

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy 2025 - 2028



Nottingham
City Council

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Foreword

This strategy reaffirms Nottingham City Council's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, setting out a vision for an inclusive Council that embraces diversity, supports communities, and delivers accessible services.

Rooted in our Strategic Council Plan and Equality Objectives, this strategy outlines actions to eliminate discrimination, celebrate differences, and ensure every person has the opportunity to thrive.

As a large employer and service provider, we are determined to tackle prejudice, inequality, and poverty. While progress has been made, we acknowledge that racism, hate crime, and discrimination remain significant challenges. Against economic pressures and changing demographics, we are committed to understanding and addressing the complex needs of our diverse communities.

We proudly support underrepresented groups, including ethnic minorities, disabled individuals, and the LGBT+ community. These values will guide our employment practices, leadership approach, and community engagement.

Despite serious financial challenges, our ambition remains undimmed. We will continue to secure resources, strengthen partnerships, and convene stakeholders to drive meaningful change.

This strategy reflects our ongoing dedication to creating a Nottingham where everyone belongs, is valued, and has the opportunity to succeed. Together, we will build a fairer, more inclusive future for our city and its people.



Cllr Neghat Khan
Leader of the Council



Sajeeda Rose
Chief Executive



Cllr Linda Woodings
Executive member
Finance & Resources

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) commitments

In February 2024, the Government announced that the Secretary of State would appoint Commissioners to Nottingham City Council for two years. Statutory Intervention through Commissioners is a very significant step and will require a revised Nottingham City Council Improvement Plan that sets out a range of key deliverables that will demonstrate how the Council will improve over the next two years.

We will continue to place people at the centre of what we do, but it is clear to us that the way in which we do it must change. We will reshape the organisation and redesign how we deliver our services, ensuring that our statutory duties are met while finding a more efficient way to deliver for our People, our Neighbourhoods and our City. Our current financial situation means that we have to prioritise the statutory services that keep people safe while we seek to bridge our funding gap.

During the course of these changes, we will consider the needs of vulnerable groups and those who are most likely to be disproportionately impacted. We will carry out robust equality impact assessments and continue to ensure that we do all we can to reduce and mitigate the negative impacts on protected groups where possible.

Equality, diversity and inclusion underpins delivery of key Council strategies. It reinforces the actions and aspirations of the organisation and everyone – our stakeholders, employees, leaders and Councillors – recognise its value and how important it is in attracting the best people to work with us, retaining our staff and in providing the most accessible services to our citizens

Developing this strategy

This strategy has been developed in line with our refreshed Strategic Council Plan (2024) and organisation values. It also considers the challenges we face during the current context of our financial and organisational improvement plan and the impacts this may have on equality, diversity and inclusion. We have consulted widely and invited a wide range of partners, staff and stakeholders to comment on our strategy. The findings of this consultation along with an external EDI audit have shaped this strategy.

Developing an inclusive culture

Along with alignment to the Strategic Council Plan, this strategy complements and aligns to a range of other council strategies and plans and forms part of the council's ongoing work to develop a positive workforce culture – one which is fully inclusive.

By continuing to develop a culture of inclusion and by focusing on individual needs, the council will become an attractive place to work – an employer of choice. A council which retains its staff, and which provides the best and most accessible services to our citizens.

The council has been taking action to positively shift and influence its culture for a number of years. While it is important to understand that the culture of an organization constantly evolves and shifts, action can be taken to influence change. The following actions have been taken to influence our culture and create the conditions of an inclusive workplace:

- A new Leadership framework which creates clarity on the roles and responsibilities of all colleagues, and which encourages our people to display leadership qualities in all that they do.
- A revised Code of Conduct and set of Behavioural Expectations which puts Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at the heart of how we behave.
- A new approach to Individual Performance Reviews which places the emphasis on good quality, regular performance, and development conversations, centred around the individual.
- Leadership development, including 'Creating an Inclusive Workplace' and 'Being an Inclusive Leader.' Reciprocal Mentoring and 'Leading Change.'
- Specific development programmes for colleagues from under-represented groups, building confidence, removing barriers, and creating progression pathways.
- Improving our approach to workforce planning and our recruitment practices to identify areas of under-representation and take action for change.

Our work on organisational culture continues and features in our improvement plans, ensuring we embed good practice and create the conditions for all our staff to thrive.

Employee voice and feedback is an important aspect of understanding and influencing our culture. To ensure all voices are heard and responded to, we conducted a culture mapping exercise in summer 2024 as well as our staff opinion survey in Autumn 2024. Our next staff survey will take place in 2026.

Context and Legislation

The main provisions of the Equality Act 2010 provide the basic framework of protection against discrimination, harassment and victimisation, for the nine recognised ‘protected characteristics’ in employment, public functions and services, transport, premises, education, and associations. This Act provides the prime legislative basis under which this strategy operates.

Protected Characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 introduced the term “protected characteristics” to refer to groups that are protected under the Act.

- ◆ Age
- ◆ Religion or Belief
- ◆ Sex
- ◆ Marriage/ Civil Partnership
- ◆ Disability
- ◆ Gender Reassignment
- ◆ Race
- ◆ Maternity and Paternity
- ◆ Sexual Orientation

Nottingham City Council passed its motion to consider Care Experience as a protected characteristic in January 2023.

Public Sector Equality duty

The public sector equality duty is laid out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to: -

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Gender Pay Gap

Legislation came into effect in 2017 requiring employers to publish figures on their gender pay gap. We use our data on a yearly basis to continually review all areas of the organisation to identify the barriers (and the drivers) for appointing women, particularly at senior levels. Our current gender pay gap analysis shows a mean pay gap of 1.4% and a median gap of 4.4% (2024-25).

Ethnicity, Disability and Sexual Orientation Pay Gap

Following the 2017 McGregor-Smith² review, the government has not yet made it mandatory to report on the ethnicity pay gap (publishing pay differentials between people from different ethnic backgrounds). We are committed to improving the ethnic diversity of our workforce and as such we continue to mirror the gender pay gap formula to put measures in place for addressing any pay inequality in terms of ethnicity. We continue to do the same analysis on disability and sexual orientation. Our collective pay gap reports can be found on the Nottingham City Council website.

Modern Slavery Act 2015

Legislation requires us to prepare and publish a slavery and human trafficking statement each financial year and to tackle slavery wherever we find it. We recognise the responsibility to understand any potential modern slavery risks related to our services, and to explore what steps we can take to ensure there is no slavery or human trafficking in our business or supply chains.

Frameworks and charters

We will continue to use several equality frameworks and charters to help structure our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This supports us in measuring our progress whilst keeping up to date with best practice.

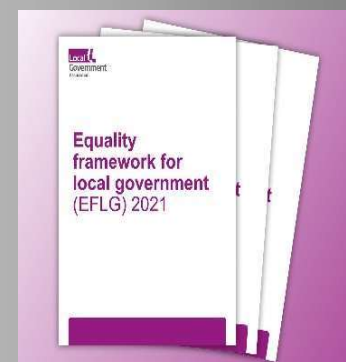
We achieved Disability Confident Leader status in 2022 and gained the Stonewall LGBTQ+ Inclusive Employer Silver Award 2022 & 2023. We continue working towards the seven calls of action for the Race at Work Charter.

Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)

The purpose of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) is to help Local Authorities review and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. The EFLG has four improvement modules:

1. Understanding and Working with Communities
2. Leadership and Organisational Commitment
3. Responsive Services and Customer Care
4. Diverse and Engaged Workforce

We will use the findings from the EFLG self-assessment to measure our objectives set out in this strategy.



Key Facts about the Citizens of Nottingham

- ❖ The latest estimate of the City's resident population is 323,700 (Census 2021)
- ❖ The City continues to see a large amount of population 'churn', with 32,300 people arriving from elsewhere within the UK and 34,500 leaving in the year 2019 - 2020.
- ❖ International migration (recently from Eastern Europe) and an increase in student numbers are the main reasons for the population growth since 2001, together with the excess of births over deaths.
- ❖ Just under 30% of the population are aged 18 to 29. 20.7 % (69,100) of the population are aged 0-17 years old.
- ❖ Full-time university students comprise about 1 in 7 of the population.
- ❖ In the short to medium term, the City is unlikely to follow the national trend of seeing large increases in the number of people over retirement age, although the number aged 85+ is projected to increase.
- ❖ The number of births has risen in recent years until 2011 but the numbers have slowly declined since then.
- ❖ The 2021 Census shows 42.7% of the population as being from black and ethnic minority groups: an increase from 35% in 2011. 43.3% are working age 16-64)
- ❖ Despite its young age-structure, Nottingham has a higher-than-average rate of people with a limiting long-term illness or disability.
- ❖ 2018-20 Life expectancy in Nottingham is significantly lower than the England average, with approximately 3 years less for men and 2 years less for women (Nottingham: 76.6 men; 81.0 women. England: 79.4 men; 83.1 women).
- ❖ 45.1% (56,315) of households owned the accommodation they lived in, lower than the England average of 61.3%. 25.5% (31,796) were in social rented housing and 28.6% (35,688) private rented – both higher than England (17.1% and 20.5%)
- ❖ There are many languages spoken including English (68.7%) Urdu (5.7%) Polish (4.2%) Punjabi (2.6%) Arabic (2.4%) Romanian (1.3%). 7.8% of households have no members who speak English as a main language.
- ❖ 69.6% (231,600) are working age, 16-65 years old, and 11.6% (38,800) are over 65 years old. (Mid-Year Estimates 2019)
- ❖ There were 164,628 women (50.9% of the population) and 159,004 men (49.1%) in Nottingham. The split is almost identical to the national average and is the same for working age (16-64).
- ❖ There are 43,300 university students within Nottingham.
- ❖ Nottingham's employment rate is 75.0% (Apr 2020 - March 2021 - NOMIS). This is the number of people that are employed as a percentage of all those that are working age, i.e., 16-64 years old.
- ❖ 225,477 people (85.3%) identified as straight or heterosexual (93% are working age 16-64)
- ❖ 12,929 people (4.9%) identified with an LGB+ orientation "Gay or Lesbian", "Bisexual" or "Other sexual orientation" (6.2% are working age 16-64)
- ❖ 18.6% of the population are disabled under the Equality Act with 17.7% being of working age 16-64

Source: ONS 2021 Census,

Nottingham City Council workforce data March 31st 2024

- ❖ 21.5 % of our workforce are from Black, Asian or other ethnic minority background
- ❖ 57.8% of our workforce are women.
- ❖ 6% of our workforce are LGB+
- ❖ 6.2% of our workforce are disabled

Our employees are our most valuable asset. We are committed to leading the city by example by working towards a workforce that represents the city. We want to build a workforce that is fully representative of the communities we serve so that we can realise the business benefits that this will bring in terms of increased innovation, improved team dynamics and a better understanding of issues that affect all citizens.

The Council encourages a culture of trust and open communication between employees and between employees and their managers, to ensure that concerns arising during the course of their employment can be resolved quickly, fairly and amicably.

The Council will not tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination, victimisation, and bullying and will take decisive action against those found to be responsible for such behaviour. Similarly, the Council does not expect any employee or worker engaged in activities for the Council to harass, discriminate, victimise or bully anyone else, whether a colleague, visitor or member of the public. The Council will take action to address this, which could result in disciplinary action and potentially dismissal and/or legal action, where the behaviour is unlawful.

The Resolution and Grievance Procedure is the Council's process for managing employee concerns, conflict or grievances at work. The stages of the procedure have been designed to help managers and employees resolve concerns in line with *the [ACAS Code of Practice 1: Disciplinary and Grievance procedures](#)*.

The Council wants to ensure that all employees have fair and equal access to all policies and procedures relating to their work. It is important that employees ask for assistance at the point at which they raise their concerns, if they have any specific needs that would help them to participate fully. This could include, for example, access and mobility issues in relation to the location of meetings, format of correspondence, etc. They can discuss their needs confidentially with their manager, who will assist them.

The City's challenges and their impact on equality, diversity and inclusion

Cost of Living Crisis & Poverty

We continue to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis, and significant funding reductions from central Government. At the same time, the need for our demand-led services including adult social care and children's services has never been higher, while our financial resilience has been reduced through correcting the mistakes we have made in the past.

The rising cost of living is not impacting on everyone equally. People who are already experiencing inequity and poverty will be disproportionately impacted. This particularly applies to People on the lowest incomes, Parents and young families, Disabled people, Black, Asian and Minoritised Ethnic groups, Social and private renters, Households with pre-payment energy meters, and Women.

These experiences are likely to intersect. People's multiple and overlapping identities and circumstances might come together to contribute to an overall (and compounded) experience of poverty and disadvantage. It is important that the Council acknowledges and understands the potential impacts so that effective solutions can be established. Such measures may include, targeted support to address specific needs; prioritisation of resources for our most vulnerable groups; the development of holistic approaches in order to create further strategies which will consider the interconnectedness of various social determinants of poverty; and the direct tackling of discrimination and biases that contribute to poverty.

One of the most common measures of deprivation is the Indices of Multiple Deprivation which applies weightings to different themes (housing, health and well-being, education and skills, income deprivation, crime). Nottingham has high levels of deprivation and ranks 11th out of the 317 districts in England using the average score measure.

(Deprivation and poverty - Nottingham Insight)

Council Budget Reductions

Significant savings will be delivered in 2024/25 and these savings, based on delivering statutory minimum service standards, are reflected in this plan and will alter what we can deliver. We face some very difficult decisions which we must make to get our finances onto a stable and sustainable footing.

We must change how we work; reshaping or reducing the services we provide so that the Council is financially sustainable in the long-term. Over the next few years, these decisions will create a very different Council. In due course this plan will be subject to further review and change to reflect the significant anticipated budget gap over the period of the plan which will require additional savings to be found so that our priority actions remain aligned with the resources that we have available.

Our Vision

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) strategy is key to achieving our ambition of being an inclusive Council.

Equality, diversity and inclusion underpins delivery of key Council strategies. It reinforces the actions and aspirations of the organisation and everyone – our stakeholders, employees, leaders and Councillors – recognise its value and how important it is in attracting the best people to work with us, retaining our staff and in providing the best and most accessible services to our citizens.

We are committed to improving the lives of people living and working in Nottingham and are working hard to ensure that everyone has fair and equitable access to both opportunities and services.

We will apply the principles of equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion in our decision making, in how we recruit and support our workforce and to the services we commission and deliver to our local residents. We will work with partners across the public, private and voluntary sector, with local organisations who are supporting individuals and communities, and with organisations who are providing services on behalf of the Council.



Outcome 1

An Inclusive and representative workforce

Create inclusive workplaces where employees can bring their whole selves to work and thrive, aspiring to represent the diversity of the City that we serve

Future Focus

- ✓ We will continue to address the Council's gender, race and disability pay gaps
- ✓ Identify ways of supporting career progression to diversify our leadership, including how effectively we make reasonable adjustments for disabled colleagues and accommodate colleagues to combine work and family or caring responsibilities
- ✓ Ensure that Inclusive Leadership behavior is embedded through IPRs and training, with specific emphasis on the employee life cycle, aiming to create inclusive practices in recruitment, talent development, performance management and retention.
- ✓ Create a workforce plan for every service area whilst ensuring service reviews don't disproportionately affect under-represented groups
- ✓ Develop and deliver information, awareness, and training on neurodiversity in the workplace
- ✓ Provide tailored mental health and wellbeing support services to all colleagues
- ✓ Review how recruitment processes operate in practice to better understand why some groups, are proportionately less likely to succeed in getting jobs than other groups
- ✓ Continue to work on our Culture Change project with a focus on cultural intelligence and psychological safety
- ✓ We will continue to explore reasons behind grievances and disciplinary actions and take appropriate action to deal with any equality issues identified
- ✓ We will ensure compliance with a zero-based tolerance of discriminatory practice in NCC
- ✓ Provide development opportunities to underrepresented groups, designed to attract, develop and retain diverse talent. Review and refresh of existing programmes to achieve best value in delivery.
- ✓ Continue the work of our staff networks improvement plan with a focus on lived experience and engaging frontline colleagues

Outcome 2

Inclusive and accessible services for citizens
 Provide services which actively addresses inequality and exclusion

Future Focus

- ✓ Continue to work with UNICEF to become a child friendly city where all children feel safe, valued and heard. Ensuring that Child Rights Impact assessments are used across the Council
- ✓ Review cultural training for all staff, particularly those in customer-facing roles, to identify gaps in current training and how it can be improved
- ✓ Ensure that Care Experience is treated as a protected characteristic
- ✓ Improve access to occupational therapy, equipment, and adaptations for Council homes
- ✓ Ensure consideration of the findings from public consultations, including annual budget proposals, surveys of residents and community engagement exercises, and evidence how these have been used in decision making
- ✓ Continue to strengthen EDI principles in Decision Making with our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) improvement project
- ✓ Monitor protected characteristics of citizens e.g. race, age, sex, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation using Council services to identify gaps in provision or barriers to accessing services
- ✓ Transform the services we provide to vulnerable adults – focusing on prevention and early intervention, providing better outcomes and supporting people to live independently for as long as possible
- ✓ Develop our community public health function to enhance our understanding of the specific needs of and barriers faced by different groups within Nottingham, and work with communities to address these in the most appropriate way

Outcome 3

An Equitable City

Build good relations between different communities so everyone is able to participate and contribute

Future Focus

- ✓ Provide a range of resettlement and asylum schemes to meet the needs of individuals who are seeking refuge in the city, including work with partners to deliver support to enable integration, employment, and health programmes
- ✓ Connect residents into opportunities within their neighborhood and the city such as learning, education employment and wellbeing activities
- ✓ Work collaboratively with the Integrated Care System (ICS) and other local authorities to improve equity and address health inequalities across the City
- ✓ Work with the Police to implement our Hate Crime Strategy, increasing reporting and reducing repeat incidences of hate crime
- ✓ Build relationships with community reference groups for protected characteristics to better understand lived experiences, intersectionality and deprivation
- ✓ We will Continue to support a range of activities that Nottingham's older people and disabled people can access in their communities
- ✓ Continue to promote and celebrate Nottingham's diversity and cultural heritage by supporting community-led initiatives, e.g., Black History Month, Disability History Month, Nottinghamshire Pride, South Asian Heritage Month, International Women's Day
- ✓ Ensure that data is regularly updated and used to set priorities across the organisation and in different services, by geographical area and by protected and other characteristics such as intersectionality, deprivation etc.
- ✓ Support and empower community groups and collaborate with partners to widen and deepen work to tackle discrimination, reduce poverty and promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the city

Outcome 4

Economic Growth for All

Support the local economy by providing citizens and businesses with access to good quality learning, opportunities for advancement, upskilling, and retraining for employment.

Future Focus

- ✓ Continue to support ethnic minority-led business sector and support local SMEs to enhance their ability to tender and potentially win business
- ✓ Use procurement opportunities to actively support businesses from communities within each protected characteristic, and scrutinising equalities, diversity, and inclusion policies of potential suppliers to further promote shared values relating to equalities, diversity, and inclusion
- ✓ Use external funding where available, to protect key Employment Support interventions for priority groups, improving the lives of people through jobs and skills support
- ✓ Promote decent, paid employment opportunities for disabled people and people with mental ill health
- ✓ Seek to reduce the over representation of certain groups within the unemployment figures in the city, such as ethnic minority populations, over 50s and disabled people
- ✓ We will ensure all of our communities benefit from the job opportunities created through economic growth, by supporting those who face most disadvantage in the labour market into work (including Apprenticeships)
- ✓ Work with DWP to deliver support under an extended IPS PC programme providing employment support for unemployed/employed disabled people
- ✓ Work with East Midlands County Combined Authority to create a strong and sustainable economy through a strategic approach to investing the Adult Skills Fund in 2025/26

Governance

The EDI Strategy has been refreshed with the input from Nottingham City Council's Corporate Scrutiny Committee and moving forward progress will continue to be monitored through this governance route.

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