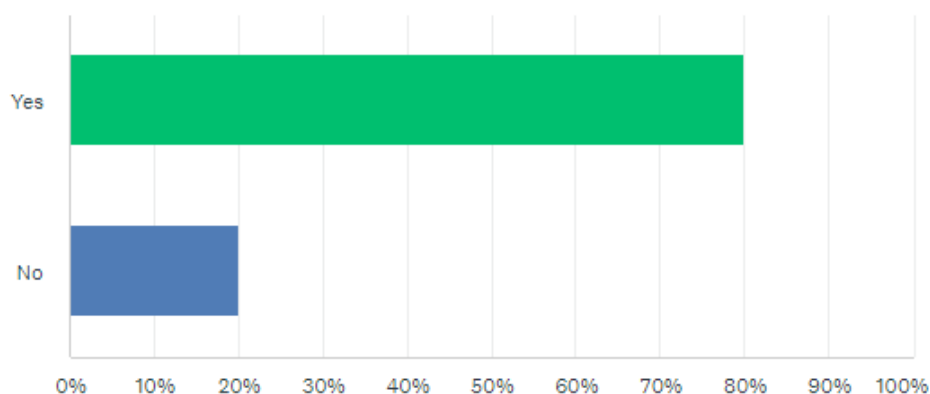


Consultation responses

Q1 Do you agree with the proposed new objective of: To provide ongoing training and support for staff and members to help them meet their duties under the Equality Act of 2010, and continue to report on progress.



Q2 Please make a comment about your choice of answer about the proposed objective

- [answered no] Although training and support are important, should part of the objective not be to ensure staff and members ARE meeting their duties under the Equality Act 2010?
- [answered yes] This is a positive objective however it would be useful to consider going further than you legal duty and ensure you are fully inclusive of LGBTQ+ staff and service users. for example understanding the needs of non-binary/gender fluid people.

Q3 We want to ensure that we continue to provide inclusive services to the people of Darlington. Please let us know if there are areas of work around Equality and Diversity which you feel need to be included in our Objective(s).

- Treating people with dignity and respect in spite of current disabilities including physical and mental health conditions.
- You mention you are exploring creating an LGBTQ+ group, this would be a positive visible signal to the wider community but also to support allies (non lgbt+ people) to understand the issues the community still face in 2022 with regard to homophobia, biphobia and transphobia as well as people with multiple marginalisations, LGBT+ people or colour for example.

Q4 If you have any comments about the updated Equality Policy please give them here

- I don't believe yr training is working towards equality for all service users
- Good clear policy but feel there could be more added to help sign-post people to where the support can be found, and for people who unexpectedly find themselves with a new characteristic (newly disabled through an accident, or diagnosed with a clinical mental health problem for example) what steps should they take to ensure they get the support they need? There is a line in Annex 2 but that was all i could see that generally cover this.
- Have you given any thought to how you will support non-binary staff within the council or those who wish to work for the local authority. The policy uses gendered language and does not reference gender nonconforming people at all. trans masculine staff who are pregnant would not, I suspect use 'she/her' pronouns or refer to themselves as 'women'.

Conversation with Darlington Association on Disability (DAD)

The policy has hardly changed since we wrote it as an Equality Scheme. Which was adapted from our original Disability Equality Scheme document.

- The Equality Scheme is referred to on page 17 even though its now a policy. Though trivial it shows no one has looked at this in depth.
- The Equality Objective for the period 2018-2022 was what I requested at the time. This was “To remind all Members and staff of their duties under the Equality Act 2010, demonstrate how the council has done this via training and engagement with services users and support organisations, and publicise the differences that this work has made.” However even though they say that this is happening I am experiencing in many departments that the penny isn’t dropping.
- Proposed measurement: 2023-2027 is: Continue to measure percentage of staff and members trained, and complaints relating to discrimination based on a protected characteristic.
- Potential for further objectives: One objective should be not only to continue to train staff it should start by letting every member of staff at all levels that this an Equality policy. Secondly, the section that refers to disability and reasonable adjustment needs to made clear that that DBC either as a service provider or employer doesn’t have the monopoly of saying what is reasonable. In fact by law if a disabled person requests something that they believe to be a reasonable adjustment and DBC disagrees the onus is on DBC like all service providers or employers to demonstrate why its not reasonable. It is not up to the disabled person to demonstrate that it is reasonable. In my experience DBC is very lacking in this area and training is needed and should be added to the objectives.