



Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report 2021 - 2025



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FOREWORD

It is with great enthusiasm that we present this comprehensive report on our equality outcomes progress for 2021-2025 and the newly proposed outcomes for 2025-2029. As we reflect on our journey, it is evident that progressive moves have been made in our collective efforts to advance equality and human rights in all that we do to make Aberdeen as a safe, welcoming and inclusive city but there remains more to be done.

Our commitment as a committee has seen us enhance community engagement and collaborative working which have been instrumental in addressing systemic inequalities and promoting an environment where every individual is valued and respected.

As we progress further, global and national events like war, civil unrest, economic growth and changing trends in demographics and health means we need to be resilient and responsive to such changes and remain committed to reducing inequality that persists.

The proposed new outcomes outlined in this report are designed to build on our achievements, address emerging issues with innovative solutions and ensuring that progress is both sustainable and impactful. Together, we can continue to champion the cause of equality and human rights, creating a fairer and more inclusive future for our citizens.

I invite you to explore this report which marks our dedication and maps our plans for the next 4 years to come. Let us remain united in our mission to advance equality, fostering a society where every person's dignity and rights are upheld.

Our Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report and supporting action plans will be working documents and will be monitored regularly to make sure it achieves the desired outcomes for our City.



Councillor Christian Allard

Convenor of the Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee

Key Findings and Summary

While progress has been made in advancing equality and tackling discrimination, there remains more that we need to do and have the duty to consider how to further advance equality, address inequalities by ensuring that policies and operations do not discriminate and that we foster good relations within the communities we serve.

We have revisited our current set of outcomes and reported progress in this report. The consultation and engagement revealed that there are some areas we must carry on improving, so we have refreshed some outcomes and made them our long-term goals and have brought back some outcomes as refreshed and proposed new outcomes in [Section 8](#).

We also recognise that:

- Collaboration between sectors remains necessary to address existing power imbalances and develop policies that are aimed at reducing inequality and disadvantage. Work done through Community Planning Partnership, Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership and the HDRC is pivotal in progressing this.
- A range of factors drive inequality of opportunity, including location and infrastructure, demographic profile, quality of local services, local skill profiles, employment opportunities and growth in local sectors. Equality needs to be everyone's business to address and remove barriers.
- A holistic approach to understand root causes of discrimination and inequality is necessary to address all factors that contribute to the inequality experienced. We remain committed better understand impacts of intersectionality and apply this knowledge to our operations.
- The review of all the data and feedback from the lived- experience highlights the importance of intersectionality. We explain intersectionality in [Section 1](#).
- Poverty plays a key role in the effects of inequality and discrimination. Financial security and employment have been highlighted as a priority need for many groups who participated in the community survey.
- Although efforts are being made, there remains the potential for more systematic action to tackle racism within organisation and services, in recruitment and employment and in the way we deliver and design our services. Our approach through our draft anti racist strategy is taking a positive and progressive approach to this.
- We have known for some time that the population is ageing, and overall population growth is slowing down in Scotland and more planning will be required to address the implications of an ageing population, including the increased prevalence of disabilities and long-term conditions, the potential increase in inequalities, and increased demand for services and infrastructure. Census 2022 data can be further explored at [Home | Scotland's Census](#)
- As Aberdeen City also experiences demographic changes in relation to welcoming diverse communities, this will require a comprehensive and planned approach to support and enable integration and inclusion especially for those arriving as asylum seekers and refugees. Consideration should be given to the challenges experienced by those with the No Recourse to Public Funds condition.
- Our equality data collection is and will need to be continuously evolving to maintain current data sources that can be used to inform effective decision making.
- The cost-of-living crisis has had a disproportionate impact on different groups, particularly Scotland's low-income households.
- Equality remains key in all our other strategic plans like the Local Housing Strategy, Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Strategic Plan, Community Learning and Development Plan and the Local Development Plan to ensure we are mainstreaming equality through everything we do.

Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report (2021-2025)

1. Introduction

This document presents the Council’s progress for mainstreaming equality within the organisation for 2021 – 2025 and to pay due regard to the Equality Act 2010 and its General Duties of eliminating discrimination; advancing equality of opportunity; and fostering good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. Having **due regard** for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The [protected characteristics](#) as defined by the Equality Act 2010 are: Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The term ‘**intersectionality**’ acknowledges and examines how a combination of more than one protected characteristic can lead to or spread distinct forms of discrimination or disadvantage. The illustration below is a useful tool for thinking about how different characteristics intersect with systems and structures to shape a person’s experience. Our report identifies some intersectional issues as we continue to gather information and evidence from lived experiences to develop a deeper understanding of impacts.

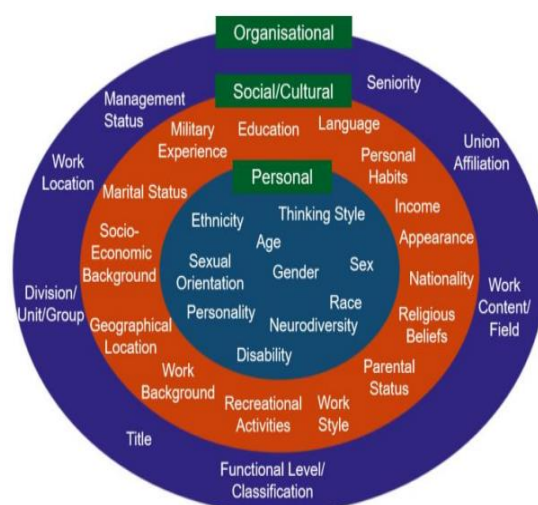


Figure 1: Diversity Wheel demonstrating how personal characteristics intersect with systems and structures to shape a person’s experience. (Source: [Scottish Government](#))

A. What is Mainstreaming?

Mainstreaming is the process of embedding equality, inclusion and human rights considerations and practices during all that we do when exercising public functions. As a public authority, we must produce new outcomes every 4 years and report the progress every 2 years to show how we are mainstreaming equality.

In practice, these processes would be connected to how:

- Decisions are made
- Policies are designed and developed
- Services are delivered
- Money is allocated and spent

B. What is an Equality Outcome?

Equality Outcomes are defined as, 'the results intended to achieve specific and identifiable improvements in people's life chances.'

C. What is the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report?

This report sets out the continuous progress we are making to mainstream equality and human rights as public sector for an approximate population of 223,919 as reported in the Census 2022 and as an employer over an approximate 8,200 employees. This report is a legal requirement and provides an update on the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report 2021- 2025 and should be reviewed alongside supporting documents in the appendices. Our list of appendices is provided [here](#).

1.2 Legal requirements

Our work is governed under [Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010](#) (The Act) which places a general duty known as the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on public authorities to have due regard to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act has been further supplemented by Scottish Ministers who have placed [Scottish Specific Duties](#) on public authorities to :

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty.
- publish equality outcomes and report progress.
- assess and review policies and practices.
- gather and use employee information.
- publish information on board diversity and succession planning.
- publish gender pay gap information.
- publish statements on equal pay.
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement.
- publish required information in a manner that is accessible.

In addition, the [Fairer Scotland Duty](#) (Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010) places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of outcome

caused by socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions. This report and appendices provide our progress on meeting our duty from 2021 – 2025.

Our last progress was reported on 30 April 2023 as required under the Equality Act (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 and the progress report can be through the link [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report - 2021-2023 \(3\).pdf](#).

This report also shares our proposed new outcomes for the next 4 years from 2025-2029 as required under the Scottish Specific Duties in [Section 8](#).

1.3 Where we are now

Since our last progress report that was published in 2023, Scotland has seen several challenges and unforeseen events, including the aftermath of Scotland's departure from the European Union with effect from 2021, the profound impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and relentless increases in the cost of living, partly because of the war in Ukraine. The impacts of these events are still being felt and hence have contributed to a changeable progress for equality and human rights as whole. We know from the '[Is Scotland Fairer](#)' report published in 2023 that the that the pandemic exposed and exacerbated existing inequalities, particularly among marginalised groups. Issues such as access to healthcare, economic disparity, and digital exclusion were brought to the forefront, prompting a change in how we do things.

1.3.1 Demographics of Aberdeen

Scotland's census in 2022 produced updated insights into the current demographics of Scotland's population and breaks it down to a local level so we can also explore the present view of Aberdeen's population. This data helps us understand the potential needs of our city and citizens and how can we shape our services to meet the needs of these changes. For the first time, census data in Scotland included information on UK Armed Forces veterans and trans status or history and sexual orientation.

A question on British Sign Language (BSL) users was also included in the Census 2022 which has helped us get a clearer picture of BSL users in Aberdeen which has often been considered as an underrepresented group.

Aberdeen's population was reported at 223,919 in the Census 2022. An interactive map with specific data range for the North East Scotland has been developed by the [Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen](#) and can be accessed through the [Health Inequalities Atlas](#).

1.3.2 Census Data 2011 and 2022 comparisons

The last data that most public sectors have used was from the Census 2011. Since then, new data evidence has been built through Census 2022 which has required services to revisit their planning and service delivery to respond to these demographic changes. For example:

- Scotland's population grew by 144,400 (2.7%) since 2011. This was due to an increase in people born outside of Scotland. This change highlights diversity of people, culture, food, religion and other social needs. Such change could mean the need for more community space, places of worship and services that might be needed around larger gatherings.

- In 2022 over half a million people living in Scotland were born in the rest of the UK (563,500). A further half a million were born outside of the UK (554,900). The number of people born outside of the UK increased by 185,600 since 2011. Cross border migration and internal migration tend to be higher for education or economic purposes. This impacts on Aberdeen's employment and education opportunities also links with local and health needs.
- The number of people living alone has increased by 100,00 since the census in 2011. In 2022 there were 40,600 more people aged 55 to 64 living alone than in 2011. Single households would also indicate a higher demand for suitable housing and may also be contributing to economic disadvantage factors if it is a single income household.
- In 2022 there were 590,500 households with dependent children in Scotland, or just under one in four households. This is a decrease of 25,900 or 4.2% since 2011, reflecting a decrease in the number of children in Scotland over the same period. The impact of this is already being realised as we have an ageing population, and more is being done to attract migration and improve recruitment. In Aberdeen during the same period, the number of households with dependent children increased from 22,354 in 2011, to 23,361 in 2022.
- The census shows a gradual shift from marriage or civil partnerships towards cohabiting. Out of a total of 2,509,269 households across Scotland in 2022, 29% contained a legally recognised couple – down from 32% in 2011. 11% of households in 2022 contained a cohabiting couple, which was an increase from 9% in 2011. In Aberdeen, the number of households with legally recognised couples decreased from 29,375 in 2011, or 28% of all households, to 27,605 in 2022, or 25% of households.
- In 2022 there were 248,954 households containing lone parent families in Scotland, or around 1 in 10 households, which was a decrease from 263,360 in 2011, or 11% of households. In Aberdeen, the number of lone parent family households increased from 8,297 in 2011 to 8,864 in 2022 and represented 8% of households in both years.

1.3.3 An overview of Protected Characteristics within Aberdeen's population

a. Age and Sex

We use the definition of 'Age' to be as a person belonging to a particular age (for example 32 year olds) or range of ages (for example 18 to 30 year olds). This looks at how certain 'age groups' are impacted in decision making and operations.

Sex under the Equality Act 2010 is defined as a man or a woman or a girl or boy.

The data suggests there are 51.6% females and 48.84% males in Aberdeen with the largest age group in the population are between 35-49 years and the smallest population are those aged between 16-24.

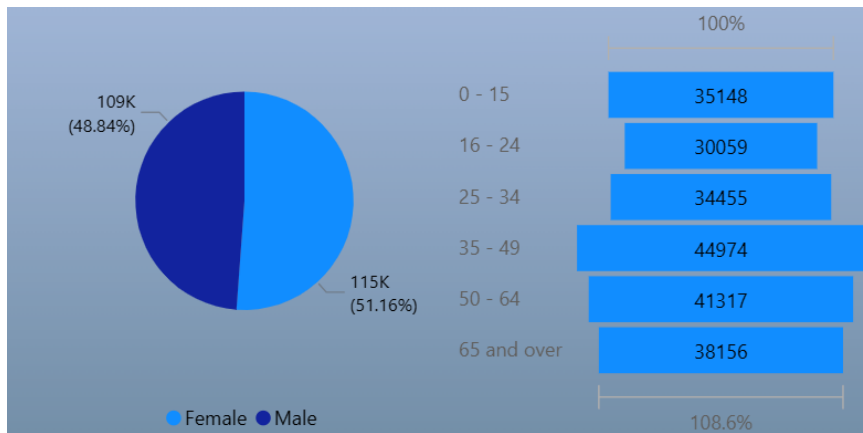


Figure 2: Aberdeen population by Age and Sex

b. Ethnicity

Under the Equality Act, ethnicity would be considered as part of 'Race' which is a group of people defined by their colour, nationality (including citizenship) ethnicity or national origins. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

We acknowledge that ethnicity is a complex issue to define. There is no consensus about what constitutes an 'ethnic group'. Research by the [Scottish Government](#) and by the [UK government](#) shows that it means different things to different people, which can depend on the context or situation, and understanding of the term evolves over time. It encompasses aspects of identity, race, ancestry, history, culture, and it is diverse.

The percentage of people in Scotland with a minority ethnic background increased from 8.2% in the previous census to 12.9% in 2022. This is a larger increase than over the previous decade (from 4.5% to 8.2%).

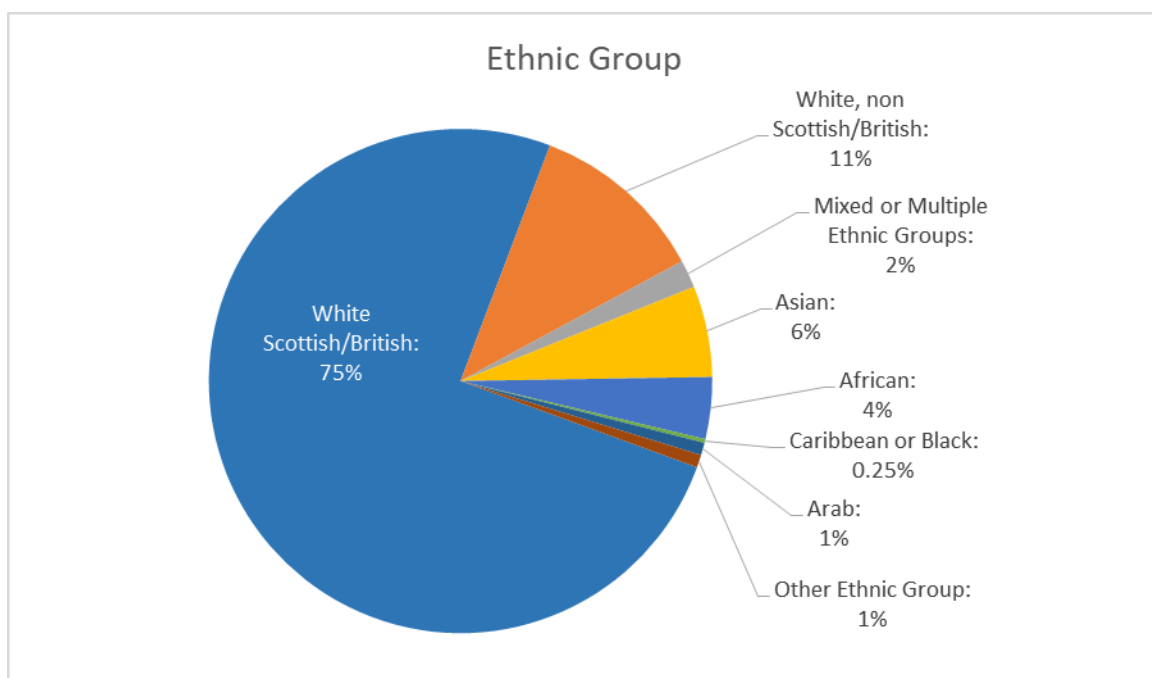


Figure 3: Ethnicity in Aberdeen City

c. Religion

Refers to any religion, including a lack of religion. Belief refers to any religious or philosophical belief and includes a lack of belief. Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition as per the Equality Act.

Across Scotland as a whole, 20.4% responded 'Church of Scotland' as their religion, down from 32.4% in 2011. The next largest religious groups were 'Roman Catholic' (13.3%), 'Other Christian' (5.1%) and 'Muslim' (2.2%). A total of 51.1% in Scotland's Census 2022 responded 'no religion' which was an increase from 36.7% in 2011.

Locally in Aberdeen, Church of Scotland and Roman Catholic are the majority religious group however, 57.99% reported to have no religion and 5.83% did not state any religion.

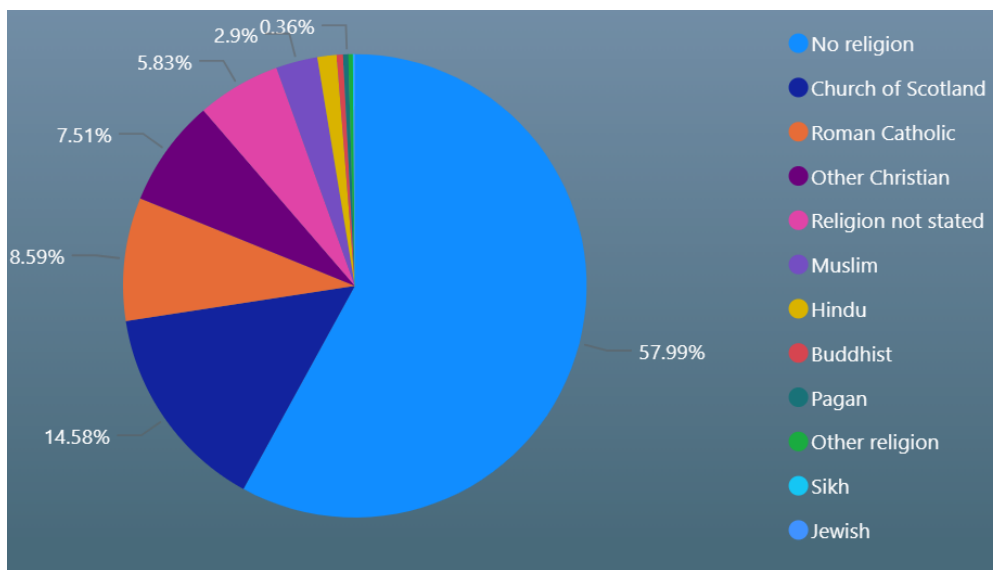


Figure 4: Religion in Aberdeen City

d. Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation as defined by the Equality Act 2010 is as whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. At 87.3%, most of the population identified as Heterosexual / Straight and 7.53% did not answer the question.

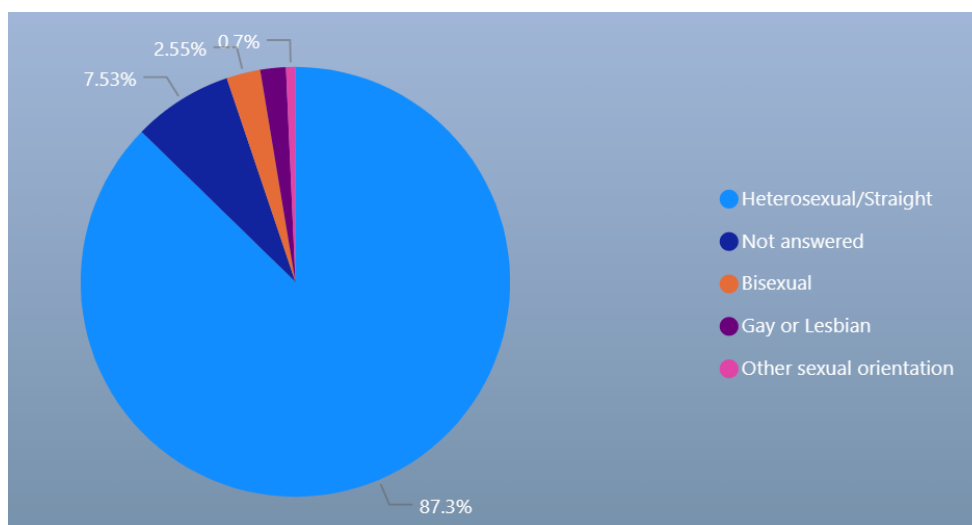


Figure 5: Sexual Orientation in Aberdeen City

e. Disability

As defined in the Equality Act, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. A total of 224,030 responses were noted to this question relating to Aberdeen.

178,845 did not have their day-to-day activities limited, 27,152 stated their day-to-day activities were limited a little and 18,033 stated their day-to-day activities were limited a lot.

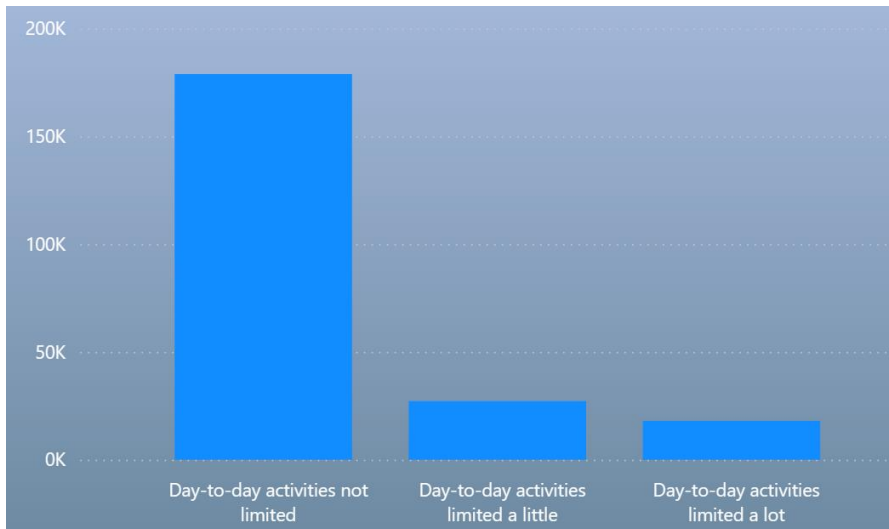


Figure 6: Disability and Ability in Aberdeen City

f. British Sign Language (BSL)

Through our local consultation in Aberdeen, British Sign Language (BSL) users have expressed different views, and some do not see BSL as a disability and more of a linguistic minority while others may define themselves as having a disability. The question on BSL was new to the Census 2022 and a total of 2.2% of people aged 3 and over can use British Sign Language (BSL).

In Aberdeen, the breakdown of BSL users is: 863 aged 3-15, 704 aged 16-24, 2232 aged 25-49, 1065 aged 50-64 and 534 aged 65 and over. We must note that being a BSL user may also include hearing interpreters or family members who can use the sign language.

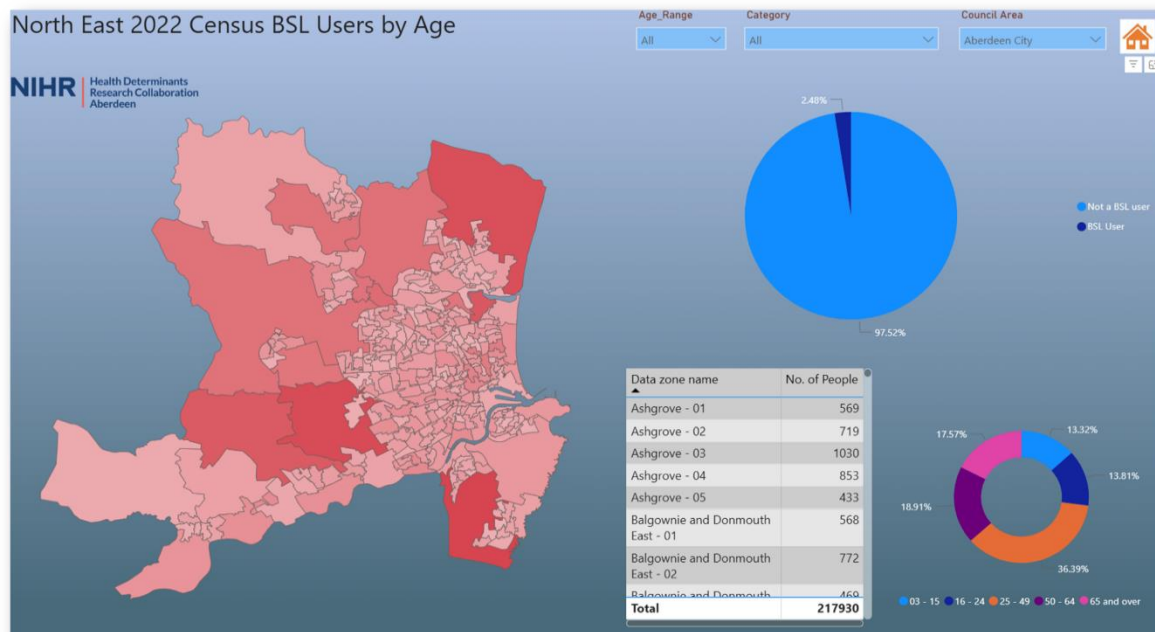


Figure 7: BSL users by Age in Aberdeen City

g. Additional Demographic Trends

- According to new statistics from National Records of Scotland, 176,100 UK Armed Forces veterans resided in Scotland at the last census. In Scotland, half of the veterans (50.4%) were aged 65 and over, and almost one third (30.6%) were aged 50 to 64, which is consistent with reports indicating an aging population in Scotland.
- In 2022, Aberdeen saw an increase in migration where there was a total of approximately 10,748 migrants which was significantly higher than our neighbouring council in Aberdeenshire who had 1207 migrants to the area.
- Migration should be considered in a broader context, encompassing internal migration where individuals move within a country, including movements between different council areas, as well as larger-scale migration from other countries. A [report](#) by the Scottish Government indicates that Aberdeen is one of the four major cities in Scotland preferred by migrants, and it has a younger population compared to other local authorities in Scotland.
- As part of migration, over 3000 displaced people have been welcomed to Aberdeen city since 2016, the vast majority of whom have arrived since 2021 via Afghan resettlement routes and in 2022, through the Ukrainian scheme routes. Arrivals also occur through asylum routes and there are currently around 380 asylum seekers in either Contingency or Dispersed accommodation in Aberdeen.

1.3.4 Population Needs in Aberdeen

The [Population Needs Assessment](#) (PNA) brings together a very broad range of data covering the people, place and economy of Aberdeen and explores how this can be related to the services and

interventions that are being provided by the Council and its partners. Key highlights from the assessment inform us that life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in the City has either stalled or is in decline.

The Population Needs Assessment looks at the health and wellbeing needs of our diverse people and helps in prioritising outcomes and reduce inequalities. The research and evidence base collected from such assessment form a solid base to understand the inequalities faced by all people with protected characteristics.

It also tells us that whilst the long-term trend in many factors relating to the determinants of health

and wellbeing has been positive, this should be viewed in context of 2 important issues:

- i. Increasing poverty in the city is clearly shown in the data, but the impact of this on many related indicators is not yet fully evident, since these indicators have a time lag.
- ii. Where there are general positive trends, in many cases these can mask very significant differences and inequalities across the city's geographical communities and communities of interest including protected characteristics and confirms the findings of the '[Is Scotland Fairer](#)' report.

1.4 Planning for a changing population

A report on [Navigating Demographic Change](#) by the Improvement Services highlights how the change in demographics impacts local councils in Scotland. The report also highlights international responses as well as others from, within the United Kingdom.

The findings of the report in relation to Scotland's changing demographic highlights some areas we can focus on to take a mix of preventative and adaptive approaches to sustain a population change.

1.4.1 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- A recent consultation paper by the Scottish Government as part of their equality and mainstreaming strategy identified 6 key drivers. These drivers included:
 - Strengthening leadership
 - Development of accountability
 - Ensuring effective regulatory and policy environment
 - Utilising evidence and experience
 - Enhancing culture and capability
 - Improving capacity

These drivers are most likely to be the national framework, and we will align with these to improve our own practices.

- We will need to revisit our plans regularly to ensure that we are changing and developing new services for the population we serve. While we have used existing data to shape services, it will be important to work with people and their lived-experience to get a deeper understanding of their experiences and impacts of our decisions from an intersectional point of view.

1.4.2 Health and Wellbeing

- An ageing population has meant that there will be implications for many aspects of our services. Housing to meet their needs, better transport infrastructure to support independence and wellbeing, care homes and care support. There will also be an anticipated impact on the benefits people can apply for and other subsidies offered to older people.
- A rise in ageing population will also have an impact on health inequalities. Wider medical [research](#) has highlighted through Covid-19 that some groups face more disadvantages than others.

1.4.3 Integration and Community Cohesion

- As the population has changed, the reason for the changes have also varied. While some people have migrated willingly, other groups were forced to leave countries of origin due to other circumstances. There will be a need for enhanced support for asylum seekers and other people arriving through other immigration routes to include working visas, family visas, students visas with an initial focus on overcoming communication barriers, mental health support, and access to healthcare and housing.
- We acknowledge that change can sometimes be seen as positive or negative. A wider awareness of Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021, how to report hate crime will be required to ensure protection for all groups.

2. Mainstreaming Equality- a review of 2021 – 2025

2.1 National Progress - Legal Reforms across Scotland

Legal reforms have been instrumental in protecting the rights of individuals and advancing equality. Anti-discrimination laws have been enacted to provide protection against bias and prejudice in various spheres, including employment, housing, and public services. Landmark court rulings have set important precedents in upholding equality and human rights.

2.1.1 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

Since our progress report in 2023, the Scottish Government has reiterated its commitment to reviewing the effectiveness of the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) in Scotland, including the effectiveness of the Scottish Specific Duties (SSDs), for which Scottish Ministers have legislative competence under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 (Scottish Government, 2021b). The Improving Effectiveness programme as part of the PSED has delivered 2 key changes to include reporting on ethnicity and disability pay gaps and working on guidance toolkits for public bodies on the use of 'Inclusive communications'. Any regulatory change is anticipated to come into force in 2025.

2.1.2 Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021

The [Hate Crime and Public Order \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#) ("The Act") - passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2021 and implemented on 1 April 2024 will provide greater protections for and creates a new crime of "stirring up hatred" relating to age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity or being intersex.

2.1.3 UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024

[The UNCRC \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was unanimously passed on the 7th of December 2023 in Scottish Parliament. In January 2024, the UNCRC became an Act, with it coming into full commencement in July 2024. The Act recognises the importance of childhood and the unique needs of children across the globe setting out the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that all children, everywhere, are entitled to and it remains, to this day, a core international human rights treaty.

2.1.4 The Consumer Duty

The consumer duty is a statutory duty introduced by the [Consumer Scotland Act 2020](#) that places a duty on relevant public authorities in Scotland to help ensure consumer interests are given sufficient weight throughout the strategic decision making process including reducing harm.

2.1.5 Employment Law - Duty to prevent sexual harassment

The [Worker Protection Act 2024](#) is an amendment to the Equality Act 2010 and came into effect on 26 October 2024. This new legislation introduces a legal duty for employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. The Act requires employers to proactively identify and mitigate potential risks of sexual harassment, including those posed by third parties such as customers and clients. The Act requires that employers must take "reasonable steps" to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment. This includes anticipating scenarios where workers may be subject to sexual harassment and taking action to prevent it. The duty applies to sexual harassment, which is defined as unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that violates a worker's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.

2.2 Local Progress

2.2.1 Community Engagement and Research

Community engagement and research are essential for advancing equality outcomes. Meaningful community engagement which then results in quality equality data and evidence requires working collaboratively with and through those who share similar situations, concerns, or challenges.

Effective consultation is a critical process for ensuring that our employees and citizens are involved in shaping and supporting decision making processes on issues that are important to them or directly affect them. The ultimate purpose is to shift the power balance and work to ensure those who may have been excluded or face barriers in doing so are at the core of designing activities that meet their needs.

Legally, stipulations in the relevant specific duty regulation (Regulation 4) of the Equality Act notes that listed authorities should take reasonable steps to involve persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and any person who appears to the authority to represent the interests of those persons; and should consider relevant evidence relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

As part of this process, the Equalities Team have worked across the council to ensure that consultation and engagement is representative and inclusive, where diverse people should have the

opportunity to participate and provide feedback across all council services. Community engagement has been the core force in developing this report with feedback and input from the different groups of people which helps us build resilient communities that are better prepared to withstand future challenges. We have identified processes and resources to support the consultation as well as ensuring that the format, questions and accessibility are key to the process. Consultation processes have been informed by the [National Standards for Community Engagement](#) and [Scottish Government Consultation Good Practice Guidelines](#).

As part of the engagement and consultation we carried out with external communities to inform the progress and development of the new outcomes as a service provider, we had an online survey with 261 contributions with an online reach of 2684 people. Other sessions we undertook were spread over the year as we began our engagement, and interactions would approximate to over 400 people over the months.

- In person sessions at Marischal College on various dates since June
- Regular sessions with GREC key to the co-development of the outcomes
- Disability Equity Partnership
- Equality Participation Network
- Shopmobility Aberdeen
- DeafBlind Scotland
- GREC Language Cafe
- Pop up sessions at Bon Accord Shopping Centre, Vaccination Centre
- Young Ambassadors
- Aberdeen Youth Movement: youth aged 12-25 years old
- Silver City Surfers
- Disability-friendly in person event
- Phone calls
- Stalls at various events
- One to one sessions with community representatives
- Attending community events with a wide public footfall, for example, Mela, Black History Month and the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership Conference.
- Four Pillars
- Fountain of Love
- Black and Scot
- Aberdeen Action on Disability

To develop our outcomes as an employer, an internal Employee Experience Survey was carried out with 1711 respondents. Not everyone responded to all the questions. We have also considered feedback provided by our Employee Equality Groups.

Our report on the Community Engagement and Survey Analysis can be accessed in Appendix 2 and our report on Employee Survey Analysis is listed as Appendix 3 and lists the more details and data on the methodology of our engagement.

Considerable progress has been made towards community engagement by Aberdeen City Council since 2021. With the increased prominence of the Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) as part of any decisions we make, the assessments look for evidence on consultation and engagement to ensure that officers are engaging with communities with a view to understand their experiences and using that information to inform proposals their views are considered as part of our decision-making

as a Council. The IIAs are helping to mainstream equality outcomes within our business as a council by ensuring equality and human rights considerations are made in everything we do. We look at the Integrated Impact Assessment in more detail in section 2.4.1 of this report.

2.2.2 Events

As Council we promote and support diversity through organising, attending, promoting, funding events that are aimed at fostering good relations and a space for shared learning that has an overall positive impact on our culture and capability as an employer and a service provider.

Along with encouraging community participation, our Elected Members, Leaders and Officers have been regular participants in such events thus improving our relationship with communities and opening access to working together on shared goals. Listed below are some of the many events that Aberdeen City Council and the leaders have supported since our last reporting cycle.

- Polish Community's Scottish Ceilidh Event
- Visit to the Gurudwara in Seaton with the Aberdeen Sikh Sangat
- Multicultural Burns Night event
- Lord Provost hosted events at the Town House to celebrate '[Iftar](#)' - event to mark the breaking of fast in Ramadan. The event was co-ordinated by our elected members through the Aberdeen Mosque and Islamic Centre (AMIC).
- International Workers Memorial Day was commemorated
- Visit to Aberdeen Hindu Temple
- White Armband Day event
- Aberdeen Chinese Elderly Association Dinner
- Aberdeen Igbo Community New Yam Festival
- Guyana Gateway Business Conference
- Aberdeen Friends of Ukraine Dinner
- Indian Association of North East Scotland annual Diwali celebration
- Aberdeen Funolympics Event at Beach Ballroom (sporting event for children with special needs)
- Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) Commemoration which has been held annually, and Marischal College is lit up externally with the HMD colour theme.
- Aberdeen Mela- One World Day – multicultural event at Union Terrace Garden
- Black History Month event
- International Women's Day

2.3 Our Council, Culture and Capability

'Aberdeen – A place where all people can prosper'

Our vision for Aberdeen City as set out in the [Local Outcome Improvement Plan](#) (LOIP) is deeply connected to our commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The LOIP emphasises that

all people should be able to access the opportunities available in the city, regardless of their background or circumstances. This vision reflects a desire to help all people, families, businesses, and communities to do well, succeed, and flourish in every aspect.

To achieve this vision, the LOIP commits to tackling issues that prevent equal opportunity for all to lead a happy and fulfilling life. This includes addressing inequalities in health, education, and employment opportunities, which are most high for families living in poverty. The LOIP also highlights the importance of early intervention and prevention to create conditions for prosperity and support future generations.

The refreshed Council Delivery Plan sets out how the council will contribute to Aberdeen City's Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and the Council's Partnership Agreement, Strategy Framework and Legislative Duties and, in doing so, details the Council's key priorities for the year ahead through Commissioning Intentions. Commissioning intentions mean how we align the use of resources with assessed needs, what is required and what we have committed to. This would include:

- assessing and forecasting needs.
- linking investment to agreed outcomes.
- considering options.
- planning the nature, range and quality of future services.
- putting these services in place; and
- evaluating the impact of those services.

The **Equality Outcomes** support the delivery of our vision and the LOIP by ensuring due regard is paid with the aim of eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations. We will work collaboratively to ensure the needs of all protected characteristics are part of the delivery.

To mainstream equality across the organisation requires a deliberate focus on culture – where equality, diversity and inclusion is championed and highly visible within our campaigns, communications, strategies and policies; the voice of lived experience is utilised to understand barriers and challenges; training is provided to raise the capability of the workforce; opportunities for co-creation are provided and embedded within governance structures; and that the impact is measured.

2.3.1 Visible commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Aberdeen City Council has made public statements and updated policies to reflect our commitment to EDI. This includes participating in national consultations to make sure the voice of the North East of Scotland is heard, adding detailed descriptions about our commitment to EDI on our website and providing information about our employee groups. This includes signing up to national strategies and in published communications campaigns. We highlight some of these policies in section 4 where we report on our outcomes as an employer and includes some of our public facing policies.

In our [Diversity in Recruitment](#) update report, we highlighted key areas of progress and actions to include:

- **Workforce Planning:** Through involving all service areas to address diversity and workforce needs.
- **Positive Action:** Measures to encourage underrepresented groups to apply for senior roles, including talent pipelines and the Aspiring Leaders programme.

- **Employee Engagement:** Co-creation of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan with various employee working groups.

The [Workforce Deep Dive](#) report also highlights the progressive steps being taken to understand and improve areas of underrepresentation within our workforce.

Highlight actions and strategies from the report include:

- **Internal Talent Movement:** Focus on retaining and developing internal staff to fill critical roles, with an emphasis on internal-only recruitment.
- **Talent Pipelines:** Building talent pipelines through apprenticeships, internships, and graduate apprenticeships to address future workforce needs.
- **Attracting New Talent:** Efforts to position Aberdeen City Council as an employer of choice, including promoting hybrid working and engaging with the community.

We CARE Charter and Commitments

As a council, we remain committed to providing the best service we can to our citizens. Our [We CARE Charter and Commitments](#) outline what good service should look like across all our services. It is our pledge to our citizens about what you can expect when interacting with us. The Council remain committed to involving citizens and test the way services are being shaped and delivered.

The charter works to support our current outcomes where people can access information and services and are able to participate in civic engagement.

The charter also improves our transparency and accountability by communicating what we can do and what we cannot.



2.3.2 Utilising lived experience to understand barriers and challenges

The people we serve are diverse and so are their needs. The change in demographics means that we need to respond to these changes with proportion and relevance.

Our Budget Consultation

In June 2023, a [landmark protocol](#) to engage the public in future budget setting, was approved at the Full Council meeting to ensure that citizens will have an opportunity to highlight what they believe is important and that information will be considered as part of the budget process moving forward.

A total of 3,192 responses were received during the Phase 1 of the process which ran throughout July 2023. Of those who responded, 55% were women; Very few (<10) respondents were under 18; and for ethnicity and nationality 2,446 of 2,654 (92%) chose to identify as “White – Scottish”; “White – British”; or “Prefer not to say”; or were “Blank”.

[Phase 2](#) had 2,654 responses and the report highlights data on respondents by protected characteristics if they responded to the questions. Citizens were able to access report and progress on the process at [Council Budget consultation results revealed | Aberdeen City Council](#).



The involvement and engagement of diverse citizens has been at the core of the Budget phases and included having focused sessions that were run by the Aberdeen Youth Movement for and by young people, sessions were delivered at the Language Café and delivered in British Sign Language.

Photo of BSL community members and communicators at one of the Budget Consultation.

2.3.3 Building Capability

Our Guiding Principles

Organisational values or principles are crucial for an organisation as they provide employees with a shared purpose and direction. They act as guiding principles that shape the desired culture of an organisation, promoting an environment of trust and respect. Our Guiding Principles were designed by our staff and strengthen our commitment to creating the kind of culture that our employees say they want, with associated capabilities to support our workforce with the right tools and support to carry out their roles which then supports their awareness of their responsibility and duty to deliver fair and equitable services to our citizens.

These principles are rooted in a collective commitment to creating a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable workforce. Since 2023, we have had a capability framework for employees that is aligned to our Guiding Principles, and a specific core capability for employees that sets out the necessary duty for all employees to have awareness, skills and behaviours around equality, diversity and inclusion.



The ‘Care’ capability provides clear standards for all employees, relevant to their job role, on the requirements and expectations for all staff to ‘value’ and champion equality, diversity and inclusion. This ensures staff understand how they should treat colleagues and interact with people, fostering an environment where diversity is valued, and everyone can deliver their best for the city.

2.3.4 Co-creation to ensure policies and processes are considered in terms of the impact on minorities, staff and service users

Inclusive policy development processes have been established to ensure that the needs and perspectives of marginalised and underrepresented groups are considered at the core of why and how we do things. Where applicable, we have worked with external communities to help shape policy. Our recently published [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) policy and the council’s [Recruitment Pack](#) were developed using feedback from external groups with the aim of ensuring we are moving in the right direction to recruit and retain a diverse workforce. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been put in place to track the implementation and impact of equality and human rights policies through our Policy and Review group.

 The Policy Group have reviewed 40 policies between 2021- 2025 to ensure equality, accessibility and compliance are embedded into our policies.

2.3.5 Evaluating the Impact of our Interventions

It is essential that we evaluate our EDI interventions to understand their effectiveness and determine whether they are achieving their intended outcomes. By reporting regularly and ensuring that we are complaint, we can understand what works and what does not. We use feedback to ensure that our processes and services are relevant and meet the needs of our diverse groups and remain accountable to our public sector equality duty. It demonstrates to our people and informs our processes that we are serious about creating an inclusive environment. Some mechanisms include:

- Statutory Performance Indicators
- Equality Outcomes Survey
- Employee Experience Survey
- Diversity Monitoring and improving our data collection

2.4 How are we mainstreaming?

2.4.1 Integrated Impact Assessments



Between April 2021 and January 2025, the completion of regular Integrated Impact Assessments rose by 265%, and Budget IIAs surged by 4800%.

The Council is required to adhere to the public sector equality duty, which involves eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between individuals with and without protected characteristics. The Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) is used to document the impact of proposed policies and practices to ensure compliance with this duty. The assessment must be thorough enough to enable the authority to fulfil its obligations under the general equality duty.

As well as the increased uptake of the completion of the IIAs, there has been an increased understanding and awareness of the Equality Act 2010 by people who feel their rights are being impacted. Recent [case laws](#) and judicial reviews have highlighted the importance of engaging with people on decisions and policies that will affect them and cause direct or indirect discrimination to them preferably at the start of the process.

Engaging communities through IIAs has helped build communication opportunities and transparency between citizens, consumers and decision-makers. We acknowledge more needs to be done to ensure that people feel their voices are heard and valued and would therefore be more likely to support and participate in the planning process. This sense of ownership and collaboration can lead to stronger, more resilient communities that are better equipped to address future challenges. It is important that we include people from the start of planning. Some feedback after the first ever Budget consultation that was carried out revealed that the community welcomed the opportunity to have a say and meet face to face with some of the senior leaders. Another example of community ownership was displayed by the Aberdeen Youth Movement has been captured in this news story: [Empowered young people express themselves | Aberdeen City Council](#)

As part of our improvements around equality agendas, our IIA form has been continually reviewed and refreshed to ensure that new legislation and any ways of capturing evidence is included in our assessment. The Integrated Impact Assessment access page was also modified in October 2023 to

improve the searchability of IIAs. The council’s assessments can be viewed online at [Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments | Aberdeen City Council](#).

The legislation considered within the Integrated Impacts Assessment are listed below and are provided as links to the relevant legislation.



2.4.2 Collaborative working

Our focus has been on improving our collaborative working bringing together diverse skill sets and perspectives, to foster innovation and creativity, leading to more robust and effective solutions in mainstreaming equality across our sector and with partners. The benefits of this enhanced working style have meant we are more effective in what we do, engage with the same users hence reducing duplication, consultation fatigue and improving overall efficiency and sustainability.

A. Community Planning Partnership (CPP)

The group is made up of public service organisations working in partnership to improve outcomes for and with people across the City, especially those most in need. All Councils in Scotland are required to have a Community Planning Partnership in place, there are 32 across Scotland.

[Community Planning Aberdeen](#) has 12 core partners, and they also work alongside many more organisations and community groups. The Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) is how the group implements, monitors and reviews how they can improve outcomes for the people of Aberdeen.

Community Planning Aberdeen’s vision for Aberdeen remains ‘A place where all people can prosper’ regardless of a person’s background or circumstances. To achieve this vision central to the LOIP is the ambition to reduce inequalities of outcome which exist across the City because of socio-economic disadvantage and/or protected characteristics.

In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the LOIP recognises that ending poverty and other deprivations must go together with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality and support economic growth which align with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and with the Social Determinants of Health. These goals also align with the public sector duty to ensure there is no discrimination, people have opportunities and there are good relations within communities.

Detailed progress updates on Community Planning Aberdeen’s projects that support mainstreaming of equality and human rights can be viewed on the webpage: [Home - Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

B. Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM)

The AYM's mission is to encourage active engagement of young people aged 12-25 years old across the city, to seek views on council services, and how to develop a wider range of opportunities for young people's involvement in the city through various events and campaigns.

The members of AYM have been created a big impact in getting young people involved in decisions that will impact them across the city. AYM is supported by the Youth Participation Development Officer and staff team who are part of the Community Learning and Development Team within Aberdeen City Council. Our Youth members are not afraid to offer critical analysis of policies and practices from a youth perspective and are helping the council in making and shaping decisions fit for the future.

To find out more about the group, access their progress and activities here: [Aberdeen Youth Movement | Instagram | Linktree](#)

C. Equalities Participation Network (EPN)

The network is funded by the Equalities Team to provide a neutral space for Aberdeen City Council and people from diverse communities in Aberdeen to engage through creating a 2-way communication between the Council and the diverse communities for the purpose of advancing equality. Since its formation in 2018, the network has produced a comprehensive community directory that is helping organisations and individuals find contacts and information related to equality groups and support.

Group agendas, topic discussions and copies of presentations are available at: [Equalities Participation Network – Grampian Regional Equality Council](#)

D. The Health Determinants Research Collaboration Aberdeen (HDRC Aberdeen)

HDRC is one of a few Health Determinants Research Collaborations funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research in 2022. HDRC Aberdeen is led by Aberdeen City Council, in collaboration with The University of Aberdeen, Robert Gordon University, the Grampian Health Board (also known as NHS Grampian), and Public Partners.

The HDRC use and work around 5 'Social Determinants' Themes that look at the themes from an equality and intersectionality lens and are continuously collecting, analysing and publishing equality data and evidence that is being used across a range of our policies and decision making.

We look at these determinants to understand what influence and control the council can use to address inequality that impacts protected characteristics and will support our drive to mainstream equality through everything we do.

Economic Stability	Children, Families and Lifelong	Neighbourhood and Environment	Communities and Housing	Health and Social Care
<p>Business advice and support.</p> <p>Economic development that will increase economic activity.</p> <p>Employability with skills and capabilities being developed.</p>	<p>Early Years Health and development</p> <p>Schools health, development, skills and attainment</p> <p>Adult education English classes and volunteering</p> <p>Libraries and activities.</p>	<p>Accessibility Mobility and active travel</p> <p>Places and spaces Physical Environment Parks and open spaces Building control Food supply</p> <p>Community Safety and cultural life.</p>	<p>Housing Availability and Affordability</p> <p>Suitability</p> <p>Energy efficiency</p> <p>Tenant / resident support</p> <p>Family support</p> <p>Financial inclusion</p> <p>Community participation</p>	<p>Wellbeing</p> <p>Recreation and Leisure</p> <p>Environment and consumer protection</p> <p>Support for Looked After Children</p> <p>Support for carers</p> <p>Child and Adult protection</p>

To find out more about the work HDRC so or to gain access to local data, you can find out more information on the webpage: [About the HDRC Aberdeen | Aberdeen City Council](#)

2.4.3 Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

We have established formal funding agreements and Service Level Agreements with various organisations to help provide services within our communities. These collaborations support us in fulfilling our general duties and advancing our equality outcomes, while also fostering a culture of trust and cooperation.

Listed below are 3 SLAs delivered through the Equalities Team. There are additional organisations that receive funding to carry out functions or deliver services on behalf of the council and are funded by other services across the Council.

- A. [Shopmobility Aberdeen](#)'s activities result in people having greater equality of access to Aberdeen and all it has to offer, raising the visibility of people with disabilities, breaking down the barriers and improving relations between disabled and elderly people and the community at large.



- 967 individuals used the services in 2024 (57 were repeat users) improving participation and independence of people with protected characteristics.
- A total of 9261 days service, an increase of 2,641 days from 2023, up almost 40% (this calculation is done by using the number of days each piece of equipment was used throughout the year based on their loan records).
- Shopmobility have a core group of 15 volunteers who regularly work with them to provide services to customers and an additional 10 who help at special events
- Shopmobility has also been present at various city events to support inclusion and accessibility – for example SPECTRA light festival, Highland Games, Firework display and stationed at the Beachfront with their mobile unit.

- B. [Deafblind Scotland](#) provide advice, support and opportunities that help enable deafblind people to take up their rightful place in their own communities and works to ensure their voices are heard across society.



- 24 individuals with dual sensory loss have been supported in Aberdeen supporting individuals with dual sensory loss in Aberdeen to engage with their communities and reduce social isolation. Key activities include one-to-one person-centred support, tailored to individual needs and abilities. This support encompasses essential tasks such as safe travel, food preparation, banking, communication, digital skills and maintaining social connections, all of which empower individuals to live independently.
- The organisation has actively supported the development of the British Sign Language Plan 2024- 2030 and contributed to the progress of the Equality Outcomes 2025 and the development of the proposed new outcomes for 2025-2029.

C. Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC)

GREC engage in advancing equality across Northeast Scotland working to tackle prejudice and discrimination, celebrate diversity, build positive community relations, and provide evidence to change policy and practice.



- **Equality Participation Network** had a total of 35 meetings of the Equalities Participation network for the reporting period between 2021- 2025. 40 individuals have attended meetings, representing more 24 groups covering all protected characteristics.
- Notes and additional materials from all meetings are available on grec.co.uk/eqn.
- **Training** between 2021-2024, 14 sessions of Intersectionality for Improvement Projects were delivered, mostly online but with a few in-person sessions. More than 50 ACC staff took part.
- **Tackling Gypsy/Traveller Inequalities Partnership** Periodic meetings chaired by GREC, 5 of these meetings were held in 2024.
- **Casework Project** Between 2023 and January 2025, an estimate of 502 people experiencing prejudice and discrimination were supported by this service.
- **Prejudice and Discrimination Reporting (PDR) Tool** – a total number of 12 submissions were received via the tool
- **Counselling Service** – Between 2023 and January 2025, an estimate of 102 people experiencing prejudice and discrimination were supported by this service. 25 Volunteering qualified counsellors support in delivering this service.
- **Third Party Reporting (TPR) Network** works collectively and meets every 6 weeks to address Hate Crime, share good practice and highlight challenges and barriers citizens and partners may face.
- **Hate Crime Reporting:** GREC also continue to facilitate a Community Planning Partnership Outcome Improvement Group, refreshed in 2024 to focus on increasing the levels of confidence to report hate crime.
- **Prejudice and Discrimination Reporting (PDR) Tool:** Between 2023 and 2024 an estimate of 45 submissions were received, mostly from schools and in relation to racism.
- **Additional information:** GREC provides continuous support for engagement opportunities and activities every year (e.g., ACC consultations, Holocaust Memorial Day, Black History Month, etc), as well as direct support to schools to help address concerns around prejudice and discrimination.

2.4.4 Procurement

Equality is a key consideration in our procurement activities as part of the [Sustainable Procurement Duty](#). The Commercial and Procurement Shared Service (CPSS) demonstrate commitments to equalities, local and national socio-economic priorities and fair work practices (FWP)/Real Living Wage (RLW) by providing relevant evidence of inclusion rates of FWP/RLW in Procurement Annual Reports.

CPSS has developed and embedded a consistent, innovative approach to community benefits in public procurement. This approach aims to maximise social value impacts across social, economic, and environmental pillars for the benefit of affected communities.



- The CPSS regularly contribute positively to equalities mainstreaming and anti-poverty strategies
- Equalities can be a standalone community benefit, integrated into specifications or an additional component of added value community benefits offering compassionate and considerate approaches to physical, social and information accessibility.
- The primary goal is inclusivity and equal opportunity in employment and skills, promoting access to high-quality, sustainable, and stable jobs. Efforts include pooling expertise to conduct proactive outreach work, addressing potential barriers, and focusing on individuals/groups farthest from employment/training markets.

3. Equality Outcomes as a Service Provider

The current set of outcomes were approved by the Committee on in a [full report](#) on 11 March 2021 and the [progress report](#) was presented to the committee on 21 March 2023. This section has been set out to report on key highlights in progress and our next steps as a service provider.

Equality outcomes are what we have committed to so that we can achieve improvements on the life of citizens in Aberdeen. As a public sector, and as a listed authority, we must produce new outcomes every 4 years and report the progress every 2 years to show how we are mainstreaming equality and meeting our duty under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

3.1 Aberdeen City Council as a service provider (2021 -2025)

3.1.1 Equality Outcome 1

All people with protected characteristics will access information, goods and services knowing that social and physical barriers are identified and removed, with a focus on Age, Gender reassignment and Disability.

In this section we have listed some key achievements as themes under outcome 1.

Key Achievements

1. **Inclusive and accessible play experience:** Hazlehead Park was refurbished with feedback from local schools and Sense Scotland. The new play park includes a mix of equipment for young and older children. Wheelchair-accessible trampoline and roundabout, interactive panels, musical items and role-play play options. An interactive unit is also strategically placed away for quiet play.
2. **Community Digital Initiatives:** Wi-fi access has been installed at Clinterty Park's Community Centre to support Gypsy / Traveller residents with literacy and information access.
3. **Engagement with Gypsy Traveller Community:** The Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer has been supporting residents with literacy and signposting, and efforts are being made to improve digital skills and access to employment opportunities through various community-based programs.
4. **Digital Skills and Employment Support:** Projects aimed at upskilling individuals in digital skills have led to 70 people accessing digital support for job applications, with advanced digital skills programs resulting in positive employment outcomes for participants. A [project](#) aimed specifically aimed at those over 50s had around **600** individuals supported into employment citywide.
5. **British Sign Language (BSL):** A new [BSL page](#) was created on our website in 2023 with improved content for the BSL community. This includes 12 BSL videos providing instructions on key items and information such as the BSL plan and budget consultation for 2024/25. BSL sessions took place in relation to the 2024/25 and 2025/26 budget consultations.
6. **Internal Engagement:** We have continued to inform our staff about accessibility. This includes corporate mandatory training, guidance to our Customer Services team around hidden disabilities and the publication of an internal blog explaining how to make services accessible and to provide information in alternative formats and languages.
7. **Alternative Formats:** We have promoted alternative formats to access our services including the implementation of a floor standing banner at the entrance to our Customer Service Centre and information on our website. Our Newsbite bulletin, which is issued twice a year to Council Tenants, offers information in alternative formats and languages. Consultations on council homes affected by RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) and rent consultations also included options for alternative formats to ensure diverse participation.
8. **Community Engagement:** A new online tool, launched in September 2024, has notably impacted community engagement by made community engagement more inclusive and accessible. The tool meets WCAG standards and includes features like language capabilities and a voice-note option, supporting more people to access it. By capturing respondents' demographics, the Council can analyse responses from different communities and identify areas with low uptake from communities with protected characteristics. This allows for targeted proactive messaging to those communities, enhancing overall engagement. For key consultations like RAAC, rent, and budget setting for 2024/25 and 2025/26, alternative methods such as paper versions and face-to-face sessions, including BSL, were offered to ensure inclusivity.
9. **Youth Engagement:** Aberdeen Youth Movement developed a social media strategy which uses colours, short statements and youth friendly language to improve engagement and the trust of young people to read posts on social media. The group have also used their engaging presence to carry out digital consultation, school roadshows, attending public events and hosting events at the 2 universities and college.
10. **Physical access :** The [Disability Equity Partnership](#) remains crucial in ensuring that physical access and inclusion are part of our processes and should be considered at the start of the

projects. DEP has been a part of over 28 projects ranging from the various projects under the City Centre Master Plan, Spaces for People, Christmas Village and have provided specialist and lived- experience advice to these projects and consultations.

11. **Access to Communication:** The in-house interpreting service InterTrans coordinated 4262 interpreting requests in 2024, 165 requests for written translations. The service has provided communication to 1251 pre-booked appointments and 2846 on demand requests for communication support. The top 10 most requested languages within the council are Polish, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Kurdish Sorani, Pashto, Farsi, Tigrinya and Kurdish Kurmanji.

Next Steps:

- We recognise that while we have made many progressive steps towards achieving this outcome, there will always be a need to ensure that fair and inclusive access remains vital for removing barriers and addressing discrimination. Just over half of the respondents (52.2%) agreed with the statement about easily accessing information on goods and services, while 19.7% disagreed.
- Feedback from our surveys and consultation have also informed us where improvements can be made to make our information, goods and services more accessible. 51% of respondents access information about the Council’s services through the website, 16.4% through social media and 3.2% physically visit the Customer Service Centre.
- To keep this integral to our behaviours and operation, we will refresh Equality Outcome 1 and bring it back as a refreshed and updated equality outcome as a long-term goal.
- We will address areas of improvement as highlighted by users and present our improvement outputs through an action plan.

3.1.2 Equality Outcome 2

Diverse communities in Aberdeen will have an increased sense of safety and belonging within their neighbourhood and City, with a focus on Race (including Gypsy/Travellers), Religion and Sexual Orientation.

Key Achievements

1. Between 2021 and 2024, through LOIP there was a project focused on 100% increase in hate crimes reported to police by 2023. The project did not fully meet its aim of increasing hate crime reporting to police by 100% by 2023, however, significant progress was made, with a 49% increase to 344 crimes reported since the baseline of 231 (2018/19). Specifically, the increase from 2018/19 has been sustained with a continued increase each year. Police Scotland report an increase in hate crime reports in Aberdeen City from 305 in 2019/20 to 344 in 2022/23. The changes tested and impact of them can be read in detail in the project end report [10.4-Draft-Project-End-GREC-Hate-Crime-v1.3.pdf](#)
2. In the refreshed LOIP a revised aim of [Increase by 10% community confidence to report hate crimes by 2026](#) was agreed and the progress of the focus will be included in as part of our next reporting cycle.



3. [Holocaust Memorial Day](#) is commemorated annually in Aberdeen that unites communities to learn from the past and promote a safer future. We emphasise youth involvement to educate them about the Holocaust and genocide, to reflect on experience of those who faced persecution, share their knowledge, and protect those at risk of discrimination today.
4. The Equalities Team participated and presented at the [Islamophobia Awareness – Seeds of Change](#) event that was held at the mosque in November 2024. The event was a step closer to understanding and working together to support belonging and understand the root causes of discrimination and hate crimes committed against Muslims.
5. [Black History Month](#) was marked at the end of October in 2023 and 2024 with focus on recognising and correcting the narratives of Black history and culture. The interactive sessions were used to share knowledge about history, culture and personal stories of perseverance and success.
6. [Reclaim the Night](#) is an event that takes place globally and Aberdeen Women’s Alliance has organised marches through the streets of Aberdeen to mark 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. The event has brought together members of the community to call for safer streets and spaces for women and girls.
7. The Council has undertaken significant work in providing registered safe spaces at the Art Gallery and Aberdeen Maritime Museum and providing an online training programme developed by Scottish Women’s Aid and Equally Safe to increase amongst all staff, regardless of gender, the understanding of violence against women and girls, including its causes, impacts, and the available routes to support. The Art Gallery Safe Space where victims of domestic abuse can discretely ask for help from the venue’s staff was [officially opened](#) by Her Majesty The Queen in January 2024. Aim 9.2 of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan remains focused to [Increase by 15% the reports of domestic abuse to Police Scotland by 2026.](#)

Next Steps:

- Safety and belonging remain a priority for individual wellbeing and their ability to participate and exercise their rights. We will ensure that further activity will be undertaken to improve belonging in the city.
- We will need to improve the awareness of how people can report hate crime and where they can get support. This aligns with our need to make information more accessible so that people can find the information they need.
- We will remain in close partnership with Police Scotland colleagues and other partners to work collectively to deliver and training.

3.1.3 Equality Outcome 3

Representation in civic participation of people with protected characteristics will be improved by ensuring our leaders, staff and organisation champion the equality agenda in the City, with a focus on Disability, Race and Sex.

Key Achievements

1. We delivered training in community settings to ensure that people understand the implications of the Equality Act, how this might impact their own behaviour and decisions and raise awareness of their rights when accessing our services. Some of these sessions were delivered at the Come and Network Festival, sessions with our Arm’s Length External

Organisations (ALEOS) who deliver services on our behalf, the Local Resilience Partnership, the Community Learning Development Standards Council Scotland.

2. The Lord Provost and Elected Members have been involved in organising, promoting, supporting and attending various events across the city to ensure inclusion and diversity are at the top and ensuring there is a range of events that promote and support the diversity in the city. [Section 2.2.2](#) of this report shares some of these events.
3. In partnership with Elect Her, a UK-wide organisation working to motivate, support and equip women from all backgrounds to stand for political office, the council hosted 2 events to encourage and support women into a political journey. The 2 events were well attended with some women from minority communities considering standing for local political positions.



Figure 8: Elect Her - promoting diversity in politics

4. The [Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee](#) welcomed an external advisor who has contributed to representation, role modelling and collaborative working of minority ethnic communities within the council's decision-making process. The committee will maintain community links by ensuring that the Committee will appoint advisers who are not members of the Council. These external advisers will be appointed by the Committee as follows:
 - 1 resident of Aberdeen with lived experience of poverty
 - Up to 2 people representing the charitable sector in Aberdeen
 - 1 person representing higher and further education in Aberdeen
 - 1 person representing key interest groups in Aberdeen (that may be appointed for a defined period); and
 - 1 public health professional/practitioner who works in Aberdeen.

This measure taken to include representation at the committee has supported our duty to working collaboratively to end discrimination, victimisation and harassment, improve equality of opportunity and fostering good relations within our diverse communities especially those impacted by poverty and inequality through participation and collaborative working.

Next Steps

- Through the feedback and participation at events, we have found that communities welcome and want more opportunities to participate and network. We will ensure that future events and opportunities are widely communicated to increase awareness and participation.
- Through our consultation process, we found that outcome 3 was welcomed but people found the wording difficult to understand especially if they were not fully active with council initiatives. We will use this feedback to ensure that we use a simple approach to communicating the next outcomes.

4. Equality Outcomes as an Employer (2021- 2025)

The current set of outcomes were approved by the [Operational Delivery Committee](#) on April 11 April 2021, followed by an [Action Plan](#) presented to Staff Governance on 12 April 2021, which then followed by a [progress report](#) was presented to the committee on 8th March 2023. This section has been set out to report on key highlights in progress and our next steps as an employer. Additional information on our workforce data has been included in relevant appendices as part of this report.

We remain proud to be an equal opportunity employer and are committed to welcoming and treating everyone fairly. As an equal opportunity employer, we recognise the benefits that a diverse workforce with different values, beliefs, experiences, and backgrounds brings to the organisation and want to ensure we value and learn from this diversity.

The Equality Ambassadors Network offers a channel for knowledge sharing and consultation from an intersectional approach while our employee equality working groups remain a key driving force in ensuring that our diverse workforce has a safe space to initiate change and improvement in our practices and collectively deliver progress on our equality outcomes. The employee equality working groups are:

- Equality Ambassadors Network
- Age Working Group
- Disability and Inclusion Group
- LGBTQ+ Employee Group
- Race and Religion Working Group (known as RED - Race Equality and Diversity)
- Working Group for Sex as a Protected Characteristic

4.1 Introduction to Employee Information

One of the duties under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 is to gather and use employee information. Employees are required to provide their Age and Sex as part of the pre-employment process when joining Aberdeen City Council—and may choose to provide additional diversity data at any point during their employment through the Council's HR and Payroll system, CoreHR.

The duty requires the organisation to gather annual information on the composition of its employees as well as annual information on recruitment, development, and retention of employees with respect to the number and relevant protected characteristics of employees. The information must be used to better perform the general equality duty.

The mainstreaming report must include an annual breakdown of the information gathered and must also include details of the progress that the organisation has made in gathering and using the information to enable it to better perform the general equality duty. The employee information in this 2025 Mainstreaming Report comprises the following by protected characteristic as shown in Employee Information in Appendix 4.

- Composition of employees listed from 2020 -2024
- Recruitment information, namely applicants shortlisted applicants and successful applicants for calendar years listed from 2020 -2024
- Development information, namely employees who undertook corporate training in calendar years listed from 2020 -2024

- Retention information, namely employees who left the organisation in calendar listed from 2020 -2024
- Discipline and grievance data in calendar years listed from 2020 -2024
- Gender pay gap data.

In accordance with the requirements stated in the guidance, the above has been produced for the organisation as a whole and in relation to the Education Authority (which comprises teachers and other employees in the Education Service). Appropriate analysis has been undertaken in relation to the figures.

It should be noted that where there were minimal numbers of employees in a category, the actual figure has been removed from the table and replaced with the words 'Under 5'. This is to help ensure that no individual employees can be identified so that confidentiality in relation to sensitive personal data can be maintained. The employee information contained in this report is to be used in relation to the planning of current and future employment equality related initiatives, to make progress towards our Equality Outcomes.

4.2 Existing initiatives

The Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion for all current and future employees. The focus on equality, diversity and inclusion remains embedded and is a part of the organisation's current Workforce Delivery Plan.

The Council already has several initiatives and activities which support equality, diversity and inclusion including:

- A range of policies and guidance documents including an equality and diversity policy, flexible working guidance, family friendly policies and guidance, disability in the workplace guidance, supporting carers at work guidance, supporting attendance policy and guidance, transgender equality and transitioning in the workplace guidance, equal pay policy, gender-based violence policy, special leave policy, IVF guidance, and career break policy.
- A robust and fair approach to recruitment and selection, including recruitment and selection guidance and training for managers covering equality, discrimination and unconscious bias.
- A Guaranteed Interview Scheme which includes schemes for disabled people, young people, care-experienced young people and 'New Scots'.
- Flexible and smarter working for many roles across the organisation including options such as part-time hours, term-time, flexi-time, compressed working weeks and annualised hours.
- Support for mental health and wellbeing, including a counselling and occupational health service for employees.

4.3 Aberdeen City Council as an employer (2021-2025)

Employer Equality Outcome 1

Improve the diversity of our workforce and address any areas of underrepresentation, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all protected groups (with consideration for both internal employees and external applicants), with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Race and Sex.

Key Achievements

1. **Recruitment:** Developed an [Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Recruitment Pack](#) that sets out our commitment to welcoming and celebrating diversity and provides potential applicants with information about their entitlements and also any adaptations to selection processes that can be requested – the pack was developed with our employee equality groups. Pledges clearly advertised on our [MyJobScotland](#) pages for Disability Confident, Carer Positive, Support for [Armed Forces](#), Young Person’s Guarantee. The team have also attended various events to promote employment opportunities within communities and to raise awareness of all the different types of opportunities that are available in the Council.
(update pending)



Figure 9: Promoting recruitment at the Aberdeen Mela

2. **Developing Diverse Leaders:** We have engaged in more activity to promote interest and diversity and leadership level. The Aspiring Leadership programme which aims to develop confident, communicative, and strategic leaders who are committed to growth, empathy, and innovation within our organisation. 12 staff undertook the Aspiring Senior Leaders Programme 2023-24 and 20 staff are currently undertaking the Aspiring Leaders 2024-25 programme.

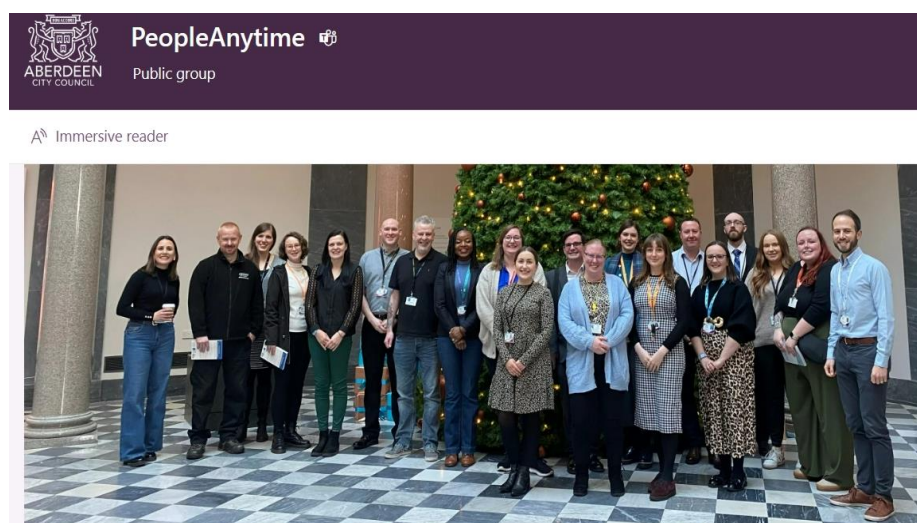


Figure 10: Our Aspiring Leaders 2024-2025

The **Accelerator Scheme** offers additional support and positive action for those with protected characteristics – to increase their confidence and improve their participation in the in leadership schemes that are offered to all eligible employees.

Similarly, the ACOSVO is another programme employees have had the opportunity to undertake a leadership exchange programme. 15 staff have accessed the ACOSVO Leadership exchange since 2021. These leadership programmes are targeted to improve our equality of opportunity and diversity of representation at leadership and senior level and encourage more internal talent to apply for senior posts.

3. **Policy updates:** The [EDI Policy](#) was refreshed and approved in 2024 giving a comprehensive guide to our commitment to EDI, adopting Scottish Government recommendations and reflecting the needs of our citizens. The Smarter Working Guidance was also reviewed, and a new Flexible Working Policy and Guidance was approved at Staff Governance Committee in January 2025.
4. **Scrutiny and outcomes:** We have used feedback from various council committees to ensure we are using the feedback to develop new actions. We are in the process of planning more in-person training sessions on Unconscious Bias, Cultural awareness training and publish our draft guide on terminology we use as an employer and public service provider.
5. **Accessibility:** Our internal EDI hub was launched and is the home to information and resources for all staff on various topics on equality. All our employee equality groups contribute articles and information to share information available to all council employees with access to the intranet. Where digital technology uptake is low, critical information is shared through printed copies of information delivered to various council sites.
6. **Developing new talent:** Recruitment has improved through Developing the Young Workforce initiatives. Programs like Apprenticeship Programme, Career Ready Programme, and ABZ Employability Pathways Programme allow us to engage diverse young people in the city. These programs offer work experience, support networks, and development opportunities, making a career with Aberdeen City Council appealing.
7. **Star Awards:** We celebrate our staff through our internal awards where employees are celebrated for championing Equality Diversity and Inclusion, Rising Star and Trainee Apprentice / Student of the Year.
8. **Equality Working Groups:** the working groups have been actively working on activities, communications, promotions and events which further promote equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Each group has contributed to articles and information hosted on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion hub and remain pivotal in consulting on some of the policies and activities.
9. **Equality Diversity and Inclusion:** A virtual team site for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) has been established to facilitate cross-organisational collaboration on EDI initiatives. This site focuses particularly on employee outcomes and action plans. Additionally, a Diversity and Inclusion calendar has been developed to capture a variety of events, celebrations and observation dates to help promote awareness across all characteristics.
10. **Pronouns** - Employees have the option to add their pronouns to their email and CoreHR has been updated to allow employees to select Mx as their title. This enhances our commitment to being an inclusive employer with focus on sex, gender reassignment and sexual orientation.

Next steps

- We recognise that more needs to be done to encourage employees to share their equality data so that we have a solid evidence-based approach to developing our future workforce policies and strategies. We will increase our campaigns on data completion and raising awareness about how we use such data.
- We will address the gaps in our training needs to ensure we maintain current knowledge and understanding of equality agendas.
- We will remain committed to building a diverse workforce with people from a wide range of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, who are valued for their unique contributions in an environment that is respectful, supportive and free of discrimination, harassment or bullying.
- The Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee inquiry of 2020 has highlighted the persistent issues that impact on outcomes for minority ethnic people in Scotland moving into, staying in and progressing in employment. Their recommendations below highlight both systemic issues perpetuating race inequality in recruitment practice and in the workplace, as well as the need to improve practices such as the gathering and analysis of workforce data to inform action plans and determine measurable outcomes:

'The Committee recommends that all public authorities subject to the Scottish specific Public Sector Equality Duty should, as a minimum, voluntarily record and publish their ethnicity pay gap and produce an action plan to deliver identified outcomes.'

We are in the process of developing our draft Race Equality Policy led by our Race and Religion Equality Group (RED).

- A review of all training has been undertaken as part of the wider corporate commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Observations by the equality groups have noted that there is not enough training about Gypsy / Travellers or on religion, faith and belief. We will seek to improve our offer on training around these topics.
- Recruitment: Youth feedback suggested they were unaware where they can look for jobs with the council. We will promote the use of [Jobs | Aberdeen City Council](#) and share more opportunities through social media which was the preferred choice of interaction.

Employer Equality Outcome 2

Ensure that all of our employees who have protected characteristics feel fully valued, safe and included at work, with a particular and prioritised focus on Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Race, Sex and Sexual orientation.

Key Achievements

1. **Mentoring and Coaching:** Through training and continuous development, we have developed an ACC Coaching Bank of 24 trained coaches. 16 new applications have been received to become a Mentor, and 12 of our new Aspiring Leaders have also been paired with a Mentor for 2023/24 and 20 Aspiring Leaders have been paired a mentor for 2024-2025.

- **Reasonable Adjustment Passports** - allows employees to work go through the process of setting up reasonable adjustments in the workplace taking in to account their situation and records this in a safe and secure environment. The passport is held digitally in the employees file which ensure should the employees manager change , or should the employee move roles within the organisation that the passport stays with the employee and a new manager can access the information quickly. This prevents employees from having to go over sharing the same information again and again and improved continuity as well as reduces the impact of having to share such personal information.
- **Communications and campaigns:**
Gender specific targeted initiatives e.g. women’s health campaigns, menopause awareness, disability awareness around specific issues and accessing grants as well as signposting to specialist organisations and other sources of support, including local services.
 - **Domestic Abuse campaigns** – we developed an organisational protocol for any women coming forward to disclose they were experiencing domestic abuse so that managers could have confidence to support them and assist then in signposting to relevant services that could but also so they could create a safety plan and share a ‘safe’ word “Ask for Angela” campaign should require immediate assistance.
 - **Physical Health Campaigns** – Age and Gender specific programmes - working in partnership with Sport Aberdeen to offer tailored programmes which ensure that all women as well as minority groups feel comfortable to come forwards and participate in initiatives e.g. taster classes specifically for women etc.
- **Employee Assistance Programme** – offers advice specifically around issues like Domestic Abuse, anxiety, depression with a person-centred approach.
- **Employee Online Peer Support Groups** – Within our workforce, interest specific support groups have been active like the Menopause Group, Neurodiversity Group – creating a safe space for employees to seek advice and support from each other on best practice and a place to gain ideas for finding the right support for them in the workplace
- **Capability Framework:** The refreshed [Capability Framework](#) shaped by the five Guiding Principles – Purpose, Pride, Team, Trust and Value and is structured into four levels reflecting the increasing levels of responsibility and complexity of roles within the organisation. To help employees meet capability expectations, we developed The Learning Academy, an online platform offering various self-led, team-based, and facilitated workshops. These resources are tailored to different levels of the capability framework, providing opportunities for upskilling.
- **Disability and employment:**
The Disability and Inclusion Group is led by 16 employees, who promote the visibility and rights of colleagues with disabilities to create a more inclusive and accessible work environment and keep advancing initiatives that support employees. The group have been active in providing feedback and guidance on terminology, on good practice and highlighting awareness days epilepsy Day, Parkinsons week, Tourette Awareness, Neurodiversity week.

The Employability and Skill Team – ABZ Works has commissioned a study with Rocket Science to explore barriers to employability support for disabled people. The aim is to identify gaps in service provision and shape employability programmes for individuals with a disability or parents with a child with a disability.

- The **LGBTQ+ Group** has 18 employees who promote LGBTQ+ equality across the organisation. The group meets monthly with a focus on ensuring the language used across the organisation is inclusive, promoting LGBTQ+ events throughout the year, attending LGBTQ+ training from 4Pillars and participated in Grampian Pride’s march in 2023 for the first time. In 2024 the group wished to hold a stall at Grampian Pride providing information about Aberdeen City Council’s focus on ED and I during recruitment and for their employees, discussed opportunities available across Aberdeen (job vacancies and community initiatives) and promoted safe sex in partnership with NHS Grampian.

Next Steps

- The Employee Experience survey has highlighted areas that could benefit from more training and awareness. These will be captured as part of our new action plan that will be developed by September 2025.
- Work is being progressed to develop our Zero Tolerance Policy and will be published on our website and promoted through social media.
- As our workforce is made up of 70% women, we will ensure adequate support is in place from women through the development of a menopause policy and pledge

Survey Highlights

We encourage and support equality of opportunity across the organisation where everybody can be their true selves and thrive.

The first step in taking action to address inequality as an employer is understanding our workforce and their lived experience in the workplace and the extent to which our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is visible and genuine to them.

In 2024 we conducted an employee experience survey, which sought to understand the experience of employees through the lens of protected characteristics, and also the perception of Aberdeen City Council’s commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The survey was divided into various sections, and 22 questions asked around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The full results are available to see in Appendix 2 as part of our Employee Survey Analysis and the are presented below:

1. Increased diversity and inclusion have a positive impact on our culture and productivity.
2. Aberdeen City Council provides adequate support for employees with protected characteristics.
3. The council takes equal opportunities seriously.
4. Aberdeen City Council clearly communicates its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as an employer.
5. Aberdeen City Council actively promotes the diversity of its workforce in its internal communications.

6. Internal communications are available in accessible formats for all.
7. I am aware of Aberdeen City Council's Equality Ambassadors and Staff Equality Networks.
8. I know how to access and participate in internal equalities activities at Aberdeen City Council.
9. I am aware that Aberdeen City Council works in partnership with Trade Unions.
10. I know how to access and participate in Trade Union membership and activities at Aberdeen City Council.
11. There are opportunities to progress within Aberdeen City Council.
12. All employees have fair and equal access to the promotion and development opportunities in Aberdeen City Council.
13. Aberdeen City Council is doing enough to bring diversity into the organisation through recruitment.
14. Aberdeen City Council's recruitment process is accessible and inclusive to all.
15. Diversity is visible and encouraged in Aberdeen City Council's recruitment campaigns.
16. Aberdeen City Council provides adequate equality, diversity and inclusion training for employees.
17. Managers and leaders are well trained and educated about EDI standards and best practices
18. There are effective knowledge and skill-sharing processes between different ages in our workforce.
19. I have skills and knowledge in the Gaelic language.
20. I have skills and knowledge in British Sign Language (BSL).
21. There is a clear commitment to enhancing workforce diversity and addressing underrepresentation in my service area.
22. I feel confident discussing any issues related to any protected characteristics I may have with my manager.

Further narrative on these findings have been included in the 'Employee Survey Analysis – A focus on Equality Diversity and Inclusion Questions' in Appendix 2.

5. Equality Outcomes as an Education Authority (2021-2025)

5.1 Education Equality Outcome 1

Increase access to information by ensuring communication barriers are removed for children, young people and families who are disabled.

Key Achievements

1. All young people with additional support needs have either a low- or high-tech communication aid which allow them to communicate and engage in learning.
2. Central officers are working with local charities to provide in person information sessions for families with young people who have additional support needs.
3. Our Fit Like service continues to support families to access support from third sector providers.
4. All schools have a CIRCLE lead who has facilitated a review of learning environments which has led to improved quality and accessibility.
5. Our Educational Psychology Service has trained over 50 Emotional Literacy Support Assistants to provide support to young people.

6. Work has begun to bring together all information relating to support for additional support needs together in a single accessible website.
7. The broadening of the offer at senior phase has created a wider range of pathways for all.
8. Both Orchard Brae and Bucksburn wing have held Futures events that provide information on post 16 transitions.
9. Orchard Brae Connect offer support, information and training sessions to all parents of children with ASN.
10. Local employability Partnership (LEP) conference was held in December 2024, based on independent research by Rocket Science, the aims to understand barriers, support requirements and how information could be shared effectively
11. The city-wide parent forum meets frequently to address issues relating to communication in a timely manner. Committee members highlighted communication as part of the action plan for the Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan
12. Bucksburn Academy ASN Wing continue to work towards achieving Makaton friendly status with members of staff identified to undertake Makaton, and Talker training. Orchard Brae School staff are part of a national group, developing materials to support practitioners build their knowledge and skills to support pupil voice and agency for those learners with complex additional support needs.

Next Steps

- The new Parental Involvement and Engagement Plan was approved by committee in November. An underlying action plan is now being used by officers to meet the priorities which were outlined. Communication has taken precedence as highlighted by committee members

5.2 Education Equality Outcome 2

Increase the feeling of trust and belonging to schools and communities by reducing bullying of those with protected characteristics, race, disability, LGBT.

Key Achievements

1. Our anti bullying policy and guidance for schools has been updated and this is supporting more consistent recording of incidents across the city.
2. All Schools using SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module (BEM) to record bullying incidents.
3. All incidents are tracked and reviewed by a central officer to inform next steps.
4. 28% of young people surveyed who had experienced bullying felt incidents had not been dealt with well.
5. Bright spots survey identified that 99% of the 11-17 year old care experienced young people, felt they had an adult who they trusted and who sticks by them no matter what.
6. Almost all schools are engaging with Time for Inclusive Education to increase staff understanding of young people with protected characteristics.
7. 400 teaching staff across 55 education settings have completed Stage 1 of the Time for Inclusive Education E-Learning Module.
8. Schools continue to work through the LGBT Charter programme.
9. 4 Pillars have delivered LGBT training to 140 staff ensuring that there are key staff in our schools who are well placed to support our LGBTQIA+ communities.

10. In line with national guidance, all secondary schools are reviewing existing programmes with a view to register on the Equally Safe in School website. Bucksburn Academy are engaging with Equally Safe at School (ESAS) as one of the Pilot schools. The experiences from this will support further schools participation with the programme.

Next Steps

- Support trained staff to deliver courses in their own schools and across the city ensuring sustainability.
- All incidents of gender-based violence will be tracked and reviewed as part of the ongoing audits into bullying incidents over session 2024/25. This will support the collection, monitoring and review of the data.
- Schools will review their Relationships and Sexual Health and Parenthood curriculum to ensure it includes learning about equalities and gender-based violence.
- A Scottish Government pilot of a primary version of Mentors in Violence Prevention is currently running in selected central belt schools; this will be rolled out nationally in session 25/26.

5.3 Education Equality Outcome 3

Reduce number of exclusions for children and young people with disabilities.

Key Achievements

1. Exclusions for young people with a disability have been reduced by 15%.
2. No exclusions have been recorded at Orchard Brae school.
3. There has been a steady reduction in the number of exclusions of ASN pupils attending Bucksburn Academy.
4. In order to support further reduction in the numbers we have implemented a programme of de-escalation training for all staff in schools and reviewed and updated planning and support packages in place for young people who display distress or dysregulation.

Next Steps

- Include de-escalation training as part of mandatory training at induction for all staff working with children and young people.
- Continue to track reasons for exclusions to ensure appropriate interventions are in place to support young people.

6. Equality Outcomes as a Licensing Board

Aberdeen City Licensing Board is a relevant public body under the 2010 Act hence the Board is required to prepare and monitor the progress towards achieving Equality Outcomes in terms of Regulation 4 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Board published their Equality outcomes in April 2021. In April 2023 the Board published a report, in accordance with its legal duties, on the progress towards achieving those outcomes.

The Licensing Board must publish progress on mainstreaming and a new set of outcomes by April 2025.

6.1 Aberdeen City Council Licensing Board (2021-2025)

Licensing Equality Outcome 1

Developing the Licensing process to ensure fair access for all, including the development of electronic applications and payments and the implementation of hybrid Licensing Board meetings.

Key Achievements

1. All meetings of the Licensing Board are now hybrid. Meetings are now held in either the Council Chamber or Committee Room 2 which allows access to the relevant equipment to allow participation in hybrid meetings since 2022.
2. The hybrid model of meetings has offered applicants, representatives and Board Members the choice and flexibility to attend meetings in-person or remotely online.
3. The Council Chamber and Committee Room 2 are accessible to wheelchair users and persons with restricted mobility as there is a lift located close to the entrance to the building, which itself has wheelchair accessibility outside.
4. Meeting rooms have hearing loop facilities for persons with hearing impairment who use hearing aid devices.
5. Electronic Applications and Payments. In addition to accepting applications by post, applications can be sent by email. Payments in respect of applications can also be made electronically on the Council's Civic payment portal offering more choices on how payments can be made.

Licensing Equality Outcome 2

Licensing Board works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to ensure the most effective decisions are made to meet the aims of the Board and also works with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises.

Key Achievements

1. The Licensing Board published a new [Statement of Licensing Policy](#) in November 2023. The Policy gives the Board a solid framework to make the right decisions at the right time, always with the five licensing objectives at the forefront of their thinking. The Policy also sets out what the Board expects of licence holders. The Board carried out a consultation on the Policy and a range of stakeholders contributed to its development.
2. The Local Licensing Forum keeps the operation of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 under review and gives advice and makes recommendations to the Licensing Board. The Board

must have regard to any advice given, or recommendations made by the Forum, and where the Board decides not to follow the advice or recommendation, it must give the Forum reasons for the decision.

3. The Board and Forum hold a joint meeting on an annual basis.
4. The Board works with a range of stakeholders on an ongoing basis. The stakeholders include Police Scotland, Grampian Health Board, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Community Councils, and licence holders.
5. Licensing Standard Officers (LSOs) work with licence holders to ensure compliance with licence conditions and to promote good practices in and around licenced premises. The LSOs work with a range of partners including but not limited to Police Scotland, Environmental Health and Trading Standards. LSOs will carry out inspection visits to licensed premises and where necessary can issue compliance notices and report to the Licensing Board any concerns they may have about a particular premises.

Next Steps

The next steps will be determined by the Licensing Board and will be reported on as part of the progress report in 2027.

7. Setting our outcomes for Mainstreaming Equality – looking ahead 2025-2029

Specific duty regulation (Regulation 4) as set in the Equality Act stipulates that listed authorities should take reasonable steps to involve persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and any person who appears to the authority to represent the interests of those persons; and should consider relevant evidence relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

7.1 Methodology

To develop our next set of outcomes, we have reviewed our progress against our current outcomes to understand what has gone well and what can be done better. We have also looked at what will be achievable within our resources.

1. We have also considered available local and national equalities evidence,
2. We reflected on our previous equalities work to establish if it is still fit for purpose,
3. We have undertaken extensive community engagement, through surveys, in person and online meetings with groups within our communities.
4. We have used feedback from our employee equality working groups and responses from our recent employee survey to address trends and needs.

7.2 Proportionality and relevance

The outcomes have been set based on proportionality and relevance to focus on areas where there has been persistent inequality and will support us in advancing the needs as stated in the General Duty within the restraints of public spending.

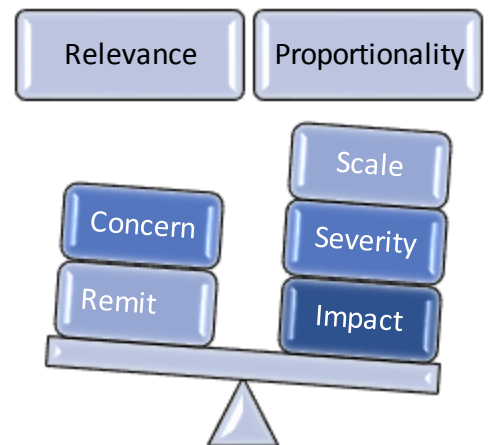
Scale of how many people are being affected by the issue and how it impacts their own positive outcomes.

Severity – does it add to inequality for specific groups and what is the risk associated.

Concern – is it a significant issue to the communities?

Impact – is the situation getting worse and is there more that can be done to improve better outcome chances?

Remit – is this something we can do as a public authority and within the given restraints of public spending?



7.3 Participants

As part of the process, attended information sessions by the Scottish Government and Equality and Human Rights Commission to shape our outcomes. We have also worked with several groups to ensure there was a diverse spread of individuals we engaged with to assess our progress and to develop new outcomes. Some of these groups included but are not limited to:

- 4Pillars (LGBT+ and other intersecting characteristics)
- Aberdeen Deaf Club (Disability and other intersecting characteristics)
- Aberdeen Youth Movement (Age- Youth and other intersecting characteristics)
- Black and Scot (Sex, Race and other intersecting characteristics)
- Various Community events (All characteristics)
- Disability Equity Partnership (Disability and other intersecting characteristics)
- Deafblind Scotland (Disability and other intersecting characteristics)
- Diversity Bridge SCIO (Race / Religion and Belief and other intersecting characteristics)
- Aberdeen City Council Employee Equality Ambassadors Network (All characteristics)
- Grampian Regional Equality Council (All characteristics)
- Shopmobility Aberdeen (Age, Disability and other intersecting characteristics)
- Silver City Surfers (Age – Older and other intersecting characteristics)
- Internal Staff Equality Groups and Networks (All characteristics)
- Attendees at the vaccination centre (All characteristics)
- Young Ambassadors Network (Age – young and other intersecting characteristics)
- Fountain of Love (Race / Religion and Belief and other intersecting characteristics)
- Aberdeen Action on Disability (Disability and other intersecting characteristics)

7.4 Internal/external drivers

We have aligned ourselves with some of the recommendations of the [race and ethnic disparities report](#) as part of our overall outcomes with the aim of:

- Building trust between our citizens to whom we provide information and services
- Promoting fairness to improve opportunities and outcomes for employees, individuals and communities
- Creating agency and means of participation so that citizens can have more involvement in decisions that impact their lives
- Achieving meaningful and genuine inclusion so that everyone feels they belong and are safe.

8. Proposed Outcomes for 2025- 2029

8.1 Proposed draft outcomes as a service provider (2025 -2029)

Proposed refreshed outcome:

Equality Outcome 1: All people can access information and services, with systemic, social, and physical barriers identified and minimised.

Rationale:

The feedback received via the survey and engagement highlighted that there remain areas for improvement to include support for vulnerable groups, providing clear instruction and guidance on what information is available and how people can access it. More detail on responses have been included in Appendix 2.

Proposed Outputs:

- We will improve how we collect, analyse and utilise data to gain a better understanding of barriers to accessing information and services. Improved data will support a better understanding of systemic barriers disadvantaging specific groups. This will help us to work collaboratively and tackle inequalities more efficiently. We will focus on Age, Disability, Race and the interactions with poverty.
- By September 2025, we will co-develop and share sustainable and achievable action plans
- We will communicate widely any changes to critical processes we undertake
- We will improve on sharing results and outcomes of consultation and engagement exercises
- We will develop more data dashboards that will allow us to disaggregate data and better understand the impact of intersectionality.
- We will update and better promote internal guidance to employees on inclusive language, accessibility and alternative formats.

- We will co-develop inclusive resources with staff and with community members to help individuals understand our processes.
- We will promote opportunities for employment, volunteering and training within focussed communities
- We will increase our use of social media and other communication channels to share events and opportunities to get involved.
- We will offer more training and awareness for staff to reinforce equalities considerations when creating/promoting consultations

Proposed new outcome:

Equality Outcome 2: All people can participate and help shape decisions that affect them

Rationale:

Key issues that were highlighted as part of the engagement and consultation highlighted communication issues to include accessing information digitally or through other sources, navigation of website and challenges with long waiting times on calls or getting responses to email messages. Feedback also highlighted that communication needs to be improved so that people know how their contribution in surveys and consultations are being used to make decisions.

Proposed Outputs:

- We will examine best practices and innovative methods for involving Lived and Living Experience, ensuring those facing the worst inequalities can participate.
- We will provide multiple channels for participation, including online platforms, face-to-face meetings, and written submissions, making sure that people with different abilities and resources can engage effectively.
- Our efforts to engage will focus on diverse communities and intersectionality, ensuring that we reach and communicate proactively with underrepresented groups. This will be inclusive of ethnic minorities and people with disabilities, as well as people facing socio-economic disadvantage.
- We will maintain open lines of communication, keeping the public informed about the consultation process, key milestones, and how their input is being used. Regular updates will be shared via our website, social media, and community news bulletins.
- We will regularly evaluate our processes, seeking feedback from participants to identify areas for improvement and ensure that the process remains effective and inclusive.
- We will strengthen work with partner and community organisations to make sure processes are inclusive.

Proposed new outcome:

EO3: Aberdeen City Council will develop inclusive infrastructure that meets the need of people who use it.

Rationale:

Places and spaces need to be accessible and inclusive for the people living in Aberdeen.

Improving public services such as libraries, pavements, and improving amenities and council facilities across the city were issues communities felt that could be improved on.

'Roads, Transport and Parking' had the highest number of respondents disagreeing with the statement that 'I can easily access the following goods and services' at 48% disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Issues with the efficiency of council services, such as delays in processing applications and lack of follow-up on reported issues were also raised. Respondents also shared experiences of navigating what they found to be complicated procedures in accessing services and information.

We will work collaboratively with the wider city plans to ensure inclusion remains a part of their service area activities.

Proposed outputs:

- Inclusive infrastructure considers physical, social, cultural and procedural aspects of our daily operation. We will focus on Disability, Age, Race, Sex and Sexual Orientation.
- We will implement the Social Model of Disability, which understands disability as resulting from barriers created by our buildings, processes, systems, and culture, rather than being caused by an individual's impairment. Our focus will be on but not limited to Age, Disability, Race and Sex.
- To meet this outcome, we will assess and implement communication strategy to share why equalities data is requested and how we use it to inform better decision making that is inclusive.
- By 2027, we will undertake a review and report back to understand the impact of infrastructure and the relation between inequality. Our focus will be on but not limited to Sex, Disability, Sexual Orientation, Gender Reassignment.
- We will work with all our services to identify improvements in our process to support

8.2 Proposed draft outcomes as an Employer (2025 -2029)

Proposed new outcome:

Equality Outcome 1: Our workforce is as diverse and representative of the city we serve, with a focus on sex, disability, race and sexual orientation.

Rationale:

Along with the feedback from our employee equality groups, employee survey, we have also considered census data and our internal staffing reports to ensure our work force is diverse and representative of protected characteristics.

Proposed outputs:

- We will take forward a range of actions that will deliver cross cutting and intersectional improvements alongside specific activity focussed groups where appropriate to develop diverse leaders from our workforce.
- We will implement a continuous improvement approach to enhance delivery and outcomes for improving leadership diversity with an intersectional focus on Disability, Sex and Race .
- We will continuously review our recruitment statistics and address under-representation through positive action at leadership levels.
- We will develop our social media promotion of equality, diversity, inclusion.
- We will develop promotional material to promote Aberdeen as a city to live and work and attract candidates nationally. In our promotion of vacancies, highlight if the role has the ability to work flexibly, including hybrid, to potentially increase the candidate pool.
- Continue to train new recruiting managers and refresh the capabilities of experienced recruiting managers in unconscious bias, as part of Recruiting and Selection Training for Managers.
- We will increase awareness of Accelerator scheme for all development opportunities.
- We will focus on addressing occupational segregation through Workforce Planning.

Proposed new outcome:

Equality Outcome 2: Employees feel their voice and experience is heard, valued and helps shape decisions that affect them.

Rationale:

As part of the employee survey, 13% disagreed to the question of ‘I feel respected and included as an employee’. 56% agreed that that the council has good ways of keeping us informed. Our drive is to improve value and respect within our workforce.

As the need for lived experience and the right increasing emphasis on inclusive communication, this outcome will improve participation and informed decision making.

Proposed outputs:

- We will improve how we gather and act on the experiences of our workforce.
- We will expect managers and leaders to actively seek out, listen and respond to workforce who are facing challenges.
- We will actively seek out, listen and respond to employee voice to identify barriers and challenges.
- We will engage with our equality working groups to engage and co-create policies and strategies. Employees are involved from the start.
- Communications are accessible, show diversity of voice and experience
- We will improve how we collect, analyse and use equality data and information about our workforce.
- We will raise awareness of opportunities to participate in workforce decision making, such as through our Equality Ambassadors, Equality Working Groups.

- We will assess the impact of actions taken through equality groups and employee experience surveys – and act on our learning to ensure all employees feel valued and included.
- Employees feel safe and empowered to report any incidences or cultures that are not aligned to equality agendas – through clearly available anonymous reporting and other channels.
- We will improve our internal training and communications for managers and employees to increase awareness and capability on EDI.

8.3 Proposed draft outcomes as an Education Authority (2025 -2029)

Equality Outcome 1: Pupils with disabilities will experience better access to services that meets their needs through more frequent and systematic involvement in the design of service delivery across the council.

Equality Outcome 2: Young people and families will have improved access to the resources needed to support their mental health and wellbeing.

Equality Outcome 3: Staff, children and young people will have a greater awareness of how they can support equality through delivery of curriculum.

8.4 Proposed draft outcomes as a Licensing Board (2025 -2029)

The Licensing Board outcomes have been set and will be considered by the Board in April 2025.

Licensing Outcome 1

Review and maintain the licensing process to ensure fair access for all, including the continuation and development of hybrid Licensing Board meetings.

1. The Board will monitor and review its application forms and standard documentation regularly to ensure that these are as accessible as possible and continue to hold hybrid Licensing Board meetings in so far as is possible.
2. The Board will seek to ensure through its Questionnaire (attached to the Board’s application forms) that its services are accessible to everyone who lives in Aberdeen and beyond, including persons with protected characteristics.

Licensing Outcome 2

The community of Aberdeen City are able to engage effectively in the exercise of the Board’s licensing functions.

1. The Board will seek to identify any issues arising in connection with persons with protected characteristics which are identified through partnership working with the Licensing Forum in order to monitor and address such concerns, as appropriate.
2. The Board will seek to ensure that the service it provides offers equal opportunity for engagement by persons with protected characteristics.

9. Next steps:

- Following approval, our final report will be published [Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Report | Aberdeen City Council](#) by April 2025.
- We will also publish a summary of the report that is easy to read.
- We will also publish an Easy Read version of the new outcomes
- We will produce a summary version of the report in British Sign Language.
- We will have more engagement sessions to co-create and develop effective action plans to help us collectively reach the equality outcomes.
- Present Action Plans to relevant committees
- A progress report will be presented to committee by April 2027.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Equality Outcomes Mainstreaming Report 2021 - 2025

Appendix 2: Community Engagement and Survey Analysis

Appendix 3: Employee Survey Analysis

Appendix 4: Employee Information

For any enquiries about this document or if you require alternative formats:

Please contact:

equality_and_diversity@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Aberdeen City Council | People and Organisation Development | Customer Services

Marischal College | 3rd Floor Hub 16 | Broad Street | Aberdeen | AB10 1AB

Tel: 01224 070 300

British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us direct by using [ContactSCOTLAND-BSL](#)