

South
Derbyshire
District Council

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ANNUAL REPORT



2025-2026

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Foreword

We are proud to introduce our annual Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report.

This report highlights the progress we and our partners have made over the past 12 months to advance our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion; to outline our next steps, and to meet the requirements of our public sector equality duty.

The Council wants a District in which people have a good quality of life, be who they want to be and can achieve their full potential. This is underpinned by the recognition that individuals, families, and communities do not all have the same starting point or access to the same opportunities.

We highlight some of the work we have been doing to promote and celebrate equality, diversity, and inclusion, in collaboration with our partners, and in the wider community. This demonstrates our ongoing commitment to ensuring our residents, customers, and staff are treated fairly and equitably by the Council.

Our work shows the many ways we have used to listen, include, and involve our communities. We understand that everyone is an individual with their own characteristics, preferences and lifestyles they choose. We celebrate difference and acknowledge personal choice.

We continually work to improve, and we acknowledge there is more to do to address inequality, discrimination, and exclusion. We are committed to being a role model and being there for people who need our help or support.

We are proud of the work we have achieved to make South Derbyshire a place where people can fully participate in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of our District.

We thank our partners who play an important role in achieving our aims, and our staff who constantly go above and beyond to serve our residents, customers, and partners. We will continue to work together to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion are central to everything we do.

Leadership

We demonstrate inclusive leadership, partnership, and a clear organisational commitment to being a leader in equality, diversity and inclusion.

We have an Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Group with a broad membership that includes representatives from voluntary, community, and faith-based groups, Trade Unions, senior Council officers, Members, and employees.

We have reviewed, updated, and received feedback on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028 and action plan with this group and with the Leadership Team, Heads of Service, Trade Unions and Members. We have listened and focused our action plan on a smaller number of activities that will be delivered during the year and then to review our approach.

Community cohesion is what brings members of different communities together. During 2025/26 examples of activities we organised to bring people from different backgrounds together included the Festival of Leisure, and display of lit candles in the Civic Office windows to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.

Our lead membership of the South Derbyshire Partnership which aims to improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of South Derbyshire makes an important contribution to equality, diversity, and inclusion.



In 2025-26:

- Our transport services supported wheelchair users to access 295 journeys to medical and social appointments (medical journeys funded by Derbyshire County Council and social journeys funded by SDDC).
- Our connected South Derbyshire project, in partnership with Public Health Derbyshire, supported the community to continue groups for people with dementia, Parkinson's disease and other mobility issues as well as starting work on supporting any areas of digital exclusion and developing groups that will contribute to supporting men's mental health.
- Our Digital Futures programme supported residents who may be digitally hesitant to access useful things online such as the NHS app as well as supporting people to spot scam text messages
- Handy person service completed 555 call outs to vulnerable residents or with a disability; installing things such as grab rails, ramps and key safes.
- Our Connect Befriending service supported an average of 40 individuals per month experiencing isolation and loneliness, many of whom are unable to get out independently.
- Mental wellbeing support service helped an average of 50 people per month with a range of practical and emotional support measures.
- We hosted work experience and intern placements for South Derbyshire young people.
- Our safer homes service (funded by SDDC) provided practical support to 507 residents who have been affected by crime, anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse.

Workforce

We actively promote equality, diversity, and inclusion to our workforce and take actions to support this.

We recognise the value and importance of treating all staff equitably and to take positive action, provide support and raise awareness of barriers and challenges staff can face in the workplace or in their daily life.

During 2025/26 we have:

- Reviewed and agreed our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy for 2025-2028 and an annual Action Plan.
- Completed and published our Gender Pay Gap report that shows that on a median basis females are paid 17.12% more than males.
- Maintained our Disability Confident status and are working towards Disability Leader accreditation
- Have continued to implement our Customer Access Strategy, adding extra accessibility channels for people to contact us and have continued with our mandatory training plan for staff, including neurodiversity training for managers.
- Achieved Customer Service Accreditation status.
- Continued to provide Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for our staff with 63% of our staff trained to date.
- Supported employees with disabilities to remain in work through providing access to equipment and support.
- From April 2025 to March 2026 we supported 10 work experience placements across our Services.
- We employed 15 apprentices and supported them with additional training and support to enhance their future career options.
- Completed Equality Impact Assessments on employment policies and procedures along with completing the same with service based strategies and policies.



Communities

Ensuring everyone can access and benefit from our services is key to our work.

Supporting Independence and Wellbeing

Our work on Disabled Facilities Grants continues to support individuals to maintain independence and supports their confidence and wellbeing. In 2025-26 we completed 55 adaptations in private properties (including private rented and social landlords) and 44 adaptations in Council-owned properties.

The Council's Careline team provides a 24/7 responsive service to almost 1,000 residents throughout the District.

They ensure vulnerable residents stay safe and receive help if they fall, become ill, or are at potential risk from fire. From 1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026 Careline answered 32,932 calls, 99.15% of which were answered within 60 seconds - this well exceeded our target of 97.5%.



Supporting Children, Families, and Vulnerable Residents

Looked after and care experienced children and their carers are able to access our Leisure Centres, managed by Everyone Active for free and this includes any carer attending with somebody they look after within South Derbyshire. Free membership is also offered to anyone living with Parkinson's Disease.

There are weekly activity groups in South Derbyshire. The Tennis group at Maurice Lea Memorial Park runs all year round moving indoors in the winter months. The Bowls group is seasonal outdoors at Maurice Lea Memorial Park from May to September with monthly winter indoor activity sessions at Midway Community centre.



Two new Gardening groups at Eureka Park and Newhall Park were created in 2025 encouraging volunteers help with the maintenance of gardens on our parks. These sessions run from Spring to Autumn.

Derbyshire specialist child exploitation charity Safe and Sound has been able to deliver weekly outreach visits with young people across Swadlincote Town centre and the urban core parks. The outreach sessions have given young people a voice, listening to their concerns, empowering them to action change. This enables them to access different organisations to seek support, feedback their views and help to positively shape the future delivery of services.

The South Derbyshire Community Grant Fund which was administered by the Council using part of its allocation of UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity funding, supported 17 community projects spread across the district and this work is ongoing. These ranged from improvements to community venues and community sports facilities to energy efficient measures and environmental projects such as a new community woodland. Projects included new equipment for a foodbank, new accessible internal and external doorways in village halls and new insulation in community venues for the comfort of users, particularly the very young and elderly.

Equality in its widest sense is at the heart of these community projects with applicants, as part of the application process, being asked about what arrangements will be made for those with mobility or access difficulties to benefit from their project and how they will actively seek to involve as wide a range of people as possible from different backgrounds and groups.

Holiday Activities and Schools

During the Easter and Summer holidays, the Active Communities and Health Team delivered a wide range of Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) sessions. HAF supports children from low-income families by providing healthy meals, enriching activities, and free childcare places, helping to improve health, wellbeing, and learning outcomes.

Delivery included school-based camps through the Active Schools Partnership, sessions at Rosliston Forestry Centre led by Get Active in the Forest, cycling activities at Cadley Park, summer skateboard coaching, and evening youth sessions for teenagers. In total, over 50 sessions were delivered, with more than 2,200 funded places utilised.



In partnership with Swadlincote secondary schools, Active South Derbyshire launched Year 2 of the Sports Mentoring Scheme. This initiative creates a safe and supportive environment for young people experiencing challenges or barriers, enabling them to explore their thoughts and feelings while benefiting from physical activity. The ultimate aim is to help participants re-engage with education and their wider community. Delivery began in December, with eight young people currently undertaking an eight-week, one-to-one programme. We have set an ambitious target of 30 completed referrals within 12 months.

As part of our Summer Activities programme, we hosted two free SEND Family Sessions at Midway Community Centre. These sessions provided young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) the chance to try a variety of activities in a safe, supportive, and quieter environment. Designed for families who may find mainstream sessions challenging, these events welcomed 39 young people and their families/carers. Feedback indicated that attending these sessions increased families' confidence to participate in the wider summer programme, as they gained a clearer understanding of available activities and support.

Overall the Summer Activities programme (playscheme) delivered 84 free-to-access sessions and recorded 4,975 participations over five weeks of delivery, many of which were young people with disabilities and/or SEND.



Health and Inclusion Initiatives

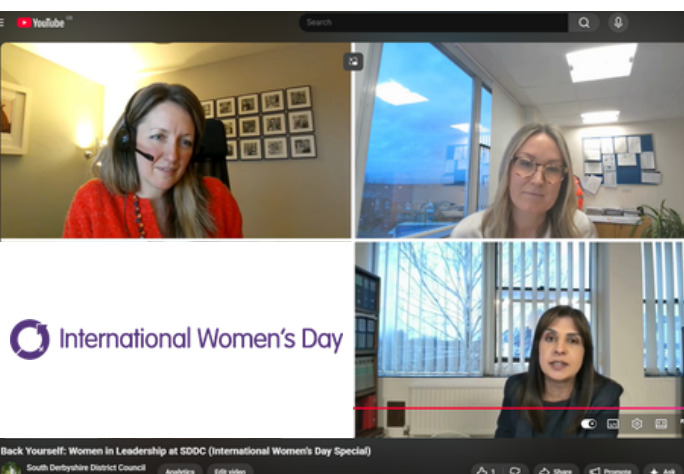
Get Active in the Forest launched a Parkinson's disease Support Group at Rosliston Forestry Centre. This free weekly social group offers individuals with Parkinson's disease and their families the opportunity to engage in activities such as chair-based exercise and Nordic walking, alongside time to socialise and connect in a welcoming setting.

At Rosliston Forestry Centre resurfacing of many of the paths and trails to allow those using mobility aids to travel further around the site were completed including part of the National Forest Way. The tender process to replace five doors to assist those with mobility issues accessing our venue has been completed and the installation will begin in the spring.

Customer Access and Equality

We have carried out a Customer Service Excellence assessment and are proud to have achieved a 'whole council' Customer Service accreditation. We achieved a 'compliance plus' rating in customer engagement, consultation, focussed culture, partnership working, collaboration and complaint handling. The assessor said:

“ *The Council's commitment to equality and inclusion is further reflected through its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and Action Plan, which outlines how services respond to the needs of different communities and protected groups.* ”



A Diversity Calendar of Events was delivered, with different religious festivals, themed weeks and months all promoted. These included Diwali, Pride month and International Men's Day, as well as Holocaust Memorial Week. For International Women's Day our Leadership Team participated in a video podcast

Our work with the Sukhmani ladies in Stenson Fields continued this year as we joined them to celebrate their 25th anniversary. The Nordic Walking Group continues and our work with members of the community living with Parkinson’s continues to grow.

The Festival of Leisure has continued its commitment to accessibility for all with an accessible arts offer, including inclusive textile weaving and ceramics workshops, while also placing a strong focus on giving local and emerging artists the opportunity to perform and share their talents with the community.

We continue to share resources on our website, support for people who need support from the Access to Work scheme.



Partnership and Working Safely

UNITE STANDS FOR



UNITY
OVER DIVISION

Partnership working remains vital to understanding and supporting our communities. We continue to be an important member of the South Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership, a multi-agency group that works to reduce crime and the fear of crime, signposting people to available support.

Reported hate crime figures for the District have increased slightly, with those for 2025–26.

Total Hate Crimes				
District	April 2024 - March 2025	April 2025 - March 2026	Volume Change	% Change
Amber Valley	233	260	27	11.6%
Bolsover	164	142	-22	-13.4%
Chesterfield	300	262	-38	-12.7%
County Council area	1,357	1,399	42	3.1%
Derby	1,018	1,177	159	15.6%
Derbyshire Dales	77	68	-9	-11.7%
Erewash	203	250	47	23.2%
Force area	2,375	2,576	201	8.5%
High Peak	112	142	30	26.8%
North East Derbyshire	133	122	-11	-8.3%
South Derbyshire	135	153	18	13.3%

Looking ahead

Excellent progress was made in 2025 – 26 but there is still more to do.

Working with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Steering Group and other stakeholders and partners, we will continue to build on what has been achieved.

Our plans for 2026–27 include:

- A Corporate Peer Challenge to include a focussed review of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Continuing to review our employment policies and procedures, completing Equality Impact Assessments to identify any opportunities to make us as inclusive as possible and an 'Employer of Choice.'
- A continuation of the social mobility programme aimed at disadvantaged young people, aged 11 – 16 in secondary schools in the District to improve their employment prospects through a range of interventions which include employee visits, out of school visits to employers, and work experience placements
- The Disabled Facilities Grants team have a new Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and a revised Council Housing Adaptations Policy and along with other service improvements have brought waiting times down from over a year to just 3-4 weeks for an initial Occupational Therapy assessment - over the last year we have increased the number of DFGs delivered by 33%.
- Continue to promote our calendar of events that the Council to engage with staff to commemorate, celebrate and educate our employees and residents to better understand our community and workforce demographic and data to ensure we are representative of the communities we serve.
- Develop our disability and ethnicity pay gap reporting.
- Review our recruitment processes and practices to encourage applicants from underrepresented groups.
- Continue with our Sports Mentoring Scheme with an ambitious target of 30 completed referrals within 12 months.
- Review our services in light of the Supreme Court judgment to ensure we remain compliant with the law whilst continuing to support members of the LGBTQ community.
- Complete an internal campaign to build our insight into the equality profile of our workforce.
- Develop our approach to identify and support employees with mental health conditions including the provision of neurodiversity training for Managers and staff.
- Procure and implement an employee assistance programme that will enable employees to obtain access to a range of different support services to support their physical, mental and financial health.
- Improved and streamlined process for completing Equality Impact Assessments.
- Exploring options to give greater support and opportunities to Care Leavers in gaining employment and education.



Continued...

- Work towards achieving recognition as a Disability Confident Leader to strengthen our commitment to supporting disabled employees and applicants.
- Establish an Equality Champions and Ambassadors Network to support the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion across the Council
- Improve the equality profile of job applicants by reviewing and enhancing the application form to encourage disclosure of protected characteristics.
- Work towards achieving the Carer Friendly Employer Quality Mark to better support employees with caring responsibilities.
- Explore opportunities to increase the use of the Language Line service and the Namedrop interpretation tool to improve accessibility and ensure equitable access to our services for all residents.
- Improve our collection of equality data of people accessing our services or requesting information. This will inform the delivery of services, provide information to monitor trends, and highlight potential barriers for people accessing our services that we can address and resolve.



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If you would like this document in another language, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us.

This information is also available in large print, Braille or audio format upon request.

General enquiries: Call **01283 595795** or visit
www.southderbyshire.gov.uk/contact

