

Including Everyone

Equalities, diversity and inclusion framework



Cherwell

DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Including Everyone

There is enormous strength in diversity. Bringing people together from across a wide range of social and cultural experiences and backgrounds enables us to broaden our perspectives, enhance our understanding and enrich our way of life. It fosters an inclusive and supportive environment, which lends strength and vitality to communities and this enables individuals to meet their potential.

Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council are a partnership of councils, sharing a Chief Executive, developing shared teams and are joining up where it makes sense. Our Including Everyone Framework outlines our joint approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion for both councils. It sets out our vision to be leaders in our field; providing inclusive services, workplaces and communities, equitable access to services and equality of opportunity.

We have heard how painful exclusion can be for people and how negatively this can impact people's lives. We take our obligations and commitments to equalities, diversity and inclusion extremely seriously. We recognise

the need to listen and learn as we tackle inequalities through our policies but most importantly through our concrete actions.

We are working hard to ensure our workplaces, services and communities are inclusive, so they are places where diversity is protected, honoured and celebrated. We know we don't have all the answers, but by listening to and learning from our staff and residents, we can identify inequality and tackle disadvantage. We recognise the need to redouble efforts to tackle racism and all forms of discrimination.

We have developed a joint framework because we share a mutual understanding of what is important and what we are working to achieve. How this is expressed for our communities, services and staff will differ according to their unique circumstances, and this will be reflected in an action plan for each organisation which will sit underneath this framework. These plans describe the local actions we will take to deliver on the goals and commitments outlined in this document; they are updated annually and are used to track and measure our progress.



Cllr Ian Hudspeth
Leader of Oxfordshire
County Council



Cllr Barry Wood
Leader of Cherwell
District Council

Our shared vision is to be a partnership of councils, leading the field in our approach to equality and diversity in our workplace, inclusive service delivery and tackling disadvantage in the communities we serve. We have developed a framework around our vision, shown on this page; organised around three strands of work, each with commitments and goals against them and a set of key principles that underpin all we do.

Our Including Everyone Framework

Leading the field in equality and diversity in our workplace, inclusive service delivery and tackling disadvantage in the communities we serve



- We work with communities to help them thrive
- We work with partners to tackle disadvantage in our communities.



- Our information and buildings are accessible for all
- Our services use good data and engage with users to plan and meet their different needs.



- Our workforce is inclusive, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve
- Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge to be inclusive.

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility

We listen and learn together

Flexibility supports diverse needs

Diversity is embraced and celebrated

Why **Including** Everyone is important

This Framework is important for us in honouring and protecting the diverse strengths of individuals and in building inclusive communities; we go beyond what the law expects of us to achieve this. The Equality Act (2010) states that public bodies, including Councils need to take extra steps to stop discrimination: this is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Act defines discrimination as the less favourable treatment of a person, because of a protected characteristic, as compared to others who do not share that characteristic. The legislation also applies where there is a belief that the person who is disadvantaged has a particular protected characteristic, even if that is not the case.

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that we must consider equality as part of our daily business, in particular:

- ✔ We need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
- ✔ We need to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
- ✔ Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not,
- ✔ Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years and,
- ✔ Publish information, at least annually, to show how we comply with the Equality Duty including information about employees and to people who are affected by the public body's policies and procedures.

There are nine protected characteristics: age; disability (including invisible disabilities); gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation.

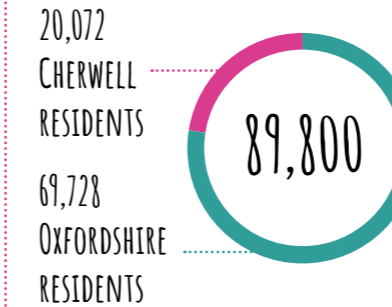
We go further than the protected characteristics in our decision-making process. To do this we consider the impact that our decisions have on people living with social deprivation, in rural communities, those leaving care, carers, and those in our armed forces community. For us inclusion applies to the 'communities' where we live and work, but also communities of shared understanding, such as faith, heritage and sexuality. We want to support every community to be the best it can and we work to remove or reduce obstacles which get in the way; this includes tackling unconscious bias which occurs when people favour others who look like them, share their values or experiences.



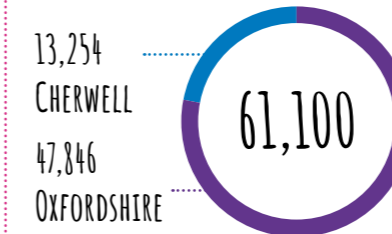
Not everyone is included

Data about the county and district tells us that the population we serve is relatively affluent; we also know that this level of data masks some stark inequalities within our communities which we find when we dig beneath the surface. The diversity in our communities is a strength and does not result in disadvantage by itself, but we know we need to tackle inequalities because not everyone has the same life opportunities. The following illustrates examples of some of the inequalities in our communities:

People live with a long term illness or disability in Oxfordshire (2011)



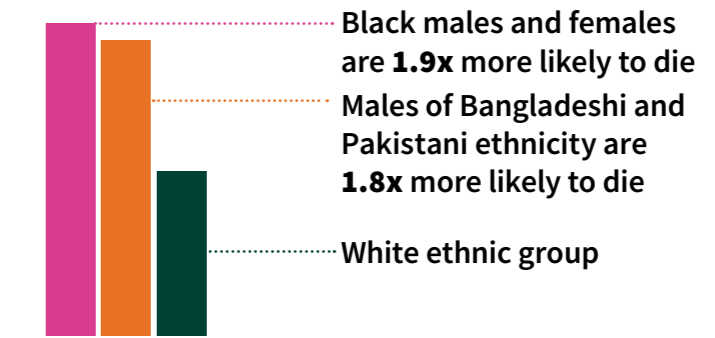
Unpaid carers in Oxfordshire (2011)



Research shows carers are more likely to report symptoms of mental ill-health, and struggle financially

Public Health England, information shows ethnic identity influences mental and physical health outcomes via multiple routes, such as experiences of discrimination and fear of negative incidents

Ethnic groups risk of death from COVID-19

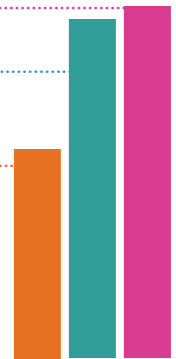


Average pay for men in Oxfordshire

Average pay for men in Cherwell

Average pay for women in Oxfordshire

Men earn on average **£6,800** more than women in the Oxfordshire area. Men in the Cherwell area earn on average **£6,200** more



In 2020, **10%** of children across the county live in low income families; thats almost

12,000

CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

Life expectancy between the most and least deprived wards in Oxfordshire is

13.7 YEARS

In 2019, there were

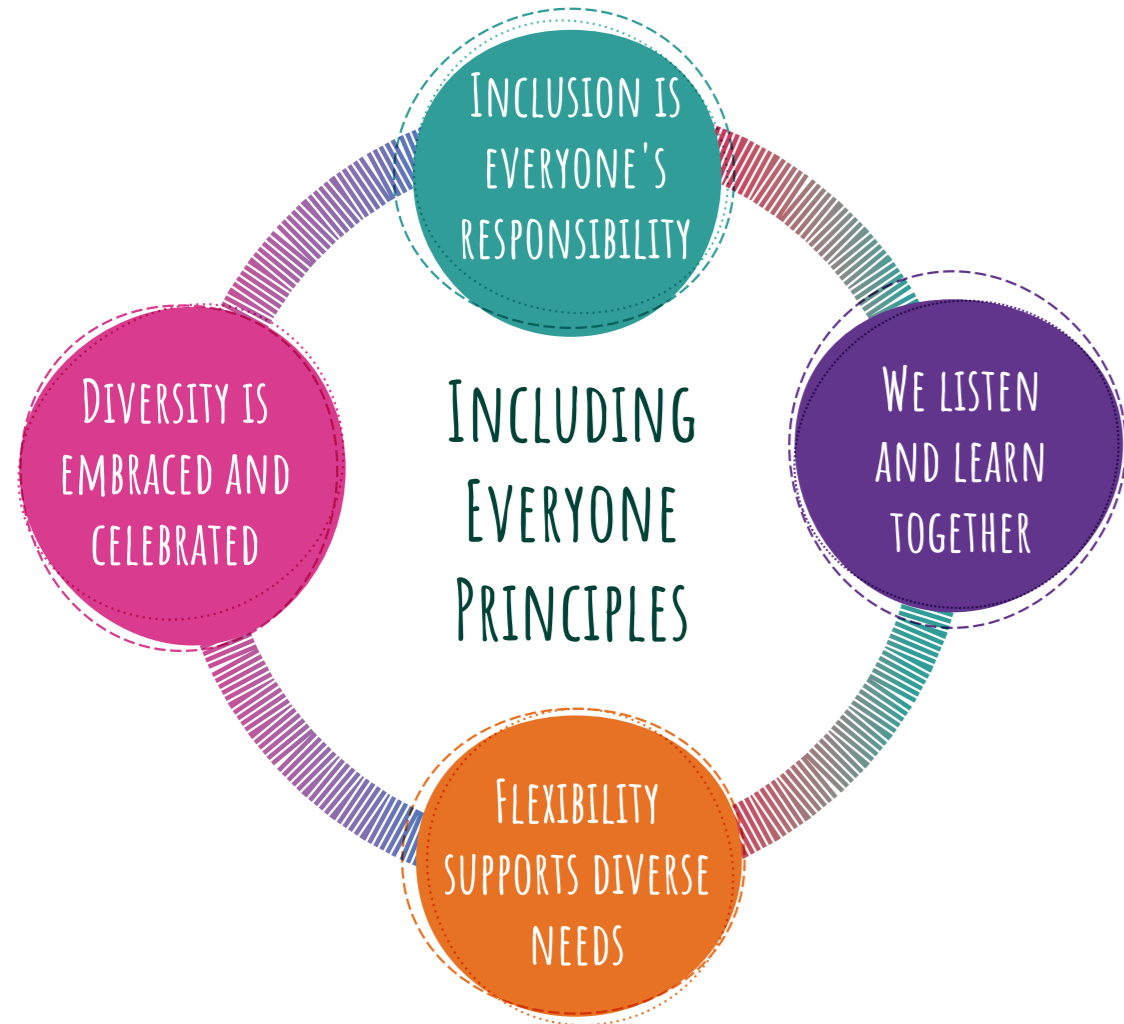
6,464

PUPILS

with learning difficulties in Oxfordshire schools

Principles

Our equality, diversity and inclusion Framework is underpinned by the following key principles:



Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. Including everyone means that we all need to work together, in the workplace and in communities to remove seen and unseen barriers to opportunities.

We listen and learn together. People have unique experiences and perspectives which can enrich our collective understanding, so by creating a culture of curiosity we can learn how to best focus our efforts.

Flexibility supports diverse needs. Recognising and responding well to diverse needs, ensures we deliver an inclusive communities, services and workplaces.

Diversity is embraced and celebrated. There is enormous strength in diversity; we celebrate this and embrace it in our learning, service delivery and community leadership.

We have three inter-connected strands that help us organise our work: inclusive communities, inclusive service delivery and inclusive workplaces. The following section sets out our goals and commitments against each strand. The goals will be tracked and measured in an annual action plan for each council, which sit underneath this framework.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

GOAL 1

We work with communities to help them thrive

COMMITMENTS

- Engage with, and support, local community groups and organisations
- Promote inclusive behaviour with residents and those using services
- Work directly with communities to identify inequality and tackle disadvantage.

GOAL 2

We work with partners to tackle disadvantage in our communities

COMMITMENTS

- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through our supply chain and strategic partnerships
- Promote and encourage inclusive behaviour for future generations
- Work with all partner organisations to understand diverse needs and create inclusive communities.



INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

GOAL 3

Our information and buildings are accessible for all

COMMITMENTS

- Ensure our information, website and digital services are accessible for all; including those digitally excluded
- Take action to make our buildings accessible to all residents and staff.

GOAL 4

Our services use good data and engage with users to plan and meet their diverse needs

COMMITMENTS

- Better understand those using services and their needs by collecting their information and feedback
- Engage residents, those using services users and community groups when planning and delivering services
- Plan and deliver services that promote inclusion.

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

GOAL 5

Our workforce is inclusive, reflecting the diversity of the communities we serve

COMMITMENTS

- Improve the diversity of our organisation at all levels to be representative of our communities
- Celebrate and promote diversity in our workforce
- Provide a supportive environment so all staff can reach their potential.

GOAL 6

Our staff have the values, skills and knowledge to be inclusive

COMMITMENTS

- Identify and tackle discrimination in all its forms
- Provide managers with the skills to support employees with different needs and plan inclusive services
- Train our staff to identify and avoid unconscious bias and deliver inclusive services.



Responsibility for delivering **Including** Everyone Framework

An underpinning principle of our Framework is that inclusion is everyone's responsibility; we need a collective effort to realise our vision. The following sets out the roles and responsibilities for delivering the Including Everyone Framework:



Monitoring and reporting progress

The goals and commitments of our Including Everyone Framework are set every four years and are shared between Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

Sitting beneath this Framework will be an annual action plan for each organisation, that reflect the different ways in which

we are working to make our respective organisations, services and communities more inclusive. The action plans will have indicators to help us measure progress against our goals. Implementation will be overseen by the Inclusion Steering Group and reporting will align with business monitoring.

We will engage in the development of our action plans each year and will produce an annual report to outline our progress. We will seek feedback on how others see and experience our progress as part of the annual reporting process.

References and resources

- Oxfordshire Joint Strategy Needs Assessment
- 'Some are more equal than others: hidden inequalities in a prospering Oxfordshire' 2019/20 Director of Public Health Annual Report
- Equalities and Human Rights Commission
- Stonewall (LGBT+) specific information
- My Life, My Choice
- Age UK Oxfordshire
- Oxfordshire Youth
- Disability Rights UK





Alternative formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, ie easy read, large text, audio, Braille or a community language, please get in touch.


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