

# Annual Equality and Diversity Review June 2024

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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.

If you need us to do anything differently (reasonable adjustments) to help you access information in this report, including providing it in another language or format, please contact [anne.foreman@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:anne.foreman@northtyneside.gov.uk) or call 0191 643 2225.

## **Our highlights**

Since our last Equality and Diversity Review was published in June 2023, together we have:

- Agreed Phase 3 of our Embedding Equality Programme, helping to deliver our equality policy commitments and objectives by making equality everybody's business
- Adopted the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act
- Launched our Dignity and Respect at Work Policy and incident reporting system
- Created an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Hub on our Learning Pool portal giving more colleagues greater access to EDI resources and support
- Promoted our new Leave Options Guidance to offer a wider range of support and information with a more flexible approach for leave including disability leave, carers leave and time off for emergencies
- Welcomed the creation of a new Staff Network – Diversity of Thought which aims to support neurodiverse colleagues and raise awareness about neurodiversity
- Delivered a range of awareness raising events and campaigns in line with the Authority's Equality Calendar for 2024
- Campaigned to improve colleague diversity data to inform service planning and support
- Run human rights training for senior managers
- Updated our candidate attraction packs to create a more accessible and inclusive approach to recruiting new team members

- Made sanitary products available for free in our community hubs, headquarters and Killingworth buildings
- Designed and implemented our Anti-racism promise for the Authority with agreement from SLT and Cabinet.
- Enrolled a second colleague on SOLACE AMPLify, an inclusive leadership programme developed for aspiring talent and empowering future leaders to drive meaningful change in the public sector
- Achieved Bronze Trailblazer status from Race Equality Matters
- Retained top accreditation from the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance for the support given to survivors of Domestic Abuse
- Rolled out a multi-sectoral North Tyneside Neurodiversity Programme to improve understanding of the needs of children and young people who think differently and take a co-production approach to ensuring those needs are met
- Continued to implement our Connecting Communities Strategy to create six community hubs that will work with our communities and partners to make sure they offer the services and support local residents want and need
- Celebrated diversity and multiculturalism at the third North Tyneside Together Festival in September 2023
- Worked with Walking With and North Tyneside Learning Partnership to support twelve more schools to apply to be Schools of Sanctuary
- Appointed a Housing Navigator to support single homeless people and rough sleepers to find accommodation and sustain their tenancies
- Unveiled a blue plaque as part of Black History Month to commemorate the life of Charles Minto MBE who fought to provide accommodation, community events, job opportunities and employment rights for the hundreds of Black people who lived in North Shields in the 1930s and 1940s

- Opened four new Changing Places facilities in Whitley Park, North Fields Fish Quay, Rising Sun Country Park and Wallsend Parks, in the later an accessible BBQ area and picnic benches were also installed
- Developed supported internships to help 16-24 year olds help young people with special educational needs and disabilities gain practical work experience helping them to transition from school to employment
- Continued to deliver our poverty intervention work focused on supporting residents experiencing food insecurity, fuel poverty, financial crises and emergencies, and people needing support with clothing and household bills
- Received recognition from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services for the good practice demonstrated by our Inspire Adult Social Care (ASC) Improvement Forum and Autism Better Together per led support and social group
- Worked with our Inspire Forum to co-produce more than 30 new plain English and easy read adult social care information sheets and BSL videos
- Further embedded EDI in ASC workforce development, focusing on intersectionality, inclusion, invisible difference, anti-oppression and anti-racism
- Launched a bookable respite care offer in partnership with AgeUK and Everyday Care and Support
- Worked with the local community to support the True Arts inclusive performing arts group to transform the old Willington Quay and Howdon Boys Club building into a creative home for the charity – as part of the DIY SOS: The Big Build TV programme
- Embedded equality as a strategic delivery priority into Directorate Actions Plans for 2024/25
- Ran a conference to improve school colleagues' knowledge and understanding of emotionally based school non-attendance

- Hosted an international professional forum to support work with bilingual pupils and those for whom English is an additional language
- Created a booklet and [Supporting and Enabling Parents \(padlet.com\)](#) padlet to provide advice, support and signposting for parents with English as an additional language to help them make the most of the opportunities in North Tyneside
- Increased access, awareness and take up of support services through opening our Working Well hubs in North Shields, Wallsend, the North West and Whitley Bay with 12,000 residents accessing since August 2022
- Targeted employment support at those with protected characteristics, with activities such as:
  - Jobs fairs and support events specifically for asylum seekers, refugees, young people, over 50's
  - Partnered with 'Walking With' to deliver 'drop in' and 'outreach' services
  - Delivered 'calm' jobseeker support sessions for neuro-diverse residents in partnership with NE Autism Society
  - Employed a dedicated Resettlement Employment and Skills Coordinator
- Challenged attitudes towards and increased understanding of disability by encouraging North Tyneside businesses to be Healthy Workplaces including promoting 'Disability Confident' and the 'Good Work Pledge' schemes
- Offered digital support and access to devices for vulnerable groups
- Provided a 'warm welcome' for vulnerable residents including wellbeing activities to reduce anxiety
- Gave residents a choice of face to face and digital engagement dependent on their individual employability needs, including outreach services close to their homes
- Worked with The Bay Food Bank and The Bread and Butter Thing (TBBT) to make referrals and help tackle food poverty

- Provided sensitive and personalised employability services for LGBTQ+ customers
- Adult Learning worked with the Housing team to provide resettlement employment and skills advice and ESOL (English as a second language) to support community integration and cohesion
- Embedded reasonable adjustments into the delivery of the apprenticeships training undertaken by the Adult Learning Service
- Produced new guidance for front-line colleagues on how to manage and support customers and service users with assistance dogs
- Installed 48 linked smoke alarm kits for North Tyneside Living tenants who are either deaf or have a hearing loss – all new tenants who are deaf or visually impaired will have specific smoke alarms installed in their properties.

## 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'.

Cabinet agreed the following objectives in 2023. They closely align with our Embedding Equality Programme 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.

Our objectives will be reviewed again in winter 2024/25.

**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 can make a difference in the Authority.



- The Authority has high satisfaction levels across all colleagues in respect of colleague engagement.
- EqlAs 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 results.

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

#### **Outcomes**

- Voluntary employee diversity declaration has increased to 65%
- 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 underrepresented 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 EqIAs 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.

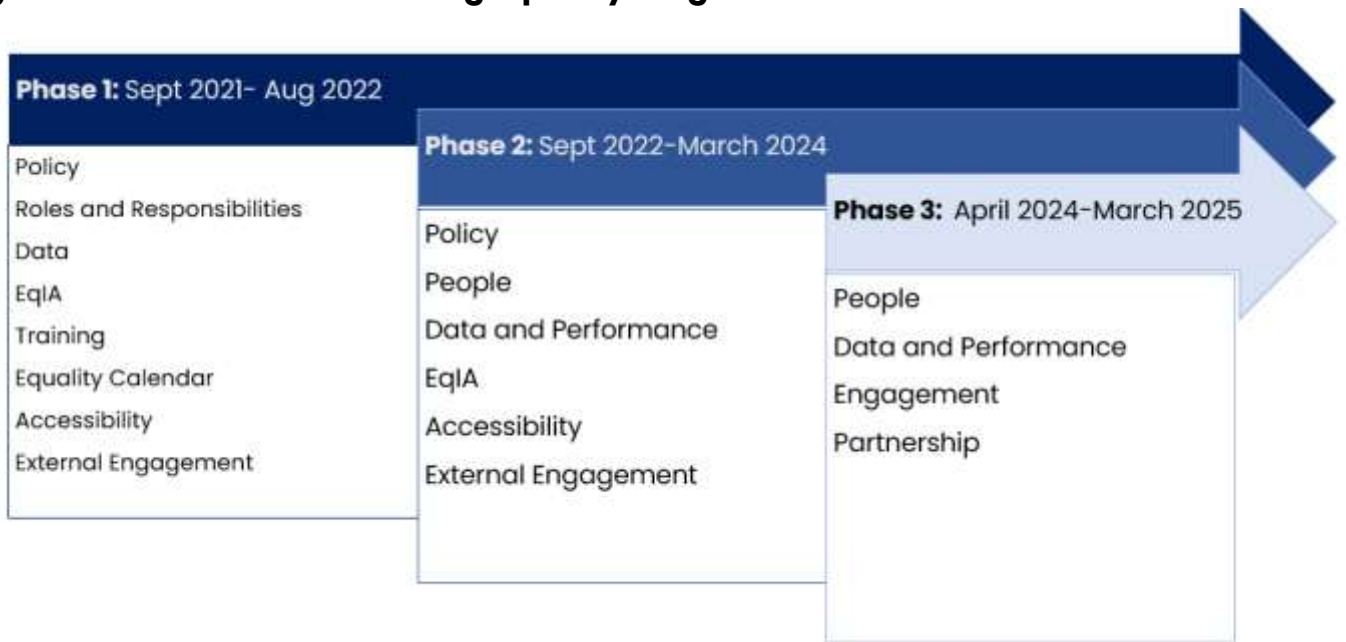
Our Embedding Equality Programme was formally launched in September 2021. It aims to mainstream equality and to ensure every member of the NTC Team can play an active part in the delivery of our policy commitments and equality objectives. It also enables the Authority to review its performance against 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.

Phase two of the Programme ran from September 2022 – March 2024. The programme was reviewed and updated in Spring 2024, and a third and final phase agreed. As Figure 1 (overleaf) shows Phase Three retains three of the workstreams from Phase Two and introduces a new Partnership Workstream.

**Figure 1: Overview of Embedding Equality Programme and Workstreams**



This chapter provides a review of progress made during phase two of the programme and outlines the priorities for phase three.

## 3.1 Policy

### Phase Two: 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

### Phase 2: Action

- a. Our [Hate Crime Policy Statement](#) was created in October 2022, following engagement with the Mayor's Ethnic Diversity Community Taskforce and our Staff Networks, Cabinet agreed it in October 2022. It strengthened our commitment to address hate crime and incidents and support those colleagues and community members who experience them.

The introduction of our new Dignity and Respect at Work policy and incident reporting system in Spring 2024 has also helped to ensure that should any colleague experience a hate incident they will receive the appropriate support.

- b. We established a strong [business case](#) for our equality work, in line with the criteria set out in the LGA Equality Framework. This informs strategic and service planning.
- c. The Corporate Equality Group (CEG) Development Day was held in September 2022. During the event, training on the Authority's new Equality Impact Assessment template was completed, 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 the stocktakes asked: is equality, diversity and inclusion considered on Senior Management Team agenda? can directorates evidence how they contribute to the equality elements of the Authority's policy framework? how is employee and customer equality, diversity and inclusion data is collected and used to inform decision making? how are equality impact assessments being used and how are accessibility issues considered?

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

- e. Equality processes has been embedded in Procurement, IT Board, Investment Board, traffic regulation processes, our corporate brand, redesign of our website and complaints procedures. Commitments have also been made to embed equality into investigations undertaken by Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee and our planning processes.

37 Business as Usual EqIAs were also completed across the Authority between April 2023 and March 2024, helping to embed equality in the Authority's day to day operational processes.

- f. Awareness raising activities and information continue to be publicised internally and externally through the Authority's 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 2023 we have promoted a range of activities, which in addition to the above, has included: running our third North Tyneside Together Festival, raising awareness raising activities during Carers Week, Northtyneside Together Festival, World Alzheimer's Day, Hate Crime Awareness Week, Baby Loss Awareness Week, International Men's Day, White Ribbon Day, World Aids Day, Race Equality Week, Neurodiversity Celebration Week, Internatinal

Transgender Day of Visibility and Black Inclusion Week. Calendar dates are marked in a variety of ways, including blog posts, lighting up key buildings in the colours of each cause, using our social media platforms, promoting local charities and groups, running exhibitions, sporting challenges, information stalls, 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. Both will be reviewed again in winter 2024/25.

### **Phase Three**

This workstream has been merged with the Policy and Performance workstream – please see section 3.4 for further details.



## 3.2 People

### Phase Two: 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

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.

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

- I. 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.

## **Phase Two: Action**

- a. A Disability Support and Information area within our colleague ED&I (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) hub was launched in March 2024. This area provides information and guidance traditionally supplied in a disability policy. This includes:
  - an area detailing all internal workplace support provided to colleagues
  - information regarding our Disability Action Plan and Disability Confident status
  - learning and development offerings to colleagues regarding disability and neurodiversity
  - external support
  - useful information on supporting colleagues at work, including defining disability, how to be a disability ally and the use of inclusive language.
- b. In 2023 we introduced 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. We are developing our Recruitment Guidance for Managers to be launched in September 2024 which will include offering a more inclusive recruitment experience for 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 was launched in March 2024 to support colleagues who experience or witness discrimination, bullying or harassment in the workplace.
- f. Five Staff Networks are now established, with over 100 members across the organisation. They are the: Disability, Long-term Health Conditions and Carers Network (known as DisLoC), Diversity of Thought, 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 and are 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.
- h. In July 2023, we reviewed our employees monitoring and declaration process to encourage more colleagues to declare their protected characteristics and reset the statistics we had to 0. By spring 2024 we had increased our diversity declaration rates to 65% across the Authority. Improved declaration rates will provide us with a clearer picture of the makeup of our organisation, enabling us to identify trends, develop more targeted actions, more accurately calculate gaps and provide a benchmark for us to measure success against.
- i. The findings from our team survey were analysed according to protected characteristics and action plans formulated based on the results of the survey. We will be launching the 2024 Team Survey in September 2024.
- j. An Equality baseline has now been established and is refreshed every month.
- 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](#).

- I. 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 Trans, Non-binary and Gender Diverse Awareness, Disability Awareness for Managers and specialist learning including Epilepsy Awareness, Neurodiversity Awareness and Understanding Autism.

Workshops including 'Understanding Inclusion' (run for Senior Leadership Team) and tea and talks for colleagues, including 'Let's Talk about Race' and 'Living with ME'.

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.

### **Phase Three:**

The People workstream will continue, with priorities, to:

- a. Design ED&I and Health and Wellbeing data reports for analysis and distribution
- b. Publish Gender, Pay Gap report internally and externally and Disability and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports internally
- c. Launch and act on findings of 2024 Team Survey
- d. Develop inclusive recruitment guidance
- e. Enhance and raise awareness of our learning and development equality offer
- f. Review the current exit interview process and plan (re)design stay/exit content and procedures
- g. Ensure that all policies are updated in line with legislative changes

h. Continue to review the Authority's Attendance Management Procedure to ensure a wider focus on prevention strategies and health and wellbeing.

A review of progress against these priorities will be reported in the June 2025 Equality and Diversity Review.

### **3.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

#### **Phase Two: Focus**

- a. Develop a 'business as usual' EqIA template
- b. Implement interim MS Office Teams storage of EqIAs
- c. Implement EqIA training plan
- d. Develop on-going EqIA support options
- e. Develop and implement electronic EqIA system
- f. Agree EqIA monitoring and reporting processes
- g. Support service areas to embed EqIAs in planning and decision-making processes.

#### **Phase Two: Action**

- a. The Business as Usual (BAU) EqIA template was developed in autumn 2022. Following the equality stocktake all Directorates made a commitment in their Directorate Plan to create and share six business as usual EqIAs during 2023/24.
- b. The Teams folder for EqIAs was created in autumn 2022 to enable every Directorate to store their EqIAs in a central location. EqIAs previously stored on EDRMS were also transferred to the Teams folder.
- c&d The EqIA training Plan was successfully rolled out. With 251 colleagues taking part in in-person or training via Teams between September 2022 and May 2023. This 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.

SLT determined that all members of the Authority's Leadership Forum, which consists of SLT and Heads of Service, should receive EqIA training. Take up by new managers is therefore monitored monthly and action taken. EqIA training is also available on Learning Pool, with live, targeted training available on request.

e&f The electronic EqIA system has been developed; testing began in March 2024.

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

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 has built upon the good practice already developed with regard to the Authority's Cabinet, Council and delegated matters reports.

### **Phase Three**

This workstream has been merged with the Policy and Performance workstream – please see the following section 3.3 for further details.

### **3.4 Data and performance**

#### **Phase Two: 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 diversity 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).

#### **Phase Two: Action**

- a. The development of equality dashboards is closely linked to the creation of our new electronic Equality Impact Assessment system. Once the new system is fully tested and launched, dashboards will be provided to SLT and directorates to monitor the number and status of EqIAs.
- b. The new survey training was launched in spring 2024. 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 has been 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 housing benefit and council tax support claimants, adult social care service users and customers of our Adult Learners Service are in development ready to be added to our data store. Such profiles can be used to inform EqlAs. However, our aim is that when the new CIP (Customer Innovation Platform –please see section 3.5 for further details) is 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 and support.

- d. In Spring 2023 the Corporate Equality Team created a customer data standard, which complements the standard equality and diversity survey questions. This standard has been adopted by IT who have agreed to apply it to new apps and systems either developed or procured by IT.

### **Phase Three**

The Data and Performance workstream will continue, incorporating the remaining priorities from the policy and equality impact assessment workstreams. Its priorities will be to:

- Implement a standard set of demographic fields in our information systems to capture a minimum set of equality and diversity data on customers
- Disaggregate and report on customer equality and diversity data to identify gaps in participation and inform service design and delivery
- Support the consistent recording and use of customer communication needs and enable recording of pronouns
- Embed electronic equality impact assessments and monitoring
- Update equality objectives and integrate into organisational plans

- Create formal guidance for suppliers on the equality requirements of the procurement and commissioning process.

A review of progress against these priorities will be reported in the June 2025 Equality and Diversity Review.

### **3.5 Accessibility**

#### **Phase Two: 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

#### **Phase Two: Action**

- a. Following AccessAble's 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 in 2021, a schedule of works was identified and completed. T

This process was repeated in 2022/2023 when 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 and a second schedule of works completed in summer 2023. All of the reports are available on [AccessAble's Guide to North Tyneside](#) and on the relevant pages of the Authority's website.

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

- b. A communication plan has been implemented to promote our [Accessible Information Policy](#).
- c/d Customer records on the Authority's new CIP system now include key demographic/ protected characteristic data on sex, gender, age, disability and ethnicity, plus pronouns, communication needs and access needs. This is helping 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 have been created and published on electoral services, corporate complaints, the Authority's Equality and Diversity Policy and on services provided by Adult Social Care. More videos and easy read materials are planned.
- d. Following the creation of the Customer First Office a review of the Authority's complaints procedure was 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. In September 2023 Legal Services provided training and guidance to Leadership Forum on the practical implications of the Human Rights Act. This training will also be given to Corporate Equality Group and Cabinet. An e-learning module is also planned which all colleagues will be able to access.
- f. New Changing Places facilities in Whitley Park and North Shields Fish Quay opened to the public in Spring 2024.
- g. A further two new Changing Places facilities opened to the public in March 2024 at the Rising Sun Countryside Centre and Richardson Dees Park. At the same time section 106 funding was also used to install accessible picnic and BBQ facilities close to changing place.
- 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.

### **Phase Three**

A review found that this workstream has achieved all of its priorities and has embedded accessibility principles within the Authority that will continue to be implemented and monitored. It was therefore agreed to close this workstream.

## **3.6 Engagement**

### **Phase Two: 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.

### **Phase Two: Action**

a-c An Engagement Manager was appointed in summer 2022 and an Equality Engagement Advisor came into post in June 2023. Their work programme includes actions 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 are ensuring that:

- the Authority's engagement includes those residents who are underrepresented in activities, including those with protected characteristics.
  - 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, is enhanced.
- d. The Authority undertakes annual equality monitoring of the characteristics of its elected members.

- e. Governor Services for our schools has agreed to implement and evaluate a recruitment campaign that seeks to increase governor diversity. Additional initiatives to increase diversity in public life also began to be explored.

### **Phase Three:**

The Engagement workstream will continue, with priorities, to:

- Develop engagement leads within all services to ensure consistency in engagement activities across the Council
- Support the development of EqlAs as part of the engagement process
- Develop training for colleagues and members around engagement activities including the new Engagement website
- Progress Local Authority of Sanctuary application and develop the work of the Ethnic Diversity Community Taskforce
- Increase minority participation and leadership in engagement activities, including exploring opportunities for co-development and co-creation projects
- Embed robust partner working with police and PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner) around hate crime, including improved data sharing
- Develop and launch campaigns to raise awareness of opportunities to participate in public life in North Tyneside.

A review of progress against these priorities will be reported in the June 2025 Equality and Diversity Review.

### **3.7 Partnership**

The review of Phase two of the Embedding Programme against the criteria set out in the LGA Equality Framework resulted in the creation of the new Partnership Workstream. It's priorities during Phase Three seek to:

- Deliver a commitment to the principle of embedding equality and diversity across the NorthTyneside Strategic Partnership (NTSP)
- Review the contribution of existing Theme Partnership strategies/action plans
- Host an Executive Board Equality Workshop
- Agree equality objectives and outcomes for the partnership
- Ensure equality considerations are built into theme partnership strategies and action plans
- Implement equality monitoring arrangements across the partnership
- Improve the promotion and visibility of NTSP.



## **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.
- 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.
- Engagement with our five 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, Full Council and delegated decisions on protected groups.
- The identification and clearance of the equality implications of the decisions recommended in Cabinet, Full Council and delegated matters 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.

## **Appendix:**

Appendix A: Borough Equality Profile

Appendix B: Employee Data Narrative

## Appendix A: Borough Profile

### Profile of Borough Population (compiled May 2024)

Equality Group	Number in borough	% in borough	Source
<b>Sex</b>			
Female	108,184	51.4%	<a href="#">ONS 2022 Mid-Year Population Estimates</a> (total borough population 210,487)
Male	102,303	48.6%	
<b>Age</b>			
Under 16	37,346	17.7%	<a href="#">ONS 2022 Mid-Year Population Estimates</a> (total borough population 210,487)
16-24	17,680	8.4%	
25-34	25,995	12.3%	
35-44	28,999	13.8%	
45-54	27,522	13.1%	
55-64	29,063	13.8%	
65-74	23,571	11.3%	
75 and over	20,131	9.6%	
<b>Trans</b>			
Gender variant people	667	0.4%	<a href="#">ONS Census 2021 Gender identity - dataset TS078</a> (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).

<b>Ethnic origin</b>			
<b>White</b>	<b>198,208</b>	<b>94.9</b>	<a href="#">ONS Census 2021 Ethnic group - dataset TS021</a>
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	
<b>Black or Black British or Black Welsh</b>			
Caribbean	102	0.0	
African	1,020	0.5	
Any other Black background	159	0.1	
<b>Asian or Asian British or Asian Welsh</b>			
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	
<b>Mixed</b>			
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	
<b>Other</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>0.6</b>	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>			
Straight or heterosexual	157,223	91.7	<a href="#">ONS Census 2021 Sexual orientation - dataset TS077</a>
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	
<b>Religion/Belief</b>			
No religion	96,413	46.1	<a href="#">ONS Census 2021 Religion - dataset TS030</a>
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	
<b>Person with a disability</b>			
Disabled under the Equality Act	41,748	20.0	<a href="#">ONS Census 2021 Disability - dataset TS038</a>

<b>Marriage and civil partnership status</b>			
Never married or registered a civil partnership	61,425	35.8	<a href="#">ONS Census 2021 Legal partnership status - dataset TS002</a>
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. We have worked throughout 2023 to address this and have increased our diversity declaration rates to 65% completion across the Council. Work is ongoing continuously to improve this.

### 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 Scales<sup>1</sup> 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 able to better understand the profile of the workforce and analyse it against the demographics of the borough more effectively.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.

## **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, but we are working to address this.

## **Leavers**

The Authority currently has limited data to report on across all the protected characteristics in this area, but we are working to address this.

## **Flexible Working**

All colleagues at the Authority are provided with the opportunity to request flexible working. We are working to find ways to record and monitor take up by protected characteristic.



## **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 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.