

North Yorkshire County Council
Report to Executive Member for Stronger Communities
17 June 2021

Equality objectives 2021 - 2025

1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to recommend for approval the equality objectives for the County Council for the period 2021 – 2025.

2.0 Background

2.1 The public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 requires us to:

- Prepare and publish one or more equality objectives at least every four years
- Ensure that the objectives are specific and measurable.
- Publish the objectives in a way that is accessible to the public.

2.2 Our equality objectives should help demonstrate that we are meeting the general equality duty, the three aims of which are to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic¹ and those who don't.
3. Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

2.3 Equality objectives help focus attention on the priority equality issues within an organisation in order to deliver improvements in policy making, service delivery and employment, including resource allocation.

2.4 Equality and Human Rights Commission guidance advises that equality objectives should address the biggest and most pressing issues facing the protected groups for whom the organisation provides services, and who are employed by an organisation, and be seen as part of the organisation's business plan, supporting delivery of it and an integral part of its performance. It states that objectives which aim to increase participation, improve experiences, which are ambitious, outcome-focused and realistically achievable are more likely to demonstrate to the public that the Council is serious about using the equality duty as a tool to reduce inequality and to foster good relations.

2.5 In addition to its Equality and Diversity Policy Statement, which is currently being refreshed, North Yorkshire County Council has a number of strategies which aim to tackle the issues affecting particular groups, for example in relation to dementia, learning disabilities and supporting carers. Equality issues are also referenced in other strategic documents. We have received national acclaim for initiatives such as our Children and Families Prevention Services, the Scarborough Pledge (which is dedicated to having a positive impact on the life chances for children and young people in the area, and empowering them to achieve the best for their futures),

¹ The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership is covered by the first aim i.e. to eliminate discrimination.

investment in the Living Well and Stronger Communities programmes and our public health focus on the wider determinants of health inequality. However, setting specific equality objectives and reporting on performance of these at a corporate level demonstrates ownership at the highest level and provides the opportunity to address more structural cross-cutting inequalities.

- 2.6 Our current equality objectives were last refreshed in 2016. Current equality objectives (2016 – 2020) and progress towards achievement are published on the County Council’s website at <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/26151/Equal-opportunities-information>
- 2.7 The objectives were therefore due to be renewed in 2020. Work on this began early in 2020 but was paused due to lack of capacity when the Covid-19 pandemic began. When work recommenced it was quickly understood that the focus of the objectives needed to change to encompass and acknowledge inequalities exposed and/or created by the pandemic and the inequalities condemned by the Black Lives Matter campaign.
- 2.8 The draft objectives are attached at Appendix 1.

3.0 Background to setting suggested equality objectives 2021 – 2025

- 3.1 The Corporate Equality Group, in recommending the draft objectives, has continued with the previously agreed approach of setting a small number of well-chosen objectives with clear actions associated with them, following the same criteria used previously for selection, based on national guidance:

Equality objectives must:

- a) Relate directly to the approach and ambitions of the Council Plan
- b) Be evidenced by data/engagement
- c) Be achievable and measurable
- d) Be proportionate and not require a large increase in costs or resources

- 3.2 A number of factors have influenced the choice of draft objectives:

- As previously mentioned, the inequalities exposed and/or created by the Covid pandemic and the inequalities condemned by the Black Lives Matter campaign have been incorporated. This includes the digital inclusion objective which is a continuing issue but which has been particularly highlighted during Covid when so much interaction has had to take place on digital platforms.
- In 2019, Healthwatch North Yorkshire 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. This project was undertaken in discussion with NYCC Health and Adult Services, as we were aware that we had a gap in our knowledge of local need. The draft objective and actions in relation to this are informed by Healthwatch’s report.
- The draft objective on improving wellbeing, inclusion and feeling safe for vulnerable groups of children and young people has been informed by the Growing Up in North Yorkshire survey.
- A report to Management Board in 2019 highlighted concerns in relation to outcomes for GRT communities and these issues are still current.

- 3.3 The draft objectives have been assessed and amended by Management Board.

4.0 Performance reporting

- 4.1 In order to ensure that progress on achievement of the equality objectives is an integral part of the performance of the organisation, performance reporting against the agreed equality objectives will be included in the quarterly performance reports.

Progress will be also be published on the website on an annual basis, as is currently the case.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 The Executive Member for Stronger Communities is recommended to approve the equality objectives for the County Council for the period 2021 – 2025.

Neil Irving

Assistant Director, Policy, Partnerships and Communities
on behalf of Corporate Equalities Group.

9 June 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft equality objectives 2021 -2025.

Draft equality objectives 2021 – 2025

	Objective	Evidence of need	Actions	By whom	KPIs
1	Identify and address inequality as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and work to support vaccine take-up across all communities.	<p>Evidence shows that some communities have been harder hit by the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. For example, lower income and Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups are disproportionately represented in front line jobs which cannot be carried out from home and therefore are more vulnerable to catching COVID, to being furloughed or to being made redundant.</p> <p>Although children and younger people are generally less affected by the virus, the containment measures and the resulting social and economic impacts are having significant negative impacts on children and young people's mental health and on the long-term prospects for young people. Factors include reductions in family income, increases in child poverty, food poverty and hunger, damage to employment and training prospects as well as educational attainment.</p> <p>Children from lower income families are more likely to be negatively impacted by remote learning requirements and less able to access a computer connected to the internet. A University College London study found that one in five children on free school meals had no access to a computer at home (c.f. 97% of the most affluent children)..</p>	<p>In collaboration with the York and North Yorkshire LEP, implement economic recovery plans for the county.</p> <p>Support schools to use catch-up and pupil premium funding to effectively support disadvantaged and vulnerable learners, focusing on closing the attainment gap.</p> <p>Promote and monitor successful evidence-based interventions in relation to national and local initiatives aimed at raising attainment.</p> <p>Access and analyse regularly published demographic data on local covid-19 vaccinations, including ethnicity, age, sex and socioeconomic status.</p> <p>Understand what is driving vaccine hesitancy within these communities by involving those who know and work closely with these communities.</p> <p>Support NHS communications vaccination campaigns via the multi-agency Local Resilience Forum communications group,</p>	<p>Growth and Heritage Services</p> <p>CYPS</p> <p>Public health</p> <p>Public health</p> <p>Communications</p>	<p>Economic indicators</p> <p>Education outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable learners</p> <p>Vaccination rates by a range of demographic categories.</p>

		<p>This supports a growing evidence base highlighting the risk of the attainment gap widening as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>National research shows that the economies of areas with a high dependence on the most 'locked down' sectors such as tourism and hospitality, for example seaside towns and rural coastal areas, have been particularly badly affected.</p> <p>A poll carried out by Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) shows that hesitancy about having the vaccine is disproportionately high in some of the communities that have already been hardest hit by the pandemic e.g. Black and Ethnic Minority communities and lower income groups.</p>			
2	Identify and address inequality in outcomes for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) customers.	<p>National research indicates inequalities in outcomes, most recently in relation to Covid-19.</p> <p>Data on outcomes in North Yorkshire is currently incomplete but there is no reason not to assume similar impacts as seen nationally. Improvement of data collection and quality will form part of the actions required.</p> <p>However, it is likely that there will be some differences in experiences in North Yorkshire in comparison to urban metropolitan areas. For example, more rural and dispersed communities are likely to mean elevated levels of social isolation and reductions in local mutual support.</p>	<p>Improve data collection and quality across council</p> <p>Ensure engagement opportunities are inclusive and feedback from engagement about service experience is captured and used to improve service delivery.</p> <p>Define further longer-term actions based on data collection and feedback.</p>	<p>Strategy and Performance</p> <p>Data and Intelligence</p> <p>Engagement teams – across directorates</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Children and Young People's Services</p>	<p>Key Stage education indicators for BAME children and young people</p> <p>Outcomes for BAME children from GUNY survey</p> <p>Public health indicators</p> <p>No of hate crime awareness sessions undertaken</p>

			Flag any protected characteristic dimension to HR casework to allow themes to be collated and improvements to be implemented.	NYCC leaders and managers	<p>characteristic flag (disciplinary, resolving issues at work, harassment, performance or capability).</p> <p>Characteristics of top 5% of earners compared to whole workforce.</p> <p>% of staff BAME % of staff disabled % of staff recorded as LGBT</p>
4	<p>To improve health and educational outcomes amongst Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) communities in the county.</p>	<p>2011 census included 'Gypsy or Irish Traveller' as specific ethnic group for first time. NY 588 people - Selby (158), Hambleton (132) and Harrogate (107) with smaller communities across other districts.</p> <p>Education From 2015 – 2017 inclusive, no White Irish Traveller (WIRT) or White Romany (WROM) students in NY attained GCSEs in English & Maths at 4/C or above, compared to 10% of WIRT & WROM pupils nationally. (national figures for pupils of non-GRT background – 64%)</p> <p>Nationally, GRT pupils have high rate of school exclusions and report high levels of bullying and racial abuse. GRT pupils in NY more than 5 times more likely than non-GRT pupils to become home educated.</p> <p>Health 2011 census – 5% of population of NY</p>	<p>Research and learn from best practice elsewhere.</p> <p>Update JSNA Gypsy and Traveller report data – currently 2016</p> <p>Improve data and intelligence sharing, in relation to GRT communities, across the council, and with partner organisations.</p> <p>Develop community cohesion work to improve relationships between communities</p>	<p>Strategy and Performance</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Children and Young People's Service</p> <p>Public Health</p> <p>Data and Intelligence</p> <p>Safer Communities</p> <p>Hate Crime Working Group</p>	<p>Educational attainment of GRT children</p> <p>% of GRT children in school</p> <p>Health outcomes for GRT communities</p> <p>JSNA report data</p> <p>No of hate crime awareness sessions undertaken</p> <p>No of schools accessing hate crime awareness educational resources</p>

		<p>reported 'bad/very bad' health. In GRT population this rose to 12%.</p> <p>Evidence to Women and Equalities Health Select Committee 2018 (by NHS Leeds CCG Partnership) cites average life expectancy of approx. 50 years, higher rates of infant mortality and young men committing suicide.</p> <p>Less likely to be registered with GP and face barriers to accessing health services in general.</p> <p>GRT communities are deemed high risk for Covid-19 outbreak management.</p> <p>Community safety Increased safety concerns for staff trying to work with GRT communities and access sites.</p> <p>Significant modern slavery concerns.</p> <p>National figures suggest violence amongst, and by, younger GRT is increasing.</p> <p>Under-reporting of hate crime against GRT communities.</p>			No of hate crime awareness campaigns
5	To ensure service delivery and commissioning, particularly social care and public health, is inclusive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans + adults	<p>In 2019, Healthwatch North Yorkshire 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.</p> <p>This project was undertaken in discussion with NYCC Health and Adult Services, as</p>	<p>Review current programme of LGBT+ training for HAS provider teams and develop programme for wider rollout.</p> <p>Develop and implement consistent approach to gathering LGBT demographic data.</p> <p>Improve the Information, Advice and Guidance offer for LGBT+ people so that people can be</p>	HAS Diversity and Inclusion Group	<p>Number of HAS colleagues taking part in LGBT+ training opportunities</p> <p>Number / analysis of complaints received that</p>

	<p>we were aware that we had a gap in our knowledge of local need.</p> <p>The report was published in June 2020 and is available here: https://healthwatchnorthyorkshire.co.uk/our-work/published-reports/</p> <p>The report includes national research findings on health inequalities for LGBT+ people as well as the results of the local engagement activity.</p> <p>For example, the Stonewall's (2018) survey asked more than 5,000 LGBT people about their experiences of mental health and wellbeing when accessing healthcare services and found that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of LGBT people (52 per cent) experienced depression in the last year, with another 10 per cent saying they think they might have experienced depression. • One in seven LGBT people (14 per cent) avoid seeking healthcare for fear of discrimination from staff. • One in eight LGBT people (13 per cent) have experienced some form of unequal treatment from healthcare staff because they're LGBT. • One in five LGBT people (19 per cent) aren't out to any healthcare professional about their sexual orientation when seeking general medical care. This number rises to 40 per cent of bi men and 29 per cent of bi women. 	<p>signposted to appropriate specialist support when required.</p> <p>Ensure that the social care and public health commissioning process and contract monitoring includes consideration and recognition of specific needs of LGBT+ people.</p> <p>Incorporate findings of HWNY report into Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and 'Hope, Control and Choice' mental health strategy implementation planning.</p> <p>Increase representation and involvement of LGBT+ people in engagement opportunities in order to co-design inclusive policy and practice.</p>		<p>include element relating to LGBT+ identity</p> <p>Increase the number of LGBT+ specific resources included in IAG offer</p> <p>Increase number of LBGT+ groups reached and included in engagement opportunities</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One in seven LGBT people (14 per cent) have avoided treatment for fear of discrimination because they're LGBT. 			
6	To improve wellbeing, inclusion and feeling safe for vulnerable groups of children and young people.	<p>The Growing up in North Yorkshire survey 2018 provided the following data</p> <p>Overall for Year 6 pupils 21% stated they had been bullied at or near school in the last 12 months. For year 6 pupils who self-identify as young carers this was 32%, for children in care 50%, for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) pupils 28%, Free School Meals (FSM) pupils 29%, ethnic minority 18% and minority religion 16%</p> <p>Overall for Year 10 pupils 19% stated they had been bullied at or near school in the last 12 months. For Year 10 pupils who self-identify as an ethnic minority this was 22%, minority religion 20%, young carers 35%, SEND 34%, FSM 28%, Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) 36% and 41% for trans and non-binary young people</p> <p>The survey is being repeated in November 2020 with results due in March 2021 which may result in some further actions being identified</p> <p>A recent Learning Lessons Review in North Yorkshire has also recommended, "All schools across North Yorkshire should be reminded of their responsibility to ensure that they must have robust procedures and operational practice in place to tackle bullying and support victims effectively. Professionals have a responsibility to</p>	<p>To monitor the data from the Growing up in North Yorkshire survey 2020 with a focus on the identified vulnerable groups and the responses to the bullying questions and other safety focused questions to highlight any emerging issues.</p> <p>Funding has been agreed for the continuation of the North Yorkshire Healthy Schools award presently to March 2022 . All schools are actively being encouraged to participate in the award. Presently 200 schools are signed up for the award. As part of the emotional health and wellbeing theme for the award schools are asked to have an effective anti-bullying policy in place that is fully inclusive of the Equality Act protected characteristics and encourage a child and young person friendly version of the policy to be developed that is accessible for all pupils.</p> <p>There is an aim to develop for schools that have achieved the Gold award enhanced badges which would include Diversity & Equality. For schools to achieve these enhanced badges they would have to provide evidence against an evidence based criteria which has been shown to have a positive impact in schools.</p> <p>Continue the focused target work to support identified vulnerable groups like the LGBT youth groups, young carers support networks and service family champions. There is an opportunity to use these support mechanisms to listen to the voice of these more vulnerable children and young people which can feed in County anti-bullying work.</p>	Children and Young People's Service	<p>Monitor and actively respond to the wellbeing and resilience scores for vulnerable groups from the Growing up in North Yorkshire Survey 2020</p> <p>Decrease in the percentage of pupils who report they have been bullied at or near school in the last 12 months. (Growing up in North Yorkshire survey data 2020)</p> <p>Through the North Yorkshire Healthy Schools Award continue to increase the number of schools participating in the award and achieving the Emotional Health and Wellbeing theme and provide support to enable schools to develop an effective anti-</p>

<p>challenge and share concerns with the school”.</p>		<p>bullying policy and having a whole school inclusive ethos.</p> <p>Developed the criteria for the enhanced healthy schools badge focused on Equality and Diversity for schools to start participating in from September 2021.</p> <p>Use the North Yorkshire Healthy schools quality assurance process to monitor schools anti-bullying policies and to identify good practice which can be shared with other schools.</p> <p>To have engaged with identified vulnerable groups of young people on what has worked well for them in North Yorkshire schools to feel included and safe and use this information to share good practice.</p>
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7	<p>To 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.</p>	<p>Engagement with the internet has an important influence on the take-up of digital services provided by the public sector. The 2018 Internet User Classification (IUC) is a classification that describes how people living in different parts of Great Britain interact with the Internet. Understanding this geography is critically important to mitigate digital inequality, and the IUC for North Yorkshire provides a means of targeting interventions necessary to ensure smooth transitions to digital service use at the local level.</p> <p>Different user categories can be seen here - Digital Strategy and projects North Yorkshire County Council</p> <p>The move online during the Covid pandemic particularly highlighted a number of barriers to digital access for some groups, particularly some disabled people and people on low income. These barriers included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet and IT skills • Cost of data • Lack of access to data / data top-ups • Poor internet availability eg in rural areas • Lack of access to suitable kit • Cost of kit • Concerns about internet safety • Lack of choice and control <p>The Accessible Information Standard (AIS) aims to make sure that people who have a disability, impairment or sensory loss get</p>	<p>Continue to implement the North Yorkshire Digital strategy in partnership with district councils North Yorkshire Digital Strategy North Yorkshire County Council</p> <p>Implement digital infrastructure projects, including public wi-fi in market towns and improving mobile access.</p> <p>Work with partners to develop the digital capability and skills of pupils, students, workforces and the community.</p> <p>Help to bridge the digital divide through the library service.</p> <p>Ensure our websites and online services can be used by people of all abilities and disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial improvements to main council website including the removal of most PDFs and replacing them with website content • Timeline for future improvements to main council website • Mitigation actions where it is not possible to make all content fully accessible • Cascade improvements down to all other sites managed by the council <p>Review customer channels to ensure that they meet requirement for anticipatory reasonable adjustment.</p> <p>Review application of Accessible Information Standard to relevant systems and processes across the council.</p>	<p>NY Digital Strategy Group</p> <p>Libraries Stronger Communities</p> <p>Communications team</p> <p>Customer Strategic Group</p> <p>AIS: HAS Engagement and Governance Team</p>	<p>Number/percentage of NYCC services available online</p> <p>Customer usage statistics for online NYCC services</p> <p>Website user satisfaction data</p> <p>Feedback and complaints / commendations</p> <p>Broadband coverage of county</p> <p>No of assisted digital sessions held in libraries</p> <p>No of people attending assisted digital sessions in libraries</p> <p>Requests for information in an accessible format</p>
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<p>information that they can access and understand, and any communication support that they need from health and care services. By law (section 250 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012), all organisations that provide NHS care or adult social care must follow the Standard in full from 1st August 2016 onwards. Organisations that commission NHS care and / or adult social care, for example Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), must also support implementation of the Standard by provider organisations. This action is aimed at reviewing the council's compliance with the AIS and identifying any areas for improvement.</p> <p>Information about the website accessibility, current non-compliance and planned improvements, as well as how to access the site with screen reading and translation technology, can be found at www.northyorks.gov.uk/website-accessibility</p>			
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