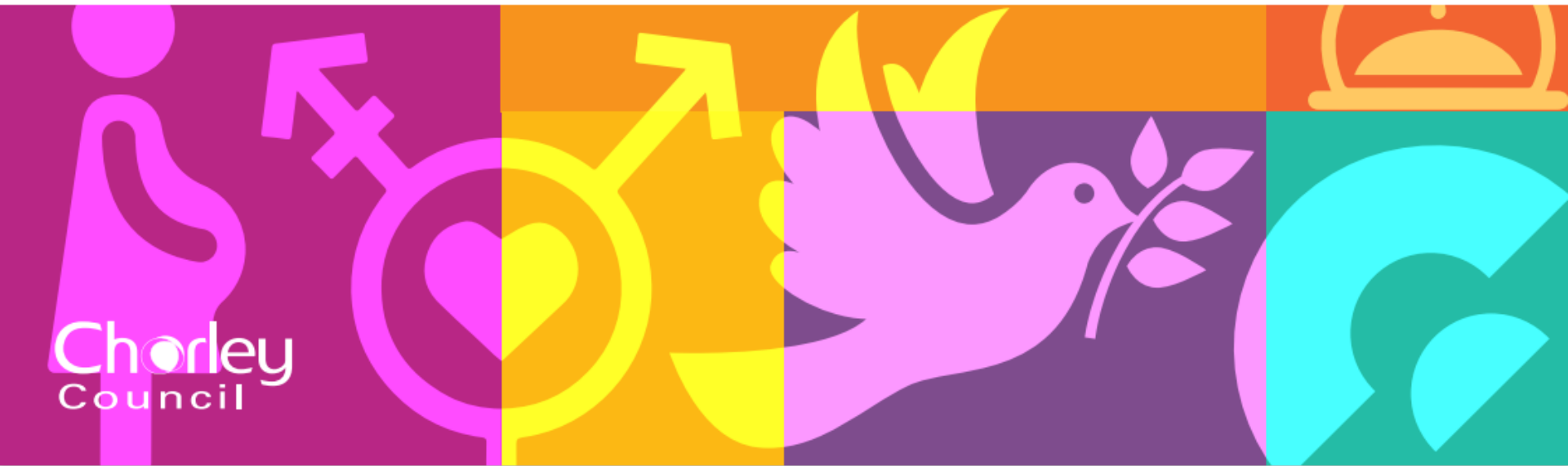




OUR EQUALITY STRATEGY



Why do we need an equality strategy?

We want to have a fair, inclusive and accessible borough where everyone has equitable access to services and opportunities and are included and represented. We want to live in a society that recognises people's different needs and situations, removes barriers and offers the right support so that there is no limit to what people can do and can be.

We will promote and support our diverse communities, building good relationships and cohesion, where everyone feels welcome and connected and can contribute to and benefit from a thriving borough.

We have seen through the impact of the pandemic, the cost of living crisis and increasing need for resettlement programmes that more people are experiencing crisis, disadvantage and poor life chances. We need to ensure that we understand the inequalities that exist across Chorley; and tackle them in the right way so that everyone can live well.

This strategy will help to ensure we adopt an equitable approach to achieving equality. This means providing equal access and support to everyone, but adjusting that support based on need to achieve fairness in outcomes for our people and places. This strategy will apply to all council activities including decision-making, policy, and service delivery to make sure we have a fair, inclusive and accessible borough.

Where we are now

We have begun building the foundations for a good commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and working towards a more equitable society.

We have developed a data sharing platform with partners to gain valuable insights about our people and places so that we can allocate resources and deliver targeted initiatives to those that will benefit most.

We consider social value when we procure or commission new services, making sure that what we buy creates additional benefits for our residents and communities including apprenticeships, training programmes or environmental improvements.

We have introduced specific EDI training for council staff so that they can contribute to more equitable and inclusive workplace cultures and service delivery.

We are developing inclusive Human Resources (HR) policies to help ensure equal opportunity for new and existing employees including fair recruitment and other practices that allows everyone to feel safe, supported and encouraged.

We want to build on this work, using our EDI Strategy and Action Plan to strengthen our commitment.

Our borough

Source: ONS Census 2021

Population: 117,732 residents

Age

	Chorley	England
Under 25	26.5%	29.2%
25 – 64	53%	52.4%
65 and above	20.5%	18.4%

Disability

	Chorley	England
Disabled under the Equality Act	18.5%	17.3%
Not disabled under the Equality Act	81.5%	82.7%

Gender identity

	Chorley	England
Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth	95.2%	93.5%
Gender identity different from sex registered at birth	0.3%	0.5%
Unknown	4.5%	6%

Marriage and civil partnership

Legal Partnership Status	Chorley	England
Single	33.4%	37.9%
Married or in a registered civil partnership	47.8%	44.7%
Separated	2.2%	2.2%
Divorced or civil partnership dissolved	10.4%	9.1%
Widowed or surviving civil partnership partner	6.2%	6.1%

Pregnancy and maternity**

Year	Maternity Rate (per 1,000 women aged 15-44)	England
2022	51	51.9

Race

	Chorley	England
Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh	1.9%	9.6%
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	0.6%	4.2%
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	1.5%	3%
White	95.6%	81%
Other ethnic group	0.4%	2.2%

Religion or belief

	Chorley	England
No religion	30.9%	36.7%
Christian	61.5%	46.3%
Buddhist	0.2%	0.5%
Hindu	0.3%	1.8%
Jewish	0.1%	0.5%
Muslim	1.4%	6.7%
Sikh	0.1%	0.9%
Other religion	0.5%	0.6%
Unknown	5.1%	6%

Sex

	Chorley	England
Male	49.8%	49%
Female	50.2%	51%

Sexual orientation

	Chorley	England
Straight or Heterosexual	91.7%	89.4%
Gay or Lesbian	1.3%	1.5%
Bisexual	1%	1.3%
Other	0.2%	0.3%
Unknown	5.9%	7.5%

*Source: ONS birth characteristics 2022

How did we develop the strategy?

We have assessed our organisation against the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) to help us in meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 including the Public Sector Equality Duty. It looks at our understanding of and engagement with communities, our leadership, partnership and organisational commitment, how responsive our services are and how diverse and engaged our workforce are.

We have found that we have some good practices and are 'achieving' in some areas, however, we are 'developing' in many others. We now know the areas of activity that we need to address to deliver good equality outcomes including further work on data, community engagement, and community relations.

The strategy is supported by a delivery plan which sets out the action we will take to progress our equality improvement journey.

Our vision

- **Our Residents** – Listening to our residents' needs through consultation and engagement including surveys, feedback and forums, and responding to people's differences through inclusive information and communication and by involving users and communities in the design and implementation of services so that they will work for everyone including people who face barriers.
- **Our Partners** – Working with our partners to support our diverse communities
- **Our Organisation** – Developing our organisation to be in the best position it can be to support our residents and equality and diversity is at the heart of everything we do.
- **Our Staff** – Equality and diversity are at the heart of our core values, having a positive and supportive culture and supporting our staff to champion equality and diversity in their work.

This Strategy is about strengthening our commitment to being an inclusive employer, addressing inequalities and creating equity in our borough.

Our equality objectives

- **Fostering and developing positive cultures and understanding** – ensure our staff are able to deliver services fairly and can model behaviours that help to create an inclusive work environment.
- **Building an inclusive workforce** – to help attract, recruit and retain the best people for the job, we will develop an open, collaborative and inclusive culture where the principles of fairness and wellbeing are promoted.
- **Ensure adequate access to services for all** – to make sure we support each and every resident in the right way we will regularly review how we deliver our services and make changes where needed.
- **Support people in the community who are most in need** – we will focus on ensuring that the needs of the whole community are being addressed now and, in the future.
- **Involve our communities** – we will work to involve local people and engage openly with our residents and service users, seeking to capture all points of view to make better informed decisions.

How will we implement the strategy?

- **Taking action** – we will ensure that there is an organisational commitment to achieving the actions set out in the delivery plan.
- **Monitoring progress** – we will have a dedicated EDI Board which will monitor the implementation of this strategy. We will produce an annual report to highlight progress.
- **Engaging our staff** – We will establish an Equality Champions Network to take an active role in the development of actions, providing feedback and challenging proposals around equality. Our People Strategy will focus on creating inclusivity in the workplace.
- **Data** – we will enhance our data systems and practices to help in gathering, monitoring and using local insight to inform service delivery.
- **Corporate Priorities** – we will work with residents to inform our corporate priorities, ensuring that we work hard to engage with underrepresented groups.
- **Partnership working** – we will work with the Chorley and South Ribble Partnership and the Joint Community Safety Partnership to tackle inequalities and promote community cohesion.