

























## **Maternity and Paternity Leave**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has a range of family-friendly policies and practices.

For the period 1st January 2022 – 31st December 2022, 67 employees started maternity leave and 22 of these employees returned to work in the same period.

A further 38 employees had started maternity leave in 2021 and returned to work in 2022

All who took maternity leave returned to work and were still with the council as of the 31st December 2022.

During this period, 22 employees took paternity leave – 12 of these took 2 weeks leave, with the remainder taking one week.

## **Pay and Grading**

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has a job evaluation scheme in place to ensure that jobs are objectively assessed, while avoiding prejudice or discrimination. All employees are paid as per the [Pay Policy Statement 2022 – 2023](#) which is reviewed on an annual basis.

As per the Equality Act 2010 (specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulation 2017, Gender Pay Reporting Legislation requires employers with 250 or more employees to publish statutory calculations annually showing how large the pay gap is between their male and female employees. We are required to publish this data separate from this report on our own website and the Gender Pay Gap service government website. The deadline for March 2022 data publication is 30 March 2023.

## Workforce Development Opportunities

The Learning and Development team aims to support the Council's vision by designing and delivering the annual Corporate Training Plan, aligned with the Priorities and Strategic Objectives.

In addition to the corporate Learning and Development team the Children and Family Services Learning and Development Academy work to support their staff in designing and delivering courses that meet their specific sector needs.

Training is provided in subjects to support the skills, knowledge, behaviours and professional development across the organisation.

In 2022 employees attended the following mandatory Equality and Diversity training:

- 732 employees completed the Equality and Valuing Diversity e-learning
- 247 employees attended the Respect and Inclusion session, as part of induction
- 1356 employees completed the WRAP- Workshop to Raise the Awareness of Prevent training, either face to face or via e-learning
- 625 employees completed Modern Slavery training, either face to face or via e-learning

The annual number of employees attending these courses will fluctuate dependent upon the mandatory time scales to attend refresher training.

Our employees have also had access to a wide range of other courses that enhanced their knowledge of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. In total 63 courses were accessed 5753 times. Course have been more accessible as they are made available via different delivery methods either face to face, online or via e-learning.

Some of the courses accessed by our employees are:-

- Autism Awareness Training
- Deafblind Awareness Session
- Accessibility eLearning - How to Ensure Documents are Accessibility Compliant
- Lunchtime Learning - Introduction to British Sign Language
- Gender Reassignment Discrimination
- Menopause Awareness Session

Courses are made available to all employees and access or learning requirements are identified at the time of booking. Any additional support required is assessed by a teacher trained practitioner as part of the learning programme. Should additional needs be identified by the learner, a bespoke course or 1:1 on site support is made available.

## **Updates and continuing work**

The City Council continues to review and revise its policies, procedures and offers available to its employees to ensure we are an employer that people are proud to work for. Key to understanding the improvements required is the engagement activities taking place in our employee network groups, all of which are led by members of the senior management team demonstrating our leaderships commitment to ensuring inclusivity here at the council.

The work undertaken highlights where we need to focus our priorities to ensure our employee are supported, developed and rewarded in an inclusive way that helps them to excel and deliver the high-quality services that our residents need.

Driving this forward has been the launching of the Equality and Diversity Strategy 2022 – 2025 and the recruiting of a dedicated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion officer.

Below details some of the great work that has been completed over the last 12 months and how we will continue to work on these topics in 2023.

### **Race Equality and Workforce Race Equality Standard Working Groups**

The Race Equality working group has continued to work on its action plan to strive towards achieving the targets set. Some of the key work that has taken place over the last year is:-

- Ethnically Diverse Staff Network group has been established and meets regularly
- As a council we have signed up to the Race at Work Charter
- An Aspiring management course and the implementation of a Talent Matrix procedure is allowing more employee access to development opportunities. Supporting our desire to increase the number of employees from an ethnically diverse background into management roles
- The Workforce Race Equality Standard Working Group has had sign off for its 2022-23 WRES Action Plan
- Launching of our Educational Engagement Programme, ensuring all young people in the City understand they can aspire to any role and that we as an employer welcome a diverse workforce.

Work will continue in 2023 to ensure we achieve what we have set out in our action plans.

### **LGBTQIA+ Employee Network**

Over the last 12 months the network group has progressed quickly, with regards to giving advice and support to not only our managers and other Local Authorities, but also to individual staff and their families.

A working relationship has been established with Staffs Police and Staffs Fire and Rescue following approaches to our stands at our Skills and Employment Summit and internal Staff Awards. In working together, it will create a more collaborative approach for public services both across the City and the wider Staffordshire area. Already our relationship with Staffs Police has allowed us to both share and implement some best practices. Having flown the flag for International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHO) in 2022 all three services, as well as the NHS, will be doing the same as a show of solidarity in May 2023.

Work is taking place to develop a toolkit for managers, providing details and information on frequently asked questions to allow managers to use the correct terminology and to approach situations with compassion.

Progress is taking place with re-wording our guidance documents to allow us to adopt a more appropriate and up to date support system for staff. The network group are proactive in their approach in ensuring the network group is known across every service and in all Council venues, this may include site visits with our stand, leaflets being made available to all staff and posters being displayed in break rooms.

In 2023, the network group is planning its attendance at this year's Pride event, to ensure Stoke-on-Trent City council is more present in the community, this will be done in collaboration with our partners.

The group aims to widen its support into areas such as working with our Foster Carers across the city.

### **Early Careers Network**

In July 2022 the Early Careers Network was established, aimed at staff in their early local government careers who are looking for support, networking and professional development opportunities.

Since then, the network has grown to amass over 30 members of staff who meet regularly. There have been three in person development sessions, offering the group the chance to hear from Directors and Assistant Directors about their career journeys, and a session surrounding imposter syndrome and techniques to overcome this.

Moving forward the group is hoping to continue to grow and offer further opportunities for staff to develop in their roles, supporting staff at the beginnings of what we hope is a long career at the council.

### **(dis)ability Employee Network Group**

The City Council has set up a steering group and will launch in 2023 to all employees an employee (dis)ability network group. The aim of the group will be to

provide the opportunity to support those within the Council who have disabilities of all sorts. The main objectives of the steering group are:-

- Develop and implement an action plan to achieve agreed disability specific equality objectives
- Act as a point of reference for disability issues
- Encourage active involvement and participation of group members
- Link with other diversity groups as and when required
- Explore opportunities for improving policies and procedures for the benefit of staff and communities in Stoke-on-Trent
- Encourage good links with community engagement and development teams
- To offer informal support to members who may be experiencing difficulties around equalities issues

As a council to support all of our employees we have introduced a Health passport to ensure no matter what role they are in or move to they are fully supported.

Work has already been started by the group forwarding suggestions for change in our recruitment procedures and are developing a Neurodiversity policy to extend our ethics as an organisation and ensure we are inclusive to all.

### **Fostering Friendly**

The City Council is a Fostering Friendly employer, and in 2022 received Fostering Friendly – Employer of the Year award. Fostering Friendly is a scheme created by The Fostering Network, the UK's leading fostering charity. The scheme supports employers to implement a policy which promotes fostering and supports their foster carer employees. Stoke-on-Trent City Council is a Fostering Friendly employer and has been working hard over the last year to encourage major local employers to join in pledging support for children in care.

### **Celebrating our diverse culture**

As one of the largest employers in the city our employees are from diverse backgrounds, races and faiths, working together supporting our communities. We want to celebrate the culture within the council, sharing information and dates of religious festivals, national and international days and to highlight the ongoing work towards equality, diversity and inclusion.

We celebrated Ramadan, International Day Against Homophobia Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBiT), International Women's day, Pride month, Learning Disability week, Black History month, Diwali and Christmas.

We invited our staff to attend commemorative events such as those held for the Lidice 80th anniversary and the Srebrenica Remembrance Day



In 2023 we aim to build on our commitment to strengthen the communities understanding of what we as a council do to embrace diversity. We will be launching a community brochure, be present at key community events and improve our recruitment website .

# Appendix 1 – Strategic priorities and objectives

## Strategic priorities and objectives

Sitting underneath the council's vision are five strategic priorities. Aligned to each priority are a number of strategic objectives that we will endeavour to deliver over the next four years.



### Priorities

**Support vulnerable people in our communities to live their lives well**

**Enable our residents to fulfil their potential**

**Help businesses to thrive and make our city more prosperous**

**Work with our communities to make them healthier, safer and more sustainable**

**An innovative and commercial council, providing effective leadership to help transform outcomes**

### Strategic Objectives 2020/24

- Transform outcomes for vulnerable children and young people in the city
- Help to protect vulnerable adults from neglect and harm
- Work with partners to tackle the causes and impacts of homelessness and rough sleeping
- Protect families from the harmful impacts of drug and alcohol misuse
- Address financial hardship and improve access to affordable financial services

- Improve education and skill levels for residents of all ages
- Protect and improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
- Improve the quality and supply of housing in the city
- Enable our residents to secure and progress in sustainable employment
- Transform digital infrastructure to improve access to online services

- Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship to support local business growth
- Deliver a high-quality transport network that boosts connectivity and enables sustainable travel
- Work with local and national partners to boost employment, pay and productivity
- Prioritise the redevelopment of derelict and brownfield sites at strategic locations in the city
- Celebrate and promote our great city as a destination for business, heritage and culture

- Improve the environmental sustainability of our towns and communities
- Work with residents and partners to make our communities safer, cleaner and healthier
- Reduce the numbers of empty properties to enable our town centres to thrive
- Transform community involvement in tackling issues which hold our city back
- Invest in communities to help build resilience and grow social capital

- Deliver more joined-up services to maximise efficiency and achieve improved outcomes
- Ensure the continued financial stability of the City Council
- Work with partners to devise innovative and collaborative approaches to local challenges
- Deliver a wide range of commercial services and invest to enable the city to prosper
- Improve the use of data in decision-making and service improvement

## Appendix 2 - Equality and Diversity Objectives 2021 – 2025

The underlying causes and aggravating factors which give rise to inequalities tend to have arisen over the course of many years and cannot be eradicated within a short timescale. Also, the objectives are designed to align as closely as possible with the priorities and strategic objectives contained in the new Stronger Together Strategic Vision, which is broadly similar in structure and approach to the original Stronger Together Strategic Plan. Retaining similar descriptions of individual equality objectives also promotes more effective transparency in terms of performance monitoring and reporting against each of the objectives.

An additional consideration regarding the revised equality objectives is the nature and scale of impacts arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The objectives reflect the fact that an important part of the focus of the citywide response to and recovery from the pandemic will involve identifying, assessing and mitigating adverse impacts on individuals, groups and communities, as well as working to protect communities from the threat of future outbreaks, strengthen local resilience and community cohesion and increase employment and economic growth.

The objectives are listed below

- Narrow the gap in educational attainment levels between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and the average city pupil
- Narrow the gap between the city and the rest of the UK regarding adult skills and qualifications
- Improve access to employment for groups which experience barriers to work
- Reduce health inequalities
- Celebrate and promote our great city as a destination for business, heritage and culture
- Work with residents and partners to make our communities safer, cleaner and healthier

The full objective details which can be found in the attached document will be monitored and reviewed in line with the Stronger Together Priorities and updates given as we make progress. [Equality Objectives 2021-24.pdf](#)