



Draft Equality Information Report 2024

**Scrutiny committee
7 December 2023**

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NORWICH
City Council

Equality Information Report

As part of the **Equality Act 2010**, the council must demonstrate due regard to three general equality duties across its functions:

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

The council must also publish **equality data** annually about the people:

- who live in Norwich
- who work at the council
- who use its services

Norwich City Council does this through its Equality Information Report; it also uses this to highlight data around non-statutory aspects of inequality which are addressed within its new EDI Strategy - such as socio-economic disadvantage.

Equality Objectives

Our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) states that Norwich City Council is committed to equality for all residents of Norwich. Guided by this policy, we strive to deliver accessible and fair services, as an employer, contractor of services and a community leader.

The policy details our current equality objectives:

- Develop a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Redesign council services and reshape teams around the needs of users, creating more joined up and accessible services which are in tune with the changing needs and behaviours of those we serve
- Understand our communities and celebrate and respect diversity
- Recruit, develop and retain a diverse and representative workforce.

The Strategy team are currently in the process of revising our EDI policy which will include a refreshed set of equality objectives.

We also anticipate that an EDI Action Plan will also be developed over the coming year.

This Action Plan will reflect the EDI strategy and be informed by the Equality Information Report. In future years, our EDI objectives will be contained within our Action Plan.

Report Format & Improving how we Review Equality Progress

Last year, we started reporting our progress relating to the reduction of local inequalities through the Equality Information Report in a different way. This year we have chosen to use the same format, highlighting all the great work the council has done to tackle the often difficult and persistent nature of inequalities in the various forms they appear.

Following the upcoming work to embed the new EDI strategy and forthcoming Action Plan within the council, we will develop a review framework that delivers clearer and more focussed monitoring around the strategy's priorities.

EIR 2024 - Headlines

- The demographic profile of our residents remains mostly unchanged since last year's report (underlying data doesn't change quickly and there is some lag on updating of data sources). However, work has taken place to better illustrate the data trends across a variety of metrics, located within section 5 of the report.
- We are continuing to improve the accessibility of our reports and publications, and so this year have adopted a consistent and accessible format for all our data tables, graphs and charts. The colours used improve the readability for some vision impairments.
- Median salaries across Norwich and Norfolk for both males and females continue to grow, however we have seen steady increases in the gender pay gap within Norwich over the last 3 years (currently 17.7% across Norwich).
- Over the last year, the council has seen a 43% increase in the number of translations and interpretations conducted for our customers.
- Racial related hate crimes continue to represent the most frequently occurring form of hate crimes and incidents within Norwich.
- We have seen a very slight increase in the ethnic diversity of our tenants.

Unequal Impact of the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Norwich City Council recognises that the cost-of-living crisis negatively impacts the levels of inequality being felt by our community.

Cost of living impacts include:

- Lower income groups spend comparably more of their income on essential goods, such as food and energy to heat their homes.
- There is disparity between the average health of individuals who are more socioeconomically advantaged and those who are not.
- Those who were previously financially secure have been drawn towards, or into, poverty and financial hardship. This is demonstrated through a dramatic increase in the number of people seeking debt advice around deficit budgets.

The Equalities Information Report therefore highlights some of the socio-economic hardship we know many of our residents, employees and other stakeholders are experiencing.

Role of local government

Local authorities are central to efforts to realise a fairer society through the promotion and celebration of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. This is particularly important as we navigate and eventually emerge from the current cost of living crisis. The recent period of high inflation and interest rates is highly likely to cause long lasting impacts on people's financial, physical and mental health. This is, of course, in addition to exacerbating other existing inequalities within Norwich.

Norwich City Council continues to work to reduce inequality and disadvantage impacting individuals in possession of protected characteristics, in addition to exploring ways to reduce other inequalities such as those relating to health and socioeconomic status, as demonstrated in our Equality Information Reports.