

Sheffield City Council

Equality Objectives 2019-23



Consultation Report

February 2019



Sheffield City Council Equality Objectives 2019-23 Consultation Report - February 2019

1.0 Overview

Our Equality Objectives are very important to us as an organisation. They guide the work we carry out in the city and demonstrate our commitment to challenging inequality and promoting a fair and inclusive Sheffield.

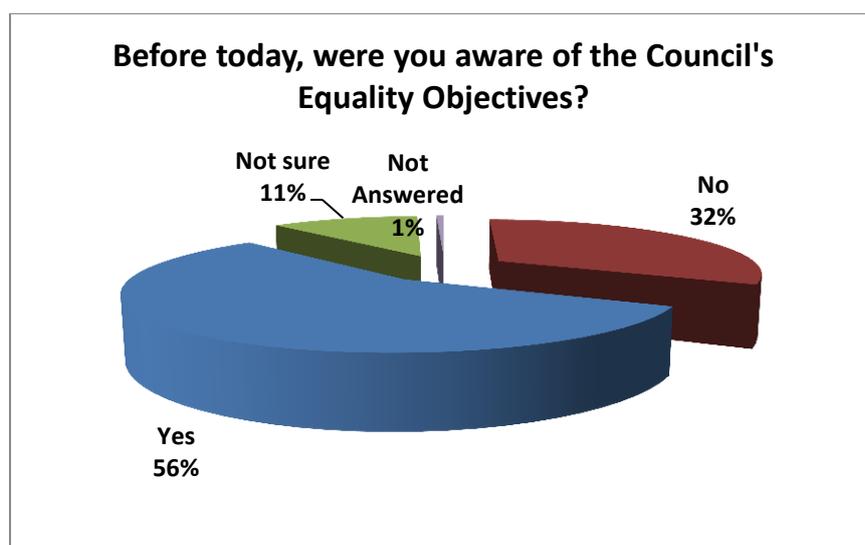
By law the Council is required to set at least one Equality Objective every four years. To help us focus on a small number of important areas, so we can really make a difference, for 2019-23 we proposed setting four objectives, each with a set of three more specific aims.

During October and November 2018 we published a set of draft Equality Objectives and carried out a public consultation exercise. We had an online survey with paper copies available on request. We also held an informal discussion session with the organisations who support the [Equality Hub Network](#).

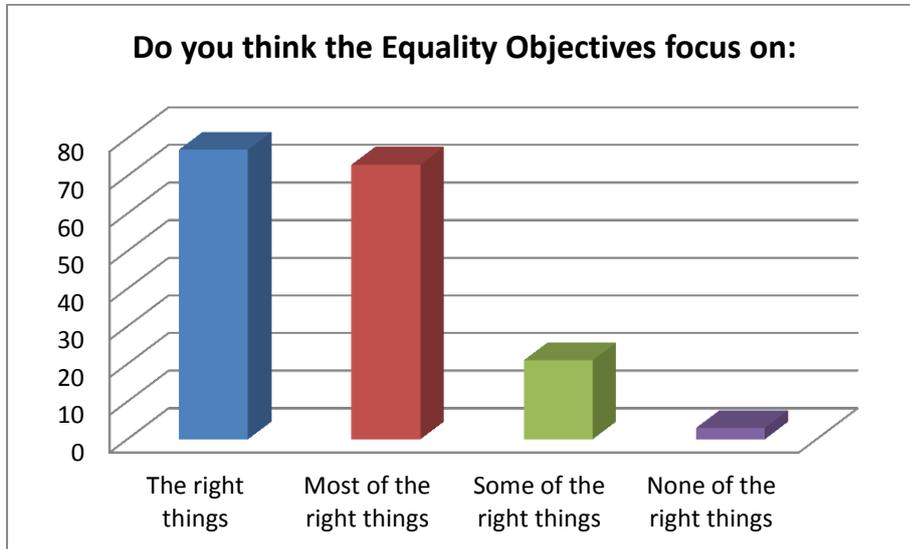
2.0 Responses

We received 178 responses to the survey: 167 were from individuals and 10 were from organisations, with one person choosing not to answer this question. The survey consisted of a number of multiple choice questions along with opportunities for people to leave comments and suggestions.

The first question asked people if they were aware of the Council's Equality Objectives and the results show that the majority of people (100 respondents) were.

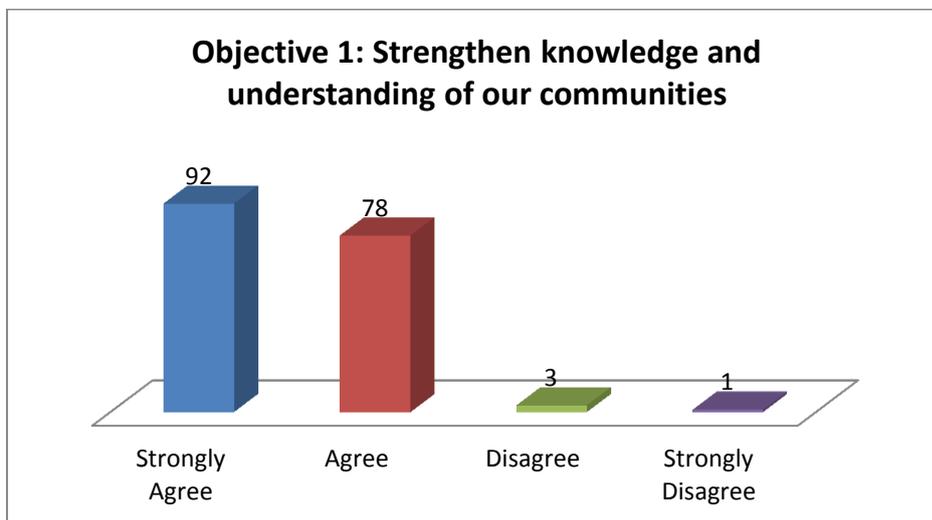


Question 2 asked whether people felt the set of proposed Equality Objectives, focus “on the right things”. The response to this question is very positive, with 84% of people saying that the objective focused on either “The Right Things” or “Most of the Right Things”.



For each of the four objectives people were then asked “To what extent do you agree that this is an important objective?”

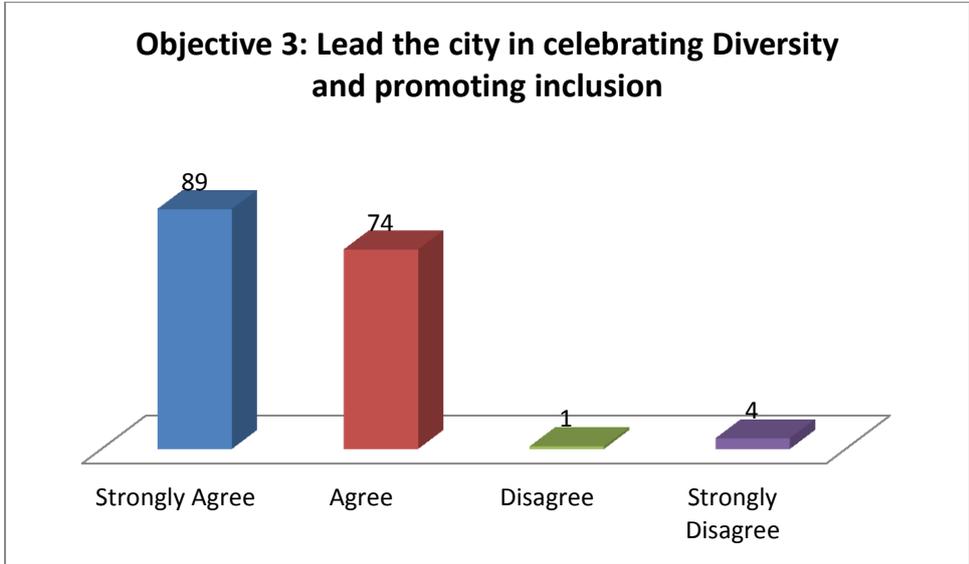
Again, the responses were very positive as the four charts below show.



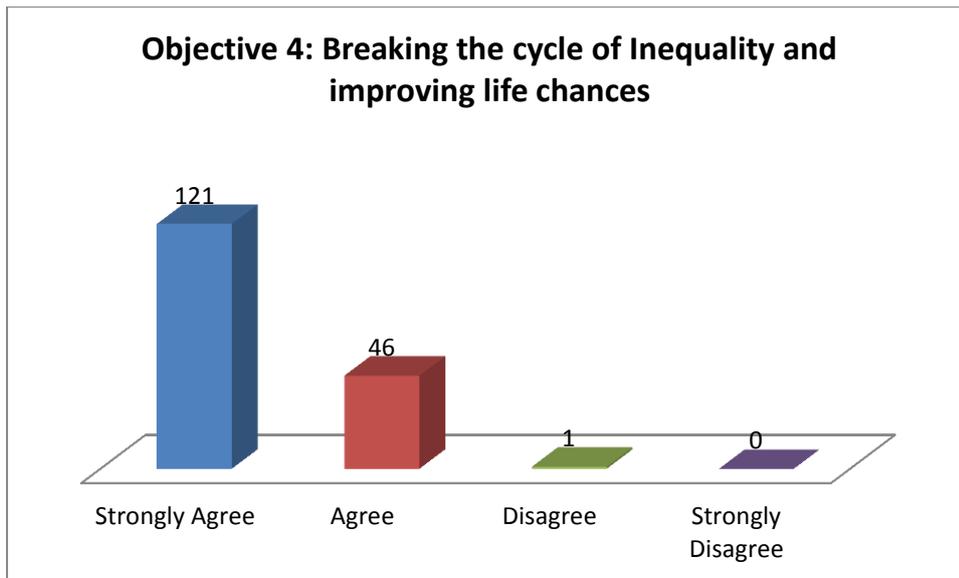
98% of people either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that this is an important objective.



94% of people either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that this is an important objective.



97% of people either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that this is an important objective.



99% of people either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree” that this is an important objective.

2.1 Comments / Suggestions

People were also invited to leave comments / suggestions regarding each objective. This section provides an overview of some of the feedback that was received and our response; it also reflects feedback from the discussion with the Equality Hub Network support organisations.

Objective 1: Strengthen knowledge and understanding of our communities

Summary of Feedback

There were a number of comments about ensuring we continue to listen to underrepresented groups and that we engage with them to ensure they have a voice. A number of people also remarked about making sure “all communities” feel engaged, for example, one respondent said: *“A key facet is to find ways to meaningfully engage with everyone within Sheffield's communities; and to find ways to make sure that everyone can be sure that their voice is being heard.”*

Some people felt that we also needed to consider “how” things will be done and “what” we are going to do with the improved knowledge and understanding, a sense that we would need to move from “understanding to doing”. One respondent commented: *“I agree this is important. But beyond it comes a further layer, which is what are we going to do with that strengthened knowledge and understanding?”*

There was also feedback about a need to understand the needs of communities and the challenges that they face - not just who they are.

Our Response

We would agree with this feedback. This objective needs to not just be about gathering information, once we have this information we need to use our improved knowledge and understanding to continue to deliver better services that meet the needs of our diverse communities.

We will also continue to ensure we listen and engage with communities across the city, including underrepresented groups and those who experience barriers to engagement; this will include our continued work with the Equality Hub Network

Objective 2: Ensure our workforce reflects the people that we serve

Summary of Feedback

We received a number of comments about a lack of diversity in senior positions within the Council, specifically with regards to BAME groups (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) and women. There was also feedback regarding progression for diverse groups and addressing barriers to progression.

Workforce diversity with regards to factors other than protected characteristics was also raised; other suggested areas included socio-economic back ground, class and education. A number of people also mentioned the need to employ staff in frontline roles with the right values and skills.

Whilst people were clearly supportive of having a diverse and representative workforce, for example one respondent commented: *“If the workforce doesn't represent the people we serve, we can hardly have empathy and understanding of the needs and requirements”*. There was also a perception from a number of respondents that this objective was referring to positive action, positive discrimination or the introduction of quotas, with a number of people commenting that recruitment should be about the best person for the job, based on knowledge, experience and skills.

In terms of clarity there was also a suggestion to add “within our workforce” after “carers” into Objective 2, Aim 3.

Our Response

We acknowledge your feedback regarding concerns about a lack of diversity in senior positions, along with challenges in terms of progression and barriers to progression. We know we have a particular challenge in terms of underrepresentation of certain groups, (BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic), Women, Disabled People and LGB+ and Trans people, at Chief Officer grade and equivalent.

Through our commitments in this Objective we will continue to promote inclusion, fairness and accessibility in our workforce, whilst working to improve our workforce diversity and representation across grades. This objective is not proposing any changes to our current recruitment and selection policies and procedures, which recruit people based on their skills, expertise and knowledge.

We will amend Aim 3 to include the wording “within our workforce” after carers.

Objective 3: Lead the city in celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion

Summary of Feedback

There were a number of positive comments about how welcome and inclusive Sheffield is as a city, for example one respondent commented: *“Sheffield has long had a reputation as a friendly and welcoming city towards people from all communities”*.

A number of people also commented that they felt it was important that the council demonstrates leadership in terms of diversity and inclusion, and that we work in partnership across all sectors, public, private, voluntary and faith.

There was also feedback about how celebrating diversity needs to be across all groups including age (younger and older) and all races. Some people also felt that we should promote local examples of the benefits of diversity and inclusion, for example one responded suggested: *“Having real examples of where diverse groups have come together to deliver improvements would demonstrate the value of diversity.”*

There was also feedback regarding “designing for accessibility” and physical accessibility - to ensure we have spaces that support independence as people get older and for disabled people.

Our Response

We welcome the positive feedback and suggestions regarding diversity and inclusion in the city and how we can celebrate it. As part of this objective we want to lead the city in celebrating and promoting our diversity and the benefits and opportunities it brings. We will continue to promote inclusion and accessibility, including through our work with AccessAble.

To reflect the points made about partnership working, we will add in a reference to cross sector working to aim 1, so it will read “We will work with our partner organisations *across all sectors*”. To more strongly reflect the points about accessibility, we will amend the wording on Aim 3, so it will read “We will continue to support citywide work to ensure our city is an inclusive *and accessible* place to live and visit”.

Objective 4: Breaking the cycle of inequality and improving life chances

Summary of Feedback

We received a number of comments about equality issues within the city in terms of access to services, along with comments about the linked issue of poverty and the substantial impact it has on people’s life chances and outcomes, for example one respondent commented: *“Poverty is a significant factor in life chances and support needs to be provided to families”*.

There was also feedback about ensuring we have affordable and inclusive housing developments, which include adapted properties.

A number of people also felt that supporting young people to achieve their potential and raising aspirations should be a priority along with education and investing in skills development.

We also received a suggestion that the introduction to this objective should more strongly reflect the fact that the focus is on areas of persistent inequality.

Our Response

We understand the devastating impact that poverty has on individuals and families in the city and will continue to ensure our services focus on those with the greatest need. We want to ensure our services are fair and accessible and will continue to undertake equality impact assessments to inform our decision making. Through this objective we will focus on inequalities in health and wellbeing, including decent, inclusive and accessible housing.

Based on your feedback we will change the title of this objective to – “Break the cycle of inequality and improve life chances” and we will strengthen the wording in the introduction to reinforce that many of these are areas of persistent inequality.

Finally people were invited to leave any other comments / suggestions.

Other Comments / suggestions

Summary of Feedback

We received a number of comments about increasing levels of inequality within the city and a widening inequality gap. Some people linked this to reductions in public funding and for some there are concerns that these conditions will impact on delivery of the objectives.

There were also comments regarding rises in poverty and a sense that some areas of the city were “being left behind”. A number of people also acknowledged the financial restraints being faced by the Council. In addition there was also a sense that “breaking the cycle” is not something the council can do alone, and it will require partnership working. There were a number of comments about “how” the council will actually achieve these Objectives, with some people keen to see further information about this.

We also received a suggestion about including some information about why we have chosen these areas for our four objectives e.g. based on data from our Workforce Diversity Reports and Annual Equality Report.

Our Response

Like many of you we recognise there are increasing levels of poverty and inequality in the city, which are inevitably linked to austerity and reductions in public funding. We recognise that this poses a substantial challenge in terms of some of the areas we plan to focus on through our Equality Objectives, particularly areas of persistent inequality. However, we remain committed to supporting those in the greatest need and providing services which are fair, inclusive and accessible. We will also

continue to work with partners from across all sectors to ensure we work collaboratively to deliver the best possible services for people who live and visit the city.

Based on your feedback, our final Equality Objectives document will include both a section on why we have chosen to focus on these objectives and on our next steps in terms of delivery, engagement and reporting.

We also understand that some of you would like to have more information about how we will achieve our Objectives over the next four years. We will continue to provide a detailed update through our “Annual Equality Report”, which we publish on our website. This report will provide an update on each of the four Objectives, including how we are delivering and the outcomes. The Annual Equality Report also includes a detailed set of data on our workforce diversity, so you can see how we are progressing. Our [2016-17 Annual Equality Report and Workforce Diversity Reports](#) are available online now and the 2017-18 reports will be available from March 2019. The first annual report for our new 2019-23 objectives will then be available around March 2020.

We also are required to publish annual Gender Pay Gap data; this annual data set includes information on the mean gender pay gap in hourly pay, median gender pay gap in hourly pay and the proportion of males and females in each pay quartile. Our current [2017 Gender Pay Gap data](#) is available on our website. In addition we also undertake analysis in terms of Equal Pay for some groups with protected characteristics, including disabled people and BAME (Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic) groups.

3.0 Next Steps

As a result of this consultation we will make some changes to our Equality Objectives 2019-23 as outlined in this report.

The final document will then be published around April 2019 and will be available online via our [Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Webpages](#).

We will also continue to reflect on your feedback as we deliver against the objectives and review our progress.

Thank you

Finally, we are grateful to everyone who took part in this consultation. We received 176 responses, from a diverse group of people within the city. Your thoughts and suggestions were well informed and insightful and we thank you for taking the time to respond.

4.0 Equalities Monitoring

Ethnicity	
White	138
White (non-British)	6
Asian or Asian British	10
Black or Black British	9
Other Ethnic Group	1
Mixed / Multiple Heritage	4
Not Answered	10

Age	
16-18	0
19-24	4
25-34	13
35-44	42
45-54	60
55-64	42
65-74	11
Not Answered	6

Sex	
Female	95
Male	72
Non-binary	2
Other	9

Is your Gender identity the same as the sex you were assigned at birth?	
Yes	161
No	4
Not answered	13

Caring responsibilities	
Yes	35
No	134
Not Answered	9

Religion / Belief	
No religion	86
Buddhist	2
Christian	61
Hindu	2
Muslim	8
Sikh	1
Other	6
Not Answered	12

Sexual Orientation	
Bisexual	4
Gay man	5
Lesbian/gay woman	4
Heterosexual/straight	149
Other	3
Not Answered	13

Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person?	
Yes	41
No	129
Not Answered	8

Are you currently serving or a veteran in the UK Armed Forces?	
Yes	2
No	164
Not answered	12

Are you a reservist or in part time service such as in the Territorial Army?	
Yes	3
No	162
Not answered	13

Are you a member of a service person's immediate family?	
Yes	1
No	165
Not answered	12

Equalities Monitoring - Summary

The vast majority of respondents completed the equalities monitoring questions, with completion rates varying between 178-165 people (a total of 178 people responded to the survey). Overall we have engaged with a diverse group of people, with most categories being representative of the overall city population:

Ethnicity - 18% of our respondents were from BAME groups (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), the citywide BAME population is around 19%.

Disability – 24% of our respondents stated that they considered themselves to be a disabled person, the estimated city population is around 18% (as the prevalence of disability rises with age the older age profile of our respondents may explain the higher figure).

Sexual Orientation - 9% of our respondents were LGB+, an estimated 5-7% of the city population are LGB+.

Carers – 20% of our respondents were carers, Sheffield Carers Centre estimates that the city has almost 60,000 carers in a population of 600,000, so around 10% (again, as carers are more likely to be over 45 the older age profile of our respondents may explain the higher figure).

Trans - 2% of our respondents said that the gender identity was different to the sex they were assigned at birth, the estimated trans population in the city is 0.6%.

Religion & Belief (inc. no belief) – we engaged with a high number of people who described themselves as having “no religion”, 52% (based on the 2011 census the estimated city population is 31%) and a lower number of people who describes themselves as Christian 37% (the citywide estimate is 52%). Again, figures were slightly lower for Muslims, 5% of people stated their religion to be Muslim and the citywide estimate is 7.7%. Figures for other faiths were in line with city estimates (but numbers are low).

In terms of **sex**, we engaged with a higher proportion of females (52%) than males 40%, and 6% of respondents described their sex as “non-binary” or “other”. For **age**, we engaged with a higher age range, 10% of respondents were under 34 years old, 59% were 35-54 and the remaining 31% of respondents were 55+.