

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Inclusion strategy 2026-2030 and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2024-25	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): 12/12/2025	
Directorate: PSE	Service area: Policy, Performance & Improvement
Lead Manager: Michael Holmes	Contact number: Michael.Holmes@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a: ☒ Strategy / Policy ☐ Service / Function ☐ Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Michael Holmes	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Policy and Strategy Officer
Paul Stafford	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Policy Officer
Oscar Holden	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Corporate Improvement Officer

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance

Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)

This may include a group/s identified by a protected characteristic, others groups or stakeholder/s e.g. service users, employees, partners, members, suppliers etc.)

The Inclusion Strategy 2026–2030 aims to ensure that inclusion is embedded across all RMBC activities within the borough. It primarily affects people with protected characteristics and those facing barriers due to socio-economic circumstances. The intended outcomes are to:

- Expand access to opportunities for all residents.
- Deliver services that meet the needs of diverse communities.
- Work collaboratively with communities to design services that reflect their priorities.
- Create vibrant, safe, and welcoming spaces for everyone.

The strategy focuses on the following themes:

- *Working together* – demonstrating how the Council will continue to engage with residents and, where possible, design and produce services and plans with them, acknowledging the need to proactively reach out to those who find it more difficult to engage.
- *Responsive services* – focused on the importance of listening to residents, consistently providing feedback, and showing how services are being reshaped (where appropriate) in response.
- *Welcoming places* – reflecting concerns about feeling safe, which is a significant issue for some groups.
- *Employer of choice* – outlining ongoing efforts to ensure that the Council's workforce reflects its diverse communities, with an inclusive approach to recruitment and staff engagement.

What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)

RMBC maintains extensive equality data, gathered through local consultations and national datasets such as the Census and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This

information helps us understand the borough's diverse communities and informs inclusive policy development.

About Rotherham

Rotherham is one of four metropolitan boroughs in South Yorkshire. It comprises 25 Council wards, covering urban, suburban, and rural areas. The borough has a population of **276,595 (2024)**, with most residents living in the urban areas of Rotherham.

Equality Profile

Age

- Rotherham's population is ageing: **19.7%** of residents are aged 65 and over (1 in 5 people).
- The borough has a below-average proportion of young adults aged 18–29 (**13.2% vs 15% nationally**), reflecting outward migration for study and work.

Race/Ethnicity

- Rotherham is increasingly diverse, with **31,193 people (11.7%)** from minority ethnic groups (Census 2021).
- The Pakistani community is the largest minority ethnic group after White British.

Gender

- In 2025, full-time female workers in Rotherham earned **75% of male earnings**, compared to **87% nationally**.

Disability

- **56,177 people (21.1%)** have a long-term health condition; **9.8%** report severe limitations (vs **7.5% nationally**).

Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity

- **2.1%** of residents identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual (Census 2021).
- **0.6%** of residents aged 16+ identify as transgender, non-binary or have a gender identity different from their sex at birth (vs **0.5% nationally**).

Religion

- **49% Christian, 5.1% Muslim, 39.8% no religion** (Census 2021).

Deprivation

- Rotherham is among the **15% most deprived local authority districts in England**.
- **11,904 children** live in absolute poverty (DWP, 2022/23).
- Life expectancy in the most deprived areas is **9.9 years lower for men** and **9.5 years lower for women** than in the least deprived.
- Healthy life expectancy at birth:

- **Males: 56 years**
- **Females: 55.6 years**
(England averages: 61.5 and 61.9 years respectively – PHE, 2021–23).

Engagement Overview

Online Survey

- **Total responses:** 22
- **Equalities monitoring consent:** 12 respondents (54.5%)
Note: Small sample size – findings may not represent the whole borough.

Demographics of respondents

- **Age:** 100% aged 25–64
- **Gender:** Female 27.3%, Male 18.2%, Other 2.6%, No response 45.5%
- **Gender reassignment:** Transgender 4.5%, Prefer not to say 4.5%, No 45.5%, No response 45.5%
- **Sexuality:** Gay/Lesbian 18.2%, Heterosexual 13.6%, Other 9.1%, Bisexual 4.5%, Prefer not to say 9.1%, No response 45.5%
- **Disability:** Long-term disability 36.4%, No disability 13.6%, Prefer not to say 4.5%, No response 45.5%
- **Ethnicity:** White British 36.4%, Asian (Pakistani) 4.5%, White Irish 4.5%, White Other 4.5%, Prefer not to say 4.5%, No response 45.5%
- **Religion:** No religion 22.7%, Christian 13.6%, Jewish 4.5%, Muslim 4.5%, Prefer not to say 9.1%, No response 45.5%
- Other characteristics (marital status, pregnancy/maternity, carer status, refugee/asylum) were also captured.

Focus Groups

- **12 focus groups** held: 3 online, 8 in person, 1 hybrid.
- The focus groups engaged with borough residents and staff, ensuring representation from a wide range of demographics and organisations/service users representing specific cohorts (e.g. ethnicity, sexuality, gender, disabilities, age).

Key messages from engagement

- **Communication barriers:** Difficulty contacting the Council; lack of feedback loops.
- **Safety concerns:** Particularly among some communities; perception that deprived areas are overlooked.
- **Desire for co-production:** Strong appetite for collaborative service design and regular engagement mechanisms.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

The consultation process, coupled with use of pre-existing data sets, aimed to minimize gaps in the information available. While some gaps in data are inevitable, the service and the local authority are committed to an ongoing programme of improvement, including regular reviews and the integration of new data sources where possible. This ongoing programme of improvement will include follow up engagement with all groups that have been involved in the engagement process.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

The impact of the policy on communities and groups with protected characteristics will be monitored through a combination of structured reporting, governance, and engagement mechanisms:

- **Regular Reporting:** Progress will be tracked through Q2 and Q4 reports to Cabinet on Council Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Year Ahead Delivery Plan progress.
- **Annual Reviews:** The Equalities Annual Report will provide a review of progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy and workplan. This report will identify forward actions and share good practice through case studies. In addition, an annual action plan will set out key activities across the strategy's four themes and will be subject to oversight through robust internal governance arrangements.
- **Integration into Planning:** Both the Council Plan and annual service plans will explicitly demonstrate how inclusion, equality, and diversity considerations are embedded in the planning and delivery of priority activities.
- **Engagement and Accountability:** Internal staff networks and external representative groups advocating for people with protected characteristics will be actively engaged and provided with opportunities to hold the Council to account.

These arrangements ensure that equality considerations remain central to policy implementation and that progress is transparent, measurable, and informed by stakeholder input.

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)

**Focus group 1: Voluntary and Community Sector
Focus Group – 6th August 2025**

Participants included representatives from Rainbow Project, Voluntary Action Rotherham, NHS Mental Health Community Connectors, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, Rotherfed. They stressed the need for clearer definitions of which communities are represented, acting on feedback, and co-designing solutions. They highlighted that delivering accessible and responsive services should be a top priority, with simplified objectives and stronger leadership to promote equalities. Key concerns included poor customer experience, barriers to accessing services, lack of face-to-face engagement, safety issues, and the

	need for investment in green spaces, regeneration, volunteering, and inclusive communication, alongside calls for a dedicated equalities team and more diverse recruitment practices. Focus group 2: Sense Centre – 7th August 2025 Participants included Sense service users, carers and staff. They raised concerns about accessibility, customer experience, and inclusion, highlighting poor pavement and road conditions, limited accessible facilities, and challenges with disabled travel passes and cinema seating. They called for better Council communication, staff training, work shadowing with community services, and co-design of inclusive services, alongside improvements in public transport, safety, and consultation processes. Suggestions also included hosting disability awareness events, providing accessible toilets, and creating more opportunities for ethnic minority groups and disabled adults. Focus group 4: Rainbow Project – 19th August 2025 Participants at Montgomery Hall included staff members and service users. They raised concerns about safety in Rotherham town centre, particularly for LGBTQ+ individuals, and called for more inclusive facilities such as gender-neutral toilets. They highlighted gaps in support for homeless people, the need to improve the night-time economy, and suggested relocating Rotherham Pride to a safer, quieter venue like Clifton Park. Other issues included an intimidating complaints process, poor accessibility at Riverside House, and limited awareness of homelessness services. Recommendations included staff training on equality and sexual health, introducing mystery shoppers to assess inclusivity, and improving website accessibility with features like speech-to-text and customizable display options. Focus group 5: Faith Leaders – 21st August 2025 Participants from local faith groups praised positive experiences with Council services, citing efficient Parking Services and strong engagement with the mosque during community events. They stressed the need for inclusive public engagement, better promotion of consultations, and clear communication on how feedback shapes decisions. Key priorities included improving town centre safety and regeneration, fostering community cohesion, upgrading civic spaces, and equipping young people to challenge misinformation and understand local democracy
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	Focus group 6: Steel City Consultancy – 2nd September 2025 Participants included community groups focused on supporting women and their families. One session was hosted for women and one for men. Residents in Kimberworth raised concerns about inequality in investment, deteriorating environments in areas like Ferham, and barriers to accessing Council services, including long phone wait times and limited face-to-face support. Safety issues, lack of visible policing, and poor communication on consultation outcomes were highlighted, alongside calls for councillor surgeries and better community integration. Additional priorities included overcrowded housing, borough-wide selective licensing, school admission inequalities, inadequate social care, health disparities, and ineffective active travel infrastructure, with participants stressing the need for visible leadership and dedicated funding to address inclusion. Focus group 7: Sight and Sound – 5th September 2025 Participants at Sight and Sound (service users and staff) highlighted a lack of consistent feedback following consultations, noting that outcomes and decisions are rarely communicated or explained. Key concerns included pavement parking, absence of audible traffic signals for visually impaired residents, missed garden waste collections, and feeling unsafe due to anti-social behaviour. Negative experiences at Riverside House were reported, where residents struggled to access in-person support and were directed online, prompting calls for staff training to ensure inclusive and effective customer service. Focus group 8: Youth Cabinet - 10th September 2025 Participants from the Rotherham Youth Cabinet highlighted concerns about poor public toilet facilities, lack of free sanitary products, and safety issues when walking home or using green spaces. They stressed the need for better mental health support for young people, improved promotion of services and consultations, and more accessible activities for communities with limited transport options. Suggestions included hosting inclusive community events, providing sustained funding for equality networks, and offering Council work experience
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	placements for 16–18-year-olds to build engagement and future opportunities. Focus group 9: A Borough That Cares Network - 12th September 2025 Participants from the Borough That Cares member organisations and RMBC staff stressed the need for early community engagement before strategies are developed, better support for service users with complex needs, and inclusion champions to provide tailored assistance. Key priorities included building a diverse workforce, fostering a sense of belonging, and improving access to services through libraries and neighbourhood hubs. Recommendations focused on transparent commissioning and funding processes, accessible communication in easy-read and non-digital formats, and regular collaboration with equality networks. Leadership was urged to model inclusive practices consistently, while HR should work with staff networks and partners to embed diversity across the organisation. Focus group 10: Deaf Futures - 26th September 2025 Participants at Herringthorpe United Reformed Church (service users, carers and BSL interpreters) expressed frustration over decades of feeling unheard and highlighted major barriers to communication, particularly for the deaf community, which has led to isolation and poor mental health. Key concerns included inaccessible phone support, lack of advocacy and translation services at Riverside House, difficulties with online travel pass applications, and inequities in public transport access for disabled and elderly residents. They also called for fairer funding for equality-focused community networks and greater recognition of support for vulnerable individuals. Focus group 11: United Multicultural Centre – 12th November 2025 Participants at the United Multicultural Centre (service users and staff) stressed that inclusion means equal access to services without discrimination and called for more initiatives to integrate diverse communities. Key concerns included public safety, poor road and pavement conditions, overcrowded housing for refugees, inadequate street lighting, and barriers to accessing Council services due to language and technology issues. Additional priorities were education
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	support through English classes, employment pathways, tackling drug-related crime, and improving responsiveness and communication from Council officers. The group supported the Inclusion Strategy objectives but requested regular face-to-face engagement, better promotion of multiculturalism, and more funding for community organisations to strengthen cohesion and deliver accessible services.
Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)	Focus group 3: RMBC Internal Staff Networks – 7th August 2025 Participants from the Council's internal equality networks highlighted the need for more inclusive communication, including translation and accessibility tools like text-to-speech on the Council website. They recommended a unified “One Council” approach, equality champions across directorates, and proactive community recovery efforts to strengthen cohesion. Suggestions for workforce diversity included mentoring programmes, expanded development opportunities, and collaboration between HR and staff networks to remove recruitment barriers. Leadership accountability was seen as critical, with calls to embed inclusion into performance objectives and policies. Participants also stressed co-designing services with users to ensure accessibility and responsiveness.

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The Inclusion Strategy is designed to complement and strengthen the ambitions set out in the Council Plan 2025–2030 by embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) principles across all services and decision-making. While the Council Plan established a commitment to fairness and opportunity for all, the Inclusion Strategy provides a framework for delivering these aims in practice.

The strategy ensures that the Council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, which require it to:

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

It addresses the needs of all protected characteristic groups (Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnership and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) by:

- **Accessible services:** Improving physical and digital accessibility.
- **Targeted support:** Delivering tailored initiatives alongside inclusive cultural events and community cohesion programmes.
- **Safety and wellbeing:** Working with partners through the Safer Rotherham Partnership to tackle hate crime, improve community safety, and create welcoming spaces for all.
- **Inclusive economy:** Using the Social Value Policy and Employment Solutions service to create jobs, apprenticeships, and training opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- **Workforce diversity:** Strengthening recruitment practices to attract candidates from diverse backgrounds and supporting staff networks.

Some examples of actions that will be undertaken as part of the strategy/action plan include:

Working together

- Roll out the use of new consultation software (Citizen Space) to make the approach more consistent and improve accessibility
- Embed the Rotherham Adult Social Care Always Listening Co-Production Board (RASCAL) within the approach to change across adult social care
- Complete building work on the SEND centre at Eric Manns and hand over to the Rotherham Parents Carers Forum

Responsive Services

- Provide food vouchers, meals and activities to children eligible for free school meals during the school holidays, as part of the Household Support Fund and Holiday Activities and Food programmes.
- Agree an updated Domestic Abuse Strategy to continue to improve the support available to victims and the actions taken to address perpetrators of violence and abuse.
- Commission specialist organisations to embed Individual Placement Support within services already accessed by people on probation, survivors of domestic violence, and those experiencing homelessness.

Welcoming Places

- Support communities across the borough through the delivery of the Community Cohesion Grant fund.
- Tackle hate crime incidents and the drivers of hate crime through the delivery of education and engagement group and individual sessions
- Improve four play areas as part of the children's playground programme, ensuring they are accessible to disabled children

Employer of Choice

- Promote workforce diversity in underrepresented areas of the organisation by using disaggregated data to inform the development of initiatives.

- Develop and implement targeted career development strategies into leadership and management roles for existing staff members from underrepresented groups within the workforce. • Increase the proportion of new starter apprenticeships created within the Council • Conduct a training needs analysis of the learning and development offer across the Council to identify where there is variation across directorates. Expand the offer of learning and development based on the needs analysis. The strategy also commits to co-designing services with communities, ensuring that feedback informs service improvements. Progress will be monitored through annual action plans and ongoing engagement activity.
Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups? No problems or barriers have been identified. The Inclusion Strategy is specifically designed to reduce and eliminate barriers faced by communities and protected groups, ensuring equitable access to services and promoting fairness across the borough.
Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers? Yes. The Inclusion Strategy is designed to deliver positive impacts by promoting equality, improving access to services, and removing barriers that prevent participation. It aims to create fairer opportunities for all communities by addressing inequalities, enhancing customer experience, and ensuring services are inclusive and responsive to diverse needs.
What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another) The strategy explicitly aims to bring different groups together through the delivery of diverse events and creative programmes, to involve service users generally and particular cohorts who are at risk of exclusion in shaping and designing services, and to make places more welcoming and safer.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Inclusion Strategy 2026-2030 and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2024-25
Directorate and service area: PSE – Policy, Performance and Intelligence
Lead Manager: Michael Holmes
Summary of findings:
The Equality Analysis demonstrates that the Inclusion Strategy 2026–2030, Equalities Action Plan 2026-27, and Equalities Annual Report 2024-25 collectively embed equality, diversity, and inclusion across Council services, aligning with statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. Engagement through surveys and focus groups highlighted priorities such as improved communication, safety, and co-production, while equality data confirms significant diversity and socio-economic challenges in Rotherham. No adverse impacts were identified; instead, the strategy delivers positive outcomes by removing barriers, promoting fairness, and fostering good relations. Progress will be monitored through quarterly reviews, annual reporting, and ongoing engagement with equality networks to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Initial feedback to groups that took part in the engagement process / ongoing engagement with those groups	All	March 2026 / Ongoing
The action plan will be reviewed quarterly to assess progress	All	April, July, October 26; January, April 27
Annual action plans will be produced to identify specific actions for the year ahead.	All	April 27, April 28, April 29
Annual reports will be produced to review all progress made annually and highlight key achievements and areas for improvement.	All	Late summer each year

*A = Age, D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage. C= Carers, O= other groups

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.

Name	Job title	Date
Fiona Boden	Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence	02/01/2026
Lynsey Linton	Service Director of Human Resources	02/01/2026

7. Publishing

The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this Equality Analysis relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date Equality Analysis completed	16/12/2025
Report title and date	Inclusion strategy 2026-2030 and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report 2024-25
Date report sent for publication	09/01/2026
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	16/12/2025