

# Equality Strategy 2023-27



# Foreword



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Executive Member for Education, Achievement, and Equalities

**In developing Tameside Council’s Equalities Strategy 2023 – 2027, we have had to reflect on a tumultuous few years where, through the COVID-19 Pandemic, the inequalities in society have been laid bare. This experience has stiffened our resolve to ensure we are better placed to help everyone thrive regardless of their background.**

The new census data offers us a fresh window into the communities of Tameside that we have not had for over ten years. Understanding how many of our households do not speak English or that our population is ageing is extremely valuable information but will mean that we have to adapt how we deliver services to meet the needs of the population we serve.

There is an urgent need to improve the day-to-day lives of the most vulnerable and poorest residents whilst understanding the challenges disadvantaged communities face. This plan will help to ensure equality is considered at all levels of Council decision-making, policy, and service delivery.

We also want to acknowledge that there is more to do in tackling prejudice and hate with the recent Black Lives Matter and MeToo movements protests showing that we can never be complacent and recognise that these issues are still an ugly part of our society.

We recognise that all people are different and their needs complex. We are confident that this strategy sets out how we aspire to achieve real and lasting progress for diverse groups and individuals alongside everyone else in Tameside over the next few years.



# Contents

<b>1. Introduction and Scope .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Tameside Profile .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Developing the Equalities Strategy: Engagement and Consultation .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>4. Our Equality Objectives .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5. Action Plan .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>6. Implementing the Strategy .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Appendix One: Case Studies of Good Practice .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix Two: Legal Context .....</b>	<b>48</b>

# 1

## Introduction and Scope

The world has changed significantly since the previous One Equality Scheme 2018-2022 was developed.

At the start of 2020, COVID-19 arrived in Britain on its global path of havoc. COVID-19 laid bare and exacerbated existing, entrenched inequalities. Mortality rates and severe illness caused by COVID-19 was especially high amongst the elderly and those classified as “clinically extremely vulnerable”, including people with disabilities.

Children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds were impacted to a greater detriment by disruptions to education. These are just a few of many important examples.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the killing of George Floyd by police in the United States catalysed global protests and conversations,

including in the UK, about racial and ethnic disparities in all walks of life, not just the criminal justice system. Black women are four times more likely to die during pregnancy and childbirth than white women. There were higher mortality rates from COVID-19 amongst Black and South Asian communities compared to their White British counterparts. It is important that racial and ethnic disparities such as these are addressed and not forgotten. Similarly the MeToo movement has shone a light on the experiences of women around sexual abuse and harassment.

Now, whilst learning to live with COVID-19, the “cost of living crisis” has erupted, with significant rises in energy bill costs and increasing costs of food. Many people and families are now struggling to make ends meet.

This tumultuous societal landscape means it is imperative that at Tameside Council there is an embedded approach and ethos in the organisation to addressing and alleviating inequalities throughout the borough. So, implementing this Equalities Strategy is the ethical and moral thing we should do as an organisation. This will ensure that addressing and alleviating inequalities orients and permeates throughout all strategies, policies, and services. If action is not taken and inactivity prevails then there is the danger of complicity in furthering existing inequalities. This goes against the mission to serve and deliver the best possible outcomes for all residents throughout Tameside.

## Legal Duties

The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to produce and publish equality objectives every four years. These objectives should be specific and measurable. The approach to equality must account for all “protected characteristics”. These are attributes that can underlie a person’s or community’s marginalisation. There are nine such characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race, including colour, nationality, ethnicity, and national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation<sup>1</sup>

In Tameside, there are six further protected characteristics considered:

- **Current and former members of the armed forces**
- **Mental health**
- **Carers**
- **Breastfeeding**
- **Socio-economic disadvantage.**
- **Cared for children and care leavers**

These legal duties, as well as the ethical imperative outlined above, underpin the development of this Equalities Strategy.

<sup>1</sup>More information about our legal duties in terms of equalities can be found in Appendix Two.

## This Strategy's Scope

This Strategy is about embedding an approach and ethos throughout the organisation that will orient and permeate all strategies, services, and operations. This will put us in a better position to address things like socio-economic inequalities. There are other strategies and policies that more directly address specific inequalities, such as the Poverty Strategy and the Inclusive Growth Strategy.

This strategy is for Tameside Council. The previous One Equality Scheme 2018-2022 was a joint strategy with NHS Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS T&G CCG). The legal framework governing the commissioning and provision of healthcare services in Tameside and Glossop has changed in 2022. NHS T&G CCG has been disbanded. Healthcare services in Tameside have been incorporated into the newly formed Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership, which brings together healthcare commissioners and providers from across Greater Manchester to collectively plan and organise healthcare services to meet the needs of all local populations. In conjunction, healthcare services in Glossop have been incorporated into Joined Up Care Derbyshire. As a result, the Council is solely accountable for this strategy.

Nevertheless, work will continue to align with Greater Manchester Integrated Care (Tameside), the new body that oversees healthcare services in Tameside, considering especially the health inequalities that were brought to public attention during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The background image shows a canal scene with a tall brick chimney on the left, several multi-story brick buildings along the banks, and a red and blue narrowboat in the foreground. The scene is overlaid with a blue tint. A large yellow circle with a white center is positioned in the middle of the image, containing the text.

# **2**

## **Tameside Profile**

# Age Groups in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census

12.3%

Aged 0-9

11.8%

Aged 10-19

11.6%

Aged 20-29

14.0%

Aged 30-39

12.6%

Aged 40-49

14.2%

Aged 50-59

10.8%

Aged 60-69

8.5%

Aged 70-79

3.6%

Aged 80-89

0.6%

Aged 90+

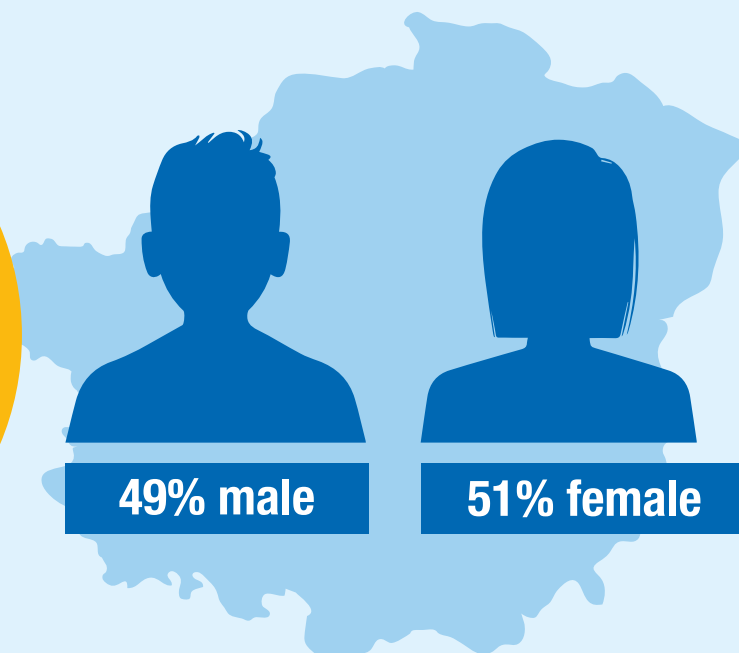


Tameside has an ageing population. There was a 0% population change in those aged 0-49, whilst there was a 16% increase in those aged 50+.



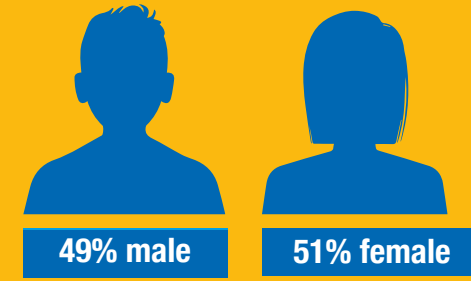
# Tameside Population by sex

Source: 2021 Census



# England Population by Sex

Source: 2021 Census

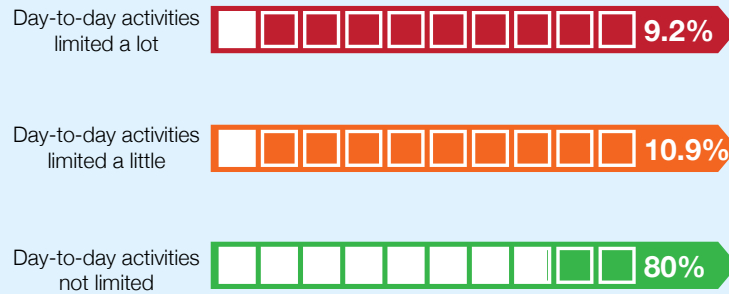


# Disability in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census

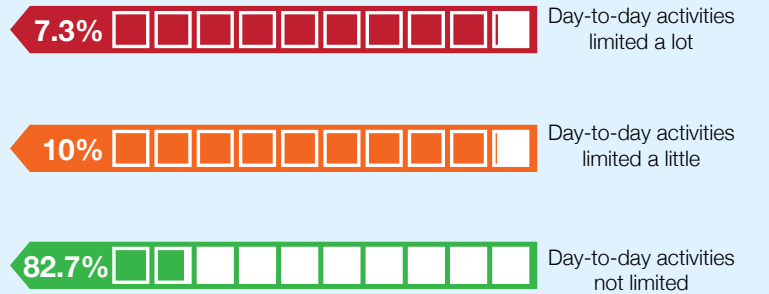
## Tameside

Source: Census 2021



## England

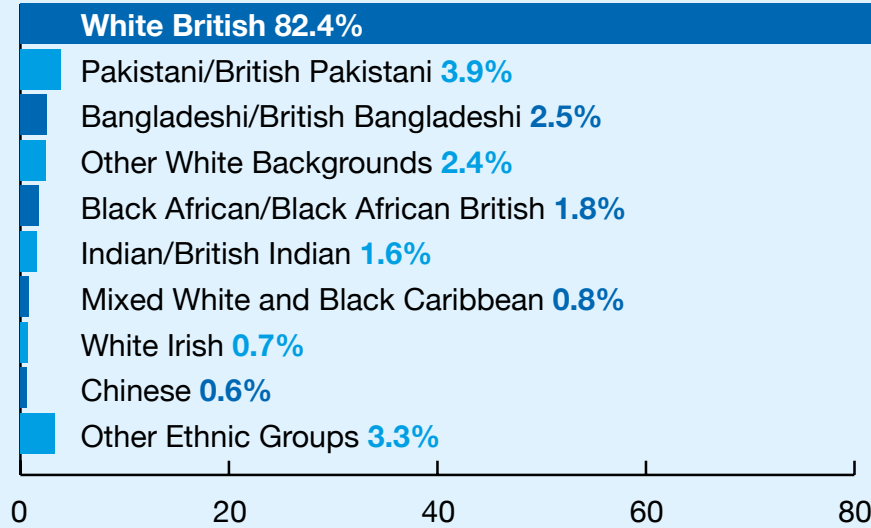
Source: Census 2021



Compared to England (7.3%), Tameside has a higher proportion of residents who are disabled and whose day-to-day activities are limited a lot (9.2%).

# Ethnic Population in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census



After those who identify as White British (82.4%), the next three ethnic groups who comprise the highest proportions of Tameside's population are Pakistani/British Pakistani (3.9%), Bangladeshi/British Bangladeshi (2.5%), and those from other white backgrounds (2.4%).

# Tameside Population Increase

The largest population increases since the last census have occurred amongst Pakistani/British Pakistani (+4100), Black African/Black African British (+2900), those from other white backgrounds (+2000), and Bangladeshi/British Bangladeshi (+1500).



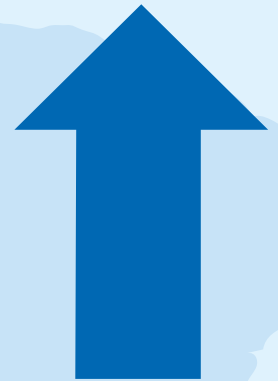
**+1500**  
Bangladeshi/  
British  
Bangladeshi



**+2000**  
Other White  
Backgrounds



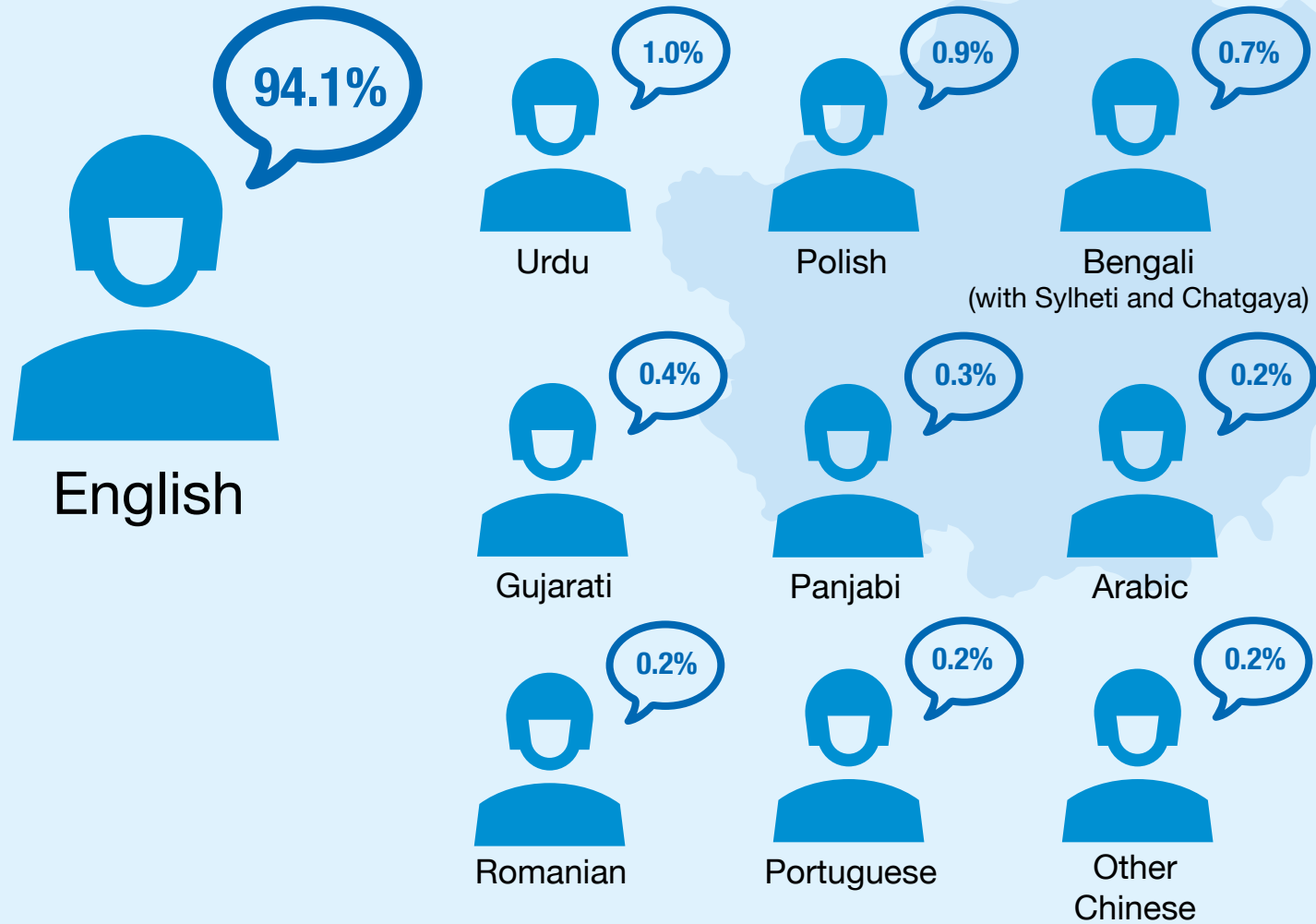
**+2900**  
Black African/  
Black African  
British



**+4100**  
Pakistani/British  
Pakistani

# Main Language in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census



After English, the following languages had the highest proportion for first or preferred language amongst residents in Tameside: Urdu (1.0%), Polish (0.9%), Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) (0.7%), Gujarati (0.4%), and Panjabi (0.3%).

# Proficiency in English

Source: 2021 Census



**36.0%**  
Can speak English very well



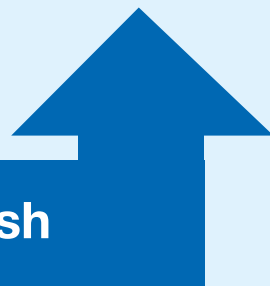
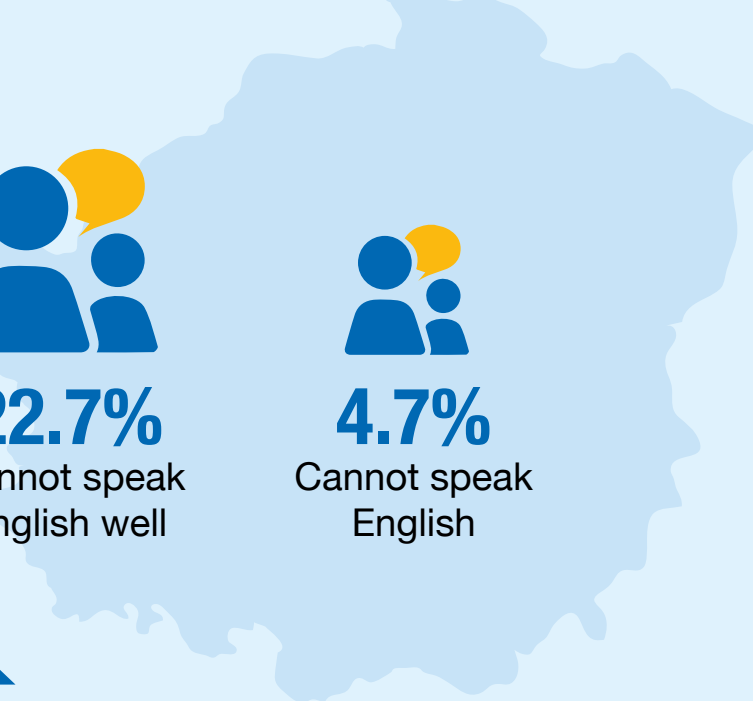
**36.6%**  
Can speak English well



**22.7%**  
Cannot speak English well



**4.7%**  
Cannot speak English



**Of those whose main language is not English**

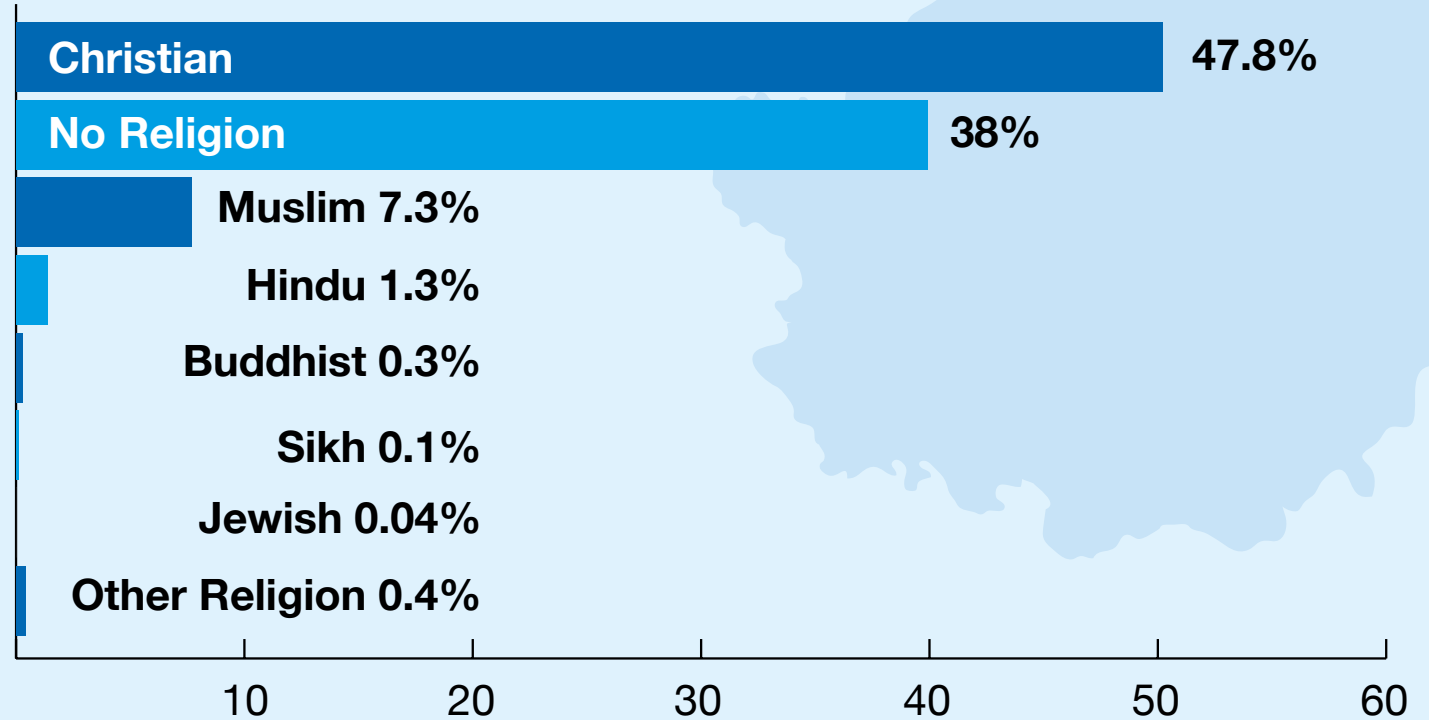


Also, there are 3000 households in Tameside in which no person speaks English as main language, with a further 900 households in which no adults speak English as a main language yet a child aged 3-15 speaks English as a main language.



# Religious Denominations in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census

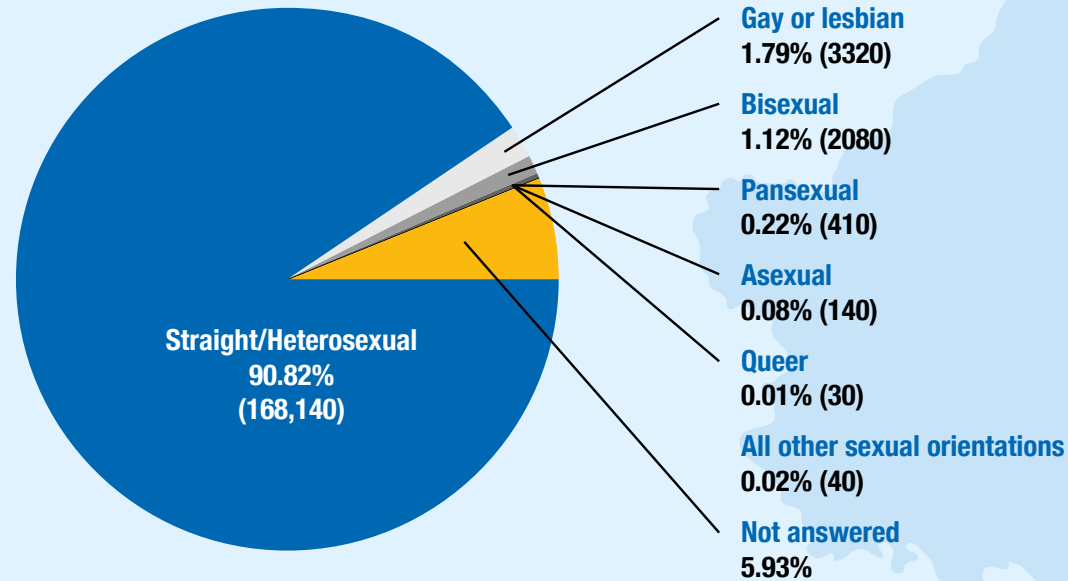


The religion with which most Tameside residents identify with is Christianity (47.8%), followed by those who state they have no religion (38.0%), and Islam (7.3%).

Nevertheless, since the last census, there has been a large decline in the number of residents who identify with Christianity (-29800), and, conversely, an increase in those with no religion (+36,200) and those who identify with Islam (+7200).

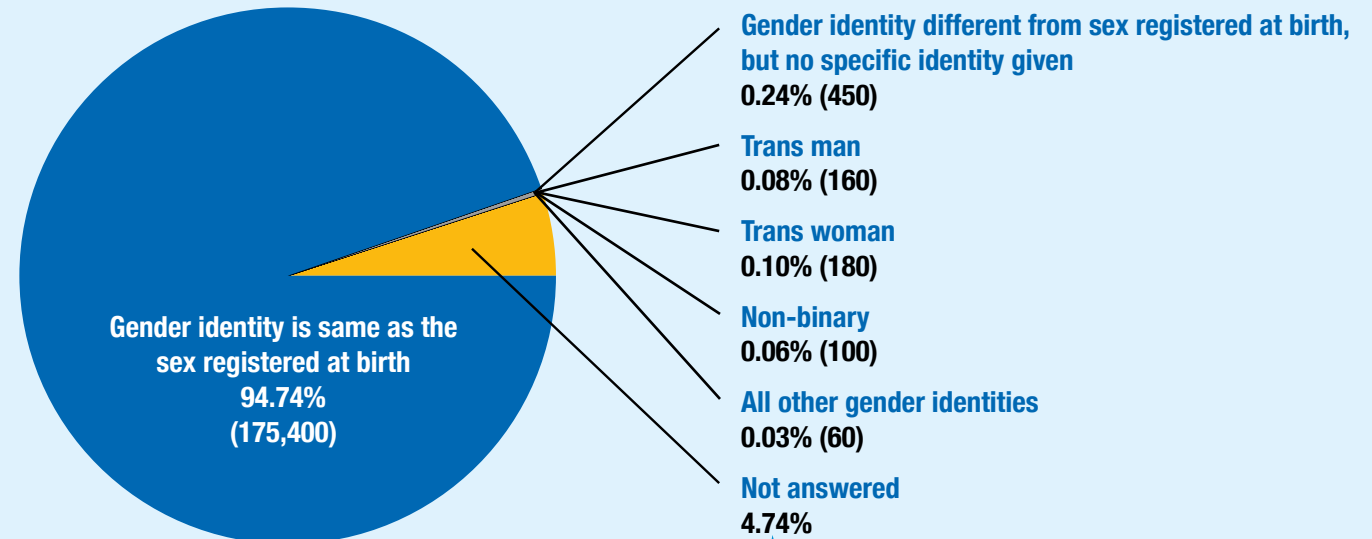
# Sexual Orientation in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census



# Gender Identity in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census



# Marital Status and Civil Partnerships in Tameside

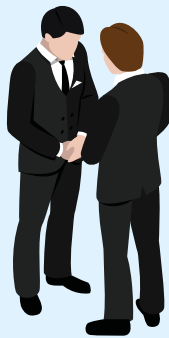
Source: 2021 Census



Never married/never registered a civil partnership  
**40%**



Married/civil partnership: Opposite Sex  
**40.4%**



Married/civil partnership: Same Sex  
**0.4%**



Separated  
**2.6%**



Divorced/dissolved civil partnership  
**9.7%**



Widowed  
**6.7%**

# Armed Forces Veterans in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census

2.9%

There are 5366 armed forces veterans living in Tameside, 2.9% of Tameside's population aged 16+

This is lower than the proportion for England: 3.1%.

A further 1330 residents have served in the armed forces reserves.

## The estimated rate of common mental health disorders in Tameside

# Mental Health in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census

19.5%  
for residents aged 16+

12.1%  
for residents aged 65+

These are higher than the respective England averages for those aged 16+ (16.9%) and 65+ (10.2%).



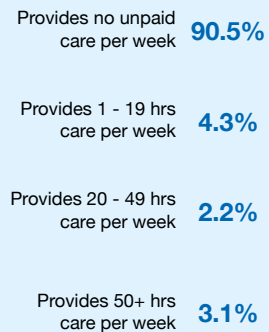
# Provision of Unpaid care in Tameside

Source: 2021 Census



## Provision of Unpaid Care in Tameside

Source: Census 2021



## Provision of Unpaid Care in England

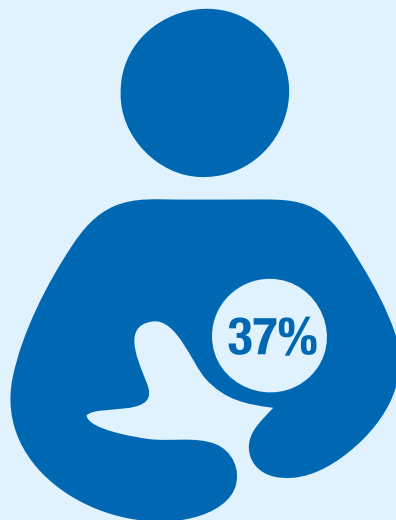
Source: Census 2021



Tameside has a slightly higher proportion of residents who provide 20+ hours of unpaid care per week (5.3%) than England (4.4%).

# Pregnancy and Maternity (breastfeeding)

Source: Office for Health Improvement and Disparities Fingertips Profiles

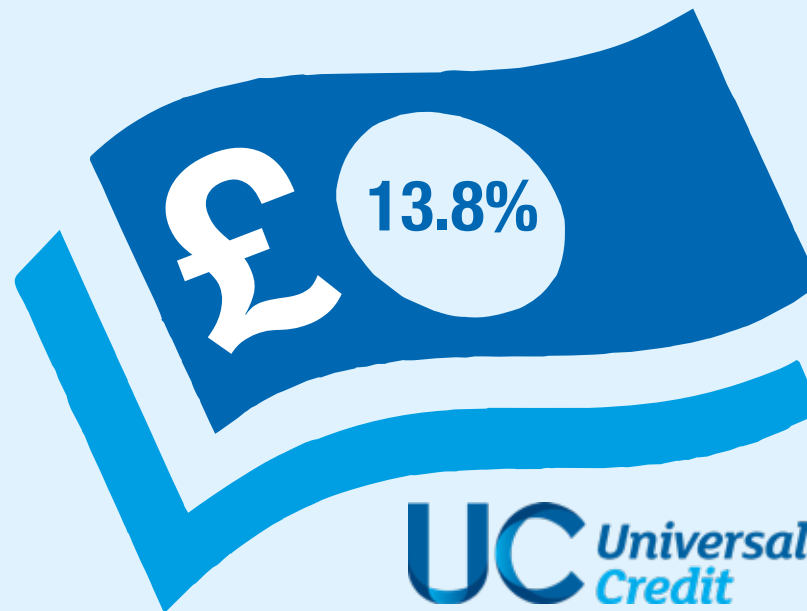


In 2021-22, at 6-8 weeks after birth, 37% of babies were being breastfed in Tameside, which is lower than the breastfeeding prevalence nationally (49%).



# Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Source: Department for Work and Pensions Stat X-plore



As of September 2022, 13.8% of Tameside's residents were eligible to apply for Universal Credit.

This is higher than the proportion for England (10.7%).

# Cared for Children and Care Leavers



Cared for children

656

Source: LCS as at end December 2022



Care Leavers

Age 17-18 - 90

Age 19-21 - 208

Age 22-24 - 140

Source: LCS as at end December 2022



# 3

## Developing the Equalities Strategy

# Engagement and Consultation

In identifying our objectives for the next five years a variety of public engagement, consultation, and self-assessment methodologies have been undertaken. This has helped us understand where our priorities are, the gaps in how we work with more diverse communities, and what must be done to address this.

## The Local Government Association Equality Framework (EFLG)<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) is to help Local Authorities review and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010.

The EFLG has four improvement modules:

- 1. Understanding and Working with Communities**
- 2. Leadership and Organisational Commitment**
- 3. Responsive Services and Customer Care**
- 4. Diverse and Engaged Workforce**

We used the findings from the self-assessment to develop the objectives set out below.

<sup>2</sup> Local Government Association (2021): “Equality Framework for Local Government”. Available at: [Equality Framework for Local Government \(EFLG\) 2021 | Local Government Association](#)

## The Tameside Partnership Engagement Network

In July 2022, public engagement activity was undertaken with individuals, VCSE organisations and charities via the Tameside Partnership Engagement Network Conference.

A number of key local organisations participated in the engagement activity, including the below:

- **Action Together**
- **Ashton Pioneer Homes**
- **Diversity Matters**
- **Tameside Healthwatch**
- **Made By Mortals**
- **Stroke Association**
- **TOG Mind**

Key feedback from the event can be found from the PEN report here: [PEN Reports](#)

## Tameside Inequalities Reference Group

The Tameside & Glossop Inequalities Reference Group (IRG) provides a forum to enable the sharing of ideas on responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, with the ultimate aim of reducing inequality across Tameside. Whilst the group is not a decision making body, it makes recommendations for action via existing governance structures and steers action to address inequalities.

Membership of the group is made up of representatives from a range of public sector and VCSE organisations across the area. The group meet on a quarterly basis to share progress on inequalities work, discuss emerging issues and discuss chosen areas of focus.

The IRG developed a work plan and the group have established leads from within the local community to drive each work area. A number of work areas were delivered throughout 2022 detailed overleaf.

- 1. Digital Exclusion:** This work area looked at the prevalence of people in Tameside who struggle to access digital services, the drivers, and impact.
- 2. Social Isolation and Wellbeing:** Tameside MIND undertook a series of focus groups and surveys, online and paper based, across their local client base. They aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on residents' mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- 3. Children and Young People:** The experiences of children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic were focused on, particularly in terms of education. A series of recommendations have been made, all of which have been approved by the Tameside Youth Council.
- 4. Learning Disabilities:** People First Tameside were commissioned to examine the experiences of people with learning disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and how improvements can be made.
- 5. Community Cohesion:** This work stream reviewed local, regional, and national research to direct Tameside's community cohesion programme. A series of recommendations were made, including the publication of a new Community Cohesion Strategy.
- 6. Communication and Language Barriers:** Diversity Matters North West (DMNW) were commissioned by Tameside Council to provide an overview based on key local research and public engagement covering barriers faced by ethnic minority communities living in Tameside to accessing information, e.g. language barriers, inaccessible formats, etc.

All of the areas of focus have concluded with presentations and reports published on the Council's website. The Health & Wellbeing Board will be using these and future reports to inform their forward planning and their statutory role in addressing inequalities<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup>All reports published under the remit of the Tameside Inequalities Reference Group are available at: [Tameside & Glossop Inequalities Reference Group](#)

## Manchester Pride - All Equals Charter<sup>4</sup>

Tameside Council and NHS Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group (TGCCG) achieved high praise for their “exceptional” efforts to improve equality and inclusion and support diversity.

In 2022 both organisations achieved ‘Role Model’ accreditation from the All Equals Charter, Manchester Pride’s equality, diversity and inclusion programme. The All Equals Charter assists businesses and organisations in understanding, recognising and challenging any form of discrimination in the workplace. The charter aims to make the workplace inclusive, diverse and equal for marginalised people.

All Equals Charter members strive towards accreditation of various levels, beginning at Entry Level and ending with Role Model Level. The members are invited to follow a set of commitments and principles which they are regularly assessed on to ensure their services and company promotes equality and diversity for all members of marginalised communities.

Tameside Council and Tameside and Glossop CCG volunteered to become members of the All Equals Charter in 2019. Volunteering to take part in the All Equals Charter assures efforts to improve diversity in the work place and across local services are effective and support an inclusive environment. The feedback provided by the All Equals Charter facilitated us to develop an action plan to further improve equality in the work place and services for the LGBTQ+ and other marginalised communities. This has been incorporated into this Strategy. Work will continue throughout 2023 to deliver on recommendations made through the accreditation process and we remain members of the All Equals Charter group.

<sup>4</sup>More information on Manchester Pride’s All Equals Charter is available here: [All Equals Charter – Manchester Pride](#)



**4**  
**Our Equality  
Objectives**



From the engagement, consultation, and self-assessments outlined above, we have identified six Equality Objectives. Through these objectives, we aim to embed an approach and ethos throughout our organisation that will centralise equality, ensuring that equalities concerns will orient and permeate through all our strategies, policies, and services.

## These objectives are:

- 1. Continuous Effective Monitoring:** Improve our approach to monitoring performance in terms of equalities to enable transparency, accountability, and rigour.
- 2. Embedding Equalities in Service Change:** Embed equalities in service changes, strategy and policy development, and decision-making processes across the organisation through robust and rigorous Equality Analysis and Impact Assessments.
- 3. Cultivate Seldom Heard Voices in Engagement:** Expand and adapt our engagement and consultation approaches to increase the involvement of “seldom-heard groups” and ensure that their perspectives are central to strategy, policy, and service development.
- 4. Addressing Barriers to Information and Services:** Address and alleviate barriers to accessing Council information and services that protected groups encounter.
- 5. An Accepting Organisational Culture:** Instil an organisational culture and practice of acceptance of different staff needs and requirements to ensure that all staff, particularly those from protected groups, are valued.
- 6. Celebrating Diversity:** Promote and celebrate the value of diversity in Tameside, so that as an anchor institution, the Council can be a positive exemplar to the broader community.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a canal scene. On the left, a tall, dark brick chimney stands against a blue sky with light clouds. The canal water is calm, reflecting the sky and the buildings. On the right, there are several multi-story brick buildings with many windows. In the foreground, a red and blue narrowboat is docked. A large, white circular graphic with a thick yellow border is centered on the page, containing the text '5 Action Plan'.

# 5 Action Plan

Under each of the Equality Objectives defined, a series of actions have been identified that will enable our organisation to achieve each objective. These actions are set out in an action plan:

# 1. Continuous Effective Monitoring

Improve our approach to monitoring performance in terms of equalities to enable transparency, accountability, and rigour.

# Actions:

## • Equalities Dashboard:

- Develop an Equalities Dashboard to present relevant data in a usable and trackable format
- Determine the equalities data to be contained in the Dashboard by consulting Census data, the Equalities and Human Rights Commission's Measurement Framework<sup>5</sup>, and Tameside Council's workforce data.
- Research whether our equalities measures can be benchmarked against other local authorities, particularly our GM and statistical neighbours, and national data to highlight inequalities that we need to address in Tameside.
- Monitor equalities data over time to assess the difference that Council policies and services make in addressing inequalities.
- Provide access to and promote the Equalities Dashboard via the Council's website and intranet.

## • Monitoring of equalities by services:

- Conduct an audit to determine how/ whether different services monitor equalities, examining what they monitor and what they use this information for.
- Develop processes to systematically monitor departmental commitments around equalities.
- Develop a mechanism that identifies issues of inequalities that particular protected groups may be experiencing in Tameside, so that these can be addressed through targeted interventions.

## • Procurement:

- Conduct and audit contracts with service providers to determine if equalities are monitored.
- Introduce mandatory requirement that all contracts include equalities considerations and that equalities should be monitored.

<sup>5</sup>Equality and Human Rights Commission (2017): "Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights". Available at: [measurement-framework-interactive.pdf \(equalityhumanrights.com\)](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/measurement-framework-interactive.pdf)

## 2. Embedding Equalities in Service Change

**Embed equalities in service changes, strategy and policy development, and decision-making processes across the organisation through robust and rigorous Equality Analysis.**

# Actions:

- Conduct an internal review of Equality Analysis processes to determine how equalities are embedded across directorates via an EIA Audit and anonymous staff survey.
- Review EIA template – include space for data evidence and define the protected characteristics.
- Create an accessible Equalities toolkit to improve equalities practice across the organisation. Include best practice guidance on the completion of EIAs to ensure that EIAs are completed efficiently and effectively.
- Provide equalities training (including EIAs) to Elected Members and staff to instil best practice across the organisation.
- Develop performance indicators to track the quality of Equality Analysis.
- Publish EIAs in a centralised location on the Council's website.
- Establish cumulative Equality Analysis, i.e. monitor the cumulative impact of service changes and policy development on particular demographic groups through EIAs and other sources.
- Consider adopting Cared for Children and Care Leavers as a protected group under Equality Analysis.
- Conduct a review on the extra protected groups included in Equality Analysis beyond those prescribed in the Equality Act 2010.

### 3. Cultivate Seldom Heard Voices in Engagement

Expand and adapt our engagement and consultation approaches to increase the involvement of “seldom-heard groups” and ensure that their perspectives are central to strategy, policy, and service development.<sup>6</sup>

# Actions:

- Improve our programme of reaching out to seldom-heard groups with a view to obtaining a better understanding of their concerns.
- Monitor the participation of protected groups in consultation and engagement compared to the demographic breakdown of Tameside’s population.
- Increase accessibility of consultations to seldom-heard groups, e.g. easy read format, paper versions, etc.
- Improve relationships with VCSE groups that work with and support protected groups.

<sup>6</sup>Healthwatch define “seldom-heard groups” as “under-represented people who use or might potentially use services and are less likely to be heard by these service professionals and decision-makers”.

Source: [20200727 How to coproduce with seldom heard groups.pdf \(healthwatch.co.uk\)](#)

## 4. Addressing Barriers to Information and Services

Address and alleviate barriers to accessing Council information and services that protected groups encounter.

# Actions:

- Work with services to map barriers that protected groups may encounter when using their service.
- Develop inclusive and tailored communications approaches aimed at specific protected groups through varied communications methods (e.g. leaflets, visual graphics, videos), translated materials, and appropriate formats (e.g. Braille, Easy Improve Read).
- Promote the Council website's accessibility functions – translations (including audio translations), colour formatting, etc.
- Review cultural training for all staff, particularly those in customer-facing roles, to identify gaps in current training and how it can be improved.
- Provide refresher training on cultural sensitivity for all staff, particularly those in customer-facing roles.
- Conduct a review of all Council physical spaces to ensure that these are accessible for people with physical disabilities and visual/hearing impairments, as well as people who are neurodivergent and from an ethnic or cultural minority.

## 5. An Accepting Organisational Culture

**Instil an organisational culture and practice of acceptance of different staff needs and requirements to ensure that all staff, particularly those from protected groups, are valued.**

# Actions:

- Advance on the EDI training that is already offered to staff – e.g. training to be offered on neurodiversity, trans- inclusion, and non-binary inclusion.
- Drive forward the establishment of staff network groups beyond REACH and the Neurodivergent Employee Network.
- Establish a staff survey to monitor wellbeing in the workplace and disaggregate the results of this by protected group.
- Develop organisational policies around coming out and transitioning.
- Include staff pronouns in email signatures.
- Review workspaces and working processes to ensure the Council is an inclusive working environment for all.
- Review recruitment processes for protected groups to improve the accessibility of recruitment and improve the representation of protected groups amongst the Council workforce.
- Review induction process so that that new recruits are able to discuss their preferred ways of working and reasonable adjustments, e.g. through the Health and Wellbeing Passport.
- Aim to increase representation amongst Council leadership, so that a broader array of lived experiences and viewpoints are present at the top levels of the Council.
- Promote the channels through which staff can provide feedback on barriers they are encountering in the workplace.



## 6. Celebrating Diversity

**Promote and celebrate the value of diversity in Tameside, so that as an anchor institution, the Council can be a positive exemplar to the broader community.**

# Actions:

- Organise and promote important calendar periods and events (e.g. Black History Month, Pride Month, International Women's Day, Remembrance Day).
- Promote the Council's achievements in terms of equalities to show that our commitment to equalities is not tokenistic but rooted in action.
- Achieve the LGA Equality Excellence award through successful peer review.
- Continue to deliver events that celebrate diversity in Tameside.
- Promote and celebrate diversity through publications like Citizen and use of Social Media



The background of the slide is a photograph of a canal scene. On the left, a tall, dark brick chimney stack rises into the sky. The canal is filled with several narrowboats, including a prominent red and blue one in the foreground. The water reflects the buildings and the sky. On the right, there are large, multi-story brick buildings with many windows. A few people can be seen walking on a paved area near the canal. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

# 6

## Implementing the Strategy

## Corporate Governance

The Health & Wellbeing Board will hold a Delivery Group accountable for implementation of this Strategy. Their status as an independent body provides the appropriate degree of challenge.

Each year the council will produce an end-of-year progress report against plans for implementation, which will offer an opportunity to reflect on challenges and achievements and also inform our plans for the coming year.

The Inequalities Reference Group, which comprises Elected Members, Council and Health Colleagues as well as third sector Partners takes a wider look at inequality across the borough. It acts as a forum for the sharing of ideas and thoughts on carrying out responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a further degree of oversight it can also request updates on implementation, delivery and monitoring of equalities data.

A Delivery Group comprising 'Champions' from each department will be responsible for implementation of this Strategy.

## Monitoring Performance

The proposed Equalities Dashboard will provide the means for the Governing Groups to monitor the impact of the Strategy.

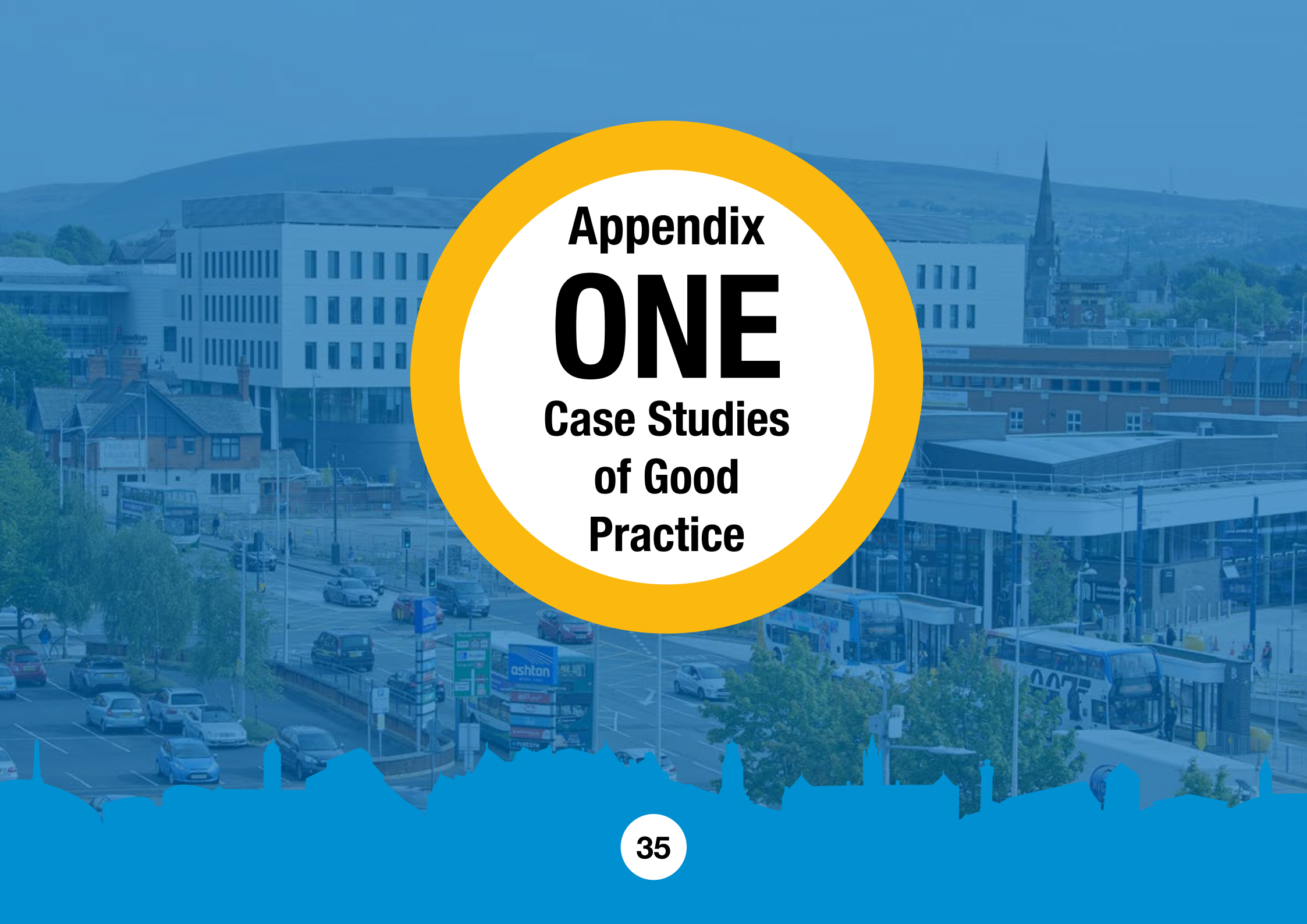
A further recommendation around services adding equalities data to existing dashboards should also provide some insight into take-up of services by protected characteristic and, again, provide clarity on progress.

## Links to Corporate Plan

Inclusivity is at the heart of the Corporate Plan, providing a cross-cutting link to each of the eight priorities across the themes of 'Starting Well', 'Living Well' and 'Ageing Well'. As a Corporate priority the end-of-year progress report will therefore also go to Cabinet for consideration.

## Strategic Context

Work in Greater Manchester (led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority) also contributes to the Equalities landscape in Tameside. Through Groups such as the GM Equality Officers Group and the seven Equality Panels we are able to share best practice and contribute ideas to regional solutions.



**Appendix**  
**ONE**  
**Case Studies**  
**of Good**  
**Practice**

## Free school meal voucher scheme

With thousands of local families were facing unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond there was a need to do everything possible to support them. A free school meal voucher scheme was launched to ensure no Tameside children went hungry during holiday periods. Families were able to apply for the vouchers at [www.tameside.gov.uk/voucher](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/voucher). Around 9,000 children were eligible for income based free school meals across the borough.

Thousands of applications were sent in and verified, with vouchers being sent out. It was good to know those who needed support were getting it.

## Free food vouchers to support struggling families

Thousands of Tameside families were facing unprecedented challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government's COVID-19 Winter Grant for a [package of measures](#) was used, which included free supermarket food vouchers for children eligible for free school meals, as well as for sixth form and college students from low income households. Care leavers also received vouchers and a limited number of vouchers were made available through the [Early Help Access Point](#) and [Welfare Rights](#).

The scheme was [recognised on Twitter by Marcus Rashford](#), who campaigned nationally for free school meals during the holidays for children living in poverty.



Marcus Rashford MBE @MarcusRashford · 16 Dec 2020

Tameside Council



Tameside Council @TamesideCouncil · 16 Dec 2020

Children eligible for free school meals will receive supermarket food vouchers to help ensure they don't go hungry over the Christmas & February holidays as part of our wider package of measures to support struggling households [tameside.gov.uk/Newsroom/Schoo...](http://tameside.gov.uk/Newsroom/Schoo...)

[Show this thread](#)

Read more: <http://www.tameside.gov.uk/Newsroom/School-holiday-food-vouchers-for-struggling-famili>

## BILD Oliver McGowan Learning Disability and Autism Training

BILD Oliver McGowan Autism Training was carried out for Thameside Council's staff, which covers how best to support those with learning disabilities and autism amongst our workforce.

Thameside residents who are autistic or have a learning disability led the sessions. The training is named after Oliver McGowan, whose death shone a light on the need for health and social care staff to have better training

## Hate Crime Awareness

As part of Hate Crime Awareness Week in 2021, a Hate Crime Small Grants fund was launched, in partnership with Action Together, where community groups bid for up to £1000 for projects that promoted hate crime awareness. There is more information on the newly refreshed [hate crime webpage](#). The Community Cohesion Officer, Terry Finn, offered online talks to community groups about hate crime and how to report it. Such talks are vital, as hate crime is hugely under-reported.

## Half-Term Holiday Scheme

A half-term holiday scheme in February 2021 provided healthy activities for Thameside's vulnerable children and those of key workers. Active Thameside provided a host of COVID-safe activities that gave parents and carers a half-term break and much-needed respite for families of children with disability. The diverse range of activities included sports and life skills that would help children keep fit and healthy and boost their abilities.



## Reaccreditation of Charters – Mindful Employer and Disability Confident



In 2021, The Council were reaccredited with **Mindful Employer** for Employers Positive about Mental Health'. This charter helps us as an organisation to be recognised as those employers who are working towards better mental health in the workplace, no matter where they are in their journey. It is clear that people experiencing mental ill health continue to report stigma and discrimination at work.

Through the 'Charter for Employers Positive about Mental Health a commitment to creating a supportive and open culture, where colleagues feel able to talk about mental health confidently, and aspire to appropriately support the mental wellbeing of all staff.

This includes an on-going commitment to:

- Provide non-judgemental and proactive support to staff experiencing mental ill health.
- Not make assumptions about a person with a mental health condition and their ability to work.
- Be positive and enabling towards all employees and job applicants with a mental health condition.
- Support line managers in managing mental health in the workplace.
- Ensure we are fair in the recruitment of new staff in accordance with the Equality Act (2010).
- Make it clear that people who have experienced mental ill health will not be discriminated against, and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both the employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment.

The Council also been recently reaccredited with Disability Confident, which recognised how the organisation is thinking differently about disability and taking action to improve how recruitment, retention and training of disabled employees. Being Disability Confident is a unique opportunity to lead the way in our community, and you discover someone the business cannot do without!



As a **Disability Confident Employer** organisations must:

- have undertaken and successfully completed the Disability Confident self-assessment
- are taking all of the core actions to be a Disability Confident employer
- are offering at least one activity to get the right people for our business and at least one activity to keep and develop our people.

## Tameside couple support LGBT+ Adoption & Fostering Week

A big thank you was given to our foster carers who were helping us to highlight New Family Social's annual LGBT+ Adoption and Fostering Week, which had a 'Build your Family' theme. People who foster for their local authority give local children the chance to experience a stable and loving family life and to remain within their local area. This means that local authority foster carers are helping children to stay close to friends and family, and to remain in the same schools, at what can otherwise be a very unsettling time in their lives. The Council needs foster carers from all backgrounds to look after children of all ages.

## Mental Health Courses and Activities

Over the last few years, we have worked hard to change the conversation about mental health, by providing training courses and awareness sessions to staff, such as improving personal resilience, mental wellbeing in a hybrid workplace, and so on. This is in conjunction with the fantastic work that our Mental Health First Aiders, Health and Wellbeing Champions and of course our passionate individuals across the organisation making it a priority to talk about mental health.

## New People Plan

The new [People Plan 2021 – 2024](#) launched in June 2021. It recognises that people drive success and enable the organisation to deliver on its vision, purpose, and priorities, and that people are our most important resource and asset. It sets out a charter for all people related matters, supporting the ambition to be an employer of choice, where employees feel valued, listened to, and know their contributions really matter. Following the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, it was important to re-evaluate the strategic aims for the workforce over the next few years, to ensure that we:

- **Have a people offer that is robust**
- **Create and sustain a positive culture**
- **Continue to attract, develop and retain the best people**
- **Are ready and committed to embrace the opportunities and challenges presented to us by the pandemic and beyond**
- **Are able to capture and embed the positive aspects of our changed way of working, increasing flexibility and performance.**

To achieve the aims set out in our new People Plan, a number of the organisation's people offers have been refreshed, so that the organisation can continue to support and develop the workforce effectively.





## Social media celebration for Armed Forces Day

Tameside might not have been able to celebrate Armed Forces Day with the usual events in Denton but there was still a great deal to recognise the borough's long and close relationship with the forces.

Libraries and Culture were posting on social media all week. There was something on Twitter every 30 minutes from 9am, and every hour on Facebook, culminating in the release of a short video at 4pm featuring some of the highlights from previous Victoria Park celebrations. Dukinfield Town Hall were floodlit in red, white and blue.

The Armed Forces Day flag was raised in Denton at the town hall and the Tameside Armed Services Community (TASC) allotment. The allotment site at Rose Hill was completely transformed with a summer house, raised beds, a fruit cage and a polytunnel. Various crops and fruit trees were planted. It's available to all TASC members, whether they want to grow things or just meet up for a cup of tea and a chat.



## Low Cost Food Scheme Opening to More Tameside families

It's great to be working with food surplus redistribution charity [The Bread and Butter Thing \(TBBT\)](#) to expand its innovative, affordable food service in the borough. A hub was already been operating in Hattersley since 2018 and now, thanks to external grant funding, the public health team commissioned a new hub at St Peter's Church in Ashton-under-Lyne next Wednesday (14 July). Two further hubs will open in subsequent weeks at Haughton Green Community Centre and Ridgehill BigLocal. Not only will it offer people on low incomes access to quality food at an affordable price, it also means that surplus food is being used and not wasted, so it was a great result all round.



## Supporting Our Young People

Executive cabinet approved a new scheme to help a group of at-risk young people into employment, education, or training. The £280,000 scheme will focus on 46 young people identified as high risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) due to their attendance in education.

A multi-agency plan is in place to provide additional support including in education and pupil referral services. To further support the young people, the Youth Employment Scheme aspect of the Tameside Employment Fund has been reinstated to give the young people access to six months paid employment at local companies. This is a fantastic example of our commitment to ensuring vulnerable young people have the opportunities and support they need to succeed.

## Active Tameside award for diversity and inclusion

The 'Everybody Can' service, run in partnership with Active Tameside, received the 'Diversity and Inclusion' Award for the second time at the national ukactive Awards. Everybody Can provides fully accessible and inclusive health, wellbeing, and social development support to thousands of residents with varying needs and abilities. It involves over 15,000 community-based sessions annually, attended by over 1200 young people and adults with a disability or additional needs, and includes adult social care and outreach support and activities such as sport, swimming, cooking and horticulture and essential respite services for parents and carers. This is much deserved recognition for this brilliant work, which is making a difference.



## Black History Month

“PROUD to be” was the theme for [Black History Month](#) which took place throughout October. It’s a national celebration to honour the too-often unheralded accomplishments of black Britons throughout the country’s history.

In Tameside [Arthur Wharton](#), the world’s first black professional footballer who played for two local sides, Ashton North End and Stalybridge Rovers, at the end of the 19th century was honoured. There is a blue plaque in tribute to him at the Tameside Stadium in Ashton.

Local Studies and Archives hosted a talk by Michelle Haller, who recounted her experiences as an NHS community nurse, and Libraries put together a reading list which included “100 Great Black Britons” by Patrick Vernon and Angelina Osborne.



## Poverty Truth Commission

2021 saw the launch of the Tameside Poverty Truth Commission at the 4C Centre in Ashton.

The guiding principle is simple but powerful; creating effective and lasting solutions to poverty is only possible when we understand the everyday reality of poverty. In order to achieve this, Poverty Truth Commissions bring together people with lived experience of poverty (“grassroots commissioners”) and local community, businesses and political leaders (“civic commissioners”).

By giving a voice to those who would otherwise remain on the margins of society the Poverty Truth Commission allows for the development of new initiatives to tackle poverty at a local level, rooted firmly in the experiences of grassroots commissioners and the expertise of civic commissioners. The Commission has continued to meet regularly since then and will be presenting its findings when it concludes in 2023.

## Tameside Youth Summit

Mental wellbeing, confronting sexism and homophobia, disruption to education, and improving public transport were some of the subjects discussed by young people at the first ever Tameside Youth Summit.

Designed and run by the members of the Tameside Youth Council with representatives from a number of schools and colleges in the borough, the event gave young people in attendance the opportunity to share their experiences of the coronavirus pandemic and what is important to them as the borough looks to build back better, fairer and greener.

The afternoon session of the Youth Summit then saw a number of local leaders and decision makers join the event to discuss with our young people the issues that were raised earlier on in the day.

This culminated in the drafting of a “Pledge Card” by every adult in attendance stating what they would do, both personally and within their organisations, to improve the lives of all young people in Tameside. The Youth Council will contact everybody who made a pledge in six months’ time to see if they’ve succeeded in turning them into action.

Some of the potential solutions discussed by young people and local leaders and decision makers in attendance included providing better mental health support through teacher training, wellbeing activities and “safe spaces”, strengthening youth councils in schools so that young people feel like they have a voice in their own education, doing more to tackle sexist, homophobic, transphobic and racist bullying, especially on social media, and introducing more regular timetables for public transport.

## Recognition for supporting Equality and Diversity in Tameside

Tameside Council received the 'Role Model' accreditation from the All Equals Charter - Manchester Pride's equality, diversity and inclusion programme. As an organisation, high praise was offered for "exceptional" efforts to improve equality and inclusion and support diversity.

The All Equals Charter is based on a set of commitments (as outlined below) which members pledge to follow;

- Recognition of the Diversity of LGBT+ People.
- Challenging Prejudice and Discrimination
- Employing a diverse workforce through open and fair recruitment procedure
- Developing and providing services that can be used by a diverse range of LGBT+ people
- Develop and review specific policies to implement this Charter
- Working with Partners
- Progress Tracking and Reporting



## LGBT+ History Month

The diversity and talent of our LGBTQ+ communities were celebrated. It was also about raising awareness of and combating the prejudice and discrimination faced by many LGBTQ+ people.

Clarendon College and Tameside College came together with the Council on Wednesday 16th February, celebrating LGBT History month as part of our weekly groups with young people.

Weekly LGBT+ support groups are run by Tameside Youth Service for young people aged 17+ and for those in Years 7-11. It includes a safe space for LGBT+ young people, including those who are gender fluid, and/or questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity, where young people can meet, socialise, talk about what matters to them, make new friends, and participate in activities and have fun.

## Ending Period Poverty with Hey Girls

Period poverty is a silent problem across Tameside and 1 in 10 people in the UK still cannot access or afford basic hygiene products. Working with Hey Girls, Children's Centres across Tameside offer support for people who are experiencing period poverty by having a stock of hygiene products including sustainable products.

Active Tameside centres have also recently partnered with Hey Girls and now provide free sanitary products in all of their venues too. People who visit the centres can discretely ask for a bag of products at reception by asking for Vera (pads) or Violet (tampons).

Alternatively, people can take from the available stock in all female, unisex or accessible toilets. These products are stocked up at the same time as toilet roll so they should always be available. It is important we work towards increasing access to free hygiene products. Thank you to services and organisations across Tameside for supporting people who cannot readily access these products.



## Tameside Community Champions

Tameside recognised early on during the coronavirus pandemic that there are many people in communities who preferred to receive their information from those that they know and trust. It is for this reason that the "Community Champions" scheme was created. The Tameside Community Champions network is designed to empower residents and workforces with the information they need to lead the way in their community.

By bringing together existing networks and residents' groups together in one place, silos were broken down, a sense of collective spirit created, and a better relationship built between the council and residents. As well as sharing information and leading by example, Champions also play a valuable role in providing essential insight from diverse communities to the Council and partners. We are opening doors to have better relationships between council and residents and providing free training to support them in their roles.



## Cost of Living Crisis & Poverty

In October 2022, the Council implemented the Socio Economic Duty, which provides a powerful new tool to understand, address and reduce socio-economic inequalities in our communities. This sits alongside and propels the work underway to tackle Poverty, underpinned by a new Poverty Strategy that will be launched early in 2023.

It also sits alongside the current work to address the Cost of Living crisis afflicting many in Tameside through campaigns like Helping Hand, which proactively directs people to the support they need at the moment.



## Supporting Men's Mental Health

We all know men do not often reach out even when in crisis, so a campaign to engage men more in local mental health services was launched. Partners came together to organise Tameside Men's Mental Health and Wellbeing Conference. The event aimed to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing among men, foster conversations for mental health among men and to highlight the breadth of support available for men in Tameside and beyond.



**Appendix**  
**TWO**  
**Legal Context**



## Equality Act 2010

The public sector equality duty is laid out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It came into force on 5th April 2011, and it states that a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:-

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

These are often referred to as the three 'arms' of the duty.

In short, this means that both Tameside Council and NHS T&G CCG must consider the impact our actions have on equality, and whether when delivering a particular service or function, or in our roles as employers, we are furthering the aims set out in law. The specific duties, detailed below, show the minimum amount of information we must publish in order to show that we are complying with the general duty.

This duty replaced the previous Public Sector Equality Duties that were in force covering race, sex and disability and expanded the scope of the previous duties to cover all 'protected characteristics' (although only the first 'arm' of the duty applies to marriage or civil partnership).

The Duty also applies to bodies that deliver services on our behalf, as in doing so they are exercising a public function. So for example, a private sector provider that is contracted to deliver a service in relation to adult social care would be required to consider the general duty and would be subject to its provisions. However, only the part of the organisation that is delivering the public service is subject to the duty; the organisation as a whole is not.

Having 'due regard' for advancing equality involves:

- a) Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) Taking steps to meet the needs of people who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encouraging people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

This means that when we are considering how our practices, policies and procedures impact upon equality we need to also be considering the ways in which we can mitigate any potentially negative impacts, and ensure that access to our services remains fair and equitable.

For example, the law requires us to make reasonable adjustments to the way in which services and public functions are delivered where a disabled service user may be placed at a substantial disadvantage.

In considering how a service is delivered or offered, we need to consider the potential barriers that a person with a disability may have to overcome in order to access it, and put in place reasonable adjustments to lessen these. Such adjustments may be physical, or they may involve providing an auxiliary aid, or altering the way in which the service is delivered

## The Specific Duties

The specific duties are contained within the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011. They came into force from July 2011, and confirm the minimum steps that public bodies must take in relation to publishing information on equalities, such as workforce monitoring data and equality objectives. The 2011 Regulations were replaced by The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 in March 2017.

The regulations state annually, public authorities (with 150 or more employees) must publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty, including information about the protected characteristic status of employees, and other persons affected by our policies and practices.

The regulations also state that public authorities (with 150 or more employees) must publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, and subsequently at intervals of no more than four years from the date of first publication.

The information we publish must be in a manner that is accessible to the public, and may be contained within another published document. This in effect removes the requirement on public bodies to publish separate and specific equality schemes, as noted earlier.

## Compliance with the Duty

Publication of the Equality Strategy ensures that we are adhering to the regulation stating that we must publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives, and subsequently at intervals of no more than four years from the date of first publication.

The Equality Strategy contains our equality objectives and we have ensured that these are outcome focussed and are in alignment with other key strategic documents.

These sections also detail the processes and structures we have in place to ensure that appropriate consideration of equality issues is embedded in our decision making and day to day work.

Furthermore, it builds upon the work done as part of previous schemes and strategies of each of the organisations by including details of how we have engaged with our communities and ensured that those protected under legislation have been involved as part of influencing, developing and shaping the commissioning and delivery of services.

In providing the framework of how we approach equality in the area; it confirms a number of actions and processes that our services undertake in order to meet the general and specific duties. For example, the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process helps us ensure that the decisions we take have been properly considered for their impact on relevant protected characteristic groups, and are based on solid evidence, including feedback from consultation and engagement. We use the EIA process, and the principles embedded within it, to ensure that we are complying with the general public sector equality duty. Similarly, the EIA process is just one of the ways in which we satisfy the requirement of the specific duties by publishing information relating to individuals sharing a relevant protected characteristic who are affected by our policies and practices.

The EIAs produced to support individual policy changes and practices by Tameside Council and are available within the individual decision reports produced by the services. Equalities information relating to the Council's workforce is published online at:  
[www.tameside.gov.uk/workforceequalitydata](http://www.tameside.gov.uk/workforceequalitydata)

## Protected Characteristics

The main provisions of the Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1st October 2010.

These provide the basic framework of protection against discrimination, harassment and victimisation, for the nine recognised 'protected characteristics' in employment, public functions and services, transport, premises, education, and associations.

The Act replaces all existing anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. The aim is to streamline previous laws and 'level up' protection across the protected characteristic groups.

The nine protected characteristics, and what is meant by them, are detailed below, as are details of the protection given by the Act.

The nine protected characteristics are:

- **Age**
- **Disability**
- **Race**
- **Sex**
- **Religion or Belief**
- **Sexual Orientation**
- **Gender Reassignment**
- **Pregnancy & Maternity**
- **Marriage & Civil Partnership**

In Tameside, we also include a further six protected characteristics:

- **Carers**
- **Military Veterans**
- **Breastfeeding**
- **Mental Health**
- **Socio-Economic Disadvantage**
- **Cared for Children and Care Leavers**

**Please note that this is intended as a general overview and introduction only, and does not constitute legal advice.**

The Equality Act 2010 is a wide-ranging piece of legislation and will apply differently in certain situations and circumstances. There are, for example, areas where discrimination is lawful, such as where the provisions of another law demand it, or where an action can be justified as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. The level of protection afforded by the Act will depend on individual circumstances.



## Age

This is defined as a reference to a person's age group. This can mean people of the same age, or a range of ages, for example 'under 18s' or 'over 50s', or a specific age group e.g. '25- 34 year olds'. People who share the protected characteristic of age are therefore in the same age group, although this can be broad as well as very specific. Age groups do not have to be defined numerically, they can be relative e.g. 'older than you/me'.

## Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a longterm and substantial adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities. This includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing, and also any impairment which consists of a severe disfigurement. Long term means that the impairment has lasted, or is likely to last, for at least 12 months or the rest of the affected person's life.

The Act has changed previous disability law, in that a person now no longer has to demonstrate that their disability affects a particular function such as mobility or speech. This used to be known as the 'list of capacities'.

Some illnesses, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV infection, are covered by the Act, from the point of diagnosis, under the protected characteristic of disability. Progressive conditions, and those with fluctuating or recurring conditions, will also be considered as disabilities in certain circumstances.

The Act strengthens the support given to people associated with someone with a disability, such as carers, by expanding the coverage of discrimination by association to cover disability.

It also introduces the concept of discrimination arising from a disability, where someone suffers unfavourable treatment as a consequence of something arising from their disability.

The Act also seeks to ensure that disabled people are given fair treatment when applying for positions of employment, in that it now bans the asking of pre-employment health questions, including sickness absence (other than in certain, specific circumstances).

For information as to what constitutes a disability under the Act, and where the Act applies, please consult the Statutory Codes of Practice or the information held on the Office for Disability Issues website.

## Race

A person who is from a particular racial group will have the protected characteristic of race. A racial group is defined as a group of people who have, or share, a colour, nationality or ethnic or national origins. All racial groups are protected from unlawful discrimination under the Act, and an individual may fall into more than one racial group.

## Sex

Sex refers to a man or woman of any age, or groups of men and/or boys, and women and/ or girls. The protected characteristic of sex does not include gender reassignment or sexual orientation. These are covered separately.

## Religion or Belief

Religion or belief includes any religion and any religious or philosophical belief. This protected characteristic therefore includes the commonly recognised religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism and Buddhism for example. However, in order to be protected, a religion does not necessarily need to be mainstream or particularly well known, but it must have a clear structure and belief system. It also includes a lack of any religion or belief, for example philosophical beliefs such as Humanism and Atheism.

## Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to a person's sexual orientation towards persons of the same sex (i.e. a gay man or a lesbian), persons of the opposite sex (i.e. heterosexual), and persons of either sex (i.e. bisexual). It also relates to how people feel, as well as their actions. Discrimination under this protected characteristic covers discrimination as a result of how someone's sexual orientation manifests itself i.e. in how that person presents themselves, or the places they choose to visit.

## Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment is the act of moving away from one's birth sex to the preferred gender, i.e. from male to female, or vice-versa. It covers anyone who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing, or has undergone the process (or part of the process) to reassign their sex.

The Act removes the requirement for the person proposing to undergo this change to be under medical supervision in order to be protected, recognising that it is a personal process and not necessarily a medical one.

## Pregnancy and Maternity

Where a woman is pregnant or on maternity leave she is covered by this protected characteristic, as well as being covered by protection and rights afforded to her by other statutory rights such as time off for antenatal care and health and safety protection. In cases where an employer has to treat a pregnant employee more favourably than other workers, men cannot make a claim for sex discrimination based on this more favourable treatment.

## Marriage and Civil Partnership

When the Equality Act 2010 was first introduced marriage referred to any formal union of a man and a woman which is legally recognised in the UK as a marriage.

Civil Partnership refers to a registered civil partnership under the Civil Partnership Act 2004, including those registered outside of the UK. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

However, following legal changes in 2014, same sex couples can now marry in civil ceremonies or religious ones where the religious organisation allows it throughout England, Scotland and Wales. Civil

partners who wish to convert their civil partnership into marriage are also able to do so. Additionally, married transgender men and women are now able to change their legal gender without having to end their marriage.

The status of being unmarried or single is not protected. Similarly, people who intend to marry or form a civil partnership but have not yet done so, or who are divorced or have had their civil partnership dissolved, are not protected by this characteristic.

## Additional Locally Determined Characteristics

The additional local determined characteristics are defined as:

### Carers

Anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. This includes young carers who may be providing support to a parent.

### Military Veterans

Those who have served in the British Armed Forces and since left them.

### Breastfeeding

Those mothers who are feeding their infants.

### Mental Health

Those with a condition related to their psychological and emotional well-being.

## Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Local residents with low or no income, living in relative or absolute poverty, or experiencing any other form of socio-economic disadvantage.

## Cared For Children & Care Leavers

Children and young people become cared for (sometimes known as looked after) when their birth parents are unable to provide ongoing care in either a temporary or permanent capacity and so the local authority takes care of them.





