

Chesterfield Borough Council

Equality and Diversity Strategy

2019-2023

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1. Foreword

Welcome to Chesterfield Borough Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy 2019-2023. This ambitious Strategy and Action Plan sets out our objectives for the next four years to promote equality and diversity both within the Council and in our communities. The strategy has been designed to complement our new Council Plan and to ensure that our approach to equalities is embedded within everything we do.

Chesterfield Borough Council recognises and welcomes the diversity of our Borough. Our strategy provides a framework for continuing to celebrate this diversity and foster good relations within our communities.

Despite the financial challenges, we will continue to demonstrate our commitment to equality and diversity, ensuring that it is an integral part of our decision making processes and service delivery so that our communities have equitable and fair access to services.

2. Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

Our vision at Chesterfield Borough Council continues to be 'putting our communities first'. We are here to serve and support our communities including our residents, tenants, businesses, visitors, students and voluntary groups. Together we will continue to make our borough a great place to live, work, visit and invest.

The Council as a community leader, a service provider, employer and commissioner of goods and services, has a clear social and legislative responsibility to prevent discrimination and advance equality. By working to eliminate discrimination and promote equality we will empower our residents and help them to realise their full potential.

Our duties under the Equality Act 2010

As a Local Authority, we are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which was introduced in the Equality Act 2010. This duty requires all public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- 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.

In order to support public bodies to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty there are Specific Duties which public bodies must meet:

- Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years, and
- Publish information, at least annually, to show their compliance with the Equality Duty. This must include information relating both to its employees and to people who are affected by the public body's policies and procedures.

The other important pieces of legislation that we need to adhere to and impact on the work of both the inclusion and prevention agenda are:

- 1998: Human Rights Act
- 1996: Employment Rights Act

The Equality and Diversity Strategy sets out the Council's commitment and approach to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations in the Borough over the next four years. It includes:

- *the roles and responsibilities for delivering the Council's Equality and Diversity Strategy*
- *the local context and achievements made so far by the Council and partners*
- *our Equality and Diversity Principles, which will guide our approach to equality and diversity*
- *our specific objectives and anticipated outcomes in relation to Equality and Diversity*
- *the way that we will monitor our progress in delivering the strategy and how we will make a real and positive difference to the lives of those affected by Chesterfield Borough Council's services*

When developing this Strategy, we have been guided by the Council's four key values:

1. *We are customer focused*
2. *We take a can do approach*
3. *We act as one council, one team*
4. *We believe in honesty and respect*

The Equality and Diversity Strategy complements and supports the delivery of the priorities within the Chesterfield Borough Council Plan, which are:

- *Making Chesterfield a thriving Borough*
- *Improving the quality of life for local people*
- *Providing value for money services*

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Our Constitution governs how decisions are made, how we operate and the procedures that are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable. Decisions are taken by councillors through the Council and its committee meetings, most of which are open to the public.

The day-to-day delivery of local services is carried out by various staff through the Council's management structure. The Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team has overall responsibility for managing the Council, and work together with the Corporate Management Team to oversee progress against the Council's stated priorities, and the outcomes delivered as a result of the Council's plans and services they provide to residents. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are used by decision makers including Council, Cabinet, Committees and Officers to determine the impact of the Council's

initiatives, and to put appropriate mitigating action in place to minimise negative impact on groups protected by the Equality Act and the wider community.

Achieving and promoting equality and diversity is a responsibility shared by all elected members, the Senior Leadership Team, Corporate Management Team, managers, staff, contractors, partners, stakeholders and residents.

Equality and Diversity Forum

The Equality and Diversity Forum is a group of representatives from statutory partners, community groups and local individuals with an interest and/or expertise in equality and diversity. The Forum members work together to share ideas, best practice and to raise awareness in the community of equality and diversity. The Forum acts as a critical friend for the Council's services and plays a key role in the scrutiny and development of Equality Impact Assessments which inform the Council's decision making process. Support is provided by the Council to facilitate the Forum's activities, which include organising a number of themed awareness raising and training events throughout each year. The Forum adopts a partnership approach, pooling resources with partners to maximise the positive impact of its work in the community.

Elected Members

Elected members must fulfil their statutory responsibilities under the Equality Act to promote good community relations in all their work, particularly in their community leadership role. They must also make informed decisions, which consider the impact on people with protected characteristics and key community groups.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) must champion and lead by example, using the Public Sector Equality Duty to encourage the integration of equality and diversity issues in all aspects of the Council's work. SLT should actively help to promote equality and diversity issues and actions within services, and ensure that good quality Equality Impact Assessments are completed and associated mitigating actions delivered (where appropriate).

Corporate Management Team and other managers

The Corporate Management Team must maintain an overview of equality and diversity for their service and ensure effective development, implementation and monitoring of service equality and diversity objectives and related actions within service plans, including ensuring completion and appropriate challenge of Equality Impact Assessments.

Employees

Employees should demonstrate commitment to equalities by:

- Championing equality and diversity in the Borough when undertaking their work
- Taking active steps to challenge discrimination and harassment in the workplace and the community including hate crime reporting
- Making informed decisions and proposals, which consider the impact on people with protected characteristics and key community groups
- Understanding, complying and embedding the equality and diversity processes in their services.

Employees receive a comprehensive training package detailing their roles and responsibilities and raising awareness of equality and diversity related matters.

Contractors

Contractors who deliver services on behalf of Chesterfield Borough Council must comply with the Equality Act 2010, including incorporating the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty commitments in all dealings and practices on behalf of the Council in all areas assessed as relevant to the duty.

Partners

Partners must be aligned to the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and the objectives set out in this strategy.

Stakeholders

The Council should engage with stakeholders to ensure they can contribute to the process of setting, monitoring and reviewing equality and diversity objectives and action plans.

4. Local Context

Chesterfield is the second largest settlement in Derbyshire (Derby City is the largest). It is a relatively compact and mainly urban area. The market town of Chesterfield acts as the sub-regional centre for north eastern Derbyshire and provides a range of retail, commercial, leisure and cultural facilities.

Chesterfield is a major centre of employment (over 48,000 people work in the Borough) attracting almost 21,000 in-bound commuters on a daily basis. Its employment catchment area covers a large part of the surrounding districts of Bolsover and North East Derbyshire, as well as drawing in people from Derbyshire Dales and Sheffield.

Key equalities related information from the Census and other information sources such as the area Health Profile and Index of Multiple Deprivation include:

- Demographic information - On Census day 2011 Chesterfield Borough had a population of 103,800 - 5000 more than on Census day 2001. The Borough has a higher proportion of residents from minority ethnic backgrounds than in Derbyshire, with the main populations in St. Leonards, St. Helen's, Holmebrook and Brockwell. In 2001, 98.1% of the Chesterfield Borough population were White British compared to 94.9% in 2011.
- The Borough has a higher percentage of households with no access to a car or van than Derbyshire, East Midlands and England at 27.1%. The highest percentages (over 40%) are in Rother and St. Helens compared to just 11.2% in Walton.
- The majority of Chesterfield Borough residents live within a 20 minute walk of essential services, including GPs, Pharmacies, Schools, Post Offices etc. (a significant percentage within 10 minutes).
- Housing - The Borough has a far lower percentage of owner occupiers than in Derbyshire. The highest percentages are in Walton and West; the lowest percentages are in Rother, Middlecroft and Poolsbrook. The Borough has a considerably higher percentage of social housing than in Derbyshire, East Midlands and England. The private rented sector appears to be growing rapidly with particular concentrations in Holmebrook, St. Leonards and St. Helens.
- Working and Learning Communities -21% of residents in Chesterfield Borough have higher level qualifications; this is lower than in Derbyshire, East Midlands and England. The highest percentage of residents with higher level qualifications is in the west of the Borough – Walton and West (39.8%), the lowest over in the East (Middlecroft and Poolsbrook – 11.6%). There is a higher percentage of residents in Chesterfield Borough who are economically inactive due to long-term sickness or disability.
- Chesterfield is the 85th most deprived area in England out of 326 English local authorities.

- There are significant concerns about entrenched and worsening deprivation in several Chesterfield neighbourhoods for example Grangewood is now in the 1% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. In order to make detailed observations about communities, areas are divided into Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). All six of the Chesterfield LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in 2015 have deteriorated since 2010.
- Deprivation inequality has risen in Chesterfield Borough with the areas within the 10% least deprived in England improving their position across a range of domains and the 10% most deprived deteriorating.
- While employment deprivation has improved generally in Chesterfield Borough, a third of neighbourhoods within the Borough remain the 20% most deprived in England.
- Health - The health of people in Chesterfield is varied compared with the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 3,700 children (21%) live in poverty. Life expectancy is 10 years lower for men and 8.9 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Chesterfield than in the least deprived areas. In Year 6, 20% of children are classified as obese, and 26.5% of adults are classified as obese. The rate of self-harm hospital stays, smoking related deaths, drug misuse and early deaths from cardiovascular disease are worse than average. Health and disability is a major concern for Chesterfield Borough. The Borough is ranked the 25th most deprived in England in terms of health, and half of the LSOAs are within the 20% most deprived within England.

Despite extensive investment to strengthen Chesterfield's economy, these figures suggest that a significant percentage of our community are not currently accessing the proceeds of growth due to a variety of factors including poor health, caring responsibilities, poor educational and skills attainment etc.

You can find out more about Chesterfield's communities in our State of the Borough Report which can be accessed on the [Council's website](#).

5. Key achievements during the last Equality and Diversity Strategy

Successfully delivering the previous Equality and Diversity Strategy (2017-2019), has enabled the Council and partners to achieve a number of key outcomes which have improved the services we deliver for the local community and supported our Council objective to improve the quality of life for local people:

Encouraging mutual understanding and respect

Working with our partners, our Equality and Diversity Forum have continued to deliver free events throughout each year which promote understanding and celebrate diversity in our local communities, many of which include a training element to support our local organisations in promoting equality. This is helping to create communities which challenge discrimination and embrace difference.

We have also improved our hate crime reporting process to ensure that employees understand their responsibilities and that we are able to give the best possible advice and support to vulnerable people, reporting/and or signposting to organisations where appropriate.

Encourage and support involvement from all communities in the shaping, development, delivery and monitoring of local services, and ensure that service changes address the needs of our communities

In consultation with local groups, we have made some changes to our equalities monitoring form to ensure that it is relevant and representative, enabling us to gain a better understanding of our local community when planning and delivering our services and capturing customer feedback.

We have also reviewed the set of information that we publish annually to demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty, to ensure we continue provide high quality accessible information in line with the Equality Act. Comparing our data with other authorities, we have found our approach to be robust.

The Policy Team and Equality and Diversity Forum have continued to give equality advice and insight into the Council's projects and plans, such as the town hall refurbishment project, and supporting the equality impact assessment process.

Empower equality and diversity organisations, the voluntary sector, local businesses and communities by monitoring and publishing equality and diversity information and outcomes so that they feel they can understand the reasons for Council decisions and challenge them if they feel it necessary.

Further to our review of the information we publish under the Public Sector Equality Duty, during the last two years we have improved our equality impact assessment (EIA) process and developed a toolkit to support employees to measure the impact of proposed changes to services and policies, and to ensure our Councillors are able to make fair decisions understanding the implications for people with protected characteristics, delivering positive impacts where possible, and mitigating against negative impacts.

Using latest Index of Multiple Deprivation and other demographic information, we have updated our 'State of the Borough' report, which is also available to the public, providing information about the local community which can be used to ensure service planning meets the community's needs. We have also been supporting the planning for the local delivery of the Census 2021.

In addition to our existing work on the gender pay gap, and following new guidance, the Council has analysed and published further information about the average amounts of pay that women and men get across our whole workforce. The Council's gender pay gap is a complex issue, which mainly relates to particular roles seeming to attract a particular gender, and also because the Council operates a bonus scheme in order to recruit skilled tradespeople at a competitive rate to deliver our housing repairs. This service area seems to attract more male candidates than female. Action planning is taking place to further our progress in narrowing the gender pay gap within the timeframe of the Equality and Diversity Strategy for 2019-2023.

Provide employees with training and development opportunities so that they have the skills, abilities and confidence to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to diversity and discrimination, both within the workplace and when delivering services.

In addition to the mandatory corporate training on equality and diversity, we also offer our employees modules on specific equality themes, eg. autism awareness to support our customer service. 97% of employees that have undertaken the equality and diversity training stated that the modules either met or exceeded their expectations. We also offer a pre-retirement course for employees approaching retirement, and managing stress sessions. Many of the Equality and Diversity Forum activities also contain training elements which are open to the wider community as well as our own employees.

You can read more about our achievements in our Equality and Diversity Annual Reports which are available on the Council's website.

6. Equality and Diversity Principles

The following principles govern our approach to Equality and Diversity at Chesterfield Borough Council:

1. Putting the needs of our communities at the heart of delivery and embedding and mainstreaming equality into the work of Chesterfield Borough Council.
2. Making sure that when taking decisions, we consider information and feedback from our communities and the impact our decisions may have on them, through Equality Impact Assessment process.
3. Monitoring, assessing and evaluating the impact of our strategies, policies, programmes, projects and commissioning on equality. Taking mitigating action to minimise any adverse impacts on people who share a protected characteristic.
4. Being open, honest and transparent, publishing and ensuring easy access to equality information and outcomes.
5. Ensuring consultation and engagement is central to the development and delivery of our services, in line with the Council's Community Engagement Strategy.
6. Working in partnership with other organisations, the voluntary sector, and local businesses to promote, recognise and celebrate difference within the context of fairness and equality.
7. Working in partnership to promote, recognise and celebrate diversity and to create communities which challenge discrimination and embrace difference.
8. Working towards developing a workforce which is representative of local communities and ensuring employment policies are fair and robust.
9. Drawing on best practice to continuously improve and strengthen our approach to equality and diversity in the workplace and wider community.

7. Equality and Diversity Objectives

The Council has set the following six equality and diversity objectives and associated actions to provide a framework for the Council's work on equalities over the next four years.

Objective 1: Ensuring a fair approach to the Council's decision making, and that service changes address the needs of our communities in an equitable way, taking account of the needs of people with protected characteristics.

Fair decision making

1. Continuing to embed the Council's commitment to equalities in its service planning and delivery by delivering a robust equality impact assessment process, and upholding the importance of this during financially challenging times.

(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

2. Providing employees with training and development opportunities so that they have the skills, abilities and confidence to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to diversity and discrimination, both within the workplace and when delivering services. Delivering ongoing equality and diversity refresher training as required with services and a range of additional awareness raising modules on locally relevant themes.

(Lead service: Customers Commissioning and Change / Policy and Communications)

3. Encouraging involvement from all communities in the shaping, development, delivery and monitoring of local services, continuing to monitor use and satisfaction with our services to identify access/accessibility issues / satisfaction with our services from different groups.

(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

4. Empowering local communities and organisations by publishing equality and diversity information and outcomes so that they feel they can understand the reasons for Council decisions and challenge them if they feel it necessary.

(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

Understanding our communities

5. Support the planning and delivery of the local arrangements for the 2021 Census.

(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

6. Maintain the State of the Borough report in line with latest available information, including Census 2021 data as available.

(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

7. Ensuring that translation and interpretation made available by Chesterfield Borough Council meets the needs of local communities by reviewing and revising our current arrangements.

(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

Objective 2: Supporting equitable access to high quality services that recognise the needs of different customers

Supporting access to services

8. Supporting and facilitating the Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum to act as a critical friend, improving and championing access to the Council's services for all.
(Lead service: Policy and Communications)
9. Making sure that our communities are able to access our bespoke health and wellbeing offer in our Theatres, parks and leisure centres, for example, by facilitating the Theatres Access Group, providing targeted activities such as autism friendly swim sessions, encouraging groups who share protected characteristics to use our parks for events, maintaining our Green Flag status for 5 parks, and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing especially in targeted and hard to reach sectors of the community.
(Lead service: Health and Wellbeing)
10. Retaining our Customer Service Excellence accreditation
(Lead service: Customers Commissioning and Change and Arvato)
11. Continuing to take an active role in Dementia Friendly Chesterfield
(Lead service: Health and Wellbeing / Policy and Communications)

Accessibility of information

12. Review the corporate accessibility statement to ensure that it is reflective of and accessible to our local communities
(Lead service: Policy and Communications)
13. Developing the council's website, intranet and microsites to make them accessible to all our internal and external customers. This will include improving the quality and usability of our online information, to comply with EU Web Accessibility Directive, and to improve the user experience for customers with additional needs (such as visual, reading or motor impairments). We will also include subtitles on all videos published online, such as on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and on the council website including self service areas.
(Lead service: Policy and Communications and Customers Commissioning and Change)

Objective 3: Encourage mutual understanding and respect between our communities.

Raising awareness

14. Raising awareness of local equality issues and celebrating our diverse communities through the delivery of a minimum of four events each year through Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum on a range of locally relevant equality themes.
(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

Supporting vulnerable people

15. Managing the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement and associated programmes for CBC.
(Lead service: Policy and Communications Housing,)

16. Completing the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult self-assessment and action plan working with Derbyshire safeguarding Boards
(Lead service: Policy and Communications)

17. Delivering community safety priorities through the Community Safety Partnership usig this forum to help tackle issues facing our communities through creating a common vision and sense of belonging developing strong, positive relationships between people from different backgrounds and ensuring joint community engagement and tension monitoring plans are in place where appropriate.
(Lead service: Health and Wellbeing)

18. Continue to work with partners to tackle homelessness – dealing with over 900 cases per year
(Lead service: Housing)

Objective 4: To maintain a modern and diverse workforce that is reflective of the local community and feels valued and treated fairly

Employee wellbeing

19. Responding effectively to the gender pay gap reporting requirements including action planning.
(Lead service: Policy and Communications, Customers Commissioning and Change)

20. Seek employee feedback through the annual employee survey and develop and deliver annual action plans to address issues and trends identified.
(Lead service: Customers Commissioning and Change and Policy and Communications)

Recruitment

21. Maintain and build on the Council's Investors in People status
(Lead service: Customers Commissioning and Change)

22. Transform the recruitment web portal to attract a diverse range of candidates, using best practice from other councils
(Lead service: Customers Commissioning and Change)

23. Maximise opportunities for engagement with businesses and schools, promoting careers and apprenticeships in local government
(Lead service: Customers Commissioning and Change, Policy and Communications),

Economic Growth

Objective 5: To make sure that local people who share protected characteristics are able to access opportunities in employment and growth.

Inclusive approach to growth

24. Supporting 5000 children to prepare for future job opportunities through the HS2 and you initiative.

(Lead service: Economic Growth)

25. Providing the Young Person's Market, where stalls are available free of charge for anyone aged between 5 and 25 years old.

(Lead service: Commercial Services)

Apprenticeships

26. Help to develop the careers of over 90 apprentices across the Council by ensuring that we provide opportunities for people to develop qualifications, vocational skills and increase employability

(Lead service: Customers, Commissioning and Change)

27. Enable 350 apprenticeships via the apprentice town initiative by working alongside and supporting apprentice providers.

(Lead service: Economic Growth)

28. Work in partnership with Chesterfield college to explore opportunities for joint working (e.g. catering placements, trade staff supporting tutors and assessors)

(Lead service: Customers, Commissioning and Change, Economic Growth)

Objective 6: Supporting independence at home for our tenants, local residents and vulnerable people.

29. Support independence at home for vulnerable people through our Careline and Neighbourhoods service, and delivering Disabled Facilities Grants.

(Lead service: Housing, Health and Wellbeing)

30. Maintain independent living through the continued support of vulnerable people - Invest in over 1350 major improvements in our council homes including new kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, windows and rewiring, ensuring that 100% of our Council homes meet the decent homes standard

(Lead service: Housing & Commercial Services)

8. Keeping track of our progress

The Equality and Diversity objectives are aligned to the priorities in the Council Plan 2019-2023. We will use our performance management framework to keep track of our progress in achieving our objectives.

Progress will also be monitored by the Equality and Diversity Forum, and presented in regular performance reports. The achievements will also be reported every year through the Equality and Diversity Annual Report to show the work being done by the Council in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010 and the objectives within the strategy to promote diversity and recognise and celebrate difference.

9. Further information

If you have any comments on our Equalities Annual Report or would like to request further information or copies of any of the documents highlighted in the report please contact the Policy Team:

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