



South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Scheme 2020 – 2024

(2023 Revision)

Version	Approval	Date
1.0	Cabinet	27/06/2023

Introduction and Context

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act came into effect on 1 October 2010, strengthening laws to prevent inequality, and extending to include some forms of discrimination previously unrecognised within legislation.

Protected Characteristics

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 Equality Act includes the **public sector equality duty**. This applies to a range of public authorities, including South Cambridgeshire District Council, and is made up of 'the general equality duty' and 'specific duties'.

The **general equality duty** requires us to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. 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, we need to have due regard to all three of these aims.

Due Regard

The Equality Act 2010 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.

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:
 - The annual publication of equality in employment information (met through the publication of our [Workforce Breakdown Report](#))
 - The publication of information to show steps that have been taken to have due regard to the aims of the equality duty (met through the publication of [Equality Impact Assessments](#) and Equality Scheme progress reports).
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the general duty every four years (met through the publication of this document).

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.

Equality Objectives and Action Plan

The following 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**.

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

An action plan is set out from the following page, providing details of the actions that will be taken to achieve these objectives.

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

How we will achieve the objective	2023-24 Outputs	Rationale for inclusion	Target Completion Date
<p>1. Continue to develop our understanding of the needs of different protected characteristics, and good practice for meeting these</p>	<p>Review and act upon feedback received in relation to the impacts of services and council activities on protected characteristics</p>	<p>A new approach for obtaining and reviewing resident customer feedback was introduced during 2022-23. During 23-24 we will build on this approach, identifying and acting upon feedback in relation to equality impacts. This will also help us to continue to develop our understanding of the needs of different protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Q2</p>
	<p>Attendance at key regional and national events and conferences, feeding back key findings to the rest of the organisation.</p>	<p>To develop and maintain awareness of the latest EDI issues and best practice.</p>	<p>Q4</p>
	<p>Use of local and regional networks to share and hear about examples of good practice from other like-minded organisations.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>Q4</p>
	<p>Improved availability, analysis and use of data to inform decisions that impact on disadvantaged groups, including through a data pilot to help target cost-of-living support to those most in need.</p>	<p>During 2022-23 an Equality Profile dashboard was developed and made available, providing easily accessible Census data about South Cambridgeshire. This will be updated in 23-24 and built on through the pilot scheme, as mentioned.</p>	<p>Q4</p>

<p>2. Review SCDC policies, projects, and services to ensure equality considerations are embedded within service design and delivery</p>	<p>Continued increase in the completion of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to accompany new plans and proposals (14 complete 2022-23)</p> <p>Promote participation in Healthwatch (an independent statutory body for the NHS) to a broad range of people (with particular focus on underrepresented groups), for the provision of feedback on experiences of medical care within the district.</p> <p>Engage with residents using our Community Wellbeing Hubs to ensure we are delivering fully inclusive support.</p>	<p>To help assess and manage the equality impacts of key pieces of work within the 23-24 Business Plan and to demonstrate due regard to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.</p> <p>Inclusion of diverse groups of people in our engagement on health and cost of living in the district</p> <p>See above.</p>	<p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p>
<p>3. 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 access to homelessness, housing and welfare support data to inform the development of a new Homelessness strategy.</p> <p>Support further requests to aid and support refugees and asylum seekers, should they be located in the district.</p> <p>Delivery of 40 new homes for refugees as part of the Local Authority Housing Fund</p>	<p>Rolled over from the previous year, this measure is an extension of the commitment within the Race Equality Motion at Full Council to “Consider BAME access to housing and to homelessness and welfare support.”</p> <p>As per ‘Modern and Caring Council’ output 6dii) in the 23-24 Business Plan.</p> <p>As per ‘Housing that is truly affordable’ output 1d) in the 23-24 Business Plan</p>	<p>Q3</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>Q3</p>

	<p>Review and implement the cost-of-living support package for the 2023-24 financial year.</p> <p>Launch surveys gauging attitudes towards council tenants, informing the way we communicate with tenants and improving services for disabled tenants</p> <p>Support tenants facing mental health issues to maintain their tenancies and prevent homelessness</p> <p>Offer and provide extra digital support, including training and equipment, to those in sheltered housing</p>	<p>As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 6ei) in the 23-24 Business Plan</p> <p>To encourage positive promotion and perceptions of council tenants and social housing in South Cambs. STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents) survey to be completed annually.</p> <p>As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 6bvii) in the 23-24 Business Plan.</p> <p>Plans are in place to survey sheltered housing residents to ascertain the need for extra digital support regarding equipment and training and provide this based on survey results</p>	<p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p>
<p>4. Build on Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation to ensure best practice response to domestic abuse</p>	<p>Staff complete mandatory domestic abuse training and targeted training is updated for roll out to specific roles</p> <p>Roll out and promotion of a network of Domestic Abuse Champions across the organisation</p> <p>Renewal of DAHA accreditation.</p> <p>Work with the County to assist in their duty to undertake Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment reporting and</p>	<p>As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 6gi) in the 23-24 Business Plan</p> <p>As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 6gii) in the 23-24 Business Plan</p> <p>To reflect work to that's required to renew accreditation annually.</p> <p>To ensure that the Domestic Abuse Needs Assessment reporting provides good quality data, and that this is reviewed as part of the</p>	<p>Q1</p> <p>Q1</p> <p>Q2</p> <p>Q4</p>

	review this information internally to help shape future response to domestic abuse.	continuing review of approaches to domestic abuse response.	
5. Encourage and promote diverse workforces to South Cambridgeshire businesses	Promote the Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge to businesses through our Business Support Newsletter and other channels.	Completed for the 22-23 year, but this is a rolling action that will also take place in 23-24.	Q4
	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.	Completed for the 22-23 year, but this is a rolling action that will also take place in 23-24	Q4
	Apprenticeships focussed communications campaign to businesses in Q2	As per 'Growing Local Businesses and Economies' output 4a) in the 23-24 Business Plan	Q2
	Encourage and promote business start-ups from underrepresented groups in South Cambs	Use funding to support business start-ups, including a focus on women and ethnic minorities looking to establish and grow their own enterprises	Q4
6. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training will be rolled out for Members	Provision of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to members	In 21-22 17 members received this training. Following 2022 elections 13 received the training. To repeat this offering in 23-24.	Q3

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

How we will achieve the objective	Outcomes and Outputs	Rationale for proposed inclusion	Target Completion Date
<p>1. Review and examine SCDC structures and processes to ensure people with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged</p>	<p>Complete a review of how and where we advertise Council vacancies.</p>	<p>To promote the Council as an employer of choice for all.</p>	<p>Q4</p>
	<p>Implement a method for obtaining and reviewing data on the number of applications received from protected characteristic groups.</p>	<p>Rolled over from 2022-23. Work is underway to allow 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>Q4</p>
	<p>Increase the number of job applications from people from the protected characteristic groups from baseline levels.</p>	<p>As above.</p>	<p>Q4</p>
	<p>10 apprenticeship courses completed by SCDC staff during the 2023-24 year, as an accessible route to progression</p>	<p>As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 2ai) and 2aii) in the 23-24 Business Plan. 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>Q4</p>
	<p>Promotion of apprenticeships as a development route for SCDC staff and recruit a new intake of apprentices</p>	<p>This work is planned to ensure that the Council is promoted as to promote the Council as an employer of choice in the local area. As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 2ci)</p>	<p>Q4</p>

	<p>(internally or externally) to commence their courses during the year</p> <p>Provision of work experience opportunities within the organisation, and representation at 3 local careers fairs</p> <p>Disability Assessment of our offices completed, and assurance received by Disability Cambridgeshire</p> <p>Publicise clinical supervision support opportunities for services that require it and make sure it is part of onboarding</p> <p>Attain a Menopause in the Workplace accreditation</p>	<p>As detailed above.</p> <p>Rolled over from 2022-23 and subject to building work at South Cambs Hall.</p> <p>Colleagues working in hands-on roles that involve life-changing decisions for residents are able to access specialist support through work if needed</p> <p>A majority of council staff will go through the menopause. Beginning this accreditation ensures that our staff know we take the issue of menopause and the impact it can have on our staff seriously</p>	<p>Q4</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p>
<p>2. Collect data about the South Cambridgeshire District Council workforce to monitor and analyse representation of people from different protected characteristics</p>	<p>Continue to monitor staff wellbeing, with analysis by protected characteristic, using the survey data collected by Robertson Cooper (Health and Wellbeing Survey April 2023). Respond with action plans to any issues identified.</p>	<p>Wellbeing surveys undertaken and analysed annually. The Robertson Cooper Survey has comprehensive data that can be analysed by most protected characteristics.</p>	<p>Q3</p>

	Progress towards workforce diversity that represents the local equality profile.	The 2022 Equality in Employment report has been published and there has been some improvement on last year. We will also have access to improved recruitment data when HR's iTrent recruitment module goes live in the summer.	Q4
	Monitor how many learning and development opportunities are offered to and taken up by staff, with analysis by protected characteristic	Investing in our staff to learn new skills enables them to advance in different roles around the organisation, keeping talent within the council.	Q4

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

How we will achieve the objective	2023-24 Outputs	Rationale for proposed inclusion	Target Completion Date
1. Develop the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, with consideration given to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion opportunities, particularly within the consultation stages	Actions identified within EqlAs in relation to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan are undertaken and completed within the timescales set out.	EqlAs for the Local Plan show we have taken due regard when it comes to making changes to the local area	Q4
	Carry out a review of the Greater Cambridge Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which outlines how communities are engaged on planning related matters	As per 'Modern and Caring Council' output 5bii)	Q4
		We need up to date data to allow accurate and clear decisions to be made. This is especially	Q4

	<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 in relation to the Local Plan, including sections covering social and health impact</p>	<p>important in the delayed accommodation needs assessment.</p> <p>Helping to assess the social and health impacts of the developing Local Plan.</p>	<p>Q4</p>
2. Create places where people feel safe and our communities thrive	<p>Develop the nature-based wellbeing activity programmes and other sports programmes in order to serve more young people in the district</p> <p>Work with young people to decorate planters that will be placed around ATMs in the district in order to deter theft via stolen farm vehicles</p> <p>Develop a project targeted at reducing the stigma of breastfeeding in local businesses and in public spaces</p>	<p>As laid out in the Modern and Caring Council section of the Business Plan, at 6ci.</p> <p>Links with Modern and Caring Council section of the Business Plan, at 6fi.</p> <p>To help families feel more welcome in South Cambridgeshire</p>	<p>Q4</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>TBC</p>
3. Ensure a consistent approach to consultation, providing all groups with opportunities to make their views known	<p>Work with the Consultation Institute to provide consultation training to key staff involved in the planning of consultations</p> <p>Launch an internal SCDC consultation toolkit to achieve a consistent approach to consultation</p>	<p>Training is being provided by the Consultation Institute.</p> <p>As laid out in the Modern and Caring Council section of the Business Plan at 5bi.</p>	<p>Q1</p> <p>Q2</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 for 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.

Disability Passport - The goal of the Reasonable Adjustment Disability Passport Policy is to encourage everyone with a disability to have high quality conversations with their line manager and explain how their conditions impact them at work so effective support measures can be put in place.

Race Equality Motion

At the Council meeting of the 14th 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.

Our Equality Pledge

As a signatory of the Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge, the 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.