

# **EQUALITY PROGRESS**

## **2022/23**

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# Public Sector Equality Duty

The [Public sector equality duty](#) came in to force in April 2011 placing a duty on public authorities to have due regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The objectives are to – known as the General Equality Duty - are:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

# Public Sector Equality Duty

There is also a specific duty place on public authorities to publish:

- equality objectives, at least every four years
- information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty

# Equality Objective 2022-26

*"Progress equality performance through the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)."*

Equality objective agreed at Cabinet – June 2022

# Benefits of our approach

The Equality Framework for Local Government guides our equality improvement journey by identifying key actions that will support us to:

- Deliver accessible, inclusive and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from under-represented groups
- Employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving
- Provide equality of opportunity for all staff
- Meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and support any aspirations to exceed these



# Benefits of our approach (cont.)

It seeks to do this by:

- Identifying the areas of activity that councils need to address to deliver good equality outcomes
- Helping councils to understand how they can build equality into processes and practices
- Supporting organisations to become inclusive employers.
- Enabling councils to informally self-assess their progress on the equality improvement journey and determine where and how they need to improve.

# Framework Structure

The EFLG requires the council to undertake a self-assessment.  
The framework has four modules and three levels

- Modules:
  1. Understanding and working with our communities
  2. Leadership and organisational commitment
  3. Responsive services and customer care
  4. Diverse and engaged workforce
- Levels:
  - Developing
  - Achieving
  - Excellent

**SELF-ASSESSMENT**

**FINDINGS**

**JUNE 2023**





# Module 1: Understanding and Working with Communities

Section	Self-assessment	Strengths	Key areas for improvement
1. Collecting and sharing information	Achieving	<a href="#">Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</a> Strong partnerships, i.e. Health & Wellbeing Board, Safer Sunderland Partnership	Citywide equality data is provided to council services in an accessible format to inform improvements in service delivery.
2. Analysing and using data and information	Achieving to Excellent	The council is highly intelligence-led, using data and intelligence to inform priorities	Combine data already available to the council, to provide a more comprehensive and sophisticated view of the needs of people in the city, informing intelligence led commissioning and decision making.
3. Effective community engagement	Achieving	<a href="#">Let's Talk Sunderland Engagement Strategy</a> <a href="#">Resident's Survey</a> <b>Warm Spaces and Community Hubs</b> Equality forums <a href="#">VCS Alliance</a> and area networks.	Develop a single approach to how we engage with communities, ensuring feedback is broken down by protected groups. Ensure feedback is available to all council services to use to develop and improve services.
4. Fostering Good Relations	Achieving	Safer Sunderland Partnership Hate Crime Monitoring Group	Develop a strategic approach to cohesion and integration, approach to include training to raise awareness of the needs of different communities and how good relations can be fostered.
5. Participating in public life	Achieving	As section 3	As section 3

# Module 2: Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Section	Self-assessment	Strengths	Key areas for improvement
6. Political and officer leadership	Achieving	Senior leaders have developed the <a href="#">City Plan</a> Vision: Sunderland will be a connected, international city with opportunities for all.	Arrange awareness raising events on issues of equality and diversity for both staff and residents
7. Priorities and partnership working	Achieving	Well-established partnership arrangements and strong Voluntary Sector Alliance, that are all committed to delivering improvements and reducing inequalities	Actions identified through EFLG self-assessment process to be embedded into strategic planning.
8. Using Equality Impact Assessment	Achieving	New process of <b>Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)</b> in place to ensure due regard of equality considerations is taken, and maximise other opportunities in activity against council priorities	Staff are equipped to undertake robust IIAs and demonstrate due regard to equality considerations in decision making.
9. Performance Monitoring and Scrutiny	Achieving	Key staff in place in the council a focus on equality and diversity in relation to staff, policy and the community  Chief officers identified to champion equality and diversity and the IIA	Strategic Equality Group to oversee delivery of the plan resulting from self-assessment and provide assurance to senior leaders on its implementation.  Build challenge in relation to equality and diversity into the Scrutiny Work Programme.

# Module 3: Responsive Services and Customer Care

Section	Self-assessment	Strengths	Key areas for improvement
10. Commissioning and procuring services	Achieving to Excellent	Comprehensive Procurement Framework that is adhered to across the board, with equality considerations embedded within the framework.	Ensure council services have better access to citywide equality data to improve equality and social value outcomes through commissioning
11. Integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes	Working towards Developing	Equality objective for 2022-26: "Progress equality performance through the Equality Framework for Local Government."	Lead officers are identified to deliver specific actions that support the achievement of the EFLG key areas for improvement.
12. Service Delivery and Design	Developing	Good Customer Services Network with process and procedures to a positive customer experience. CSN Service Liaison Framework encourages services to adopt <b>Customer Promise</b> .	Where relevant to service delivery and improvement collect data by protected characteristic.



# Module 4: Diverse and Engaged Workforce

Section	Self-assessment	Strengths	Key areas for improvement
13. Workforce Diversity and Inclusion	Working towards Developing	Well-established <a href="#">Workforce Diversity Report</a> which sets out the council's workforce in terms of protected groups.  Recruitment processes and employment policies are inclusive.	The Council has a Workforce / People Strategy. The Council progresses from being Disability Confident Committed (level 1) to becoming a Disability Confident Committed Employer (level 2). The longer term aspiration is to become a Disability Confident Leader (level 3).
14. Inclusive strategies and policies	Working towards Developing	Policies and procedures that comply with equality legislation and employment codes of practice  Surveys in place to help us gather information about employee needs	The Council has a preventative approach to bullying and harassment at work. Associated data is analysed by protected characteristic.  Provide opportunities for all employees to have a voice and ensure a positive and inclusive working environment.
15. Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data	Working towards Developing	Annual <a href="#">Workforce Diversity Report</a> produced  Evidence that <a href="#">Gender Pay Gap</a> is reducing	Develop Power BI (database) to enable improved analysis of workforce
16. Learning, development and progression	Working towards Developing	Behaviours for all staff, managers and leaders have been developed linked to the council's values  New elected Member induction is rigorous	Learning and Developing Strategy in place
17. Health and wellbeing	Working towards Developing	Very strong universal health and wellbeing offer for staff. However, this needs to be targeted to need and protected groups before we can report more positively on the EFLG Level	Undertake an exercise to understand whether the working environment in all council buildings meets the needs of a diverse range of staff  Develop an intelligence-led health and wellbeing programme for employees  Recommission mental health training

# Action Plan

From self-assessment, detailed action plan developed with nine key areas for improvement:

1. Strengthened governance arrangements in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion
2. City-level equality data is available for services to use to inform service improvements and set stretching social value targets
3. Equality profiles of council customers will be understood, providing a sophisticated view of the needs of people in the city, informing intelligence-led commissioning and decision making. All sections of the community who need our services will be able to access them
4. Engagement with communities and customer insight will routinely be used to inform service development
5. Integrated Impact Assessments will be embedded across the council
6. There will be a strategic approach to community cohesion
7. There will be a comprehensive Workforce Strategy, which meets the needs of the organisation and ensures the profile of the council workforce is representative of the city
8. All staff will be equipped with the knowledge and skills required to ensure services are equitable and inclusive
9. All staff have a safe and inclusive working environment



# Next steps

- The council will continue to progress the key areas for improvement in each module
- The self-assessment will be refreshed annually to take account of progress and identify additional areas for improvement
- Equality progress will be published annually