

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Policy and Intelligence Team



Summary

This paper sets out the commitment that Plymouth City Council has made to promoting equality. It explores the legal duties that the Council must comply with and provides examples of how these have been fulfilled. Specifically, the paper outlines the progress that the Council has made in delivering against its equality objectives and its Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2023/24. A refreshed Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2024/25 will be developed to support the delivery of the new equality objectives for 2024-2028 and will be published separately.

In addition to delivering specific projects and interventions under the action plan, it is crucial to remember that it is incumbent on everyone in Plymouth City Council to play their part. As the Council faces unprecedented budgetary pressures, it is vital that due regard is paid to equality and diversity, and actions that support this agenda continue to be mainstreamed across the Council.

I. Context

I.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 extended statutory protection across nine 'protected characteristics'. It recognised new forms of discrimination and introduced the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

As an Authority listed in Schedule 19 of the Act, we are subject to the PSED. The PSED consists of a general equality duty supported by specific duties which are imposed by secondary legislation.

As an organisation, we are expected to demonstrate 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

On 27 March 2023, the Council unanimously supported the motion to 'Treat care experience as if it were a Protected Characteristic'¹. Plymouth became one of 29 Local Authorities across the UK to take this position although this number has now reached over 80. We believe that it is vital to recognise the additional challenges and barriers that care experienced individuals face. Though their experiences will have varied, the challenges faced by these individuals can have profound and lasting impacts. Recognising care experience as a protected characteristic will provide us, and other public bodies, with greater authority to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced people.

The Equality Act says that we must exercise due regard to equality when we make decisions, in a way that is reasonable and proportionate to the decision being taken. To discharge this duty, we remain firmly committed to conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on all member decisions taken in

¹ A care-experienced individual is someone who has been looked after by the local authority at any point, for any length of time. Care experienced individuals include people with a wide range of experiences including those who have lived with Foster Carers, in Residential Children's Homes or who have been adopted.

the context of our Leader's scheme of delegation. We do this to ensure they do not adversely impact our different communities.

1.2 Specific Equality Duties

The aims of the PSED are supported by specific duties set out in separate regulations made by the Secretary of State. Listed authorities in England are required to:

- At least annually from 30 March 2018
 - publish information about their employees and other persons affected by their policies and practices to demonstrate compliance with the general duty.
 - publish gender pay gap information relating to the employees; the form and content of this publication is set out in a schedule to the regulations.
- At least every four years, prepare and publish one or more objectives that they think are needed to further any of the aims of the General Equality Duty.

1.3 Our equality information

Alongside this document, we have published our [Equality Profiles](#), which include data and intelligence about our residents and service users, covering all of the nine protected characteristics from the Equality Act. These are:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| ▪ Age | ▪ Gender Reassignment |
| ▪ Disability | ▪ Race |
| ▪ Religion or Belief | ▪ Sex |
| ▪ Marriage and Civil Partnerships | ▪ Sexual Orientation |
| ▪ Pregnancy and Maternity | |

As an organisation committed to inclusion, we recognise that other groups such as veterans, carers, and people with experience of the care system can also face additional barriers. As Plymouth City Council has also committed to treating care experience as a protected characteristic, an Equality Profile is also now available on people with care experience.

Our Equality Profiles are updated annually to keep them as current as possible. The [Plymouth Report](#) is another useful source of further data about our diverse communities.

1.4 Policy

The diversity of our city and workforce is one of our greatest strengths and assets. We put equality and diversity at the centre of all our work. Our approach and commitment to equality is also set out in our Equality and Diversity Policy. This is integral to our commitment to making Plymouth 'one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone'.

In the spirit of that commitment, we have worked to ensure we deliver services to all our communities in a way that eliminates discrimination, advances equality of opportunity, and fosters good relations.

Our Equality and Diversity Policy will be reviewed and republished in light of our new commitment to treat Care Experience as a protected characteristic and our refreshed Equality Objectives.

1.5 Plymouth City Council's Corporate Plan

Plymouth City Council and its partners are committed to the shared vision to become 'one of Europe's most vibrant waterfront cities where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone'. To achieve this vision, we have adopted a set of values that underpin our commitment to equality and diversity in the Council's [Corporate Plan](#).

We believe in:

- Democracy
- Responsibility
- Fairness
- Co-operation

1.6 Customer feedback

Plymouth City Council is committed to the highest standards of customer service. We are committed to treating all of our customers with fairness and respect and encourage feedback about our services. Our primary mechanism for collecting customer feedback is through our online system Firmstep. Whilst we monitor customer complaints, we do not do this against the protected characteristics. However, we have refreshed our demographic monitoring guidance as the first step towards this.

1.7 The Equality Framework for Local Government

The [Equality Framework for Local Government](#) (EFLG) is an equality and diversity tool for local government developed by the Local Government Association (LGA). The EFLG is also a way for the Council to deliver against the PSED. It consists of four elements assessed against three levels of achievement: 'developing', 'achieving' and 'excellence'.

The assessed elements are:

- Leadership and organisational commitment
- Understanding and working with communities
- Diverse and engaged workforce
- Responsive services and customer care

As a Council, we have committed to working towards the 'excellence level' of the EFLG. Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2024-2025 will set out how we as a Council plan to continue working towards this.

2. Progress towards our Equality Objectives 2020-2024

In 2020, we set one overarching objective to celebrate diversity and ensure that Plymouth is a welcoming city.

Plymouth City Council is committed to celebrating the diversity of our city. To help us celebrate the different religious and cultural celebrations which communities mark in Plymouth, we created a [Equality and Diversity Calendar](#). We use this to help us celebrate our city's diversity in a meaningful way.

We have continued to mark equality and diversity dates during 2023-2024 on social media, our external Newsroom and via internal communications as appropriate. These have included Black History Month, Hate Crime Awareness Week, World Mental Health Day, 16 Days of Activism, Care Leaver's Week and Adult Safeguarding Week.

Case Study – Welcoming City Programme

As part of a programme of work, we undertook the following activities in 2023:

- *Launched a survey which has been circulated to identify current equality and diversity practice across the city within key institutions and start the welcoming city conversation.*
- *Convened an informal group of trusted partners and equality, diversity and inclusion experts as a 'critical friends' group. Led by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Co-operative Development and Communities, this is an informal group with the shared aspiration to make Plymouth a welcoming city*

for everyone. Further meetings are scheduled for 2024 and an equality, diversity and inclusion event is planned for summer 2024.

Case study – Black History Month

Black History Month aims to help raise awareness of the history and contribution of black individuals and communities in the UK. In 2023, Plymouth City Council provided a small amount of funding to local organisations to celebrate Black History Month which was used to support local events in the city. The Lord Mayor showed his support for Black History Month by attending the launch of Hidden Figures of Plymouth celebrating the contributions made by diverse communities to the city and their legacy.

Case Study – LGBTQIA+ History Month at the Box

In February 2024, to mark LGBTQIA+ History Month, The Box (Plymouth’s award-winning museum owned by the Council) curated a new series of displays to showcase Plymouth’s LGBTQIA+ community archives. One display highlighted a recent project called 'Two Sides of The Same Coin' - an artist-led initiative from the Queer District Collective that collects LGBTQIA+ stories and voices of Plymouth. The artists were inspired by a painting of the back room of the former 'Lockyer Street Tavern' by popular artist Beryl Cook (1926-2008) and built a bar which toured around the city collecting stories to add to a community archive. All of the other showcases were co-curated with members of the LGBTQIA+ community and participants from local organisations were invited to help select material and contribute to its interpretation and install.

We also set four specific objectives which we worked towards achieving over the past four years. These were:

1. Pay equality for women, and employees with disabilities in our workforce.

Plymouth City Council is committed to equal opportunities and the fair treatment of its workforce. As an employer, we have a clear policy of paying employees equally for the same or equivalent work regardless of sex or disability. The Council operates a comprehensive job evaluation scheme to ensure that rates of pay are fair and are based wholly on the role being undertaken.

We want to ensure that all employees have the opportunity to progress and meet their potential. As an employer with over 250 employees, we have an obligation to report on our gender pay gap. We monitor pay equality across different employee groups. We recognise that our employees with disabilities face additional barriers compared to those employees who do not, which is why we decided to set this as one of our objectives.

Progress against this Equality Objective is set out in a separate published [report](#).

2. Supporting our workforce through the implementation of our People Strategy 2020 – 2024

Our People Strategy 2020 – 2024 is our workforce strategy and will help us to work inclusively, with current and future employees and partner organisations. To make this happen the strategy has been split into four key themes:

- Everyone feels welcome - inclusivity and diversity
- Aspire to be the best - talent and development
- Attract and keep the right people - employer of choice
- Be well led - our leadership

As an organisation, we must ensure that all our employees feel welcomed, are treated with dignity and respect and are encouraged to meet their potential. We monitor the implementation of our People Strategy to ensure we are meeting our ambitions.

Under our specific equality duties, we publish annual equality monitoring data which covers the demographic breakdown of our workforce, as well as our recruitment processes and employees leaving the organisation. This information is found in our [Workforce Equality Profile](#).

Progress against this Equality Objective includes:

- Becoming a White Ribbon Accredited organisation as part of our ongoing commitment to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG). This builds upon the work of the VAWG Commission which was created in 2022 to review what is being done across the city to educate, prevent and deter VAWG. It also considered what support is available for victims and made recommendations on what more could be done to make women and girls safer in the city.
- Creating an 'equality hub' on our intranet for employees which includes a range of engaging and useful information such as our Equality Objectives, information about our PSED and our equality and diversity policy.
- Delivering appreciative enquiry training to employees and partners to encourage good practice and inclusive community engagement.
- Continuing to roll out our equality and diversity training and developed a training course for all customer facing employees.
- Working with our partners at City College to support a number of placements across the Council through the Supported Internship Programme. The programme works specifically with students who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) and provides them with two 12-week placements across a year.
- Reviewing and updating our recruitment and selection policy to ensure that our recruitment processes are fair and promote equality and which also encourage flexible working.
- Launching and supporting our employee networks which aim to help foster a positive culture, offer networking opportunities to employees, and encourage an understanding and celebration of difference within the organisation. These networks are continuing to develop and include:
 - Disability Network
 - Carer's Network
 - Faith and Belief Network
 - LGBTQ+ Network
 - Men's Network
 - Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage (Reach) Network
 - Women's Network
 - Armed Forces Network

3. Supporting victims of hate crime so they feel confident to report incidents, and working with, and through our partner organisations to achieve positive outcomes.

We have been working with our partners to ensure that victims of hate incidents and hate crimes receive appropriate support and that people feel confident and understand how to report incidents. We have also been working hard to raise awareness of the importance of reporting hate incidents and hate crimes via third party reporting centres.

We will continue to work with communities and partner agencies across the criminal justice system and voluntary and community colleagues to achieve a positive outcome for victims.

A full breakdown of hate crimes/incidents within Plymouth along with perceptions of safety amongst different groups can be found within our [Equality Profiles](#).

Progress against this Equality Objective includes raising awareness and engagement activity such as:

- Our Safer Communities team maintaining a close working relationship with the Police Diverse Communities Team (DCT). They liaise regularly to ensure relevant information is shared (e.g. community tensions, increasing reports of hate crime) and work in partnership to prevent and address any concerns impacting Plymouth's diverse communities.
- Our Safer Communities team continuing work in partnership with Community Builders to understand any concerns impacting the city's diverse communities, including community tensions, cohesiveness, or hate crime.
- Our Safer Communities team attending monthly meetings with the city's largest housing provider Plymouth Community Homes to provide advice and support in relation to any of their anti-social behaviour cases where there has been a hate crime or hate incident reported. This meeting is also an opportunity to understand and address any concerns around community cohesion within their neighbourhoods.
- Our Prevent Partnership having a standing item on the agenda to update the group in relation to the current hate crime data and any emerging concerns or trends in the city. If there is a new or emerging trend identified, a partnership plan can be created in this forum to try and address this.
- Plymouth has implemented a lower threshold to request an Anti-Social Behaviour Case Review where there is an element of hate linked to the anti-social behaviour. A risk assessment is carried out with all those who request an ASB Case Review and we specifically ask within this whether someone feels they are being targeted due to a protected characteristic. If this is the case, relevant support and signposting is always offered.
- The council being a standing member of the city's Community Reference Group. This meeting brings together representatives from Plymouth's diverse communities with statutory agencies as an opportunity to improve our relationship, understand any concerns, and work in partnership to address these.
- Our Safer Communities Team undertaking a range of activities each year for Hate Crime Awareness Week to raise awareness about hate crime, provide advice about how it can be reported, and signpost victims to support services. In 2023, the team carried out a number of engagement events including visits to the British Red Cross, Plymouth Synagogue, and Piety Mosque. The team also attended Blue Light Day to engage with individuals with learning disabilities, their family, and carers. Internal and external communications took place over the week to raise awareness about hate crime and how it could be reported.
- In 2023, Op Tarlac was set up to monitor community tensions linked to the conflict in Israel and Gaza. We continue to work closely with the police to ensure we are aware of any tensions so we can respond appropriately. The team are also directly engaging with relevant communities, e.g. through the Synagogue, to offer support.
- Training all of our Safer Communities Team in third-party reporting so they can take reports of hate crime to report to police on behalf of victims. It is recognised that reporting to police directly can be a barrier for some therefore the team are trained to take reports to try and overcome these barriers.
- In 2023 we signed the Community Safety Charter showing our commitment to promoting a culture that does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, harassment, intimidation and hostility towards others. We proactively promote this charter to other organisations in the city.

4. Plymouth is a city where people from different backgrounds get along well.

We continue to build strong and cohesive communities to ensure that our city is welcoming for everyone. In our City Survey, we include questions that ask our residents about community cohesion in their local area. To allow us to better understand the cohesion levels in Plymouth we have commissioned Plymouth Octopus Project to carry out appreciative enquiries with different communities. We also continue to work closely alongside our partner agencies and communities to understand the challenges that they face.

Case study – Community Builders

The Council's Community Empowerment Programme aims to promote partnership working, community involvement and community resilience. As part of this programme, 10 community development workers are currently in post across the city and are working side by side with residents and local community groups. Community Builders start by finding out what people within a community care about so they can work together to change, develop and/or sustain community activities. They map what is going on in communities to enable people get involved and help them connect and improve their wellbeing. Community Builders are working across Plymouth including in some of the least cohesive wards of the city.

They will be working in the following areas:

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| ▪ Barne Barton | ▪ East End |
| ▪ Devonport | ▪ Efford |
| ▪ Honicknowle | ▪ Estover |
| ▪ Stonehouse | ▪ Southway |

Community Builders are also working specifically with minority ethnic communities, LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, young people and men.

Progress against this Equality Objective:

- Community Builders are working in collaboration with Improving Lives Plymouth within the context of the Community Mental Health Framework to support a new Mental Health Collective with community-based organisations to connect. This collective is being co-designed and run by its members and meets bi-monthly. A third Listening Event took place in January 2024.
- Community Builders created new Pride in Plymouth pop-ups within new areas of the City – Southway and Estover.
- Community Builders have been engaging with schools to raise awareness of LGBTQ+ communities and intergenerational opportunities. This has taken place at Plymstock School as part of their Diversity Week and future sessions are planned at Brooke Green Centre for Learning.
- Community Builders are working in partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police Diversity team to address hate crime in local schools in Stonehouse by delivering presentations promoting diversity.
- Community Builders are supporting new 'Community Connectors' within Diverse Communities, Communities of Identity and Interest. Between February and September 2023, the Community Builder for Diverse Communities reported working with 93 Community Connectors; the LGBTQ+ Community Builder reported working with 36 Community Connectors and the Mental Health and Disability Community Builder reported working with 47 Community Connectors.
- We have worked with our partners to start breaking down some of the barriers facing refugees who wish to volunteer. Work has been continuing with the Changing Futures

programme to ensure participation into volunteering roles from people with complex lives and an introduction to volunteering training programme has been developed and delivered. Ongoing partnership work with refugee and asylum seeker organisations to encourage volunteering at city wide and local events.

- We have continuing to promote inclusion at the Box via an Access Improvement Group alongside an extensive programme of engagement work with communities. This has included for example, 'Where Am I?', a co-curated exhibition as part of the Culture Club programme that explored the Box's collections through an LGBTQ+ lens.

We know that when communities are well connected, they are more likely to have better health outcomes and increased levels of cohesion. To measure cohesion in Plymouth, within our survey work, we ask whether residents feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. This question was included in the 2022 City Survey as a measure of community cohesion and more specifically to measure performance against our equality objective.

The question regarding residents who think that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together was asked in the 2022 City Survey, using the same methodology as previous Plymouth City Surveys. The results show that 42 per cent of respondents agreed that Plymouth is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, while 14 per cent disagreed. The proportion of residents agreeing with this statement has increased compared with 39 per cent who agreed in 2020 and 38 per cent in 2018. Plymouth's cohesion score is currently 77 per cent; this excludes the neutral options and is an improvement on 74 per cent in 2020.

A further Plymouth City Survey will be delivered in 2024.

3. Demonstrating our commitment

3.1 Summary of recent activity

In addition to publishing our progress towards meeting our equality objectives, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires that we publish information to show that we are compliant with the Equality Act General Duty. This section describes some of the work we did to promote equality, tackle discrimination and to encourage good relations between different groups last year.

We have continued to work hard to promote equality within communities and to ensure that our services are accessible. As a Council, we value the contribution that people and communities can make and want to harness that potential to work together for a fairer, greener, and healthier city where everyone can enjoy an outstanding quality of life. Our [community engagement principles](#) set out our approach to community engagement.

We are proud that some of the steps that we have taken to promote equality include:

- Continuing to provide sanctuary for those seeking refuge from conflict by setting up a Ukraine Taskforce to coordinate the citywide response to the Ukraine crisis following the launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Working with our partners within the Changing Futures Programme to understand the needs of people with lived experiences within the complex needs system.
- Promoting inclusive growth via the Plymouth Charter development programme. This work has been funded through the C-Care project, an EU Interreg funded project which aims to better understand how the Plymouth economy can promote inclusion and support flexible working to create an economy that works for everybody.

- Setting up a Cost of Living Taskforce to coordinate a city-wide effort to provide support for Plymouth families impacted by the rising cost of living.
- Analysing the findings from the 2021 Census to allow us to understand the demographics and changing needs of our communities. This insight is helping to inform our Equality profiles and EIAs.
- Continuing to promote and support digital inclusion by purchasing a small number of chrome books and tablets which supported digital champion volunteers to give one-to-one digital skills training and assistance.
- We have updated our EIA template to allow space for consideration of the impacts that the council's decisions may have on care-experienced individuals.
- Working with our partners to carry out in-depth research into health inequality within Plymouth as part of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) programme. To date, HDRC has delivered 4 projects: 'Assessing the collective impact of food-focused initiatives in Plymouth; using a series of 'cradle-to-grave' health and wellbeing indicators to measure the impacts of housing regeneration initiatives in Plymouth; evaluation of an income maximisation service for low-income families; and transition to school. The HDRC has also supported service directorates throughout the Council with:
 - Appreciative enquiry (AE) training for teams and groups throughout the Council
 - specific AE support for a project in children's services working with young people (NEET)
 - themed analysis support for managers of previous AE work to ensure it is used well in informing and influencing decision-making
 - Ocean City investment analysis and green / blue prescribing work; Council Cost of Living event themed analysis supporting future strategy development; and
 - supporting the evaluation of the public health strategy (Thrive)
- Continuing to embed equality in our procurement and commissioning activities:
 - All relevant staff have completed training in Ethical Procurement
 - Recruitment and support of overseas workers for Adult Social Care – a Plymouth project board was established in collaboration with partners to support a programme of attracting overseas workers to Plymouth. This included specific pastoral and training support, built on by developing our understanding the cultural and practical needs of those coming to work and live in our city.
 - We have developed a social value monitoring template to support contract managers in tracking the delivery of supplier social value commitments which includes the delivery of equality and diversity related measures where relevant and proportionate.
- Working to combat Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and progress the recommendations of the Plymouth VAWG Commission. The Council has published a VAWG, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy which was launched on 07 December 2023 during the 16 Days of Activism to end gender-based violence. An internal Plymouth City Council Domestic Abuse policy is currently being consulted on. Training will be provided to all HR&OD colleagues by Spring 2024 on domestic abuse to ensure staff and managers receive the appropriate support and signposting to support services.
- Inclusion and accessibility of events remain a priority therefore we have established an Events Inclusion and Access Group with representation from different groups working and living with disabilities both visible and invisible. Significant progress has already been made with the introduction of BSL interpretation for the British Fireworks Championships, and a mystery shopping scheme across all our events.

3.2 Our Members

Our members have an important role in ensuring that equality and diversity is at the centre of the organisation as set out in the Council Constitution which states:

"We the people of Plymouth, through our elected representatives to Plymouth City Council, ordain and establish this Constitution today 30 January 2012 in order that it will assist in the elimination of discrimination and inequality, promote social and economic well-being, environmental sustainability and opportunity for all and establish good and open governance of our city and its inhabitants."

Members are required to consider equality and diversity when they make decisions. To support members in their role we offer online Local Government Association developed equality and diversity training to all councillors as part of their induction to their role. This training helps members to understand different equality and diversity issues and ensures that they are able to deliver their duties in accordance with the Councillor Code of Conduct. Members received online Councillor Equality and Diversity training in November 2023 and this was well attended and received. Further wider training is planned for 2024.

4. Our equality objectives 2024-2028

4.1 Setting our new equality objectives

We are committed to treating everyone with respect and dignity, and working towards creating a fairer city where everyone is welcome and feels that they belong. Under our PSED, we must publish one or more equality objectives every four years.

As a council we strive to ensure that our equality objectives correspond to the three main strands of the general equality duty and that they provide strong evidence to demonstrate that we are discharging our duty and making progress towards the aims of the Equality Act 2010.

We choose our equality objectives to address the challenges facing those with a range of protected characteristics. As outlined above, in March 2023 the Council agreed to treat care experience as a protected characteristic.

Our intention is to avoid establishing a hierarchy of discrimination, whilst also reflecting the challenges faced by our local communities. We also want to acknowledge that everyone has their own unique experience of discrimination and in some instances, an individual may face multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage.

We have chosen our new set of Equality Objectives for 2024-2028 using this methodology, and through consultation with our local communities and partners. As a city, and as a council, we are committed to being a fair city and treating everyone with respect and dignity and our refreshed Equality Objectives aim to achieve this and to reflect the needs of our workforce and our communities.

4.2 Consultation and Engagement

During February 2024 we published a set of draft equality objectives and carried out a public consultation exercise where we consulted with key stakeholders, businesses and communities. We developed an online survey which was accessible via Plymouth City Council's consultation portal and this was open for over four weeks. The survey consisted of four multiple-choice questions asking respondents whether they agreed with each proposed objective as well as providing space for respondents to provide additional comments should they wish.

Internally, we consulted with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for equality and diversity as well as the nominated Welcoming City Champion. We communicated information about the survey at a meeting of the Performance, Finance and Customer Focus Overview and Scrutiny Committee. We also communicated information more broadly via our staff newsletter, intranet and other communication channels.

We consulted with the community safety partnership's Diverse Communities Team in relation to our equality objective relating to hate crime as we recognise Safer Plymouth is our key delivery partner.

Externally, we also consulted with city wide partners. We shared information about our consultation with our key equality and diversity contacts, on our main council website and with voluntary and community organisations and businesses.

Overall, we received 43 responses to the online consultation. 37 were from individuals, 4 were from organisations and 2 selected other. 13 respondents were male and 17 were female while 13 did not state their sex. No responses were received from people under the age of 25 and only one response was received from anyone aged 75+. 12 of the 43 respondents reported being limited a little or a lot by health and disability. The majority of respondents were from a white background (27 of the 43). Only three respondents selected a different ethnicity.

A summary of responses and corresponding changes for each equality objective is outlined below.

1. Plymouth is a welcoming city where we will work together in partnership to promote equality, diversity and inclusion, facilitate community cohesion and support people from different backgrounds to get on well together.

43 responses were received to this objective and of these, 35 were in support of this objective. Feedback on this objective was varied however several comments related to the use of the term 'background'. It was felt by some that this was not as inclusive as it could be, and excluded some protected characteristics such as disability as well as other life experience that might give people different outlooks on life.

In response to this feedback the following change is proposed:

Objective 1: Plymouth is a welcoming city where we will work together in partnership to:

- promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
 - facilitate community cohesion.
 - support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together.
2. Plymouth City Council will give specific consideration to care experienced people in its decision-making to help reduce the disadvantage they face and seek to improve their life outcomes, including access to employment.

42 responses were received to this objective and of these, 38 were in support of this objective. Due to the level of support for the objective, there was very little feedback from those that did not agree with it. However, a couple of respondents expressed concern that the wording of this objective could be considered a 'victim narrative' and may lead to more negative than positive outcomes. There was also some feedback that the definition was unclear as to what constituted 'care experienced'. The accepted Council definition is outlined on page 1 of this document.

In response to the feedback received, and to reflect the Council's role in city leadership, this objective has been amended to:

Objective 2: Plymouth City Council will give specific consideration to care experienced people in its decision-making to raise aspirations, increase opportunities and seek to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment, and housing, and will encourage other organisations to do the same.

3. Plymouth City Council will build a workforce that reflects the demographics of the city and encourage other employers to do the same.

42 responses were received to this objective and of these, 31 were in support. This is slightly lower than with the other three objectives. Feedback from those who did not agree with this objective was that the objective focused too much on equality of outcome rather than equality of opportunity and this could lead to unintended negative outcomes. Concern was also expressed that this could be perceived as the council filling quotas as opposed to employing the best candidate for the job. A couple of respondents also felt that it could be broadened to cover other disadvantaged people rather than just the protected characteristics.

In response to feedback, the following change has been proposed:

Objective 3: Plymouth City Council will continue to build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves. We will learn from our communities and other organisations so that we get this right and we will encourage other employers to do the same.

4. Plymouth City Council will support diverse communities, so they feel confident to seek support and advice, report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.

41 responses were received and of these, 35 were in support of this objective.

Only a few respondents did not support this objective and there was very little detailed feedback. Therefore, no changes are proposed for this objective.

4.3 Our Proposed Equality Objectives 2024-2028

Following consideration of all feedback received from our engagement activities, the following objectives are proposed:

Objective 1: Plymouth is a welcoming city where we will work together in partnership to:

- promote equality, diversity and inclusion
- facilitate community cohesion
- support people with different backgrounds and lived experiences to get on well together

Objective 2: Plymouth City Council will give specific consideration to care experienced people in its decision-making to raise aspirations, increase opportunities and seek to improve their life outcomes, including access to training, employment and housing, and will encourage other organisations to do the same.

Objective 3: Plymouth City Council will continue to build and develop a diverse workforce that represents the community and citizens it serves. We will learn from our communities and other organisations so that we get this right and we will encourage other employers to do the same.

Objective 4: Plymouth will support diverse communities so they feel confident to seek support and advice, report crime and anti-social behaviour, including hate crime and hate incidents, and work with partners to ensure Plymouth is a city where everybody feels safe and welcome.

5. Our Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2024 – 2025

Once our new equality objectives have been agreed, a new Action Plan will be developed to define how we will work towards these objectives over the next year. The Action Plan will also include some of the wider activity that the council will undertake in order to support its equality and diversity ambitions.

5.1 Key activities for 2024 / 2025

Over the next 12 months, the council is committing to undertake the following activities:

- Continue to deliver the Welcoming City programme of work in partnership with the Critical Friends Group, including hosting an event to engage Equality, Diversity and Inclusion leads in partner organisations in best practice and collaborative approaches.
- Undertake a review of our Equality and Diversity Policy and demographic monitoring in response to our new equality objectives and to acknowledge that the Council has agreed to treat care experience as a protected characteristic.
- Provide further equality and diversity learning and development opportunities for members and staff. We will engage with the staff networks to incorporate lived experience into the training.
- Continue to gather and learn from feedback from the Community Builders working with communities and the Appreciative Enquiries that have been held.
- Continue to work with Changing Futures to ensure participation from people with complex lives and continue to build partnerships with refugee and asylum organisations in the city.
- Continue to explore how we can make volunteering in Plymouth more inclusive and accessible by developing the GoVolunteering volunteering platform.
- Work with our partners to carry out in-depth research into health inequality within Plymouth as part of the Health Determinants Research Collaboration programme.
- Undertake a full review of our Equality Impact Assessment process (EIA) and refresh the related guidance.
- Consider how we can further support our workforce in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and focus activity to ensure tangible progress is made towards achieving the excellence level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.
- Seek accreditation for our signature city events as part of the [Attitude is Everything Live Events Charter](#), which is an industry standard designed to help build disability equality into all aspect of the events.
- Fully embed the treating of care experience as if it were a protected characteristic within our commissioning processes for health and social care contracts across children's and adult services and procurement.
- Continue to deliver our Full of Life programme of work including completing a baseline assessment, implementing the 'Plymouth Ageing Better' Charter, developing age-friendly communities and continuing to chair a citywide steering group'.

These are just a few examples to demonstrate the breadth of activity planned over the next 12 months. More detail will be outlined in the 2024-2025 Action Plan.

Published by Plymouth City Council

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