

**City of York Council
Equity, Diversity &
Inclusion
Strategy 2025-2028**

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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 equity across all our services and functions.

Why is equity, diversity and inclusion important to CYC? First and foremost, accelerating equity, diversity and inclusion is simply the right thing to do. Secondly, there is a strong 'business' imperative for CYC to really embed EDI in its practices and services, borne out by the data. We have seen a 200% increase in racial hate crime in the last year in our city. YouGov data shows that 78% of UK 18-24 year olds consider "acceptance and inclusion of employees of all backgrounds" when searching for jobs. Research by McKinsey found that having diverse teams leads to an increase in problem-solving, and ultimately better decision making and performance.

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. Our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion strategy ensures 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, citizens 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 is a living document, which will be constantly under review by our Corporate Equity, Diversity &

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Inclusion Group as well as our external stakeholders. We welcome any comments and collaborative working, which may inform the process. We will report annually 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

Ian Floyd

Leader of the Council

Chief Operating Officer

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1. Definitions and current state of play

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 (including Gypsy & Traveller ethnic groups), sex, religion/belief, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment/identity, social class, maternity/paternity, marriage or civil partnership 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 recognises 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 characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010, which are age; disability; sex; gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; represents a waste of talent and a denial of opportunity for self-fulfilment.

Furthermore, we recognise the following as protected characteristics in the work of the Council; carers; care experience; and socio-economic background (includes low income groups and the digitally excluded). We expect commitment and involvement from all our staff, partners and providers of goods and services in working towards the achievement of our vision.

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Inclusion

Inclusion in a workplace context 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, its 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.

Wider than the workplace, inclusion is ensuring our citizens, service users and staff feel a sense of belonging, respected and valued for who they are. Inclusion is ensuring everyone has a voice and can be at their best.

Merit and positive action

We will endeavour to achieve all of this through *positive action* to promote inclusion. There is an important distinction between positive action and positive discrimination. Positive action is lawful and aims to address disadvantages by encouraging participation and removing barriers. Positive discrimination is unlawful and involves giving preferential treatment based solely on protected characteristics.

We will always recruit or promote the best person for the job, positive action is not about preferential treatment, it aims to ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to be considered.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is about how multiple categories of identity or the intersection of several characteristics, can shape our experiences and lead to distinct forms of discrimination or disadvantage.

This also highlights the risk of too much emphasis on categorising people by protected characteristics, can lead to groups feeling their challenges are being overlooked. There is a further risk of alienating people who don't feel they fit into any particular category. Our strategy focuses on the importance of the universal issues of dignity and respect.

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Current state of play

CYC workforce diversity breakdown – from CYC Workforce Profile
30/09/2024

Characteristic	York population	CYC
Disabled	17%	8%
Male / Female	48% / 52%	37% / 63%
Gender reassignment or Trans/non-binary	1%	>less than 10
Black, Asian, Ethnic Minority ¹	13%	7%
Has religion/belief	47%	39.5%
Heterosexual / Non Heterosexual	86.5% / 5.5%	95% / 5%

What the public say

Our recent public consultation revealed a wide range of opinions and experiences about equity, diversity and inclusion. These are some quotes from members of the public:

‘I have had mixed raced friends and those from minority groups made to feel discriminated by council employees who have demonstrated ignorance of their cultures/lived experiences’.

‘I recently had a really positive experience in dealing with the housing service - applying for the council housing list. I explained that I had autism and member of staff actually anticipated correctly the

¹ Some organisations record minorities in a much more restrictive way, focusing only on visible minorities. It is also known that the census and other counts substantially undercount certain minorities, including some South Asian minorities and Travellers, for example, because of non-response for various reasons.

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reasonable adjustments I would need to for this meeting – i.e. in person, in a quiet room, their emails set out clearly in different sections. I had no feelings of distress’.

‘I’ve loved living in York because it’s peaceful...When it comes to making choice...You don’t have a black Barber in York and it’s really hard for someone that doesn’t understand the texture of my hair to barb my hair...And there are no African restaurants in York, I always have to cook for myself or go to Leeds or Manchester’.

2. Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 brings all existing discrimination laws together into one piece of legislation that addresses employment, provision of goods and services, and property.

The Equality Act 2010 created nine **protected characteristics*** which are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

The Act also created a number of **prohibited conducts** in relation to people with a protected characteristic, these are: discrimination; (failing) the duty to make adjustments for disabled people; harassment; and victimisation.

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 regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different communities

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

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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**.

*These protected characteristics are explained in more detail on the City of York council's website: [Equality Act 2010 – City of York Council](#)

** 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”)

(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.

Scope:

The scope of this strategy and action plan incorporates other policy developments and commitments such as:

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

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- Gypsy and Traveller Action Plan

Human Rights Act (1998)

The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the fundamental rights and freedoms that everyone in the UK is entitled to. It incorporates the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) into domestic British law. The Human Rights Act came into force in the UK in October 2000.

It requires all public bodies (like courts, police, local authorities, hospitals and publicly funded schools) and other bodies carrying out public functions to respect and protect your human rights.

3. Our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Promise and Commitment

We believe that equity is essential to building strong cohesive communities. A truly inclusive city benefits all. Our promise is to ensure that EDI is an essential ingredient in becoming a vibrant community. The challenge for our EDI 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 equity and equality to all York’s, citizens, service users, our staff and the people who visit us.

City of York Council promises to:

- value diversity in our communities;
- promote an equitable, inclusive and engaged society;
- take a zero tolerance stance on intolerance, discrimination, harassment and victimisation in all of its forms

4. What we will do

This strategy pledges us to:

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1. Develop and promote anti-discrimination policies and practices at all levels of the council, and, in the delivery of our services to the public.

This means:

- Our employment policies and practices are fit for purpose and up to date in order to effectively tackle issues. This includes those dealing with recruitment, promotion, training, grievance, discipline and retention.
- We improve the representation of people with protected characteristics at all levels of the council so that our workforce better reflects York's diversity
- Using the data we have on our diverse communities to inform policy and practice
- Engaging with diverse communities to co-develop policy and practice
- We take positive action to prevent harassment and victimisation of citizens, service users and employees

2. Ensuring best practice in equity, diversity and inclusion at corporate, service and individual levels throughout the council.

This means:

- Services are truly accessible, welcoming, culturally sensitive and responsive to the needs of our diverse city and communities.
- Services are co-designed with diverse communities and incorporate lived experience to manage diversity effectively by tackling inequality and social exclusion.
- We promote diversity and fight intolerance through our work with all our partners, across public, private and third sectors, locally and regionally
- Ensure there is no discrimination in the distribution of grants and other resources to reflect the diverse needs within the city

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3. Launch our unique process of conducting human rights and equity impact analysis, across all service areas as an integral part of decision-making processes.

This means:

- We engage in effective equality analysis of policies and procedures impacting staff and citizens, making them fit for purpose
- We widen this analysis to include human rights and embed it at the start of all decision-making processes.

4. Provide training and support for staff and members to help them to meet their duties under the Equality Act and ensure citizens of York are treated with dignity and respect.

This means:

- We ensure that we enable people and communities to fully participate in consultations over the planning and delivery of council services that affect them.
- We are providing support and training to ensure this strategy is implemented and makes a difference
- We report on progress of this strategy, meeting the duties under Equality Act (2010) and ensuring citizens are treated with dignity and respect

5. Implement our Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan and ensure we are leading edge as an inclusive employer and service provider

This means:

- We effectively monitor, and report on, how well we are achieving our goals to eradicate discrimination, hate crime and anti-social behaviour from York
- We work with our partners to pursue agreed EDI objectives across the public, voluntary and business sectors of York.

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- We conduct regular and effective monitoring of this strategy, action plan and Key Performance Indicators so that we demonstrate how we are making a difference

5. Responsibilities

The Executive has collective councillor responsibility for the delivery of the EDI 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.

We will secure a mechanism by which citizen and stakeholder voices can be heard to feed into the development of policies and strategies, with consideration of their rights through Human Rights and Equity 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 Corporate Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Group.

Directors and Heads of Service are expected to demonstrate commitment to ensuring that the EDI Strategy is implemented at every level of the organisation.

- All members of staff are required to support the EDI strategy, policies, initiatives and ensure that members of the public, service users or employees are not discriminated against on the grounds of their age; disability; sex; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership status; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; or sexual orientation; carers; care experience and socio-economic background (includes low income groups and the digitally excluded).

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Monitoring and Evaluating the Strategy & Plan.

We will publish an annual report which will:

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

What does success look like?

In taking the actions and meeting our obligations which are set out below, we will expect to achieve a number of outcomes which show real improvements over a period of time.

These are:

- A workforce that better represents 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 this strategy and ensure citizens of the City are treated with dignity and respect as we deliver services.

More details on how we will measure the impact of our services, functions and policies is available in the Appendix.

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Appendix

Measuring the impact of our services, functions and policies

We will undertake impact analysis across all our key functions in relation to all protected characteristics using our Human Rights and Equity Analysis Tool.

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 communities.
- Consult data and feedback from 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 Equity Analysis.

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

- 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 equity analysis and set equity objectives effectively.