Newcastle Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2029

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Foreword from Leader of the Council



Newcastle is a multicultural city, a City of Sanctuary, and a regional capital that warmly welcomes visitors from across the world. We know that tackling inequality and promoting equality is fundamental to building a fair society and a strong local economy where everyone feels that they belong, that they have a voice, and have an equal opportunity to contribute.

We want to make Newcastle a 'Marmot City' by focusing on reducing health and income inequalities for people in our city and creating a Newcastle where everyone can succeed and thrive. The council is committed to leading by example, uniting our partners to tackle the challenges that limit what people can do and become.

We are making progress in many areas. Our Anti-Poverty Strategy, Inclusive Economic Strategy and Health and Well Being Strategy are designed to reduce the causes and impact of poverty and reduce health inequalities across our communities. Our Children and Families Newcastle partnership is focused on improving educational outcomes and opportunities for vulnerable children and young people. Our Housing Services aim to provide high-quality, safe, sustainable, and well-maintained social housing supports individuals with or without a home, giving the stability and security needed to pursue opportunities and achieve well-being. The Safe Newcastle partnership and our new Movement Strategy have clear priorities to ensure our city is safe and accessible. Our own workforce is becoming more diverse, and we are ambitious about challenging ourselves and our partners in the city to do more and do better.

These initiatives are making a positive impact, but too many of our city's residents still face discrimination and disadvantage in many aspects of their lives. This strategy shows our commitment to continuously improving equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in Newcastle. We will make our actions visible and lead by example, so that anyone working for the council, partnering with us, or using our services, knows that they will be treated fairly and with respect.

Cllr Karen Kilgour, Leader of Newcastle City Council.

What is equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)?

Equality means ensuring everyone has equal opportunities and rights, regardless of background. Equality recognises that people face discrimination and prejudice in relation to some differences and seeks to remove these barriers. Equality does not mean treating everyone the same, it means having equal opportunities and not being discriminated against.

Diversity means recognising, valuing and respecting the differences among individuals and groups. People are different in many visible and non-visible ways, and people can be more likely to experience discrimination because of some differences.

Inclusion means creating environments where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to participate fully. Inclusion ensures that all people feel respected, involved and valued for their unique identities. The way people are included needs to be meaningful for it to work.

Our city

Newcastle is a diverse and multicultural city with a growing population. In the period between Census 2011 and Census 2021, the population increased by 7% and is projected to grow by another 4% by 2031.

If Newcastle's population were 100 people:

- 11 would identify as Asian or Asian British, 3 as Black, Black British, Caribbean or African, 2 as Mixed or Multiple ethnicities, 80 as White, and 3 as another ethnic group.
- 88 households would have English as the main language for all resident adults.
- 49 would be male and 51 female.
- 83 would be aged 16+, with 72 identifying as heterosexual, 2 as gay or lesbian, 2 as bisexual, and 6 not responding.
- 24 would be aged 0-19 years, 13 school-aged, 12 aged 20-24, 44 aged 25-59, and 20 aged 60+ years.
- 21 would have a disability limiting their day-to-day activities.
- 41 would identify with no religion, 41 as Christian, 9 as Muslim, 1 as Buddhist, 1 as Sikh, 1 as Jewish and 6 not answering.

Our workforce

Newcastle City Council is a large and complex organisation with a workforce of approximately 5,500 people who deliver hundreds of valuable public services to over 310,000 residents and around 65,000 students. Our dedicated workforce is our greatest asset, and we understand the importance of developing a people-centred organisational culture that supports our colleagues to strive for excellence every

single day. Our values are embedded in our organisational culture and are central to everything we do, guiding the decisions we make, clarifying ways of working, and explaining how it feels to be part of this organisation, and this great city.

If our workforce were 100 people:

60 would be female and 40 would be male
6 would be from ethnic minorities
5 would be disabled
3 would be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
4 would be aged 16-24
34 would be aged 25-44
57 would be aged 45-64

Our legal obligations

As a public body, the council must comply with the Equality Act 2010 which gives protection to individuals and groups identifying with the nine protected characteristics in the Act making it unlawful to discriminate against someone on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Sex
- Gender reassignment
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity

As a local authority we are required to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct which is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010.
- 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.

Equality monitoring

Effective equality monitoring is key to helping us to meet our legal obligations. Equality monitoring is the collection of information about the characteristics of people such as their age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Having this kind of information about our service users helps us to make sure that our services are accessible to everyone who needs to use them.

Equality monitoring enables us to increase our knowledge and understanding of Newcastle's diverse communities and gather information about who uses our services. For equality monitoring to be effective, the recording of information is just the first step. By analysing the data collected we can develop our understanding as a council of how well we are meeting our commitments. The monitoring data may highlight where there are inadequacies or issues in how services are accessed and who they are accessed by. This provides the basis for the review of policies and identifying areas for improvement.

Analysing information gathered through equality monitoring helps us to identify and consult with groups that do not access our services, or who access them in disproportionately low numbers. We can then:

- Develop an understanding of why our services do not meet their needs.
- Improve delivery of services making it easier for all groups of customers to access services.

Our approach

Equality, diversity, and inclusion is at the heart of the council's vision and values and is part of everything we do. Our Council Plan sets the outcomes we want for residents and our city and explains how we aim to achieve them. One of the Plan's guiding principles for doing so is to ensure our council is equitable, diverse and inclusive.

We are committed to offering equal opportunities to all and valuing the rich diversity in our communities. This commitment is fundamental to our service delivery, our partnerships and collaborations, and our responsibilities as an employer.

We play a critical role in reducing inequalities and enhancing inclusion and cohesion within our communities. This strategy guides our commitment to EDI across all operations, and compliance with to Equality Legislation and Codes of Practice.

We must also ensure greater diversity, equality and inclusion within our own organisation to lead our city by example and pave the way for a more diverse democracy that supports better life outcomes and celebrates our diverse communities.

Aims of the strategy

This strategy outlines the council's approach to EDI, emphasising inclusivity, fair access to services, and a sense of belonging. By promoting diversity, we enable all residents, staff, and partners to reach their full potential. By leveraging the talent and perspectives in our city, we will create a more equal and inclusive Newcastle where everyone can succeed.

The design and delivery of our services must reflect our EDI approach. We will embed equality and good relations in our daily business and regularly review our ways of working to find opportunities for improvement and ensure we are consistent and effective.

This strategy will help us to:

- **Create a lasting, positive impact** on our communities and the people we employ, serve, and work with by fostering inclusion and opportunity.
- **Ensure full compliance** with relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, to uphold our legal and moral responsibilities.
- **Establish clear, measurable objectives** for our equality agenda and regularly assess performance for continuous improvement and accountability.
- **Lead by example** within the community, promoting best practices and raising awareness of the importance of EDI.
- **Deliver exceptional services** that meet the diverse needs of all individuals, ensuring accessibility and fairness.

This strategy is not just a document. It is a concrete representation of our commitment to creating an inclusive environment. It is central to the ways of working, thinking and decision-making in our organisation.

Socio-economic duty

The socio-economic duty, although not yet enacted as law in England, is a requirement for public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address the inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place of residence or social class.

Our approach to tackling inequality also includes the voluntary adoption of the Socio-Economic Duty (SED), a requirement for public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address the inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place of residence or social class. We have embedded these principles in our Council Plan, our Anti-Poverty Strategy and Inclusive Economic Strategy.

We are committed to tackling the root causes of multi-generational disadvantage and poverty which affect people from birth. We will also take an intersectional approach to understanding how multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage can compound themselves and create unique challenges for people. We also recognise the entrenched negative impacts of economic deprivation, and the need for us to target our resources effectively to meet the needs of people living in poverty. People can also be excluded for many other inter-related reasons such as being socially isolated, living in poor housing, or having poor health.

Care experienced people

We are also taking a groundbreaking step by formally recognise ‘care experienced people’ as a characteristic to be considered alongside the other protected characteristics. Although this designation is not enforceable under the Equality Act 2010, it is applicable in relation to the council’s duties and commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. We will consider Care Experience in our Integrated Impact Assessment and ensure council policies reflect this.

Multiple barriers to inclusion

We recognise that creating a successful and inclusive city also means recognising that there are causes of inequality or exclusion which are often interconnected.

People can be excluded for many reasons such as being socially isolated, living in poor housing, or having poor health. Other groups such as refugees and migrants, those with caring responsibilities, or those at risk of homelessness or drug and alcohol users are also likely to face inequality or exclusion. We will consider these in our approach alongside protected characteristics.

Intersectionality, where people have multiple characteristics and experiences can increase the prejudices and discrimination, they face. For example, a person who is gay and disabled. This is particularly the case for people living in poverty. Improving data on intersectionality is key to a better EDI policy.

‘Marmot City’ and Health in All Policies

Michael Marmot’s report, “Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Review,” highlights the urgent need to build a society based on social justice, reduce income and wealth inequalities, and prioritise health and well-being over narrow economic goals.

Newcastle is committed to becoming a Marmot City, focusing on reducing health inequalities and supporting disadvantaged groups. The Marmot principles ensure fairness, diversity, and inclusion in all council activities. Progress against the principles will be tracked, especially for people with protected characteristics.

The council leads a ‘Health in All Policies’ approach, embedding Marmot principles in all council work. This involves all departments working together to ensure policies and services consider health and fairness, aiming to create a healthier and more equal city.

Focused areas of work

We recognise that to effectively tackle inequality we need to focus on the needs of people in specific ways, for example we will:

- Recognise and remove barriers faced by **Disabled people**, provide flexible services, communicate in a range of accessible formats, and promote the

'Social Model' of disability. In March 2025 we signed the **Disability Employment charter** and will aim to become a **Disability Confident Leader** employer.
- Improve safety, challenge **sexism and misogyny**, and ensure our services and workplace requirements consider women's needs and circumstances with an ongoing commitment to the **White Ribbon** initiative.
- Take a strategic approach to promoting **race equality**, through adoption of UNISON's Racism Charter.
- Promote awareness and understanding of **LGBT+** identities and experiences through campaigns, initiatives, and events with visible allyship.
- Build relationships with **faith groups**, challenge prejudice and promote understanding of different religions and beliefs and consider the requirements of people of faith in our services and workplace.
- Have a clear policy and guidance on how best to support **transgender** and **gender-diverse** employees, service users and residents.

Our objectives for 2025-2029

Our equality objectives set out how we will achieve the aims and commitments of our Equality, diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and comply with equality legislation. They will ensure that our resources focus on priority areas identified as critical to achieving equality, diversity and inclusion across Newcastle.

These objectives have been set using equality analysis, in consultation with the council's leadership, workforce and residents, in alignment with Local Government Association benchmarking.

Objective 1: Provide fair and inclusive services that promote wellbeing

We provide hundreds of essential services to people living in Newcastle, like children's education and safeguarding, adult social care, waste collection, housing, road maintenance and library services. They all have a role in making the city more equal and welcoming. We want Newcastle to be a city where everyone can use council services easily, feel included, and live a healthier life. That is also true for the services we procure.

As we become a Marmot City, we will work towards reducing health and social inequalities by making services fairer and easier to use.

What we want to achieve:

- An evidence-based approach to service design and delivery and to measurement of our progress - improving our data gathering, equality monitoring and analysis, and improving our understanding of intersectionality, so we understand who is using our services and where there are gaps.

- Being a listening organisation – gaining and using feedback from service users to improve services to make them better and fairer. We will create opportunities for discussion and feedback, enabling meaningful dialogue with residents and community organisations.
- The effective use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to check the impact of our decisions before making big changes to make sure they don't unfairly affect certain groups.
- A focus on the needs of more individuals facing disadvantage and exclusion, as well as those protected under equality laws.
- Council information that is easier to understand - by using clear and inclusive language, multiple languages, and accessible formats where possible.
- Safe public spaces that they are accessible to all.
- Guidance and support for businesses and contractors to support the development of their equality, diversity and inclusion policies and practice when working with the council.

Objective 2: Lead the way in equality, diversity and inclusion and being a beacon of good practice

We want people and organisations in Newcastle and beyond, to view us as a beacon of good practice. Everyone at Newcastle City Council has a role in achieving our goals and councillors and senior officers have a particular responsibility as active, visible leadership and positive role models. This objective ensures that council Members and senior officials demonstrate strong leadership and effective decision-making on EDI issues. Staff representatives, including our staff-led groups and trade unions also have an important role to play.

What we want to achieve:

- Leaders who actively champion EDI and serve as role models for the entire organisation.
- A culture of zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, bias, or exclusionary practices.
- Inclusion of EDI in all our policy and strategy development so decisions are made on the basis of thorough insight into the needs of our communities.
- Delivery and commissioning of services that actively promote EDI.
- A rich organisational knowledge base of EDI issues and good practice.
- Strong partnerships with diverse networks and community groups to drive change and increase trust and confidence.
- Productive work with communities and neighbourhoods to support EDI at local ward levels.
- Sharing good EDI practice and innovation locally, nationally, and internationally so excellence can be recognised.

Objective 3: Tackle prejudice and promote good relations amongst our communities

Our goal is to bring people together, reduce prejudice, and ensure everyone in Newcastle feels safe, included, and able to participate in community life. We will collaborate with local groups, challenge discrimination and create opportunities for people to connect and understand each other better. As a Marmot City, we are committed to involving communities in identifying what causes poor health and designing actions to reduce them.

What we want to achieve:

- Stronger community engagement. More residents from a diversity of communities taking action and accessing opportunities in their neighbourhood and city, connecting with the voluntary sector and community champions networks.
- Greater participation in public life by underrepresented groups.
- The development of safe, inclusive spaces for different communities to come together, share knowledge, and build partnerships.
- Effective multi-agency partnerships which provide strategic coordination of hate-crime response – tackling and reducing hate crime, raising awareness, and ensuring effective support for victims.
- Promotion and celebration of Newcastle's diversity and cultural heritage though a vibrant calendar of citywide events and initiatives e.g., Black History Month, International Women's Day, Ramadan, Diwali, Hanukah, Pride, LGBT History month and Disability History Month.

Objective 4: A diverse and inclusive workforce which reflects our communities

We want Newcastle City Council's workforce to reflect the diversity of the city and be a workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and have equal opportunities for promotion and career advancement. Representation and role modelling at senior levels is key.

We are committed to ensuring we have an inclusive, high-performing, and motivated workforce that is representative of the city we serve.

Our People Plan is our organisational commitment to addressing our culture and ways of working to promote inclusion and to tackle root causes of institutional inequality

What we want to achieve:

- An organisational culture where staff feel safe, valued and included and where they feel they can ‘be themselves’ at work.
- Governance and management that proactively creates the conditions for EDI to be part of day to day working life.
- Improvement in the levels of employment at all levels, including leadership, for currently underrepresented groups.
- Mandatory EDI staff learning and development offer that ensures all employees understand their rights and responsibilities, and the diverse and intersectional needs of our communities.
- A confident and knowledgeable workforce who act as ambassadors and champions for EDI both in their working and non-working environments.
- Managers who are skilled and empowered to support staff as individuals, valuing and using diverse and different ways of thinking to improve service planning and performance.
- Improvement in the gender and ethnicity pay gaps for our workforce.
- Recognition and addressing of any aspects of our culture and ways of working that are dysfunctional or discriminatory.
- An organisational culture that supports a positive sense of health and wellbeing for all our employees.

Measuring impact

A detailed action plan with key performance indicators and SMART targets will be produced for our objectives. Annual EDI reporting will highlight what we have done each year to achieve our equality objectives and the progress we have made in relation to EDI work across the council.

We also use equality benchmarking tools - the Equality Framework for Local Government and the LGA Diverse by Design guidance – to provide an objective basis for our EDI action planning and to ensure it is in line with best practice.

Areas of impact measurement in the Action Plan will include:

- Young people who are not in education, employment or training
- Website accessibility score and reading age
- Tenant satisfaction levels
- Adult and social care user satisfaction levels
- Disability employment rate of our residents
- Ethnic minority employment rate
- Uptake of free school meals including autoenrollment, and lobbying of government for an increase in FSM grant
- Yearly Cumulative Impact Assessment alongside our Medium-Term Financial Plan

- Hate crime reporting
- Recruitment process review
- Equality monitoring of our workforce
- Evidence of EDI design in project plans and leadership models
- Employability events to reach into all communities
- Workforce gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting
- Completion of equality, diversity and inclusion training

Glossary

Care Experienced People: refers to anyone who has been in care at any point in their life, regardless of the duration or whether they are still in care or have moved on. This term encompasses individuals who have been cared for by foster carers, in residential children's homes, kinship care, supported accommodation, or secure units. Care Leavers are a specific group within the Care Experienced community.

Disability Confident scheme: Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. It has replaced the previous Two Ticks Positive About Disabled People scheme. There are three levels of achievement which include:

- Level 1: Disability Confident Committed
- Level 2: Disability Confident Employer
- Level 3: Disability Confident Leader

Disability Employment Charter: Is a set of vital measures that, if implemented, would substantially improve disability employment. By setting out clearly and simply the actions needed, it provides government with a road map for change as it develops the next phases of its National Disability Strategy. The Charter consists of nine areas of action. Each of the nine areas contain several specific asks that will help disabled people's employment outcomes.

Equality Act 2010: the Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010 and legally protects people in the UK from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws, amalgamating them within a single Act, bringing together various pieces of equality legislation, such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations, particularly under the nine protected characteristics:

Equality Framework for Local Government: The framework helps local councils to meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duties (PSED)The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) has four improvement modules:

1. Understanding and Working with your Communities
2. Leadership and Organisational Commitment

3. Responsive Services and Customer Care
4. Diverse and Engaged Workforce

Equality monitoring: this is one of the ways we are able to find out more and build an accurate picture of the diverse composition of our staff and communities, so that we may create policies, procedures and sources of support that directly benefit and respond to the needs of individuals and groups

Equal opportunities: Equal opportunities, or equality of opportunity, may be defined as ensuring that everyone is entitled to freedom from discrimination, where individuals have an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential and accessing opportunities. The term ‘equal opportunities’ has mostly been replaced by ‘equality, diversity and inclusion’ in recent years.

Ethnicity: refers to the following shared traits within a particular group of people:

- a long-shared history of which the group is conscious as distinguishing it from other groups and the memory of which it keeps alive
- a cultural tradition of its own including family and social manners, often but not necessarily associated with religious observance
- a common, however distant, geographical origin
- a common language and literature

It is important to remember that everyone has an ethnicity, and 'white British' is an ethnic group.

Gender identity: Describes a person's internal perception of their own gender. For transgender people, their gender identity does not match the gender assigned to them at birth.

Gender pay gap: the gender pay gap uses pay scales to measure how organisations are providing equality of opportunity for men and women, using pay as the best measure of seniority. The gender pay gap shows the difference in average (mean) and also median earnings between women and men.

Gender reassignment (or transitioning): The process whereby people transition from their assigned gender to live in the gender with which they identify. Gender reassignment is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (2010). A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment "if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex".

Hate crimes: hate crimes denote criminal acts such as assault, harassment, sexual offences, criminal damage and hate mail, which are perceived to be motivated by hostility or prejudice that is based on race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or transgender identity

Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA): This is where a detailed and systematic analysis is undertaken to determine how a policy, procedure or change to process etc., may disproportionately impact a particular group.

Intersectionality: The term is used to refer to the idea that an individual's identity consists of various biological, social and cultural factors, including their race, ethnicity, sex, religion and sexual orientation etc, and that each of these contributes to their overall identity and to who they are as an individual. A single person may experience multiple forms of discrimination and systematic social inequality as a result of having more than one characteristic. It may also mean that they experience either privileges or disadvantages on the basis of differing aspects of their identity, and they may experience barriers or even be excluded from one particular group as an indirect result of their identification with another.

The Local Government Association (LGA) is a national membership body for local authorities in England and Wales, acting as the national voice of local government, working to support, promote, and improve it.

LGBT+: is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender people. The '+' symbol recognises other identities which either do not fall into these categories or are not explicitly referenced, such as queer, questioning, nonbinary, intersex, gender-fluid, asexual, aromantic and several others.

It is important to acknowledge that while this and other acronyms are widely used by individuals and institutions, the LGBT+ community is not a single homogeneous group and the experiences of all individuals who identify within this wider community are different.

Non-binary: An inclusive term used to describe people whose gender identity is "fluid" and not exclusively male or female. Non-binary people may identify as neither male or female, or they may feel that they embody elements of both or that they are something different.

Protected characteristic: is a term used in the Equality Act 2010 to describe the characteristics that people have in relation to which they are protected against discrimination and harassment. Under the Act, there are nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation

Sexual harassment: Sexual harassment is defined as an incident where a person engages in unwanted conduct of a sexualised nature that has the purpose or effect of violating someone's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment. This can include making sexual comments or unwanted sexual advances.

Social model of disability: The social model of disability seeks to define disabled people as people, first and foremost, and that they are not inferior, incomplete or

'less than' but simply different from people who are not disabled. The social model seeks to celebrate difference and is preferable to the medical model by including the individual in the process and putting individual requirements and personal experiences above all else. It acknowledges that it is not the disabled person who is the 'problem' instead it is the barriers and limitations of the world around them which 'dis-ables' them.

Socio-economic Duty: In simple terms, the socio-economic duty means public bodies will consider how their decisions impact people facing socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic plans, aiming to reduce inequalities in areas like, employment education, health, and housing.

Transgender (or trans): An umbrella term describing the diverse range of people whose gender identity or gender expression differs from their assigned gender. The term can encompass individuals who are transsexual, cross-dressers, intersex or non-binary.

UNISON Anti Racism Charter: is a commitment to take anti-racism seriously and a pledge to address the racial disparities in recruitment, promotion, training , disciplinary procedures and pay.

White Ribbon Initiative: White Ribbon is the UK's leading charity engaging men and boys to end violence against women and girls. The aim is to prevent men's violence against women and girls by addressing its root causes. They work with men and boys to change long-established, and harmful, attitudes and behaviours around rigid gender norms and masculinity that perpetuate inequality and violence.