

Knowsley MBC

Equality and Diversity 4 Year Progress Report

2020 - 2024

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Equality, Diversity and Inclusion 4 Year Report

Executive Summary

As part of our responsibilities under The Equality Act 2010 the council are required to produce a 4 year report demonstrating our progress towards meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty, as well as having a statutory responsibility we recognise this is the right thing to do and we will continue to have Equality, Diversity and Inclusion as a key priority for the next 4 years.

The Act was introduced to protect people from harassment in the workplace and also in wider society. The Equality Act places responsibilities on public sector organisations; as such, local authorities must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work; in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees. It also requires that public sector organisations:

- Have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

The Equality Act 2010 identifies nine protected characteristics. They are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (ethnicity)
- Religion, belief and non-belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

General and Specific Duties

As part of the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we are required to publish information on how we have met our duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). Each Public Body with more than 150 employees is expected to:

1. Publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty. This needed to be done for the first time by 31 January 2012 and at least annually thereafter. This information must include, in particular, information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are:

- Its employees, and
 - Affected by its policies and practices.
2. Each listed authority (including schools and pupil referral units separately from their Local Authorities) must prepare and publish one or more equality objectives to further the aims of the general equality duty. This needed to be done for the first time by 6 April 2012 and at least every four years thereafter. The objectives must be specific and measurable.

Both the equality information and the equality objectives must be published in a manner that is accessible to the public.

The [Annual Workforce Profile and Gender Pay Gap Report](#) detailing the make-up of Knowsley Council employees by the protected characteristics and our progress on the gender pay gap, are available on our website. This report focuses on how we have met the equality objectives that we set in 2020.

How do we meet the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010?

Knowsley Council uses three mechanisms below to demonstrate compliance with The Equality Act 2010 and to implement our equality objectives within our service delivery and management processes:

1. **Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's)** - must be used to demonstrate that the Council has given "due regard" to the general equality duty within its decision-making, commissioning, employment, procurement and service delivery functions.
2. **Equality Monitoring** - equality profiles must be used appropriately within consultation, complaints and other monitoring process to demonstrate equality of opportunity in access, quality and outcome across service delivery and employment.
3. **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training** - corporate standards, a comprehensive suite of training interventions and one to one support to ensure that staff, management and elected members understand the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Statement and their responsibilities.

The council's [Equality & Diversity Policy Statement 2022 - 2025](#) details our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

KMBC Equality and Diversity Objectives 2020-2024

The council vision during from 2020-2024 was to make Knowsley the 'Borough of Choice'. Whilst the physical assets of the borough - its green space, leisure facilities, its infrastructure and connectivity - are of very high quality, its greatest potential asset is its people and their

families. To help deliver this vision, the Council identified around five delivery priorities for 2020-2024: -

- Maximise the Council's contribution to education in Knowsley;
- Maximise the Council's contribution to the health and wellbeing of Knowsley residents;
- Provide high quality and sustainable Adult Social Care;
- Accelerate business growth, new jobs and new housing; and,
- Create a sustainable Borough.

These outcomes are supplemented through the following equality objectives:

1. Publish a Declaration of Intent on Race Equality
2. Gain Navajo Charter Mark accreditation
3. Achieve Disability Confident Level 2 "Employer"
4. Gender Pay Gap progression – To reduce the median gender pay gap to the city-region average of 8%.

To be successful, the Council continue to build on the principles of "Knowsley Better Together" to build better partnerships and help others to make a difference in Knowsley.

How were the 2020 – 2024 objectives met?

Publish a Declaration of Intent on Race Equality

Knowsley Council accepts that it has an important role to play in tackling racial injustice and inequality and driving forward positive change and in December 2021 after working collaboratively with our staff Black and Minority Workers Group we published our first Declaration of Intent on Race Equality.

The full [Race Equality - Declaration of Intent](#) includes detailed actions on how we will progress Race Equality at Knowsley Council. The commitments and actions in the Declaration of Intent run until 2025. Some of the progress made so far includes:

- Conducting an employee survey and analysing the results by ethnicity
- Increasing the number of staff from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic backgrounds from 1.6% (2021) to 2.5% (2023)
- Introducing inclusive recruitment guidelines to enable managers to be more inclusive when recruiting
- Committing to ensuring all staff attend the Liverpool City Region Race Equality Training Programme with 206 managers attending to date.

A full report on how we have met our Declaration of Intent on Race Equality will be published in 2025. This will be reviewed in line with the development of the new Council Plan, People Strategy and Stronger Communities Plan to determine further action and next steps.

Gain Navajo Charter Mark accreditation

The Council were awarded the Navajo Merseyside and Cheshire LGBTIQA+ Charter Mark in October 2024 having undergone a rigorous assessment in July 2024. The council were judged successful in all 10 areas of the Charter Mark assessment in line with statutory requirements and promoting best practice in engaging with the LGBTIQA+ community.

Feedback was extremely positive with the assessors' highlighting areas where the council is doing well, including incorporating lived experience and diverse voices into policy development and our corporate and financial commitment to Equality, Diversity and LGBT+ inclusion as well as some areas for improvement which will be incorporated into our wider Equality, Diversity and Inclusion workplan.

Achieve Disability Confident Level 2

In January 2023 the Council gained Disability Confident Level 2 Employer Status. The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents people with disabilities can bring to the workplace. Knowsley Council first gained level 1 'Committed' status in 2019 and presented robust evidence leading to the higher-level 2 "Employer" award. This included meeting key requirements, such as actively attracting and recruiting disabled people to help fill job opportunities, providing support in the workplace and ensuring employees have sufficient disability equality awareness training.

Gender Pay Gap

Our [Gender Pay Gap report](#) is published annually. In 2020 we reported a median gender pay gap of 9.43% and a mean gender pay gap of 13.8%. By March 2024 this had reduced to a median gender pay gap 6.9% and a mean gender pay gap of 11.3%. Unlike many other local authorities, Knowsley is proud to have maintained large in-house School Meals and Facilities Management services. The posts in those services are predominantly filled by female workers. The size of these services (employing over 590 staff in total) impacts significantly on the gender pay gap calculation. This aspect of the workforce skews the overall gender pay gap calculation. Across all other pay bands (including senior officers), there is no gender pay gap in the Council.

Our [pay policy statement](#) is published each year as part of our annual budget setting process.

As part of our work to reduce the Gender Pay Gap we have worked to make our recruitment processes more inclusive. Some of examples are:

- Added phonetic spelling of names to job applications.

- Pronouns added to application form next to your name on personal details and to ID badges
- Making it clear on applications forms that flexible working is an option when possible
- Changing the language on job adverts to ensure that it is clear that we welcome applications for everyone, especially those from minoritised groups.
- Launch of Inclusive Recruitment Guide for Managers
- Extended Guaranteed Interview to Armed Forces and Care Leavers
- Produced a film featuring our employee networks film and a film that shows a diverse range of people working for Knowsley Council [Yes Knowsley | Knowsley Council](#)

Employee Networks

We have 8 Employee Networks, and we support them to celebrate what is important to them. Some key events and highlights from 2020-2024 include:

- Women's History Month and quarterly Menopause cafes
- Black History Month focussing on Black Entrepreneurs in Knowsley and a celebration event for Black and Minority Ethnic Staff
- Carer's Rights Day
- Interfaith Week celebration and bi-annual Foodbank collections
- Supported the establishment of new networks:
 - Youth Employee Network (2023)
 - Changies – Men's Health (2021)
 - Neurodiversity Network (2020)
- LGBTQ+ History Month, Knowsley Pride and Pro-nouns on ID badges

Our Black and Minority Workers Group have also produced a film called ["Here for Good"](#) that showcases Black History in Knowsley as part of our Knowsley at 50 celebrations.

Equality Impact Assessments

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to assess the impact of decisions on underrepresented groups. Knowsley Council's method for complying and further documenting our commitment to equality and diversity is through the implementation and completion of Equality Impact Assessments. An equality and diversity impact assessment is a way of finding out whether a decision affects different groups of people in different ways. These assessments must be undertaken to comply with our organisational commitments and statutory obligations.

As part of Knowsley's commitment to equality and diversity, impact assessments will be undertaken of every relevant decision and will take into account the Equality Act 2010 General Duty, The Human Rights Act 1998, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and the Care Act 2014.

Equality Impact Assessments cover the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race (including Gypsies and Travellers)
- Religion and Belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual Orientation
- Offending Past
- Carer's Status
- Social Economic Status (including Child Poverty)
- Care Experience
- Armed Forces, Veterans and their Families

In recognition of particular local characteristics, Knowsley Council has chosen to include within our equality impact assessment analysis Carer's, Offending Past, Socio-economic Status and Child Poverty, Armed Forces, Veterans and their families as vulnerable groups the latter reflecting our commitment to the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

In October 2023 Knowsley Council adopted Care Experience as a protected characteristic [Agenda item - Notices of Motion | Knowsley Council \(councillors.kmbc\)](#). Care experienced includes all those who have had prolonged contact with social care by virtue of legal order from the court known as a care order; some may have been fostered, some placed with family members or others may have received support in a placement such as a children's home. This cohort face significant challenges upon leaving the care system and are statistically more likely to struggle across a range of areas including education, employment and housing as well as more likely to experience poor mental health and disrupted adult relationships.

The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will be used to address negative issues which may arise from existing or proposed policies, including the identification of potential for discrimination and the consideration of alternative proposals and activities that will not have any adverse impact. They also provide an opportunity to consider how services and decisions can be more inclusive and foster good relations. Equality Impact Assessments are required for each decision that is made the council and are published alongside the papers [Browse meetings - Cabinet | Knowsley Council](#)

Complaints and Compliments – Have Your Say

Every year, Knowsley Council publishes an annual report to provide a summary of the complaints and compliments the Council has received and how they have been dealt with. Feedback from residents and service users is important to the Council. It is an opportunity to identify and address problems, learn from our mistakes and good practice, and continue to improve what we do.

The report is produced to:

- To be open and transparent about the complaints we receive, how we have responded, and what we have done to put things right.
- To explain what we have learnt from the feedback we have received.
- To encourage people to get in touch to tell us about their experiences.

The report can be found here - [Have Your Say - Annual Report 2023-24](#)

We are unable to report complaints under protected characteristics as although we ask for the information to be provided on the complaint page of the Knowsley Internet, we are rarely provided with this information from the complainant. Where there are low numbers who may disclose their protected characteristic, it would not be appropriate to publish this information as individuals may be easily identified.

Our website

In 2023 we launched our new website, www.knowsley.gov.uk our goal from the beginning was to create a website with accessibility as the pillar that is easy to navigate and provides options for customers with additional needs, as well as information that is easy to read and understand. To that end, we conducted a full content audit, which resulted in a major overhaul of content to make it as accessible as possible, aiming for a reading age of 9.

We built the website to WCAG 2.1 and 2.2 guidelines and in addition, we utilise a tool called Silktide which allows us to run automated accessibility checks to assess any areas for improvement or further development. To provide our customers with more options, we have integrated the accessibility toolbar, Recite Me which enables customers to customise their user experience to their needs as well as translating the website into over 100 languages (50 in spoken translation).

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Training

Knowsley Council aims to promote a culture where learning and development is promoted and supported to enable all employees regardless of Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race (including gypsies and travellers), Religion and belief, Sex (Gender), Sexual Orientation, Carer's Status, grade or post to realise their full potential both at work and in the community.

Knowsley Council and partners recognise the importance of equal opportunities and equal access to learning and the need to take positive steps to make reasonable adjustments to meet the learning and development needs of employees. The partners will ensure that learning and development opportunities will be available to all employees.

The Council is committed to providing appropriate learning and development programmes to ensure that employees are aware of current equality and diversity issues and their

responsibilities. Examples of equality and diversity training that is undertaken include (this is not exhaustive):

- All elected members receive equality and diversity awareness;
- All elected members receive equality impact assessment and “due regard”;
- All staff involved in recruitment and selection must complete an e-learning module and test. The test has a 90% pass mark. Managers that don’t obtain the pass mark after 2 attempts are given one-to-one coaching.
- Equality Impact Assessment training is available as e-learning, one-to-one and bespoke team sessions;
- All Heads of Service receive one-to-one support in the completion of EIAs on service plans;
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Unconscious Bias training; and
- Equality and Diversity module as part of the Care Certificate.
- Equality, Diversity, Inclusion is part of the Corporate Induction a comprehensive two day induction which orientates new employees to the council.

In 2022, we also signed up to the LCR Race Equality Programme which includes race equity training for all employees over a 5 year period.

Future KMBC Equality and Diversity Strategy

Our current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Workplan runs for 3 years. During the first year we took the opportunity to “reset and refocus” this was to ensure that we were looking at the right things and working with the council and our employee networks to decide what they are. During the second year of our current plan we will be aligning the EDI workplan with the new Council Plan 2025- 2028 and People Strategy. Our People strategy is where our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives will sit.

Publishing

This document is published in line with the specific public sector duty under the Equality Act 2010 to publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the General Duty of the Equality Act 2010: to give due regard to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good community relations within decisions, policy and service delivery.

Knowsley Council regularly report on equality, diversity and inclusion progress:

- The council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Stakeholder Group meets bi-annually to lead the work on the EDI Workplan. It is led by the Executive Director for Communities and Neighbourhoods and reports to Executive Management Team by exception.

- The Equality, Diversity, Implementation Group meet every 6 weeks and drive the EDI workplan in conjunction with the Organisational Development Team and Stronger Communities and
- Regular Equality Progress Reports are reported to Chief Officers and relevant Portfolio Holders.

If you would like this document in an alternative format please contact

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