

City of York Council

Draft Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2024 - 2027

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Our Vision

As a core commitment within our Council Plan we are ambitious for and committed to achieving continuous improvement and equality across all our services and functions. We aim to deliver services that are equally accessible to all our customers and to implement robust strategies and policies that are person centred and considerate of needs. As an employer we will ensure equity in the recruitment, training and promotion of our employees. We will also celebrate diversity within the workplace and our city, encourage our employees to embrace continuous learning and development in all aspects of their role as officers and as individuals supporting our communities. As part of this process our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy aims to ensure we deliver on our commitments and, drive change at all levels of the Council.

We will collaborate with our strategic partners, as well as employees, trade unions, community groups, service users, residents and customers to co-produce initiatives and deliver the change we aspire to. We are proud to continue deliver against our commitments as a Human Rights City and City of Sanctuary, and seek to support and include all members of our communities to be the best they can be in our city.

Our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 2027 is a working document, which will be constantly under review by our Corporate Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Group as well as our external stakeholders and we welcome any comments and collaborative working, which may inform the process. We will report annually in April 2025, 2026 and 2027 on the progress we have made and include any new actions.

We believe that this Strategy and action plan not only highlights the council's commitment to achieve true equity, celebrate diversity and secure the inclusion of all, but also makes us transparent and accountable.

Finally, we would like to express our support for and commitment to this strategy and look forward to seeing positive outcomes and benefits emerge from its implementation.

Cllr Claire Douglas
Leader of the Council

Ian Floyd
Chief Operating Officer

Consultation Draft

1 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (ED&I) Statement

Equity

Equity is about the fair treatment for all people, so that strategies, policies, procedures and practices that are being implemented ensure that protected characteristic identity is not predictive of life chances, opportunities and outcomes.

Equality presumes that all people should be treated the same. However, equity has a different approach. Equity takes into consideration a person's or a community's protected characteristics, for example disability, race/ethnicity, sex, religion/belief, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment/identity, social class, maternity/paternity, marriage or civil partnership (in employment) and promotes the adjustments to service or employment practice to ensure that the outcome is equal. Equity recognises that structures, bias and lack of opportunities lead to disadvantage.

Diversity

The Council values diversity and recognise that different people bring different perspectives, ideas, knowledge and culture and that this difference brings great strength. A wider talent pool provides new perspectives and is proven to create innovation.

We believe that discrimination or exclusion based on individual characteristics and circumstances, such as age; disability; caring or dependency responsibilities; sex or gender reassignment, identity or expression; marriage and civil partnership status; political opinion; pregnancy and maternity; race, colour, care experience; nationality, ethnic or national origin; religion or belief; sexual orientation; socio-economic background; trade union membership status or other

distinctions, represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.

We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

Inclusion

Inclusion is about workplace experiences and the degree to which employers involve and embrace all employees, recognise that their diversity adds to value to **the council, it's service users**, communities, external stakeholders and create more innovative solutions and meaningful contributions. National and international evidence illustrates that inclusive cultures lead to diverse workplaces.

2. Our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Commitment

To achieve our vision we will value diversity in our communities, promote an inclusive society and oppose all form of intolerance and prejudicial discrimination, whether it is, intentional, unintentional or intentional.

City of York Council is therefore committed to :

- Working in partnership with all communities in York to ensure they are fully involved in democratic decision-making processes;*
- Ensuring all council services (and information about them) are available to, and shaped to meet the different needs of, all our city's communities. Also, that users are involved in the co-design and development of those services;*
- Ensuring equal access to jobs at all levels of the council so that our workforce aims to reflect York's diversity;*
- Promoting diversity and fighting intolerance through our work with all our partners in the public, voluntary, community, independent and private sectors, locally and regionally;*
- Taking positive action to prevent harassment and victimisation of residents, service users and employees;*
- Distributing/facilitating grants and other resources to reflect the diverse needs within the city;*
- Implementation of this policy by all Members and employees;*

- *Ensuring our employment policies and practices do not prejudicially discriminate. This includes those dealing with recruitment, promotion, training, grievance, capability, discipline and retention;*
- *Providing support and training to ensure this policy makes a difference;*
- *Ensuring regular and effective monitoring and review of the implementation of this policy and action plan so that we make a difference and continuously improve our equalities practice.*

Consultation Draft

3. Our Promise.

We believe that equality is essential to building strong cohesive communities. Our promise is to ensure that ED&I is an essential ingredient in becoming a vibrant community. The challenge for our ED&I Strategy is to be able to live up to and embrace the commitments made in our Council Plan 2023 – 2027 ‘One City for All’

Our Council Plan commits us to demonstrate both quality and equality to all York’s, citizens, service users, our staff and the people who visit us.

4. Our Objectives (what we will do)

Our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Statement pledges us to:

- Developing and promoting anti-discrimination policies and practices at all levels of the council and in delivery of our services to the public.
- Improving equity practice at corporate, service and individual levels throughout the council.
- Develop a systematic process of conducting equality impact analysis and needs/requirements assessments, across all protected characteristic groups across all service areas as part of business and decision-making processes.
- Provide ongoing training and support for staff and members to help them to meet their duties under the Equality Act of 2010, raise awareness of this Policy and ensure residents of York are treated with dignity and respect, and continue to report on progress.

- Implement our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan 2024 – 2027 and seek to achieve 'Excellence' against the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG) by March 2027

5. Our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 2027

Aims to:

- Ensure that services are designed, co-ordinated and delivered to manage diversity effectively by tackling inequality and social exclusion.
- Engage in equality analysing strategies, policies and procedures and setting equality objectives.
- Ensure that services are accessible, welcoming, culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of our diverse city and communities.
- Ensure that we enable people and communities to fully participate in consultation over the planning and delivery of council services that affect them.
- Ensure that we work with our partners to pursue equality and diversity objectives across the public, voluntary and business sectors of York.
- Ensure that we respond quickly and effectively to legislation and national policy initiatives on anti-discrimination measures and practices.
- Ensure that we effectively monitor how well we are achieving our goals to eradicate discrimination, hate crimes and anti-social behaviour from York

6. Responsibilities.

The Executive has collective councillor responsibility for the delivery of the ED&I Strategy. Each Executive Member also has responsibility for reviewing and evaluating equalities as appropriate for their portfolio area.

The Human Rights and Equalities Board alongside our Scrutiny Committees will be able to scrutinise the delivery of the plan over the three years.

We will secure a mechanism by which resident and stakeholder voices can be heard to feed into the development of policies and strategies, with consideration of their rights through Human Rights and Equalities Analysis tool.

The Chief Operating Officer will take the lead responsibility for the overall management of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Chair the Council's new Corporate Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Group.

Directors and Heads of Service are expected to demonstrate commitment to ensuring that the ED&I Strategy 2024 – 2027 is implemented at every level of the organisation.

All members of staff are required to support the ED&I strategy, policies, initiatives and ensure that members of the public, service users or employees are not discriminated against on the grounds of their race, age, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, sex, dress, colour, religious belief, maternity/paternity, HIV or other medical status, social or economic status, marriage or civil partnership, sexual orientation or gender assignment, socio-economic status, caring responsibilities or care experience.

7. How we will Equality Analyse our Strategies, Services, Functions and Policies.

We will use equality impact analyses across all our key functions in relation to all protected characteristics using our Human Rights and Equality Analysis Toolkit.

We will:

- Establish clear aims and objectives for the policy to be assessed.
- Consider available qualitative and quantitative data.
- Assess how each option being considered will directly or indirectly impact on our community.
- To formally consult all relevant stakeholders which will primarily include service users, voluntary and community organisations, staff members and their associations and trade unions.
- Monitor and review the changes made to the policy or service.
- Publish the results of the Human Rights and Equality Analysis.

8. Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy & Plans.

We will ensure that our service plans address issues in a tangible manner that is open to inspection. We will:

- Challenge – whether the service meets the needs of all sections of the community.
- Compare – how well our services are performing from the point of view of all groups, against other service providers.
- Consult – effectively over services and ensuring that we include all hard to reach groups and carry out the consultation in a non-discriminatory and inclusive manner.
- Compete – Ensure that service providers conduct equality analysis and set equality objectives effectively.

We will publish an annual report which will:

- Report on completion of action plans, outcomes and related performance measures;
- Update action plans; and
- Update this strategy in response to any changes in the council and city's strategic and policy framework.

9. Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010 with further provisions being enforced on 6th April 2011, to bring all existing discrimination laws together into one piece of legislation that addresses employment, provision of goods and services, and property.

The Act includes a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which was extended

to address age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, *marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. These groups are often called “protected characteristics” (PC’s)**

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) consists of two parts, which the council must meet when carrying out its functions:

(1) The General Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the council to have due to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant Protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, and to
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

These are often referred to the three aims of the general equality duty.

To advance equality of opportunity, the council must have due regard to the need to:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

This includes treating some people more favourably than others in order to redress existing inequality and taking into account the needs of disabled people.

** Marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity only apply to the first aims of the general duty, not to the other aims (i.e. “advancing equality of opportunity” and “good relations)”*

*** These PC’s are explained in more detail on the City of York council’s website:*

(2) The Specific Duties, set out below, are legal requirements designed to help the council meet the general duties of the PSED.

They are:

- Publishing equality information on its workforce and service in an accessible way annually thereafter.
- Publishing its own equality objectives. These objectives must be based on equality evidence and analysis, they must be specific and measurable, and be reviewed and revised at least every four years.
- Publishing evidence of equality analysis (formerly known as equality impact assessment) undertaken and information used to establish whether policies, practices and decisions further the equality aims of the general duty or have an adverse effect on different groups. If there is evidence of the latter, the council should consider whether there are ways of mitigating any adverse impact identified.
- Publish information about engagement with people who have an interest in furthering the three aims of the general duty.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responsible for monitoring **and assessing local authorities’ compliance with the equality duty, and**

has the power to serve notices on local authorities that fails to comply. The equality duty can also be forced by Judicial Review via the EHRC, a group of individuals with an interest in the duties of the Equality Act 2010

10. The Equity Diversity & Inclusion Action Plans

In taking the actions and meeting our obligations which are set out in the attached action plans (*in development*), we will expect to achieve a number of outcomes which show real improvements over a period of time.

These are:

- A workforce that aims to be representative of the communities in York, and an improved employee profile at all levels of the organisation.
- Better access to services and more accessible services.
- A caring and responsive council which meets the needs of all members of the community, increased customer satisfaction across all areas.
- Improved service provision which reflects the needs of the people of York.
- Meet their duties under the Equality Act of 2010, raise awareness of the Equality Policy and ensure residents of the City are treated with dignity and respect as we deliver services.

Scope:

The scope and action plans incorporate other recent policy developments and commitments such as:

- The Social Model of Disability
- Anti-Racism Strategy and Action Plan (City and Council).