

Equalities Scheme 2021-2025

The Equalities Scheme for 2021-25 builds on the previous Scheme to reflect the changes in society to ensure it is relevant to all and to broaden its focus to take account of inclusion, in addition to objectives relating to equality and diversity.

Inclusion is fundamentally about individual experience and allowing everyone to access services and feel part of the Borough. Inclusion gives diversity impact and drive towards a place where all residents, elected members and all Council employees are empowered to thrive - inclusion is relevant for everyone.

Aims of the Scheme

The aims of the Scheme are:

- We want Rushcliffe to be a welcoming place for everyone
- We want our services to be easy to access for all
- We will treat people fairly and aim to meet individual needs
- We aim to make Rushcliffe a place where everyone can achieve their potential

Commitments & Indicators under the Scheme

As part of the Scheme, the Council will be committed to:

1. Understanding our community

Indicators in support of this are:

- Gather and analyse diversity data to understand where action is needed to ensure inclusivity for all
- Effective community engagement
- Participation in public life
- Commissioning and procuring services

2. Reflect the diversity of our community

Take actions to achieve appropriate and inclusive representation in terms of our workforce, task and finish groups and service delivery/take-up.

- Leadership
- Assessing equality impact in policy and decision taking
- Equality objectives and annual reporting
- Inclusive strategies and policies

3. Work in partnership to achieve impact

Develop and share policies and resources across the organisation and with key partners to improve representation and inclusivity of diverse groups to maximise impact.

- Priorities and working in partnership
- Collecting and sharing information

4. Develop, implement and monitor annual action plans

Equality, diversity and inclusion need to be embedded within the fabric of the organisation rather than being a separate add-on. Each year, with input from representative groups, priorities and action plans will be established to be built into service plans.

- Performance monitoring and scrutiny
- Integrating equality objectives into service planning

Identifying Priorities for Action Plans

The Scheme is brought to life through annual action plans. This will be developed based on issues and priorities identified through consultation with our communities to ensure they are relevant. The actions will be implemented as part of service plans so that equality, diversity and inclusion are integral to the organisation and not add-ons.

The 2021 Census results will provide key insights into the residents of Rushcliffe and will serve as a significant review point in terms of the development of actions and plans in light of this new information.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2021/22

1. Understanding our community

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to be part of everything we do across the whole Council through inclusion in our annual service plans
- Have up to date equality information about our communities
- Make sure our conversations with our communities are inclusive and ensuring information on our website and in our communications is clear and accessible
- Support Councillors to lead on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by building their knowledge and awareness through training
- Identify ways to engage more young people in democracy
- Support residents to access all Council services equally
- Support residents and staff to access digital information and products with ease, including compliance of our website with the [Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations](#).

2. Reflecting the diversity of our community

- Consider the impact of Covid 19 on our communities and how we will support them as a result
- Review how Covid 19 has changed how residents access our services – making sure we are providing the right services in the right places
- Strengthen our policies and training in procurement so we work with suppliers who share our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and support us to tackle inequalities.
- Continue to carry out Equality Impact Assessments during the development of services and policies to identify how impacts can be avoided, reduced or mitigated. To ensure all policies, projects and service decisions consider all equalities implications at the start
- Undertake consultation with community groups, residents and elected members to ensure voices are heard and listened to
- Fulfilling our public sector duty within the legal framework, the Scheme incorporates and builds on our legal requirements as provided within the Equality Act 2010 to:
 - Eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation
 - Ensure people are treated with equality in mind
 - Create and develop good relations with our communities and within our workforce

3. Working in partnership to achieve impact

- Re-start the Rushcliffe Community Cohesion Network Group to better link up with, support and respond to our local communities' needs.
- Continue working with the Active Rushcliffe Health Partnership, which helps organisations and services work together to deliver projects supporting high priority groups, such as disability, BAME, women and girls (including pregnancy and maternity).
- Enable building of new homes across the Borough, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of our diverse communities.
- Work with our partners to support young people and other groups most impacted by Covid 19, with suitable training, employment and support. For example, we will be providing work experience placements as part of the Government's Kickstart scheme for young unemployed people.
- A mentoring programme to support the development and engagement of those in local schools and under-represented people (such as the BAME community) as well as further developing the Council's own workforce.

- Support local businesses to recover from Covid 19, including training of existing and new staff, business advice and networking opportunities
- Work with other councils and partners to share resources, information and best practice on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

4. Supporting our workforce

- Ensure all employees regularly complete Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training so they better understand and meet the needs of our communities and colleagues to make sure inclusion is at the heart of everything we do.
- Take action so our Employee Liaison Group reflects the make up of our workforce and are empowered to take a leading role on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Keeping the conversation going about working smartly to benefit all staff and improve productivity and wellbeing
- Change our recruitment processes so they are accessible and help to attract the best talent.
- Continue to monitor and report the diversity of our workforce and equality indicators, such as the gender pay gap
- Equality, diversity and inclusion is recognised as an organisational priority and is reflected within our People Strategy, which has a dedicated strategic theme: Being Inclusive & Building Diversity.
 - Continue monitoring and understanding reasons and actions to address under-representation and pay gaps
 - Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion considerations as part of policy development
 - Through development and communication, increase awareness of equality, diversity and inclusion issues to understand barriers and how these could be addressed
 - Continue to fully engage with national schemes and initiatives to support under-represented groups into work