

NORTH NORFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL
EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2021-2025

Introduction

North Norfolk District Council is committed to treating all residents, service users, staff and elected members fairly and ensuring equality of opportunity for all.

It is the Council's aim to eliminate unfair discrimination in all forms, whilst promoting equality, respecting diversity and promoting inclusion in the recruitment, treatment and development of all staff and in the delivery of services to its residents, businesses and visitors.

This Council will uphold its responsibilities as a service provider, public body and employer, under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

This Council recognises that delivery of this Strategy will require leadership, political commitment, and ownership across all services, as well as effective consultation and engagement with residents, businesses, community representatives, partners and external organisations.

This Strategy outlines the Council's key equality objectives for the period 2021-25.

The Council's Statutory Obligations

The Equality Act 2010

The 2010 Equality Act brings together for the first time the legal requirements on equality that the private, public and voluntary sectors must follow.

The Act prohibits unfair treatment in the workplace; when providing goods, facilities and services; when exercising public functions; and in the management of premises.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that people be treated fairly at work or when using services. It protects people from discrimination on the basis of certain **protected** characteristics. These vary slightly according to whether a person is at work or using a service.

There are nine protected characteristics that provide protection from discrimination for employees. These are:-

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

There are eight protected characteristics of people who use services. These are:-

- Age (over 18)
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

The Equality Act sets out the different ways in which it is unlawful to treat someone, including direct and indirect discrimination, failing to make a reasonable adjustment for a disabled person, harassment and victimisation.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

As a local authority, this Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, outlined in the three strands below:-

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between those people who have one of the protected characteristics and those who do not.

All public authorities are required to publish one or more equality objectives at least every four years which they think should help them to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

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North Norfolk District Council's Equality Commitments & Objectives

This Council has developed an Equality Statement and four key equality objectives, as follows:-

“North Norfolk District Council is committed, as a community leader and employer, to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion across all of its services and functions. We will strengthen our consultation and engagement activity to improve service provision and access to our services for everyone in our communities. We recognise the value of a diverse workforce and wish to reflect the diversity of the communities we serve in our workforce.”

Objectives:

In order to deliver against its Equality Statement, this Council has developed four objectives for the period 2021 – 2025:

1. This Council will review access to its services in order to develop a range of access points and modes with a view to making its services as responsive and as accessible as possible to all potential service users
2. This Council will review its consultation and engagement activities to ensure that the voices of local communities are at the heart of strategy and policy development and service design.
3. This Council will work in partnership with residents, community representatives, businesses, voluntary and statutory partners and external organisations to promote equality, diversity and inclusion to improve the health and wellbeing of residents and to eradicate exploitation, prejudice and discrimination
4. This Council will lead by example in promoting and celebrating the diversity of our communities and seek to reflect the diversity of the North Norfolk District Council area in our workforce

In order to measure its compliance with its legal obligations and progress against its equality objectives, the Council will collect, analyse and evaluate equality monitoring data which will inform the development of its resident and workforce profile.

The Strategy will be publicly available on the Council's website, and will be available in alternative formats on request.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments

Commitments as a Community Leader; this Council will

- Support the relaunched Norfolk Equality and Human Rights Council in their work challenging inequality and injustice
- Sign-up to the Mental Health Challenge for Local Authorities
- Ensure that the Council's motion to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-semitism is observed
- Ensure that the Council's motion 'that there is no place for racism and that far more needs to be done to eradicate race discrimination in society, and commits to lead by example to ensure equal opportunities for all regardless of race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability' is observed
- To be an actively engaged in key partnerships delivering against the equalities agenda including the Community Safety Partnerships, Norfolk Ant-Slavery Network and support for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
- Continue to support national and local equality campaigns and initiatives including; Stop Hate in Norfolk, No More and White Ribbon sexual violence and domestic abuse campaigns and the annual Mental Health Awareness Week, Norfolk Black History Month and Norfolk Pride
- Continue to support and monitor service provision against the Armed Forces Covenant
- Undertake a self-assessment against the Local Government Association Equalities Framework to assess progress against the equalities agenda to inform the further development of this Strategy and actions
- Take a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying and investigate all reported incidents of member misconduct in line with the Member Code of Conduct

Commitments as a Service Provider; this Council will

- Update its Customer Strategy, Customer Charter and Communications Strategy to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded into key corporate strategies
- Develop an Engagement Strategy and embed consultation with residents and services users in all aspects of the work of the Council, including consultation on further development of this Strategy
- Develop a Quality of Life Strategy
- Work with partners to deliver support to residents and businesses to mitigate the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic, build resilience and support recovery
- Develop a detailed action plan for the delivery of this Strategy to include initiatives such as providing a Changing Places Facility in each of the District's principal towns and providing beach access wheelchairs

Commitments as an Employer; this Council will

- Take a zero tolerance approach to discrimination, harassment and bullying and investigate all reported incidents in line with the Council's disciplinary policies. These policies cover all employees of the organisation
- Review its policies on flexible working, agile working, remote working and home working in light of the COVID pandemic and review the need for, and use of, office accommodation
- Review its policies on recruitment and consider how a reduced reliance on office based staff might enable the Council to attract a larger talent pool of potential candidates for

vacancies and the opportunities this might offer to increase diversity within the workforce and help to fill key skills gaps

- Continue to review its Gender Pay Gap and consider what actions it can take to further close this gap
- Continue to support national and local equality campaigns and initiatives as an employer to promote a culture of openness and to support the health and wellbeing of employees
- Continue to support and develop the Staff Focus Group as a voice for employees
- Continue to support the recruitment of apprenticeships as part of a strategy to encourage greater diversity in the workforce and as a development opportunity for those already employed by the Council
- Review training and awareness raising programmes for employees across the equalities agenda
- Monitor referrals to commissioned services including Occupational Health and Employee Assistance and evaluate their effectiveness in better supporting the health and wellbeing of employees

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Implementing the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

This Strategy, and its policy implications, apply to every employee and elected member of North Norfolk District Council and any other person, contractor or organisation employed by the Council to work or deliver services on its behalf.

All employees and councillors have a personal responsibility to conduct themselves in ways which deliver the Council's commitments to fairness and equality. To treat everyone with respect, consideration and in a non-discriminatory way and to promote the same levels of behaviour in their dealings with colleagues, customers, partners and local communities of place and interest.

The Council will ensure that councillors, employees and any other person, contractor or organisations employed by the Council to work or deliver services on its behalf are made aware of this Strategy, and their responsibilities for implementing it.

This Council will communicate this Strategy to employees through the staff induction programme, managers, trade union representatives and the Staff Focus Group. Elected members will be informed of the policy as part of their induction following their election to the Council at the four-yearly election cycle or subsequent to a by-election. Periodic review of the Strategy will be undertaken through the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Staff Consultative Committee.

Training for employees and elected members will be arranged to promote understanding of the Strategy and its objectives with the aim of making North Norfolk a more equal, diverse, inclusive and accessible place to, live, work, and visit; supported by providing training, written information and guidance.

Leadership and management

The Council's Cabinet and Corporate Leadership Team has joint responsibility for promoting the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and its objectives to ensure that progress is made, and actions taken, to address any shortcomings in our policies, practices and procedures.

At a service level all managers have a responsibility to:

- Actively promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour, whilst creating and promoting a culture where complaints can be raised without fear of reprisal.
- Ensure that all employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to this Strategy and equalities legislation.
- Encourage positive attitudes to equality, diversity and inclusion in employment and service provision.
- Integrate equality, diversity and inclusion objectives into service plans and customer service standards.
- Ensure that our consultation on service development includes positive engagement with service users, communities and stakeholder groups, so that a diverse range of views and

different needs are fully understood in order to identify barriers to access and the potential for discrimination in the provision of services or employment.

Review

This Strategy will be formally updated at least once every four years, or earlier if required, for example to reflect Census data 2021. An annual review will take place to ensure the document remains legally compliant and relevant.

An annual Action Plan including key and reportable measures and outputs in support of the Strategy objectives will be developed in order to demonstrate progress.

Regular reporting of progress against the objectives outlined in this Strategy will take place through the Council's performance management processes.

The next formal review of the Strategy should be undertaken by March 2025.

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Appendix 1

Resident Equalities Profiles

North Norfolk District Council serves a population of some 105,000 people, living in 120 settlements across an extensive rural area covering 960 sq kilometres. The District has a 72-kilometre long coastline and takes in the northern reaches of the renowned Broads wetland environment. The District's largest settlement is North Walsham with a population of 13,000 people; with the District's other towns being Cromer, Fakenham, Holt, Sheringham, Stalham and Wells-next-the-Sea. Norwich, Norfolk's largest city and centre of high order services, retail, leisure and which has a strong cultural offer, is situated approximately 40 kilometres to the south of the North Norfolk District.

Data relating to North Norfolk from the 2011 Census outlines many of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010. It is noted that District specific data on certain protected characteristics such as sexual orientation, gender reassignment and pregnancy or maternity is either limited or unavailable at this time.

Age

The North Norfolk District has a one of the oldest age demographics of any local authority are in the country; with 33% of the population of pensionable age, compared to 25% in Norfolk; 20% in the East of England region and 18% in England. This figure is projected to increase to 40% by 2039 (ONS Population Projections). The District sees large numbers of people retire to the area due to its good quality environment, relatively affordable property compared to Greater London and the South-East and northern Home Counties, and high quality of life.

Disability

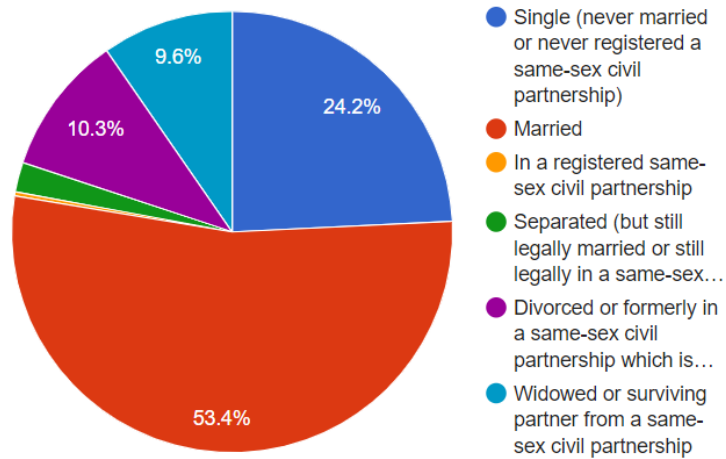
The 2011 Census showed that 23% of North Norfolk residents live with a long term health condition or disability which limits daily activities; however, life expectancy levels in the District are some of the longest in the country.

Race

The numbers of people from minority ethnic backgrounds in North Norfolk is low, with 97% of the population being 'British White' (2011 Census). The District has seen an increase in the numbers of residents not born in the UK in recent years, particularly from the European Union seeking employment in the agriculture, food processing, health and social care and hospitality sectors; and at the 2011 Census it was estimated that 2284 or 2% of residents were of European origin.

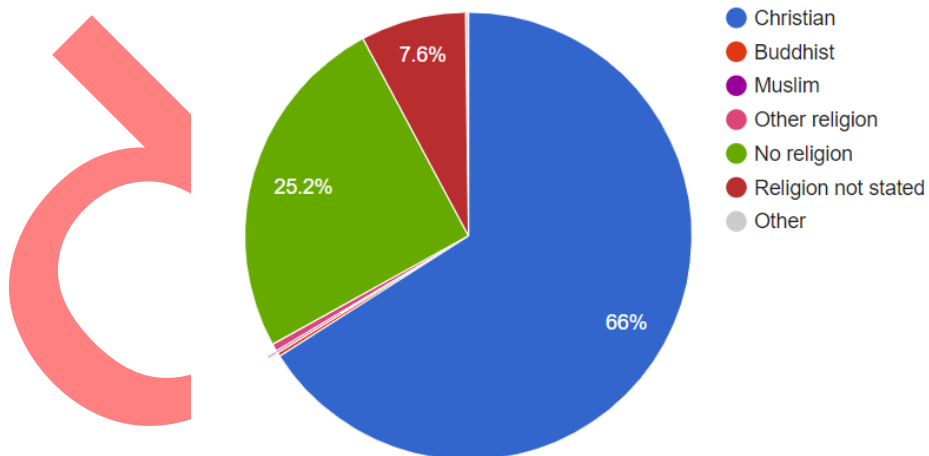
Marriage or Civil Partnership

North Norfolk: Marital and Civil Partnership Status



Religion or belief

North Norfolk: Religion



Sexual orientation:-

Whilst there is limited data available on the LGBTQIA+ population of North Norfolk, relating to lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, intersex, asexual and others, data from the Office for National Statistics gathered in 2018 suggests that the proportion of the UK population aged 16 years and over identifying as heterosexual or straight decreased from 95.3% in 2014 to 94.6% in 2018. The proportion of the national population identifying as lesbian, gay or bisexual increased from 1.6% in 2014 to 2.2% in 2018.