



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion plan 2023/26



Norfolk County Council

Our ambition for Norfolk

- We aim for Norfolk to be one of the highest performing counties in the country - creating jobs and opportunities and cherishing our environment, countryside, and heritage.
- Above all, we want to empower our residents to be in control of their lives and influence decision-making - to enable equality of opportunity for all.
- We set out our strategy in [Better Together, for Norfolk](#).
- We have a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity in Norfolk.
- We know the work we do can affect people differently. We also know some people find it more difficult to use our services, or their circumstances may impact on their life chances.
- One of Norfolk's strengths is our diversity – and the latest [Census results for 2021](#) indicate our diversity is increasing.
- Our aim is that over the next three years, we will make a difference and continue to improve life in Norfolk for all.



How we prioritise what to do first



As a County Council, our capacity and budgets are limited, so we must think carefully about what will deliver the best results.

We prioritise actions based on:

- Our legal responsibilities – gaps in compliance.
- Independent reviews – for example, OFSTED, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, the Care Quality Commission and safeguarding reviews.
- Data about how people use our services and any inequalities they experience – and what will achieve the greatest impact.
- Views of different people and communities.

Our objectives for 2023 to 2026



1. Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.
2. Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.
3. Promote equality for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.
4. Deliver our EDI transformation plans in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews.

Objective 1:

Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.



Why this is important

- Norfolk County Council agreed a Motion on 20 July 2020 to eliminate racism.
- Our ethnic minority residents and employees tell us that racism continues to be a factor impacting on their lives.
- Our social care workforce is increasingly diverse, and this will continue as we welcome more international workers to help fill vacancies in social care.
- This makes tackling racism towards our employees even more important – it is not just about equality and keeping people safe, but also about recruitment and retention so that we can continue to provide social care services in Norfolk.

The challenges

- A review highlighted that young people in Norfolk who are Black or from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background experience persistent inequalities.
- These inequalities are seen across the UK – but there is no consensus about why they occur or how best to address them.

Objective 1:

Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.



Our priorities

1. Publish revised guidance explaining all the steps managers and employees should take to tackle racism affecting service users and colleagues:
 - How to report and record racist incidents so that they can be investigated, addressed and monitored. Reporting data will be provided to senior management teams 6 monthly.
 - What steps should be taken if the racism is caused by a service user, to keep our ethnic minority employees safe; how and when to send a caution letter to a service user who exhibits racism towards employees; how and when to report incidents to the police.
 - How to manage situations where racism is caused by someone who lacks capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour.
 - New guidance about how to promote race equality at work - such as when chairing meetings, commissioning services, arranging events or consultation.

Objective 1:

Promote race equality and eliminate racism across our workforce, services and communities.



Our priorities

2. Pilot restorative work with people who exhibit racist behaviour towards our employees – to see if this changes behaviour.
3. Undertake analysis to check whether the decisions we make about young people who are Black or from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background are equitable, focusing first on ‘early help’.
4. Review the support available for Black and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller young people who are Looked After or Care Leavers, to check whether we take every opportunity to meet their needs – and through engagement with young people, identify what else we could do to improve outcomes.
5. Work with independent Black equality experts to examine why Black young people are over-represented in youth offending.
6. Provide clear guidance to managers on how to promote race equality through policies and procedures and continue to undertake robust checks to ensure that our policies consistently meet agreed standards.
7. Increase the representation of ethnic minority people in our public participation forums.

Objective 2:

Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.



Why this is important

- Everything that we provide - whether computer software; websites; physical buildings; customer services; equipment; personal support; correspondence – must be accessible for disabled people.

The challenges

- Disabled people experience many barriers to independence. The nature of these barriers varies – depending on whether someone is blind, D/deaf, neurodivergent, or if they have learning disabilities or a physical or mental health disability.
- What works well for one person – such as bright light to enable someone with sight loss to see more easily – may create an obstruction for someone else – e.g. an autistic person may find bright light distressing.
- Some reasonable adjustments are straightforward – but many require technical skill - such as making sure that websites are accessible for blind people who use screen readers.
- Working with disabled people to identify which barriers should be prioritised is important, so that we address the greatest barriers first.

Objective 2:

Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.



Our priorities

1. Improve Digital Accessibility through delivering our new road map which sets out the actions we are taking to comply with the Web Accessibility Guidelines AA Standard - and then beyond that to make our digital platforms as usable for as many people as possible.
2. Publish revised guidance explaining the steps managers and employees should take (and the resources available to support them) to promote access for disabled people, when:
 - Communicating with disabled people
 - Publishing information – including technical information such as diagrams and drawings, which are not easy to convert into accessible formats.
 - Commissioning technology
 - Developing ‘automation’ software
 - ‘Onboarding’ disabled colleagues
 - Making reasonable adjustments
 - Applying for [Access to Work](#)
 - Using ‘SharePoint’
 - Chairing virtual and physical meetings.

Objective 2:

Provide services, information and environments that can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all disabled people.



Our priorities

3. Continue to implement the Accessible Information Standard - to achieve compliance and explore ways to overcome supply issues with formats such as Easy Read.
4. Explore whether we can produce accessible templates of our commonly used business documents (eg policies, action plans, contracts, reports, presentations, plans on a page, job descriptions) so that people with sight loss, people who are neurodivergent and/or who have dexterity issues can access this information.
5. Deliver our customer experience strategy, to ensure all our customers can communicate with us, particularly people who are Blind, D/deaf or who have learning disabilities.
6. Continue to deliver our rolling programme of capital improvement, transport, infrastructure and technology – working with disabled people to identify, prioritise and address barriers to access.

Objective 3:

Promote equality for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.



Why this is important

- Norfolk is home to a growing number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary and gender-fluid people.
- According to the Office of National Statistics, 3.89% of Norwich residents are bisexual - the highest of any local authority in England. In the City Centre West area of Norwich, the figure rises to nearly 7% of the population.
- Norwich also has the second-highest proportion of people outside London who identify as Transgender (1.07% - more than three times the English average of 0.5%) and non-binary (0.33% - which is above the national average of 0.06%).
- In 2020, Norfolk County Council became the first organisation in Norfolk to sign the Norwich Pride pledge.
- The pledge commits the Council to be a safe, welcoming, and friendly place for LGBTQ+ residents and employees.

The challenges

- New case law is setting out the rights of trans and non-binary people. A priority is to ensure that our LGBTQ+ residents and employees feel safe and valued.

Objective 3:

Promote equality for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.



Our priorities

1. Publish revised guidance for managers and employees explaining the steps they should take if an LGBTQ+ service user or colleague is affected by prejudice or discrimination. This will cover:
 - How to report and record incidents so that they can be investigated, addressed and monitored. Reporting data will be provided to senior management teams 6 monthly.
 - What steps should be taken if the incident is caused by a service user, to keep our LGBTQ+ employees safe; how and when to send a caution letter to a service user who exhibits unlawful discrimination towards employees; how and when to report incidents to the police.
 - How to manage situations where an incident is caused by someone who lacks capacity to understand the impact of their behaviour.

Objective 3:

Promote equality for our LGBTQ+ service users and colleagues.

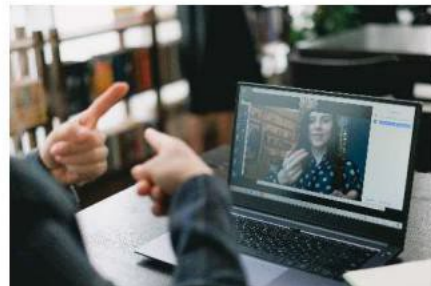


Our priorities

2. Ensure that our business systems can accurately record someone's sex and gender identity – and where there are barriers, work with LGBTQ+ people to identify ways to remedy this.
3. Carefully consider public-facing services (such as the books and resources we provide in libraries), to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our increasing LGBTQ+ community in the city.
4. Increase the representation of LGBTQ+ people in our public participation forums.
5. Increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ people in our marketing materials, so that we are representing all the people we serve.

Objective 4:

Deliver our EDI transformation plans in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews.



Why this is important

- External inspections and safeguarding reviews have recommended actions we should take to strengthen work on equality and inclusion.
- We know that we are travelling in the right direction, because:
 - Our progress in Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service on EDI was commended by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) as 'innovative practice'.
 - Dr Margaret Flynn, the author of the Safeguarding Adults Review for Joanna, Jon and Ben, said that our approach to addressing Recommendation M in the report (tackling racism) was 'illuminating in terms of its reach, its evidence-based focus and piloting ways of thinking about dealing with racism'.
 - We are quadruple award-winning for our work to promote equality - this includes awards from the Asian Fire Service Association and the [BBAA Leonard Cheshire awards](#).

The challenges

- There is still much to do – and we are not complacent about the level of change required.

Objective 4:

Deliver our EDI transformation plans in response to external inspections, peer and safeguarding reviews.



Our priorities

1. Deliver our EDI plan for Norfolk Fire & Rescue Service
2. Deliver our EDI improvement actions in response to Adults Peer Review 2022.
3. Deliver our EDI improvement actions in response to Recommendation M (tackling racism) Safeguarding Adults Review – Joanna, Jon and Ben
4. Review our EDI learning and development offer – to help us to deliver the priorities in this plan and equip people with the knowledge they need to tackle racism, homophobia, transphobia, and prejudice in relation to disability, sex and gender.

We will also:

- Continue to engage with our residents and employees via independent living and advisory networks to help us improve services.
- Continue to use events in the cultural calendar to raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion.



You can contact us [online](#), or alternatively:

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Normal telephone operating hours are 9am to 5pm
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For our employees go to [myNet](#).

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