



Northumberland
County Council



Our Equality Objectives 2021 - 2025

Northumberland County Council is asking for your views on our new draft equality objectives. These objectives will guide our work for the next four years. When our objectives are agreed we will develop actions to help us monitor how we are doing. The objectives aim to help us to tackle inequality and achieve our vision to improve equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our draft objectives are to:

1. Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities
2. Listen, involve and respond to our communities effectively
3. Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff
4. Create a positive culture with strong leadership and, a commitment to excellence in improving equality outcomes, both within the council and amongst partners

1. Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities

Across the Council we have many services and teams that collect information and data about our communities. We meet and talk to many different people, organisations and groups.

The challenge for us is how we can gather information that is accurate and gives us information about who is using our services. We need to find out what we can do to improve people's experience. We want to find out if some groups are not using services. We also want to know if there are any differences in the experience of different groups of people and to understand the reasons for this.

We want to improve the information we collect about the protected characteristics of both our staff and service users. We also need to get better at analysing and using this data to help improve the decisions we make.

We are looking at our digital strategy to see how we can improve access to our online services, improve the information we collect and use this to improve services.

Potential actions we could take to support this objective may include:

- Working with teams and directorates to identify gaps in data collation and monitoring
- Developing an improved corporate customer database and encourage the collection of monitoring data for employees
- All services will collect information about the experiences of their service users
- Monitoring compliments, complaints and comments to identify any equality issues or differences in the experience of people with protected characteristics
- Analyse and report on differences in the experience of protected groups to senior management so actions can be identified to address these

2. Listen, involve and respond to our communities effectively

We have several ways to engage and consult with the public. However, we do not always consistently collect monitoring data to show that all protected groups and different communities have been given a voice.

Actions we could take to address this could include:

- Consultation and engagement activities will collect equality information, where this is appropriate
- An Equality assessment of consultation activities will be carried out. This will make sure the needs

of different protected groups have been considered and consultations are accessible for different groups

- Making sure that information that is shared with the public is accessible to our communities and is available in different formats and can be accessed in different ways
- Making sure that the views of different sections of the community are reported and can be considered

3. Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff

Actions we could take include:

- Making sure we recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Looking at our recruitment processes and identifying actions to improve the diversity of our workforce
- Undertaking a staff census to make sure that information about our staff is accurate and identify any gaps in the diversity of our workforce. We will identify actions to address this
- Auditing the skills and training needs of our staff for equality, diversity and inclusion
- Improving workforce data that is shared with Heads of Service to include data on protected characteristics
- Developing directorate action plans to respond the staff survey and develop actions to promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- Working with staff groups to identify key policy changes or initiatives which could better support our staff

4. Create a positive culture with a strong leadership and commitment to excellence in improving equality outcomes, both within the Council and amongst partners.

There are many good examples of the Council's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, both within and outside of the organisation. More work is needed to further promote inclusive leadership and support our workforce.

Actions to support this could include:

- Developing a network of Champions that promote and drive forward continual improvement in equality and diversity
- Developing a communications and media plan to ensure there is proactive promotion of equality and diversity across the Council's activities
- Offering training and support to staff, councillors and members on the Public Sector Equality Duty and best practice in equality, diversity and inclusion
- Introducing questions on equality, diversity and inclusion into recruitment exercises and in evaluating performance
- Undertaking a baseline assessment of the Council's performance on equality, diversity and inclusion

We are asking you whether you feel these objectives are the right ones for the Council and for any comments or suggestions you have. More information about why we are suggesting these objectives and the Council's vision for equality diversity and inclusion can be found in the Council's Equality Strategy document.

If you need this information in Large Print, Braille, Audio, or in another format or language please contact us:

You can call us on 0345 600 6400

Monday to Thursday 08:30 - 17:00

Friday 08:30 - 16:30

People with speech or hearing difficulties can use Relay UK to contact us by dialling 018001 01670 623515

BSL users can contact us through Sign Video using the link on our website or here northumberlandcc-cs.signvideo.net

Or email our Equality and Diversity Lead, Patrick Price, at patrick.price01@northumberland.gov.uk