

Equalities Objectives 2025-28

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is dedicated to upholding its responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty. To meet this obligation, we are required to produce a set of equality objectives every four years.

The equality objectives for 2025-28 are based around the Equality Framework for Local Government. The framework has been provided by the Local Government Association and is intended to help councils improve the delivery of inclusive services, employ a diverse workforce and provide equality of opportunity for all staff. They have four modules of improvement; understanding our communities, leadership, services, and customer care, and diverse and engaged workforce. These have influenced the objectives set out below. In addition, the objectives are designed to align as closely as possible with the priorities and objectives outlined in the new Our City, Our Wellbeing strategy and the seven key priorities:

1. **Healthier** - Creating a healthier standard of living for all our citizens
2. **Wealthier** - Reducing hardship and enabling greater shared prosperity
3. **Safer** - Building empowered communities, safe from the threat of harm
4. **Greener** - Conserving our environment and living more sustainably
5. **Cleaner** - Working together to clean up our city and our communities
6. **Fairer** - Tackling inequality and improving life chances for everyone
7. **Skilled** – Providing opportunities for people to improve their skills and education

Our aim is to embed equality into being an integral part of the way the Council works at the heart of everything we do as a service provider, a decision maker, a commissioner, and an employer. We are committed to ensuring that all our staff and residents are treated equally and fairly. Outlined below are four key objectives, supported by detailed actions on how we are planning to achieve this and what success will look like. These objectives and actions do not encompass all the work the City Council does on Equality and Diversity but offers an insight into the key priorities we will be working towards over the next 4 years.

Objective 1: Better understand and engage with our local community

A) Ensure everyone has the opportunity to play a part in contributing to and influencing our approach to community engagement

Key Action: Increase the participation of diverse communities that have been underrepresented in decision making.

- Improve the engagement plan for consultations
- Collaborating with key officers across the council to understand best practice for engaging with different communities
- Review the collection of personal data for consultations. Communicate why this data is being collected and how we intend to use it to contribute to decision making and future initiatives.
- Work with our partners to identify any gaps in data and share expertise
- Ensure diversity of representation and voice on partnership fora, focus groups, citizen's juries, and the like. This includes for children and young people

Measure of Success: Respondents demographic is representative of our local community and is continuously contributing to the decisions made across the council and the initiatives and activities we undertake

B) Build our presence up within the community

Key Action: Ensure that more of our work, including decision-making, is done in and with communities.

- Ensure that our commitment to equalities is embedded in all our community work, and particularly the One Stoke programme, the Strengthening Communities programme, family Matters and Age Friendly City
- Under the banner of the City Alliance, work with VAST and its members to promote our equality commitment and to work in partnership with all relevant networks to further the cause of equality

Measure of Success: Evidence of positive council involvement in our local communities

Objective 2: Improving the diversity and cultural competence of leadership within the council

A) Leaders across the council who are knowledgeable advocates for the equality and diversity agenda

Key Action: Senior leaders demonstrate their commitment to equality.

- Senior leadership act as champions for our Staff Network Groups



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- Senior leaders continue to engage with staff from diverse backgrounds through programmes such as our Reciprocal Mentoring programme
- Leadership advocates for equality and diversity in all realms of work, including board meetings, stakeholder panels and public communications
- Work with Learning and Development to develop leadership training relating to cultural competency, psychological safety, inclusive leadership amongst other inclusion related topics, holding leadership accountable for improving their knowledge around relevant topics. The new management development programme will be able to support us with this.
- Ensure that a knowledgeable commitment to equality is a core part of the Member Development programme.

Measure of Success: Each network group has an allocated Senior Leader who positively drives forward the actions and awareness

Measure of Success: % of senior leadership team actively participating in reciprocal mentoring across all directorates, case studies presenting the effectiveness of reciprocal mentoring and wider initiatives

B) A more representative senior leadership team

Key Action: Investing in the development of staff from unrepresented groups.

- Providing the right development opportunities to support progression into senior management roles through removing systemic barriers and working with staff to provide equitable opportunities.
- Review our current workforce data to identify our gaps within our senior leadership team across all protected characteristics.
- Gather updated feedback from employees to see where there may be gaps regarding progression opportunities.

Measure of Success: % increase in diversity of our senior leadership team across all protected characteristics

*Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service

Objective 3: Provide accessible and equal services

Action: Conduct Equality Impact Assessments to ensure all decision-making is fair and there is no disadvantage against any particular group

Desired Outcome: EIA numbers increase and are being used effectively to inform decisions, reducing the impact on groups from protected characteristics

Action: Educate staff on the importance of Equality Impact Assessment completion and compliance and ensure completion is at a good and consistent standard



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Desired Outcome: Identify areas to improve service delivery and see an increase in compliance with Equality Impact Assessment

Action: Develop and use the Social Value Framework for procurement

Desired Outcome: Services we procure are actively improving equality outcomes through social value

Action: Offer public information in alternative accessible formats where permitted and when it has been identified that there is a need to do so

Desired Outcome: Reduce the barriers to accessing information for people to ensure we are reaching all our community

Objective 4: Develop a diverse and engaged workforce

A) Our workforce is representative of the city's diversity

Key Action: Attract and recruit a workforce that is representative of the city's diversity.

- Review our approach to attraction, recruitment, and retention to remove barriers to the workplace
- Implement guidance regarding best practice for inclusive recruitment
- Improve our data across all aspects of recruitment and workforce

Measure of Success: % improvement in workforce diversity across all protected characteristics, with an aim of matching our local demographic*

*19% declaring a disability, 5% LGBTQIA+, 49% women, 17% ethnically diverse

B) A workforce that is engaged, feels safe, appreciated and has a sense of belonging

Key Action: Review and develop HR policies that support our equality and diversity agenda.

- Engagement with our staff network groups to review pertinent policies, during the reviewing process
- Continuously make our policies and procedures more engaging through using alternative approaches to ensure colleagues are viewing these policies as well as making sure equality principles are embedded throughout
- Invest in training & development to ensure the whole workforce feels comfortable to discuss equality issues

Measure of Success: Relevant policies have been reviewed, and recommendations have been consulted on between HR and the networks

Key Action: Consulting, informing, and celebrating with staff around equality, diversity, and inclusion.



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- Offer a wide range of EDI training
- Calendar of key awareness days that will be discussed with networks, will also encourage other employees to raise ideas, contribute lived experience stories etc to ensure everyone plays a part in these events
- Annual staff survey
- Use the employee feedback to identify and act upon any key gaps where barriers in the workplace have been identified
- Introduce a quarterly EDI newsletter highlighting upcoming events, what has happened throughout the quarter, new training that is available and other EDI updates
- Adopt and community a Zero Tolerance approach to any form of unlawful discrimination

Measure of Success: % take up of EDI training offered

Measure of Success: Produce a calendar of events, as agreed by our staff network groups

Measure of Success: Proportional representation of staff partaking in the staff survey

Measure of Success: Actions have been conducted as a result of the findings from the staff survey

Measure of Success: Monitor the engagement with the EDI newsletter

Measure of success: Number of discrimination cases submitted and % upheld.

C) Monitoring and analysis of workforce HR data to understand any discrimination or bias within the organisation

Key Action: Monitor and review HR cases; disciplinaries, grievances and complaints.

- Review our reporting mechanisms for all HR cases
- Review of individual cases to collate themes to further inform areas where actions may be required, such as training or coaching

Measure of Success: Understand any biases that are present within our HR processes and in what directorates they are originating and what we can do to address these