

## Equality Action Plan

### Statement

The Council is committed to the equality of opportunity in the workplace, and within all services provided to customers, communities, and stakeholders. The Council believes in fairness, equitable practices and approaches that value diversity, equality, and inclusion. The Council is opposed to all types of discrimination, and unfair/unlawful practices, and the Council will take appropriate action wherever instances of discrimination and harassment occur, in the delivery of services and in the course of employment.

North West Leicestershire District Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to:

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

### Objectives

**Objective 1 - Collecting and sharing data** – using staff and census data, which allows for sharing of this information within teams and departments to help inform decision making. (Collecting, analysing, and publishing workforce data). Systems are in place to collect and analyse employment data across a range of practices (recruitment, training, leavers, grievance and disciplinaries etc).

**Objective 2 – Workforce diversity and inclusion** - there is a move towards greater diversity in the Council's workforce profile compared with previous years. There are appropriate examples of positive action to improve diversity. There is evidence that the workforce profile at all levels broadly matches the community profile.

**Objective 3 – Political and officer leadership** - The political and executive leadership have publicly committed to reducing inequality, fostering good community relations, and challenging discrimination. Therefore, there is active work to further raise the profile of equality, diversity and inclusion (E, D and I) within the Council.

## Equality Action Plan

The following four headings below are taken from the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2021, and the action plan is built around this framework:

1. Understanding and collaborating with communities
2. Leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment
3. Responsive services and customer care
4. Diverse and engaged workforce.

### **Understanding and working with your communities**

<b>LGA framework points – taken from EFLG 2021</b>	<b>Where NWLDC is at now and responsible officer/team?</b>	<b>What do we want to have achieved by 2028.</b>
<p><u><i>Objective one - Collecting and sharing data.</i></u></p> <p>Effective community engagement – are the communities involved in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Relevant, proportionate, and appropriate information about the local communities and their protected characteristics is being gathered.</p> <p>Information is shared appropriately across the organisation and with partners,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information as to the district and census changes between 2011 and 2021 have been analysed and will be placed into a dashboard.</li> <li>• The equalities information that is collected by different departments is dependent on need for such confidential information and is done so proportionally. As is proportionate, this information is not held in a single department.</li> <li>• EIA process and form has been reviewed and streamlined – 1 form to be completed for policy/ function/ service and for proposals which is a</li> </ul>	<p>Power BI dashboards have been created and will be shared with managers in 2024/2025 so that service planning can be informed by community data to ensure that the Council is focussing on services that are needed.</p> <p>A process for engaging with communities will have been created by setting up a cross organisation working group to discuss equality matters.</p>

LGA framework points – taken from EFLG 2021	Where NWLDC is at now and responsible officer/team?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
informing the planning of services and contributing to better outcomes.	new element. Guidance notes have also been included within the process. This will capture underrepresented groups and should ensure communities are further involved in decision making via consultation.	

LGA framework points – taken from EFLG 2021	Where NWLDC is at now and responsible officer/team?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u><i>Analysing and using data information</i></u></p> <p>Information and data are disaggregated and analysed to support the assessment of local need, impacts of changes to services and priorities. Information and data is used effectively as part of impact assessment/risk assessment ensuring due regard is given to the public sector equality duty.</p> <p>Performance data is monitored against equality objectives and outcomes with key partners and other stakeholders. Equality outcomes for commissioned and procured services are monitored and reported on.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will be achieved through the EIA process.</li> </ul>	<p>To work alongside East Midlands Council.</p> <p>LSEF supports the delivery of the equality, diversity and human rights agenda within statutory bodies, the voluntary and community sector, and Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs).</p> <p>It is made up of people from various organisations across the area, responsible for progressing equality and diversity.</p>

<b>LGA framework points – taken from EFLG 2021</b>	<b>Where NWLDC is at now and responsible officer/team?</b>	<b>What do we want to have achieved by 2028.</b>
<p><u>Effective community engagement</u></p> <p>A whole Council approach to the development of inclusive community engagement structures is being developed throughout the organisation. There are opportunities for communities to be involved in decision making.</p> <p>People from under-represented groups are encouraged and enabled to participate in decision making. A range of engagement methodologies are used. Priorities have been changed because of community engagement with a clear and demonstrable evidence basis. The organisation and its partners share information and the results of engagement activities to ensure that particular groups are not being over consulted with.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where a policy/function/service or proposal that is being considered may affect certain members of a community, an EIA is completed to help establish which communities/ those with protected characteristics will be affected, and how to mitigate against these.</li> <li>• UPDATE: Through the EIA process, consultation should form part of the due regard test of evidence gathering.</li> <li>• For example, the census has shown that the majority of residents in the district identify as white, and that the largest religion/belief is that of Christianity. This is similar for other protected characteristic groups. However, there is a majority of people who do not identify with any religion or belief, and this information has been fed into the corporate events list process, and the current list has been signed off by full council.</li> </ul>	<p>To establish what community engagement is currently being undertaken and ensure that future engagement activity (with changes as necessary) is enabling all residents to be able to participate in decision making.</p>

LGA framework points – taken from EFLG 2021	Where NWLDC is at now and responsible officer/team?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Fostering good community relations</u></p> <p>The organisation and its partners have a strong understanding of the quality of relations between different communities and collectively monitor relations and tensions.</p> <p>The organisation and its partners are actively engaged in planning and delivering activities that foster good relations. I.e. Harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified. Members play a role in monitoring community relations and reporting intelligence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment is monitored from an internal perspective via HR statistics in reference to disciplinary or police referral cases.</li> </ul>	<p>Where it is identified that a hate crime impacts on a community with protected characteristics – we will make sure that community groups / housing etc are working with local Joint Action Groups (JAG) and partners to minimise the problem – for example we may need to be looking at how we allocate housing safely etc.</p>

LGA framework points – taken from EFLG 2021	Where NWLDC is at now and responsible officer/team?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Participation in public life</u></p> <p>The Council has an understanding of public life by different communities/or those with protected characteristics (developing).</p> <p>Local people are encouraged to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented. The council uses a range of different methods, and it is able to innovate and find new ways to extend participation in certain communities (achieving)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPDATE: through analysis of the censuses 2011 and 2021 the Council has a good understanding of the population makeup of the district. This can be used to inform service delivery and community engagement.</li> <li>• For example, the census tells us that the Polish community is our second largest community (second to our white Christian community) and therefore we need to understand how we are best to engage with this group of residents.</li> </ul>	<p>To build upon and develop the current corporate events list which enables the Council to educate, celebrate and commemorate certain events throughout the year.</p>

**Leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment**

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Political and officer leadership</u></p> <p>All across the organisation from senior management to officers and beyond, there is some evidence of action, not just ‘talking about it.’ The organisation has established and publicised a strong business case for its equality work. Ensure committed leadership, partnerships and show good organisational commitment. The political and executive leadership have publicly committed to reducing inequality, fostering good relations, and challenging discrimination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E, D and I training offered to whole staff group from 2023. Equalities month took place again in October 2023, with an external trainer conducting sessions relating to unconscious bias (specifically relating to the recruitment process). Corporate events list 2024 now in place and being actioned.</li> </ul>	<p>Opportunities for senior leaders and managers to engage with equality and diversity events will continue in order to demonstrate, commitment and leadership.</p> <p>All new and existing staff will be given Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&amp;I) training.</p>
<p><u>Priorities and partnership working</u></p> <p>Partnership working arrangements are being reviewed with the voluntary and community sector and the wider community to ensure that local equality priorities are addressed. There is support and investment in the voluntary and community sector that it is able to work as a network or collective with the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council is a member of the East Midlands Council (EMC) and LSEF group, to share best practice.</li> </ul>	<p>Opportunities to work in partnership will continue to be supported where appropriate.</p>

<b>LGA framework points</b>	<b>Where NWLDC is at now?</b>	<b>What do we want to have achieved by 2028.</b>
<p><u>Using equality impact assessments (EIA)</u>  The organisation can demonstrate that improvements in equality outcomes are being delivered as a result of effective equality analysis/impact assessment, and that negative impacts have been mitigated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This has been achieved through the EIA workshops training. The monitoring and evaluation of the EIA form will allow us to map out if improvements have been made.</li> <li>• Current audits of EIA are being undertaken, at random intervals for quality checks. It was agreed that certain EIA's will be shared on an internal platform.</li> <li>• Contact was made with the agencies below\.</li> <li>• Age UK</li> <li>• Melton Mencap</li> <li>• Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living (LCiL) – could provide support on employing those with autism at work only - at current time.</li> <li>• The Race Equality Centre in Leicester and Leicestershire Due to funding and under resources, no agency could commit to helping the Council to undertake any consultation work if needed.</li> </ul>	<p>By 2028 we aim to have an effective network of external groups and stakeholders that contribute to our equality outcomes.</p>

**Responsive services and customer care**

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Commission and procurement services.</u></p> <p>The organisation ensures that procurement and commissioning processes and practices take account of the diverse needs of clients, and that providers understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The organisation ensures that procurement and commissioning processes and practice take account of the diverse needs of clients and that providers understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bids or proposals should be captured as part of the EIA analysis. The EIA form now includes the word 'proposal' which should help with this aspect.</li> </ul>	<p>The procurement process will include as assessment of fair and equitable practices so that where appropriate goods and services purchased by the Council take account of the diverse needs and priorities of residents and service users.</p>
<p><u>Integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes</u></p> <p>Equality objectives for the organisation have been set and published in accordance with the requirements to support the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equality homepage has been updated, and the equality objectives have been set and presented to CLT.</li> <li>• Heads of service plans will be reviewed and challenged to ensure that they incorporate equality objectives into the service outcomes that they are required to deliver.</li> </ul>	

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Service delivery and design.</u></p> <p>The organisation has systems to collect, analyse and measure how satisfied all sections of the community are with all services. There is evidence that services are meeting the needs of a diverse community, and that take up of services is representative of the wider community.</p> <p>The mapping and satisfaction data collected is disaggregated by different equality groups or vulnerable communities.</p> <p>There are mechanisms in place for service users to be consulted about service development and delivery.</p> <p>Take up of services is representative of the community in proportions that would be expected.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are mechanisms in place for service users to be consulted about service development and delivery in some departments, and these will be further picked up through consultation in EIA process.</li> <li>• UPDATE: HR is collaborating with Customer Services to capture information based on age and gender. This information can then be built on in terms of trying to gauge a picture of what the Council's customer base looks like.</li> <li>• UPDATE: HR has worked alongside Legal Services to create an Individual actions EIA form. This form will sit alongside the general EIA process. This should ensure that if an action is being taken against an individual, then due regard is taken, monitored, and mitigated against.</li> </ul>	<p>Customer satisfaction rates will be monitored and reviewed and fed into the delivery and design of services.</p>

**Diverse and engaged workforce.**

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Workforce diversity and inclusion</u></p> <p>There is a move towards greater diversity in its workforce profile compared with previous years, including increasing the levels of previously under-represented groups at all levels of the organisation.</p> <p>There are appropriate examples of positive action to improve diversity. There is evidence that the workforce profile at all levels broadly matches the local labour market/community profile. There are reasonable explanations for gaps (e.g., the community profile is constantly changing or there is a retired population) and what the organisation is doing about it. Good use is made of flexible working arrangements and targeted career pathway initiatives to address potential barriers and under representation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment, transfer, leavers, and promotion information via strand of ethnicity, age, and gender is recorded.</li> <li>• UPDATE: HR has worked alongside legal Service to create an Individual actions EIA form. This form will sit alongside the general EIA process. This should ensure that if an action is being taken against an individual, then due regard is taken, monitored, and mitigated against.</li> <li>• Census Ethnic group, national identity, language, and religion has been published 29 November 2022, and placed into a dashboard, this will be made available to managers in 2024/2025.</li> <li>• UPDATE: Introduction of hybrid working and the promotion of flexible working. This aims to break down potential barriers to work more flexibly. Also, could positively affect females, and anyone with a disability.</li> </ul>	

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has recognised that the some vulnerable/disadvantaged groups are not legally covered as a protected characteristic, however we have chosen to recognise the following as a non-legal protected characteristic.</li> <li>• Care Leaver: A care leaver is an adult who spent time in care as a child (i.e., under the age of 18). This care could have been approved by the state through a court order or on a voluntary basis. It encompasses various forms of care, such as foster care, residential care (including children’s homes), and other arrangements outside the immediate or extended family.</li> </ul>	
<p><u><i>Inclusive strategies and policies</i></u></p> <p>The organisation has an excellent set of policies and procedures in place which are actively promoted to staff from all protected groups and used by managers to promote equality. Strategic, innovative, and holistic approaches have been considered to improve outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to work interviews, reflection times are conducted regularly. Managers have all had training in <b><i>‘handling difficult conversations</i></b> and the health and wellbeing team has run Make Every Contact Count (MECC) Training.</li> <li>• Evaluation of EIA workshops has taken place, and the feedback has been positive. Many have reported that this</li> </ul>	<p>Our policies, plans and training programmes will be evaluated for their impact on inclusivity and proven to have an effective impact.</p>

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p>Staff say that they can have difficult conversations with their managers about aspects of equality at work and in the wider world that affect them and their colleagues.</p> <p>Training and development strategies are proven to be making a significant difference to the wider equality agenda for employees and for workforce diversity. Staff involved in equality networks are satisfied that they are listened to and that they can make a difference in the organisation.</p>	<p>has helped them in their understanding of the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I Trent system will allow staff to record their protected characteristics anonymously. Information to be monitored and analysed by HR only.</li> </ul>	

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u><i>Learning, development, and progression</i></u></p> <p>The organisation carries out regular assessments of their training, learning and development needs of members and officers in order that they understand their equality duties and take action to deliver equality outcomes. Consideration is given to the progression of under-represented groups.</p> <p>An assessment has been made as to what equality-related training, learning or development is required in the organisation. Appropriate behavioural competencies have been identified for the workforce.</p> <p>The learning and development plan/strategy take account of equality issues including the progression of under-represented groups. Induction training for new members includes equality and all members are offered equality training. Appraisal processes ensure staff and managers are aware of their equality-related responsibilities and accountabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA training was rolled out to all team leaders and managers in October 2022.</li> <li>• Staff training available to all staff and new starters. Appraisals do pick up equality related responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<p>To have developed and implemented a customised equality training programme for members.</p> <p>To have reviewed and updated behavioural competencies to include and consider ED&amp;I.</p>

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Collecting, analysing, and publishing workforce data</u></p> <p>Systems are in place to collect and analyse employment data across a range of practices (recruitment, training, leavers, grievance and disciplinaries etc). It is possible to analyse data by all the protected characteristics whilst ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect from any risk of personal identification.</p> <p>Data on applicants, people shortlisted, and the composition of the workforce is systematically collected. This can be categorised by the protected characteristics.</p> <p>The organisation considers and is addressing pay gaps across other areas of inequality such as religion and belief/ age, LGBT+ etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Equalities information relating to the Council's workforce is being collated and published into a dashboard that will be made available to managers in 2024/2025. Senior HR Advisor is also collating information as to leavers, recruitment, retention demographic and protected characteristic information for analysis and monitoring. Sensitive protected characteristics are collated by the employee self-access portal on I Trent: that is only accessible by HR only.</li> </ul>	<p>The Council's Gender pay gap will be reported annually.</p> <p>Data in relation to ethnicity pay gap will start to be collated in 2024/25, with a view to publication from 2025/26 onwards, annually.</p>

LGA framework points	Where NWLDC is at now?	What do we want to have achieved by 2028.
<p><u>Health and wellbeing</u></p> <p>There is a positive health and wellbeing culture throughout all levels and areas of the organisation which supports all employees sense of identity and self-esteem. Staff feel well supported by their managers and the policies of the organisation. There have been significant outcomes in the health and wellbeing of all staff including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>The organisation understands the concept of different models of disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff are given the same benefits, i.e., access to Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), UK healthcare. The UK healthcare scheme also covers existing medical conditions.</li> <li>• Staff have access to the health and wellbeing hub.</li> <li>• Remote access to the sickness absence meetings has meant consistency in ensuring policies are applied proportionally. The Council ensures that reasonable adjustments and recommendations are made so that all individuals can participate in work, social and general activities.</li> <li>• An employee wellbeing policy and strategy in place.</li> <li>• The Equalities team partners with the health and wellbeing team to promote topics, such as world mental health day.</li> </ul>	<p>Health and wellbeing initiatives will continue to be innovative.</p> <p>To seek employee views on the impact of the Health and Wellbeing policy and strategy</p>