

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

AGE | DISABILITY | GENDER REASSIGNMENT | MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP | PREGNANCY & MATERNITY | RACE | RELIGION OR BELIEF | SEX | SEXUAL ORIENTATION

STRATEGY & OBJECTIVES 2022-25



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CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| FOREWORD | 3 |
| VISION AND PURPOSE | 4 |
| PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY | 5 |
| STRATEGIC CONTEXT | 7 |
| THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT | 9 |
| THE EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH | 10 |
| ENSURING A DIVERSE AND ENGAGED WORKFORCE | 17 |
| HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS? | 20 |

FOREWORD – Leader & Cllr. Alam

When we launched the Council Plan 2022/2025, we set out our ambition to create an inclusive borough for people to live, work and enjoy. A borough where no-one is left behind and where all are welcome and treated fairly. We want Rotherham to be a place in which everyone can achieve their hopes and aspirations. We want to ensure no-one is held back and that regardless of age, race, gender, or any other characteristic people can succeed.

This refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy aims to set out the actions the Council is taking to support this journey. We are taking this opportunity to reflect recent impacts such as the global pandemic, in addition to the cost of living challenges faced by people across the borough.

The work we have been doing to embed equalities throughout our operations and in our decision-making and partnership working has made good progress. This has been reported each summer in the Equalities Annual Report and this progress will continue.

We are continuing to review our approach to equalities including our route map to reach ‘excellent’ under the Local Government Equality Framework, to ensure that we continue to improve our performance for those who have protected characteristics.

We will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is linked across our strategies. This will include our approach to tackling health inequalities alongside economic disadvantage.

As a Council, we have adopted a positive and proactive approach to advancing equalities, including ongoing staff engagement and training, the development of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion champions and

strengthening our conversations with our communities. We are in the process of establishing a co-designed approach to equalities with the voluntary sector, which aims to recognise the needs of all those with protected characteristics and to ensure that our work in this area is informed by the real-world experience of our communities.

We also recognise the disproportionate impact that Covid-19 has had on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. Work by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI)¹ notes that existing disadvantaged communities have been and will be disproportionately impacted by Covid. Our strategy continues to recognise the contributions that people from different backgrounds make, whilst actively working with partners and communities themselves, to tackle inequalities and foster good relationships.

As well as our firm commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the protected characteristics, our aspirations go further to include consideration of people in care, refugees and migrants, people with caring responsibilities and the inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. Whilst we recognise that the Council can’t do everything, we want Rotherham to be a fair, inclusive and safe place for everyone and for the Council itself to be an employer of choice which is more representative of the communities we serve. Our strategy sets out how we will deliver this ambition.



Chris Read,
Leader of
Rotherham Council



Councillor Alam
Cabinet Member for
Corporate Services,
Community Safety
and Finance

¹ 2020 -11-reviving-regions.pdf (cbi.org.uk)

VISION AND PURPOSE

Our vision for Rotherham is set out in the Council Plan 2022/2025

Our Vision is:

“Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future we can all share. We value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind. To achieve this as a council we must work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents.”

We want every neighbourhood to be a thriving neighbourhood, where people can work together to achieve a good quality of life. We want to empower everyone to lead fulfilling lives, whilst also keeping them safe from harm. Where everyone can prosper and plan confidently for the future regardless of who they are, to make Rotherham a welcoming place, where equality, freedom, fairness and opportunity are open to all.

The purpose of this strategy is to outline our plans to deliver our equality objectives. This strategy lays out a new set of commitments to guide us through 2022 to 2025 and is done so in the context of our obligations under the Equality Act (2010) and our Public Sector Equality Duty.



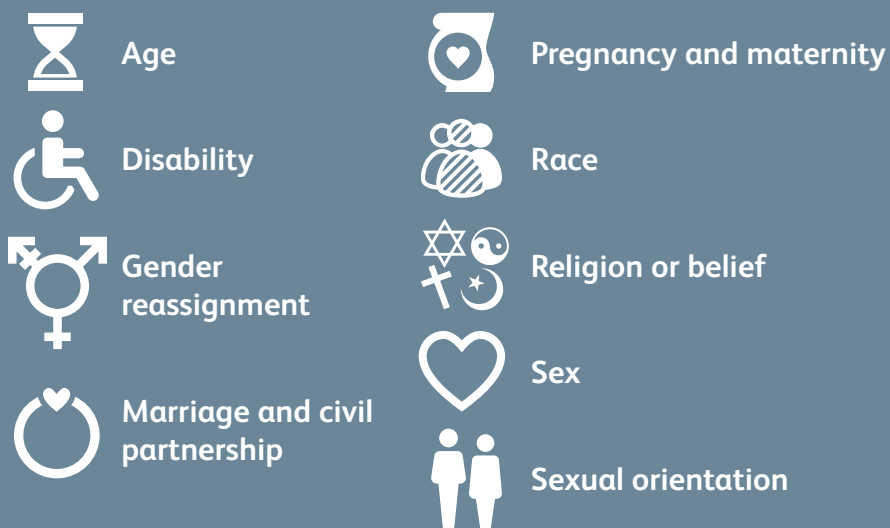
PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- 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.

What are Protected Characteristics?

What are Protected Characteristics? Under the Equality Act 2010 it is illegal to discriminate against anyone for any of the following reasons:



Under the Equality Act 2010, there are four main types of discrimination, which include:

- 1 **Direct discrimination.** This form of discrimination is when someone is treated differently or worse than someone else because of that person's protected characteristic.
- 2 **Indirect discrimination.** This form of discrimination occurs when a company put a general rule or plan in place, which puts some people with protected characteristics at a disadvantage. In the workplace, this general rule is only discriminatory when there's no justification for implementing it.
- 3 **Harassment.** This form of discrimination is where someone conveys negative behaviour towards someone else to harm that person's dignity. Typical forms of harassment include bullying, harmful nicknames, asking inappropriate questions and gossiping.
- 4 **Victimisation.** This form of discrimination is when someone becomes a victim of harmful behaviour because they support (or are expected to support) someone who possesses a protected characteristic. To be a victim of victimisation, you don't need to have a protected characteristic yourself.

There is also legal provision covering positive discrimination. This is a form of discrimination that favours someone by treating them differently in a positive way. An example is an organisation appointing someone from an underrepresented group into a role without considering whether they have right skills for the post over other candidates who are better qualified. Positive discrimination is unlawful.

The Council is committed to provide equal life opportunities for all our residents. We know that many things affect a person's ability to lead a fulfilling and happy life. This includes employment opportunities, good physical and mental health and access to educational opportunities.

Some residents are more able to access educational opportunities and employment than others, whilst some face additional barriers and challenges. We will focus upon tackling these inequalities, including considering our own recruitment practices. We will work with our partners to help reduce the gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived

communities, support the improvement of educational outcomes and employment opportunities for people in Rotherham.

To do this, we will listen to our residents and our workforce and seek to involve all voices. We will celebrate the richness and diversity of the borough and the value this brings to the lives of the people of Rotherham. We will ensure that our decisions are informed by people's real-life experiences, learning lessons from what residents tell us to embed our equalities work into all we do. From these lessons we seek to continue to improve our services and our decision-making.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire. Our 25 Council wards cover a wide range of urban, suburban, and rural areas. 70% of Rotherham is open countryside. The borough has a population of 264,984 (2020) with an age profile resembling the national average.

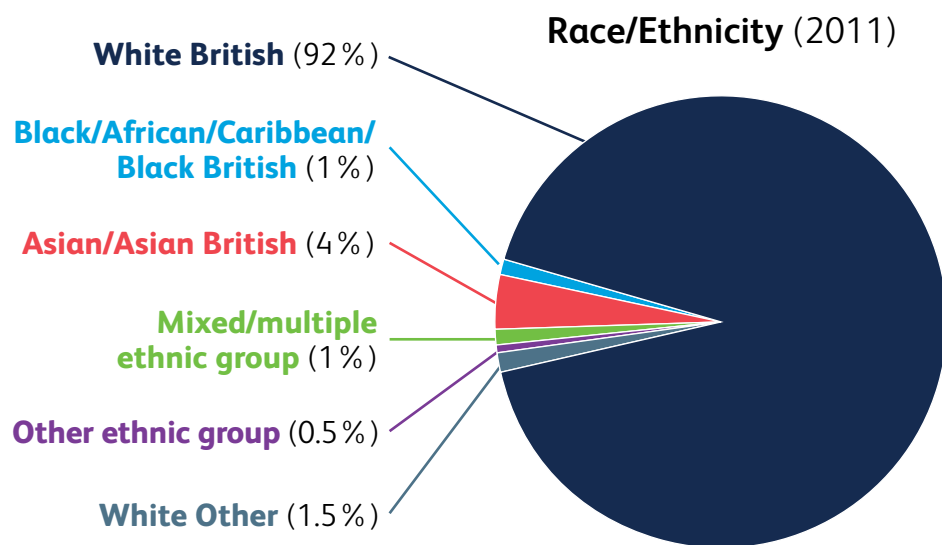


There are fewer compared to average, young people aged 18-24 as a result of people leaving the area to study or work. Older people are the age group growing most rapidly, especially those aged 75+ who account for 9% of the borough population. The borough averaged just over 2,900 births per year between 2015 and 2020.

The 2011 Census found that 92% of the population are White British and 8% are from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups. 7,912 (38%) of Rotherham's 20,842 BAME residents were from Pakistani or Kashmiri backgrounds. 29.3% of the boroughs BAME population live in Rotherham's three central wards.. In Rotherham schools, 16% have a BAME background (2020) whereas only 2.6% of pensioners (65+) are BAME.

There is no official data on the sexuality or sexual identity of Rotherham people, however, the Office for National Statistics (2018) estimate 2.7% of the UK population are lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB). 2.7% of Rotherham's population would equate to 7,155 residents being LGB. Stonewall estimate 1% of the UK population is transgender or non-binary. This estimate would equate to 2,650 people identifying as transgender or non-binary in Rotherham. In 2011, 103,287 residents were married, and 283 in a civil partnership.

The 2011 census showed that a relatively high proportion of Rotherham's population have a long-term health condition and are otherwise disabled (56,588 residents). This amounts to 22% of the Borough population compared with the English average of 17.6%. Over 22,000 people (8.5% of the population) claimed a disability benefit, well above the English average of 5.4%. Two thirds of disability benefit claimants have a physical disability and a third have a mental health condition. The most common disabling conditions are arthritis (18.6%), learning disability (15%) and psychosis (6.6%).



8,585 (5.3 %) of working aged residents claim unemployment benefits in 2022 with the majority being men (59%). 4.3% of working aged women claim unemployment benefits compared to 6.3% of men. Figures for both genders are above national average. Residents aged 25-49 account for the majority of people claiming unemployment benefits. 6% of those aged 16-24 and 25-49 claim unemployment benefits compared to 2% of those aged 50 and above.

Claimant count (unemployment) by Gender (2022)

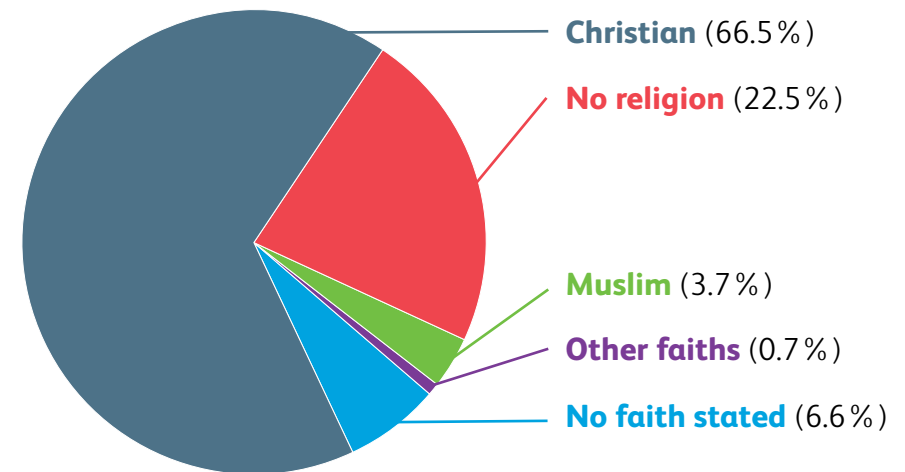
| Gender | Claimant count | % of total claimant count |
|--------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Male | 5,070 | 59% |
| Female | 3,515 | 41% |
| Total | 8,585 | 100% |

Claimant count (unemployment) by Age (2022)

| Age | Claimant count | Number of residents in age group | Claimants as a percentage of residents in age group |
|------------|----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Aged 16-24 | 1,615 | 25,171 | 6% |
| Aged 25-49 | 5,045 | 81,968 | 6% |
| Aged 50-64 | 1,805 | 54,023 | 3% |
| Age 65+ | 120 | 52,388 | 0.2% |

The 2011 Census showed that two thirds of the Rotherham population are Christians and 4.4% belong to other faiths, mainly Islam. 22.5% of residents had no religion and 6.6% did not answer. Almost all members of minority faiths belong to BME communities. 96% of Christians are white British, 45% of BME residents are Muslim, 33% are Christians and 10% have no religion.

Religion (2011)



22% of Rotherham residents live within the 10% most deprived areas of England. 12,667 children were living in “absolute poverty” (Department for Work and Pensions) in 2018/19. Life expectancy in the most deprived areas of Rotherham is 9.9 years lower for men and 9.5 years lower for women than in the least deprived areas. There are significant gaps in healthy life expectancy, meaning those from more deprived communities can expect to live for more years in poor health.

THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The council has set out an intention to reach and then maintain 'excellent' under the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), and the delivery of our Public Sector Equality Duty.

The EDI Strategy encompasses high-level actions to deliver this and shows how we will take them forward. It embeds our equalities duties and commitments through the Council's service plans, corporate projects along with community consultation and engagement.

The key components of the EFLG framework are:

- Understanding and working with your communities.
- Leadership and Organisational Commitment.
- Responsive Services and Customer Care.
- Diverse and engaged workforce.



THE EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

The Council's equality objectives have been developed to provide a high-level framework that takes account of our equality, diversity and inclusion journey so far and provides a clear direction for the next stage. The equality objectives and proposed key actions have been subject to extensive consultation. Responses to the consultation have been used to shape actions and plans under each of the objectives as set out.

The four equality objectives together with their key actions are set out here:

1 Understanding, Listening to, and Working with Rotherham's Communities

The Council's vision for Rotherham sets out that "we value decency and dignity and seek to build a town where opportunity is extended to everyone, where people can grow, flourish and prosper, and where no one is left behind."

How the Council understands, listens to and engages with our communities is critical to this, especially to help ensure that needs are recognised, and no-one is left behind. The Council will continue to develop its knowledge, understanding and engagement through multiple channels.

Where we are now

We have committed to working with communities to achieve the best outcomes for local people, recognising the importance of putting them at the heart of everything we do. That means involving local residents in the things that matter to them and making sure we design our services taking account of feedback from those who use them.

We have developed robust processes for engagement and consultation with communities a recent example of which was in helping to shape our new Council Plan. This includes having a consultation and engagement policy to ensure standards and consistency in how we consult. We actively engage service users, stakeholder groups and work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector and faith organisations.

Throughout the COVID pandemic, we have continued to work with partners to focus on the needs of our communities. Engagement work took place in high-risk places including town centre neighbourhoods, with BAME communities and the working age population to reduce transmission risk and promote vaccination.

The Tenant Engagement Framework and Thriving Neighbourhoods' Strategy support and enable different levels of engagement within communities to take place, with opportunities for underrepresented groups to participate in Council decision-making. Other examples of engagement include the Housing Involvement Panel which enables tenants to challenge services, performance and ensures the Council learns from complaints.

To better understand the different stakeholders that may wish to take part in consultation on council services, we are developing a picture of the different people who use services and voluntary, community and faith groups.

In addition, equalities monitoring information is collected as part of service level consultations. The information gathered from both stakeholder feedback and monitoring information is critical to the Council understanding the uptake of services and identifying where there may be barriers.

To better understand the makeup of our communities, the council collects and analyses information from internal and external data sources including the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This range of data sources are shared

through the Rotherham Data Hub. Services are encouraged to use the data available for service planning, commissioning, decision making and preparation of strategic documents such as the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

To deliver our equality objectives we work with our communities and in partnership. Our policy on consultation and engagement aims to ensure that our objectives are meaningful and reflect the views of communities and partners. Recent examples include the carers' strategy which has been shaped by feedback from carers.

What the public consultation suggested:

- There are positive examples from some areas of the Council, in particular Early Help and around hate crime, where communication and engagement are considered to be working well
- Improving access to council representatives from social care and customer services is important to be able to raise concerns/share views more easily
- The Council should look to develop a better understanding of people's real-life experiences, to inform decision making

Where we want to be

We want to be able to effectively demonstrate how we have listened to all sections of the communities that we serve.

We would like to see more people from under-represented groups participating across a more diverse range of consultation activities and be able to evidence how improvements to services have been influenced as a result of this. Our ambition is that communities will be encouraged and supported to influence or shape decisions that affect them.

The Council is aiming to develop stronger intelligence, data and information relating to differing community needs across the borough to better understand the picture of challenges that exist within and between wards. Data will be used appropriately and accurately to help predict and measure demand for services so that we can plan and design our services to meet evidenced needs.

The achievement of outcomes will be measured through the Council Plan and Year Ahead Delivery plan, supported by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy at a more detailed level. Over time, we will be able to track the progress of our work to narrow the gaps in the areas identified by local people as their priorities in our Council Plan.

How we will get there

- Listening to residents and service users through consultations and feedback to improve the evidence base that informs service delivery.
- Enhancing the way that we engage with communities including those with protected characteristics, to ensure that all voices are heard and there is an opportunity to provide lived experience.
- Sharing and presenting information in appropriate and accessible formats.
- Developing joint partnership approaches and activity including the use of intelligence to tackle inequalities, promote equalities and good community relations that have a positive impact.



2 Delivering Accessible and Responsive Services that Meet Diverse Needs

The Council's vision for Rotherham sets out "to work in a modern, efficient way, to deliver sustainable services in partnership with our local neighbourhoods, looking outwards, yet focussed relentlessly on the needs of our residents."

The Council, as a major service provider and in exercising its leadership role, touches the lives of everyone in Rotherham. **In this, the Council demonstrates that public services are a force for good, advocating for equality and tackling disadvantage.**

The way services are designed, commissioned, and delivered contributes to ensuring that the needs of diverse communities are served and that nobody is excluded from accessing services.

The role of partnership working continues to be of real value in tackling socio-economic and health inequalities with key actions and tangible outcomes to be set out. The Rotherham Health and Wellbeing Board and its strategy set out how health inequalities are tackled.

Where we are now

We have made real progress in redesigning services and introducing digital processes to improve both accessibility and convenience for our customers. We want to go even further through our Council Plan commitments, to improve customer standards across our services making them easier to access. This links back to objective 1, because to do this effectively, we will need to work in partnership with our communities and customers to really understand the challenges they face in using council services.

We have continued to ensure that equalities are actively considered in decision-making through the use of equality screenings or assessments which accompany every report through to Cabinet. We have trained and developed our managers and the wider workforce in the need to consider equality, diversity and inclusion as part of their early thinking on service planning, new initiatives or service redesign and provided the tools to support them in doing this.

We also look to advance equalities through our third-party contracts, and this is now included in a commissioning toolkit, tender documents and contract documentation.

We use the data and intelligence that we gather across our services including council complaints, to gain a better understanding of where there are challenges that need to be tackled, including where protected groups have raised issues.

We have real tangible examples of service developments, including those achieved through partnership working that improve accessibility and outcomes. These include a befriending service provided by Rotherham Federation; new lighting and CCTV in Clifton Park to help women and girls feel safer and better accessibility in our libraries, to name but a few.

Underpinning all of this are our 'One Rotherham' values that set out how we expect to work together and in partnership, whilst seeking to break down barriers, ensure a one team approach and put the customer at the heart of all we do.

Case studies of achievements are set out each year in the Equalities Annual Report.

The public consultation suggested:

- Ensuring that council meetings and the council website fully enables access and engagement
- Working with local communities, listening to and supporting underrepresented groups to ensure that services seek to remove and mitigate barriers to access that may exist

Where we want to be

The Council's ambitions includes that customers receive a consistent, high quality and efficient services from all areas of the Council. This will involve agreeing a new set of customer service standards to deliver an excellent customer experience, by improving the quality of our customer contacts.

As set out in the Council Plan, residents and communities are a key part of how we work collaboratively and in partnership to design services that are both inclusive and accessible. A new programme focused on the experience that our customers have when accessing council services, is at the heart of this and will result in consistent customer standards to help us deliver high standards of service. Digital inclusion is a major consideration in understanding the barriers that prevent people from being able to access services and activities online. We are committed to understanding these barriers better so that we can work with communities to effectively tackle them.

To achieve this, we will need to work with residents and customers to understand barriers that they may face and learn from their lived experiences to inform our service design.

We want to be able to take the evidence, analysis and learning from our equality assessments to inform future service design and to be able to better evidence the impacts that they have had in improving outcomes.

We also want to ensure that the assessments themselves are accessible and more meaningful. A recent example includes the Dementia Cafe for BAME people, where the outcome of equality assessment lead to service redesign.

We will build on our current approach to co-production and co-design with service users wherever possible, enabling services users' voices to be heard and for them to influence and shape outcomes.

How we will get there

- Communicating and engaging with residents so that they feel informed about council services and how to access these.
- Listening to service users through consultations and complaints to produce evidence-based analysis that informs service design and delivery.
- Strengthening digital infrastructure and supporting skills' to enable access for all.
- Working together in partnership and in collaboration to deliver the Council Plan commitments to tackle inequality and disadvantage.
- Continuing to improve the use of Equality Assessments in service design and delivery, capturing challenges and opportunities at the very beginning, ensuring barriers are considered and mitigated where possible.



3 Providing Leadership and Organisational Commitment to Actively Promote Equalities

Our vision sets out that “Rotherham is our home, where we come together as a community, where we seek to draw on our proud history to build a future, we can all share.”

This objective has two key elements. The first takes forward how we work across our services and with partners to tackle prejudice and discrimination. The second is about how people come together to celebrate what is good about the diverse communities in Rotherham and the common bonds across communities that make Rotherham a better place.

Where we are now

The Council is committed to tackling prejudice and racism in all its forms. We have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of anti-Semitism and passed a “Black Lives Matter” resolution with the aim of making Rotherham an “anti-racist town”.

There are established processes for Elected Members, partner organisations and our workforce to feed in information about issues that have the potential to cause community tensions. This enables actions to be taken as a result, and we work with Statutory Partners to respond to and monitor hate crime incidents.

We are progressing with our Building Stronger Communities Strategy empowering people by, working through a broad partnership. This is working to achieve people living and working in harmony, with a shared sense of community spirit, having respect for each other as citizens and respect for Rotherham as a place.

We use a range of communications and events to promote positive relations, that are important to local people and support understanding of diversity.

The public consultation suggested:

- Promoting equality and raising awareness of equality issues
- Getting involved should include arranging and attending cultural exchange events to share knowledge

Where we want to be

We have set out in both the “Every Neighbourhood Thriving” and the “People are Safe Healthy and Live Well” themes of the Council Plan, how the pandemic response helped to show the benefits of working together across partnerships and communities. We want to continue to build on this, with people coming together from all parts of the community to get involved and tackle the issues that are most important to them.

Through our ward councillors and neighbourhood working model, we will continue to play a strong community leadership role in bringing partners and communities together to tackle issues and tensions and to overcome barriers, whilst promoting harmony and cohesion. We will work with changing communities over time to ensure that everyone feels at home in Rotherham. We want to ensure that people do not face barriers and prejudice.

We will continue to build on the events we hold that have had the most meaning for our communities, and look to mark a broader range of dates that are important to people.

We will stand up to prejudice and discrimination in all its forms. We will always speak out to protect our communities and their best interests.

How we will get there

- Continuing to work with a range of partners, including statutory bodies, to address issues around community safety including addressing hate crime, whilst taking a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice and discrimination.
- Working in partnership with services, partners and communities to promote equality and good community relations.
- Supporting awareness and understanding across communities to promote good relations across the range of protected characteristics.
- Celebrating diversity within our communities and marking events.



4 Ensuring a diverse and engaged workforce

As a Council we are committed to addressing the challenges faced by our workforce, residents and communities and our overall approach is detailed in the Council Plan 2022-25.

Our approach includes maximising opportunities to evolve the way in which we work, provide services to residents and communities and listen to feedback from our workforce on how we progress into the future, and how we build on lessons we have learnt over recent years. This will ensure we remain focused on providing the best services we can to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Rotherham.

Where we are now

We undertake regular monitoring of workforce data in relation to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010, to support the Council's commitment to transparency and fairness.

The Council's workforce has many women who work in part time roles, however the number of men working part-time has gradually increased to one in five, which compares to three in five women over the last five years.

Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Employees (BAME) representation in the workforce is 4.7% which is below the 2011 census level (6.3%) of the BAME working population in Rotherham. Two thirds of our BAME employees are under 49 years of age which is higher than the representation of non BAME employees in the same age group.

The representation of employees declaring a disability in the workforce is 9.2% which is below that of the proportion of disabled people in Rotherham as a whole (18%) reported in the 2011 census, but this pattern is not unique to Rotherham and is reflected nationally.

Over the last eight years the Council has seen significant reductions in its gender pay gap with the mean gap reducing from 18.2% to 11.2% and median from 21.8% to 9.2%

Ensuring equality of opportunity for our workforce and tackling workplace exclusion remain critical for the continued success of the Council. This sets an example for all other employers within the borough and these statistics have helped to inform the shaping of the strategy and annual workplan.

We are committed to equalities, diversity and inclusion within our workforce at all levels, ensuring that there is confidence in working together to deliver the best possible services for residents. To support this commitment, positive steps continue to be taken to improve workplace equality. Examples of some of the activity include:

- Ensuring all of our policies are up to date and reflective of our diverse needs and situations.
- Flexible, fair and transparent pay and benefits.
- Removing barriers to flexible working wherever possible.
- Supporting staff with caring responsibilities.
- Staff development and career progression that reflects individuals' needs and learning styles.

We recognise that a better work-life balance can improve employee motivation, performance, productivity and reduce stress. To support employees in achieving this balance, we have developed a wide range of

flexible and hybrid working arrangements. Hybrid working builds upon previous flexible working policies and supports a culture of working wherever, whenever, and however is most appropriate to deliver the best possible outcomes for residents.

The public consultation suggested:

- Offering council staff training and development to improve their understanding of people's lived experiences and to better inform service design and delivery
- Staff groups could be a valuable networking opportunity, a forum to come together to share concerns, with the importance to have deliverable outcomes, formalised structures and clear responsibilities, and the possibility to give feedback on progress on equalities.

Where we want to be

Our workforce is key to the successful delivery of the Council Plan and this underpinning EDI strategy. We would like to refresh our Council values and behaviours in conjunction with our workforce as these provide the framework that all Council employees should operate within. We would also like to increase our engagement from underrepresented groups through the development and support of staff networks.

We want to ensure that our workforce is reflective of the communities we serve and that we are able attract a diverse range of candidates for Council positions, by understanding and tackling any barriers that may exist. We want to ensure that people from all protected characteristics have a place within the Rotherham Council workforce. We would like to engage more with our young people in the borough to promote career opportunities that exist

within the Council and to create career pathways for the whole workforce, understanding that there needs to be flexibility in our approach.

It is important that as we move forward on our equalities journey, that we ensure more inclusive and accessible practices and policies that are easy to understand using plain language, but also available to those employees who require the information in different formats. We would like to continue to engage with individuals and groups within our workforce who have different types of needs to understand how we can best support them.

We want to ensure that we equip our workforce with the skills that help them to grow their capacity to learn and adapt, ensuring that we enable them to proactively embrace new ways of working, focusing on how they can add value. We recognise that the approach to doing this will need to be inclusive and will continue to consult and engage with our workforce in a variety of ways.

How we engage our workforce and recognise its diversity will not only ensure there are no barriers and that special needs are met, but also bring experience into the design of services and how we work on a daily basis.



How we will get there

Five workforce priorities along with some key actions have been identified to support the delivery of the Council Plan and the EDI Strategy:

- Being an Employer of Choice so that we attract and retain talented individuals.
- Progressing with our Ways of Working post-Covid, ensuring that we are innovative and agile, that our workforce policies are accessible and inclusive and that we have refreshed values and behaviours to underpin what we do.
- Driving forward our workforce engagement to include support for establishing stronger networks for underrepresented groups and facilitating new approaches to engagement that are accessible and inclusive.
- Developing our workforce development programme that takes account of different needs and also promotes equalities, diversity and inclusion as being at the heart of what we do.
- Building on our workforce Health and Wellbeing programme offer based on workforce feedback and national good practice.



HOW WILL WE MEASURE OUR PROGRESS?

How Will We Measure Our Progress?

This strategy underpins and supports the delivery of the Council Plan which has equalities, diversity and inclusion at its very heart. On that basis, this strategy is guided by the Key Performance Indicators that are already contained within the Council Plan and will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis, in addition to more detailed operational service plans.

Measuring delivery of the strategy is also about our progress towards and achieving “excellent” under the Equality Framework for Local Government. This establishes the equality standards the Council works to. We will collect and share information on case studies to showcase best practice and make equalities about real life experiences as well as gathering data and outputs.

Our refreshed equality objectives are the starting point of our next chapter. They will be supported by an annual work programme which is monitored. An annual report of progress will be prepared and published on the Council’s website. Delivery of the activities within the work programme aspires and aims to bring people along on the journey that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at Rotherham is taking. It is the role and responsibility of everyone at the Council to support the delivery our vision for equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Equalities Annual Report

The annual report is published in June each year. In June 2022, it will report the progress of the next steps and actions set out in the 2021 report and will take forward the workplan for 2022/23 as set out in this strategy. This will form the basis for future year reports, which will be published and considered by both scrutiny and Cabinet within the Council.

Conclusion

We recognise the diversity of Rotherham’s communities is expanding and that this should be welcomed and valued. There will be many opportunities and challenges over the next three years as we work with residents to improve their lives and reduce the incidences of discrimination and harassment. Our refreshed equality objectives will allow us to build on our previous achievements and continually improve.