

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2025

Wards affected: All Torbay wards

Report Title: Inclusion Annual Report

When does the decision need to be implemented? Upon consideration by Cabinet on 16 December 2025

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This paper shares with Cabinet the progress that Torbay Council has made in promoting equality in the past year. It explores the legal duties that the Council must comply with and provides examples of how these have been fulfilled.
- 1.2 Specifically, the paper outlines the progress that the Council has made in delivering against its Equality Objectives and its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2025/26.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 Under the Equality Act the Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty which means that we need to give 'due regard' to equality. The General Duty requires us to:
 - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- 2.2 Under our Public Sector Equality Duty, we must publish one or more equality objectives every four years. Following a consultation, we last set our equality objectives in May 2025.
- 2.3 The Inclusion Strategy aims to holistically bring together the Council's work on inclusion and its equality objectives into one overarching document. This supports the Council to meet its Public Sector Equality Duty and deliver against its Equality Objectives.

- 2.4 The Equality and Diversity Action Plan sets out how the Council will work towards its Equality Objectives and will continue to implement the recommendations from the Racism Review.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision.

- 3.1 Note the progress made in delivering the Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2025-2026.
- 3.2 Approve the refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2027 as set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2026-27

1. Supporting information

1.1 In May 2025, the Council updated its equality objectives to meet its specific duties within the Equality Act. Progress against each of our equality objectives is set out below:

1. Ensure a wide range of voices are reached and heard in decision making, designing and delivering services.

As part of a programme of work, we undertook the following activities in 2025/26:

- Continued to support the Learning Disability Partnership and Autism Partnership recognising the important role that the Ambassadors play in shaping services in Adult Social Care and beyond.
- Engagement and communication colleagues joined Torbay Pride to celebrate the local LGBT+ community and gather community feedback.
- Raised awareness of our British Sign Language provision amongst colleagues which resulted in more people accessing British Sign Language interpretation via our supplier Sign Solutions.
- Joined partners to explore how we can make our beaches more accessible for people with disabilities. We are committed to continuing to explore how we can promote accessibility more broadly in Torbay.
- Continued to hold community engagement events across Torbay to better understand the needs of the local community.
- Continued to raise awareness of the importance of completing meaningful equality impact assessments amongst colleagues. This enables decision makers to fully understand the impact of decisions on different parts of the community.
- Worked with Devon County Council to tender a new interpretation and translation contract to make our services accessible for people with various communication needs. The new service will go live in Spring 2026 once our new provider has been confirmed.
- Continued to ask equality questions within our consultation surveys to find out if a proposed change to our policy or one of our services would affect a particular group of people.
- We continued to engage with partners working with different communities as part of the consultation on Local Government Reform.

2. Ensure that we embed inclusion into our procurement framework and clearly communicate our commitment towards inclusion with potential suppliers.

As part of a programme of work, we undertook the following activities in 2025/26:

- Following engagement with the Procurement Champions, we have developed procurement guidance to support colleagues in embedding equality, diversity and inclusion considerations within the procurement process.

3. Continue to implement the recommendations from the Torbay Racism Review Panel.

As part of a programme of work, we undertook the following activities in 2025/26:

- Setting up the Torbay Inclusion Partnership to strengthen our relationship with seldom heard groups including those from minoritised ethnic communities. The Partnership aims to create an additional forum for groups to help shape policy and service development at the Council.
- Continued to implement recommendations from the Review, including reviewing the workforce data that is currently collected and identifying what data is missing.

4. Support the diverse needs of our workforce. Our staff are one of our biggest assets and our employees come from a wide range of backgrounds with a variety of skills and knowledge. We are committed to supporting our staff and enabling them to provide the best possible service to our customers.

As part of a programme of work, we undertook the following activities in 2025/26:

- Continuing to celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion through marking a range of inclusion related dates to our staff throughout the year. Examples this year include Pride, Black History Month, International Women's Day, Learning Disability Week.
- Ensuring that policies and initiatives are in place so our staff can feel safe at work and carry out their duties without feeling bullied or discriminated against.
- Delivering equality, diversity and inclusion training courses to managers as part of the Managers Framework.
- Launched a new mandatory all staff equality, diversity and inclusion e-learning course.

- 1.4 We are proud of the steps that we have taken to promote inclusion. We are aware that further work is needed to mainstream inclusion across the Council and are fully committed to doing so. Our refreshed Equality and Diversity Action Plan for 2026/27 aims to support us to continue this work in a meaningful and impactful manner.

2. Options under consideration

2.1 The options considered were:

- (i) To not progress with an annual Inclusion Update or publish a refreshed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan for 2026/27.

- 2.2 This was not deemed to be a suitable option. The Council has a legal obligation to publish equality objectives. Under our Public Sector Equality Duty, it is important that we promote and fully embed inclusion. A strategic and joined-up approach will help us to achieve this.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

3.1 No further funding is required at this stage.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None anticipated.

5. Engagement and Consultation

5.1 Consultation and engagement did not inform the development of this paper.

6. Purchasing or Hiring of Goods and/or Services

6.1 Not applicable within this proposal.

7. Tackling Climate Change

7.1 No adverse impacts on climate change are anticipated.

8. Associated Risks

8.1 There are no associated risks.

9. Equality Impacts - Identify the potential positive and negative impacts on specific groups

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old. 55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old. 27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Carers	At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Disability	In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.			
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.			
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay,	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Human Rights impacts		No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared-	No adverse impacts are anticipated from this decision.	Not applicable	Not applicable

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
	for and care experienced children and young people.			

10. Cumulative Council Impact

10.1 None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

11.1 None

