

**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**5 December 2022**

**Progress Update on Equality Objectives 2021- 2025**

**1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an overview of progress with achieving the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) objectives and other EDI related work. It also details work to ensure that the new unitary authority will comply with the public sector equality duty.
- 1.2 The report covers quarters 2 and 4 of 2021 and quarters 1 and 2 of 2022.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The public sector equality duty requires us to prepare and publish one or more equality objectives at least every four years. North Yorkshire County Council's equality objectives 2021 – 2025 were approved in June 2021 and reflect the needs of our communities post-Covid.
- 2.2 The refreshed objectives have been embedded into the performance framework and are monitored and reported through quarterly performance reporting to Management Board and Executive.

**3.0 Examples of progress with equality objectives 2021 – 2025**

- 3.1 Objective 1: Identify and address inequality as a result of the impact of COVID and work to support vaccine take-up across all communities.  
A vaccine assurance group was set up to identify and address inequalities in the COVID-19 vaccine take up. Some targeted work has been carried out on displaced populations including making information on vaccinations available as part of the Homes for Ukraine work. We are also undertaking some more detailed projects on vaccine uptake among children in Scarborough and home-educated children.
- 3.2 Whilst working on the COVID-19 vaccine roll out, the group identified wider inequalities in the take up of vaccinations particularly in dispersed populations and populations in the Scarborough district. For this reason, two strategic groups were set up to continue and expand the work of the vaccine assurance group: the Scarborough Screening and Immunisations group and the North Yorkshire Strategic Migrant Health group.
- 3.3 The Scarborough Screening and Immunisations group brings together partners from the wider system to identify issues with uptake of screening and immunisations in different populations in Scarborough and find ways to increase it. The group has focused on doing some targeted work in a deprived area of Scarborough where vaccine hesitancy and mistrust in health services is high. The group is led by Public Health in collaboration with NHS England and Improvement and includes representatives from Harrogate District Foundation Trust (HDFT) (NY school age immunisations provider), North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, Primary Care Networks, General Practice Managers, NYCC Early Help, Stronger Communities and the Pomoc project based in Scarborough and Ryedale. The Pomoc project supports the local Eastern European community as well as building community for all. The membership of the group is flexible and can include partners as relevant to the agenda of each meeting. The group meets every six weeks and has made significant progress.

- 3.4 In discussions with partners, it was identified that schools could be doing more to promote uptake of school-age immunisations and support HDFT in delivering those. For this reason, a joint webinar for schools in Scarborough was arranged, delivered by Public Health and HDFT to give schools practical ways of increasing uptake of immunisations.
- 3.5 As a result of this meeting, a number of partners attended a community event organised by Pomoc which was for Eastern European and other communities in Scarborough to come together and celebrate their cultures. The event was a great success and gave us the opportunity to meet people who support migrant populations in Scarborough and find out about the work they do.
- 3.6 The North Yorkshire Strategic Migrant Health group focuses on the health needs of dispersed populations across North Yorkshire which includes the need for screening and vaccinations. Interpreters and trusted voices were used to engage with migrant groups within hotel settings and bespoke translated communications were produced to support uptake and answer questions. National resources were supplied to settings through local GP and CCGs to outline broader screening and immunisation, including migrant health check information. It was noted that whilst provision of printed material in native language was suitable for some groups, others required verbal interpretation due to literacy levels. Trusted voices through services already engaged continue to offer translated information as needed. The strategic group now focuses on continuing to reduce inequalities in access to healthcare for the broadening migrant population of North Yorkshire and brings together key health partners to own risk and responsibility for this population. The group is looking towards good practice examples from other areas to further reduce inequalities of healthcare provision in this group.
- 3.7 Links have also been made with Probation Services to promote screening and immunisations and share a communications pack with them.
- 3.8 An engagement session was held with refugees in Northallerton, supported by the Refugee Council. This was a follow-up session to one held in June, coordinated by North Yorkshire County Council Health and Adult Services in conjunction with colleagues from the Humber & North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and Healthwatch North Yorkshire. Colleagues from these organisations met with local members of the refugee community living across Northallerton district and heard first-hand around some of the challenges faced when accessing local health systems. Having colleagues who worked within these systems present allowed for really positive discussions to take place to help provide context behind some of the individuals' experiences, as well as advice and guidance on how to move forward. The intention is that this will be the first in a series of engagement opportunities with members of the refugee community based in different districts across the county.
- 3.9 Objective 2: Identify and address inequality in outcomes for customers from ethnic minorities.  
The Inclusive Communities Joint Co-ordinating Group (part of the Community Safety Partnership) has developed a multi-agency action plan to ensure there are engagement opportunities and action to mitigate against hate crime across all communities.
- 3.10 Public Health received a 12 month Government grant to expand and develop the Tier 2 Adult Weight Management service. Part of the funding was used to develop bespoke programmes for specific target groups, including ethnic minority communities. A programme aimed at the Pakistani women with the Broughton Road community in Skipton led by Craven District Council, has provided:
- initial assessments and weekly sessions in the community centre rather than the leisure centre

- women only group
- session times/days scheduled around prayer times
- Four cooking workshops with healthy options of local authentic cuisine
- Talk from social prescriber Shamim Akhtar on diabetes

- 3.11 Nine (out of 13) women completed the 12-week programme. Eight of these achieved their target of 5% weight loss and continued through the Maintenance programme. At 24 weeks, all 8 ladies completed and 7 sustained their 5% weight loss. The community group are continuing to fund ongoing exercise sessions for the ladies.
- 3.12 Public Health and Tees Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust are currently working on a report to consider mental health in ethnic minority communities in North Yorkshire.
- 3.13 Homes for Ukraine -The Homes for Ukraine scheme in North Yorkshire continues to resettle significant number of individuals and families with the first guest arrivals being at the end of March 2022.
- 3.14 North Yorkshire County Council continues to work with district and borough councils to visit sponsors, inspect properties and carry out safeguarding and welfare checks.
- 3.15 Our communities have responded by setting up extensive networks to support both sponsors and guests, with regular drop-in and social events, as well as language support sessions. Citizens Advice North Yorkshire, a key partner, is offering invaluable support through a dedicated phone line, as well as attendance at local events. NYCC's Early Help and Living Well teams, along with the district's housing officers, are supporting the essential signposting function by ensuring guests and sponsors can access information and guidance to apply for benefits, schools, GP registration and other appropriate referrals.
- 3.16 Refugee resettlement (Afghan ARAP/UKRS) - North Yorkshire County Council, in partnership with the district councils, has permanently resettled 127 persons (27 families) under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and to date 134 persons (34 families) – mainly Syrian refugees - under the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS).
- 3.17 Objective 3: Improve inclusion and diversity of staff working for the County  
Workforce data for Q2 22/23 is provided below. (Q2 21/22 is included for comparison purposes).

	Q2 21/22	Q2 22/23
% male	23.4%	23.6%
% female	76.6%	76.4%
% of staff who have declared their ethnicity	73.4%	75.7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the above, % of staff who have said they are of ethnic minority</li> </ul>	2.2%	2.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the above, % of staff who have said they are White</li> </ul>	97.8%	97.4%
% of staff who have declared disability / no disability	57.7%	50.6%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the above, % of staff who have declared a disability</li> </ul>	4.0%	3.9%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of the above, % of staff who have declared no disability</li> </ul>	96.0%	96.1%
Average age of workforce	47.23	47.45
% of staff over 55 years of age	29.14%	30.01%
% of staff under 25 years of age	4.88%	4.69%
Top 5% of earners (excluding schools)		

Average age	50.5	50.4
% male	35.5%	35.8%
% female	64.5%	64.2%
% ethnic minorities (declared)	1.3%	1.0%
% White (declared)	98.7%	99.0%
% declared a disability	2.8%	2.1%
% declared no disability	97.2%	97.9%

- 3.18 Although there has been improvement with employees declaring their equality data within recent quarters, there remains further work to be done to encourage more staff to update their equality information. Technical issues at various points in the year meant that reporting of disability was not being recorded correctly and figures are therefore underreported.
- 3.19 Health and Adult Services (HAS) Human Resources and Organisational Development, in conjunction with HAS anti-racist practice group, have developed a recruitment and retention action plan to improve workforce diversity. This is a substantial piece of work with short, medium and longer-term actions with key target areas identified, and implementation is underway.
- 3.20 Key target areas for the plan:
- Training – to upskill managers to recognise some of the challenges people experience around bias etc and look at targeted training.
  - Improving recruitment practices
  - Strengthening career progression – one of the key long-term plans is to increase racial diversity at senior levels.
  - Challenging culture and encouraging conversation
- 3.21 The co-produced anti-racist statement has been included in recent HAS recruitment advertisements. The group also continues to focus on workforce development to increase understanding of anti-racist practice.
- 3.22 In addition, work is underway to improve the experience of ethnic minority newly qualified social workers (NQSWs): the diversity element of the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment Policy has been strengthened and ASYE training reviewed to increase the focus on issues of anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice.
- 3.23 HAS Leadership Team has agreed that all roles from Service Manager upwards, as well as some other key roles, will have an ethnic minority representative on the interview panel. This will involve a 'recruitment panel pool' of people who want to do this. To assist with this, a pilot training course has been commissioned with Training and Learning to upskill those who may never have been involved in conducting interviews before due to their role e.g. frontline staff. This is good for applicants in terms of fairness and visibility but also has the dual effect of giving volunteers better insight and experience for their own future interviews. This was another area highlighted where colleagues from ethnic minorities feel further support is required. If successful, this pilot could be used to inform wider corporate/LGR work and/or other under-represented groups.
- 3.24 Leading on from the above, lived experience feedback strongly indicated a feeling that there is less support/help available when ethnic minority staff apply for internal promotions when compared to white colleagues, who may have larger internal support networks at NYCC. HAS Leadership Team therefore agreed to take positive action to upskill those interested by running targeted workshops for ethnic minority colleagues to cover application/interview skills. This has been commissioned with Training and Learning.

- 3.25 We are awaiting further government guidance on how any ethnic pay gap should be calculated and reported.
- 3.26 Work has also continued on exploring the Council's employment of disabled people, particularly people with learning disabilities and neurodivergent people. We have engaged with the Supported Employment team, District and Borough Councils, Disabled Employee Network, Ripon Disability Forum and other local government organisations across England on this issue.
- 3.27 Staff networks – four staff networks have been established and are chaired by senior members of staff. These are now open to staff across all eight councils in North Yorkshire. There are also a number of staff forums on Yammer.

<b>Pride Employee Network</b>	<b>Value in Racial Diversity Network</b>
<p>Areas of work have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visibility of networks to new employees/members of the council, and district/borough councils who are not aware of the networks or LGBTQ+ community present.</li> <li>• Trans/Transitioning at work policy</li> <li>• Gender pronouns at work – email policy, education. International Pronouns Day.</li> <li>• Involvement in Pride events</li> <li>• Gender inclusive language on forms and professional conversations</li> </ul>	<p>Areas of work have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black history month – podcast to celebrate</li> <li>• Allocated spaces for prayer in council buildings</li> <li>• Supporting international recruits</li> <li>• Providing more diversity to North Yorkshire fostering panels</li> <li>• HAS pilot interview panels</li> <li>• Islamophobia awareness month</li> </ul>
<b>Disabled Employee Network</b>	<b>Gender Equality Staff Forum</b>
<p>Areas of work have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building accessibility – creating a consultative relationship with Property services where DEN can help to advise future building and avoid issues further down the process</li> <li>• Hot desking</li> <li>• Accessibility of the group for deaf employees</li> </ul>	<p>The Gender Equality Staff Forum is open to all employees, whatever their gender identity.</p> <p>Areas of work have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic abuse and support for staff</li> <li>• Increasing awareness of group</li> </ul>

- 3.28 International recruitment: Nationally and locally, Adult Social Care has been experiencing recruitment challenges for some considerable time. There are a number of interventions underway to address this, one of which is international recruitment.
- 3.29 Since August, Resourcing Solutions and the HAS Practice Team have been overseeing an international recruitment campaign with the aim of recruiting 30 Social Workers and 5 Occupational Therapists from South Africa and Zimbabwe. The programme will have the added benefit of increasing HAS workforce diversity.
- 3.30 New recruits started arriving from late October onwards. An intensive programme of induction, training and pastoral support has been developed to wrap around new starters to ensure that their on-boarding experience is positive and well-managed.

- 3.31 Training and learning: Revised EDI e-learning is in the final production stage and aims to be a more in-depth, updated approach to understanding the importance of EDI in the workplace for all new employees. It covers the legal, business and moral importance as well as providing relevant case studies, engaging videos and educational knowledge checks.
- 3.32 Mandatory EDI training for all managers has been developed and is in the pilot stage. These trainings are scheduled from October 2022-March 2023.
- 3.33 The content for an updated EDI page for the intranet is near completion following consultation with colleagues working across different areas of the council. The page will feature important existing resources on EDI such as Learning Zone training and awareness days, information about the Employee Networks and of relevant working groups/staff working on EDI.
- 3.34 A number of events, celebrations and commemorations have been marked with stories on the intranet raising awareness and knowledge about the experiences of staff and our communities. Examples include:
- Race Equality Week
  - LGBTQ+ History Month
  - Women's History Month
  - Black History Month
  - World Mental Health Day
  - International Women's Day
  - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
  - Holi
  - Ramadan
  - International Trans Day of Visibility
- 3.35 These have also been used to raise awareness of, and recruit to, staff networks and to initiate relevant conversations on Yammer.
- 3.36 Objective 4: Improve health and educational outcomes amongst Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) communities in the county.  
A deep dive around improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families, including a focus on vulnerable groups (looked after children, military, English as an additional language, children in need, child protection, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller) has been undertaken and our Elective Home Education Officers are reviewing their practice in working with GRT families.
- 3.37 Traveller sites/communities are also a priority for Public Health in terms of inclusion health; a current project is to develop targeted communications about immunisation and screening, building on learning during the pandemic.
- 3.38 Using the domestic abuse safe accommodation grant, a post has been developed with Horton Housing to support early identification of domestic abuse and provide appropriate support and advice across GRT communities. The post holder, employed by Horton Housing who manage four of the County Council's seven traveller sites, started in September and has completed Independent Domestic Violence Advisor and Independent Sexual Violence Advisor training. The aim of this role is to develop relationships of trust with travellers on those four sites, with a specific focus on domestic abuse support. Whilst this role will also support the development of stronger relationships with other services, it should be noted that this will take time in order to allow the support worker to build trust and will need to be carefully managed.

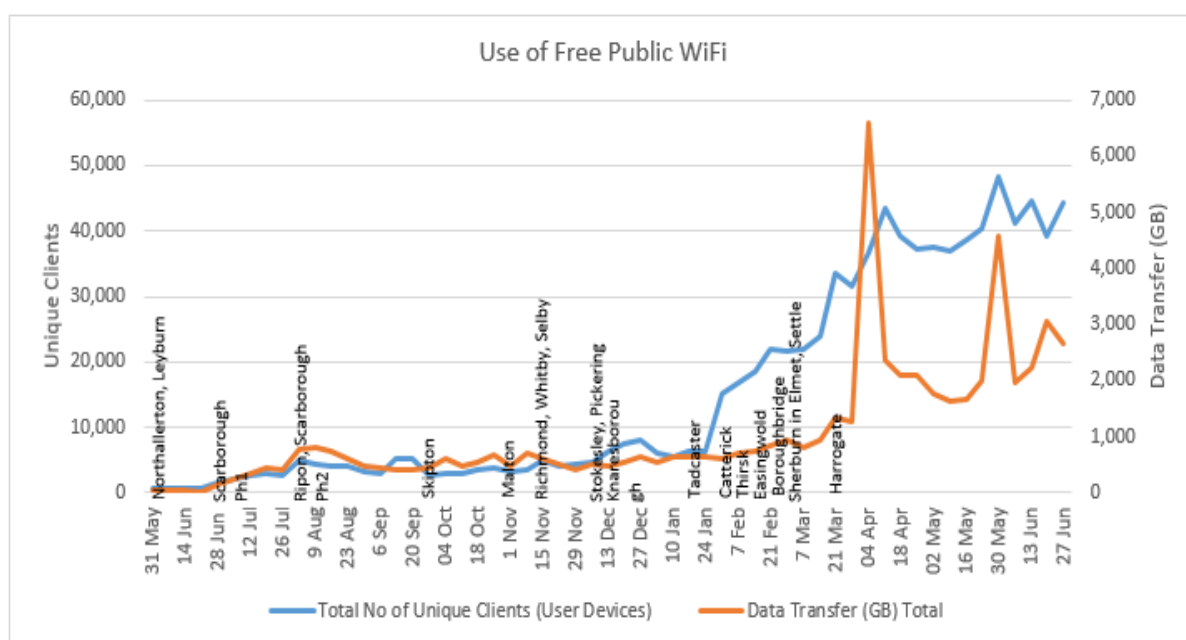
- 3.39 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month in June was promoted within the Council and staff were signposted to resources to help improve their understanding and awareness of relevant issues
- 3.40 Discussions continue on support for GRT communities, cross-directorate and with district council colleagues. Planning is underway to develop joint working and assess priorities for the new council.
- 3.41 Objective 5: Ensure service delivery and commissioning, particularly social care and public health, is inclusive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans + adults.  
In 2018/19 Healthwatch North Yorkshire (HWNY) engaged with LGBT+ adults in North Yorkshire to understand their experience of accessing health and social care, with a particular focus on mental health services. Health and Adult Services' equality, diversity and inclusion group is continuing to explore how best to achieve the recommendations arising from the HWNY report including considering the Rainbow Badge scheme for health and social services and reviewing LGBT+ training and learning opportunities for staff.
- 3.42 The recommendations from the HWNY report have been included in the North Yorkshire Public Mental Health and Prevention Strategic Plan 2021-23 as well as being included in the Council's corporate equality objectives.
- 3.43 Staff attended an LGBT+ Commission Inquiry into people's experiences of health and social care. Data collection was a priority in most contributors' talks – the importance of making the invisible visible. Other priorities included training and visible signs of inclusion (e.g. images, lanyards, language). The recommendations from this inquiry session have informed the current iteration of the Health and Adult Services equality, diversity and inclusion work plan.
- 3.44 Following the well-received Trans awareness session delivered to Health and Adult Services leadership forum in September 2021, a session focussing on Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual awareness was delivered to the HAS leadership forum on 21 March 2022. The session focused on a talk from an older gay person with experience of health and social care. This talk, and the talk from the Trans person in September, were recorded and have been uploaded to a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion library SharePoint so that they can be shared with teams. The library is open to all County Council employees.
- 3.45 The age friendly communities North Yorkshire steering group has been looking at how we can implement the findings of a recent Public Health England/Age UK report that explores the factors underlying health inequalities for LGBTQ+ people in rural and coastal communities. An initial workshop with the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities and stakeholders has been held.
- 3.46 Brief support and advice has been provided to key staff groups (social workers, foster care support workers) working with vulnerable groups (including LGBT children and young people) around how to support young people who are questioning their gender. Further access to LGBT learning, training and resources for these staff groups is currently being explored.
- 3.47 Staff also attended a webinar on a National Institute for Health and Care Research funded study whose aim has been to produce research that will improve the provision of mental health support for LGBTQ+ young people when they first start experiencing mental health problems. Learning is being shared with relevant teams.
- 3.48 Pride month was promoted and celebrated within the Council in June and staff were signposted to resources to strengthen their understanding and awareness of relevant topics. Awareness sessions were also available as part of Safeguarding Week 20 – 24 June

- 3.49 The Health and Adult Services Provider Service is developing a new programme of autism training modules which include a focus on autism and diversity, for example autistic girls and women, and LGBTQ autistic people. The modules will include the lived experience of autistic people.
- 3.50 Objective 6: Improve wellbeing, inclusion and feeling safe for vulnerable groups of children and young people.  
 Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey - The Growing Up in North Yorkshire (GUNY) equality section data has been shared with the Inclusive Communities Joint Co-ordinating Group. A development session was held which has identified a range of recommendations:
- Update the managing prejudice based incidents in schools and supporting schools develop and implement effective anti-bullying policies and practice
  - Increase capacity to provide effective training for staff in schools to have an inclusive understanding of equalities, creating inclusive environments, managing prejudice based incidents and reporting hate crimes. LGBT training continues to be available through the early help training programme.
- 3.51 A Growing Up in North Yorkshire Masterclass for the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership was held on 28 January 2022 to share the data from the 2020 GUNY survey with a range of partners.
- 3.52 Funding has been secured to run GUNY surveys in 2022 and in 2024 and 75% of schools have completed the 2022 survey. The survey will include the equality monitoring data. School and County reports are due in the autumn term 2022.
- 3.53 Funding has been secured for the Healthy Schools Award until March 2023 but with reduced capacity within the team which may impact on the development of the equality and diversity enhancement of the award.
- 3.54 67% of the schools in North Yorkshire have signed up to the Healthy Schools Programme and 87 schools have achieved an award. The Healthy Early Years award, launched in November 2021, promotes an inclusive environment and celebrates diversity. 92 Early Years settings have signed up for the Healthy Early Years Award.
- 3.55 LGBTQ + training sessions continue to be delivered through the early help training programme and for foster carers, as well as the development of online networking supported by the LGBT champions within the Early Help Team.
- 3.56 Wider youth engagement has been carried out via the youth commission to feed into work to widen the training offer around hate crime and community tensions.
- 3.57 The programme of providing effective training for staff in schools to have an inclusive understanding of equalities, creating inclusive environments, managing prejudice-based incidents and reporting hate crimes continues. Two LGBT training sessions have been delivered through the early help training programme with further sessions planned. An equalities session has also been part of the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education professional practice group meetings for schools. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans training is being provided for foster carers.
- Work to review documentation developed for schools to support them to manage prejudice-based incidents and develop and implement effective anti-bullying practice has been carried out with a range of partners and was provided to schools for the autumn term 2022.
- 3.58 Children and Families Service continue to offer support to Afghan families and families seeking refugee status in bridging hotels. The Service also continues to undertake welfare and welcome visits to the sponsors and guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The purpose of these visits includes ascertaining the suitability of accommodation, offering



advice and information to the sponsor, initiating DBS checks and checking that the guest family are settled and happy. Additional visits at the 5 month point from arrival have now also been scheduled. The purpose of this visit is to ensure that the children are registered and attending an education setting, to discuss any further support required and determine if the sponsor is able to continue to accommodate the family after 6 months.

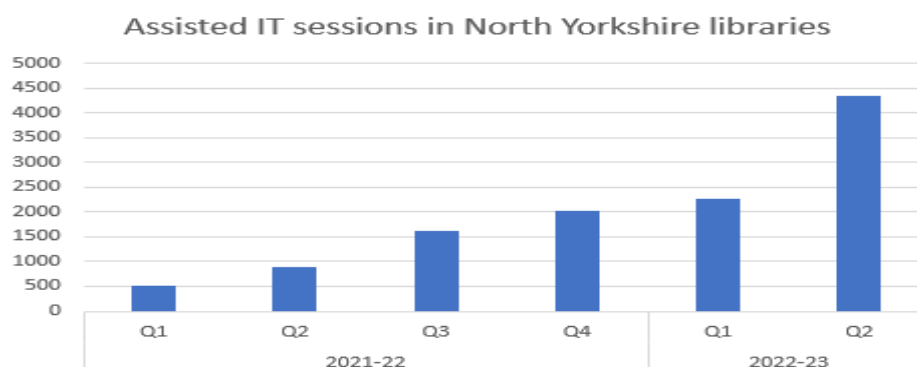
- 3.59 As of 31 October 2022, we have 365 identified sponsors offering accommodation to families. Of these Early Help have conducted welfare visits to 319 sponsors and welcome visits to 296 families and a total of 394 children. Since arrival 75 of these families have either returned to the Ukraine, moved into temporary accommodation or been re-matched with a new sponsor.
- 3.60 The new scheme for unaccompanied minors was launched in July. A clear pathway has been developed using the private fostering framework extended for children up to 18 years of age. The initial assessment of the sponsor, which includes a conversation with the parents of the child is undertaken by a qualified social worker within the FAST team supported by a children and families worker from Early Help. A visit is carried out 24 hours after the child arrives in North Yorkshire and then 6-weekly. To date only three children (two families) have applied under this scheme.
- 3.61 Objective 7: Support digital inclusion for North Yorkshire’s communities and ensure that digital access to our services is inclusive of the widest range of customers as possible, taking into account different access requirements and the needs of those who experience digital exclusion.  
Free public WiFi has now been rolled out in 20 towns across the county (against an original target of 16). The public Wi-Fi service, which is a collaborative effort between the County Council and Brierley Group companies NYnet and NY Highways, will improve digital access for individuals and businesses.
- 3.62 As the roll out continued and people became aware of it, usage grew so that by Jun this year there was an average of over 42,000 devices connecting to the Wi-Fi each week and transferring almost 2,500GB of data each week. The growth in usage, and when towns came on-line can be seen in the chart below.



- 3.63 Broadband and Superfast broadband - The percentage of the County’s business and residential properties with Superfast broadband (30 Mbs+), continues to increase, and the

gap between the coverage in North Yorkshire and that in England continues to close. At the end of quarter two 2022, superfast broadband coverage in North Yorkshire reached 94.0% compared to 97.7% across England. This means the gap between broadband coverage in England and North Yorkshire has reduced from 5% to 3.7% over the last year.

- 3.64 For ultrafast broadband (100Mbs+), the gap is more significant but continuing to close. At the end of quarter two; 38.7% of premises in North Yorkshire were able to access ultrafast broadband, compared to 73.9% across England. Indicating three times the growth in North Yorkshire Compared to the rest of England.
- 3.65 Work has been undertaken to review contact details on the website to ensure that these are up to date and that they offer more than one channel of access to customers.
- 3.66 The HAS Engagement and Governance Team is working with Healthwatch North Yorkshire to gather more information on people's experiences and needs around accessible information to inform the review of the accessible information standard. A survey for members of the public has been developed and widely publicised.
- 3.67 Sessions continue to be held in libraries to improve IT skills and help people access online services. Take-up has increased month on month since Covid restrictions have been lifted and confidence returns.



#### **4.0 Other examples of EDI related work**

##### **4.1 Corporate equality monitoring questions and guidance**

The questions and guidance have been updated to reflect changing attitudes and the questions used in the 2021 Census. The purpose of this guidance is to help staff understand when and why we should carry out equality monitoring and how to do it in an appropriate, consistent and proportionate way. Promotion of the updated questions and guidance has taken place on the intranet, Yammer and through the corporate and directorate equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) groups.

##### **4.2 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) general and specific duty reporting**

The PSED reporting information was updated on our website in line with the deadline of 30 March 2022.

##### **4.3 Budget cumulative equality impact assessment**

The cumulative equality impact assessment of the Council's budget 2022-23 as part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy report was completed by members of the Corporate EDI Group.

##### **4.4 Accessible Transport Group**

Inclusion North continue to support the group and the intention is that the terms of reference and priorities for the group are co-produced. Membership includes

representatives of North Yorkshire Disability Forum, North Yorkshire Learning Disability Partnership Board and Northallerton Over-50s Forum and County Council colleagues. The group has identified bus services and taxi services as the two key areas on which they wish to focus initially. They are planning to write to bus companies to raise accessibility issues and concerns and have met with the taxi licensing officers responsible for drafting the new Taxi licensing policy in preparation for LGR in April. The group will submit a response to the draft policy consultation. A letter to the bus companies has been drafted and representatives have been invited to attend a meeting in early 2023.

#### 4.5 People with experience of mental health services

The options appraisal for building the voice of people with experience of mental health services was completed. This work links with ongoing work by partners to build co-production into the development of mental health services, particularly the Transforming Community Mental Health Services programme.

#### 4.6 Voice of Older People

Following the grant award process last year, Community First Yorkshire have been appointed to develop a new, diverse and inclusive network of older people's voices across the county. Their role will also be to support and advance that network and to assist older people to play an active role in countywide representation.

#### 4.7 This is a three-year piece of work (2022-2025) that will focus on the following key work areas:

- Development of a network of older people's voices – open to any group or organisation who are comprised of, or represent, older people, and individuals aged 50 and over who reside in North Yorkshire.
- Creation of a partnership board to oversee and co-ordinate activity of the network. The structure of this board and proposals for how it should operate will be co-designed with older people.
- Creation of a central communication platform. This will act as a central point for information, queries and signposting. There will be a digital offer with information available via a website, email newsletter and e-bulletins, notifications of meetings and events, opportunities to share examples of best practice and capacity building support for local groups, including in relation to fund raising

#### 4.8 North Yorkshire Disability Forum (NYDF) and North Yorkshire Learning Disability Partnership Board (NYLDPB):

These continue to be active and supported by the County Council. A particular focus for the latter half of 2021 was on the Government's new fund for Changing Places (fully accessible toilets) and local forums worked closely with District Council colleagues to maximise take-up.

#### 4.9 Employment has also been a focus for both NYDF and NYLDPB. NYLDPB met with Supported Employment and the Graduate Inclusion and Diversity Officer for a preliminary discussion about employment of people with a learning disability and autistic people, and local disability forums are planning themed meetings on employment support.

#### 4.10 NYLDPB have been running a survey about living a good life. Topics include information about finding a home, friendships and relationships, employment opportunities/support and direct payments. Self-advocates have worked with North Yorkshire Police to create an easy read leaflet about misogyny for Hate Crime Awareness Week (October 2022) and supported the council with easy read documents.

#### 4.11 Future plans: the Chair of NYDF is meeting with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive in December 2022, to discuss NYDF's priorities for the new council from a

disability perspective to ensure that North Yorkshire is as accessible and inclusive as possible.

- 4.12 We are currently working with the rail industry in many areas of North Yorkshire to improve accessibility of railway stations.
- 4.13 Access for All Funding (Department for Transport)  
To improve accessibility to stations. Bids to the fund must be made by the train operating company with support from the relevant local authority. Bids are currently open in 5-year blocks. In 2019 – 2024
- 4.14 North Yorkshire has been successful in getting funding to make the following stations fully accessible:
- Northallerton – [new lift](#)
  - Selby – new lift and stairs, replacing a crossing that can only be used at certain times of the day
  - Malton - [works to raise platform](#)
- 4.15 For 2024 – 2029 we are working with the industry on bids for:
- Skipton – replacing the steep ramp and subway with a bridge and lifts
  - Thirsk – new bridge, lift and stairs, replacing a crossing that can only be used at certain times of the day
  - Seamer – new access to/from the station replacing a crossing that is not accessible to get to platforms
- 4.16 Addressing violence against women and girls in North Yorkshire and York  
The Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner released a new strategy to prevent violence against women and girls on 30 June. Partner organisations including NYCC (cross-directorate) contributed to the development of the strategy and will continue to contribute to the implementation plan. Both the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board and Children’s Safeguarding Partnership are supporting it.
- 4.17 The strategy sets out a collective commitment from groups and organisations across the area including North Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, North Yorkshire County Council and City of York Council and has been written collaboratively following extensive consultation with these bodies, and, crucially victims and survivors themselves.
- 418 It identifies six objectives which aim to create tangible change and which the Commissioner is asking to be judged against:
- ensure all women and girls are listened to, including those from under-represented communities
  - tackle the root causes of violence against women and girls with prevention and early intervention
  - increase public confidence and trust in North Yorkshire Police
  - strengthen partnerships so we work together, across agencies, to address the challenges
  - enhance the support available for victims and survivors
  - invest in early intervention to identify and stop potential offenders and change behaviour of those who have already offended to prevent re-offending
- <https://www.northyorkshire-pfcc.gov.uk/womenandgirls/>

#### 4.19 EDI sessions for Members

A programme of sessions focussing on the lived experience of people with particular characteristics is being developed. Members have been provided with a refresher session on the legal elements of EDI and consulted on the draft programme of sessions. A confirmed session on disability awareness has been agreed for delivery by members of the North Yorkshire Disability Forum in February 2023.

#### 4.20 Armed Forces Covenant

A new armed forces covenant policy for the new North Yorkshire Council is under development and statutory national guidance is awaited. The Armed Forces Act 2021 enshrines the Covenant into law to help prevent service personnel and veterans from being disadvantaged when accessing public services. One key feature of the Act is to introduce a new duty to specified persons or bodies, including councils, to have due regard to the principles of the Covenant, when exercising certain housing, education or healthcare functions (excluding social care). This re-design of the covenant will be in place for when we become a new authority on 1 April 2023 and is currently being presented to key colleagues across the council to inform them of the changes this new policy will bring.

#### 4.21 Older People: Age Friendly Communities

North Yorkshire County Council and partners have joined the national network of Age Friendly Communities, a World Health Organisation programme. This means that we have signed up to say that we're committed to becoming an age friendly community in North Yorkshire and making sure that North Yorkshire is a good place to grow old in.

4.22 Led by Public Health, the work began pre-pandemic, including co-production and engagement with older people. A strategy is being developed to direct and underpin the project.

4.23 Engagement to inform the strategy and the new Age Friendly Network has recently taken place in each district, focused on International Day for Older Persons (1<sup>st</sup> October). Commissioned by NYCC and delivered by Community First Yorkshire, the Age Friendly Network is aimed at people aged 50+ and is an opportunity for North Yorkshire's residents to share their views and speak directly to local service providers.

### **5.0 Local government reorganisation**

5.1 Work is progressing to develop a proposed framework to ensure the new council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector equality duty.

5.2 The proposed approach to corporate equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) which will use the themes of the LGA's Equality Framework for Local Government as a best practice model has been agreed. This will ensure that the relevant areas are targeted, monitored and progress is reviewed. NYCC's corporate EDI policy statement will be rolled over and reviewed post-vesting day. The equality objectives for the new authority will form part of the Council Plan and therefore be approved as part of that process.

5.3 Collaborative work on equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as part of local government reorganisation is continuing. The Corporate EDI group recently held a joint meeting with EDI reps from the District and Borough Councils to explore future joint working and moving towards the formation of a corporate group for the new authority. Monthly meetings via Teams with an emphasis on sharing practice will now take place.

### **6.0 Further information**

- NYCC [Equality, diversity and inclusion Policy Statement](#)

- Equal opportunities information including gender pay gap information and other information in relation to our workforce diversity.
- Equality and diversity section on the NYCC website <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity>
- Equality section on the intranet <http://nyccintranet/content/equalities>
- Information about paying due regard and templates <http://nyccintranet/content/paying-due-regard-equality-using-equality-impact-assessments>
- Online learning on Learning Zone – mandatory equality and diversity course for all staff, discretionary course on equality impact assessment.
- Directorate equality reps - <http://nyccintranet/content/equalities-contacts>
- Demographic Information - [www.datanorthyorkshire.org](http://www.datanorthyorkshire.org) [www.northyorks.gov.uk/equal-opportunities-information](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/equal-opportunities-information)  
<http://nyccintranet/content/our-diverse-communities>

## 7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Equality and diversity is an important priority for the Council. Paying due regard to equality is not just a legal obligation but good customer service. We will continue to foster a positive and inclusive approach to our staff and customers, and ensure we are better informed about impacts on specific groups and geographic areas.
- 7.2 The role of Members is to challenge services to progress and embed the objectives, and to take a leadership role in communities. Progress will continue to be reported to the committee on an annual basis, or as required.

## 8.0 Recommendations

Members are recommended to note the report and provide comments and suggestions for additional improvements.

**Report author:** Deborah Hugill, Senior Strategy and Performance Officer

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