

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Document Title	East Lothian Council Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2019-2021 and 2021-2023

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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE: October 2023

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: East Lothian Council Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2019-2021 and 2021-2023

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide elected members with the East Lothian Council Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2019-2021 and 2021-2023.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is under a duty to publish biennial equality mainstreaming and outcome report to demonstrate how it is meeting its equality outcomes in line with the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 Given the impact and pressures of the COVID 19 pandemic through 2020 to 2022 the council did not publish its 2019-2021 report. Therefore this latest report incorporates reports on both 2019-2021 and 2021-2023.
- 3.3 The report summarises the duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent regulations covering the Public Sector Equality duty and the General Duty and the Fairer Scotland Duty. It outlines how the council attempts to mainstream equality considerations into council plans and day-to-day work through:
- Ensuring high level commitment and buy in to equality through all levels of the Council structures and planning procedures – this is evidenced by the new Council Plan commitment to reducing poverty and inequality;
 - Understanding the Impact of our work – through undertaking Integrated Impact Assessments, equality monitoring and reporting on equalities performance indicators, self-evaluation and consultation and engagement with equalities groups;

- Building Organisational Capacity – including providing equality training for staff and embedding fair work in the council's procurement policy and practice.

3.4 It then provides an overview of progress in meeting the outcomes in the last two years of the 2017-2021 Equality Plan, before providing some more detail on how the seven outcomes of the 2021-2025 Equality Plan are being met.

- East Lothian Council services are accessible to, and will meet the needs of, all in the community including people who share protected characteristics.
- In East Lothian we are breaking the cycle of poverty so that fewer people experience poverty.
- The gap in educational outcomes for children and young people impacted by socio-economic disadvantage will be closed; and, the health and wellbeing of children and young people with protected characteristics will be improved.
- Everyone in East Lothian has access to a decent, affordable, warm and dry home.
- In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives.
- People feel safe and experience less crime in their communities, and at home, there is zero tolerance of hate, abuse and violence against women and girls and people feel their communities are inclusive.
- East Lothian Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and our workplace feels inclusive to staff with protected characteristics.

3.5 To support the achievement of these outcomes council services we will continue to:

- engage with people with protected characteristics;
- engage with voluntary and third sector organisations that work with equalities groups;
- consider equality issues raised by members of staff and the community;
- look at what existing service areas are doing to advance equality;
- look at external factors which will impact on local people and the way in which the council delivers services.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications from this report.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial – none.

6.2 Personnel – none.

6.3 Other – none.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 East Lothian Council Equality Mainstreaming and Outcomes Report 2019-2021 and 2021-2023

AUTHOR'S NAME	Paolo Vestri
DESIGNATION	Service Manger Policy, Performance and Organisational Development
CONTACT INFO	pvestri@eastlothian.gov.uk 01620 827320
DATE	28 th September 2023

East Lothian Council
Equality Mainstreaming &
Outcomes Report
2019-2021 and 2021-2023

August 2023

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For all other enquiries please email: equalities@eastlothian.gov.uk, call 01620 89 827827 or write to Linda Alexander, John Muir House, Brewery Park, Haddington, East Lothian, EH41 3HA

Foreword

I am pleased to share our most recent Equality Outcomes Progress report. The report covers the periods 2019-21 and 2021-23 which have undoubtedly presented a number of significant challenges to our communities as well as how we and our partners deliver services.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, maintaining a sharp focus on addressing the challenges associated with inequality and hardship has been a key priority. We were very conscious there was a significant equality dimension to the pandemic – for example in terms of the impact on women, disabled people and minority ethnic communities. Taking action to minimise disruption to education was very important in the interests of our children and young people, as well as maintaining a supportive business environment at such a difficult time for firms across the county.

During these periods our services adapted swiftly and we worked closely with our communities to support the wellbeing of our population and respond to the needs of those who need our support. For example, this included maintaining learning by rolling out digital access to education for our children and young people.

As well as the pandemic, the challenging financial and economic circumstances we have been facing in recent times highlight that the principle of equality must continue to underpin all of the council's work. We must challenge ourselves to tackle inequality and work with our partners to improve outcomes for people across the protected characteristic groups, as well as all those in our communities experiencing inequality and socio economic hardship.

Our Equality outcomes form part of this work. It sits alongside a wider suite of policy and practice. Its principles underpin all of what we do and how we do it and chimes with our East Lothian Council values – Enabling, Leading and Caring.

I look forward to building on this vitally important work while striving to ensure that East Lothian Council meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. We will continue working to eliminate discrimination, promote quality of opportunity, foster good relations and be an Equal Opportunity employer.

With the ongoing commitment of our employees - and the involvement participation of our communities - we will continue working in support of an East Lothian which is fair and prosperous for all.

Monica Patterson
Chief Executive
East Lothian Council

1. Introduction

The purpose of this mainstreaming report is to demonstrate progress against our equality outcomes in line with our duties under the Equality Act 2010. It shows how East Lothian Council has taken forward work to mainstream equality in our role as both a service provider and employer.

The council's [East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2021-2025](#) continues our commitment to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people. It builds on previous work, and informs our overarching commitments.

The Fairer Scotland Duty which came into force in April 2018 forms part of this work and is reflected in the outcomes. This additional duty, tasks local authorities to actively consider how to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

Equality is at the heart of what we do as a Council and our aim is to ensure everyone who lives, works or receives a service does so free from discrimination, and is able to achieve their fullest potential.

This report captures outcomes for the first two years in our most recent Equality Plan 2021-2025, and the period 2019-2021 from the previous plan. It does not provide an update on the many outcomes and actions set out in our other strategic plans, including the 2022-2027 Council Plan, the 2021-2023 Poverty Plan, the Education Service improvement Plan, and the Local Housing Strategy which also deliver on equality outcomes.

This report uses the terms 'East Lothian Council/council' as shorthand for the Council, Education Authority and Licensing Board (all three bodies).

To find out more please go to the [East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2021-2025](#)

The [2022-2027 Council Plan](#) sets out the council's ambitious vision of '**an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian with a dynamic and thriving economy that will enable our people and communities to flourish.**' It establishes three overarching objectives that have been set in response to the fundamental challenges the council faces:

- **Recovery and Renewal** – recovering from the COVID pandemic by investing in regeneration and a sustainable future
- **Reduce Poverty and Inequality** – supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality

- **Respond to the Climate Emergency** – meeting our net zero climate change targets.

The 2022-2027 Council Plan also re-affirms the four thematic objectives that were established in previous plans:

- **Growing our Economy** – to increase sustainable and inclusive economic growth as the basis for a more prosperous East Lothian
- **Growing our People** – to give our children the best start in life and protect vulnerable adults and older people
- **Growing our Communities** – to give people a real say in the decisions that matter most and provide communities with the housing, transport links, community facilities and environment that will allow them to flourish
- **Growing our Capacity** – to deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible within our limited resources.

2. The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public authorities to address systemic practices which could lead to discrimination and adverse impact.

It also introduced the term 'Protected Characteristics', which refers to the nine equality characteristics protected by the duty. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.¹

Duties under the Act

As a local authority, East Lothian Council is legally required to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED or General Duty) in addition to its other provisions relating to employment, education and training. This is comprised of two elements, the general and the specific duty.

The General Duty (GED) requires public listed authorities to have 'due regard' to the need 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, and to
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Additionally the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require an authority to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review policies and practices
- gather and use employee information
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish statements on equal pay
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish in a manner that is accessible.

¹ [Home Page | Equality and Human Rights Commission \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](http://equalityhumanrights.com)

On 18 March 2016 the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2016 came into force. This new set of Regulations:

- a) Introduced a new requirement on some listed public authorities to publish the gender composition of their Boards, and to produce succession plans to increase the diversity (across all protected characteristics) of their Boards; and to
- b) Lower the threshold for listed bodies to publish information on their gender pay gap and equal pay statements, from those authorities with more than 150 employees to those with more than 20 employees.

In respect of the above, the council is not considered a 'relevant listed authority' in regard to publishing the composition of the board (a). However, we publish information as stipulated in (b).

The Fairer Scotland Duty

The Fairer Scotland Duty came into force in April 2018, to ensure public bodies consider how they reduce socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.

In broad terms, ' socio-economic disadvantage' means living on a low income compared to others in Scotland. It is defined as having little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation which can restrict the ability to access basic goods and services.

Socio-economic disadvantage can be experienced in both places and communities of interest, leading to further negative outcomes such as social exclusion. It may arise from a range of factors, including: poverty, health, education, limited social mobility, housing, and a lack of expectations.

The Scottish Government issued its final version of the guidance in October 2021. To find out more go to [Fairer Scotland Duty: guidance for public bodies - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/consultation-papers/plain-language/fairer-scotland-duty-guidance-for-public-bodies-2021-09-20.pdf)

The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of a public authority such as the council. To find out more go to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission website](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-duties).

The Council revised its Integrated Impact Assessment framework to take account of the Fairer Scotland duty.

3. Mainstreaming Equality

Mainstreaming is a term used to capture the practice of integrating the needs of the General Equality Duty throughout all the work of the council. It means:

- Making equality part of the day to day business of what we do as service planners, providers and employers, rather than a 'bolt-on' at the end of projects and other programmes of work;
- Ensuring that equality of opportunity is part of the culture of the organisation, recognising that both employees and customers benefit from organisations where they feel valued and their interests and issues are respected alongside the issues and values of others;
- Demonstrating a commitment to the general duty by publicly demonstrating that unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment are not condoned.

The council's equality considerations are mainstreamed into council plans and our day-to-day work. Therefore the Equality Plan does not replicate all of the various equality outcomes, objectives and actions set out elsewhere.

As part of this work we complete an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of any proposed, or changed policy, practice or strategy. We do this to test for potential areas of discrimination, differential or adverse impact, including socio economic impact, across the protected characteristic groups.

The council continues its mainstreaming approach set out in its Equality Plan 2021-2025. The Plan highlights three high level priorities through which the council mainstreams equality:

- Ensuring high level commitment and buy in to equality through all levels of the Council structures and planning procedures – this is evidenced by the new Council Plan commitment to reducing poverty and inequality;
- Understanding the Impact of our work – through undertaking Integrated Impact Assessments, equality monitoring and reporting on equalities performance indicators, self-evaluation and consultation and engagement with equalities groups;
- Building Organisational Capacity – including providing equality training for staff and embedding fair work in the council's procurement policy and practice.

4. 2019-2021 Outcomes Report

2019-2021 was dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic which had a significant negative impact on society, health and the economy. The pandemic shone a light on the fragility of many people and contributed to the increasing inequality faced by particular groups with a protected characteristic.

These impacts were reflected and taken into account in our 2021-2025 Equality Plan which drew heavily on the work of the East Lothian Poverty Working Group which was established to review the 2017 Poverty Plan. This plan adopted all the recommendations of the East Lothian Poverty Commission to develop a new Poverty Plan 2021-2023.

The following section provides an overview of our Equality Plan progress for the period 2019-2021. Please note that reference is also made to our current position as it relates to outcomes as part of our 2021-2023 reporting.

a) Learning and Development

Mainstreaming equality is predicated on the knowledge and skills of our staff. As part of this work we reviewed and updated our equality training into a digital module. This equality e-learning module is one of the mandatory modules for all new staff and is also mandatory for all staff, to re-take annually. The update was introduced in 2022 and around 70% of staff have completed it to date.

Additionally an e-learning module to provide information and illustrate the impact in relation to the Fairer Scotland duty, is being developed. This information communicates our values to all employees, and supports staff to have the knowledge and skills to implement equality practice, address barriers, and ask questions of their work.

Our Integrated Impact Assessment learning and development content will be updated as part of the Learning Plan review in 2023. This will further enhance staff skills and knowledge to anticipate the impact of proposals.

b) Assessing Impact

Understanding the experiences of people, specifically those facing discrimination and disadvantage enables us to design inclusive services to better meet different needs. We have developed an Integrated Impact Assessment framework. This supports staff to consider the equality and socio economic impact of their work together with consideration of both human and children and young people rights.

Leadership is provided by Heads of Service reviewing each assessment prior to publication alongside the relevant Strategy, Policy or Plan report that goes to Council Cabinet meetings. Completed IIA's are available on our [website](#).

The Integrated Impact Assessment template and guidance that were reviewed in 2022 are available on the council's intranet for all staff.

c) Human rights and children's rights

The council has been preparing for the implementation of the legislation to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scottish domestic law. In addition to piloting a children's rights impact assessment (CRIA) with help from the Children's parliament, NHS Lothian, the University of Edinburgh and Together (a Children's Rights organisation), the council has established a cross-service UNCRC working group. This group informs understanding of our obligations in relation to upholding children's rights, and the implications of how we do things. It ensures that all services are aware of and involved in the work required to prepare for and then implement new duties and responsibilities arising from the incorporation of the UNCRC.

Human rights and children's rights have been included in the council's Integrated Impact Assessment framework.

d) Engagement with equality groups

Our ability to connect with our equality communities is an ongoing priority as our population increases. We work with our Health and Social Care partners, the Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL), and Lothian based representative organisations to support our communications and encourage engagement.

We also engage our communities through our six Area Partnerships, consultation through our Consultation Hub, digital communications and community feedback.

In order to expand and embed our engagement with equality groups we are developing a 'sounding board' approach to engage both formally and informally with groups and organisations representing or involving equality groups. The 'sounding board' will be used to inform and shape developing work and contribute to Integrated Impact Assessments.

e) Equal Pay Audit and Equality in Employment Monitoring Report

Employee Equal Pay Audits and Equality in Employment reports are produced annually by our Human Resources department. These help us to monitor the composition of our workforce, including protected characteristics, identify potential discrimination, as well as actions to address pay differences between men and

women. To find out more please go to our [Equalities Monitoring Report 2021-22 | East Lothian Council](#) and [Employee Equal Pay Audit 2021-22 | East Lothian Council](#)

f) Organisational approach to mainstreaming equality

The increased visibility of the Integrated Impact Assessment process and the requirement to provide an IIA as part of council reports has increased awareness of equality considerations and has encouraged managers and relevant officers to attend training and information opportunities.

Managers have been supporting the development and implementation of good practice in equalities. For example Libraries are identifying how anonymised equality data can be collected and at what point; Human Resources have checked system communications and recruitment information to ensure the Guaranteed Interview scheme is triggered; and, the recently revised Procurement Strategy 2022 takes cognisance of responsibilities under the Equality Act.

g) Equality monitoring and data collection

Data monitoring guidance signposts and supports staff in their work to engage and collect relevant equality data. Coupled with our Integrated Impact Assessment approach and the generation of up to date population information and engagement activities, we continue to build our processes and knowledge to develop and design responsive services. For example:

- The Equality Data Monitoring guidance is being reviewed and updated. This includes information to support services as they consult and engage service users and citizens.
- Human Resources captures recruitment and staff equality data through the recruitment process via My Jobs Scotland. Once in post staff are encouraged to complete and update their equality information with periodic reminders. This information is used as the basis of the annual [Equalities Monitoring Report 2021-22 | East Lothian Council](#).

The council carried out a Residents Survey in late 2021. This was a postal and online survey which was completed by just over 2,400 people. The survey included questions on Neighbourhood and Quality of Life, Community Safety, Health and Wellbeing, Perceptions of the Council, Satisfaction with Public Services, and Local Priorities.

The questions were designed to establish the public's views on general and specific aspects of life in East Lothian, but also to gather data to help inform the council and Community Planning partners of public views and perceptions. The survey findings are of potential use to individual council services and partner organisations. The ward level data will be very useful to Area Partnerships as they review and revise their Area Plans.

The full report provides extensive comparison of the survey responses based on the ward in which respondents live, their age and sex. A boosted sample allowed comparison to be made between areas of highest levels of socio-economic deprivation (areas in the 20% highest levels of socio-economic deprivation according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020) and other areas.

Analysis of responses by the sex of respondents showed little variation in responses between male and female respondents to most questions. For example, 23% of males and 24% of females said they feel threatened by crime 'a great deal or a fair amount'; and 15% of both female and male respondents said they felt lonely and isolated because of COVID. However, there were significant variations in responses to some questions from female and male respondents. For example, the question on feelings about the COVID pandemic recorded that female respondents were more anxious and concerned about the pandemic than male respondents – 41% compared to 31%.

Analysis of responses by the age of respondents highlighted issues where there were difference in views as well as areas where there is little variation. For example, responses to the questions about internet access and usage showed significant variances in regular online activities. On the other hand, the question about the extent to which respondents feel threatened by crime in their local area showed little differentiation according to age; 22% of respondents aged 65 and over and the same percentage of respondents aged 16-34 said they feel threatened by crime in their local area 'a great deal or fair amount'.

To find out more about the residents survey 2021 please go to [East Lothian Residents' Survey | East Lothian Council](#)

5. Equality Plan 2021-2025

East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2021-2025 was approved by Cabinet in November 2021. The Plan builds on the work of the Equality Plan 2017-2021. It sets out what we will do over the next four years to ensure everyone who lives, works or receives a service in East Lothian should be free from discrimination, and able to achieve their fullest potential and no one is denied opportunities because of who they are.

Our equality plans are cumulative and incremental, each building on the actions and progress of the last as well as responding to emerging needs and information. We achieve this by engaging with local groups and individuals, as well as other Lothian councils, our Health and Social Care Partnership, the Police and NHS to inform our outcomes. Due to lock down we were unable to meet our communities and individuals face to face and used the council's Consultation Hub to consult residents. Additionally, the draft Equality Plan 2021-2025 was circulated to equality groups and representative organisations to comment on and circulate through their networks and service users.

The engagement identified several areas for action, including:

- sex equality, including the impact of domestic abuse, and issues such as increasing women's representation on boards, and access to maternity leave
- hate crime experienced by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, particularly people with physical and learning disabilities, and people targeted due to their sexual orientation or gender identity
- ensuring children with additional support needs are included in mainstream services and fun activities
- LGBTQi+ equality in local schools and communities, including support for transgender pupils
- ensuring local services are accessible to all
- identifying meeting spaces to meet religious needs during religious periods.

We also carry out annual Employee Engagement Surveys. The 2021 survey included questions relating to the equality issues, including experience of bullying, harassment and its impact on mental health. The survey indicated that the majority of staff feel they are treated fairly and are positive about how the council is addressing equality. Just under 90% of respondents stated that they are treated. Fewer than half of the employees who stated they are not treated fairly, suggested this was due to an equality related issue.

The survey included five questions about East Lothian Council as an employer from an equalities perspective, which will be used to inform the Council's new Equalities

Plan. The responses to these questions showed that a large majority of employees are positive about how the council is addressing equalities issues.

- Over eight out of 10 employees either strongly agree (24.6%) or agree (57.3%) that East Lothian Council takes equality seriously as an employer; whilst fewer than one in ten (6.7%) disagree. Just over 11% answered Don't Know.
- Eight out of ten employees do not think the council could do more to advance equality of opportunity. Further analysis of the comments and suggestions made by respondents will be carried out to identify any common themes or issues.
- More than eight out of ten employees strongly agree (27.4%) or agree (57.9%) that they feel able to disclose personal information such as religious belief, sexuality or any disability. Only 7.4% either disagree (5.6%) or strongly disagree (1.8%) that they feel able to disclose personal information. Just over 7% answered Don't Know.

Detailed analysis of the answers to the equalities questions by sex of the respondents showed very little differences in the views of female and male employees, although fewer male employees feel able to disclose personal information.

The public engagement and engagement with council staff was used to inform the priorities of the new East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2021-2025. The Plan sets out seven high level equality outcomes to ensure the council meets its statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010. These are:

1. East Lothian Council services are accessible to, and will meet the needs of, all in the community including people who share protected characteristics.
2. In East Lothian we are breaking the cycle of poverty so that fewer people experience poverty.
3. The gap in educational outcomes for children and young people impacted by socio-economic disadvantage will be closed; and, the health and wellbeing of children and young people with protected characteristics will be improved.
4. Everyone in East Lothian has access to a decent, affordable, warm and dry home.
5. In East Lothian we live healthier, more active and independent lives.
6. People feel safe and experience less crime in their communities, and at home, there is zero tolerance of hate, abuse and violence against women and girls and people feel their communities are inclusive.
7. East Lothian Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and our workplace feels inclusive to staff with protected characteristics.

To support the achievement of these outcomes council services we will continue to:

- engage with people with protected characteristics;
- engage with voluntary and third sector organisations that work with equalities groups;
- consider equality issues raised by members of staff and the community previously;
- look at what existing service areas are doing to advance equality;
- look at external factors which will impact on local people and the way in which the council delivers services.

6. 2021-2023 Outcomes Report

This section of the report provides an update on progress made against each of the seven objectives in the 2021-2025 Equality Plan and concludes with a summary of how the East Lothian Council Licensing Board is meeting its equality outcomes.

6.1 East Lothian Council services are accessible to, and will meet the needs of, all in the community including people who share protected characteristics.

Engagement

We are continuing to develop our relationships and connections with representative, local, Edinburgh based or national organisations, and continue mapping local groups and populations as well as embedding equality monitoring into our engagement and consultations. Additionally, we work with East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership colleagues to encourage participation and engagement of under-represented and protected characteristic groups such as older people, people with disabilities, and ethnic minority communities.

Disability Equality Scotland has also re-established a local access panel in East Lothian in 2023.

We aim to re-establish an East Lothian Equality and Diversity network/sounding board.

Several services have conducted focussed engagement work. For example, in 2021/22 Community Housing services conducted a series of targeted workshops to hear experiences from people across the protected characteristic groups to inform their work. Housing staff have continued their efforts by participating in the Lothian Gypsy Traveller Forum.

The council works with our Third Sector Interface, Volunteer Centre East Lothian and voluntary sector groups/partners to keep up to date with local group activity and promote our engagement opportunities and communications. For example we have worked collaboratively to establish the Collective for Change a group of people with lived experience who are contributing to the review of the current Poverty Plan and the development of the new Plan.

The council uses Customer Feedback – complaints, comments and compliments – to improve what we do. For example, a recent complaint resulted in a review of procedures to ensure all customers receive adequate communication and preparation time prior to a visit from property maintenance staff, to ensure health, wellbeing and safety considerations are taken into account.

Assessing Impact

Our Integrated Impact Assessment framework is an integral part of the development of policy and practice. A completed assessment accompanies relevant council reports and is available to inform the decision making process. Information sessions on how to carry out Integrated Impact Assessments are held regularly in partnership with Lothian councils and the NHS Lothian.

Our equalities data monitoring guidance is being updated. This will provide guidance to staff on how to gather and take into account data and intelligence about the protected characteristics of clients and service users.

To find out more about our Integrated Impact Assessment framework please go to our [IIA webpages](#).

Accessibility (Interpretation and Translation services)

The council website is accessible in line with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and is monitored to maintain its performance and accessibility. Information about the council and its services is accessible via the 'Recite me' function on the council website. This function supports online users to translate and also hear content in their preferred language and includes read aloud, and text format changes. In 2022, 4,253 unique individuals used the Recite me function. This includes use of the screen reader and translated information. The languages most used on the website were Polish, Turkish, German, Chinese Taiwan, Spanish and Bulgarian. School data shows that over 50 languages are spoken in local homes.

Web editors and content creators receive training and advice in digital accessibility, including the procurement of new websites and application services. For example our Accessibility Statement and the new library catalogue have been changed as a result of the 2022 audit.

We continue to implement our British Sign Language Plan 2018-2024 ([CAB20190910_04_British_Sign_Language_Plan_\(1\).pdf](#)) and work with Deaf Action to support communication with customers, and also promote the use of the Scottish Government's British Sign Language connect service.

A review of our Interpretation and Translation services (ITS) was carried out in 2021 to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our services users and citizens. Further work will be undertaken in 2024 in partnership with Lothian councils, NHS Lothian and the Health and Social Care Partnership to develop joint communications in minority languages.

Procurement and Fair Work clauses

The council's revised Procurement Strategy 2022, affirms its obligations under relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the use of Fair Work

clauses. The application of the Strategy will enable the council to more effectively lever change through influencing awards using Equality and Fair Work criteria. To find out more please go to [Procurement Strategy | East Lothian Council](#).

Measuring performance

The council has adopted a suite of 50 Council Plan Performance Indicators. Around half of these are poverty and equality indicators. A further 20 equality indicators have been identified to monitor progress with and achievement of actions in the 2021 - 2025 Equality Plan. Where possible the Council Plan and Equality Plan indicators will be disaggregated according to protected characteristics such as sex and age. Coupled with the update of the data monitoring guidance, it is anticipated that services will be able to identify some disaggregation across the protected characteristics to inform service delivery and the Impact Assessment process.

Further work is to be undertaken in 2024 in partnership with Lothian councils, NHS Lothian and the Health and Social Care Partnership to develop joint approaches to gathering and sharing data and analysis of data on protected characteristics.

6.2 In East Lothian we are breaking the cycle of poverty so that fewer people experience poverty.

One of the three overarching objectives in the 2022-2027 Council Plan is to: **Reduce poverty and inequality** - *supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality.*

The current [Poverty Plan 2021-2023](#) shows how the council and its partners meet their responsibilities under the Fairer Scotland Duty to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

The 2021-2023 Plan builds on the previous 2017-2021 plan and sets out 49 actions based around seven outcomes which reflect the Equality Outcomes set out in this Equality Plan:

- Working and free from in poverty
- Financially Included – people have access to income maximisation and money advice
- Having a decent, affordable and warm home
- Educated – reduce the attainment gap and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people
- Healthy and Well – people in East Lothian are enjoying healthier lives and health inequalities are eliminated
- Resilient and Well Connected individuals and communities; connected public services taking a prevention and early intervention approach to tackling poverty

- Empowered and Responsible – citizens and communities are empowered to influence policy and the council and partners take responsibility to reduce poverty.

A review of the 49 actions contained in the 2021-2023 Poverty Plan carried out in July 2023 showed that 49% (24) of the actions have been completed, 41% (20) are ongoing / long term commitments and 10% (5) have still to be progressed.

Key actions/ activities to support the delivery of the Poverty Plan and meet the reducing poverty and inequality outcome in 2021-2023 included:

- Developing cash first approaches to supporting people in financial difficulty, including increasing Scottish Welfare Fund funding to provide £50 and £100 cash payments to people as an alternative to referring them for a Foodbank parcel; supporting the Community Windpower Energy Fund that distributed almost £800,000 to help over 1,400 households pay their fuel bills and meet the rising cost of living in winter 2022/23; and, providing additional funds to Children’s Services and Adult Social Work to provide cash support to vulnerable children, families and adults including carers.
- Running a Benefits Campaign in September 2022 that generated almost £125,000 in financial gain for over 60 people who accessed advice services as a direct result of the campaign.
- Establishing a £758,000 Cost of Living Assistance Fund in 2022/2023 to support low income households through the cost of living crisis.

The review of the 2021-2023 Plan and its actions will help to inform the development of the new Poverty Plan which is being developed by a multi-agency working group and active engagement with the voluntary and community sector and people with lived experience.

6.3 The gap in educational outcomes for children and young people impacted by socio-economic disadvantage will be closed; and, the health and wellbeing of children and young people with protected characteristics will be improved.

This outcome is met through the Education service and is also aligned to the action to ‘reduce the attainment gap and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people’ set out in the Poverty Plan 2021-2023. The Education service’s Progress and Improvement Plan aligns with the current Poverty Plan to meet our Fairer Scotland duty, as well as Equality Plan actions.

For most of 2020, 2021 and part of 2022 schools remained closed and lessons were delivered virtually to the home due to the Covid pandemic. The impact this had on

children, young people and their families has been well documented and our progress to reduce the poverty related attainment gap has been set back.

However, the Education Service continues to have a relentless focus on Inclusion, Achievement, Ambition and Progress for All. It aspires to Get it Right for Every Child and to ensure that our children and young people are Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included.

During 2019, Education and Children's Services came together as one integrated service which now work together to ensure everything it does, starts with the child and family and builds the right support and services around them.

The Education and Children's Service values and respects the diverse communities it serves and has policy and guidance documents in place to promote positive attitudes and eliminate discrimination. Our vision and values align with the four capacities of: successful learners; confident individuals; responsible citizens; and effective contributors. We also strive to meet the key priorities in the National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education, 'Achieving Excellence and Equity' (Scottish Government, January 2016) and Delivering Excellence and Equity in Scottish Education (Scottish Government, June 2016). These are to:

- improve attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy
- close the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children
- improve children and young people's health and wellbeing
- improve employability skills and sustain, positive school leaver destinations for all young people.
- eliminate discrimination and stereotyping in all of its establishments.

To ensure all children can flourish and achieve their potential the service has adopted a new Anti-bullying Policy, *Respect for All: Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in our Schools* This has a particular focus on addressing the needs of children and young people with protected characteristics and is applied to support children to be in school.

Schools and nurseries also take the Accessibility Strategy (2020-2023): Included, Engaged & Involved: Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for all, into account in management decisions and improvement planning.

School have had a renewed focus on attendance supported by the launch of a new attendance policy "Included, Engaged & Involved: A Positive Approach to Improving Attendance" in January 2022.

Using Scottish Attainment Challenge, strategic equity funding from session 2022/2023 we support initiatives with the intention of closing the poverty related attainment gap between the children / young people living in the 20% most deprived data zones with those living in the 20% most affluent data zones. To date, the fund has secured additional staffing in the way of a Principal Teacher of Equity in each of the secondary schools and Equity School and Family Support Workers in identified primary schools. The Strategic Equity funding has associated 'stretch aims' connected with closing the poverty related attainment gap in primary literacy and numeracy, secondary attainment for young people leaving school, attendance, part time timetables, exclusions and participation for 16-19 year olds.

Other work supporting our commitment to equality includes:

- issuing laptops to enable children to access lessons virtually
- providing support and provisions to ensure children could learn
- consulting with pupils and parents to identify experience of bullying because of a protected characteristic, and to increase the availability of school library books that explore and reflect different experiences.
- completing the [lgbt charter for schools](#), and
- specific targets to reduce exclusion rates and close the poverty related gap.

To find out more please go to:

[Education and Children's service progress report and improvement plan 2021-2022](#)
[Education service progress report and improvement plan 2020-21](#)
[Education service progress report and improvement plan 2022-2023](#).

6.4 Everyone in East Lothian has access to a decent, affordable, warm and dry home.

The existing [Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023](#) is now approaching the end of its timeframe, and the new 2024-29 plan is currently being prepared. Complying with the statutory duties of Local Housing Strategies, it will continue to set out how the council will meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and ensure, homes are accessible and adaptable to meet the needs of those with particular requirements and promote independent living.

During the period of the current plan work to meet this commitment has included:

- Completing a needs assessment to identify wheelchair user need, a target of 10% of all affordable homes are to be accessible to people using wheelchairs over the course of the new housing plan.

- Setting a housing supply target of 189 affordable homes per year. Of these, 40 units are available to people with mental health difficulties and/or a physical or learning disability.
- Currently working alongside the Scottish Government to establish engagement with Gypsy Traveller community to establish need and demand for a site, since being destroyed.
- Updated the Annual Rapid Rehousing transition plan to facilitate the end of rough sleeping with the pan Lothian housing pathways for offenders in place working with relevant partners, including the Scottish Prison service. As part of this the Violence against women and girls work has informed the restorative Justice pilot project To find out more please go to in [the Community Justice Local improvement](#)
- Developing The My Place a 'Peer-Flatmate Scheme' in partnership with the Rock Trust to assist care experienced young people avoid homelessness. In 2020, it was expanded to include Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People over the age of 16, and in 2022, on the success of the project, it was expanded to also include young people experiencing homelessness.
- Extending our Fuel Poverty Service with Changeworks to support the increase in residents and tenants facing fuel poverty increasing access to support and assistance.
- Participating in STRENGTH, a Housing First for Women subjected to Domestic Abuse initiative, launched in 2021 as part of the Scottish Government's Third Sector Homelessness Fund.
- Housing and supporting asylum seekers and Ukrainian refugees settling in East Lothian.

6.5 Healthier, more active and independent lives.

This outcome is led by the East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP) which is governed by East Lothian's Integration Joint Board (IJB). The H&SCP has responsibility for the delivery of community health and social care services locally. The arrangements for the IJB and HSCP are set out in the IJB's Integration Scheme.

The IJB's key functions are to:

- Prepare a Strategic Plan for all delegated functions
- Allocate the integrated budget to deliver the aims of the Strategic Plan
- Oversee the delivery of services.

Functions that have been delegated to the H&SCP/ IJB include:

- Adult social care services
- Adult primary and community health care services

- Some elements of adult hospital care.

A full list can be found in the [East Lothian IJB Integration Scheme](#).

The IJB is subject to the duties and responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010 in its own entity. Their mainstreaming and outcomes report acknowledges that it has work to do to ensure it meets the needs of people with a protected characteristic. This includes:

- Better and more focused use of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) when considering policy or practice change or development at the outset and during the life of projects
- Assembling better data about equalities groups who use our services and potential gaps in our understanding of what particular groups need and potential barriers for them in accessing services

To support this and related work an Equalities and Engagement Officer post has been created to maintain an overview of equality, diversity and inclusion, raise awareness, promote effective use of IIAs and help staff and IJB members to access appropriate training. It publishes an independent Equality Outcomes Report. To find out more please go to the [IJB outcomes and mainstreaming report 2023-25](#).

6.6 People feel safe and experience less crime in their communities, and at home, there is zero tolerance of hate, abuse and violence against women and girls and people feel their communities are inclusive.

It is important that people feel safe and experience less crime in their communities, and at home. We work to meet our aspiration of a zero tolerance of hate and abuse, with everyone feeling safe and included. Work to achieve this aim to date includes the development of a Violence Against Women and Girls prevention plan, a regular training and briefing programme delivered with our partners, including Police Scotland, and delivering on our Equally Safe Prevention Plan 2022-2025. This plan includes a distinct East Lothian focus. To find out more please go to [Supporting Safer Communities - Public Protection across East Lothian and Midlothian | Home \(emppc.org.uk\)](#).

We support Police Scotland to implement the Keep Safe scheme locally. This scheme aims to establish a network of local safe places, including community and local authority buildings alongside local businesses. Designed with disabled people it can be used by anyone feeling lost, scared or vulnerable. To find out more please go to the [Keep Safe scheme – Police Scotland](#).

Other initiatives which we support include:

- UK Government's On Your Side, which provides culturally specific support for victims of crime from a South East Asian background. To find out more please go to [On You Side](#)
- 'Ask for Angela' campaign which aims to give women and girls a safe way to alert bar and restaurant staff if they are in a risky situation.
- Safe spaces UK ('Ask for Ani' Action Needed Immediately) initiative with four chemists participating across East Lothian, including some public buildings. To find out more please go to [Ask for ANI-UK Says NO More](#)

Additionally, each year we have supported the 16 Days of Activism campaign against violence against women and girls. The 2023 programme delivered events to raise awareness and inform our broader work as highlighted above. More broadly, the campaign is vital in reinforcing the messages that we can all take action to raise awareness and end violence in all its forms. Find out more please go to [End violence against women and girls in East Lothian | East Lothian Council](#)

Integral to 'feeling safe', is being comfortable in your community and when out and about. The initiatives highlighted above play a key part in meeting this objective. However our aim is to make these types of initiatives no longer required by eradicating violence against women and girls and all form of hate crime and abuse. We support this longer term goal by supporting programmes and events that contribute to eliminating discrimination and celebrate diversity and contribute to creating community cohesion. This work includes information and exhibitions across our libraries and museums such as: local history work led by Haddington library exploring East Lothian links to the trading of enslaved people; supporting local Black History Month, International Women's Day and Pride events.

6.7 East Lothian Council is an Equal Opportunities employer and our workplace feels inclusive to staff with protected characteristics.

East Lothian council is committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer. It aims to ensure that the workplace feels inclusive to all staff, is a positive place for all employees. We aim to have a workforce that is inclusive and diverse and one that brings this approach to what we do.

As part of this work we undertake employment monitoring. The 2021-22 employee equalities monitoring information highlights the importance of this work to ensure it meets the equality duties and is an employer of choice. All staff complete the mandatory Equality and Diversity module both at induction for new staff, and annually thereafter. Introducing this revision means that all staff are reminded of their equality obligations as employees both to their colleagues and in delivering services.

An employer that provides modern and fair employment opportunities and experiences, is committed to robust self-evaluation and undertakes proactive improvement action. As part of this endeavour the council has continued to encourage employees to feel confident about declaring their disability, sexual orientation or information about other protected characteristics. This is reflected within the equalities monitoring data, with more employees volunteering information about their sexuality and race.

East Lothian Council has a good record on equalities and pay equality and has no live equal pay claims. However, as the workforce profile and equal pay data for this period, shows there are still areas that need to be addressed.

Over the period covered by this Equality Outcomes and mainstreaming report actions and initiatives undertaken to support the council's aim to be an Equal Opportunities employer have included:

- Signing up to use the Disability Confident Symbol
- Signing up to become a Carer Positive Employer
- Taking part in the Healthy Working Lives National Award Scheme
- Developing flexible employment policies and practices
- Increasing the renewal frequency of the mandatory Equality and Diversity training course to annually
- Paying council staff the real living wage and preparing to apply for accreditation as a Living Wage employer.
- Developing a Listening Ears Service to support staff who may have mental health issues
- Setting up a Carers Hub.

We are currently taking steps to improve our employment practices and participate in the shadow group for the Equally Safe accreditation. This programme enables councils to work towards accreditation as a gender sensitive employer.

We explain and encourage all employees complete their own equality data on the MyHR pages. This has recently allowed employees to self-identify as a veteran, reservist, cadet force volunteer or a military spouse/ partner, alongside the protected characteristic data. Having this breadth of information helps us tailor the support we give to employees through our HR policies.

We continue to produce our Equality in Employment Monitoring report and action plan and agree actions with the Trade Unions. Trade Union participation is also informing the updating of our Equality in employment policy and statement. As a council we collect information across the protected characteristics, including race

and disability. We use this information to inform subsequent actions in our Annual Equal pay audit.

The 2023 staff/ employee engagement survey focussed on health and wellbeing, and included questions contributing to a stress and mental health audit. The survey was analysed according to some protected characteristics. Key findings from this analysis included:

- Female staff are generally more positive about their physical health and mental wellbeing than male staff. 85% of female staff said their mental wellbeing is Very Good or Good compared to 78% of male staff.
- There was almost no difference in responses to a question about whether staff had experienced bullying and harassment from female and male staff. A slightly higher proportion of male staff (16.9%) said they are rarely, sometimes or often bullied or harassed compared to female staff (16.3%).
- Approximately 100 staff indicated that they had experienced bullying and Harassment. However, only a small number of specific cases were in relation to the person's protected characteristic. Reasons staff felt bullied or harassed included abusive, threatening behaviour and/or intimidation by clients, and abusive language or being the subject of banter from colleagues.

The HR service s addressing the findings with managers, including specific information on workplace interactions and responsibilities. These findings will continue to inform our training and support services to identify where specific action is required.

In May 2022 the council adopted an Equal Opportunities Statement which outlines its commitment to being an Equal Opportunities employer with all aspects of employment and associated policies underpinned by equal opportunities.

Further actions to address the issues arising from equalities monitoring and the equal pay audit and to support the fulfilment of the Equal Opportunities statement are detailed in the Workforce Plan.

Our current 2023-2027 Workforce Plan ([CAB20230117_03_Workforce_Plan\(3\).pdf](#)) developed using information from the annual Equality in Employment Monitoring report, identifies that:

- The number and percentage of staff who identify as having a disability has increased slightly over the last three years from 154 (3.37%) in 2019/20 to 213 (4.29%) in 2021/22.

- 72% of our workforce is female and there is an increase in people reporting their sexual orientation and identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual.
- Whilst there has been a small increase in staff from minority ethnic backgrounds 92% of our employees identified as white.

The council's workforce is still traditionally gender defined – care and clerical posts predominantly held by women; crafts, manual and technical posts held by men – and this has meant that the council still has an equal pay gap of over 4%. Further attention needs to continue to be given to 'breaking down' these traditional gender stereotypes in different sections of the workforce, including employee and role profiling in council recruitment, staff communications through the Inform staff e-zine and public communications.

The 2023-2027 Workforce Plan includes a set of actions that aim to support the council meet its commitment to be an Equal Opportunities employer:

- Carry out a review of recruitment procedures and practice against the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit and make any necessary changes
- Review the Annual Equal Pay Audit in line with Government guidance to assess whether it should include information and actions to address pay gaps faced by employees with protected characteristic groups along with the gender pay gap; for example Ethnicity & race and Disability Pay Gap audits
- Carry out a stress and mental health audit of employees correlated against the protected characteristics as part of employee engagement surveys; and use the results to inform the development of mental health and wellbeing training and support services
- Become an "Equally Safe at Work" accredited employer and progress the development of a gender based violence policy
- Update the Post-employment Equalities Questionnaire to mirror the current 'myjobscotland' questionnaire
- Promote Stage 3 Data Collection by increasing the frequency of alerts sent to employees reminding them to update their Equalities Information on myHR and the introduction of an additional reminder into the mandatory Equality and Diversity elearning module
- Make appropriate adjustments to support neuro divergent employees
- Increase the number of targeted recruitment initiatives to promote employment with the Council to people from underrepresented groups and address traditional gender stereotype roles in employment
- Further enhance employee engagement in relation to equal opportunities to gain a more qualitative insight into any issues concerning employees – including barriers to disclosing equalities information.

6.8 East Lothian Council Licensing Board

The Licensing Board contributes to the current council plan to ensure that 'Fewer people are the victim of crime, disorder and abuse in East Lothian' and continues our equalities work as it addresses public health issues, preventing crime and disorder, and the protection of children, set out in its Statement of Licensing Policy 2018-2023. All reports presented to the Board which propose new policies or guidelines or other changes are accompanied by an equality impact assessment, most recently this includes the impact assessment of our sexual entertainment venue policy. The Board has also reviewed the accessibility of its application processes, including the application form and its Disability Access Statement which has resulted in each licensing objective requiring specific accessibility information as part of the licence process.

The East Lothian Licensing Board is constituted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005. The regimes under these Acts set out broad aims which the Board must and will support in all its functions. It works with a range of partners to ensure appropriate information informs decision making. Key partners include police, health and fire services, anti-social behaviour team, community councils, and any other relevant stakeholders. Where relevant this can include information about equalities issues and experiences of equality groups in the community, such as women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

The East Lothian Licensing Board will further this work with the implementation of the Integrated Impact Assessment Tool. All reports presented to the Board proposing new policies or guidelines setting out new functions, or proposing any other changes with implications for equality groups and will include details of the results of the impact assessment.