



South Staffordshire Council

'Everyone Counts'



www.sstaffs.gov.uk



Equality and Diversity



‘EVERYONE COUNTS’

Welcome to this summary of South Staffordshire Council’s equality plans and arrangements.

I am delighted to introduce this document which sets out our commitment to build a fairer society for our residents, businesses, and employees in South Staffordshire.

This document is a high-level overview of the top equality issues in our district, work in progress and future plans.

I am particularly proud of South Staffordshire’s reputation as a welcoming place, but also aware more needs to be done. In one way or another equalities can affect us all. As a council we have broad ranging responsibilities with respect to equalities, both as a service provider and as an employer. Whilst we take the Equality Act 2010 extremely seriously where possible we will also aim to exceed statutory obligations, particularly where this will make a difference to our communities.

As a public sector provider, we have a responsibility to give people a voice. We can best do this by talking to people to find out what they want and then delivering inclusive services that are as flexible and diverse as the communities we serve.

We must also reflect inwardly and recognise our responsibilities as an employer because we know that a workforce that represents the make-up of our district is better placed to deliver equitable services that are sensitive to different needs and perspectives.

I hope I have gone some way to conveying the importance we place on equality.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Heywood'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Dave Heywood

Chief Executive
South Staffordshire Council

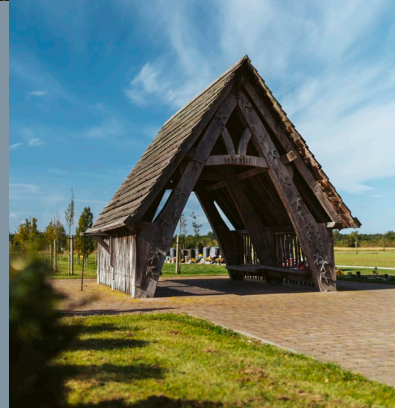
Equality and Diversity



Shaping South Staffordshire's future

“We are proud that 92% of our residents would recommend South Staffordshire as a good place to live. Our 27 parishes are made up of some small hamlets and large village with no major towns. Our diverse communities are a strength of the district and we are proud of their uniqueness.

With 80% greenbelt land, our residents take pride in our beautiful countryside as well as our rich legacy of conservation areas, amongst many historic buildings and landscapes. The area also has a strong manufacturing history that has been recently heightened by our partners; i54 South Staffordshire and Jaguar Land Rover”



Equality and Diversity

Our approach to equality and diversity, and what does it mean for our communities, staff and residents.

OUR APPROACH

As a council we have equality responsibilities, both as a service provider and as an employer, as emphasised in the Equality Act; particularly the importance of treating people with protected characteristics fairly.

However, equality is not just about staying within the law. South Staffordshire Council has a vital role to play in making a difference to our residents. This includes reducing inequalities and driving better outcomes for people who experience disadvantage relating to their protected characteristics and because of socioeconomic and health inequalities.

Therefore, we have produced our 'Everyone Counts' document. This sets out a high-level overview of the top equality issues affecting our communities and staff. We have also set out our work in progress, plans and equality objectives which aim to remove barriers, promote equality of opportunity, foster good relations, and improve our performance in meeting our equality duties.

What this means for:



OUR COMMUNITIES

We will develop approaches to make all people feel welcomed and valued in South Staffordshire. We will proactively challenge discrimination and exclusion and eliminate barriers.



OUR STAFF

We will treat all people fairly. We aim to create an environment where everyone can participate and has an equal opportunity to fulfil their potential.



OUR RESIDENTS

We recognise that everyone is different, whether these differences are visible or non visible. We will respect, value and celebrate these differences.

Diversity and Inclusion Achievements



From 29 March 2021 to 31 July 2021, **182** walkers have walked with the **South Staffordshire Walking Programme**. There has been **2,002** attendances.



Work commenced on the construction of a new **3G Pitch** at Wombourne Leisure Centre.

As a result of the **Holiday activities and food programme funding** (HAF) during the summer holiday activity camp, the leisure centres were pleased to accommodate **1,884** free places and a further **130** free places for the Christmas holiday activity camp.

2,000 children and **56** adults on the **learn to swim** programme.



Our **leisure centres** offer activities and classes for all age groups and abilities.



Since the **Gentle Exercise classes** restarted on 17 May 2021 to the end of October 2021, a total of **318** people attended a total of **242** classes (normally 12 a week). During this time, a total of **4,060** attendances have been recorded with an average of **18** people attending each class.



South Staffordshire Community Lottery sold **204,027** tickets.

Now raised over **£122,416** for good causes, charities and community groups.

260 members have requested access to our **free** online class membership.

Facebook Likes **7,985** Followers **8,831**
Twitter Followers **9,580**

Customer Services answered **66,239** calls and handled **10,705** emails.

Supported **806** callers on our **Covid Helpline**.

Worked with **Support Staffordshire (VCSE)** to ensure consultations are reaching underrepresented groups.

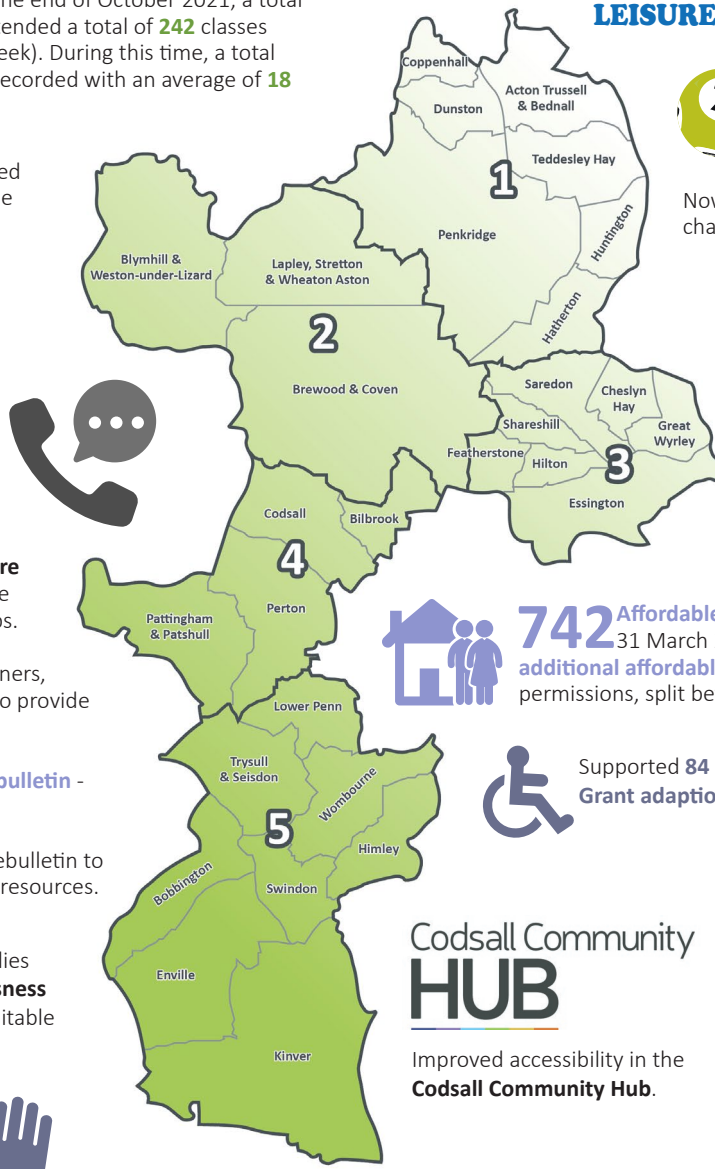
Worked with local members, partners, parishes and community groups to provide Covid-19 community support.

Reintroduced a weekly **Covid-19 bulletin** - with **17,890** subscribers.

Send out a weekly Council News ebulletin to residents which includes support resources.

Supported **39** families at risk of **homelessness** and found them suitable accommodation.

Working with partners to raise awareness and increase reporting of **domestic abuse**.



A new **health and wellbeing walk** has launched at Baggeridge Country Park and its new refurbished children's area is a huge success.



742 Affordable Housing completions by April 2020 and we expect a minimum of **540** additional affordable homes to come from our current housing permissions, split between social rent and shared ownership.



Supported **84** residents with **131** Disabled Grant adaptations, totalling **£863,335**



849 new applications for benefits.

Codsall Community HUB

Improved accessibility in the **Codsall Community Hub**.



Development of new **Wellbeing Strategy** and online **Wellbeing Resource Hub**.



Multi-platform Local Plan consultation received more than **2,600** responses.

Working with partners to raise awareness and support people who are particularly vulnerable to being a victim of crime, or criminally exploited.



April - December 2021 the **Building Better Opportunities** programme has achieved:

112 sign-ups to the programme.

11 participants have moved into education/training.

31 participants have moved into employment.

Created **five** apprenticeship opportunities.

Helped residents in **1,300** properties with assisted bin collections.



ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY

92% of residents would recommend South Staffordshire as a place to live

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ENGAGING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

Every year we send out an annual survey for our residents to complete, the latest survey uncovers the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on our residents, their families, and communities as well as incorporating some more generic themes. The results will now be used to support the Localites+ model and service planning.

IMPACT OF COVID-19



We then asked what they are likely to continue from the above and the top three things are enjoying more time outdoors in/around my local area, a healthier lifestyle and remaining more digitally connected to my community.

Over the next three months, the top three things that residents are very worried about are access to health care services (60%), the local economy, (51%) and their physical health (38%).

Since the start of the pandemic, more people have used the internet to access information and services, spend more time walking/gardening and buy locally more often. 20% of people exercise less and not surprising have less contact with friends and family.

166 people said that Covid had changed how they used council services. The reasons range from cancelling gym membership, using parks more, using services online, difficulties with contacting officers.

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Looking to the future, just over half of the responses indicated that they would continue to exercise independently, exercise through frequent gardening and utilise open green spaces. 25% of people said that they would return or join their local leisure centre and are interested in supporting environmental projects. 273 people provided their email addresses to receive more information about health and wellbeing options.

UNPAID HELP OR SUPPORT



When asked what would encourage people to provide unpaid help or support to others in the community, the top three reasons were; being able to fit this in around my life, not having to make an ongoing commitment and understanding how I can help. 188 people provided their email addresses to receive more information on providing unpaid help or support in the community.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19



From the beginning of lockdown South Staffordshire Council, quickly focused on its areas of priority; keeping our communities safe, continuing to provide essential core services, providing financial assistance to local businesses, and ensuring our members and workforce had the tools to do their jobs. Overnight most staff became homeworkers, a transition that was executed smoothly due to the considerable strides made through our transformation agenda, and the council quickly developed a pace to respond to the considerable challenges we faced from the offset.

Community Focus: One of the immediate concerns at the beginning of lockdown was to ensure that our most vulnerable residents were safe and had access to food. A community mapping exercise was carried out with parishes and community groups informing us of the areas to focus on in our Localities that needed our support. In these instances, we worked with local members, partners, parishes and community groups, to ensure there were no gaps in provision across the localities, providing a mix of in-kind support, and where needed, giving additional funding. This accelerated our Localities+ agenda and the introduction of six Locality Enabler roles chosen from across council services, to work on our response and recovery.

Ultimately, we have not let the challenges of the pandemic thwart our ambitions of keeping our communities prosperous and vibrant, whilst maintaining the necessary pace of delivery.

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UNDERSTANDING OUR COMMUNITIES



There are **114,973** people living within South Staffordshire of which **57,249** are male and **57,724** are female.



Within this Population **59,037** are economically active whilst **25,461** are classed as economically inactive.



74.99% of houses are owner occupied whilst **9.97%** are privately rented.



The three highest Mosaic groups are B Prestige Positions, E Suburban Stability and H Aspiring Homemakers.



The Population of the area is expected to change by **1.34%** by 2023.

| AGE BANDS | Area |
|-----------|---------------|
| Under 15 | 16,582 |
| 15-19 | 5,909 |
| 20-24 | 5,894 |
| 25-34 | 12,203 |
| 35-44 | 12,593 |
| 45-54 | 17,677 |
| 55-64 | 16,207 |
| 65+ | 27,908 |

Source: Experian Age and Gender Estimates (2018)

| ETHNIC MIX | Area |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| White | 109,610 |
| Gypsy/Traveller/Irish Traveller | 153 |
| Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups | 1,748 |
| Asian/Asian British: Indian | 1,476 |
| Asian/Asian British: Pakistani | 340 |
| Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi | 33 |
| Asian/Asian British: Chinese | 210 |
| Asian/Asian British: Other: Asian | 340 |
| Black/African/Caribbean/Black British | 804 |
| Other Ethnic Group | 259 |

Source: Experian Current Year Estimates based on ONS Census Data (2018)

Our Locality Profile is produced bi-annually and highlights the many different needs, issues and priorities of the 25 wards and five localities that make up South Staffordshire's district. Data is structured around many key themes such as; employment, health and wellbeing, education, housing, transport, community safety, volunteering and rural isolation. Any emerging issues and challenges are highlighted and used to inform future policies, projects, funding applications and the redesigning of public services in order to ensure resources are allocated effectively. The current and previous profiles are available to everyone via the council's website and shared with members and partnership organisations.

The Locality Profile highlights that dementia is a local issue due to being above the national average. The demographics of South Staffordshire that are presented also indicate that the largest increase over the next 10 years will be within the 65-84 age group.

Equality and Diversity

By 2030, to every 65-84 year old, there will only be two 16-64 year olds. This, in conjunction with an above average prevalence of dementia, has fuelled our desire to become a dementia-friendly community.

These are some of the key local challenges that will inform how we work with partners to plan and deliver our services.

THE CHALLENGES:

- » The gap in the employment rate between those with a long-term health condition and the general population is 38%, higher than the national average (29%). Other vulnerable groups (for example those with mental health conditions or who have a learning disability) also have relatively low employment rates.
- » The percentage of adults aged 16-64 with NVQ level 3 or above is lower than the national average. South Staffordshire also has a similar number of adults with no qualifications when compared to the national average.
- » Four out of the six secondary schools in South Staffordshire have a below average GCSE attainment of grade 5 or above in English and Maths.
- » Unemployment in Bilbrook is above average.
- » Housing affordability is an issue for low earners in South Staffordshire. The latest district affordability ratio in January 2018 was 8.82, which means the lower quartile house price in South Staffordshire is almost nine times the lower quartile average annual income. It is Locality 2's second most desired improvement.
- » Healthy life expectancy in South Staffordshire is 66 years for men and 66 years for women. Women are spending more of their lives in poor health than men (17 years compared to 14).
- » Long-term conditions such as dementia, diabetes, hypertension and stroke are higher than the national average.
- » Excess weight in adults is similar to the national average. Excess weight in children is above the national average.
- » The uptake of the seasonal flu and pneumococcal vaccine in people aged 65 is worse when compared to the England average and the trend over the last five years is worsening.
- » Breast and cervical attendance has worsened over the last five years.
- » South Staffordshire has a higher proportion of lone pensioner households compared to the national average.
- » Burglary is the biggest concern to South Staffordshire safety. Himley and Swindon, Trysull and Seisdon and Bilbrook, however, are the only wards that have higher burglary rates than the England average. Burglary has also increased in Locality 2 and 3 since the previous 12 months.

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EQUALITY OBJECTIVES

Following on from an LGA Peer Review in June 2018 one of the recommendations was to develop a Place Narrative with a long-term vision for the district. Sixty separate consultation events were held with community groups in the district and the information gleaned from these alongside the data in the Locality Profiles led to a Place Narrative which helped to inform the Council Plan 2020-2024 - talking to and listening to our communities is at the core of what we do.

The Council Plan sets key objectives and outcomes that support the achievements of the Council's new vision, "Shaping South Staffordshire's future". The vision "Shaping South Staffordshire's future" will be delivered through the two new clear priority areas in the new Council Plan, "Prosperous Communities" and "Vibrant Communities".

Each priority sets out five key objectives and outcomes to be achieved over the next four years. Each of the objectives will be supported by the delivery of five key delivery arms, financial stability, embracing technology, flexible and skilled council, working with our communities and to create a business and community hub.



South Staffordshire's Councils equality objectives reflect our current corporate objectives in relation to Equality and Diversity and help us to improve policy making, and service delivery:

- Know the diversity of our community and understand its need.
- Work in partnership with public, private, voluntary and community organisations to reduce the equality gaps and improve lives.
- Actively engage our community to participate in decision making processes to improve the services we provide.
- Continue to ensure our workforce is representative of the communities we serve and our work place is inclusive and strives to treat people equitably with dignity and respect.

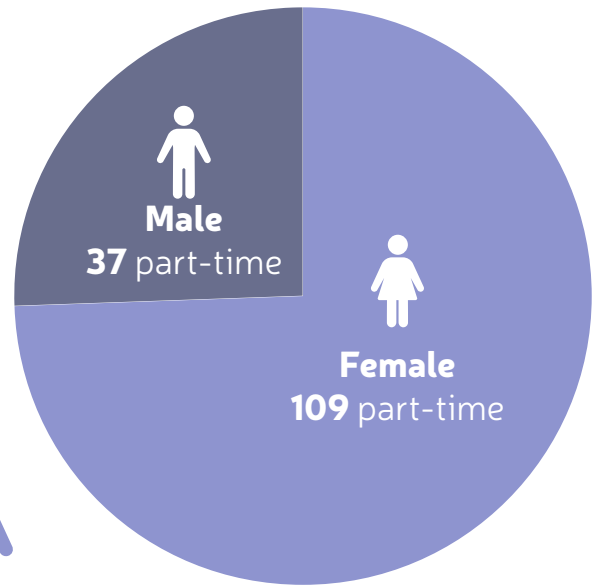
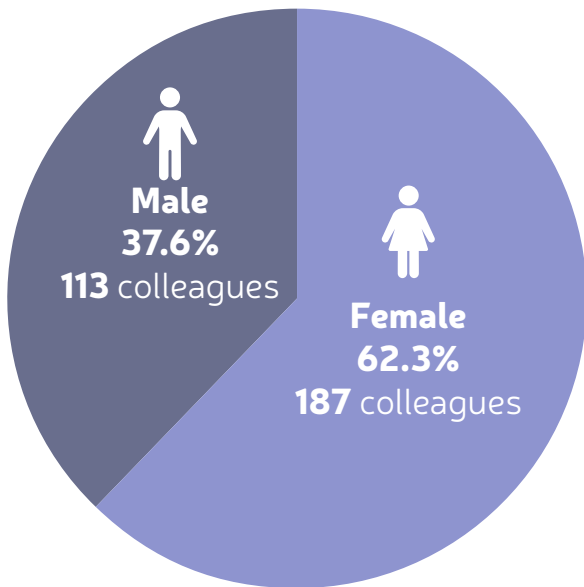
We recognise that achieving these objectives is a long-term goal which will require concerted, proactive and on-going action in order to evidence change. We will report on performance measures and outcomes about these objectives annually, and this information will be published on our website. We will also review the objectives regularly to check that they are still relevant and to ensure they reflect the current customer needs, resident feedback and data that we have available.

Equality and Diversity

WORKFORCE STATISTICS



Our Gender Profile



75%

of our Corporate Leadership Team are female



100%

Return to work rate from maternity leave



Gender pay gap is **8.9%** (mean) and **0.89%** (median)

Our Age Profile

| Age Group | % |
|--------------|-------------|
| 16-18 | 1.67% |
| 19-25 | 12.67% |
| 26-35 | 11.67% |
| 36-45 | 23.67% |
| 46-55 | 22% |
| 56 Plus | 28.33% |
| Total | 100% |

26% of our workforce are under age 36

Just over **23%** are between the ages of 36-45

Just over **50%** are over age 45

We have **8** colleagues undertaking an apprentice programme and have employed **5 new apprentices** since April 2021

Equality and Diversity



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ACTIONS

Workforce Development Strategy Actions taken to help us recruitment and retain a diverse workforce and continually improve on equality and inclusion

- ✓ All council services have been provided with their staff workforce profile data so they can develop plans to be more representative through recruitment or career development strategies.
- ✓ We have issued feedback questionnaires to leavers from under-represented groups to identify if we can make improvements that are specific to the needs of under-represented parts of our workforce.
- ✓ We have promoted the importance of colleagues updating their information to assist us in supporting employees with disabilities.
- ✓ We have contacted employees who have disclosed that they have a disability to identify if they have sufficient support and/or require any further adjustments and used this information to develop further actions.
- ✓ We have developed a new health and wellbeing strategy.
- ✓ Supported the health and wellbeing strategy with a comprehensive on-line wellbeing resource hub for staff and training programme.
- ✓ We have ensured Aspire, our talent management programme, promotion opportunities and the award of additional development responsibilities and honoraria have been inclusive and included colleagues from under-represented groups.
- ✓ We have increased investment in graduate and apprentice employment this year. An additional five posts have been created since 1 April 2021. The council has also used the apprentice levy to fund qualifications and technical programmes to support career development for existing employees.

Equality and Diversity



EQUALITY ARRANGEMENTS

Our commitment

We're committed to helping to build a fairer South Staffordshire where the diversity of our local communities is celebrated.

We are working hard to shape our services and employment practices to make sure that we are fully supporting, equity, fairness and the right to live free from discrimination, victimisation, and harassment and to give everyone the best possible environments to live, visit and work.

Leadership strategy and policy

The Leader of the Council, all Elected Members, Chief Executive, Corporate and Assistant Directors have responsibility for the strategic direction of equality and diversity in the Council. They also ensure equality is considered when key decisions are made that affect residents and employees.

This is supported by the Council's corporate equality steering group who develop strategic plans and corporate work programmes to support equalities at South Staffordshire Council.

Equality and Diversity Service Group

The Equality and Diversity Service Group is representative of key council services. The aim of the group is to quality assure Equality Impact Assessments, integrate equality in service planning and to provide a forum to consider the needs of underrepresented colleagues and ensure they have a voice and can share their expertise to help us continually improve.



South Staffordshire Council

