

# Fenland District Council - Annual Equality Report 2025

Are we accessible to you?

We would like everyone to understand the work that we are undertaking locally on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, to achieve this we would like to share this information with you in the most accessible format for you to understand.

Therefore, on request we will provide this document in alternative formats or language if you require this.

To make a request please telephone 01354 654321 or e-mail [diversity@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:diversity@fenland.gov.uk) or [info@fenland.gov.uk](mailto:info@fenland.gov.uk)

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## Introduction

Fenland District Council (the Council) recognises the role it must play in advancing equality of opportunity locally and regionally, as a statutory organisation, as a large local employer and provider of a wide range of community facing services. We recognise that the Council is at the centre of improving life opportunities for people who experience disadvantage and discrimination in Fenland.

This report gives a summary, and update of some of the actions we have taken to achieve this, as well as the progress we have made on improving equality of opportunity; to serve the people of Fenland, promote and celebrate the diversity of the area, aid integration and how we act as an employer. It also demonstrates how we undertake, integrate, and mainstream this approach into all our work, both as an employer and service provider.

Producing this information has also helped the Council to both clarify and identify the key issues affecting its service users and staff. Additionally, this has helped the Council to better inform the development of its services and to make them as effective and accessible as possible for everyone. This is achieved by carrying out equality analysis on all the Councils policies strategies, procedures, and functions to enable us to understand the impact of the decisions we make on people with different protected characteristics and therefore enable the Council to scope services to make them accessible to all, and plan services more effectively.

Through gathering equality data and engaging with our communities, we know that the main issues affecting local people are cost-of-living challenges, community cohesion, housing, transport, as well as access to services. This should be viewed in relation to higher levels of local deprivation and the large inward flux of migrant people, the rural nature of the area where residents live further away from key services than the regional average.

The Council acknowledges and recognises that there exist in society individuals and groups who face discrimination (whether intentional or unintentional) based on their background and personal circumstances. Further, that any unintended consequences of a policy or procedure may have an adverse impact on a particular group. This is particularly important at a time of significant reductions in public sector budgets and a cost-of-living crisis in a deprived area.

Like all public bodies we have a statutory general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. We also have specific legal duties; these include publishing employment information and reporting on how we are integrating equality into our work practices.

The Council actively works towards fairness, integration and inclusion for all; that enables everyone to maximise their life chances and help to minimise discrimination in a society that recognises and values the diversity within our district. We seek to

create and maintain a district in which each person has an equal entitlement to receive quality services and employment opportunities irrespective of their race, religion or belief, disability, age, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, family circumstances or marital status. The Council values the strength that comes with difference, and the positive contribution that diversity brings to the district.

This work was first recognised in October 2009, when the Council attained *Excellent* status on the Customer Service Excellence Framework. To obtain this accreditation the Council had to demonstrate its understanding of customer expectations, and how it is meeting these by providing excellent customer services to all our community.

The Council's Business Plan sets out the priorities for the Council and outlines how we will address the challenges ahead. The Business Plan is underpinned by the commitment to develop and support cohesive communities, and equality targets including:

#### Under the community/ environmental priorities

- Support vulnerable members of our community
- Enable residents to claim the Council Tax Support and Housing Benefit they are entitled to.
- Use our housing powers to improve the condition of private rented homes.
- Use our housing powers to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping.
- Reduce emergency accommodation use to provide better quality and more cost-effective short-term accommodation and supported homes for homeless clients.
- Use our housing powers to meet housing needs, including bringing empty homes back into use.
- Support residents to manage the effects of the cost of living.
- Encourage partners to support the delivery of the Golden Age programme and support older people

Work with partners to keep people safe in their neighbourhoods by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour and promoting social cohesion

- Manage the Fenland Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Support the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum to deliver the Fenland-wide Community Cohesion Action Plan.
- Deliver the Community Safety Grant Agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner.
- Provide proportionate support and advice for community groups to hold safe and successful public events.

#### Under the quality organisation priority:

- Meet our Public Sector Equality duty by delivering the requirements of the 2010 Equality Act and 1998 Human Rights Act through our core service delivery and publication of a statutory Annual Equality Report.

## Who we are?

We can only provide effective services to our communities if we recognise and understand the diversity and cultures that exists within our community, which in turn enables us to plan to meet their needs and address any concerns of our residents.

The Council covers a wide geographical area and is committed to delivering excellent services to all the district's community which is made up of a diverse range of individuals, groups, faiths, and communities, whilst continuously improving the way we promote equality, celebrate difference and diversity, and promote integration.

As part of our commitment, we seek to collect relevant information about our service users and our communities. This information helps us to understand the makeup of our community, and then we can engage to see if we are meeting service user needs and see if there are any areas where we can improve the services we offer.

The Equality Act 2010 (the Act) harmonised and simplified previous anti-discriminatory laws with a single piece of legislation. It harmonised the law and removed inconsistencies which made/ makes it easier for people and organisations to understand and comply with it. Additionally, it also strengthened the law in important ways, to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The specific duties of the Act require the Council, as a public Authority, to publish information showing its compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually and to set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.

This document publishes information which demonstrates that the Council has due regard to the need to: -

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Equality, equity of outcomes and fairness underpin our work, and it helps us to build the culture, and ethos of the Council at all levels. Despite the challenging economy and unique health challenges/ circumstances that we face we have continued to strive to achieve fairness in all our services and in all our activities.

Updating the Annual Equality is one of the ways in which the Council highlights the extent to which it is meeting its obligations and responsibilities. It says a lot about our progress in relation to the key equality objectives that the Council had set for itself, but it is not the whole story. Many achievements have been made via informed decision making, on issues that affect the broader well-being of our community and particularly amongst those who faced disadvantage through the promotion of our equality priorities embedded in the Council's Business Plan.

In this document we outline the issues and activities that have had a greater significance to the Council's progress in promoting greater equality as well as how we met the Council's responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duties contained within the Equality Act during the last financial year

This update also provides information on the services we focussed on last year as well as giving examples of key areas of our work via case studies in line with the commitment made under our equality objectives.

## **Our Demographic data**

**New** - Fenland is renowned for its vibrant community spirit, rich heritage and picturesque land and skylscapes. Located in North Cambridgeshire, the Fenland District spans 211 square miles and is home to 102,462 residents (ONS: 2021). Over 70% of the population resides in the four market towns of Chatteris, March, Whittlesey, and Wisbech, while the picturesque rural areas encompass 29 villages.

- Population of 102,462 (ONS: 2021).
- Average house price of £225,000 (UK HPI June 2024), 22% less than the national average.
- Close proximity to large urban centres like Cambridge and Peterborough.
- Population growth projected to reach 118,826 by 2043, a 16% increase (ONS: 2021).
- 23% of residents (23,400 people) are aged over 64, higher than both the county and national averages (ONS: 2021).
- 135 hectares of open green spaces.
- 80th most deprived area out of 317 in the country (IMD: 2019) This is due to be updated in later 2025

Since the 1970s the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and its predecessors have calculated local measures of deprivation in England. This statistical release contains the latest iteration of these statistics, the English Indices of Deprivation 2025 (IoD25), summarising key findings from the data and signposting further analysis and guidance. The IoD25 suite of resources are Accredited Official Statistics.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England and is part of a suite of outputs that form the Indices of Deprivation (IoD). It follows an established methodological framework in broadly defining deprivation to encompass a wide range of an individual's living conditions. People may be living in poverty if they lack the financial resources to meet their needs, whereas people can be regarded as deprived if they lack any kind of resources, not just income. In the IoD, 'deprivation' refers to people's unmet needs, whereas 'poverty' refers to the lack of resources required to meet those needs or socially perceived necessities. These needs and necessities may change and evolve other time, but relative deprivation remains.

Multiple Deprivation considers a wide range of aspects of an individual's living conditions

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime • Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation.

Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with our partner organisations to positively overcome these challenges. As outlined within the Councils Business Plan, which seeks to maximise the positive opportunities that this growth could bring.

Our population is getting older. Alongside partners, we are working to enable residents to access the support they need to live happily, healthily, and independently. We also face challenges around deprivation, particularly around education and health. Nevertheless, we continue to work closely with other organisations to positively overcome these challenges.

The health of people living in Fenland has improved in the past five years, but it is still below average. The state of Fenland's health as of 17 November 2022 is identified in the Office for National Statistics's 2021 Census data.

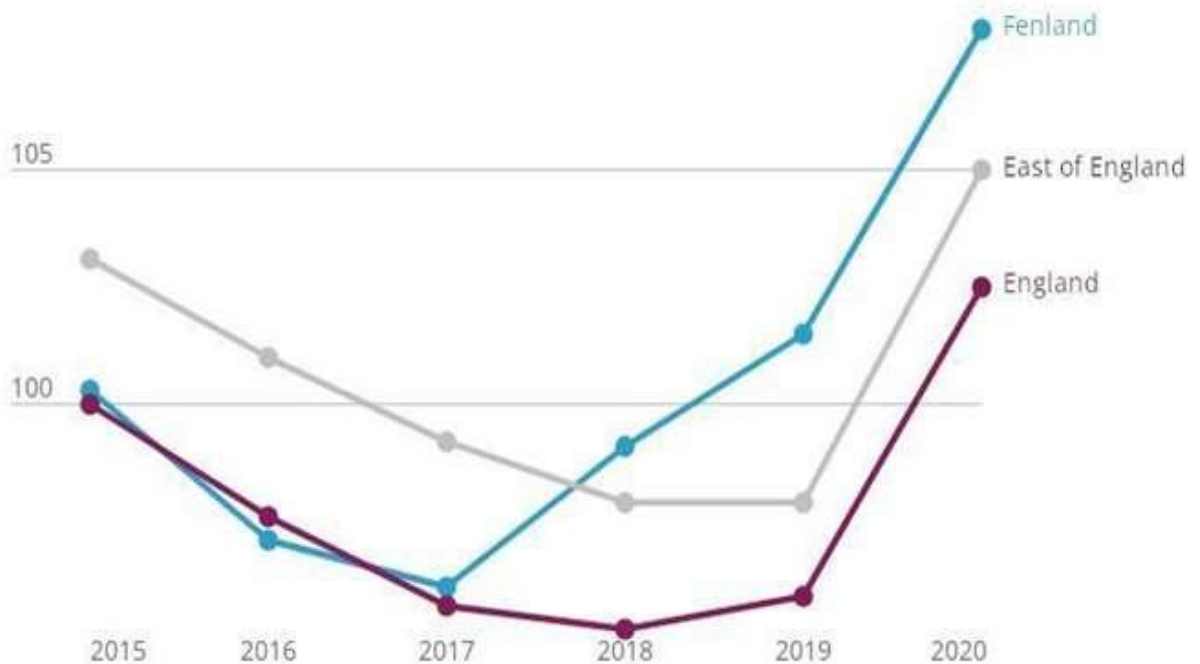
This overall score is made up of measures in different categories, called domains and subdomains. These measures include physical and mental health conditions like diabetes or anxiety, local unemployment, road safety, and behaviours like healthy eating.

This score can show whether health in a local area is improving. The Health Index score has a baseline of 100, which represents England's health in 2015. A score higher than 100 means that an area has better health for that measure than was average in 2015, lower than 100 means worse health than the 2015 average.

Fenland's overall score was 95.1 up 3.4 points on the previous year.

### Fenland's Health Index value for "crime" improved by 7.7 points in the five years between 2015 and 2020

Health Index values for the "crime" subdomain, Fenland, the East of England and England, 2015 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics – Health Index for England

The top measure for health in Fenland was 'living conditions' with a score of 109.6. This area looks at air pollution, household overcrowding, noise complaints, road safety and rough sleeping.

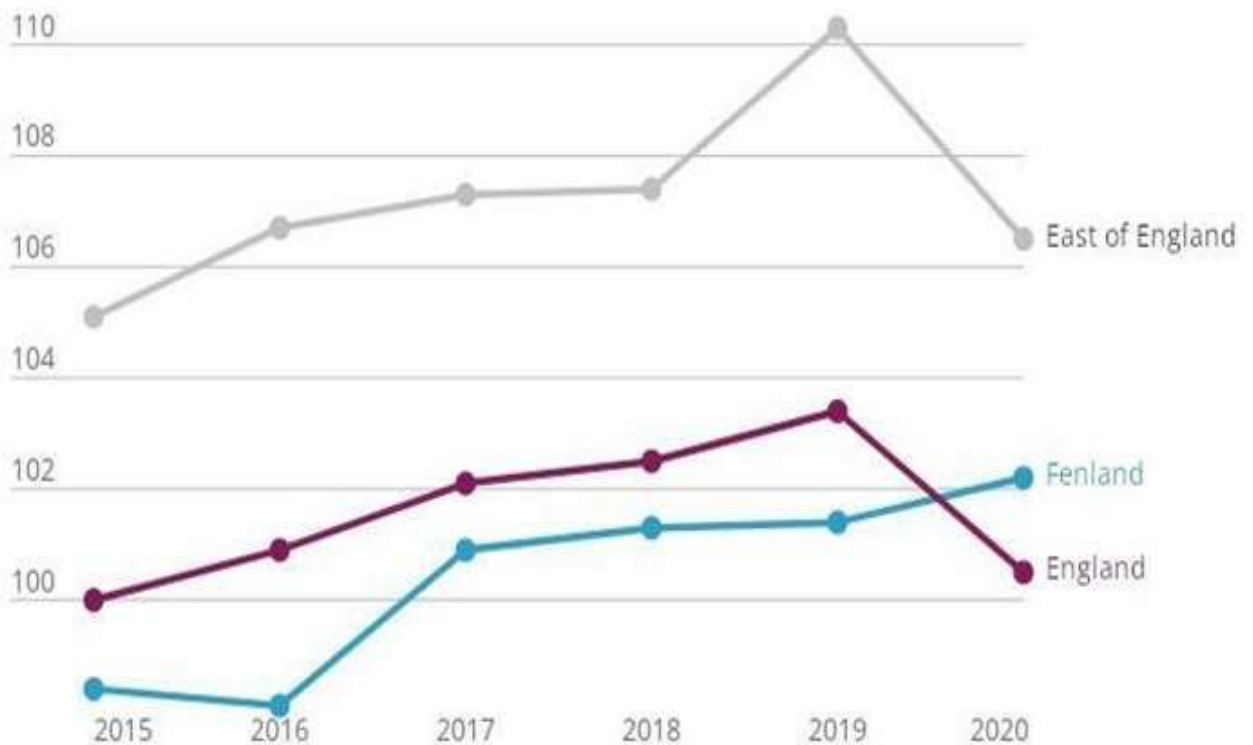
The second highest score was 'access to green space' while the worst score was for 'physiological risk factors'.

Fenland's lowest indicator score was for overweight and obesity in adults which was 76.6 that is down 5.6 points.



## Fenland's Health Index value for "economic and working conditions" improved by 0.7 points between 2019 and 2020

Health Index values for the "economic and working conditions" subdomain, Fenland, the East of England and England, 2015 to 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Health Index for England

People are also less happy than they were with the score dropping 12.4 points from 94.1 in 2019 to 82.2 in 2020.

The index for smoking, pupil absences, distances to sports and leisure facilities and sedentary behaviour barely changed between 2019 and 2020.

But there were worsening scores for cancer, life satisfaction, happiness, suicides and young people in education, employment or apprenticeships.

Scores for diabetes and GP appointments improved, as did job related training, air pollution and feelings of anxiety.

Fenland's score for health relating to 'access to green space' is better than the score for England as a whole. The score is 108.2 in our area, for the East of England it is 101.1 while England has a score of 99.9.

Fenland's score puts it in the top 25% of local authority areas across England for this subdomain.

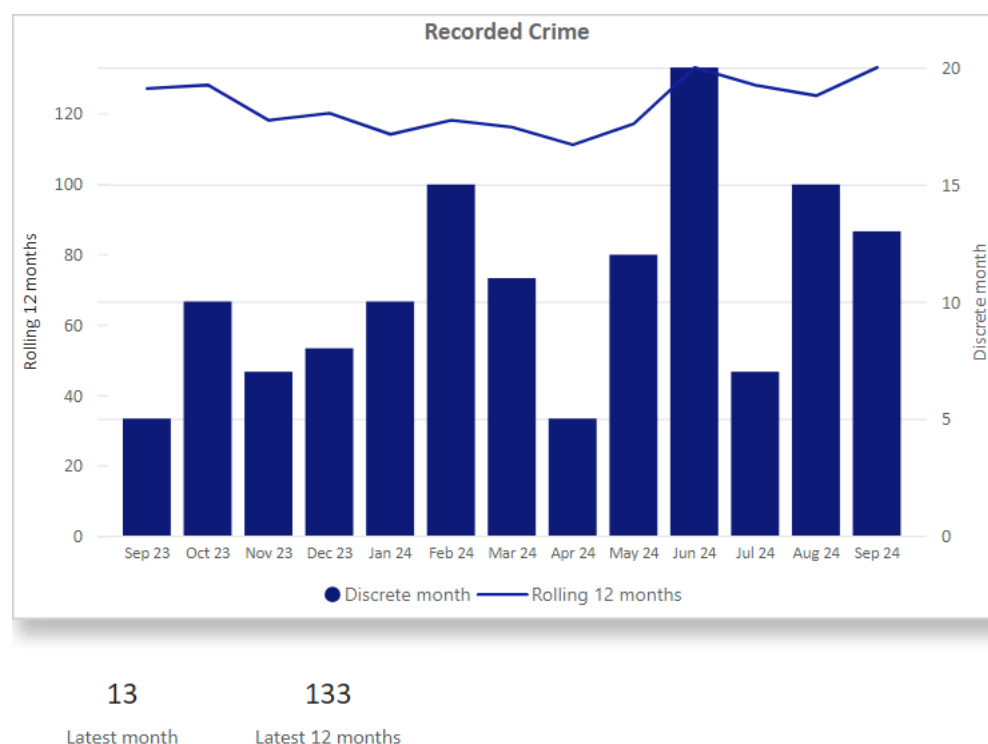
Cambridgeshire Insight provides updated information: [Economy – Interactive Reports](#)

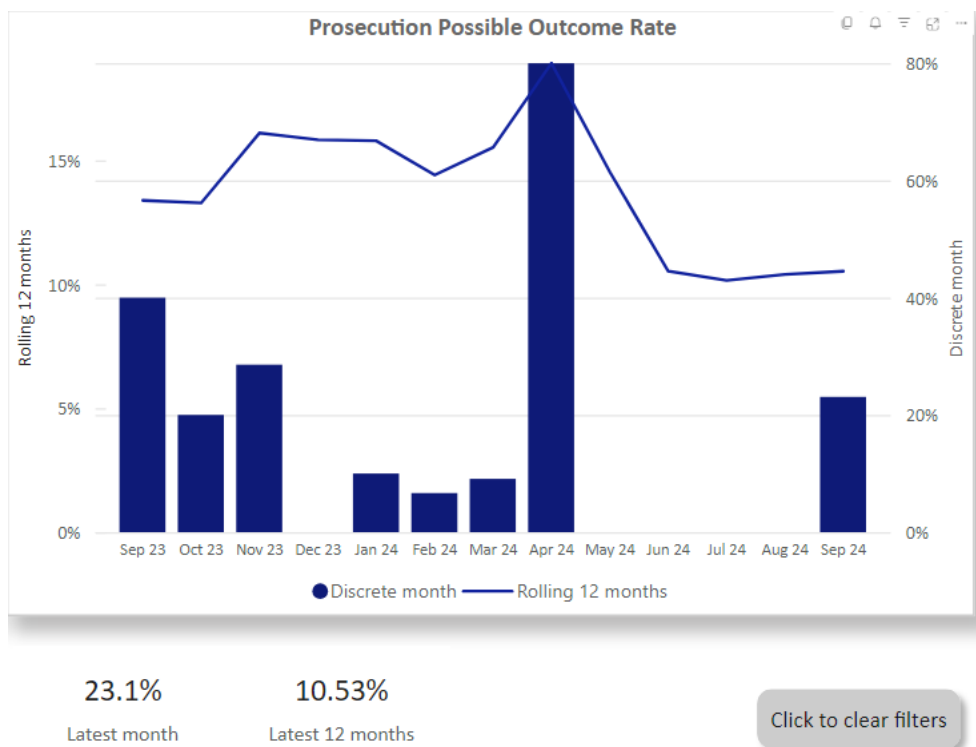
## Hate Crime Reports

Hate crimes and incidents are reported either via Cambridgeshire Police, local community reporting centres or the True Vision online reporting system. Most of the reports come via our community/ community reporting centres. Data is crossed checked by the Police to ensure that all reports are just counted once.

In the 12 months to September 2024 there were 133 reported hate related crimes. There were more reports of incidents, but once initial investigations were undertaken these figures were filtered to actual crimes that needed investigation. Reports vary from verbal abuse to actual bodily harm.

Month by month figures produced below.





To address these issues:

**The Community Safety Partnership** is engaging in the delivery of Workforce Development sessions linked to Hate Crime, PREVENT and Domestic Abuse for frontline professionals and volunteers who work across Fenland.

## Context

Every year we set out our ambitions and priorities for the coming year in the Council's Business Plan. This enables us to outline what we want to achieve and how we intend to do it – with people always at the forefront of our thoughts.

Residents, visitors, employees, employers, our workforce – in short, all people - are at the heart of everything we do, no matter how we plan for the years ahead. The outcomes we focus on, the actions we will deliver through working collaboratively with our partners and communities are what change peoples' lives for the better is the long-term.

Working with partners we help to improve opportunities for everyone and make Fenland an even better place to live, work and raise a family. During the past few years, we have made significant progress towards unlocking Fenland's potential, raising aspirations, improving public services, and securing inward investment to help our communities grow and strengthen.

Fenland continues to experience deprivation that affects peoples' quality of life, their health and even their life expectancy. But if the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic has taught us anything, it is that we work better when we are standing together with partners. The pandemic has shown us what is possible when public bodies, businesses, voluntary sector and communities work together with a common aim.

In this report we have outlined several actions that have started that will support this work, through continued and ongoing partnership working. We are also progressing key town centre regeneration projects, delivering major transport and connectivity schemes, transforming our council services, protecting our environment, and identifying further investment opportunities. Alongside these ambitions and priorities which will underpin all the work of our members and senior leadership team, there's lots of opportunities to look forward to. No doubt challenges lie ahead, but we're confident we can deliver for the people of Fenland.

Despite the legacy of the highly challenging issues caused by the pandemic and financial circumstances that the public sector is operating within, the Council has still been able to make tangible progress in many areas of its the Equality Objectives, often through partnership working, harnessing local adaptability, and integrating its work to develop a coherent approach in delivering its priorities to the community. The equality priorities that the Council have set, in recognising that there would be future broader impacts upon services and communities because of the current austerity measures have gone some way through the budget development process to limit these impacts although of course it cannot fully eliminate them.

The Council is also working with Gypsy Roma Travellers, Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) and disadvantaged people via the wider 'Diverse Communities Forum' a local partnership involving statutory, third sector, educationalists and faith groups to successfully tackle, amongst other things, migration issues affecting local people including homelessness, overcrowding, poor housing conditions, modern day slavery, discrimination, and street drinking. This has a close interface with the statutory work of Fenland Community Safety Partnership.

### **The Equality Duty the Equality Act 2010 – (the Act)**

This Act places a statutory duty upon all Local Authorities to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work in developing policy, in delivering services to their residents, and in relation to their employees. The Act requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.

The Act also makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with a 'protected characteristic'. The protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership

- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

**To summarise the aims of the Equality Act 2010 it requires the Council as a local authority to:**

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Consider the diverse needs of the individuals they serve, minimising disadvantage and ensuring the inclusion of under-represented groups.
- Ensure that those organisations carrying out duties on its behalf also comply with this duty.
- Base their policies, procedures and other actions on sound evidence and research around the needs of their communities.

### **Our Approach to do this**

Our corporate approach is to ensure equality considerations are mainstreamed into key business drivers, such as the budget setting process, procurement, and our approach to delivering customer services. We do this by developing related actions that are mainstreamed into the relevant strategies and plans, which shape our organisational approach in each of these areas, thus ensuring equality is integral to our approach and is owned across the Council.

We are committed to providing high quality services that are customer focused. These services will be accessible, sensitive, and responsive to the diverse needs of all individuals, families, and communities. To this end we are continuing to collect equality-related data for the services we deliver. Over time, we intend to collect even more information and to strengthen the collection of equality-related data across the council. We will then use this data to better inform service planning and development, seeking to continually improve our performance over time.

### **The Council as an Employer**

Equality monitoring information is collected by the Human Resources (HR) team and stored on the Council's payroll and HR information system. The information is requested at the recruitment stage and regularly updated.

The Council encourages all employees to provide this information and circulates a regular reminder to update this information which is sent out to all employees at regular stages to update the information held.

As of January 2025, the Council employed 354 people. A staff breakdown is attached as Appendix 1.

Internal monitoring of cases for grievances, disciplinary and dignity at work show no indication of discrimination involving any equality strand. Our relatively low level of grievances reflects the Council's approach in resolving issues wherever possible, informally at local level before they escalate.

Figures have been collected for all the equality strands and analysed. Those for sexual orientation and gender reassignment have not been published because of the low number of people this relates to.

There are effective communication and consultation mechanisms in place at all levels and services within the Council to ensure that the workforce is fully consulted on and informed about any issues that could concern or affect them. The processes employed within the Council to ensure the effective and ongoing communication between Corporate Management Team, managers, supervisors, employees, and trade union representatives are detailed within this document. Any issues regarding restructures, substantial changes to roles, as well as any new initiatives/legislation affecting the function of a service are clearly communicated and consulted upon from inception with all appropriate groups. A report is then made to the Council's Audit and Risk Management sub-committee (formerly known as the Staff Committee) to consider and agreed recommendations are then implemented.

Consultation is characterised by joint discussions with all staff on any/ all service level operational issues, which are conducted on an informal and regular basis; often taking place as part of regular individual, team and/or service meetings along with service plan development workshops.

Consultation at an organisational level occurs at regular scheduled Management, Trade Union, and Staff Partnership (MTSP) meetings. This group is comprised of management, trade union and staff elected representatives. These meetings cover corporate and strategic issues, as well as any staff and/ or service level issues that may need to be discussed. They are held generally monthly (or more frequently if specific meetings are needed), including meetings between trade union officials, the Council's Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development, and when required the Traveller& Diversity Manager.

This framework facilitates the information and consultation process at all levels with the workforce and trade unions and is so structured and designed to provide an inclusive and consistent approach throughout the Council. Whilst structure is important, it is recognised that there will, at times, be a need for flexibility in approach, and this should be discussed and jointly agreed in each case.

The Council also works to a framework of Core and *Management* Competencies which cover:

- Customer Focus
- Effective Communications
- Teamwork and Co-operation

- Respect & Dignity for all
- Leading, Managing and Responding to Change and Management competencies:
- *Coaching and Developing People.*
- *Effective Leadership.*
- *Managing People.*
- *Managing Performance.*
- *Strategic Awareness.*

These competencies link to the Council's Core Values which are:

- Value, Respect and Dignity for all.
- Adopt a positive ONE TEAM approach.
- Listen, talk, and act.
- Understand, learn, and improve.
- Encourage and Support.
- Service Excellence.

All staff and members of the Council are aware of what is expected from them as either Council employees or those representing the Council. To enhance and reinforce their understanding of this the Council has developed and updates its Employee Handbook. This is promoted internally and is available on the intranet.

## **Staff Groups**

The Council has an established **Equality Service Champions Group**. This group provides a forum for staff working on equality issues within their own service area to develop their personal knowledge, gain support, share information, good practice and promote equality and diversity awareness and practices across the Council.

When developing policies and making decisions, the Council will ensure that the decision makers are aware of the findings of the associated Equality Impact Assessment. This will better inform how any change to an existing/ new policy, procedure or their implementation could impact/ affect people with any of the protected characteristics. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic/s, and/or if any issues are identified then we will do our best to find ways to reduce or remove any identified adverse impact. If we can't then we think carefully about whether we need to make the change to achieve a legitimate aim and explain this.

The Group is coordinated by the Council's Traveller & Diversity Manager who coaches and mentors' equality champions to enable them to undertake their roles which then enables them to carry out the analysis of all findings.

This group is long established and meets on a regular basis. It also provides peer support and a pool of expertise and experience to develop good practice to enable all members to review policies and projects with regards to identify any equality analysis/ issues through a Customer (Equality) Impact Assessment.

## **What is a Customer (Equality) Impact Assessment?**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool that helps us to place equality, diversity, cohesion and integration at the heart of our decision making and everything that we do and make sure our strategies, policies, services and functions do what they are intended to do and for everybody.

Carrying out an EIA involves assessing the likely (or actual) effects of policies on people in respect of protected equality characteristics including age, disability, race and sexual orientation. This includes looking for opportunities to promote equality that may have previously been missed or could be better used, as well as negative or adverse impacts that can be removed or mitigated where possible. If any negative or adverse impacts amount to unlawful discrimination, they will be removed.

By taking this evidence-based approach, it is designed to help the Council ensure that its policies, practices, events, and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

An EIA should be carried out when a new policy/ practice is being developed and/ or there are any proposed changes to a policy. Within the EIA, any reference to 'policy' covers the full range of functions, activities, and decisions for which the Council is responsible – essentially everything we do. It includes both current policies and those under development, as well as organisational change.

Why is an EIA required? all services are required to complete an EIA during the initial stages of policy development, so that they can implement proactive solutions early on. This will allow sufficient time for the policy to be adjusted to mitigate any equality-related concerns or potential adverse impact/s.

The EIA is based on evidence of impact and relevance. This is collected on an evidence matrix which provides the starting point for the consideration of the potential impacts on anybody with protected characteristics, cross referenced with some key areas where impacts might be discernible.

The Champions recognise that the matrix is intended to be a starting point for consideration of any potential impacts defined within the key protected characteristics. Other sources of data should also be considered.

These might include further detail on the following:

- Data on populations in need
- Data on service uptake/ access
- Data on quality/ outcomes
- Research evidence/ literature review
- Findings from stakeholder consultation
- EIAs on similar policies or findings of Assessments by other authorities



## **Staff Self – Service**

We have encouraged employees to update their personal profiles and update their records via our self-service HR database. We hope this will help us provide more accurate data and analysis on existing staff to inform our workforce analysis. More detailed information is provided in an attached appendix.

## **Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and PREVENT training**

The Council offers all staff and members the opportunity to refresh and update their equalities knowledge and skill set via training courses.

A comprehensive training programme for customer facing staff is run annually and is open to anyone within the Council to attend. More bespoke equality and diversity courses can be run at any time to meet the identified needs of individual teams or services.

This training approach enables staff to understand the general Equality Duty and challenges regarding radicalisation thus be conscious of their duties and obligations, and this helps them develop a comprehensive approach to meet these duties.

## **Raising and Maintaining Awareness**

It is important that staff and elected members are aware of the Public Sector Equality Duty and know how to comply with this so that this is considered in our work. To enable this, we ensure that we provide appropriate information / training and use a combination of methods to build and maintain awareness including:

- Briefings for elected members.
- Briefings for Corporate Management Team.
- Information to key contacts within the Council.
- Items and updates in our staff briefings
- Inclusion with Overview & Scrutiny reviews.

Equality issues are an item that is regularly discussed at team meetings and service areas within the Council, this ensures that it remains a live issue.

## **Flexible Working and Work Life Balance**

The Council offers its employees flexible working hours, recognising the need for employees to work flexibly and is committed to optimising the opportunities to incorporate family friendly and flexible working practices where possible. The Council is committed to widening access to quality services through providing flexible modes of working and service delivery.

## **What's Breaking**

What's Breaking is the Council's information and alert mechanism for all staff engagement which is one of the methods the Council uses to communicate with our staff.

It is an inclusive mechanism to communicate and disseminate information, news, and updates to all areas of the workforce, and compliments other established communication mechanisms, such as staff 1-2-1's and team meetings, staff briefings, notice boards, e-mail, newsletters, policies and procedures, briefing notes, training courses and FAQs, intranet and internet. Staff who do not have access to email and the intranet receive printed versions via their supervisor/ team leader/ manager or if they can't read then it is explained to them.

## **Staff Sessions (Called Horse's Mouth briefings)**

These are information sessions delivered to all staff at each Council office, Leisure, and Business centre at varying times by the Chief Executive on a regular basis. These sessions include a great deal of information, including:

- Council Achievements.
- Council Priorities.
- Forthcoming Challenges.
- Budget Information.
- Workforce updates.
- Open forum and Q & A session.
- Springboards/121s
- Further improving our ICT offer
- Further improving our training offer
- Better pay and terms and conditions
- Office environment and accommodation
- Clearer communication of future vision

## **Gender Pay and Occupational Segregation Information**

The Gender Pay Gap legislation (developed by the Government Equalities Office) was introduced in April 2017. It requires all employers of 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap for workers in post as of 31<sup>st</sup> March of each year.

The gender pay gap is a simple calculation that takes the average measure of pay for female employees and compares it to that for male employees. The difference is expressed as a percentage of men's pay.

As a concept it is different from "equal pay" which deals with any pay difference between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs or jobs of equal value. The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men's earnings. For example, a 4.0% gender pay gap denotes that women earn 4.0% less per hour, on average, than men.

Conversely, a negative 4.0% gender pay gap denotes that women earn 4.0% more, on average, than men.

Fenland District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees and has a clear procedure to ensure employees are paid equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex or any other protected characteristic.

### **What do we report on?**

Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees
Mean bonus pay gap	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees
Median bonus pay gap	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees
Bonus proportions	The proportions of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands

Fenland District Council's annual Gender Pay Gap analysis does not identify any particular areas of concern.

The Council's Human Resources team report on this annually. The report can be accessed at **Appendix 2**.

## **The Elected Councillors (Members)**

Fenland District Council Councillors are elected every four years,

Local Councillors are elected by the community, their role is to decide the council priorities over and above its statutory duties. They represent public interest as well as individuals living within the ward in which he or she has been elected to serve a term of office.

They have regular contact with the public through council meetings, telephone calls and/or local community meetings and/ or surgeries. Surgeries provide an opportunity for any ward resident to go and talk their councillor face to face and these take place on a regular basis.

Our elected members can be seen on the Council's website or via the following link.

[Your Councillors - Fenland District Council](#)

## **Services Provided by the Council**

The Council seeks to "mainstream" equality into its services and functions.

Mainstreaming is an approach to deliver equality practices within an organisation. It is primarily a long- term strategy aimed at ensuring that equality principles and practices are integrated into every aspect of an organisation from the outset. The focus should not only be internal (mainstreaming equality principles into procedures and systems) but also external (mainstreaming equality principles into policies and customer service delivery). Mainstreaming provides a framework that facilitates and compliments, equalities legislation and other equality measures

In simplistic terms this means integrating equality into our day-to-day work. We take equality and fairness into account in the way we go about our business when acting as an employer, when planning and providing services and when making decisions.

Mainstreaming ensures that equality becomes part of our culture. This benefit both employees and service users who know that they will be treated fairly and contributes to a continuous improvement and better performance.

Reporting on "mainstreaming" helps us to demonstrate the ways we are fulfilling our general equality duty.

Before we design a policy, procedure or function it is important for us to understand the needs of service users, including any needs due to having a protected characteristic. This information can be used to improve service/policy design and implementation.

The Service Planning approach specifically prompts and guides services to have regard to their equality duties; both about implementing the Corporate Plan and the

corporate objectives which may, for example, be identified through equalities analysis in Customer (Equality) Impact Assessments.

The Council places a strong emphasis on equality analysis, which is used when developing policies and making decisions. The Council will make sure that those who are making the decisions know how the change could affect people with any of the protected characteristics. If the change might cause difficulties for people with a protected characteristic, we will do our best to find ways to reduce this impact. If we can't then we think carefully about whether we need to make a change to achieve a legitimate aim.

The Council has reviewed its equalities data and impact assessments; and these are refreshed annually.

We use the Customer (Equality) Impact Assessment process as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion, and community cohesion issues have been considered when drawing up Council policies or any proposals which affect the delivery of services, the carrying out of the Council's functions and/or employment practices.

The Council has regularly carried out and reviewed these assessments since their introduction in 2002. Assessments are carried out when developing any new policy, plan, or function, or making changes to an existing policy, plan, or function, including the reduction or termination of a service as well as during development of the Council's annual budget proposals.

They identify any impacts on people or groups of people who possess any of the nine protected characteristics, as well as considering socio- economic factors. Existing policies are screened as part of an annual review process.

Impact Assessments help ensure that our service users receive services in a fair and equitable way ensuring that all are focused on outcomes. They provide an opportunity to stop or revise a policy or function which if implemented may potentially be unlawful.

They also contain mitigating actions wherever possible to minimise any adverse impacts, as well as identifying opportunities for positive impacts such as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good community relations.

We use internal and external data to provide evidence for the assessments and consult directly with service users and equalities groups to proof our findings. Impact assessments are organic documents and are developed and added to as a project progress.

The Council consult with a range of community groups, and forums such as the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum, around specific issues when completing equality analysis. These groups are often consulted when we are developing and refreshing policies, strategies, procedures and functions and they act as the conduit to our vulnerable and minority communities for our annual consultation around the Councils Corporate Business Plan.

Where an impact assessment relating to a new policy has been carried out its findings are fed into any subsequent committee/ cabinet reports. This ensures elected members are fully aware when considering a report on any equality issues and/ or any negative and/ or cumulative effects on any of the protected characteristics to better inform them in their decision-making process.

These assessments are completed by each service's Equality Service Champion and/or Service Manager then agreed/ signed off by the relevant Head of Service. They help drive through the implementation of the Council's equality commitment and monitor service delivery outcomes within their service area. Guidance, support, and advice are offered to those who may need assistance during the process. They are people from within the Council who represent each service team.

As part of the Business Transformation, work has been undertaken to ensure the Council meets the savings targets expected by Central Government. Customer Impact Assessments have been undertaken to consider the impact of the savings projects on the community in relation to the Equality Act taking mitigating action as required.

## **Procurement**

The Council's procurement process of acquiring goods, works, agency workers and services from third parties and other statutory partners/ providers reflects the Council's commitment to equality and diversity. The Council will seek to ensure that all external contractors that want/ may deliver services on behalf of the Council embrace the principles of equality and diversity and that they can clearly demonstrate this to us.

## **Delivery of Council Strategies**

The Council consults and engages with its residents in a variety of ways to collect information and data that can be used to better inform its plans and policies to be able to prioritise, identify areas for improvement and service change, set and monitor performance standards and measure satisfaction on the quality of the services we provide.

## **Working with Communities**

With many people under increasing financial pressure, local community groups have become a central part of the local response.

The cost-of-living crisis has increased the prices of energy, food and other essential items. People are increasingly struggling to meet everyday expenses, including feeding their families, keeping their homes warm and traveling to work.

Local community groups offer different forms of support to those in need, with the most common being the provision of free or low-cost food. Other support includes children's clothing and equipment, free toiletries, IT support and social activities. In addition to their core focus, each group can refer people on for more specialist help

in areas they did not feel qualified to deal with. They also provide important social contact for people struggling with loneliness.

The Council recognises the decisions it makes and the services it delivers will be received/ used by different people in different ways. Therefore, the Council aims to involve all communities in the decisions which affect them. All our current consultations are on our website and advertised through all the usual methods of communication including X (formally Twitter), newsletters and direct action to vulnerable and minority groups including hard copies in community languages placed in community hubs and at consultation events.

The Council has many ways of knowing and understanding it's communities and collects equality related information from many sources to build a picture of our community. This includes national, regional, and local data down to ward level and helps the Council to know what services our community require.

### **Fenland Diverse Communities Forum**

In communities where there is a lack of cohesion, and high levels of deprivation tensions can arise which may lead to conflict. Whilst most of the work of the Diverse Communities Forums is preventative and focussed on projects aimed to build community cohesion, we are also collating, monitoring and responding to any rises in tension. Early intervention can make a real difference in preventing low level tension building into bigger issues, potential incidents of public disturbance and disorder which impact on communities. This work also contributes to building good relations, integration and positive development of community cohesion.

Strained relationships may build up within or between communities, or against institutions, based on real or perceived events or information, or due to fears, prejudices, circumstances or specific actions. Issues could be of a religious or racial nature, for example an increase in concerns about hate crime targeting a particular ethnicity, sexual orientation, and faith community.

### **Tension Monitoring**

To do this work, we have an established a tension monitoring group, bringing together key partners and community representatives to discuss incidents which have occurred/ may occur due to rumblings of discontent. This information also provides the Diverse Communities Forum with an opportunity to identify proactive and strategic work needed to address any emerging community tensions. Group members make others aware of any tensions and/ or incidents between communities as soon as they are aware. This includes both large scale incidents e.g. disputes between communities, but also small-scale incidents with the potential for a significant community impact – e.g. between communities which have been involved in disturbances in the past.

In addition to working through partners in other agencies/ organisations, we have also set up links with perceived hard to reach communities – seeking to encourage them to be proactive about contacting appropriate support agencies if they have any concerns. This enhances the groups work and enables people that do not have the confidence to speak more openly about a variety of issues to a trusted agency. We also use these contacts to spread positive messages back out to the community, such as on the importance of good community relations and using this to send positive messages/ counter misinformation to resolve tensions.

The Council, in conjunction with other public, statutory services, faith, community and voluntary sector partners work together through the Fenland Diverse Communities Forum. This partnership forms part of our consultation process for establishing the equality objectives for the year ahead; it also has a cohesion and integration plan which tracks and updates on all progress against our agreed Fenland-wide cohesion/ Integration action plan and discusses the challenges and the benefits of providing public, community and voluntary services in the district.

The partnership action plan is driven, and performance managed through a core partnership group and primarily focuses on positive community outcomes. All proposals are then shared and agreed with our local community.

### **No one left behind.**

Below are some examples of the partnerships work.

Working with local community groups, the Rosmini Centre, PARCA (Peterborough Asylum & Refugee Community Association) and the Hanseatic League support for Eastern European communities we have been able to assist many Europeans to continue to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme who were previously unable to apply due to lack of language, literacy or computer skills.

The EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) is a registration process for EU nationals and their family members who wish to stay in the UK after the UK left the EU. All EU nationals who do not have British citizenship will need to apply for settled status.

The EU Settlement Scheme allows people who came here from Europe prior to BREXIT to continue to live, work and study here in the UK. It also means that they continue to be eligible for:

- public services, such as healthcare and schools
- public funds and pensions
- British citizenship if you want to apply and meet the requirements.

The numbers of people who have obtained settled status in Fenland and other local authorities nearby:



The latest local EU Settlement quarterly figures show that the following numbers of people have obtained settled status:

- Cambridge – 35,340.
- ECDC – 8,560.
- Fenland – 20,640 of these 6,230 people were from Lithuania, 5,730 people from Bulgaria. We have one of the largest Bulgarian communities in the East of England and only Boston outside of a large Town/ City has more Bulgarian people. From the figures and feedback from the community the Bulgarian population continues to grow, and anecdotal information also states that many Bulgarians are relocating to Fenland from other areas. These numbers are not included in this information as they may have gained settled status elsewhere in the UK.
- Hunts – 14,260.
- WNKLCB – 15,000.
- Peterborough – 75,150 .
- SCDC – 14,400.
- S Holland – 21,200.

## **BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER**

To address loneliness and isolation partners have set up several lunch clubs and coffee mornings across the district in both towns and villages. Generally, they are all well supported and with a fabulous atmosphere, the photograph below typifies this at a free community coffee morning, 68 people turning up to enjoy the cakes and company, and this is typical of the local support for these events.

This event had a steady stream of visitors popping in to offer their support with community support workers from Fenland District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, a village agent courtesy of Cambridgeshire Acre and who was introduced to everyone present.

The local social Prescriber also called by to signpost help to anyone who needed it.

Recently, the Wisbech Community Development Trust then announced a new coffee morning every Friday at the Oasis centre called the Good Mood Cafe.



Several people attending have been taught how to use computer tablets provided courtesy of Cambridgeshire County Councils care together commissioner.

After identifying two technology champions who can attend the café regularly, they will be coaching people every week on a one-to-one basis on how to get the most from their tablets and Laptops with emphasis on saving money and avoiding being scammed.

### **Work Well - The Help Hub**

The Council opened a health funded help hub which has been operational since the beginning of June and by the end of July, it had triaged 91 residents who are either unemployed or have a GP sick note. The FDC support workers have worked with each client to understand the root cause of any barriers preventing work and referred them to a raft of supporting agencies either in the voluntary and community sector or the public sector. It has been pleasing to see that there are examples of when the Council is now getting earlier heads up of a potential issue relating to our core services to make earlier and lower cost interventions.

Examples of their support include:

- Assistance with completing Direct Housing Payments for help with rent arrears and shortfalls in rent.
- Volunteering organisations to help keep active and for social support.
- Referral to Richmond Fellowship to offer support with existing employer.

Case study 1:

Customer out of work for 14wks. Previous role in caring but due to having a stroke is unable to return to this role.

The team made 2 referrals:

- to the Adult Early Help team for support at home with bathing.
- to the Papworth Trust for the Pioneer Programme to help with retraining.

Case study 2

This referral was one of the 1<sup>st</sup> help hub customers. He was referred from the DWP, as he had been given his notice in February. He suffers with arthritis. He was at a low point in his life after losing a family member a few months before. He was issued a foodbank voucher to help him through, which he was grateful for and was overwhelmed. The hub discussed his case with the disability coach at the DWP and what they would be able to help him with. The hub discussed support that he could possibly get for helping him around the house. At the time he was at too low a point to agree but said he would think about it.

The hub built a rapport and talked about lots of things that he likes to do including photography and gardening. The hub then mentioned about volunteering. After saying no initially he did eventually sign up for Volunteer Cambs.

This built confidence and he is now working full-time, and he says he has his Mojo back!

Feedback from an Officer from DWP:

*“With regards to the referrals I have sent over to the team, the response from the claimants I have referred has been extremely positive. All callers have been spoken to with empathy and respect and have all come away with support or sign posting that has moved them forward with barriers be it schooling, housing, grants, foodbank support or referral to social support.*

*The gentleman that received food to his door was so grateful and moved by the kind gesture. I have had another customer that was signposted for social support around hoarding, and she is so happy to have received support and is even getting help to apply for jobs. I have others that have received housing and health support that has resulted in grants and white goods.”*

### **Travelling communities**

Gypsy Roma Traveller communities face unique challenges, ranging from inadequate access to education and healthcare to the struggle for respectable living conditions. Local government can make a huge difference in terms of providing culturally appropriate support – including the provision of culturally appropriate accommodation.

It's no secret that poverty, especially in the current cost of living crisis, affects a wide range of communities. The Gypsy Roma Traveller community is no exception. The Gypsy community has traditionally had high rates of declining health and wellbeing and increasing mortality that are significantly worse than for the general settled population. Whilst there are several ways local authorities can help tackle poverty in the travelling community, which we do, we commissioned a new Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment to identify the local needs of Travellers, barriers to service as well including accommodation needs. In order that we can plan to address these.

### **Support vulnerable members of our community**

In our commitment to support vulnerable members of our community, we:

- used our housing powers to prevent homelessness, reduce rough sleeping, meet housing needs, improve housing conditions and keep homes safe and accessible
- enabled residents to claim the Council Tax and Housing Benefit support they're entitled to in partnership with our shared service Anglian Revenues Partnership
- used our powers to improve the condition of private rented homes and ensure they are safe, secure and accessible, investigating a total of 286 homes
- continued our focus on preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- received inquiries from a total of 2002 households seeking housing advice and continued to demonstrate our commitment to supporting them at an early stage to prevent homelessness. When we've been able to get involved at an early stage our success rate of preventing homelessness has increased to 77 per cent this year from 52 per cent last year.
- continued The Rough Sleeper Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG) project and supported 81 individuals. Of those 34 were supported into stable move-on accommodation. Due to the increase in complexity, 25 clients had an alternative outcome. This included prison, hospital, or loss of contact. We

continued to support 22 people through the initiative at year-end. Every attempt is made to encourage engagement with services to allow secure futures for all.

To assist in our aim of meeting housing needs, we brought 64 empty homes back into use.

We supported residents to manage the effects of the cost-of-living through means including issuing food vouchers, benefits advice, signposting and assisting with online Universal Credit (UC) applications.

Our My Fenland customer contact team enabled the WorkWell project to provide support to residents to return to work following ill health, supporting 265 customers from June 2024. In December 2024, the externally funded WorkWell project launched with similar aims and 220 people were supported to year-end.

### Promote health and wellbeing for all

We worked collaboratively with partners, including operators of our four Fenland leisure centres Freedom Leisure and our health providers, to deliver leisure and wellbeing services.

We encouraged healthier communities through fitness and wellbeing activities developed, delivered and supported by our Active Fenland team, which provides free and low-cost social and fitness sessions in a bid to launch good health habits.

Active Fenland delivered and supported a total of 1,463 sessions catering to young and old and focused often on reaching those who have lost fitness or do not do regular exercise.

We encouraged partners to support the delivery of Golden Age events providing information to over 60s on opportunities, services and support available to them. Four Golden Age events were held, reaching 528 visitors. A pilot Golden Age Christmas appeal saw 200 shoeboxes filled with donated gifts for distribution to over 60s in Fenland.

Community heroes of all ages celebrated at Pride in Fenland 2025

The community heroes of Fenland were recognised at the latest Pride in Fenland awards ceremony on Wednesday (June 25).

The awards saw 87 nominations for individuals and groups that positively impact lives in the district.

The event, organised by Fenland District Council, was the 17<sup>th</sup> of its kind.

"Increasingly humbled"

Opening the event, at Wisbech St Mary Sports and Community Centre, the district's Cllr Susan Wallwork said: "With every year that goes by, I become increasingly humbled by the voluntary community in Fenland.

"Individuals of diverse ages and backgrounds are regularly making a meaningful difference to Fenland residents in a multitude of ways.

"These awards shine a spotlight on you. It's also important that we acknowledge the huge numbers of volunteers not in this room who may not have received a nomination, but are no less deserving, and also make a difference to lives every day.

"We would like to give our heartfelt thanks to these people as well as to those of you here tonight."

Cllr Wallwork and Cllr Sam Clark made the night's announcements.

All nominees were invited to the event where the impact they'd each made was mentioned and recognised.

Winners were selected in eight categories and runners up in six of those. All received trophies and £50 and £25 prizes respectively.

Jane Melloy, aged 84, was awarded the Lifetime Volunteer Award for all she still does to support Tydd St Giles and the wider community and her years spent as a magistrate and then supporting witnesses in court as a Witness Service volunteer.

#### [Work with partners to promote Fenland through Culture and Heritage](#)

We continue to promote local culture and heritage in partnership with the Fenland Culture Partnership and Arts..

Octavia View continues to host an Arts Gallery supporting the work of local artists.

We provided support to community groups to hold safe and successful public events, including the reintroduction of the Wisbech Rose Fair which is a regionally recognised event.





x																			
x	Black / Black British																		
x	African	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Black British	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Other Black	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x																			
x	Mixed Background																		
x	White & Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
x	White & Black African	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	White & Black Caribbean	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Other mixed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x																			
x	Asian & Asian British																		
x	Asian British	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Bangladeshi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Pakistani	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Indian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Other Asian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x																			
x	Chinese																		
x	Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Chinese British	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Other Chinese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x																			
x	European																		
x	Bulgarian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Latvian	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Polish	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Romanian	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Slovak	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Czech	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Lithuanian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Portugese	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Russian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
x	Other European	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	0	0
x																			



[illegible]

## Gender Pay Gap Narrative – 31 March 2024

### Introduction

Gender Pay Gap legislation (developed by the Government Equalities Office) introduced in April 2017 requires all employers of 250 or more employees to publish their gender pay gap for workers in scope as of 31 March 2024.

The gender pay gap shows the difference between the average earnings of men and women. As a concept it is different from “equal pay” which deals with any pay difference between men and women who carry out the same or similar jobs or jobs of equal value.

The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men’s earnings. For example, a 4.0% gender pay gap denotes that women earn 4.0% less per hour, on average, than men. Conversely, a negative 4.0% gender pay gap denotes that women earn 4.0% more, on average, than men.

The Council uses these results to assess:

- The levels of gender equality in our workplace
- The balance of male and female employees at different levels.

### **What do we report on?**

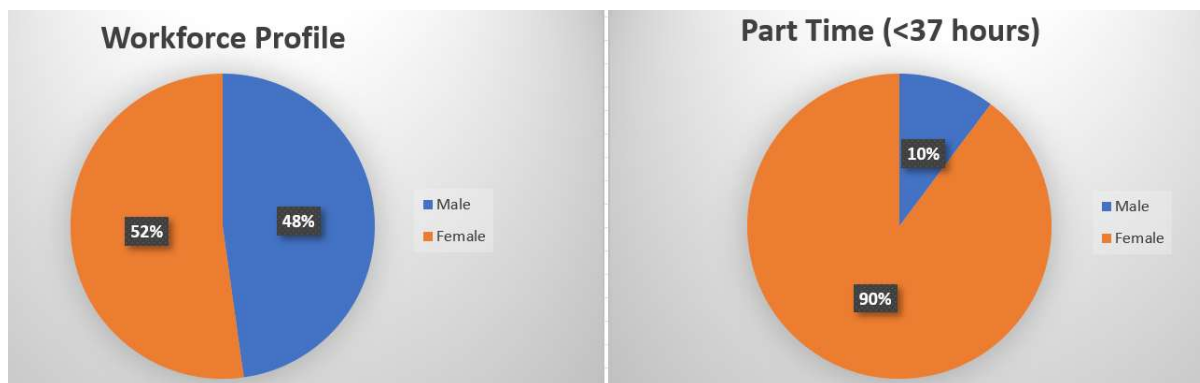
Mean gender pay gap	The difference between the mean hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees.
Median gender pay gap	The difference between the median hourly rate of pay of male employees and that of female employees.
Mean bonus pay gap*	The difference between the mean bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees.
Median bonus pay gap*	The difference between the median bonus pay paid to male employees and that paid to female employees.
Bonus proportions*	The proportions of male and female employees who were paid bonus pay during the relevant period. * - Not relevant for FDC.
Quartile pay bands	The proportions of male and female employees in the lower, lower middle, upper middle and upper quartile pay bands.

Overall, the gender pay gap is defined as the difference between the median (actual midpoint) basic pay of men and women expressed as a percentage of the median basic pay of men:

$$\text{Gender pay gap} = \frac{\text{Median pay men} - \text{Median pay women}}{\text{Median pay men}} \times 100$$

## Our Workforce Profile.

There were 316 employees (headcount) working on the snapshot date of 31 March 2024.

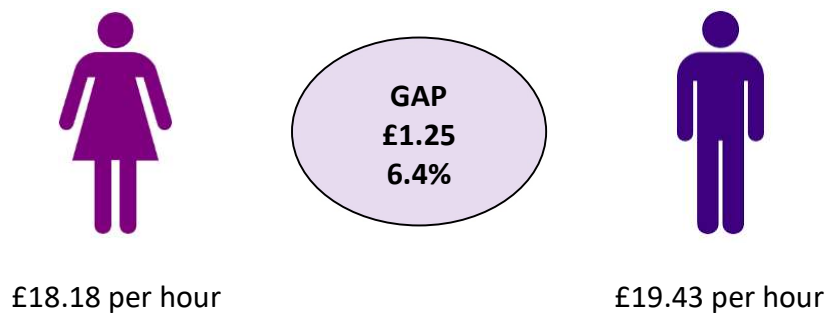


Average weekly hours worked:



## Results – 31 March 2024

**Mean:** Average hourly rate of pay and the percentage difference:



**Mean Pay Gap: 6.4% (Previously 7.7%)**

### ONS Summary\*:

According to the 2024 Office for National Statistics “Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings” (ASHE) figures, it currently stands at 7%, down from 7.5% in 2023. This gap has been declining slowly over time. \*[Office](#) of National Statistics Annual survey of Hours and Earnings.

**Local Government Association** - As reported by the [LGA](#) for 2023/24 -on average, women in English local authorities were paid 3.5% less than men according the mean pay and 1.7% less than men according the median pay.

**Median:** Middle hourly rate of pay and the percentage difference between:



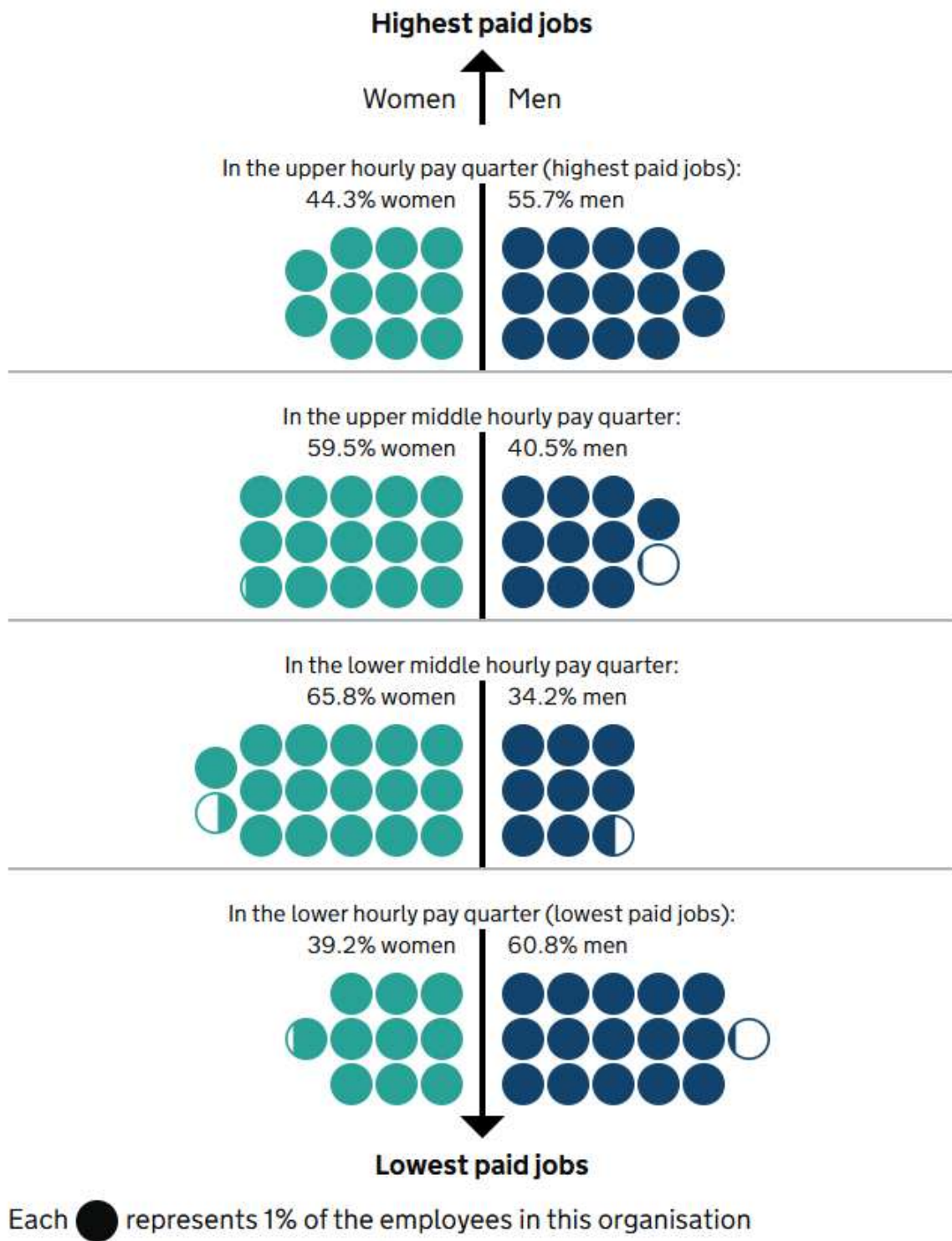
**Median Pay Gap: -0.5% (previously -11.6%)**

### Pay Quartiles.

Pay quarters show the percentage of men and women employees in 4 equally sized groups based on their hourly pay.

Pay quarters give an indication of women's representation at different levels of the organisation.

Pay quarter		Women (%)	Men (%)	Total (%)
Upper hourly pay quarter (highest paid)	Percentage in this pay quarter	44.3	55.7	100
	Percentage of all employees	11.1	13.9	25
Upper middle hourly pay quarter	Percentage in this pay quarter	59.5	40.5	100
	Percentage of all employees	14.9	10.1	25
Lower middle pay quarter	Percentage in this pay quarter	65.8	34.2	100
	Percentage of all employees	16.5	8.5	25
Lower hourly pay quarter (lowest paid)	Percentage in this pay quarter	39.2	60.8	100
	Percentage of all employees	9.8	15.2	25
Totals		52.2	47.8	100



### Bonus Pay Gap.

Fenland District Council does not operate any performance related pay or bonus scheme and therefore has no bonus gender pay gap.

### No Bonus Gap

### Analysis of Data and how calculated.

#### *The median gender pay gap figure:*

This is the difference between the hourly pay of the median man and the hourly pay of the median woman. The median for each is the man or woman in the middle of a list of hourly pay, ordered from highest to lowest paid.

A median involves listing all of the numbers in numerical order. If there is an odd number of results, the median is the middle number. If there is an even number of results, the median will be the mean of the 2 central numbers.

Medians are useful to indicate what the 'typical' situation is. They are not distorted by very high or low hourly pay. However, this means that not all gender pay gap issues will be picked up. They could also fail to pick up as effectively where the gender pay gap issues are most pronounced in the lowest paid or highest paid employees.

### ***The mean (average) gender pay gap figure***

The mean gender pay gap figure uses hourly pay of all employees to calculate the difference between the mean hourly pay of men, and the mean hourly pay of women.

A mean involves adding up all the numbers and dividing the result by how many numbers were in the list.

Mean averages are useful because they place the same value on every number they use, giving a good overall indication of the gender pay gap. Very high or low hourly pay can 'dominate' and distort the figure.

Currently there is no published information to define what level of pay gap is regarded as a cause for concern, the mean gender pay gaps identified are on a par with those statistics reported by the ONS (shown above).

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The results are also likely to be due to workforce distribution across the pay bands and length of service amongst the male employees. Men and women in local government often work in different roles, with men more likely to be in a manual role, while women are more likely to be in administrative or support roles. Traditionally this type of occupational segregation can also result in senior leadership or technical roles being dominated by men.

There have also been a few Job Evaluation changes in this timeframe that have impacted largely our male workforce colleagues (although the pay changes would apply to women too if there were women in post).

Fenland District Council has well established Job Evaluation schemes in place and has undertaken a comprehensive review of pay and allowances to ensure there is no disparity. The most recent changes were in April 2019, when we carried out an equal pay audit and as a result, amended our pay band structures accordingly for all NJC salary bands.

Across the UK economy, men are more likely than women to be in senior roles (especially very senior roles at the top of organisations), while women are more likely than men to be in the front-line roles at the lower end of the organisation.

Women are also more likely than men to have had breaks from work that have affected their career progression, for example to bring up children. They are also more likely to work part time. It remains the case that more women than men work part time because most caring responsibilities within the home are still taken on by women.

This pattern from the UK economy is reflected in the make-up of Fenland District Council's workforce, where the majority of front-line customer services staff are women, while the majority of operational roles are held by full time men.

We are pleased to be able to say Fenland District Council's gender pay gap is not disproportionate with other similar sized local authority organisations, see below a comparison on other District Councils that at the time of writing had reported their data.

### Comparison.

Comparison of other local authority district Council's (plus extra geographically to FDC) that had reported their data at the time of writing this report:

Employer Name	No. Employees	Mean %	Median %	Women in Lower Pay Quarter	Women in Lower Middle Quarter	Women in Upper Middle Quarter	Women in Upper Quarter
Adur District Council	500 to 999	4.1	4.1	43.5	50.9	44.4	38.8
Arun District Council	250 to 499	24.43	10.15	77	69	63	42
Ashfield District Council	500 to 999	-1.43	-5.3	39.33	39.6	50.34	40.94
Basildon District Council	500 to 999	1.55	0	41.6	63.8	61.1	54.1
Blaby District Council	250 to 499	-2	0	43.7	64.4	56.3	51.7
Bolsover District Council	250 to 499	-3.93	-3.42	58.7	41.3	64.1	56.3
Braintree District Council	250 to 499	-9.47	-14.83	22.31	52.46	66.94	57.02
Breckland District Council	250 to 499	13.5	17.2	78.2	79.5	70.5	64.6
Bromsgrove District Council	250 to 499	-10.15	-10.9	18.95	33.68	42.11	48.42
Chichester District Council	500 to 999	-2.71	-1.47	29	63	50	47
East Devon District Council	500 to 999	2.43	-4.29	39	66	67	43
East Lindsey District Council	250 to 499	3.8	-7.9	25.7	68.6	57.4	49
Epping Forest District Council	250 to 499	8.68	10.44	78	78	53	56
<b>Fenland District Council</b>	<b>250 to 499</b>	<b>6.39</b>	<b>-0.48</b>	<b>39.24</b>	<b>65.82</b>	<b>59.49</b>	<b>44.3</b>
Folkestone & Hythe District Council	250 to 499	1.7	0	49.6	67.6	64.9	50.9
Horsham District Council	250 to 499	-10.9	-7.9	32.6	43.2	55.3	53
Huntingdonshire District Council	1000 to 4999	-1.6	-9.5	48.5	48.8	59.5	53.6
Lichfield District Council	250 to 499	-4.3	-1.9	38	35	42	46
Malvern Hills District Council	250 to 499	-5.25	0	31.15	67.21	51.67	55.74
Mansfield District Council	500 to 999	0.35	6.56	46.3	60.9	32.3	43.5
Mid Devon District Council	500 to 999	-0.3	-3.49	37.8	54.6	53.9	57.3
Mole Valley District Council	250 to 499	3.3	3.98	62	66.3	66.3	53.3
New Forest District Council	500 to 999	0.7	1.7	26.5	62	44	37.2
North Hertfordshire District Council	250 to 499	14.6	13.1	72.9	76.8	71.6	49.5
North Norfolk District Council	250 to 499	12.449	12.619	73.81	66.67	61.45	50
North West Leicestershire District Council	500 to 999	-1.33	2.22	44	53	43	50
Peterborough City Council	1000 to 4999	5.2	4.9	72.58	78.49	72.04	70.89
South Cambridgeshire District Council	500 to 999	-8.57	-16.77	25	57	62	57
South Hams District Council	250 to 499	-5.34	-5.05	10	44	52	44
South Holland District Council	250 to 499	-1	-1.1	36.8	52	47.4	43.4
South Kesteven District Council	500 to 999	-4.83	0.8	34	59	50	43
South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District	500 to 999	7.57	4.57	63.1	67.6	67.6	53.4



Councils							
Stratford-On-Avon District Council	250 to 499	12.7	13.6	78.9	72	58.7	53.3
Teignbridge District Council	500 to 999	-2.9	-3.5	21.3	62.9	39	47.5
Three Rivers District Council	250 to 499	-16.09	-29.38	5.75	54.02	68.6	54.65
Torridge District Council	250 to 499	5.71	3.31	26.4	61.12	42.5	34.73
Uttlesford District Council	250 to 499	3.1	-2.1	39	67	63	44
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	5000 to 19,999	-0.89	-3.37	73.9	62.4	72.1	68.1
Warwick District Council	500 to 999	11.7	7.6	73.2	48.8	64.6	42.5
Wealden District Council	250 to 499	10.8	10.9	68	70	66	46
West Lindsey District Council	250 to 499	-4.65	-15.35	32	64	69	54
Wychavon District Council	250 to 499	9.78	2.87	69.84	61.9	67.74	53.97
Wyre Forest District Council	250 to 499	-7.19	-8.62	30.49	51.85	71.6	58.54

Below is a look at the median pay gap by types of authorities. [Source Local Government Associates](#) -

Table 2: Median pay gap by type of authority

Type of authority	Percentage
Counties	8.3%
Metropolitan districts	4.9%
Unitary authorities	2.6%
London boroughs	-0.2%
Shire districts	-0.7%

### Action we are taking.

The Council is committed to reviewing the results of equal pay audits it carries out to ensure there is no gender bias in respect of pay or in other processes. Although the gender pay gap is not significant and the median shows females are paid more, it is recognised that changes to the workforce will cause fluctuations in the data each year. As such the Council will continue to implement actions to ensure equality, including:

- Continue with data collection and analysis. Since changing HR systems, we will have new data tools to interrogate the findings.
- Benchmarking against industry standards and compare local government pay data to ensure in line with other sectors.
- Where possible the council applies an agile working method, giving staff maximum flexibility providing that the delivery of the service is not compromised.
- The council's use of the National Joint Council Job Evaluation scheme ensures that there is a consistent, thorough evaluation of individual job roles against agreed criteria, which does not allow for gender bias. The Council will ensure that grades continue to be determined through objective analysis and job evaluation to maintain the integrity of the pay and grading system.



- There are no opportunities for managers to pay bonus or any other non-objective payments to any employee.
- Continue to make use of the Apprenticeship Levy by upskilling our existing employees, particularly at the team leader and supervisor levels.
- All staff are provided with at least an annual review which includes consideration of their personal development.
- The Council aims to recruit from the widest possible talent pool for advertising job vacancies widely, ensuring gender-neutral language in adverts, use of competency-based selection techniques to guard against unconscious bias in recruitment processes.
- Provide training for recruiting managers and ensure there are no biases in recruitment practices.
- Implement regular unconscious bias training for all staff, this can help challenge any assumptions and biases that may contribute to a gender pay gap.
- Actively promote the employee benefits we offer in our recruitment advertising. It is hoped that an understanding of some of the non-cash benefits on offer such as flexi time, generous annual leave entitlements, discounted leisure membership as well as membership of the Local Government Pension scheme may attract a broader spectrum of candidates to roles across all pay structures.
- Continue to monitor shifts in the gender pay gap data each year to identify any trends and analyse underlying causes.
- Promote a culture of equality and inclusivity within the Council. Make sure that gender equality is embedded in the values and mission of the organisation, and encourage leadership at all levels to model inclusive behaviours.

## **Summary**

It is important to remember that the presence of a gender pay gap does not imply that there is an equal pay issue within the Council. Equal pay is the right for men and women to equal treatment in their terms and conditions of employment for work that is the same or broadly similar. It's an aspect of UK equalities legislation which has been in force for over 40 years.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) explains the difference in the following way: "The gender pay gap is not the same as pay discrimination or equal pay. The gender pay gap is calculated by taking all employees in an organisation and comparing the average pay between men and women. Equal pay rules outlaw pay differences in men and women's pay for same or similar work. It's possible for an employer that treats its women fairly in terms of pay to have a large gender pay gap, and for an organisation that treats its female workers unfairly to have a small gap."

It is encouraging that the headline figures for our sector continue to show the gap between the earnings of men and women in our sector is reducing. This reflects the work across the sector to develop innovative recruitment practices, improve career development opportunities and support women's participation and progress in our workplaces, for example promoting flexible working opportunities to all employees.

We recognise that further work could be done to address this issue, while women's mean hourly rate is 6.4% lower than men, this is not as a result of paying men more than women for the same or

equivalent work. Fenland District Council staff are paid the same for the same job, but the gender pay gap exists due to our workforce profile.

Fenland District Council is therefore confident that its gender pay gap does not stem from paying people differently for the same or equivalent work. Rather its gender pay gap is the result of the roles in which men and women work within the organisation and the salaries that these roles attract.

Fenland District Council is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for all employees and has a clear procedure to ensure employees are paid equally for the same or equivalent work, regardless of their sex or any other protected characteristic.

To ensure that the jobs employees undertake are of equal value, in setting the pay levels Fenland District Council undertakes job evaluation to determine the size of a job by following the nationally recognised job evaluation scheme for National Joint Council employees. Evaluations are undertaken regularly for new jobs and as part of restructures where a job significantly changes.

There is additional support offered to women who return to work following maternity/adoption leave to enable them to return to work and fit around their work life balance. Additionally, there is shared parental leave that encourages male employees to also consider more time off for work life balance.

Being able to care for others should be a choice open to both men and women and is a core issue when it comes to gender equality. It was therefore a key consideration when recently reviewing our policies and considering if our workplace culture is such that employees are supported to take on caring roles and responsibilities if they choose to.

The main reason for our organisation's gender pay gap is an imbalance of male and female colleagues across the organisation. The mean pay gap figure shows that overall male employees have higher pay than female. When the gender distribution is looked at by pay quartiles a more detailed picture is revealed which shows that, now, there are fewer women in senior roles than men, and a higher proportion of men relative to women in the lower quartile.

## **Recommendations**

Fenland District Council remains committed to ensuring ongoing robust delivery of all people policies and practices to ensure no gender bias is in place when recruiting and appointing to new roles. The Council will continue to ensure that our pay and reward systems are fair and transparent.

The Council will continue to monitor our performance, along with initiatives that we have in place which have already contributed to these results such as:

- Actively supporting parents returning to work from maternity leave, shared parental leave or adoption leave by offering job share, career breaks/sabbaticals or part time opportunities.
- Promote flexible working and widening participation specially of men using parental leave
- Develop and implement talent management and succession planning processes to enhance career development opportunities
- Flexible/Hybrid/Agile working options in most services and many locations
- Move from a largely paper-based exit interview process to a digital version to collect and analyse the reasons for leaving and put in place actions to bring about positive change
- Compassionate and special leave arrangements

- Appraisals for all staff to allow for focussed discussions around learning and development
- Coaching programme
- Employee recognition scheme
- Ensure our Learning and Development Programme is accessible to all including the promotion of apprenticeships at all levels of the organisation
- Salary bands that clearly show incremental progression and where appropriate related criteria.

The Council should continue to ensure that part time employees are well supported and are given opportunities to progress, which means that well-qualified, experienced women (and men who also take on caring responsibilities) are better able to keep participating in the workforce.

Any future action plan will need to focus on attaining even greater diversity in the workplace and we will continue to encourage and support all our employees to fulfil their full potential.

By taking a comprehensive and systematic approach, Fenland can address the gender pay gap, create a fairer workplace, and help lead the way in promoting gender equality in the public sector. Regular tracking, transparent communication, and leadership commitment are key to driving the change.

Few employers in Fenland can boast the breadth and variety of roles we enjoy at Fenland District Council, and we remain committed to promoting Fenland District Council as a fair and inclusive employer. Our flexible working practices and wide range of roles ensure that we encourage and support employees to come to work for us and to develop their long-term career to stay with us.

***We have a workforce to be proud of!***