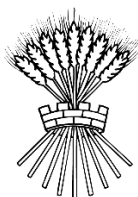


**RYEDALE
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**



**POLICY STATEMENT
(forms part of Equality Scheme)**

Equality policy statement and objectives for 2021-2023

Author	Head of Communications, Technologies and Business Transformation
SMB owner	Head of Communications, Technologies and Business Transformation
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Status	Draft
Ratifying committee	Policy and Resources
Date ratified	[Date to be inserted on approval]
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Review cycle	2 years
Review date	Not applicable. Will cease with commencement of new unitary.

Legislative context

This document has been prepared in the context of the Equality Act 2010. The Act provides the legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. Under the Act, it is unlawful to treat someone unfairly because they belong (or someone thinks they belong) to a group of people with the following protected characteristics:

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

Under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, Ryedale District Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. The purpose of the Equality Duty is to ensure that public bodies consider the needs of all individuals in their day to day work – in shaping policy, delivering services, and in relation to our own workforce.

Under the Equality Duty we must give due regard to the following three aims when making decisions:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. In practice this means:
 - Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
 - Meeting the needs of people with protected characteristics
 - Encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. In practice this means:
 - Tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others

Under the Equality Duty, there are specific things that Ryedale District Council must do. We must:

- Publish information to demonstrate our compliance with the general equality duty. This must include:
 - Information about people who share a protected characteristic in our workforce
 - Information about people who share a protected characteristic and who may be affected by the Council's policies and practices
- Publish one or more objectives that we wish to achieve to further equality and human rights

Our response to the Public Sector Equality Duty is set out in the following pages.

Equality policy statement

Ryedale District Council values the enriching contribution that people from all backgrounds and experiences bring to Ryedale as a place, and the Council as a body.

As a Council we oppose prejudice and discrimination, and we will take every possible step to ensure that our citizens and our workforce are treated with dignity and respect across all of our activities.

As an organisation we will seek to provide services to our citizens in a way that acknowledges the needs of different communities, and that does not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of age, cultural background, socio-economic situation, disability, ethnicity, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, faith or belief.

To support this we are developing our ability to make evidence-based decisions that reflect community needs, aspirations and feedback, and we continue to share information with our partners and contractors to ensure those working with us, or on our behalf, adopt an equality approach.

As an employer we recognise that we will develop and deliver services to the community better, if our workforce is inclusive and demographically representative of the community of Ryedale as a whole. For that reason, we will strive to be an organisation that reflects the diversity of our communities in Ryedale by monitoring the equality aspects of our recruitment and taking positive action to encourage applications from under-represented groups.

We pledge to make decisions on employment fairly, and create/promote an inclusive environment where all of our employees are respected and supported and can be their authentic selves at work.

We recognise and embrace our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and we undertake to deliver on the equality objectives and activities set out in our Equality Action Plan.

Our strategic aims and objectives

We have two over-arching aims:

- Service: To enshrine equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that we do, so that all Ryedale citizens are fully able to access and use our services without issue or discrimination.
- Workforce: To create and maintain an inclusive working culture, where everyone feels able to be their authentic selves, and is supported to achieve at work.

Sitting beneath these over-arching aims are a number of strategic objectives which draw upon the Local Government Association Equal Framework (2020). These are listed below.

Understanding and working with our communities

1. We will improve our understanding of our communities by gathering, analysing and sharing profile data, which can be used for evidence-based decision-making
2. Working with partners, we will implement the Place Standard in key localities across our district, as a means to gather information about community needs and aspirations, and give communities a role in decision-making
3. We will foster good community relations by increasing our active participation in equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) awareness days and partnership campaigns, and championing inclusion in democratic structures

Leadership and organisational commitment

4. We will signal the Council's commitment to reducing inequality by publishing our equality policy statement
5. We will reach out to partners in the voluntary and community sector and wider community to build relationships, and provide an opportunity for key issues to be raised
6. We will strengthen our processes to ensure that equality issues are considered in decision-making
7. We will report on, and publicize, progress against our objectives and equality action plan

Responsive services and customer care

8. We will refresh our procurement and commissioning processes to take account of the diverse needs of clients and ensure that providers understand the requirements of the public sector equality duty
9. We will embed equality into service planning
10. We will increase and improve our systems for gathering customer feedback and measuring satisfaction with our services
11. We will improve our ability to communicate with members of the community who have special communications needs

Diverse and engaged workforce

12. We will build upon our understanding of our recruitment and workforce demographics against protected characteristics
13. We enhance our EDI training to encompass a broader training offer for our workforce to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion and its practical application is understood
14. We will raise awareness of our mechanisms to support employee health and well-being issues