



South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Scheme 2020 to 2024

(2022 Revision)

Version	Approval	Date
0.3	Cabinet	22 March 2022

Introduction and Context

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010, bringing together all previous equality legislation into a single Act, strengthening laws to prevent inequality, and extending equality law to include some forms of discrimination previously unrecognised within legislation.

Under the Equality Act, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of any of the following 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act includes the public sector equality duty, which came into force in April 2011. This duty applies to a range of public authorities, including local authorities, and is made up of 'the general equality duty' and 'specific duties' that are intended to help organisations to perform the general equality duty.

The general equality duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are often referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. To comply with the duty a public authority needs to have due regard to all three of these aims.

The Act explains that having 'due regard' for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people (including taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities)

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In relation to the third aim, the Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Local Authorities are also required to complete the following specific duties:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how the General Duty is being met. This is achieved through two methods:
 - The annual publication of equality in employment information.
 - The publication of information to show steps that have been taken to have due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the General Duty every four years.

Equality Scheme Purpose

The purpose of our Equality Scheme is to:

- Set out our equality objectives for the period 2020-24 and provide details to show how these will contribute towards the aims of the General Duty.
- Present the Council's approach to embedding equality within Council services.
- Provide details of the equality responsibilities of the Council, its employees, and elected representatives.
- Set arrangements for monitoring and checking progress against our equality objectives.

Our Equality Pledge

As a signatory of the Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge, South Cambridgeshire District Council appreciates and values the benefits that different communities contribute to the district and wider region. More specifically our pledge states that:

"We believe in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community. Our aspiration is for South Cambridgeshire and the wider region to be safe, welcoming, and inclusive."

More information about the equality pledge, including details of how to sign up as either an organisation or individual, are included on our [Equality and Diversity webpage](#).

Equality Objectives and Action Plan

The following three high level equality objectives have been set for the 2020-24 to help the council in meeting the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and to reflect

the context detailed within the facts and figures included at **Appendix Ai** (Facts and Figures).

Objective 1 - Understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and identify, prioritise, and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

Objective 2 - South Cambridgeshire District Council is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings

Objective 3 - Protected groups are included and have their voices heard in discussions about the future shape of the district

A plan is set out on the following page, providing details of the actions that will be taken to achieve these objectives, as well as measures of success.

Objective 1: Understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and identify, prioritise, and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

Action	What success will look	Rationale for inclusion
<p>Continue to develop our understanding of the needs of different protected characteristics, and good practice for meeting these</p>	<p>Promote and participate in quarterly Equality Pledge signatory meetings, to share and hear about examples of good practice from other like-minded Cambridgeshire organisations.</p> <p>Attendance at key regional and national events and conferences and feeding back of key findings to the rest of the organisation.</p>	<p>To reflect planned activity to continually develop our understanding re EDI and contribute to the network of organisations that have signed the equality pledge.</p> <p>To develop and maintain awareness of the latest EDI issues and best practice.</p>
<p>Review SCDC policies, projects, and services to ensure equality considerations are embedded within service design and delivery</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessment e-learning course rolled out to staff creating policies and leading on projects</p> <p>All 2022-23 Business Plan Actions have Equality Impact Assessments completed</p> <p>Identify and implement an approach for the review of feedback received in relation to the impacts of services and council activities on protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Improvements have been made in the number of EqIAs being completed, but further progress is required to fully embed as a key part of the development of proposals.</p> <p>Our Business Plan action plan is made up of a range of flagship activities and it is important that these lead by example, in terms of demonstrating that due regard has been given to equality impacts.</p> <p>While EqIAs are a useful tool for anticipating the impacts of new services, projects and activities prior to implementation, an approach is also required for monitoring the impacts of services and activities during and following their delivery.</p>

<p>Review access to Housing, Homelessness, and welfare support by those with protected characteristics, identifying and implementing actions for the removal of barriers to inclusion</p>	<p>Review of access to homelessness, housing and welfare support data to inform the development of a new Homelessness strategy.</p> <p>Continued engagement with agencies coordinating local government refugee resettlement efforts to identify further opportunities to assist with the housing of refugees.</p>	<p>This measure is an extension of the commitment within the Race Equality Motion at Full Council (14/07/2020) to “Consider BAME access to housing and to homelessness and welfare support.” Initial data was obtained and provided to the Task and Finish Group, who, within their report to Cabinet in March 2021 stated that “this could be monitored going forwards in the development of future potential solutions.” A review of homelessness will be taking place in 2022, which will lead to a new homelessness strategy.</p> <p>To date, SCDC and Ermine Street Housing have each put forward three homes for the housing of Afghan refugees. The Council has also helped to identify two homes from a local Registered Social Landlord, meaning that in total 8 Afghan families will have been housed. The Council has previously offered housing and support to refugees from Syria and has now pledged support to national schemes that provide support to refugees leaving Ukraine as the detail is confirmed by government.</p>
<p>Work to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, including provision of inclusive and accessible support for victims and survivors with protected characteristics</p>	<p>Completion of Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) equality and intersectionality framework relating to practice that enables staff to understand and respond to victims and survivors’ intersectional needs and experiences of disadvantage and discrimination.</p> <p>Achievement of DAHA accreditation.</p>	<p>To reflect planned work to meet the specific requirements of the equality and intersectionality DAHA framework.</p> <p>To reflect work to complete all DAHA accreditation requirements and achieve accreditation,</p>

	<p>Work with the County to assist in their duty to undertake Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment reporting and review this information internally to help shape future response to domestic abuse.</p>	<p>demonstrating best practice in responding to domestic abuse.</p> <p>To ensure that the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment reporting provides good quality data, and that this is reviewed as part of the continuing review of approaches to domestic abuse response.</p>
<p>Improve the availability and analysis of quantitative and qualitative information about the makeup of our residents and customers, to inform decisions that might impact on different protected characteristic groups</p>	<p>A South Cambridgeshire equality profile dashboard is available, providing a robust and useful evidence base about local demographics to those shaping SCDC policies, services, and projects.</p> <p>Emerging data in relation to EDI (including 2021 Census and LGBT+ Needs Assessment results) is reviewed and available through new equality profile dashboard, with key findings promoted through key internal communications channels.</p>	<p>This will provide a single point of access for staff to access equality data, to assist in the development of evidence-based policy, project and service development that accounts for impacts on protected characteristics.</p> <p>New EDI data (including Census results) will become available during the year and provide an opportunity to gain a greater understanding in relation to the makeup of South Cambs communities and residents.</p>
<p>Encourage and promote the benefits of a diverse workforce to South Cambridgeshire businesses</p>	<p>Promote the Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge to businesses through our Business Support Newsletter and other channels.</p>	<p>We know from various sources that barriers to employment and inclusion within the workplace continue to exist in today's society. An initial webinar took place in January to promote the Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge to businesses and additional opportunities will be taken to promote this throughout the 2022-23 financial year.</p>

	<p>Provide opportunities for sharing of good practice between businesses and other organisations through quarterly meetings of Equality Pledge signatories.</p> <p>Promote equality resources to businesses, to help broaden understanding of inequalities that exists in the workplace and action that can be taken to address this.</p>	<p>A core benefit of becoming a pledge signatory is the opportunity to join a network of like-minded organisations with opportunities to share good practice and information at quarterly meetings.</p> <p>This measure incorporates the Cabinet-agreed recommendation put forward by the Race Equality Task and Finish Group (March 21 Cabinet meeting).</p>
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training will be rolled out for Members	Provision of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training as part of new member induction process following elections in 2022.	EDI training was offered to all members in 2021-22 and 17 received this. 2022 elections provide a further opportunity to provide EDI training to any new or existing members as part of the induction process.

Objective 2: South Cambridgeshire District Council is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings

Action	What success will look like	Rationale for proposed inclusion
Review and examine SCDC structure and processes to ensure people with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged, including through recruitment processes and remote working arrangements	<p>Implement a recruitment communications plan promoting SCDC as an inclusive and welcoming employer to applicants from under-represented groups, including a review of how and where we advertise Council vacancies.</p> <p>Implement a method for obtaining and reviewing data on the number of</p>	<p>To reflect planned activity to develop and implement a recruitment communications plan to promote the Council as an employer of choice for all.</p> <p>The SCDC Business Plan commits the Council to increasing the number of applications from under-represented groups. Work is underway to allow</p>

	<p>applications received from protected characteristic groups.</p> <p>Increase the number of job applications from people from the protected characteristic groups from baseline levels.</p> <p>Increase the number of apprenticeships being undertaken within the organisation as a means of promoting the Council as a viable career option for a broad range of prospective employees.</p> <p>Provision of work experience opportunities within the organisation, and representation at local careers fairs and in schools and colleges to promote the Council as an employer of choice in the local area</p> <p>Impacts of hybrid working arrangements are monitored through annual staff surveys</p> <p>Completion of Team Charters for each team across the Council setting out approaches to hybrid working.</p>	<p>data on applications from under-represented groups to be extracted from the new HR system. This will allow progress to be tracked in relation to this action.</p> <p>As above.</p> <p>SCDC's Apprenticeship Strategy was approved in January 2022 and offers a method of promoting the Council as an employer to a wide range of prospective employees.</p> <p>This work is planned to ensure that the Council is promoted as a viable and visible career option.</p> <p>The Hybrid working strategy is due to be approved in March 2021. The staff survey provides opportunity to gain insight into the impact of hybrid working arrangements on staff with different characteristics.</p> <p>Team Charters are being agreed across the organisation, with input from all team members, to identify ways of working that best suit the needs of staff members (including those with protected characteristics) and teams, whilst enabling the</p>
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		delivery of high standards for our residents and businesses.
Build on Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation and undertake a disability friendly assessment of our office buildings and buildings that we are designing and delivering	<p>Disability Assessment of our offices completed, and assurance received by Disability Cambridgeshire.</p> <p>Develop and adopt a Reasonable Adjustment Passport policy and promote its availability to Council staff (including a section on Reasonable Adjustments on the HR intranet pages).</p>	<p>The completion of a Disability Assessment of our offices was included in previous Equality Scheme but has been delayed due to Covid and extensive building works within South Cambs Hall.</p> <p>This measure is a recommendation from the EDI Staff forum to help raise awareness of the availability of reasonable adjustments for disabled staff and to reduce the need for discussions around reasonable adjustments to be repeated for staff who move teams or have a change in manager.</p>
Collect data about the South Cambridgeshire District Council workforce to monitor and analyse representation of people from different protected characteristics	<p>Analyse annual staff satisfaction surveys around equality, diversity, and inclusion, and publish 'you said, we listened' examples internally following analysis of the survey results.</p> <p>Progress towards workforce diversity that represents the local equality profile.</p>	<p>Staff survey completed in January 2022, this action will involve the analysis of the results, and consideration of any additional actions that this might identify.</p> <p>This will be monitored and published through the Council's 2021-22 Equality in Employment report, which will compare representation against the most currently available demographic data for South Cambridgeshire District (including Census data once released).</p>

Objective 3: Protected groups are included and have their voices heard in discussions about the future shape of the district

Action	What success will look like	Rationale for proposed inclusion
<p>Develop the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, with consideration given to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion opportunities, particularly within the consultation stages</p>	<p>Equality Impact Assessments are completed identifying actions to ensure the voices of people from protected characteristic groups are included and represented within plan consultation and development activity.</p> <p>Actions identified within EqlAs undertaken are undertaken and completed within the timescales set out.</p> <p>Undertake evidence gathering exercises to understand needs of people with protected characteristics. This will include an accommodation needs assessment of Gypsies and Travellers.</p> <p>Completed sustainability appraisal including sections covering social and health impact</p>	<p>A continuation of the longer-term actions included within the existing scheme, reflecting the Local Planning process.</p>
<p>Review the Council's arrangements for consulting on key decisions with its residents</p>	<p>Develop a corporate list of key contacts and groups to engage with in relation to decisions.</p> <p>Work with the Consultation Institute to carry out a consultation skills audit.</p> <p>Create corporate consultation and engagement guidance.</p>	<p>These measures are based on the specific actions that are planned as part of the review of arrangements for consulting on key decisions.</p>

Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion within Business-as-Usual Council Activities

In addition to the above equality objectives and action plan, the following approaches are taken to the embedding of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion through the range of activities undertaken by the Council:

EDI Calendar and Promotion of Key Dates

SCDC celebrates and promotes diversity by marking key dates within the calendar through the design and delivery of a programme of internal events and promotion of key resources. This is contributed to by the EDI Staff Forum, who have worked to develop a Calendar of Notable Dates to be marked and are continuing to maintain and update this on an ongoing basis.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are completed during the development of policies, procedures, projects, functions, strategies, and services. EqIAs provide a methodical approach to the assessment of impacts across the nine protected characteristics, allowing us to plan mitigating action and to seek to maximise opportunities to advance equality within our services. Once completed, EqIAs are published on the [Council's website](#).

Member Champion for Race and Equality

Cllr Tumi Hawkins has been appointed as the Lead Cabinet Member of Race and Equality, following a recommendation to Cabinet by the Race Equality Task and Finish Group in March 2021.

Staff and Member Training

South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to ensuring that it is operating fairly and equitably in both service delivery and employment. To ensure that equality and diversity standards are upheld during the delivery of services, essential training will be provided to all staff and members.

Additional equality and diversity training can be provided to staff according to their specific service requirements.

The Council ensures that all staff have completed safeguarding training, this training also includes an e-learning module on Modern Slavery.

Staff Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum

A staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum was set up in January 2021 to help identify improvements to narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community. During the 2021-22 financial year, this included

work to develop an internal Inclusive Language Guide, a calendar of notable events to be marked through various means, and recommendations regarding inclusive recruitment practices and processes around the identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled staff.

South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership

Through the South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership, SCDC undertakes joint work with Police, Fire, District Councils, County Council, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and voluntary group partners to protect vulnerable people within the district, including those who may be subject to Anti-Social Behaviour, Hate Crime or at risk of Modern Slavery.

Language Services for non-Native English Speakers

The Council has access to an external translation and interpreting services provider. This can be used for the translation of documents and interpreting of verbal communication to allow barriers faced by residents and other stakeholders who do not use English as their first language (including users of British Sign Language etc.), to be overcome. Further information about how these services can be accessed is available by emailing equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk

Key Policies

Officers' Code of Conduct - All employees of South Cambridgeshire District Council are expected to work to our code of conduct, including fair and equitable treatment of all staff, customers, and residents.

Dignity at Work Policy - SCDC positively encourages and promotes a working environment where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The Council is committed to creating a fair and safe working environment where employees can work free from abusive, threatening, or unwelcome behaviour. Complaints of harassment and/or bullying or victimisation will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly, sensitively, and confidentially.

Pay Policy - The Council is committed to ensuring that its pay strategy is fair and equitable, affordable, transparent, and easily understood. This enables the organisation to attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce. Our staff salaries are evaluated using the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme which is based on the principle of joint ownership, openness, transparency, and equality.

Recruitment Process – SCDC's Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures are designed to recruit staff in a fair and consistent way that supports equality of opportunity. Our recruitment processes are open and robust with procedures for checking that interview attendees are eligible to work in the UK and for requesting and following up applicant references. We also ensure that interview panel members have received equality and diversity training, to ensure a consistent and fair process.

Safeguarding Policy - SCDC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm and their families. The council works under Cambridgeshire County Council's Adult Safeguarding policy guidelines and procedures. We take our responsibilities seriously and expect all staff, partners, and contractors to share this commitment. We ensure our procurement and contracting policies and procedures adequately reflect our safeguarding responsibilities. All incidents of poor practice, allegations and suspicions are taken seriously, reported, and are always responded to. Additionally, all staff are expected to attend regular safeguarding training.

Whistleblowing Policy - The Council encourages staff, contractors and elected Members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council's activities, to come forward and voice those concerns. Our Whistleblowing Policy has been prepared in consultation with staff and with the help of the independent charity, Public Concern at Work. It commits the council to ensuring that whistle-blowers will suffer no recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern about malpractice.

Race Equality Motion

At the Council meeting of 14 July 2020, a motion was passed setting out the Council's beliefs that:

- Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals, continues to be a serious and often unseen problem in the UK. This is as true in Cambridgeshire, where the ethnic minority population is 18.6%, as it is in areas with greater diversity.
- Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete.
- This Council, representing people in South Cambridgeshire, has a duty as a public leader to actively lead that work.

This motion also brought forward a number of commitments in relation to the Council's work to promote race equality, which have been incorporate within the equality objectives section of this scheme.

Appendix Ai – Facts and Figures

A Growing District

The South Cambridgeshire population is forecast to increase by **7%** by 2031 from 2018 levels (from 158,500 in 2018 to 169,300 in 2031, an increase of 10,800 residents) (Cambridgeshire Insight, 2020)

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2019)

Growth is underpinned by high levels of employment, education, skills and training, affluent area, relatively low levels of crime and good living environment, as demonstrated by, South Cambridgeshire's scores against Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Where number 1 is the most deprived and number 317 is the least deprived, South Cambs places:

307th for Education, Skills and Training

304th for Employment

302nd for Income

258th for Living Environment

248th for Crime

98th for Barriers to Housing and Services (rurality and high cost of housing)

However, this will not be the experience for everyone, and the potential for isolation within the district, particularly amongst vulnerable groups, is highlighted by the significantly lower score in the terms of the 'Barriers to Housing and Services' category, due to the rurality of the district and high cost of housing.

South Cambridgeshire Equality Profile Headlines

- At the time of the 2011 census **93.3%** of South Cambridgeshire residents identified as White (including **0.3%** Gypsy or Irish Traveller), **3.7%** Asian/Asian British, **1.8%** Mixed/Multiple Ethnic groups, **0.8%** Black/African/Caribbean/Black British and **0.5%** Other ethnic group (Census, 2011)
- **95.3%** of South Cambridgeshire residents speak English as their main language. **6,802** residents do not speak English as their main language.

Following English the next highest main language groups are Other European (1.9%), South Asian (0.7%) and East Asian (0.7%) (Census, 2011)

- As of 2018 **10.8%** of South Cambridgeshire residents were non-UK nationals (ONS, 2019)
- South Cambridgeshire residents aged 65+ are forecast to increase to **22.2%** in 2031 from 16.6% in 2011 (ONS, 2019)
- Pockets of high fertility (between 2011 and 2015) exist in places such as Waterbeach & Landbeach (**84.9** births per 1000 females aged 15-44, compared with **64.4** per 1000 for South Cambs and 63.2 per 1000 for England) (Public Health England, 2020)
- **11.2%** of residents have a long-term disability limiting day-to-day activities. **8.5%** have a long-term disability affecting the kind or amount of work they might do (ONS, 2020)
- Male residents in FT work earn **£4.03ph** more than female residents in FT work (compared with £1.22ph difference nationally) (NOMIS, 2020)
- In 2018/19 **10 per 1,000** Black people were subject to stop and search action, 4 per 1,000 Mixed ethnicity people, 3 per 1,000 Asian people and 1 per 1,000 White people in Cambridgeshire (Gov.uk, 2020)

Some National Context

- Almost **1 in 5** LGBT staff have been the target of negative comments or conduct from work colleagues in the last year because they are LGBT (Stonewall, 2018)
- **1 in 8** trans people have been physically attacked by customers or colleagues in the last year because of being trans (Stonewall, 2018)
- The ethnic minority employment rate is **62.8%** compared with 75.6% for White workers (McGregor-Smith Review, 2018)
- In 2018/19 **38 per 1,000** Black people were subject to stop and search action, 11 per 1,000 Mixed Ethnicity people, 11 per 1,000 Asian people, 7 per 'Other inc. Chinese' people and 4 per every 1,000 White people (Gov.uk, 2020)
- In 2015/16, **47.6%** of disabled adults were in employment, compared with almost 80% of the non-disabled adult population (EHRC, 2017)
- In 2012-14 **45.3%** of disabled people reported difficulty accessing health, benefits, tax, culture, sport, and leisure compared with 31.7% for non-disabled people. (EHRC, 2017)