

Equality and diversity policy statement

Report on consultation responses

May 2021

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 The current equality and diversity policy statement is part of the Council's policy framework and was approved by full Council in 2012.

2.2 The statement is undergoing a refresh to:

- remove references to out-of-date Council Plan vision and wording about service delivery
- link more clearly to the current Council Plan
- more accurately reflect the wording of the Equality Act 2010
- more accurately reflect the additional characteristics considered by the Council in terms of equality
- more accurately reflect the aspirations of the Council in terms of inclusion and diversity

2.3 A consultation was undertaken on the draft refreshed policy statement.

2.0 Consultation

2.1 Survey methods and stakeholders

- 2.1.1 Stakeholders and methods of engagement/consultation are listed below:
- NYCC staff – staff networks, Yammer, online survey
 - Disability groups – networks, online survey
 - Learning Disability Groups – networks, survey on Easy Read version of draft statement
 - General public – online survey
- 2.1.2 The online survey ran from 7 April to 21 May 2021. A copy of the survey questions is included at Appendix A.
- 2.1.3 In total 95 respondents completed the questionnaire on-line and 1 completed a paper version. A further 6 responses were received via email. Responses were received from:
- North Yorkshire County Council Employees (88%)
 - Residents of North Yorkshire (6%)
 - Disability representatives (6%)

2.2 Online and paper survey responses

2.2.1 The survey results were generally supportive of the proposed policy statement and in agreement that the aims and commitments were the right ones for North Yorkshire.

2.2.2 Responses to individual questions:

- **To what extent do you agree that the aims as stated in the policy statement are the right ones for North Yorkshire County Council?**

The majority of respondents (79%) strongly agreed or somewhat agreed with the aims. Only 9% of respondents strongly disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the aims.

- **Our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 are set out in the policy statement. To what extent do you agree that the commitments made to help us meet our responsibilities are the right ones for North Yorkshire County Council? (Our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 are set out in the policy statement. To what extent do you agree that the commitments made as part of our meeting our responsibilities are the right ones for North Yorkshire County Council?)**

There was a similar response to the commitments made to help us meet our responsibilities. The majority of respondents (81%) strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that commitments made are the right ones for North Yorkshire County Council. Only 6% strongly or somewhat disagreed.

2.2.3 Respondents were asked if there was anything else they would like to tell us about our draft equality and diversity policy statement. A full list of these comments are provided at Appendix B with our response. The comments, and those received in other ways, are summarised under thematic headings below at 4.2

3.0 Easy read consultation

- 3.3 An Easy Read version of the draft equality and diversity statement and a short questionnaire were produced. A copy of the Easy Read questionnaire is included at Appendix C.
- 3.4 These were distributed to Learning Disability Self-Advocates via Keyring and 4 responses were received.
- 3.5 Two respondents completed the questionnaire. The other two responses related to wording, pictures and layout of the statement, suggesting where these could be improved to aid understanding. These are included at Appendix D.
- 3.6 Responses to the questionnaire

Question 1: Is our Easy Read equality and diversity policy statement easy to understand?

Both respondents agreed it was easy to understand.

Question 2: If it is not easy to understand, what would help make it easier to understand?

Both respondents said this was not applicable.

Question 3: What do you like about it?

Respondent 1 - I liked the pictures they matched the words. The promises that you have made are really good and important.

Respondent 2 - It will help people will be able to understand what equality and diversity is about. I liked how it said that they would treat people fairly.

Question 4: What do you not like about it?

There was nothing that the respondents did not like about the statement.

Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about it?

Respondent 1 – I think you should share your promises with more people so that they know about them.

Respondent 2 – Some people don't know what equality and diversity is so sharing this information will help people to understand it more.

4.0 Other responses

- 4.1 In addition to the responses received via the online survey, there were also a number of other comments received in emails. These are included in full at Appendix E with our response.

4.2 A themed summary of all comments received is provided below.

Response theme	No received
Need to ensure statement is embedded with staff/managers/councillors and training takes place	9
Clarification of terminology/wording and typos	6
Support for statement	4
Requirement for regular monitoring	4
Need to be clear about equality of opportunity and getting the best person for the job, not positive discrimination	4
Need additional emphasis on race	3
Specific comments about instances when the respondent feels NYCC has not met the standards it should	3
Poor attitude to disabled employees	2
Support for protecting rights of natal women	2
No mention of gender	1
Support networks for LGBT groups	1
Not enough women working part time in senior positions with younger children	1
How does this link to unitarisation?	1
Can we link in lived experience?	1
More resources needed to ensure commitments met	1
Support for ex-military job applicants	1
Equality practices/procedures – school governors	1

Appendix A – Survey questions

As one of the largest employers in the county and one of the main providers of local services, we are reviewing our high-level equality and diversity policy statement and we would be grateful for your comments on our draft.

Please read the draft equality and diversity policy statement [\[link\]](#) and complete the following short survey to let us know your views.

Q1. Are you answering this survey as:

- a) a member of NYCC staff
- b) an NYCC councillor
- c) a resident of North Yorkshire
- d) other (please explain below if you would like to)

Q2. To what extent do you agree that the aims as stated in the policy statement are the right ones for North Yorkshire County Council?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Q3. Our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 are set out in the policy statement. To what extent do you agree that the commitments made as part of our meeting our responsibilities are the right ones for North Yorkshire County Council?

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neither agree nor disagree

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

Q4. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about our draft equality and diversity statement? [space for free text response]

Please tell us a little about yourself so that we can be sure that we are reaching a wide range of different people. You do not have to answer these questions. However, if you do you will help us to make sure that our services are fair and accessible to everyone.

Q5. Are you...? Please tick the appropriate box.

- Female
- Male
- I describe myself in another way (please tell us below if you would like to)
- Prefer not to say

Q6. Which age category are you in? Please tick the appropriate box.

- 16-19 20-29 Prefer not to say
- 30-39 40-49
- 50-64 65-74
- 75-84 85 +

Q7. What is your ethnic group?

Please choose one section from A – E, and then tick one box to best describe your ethnic group or background.

A White

- English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British
- Irish
- Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- Any other White background (please tell us below if you would like to)

B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background (please tell us below if you would like to)

C Asian / Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Chinese
- Any other Asian background
(please tell us below if you would like to)

D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

- African
- Caribbean
- Any other Black / African / Caribbean background (please tell us below if you would like to)

E Other ethnic group

- Arab
- Any other ethnic group (please tell us below if you would like to)

F Prefer not to say

Q8. Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person or to have a long-term, limiting condition? Please tick the appropriate box.

- Yes No Prefer not to say

Appendix B

Comments received via online survey/paper survey form

	Is there anything else you would like to tell us about our draft equality and diversity statement?	Our response
1	As having the biggest Army garrison in the country and NYCC holding the Gold Armed Forces Covenant award, is there something that can help service leavers such as guaranteed interviews, bearing in mind that most of those leaving the service have not had interviews in possible 20 odd years or even wrote out an application	As an organisation we have decided not to guarantee interviews in many other circumstances largely because evidence shows that it does not increase/change appointment decisions and has wider unintended consequences. There is significant support from career transition services in the army and we work very closely with these, with our staff located on military bases; delivering employer led cv/interview workshops, facilitating work placements/work trials and supporting transition into the workforce. We employ many ex-forces personnel and reservists and their families (Estimate: over 550 employees excluding schools). We could probably better raise awareness of the support and community of service people within our workforce to encourage others to join us.
2	The LA appoints a representative to each LA maintained school but there are no Diversity statistics available. Many of our schools contain in a spectrum of EAL and LGBTQ parents who are not reflected in the school's governance.	This comment will be passed to the appropriate team in Children and Young People's Services.
3	It's one thing having a policy statement, but the employer must ensure their employment procedures, such as redundancy & redeployment, do not indirectly discriminate against a person with protected factors by making them follow the same process as everyone else, even when there is evidence to show this is likely to have a detrimental effect on their health. Treating everyone the same is not equality.	Our policy statement is intended to be an overarching document which sets the principles and vision for the County Council. These principles should run through all employment policies and procedures and customer service standards. This will be made clearer in the policy statement. We agree that we must all be vigilant for unintended indirect discrimination. HR colleagues are aware of the need to be flexible in HR processes, eg making different arrangements for those with a disability or in a

		maternity situation, but we will revisit our processes to see if they could be improved further.
4	The statement is a fair representation for equality and diversity and minority groups with good intention to adhere to our policies in this regard and as a workforce to follow this policy, my opinion is that as a workforce in whatever role that reminders are in place for employers and employee's to enable this practise.	Noted
5	I am glad to see that the rights reflected in the statement are legally correct and protect the rights of natal women.	Noted
6	It looks like you have everything covered, really well thought out and written.	Noted
7	NYCC must not be dragged into the current fixation that many large organisations have with prioritising the 'needs' of trans-women over the needs of women. Sex and gender and two very different categories - as the draft policy states very clearly; sex is a protected characteristics under the EqA2010. Women still face significant barriers at work, generally, and are still over-represented in lower income roles. Any move away from recognising sex, as opposed to gender, would let women down. There are very powerful lobby groups, and lots of well-meaning people have been taken in by claims that transpeople are not protected unless they are treated as women. Transpeople should be protected at work, and in society, as transpeople not (in the case of trans-women) as women. I am pleased that there is no suggestion in the draft policy of denying the use of words such as 'woman'. Again, may well-intentioned employers have sought to ban the use of sex-specific language (in the vast majority of cases against the use of 'woman'), thus denying women's existence as a specific group and a group that experiences significant discrimination based on their sex, not their gender. I hope that the NYCC policy will continue to be grounded in fact, law and science.	Noted
8	It needs to be underpinned by easily-accessible systems and practices to enable employees to challenge inequalities and to have appropriate, clearly visible channels for raising issues.	Agreed. We have a generic resolving issues at work process but we can and should do more to make it easier for people to challenge and raise issues and build skills for managers when challenges are raised with them.
9	I feel the statement is well worded and demonstrates good values for staff to follow. It would be interesting to learn more about the diversity of the county and how this varies across the different localities. I think the statement has the right balance around increasing representation whilst ensuring this is reflective of the county and local communities.	We have published information about the diversity of the county Equal opportunities information North Yorkshire County Council We are aware that this information needs updating.

		Information from the recent census will help with this.
10	It's not what it says in the policy statement, it's how it's implemented and who assesses that independently	Noted. The Equality and Human Rights Commission has a role in assessing councils' compliance with the public sector equality duty.
11	<p>THE FOLLOWING NEED CLARIFICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support the development of COHESIVE places where everyone is treated fairly no matter what their background • work with partners and local businesses to improve opportunities for the people of North Yorkshire, especially those who EXPERIENCE disadvantage and discrimination • ensure that diversity and inclusion is a natural and organic part of what we do, making it something that everyone at the council UNDERSTANDS • increase representation of under-represented groups AT ALL LEVELS across the council • We will NOT JUST FOCUS solely on protected characteristics, but promote inclusion and diversity more generally. • we will use information and TALK TO PEOPLE to identify where inequality exists so that we can plan to tackle it • We will aim to get the MALE-UP of our staff to match our communities. • We will have clear systems for staff to complain IF THEY ARE TREATED UNFAIRLY • if we find that anyone HAS BROKEN our equality policy we will investigate and take disciplinary action if appropriate 	Our policy statement is intended to be an overarching document which sets the principles and vision for the County Council. These principles should run through all employment policies and procedures and customer service standards. This will be made clearer in the policy statement.
12	The main issue is interpretation of the guidance, and the general disgusting attitude to disabled employees.	As an employer, NYCC tries to support and work with people with disabilities and has a number of approaches in place. However, we could be more vocal on disability issues, better promote systems which are in place eg disability passport and promote positive stories. The new disabled employee network is another opportunity to raise the profile and identify specific areas for future work. We also must make it easier for people to challenge and raise issues and build skills for managers when challenges are raised with them.
13	Doesn't appear to mention gender , and I believe it should	We have used the wording for protected characteristics as it appears in the Equality Act 2010.
14	I sometimes think the demographics in North Yorkshire and the different cultures and migration (particularly for work) from many different countries is not fully understood and it took a pandemic to realise that we	The equality monitoring question used in surveys has been taken from the national census to ensure consistency.

	<p>had Romanians and Latvians in Scarborough for instance. How do we get us all to better integrate and be part of life in NY. Its interesting in surveys that we use White as a cover all and yet there are a lot of differences within that sector - do we have the same attitude to an American as a Eastern European residing in the UK / North Yorkshire?, but we don't break this down in the same way we do Asian. Maybe we should ask the question more specifically and ask for nationality in all sections that in turn helps understand our mix of people better as all have different cultures. I also think we are not accepting of many cultures in North Yorkshire and there is a need for more to be done in this area . I had an Indian sister in law who visited and after the visit said how uncomfortable she felt when visiting certain areas of the Coast. I think there is still a lot of work to be done in this area, including stronger messaging.</p>	
15	No	Noted.
16	<p>The local authority do not have support networks for LGBT groups, nor do they have many women working part time as mothers of younger children in management positions.</p>	<p>A staff LGBT network has recently been set up and the Council supports a number of LGBT young people's groups.</p> <p>It is true that at the highest level there are more full time employees (men and women), than part time. This is a reflection of the historical 'norm' that these senior roles needed full time managers. It is essential to our journey to close the gender pay gap that we are open to different ways of working at a senior level, including splitting roles into part-time work. As more senior roles are undertaken part-time this will provide good role models. We can also do more to promote, enable and normalise fathers combining work and childcare.</p>
17	It needs to say something specific about race?	<p>Race is included as one of the protected characteristics. It is important not to, intentionally or unintentionally, create a hierarchy of these characteristics but to ensure that they are all considered equally.</p>
18	<p>In the statement you state the following; North Yorkshire is a very rural county and people living outside the larger towns can find it difficult to access services. We will treat people fairly wherever they live and make sure they get the services they need. I would</p>	<p>We are considering how we will demonstrate the effectiveness of our statement. This is likely to draw on information from a number of sources including</p>

	<p>like to ask how this fits with the proposal of a single unitary council based in York. I also think that monitoring the effectiveness of the Equality and Diversity Statement should be done initially after 6 months in order to evaluate and make changes where necessary before it becomes too inbedded in people's practice. I believe once established it could be reviewed on an annual basis.</p>	<p>feedback from staff networks, staff survey, customer service data etc.</p>
19	<p>In the draft there is a point about increasing representation of underrepresented groups at all levels of the Council and also having a workforce that reflects the diversity of North Yorkshire. I would be interested to hear how these are going to take place in practical terms given that North Yorkshire is a fairly homogeneous region. The backgrounds of people applying for any new roles are not predictable/controllable so although nobody would be at fault it may reflect badly if this is a stated goal and it is not fully achieved purely due to reasons outside the control of NYCC. I am aware we can hire staff from anywhere in the Country theoretically so that may solve this issue, however, it may clash with other NYCC/ goals around reducing traffic and emissions in the local community (perhaps the recent increase in WFH commitments may balance this out though). In terms of the legal responsibilities Under the Equality Act 2010 I think the policy statement matches up very well. The only point of contention I could foresee being brought up would be around prioritising hiring (or not hiring) people based off the presence of protected characteristics which presumably would be in contravention of the Equality Act 2010 . I understand the aim of this is certainly not to encourage discrimination of any kind, and is trying to make sure everyone is treated fairly and respectfully, however it should be made clear that it is the case as I feel certain sections could be misinterpreted (especially by people unfamiliar with the Equality Act) as favouring people because of certain characteristics (e.g. "Treating everyone the same does not necessarily give people equality of opportunity. Sometimes we need to treat different people in a different way to give them equal access to a service or job"), further explanation/contextualisation I think would help avoid any confusion.</p>	<p>The equality and diversity policy statement is not aiming to embed positive discrimination or prioritise those with particular protected characteristics ahead of those without these characteristics. It is about ensuring that people are given an equal chance to access services and to achieve within the council. For example we may need to provide information in a different format or make reasonable adjustments to workspaces.</p>
20	<p>I noticed a couple of points under the 'Our Responsibilities' tab I believe would benefit from further explanation. Firstly, "build good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't", I wasn't entirely sure what was meant by this, presumably it means building relations people who share a characteristic (e.g. a race) with others who don't have that characteristic (e.g. people of a different race), as by definition everyone has some sort of protected characteristic. I think people</p>	<p>The equality and diversity policy statement is intended to be a short, overarching document. We will use intranet articles, Yammer and blogs to start conversations with staff about more detailed equality, diversity and inclusion topics.</p> <p>We have published information about the diversity of the county</p>

	<p>may misunderstand it to mean building relations between people have protected characteristics and those who don't (even though everyone does have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010). The second point was "We will not just focus solely on protected characteristics, but promote inclusion and diversity more generally", what exactly do you mean by this and how will it manifest in the daily life of the general public or NYCC staff. Also, what reason do you have to believe this a positive thing and what mandate do you have to say that the people of North Yorkshire desire this to be a part of the Council's goals? Under the aims section you list "have a workforce that reflects the diversity of North Yorkshire", I think this is a reasonable goal but you should compare the % of NYCC/local government staff to the demographics of the County to measure whether certain groups are over/under/correctly represented. Perhaps this can become something that is reported annually going forward. Another aim was "ensure that diversity and inclusion is a natural and organic part of what we do, making it something that everyone at the council understands", if it is a natural part of what we do then why does it need to be included in the policy? I would in general question the need for raising the representation of underrepresented groups, investigation into if there are reasons why they are underrepresented would be useful for everyone to know as well.</p>	<p>and our workforce Equal opportunities information North Yorkshire County Council We are aware that this information needs updating. Information from the recent census will help with this.</p>
21	<p>2nd aim: support the development of cohesive places where everyone is treated fairly no matter what their background I wonder whether there is a clearer way of expressing what is meant by cohesive places? Assume we thinking geography but just not sure that everyone will get what it is we are trying to do. I guess "place" could be a town, a village hall, a school??? "cohesive" not the most widely used term outside of our local government world? That said, I'm struggling to find an alternative phrase to suggest so not being very helpful I'm afraid.</p>	<p>In the statement we intend 'place' to refer to any physical community including towns, villages, schools or places of work.</p> <p>We will amend the wording to: 'support the development of places and situations where everyone is treated fairly no matter what their background, where people are empowered and have the confidence to play active roles in their communities'.</p>
22	<p>an inclusive culture is also dependent on non-managers feeling safe to have a voice. the organisation must continue to strive to avoid hierarchy: where senior management tick boxes but actually don't follow the aims written down in policy and plan of the Council. An aim to have staff engagement for an inclusive culture is also important.</p>	<p>Agreed. Staff engagement has had an increasing profile at the Council in recent years, for example the staff survey with results analysed at all levels. An unintended 'benefit' of the pandemic has been new ways of engaging, communicating and sharing, through Yammer and various interest/support groups.</p>

		<p>We need to make it easier for people to observe, comment, raise issues and challenge without it having to be a negative process. We need to really embrace and listen to different views, to get the benefit of those different views but to allow our employees to flourish as their authentic selves.</p>
23	<p>The statement is great but the realities are different. Certain disabilities are really well catered for. Other disabilities are hugely misunderstood and even discriminated against (eg ADHD and higher functioning autism). Working groups need to be set up with current staff with these neurodiverse conditions to look at how you can get it right. One staff member is interviewed on ADHD internationally and writes for broadsheets on the condition and yet NYCC never utilises his knowledge. Another lectures outside of work on Autism and yet no one consults with her. NYCC should be rubbing their hands together and farming these people's knowledge so they can get it right. They know about the condition and are also professionals within the system. You can't buy that type of expertise</p>	<p>We are a large, complex organisation and it can be difficult to both harness expertise and develop support and procedure to meet individual and collective needs – but that is what we strive to do and aim to further improve.</p> <p>Whilst early in their development, we hope that staff network groups will further enable the voice of employee's alongside working closely with unions to increase employer understanding and to improve the support to staff and also to inform the development of policy and procedure. The Disability Employee Network (DEN) in particular will harness staff views regarding autism, neurodiverse and wider health conditions. Health and wellbeing support to staff is wide ranging and staff are encouraged to set-up new health and wellbeing groups and activities and to help the promotion of health conditions and share experiences, health management approaches etc.</p> <p>We encourage those experienced colleagues to join and support these staff voice and interest groups. To join staff network groups contact Francesca Floris. To discuss how to set-up a health and wellbeing group or activity contact Julie-Ann Ellenor.</p>
24	<p>NYCC is making much ground to promote diversity and equality throughout. This is much welcomed and I hope it continues to be put into practice and not just on paper. Hopefully this progression will continue.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

25	That it is implemented and fully understood by all staff and particularly those in positions of responsibility i.e. Managers, policy makers and heads of service.	Noted.
26	The language is clear and aims are meaningful I hope we can review and see what has changed.	Noted. We are considering how we will demonstrate the effectiveness of our statement. This is likely to draw on information from a number of sources including feedback from staff networks, staff survey, customer service data etc.
27	It can be hard to understand how these kinds of documents translate into practice - how do people feel? what is the lived experience of equality and diversity? Is there a way of linking to this kind of information too?	Noted. We are considering how we will demonstrate the effectiveness of our statement. This is likely to draw on information from a number of sources including feedback from staff networks, staff survey, customer service data etc.
28	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and three different things the draft statement seems to jumble them up together so there is little clarity about what we are actually saying about these three elements. What have Human Rights not been considered at all? Why is it one statement covering the internal and external environments again this makes it very confusing. There is not a single explanation of 'HOW' any of this will be achieved e.g. create an inclusive culture - How / measurements is this a SMART aim? If not does it have any meaning?	<p>Definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion will be included in the statement.</p> <p>Reference to our duty in relation to human rights will be included in the statement.</p> <p>Internal and external audiences have both been included in the same statement and the same principles apply to both. More detail is given in employment policies and procedures and customer service standards. This will be made clearer in the policy statement.</p> <p>The aims of the document will be achieved through equality impact assessments, service planning, compliance with employment policies and procedures and customer services standards. Key performance indicators for a range of equality and diversity areas will be included in the council plan and quarterly performance monitoring.</p>
29	There are two 'the' in the following sentence: Meeting our responsibilities Everyone, including the the council, has a part to play to realise our vision for North Yorkshire. We will work with our communities and partners to achieve our vision.	Noted.

30	The draft policy states: “. Sometimes we need to treat different people in a different way to give them equal access to a service or job.” It is not clear what this means or what changes are envisaged in order to deliver it. The successful delivery of Equality of opportunity will naturally see diversity as a natural outcome. The delivery of “diversity” can result in the loss of “equality of opportunity” for everyone.	The equality and diversity policy statement is not aiming to embed positive discrimination or prioritise those with particular protected characteristics ahead of those without these characteristics. It is about ensuring that people are given an equal chance to access services and to achieve within the council. For example we may need to provide information in a different format or make reasonable adjustments to workspaces.
31	My understanding is that NYCC is a Modern council which provides equality of opportunity for everyone irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age etc. Recruitment, development and promotion are solely made on ability - the most competent person for the role. An individuals’ personal characteristics and preferences are irrelevant to that assessment. It is not clear if and/or how the new policy will change the current process. The new policy appears to indicate that protected characteristics will now become a factor to be taken into account. If so, how will these protected characteristics be individually weighted? How will the assessment process be assessed to establish fairness to all applicants? Perhaps this could be Illustrated with an example, e.g. current profile of Executive for all posts from Chief Exec to Ass Director level compared to a new profile after successful implementation of the new policy?	The equality and diversity policy statement is not aiming to embed positive discrimination or prioritise those with particular protected characteristics ahead of those without these characteristics. It is about ensuring that people are given an equal chance to access services and to achieve within the council. For example we may need to provide information in a different format or make reasonable adjustments to workspaces.
32	It is comprehensive and well thought out. It is strong on equality but I wonder if it is clear enough about what diversity means. Will everyone reading it have the same understanding? Should it also include a response to the George Floyd murder and the aims and achievements of the BLM movement. Maybe something about a commitment to supporting black residents and staff.	Definitions of equality, diversity and inclusion will be included in the statement. Race is included as one of the protected characteristics. It is important not to, intentionally or unintentionally, create a hierarchy of these characteristics but to ensure that they are all considered equally.
33	You don’t mention staff training to address any issues that may arise. It is pointless having a strategy if all staff are now aware of it.	We will amend the wording to make it clearer that staff and councillor training and development will embed the principles of the policy statement.

Appendix C – Easy read survey questions



North Yorkshire County Council Equality and diversity policy statement Have your say!

Easy Read version

We would like to know what you think about our promise to value everyone and treat them fairly. Please read the Easy Read version of our equality and diversity policy statement and answer the following five questions.

Thank you!



Question 1: Is our Easy Read equality and diversity policy statement easy to understand?

Please tell us here:



Question 2: If it is not easy to understand, what would help make it easier to understand?

Please tell us here:



Question 3: What do you like about it?

Please tell us here:



Question 4: What do you **not** like about it?

Please tell us here:



Question 5: Is there anything else you would like to tell us about it?

Please tell us here:

Appendix D

Comments on the draft Easy Read equality and diversity policy statement regarding wording and design

Page 1

This document will help explain North Yorkshire County Council's promise to value everyone and treat them fairly. Remove 'document'.

Add – the Equality Act is a law which

We will give people equal opportunities. This means we will give everyone the same chance to do things

Page 2

We promise to value everyone and treat them fairly. We are not sure about this picture.

Page 4

Make sure everyone can use our services, whoever they are and wherever they live in North Yorkshire. Map of North Yorkshire?

Add – WE will make sure everyone

.....and what we can do to make sure we help people understand these changes.

.....and tell them what will happen next

Page 5

Make sure all our staff understand our promise to value people and treat them fairly. A different picture to explain this.

Appendix E – Feedback received via email

	Comment received	Our response
1	<p>I presume that NYCC draft Equality Proposals can be commented on by any adult citizen of North Yorkshire. I therefore respond as a citizen only, to NYCC Equality & Diversity proposals.</p> <p>Any organisations under ‘care and/or control’ of NYCC should not be in a position whereby they can apparently discriminate against any person who due to his/her presumed able bodyness, by denying full democratic membership of any body or organisation supported by NYCC.</p> <p>If NYCC believe that to ensure smooth running of any organisation under their care is better if the so called able bodied are ‘excluded’ in any way, NYCC should write this exemption into their Equality proposals.</p>	<p>The County Council aims to be inclusive in all that we do and takes steps to avoid discrimination against any person or group. We expect our commissioned services to act in the same way, and this is written into our contracts with service providers.</p> <p>However, legislation states that there may be occasions when it can be argued that treating groups differently according to their protected characteristics can be justified if it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.</p> <p>If there are any situations where a citizen feels that an action by the council or a commissioned service is discriminatory and the above rationale does not apply, they should contact us so that we may look into the matter.</p>
2	<p>What would be helpful to us is the consistent use of terminology. For example, 2012 refers to “one equality objective” but the draft 2021 talks of “Aims”.</p> <p>The 2021 Our Aims, of which there are 9, are different to the NYCC website equality objectives, of which there are 8. DH tells us that these were set at the beginning of 2020 but are being refined. Are the 2021 Our Aims the outcome of the refining process?</p>	<p>The aims in the draft policy statement are the principles on which all our relevant policies, procedures and standards are built.</p> <p>The equality objectives, which are currently also being refreshed, cover specific areas where we feel we need to improve. These have been developed based on data, intelligence and feedback from service users and are due to be agreed by the Executive Member on 17 June.</p>
3	<p>2012 Our Commitment - “the council aims to provide excellent and efficient local services enabling everyone to fulfill their potential”. Sounds good and it continues “as a local authority we must: stop unlawful discrimination etc which is the Public Sector Equality Duty s149 of the Equality Act. The 2021 draft statement lists the three s149 duties that apply to all councilors, officers and employees of NYCC.</p>	<p>a) The Council is committed to ensuring it is compliant with all legislation. In respect of the complaint that home to school transport was not compliant with Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations (PSVAR) 2000, the Council provided the service in good faith and in a genuine belief that it complied with all legal obligations. This was a widely held view among other councils that PSVAR did not apply to home to school transport services. The Council temporarily ceased charging for spare seats on vehicles covered by PSVAR that were non-compliant, and only reintroduced them when clarity over the law was provided by Department</p>

<p>a) In 2019 it became clear that NYCC failed with this aim as regards the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000. The authority's immediate response was to stop charging non eligible pupils for transport to and from school, at considerable cost to the council. We believe that is unacceptable that the NYCC legal team allowed coach operators to ignore this legislation for 20 years, causing indirect discrimination to many wheelchair users when buses used for school runs were used as rail replacement vehicles. Only as a result of a wheelchair user raising awareness of this issue with NYCC have school transport providers started to obtain coaches that are accessible, or to retrofit lifts onto coaches in their fleet. We believe that NYCC failed to meet this 2012 commitment and <u>are surprised</u> that no mention of this issue is contained within the 2020 annual report.</p> <p>b) Early in 2021 a disabled member of the Yorkshire Coast & Ryedale Disability Forum became aware that the NYCC website, and some services, failed to meet the Public Sector Bodies (Websites & Mobile Applications)(No 2)Accessibility Regulations 2018. At the same time the fact is that the Local Government Association had advised all local authorities nationally, to make sure that their websites complied with these Regulations by 23 September 2019. We believe that NYCC <u>failed to react</u> to this guidance from the LGA.</p> <p>It cannot be acceptable that NYCC employ both a legal team and a IT team and, between them, have failed since 2012 to meet their legal obligations in regard to these two items. A review of all services taking into account all equality and diversity legislation is needed <u>as soon as possible</u>, to avoid further discriminatory "provisions, criteria & practices".</p>	<p>for Transport. The full detail of these decisions can be seen in Executive minute reports at the following links:</p> <p>https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/Data/Executive/20190903/Agenda/04 Charges for Home to School Paid Travel Permits and Post 16 Travel.pdf</p> <p>https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/olddocuments/2019-09-03 Executive Agenda.pdf?F=2019-09-03%20Executive%20Agenda.pdf&MId=2782&D=20190903&A=1&R=0 - search=%22psvar%22</p> <p>https://edemocracy.northyorks.gov.uk/Data/Executive/20200519/Agenda/06 PSVAR Report & Appendices.pdf</p> <p>b) The Council is committed to ensuring that the processes to access all our services do not discriminate and have in place our 'Customer Access to Services Programme' (CASP) which is reviewing all services in this regard.</p> <p>In addition, we can confirm that by 9 June 2021, the Council will have finalised an amendment to our website, which will provide a direct link at the top of each webpage (in the form of a 'click box') for customers to contact (via alternative communication channels) our Customer Service Centre to report any accessibility needs with a particular webpage and/or service. This service will also work on mobile devices.</p> <p>In conjunction with this, we are delivering refresher training to our staff in the Customer Service Centre to ensure that any accessibility needs reported by our customers are addressed promptly with a swift resolution.</p> <p>As a result of taking this step, all our customers using our website and/or a mobile device to access a service will (if required) be able to identify and utilise several different communication channels available to them to request accessibility to any aspect of the service which they are unable (in its current format) to access.</p>
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4	<p>2012 page 2 “Meeting our responsibilities”. In this section it states that “we will develop our councilors & staff to help us meet our equality duties”. Our concerns were raised in DH email of 21/4/2021 in which we were informed that it is not mandatory for councilors to access the online discriminatory awareness training. Councilors ultimately make decisions for NYCC. Their employment and personal life may not include any understanding of disability issues so, logically, they should be made <u>fully aware</u> of their responsibilities and PSED duty to the disabled residents of North Yorkshire. We believe that the authority should review the requirement for councilors to access such training.</p> <p>In the 2021 “our aims” the seventh aim refers to diversity and inclusion ...is “something that everyone at the council understands”. We would be reassured that this aim may become a reality if all councilors were obliged to participate in discriminatory awareness training.</p>	<p>Our mandatory equality and diversity awareness online learning package for staff is currently being refreshed to ensure that it provides the most appropriate support for, and underpinning of, our policy statement and vision for equality, diversity and inclusion in the council.</p> <p>Our councillors do have equality and diversity training as part of their induction to the Council and at Member Seminars, on an ad hoc basis, although this is not at the level that is expected of employees of the Council. They also sign a code of conduct and are subject to a standards regime.</p> <p>Councillors are not employees. They are elected representatives who receive financial compensation for the time spent on Council business and work in their division. They do not sign a contract of employment and do not have to do any training.</p> <p>It is felt that the current staff training package is not suitable for members. The development of a bespoke was not progressed due to the pandemic, changing work demands and the prospect of local government reorganisation.</p> <p>With the formation of a new Council or Councils in 2023, there is an opportunity to do things differently, in particular as part of the post-election induction in May 2022.</p>
5	<p>2012 “Meeting our responsibilities” item 6 refers to Equality Impact Assessments. Examples of EIAs that have been done would help us understand how this commitment has been met. As A boards, outdoor hospitality tables and “clutter” are appearing on pavements, which we believe, is the County Councils Highways responsibility, <u>sight of an EIA</u> on this issue</p>	<p>This request will be passed to Highways.</p>

	would be appreciated, particularly by our visually impaired members.	
6	2021 “Our commitment” paragraph 2 “we are also committed to achieving the highest standards in service delivery, decision making and employment practice”. Item 3 above and other service issues, raised by a YCRDF member suggests that more resources are required if this commitment is to be met going forward.	The Council is committed to ensuring that the necessary resources to achieve the aims in our equality and diversity policy statement can be achieved.
7	2021 aim number 7 “ensure that diversity & inclusion is a natural and organic part of what we do, making it something that everyone at the council understands”. Given national criticism of the way the disabled community have been disadvantaged, by both national and local government during the last 12 months, the forum would like to see more resources provided to make this aim a reality. Assisting the recovery of many community-based organisations and charities that support the 11 groups with “protected characteristics” in the North Yorkshire population is <u>now essential</u> . Actions not words are needed to make aims realistic and achievable.	<p>The County Council very much values the work of community based organisations and charities in the county and continues to work closely with the sector.</p> <p>The Council’s Stronger Communities programme works with a number of local community-based organisations and charities providing support to a range of people, including those with protected characteristics. This includes grant aid and support. It has also been instrumental in facilitating the community response to Covid during the pandemic and ensuring that vulnerable people were able to access food and essential services.</p> <p>The Council also grant aids Community First North Yorkshire, as a local infrastructure organisation, which provides practical support and advocacy to voluntary and community organisations, parish councils and social enterprises.</p> <p>The Council and Community First Yorkshire are working together to support the recovery of all voluntary and community organisations.</p>
8	<p>2012 statement – final sentence “We will publish reports each year” resulted in a request from the forum for a copy of the 2019 and 2020 reports. While there is too much information for us to digest, contained within the reports, two items have attracted our attention.</p> <p>a) The 2019 report conclusion 8.1 refers to the EFLG (the Equality Framework for Local Government). We feel that we cannot comment on the work that is being done by</p>	<p>a) The suggestion about identifying councillors who are willing to take on the responsibility for ongoing promotion of equality issues has been considered by the Leader of the Council and his intention is to add responsibility for ongoing promotion of relevant equality issues to the responsibilities of every Executive Member.</p> <p>b) As detailed in our response to comment 3, the Council’s Customer Access to Services Programme’ is reviewing all services. This was not</p>

<p>NYCC to improve against the EFLG, other than to suggest that the authority considers identifying councilors who are willing to take on the responsibility of ongoing promotion of equality issues, across all council services.</p> <p>b) The same report refers to compliance with the Accessible Information Standard. Forum members fully support compliance with this standard at all times, including when pandemics occur. It is <u>unacceptable</u> if access to any NYCC service, for a group with protected characteristics, are curtailed at times when the authority resources are under pressure. Equality legislation is ongoing and not sidelined by the Coronavirus 2020 legislation.</p>	<p>sidelined during the pandemic but the unprecedented times did mean that many services had to adjust quickly. The pandemic has brought greater attention to inequality, which has led to more focus when making decisions and additional resources.</p>
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