



Dudley Council Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025.

Glossary of Terms

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the term protected characteristics to refer to the different ways that individuals and groups of individuals can be treated unfairly because of an identifying factor.

In this strategy and the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion action plan we use the most inclusive, proportional language possible. We refer to groups, and collectives of individuals as having “protected characteristics.”

For clarity, the protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership (in employment only)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Where we use the terminology BAME, we are referring to those who are grouped as Black, Asian and/or Minority Ethnic. This is a term that can collectively group people, regardless of the colour of their skin, inclusive of Travellers for example. We understand that some people have reservations about the term Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME), however, due to the nature of the data available on this subject we have used it in the mentioned articles for accuracy and consistency.

Please note we also use “gender” as well as “sex” as it is more inclusive of different identities. Currently, The Equality Act 2010 defines sex as “a man or a woman” which is not inclusive of those who identify as non-binary and/or intersex. We also use the term “they” where it is not clear what “sex” is being referred to.

With this considered, we would like to make it clear that we understand legally, our duty is to consider the protected characteristic of “sex” as we are bound by The Equality Act 2010, however, we feel using the word “sex” as well as gender, and “they/them” makes us a more inclusive council.

The Equality Act 2010 also protects people who are married or in a civil partnership from discrimination whilst at work.

We recognise that there is a range of other groups that may face additional disadvantage and discrimination. These include carers, people experiencing domestic and/or sexual violence, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, (ex) armed forces personnel and people on the autistic spectrum.

Wherever possible, we shall also consider those impacted by social mobility and socio-economic impact factors.

Foreword by the Chief Executive

I am very pleased to introduce Dudley Council's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy 2022-2025 which sets out our commitment for progressing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in our Borough and workforce over the next three years.

The basis of our work and drivers for change are explored throughout this Strategy which is in place to demonstrate our commitment to the requirement for inclusivity, with a view to improve our current offering and to create a deep understanding of the communities we serve. We shall ensure this understanding is reflected in decisions made and by valuing every person who works for us, as well as all of those affected by any decisions we make as a Council.

Our commitment to equality and diversity is paramount; we endeavour to ensure our commitment is firmly embedded across the whole of our organisation through its services, workforce, training, policies, practices, and procedures.

We aim to deliver appropriate services that are accessible for our changing Borough and responsive to all our customers, at the right place and ultimately at the right time.

We must implement robust policies that will ensure equity in the recruitment, training, and development of our employees through their life cycle with us, regardless of their position or protected characteristic. We shall continue to work with our communities to find a way to support them within the available resources.

Finally, we would like to express our commitment to this Strategy. Our commitment has already been demonstrated by the preliminary steps we have taken whilst developing the Strategy such as an independent review around race Equality, signing the Race at Work Charter, being a Disability Confident Employer and joining the Stonewall Diversity Programme.

As a council, we look forward to seeing positive and measurable outcomes from implementation of the Strategy and I will personally take responsibility for ensuring that we make speedy and significant progress over its lifetime.

Why Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters to Dudley Council and our vision

We are incredibly proud of our Council and the Borough it serves; it is unique and a special place to live and work. We wholeheartedly value our communities alongside our workforce and must use their lived experience to shape the future Council. We are committed to equality of opportunity, elimination of discrimination and promotion of good relations between all people regardless of age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, gender re-assignment, religion and belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status.

We have key behaviours and values that are integral to everything we do, and these will help us to achieve excellence in equality.

Below, is our vision setting out what we aim to achieve. Our vision demonstrates our commitment to equality diversity and inclusion. Putting equality at the heart of everything we do.

Dudley Council Vision

Putting Equality at the heart of everything we do



To become a leader for equality, diversity, and inclusion and to ensure it is at the heart of everything we do and all of the decisions we make, inclusive of policy, procedures and practice. We will translate our commitment to true equity, by promoting equality and inclusiveness in all aspects of our work and our responsibilities in respect of;



- Being a service provider - providing appropriate services that meet the differing needs of our local people regardless of their protected characteristics.



- Being our Borough's largest employer - ensuring fair recruitment, having a diverse and inclusive workforce, and providing a working environment that is safe, accessible, and free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination.



- Being community leaders - through our elected members, working with communities and partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to improve quality of life for Dudley Metropolitan Borough residents.

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion journey since our last Strategy update:

Since the last Strategy, many steps have been taken to improve our equality offering. An independent assessment by Inclusivity Global commenced in May 2020 to ascertain Dudley Council's position in relation to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty placed on the Council. The review, which was completed in July 2020 also assessed our progress in developing and embedding equality and inclusion practice across the Council.

The independent assessment by Inclusivity Global included one-to-one interviews with the leaders of both political parties, the Chief Executive, directors, heads of service and other key senior officers agreed by the project sponsor. Interviews with staff with equality and diversity responsibilities also featured as well as work to check HR strategies, policies, and other key documents. The assessment has helped us to shape this Strategy and has identified a number of areas for improvement which will be addressed through our action plan.

An independent external review was also carried out by BRAP (Birmingham Race Action Partnership) during 2021 into race equality in employment across the Council. The findings and recommendations of the review have been accepted and communicated to employees and elected members and an action plan for the improvement of racial equality in employment is currently being developed by HR, OD & Inclusion services, in conjunction with trade unions.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy.

To create an inclusive Dudley Council and Borough, we must integrate equality and inclusion into all that we do. This Strategy highlights the key areas of work that must be approached proactively to advance our position on equality. It has been developed in line with the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), which is used to help organisations, in discussion with local partners including local people, review and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected by The Equality Act 2010.

The Strategy is focused on four key themes:



Theme One

Understanding our diverse customers and residents.

Theme Two

Demonstrate inclusive leadership and accountability for delivering EDI outcomes across the organisation.

Theme Three

Ensuring the integration of equality objectives into the commissioning, procuring and delivery of services.

Theme Four

An engaged workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve.

Theme One

Understanding our diverse customers and residents.

Dudley has a diverse, multicultural, proud, and ever-growing population. As a local authority, understanding who lives and works in our Borough, and within our Council, enables us to plan and deliver effective services that meet people's needs more effectively, whilst being accessible and appropriate for all who need to use them.

Using the latest available census and other population data, and our most up to date staff equality data, will enable us to understand our community demographic better, and identify the changing needs of our communities. This in turn will ensure changes are made as needed to ensure responsive public services.

We will:

- Use data to inform policy and strategy and improve the monitoring and analysis of equality data.
- Undertake an evidence-based review (on release of the latest census data) to inform and improve our community engagement activity.
- Collect and share information on our communities, benchmarking against others to see how we compare, whilst using and analysing this data to inform service planning, commissioning and decision making.
- Develop the appropriate skills in our workforce to be able to actively engage with diverse residents, customers, and partners.

- Consult with our community groups and partners on the strategic action plan to support the implementation of this Strategy through years 2023-24 and 2024-25.

We will achieve this by:

- Reviewing what equality data is collected to ensure this is appropriate.
- Routinely analysing equality data to improve understanding of our service users.
- Continuing to develop the diverse range of ways for people to engage and have their voice heard.
- Reviewing our use of language.
- Working with all directorates across the Council, ensuring equality impact assessments are completed correctly and where appropriate.
- Improving the current Equality Impact Assessment that is used, introducing a new toolkit to ensure those completing the assessments have the right level of knowledge and understanding to complete the assessments with fair consideration.
- Creating staff focus groups from the newly formed staff networks to review policy/procedure, to help measure impact across all protected characteristics and to gain lived experience feedback.

Theme Two

Demonstrate inclusive leadership and accountability for delivering EDI outcomes across the organisation.

We know that the right leadership - both political and managerial – is key to establishing a strong vision for equity and improving equality outcomes because it is where accountability for our organisation must sit. All staff, managers and councillors have a vital role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the Council's performance and strategic aims, ensuring there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality.

We will:

- Improve and drive forward our leadership's inclusion ambitions and visions, upholding the highest standards of integrity and valuing difference.
- Challenge how leadership mindsets, strategies, and actions can support, secure, and sustain progress as Dudley Council strives to achieve an inclusive workplace.
- Integrate equality objectives into service planning and decision making.
- Ensure leadership promises are upheld, such as a “zero-tolerance approach” to inappropriate behaviours.
- Ensure our four new leadership development programmes contain equalities leadership modules.
- Introduce mentoring programmes to develop and enhance leadership skills and capability through organisational development, in the support of the creation of reverse mentoring for marginalised staff across all characteristics.
- Provide training on equality impact assessments for all Council management teams to ensure their personal accountability for identifying any equality impact arising from project initiatives or proposals.
- Identify the ways leadership development can play a key role in building the necessary leadership capabilities for creating inclusive cultures.

We will achieve this by:

- Working towards improving our “management development offering” ensuring key areas of diversity and inclusion are a key element of this, including cultural competence, how to support diversity in the workplace, code-switching, and conscious/unconscious bias training.
- Improving our mandatory e-learning offer, ensuring that EDI module(s) are up to date.
- Gathering evidence that equality considerations inform decision making.

- Taking steps to counter negative stereotypes, historic to our organisation, that can affect the experience of marginalised groups whilst working at Dudley Council.
- Performance monitoring of actions through our Corporate Equalities Group and scrutiny of progress through the Future Council Scrutiny Committee.

Theme Three

Ensuring the integration of equality objectives into the commissioning, procuring and delivery of services

We must ensure that procurement, delivery, commissioning processes and practices take account of the diverse needs of customers, and that providers understand the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. By 2025, we will be able to proactively demonstrate that commissioned/procured services are helping us to achieve our equality priorities resulting in the integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes.

We will:

- Introduce standard equality clauses for contracts to ensure, when procuring services, the needs of protected groups are taken into account.
- Provide accessible opportunities for service users to engage in the design and planning of services.
- Monitor and evaluate access to, take up and appropriateness of services regularly, including by protected characteristic.
- Ensure applicants' and residents' communication needs are checked.
- Create structures to ensure equality outcomes are integrated into business objectives.
- Ensure quality EDI analysis is fed into planning and assessment of service plans. Objectives are to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely).

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring adverse trends, identified from monitoring and analysis of data, are acted upon proactively, rather than reactively.
- Ensuring that the organisations we purchase or commission services from have a commitment to equality and diversity.
- Creating the appropriate guidance for our suppliers on the equality requirements for the procurement and commissioning process.
- Ensuring the money we spend on procuring services protects and promotes equality in employment.
- Building equality and engagement into our service design, project management and commissioning and procurement processes.
- Ensuring by 2025, our services will be re-assessed to identify access needs.
- Monitor the relative satisfaction levels of people with different protected characteristics with our services.

Theme Four

An engaged workforce that reflects the diverse community we serve.

To deliver the best services we can, we must employ a workforce that is reflective of the community we serve and which understands its needs. We know we need an engaged diverse workforce for many reasons, but predominantly, because we respect that workplace diversity brings different perspectives on how to approach

tasks, creating a wealth of ideas. We will work to create an inclusive environment for a diverse range of people to work in, valuing their health and wellbeing.

We will:

- Change our recruitment practices to encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds.
- Focus on continually improving performance and succession/workforce planning.
- Introducing a holistic attraction and retention strategy inclusive of talent pathways for under-represented groups.
- Foster an inclusive culture providing a safe environment for all, whereby inappropriate behaviors are not tolerated, supported through appropriate policies such as “dignity at work”.
- Encourage people to be their “whole self” in the workplace to be able to flourish, free of worry of judgment and unfair treatment.

We will achieve this by:

- Improving the quality of the equality data we hold on our employees, e.g. by reducing the proportion of 'unknown' characteristics.
- Working with our staff networks and trade unions to reduce the number of grievances related to discrimination.
- Working towards achieving national Disability Confident Leader status, as opposed to employer status.
- Ongoing monitoring of recruitment equality information. The introduction of anonymised recruitment.
- Workforce planning – Using our workforce plans to identify areas of under-representation and opportunities to address these via succession planning, i.e., growing our own.
- Continuing to report in line with statutory requirements and obligations e.g., on our gender pay gap. However, by 2025, we will include intersectionality, focussing on best practice such as ethnicity pay gap reporting and use the Government’s voluntary reporting framework for disability, mental health, and wellbeing.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everybody has a role to play in helping us to achieve this Strategy and our equality vision.

All staff will do this by:

- Being aware of the Council’s legal equality duties and our organisational commitments and understanding what they mean practically for them within their roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring they are aware of policy updates, our Code of Conduct with expected behaviours and are up to date with their mandatory e-learning modules.
- Treating service users, colleagues and residents with dignity and respect whilst responding appropriately to meet diverse needs. This is underpinned by our Dignity at Work Policy that has been created by the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Manager as of 2022.
- Challenging, and reporting to managers, incidents where equality practice has not been followed, including discrimination, harassment, and bullying.
- If they do not feel comfortable raising this with their direct line manager, raising this with another senior member of staff, or the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team who can provide support.

- Supporting and attending staff network groups to add their input into issues that may affect them, as a characteristic holder or an ally, if they wish to do so.

Managers will do this by:

- Ensuring all staff understand their personal responsibilities in relation to equality.
- Ensuring equality outcomes are measured and improvement targets set in relation to the accessibility and delivery of services to residents.
- Creating an inclusive workplace culture in which all staff can thrive, being their whole selves and reaching their full potential.
- Ensuring all staff are supported and referred to appropriate training so that they can perform their jobs effectively and to the best of their ability.
- Managing all staff fairly and equitably through the consistent and fair application of HR policies and procedures, such as grievances and disciplinaries.
- Setting clear standards of behaviours which fall in line with our values, dealing with any instances of inappropriate behaviour including discrimination, harassment, and bullying.

Elected members will do this by:

- Championing equality within the Council and in their local communities.
- Scrutinising progress against our commitments within this Strategy, following its implementation.
- Ensuring that they consider the equality impact of any decisions they make in line with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Leading, supporting and advocating for the diverse people and communities they represent in their respective wards.

Further Information

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For copies of this information in a different language, or a different format, please contact the EDI Team.

Arabic
Bengali
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