

# **EDI Strategy & Action Plan 2024**

## **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

### **1. Initial information**

Name of the policy, project, strategy, project or service being assessed:

- Dorset Council Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027

### **2. Is this a new/refreshed strategy?**

The Dorset Council EDI Strategy, Priorities and Action Plan is a new strategy with proposed actions for each year and a detailed supporting action plan. It replaces the current EDI Strategy, which is due to end in 2024.

The EDI Strategy and Action Plan was originally intended to be presented at the start of 2024. However, the previous administration (Conservative) decided to delay it. The newly elected administration (Liberal Democrat) supports progressing this piece of work. As a result of this delay, the opportunity was taken to review the initial drafts, which resulted in both documents being updated. The EDI strategy and action plan identifies who is responsible for delivering on the identified actions.

### **3. Is this for internal and external?**

Internal (employees only) and External (residents, communities, partners, visitors)

### **4. Please provide a brief overview of its aims and objectives:**

The new EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027 aims to meet a legal requirement and play an influential community leadership role in challenging inequality. It will also help us ensure that what we do is always for the benefit of Dorset's residents by:

- Delivering high quality responsive services and improving customer care
- Delivering fair and equal access for all to facilities and services, free from discrimination
- Being more efficient – providing value for money with improved and targeted services and savings.

We have a responsibility to listen and respond better to ensure that our workplace and our services meet the needs of everyone. As one of the county's largest employers, we also have a responsibility to lead by example. This document outlines the principles and objectives that will guide us on our journey.

## **5. Please provide the background to this proposal.**

The Dorset Council Plan 2022-2024 set out our vision to “make Dorset a great place to live, work and visit”. The development of the new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan is key to achievement this vision. This strategy makes an essential contribution to the achievement of all five priorities set out in the Council Plan:

- Driving economic prosperity
- Creating stronger, healthier communities
- Creating sustainable development and housing
- Protecting our natural environment, climate, and ecology
- Becoming a more responsive, customer-focused council.

In particular, the purpose of this strategy is to support achievement of the council's vision by focusing on the priorities of ‘stronger, healthier communities’ and a diverse and engaged workforce to enable us to become ‘a more responsive, customer-focused council’.

### **Evidence gathering and engagement**

#### **6. What sources of data, evidence or research has been used for this assessment? (e.g national statistics, employee data):**

Before developing the new EDI Strategy and action plan an opportunity was undertaken to review the existing strategy and action plan which was published in 2021. A review of the 35 actions identified that:

- 14 actions completed
- 18 actions partially progressed
- 3 actions not progressed

Engagement with external partners (members of the EDI Reference group; EDI members of the Integrated Care System group) and internal partners (Extended Leadership Team; EDI Strategic Board members; 2 workshops) undertaken at the end of 2023 and the start of 2024.

To inform the development of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan, we have drawn on latest census information provided by the Office for National Statistics, 2021 and Human Resources data 2019-2024.

#### **7. What did this tell you?**

A review of the data told us that the refreshed EDI Strategy & Action Plan needs to be wide-reaching and flexible, responsive to needs and change.

For ease of presentation of demographic data, infographics and tables have been used to present a picture of the Dorset Council workforce and we compare against our residents and nationally. Looking to the future we aim to present this information in dashboards.

The feedback/comments on drafts have been considered, and updates to the strategy and action plan have been made. However, providing individual responses to every comment has not been possible.

While developing the EDI Strategy and Action Plan, it is important to recognise that achieving the identified actions is a collective responsibility and the work needs to be owned by the council.

## **8. Who have you engaged and consulted with as part of this assessment?**

The EDI strategy and action plan was developed through engagement with employees and stakeholders including:

- voluntary and community sector
- EDI Reference Group
- employee networks
- trade unions
- senior officers
- Integrated Care System EDI members

## **9. Is further information needed to help inform decision making?**

We do not consider any further information required at this stage as engagement and consultation have been undertaken to develop these drafts. However, it is recognised that further information might need to be included because of feedback from the People and Health Overview Committee and Cabinet. In addition, changes might be necessary because a new government has been elected.

This EqIA is proposed to be reviewed each year when the council publishes information as part of its Public Sector Equality Duty reporting requirements.

### **Is an EQIA required?**

The Dorset Council EDI Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027 does require an EqIA.

## Assessing the impact on different groups of people

For each of the protected characteristics groups below, please explain whether your proposal could have a positive, negative, unclear or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is and, if unclear or negative, please explain what mitigating actions will be taken.

- use the evidence you have gathered to inform your decision-making.
- consider impacts on residents, service users and employees separately.
- if your strategy, policy, project or service contains options you may wish to consider providing an assessment for each option.
- see guidance for more information about the different [protected characteristics](#).

### Key to impacts

Positive Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the proposal eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and/or fosters good relations with protected groups.</li> </ul>
Negative Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protected characteristic group(s) could be disadvantaged or discriminated against</li> </ul>
Neutral Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no change/ no assessed significant impact of protected characteristic groups</li> </ul>
Unclear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• not enough data/evidence has been collected to make an informed decision</li> </ul>

### Impacts

Impacts on who or what?	Choose impact	How
Age	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Disability	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Gender reassignment and Gender Identity	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Marriage or civil partnership	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Pregnancy and maternity	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Race and Ethnicity	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Religion and belief	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Sex (consider men and women)	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Sexual orientation	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan

<b>Impacts on who or what?</b>	<b>Choose impact</b>	<b>How</b>
People with caring responsibilities	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Rural isolation	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Socio-economic deprivation	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Single parents	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan
Armed Forces communities	Anticipated positive impact	Please see the proposed action plan

**Please provide a summary of the impacts:**

We anticipate the action plan has the potential to benefit employees, residents and visitors to the Dorset Council area. Some of the priorities identified in the action plan will be running throughout the duration of the strategy.

We recognise that change might occur, whether due to local, national, or international drivers; if this occurs, the EDI Strategic Board will decide whether or not existing priorities need to be added or changed.

In developing the new EDI Strategy and Action Plan, an opportunity has been taken to identify definitions for most of our local protected characteristics. Where possible, we have aligned with the Office for National Statistics and the NHS. It is recognised that more work is required concerning care experienced, which is a priority for 2024/25.

## Action Plan

Summarise any actions required as a result of this EqIA.

Issue	Action to be taken	Person(s) responsible	Date to be completed by
EDI Strategy and Action Plan approval	Present the EDI Strategy and Action Plan to the People and Health Overview Committee	EDI Officer BP - Communities & Partnerships Head of Strategic Communications and Engagement	July 2024
EDI Strategy and Action Plan approval	Present the EDI Strategy and Action Plan to Dorset Council Cabinet.	EDI Officer BP - Communities & Partnerships Head of Strategic Comms and Engagement	September 2024
Publication/promotion of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan	Develop a communications plan to support implementing the EDI strategy and action plan across the council.	EDI Officer Internal Communications	By the end of October 2024
Implementation of the EDI Strategy and Action Plan approval	Introduction of an electronic reporting framework for the tasks identified in the EDI Action Plan	EDI Officer	By the end of October 2024
Implementation EDI Strategy and Action Plan approval	Contact Task owners identified in the EDI Action Plan.	Task Owners	By the end of October 2024
Updating EDI Strategy and Action Plan	Update the EDI strategy and action plan if the new administration introduces any changes at Dorset Council.	EDI Strategic Board	Each EDI Strategic Board meeting
Annual review of EqIA	Review this EqIA as part of the Public Sector Duty reporting requirements.	EDI Officer	End of March each year

## Sign Off

Officer completing this EqIA:

Officers involved in completing the EqIA: Dr James Palfreman-Kay, Jen Lewis, Laura Cornette and Katherine Locke

Date of completion: 12 July 2024

Version Number: 1

EqIA review date: End of March 2025

Equality Lead Sign Off: Laura Cornette

### Next Steps:

- the EqIA will be reviewed by Communications and Engagement and if in agreement, your EqIA will be signed off.
- if not, we will get in touch to chat further about the EqIA, to get a better understanding.
- EqIA authors are responsible to ensuring any actions in the action plan are implemented.

Please send to [Diversity and Inclusion Officer](#)