

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Annual Position Statement



2023



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

This statement provides an overview of 2022/2023 in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion in South Kesteven. This Council promotes equality of opportunity across all its functions.

South Kesteven District Council is committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in everything it does, whether it is the services provided, the money spent or the people employed. The Council is a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer. It defines an equal and inclusive district as one where all residents, service users, Council staff, Elected Members and the voluntary, faith and community sectors are supported to fulfil their potential. These individuals and agencies are treated with respect and are actively involved in shaping decisions that will affect the workplace and the wider community.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the decisions the Council makes on how to deliver the best possible outcomes for communities across South Kesteven. High standards of service delivery continues and the workforce is committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything the Council does.

This document provides general information relating to how the Council works across South Kesteven, a retrospective perspective in terms of the make-up of the people who live and work within the District and highlights activity which supports equality of access to the services available.

The Equality Act

South Kesteven District Council has a responsibility to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty which is set by law as part of the Equality Act 2010. The duty gives protection for all persons who might be discriminated against because of their age, race, sex, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. The Council must consider what the impact of policies, procedures and functions have on people in relation to their socio-economic status and on those with formal or informal caring responsibilities.

The duty requires the Council to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and 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 a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties placed on public bodies are to:

- **Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty** – including information relating to employees who share protected characteristics and information relating to service users. This is achieved through the production of this document.
- **Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.** The Council's objectives are outlined below. These can be reviewed and revised as required within the published timeline which, for South Kesteven District Council, is currently 2020-2024.



Profile of the District of South Kesteven

The district of South Kesteven is one of seven within the county of Lincolnshire and borders North Kesteven to the north, South Holland in the east, the unitary authorities of Rutland and Peterborough to the south and the counties of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to the west.

The District covers 943 square kilometres (365sq miles) with the administrative centre in Grantham and three further market towns of Bourne, Stamford and Market Deeping. Two-thirds of the population lives in one of the four market towns and the remaining third live in one of over 80 villages and other rural settings in the area. According to Census 2021 figures, the approximate number of domestic dwellings in South Kesteven is 62,800, with Grantham being the largest urban settlement. The District is divided into 77 parishes and has 30 Wards, represented by 56 Councillors.

Community make-up

In South Kesteven there are 153 people per square kilometre, this compares with an overall Lincolnshire average of 130 people per square kilometre. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics in its Mid-Year Estimate (published 21 December 2022) state a population of 143,787, which shows an increase in population of 10,099 since the census taken in 2011 and an increase of 19,099 since the 2001 Census. The overall population size is currently projected to increase to 155,821 by the year 2043, through a potential net increase in international and internal migration, in addition to typical population growth.

Mapping and local intelligence within the District shows significant increases in minority ethnic communities with the greatest concentration of diversity located in Grantham. This soft intelligence was borne out by the 2021 Census.

The greatest number of people from any one country from outside the United Kingdom (UK) making their home in South Kesteven are from Poland. Additionally there are pockets of small communities, sometimes individual families, who need Council services, help and advice and are unable to speak, read or write in English. Since the start of the Homes for Ukraine programme began, 205 South Kesteven households have hosted families fleeing conflict. Community and faith groups have raised funds for the provision of

English lessons and have supported families to settle. Census 2021 data shows the top ten languages (after English) spoken in the District have changed in the ten years since the last Census with Romanian, Tamil, Spanish and Nepalese replacing Cantonese, Slovakian, Tagalog and French. These languages are still present in the District, meaning numbers for the other languages have increased at a higher rate. The Council provides translation and interpreter services on request.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) internal migration figures published in December 2022, as part of its Mid-Year Population Estimate, show the internal migration inflow for South Kesteven was 1,975. This is countered by an outflow of 1,500 individuals leaving the District with a net migration of 475 for the time period. The Mid-Year Estimate states there are 43,040 people aged 60 and above who are resident in South Kesteven. This shows this age group remains at 30% of the total population of the District. The proportion of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase significantly by 2040 according to POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information). Using figures reported in the ONS Mid-Year Estimate, the current number of people aged over 75 in the District is 15,655. This figure is projected to increase to 26,800 by 2040 (i.e. a 71.19% increase).



Demographic and Workplace comparison

Using data available through the Census and Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates, the Council is able to build a statistical picture of the District's residents. When used as a comparison against the information held in relation to the workforce, this determines how representative South Kesteven District Council is of the population the Authority serves. Carrying out such comparison helps the Council to identify any gaps in the knowledge base relative to the population of South Kesteven and the workforce, as well as providing opportunities for organisational development and change, as necessary, to ensure the Authority remains representative of the District. The following graphics illustrate a direct comparison, based on percentages, between the population of South Kesteven and the workforce of the Council. Information relating to certain protected characteristics is currently not collected by the Council. Where no direct comparison is possible, separate charts have been provided. Mandatory equality information now forms part of the Council's recruitment process, with the option of 'Prefer Not to Say'. This approach should reduce the percentage of information which is not known.

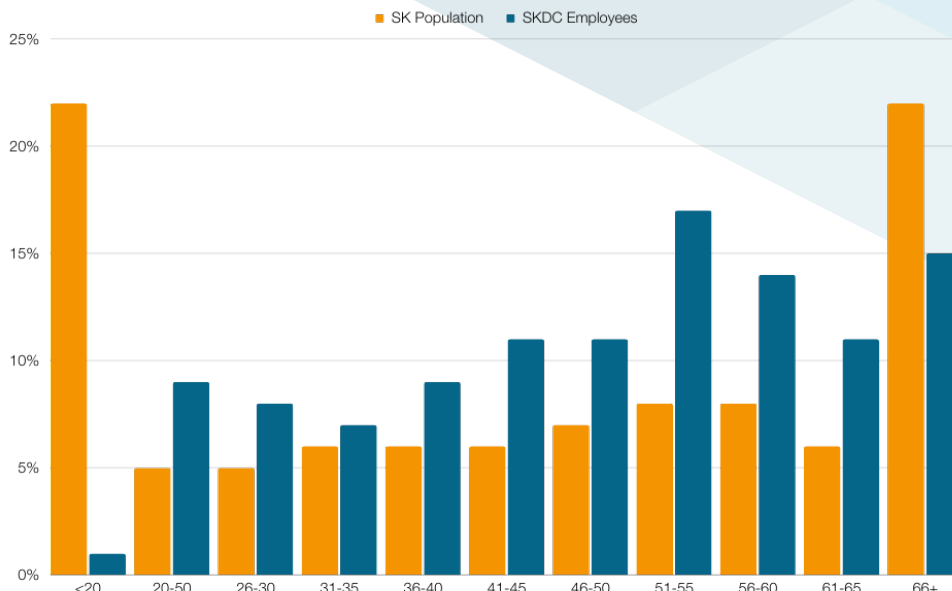
SK Population / SKDC Workforce Comparison: Sex

Population figures source: 2021 Census



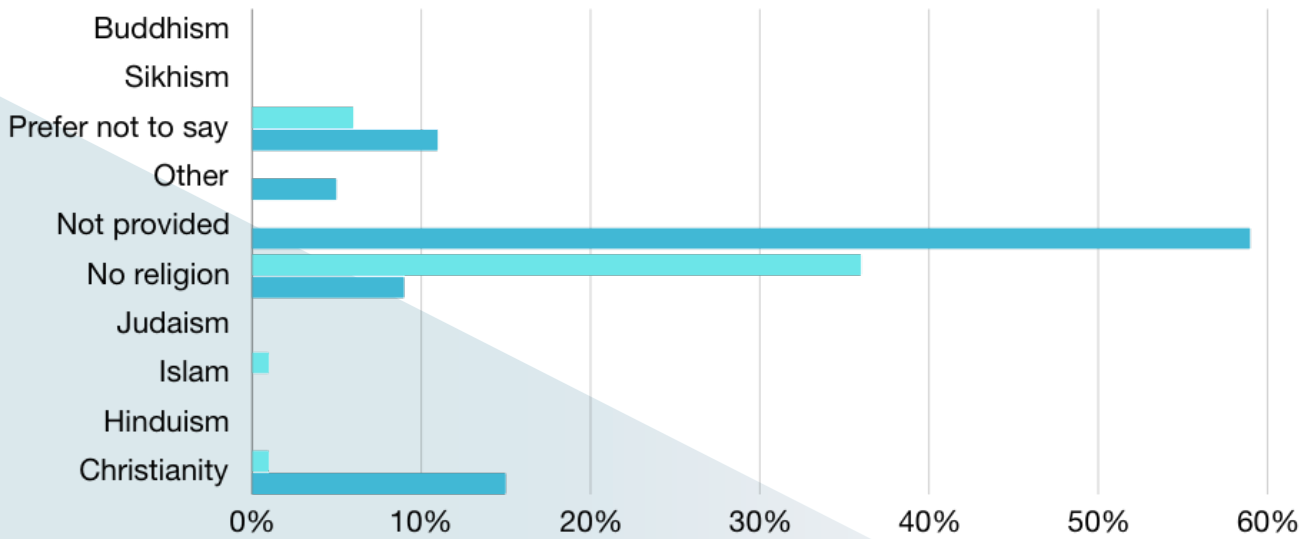
SK Population / SKDC Workforce Comparison: Age group

Population figures source: 2021 Census



SK Population / SKDC Workforce Comparison: Religion or Belief

Population figures source: 2021 Census

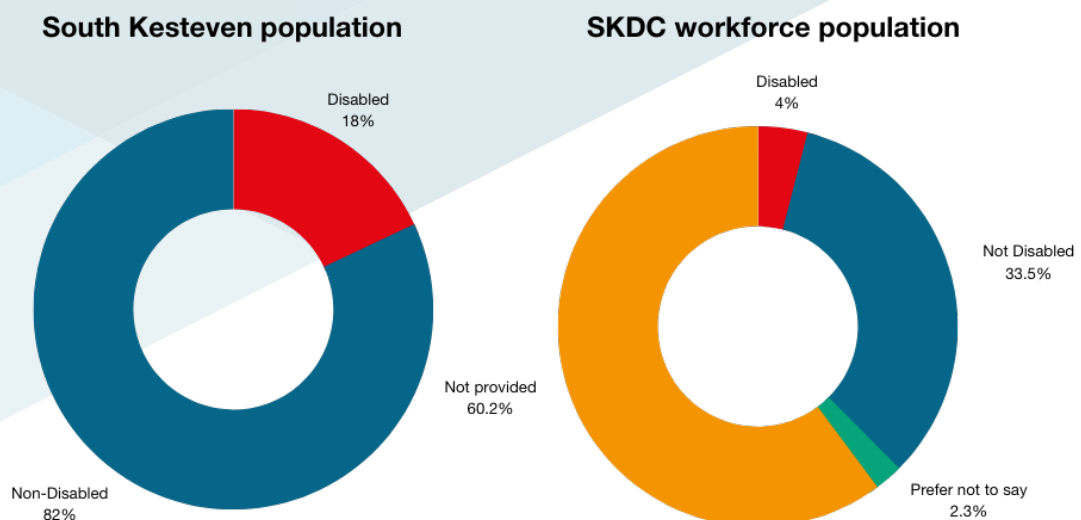


The images above provide an illustration, by age-group and sex, of the population of the District directly compared with the workforce of South Kesteven District Council. These images show the Council is representative of its residents.

The following images provide information relating to other key protected characteristics taken from the 2021 Census alongside the South Kesteven District Council workforce data with supporting narrative where available.

SK Population / SKDC Workforce Comparison: Disability

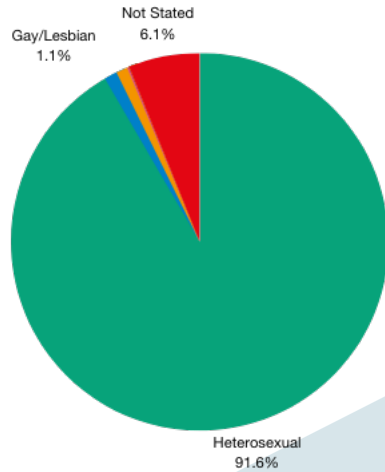
Population figures source: 2021 Census



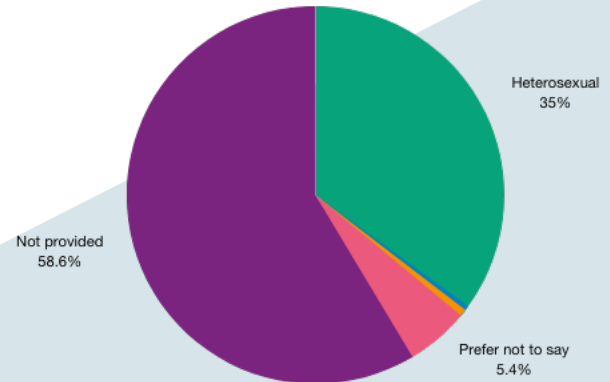
SK Population / SKDC Workforce Comparison: Sexual Identity

Population figures source: 2021 Census

South Kesteven population



SKDC workforce population



Data provided by the 2021 Census shows the population of South Kesteven as 90.5% white British. Ethnicity identifiers therefore account for the remaining 9.5%. Statistics for some of the protected characteristics are not known for a large proportion of the workforce. For example, ethnicity data held shows the Council’s employees as 68.90% white British, with 3.9% representing ethnic minority identifiers. 2% of the workforce responded with “prefer not to say” , whilst 25.20% did not provide an answer. It is hoped to increase this for existing employees.

The Council are seeking to understand how to encourage greater disclosure of information by applicants in the recruitment process and with the existing workforce via the People Panel and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group. the recruitment process and with the existing workforce via the People Panel and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group.



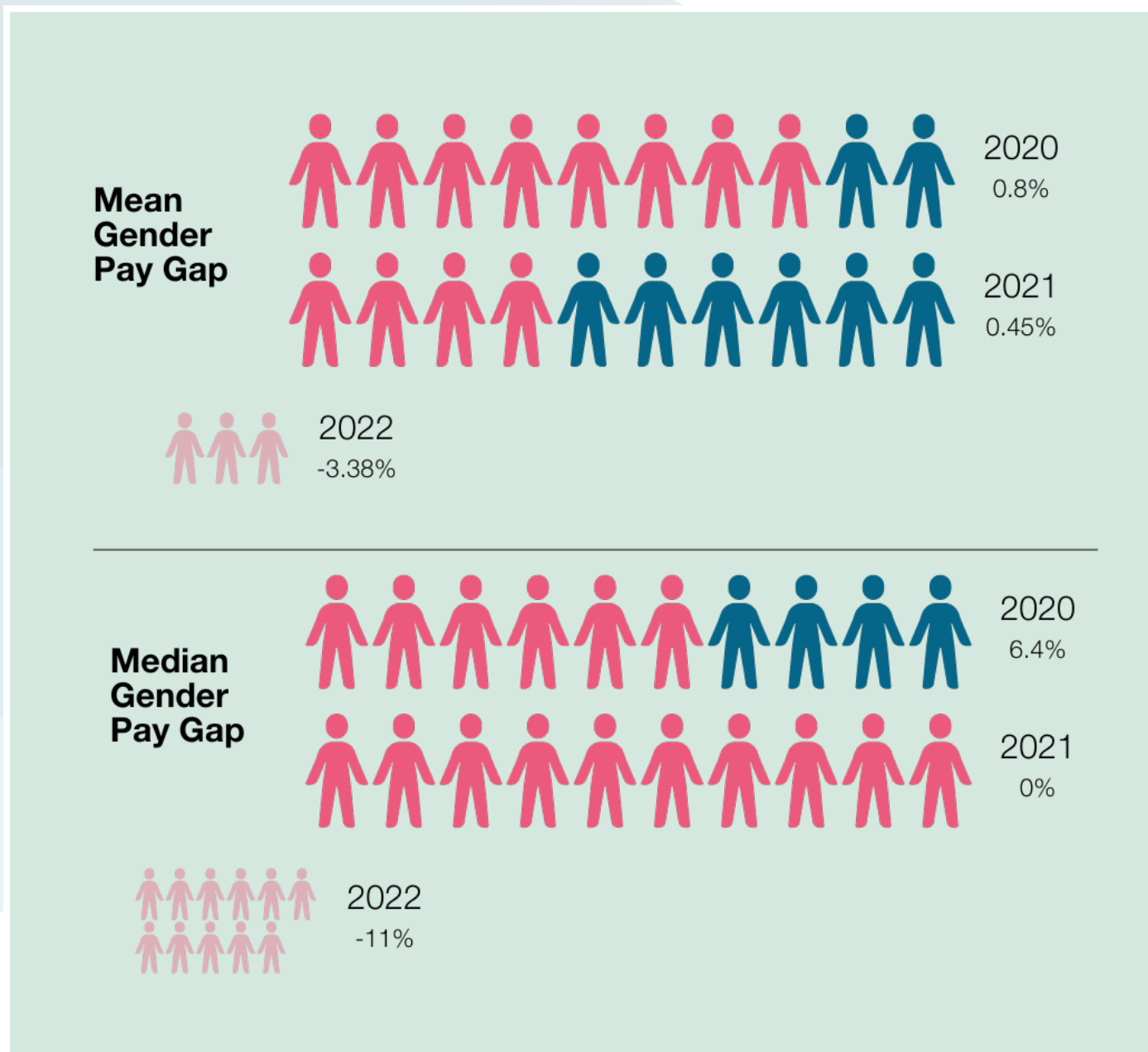
Our Equality Objectives 2020-2024

Objective	How this will be achieved?	What has been achieved?
<p>1. Strengthen knowledge and understanding of our communities.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Council's services are responsive to different needs and treat service users equitably, with dignity and respect. Listen, involve and respond to our communities effectively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Community Engagement Team working directly with the voluntary and community sector • Delivery of a series of engagement events across the District for residents and community and voluntary groups • Meaningful engagement with faith communities through forums and community events • Delivery of events targeted at women and families, focusing on domestic abuse, cyber safety, modern slavery and human trafficking • Provision of funding for voluntary and community organisations and agencies supporting people in food crisis • Regular consultation with residents, tenants and other stakeholders to seek views on the services delivered by the Council • Delivery of topic based awareness training focusing on individual protected characteristics • Creation of an database relating to 300+ faith, voluntary and community groups and organisations operating within the district • Awareness raising visits to charities within the district offering support to people with mental health concerns – Mindspace, Don't Lose Hope, Bhive • Development and delivery of an Inspirational Women Event celebrating exceptional women with a connection to South Kesteven • Commission of a mental wellbeing project aimed at supporting young people • Provision of 'Knowing Your Community' workshops for elected Members • Attendance at, and delivery of, Wellbeing events across the District • Delivery of a series of funding workshops in support of the voluntary and community sector

Objective	How this will be achieved?	What has been achieved?
<p>2. Build a culture of equality and inclusion into all the services, functions and projects we deliver.</p>	<p>Incorporate the need to assess and address equality issues into the Council's project methodology and democratic processes to ensure consideration of the needs of our customers is at the heart of what we do from the earliest stage of development, through to decision making and implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality considerations have been built into project methodologies used across all council services • Introduction of Equalities Allies across service areas • Menopause café support group • Introduction of First Aiders for Mental Health, with representation from staff and elected Members • Resolution to join the Local Authority Mental Health Challenge • Development of a Mental Health Working Group comprising Officers and elected Members • Themed events delivered by First Aiders for Mental Health including: Mental Health Awareness, Suicide Prevention and Men's Mental Health • Introduction of a new Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process which requires consultation to be undertaken as part of the process • Equality impact assessment training delivered to the Council's management team • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) e-learning is mandatory for all staff and elected Members • EDI considerations built into committee report templates and EIAs are published alongside committee reports to ensure considerations are made at the time decisions are taken • Bitesize training sessions relating to equality, diversity and inclusion • EDI working group introduced to represent the protected characteristics of the Council's staff to inform policy and practice across the Authority • Introduction of a Youth Council

Objective	How will this be achieved?
<p>3. Prove our ongoing commitment to equal opportunity by developing a diverse, inclusive and empowered workforce and by reducing our gender pay gap.</p>	<p>Utilise workforce data to help identify areas for improvement in the diversity and skills of our workforce to seek equality of representation at all levels across the organisation. Develop and deliver against an action plan to specifically address the Council's gender pay gap, to form part of the work programme of the Employment Committee.</p> <p>Demonstrate a positive culture with strong leadership and organisational commitment to improving equality outcomes.</p>

What has been achieved?



Supporting our staff

During 2022/2023 the Council had 480 employees. During this year, 134 people ended their employment with the Authority, and 73 commenced employment.

The statistics show 9.5% of the workforce are aged 25 and under, this has increased by over 1.5% from the previous year. The Council is continuing to increase the appeal of working for the Authority. Actions have included targeted recruitment advertising via social media channels and promoting career development opportunities through apprenticeships and 'grow our own' initiatives. The Council has recently hosted a large group of students for a work placement programme. Following this, two of the students were recruited as Interns, tasked with developing a Council Instagram account to provide a further routes to advertising vacancies. Research shows Instagram is the second most popular social media channel, with 53 minutes per day spent on Instagram (compared to 1 minute per day spent on LinkedIn).

The Council is mindful of its external profile and is in the process of updating its website. This will include information important to employees – social responsibility, opportunities for development and progression, culture, working patterns and benefits.

Working patterns and benefits are of importance in attracting employees. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the way in which people work – some preferring home working with the flexibility this can allow, whereas others need an office environment. The Council's agile approach, subject to the role undertaken, means in the main differing workstyles and preferences can be easily accommodated.

Workforce development and succession planning is underway to address the potential loss of knowledge and skills due to the proportion of the workforce aged 55 and over (over 30% of the workforce).

Ensuring Equality and Inclusion for our Workforce

Wellbeing

The Council puts on a varied wellbeing programme for staff. Regular staff surveys help shape the programme which has included a range of educational and awareness initiatives on topics such as mental health, breast cancer and strokes.

First Aiders for Mental Health

It is predicted by 2025, there will be in excess of 15,000 living with a common mental health disorder in South Kesteven. It is therefore, increasingly important for staff to be supported. The Council now has 21 First Aiders for Mental Health amongst staff and elected Members who can listen and signpost colleagues to other support services.



Employee Assistance Programme

The Council recognises the demands placed upon staff in their working and personal lives. To help staff deal with these demands, the Council offers an Employee Assistance Programme. This programme, which is also available to elected Members, is a free confidential service providing year-round support and information on a range of personal and work-related issues

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

This year saw the introduction of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group. This group, made up of Officers from across the Council who represent some of the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, explores opportunities to help the Council become more inclusive, promote equality and diversity and share information on a range of topics to help improve the awareness of Officers.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Allies

The Council has a network of Equality Allies across the workforce. There are currently ten Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Allies. These allies provide support to colleagues on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, acting as critical friends during the equality impact assessment process. The Council has a further three champions who support as described above and are also LGBTQIA+ Allies.

People Panel

Launched in March 2022, the People Panel is made up of 31 colleagues from departments across the Council. The Panel has been set up to be a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance that will affect colleagues. The meetings provide an opportunity for employees to raise issues of interest or concern, share their opinions and views and get more involved in how the Council operates.

Recruitment

The Council's People Strategy 2022-2025 looks at ways to increase the diversity of the workforce, to ensure the demographics of the district are reflected. One action taken to achieve this is to remove the potential of unconscious bias through implementing Name Blind Recruitment as part of the recruitment process.



Ensuring Equality and Inclusion for our Customers and our Communities

Equality Impact Assessments

The Council's Equality Impact Assessment process requires consideration is made in the development or review of every policy, function, project or procedure impacting South Kesteven residents. Copies of Assessments are published along with committee reports to ensure due regard is given throughout the decision-making process.

Translations and Interpreters

Any document is provided in an alternative format on request. This includes translating into other languages, documents in large print or Braille and information in audio format. All staff have access to Language Line for instant translation services and in-person interpreter services are provided when required. Staff and customers have access to Text Relay to assist with calls to and from the Council for people with a hearing impairment.

Disabled Facilities Grants

The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide disabled facilities grants to adapt the homes of disabled people. Financial and technical assistance is available to residents who live in their own home, are a private tenant or a housing association tenant to support the needs of disabled children and adults. Eligibility is based on an assessment by an Occupational Therapist (OT). The grant will pay for the essential adaptations the OT identifies as necessary and appropriate in accordance with the Council's standard specification.

Funding to Food Support Agencies

A ring-fenced funding pot is available to support the work of agencies and community groups within the District which provides access to food and essential supplies to those in need. In the past, this support has only been offered to the four Foodbanks within the District and is now also offered to community larders, agencies providing hot meals to vulnerable individuals and community cafés operating on a 'pay what you can' basis.

Assisted Bin Collections

The Council's People Strategy 2022-2025 looks at ways to increase the diversity of the workforce, to ensure the demographics of the district are reflected. One action taken to achieve this is to remove the potential of unconscious bias through implementing Name Blind Recruitment as part of the recruitment process.

Cost of Living Support

The Council has two dedicated Cost of Living Support Officers. Their roles are to signpost and directly support South Kesteven residents who may be experiencing financial difficulties.

Conclusion

One of the purposes of producing this document, beyond showing how the Council meets the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty, is to determine how representative our workforce is of the district and the communities we serve. Many of the statistics supplied are based on the 2021 Census and the Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimate. Based on these statistics, assurance can be taken in terms of gender balance and age ranges, the Council has a representative workforce.

Work is underway to improve data collection relating to the Council's workforce to enable percentage comparisons to be made relating to the Protected Characteristics to provide a more thorough view on how representative the Council is of the District it serves. Going forward, this will help determine any further steps the Council may wish to take to redress any imbalances.



Alternative formats and languages

To ensure all residents of South Kesteven have access to our information material, our information is available in a range of different languages and formats, including large print, Braille, audio tape and computer disc.

To request a document in a specific language or format, you can ring us or email us on:

☎ 01476 40 60 80
✉ communications@southkesteven.gov.uk

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or computer disc. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from this service, please contact us.

Polski / Polish:

Skontaktuj się z nami, korzystając z powyższych danych, jeśli potrzebujesz przetłumaczyć ten dokument na swój język

Lietuviškai / Lithuanian:

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Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot a fenti elérhetőségeken, ha szüksége van erre a dokumentumra az Ön nyelvére lefordítva

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தமிழ் / Tamil

இந்த ஆவணத்தை உங்கள் மொழியில் மொழிபெயர்க்க வண்டம் என்றால், மலே உள்ள விவரங்களைப் பயன்படுத்தி எங்களைத் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்

Español/ Spanish

Póngase en contacto con nosotros utilizando los detalles anteriores si necesita que este documento se traduzca a su idioma.

Nepali / Nepalese:

यदि तपाईंलाई यो कागजातलाई आफ्नो भाषामा अनुवाद गर्न आवश्यक छ भने कृपया माथिको विवरणहरू प्रयोग गरेर हामीलाई सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्

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