



South Staffordshire Council

'Everyone Counts'

Our Equality Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

2024 - 2027



www.sstaffs.gov.uk



Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



'EVERYONE COUNTS'

Welcome to this summary of South Staffordshire Council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

We are delighted to introduce this document which sets out our commitment to build a fairer society for our residents, businesses, and employees in South Staffordshire.

This document is a high-level overview of the top equality issues in our district, work in progress and future plans.

We are particularly proud of South Staffordshire's reputation as a welcoming place, but also aware more needs to be done. In one way or another equalities can affect us all. As a council we have broad ranging responsibilities with respect to equalities, both as a service provider and as an employer. Whilst we take the Equality Act 2010 extremely seriously where possible we will also aim to exceed statutory obligations, particularly where this will make a difference to our communities.

As a public sector provider, we have a responsibility to give people a voice. We can best do this by talking to people to find out what they want and then delivering inclusive services that are as flexible and diverse as the communities we serve.

We must also reflect inwardly and recognise our responsibilities as an employer because we know that a workforce that represents the make-up of our district is better placed to deliver equitable services that are sensitive to different needs and perspectives.

We hope we have gone some way to conveying the importance we place on equality.

Dave Heywood
Chief Executive
South Staffordshire Council

Councillor Roger Lees BEM
Leader
South Staffordshire Council

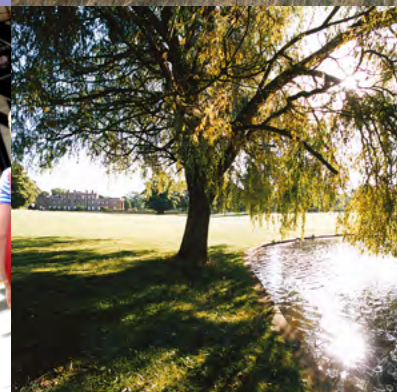
Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



**Shaping
South Staffordshire's
future**

"We are proud that in 2023, 89% of our residents would recommend South Staffordshire as a good place to live. Our 27 parishes are made up of some small hamlets and large villages with no major towns. Our diverse communities are a strength of the district and we are proud of their uniqueness.

With 80% greenbelt land, our residents take pride in our beautiful countryside as well as our rich legacy of conservation areas, amongst many historic buildings and landscapes. The area also has a strong manufacturing history that has been recently heightened by our partners; i54 South Staffordshire and Jaguar Land Rover"



Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

Our approach to equality and diversity, and what it means for our communities, staff and residents.

This is a three year strategy 2024-27. The data will be reviewed annually.

OUR APPROACH

As a council we have equality responsibilities, both as a service provider and as an employer, as emphasised in the Equality Act; particularly the importance of treating people with protected characteristics fairly.

However, equality is not just about staying within the law. South Staffordshire Council has a vital role to play in making a difference to our residents. This includes reducing inequalities and driving better outcomes for people who experience disadvantage relating to their protected characteristics and because of socioeconomic and health inequalities.

We have produced our 'Everyone Counts' document to set out a high-level overview of the top equality issues affecting our communities and staff. We have also set out our work in progress, plans and equality objectives which aim to remove barriers, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations, and improve our performance in meeting our equality duties.

What this means for:



OUR COMMUNITIES

We will develop approaches to make all people feel welcomed and valued in South Staffordshire. We will proactively challenge discrimination and exclusion and eliminate barriers.



OUR STAFF

We will treat all people fairly. We aim to create an environment where everyone can participate and has an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.



OUR RESIDENTS

We recognise that everyone is different, whether these differences are visible or non visible. We will respect, value and celebrate these differences.

Diversity and Inclusion Achievements

As a result of the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) South Staffordshire Council leisure centres accommodated **960 spaces** free spaces during the Easter and Summer Holidays Activity Camps.



Fit & Fabulous over 50
Gentle Exercise

From 1st April to 30th September 2023, a total of 5,353 people attended gentle exercise programme classes.

Followers **10,666**

Followers **9,804**

Customer Services answers an average of **4,400** telephone calls, which increases to **6,000** calls during May and June; handles **400** email enquiries and supports **900** face-to-face enquires within Codsall Community Hub.



The Disabled Facilities Grants service, now delivered by Stafford Borough Council has completed 143 adaptations totalling £734,507 supporting vulnerable people to remain in their homes between April 2023 and March 2024.



During 2023, 184 vulnerable homeless households at risk were supported to prevent homelessness or to find accommodation.

Arranged for the installation of safety equipment into the homes of **72 victims of Domestic Abuse** to prevent them having to move home or become homeless".

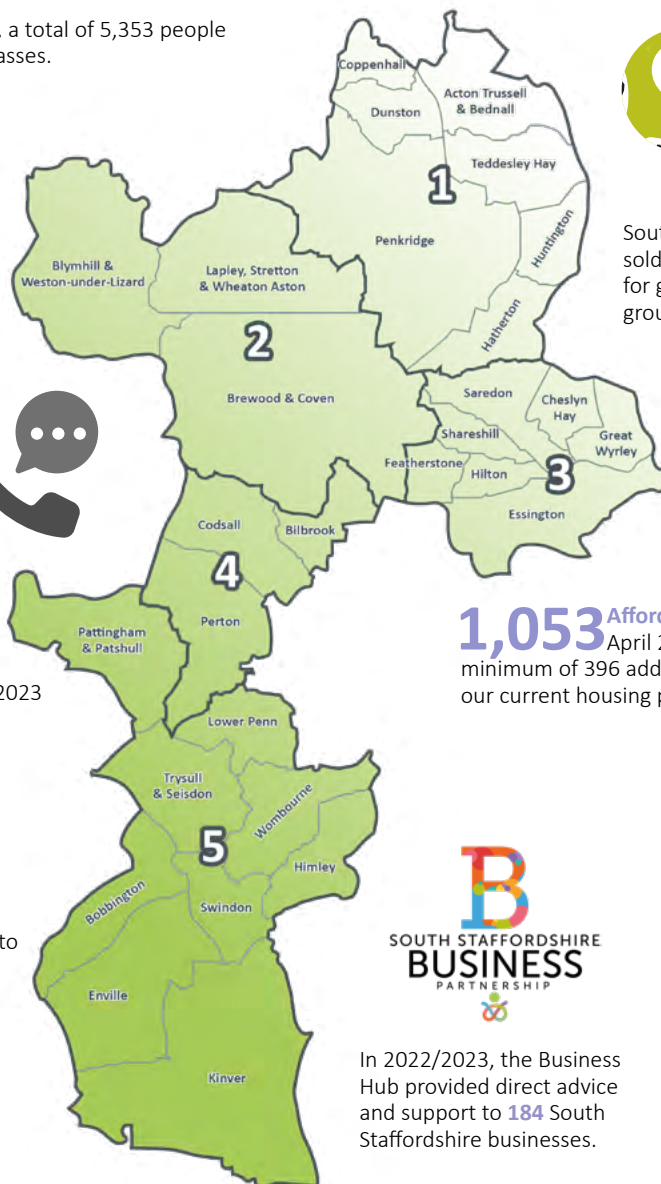
Creating Brighter Futures between April 2023 and March 2024 supported over 130 residents to improve their career prospects through training, qualifications, life skills and volunteering.

Working with partners to raise awareness and support people who are particularly vulnerable to being a victim of crime, or criminally exploited.



Our **leisure centres** offer activities and classes for all age groups and abilities.

Funded by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner – The Universal Space Scheme enabled over 1,300, 8 – 17 year olds to enjoy discounted leisure activities such as football and swimming.



South Staffordshire Community Lottery has sold **314,838** tickets and generated **£189,000** for good causes, charities, and community groups across South Staffordshire.



1,053 Affordable Housing completions from April 2010 to March 2023 and we expect a minimum of 396 additional affordable homes to come from our current housing permissions.



In 2022/2023, the Business Hub provided direct advice and support to **184** South Staffordshire businesses.

Processed 1,191 new applications for Council Tax Support between April 2023 and March 2024 with a total of 5,538 households in receipt of benefits.

Working with partners to raise awareness and increase reporting of **domestic abuse**.



Achieved accreditation from Health at Work

We responded to and took appropriate action to over **200** requests in relation to housing conditions. Of those, **29** related to damp and mould in properties.

Helped residents in **1,459** properties with assisted bin collections.



ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY

89% of residents would recommend South Staffordshire as a place to live

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

Every year we send out an annual survey for our residents to complete, the latest survey, undertaken in 2023, focused on place and how residents feel about living in South Staffordshire. The results were used to develop the new Council Plan for 2024-28 and also support the Localities+ model and service planning.



RESIDENT SURVEY 2023 SUMMARY

60%

of residents are more likely to identify with their village, 32% are more likely to identify with South Staffordshire, 8% are most likely to identify with Staffordshire.

51%

of residents volunteer in the community and a further 13% would like to volunteer

83%

of residents agree that people work together to improve their local area

86%

of residents feel safe during the day

67%

feel safe at night in the area they live

61%

of residents are concerned about the cost of living and 44% about tackling crime

When asked what's most important in making South Staffordshire a good place to live, 47% of residents selected access to nature as most important.

A sense of community was the overarching theme in the analysis of the statements made in the open responses in the survey. Community and village also featured strongly.

In addition to future resident surveys the Council is working with Support Staffordshire to establish Key Community Groups in all 5 Localities to facilitate further engagement opportunities alongside work to co-ordinate activity and signpost people to the support available within their communities.

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITIES



There are **110,472** people living within South Staffordshire of which **55,308** are male and **55,164** are female.



Within this Population **51,697** are economically active* whilst **13,582** are classed as economically inactive.



74.5% of houses are owner occupied whilst **10.5%** are privately rented.

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE AGE	Number	%
Total: All usual residents	110,474*	100.0
Aged 4 years and under	4,923	4.5
Aged 5 to 9 years	5,510	5.0
Aged 10 to 15 years	6,669	6.0
Aged 16 to 19 years	4,144	3.8
Aged 20 to 24 years	5,431	4.9
Aged 25 to 34 years	12,060	10.9
Aged 35 to 49 years	18,861	17.1
Aged 50 to 64 years	25,132	22.7
Aged 65 to 74 years	14,191	12.8
Aged 75 to 84 years	10,071	9.1
Aged 85 years and over	3,482	3.2

* total differs due to rounding.

GENDER IDENTITY, CENSUS 2021 SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE (note - only asked for those aged 16 or above)	Number	%
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth (number)	89,061	95.39
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given (number)	99	0.11
Trans woman (number)	38	0.04
Trans man (number)	38	0.04
Non-binary (number)	20	0.02
All other gender identities (number)	11	0.01
Not answered (number)	4,103	4.39
Total	93,370	100

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census of Population 2021

7 * Definition of economically inactive - <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/labourmarketvariablescensus2021/economicactivitystatus>

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITIES

ETHNIC GROUP	Number	%
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi	59	0.1
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese	189	0.2
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian	2121	1.9
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani	435	0.4
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian	304	0.3
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African	307	0.3
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean	547	0.5
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black	177	0.2
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian	615	0.6
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African	120	0.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean	1174	1.1
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	333	0.3
White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British	101832	92.2
White: Irish	483	0.4
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	192	0.2
White: Roma	29	0.0
White: Other White	1034	0.9
Other ethnic group: Arab	60	0.1
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	464	0.4
Total population	110475*	100

Source: Office for National Statistics, Census of Population 2021

* total differs due to rounding

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

By 2030, to every 65-84 year old, there will only be two 16-64 year olds. This, in conjunction with an above average prevalence of dementia, has fuelled our desire to become a dementia-friendly community.

These are some of the key local challenges that will inform how we work with partners to plan and deliver our services.

THE CHALLENGES:

- » Adults aged 16-64 with NVQ level 3 or above is 17.6% which is higher than national average.
- » Adults with no qualifications is slightly higher than national average with Huntington and Hatherton, Essington and Himley and Swindon being notably higher than national average.
- » Healthy life expectancy in South Staffordshire is 65 years for men and 66 years for women.
- » Around 25% of children aged 4-5 have excess weight.
- » 68% of South Staffordshire adults have excess weight which is above national average.
- » 15.7% single person households are aged 66 and over which is higher than national average of 12.9%.
- » Breast Cancer screening is worsening.
- » Dementia prevalence is above the UK average.
- » Average house price is £265,000 which now stands at 8 times the average gross salary £33,075.
- » Average download speeds and availability of gigabit remain significantly below national levels and many areas have low average* download speeds.
- » 53.3% of residents aged 16 and over were employed which is below the national average.
- » There was a 24% increase in the last ten years in the number of people aged over 64 compared to a national increase of 20%.
- » Vehicle crime has reduced by 20% in 2023-24 (466 vehicle crimes recorded).

* This is based on 2022 data from the Ofcom Connected Nations data. For download performance the latest published data is for 2022. These speeds may have improved since particularly where there has been investment in new infrastructure.

'Everyone Counts'



Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy



EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

The 2021 Census has provided updated information about changes in the local population. This and the Resident Survey 2023 feature in updated [Locality Profiles and Place Narrative](#). This contributed to the development of the priorities set out in our [Council Plan 2024-28](#).

The plan outlines the strategic direction of the council and the priorities for the next four years to deliver our vision “A place of Vibrant Communities”.



South Staffordshire’s Councils equality objectives reflect our current corporate objectives in relation to Equality and Diversity and help us to improve policy making, and service delivery:

- **Empowering our communities** – to enable local people from diverse backgrounds to influence service design, we will consult and engage with our communities and partners, providing opportunities for sustaining and improving the quality of life that our communities value.
- **Quality services and our Customer Promise** – we will use our data and intelligence to inform our understanding of the diverse needs of our communities, making sure the services we provide are fair and accessible to everyone by removing any barriers to access, equity and inclusion.
- **Employer of Choice** – we will strive to have an agile and adaptable workforce that is representative of our communities. Recognised as a local Employer we will facilitate connections that provide opportunities for local people, with the council, partners, and businesses in South Staffordshire.



We recognise that achieving these objectives is a long-term goal which will require concerted, proactive and on-going action in order to evidence change. We will report on performance measures and outcomes about these objectives annually, and this information will be published on our website. We will also review the objectives regularly to check that they are still relevant and to ensure they reflect the current customer needs, resident feedback and data that we have available.

WORKFORCE STATISTICS



Our Gender Profile



There are
194 (60.25%)
female employees and
128 (39.75%)
male employees

The number of female part-time employees is significantly higher than male part-time employees

Gender breakdown is similar to previous years

31 March 2023

4.87% (mean)
6.98% (median)

437* contracts
(60% female & 40% male)

31 March 2022

6.53% (mean)
9.42% (median)

431* contracts
(61% female & 39% male)

* NB this is based on all contracts paid including multiple jobholders and casual relief workers.

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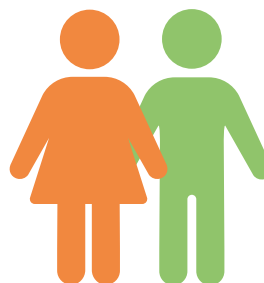
Gender pay representation by seniority

Corporate Leadership Team



60%
female employees
40%
male employees

Assistant Directors



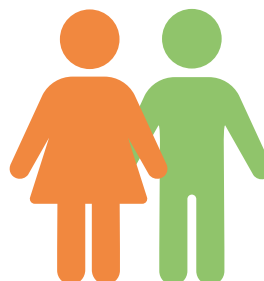
50%
female employees
50%
male employees

Team Managers



57%
female employees
43%
male employees

Assistant Team Managers



37%
female employees
63%
male employees

Our Ethnicity Profile

Over **92%** of the workforce has declared themselves as British.

We have 22 employees across 13 service teams who have declared they are from ethnic minority backgrounds (16 during 2021/22).

Disability Workforce Profile

Disabled
16 employees
4.97%

Not disabled
297 employees
92.24%

Not specified
6 employees
1.86%

Prefer not to say
3 employees
0.93%

Age



Almost **19%** of the workforce are 25 and under which is a marginal improvement on last year

Ages	%
16-18	7.76%
19-25	11.18%
26-35	13.04%
36-45	23.29%
46-55	18.95%
56 Plus	25.78%
SUM	100.00%

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

Employee survey 2023/24 executive summary

8.3 ★
average rating

I am treated fairly and feel valued.



8.7 ★
average rating

I am satisfied with the leadership and culture of the organisation.



8.5 ★
average rating

South Staffordshire Council is a well-run organisation.



8.8 ★
average rating

The Council is an inclusive organisation.



8.6 ★
average rating

I feel proud to work for South Staffordshire Council.



Words used to describe the council's culture?

Ambitious • Progressive

Friendly • Positive

Caring • Supportive

Inclusive • Flexible

What do you like best about working for South Staffordshire Council?

“Great flexi scheme and working arrangements offering hybrid working.”

“Supportive environment that values individuals and their contributions.”

“Flexibility (hours), good pension contribution, career opportunities.”

“Positive, inclusive culture. Senior management genuinely care about their staff.”

“Good wellbeing support, modern office space and facilities.”

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy

COMMUNITIES – 2024/2025

OUR PLANS TO IMPROVE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION



- ✓ Monitor our community performance indicators and use the findings to shape our plans and priorities.
- ✓ Taking forward the outcomes from the Ageing Well Summit.
- ✓ Progress the partnership action plan which covers economic wellbeing and community wellbeing themes.
- ✓ Through data and intelligence identify priority need for allocation of health inequalities funding across the district.
- ✓ Conduct a resident's survey to understand community priorities and take action to improve response rates from younger age groups.
- ✓ Establish key community groups in the voluntary sector by locality to enable greater networking, signposting, and collaboration within communities.
- ✓ Continue to deliver the Creating Brighter Futures Programme across the district with the aim of supporting skills, qualification uptake, employment, and improve career prospects.
- ✓ Take forward specific projects in Locality 3 with the aim of upskilling parents and working with local employers to provide additional skills for employees.
- ✓ Assist with cost-of-living pressures by improving awareness of benefit entitlement through delivery of a Welfare Services roadshow within each Locality across the district.

WORKFORCE – 2024/2025

OUR PLANS TO IMPROVE EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

- ✓ Introduce anonymised candidate recruitment.
- ✓ Continue to roll out inclusive recruitment and unconscious bias training.
- ✓ Align our workforce data categories with census and best practice equality data and map against local population data to identify how representative we are as an employer.
- ✓ Promote awareness of neurodiversity support in the workplace.
- ✓ Continue to ensure all employees attend equality, diversity and inclusion training.
- ✓ Conduct a culture and wellbeing survey and respond to any key findings.



EQUALITY ARRANGEMENTS

Our commitment

We're committed to helping to build a fairer South Staffordshire where the diversity of our local communities is celebrated.

We are working hard to shape our services and employment practices to make sure that we are fully supporting, equity, fairness and the right to live free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment and to give everyone the best possible environments to live, visit and work.

Leadership strategy and policy

The Leader of the Council, all Elected Members, Chief Executive, Corporate and Assistant Directors have responsibility for the strategic direction of equality and diversity in the Council. They also ensure equality is considered when key decisions are made that affect residents and employees.

This is supported by the Council's corporate equality steering group who develop strategic plans and corporate work programmes to support equalities at South Staffordshire Council.

Equality and Diversity Service Group

The Equality and Diversity Service Group is representative of key council services. The aim of the group is to quality assure Equality Impact Assessments, and to provide a forum to consider the needs of underrepresented colleagues and ensure they have a voice and can share their expertise to help us continually improve.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE OUR EQUALITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANS

Empowering our communities

- Locality Enabler activities, wards walks, residents survey and customer insight will demonstrate that we actively listen and engage with our communities to understand their priorities.
- Our services will use this intelligence in shaping their service plans and performance indicators.

Quality services and our Customer Promise

- Equality Impact Assessments will remove inclusion barriers and ensure our policies, services and decisions are influenced and informed by data and intelligence relevant to the diverse needs of our communities.

Employer of choice

- Workforce data will demonstrate how representative we are of our communities.
- Training attendance and evaluation records will evidence our commitment to ensuring our workforce are well informed and aware of the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Employee surveys will measure our workforce culture, wellbeing and employee engagement ratings.
- Human resource metrics will measure the opportunities we are providing to support work experience, apprentices and local employment.

