

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2026 – Summary

Why do we need this Strategy?

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy describes what we plan to do over the next four years to deliver better outcomes for those living and working in Cornwall through levelling up life chances across the diverse communities of Cornwall.

It will help the Council meet its legal duties under the Equality Act and help us ensure that what we do is always for the benefit of Cornwall's residents.

Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

In February 2022, Cornwall Council set out its mission to ensure that everyone can start well, live well and age well. The [Council Business Plan](#) also set out four priorities to make Cornwall:

- A brilliant place to be a child and grow up
- In a thriving, sustainable Cornwall that offers a secure home, a decent income and a great environment for all
- With vibrant, safe, supportive communities where people help each other live well
- All supported by an empowering and enterprising council that secures great value for money and provides a consistently excellent customer experience.

This strategy aims to support these priorities by also recognising that factors such as race, sex, age, sexual orientation and disability will affect whether you are more likely to face direct and indirect barriers in society. Some people will face more than one of these barriers.

The Change we Want to See

We talked to partners working in equalities for their views on the priorities for equality, diversity and inclusion at the council. From those conversations we developed five outcomes that set out how the change we want to see as a result of this strategy:

1. **Equality, diversity and inclusion will be everybody's business.** Councillors and council staff will be knowledgeable and confident in equality matters. We will assess

the impact of decisions on residents and staff, and we will adapt services and projects as needed to mitigate any negative impact.

2. **Services and facilities are accessible to all.** Cornwall Council's facilities and services, whether for residents or staff, will meet the needs of our diverse communities.
3. **We will strengthen our relationships with communities and partners.** We want partnerships based on trust and respect and where both parties come to the table as equals.
4. **We will celebrate the benefits that a diverse workforce** brings and will work to have a culture where staff feel well supported.
5. **The council celebrates the diversity of Cornwall.** We will act as an advocate for everyone in Cornwall; and help other organisations in Cornwall to reduce inequality.

Our Objectives

There are 24 objectives in the strategy that will help us achieve our aims.

Five objectives set out how the council as a whole will approach equality, diversity and inclusion in its everyday business. These objectives describe how we will put equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of everything we do.

1. We will collect and publish data on equality in Cornwall consistently across the council. This allows us to understand different outcomes experienced by communities, service users and staff and make more evidence-based decisions
2. We will build collaborative and equal relationships with communities and partners based on trust and respect, so that their voices help shape services and policies. This will strengthen our decision making and improve outcomes by ensuring a diverse range of voices are heard
3. We will support our Councillors and staff to know more about equality matters. The council will celebrate diversity and support colleagues to feel confident about being themselves at work.
4. We will ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are a part of the decision-making process. We will assess the potential impact of decisions on people in relation to their protected characteristics and mitigating actions will be taken where necessary
5. We will ensure our services are convenient and accessible for all, adopting a "One-Council approach" to improve the experience of those who contact the council.

Other objectives have been developed in response to what we know about inequality in Cornwall.¹ The Council Plan addresses many inequalities, so this strategy looks to provide further support where there are gaps.

¹ The data we have used to support these objectives is set out in the main strategy document.

Equality Objectives	Why this Matters
To take concrete actions to eradicate racism and advance race equality in Cornwall, building on recommendations endorsed by Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Leadership Board	There is evidence of racism and racial discrimination in Cornwall, and so the Council will work with partners to advance race equality.
To represent the rights and interests of the Cornish , working to ensure the implementation of all articles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities	Following the UK Government recognising the Cornish as a protected national minority, there is still much to do to ensure the rights of the Cornish National Minority are represented and protected.
To work with the Gypsy and Traveller community to ensure that Gypsies and Travellers, regardless of their tenure, have equity of access to health, welfare, education and all other essential services	Gypsies and Travellers are protected under the Equality Act 2010 as a minority ethnic group and face many inequalities in society. This objective seeks to address issues around accommodation and family support.
To increase the number of younger adults with Special Educational Needs and Disability and Learning Difficulties and Disabilities moving into paid employment	Disability is the single biggest equality factor in affecting income and one action the Council will take in response is to support those with disability into work.
To support those in need to access suitable housing	Access to affordable housing is a major issue across Cornwall; it is also important to provide the right type of affordable housing for people with additional needs
To ensure our streets and open spaces are accessible and inclusive	There is evidence pointing to the benefits of green space in the living environment for both physical and mental health. This objective will help increase access.
To embed the social model of disability across the Council	The Council will look at access to our buildings for the public and staff, using the social model of disability, which says that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment.
To ensure all our children have the best start in life – particularly those who may be at risk of underachieving due to vulnerability	Disadvantage affects children throughout their school life and beyond, and so it is critical to provide early support.
To ensure the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people are supported through high-quality local services so that no one is left behind	
To ensure children and young people have the chance to develop strong self-identities and feel respected and affirmed as unique individuals with their own life stories; and that they have a sense of group identity where links with their family and community are acknowledged and extended	When children and young people feel a sense of belonging and sense of pride in their families, their peers, and their communities, they can be emotionally strong, self-assured, and able to deal with challenges and difficulties. This creates an important foundation for their learning and development.

Equality Objectives	Why this Matters
To ensure all children and young people, including those at risk of social exclusion, are given the opportunity to make a positive contribution to their lives in Cornwall	Children's rights will be at the heart of our decision-making, policy and practice. This objective supports that work to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate.
To identify hate-related behaviours in education and childcare settings at an early stage, and support positive intervention to prevent further harm	Hate crime is increasing in Cornwall, and so we will take action to tackle this at an early stage.
To strengthen our response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (DASV) by training all staff how to recognise it and respond to risk appropriately	DASV has also increased in Cornwall, and one of the ways the Council will respond to that is ensuring that all our staff are able to recognise and respond in the most supportive way.
To support staff to identify multiple trauma and confident to work with people who have experienced trauma and its effects	
To ensure that pay is equitable across Cornwall Council	The gender pay gap in the Council has decreased in recent years; however we must continue to work to reduce it. We also need to understand the extent of the race and disability pay gap.
To support our residents to access and be confident using online services	Access to online services is increasingly important, and this objective will support residents where needed – whilst also recognising that not all people want to access services online.
To ensure that the council achieves and actively supports the requirements of the Armed Forces Covenant and the impending Armed Forces Act.	Cornwall has a significant armed forces and veteran community, who can face disadvantage when accessing public services. This objective will address these inequalities through implementing the Armed Forces Covenant.
To explore the opportunity for a Faith Covenant with faith based organisations to ensure that we work effectively together	Our faith communities are a vital part of our society, and we want to improve how we can work in partnership with them.
To build support, including securing suitable accommodation for refugee children and families and unaccompanied asylum seeking children	Following the positive response from Cornwall's residents in welcoming Ukrainian's refugees, we will build our support to all refugee children and families.