

RYEDALE
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Equalities Progress Report 2021 - 2022

Introduction

Within the Council Plan Ryedale District Council (RDC) highlights the importance of equality and diversity as being central to the delivery of its aims and objectives. Central to its theme of ‘Organisation: an innovative, enterprising council’ is the determination to create a council that is accessible to all; and a specific pledge to:

“... tackle inequality. Delivering better equality across the district is central to everything the council does and it is committed to doing all it can to be a welcoming and inclusive place characterised by diversity”. It further expands on this priority through a commitment to creating “a district where everyone feels welcome and can thrive”. The Council Plan goes further by articulating several priorities and aims that are central to its equalities priorities:

- Safeguarding vulnerable people
- Ensuring equalities, mental health and well-being are at the heart of service design
- Training its employees and supporting and encouraging businesses and communities to do the same.

In delivering these ambitions a specific Equalities Action Plan was developed in 2021/22 with the following workstreams:

- Understanding and working with our communities
- Leadership and organisational commitment
- Diverse and engaged workforce

This progress report will consider each of these three objectives and the actions taken to deliver them across the year; focussing on the above workstreams and the 14 objectives that underpin them.

Understanding and working with our communities

Objective 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.

The work in this area has focussed on the creation of place-based area profiles for our 5 Market Towns. The profiles provide vital information on population, age and gender, ethnicity, migration, religion, vulnerable groups, housing, crime and safety, health and wellbeing, economy, access to transport and communities and environment. The place profiles allow officers to understand the communities in which they work; drawing on a range of publicly available data sources and internal information to help create a better understanding of the communities they work in.

This data provides a valuable insight into the experiences of people living in the district; for example just 15% of households don't have a car in Ryedale compared to 26% nationally; however the distance to key services is typically much higher (for example the average distance to a doctors surgery is 3.1km compared to a national average of 1.2km), or the average travel time when using public transport is 87 minutes against an England average of 39 minutes. This level of insight will help inform future strategies around travel and transport.

Objective 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 voice in decision making

The three major developments in this area are the development of the place standards toolkit which is being used to engage with communities to gain a better understanding of what the communities feel are their local priorities. The place standard asks 14 key questions related to the place that people live in. for example how safe do you feel in your area? or how easy is it to move around etc. The toolkit then provides feedback to the community on what they see as their priorities and what action should be taken to address any concerns. The place standard tool kit has been used in Pickering and is being rolled out in Castlegate in Malton.

The second project has been the creation of a new resource to support community engagement in local issues. The new Common Place IT platform has been developed to allow residents of Ryedale to pinpoint areas and issues of concern and help inform strategic decisions alongside providing valuable information for the council and its stakeholders on communities' priorities. The new platform has been launched in 2022 with a campaign looking at 'active travel'.

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Alongside the development of the Place standards and Common Place platform the council has also introduced Community MAPS (multi agency partnerships); drawing on the knowledge and experience of key stakeholders across the district to help inform and shape priorities. Regular meetings of the Community Connect Partnership have also helped engage third sector organisations around issues of inequality and supporting information sharing and joint working. This has included a number of town councils, county council and support services around health, caring responsibilities, and advocacy organisations for other minority groups. The next steps for the partnership will be undertake a development day to help inform key place standard requirements using the data that has been gathered over the last year. This is scheduled to take place early in the 2022/23 financial year.

Objective 3: We will foster good community relations by increasing our active participation in EDI awareness days and partnership campaigns, and championing inclusion in democratic structures

The council has been extremely active in participating in nationwide campaigns, supporting an array of initiatives such as Safeguarding Week, World Mental Health Day, and International Women's Day; amongst others; this is alongside delivery of internal campaigns and priorities identified by the council such as British Sign Language awareness sessions and developing a cohort of mental health first aiders to support colleagues. Details of the campaigns supported by Ryedale District Council can be found in Table 1, with Table 2 highlighting internal training and events organised by RDC.

Table 1: National and Local Campaigns Supported by RDC 2021/22

Campaign	Date
Stalking Awareness Week	15 April 2021
Mental Health Awareness Week	7 May 2021
Dementia awareness	12 May 2021.
World Mental Health Day	4 October 2021
Men's health	8 November 2021
IDAS 16-day campaign	25 November 2021
LGBT+ history month	31 January 2022.
Time to talk day	3 February 2022
Sexual abuse and sexual violence awareness week	7-13 February 2022
Women's History month	1 March 2022
International Women's Day	8 March 2022

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Child Exploitation Awareness Day	18 March 2022
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Despite participating in a number of events and days that are clearly important and valuable to helping identify specific equalities issues the council has not evaluated the success of any of these campaigns and therefore it is unable to establish what impact these have had. It will take this learning into the programme of work for 2022/23.

Table 2: Internal and Local EDI Campaigns, Training and Events

Campaign	Date
Zero Tolerance	4 June 2021
Mental health first aiders	15 June 2021
British Sign Language course offer for staff	6 July 2021
Safeguarding training for staff	5 November 2021
Domestic abuse information for staff	9 November 2021
CPD courses for women and BAME staff	16 November 2021
Accessibility champion	26 January 2022
Accessible play park at Riverside View opens	8 February 2022
Diversity and inclusion in the workplace training	16 March 2022

Training has been valuable for colleagues and the introduction of Mental Health First Aiders is seen as a positive move and this links to the People and Culture plan.

Leadership and Organisational Commitment

Objective 4: We will signal the Councils commitment to reducing inequality by publishing our equality policy statement

This Progress report refers directly back to the priorities and actions identified within the equality policy statement which has been published on the Ryedale District Council website. The organisation is proud of the work undertaken to create and deliver this statement over the course of the 2021/22 year but also recognises that having the statement is just the start of the journey. This progress report not only evidences where successes have been achieved but also what actions will be needed for 2022/23 to ensure it remains active during the last year of the district council.

This will mean that the statement will continue to be developed through an action plan created by its internal Equalities working Group and will continue to be shared with elected members, colleagues, customers, and stakeholders throughout the year.

One specific action attached to this objective has been superseded. Due to the impending Local Government Reorganisation process new ICT systems such as SharePoint to help with the dissemination of policies and procedures will not be progressing at Ryedale District Council until after the creation of the unitary authority; therefore, the Council has been unable to deliver on this specific action; meaning the sharing of the policy document is still managed through traditional means such as discussion at team briefs and through its availability on the intranet.

Objective 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

It is almost impossible for the council to deliver on the priorities of the equality policy statement in isolation. Many of the valuable community partners and stakeholders have a significant role to play in helping address in equality and RDC recognises its importance in supporting these organisations find solutions to the problems their customers face. The council is active across several partnerships and working groups including:

- Community Connect Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership
- Older Persons Forum
- MESMAC – supporting LGBT+ communities
- Prevent and Equalities Forum – tackling extremism
- Health Alliance
- Mental Health Forum
- POMAC – Polish and Eastern European support group

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Whilst not an exhaustive or comprehensive list the council will be undertaking a gap analysis of its partnerships to further expand on the Councils understanding of the lived experiences of minority groups but to also ensure that these groups are engaged and supported to help them achieve their aims.

Objective 6: We will strengthen our processes to ensure that equality issues are considered in decision making processes.

Across all papers and reports considered by the council is a requirement for officers to consider any equalities impacts. Despite this, there is a recognised need to do more in this area; making greater use of the information contained in the place profiles will ensure that the council is using the data and information about its communities to best effect and more needs to be done to communicate back to the public on the findings of the equality impact assessment process that contributes to the reports and projects considered by the Council. This is therefore a priority for the 2022/23 financial year.

Objective 7: We will report on and publicise progress against our objectives and equality action plan.

This progress report fulfils this criterion; however, the council is committed to furthering the equalities agendas and has created a revised action plan for 2022/23 based on its finding when creating this progress report alongside the existing actions identified within the original equalities policy statement. The council recognises that equalities work will never be a complete project and therefore this remains an ongoing priority and will also be flexible in terms of the delivery of its action plan, responding to any risks or opportunities as they arise.

Objective 8: We will refresh our procurement and commissioning processes to take account of the diverse needs of client and ensure that providers understand the requirements of the public sector equality duty

The procurement processes comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty and Social Value Act. The council is committed to ensuring positive impact for the council and particularly how contracted partners are helping the council meet its targets around employment and inequality. The council will continue to work and ensure best value.

Objective 9: We will embed equality into service planning

For the 2022/23 financial year a new service planning process has been developed that allows the council to track how specific services are addressing corporate issues linked to equalities, carbon reduction and health and safety amongst others. This puts a direct focus on these

agendas ensuring they are at the forefront of the planning of activities, improvements, and projects. Further enhancements that will take place from the start of the 2022/23 financial year include improvements to the data capture side of the impact assessments to ensure that any new initiatives are fully considered in terms of any positive or negative impacts they may generate against the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010. A more thorough review of the impact of these changes will be considered in the Equalities Progress report for 2022/23.

Objective 10: We will increase and improve our systems for gathering customer feedback and measuring satisfaction with our services

The most significant development in this area concerns the introduction of the CommonPlace platform that allows citizens to engage with the council on a number of place-based, localities issues and the things that matter to them most about where they live. This platform has undergone extensive development across the 2021/22 financial year and launched early in 2022/23. This will provide an extensive platform with which customers can be consulted with on specific items as directed by the council, but also help steer the conversation by highlighting specific issues (and strength of feeling) across their communities.

RDC had intended to develop an annual survey of customers however this is unlikely to develop further due to the ongoing changes likely to be introduced by Local Government Organisation; consequently, the council will be looking at cost effective, simple methods to increase customer feedback linked to service delivery that can be actioned quickly and simply by managers and help inform quarterly reports to elected members. More information on this will be produced in the 2022/23 equalities report.

Objective 11: We will improve our ability to communicate with members of the community who have special communication needs

Meeting the needs of a diverse community is essential to the aims of the council; specifically providing people with equality of access and the ability to engage with the authority on the things that matter most to them.

To this end a few initiatives have been delivered throughout 2021/22 to facilitate delivery of this objective. The council has translation and interpretation facilities in place through a contract with a specialist communication service. This means that any documentation; specifically legal documents can be created in a wide variety of languages and formats; whilst there is also a person-to-person translation service available (requires pre-booking arrangements) to further assist those who prefer direct contact either in person or over the phone.

The RDC website has been fully assessed as to its accessibility and contains a clear accessibility statement that details the options available to users; this includes mobile optimisation recognising that increasingly many more people rely purely on handheld devices to access services as opposed to desk top computers.

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Colleagues have continued to be trained on specific equalities issues and the authority now has several trained dementia friends whose skills and experiences will be used to help shape future services to ensure they are accessible for those living with dementia; this includes changes to reception and waiting areas at Ryedale House which will be reviewed in 2022/23 as part of the ongoing changes to how the council works. These improvements will also extend to looking at how other customers use the space such as those with hearing impairments and the use of induction loops across council sites.

Services have also developed community hubs, satellite drop-in sessions within various different place-based areas in Ryedale. The services have worked in partnership with other public sector partners, VCSE and volunteer organisations to ensure residents are able to access advice and support on services within the local community.

Diverse and Engaged Workforce

Objective 12: We will improve our understanding of our recruitment and workforce demographics against protected characteristics and seek to encourage successful applications from under-represented groups

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to ensure that the business is recruiting in a fair and transparent way; through supporting managers with unconscious bias training to incorporating a much more effective equalities statement on recruitment literature. As part of the Local Government Reorganisation processes all recruitment is now handled by NYCC through their own recruitment portal as yet data and reports are to be shared with district councils concerning their local performance relating to the diversity of applicants. Ensuring the business is able to access and review this information has been identified as an action for the 2022/23 financial year; however, it is acknowledged that the council remains compliant in its practices and any reports to central government concerning diversity are completed in time by colleagues at NYCC.

All organisations that employ over 250 people must complete a gender pay gap report. Ryedale District Council is typically just under this threshold however completes the pay gap report as good practice. This report suggests that RDC is performing well in terms of supporting women in work with women earning £1.04 for every £1.00 that men earn. Typically, women are held back in terms of pay in the workplace and therefore to have such a small (but positive pay gap) recognises the steps that the council has taken to support women in the workplace and supporting them into senior positions traditionally dominated by men.

In terms of creating an accessible workplace, initiatives have been undertaken around improving DSE assessments and ensuring that all steps are taken to help improve access for those with illness, disability, or other conditions to be able to work comfortably. Further improvements to the office environment will be undertaken throughout the 2022/23 financial year ensuring as more people come back into the office and a more

hybrid approach to work emerges, they do so in an environment that supports positive mental health and wellbeing alongside addressing any physical concerns they may have.

Objective 13: We will develop and deliver a broader training offer for our workforce to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion and its practical application is understood

RDC has identified a significant number of mandatory training courses that all colleagues should attend along with specific manager training for seniors within the organisation to ensure they are managing fairly and effectively in line with the councils' policies. At the end of the financial year 95% of colleagues had completed their mandatory training, with the failure to achieve 100% linked to staff turnover meaning individuals did not have their training records up to date when they left the business. This mandatory training covers a variety of topics linked to equality, diversity, and inclusion, including practical understanding of these themes; alongside unconscious bias for recruiting managers, safeguarding and extremism training.

Objective 14: We will raise awareness of our mechanisms to support employee health and well-being issues

The last few years have proved to be challenging not just for organisations but for the individuals working within them. Ensuring colleagues feel supported in terms of their health and wellbeing has become increasingly important to RDC over the course of the pandemic. This year the council introduced a mental Health First Aider scheme to provide peer support for those experiencing negative mental ill health. The council has also supported several health-based initiatives including weekly football and gym membership as part of the employee benefits scheme.

A further scheme introduced this year is focussing on zero tolerance towards inappropriate behaviours which can be experienced both in the workplace from colleagues but also from customers. The council will continue to expand on this through 2022/23 to ensure this message is much more visible and impactful helping protect colleagues.

Finally, as RDC moves towards becoming part of a unitary authority it's important that people feel involved and supported through the transition. This has started through a series of pulse surveys across the North Yorkshire local authority area to understand people's issues and concerns around local government reorganisation but to also ensure they are helping shape the new council and able to participate in this exciting stage of its development. Results from across the region suggested that 83% of respondents felt senior management communicated well about the changes; 28% of respondents (almost 560 individuals) wanted to play a bigger role in the transition and 79% of those surveyed see themselves as continuing to work with the new council. From a Ryedale perspective colleagues receive regular updates on the LGR process from senior managers and there is an increasing focus on sharing the work being undertaken across the variety of workstreams to ensure the new council is ready to launch from April 2023.

Conclusion

Over the last 9 months equalities work has taken on greater significance across RDC; however, despite the progress some gaps exist. Colleagues are more informed and confident when addressing equalities issues and centralised approaches to training and development have helped ensure colleagues remain up to date with their knowledge and understanding of emerging equalities issues such as unconscious bias.

New technology is also increasingly important to the development of the councils understanding of equalities issues across the district; and the launch of the new CommonPlace platform and the use of the place standards toolkit will provide a much greater opportunity for residents to highlight issues in their communities and for them to work with the Council to address issues that matter to them. Additional work around integrated travel and supporting people to access service (especially from rural or isolated communities, or if people have impairments that impact on their ability to engage with services) will also be a key priority for the council over the next 12 months as will doing more to understand the place-based priorities and ensure this information is used effectively to deliver targeted responses to any emerging trends or challenges.

2022/23 Action Plan

Priority	Objective	Action	Measure	Owner	Due date
Understanding and working with our communities	Objective 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	We will make new area profile information more accessible and will promote this with services.	All service managers able to access; publicity issued; BOB page available	BS	Qtr 1 2022/3
		Review data-sharing agreements amongst key partners and gaps addressed	Report provided to SMB setting out data sharing agreements in place	PM	Qtr 1 2022/3
		Build on joint data platform with appropriate partners to extend community insight	Plan in place for data development	PM	Qtr 1 2022/3
			Delivery of data development plan		Qtrs 2-4 2022/3
	Objective 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	Develop/embed mechanisms for frontline community data to be collected and shared	Community MAPS/ Place standards toolkit information to be collected and used	BS	Qtr 1 2022/3
		Refresh Place Standards Pickering data to verify any changes to community aspirations post COVID and gain partnership buy-in on action plan	Plan in operating and actions being tracked	BS	Qtr 2 2022/3
		Roll-out place standards event in castlegate, Malton and gain partnership buy-in on action plan	Plan in operation and actions being tracked	BS	Qtr 2 2022/3
		Roll-out place standard events Markets towns as appropriate Hemsley, Norton and Kirkbymoorside and gain partnership buy-in on action plan	Plan in operation and actions being tracked	BS	Qtr 1 2022/3 Qtr 2 2022/3
					Qtr 3 2022/2

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	Objective 3: We will foster good community relations by increasing our active participation in EDI awareness days and partnership campaigns, and championing inclusion in democratic structures	Develop understanding of hate crime incidence through data link with North Yorkshire Police	Hate crime incidence incorporated into data-sharing	BS	Ongoing
		Develop a calendar of awareness days linked to protected characteristics and promote appropriate messages via social messages and intranet	Calendar in place for remainder of 2021 and social media activity programmed	JLB	27/05/2022
			Calendar in place for 2022 and social media activity programmed		Qtr 4 2022/3
		Review/refresh materials carried by Citizen's Advice van from an equalities perspective	Material produced and in place	BS	Qtr 2 2022/3
		Develop RDC's active participation in Hate Crime Week	Plan in place for October week and delivered	BS / SW	Qtr 3 20221/3
		Develop RDC's active participation in Safeguarding Week by	Participate in National Safeguarding week 2022/23 - scheduled for June 2022	BS/JM	30-Jun-22

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Leadership and Organisational Commitment	Objective 4: We will signal the Council's commitment to reducing inequality by publishing our equality policy statement	Refresh the equality statement, and approve through committee	Statement agreed (refresh action plan for 2022/23)	RM	Qtr 1 2022/3
		Socialise understanding of the equality statement to staff internally via intranet, managers' meeting and staff meeting cascade as part of enhanced training offer (see later section)	Materials available and awareness covered on agendas	Comm s/Equality lead	Jul-22
		Publicise the signing of the statement via media/social media channels, using as an opportunity to reinforce Council commitment to equality	Media statement issued; social media publicity issued	JLB	Jul-22
	Objective 5: We will reach out to partners in the voluntary and community sector and wider community to build relationships, and provide an	As part of the annual service survey, conduct structured service issue conversation using direct links with Ryedale protected characteristic groups and key community influencers (e.g.: Yorkshire East and Ryedale Disability Forum; Scarborough, Whitby and Ryedale Local Area Group of North Yorkshire Learning	Meetings held; service issues relevant to protected characteristics identified and communicated to service leads	KR	Qtr 4 2022/3

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	opportunity for key issues to be raised	Disability Partnership Board; Ryedale Special Families, Malton Pride)			
	Objective 6: We will strengthen our processes to ensure that equality issues are considered in decision-making	The equality impact assessment template is reviewed and refreshed	New template in place	RM	Qtr 2 2022/3
		Guidance is produced for managers on when an equality impact assessment is expected and publicised via training and intranet	Guidance in place	RM	Qtr 2 2022/3
		All management undertake to check all reports coming forward for decision to assess whether an equality impact assessment is required and to push back on any papers submitted that do not have sufficient equality data	Annual equality report includes figure on number of policies/strategies for which an EIA was produced	RM	Ongoing
		Completed equality impact assessments are made publicly available on the Ryedale District Council website	Assessments published	RM	Ongoing
	Objective 7: We will report on, and publicize, progress against our objectives and equality action plan	Activities, measures and milestones as set out in this Action Plan are adopted and picked up by Leads in their performance tracking, and subsequently in the quarterly performance report to committee	Quarterly performance report picks up relevant measures	RM	Ongoing
		An progress report on equality progress is published at the end of the 2022/23 financial year	Report published	RM	Qtr 1 2023/4

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	Objective 8: We will refresh our procurement and commissioning processes to take account of the diverse needs of clients and ensure that provides understand the requirements of the public sector equality duty.	Procurement to consider equality impact assessments on new contracts	Action Plan amended.	?	Qtr 1 2022/3
	Objective 9 We will embed equality into service planning	Equalities to be added to service planning, and demonstrate this to senior managers in annual service plans	Service plan includes at least one equality objective	RM	Qtr 1 2022/3
		The equality aspect of complaints is reported as part of the annual equality performance report	Report figures available and socialised to aid service improvement	RM	Qtr 4 2022/3
		Guidance on setting of equality measures and objectives is incorporated into instructions for service plans	Guidance provided	RM	Qtr 1 2022/3

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	Objective 10: We will increase and improve our systems for gathering customer feedback and measuring satisfaction with our services	We will review current customer feedback activity across core services to evaluate its effectiveness, frequency and adoption as part of service improvement	Report presented to SMB	ML	Qtr 3 2021/3
		Ryedale District Council adopts instant customer satisfaction feedback mechanisms (effectiveness, courtesy) on core citizen-facing services	Housing, benefits and customer service utilizing quick feedback tools	KR	Qtr 4 2021/2
			Satisfaction measures reported as part of quarterly performance report	ML	Qtrs 1, 2, 3 and 4 2022/3
	Public consultations and their results to be centrally logged with results reported annually as part of	Consultations included in annual performance report	RM / LB	Qtr 4 2022/3	

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		the report against the equality action plan			
Objective 11: We will improve our ability to communicate with members of the community who have special communications needs		We will publicise our approach to availability of digital documents in alternative formats via our engagement statement, on our website, and to staff	Guidance available and socialised	RM /JLB	Qtr 2 2022/2
		We will define and adopt a corporate position on translation availability across frontline services	Translation approach in place and understood. Use of translation services measured annually in performance report	RM / KR	Qtr 1 2022/3
		We will work with an appropriate partner (e.g., autism society) to introduce appropriate visual support materials to help customers with autism and learning difficulties in interview situations	Visual materials available in reception and meeting rooms	PM	Qtr 2 2022/3
			Training delivered.		
		We will become a Dementia Friendly organisation by adopting this training across frontline teams	Measure of number of dementia-friendly staff incorporated in annual report	EL	Qtr 4 2022/3
		We will define and develop our approach to supporting people with hearing difficulties and deafness	Frontline staff trained on support offered to people with hearing difficulties	ML	Qtr 4 2022/3

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Diverse and engaged workforce	Objective 12: We will improve our understanding of our recruitment and workforce demographics against protected characteristics, and seek to encourage successful applications from under-represented groups	We will launch an internal campaign to encourage self-reporting on My View with the objective of boosting completion	% of staff who have completed, reported in annual performance report and showing improvement on current	EL	Qtr 2 2022/3
		We will train all recruiting managers in unconscious bias	Number of trained staff reported in annual performance report	EL	Ongoing
		DSE completions and adjustments will be reported into the Corporate Health, Safety and Well-being Group, in order to have oversight and flag potential disability issues	Adjustments reported and matters escalated as required	RM	Ongoing
				JLB	

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	Objective 14: We will raise awareness of our mechanism to support employee health and well-being issues	We will regularly raise awareness of zero tolerance and reporting mechanisms, health assured and occupational health offers, and the digital pledge with quarterly messages through the intranet and weekly staff newsletter	Comms messages distributed on BOB and staff newsletter at least once a quarter		Qtrs 1, 2, 3 and 4 2022/3
		We will actively participate in “people” workstream developments in local government reorganisation structures	Staff feel informed and supported on LGR, measured through pulse surveys	EL	To end March 2023