

Sheffield City Council

Annual Equalities Summary

2020/2021

Annual Equalities Summary Report 2020/2021

Our Annual Equalities report provides an overview of how we are meeting the Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Duties (PSED) and **Equality Objectives**. The reporting time frame for this report is from March 2020 to April 2021, this report is slightly longer than the previous year as it includes a section on City wide partnership working in response to Covid 19, examples of engagement community work in collaboration with mainstream services and an in depth demonstration of our commitment to our Equality Objectives. The report also captures how we behave as an employer, our workforce diversity and a snapshot of how our colleagues managed and adapted working through the pandemic.

In 2020 due to COVID 19 the Equalities and Engagement team itself was impacted in that 2 team members were moved to the Covid response teams, 2 further team members moved to new roles and we recruited 2 new staff. However, for a significant period including this reporting period, we have been under staffed as a result of supporting the organisations response to Covid 19.

The **Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Duties (PSED)** require the Council to have due regard to three areas in the way it works:

1. To **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation**, and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
2. To **'take forward (advance) equality of opportunity'** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who don't.
3. To **'foster good relations'** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

As a Local Authority, we understand that it is imperative to assess the potential impacts on the range of external and internal activities on diverse groups of people across Sheffield. This involves looking at evidence, engaging and building relationships with all communities, staff, partnerships, customers, stakeholders, and service providers across the city.

Our **Equality Objectives** demonstrate the Council's commitment to challenging inequality and promoting a fair and inclusive city. We have 4 objectives, each with a set of 3 more specific aims. The Annual Equality report includes various examples of actions and progress across the Council, guided by the Equality objectives. The below aims to provide a short summary in alignment with the Equality objectives.

Equality Objectives 2019 - 2023

Objective 1: Strengthen knowledge and understanding of our communities

- The Customer Services Team, together with the Digital Services and Equalities & Engagement team, have developed an online Equalities monitoring form to capture information about the people using our online services.
- Public Health commissioned services include sports, physical activity projects, programmes, contracts, and funding with sports facility providers across the city are expected to collect Equality monitoring information. The data is collected, and a report is produced which is reviewed by leisure operators and senior members of staff. This is regularly compared against expected uptake and health needs of each population group to ensure equitable access.
- Additionally, we have started the dialogue and raised awareness around the importance of capturing equality monitoring data within various departments across the Council. We understand that having accurate data regarding individuals who may access our services at one point during their lives, will contribute positively to their personal experience. Understanding the areas where further targeted work is required to ensure that all residents in Sheffield are receiving a service that meets their needs is invaluable.

- A local Area Partnership (LAP) between Sheffield City Council and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) provided localised knowledge of various community groups, identify initial barriers to participation/engagement and promote the importance of completing the Census. For example, sharing information about communities with localised knowledge from Council officers and partners across the city allowed ONS Community Engagement Officers to tailor community engagement and inform their large field operations.
- Race Equality Commission - The Commission was established in 2020 in response to the impact of the COVID 19 on BAME communities and the Black Lives Matter Movement. The Commission has an Independent Chair Professor Emeritus Kevin Hylton and 24 Commissioners however the Council are assisting the Commission by providing all of the support and funding. The Commission's aim was to make a non-partisan strategic assessment of the nature, extent, causes and impact of race inequality in the city and to make recommendations for tackling them.

Objective 2: Ensure our workforce reflects the people we serve

- A review and focused work is taking place within Human Resources and other Council departments across all grade profiles to ensure that vacancies are advertised in a much wider arena to maximise the potential to obtain a diverse pool of applicants. The recruitment process is also being reviewed alongside our overarching approach to advertisement, attraction, selection, progression, retention, development, targeted development for all protected characteristics, career opportunities, talent management, learning and development, website design (jobs/career pages), promotion of employee benefits and the use of social media.
- We have established a Disability Confident working group that is currently assessing the Disability Confident Level 2 criteria to identify areas of improvement and actions for the organisation. The group's remit is being extended to ensure it provides the necessary feedback to the organisation on such issues as low morale, attraction, recruitment, progression, development, the current 'reasonable adjustments' process/approach plus more and will therefore align to the DC Level 2 assessment. This group will become an influential voice that receives the attention and visibility for the work it is undertaking.
- We are re-establishing a Carers' working group from September to understand how our employees who are carers are feeling in the organisation following feedback from employee surveys, SEINs, the Equality Leads and other routes that their morale is low. We launched a new Carers' Policy in April 20 that offered up to 6 days' paid carers' leave but this did not potentially reach its target audience due to Covid 19 and working from home for many employees.

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

- We work closely together across all sectors and within our organisation to promote, celebrate and raise awareness of specific events throughout the year. These events are communicated on the Manager Bulletin, Other News, the Chief Executive's weekly blog, through the Equality Leads, Staff Equality and Inclusion Networks (SEINs), internal department specific newsletters and externally to organisations and on various social media platforms. We also share and promote our new EDI training products to further develop employee knowledge, learning and awareness in the Council.
- The Equalities and Engagement team have developed an Equalities Awareness Day Calendar and work collaboratively with different departments such as HR, Communications, the Staff Networks, Race Safe Space Network, Sheffield Equality Partnership Organisations/ members, city wide EDI leads, external community groups and other mainstream service providers. We are approaching equality awareness days collectively with various community groups, stakeholders, and partners across Sheffield. To ensure it is impactful, relevant and

co-produced through delivering workshops, webinars, projects, events, and live interactive discussions. An organisational draft equalities awareness day calendar will be shared with partners and employees by the end of the year.

- As an organisation we understand that accessible means different things for different people which is why we think AccessAble is an important resource for our city and why we appreciate AccessAble's approach of giving factual information without judgement. They currently work with 110 Local Authorities including all in South Yorkshire and 60 NHS Trusts and 101 education settings including Sheffield University and Sheffield Hallam University
- We are working with Disability Sheffield and AccessAble, to embed the guides across the Council to ensure people can access the guides efficiently. Work is ongoing with colleagues across the Council, and we are in discussion with the Business Improvement District. There are 359 reviewed venues across Sheffield.

Objective 4: Break the cycle of inequality and improve life chances

- We continue to work with a wide range of partners on issues around healthy relationships, bullying and the wellbeing of young people and these are picked up by several groups working across Sheffield, for example the Healthy Relationships Group, the Sexual Health Network, RSE Forum, and the Domestic Abuse Steering Group. There has been ongoing work to support vulnerable children and families through our Strengthening Families Change Programme which includes families facing domestic violence
- We insourced our Youth Services in October 2020 and as part of the commitment to Sheffield's young people have pledged to invest £2 million into our youth services to ensure that all young people make a successful transition from their teenage years into confident, happy, and successful young adults.
- As part of our Covid-19 emergency response, we provided food vouchers to families during the October, Christmas, and February holidays as a recognition that many families continue to face financial difficulties because of the pandemic and in response we have committed to also provide vouchers for the children who are eligible for free school meals and those who access social care or MAST, or get income assessed Early Years support over the upcoming Easter holidays. Alongside providing food vouchers, a range of free holiday activities was made available for children and families to take part in as part of the Sheffield Healthy Holidays scheme.

For more in-depth information, please see the Full Annual Equalities Report

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