

Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy



Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (EDI) sets out our commitment as a council to achieve better outcomes for everyone in Gateshead.

This policy is for all Gateshead residents, our employees and our councillors. It applies to all council services, including those using volunteers or delivered by other organisations on behalf of the council.

Specific policy guidance for our employees is available in our Workforce EDI strategy.

Context:

As a council, we have a legal duty under the Equality Act (2010) to;

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity; and
- promote good relations between different groups of people

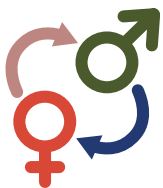
This legal duty covers nine protected characteristics:



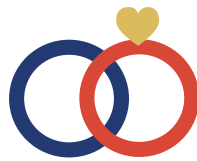
age



disability



gender reassignment



marriage and civil partnership



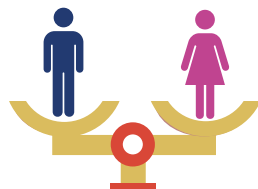
pregnancy and maternity



race



religion or belief



sex



sexual orientation

This includes discrimination against people on the grounds that they are associated with a person who shares a protected characteristic or are perceived to share a protected characteristic.

We also have duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (2012) to consider the needs of all individuals, including our employees, in service delivery and policy development. We publish annual information to show how we comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and agree Equality Objectives every four years to work towards improving outcomes for Gateshead residents.


We will make sure that we comply with these duties, however we want to do much more, both because it will help us achieve our vision and it is simply the right thing to do.

Our strategic approach, Thrive, has the ambition of making Gateshead a place where everyone can thrive. Our Thrive pledges include; to tackle inequality so that everyone has a fair chance and to put people and families at the heart of everything we do.


We know inequalities exist within Gateshead, and between our residents with different protected characteristics. As a council, we have a leadership role to challenge inequality and promote equality of opportunity in all of our services and in our decision-making. This policy is our clear organisational commitment to be a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion.

Diversity in Gateshead:


Gateshead - what we know




Gateshead's **population** is **196,100**




51% are female




49% are male



89,000 households




Gateshead has an ageing population. **20.3%** of our residents are **65 and over**. An **increase of 12.9%** since 2011. 21.7% are aged under 20 (in England it is 23%).



The largest **religion** in Gateshead is **Christian 50.8%**, followed by **Muslim 2.1%** and **Jewish 1.5%**.

No religion was the **second most common response, 40.1%**, up from 23.9% in 2011


Declining number of people in Gateshead identifying as Christian.



For the first time the census asked people (aged 16 or over) about their **sexual orientation and gender identity**.

3.4% of the population **identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual** or other (non-heterosexual) sexual orientation, similar to the England figure of 3.2%.

In Gateshead, 0.2% answered no to the voluntary question "is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?", **compared to 0.2% in England**.



People from a **Black, Asian, mixed or multiple or other ethnic background** in Gateshead is small but **increasing** (3.7% in 2011 to 6.5% in 2021).

0.1% identified as **Gypsy or Traveller** in the 2021 census.

The most common **languages spoken** by Gateshead residents **after English** are; **Polish, Arabic, Kurdish and Romanian**.



In Gateshead **42.3%** of the population aged 16 years or over were **married or in a civil partnership** in 2021. This is down from 44.7% in 2011, reflecting national trends.

4.5% of our residents are **Armed Forces Veterans**



22% of people in Gateshead **identified as disabled**, just over 1 in 5, higher than the 17% in England.




1 in 10 of the population identified as **providing unpaid care** in 2021, across England it was 1 in 8.




94 of our residents use **British Sign Language** as their primary language.

Our workforce (data declared at 31 March 2023- excludes school employees)

Gateshead council has
4448 employees
(excludes school employees)

 **61%** are female

 **39%** are male

Across all local authorities the split average is 70:30

44%

The council's workforce age profile shows **44% are aged 50+**, **11.6% are aged 60+**


There are lower numbers of younger employees

14% aged 30 and under,
1.4% aged 19 and under

 **Disability**
The proportion of council employees who declared a disability

- 2.7%** identify themselves as disabled
- 61.7%** do not have a disability
- 35%** of our workforce have not provided any information around disability

Religion or belief

 **28%** of employees declared they are **Christian**
26% say they have **no religion**.
43% have **not declared** any religion

Race

 **2.75%** of employees are from a Black, Asian, mixed ethnic background or another ethnic group

Sexual orientation

 **1.7%** of employees identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual

We have no employees who have declared that their gender identity is different to the sex they were registered with at birth.

Marriage and civil partnership

 **41%** of workforce is **married**
0.3% in a **civil partnership**
13% of employees did not provide this information

Gender pay gap

- Top two tiers in the council have eight roles, **3** are held by **females**, **5** by **males**
- Almost **twice as many females are employed than males** at Gateshead Council, with over **66.67%** of those females being employed in the lower two quartiles (on the lower rates of pay)
- Our mean gender pay gap in March 2022 was 4.56%, reduced from 2021.
- Median gender pay gap was 5.28%, reduced from 2021.

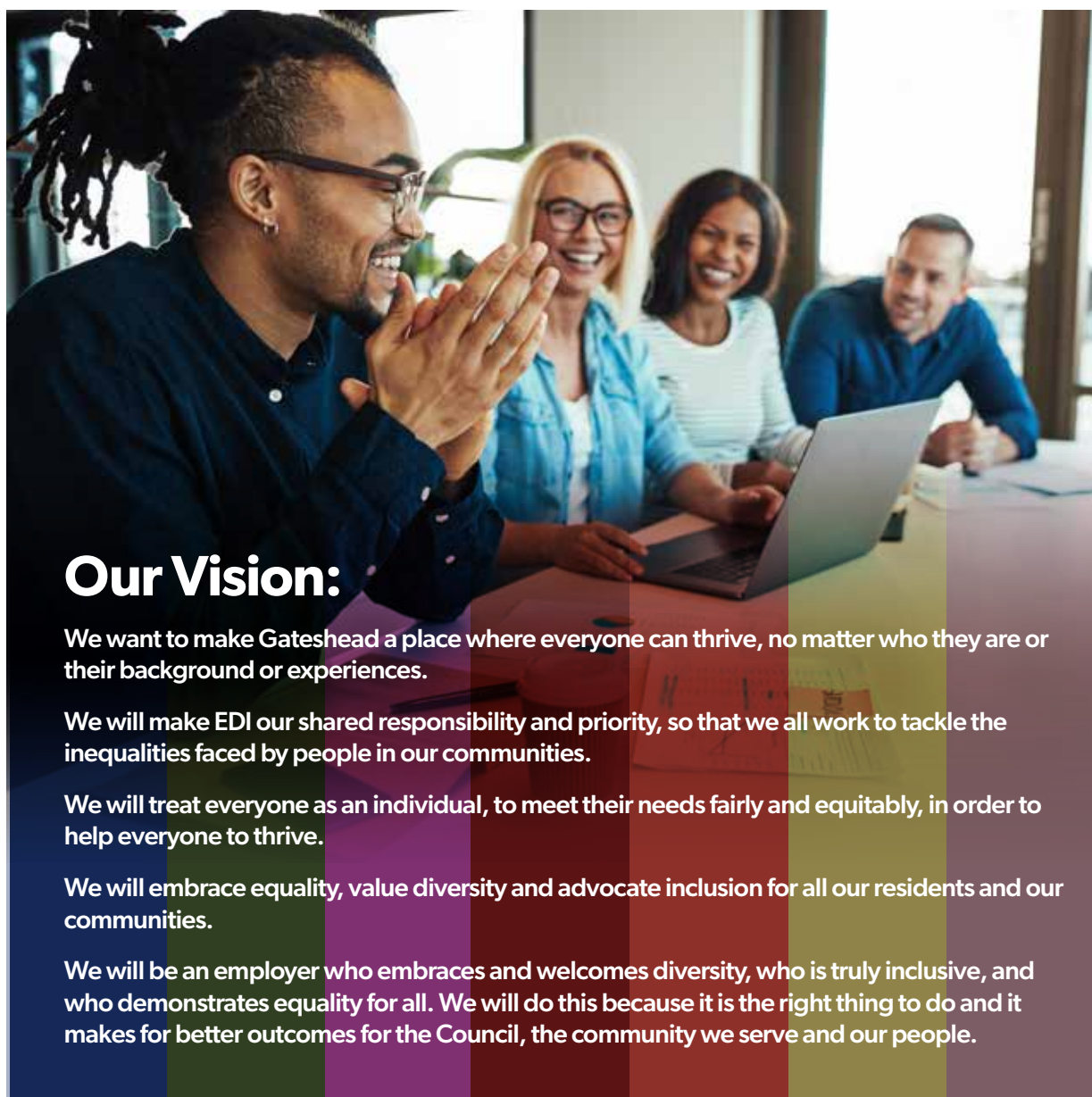
What we mean by EDI:

Equality is about fairness. A society where individuals or groups of people are not treated less favourably, and where everyone can participate and have the same opportunity to fulfil their potential.

However, we know that equality is not always enough. For some individuals we recognise there are difficulties to them being able to access opportunities fairly. In order to achieve **equity**, we must develop an equitable approach to do more and provide additional support to remove the barriers that some people face.

Diversity is about recognising and respecting the value of difference. It means considering and appreciating all the unique characteristics that make people who they are. This includes, but is not limited to; national origins, language, race or ethnicity, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, and family structure. Diversity also includes diversity of thought and life experiences.

Inclusion is about creating and maintaining a culture where people feel welcomed, respected and valued for who they are as an individual or groups.



Our Vision:

We want to make Gateshead a place where everyone can thrive, no matter who they are or their background or experiences.

We will make EDI our shared responsibility and priority, so that we all work to tackle the inequalities faced by people in our communities.

We will treat everyone as an individual, to meet their needs fairly and equitably, in order to help everyone to thrive.

We will embrace equality, value diversity and advocate inclusion for all our residents and our communities.

We will be an employer who embraces and welcomes diversity, who is truly inclusive, and who demonstrates equality for all. We will do this because it is the right thing to do and it makes for better outcomes for the Council, the community we serve and our people.

Commitments:

Our commitments are based on the themes within the Equality Framework for Local Government.

We will:

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment –

- Make EDI a shared responsibility and priority for everyone, at all levels of the Council: leaders, councillors, managers and employees.
 - Embed EDI in all our policies, procedures and ways of working so it is visible in our everyday work.
 - Embed EDI into all of our decision-making processes, using our Integrated Impact Assessments approach.
 - Implement the voluntary Socio-Economic Duty within the Equality Act, as agreed in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, so that we pro-actively consider socio-economic impact to inform our council decisions.
 - Demonstrate inclusive leadership and treat everyone - customers and colleagues, with dignity and respect, in a fair and equitable way.
 - Actively challenge any unacceptable behaviour or attitudes which go against the principles in this policy.
 - Prioritise Inclusivity as pledged in our [Corporate Plan 2023-2028](#).
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Responsive services and customer care –

- Put EDI at the heart of the design and delivery of our services, policies, systems, procurement, commissioning and facilities, so that they are fully accessible and inclusive, removing any barriers faced by our residents.
 - Recognise our residents are individuals and provide services to meet their needs, in some cases this will mean doing more to support those individuals who are disadvantaged by who they are or their experiences.
 - Communicate in accessible ways and provide information, advice and guidance about our services in appropriate formats, in order to fully meet the needs of all our residents.
 - Deliver our customer commitment to listen, be flexible and respond appropriately with reasonable adjustments, to always meet the needs of all our customers.
 - Improve our customer knowledge and understanding through data collection, to improve access to and take-up of our services.
 - Prioritise Customer Experience as pledged in our [Corporate Plan 2023-2028](#).
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Understanding and working with our communities –

- Listen to our residents and learn from their experiences, to improve our knowledge and understanding of the needs of all our diverse communities across Gateshead.
- Actively involve and enable our communities, including our employees, in inclusive consultation and in our decision-making processes.
- Co-design and collaborate with partners where possible, to deliver for local communities.
- Actively work with our diverse communities to improve our insight and build effective relationships.

Diverse and Engaged Workforce –

- Have a leadership culture where all our people are truly inspired, regardless of their characteristics.
- Develop a work experience where people love coming to work knowing that being an individual is something to be proud of.
- Build a brand which is recognised by our future employees as an employer that wants them to bring their best selves to work, knowing that they'll feel valued and welcome, because what they do and how they do it is all that matters to us.
- Ensure we have an environment where our people feel able to be themselves, challenge poor behaviours and encourage everyone to be accepting, welcoming and at home at Gateshead Council.
- Have inspirational leaders who role model what great looks like, being inclusive, treating everyone as equals and applauding diversity.
- Establish ways of working that ensures that our practices, process, systems, policies, and procedures support our ambition to be an exemplar for equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Provide opportunities for people to grow, learn, develop, and help others.
- Aim to have a workforce which is representative of the community we serve and achieve significantly more diverse representation across each level of job role in our workforce.
- Design ways of working that are aimed at removing unintended barriers which hinder and/or prevent individuals from challenged socio-economic backgrounds from entering, retaining and progressing their employment.

Further detail on our commitments to our employees can be found in our Workforce EDI strategy.

By adopting this policy and delivering our commitments we want to achieve a place where everyone feels safe, included, valued and respected, to help all Gateshead residents and our workforce to thrive.

Responsibility for implementation

At Gateshead Council we all have a responsibility for ensuring that our services comply with this policy and that we work together to deliver the commitments for our residents and employees

We will report on progress made against our corporate Equality and Diversity work programme, using the Equality Framework for Local Government, in our Equality and Diversity annual report.

We will review this policy every three years, or earlier should related policy or legal requirements change.



