

Chichester District Council

Equality Strategy 2022 - 2026

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Contact: Corporate Improvement

Introduction

Chichester District Council is committed to providing equality of opportunity in all our activities and to ensuring that discrimination does not occur.

This Strategy sets out our Equality Objectives for the period 2022-26, how we plan to achieve them and how we will measure our success.

The Strategy adopts a broad definition of equality, following the Equality Act 2010 in focusing on 'equality of opportunity'. This means that action taken under this Strategy can be tailored to meet the specific needs of the individual or group in question and does not necessarily require everyone to be treated the same.

Scope

This is a council-wide strategy that outlines our equality commitment to staff, members of the public and communities in our District.

Also linked to this Strategy is our Annual Report on Equalities, which gives details of our progress on actions that support our equality objectives. This is written and published annually on our website.

Where relevant, this Strategy will also refer to other internal policies and documents, which are made available to staff via our Intranet.

Legislative Framework

This strategy sets out the measures we are taking to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation, including:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998 and Data Protection Act 2018
- Employment Act 2008
- The Public Sector Bodies (Website and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018

Protected characteristics

The Equality Act covers nine characteristics that people may have, which are called Protected Characteristics. These are shown in the table below, alongside their definition according to the Equality Act, or, where relevant, a more up to date accepted definition.

Protected Characteristic	Meaning
Age	A person of a particular age or age group
Disability	A person who has (or has had) a particular disability. Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Progressive conditions are covered by the Equality Act.
Gender reassignment	A transsexual person. Transsexual is defined as a person proposing to undergo, undergoing or having undergone a process (or part of a process) to reassign their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. A Women and Equalities Committee Report in 2016 recommended that the terms 'gender reassignment' and 'transsexual' used in the Equality Act 2010 are

	outdated and misleading. The preferred umbrella term for those with this protected characteristic is trans. This definition can also include those who identify as non-binary.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	A person who is legally married or in a civil partnership.
Pregnancy and Maternity	A woman who is pregnant or has given birth in the preceding 26 weeks. Includes those who are breastfeeding. Further protections are given in the Act beyond 26 weeks, but this is considered under the sex protected characteristic.
Race	A person of a particular racial group or the racial group as whole. Race includes colour, nationality (including citizenship) and ethnic or national origins.
Religion	A person of a particular religion or belief or lack of religion or belief. Religion includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief includes any religious or philosophical belief that is worthy of respect in democratic society and does not affect other people's fundamental rights.
Sex	Male or female or a group of people, like men or boys, women or girls.
Sexual Orientation	A person of a particular sexual orientation. This includes sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex, persons of the opposite sex or persons of either sex. Expression of sexual orientation such as through a person's appearance or the places they visit is also covered.

Where they are relevant, the Council will also consider the impact of socio-economic and geographic inequality and the needs of carers alongside the proscribed protected characteristics.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 places certain duties on public authorities, which includes Councils. Public authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, have **due regard** to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

The Equality Act 2010 further explains that having due regard for advancing equality means public authorities should:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
- Take steps to meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, where these are different from the needs of other people
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Finally, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 places a requirement on public authorities to publish, at least annually, information to demonstrate compliance with the above duties. Public Authorities with 150 employees or more are also obliged to publish, at least annually, information concerning protected characteristics in relation to their staff and other persons affected by its policies and practices.

What are the benefits of the equality duty?

Compliance with the general equality duty is not only a legal obligation, but we believe it will help achieve our aim of the district being an inclusive, safe and fair place to live, work and visit. Compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty should result in better-informed decision making and policy development. An organisation that is able to provide services to meet the diverse needs of its users should find that it carries out its core business more efficiently. A workforce that has a supportive working environment is more productive and a diverse workforce draws on a broader range of talent and better represents the community we serve.

How We Comply with the Duty

At Chichester District Council we comply with the specific duties by publishing an Annual Report on Equalities every year, which looks back over the previous calendar year. The report identifies progress we have made towards our published Equality Objectives and also includes anonymised information about our staff profile in relation to the protected characteristics.

Equality Impact Assessments are used to assess the impact of any major new or amended policies and practices on those with protected characteristics. They ensure the potential impact of any proposal on those with protected characteristics or on our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty have been considered carefully. Completed Impact Assessments can be found on our website, as part of Committee Papers for relevant decisions. Where a full Impact Assessment is not required, our Committee Report template still includes space for a brief assessment of the equality impact of the particular proposal. Training for staff who write committee reports has been provided to give further detail on this requirement.

Our Equality Objectives

The Equality Strategy sets out Equality Objectives that the Council will work towards through the life of the Strategy. The objectives are broad and strategic and intended to influence how all the Council's Services are delivered.

The objectives that follow have been identified following review of a range of evidence sources and consultation with Council staff and Members.

We will also refer to the council's priorities, as identified in the current version of the Corporate Plan. One of our identified priorities is 'Supported Communities'. We aim to ensure that there is a safety net in place for the most vulnerable and those who may be disadvantaged in any way, which may include those with protected characteristics. We will consider the issues faced by these people in relation to our services or policies and ensure they are taken into account in the decision making process.

Objective 1: Data

We will use a range of internal and external data sources and work in partnership with others to find information about our local communities and customers. We will use data to inform the types of services we offer and the most effective methods of delivery. Where gaps in data are identified, we will engage with customers, communities or local representative groups to find the best way to fill them.

Local data helps build an understanding of the communities that make up Chichester district and the needs of those communities, which in turn will help to inform the development of policy and decision-making. The authority undertakes equality monitoring using a vast range of community and ward profiling data produced by our local partners, census data and other national data sets where data is released at a Local Authority level. Service Teams also collect and hold their own information that is relevant to the Service they deliver. **Appendix 1** shows the most up to date equality data available at district level at the time this Strategy was developed. Subsequent updates can be found using the links to external sources on our website.

Services are encouraged to make use of all types of information available when planning how to deliver their Service. Where a Service discovers a gap in their customer profile, they are encouraged to engage directly with their users/customers, or groups who represent them, to find out whether there are specific reasons a particular group is less likely to use the Service.

Objective 2: Employment and Staff

We will use our power as a major employer in the area to ensure that we lead by example in our human resource practices on equality. We will do this by ensuring our policies on recruitment and retention of staff are sound and all our staff are well supported and adequately trained in equality and diversity matters.

The council recognises that our employees are our greatest resource and all our employment and recruitment policies will reflect our commitment to equality and best practice.

We continue to work towards a workforce that reflects the diversity of the local community to fully utilise their skills and abilities. Employees are asked to supply equality information about themselves so we can assess how representative our workforce is of the wider community. We will take positive action where appropriate to encourage underrepresented groups into our workforce, in line with our current Equality and Diversity Policy.

No employees will be discriminated against in the areas of pay or conditions of service, access to training and development or promotion. In compliance with The Equality Act, we publish annually a report on gender pay gap calculations at the Council.

Where the needs of our customers allow, we promote flexible working practices, recognising that many of our employees have caring responsibilities. The Council ensured that structures, equipment and policies were in place to allow the majority of our staff to work mainly from home for most of 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. We will take forward the lessons learned from this and continue to provide staff with the flexibility to manage their work/life balance, provided the needs of our customers are met and quality services, representing good value for money are delivered.

We have introduced several tools to support the mental health of our staff including stress management tools and the Employee Assistance Programme to help employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact on their work performance, health or wellbeing. Our Wellbeing Team delivers various focused initiatives and information sessions to support staff.

All employees are required to conduct themselves in non-discriminatory ways towards colleagues and the public and to follow the principles of this strategy at all times. If they do not do so, formal disciplinary action may be taken against them.

Equality training is provided for staff to ensure they are made aware of their rights and responsibilities under this strategy. In particular, all managers are trained in equalities matters concerning employment. Equality training is also offered to Members. Equality issues are an integral part of our training and development programmes, regardless of whether we use internal or external trainers.

In addition, tailored equality training to reflect the needs of specific services is encouraged, particularly for services engaging directly with customers or where there is likely to be significant engagement with people who have protected characteristics.

The council makes a strong commitment to training and development for all staff. All staff have equal access to training and development and we will take appropriate positive action for those who are underrepresented in our workforce.

Objective 3: Service Delivery

We will provide services in a way that will not discriminate against any person with protected characteristics or protected groups within the community. We will consider the equality impact of policies, procedures, initiatives and projects and, wherever possible, will take mitigating action if adverse effects are identified.

We will ensure that all services provided by the council are made accessible, where reasonable to all individuals and groups without discrimination.

Where we do not deliver services directly ourselves, we will ensure our partners, contractors and suppliers also comply with the relevant statutes and encourage good equalities practice. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules were updated in 2021 to follow national models for compliance. Additional focus on social outcomes, including Equality Act based social outcomes, has been designed into the procurement system.

During the 2020/21 closure of our offices due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Council was able to ensure continued access to our services online. This included improvement of our existing online offer and bringing more services online. Customer feedback indicated a largely positive reaction to this shift. Building on this, our Customer Service Centre reopened with a focus on self-service for those customers who are able to, freeing up staff to meet the needs of our most vulnerable customers. Customer Services Officers remain available to support customers over the telephone and in person. This can include resolving enquiries or supporting customers to move towards self-service in the future. Officers are trained and encouraged to use their judgement and discretion to offer appropriate support to those who need most help.

The Communications Team continue to strive to meet the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The regulations help to make sure that online public services, whether accessed via a computer or on a mobile device, are accessible to all users and that all documents we publish online are inclusive and easily readable for all potential readers.

We will be responsive to the needs of local people and work to remove any identified barriers to communication. Individuals will be consulted about their communication needs and preferences. In compliance with the Accessible Information Standard, where we provide services linked to health or social care, we will identify particular needs of service users, record them, flag them to other staff and/or share them with other organisations as appropriate, as well as doing our best to meet identified needs.

Delivery of our services will also take account of emerging equality issues the Council has made commitments on and any relevant national considerations or duties. Examples of this that have emerged in recent years include the Armed Forces Covenant, which the Council signed in 2014, the Modern Slavery Pledge, which the Council signed in 2020 and made further commitments on in 2021 and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance working definition of anti-Semitism, which the Council adopted in 2020. Council Officers will continue to stay up to date with any new equalities discourse and advise Members accordingly.

We will ensure that our buildings are fully accessible and where this is not practical we will provide reasonable alternative methods of access so no one is discriminated against by physical barriers. The Council has made a commitment to recognise hidden disabilities as part of disability equality and to work towards ensuring Council offices are hidden disability friendly and clearly identified as such by way of the Sunflower logo. All aspects of access and equality are considered at the design stage of repair and improvement contracts.

Objective 4: Community Cohesion and Involvement

We will work to encourage cohesion between different communities and individuals, with or without protected characteristics, and support those who may be subject to discrimination. We will engage with residents, communities and others in an inclusive way, encouraging everyone, particularly people with protected characteristics, to have their say.

The council will work in partnership with other local agencies to promote equality and continue to build closer links with those who may be subject to discrimination through engaging with communities and organisations working with those people. We will support victims of discrimination across all our services. This may be through dissemination of information, signposting to other local services and through the application of this Strategy in service design and delivery. Our Communities Team works with local partners to regularly monitor community tensions and incidences of hate crimes, taking joint action where necessary.

We continue to identify and engage with local groups and organisations that represent District residents who share any of the protected characteristics (for example, Chichester Access Group), to inform the work of the Council. We will explore all opportunities to celebrate diversity and support campaigns and events that promote inclusivity and tolerance in our communities.

The Communications Team seeks to engage with equality groups in Chichester about relevant issues, including those groups that are sometimes underrepresented. Views will be sought from the public whenever there is a statutory requirement to consult and also

when their views can contribute to development of policies or services or are necessary to understand the potential impact of a Council decision. We acknowledge that those who have a particular protected characteristic are best placed to assess the impact of any policy or decision on people who share it. Where practical, we will consult our customers and the local community to establish whether our services are accessible to all.

The council will use a variety of means of engaging with the local community, recognising that some engagement methods will be more effective with different groups. Our Communications Team have a range of tools available to support meaningful consultation and engagement with a range of communities and steps will always be taken to ensure those with specific needs who wish to take part are able to do so. We will regularly consult with the relevant trade unions and our employees using a range of consultative structures and engagement methods. The council will keep these means of communication under review to ensure they continue to be effective.

Objective 5: Equality and the Rural Area

We will ensure that the rural nature of our district is promoted and taken into account, whilst continuing to ensure that accessibility of service is a key consideration when designing new services or revising existing procedures.

We recognise and appreciate the beautiful natural environment we have in the District and its importance to our local communities and economy. However, in some areas, some of our communities experience difficulties as a result of the rural environment, including rural isolation, lack of transport and access to services.

We will take into account the rural nature of the District, to ensure that it is protected, but also that accessibility for all communities and those with protected characteristics is considered and enabled as far as possible. This could include focusing specific support on just our most rural locations. We will ensure the interests of our rural communities are understood and taken into account when decisions are made that affect them.

Putting the Strategy into action

Putting the strategy into action is the responsibility of all staff and Members. Both employees and Members must comply with both the spirit and wording of the strategy. This strategy is to be regarded as part of every employee's terms and conditions of employment.

Divisional Managers are responsible for ensuring that their services are delivered without discrimination and all managers are responsible for preventing discrimination and for setting a good example. Members are responsible for agreeing the strategy and the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Corporate Services will review and sign off the Annual Report on Equalities each year.

When Services plan their projects and service delivery for the next year, as part of our annual Service Planning process, we ask them to identify any projects that could impact on equality issues. Progress on these projects is reviewed annually and published in the Annual Report on Equalities.

The council will communicate the Equality Strategy and related policies to all existing staff and people applying for jobs with the council, for example through the information we send out to prospective employees and through the induction of new employees.

Equality and Diversity pages will be maintained on the council's website and our staff Intranet to ensure they continue to contain relevant and up to date publications and reports.

Remedies

Staff who feel they have been discriminated against should refer to the Equality and Diversity Policy and the Bullying and Harassment at Work Policy as well as the Grievance Procedure if appropriate. Employees who fail to comply with the Equality Strategy may be subject to the council's Disciplinary and Contract Termination Procedure.

Complaints from customers will be dealt with through the corporate complaints procedure.

Appendices

Chichester District population equality analysis carried out September 2021.

Further Reading

The following documents are readily available to staff on our Intranet, or can be obtained by emailing chichesterHR@chichester.gov.uk

- Communication and Digital Strategy 2021-26
- Consultation Toolkit
- Equality Act 2010 – Guidance and Equality Impact Assessment template
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Equality Monitoring Guidance and equality monitoring template
- Flexible Working Policy
- Conduct of Staff Policy
- Domestic Abuse – Workplace Policy
- Stress Management Policy
- Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave Policies

A copy of this Equality Strategy can be made available in alternative formats by calling 01243 785166.

Chichester District population equality analysis September 2021

BACKGROUND

This document outlines some key statistics which help to understand the residents within Chichester District. The most up to date data for each of the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010 has been included. In many cases, the most recent data available comes from the Census. The most recent Census was conducted in March 2021, however, initial data from that will not be released until March 2022. That data will be reviewed when it is released and any significant changes addressed at the time.

The key statistics below are from the 2011 Census, unless a more up to date data source is available. On Census Day 2011, the population of Chichester District was 113,794. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) also publishes annual population estimates; most recently estimating the population mid-way through 2020. This data is also shown below where it is relevant.

AGE

Breakdown of age ranges in the district at Census 2011 and subsequent ONS population estimates. The largest groups are highlighted.

Age Range	Census 2011		Population Estimate Mid-2020	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
0-9 years	11,282	9.91%	12,206	10.05%
10-19 years	12,609	11.08%	12,796	10.53%
20-29 years	11,350	9.97%	11,589	9.54%
30-39 years	11,326	9.95%	11,226	9.24%
40-49 years	15,809	13.89%	13,513	11.12%
50-59 years	14,974	13.16%	17,851	14.69%
60-69 years	16,101	14.15%	16,755	13.79%
70-79 years	11,734	10.31%	15,553	12.80%
80+ years	8,609	7.57%	10,019	8.25%
Total	113,794		121,508	

In general, the estimated proportion of the District's population in age groups under 50 has fallen from 2011 to 2020, while the proportion aged 50 or over has grown.

DISABILITY

Limiting Long Term Illness

2011 Census figures for people in Chichester District living with a limiting, long-term health problem or disability. The largest group is highlighted.

	Number of people	Percentage
Day-to-day activities not limited by any illness, health problem or disability	93,911	82.5%
Day-to-day activities limited a little by any illness, health problem or disability	11,555	10.2%
Day-to-day activities limited a lot by any illness, health problem or disability	8,328	7.3%
Total:	113,794	

Disability Benefit Claimants

The numbers of active claims for disability related benefits are released by the Department for Work and Pensions and can give a more up to date indication of the number of people in Chichester District living with a disability.

The table below shows the main types of benefits people can claim on the basis of having a disability and the number of people claiming them in Chichester District. Some people are eligible to claim more than one of these so the claimant numbers should be viewed independently of each other. Receipt of some of these benefits does not necessarily mean that claimants cannot also work to some extent.

Benefit	Eligibility Overview	Chichester District Claimants	% Population (mid-2020 estimate)
Disability Living Allowance (DLA)	Now discontinued but some claimants (particularly older people) may continue to receive it until their existing claim ends. New claims are allowed for children under 16.	1,913 (Feb 2021)	1.57%
Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)	Working age claimants with a disability or health condition that affects how much they can work	2,089 (Feb 2021)	1.72%
Attendance Allowance	Pension-age claimants with a disability severe enough that they need someone to help look after them.	3,271 (Feb 2021)	2.69%
Personal Independence Payment (PIP)	Claimants with a long term physical or mental health condition or disability.	2,993 (July 2021)	2.46%

GENDER REASSIGNMENT

Data on gender reassignment is not yet available at a Local Authority level. This has been addressed by the inclusion of a voluntary question about gender reassignment in the 2021 Census. Responses will capture whether or not an individual's gender identity is the same as they were assigned at birth.

Until this data is released, estimates about the number of Trans and non-binary people in the UK place the proportion at between 0.3% and 1% UK-wide. This could suggest that between 365 and 1,215 people in Chichester District identify as Trans or non-binary.

MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

Marital status of the resident population in Chichester District according to Census 2011 data. The largest group is highlighted.

Marital Status	Number of people	Percentage
Single (never married or registered a same-sex civil partnership)	25,801	27.1%
Married	49,642	52.2%
In a registered same-sex civil partnership	175	0.2%
Separated (but still legally married or in a same-sex civil partnership)	2,153	2.3%
Divorced or formerly in a same-sex civil partnership which is now legally dissolved	8,890	9.3%
Widowed or surviving partner from a same-sex civil partnership	8,500	8.9%
Total (aged 16 or over):	95,161	

PREGNANCY & MATERNITY

According to ONS data, there were **964** live births to women living in Chichester District in 2019. This has fallen from 1,051 in 2015.

ONS also calculates and publishes via NOMIS, a General Fertility Rate (GFR) using the total number of live births per 1000 women aged 15 – 44 according to population estimates. The 2019 GFR for Chichester District is **54.6**, down from 58.5 in 2015. The GFR has generally been falling since 2014, which is in line with trends in the rest of West Sussex and the South East, although figures for these areas remain higher than in Chichester District.

RACE

Ethnicity of the resident population in Chichester District according to Census 2011 data. The largest group is highlighted.

Ethnic Group	Number of people	Percentage
White: English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	105,841	93.01%
White: Irish	743	0.65%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	238	0.21%
White: Other White	3,500	3.08%
Mixed / multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	269	0.24%
Mixed / multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	158	0.14%
Mixed / multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	361	0.32%
Mixed / multiple ethnic group: Other mixed	304	0.27%
Asian / Asian British: Indian	470	0.41%
Asian / Asian British: Pakistani	36	0.03%
Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi	131	0.12%
Asian / Asian British: Chinese	339	0.30%
Asian / Asian British: Other Asian	641	0.56%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: African	319	0.28%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: Caribbean	129	0.11%
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British: Other Black	70	0.06%
Arab	102	0.09%
Any other ethnic group	143	0.13%
Total:	113,794	

RELIGION AND BELIEF

Religion of the resident population in Chichester District according to Census 2011 data. The largest group is highlighted.

Religion	Number of people	Percentage
Christian	75,248	66.13%
Buddhist	492	0.43%
Hindu	276	0.24%
Jewish	163	0.14%
Muslim	419	0.37%
Sikh	31	0.03%
Other Religion	516	0.45%
No Religion	27,947	24.56%
Religion Not Stated	8,702	7.65%
Total:	113,794	

SEX

Of the 113,794 people living in Chichester District, 54,401 (47.8%) were male and 59,393 (52.2%) were females at the time of the 2011 Census.

The mid-2020 population estimate shows that the total population of Chichester District has grown to 121,508. 58,411 (48.1%) are male and 63,097 (51.9%) are female. The split of the District's population between males and females has remained generally consistent.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Data about sexual orientation is not yet available at a local authority level. This has been addressed by the inclusion of a voluntary question about sexual orientation in the 2021 Census.

Although the 2011 Census shows that 175 people aged over 16 living in Chichester District were in same-sex Civil Partnerships, this does not include those in same-sex relationships who have not formed a civil partnership, or those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other but are not in relationships.

The latest sexual orientation data at a national level comes from the Annual Population Survey 2019. The table below shows how people nationally identify and how that could translate if calculated based on Chichester District's population. Nationally, the proportion of people identifying as gay, lesbian, bisexual or other has been increasing since 2015.

Sexual Orientation	% Identifying Nationally (Annual Population Survey 2019)	Estimate for Chichester District Population (mid-2020 estimate)
Heterosexual or straight	93.7%	113,853
Gay or lesbian	1.6%	1,944
Bisexual	1.1%	1,337
Other	0.7%	851
Don't know / Refuse	3.0%	3,645