

DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER- CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES

Date: Tuesday 27th July, 2021
Time: 11.00 am
Venue: Council Chamber

AGENDA

1. Equality and Inclusion Report - 2019 and 2020 3 - 24

Charlotte Benjamin
Director of Legal and Governance Services

Town Hall
Middlesbrough
Date Not Specified

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors , , M Smiles

Assistance in accessing information

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MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL	
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Report of:	Strategic Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration
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Submitted to:	Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Culture and Communities, 27 July 2021
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Subject:	Equality and Inclusion Report – 2019 and 2020
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Summary

Proposed decision(s)

That the Executive Member notes the findings and progress outlined in the Equality and Inclusion Report spanning 2019 and 2020 (Appendix 1) and approves the proposed actions set out within the report to promote continuous improvement.

Report for:	Key decision:	Confidential:	Is the report urgent?
Decision	No	No	No

Contribution to delivery of the 2021-24 Strategic Plan

People	Place	Business
The report ensures compliance with legal requirements in relation to publication of diversity and workforce data.	Not applicable.	The report sets out how the Council aims to improved inclusion within local communities and its workforce.

Ward(s) affected

There is no direct impact on any ward from the recommendations of this report.

What is the purpose of this report?

1. This report presents the Council's Equality and Inclusion Report for 2019 and 2020 and asks the Executive Member to agree a number of actions to improve outcomes for local communities and the Council's workforce.

Why does this report require a member decision?

2. The Council's Scheme of Delegation gives the Executive collective responsibility for corporate strategic performance, together with associated action.
3. Equality and diversity, fair decision-making and the need to tackle inequalities in outcomes is of critical importance to overall community wellbeing and cohesion within Middlesbrough and so is integral to the Council's Strategic Plan.

Report Background

4. The Equality Act 2010 placed a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on local authorities and other bodies. The broad purpose of the PSED is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into day-to-day business. It requires equality considerations to be reflected into the design of policies (including internal policies) and the delivery of services, and for these issues to be kept under review.
5. This PSED is supported by specific regulations that place additional duties upon the Council. In particular the Council is required to publish a range of data to demonstrate its compliance with the PSED and on the composition and equality of its workforce.
6. The Council's Annual Equality and Inclusion Report ensures that these duties are met and that all relevant data is published, in line with statutory requirements.
7. The publication of the report covering 2019 was significantly delayed due to the impact of COVID-19 on the Council's business-as-usual operations, therefore the report presented to today's meeting (Appendix 1) covers both 2019 and 2020 and:
 - describes and compares the diversity of Middlesbrough's population and the Council's workforce, alongside appropriate comparators;
 - sets out how the Council complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010; and
 - summarises progress to date in actions taken to improve equality and inclusion outcomes for local communities and the Council's workforce, and sets out further action to be taken in the next year.
8. The report and associated datasets will be published on the Council's Open Data site following today's meeting.
9. The report finds that:
 - Middlesbrough is a diverse town and its diversity continues to grow. Diversity is positive and to be celebrated.
 - The diversity of the Council's workforce is broadly equivalent to local diversity, with the exception that BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) communities are underrepresented. This is an issue for local government generally, and there are

signs of improvement in Middlesbrough. However, more needs to be done, particularly given the growth of BAME communities within the town.

- The Council has an appropriate suite of policies in place to protect employees from discrimination, and there is no significant evidence of direct discrimination within the Council's operations. More employees are being transparent about their diversity, and this is a positive trend.
- However, it is acknowledged that unconscious bias exists within all individuals and organisations. It is therefore appropriate to implement additional checks and initiatives to counteract such bias in all areas of the Council's operations.
- The Council is introducing a number of initiatives in support of its equality objectives and the wider inequalities agenda, and should ensure that it can demonstrate the impact of these initiatives on those with protected characteristics within local communities.
- Continuous improvement is dependent upon engagement with local communities, and the Council should ensure that its revised approach to community engagement takes the opportunity to build dialogue with all communities in the town, and not just communities of place.

10. The action plan for 2021/22 at the conclusion of report responds to these findings and also to two unprecedented worldwide events arising in 2020/21.

11. As previously reported to the Executive, the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the inequalities that exist within societies across the world, including within Middlesbrough, and these matters will be addressed in the Council's recovery planning with partners.

12. The murder of George Floyd while in police custody in Minneapolis on 25 May 2020, sparked worldwide protests in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. On 14 October 2020, full Council carried a motion acknowledging the issue of racism in societies, and committing the Council to a programme of training on Black History and providing and promoting literature and media representing the Black experience in libraries and other settings. The action for 2021/22 incorporates the actions required by Council.

13. In response to the Black Lives Matter protests, the UK Government appointed a Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, which reported on 13 March 2021. The Council will consider the Government's responses to the findings of this report during the year.

What decision(s) are being asked for?

14. That the Executive Member notes the findings and progress outlined in the Equality and Inclusion Report spanning 2019 and 2020 (Appendix 1) and approves the proposed actions set out within the report to promote continuous improvement.

Why is this being recommended?

15. To demonstrate the Council's compliance with the PSED and related requirements to publish related data, and to demonstrate to all stakeholders the Council's commitment to improving equality and inclusion within Middlesbrough and within its workforce.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

16. The Council could choose to present the data within this report within two more separate reports (e.g. one regarding equality objectives and another on workforce data). However, this is not recommended, as bringing all data together in one report provides for coherent analysis and response and is in line with the Council's commitment to openness and transparency.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

Legal

17. The report and its associated action plan, demonstrates how the Council does and will continue to meet its various statutory duties in relation to equality and inclusion, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Financial

18. It is anticipated that all actions proposed in this report are achievable within existing and planned budgets.

Policy Framework

19. Current and planned activity outlined is consistent with the aims and priorities of the Strategic Plan, so this report does not seek to vary the Council's Policy Framework.

Equality and Diversity

20. The Equality and Inclusion action plan for 2021/22 (set out at the end of Appendix 1) has been subject to Level 1 (screening) equality impact assessment (at Appendix 2). This assessment identified that no negative differential impacts on diverse groups and communities within Middlesbrough is anticipated from the delivery of the action plan.

Risk

21. The Council's approach to equality and inclusion will have a positive impact on a number of risks within its strategic risk register in the short and longer-term. In particular its commitment to ensuring the workforce is representative of local communities should impact positively on risk 08-027 – the potential inability to recruit or retain key staff, impacting negatively on Council Services.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision

22. Subject to approval, the action plan included within the Equality and Inclusion Report for 2019 and 2020 will be implemented, with progress assessed as part of Directorate Performance Reviews to ensure delivery.

Appendices

- 1 Equality and Diversity Report 2019 and 2020
- 2 Equality and Inclusion Action Plan 2021/22 – Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

Background papers

22/11/17 Executive Member for Finance and Governance; Annual Equality and Inclusion Report 2017

19/02/19 Executive Member for Finance and Governance; Annual Equality and Inclusion Report 2018

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Appendix 1: Equality and Inclusion Report 2019 and 2020

Introduction

1. The Equality Act 2010 places a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) on the Council. The PSED requires that when taking decisions the Council must have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
2. The protected characteristics are:
 - age;
 - disability;
 - gender reassignment;
 - marriage and civil partnership;
 - pregnancy and maternity;
 - race;
 - religion or belief;
 - sex; and
 - sexual orientation.
3. All individuals have some of the protected characteristics and so would be covered by the provisions of the Act when experiencing discrimination due to these characteristics. Some conditions (e.g. menopause) also are covered under several characteristics.
4. Discrimination by association is also covered by the Act, protecting, for example, carers from being treated less favourably because their caring responsibilities for an elderly or disabled person.
5. The Act states that compliance with this duty may involve:
 - removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; and
 - encouraging persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
6. The PSED states consideration should also be given to the steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons where they are different from the needs of people who are not disabled including, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

7. The Act is supported by specific regulations, which place additional duties upon the Council, including the requirement to publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the PSED and to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable objective it thinks it should achieve to enable it to meet the general PSED.

Purpose of the Equality and Inclusion Report

8. The purpose of this report is to:
 - describe and compare the diversity of Middlesbrough's population and the Council's workforce, alongside appropriate comparators;
 - set out how the Council complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010; and
 - summarise progress to date in actions taken to improve equality and inclusion outcomes for local communities and the Council's workforce, and set out further action to be taken in the next year.

Diversity within Middlesbrough

Population

9. Middlesbrough's current population is estimated to be 140,980 (2019 mid-year population estimate, ONS). It is one of the smallest local authorities in the country by population and by area, and so has a high population density, at 26.17 people per hectare compared with 4.32 in England overall.

Age

10. The town's population overall is younger than both regional and national averages, with 20.08% of the population aged 15 and under, compared with 19.22% in the UK overall.

Disability

11. Life expectancy and the overall health of the local population in Middlesbrough is generally significantly worse than the England average, and those in the most deprived areas of Middlesbrough can expect to live around 12 years less than those in the least deprived.
12. 23% of those aged 16-64 were Equality Act Core or work-limiting disabled in Middlesbrough in the 12 months to December 2020, compared with 21.3% nationally and 25.9% regionally (ONS, Annual Population Survey).

Gender reassignment

13. There is no reliable data on gender reassignment at local authority level – the recent Census included a voluntary question on this for the first time.

Marriage and civil partnership

14. At the 2011 Census, 41.5% of Middlesbrough's adults were married or in a civil partnership, compared with 45.7% in the North East and 46.7% in the UK overall.

15. The most recent local authority-level data relating to marriage and civil partnership is from 2017, in which 26.24% of ceremonies were religious and 73.76% religious (ONS), compared with 23.17 / 76.82% and 22.83 / 77.17% in the North East and England respectively. No information is available on the prevalence of same-sex marriage at this time.

Pregnancy and maternity

16. Middlesbrough has a significantly higher fertility rate than the North East and England overall, with a rate of 64.3 per 1,000 females aged 15-44 in 2019, compared with 53 in the North East and 57.7 in England. The fertility rate per 1,000 females aged 15-17 in Middlesbrough is over twice the England average.

Race

17. 11.7% of residents are estimated to be from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME¹) communities, compared with 14.6% nationally, making Middlesbrough the second most ethnically diverse local authority area in the North East and the most diverse in the Tees Valley. 26% of current school-age children are from BAME communities, and as such local diversity will continue to grow in future years.
18. 12.86% of Middlesbrough's residents were born outside the UK (significantly higher than the North East average of 5.95%, and up 8.5% points since 2001) and international migrants are at the present time the key driver of continued population growth within Middlesbrough.

Religion or belief

19. The 2011 Census reported that 63.2% of the Middlesbrough population who answered this question were Christian (compared with 67.5% in the North East and 59.4% in England), 7% Muslim (1.8% North East, 5% England), 1.32% other religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism (1.2% North East, 3.68% in England), and 22.3% no religion (23.4 North East, 24.7% England).

Sex

20. 50.5% of Middlesbrough's residents are female, with 49.5% male, a marginally higher proportion of males than the North East and Great Britain averages.

Sexual orientation

21. There is no reliable data on sexual orientation at local authority level – the recent Census included a voluntary question on this for the first time.
22. The 2013 integrated household survey indicated that 1.1% of the North East population identified as being gay, lesbian or bi-sexual, compared with 1.7% nationally. In general terms, statistics relating to sexual orientation are considered to under-report diversity.

¹ BAME is used as a collective term in this report. The Council is aware that some individuals and communities are uncomfortable with this term and will consult with employee groups and other parties this year to agree a method of better describing ethnic diversity in Middlesbrough in future reports.

Caring responsibilities

23. In the quarter to August 2020, DWP reported a total of 4,928 individuals as being eligible for a Carers Allowance, and a total of 3,908 receiving payment in Middlesbrough. The proportion of claimants within Middlesbrough is significantly higher than the North East and overall England average.

Deprivation

24. The Indices of Deprivation 2019 ranks Middlesbrough the fifth most deprived local authority (LA) area in England and the most deprived area in the Tees Valley.
25. Middlesbrough is ranked the most deprived LA area in England for income deprivation. It has the highest proportion of children (32.7%) living in income deprived households (being second highest in 2015), and the 22nd highest proportion of older people (23.3%) living in income deprived households (unchanged from 2015).
26. Middlesbrough is also the LA with the highest proportion of LSOAs in the most deprived decile of the IMD 2019. Middlesbrough also ranked first on this measure in 2015, and second in 2010.
27. Many of the disadvantages faced by protected groups are underpinned or made worse by deprivation and discrimination can be a direct or indirect cause of deprivation, in employment, income, health, education and other areas.
28. In particular, children in Middlesbrough are more likely than children in the wider region and nationally to be subject to child protection or have to be cared for by Council.

COVID-19

29. At times during the COVID-19 pandemic, Middlesbrough has experienced some of the highest rates of infection in the UK. The reasons for the apparent disproportionate impact on Middlesbrough require detailed investigation in due course, however, the following factors are likely to be significant:
 - the extent of overall poor health within Middlesbrough's communities;
 - the extent of income and health inequalities within Middlesbrough's communities;
 - the population density and housing tenure types within Middlesbrough; and
 - the proportion of workers in jobs where social distancing is difficult.
30. COVID-19 has had and will continue to have significant adverse implications for those with protected characteristics over and above the impact on the general population, widening significantly existing local inequalities in income, health, educational attainment and other areas.
31. Addressing these inequalities will be central to the Council's recovery planning, which will be driven by community impact assessments and subject to health and equality impact assessment where appropriate.

Diversity of the Council's workforce

32. The Council provides a wide range of services to people and groups who live in, work in or visit Middlesbrough, and its actions and decisions affect the lives of all people within the town to some degree.
33. Analysis of those who use the MyMiddlesbrough online citizen account (where they have completed equality monitoring forms) suggests (as would be expected) that the Council's customer base broadly reflects the diversity of the Middlesbrough's population as described above.
34. There is a clear relationship between the Council's workforce and the communities it serves, indeed there is a significant overlap between the two. An estimated 70% of employees live in the local area and so are funders, recipients and providers of local services.
35. As community leader, it is desirable for the Council's workforce to be broadly representative of the communities it serves to ensure that diversity is part of the Council's 'DNA' and so that those communities feel better connected to the work of the Council.
36. The following paragraphs set out statistics on diversity within the Council's workforce, compared with the town's population, where data is available.
37. Employee's diversity data is self-declared and discretionary, with employees asked to update the Council's HR system annually. As such the completeness of the data is variable, as illustrated in the table below.

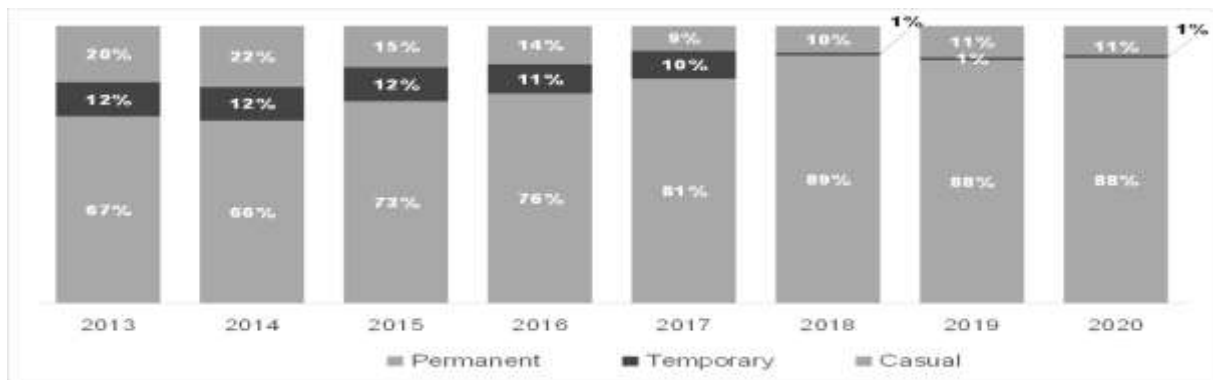
Characteristic	Response provided	Disclosed	Not known	Undisclosed
Disability	95.72%	83.53%	12.19%	4.28%
Race	87.03%	86.07%	0.15%	13.78%
Religion or belief	71.04%	61.04%	6.98%	31.99%
Sexual orientation	62.11%	57.59%	1.98%	40.43%

38. From this it can be concluded that employees are much less likely to disclose their sexual orientation or religion or belief. This is not uncommon in any organisation, and can be for a number of reasons, both positive and negative. However, it is the responsibility of all employers to provide a positive and inclusive environment that allows employees to be comfortable in declaring such information, should they wish to do so, and during 2020 the percentage of Council employees willing to share this information improved across all protected characteristics.

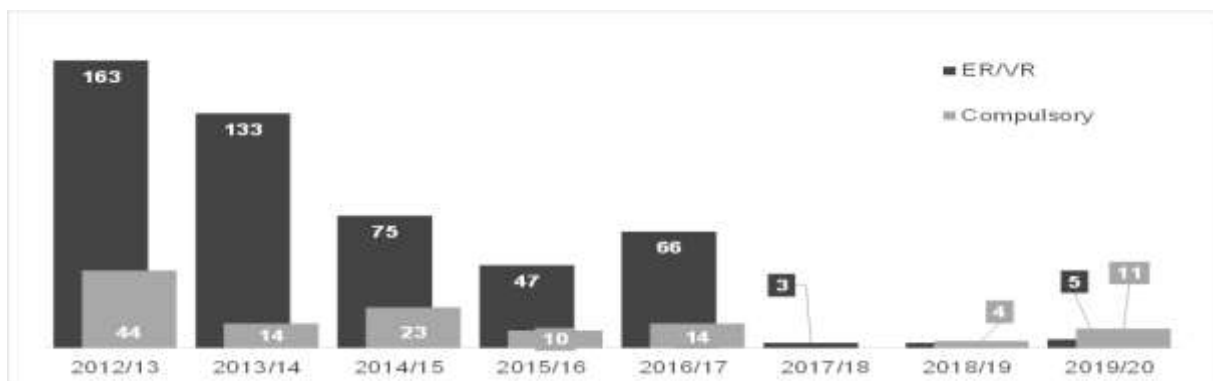
Workforce population

39. At the 31 March 2020, the Council employed 3,339 people, down 134 from 31 March 2018, equating to 2,840 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) and 3,304 posts, excluding casual posts. The Council remains one of the largest employers in Middlesbrough, providing around 6% of jobs in the local authority area.
40. The proportion of staff on permanent contracts was 88% during 2019 and 2020, and those on temporary or casual terms also remained static at 11% and 1% respectively.

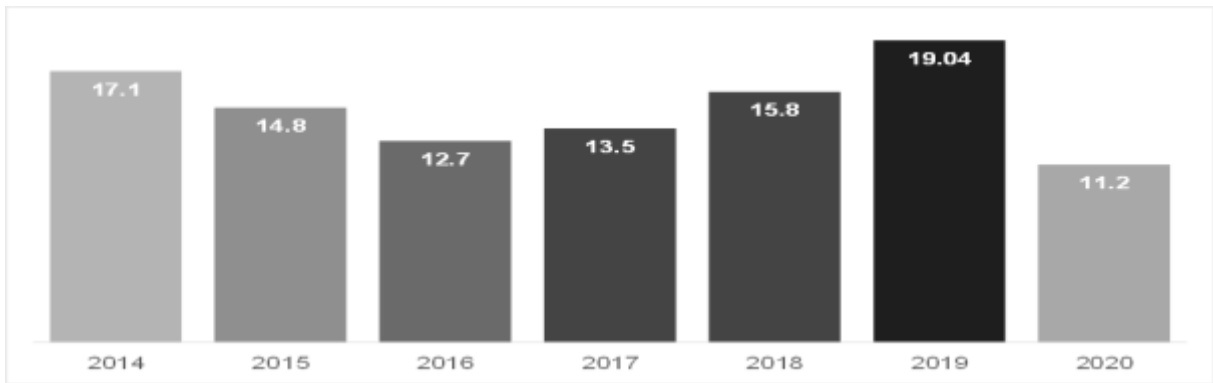
This is marginally lower than the national average rate of 89.6% at Quarter Three 2020.



41. 329 posts were recruited by the Council via the North East Jobs website in 2018/19 and 421 in 2019/20. There were a total of 6,688 applications in 2018/19, with an average of 20.32 applicants for each post. In 2019/20, applications fell to 2,500, with only 5.94 applicants per post.
42. In 2018/19, 661 people left the Council, up from 551 and 457 in the preceding two years, reflected in the increased staff turnover rate described above. Leavers fell to 374 in 2019/20, reflecting the impact of the pandemic.
43. Redundancies were again minimised during the years covered by this report, with 4% of leavers (23 in total) made redundant over the period.

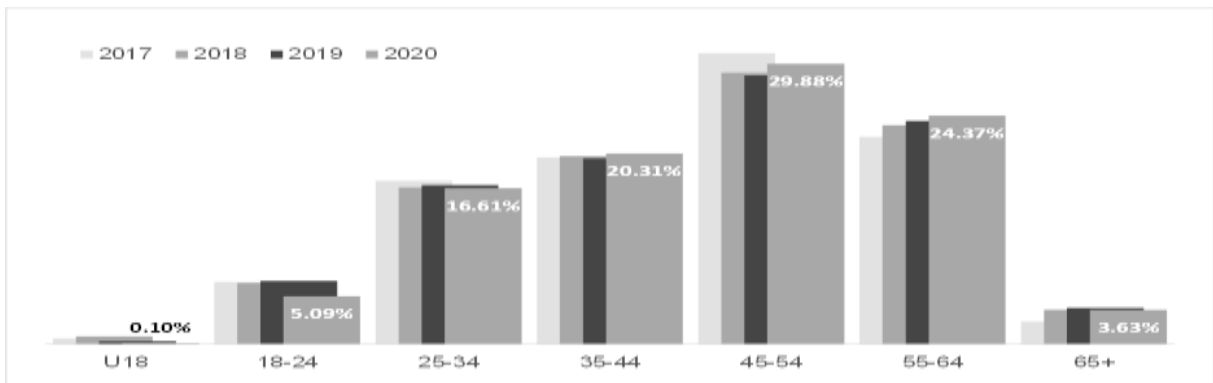


44. In line with the above, staff turnover in 2019 was 19.04%, up from 15.8% in 2018 and the highest level since 2014. This dropped significantly to 11.2% in 2020, reflecting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent national comparator is from 2017/18, when the all England local government turnover rate was estimated to be 13.4%.



Age

45. 78.2% of the Council's workforce is aged over 35, with 57.8% aged over 45. Both percentages have increased slightly since 2018/9. This broadly reflects ageing profile of the local government workforce as a whole, though the Council has a slightly greater proportion of employees aged under 35 than regional and national averages, reflecting the local workforce profile.



Workforce	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
England LAs	4.7%	14.5%	21.4%	31.4%	24.6%	3.4%
NE LAs	4.9%	13.9%	21.0%	31.3%	25.7%	3.3%
MBC LA	5.2%	16.6%	20.3%	29.9%	24.4%	3.6%

Local Government Workforce Survey, LGA 2019/20

46. The average age of leavers was 46 in 2019/29, up from 45 in 2018/19 and 42 in 2017/18.

Disability

47. The Council has been accredited with the national 'Disability Confident' employer award and is committed to being a positive employer for people with a disability. As part of this the Council offers guaranteed interviews to those individuals with a disability who meet the essential criteria for all posts advertised. In 2019/20, 5.5% of applicants declared a disability.
48. Since 2014, the proportion of employees with a declared disability has risen slightly from 2.22% to 3.32%, however given the reduction in the overall workforce during this period the change in absolute numbers is likely to be negligible.
49. The national average for local government was 3.3% in 2019/20, almost exactly the same level. However, as paragraph 33 makes clear, 12% of the Council's employees

appear to be unsure as to whether they fall within the legal definition of disability, higher than the national average. While this fell from 14% in 2019, future communications with employees on equality monitoring will continue to include more guidance on this and other related matters to promote a fuller response.

Gender reassignment

50. No information is available on the prevalence of gender reassignment in the Council's workforce. This will be added into employee equality monitoring in future years.

Marriage and civil partnership

51. Approximately one third of the Council's workforce have advised that they are married (1,113 at March 2020 – broadly consistent with the previous two years). No information is available on the prevalence of civil partnership in the Council's workforce. This will be added into employee equality monitoring in future years.

Pregnancy and maternity

52. While Council does not hold information on pregnancies among employees, there were 41 maternity leave during 2019/20, up from 17 and 29 in the prior two years.

Race

53. At 31 March 2020, 4.05% of employees self-identified as being from BAME communities, broadly the same as the previous year, but up from 3.1% in 2018/19. This is a higher proportion than the average for North East councils, but lags some way behind the average for all England councils.

Workforce	White	BAME
England LAs	89.2%	10.8%
NE LAs	97.7%	2.3%
MBC LA	95.95%	4.05%

Local Government Workforce Survey, LGA 2019/20

54. BAME communities are currently estimated to comprise 14% of the UK population, and 4.7% of the North East population, suggesting that such communities continue to be the most underrepresented in the local government workforce as a whole.
55. Periodically the LGA runs campaigns to encourage BAME communities to apply to jobs within the sector, and the run for office. There are some signs of improvement locally – in 2018/19 9.9% of applicants to the Council were from BAME communities and this rose to 13.2% in 2019/20. Systems to compare the diversity of applicants with those of successful candidates are not currently established but this will be explored this year.

Religion or belief

56. In 2018/19, 43.73% of employees that responded stated that they were Christian, compared with 42.46% in 2018. There has been a steady rise in recent years of employees professing no religious belief, standing at 36.93% in 2019/20 and reflecting wider trend in UK society. Employees stating that they were Muslim were the third highest grouping, rising from 1.24% in 2017/18 to 1.66% in 2018/19 to

1.85% in 2019/20. There is no comparison data for the wider local government workforce.

Sex

57. The Council's workforce is majority female – 70.62% of the Council's employees were women in 2018/19 and 70.05% in 2019/20 – a slight reduction from 71.35% in 2017/18.
58. While this is not reflective of the wider UK workforce, which shows a roughly equal gender split – it is broadly comparable with other local authorities and reflects traditional gender roles within public services, with 74.89% of the directly-employed local government workforce female at Quarter Three 2020.
59. 70% of job applications received in 2018/19 were from females and in 2019/20 this fell to 65.88%. Analysis of job applications during 2019/20 shows that applicants continue to follow these traditional paths. For traditionally female roles (e.g. cleaning, catering, care, education and administration), 76.5% of applicants were female. For traditionally male-dominated roles (e.g. driving, mechanical and manual outdoor work) 82.7% of applicants were male.
60. In 2018/19 67% of leavers were female, and in 2019/20 this increased to 71.66%. 50% of those who left the Council as a result of redundancy in 2018/19 were female, falling to 36.67% in 2019/20.
61. Females accounted for 30% of the Council's Management Team at the end of 2019/20. The 2018 LGA Chief Executives / Chief Officers Survey 2018 identified 46.8% of females in these roles.
62. Overall, females held 56.76% of Head of Service posts at the end of 2019/20, up from 51.11% in 2018/19 and 53.85% in 2017/18. The majority of Heads of Service within Children's Services (69.23%) were women, with the remaining Directorates demonstrating with an equal gender split or a majority of men in these roles.
63. At 31 March 2020, 54.29 (55.00% at 31 March 2019) of the top 5% highest paid employees within the Council were female. There is however a significantly larger proportion of females in the lower and middle salary quartiles, and this is reflected in the gender pay gap.
64. The average gender pay gap within the Council in 2018/19 was 9.9%, up from 6.7% in 2018 (10.5% in 2017). This means that, on average, men were paid 9.9% more. The gender pay gap report for 2019/20 will be published later in 2021.
65. Nationally the average gender pay gap for this period was 17.3%, and the LGA estimates that the average gap across the 319 local authorities above the 250 employee threshold was 6.8% in 2018/19 and 6.1% in 2019/20.
66. It should however be noted that there are some difficulties in comparing local authorities, as some have outsourced services that contain large volumes of lower-paid workers (e.g. cleaning and catering), while others, including this Council, have retained such services, increasing the gap.

Sexual orientation

67. In 2018/19, 93.63% of employees that responded stated that they were heterosexual, 2.69% stated that they were either bisexual, a gay man or a gay woman / lesbian, increasing to 3.29% in 2019/20. This figure is greater than existing estimates for the North East population. There is no comparison data for the wider local government workforce.

Caring responsibilities

68. In 2019/20 33.52% of employees that completed equality monitoring declared that they had caring responsibilities, rising significantly from 28.2% in 2018/19 and 16.5% in 2017/18. 75.75% of carers had a caring responsibility for children, the remainder for a partner or other adults. There is no comparison data for the wider local government workforce.

Employee sickness absence

69. The average number of sick days per employee during 2019/20 was 11.1, compared with 10.51 in 2018/19 and 10.73 days in 2017/18. In 2019/20, 5.29% of all staff working time was lost to sickness across the Council, up from 4.35% in 2018/19.
70. Around 87% of all sickness occurrences were short-term, for an average of 2.81 days each. The average duration of a long-term sickness absence was approximately 35 days.
71. The most recent comparator was the 2017/18 LGA Workforce Survey which gave an average for all local authorities of 8.8 days per FTE or 3.6% lost working time.
72. The apparent difference in absence will be linked to local differences in recording, general health deprivation with Middlesbrough and the Council's direct employment of certain job types, among other factors. The Council has recently appointed a HR Business Partner dedicated to employee health and wellbeing who will this year examine underlying causes of staff absence and put in place targeted initiatives to address any issues arising.

Diversity of apprentices

73. The Council is committed to providing a range of apprenticeships for local young people. In 2019/20 116 apprentices (including both new hires and existing employees taking up an apprenticeship) started with the Council, up from 101 in 2018/19.
- 77% of the apprentices starting in 2018/19 were female, rising to 80% in 2019/20.
 - 8% of those starting in 2018/19 declared a disability, rising to 15% in 2019/20.
 - 5% of those starting in 2018/19 were from BAME communities, rising to 8% in 2019/20.
74. 72% of those completing apprenticeships during 2019/20 gained employment, up from 70% in 2018/19 and 55% in 2017/18, with the majority of employment gained within the Council. 20% progressed to higher level apprenticeships or further / higher education (compared with 21% in 2018/19), and the remaining 8% were seeking employment (down from 9% in 2018/19).

75. Changes to the Council's apprenticeship strategy have now been agreed to allocate priority to care leavers, in line with the Council's legal responsibility as corporate parent.

Diversity of volunteers

76. The Council recognises the significant and valuable role that volunteering can play in delivering discretionary public services and in providing opportunities to local residents to raise their aspirations and improve job prospects.
77. The Council's volunteer workforce has remained largely static since 2018, standing at 474 in 2020. 35.7% of volunteers provided equality monitoring data, and of these 61% were female and 86.55% identified as White, with 11.7% BAME (1.75% undeclared), figures in line with the previous two years.

How the Council complies with the Equality Act 2010

78. The Council's maintains a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Middlesbrough that sets out in detail historic, current and projected outcomes for the people of Middlesbrough across a range of themes and identifies where these outcomes differ for people from different backgrounds. The statistics within the 'Diversity in Middlesbrough' section are drawn from the JSNA.
79. The JSNA is used to inform the development of the Council's strategies, equality objectives and wider commissioning intentions, in line with the PSED.
80. The Council's equality objectives are embedded within its Strategic Plan. During the period of this report, the Council's equality objectives were:
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour head-on.
 - Ensuring Middlesbrough has the very best schools.
 - Working with communities to redevelop Middlesbrough's disadvantaged estates.
81. In February 2021, Council approved a revised Strategic Plan for the period 2021-24 which included nine strategic priorities, three of which are also the Council's equality objectives for this period:
- We will work to address the causes of vulnerability and inequalities in Middlesbrough and safeguard and support those made vulnerable.
 - We will tackle crime and anti-social behaviour head on, working with our partners to ensure local people feel safer.
 - We will ensure the recovery of local communities, businesses and the Council's operations from COVID-19, taking opportunities to build back better.
82. Progress in delivering the Strategic Plan is reported to the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Board on a quarterly basis.
83. Equality and inclusion are central to the Council's corporate values, and the Council has in place a range of equality and human resources policies to ensure legal compliance and fair treatment for all:

- **Equality Policy:** This policy sets out how the Council will ensure customers, employees and job applicants are treated fairly and in line with the protections set out for relevant characteristics within the Equality Act 2010.
- **Recruitment and Selection Policy:** This policy is in place to ensure that the Council's recruitment and selection practices are fair and consistent.
- **Dignity and Respect at Work Policy:** This policy sets out the Council's requirement that all employees will be treated with respect and dignity in the workplace and outlines expected behaviours.
- **Equality Monitoring Policy:** This policy establishes a consistent approach to the collection of user equality and diversity data within the development and delivery of Council services. Provision of this data is discretionary but ensures that the Council is able to understand the impacts of its decisions and services on different groups (including its employees) and communities.
- **Impact Assessment Policy:** This policy sets out the process to be followed to ensure officers developing recommendations fully understand and weigh the consequences of possible and actual interventions and articulate these effectively to decision-makers. It ensures that appropriate consideration is given to the PSED.
- **Monitoring of Hate Incidents Policy:** This policy sets out how the Council will collate details of hate incidents either witnessed by its staff or reported to them. Hate crimes will also be reported to the Police.

84. These policies are regularly reviewed to ensure the Council continues to comply with the law and best practice. The policies were last reviewed and updated during 2020 and approved by the then Executive Member for Culture, Communities and Education on 11 February 2021.
85. All employees undertake mandatory training on equality and inclusion matters, and the requirement to uphold and where appropriate lead on these policies are articulated within employee job descriptions.
86. The availability of accurate and timely information is key to performance improvement in all areas of the Council's business, including equality and inclusion.
87. As stated above, employees are asked to update their equality monitoring data on an annual basis, and equality monitoring is also used in staff surveys and subsequent analysis, where appropriate.
88. Outcomes from grievance, disciplinarys and related processes relating to alleged or actual discrimination are monitored by Human Resources who would identify any areas of concern. During 2018/19 one of 51 disciplinary investigations and one of 20 grievances alleged discrimination against an employee. During 2019/20 zero (of 60) disciplinary investigations and one of 10 grievances alleged discrimination.
89. An internal audit of Discrimination & Staff Inequality undertaken by Tees Valley Audit and Assurance Services during 2019/20 found the Council to have a strong control environment in place to address such matters.
90. Outcomes from impact assessments are reviewed at the draft stage by the Strategy, Information and Governance service prior to consideration by decision makers. The Council publishes impact assessments where these relate to decisions taken by elected members or delegated to officers.

91. Outcomes from hate incident monitoring are monitored by the Strategy, Information and Governance service with recommendations for improved procedures made to services where appropriate.
92. The Council is strongly-focused on employee engagement. A corporate Employee Engagement group is chaired by the Chief Executive, and an Equality and Inclusion Group is chaired by the Strategic Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration as Corporate Management Team Lead on this agenda. In addition there are monthly Disability Network and BAME Network group meetings.

Action taken during 2019 and 2020 to improve equality and inclusion

93. The following additional actions were taken during 2019 and 2020 to improve equality and inclusion:

Within Middlesbrough:

In line with its equality objectives, the Council has:

- made significant investments and improvements into its approach to community safety, including a new neighbourhood warden team, to provide community reassurance;
- completed its £1.3m school improvement programme to support increased educational attainment, targeted as appropriate; and
- launched a range of social regeneration initiatives, including the launch of the '50 Futures' and expanded the guaranteed interview scheme to improve the lives of disadvantaged communities and groups across Middlesbrough.

In addition, the Council has:

- Implemented an integrated approach to the management and provision of support to those with complex needs;
- coordinated an effective local emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic, engaging with and supporting vulnerable groups where required; and
- made significant progress in improving Children's Services following the 'Inadequate' outcome of the 2019 Ofsted ILACS inspection, seeing the rate of children looked after by the Council begin to reduce after a prolonged period in which it steadily increased.

Within the Council:

- Continued improvements to employee engagement, including refreshed staff surveys and regular Mayoral, Chief Executive and Director all-staff briefings;
- increased involvement of employee engagement groups in corporate and directorate action planning on the equality and inclusion agenda;
- expansion of the employee engagement group's work to include support for action planning to address areas for improvement identified in staff surveys; and
- the creation of a new employee group to support LBGTQ+ staff members.

94. Three key actions planned for 2019 (enhanced promotion of vacancies, a staff volunteering scheme and refreshing the corporate approach to community engagement) were delayed to 2021/22 due to COVID-19.

Summary of findings

95. In summary, the findings of this report are therefore:

- Middlesbrough is a diverse town and its diversity continues to grow. Diversity is positive and to be celebrated.
- The diversity of the Council's workforce is broadly equivalent to local diversity, with the exception that BAME communities are underrepresented. This is an issue for local government generally, and there are signs of improvement in Middlesbrough. However, more needs to be done, particularly given the growth of BAME communities within the town.
- The Council has an appropriate suite of policies in place to protect employees from discrimination, and there is no significant evidence of direct discrimination within the Council's operations. More employees are being transparent about their diversity, and this is a positive trend.
- However, it is acknowledged that unconscious bias exists within all individuals and organisations. It is therefore appropriate to implement additional checks and initiatives to counteract such bias in all areas of the Council's operations.
- The Council is introducing a number of initiatives in support of its equality objectives and the wider inequalities agenda, and should ensure that it can demonstrate the impact of these initiatives on those with protected characteristics within local communities.
- Continuous improvement is dependent upon engagement with local communities, and the Council should ensure that its revised approach to community engagement takes the opportunity to build dialogue with all communities in the town, and not just communities of place.

Actions to be delivered during 2021/22

96. Taking into account the key findings, the proposed actions for 2021/22 and beyond are set out below:

Action	Lead	Deadline
Launch staff volunteering scheme allowing employees to support local voluntary groups during working hours.	Stronger Communities	30/09/21
Continue proactive promotion of vacancies within communities that are under-represented in the Council's workforce.	Human Resources; Marketing and Communications.	31/03/22
Explore means of comparing the diversity of applicants with the diversity of subsequently successful candidates.	Human Resources	31/03/22
Ensure staff equality monitoring includes all protected characteristics and encourage all staff to update their information to ensure improvement actions are based on data that is complete and accurate as possible.	Strategic Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration; Equality and Inclusion Group	31/03/22
Deliver a programme of training to all elected members, senior managers and recruiting managers on the history of diverse communities in the UK, issues of bias how they manifest themselves in society.	Strategy, Information and Governance and Members Services	31/03/22

Action	Lead	Deadline
Provide confirmation to full Council that literature and media relating to Middlesbrough's diverse communities are represented in Middlesbrough libraries and cultural spaces and that these materials are promoted within Council settings.	Stronger Communities	31/03/22
Build on the Council's gender pay gap statement by publishing the White / BAME pay gap, and differentials for other protected characteristics, where data allows.	Human Resources	From 31/03/22
Develop a mentoring scheme for those employees with protected characteristics who wish to advance in their careers, for implementation during 2021/22.	Human Resources	From 31/03/22
Refresh the corporate approach to community engagement building upon learning from locality working and COVID-19 response to move the Council 'closer to the people', contributing to improved equality and inclusion, and identifying and addressing barriers to employment and participation in public life.	Strategy, Information and Governance; Stronger Communities; Democratic Services	31/03/22
Ensure that the Children's Services Improvement Plan fully considers equality and inclusion issues.	Executive Director of Children's Services	Ongoing
Ensure that the Council's COVID-19 Recovery planning fully considers the differential adverse impacts on COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and those with protected characteristics and plans accordingly to appropriately mitigate these impacts.	Chief Executive	Ongoing
Arrange for Equality and Inclusion Group to meet with LMT once per quarter to consider progress against this action plan and to raise any issues.	Strategic Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration	Ongoing
Consider the Government's response to the report of the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities and implications for the Council's approach to equality and inclusion.	Equality and Inclusion Group	31/03/22
Consult upon and review terminology used within the Annual Equality report and associated documents to ensure that it remains appropriate.	Strategy, Information and Governance; Equality and Inclusion Group	31/03/22
Identify whether there are any existing or forthcoming national campaigns on encouraging men and women into roles that they would not traditionally apply for and promote to local schools and communities.	Marketing and Communications	31/03/22
Explore whether the Council can allocate priority for entry level roles to its apprentices, care leavers and other appropriate groups.	Community Learning	31/03/22
Examine underlying causes of staff absence and put in place targeted initiatives to address any issues arising.	Human Resources	31/03/22

97. The above actions will be monitored on a monthly basis as part of Directorate Performance Reviews to ensure delivery.

Appendix 2: Impact Assessment Level 1: Initial screening assessment

Subject of assessment:	Equality and Inclusion Action Plan 2021/22			
Coverage:	Overarching / crosscutting			
This is a decision relating to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service	<input type="checkbox"/> Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Process/procedure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Review
	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state)		
It is a:	New approach:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Revision of an existing approach:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
It is driven by:	Legislation:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Local or corporate requirements:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Description:	<p>Key aims, objectives and activities The document sets actions to improve equality and inclusion within Middlesbrough and within the Council’s workforce during 2020/21.</p> <p>Statutory drivers Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Differences from any previous approach This document supersedes the action plan set out in the Annual Equality and Inclusion Report 2018.</p> <p>Key stakeholders and intended beneficiaries (internal and external as appropriate) Elected members, employees of the Council, local communities and businesses, partners.</p> <p>Intended outcomes To ensure that the Council’s commitment to promoting equality and inclusion clearly articulated and communicated to all stakeholders, and that the Council continues to comply with the duties of the Equality Act 2010.</p>			

Live date:	As soon as the report is approved.			
Lifespan:	2021/22 financial year.			
Date of next review:	Reviewed on an annual basis, with information on progress to be published on the Council's website and social media.			
Screening questions	Response			Evidence
	No	Yes	Uncertain	
Human Rights Could the decision impact negatively on individual Human Rights as enshrined in UK legislation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No. Delivery of the actions within the Equality and Inclusion Action Plan 2021/22 will not contravene human rights as identified in national legislation.
Equality Could the decision result in adverse differential impacts on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in UK equality law? Could the decision impact differently on other commonly disadvantaged groups?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No. The actions are aimed at reducing inequalities within Middlesbrough and within the Council's workforce and apply to all protected characteristics. As a result there are no concerns that the actions could have a disproportionate adverse impact on groups or individuals with characteristics protected in national legislation.
Community cohesion Could the decision impact negatively on relationships between different groups, communities of interest or neighbourhoods within the town?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No. The plan commits to improving community engagement within the town, which will result in direct benefits for cohesion. As a result there are no concerns that the proposed plan could have an adverse impact on community cohesion.
Assessment completed by:	Paul Stephens, Head of Strategy, Information and Governance			
Date:	17/06/2021			
LMT approver:	Erik Scollay, Strategic Director of Adult Social Care and Health Integration			
Date:	17/06/2021			