

# Building a Fairer Oldham

Equality, Diversity and  
Inclusion Strategy

2021 - 2025



**Oldham**  
Council

## Appendix: Equality Action Plan 2021 – 2025

The aim of the Equality Action Plan is to place equality and diversity at the heart of what we do, setting ourselves ambitious goals and measuring progress against these in order to narrow the gaps that exist across the borough.

Whilst the Equality Action Plan articulates our priorities it does not capture everything that we do to address inequality, as the work to address inequalities is reflected in the relevant individual strategies, plans and policies that are in place across Team Oldham. This is a living document. It recognises that Equality and Diversity doesn't stay the same, it changes, Covid-19 has shown us that. This is about ensuring we are doing everything we can, to tackle inequality in all its forms, through all our work. The Equality Action Plan will be updated regularly and overseen by Oldham's Equality Advisory Group and Oldham Council's Equality Steering Group. The current focus of the Action Plan is on the Council, CCG, Unity and parts of Team Oldham, but additional development will deepen this approach across the wider system.

The action plan will continue to be developed with action leads, reflecting the ongoing work to capture the learning from our response to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as work that is currently being undertaken to map equality impacts across the wider system. This includes the development of a dedicated performance dashboard for equalities, helping us measure how we are tackling inequalities across the borough, Team Oldham's services and our workforce.

Equality Objective	Key Actions	Updates – January 2023
<b><i>Identify and mitigate the equality impacts of COVID-19, informing our response through research, best practice and lived experience, while supporting the delivery of our Covid-19 Recovery Strategy.</i></b>	We will continue to work across Team Oldham, Oldham's Equality Advisory Group and our communities to deliver Oldham's Covid-19 Recovery plan, focused on mitigating the impact of the pandemic across all of Oldham's communities.	Oldham's Covid-19 Recovery Strategy has now been replaced with the new Corporate Plan (September 2022). The delivery of Oldham's Corporate Plan continues to be monitored through the quarterly corporate performance report; highlighting areas where we are making good progress, but also flagging potential issues to Management Board and Leadership. The report is also shared with Performance Overview and Scrutiny committee.  Regular reporting of Covid-19 has now stopped, though Public Health continue to monitor and action national guidance as appropriate.
	Reducing the inequalities created, or that were pre-existing and exacerbated, during the pandemic for people with protected characteristics or other	Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK is now facing a cost-of-living crisis, exacerbating existing inequalities across the borough. We have committed over three million pounds of new funding to help residents

	<p>vulnerable groups through Team Oldham's Equality Impact Assessment Process, which will identify potential issues, ensuring appropriate mitigations can be put in place across the wider Team Oldham system.</p>	<p>through the cost-of-living crisis. This investment will help our communities to navigate a really challenging winter but will also provide longer-term help, ensuring that our most vulnerable residents don't fall into crisis and are accessing all the support they are entitled to.</p>
	<p>We will continue to address health inequalities which have been further exacerbated by Covid-19, acting to tackle both the underlying causes as well as the negative impacts of health inequalities. This work is reflected in this Strategy as well as other key local strategies and plans including the Poverty Strategy and Covid-19 Recovery Strategy.</p>	<p>A health inequalities plan for Oldham has been developed and signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board in June 2022.</p> <p>The primary outcomes which the plan is aiming to achieve is to reduce the gap in life expectancy and health life expectancy within Oldham, and between Oldham and the national average, ensuring that all residents can experience the best possible health and wellbeing throughout their lives.</p>
	<p>Undertake a learning review of our Covid-19 response, including test and trace, vaccination and broader CV-19 engagement activity to help drive how we work together as a system to deliver health, care and other public services more broadly going forward. The initial findings from this work will be published by October 2021.</p>	<p>The consultation exercise with key services, partners and elected members has concluded. A report has been published in partnership with the CCG, with recommendations taken through the Health and Wellbeing Board in summer 2022.</p>
	<p>Address and tackle equality issues for those from key ethnic groups and other disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Providing advocacy for those with English as their second language and finding alternative ways to engage and communicate key messaging to hard to reach communities, for example, through Oldham's Community Champions programme, a project delivered in partnership between Oldham Council and Action Together, which aims to support people disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, including minority ethnic communities and people with a disability.</p>	<p>Through Oldham's cost-of-living response we have invested £600,000 in our community engagement team who will reach out to residents in their own homes to check their wellbeing, to signpost them to available support and to provide advice on how residents can manage their bills. This will be targeted at those most in need, starting with our older residents and those areas facing the greatest hardship.</p> <p>We have also allocated nearly half a million pounds to Oldham's VCFSE sector to help some of most marginalised communities and ensure organisations like food banks can continue to support those who need them. This funding will make sure that organisations who work directly with the most vulnerable, including the elderly and care leavers are able to provide essential help and support including fuel and food vouchers and referrals to other services</p>
	<p>Monitoring and reviewing the potential impacts of the pandemic relating to sex and gender reassignment including access to midwifery. This will include</p>	<p>Since the start of the pandemic, officers have been attending the GM Equality Officer Group, who provided resources and recommendations on supporting the LGBTQ+ community during the</p>

	<p>minimising the impact of the pandemic on the LGBTQ+ community, ensuring our services are inclusive and accessible through regularly reviewing our policies and procedures.</p> <p>We will review our policies and procedures annually, ensuring that they continue to support the LGBTQ+ community.</p>	<p>pandemic. These resources were promoted through Oldham Council's website <a href="https://www.oldham.gov.uk/pride">https://www.oldham.gov.uk/pride</a> and through Oldham's Equality Advisory Group.</p> <p>The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) is setting up an LGBTQ+ organisations engagement group to better understand the needs of LGBTQ+ communities, which Oldham Council will actively promote to local groups.</p>
	<p>Continue to develop an integrated financial support offer, ensuring financial support can be accessed through the community hubs, helping to help to prevent further escalation into crisis for those who are struggling financially.</p> <p>Identify impacts for those on low incomes, or zero-hour contracts, who cannot work from home and those with no access to public funds, through providing routes to advocacy and supporting people to access grants.</p>	<p>Oldham's cost-of-living response has seen a £3 million package of support to support residents and help households in Oldham that are struggling with the rising cost of living. This approach aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer advice, support and guidance to every household in Oldham during the cost-of-living crisis.</li> <li>• Maximise income for Oldham households – ensuring they are claiming all support they are entitled to.</li> <li>• Increase the safety net and support system for people in financial crisis so that there is enough support for people who need help with essentials like food, fuel, housing or childcare costs.</li> <li>• Reach out proactively to those most vulnerable to the impact of rising cost-of-living including older people, those with families and those already facing poverty to make sure they have all the help and support they need.</li> </ul>
	<p>Addressing inequalities relating to age. This is both for Older People and Young People:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Older People – providing information and support for older people who have been impacted by the pandemic, including helping them access crisis support post-pandemic.</li> <li>2. Young people – providing information and support for younger people who have been impacted by the pandemic, considering the reduction in their support services, mental health and wellbeing provision and access to respite and support for young carers.</li> </ol>	<p>Older People – Oldham continues to support the GM Age Friendly campaigns, including the GM Keeping Well, Pension Credit and Winterwise Campaign. We have also developed an Age Friendly Strategy for Oldham, which is overseen by the Age Friendly Steering Group, aligned to the Public Health, Health Inequalities Strategy.</p> <p>Young People – In December 2022, Oldham announced a £14.7m investment in Children's Services to recruit 50 more permanent social workers with the aim of ensuring manageable case-loads and reducing the need for expensive agency staff.</p> <p>The investment will also see the establishment of a new council-run children's home for local children and young people with learning disabilities, so fewer children need to be cared for outside of Oldham.</p>



	<p>Through the Equality Advisory Group, we will continue to ensure that those with particular faiths or beliefs are able to live their lives accordingly, identifying any potential gaps in our understanding or approach to tackling the pandemic in Oldham. This includes ensuring access to appropriate end of life care, bereavement services, culturally appropriate food and other religious and cultural needs.</p> <p>We will continue to meet with the Equality Advisory Group on a fortnightly basis, working with different faith groups to ensure Oldham's Covid-19 response is culturally sensitive and appropriate.</p>	<p>Payments to foster carers have also been increased by ten per cent, adding around £2,000 more a year in allowances.</p> <p>We are currently undertaking a governance review, ensuring that the membership of the Equality Advisory Group is representative of Oldham's communities (especially those with protected characteristics), as well as strengthening the relationship with the Community Champions Network. These groups will become the new Communities Board in the refreshed Oldham Partnership governance structure, with the first meeting of the group due to happen in February 2023.</p>
<b>Equality Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<p><b><i>Provide services that put the citizens' voice at the heart of decision-making, ensuring our services are inclusive and drive equity:</i></b></p>	<p>Establish standardised categories and classifications for equality data being collected and recorded, ensuring consistency across Team Oldham to inform and shape our decisions.</p> <p>We will develop an equality dashboard helping us measure how we are tackling inequalities across the borough, Team Oldham's services and our workforce.</p> <p>We will continue to strengthen the collection of equality related data across the council and will work to identify how we use this data to inform service planning and development, seeking to continually improve our performance over time. The results of this work will be reported back to Oldham's Equality Steering Group on an annual basis.</p> <p>Actively engage with people and communities to better understand the confidence people have in our services, as well as the barriers they experience when accessing services and where applicable we work in partnership with service users from protected</p>	<p>All corporate reporting includes a detailed breakdown of inequality and disadvantage where data is available. Work is continuing, to improve and standardise categories for recording equality data across Team Oldham. Improving the collection of equalities data will enable us to significantly improve our local intelligence and help inform service planning and development.</p> <p>Oldham has recently adopted a new Equality Impact Assessment Framework, considering the effect of a decision in three areas: Equality Characteristics, Corporate Priorities and Future Oldham Aims. This framework is being used to analyse the impact of all budget reduction proposals for 2023 / 24.</p> <p>To coincide with the launch of the new Oldham Plan, Oldham Council undertook a resident survey with a representative sample of residents to provide a baseline assessment of resident satisfaction, that can be used to help steer future service improvement. The survey to gain an understanding of residents' opinions and views about the Council, the services it provides, the local area and how residents perceive their</p>

	groups, both internal and external to address these barriers.	health and wellbeing to develop a baseline assessment which can be used to shape service delivery and priorities. The results of the survey are currently being analysed, with a report planned for publication in March 2023.
	Continue to publish Oldham's annual equality report: a profile of the borough's population based on the nine protected characteristics.	Oldham's annual equality report is being updated with the outputs from the much anticipated 2022 census and will be available in summer 2023.
<b>Equality Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b><i>Champion inclusivity across the borough, working with our partners and communities to make Oldham a fairer place for everyone, while valuing and celebrating diversity and inclusion for all.</i></b>	Establish a new Women's Taskforce, chaired by the Council Leader, with the aim of addressing women's disadvantage and promoting greater equality. The Taskforce will explore issues that are affecting women in Oldham, to tackle any existing inequalities and deliver a series of projects that make a real difference to women and families in the borough.	Work is ongoing to explore the nature of disadvantage faced by women in Oldham. The current focus relates to women's experience of accessing mental health support – and research is underway, led by colleagues in Mental Health Commissioning, to identify the Mental Health services available to women in the borough, the extent to which women access these and by which routes. An update on this work has previously been presented to Overview and Scrutiny.  In November 2022, Oldham became White Ribbon Accredited - making a commitment to ending men's violence against women. As an Accredited organisation, Oldham Council will develop and deliver a comprehensive Action Plan to change the cultures that lead to abuse and violence and promote gender equality.
	Take a joined-up approach with our public and voluntary sector partners to raise awareness of hate crime and to ensure that hate crime is effectively tackled, helping people feel more confident to report it.  We will monitor customer satisfaction through the Greater Manchester Police reporting framework, identifying and implementing opportunities to improve the experience of people impacted by hate crime.	'Hate and how to effectively challenge' sessions have been delivered to Team Oldham staff throughout 2022, with further sessions planned for 2023.  The Greater Manchester Hate Crime Awareness Week took place from 7 <sup>th</sup> to 13 <sup>th</sup> February 2022. A Council social media campaign raised awareness of hate crime during the week.  The following groups from the voluntary, community and faith sector were awarded funding from GMCA to raise awareness during hate crime awareness week:  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oldham Play Action Group;</li> <li>• Yuvanis Youth;</li> <li>• Oasis Community Hub Oldham;</li> <li>• Oldham Personal Advocacy Ltd.;</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European and Roma Organisation;</li> <li>• Greenhill Football Club.</li> </ul>
Supporting and adopting an approach to combat racial prejudice, stereotyping, harassment, unjustified discrimination, undignified and culturally insensitive and offensive behaviour.		The Council continues to provide 'Hate and how to effectively challenge' sessions to staff at Oldham Council, partner organisations and the VCFSE Sector.
We will continue to promote race equality and cultural awareness, helping us foster mutually beneficial and respectful long-term relationships across different communities.		Further 'Hate and how to effectively challenge' sessions will be offered to Council staff to raise awareness in 2023.
Develop a training programme that has equality, diversity and inclusion at its heart, providing training on equality issues, including cultural awareness training, co-design with communities, tackling inequalities that exist across Oldham and embedding equality and diversity into the development, design and delivery of Oldham's services.		<p>A training programme focused on equality, diversity and inclusion has been scoped, with initial content designed and agreed. A range of training modules are currently being developed, including e-learning and face-to-face training.</p> <p>We have also been holding training sessions to inform staff about Oldham cost-of-living response. The session is broken down into 3 parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Empathy' – understanding what people are going through when they are in crisis and adapt the support you are offering to meet their needs</li> <li>• 'Information' – about the MART tool and other sources of support for individuals if they are struggling/how to make referrals in</li> <li>• 'Prevention' – about multiple disadvantages and how to reduce the need for crisis support.</li> </ul>
Improve the knowledge and understanding of hate crime identification by staff and drive improvements in recording hate crimes.		See action above regarding hate crime awareness training.
We will monitor customer satisfaction through the Greater Manchester Police reporting framework.		
Work with the community safety and cohesion partnership to improve the communication of support to minority and ethnic communities and awareness of		Through the Safeguarding Partnership we continue to deliver training on honour-based violence, ensuring staff are aware of cultural issues and how to best support victims in these circumstances.

	<p>staff around cultural issues and barriers to accessing services.</p>	<p>Oldham Council continues to work closely with Oldham's minority ethnic voluntary sector to raise awareness of domestic abuse and the support available.</p>
	<p>Establish a Poverty Truth Commission (PTC) made up of councillors and commissioners, to recommend measures to tackle poverty, identify causes and mitigate the consequences, informing the development of a Poverty Strategy. This work will have a direct link with the COVID-19 response and recovery work and will seek to identify specific areas around poverty including (not exhaustive) –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No recourse to funds</li> <li>• Access to food and foodbanks</li> <li>• Resources for children being educated at home</li> </ul>	<p>The PTC brings people with lived experience of poverty together with civic and business leaders to better understand and address the challenges facing residents. Although recently concluded, Commissioners continue to work with the Council and partners - influencing policy and practice.</p> <p>From the outset the approach has been to embed the PTC within our existing policy making and decision-making structures; it is integral to our wider work to tackle poverty and disadvantage in the borough. The PTC forms a key strand of our Partnership Anti-poverty Action Plan and, once completed, will shape the borough's Anti-Poverty Strategy. The Commissioners are represented on the strategic and senior level partnership Poverty Steering Group and the VCFSE led Poverty Action Group.</p>
	<p>Establish a Poverty Steering Group to take forward co-ordinated action to tackle poverty in Oldham, informed by the Poverty Truth Commission; which will include a representative from the Equalities Advisory Group.</p> <p>The Poverty Steering Group will meet quarterly, aiming to address both the symptoms and causes of poverty in Oldham.</p>	<p>The Poverty Steering Group has currently been replaced by the Cost-of-Living Steering Group, who meet weekly to manage and monitor the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on Oldham's residents.</p> <p>Work will begin in the New Year on re-visiting the priorities of the Anti-Poverty Action Plan and ensuring these align with those of the Corporate and Oldham Plans.</p>
	<p>Celebrate Oldham's diversity through regular equality-related events: Black History Month, International Women's Day, International Day of Persons with a Disability; LGBT+ History Month; Holocaust Memorial Day.</p>	<p>Oldham Council continues to actively participate in equality related events, including Black History Month, International Women's Day, International Day of Persons with a Disability; LGBT+ History Month; Holocaust Memorial Day.</p>
	<p>Continue to promote Team Oldham-wide campaigns on issues such as mental health and domestic abuse, raising staff awareness and improving the customer experience through staff education and training.</p>	<p>We regularly run campaigns internally and externally that champion diversity and promote the work we do to challenge inequalities. For example, we delivered high-profile communications activity for events throughout the autumn such as Black History Month, World Mental Health Day, and Hate Crime Awareness Week.</p>
	<p>Continue to participate in Hate Crime Awareness campaigns, helping residents gain a better</p>	<p>A social media campaign was developed to raise awareness during Greater Manchester Hate Crime Awareness Week from 7th – 13th</p>



	<p>understanding of what hate crime is, how they can access support, and how they report and prevent hate crime in their area.</p> <p>Identify opportunities through our culture programme and Oldham's Cultural Strategy to capture and celebrate Oldham's diversity, for example, through statues, monuments, and cultural ambassadors.</p> <p>Become a Living Wage Place, expanding the number of organisations in the borough that have living wage accreditation, and increasing the number of people whose salaries are uplifted as a result, providing secure, safe employment, addressing gender and ethnic pay imbalances and developing strategies for in-work progression and wellbeing support.</p> <p>All Oldham's contracts will be uplifted to the Foundation Living Wage by 2023.</p>	<p>February 2022. We will be actively participating in Hate Crime Awareness Week 2023.</p> <p>Working in partnership with a researcher from Manchester City of Literature we have welcomed a range of community groups into the archive for them to better understand what resources we have to offer. The result will be a new guide for other communities to encourage them to explore our collections in the future</p> <p>Oldham Library has also Initiated the introduction of our new Dementia Friendly Books Collection and re-introduced the Braille Group, supporting families of children with a visual impairment to learn new skills.</p> <p>The Build a Business programme also runs at Oldham Library – a free/funded business support programme focusing on those less likely to access other support, including women and BAME entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Oldham are currently participating in a GM Living Wage Pilot initiative, exploring how we can encourage more Anchor Institutions to become Foundation Living Wage accredited.</p> <p>In October 2022, Oldham Council has agreed to implement the Living Wage Foundation's 'real living wage' for all staff working across care services commissioned by the council starting from the beginning of November 2022. This means that all staff and contractors are now paid the Foundation Living Wage.</p>
<b>Equality Objective</b>	<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Impact</b>
<b><i>Achieve a skilled and diverse workforce building a culture of equality and inclusion in everything we do.</i></b>	<p>Appoint corporate equality champions, drawn from the Team Oldham's senior management team to raise awareness on equality issues and promote good practice.</p> <p>Appoint diversity champions, drawn from the Team Oldham workforce to champion diversity, challenge poor practice and provide feedback on issues impacting the wider Team Oldham workforce.</p>	<p>This action needs reviewing due to changes in structures/Champions. The Review scheduled for 2023/24</p>

	<p>Use our role as an anchor institution to actively promote apprenticeships, increasing the number of apprenticeships available for underrepresented groups across Team Oldham, with the aim of having 2.3% of the workforce undertaking a new apprenticeship.</p>	<p>This target has been met.</p> <p>An initiative has started for 20 apprentices to be recruited each year across the Council. Cohort for 2022/23 achieved.</p>
	<p>Publish an annual report showing how we are eradicating the pay gap between our male and female employees, helping to highlight any unfair practices, which we can abolish through our Workforce Strategy. We will also continue to develop this work to identify pay gaps for other underrepresented groups (where there is statistical validity) with a view to publish this information, while removing unfair or unequitable practices across our workforce.</p>	<p>The Gender Pay Gap report is published yearly.</p> <p>The next report due 31/03/23.</p>
	<p>Reduce the proportion of 'unknown' equality data we hold on our employees.</p> <p>We will publish the result of this work annually through our annual Equality Report.</p>	<p>There is a statutory requirement to publish equality data &amp; demonstrate actions to improve reporting, including actions to improve representation.</p> <p>The next report due 31/03/23</p>
	<p>Review diversity data at all levels of our workforce and amongst our commissioned services to help identify areas for improvement, including amongst our commissioned services, highlighting priority areas for change.</p>	<p>Please see the action above.</p>
	<p>Develop a recruitment framework that aims to improve the diversity of Team Oldham. The framework will improve how recruitment processes operate in practice with a view to better understand why some groups are less likely to succeed in getting jobs than other groups. We will challenge our internal recruitment processes to overcome these barriers. The outcomes of this work will be reported to the Equality Advisory Group on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Recruitment practices have been reviewed and are in line with current equality legislation.</p> <p>Recruitment equality data published as part of our Equality Statutory Reporting (as above).</p>
	<p>Pilot new approaches to advertising roles through community outreach and different platforms to better target local communities and supports our approach to Community Wealth Building.</p>	<p>Roles continue to be advertised using a variety of channels in order to widen reach.</p>

		We have also used initiatives such as Kickstart and T Levels to widen community representation in entry level roles.
	Review existing recruitment practices to ensure the values and competency-based approach to recruitment at all levels provides the right approach to improve diversity throughout the organisation	A review has been completed, and further work will be undertaken scheduled for 2023/24.
	Continue to develop a workforce that is representative of the communities we serve, seeking to recruit locally and from priority groups where appropriate e.g. young people, people with disabilities and long-term health problems, people experiencing poverty.	Please see the action above.
	Ensure that managers are equipped with the tools to manage their teams in a supportive way; embracing difference whilst applying consistently fair practices across all groups.	HR policy and process ensures that Managers have the tools required to ensure fair and consistent management of their teams.  Leadership toolkit provides supporting tools and information.  Me Learning platform provides a variety of e-learning modules supporting good practice in EDI.