

Including Everyone

2025 - 2029

Equalities, diversity and inclusion framework



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Including Everyone

We want Oxfordshire to be a place where everyone can thrive, no matter their background. Our county is changing, and many of our communities have faced painful challenges in recent years with COVID-19 and the cost-of-living crisis, which have heightened inequalities in our communities. We know that the climate crisis will impact disadvantaged and marginalised communities more. As a council we must do our part to meet these challenges head on to help ensure that everyone can realise their full potential.

We take our obligations and commitments very seriously and we are determined to challenge discrimination and reduce inequality in all that we do. We are working to achieve both the RACE Equality Code accreditation and to becoming a Council of Sanctuary to support some of the most vulnerable migrants coming to Oxfordshire. We have committed to considering future generations in our decision making, with the aim of making intergenerationally fair decisions. And we are also developing our approach to integrating the socio-economic

duty, which means we will consider and take action to reduce inequalities experienced because of socio-economic disadvantage.

This refreshed Including Everyone framework sets out our vision across three pillars: Inclusive Workplace, Inclusive Service Delivery, and Inclusive Communities. These build on our 2020 framework, but place more emphasis on the role of senior leaders, the value of lived experience and consideration of intersectionality. We have also included some case studies to bring the framework alive and demonstrate how we are working towards our ambitions in practice.

Our framework will be underpinned by specific key performance indicators (KPIs) for the whole organisation to work towards, which will enable us to measure our progress. These KPIs will be data-driven and will help shape our inclusion priorities.

We are proud of all the work we are doing to tackle inequalities. But we know there is much more to be done to create a fairer Oxfordshire. As a council, we may not have all

the answers, but we know that by listening to our colleagues and communities, we can learn, respond and adapt as we go.

We are extremely grateful to residents, communities and partners who have taken the time to share their experiences and feedback in helping to shape this framework. Working with our communities and learning from, and being guided by, their experiences is key to tackling disadvantage.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Leffman".

Cllr Liz Leffman
Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

Our **Including** Everyone Framework

Our ambitions:



- We work with communities to help them thrive.
- We support and encourage partners to be inclusive.



- We have accessible buildings and information, and we encourage our partners to do this too.
- We communicate and engage with our residents to plan and meet their diverse needs.



- Our working culture is inclusive and our employee demographics reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.
- Our colleagues have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everyone.
- Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work.

Our vision is to lead the way in creating a fair and inclusive Oxfordshire by building an inclusive workplace culture, delivering inclusive services, and tackling disadvantage in the communities we serve. Each of our three pillars is supported by specific ambitions, which in turn are underpinned by our principles to guide how we work towards our vision.

OUR PRINCIPLES:



Why we must **include** everyone

We believe that promoting inclusion and reducing inequalities is simply the right thing to do. However, as a public body, we also have a legal obligation to do this.

As a council, we must follow the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act (2010). This means that the council has a special role in tackling discrimination. 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.

Public Sector Equality Duty means we must:

- ✔ **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,**
- ✔ **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 already go further than the protected characteristics in our decision-making, ensuring we consider the impact of our decisions on:

- ✔ **Areas of deprivation**
- ✔ **Rural communities**
- ✔ **Armed Forces communities (including veterans)**
- ✔ **Carers**

As outlined in our case studies (see pages 15-20) we are moving towards considering the impact our decisions have on future generations, those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage and vulnerable migrants.

For us inclusion applies to the communities where we live and work, but also to communities of shared understanding, such as faith, heritage, lifestyle and sexuality. We want to support every community to thrive, and we actively 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. We also recognise that many people are part of multiple communities and may have several protected characteristics or diverse lived experiences which may compound any disadvantage or challenges they experience. This is called intersectionality.



Oxfordshire is more diverse and less equitable than many think

Oxfordshire's population is becoming increasingly diverse, as the statistics from the 2021 Census and 2023 Joint Strategic Needs Assessment illustrate. This makes it all the more important that we tackle inequalities to ensure everyone is included.

LGBTQ+

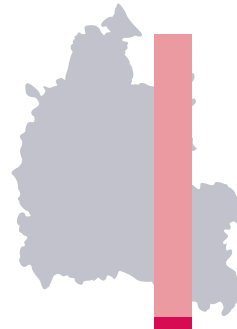
Oxford is home to the UK's largest population of trans and non-binary people outside of London

0.6% OF THE POPULATION



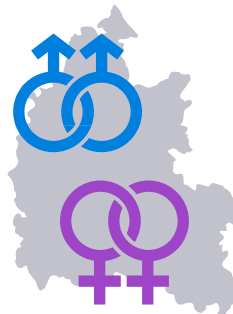
3.4% OF OXFORDSHIRE'S POPULATION

define their sexual orientation other than straight / heterosexual



0.8% OF MARRIED / CIVIL PARTNERED PEOPLE IN OXFORDSHIRE

are in same-sex relationships



Migration

Oxfordshire has a greater population of those born outside the UK than the national average (**17% versus 19%**) and

ENGLISH IS A SECOND LANGUAGE FOR 9% OF OXFORDSHIRE'S POPULATION.



OVER 50

DIFFERENT LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN IN OXFORDSHIRE.

After English, Polish (**1.2%**), Portuguese (**0.8%**) and Romanian (**0.8%**) have the most speakers in Oxfordshire.

There are around

3,500

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS RESIDING IN OXFORDSHIRE.

Race, ethnicity and cultural heritage

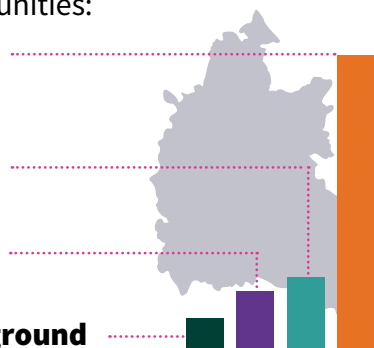
Oxfordshire is home to many different ethnicities and cultures, creating rich and diverse communities:

6.4% Asian (mostly of Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and Bangladeshi origin)

1.6% other ethnic groups (including Arab, East Asian, Turkish and Kurdish)

1.3% Black of African background (such as Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan)

0.7% Black British or Caribbean background



NEARLY A QUARTER

of Oxfordshire residents are of an ethnic group other than White British (**and almost half the population in Oxford**)

Oxfordshire has a higher proportion of residents that are of a mixed-race or of multiple ethnicities than the England and Wales average (**3.1% compared to 2.9%**)

0.26%

OF OXFORDSHIRE'S POPULATION are part of the gypsy, Roma and traveller communities

Oxfordshire has a bigger proportion of residents of Polish origin than the England and Wales average (**1.2% compared to 1%**)

Religion

Oxfordshire has a higher proportion of residents with no religion than the England and Wales average (**40% versus 37.2%**), as well as a higher Christian population (**47.3% versus 46.2%**)

OVER HALF

of the population of Oxfordshire (**53.1%**) have a religion



Armed Forces

There are around

10,000

ARMED FORCES PERSONNEL stationed in Oxfordshire, mostly RAF and army

Oxfordshire has a bigger population of veterans compared to the England average (**4% compared to 3.8%**),

including around

400

FORMER GURKHAS

There are over

3,000

SERVICE CHILDREN

in our schools – the fifth largest service pupil population in England

Health and wellbeing

There are around

52,000

RESIDENTS

who provide unpaid care in Oxfordshire, with higher rates of unpaid care in areas of deprivation.



Oxfordshire has a higher prevalence of young carers (0-15 years) than the rest of England (**1.07% compared to 1.06%**)

Difference in life expectancy at birth between the most and least deprived areas of Oxfordshire:



Men:

11 YEARS



Women:

12 YEARS

Nearly

99,000

PEOPLE

are living with a disability in Oxfordshire.

6,852

YOUNG PEOPLE

have learning difficulties.

2.6%

OF SCHOOL PUPILS

have Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Socioeconomic disadvantage

Oxfordshire's

TEN

MOST DEPRIVED AREAS

have higher rates of children (under 16s) in poverty than across England (**24.6%**)

Increasing numbers of households experience fuel poverty, with more households in Oxford experiencing fuel poverty than the rest of Oxfordshire.

Nearly

20,000

CHILDREN

and

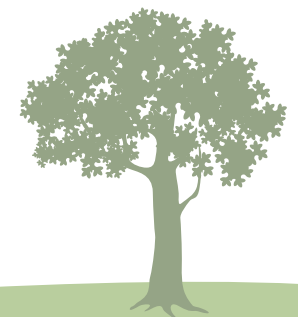
12,000

OLDER PEOPLE

in Oxfordshire live in poverty.

FOUR

OF OXFORDSHIRE'S WARDS are in the most **10%** deprived nationally



How we will achieve our ambitions: Our inclusion 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 and address inequalities.

We listen and learn together. People have unique experiences and perspectives which can enrich our collective understanding. By creating a culture of curiosity and psychological safety, we will learn more about our individual and collective strengths and how best to support one another. We work in partnership to create inclusive cultures.

Flexibility supports diverse needs. Recognising and responding well to diverse needs ensures we deliver inclusive communities, services and workplace culture. We adapt our approaches to the needs of different communities.

Diversity is embraced and celebrated. We recognise the strength that lies in diversity; we celebrate this and embrace it in our learning, service delivery and how we work with one another and our partners.

We value the lived experiences of our colleagues and communities. We create opportunities to hear and understand the lived experience of residents, communities and colleagues. We use our understanding of different lived experiences and intersectionality to help shape our services.

PILLAR 1

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

AMBITION 1:

We work with communities to help them thrive.

- ✔ This means recognising communities as being the experts on their needs and valuing their lived experience, and so we work with them to shape services and tackle inequalities across Oxfordshire. We don't assume we know what a community needs, so we engage them to find out.

AMBITION 2:

We work with partners to tackle disadvantage in our communities.

- ✔ We work with many partners across Oxfordshire and beyond to deliver services and support residents. We recognise our role in bringing together partners, facilitating partnerships and sharing best practice when it comes to inclusion, and we promote and foster inclusion in our relationships.



Examples of what we are doing:

Public Health community insight profiles. We are working with our most economically deprived communities to gain understanding and insight on their needs and priorities to help shape council services.

Social value policy. We are encouraging our suppliers to provide additional value to local communities through additional economic, social or environmental benefit.

Modern Slavery Statement. We have committed to preventing modern slavery through our supply chains, procurement activities and partnership working, ensuring we work to safeguard vulnerable people and groups from the harms of modern slavery.

Council of Sanctuary. We have committed to becoming a Council of Sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers in Oxfordshire, ensuring that Oxfordshire is a welcoming and supportive place for vulnerable migrants. Read more about this on page 15.



PILLAR 2

INCLUSIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

AMBITION 1:

We have accessible buildings and information, and we encourage others to do this too.

- ☺ This involves ensuring that our buildings are not only physically accessible, but that they are accessible, useable and welcoming to all residents, including those with sensory needs. It also means that our information is available digitally and offline, and can be accessed and understood by residents.

AMBITION 2:

We communicate and engage with our residents to plan and meet their diverse needs.

- ☺ We are proactive in engaging with residents to shape service delivery and ensure that our communication and engagement opportunities are accessible for different communities and groups. It also means we create targeted communications and engagement opportunities when we need to hear from seldom-heard and underrepresented groups. We ensure that protected and underrepresented groups are considered at the early stages of planning and designing services.

Examples of what we are doing:

Move to Speedwell House. Moving our headquarters from County Hall to Speedwell House will enable us to create an inclusive and accessible building that meets the needs of our colleagues, partners and residents.



Period poverty scheme. A scheme to assess how we can alleviate period poverty and barriers to accessing period products for residents and communities. See our case study on page 19 for more information.

Impact assessments. We proactively consider the impact of our decisions on protected and underrepresented groups and are developing a more robust and integrated approach to impact assessments.



Cheers M'Dears and Ta Da! A service user-designed social space and beauty salon for adults with learning difficulties, autism and dementia that demonstrates how we work with service users and partners to shape our services. See the case study on page 17 for more about this first-of-its-kind venue.



PILLAR 3

INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

AMBITION 1:

Our working culture is inclusive and our employee demographics reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

- ✔ We create a supportive and inclusive employee community that reflects the diversity of Oxfordshire, and we value the lived experience that our colleagues bring to our work.

AMBITION 2:

Our colleagues have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everyone.

- ✔ We make inclusion a priority across the organisation, including in induction and training for new colleagues. We provide access to resources and training to empower colleagues to drive inclusion forwards and consider all work through an inclusion lens.

AMBITION 3:

Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work.

- ✔ Senior managers lead by example in promoting inclusion, sharing best practice, celebrating success and being accountable when things do not go right. Our senior managers create safe and inclusive spaces that empower colleagues to bring their full selves to work.



Examples of what we are doing:

Reciprocal mentoring. This scheme pairs senior leaders with aspiring leaders from underrepresented groups to co-mentor each other as ambassadors for inclusion.

Partnering with Inclusive Employers

We have partnered with Inclusive Employers, an organisation that provides training and resources to promote inclusion and best practice among colleagues.

RACE Equality Code accreditation

An accreditation that commits us to taking action for race equality in our workplace and our decision-making. See our case study on page 20 to find out more about what this entails.



CASE STUDY: COUNCIL OF SANCTUARY

Oxfordshire County Council has pledged to become a 'Council of Sanctuary' for those fleeing violence, war and persecution from around the world. This means we will work with other councils and organisations to promote the inclusion and welfare of refugees and asylum seekers in our county, as well as make a stand against anti-refugee legislation.

To achieve Council of Sanctuary status we must demonstrate our commitment and progress in this work by meeting 14 criteria. Here we show how some of the Council of Sanctuary criteria align with our Including Everyone ambitions and bring the framework alive.

- 🟢 **Raise awareness of the challenges facing refugees and asylum seekers through educating and training our colleagues.**

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 2:

Our colleagues have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everyone.

- 🟢 **Raise awareness of the importance of providing a warm welcome at the community level for all people seeking sanctuary, regardless of how they arrived.**

Inclusive communities: Ambition 1:

We work with communities to help them thrive.

Inclusive communities: Ambition 2:

We support and encourage partners to be inclusive.

- 🟢 **Amplify the voices of refugees and asylum seekers, creating meaningful engagement opportunities to shape our work with the community.**

Inclusive communities: Ambition 1:

We work with communities to help them thrive.

Inclusive service delivery: Ambition 2:

We communicate and engage with our residents to plan and meet their diverse needs.



- ✔ Bring together managers and leaders to embed and sustain a welcoming and inclusive culture across the organisation.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 2:

Our colleagues have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everyone.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 3:

Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work

Inclusive communities: Ambition 1:

We work with communities to help them thrive.

- ✔ Commit to be an anti-racist organisation and make sure our policies and procedures support this.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 1:

Our working culture is inclusive and our employee demographics reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 2:

Our colleagues have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everyone.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 3:

Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work.



CASE STUDY: CHEERS M'DEARS AND TA DA!

Launched by our Banbury Community Support Service in 2023, the Cheers M'Dears pub and Ta Da! beauty salon are award-winning examples of our ambition to work with communities in creating inclusive services.

Banbury Community Support Service (CSS) supports adults with learning difficulties, autism and dementia. Cheers M'Dears is a community pub-style venue, developed with and for service users. Similarly, Ta Da! is a beauty salon, also developed with and for service users.

In engaging with their service users, CSS discovered that they wanted a social space where they could relax and enjoy themselves, as well as invite their friends and family. Service

users also wanted to co-create the space and be involved in its design and creation.

CSS fundraised for the project with partners and the community through events, local press and social media, helping to spread the word and bring in volunteers to support the decorating and furnishing of the pub - a testament to the power of working with communities to help them thrive.

Since its creation, Cheers M'Dears has become a communal hub for service users and partners, as well as the local community who are able to rent the space. It provides a welcoming and inclusive space for people to enjoy a pub-style setting with their families and friends in a venue that is fully accessible and safe.

Following the success of Cheers M'Dears, female users of the service expressed interest in a quieter and more personal space for them



"I like going to our pub room on a Friday, it lifts my spirits to be with friends, it always feels fun and safe."

GU (a service user)

to use, and a few months later a pampering space 'Ta Da!' was opened. Ta Da! offers beauty sessions to service users, supported by local beauty therapists and hair salons and provides a space for personal care in a comfortable and inclusive setting. CSS also formed a partnership with a local college to supply hair and beauty students to provide free treatments for service users - including hair dressing, nail treatments and massage.

Inclusive service delivery: Ambition 1:

We have accessible buildings and information, and we encourage others to do this too.

Inclusive service delivery: Ambition 2:

We communicate and engage with our residents to plan and meet their diverse needs.

Inclusive communities: Ambition 2:

We support and encourage partners to be inclusive.

CASE STUDY: FUTURE GENERATIONS

Oxfordshire County Council has committed to considering future generations in its decision making - ensuring that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability to meet the needs of future generations. This principle is central to creating a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire in the present and for generations to come.

Our future generations work includes considering those not yet born – our residents and communities of the future, as well as our young people of today. Through this work, we will ensure that young people’s voices and needs are considered in decision-making and planning for the future, creating an inclusive and fair future for our young people of tomorrow as well as today.

Supporting this commitment is a work programme which focuses on two key areas: i) youth engagement with local democracy; and ii) enhancing youth engagement.

This includes supporting young people to participate in local democracy and help shape policy and decision-making and providing them with a range of platforms for their voices to be heard.

As a county council, we believe we are integral in driving youth engagement, along with our schools, partners and colleagues. We also want to become an organisation that young people want to be part of and work for.

Inclusive service delivery: Ambition 2:

We communicate and engage with our residents to plan and meet their diverse needs.

Inclusive communities: Ambition 1:

We work with communities to help them thrive.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 1:

Our working culture is inclusive and our employee demographics reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.



CASE STUDY: PERIOD POVERTY

We are trialling a pioneering scheme to support the alleviation of period poverty in Oxfordshire.

Period poverty is defined as the inability of individuals to access menstrual products, whether this be due to financial constraints, limited availability or stigma in acquiring appropriate products. The UK cost of living crisis has increased rates of period poverty – Action Aid reported in 2023 that the number of people struggling to afford menstrual products increased from 12 per cent in 2022 to 21 per cent in 2023. Individuals impacted by period poverty may use sanitary pads or tampons for longer than advised, re-use disposable products or improvise with other materials such as tissues, cotton wool, clothing or paper. Period

poverty is more prevalent among young people, who experience more stigma around menstruation.

There are a number of inclusion and intersectionality factors that have been considered through this scheme. Making products available in spaces that young people frequent is important. In addition, gender identity is a factor that impacts access to products, for example trans-men, transmasculine and non-binary individuals who menstruate may face additional stigma and burdens in accessing products that they need. They are also more likely to experience homelessness and financial difficulties and so are more likely to experience period poverty in addition to stigma. This is addressed by making products available more widely than in women's bathrooms. In addition, race and cultural heritage can be a factor in stigma around menstruation and access to products, particularly where there are language barriers.

The period poverty scheme makes menstrual products available for free through a number



of public spaces, including libraries, children and family centres as well as our own office buildings. Library provision is barrier-free, so no resident will need to ask a stranger for products, to ensure there is no stigma. Libraries have been selected in areas of high economic deprivation where period poverty is more prevalent, as well as at larger libraries. Products are available to all, with no definition of who can and cannot access them, and they are available in whole packs, to ensure adequate provision for individuals throughout the month.

Inclusive communities: Ambition 1:

We work with communities to help them thrive.

Inclusive service delivery: Ambition 1:

We have accessible buildings and information, and we encourage others to do this too.

Inclusive service delivery: Ambition 2:

We communicate and engage with our residents to plan and meet their diverse needs.

CASE STUDY: RACE EQUALITY CODE

We are working towards accreditation under the RACE Equality Code, affirming our commitment to race equity as an organisation and employer.

The RACE Equality Code is an external framework designed to address race inequity within organisations, particularly focusing on leadership roles, governance and accountability. The code emphasises the importance of influencing leadership to drive real change and hold organisations accountable through public reporting. It is framed by its four pillars – RACE – Reporting, Action, Composition and Education, which each detail specific actions and requirements.

To achieve this accreditation, we must meet a number of actions and criteria that we are assessed against in demonstrating our commitment to race equity and being an anti-racism organisation.

Some of our priority areas in this work are:

- ✔ **Improving reporting and data compilation on the diversity of our employees, with particular focus on race diversity at senior leadership levels, as well as reporting on ethnic pay gaps.**
- ✔ **Unconscious bias training for managers to ensure they are aware of and can address their biases in decision-making.**
- ✔ **Leadership and mentoring programmes to support Black and other employees from underrepresented ethnic groups to progress within the organisation.**
- ✔ **Sharing best practice across the organisation to promote a culture of inclusivity and continuous improvement.**
- ✔ **Inclusive recruitment practices, such as ensuring diverse and representative interview panels, talent diversity, inclusive recruitment campaigns and adverts.**

- ✔ **Creating an inclusive culture and psychological safety in the workplace through training, processes and policies that prevent discrimination, harassment and bullying in the workplace, as well as listening to the lived experience of our colleagues and colleague networks.**

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 1:

Our working culture is inclusive and our employee demographics reflect the diversity of the communities we serve.

Inclusive workplace: Ambition 2:

Our colleagues have the values, skills and knowledge they need to include everyone.

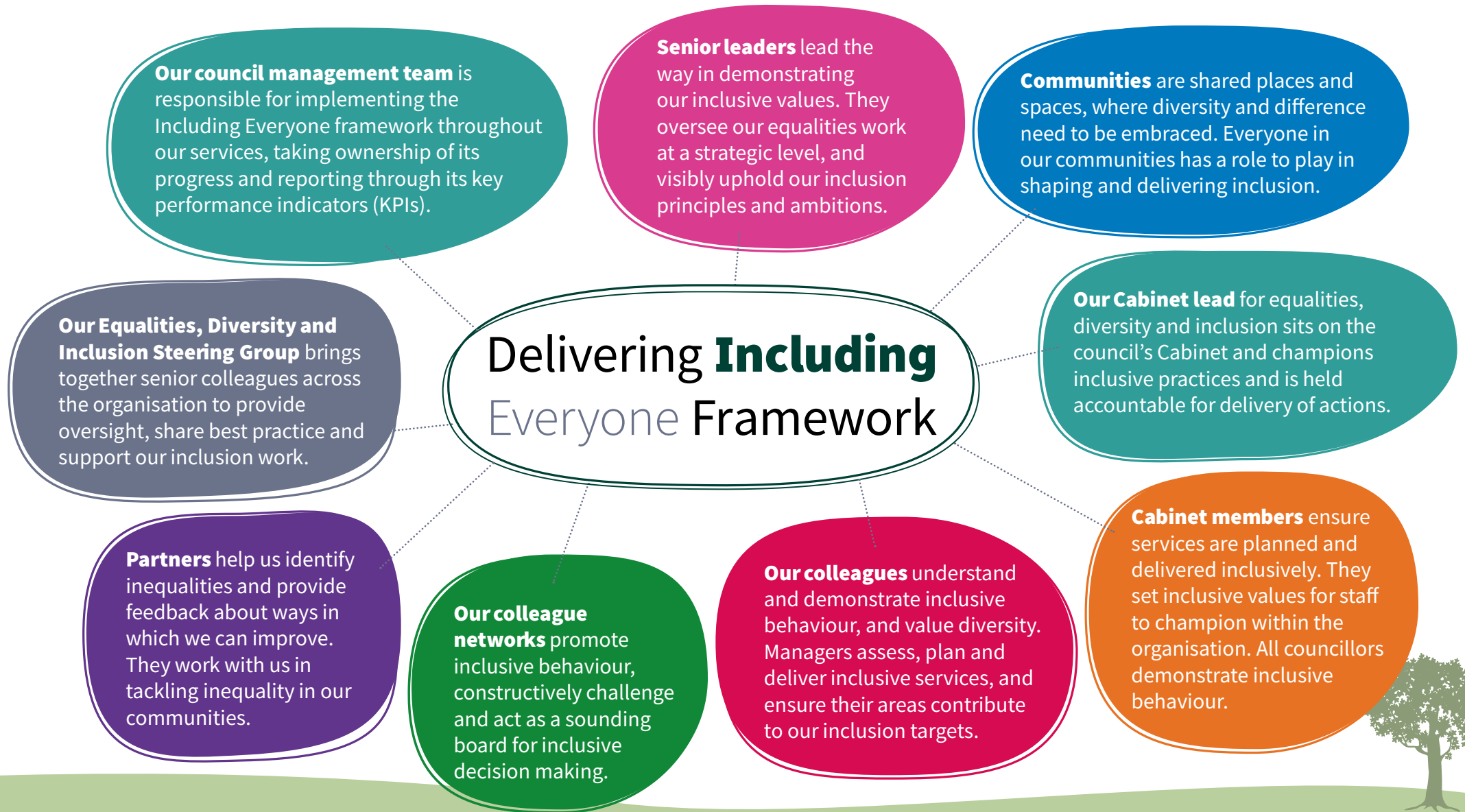
Inclusive workplace: Ambition 3:

Our senior managers lead the way in making sure that everyone feels confident to be fully themselves at work.



Responsibility for delivering the **Including** Everyone Framework

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. We all have a role to play in making our vision of an inclusive Oxfordshire a reality.



Reporting and monitoring

We are developing organisation-wide key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure and report on our progress towards meeting our inclusion ambitions.

The KPIs are specific, measurable, actionable, Reportable, and Time-bound (SMART), and will act as shared goals for all council services to work towards. It will be everyone's responsibility to contribute to achieving these goals.

Our KPIs will be developed using robust data-led methodologies to ensure impact and progress can be measured in a meaningful way.

We are using a range of data sources to develop our KPIs, including:

- **Service use and customer satisfaction**
- **Diversity and demographics in our consultation and engagement opportunities**
- **Residents' surveys**
- **Employee diversity data**
- **Recruitment tracking and talent pipeline data**
- **Colleague retention rates**
- **Colleague inclusion training rates**
- **Accessibility ratings**

We are committed to developing a transparent and accountable reporting mechanism, including making our progress accessible to residents and partners. Combined with oversight and accountability from senior leaders and managers, this will ensure that inclusion is prioritised at Oxfordshire County Council. It will also enable us to adapt or change when we experience barriers to achieving our inclusion ambitions.





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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 oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us


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