

East Suffolk Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023

Vision: *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at the heart of all we do - ensuring equal access to opportunity and striving for equal outcomes for all*

Principles

Ease Suffolk Council is an inclusive employer that values and reflects diversity.

Our Councillors, staff and contractors:

- understand and apply the principles of Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion
- are kind, considerate, respectful and tolerant
- work in partnership with all parts of our community, co-producing services wherever possible, to ensure that they meet a broad range of different needs and are accessible to all
- actively promote the importance of Equality, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion to our businesses, residents and visitors
- Call out and stand up against discrimination
- Ensure Council investment tackles inequalities and reaches those people most in need, to support more equitable and equal communities

Definitions

‘Equality’ means that each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities

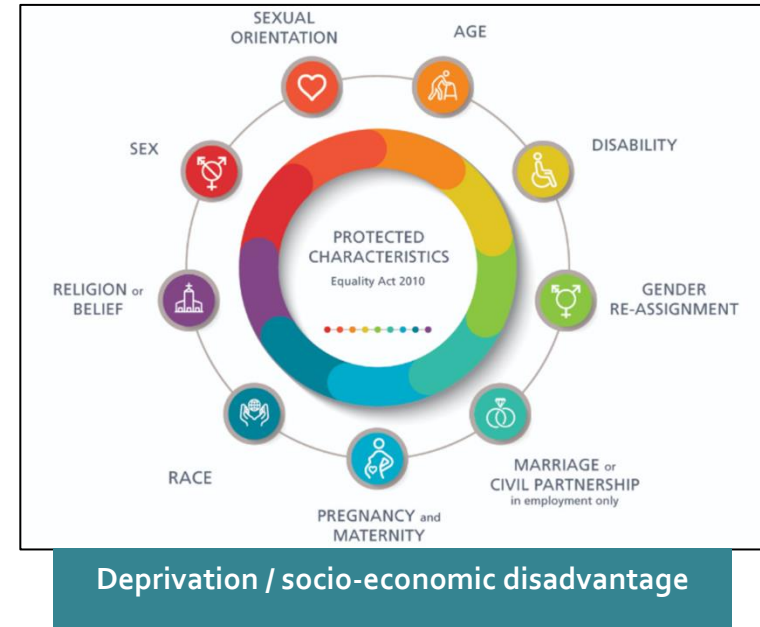
‘Equity’ recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates the specific resources/ opportunities needed to reach an equal outcome

We will ensure Equality and strive for Equity

‘Diversity’ means understanding and valuing the fact that everyone is individual and different

‘Inclusion’ means ensuring that everyone can use the same facilities, take part in the same activities, and enjoy the same experiences

East Suffolk Protected Characteristics



EDI – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

CLT – Corporate Leadership Team

PC – Protected Characteristic

A number of actions have ARCAP against them, this is because the actions in our Anti Racism Charter Action Plan have all been included in this EDI Action Plan

East Suffolk Council – An Inclusive Employer of Choice

Priority Projects

Purpose	Proposed Project/Activity	Lead Officer	0-6 months	6-18 months	Ongoing
IE1. Enable staff to feel valued, included and able to raise issues (ALLYSHIP: CONFIDANT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish staff support networks/groups/forums, or help staff to link into existing groups e.g. SCC Black Workers Group b. Ensure that these groups/networks feed into decision making structures e.g. Corporate Leadership Team and the Services for All Group c. Ensure staff feel confident in raising issues (including anonymously where necessary) by cascading messages through all teams about how to do this d. Train and support Managers to understand and respond positively to issues raised 	<p>Nicole Rickard</p> <p>Kate Blakemore/ Nicole Rickard</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>Heather Shilling/CLT</p>	*		*
IE2. Ensure our recruitment processes are genuinely accessible and attract a diverse workforce that represents the local population (ARC AP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Increase workforce equality monitoring (including ethnicity) and publish the results (ARCAP) b. Encourage staff to disclose by helping them to understand the purpose/benefits of doing so c. Promote the Council as an employer to all protected characteristic groups - review how/where we advertise posts and increase reach into diverse communities d. Provide additional guidance about how to complete job application forms e. Ensure recruitment panel diversity f. Make reasonable interview and test adjustments and promote that we do this g. Provide constructive interview feedback and learning h. Monitor recruitment processes to show the success of applications from specific protected characteristic groups (e.g. global majority candidates) (ARCAP) 	<p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>CLT/Managers</p> <p>CLT/Managers</p> <p>CLT/Managers</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p>	*	*	*
IE3. Increase knowledge, awareness and understanding of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in ALL staff and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review/revise manager and staff training and ensure that it covers the basics as well as emerging agendas e.g. anti racism (ARCAP), unconscious bias, neuro diversity and transgender b. Pilot training on Services for All Group members c. Provide robust EDI training for managers involved in recruiting, promotions and investigating allegations (ARCAP) 	<p>Heather Shilling</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p>	*	*	*

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Regular and robust monitoring to ensure that all staff undertake EDI training e. Skills development to ensure staff/Councillors feel confident in using EDI terminology, sharing information and challenging myths f. Include additional EDI questions in the Staff Survey and feed outcomes into future iterations of this EDI Plan g. Include EDI as a standing agenda item on Team Meeting agendas to prompt more discussions about EDI h. Regular updates on EDI at Corporate Leadership Team meetings i. Meaningful discussion about EDI in My Conversations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heather Shilling Heather Shilling Amie Skeet Managers CLT Kate Blakemore 			
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Purpose	Proposed Project/Activity	Lead Officer	0-6 months	6-18 months	Ongoing
IE4. Increase awareness and understanding of EDI and the 10 'protected characteristic' groups and provide opportunities for staff to shared lived experience, leading to increased visibility (ALLYSHIP: AMPLIFIER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create an EDI area on Sharepoint and provide key information e.g. Services for All Group members, key documents, information about terminology, protected characteristic groups b. Develop a promotional campaign on EDI c. Encourage those with lived experience to share information and stories to highlight the challenges and opportunities for each protected characteristic group d. Develop a network of Protected Characteristic 'champions' who provide advice/support and act as allies e. Use a range of events to provide a 'platform' for protected characteristic groups to share experiences and for everyone to learn from these experiences f. Hold an annual EDI event to maintain profile and increase awareness within ESC g. Recruit an EDI Apprentice to support all EDI work 	<p>Phil Harris</p> <p>Phil Harris Nicole Rickard / Services for All Group</p> <p>Nicole Rickard</p> <p>Kate Blakemore / Nicole Rickard</p> <p>Kate Blakemore / Nicole Rickard</p> <p>Nicole Rickard</p>		*	*
IE5. Ensure that all staff have a positive experience working for ESC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote our ambitions re EDI, equal opportunities, flexible working, hybrid working, work/life balance, part time working, and job share opportunities b. Provide dedicated spaces for inclusion related activities e.g. reflection room or breast-feeding space c. Introduce mentorship and reverse mentorship schemes for protected characteristic groups d. Look at promotion policies and processes to identify and address disparities in equality of opportunity (ARCAP) e. Analyse discipline and grievance cases to identify and address race in relation to outcomes of comparable cases (ARCAP) f. Interrogate exit interview results to identify and address disparities in retention of staff members (ARCAP) 	<p>CLT</p> <p>Kate Blakemore</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p>			*
IE6. Put the Services for All Group at the centre of Council policy making and service design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Services for All group to oversee delivery of this EDI Action Plan b. Ensure that each team has an EDI 'champion' sitting on the Services for All Group and that they understand their role and responsibilities c. Use the Services for All Group to cascade information to teams, and to collate issues to feed into Corporate Leaderships Team d. Identify any training needs for Services for All group members 	<p>Services for All Group CLT</p> <p>Nicole Rickard</p>	*		*

		Nicole Rickard			
IE7. Identify and challenge discrimination, including racism (ARCAP) (ALLYSHIP: UPSTANDER)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Actively stand up against discrimination in all its shapes and forms (ARCAP) b. Challenge lack of awareness and misunderstanding – everyone in the Council has a ‘myth-busting’ role c. Challenge unconscious bias, limiting assumptions and judgements d. Provide a racism reporting process for notifying, investigating and recording outcomes (ARCAP). 	<p>CLT</p> <p>All</p> <p>All</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p>			*
IE8. Recognise and mitigate the impact of discrimination on staff wellbeing (ARCAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with the ESC Wellbeing Group to consider the specific wellbeing needs of protected characteristic Groups b. Provide wellbeing support to any employees who experience discrimination either directly or indirectly c. Use the network of Mental Health First Aiders to support those impacted by discrimination 	<p>Fiona Quinn</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p> <p>Amie Skeet</p>			*
IE9. Ensure that all workplaces are accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Involve people with lived experience in ESC building audits 	Kerry Blair	*		*

East Suffolk Council – A Community Leader

Priority Projects

Purpose	Proposed Project/Activity	Lead Officer	0-6 months	6-18 months	Ongoing
CL1. Improve our services through active engagement and co-production with protected characteristic groups. Increase participation from under-represented groups and identify ways to reach communities that may not actively engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Identify opportunities to co-produce services e.g. Healthwatch Tackling Poverty Together b. Identify innovative ways to involve communities in decision making, particularly under-represented groups c. Actively seek feedback from external stakeholders e.g. Disability Forums, Suffolk/Great Yarmouth and Waveney Minds, Waveney Youth Council d. Seek suggestions and feedback from the community, including via Councillors and using tools like Youth Voice e. Revisit the idea of an East Suffolk Citizens Panel f. Increase the diversity of membership of the eight East Suffolk Community Partnerships 	<p>CLT</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>Kate Blakemore Nicole Rickard</p>		*	*
CL2. Ensure that ESC Councillors understand Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, EDI priorities and their leadership role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that Councillors know where to find key information about EDI on the website / Sharepoint b. Analyse the change in Councillor profile following the May 2023 elections and identify future opportunities to increase the diversity of Councillors (links to the 'Be a Councillor' campaign) c. Support the EDI Councillor Champion – the Cabinet Member for Communities d. Ensure that Councillors are involved in/sighted on key EDI projects and activities 	<p>Nicole Rickard</p> <p>Sarah Davis</p> <p>Kate Blakemore</p> <p>Kate Blakemore / Nicole Rickard</p>	*		*
CL3. Understand East Suffolk communities better - to enable us, communities and their representatives to make better decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lead engagement with communities about their needs – implement a corporate review of the way that we engage? b. Use the Community Partnerships more for EDI intelligence gathering 	<p>Sandra Lewis</p> <p>Luke Bennett</p>		*	*

Purpose	Proposed Project/Activity	Lead Officer	0-6 months	6-18 months	Ongoing
CL4. Ensure that East Suffolk communities, Town and Parish Councils and businesses understand our EDI ambitions and role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review and revise the EDI information on the ESC website – ensure that there is a clear overview of our EDI work and ambitions b. Increase awareness of EDI and the 10 Protected Characteristic groups within East Suffolk through a range of mechanisms – website, our resident/tenant magazines, events, workshops, webinars etc 	<p>Nicole Rickard</p> <p>Phil Harris / CLT</p>	*		*
CL5. Improve community relations and tackle community tensions, including by challenging myths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Collate information from Councillors and front-line staff about emerging community tensions in a more systematic and timely way – and feed this into decision making structures b. Raise awareness of community cohesion and explore ways to increase community cohesion in East Suffolk c. Maximise opportunities to increase understanding of diverse communities and their needs 	<p>Sandra Lewis</p> <p>Nicole Rickard</p> <p>CLT</p>		*	*
CL6. Better understand who is happy with our services and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Monitor corporate complaints on the basis of protected characteristics where possible b. Include EDI specific questions in the Residents Survey 	<p>Tom Darling – Fernley</p> <p>Sandra Lewis</p>		*	*
CL7. Maximise opportunities for Inclusive Investment and lead by example as an inclusive employer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that our approach to ‘inclusive investment’ means that investment in key programmes and projects benefits those who live in the most deprived communities b. Remove the GCSE requirements for some Apprenticeships and provide pre-Apprentice opportunities c. Consider additional Apprenticeships for Children Leaving Care d. Investigate signing up to Employers – Movement to Work (support employers to create employment and work experience opportunities for young people aged 16-30 who are not in education, employment or training) e. Continue work with schools and colleges, including mentoring, work experience support and career aspirations 	<p>Paul Wood</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p> <p>Heather Shilling</p>			*
CL8. Encourage and recognise social value in our procurement processes and supply chains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update the ESC Strategic Procurement Strategy to better reflect social value b. Use data about EDI to inform our commissioning processes c. Include our ambitions around E and I in the revised social value ‘asks’ and reinforce through our procurement processes e.g. better due diligence about the EDI ethos of suppliers 	<p>Amy Moye</p> <p>Amy Moye</p> <p>Amy Moye</p>		*	

East Suffolk Council – Thinking Equalities in all we do

Priority Projects

Purpose	Proposed Project/Activity	Lead Officer	0-6 months	6-18 months	Ongoing
TE1. Ensure we understand the needs of/barriers for the ten East Suffolk protected characteristic groups and share this widely to ensure that services better meet their needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agree what data we will collect and how we will use this data b. Agree a consistent way to capture insight and intelligence about/from protected characteristic groups c. Feed both hard and soft data into the new ESC Data Dashboard d. Ensure this data and insight informs service design (see also TE3) 	<p>Sandra Lewis Services for All Group</p> <p>Sandra Lewis CLT</p>	*	*	*
TE2. Focus on providing the best experience for all customers, including by adapting services to meet specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make accessing the Council and our services as easy as possible b. Increase staff understanding about best practice in dealing with customers with diverse needs - and the importance of not making assumptions about those needs c. Be better at adapting services when we become aware of specific needs and share best practice widely d. Ensure a more consistent approach to our engagement, communication and marketing to customers (including languages and use of plain English') e. Ensure staff are aware of available tools e.g. Language Line, sign language interpreters, easy read, and how to access them f. Increase use of 'Plain English' in all communication g. Make our website more user friendly and test with Protected Characteristic groups h. Consider how we reach customers who don't read or write – alternative forms of contact i. Explore an on-line chat function for Customer Services Team 	<p>CLT Tom Darling – Fernley</p> <p>CLT</p> <p>Phil Harris</p> <p>Phil Harris</p> <p>CLT / Phil Harris Sandra Lewis</p> <p>Sandra Lewis</p> <p>Tom Darling – Fernley</p>	*		*

Purpose	Proposed Project/Activity	Lead Officer	0-6 months	6-18 months	Ongoing
TE3. Regularly review the ESC EDI strategy - informed by data about, and intelligence from, the ten protected characteristic groups (ARCAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review our equality objectives and ensure they are SMART b. Embed these objectives in the revised Strategic Plan and individual Service and Team Plans c. Produce an annual Equality Report to show how we are performing against our agreed objectives 	CLT Kate Blakemore Kate Blakemore/ Nicole Rickard		*	*
TE4. Have a clear and visible race equality policy championed by political and officer leadership (ARCAP) (ALLYSHIP: SPONSOR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Include a section on Race Equality in the updated Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy, promote this widely and ensure review of progress by Corporate Leadership Team 	Nicole Rickard	*		
TE5. Undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) for all strategic-level decisions. (ARCAP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ensure that EqIAs are an integral part of decision making – including through discussion with/by Councillors before coming to a decision b. Provide further training for officers and Councillors on the EqIA process, form and best practice c. Review and provide feedback on individual EqIAs d. Provide examples of good EqIA's on Sharepoint e. Involve Protected Characteristic groups in EqIAs f. Link EqIAs into the Report Writing training g. Link EqIAs into the refreshed ESC project management approach 	CLT Nicole Rickard Nicole Rickard Nicole Rickard CLT/Managers Heather Shilling Sandra Lewis	*		
TE6. Work in partnership with protected characteristic groups to co-produce projects to meet identified needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with protected characteristic groups to develop projects/initiatives e.g. Men's Sheds, Woman to Woman b. Build on the outcomes of the 'Embracing Difference' workshop at Pathways Care Farm in April 2023 	CLT Nicole Rickard			*
TE8. Tackle digital exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider 'digital poverty' and increase digital access, including through our 'digital champions' b. Ensure that there are non-digital alternatives (e.g. face to face) c. Ensure a flexible and responsive approach to delivering services 	Nick Khan CLT CLT		*	