



Northumberland
County Council

Equality Information Report 2025

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Foreword from our Chief Executive

Welcome to our Equality Monitoring Report 2025, which covers the period 1st April 2024 to the 31st March 2025, and details how we are continuing to work towards meeting our duties under the Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty, whilst also reviewing how we are making progress against Meeting our Equality Objectives for 2021- 2025.

This report once again provides us with a great opportunity to demonstrate how we are continuing to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across our workforce and our communities, recognising the breadth of personal knowledge and experience that each staff member and resident of Northumberland brings, and how that knowledge and experience can shape the work that we do and the communities that we live in.

As a Council, we remain committed to making progress against our current priorities of economic growth, inequalities, and value for money. Equity and Equality are a key part of the foundation of the work we are carrying out across the organisation and are very much embedded within our core vision and values.

We remain fully committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity & equality and inclusion across our county and recognise and embrace diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences. As an organisation, we remain wholeheartedly dedicated to tackling inequalities, prejudice and discrimination that impact residents and communities across our Northumberland.

This report celebrates our successes whilst affording us an opportunity to share our ideas for the future, ensuring that our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion remains embedded within our services and throughout our workforce.



Helen Paterson – Chief Executive, Northumberland County Council

Introduction

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty) Northumberland County Council is required to publish equality information annually, and to report on progress with achieving Meeting our Equality Objectives. As part of this duty, we collect and publish information about our services and the actions we are taking to progress Meeting our Equality Objectives, which are to:

- Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.
- Listen to, involve, and respond to our communities effectively.
- Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.
- Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

Whilst we are required to publish this information, we welcome the opportunity to reflect on the valuable work done throughout the year that has enabled us to further diversity, equity and inclusion across our organisation and our communities.

The Council's organisational values outline our commitment to Northumberland's residents and communities. Key to the successful delivery of these values is our workforce, which is why it is extremely important that both our workforce and residents are engaged, heard, and valued.

We are wholly committed to ensuring that we do not discriminate or otherwise treat unfairly any individual on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

This report provides an overview of the Council's performance in relation to equality through the lens of the protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010). It also provides an insight into the work, initiatives and partnerships around equality, diversity, and inclusion across the workforce and within our communities.

About Northumberland

Northumberland is England's northernmost county, bordering Cumbria to the west, County Durham and Tyne and Wear to the south and Scotland to the north. Berwick upon Tweed in the far north of the County lies approximately 2 miles from the Scottish border, and much of the county lies further north than the southernmost Scottish border.



From ancient castles and stunning landscapes, picturesque coastal and market towns, Northumberland is a diverse county. Our economy boasts a growing, internationally recognised offshore and renewable energy hub delivering clean and green growth.

The county is the largest unitary authority by geographic coverage with the greatest area of Green Belt of any Local Planning Authority. With an area of 5,013 km² and a population of 324,400 ¹(2024), Northumberland is the least densely populated of the North-East region's 12 local authority areas and the sixth most sparsely populated in England. The different parts of the county have distinct characteristics, from urban to rural, coastal to upland and well-connected to remote.

The south-east of the county is the most densely populated, with the three largest towns, Blyth, Cramlington and Ashington. These act as main employment centres, drawing from a wider area than just south-east Northumberland. Beyond the south-east, the county's main settlements are located along the Tyne Valley corridor and along the coast.

Morpeth, Hexham, Prudhoe, Berwick and Alnwick are the main market towns, all of which have significant rural hinterlands. Almost 97% of the county's land area is classed as rural, with just under half of the population living in this area and over half of the population living in 3% of the land area, mainly in the south-east of the county.

¹ Source: NOMIS

Statistics provided by the Office of National Statistics² show that in line with the rest of the North East region, Northumberland's population grew at a relatively slow rate in the last decade, with an overall population percentage increase of 1.4% (compared to 6.6% across England).

One of the challenges faced by the Council is Northumberland's ageing population with 26% of our residents currently aged 65+. This is a higher proportion than both England (19%) and the North East region (21%).³ Our 65+ population is projected to grow by the largest proportion, rising to 33% of our population by 2043.⁴

Conversely, 19.9% of Northumberland's population are aged under 19, lower than the proportions for England (19.9%) and the North East (22.2%).⁵ of Northumberland's population has seen a reduction of 5.9% in people aged 15 to 64 years and a decrease of 3.4% in children under 15 years.

There is a strong reliance on the public sector for employment within Northumberland, with almost one in three people working in the various sub-sectors of health and social work, education and public administration. With 5419 employees Northumberland County Council remains one of the largest employers in the county. Our average annual staff turnover rate stands at approximately 9.75%, a reduction of 1.72% from last year, and comparing positively well to the current national average of 16.8%.

² Census 2021

³ Source: Fingertips, Productive Healthy Ageing Profile

⁴ Source: NOMIS Population Projections.

⁵ Source: NOMIS Population Estimates

Our Priorities, Values & Equality Objectives

Our Priorities

The Council's updated Corporate Plan was launched in 2023. This Plan, running from 2023 to 2026, sets out what the Council, both Members and staff, will do, working with partners and communities to deliver on our Vision and Priorities for all of Northumberland's residents in the coming years.

It outlines how we will ensure we are a Best Value Council, delivering value for money services to residents, businesses, and visitors to the county. Building upon achievements from the previous Corporate Plan this plan shapes how we deliver all services and functions, ensuring service plans and staff appraisals are clear on how they will contribute to achieving our Vision and Priorities.



We want to ensure that the county continues to be a land of great opportunities for current and future generations. To achieve this, Members and Council staff are focused on working together to deliver our three Corporate Priorities

1. **Achieving Value for Money** - operating efficiently and effectively
2. **Tackling Inequalities** - supporting everybody to live their best lives.
3. **Driving Economic Growth** - enabling prosperity across the county

Our priorities are interlinked, and all of our actions support the delivery of our vision to be a Land of Great Opportunities. Our actions focus on what we can do as a local authority but, in all of our work, we work in partnership with other organisations and within a local, regional and national context. Our measures reflect both things that we can do as a Council and those things we need to work in partnership to achieve.

Our Values

We recognise that how we deliver is as important as what we deliver, and this is the key to our success. Our Northumberland team, officers and members, have developed a set

of shared values that will underpin everything we do. It will guide the decisions we make; the way we work with each other and the difference we make in our communities.

- **People First** - We provide services to our people (residents, colleagues, members, partners, visitors and businesses) through lasting, genuine, relationships that make a positive difference to their lives and their communities. We listen and understand our people's needs and put them at the heart of our decision making.
- **Respect** - We are committed to building a trusting, caring and supportive environment for all our colleagues and communities. That means we are there for each other, act with empathy, value differences and encourage others to express themselves in order to collectively achieve our common goals. We treat others as they would wish to be treated.
- **Excellence** - We strive for the highest quality delivery of our services. This means being accountable for our actions and delivering on our commitments. We share and celebrate what works, are open and learn from what doesn't and take pride in continually improving.
- **Resilience** - We have robust controls, practices and support in place to protect our residents, our colleagues and our communities and empower them to thrive and live well. We are committed to acting sustainably in order to drive the right impact, over the long term, whilst ensuring best value for money

These values are the standards by which we will hold ourselves and each other to account. They are our promise to our residents.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

As part of our duty under the Equality Act 2010, the council publishes equality objectives every four years. These set out our equality priorities as an employer and for our services.

Our aim is to make equality, diversity and inclusion part of the way the council works, placing it at the heart of everything we do. The existing Objectives will be reviewed and refreshed during 2025. Our current objectives are as follows;

1. Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.
2. Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.
3. Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

4. Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

We will be developing updated Equality Objectives during 2025 to ensure that we remain committed to supporting Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across our workforce and communities over the next 4 years.

Understanding Northumberland Residents' Profile

Figures are produced at a county level; however, it is acknowledged that this can conceal inequalities that exist in different communities across the county.

Population

The 2021 Census determined that in Northumberland, the population size has increased by 1.4%, from around 316,000 in 2011 to 320,600 in 2021. This has since risen again by a further 1.19% to 324,400⁶ in 2024.

Northumberland remains the least densely populated of the North East's 12 local authority areas, with 64 people per sq. km. Northumberland is the 6th most sparsely populated local authority in England.

Census 2021 results revealed that at that point there were 146,900 households with at least one usual resident, an increase of 6.1% on 2011.

Age

Of the four UK nations, England consistently has the highest life expectancy at birth for males and females, and Scotland the lowest. Life expectancy at birth in 2020 to 2022 in England was estimated to be 78.8 years for males and 82.8 years for females⁷.

In Northumberland life expectancy for a male from birth is 78.3 years and for a female it is 82⁸ years, so very similar to the national picture.

There has been an increase of 28.9% in people aged 65 years and over, a decrease of 5.9% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and a decrease of 3.4% in children aged under 15 years.

The largest increase was seen in the 70-74 age band, growing by 50%. The number of people aged between 40 and 49 decreased by 21% over the decade.

Sex

Current figures indicate that in Northumberland 51.14% of residents are female and 48.86% are male, with a ratio of 95.6 males to every 100 females. This is consistent with the profile of England & Wales with a population of women at 51.0% of the population and for men at 49.0%⁹.

⁶ Source: NOMIS

⁷ National life tables – life expectancy in the UK: 2020 to 2022 - ONS

⁸ Source: Fingertips

⁹ ONS Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021- 02/11/2022

Ethnicity

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, a race 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.

According to the latest census 2021 the population in Northumberland is predominantly White at 97.7%, with 1.2% Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh, 0.1% Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African and 0.3% Other Ethnic Group¹⁰

In addition, 0.7% of Northumberland residents identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, up from 0.5% in 2011. This 0.2 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area.

Across the North East, the percentage of people from "Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups" increased from 0.9% to 1.3%, while across England the percentage increased from 2.3% to 3.0%.

The percentage of people who identified their ethnic group within the "Other" category ("Arab" or "Any other ethnic group") increased from 0.1% in 2011 to 0.3% in 2021.

- Asian - 3,374 people or 1.2%
- Black - 598 people or 0.1%
- Mixed - 2,557 people or 0.7%
- Other - 1,010 people or 0.3%
- White - 313,027 people or 97.7%

Religion and Belief

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, 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.

In England about 46% of the population is Christian, 7% is Muslim, 2% is Hindu, and Buddhists, Sikhs and Jews are each around 1%. The remainder is split between people with no religion and those who decided not to identify a religion.

The majority of the population of Northumberland are Christian (53.2%). The next largest group those that state they have No Religion at 40.1%. Of the remaining respondents, 0.5% are Muslim, 0.2% are Buddhist and 0.2% are Sikh, 0.1% are Hindu

¹⁰ ONS Census 2021

and 0.1% are Jewish. Of the remainder 0.4% identified as Other and 5% did not answer the question. ¹¹

Religious groups in Northumberland as detailed within the 2021 census are as follows:

- Christian - 170,669 people or 53.2%
- Buddhist - 752 people or 0.2%
- Hindu - 446 people or 0.1%
- Muslim - 1,635 people or 0.5%
- Sikh - 654 people or 0.2%
- Other (including No Religion) - 146,410 people or 45.7%

Disability

In the Equality Act 2010 a person has a disability if she or he has 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.

Information from the Census 2021 details that 8.3% of the population have a disability that limits day-to-day activities a lot, with 11.3% having a disability that limits day-to-day activities a little, a total of 19.6% of the population.

In the 2021 census, 80.4% of Northumberland residents responded that they were not disabled increased from 80.0%

Of those who reported a disability

- 8.3% stated that they were limited a lot by disability.
- 11.3% stated that they were limited a little by disability.

Sexual Orientation

The 2021 Census reports that 92.11% of the population of Northumberland are straight / heterosexual, with 1.23% Gay or Lesbian, 0.84% are Bisexual and 0.17% from All Other Sexual Orientations. 5.64% of respondents did not answer the question.

- Straight / Heterosexual 92.12%
- Gay or Lesbian 1.23%
- Bi Sexual 0.84%
- All other sexual orientations 0.17%
- Not answered 5.64%

¹¹ Census 2021

Gender Identity

As defined by the Equality Act 2010, sex is understood as binary being either male or female. It can mean a group of people like men or boys, or women or girls.

There were 30,420,202 women (51.0% of the population) and 29,177,340 men (49.0%) in England and Wales¹².

According to the Census 2021 in Northumberland 51.2% are female and 48.8% are male, with a ratio of 95.6 males to every 100 females.

The detailed Gender Identity for Northumberland residents over the age of 16 was reported as follows¹³

• Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	95.48%
• Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given.	0.11%
• Trans Woman	0.05%
• Trans Man	0.05%
• Non-binary	0.04%
• Other Gender Identities	0.02%
• Not answered	4.24%

Carers

A carer is a person of any age who provides unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour who is disabled, has an illness or long-term condition, or who needs extra help as they grow older.

Carers are holding families together, enabling those they care for to get the most out of life, making an enormous contribution to society and saving the economy billions of pounds. Yet many are stretched to the limit – juggling care with work and family life, struggling to make ends meet and often battling with poor health themselves¹⁴.

Though not a specific Protected Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act it is recognised that people with caring responsibilities can be vulnerable or disadvantaged and therefore should be considered.

The 2021 Census asked people to report on unpaid care that they provide on a weekly basis.

- 90.3% of Northumberland residents provide no unpaid care.

¹² Census 2021

¹³ Census 2021

¹⁴ Carers UK

- 4.6% provide care of 19 hours or less.
- 2.1% provide between 20 hours and 49 hours.
- 3.0% provide 50 hours or more care per week.

Meeting Our Equality Duty

As a public sector organisation Northumberland County Council has a duty to analyse the impact of our services and practices on equality across all the protected characteristics.

This helps us consider if the way we do things has any unintended consequences for some groups, and to check if they will be fully effective for all target groups. It can help us identify practical steps to tackle any negative effects or discrimination, opportunities to promote equality and foster good relations between different groups. We publish equality information and undertake equality impact assessments to help us do this.

Integrated Impact Assessments

As part of the Council's local commitment to reduce inequalities, the Council has developed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process which allows decisions to be screened not only to consider the need for an equality impact assessment, but also to consider the impact on a broader range of groups experiencing socio-economic and health inequalities, as well as impacts on the environment.

To implement this new approach, a new IIA tool has been developed and launched across the organisation and is now used by officers when taking decisions through the budget and committee process.

Annual Equality Information Analysis

The council completes an annual analysis of its core functions and services and their impact on equality, with an additional analysis covering our workforce and employment issues across the whole Council. This analysis identifies key areas where changes may be needed to ensure that services respond fairly to the needs of different groups and identifies areas where further information and feedback needs to be gathered. It is an ongoing cyclical process which is reported on and published annually and fed into the service planning process so actions and performance can be monitored.

Understanding and Engaging with our Communities

The Council uses various tools to meet the required duties and promote Diversity, Equity, Equality and Inclusion across our communities. We use a range of methods to ensure that we listen to the views of the people who use our services and involve them in decision making. This includes helping us get a better understanding of the specific equality issues that impact on different groups in the community.

High quality, coordinated and proactive consultation and engagement is essential for:

- ensuring all residents have the opportunity to shape services
- good decision-making

- evaluating the Council's progress against strategic priorities and medium and long-term objectives.

We engage with our residents through various means:

- **The People's Panel** - The Council continues to maintain a People's Panel. This is a representative consultative body of residents, used to help identify local priorities and to consult service users and non-users on a range of customer satisfaction and local quality of life issues.
- **Youth Parliament** - Organised by young people, the parliament provides opportunities for today's youth to use their voice and bring about change. It has four members; the members are elected by other young people in Northumberland. Two deputy members take office each year, joining two current members. Members are elected based on their manifestos for improving Northumberland. These manifestos outline what our young people are passionate about in the county, and the changes they would like to see. The elected members will represent Northumberland on a regional and national platform, working closely with the Youth Cabinet.
- **Youth Cabinet** – The Youth Cabinet are elected annually by young people in Northumberland as a body working to represent the views of their peers within the County to decision makers.
- **Voices Making Choices** is made up of young people aged 14 to 21 with experiences of the care system. They are from diverse backgrounds and have different experiences.
- **Student Inclusion Council** - Northumberland's Student Inclusion Council (SIC.) aims to champion the voice of children and young people with SEND and to drive positive change. The new SIC. members are passionate about making a difference and will work alongside the council's Education and SEND team to play an active role in shaping the future of education and council services, making sure the voice of all young people with SEND in the county is heard.
- **The Housing Assurance Board** - this is made up of 3 tenants, Director of Housing, Head of Housing and the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing. This board will maintain an overview of housing services and provide strategic direction, monitor performance against consumer standards and in doing so, commission scrutiny reports where they see appropriate. Together with tenants they will provide assurance of our compliance against our regulatory requirements. They will meet quarterly in the new year, however, there will be some scoping meetings with all parties before the first date is agreed, subsequent dates will follow.
- **Tenant Influence Panel** - this is made up of 9 tenants (from our original tenant alliance panel). Their role is to monitor day to day operational performance and drive the tenant agenda of priorities for service improvements. They will carry

out any scrutiny requirements identified and agreed with the Assurance Board. 3 representatives from this group will be members of The Housing Assurance Board with direct dialogue and participation in all discussions. This panel will be responsible for updating our new Tenant Forum on all activity and discussions within their group and the board. They will meet every month (minimum) in the new year.

- **Tenant Forum** - this group currently stands at 24 tenants but is unlimited in numbers. Its role is to be part of monitoring groups, task & finish groups, dip in dip out options, and "know your service " sessions, job shadowing, mystery shopping etc. They take part in events for tenants and are involved in all activities and specific projects if they so wish. This is a diverse group which not only will keep up to date and take part in housing issues but also hear from other council services delivering to our estates and the wider community. The forum will pass on their views and opinions to the Influence Panel, helping to shape their agenda. They will meet every 2 months in the new year.
- Local people are regularly consulted through surveys and service wide consultations further details of this engagement can be found within the service reports included in this report.

In addition

- The Council is supporting Victims and Survivors of Domestic Abuse and has achieved **Accreditation with White Ribbon UK** – The Council received White Ribbon accreditation after the organisation approved its three-year plan and zero-tolerance to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.
- The Council has maintained its **Gold Standard Award** for the **Armed Forces Covenant Employer Recognition Scheme**. This prestigious award recognises and rewards UK employers and organisations that demonstrate exceptional support for the armed forces community. In 2018, the Council was one of only nine local authorities across the entire UK to receive the coveted Gold Award, which must be revalidated every five years, which was achieved in 2023.
- The Council achieved the **Disability Confident Employer** standard during 2024, demonstrating our commitment to actively attracting and recruiting disabled people to help fill your opportunities, providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process as well as ensuring employees have appropriate disability equality awareness.

Our Services

Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing

The Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing Directorate contains two different service areas. Assessments and Safeguarding, and Commissioning and Performance.

Both areas work together closely to deliver on our statutory functions and to improve outcomes for our vulnerable residents. Both service areas have service delivery commitments and statutory duties laid out in the Care Act 2014. More detail on each service area is laid out below.

Assessment and Safeguarding

Assessment & Safeguarding has a statutory duty to meet the legal obligations of the Care Act 2014 covering the following areas:

- Promote wellbeing
- Prevent, reduce or delay needs
- Provide information and advice and assist with market shaping for commissioned support
- Assessing Eligibility for support and undertaking care needs assessments for anybody who appears or have care and support needs (including carers)
- Safeguarding Adults – duty to makes enquiries, or have others do so, if an adult is at risk of abuse or neglect

Application of the Humans Rights Act and Mental Capacity Act legislation are also adhered to and applied in practice.

Overview of Service Areas

- **Onecall & Enquiry & Referral Co-ordinator Service**
Single point contact for adult care where ERCS provide a triage function support that includes signposting and providing advice and guidance
- **Care & Support Community Teams**
Assessment when the primary need is either physical or mental health (excluding serious mental illness), coordinating multi agency management of risk with monitoring and review. Working closely with primary and secondary health care to manage risk with monitoring and review
- **Countywide Learning Disability Team**
Assessment of Learning disability needs with management of risk with primary and secondary health care

- **Adult Safeguarding Team**
Triage and Enquiry Function and operation of a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) working to a minimum of 2 hrs and maximum of 8 hrs to gather information and implement safety plans
- **Substance & Alcohol Team**
Provide intense support to hard to reach, vulnerable people who due to their alcohol and/or substance intake meet the safeguarding criteria for self-neglect
- **Prevention Teams (part of care support team model)**
Reduce and delay the need for care and support by adopting a strengths-based model that promote independence and closer links to community support
- **Northumberland Approved Mental Health Professional Inpatient Team**
Ensures 24/7 AMHP function and assessment and monitoring of service users in mental health inpatient wards. Provides assertive and intensive function to oversee service users with serious mental illness that have a social care need.
- **Deprivation of Liberty Team**
Undertaken assessments to protect people who lack the mental capacity to make decision about their care and treatment to keep them safe from harm
- **Occupational Therapy Service**
Enhance people's lives through the planning and delivery of person-centred goal setting care
- **Home Improvement Service**
Support independence and ability to remain in one's own home through the installation of major and minor adaptations
- **Homesafe Hospital Team (HIS)**
Home first approach to discharge reducing the length of stays in hospital
- **Risk & Independence Team**
Intense review of community packages of cares to ensure value for money
- **Short Term Support Service**
Goal Focused care and therapy reablement support to enable people to live in their homes for longer
- **Telecare**
Community alarm service for vulnerable adults
- **Joint Equipment Loan Services (JELS)**
Countywide service to provide and deliver equipment to vulnerable people in their own homes
- **Social Work Academy**
Model of support for Newly Qualified Social Workers
- **Emergency Duty Team**
Provide emergency support out of hours including AMHP cover
- **Training & Development**

Training offer for adult social care staff

- **Admin**

Admin support for all service areas

Commissioning and Performance

Commissioning and Performance also incorporates Adult Services In-House Provider Services, Adult Care Finance, Systems and Governance.

The Commissioning function has the following specific Care Act duties:

- Promote diversity and quality in service provision
- Market shaping & commissioning of adult care & support services
- Managing (regulated) provider failure
- Managing other service interruptions

The Service Director is also responsible for Integrated Commissioning, from a Children & Young People.

Integrated Commissioning, from a Children & Young People perspective, has specific statutory duties under section 26 of the Children & Families Act. They are:

A local authority in England and its partner commissioning bodies must make arrangements (“joint commissioning arrangements”) about the education, health and care provision to be secured for—

(a) children and young people for whom the authority is responsible who have special educational needs, and

(b) children and young people in the authority's area who have a disability.

(2) In this Part “education, health and care provision” means—

(a) special educational provision;

(b) health care provision;

(c) social care provision.

Overview of service areas

- **Strategic Commissioning and Contracting**

The portfolio of services commissioned are broad and cuts across regulated adult social care, such as home care, Extra Care, Supported Living, care homes, unregulated services such as day opportunities and services in the voluntary and community sector.

The service undertakes the formal contract management of all contract providers as well as the application of the department's provider quality assurance framework. Commissioning and performance manage any potential risk and issue with provider failure of regulated services as well as undertake proactive assurance to limit any risk of any market interruption across the entirety of what they commission. IC also undertake internal quality audits across each area of the ASC operational teams, providing an audit report and action plan for Teams to continually improve.

In Children's services the predominant activity is in Children's social care services as well as working across public health on the delivery of health and wellbeing services for Children & Young people. There are also areas of commonality across the two directorates, for example in commissioning of support to carers (adult carers & young carers) and statutory advocacy service.

- **Direct Payments**

Integrated Commissioning are also responsible for the provision of a Direct Payments service, supporting residents to be in control of their own individual budget, arranging their care and support individually. The brokerage function supports efficient use of the commissioned home care contract, brokering packages of support with contracted providers and supporting the maintenance of market sufficiency across the County.

- **Direct Provision from Internal Services**

The service is also directly involved in the delivery of services to adults with learning disabilities. This includes a 24-bed residential care home with additional respite provision; supported living services, shared lives, five-day services across the county and 3 horticultural services. Occupancy across the accommodation with support is above 95% for all services. Utilisation of the day services ranges from 65% to 100% use of available capacity in the centres. There are varying reasons for this including the condition/layout of some buildings used, the availability of alternative options in any given local area and the legacy effect of the pandemic on this group of people and their perception of the continued risk of mixing in large numbers.

- **Finance, Performance and Governance**

Financial Assessment and Benefits Officers carry out the vital function of assessing individual residents' income and assets and therefore ability to contribute towards or pay for their care and support, whilst also supporting residents to maximise their income through ensuring they apply for and receive all applicable eligible benefits.

The service is responsible for decision making with regards key areas of national policy implementation and adult social care spend through for example, the Better Care Fund, Adult Social Care Discharge Fund and Market Sustainability & Improvement Fund. This includes strategic commissioning activity associated with the delivery of schemes under these funds, the associated reporting on the financial profiling, spend, delivered benefits and performance achieved. The service is also actively involved in discussions on the most appropriate delivery model, under these funds, for services operated solely by the Council and those that are delivered in partnership with Health services.

Performance and financial reporting are both internal through the corporate governance framework to senior officers and elected members through various meetings and committees. The service is also responsible for the statutory ASC reporting to relevant government departments, most notably through our ASCOF returns.

Notably, the service is also responsible for the primary Client Record Management System and financial reporting tools. The service is undertaking a wholesale replacement of this system, moving from the long-standing use of SWIFT to a new operating system Azeus.

The service is responsible for the departmental transformation programme of work, providing project and programme management and facilitating the transformation board, improvement action plans and preparation/maintenance of CQC assurance readiness.

Our Data

We collate information on our service users for each of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex

There are 8,906 service users (as of 5th February 2025). A breakdown by protected characteristics is provided in the links below:

[Equality impact data % figs as of 5th February 2025.pdf](#)

Consultation and Engagement

The service engages with our customer and residents through various routes;

- **Peoples Advisory Panel**

- Meets bi-monthly.
- Panel members are people with lived experience and carers.
- Recent agenda items discussed included:
- Carers Assessments
- Carers Training
- Complaints process.
- Equality and Diversity questions (for surveys)
- Service Transformation
- Website layout
- Accessibility of information (via website)

Example Outcomes:

- Updates to Carers training
- Suggested changes to the website specifically linked to usability.
- Reforming of Equality and Diversity questions for surveys

- **Learning Disability Partnership (LD) Board**

- Meets quarterly.
- Panel members are professionals and people with lived experience/carers.
- Recent agenda items discussed included:
- Feedback from the Forums and other regional groups
- Update from LD Partners
- Business updates e.g. update on NCC Self-Assessment

- Updates from Carers Northumberland (Carers Update)
- Service Updates

Example outcomes:

- Direct feedback from people with lived experience
- Change to Board chair, to include PLE.

- **Autism Partnership Board**

- Meets quarterly.
- Panel members are professionals and people with lived experience/carers.
- Recent agenda items discussed included:
- Update from Autism Partners
- Updates on *All Age Northumberland Autism Strategy*
- Updates on the Adult Social Care Transformation
- Adult Social Care Autism Working part.

Example outcomes:

- Direct feedback from people with lived experience
- Involvement of people with lived experience in the formation and design of the strategy

- **Carers Partnership Board**

- Meets Quarterly
- Panel members are professionals and people with lived experience and carers.
- Recent agenda items discussed included:
- Co-production of Carers Strategy
- Carers Issues
- Development of Carers Dashboard
- Parents Carer Forum update

Example outcomes:

- Direct feedback from people with lived experience
 - Involvement of carers with lived experience in the formation and design of the strategy
 - Development of support for carers with loved ones in Care Homes
 - Formation of the Carers Forum
 - Pilot of new technology (i.e. Mobilise)
 - Pilot of OT's undertaking Carers Assessments
-
- **Understanding and identifying our barriers to entry**
 - Dedicated project aimed at engagement with marginalised groups in Northumberland, to understand potential barriers to accessing Adult Social Care
 - This is a new project therefore outcomes will be determined in 2025.

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

Examples of good practice examples, or progress in improving services, for people with protected characteristics within Adult Services include:

- Awareness raising among all front-line staff relating to people with protected characteristics, including via training and development, examples of this being *Intermediate Autism Training*.
- Development of specific co-produced strategies e.g. All Age Northumberland Autism Strategy, Carers Strategy.
- Development of communication booklet for people with Autism.
- The commissioning team support a number of provider forum meetings, for different areas of the provider landscape e.g. Day services, care homes and home care providers. These forums offer an opportunity for the local authority and independent providers to collaborate on service improvement and service development, to the benefit of people with protected characteristics.
- Newly updated Carers Training, available to all front-line staff and co-facilitated by Carers.
- Some storyboards have been shared from the Sensory Service:

- [Adult Services Storyboard Sensory Service 2024.pdf](#)
- [Adult Services Storyboard Sensory Service 210125.pdf](#)
- [Adult Services Storyboard Sensory Service CT.pdf](#)

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

A dedicated project has been identified by the Adult Services Equalities Working Group. The group is attended by senior managers from Adult Services along with the NCC DEI Lead and a Senior Manager from Public Health.

The purpose of the project is to understand and engage with people in Northumberland from under-represented groups regarding access to Adult Social Care.

The project is closely aligned with Public Health and Communities First.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

Prevention Hubs

Prevention Hubs in four localities within Northumberland have adopted the Communities First approach.

The prevention teams are a multi-disciplinary model with staff from different specialisms (social workers, occupational therapists, STSS staff, care managers, support planners etc) all working together to triage referrals when they present to the service with consideration of how community resources can support or prevent or delay the requirement for long term care.

A key element of this change is the involvement of the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VSCE) and Community Connectors to assist with identifying any support that can be provided by the voluntary sector in that local area.

Survey feedback

We continue to send surveys to clients, either in response to intervention received, or requesting general feedback on the services which we provide. The Adult Services Peoples Experience Working Group is the main forum to review feedback received and identify actions, to improve people's experiences.

Forums for People with Lived Experience

As detailed in section 5 above, we host various forums which invite discussion and involvement on key priority areas, from people who have/use our services.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

Training

In addition to the statutory/mandatory equality e-learning programme for staff, additional training courses are also available, including:

- Cultural Competence Training
- Mind Your Language
- Autism and SPELL Training
- Autism Working Group, which includes staff with Lived Experience of Autism
- MECC

Employment

Job Carve Posts in Adult Social Care are used to provide jobs with individual reasonable adjustments to support people with health and social care needs to obtain and maintain paid employment.

Understanding our workforce

Encouraging our staff to complete their personal information on Oracle regarding any protected characteristics.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

Examples of how Adult Social Care (ASC) are working to create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion include:

- Our commitment to 'Diverse by Design' to ensure we embed fair values, systems and behaviours throughout Adult Social Care
- Our commitment to 'Social Care Workforce Race and equality Standard (SC-WRES)' to ensure we are addressing race inequalities by measuring the experiences of people from minoritised ethnic backgrounds, helping to support our accountability in fostering an equitable workplace environment.
- Our commitment, as a lead partner, in the development of Communities First approach with onboarding across all NCC directorates
- A dedicated session on Equality and Diversity at the ASC Team Managers Workshop (scheduled for Q1 2025-26)
- Staff participation in forums aimed at DEI objectives, for example, the Staff Carers Network.

Children & Young People

The Core Functions and Statutory Duties for the service area Children, Young People and Families include as per the Children Act '89 et al, that it is the general duty of the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. This is further underpinned by the Statutory framework within Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 as well as Children and Social Work Act 2017.

This includes (but is not limited to) statutory and core functions:

- Assessment, Planning and reviewing support
- Support via Child in Need, Child Protection or through providing care for a child
- Support to long term cared for children and to families where a Supervision Order is in place
- Corporate Parenting Responsibilities
- Supplementary services when a child is care for such as Family Time
- Private and Public Law Care Proceedings as well as the use of S20 voluntary Accommodation
- Fostering Services
- Adoption
- Residential Homes & Supported Accommodation – sufficiency strategy
- Support to connected carers (SGO, private fostering)
- Virtual School
- Youth Justice Service
- Homelessness 16/17-year-olds
- Young Carers
- Support to families with disabled children and SEND and through the provision of Direct Payments
- Plan, provide and commission support for children who require it
- Work in partnership with agencies as per Working Together to Safeguard Children such as police, health & Education through the delivery of a Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements (Northumberland Children & Adult Safeguarding Partnership - NCASP) as well as delivering on the requirement of any child death reviews or learning reviews
- Mandated through Government through the National Transfer Mechanism to support Unaccompanied children and young people
- Delivery regarding Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Delivery of Early Help and Family Hubs – strengthening our prevention offer and support into our communities

Our Data

We have electronic case recording system LCS / System 1 and EHM where information pertaining to a child and their family is stored. This does include details around protected characteristics and forms part of our statutory work to provide a service to families, including safeguarding children as well as data returns that are provided to the Government.

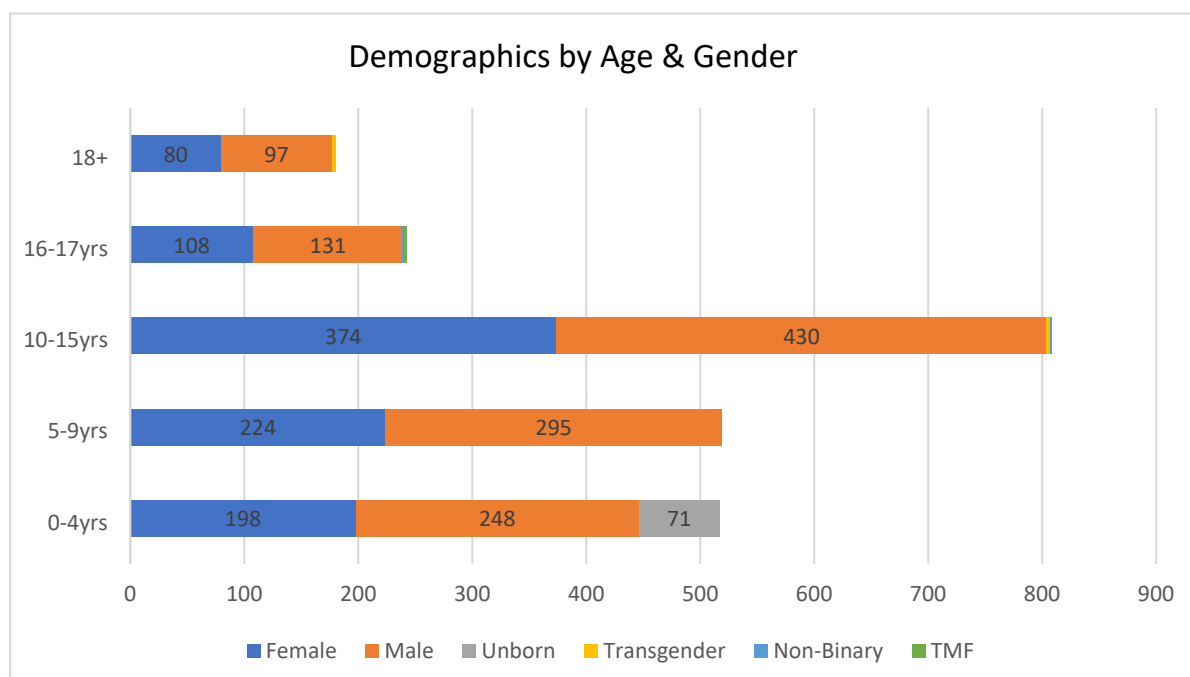
We also use the ES&S system Capita One and hold information relating to some protected characteristics on our ePEP system. The ePEP is part of the statutory work that informs planning for a cared for child within education.

Children's Social Care

The following is data held for clients within Children's Social Care.

Demographics of Children with a Social Worker

Clients	Families	Has a Disability
2266	1466	21%

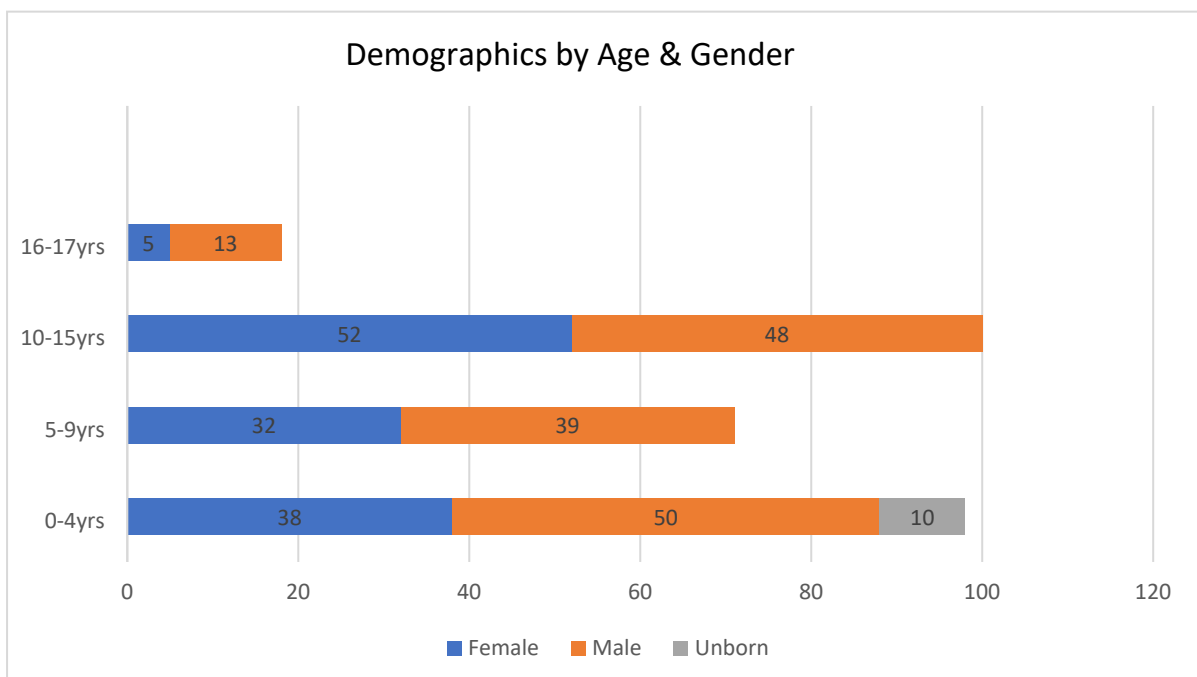


Gender	%
Female	43.42%
Male	53.00%
Unborn	3.13%
Trans male	0.31%
Non-Binary	0.09%
Trans female	0.04%

Ethnicity Group	%
White	88.88%
Asian	1.19%
Black	1.02%
Mixed	2.34%
Other Ethnicity	1.54%
Irish Traveller	0.22%
Black (other background)	0.18%

Demographics of Children with a Child Protection Plan

Clients	Families	Has a Disability
287	152	7%

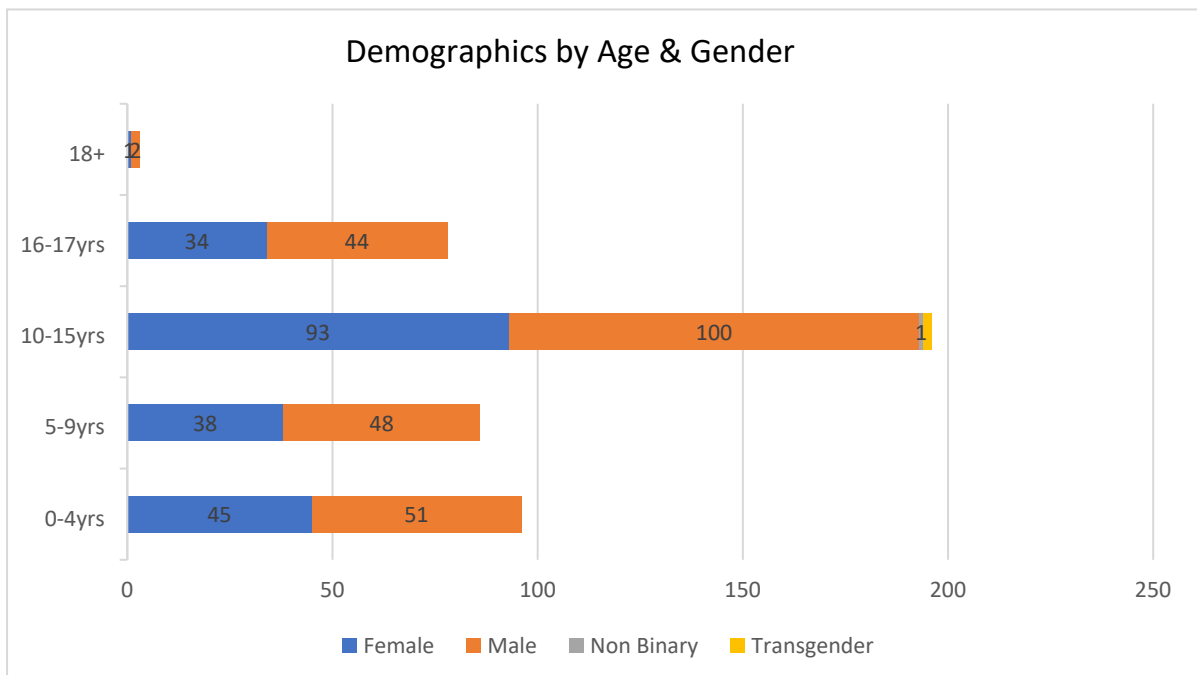


Gender	%
Female	44.25%
Male	52.26%
Unborn	3.48%

Ethnicity Group	
White	257
Asian	5
Mixed	14
Other Ethnicity	1
Not recorded	10

Demographics of Children who are Looked After (Cared for Children)

Clients	Families	Has a Disability
458	318	11%



Gender	%
Female	46.07%
Male	53.49%

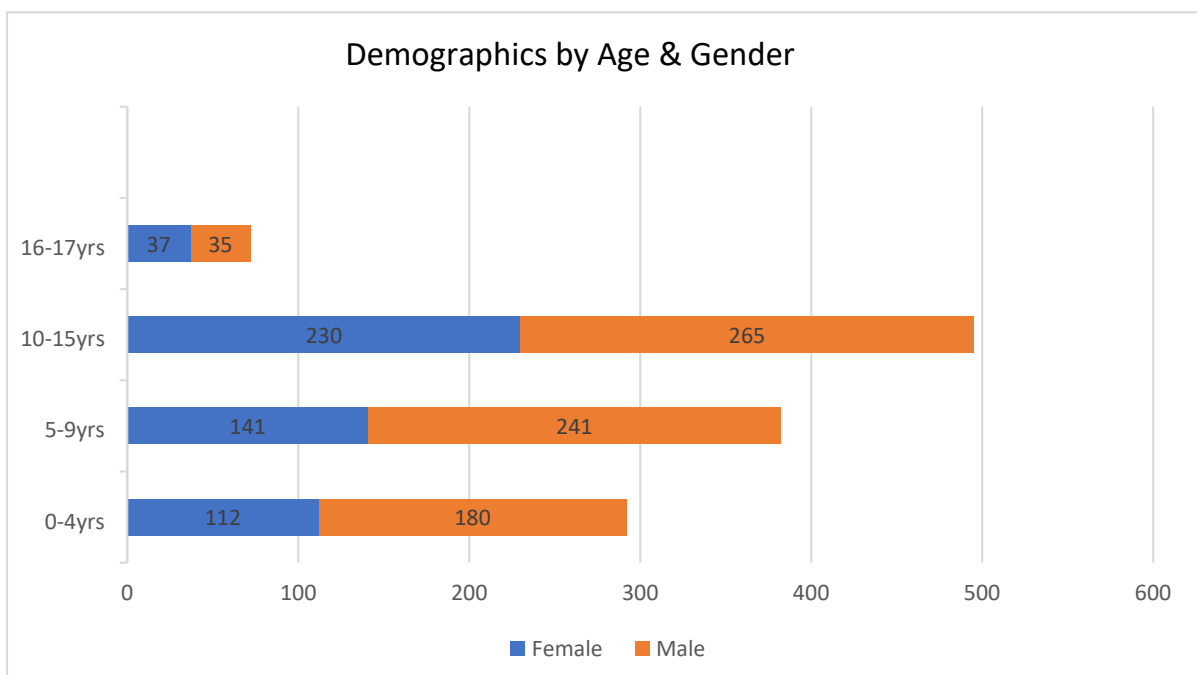
Non-Binary	0.22%%
Transgender	0.22%

Ethnicity Group	%
White	92.79%
Asian	0.66%
Black	0.22%
Mixed	1.53%
Irish Traveller	0.22%
Other Ethnicity	3.06%
Not Recorded	1.53%

Early Help

The following is data held for clients within Early Help services.

Clients	Families	Has a Disability
1263	691	10.69%



Gender	%
Female	41.83%
Male	58.02%
Non-Binary	0.08%
Transgender	0.08%

Ethnicity Group	%
White	86.24%
Asian	0.32%
Black	0.24%
Mixed	1.69%
Other Ethnicity	11.50%

Consultation and Engagement

- We have a participation service that regularly engages our children and young people to seek their views and ideas about how we shape services – this is through our voices making choices group.
- Work with the youth cabinet and young members of parliament.
- We have linked with members within the community when we have been looking to open a new children's home as part of a pre planning process.
- Work with partner agencies regarding their role as Corporate Parents for our Cared for Children.
- We have 9 Parent Carer Panels attached to Family Hubs who consult with parents and carers around service delivery across the early help system.
- We are in the process of setting up Young People's Panels to engage and consult with young people.
- Free to Be is a group for young people LGBTQ+ and has been nominated and subsequently shortlisted for the 'Youth Achievement Award' as part of the Pride Action North and ReportOUT Progression Ball and Awards 2025 – Pride Prom. This special event celebrates extraordinary achievements in supporting and promoting LGBTQIA+ communities both locally and globally and was held on the 7th of February 2025.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

Work is planned around raising awareness of everyone's responsibility within the Council as well as partner agencies about their role as a Corporate Parent. Our Children and Young People who require our care are some of the most vulnerable in society, with less opportunity, life chances and increased mortality rates. Many Local Authorities have taken the decision to recognize this as a protected characteristic and there is recommendation into central Government that this should happen.

Work has already commenced with some partner agencies about Corporate Parenting, and we have a Policy Conference scheduled for March with our elected members with a key focus being on Corporate Parenting and how this is everyone's responsibility.

We understand our communities well due to the nature of the work in this area. Data that we have gives us an understanding of what areas we should target for maximum impact and to reduce the need for Statutory services. Our service priorities are underpinned by the Corporate plan with 4 key areas being identified. They are:

- **Prevention & Early Support**

Objective: All children & young people have the best possible start to life. They have happy, healthy and safe childhoods, where they can thrive and reach their full potential.

(Corporate plan – Tackling inequalities by providing support within the communities that need it most, so they are resilient. Providing our children with the best start in life so they grow up well and have the building blocks to a good life)

- **Aspirations for our Cared for and Cared experienced Community**

Objective: The Council and its partners will work together to support our children and young people to feel nurtured, valued, heard, and understood.

(Corporate Plan – tackling inequalities)

- **Keep children and young people safe and supporting them to thrive**

Objective: *When children and young people need support through our statutory services, we will work with the families and our multi-agency partners to support and safeguard our children and young people*

(Corporate Plan – Tackling Inequalities and Achieving Value for Money)

- **Workforce**

Objective: *Extending our recruitment and retention strategy in social work to include the Children's Social Care workforce. Allowing us to reduce reliance on agency social workers and to recruit foster carers and residential homes staff to support our children. Have a workforce who are well supported and chose to stay in Northumberland County Council. (Corporate Plan – Driving Economic Growth and Achieving Value for Money)*

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?
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Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

As previously detailed, we have a participation service – within this we seek the views of some of our Cared for Children who are in the Voices making Choices group. We also engage with our youth cabinet and young members of parliament.

We actively seek feedback from families when we have been involved with them.

We consult with our school community about policy and safeguarding and provide training for professionals in key statutory roles – e.g. SENCO's a spart of the Virtual School.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?
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Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

Our Principal Social Worker is the Race Equality Network Chair for Northumberland County Council.

We have 2 people who will be in the regional anti racist champions' network.

We provide training and development opportunities to staff in children's social care to support their understanding of inclusion, equality and diversity with things such as DA training.

We have set up a network of SEND Champions which will continue to highlight, educate to enable the workforce to better support children and families with SEND.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?
Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

As previously detailed a staff member is integral not just within our Directorate but also within the Council as the Race Equality Network Chair, she supports events that take place to raise awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion such as the one that took place on 6/2/25.

We have 2 people who will be in the regional anti racist champions' network. Learning from this will be brought back and fed into teams.

Education, SEND & Skills

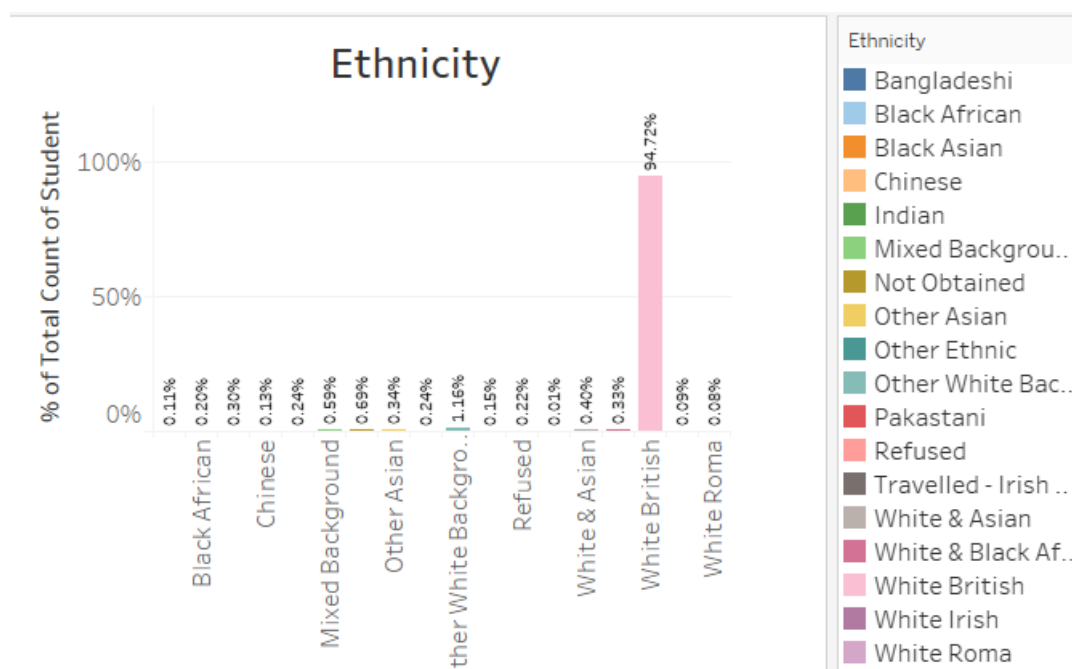
The Core Functions and Statutory Duties for the Education, SEND and Skills service area are as follows:

1. Plan, support and deliver on the expansion of the Early Years and Childcare sector
 - Develop the school readiness journey with all partners
 - Support the financial security, sufficiency and sustainability of providers
2. Develop capacity for meeting increased numbers and complexity of SEND needs
 - Further develop our 'Ordinarily Available Provision' guidance, support and training
 - Increase specialist capacity in local schools
 - Develop higher needs capacity in Northumberland Special Schools
3. Develop and implement new SEND pathways which support fairness, transparency, expectations and a consistency of approach
 - Review the SEND placement methodology and panels
 - Review the SEND Banding system
 - Review the statutory assessment process and introduce digital EHCPs
4. Deliver the rollout of the Northumberland School Alliances model
 - Finalise and launch the 8 alliances
 - Refine the focus of each alliance
 - Analyse the impact of each alliance annually
5. Increase support for attendance
 - Ensure the full implementation of the Attendance Strategy
 - Develop policy, practice and provision to appropriately support EBSA learners
6. Development and promotion of the pathways into apprenticeships, further education, higher education and employment for young people and adults increasing the focus on preparing for adulthood
 - Further extend an appropriate post 16 Skills offer, including for post 16 SEND
 - Develop a 14-16 Skills offer

Our Data

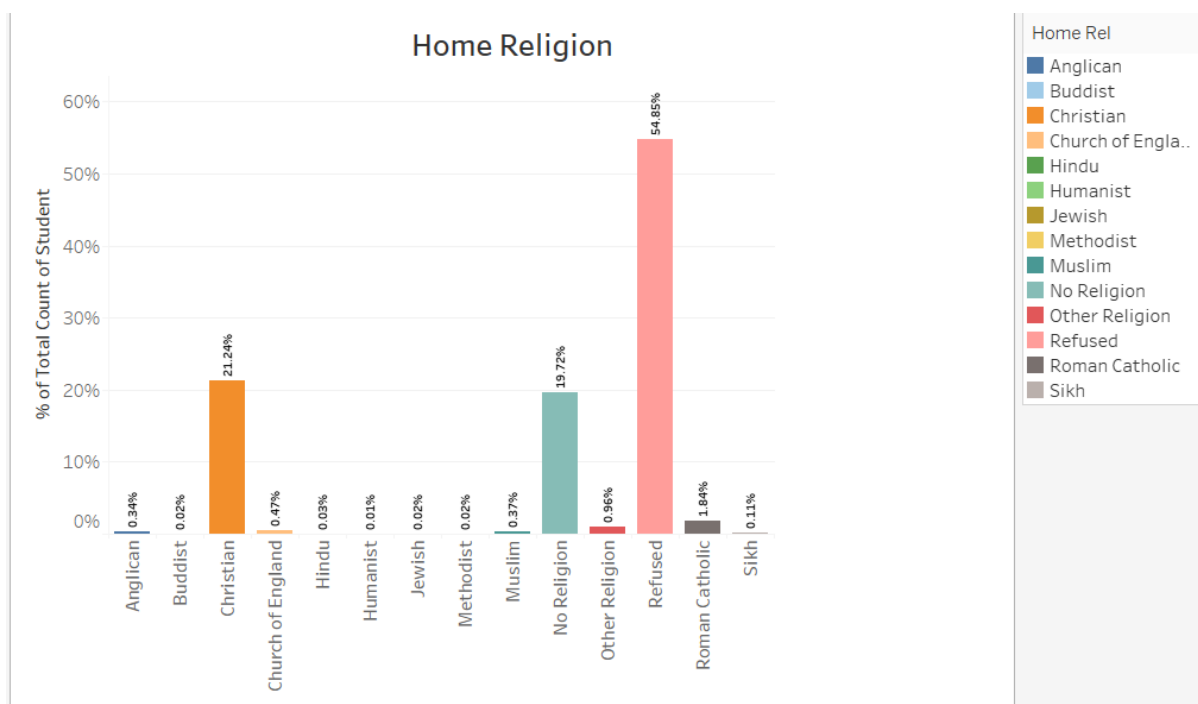
Sex: The school census is completed by schools annually. In October 2024, the census demonstrated that of 44,353 pupils on roll in schools in the county, Northumberland has 51% male and 49% female pupils in schools.

Race: The census demonstrates that 95% of pupils in schools are white British in ethnicity (the term used on forms rather than race) and 5% are from 'all other ethnic groups combined'. We use 'ethnic minorities' to refer to all ethnic groups except the white British group. Ethnic minorities include white minorities, such as Gypsy, Roma and Irish Traveller groups.



Refugee and Asylum Seeker children: 198 Asylum Seeker Children in Northumberland. Currently we have 2 New Schools of Sanctuary, both in Blyth. Whilst Bede Academy, Central Primary and Bothal Primary are in the process of renewing.

Religion and belief: Where parents have provided this information, the religions represented in Northumberland schools are represented in the table below. Over half do not disclose the information, 19.7% have no religion and 21.2% are Christian.



As a directorate, we do not collect data about pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation or gender reassignment in the school aged population.

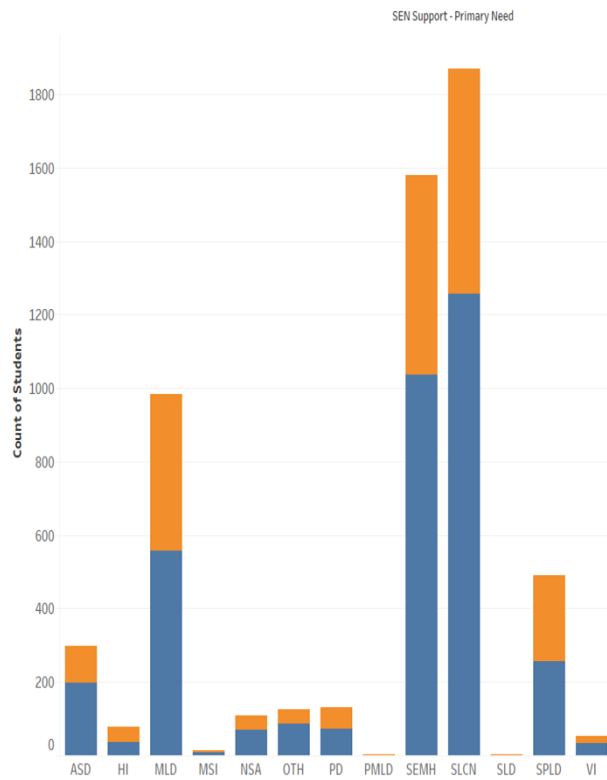
Schools monitor and hold their own data regarding discriminatory incidents relating to disability, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

The number of racist incidents recorded in 2023-24 by the Local Authority was 96

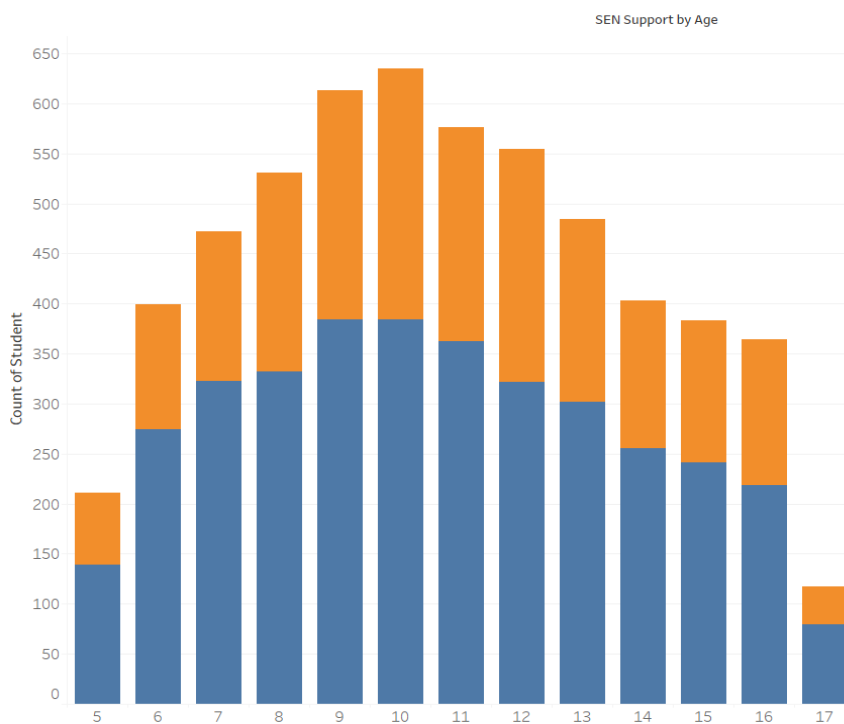
Disability: The data which follows demonstrates the numbers and proportions of boys and girls receiving SEND support, and with Education Health Care Plans.

	Male	Female
SEND Support	62% ↓ (63%)	38% ↑ (37%)
EHCP	71.5% ↓ (73%)	28.5% ↑ (27%)

Currently there are 1477 EHCP pupils educated in a Northumberland Maintained Special School, of these 74% are male.

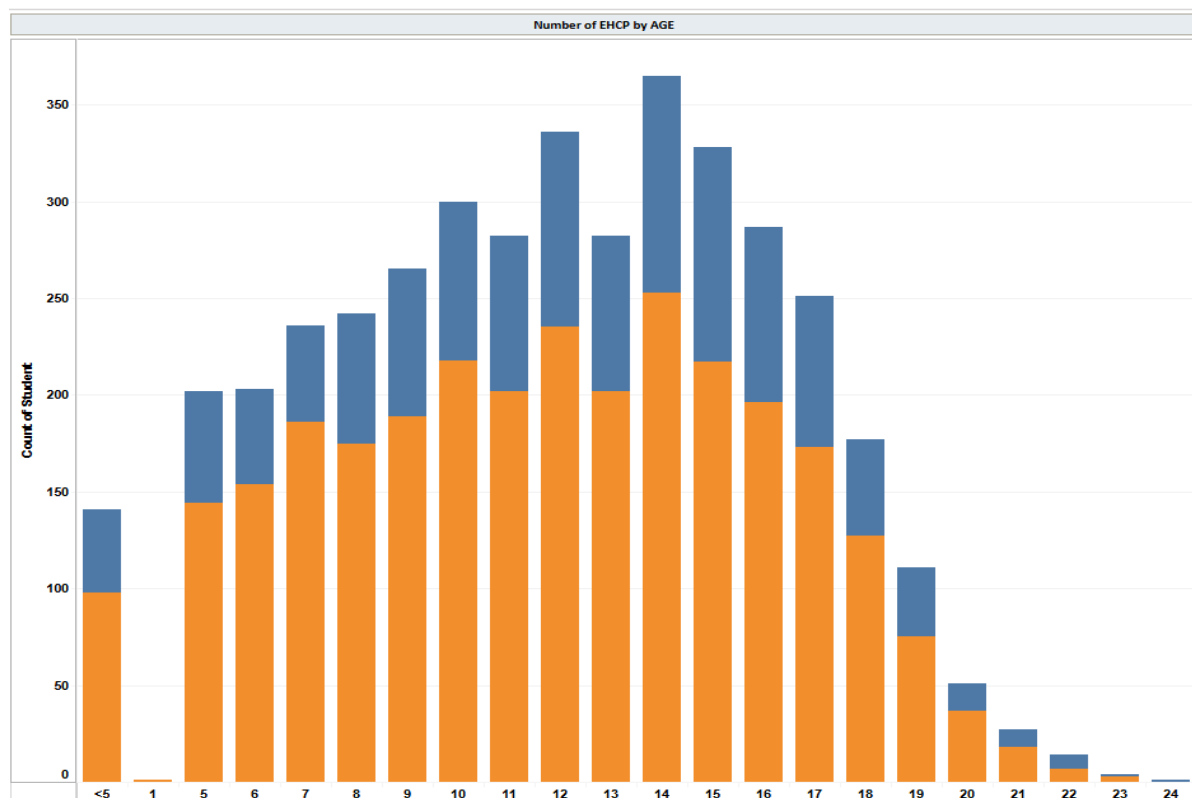
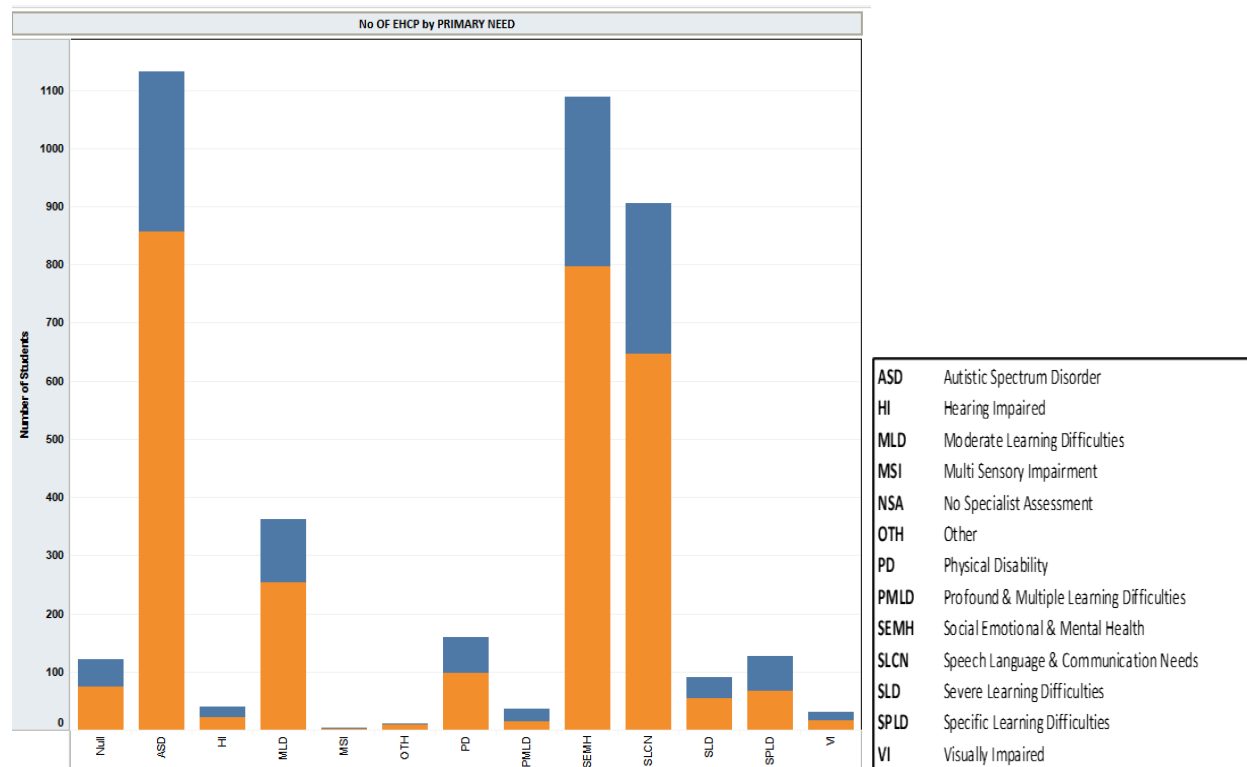


ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disorder
HI	Hearing Impaired
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MSI	Multi Sensory Impairment
NSA	No Specialist Assessment
OTH	Other
PD	Physical Disability
PMLD	Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties
SEMH	Social Emotional & Mental Health
SLCN	Speech Language & Communication Needs
SLD	Severe Learning Difficulties
SPLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
VI	Visually Impaired



Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Pupils

(MALE: FEMALE)



Consultation and Engagement

- In 2024 Youth Cabinet met to respond to the government consultation on proposed changes to the guidance on teaching Relationships Sex and Health Education. This was submitted in June, but there has been no response to the proposed changes to the curriculum since the consultation period ended. The guidance proposed that children and young people's learning about some protected characteristics be delivered at set points in a child's education or removed from the curriculum. Youth cabinet felt that this could lead to inequalities or compromise safety for some young people.
- In 2024 20% of eligible school pupils in Northumberland aged 11-18 participated in the National Make Your Mark Survey. 5567 votes were cast in total. Make Your Mark uses broad voting themes to allow newly elected Members of Youth Parliament to conduct localised research, better understanding how an issue impacts upon the communities and people they stand to represent. This approach enables young people to have real ownership on the issues they choose to tackle. The most important themes to Northumberland voters were Culture, Media and Sport (1126 votes) Health and Wellbeing (1045 votes) and Jobs, Economy and benefits (749 votes).
- In the Special Educational Needs service, the High Incidence Needs Team, Low Incidence Needs Team and SENDIASS carried out evaluations with their customers, with the following results:

Lived experience of the HINT team

- 76% of the younger pupils completing a service evaluation, and 97% of older children indicated that the support that they had received from HINT staff had helped them.
- 76.19% of the younger pupils completing a service evaluation felt that their work with HINT would help them in class.
- 100% of older pupils completing a service evaluation agreed that HINT staff had listened to them and were interested in what they had to say.

In relation to the work of HINT Teachers/Therapists

- 100% of parents/carers who submitted an evaluation agreed that HINT staff had listened to their concerns about their child.
- 75% parents/carers agreed that HINT support had or would make a positive difference to their child at school.

- 100% felt that support from the team(s) would make a positive difference to their child at home.
- 100% agreed that their contact with HINT teachers or therapists had been useful.

In relation to the work of HINT Workers or Assistants

- 85% of parents/carers agreed that the support that their child had received would make a positive difference at school.
- 80% stated that it would make a positive difference at home.
- 96.7% of parents/carers agreed that they were happy with the level of communication between themselves and the HINT Worker or Assistant working with their child.

Lived experience of the Low Incidence Need Team

Pupils

- 98% of respondents agreed that the work completed with LINT had helped them.
- 2% were unable to determine whether we had helped them or not.
- 98% agreed that LINT staff had listened to them and were interested in what they had to say.

Parents/Carers

- 100% of respondents agreed that LINT Teachers, Portage Home Visitors and Specialist Teaching Assistants had listened to their concerns about their child.
- 100% agreed that the support that their child had received from LINT had made a positive difference to their child at school and at home.
- 100% agreed that their contact with LINT had been worthwhile and training and support had been useful.
- 99% of respondents agreed that the support that their child had received from a LINT colleagues would make a positive difference at school and 99% stated that it would make a positive difference at home.

- 100% of parents/carers agreed that they were happy with the level of communication between themselves, school and the LINT colleagues working with their child.

Schools/Settings

Of the evaluations received by LINT from schools and nurseries:

- 100% agreed that the Sensory Support, Portage and EAL Teams had provided advice, recommendations, training and approaches that would help them to meet their pupil's needs.
 - 100% were satisfied with the prompt and timely response received from LINT.
 - 98% were satisfied with accessibility to the LINT services, but 10% of families on the Portage wait list felt they had to wait too long for access to support.
 - 99% of the schools/settings were satisfied with the level of professionalism displayed by LINT staff teams.
- Northumberland Information Advice and Support Service provide free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to parents, carers and children and young people with SEND. The main reasons for SENDIASS referrals for the period 1.10.23 to 31.12.2024 were:
 - Advice about educational placement - 19% (182 out of 959 referrals)
 - Concerns about SEN Support in school/college - 16% (153 out of 959 referrals)
 - How to request an EHC needs assessment - 9% (89 out of 959 referrals)

Parents and carers reported:

- "I feel more confident"
- "I feel happier and less worried about the future"
- "I have a greater understanding of the educational processes for children with SEN"

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

- During the 2023-24 academic year a network for teaching professionals in Northumberland who run or coordinate Pride or LGBTQ+ groups in Northumberland schools were supported and mentored by a virtual network

commissioned from local lived experience experts from the charity Humankind. The group met termly to discuss activities and support needs and best practice across their groups.

- Schools can access equalities update resource via the Northumberland Education web site. Refreshed and republished each term it contains dates of campaigns and services, resources, training and research to better equip schools to meet their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Every half term a network of teachers in Northumberland schools meets to share best practice and share resources which promote Personal Development which includes teaching and learning about protected characteristics, sex and relationships and tolerance and mutual respect.
- Schools in Northumberland apply for and obtain accreditation and charter marks which include Rainbow Flag Award for LGBTQ+ inclusion, The Anti-Racist School Award, The Inclusion Quality Mark Award, The Equalities Award and The International School Award.
- In October 2024 Education and Skills partnered with NCASP and the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Board to host a Healthy Relationships Summit; an opportunity for the children's and education workforce to take learning, resources and best practice back to their workplace to ensure that the themes of positive peer cultures and working together to eliminate VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) could be shared during the White Ribbon 16 Days of Action and Activism in November-December 2024.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

Support is available for schools and their governing bodies to request and access support in identifying and setting stretching equality objectives for the new reporting cycle 2025-2019.

The objectives are a reflection of the contextual information schools share when they publish equality information annually as part of their obligations under the PSED.

Typically, schools in Northumberland reflect upon the limited opportunities children have to interact with culturally and religiously diverse people and communities, the growing threat of misogyny and power imbalances in relationships, and the need to be aware of and use the most respectful and accurate terminology and language for concepts of equality and inclusion.

A significant aspect of the focus of the service in the coming years will be in ensuring access to the right education and provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

The bi-annual survey of schools who elect to participate in the Health-Related Behaviour Questionnaire took place in Autumn 2024.

This is one of the only county-wide opportunities we have to hear the voices and experiences of school children in Northumberland.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

School based staff access a range of training on topics such as positive masculinity, teenage relationship harm, the language of DEI, protected characteristics and challenging racism.

Bespoke learning is offered as staff CPD, through conferences and online training or as in-house training for a whole staff team.

Governors are included as part of this workforce.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

There is a well-established network of school based Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Champions who attend training and maintain a commitment to eliminating Violence Against Women and Girls as workplace champions.

School Leadership, including the governing body has a statutory responsibility to fulfil the PSED duty and to

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The SEND, Education and Skills service monitors and supports this work through the School Improvement framework and the team of School Improvement professionals who offer guidance and support.

Communications & Engagement

The Core Functions for the Communications and Engagement service area are as follows:

- Media Relations
- Public Relations
- Internal Communications
- Marketing and Campaigns
- Digital and Website
- Content Design
- Elected Member communications.
- Graphic Design

The service actively supports internal colleagues and workforce to maximise opportunities to communicate and share information across the organisation, supporting specific campaigns identified as being of importance and interest to all staff. The service also supports the promotion of consultation via CitizenSpace and can access this platform to ensure that it is used to best effect when consulting with our Residents.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?
Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

We actively support our DEI team through corporate communication to help colleagues understand the needs of our communities.

We also plan to invite the DEI team to our team meetings during 2025 to ensure an ongoing wider team understanding of the importance of Meeting our Equality Objectives and broader DEI priorities.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

We actively support our DEI team through corporate communication to help colleagues understand the needs of our communities, adapting that communication to ensure that it remains appropriate for all.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

We actively support our DEI team through corporate communication to help colleagues understand the needs of our communities.

We support the Talent and Acquisition team to ensure that any recruitment and retention communication is as effective as possible.

We have involved members of DEI team in our own recruitment process, ensuring that the new Communications Officer supporting that team was the right candidate.

We encourage our team to take part in internal surveys for themselves and the organisation.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

The Communications Team meets monthly face to face to share learning and knowledge. Ensure whole team inclusion.

We have regular away days which include volunteering and team building.

The Team is encouraged to get involved in Staff Networks either as Members or Chairs.

The Team is encouraged to share their voice in spaces.

Economic Development & Growth Service (ED&G)

This analysis reflects the Economic Development & Growth Service (ED&G) which comprises of two services – (i) Economic Development and (ii) Regeneration.

The overarching aim of the ED&G service is to support the regeneration and economic growth of all residents, communities and businesses in the county. Two interlinked Services – Economic Development and Regeneration deliver the following key functions to support this:

- Managing the progressive development and implementation of an extensive pipeline of regeneration projects and programmes.
- Facilitating the delivery, in partnership as appropriate, of significant regeneration projects and programmes - delivery of significant regeneration programmes, including completion and progress on flagship regeneration projects across our towns and places and the continued development of regeneration plans.
- Maximising the funding opportunities presented by central government, the North East Combined Authority, the Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal, and other national and regional programmes - through the development and mobilisation of its priorities for growth, portfolios, investment programmes and projects which support Northumberland's economic aims.
- Maintaining the council's accountable body role for externally funded regeneration projects and programmes.
- Bringing forward and deliver a new Northumberland Economic Strategy, building on the refreshed Economic Strategy in 2024 and recognising the significant opportunities for growth in the County, the contribution of key sectors and cultural and natural assets. This includes mobilisation of the Growth & Investment Endowment Fund and wider investment opportunities in support of the Economic Strategy.

The two services cover a range of portfolios including town regeneration, rural growth, business support, culture and tourism and employability and inclusion.

There are certain levels of protective characteristics data collected in relation to the beneficiaries (individuals and organisations) accessing activity and services delivered through the range of functions with the ED&G Service. This is primarily in response to specific requirements of external funders. The data is collected but not necessarily collated or analysed which is something that needs to be considered moving forward to achieve a consistent approach.

There is a willingness within the Service to look at how best it can meet the equality monitoring, reporting and measurement requirements of both its external funders and corporately from 2025 onwards.

Consultation and Engagement

Consultation and engagement are key factors when developing and delivering the projects and programmes within the Service. Examples include:

- Although not formally recorded, there are individuals accessing support such as business and enterprise events and activities who have disabilities and appropriate adjustments are made based on their needs. Also, the Northumberland Small Business Service project hold female only networking sessions as part of a comprehensive business engagement programme to encourage inclusive participation. Events are also held at accessible locations and at varying times, again to encourage and promote inclusivity.
- To ensure equality and inclusivity, all capital related work needs to ensure buildings meet the legal standards and requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and through the Strategic Estates function, the services of an Access Consultant are employed when required and where possible specify BS8300 as the standard for refurbishment and design standard for new buildings.
- The Employability team supports delivery of Social Value in Northumberland County Council and Advance Northumberland contracts in line with the Social Value Act 2012. This includes working with contractors and sub-contractors to deliver new employment opportunities, apprenticeships and traineeships, training opportunities and work experience placements to benefit Northumberland residents and communities. The team can support contractors to develop their Social Value plans and to deliver Key Performance Indicators. The team works in partnership with Council Procurement, Planning and other departments, and then with contractors and the wide range of providers that can make Social Value a reality.

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

The following provides a snapshot of good practice examples across the Service:

Culture and Tourism

Through its work within the Destination North East Destination Development Partnership, the Tourism team have supported businesses to become more inclusive and accessible.

- **Northumberland Destination Management Plan**- key findings of industry consultation have shaped the development of access and inclusion in the Northumberland Destination Management Plan. A Product Audit Survey was commissioned to benchmark industry perceptions. One particular question sought views on provision of accessible services. It asked: *‘One in five people in the UK have range of visible and hidden impairments. Do you perceive the county as ‘accessible’. Please explain why and how this perception can be strengthened or altered to make the county’s tourism provision more inclusive?’* Key findings and areas deemed needing improvement to make the destination more accessible were from respondents for this were:

 - Awareness - not welcoming; not enough being done; raise the game; be better; visible vs hidden.
 - Facilities - toilets, accommodation; equipment provision; equipment hire (chairs, bikes etc.).
 - Access - parking; footpaths; countryside/landscape schemes; gates/stiles; solutions for heritage attractions that cannot make alterations.
 - Information – signage; visitor info; access statements; consistency; to allow disabled visitors to research and plan.
 - Promotion – cover full spectrum of mobility to sensory to educational.
 - Knowledge - staff training; guidance on what’s needed.
 - These findings have since informed action within the 10-year Northumberland Destination Management Plan to better understand the immediate sector priorities, more effectively audit facilities to understand product gaps and utilise opportunities and best practice to shape positive communications messaging.

- **LGBTQIA+ Proud Allies Training** - The full Visit Northumberland team, and a number of Northumberland visitor economy businesses have undertaken [Proud Allies training](#). Shaped and presented by a representative team of LGBTQIA+ professionals and community members with lived experience (delivered by Northern Pride), Proud Allies is a business training scheme which gives confidence in welcoming those from the LGBTQIA+ community. It is suitable for any business committed to championing LGBTQIA+ inclusion, with added benefit for those working in public facing roles, front of house, customer service, marketing, HR, policy makers, focus group/network leads, management teams and board members/trustees.

- **Everybody Welcome** - Visit Northumberland has an Accessible Champion, dedicated to disseminating information and delivering [VisitEngland's objectives to support access and inclusion](#). The team has a destination toolkit through which they actively encouraged Northumberland visitor economy businesses to embrace accessibility provision through a funded programme that delivers training, accessibility assessments, video walk throughs, and enhanced product information. Visit Northumberland has been directly involved in supporting Purple Tuesday, the annual day of celebrating the value of visitors with additional needs.

Regeneration

The following examples demonstrate work undertaken with Public Health to undertake additional consultation, engagement and co-design of regeneration policies and programme

- **Cramlington Regeneration Programme Cabinet report** - the design of this programme is based on the 'Cramlington Conversation' - a joint exercise to engage and consult the community of Cramlington with around 500 people engaging. Significant resources were deployed to undertake a range of alternative methods to get input from underrepresented groups, including many of the target groups in your email. This work was developed jointly by the Regeneration and Public Health teams. The same approach has been taken in some place plan towns for Borderlands Place Programme, for example - in Bedlington, recognising the need to engage a number of hard to reach/underrepresented groups.
- **Blyth Town Investment Plan / Long Term Plan for Town draft submission** - this plan has been developed based on an intense period of extensive engagement in summer 2024 with over 100 organisations in the town and 500 members of the public. This builds on thousands of people engaged throughout the development of Energising Blyth to date ranging from pop up events for businesses in cafes through to thousands of people attending events in a marquee on the Market Place and in between times a pop-up art led shop in the town centre. The approach included deliberate methods to engage underrepresented group using the same 'toolkit' deployed in Cramlington. It has an emphasis on co-design with community orgs and the public.
- **Energising Blyth Bowes Court engagement event** - on a smaller, but significant scale the Bowes Court housing project is a good example of engaging underrepresented groups at a project level. See the press release <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/News/2024/Nov/Blyth-home->

[improvement-scheme-gets-a-warm-receptio.aspx](https://www.marketpavilion.co.uk/blyth-celebrates/). Prior to works getting underway it was recognised that the housing the improvements were to be made to include a specific set of residents, many who were not used to engaging with council services, many older people, and a host of other issues which would make them less likely to engage in a standard 'council drop in'. As such the engagement was designed with the user in mind, a host of support agencies involved, door knocking, call in for a cuppa style to help break down barriers and build trust to attend and find out more. This is part of a wider set of letters and information deliberately couched to engage the residents of the scheme. Overall, this has worked well to date with good attendance at the event.

- **Blyth Celebrates** - as part of Blyth Celebrates we are launching community led and co-designed elements of the programme of events and activities. This provides funding direct to the community for activities they will organise themselves. this is in partnership with Heart of Blyth and follows the same principles as the above examples. This is a pilot leading into further work of a similar ilk through long term plan for towns
<https://www.marketpavilion.co.uk/blyth-celebrates/>

Integrated impact assessments, equality impact assessments and health impact assessments are examples of tools used. In addition, the Service relies heavily on the socio-economic data produced by our Senior Economic Analyst which underpins much of the work carried out, particularly informing programme / project design and development.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

Examples specifically within the Service's Strategic Estates function include:

- Provision of Changing Places facilities at new leisure centres at Berwick and Morpeth.
- Refurbishment of County Hall building has dramatically improved access and inclusion (motorised doors, accessible toilet provision etc).

- Provision of Changing Places facilities when space available in public toilets.
- Solar car port bays for accessible access.
- Commissioned new pool hoists for Wentworth, Berwick and Morpeth Leisure Centres to ensure swimming can be more inclusive.

Throughout 2025, the Service will aim to:

- Work with, and regularly consult its staff, customers and communities to ensure needs are being met.
- Use NCC premises to support local charities, businesses and community groups to raise awareness of their services e.g., newly refurbished conference and exhibition suite at County Hall.
- Seek feedback from elected members and community groups and other beneficiaries.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

Examples of actions to meet this objective specifically within the Service's Strategic Estates function include:

- Head of Service for Regeneration continues to chair Morpeth and Alnwick Forums focussing on improving links with local communities, including holding public showcase events incorporating a wide range of local group stalls. Invited inequalities team to speak at both forums to encourage greater inclusivity.
- Deliver fit for purpose accommodation in conjunction with other teams
- Provide access information on a national disability information website to assist disabled people to plan visits to our customer service centres.
- Transfer of surplus assets where appropriate to local groups and Parish Councils where they can be more effectively utilised and maintained for the benefit of local residents.

Specific examples of achievement include:

Acquisition of new properties to meet the needs of refugees.

- Acquiring sites for the development of new facilities for people with specialist care needs
- Refurbished Newbiggin Sports Centre (now renamed as Sports & Community Centre) to enhance community facilities and improve accessibility
- Refurbished Lindisfarne Annexe and renamed as Community Hub supporting Food Bank, Customer Services etc. This has made the building fully accessible.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

Actions to meet this objective include:

- All staff complete an equality and diversity mandatory training module (E-learning)
- Line managers signpost staff to further inhouse training as part of appraisal and continuous professional development process
- Ensuring buildings meet the legal standards and requirements of the Equality Act 2010
- Encouraging staff participation to represent Service at staff network groups.
- Ensuring compliance with NCC policies and procedures
- Acknowledging and encouraging the celebration of holidays and be mindful of religious events.
- Encouraging frequent staff feedback at 1:1 supervision and team meetings. This provides an opportunity to nurture inclusion and demonstrates that management value everyone's opinion equally.
- Promoted service dog etiquette via Comms and carried out training for Facilities Management staff.
- Ensuring equality impact assessments are completed for all decisions impacting on service users and wider community.

Specific examples of achievement include:

- Employing an Access Consultant to integrate equality and diversity process into main designs of buildings.

- Facilities Management liaising with the Asylum Seeker and Refugee team to help support refugees into employment with NCC.
- Notices placed on all fridges within County Hall regarding thefts. This helped protect those staff with medical problems, e.g., diabetes
- Investment and creation of a nursing room and quiet prayer room provided within refurbished ground floor area at County Hall
- Notices placed on all fridges across corporate sites with information regarding help for anyone suffering due to current economic climate (cost of living)
- Staff show respect and support by not eating in front of colleagues who are fasting during Ramadan.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

The following illustrated contribution to this objective across the Service:

- Ensuring line managers continue to promote and raise awareness of protected groups through team and 1:1 supervision meetings.
- Encouraging staff participation to represent Service at staff networks.
- Encouraging staff to complete staff surveys and pulse surveys.
- Employing the services of an Access Consultant when required and where possible specify BS8300 as the standard for refurbishment and design standard for new buildings.
- A collective responsibility to hold each other accountable for implementing, seeing through and striving to continuously improve diversity and inclusion as a core value in everything we do.
- Encourage staff to share their personal pronouns (gender-inclusive language).

Environment and Transport

The Environment and Transport Directorate's key aims are to manage, maintain, protect and enhance our natural and built environment for the benefit of those who choose to live, work, visit and invest in Northumberland and to work with local communities and other key stakeholder organisations to improve the physical appearance and quality of life within our communities, making them more sustainable, self-sufficient and safer places.

The Directorate is currently organised into three service areas: Highways and Transport, Neighbourhood Services and Climate Change. The core functions and statutory duties of each service are detailed below:

Highways and Transport

- Development of transport policy and delivery of major capital transport schemes
- Highways asset management including roads and bridges inspection
- Maintenance of roads, footways, cycleways, bridges and street lighting, including winter and severe weather response
- Highways Development Management
- Network management, including parking and streetworks
- Design, project management and delivery of highway and transport improvement schemes
- Road safety and cycling training and casualty reduction schemes
- Highways Laboratory services
- Public transport commissioning and transport operations for schools and supported bus services
- Flood and coastal erosion risk management
- Managing the Definitive Map and Adopted Highway records

Neighbourhood Services

- Refuse collection and recycling services including bulky waste, hazardous household waste, garden and commercial waste collection services
- Provision and management of Household Waste Recovery Centres (HWRCs)

- Management of Municipal Waste including the management of the Council's long term Waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Contract
- Closed landfill sites aftercare
- Waste education and awareness raising
- Removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles
- Winter Maintenance (support to NCC Highways service including gritting of priority footpaths)
- Flooding and extreme weather response (as part of NCC's emergency community response arrangements)
- Street Cleansing
- Grounds Maintenance
- Management of Parks & Urban Green Spaces including Country Parks and Local Nature Reserves
- Public Rights of Way Maintenance, Management and Enforcement
- Cemeteries and Crematoria
- Markets
- Public Conveniences
- Fleet Management
- Security and postal courier service

Climate Change

The Council wants Northumberland's residents and environment to thrive and flourish, now and into the future and recognises that tackling climate change underpins the successful delivery of its key corporate objectives. As part of the Council's approach to tackling climate change it has made the following commitments: to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2030; to work with the Government to make Northumberland carbon neutral (in relation to carbon dioxide emissions) by 2030 and; to achieve net zero for all greenhouse gases for the county of Northumberland by 2040.

The Climate Change team have the lead responsibility for delivery of the Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2026, which is an integrated policy that supports this

vision. The action plan brings together three strategic themes, ‘Society’, ‘Emissions’ and ‘Environment’ to facilitate a holistic understanding of the interconnectivity of these issues, and their solutions. These are set out in the diagram below and set the key functions and duties of the team for the plan period.

Society - engage, inform, connect and support, for equitable change	Environment - repair, improve and maintain	Emissions - reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy waste
Policy and governance	Ecosystems and biodiversity	Northumberland county council's own emissions
Public Health & wellbeing	Agriculture	Renewable energy generation
Planning	Trees, woodlands & forests	Heating and powering buildings
Adaptation and resilience	Peatland restoration	Transport
Engagement & partnerships	Waste management	

Our Data

Environment and Transport

Employees

We have 979 employees working in our service.

The service employees are predominantly male (805 employees) which is 82% of the workforce and 18% are female.

The age profile of our service is as follows:

In their 70s	1% of employees
In their 60s	23% of employees
In their 50s	28% of employees
In their 40s	16% of employees
In their 30s	18% of employees

In their 20s	12% of employees
In their teens	2% of employees

We do not have any other information about our employees regarding the other protected characteristics.

All staff receive training in equality awareness.

Service Users

Census information shows Northumberland's population is approximately 49% male and 51% female.

Most residents accessing Neighbourhood Services' services are classed as "white" which is consistent with the county profile.

Waste Services

The Council empties ~7.7 million wheeled bins per annum where residents receive an alternate weekly collection of general waste and recycling. We know from the latest survey undertaken in 2023 that of the 1300 respondents who completed the Equality and Diversity section of the questionnaire, 71% were female, 20% were aged between 25-44, 46% were aged between 45-64 and 25% were aged between 65-74.

Census information shows Northumberland's population is approximately 49% male and 51% female. The gender profile of residents completing the annual waste satisfaction surveys is different to Northumberland's gender profile, as more females completed the survey than males.

Hazardous Household Waste Service – it is important to ensure that the needs of residents are catered for given that 25% of service users are aged 65 or over. The service is purely a collection and disposal service, there is no obligation on the waste management service to dismantle or undertake works to the property. Whilst the collection and disposal of hazardous waste is free to the householder, they are required to package the materials ready for collection. However, the council's contractor will package the materials on their behalf where they are unable to do so. The high level of satisfaction with this service (97%) indicates that these measures are acceptable to most service users.

Older people, mobility impaired people, or those with a health condition that prevents them from wheeling their bin to the collection point and collecting the bin may request the Council does this on their behalf, if there is no other non-disabled person over 16 years of age resident at the address. The Council provides 'assisted' collections to 6,066 properties, which equates to 315,000 uplifts per annum. Front line staff have received training in equality awareness which includes disability awareness, and some have received specific deaf awareness training.

Green Spaces and Countryside Team

We collect annual data from sample users of our country parks, sending out the user satisfaction survey with their annual permit renewal. The information provided gives us feedback on customer satisfaction and suggestions for improvement. We have included questions on Equality and Diversity since 2023.

Of the 35 people who responded 17 were happy to provide responses to Equality and Diversity questions. From those responses we know more about the users of our country parks.

- 8 were female and 9 were male.
- 11 were married or in a civil partnership.
- 11 were British.
- 17 said they were White/English
- 15 were heterosexual/straight.
- 8 were Christian.
- 8 had no religion.
- One person was under 18 years old.
- 3 people were aged 25 to 44.
- 10 people were aged 45 to 64.
- 3 people were aged 65 to 74.
- 6 people considered themselves to have a disability.

For the Countryside Service, the main areas of concern relate to physical and environmental barriers to access to the countryside, the facilities provided to the public, and to the provision of information in a format that is accessible to people with visual, hearing or learning disability. No current information is available to indicate the level of demand by disabled people for the services provided by the Countryside team but there is no reason to believe that disabled people would be significantly less interested in enjoying the countryside than non-disabled people.

Wheelchair users and visually impaired people will find much of the public rights of way network have barriers to access, with accessible paths limited to urban areas and specific wheelchair accessible paths constructed by the Council. The length of wheelchair accessible path in the County is not known but will represent a small proportion of the total.

The impacts on disabled and visually impaired people on the recreational sites managed by the Council are similar to those in the rights of way network but are less severe, as fewer structures (stiles and gates) need to be negotiated, path surfaces are generally better, and signage and information is often provided. Information and public events may be less easily accessed by some disabled people.

Anecdotal information suggests that in some areas and at some times of the day, women may be deterred from accessing the countryside due to the fear of crime while in remote areas out of sight of other people. This situation could be made worse by poor maintenance of paths, lack of control of overhanging vegetation, or the failure to take account of personal security concerns when creating or diverting paths.

Some women may be concerned and reluctant to use our services such as accessing parks and open spaces, public conveniences, cemeteries, and quiet shopping areas due to a perceived fear of crime or harm during hours of darkness or due to the unattended, remote location of the service. Very few actual complaints or issues of this type are reported. The council has worked with Northumbria Healthcare Trust and Active Northumberland to promote walking as an activity, and this could potentially encourage more women to take this up as an activity and encourage access to the countryside and tackle potential barriers to participation.

Our services are provided equally to men and women, however:

- Women access and enjoy the countryside in some areas less than men, or at different times of the day.

- Women may be less inclined to use some elements of our service at some times during the day.

Highways and Transport

We collect data and feedback annually through the NHT Survey. The information provided gives us feedback on customer satisfaction and suggestions for improvement. This is an externally managed, national survey to provide feedback and benchmarking information, and it includes questions on Equality and Diversity.

Of the people who responded 834 people were happy to provide responses to some (but not all) Equality and Diversity questions. From those responses we know more about the users of our highways and transport services.

We know that 352 were male, 390 were female, 2 preferred to think of themselves in another way, 19 preferred not to say and 12 did not state any gender.

We know that 165 people considered themselves to have a disability, 88 respondents were blue badge holders, 558 were neither of these options and 23 preferred not to say.

We know that respondents were in the following age groupings:

AGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
16-24	3
25-34	31
35-44	40
45-54	89
55-59	70
60-64	106
65-74	210
75+	210

Not stated	16
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We know that 96% of respondents are White British, 1% Irish, 0% Asian and 1% responded as other white background.

Climate Change Team

The climate change service does not collect or hold information about people unless required for specific project delivery. The delivery of warmer homes project does include the collection of data required for eligibility checks, as this funding is targeted at households at risk of fuel poverty, or who are vulnerable to the risks from cold homes. Please see the IIA for Warmer Homes for further detail

(<https://northumberland.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s23474/09.1%20Warm%20Homes%20Social%20Housing%20Fund%20Appendix.pdf>)

Consultation and Engagement

Waste Services Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022/2023

Annual online surveys are undertaken to assess residents' satisfaction with waste services, such as kerbside collections and Household Waste Recovery Centres. Responses from the general population are compared with those from protected groups to identify the impacts services have. The survey collects Equality and Diversity information from those who are willing to provide it, and this information is used to analyse service performance and customer satisfaction and inform future decisions. The findings of the survey carried out in 22/23 were presented in a summary report. No policy or process adjustments were required following results analysis.

Country Parks Users Customer Satisfaction Survey

We collect annual data from sample users of our country parks, sending out the user satisfaction survey with their annual permit renewal. The information provided gives us feedback on customer satisfaction and suggestions for improvement. For the first time in 2023 we included questions on Equality and Diversity. These responses provided us with feedback on disabled parking provision, wheelchair access provision on paths and disabled toilet facilities which we have taken into consideration, although do not require policy change.

Consultation as part of the review of and refurbishment programme for public conveniences 2024

We have delivered an additional changing places facility at Druridge Bay Country Park in 2024/25 and supported Alnwick Gardens to access funding to enable them to provide a Changing Places facility outside of the paywall at this key visitor attraction so it can be used for anyone visiting Alnwick. The wider public toilet refurbishment programme is continuing into 2025/26 and there will be more facilities with improved accessibility and user-friendly facilities for users from the protected characteristics groups.

NHT survey

Each year our service participates in the National Highways and Transport Network (NHT Network) survey. This is a leading benchmarking and service improvement tool for local authorities. The survey collects the public's views on different aspects of highways and transport in the authority's catchment area. A random sample of 3300 households receive the survey. Several Equality and Diversity questions are included in the survey, and results are included in the final report. Results are analysed and the data we receive is used as a management support tool to inform decisions on future service provision.

The Northumberland Line

As part of the design process for the Northumberland Line, the project held a series of 3 workshops to look at accessibility issues at each of the six new stations along the line.

Accessibility groups from across South-East Northumberland were invited to take part and that helped with the final designs to make sure that the stations were accessible.

On Friday 14th February 2025, an event was held at Ashington station so that the groups could have a look at the finished product. In all, representatives from six local groups came to have a look at the station and its facilities from tactile paving from the car park to the shelter then onto the train, the help point that includes braille assistance and a T-loop as well as the ticket machine which has a display that lowers for customers in wheelchairs.

Inclusive cycling offer – Wheels for All

NCC commissioned charity Wheels for All [wheels-for-all website](https://www.wheels-for-all.org.uk/) in October 2022 to host series of inclusive cycling taster events across Northumberland. These events

were funded through the DFT's capability and ambition funding. Events varied from open public to closed schools' sessions and were held in both private and public settings to maximise the variation of potential delivery.

The charity summarised their reflections of the taster sessions and views towards what an inclusive cycling offer for the county should look, with the most notable requirements listed below:

- Training budget to support the development of staff, partners and volunteers.
- Promotions and marketing budget
- Track and facility hire.
- Outreach events calendar
- Staffing -Wheels for All coordinator needs revenue funding to support the development.

Strategic Transport concluded that there is a sizable appetite for inclusive cycling within the county for both adults and children. The County has a good legacy of cycling initiatives through active travel campaigns and independent cycling groups, which would provide residents with a recognisable starting point for inclusive cycling or an ongoing pathway for rider development through schemes such as Bikeability and British Cycling.

Strategic Transport also recognised that the inclusive cycling offer would be well received within our neighbouring authorities, and in March 2023, invited wheels for All to return to Northumberland to host a regional inclusive cycling seminar. Wheels for All presented a high-level overview of inclusive cycling offers across the region, before facilitating workshops on how the offer could extend into existing schemes as well as identifying new opportunities to establish itself.

As part of the March 2023 seminar, WFA also hosted further inclusive cycling taster events for public and schools.

In conclusion to the taster events of October 2022 and seminar of March 2023, strategic transport concluded a regional offer for inclusive cycling in the North East would be a primary target. A potential for multiple cycling hubs would provide a diverse network facility for hubs to share:

- Wide range of cycle and equipment
- Pool of volunteer resource
- Variation of hub opening dates and times
- Variation of riding terrains (closed public or open cycleways)

- Options to centralise a pool of training opportunities for volunteers or supporting schemes.

From March 2023 NCC have supported WFA, who worked alongside Rise ([We Are Rise website](#)) to conduct an audit of existing inclusive cycling offers to evidence:

- Existing inclusive cycling offer/ short term funding programme
- Regional comparisons
- Formation of a network of committed stakeholders within region

In December 2023, WFA and Rise presented their audit findings to Transport North East (TNE) with a view for potential revenue funding opportunities, and also to support with the ongoing development of stakeholder network.

As a result of NCC's link up between WFA, Rise and TNE, TNE have invited WFA to take on a critical friend role as part of the Health and Equalities Impact Assessment. This role would help embed inclusivity into the design and practice of active travel infrastructure design for active funding opportunities, such as the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) which WFA will look to support.

The Climate Change Team

In 2024 the Climate Change (CCT) and Warmer Homes teams attended approximately 50 external events, delivered 36 'free tree' give-away sessions, distributed a monthly digital newsletter, and published a new stand-alone website.

The CCT have direct contact routes for residents via Climate change and warmer homes mailboxes and by telephone. Engagement has focused mostly on providing information and updates for our stakeholders; and receiving information, feedback, suggestions from stakeholders. As part of the 'Farming in a Future Climate' project in 2024 there were two collaborative workshops held with key farming and NCC stakeholders to help shape the project.

The Climate Change Team has not undertaken any formal consultation during 2024.

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

All our depots and workshops display corporate material e.g. posters to promote the corporate campaigns to raise awareness of issues of equality in the workplace. These have included awareness of domestic violence, how to report bullying and victimisation at work, promoting equality of sex and sexual orientation, and the provision of a chaplaincy service.

We have notice boards to promote events such as Pride Northumberland and many of our employees wear the rainbow lanyard to promote awareness of the LGBT Pride campaign and to promote an environment of openness around sexuality and gender identity in the workplace.

We have staff who have volunteered to be Equality and Diversity Allies to promote these issues across their service areas.

Apprentices

Environment and Transport has always supported the Council's apprentice programme and following the introduction of the Apprentice Levy we pledged to support the corporate initiative by providing further placements for apprentices. These placements are filled in the main by young people however there are no restrictions to age limits for those wishing to undertake an apprenticeship and learn a new trade.

The service has also employed an apprentice with a visual disability and has taken the appropriate steps to provide them with support and equipment to get to and from work and to work more easily when performing their duties. This apprentice secured full time permanent employment within the council.

The service has provided placements for young adults with learning disabilities, and for those from a care background to give these young people the skills to gain employment and make positive changes to their life.

Waste and NEAT

Information about our services and events is routinely provided in English unless requested otherwise. Information on our website is linked to an online translation service and has many different languages available. Most residents accessing Neighbourhood Services' services are classed as "white" which is consistent with the county profile.

All users of our services should be treated equally regardless of their religions or beliefs, in order that unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation are eliminated. There is no evidence to suggest that persons of a certain religion or belief are disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by our services.

HWRCs – the sites are tailored to meet the needs of protected groups by being split level to allow residents to deposit waste with the minimum amount of physical

exertion, have dedicated disabled parking with a push button to attract the site staff's attention, and employ contractor's staff who receive E&D training and help residents.

We promote our services through our website, publications, and press articles. Mechanisms are in place to translate information into other languages on request. Information on our website can be translated into different languages by using links on the page. Promotion of services via the web page is linked to a translation service, leaflets at council premises including HWRCs, libraries and council buildings, press releases and articles in the County magazine. We can translate information into other languages.

All services are provided equally to both men and women. Some waste services do require a degree of physical exertion by the resident which is addressed by the Council in the following ways:

- Assisted collections and trained HWRC staff offer additional support to residents, whether male or female, who cannot cope with the physical demands of disposing of their waste.
- The hazardous household waste collection service does not remove the householder's obligation to dismantle the asbestos sheeting and have it packaged ready for collection. However, where the householder is unable to package the waste and cannot rely on friends or family to do this, the Council will arrange for its contractor to package the waste on the householder's behalf.

Our staff receive equality training which includes gender awareness. Council staff receive equality training which includes sexual orientation and gender identity. Neighbourhood Services actively takes part in corporate initiatives to promote awareness of these issues.

Green Spaces and Countryside

When undertaking improvement works in the rights of way network or Council owned sites officers undertake an accessibility assessment to ensure that works undertaken do not adversely affect the ability of disabled people to access paths and facilities.

Enforcement procedures are in place to deter dog fouling, and we endeavour to ensure our playing fields, parks and open spaces are safe for all members of the community, particularly children, who are most at risk of health issues in relation to dog fouling.

- There is no duty on the Council to make public rights of way accessible for all users. Public rights of way are not a service 'provided' by the Council. However, where improvements to the existing condition of paths are planned the Council has a greater duty to take account of the needs of disabled people.
- Membership of disabled people in the Northumberland National Park and County Local Access Forum
- Service provision guidance on gaps, gates, and stiles for the public rights of way network
- When undertaking improvement works in the rights of way network or Council owned sites, Officers have regard to the duties of the Equality Act 2010. An accessibility assessment is undertaken to ensure that works undertaken do not adversely affect the ability of disabled people to access paths and facilities.
- Officers have worked in the past with representatives of disability groups to identify paths and promoted walks that are suitable for disabled people and for users of all terrain disability vehicles.
- The Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan includes a Statement of Intent on Access for All that outlines the Council's policy of working towards improving access to the countryside for a wider range of users, in particular people without a car and disabled people.
- Information provided to the public at the Council's parks and other sites is available in large print, Braille, or audio on request, we are working to improve access to public events, by providing information about access arrangements for disabled people in alternative formats, through leaflets and information on the web.

Cemeteries and Crematoria

Where we provide a Cemetery or Crematorium, we have made suitable adaptations to allow access for disabled users.

Our Cemeteries and Crematoria service offers the provision of consistent practices and procedures for burials and cremations to be carried out in accordance with burial/cremation law and Health and Safety legislation. As far as is practicable, this is done and in accordance with religious or other beliefs (including humanist ceremonies) or cultural requirements of the deceased and the wishes of the bereaved.

We have a process in place to provide a Muslim burial service at some of our cemeteries. We have set aside a designated area of the cemetery for this reason. The appropriate representatives of the Muslim community have been consulted, and we are working closely with them regarding this service.

Neighbourhood Services, in partnership with Ponteland Town Council offer a same day burial service for those of Muslim & Jewish faith as this supports those communities where there is a religious or cultural need to bury deceased loved ones as quickly as possible.

As a result of feedback, we have updated information on our website to make it more inclusive for people from different religious groups and taken account of other beliefs such as Atheism.

We engage with a wide variety of different religious groups in the community, the Single equality forum, and NE Regional Faith Network. We have given people the option to choose whether they display a cross at the Blyth Crematorium and Chapel to reflect the requirements of different religious or other beliefs.

Our staff receive equality training which includes religion and belief awareness.

We promote the Chaplaincy service offered to all NCC employees.

Public Conveniences

Disabled users have a right to access public conveniences and we must ensure that we have made adequate provision for them in terms of being able to safely access, use and exit these facilities.

We continue to provide a “You’re Welcome” scheme which encourages local businesses to make their toilet facilities available to the public, and this has enhanced the quality of toilet provision and promoted greater social inclusion for older people, young children, and disabled people.

The Council provides specifically adapted facilities for disabled people. This includes ramps to allow easy access, pull cords, and lowered basins.

The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (R.A.D.A.R), alongside disability organisations, local authorities and others, established a national key scheme (NKS) for toilets for disabled people in 1981. The principle is if a local authority locks public toilets for disabled people, it can use a standard lock and make

arrangements for disabled people to obtain a key. Having a RADAR key allows disabled people to open locked accessible toilets all over the UK.

Disabled toilets are commonplace and certain premises (including restaurants) are required to have them by law, but often they are kept locked to ensure they can only be used by people who need them. This can become a problem if a member of staff is not on hand with the key when you need it. We support the use of RADAR keys where appropriate.

Changing Places Toilets enable everyone, regardless of their access needs, disability, reliance on the assistance of carers or specialist equipment, can use a toilet facility with dignity and hygienically.

Northumberland County Council Changing places facilities can be found at the following locations:

- County Hall, Morpeth. NE61 2EF
- Berwick Leisure Centre. TD15 2AS
- Ashington Leisure Centre. NE63 9JY
- Holy Island, Green Lane Car Park. TD15 2SQ
- Seahouses, Seafield Road. NE68 7SN
- Cramlington Hub, Manor Walks Shopping Centre, NE23 6YB
- Newbiggin Sports and Community Hub, Woodhorn Road, NE64 6HG
- Druridge Bay Country Park, Red Row, Morpeth, NE61 5BX
- Berwick Town Centre, Woolmarket, TD15 1DH

More changing places facilities are planned in the coming year and as part of the wider public toilet refurbishment programme there will be more facilities with improved accessibility and user-friendly facilities for users from the protected characteristics groups.

Markets

Officers are proactive in ensuring there is safe access around town centre market stalls for disabled users, ensuring there are no low-level displays that may cause trip hazards.

Highways and Transport

Reduction in occupation of the highway in relation to skips, scaffolds, hoardings etc will likely have a positive impact on pedestrian movements and specifically for disabled people particularly those in wheelchairs.

Reduction in occupation of the highway in relation to skips, scaffolds, hoardings etc will likely have a positive impact on pedestrian movements e.g., for pushchair access and persons with visual impairments. It may also have positive impact on carers or parents of young children who will be able to navigate built environment more easily. This will benefit all groups but particularly women who are more likely to be carers.

Blue Badge holders can park free of charge in our car parks, and there will be no change to that policy. Parking charges apply to all other users. Not all disabled people qualify for a blue badge so some disabled people may be affected by parking charges. Parking charges can affect low-income drivers more than those on higher incomes and can have some equity implications. Eligibility for the Blue badge scheme has been extended to include some groups of disabled people who were not previously eligible. We will continue to promote information about the blue badge and concessionary bus pass schemes for older and disabled people.

Information can be requested in a range of alternative formats through the Council's Customer Services Team.

We also provide a Northumberland Pay & Display parking permit that significantly reduces the cost of parking compared to when paying at the ticket machine.

Signs are in plain English to help people who do not have English as a first language. Information on the Council website is linked to a translation service; Customer service staff have access to a telephone interpretation service. We have introduced an online BSL (British Sign Language) video interpreting service for customers who use sign language.

Encouraging use of public transport would give people an alternative to paying charges and have environmental benefits. Older men and women are entitled to a free bus pass which could help to mitigate the impact of parking charges for this group.

We have worked to improve accessibility in the public realm through engineering works carried out through the Local Transport Plan programme such as provision of dropped kerbs and through guidance and through initiatives to minimise pavement clutter and improve the ease of use of our footways. Work on road safety is targeted to reduce casualties in the most vulnerable groups and to aid older drivers to continue to drive safely.

Climate Change Team

- published a new stand-alone website, in accordance with the Public Sector Bodies (websites and Mobile applications) (no.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The new climate change website has been designed to the web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1 AA standard.
- Engaged with BI/IT's new process for auditing dashboards. To ensure usability and enhance the accessibility of the products the CCT provides. Creating an accessible greenhouse gas emission dashboard for Northumberland and allowing the CCT to publish vital information and data in an accessible and easy to understand format.
- will create additional resources, and formats where possible and/or requested.
- published Climate Change Action Plan 2024-2026. Climate change mitigation and adaptation help reduce risks from climate change and environmental impacts. As these impacts will be unevenly distributed between populations, low-income households, the elderly, children, those with health vulnerabilities and minority communities will be most affected by climate change. By reducing the risks and impacts of climate change, the CCT seeks to reduce the impacts on vulnerable populations.
- Warmer Homes Programme has delivered energy efficiency works for approximately 208 eligible households across Northumberland. This programme *is* targeted at households most at risk of fuel poverty, or who are vulnerable to the risks from cold homes.
- supported policy development, e.g. Integrated Impact Assessments and The Air Quality Strategy for Northumberland.
- delivered projects supporting young people, including a COP29 schools' event. Providing opportunities for young people to learn and feedback to NCC about climate change and their future.
- CCT hope to increase focus and impact on Climate justice and equity throughout our projects and programmes.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

- Consider whether we need to monitor the age profile of the users of our service, particularly in relation to user satisfaction surveys.
- Monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about accessibility issues and physical accessibility of paths and facilities, the provision of facilities for young children and accessibility of information and events.
- Evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions on young and older people.
- Provide better information regarding the opportunities for disabled people to access and enjoy the countryside, parks and open spaces.
- Continue to monitor and provide safe and effective accessibility for disabled users for all our publicly accessed services, and to allow safe mobility around town centres.
- We will continue to review whether more detailed information is needed concerning the sexual orientation of our customers.
- Improve communication and consultation with groups representing a diverse range of disabled people to ensure that the resources available for enhancing accessibility are targeted effectively.
- Evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions on disabled people.
- We need to evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions on our users who may be pregnant, on maternity leave, parental leave or who are breastfeeding.
- We need to consider whether we need to monitor the users of our services who are pregnant, breastfeeding or on parental leave.
- We will consider whether we need to monitor the religions of the users of our service where this may be appropriate.
- We will consider if it is appropriate to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints in relation to religion and belief.
- We will continue to evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions on the users of our service with different religions or beliefs.

- Research on the Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan revealed that females are more fearful than males of assaults when using the rights of way network. Women are less likely than men to walk or cycle alone on the rights of way network and are more likely to be accompanied by other family members and dogs. We need to ensure that females are not discouraged from using the rights of way network because of changes to the network.
- We will complete integrated impact assessments ahead of any activities – to facilitate better quality decision making and highlight where there are gaps in our knowledge, understanding, or data.
- We will continue to best utilise data and our business intelligence officers, to source, create, collate, communicate and publish the data needed to deliver the service, and understand the needs of Northumberland's communities.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

- Improve communication and consultation with groups representing a diverse range of disabled people to ensure that the resources available for enhancing accessibility are targeted effectively.
- We need to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints in relation to users of our services who are pregnant, breastfeeding or on parental leave.
- We should continue to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about issues regarding language and race and consider further measures in response to demand.
- We should consider the use of articles in diverse range of media including magazines in other languages to promote awareness of services.
- We should continue to evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions on our users of different ethnic groups.
- We should continue to identify ways to further engage with the black and ethnic minority communities to ensure services are fully inclusive and accessible, and work with local groups such as the BAME staff group, Buffalo Centre BAME groups and FLOW (Filipino League of Wansbeck) and other groups.

- We will continue to work closely with representative religious and other belief groups such as the Humanist group to ensure we can offer a comprehensive service that fully meets their needs and beliefs.
- We will review the services we are able to offer across the County and investigate options available to the variety of religious groups and implement procedures as appropriate.
- We aim to further develop our website to ensure it details all options offered by our service in relation to cremation and burials.
- We need to continue to consider the safety and concerns of users our services and whether some users would be reluctant to use our services because of these concerns and put mechanisms in place to reduce these concerns. We will continue to work with partners to overcome barriers to access to the countryside, particularly for women.
- We should consider a process to monitor satisfaction rates and complaints about accessibility issues relating to gender regarding our services and facilities, and accessibility of information and events.
- We will continue to evaluate the impact of any proposed service reductions to ensure there is no disadvantage or discrimination according to gender group.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

- We will continue to deliver equality training to our staff which includes the management policies and principles relating to employees whether they are single, married, in a civil partnership, separated or divorced.
- We will continue providing awareness training to staff around sexual orientation equality.
- We need to continue providing awareness training to staff around race equality.
- We will continue to deliver equality training for our employees which includes religious or other belief awareness.
- We will encourage staff to participate in staff surveys to ensure all voices are heard, and we will fully participate in analysing the results of staff surveys including the formation of an action plan to improve where we need to.

- We will recruit a diverse workforce that reflects the needs of the communities we serve.
- Integrated impact assessments will be completed for activities that effect people. Showing our commitment to improving DEI for Northumberland's people (internally and externally), by committing to better quality decision making, and better outcomes for people and place.
- IIAs will embed the skills and thinking required to complete IIAs throughout all teams at the council. Helping officers to assess impact, be equitable, be innovative and bold, work collaboratively, and share knowledge and ideas. Ultimately developing teams that are intelligence-led and have holistic decision-making skills.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

- We will continue to promote corporate initiatives which encourage our employees to feel they can be open about their sexual orientation and work in a supported environment.
- We will continue to promote corporate services to support the religious beliefs of our employees.
- We will develop a network of champions that promote and drive forward continual improvement in equality and diversity in our service area.
- Integrated impact assessments will be completed for activities that effect people (e.g. policy, strategy, service changes, projects, programmes or budget proposals). This shows our commitment to improving DEI for Northumberland's people (internally and externally), by committing to better quality decision making, and better outcomes for people and place.

Finance & Procurement

Service areas are Corporate Commissioning & Procurement, Corporate Finance and Transactional Services (Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Cashiers & Income Management, Insurance, Payroll and Revenues and Benefits).

Our core functions are to provide a range of effective, efficient, and high-quality professional services which support members, managers, staff, services, schools, residents, businesses and a range of external partners in the delivery of the Council's objectives. We endeavour to ensure that we maximise the use of resources and challenge all our services on their delivery to be lean and efficient and to embrace new ways of working that both minimises waste and removes duplication. We ensure that the Council's non pay expenditure achieves value for money and secures positive social and environmental outcomes for Northumberland.

The Directorate's statutory duties include:

- Ensuring that all Council procurement of goods, services and works is subject to the national legal framework which encourages free and open competition and value for money, in line with internationally and nationally agreed obligations and regulations.
- Co-ordinating the annual budget setting process, ensuring that the Council meets its statutory obligation to set a balanced budget by 11 March of the preceding year.
- Setting of the council tax.
- Production of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.
- Submission of statutory Government returns.
- Collections of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates)
- Provision of Housing Benefits
- Pensioners' Council Tax Support Scheme
- Disabled Persons Parking Badge (Blue Badge)
- Free School Meals

The Corporate Commissioning and Procurement Service [Directorate] does not collect data on employees or organisations that it provides services to as they are employees within the public sector.

However, the Service does expect successful Tenderers to be equally committed to equality and diversity in their employment practices and service

provision and adhere to all anti-discrimination legislation. As such equality and diversity is considered at the supplier selection stage and in the Invitation to Tender documentation, in terms of specification and contractual terms and allows for the inclusion of policies relevant to the contract which then form a Mandatory Requirement for delivery by the successful Tenderer. This is then subject to monitoring by the nominated Contract Manager as appropriate.

Our Benefits system holds age, sex and evidence of disability (via receipt of disability benefits) on each claim record. The Revenues part of the system holds data on sex.

In payroll; the Council asks staff to provide information on equalities, the data is held by HR. Currently less than 30% of staff on payroll have provided equality info

Consultation and Engagement

In September 2024 due to improving the way we used technology we consulted with the three admin staff in the Insurance Team to inform them that we would reduce the number of roles in the team from three to two. This placed one role at risk of redundancy. However, the individual at risk was successfully redeployed.

The consultancy was supported by HR and raised no issues of concern in respect of Equality.

The Directorate's leadership fully endorses and supports the attendance for all staff on the numerous staff Network Groups through team meetings and 1:2:1s.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?
Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

The Directorate's Social Value and Responsible Procurement Manager is embedding the Council's Procurement Corporate Social Responsibility Policy, to drive wider financial and non-financial outcomes, including improving wellbeing of individuals and communities and is a member of the Voluntary and Community Sector Liaison Group which helps shape and influence local policy and strategic priorities.

In 2025 a new strategic Commissioning Framework (co-produced with community stakeholders) will be launched to support continuous improvement across commissioning to achieve positive outcomes for residents. We will blend customer-centric engagement principles with the Council's Communities First approach to tackling inequalities and ensure the new Integrated Impact Assessment tool is incorporated within the commissioning cycle.

The Benefits Section has supported an initiative to make those entitled aware of their opportunity to claim free school meals for entitled under privileged families. This has led to an increased take up of this benefit.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?
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Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

A Northumberland Supplier Engagement event will take place on 16 May 2025 to promote opportunities to do business with the Council, to increase the diversity base of suppliers in Northumberland and promote a better understanding of equality, diversity inclusion and social value clauses in contracts. Existing and potential suppliers will be consulted and engaged with to encourage their feedback which will help inform the development of a new commissioning framework for the Council.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?
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Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

The Directorate adheres to the Council's recruitment and HR protocols when recruiting for staff. Equalities information is retained by HR for reporting purposes.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?
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Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

The Corporate Commissioning and Procurement Service will be implementing the new Procurement Act 2023 which comes into effect on 24 February 2025. This will

open up public procurement to new entrants such as small businesses and social enterprises so that they can compete for and win more public contracts.

Housing Services

The Housing Service has various responsibilities including management of Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Our Services include

Housing Management

Providing Housing and Estate Management service to **8,266** tenants and **250** leaseholders, this includes

- Income Management – collection of £32m rent debit
- Welfare advice, support and NCC Hardship fund
- ASB and tenancy breaches
- Manage 9 Sheltered Housing Schemes with 240 tenants
- Right to Buy management – sell approx. 50 homes per year
- Allocate approx. 700 new tenancy agreements per year
- Tenant Engagement - ensuring tenants have a say in how services are delivered
- Inspect, maintain and repair of council housing stock. Out of hours emergency repairs
- Management of statutory compliance/cyclical maintenance – such as Gas Safety and Fire Safety etc.
- The Service administers Northumberland “Homefinder” Service on behalf of all Social Housing providers (including Housing Associations) in Northumberland.

Strategic Housing

Statutory Homelessness & Housing Options Service

- Provides advice and assistance to residents who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- Takes reasonable steps to secure current or alternative accommodation.
- Provides and manages Temporary Accommodation to residents who meet the criteria and support them to secure alternative accommodation.

Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service

- Integration of refugees offered resettlement through Government programmes,
- including the Afghan Relocation & Assistance Policy and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme
- Management & coordination of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Support to Asylum Seekers who have received a Leave to Remain decision from the Home Office and who wish to remain in Northumberland.

The Private Sector Housing Team

- Improve property and management standards within private rented sector
- Tackle long term problematic empty homes and bring empty properties into use
- Advice and support to landlords and tenants regarding rights and obligations
- Manage private sector accreditation scheme and rent deposit guarantee scheme
- Development of selective licensing scheme for specific targeted areas

Policy & Strategy

- Develops housing strategies which include the Private Sector Housing Strategy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and the Housing Strategy.
- Develop funding bids and grant applications

Gypsy Roma Traveller Services

The service has functions for Unauthorised traveller encampments & Traveller Liaison as well as managing the Councils two permanent GRT sites in Hartford Bridge and Lynemouth.

Housing Capital

- Build works and maintenance
- Major improvement works, including sick and disabled persons adaptations, thermal efficiency measures and refurbishments
- Small scale new build and conversions,
- Emergency out of hours service, empty homes improvements · Direct delivery of new council homes.

Our Data

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee team currently support 232 households made up of 604 individuals. The families are assisted with every aspect of their lives to enable them to settle in a new country. The service has access to data on all of the protected characteristics bar gender identity for the traditional resettlement schemes, but not the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service Clients by Gender

- Males - 248
- Females - 356
- Disclosed disabilities - 7

Asylum Seeker & Refugee Service Clients by Age

- 0-17yrs - 221
- 18-24yrs - 73
- 25-44yrs - 188
- 45-59yrs - 87
- 60-64yrs - 10
- 65-74yrs - 18
- 75yrs+ - 7

Homelessness and Housing Options Service

The homelessness and housing options service gathers equality and diversity information and reports this to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government through Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) via Deltar reporting system. The HCLIC collects detailed case-level information on households each quarter, as they progress through each of the prevention, relief, and main duty decision stages of the statutory homelessness system.

The statistics for 2024 show a total of **2133** households contacted the Homelessness and Housing Options Service of which **421** were cancelled or closed, **102** had no duty owed and **757** were advice and information only and **141** cases are ongoing. The remaining 712 cases were as follows:

- 113 were Prevented from becoming homeless
- 412 were Relieved from being homeless and
- 167 went through to Main Duty

Figures for the 712 households, reported as prevented, relieved and main duty can be broken down into the following categories:

Homeless applicants by Ethnicity

Ethnic origin (as recorded on system and grouped in line with 2021 Census)

Homeless Applicants 2024 (Race)

- White – 87%
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African –2.5%
- Asian or Asian British – 4%
- Other ethnic group –3.5%
- Preferred not to say – 3%

The figures above tend to reflect the ethnicity statistics from the 2021 Northumberland Census. They show that 97.6% of the Northumberland population

are white which compares to the homelessness stats which show that 87% of all applicants were recorded as being white.

Homeless Applicants by Gender

- Female 54%
- Male 46 %

NCC Housing Tenants

Persons living in Current Tenancies by Gender

- Male 45.46%
- Female 51.98%
- Non-Binary 0.01%
- Transgender 0.02%
- Prefer not to say 2.53%

Persons living in current tenancies by Age

- Under 20 - 24%
- 21-35 - 23.76%
- 36-50 - 18.71%
- 51-64 - 15.64%
- 65+ - 18.61%

Persons living in current tenancies who have disclosed a disability

- Yes - 4.99%
- No - 95.01%

Persons living in current tenancies by Race

- White – 86%
- Black, Black British, Caribbean or African – 4.5%
- Asian or Asian British – 6%
- Other ethnic group – 3.5%

Consultation and Engagement

We have conducted over 7,000 tenant satisfaction, transactional and 'Getting to Know You Surveys'. These allow tenants to provide us with valuable insight on how we can deliver more inclusive services to them. We regularly ask tenants for their preferred means of contact.

We also have various groups that work with our Tenants to understand their needs. They are

- **The Housing Assurance Board** - this is made up of 3 tenants, Director of Housing, Head of Housing and the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Housing. This board will maintain an overview of housing services and provide strategic direction, monitor performance against consumer standards and in doing so, commission scrutiny reports where they see appropriate. Together with tenants they will provide assurance of our compliance against our regulatory requirements. They will meet quarterly in the new year, however, there will be some scoping meetings with all parties before the first date is agreed, subsequent dates will follow.
- **Tenant Influence Panel** - this is made up of 9 tenants (from our original tenant alliance panel). Their role is to monitor day to day operational performance and drive the tenant agenda of priorities for service improvements. They will carry out any scrutiny requirements identified and agreed with the Assurance Board. 3 representatives from this group will be members of The Housing Assurance Board with direct dialogue and participation in all discussions. This panel will be responsible for updating our new Tenant Forum on all activity and discussions within their group and the board. They will meet every month (minimum) in the new year.
- **Tenant Forum** - this group currently stands at 24 tenants but is unlimited in numbers. Its role is to be part of monitoring groups, task & finish groups, dip in dip out options, and "know your service " sessions, job shadowing, mystery shopping etc. They take part in events for tenants and are involved in all activities and specific projects if they so wish. This is a diverse group which not only will keep up to date and take part in housing issues but also hear from other council services delivering to our estates and the wider community. The forum will pass on their views and opinions to the Influence Panel, helping to shape their agenda. They will meet every 2 months in the new year.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

- We are consistently gathering information about our tenants (Tenancy Audits, Getting to Know You Surveys etc) and tailoring our services based off this information.

- We are working on IHE Project of Reducing Inequalities in Health through Housing including supporting vulnerable people/communities.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

- Collaborative working with other services (e.g., Health, Northumberland Communities Together, Safer Neighbourhoods, Police etc.) to make sure we have the most up to date and relevant information to enable effective delivery of services - "Communities First" project is a good example of this.
- Our engagement plans include different methods to effectively reach different target groups that are eligible for support within their tenancy.
- We use the engagement and consultative routes described above to ensure that we are listening and responding to our tenants and our communities effectively.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

- All Housing frontline staff attend yearly Domestic Abuse training
- Housing staff support the White Ribbon Campaign through which we challenge negative attitudes towards, and violence against, women and girls. Work is also being done around raising the profile of services who can help and support men who may be experiencing domestic abuse, and it is hoped that this will help to encourage more men affected by this to speak out and seek help.
- Housing has representation across teams from staff who have volunteered to become Northumbria Domestic and Sexual Violence Champions, the aim of this being to provide support to colleagues who may be seeking help for tenants they are working with, or who may be experiencing this personally.

We have a network of voluntary Domestic Abuse Champions across our housing teams who are there to advise colleagues working with victims of domestic abuse as well as providing a confidential support service to staff who may be personally experiencing issues. Part of the Champions' role involves raising awareness of current resources and services available locally or nationally to provide professional expertise for victims of domestic abuse.

- The Asylum Seeker & Refugee team regularly undertake training relating to the clients we support which can include political, historical and cultural subject matters.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

- The Asylum Seeker & Refugee team employ skilled staff who have arrived in the UK under different resettlement schemes. Anyone in the team with lived experience can share insights and knowledge of their communities' cultural and service needs and help the communities in question understand that we are here to help so that they can be open and honest with us.

Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service (NFRS)

NFRS Promote fire safety, including the provision of information and publicity on how to prevent fires, and on the means of escape from buildings in case of fire. Extinguish fires and protect life and property in the event of fires. Rescue people and protect people from serious harm in the event of road traffic collisions. When necessary, deal with emergencies other than fire and road traffic collisions.

To collaborate with emergency services and other local and national partners to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service they provide. To be accountable to communities for the service they provide. To develop and maintain a workforce that is professional, resilient, skilled, flexible and diverse. To make appropriate provision for fire prevention and protection activities and response to fire and rescue related incidents. To identify and assess the full range of foreseeable fire and rescue related risks their areas face.

- Secure the provision of personnel, services and equipment.
- Secure the provision of training for personnel.
- Secure arrangements for dealing with calls and summoning assistance.
- Secure arrangements for obtaining information for the discharging of their functions.
- Secure arrangements for reasonable steps to be taken to prevent or limit damage to property resulting from the discharge of their functions.

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

Historically NFRS have undertaken positive action days during recruitment. Positive actions days are aimed at targeting underrepresented groups within our communities.

Promotion processes are run with an EDI focus and are in line with the National Fire Chiefs Council code of conduct. This includes 30-minute access time to questions prior to interview. Times are adapted to allow for additional requirements for people with neurodiverse conditions.

NFRS uses language line to communicate with persons with English as an additional language.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

- We are committed to ensuring that we are seen as an employer of choice for everyone within our communities as we recognise that by promoting inclusion, and having a more balanced and representative workforce, we are better able to understand the needs of people from diverse backgrounds and shape our service more effectively to meet their needs.
- We remain committed to taking deliberate and positive action to promote the service to underrepresented groups.
- Our people strategy is based on a set of 12 guiding principles which underpin and cut across all areas of service with six key commitments to assist in ensuring that the strategy can deliver on our strategic aims and objectives and better support the role of the service within our council, communities and partnerships. DEI is referenced across all policies and equality impact assessments are embedded within our new policy and policy review process.
- NFRS will provide a focus on NCC DEI commitments in their new people plan.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

- NFRS Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) will undertake a new consultation process to include staff network groups. This will help shape our approach to community engagement.
- NFRS ensures it is productive through targeted workstreams. The service has assessed a suitable range of risks and threats using a thorough community risk management planning process. In its assessment of risk, it uses information it has collected from a broad range of internal and external sources and datasets. This includes working with Operational Research in Health to develop a risk profile of the county. The service has also considered NHS frailty scores, census data, data from partners, historical incident data and environmental factors. When appropriate, the service has consulted and held

constructive dialogue with its communities and other relevant parties to understand risk and explain how it intends to mitigate it. For example, the service has developed a consultation and engagement plan in conjunction with an external consultant who was employed to facilitate effective communication.

- We have improved our safe and wellbeing program by fostering stronger partner relationships with agencies internally (within NCC) and externally to ensure we safeguard those most at risk. This has included joint visits with Communities together.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

- NFRS is preparing to undertake a whole-time firefighter recruitment campaign. This will have more of a holistic DEI approach to ensure underrepresented groups have fair and transparent access to support. The recruitment campaign will have a focus outside Northumberland County area as well as those living within it.
- All staff in managerial positions have undertaken a level 2 DEI course through Sunderland University.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

- NFRS is working to NFCC fire standards for culture and leadership as well as EDI (code of ethics).
- NFRS People Plan is currently under review, which includes people and culture workshops.
- People, culture and leadership are embedded elements within development portfolios for all staff who undergo promotion within the service.
- NFRS has welcomed a Neutral Assessment of the service culture. This will provide SLT with an overview of our current position, as well as an action plan for improvement moving forwards.

- NFRS has entered into a collaboration with Northumbria Police to support and learn from a professional standards board. This will come into fruition in 2025 and will support our commitment to EDI. This has also helped NFRS align to recommendations set out within the HMICFRS misconduct report.
- NFRS principal management team have undergone a 360 assessment.

People and Culture

The Core Functions and Statutory Duties for People and Culture are delivered by the following services

- People Team
 - HR Operations
 - Talent Acquisition
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
 - Strategic Projects
 - Business Support
- Organisational Development and Culture Team
 - Learning and Development
 - Talent and Experience
 - Leadership and Culture

Both areas work closely together to deliver on our statutory functions and to support our workforce from recruitment, through the life of their employment, to the end of their time with us. Both service areas have service delivery commitments and statutory duties, including those laid out by the Equality Act Public Sector Equality Duty.

Our Data

At the time this report was compiled, Northumberland County Council employed a total of **5422** employees (this does not include staff from the council's schools). As at the 1st February 202, 2112 staff (38.95%) had provided their Equality Information.

We recognise that it is important that declaration rates are improved, and that staff recognise the importance of providing this information. This forms a key component of our new People and Culture Strategy 2023-2026.

Engagement with hard-to-reach employees remains a priority and we continue to work closely with Staff Network Groups, Trade Union Colleagues and other key stakeholders to address this area and to break down the barriers to engagement.

Our Workforce Equality Analysis Report 2025 is available [here](#)

Our Gender Pay Gap Report 2025 is available [here](#)

Consultation and Engagement

- A full Staff Survey was completed during 2024, with an overall response rate of **54.40%** and all data received anonymised. The results of this survey were shared with each of the Directorates, who have then developed their own

action plans to develop and implement any changes that have been identified. Within the Survey were questions that explored the Health & Wellbeing of staff, as well as their views about how well we support and reflect Diversity, Equity and Inclusion across the organisation.

- During 2024 the People team supported on several consultations within services for changes to structures, no changes were required to the process for protected groups other than if any disabled staff requested different meetings or information formats.

HR policies are regularly reviewed and EQIA assessed then passed to the Council's network groups to review. From time to time, some amendments are made following both the EQIA and feedback from network groups.

The Council's terms and conditions were revised across 2024/25 and EQIA was done, but nothing needed to be changed as a result.

- Development of the new Integrated Impact Assessment was successfully completed, with information shared at Corporate Briefings, via our Communications Team, and by attendance at team meetings. We also held Lunch & Learn sessions where colleagues had the opportunity to join a session to hear about and see the new IIA format.
- We work actively with our Communications colleagues and have issued information to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Health & Wellbeing across the workforce, engaging with colleagues via blog, vlog and drop-in sessions, sharing information and gathering ideas as part of that process.
- We have encouraged increasing declarations of Equality Monitoring data, increasing returns by nearly 7% over the year. This work will continue during 2025, to share with colleagues why the collection of data remains important and helps inform the priorities of the council.
- Our Staff Networks continue to grow and are unique across neighbouring local authorities in their number and that we have a dedicated Staff Network Coordinator. These Networks are an important sounding board for ideas and reviews and give a valued insight into mood and priorities of the workforce.

We have refreshed the Staff Networks Terms of Reference, reflecting the importance and value of the roles of our Network Chairs, Champions and members.

We hold regular meetings with Chairs and Champions, chaired by Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities and Stronger Communities acting as Champion of Champions and feeding back to Executive Group, reflecting the value that is placed on these groups.

- Our Health & Wellbeing team delivered the WOW Winter Wellbeing on Wheels staff flu vaccination roadshow in early 2025, delivering 500 vaccinations to frontline colleagues.
- Our Health & Wellbeing team coordinate and support the work of the Health & Wellbeing Champions based in service areas, ensuring that our employees are supported in various ways to suit their preferences.
- Our Talent Acquisition Team have supported the Neurodiverse Employment Event at Cramlington Hub. Interacted with attendees, offering support and guidance on applying for roles at NCC and promoting benefits.
- In collaboration with the Employability Team in Northumberland Skills, the Talent Acquisition Team facilitated a Careers session at Morpeth Leisure Centre, aimed at job seekers with multiple barriers to work. The team also attended multiple Work Smart, Live Well drop-in sessions at Cramlington Hub to promote NCC as an inclusive employer

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

- The People and Culture team work flexibly to support both colleagues within the team and in other services to ensure, where possible, their needs are met. This has included revised working arrangements, and adjustable desks and equipment to support continued access to work.
- The Health & Wellbeing Team support Instructorlive, who provide a fully inclusive Exercise on Demand Platform (Chair based ballet, exercises and physio-based sessions for those with mobility issues), promoting health, wellbeing an exercise across our workforce.

- The Health & Wellbeing team have actively promoted walking routes that are wheelchair friendly, ensuring accessibility is supported.
- Learning and Development offer Multiple Learning Methods: We provide a variety of learning formats to suit different needs, including e-learning, workbooks, explainer videos, microlearning, and facilitated group sessions. This ensures that learning is accessible and engaging for everyone.
- Bitesize, Readable Learning: Our modules are designed in a bitesize format to improve readability, comprehension, and retention, particularly benefiting neurodivergent learners and those with cognitive processing needs.
- Accessible Learning Platforms: Our Learning Together platform, includes integrated accessibility functions such as screen reading, closed captions, adjustable font sizes, and alternative formats to support visual and hearing impairments.
- Collaborative working: with representatives from staff network groups and managers to seek feedback on the suitability of learning methods and module design where possible. This includes features such as microlearning, interactive content, and video-based explainers to enhance engagement.
- Service-Specific Learning Solutions: We recognise that different services have unique workforce requirements, so we collaborate with teams to develop tailored learning approaches, such as printed workbooks for offline learning or facilitated group discussions for reflective learning experiences.
- In Early Careers we offer Workplace Adjustments/Access to work requests: We assist managers and apprentices with Access to Work requests, helping them secure appropriate equipment, workplace adjustments, and support for travel to ensure an inclusive and supportive working environment.
- Working with Training Providers: to ensure the learning and support needs of apprentices are considered, including agreeing any necessary variations to assessments for individuals with disabilities or learning difficulties.
- Manager and Mentor Support: providing advice and guidance, helping them understand how to support colleagues who need additional assistance to complete their studies. Ensuring that the apprenticeship scheme is accessible to everyone, removing barriers to participation and success.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

As a service that focuses on supporting and enabling change, at the heart of our work are the needs of our communities. We will continue to champion the need to understand communities and within our work challenge ourselves to ensure we understand the needs of communities when working in an area that might impact communities and service users.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

- Health & Wellbeing and DEI questions have been included in our Staff Survey 2024. This has helped us understand how our people would like to be supported. In response we have delivered extra financial wellbeing sessions, mental wellbeing sessions including Psychological Wellbeing Coordinator sessions and mental wellbeing updates, as well as completing a Musculo-skeletal Deep Dive investigation to help reduce absence.
- WOW Winter Wellbeing on Wheels staff flu vaccination roadshow included taking NHS Health Trainers to depots/ outlying areas, supporting our frontline staff in the more outlying areas.
- Health & Wellbeing Champions based in service areas have acted as a conduit for wellbeing within that particular work area.
- We have invited external experts in to complete both virtual and in-person sessions to discuss key areas of wellbeing and DEI, including menopause, mental health and Racial Equality.
- We have developed additional Work Experience Initiatives by expand outreach work by partnering with community organisations and schools to promote apprenticeships and work experience.
- We have developed Tailored Apprenticeship & Early Careers Support by working directly with community representatives and support groups to

ensure apprenticeship and work experience opportunities are accessible, particularly for young people from underrepresented communities. – This work is already active in parts of the community.

- Talent Acquisition used social media to raise awareness of Ramadan and how NCC supports staff during this meaningful month
- The Talent Acquisition team coordinated collection of food bank items and delivered to dedicated services that support those in need of the support in our community

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

We have delivered the following to help improve the diversity and skills of our workforce

- Facilitated Financial wellbeing (budgeting, scam aware etc.) workshops.
- Provided Psychological Wellbeing support and signposting.
- Achieved Mindful Employer status.
- Completed the North of Tyne Good Work pledge.
- Developed and delivered an Appropriate and Inclusive Language blog
- Supported Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month, sharing information about the GRT culture.
- Supported Blyth Family Pride and Mr Gay Day in Alnwick, celebrating the LGBTQIA+ communities
- Supported the Mela Festival which showcases the rich heritage of Pakistani, Bengali, Indian, and other South Asian cultures.
- Supported Black History Month with Vlogs from colleagues describing their stories and experiences, a staff workshop with an external speaker, and sharing information with wider teams across the organisation
- Supported Disability History month with a range of blogs and vlogs and colleagues sharing their experiences with others.
- Supported Race Equality Week, with a Culture Day drop-in event and a White Privilege vlog
- Developed the Neurodiverse Passport and Guidance and the Disability & Long-Term Health Condition passport & Guidance to mirror the existing Carers Passport, to provide additional support to colleagues and line managers.

- We have conducted research and engagement with learners and managers to better understand learning barriers within Learning Together, updating development programmes where possible. We have ensured that the procurement of the replacement Learning System has the functionality colleagues require and will invite colleagues from Staff network to participate in user testing of the replacement Learning system.
- We plan to improve Learning Together data and reporting to enable analysis of demographic data across LD activities to identify gaps in access and engagement in training and progression opportunities.
- We are working with neurodiverse colleagues/network groups to ensure that all learning materials are designed with diverse needs in mind, including alternative formats and assistive technology compatibility.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

We have achieved the following:

- Continued to support the dedicated Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Team, demonstrating a commitment from an Executive level to DEI across the organisation.
- Achieved the Disability Confident Employer status, reflecting on the great work already being done to support colleagues with a disability whilst also encouraging new recruits to join us.
- Developed a new performance recording structure to ensure delivery of the People & Culture Strategy priorities.
- Health & Wellbeing Team have all completed Connect 5 training (Resilience based tools).
- Supported an officer to complete a Public Health Apprenticeship
- We are embedding Psychological Safety in training. We are designing workshops and toolkits that promote psychological safety, helping leaders and teams to foster open, inclusive, and respectful working environments. This has already begun within our Change Leadership offer.

Policy & Performance

The Core Functions and Statutory Duties for the Policy & Performance Service are as follows:

Corporate Policy

Overview of service areas

- Planning, Performance and Accountability Framework
- Corporate Plan
- Service Plans
- Policy Conferences
- Scanning national policy
- North East Combined Authority coordinate briefings

Corporate Performance

Overview of service areas

- Quarterly performance reporting
- Annual report to Council
- Performance Management Framework

Consultation and Engagement

Our Resident's Survey was undertaken in November 2023 and results received in February 2024.

Results are shared with service areas to ensure policy or processes consider residents views.

This was completed by 1850 residents and each question reports a breakdown of answers by gender, age, working status, tenure and disability.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

We have purchased and currently implementing the Instant Atlas product which we have published on our webpage as “Northumberland Data Hub” This will give us access to 1800 data sets to understand the population data of Northumberland in areas such as population, age, ethnicity (census) Crime, Health, Housing.

[Northumberland Data Hub web link](#)

The aim is to roll out the benefits of using data as intelligence throughout 2025 to all our service areas to aid analysis and decision making to strengthen knowledge and understanding of communities.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

A Residents Survey will be undertaken at the end of 2025 to determine the priorities of our residents and communities.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

We encourage team to take part in internal surveys for themselves and the organisation.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

The team meets monthly face to face to share learning and knowledge. Ensuring whole team inclusion.

The team is encouraged to get involved in Staff Networks

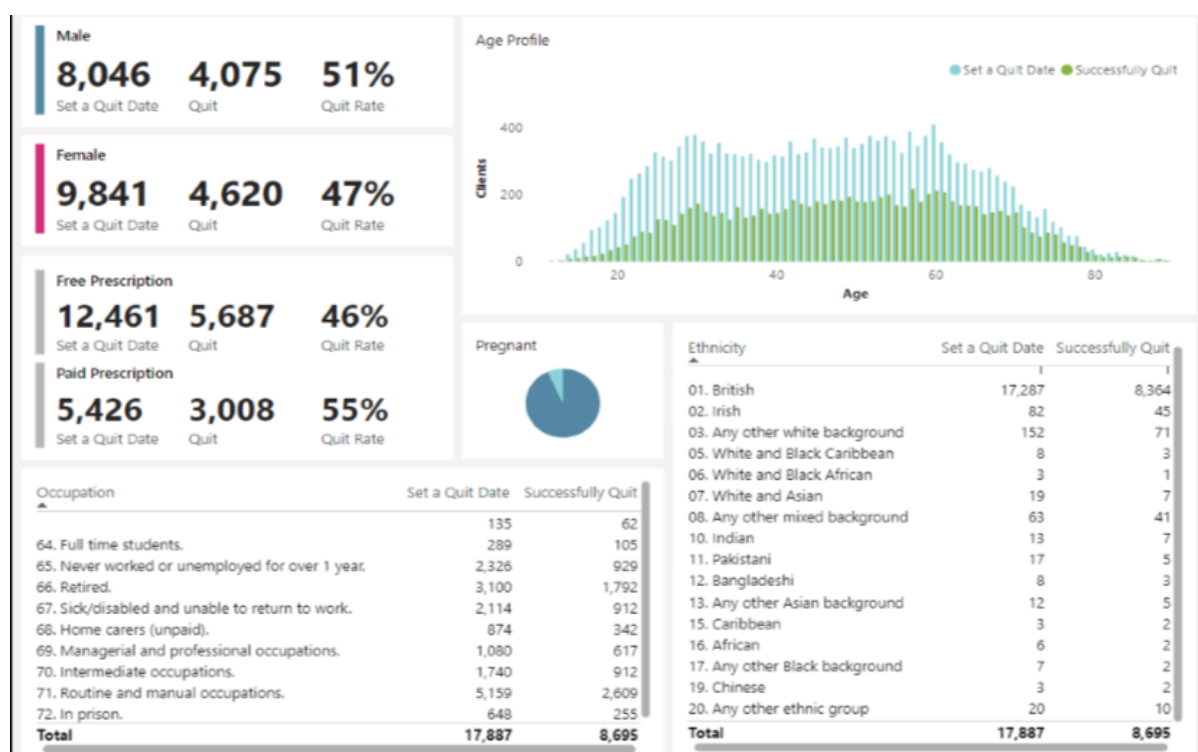
Public Health

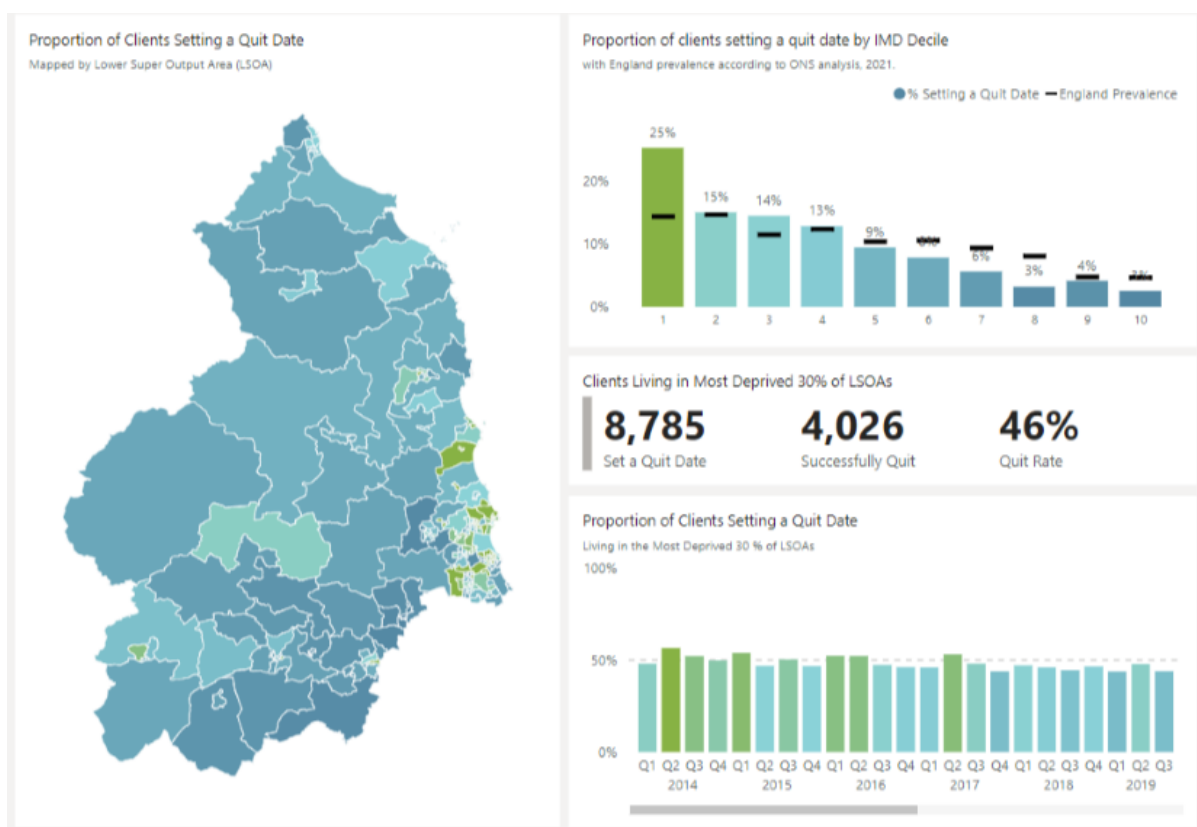
The Core Functions and Statutory Duties for the Public Health are as follows:

- **Living and Ageing Well** (Tobacco Control; Stop Smoking Service; Sexual and Reproductive Health; Drugs and Alcohol; Commissioning Pharmacy PH services; NHS Health Checks; Healthcare Public Health, Health Protection).
- **Public Health policy, place and intelligence** (Public health intelligence; Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JSNAA); Community centred approaches; Making Every Contact Count (MECC); Healthy weight and physical activity, Workplace Health; Financial wellbeing; Advice services; Health Trainer Service; Building Blocks; Health in all policies; Communities First)
- **Starting and growing up well and public mental health** (Children and Young People's Health; Oral Health; Growing Healthy Northumberland 0-19 service; Public Mental Health)

Our Data

Stop Smoking Service: the service obtains client data specific to age, race, sex and sexual orientation, some screenshots of data over time from PowerBI/SSS dashboard.





71. Routine and manual occupations.

5,159 **2,609** **51%**
Set a Quit Date Successfully Quit Quit Rate

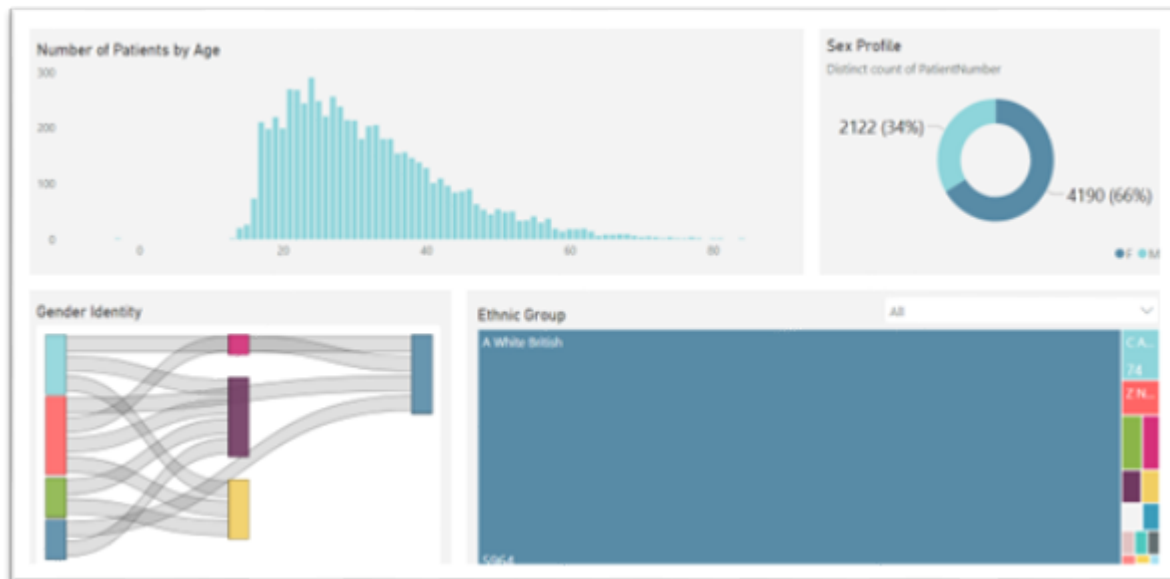
Long Term Condition

2,854 **1,594** **56%**
Set a Quit Date Successfully Quit Quit Rate

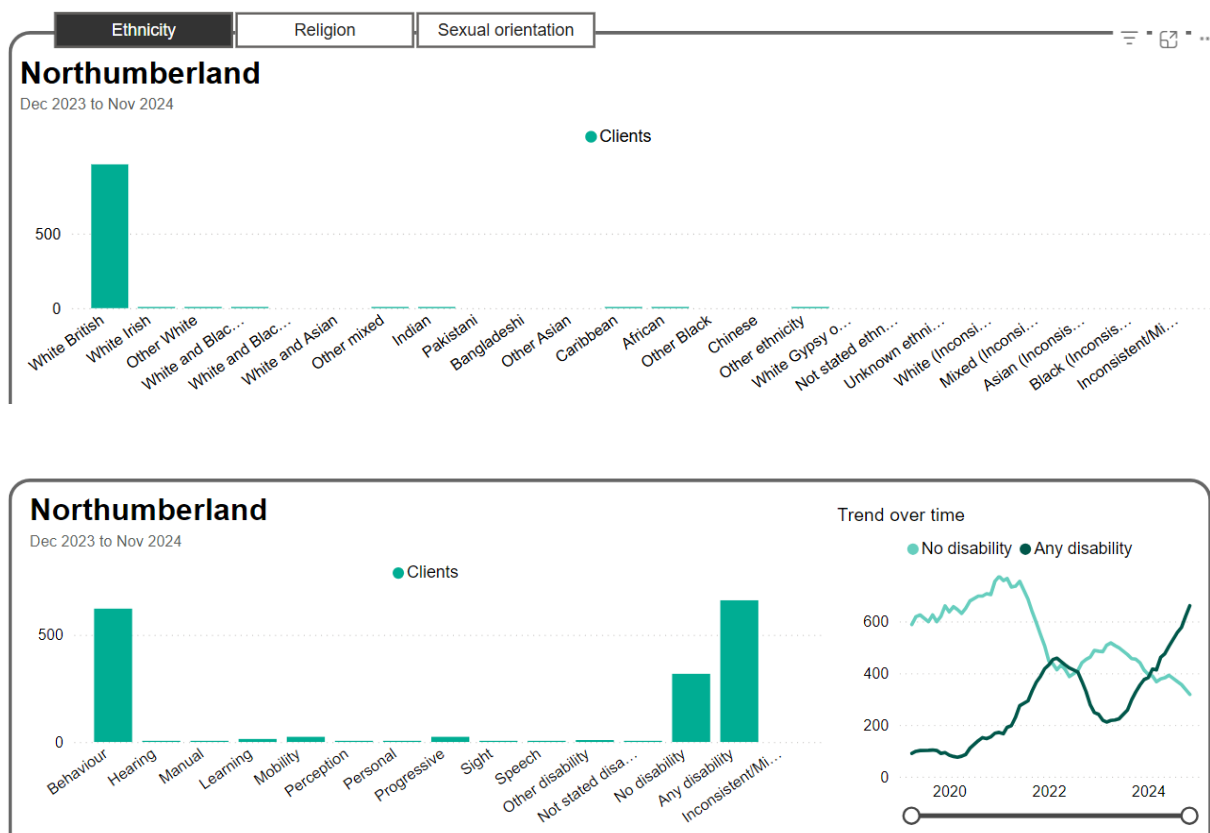
Mental Health

1,138 **577** **51%**
Set a Quit Date Successfully Quit Quit Rate

Sexual Health Service: All above data is collected by the service and submitted to our powerBI dashboard. Example of data below:



Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service: All of the above data is collected by the service and submitted to the national NDTMS database. See example of data below:



- **Health Trainers:** Health Trainers use System One to record characteristics named above.

Consultation and Engagement

- **Stop Smoking Service:** the Tobacco JSNAA has highlighted a gap in 'what do people say' and the recent Fresh NE Smoker Segmentation Survey provides some insight into our smoker types but we need to have more local consultation/engagement - as a service, the SSS has a client survey '2 minutes of your time' and has recently started to follow up on DNA's/lost to follow ups to understand the reasons for non-engagement – there is currently no adjustment to the questionnaire process for protected groups.
- **Health Trainers:** Engagement took place in the role out of NHS Health Checks within community delivery. This provided insights to barriers in accessing an NHS Health Check, comfort in community delivery as an alternative to GP deliver and allowed us to tailor our approach to reach those who would not access an NHS Health Check. EG Men lower uptake.
- **Sexual Health Service:** Health Equity Audit completed during 2024/25. Identified that some groups appear to be under served – both older and younger cohorts. Service is currently developing an action plan to respond to findings and adapt service delivery as required. A Sexual Health Strategy was also developed in 2024/26 and contains specific actions aimed at increasing access by underserved groups and communities.
- **Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service:** The service has an ongoing process of patient engagement and uses the results to adapt their delivery. In 2024/25 it was identified that alcohol users were becoming less likely to access the service. A range of responsive action was developed including service promotion, dedicated clinics and group work, and assertive peer outreach. Numbers are now increasing.

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

- **Stop Smoking Service:** Under the protected characteristic 'disabilities' the SSS can provide good practice example of adjustments to service provision for clients who have Severe Mental Illness (SMI)
- **Health Trainers:** Offer NHS Health Checks with a targeted approach to increase uptake for those with a low uptake within GP delivery. Examples include CVD workplace delivery supporting access to those in employment as

well as offering NHS Health Check within Northumberland County of Sanctuary

- **Sexual Health Service:** Service deliver clinics aimed at specific cohorts on a need's basis. In response to feedback from patients, the service is expanding the range of online and digital information and interventions that are available.
- **Drug and Alcohol Treatment Service:** See above regards alcohol users. The service also has a dedicated older persons worker, criminal justice and prison link workers and a mental health peer worker, all focused on engaging with previously underserved groups.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?

Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.

Our Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment brings together data and insights about our population in Northumberland, including pinpointing inequalities in our communities. The JSNAA provides a robust source of information to support NCC to be more aware of communities' diverse needs and improves our ability to address them.

Our Director of Public Health report highlighted inequalities in physical activity across Northumberland. This included different experiences of people with of older age, women, people with disabilities, and people from ethnic minority groups.

Our Transport and Health Needs Assessment (THNA) was published in 2024, which included insight work with communities that may be vulnerable to social exclusion due to transport. This included older adults, people with low incomes, people living in rural areas, and people with mobility limitations. To build on the THNA, we intend to do more detailed work with rural communities to explore a community strengths-based approach to transport solutions using the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) principles.

A Sexual Health Strategy and a Sexual Health Equity Audit were completed in 2024/25. Both of which have increased our knowledge of our communities – women, and both older and younger groups.

The Drug and Alcohol Treatment service will be delivering a Health Equity Audit during 2025/26 and will also be a major stakeholder in the development of our Alcohol Strategy.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?

Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

Tobacco Control (SSS):

Northumberland Tobacco Control Partnership draft action plan: specific actions to:

4.2.1: Engage with organisations who work with target population groups to understand needs and motivators, to increase opportunities for quit attempts

4.2.2 Establish a NTCP Serious Mental Illness (SMI) sub-group to focus on stop smoking support for smokers managing mental health conditions.

4.2.3 Deliver targeted communication and engagement with the routine and manual (R&M) workforce; scope accessible stop smoking opportunities member priority.

5.1.3 Delivery providers of stop smoking support to implement learning from the North East Smoker Segmentation Survey (Fresh/Bluegrass) to understand Northumberland smoker segment types

8.2 Hear our residents voice and work together to understand What can communities do for themselves? What might communities need some help with? What can't communities do that agencies can?

8.2.1 Seek public opinion on smoking and vaping – as part of the JSNAA's section on 'what do people say.'

8.2.2 Utilise Fresh's North East Smoker Segmentation Survey on smoker types to enable more successful quits.

8.2.3 Liaise with VCSE partners to scope and understand existing assets and gain more intelligence on 'what do people say' and understand what

‘reasonable adjustments’ might be required to enable successful quits member priority.

Sexual Health: The Sexual Health Strategy was developed using extensive stakeholder and patient engagement. One of the Strategies objectives is to ensure that our provision is needs led and responsive to our communities.

Drug and Alcohol: The Alcohol Strategy, which is currently in development, will include extensive stakeholder and patient engagement. Those with lived experience of problematic use are a particular target group and will be engaged in various settings – including treatment services, the community and prisons.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

Stop Smoking Service: SSS practitioners have all been trained in NCSCCT Community Mental Health Tobacco Treatment – and we will be looking at additional training to increase awareness/skills to maximise engagement/understanding of potential adjustments needed for our - targeted populations i.e. social housing tenants, smokers aged 24-35 years, mental health conditions, low income / unemployed, routine & manual workers, asylum seekers & refugees, people who are homeless/at risk of homelessness.

We have supported the development of the Integrated Impact Assessment which as an approach will result in greater use of a process to understand the impact of our decisions on people with protected characteristics and experiencing other forms of inequality. We will also be able to better understand the quality of decisions being made and where further training is required.

Health Trainers: Continued learning and development opportunities. Number of staff undertaking Health and Wellbeing Apprenticeship as well as a Senior Health within public health degree. Guest speakers on a range of related topics attend monthly Health Trainer team meetings.

Sexual Health: We have developed shared training opportunities for our service with our substance misuse service, so staff can access substance misuse and trauma informed training.

Drug and Alcohol: As above. The Sexual Health service has also delivered based SH/HIV awareness training to D&A colleagues.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

Stop Smoking Service: L&OD development plan; team workshops and provision of series of topic-focused workshops being discussed according to the recommendations on better ways of working.

Health Trainers: Continued learning and development opportunities. Number of staff undertaking Health and Wellbeing Apprenticeship as well as a Senior Health within public health degree. Guest speakers on a range of related topics attend monthly Health Trainer team meetings.

We supported the Ramadan Iftar Dialogue Dinner organised by Dialogue Society Northeast Branch in partnership with Northeast Diversity, Education and Solidarity, Buffalo Community Centre, Madina Masjed and Community Centre. The event was funded by Blyth Town Council and the Heart of Blyth Project and was the 3rd consecutive year at being organised in this format. The theme for this year's event was **"Peace and Unity"**. 80 people took part in this year's event.



We have supported the Dialogue Society's Christmas Peace and Unity Event – this event's aim was to bring together residents and organisation from a diverse range of religions of beliefs to celebrate together Over 100 people took part in the event. The organisers invited the Mayor of Blyth and the Vice Lord Lieutenant to give a speech about Peace and Unity. All participants were asked to sit at the table with people that they were not/ not so familiar with so that they could chat and build connections.

We organised a Hate Crime Awareness Event in partnership with Northumbria Police and Blyth CVA. The aim of the event was to raise awareness to residents and

practitioners about Hate Crime and how can a victim get support. The event was in a drop-in format. The event was attended by residents and practitioners. Some of the practitioners in attendance were able to make new connections and planned further events and meetings because of this event.

Sexual Health: The 5-year Sexual Health Strategy developed in 2024/25 is County wide and an example of the Council's commitment to leading on delivering high quality and needs led services for often underserved groups and communities.

Drugs and Alcohol: The forthcoming Alcohol Strategy will be County wide and is an example of the Council's commitment to leading on delivering high quality and needs led services for often underserved groups and communities.

Safe & Resilient Communities (Stronger Communities)

Safe & Resilient Communities comprises the following functions:

- Strategic Community Safety Partnership
- Safer Communities/ Community Safety
- Connected Communities - Locality Coordination & Support Planning
- Active Communities - Sports Development & Community Hubs
- Welfare Support & Assistance

Our Data

Safe & Resilient Communities do not directly capture data about People and Protected Characteristics.

The service does use available data sets from across a wide range of data sources and solutions to help inform policy, practice and provision. This includes Northumberland Equality Impact Assessment, Northumberland Joint Strategic Needs and Assets Assessment (JNSA), Public Health Shape Solution, Low Income Family Tracker (LIFT), etc.

Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIA) exist for all data sharing and processing activities in accordance with data protection regulations.

Anonymized and aggregated data returns for third party organizations (TPO's) are used as part of routine management information reporting to Government Departments such as MHCLG, DfE, etc.

Consultation and Engagement

The service is routinely involved in the facilitating and participation in community-based conversations, consultation and engagement. Consultations and engagement have included:

- Use of NHS Scotland Place Standard Tool
- Hirst Master Planning Consultation
- Heart of Blyth Community Conversation
- HAF+ Consultation
- DWP Household Support Fund Delivery Plan Consultation
- Ipsos Mori HSF5 Evaluation and Community Beneficiary Consultation

- Community Asset Transfer Consultation
- Sport England and Football Foundation Play Zones Consultation
- Town Plan consultation (Cramlington Conversation and Master Plan)
- FareShare Food Distribution Network Consultation
- Thriving Together Network Events
- Wheeled Activity Strategy Consultation and Engagement
- Warm Spaces Engagement Events
- Community Resilience Hubs Engagement Events
- Armed Forces & Veterans Outreach Engagement Events
- Transport Hotspots Community Consultation and Engagement Events

Northumberland PlayZone portfolio was predicated on data and consultation with communities and in particular those with protected characteristics as part of Sport England and Football Foundation identified priority groups. Outcomes and insights have helped inform policy and approach with.

- Low socio-economic groups
- Women and Girls
- Disability and those with Long term Health Needs
- Diverse and Multi-Cultural Communities

We have increased the number of community network events delivered through our VCSE Infrastructure Contract 'Thriving Together' providing opportunity for communities to come together, promoting the emergence of new leaders, and facilitating collaborative efforts to cultivate a supportive culture throughout the county, with the overall aim of improving the lives of Northumberland residents. New thematic themes include Armed Forces and Veterans Community Network,

Good Practice and Service Development Plans

The service continues to introduce new technologies and resources to support those people with mental health concerns within community settings (activitouch

resources) as well as improving facilities for those with physical disabilities within community settings (Changing Places).

A review of Ability to Play is underway to look at opportunities for service improvement and enhancement of service offer.

Our 'Get on Side', Northumberland's Active Through Football programme, is our opportunity to learn from doing things differently. By identifying and working with key target audiences, who face some of the greatest inequalities to being physically active, we want to increase activity levels and create sustained behaviour change using a 'Place-based approach.' The programme is seeing demonstrable impact and outcomes within Ashington, Newbiggin and Berwick.

Meeting our Equality Objectives

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 1st Equality Objective?
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Strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities.
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The service has invested in opportunities to build capacity in our placed based workforce so we can increase levels understanding, insights and needs of our communities. This has included recruitment to Locality Coordinators, Community Development Workers, Community Safety Officers and Rural Advocacy Worker posts.

The service has championed opportunities for those with a physical and/or learning differences to access volunteering and employment opportunities and help prepare for adulthood

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 2nd Equality Objective?
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Listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively.

The service has increased access to community-based services and activities for protected groups as well as increasing activities and opportunities for older people

within community settings which has included social connection and friendship groups, walking and talking groups, Singing for Wellness and Health Checks.

- Over 85,000 people attended Community Hubs
- Over 5,580 hours of community led activity delivered within community hubs.
- Over 140 local community engagement events 'Here to Help' delivered in partnership with VCSE groups and statutory partners.
- 4 local resilience forums held across Northumberland supporting 117 organizations (communities) to develop local pre-readiness resilience plans.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 3rd Equality Objective?

Improve the diversity and skills of our workforce to help us embed equality, diversity and inclusion in how we deliver services and support our staff.

The service has invested in opportunities to build capacity in our placed based workforce so we can increase levels understanding, insights and needs of our communities and better reflect the communities we serve. This has included recruitment of Locality Coordinators, Community Development Workers, Community Safety Officers and Rural Advocacy Worker posts. We will be recruiting individuals with personal lived experience to work on two new commissions in 2025/26.

- Lived Experience (Veterans Suicide Prevention) - Armed Forces & Veterans
- Lived Experience (Changing Futures) Individual with complex needs.

The service has championed opportunities for those with a physical and/or learning differences to access volunteering and employment opportunities and help prepare for adulthood. 7340 hours of volunteer placements were offered through community hubs.

What actions have been taken in 2024, or are planned for 2025, within the Group or Service Area to contribute to the Council's 4th Equality Objective?

Create a positive culture, with a clear leadership commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion both within the council, with our partners and the wider community.

We have taken the lead on the development of [PlayZones](#) which are the Football Foundation's exciting new capital investment programme. Using investment from

the Premier League, The FA and the Government through Sport England, the PlayZones Programme aims to engage with local communities across the country to create outstanding sports and activity spaces and tackle inequalities in participation.

We have been ambitious in Northumberland with a proposed portfolio of up to 16 sites. The first of these PlayZone sites have already commenced construction and we are looking forward to seeing their activation and development over the coming years.

Community Engagement has been at the heart of this programme. Facilities have and will continue to be designed in partnership with local communities to ensure that the final design and surface works for football and other sports and activities identified for that local area. Activation and management of the space is as important as the facility itself. PlayZones will be available for community use day and night, all year round.

The Head of Service supports the Armed Forces Staff Network as a Workplace Champion and is a White Ribbon Ambassador promoting opportunities to tackle inequalities across the service and with partners.

Data Sources & Useful Links

Office for National Statistics – [Northumberland facts and figures](#)

Equality Act 2010 - [Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Public Sector Equality Duty - [Public sector equality duty - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Northumberland County Council Corporate Plan [CORPORATE-PLAN-2023-26.pdf](#)

Northumberland Economic Strategy [Economic Strategy final 2019-2024](#)

Northumberland Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy [Homelessness-and-Rough-Sleeper-Strategy-2022-2026](#)

If you need this report in a different format you can ask for this in the way that is best for you.

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