

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL23 April 2025Report by Director of Business Operations and PartnershipsEQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS MAINSTREAMING REPORT**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the East Renfrewshire Council Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Report for approval.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that Council:
 - (a) acknowledges the duties of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012;
 - (b) approves the content of the Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming report prior to publication (Annex 1); and
 - (c) approves the new Equality Outcomes for 2025-2029 (Annex 2).

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

3. East Renfrewshire Council continues to strive towards eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between those from different protected characteristic groups.

4. East Renfrewshire is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse communities in Scotland. According to the most recent census data, East Renfrewshire is home to 13 faith groups. The Muslim population has grown significantly since the last census, making up 5.5% of the local population, which is the second highest local population in Scotland. The Hindu population has also seen an increase, particularly amongst younger age groups. The Jewish population has seen a decline since the last census, but it remains the highest proportion in Scotland.

5. We have the fifth highest proportion of residents from minority ethnic backgrounds in Scotland. Just over 16% of East Renfrewshire residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds; this is a significant increase from 8.9% in 2011. One quarter of our school pupils are from minority ethnic groups; this has nearly doubled in the last decade.

6. Less than 2% of our population identify themselves as LGBTQ+, the 2nd lowest rate in Scotland, whilst almost 89% identify as straight or heterosexual. The remaining 9% chose not to respond to this census question.

7. We have the highest proportion of children and young people, along with a growing ageing population. Life expectancy here is higher than the Scottish average but we have seen a 20.5% increase in those with a health problem that limits their day-to-day activities a lot. We

are proud of our diverse population and, through A Place to Grow, we are building a future where people from all backgrounds are supported to flourish, thrive and live well.

8. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, East Renfrewshire Council is required to:

- report on progress on making the Public Sector Equality Duty integral to the exercise of its functions (Regulation 3);
- update on progress to meet equality outcomes set in 2021 (Regulation 4);
- outline the composition of the workforce, and use of that information (Regulation 6), and;
- provide information on the gender pay gap (Regulation 7).

REPORT

9. The Equalities and Human Rights Mainstreaming report (Annex 1) demonstrates how we are meeting our duties under the Equality Act. The report is split into three sections:

- Detailing the actions we have taken to ensure equalities and human rights are embedded throughout the organisation
- Providing an update on the progress we have made towards our 2021 Equality Outcomes, over the last 2 years. This builds on the progress report published in 2023; and
- Focussing on how we have supported employees, including workforce composition and pay gap information by gender, disability status and ethnicity.

10. The report is structured in line with the statutory requirements (as noted in point 8) and mirrors the Scottish Government reporting under the six principles of mainstreaming. This has resulted in a substantial level of detail within the report, and some areas of repetition. We have tried to minimise this as much as possible but also need to ensure we meet requirements as set out by statute and the Equality and Human Rights Commission best practice.

11. The 2025 – 2029 Equalities Outcomes report (Annex 2) sets out our new outcomes for the next four-year period 2025 – 2029.

12. In East Renfrewshire, we want to ensure everyone is treated fairly, has equality of opportunity and is empowered to contribute to their community. We are fortunate to have a diverse local population and we believe this diversity benefits all of us. We want to learn from the different experiences, perspectives, and skills that different individuals and communities bring to the area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Costs associated with implementing the commitments detailed will be met through individual departments and services. An Equalities Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment has been completed. This

identified positive impacts on protected characteristic groups, socioeconomic disadvantage and the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The completed EFRIA can be found [here](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Director of Business Operations & Partnerships
March 2025

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

[Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming: Progress Report 2023](#)

[Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Report 2021](#)

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Equality and Human Rights Mainstreaming Report 2025



EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

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Executive Summary

This report is split into three sections. The key findings from each section are summarised here.

Section 1: Mainstreaming

This section highlights the progress made to integrate equality into everything we do. We have seen positive progress in many areas, including:

Strengthening Leadership

- Elected Members have supported the development of new **community groups and networks** and been involved in a range of **community events**.
- Elected members have participated in **equality training and workshops** to enhance their understanding of equalities work.
- Our corporate management team worked with an external organisation to consider **cultural awareness and support diversity** and are now responding to the recommendations proposed.
- Across the council, several teams have used their leadership meeting time to undertake **equality training tailored to their own departmental needs**.

Capability and Culture

- We have undertaken a **review of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training** across the organisation and developed a **new suite of materials** designed to best meet the needs of all employees.
- We have launched our new People Strategy with a clear **commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging**.
- Our new Dignity at Work Policy **protects employees from bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination**.

Effective Regulation

- We have reviewed and enhanced our Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment process to **support decision-making and identify any potential impacts of policy decisions**.
- Our budget setting process ensures **budget decisions are being made with a clear understanding of any potential impacts on equality, fairness and rights**.
- We have **reviewed the membership and purpose** of the Equality Officer Working Group.
- Our Social Justice Strategy works to create a **school culture which promotes equality, respects rights and preserves human dignity**.
- We published our British Sign Language Plan which sets out how we ensure **BSL users are involved and empowered**.

Accountability and Transparency

- We published our Education Department Quality and Standards Report which outlines **progress being made against the commitments in the Education Social Justice Strategy**.
- We published details of the **progress being made against the commitments in our BSL Plan**.
- We improved the process to ensure all Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments are **being scrutinised and published**.

Evidence and Lived Experience

- We have worked with community members to develop a Community Equalities Forum to **help influence local decision-making** and **raise awareness about equality issues**.
- Our Employee EDI Network continues to **advocate for an inclusive and fair working environment**.
- The Deaf Community Network helped **develop the BSL Plan** and the group continues to meet, **monitor progress** and identify **ongoing need**.

Improving Capacity

- We have taken steps to make our **recruitment processes more inclusive** and help us **attract a more diverse range of candidates**.
- We have created some specialist staffing roles in Education, including a **Deaf role model teacher**, a **Gaelic head teacher and class teacher** and a new Principal Teacher post with a **remit for equalities training and development**.

Section 2: 2021-2025 Equality Outcomes progress

In 2021, we set out six new Equality Outcomes and in 2023, we published details of how we had progressed against each of these. This section provides a further update on progress made since 2023. Some key highlights include:

- *“Minority ethnic residents are represented in public life and have their needs recognised and addressed in decision-making”*: We have supported the establishment of a **Community Equality Forum** and worked with Community Councils to better **understand the profile of their membership**.
- *“Minority Ethnic, disabled and younger residents are able to access services and feel connected to their communities”*: We have introduced **neurodiverse sensory equipment** and **dyslexia friendly books** in libraries and delivered **BSL interpreted performances** in our theatres. We have delivered **BSL and Trauma Skills training** to frontline staff to help make services more accessible. And we have published new guidance for **Inclusive and Accessible Communications** to help ensure information about all our services is shared in a way that meets people's needs.
- *“Domestic abuse survivors are protected from harm and abuse”*: We have enhanced the domestic abuse **training and tools** available to employees and ensured they are aware of the **referral pathways** and support available. We have promoted support services to ensure **victims know what help is available and how to access it**. And we successfully delivered a **new programme with a focus on children** experiencing domestic abuse recovery.
- *“The mental health and wellbeing of LGBT+ children and young people is improved”*: We continue to deliver a needs-led LGBT+ Youth Group which provides a **safe, supportive environment** and opportunity to take part in activities together. LGBT+ young people have also joined our youth rights association to **ensure their voices are heard**.
- *“The diversity of East Renfrewshire Council workforce at all levels better reflects the local population”*: We have made several changes to our recruitment policy and practice including: extending the **guaranteed interview scheme**; creating **guidance for applicants**; providing **interview questions on arrival**; and **advertising our jobs in a variety of ways and places**. **Five**

teachers of a **minority ethnic background** have also completed a **leadership mentoring programme**.

- *“Younger residents and Disabled residents are able to participate and are supported to sustain good quality employment opportunities”*: We have delivered a **range of specialised employment supports** to Disabled people and younger residents. We launched a **Health, Disability and Employability group** to get the right support to the right people. Schools have seen an **increase in the number of young carers being identified and supported**, and primary schools came together to **celebrate Young Carers Actions Day**.

We have developed new Equality Outcomes for 2025-2029 and these can be found in the accompanying report.

Section 3: Employees

This section provides details of how we have supported our employees, including details about our workforce profile.

As noted in the previous sections, there has been key progress in the launch of our **People Strategy and Vision**, improvements in our **recruitment policy and practice**, and the launch of our **Dignity at Work** policy. In addition, we have maintained our accreditation for **Disability Confident**, **Carer Positive** and the **Living Wage** and we continue to support the **Miscarriage Association’s pregnancy loss charter**. We have also offered employees a **range of wellbeing supports** including Health Checks, team wellbeing events, walking clubs and book groups.

Our workforce profile information tells us:

- The largest proportion of our employees are aged **45-54 years**.
- There has been an **increase in the percentage of minority ethnic employees**, from 3.56% to 5.24%.
- There has been a **slight increase in the percentage of Disabled employees**, from 2.18% to 2.85%.

With regards to our pay gap data:

- The **gender pay gap is 4.9%** which is slightly higher than last year (4.6% in 22/23). This equates to an average of £1 difference per hour and the main reason for this disparity is the higher percentage of women in lower graded posts.
- The **disability pay gap is 11%** which is a slight increase compared with the previous year (10.7% in 22/23).
- The **ethnicity pay gap is 18.7%** which is an increase compared with the previous year (17.3% in 22/23).

Mainstreaming Equality

East Renfrewshire Council is committed to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all residents, employees, and partners. Our dedication to mainstreaming equality is reflected in our ongoing efforts to integrate equality principles into every aspect of our policies and services. We believe that by embedding equality into our everyday functions, we can enhance the quality of life for all residents and build a stronger, more cohesive community. By mainstreaming equality, we aim to create a place where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered. This report highlights the key initiatives, achievements, and challenges we have encountered in our journey towards equality.

Mainstreaming equality ensures that we:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The report sets out the progress we have made to mainstream equality within six key areas:

- (1) **Strengthening Leadership:** ensuring leaders all levels have the skills and capacity to champion equalities.
- (2) **Capability and Culture:** building the right skills and ethos within the workforce.
- (3) **Effective Regulation:** putting in place the appropriate policies and frameworks to support equalities.
- (4) **Accountability and Transparency:** reporting progress and being held to account on this.
- (5) **Evidence and Lived Experience:** making sure decisions are informed by data and feedback from people from protected characteristic groups.
- (6) **Improving Capacity:** ensuring we have the ability to deliver on our commitments.

Strengthening Leadership

Since publishing our 2023 Mainstreaming report, East Renfrewshire Council has had significant leadership changes, with a new administration settling in and changes to the Corporate Management Team, including a new Chief Executive. Throughout this time, equality has remained a key priority across the organisation.

The Council, along with our Community Planning Partners, recently launched the Place to Grow Vision, the biggest strategic development in 15 years. The vision sets out our shared hopes and aspirations between now and 2040 so that in East Renfrewshire:

- children and young people flourish;
- communities and places thrive; and
- we all live well.

Integral to this vision is a commitment for **‘Lifting All’** by tackling and reducing the inequalities and barriers that some of our people experience, so that everyone can flourish, thrive and live well.

Elected Members

As part of the suite of induction materials, all Elected Members are provided with Equality and Diversity e-learning modules. These set out the basic principles and legislation and provide the foundations to ensure equality, diversity and human rights underpin everything they do in their roles. In August 2023, Elected Members received additional bespoke training. This training focussed on best practice guidance and the role of Elected Members in relation to mainstreaming, equality outcomes, policy development and scrutiny.

Since being appointed, the Convenor of Education, Equalities, Culture & Leisure has regular briefings from key officers around the current, pertinent issues. These have included but are not limited to: the employee Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Network; staff training; national/statutory changes; consultation and engagement findings; upcoming events or celebrations; and the development of a community equality forum.

The Provost has worked with local community members to establish the Diversity Friendship Group. This is a multicultural friendship group where people can come together to enjoy activities, have lunch and make new connections. This new group was led by the community, but championed by the Provost, demonstrating a strong and committed leadership approach.

Corporate Management Team

Our Corporate Management Team (CMT) continues to take a proactive approach to mainstreaming equalities and provides the organisational support for many of the approaches detailed throughout this report. This includes ensuring EDI is a key focus of our new People Strategy, commissioning new EDI training materials, supporting the employee EDI network and inter-departmental working groups, and developing and embedding the Impact Assessment process.

In 2023, we commissioned CEMVO Scotland (a national intermediary organisation and strategic partner of the Scottish Government Equality Unit) to create a high-level report with recommendations for our senior leadership and management staff. This was to complement the creation of a new training package and to set the context of influencing change across the organisation and how to support all staff to participate. This followed a series of workshops with frontline employees, managers and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to better understand the learning needs of the organisation in relation to cultural awareness and supporting diversity.

In 2024, CMT reviewed the findings of the CEMVO report and agreed how best to implement and embed their recommendations. This included making clear commitments in our new People Strategy and committing resource within organisational development to deliver the new training materials. Further information on these can be found throughout this report.

Leadership across the organisation

Whilst the Corporate Management Team have overall responsibility for equalities and human rights across the organisation, leadership teams within each department have also taken ownership of the role they play in mainstreaming.

Some departments have undertaken specific training with their leadership teams around Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments (EFRIA). These training sessions focussed on the value of assessing impact and the importance of doing this well to support their decision-making processes. The leadership teams used these sessions to consider how to keep a focus on equalities, fairness and rights when making strategic decisions and policy level changes to their services, particularly when doing so under challenging financial circumstances. These sessions also highlighted potential cumulative impacts of multiple service level changes, and the leadership teams acknowledged their role in monitoring and responding to this, and the most appropriate way to manage this within their own department.

In addition, the leadership teams have been supportive and encouraging of their staff being involved in the EDI network and the various working groups such as the Equality Officer Working Group and the Inclusive and Accessible Communications Group.

Capability and Culture

We recognise that to ensure equalities and human rights are mainstreamed within East Renfrewshire Council, we need to invest in our staff and ensure that across all roles and departments, people are equipped with the right skills and understanding. This is a multi-faceted issue and therefore we have taken a range of steps to continue to improve capability and culture.

Equality Diversity and Inclusion training evaluation

Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training for staff is critical for improving our capability. Over the last two years, we have invested resource (both staff and financial) to better understand how adept our workforce is in relation to equalities and, in turn, target specific supports to address areas of need.

As part of their work, CEMVO Scotland completed a comprehensive review of our existing equality, diversity and human rights training, and worked in partnership with us to develop a new values-based training resource. CEMVO engaged with staff at all levels and across all departments to understand how the current training materials met their needs and any gaps. They developed a new suite of training materials in a variety of formats and undertook some user testing with staff and adjusted the materials accordingly based on this feedback.

This process has resulted in the development of an enhanced equality, diversity and inclusion training package. The package consists of a range of accessible training sessions designed with flexibility in mind and which can be delivered in different ways, including short 'bite-size' sessions. Some of the materials relate to cultural awareness and understanding communities and are aimed at all members of staff; whilst others relate to inclusive recruitment and unconscious bias and are aimed at managers and Human Resource staff.

People Strategy 2024-2027

In 2024, we launched our new People Strategy. The vision is to have engaged employees who are motivated to deliver quality services, which includes being an organisation that promotes and values equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging. Our People Strategy sets out our commitment to: working collaboratively with our employees to ensure we create an open environment where they feel valued and respected; to promote an inclusive and fair work environment that promotes equality and challenges discrimination; and to help people feel able to 'bring their authentic self' to work, knowing their unique perspective and experiences are valued as essential to the organisation, and are part of our shared organisational identity.

Dignity at Work Policy

Our new Dignity at Work Policy was introduced in 2024 and has a focus on creating a respectful and inclusive workplace. The policy is founded on five key principles:

- Respect: Treat everyone with courtesy and consideration.
- Inclusion: Embrace diversity, equality, inclusion and ensure everyone feels included.
- Support: Offer help and support to colleagues when needed
- Communication: Communicate in a respectful way, without using discriminatory or offensive language
- Lead by Example: Demonstrate respectful behaviour in all interactions.

The Dignity at Work Policy is designed to protect employees from bullying, harassment, sexual harassment, victimisation and discrimination, and provide support and resources for those who may need them. However, the policy also highlights the responsibilities of all employees to be aware, to speak up and support others. This is an intentional decision to further support a culture that ensures everyone has a role to play in mainstreaming equalities and human rights across the organisation and beyond.

Community Events

Creating an inclusive culture across East Renfrewshire Council goes beyond our own employees and includes the way we celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion publicly. We created and promoted a video to celebrate South Asian Heritage month, in partnership with our local South Asian community, and we have created displays within our council buildings for Black History Month featuring inspiring stories of prominent Black people in the UK. Through the Scottish Government Anti-Racism in Education Programme Fund we have supported an intergenerational project between Thornliebank Primary School and the Women of Colour Heritage Group to create an oral history project.

Civic Event Protocol

In 2025, we introduced a new Civic Event Protocol which provides support and guidance for civic and ceremonial events. This protocol sets out the key dates throughout the year, including International Women's Day and Pride, when the council will fly a flag, to celebrate specific occasions or events. These celebrations will be promoted to all employees and to the wider public, through a range of communications channels.

Effective Regulation

The people element of mainstreaming – both the leadership and wider culture – is vital, but it also requires effective policies and guidance to provide the structure within which to operate. Since 2023, we have made some changes to elements of our regulation, including updates to our Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment process, embedding equality considerations into our budget setting process and introducing a new Social Justice Strategy in Education. We have also reviewed our Equality Officer Working Group to ensure it is best able to support the structures.

Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment (EFRIA)

We have had an integrated impact assessment process in East Renfrewshire for several years. The Equalities Fairness and Rights Impact Assessment (EFRIA) includes the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Fairer Scotland Duty and, more recently, the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) Act. The EFRIA tool is designed to support decision-making by identifying any potential impacts of policy decisions, and officers/managers received support through written guidance materials and training sessions delivered throughout the year.

Since our last report in 2023, we have listened to feedback from officers/managers and taken steps to review and improve the EFRIA process. This has included:

- Clarifying our screening process - this has supported officers to understand when an EFRIA is and is not required. The screening also provides officers with clear instructions on what to do next;
- Updating the EFRIA template - the template has been adapted to make it more user-friendly and intuitive;
- Updating the written guidance - the supporting guidance information has been updated in line with the new template;
- Creating new supporting materials - this includes video tutorials and good practice examples to help guide people to undertake good quality impact assessments;
- Introducing support sessions - we are running monthly drop-in sessions which are open to anyone needing advice around a specific issue, or more general information; and
- Additional training for Departmental Equality Officers - we ran a training session specifically designed to better equip the departmental officers to respond to EFRIA queries or support requests within their own departments.

Budget setting process

The Budget Strategy Group (BSG) considers all budget proposals templates submitted by the relevant departments. The budget proposal template includes reference to any potential impacts on equality, fairness or rights. As part of the EFRIA review process, we created a stronger link between the EFRIA and budget setting templates to ensure that potential and any accumulative impacts could be assessed as part of the decision-making process.

Equality Officer Working Group

Our Equality Officer Working Group (EOWG) was established several years ago, to support our mainstreaming approach and ensure equalities and human rights issues are embedded across all departments. In 2024, we worked with the Corporate Management Team to review the membership and role of the group to ensure it was fit for purpose. The refreshed group then reviewed the Terms of Reference, agreed ways of working and discussed relevant training needs. We will continue to develop and support this group, understanding their critical role in our mainstreaming efforts.

Education Social Justice Strategy and Framework

In 2023, we launched 'Beyond Equity: A Social Justice Framework for Education in East Renfrewshire'. This framework highlights the need for all educators to have an in-depth understanding of the political, cultural and socio-economic issues affecting learners and their families to create a school culture which promotes equality, respects rights and preserves human dignity. This approach not only allows children and young people to thrive in their communities but also contributes to their understanding and appreciation of diversity and helps build a more just society.

The strategy is laid out through the following principles:

- **Use of Resources:** We support and empower schools to use resources to deliver activities, interventions and experiences which will improve equity in education outcomes.
- **Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** We implement socially and culturally responsive Learning, Teaching and Assessment practices that reflect the experiences and perspectives of our pupils and reduce barriers to learning and attainment.
- **Curriculum Design:** All children and young people see positive representations of themselves and diverse others in what they read, see, and hear. The curriculum recognises and reflects the diversity of society and takes account of global perspectives.
- **Professional Learning and Development:** As educators we are able to recognise our own racial and social identities. We work proactively to understand our own bias and develop cultural competence, continually updating our practice to meet all learners' needs.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** We are improving staff diversity to better represent and support our pupil population.
- **Relationships with Learners, Families and the Community:** We promote family and community partnerships that value and involve all our pupils, parents and partners, and we work together to develop a socially just climate.

British Sign Language Plan

We published our new British Sign Language (BSL) Plan for 2024 – 2030. This plan will ensure that those whose first or preferred language is BSL are fully involved in daily and public life as active, healthy citizens and are empowered to make informed choices about their lives. The East Renfrewshire BSL Plan sets out our aims:

- To improve outcomes for BSL users by embedding the needs of BSL users in relevant Council and partnership policies, plans and strategies in order to develop solutions to the barriers faced by BSL users in their daily lives.
- To remove accessibility as a barrier for BSL users in all aspects of life, recognising the importance of having accessible information in the right format at the right time, utilising technology and increasing people's awareness of communication tools.
- The Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach will be fully embedded, with a deaf or deafblind child and their family offered the right information and support at the right time to engage with BSL. We will strengthen partnerships between relevant organisations to overcome barriers for BSL users and deaf/deafblind children to ensure they have the support they need at all stages of their learning, so that they can reach their full potential.
- BSL users will receive person-centred support to develop their skills, consider what route to employment is right for them and to enter the workforce so that they can fulfil their potential and improve Scotland's economic performance. They will be provided with support to enable them to progress in their chosen career.
- BSL users will have access to the information and services they need to live active, healthy lives, and to make informed choices at every stage of their lives.
- BSL users will have access to the cultural life of East Renfrewshire, active opportunities to enjoy and contribute to culture and the arts and are encouraged to share BSL and deaf culture with other people in the area.
- To better understand the evidence and data on the BSL community in East Renfrewshire and use this to inform decision making and service planning that meets people's needs.
- BSL users will have safe, fair and inclusive access to public and active transport and the systems that support transport use in East Renfrewshire.
- BSL users will have fair and equal access to the civil, criminal and juvenile systems in Scotland.
- BSL users will be fully involved in democratic and public life in Scotland, as active and informed citizens, as voters, as elected politicians and as board members of our public bodies

Accountability and Transparency

We have well-established processes in place for reporting on progress and being held to account and have created some new processes more recently. These processes ensure we are open and transparent, which supports the mainstreaming efforts across East Renfrewshire Council.

Education Standards and Quality Reporting

Our Standards and Quality Report, published in 2025, provides a comprehensive overview of the progress made under the Social Justice Strategy. Some key highlights include:

- 170 teachers and Child Development Officers (CDOs) attended an anti-racism training session; the Equalities Coordinators Network took part in a focused session on anti-bullying and anti-racism with support from national anti-bullying organisation RespectMe; and all head teachers and heads of centre participated in a discussion led by Education Scotland on anti-racism. As a result, practitioners report increased confidence in discussing and responding to challenging issues around race and promoting anti-racism in their establishments. This work is also helping schools to ensure establishment policies and processes are robust, up-to-date, and lead to positive learning environments for all.
- Over 260 practitioners attended, and highly evaluated equality and diversity-focused twilight professional learning sessions led by the Quality Improvement Team.
- The development of an Early Years Outreach Service with a focus on additional support needs particularly affecting language and communication, learning and emotional regulation.
- Working in partnership with the Violence Against Women (VAW) and Girls Partnership to provide guidance on dealing with Gender-Based Violence in Schools, to raise awareness of and reduce incidences of gender-based violence. All secondary schools have staff and senior pupils trained in delivering the Mentors in Violence Prevention programme.

This report was shared to the Education Committee for scrutiny and review.

British Sign Language Plan reporting

As part of our British Sign Language (BSL) Plan, we report on key progress on the previous plan. In 2024, we published progress against the 2018-2024 plan. Some key successes include:

- Over 60 members of staff and third sector colleagues received BSL Awareness training throughout 2023 and 2024. This was delivered by a Deaf person and outlined some of the barriers people who use BSL face in their daily lives and ways hearing people could better support BSL users accessing services, as well as teaching some basic finger spelling.
- BSL interpreted events were offered to support community engagement and participation in culture, including ERCL's Remembering Together Community Covid Memorial, where the final sharing event and discussion was facilitated with BSL interpretation.

- East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure developed and delivered Creative Scotland funded 'Storytelling with BSL' sessions for young people aged 9-12 to learn BSL skills, as part of Eastwood Park Theatre's aim to make theatre accessible to all.
- Many schools have engaged in learning some basic BSL such as signing a song, finger spelling names and learning the days of the week in BSL.

This report was shared to Council for scrutiny and review. Progress on the current plan will be reported again in 2027.

Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments

All Equality Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments (EFRIAs) should be made publicly available on our website. They are published in a central repository which is searchable by department, date, protected characteristic group and assessment outcome to ensure they are as easily accessible as possible. As part of the EFRIA review process, we identified some improvement actions to ensure that all EFRIAs are published in the correct place and in a timely manner. We will continue to work to embed this process, supported by the Equality Officer Working Group.

In addition, as part of the EFRIA process review we have introduced a new screening tool. We are currently working to link this screening tool with the Committee Report process. This will ensure that all papers going to committee explicitly state the EFRIA screening outcome and links to the completed EFRIA where relevant. This aims to enhance transparency and reduce the risk of EFRIAs being overlooked.

Evidence and Lived Experience

We continue to ensure decisions are informed by data and feedback from people from protected characteristic groups. We have worked to facilitate a new Community Equalities Forum, strengthened the role of our staff network and staff monitoring data, and ensured lived experience feedback is embedded within our strategic planning processes.

Community Equalities Forum

In 2023, we commissioned a community development organisation to facilitate the development of a community-led equalities network. They actively engaged with community members and professionals across East Renfrewshire through community events, online surveys and one-to-one meetings (both in-person and online). This engagement included representatives from community groups, Community Councils, Parent Councils, faith leaders, political representatives as well as many individuals with a personal interest.

A new Community Equalities Forum was established and launched in May 2024. The group established a Terms of Reference which included five key things the Forum will do. Two of these are:

- Take part in consultations and help to influence local decision-making. The Forum will work with organisations to help shape and design plans and services.
- Raise awareness about issues around equality and share experiences to promote more understanding.

This shows a commitment from the Forum to ensure decisions are informed by data and feedback from those with lived experience. We are continuing to work with the Forum and since it was launched; there have been three further network meetings which we have facilitated with the aim of the forum becoming fully community led in the future.

Staff evidence and experiences

We continue to review the quality of the data we hold about our staff profile, recognising the importance in helping us understand the diversity across our workforce. We have developed a new dashboard to provide improved data and monitoring of workforce protected characteristics.

Our employee Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Network was established as an employee-led, safe space for staff to share experiences and advocate for an inclusive and fair work environment that promotes equality and challenges discrimination. Members of the EDI Network have brought their own lived experiences to help shape the range of work which goes on across the council. This has included:

- Policy Development; providing feedback on the new People Strategy
- Training materials; taking part in staff focus groups around training needs and undertaking user-testing of the new training materials developed by CEMVO as noted above
- Event planning and promotion; developing materials for wider communication with staff around cultural events such as Pride

Deaf Community Network

Since 2023, we have been regularly meeting a steering group of eight residents that use BSL, to understand their experiences of services and what their needs are. We worked with them to co-produce the BSL Plan to ensure it is reflective of their priorities and the changes they wish to see, to make East Renfrewshire a better place to live for all people that use BSL. We continue to meet with this steering group at least every 3 months to monitor progress, sense check actions and understand ongoing need and this includes identifying intergenerational networking.

Developing the new Equality Outcomes

In developing our new Equality Outcomes for 2025-2029, we gathered a range of relevant evidence and lived experience feedback. This included a comprehensive review of existing sources of evidence such as the recent Census release, Citizen's Panel survey results, and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Health and Wellbeing Survey results. We also gathered feedback through a specific new survey, and we engaged with a range of community groups representing different protected characteristics groups, and many with intersectionality. All these sources informed the new outcomes and ensured they are shaped by evidence and lived experience feedback.

Improving Capacity

To deliver on our commitments to mainstreaming, we need to ensure we have appropriate capacity. Despite the ongoing challenges arising from financial constraints and budget cuts, we have managed to improve capacity in some areas since the last progress report in 2023.

Inclusive recruitment

We have taken steps to make our recruitment processes more inclusive. To help attract a more diverse range of candidates, we have created more accessible information about East Renfrewshire Council as an employer and we have produced and published guidance to support applicants to complete application forms. To help remove barriers for applicants, we have introduced a guaranteed interview scheme for Veterans and Care Experienced Young People. This is in addition to the existing Disability Confident accreditation which guarantees interviews for Disabled applicants. To make our interview process more inclusive, we provide candidates with interview questions in advance. This approach aims to support candidates with hidden disabilities such as mental health conditions or neurodiversity, where English is an additional language or where the candidate may have a condition which affects speech.

As noted above, we have also developed a new package of Equality Diversity and Inclusion training materials, including materials specifically focused on inclusive recruitment and unconscious bias. We will roll these out across the organisation with the intention of continuing to drive improvement in our recruitment practices.

Specialist staffing resources

Across the organisation, we have created some specialist roles to enhance our ability to deliver on our equality commitments. Some of these posts are currently filled, whilst others are still in development. The relevant roles include:

- A Deaf role model teacher to work with the Teacher of the Deaf in schools to provide lived experience support to young people experiencing hearing loss
- A Gaelic Language Primary Education facility opened in 2022 with a Gaelic head teacher and classroom teacher
- The creation of a new Organisational Development post with a remit for equalities training and development, based on the Corporate Management Team commitment to the recommendations from the external report mentioned previously

British Sign Language videos

A dedicated budget has been used to create and publish a series of British Sign Language information videos on our website. These videos cover a range of topics including how to make a complaint, applying for financial supports or entitlements such as free school meals and information about services such as Money Advice and Rights Team and employability service Work EastRen. These topics

are based on feedback from the Deaf community and are intended to enhance capacity by providing information in an accessible format.

Equality Outcomes 2021-2025: Progress update

This section provides an update on the progress of our 2021-2025 Equality Outcomes.

Our 2021 – 2025 Outcomes are:

- ◆ Minority ethnic residents are represented in public life and have their needs recognised and addressed in decision-making
- ◆ Minority Ethnic, disabled and younger residents are able to access services and feel connected to their communities
- ◆ Domestic abuse survivors are protected from harm and abuse
- ◆ The mental health and wellbeing of LGBT+ children and young people is improved
- ◆ The diversity of East Renfrewshire Council workforce at all levels better reflects the local population
- ◆ Younger residents and Disabled residents are able to participate and are supported to sustain good quality employment opportunities

For each outcome, we describe the progress made over the last 2 years; this builds on the [2023 Progress Report](#). Each outcome has some associated measures to help monitor progress. Where possible, we have included:

- The baseline measure (2021)
- The mid-point progress measure (2023)
- The most recent measure (2025)

In some instances, there have been changes in data collection processes, or the most recent data is not yet available. This is referenced in the relevant sections.

The progress against each of the existing outcomes, has been considered in developing our new Equality Outcomes for 2025 – 2029. This means some of these outcomes, or elements of them, are still a key priority and we will continue to work on them for the next four years.

Outcome 1: Minority ethnic residents are represented in public life and have their needs recognised and addressed in decision-making

Why is this outcome important?
<p>2020/21 engagement findings showed that minority ethnic residents felt less involvement in public life and were therefore less likely to influence decision-making.</p> <p>This feedback was supported by local data which showed a lack of minority ethnic representatives on Council Boards, within the Administration or in senior management positions.</p>
What did we say we would do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower and encourage minority ethnic residents to get involved in public life • Increase the influence minority ethnic residents have on strategic decision making
What progress have we made?
<p>Since the last progress report, we have worked in partnership with communities to establish a community-led equalities network. The East Renfrewshire Equality Forum brings local residents and community groups from all backgrounds together to raise awareness of equality issues, share knowledge and information and to give voice to our diverse and underrepresented communities. The Equality Forum aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share good practice and ideas locally and nationally and connect with other equalities forums to help support this. • Share information, resources, opportunities, funding, and events. • Take part in consultations and help to influence local decision-making. The Forum will work with organisations to help shape and design plans and services. • Raise awareness about issues around equality and share experiences to promote more understanding. • Provide opportunities for members to take part in relevant training. <p>The Equality Forum was launched in May 2024 and meets approximately four times a year.</p> <p>We have worked with local Community Councils to try to better understand the profile of their membership. We worked to gather demographic information for Community Council members however the response rate was low and the limited numbers created issues around anonymity of the data. We will continue to engage with Community Councils and will work with the Equality Forum to help identify any potential barriers which may limit involvement and consider ways to reduce these.</p>

The following measures are intended to highlight progress against this outcome. Where baseline data is available, this has been included.

Critical Indicators	Baseline data	Mid-point data	Current data
Number of minority ethnic members on council boards (this data is not currently	1 member (11%) of ERCLT Board of Directors	1 member (11%) of ERCLT Board of Directors	1 member (11%) of ERCLT Board of Directors

collected for Community Councils)			
Number of Equality, Fairness and Rights Impact Assessments making use of local data and/or engaging with the Equality Forum	2	47 (between baseline and midpoint)	33 (between midpoint and current)

Outcome 2: Minority Ethnic, Disabled and younger residents are able to access services and feel connected to their communities

Why is this outcome important?
<p>2020/21 engagement suggested that minority ethnic residents felt access to services could be restricted due to language barriers.</p> <p>Engagement suggested the Disabled residents felt access to some services was restricted due to a lack of information in alternative formats.</p> <p>Engagement suggested that young carers may feel a lack of support, and therefore feel a disconnect with their communities.</p> <p>Engagement findings suggested that young people in East Renfrewshire were likely to feel disconnected from their communities due to lack of jobs and affordable housing.</p>
What did we say we would do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make services more accessible to minority ethnic, Disabled and younger residents • Ensure the services offered meet the needs of residents • Build stronger community connections for minority ethnic, Disabled and younger residents
What have we done so far?
<p>To make leisure services more accessible to younger residents, East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure (ERCL) Trust continues to deliver the For Your Entertainment (FYE) Scheme for young people. The Health and Social Care Partnership approve referrals into the scheme, and this provides eligible young people with access across ERCL services free of charge.</p> <p>To ensure our services meet the wide needs of our residents, we have introduced neurodiverse sensory equipment at libraries and dyslexia friendly books in libraries. We have also provided British Sign Language (BSL) interpreted performances at Eastwood Park Theatre, BSL Arts and Heritage events, BSL drama classes for children and created online BSL videos.</p> <p>We have developed a series of British Sign Language information videos on our website that includes information on bin collections and Council Tax. This followed a series of discussions with Deaf community network members who highlighted the importance of equal access to receiving information about Council services.</p> <p>To ensure services are welcoming, ERCL staff have been trained in Trauma Skills Level 2 to help understand and support anyone who has experienced trauma to use their service. Similarly, frontline staff have been trained in Neurodivergent Audiences and Events planning to help remove access and participation barriers.</p> <p>We have considered how we support key staff in education establishments to be more trauma-informed so that they have improved knowledge, skills, understanding and confidence to support our children and young people. We have developed and offered supervision provision in identified</p>

schools. There was an improvement in knowledge, confidence and skills as evidenced through the pre and post training evaluation.

We established a cross-departmental working group to develop Good Practice Guidance for Inclusive and Accessible Communications (IAC). The guidance supports staff to make communications more inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities, languages spoken, or other factors. The guidance includes information about communicating effectively with:

- those who do not have English as a first language
- people who have a hearing or visual impairment
- people who have global learning disabilities or specific learning difficulties

This IAC guidance has only recently been launched. We hope to see it have a positive impact on how we communicate in future and for best practice to become embedded.

We continue to work closely with our external partners to improve the accessibility of services and features on the website. Last year, we increased the accessibility score of our website to 97%, an increase of 6% on the previous period. This ensures our website will be available to a wide range of customers including those with additional needs such as visual or hearing impairments.

The measures below are intended to demonstrate the progress against this outcome.

Critical Indicators	Baseline data (2021)	Midpoint data (2023)	Current data (2025)
Percentage of minority ethnic residents who feel a sense of belonging to their community*	54%	40%	58%
Percentage of Disabled residents who feel a sense of belonging to their community*	43%	54%	50%
Percentage of younger residents who feel connected to their communities*	Sample size too small	Sample size too small	Sample size too small

*Data gathered from Citizen Panel Survey

Outcome 3: Domestic abuse survivors are protected from harm and abuse

Why is this outcome important?
<p>In 2021-22, 593 domestic abuse incidents were reported to the Police; which is a 10% increase compared to the previous year. This means that there is domestic abuse happening every day in homes across the authority and a growing confidence in reporting these incidents.</p> <p>We know that the majority of domestic abuse survivors are women and the majority of perpetrators are men – 98% of high risk victims were female and 83% of domestic abuse incidents involved a female victim. At least one in five women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime. Just over four in five domestic abuse incidents involved a male suspected perpetrator and female victim.</p> <p>We also know there are additional risk factors relating to the protected characteristic groups including disability and victims from a minority ethnic background face additional barriers to seeking help. 58% of high risk victims recorded a disability which includes mental ill health, 19% of high risk victims were from minority ethnic communities and 45% of women and children supported in refuge were from minority ethnic communities.</p>
What did we say we would do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure employees can identify and respond to domestic abuse appropriately and effectively ▪ Implement policies and strategies which support the strategic response to domestic abuse
What have we done so far?
<p>We have implemented domestic abuse induction training to all new employees. This was introduced in January 2024 and since then 1040 employees have completed the e-learning module and 28 employees have attended the managers training.</p> <p>We have made domestic abuse resources tools available, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Safe and Together gold standard child protection domestic abuse training • a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to provide a structured, partnership response to high-risk cases of domestic abuse • a comprehensive risk assessment (DASH Risk checklist) to support decision making on cases referred to MARAC <p>We have ensured employees are aware of the referral pathways and supports available through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a comprehensive training programme on Domestic Abuse/MARAC and Safe and Together practice ▪ regular communications to all employees ▪ monthly domestic abuse advice sessions for any member of staff to discuss and seek advice <p>We have delivered comprehensive awareness and media campaigns to ensure victims are aware of the range of services and supports available and to raise awareness of gender-based violence.</p>

Each year we participate and co-ordinate 16 Days of Action Against Gender Based Violence this includes delivering a range of media communications and wide variety of targeted events and workshops with staff and wider partners.

International Women's Day on the 8th March 2023 provided a further opportunity to celebrate social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women and raise awareness and collective action on gender equality and the work to end gender-based violence. To celebrate Women's Aid hosted a successful open day at the Foundry, Barrhead with over 50 people in attendance throughout the afternoon. The event was supported by key senior officers and elected members across the HSCP, Council and Police Scotland. [Domestic abuse service to mark International Women's Day - East Renfrewshire Council](#)

We have developed and launched two new domestic abuse policies for employees and housing services. The policies have involved consultation with domestic abuse survivors, partner organisations and the Violence Against Women Partnership. Both policies ensure a sensitive and consistent approach to supporting victims of domestic abuse. The policies have been widely shared and promoted across the organisation with comprehensive training to senior managers and employees across the council to support implementation.

During this period Women's Aid launched a new programme Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDER) programme. This 10-week group work programme is an educational, recovery focused, multi-agency initiative for women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse. To date 2 programmes were delivered which included 13 families and 17 children. This was positively received and evaluated by all participants.

We have progressed our approaches to gender-based violence in schools and have established a local team of pastoral staff who have been trained in the delivery of the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme ensuring that all secondary schools are involved in the delivery of this programme with young people. Further, we have established a team of staff who will support primary schools to use MVP as appropriate. To provide ongoing support, we have established a network for MVP practitioners to share national updates in relation to gender-based violence and offer opportunities for key staff to share good practice.

The measures for this outcome are intended to demonstrate some of the key data which can indicate progress. It is important to note that the issue of domestic abuse is complex and we need to understand the story beneath the figures. For example, an increase in the number of incidents could show an increase in confidence in reporting or an increase in incidents, therefore a measure of change could be either positive or negative.

Critical Indicators	Baseline data (April 2021)	April 2021- 2022	April 2022-23	April 2023-24
Number of Domestic Abuse incidents*	537 (2020-21)	593 (2021-22)	553 (2022-23)	579 (2023-24)
Number of staff undertaking Domestic Abuse training**	239	225	227	181

Number of Referrals to Domestic Abuse support services in East Renfrewshire	RFA HSCP (children only) 365	RFA HSCP (children only) 219	RFA HSCP (children only) 152	RFA HSCP (children only) 115
	-	Number of DA Enquiries 130	Number of DA Enquiries 316	Number of DA Enquiries 407
	Women's Aid (Women & Children) 288	Women's Aid (Women & Children) 335	Women's Aid (Women & Children) 336	Women's Aid (Women & Children) 334
	MARAC 292	MARAC 330	MARAC 329	MARAC 415
	Total 945	Total 884	Total 817	Total 864
	Women's Aid Helpline Calls 517	Women's Aid Helpline Calls 891	Women's Aid Helpline Calls 750	Women's Aid Helpline Calls 725
Proportion of supported women and children who report improvement in domestic abuse outcomes.***	84% women	87% women	90% women	94% women
	87% children	84% children	82% children	84% children

* this data is sourced from Police Scotland whose most up-to date figures at the time of writing are for 2023-24

** Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence Risk Assessment (DASH) and Safe and Together

*** Source is self-reported outcomes by women and children in Women's Aid

Outcome 4: The mental health and wellbeing of LGBT+ children and young people is improved

Why is this outcome important?
<p>2020/21 engagement findings indicated a need for increased mental health support for young people in East Renfrewshire; this was raised both by young people directly and parents and carers of young people. The Children's Plan had already identified this as a priority action.</p> <p>Data at a national level also indicates that LGBT+ young people are at a higher risk of mental health problems than heterosexual people.</p> <p>National data suggests that LGBT+ residents are much more likely than others to feel isolated and/or lonely.</p>
What did we say we would do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase preventative mental health and wellbeing support for LGBT+ children and young people ▪ Increase early intervention mental health and wellbeing support for LGBT+ children and young people
What have we done so far?
<p>The Community Learning and Development Team continue to deliver a needs-led LGBT+ youth group. The group provides young people with a safe space, opportunity to share their experiences, gain support from each other and build relationships with youth work staff. This group ensures a supportive environment where young people can take part in fun and educational activities that positively impacts on their mental health and wellbeing and makes them feel safe, accepted and included. The group have participated in PRIDE, Leap sports residential and weekly group work sessions. In addition to this we have LGBT+ young people as part of our youth rights association which provides a platform to ensure LGBT+ young people's voices are heard.</p> <p>The Equalities Coordinators Network are members of school leadership teams with responsibility for leading on equality and social justice in every establishment. They met regularly to undertake professional learning on current equality issues and share effective practice to promote equality and social justice. Facilitated by the Quality Improvement Team and third sectors partners, focused sessions took place on a range of topics including culturally and socially responsive practice, and Gender and LGBTQ Equality. This continued professional learning offer has provided all establishments with the knowledge to review their practice and update policies as appropriate. Schools have recently been encourage to engage with TIE (Time for Inclusive Education) who provide a self-directed e-learning modules and deliver CPD directly to teaching staff. We don't yet have engagement data available for this.</p>

The measures for this outcome are intended to present some key data around areas of progress. Where baseline data is available, this is included.

Critical Indicators	Baseline data (2021)	Midpoint data (2023)	Current data (2025)
% schools and centres engaging with UNICEF's Rights Respecting School framework		100%	100%
Number of interactions with the LGBT+ Helpline	1	4	0*
Number of people accessing the LGBT+ Youth Group for support	18	43	31**

*The helpline was established during lockdown to provide a safe and confidential space for young LGBT+ people who may have felt isolated. However, the demand for this service has been low

**Programmes run on the school calendar year

Outcome 5: The diversity of East Renfrewshire Council workforce at all levels better reflects the local population

Why is this outcome important?
<p>Employment opportunities was a key theme identified by the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and our 2020/21 engagement found this was important at a local level too.</p> <p>As the largest local employer, ERC should be leading the way in providing good quality employment and advancement opportunities for staff within the protected characteristic groups.</p>
What did we say we would do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure our recruitment policy and practice is inclusive ▪ Improve access to career pathways for employees from minority groups ▪ Improve retention of employees from minority groups
What have we done so far?
<p>To improve our recruitment policy and practice, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extended the guaranteed interview scheme to include Looked After People and Veterans for Local Government roles, which means they will be invited to interview where they meet the essential criteria for the role. • Updated our job application form to make the questions simpler and less repetitive so that it is clearer for applicants to complete • Created guidance for applicants explaining how to complete the Local Government job application. This guidance is included as a link on job adverts and is published on our Council website. • We provide candidates with the interview questions on arrival at their interview so they have them to read in advance and they can have them in front of them during the interview. This approach supports all applicants and was in particular those candidates who may be neurodiverse, where English is an additional language, or who have a condition that affects communication or where candidates feel excessive stress around the interview process. • Job advert posters are now used in public places to reach members of the public who may not automatically use the internet for job searches. The posts include QR codes for ease of access. • In addition to job posters, we now include the QR code in a weekly email to staff regarding job vacancies so that this can be shared more easily. • Jobs continue to be promoted via social media including Facebook and LinkedIn. • A Jobs & Careers page has been created on the Council website which contains more information for applicants and key policies. • Proactive communications have been issued to employees to ask that they update their equality data and the positive reasons for this. • Five minority ethnic teachers have completed a leadership mentoring programme with Scottish Association for Minority Ethnic Educators (SAMEE).

Critical Indicators	Baseline data (2021)	Midpoint data (2023)	Current data (2025)
Percentage of ERC employees from minority groups (ERC population 6%)	2.98%	3.56%	5.24%
Percentage of teaching staff/Child Development Officers from minority ethnic groups	3.53%	3.55%	3.48%
Percentage of promoted* teaching staff/Child Development Officers from minority ethnic groups	2.92%	3.27%	3.21%

**Promoted staff are Principal Teacher, Depute Head Teacher or Head Teacher*

Outcome 6: Younger residents and Disabled residents are able to participate and are supported to sustain good quality employment opportunities

Why is this outcome important?
<p>2020/21 engagement and data identified issues relating to employment opportunities for both younger people and those with a disability.</p> <p>Data indicated that younger people were more likely to face employment challenges in the current climate, with out-of-work benefit claims increasing by the largest proportion in 18-24 year olds.</p> <p>Data also showed that adults with a learning disability were less likely to be in employment than the national average. The engagement findings support these concerns; they noted reduced opportunities to find good quality employment for Disabled individuals and those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Young carers have lower participation rates and the main reason given for reduced school attendance is due to at home caring responsibilities.</p>
What did we say we would do?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase good quality employment opportunities for Disabled residents ▪ Increase employability support for younger residents ▪ Increase support for young carers
What have we done so far?
<p>Through the No One Left Behind Approach, we have provided a range of employability supports for Disabled people. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable Works, Progress for Parents: employability support aimed at parents with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities • Values into Action Scotland: Triple E Supported Employment Programme for adults with disabilities • Scottish Action on Mental Health: Individual Placement & Support Programme for those with mental health conditions • Scottish Action on Mental Health: Individual Placement & Support Programme (co-located with Community Mental Health Team) for those with severe and enduring mental health issues • Health Employability programme: employability support aimed at anyone with a health condition within the locality <p>Alongside employability programmes, the East Renfrewshire Local Employability Partnership (LEP) launched a Health, Disability & Employability subgroup in September 2024. The group aims to bring together relevant stakeholders to ensure that support is getting to the right people at the right time. Free neurodiversity training has also been delivered to a wide range of LEP partners.</p>

This is in addition to Diversity, Inclusion and Equality Training delivered to local businesses by Enable (January to March 2025).

Employability supports offered for younger residents include:

- Youth Employability Programme: aimed at 16-24 yr olds who are not in education, employment or training
- Care Experienced Employability Programme: aimed at care experienced young people between the ages of 16-29 yrs old
- Positive Pathways Programme: aimed at 16-19 yr olds school leavers with no positive destination
- Enable Works – Next Steps Programme: employability support aimed at 16-24 yr olds with Additional Support Needs
- Community Justice & Employability Programme: support for those with criminal convictions
- Modern Apprenticeship Programme: support for young people

Regular caseload meetings occur between Work EastRen, Developing the Young Workforce, Education and Skills Development Scotland to target those young people most in need.

To support Young Carers, all education establishments put the needs of care experienced children and young people at the heart of their improvement agenda. Ongoing awareness raising sessions with Head Teachers, Deputy Headteachers, and Additional Support Needs Coordinators on our Corporate Parenting duties and what it means to be ‘a good parent’ are pivotal. We have been working with the West Partnership to provide a suite of training materials for staff in schools to ensure that our care experienced children and young people receive the right support and nurture from all staff in our educational establishments. Training for Trainers has been provided for key staff in all establishments who will deliver the Keeping the Promise Award to all staff in all settings.

Most primary and all secondary schools continue to engage with Young Carer development workers who deliver at assemblies, provide workshops and drop-in sessions for pupils, and training for staff. This engagement has led to an increase in the number of carers being identified by schools and being supported by the Carers Centre. In March 2024, primary schools participated in an event held at Eastwood Theatre to celebrate Young Carers Action Day, sharing their experiences and hearing from other supporters and contributors.

Critical Indicators	Baseline data (2021)	Midpoint data (2023)	Current data (2025)
Out of work claimant rates for young people*	405	175	150 (18-24 yr olds) NOMIS December 2024
Success measures re Youth Employability programmes	427	675 (March 2023)	425 (March 2023-April 2024)

offered through Young Persons Guarantee**			510 (April 2024 - Jan 2025)
Number of positive, sustained School Leaver Destinations at 12 month follow up	97.4%	97.5% (April 2023)	97.5% (April 2024)
Percentage of young carers leaving school with a positive destination	Not available	100%	99% (April 2024)
An increase in the number of identified young carers in schools		19.7% increase between September 2021 and September 2022	20.7% increase between September 2022 and September 2024
Average % attendance of young carers in school over the school year	90.01% (All ERC pupils 95.53%) (2020-2021)	85.36% (All ERC pupils 92.36%) (2021- 2022)	83.19% (All ERC pupils 93.1%) (2023-24)

Employees

Organisations like the Council cannot flourish and grow if everyone thinks and behaves the same way. We must create an environment where the Council benefits from the existing diversity of the workforce, while working towards the ambition of having an equality profile that more closely reflects the population it serves. Such an approach should also go beyond legal compliance and seek to add value to the organisation by contributing to employee well-being and engagement.

Diverse teams perform better and solve problems faster by encouraging creativity and fostering innovation. All employee-related actions should ensure that, regardless of anyone's ethnic identity or background, everyone deserves the opportunity to develop their skills and talents to their full potential, work in a safe, supportive and inclusive environment, be fairly rewarded and recognised for their work and to have a meaningful voice on matters that affect them. The following section on workforce culture will explore how the Council aims to achieve that.

These areas are viewed as examples of an approach to establish equality and diversity as integral to how our Council operates, as we foster activities at both the corporate and operational level. They are not viewed as the ultimate destination but as routes towards developing equality of opportunity for those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Key improvements since the last report include:

Our People Strategy 2024 – 2027

In East Renfrewshire we want to make people's lives better. The Place to Grow Partnership Vision for 2040 informs all Council plans including our People Strategy.

Our employees are our greatest asset, and we recognise the need to invest in them, seek their feedback, and ensure they can work efficiently and effectively. By supporting and developing our employees we will continue to live our values and develop progressive, people-orientated policies and practices.

Our aspiration is to be a learning organisation; one that continuously transforms through the learning and development of our people. Learning has a clear link to growth, innovation and motivation. Becoming a learning organisation means we can respond faster to change through effective problem solving and the introduction of talent strategies to develop and retain and attract the best people. This will lead to improvements in performance and customer satisfaction.

We want inspirational and effective leaders who ensure employees are supported and developed to build the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding required for their roles. This includes supporting all newly appointed leaders, managers and employees to develop into their roles. We will encourage our people to seek out high quality learning experiences within and beyond local government by engaging individually and collaboratively relevant to their role.

Our leaders will recognise the importance of employee engagement and ensure employees are clear on work priorities, have the information and skills they need to excel in their job, support them to

communicate their views on key issues affecting them and set clear expectations on their contributions. We will utilise the experience and skills of our employees and engage with them to inform improvements in the way we work and the services we provide to deliver a customer focused, One Council approach.

We are focused on developing our workforce, supporting our employees' health and wellbeing, valuing equality and the advancement of diversity, recruiting, retaining and developing employees with the correct skills and making the best use of technology and enhancing the way we work to support our local residents.

Vision and Outcomes

Our People vision is to have engaged employees who are motivated to deliver quality services for our customers. This means:



This will be delivered by



Under each of the pillars above we have associated actions which will be the focus to support us to achieve our People Strategy.

Accreditation



The Council has maintained its accreditation for Disability Confident, Carer Positive and the Living Wage. We continue to support the Miscarriage Association's pregnancy loss charter by treating miscarriage in line with bereavement and allowing employees time off under this process. The Council has Silver accreditation from the Ministry of Defence's Defence Employer Recognition Scheme and has submitted its application for the Gold award.

Values

The Council's Values continue to be communicated with all employees and are integrated into our employment policies and practice.

Recruitment Improvements

Updates have been made to our recruitment processes to support them to be more inclusive for all. The key changes include:

- The creation of a Jobs and Careers page on the Council Internet which includes relevant policies and information for employees and prospective employees to learn more about the Council and our terms and conditions of employment.
- Guidance has been written for job applicants to help them complete the Local Government job application forms. A link to the guidance is provided in job adverts and is also published on our Jobs and Careers page on our website.
- We have extended our guaranteed interview scheme beyond Disabled applicants to include Veterans and Looked After Children, so applicants can make us aware through the recruitment process. Where applicants meet the essential criteria for the job they are applying for they will be guaranteed an interview.
- Interview questions are now provided to candidates on arrival at interview so they can read them and refer to them during the interview as required. This approach has specifically been taken to support those candidates with hidden disabilities such as mental health or neurodiversity, where English isn't the first language or where the candidate may have a condition which affects speech.
- As of 1st April 2025, all Modern Apprenticeship roles are paid at the Real Living Wage rate.

Sexual Harassment Prevention

We implemented a new Dignity at Work policy, to replace the previous Bullying and Harassment policy, which aligns with the new duty to prevent Sexual Harassment in the workplace and by third parties. A letter was issued to all employees to highlight the new policy with a leaflet explaining the key points.

In addition, we have added text into our procurement contracts with third party suppliers to ensure they are aware of our stance on Sexual Harassment of employees.

To support the new policy, we have implemented a confidential reporting method for employees to use to raise concerns which will then be investigated.

Family Friendly Practice

We have updated our policies in line with legislation changes for Carers and Paternity leave. We continue to offer above the statutory entitlements for Carers leave and provide special leave for a range of reasons to support employees. We continue to offer bereavement leave for miscarriage and we will implement the Neonatal Care Pay & Leave when this is introduced this year.

Fair Work First

The Scottish Government Fair Work policy asks employers to provide secure employment with fair pay and conditions, to ensure workers are heard and represented, treated with respect and have opportunities to progress. These measures have been identified as being essential in tackling poverty, balancing the rights of employers and workers and benefiting society and the economy. East Renfrewshire Council was one of the first local authorities in Scotland to agree our Fair Work statement with our Trade Unions and publish it on our website. The full statement can be accessed through this link [Fair Work Statement](#) and demonstrates our commitment to Fair Work practices and evidences the processes used to support this. From 1st April 2025 all Modern Apprentices will be paid the Real Living Wage which supports Fair Work principles.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing and healthy working practices and initiatives are central to our culture, to ensure we work in a modern, safe environment where employee health and wellbeing is actively promoted. A range of wellbeing approaches have been offered to employees including Health Checks which gives employees the opportunity to have a general health check-up, team events to focus on wellbeing, walking clubs and book groups. Training has been developed and delivered on Spotting & Managing Mental Health Issues. A Wellbeing survey was undertaken with employees in 2024, with an overall satisfaction score of 72.46% achieved.

Engagement

The Council has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Network which is open to all employees with lived experience and/or an interest in equality issues. The Network is an employee led, safe-space for staff to share experiences, celebrate diversity, and advocate for an inclusive and fair work environment that promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

Training

Becoming a learning organisation is a key priority for the Council over the coming years, including training for our Leadership and Management employees to ensure they understand our Council values, behaviours and are resilient and able to support their teams. Trauma informed training has been facilitated by our HSCP colleagues for managers across the Council to raise awareness of how trauma can negatively impact on employees or people we may come into contact with.

In the mainstreaming section, we have reported on the work with external partners to increase cultural competence and awareness of employees. As part of these recommendations, we are progressing an inclusive leadership programme for our senior leaders. There will be different levels of training focusing first on our Corporate Management Team. Their training will concentrate on the organisational approach to equality, as well as their own equality awareness. This training will be followed up with wider leadership sessions for managers and senior managers which will cover the responsibilities for equalities at their level. Finally, will be an update of all equality training for employees, to ensure all training is up to date and relevant.

In addition to Inclusive Leadership, Neurodiversity training will be developed and rolled out, to raise awareness for all employees.

Employee Equality Monitoring

This report details the current equality monitoring requirements of the Council in line with the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, while paying due regard to the general duties. Under these regulations, all public authorities in Scotland are required to publish a set of equality outcomes, a mainstreaming report containing employee information and/or profile. In addition, where an authority has 20 employees or more, a statement on equal pay, occupational segregation and gender pay gap information should be published.

The employment section of this report takes into account the following authorities and partnerships that are covered by the Specific Duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty for East Renfrewshire Council, which includes:

- East Renfrewshire Education Department
- East Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership
- East Renfrewshire Licensing Board

The statistics have been produced in respect of the years 2023-2024 with comparative data provided for previous years where this is available.

The Education Department is an integral part of East Renfrewshire Council with a remit that covers a range of services from schools to facilities management. Their statistics are included in the data provided for the Council as a whole.

East Renfrewshire Licensing Board does not have any employees and therefore there are no separate statistics listed.

The statistics produced do not include the East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust. [The Culture and Leisure data is published separately.](#)

Current Monitoring Arrangements

Currently an analysis is undertaken of the following:

- Employees in post
- Applications for employment

- Applications for training
- Formal reporting of bullying and harassment cases
- Grievance procedures
- Disciplinary cases
- Termination of employment

The data collected is in line with the classification requirements for protected characteristics, which are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

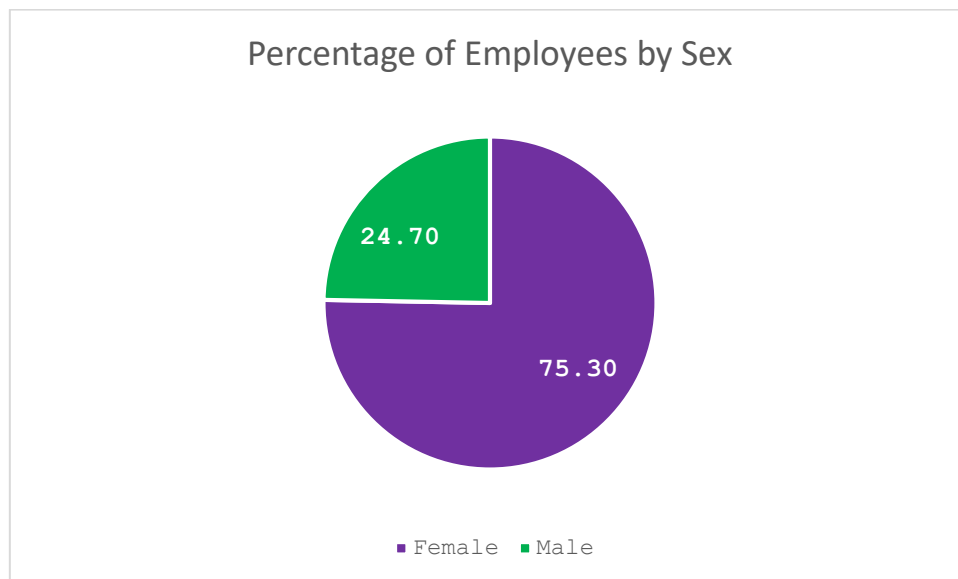
Workforce Equality Data

Employees with multiple posts have been counted once in all the demographic data.

- The full-time equivalent employee figure is 3927.17.
- The employee headcount figure is 4963.

Sex of Employees

The percentage of employees by sex remains mainly unchanged since the last mainstreaming report in 2023, where the female percentage was 76%.



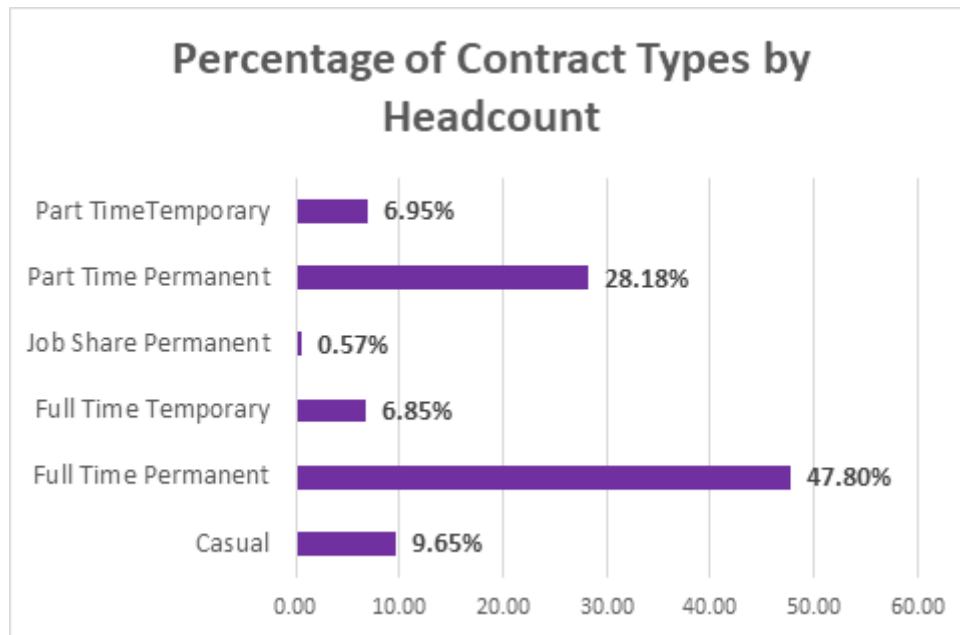
Contracts Based on Full Time Equivalent Employees

The following information does not include casual workers.

- 3386.06 employees, which is 84% of our FTE are on permanent contracts.
- 541.12 employees, which is 16% of our FTE are on temporary (fixed term) contracts.
- The proportion of permanent to temporary contracts remains unchanged since last report (2023).

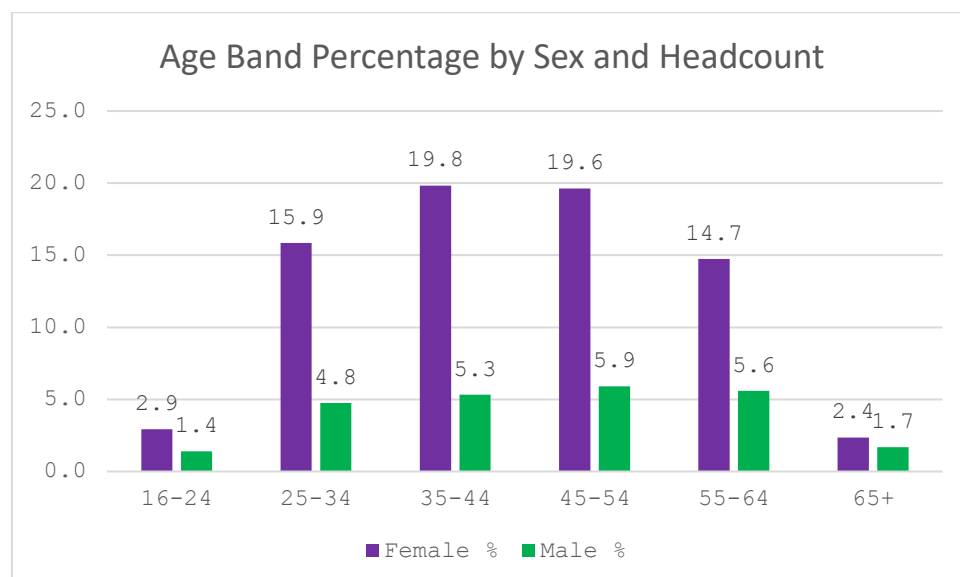
Contracts Based on Headcount - includes casual workers.

Contracts based on headcount includes all the various contract types currently offered by East Renfrewshire Council. 76.55% of our headcount are on permanent contracts, 13.8% of our headcount are on temporary (fixed term) contracts and 9.65% of our headcount are on casual contracts.



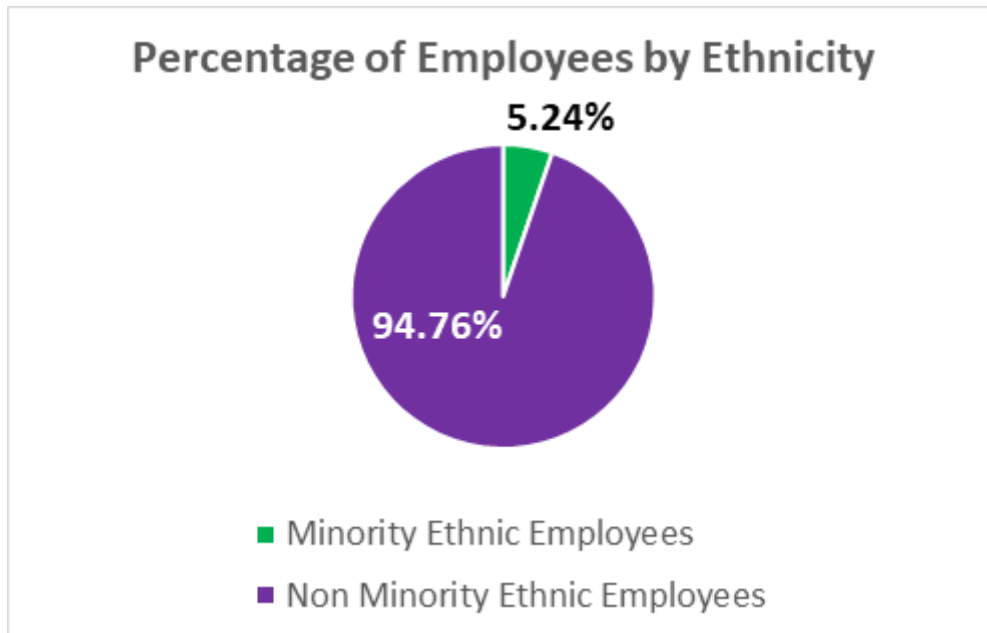
Age Bands

The age bands with the highest proportion of employees remains unchanged from the last mainstreaming report in 2023, with the age group 45-54 containing the highest proportion of employees.

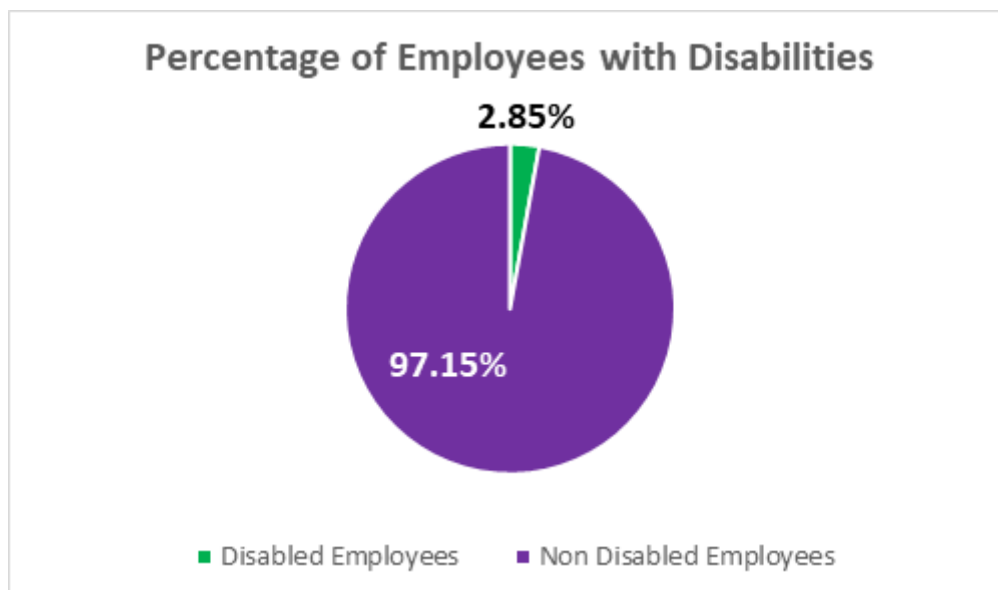


Ethnicity/Race

The percentage of employees who are minority ethnic has increased since 2023 from 3.56% to 5.24%.

**Disability**

The number of employees who are disabled has increased since 2023 from 2.18% to 2.85%. The disclosure rate is still very low for disabilities, with the majority of employee data showing as unknown.



East Renfrewshire Council Equal Pay Statement 2025-2027

East Renfrewshire Council supports the principle of equal opportunities in employment and believes that male and female employees should receive equal pay for work of equal value.

We understand that equal pay between men and women is a legal right under both domestic and European Law and that the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 concerning equal pay, which covers race and disability in addition to gender.

The Council recognises that in order to achieve equal pay it must have a pay, grading and benefits structure that is transparent, flexible, based on objective criteria and free from bias. It is in the Council's interest to ensure that it has a fair and just pay system.

The Council understands that to deliver equal pay for its employees it is also necessary to consider all the causes of the gender pay gap and that these go beyond discrimination within pay systems. We recognise that our training and employment practices can affect employees of different genders, disabled employees and those employees from a minority ethnic background, in different ways. We are committed to tackling these types of segregation both horizontally and vertically in occupations across the Council by providing an environment that promotes equality of opportunity by removing incidents of stereotyping about skill and capabilities, changing the culture associated with different jobs, removing barriers to accessing training courses and apprenticeships and promoting a healthy work-life balance.

Our objectives to achieve equal pay and address the pay gap in employment for these groups include:

- Ensuring that those individuals doing work of equal value receive the same level of pay, unless an objective reason exists for any difference
- Reducing the pay gap for both full-time and part-time employees
- Having a workforce in which women and men, employees with disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups are represented at all levels
- Having recruitment and employment practices that promote equality and are free from discrimination
- Ensuring all employees have fair and equal access to training and development opportunities

In order to achieve our objectives, we will undertake a range of actions including:

- Introducing arrangements for the ongoing monitoring of the pay grading, benefits structure, and take remedial action where appropriate.
- Providing training and guidance for those involved in determining pay
- Informing employees of how these practices work and how their own pay is determined.
- Identifying where there is occupational segregation and take positive action to reduce it
- Monitoring the uptake of training and development opportunities and improving access to training programmes
- Examining any barriers that may impact, (on the grounds of gender, race and disability), employees advancing to more senior level posts and take positive action to remove them

- Consulting with Trade Unions and review the current mechanisms for consulting with all employees.

The Council will report annually on its progress and review its Equal Pay Policy Statement every two years.

The Director of Business Operations and Partnerships is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reviewing the operation of the policy across the Council and ensuring that due consideration is given to the resources required to achieve equal pay.

Pay Gap information

The gender pay gap is the difference in average pay between men and women in the workforce. It is different to equal pay, which means you must pay men and women the same for equal or similar work.

Under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, the Council, as a listed authority, must publish information on the percentage difference among its employees between men's average hourly pay (excluding overtime) and women's average hourly pay (excluding overtime). From 2017, the pay gap information was extended to include the equal pay gap between the following:

- Persons who are minority ethnic and persons who are not
- People who are disabled and those who are not

In these situations, as we have a significant number of employees in the workforce where this information about them is not known, these are not included in the calculation. Annual reminders are sent out to employees asking them to update their personal data, which includes ethnicity and disability information, to help us to produce a pay gap which is more accurate and reflective of the actual situation in the workforce and to allow us to identify actions to address the gaps. We are aware that the normal reasons for pay gaps can include the below points and we monitor these areas:

- Occupational Segregation, which is the distribution of employees across and within different occupations based upon demographic characteristics, most often gender.
- A lack of flexible working opportunities
- Discrimination in pay and grading structures

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap has been calculated by totalling total basic pay for males and females and dividing by the total contracted hours. In 23/24 the gender pay gap increased slightly compared to the previous year.

The Council is part of a national initiative to ensure consistency in the calculation of pay gaps. We currently only include basic salary in the gender pay gap shown below. We are part of a pilot to include all fixed allowances, which are paid to employees based on their work patterns (excluding overtime). This calculation this would result in a reduction in our gender pay gap for 23/24 to around 4%.

Gender Pay Gap and Analysis

Year	Percentage Gap
23/24	4.9%
22/23	4.6%
21/22	5.71%
20/21	6.48%
19/20	6.32%

- The difference in pay is 4.9% which equates to an average of £1 difference per hour for male employees.
- The main reason for the pay gap is a high percentage of women in lower graded posts rather than the high percentage of males in higher graded posts.
- Our average salaries are some of the highest in Scottish Local Authorities, and our lowest grade point for LG is £12.82 based on April 2024 pay award. In comparison the 2024 Real Living Wage is £12 per hour and will increase to £12.60 per hour in our Council in April 2025.
- We do use the Scottish Joint Council's job evaluation scheme, which ensures jobs are evaluated fairly and doesn't evaluate roles based on gender.
- For LG there are males in receipt of higher salaries across LG grades compared to females in the same grade, however this is due to males either being in post longer and are therefore on a higher salary point within the grade, or they have joined the Council and been placed on a higher grade due to demonstrating they are already in receipt of a higher salary.
- There are pay gaps in the teacher pay scales, this is likely to be due to their pay being calculated differently as teachers (not probationers) may receive incremental progression through their pay structure which is based on individual experience.

Disability Pay Gap

The pay gap for 23/24 was 11.0%. The figure is calculated by excluding data which is unknown or prefer not to say. The pay gap in 22/23 was 10.7%. Therefore, there has been a slight increase in the pay gap compared with the previous year.

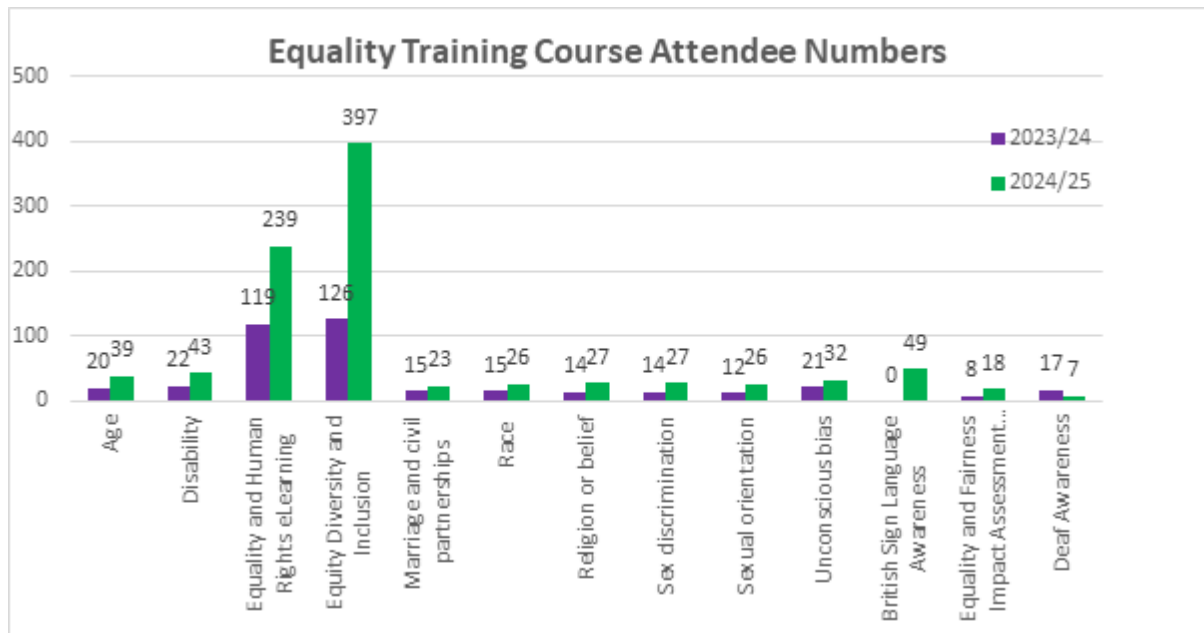
Ethnicity Pay Gap

The pay gap for 23/24 was 18.7%. The figure is calculated by excluding data which is unknown or prefer not to say. The pay gap in 22/23 was 17.3%. Therefore, there has been an increase in the pay gap compared to the previous year.

The Council recognises improvement is required in the Disability and Ethnicity Pay Gaps and will continue to encourage employees to disclose protected characteristics to help identify improvement actions that can be taken.

TRAINING DATA

The Council provides employees with a range of equality courses through a mixture of e-learning and classroom-based sessions. Equality and Human Rights training and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training are recommended to all employees which is why the attendance numbers are higher.

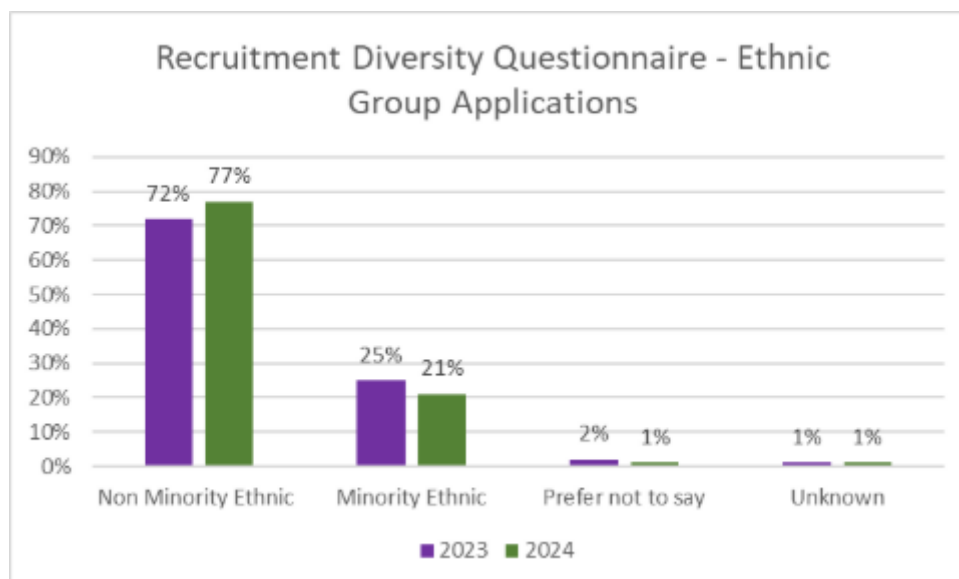


RECRUITMENT DATA

The following data was taken from our recruitment system Talentlink which is branded as My Job Scotland. Candidates applying for roles are asked to provide their equality data however it is not mandatory.

Ethnicity of Applicants

Based on the ethnicity of job applicants applying for roles, the percentage of minority ethnic applicants reduced by 4% between 2023 and 2024.



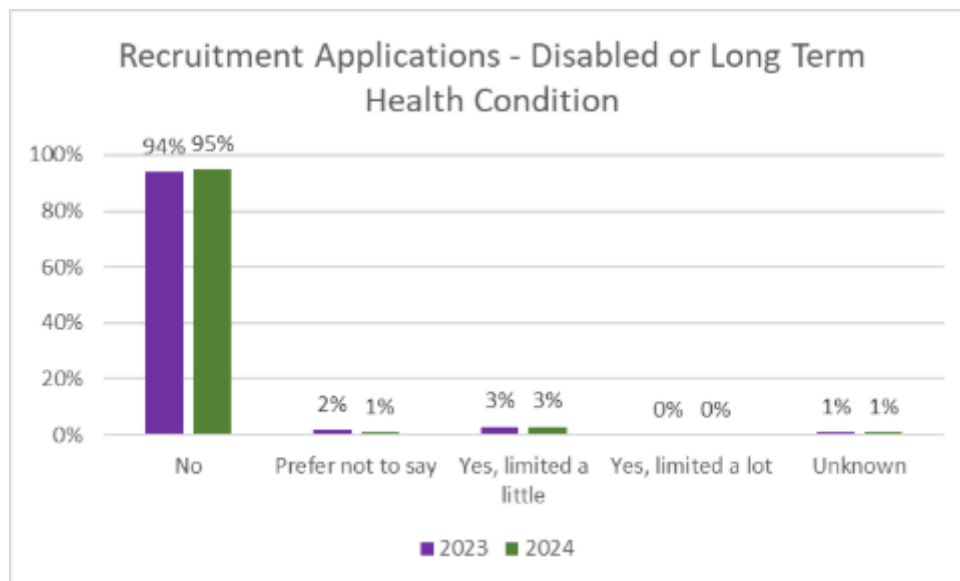
Ethnicity Applicants Hired

Based on the ethnicity of job applicants applying for roles, the percentage of minority ethnic applicants hired appears to have reduced from 13% to 9%. However, our overall percentage of minority ethnic employees has increased which means that more of our employees are disclosing their ethnic origin.



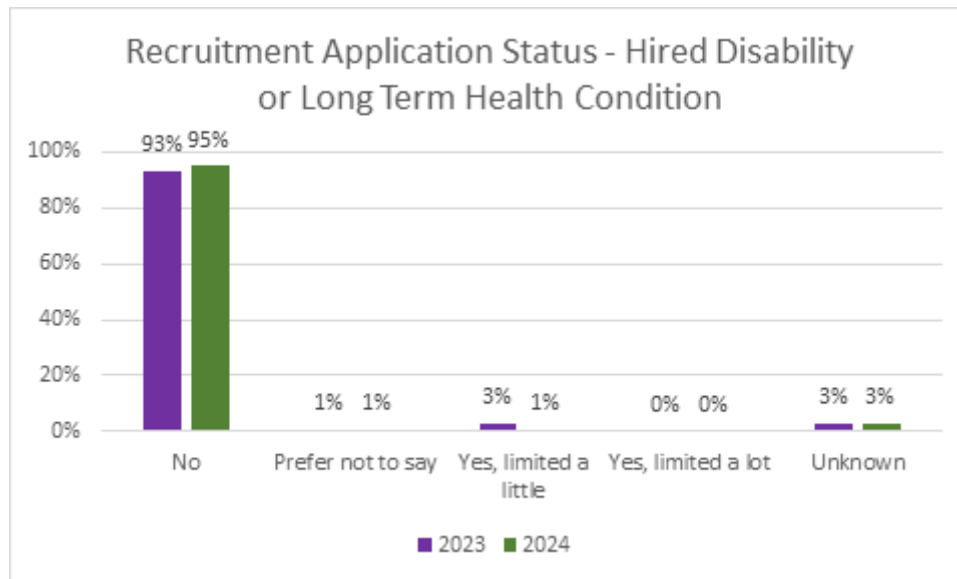
Disability Status of Applicants

Based on the disability status of job applicants applying for roles, the percentage of disabled applicants who informed us they are disabled remains unchanged at 3% between 2023 and 2024.



Disability Status of Hired Applicants

Based on the disability status of job applicants hired by the Council, the percentage of disabled hires appeared to reduce between 2023 and 2024 by 2% however the overall percentage of disabled employees has increased which we believe is due to better disclosure rates by employees.



Equality Outcomes

2025 - 2029



EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

Introduction

As we continue to advance our commitment to equality and inclusion, it is essential to establish clear and measurable outcomes that reflect our dedication to creating a fair and equitable environment for all. This document outlines our new equality outcomes, which are designed to address discrimination, advance equality of opportunities and foster good relations.

Our new equality outcomes are the result of extensive consultation with stakeholders, thorough analysis of current data, and a deep understanding of the unique challenges faced by different groups across East Renfrewshire. These outcomes are aligned with our broader strategic goals, set out in our vision document A Place to Grow, and are intended to drive meaningful change.

The following sections of this document will detail each of our new equality outcomes, the rationale behind them, and the specific actions we will take to achieve them. We will also outline how we will monitor progress and evaluate the impact of our efforts.

By setting these new equality outcomes, we reaffirm our commitment to fostering an inclusive culture where diversity is celebrated, and people from all backgrounds can flourish, thrive and live well.

Steven Quinn

Chief Executive, East Renfrewshire Council

Background

Equality outcomes should help us to meet our equality duties to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) provide guidance on outcome setting, and this has supported us to identify and develop our outcomes. Critical to this is understanding the experiences of people from different protected characteristic groups. The new outcomes have been guided and developed by an engagement and evidence gathering process between September 2024 and January 2025. This included:

- **Desk Based Research:** We reviewed existing research findings including Citizens Panel surveys, NHSGGC Health and Wellbeing survey, Nomis, Stat-Xplore, Census Data 2022 and others.
- **Community Event:** We hosted an event which looked at the desk-based research findings and whether they provided a good reflection of life in East Renfrewshire based on their own experiences. Community representatives, including members of the Equality Forum, attended this event
- **Focus groups:** We attended several existing community groups to better understand the issues which were important to them. This included groups representing minority ethnic, older people, different faiths, youths, neurodiversity and LGBTQ+
- **Survey:** Between November 2024 and January 2025, we ran a public online consultation to identify what was most important for local people in terms of equalities. The survey was hosted online, with paper copies available, and was promoted via social media, digital notice boards, flyers and posters. We received 146 responses.

We presented the findings from these sources at two workshops - one with officers from the Council and HSCP and the other our Elected Members, IJB and Corporate Management Team. Together we shaped the following outcomes that will help us deliver our equality duties

OUTCOMES



1

There is equitable access to information and meaningful participation for all.



2

People are supported to age well with dignity.



3

Domestic abuse survivors are protected from further harm and abuse.



4

Our workforce, at all levels, better reflects the diversity of the local population, and our staff are culturally aware.



5

There is strong community cohesion among our diverse communities and people feel safe and included.



6

Individuals facing barriers have access to meaningful employment.

There is equitable access to information and meaningful participation for all

Link to General Equality Duties:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity

Link to Place to Grow:

- Our communities will be stronger, more connected and collaborative and will be leading on solutions to support people to live well
- The voice of every child and young person will be heard and their rights recognised, respected and nurtured

Link to HSCP Strategic Plan:

- Our communities are resilient and there are better opportunities for health & wellbeing

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Some groups experience more barriers to accessing information or having their voices heard than others. People tell us they want to be able to have influence over decisions which affect them, but they also tell us that they feel they can't do this currently. Disabled people are most likely to feel disempowered, expressing a distrust with council decision-making processes and frustration with lack of involvement and influence.

We are increasingly seeing more services and support go online but digital exclusion means that certain groups, particularly older adults and those who speak English as an additional language can be left behind.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS OUTCOME

We will take steps to improve access to information and participation, with a focus on the groups facing the most barriers. This includes:

- **Enhancing inclusive and accessible communications (IAC) across all services:** We will listen to feedback from people about the ways they want to communicate with us and take steps to meet these needs.
- **Taking a more pro-active and consistent approach to engagement aligned to decision-making;** We will involve people and listen to their views when making decisions which could impact on them and their families. We will develop processes and best practice in ensuring Children's Rights through our UNCRC implementation group.
- **Increasing employee awareness of the needs of different groups;** Through training, community engagement and a robust Equality Fairness and Right Impact Assessment process, our staff will be more aware of the diverse range of needs and be able to support people in the way which best suits them.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS OUTCOME

We will gather data through the Citizens Panel around how people rate communications and whether they feel services are accessible to them. We will also look at perceptions of being able to influence decision making. Where possible, we will look at each of these by protected characteristic group. We will also look at the number of outputs on IAC resources e.g. BSL videos.

People are supported to age well with dignity

Link to General Equality Duties:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

Link to Place to Grow:

- Our older population will be supported to live healthy, active lives and have opportunities to participate, contribute and thrive
- Our residents will have access to creative and vibrant cultural experiences and have opportunities to celebrate their diversity of heritage.

Link to HSCP Strategic Plan:

- Our communities are resilient and there are better opportunities for health & wellbeing

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

There is an ageing demographic in East Renfrewshire; around 1 in 5 residents are aged 65 or older. Older people can often face double discrimination due to growing older with a protected characteristic, for example those ageing with a disability.

Just over 16% of our people are from minority ethnic backgrounds. We are seeing an increase in minority faith communities, particularly Muslim, Hindu and Sikh and it is important that we are culturally sensitive to the needs of people as they age particularly in relation to care.

Evidence at a national level tells us that ageing LGBTQ+ community are more likely to live alone and be isolated, and in some cases still carry the stigma and trauma of social and legislative discrimination.

This means the needs of our older people are becoming more varied, and therefore our services need to be adept and responsive to ensure they meet these needs, and that people can age well with dignity.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS OUTCOME

Enabling people to age well with dignity requires action in a number of different areas:

- **Improving awareness of frontline employees;** We will work with frontline employees to increase awareness of different cultures, religions and other backgrounds to ensure staff are responsive to differing needs.
- **Improving community awareness;** We will run targeted awareness campaigns which promotes the diversity of our older population and challenges stereotypes
- **Encouraging local social support networks;** We will work with partners to consider the existing range of support networks, including intergenerational supports. We will monitor whether they meet the diverse range of needs, and help develop new networks as and when required.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS OUTCOME

We will look at data from relevant surveys to monitor quality of life perceptions by age. We will also consider data around feelings of loneliness. And we will monitor local social support networks, including any changes in membership of existing groups and any establishment of new groups.

Domestic abuse survivors are protected from further harm and abuse

Link to General Equality Duties:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation

Link to Place to Grow:

- Health inequalities will have significantly reduced and residents will have routes out of poverty

Link to HSCP Strategic Plan:

- People are safe and protected

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Domestic abuse is a growing concern in East Renfrewshire. It is the main reason for referrals to Children and Families Social Work, making up a third of all referrals; and there is an increasing number of domestic abuse referrals to Adult Support and Protection Social Work.

Domestic abuse is a gendered issue, with women being significantly more likely to be subject to abuse than men. We know that there are high levels of coercive control and an increase in financial abuse, which increase women's vulnerability to homelessness and poverty.

Women from minority ethnic backgrounds and Disabled women are at an even higher risk of domestic abuse, and these numbers have also increased over recent years. Ethnic minority women and Disabled women can face multiple barriers to seeking help, making them even more vulnerable.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS OUTCOME

When taking action to address domestic abuse, we need to take a range of actions each aimed at different elements of this complex issue. These include:

- **Increase the number of women empowered to report abuse;** We will run awareness raising campaigns of gender-based violence, and ensure women are aware of the referral pathways and supports available.
- **Increase employee awareness and ability to support victims;** We will provide domestic abuse induction training to all new employees make domestic abuse resource tools available, ensure employees are aware of the referral pathways and target money advice and right support for victims
- **Tackle the underlying causes of domestic abuse;** We will implement a domestic abuse perpetrator programme and implement gender-based violence prevention programme in schools

HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS OUTCOME

We will monitor the changes in outcomes for women and children who have suffered domestic abuse. We will gather data on the number of people participating in training and programmes, and we will track the number of referrals to support services.

Our workforce, at all levels, better reflects the diversity of the local population, and our employees are culturally aware

Link to General Equality Duties:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity

Link to Our People Vision:

- An organisation that promotes and values equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging
- Inspirational and effective leaders at all levels

Link to HSCP Strategic Plan:

- People are enabled to live healthy and fulfilling lives

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

Creating a diverse and inclusive workplace is a top priority for us. This isn't just about legal compliance; it's about acknowledging and valuing our differences and treating everyone with fairness and respect. We believe that when people feel appreciated, valued, and supported, they can truly be themselves and perform at their best.

Scotland's councils are facing significant challenges in maintaining and developing workforce capacity caused by a range of factors including financial pressures; an ageing workforce; increased service demand; recruitment difficulties; differing population changes across the country; skills gaps and pay competition from other sectors.

Our current workforce profile does not reflect the local population profile in terms of diversity. The most recent census data tells us that around 16% of our residents are from minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with just over 5% of our staff. Around three quarters of our staff are female, and less than 3% of employees have a disability. Currently only a small number of employees record monitoring information so it is challenging to get a clear picture of the diversity of our workforce through employee data

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS OUTCOME

We will strive to attract a diverse range of applicants and become an 'employer of choice' in the local area. We will promote the varied range of roles and opportunities available and will ensure we provide the required learning and development to support staff to progress within our organisation.

We will focus on:

- **Inclusive recruitment policy and practice;** We will ensure our recruitment processes are fully inclusive and address any barriers which might exist
- **Increasing access to career pathways;** We will work with our leadership team to promote the importance and benefits of a diverse workforce, including at a promoted level
- **Improving retention of employees from minority groups;** We will identify actions, within financial constraints, to promote staff retention based on leaver data and existing staff feedback
- **Increasing knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion issues amongst managers;** We will ensure our managers are educated about diversity, are culturally competent and empowered to support staff from all backgrounds

HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS OUTCOME

We will use staff profile data to monitor changes in diversity over time. This will include looking at the profile of employees in leadership/promoted roles; the pay gap data; employee turnover levels; and the participation in equality and diversity training.

There is strong community cohesion among our diverse communities and people feel safe and included

Link to General Equality Duties:

- ✓ Foster good relations
- ✓ Eliminate harassment and victimisation

Link to Place to Grow:

- Our children and young people will experience love, safety, happiness and good physical and emotional health, have friends they can trust and hope for the future
- We will have attractive places that encourage wellbeing and strong community bonds
- Our residents will have access to creative and vibrant cultural experience and have opportunities to celebrate their diversity of heritage

Link to HSCP Strategic Plan:

- Our communities are resilient and there are better opportunities for health & wellbeing

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

East Renfrewshire has an increasingly diverse population. Just over 16% of our people are from Minority Ethnic backgrounds, and a quarter of school pupils with over 70 languages spoken. The area is home to 13 faith groups, including the largest proportion of Jewish population in Scotland and growing populations of both Muslim and Hindu. East Renfrewshire is also considered one of the safest areas in Scotland, with one of the lowest crime rates in the country.

Recent global circumstances have spotlighted issues around community connections and people feeling safe, and we have recognised the impact of this in our local area. While we have a growing diverse population, some people don't feel a strong sense of belonging to their community or neighbourhood, or a sense of trust. And despite our low crime rates, some groups don't feel safe in their communities or at home.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS OUTCOME

We want to celebrate East Renfrewshire as a diverse and inclusive place to live, and ensure all people living here feel safe, connected, involved and welcome within their local communities. We will work in partnership with the Equality Forum to take action in line with the current community need.

This will include:

- **Enhancing interfaith dialogue;** We will support those from different faiths and no faith to engage meaningfully and openly
- **Encouraging diverse representation across communities and forums;** We will identify and remove barriers which prevent or hinder people from having a voice in their community
- **Positive promotion of community safety;** We will better understand the basis of the safety concerns and work in partnership with communities to address these

HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS OUTCOME

We will look at data from our Citizen's Panel survey to monitor how people are feeling about their sense of belonging and feelings of safety. In particular, we will look at this for underrepresented groups. Where possible, we will also gather data about who is participating in relevant groups and forums.

Individuals facing barriers have access to meaningful employment

Link to General Equality Duties:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity

Link to Place to Grow:

- We will have strong, diverse local businesses, encouraging investment, developing skills and providing a wide range of fair work opportunities
- Achievement will continue to improve in all our establishments, with every child and young person in East Renfrewshire learning successfully and being well prepared for their future

WHY THIS IS A PRIORITY IN EAST RENFREWSHIRE

East Renfrewshire is a desirable place to live and attracts a diverse group of people. We have the highest proportion of young people in Scotland and also one of the highest populations of people living with one or more long-term health conditions.

Young people and Disabled people are more likely to face barriers to employment. For young people, this can include a lack of post-university career opportunities locally or a lack of beyond school pathways for those who choose not to enter further or higher education. For Disabled people, this means being significantly less likely to be employed than those without a disability, or that that employment is limited to lower-paid jobs.

Businesses in East Renfrewshire are mainly small, and do not employ a large number of people, therefore, local job prospects are limited. A lack of suitable jobs opportunities means our young people and Disabled people can face disadvantage in accessing meaningful employment.

HOW WE WILL DELIVER THIS OUTCOME

To address this outcome, we will look at both the employability supports offered and the local economic profile. Specifically:

- **Continuing to deliver specialist employability programmes;** Through the No-one Left Behind programme, we will offer employability supports to young people and Disabled people
- **Working to promote good quality, meaningful employment opportunities;** As a local employer, we will lead by example to consider and promote a varied range of employment opportunities, within budgetary limitations. We will also engage with local businesses and encourage them to do the same.
- **Directing and targeting support to young people;** Through the Positive Pathways/Youth Employability programme, we will support young people to achieve positive and sustainable post school destinations

HOW WE WILL MEASURE THIS OUTCOME

We need to acknowledge that for many young people and Disabled people, the move into meaningful work can take some time and may not be reflected in overall employment rates. Therefore, we intend to monitor short-term changes such as: the number of Disabled Work East Ren clients entering employment and the number of positive outcomes for those engaged in Specialist Employability programmes.

Summary of activities

Outcome	Activities
There is equitable access to information and meaningful participation for all	Enhancing inclusive and accessible communications across all services
	Taking a more pro-active and consistent approach to engagement aligned to decision-making
	Increasing staff awareness of the needs of different groups
People are supported to age well with dignity	Improving awareness of frontline staff
	Improving community awareness
	Encouraging local social support networks
Domestic abuse survivors are protected from further harm and abuse	Increasing the number of women empowered to report abuse
	Increasing staff awareness and ability to support victims
	Tackling the underlying causes of domestic abuse
Our workforce, at all levels, better reflects the diversity of the local population, and our employees are culturally aware and competent	Inclusive recruitment policy and practice
	Increasing access to career pathways
	Improving retention of employees from minority groups
	Increasing knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion issues amongst managers
There is strong community cohesion among our diverse communities and people feel safe and included	Enhancing interfaith dialogue
	Encouraging diverse representation across communities and forums
	Positive promotion of community safety
Individuals facing barriers have access to meaningful employment	Continuing to deliver specialised employability programmes
	Working to promote good quality, meaningful employment opportunities
	Directing and targeting support to young people

Summary of indicators

Outcome	Indicator
There is equitable access to information and meaningful participation for all	Rating of communication with ERC/HSCP
	%age of Disabled people who agree they can influence decisions affecting their local area
	No. of outputs of IAC resources
People are supported to age well with dignity	Adults feeling lonely in the past week
	Quality of life perceptions
Domestic abuse survivors are protected from further harm and abuse	%age change in women's domestic abuse outcomes
	Participation in training and programmes
	Number of referrals to services
Our workforce, at all levels, better reflects the diversity of the local population, and our staff are culturally aware and competent	%age of minority ethnic staff in leadership grade roles
	%age of Disabled staff in leadership grade roles
	Participation in E&D training
There is strong community cohesion among our diverse communities and people feel safe and included	%age who feel a sense of belonging to community
	%age who feel their neighbourhood is a safe place to live
Individuals facing barriers have access to meaningful employment	Number of Disabled Work East Ren clients entering employment
	Number of positive outcomes for those engaged in Specialist Employability Programmes