

Surrey County Council EDI Action Plan 2021-22

Surrey County Council’s core mission is to ensure no-one is left behind. This means tackling inequality should guide everything we do and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) needs to be integral to the council’s culture.

The council’s leadership has radical ambitions for EDI, reflected in this action plan. It commits them to be **open** and **transparent** with staff and residents about our intentions and how we will take **responsibility** for achieving them. The Chief Executive and Executive Directors will be proactive and directly involved in driving this agenda, through sponsorship of staff networks, championing EDI across all council services and taking part in reverse mentoring schemes. We will also support staff to have frank, open conversations about EDI, both to discuss where things are going well and where things still need to change.

If we get this right and we all play our part, Surrey’s residents and our staff should see the council as a fair, compassionate and inclusive organisation that genuinely values difference and makes everyone feel safe and that they belong.

Colleagues who attended the Staff Diversity Tour in late 2019 said we need to do much more to support all our staff to belong and retain existing top talent, make the council a more attractive proposition to a more diverse range of prospective employees, and leaders need to be more visible on EDI so residents, Members, partners and staff understand the need to increase our efforts on this.

This is something we must focus on if we want to be one of the leading councils in England and the most effective council for Surrey residents. It is:

- **Essential for residents** – local democratic arrangements and council services will be designed to be open, inclusive and accessible for all.
- **Essential for staff** – they will be encouraged to bring their whole selves to work and use their diverse experiences and skills to improve performance and create innovative solutions to make residents’ lives better.
- **Essential for the council** – developing a diverse workforce and a better understanding of residents who are being left behind means we can design more responsive services by focusing resources where they’re most needed, improving both value for money and outcomes.

Doing this will also help the council to comply with its legal obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010.

This plan does not capture everything the council is doing to tackle inequality, but it will play a key part in ensuring it is an inclusive and diverse organisation for staff and how we work with residents. These are reflected by the following five themes:

- Employee Experience
- Leadership
- Knowing and engaging our communities
- Communications and engagement
- Delivering inclusive services

Objective 1 - Employee Experience: Strengthen the diversity of our workforce and move to an inclusive culture that values difference, where all staff feel they belong and have opportunities to succeed

Lead: Jackie Foglietta, Director of HR & OD

Timeline:	Priority:
<p>By the end of 2020/21 (April 2021)</p>	<p>Update and work towards a mandatory EDI training package for all staff so they better understand and meet the needs of colleagues and residents with protected characteristics</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reverse mentoring for senior managers and members of the Employee Reference Groups; • Unconscious bias training for all staff and new starters; • Developing an unconscious bias network of 30 staff who are trained to deliver unconscious bias training to teams across the council • Putting out a tender in January 2021 for a training package for evidence-based training on experiences and issues faced by people with protected characteristics, such as disability awareness for managers and active bystander training <p>Support the council's Employee Reference Groups (ERGs) to develop their profile and role by:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assigning each ERG an Executive Director and Cabinet Member sponsor so they can raise concerns directly with, and secure support from, the council’s leadership; • Provide support to the existing ERGs to enhance their effectiveness, such as annual action plans and protected time for staff to attend; • Providing encouragement, resources and support for colleagues who want to establish new ERGs.
<p>Improve the quality and visibility of our staffing data to identify and monitor EDI issues across colleagues with protected characteristics. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce representation; • Promotion; • Bullying and harassment; • Discrimination; • Retention <p>This data will support Directorates to develop local plans to support EDI across their business areas, including approaches to succession planning</p>
<p>Enable more staff to feel confident to declare information on protected characteristics, such as disability and sexual orientation, to improve the support we can provide them</p>
<p>Make the policies designed to support and protect our staff clearer, such as grievance, bullying and harassment policies, and ensure colleagues who use them have the right support in place.</p> <p>Use data on formal HR procedures to identify any bias hotspots and take action.</p>
<p>Ensure our approach to agile working benefits all staff and supports improved productivity and wellbeing.</p>

	We will strengthen our support for colleagues with disabilities who require reasonable adjustments to deliver their roles effectively. This includes improving access to using technologies for remote working, Occupational Health and Access to Work.
Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021/22.	<p>Strengthen our recruitment processes to focus on attracting the best talent and minimise potential sources of bias. This includes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing blind recruitment and develop ways to make recruitment panels more diverse; • Working with voluntary, community and faith sector partners to address the recruitment of underrepresented groups across the organisation. • Working with recruitment agencies to ensure we attract a diverse pool of candidates for senior leadership positions
	Continue monitoring and taking action to narrow the Gender Pay Gap
	Develop and introduce ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting
	Work with ERGs to identify accreditation from leading EDI organisations to work towards, such as Race in the Workplace accreditation.

<p>Objective 2, Leadership: Members and senior officers are champions of equality, diversity and inclusion, acting as role models and demonstrating their commitment to tackling inequality.</p> <p>Lead: Katie Stewart, CLT Executive sponsor for EDI</p>	
Timeline:	Priority:
<p>By the end of 2020/21 (April 2021)</p>	<p>Each Directorate Leadership Team appoints an EDI champion who is responsible for identifying and acting on the local EDI issues, and provides support and challenge to colleagues.</p>
	<p>Prioritise staff from protected groups to attend the Career Sprints Leadership programme to increase diversity in the council's leadership and management</p>
	<p>Recruit an EDI Programme Lead to drive delivery of this action plan</p>
<p>Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021.</p>	<p>Work with partners to provide leadership on EDI across Surrey towards a common agenda and seek opportunities for collaboration.</p>
	<p>Support Members to lead on the EDI agenda by building their knowledge and awareness through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A refreshed Member EDI training programme as part of their continuing professional development; • Supporting the Leader and Cabinet to engage with Surrey's diverse communities to strengthen relationships and further understanding of issues facing these communities.
	<p>Hold a Member led review into councillor diversity and inclusion at Surrey County Council, ensuring that our practices support councillors of all backgrounds to work effectively</p>

	Seek to integrate and learn from best practice with other local authorities to adopt approaches to improving the diversity of the council's senior officer leadership.
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Objective 3, Knowing and Engaging Our Communities: Using the best information available and fostering good relations with and within our communities, to work with them to address their needs and maximise local participation

Lead: Nicola Kilvington, Director for Insight, Analytics and Intelligence

Timeline:	Priority:
Short-term actions to be completed by the end of the financial year (April 2021).	Work with the voluntary, community and faith sector EDI group to collaborate on and deliver initiatives to make Surrey a fairer place to live and work
	Support growth and development of a Faith Links Network across Surrey with faith partners
	Develop Locality Profiles to better understand the needs of all communities at neighbourhood level
Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021.	Provide guidance and tools, such as an EDI tool kit for Surrey County Council’s partners, for strengthening anti-discrimination in Surrey.
	Develop a Leader’s No-one Left Behind Advisory Panel, bringing together experts from equality groups and voluntary, community and faith sector organisations to shape, influence and guide the county’s approach to EDI
	Use insight gathered from Locality Profiles to identify key EDI issues in each place and develop measures with communities to address them.
	Ensure we gather robust equality information from our data and insight and ensure all consultation and engagement is inclusive. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance for services on how to capture and analyse data on EDI issues; • Support for services to ensure their consultation and engagement activities are as inclusive as possible; • Streamlining inclusive participation methods into the design of the new locality governance arrangements

Objective 4, Communication and Engagement: to clearly communicate a radical approach to equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation especially to our residents.

Lead: Andrea Newman, Director for Communications and Engagement

Timeline:	Priority:
Short-term actions to be completed by the end of the financial year (April 2021).	<p>Develop tools, support and guidance for staff to improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of our communications. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the public website as accessible as possible in compliance with the new Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations • Guidelines to support officers when communicating with diverse groups of residents; • Developing an inclusive language guide to support colleagues feel more confident in having sensitive conversations
Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021.	<p>Raise awareness with residents, partners and staff of the organisation’s radical EDI agenda, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrating Surrey’s diversity, and that of SCC’s workforce, such as through a Surrey diversity festival • Sharing positive stories to promote work to tackle inequality including best practice stories • Facilitating Members and the Corporate Leadership Team regularly and openly talking about the importance of EDI to the organisation and issues • Highlighting initiatives to support staff, e.g., ERGs, policies to tackle bullying, harassment and discrimination, etc. • Reporting progress against our equality objectives, including a ‘you said, we did’ from the Diversity Tour • Promoting the work of the ERGs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EDI Champions within front-line services to promote the agenda through the wider organisation
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Objective 5, Delivering Inclusive Services: our services are responsive to individual needs so all residents can access services easily and have opportunities to improve their outcomes.	
Lead: Katie Stewart, CLT Executive sponsor for EDI	
Timeline:	Priority:
Short-term actions to be completed by the end of the financial year (April 2021).	Ensure services are equipped to assess, and understand the importance of, the equality implications of their policies and service decisions through Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA)
	Support an inclusive approach in the Communities transformation portfolio, such as Local Community Networks, Your Fund Surrey and Libraries, so all residents can participate in decision-making and benefit from inclusive accessible services.
	Strengthen our policies and training in Procurement and Commissioning so we work with suppliers who share our commitment to EDI and support us to tackle inequalities
	Work with the Land and Property service to ensure the council's buildings are inclusive and accessible for all
	Produce a digital accessibility policy and governance to support residents and staff to access digital information and products with ease
Long-term actions to be progressed throughout 2021	<p>Monitor progress of the Organisation Strategy 2021-26 equality objectives through the council's outcome-based plans for each of the four strategy priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle economic inequality and disparity so all residents have the opportunities to access the jobs, homes and transport they need to share in the benefits of growth • Work to close the county's healthy life expectancy gap by focusing our resources on children and adults who need our services most so they can be healthy, independent, and thrive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with communities, through our new local engagement model, to make it easier for all residents to participate in local democracy, service design and decision-making
	Ensure equality impacts are understood as part decision making for emergencies and/or serious incidents and put mitigations in place where needed

How we'll know this is making an impact	
What will be different?	How will we know?
Our workforce is more representative of Surrey's diverse population	Increase % of our workforce from the following protected groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability LGBTQ+ BAME, and People aged 30 and under
People working for the council feel included and valued, they belong at the organisation and have the same opportunities to succeed	Pulse Survey measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> % people who feel they are able to bring their whole selves to work % people who feel fairly treated by the council % people who feel the council is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment % people who feel SCC acts fairly with regard to career progression/promotion Number of people who have personally experienced discrimination at work in the past 12 months
	Reduce Gender Pay Gap average
The council's officer leadership better represents the community it serves	Increase % of colleagues in management from the following protected groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability LGBTQ+ BAME
Residents feel they have good relations within their	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % residents who feel strong sense of belonging in their local area Measures of diversity among friendship groups, wider social networks and acquaintances % residents who feel their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together

communities and feel fully able to participate in public life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• % residents who participated in civic activity in last 12 months (e.g. registered to vote, formal volunteering, informal volunteering, formal culture and events)• % residents treated unfairly in the last 12 months because of one or several protected characteristics or because of social class
All residents are able to access services easily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service satisfaction measures, broken down by protected groups• Complaints data on accessibility and discrimination