Cambridgeshire County Council

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Update

Staffing and Service Appeals Committee – November 2025

Presented by Faye McCarthy, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Business Partner

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy

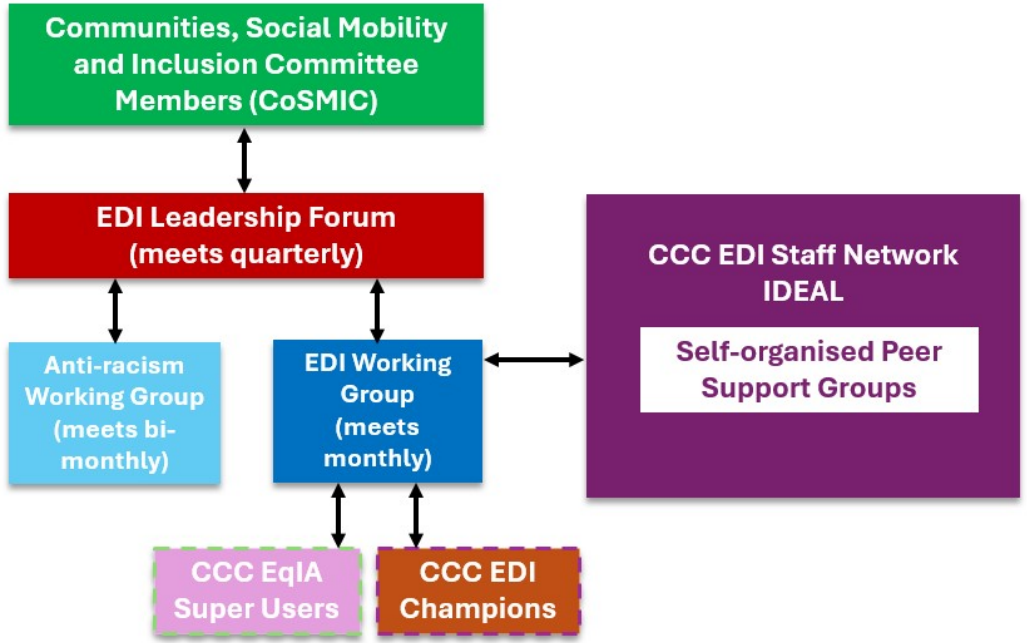
The public sector equality duty (PSED) (under the Equality Act 2010) requires public bodies, when carrying out your public functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Public authorities have specific duties under the Equality Act to help them comply with the public sector equality duty. They must:

1. Publish equality information at least once a year to show how they've complied with the equality duty.
2. Prepare and publish equality objectives at least every 4 years.

Our equality objectives form our EDI strategy. There are twelve equality objectives for our three themes (workforce, communities and services) and each objective has a series of actions aligned to it. The action plan spans between 2023-2027 and is a live document.

The actions in the strategy are delivered through our EDI governance structure. The action plan is monitored by the EDI leadership forum and reported to CLT quarterly and CoSMIC bi-annually.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy

We know that an ambitious response is needed to deliver high quality, effective and inclusive services to our local community, retain a diverse and engaged workforce, and ensure that residents and employees can achieve their full potential. There are three themes to help define our equality objectives; a) Our workforce, b) our communities and c) our services.

A: Our workforce:
Foster an inclusive, supportive and safe working environment that attracts and retains diverse people who feel valued, respected, and empowered.

B: Our communities:
Further understand and work with our diverse communities across Cambridgeshire, developing local solutions which address the needs of our communities.

C: Our services:
Ensure people who use our services and residents have good quality public services that meet the diverse needs of our communities.

Underpinning these three themes are three guiding principles which underpin our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion:

1. Taking evidence-based action

What does this look like? Using quantitative and qualitative data to inform targeted action. We will address gaps in data collection holding us to account for the progress made in addressing discrimination and advancing equality. We will improve our collection and coordination of data to better understand our workforce and communities, particularly under-represented and marginalised groups.

2. Listening to the voices of everyone

What does this look like? Actively seeking the views of our diverse colleagues and communities, listening and hearing their voices through a variety of accessible mechanisms, and acting based on feedback.

3. Having a transparent and robust approach that delivers meaningful change

What does this look like? Being open-minded and honest throughout our EDI journey, including our actions and progress. Taking action, making fair decisions, and evidencing the impact of our work and delivering tangible change.

EDI strategy action plan update

The CCC EDI Strategy 2023-2027 is published on the CCC website here. An action plan sits below this with actions related to three themes, our workforce, our communities and our services. A RAG rating of the actions is included below:

Workforce

Colour rating	Definition of colour rating	Number of actions
Red	Not started	0
Amber	In progress	29
Green	Completed	22
Blue	Planned, not started	5
Total		56

Communities

Colour rating	Definition of colour rating	Number of actions
Red	Not started	0
Amber	In progress	7
Green	Completed	6
Blue	Planned, not started	0
Total		13

Services

Colour rating	Definition of colour rating	Number of actions
Red	Not started	0
Amber	In progress	10
Green	Completed	5
Blue	Planned, not started	1
Total		16

Key for actions
Red - Not started (late)
Amber - In progress
Green- Complete
Blue - Planned, not started

Examples of some of our workforce actions (1)

Complete since the last update

Submitted the **Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES) action plans for** Children's and Adults. The SC-WRES is a program that identifies and addresses racial inequalities in the social care workforce. It is grounded in the legal framework of equality and non-discrimination, specifically the Equality Act 2010. Feedback from Skills for Care:

> *"A thoughtful and well-written plan that outlines how the SC-WRES indicators are being embedded in wider equalities performance reporting, with alignment of the work across adult and children's services. The council benefits from a continuous improvement culture which has enabled a collaborative structure for delivery to be initiated at pace."*

Developed and launched **neurodiversity at work awareness training** with Learning & Development colleagues. Our neurodiversity awareness training helps the organisation to understand their legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010, which requires them to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees, including neurodivergent conditions. The training fosters a more inclusive workplace by educating employees about neurodiversity and its associated strengths and challenges, ultimately promoting a more supportive and collaborative environment.

- 117 colleagues have completed this since it launched in September 2025, 93.2% rated the training as excellent and 6.8% as good.

Marked **Black History Month** throughout October 2025 with a series of events, including hosting an exhibition in New Shire Hall of artwork from local Black artists as well as influential Black figures, pieces of work from the Museum of Cambridge, care leavers and school children. Positive feedback was received from colleagues on all events.

Examples of some of our workforce actions (2)

Complete since the last update

Achieved Disability Confident Level 3 Leader status. The Disability Confident scheme aligns with the legal obligations outlined in the Equality Act 2010, which protects disabled individuals from discrimination and requires reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

- Feedback from Disability Rights UK, the external validator of our self-assessment: "*Cambridgeshire County Council is delivering against all of the core actions and has provided evidence for each of the required activities, including data collection, voluntary reporting and showing leadership.*"

Introduced a **guaranteed interview scheme for care experienced applicants** who meet the essential criteria. We are currently looking at the impact of this.

Took targeted action to **improve our diversity disclosure rates** of employees. Diversity data helps us to understand the impact of our policies and practices on different groups, which is crucial for meeting the PSED's requirements. To demonstrate compliance with the equality duty, we must publish the annual equality information report to understand whether we are providing equality and opportunity for all our employees and explore ways to improve data collection and data quality. For all actions in the action plan, an evidence-based approach is taken using data to identify issues and measure outcomes. This data also enables us to report our statutory pay gap information.

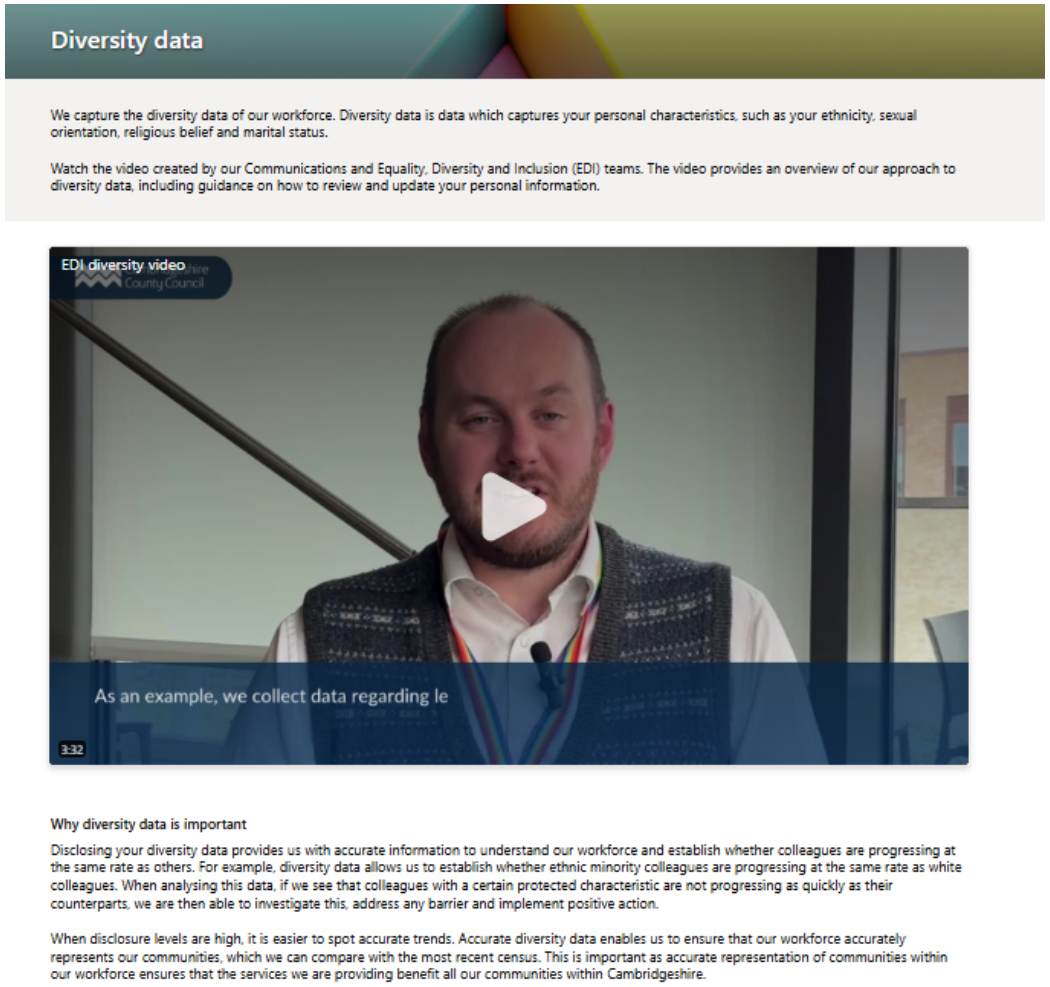
- Since November 2024, disclosure rates have increased by 10.83% for disability, 4.5% for ethnicity, 6.17% for religion and 5.25% for sexual orientation.

Examples of some of our workforce actions (3)

In progress:

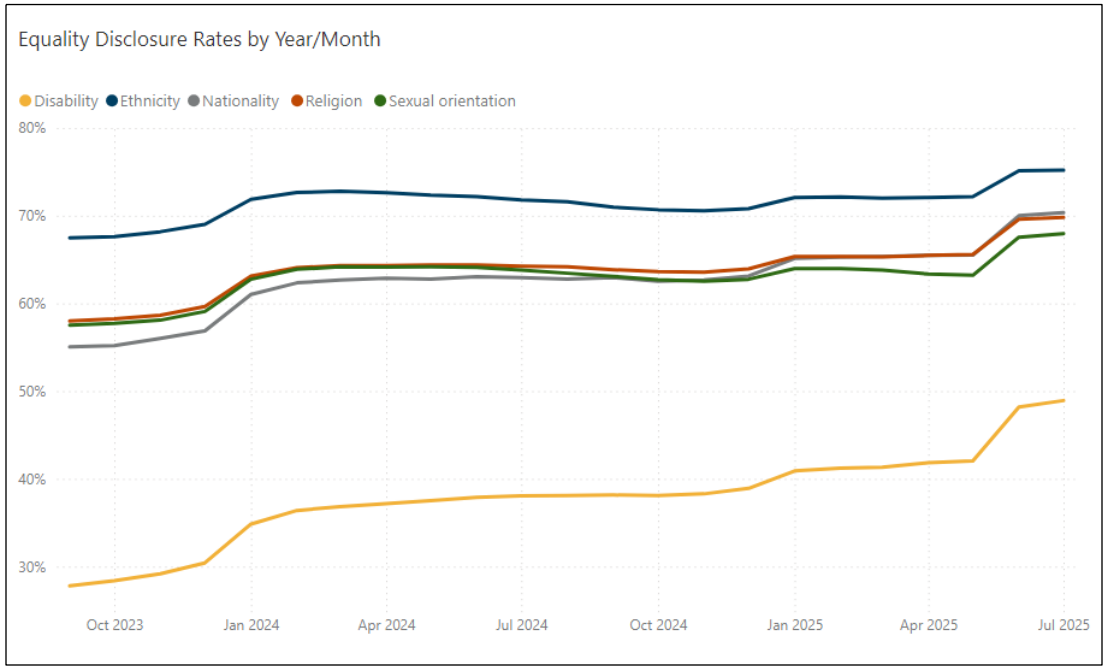
- Developing a **reasonable adjustment policy for customers,** supporting officers to understand our legal requirements as provider of services. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to take reasonable steps to make adjustments for disabled people to ensure they can access services and functions without being disadvantaged.
- Working on our **pay gap reporting** for 2025 (published March 2026) with colleagues in HR, Policy, and Wellbeing. Under the Equality Act 2010 (Gender Pay Gap Information) Regulations 2017, employers in the UK with 250 or more employees must legally report their gender pay gap annually by submitting calculations to the government and publishing them online.
- Including additional content on **sexual harassment** into our EDI e-learning. In 2024, the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023 came into force on 26 October, creating a new legal duty for all UK employers to proactively prevent sexual harassment. This means employers must take "reasonable steps" to prevent harassment.
- Exploring support and resources **for racism and mental health** to further support colleagues.
- Finalising an approach to **pledges, charters and accreditations** for the council, to develop a consistent way of managing requests.

Showcasing our work: diversity disclosure rates



EDI diversity video.mp4

- Targeted emails to all colleagues with missing diversity fields in ERP.
- Launched a video in collaboration with IDEAL and peer support groups.
- New diversity disclosure webpage.
- Emails to new starters.



Showcasing our work: anti-racism

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination based on race in the workplace, including racial harassment and victimisation. Employers have a duty to prevent discrimination, which includes creating a work environment free from such behaviours. This includes taking reasonable steps to protect employees from harassment by others, both inside and outside the workplace

Formed in February 2024, the anti-racism steering group is an overarching organisation wide group. The group oversees our organisational approach to addressing racial inequities and implementing a strategic and targeted approach to advancing race equity.

Actions so far:

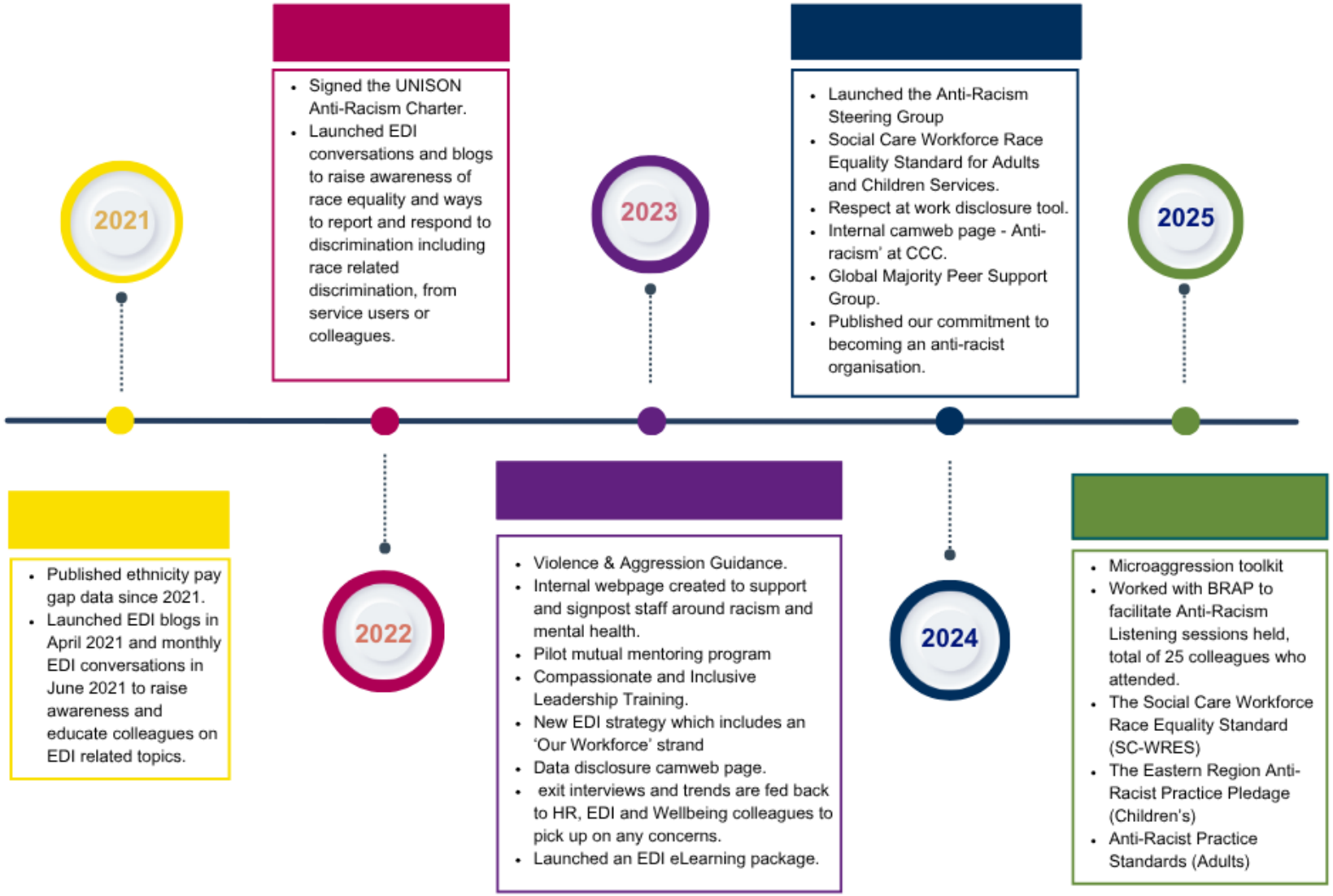
- Released communications to the organisation to raise awareness of the new steering group and outline our commitment as an organisation.
- Supported the launch of a global majority peer support group.
- Marked Black History Month in 2024 and 2025.
- Committed to the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES). t is grounded in the legal framework of equality and non-discrimination, specifically the Equality Act 2010. Action plans were submitted in July 2025, and work is underway for the 2025/26 SC-WRES.
- Developed new webpages to keep colleagues up to date with our anti-racism journey and the support available.
- Hosted listening sessions with global majority colleagues, following the findings from these sessions we are now exploring next steps.

Next steps:

- Developing a shared vision for anti-racism across the council.
- Developing race awareness learning for colleagues.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL IS COMMITTED TO BECOMING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION.

ANTI-RACISM AT CCC



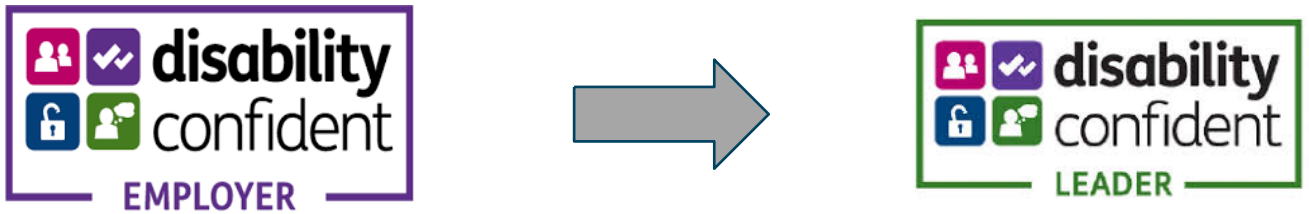
Cambridgeshire County Council

Showcasing our work: Disability Confident

Supporting colleagues' individual needs, including disability, neurodivergence, mental, physical, and long-term health conditions.

Evidence throughout the self-assessment highlighted some of the existing work, including:

- Identifying what additional steps we can take as an organisation to continue to ensure our workplace is a supportive environment for all colleagues.
- Providing an inclusive and accessible recruitment process. Through the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, we will offer an interview to all applicants who disclose a disability and meet the essential criteria for a job vacancy.
- Proactively offering and making reasonable adjustments as required.
- Supporting employees to manage their disabilities or health conditions through various ways including: a wellbeing passport, reasonable adjustment guidance, and support for applying to Access to Work.
- Offering training on reasonable adjustments and neurodiversity awareness.



Showcasing our work: resources for colleagues

We are currently updating and refreshing our internal guidance documents and identifying gaps to produce new toolkits/guidance to support colleagues. The below provides a summary of complete documents, those in progress and upcoming plans.

Complete since last update	In progress	Upcoming
Published guidance for managers to identify ways to embed EDI into their team working - making team working accessible and inclusive is a legal obligation in the UK under the Equality Act 2010. This includes making sure the workplace and work practices are accessible to as many people as possible Produced a **checklist document for colleagues creating or reviewing documents to identify equality considerations**. Produce a briefing document to **support managers to highlight the importance of diversity data in their teams**. To demonstrate compliance with the equality duty, we must publish the annual equality information report to understand whether we are providing equality and opportunity for all our employees and explore ways to improve data collection and data quality. This data also enables us to report our statutory pay gap information.	Developing a **reasonable adjustment policy for customers -** supporting officers to understand our legal requirements as provider of services. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to take reasonable steps to make adjustments for disabled people to ensure they can access services and functions without being disadvantaged. Reviewing and relaunching the customer accessible information and communications policy.	Developing anti-racism learning and resources on racism and mental health.