

Three Rivers District Council

# Equalities Duty Information Report

January 2025

## Foreword

“As a council, we are committed to making Three Rivers a great place to live, work and visit. We see equality, diversity, inclusion and equity embedded within our core values and behaviours.

As an organisation, we are committed to tackling inequalities, prejudice and discrimination. We will do this through our own services, for our residents and staff and work in partnership with local organisations to embed this culture.

At the same time, as a council, we understand that some of our communities are hidden, and not visible through the Census data. As council leader I am passionate that we as an organisation work with these communities directly and through our partner organisations already supporting them, to ensure their voices are heard and they feel a sense of belonging to the Three Rivers community.

We understand that the cost of living and long-term impact of the pandemic has created more inequality for some of our residents and we are committed to addressing these.

This Equality Duty Information Report provides information for our residents on the work we are doing as a council to meet our Equality Objectives for 2022-26, as well as information on our staff across a range of characteristics at a snapshot in the year.”

**Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst**  
**Leader, Three Rivers District Council**



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is the council's annual Equality Duty Information Report, setting out the achievements made in supporting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in Three Rivers during 2024.
- 1.2. The report highlights key pieces of work undertaken by the council and, where relevant its partners, and sets out the future direction in the provision of fair and inclusive services.
- 1.3. Progress is reported against the context of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2023-26, which contains the following objectives:
  - 1.3.1. To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training
  - 1.3.2. To improve equality and access to services for all residents
  - 1.3.3. To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities
  - 1.3.4. To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.
- 1.4. Details of the councils Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy can be found at: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/equality-and-diversity>

## 2. Legislative Framework

- 2.1. As a public sector organisation, the council has statutory duties governed by the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 and related regulations. Under the Act, public sector organisations with over 150 employees are required to show that they have identified and considered the impact of their activities on people with "protected characteristics".
- 2.2. Protected characteristics are defined in legislation as Race; Age; Sexual Orientation; Disability; Sex; Religion or Belief; Gender reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity. In addition to considering the needs of those with protected characteristics. The council's Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy has regard to disadvantages that may arise from income, skill level or by virtue of where people live and the councils work as a signatory to the Armed Forced Community Covenant.
- 2.3. The Equality Act 2010 also includes a general equality duty which requires the council to have due regard to the need to:
  - 2.3.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization.
  - 2.3.2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
  - 2.3.3. Foster good relations between different groups.
- 2.4. Due regard involves:
  - 2.4.1. Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics and
  - 2.4.2. Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups, where they are different from the needs of other people.
- 2.5. This general equality duty applies to the council as an employer as well as a provider and enabler of public services.

### 3. Equality Impact Assessments

- 3.1. A core element of the council's work to ensure that it meets its equalities duties is the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). Where there are major changes to a service area, new policies or projects being considered, council officers and members must undertake, review and give consideration to an EIA at key scoping, planning, decision making and implementation stages.
- 3.2. Completed impact assessments are included with relevant Committee reports (the inclusion of a section on equalities impacts is a mandatory requirement) and published on the council's website.
- 3.3. EIAs are completed by the applicant for all Community Infrastructure Levy applications made to the council.
- 3.4. EIAs are used to identify not only any negative impacts that could result from the proposals, but also where there may be opportunities to further promote equality, remove barriers to services which have or could have a differential impact on the protected groups in Three Rivers or address disadvantages which could arise from disparities of income, skill level and by virtue of where people live.

### 4. Equalities Sub-Committee

- 4.1. The Equalities Sub-Committee was developed in 2020 to review and discuss motions relating to equality in order to make recommendations to Full Council.
- 4.2. The Sub-Committee also hears from partner organisations and community groups on the services they deliver and emerging or existing concerns.
- 4.3. This year, the Equalities Sub-Committee received presentations from Herts Mind Network on the Flourish Project and the Refugee Council, focusing on support offered to refugees. Gate Herts presented on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveler communities and Mission Employable on the skills and employability support provided to young people with learning disabilities.

### 5. Inclusion Working Group

- 5.1. The Inclusion Working Group was developed in 2024. This is an internal group made up of officers across all council teams.
- 5.2. The group has been meeting on a bi-monthly basis, and has been identifying training needs, development awareness raising resources, developing the action plan included within this report and progressing the Disability Confident Leadership accreditation.

### 6. Values and Behaviours

- 6.1. Over the last year the council has embedded Values and Behaviours which underpins equality, diversity, and inclusion. Three Rivers is committed to demonstrating and promoting the following values.
  - 6.1.1. We are proud.
  - 6.1.2. We are respectful.
  - 6.1.3. We are passionate.

6.2. A behaviour framework has been implemented to encourage and enable staff to develop behaviours connected to the values in line with their roles. It is used in staff 1-1 meetings as well as in performance development reviews (PDR's).

## 7. Disability Confident Leadership

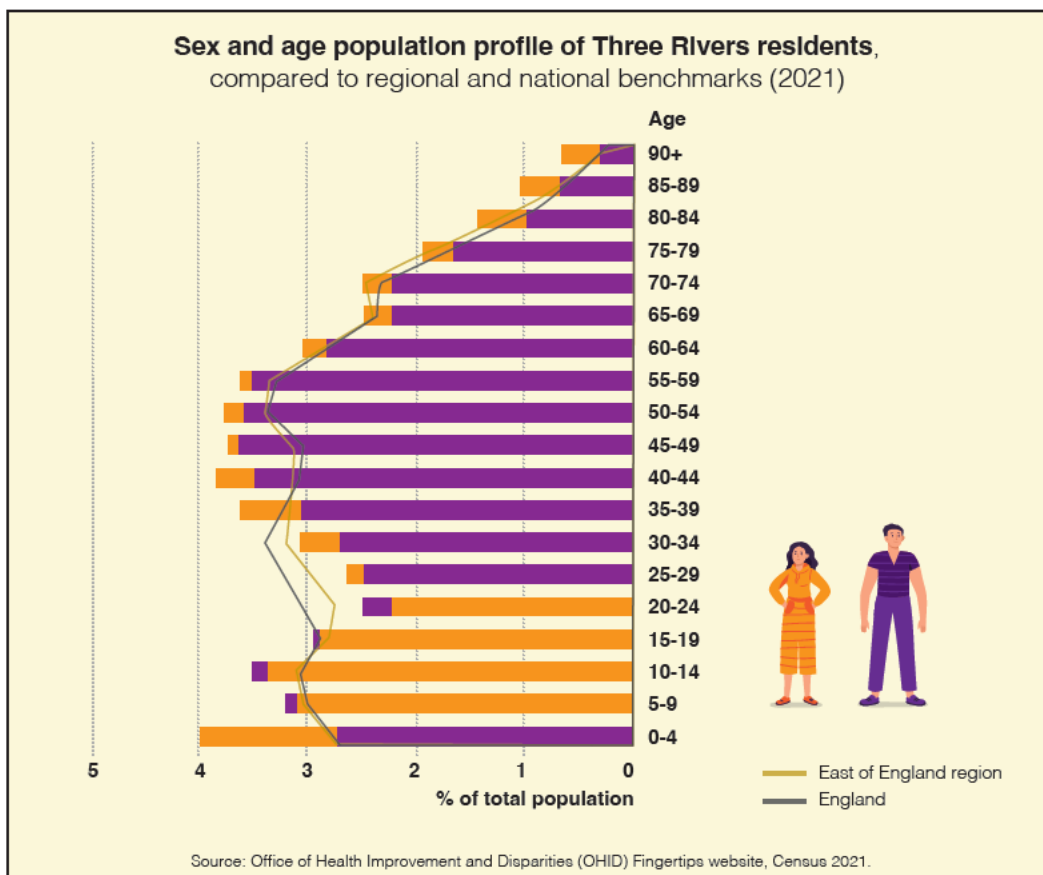
7.1. The council is a Disability Confident Employer.

7.2. In 2024, Three Rivers District Council wanted to progress further within the Disability Confident Scheme, and so began the process to achieve a Disability Confident Leadership Accreditation. This will help the council to take additional steps to recruit, retain and develop people with disabilities, and promote the value brought by them to the organisation.


7.3. The council is required to complete a self-assessment and provide evidence to demonstrate this. The council has partnered with Sunnyside Rural Trust to validate the self-assessment and they have supported the council in developing an action plan in order to achieve the accreditation.

7.4. The council held a Disability Confident Event in September 2024 to encourage local businesses to begin their own Disability Confident journey. Encouraging and influencing other partner organisations and businesses to become disability confident will continue in 2025.

8. **Three Rivers Communities** – series of infographics based on data from 2021 Census to provide a summary of protected characteristics.




**The 2021 Census estimates** that the population of Three Rivers is **93,800** with



**49% males**    **51% females**


The majority of residents are aged **15-64 years (63%)**



**18% of the population aged 65+**

It is projected that the number of people aged 65+ in Three Rivers will increase by **7%** by mid-2043  
(ONS 2018 - based population estimates)


**The most common age of Three Rivers residents was**



**40-59 years** and **5-14 years**

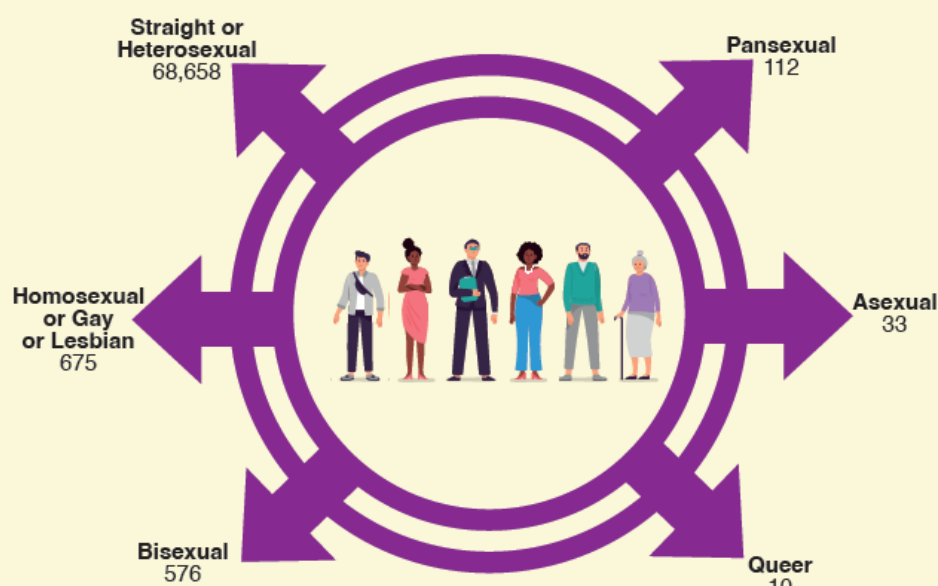
Three Rivers had a higher proportion of the population in these age brackets compared to the regional and national averages.

**However,**



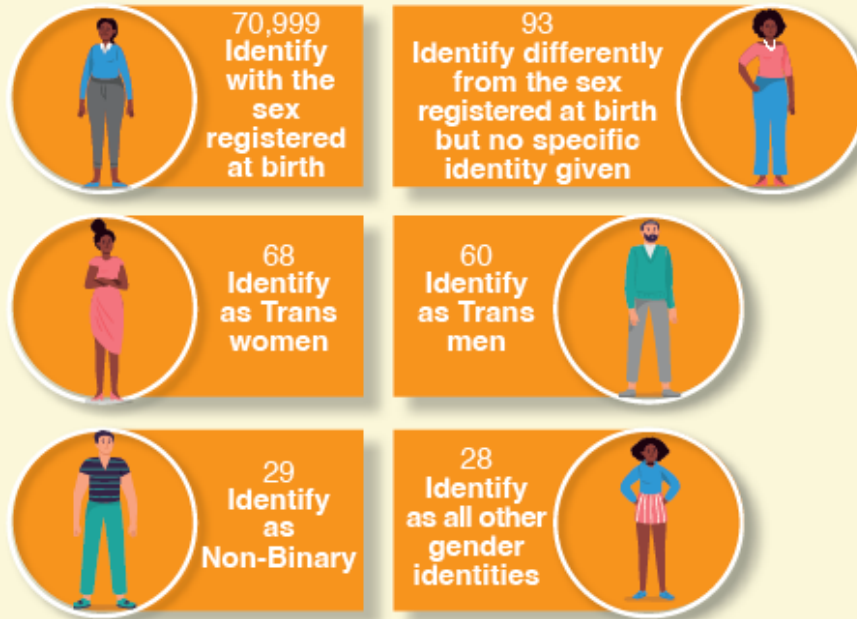
Three Rivers had a **lower proportion** of males and females **aged 20-34** than regional and national averages

**Sexual orientation** profile of Three Rivers residents from the census data



Sexual Orientation	Count
Straight or Heterosexual	68,658
Pansexual	112
Asexual	33
Queer	10
Bisexual	576

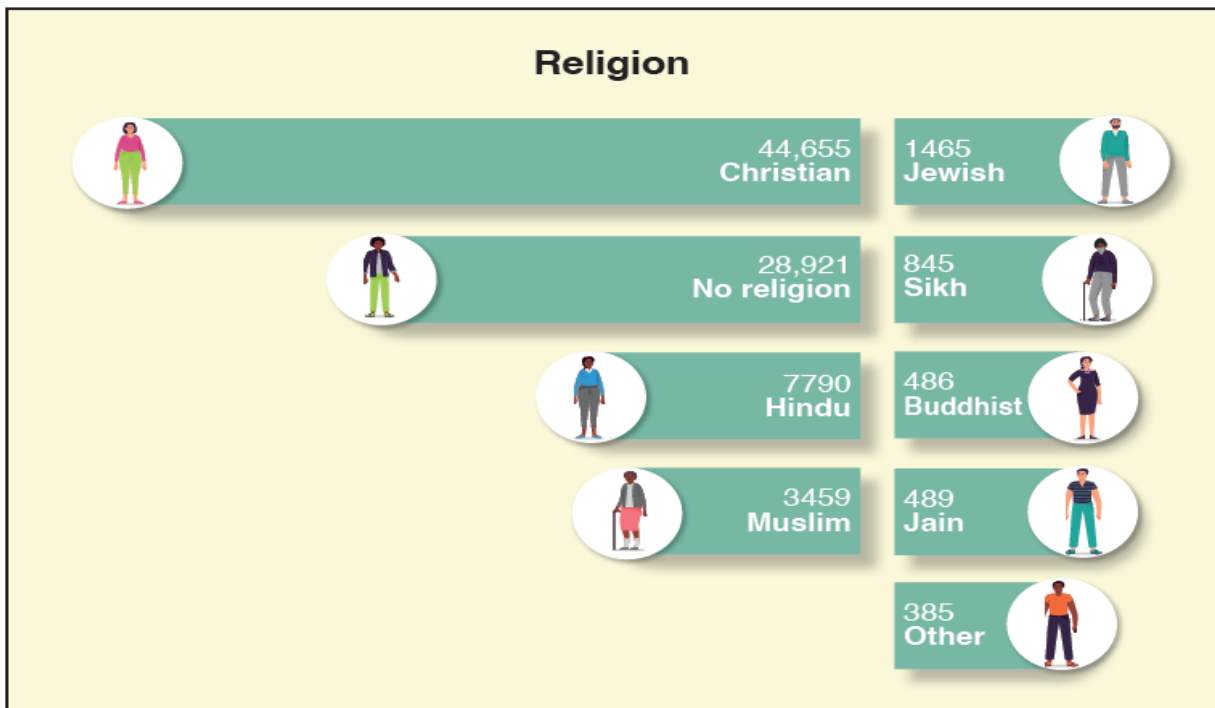
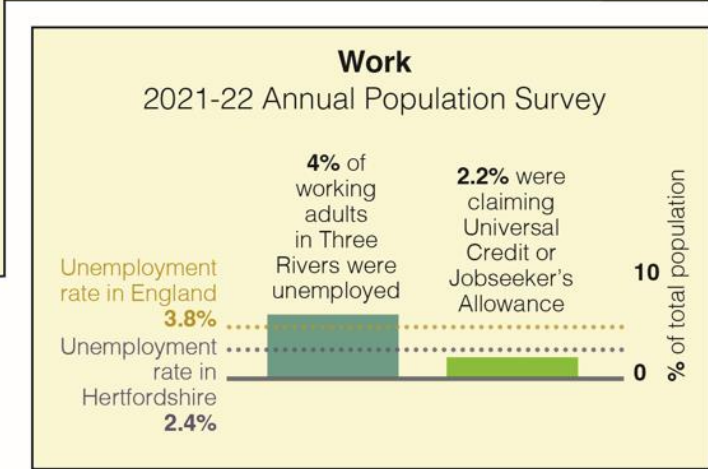
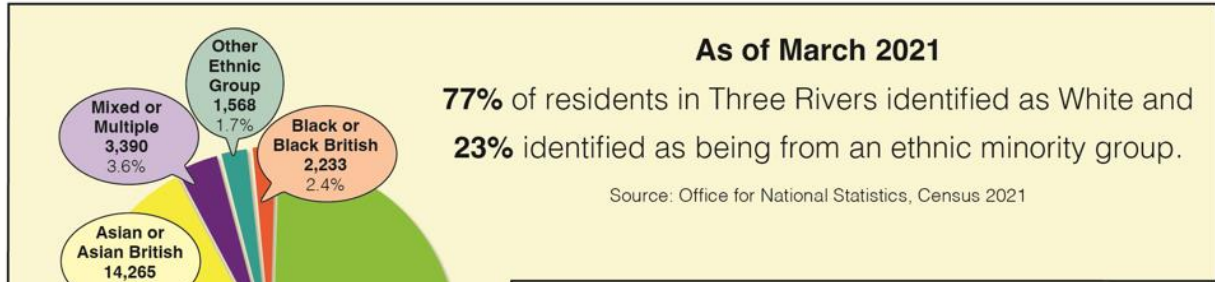
## Gender Identity

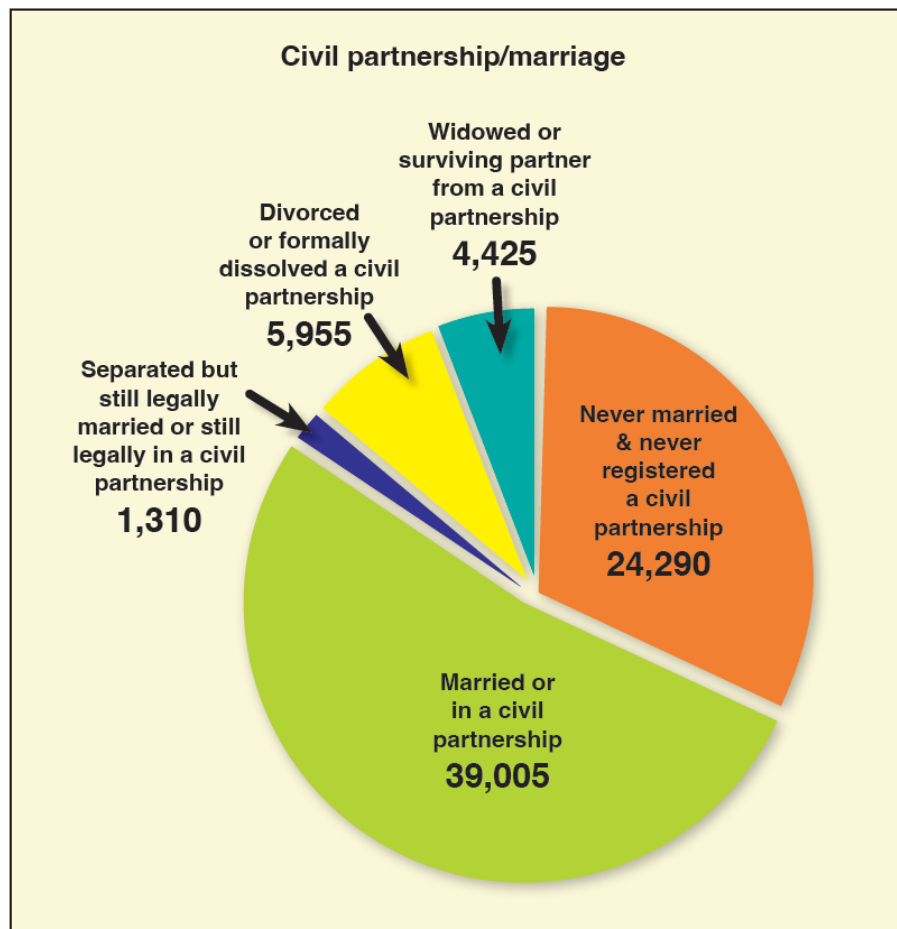


## Disability









Organisations providing support to Gypsy, Roma and Traveler Communities, and LGBTQ+ communities have highlighted that their communities are hidden from the census breakdown. Gender identity, sexual orientation and ethnic background is not always shared within the census.

## 9. Council Staff

9.1. In addition to looking at improvements to services in the context of equality and diversity, this progress report also provides information about council staff. As part of the requirement to publish Equality Data, the council publishes [Workforce Monitoring Report](#) detailing the composition of our staff compared to the background population of Three Rivers District. This includes information about age, sex, disability, faith and ethnicity and is published on the council's website. The council's [gender pay gap](#) is published separately at the end of each financial year.

9.2. At the end of September 2024, the council had 345 employees. There is a low percentage of employees choosing to record their protected characteristics. Therefore, it is difficult to compare council employees with protected characteristics to the population of Three Rivers District with protected characteristics.

9.3. An internal campaign was held to encourage staff to provide this information, the number of staff providing information has increased from 23% in 2023 to 36% in 2024.

### Age

9.4. The age profile for council employees on 30 September 2024 is indicated in Table 1 below: Table 2 further breaks down this data by pay grade groups.

**Table 1:** for comparison 2022/23 figures are in brackets

Age Group	Total of employees	% of employees
29 and under	53 (52)	15.36 % (15.66%)
30-39	57 (58)	16.52% (17.47%)
40-49	70 (58)	20.29% (17.47%)
50-59	104 (113)	30.14% (34.04%)
60-64	47 (37)	13.62% (11.14%)
65 +	14 (14)	4.06% (4.22%)
Total	345 (332)	100.00%

**Table 2:** for comparison 2022/23 figures are in brackets

Pay Scale / GRADE	29 and under	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64	65 +	Grand Total
Scale 6 / and below	36 (29)	24 (25)	25 (19)	58 (57)	25 (20)	9 (8)	177 (158)
SO1 to MG1	17 (23)	25 (24)	31 (25)	30 (39)	20 (17)	4 (6)	127 (134)
MG2 to MG3	0 (0)	6 (6)	9 (10)	12 (13)	2 (0)	1 (0)	30 (29)
MG4 to MG5	0	2 (3)	5 (4)	2 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	9 (9)
Director/ Head of Paid Service	0	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0	0	2 (2)
TOTAL	53 (52)	57 (58)	70 (58)	104 (113)	47 (37)	14 (14)	345 (332)

9.5. The median age of council employees is between 40 and 49 years old. This is in line with the working age demographic of the District, with the highest number of working age adults being between 40-55 in the 2021 census. Over 50% of the council's workforce is over the age of 50 presenting succession planning challenges for the council but also opportunities to increase diversity.

9.6. A range of initiatives have been put in place to increase the number of young people coming to work in the council. Examples of these include recruitment into apprenticeships, provision of work experience placements and the continuation of the Customer Service Centre Academy.

### Gender

9.7. The council's gender profile on 30 September 2023 is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3:** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

SEX	Total no of employees	% of employees
Female	154 (147)	44.63% (44.28%)
Male	191 (185)	55.37% (55.72%)
Total	345 (332)	100.00%

Table 3a breaks this down into pay grading.

**Table 3a: Percent of Female Workforce by Grade**  
for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

<b>GRADE</b>	<b>Broad Description</b>	<b>Total no of female employees</b>	<b>% of female employees</b>
Scale 6 / Band 5 and below	Most front-line jobs	54 (43)	35.06% (29.25%)
SO1 to MG1	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors/ technical specialist	81 (85)	52.60% (57.82%)
MG2 - MG3	Professionals grades/managers/ Service Heads	11 (11)	7.14% (7.48%)
MG4 -MG5	Associate Directors/Service Heads	6 (6)	3.90% (4.08%)
Director / Head of Paid Service	Director / Chief Executive	2 (2)	1.30% (1.36%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>154 (147)</b>	<b>100%</b>

9.8. 44.5% of the council's work force is female (compared to a 51% female population in Three Rivers as a District in the 2021 census), a small increase from the previous year. It is notable that whilst female staff are employed in over 59% of the Councils most senior posts they are significantly under-represented in lower grade roles where male employees are disproportionately high in number at 70.1% of the workforce.

9.9. The council uses the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure equality of pay between sexes.

#### **Disability**

9.10. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial and the effect of the impairment will have lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.

9.11. The statistics on council employees declaring that they have a disability at 30 September 2023 are shown in Table 4 below:

**Table 4:** for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

<b>DISABILITY</b>	<b>Total no of Employees</b>	<b>% of employees</b>
Yes	10 (7)	2.90% (2.11%)
No	114 (68)	33.04% (20.48%)
Not Stated	221 (257)	64.06% (77.41%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>345 (332)</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

9.12. The actual figure for 2023-24 is 2.9%, a slight increase on the previous year's 2.11%. It is worth noting that many employees have not stated if they are disabled or not (221 out of 345 employees). If you strip out the not stated employees and just look at the Yes and No respondents, then 8% of employees declared themselves as disabled. This is compared against a population figure of 13.53% of the 2021 census population having a long-term illness or disability.

#### **Gender reassignment**

9.13. No staff currently identify as being transgender. However, we note that staff who have transitioned would not necessarily choose to disclose this data and are not required to.

### Marriage and Civil Partnership

9.14. The marital status of council employees at 30 September 2024:

**Table 5** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Total no of Employees</b>	<b>% of employees</b>
Married	73 (49)	21.16% (14.76%)
Divorced	5 (3)	1.45% (0.9%)
Single	43 (24)	12.46% (7.23%)
Civil Partnership	0(1)	0.00% (0.32%)
Widowed	1 (0)	0.29% (0.00%)
Separated	5 (4)	1.45% (1.20%)
Not Stated	218 (252)	63.19% (75.9%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>345 (332)</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Race/Ethnic Minority (REM) background

9.15. The ethnic composition of council employees at 30 September 2024:

**Table 6:** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

<b>Ethnic Group</b>	<b>No of employees</b>	<b>% of employees</b>
White: British	104 (73)	30.14% (21.99%)
White: Irish	1 (0)	0.29% (0.00%)
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
White: Roma	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
White: Other	12 (8)	3.48% (2.41%)
Mixed Ethnic group	5 (3)	1.45% (0.90%)
Asian: Indian	7 (3)	2.03% (0.90%)
Asian: Other	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
Black: African	2 (1)	0.58% (0.30%)
Black: Caribbean	2 (0)	0.58% (0.00%)
Black: Other black	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other Ethnic Group	2 (0)	0.58% (0.00%)
No Data Held	210 (244)	60.87 (73.49%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>345 (332)</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Table 6a:** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

<b>REM / NON-REM</b>	<b>No of employees</b>	<b>% of employees</b>
REM	18 (7)	5.22% (2.11%)
NON-REM	117 (81)	33.91% (24.4%)
No Data Held	210 (244)	60.87 (73.49%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>345 (332)</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Table 6b breaks down the number of staff declaring they are from a Racial or Ethnic Minority (REM) staff by pay band.

**Table 6b:** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

Pay Scale / Grade	Broad Description	Total no of employees	No of REM	% of REM
Scale 6 and below	Most front-line jobs	177 (158)	6 (3)	33.33% (42.86%)
SO1 to MG1	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors/ technical specialist	127 (134)	8 (2)	44.44% (28.57%)
MG2 - MG3	Professionals grades/managers/Service Heads	30 (29)	3 (0)	16.66% (14.29%)
MG4, MG5	Associate Directors/Service Heads	9 (9)	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
Director/ Head of Paid Service	Chief Executive/Director	2 (2)	1 (1)	5.55% (14.29%)
Total		345 (332)	18 (7)	100.00%

9.16. The total number of employees declaring they are from a REM background for 2022-23 was 18 or 5.22% of the workforce (7 or 2.11% in 2022-23). However, 60.87% of Council staff did not report their ethnicity. If you remove the not stated employees and just look at the REM and NON-REM respondents, then 13.3% of employees declared themselves as REM. 23% of people living in Three Rivers identified as being from an ethnic minority group in the 2021 census.

### Religion

9.17. The religious beliefs of Council Employees at 30 September 2024:

**Table 7:** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

Religion	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Christian	67 (46)	19.42% (13.86%)
Hindu	5 (4)	1.45% (1.20%)
Jewish	3 (1)	0.87% (0.30%)
Other	2 (1)	0.58 (0.30%)
Muslim	1 (0)	0.29% (0.00%)
Sikh	1 (0)	0.29% (0.00%)
No Religion	51 (33)	14.78% (9.94%)
Not Stated	215 (247)	62.32% (74.4%)
Total	345 (322)	100.00%

9.18. In the 2021 census 63.5% of the district population stated they follow a religion, but only 16% of council employees follow a religion. However, 62.3% of staff did not provide this information in the equality monitoring form.

## Sexual Orientation

9.19. The breakdown of staff sexual orientation is shown in Table 8:

**Table 8:** for comparison 2022-23 figures are in brackets

Sexual Orientation	Total no of employees	% of employees
Bisexual	6 (2)	1.74% (0.60%)
Gay or Lesbian	0 (1)	0.00% (0.30%)
Heterosexual	113 (77)	32.75% (23.19%)
Not stated	216 (250)	62.61% (75.3%)
Prefer not to say	10 (2)	2.90% (0.60%)
Total	345 (332)	100.00%

9.20. The breakdown of staff sexual orientation is shown in Table 8. It is noted that most employees (62.6%) have not completed this section in the equality monitoring form.

9.21. The current percentage of LGBTQ+ staff at 1.74% is above the district Census percentage of 1.49%. However, the LGBTQ+ community has been identified as a hidden community. Work on embedding the Inclusion Working Group and Values & Behaviours within the council should encourage staff to disclose their sexual orientation.

## Pregnancy and Maternity

9.22. During 2023-24, seven female members of staff took maternity leave, compared to six the previous year.

## 10. Training

10.1. All staff are required to complete an equality and diversity on-line training module. Compliance rates are reported to the Corporate Management Team. Equalities training for Members is also provided via the online training module with additional training on specific topics promoted regularly.

10.2. In person, half day training on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion was held for staff at Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council in 2024.

## 11. Delivering Council Services

11.1. This section identifies service provisions, projects and improvements targeted for those with protected characteristics as well as for those who may find it difficult to access services by virtue of where they live, a lack of certain skills or low income.

11.2. The actions listed on the following tables demonstrate the work the council is doing to meet the Equality Objectives listed in Section 1. Some of the projects, services or initiatives address a range of equalities issues and often relate to intersectionality (multiple protected characteristics).

11.3. These actions and outputs have been summarised in the following tables.



### Equality Objective 1: To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training

Action	January – December 2024 Outputs
Organisation and delivery of Green Skills jobs fair aimed at young people and residents who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET).	Career fair held in March 2024 at Watersmeet Theatre. Attended by over 300 sixth form students from local schools and colleges, as well as over 120 young people, parents, and adults seeking employment or skills development. 23 exhibitors representing industries such as, renewable energy, retrofit and construction, green technology, engineering, film production, conservation and more, were present.
Co-ordination of training opportunities for women working in front line services to tackle violence against women and girls.	On 21 <sup>st</sup> March 2024, over 50 female professionals undertook a full day training course called 'Engaging perpetrators in Interventions'. At the end of the day all professionals, with 1 being not confident at all and 10 being very confident, were between 6 and 10. Lunch and Learn sessions took place on 28 <sup>th</sup> November 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> Of Dec. The sessions were open to all staff and Council Members. A total of 20 people attended the sessions.
To create and develop an Inclusion Working Group with representation from all service areas.	Inclusion Working Group has been developed with most service areas being represented. The group has agreed a terms of reference and bi-monthly meetings have been held.
Development of Disability Confidence event for employers in the local area.	57 people attended the Disability Confidence event held in September. Presenters included Herts County Council, DWP, Sunnyside Rural Trust and Mission Employable.
Review and amend application and interview process in order to ensure consistency to promote equality of opportunity	Re-wrote the job advert to show TRDC as an "employer of choice". Alerted candidates to the employee benefits. Produced scored shortlist Produced questions to be asked of ALL candidates at interview which were independently scored.
Promote work and development opportunities for younger team members in preparedness for retirement of other colleagues.	Through PDR process 4 members of frontline staff were identified as having a desire to progress through the ranks. One has now replaced a retired Waste Supervisor and another is acting up into a supervisory role. Due to another member of staff retiring a 6 month secondment was advertised and position filled with an environmental operative. All placements are working extremely well.
Grounds team training on skills within green spaces	Asbestos Awareness – 23 people Basic Tree Survey & Inspection – 6 people UKHab in Conservation – 1 person Beginners Botany – 1 person
Training for casual staff pre easter and summer (includes managing behaviour, safeguarding, basic life support (BLS), ASD, inclusion, induction includes British values, early years.	Easter 2024 Training courses delivered: Paediatric First Aid (3 staff attended) Safeguarding Level 1 (7 staff attended)



	<p>Summer 2024 Training courses delivered:</p> <p>Managing Challenging Behaviour (5 staff attended)</p> <p>Paediatric First Aid (2 staff attended)</p> <p>Safeguarding Level 1 (13 staff attended)</p> <p>Basic Life Support (BLS) (11 staff attended)</p> <p>Starter Induction Training (6 staff attended)</p>
To provide local students with work experience opportunities, allowing them to develop their knowledge of the industry.	2 work experience students attended Watermeet Theatre for one week each. During their time they gained first hand knowledge of the technical and front of house elements of the theatre.
Offer all staff opportunities for development through annual PDR	Training needs are collated in 2 ways – via an ad hoc training request or as part of the TRDC annual PDR process. Most training is requested and approved via the ad-hoc process. Training is mainly delivered by external trainers. Training includes corporate initiatives such as management development as well as mandatory courses (various levels of safeguarding, first aid, fire warden etc). There is also service specific training such as law updates in housing and benefits, dog warden training etc.
Explore TRDC becoming Disability Confident Leaders through Disability Confidence Scheme	Three Rivers District Council is currently recognised as a Disability Confident Employer. To progress becoming a Disability Confident Leader, we have partnered with Sunnyside Rural Trust, who are supporting us in achieving this accreditation. An initial assessment has been completed, and we are actively working through the recommended actions to meet the requirements of this higher level.
Blind recruitment trial – personal information won't be shared with those reviewing applications to remove any unconscious bias.	This trial received some positive feedback from hiring managers, however some managers have expressed concerns around the useability of the system. Therefore, we have paused this approach for now while we seek further support from the service provider.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) training for staff	Half day training was held and offered to staff at TRDC and WBC. 25 people attended the training.
Training on protected characteristics	<p>Lunch and Learn sessions for held for staff on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurodiversity</li> <li>• Men's Health</li> <li>• Women's Health.</li> </ul> <p>Two further in depth sessions for people managers were held on neurodiversity and menopause.</p>

## Equality Objective 2: To improve equality and access to services for all residents

Action	January – December 2024 Outputs
Paper forms to continue to be made available for residents. This will positively impact those who are digitally isolated.	Paper forms are made available on request
Service Charter states support is available is accessibility is an issue. Appropriate support to be offered based on the needs of the resident.	Consider ways in which to increase the accessible fleet of licensed vehicles without compromising public safety.
Disability Awareness, Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation training undertaken with all licensed taxi drivers	All drivers are required to complete training every 3 years.
Referrals to Healthy Hub for those digitally isolation	12 referrals received from Partner organisations.
Referral for data package if digitally isolated, on low income, insufficient access to data in or outside home, and over age 18.	Process developed and communications shared to promote internally. No referrals received.
Development & delivery of White Ribbon Action Plan, to identify council actions to tackle violence against women and girls	As of November 2024, the White Ribbon action plan has completed all Year 1 actions. Including the production of a personal safety campaign, full participation in 16 days of Activism, Staff promotion, the creation of a White Ribbon poster and the offer of all staff domestic abuse training.
Secure funding for and manage delivery of the Community Support Service (CSS)	The CSS Service Level Agreement is to be amended to one FTE to deliver this work and continue our partnership arrangements with MIND and support residents with their mental health needs.
Confident Continence	A campaign to raise awareness of reusable continence products to address environmental and cost issues <a href="http://www.wasteaware.org.uk/confidentcontinence">www.wasteaware.org.uk/confidentcontinence</a> This sits within the wider campaign of 'Herts Sustainable Families' which includes information on reusable products for periods and nappies. Discount scheme available.
Period poverty A campaign to promote reusable period products to address both environmental and cost issues. <a href="http://www.wasteaware.org.uk/sustainable">www.wasteaware.org.uk/sustainable</a> periods. This sits within a wider campaign 'Herts Sustainable Families' which includes information on reusable continence products and nappies. Discounts scheme available.	Enquiries to find suitable supplier and referral system for free reusable period products to those in period poverty are ongoing.  401 applications for the discount code. 25 purchases with the discount code totalling £1,247.92 and saving residents a total of £92.75.
Reusable Nappies	507 sales to date using the discount code. £40,818.49 spent, with a total of £6,095.04 saved by

<p>A campaign to raise awareness of reusable nappies to address both environmental and cost issues.  <a href="http://www.wasteaware.org.uk/reusablenappies">www.wasteaware.org.uk/reusablenappies</a> This sits within a wider campaign 'Herts Sustainable Families' which includes information on reusable period and continence products. Discount scheme available.</p>	<p>residents through the discount scheme.</p>
<p>Delivery of assisted bin collection service, which allows elderly or disabled residents to request support.</p>	<p>1044 Assisted collection customers (as at 27/11/2024)</p>
<p>Provision of bulky waste collection service increases access to waste services to residents without access to their own vehicle. Subsidised service offered to residents on benefits.</p>	<p>737 - Bulky waste collections (01/01/24 to 28/11/24)</p>
<p>E.ON to attend Healthy Hubs and Leisure Centres to raise awareness of funding available for home energy efficiency improvements for residents on lower incomes and with disabilities/health conditions.</p>	<p>E.ON Healthy Hub visits ceased in February 2024 as E.ON paused delivery of the ECO4 scheme and shifted focus to delivering GBIS funding instead, and E.ON Energy Solutions moved to E.ON Next.  Between Jan-Feb 2024, E.ON engaged 62 residents at William Penn Leisure Centre and Mill End Healthy Hub, as well as 12 community organisations and charities at Mill End Baptist Church.  Since then, engagement has been mainly online via newsletters, website, and social media. Grand Union Community Energy have been carrying out "Energy Champion" community visits, including at Healthy Hubs in the District. GUCE have had 5 people register for home visits which led to 4 delivered home visits (all from South Oxhey). 60 conversations with residents have taken place since August.</p>
<p>Home Energy Support Service (Better Housing Better Health) to provide free-to-call home energy helpline for residents to remove digital isolation barrier.</p>	<p>Between 01/01/2024 to 31/10/2024 Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) have offered 136 interventions to Three Rivers residents, including offering small measures, home visits, referrals for larger grants, etc.  (NB: one household can receive more than one intervention).  In 2024 to-date, BHBH have supported over 100 households with free energy saving advice and support.</p>
<p>Election considerations for ID checking for women wearing face coverings. Disability awareness.  Offer for everyone to request personal ID checking</p>	<p>Guidance continues to be followed, and arrangements shared in previous update continue to be in place through privacy booths available or use of a private room. Provision in place for females to undertake the check.  Disability access: polling stations used are selected to ensure ease of access, particularly for wheelchair users, buggies, and those with mobility problems.</p>
<p>Engage with local groups that support residents - following public engagement to identify barriers - on voting</p>	<p>The additional elections held in 2024 (general, parish and district by-elections) and implementation of additional requirements of the Elections Act has made this challenging to</p>

process/election system.	implement. After the general and local elections a review was undertaken of how the election was conducted with no issues raised regarding barriers to voting. In 2025, we will need to contact all postal voters to inform them of new registration requirements, so there is the opportunity to use the communications plan that will need to go alongside this to increase knowledge on different voting methods and the importance of registration to support improved access.
Transform councillor information so it can be read by a screen reader, currently on PDF	The PDF's that mod.gov produces with agendas are fully compatible with screen readers.
Development and hosting Community Fairs to raise awareness of local services within individual neighbourhoods.	Community Fair held in March at South Oxhey Leisure Centre, 250 residents in attendance with 20 different partners and charities. Community Fair held in September at the Grove with 400 attendee's. This fair was delivered in partnership with Watford and Three Rivers Trust & the Grove.
Development of digital inclusion through distribution of data packages for adults on low income who are digitally isolated and onward referral to W3RT services to upskill.	Process developed and communications shared to promote internally. No referrals received.
Food Box Project Provide families and individuals referred by a professional with fresh produce to last a week, once a month for 6 months.	The Foodbox Project has supported 60 Households with Food parcels this includes 43 Households with children and 17 other Households.
Delivery of Healthy hub and pop-up hubs within local neighbourhoods	18 Healthy Hub Pop Ups have been provided.
Dissemination of "Warm in winter" bags to elderly and isolated residents.	43 Warm in winter bags have been distributed in 2024. In addition, council teams have volunteered to pack bags in support of the charity.
ACE referral scheme – 2 bands, free or self-referral for reduced rate. This goes beyond TRDC provision, local groups too. Accept childcare vouchers. Access to holiday provisions.	Easter 2024 Playscheme: Total of 42 ACE bookings. 26 self-referrals (50% discount) 16 professional referrals (100% discount) Summer 2024 Playscheme: Total ACE bookings 112 (10% of total bookings) Unique ACE customers 10 (5% of unique children attending)
Use of Makaton style images for play schemes	Playscheme service has prompts and Makaton style images to aid communication.
Provide one to one support, when possible, at Playschemes, for children with additional needs and disabilities	During Easter 2024 playscheme we supported seven children with one-to-one support needs. During summer 2024 we provided one to one support for two children.

Plan inclusive play areas	Play spaces have been co-designed with local primary schools and includes sensory, natural play such as planting, willow dens and sand. Pathways and access routes, along with inclusive play equipment such as basket swings are also part of the design for play spaces.
Leisure activities can be accessed by vulnerable people, and those with access or mobility needs	All leisure activities are fully inclusive and some target vulnerable groups e.g. Dance for Parkinson's / Swimming after Stroke.
Engagement with specific groups through Have your Say	<p>Completed the following surveys on the Have Your Say Platform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play strategy consultation – live December 6 2024</li> <li>• Three Rivers Cultural Strategy Survey - 8 November 2024 – 22 November 2024</li> <li>• The Green and Stones Orchard – 4 November 2024 – 2 December 2024</li> <li>• Denham Way Playing Fields – 31 May 2024 – 14 July 2024</li> <li>• Ebury Play area – 29 April 2024 – 17 May 2024</li> <li>• Eastbury Play area – 29 April 2024 – 17 May 2024</li> </ul> <p>Engagement surveys were also sent directly to participants of activities, including Active Parks.</p>
Engagement with community groups to address and reduce digital exclusion	<p>CSC staff have been attending the Healthy Hubs weekly at Mill End, Abbots Langley and South Oxhey offering to assist residents with any enquiries and promoting the on-line services available and how to access them.</p> <p>CSC staff to be reminded of promoting the Digital Isolation programme at January 2025 team meeting.</p> <p>Noticeboards have been improved three damaged boards replaced, six boards repaired and one new board in south Oxhey in partnership with the parish council. The style of posters has been enhanced to increase accessibility.</p>
Expand the film programme at Watersmeet to include relaxed performances targeting neurodiverse customers, those with additional needs or disabilities and those with daytime childcare responsibilities.	<p>Supported Environmental Protection to screen a free children's film over October half term.</p> <p>Hosted the 6 Inches of Soil documentary event in November 2024.</p> <p>Offered a local school the opportunity to see the film of 'Wild Robot' a book they were studying as part of their curriculum.</p> <p>Dedicated dementia-friendly screening planned of My Fair Lady (28 January 2025) and Mamma Mia (25 Feb 2025) at a reduced ticket price.</p>
Accessibility of TRDC website and intranet	<p>Used ReciteMe tool to translate (font size, colour and style) and adapt web content on TRDC website.</p> <p>TRDC website has achieved Accessibility Compliance score of 88.7 per cent (against industry benchmark of 86.9 per cent) on Siteimprove accessibility scoring.</p> <p>Project to improve intranet's accessibility begins in January 2025.</p>
Attendance at Healthy Hubs to improve accessibility to residents.	<p>Housing is actively attending the healthy hubs and attracting new users to the service. Through the Hubs 8 incidences of support has been provided for Homelessness and 24 incidences of support provided for housing advice.</p> <p>Regular attendance of Communications Officer at events and increased social media promotion</p>

	has taken place in 2024. A new communication strategy has also been put in place which includes new photography and video content to promote activities.
Securing accommodation for refugee families coming to the district under existing scheme	Council has been successful in securing funding via the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) that will provide multiple properties for accommodation of those who have moved to the UK under eligible resettlement schemes.
Maintaining Service Level Agreement with Refugee Council (or another provider) to provide support for refugee families living in Three Rivers.	Ongoing Service Level Agreement is sufficient. To be monitored on an ongoing basis.
For residents with barriers in attending the Council Office, staff to make arrangements to visit. This will support residents with mobility needs, or lack of access to transport.	Ongoing home visits are carried out by officers to those less mobile and transport provided if necessary to the customer.
Request on housing application form for information on protected characteristics – each case can be individually assessed for additional adaptations as required.	Customers are encouraged to complete the form with all information required, if not entered Housing Advisors will ask the missed questions.
Use of Language line to support residents who do not speak fluent English.	Ongoing use of language line, which has seen positive outcomes and reduced the language barriers.
Residents presenting for housing support who are Veterans will receive priority housing	Keeping up to date on legislation changes to ensure we continue to be compliant, through training and government guidance.
Housing referral service to Citizens Advice provides clients experiencing financial deprivation with offer of support in 2 days.	Officers still actively referring customers who need financial support and guidance especially with the cost-of-living crisis. From July – September 2024, 14% of approaches were for Housing Advice and 13% for debt advice.
Development of cost-of-living project to support clients experiencing deprivation	Education and employment opportunities have been explored in depth with our single homeless households with successful outcomes. Kitchen essentials have been provided to households and a new project on batch cooking is being explored.
To engage with local diverse groups and partners in order to co-develop Barton Way Building	The Council has met with Croxley Green Parish Council who are keen to take over the entire ground floor space to provide a new community space and Parish Council Office. Further engagement with potential user groups will follow during the development of this project.
To build relationships with GPs and Health sector in order to ensure health needs and inequalities are addressed where possible through the local plan.	Officers attended a meeting with Herts and West Essex Integrated Care Board to discuss current and future issues/needs. The policy team also commissioned an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, whereby consultants also had meetings with the health sector and reviewed current and future health-related infrastructure requirements. Officers also had several meetings with different departments within Herts County Council, including the Healthy Places Team.
Access Card to be accepted at Watersmeet Theatre	Since the launch, 9 customers have registered for the access disability card.

### Equality Objective 3: To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities

Action	January – December 2024 Outputs
Explore opportunities for community engagement, in areas of low response to identify whether knowledge / understanding of planning & licensing process a barrier in some areas.	Making a representation page on website should be updated to give guidance that planning matters do not fall under the licensing regime and any planning concerns to be referred to the planning department and will not be considered as a valid representation. We have created a user guide. Applications are now available on the website. Social media now directs people to this page.
Mapping of LSOA's within areas of deprivation to target engagement for Health Inequalities.	Completed, the findings allowed for the Health Inequalities project to be targeted in these areas, dependent on engagement from local GP surgeries.
Community engagement as required in relation to hate incidents and community tensions.	Engagement with local communities has taken place in response to tensions or potential tensions. This will also be monitored in partnership with Hertfordshire County Councils' Prevent Programme Manager
Community Engagement through Community Liaison Officer & communicating this back to broader council	Various engagement events occurred in past year including visits to GATE Herts, Three Rivers Community Gardens, temporary accommodation sites, Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership and Romanian church groups. Any feedback or issues raised at these sessions would be relayed back to the appropriate line manager to determine next steps
Engagement on consultation with local community groups, SEN school & temporary accommodation sites.	Lincoln Drive Temporary Accommodation Garden project was led and delivered in consultation with those living on site and in partnership with the New Hope Trust. Local schools engaged in play spaces projects this year, including St Joseph's, St Mary's and Eastbury Farm. Children involved in the co-design, including those with Special Educational Needs. New Draft Play Space Strategy has guiding principles focused on "accessible for all" and "community co-design". The Play space strategy consultation will invite all local schools in the district to take part.
Building relationships with community groups that hire the theatre on a regular basis	Recommendations from existing hirers have led to a year round fully booked programme from cultural groups, dance schools.
Community Group leaders and representatives to attend CSC team meetings to improve awareness of customs and challenges.	CSC Team Managers to liaise with Strategy & Partnerships Team to create a timetable to invite Group Leaders to CSC team meetings during 2025 and invites to be sent out.

**Equality Objective 4: To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.**

Action	January – December 2024 Outputs
<p>Pilot Transition Streets programme in Three Rivers to trial an inclusive community-led approach to household carbon emissions reductions, which focuses on personal connections between residents and uses financial savings as the driver of change.</p> <p>No eligibility criteria, so open to all.</p> <p>May look at engaging pre-existing groups e.g. faith groups, as well as neighbours on streets, in later stage of project.</p>	<p>First group completed Transition Streets programme in June 2024. In October 2024, two new groups started (one in Moor Park, and one in Chorleywood) and are progressing through the programme.</p> <p>From January 2025, it is expected that a group of volunteers at Woodoaks Farm may commence.</p>
<p>To sponsor and attend Hertfordshire Pride</p>	<p>Hertfordshire Pride was sponsored and attended by council officers in August 2024</p>
<p>Development of information through worksheets and digital campaigns to raise awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race Equality Week</li> <li>• Deaf Awareness</li> <li>• Refugee</li> <li>• World Aids Day</li> </ul>	<p>Worksheets were developed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race Equality Week</li> <li>• Deaf Awareness</li> <li>• Refugee</li> <li>• World Aids Day</li> <li>• Learning Difficulties.</li> </ul> <p>These were sent out to all staff members and uploaded to the intranet.</p>
<p>Development of Open Dialogues sessions for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Lawrence Day</li> <li>• Roma and Sinti Holocaust Memorial</li> <li>• Herts Pride</li> </ul>	<p>We held 3 “Open Dialogues” sessions alongside partners to facilitate an open forum where issues that affect marginalised communities were discussed with council staff and partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stephen Lawrence Day</li> <li>• Roma and Sinti Holocaust Memorial</li> <li>• Herts Pride</li> </ul>
<p>Awareness initiatives arranged for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning difficulties</li> <li>• Diabetes Awareness</li> <li>• Diwali</li> <li>• Black History Month</li> <li>• LGBTQ+</li> <li>• Gender Based awareness.</li> </ul>	<p>The Inclusion Working Group created worksheets that have been shared with council staff. Two worksheets individually focussed on African and Caribbean culture.</p> <p>A factsheet for Diwali celebrated and educated readers about the Hindu festival.</p> <p>A worksheet focussing on learning difficulties was also developed which highlighted what a learning difficulty is and the actions the council is doing.</p> <p>A men’s health event was ran in collaboration with Watford CSE Trust.</p> <p>An “Open Dialogues” session was held alongside Herts Pride.</p> <p>And for these significant dates:</p> <p>Holocaust Memorial Day - in person event</p> <p>Pride Month – in person event</p> <p>Disability Pride Month - officer blog</p> <p>Race Equality Week - worksheet</p>



	<p>Deaf awareness week - worksheet          Black History Month - 2 blogs          South Asian Heritage Month - video          Refugee Awareness Week - worksheet          Armed Forces Day – armed forces event.</p>
Deliver a programme at Watersmeet that caters to cultural and ethnically diverse communities in Three Rivers	<p>The venue has been hired out at weekends throughout 2024 to cultural groups who provide a programme of entertainment for their local community.          The venue was used by Pinner Hatch End Synagogue in September to celebrate the Jewish New Year.</p>
Social media posts on festivals/culturally significant dates	<p>Social media graphics and messages posted for these festivals:          Ramadan and Eid          Diwali          Rosh Hashanah          And for these significant dates:          Holocaust Memorial Day (+ in person event)          Pride Month          Disability Pride Month (+ blog)          Race Equality Matters Week          Deaf awareness week          Mental Health Awareness week          Black History Month (+ 2 blogs)          South Asian Heritage Month          Refugee Awareness Week          Remembrance Day</p>
Explore provision of activities delivered by New Hope Trust for residents living at temporary accommodation (including coffee mornings and festive celebrations)	<p>New Hope have had festive celebrations for residents and provided the children with gifts contributed from Little Green Lane School.</p>
Street lighting improvements to allow for resident's feelings of safety to improve. Particularly in relation to violence against women and girls.	<p>Completed the replacement and upgrade of all Council-owned streetlights with highly efficient hybrid or solar LED units. Not only are these units much more energy efficient, but in appropriate locations they have sensing capabilities to brighten and dim as necessary. The quality of the light from these units should provide a greater sense of safety and security to our community.</p>

## 12. Other Inequalities

### Armed Forces

- 12.1. Census 2024<sup>1</sup> was the first census in which residents (aged 16 years and over) were asked whether they had previously served in the UK armed forces, either as a regular, a reserve or both.
- 12.2. 2.6% had served in the Armed Forces or the Reserve UK Armed Forces, with 5.3% of the district's households including a formed member of the Armed Forces or the Reserve UK Armed Forces
- 12.3. The council is committed to the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant. This is a statement of support between the civilian community and its local Armed Forces community. Further information on the Covenant can be found at [Hertfordshire Heroes](#). As part of this commitment, Three Rivers District Council appoints an Armed Forces Champion, currently Cllr Sarah Nelmes.
- 12.4. The council is an active member of the [Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board](#) who work in partnership to deliver the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) locally. It brings together business, military organisations, charities, NHS and local authorities in a shared commitment to ensure that those who serve and have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

### Deprivation

- 12.5. There are hidden pockets of deprivation within our communities, where individuals and families on low incomes live alongside more affluent neighbours. This leads to a perception that many of our communities are seen to be comfortable places to live, masking the real needs of many people living there.
- 12.6. In 2021 life expectancy was 7.2 years lower for men and 5.1 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Three Rivers than in the least deprived areas.
- 12.7. The community and voluntary sector within Three Rivers are continuing to report significantly increased service demand whilst simultaneously having fewer volunteers.
- 12.8. Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service continues to see an increase in clients presenting with debt problems compared to previous years.

## 13. Conclusion

- 13.1. This report includes details of how the council, collaborating with its partners, is providing for the needs of "protected" and underrepresented groups, as well as raising awareness and adapting services in the district.
- 13.2. It provides a snapshot of the work taking place to prevent and where necessary address, disparities arising from protected characteristics, where people live, their income or skill level and demonstrates the steps the council has taken to achieve the statutory duties governed by the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010.
- 13.3. The work done in relation to the objectives shows how the council is taking steps to achieve the following:
  - 13.3.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization.
  - 13.3.2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.
  - 13.3.3. Foster good relations between different groups.
- 13.4. The council will continue to maintain and where possible further develop its equality and diversity work in the year ahead, led by the Inclusion Working Group.

