outreach services specifically for Asylum Seekers and Refugees in partnership with a local community group (Working With)
 - delivered ‘calm’ jobseeker support sessions for neuro-diverse residents in partnership with the North East Autism Society
 - challenged attitudes towards disability by encouraging local businesses to be Healthy Workplaces, including promoting ‘Disability Confident’ and the ‘Good Work Pledge’ schemes
 - championed older workers in the workplace
 - provided sensitive and personalised services for LGBT+ groups
 - exceeded all ethnic diversity, disability and 50+ targets on Wise Steps, Moving on Tyne and Wear and Working Homes employability projects.
- Through our Adult Learning Service, we:
 - created a new offer around resettlement employment and skills advice and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). This resulted in almost 300 ESOL enrolments since March 2022, with a further 390 planned places for 2023–24.
 - following trans-awareness, gender diversity and LGBT+ training for colleagues, embedded relationships and self-expression into the Ignite Your Potential programme for 2023–24.
- Delivered Relax Kids pilot, an innovative approach to emotional regulation, to 36 children and young people with anxiety, neurodiversity related concentration issues and young carers through the Children and Young People Mental Health Strategy/Barnardo’s Strategic Alliance .
- Marked World Social Work Day with an event on Respecting and Celebrating Diversity. This included a workshop round that enabled colleagues with protected characteristics to reflect on experiences of exclusion and its impact

on them in the workplace – providing an opportunity to think about allyship, invisible difference, and unconscious bias.

- Embedded a new adult social care supervision framework with a focus on wellbeing, equality and diversity.
- Revised adult carer assessments to take a more preventative approach, based on meaningful, structured conversations about the carer’s wellbeing, to support resilience, reduce stress and mitigate risk of care breakdown.
- Continued to grow our inclusive Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, with inclusive theatre school ‘True Colours’ (a North Tyneside based project) winning the Department for Education Choice award at the National HAF Awards.
- Expanded our Autism Support and Friendship Group for autistic people, their friends and families.
- Created the Reading for Wellbeing project to improve wellbeing through reading for pleasure. The project has employed a Community Reading Worker to support people with mental health issues.
- Supported over 1,500 residents visiting our libraries and Customer First Centres (the majority of whom were very elderly and/or had difficulty accessing the form) to complete an online form to claim a £150 energy rebate.
- Supported six schools to become a ‘School of Sanctuary’ and create a culture of welcome and inclusion for refugees and people seeking asylum.
- Co-designed a twelve week Body Benefits programme at Whitley Bay Islamic Cultural Centre. Then building on this engagement, established a women’s swimming group, and supported the Islamic Centre to submit successful funding bids to create a gym at the Centre and run a women’s exercise class.

2. Our Corporate Equality Objectives:

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires local authorities to set and publish equality objectives 'at least every four years'.

In accordance with good practice these objectives were reviewed during winter 2022/23. After which, Cabinet agreed to retain three of the existing objectives, to amend three and to approve the outcomes we are seeking to achieve under each objective. These changes help to ensure that the objectives are more closely aligned with our Embedding Equality workstreams.

Details on how the workstreams are contributing to the achievement of our Corporate Equality Objectives can be found in the relevant sections of Chapter 3:

Objective 1: Improve North Tyneside Council's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process (unchanged)

Outcomes:

- Use/embedding of the new guidance and templates results in better quality, more robust EqIAs, able to evidence due regard and enable more right first-time service delivery and fewer complaints.
- Introduction of a new electronic system for EqIAs results in improved quality monitoring and performance reporting through new Equality and Diversity Dashboards to SLT and individual directorates.

Objective 2: Create a more inclusive colleague experience within the Authority (updated)

Outcomes:

- Workforce diversity data shows increases across underrepresented protected characteristics.
- Team survey results – colleagues feel that the Authority is committed to creating an inclusive culture. There is confidence that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and will be dealt with effectively if an issue arises.
- Staff networks are satisfied that they are listened to and that they are able to make a difference in the Authority.
- The Authority has high satisfaction levels across all colleagues in respect of colleague engagement.
- EqIAs are in place to ensure HR policy and procedures comply with equality legislation and employment codes of practice.

Objective 3: Ensure colleagues and elected members understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (updated)

Outcomes

- All colleagues and members use inclusive language and treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Everyone feels welcome and internal and external customers are treated with dignity and respect.
- Colleagues have the skills to treat all colleagues and customers with dignity and respect and show due regard to people’s protected characteristics and this is reflected in the Team Survey.

Objective 4: Improve the collection and use of workforce and customer equality and diversity data (updated)

Outcomes

- Employee diversity declaration increases
- As customer record systems are renewed/redesigned they include fields to collect standardised equality and diversity data and insight (including data on customer communication needs), this contributes to right first time and improved customer satisfaction/fewer complaints.
- Customer satisfaction surveys include standard demographic questions, so engagement and service use can be monitored and action taken, resulting in better quality EqlAs and decision making, and greater awareness and use of services by under-represented groups.
- Improvements are made to the provision of equality and diversity data available on the Authority’s datastore. This supports improved evidence based EqlAs and effective diversity monitoring.
- Workforce diversity data shows increases across under represented protected characteristics.
- The Authority reports annually on its gender pay gap and action planning is informed by data insight.
- Equality and diversity data is reported to and reviewed by senior leaders via Equality and Diversity Dashboards and influences decision making.

Objective 5: Ensure our buildings, services and communications are accessible (unchanged)

Outcomes

- Information on the accessibility of our buildings is published on our website, in our buildings, and on the AccessAble Directory.

- As customer record systems are renewed/redesigned they include fields to collect standardised data on customer communication needs, this contributes to right first time and improved customer satisfaction/fewer complaints.
- Actions identified through both change and business as usual EqlAs are acted upon and monitored resulting in improved accessibility and customer satisfaction.
- Customer care policies highlight the needs of protected groups and there is evidence that these needs are taken account of.
- Employees use the guidance in the Authority's Accessible Information Policy to improve service provision and communication (including use of our translation and interpretation services) contributing to more efficient service delivery, more compliments and fewer complaints.
- Our websites and apps are fully compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard.
- There are examples of how different customers' experiences and complaints are analysed and acted upon to improve services.
- Human Rights legislation guidance is available for colleagues and decision makers have up to date knowledge.

Objective 6: Improve engagement with North Tyneside's diverse communities (unchanged)

Outcomes

- There are inclusive engagement mechanisms and structures providing opportunities for communities and service users to be involved in decision making, and service development and delivery, helping to improve engagement with these groups.
- Residents and service users are consulted effectively before services are developed and the process demonstrates due regard to protected/under-represented groups. Together with the point above this will contribute to more effective and efficient service development and delivery.
- More shared engagement activities are developed and delivered with partners increasing the Authority's reach into under-represented groups.
- Campaigns and initiatives are developed to increase participation in public life and leadership of people from protected/underrepresented groups, this will help to improve engagement/representation of these groups.

Our corporate equality objectives are delivered through the implementation of our Embedding Equality programme. Chapter 3 explains more.

3. Our Embedding Equality Programme

North Tyneside Council's Equality and Diversity Policy states that 'equality affects and involves everyone.' We are all a mix of protected characteristics, some visible, others not. This means equality is everyone's business and all employees and elected members have a role to play in ensuring the Authority achieves the aims of the Equality Act 2010.

Our Embedding Equality Programme was formally launched in September 2021. It aims to mainstream equality and to ensure every member of the NTC Team is able to play an active part in the delivery of our policy commitments and equality objectives. It also enables the Authority to review its performance against the Local Government Association's (LGA's) Equality Framework. Finally, it supports everyone who participates in the programme to live our corporate values of:

- We listen
- We care
- We are ambitious
- We are good value for money

The programme builds on lessons from the successful mainstreaming of safeguarding and health and safety across the Authority and learning from best practice across other public sector bodies.

Given the progress made and lessons learned during the first year of the Embedding Equality Programme, and in light of the LGA updating its Equality Framework, the programme's workstreams were reviewed and updated. Phase two of the programme began in September 2022 and contains six workstreams. The focus of each workstream is outlined below, together with an update on progress achieved to date:

3.1 Policy

Focus:

- a. Prepare and promote Hate Crime Policy Statement
- b. Prepare and promote business case for equality work
- c. Hold Corporate Equality Group (CEG) Development Day

- d. Share findings from equality stocktake and work with services to develop action plans to embed equality
- e. Support integration of equalities in key strategic plans and processes
- f. Promote and deliver the Equality and Diversity Calendar
- g. Review Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives

Action:

- a. Following engagement with the Mayor’s Ethnic Diversity Community Taskforce and our Staff Networks, Cabinet agreed our Hate Crime Policy Statement in October 2022. It provides clear definitions of both hate crime and hate incidents, highlights the prevalence of hate crime in North Tyneside and the impact this has both on those who experience it and on the wider community. The statement strengthens our commitment to address hate crime and incidents and support those colleagues and community members who experience them.

Development of a new Dignity and Respect at Work policy and incident reporting system will also help to support colleagues who experience hate incidents; while the work of the Safer North Tyneside Partnership will seek to increase awareness of hate incidents and crimes, and how to report them.

- b. In line with the LGA equality framework’s requirement, that we establish and publicise a strong business case for its equality work, a business case has been drafted for consideration by Corporate Equality Group and Senior Leadership Team. The business case has also been shared with the LGA who welcomed it and recommended sharing it with other local authorities.
- c. The Corporate Equality Group (CEG) Development Day was held on 29 September 2022. During the event phase two of the embedding programme was introduced and training on the Authority’s new Equality Impact Assessment template undertaken, as the service representatives who attend CEG have a vital role to play in the quality assurance of impact assessments undertaken by their directorate. Insight into the equality culture within services and the challenges of embedding equality were also discussed.
- d. Equality stocktakes were undertaken to understand how equality is managed in each directorate, for example is it considered on Senior Management Team agendas, if directorates can evidence how they contribute to the equality

elements of the Authority's policy framework, how employee and customer equality, diversity and inclusion data is collected and used to inform decision making, use of equality impact assessments and the consideration of accessibility issues.

Feedback and recommendations from these discussions was shared with Directorate Management Teams to help support the embedding process.

- e. Building on the embedding undertaken with the teams in the Procurement and ICT services last year, equality considerations have been embedded into the Authority's traffic regulation processes, helping to ensure that the needs of protected groups are considered as part of project implementation. The corporate brand was refreshed to ensure it was more accessible.

Work is planned to ensure that the investigations undertaken by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and decisions made by our Planning Service and Environmental Health Enforcement procedures embed equality considerations.

- f. Awareness raising activities and information are being publicised internally and externally through the Authority's 2023 Equality Calendar. Each date has a SLT sponsor.

Working in partnership with our Staff Networks and community partners the Authority continues to mark key dates including LGBT+ History Month, Black History Month, Disability History Month and Holocaust Memorial Day.

Since summer 2022 we have promoted a range of activities this has included: taking part in Northern Pride, running our Second North Tyneside Together Festival, raising awareness raising activities during Hate Crime Awareness Week, marking Pregnancy and Infant Loss Remembrance Day, World Autism Acceptance Week and Deaf Awareness Week for the first time and celebrating International Women's Day. We continue to mark calendar dates in a variety of ways, including blog posts, lighting up key buildings such as St Mary's Lighthouse and Killingworth Block A in the colours of each cause, using our social media platforms, promoting local charities and groups, and through guest speakers and fund raisers to help sustain supportive communities and workplaces.

- g. A review of our Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality objectives was undertaken in winter 2022/23. Following public and stakeholder consultation our [policy](#) was updated and agreed by Cabinet in March 2023 The policy now has a stronger focus on inclusion and includes a new commitment 'to celebrate

the diversity of our communities and seek to raise awareness of the benefits of diversity and inclusion'. At the same time the Authority's Corporate Equality Objectives, as shown in section 2, were updated and brought into line with our Embedding Equality Programme workstreams.

3.2 People

Focus:

To improve the experience that colleagues, and candidates, have with us by ensuring the employee cycle, from recruitment and induction and throughout the colleague journey, is inclusive, we will:

- a. Introduce a Disability Policy
- b. Review Attendance Management Procedures
- c. Review Recruitment and Selection process and practice
- d. Focus workforce planning processes on increasing the diversity of the workforce
- e. Introduce a new Dignity and Respect at Work Policy
- f. Embed Staff Networks
- g. Periodically review all people policies to ensure they are inclusive

Action:

- a. An overall Disability Support Review that has included information and guidance supplied in a traditional disability policy has been completed. This has included putting in place Workplace Support Profiles, Reasonable Adjustment guidelines and processes in conjunction with introducing Disability Leave options in 2023 as part of the Leave Options Policy.
- b. In 2023 we are introducing new guidance to support colleagues taking leave which is both planned and unexpected. This is included in the new policy providing a more people centred approach when colleagues are taking leave including disability leave, carers leave, dependants leave and cultural and religious observance. The new guidance provides additional emphasis on how absence is supported.

- c. A candidate engagement pack has been developed and introduced to the recruitment process to attract and engage new candidates.
- d. The People team has strengthened its team capability to support the design and delivery of a more inclusive colleague experience going forward and to consequently increase the diversity of the workforce.
- e. Our Dignity and Respect at Work Policy is in development and will be introduced in 2023, in conjunction with new government legislation due to be introduced in autumn 2023.
- f. Four Staff Networks were established in 2022. They are the: Disability, Long-term Health Conditions and Carers Network (known as DisLoC), Ethnic Diversity Network, Gender Equity Network and Pride Network.

Each Network has a Senior Leadership Team sponsor, who they meet with quarterly, but who is always available to provide support and champion the network supported by the People Team.

- g. All our existing policies are periodically reviewed to ensure that they are in line with best practice, are inclusive and have a consistent tone that reflects the people centred approach we are introducing across the organisation.

Action:

To improve the declaration rates of workforce equality data and contribute to a diversity dashboard, we will:

- h. Review our employee monitoring declaration process to encourage colleagues to declare on all protected characteristics
- i. Use the findings from team surveys to identify insights and focus on what matters to those team members
- j. Establish an equality baseline to inform the EDI dashboard and gain a deeper understanding of issues and needs by protected characteristic
- k. Publish the Authority's gender pay gap and action plan in a timely manner.

Action:

- h. We have reviewed our employees monitoring and declaration process to encourage more colleagues to declare their protected characteristics. This will be introduced in Summer 2023. Improved declaration rates will provide us with a clearer picture of the makeup of our organisation in order to identify trends, develop more targeted actions, calculate gaps more accurately and provide a benchmark for us to measure success against.
- i. The findings from our team survey were analysed according to protected characteristics.
- j. An Equality baseline has now been established and is refreshed on a monthly basis.
- k. The Authority's gender pay gap and action plan was published in line with the required Office for National Statistics deadline with actions feeding into the wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. The Gender Pay Gap report can be found [here](#).

To ensure colleagues and elected members understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, we will:

- l. Develop appropriate learning and development interventions to provide colleagues and members with the information they need to carry out their roles effectively and support an inclusive workplace culture. This will include:
 - mandatory EDI training for new colleagues
 - specific training to raise awareness of particular characteristics as required – e.g. LGBT+, autism

Action:

- l. The Authority is committed to developing colleagues to have the capability, skills and understanding to create a culture of inclusion and equity. An equality and diversity learning hub which includes supportive materials and additional resources is available to all colleagues . It includes Disability Awareness for Managers and specialist learning including Epilepsy Awareness, Neurodiversity Awareness and Understanding Autism.

Workshops including “Let’s talk about race” (run for Elected members) and “Disability – A Lived Experience” (for managers) have also been run this year.

Mandatory equality, diversity and inclusion training is delivered to all colleagues and elected members and is part of the inductions programme for all new colleagues and elected members. There is a requirement for all colleagues to refresh this training every 3 years.

3.3 Data and performance

Focus:

- a. Develop equality dashboards for SLT and service areas
- b. Standard equality and diversity questions promoted in new survey training
- c. Improve access to equality and diversity data via data store:
 - publish data from major surveys by equality demographics
 - publish more customer equality profile summaries
 - provide links to relevant national equality data reports
 - raise awareness of borough equality profile
- d. Improve collection and use of customer/service user equality data (to be progressed alongside Accessibility Workstream action to audit customer IT systems)

Action:

- a. The development of equality dashboards is closely linked to the creation of our new electronic Equality Impact Assessment system, which was expected to be ready for December 2022. Although a full specification for the system has been agreed, delivery has been delayed until December 2023 due to reprioritisation of projects. Once the new EqIA system is established dashboards will be provided to SLT and directorates to monitor the number and status of EqIAs. The dashboards will contain workforce equality data, details of which will be determined in 2023.
- b. New survey training is being developed. It emphasises the importance of using standard equality and diversity questions in survey design and data collection. As agreed at Senior Leadership Team in 2018 the questions and categories used by the Authority comply with the Government Statistical Service's harmonised standard. This standard has been rigorously tested from both a community and research perspective. It enables comparison with national

data sets (including the 2021 Census) and aligns with statutory data collection requirements (including social care data and pay gap reporting).

- c. Our datastore is being reviewed and updated to improve access to equality and diversity data. Data from the 2021 Census by protected characteristic is now published and is also available within our borough and ward profiles. Relevant national reports highlighting the needs and issues experienced by protected groups are also now available.

Our summary profiles on the make-up of both our secondary school pupils and young people working with the Youth Offending Team have been updated. New summary profiles on our tenants, housing benefit and council tax support claimants, adult social care service users and customers of our Adult Learners Service have also been added to our data store. These can be used to inform EqlAs. However when the new CRM system (please see section 3.5 for further details) is implemented and connected to existing business systems, this will enable the Authority to deliver further improved customer services.

The updated datastore is being promoted during EqlA training.

- d. Work continues to support the systematic collection of equality data through the Authority's planned innovation platform. The EqlA undertaken for the new system included the requirement to where appropriate, collect customer equality data and information on their communication needs, title preferences and required pronouns.

The specification for the Authority's Unified Housing System also includes requirements to collect customer diversity data.

3.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Focus:

- a. Develop a 'business as usual' EqlA template
- b. Implement interim MS Office Teams storage of EqlAs
- c. Implement EqlA training plan
- d. Develop on-going EqlA support options
- e. Develop and implement electronic EqlA system

- f. Agree EqIA monitoring and reporting processes
- g. Support service areas to embed EqIAs in planning and decision making processes

Action:

- a. The Business As Usual (BAU) EqIA template has been developed. Following the equality stocktake all Directorates have made a commitment in their Directorate Plan to create and share six business as usual EqIAs during 2023/24. Colleagues in our highways team are currently using them to support the implementation of traffic regulation orders.
- b. The Teams folder for EqIAs has been created to enable every Directorate to store their EqIAs in a central location. EqIAs previous stored on EDRMS have also been transferred to the Teams folder.
- c&d The EqIA training Plan has been successfully rolled out. As a result 251 colleagues have taken part in in-person or training via Teams between September 2022 and May 2023. This has included specific training for Cabinet, SLT, all senior managers and members of Corporate Equality Group. All participants were asked to rate their confidence in completing an EqIA prior to the training and then again immediately afterwards. This revealed that out of an overall score of 5 confidence increased from 2.3 to 3.7, while the helpfulness of the training was rated at 4.2.

An on-line training course has also been developed on learning pool alongside good and poor practice exemplar EqIAs. Additional Teams courses will be provided as required and ongoing support is available via CEG members and the Equality Team.

- e&f A detailed scoping document has been developed, with an expected completion date for the creation of the electronic EqIA system of December 2023. The electronic system includes consideration of socio-economic impact.

The monitoring and reporting processes for EqIAs will be confirmed during testing of the electronic EqIA system.

- g. As described in section 3.1 action c work is ongoing to support directorates to embed EqIAs into their planning and decision making processes. The roll out of Business As Usual EqIAs will build upon the good practice already developed with regard to the Authority's Cabinet, Council and delegated matters reports.

3.5 Accessibility

Focus:

- a. Review access to buildings:
- Prioritise and implement appropriate good practice from AccessAble phase 1
 - Deliver AccessAble Phase 2 and implement prioritised recommendations
- b. Rollout bite-sized guidance from Accessible Information Policy
- c. Capture and use data on individual customer accessibility needs via new CRM system
- d. Agree an improvement plan to ensure other customer IT systems capture individual customer accessibility needs and this information is acted upon
- e. Develop additional BSL videos for key NTC webpages
- f. Review NTC complaints policy to ensure it highlights the needs to protected groups and equality profile data is collected and used
- g. Produce guidance on the Human Rights Act for colleagues and decision makers
- h. Install 2 new changing places facilities
- i. Submit bid for additional changing places facilities
- j. Review implementation of SignVideo

Action:

- a. A good practice review of the recommendations from Phase 1 of the AccessAble review of the accessibility of 30 of our public buildings and visitor attractions including our Leisure Centres, Libraries, Customer First Centres, Family Hubs, Segedunum, St Mary's Lighthouse and Quadrant was undertaken towards the end of 2021. The surveys identified a range of works requiring attention including induction loops, new mirrors, coat hooks and pull chords. All required works were fully completed by end of March 2023.

AccessAble assessed a further ten buildings, including our cemeteries and crematoria, Stephenson Railway Museum and Killingworth Block A, Northumberland Park, Richardson Dees Park and Shiremoor Adventure Play site between October and December 2022. All of the reports are available on [AccessAble's Guide to North Tyneside](#). The current schedule of recommended works (similar to the phase 1 schedule) have now been identified and are being progressed. It is expected that all works will be fully completed by the end of summer 2023.

All buildings (phase 1 and 2) are due for an annual re-survey starting in September 2023. Any required actions or updates will be reviewed and actioned accordingly.

- b. A communication plan was developed to promote our [Accessible Information Policy](#): colleagues were interviewed to explain how the policy has supported them in their roles and helped them to provide better customer service. Tips are also being shared in our employee newsletter Teamwork, the policy was promoted at Leadership Forum and it is available on the Authority's intranet.

Accessibility checklists were also developed for use in planning and running public consultation events as part of the North East Devolution Consultation and for our polling stations.

- c/d Customer records on the Authority's new customer relationship management system, will include key demographic/ protected characteristic data on sex, gender, age, disability and ethnicity and will also include fields on pronouns, communication needs and access needs. This will enable the Authority to understand the make-up of its customers and service users (including who is not using its services), ensure its information, services and buildings are accessible and we communicate with our customers as they need us to.

It is planned that the new CRM system will act as the central customer information store and will connect to other systems that currently hold customer information such as the Unified Housing System, Social Care and Leisure and Libraries systems, enabling the benefits outlined above to be achieved across a range of services.

- c. Further BSL Videos are planned on electoral services, hate crime and incidents and corporate complaints.
- d. Following the creation of the Customer First Office a review of the Authority's complaints procedure is underway and includes an updated equality section. The procedure is due to be published in July 2023. A new customer satisfaction survey which collects equality data was launched in November 2022 and customer feedback is being monitored.
- e. Legal Services will provide training and guidance to Leadership Forum in September 2023 around the Human Rights Act
- f. Installation of the changing places facilities at Whitley Park and North Shields Fish Quay that the Authority received funding for from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) in 2022 was delayed due to unforeseen ground conditions and utility connection issues. These issues have now been resolved, with both projects due to be completed by the end of July 2023.
- g. In February 2023 DLUHC confirmed that the Authority had been awarded £100,000 to install changing places facilities at the Rising Sun Countryside Centre and Richardson Dees Park. Work is underway to finalise detailed delivery plans and appoint contractors so that both schemes can be completed by March 2024.
- h. A review of the SignVideo service that provides a live BSL video links to our Customer Contact Centre and video relay services to 14 reception desks in our Customer First, leisure, libraries and headquarters building was completed. Although take up at the reception desks is low it was agreed to continue to provide the service. Further promotion of the service was also undertaken during Deaf Awareness Week in May 2023.

3.6 External engagement

Focus:

- a. Appoint an Engagement Officer (Equality).
- b. Develop, agree and implement a work programme to improve engagement with underrepresented communities with protected characteristics.
- c. Develop more shared engagement activities with partners.
- d. Develop campaigns and initiatives to increase participation in public life and leadership of people from protected groups.
- e. Improve Members' profile within communities with protected characteristics.

Action:

a-c An Engagement Manager was appointed in summer 2022 and an Equality Engagement Advisor has been in post from mid-June 2023. Their work programme will include action to develop shared engagement activities with partners with support from our Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison Manager.

As part the Authority's inclusive engagement agenda, these roles will seek to:

- ensure that the Authority's engagement includes those residents who are underrepresented in activities, including those with protected characteristics.
 - enhance the work already undertaken by our Participation, Advocacy and Engagement Team with a range of groups including: children and young people (including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and looked after children and care leavers) and with the Ethnic Diversity Community Taskforce.
- d. The Authority undertakes annual equality monitoring of the characteristics of its elected members.
 - e. Opportunities to improve members profile with communities with protected characteristics will be explored following the development of relationships with these groups by the Equality Engagement Advisor.

4. Governance arrangements and progress monitoring

Progress against the Authority's equality objectives and the actions outlined in the Embedding Equality Programme are governed and monitored through:

- Monthly briefings and reports to the Cabinet Member with responsibility for equality, diversity and inclusion; quarterly updates to Senior Leadership Team (SLT); presentations and training to Leadership Forum; and engagement with our trade unions through the Employee Joint Consultative Forum.
- The activity of Corporate Equality Group (CEG). The group meets bi-monthly, its membership includes senior service representatives, Staff Network Chairs and trades union representatives, and it is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive. This group leads the equality work of the organisation and oversees the implementation of our Embedding Equality Programme. In its role as the board for the programme, it receives regular reports from workstream leads, who hold review meetings prior to each CEG.
- Engagement with our four Staff Networks on new policies and procedures at their monthly meetings, but also through the Network Chairs attendance at CEG and their quarterly meetings with their SLT sponsor.
- Our equality impact assessment process to ensure we properly consider the potential impact of operational, and Cabinet and Full Council decisions on protected groups.
- The identification and clearance of the equality implications of the decisions recommended in Cabinet and Full Council reports.
- Managing potential equality risks through the Risk Management process.
- Publication of equality data as required by government, including Gender Pay Gap reporting.
- Dealing with any complaints of discrimination, harassment and victimisation, seriously, promptly and confidentially.
- Biennial public consultation and updates on our Equality and Diversity Policy and Corporate Equality Objectives, which are then agreed by Cabinet.
- Publication of our Annual Equality and Diversity Review.

During phase 2 of the Embedding Equality Programme these arrangements will be further enhanced with the introduction of our Equality Dashboard, which will be regularly reported to SLT. Information on how service areas are contributing to the Programme will also be included in planned performance reports against the Authority's Organisational Business Plan.

Appendix:

Appendix A: Borough Equality Profile

Appendix B: Employee Data Narrative

Appendix A: Borough Profile

Profile of Borough Population (compiled April 2023)

Equality Group	Number in borough	% in borough	Source
Sex			
Female	107,708	51.5	ONS 2021 Mid-Year Population Estimates (total borough population 209,151)
Male	101,443	48.5	
Age			
Under 16	37,335	17.9	ONS 2021 Mid-Year Population Estimates (total borough population 209,151)
16-24	17,685	8.5	
25-34	25,947	12.4	
35-44	28,025	13.4	
45-54	28,067	13.4	
55-64	28,879	13.8	
65-74	24,026	11.5	
75 and over	19,187	9.2	
Trans			
Gender variant people	667	0.4%	ONS Census 2021 Gender identity - dataset TS078 (total of usual residents aged 16 and over with gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given, trans women, trans men and all other gender identities).
Ethnic origin			
White	198,208	94.9	ONS Census 2021 Ethnic group - dataset TS021
White English, Welsh, Scottish Northern Irish or British	190,303	92.5	
White Irish	797	0.4	
Any other white background	4,108	2.0	

Black or Black British or Black Welsh	1,281	0.6	
Caribbean	102	0.0	
African	1,020	0.5	
Any other Black background	159	0.1	
Asian or Asian British or Asian Welsh	5,396	2.6	
Indian	1,539	0.7	
Pakistani	528	0.3	
Bangladeshi	1,009	0.5	
Chinese	1,225	0.6	
Any other Asian background	1,095	0.5	
Mixed	2,879	1.4	
White and Black Caribbean	501	0.2	
White and Black African	663	0.3	
White and Asian	1,013	0.5	
Any other Mixed background	702	0.3	
Other			
	1,204	0.6	
Sexual Orientation			
Straight or heterosexual	157,223	91.7	ONS Census 2021 Sexual orientation - dataset TS077
Gay or Lesbian	2,925	1.7	
Bisexual	1,992	1.2	
All other sexual orientations	404	0.2	
Not answered	8,968	5.2	
Religion/Belief			
No religion	96,413	46.1	ONS Census 2021 Religion - dataset TS030
Christian	97,333	46.6	
Buddhist	587	0.3	

Hindu	823	0.4	
Jewish	128	0.1	
Muslim	2,517	1.2	
Sikh	437	0.2	
Other religion	774	0.4	
Not answered	9,954	4.8	
Person with a disability			
Disabled under the Equality Act	41,748	20.0	ONS Census 2021 Disability - dataset TS038
Marriage and civil partnership status			
Never married or registered a civil partnership	61,425	35.8	ONS Census 2021 Legal partnership status - dataset TS002
Married or in a registered civil partnership	76,283	44.5	
Separated, but still legally married or still legally in a civil partnership	4,341	2.5	
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	17,434	10.2	
Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner	12,026	7.0	

Appendix B: Employee Data Narrative

This appendix provides an explanation of the North Tyneside Council employee data presented in our [Datastore](#).

Our data

Data is produced from our Business Management System. As the equality, diversity and inclusion data we collect is disclosed on a voluntary basis we know there are issues on underreporting, but we have plans in place to address this by improving the data we collect and a planned campaign to improve declaration rates.

Overview of NTC Team

Overall, in April 2023 the Authority was employing 3,778 people, this was equivalent to 3,045 full time employees (Source: BMS Management System).

In our Senior Leadership Team, at Director level and above, 5 females and 5 males are employed by the Authority.

Currently, indeed since 2019, 62% of our workforce are female (higher than the borough figure of 52%) and 38% are male (the borough figure is 48% [ONS 2021 Census results](#)). This compares to 68% females and 32% males in 2017 (Source: [Datastore](#)).

The percentage of females at senior levels of the organisation remains high – at 58% the number of females in our North Tyneside Senior Pay Scales¹ has remained static since 2022. (Source: [Datastore](#)).

The Authority is currently undergoing a process of collecting more detailed declaration data from all colleagues across the organisation. When this data collection has been successfully completed and analysed the Authority will be in a position to better understand the profile of the workforce and analyse it against the demographics of the borough more effectively.

For this reason specific data relating to protected characteristics has not been provided. We anticipate that we will have an improved picture in 2024 once we have introduced a new data declaration process.

¹ The Authority's Senior Pay Scales were agreed by Council in 2008 following a pay and grading review where all jobs in the Council were job evaluated. The Senior Pay Scales apply to middle and senior management roles including Heads of Service, Directors and Chief Executive.

Recruitment

The Authority's recruitment practice is based on fairness and transparency, with people selected on merit and assessed against a set of required skills, values and behaviours. Job roles are open to internal and/or external competition.

We are a Disability Confident Employer and also offer a guaranteed interview to ex-army applicants on the basis that they meet both the essential and desirable requirements of a job vacancy.

We advertise our vacancies using a variety of channels including a regional jobs site, social media and other advertising methods to promote jobs and reach as wide a range of applicants as possible.

New Starters

The Authority currently has limited data to report on across all the protected characteristics in this area.

Leavers

The Authority currently has limited data to report on across all the protected characteristics in this area.

Flexible Working

All colleagues at the Authority are provided with the opportunity to request flexible working.

Pay Gaps

Our gender pay gap figures are produced in line with government guidance and compare the mean and median hourly pay, excluding overtime, of males and females working full-time.

Our gender pay gap report as of 31 March 2023 can be found [here](#) and includes an action plan to address the gaps identified.

We are in the process of producing a Race Pay Profile that will be published in due course

Learning and Development

The Authority has seen an overall increase of 15% in engagement in Learning and Development from the workforce over the last 5 years.

Learning and Development opportunities are continuously under review in terms of the catalogue of opportunities available, as well as the way they are delivered in order to achieve an increased level of engagement across the organisation, and in response to best practice and the most successful methods identified to engage with colleagues.

In addition to the quantitative data collected by the Authority, a review of post learning evaluation data is carried out to ensure the learning and development offer continues to meet the needs of the whole workforce. If any issues are raised during the evaluation process they are acted upon and adjustments put in place.