



Westmorland
& Furness
Council

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Phase 2 Update and Action Plan

April 2026 – March 2028



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Foreword

We are extremely proud to introduce our Phase 2 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Update and Action Plan to you.

This is a clear commitment to fairness, respect, and accessibility, and it marks the continuation of the council's journey to embedding EDI in everything we do.

This action plan is more than a document; it is a promise to champion equality, embrace diversity, and foster inclusion across our organisation and the communities we serve.

Our first EDI Action Plan laid the foundations by listening, learning, and beginning to remove barriers. Now, with Phase 2, we are taking bold steps forward, further embedding EDI principles into our policies, services, and culture to create an inclusive workplace and deliver equitable services.

We want to be a council that understands and takes account of the varying needs and experiences of the different groups among our workforce and community, ensuring all of our residents, staff and members are included, supported and celebrated for who they are.

Despite the challenges of forming a new authority, we have already integrated EDI into governance, recruitment, service design, and community engagement. Guided by the Public Sector Equality Duty, but going beyond statutory compliance, we are committed to reducing inequality, eliminating discrimination, and ensuring every voice is heard.

Our community is strongest when differences are celebrated and fairness is guaranteed. Together, with our staff, partners, and residents, we will ensure that Westmorland and Furness is a great place to live, work, and thrive for everyone.



Miranda Cannon
Chief Executive



Councillor Helen Chaffey
Cabinet Member for Communities, Customer
Services, Culture and Communications

Introduction

In March 2024, Westmorland and Furness Council released our first statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)¹.

This statement included the first set of Equality Objectives for the council, as well a two year Action Plan from April 2024-March 2026, outlining the workstreams that will support us to achieve these objectives.

In April 2025, the council released an annual report², outlining the progress we made in the first 12 months of the Action Plan, and the ambitions we still wanted to achieve by the end of March 2026.

In this document we have outlined all the progress made across the initial action plan, and we have also outlined the next stage of our EDI work in our Phase 2 EDI Action Plan, from April 2026 to March 2028.

A reminder of what we mean by EDI

We use the following definitions of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI):

- **Equity** - means that, in some circumstances, people need to be treated differently in order to provide meaningful equality of opportunity.
- **Diversity** - recognising, and celebrating, that people have different characteristics, backgrounds, attributes, cultures and experience.
- **Inclusion** - actively ensuring that everyone is included, welcomed, represented and reflected, in our services, council and community.

A reminder of our EDI duties

As a public authority, the council is bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)³ under the Equality Act (2010)⁴, which requires us to have due regard to the following general duties:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other unlawful conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.
- Foster good relations between people who share and people who do not share a relevant protected characteristic.

Our EDI Objectives, Public Statement and Action Plan, all ensure that we are compliant with the general duties of the PSED outlined above.

¹[Our equality objectives, EDI statement and action plan | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

²[WFC - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) Annual Report](#)

³[Public Sector Equality Duty: guidance for public authorities - GOV.UK](#)

⁴[Equality Act 2010](#)

We are also under specific duties that require us to:

- Set one or more equality objectives at least every four years
- Provide information on the organisation's compliance with the general duty every year, and
- Publish specified information on the organisation's gender pay gap data every year.

By setting our Equality Objectives and publishing an annual report on our progress towards achieving them, as well as annually publishing data on the organisation's gender pay gap, we are ensuring that we are compliant with the specific duties under the PSED.

The Equality Act provides the legal framework for statutory services, but this action plan seeks to go beyond this statutory duty.

You can find more information on our responsibilities on the council website⁵.

A reminder of who is included in the scope of this action plan

The following groups and characteristics are within scope of the EDI work the council undertakes:

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010):

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage/civil partnership
- Maternity/pregnancy
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition to the protected characteristics above, we also recognise these characteristics as equally important in our focus:

- Armed forces families
- People who are care experienced (having experience of the care system)
- Rurality
- Socio-economic inequality

We recognise that there are other groups in Westmorland and Furness who are also vulnerable and / or experience barriers to enjoying the same opportunities as others, and will strive to address this in our work, too.

⁵[Equity, diversity and inclusion | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

A reminder of our stakeholders

This action plan applies to all areas of the council's work and to everyone who interacts with or is impacted by the council, including both internal and external stakeholders:

Internal stakeholders

- Council employees – all staff, including permanent, temporary, and agency workers.
- Elected members (Councillors) – ensuring inclusive decision-making and representation.
- Job applicants and volunteers – recruitment and volunteering opportunities must be fair, accessible, and inclusive.

External stakeholders

- Residents and service users – people who rely on council services, ensuring equitable access and removing barriers.
- Community groups and local organisations – charities, advocacy groups, and partners that collaborate with the council.
- Partner organisations and contractors – suppliers and service providers expected to align with EDI principles in procurement and delivery.

Wider

- Businesses and employers – where collaboration supports inclusive economic growth.
- Regional and national bodies – where the council contributes to broader equality objectives and statutory requirements.

To truly embed Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, we will work closely with each of these stakeholder groups to continue to help us identify barriers, champion inclusive practices, and deliver measurable outcomes together.



Progress we have made so far

Inclusive leadership and positive role models

Inclusive leadership is embedded at every level of the organisation. Strategic oversight is provided by the Corporate EDI Action Group, chaired by the council's Assistant CEO, Alison Hatcher, ensuring accountability and alignment with our corporate priorities.

Leadership commitment is reflected in our Members through the Cabinet Portfolio Lead for EDI, Councillor Helen Chaffey, Cabinet Member for Communities, Customer Services, Culture and Communications, who also chairs our Members Special Interest Group on EDI.

And we have an appointed Corporate EDI Advisor, who strategically drives our EDI delivery and engagement work, and is responsible for delivering our Phase 2 EDI Action Plan.

Creating a culture of inclusion

Directorate EDI Action Groups have been established across all seven council directorates, each developing its own EDI action plan aligned with corporate objectives. These action groups act as visible champions of inclusion, inspiring directorate-level ownership and cultural change across all council activities.

We have taken bold steps to create a culture of inclusion and continuous learning at the council. Our EDI Learning Hub provides officers and elected members a wealth of information and training resources, across a wide range of EDI themes.

Councillors are supported by a comprehensive EDI resource pack and are further engaged through a Member EDI Special Interest Group which meets quarterly with the Corporate EDI Advisor to discuss live issues, and to support with achieving the aims in the Corporate EDI Action Plan.

Staff networks have been relaunched with protected time for chairs and members, executive sponsors, and a dedicated corporate budget. Chairs provide twice-yearly updates to the executive team, ensuring employees have a direct voice with leadership.

Plans are underway to develop dedicated multi-use spaces at council offices to provide safe spaces for colleagues to pray, breastfeed, and seek sensory relief and wellbeing rest bites.

Our EDI communications and engagement plan coordinates events and activities linked to community projects and staff networks, while a values-led culture review is shaping a confident, connected organisation.

Specific initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion

Significant initiatives have been introduced to strengthen our EDI work. We have overhauled Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to improve both quality and volume, introducing online templates, detailed guidance, and a central monitoring dashboard.

Accessibility improvements include clearer council documents, enhanced website usability, and a new translation and interpretation service to support inclusive communication, and Digital and AI working groups have been established to ensure EDI principles are embedded in innovation.

Accessibility audits have been completed across the entire portfolio of council buildings, informing a programme of work to improve physical and operational accessibility, including reviews of toilet and shower facilities following the Supreme Court ruling⁶ in 2025.

⁶[For Women Scotland Ltd \(Appellant\) v The Scottish Ministers \(Respondent\) - UK Supreme Court](#)

EDI principles are further embedded in commissioning and procurement processes, influencing service specifications and stakeholder engagement.

To support evidence-based decision-making, we launched an EDI Data Hub and the Cumbria Intelligence Observatory, providing real-time data and insights from national sources.

Inclusive recruitment and workforce diversity

Our recruitment and workforce diversity efforts have been transformative. Recruitment processes and job descriptions have been redesigned for accessibility, supported by guidance for managers, and we have partnered with charities and specialist agencies to promote positive action and attract diverse talent.

The Guaranteed Interview Scheme has been expanded to include all armed forces veterans and personnel, and new and updated policies, including EDI, Reservist, Life Events, and reasonable adjustments, provide comprehensive support for employees.

We relaunched our employee data project to identify gaps and improve reporting, while regular analysis of pay and progression ensures fairness.

We publish our Gender Pay Gap report annually and have achieved Disability Confident Leader status in 2024 and revalidated our Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award in 2025.

Council partnerships and work with service users

Our commitment extends beyond the organisation into the community. The Community Power vision was co-designed with public, third sector, and community partners to ensure residents have greater influence over services and places. This approach includes EDI engagement frameworks to amplify underrepresented voices.

We relaunched the Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Partnership Network⁷, strengthening collaboration with over 30 external partners on themes such as accessibility, tackling racism, and poverty-proofing.

The independent Chair of the partnership commented: “As an external partner, I am impressed by the significant strides the council has made with their EDI Action Plan. The council’s commitment to embedding EDI at all levels is evident through their comprehensive approach and tangible outcomes.”

We are also working with local faith communities to establish a Faith Covenant⁸, a joint commitment between faith groups and the council to principles that promote trust and practical engagement, with the signing of the covenant planned for July 2026.

In September 2025, the council hosted an EDI Extravaganza Day, bringing together over 100 colleagues and community partners to share challenges, solutions, and ideas for shaping the future of EDI work.

And quoting from the council’s Corporate Peer Challenge report⁹ in 2025: “The council has made a promising start to its journey in regards to EDI which the peer team very much encourage the council to continue to build on.”

⁷ [Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Partnership Network | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

⁸ [Westmorland and Furness Faith Covenant | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

⁹ [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report](#)

Our equality journey so far

2023

- EDI consultant seconded from Local Government Association to develop Council EDI Strategy
- Equity Framework for Local Government completed
- Westmorland and Furness Council established

2024

- First annual EDI update at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny committee
- Corporate EDI Advisor starts role with the council
- Internal Corporate EDI Action Group established to deliver EDI Action Plan
- EDI Public Statement and first Equality Objectives published

2025

- First EDI Annual Progress Report published
- Directorate EDI Action Groups have been established
- Launched EDI data hub
- Established Member Special Interest Group on EDI
- Relaunched Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Partnership Network
- First submission to SC-WRES, both Adult's and Children's
- Delivered inaugural EDI Extravaganza Day
- Launched EDI learning hub
- Staff Network Groups relaunched
- EDI key feature of Staff Expo
- Workforce Data Check project launched
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) process overhauled
- EDI communications and engagement internally and externally
- Accessibility improvements

2026

Phase 2 EDI Strategy and Action Plan launched

Awards:

- Shortlisted for Diverse Cumbria Award
- Disability Confident Leader
- Care Leader Covenant and Care Leaver Friendly Employer Charter signed
- Age-Friendly Employer pledge
- Henpicked Menopause Accreditation
- Armed Forces Gold ERS Award
- Dying to Work Charter signed

The diversity of Westmorland and Furness

Age: Compared to England, W&F has an older age profile. **34,100** residents are 0-15 (15%), **135,000** are 16-64 (59%), **61,100** are 65+ (27%).



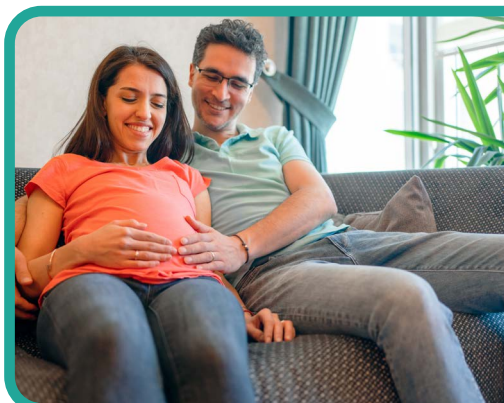
Marriage / Civil Partnership: **49.3%** married or in a registered civil partnership (above the England average of 44.7%). **31.6%** never married or registered a civil partnership.

Life expectancy: Life expectancy is **83.4** years for females and **79.6** years for males; similar to the England average (83.0 for females and 79.1 for males).



Language: **97.8%** residents with English as their main language, above the England average (**90.8%**). The top 3 languages spoken (other than English) are: Polish (**1,148** residents), Romanian (**951** residents), Hungarian (**309** residents).

Disability: **42,300** residents are disabled (**18.7%**), above the England average (**17.5%**). **7.6%** reported their day-to-day activities were 'limited a lot', similar to the England average (**7.3%**).

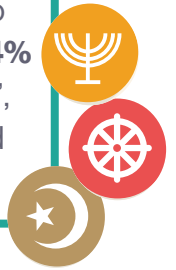


Maternity / Pregnancy: **46.6** births per 1,000 females aged 15-44 years, below the England average (**49.4**). **1.7%** multiple births, **7.2%** premature births, **5.2%** deliveries to women from ethnic minority groups, and **2.2** births per 1,000 females aged under 18 years.

Ethnicity: 12,257 residents (5.4%) from ethnic minority groups, below the England average (26.5%). 6,800 (3%) residents from White Other ethnic group; 2,196 (1%) Asian or Asian British; 1,952 (0.9%) Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups; 721 (0.3%) Other ethnic group; 588 (0.3%) Black, Black British, Caribbean or African.



Religion: 55.2% residents who are Christian, 0.4% are Buddhist, 0.4% are Muslim, 0.4% are 'Other Religion', 0.1% are Hindu, 0.1% are Jewish, and <0.1% are Sikh.



Sex: 51% of residents are male (115,760), and 49% are female (112,427).



Gender identity: 94.6% residents identify with the same gender as sex registered at birth, 122 residents (0.1%) identify as a trans man, 118 residents (0.1%) identify as a trans woman.



Sexual orientation: 90.0% residents identify as straight or heterosexual, 2,139 (1.1%) as Gay or Lesbian, 1,749 (0.9%) as Bisexual.

Armed forces: 8,944 residents aged 16+ have previously served in the UK armed forces (4.7% of people aged 16+); above the England average (3.8%).



Free school meals: 4,684 pupils (15.3%) are known to be eligible for free school meals, lower than the England average (25.7%).

Children's Social Care:

261 children looked after (67 per 10,000, same as England average).



Child poverty:

6,451 children (**18.9%**) live in relative low-income families, lower than the England average (**22.1%**).



Deprivation:

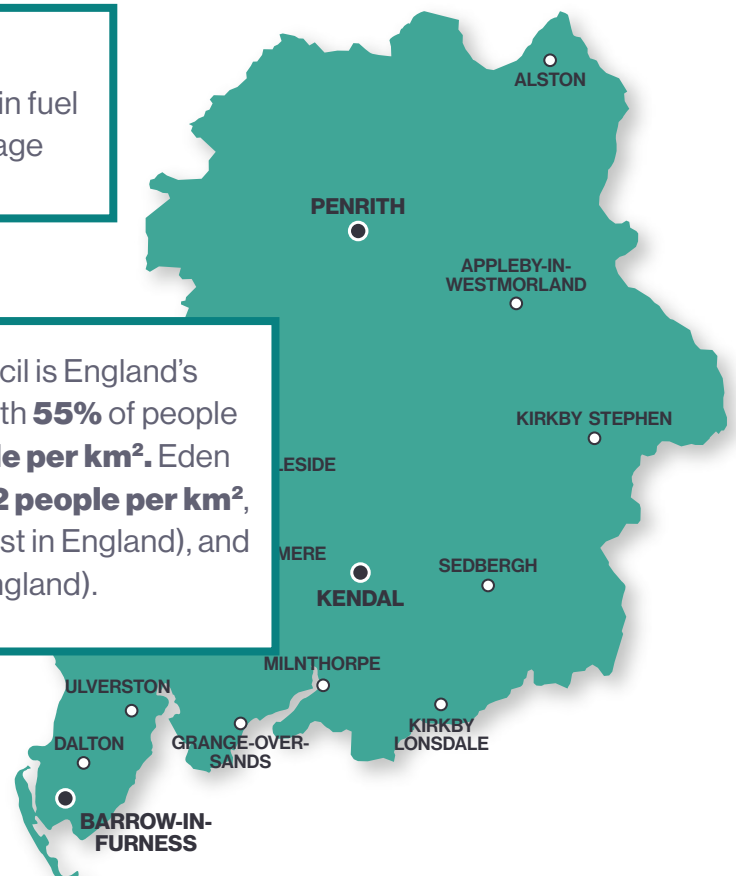
6.3% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the most deprived **10%** nationally overall, **22.5%** for Barriers to Housing and Services (25th highest in England), and **35.9%** for Living Environment (9th highest in England).



Fuel poverty:

13,734 households (**12.9%**) are in fuel poverty, above the England average (**11.4%**).

Rurality: Westmorland and Furness Council is England's most sparsely populated local authority area, with **55%** of people living in a rural area, at an average of **60.7 people per km²**. Eden has **25.8 people per km²**, South Lakeland **68.2 people per km²**, and Barrow **864.6 people per km²** (25th highest in England), and **35.9%** for Living Environment (9th highest in England).



Inequalities in Westmorland and Furness

- There is significant variation in the range of life expectancy across Westmorland and Furness. In 2016-2020, life expectancy for males was lowest in Barrow Central at 70.5 years and highest in Hawkshead and Cartmel Fell at 86.6 years. For females, in 2016-2020, life expectancy was lowest in Barrow Central at 75 years and highest in Windermere South and Staveley at 88.8 years.¹⁰
- Westmorland and Furness Council is England's most sparsely populated local authority area, with 55% of people living in a rural area, at an average of 60.7 people per km². Eden has 25.8 people per km², South Lakeland 68.2 people per km², and Barrow 864.6 people per km².¹¹
- Westmorland and Furness is deprived in relation to barriers to living environment and barriers to housing and services; suggesting rural deprivation is widespread, persistent and often hidden, particularly in Eden and South Lakeland.¹²
- 13,734 households (12.9%) in Westmorland and Furness are in fuel poverty, above the England average (11.4%).¹³

¹⁰ [Westmorland and Furness Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2034](#)

¹¹ [Lower layer Super Output Area population estimates \(supporting information\) - Office for National Statistics](#)

¹² [English indices of deprivation 2025: statistical release - GOV.UK](#)

¹³ [Fuel poverty statistics - GOV.UK](#)



Our vision for EDI

Our simple ambition is to reduce inequalities and discrimination, ensuring that Westmorland and Furness is a great place to live, work, and thrive for everyone.

We want to be a council that understands and takes account of the varying needs and experiences of the different groups among our community, working hard to ensure all our residents, staff and members are included, supported and celebrated for who they are.

EDI underpins the vision, priorities, and values outlined in our Council Plan¹⁴, as well as our sustainability principles¹⁵.

EDI is a core principle embedded across all council functions, ensuring fairness, accessibility, and representation in decision-making and service delivery. Including in key areas such as:

- **Policy Development** - Compliance with Equality Act 2010 and Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs).
- **Service Delivery** - Accessible services for all residents, including translation and interpretation.
- **Recruitment and Workforce** - Inclusive hiring and bias training.
- **Community Engagement** - Representation of diverse voices in consultations.
- **Education and Social Care** - Inclusive schools and care services addressing disparities.
- **Housing and Planning** - Accessible and affordable housing policies.
- **Procurement** - Diversity requirements in supplier contracts.
- **Governance and Leadership** - Diverse leadership and strategic EDI objectives

This action plan is intended to complement and support other strategies and action plans across the council, including some key examples such as:

- Community Power¹⁶
- People Plan¹⁷
- Social Value in Commissioning and Procurement¹⁸
- Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy¹⁹
- Digital Ambition²⁰

¹⁴ [Council plan | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

¹⁵ [Council plan delivery framework | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)

¹⁶ [Community Power Strategy](#)

¹⁷ [People Plan](#)

¹⁸ [Social Value in Commissioning and Procurement - Statement](#)

¹⁹ [Westmorland and Furness Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024-2034](#)

²⁰ [Our Digital Ambition – 2025 to 2028](#)

Our equality objectives

In March 2024, Westmorland and Furness Council released our first statement on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)²¹, which included the first set of Equality Objectives for the council.

Our equality objectives are:

- **Equality objective 1:** Establish and embed structures and processes that help to ensure an EDI focused approach at all levels of the organisation.
- **Equality objective 2:** Enhance our understanding of our customers and communities, and provide services that reflect the needs of, and are accessible to all.
- **Equality objective 3:** Strengthen knowledge of our workforce and their experiences in the organisation in order to enable a diverse workforce in which everyone can progress.

We are keeping the same equality objectives for our next phase of work for a number of key reasons:

- **Continuity and momentum** - maintaining progress on long-term equality goals by avoiding disruption and ensuring sustained effort.
- **Cultural embedding** - reinforcing objectives as part of everyday practice, helping shift from short-term projects to systemic change.
- **Stakeholder clarity** - providing a clear, stable focus for employees and leaders, reducing confusion and initiative fatigue.
- **Consistent measurement** - enabling reliable trend analysis and credible reporting through stable baselines and metrics.
- **Accountability** - keeping governance and KPIs aligned, making it easier to monitor delivery and hold owners responsible.
- **Efficiency** - reducing rework and resource demands by leveraging existing systems, processes, and communications.
- **Regulatory alignment** - supporting compliance with external frameworks and duties without frequent adjustments.

²¹ [Our equality objectives, EDI statement and action plan | Westmorland and Furness Council](#)



Delivering the Phase 2 EDI Action Plan

Outlined below are our three equality objectives for the Phase 2 EDI Action Plan (April 2026-March 2028), with the key workstream areas outlined under each objective.

Under each workstream are a number of key activities to help us achieve these aims. These are outlined in a more detailed Action Plan document which can be obtained by emailing equalities@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk.

Equality objective 1: Establish and embed structures and processes that help to ensure an EDI focused approach at all levels of the organisation

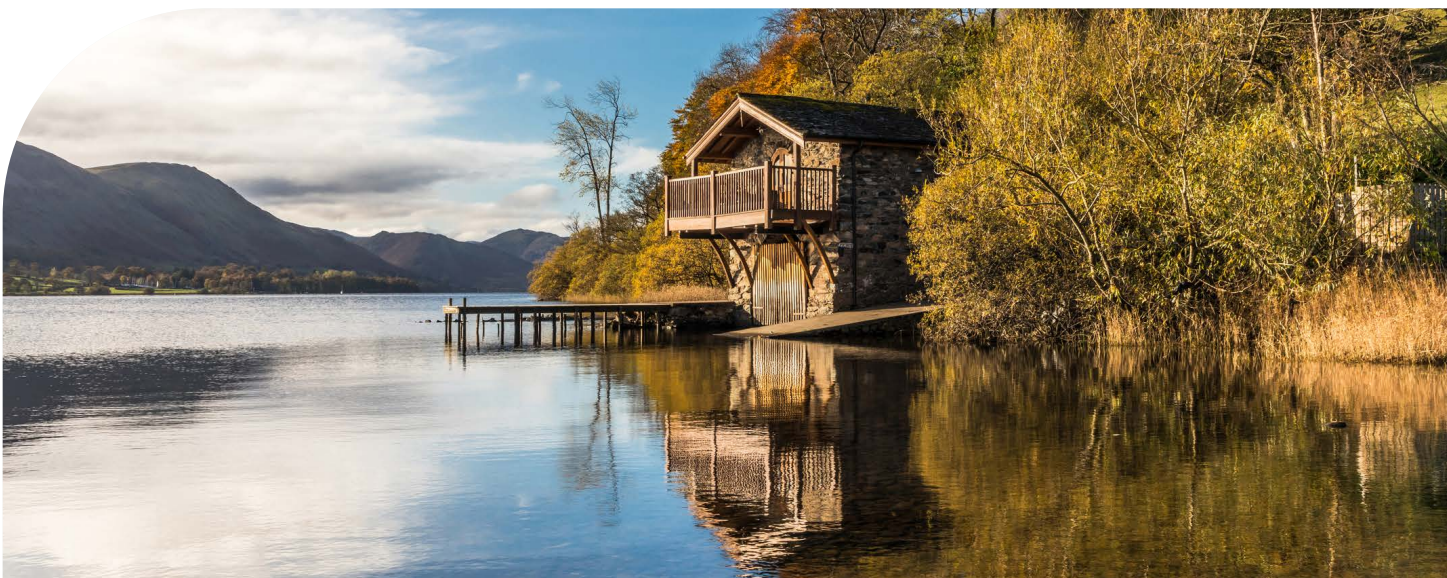
Workstreams:

1. Demonstrate a clear commitment to EDI
2. Continue to embed EDI in council culture
3. Continue to embed EDI in core structures and processes at all levels of the organisation
4. Further embed Equality Impact Assessments in the day to day work of the council
5. Develop new Corporate Action Plans to tackle key focus areas
6. Achievement of recognised EDI standards

Equality objective 2: Enhance our understanding of our customers and communities, and provide services that reflect the needs of, and are accessible to all

Workstreams:

7. Improved customer EDI data collection and analysis, to better inform decision making, and improve service delivery
8. Continue to strengthen cross-council approaches to understanding, engaging with and representing our communities
9. Continue to ensure external partner input into the council's EDI workstream
10. Continue to ensure council communication approaches reinforce and support EDI focus
11. Improved and accessible digital offer across council services
12. Council Interpreting and Translation Service enhances customer engagement
13. Improved capital building accessibility across the council
14. Continue work to improve community cohesion across Westmorland and Furness
15. Ensure EDI principles are embedded in council funding programmes



Equality objective 3: Strengthen knowledge of our workforce and their experiences in the organisation in order to enable a diverse workforce in which everyone can progress

Workstreams:

16. Improve workforce EDI data collection across the council
17. Improve representation at all levels of the workforce
18. Embed EDI principles in performance monitoring processes
19. Ensure that all W&F HROD policies and processes reflect EDI issues
20. Provide a range of accessible EDI learning and development opportunities
21. Continue to ensure council communication approaches reinforce and support EDI focus across the council
22. Drive the growth, visibility, and impact of the council's Staff Network Groups
23. Embed EDI in the council's health and wellbeing support for staff

Priority areas

A number of actions in the Phase 2 plan have been designed to further embed the foundational work that has been started, however, we have also identified emerging areas in need of more targeted, evidence-based action, to reduce gaps and improve outcomes for marginalised groups in our communities.

These priority areas of focus include the development of:

- A council-wide Race Equity Action Plan and an Accessibility Action Plan.
- More targeted action on the four additional characteristic areas; Armed Forces families, people who are care-experienced, Rurality, and Socio-economic inequality.
- Continued improvements to the built environment and digital infrastructure.
- Strengthened engagement with Staff Networks and external partners.

The rationale for this focussed work comes from the knowledge and feedback we have gained directly from data and insight sources, community members, key partners, and local understanding. It is important that we recognise and respond to this feedback, especially the nuanced experiences of small and marginalised communities, who are more geographically dispersed across the area.

For example, we know there has been a rise in racism across schools in W&F, and that front-line health care workers have been subject to a rise in race-related discrimination whilst at work, and we have seen a rise in community cohesion tensions in the area.



We also know from key research by Healthwatch W&F and feedback from community organisations like Cumbria Deaf Association, Vision Support Barrow, and Autus Cumbria, that disabled people continue to face ongoing challenges to everyday life, leading to restricted or limited access to key services.

So, this focused work will enable the council to fulfil its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty by ensuring that equality considerations are embedded across all areas of policy and service delivery. It will support a more systematic approach to identifying and addressing inequalities in outcomes, access, and lived experiences across key services, including health, education, housing, community cohesion, and the reporting and response to hate crime.

By designing services that better reflect the diverse needs of minority and geographically dispersed communities within W&F, the council will be able to deliver more effective and inclusive services. This approach will also help to strengthen trust with local communities through greater transparency, accountability, and visible progress.

Internally, this work will enhance the council as an employer by promoting fair and equitable recruitment, development, and career progression, and by improving representation across the workforce. A clear structure for governance, accountability, and measurable actions will ensure consistent oversight and regular reporting on progress.

Monitoring and evaluation

To ensure the effectiveness of the Phase 2 EDI Strategy and Action Plan, we have adopted a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation:

- **Clear objectives and KPIs** - we have embedded measurable goals in the action plan aligned with legal obligations and local priorities.
- **Baseline data collection** - we gather workforce and service user demographic data, local population demographic data with comparisons to national baselines, workforce and service user feedback, and data on training uptake, all of which will support us to evaluate and demonstrate progress.
- **Monitoring mechanisms** - we have implemented regular internal reporting on progress towards the Action Plan, we use Equality Impact Assessments to review and demonstrate how we are meeting our requirements under the PSED, and we also work closely with our staff networks and community partners.
- **Evaluation methods** - we will use a range of quantitative data and qualitative insights to benchmark progress against the EDI Action Plan, as well external audits to assess impact e.g. Equity Framework for Local Government, NW Employers EDI Charter.
- **Continuous improvement** - we will continually review progress to update the action plan, share successes, and identify areas for further attention, and we will review and refresh the Corporate EDI Strategy and Action Plan in 2028.

Governance and accountability

We have a number of governance structures in place to ensure that we are held accountable to the actions in the Phase 2 action plan and we continue to make progress towards achieving them all.

Our appointed **Corporate EDI Advisor** strategically drives our EDI delivery and engagement work and is responsible for delivering our Phase 2 EDI Action Plan.

Our **Corporate EDI Action Group**, which is chaired by our Assistant CEO, Alison Hatcher, meets quarterly with representation from all directorates across the council. This group provides strategic oversight and accountability for our EDI Action Plan and ensures that progress continues to be made.

Regular update reports are provided to the council's **Executive Management Team**, with the opportunity for further discussion on key areas, and support to make progress on any areas of challenge.

Our **Cabinet Portfolio Lead for EDI**, Councillor Helen Chaffey, Cabinet Member for Communities, Customer Services, Culture and Communications, chairs our **Members Special Interest Group on EDI**. This cross-party member group meets quarterly with the Corporate EDI Advisor to discuss live issues, and to support with achieving the aims in the Corporate EDI Action Plan.

Progress towards the EDI Action Plan is reviewed annually by the **Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee**, with committee members able to scrutinise progress made, ensuring that actions taken are transparent, accountable, and open to challenge.

We will publish an **annual progress report** publicly, so that all Westmorland and Furness residents are transparently aware of the progress made in the EDI Action Plan, and ensuring our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

We will also work with the **Westmorland and Furness Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Partnership Network**, a collaboration with over 30 external partners that meets quarterly with the council. We will work together on key themes such as accessibility, tackling racism, and poverty-proofing, with the opportunity for network members to both support and challenge the council on our progress.

We will also collaborate with **other key partners** working to hold us to account too, including trade unions, other strategic partners across Westmorland and Furness and the wider Cumbria area, including the new **Cumbria Combined Authority**.

And we will continue to deliver further **engagement events**, to bring all key stakeholders together with council officers and members, to discuss and review progress against the EDI Action Plan, and identify how we can work collaboratively to address any key issues.



Translation Services

If you require this document in another format (e.g. CD, Braille or large type) or in another language, please telephone: **0300 373 3300**.

للوصول إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الاتصال **0300 373 3300**

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请致电 **0300 373 3300**

Jeigu norétumète gauti šią informaciją savo kalba,
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W celu uzyskania informacji w Państwa języku proszę
zatelefonować pod numer **0300 373 3300**

Se quiser aceder a esta informação na sua língua,
telefone para o **0300 373 3300**

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde görmek istiyorsanız lütfen
0300 373 3300 numaralı telefonu arayınız

