



South Tyneside Council

item 7

Equality Information Report 2025

This document has been classified as: **Not
protectively marked**

Aisling Crane, Senior Strategy and Policy Officer

Cabinet – 5th November 2025

Report to the Executive

Cabinet Portfolio/Lead Member: Cllr Paul Dean, Lead Member for Voluntary Sector Partnerships and Equalities

Report of Director of Governance and Corporate Affairs

Subject: Equality Information Report 2025

Date: 5 November 2025

Wards affected: All

Council ambitions: All

Does the report and any appendices contain information which has been identified as confidential or exempt?

- No, this report does not contain information identified as confidential or exempt.

For Executive Decisions only:

Is the decision a Key Decision? No

Is it included in the Forward Plan? N/A

If not in the Forward Plan is the report: N/A

Relevant Scrutiny Chair: Cllr John McCabe

Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny? No

(If the decision is anything other than any executive decision made by the Cabinet or a Key Decision made by an officer under delegated powers, call-in is not applicable. This should be explained in the report).

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Council's delivery to date against the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and to seek endorsement for the publication of the draft *Equality Information Report 2025* (Appendix 1).

Background Information

2. To comply with the Equality Act 2010's Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies, including local authorities, are required to show due regard, when exercising their functions, for the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics (including age, disability, race, religion, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.)
3. In November 2024, South Tyneside Council refreshed its approach to delivering on this duty by launching a new Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Strategy articulating the Council's position on equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging, and setting out a delivery plan focused around three core local Equality Objectives:
 - I. Improve our Data and Understanding
 - II. Strengthen our approach to Engagement and Co-Production
 - III. Continue to embed EDIB into our Culture, Workforce and Everything We Do
4. Alongside this new Strategy, a new Equality Information Report was also published, covering the 2023/24, with a commitment to publish this information on an annual basis thereafter.
5. This annual Equality Information Report, which brings together updates on the Council's work to promote EDIB and the latest available information on the what is known about the protected characteristics of both the local population and the organisational workforce, serves to help the Council in meeting the transparency requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Main issues and Options to be Considered

6. As set out in Part 1 (Progress Update) of the draft *Equality Information Report 2025* (Appendix 1), a wide range of work has been undertaken over the last 12 months

since the launch of the South Tyneside Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, with highlights including:

7. Supporting a range of events across the year to celebrate diversity in South Tyneside, including **South Tyneside Pride**, the inclusive **Summer Parade**, the **Ocean Road Mela**, **intergenerational debates** led by the Young People's Parliament, **Learning Disability Week**, **Armed Forces Day**, **Refugee Week**, **Intergenerational Week**, and more.
8. Rolling out a new, strengthened **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) approach to support decision-making**, including a new pro-forma, a series of training workshops for managers, and heightened transparency
9. Launching a new public-facing **Data Observatory** to share the latest data and analysis on service users, including access and outcome gaps linked to deprivation and characteristics such as sex, ethnicity and disability
10. Hosting a further sold-out **'From Adversity to Diversity' conference** to mark Hate Crime Awareness Week 2025, focused on the theme of 'Online Hate', involving a range of national and regional experts and people with lived experience of hate crime, and co-produced with the Dialogue Society to include a multi-cultural buffet, music and art exhibit
11. Ongoing work to nurture the Council's **EDIB Employee Networks**, including launching several new networks, matching each network with a Corporate Director sponsor, and hosting a well-attended 2025 EDIB Network Celebration Event in Summer 2025
12. Strengthening professional links to local faith and cultural communities, including with staff and elected members participating in **Community Iftar events** across South Tyneside during Ramadan 2025 and joining in with the **Al Azhar Mosque Community Engagement Day** in June 2025; and
13. Supporting with a **Walkability Audit of the Town Hall**, conducted with Sense Ability Matters and representatives from the Neurodiversity and Disability Network and wider EDIB Network, to assess how easy it was for employees and visitors with disabilities to navigate
14. As set out in Part 2 of the report, the Council serves a diverse population with a diverse range of characteristics, needs and lived experiences. By ensuring that the organisation has an awareness of the profile of the local community, services are better placed to meet needs and address inequalities.
15. Similarly, as set out in Part 3, the Council workforce is diverse, made up of a range of people of different ages, abilities and identities who all contribute to the design and delivery of high-quality and effective services. In understanding the profile of the workforce, the organisation is able to take action to ensure that all employees are given the appropriate support to reach their full potential.

16. Cabinet is asked to note the progress against the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy outlined in Part 1 and the latest information on population and workforce characteristics set out in Parts 2 and 3, and to endorse the report to be published on the Council website.

Financial and Resources

17. There are no financial or resource implications arising directly from this report.

Legal and Governance

18. Under the Equality Act 2010, local authorities are required to show due regard for the need to: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people with different protected characteristics.
19. The actions and information described in the Equality Information Report 2025 contribute to the Council upholding and providing ongoing transparency relating to this important duty.

Risk

20. There are no significant risks arising directly from this report.
21. The Council's efforts to support employees and service users with different protected characteristics help to mitigate potential risks relating to poor workforce morale and to ineffective services.

Equality and Diversity and Community

22. The activities described in this report and in the draft Equality Information Report directly support the Council's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and commitments to equality and diversity.

Environmental and Sustainability

23. There are no significant environmental and sustainability implications arising directly from the proposed recommendations in this report.

Council Ambitions, Policies, Strategies and Plans

- 24. The activities outlined in this report help to fulfil the commitment within the Council Vision and Strategy with regards to the 'Targeting Support to Make Things Fairer' strategic ambition area.
- 25. This report and the appended draft Equality Information Report 2025 provide a progress update on the Council's Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, launched in November 2024.

Consultation and Engagement

- 26. Consultation and engagement, including with the Council's internal EDIB Employee Networks and external partners and service users, has informed both the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and the activities outlined in this report.
- 27. The actions outlined in line with the Council's 'Strengthen Our Approach to Engagement and Co-Production' Equality Objective, including the 'From Adversity to Diversity' Conference, appointment of a new Engagement Officer, and internal work associated with the EDIB Employee Networks, also directly serve to promote and improve opportunities for community and employee engagement.

Recommendations

- 28. It is recommended that Cabinet notes the activities undertaken over the last year in line with the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, notes the latest available information about the profile of the local population and Council workforce, and endorses the Equality Information Report 2025.

List of Appendices

Draft Equality Information Report 2025

Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging – Progress Update (Autumn 2025)

The following is a list of the background papers (excluding exempt papers) relied upon in the preparation of the above report:

Background Paper	File Ref:	File Location
South Tyneside Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy		Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy (2024 to 2027) - South Tyneside Council

South Tyneside Council
Equality Information Report
2025

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Introduction

As a public body, under the **Public Sector Equality Duty**, South Tyneside Council is required to show regard for the aims of the Equality Act and the need to: eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation) and people who do not; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

In South Tyneside, we recognise that promoting equality extends beyond legal obligations; it is 'the right thing to do' and is an essential aspect of our role within the local community. Upholding equality supports our ability to attract and retain a talented workforce and enables us to provide effective services that address the needs of our diverse service users.

Under our South Tyneside Vision and Strategy, we are committed to making South Tyneside a place where all residents can live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives, and as part of this we have set '**Targeting Support to Make Things Fairer**' as one of our five strategic ambitions.

We have also clearly set out our approach to advancing equalities in our **South Tyneside Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB) Strategy**, which was endorsed by Borough Council in November 2024.

This EDIB Strategy communicates our position on equalities and sets out an action plan for delivering against our Equality Objectives:

- **Improving Our Data and Understanding**
- **Strengthening Our Approach to Engagement and Co-production**
- **Embedding Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging into our Culture, Workforce and Everything We Do**

As well as generally requiring public authorities to uphold the Equality Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty also places a transparency requirement upon us to publish equality information on at least an annual basis, show how we have complied with the Duty and report on progress against our Equality Objectives.

This report therefore seeks to do this for 2025, setting out the latest information we have about our service-users and workforce, and describing the wide range of work that has been done over the last year to promote equality in South Tyneside.

Part 1: Upholding the Public Sector Equality Duty - 2024-25 Progress Update

Over the past year, we have advanced our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy by implementing actions to meet our Equality Objectives and launching initiatives across services to create opportunities and remove barriers for people with diverse needs.

Improving Our Data and Understanding

Within the last 12 months, we have:

- Established a new public-facing Data Observatory containing up to date data, insight and analysis on residents (including information on demographics and inequalities gaps), with training rolled out to elected members, officers across different services, and relevant partners and 1600+ unique users recorded in the first six months of operation (between January and July 2025).
- Built new 'Spotlight on...' sections into our Cabinet Quarterly Performance Reports which allow us to share inequalities data and insights about protected characteristics across different Council service areas and themes and describe the work we are doing to target support to cohorts with different needs, with the five topics covered so far including Smoking Prevalence, Employment, Homelessness, Child Poverty, and Alcohol Use and Harm.
- Published our first integrated Equality Information Report in November 2024 to coincide with the publication of our Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy, bringing together the latest information on the borough's population and the Council's workforce.
- Improved data quality and recording of ethnicity on our Children's Social Care system, including by making the recording of the ethnicity compulsory at the system 'Front Door' and by producing monthly data reports comparing proportions of children by age, gender and ethnicity at all stages of social care (including contact, early help, referral, assessment, s47 safeguarding enquiries, Children in Need, Child Protection, Children Cared For and Care Leavers).
- Embedded equality information in relation to age, gender and ethnicity into our key performance reports across key services, including adding equality information breakdowns into key reports and dashboards used to support Adult Social Care, Commissioning and Youth Justice services.
- Moved forward at pace with Phase 1 of the delivery of a new iTrent payroll system which can record and track information on employee characteristics, including carrying out work to ensure ethnicity, disability and other characteristic labels and categories available to employees align with the latest national census data and have been shaped with consideration for the views of the Council's EDIB Network members.

- Run a 2024 Employment Survey aimed at better understanding employee financial well-being included information collected on Age, Gender, Race and Disability.
- Designed a new 2025 Employee Survey (to be undertaken in Autumn 2025) which will collect respondent protected characteristics and will include more questions aimed at gathering baseline equality-diversity, inclusion and belonging-related information at a team and corporate level, including assessing knowledge of the Council's EDIB employee networks and requesting that respondents indicate how accurately statements such as 'I feel like I can be my true self at work' describe their own situation.
- Launched a new Leaver's Questionnaire which supports the organisation to gain detailed information on why employees choose to leave which helps to better understand potential inequalities and barriers experienced by employees in the workforce and provides the organisation with an indication of what improvements may be needed to support retained employees.
- Expanded pay gap reporting beyond gender pay gap reporting to include analysis of pay gaps associated with disability and ethnicity, to help the organisation understand and respond to gaps and shape future recruitment and retention work.

Strengthening Our Approach to Engagement and Co-Production

Within the last 12 months, we have:

- Recruited and appointed a new Engagement Officer to lead on a range of work associated with strengthening engagement across Council services, including working with the South Tyneside Regional Equality Forum (STREF), engaging with a wide range of different community and voluntary groups locally.
- Undertaken a review of Community Area Forums, the Council's neighbourhood public meetings, with 163 people taking part in surveys and feedback discussions which were used to shape improvements aimed at making the forums more engaging and accessible to a wider audience and increasing opportunities for residents to contribute their views and have a greater say in local issues and decisions.
- Launched a new internal Communications Toolkit and Style Guide to support services in better communication with colleagues and service users, including prompts on inclusive and accessible communications (e.g. using gender neutral and culturally sensitive language, respecting pronouns and identity labels, amplifying underrepresented voices, avoidance of stereotypes or biased terminology, avoiding of jargon or complex and inaccessible language, and use of descriptive text alongside images to support accessibility for people with visual impairments).
- Undertaken a range of activities to promote dialogue and address myths about migration over Summer 2025 in response to heightened national tensions, with efforts including offering a Member's Communications session

on Migration Mythbusting, hosting a Community Engagement Event at Jarrow Focus, delivering a series of Manager Briefings aimed at giving managers advice on how best to support affected staff, and co-hosting a 'STREF Symposium' on community cohesion with local partners.

- Planned a further community and multi-agency conference to mark Hate Crime Week in October 2025, following on from the successful 'From Adversity to Diversity' conference model co-delivered in 2024 with representatives from the North East branch of the Dialogue Society. The 2025 conference, badged 'Do You Know Who I Am?', will focus on 'Online Hate' and involve a range of local and national experts.
- Planned an Equalities Partnership Summit to be hosted later on the same day as the Hate Crime Conference in October 2025, to support organisations in the South Tyneside Partnership to reflect on their roles in addressing inequalities and hate, and commit to further positive action.
- Strengthened ties with local mosques, including Council officers and elected members attending Community Iftar events across South Tyneside over Ramadan in Spring 2025, and a range of Council and multi-agency professionals taking part in the Al Azhar Mosque Community Engagement Day in June, which involved a tour of the Mosque and a question-and-answer session about Islam with representatives of the local Muslim community. The Council's Leader and Chief Executive have also arranged separate visits to build relationships with local faith leaders.
- Established a strengthened corporate communications process for marking a wide range of identity-based and other awareness dates.
- Ensured 'the Voice of Lived Experience' is a core component of EDIB training programming. This includes inviting employees with different identities and experiences linked to protected characteristics to share their stories as part of training sessions, as well as through enabling each EDIB network to meet with the Chief Executive to share their experiences and campaigns directly.
- Continued to nurture and support the various EDIB Employee Networks, including through the delivery of a second annual EDIB Network Celebration Event in August 2025. The current networks include a new Men's Network and an Early Career Network for younger employees, alongside the more established Neurodiversity and Disability Network, Women's Network, LGBTQIA+ Network, Carer's Network, Multicultural Network and recently rebranded Armed Forces Families network.
- Continued to support the delivery of the Poverty Truth Commission, with a Steering Group meeting on a fortnightly basis and work underway to recruit and start initial group work with Civic Commissioners who will be supported over the coming years to share insights into their lived experiences of poverty.
- Continued to strengthen the 'Working Together' group, a diverse group of people from across the borough who use or have used adult social care services who meet monthly to provide feedback and support with the co-

production of services and communications, with 54 people attending meetings between January and August 2025. 2025 projects have included the development of an updated Carers Assessment, the production of information to promote Let's Talk Team Hubs, the redrafting of Hospital Discharge information, the shaping of communications associated with the consultation on proposed changes to care contributions, the development of a video for use at Safeguarding Development Day, and the strengthening of forms and informational gathering processed linked to Preparation for Adulthood.

- Promoted community involvement in service design as part of Co-Production Week 2025, with the Council's Adult Social Care Engagement and Co-Production Team visiting eight venues across the borough and having discussions about co-production with 138 people, including service-users, staff and partners.
- Continued to support and participate in the community-led South Tyneside Regional Equality Forum.
- Continued with work around Health Literacy, including running training sessions for officers and making process changes to improve and simplify key health and other Council communications to ensure they reach more people.
- Continued to engage as part of business-as-usual service delivery with a range of service-users, including through organised Council-facilitated groups such as the Young Health Ambassadors, Youth Council, and Making a Great Important Change (MAGIC) Children in Care Council, and through close engagement with key partners representing local people with particularly characteristics or experiences, such as Age UK, Your Voice Counts, Waythrough, and many more.

Embedding Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging into our Culture, Our Workforce, and Everything We Do

In the last 12 months, we have:

- Continued to roll out in-person 'EDIB Bitesize' all-staff training across organisation, with 240 employees including 84 managers already having completed one of 12 sessions delivered as of September 2025.
- Delivered sessions with senior and middle managers (at 'Extended Leadership Team' and a 'Leadership Exchange') to raise awareness of and embed the South Tyneside Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and associated tools and resources, and cascaded EDIB down to teams at all levels via widely circulated Managers Toolkits.
- Rolled out a redesigned Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process with a new pro-forma, improved transparency (with a commitment that all EqIAs associated with Council and Cabinet decisions are published as part of committee papers and 20 published already over the last year) and improved opportunities for EqIAs to be checked and challenged as part of internal sign-off processes (including for Council and Cabinet and for Budget Proposals

considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan). New guidance has also been circulated to managers and posted on the staff intranet, and a series of refresher training sessions have been offered to relevant managers across all directorates (with this course having been offered 3 times and completed by 18 managers as of August 2025).

- Facilitated a 'Reverse Mentoring for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging' (ReMEDIB) programme matching senior managers with employees with lived experience of different characteristics and circumstances underrepresented in the Council's organisational leadership.
- Strengthened the 'Equality and Diversity' section of the Staff Intranet, including: developing a new 'Neurodiversity and Disability Hub'; adding information, advice and resources on topics including digital accessibility, equality impact assessments, employee EDIB networks; and developing a new 'Manager's Guide to Supporting Your Team' focusing on protected characteristics, reasonable adjustments and risk assessments and signposting to wider information such as ACAS's guidance on supporting disabled people at work, Unison's guidance on tackling workplace hate incidents, and CIPD advice on the menopause at work.
- Continued to offer a range of more in-depth expert-delivered, interactive EDIB-related training sessions to all interested employees and managers, including sessions on Pronouns and Creating an LGBTQ+ Inclusive Environment led by Waythrough and on Racism led by Show Racism the Red Card.
- Rolled out Menopause Awareness sessions for employees and managers, complimenting the existing Menopause Champion programme.
- Planned four Manager Summits at various South Tyneside Council sites across October 2025, with a range of embedded equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging-related considerations, sessions and resources (including a dedicated smaller quieter session for neurodiverse colleagues and stalls at all four Summits aimed at sharing information on the EDIB Networks and signposting to resources such as Equality Impact Assessments and the Data Observatory).
- Delivered neurodiversity training to officers across the People and Organisational Change service to support fairer and more accessible recruitment and selection processes (with plans in place to extend this offer to wider managers who undertake recruitment as part of their role).
- Expanded the training offer to offer a new course on 'Unconscious Bias' to help managers consider the impact of and how to mitigate against unconscious biases in the workplace, and a new 'Introduction to Neurodiversity in the Workplace for Leaders' online session for managers in November 2025, to help them better support neurodiverse employees.
- Continued with the delivery and development of the Council's Age Friendly Pledge, with a six-month review taking place in March 2025 with the Centre for Aging Better concluding the Council had exceeded expectations in all

action areas, and also continued with delivery of the action plan associated with the Council's Anti-Racism Charter.

- Continued with the development of a Carer's Passport aimed at better supporting employees with carer responsibilities as they moved roles within the organisation by ensuring managers were immediately aware of their circumstances and needs, with the project expected to be completed by Autumn 2025.
- Improved early recruitment processes to ensure that the Council's Armed Forces Support Officer is made aware of any new starter who has identified an Armed Forces connection as part of job application forms enabling a meeting to be arranged within three weeks of starting their post and available support to be directly signposted to them.
- Collaborated with regional and national colleagues to share and learn from best practice in response to equalities-related issues, including through officer participation in forums including the North East Regional Equalities Network, the Regional Black and Minority Ethnic Network for Local Authorities and 'L3A' Local Authority Access Officers Network.
- Responded to the April 2025 UK Supreme Court ruling on the Equality Act definition of sex by internally communicating strong reaffirmation of trans colleagues continued value, rights and protections, holding a Lunch and Learn session for interested employees with input from the Legal Team and Organisational Development, convening a cross-service working group to consider how different services may be impacted, and engaging with local authorities nationally to understand options and best practice.
- Held a Walkability Audit of South Shields Town Hall in early Summer 2025 with Sense Ability Matters and representatives from the Council's Public Health team and Neurodiversity and Disability Network to assess how easy it was for employees or visitors with disabilities to navigate the workplace and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Continued with work associated with strengthening the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, including by adjusting policies to formally include the Merchant Navy in existing local covenant commitments, establishing a Uniformed Services Award category in the 2025 #LoveSouthTyneside Awards, producing an Armed Forces Support leaflet to be distributed widely during 2025 Remembrance Services, working with the Career Transition Partnership on changes to pre-application and pre-boarding to help reduce barriers for former Armed Forces candidates moving into local government employment, and providing direct support with accessing council services and referring to external services via the Council's dedicated Armed Forces Support Officer, with 85 veterans directly supported between January and October 2025.

Wider Activity

Much of the progress against our Equality Objectives is monitored and steered by our quarterly **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Steering Group**, which involves officers from a range of services and led by elected members, including the Lead Member for Voluntary Sector Partnerships and Equalities, the Lead Member for Adults, Health and Independence, and the Member Champion for Equality, Inclusion, Diversity and LGBTQ+.

Beyond this, however, we have also been clear in our EDIB Strategy that '*EDIB is Everybody's Business*' and that all Council managers, employees and elected members have a role to play in targeting support to make things fairer and in upholding our legal and organisational commitments to equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

As such, we take care to ensure that equalities issues are considered in all of our decision making and have pressed forward with a range of initiatives across different service areas that will contribute to eliminating unlawful discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between different groups of people.

This year this has included but has not been limited to:

- Delivering another diverse and inclusive South Shields Parade with performers representing a range of cultures taking part and local groups representing different parts of the local community proactively supported to take part, including young LGBTQ+ people working with charity Waythrough and local neurodivergent people engaged with Autism Able.
- Demonstrating support for the local lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer residents to coincide with regional, national and global 'Pride' events across the summer, including by flying the 'progress' rainbow flag from the Town Hall, using rainbow social media avatars and design elements, and collaborating with LGBTQ_ events charity Out North East to promote 'Pride in South Tyneside', with 2025 including a 'Pride'-themed Film Festival at the Custom's House, a 'Pride Pooches' dog show, a 'Pride Beach Party', a market and march at the 'Pride in Hebburn' festival in Fountains Park, Hebburn, and a 'Pride in South Tyneside' Sunday Concert promoting inclusion and diversity and headlined by Shayne Ward and acts including Liberty X, Scooch, The Future is Queer and Shelley Stevens.
- Establishing a new multi-agency South Tyneside Community Cohesion Group, involving various Council services and partners including Northumbria Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, Probation Services, Mears Group (responsible for delivering asylum seeker accommodation and support locally) and others, and focusing on discussing and responding to local hate crime and community tension intelligence and coordinating joint responses
- Supporting a range of community safety improvements including developing a new Hate Crime Strategy and establishing a new Safety Schools Partnership
- Promoting and supporting various cultural and community events and activities which celebrate diverse parts of the South Tyneside community, including the Ocean Road Mela, intergenerational debates led by the Young People's Parliament, the Emerald 55 exhibition at The Word honouring the

55th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots and showcasing community reflections, Learning Disability Week, Armed Forces Day, Refugee Week, and Intergenerational Week.

- Promoting an inclusive economy, including through efforts like the 'Building a Stronger South Tyneside' campaign, which is working with local businesses to address economic inactivity and raise awareness of the opportunities of employing people with a range of disabilities and health conditions.

Measuring Progress:

It is clear from the activity updates above that we are making excellent progress.

We have also identified some temporary measures to help track our progress.

Improving Our Data & Understanding:

- **1,600** individual users have accessed the new South Tyneside Data Observatory over the first six months of operation.
- **81.26%** - the proportion of the workforce for whom disability status is known (including those who have consciously declined to provide this information).
- **79.68%** - the proportion of the workforce for whom ethnicity data is known (including those who have consciously declined to provide this information).

Strengthening our Approach to Engagement & Co-Production

- **56** service users are engaged with the Working Together group and co-producing service improvements within Adult Social Care and Commissioning.

Embedding EDIB into our Culture, Workforce & Everything We Do

- **8** EDIB Employee Networks are now operational across the organisation, with 120 attendees recorded at the EDIB Employee Network 2-Year Celebration Event.
- **240** employees (including 84 managers) have completed the 'EDIB Bitesize' in-person training offer.
- **20** Equality Impact Assessments have been published as part of South Tyneside Council and Cabinet papers between November 2024 and October 2025.

We are still in the early stages of some foundational projects that will allow us to better monitor and track our progress against our Equality Objectives. This includes the implementation of 'iTrent', our new HR & Payroll System which will improve our data on employee protected characteristics, as well as the development of a new community engagement approach which will better allow us to track the numbers and profiles of people involved in certain engagement exercises.

Part 2: Information on the South Tyneside Population

South Tyneside Council draws from a range of intelligence in considering how our policies and practices affect different service users, including those who share protected characteristics.

As an organisation, we are committed to making fair, transparent, evidence-based decisions. We recognise that the more we know about our local population, the better we can ensure our services meet their needs.

We closely monitor a wide range of indicators and outcomes through our Corporate Performance Framework and within individual services, using this to monitor the impact of our activities and policies on residents.

Insight collected from feedback, consultations and engagement with service-users is another important part of this intelligence puzzle, helping us shape our services around people's needs and preferences.

Increasing access to data, including most recently the data from the 2021 census, is also helping us to continually improve our understanding of the identities, characteristics and experiences of our residents.

Key information on our population, by protected characteristic:

The following data is the latest available as at 1 September 2025. It should be noted that, unless otherwise stated, the 2021 Census remains the primary source of data for many local authority-level insights about population characteristics; as such, many of the figures provided are unchanged from the previous iteration of the report.

Population

- There are 151,393 people living in South Tyneside (Office of National Statistics Annual Population Estimate 2024)

Sex

- 49% of residents are male (72,861 residents), and 51% are female (76,409 residents) (ONS, 2023)

Age

- 17.9% of residents are aged 0-15
- 61.1% of residents are aged 16-64
- 21.3% of our residents are aged over 65
- South Tyneside has a slightly older age profile than the UK average. The median age in South Tyneside is 43, compared to 40 for England, and a larger proportion of the population are aged 65 and over compared to the UK average (21.3% compared to 18.6%)
- Older residents are more likely to have a disability, with 11% of children nationally estimated to have a disability, 23% of working aged people, and 45% of state pension aged people. (UK Disability Statistics: Prevalence and Life Experiences, House of Commons Research Briefing, October 2024)

Disability

- 22.1% of residents (surveyed in the 2021 census) identified as being disabled
- 10.5% of residents identified as being disabled and limited a lot in day-to-day activities and a further 11.6% identified as being disabled and limited a little in day to day activities
- 77.9% identified as being not disabled
- 21.6% of residents aged 16+ have a long term Musculo-skeletal problem such as arthritis (NHS England GP Patient Survey, 2024)
- 5.9% of working aged adults and 17.8% of over 65s are estimated to have impaired mobility. (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)
- 0.6% of working age adults and 7.5% of over 65s are estimated to have severe hearing loss (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)
- 2.2% of local adults have a severe visual impairment. 0.06% of working age adults, 5.1% of 65-74s and 12.4% of over 75s are estimated to have a moderate or severe visual impairment (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)
- 2.3% of local adults aged 18+ are estimated to have some level of learning disability (2.4% of those aged 18-64 and 2.1% of those 65+) (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)
- 0.5% of working age adults and 0.3% of over 65s are estimated to have a moderate or severe learning disability and therefore be in receipt of services. Of adults with a moderate or severe learning disability, 60 are estimated to have Down's Syndrome and 39 are predicted to display challenging behaviour (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)
- 1% of local adults are estimated to have autistic spectrum conditions (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics) (Note, 15% of the UK population are estimated to be neurodivergent, with conditions including autism spectrum conditions, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Tourette's syndrome or epilepsy)
- 22.3% of local school pupils have a statutory plan of special educational needs or are receiving special educational needs support (DfE Special Educational Needs in England data, 2024)
- 21.5% of working age adults are estimated to have a common mental health disorder (including depression or anxiety). 2.4% of working age adults are estimated to have a borderline personality disorder, 3.3% are predicted to have an antisocial personality disorder, 0.7% are predicted to have a psychotic disorder, and 7.2% are predicted to have two or more psychiatric disorders (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)
- 6.7% of local people aged 65 or over are estimated to have dementia and 0.06% of local people aged 30 to 64 are estimated to have early onset dementia (PANSI/POPPI 2025, from Office of National Statistics)

Race / Ethnicity / Nationality

- 94.4% of residents identify as white
- 5.6% of our residents are from ethnic minority backgrounds
- 2.9% of residents identify as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh
- The borough has less ethnic diversity than the North East (where 7% of the population are an ethnicity other than white) or England overall (19% of the population are an ethnicity other than white)
- 95.6% of residents were born in the UK
- Of those residents who were born outside of the UK, the majority (over 60%) have lived in the country 10 years or more, with only 0.5% of people having lived in the UK for less than 2 years
- 0.6% of residents were born in Bangladesh
- 0.3% of residents were born in Germany
- 0.3% of residents were born in India
- 97.74% of residents have English as their first or preferred language
- Of those residents whose main language is not English (2.34%), a quarter either cannot speak English at all or cannot speak English well (0.56% of all residents)
- 0.48% of residents have Bengali (with Sylheti and Chatgaya) as their preferred language
- Other first or preferred languages of South Tyneside residents include Polish, Arabic, Panjabi, Portuguese, Persian or Farsi, Kurdish, Urdu and Romanian
- 0.04% of people in England have sign language as their main language
- 0.4% of South Tyneside residents were recent migrants from outside of the UK at the time of the 2021 Census, having lived at a non-UK address in the year prior
- While the above statistics are informed by the 2021 Census remains the main source of intelligence on the ethnic and nationality profile of the South Tyneside population, it should be noted that 2024 population estimates indicate that the population has grown by 0.08% in the last three years, with international migration the main contributor to this change
- Analysis of ethnicity data of NHS patients registered with South Tyneside GPs (which could include some patients who are registered locally but live out of borough), linked with hospital data, suggests that the proportion of patients with an ethnicity other than White British has increased over recent years, from 8% to 13% of patients (in 2021 compared to 2024)
- 2024 South Tyneside NHS patient profiles indicate a small increase compared to 2021 NHS patient profiles in all ethnic groups other than White British, with 3.74% of patients are identified as White Non-British (up from 2.23%), 1.48% of patients identified as Indian (up from 1.18%), 1.34% as Pakistani (up from 0.72%), and 1.23% as Bangladeshi (up from 0.94%), and similar slight increases in patients who were from other ethnic groups

Religion and Belief

- 52.6% of South Tyneside residents identify as Christian
- 39.3% of residents have no religion or belief
- 2.5% of residents identify as Muslim
- Other religions practiced by notable numbers of residents of the borough include Sikhism (0.3% of residents), Hinduism (0.2% of residents), and Buddhism (0.2% of residents)

Pregnancy and Maternity

- The average age of a new mother in South Tyneside is 29.6 years
- The general fertility rate in South Tyneside is 55.5, meaning that there are 55.5 live births each year for every 1000 females of reproductive age (15 to 44) in the population – or approximately 1 in 18 local women in this age group gives birth each year
- The proportion of infants who are breastfed (at 6-8 weeks) has been steadily increasing, reaching 34.2% in 2023/24 (the latest available data), up from 27.1% in 2022/23, although this is still lower than the England average of 52.7%

Sexual Orientation

- 92.01% of the South Tyneside population identify as straight or heterosexual (according to the 2021 census)
- 2.74% of residents identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or another sexual orientation other than heterosexual
 - 1.45% of residents identify as gay or lesbian
 - 1% of residents identify as bisexual
 - 0.07% of residents identify as pansexual
 - 0.02% of residents identify as queer
 - 0.05% of residents identify with another sexual orientation
 - 0.04% of residents identify as asexual
- A further 5.36% of South Tyneside census respondents chose not to report their sexual orientation

Marriage and Civil Partnership

- 41.39 % of South Tyneside adults are in a marriage (41.17 % with a person of the opposite sex, 0.22% with a person of the same sex)
- 0.15% of South Tyneside adults are in a registered civil partnership (0.09% in a same-sex civil partnership, 0.06% in an opposite-sex civil partnership)
- 10.31% of adults are divorced (with a further 0.02 with a legally dissolved civil partnership)
- 2.72% of adults are separated (but still married) and a further 0.02% are separated but still in a registered civil partnership
- 7.38% are widowed with a further 0.01% a surviving partner from a civil partnership

- 38% of the South Tyneside population over 16 have never married and never registered a civil partnership

Gender Identity / Gender Reassignment*

- 95.31% of South Tyneside residents responding to the 2021 census reported their gender identify as the same as the sex that was assigned at their birth
- 0.38% of South Tyneside residents reported that their gender identity was different to the one assigned at birth
- Of this group, 16.5% (0.06% of the total South Tyneside population) identified as trans women, 24.6% identified as trans men (0.09% of the total population), 12.6% identified as non-binary (0.05% of the total population), 39.6% did not specify a gender identity (0.15%), and 6.7% identified as another gender identity (0.03%)
- 4.31% of local census respondents chose not to report their gender identity

*It should be noted that there has been some recent criticism of census research methods in relation to optional questions about gender identify and sexuality, with it suggested that some respondents misunderstood the question wording and responded inaccurately, however the 2021 census is the only available dataset which provides an indication of gender identity of the entire UK population.

Socioeconomic Disadvantage

Socioeconomic status is not a legally protected characteristic, but there is reference within the Equality Act 2010 to a requirement for public bodies to adopt transparent and effective measures to address the inequalities that result for inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage. While this 'socioeconomic duty' was never formally enacted in England, it has been activated in Scotland and Wales and a number of English local authorities have voluntarily adopted it and lobbied for its wider implementation.

- South Tyneside is ranked 27th most deprived out of 317 local authorities nationally. (According to the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- The average male life expectancy at birth in South Tyneside is 76.7 and the average female life expectancy at birth is 80.8 (PHE Life Expectancy at Birth, 2021-2023), both lower than the national average (79.1 for males and 83.0 years for females). Across wards, life expectancy ranges from 71.4 to 82.7 for males and 78.3 to 88 for females, typically correlating with levels of deprivation (PHE Life Expectancy at Birth, 2018-2020)
- 35.6% of local under 16s (11,021 young people) live in relative low-income households
- 32.9% of primary school pupils and 29.1% of secondary school pupils are entitled to free school meals (a statutory benefit available to families who receive means-tested benefits)

Other (non-protected) characteristics of note

In addition to those groups with legally protected status under the Equality Act, there are other groups who have particular needs or disadvantages and are likely to experience discrimination as a result of a particular characteristic.

- *Experience of Care* - Approximately 1% of local children and young people aged 0-18 are in care in any given year (100 per 10,000). Looked after children are more likely to have poorer educational and other outcomes compared to their non-looked after peers. Statistically, children in care are more likely than the average to be male, black African and / or have special educational needs.
- *Carers* – A carer is anyone who cares for a friend who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem, or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. 10.5% South Tyneside residents (aged 5 and over) report providing at least 19 or more hours of unpaid care per week.
- *Armed Forces Experience* - 5.3% of the borough's 16+ population have previously served in the UK regular armed forces and/or reserved armed forces. This group is disproportionately male (89% male and 11% female) and tends to be older than the non-veteran population, with 22% of local veterans aged 80+.
- *Asylum Status* – An estimated 0.54% of the UK's total population are stateless or have pending asylum status.

Wider information sources

- The 'Our South Tyneside' report provides, in engaging infographic form, an annual snapshot of the latest data about the borough and its population across a wide range of themes and indicators. It is designed to be a useful reference document for residents, staff, elected members and partners to understand the composition of our borough and to help build the foundation for evidence-based decision-making.
- The 'South Tyneside Data Observatory' website brings together a wide range of information on topics such as population, health, economy, environment, crime and more, from different sources, making it easier for residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to access data and understand the borough. It also contains reports from research and evaluation conducted in South Tyneside.
- The South Tyneside Joint Strategy Needs and Assets Assessment ([Overview - South Tyneside Council](#)), which is updated on a rolling basis, provides a comprehensive overview of the diverse characteristics of our local communities, and the South Tyneside Director of Public Health's 2023 'Picture of Health' Report ([Picture of Health report 2023 - South Tyneside Council](#)) additionally provides an overview of the health and wellbeing of the South Tyneside population.
- The South Tyneside Interim Market Position Statement for Support and Independence ([Market Position Statement for Support and Independence - South Tyneside Council](#)) also contains information about needs, demand and trends in relation to local people with a care need.
- Service-specific strategies, including the South Tyneside Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Economic Recovery Plan, and regular updates against these, provide additional topic-specific analysis of the characteristics, needs and outcomes of the local population.
- The Council publishes Quarterly Performance Reports which provide elected members, partners and the public with regular updates on key performance metrics.

- The Office of National Statistics publishes local authority-specific census profiles, including the South Tyneside Census Equalities Profile ([How life has changed in South Tyneside: Census 2021 \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)), which provides detailed information on the characteristics of the local South Tyneside population.

Part 3: Information on South Tyneside Council

As of March 2025, South Tyneside Council employed 3,656 employees (not including school-based employees).

Note, in the following statistics in line with best practice, to avoid identifying individuals, limited details are presented for categories where fewer than 10 people are recorded.

Sex/Gender*

- Overall, the workforce is two thirds female, one third male (65.9%; 34.1%).
- This split is not unusual for the public sector, closely matching the UK public sector reported gender split, and be explained by factors such as sector's reputation for flexible working practices, as well as to gender bias traditionally associated with roles such as in social care. (Women in Politics and Public Life – House of Commons Library Research Briefing; March 2025; Women and the UK economy, House of Commons Library Research Briefing, February 2025).
- The Children's Services workforce is particularly female dominated, with 88.7% of the workforce female and 11.3% male.
- Women are similarly very much the majority in Adult Social Services and Commissioning (82.3% female) and Public Health (86.1% female).
- Men make up the majority of the workforce in the Community Operations directorate (73.3% of employees are male, 26.7% are female).
- The organisation's gender balance has changed slightly since 2024, from 28.5% men and 71.5% women to 34.1% men and 65.9% women, likely reflecting the movement of former South Tyneside Homes Council into the Council over this period (with the majority of those employees now in the Community Operations directorate).
- As of 2024-25, according to the Council's Gender Pay Gap Report ([South Tyneside Council gender pay gap report for 2024-25 reporting year](#)):
 - Women employees earned 87p for every £1 that men earned (comparing median hourly pay)
 - Women made up 65.0% of employees in the highest paid quartile of jobs and 86.0 % of employees in the lowest paid quartile of jobs

*(*Note, in accordance with requirements for gender pay gap reporting, gender is recorded and reported in a binary way, recognising only men and women. This means the data available does not take account of non-binary or other gender identities. However, more information is provided later in this document on what is known about employee gender identity and gender reassignment.)*

Age:

- The majority of the workforce is in their 40s and 50s, with employees in these age groups making up over half (50.36%) of the workforce.
- Just 1.83% of the workforce is under 20.
- The Place Strategy directorate has a particularly high proportion of employees over 55 (26.89% of the directorate's workforce, compared to 18.03% of the overall workforce).
- The Business and Resources directorate has a particularly high proportion of employees under 25 (15.03% of the directorate's workforce, compared to 6.86% of the overall workforce).

Ethnicity:

- No ethnicity data is held for a just over a fifth of the workforce (20.32%).
- Business and Resources has the highest proportion of 'Not Known' employees (31.65%).
- 75.85% of the workforce identify as White British, with this rising 95.55% of the workforce for whom ethnicity is known.
- 19 employees (0.52% of the total workforce) identify as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, African or Caribbean (or 0.65% of the workforce for whom ethnicity is known), with this group slightly better represented in the directorates of Community Operations and Children's Services than in other directorates.
- 40 employees identify as Asian or Asian British (including Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or Any Other Asian), which is 1.22% of the total workforce or 3.1% of the workforce for whom ethnicity data has been collected. This group is slightly better represented in Place Strategy and Children's Services than in other directorates.
- 21 employees identify as 'Any Other White Background' (this includes, for example, non-British or -Irish Europeans, among other groups), which is 0.57% of the workforce or 0.72% of the workforce for whom ethnicity data is known. This group is particularly well represented in Business and Resources and Children's Services.
- 29 employees identify as having a mixed ethnic background, with this group best represented in the Adult Social Care and Commissioning directorate.
- Children's Services is the most diverse directorate, with 6.09% of employees recorded as having an ethnicity other than White British, and 4.66% recorded as having a non-White ethnicity. It is also the largest directorate. Public Health is the least diverse directorate, with all employees for whom ethnicity is known recorded as White British, although it should be noted this is also the smallest directorate (36 employees).

Disability:

- Disability status is 'Not Known' for 18.74% of employees and a further 0.33% 'Declined to Specify', with 'Not Known' highest among employees in Business and Resources (29.92%), followed by Governance and Corporate Affairs (21.21%) and Children's Services (19.2%), and lowest in Public Health (fewer than 10 employees).
- Among employees where disability status is known, 96.18% have reported no disability and 3.82% have reported a disability.
- Disability prevalence is highest in Adult Social Care Services and Commissioning, where 6.64% of employees for whom disability status is recorded have a reported disability. The lowest prevalence of recorded disability is among the Community Operations and Place Strategy directorates, where just 2.53% and 2.94% of employees for whom data is known report a disability.
- Among employees where disability status is known, disability prevalence is highest among younger employees (5.9% of employees under 30 report a disability, compared to 3.1% of employees aged 30-60 and 4.6% of employees aged 60+).
- Among employees where disability status is known, reported disability prevalence is slightly higher among men than women (5.21% of male employees reported a disability, compared to 3.09% of female employees).

Other Protected Characteristics:

Information is not systematically collected on employee religion, sexual orientation or gender identity, however an employee survey conducted in 2022 (which 12.5% of the overall workforce at that time voluntarily completed) indicated that:

With regards to religion:

- 5.17% of respondents identified as Christian
- Fewer than 10 respondents each identified as either Muslim, Buddhist or Hindu
- 2.11% of respondents identified as another religion not specified
- No employees identified as Jewish or Sikh
- 41.98% of respondents reported not identifying with a religion
- A further 2.76% of respondents did not wish to disclose any information on their religion in their response

With regards to sexual orientation:

- 89.95% of respondents identified as heterosexual or straight
- 3.89% of respondents identified as gay or lesbian
- 2.27% of respondents identified as bisexual
- A small proportion of respondents (fewer than 10 individuals) noted that they preferred to self-describe their sexual orientation

- A further 2.76% noted that they did not wish to disclose information about their sexual orientation

With regards to gender identity and gender reassignment:

- 98.22% of respondents reported that their gender identity was the same as the sex they were assigned at birth
- Several respondents reported an identity other than that they were assigned at birth (fewer than 10 respondents)
- A proportion of respondents (fewer than 10) advised that they did not wish to disclose information about whether they identified as the same sex they were assigned at birth
- 69.21% of respondents identified as women
- 29.01% identified as men
- Several respondents (fewer than 10) identified as non-binary
- A number of respondents (fewer than 10) expressed a preference to self describe their identity, preferring an identity other than as a man, woman or as non-binary.
- Some respondents (fewer than 10) elected not to describe their gender.