

Disability and Carers Equality Action Plan 2021-2023



This Action Plan specifically targets issues of under representation, measurement and impact, progress of working Disabled and Carer in our workforce.

- When considering an action plan for Disabled staff and Carers it is worth looking at these two separate but inter-linked groups of people.
- **The Equality Act 2010 say you are Disabled** if you have a physical or mental impairment, visible or hidden, that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities (which can last 12 months or longer and be recurring).
- In the UK, **1 in 5 people have a disability**, 80 per cent of which have a hidden disability.
- **Not all disabilities are visible:** some are not obvious and can make everyday life demanding for so many people. Hidden disabilities are a wide range of physical and mental conditions that range from a speech impediment, reduced sight, bipolar, chronic fatigue syndrome, colitis, autism, depression, and many others.
- **A Carer** is someone who provides unpaid care and support to a family member or friend due to their disability, health condition, frailty, mental health problem, addiction or other health and care need. If you are looking after a child, including your own child, who has special physical or mental health support **needs**, then you are also a carer.
- There are some **13.6 million unpaid carers** across the country, including 4.5 million people who first started caring during the pandemic and 800,000 young carers. Each of these carers provides vital support to a family member or friend, often at considerable personal cost.
- **Over the past two years with COVID**, the role of unpaid carers has become more important than ever. With many people shielding or unwilling to go out, unpaid carers have stepped up to provide additional support and keep people safe throughout the pandemic, but the reality is that these carers do not feel that their role is being recognised.
- This action plan includes a list of actions for the whole organisation and managers which can help address some of the barriers that working disabled and Carers may experience in our workplace.
- In 2019 Leeds City Council made a **commitment as a Disability Confident Leader**. As one of the largest employers in the city we have an opportunity to show strong leadership and act as an exemplar to other employers by championing “healthy” working (both in how people work and the environments where they work), and by taking a person-centred, social model of disability approach to the care of our employees in work and in supporting those with long term health needs and disabilities and those with caring responsibilities.
- This is demonstrated in our Equality Improvement Priorities 2018 – 2022. One of these priorities aims to ‘**provide effective support to disabled people and people with long term health conditions** with a focus on those with poor mental health to access the labour market and sustain employment with the objective of increasing the number of people experiencing mild to moderate mental health moving into work’.
- **The roles of the staff networks** particularly the Disability and Well-being (including Healthy Minds) and Carers networks are crucial in giving some of our most vulnerable workers a voice. Peer support groups gives them a greater sense of engagement, confidence and empowerment. By encouraging participation in all our staff networks, we actively value the diversity they represent within our workforce and by so doing makes it less likely that parts of the workforce are ‘left behind’. This in turn makes the organisation more attractive to diverse cultures to want to work for LCC, including greater opportunities for disabled people.
- This action plan has been developed following consultation with both the Disability and Wellbeing, and Carers Staff Networks members and builds on the findings and achievements of the Race Equality Action Plan which gave a commitment from the Council to “*stand together against all forms of racism and inequality in our council and our city*”.
- Like the Race Equality Action plan this document *will* address the concerns of our Disabled and working carers in our workforce, we have identified areas of focus as key priority areas from 2021-2023: **Staff Support; Staff Progression, Learning and Development; Communication and Engagement and Measurement and Impact**

<p style="text-align: center;">Our key priorities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Outcomes <i>How we will know we are successful</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Measures</p>
<p>1. Staff support <i>Adopt a zero tolerance approach to discrimination in the workplace and create a supportive work environment for all staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear zero tolerance culture which drives towards elimination in staff experiencing discrimination, language, behaviour from colleagues and customers. • Disabled and carer staff are treated fairly and equally as employees • Disabled and carer staff feel safe when undertaking their work • Disabled and Carer staff have positive experiences of the support they receive from their managers and colleagues • All managers are confident and competent in addressing reported incidents of discrimination within work • Initiatives/programmes which relate to advocacy routes available to disabled and carer staff in the organisation. . • Continued effective monitoring of COVID-19 risk assessment tool and impact on disabled staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero tolerance policy around inequality is in place and communicated to workforce and stakeholders across the council • % of Disabled and caring Staff reporting positive outcomes following harassment or bullying incidents • % of Disabled and caring Staff reporting positive resolution following all stages of grievance/disciplinary procedures • % of staff and managers reporting increased confidence in dealing with issues relating to discrimination at work • Number and % of managers trained to support awareness around disability and carers • Number and % of cases involving Disabled and caring staff subject to litigation (both internal and external) • Number and % where disability identified as risk factor in council's 'Risk assessment for employees more at risk from COVID-19' tool.
<p>2. Staff progression, learning and development <i>Fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes; career progression and leadership development for staff</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled and caring staff are widely represented in all roles across the Council including in senior leadership and management roles • Disabled and caring staff are accessing and completing training and leadership development programmes • Improved and inclusive recruitment practices and processes • Sustained monitoring of recruitment and progression performance data relating to Disabled and caring staff in the organisation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of Disabled and carer staff employed in senior leadership and management roles • % of disabled and caring staff completing apprenticeships and training programmes
<p>3. Communication and engagement <i>Promoting opportunities and platform for open and honest debate both at the corporate and local level relating to disability and carer issues across the organisation</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voices and experiences of Disabled and caring staff are heard and inform policy and practice • Disabled and caring staff are contributing to service reviews and to service developments • Our diverse communities contribute to and shape the development of our services • There is increased access to services by the Disabled and caring communities • Diversity is valued and is celebrated across the council • Team Leeds approach - Build a strong and active network of Allies across the organisation including at senior leadership and management levels. • Working in partnership with stakeholders to share learning and best practice • Network attendance and representation at all EDI boards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and % of Allies trained across the council • Number and % of disabled and carer staff impacted by service reviews process and Numbers and % of disabled and carer Staff Network members trained and involved in EIA assessments. • Levels of engagement with community organisations, by directorate, to shape and inform service developments • Numbers and level of engagement activities and events to celebrate diversity and inclusion to include international day for people with disabilities, inclusion day and disability history month.
<p>4. Measurement and impact <i>The Council bases its policies, procedures, practice and its service provision on robust, comprehensive and transparent data and data analysis, and through consultation with communities</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled and caring staff are treated fairly and equally as employees • Disabled and caring staff are widely represented at all levels of the organisation • Discriminatory practice is eliminated • Transparent and accessible dataset and information of Disabled and carer workforce profile and experiences • Improved take up of services by all communities • Improved customer satisfaction and feedback • Commissioning of services is informed by robust Equality Impact Assessments which reflect appropriate stakeholder engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data on equality, diversity and inclusion is routinely collated, is transparent and accessible via workforce profile dashboard. • Increase in use of Equality Impact Assessments related to disability and carers to inform policy, service reviews and service developments

Disability and Carers Equality Action Plan

Our Ambition:

To achieve a position of 'Zero Tolerance' to discrimination in the council, with co-production embedded into organisational change processes, so that we can create an inclusive culture where all staff can fulfil their potential in the organisation and bring their whole selves to the workplace.

Performance Management & Review:

Progress on achieving the objectives and action plan will be primarily owned by the council's Corporate Leadership Team supported by key stakeholders such as the Disability and Wellbeing Network, Carers Network and healthy minds Peer Support Group. The governance structure supporting this work will require a whole Team Leeds approach and is further described below.

Objectives	Leads	Actions	Timescales for completion and progress update
1: Staff support: Adopt a zero tolerance approach to discrimination in the workplace and create a supportive work environment for Disabled and caring staff			
<p>1.1 Realise the ambition to adopt a zero tolerance approach to discrimination in the workplace</p> <p>1.2 Ensure governance and accountability of Senior Leadership Teams on their commitments and actions on zero tolerance of discrimination</p> <p>1.3 To ensure a proactive approach to challenging language and behaviours in the workplace</p> <p>1.4 Ensure Disabled and Carer staff are supported when they experience and report inequality in the workplace</p> <p>1.5 Maximise opportunities for Disabled and Carers staff to share their lived experience of working within the organisation and to celebrate achievements</p> <p>1.6 Implement checks to ensure Covid Risk Assessments are happening for Disabled colleagues</p>	<p>Implementation lead/s:</p> <p>Corporate HR</p> <p>DAWN network members</p> <p>Carers network Members</p> <p>Healthy Minds Peer Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a corporate policy on zero tolerance to equality • Develop mandatory training programme for all staff on zero tolerance to discrimination • Support all managers to become confident and competent in addressing discrimination in the workplace • Support all managers to adopt inclusive leadership approaches • Deliver inclusion events and learning opportunities throughout the year for all staff • Enable Disabled and caring staff where they do not ordinarily have access to emails to contribute to and receive support from the DAWN and carers network • Staff Network to deal with any issues of discrimination, using a 'Speak up Guardian' approach • Consistent monitoring of COVID-19 risk assessment tool and impact on Disabled staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR and The joint networks have consulted with the skills and xx to include inclusion and social model of disability training in future apprentice levy cohorts. • Inclusion training has already been added and forms part of the new leadership training suite on offer. • HR are running lets talk inclusion training with emphasis on the social model of disability in addition to the inclusive recruitment offer • Further training has been reviewed as part of the skills booster offering to LCC • Active participation of the inclusion events has been undertaken jointly with forum central and Anchors across the city including International day for disabled people Dec 3rd. • The outreach vehicle project for use across networks is currently work in progress for outreach work across services and the city. • Speak up guardian currently in recruitment process. • Wellbeing offer now being rolled out to ensure staff have the meaningful conversation as part of the appraisal window. This included: • Reasonable adjustments passport • Carers passport

2: Staff progression, learning and development: *Fair and transparent recruitment and selection processes; career progression and leadership development for Disabled and caring staff*

<p>2.1 Ensure a consistent and sustained approach to career development and progression opportunities for Disabled and caring staff at all levels in the organisation including in senior leadership and management roles</p> <p>2.2 Develop inclusive recruitment practices with following key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transparency of recruitment process ○ More diverse and representative recruitment and selection panels ○ Anti-discrimination training of recruitment panel members ○ Sharing quality and transparent feedback with candidates ○ Support for managers so that they are skilled around their awareness of inclusion competency and staff development 	<p>Implementation lead/s:</p> <p>DAWN network members</p> <p>Carers network Members</p> <p>Healthy Minds Peer Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop transparent recruitment process with data analysis and tracking to monitor disabled and carer applications as well as outcomes • Create more diverse and representative recruitment and selection panels • Implement anonymised shortlisting capability and options into the council's recruitment and selection process • Develop inclusion training for all staff involved in the recruitment process • Consistent and credible approach in sharing quality and transparent feedback with candidates with support as part of recruitment process • To provide more support to managers so that they are skilled around inclusion and staff development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A training course similar to BAME inclusion training currently in draft for future roll out across the services. • Lets talk inclusion training now on PAL for managers • Leadership training under development • New ways of working initiatives and training
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3. Communication and engagement: *Promoting opportunities and platform for open and honest debate both at the corporate and local level relating equality issues across the organisation*

<p>3.1 To raise awareness of the Disabled and carers Staff Networks ambition to achieve 'Zero Tolerance' to discrimination in the organisation</p> <p>3.2 Celebrate the rich diversity of the council's disabled and carers workforce</p>	<p>Implementation lead/s:</p> <p>DAWN network members</p> <p>Carers network Members</p> <p>Healthy Minds Peer Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Allyship programme/model for staff to utilise across the council. • Disability and carers Staff Networks to work with HR and relevant stakeholders to develop sessions/opportunities specifically targeted at addressing priorities through awareness of Disabled and caring staff who do not have regular access to emails. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR to look at the work of the various allies, people person and DAWN ambassadors to consolidate the role across the Authority, provide training and awareness opportunities • Continued support of awareness campaigns and masterclass training through on line training
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<p>3.3 Build a strong and active network of Allies across the organisation</p> <p>3.4 To improve support to disabled and carer staff in services where they do not ordinarily have access to emails so they can contribute to the work of the wider network</p> <p>3.5 Monitor the impact of service reviews on disabled and caring staff</p> <p>3.6 Progress of Plan actions and priorities are communicated across the council including directorate leadership teams (DLT) and managers</p> <p>3.7 Working in partnership with stakeholders to share learning and best practice</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch a zero tolerance campaign across the council and city, making our stance visible (both internally and externally). • Active Staff Network involvement in the service review process and training more network members around Equality Impact Assessments. • Council communications (internal/external) marking key diversity and inclusion dates/events throughout the year. • Regular progress updates of Plan actions and priorities shared across a range of platforms and forums (both written and verbal) including to key stakeholders such as DLT and managers. • To draw on the expertise, support and resources of partner organisations, networks, and others with this shared endeavour - locally, regionally, and beyond. 	
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4. Measurement and impact: Council's policies, procedures and practice are informed by robust and comprehensive data analysis on equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace

<p>4.1 Transparent and accessible dataset and information of disabled and carers workforce profile and experiences.</p> <p>4.2 Increased Staff and Manager engagement to inform organisational understanding and response to improve the experience of council disabled and caring staff</p>	<p>SRO:</p> <p>Implementation leads:</p> <p>DAWN network members</p> <p>Carers network Members</p> <p>Healthy Minds Peer Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR to lead a review of what data we have, and what new data we need, including looking at datasets used by the NHS and other organisations. It will also recommend what information should be shared, who with and how often. • Conduct a pulse survey with all staff in the council to understand the lived experience of disabled and carer staff. • Conduct a survey with all managers in the council to understand confidence to support and address equality, diversity and inclusion issues and challenges. • To review the council's special leave and sickness policies at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are fit for purpose around the new ways of working. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently part of the HR senior management teams work with the Anchors
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5. Delivery of the best employee experience

<p>5.1</p> <p>To Establish new ways of agile working to provide the best employee experience.</p>	<p>Implementation leads:</p> <p>DAWN network members</p> <p>Carers network Members</p> <p>Healthy Minds Peer Group</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish robust systems of work both at home and in the office, including collaboration offers across the civic estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently 6 pilot sites are part of the new ways of working review, these survey responses will help inform the future work programmes for staff.• Review the current building inclusion report 2016 to reflect changes to construction legislation and inclusion.• Complete the buildings accessibility review as part of the new ways of working programme.• Monitor and support the continued home working of disabled and caring staff.
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