

Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) 2021



The Equality Framework has been updated to reflect the latest legislation affecting equality such as Gender Pay Gap reporting, the changing context of the local government sector and equality in Britain as well as in response to other significant issues that might affect equality including the UK's decision to leave the European Union, the increased focus on race equality as a result of the Black Lives Matter movement and the health inequities highlighted by the Coronavirus pandemic.

Equality frameworks
01 Nov 2021

Introduction

The equality framework is intended to help councils:

- Deliver accessible, inclusive and responsive services to customers and residents in their communities including those from under-represented groups.
- Employ a workforce that reflects the diversity of the area they are serving.
- Provide equality of opportunity for all staff.
- Meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty and support any aspirations to exceed these.

It seeks to do this by:

- Identifying the areas of activity that councils need to address to deliver good equality outcomes.
- Helping councils to understand how they can build equality into processes and practices.
- Supporting organisations to become inclusive employers.
- Enabling councils to informally self-assess their progress on the equality improvement journey and determine where and how they need to improve.

Providing the framework for an LGA Equality peer challenge.

Underlying principles

- The EFLG is part of the LGA's sector support programme offer to the local government sector and as such engagement with the framework is voluntary.
- The framework can help with compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty which is a legal obligation of the Equality Act 2010.
- The framework references the nine legally protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. It also encourages councils to consider other issues that might be affecting their staff such as caring responsibilities as well as issues affecting communities like socio-economic inequality and isolation including rural isolation.
- The EFLG is supportive of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's six selected domains of equality measurement which it has identified as the areas of life that are important to people and that enable them to flourish. They are: education, work, living standards, health, justice and personal security, and participation.

- The modular design of the framework reflects the fact that councils come in all shapes and sizes with different resources, communities and priorities. It recognises that action on all equality issues at once is not always possible.
- Developing EDI processes and practices is an ongoing process for all councils, regardless of what level a council is performing at (even in excellence there is room for improvement).
- The framework supports the LGA's Equality peer challenge and other peer challenges.

The framework sets out four modules for improvement, underpinned by a range of criteria and practical guidance that can help a council plan, implement and deliver real equality outcomes for employees and the community. The four modules are:

understanding and working with your communities

leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

responsive services and customer care

diverse and engaged workforce

For each module there are three Levels. Developing, Achieving and Excellent. The levels are progressive and cumulative so an organisation can plan and chart its progression against different priorities. Councils can be at different levels of the framework for different modules or themes.

Developing - The developing level criteria contain the basic building blocks for each priority. An organisation at the Developing level has made an organisational commitment to improving equality. It is putting in place processes to deliver on equality issues and is working towards meeting or is meeting the statutory requirements.

Achieving - An organisation at the Achieving level has policies, processes and procedures in place and is delivering some good equality outcomes. It is not only meeting but can demonstrate exceeding statutory requirements.

Excellent - An organisation at the Excellent level has mainstreamed equality throughout the organisation and can demonstrate that it is delivering significant outcomes across its services that are making a difference in its communities. The organisation not only exceeds statutory requirements but is an exemplar council for equality and diversity in the local government and wider public sector.

Underlying each module are a number of themes, each with a short descriptor at each level of the framework. Each theme has a set of indicators or criteria that can be used to self-assess or plan activity.

Understanding and working with your communities

- collecting and sharing information
- analysing and using data and information
- effective community engagement
- fostering good community relations
- participation in public life.

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

- political and officer leadership
- priorities and working in partnership
- using equality impact assessment
- performance monitoring and scrutiny.

Responsive services and customer care

- commissioning and procuring services
- integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes
- service design and delivery.

Diverse and engaged workforce

- workforce diversity and inclusion
- inclusive strategies and policies
- collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data
- learning, development and progression
- health and wellbeing.

Understanding and working with your communities

Collecting and sharing information

Developing category

Developing (1.1)	Criteria
The organisation has gathered and published information and data on the profile of its communities and the extent of inequality and disadvantage. Plans are in place to collect, share and use equality information with partners.	The organisation is clear about what sources of information (both local and national) are relevant and useful. The organisation knows what information is already being collected – internally and by its partners, including voluntary and community sector stakeholders. Some information and data have been gathered and published. The organisation is working with its partners to ensure information is shared effectively. Partners ensure efficient collection of data that avoids duplication. The authority is compliant with GDPR legislation in its collection, analysis storage and use of data and information.

Achieving category

Achieving (1.2)	Criteria
Relevant, proportionate and appropriate information about the local communities and their protected characteristics is being gathered. Information is shared appropriately across the organisation and with partners, informing the planning of services and contributing to better outcomes.	Information is analysed on the basis of different communities, including those sharing protected characteristics. Quantitative and qualitative research methods are used to gather data and information. National and regional data is used and analysed. Information from ward councillors is gathered in a systematic way. Data is easily accessed, shared and used by departments across the organisation. The organisation is working with partners to address identified gaps in information. Data is disaggregated using the same or similar categories. Information is being shared to identify and measure equality needs and to understand and measure outcomes for the area. There are robust and effective protocols in place for sharing information between partners and within the council and to ensure data protection. Information is being captured about health and the social determinants of health including socio-economic deprivation and other inequalities.

Excellent category

Excellent (1.3)	Criteria
A comprehensive set of information about local communities/groups with protected characteristics needs and outcomes is regularly updated and published and used to identify priorities for the local area.	The council is working with partners to continuously develop new and innovative data sharing platforms. The organisation has a sophisticated understanding of the differences between the equality profiles of their local area and how that translates to inequalities for different groups. Changing needs are identified and prioritised across a wide range of services and outcomes by, for example, referring to the Equality and Human Rights Commission's Equality Measurement Framework. Data is regularly updated and used to set priorities across the organisation and in different services, by geographical area and by protected and other characteristics such as intersectionality, deprivation etc. There is evidence of a continuous improvement of the quality of the data. Voluntary and community sector partners/health colleagues and stakeholders access and use the information.

Analysing and using data information

Developing category

Developing (2.1)	Criteria
Systems are being developed to analyse soft and hard data/intelligence about communities, their needs and aspirations.	The organisation is developing and improving systems for collating and analysing the different sets of data being collected. Information is collected by front-line staff or key decision makers and taken account of. Information captured about inequalities is used in decision making. The authority is compliant with GDPR legislation, analysis and use of data and information.

Achieving category

Achieving (2.2)	Criteria
Information and data is disaggregated and analysed to support the assessment of local need, impacts of changes to services and priorities.	Data is used to inform the setting of relevant equality objectives, and these are regularly monitored. Data is used in service planning, commissioning and decision making. Data is continuously gathered and analysed. Information is disaggregated in a meaningful way, by relevant protected characteristic and other factors (such as deprivation or rurality) and analysed on a regular basis. Information is used to identify and prioritise on the basis of need. Information and data is used effectively as part of impact assessment/risk assessment ensuring due regard is given to the public sector equality duty. Performance data is monitored against equality objectives and outcomes with key partners and other stakeholders. Equality outcomes for commissioned and procured services are monitored and reported on.

Excellent category

Excellent (2.3)	Criteria
Up to date and comprehensive equality data is used regularly to plan, predict and assess impacts of decisions and business as usual practice. Impacts are monitored and reviewed.	The organisation and its partners are using data in innovative ways such as data insight methods to target service interventions. Data is being used appropriately and accurately to predict and measure demand for services. Achievement of outcomes are measured and there is evidence of gaps being narrowed in the areas identified by local people as their priorities.

Effective community engagement

Developing category

Developing (3.1)	Criteria
A whole council approach to the development of inclusive community engagement structures is being developed throughout the organisation. There are opportunities for communities to be involved in decision making.	The organisation has an agreed approach to engagement. It is clear about different levels of engagement (i.e. informing, consulting, participating, co-producing) and when these are appropriate. Engagement structures are in place. There are opportunities for under-represented groups to engage with decision making. The organisation can evidence examples of these opportunities. Shared engagement structures/mechanisms are in development with partners. There are some shared engagement activities with partners.

Achieving category

Achieving (3.2)	Criteria
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Achieving (3.2)	Criteria
<p>Integrated engagement mechanisms and structures are in place to involve stakeholders in scrutinising service delivery, decision-making and progress. The organisation engages with all its communities when making decisions, including those from under- represented groups.</p>	<p>People from under-represented groups are encouraged and enabled to participate in decision making. A range of engagement methodologies are used. Priorities have been changed as a result of community engagement with a clear and demonstrable evidence basis. The organisation and its partners share information and the results of engagement activities to ensure that particular groups are not being over consulted with. There is an increase in the involvement of underrepresented groups. Engagement with the community and voluntary sector and the wider community effectively inform decisions. There are processes and plans throughout the organisation and with partners to increase stakeholder and voluntary and community sector involvement in informing priorities. Feedback is given and people in the community are able to challenge and have their views taken account of.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (3.3)	Criteria
<p>Formal and informal interactions take place between the organisation and its diverse and under-represented communities. All under-represented groups are actively participating in and influencing decision making and intersectionality is explored and accounted for.</p>	<p>There are a range of innovative approaches involving communities and arrangements are made to meet specific or individual needs. Vulnerable people/communities are participating including those that are seldom heard in the community. There is evidence that mainstream engagement mechanisms are increasingly involving previously under-represented groups. Communities are encouraged or supported to influence or make decisions. Staff and stakeholders are able to describe levels of influence within the community and changes made as a result. Key decision makers are involved in the engagement process. There is evidence of partnership arrangements for engagement leading to improved outcomes in participation. Partners are open to challenge and constructive criticism and there is openness in considering the views of different groups and stakeholders without bias towards the loudest voice(s). Where there is very limited or no actual representation within a local demographic, the ability to cater for difference is in evidence.</p>

Fostering good community relations

Developing category

Developing (4.1)	Criteria
<p>Structures are in place within the organisation and across partnerships to understand community relationships and map community tensions.</p>	<p>There are joint partnerships responsible for monitoring community tensions. The Community Safety Strategy considers the issue of community cohesiveness. Council communications/ promote positive relations.</p>

Achieving category

Achieving (4.2)	Criteria
<p>The organisation and its partners have a strong understanding of the quality of relations between different communities and collectively monitor relations and tensions. The organisation and its partners are actively engaged in planning and delivering activities that foster good relations.</p>	<p>Harassment and hate crimes are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified. Members play a role in monitoring community relations and reporting intelligence. Data is available, and it is disaggregated to cover the protected characteristics. Data and intelligence is regularly analysed and acted upon. Stakeholders and communities are involved in the monitoring of community relations and cohesion.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (4.3)	Criteria
The organisation takes a sophisticated approach to fostering good relations which has resulted in measurable improvements in relationships between diverse communities.	Information is available to show there has been an improvement in community relations. The organisation works with others to improve performance on good relations between diverse communities. The council's leaders maintain a high profile on community relations. The council makes use of members' links with different communities depending on circumstances. The council plays a leading role in bringing the partners and the community together if there are serious incidents of hate crime. There is obvious and demonstrable cross over between equality, diversity and community cohesion.

Participation in public life

Developing category

Developing (5.1)	Criteria
The organisation has a clear understanding of the level of participation in public life by different communities/protected characteristics. This can include involvement in local democracy and representation e.g. school governors, councillors, board members of voluntary/statutory sector organisations.	Information and data is gathered about the extent of involvement in public life.

Achieving category

Achieving (5.2)	Criteria
Local people are encouraged to participate in public life or in other activities where they are under-represented. The council uses a range of different methods and it is able to innovate and find new ways to extend participation in certain communities.	The organisation actively informs and involves local people, including under-represented groups, in opportunities for public participation. The range of participation is wide - from involvement in service consultations to participation in community-based forums, to becoming school governors etc. Outreach work or public campaigning has been undertaken to increase levels of participation by protected groups.

Excellent category

Excellent (5.3)	Criteria
There is an improvement in the participation rates of under-represented groups in public life. The organisation can demonstrate that people across a range of protected characteristics are able to influence decisions.	There is evidence that improvements have been achieved. More people from under-represented groups are participating across a wider and more diverse range of activities. There is evidence of improvements to services as a result of this greater participation. Decision makers are from a wider range of backgrounds.

Leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment

Political and officer leadership

Developing category

Developing (6.1)	Criteria

Developing (6.1)	Criteria
The political and executive leadership have publicly committed to reducing inequality, fostering good community relations and challenging discrimination.	Senior leaders in the organisation have stated their commitment to a diverse workforce and have made clear what is expected from staff when delivering services to the community. Leadership on equality is demonstrated in a way that is recognised and understood by the organisation and local communities. Leaders have publicly committed to improving equality in their area. There is some evidence of action, not just 'talking about it'. The organisation has established and publicised a strong business case for its equality work. There is evidence that the organisation is aware of the socio-economic duty within the Equality Act 2010. The organisation regularly communicates its commitment to promoting equality to staff and the community. There is evidence that publications reflect the organisation's commitment to equality and fostering good relations. There is adequate resourcing and some expertise for EDI work across the organisation.

Achieving category

Achieving (6.2)	Criteria
Political and executive leaders demonstrate personal knowledge and understanding of local communities and continue to show commitment to reducing inequality.	Senior leaders can demonstrate their commitment to equality in decision making and how this informs the way the organisation responds to challenges. Senior leaders demonstrate knowledge and commitment to equality issues. They 'walk the talk'. There is evidence that equality considerations inform their decision making. Senior leaders understand the value and impact good communications can have and ensure that publications, websites and other communications channels are as diverse as possible. The organisation promotes a positive narrative around equality and good relations across the whole community. It has influence in wider communities and partnerships, on a range of cohesion issues such as countering far right extremism. The council has adopted some of the key policies of the socio-economic duty when taking decisions. There are examples of where the organisation and its partners have had to take unpopular decisions and can evidence how it has involved the community in reaching the decision. The organisation is up to date with language and concepts and has the cultural competence and confidence to have difficult conversations around EDI issues. The organisation has taken steps to counter negative stereotypes or dispel myths.

Excellent category

Excellent (6.3)	Criteria
Leaders have gained a reputation within the community and with the Council's partners for championing equality, balancing competing interests and fostering good relations.	The organisation is able to show that even when making difficult decisions it continues to demonstrate a clearly articulated and meaningful commitment to equality. Senior leaders have and own clear knowledge of local equality priorities and how and why they are being addressed. Senior leaders act as ambassadors for the equality agenda. When appropriate they have made a bold public stance on values led equality issues such as race or transgender equality. This is done even in the face of vociferous and negative public comments. Senior leaders visibly personally challenge inequalities and drive an improvement agenda. Local communities believe that the senior leadership is successfully challenging inequality. Staff, the community or the voluntary and community sector can offer good examples of how effective communication and engagement with the council has enabled the organisation to prevent or manage tensions between different equality groups. The organisation plays a role in ensuring that all stakeholders collectively manage the conflicting needs of their communities. The council routinely takes account of the socio-economic duty when taking decisions and can describe outcomes as a result.

Priorities and partnership working

Developing category

Developing (7.1)	Criteria
Partnership working arrangements are being reviewed with the voluntary and community sector and the wider community to ensure that local equality priorities are addressed.	Corporate and partnership documents capture the commitment of the organisation and partners to equality. Equality objectives are reflected in local strategic planning. There is support and investment in the voluntary and community sector that it is able to work as a network or collective with the council.

Achieving category

Achieving (7.2)	Criteria
There is a coherent, shared vision of equality for the local area, with clear priorities which have been agreed and understood by all key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sector.	Key stakeholders have been involved in developing the shared vision of equality for the area. The shared equality priorities, objectives and outcomes for the local area are understood and acted on at all levels within the organisation. The council looks beyond traditional partners and includes the voices of smaller influencing organisations. The organisation and its partners monitor, review and evaluate performance against equality priorities, including inequality and an intersectional understanding of health inequality. The results of these activities contribute directly to the development of the organisation's objectives.

Excellent category

Excellent (7.3)	Criteria
The organisation can demonstrate success in working with partners in the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to address equality priorities, which are reviewed on a regular basis.	Staff, the community and the voluntary and community sector can give good examples of improved outcomes/reduced inequality/improvements on a range of issues including intersectional health inequality. Review mechanisms are in place. There is an 'equality dashboard' approach with outcomes/performance data for the area, shared across partners. There is evidence that cross-organisational learning is taking place. The community and voluntary sector say that they are treated as equal partners by the council.

Using equality impact assessment

Developing category

Developing (8.1)	Criteria
Due regard is taken to the aims of the general equality duty when conducting business as usual, making decisions and when setting policies.	The organisation has an agreed approach to conducting equality analysis/impact assessment of policy and service decisions. This process includes both business as usual issues and decision making. Training and support on equality analysis and impact assessment is available for staff. Impact assessments take account of the views of those affected by the policy or decision. There is a process for ensuring that equality impact assessments are sufficiently robust.

Achieving category

Achieving (8.2)	Criteria
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Achieving (8.2)	Criteria
<p>Equality analysis/impact assessment is integrated systematically into planning, decision making and performance reviews across the organisation.</p>	<p>The agreed approach to conducting equality analysis/impact assessment of policy and service decisions is used across the whole organisation. Assessments are undertaken at an appropriate stage. There is senior level commitment to using and understanding equality analysis/impact assessment to inform planning and decision making. The majority of the organisation's assessments are accessible, robust and meaningful. There is evidence that members and senior leaders routinely take account of equality analysis/impact assessment when making decisions. Members challenge poor quality equality assessments. Decisions around budget cuts and savings have taken account of cumulative impact. The findings, recommendations and conclusions are shared effectively to inform decisions and planning. Mitigating actions are identified where appropriate.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (8.3)	Criteria
<p>The organisation can demonstrate that improvements in equality outcomes are being delivered as a result of effective equality analysis/impact assessment, and that negative impacts have been mitigated.</p>	<p>Where necessary there is evidence of reports and policies being rejected by members and officers if not accompanied by an assessment that has been taken at an appropriate stage. The organisation can demonstrate how equality analysis/impact assessment has been used to identify needs and improve outcomes/reduce inequality. The organisation can provide evidence of how or where equality analysis/impact assessment has informed decision-making and led to different, tailored services that have improved outcomes. All of the organisation's assessments are accessible, robust and meaningful. The organisation captures information about what budget/service cuts mean to people's lives. The organisation is willing to take managed risks to pursue a progressive equality agenda. Impact assessments are embedded as an ongoing practice across the council.</p>

Performance monitoring and scrutiny

Developing category

Developing (9.1)	Criteria
<p>Appropriate structures are in place to ensure delivery and review of equality objectives.</p>	<p>There is an appropriate and accountable leadership group/board/forum who have responsibility for the equality agenda. There are dedicated resources for supporting equality work.</p>

Achieving category

Achieving (9.2)	Criteria
<p>The setting and monitoring of equality objectives is subject to challenge, including through any organisational bodies or groups and the political overview and scrutiny process.</p>	<p>The overview and scrutiny function is used to support and challenge progress on equality. This can include scrutinising and challenging equality analysis/impact assessment, reviewing objectives that are being set and monitoring progress. The public and partners are enabled to monitor progress. Progress and responses are reported regularly to the leadership of the organisation, officers and members. Corrective action is taken if outcomes are not being achieved.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (9.3)	Criteria

Excellent (9.3)	Criteria
The organisation uses the scrutiny process as a driver for change. The organisation benchmarks its achievements against comparable others and shares its experience in developing good practice.	The organisation assesses its performance and outcomes against comparable organisations. Review mechanisms are in place. Some outcomes and priorities have changed as a result of a scrutiny review. The organisation is approached on a regular basis to provide examples of – or showcase - its good practice. Equality work is appropriately resourced across the council.

Responsive services and customer care

Commissioning and procuring services

Developing category

Developing (10.1)	Criteria
The organisation ensures that procurement and commissioning processes and practices take account of the diverse needs of clients, and that providers understand the requirements of the public sector Equality Duty.	Guidance is available for suppliers on the equality requirements for the procurement and commissioning process. There are standard equality clauses for contracts. Procurement is based on known analysis of communities' needs. The organisation has started to consider how it can measure the social value of its contracts and procured services and goods.

Achieving category

Achieving (10.2)	Criteria
Mechanisms are in place to ensure that equality standards are embedded throughout the procurement cycle.	The organisation considers the equality impacts of how the public pound is spent with regard to local procurement and influence on the local economy. Specifications take account of the different needs of users. For example, through equality analysis/impact assessments. Monitoring requirements are built into contracts to ensure equality issues are addressed. These are then monitored and reported on. The organisation has an established Social Value Framework which includes equality outcomes. The social value of contracts is measured. The performance of sub- contracting arrangements is measured.

Excellent category

Excellent (10.3)	Criteria
The organisation can demonstrate that commissioned/procured services are helping it achieve its equality priorities.	There is evidence that contracts are being monitored using quantitative and qualitative analysis. The results are considered by both the supplier and client. There is evidence of providers meeting the organisation's equality objectives. Providers understand and can articulate a commitment to their own and the council's equality agenda. The organisation sets stretching targets for social value in equality from its contracts and these are being achieved. Local procurement is positively influencing and improving equality outcomes within the local economy.

Integration of equality objectives into planned service outcomes

Developing category

Developing (11.1)	Criteria

Developing (11.1)	Criteria
<p>Equality objectives for the organisation have been set and published in accordance with the requirements to support the public sector Equality Duty.</p>	<p>Structures are in place to ensure equality outcomes are integrated into business objectives. Objectives are underpinned by robust equality analysis. Equality analysis is fed into planning and assessment of service plans. Objectives are SMART (Specific, Measurable Realistic, Achievable and Timely). An Annual Equality report is published and shared. The specific duty to publish equality objectives has been met. Service plans are monitored regularly to ensure that equality objectives are being met. Customer care policies highlight the needs of protected groups.</p>

Achieving category

Achieving (11.2)	Criteria
<p>Specific and measurable equality objectives have been integrated into organisational strategies and plans and action is being taken to achieve them. Outcomes are measured and monitored regularly by senior leaders.</p>	<p>Equality objectives are integrated into organisational strategies and plans. There is evidence of a link between equality objectives, business planning and performance management. Equality objectives are integrated into service plans across the organisation, with progress towards them managed by key decision makers. Steps are taken if deficiencies are identified. Members are kept informed of progress against equality objectives. Objectives address equality gaps and have specific timescales. The needs of protected groups are taken account of. Service users have opportunities to comment on how services are planned. Resource implications have been properly assessed. Key decision makers demonstrate that they continuously monitor, review and evaluate performance of equality objectives.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (11.3)	Criteria
<p>The organisation can demonstrate a clear link between meeting their equality objectives and positive outcomes for its communities.</p>	<p>The organisation can demonstrate that improvements and equality outcomes are being delivered across the business. Service plans are designed and written with equality objectives in mind. Business plans review past performance, demonstrate how past objectives have been achieved, review performance and set new objectives. Actions to achieve priority outcomes are reviewed by senior leaders and members and regularly updated. Stakeholders and staff are involved in the setting and monitoring of objectives and their feedback is considered as part of assessing progress. Gaps have been identified in terms of who may not be using services and why. Action has been taken to change services in response. There is evidence of improved or improving outcomes, disaggregated where appropriate to demonstrate the effects on different communities/protected groups.</p>

Service delivery and design

Developing category

Developing (12.1)	Criteria

Developing (12.1)	Criteria
<p>The organisation has systems to collect, analyse and measure how satisfied all sections of the community are with all services.</p>	<p>There are mechanisms in place for service users to be consulted about service development and delivery. Social Value and collaborative principles are reflected in the organisations practical service delivery. The organisation is able to analyse and measure whether all sections of the community are able to access services. It is clear who service users are. Services carry out mapping exercises to identify and review current participation and to highlight gaps. The organisation collects data about user satisfaction with its services. The mapping and satisfaction data collected is disaggregated by different equality groups or vulnerable communities. Complaints are disaggregated by protected groups. There are mechanisms in place to enable staff to introduce business improvements. Appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure that Human Rights considerations are identified when planning services and that customers and citizens are treated with dignity and respect. Consideration has been given to the links between equalities and safeguarding in relevant services.</p>

Achieving category

Achieving (12.2)	Criteria
<p>There is evidence that services are meeting the needs of a diverse community, and that take up of services is representative of the wider community.</p>	<p>The organisation has systems in place to use monitoring data and citizen feedback to redesign or adapt services to ensure equity of access and can demonstrate where this has been done. Service users are consulted effectively before services are developed. Issues such as social prescription and social value involve measuring outcomes which are not delivered by the organisation. Access to and appropriateness of services is monitored regularly by senior leaders and decision makers. Senior leaders and decision makers demonstrate that they continuously review and evaluate access to services. Data about access to services and user satisfaction is used in equality analyses/equality impacts assessment. A scrutiny/evaluation process of services is in place. Human Rights issues are understood and considered when delivering services to customers and clients. Human Rights guidance is available for staff and decision makers have up to date knowledge. Equalities are accounted for within safeguarding policies, particularly in social services, education, commissioning and non-upper-tier responsibilities like housing and community safety.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (12.3)	Criteria
<p>Service design and delivery is producing equality outcomes for all under-represented groups in the community.</p>	<p>Services are co-produced with service users wherever possible and service users are able to influence changes. Initiatives such as Community Asset Transfers and Community Right to Challenge may be in evidence as delivered by local communities instead of the local authority. There is evidence of how levels of customer satisfaction with services and associated outcomes have improved over time. Take up of services is representative of the community in proportions that would be expected. There are examples of how different customers' experiences are analysed and acted upon to improve services. Where the human rights of individuals have been threatened the organisation has ensured that they are safeguarded. There is evidence of improved safeguarding outcomes for under-represented groups.</p>

Diverse and engaged workforce

Workforce diversity and inclusion

Developing category

Developing (13.1)	Criteria
The organisation understands its local labour market and has mechanisms in place to monitor its workforce against protected characteristics.	The organisation is clear about its local labour market. The organisation has begun to identify the steps it needs to take to achieve a diverse workforce. These are reflected in recruitment policies and procedures. The progress of protected groups through the organisational hierarchy is monitored and reported on. Equality mapping data is used as part of the analysis. Recruitment and selection is monitored at all stages of the process by protected characteristics.

Achieving category

Achieving (13.2)	Criteria
The organisation can demonstrate movement towards greater diversity in its workforce profile compared with previous years, including increasing the levels of previously under-represented groups at all levels of the organisation.	Where there is evidence of disproportionality, any barriers have been identified and action taken to reverse the trends. There are initiatives aimed at increasing workforce diversity in underrepresented areas of the organisation. There is some evidence that gaps are being narrowed. There are career development and retention strategies for under-represented groups into management roles. There is a developing understanding of the local labour market/community profile, the barriers equality groups face and the impact this has on achieving a diverse workforce. Succession plans and recruitment processes address under-representation. Specific and measurable employment targets have been set to improve workforce diversity. Selection panels are trained in good selection practices including how to avoid bias. This includes senior recruitment panels where members are involved.

Excellent category

Excellent (13.3)	Criteria
The organisation actively ensures that the profile of its workforce (including the profile of major providers of commissioned services) broadly reflects the community it serves/local labour market.	There are appropriate examples of positive action to improve diversity. There is evidence that the workforce profile at all levels broadly matches the local labour market/community profile. This is continually monitored. There are reasonable explanations for gaps (e.g. the community profile is constantly changing or largely retired population) and what the organisation is doing about it. Good use is made of flexible working arrangements and targeted career pathway initiatives to address potential barriers and under representation.

Inclusive strategies and policies

Developing category

Developing (14.1)	Criteria
The organisation's workforce strategies and policies include equality considerations and objectives.	All employment policies and procedures comply with equality legislation and employment codes of practice. The organisation's workforce strategy identifies equality issues. Targets and objectives are based on internal monitoring, staff consultation and the assessment of the local labour market and barriers to employment. New/changing employment policies and procedures are assessed for their impact on people with protected characteristics. All employment and training related policies are regularly reviewed. The organisation recognises and acknowledges that staff from protected groups may experience issues such as micro-aggression from colleagues or service users. The council is using its workforce data to develop training and development strategies that can support a wider equalities agenda for employees. A range of inclusive structures are in place to engage and involve staff. Policies and systems are in place to identify, prevent and deal effectively with harassment and bullying at work.

Achieving category

Achieving (14.2)	Criteria
The equality objectives contained within workforce strategies are implemented and monitored.	The organisation has a basic set of policies and practices to enhance workforce equality and diversity including reasonable adjustments, equal pay, flexible working and family friendly policies. The equality aspects of the organisation's workforce strategy are being implemented and tracked. When necessary, policy changes have been made as a result of equality analysis findings. Managers apply policies and practices across the authority in a consistent manner for all staff. Harassment and bullying incidents are monitored and analysed regularly. Appropriate action is taken to address the issues that have been identified. There is evidence that discipline, grievance and capability procedures are not disproportionately being applied to staff from protected groups. There are processes in place to address and monitor specific complaints of staff from protected groups about issues like micro-aggression from colleagues or service users. There are toolkits and guidance documents provided to help staff and their managers discuss sensitive issues such as race, gender identity and religion. Exit interviews are monitored and analysed with appropriate action taken to address any issues identified. Staff are engaged positively in employment and service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working. Trade unions and partners are involved. The training and development offer supports a wider equalities agenda for the organisation. Training courses and development interventions are meeting the needs of different groups and are making a difference in getting underrepresented groups of staff up the leadership ladder. Staff led equality networks have been established.

Excellent category

Excellent (14.3)	Criteria
Prioritised equality outcomes for the whole workforce are being achieved.	The organisation has an excellent set of policies and procedures in place which are actively promoted to staff from all protected groups and used by managers to promote equality. Strategic, innovative and holistic approaches have been considered to improve outcomes. Staff say that they are able to have difficult conversations with their managers about aspects of equality at work and in the wider world that affect them and their colleagues. Staff are involved in developing and monitoring workforce policies. Positive and tangible equality outcomes have been delivered as a result of the implementation of a wide range of policies and practices. Outcomes are systematically communicated to staff in a range of formats including targeted and tailored communication to employees in particular roles and specific equality groups. The organisation has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups in respect of staff engagement. Harassment and bullying at work is dealt with effectively and staff say that they are treated with dignity and respect. Training and development strategies are proven to be making a significant difference to the wider equality agenda for employees and for workforce diversity. Staff involved in equality networks are satisfied that they are listened to and that they are able to make a difference in the organisation.

Collecting, analysing and publishing workforce data

Developing category

Developing (15.1)	Criteria
Systems are in place to collect and analyse employment data across a range of practices (recruitment, training, leavers, grievance and disciplinaries etc).	The organisation reports annually on its Gender Pay Gap. People are encouraged to provide data and there are initiatives in place to increase the disclosure of equality information by staff. Employee data is analysed organisationally and service by service. Diversity monitoring information is separated from recruitment decisions and held securely. GDPR processes are in place and regulations are being met.

Achieving category

Achieving (15.2)	Criteria
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Achieving (15.2)	Criteria
The organisation regularly monitors, analyses and publishes employment data in accordance with its statutory duties.	Data on applicants, people shortlisted and the composition of the workforce is systematically collected. This can be disaggregated by the protected characteristics. There has been success in encouraging staff to disclose equality information and there are no significant gaps in employee data. Where there are low numbers of any protected group, ways are found to overcome this. e.g. boosted sampling, grouping ethnicities or looking regionally/nationally as well as making more use of qualitative information. The organisation publishes its race pay gap and is addressing any race and disability pay gaps. Its' gender pay gap is reducing. There is evidence that workforce data is analysed and reported to senior leaders regularly. Workforce information is published to cover basic legal requirements and includes analysis of pay/job evaluation outcomes. Action has been taken as a result of monitoring, trends are being identified and used to help establish objectives.

Excellent category

Excellent (15.3)	Criteria
The authority uses a robust and comprehensive set of employment data to inform its workforce strategy and management practice, as well as benchmarking and sharing good practice.	Workforce data includes a wide range of information and protected characteristic profiles including pay levels, training opportunities, appraisal ratings. Sufficient information exists about staff to inform robust equality analysis. The organisation considers and is addressing pay gaps across other areas of inequality such as religion and belief/ age, LGBT+ etc. The organisation understands the effects of employment policy and practice on its workforce. The organisation has sufficient information about staff to inform robust equality analysis. The workforce profile is updated regularly. It is possible to analyse data by all the protected characteristics whilst ensuring that there are appropriate safeguards in place to protect from any risk of personal identification.

Learning, development and progression

Developing category

Developing (16.1)	Criteria
The organisation carries out regular assessments of the training, learning and development needs of members and officers in order that they understand their equality duties and take action to deliver equality outcomes. Consideration is given to the progression of under-represented groups.	An assessment has been made as to what equality-related training, learning or development is required in the organisation. Appropriate behavioural competencies have been identified for the workforce. The learning and development plan/strategy take account of equality issues including the progression of under-represented groups. Induction training for new members includes equality and all members are offered equality training. Appraisal processes ensure staff and managers are aware of their equality-related responsibilities and accountabilities.

Achieving category

Achieving (16.2)	Criteria
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Achieving (16.2)	Criteria
<p>The organisation provides a range of accessible learning and development opportunities to support members and officers in achieving equality objectives and outcomes. The organisation's learning and development strategy supports the progression of under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Equality and diversity forms part of the training and development for key decision makers. There is evidence that equality issues are mainstreamed into all training (e.g. training on customer care) and rooted in clear organisational values and behaviours. Employees are confident that they can deliver services to diverse customers. They are made aware of equality objectives and/or any changes or improvements. Different methods are used to promote learning to a wide audience (e.g. standard courses, coaching, mentoring). There are specific development programmes to promote and support the progression of under-represented groups in the workplace. Management and individual appraisals include specific equality objectives for the service area.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (16.3)	Criteria
<p>Decision makers understand the importance of equality when making decisions and in how they use resources. Services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who are equipped to meet the diverse needs of local communities. The organisation actively promotes progression for under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Managers and staff are accountable for ensuring equality outcomes. They can give examples of improved equality outcomes they have contributed to. Good performance is recognised in the appraisal process and more generally. Managers feel that their training has enabled them to address issues relating to protected characteristics and equality practice confidently and effectively. Staff feel their skills have improved and that they are able to relate effectively with a range of clients. Staff can answer questions about the council's equality priorities. Feedback from service users in protected groups is positive about the skills of staff in dealing with their issues. The learning and development offer goes beyond traditional equalities training and includes emerging areas of good practice such as cultural awareness. Development programmes to support under-represented groups of staff have delivered the outcomes that were set and are making a difference to the workforce profile.</p>

Health and wellbeing

Developing category

Developing (17.1)	Criteria
<p>The organisation has begun to consider how equality, diversity and inclusion issues are linked to employee health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>The organisation uses workforce data and other information from staff to determine what its health and wellbeing priorities are. Staff in protected groups have opportunities to inform these considerations. The organisation has assessed all aspects of the working environment to ensure that the health and safety needs of all its employees are met including around COVID-19. A range of inclusive mechanisms are in place to engage and involve staff. The organisation has considered working arrangements and patterns in the light of the COVID pandemic. The organisation has a policy for reasonable adjustments for staff and members and managers are trained to implement it. Occupational health services are provided. The organisation has started to address mental health issues in the workplace.</p>

Achieving category

Achieving (17.2)	Criteria

Achieving (17.2)	Criteria
<p>The organisation promotes the health and well-being of staff via its policies. The intersectionality of health and wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion is recognised.</p>	<p>There is a coherent and joined up approach to Health and Wellbeing that addresses a range of related issues. Improvements have been made to the working environment. In the post-pandemic world, homeworking and working more flexibly is now the default position in the organisation. Staff from protected groups say there is a safe working environment which supports their wellbeing and resilience where they are impacted by racism and other discrimination. Harassment such as racism is recognised as a safeguarding/wellbeing issue which can be a cause of trauma. Staff are engaged positively in employment and service transformation and in developing new roles and ways of working. Reasonable Adjustments are provided in a timely fashion consistently across the organisation. Occupational health works closely with HR to identify and address absence trends. Managers have received training on mental health awareness and say they are equipped to address staff issues. Staff from protected groups say that their specific needs are taken into account by their managers when COVID-19 risk assessments are undertaken.</p>

Excellent category

Excellent (17.3)	Criteria
<p>There is a positive health and wellbeing culture throughout all levels and areas of the organisation which supports all employees sense of identity and self-esteem.</p>	<p>Approaches to health and wellbeing are innovative. Links are made between health and wellbeing and EDI based on evidence and there are strategies in place to address these issues. The organisation understands the concept of different models of disability. Its policies are designed in partnership with disabled staff and disability organisations which encompass a range of views and lived experience. Disabled staff feel well supported by their managers and the policies of the organisation. There have been significant outcomes in the health and wellbeing of all staff including those with protected characteristics. There are high satisfaction levels with the working environment across all staff groups particularly those with protected characteristics. The organisation has high satisfaction levels across all staff groups in respect of staff engagement. Staff from protected groups are confident that the organisation understands and responds appropriately to their specific health concerns about COVID-19.</p>