

# Northumberland County Council 2023

## Equality Information Report

### Acknowledgement

Northumberland County Council would like to thank all the individuals, groups and organisations who gave their time and expertise to contribute to the publication of this equality information, and who continue to help us to remove obstacles to equality in Northumberland.



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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# Foreword

As a Council, we are committed to making progress on our priorities of economic growth, inequalities, and value for money. Equality is a cornerstone of the work we are carrying out across the organisation and is very much embedded within our core vision and values.

We understand that inequality, for example in relation to current issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, is impacting our employees and Northumberland's communities in different ways.

As an organisation, we are wholeheartedly dedicated to tackling inequalities, prejudice and discrimination that impact residents and communities across our Northumberland. We are committed to providing a supportive working environment for our employees – a place where staff feel included, understood, and valued for all that makes them individual and authentic.

The Equality Information Report addresses the legal framework for equality and how we are meeting our Public Sector Duty. It also looks at how we are addressing and making progress on delivering our Equality Objectives for 2021-2025.

This report underpins our approach to delivering and living equality and inclusion, now and into the future, to ensure they are embedded within our services and throughout our workforce.

Dr Helen Paterson

Chief Executive

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# 1. Introduction

We are committed to making Northumberland County Council an accessible and inclusive organisation that promotes equality and welcomes and respects the diversity of all the people who live and work in the County including: employees, elected members, and visitors to Northumberland.

We are working to eliminate unfair discrimination and promote equality in our employment practices and in the way we deliver services and are fully committed to fulfilling the duties placed on us as an employer, service provider and public body under the Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation to combat discrimination and promote equality. Our values are:

- Residents first
- excellence and quality
- respect;
- keeping our communities safe and well

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.

Our Equality Objectives for 2021-2025 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.

You can find out more about our Equality Objectives in the documents below:

[Easy Read Equality Objectives 2021](#) 2.7 MB (PDF document)

[Equality Summary Report: Equality Objectives Consultation 2021](#) 1.3 MB (PDF document)

This Equality Information report and our workforce analysis report set out how we are fulfilling our duties as a public body under the Equality Act. We have a duty to advance equality for people with “protected characteristics” these are: disability, sex, race, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, and pregnancy and maternity. In each case, the Act requires us to consider three key objectives which are to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not.

The Council publishes information the work we are doing to promote equality for our employees, service users and others from the protected groups

This document also sets out how Northumberland County Council aims to make sure that inequalities are identified and addressed, in line with our corporate objectives.

Collecting, using and publishing equality information helps the Council to:

- plan more effectively and identify any risks of discrimination
- identify what the key equality issues are for our organisation
- develop our equality objectives and measure progress
- meet our obligation to analyse the effect of our policies and practices
- demonstrate to the public how we are performing and what we are achieving.

This is a 'live' document and will be reviewed and updated.

## 2. About Northumberland

Northumberland County Council was established as a unitary authority in May 2009 following local government reorganisation.

Northumberland is England's most northerly county. The County is uniquely shaped by its border history, stretching from Tyneside in the South to the Scottish Borders in the North, west to the Cheviots and the Pennines and bordered on the east by the North Sea.

Around half of the population live in the south-east of the county, which covers only 3% of the area of Northumberland. The principal towns of Ashington, Blyth and Cramlington are distinctly built up in character with modern housing development and many industrial estates.

In comparison, the rural parts of the county are very sparsely populated. The majority of the population live in the market towns of Alnwick, Berwick upon Tweed, Morpeth and Hexham together with a number of small towns and villages. These towns have become centres of activity for the rural areas of the County supplying services, job opportunities and community facilities.

Population density is a calculation of the number of people per square metre. As of 2021, Northumberland is the least densely populated of the North East's 12 local authority areas, with an area equivalent to around two football pitches per resident (64 people per sq. km). This is an increase of 1.6% on 2001 when the density was 63 people per sq.km. Northumberland is the 6th most sparsely populated local authority in England.

This presents challenges for the council in delivering services to a dispersed population over a large geographical area. To overcome some of the difficulties, the Council has utilised new technologies to communicate, using social media such as Twitter and Facebook, as well as traditional communication routes. There has been a huge rise in the percentage of residents making enquiries, paying bills and accessing services online. The Council recognises the difficulties in some parts of Northumberland which have limited or no access to the internet and is actively working to support improved access and provide alternative means of accessing services for people who are digitally excluded. Some groups of residents including some older people and some groups of disabled people also have less access to the internet or need additional support to be able to access services in this way.

The council has supported a number of projects to tackle digital exclusion. Northumberland County Council has appointed telecommunications company BT to deliver a major scheme to boost digital connectivity in the county. The Council has provided funding to support the rollout of gigabit fibre internet connections to public buildings across Northumberland, improving the speed and reliability of digital connectivity to these sites. A total of over 900 computers and wifi routers were loaned to year 10 pupils, care leavers and children who have a social worker in Northumberland in order to support their home learning needs during the Covid lockdown.

## **Key statistics;**

These statistics are produced at a county level, and this can conceal significant inequalities that exist within the county. For example, Northumberland healthy life expectancy varies between 53 years and 70 years between our most deprived and least deprived communities

## **Population:**

- Northumberland is home to 316,000 people and covers an area of 5,013 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 96.7% is classed as rural.
- 49.1% of the population live in rural areas compared to the North East (18.8%) and England (18.9%)
- 51% of the population live in the 3% of urban land based mainly in the South East of the county
- Northumberland's population growth rate between mid-2020 and mid-2021

was 0.4%, which is 0.3% higher than the average population growth rate in Northumberland for the ten years before mid-2021 (0.2%)

- The life expectancy for someone born in Northumberland has risen by 3 years over the past decade, from a life expectancy of 78 years to a life expectancy of 81 years. In England as a whole, life expectancies have also risen by 3 years.
- Of Northumberland residents aged 16 years and over, 30.5% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 27.6% in 2011.
- In 2021, just under one in two people (49.3%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 52.3% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Northumberland that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership increased from 9.3% to 9.9%

## **Sex**

- According to mid-year population estimates published by the ONS (Office for National Statistics) in 2019, males account for 48.9% of Northumberland's 321,558 population, while females made up 51.1% of the total.
- The sex ratio (the number of males for each female in a population) was 95.562 males to every 100 females in 2021. In England as a whole, the ratio was 96 males to every 100 females in 2021.

## **Age**

- The median average age in Northumberland in 2021 was 48.9, with over 18s representing 85.0% of the population.
- Age statistics collected by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show the adult population of Northumberland, that is how many people there are over the age of 18, is 273,291.

- Northumberland's age structure shows the working-age population to be 191,010 which is 59.4% of the population.
- The number of people aged 65 to 74 years rose by just under 11,200 (an increase of 32.6%), while the number of residents between 35 and 49 years fell by just under 10,400 (16.0% decrease).
- The share of residents aged between 65 and 74 years increased by 3.3 percentage points between 2011 and 2021
- People under the age of 16 represent 15.0% of the population, and over 65s represent 25.6% of the population. The percentage of the population that is of working-age has decreased over the last 10 years.

## **Ethnicity**

According to the latest census 2021 the population in Northumberland is predominantly White. In 2021, 0.8% of Northumberland residents identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, up from 0.5% in 2011. The 0.3 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

- White - 313,027 people or 97.6%
- Asian - 3,374 people or 1.1%
- Mixed - 2,557 people or 0.8%
- Other - 1,010 people or 0.3%
- Black - 598 people or 0.2%
- 

English is spoken as the main language by 98.9% of people in Northumberland and spoken either well or very well by an additional 1% of the population. 0.2% reported having poor English language skills.

Polish is the most widely spoken community language after English in Northumberland schools followed by Arabic and Chinese. Other than English, a total of 51 languages are spoken by school children in Northumberland this year (including those who communicate in BSL this rises to 52). This shows that although the numbers of people from ethnic minority groups is low Northumberland does have an increasingly diverse population

## **Religion or Belief**

The largest religious group in Northumberland are Christians who account for 53% of the population. Northumberland has a Muslim population of 1,635 which is 0.5% of the population. In 2021, 40.1% of Northumberland residents reported having "No religion", up from 23.9% in 2011.

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.

## Religious groups in Northumberland, 2021 census

- 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 - 146,410 people or 45.7%

## Disability

In 2021, just over one in nine people (11.3%) identified as being disabled and compared with 10.5% in 2011. The proportion of Northumberland residents who were not disabled increased from 80.0% to 80.4%. Caution should be taken when making comparisons between 2011 and 2021 because of changes in question wording and response options on this question.

## Carers

Northumberland saw the North East's joint third-largest percentage-point fall (alongside County Durham and North Tyneside) in the proportion of people (aged five years and over) providing up to 19 hours of weekly unpaid care (from 7.1% in 2011 to 4.6% in 2021). Approximately 37,000 people are providing unpaid care for more than 19 hours. The Census 2021 was undertaken during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care, and therefore may have affected how people chose to respond.



## **Sexual orientation**

Data from the 2021 census shows 1,535 people aged between 16 and 24 in Northumberland identified with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual, alongside 1,733 people aged between 25 and 34.

This means about 5.5% of those aged under 35 who responded to the question in the census said they identified with a Lesbian, Gay, Bi or other sexual orientation. (LGB+) Females were more likely to identify with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual with 3,475 saying they were not straight compared to 2,555 males.

In England and Wales, the majority of people who identified as LGB+ were aged between 16 and 34 (57.9%), with about 6.2% of the age group identifying with a sexual orientation other than heterosexual

## **Gender Identity**

For the first time the census asked questions about gender identity. In Northumberland, 730 (0.3%) people said they did not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth. 165 people aged 16 to 24 years said they did not identify with the gender assigned to them at birth.

### 3. The Budget

The Council's budget is split into two main parts:

Revenue: which pays for day-to-day costs such as staff and equipment

Capital: which pays for major projects such as buildings, schools and roads

The revenue budget provides both:

- Statutory services: these must be provided by law
- Discretionary services – the Council is not legally obliged to provide these

The Council's budget is largely funded by combination of government grants, local taxation and fees and charges. The Council has experienced significant pressures on its budget recently from inflation, increased demand for services and new financial burdens.

Our approach therefore needs to be transformational in terms of service integration and new ways of working, to identify more effective and efficient service delivery, as well as explore opportunities to generate income.

The recent budget set by the council focused on protecting frontline services, investing in the future and looking after the most vulnerable people. Savings of £17 million were agreed for the coming year, but these will not be at the expense of frontline services. These savings will be achieved by doing things differently and by transforming the way the Council delivers its services.

Among the priorities agreed for the year ahead are:

- Protecting and maintaining key frontline services
- Looking after the most vulnerable and supporting everyone with cost-of-living issues.
- Continuing work to re-open the Northumberland Line
- Delivering new school builds and ongoing education improvements
- Investing in leisure centres, open spaces, and town-centre regeneration.

The budget allocates £223 million to capital programmes for 2023-24 including £92 million to improve and regenerate towns and communities across the county, over £19 million for housing, £31 million for schools and £35 million for road and path repairs and flood prevention schemes. The average Council Tax increase residents will pay next year is 3.6%.

It had already been agreed to keep Council Tax Support unchanged for the next year and the county's scheme is one of the most generous in the region at a maximum level of 92%. Pensioners will continue to be eligible for up to a maximum of 100% of their council tax liability.

A number of other new hardship payments are also being introduced for both Council Tax Support claimants and Council housing tenants for the coming year.

## 4. Assessing the Equality Impact

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 to 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.

## 4.1 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.

## 4.2 Equality Impact Assessment

Our equality information gives the Council an understanding of the overarching equality impacts of its services on different groups in the community, there will be key changes, decisions and proposals that will arise during the year that will require an individual and specific equality impact assessment to be completed. In order to do this, the Council has an equality impact assessment (EIA) tool in place to complement the equality information.

All reports going to the Council's decision-making Executive, or to the full Council, are screened for any relevance to equality, and a detailed EIA is completed if required. In addition, given that this is a very challenging time financially for all public sector organisations, all of the Council's budget proposals have been screened for their impact on equality and EIAs (Equality Impact Assessments) completed as appropriate. A summary of EIA's and any actions that have been identified are published with Council reports.

## 4.3 Engagement

The Council has a range of things in place to make sure that it listens to the views of the people who uses its services and involves 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.

The Council continues to maintain a People's Panel. This is a representative consultative body of local 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 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. Over 6000 students between the ages of 11 to 18 years voted in the youth elections on Wednesday 15 February 2023
- **Voices Making Choices** is made up of young people aged 14 to 21 with experiences of the care system. They are from different backgrounds and have different experiences.
- **1001 Voices** – 1001 Voices specifically seeks the views of young people through online surveying. Each survey is written by a group of young people who compile the results and provide feedback to other young people and decision makers.
- 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.

## 5. Understanding our communities

Information is organised into the following key sections on the Know Northumberland [webpage](#).

- **State of health** provides statistics by health issues.
- **Our people** provides statistics about people with health and care needs in Northumberland.
- **Our place** provides statistics, arranged by topic, covering the areas where these people live.
- Information in the 'our people' and 'our place' sections helps to set evidence-based priorities for Northumberland.
- The **our strategy** section describes priorities and how they will be met to improve the public's health and reduce inequalities.
- **Our approach** provides details of the Northumberland health and wellbeing and how health and care needs in Northumberland are addressed.

Information about Northumberland is provided in bulletins on the website. This includes the latest census data.

## 5.1 Council Directorate Strategic Equality Analyses

Council directorates have undertaken a detailed strategic equality analysis of their key functions and services and how they may impact on different groups in the community (see Appendices). This analysis includes information such as: what the directorate knows about the use and experience of its services by different groups; what the key equality impacts are likely to be on people from different groups who use the services; the things each directorate already has in place to promote equality and demonstrate due regard to the Council's equality duties; and what things the directorate still needs to do to further promote equality.

## Appendix 1 Children, Young People and Education

### **Children's Social Care:**

Our ambition: · to be a service where meeting the needs of children young people and families is the focus, so they get the best out of life. Our purpose is to:

- support children and families at the right time and at the lowest appropriate level of intervention to ensure needs are met in a timely way;
- protect children and young people from significant harm and offending and support them to live with their families wherever possible;
- where children cannot remain with their families, to provide a range of placements and services to meet their needs, and where necessary, providing permanent alternative placements for them promptly.

### **Core statutory functions:**

- Social work (Children in need, child protection, children looked after)
- OneCall Front Door /inc. Multi agency safeguarding hub (MASH)
- Locality-based social work services
- Services for disabled children and young people
- Adolescent Social Work Team (in NAS)
- Support to Care leavers (NAS)
- Placements for Looked after children
- Residential care homes and Kyloe House secure unit
- Fostering Services
- Family Time Contact Service

- Adoption Services (link to Adopt NE)
- Accommodation services: supported and independent living (NAS)
- Virtual School for Looked After Children
- Safeguarding Standards Unit Independent reviewing service, Child Protection Conference chairs
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO): dealing with allegations against working with children and young people)
- Youth Offending Service

### **Non-statutory functions**

- Early intervention and prevention (inc. Supporting Families)
- Children's Centres
- Early help locality services
- Edge of care services: Northumberland Families First Team Healthy relationships/reducing parental conflict lead
- SGO (Special Guardianship Order) support (special guardianship)
- Youth Service (NAS)
- SORTED: substance misuse service (NAS)
- Participation service inc. advocacy (NAS)

### **Other statutory functions**

- Lead on Domestic Abuse/implementation of Domestic Abuse Act 2021 Partnership functions
- Northumberland Safeguarding children committee
- Children and young people's partnership
- SEND strategic partnership
- Domestic Abuse local partnership board (DALPB)

### **Support functions**

- Commissioning
- Performance, data and systems support
- Complaints

### **Authority-wide lead on**



- Supporting Families (our response to the 'Troubled Families' programme)
- Family Hubs
- Missing, exploited and trafficked children and young people

## **Education and Skills**

To provide statutory functions and roles on behalf of the Council; to ensure that the journey undertaken in learning through education and skills is considered and connected at key stages, including, transition, destination decision making and is place based. To support and challenge across Northumberland and provide services to schools and colleges.

### **Primary functions:**

- Our Early Years Settings, Schools, Alternative Providers, Skills and Colleges are well placed to be able to support and respond to addressing need, driving change and realising ambition and provide the very best outcomes for our children and young people
- To develop dynamic future proof education and skills models and infrastructures that are able to withstand challenge and change.
- To connect industry and education much earlier in school life to support project-based learning, governor connectivity, careers pathways and defining achievable ambition for every child.
- To use our local infrastructure and develop opportunities in partnership to support economic prosperity for our residents.
- To listen to the needs of our residents and businesses in their roles as parents, carers and leaders of communities and respond accordingly, particularly in relation to the systematic approaches we use and the experience they receive
- To understand the needs and demands of the County and to ensure there are seamless connections with economic infrastructure, priorities and demands at the core of our decision making
- To work in partnership at all times with our schools, skills and alternative providers and across the Council departments and functions.

### **Core statutory functions:**

Further information on core functions can be found [here](#)

## **Administration and Finance**

- Capital transactions: Sixth Form colleges
- Change of land use due to an academy conversion
- Home to School Transport Service
- Scheme for financing schools
- Schools causing concerns.
- Transport to education and training for people aged 16 and over

## **Admissions**

- School admissions code
- School admission appeals code.

## **Assessment**

- P-scales: attainment targets for pupils with SEN

## **Behaviour and Attendance**

- Alternative Provision
- Behaviour and discipline in schools: Guide for Governing Bodies
- Children missing in education.
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures
- School Suspensions and permanent exclusions

## **Curriculum (in England)**

- National Curriculum framework KS1-4
- National Curriculum in England: Primary
- National Curriculum in England: Secondary EYFS

## **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

- EYFS statutory framework

## **Governance**

- Constitution of governing bodies, maintained schools
- School governance (collaboration) Regulations 2003

## **Special Educational Needs**

- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school
- SEN: Code of Practice 0-25 years
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

## **Staff employment and teachers pay**

- Induction for NQTs
- ITT: criteria and supporting advice
- School teachers pay and conditions

## **Schools and College careers guidance**

- Participation of young people –EET
- Careers Guidance and access for education and training providers

## **Partnership functions Working with**

- Schools
- Early years settings
- Post 16 providers
- Higher Education
- Industry and businesses
- Peers Local Authorities
- Children's Social Care
- CCG
- Northumbria Health Care Trust
- Parent Carer Forum

## **Non-statutory functions**

## **Adult Learning**

- School Organisation and planning including capital developments
- Inclusive Education Services
- Education development- links with industry
- Inclusion support
- School meals support service
- Music Partnership North East
- Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Employability support
- Employability projects
- English as an Alternative Language
- Traveller family support in education

## **Support functions**

- Finance
- Quality Improvement and data
- School Organisation
- Schools HR

What the data tells us across Education and Skills and Children's Social Care

### **Sex:**

The school census is completed by schools annually. In January 2022, the census showed that of 45,498 pupils on roll in schools in the county, Northumberland has 52% male and 48% female pupils in schools.

### **Race:**

The census recorded that 93% of pupils in schools are white British in ethnicity (the term used on forms rather than race) and 6% are from 'all other ethnic groups combined'. 1% of pupils have not had their ethnicity recorded by their school. 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. Racist incidents are reported by schools to the local authority. This helps to monitor community tensions and enables us to offer additional targeted support to schools. In 2020-21, 113 incidents were submitted by schools. This is a high number considering that there were long periods of time when schools were working with reduced numbers of children and young people. Most people targeted for racist abuse in schools are White British, followed by general racism with no target. The minority ethnic groups of pupils targeted for most racist incidents are: Black African, Any Other Mixed and Chinese students.

Polish is the most widely spoken community language after English in Northumberland schools followed by Arabic and Chinese. Other than English, a total of 52 languages are spoken by school children in Northumberland this year (including BSL). This shows that although the numbers of people from ethnic minority groups is low Northumberland does have an increasingly diverse population.

### **Religion or 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% have no religion and 29% 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.

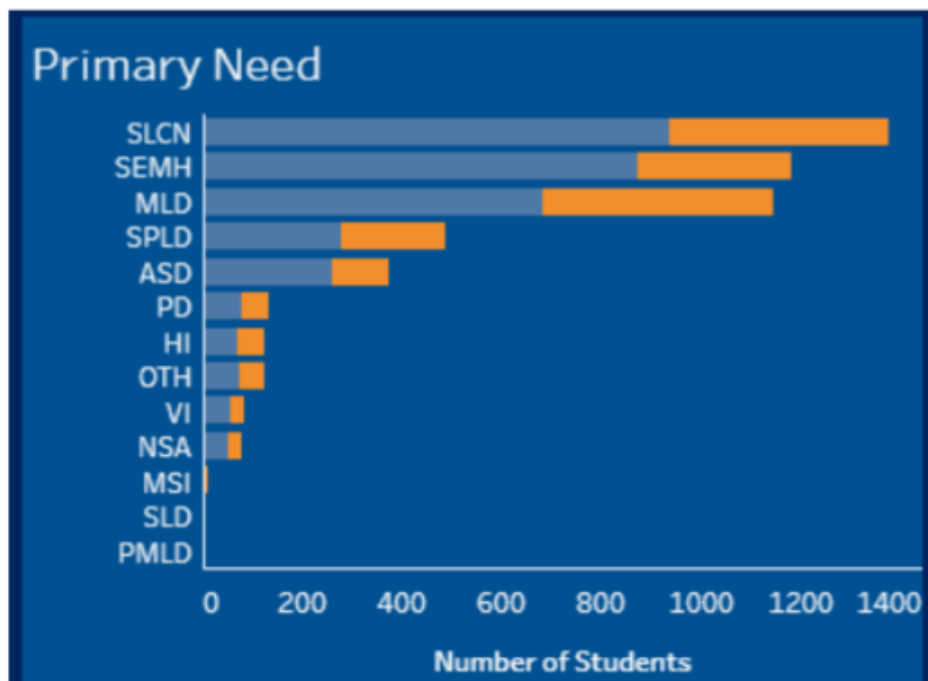
### **Disability:**

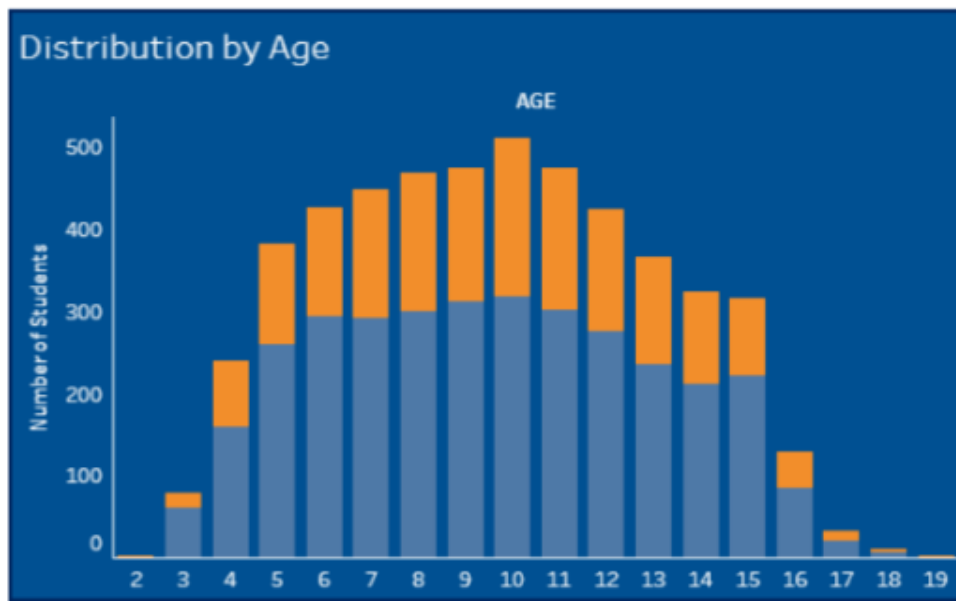
The data which follows shows the numbers and proportions of boys and girls receiving SEND support, and with Education Health Care Plans (EHCP). Currently there are 1113 EHCP pupils educated in a Northumberland Maintained Special School, of these 76% are male.

	Boys	Girls
SEND Support	65.5% ↓	34.5% ↑
EHCP	75% ⇔	25% ⇔
All	69% ⇔	31% ⇔

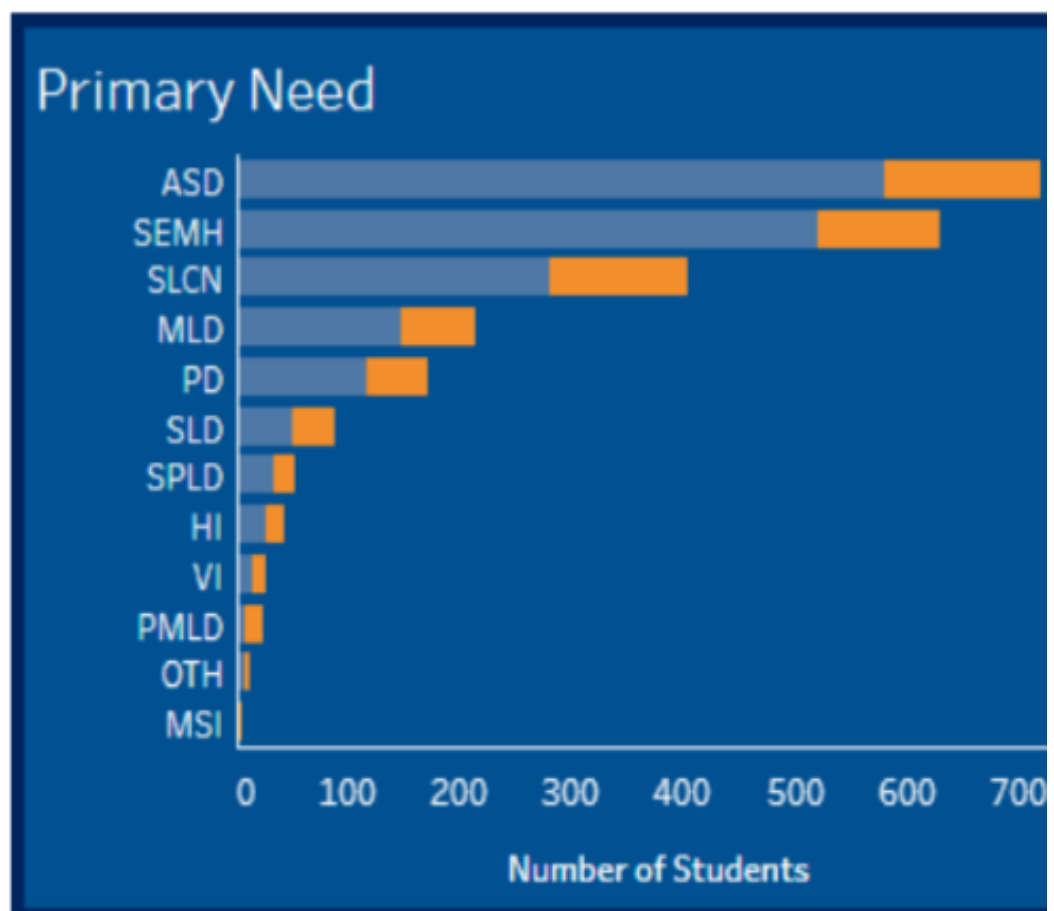
## SEN Support Pupils

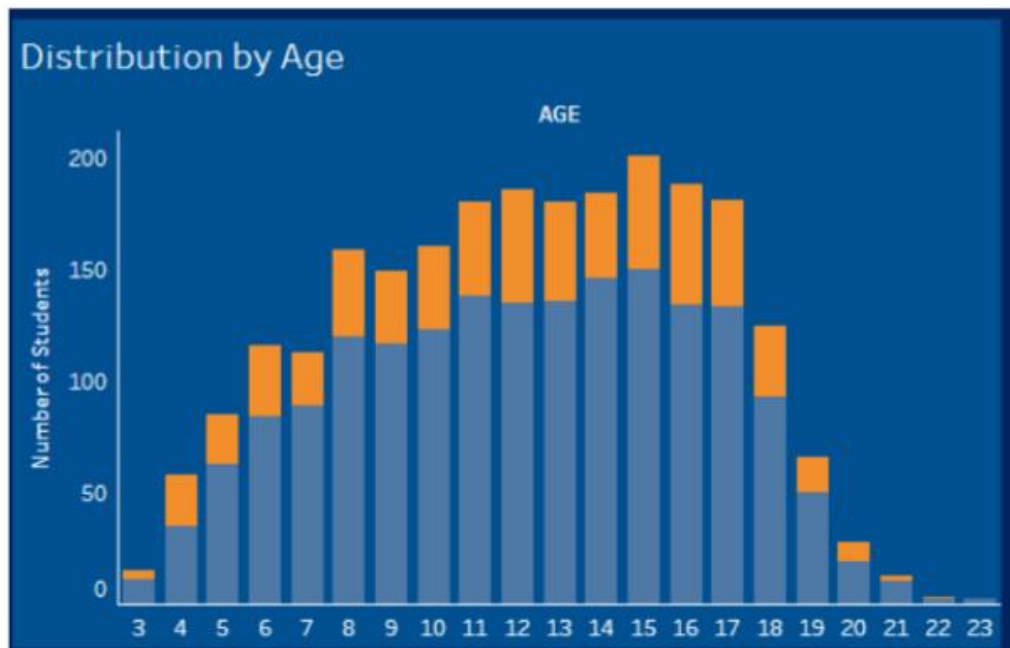
(MALE: FEMALE)





## Education, Health & Care Plan Pupils Male/Female



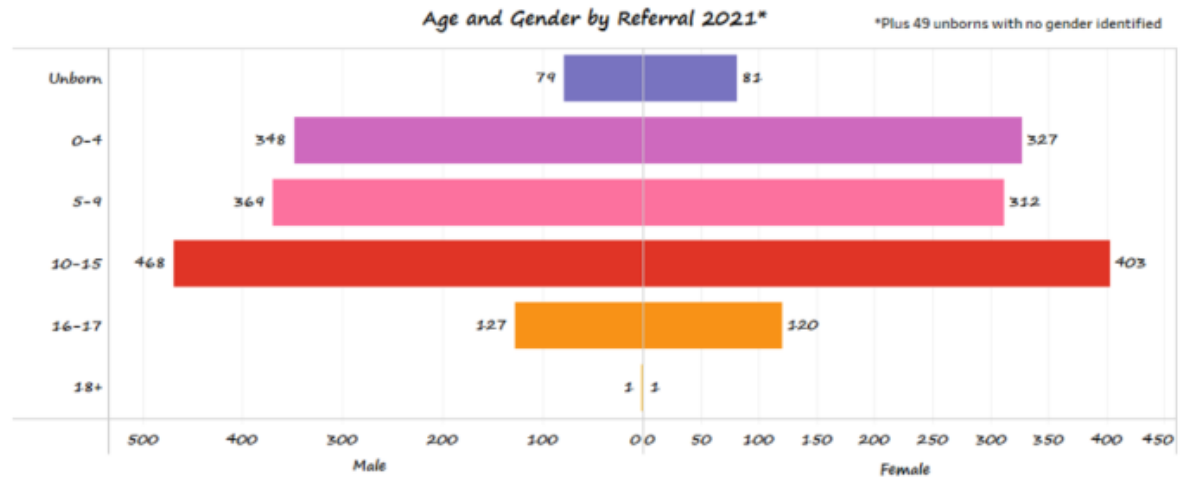


### **Children's Social Care.**

Utilise the Education & Skills equality information analysis above which has a range of information about school-age people with protected characteristics. This information assists Children's Social Care to better understand the needs of its potential client base.



## Profile of users of Children's social work services



Percentage of referrals by ethnicity 2021  
2022

Asian	1.0%
Black	0.2%
Mixed	2.7%
Other	0.4%
White	95.7%

Percentage of Referrals disability

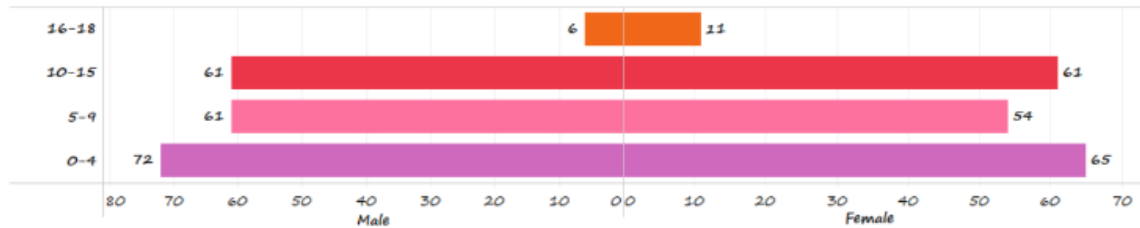
6.8%

*Percentage Gender by Referral 2021*

Female	46.2%
Male	51.7%
Transgender	0.2%
Unborn	1.9%

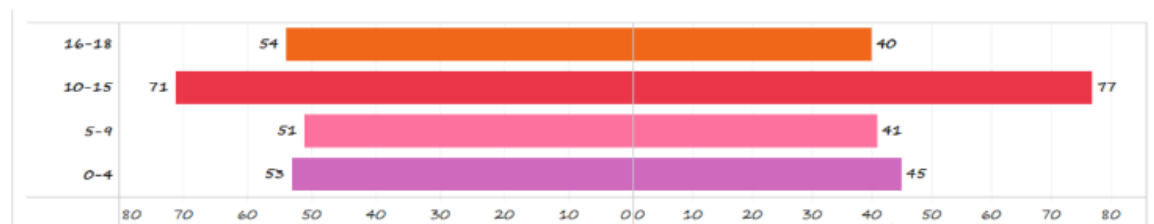
## Current caseload

### Current CP:



White	94.2%
Mixed	3.4%
Other Ethnicity	1.3%
Black	1.1%

### Current CLA:



Overview: boys are proportionately slightly more represented than females in children's social work although this is also the case within the school-age population. There is a slightly higher representation of children and young people who are classified as non-white than is the case for the Northumberland population as a whole and there will be an audit to assist our understanding of why this is the case.

## Early Help Equality data (including information from partners)

Total Children

Total Families

% with a Disability

% Gender Breakdown

976

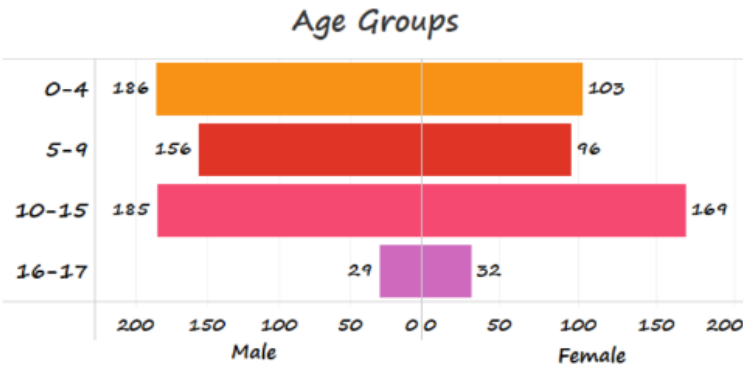
570

10.35%

Male57.76%

Female41.83%

Transgender0.41%



Ethnicity %

White84.98%

Other Ethnicity12.82%

Mixed1.26%

Asian0.53%

Black0.42%

## Early Help Family Worker Equality Data

Children

Families

Disability %

% Gender  
Breakdown

600

293

10.17%

Male

51.84%

Female

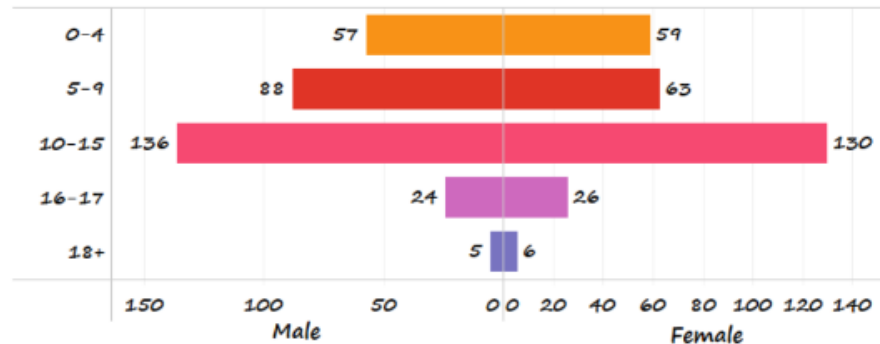
47.49%

Transgender

0.67%

Age Group

EHWF Ethnicity %



White

91.08%

Other Ethnicity

6.86%

Mixed

1.03%

Asian

0.86%

Black

0.17%

Overview: Boys are more represented when considering all early help work within Northumberland as are those of non-white ethnicity. The gender split is marginal when looking at those with an Early Help Family Worker. In addition to what hard data tells us, the audit that is about to be undertaken will help us understand more about why children and young people from non-white backgrounds are over-represented in parts of the Children's Social Care service.

**Activities across Education and Skills, Children's Social Care and partners**

Public Health conducts an optional Health Related Behaviour Questionnaire with school aged pupils every two years. The results of the most recent (December 21-January 22) survey are now available. We know that in the Primary phase:

- 11% of Year 6 boys and 2% of girls said they travel to school by bicycle;
- 29% of boys and 36% of girls travel by car.
- Y6: 85% of girls and 75% of boys said they 'always' wash their hands after going to the toilet; 1% of boys and 0% of girls say they 'never' do.
- 24% of boys and 31% of girls said that life during coronavirus had affected their mental health and wellbeing.

### **Secondary school:**

- 77% of boys and 84% of girls said they 'always' wash their hands after going to the toilet; 2% of boys and 0% of girls say they 'never' do.
- 31% of boys and 56% of girls said that life during coronavirus had affected their mental health and wellbeing.
- 30% of boys and 46% of girls said someone has posted or sent them hurtful, unwanted or nasty comments on the internet.
- 14% of pupils (28% of Year 11 girls) said they had been asked to post pictures of themselves that are inappropriate e.g., nude images.
- 32% of boys and 43% of girls said the media, including social media, influencers, TV, film, magazines, pornography or reality television at least 'sometimes' has an impact on how they behave in relationships.

### **Smoking and vaping:**

- 16% of pupils (23% of Year 11 boys and 32% of Year 11 girls) said they have at least tried smoking cigarettes (not e-cigarettes).

- 24% of pupils (32% of Year 11 boys and 43% of Year 11 girls) said they have at least tried smoking e-cigarettes;
- 7% of Year 11 pupils report using e-cigarettes 'every day'.
- 7% of boys and 15% of girls said they 'never' feel good about themselves. 25% of boys and 38% of girls said they have deliberately hurt themselves at some point.

There will be a further investigation of this at the Education & Skills Senior management Team and through the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership in July.

Northumberland was one of only 12 CCGs to be awarded funding for the national 'trailblazer' pilot schemes focusing on mental health support teams in schools and reducing waiting times.

The mental health support teams, which are being piloted in Blyth, Hexham, Ashington and Bedlington aim to support children with lower-level mental health concerns. This will make it easier to access help at an earlier stage, before problems develop to higher level that might need support from secondary care mental health services.

Blyth, Ashington and Bedlington school children took part in stakeholder surveys in 2021 connected to emotional health and wellbeing. Younger children were most concerned about friendships, bereavement, and sleep. Secondary students identified body image as a main concern, along with friendships.

Chat Health has been open to 11-19s in Northumberland to engage with school nurses about health issues that concern them. The team report that the system (of speaking in confidence to a school nurse by text) appeals to male students. Issues about mental health have been the most frequently occurring contact type.

Children and young people's views informed and shaped the current Children and Young People's Plan. Many of the 1750 children and young people who responded, stated that emotional and mental health and wellbeing were a significant priority, as was a curriculum that prepared them well for adult life, including learning about and achieving equality and challenging discrimination.

Schools' individual parent view surveys are conducted internally and by Ofsted. Awareness of national surveys and consultations enable us to hear the voice of children and young people, whilst enabling us to keep our promise to them that we will be circumspect in surveying and gathering opinions locally in a directed, purposeful way.

The recent (2021) Just like Us survey of LGBT+ young people and their peers established that:

- Two thirds (68%) of LGBT+ young people feel that their mental health has worsened since the pandemic began, compared to 49% of non-LGBT+ young people, and
- that young LGBT+ young people in the North East of England reported as being the loneliest in the country since the pandemic began.

The 2022 Make Your Mark survey had responses from over 500K young people. The highest percentage turnout (13%) was from children in the North East.

Northumberland polled the highest number of individual votes from young people in the region. The most important issues to the 5,248 participating 11–18-year-olds in Northumberland in 2022 were:

- 1: Health and wellbeing (Emotional health and wellbeing, a ban on conversion therapy, tackling the effects of poverty on health)
- 2: Jobs, money, homes and opportunities
- 3: Education and learning.

### **The Better Measures Exercise:**

Since April 2021, the Inclusive Education Service has been asking learners with special educational needs a series of questions so that it can understand how they experience life. For instance, they are asked if they get to do things outside school that they enjoy, how well they are helped to learn at school, and how they cope with life's ups and downs. The feedback from this is collated into an easy-to-understand analysis each quarter in order to help the service and schools understand the impact they are having. It is also shared back with children and families through the SEND infographic which is on the local offer website.

We have been part of wider consultation and engagement exercises in relation to parents/carers of disabled children and as a result have included the needs identified within our improvement planning.

We undertake regular consultation and engagement activities through a range of methods including at an individual child/family level and within groups. Further coordination of this feedback is currently being drawn together to support our identification of gaps in needs to be addressed.

Our employee profile fits roughly with the demographic in Northumberland. An Equality and Diversity questionnaire is about to go out to staff to seek their perspectives and will be complimented by a session at the forthcoming Senior Managers Development Day.



An inclusive education workstream has set objectives to improve and develop education for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The 2022 conference for SEN Coordinators (SENCos) in July 2022 had a focus on Preparing for Adulthood (PfA). This includes life skills, aspiration and employment.

The 2021 Northumberland Strategy for Children and Young People with Emotional and Mental Health needs sets out our local partnership's vision for the ongoing development and continual improvement of the support provided for our children and young people with emotional and mental health needs across the county.

There is a section within this plan led by Education and Skills which commits to develop strategies to challenge the stigma and inequality reported by and impacting on the emotional wellbeing of LGBTQ+ and minority ethnic children and young people, and disabled children and young people.

The current Children and Young People's Plan seeks to engage and inform children and young people in our schools by engaging and sharing with them the impacts and progress being made towards the objectives they helped to set

- A timeline that describes the process and milestones
- An Impact Day took place at the plan's mid-point
- Democratic decision making and progress sharing resource for schools were shared in collaboration with young, elected members of the Youth Cabinet and Youth Parliament

Schools all over Northumberland are committed to working towards and gaining quality standards and charter marks which demonstrate a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. These include: The Equalities Award, Rainbow Flag Award, Inclusion Quality Mark Award, Stonewall Schools Champion Award and International School Award.

Schools and colleges can access a termly Equalities Update from the Northumberland Education web site. It provides guidance to statutory duties, forthcoming events, dates and campaigns, details of local support groups for children and young people with protected characteristics and links to resources and training. For national campaigns such as International Women's Day, Black History or LGBT History Month, more in-depth resources are attached as links to this resource, to help schools to prepare and plan their learning and activities in line with the theme.

An Equalities and Schools team provides training for school-based colleagues on, for example: Writing an accessibility plan, publishing equality information and setting equality objectives, challenging discriminatory language in school, supporting LGBTQ+ pupils, working supportively with gender identity, Schools of Sanctuary and inclusive strategies for integrating Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils.

Conscious of the isolation experienced by many children and young people who identify as LGBTQ+ during the pandemic, we successfully bid for Covid Recovery funding for one day a week of school-based support and advocacy from a local third sector youth organisation. Trinity Youth have developed LGBTQ+ drop ins for young people and allies in several schools. Trinity Youth have made and taken referrals and supported individual young people throughout 2021/22. There is also a young people's development worker with Northumberland Pride working with schools and Trinity Youth and developing a Youth Voices programme for LGBTQ+ young people in the county.

From 2021, schools were required to implement new, statutory aspects of PSHE. PSHE is Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education and is an important part of young people's education. It teaches them to, not only be positive and responsible citizens within society, but healthy and happy individuals. PSHE supports young people as they prepare for the realities of modern life, exploring topics such as mental health and healthy relationships. Young people in Northumberland told us in 2019 that this was the aspect of their education they valued being taught well.

There are key elements that are now statutory. This includes Relationships Education (RE) in the Primary sector, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in Secondary, and Health Education in both the Primary and Secondary phases. This includes information about different kinds of families and the legal status of marriage for same sex and opposite sex couples. For secondary pupils it includes understanding that stereotypes can cause damage, how to show respect to others and receive respect back. Alongside this schools must address, bullying, criminal behaviour in relationships, behaviour such as sexual harassment and sexual violence, and the Equality Act 2010.

Northumberland Education and Skills is a proud partner of the Sex Education Forum and commissioned high quality SEF training to prepare all schools for the statutory elements of RSE prior to their introduction. We are local authority members of the PSHE Association. All Northumberland schools have access to a Personal Development Curriculum Network which meets each half term to develop a community where all schools can share and develop best practice in making this important aspect of learning inclusive for and representative of people with protected characteristics.

Northumberland has a strong Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) offer with a graduated approach, inclusion toolkit and inclusion workers in addition to a Portage Team working to ensure the best possible start for the youngest children with special educational needs and disabilities. Sexual harassment and abuse in schools has had a high profile throughout 2021/22. The July 2021 Ofsted review found that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse, such as being sent unsolicited explicit sexual material and being pressured to send nude pictures, are much more prevalent than adults realised. For example, nearly 90% of girls, and nearly 50% of boys, said being sent explicit pictures or videos of things they did not want to see happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers.

Children and young people told the review that sexual harassment occurs so frequently that it has become 'commonplace' and was not often reported. For example, 92% of girls, and 74% of boys, said sexist name-calling happens a lot or sometimes to them or their peers. The frequency of these harmful sexual behaviours means that some children and young people consider them normal. All

schools and colleagues working with schools are committed to ensuring that schools are safe, and that any occurrences of sexism and sexual harassment are tackled and challenged. Education and skills contribute to the wider council campaign to achieve White Ribbon accreditation by working with schools and partners to ensure that there is integrity and rigour in the way schools educate about and challenge sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour. A member of our service chairs the Race Equality Group and provides support and advice to managers around employing and supporting workers from BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) communities.

## **Activities across Education and Skills and Children's Social Care**

Meeting the council's equality objectives is an important part of the work we do.

Strengthen understanding of the needs of communities:

1. Data collection and analysis to inform resourcing is one of the ways we prepare to meet the needs of communities; for example, planning for the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in the UK who have been matched with families in Northumberland involves ensuring that school places are allocated fairly and according to capacity.
2. Listen to and respond effectively to communities

We have made a commitment to children and young people through the Children and Young People's Plan that when we survey them and ask for their opinions, that we will share the findings with them, and explain in a 'You said, we did' format the extent to which their voices have been heard when informing the services being planned. Schools and the service respond promptly to and investigate thoroughly any reports of discrimination connected with any of the protected characteristics.

3. Diversity and skills of our workforce.

A large-scale project is under way to improve the experiences of children and young people who experience mental health challenges. Schools have appointed mental health leads, there is a dedicated web site of support and investment in Primary Mental Health Workers and staff training to promote resilience and wellbeing in schools. A mental health in schools conference took place on 12th May 2022. A growing team of teachers of EAL (English as an Additional Language) support newly arrived children in schools and train teachers and the schools' workforce to have the skills to develop bilingualism, inclusion and fluency in English. A programme of dedicated equality training opportunities for school staff to develop understanding and skills in, for example: tackling discriminatory language, decolonising and making the curriculum more inclusive, setting equality objectives and understanding gender identity. The Early Years Conference in July 2022 will focus on equality diversity and inclusion.

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.

This will include a Staff College led inclusion session as part of our senior leadership day in July to support an update of our leadership pledge. We will undertake an audit of children who are from ethnic minority backgrounds who are looked after or on a child protection plan to identify any disproportionality and reasons why some groups are overrepresented in these services.

## Appendix 2: Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing (DASS)

### 1: Directorate's key functions and services

The Directorate's purpose is to:

- Promote people's independence and wellbeing
- Provide the support that people need in the community rather than in institutions
- Work "seamlessly" together with different organisations and specialists.

It does this by developing a system of support with the following four elements:

- **Prevention** - keeping people well for as long as possible: supporting people to remain active and engaged in community life by linking with activities which are attractive to the whole community and include disabled people and those with disabling long-term health conditions.
- **Reablement** – helping people regain independence after illness: providing people with the immediate support they need to recover their independence after a health crisis or an accident – ranging from advice and guidance through to time-limited periods of care or intensive programmes of rehabilitation.
- **Long term support** – supporting people with longer term needs: assessing people's needs, strengths and desired outcomes, working with individuals and families directly to help them make changes and solve problems, organising support, making recommendations or referrals to other services and agencies, and keeping detailed records.
- **Keeping people safe** – protecting from neglect or abuse: taking action to prevent harm happening in the first place; responding effectively to concerns about alleged and suspected abuse; and putting plans in place to help protect adults at risk.

**Our statutory Adult Social Care functions include:**

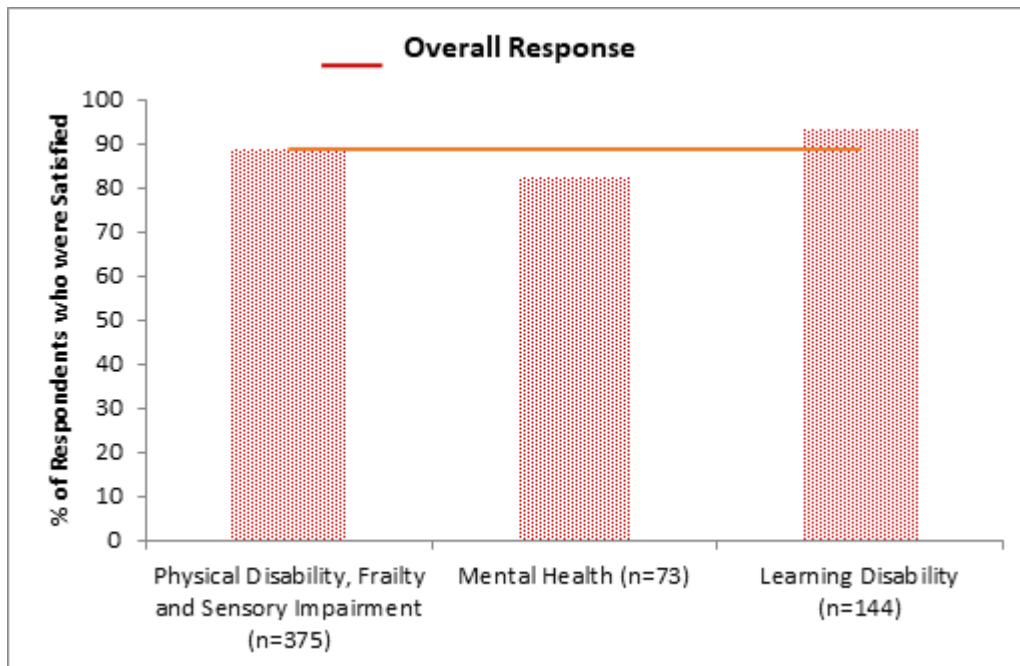
- Assessing the care and support needs of people with a long-term illness or disability and working with them to develop plans for meeting these needs.
- Statutory assessments under mental health and mental capacity legislation
- Arranging preventative support to avoid, reduce or delay the development of care and support needs, for instance by supporting people to regain their independence after a serious illness or accident (reablement), or by providing items of disability equipment, arranging adaptations to people's homes, or helping people to make use of resources available in their communities that promote health and wellbeing
- Information and advice for people with care and support needs

Social care staff, including social workers, care managers and occupational therapists, work closely together to support people to remain in their own home for as long as possible, assessing their needs, planning any interventions, and bringing in services as appropriate.

The Council is responsible for commissioning and funding care and support services such as home care and care home placements, and social care staff call on services under the Council's contracts to provide care to meet individual needs.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

Regular and on-going mechanisms for gathering people's experiences of using care management and care services are in place and feedback is generally very positive. A survey of clients using our in-house services during 2021-22 showed a high level of satisfaction with the care and support provided. 582 people completed a questionnaire. 91% said they were satisfied.



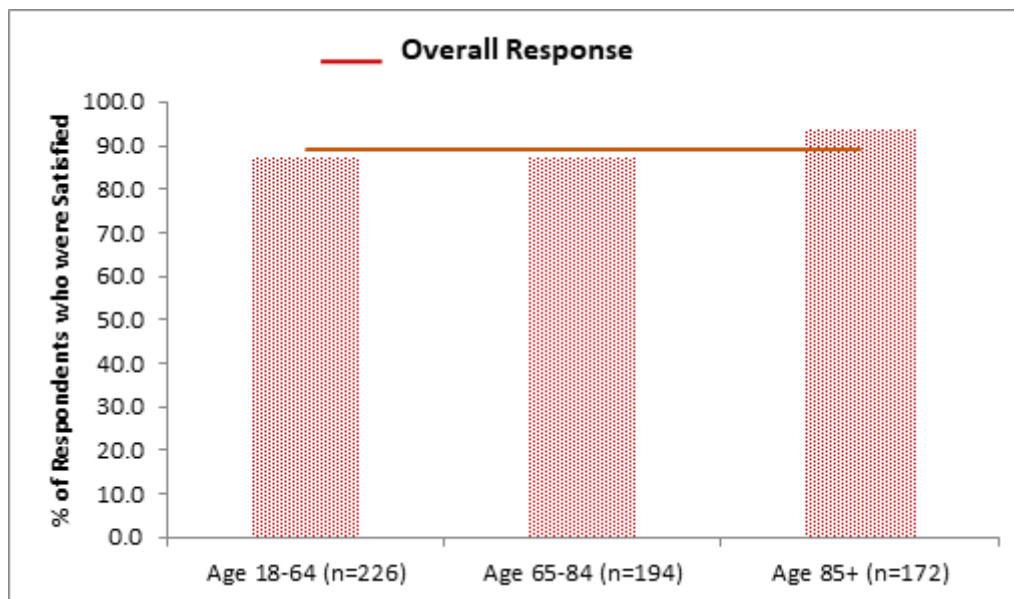
### Engagement with older people

Ageing Well Programme: The council has engaged with older people through service user forums, road shows, events and Health Trainer interventions across the county. Ageing Well continues to have active support from statutory, voluntary and community organisations, teams and individuals, through a well-established and vibrant Ageing Well network.

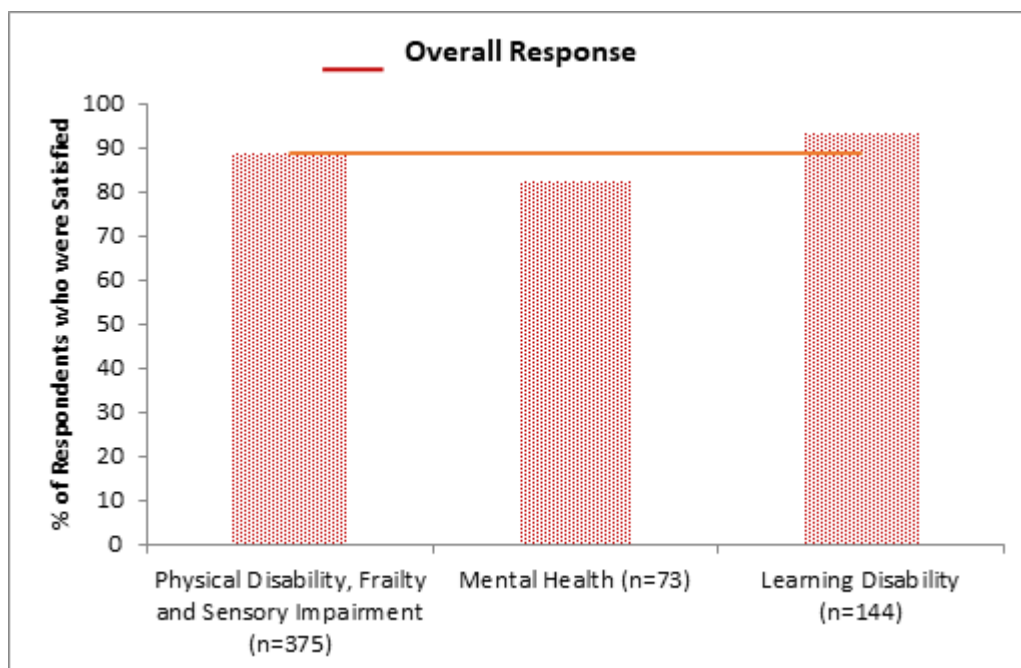
By doing more together locally this allows people to feel more empowered and endorses the role of older people as assets within their community. Regular evaluations of programme activities indicate improved social contact and connectedness and enriched health and wellbeing which all support a good quality of life.

The chart below gives a breakdown of overall satisfaction by age group

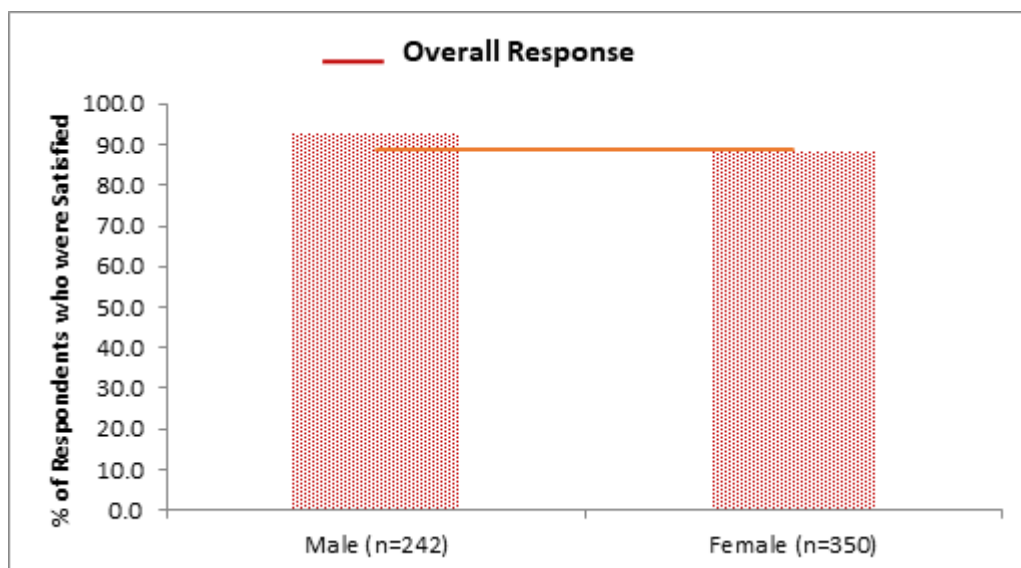




The chart below gives a breakdown of overall satisfaction by primary client group



The chart below shows satisfaction by male/female responses



## 2. Information on protected groups

### 2.1 Disability

Disabled people face a range of barriers in accessing services including physical and environmental barriers (such as poor access to buildings), communication barriers (such as poor access to BSL interpreting and accessible information), social inclusion barriers (such as poor access to public transport and community facilities) and attitudinal barriers. The concept of a 'social model of disability' and the related framework of 'independent living', developed by disabled people, are now accepted as key principles in the personalisation agenda within social care.

### 2.1.1 What do we know?

Just over one in five (22%) of the population in the United Kingdom is estimated to be disabled (Family Resource Survey, 2020/21), though this proportion is considerably higher in the North East region where 31% of the population reported a disability.

According to our information system (December 2022), there are currently 7,361 people accessing adult social care services in Northumberland. All will have some form of disability, illness or long-term condition. This number can be broken down into the following categories: Physical Disability, Learning Disability and Mental Health – as shown below:

#### Profile by broad category of disability/condition

<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>
Learning Disability	1362
Mental Health	2163
Physical Disability	3836
<b>Total</b>	<b>7361</b>

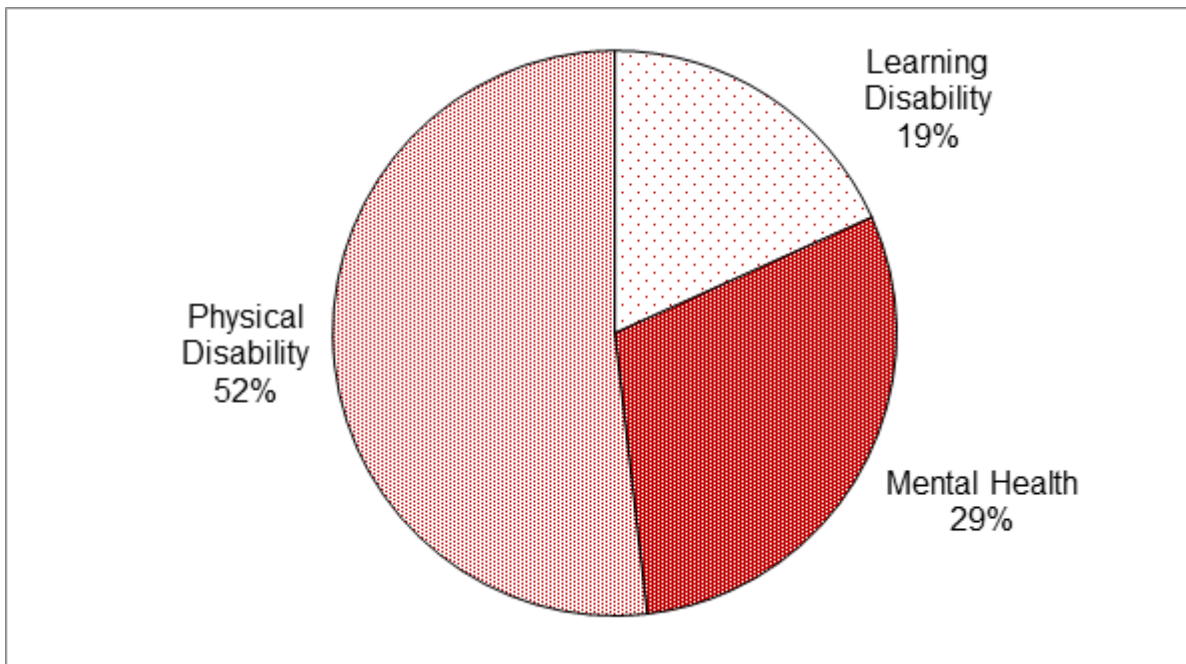
(NCC, December 2022)

#### Proportion accessing key services or support

<b>Service/Support</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Residential / Nursing Care	2186	37%
Home Care Services	2414	41%
Day Care Services	577	10%
Receiving Direct Payments	688	12%

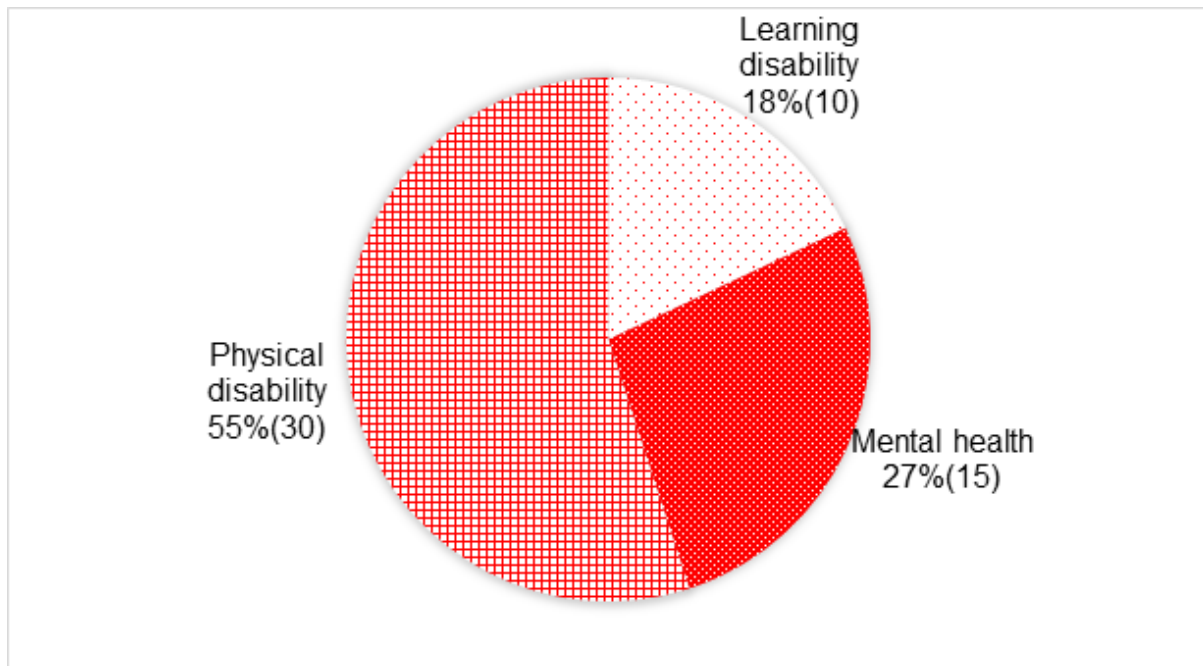
(NCC December 2022)

### Adult Social Care Caseload – breakdown by category



Further statistical information is available on the numbers of disabled people living in Northumberland is available at [How life has changed in Northumberland: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

Complaints received, broken down by category reflect similar proportions as can be seen below:



#### 2.1.2 What are the key impacts on disabled people?

- The council has a positive impact on disabled people through prevention services, such as Support Planning, financial support in a crisis through Northumberland Communities together, partnership work with Carers Northumberland on the wellbeing of carers, Telecare, home improvement and services referred to as “reablement” working with disabled people to make sure they remain active, independent and engaged in community life for as long as possible and safe. These services are a key part of integrating the lives of disabled people with those of their neighbourhood, friends and family and of aligning their life experience as closely as possible with the community as a whole.
- Independent living schemes (such as supported living schemes, “shared lives” schemes and learning disability services such as the Horticultural skills unit and café at Hepscoth Park) maximise choice and control for people with longer term support needs. We have a systematic approach to supported housing that means we can match available housing with support needs to offer personalised and individual solutions to enable people to live safely in the community.
- Commissioning strategy influences the quality of services for which we pay, its location (e.g. closer to family and friendship networks), its responsiveness to different living requirements (e.g. diet) and openness to the surrounding community. It also has an important link with obligations under equalities law

– so that evidence of compliance can be collected to ensure that the operation of a service delivers its contractual commitments.

- Safeguarding service: this provides an effective response to cases where there is a risk of neglect or abuse of vulnerable people. Changes to process have made responses quicker and more effective and enable closer working with police and children's services. This helps ensure that information known to different services is shared and acted upon earlier and in a more co-ordinated fashion.

#### 2.1.3 What have we got in place?

- Personal Budgets in social care and Support Planning in Northumberland Communities Together to help disabled people have more choice and control over their lives.
- The Short-Term Support Service - established to help ill and disabled people regain their independence and facilitate improved discharge from hospital.
- Equality training for staff through the corporate training programme.
- Safeguarding arrangements to protect vulnerable people at risk of harm or harassment.
- Commissioning and contract monitoring arrangements for independent sector care services which are aligned with the Care Quality Commission's ratings and match our standards for quality of services with their "Key Lines of Enquiry."
- Support for carers of ill and disabled people, working in partnership with the likes of Carers Northumberland.
- Our in-house Home Improvement Service which covers adaptations, a handy person service and the fitting of telecare equipment.
- Healthwatch Northumberland has been established to work with and to represent the views of local people in relation so the services that support them by sharing views and experiences.

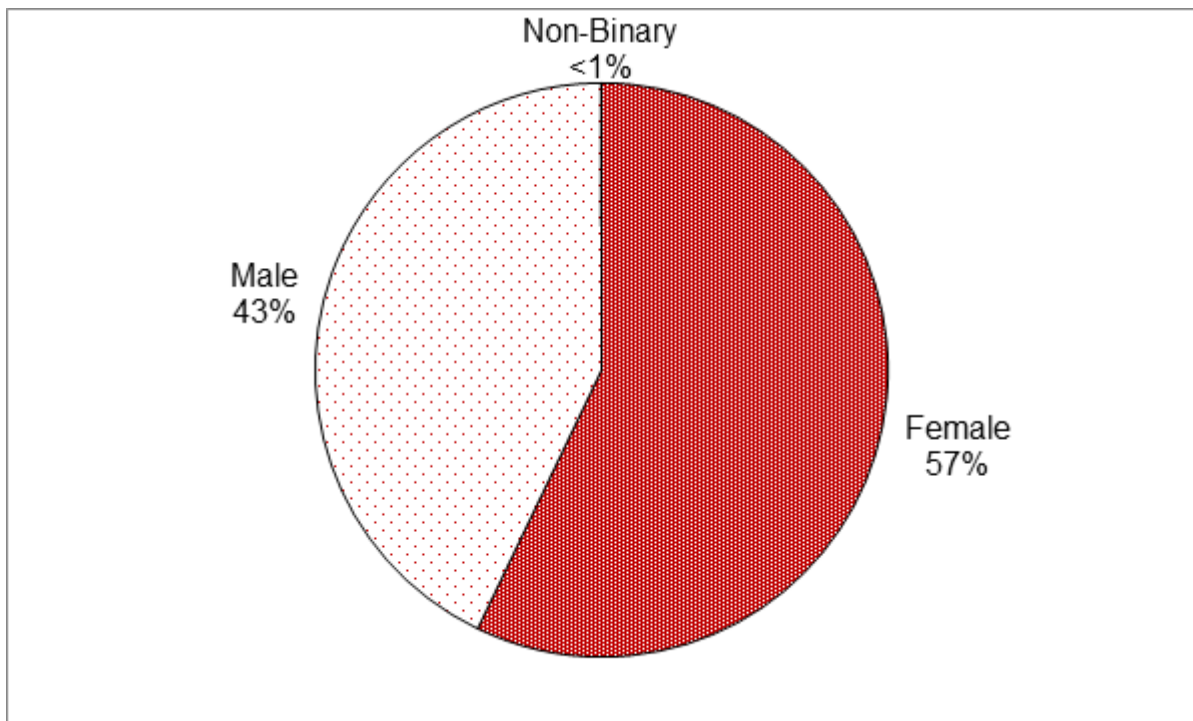
#### 2.1.4 What else do we need to do?

- We are continuing to work with social care providers to enable them to increase social care staff pay to at least the "real living wage" level by providing additional funding to those providers who agree to do this. This

should have a positive impact on the overall quality of care provision in Northumberland to benefit disabled people with a disproportionate impact on older people and women because of the higher proportion of older people and women who need to use adult social care services.

## 2.2 Sex

- Sex equality means to be treated the same as others in society regardless of being a man or woman, and to have the same opportunities. This means, the same access to services and to job opportunities at the same rate of pay (relative to experience and qualifications), to work within policies and guidelines which do not discriminate because a person is a carer or parent, man or woman; and the same opportunities to develop careers and still have a family/home life.
- There are a higher proportion of women accessing social care services in Northumberland than men. This is due mainly to the fact that the life expectancy of women is higher than that of men, although there is evidence that the gap is now narrowing. The figure below illustrates the gender profile:



Sex	Total
Female	4161
Male	3200
Non-Binary	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7361</b>

A majority of older people, and in particular frail older people, are women because women tend to live longer than men. 48.8% of people in Northumberland are men, 51.2% women (Census 2021) however for people aged over 65 or over, 46.7% are men and 53.3% are women.

In December 2022, no-one declared themselves as anything other than female or male however in March 2022 there were a small number who identified themselves as non-binary.

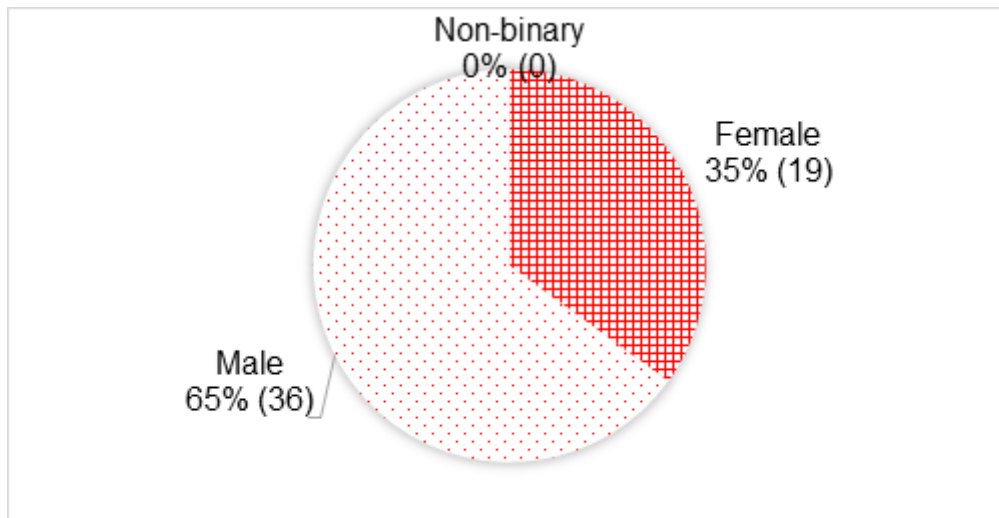
From a survey in 2021-22, levels of satisfaction with care and support services do not appear to differ greatly between men and women as shown below:



Wrapping Break]

However, a greater proportion of men than women made a complaint during 2021-22 as shown below:





Further analysis of the complaints will be required to establish if there is an underlying explanation for this, but the small sample size compared to overall numbers may be a factor.

#### 2.2.2 What are the key impacts on men and women?

Having a choice of gender of professional to provide personal care may sometimes be difficult to accommodate given that the vast majority of social care staff are female. This may therefore have a particular impact on men accessing social care services. Also, people may also prefer a particular gender of staff member to provide support and advice, particularly in situations where gender is a central issue, such as homelessness as a consequence of domestic violence.

- It is important to acknowledge that services may need to be provided differently to men and to women in order to achieve the same outcomes, for example there may be different 'motivators' in reablement.
- There are some types of disabilities and long-term health conditions related to gender including breast cancer and prostate cancer but also a greater prevalence of some conditions amongst men or women. For example, Multiple sclerosis (MS) is most commonly diagnosed in people in their 20s, 30s and 40s although it can develop at any age. It is about 2 to 3 times more common in women than men. Males are 3 times more likely than females to be diagnosed with autism
- In Northumberland there are estimated to be around 31,000 carers providing unpaid caring support (Census, 2021). This compares to around 35,000 in 2021. It isn't clear why there are fewer carers when the number of disabled people living in the county is only slightly lower than in 2021. A possible explanation might be that Census 2021 was undertaken during the

coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and this may have influenced how people perceived and managed their provision of unpaid care. Overall, women are more likely to be carers although there is evidence that as age increases, a higher proportion of older men become carers. Older men may find it particularly challenging if they have previously taken on more 'traditional roles' within the relationship and home and may therefore need extra support to continue to provide care.

- Women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence.

#### 2.2.3 What have we got in place?

Processes to accommodate choice in the gender of worker wherever possible both for in-house and commissioned services.

- Activity planning in day services that takes account of gender related preferences and needs.
- Provision of gender specific equipment as appropriate
- Access to health information targeted specifically at conditions impacting on men or on women (e.g. cervical screening, prostate cancer etc.). Commissioning and contract monitoring arrangements to ensure that services are providing a range of gender appropriate activities within residential and day services.
- Domestic violence awareness training for staff. White Ribbon campaign to raise awareness and identify sources of support

#### 2.2.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to monitor satisfaction rates with different services between men and women.
- We need to continue to monitor the gender profile of people accessing different services, within social care. Given that a high proportion of staff are female, there is a need to monitor whether men are having issues with personal care because of the lack of choice of a same-sex support worker, with the possibility if problems do emerge that we would need to consider using 'Positive Action' to recruit more male staff.

## 2.3 Race

### 2.3.1 What do we know?

According to CSCI (2008), the key to achieving appropriate social care services for black and minority ethnic people is personalised support that addresses the needs of the individual, rather than adapting services based on generalisations about cultural requirements. Services need to take a systematic approach to removing barriers that may prevent Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people receiving appropriate support. These barriers include organisational processes or assumptions and the behaviour of individual staff, which may amount to either intentional or unwitting discrimination.

The 'Living in the Margins' report produced by the Afiya Trust in 2012 suggests that, nationally, cuts in adult social care have a disproportionate impact on BAME groups with many councils failing to undertake proper equality impact assessments relating to race when making funding decisions. However, in Northumberland, robust mechanisms are in place to ensure that race is fully considered alongside each of the other protected characteristics in making such decisions.

<b>Ethnic Group</b> <b>(headline categories taken from the 2011 Census)</b>	<b>No. of People</b> <b>(March 2022)</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>% in N'land Population</b> <b>(Census 2011*)</b>				
White	7,107	96.5%	98.4%				
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	6	0.1%	0.1%	Asian / Asian British	33	0.5%	0.8%
Any other Ethnic Group	14	0.2%	0.1%	Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	18	0.2%	0.5%

*\*this breakdown from Census 2021 not available at time of writing*

Gypsies Irish Travellers form a minority ethnic group in Northumberland and the 2021 Census indicated that there were 150 people from this group living in the County. The Census also counted 5 people who identified as Gypsy/Roma. In the Census 2011, 156 people identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller so there has been no significant change.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission published research in 2009<sup>1</sup> which found extensive inequalities experienced by the Gypsy and Traveller communities and identified specific challenges that social care services need to address in order to ensure that the needs of this group are fully met.

### 2.3.2 What are the key impacts on people from different racial groups?

Through the introduction of Self-directed Support and Personal Budgets, the opportunity to put in place more “personalised” forms of social care support for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic disabled people may mean they have greater access to more culturally appropriate support where relevant.

However, it should also be acknowledged that given the race profile of Northumberland, there is likely to be a shortage of culturally appropriate services and workers available locally.

- There may be a need to arrange access to an interpreter or to have information translated into other languages in order to enable BAME people make informed choices about services and support.
- There may be a need for increased flexibility of service times and tasks to help BAME people maintain contact with their communities and meet their cultural/religious needs.
- Particularly in the delivery of home and residential care, there may be some cultural issues to take account of in relation to dietary needs or the delivery of personal care or end of life care.
- Certain ethnic groups, particularly Gypsies and Travellers, face prejudice in the community. In addition, because of their itinerant lifestyles, Gypsies and Travellers’ ability to access services can be limited.

### 2.3.3 What have we got in place?

- Mechanisms are in place to provide interpreters and to get information translated into other languages.
- Staff training which covers race equality

### 2.3.4 What else do we need to do?

- We need to continue to monitor the racial profile of people accessing social care services and support. If there is a significant change in the numbers of people from ethnic minority groups, we may need to consider using ‘Positive

Action' to recruit staff from more diverse backgrounds to help us provide more culturally appropriate services.

- We need to continue providing awareness training to staff around race equality and some of the specific considerations in relation to social care, health and housing.
- Continue to identify ways to further engage with the communities to inform service development and ensure services are fully inclusive and accessible.

## **2.4 Sexual Orientation**

### **2.4.1 What do we know?**

Research has shown that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people experience prejudice and discrimination both in relation to employment and as users of health and social care services, resulting in poorer outcomes in key areas including mental health, substance misuse, health screening and housing.

A survey conducted by Stonewall (2011) into LGB people in later life found that nearly half of their respondents would not feel comfortable about being out to care home staff, and a third would not feel comfortable about being out to a housing provider.

Significant numbers of disabled LGB people also reported they have not accessed the social care, mental health or health services in the last year that they felt they needed.

### **2.4.2 What are the key impacts on people with different sexual orientations?**

- Like all other people being supported by ASC, LGB people need support to live the lives that they choose with choice about their social life, leisure activities and relationships. For many people, this means support to have contact with other LGB people. Therefore, this needs to be something that LGB people feel comfortable about exploring in assessment and supporting planning, and it is essential that members of staff respond positively when someone 'comes out' about their sexuality to enable them to discuss how this may impact on their choices around services and support.
- It's likely that assumptions made by some staff can make it difficult for LGB people to talk openly about their sexuality. Assumptions such as, there are not

likely to be any LGB people using the service; that disabled people or older people are unlikely to have any issues around sexuality; and that the needs of LGB people are no different to heterosexual people can all have an impact.

- LGB people are more likely to be single, live alone, less likely to have children and less likely to be in touch with their family. Therefore, they are much less likely to have a carer to support them through illness or disability. Reduced carer support needs to be taken account of in assessment and support planning.
- It is possible that same sex couples may face prejudice in finding care home placements and social housing, and therefore it is important to monitor that the same policies that apply to heterosexual couples wanting to live together in care homes or social housing are applied to same sex couples.
- There is a greater prevalence of homelessness and substance misuse amongst LGB people, therefore this needs to be taken account of in service-planning and development.

#### 2.4.3 What have we got in place?

- Personal budgets and individual support plans allowing greater flexibility to choose support that can take account of sexual orientation diversity.
- An LGBTQ+ Staff Network to act as a source of advice, support and raise awareness amongst all council staff about issues that LGB people face when accessing health and social care services.
- Staff training that includes LGB equality.

#### 2.4.4 What else do we need to do?

- Continue to ensure that staff are aware of the specific health, social care and housing needs of LGB people and address it appropriately in assessments and the development of support plans.
- Continue to engage with LGB people to ensure social care and housing services are inclusive and accessible.

- Through commissioning and contracting, support independent services to be inclusive of LGB people.

## 2.5 Age

### 2.5.1 What do we know?

Age equality is concerned with responding to differences between people that are linked to age, and with avoiding preventable inequalities between people of different age groups. Ageism, the attitudes of others, and the assumptions they make, can have a dramatic effect on people – on their quality of life, access to services and choices, employment, and other opportunities.

Research has indicated that the majority of people aged over 65 think that health and social care staff do not always treat older people with dignity

The need for social care support increases with age and therefore there is a higher proportion of older people accessing adult social care services as shown below:

#### Age Profile of Adult Social Care

Age Range	No. of People	% of Total	18-24 years	398	5.4%
25-44 years	1088	14.8%			
45-54 years	624	8.5%			
55-64 years	784	10.7%			
65-74 years	975	13.2%			
75-84 years	1614	21.9%			
85+ years	1839	25.0%			

(NCC, December 2022)

### 2.5.2 What are the key impacts on people of different ages?

Moving from children's services into adult services (transitions) can be a significant change for young disabled people and have a big impact on their lives. Similarly, some opportunities and availability of support changes when someone moves from being a 'working age adult' to 'an older person'. There are similar key life transitions affecting people's housing needs.

- Interests, the type of activities people may want to engage in, and the type of support and the way it is delivered may differ depending on the age of the person and so services need to take account of this and provide age-appropriate services.
- Many disabilities and long-term conditions are age dependent.
- Older people are more likely to live in poverty and poor housing and are often more vulnerable to certain types of abuse.
- As the proportion of home-owners amongst older people increases, the problems of repair and maintenance will also become more significant.

### 2.5.3 What have we got in place?

- Self-directed support and Direct Payments provide the opportunity to put in place more “personalised” forms of social care support for people of different ages.
- The age criteria for the Short-Term Support Services was extended from ‘over 65’ to ‘18 and over’ to enable adults of all ages to access the service.
- A transitions protocol is in place to support an effective move from children’s to adult services.
- Safeguarding arrangements to protect vulnerable people of any age.
- Young carers support.
- The Ageing Well Northumberland initiative.

### 2.5.4 What else do we need to do?

- Need to continue to promote the take up of key welfare benefits for older people, especially Attendance Allowance, especially in light of rising energy costs and inflation.
- Continue to modernise day services to ensure they provide support that better meets individual needs.

## 2.6 Religion or Belief

### 2.6.1 What do we know?



Religious and cultural views on the beginning of life can influence attitudes towards a range of social care and health issues. Views on dying, death and the afterlife can also influence attitudes, for example towards pain relief, coping strategies for people with a disability or illness and for terminally ill people. The degree to which we respect Religion or Belief reflects the organisation's commitment to delivering patient centred care.

The stated Religion or Belief of 52% of people is currently recorded on SWIFT, see table below. We think it is reasonable to assume a large proportion of people who don't see themselves as having a religion or belief have simply declined to answer the question and will therefore be included in the 48% where "not stated" is recorded.

### Religion/Belief Profile of Adult Social Care

Religion/Belief	No. of People	% of Total
Church Of England	2239	30.42%
Christian	395	5.37%
Roman Catholic	394	5.35%
Methodist	225	3.06%
Church Of Scotland	56	0.76%
Atheist	42	0.57%
United Reformed	38	0.52%
Jehovah's Witness	26	0.35%
Salvation Army	25	0.34%
Protestant	24	0.33%
Muslim	20	0.27%
Spiritualism	15	0.20%
Presbyterian	14	0.19%
Agnostic	14	0.19%
Buddhist	11	0.15%
Anglican	11	0.15%
Baptist	10	0.14%
Pagan	8	0.11%
Sikh	6	0.08%
Evangelist	4	0.05%

Humanist	4	0.05%
Orthodox	3	0.04%
Hindu	2	0.03%
Nonconformist	2	0.03%
Jewish	2	0.03%
Pentecostal	1	0.01%
Quaker	1	0.01%
Congregational	1	0.01%
Church in Wales	1	0.01%
Total stated	3594	48.8%
Not Stated	3767	51.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7361</b>	

#### 2.6.2 What are the key impacts on people with different religions/beliefs?

- People with different religions or beliefs may have specific needs around food preparation and this could impact on home care, day care and residential care services.
- Enabling people to continue to practice their religion or beliefs should be considered in support planning and use of personal budgets.
- People with certain religions or beliefs may have particular views and requirements around death and dying. Therefore, services need to take these into account in providing and arranging care for terminally ill people, for example, and their families.
- May be certain religious festivals or key religious events that services and staff need to acknowledge and respond to and some people may need support to enable them to take part and get involved.
- For people with certain religions, specific days/times of day are considered to be sacred, therefore our services may need to take account of these to ensure they are inclusive of any religious requirements. This could include the need to pray at specific times so consideration may need to be given to providing a quiet space to enable this to happen.

#### 2.6.3 What have we got in place?

- Personal budgets which allow greater flexibility for people to continue with the things that are important to them, including support to continue practising their religion.
- Training for staff which includes religion or belief equality.
- Direct Payments and support to employ care workers directly, supporting a more fallible and individualised approach.
- Promote different cultures and religions – staff newsletters etc.
- Links with local groups and networks supporting diversity within communities including religious diversity, humanist organisations, and membership of the North East Regional Faith Network
- Improved links with key religious groups in Northumberland.

#### 2.6.4 What else do we need to do?

- Need to improve the recording of religion or belief.
- Increase awareness of different religions and beliefs amongst staff and better promote religious festivals and events.
- Ensure religion or belief are taken account of in commissioned services.

## **2.7 Transgender**

### 2.7.1 What do we know?

- Commissioners and providers of health and social services face challenges in caring for the trans community. The growth in the number of people, of all ages, who are seeking medical treatment for profound and persistent gender dysphoria or who have transitioned will mean services will need to respond to provide appropriate health and social services for trans people in the UK.
- We do not currently record on the adult's services system, SWIFT, if someone's current gender is different from their recorded gender at birth, though we do have a record of people who identify as non-binary.

### 2.7.2 What are the key impacts on trans people?

- Some transgender people may have specific personal care needs and handle these sensitively; for example, trans women who have transitioned later in life may still need to shave regularly. Trans people who need assistance going to the toilet or bathing require support from workers who understand that their body may not match their gender identity.
- Confidentiality around someone's transgender status is important. Whether someone wishes other people to know about their status may change over time, particularly if the person is in transition.
- Gender Reassignment can have major implications for mental health, with trans people more likely to experience depression and attempt suicide.

### 2.7.3 What have we got in place?

- Training for staff which includes trans equality and awareness.
- LGBT+ Staff Network that acts as a source of advice and guidance for staff.

### 2.7.4 What else do we need to do?

Further engagement to ensure services are accessible and fair.

## 2.8 Pregnancy and Maternity

A woman is protected against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity during the period of her pregnancy and any statutory maternity leave to which she is entitled. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

### 2.8.1 What do we know?

The Government's policy position is that the main difficulty facing disabled parents and carers stems from the lack of suitable support for their needs, rather than from their disability or caring responsibilities (the social model of disability).

The government has therefore made it clear that help with parenting for disabled adults is an essential task for adult social services teams and that children should not automatically be seen as in need of help just because they have a disabled parent or carer.

An increasing number of adults with learning difficulties are becoming parents. In about 50% of cases their children are removed from them, often because of concerns for their well-being and/or an absence of appropriate support, but research also suggests that closer working between different agencies could help prevent this.

A local study of LGBT people in Northumberland (NCDN, 2012) suggested that same sex couples may need more support around pregnancy and maternity.

### 2.8.2 What are the key impacts around pregnancy and maternity?

- Pregnant disabled women and their partners may have anxieties about pregnancy, childbirth and being parents and may need extra time and support. Women with a learning disability, for example, may need information about pregnancy and parenting in other formats that explains information in a more accessible way.
- Pregnant disabled women with progressive conditions such as MS or rheumatoid arthritis may fear exacerbation of their condition following birth, and women with existing mental health problems may be more prone to post-natal depression.
- Disabled parents and 'teenage' parents may face prejudice from others in society, and assumptions are made by some about their ability to be parents.

- Parents with a learning disability may face barriers to the provision of appropriate support due to negative, or stereotypical, attitudes about parents with learning difficulties on the part of staff in some services.

### 2.8.3 What have we got in place?

- Self-directed support and personal budgets allow greater choice and control over the support disabled people who are pregnant or have young children or are breastfeeding receive.
- Targeted work with people with a learning disability about sex, relationships, and parenting.
- Training for staff which includes pregnancy/maternity equality.
- Close links with Children's Social Services.

### 2.8.4 What else do we need to do?

- Review what additional support may be needed for parents and prospective parents with a learning disability.
- Continue to work closely with children's services to ensure that the right support is made available to disabled parents.

## 2.9 Addressing the Data Gaps

The equality analysis has identified some areas where consideration of strengthening or reviewing data could be made. These include:

- Whilst recording around Religion or Belief is improving it is still not recorded for all.

- We need to do more detailed work on the housing needs and aspirations of excluded groups, particularly older people and disabled people in rural communities.

### Appendix 3: Public Health Stronger Communities and Inequalities (DPH (Director for Public Health))

Public health's goal is to improve and protect the health and wellbeing of Northumberland residents, a priority is improving the health of the poorest members of the community more quickly. Public health is about helping people to stay healthy and avoid getting ill, as well as reducing health inequalities to help people live longer, healthier lives.

The public health team work to raise awareness to support healthy lifestyles.

**The key aims of public health are to:**

- increase healthy life expectancy in our residents through focusing on health quality as well as the length of life.
- increase equity in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities through achieving bigger improvements in the more disadvantaged communities.

We have Public Health (PH) and Integrated Wellbeing Service (IWS) functions.

The Integrated Wellbeing Service includes direct delivery of:

- Stop smoking service
- Health Trainer Service
- Capacity Building training programmes

**Engagement and consultations we have led include:**

- IWS: Consultation work with Child Minders within Northumberland regarding training and child safety, themed events for those working within their own homes with children
- Public Health (PH): conducted a leisure health equity audit (HEA) to improve delivery and ensure it better reflects the demographics of the County. A HEA goes beyond protected characteristics and includes inequalities from a socio-economic perspective, a geographical perspective and wider inclusion groups such as carers. This significantly informed the emerging new specification for the leisure contract.
- To develop the Northumberland inequalities plan there were 12 locality events held with stakeholders across the county (June/July 2022) reaching over 400 participants. This was about getting closer to the voice of our residents and talking with people who interact with residents on a daily basis.
- PH: The Place standard engagement tool was used in Hirst and Bedlington – we worked within the 4 domains of inequalities to ensure representative segments of the population were engaged in conversation.
- PH: The Heart of Blyth programme is an outreach community development approach to enable meaningful conversations with residents of Blyth



The aim of the Heart of Blyth project is to strengthen communities by building on the work already done in Blyth to bring groups from different backgrounds together.

Goals include:

- Strengthening relationships, bringing diverse groups together, building connections and sharing skills and knowledge to improve the area.
- Making the most of Blyth's strengths by building on and celebrating what is already there.
- Improving how Blyth is seen, by growing community pride, developing a positive reputation and identity which can be promoted and communicated within the town and to visitors.
- Builds on the ideas and contribution of residents and work with organisations in Blyth to provide opportunities for residents to develop these ideas further.

The Integrated Wellbeing service delivered

- A pilot programme to improve access to smoking cessation services with tailored flexible programmes of care
- smoking cessation training with Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS (National Health Service) foundation Trust (CNTW) Physical Health Team
- Smoking cessation brief intervention training with staff from Mental Health Concern, Northumberland Recovery College, Northumbria, Cramlington, Wansbeck & Seaton Park Primary Care Network's
- Staff attended mental health and smoking cessation training
- Long Term Plan Tobacco Dependency pathway Northumbria Health Care Trust, CNTW Intermediate advisor training
- Worked in partnership Barnabas Safe and Sound around You're Welcome (supported housing for young homeless people). Supported special school nurses around You're Welcome accreditation for school clinics.
- Supported Silx Teen Bar with pre-work for You're Welcome accreditation (on hold)

- Worked in collaboration with the Family Hubs (Children's centres) regarding child safety and accident prevention work for each locality
- Early Help Network - working with professionals within the South East locality to support children, young people and their families
- Ageing Well Activity includes co-ordination of the Ageing Well Network that meets approximately every 8 weeks. Stepping into spring, Summer Sizzler and Winter Warmer roadshows. Ageing Well Allies, dementia awareness, falls awareness and falls prevention training. Falls and Hazard Training (older people) with Fire Officers.
- Delivery of educational workshop around tobacco and e-cigarettes to young people undertaking an employability course through the Prince's Trust.
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health School Work
- Programme with Atkinson House School (Day community special school for boys) – working with small groups of students to deliver lessons around tobacco and e-cigarettes.
- Delivery of lessons around tobacco and e-cigarettes with small groups of students at Herdley Bank School (SEN & Autism).
- Northumberland Recovery Partnership – Health Trainer activity aimed at people who are homeless, substance abuse / misuse and vulnerable include Health MOT's, support and advice
- Northumberland Recovery College – Health Trainer activity aimed at those in mental health recovery included Dry January campaign, mocktail making, healthy cooking on a budget, health MOT's and happy boxes
- Blyth Blokes Butty Club – Health Trainer activity aimed at vulnerable residents, homeless, alcohol and substance misuse and reluctance to access some health and social care services included Health MOT's, signposting to services, public health campaign information and simple cooking from a food parcel sessions.
- Horizons – Health Trainer activity aimed at vulnerable, homeless, substance abuse / misuse clients included Health MOT's, support, advice and healthy cooking sessions.

- Alnwick Men's Health Group – Health Trainer activity aimed at socially isolated male residents included health walks and regular health trainer involvement in running the community group.
- The Fishermen's Group – Health Trainer activity aimed at retired fishermen who are reluctant to access services included health MOT's, support and advice on healthy lifestyles.
- Being Woman – Health Trainer activity aimed at women from ethnic minority communities include health MOT's, advice and support around healthier lifestyles.
- Adult Learning Day Centre. 4 session healthy lifestyle programme at Alnwick Gardens covering a different topic each week to improve knowledge around healthy eating and physical activity
- First School used by the travelling community. Starting Well delivered a 4-week healthy lifestyle programme to families including a healthy cooking demonstration to improve knowledge around healthy eating and physical activity

All our staff have undertaken Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and we usually target direct delivery to those who need it most. The Northumberland inequalities plan is about shifting the culture of the organisation to have a greater understanding of inclusion across all 4 domains of inequality beyond protected characteristics

## Appendix 4. Communities/Business Development

This directorate covers a number of areas including:

- Northumberland Communities Together
- Cultural services and library service
- Customer services
- Strategic Change Programme Team
- Corporate Complaints and Client Relations

- Improvement and Innovation Service

The aim of the Northumberland Communities Together (NCT) model is to work with people who are disadvantaged who can find it difficult to access the support they need through mainstream services. The model is focused on supporting people to help themselves and each other, through spending more time with people than is possible with traditional services, working with people to solve their problems and build knowledge, understanding and resilience.

The vision is to develop a local network of both physical hubs and virtual hubs (NCT) across Northumberland offering residents a new way to connect with community groups and local organisations and access the information, advice and support they need early to address the issues and challenges they face and to stop these issues from escalating. The ambition is for the hub network to create an environment which supports residents to help themselves through facilitating resilience and providing the support needed to reduce long-term dependency on services.

NCT Core Offer:

- Locality Coordination – asset based community development, identifying, mapping, developing and supporting local capability and capacity.
- Welfare support and assistance – providing access to benefits advice, support with emergency assistance and welfare provision
- Advice & Guidance - delivered through a dedicated team of staff, NCC (Northumberland County Council) Council services and hub partners. This includes general advice and guidance, housing, housing benefits and council tax support, employment and skills, financial inclusion, digital support and social care support services (e.g. social isolation).

NCT Support Offer:

The core offer will be enhanced by a range of information, support and guidance tailored to local need and delivered by statutory and voluntary and community

sector organisations and community groups, as well as local residents volunteering their time.

NCT Programme Offer:

- Programme Activity – Targeted interventions and programmes that address inequalities and social need with communities
- Pop Up and Enrichment - space to deliver activities and events for the community, reflecting the specific interests of local people Northumberland
- 

**Communities Together consists of the following service functions:**

- Locality Coordination (Asset Based Community Development)
- Support Planning (Community Based early help and prevention)
- Welfare Support & Assistance (Northumberland Emergency Transitions Service NETS)
- Community Support and Societal Resilience
- Community Programme Delivery
- Volunteering & Corporate Social Responsibility
- Community Hub Operations & Delivery
- Catering Services

NCT is a relatively new services and no previous benchmarking data is available. Action will be taken to collect equality data for the service

- All staff will be encouraged to update their personal information
- Results of the recent staff survey will be used as a catalyst for further research discussion and dialogue.
- Staff survey action plan will be developed with a particular emphasis on addressing areas of inequality.

The service provides teaching and learning placements for people with protected characteristics through its Community Hub delivery and Catering services.

A framework has been developed in partnership with Northumberland Skills, Project Choice, Local Schools, Adult & Children's Care Services, Schools, and Voluntary organisations to identify and promote opportunities.

Currently the service is supporting over 10 learners. Two disabled learners have progressed through our teaching and learning pathway to seek employment with NCC as apprentices. NCT also provides volunteering opportunities for residents to support local community activity and asset development. The service employs several disabled staff and has used the knowledge, insights and lived experience of those staff members to help shape service delivery, review and enhance process and address barriers within the workplace. This has included the purchase of assistive technologies, reconfiguration of roles (job carving) and peer support and mentoring of other staff to increase knowledge and skills in equality issues.

To strengthen our knowledge and understanding of the needs of our communities we:

- Secured Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding for Partnerships for People and Place to address social challenges and develop opportunities in the Hirst/Ashington areas. A community led and coproduced asset based development programme helping to influence and shape national policy.
- Invested in Asset Based Community Development approaches and piloted The Northumberland place standard tool to ensure the voice of community is heard
- Invested in Business Analyst support to better use data
- Policy in Practice Low Income Family Tracker to gain further insights and use shared data to better profile, understand and target support for service users
- Established and supported local place-based forums connecting professionals, voluntary organisations and residents together
- Developed new support and referral pathways to better understand the root causes of poverty and crisis within our communities supporting people

to navigate and become better equipped to deal with crisis points.

Reducing the need for multiple interventions.

- Encouraged local employers and Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to sign up to the good work pledge and increase opportunities for more flexible working and real wage job creation.
- Reviewed and have taken positive actions to ensure our activities and actions enhance our Armed Forces Covenant Duties and reduce disadvantage to Armed Forces personnel, Veterans and their Families.

To listen to, involve and respond to our communities effectively we:

- Established 5 local place-based coordination groups to help connect professionals, map assets and identify local need
- Piloted the Northumberland Place Standard Tool to capture the voice and views of residents
- 12 local inequality events were promoted through Thriving Together and facilitated alongside Public Health colleagues
- Coordinated local place based partnerships and forums
- Conduct an annual staff survey
- Deliver a universal service offer which is open all
- Explore and pilot new ways of working that improve the way in which the council staff can reach and connect with and support communities including new enhanced libraries offer
- 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
- Are working with HR/OD to recruit a more diverse workforce through Undergraduate Placements and Internships, Job Carved Internships, Apprenticeships, Adult Placements and Volunteering
- Work with project choice and Northumberland skills to upskill workforce on areas of equality, SEND awareness, Autism etc

- Recruit locally targeting those economically inactive or from low-socio backgrounds to offer employment opportunities within the service

We 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 by.

- Investing in the Living Leader development programme to foster a culture of open and inclusive leadership across the service
- Publishing a service level inequality promise demonstrating our actions and commitments to addressing inequality and promoting equality
- Fostering a diverse workforce composition across the service
- Supporting and mentoring other services who are providing job carving and traineeship programmes for those with protected characteristics such as Disability
- Supporting strategic delivery of DCMS, Sport England and Football Foundation PlayZones Funding to address inequalities and provide place-based assets.
- 3 years capital investment programme
- Providing advice and support to enable people to access high quality welfare support and assistance, through new holistic approaches increasing resilience and the ability for people to stay in their own homes and communities.
- Developing social search engine and data analytics solutions to help find relationships in datasets and visualise the root causes of inequalities.

## **Cultural Services**



The Library Service in Northumberland operates within NCC the Cultural Services department. Library Authorities (Unitary, County or Metropolitan borough councils) have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' for all those who live, work or study within the area.

Libraries are uniquely placed to help the Council and its partners deliver their strategic objectives, whether linked to community cohesion, health and wellbeing, economic growth, promoting independent living or increasing life chances. The scope of the service includes:

- Delivery through 30 standalone, integrated and co-located facilities,
- a mobile library service,
- a library service for HMP Northumberland
- Schools Library Service.

The report 'Libraries Deliver: Ambition for Public Libraries in England 2016-2021' (section 2.2) states 'Libraries are vital community hubs - bringing people together and giving them access to the services and support they need to help them live better. Our ambition is for everyone to; choose to use Libraries, because they see clear benefits and positive outcomes from doing so, understand what Library Services offer and how they can make the most of what's available to them, be introduced to new ideas and opportunities, then given confidence and quick and easy access to tools, skills and information they need to improve their quality of life, and receive trusted guidance through the evolving information landscape and build the skills needed to thrive in a changing world.'

The DCMS report also highlights that Library Services contribute to seven outcomes critical to the individuals and communities in their areas:

- cultural and creative enrichment
- increased reading and literacy
- improved digital access and literacy
- helping everyone achieve their full potential
- healthier and happier lives
- greater prosperity
- stronger, more resilient communities
- 

Northumberland County Council Library Service works in close partnership with Libraries Connected which is the Arts Council Sector Support for libraries nationally. Libraries Connected have developed a framework of Universal Offers that support the core public library offer which will drive library innovation and development and in turn enable the Library Service to achieve the seven outcomes agreed as critical to communities and individuals. The Universal Offers are:

- Reading
- Digital and Information
- Health and Wellbeing
- Culture and Creativity
- Children's Promise
- Vision and Print People's Promise

The library management system we use is called Spydus and is a bespoke Library Service software solution provided by Civica. A range of data is collected by libraries in the course of service delivery. In terms of data collected around protected characteristics, when customers sign up to become library members, they provide their date of birth, so age is identified. As part of the member sign-up process, we also ask customers to let us know whether they are visually impaired as this enables us to tailor their library experience to meet their needs.

Our system database is not shared with any third parties and is compliant under GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) regulations. When children join the library to participate in our annual 'Summer Reading Challenge' which is an educational reading challenge organised by the Reading Agency, we ask for their gender as part of the process. This protected characteristic data is collected in order to evidence reading take up across boys and girls and enables both libraries and the Reading Agency to identify potentially harder to reach groups. The question seeking details of gender also has an option 'prefer not to say'.

As a front-facing public service with a high level of customer engagement, feedback is always welcomed and sought. Feedback, complaints, and comments are received via the NCC corporate system (Lagan) and in the case of complaints, an investigation is instigated and where appropriate, changes applied. The outcome of any complaint, whether upheld, partially upheld or dismissed, together with a copy of the response is also uploaded to and retained by the Lagan system. Should any feedback or complaints received have an equality theme, the service would ensure that in dealing with a complaint to seek resolution that the relevant advice and guidance was sought from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team. Likewise, where equality and inclusivity good practice had been evidenced and commended, feedback would also be shared with equality colleagues.

### **Northumberland Public Library Service Consultation**

A Northumberland Public Library Service consultation took place between December 2019 and March 2020. In order to ensure the Northumberland consultation would stand up to scrutiny and produce a robust report, the exercise was undertaken by an independent commercial company called CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) C.Co. Residents of the county had an opportunity to complete a survey about the Library Service and have an opportunity to shape the future of service delivery. Due to Covid 19 face-

to- face workshops that had been planned for March and April 2020 had to be replaced with remote methods of engagement.

A total of 5,068 respondents completed the self-completion survey; of these over 1,400 responses were received as paper copies, with the remainder online. The survey asked for a range of information from the defined protected characteristics, and captured data such as sex, age, ethnicity, employment status, dependent children, family status, and disability.

Information drop-in sessions were held at all 30 Libraries across the County for people to find out more about the consultation. Telephone interviews conducted with residents to provide more in-depth views on factors driving some of the key findings from the self-completion survey. Twenty interviews, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, were completed between Tuesday, 31st March and Friday, 17th April 2020. Self-completion booklets were circulated to staff members in early April to gather their views and opinions with 47 booklets being completed. Self-completion booklets were also circulated to 18 key stakeholders in late April to gather their views and opinions with six completed booklets received. Formal responses to the consultation were received from various organisations, including several Parish and Town Councils.

The results from the different consultation exercises across all audiences demonstrates the important role the Library Service plays in the lives of the Northumberland residents, amongst the county's population of older persons and those who use the service regularly. A high proportion of respondents cited that their local library was a safe space to them, and it played a major role in their mental health and wellbeing. Many respondents spoke about how their local library combatted loneliness and when they spent time at the library, they felt less isolated. From the survey results, the most common library user is female and older (aged 55 and over). Libraries do not appear to be appealing to the younger sections of the population in the same way that they do older residents; a problem that exists nationwide.

There is some evidence from the consultation that younger people in the region would like to use the libraries as places to go and as places to work/study, but that many of the current library spaces do not have the required facilities for this to be a valid option and that the environment in which some libraries are situated are not conducive to quiet study.

Steps have been taken in tandem with colleagues from Northumberland Communities Together to develop collegiate community based operating model from the Cramlington Community Hub, where the Library Service is co-located with a range of council services. In response to the survey, proactive work is taking place to connect with the younger community to introduce them to their local library and community hub and enable them to understand what is on offer for them and how this may enrich their living and learning experience. The survey outcome evidenced that libraries provide safe spaces in the heart of their communities and provide many services targeting people who are living on a low income, people who are lonely, unemployed, or elderly, and people with long term medical conditions or disabilities.

For one in ten users, the library is the main way in which they access computers and the internet, with this figure rising to 46% of those who are out of work and seeking employment.

As part of our Library Service re-design, we are currently working on various workstreams, one of which is Succession Planning. This work will help us identify the critical positions within our service and develop action plans for career progression. This work will feed into the Future Funding Programme which is an Arts Council funded programme delivered by Libraries Connected to support Public Libraries to develop staff skills, abilities, and knowledge to take a proactive approach to diversifying and increasing their income, thus contributing to the future sustainability of the service. The content of the training programme will also focus on key areas to support development opportunities such as Stakeholder Mapping, Risk Management, Capacity and capability, Governance,

Marketing and Value for money. One of the core themes of the succession planning project will be enable all staff, regardless of background, age, gender etc., to have the skill set, knowledge, and opportunity to develop and thrive personally, and deliver a successful and inclusive future Library Service for the county of Northumberland and all its residents.

Within the Library Service, we have staff who have actively attended 'Pride' events within the region representing both the NCC Library Service and themselves and have staff who have formed and deliver a successful LGBT+ Reading group.

Events are planned across our libraries and their social media and digital channels during February 2023 to celebrate and raise awareness of LGBT+ History Month, showcasing music, arts, and spoken and printed word. We have staff within the Library Service who act as 'champions' to promote awareness of LGBT+ matters. The library supports equality and diversity events such as Black History month, Holocaust Memorial Day, Disability history month, International Women's Day.

As part of our workforce, we currently have five apprentices across the service, two of whom fall into the protected group 'disability' category. Support has been given to both individuals as and when required, and our colleagues are key personnel within our teams and offer much and contribute greatly to the output of the service.

On a regular basis, the Library Service also offers school age students an opportunity to complete their 'work experience' placements within the service. In June and July 2023, we have four students from Years 10 and Year 12 joining us for one week at various locations across the county. We aim to present a dynamic and varied working experience to our young intake, showcasing what a

career within the council and Library Service can bring in terms of opportunity, variety and learning. All recruitment vacancies are advertised by our NCC HR (Human Resources) Recruitment Team and follow best practice as outlined in the Recruitment Policy.

The library service takes a number of actions to support our Equality objectives such as working with community partners to shape and deliver a programme of events and activities relevant to each of our communities. We have also consulted and purchased items such as language books to support our refugees and asylum seekers in addition to supporting residents of the County where English is not their first language. We have established links with NCC Diversity Teams to link into National Awareness Campaigns such as Refugee Week and Black History Month and plan events and activities using the Libraries Connected Universal Calendar as a helpful resource tool

<https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/universal-library-offers-calendar-2022>.

Our stock policy also aims to represent the diverse needs of all our communities. Stock requests and suggestions are available to all library customers, which helps to shape our collections. We also ensure all our staff and volunteers complete the NCC statutory and mandatory equality and diversity training and signpost our staff to further training where needs are identified. Staff support networks are available and are introduced at staff induction, 121's and other supervisory meetings such as HR/Sickness Absence Management.

We also follow the NCC Recruitment guidelines We aim to involve all staff members with diverse experience in the planning and delivery of initiatives. We strive to ensure that all our libraries are welcoming, inclusive and safe spaces for all members of our communities. We continue to work with other partners and teams such as Northumberland Communities Together to deliver outreach events in the community. We have also registered our Libraries as 'Warm Spaces' We can measure our successes via a variety of ways such as attendance at events, monitoring library issues and visits, collecting feedback and comments, and responding appropriately.

## **Customer services**

The Key functions of Customer Services are to be the first point of contact for customers accessing Council services by telephone, face to face, email and social media. (any queries for Adults and Children's Services are signposted to OneCall)

Customer Service Advisors resolve enquiries at the first point of contact where possible and refer requests to service areas as necessary. Staff take electronic payments, assist customers to complete forms and apply for services. The service also collects data relating to customer contact to support improved performance of the team. In addition to this the service collaborates with IT and other services to redesign business processes to improve customer satisfaction.

We don't routinely collect data relating to protected characteristics of customers. From the 2021 census for Northumberland we know that:

- 16.1% are 15 years and under
- 58.4% are aged 16 to 64 years
- 23.6% of residents are over 65 years old
- 80.4% of residents are not disabled under the equality act
- 8.3% are disabled under the equality act and their day to day activities are limited a lot
- 11.3% are disabled under the equality act and their day to day activities are limited a little
- 3% of residents class themselves as non-white 96.1% of residents class themselves as white



- 40.1% have no religion, 53.2% are Christian, 0.2% are Buddhist 0.1% are Hindu 0.1% are Jewish 0.5% are Muslim 0.2% are Sikh 0.2% are any other religion 5% did not answer the question relating to their religion
- 51.2% of residents are women and 48.8% men
- 92.11% over 16-year-olds are straight or heterosexual 2.24% are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or other (LGBTQIA+) 5.64% did not answer to say if they were straight or LGBTQIA+
- 49.1% of over 16-year-olds are married or in a civil partnership
- 50.9% of over 16-year-olds are single, divorced or separated

The following information is currently held in Oracle relating to staff in Customer Services

- Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes - 2 (4.35%) No - 21 (45.65%) No response stated - 23 (50.00%)
- Do you have any caring responsibilities? Yes - 5 (10.87%) No - 18 (39.13%) No response stated - 23 (50.00%)
- Please indicate which of these groups you consider you belong to? White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British - 42 (91.30%) No response stated - 4 (8.70%)
- What is your religion or belief?
- Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations) - 3 (6.52%) No Religion - 4 (8.70%) No Response Given - 39 (84.78%)
- Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?
- Bisexual - (2.17%) Gay man - (2.17%) Heterosexual or Straight - (86.96%) No Response Given - (4.35%) Prefer not to say (4.35%)
- Which of the following describes how you think of yourself?
- Male - (6.52%) Female - (43.48%) No response given - 23 (50.00%)
- 

There is a high non response rate so we need to do further work in explaining why we are asking these questions and creating an environment where staff will feel

confident in sharing this information, if they choose to. It is difficult to make comparisons between census data and staff data due to the number of “no responses given” in the staff data.

It would seem that the service has a higher % of LGBTQIA+ staff than the % of the population in Northumberland. Religion or belief had the highest number of no responses this may be because staff feel these beliefs are private or are not comfortable revealing this at work. We need to ask staff why this is the case. The service employs a much higher % of females than males.

Disabled staff members have a number of reasonable adjustments to support them within the service including flexible working, some are working from home where this is helpful or makes it easier for them to work using disability aids.

The Council has staff network groups for many groups with protected characteristics. Customer service staff are encouraged to take part in Network Groups where they can share experiences, support each other, and contribute to policies.

Whilst mental wellbeing isn't a specific protected characteristic it may in some cases be classified as a disability. The service supports all staff with their mental wellbeing, and they are each given 30 minutes per week to spend on activities of their choice that improve their mental wellbeing. The “self-care” sessions have been well received and in a recent poll 80% of respondents said that it had a positive impact on their wellbeing.

We have equality allies within the service and staff actively support Pride events. We have staff participation in Staff Network Groups including Mental Wellbeing, LGBTQIA+, Menopause groups, and the Enable disability staff group.

Staff have undertaken Deaf Awareness Training, Dementia Friends training and ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) training. All staff have undertaken mandatory E&D training.

The Customer Experience Manager regularly attends meetings with internal departments and external partners e.g., Vision Northumberland. We offer work placements to young people, including looked-after young people and we meet with Project Choice to explore possibilities of young people with SEN taking part in work placements.

The service has a contract with SignVideo to provide face to face or telephone translation services for people who use BSL. We have a textphone for people who are unable to use the telephone. Where customers are unable to complete forms we assist with this. We help customers interact with the Council online. We refer customers to NCT, with their permission, if we feel that they would benefit from additional support. The actions we are taking include:

- Encouraging staff to review their equality data in Oracle
- Carrying out user research to help us understand the needs of our customers.
- We work with service areas to carry out service reviews, re-engineering processes while considering user needs removing pain points and making the user journey as accessible and straightforward as possible.
- We are upgrading our digital platform which will provide an improved experience for users.
- The website will be easier for people to find information, report issues and request services.
- The new user account function will enable customers to see what has happened to their enquiry, who is dealing with it and when it has been completed. Customer Service staff will have an oversight of customer requests and be able to assist with any enquiries that have been reported and report enquiries on behalf of users.

### **The Strategic Change Programme Team**

Help the council:

To work more efficiently and to deliver the Strategic Change Programme which contains 37 improvement projects across multiple Council services. The team's core function is to provide programme and project management support for the delivery of the programme.

#### Project Perspective:

Our customers are essentially 'other council services'. Only projects which impact on staff would routinely require data collection. With regards to residents and service users, data to support the design and delivery of projects may be used from time to time. Data may be collected for the purposes of designing new ways of working, designing new processes and for the development of project Equality Impact Assessments relative to each project. Staff participate in Council Staff Wellbeing activities.

As part of the Programme there is an Engagement Plan currently under development. This Engagement Plan will cover staff and also residents. Specific engagement activities will emerge as project design phases begin. The Strategic Change Programme was only approved on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2023 by Cabinet; therefore, Engagement activities are still currently being planned. As part of this strategy, an Engagement Lead for the programme will be appointed (recruitment is 'pending').

#### **The Corporate Complaints and Client Relations**

This function supports the Council's vision for an accessible and consistently recorded and monitored process for customers to raise any complaints regarding the Council's services. Services include Children's Act Complaints, Adults Services Complaints, Executive Enquiries, Corporate Complaints and Local Government Ombudsman cases. We ensure that we use learning from the complaints process to inform and make recommendations to services to improve the way we do things. Our current software does not enable us to gather

information on protected characteristics and limits our ability to monitor impacts for different groups.

As part of a more comprehensive improvement framework, we have recently procured a new case management system, which we are aiming to implement in 2023. Once implemented, we can conduct statistical analysis on case management data providing headline KPIs (Key Performance Indicator) and information for a deeper examination, such as impacts for protected groups. Combined with a library of reports that may be delivered automatically, business intelligence will be more readily available. Phase 2 of the road map will include how the information collected will be used to improve services continuously.

Individuals have a statutory right to access their personal information, which an organisation holds. These are called Subject Access Requests (SARS). The Client Relations Team is also responsible for processing SARS in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) for Children Services.

We have both internal (Participation and Advocacy Team) and independent child advocacy services (via NEPO (North East Procurement Organisation)) that we can engage in supporting children with their complaints. Any specific requirements would be considered when commissioning the relevant advocacy support. Para 3.4 (page 11) of Complaints Guidance. document ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)) details how we should support children in making their complaints. Children's Services also have links to an interpreter service if that is required.

Our current independent advocacy service is NYAS. The National Youth Advocacy Service | NYAS The local government and social care ombudsman guide complaint handling and good administrative practice. The Guidance notes - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman detail principles of good practice, which include being accessible and service user-led. These include ensuring people can access services easily, including those needing reasonable adjustments and responding to service users' needs flexibly and, where appropriate, recognising and respecting the diversity of service users and adopting an inclusive approach. All officers are educated in these principles and make reasonable adjustments when needed. Within the previously mentioned improvement framework, there is a specific category for accessibility. Any areas

we recognise we can improve have been identified and included in an action plan.

The Corporate Complaints Manager has carried out a review using the Complaints Improvement Framework. The framework uses six themes of good practice mainly derived from the requirements of the Local Government Ombudsman's Model Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP). The assessment, which should be regarded as a positive tool, helps understand and demonstrate the effectiveness of the current corporate complaints and feedback handling in different areas and be used to promote continuous improvement. The six themes are:

1. Organisational Culture - Crucial to good complaints handling is an underpinning culture that genuinely values complaints.
2. Process and Procedure - Complaints should be dealt with under a quick, streamlined, and straightforward process with a strong focus on a local, early resolution by empowered and well-trained staff.
3. Accessibility - The complaints procedure should be easily accessible by all service users.
4. Quality - An effective complaint-handling procedure should provide quality outcomes through robust but proportionate investigation and clear quality standards.
5. Learning from Complaints - The Council sees complaints as essential in helping us learn how to improve the quality of people's experience and safety, effectiveness, and outcomes.
6. Complaints Handling Performance - the organisation must focus on its performance in managing and responding to complaints and how to improve this.

Based on these findings, a comprehensive action plan has been drafted, and a road map has been produced to ensure continuous improvement. We are currently in Phase 1 of the improvement framework. Following phases include centralising a feedback team to provide a dedicated service supporting staff

through training and knowledge sharing, amongst other key objectives such as improving diversity and skills within the team.

## **Improvement Team**

The Improvement Team delivers agile project management support and continuous improvement across Council priorities and priority programmes to achieve financial sustainability, process and efficiency improvements and improved resident outcomes. Our work is flexed according to priorities, and we work alongside services to deliver change.

As a team, we do not hold any service user information as we are not a frontline delivery service working with service users. When we are working with services to help deliver change, we will use the data and information on service users which they or the Council hold which includes many of the elements listed above (census data, surveys, compliments and / or complaints and local and national research related to the service area)

Within our team, we have an EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) lead (job share as a Service Review Officer) We have staff members who are part of relevant staff networks including a co-chair of the Enable network and our Service Director is the Executive Lead for the ASD group.

As a team who support services to deliver change across the Council, we demonstrate leadership and commitment to improving equality, diversity and inclusion within this work · As an example, we are currently supporting the HR Team to review and improve recruitment and retention processes with a specific focus on ensuring these equitable and inclusive

## **Improvement and Innovation Service**

This includes:

- Climate Change
- Business Intelligence
- Corporate Performance

Climate change is a significant long-term challenge for the planet. We are committed to taking action to reduce the impacts climate change will have on all our lives long into the future. In recent years the council has reduced its carbon emissions by a third and the area is now ranked as one of the greenest in the country. But we still have a significant role to play in further reducing our own greenhouse gas emissions and providing the leadership to encourage residents, businesses and other organisations to take action to cut their own carbon footprint.

We have developed a climate change newsletter with our latest climate change news, events and funding opportunities. We have also created a climate Change Action Plan 2021-23 this is available in alternative formats. The Climate Change Action Plan includes a focus on both enabling activities (Policy, Engagement and Partnerships) and delivery activities Heating; Transport; Renewable Energy Generation; Sequestration; Waste Reduction). Each of these priority action areas have a set of key targets detailed in the plan.

All our information on the public website can be translated into over 100 alternative languages and information on the website can be adapted in a number of ways to make information more accessible, for example, for people who are neurodiverse or have a visual impairment and this also helps our carbon footprint by reducing the need for paper copies.

We asked all town and parish councils what support they required to develop their own climate change action plans. As a result of that process, we developed the Northumberland Town and Parish Council Climate Change Toolkit.

Northumberland County Council is offering financial support to organisations including voluntary and community groups, registered charities, constituted groups or clubs, community interest companies (CIC), social enterprises many of



whom represent protected groups in Northumberland and also parish councils so that they can make changes to become more sustainable.

The delivery of our climate change target is dependent on the whole County pulling together to that effect we will be running several community engagement schemes this year and are aware of the need to make these as inclusive as possible.

These include:

- Community Climate Champions – we will provide community groups with the knowledge, training, and toolkits necessary to develop their own local climate change action plans
- Free Tree Scheme – we will be running this popular scheme again with the aim of giving away a free tree for every household in Northumberland
- Carbon literacy training will be delivered to our staff
- Northumberland County Council's climate change collaboration event in March is being hosted at Alnwick Gardens as this is a venue with good accessibility.

## **New Capital Projects**

We plan to deliver a wide range of new projects over the next two years which are subject to successful funding applications. These include:

- A district heat network in Blyth, using heat from abandoned flooded mines
- Energy efficiency improvements to over 300 homes
- Installing up to 30 pavement chargers for Electric Vehicles in 7 locations across the county.

Our business intelligence function will be key to gathering data to help the council better understand the make-up of our population and to help in effectively targeting resources to support the implementation of our Inequalities plan.

All of our staff complete EDI training and two members of our staff act as Co-Chairs of Staff network groups, these are the Armed Forces and the Race Equality groups.

Actions we are proposing to take to support the Council's Equality Objectives and public sector equality duties are;

- To use the EHRC (Equality and Human Rights Commission) accessibility guide in contracting and specifying services  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/buying-better-outcomes-mainstreaming-equality-considerations-procurement-guide>
- To follow this guidance for inclusive virtual events <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/our-work/blogs/planning-virtual-engagement-are-your-events-inclusive-and-accessible-disabled-people> and this checklist for face to face events <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/engaging-disabled-people-event-planning-guide>
- Ensuring any websites or apps developed by the teams meet public sector accessibility requirements <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility>
- We will consider how equality data could be improved to support Business Intelligence and promote equality outcomes. Where appropriate we will collect equality data to identify gaps in research, consultation or engagement.

## Appendix 5. Housing and Public Protection

The Public Protection Service incorporates the following regulatory functions; Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Licensing, Building Control and Community Safety, and related services such as Land Charges.

Overall, the aim of the services is to protect public safety and health for the benefit of residents, businesses, and visitors to Northumberland. All Public Protection functions aim to be a public health and/or safety intervention.

We respond to complaints and service requests from residents and businesses both inside and outside of Northumberland and investigate such requests, as well as providing any business with help.

The services also carry out reactive and proactive inspections of all business sectors in Northumberland to provide both guidance and assistance to comply with the applicable legislation. But also taking enforcement action against those who do not comply with the law.

There are also services within Public Protection who issue a number of different licences to businesses in order that they can work legally.

Public Protection is made up of the following service areas:

### **Public Health Protection**

Teams part of the Unit:

- Commercial Team (food hygiene & standards, infectious diseases, port health)
- Environmental Protection Team (contaminated land, permits and private water supplies)
- Community and Environmental Health Team (noise & nuisance complaints, housing standards and community safety)
- Environmental Enforcement Team (animal welfare, dog fouling & fly tipping)
- Technical Support Team

### **Business Compliance and Public Safety Unit Manager**

Teams part of the Unit:

- Building Control & Land Charges Team (building construction oversight, land charges is the provision of information used to buy a property)
- Licencing Team (issuing of a wide range of licences - taxi, alcohol, street trading etc)
- Trading Standards & Animal Health Team (metrology, fair trading, consumer complaints, livestock (cattle, sheep))
- Pest Control Team (treatment service for a range of pests (rats, mice etc))

The main collection of data by the service comes from the following

- Applications for a licence (this will include several protected characteristics as part of the application process)
- Detail stored on the service's IT system this information will be provided by complainants when they wish to pass on a complaint to us. Some of the data will come from a third party (Citizens Advice who will send to NCC)
- From carrying out routine inspections or visits to people's house, they can be open with the information they provide, although it is not always recorded on our system as may not be needed to investigate the complaint
- We have also carried out customer satisfaction surveys to see what level of service we have provided – link [customer satisfaction survey](#)

All members of teams complete EDI training, some have completed Equality Impact assessment training to identify the impact of decisions on protected groups and this will be rolled out to other team members. Several officers participated in Inequalities stakeholder events across the county. Staff are supported to join staff network groups should they choose to become involved in these.

## **HRA Housing**

The service operates as one but has the following service areas:

- Housing Management
- Operations and Housing Maintenance,
- Investment & Delivery.

The key purpose is:

- To lead the Council's place shaping role in promoting housing growth across the region.
- To manage, maintain and repair the dedicated housing stock for Council tenants and leaseholders.
- To secure the provision of decent homes for all residents and to create sustainable communities across the County.
- Maximise Income on behalf of customers and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Lead on Housing Delivery, to increase the provision of affordable homes in line with the Housing Strategy.

- High quality and sustainable housing ensuring a safe and secure place to live.

### **Primary Functions:**

- Estate/Tenancy Management
- Income Management
- Gypsy Roma Traveller Service
- Administration of Northumberland Homefinder Service
- Leaseholder and Right to Buy Management
- Resident Involvement
- Voids and Allocations Management
- Welfare and Advice Service.
- Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Service
- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Adaptations Service.
- Contract administration, procurement of services and securing external funding.
- Management of statutory compliance, cyclical maintenance and Inspection (e.g., Gas Safety, Fire Safety, etc.)
- Planned Investment and Major Improvement Works Programmes
- Housing delivery programme and development of Affordable Homes.

### **Housing Operations is made up of the following service areas**

- Housing Operations Management
- Income team (Collection of rent and service charges, Leasehold Management and Right to Buy administration)
- Voids and Allocations (Allocation of Council homes, Management of empty Council homes and administer Homefinder)
- Customer Engagement (Resident involvement, customer satisfaction, complaints)
- Estate Management (Estate/Tenancy management, Sheltered Housing)

### **Housing Maintenance, Investment & Delivery is made up of the following service areas:**

- Housing Maintenance and Capital Delivery
- Capital Programme (Housing) - Planned Investment, Asset management, CSDP Programme (Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons)
- Repairs and Maintenance (Reactive Repairs, Gas Servicing, Cyclical maintenance)

- Housing Delivery (New Build Council Housing, Property Acquisition, Liaison with RP sector and Developers)

We hold the following information via our Housing Management IT System for our 8,500 tenancies:

- Age
- Disability
- Pregnancy
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex

We hold the following information on 12,000 applicants on the Housing Register

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy
- Employment
- Financial

Through the CSDP programme we fund and deliver aids and adaptations to those tenants that have requirements identified through the OT service to enable them to live independently in their homes. Such as level access showers, stairlifts, ramps, grab rails, hoists etc.

We carry out regular Customer Satisfaction for repairs, new tenants and complaints.

Several officers and managers attended the inequalities events at various places within the County and contributed to that.

Our Estate Management Officers work on the Estates and with our communities, to providing support, assistance and signposting to all tenants including those from protected groups. Housing are accredited members of DAHA – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

Housing Management and Income Teams are working in partnership with NCC's Early Help Service to promote resources across Housing teams to assist tenants and families. This includes county-wide services accessible to all such as Family Hubs who can provide a range of support and signposting to specialist services and this includes help for pregnancy, early years and breastfeeding.

We have support and vulnerability officers to support the most complex of tenants

Through our tenant involvement initiatives, we reach out and involve all tenants within our communities.

As a service we need to use the customer satisfaction survey results more to ensure we feed into the equality objectives of the Council.

## **Strategic Housing Team**

The Primary functions for Strategic Housing are as follows;

- Housing Options and Homelessness Service, including; Out of Hours Service & Management of temporary accommodation
- Private Sector Housing Initiatives including Property & Tenant Accreditation, bringing Empty homes back into use, Co-ordinating the Private Landlord Forums Refugee and Asylum Seeker Service, including resettlement of refugees under Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme and Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme, Afghan Resettlement, Homes for Ukraine and the Asylum process.
- Development of Housing Strategy and associated sub-strategies
- Management of Unauthorised Encampments
- Safeguarding & Housing Services

### **The Housing Options and Homelessness service**

seeks to prevent homelessness wherever possible through the provision of advice, support and in those cases where prevention was not possible; mitigation as set out in law and guidance. The service is delivered 24/7 and provides out of hours support. The Temporary Accommodation team provide support to residents in the units whilst they are awaiting the outcome of their Homeless application.

### **The Private Sector Service**

supports landlords and tenants in the private rented sector through the provision of accreditation schemes, seeks to bring empty properties back into use to maximise the existing housing stock, and provides opportunities to share information and good practice through a number of fora. The team also undertake EDMOs (Empty Dwelling Management Orders) which give the council the right to take over the management of an empty residential property in certain circumstances with a view to bringing it back into use and occupation. The team work to promote appropriate property and management standards and supports tenants to undertake tenant accreditation to support tenancy sustainment.

### **The Refugee and Asylum Seeker team**

support families settling in the county under several resettlement schemes, as well as the Homes for Ukraine scheme. The support offered differs according to the programme, with the Vulnerable Persons Scheme (5 years support) and the Afghan schemes (3 years support) including sourcing and furnishing accommodation. For all scheme the team offer wrap around support, including access to ESOL and cultural orientation and help to integrate families into schools and their local communities. The team also manage expectations of the families, communities and wider partners and stakeholders.

### **The Policy and Strategy team**

undertake horizon scanning to understand the national and local context in which housing functions are delivered. The team consult and deliver a number of key strategies including the Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy and the Private Sector Housing Strategy as well ensuring that policies and procedures for the service are reflective of current legislation, best practice and customer requirements.

### **The Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer**

is responsible for the management of unauthorised encampments, ensuring that appropriate welfare assessments are undertaken, referrals to other services are made available if required, and that the welfare of both Travellers and the settled community are protected.

### **The Housing Safeguarding Coordinator**

aims to uphold the requirement for every person working with or engaging with Northumberland residents, regardless of position, to take responsibility to promote positive outcomes for residents and take the necessary action needed



to ensure that any action necessary to safeguard vulnerable people is taken. In line with this, the Safeguarding Coordinator's role includes:

- Ensuring that teams across Housing have appropriate and up to date training to enable staff to recognise what safeguarding looks like, understand the range of potential issues and have access to the correct pathways to raise concerns appropriately.
- Ensuring that Housing Teams are equipped with knowledge of resources available, both locally and nationally, to support residents they work with and to enable and to empower residents to access specialist services where needed.
- Creating and maintaining opportunities and systems for Strategic Housing to work inclusively and effectively with multiple agencies and housing partners to promote and preserve the wellbeing and safety of residents.
- Providing a point of contact for safeguarding advice and information for Housing Teams.
- Promoting working links and sharing good working practice and resources with partners across the county's independent housing sector to support the safety and wellbeing of all tenants.

The Structure is as follows;

- Strategic Housing
- Homelessness & Housing Options
- Private Sector Housing
- Asylum Seeker & Refugee Team
- GRT Liaison Officer
- Housing Policy & Communications
- Housing Services Safeguarding

### **Management of Unauthorised Encampments**

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Liaison Officer collates limited E&D statistics, as this ethnic minority group are traditionally reserved about divulging personal information. All information is gathered through an assessment that looks at their social, health, education, and welfare need.

The assessments are carried out on all new unauthorised encampments in the County, and the information recorded is based upon what the families are prepared to divulge, therefore the detail and numbers may not reflect a true picture of the dynamics of encampment.

**From November 2021 to November 2022 the following E&D information was recorded:**

<b>GRT Service 01/11/2021 to 01/11/2022</b>	<b>Total</b>
Adult Males	110
Adult Females	135
Child Male	70
Child Female	85
Pregnant Females	5
Non specified health conditions	9
Specified health conditions	5

### **Homelessness and Housing Options Service**

The homelessness and housing options service gathers equality and diversity information and reports this to the Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing through Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) via Delta 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 November 2021 to November 2022 show a total of 3913 households contacted the Homelessness and Housing Options Service of which 341 were cancelled or closed, 2686 were advice and information only, 352 were prevented from becoming homeless, 268 were relieved from being homeless and 35 went through to main duty. The remaining 232 are at different stages of the process. The figures for the 655 households, reported as prevented, relieved and main duty can be broken down into the following categories: Ethnicity, Sex, Age, Disability

The figures show that of the 655 households who were homeless or threatened with homelessness between 01/11/2021 to 31/10/2022. 34% were female, white British between the ages of 25 -44. The number of applicants where there were dependent children in the household was 154 with an overall total of 329 children (those under 18 years of age). The statistics also collate information

regarding mental and physical disability, however no applicants during this period stated that they have a disability.

#### **Ethnic origin (as recorded on system)**

Homeless Applicants 01/11/2021 to 31/10/2022 <b>(Race)</b>	Total	% of total
White	628	96
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	5	0.7
Asian or Asian British	3	0.4
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	6	1
Other ethnic group	2	0.3
Preferred not to say	11	1.6

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 96% of all applicants were recorded as being white.

To assist people where English is not their first language and there maybe difficulty in communication the services, interpreters are employed to ensure that the client fully understands the processes of the homelessness application. The interpreter services have been used 27 time during the specified period from 01/11/2021 to the 31/10/2022.

#### **Sex**

Homeless Applicants 01/11/2021 to 31/10/2022 <b>(Sex)</b>	Total	% of total
Female	392	60
Male	263	40

The figures on gender {sex?} show there are 20% more female than male applicants, however due to the way the information in recorded and reported on the system we are unable to determine whether these are joint application or sole applications, we can only determine who the lead applicant is.

#### **Age (as recorded on system)**

Homeless Applicants 01/11/2021 to 31/10/2022 <b>(Age)</b>	Total	% Of total
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18-24	83	13
25-44	370	56
45-59	148	22.5
60-64	19	3
65-74	26	4
75 & over	9	1.5

Applicants who are aged under 18 years of age are automatically classed as vulnerable and as such would be given priority for housing and where deemed necessary would be provided with support to enable them to live independently or given a placement in supported accommodation.

The council has four temporary accommodation units and five dispersed properties to accommodate households while their homelessness situation is being investigated. They cover the whole the county, three of which have partial disabled facilities. Across the County there is 1 fully adapted room, 3 rooms have access to a disabled bathroom facilities and 9 rooms which are fully accessible.

### **Asylum Seeker and Refugee Service**

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee team became operational in September 2016 and currently support 246 households made up of 672 individuals. The families are assisted with every aspect of their lives to enable them to settle in a new country. Two disabled children have been found placements in special needs schools that meet their specific needs.

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 01/11/21 to 30/10/22	
Families	278
Males	79
Females	145
Children with special needs	2

### **Private Sector Housing Service**

Currently the private sector housing team do not collate any equality and diversity statistics.

### **Safeguarding & Housing**

The Safeguarding and Housing Coordinator does not collate any equality and diversity statistics, however, would promote this requirement across housing teams, supporting the continued development or review of any processes needed to gather this information.

The service has added an additional disabled access unit for clients requiring temporary accommodation.

Strategic Housing has part funded a Domestic Abuse Support Service (currently out to tender) which includes specialist support for male victims and LGBTQ victims.

Strategic Housing has introduced a refuse waste management system for unauthorised encampments. NCC supply wheelie bins to allow the Travellers to manage their waste. This lessens conflict with the settled community and environmental impacts and has meant a reduction in complaints. The system has been embraced by the Travelling community and well supported by Local Services

This has been embraced by the Travelling community and has had positive impact in community cohesion.

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee team are responsible for the delivery of NCC's Home Office funded Resettlement Schemes and operate an advocacy model of support with tailored personal support plans agreed with the refugee families shortly after their arrival in Northumberland, which set out in easily understandable terms how the team of family support workers will help individual families initially orientate to their new surroundings, and then, begin to engage with their new host communities and access opportunities for self-development, voluntary work and employment. The service also employs a Ukrainian national, an Afghan national and a former Asylum Seeker who have lived experience in common with clients as well as shared language and cultural knowledge.

NCC are working to provide Negotiated Stopping Locations in 2018 which will improve facilities for the Travelling community. This will have a positive impact on the management of unauthorised roadside encampments and should lessen tensions with the settled community and have a positive impact on the potential

for hate incidents and crimes. It will also result in an improved living environment for nomadic Travellers migrating through the county.

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

Safeguarding and Housing are rolling out safeguarding refresher training for all NCC Housing teams in June 2023 aimed at supporting older residents who may be vulnerable to domestic abuse. Additionally, plans are in place for a themed workshop to take place in early spring 2023 across NCC Housing Teams and independent social housing partner organisations, which will consider the safeguarding and wellbeing needs of younger tenants, under the umbrella of transitional safeguarding.

Housing safeguarding is working in partnership with NCC's Early Help Service to promote resources across Housing teams for the signposting of tenants and families to take up support in their area. This includes county-wide services accessible to all such as Family Hubs who are able to provide a range of support and signposting to specialist services and this includes help for pregnancy, early years and breastfeeding.

Housing staff support the White Ribbon Campaign through which we agree to challenge negative attitudes towards, and violence against, women and girls. Work is also being done around raising the profile of services who are able to 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 also 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.

