

Three Rivers District Council

Equalities Duty Information Report

January 2024

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This is the council's annual Equality Duty Information Report, setting out the achievements made in supporting equality, diversity and inclusion in Three Rivers during 2023. 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.
- 1.2. Progress is reported against the context of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2023-26, which contains the following objectives:
 - 1.2.1. To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training
 - 1.2.2. To improve equality and access to services for all residents
 - 1.2.3. To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities
 - 1.2.4. To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.
- 1.3. Details of the councils Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy can be found at: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/eqcl-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 disadvantage that may arise from income, skill level or by virtue of where people live and the councils work as a signatory to the Armed Forces 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. 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.

3.3. 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 councils website.

4. Equalities Sub-Committee

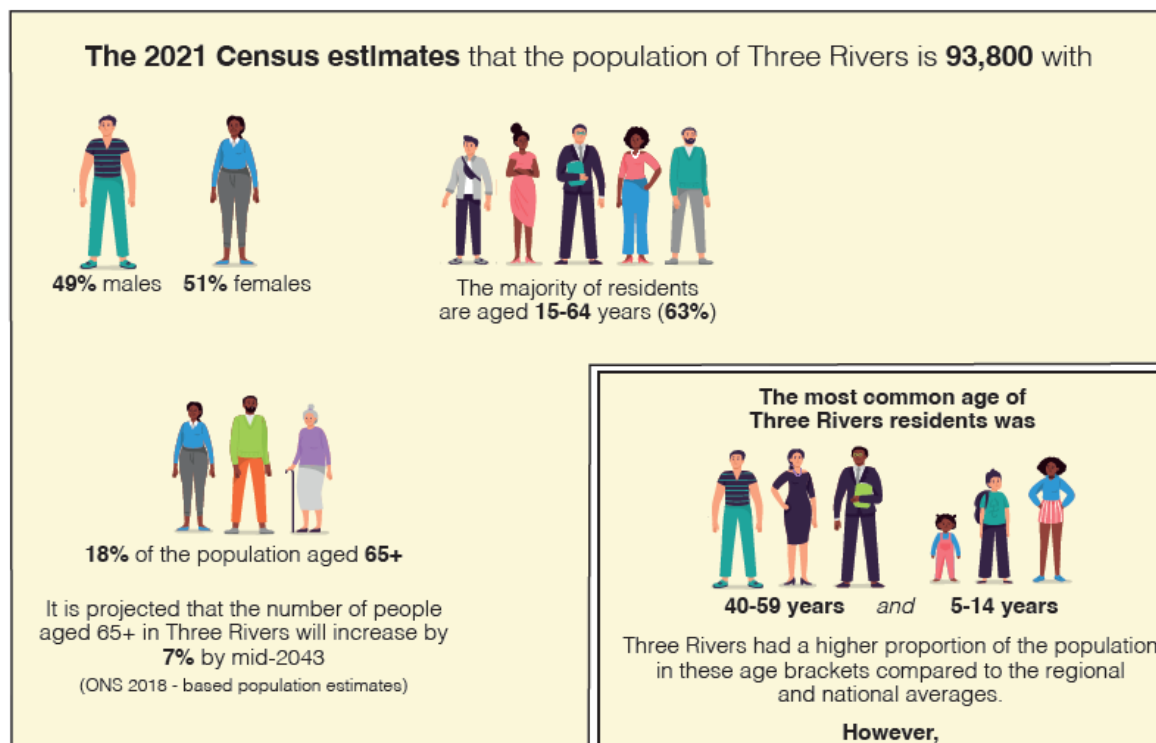
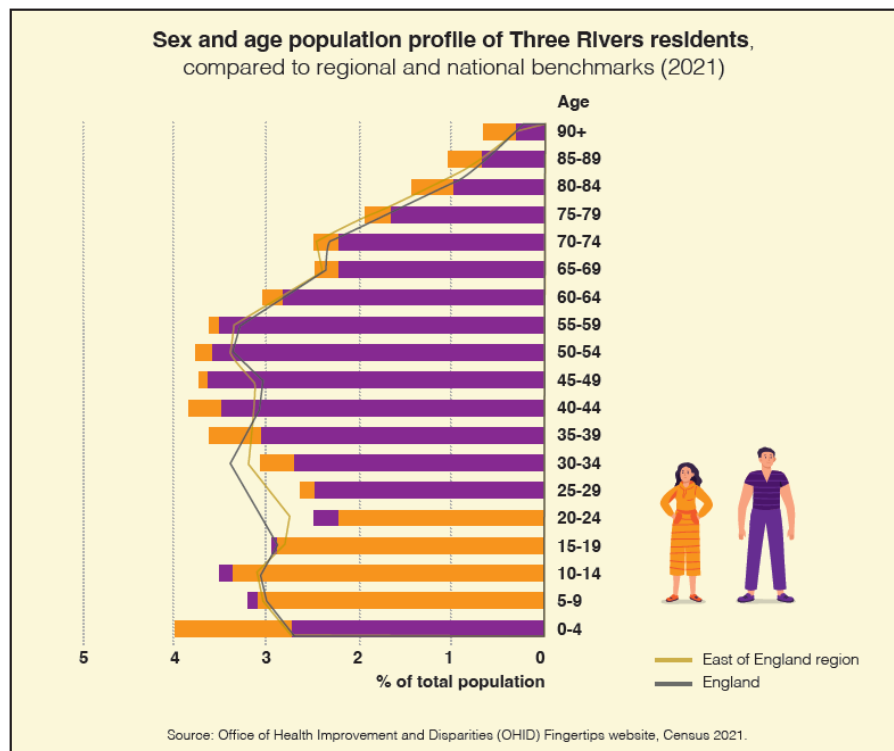
4.1 The Equalities Sub-Committee was developed in 2020 to review and discuss motions relating to equality in order to make recommendations to Full Council.

4.2 The Sub-Committee also hears from partner organisations and community groups on the services they deliver and emerging or existing concerns.

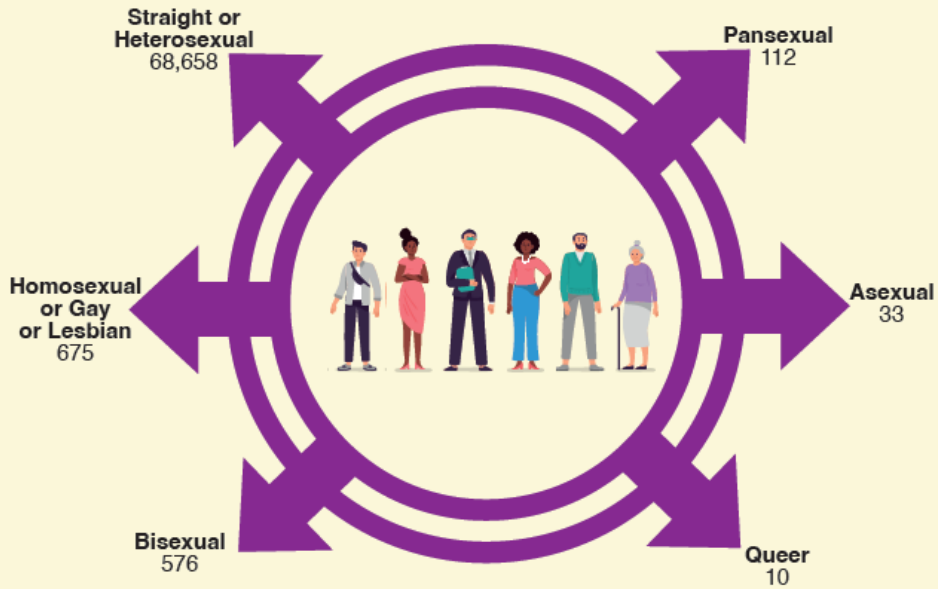
4.3 The Equalities Sub-Committee has recently received presentations on Isolation – looking specifically at the issues relating to digital and social isolation, and local projects in place locally to support in addressing these needs.

4.3 In October 2023 the Equalities Sub-Committee reviewed and recommended the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy to Full Council for adoption.

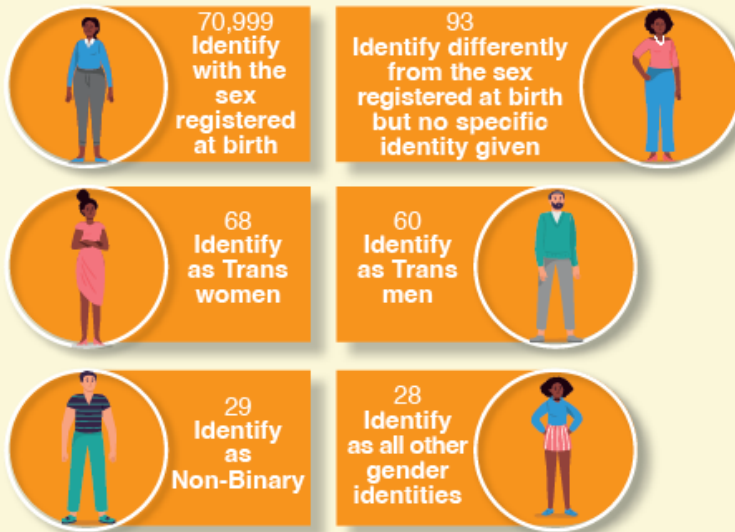
5. Three Rivers Communities - based on 2021 Census summary of protected characteristics

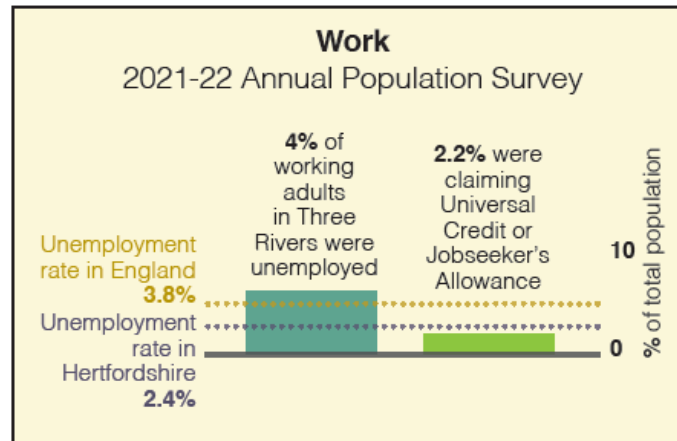
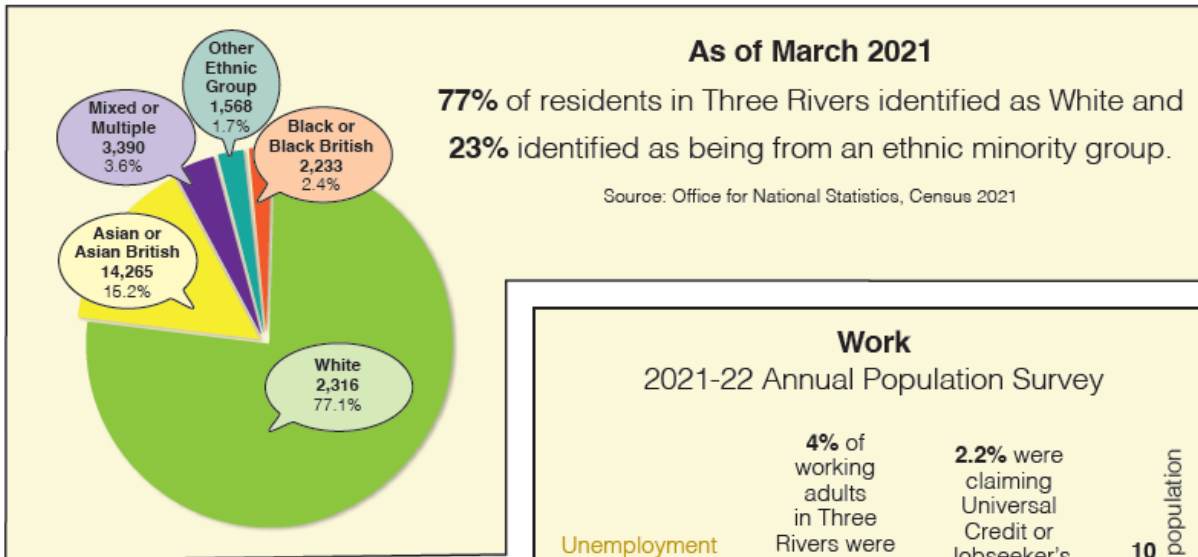
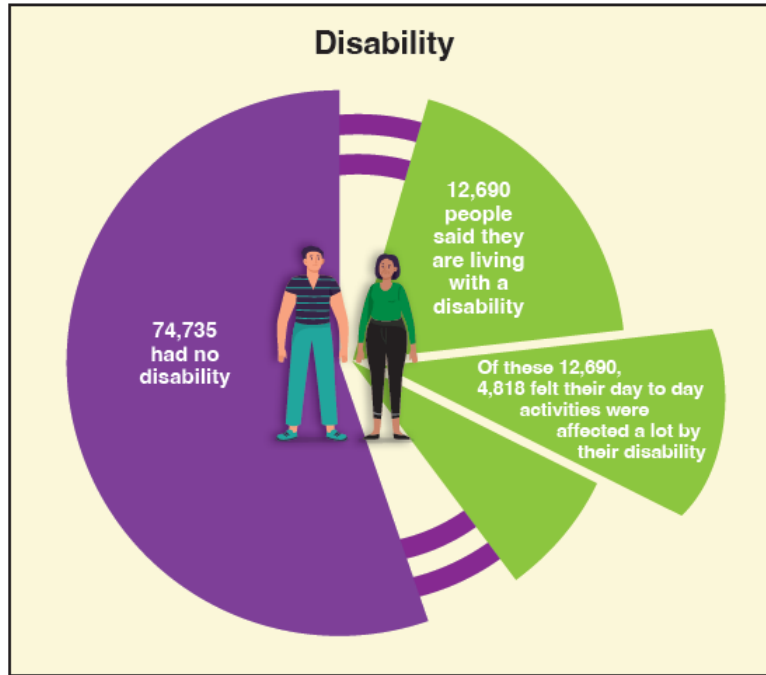


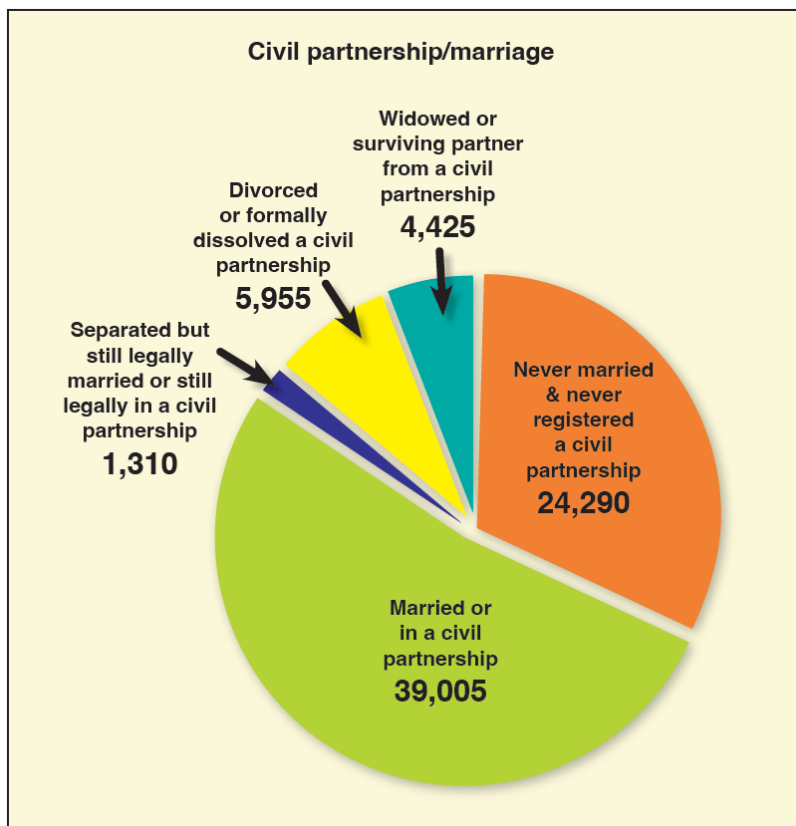
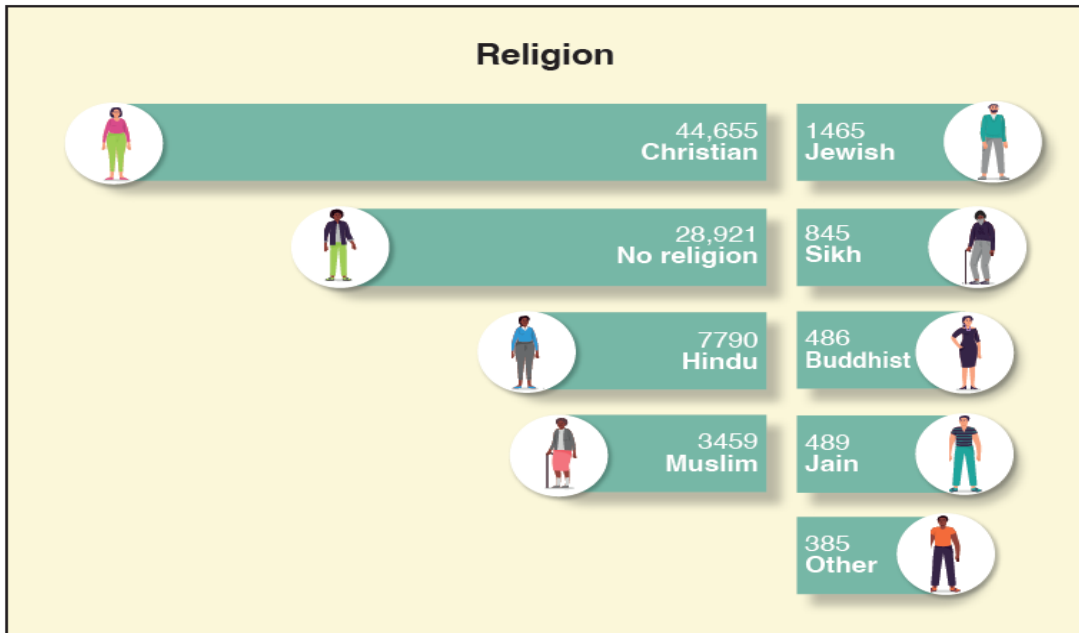
Sexual orientation profile of Three Rivers residents from the census data



Gender Identity







6. Council Staff

- 6.1. 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 an annual [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.

6.2. At the end of September 2023, the council had 332 employees. There is a low percentage of employees choosing to record their protected characteristics with over 70% of staff not completing the monitoring form. Therefore, it is difficult to compare council employees with protected characteristics to the population of Three Rivers District with protected characteristics.

Age

6.3. The age profile for council employees at 30 September 2023 is indicated in Table 1 below: Table 2 further breaks down this data by pay grade groups.

Table 1: for comparison 2021/22 figures are in brackets

Age Group	Total of employees	% of employees
29 and under	52 (47)	15.66% (14.87%)
30-39	58 (59)	17.47% (18.67%)
40-49	58 (54)	17.47% (17.09%)
50-59	113 (114)	34.04% (36.08%)
60-64	37 (33)	11.14% (10.44%)
65 +	14 (9)	4.22% (2.85%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

Table 2: for comparison 2021/22 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	29 (32)	25 (23)	19 (21)	57 (54)	20 (13)	8 (6)	158 (149)
SO1 to MG1	23 (13)	24 (27)	25 (23)	39 (43)	17 (19)	6 (2)	134 (127)
MG2 to MG3	0 (2)	6 (7)	10 (8)	13 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)	29 (31)
MG4 to MG5	0	3 (3)	4 (2)	2 (0)	0 (1)	0 (0)	9 (6)
Director/ Head of Paid Service	0	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3)	0	0	2 (3)
TOTAL	52 (47)	58 (59)	58 (55)	113 (113)	37 (33)	14 (9)	332 (316)

6.4. 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 highest number of working age adults being between 40-55 in the 2021 census. Over 50% the council's workforce is over the age of 50 presenting succession planning challenges for the council but also opportunities to increase diversity. 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 to apprenticeships, provision of work experience placements and the continuation of the Customer Service Centre Academy.

Gender

6.5. The council's gender profile at 30 September 2023 is shown in Table 3 & 3a.

Table 3: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

SEX	Total no of employees	% of employees
Female	147 (143)	44.28% (45.25%)
Male	185 (173)	55.72% (54.75%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

Table 3a: Percent of Female Workforce by Grade
for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

GRADE	Broad Description	Total no of female employees	% of female employees
Scale 6 / Band 5 and below	Most front line jobs	43 (41)	29.25% (28.47%)
SO1 to MG1	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors/ technical specialist	85 (82)	57.82% (56.94%)
MG2 - MG3	Professionals grades/managers/Service Heads	11 (16)	7.48% (11.11%)
MG4 -MG5	Associate Directors/Service Heads	6 (3)	4.08% (2.08%)
Director / Head of Paid Service	Director / Chief Executive	2 (2)	1.36% (1.38%)
Total		147 (144)	100%

- 6.6. 44.28% 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 decrease 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.
- 6.7. The council uses the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure equality of pay between sexes.

Disability

- 6.8. 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.
- 6.9. 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

DISABILITY	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Yes	7 (8)	2.11 % (2.53%)
No	68 (78)	20.48% (24.68%)
Not Stated	257 (230)	77.41% (72.78%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

6.10. The target percentage of all employees declaring that they had a disability is 9.2%, but the actual figure for 2022-23 is 2.11% or 7 out of 332 (2.53% or 8 out of 316 in 2021-22). It is worth noting that a large number of employees have not stated if they are disabled or not (257 out of 332 employees). If you strip out the not stated employees and just look at the Yes and No respondents, then 9.3% 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

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

Marriage and Civil Partnership

6.12. The marital status of council employees at 30 September 2023:

Table 5 for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

Marital Status	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Married	49 (49)	14.76% (15.51%)
Divorced	3 (5)	0.9% (1.58%)
Single	24 (28)	7.23% (8.86%)
Civil Partnership	1(8)	0.32% (2.54%)
Widowed	0 (1)	0.00% (0.32%)
Separated	4 (3)	1.20% (0.95%)
Not Stated	252 (229)	75.9% (72.47%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

Race/Ethnic Minority (REM) background

6.13. The ethnic composition of council employees at 30 September 2023:

Table 6: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

Ethnic Group	No of employees	% of employees
White: British	73 (77)	21.99% (24.37%)
White: Irish	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
White: Other	8 (9)	2.41% (2.85%)
Mixed Ethnic group	3 (1)	0.90% (0.32%)
Asian: Indian	3 (3)	0.90% (0.95%)
Asian: Other	0 (1)	0.00% (0.64%)
Black: African	1 (1)	0.30% (0.32%)
Black: Caribbean	0 (1)	0.00% (0.32%)
Black: Other black	0 (1)	0.00% (0.32%)
No Data Held	244 (220)	73.49% (69.62%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

Ethnicity

Table 6a: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

Ethnic Group	No of employees	% of employees
White: British	73 (77)	21.99% (24.37%)
White: Irish	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
White: Other	8 (9)	2.41% (2.85%)
Mixed Ethnic group	3 (1)	0.90% (0.32%)
Asian: Indian	3 (3)	0.90% (0.95%)
Asian: Other	0 (1)	0.00% (0.64%)
Black: African	1 (1)	0.30% (0.32%)
Black: Caribbean	0 (1)	0.00% (0.32%)
Black: Other black	0 (1)	0.00% (0.32%)
No Data Held	244 (220)	73.49% (69.62%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

Table 6b: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

BAME / NON-BAME	No of employees	% of employees
BAME	7 (9)	2.11% (2.85%)
NON-BAME	81 (87)	24.4% (27.53%)
No Data Held	244 (220)	73.49% (69.62%)
Total	332 (316)	100.00%

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

Table 6c: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

Pay Scale / Grade	Broad Description	Total no of employees	No of BAME	% of BAME
Scale 6 and below	Most front line jobs	158 (149)	3 (4)	42.86% (44.44%)
SO1 to MG1	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors/ technical specialist	134 (127)	2 (4)	28.57% (44.44%)
MG2 - MG3	Professionals grades/managers/Service Heads	29 (31)	1 (0)	14.29% (0.00%)
MG4, MG5	Associate Directors/Service Heads	9 (6)	0 (0)	0.00% (8.33%)
Director/ Head of Paid Service	Director / Chief Executive	2 (3)	1 (1)	14.29% (11.11%)
Total		332 (316)	7 (9)	100.00%

- 6.14. The total number of employees declaring they are from a REM background for 2022-23 was 7 or 2.11% of the workforce (9 or 2.85% in 2021-22). However, 73% of Council staff did not report their ethnicity. If you strip out the not stated employees and just look at the REM and NON-REM respondents, then 7.9% 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.
- 6.15. However there are current data gaps where ethnic origin is not recorded so the Council needs to address these gaps in order to better interpret this data.

Religion

- 6.16. The religious beliefs of Council Employees at 30 September 2023:

Table 7: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

Religion	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Christian	46 (50)	13.86% (15.82%)
Hindu	4 (5)	1.20% (1.58%)
Jewish	1 (1)	0.30% (0.32%)
Other	1 (5)	0.30% (0.32%)
None	33 (37)	9.94% (11.71%)
Not Stated	247 (222)	74.4% (70.25%)
Total	322 (316)	100.00%

- 6.17. 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, 77% of staff did not provide this information in the equality monitoring form. If you strip out the not stated employees and just look at the respondents, then 69% of employees declared themselves as following a religion.

Sexual Orientation

6.18. The breakdown of staff sexual orientation is show in Table 8:

Table 8: for comparison 2021-22 figures are in brackets

SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Total no of employees	% of employees
Gay or Lesbian	1 (3)	0.30% (0.95%)
Heterosexual	77 (81)	23.19% (25.63%)
Not stated	250 (226)	75.3% (71.52%)
Prefer not to say	2 (3)	0.60% (0.95%)
Bisexual	2 (2)	0.60% (0.63%)
Other Sexual Orientation	0 (1)	0.00% (0.32%)
TOTAL	332 (316)	100.00%

6.19. The breakdown of staff sexual orientation is show in Table 9. It is noted that most employees (75.3%) have not completed this section of the equality monitoring form.

6.20. The current percentage of LGBTQ+ staff at 0.9% is under the district Census percentage of 1.49%. If you strip out the not stated and prefer not to say employees, then 3.75% of employees declared themselves as LGBTQ+.

Equality and Diversity Training

6.21. 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.

6.22. The council has a strong commitment to developing staff within the resources available and the training budget for 2022/23 was £80,000.

6.23. 222 days of training were provided to staff (this equates to the number of people attending specific courses). For example 10 people attending a half day training course = 5 days of training delivered. This includes in-house and external (public) courses.

7. Delivering Council Services

7.1. 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.

7.2. Some of the projects, services or initiatives address a range of equalities issues and often relates to intersectionality (multiple protected characteristics).

7.3. These have been summarised for each objective.

To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training

The council fully supports the Disability Confident Employer Scheme. This means that all applicants who declare a disability and demonstrate in their application form that they meet the criteria detailed in the person specification are guaranteed an interview.

Within our recruitment process we ensure that opportunities are open to all by using the HR point scoring criteria for interviewing. This ensures we maintain consistency across the board. We can accommodate people with disabilities or additional needs throughout the recruitment process through the use of virtual interviews, allocating additional time for assessments and making accommodations if attending the council building.

We have a dedicated “Housing Navigator” position promoting employment, training, and education for individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness through 1:1 support. They support with CV writing, job searching and applications, volunteering opportunities and training. We have a network of external organisations, which include employment agencies & training providers which help support these individuals too.

Friends of Watersmeet hold a pool of over 80 volunteers. Some volunteers have additional needs and they’re provided with support and guidance when carrying out their duties as required. In 2022-23 volunteers contributed a combined total of 2,629 hours.

To improve equality and access to services for all residents

Two relaxed/dementia-friendly films were trialed at Watersmeet in July 2023 and this is something we are committed to delivering in future. The venue provides an inclusive and accessible pantomime experience where it will stage a dedicated relaxed show and a signed performance presented by a BSL signer.

The accessibility provision within Watersmeet theatre continues to be developed including; infrared hearing loop system, signed performances, relaxed performances, touch tours, and accessible lift and toilet.

The Community Support Service, part funded by the council, supports residents with their mental wellbeing needs through proactive outreach. In 2022/23 the service supported 478 people which is an increase of 27%/101 residents in comparison to last year.

Livestreaming of Council meetings to increase accessibility to the councils democratic processes.

Regular “Seniors Forums” are organized and held throughout the year to reduce isolation, inform and provide entertainment for senior residents in the district.

The council organises and promotes the “Youth Council” – a project working with local young people from schools across the district to engage them in the democratic processes of local decision making. In 2023 this work focused on environment and sustainability projects.

The council received funding to address health inequalities amplified by income deprivation on the areas of lung cancer prevention, social isolation, and mental health. These projects include:

- Man On, a new football based mental wellbeing project designed to support men aged 18+ with their mental health through physical activity and a conversation café. This has been running since March 2023 in William Penn Leisure Centre, Mill End.
- Healthy Outdoors was an outdoor activity and skills programme based at Ascend’s Dig Deep allotment in South Oxhey. The aim was to reduce social isolation, increase physical activity and improve mental health through sessions focusing on gardening skills and upcycling unused items.
- Lung cancer prevention project sends staff to local GP surgeries to offer a health and wellbeing survey to GP patients listed as smokers. The survey identifies health improvement priorities for the patient and ensures referral and access to local services.

We held a series of money advice sessions in collaboration with Money Advice Unit and Trading Standards across November to equip our residents with money management advice as we approached the winter months. The sessions were held for a veterans group and Age UK lunch club’s.

We retrofitted the poorest performing socially rented and privately rented/owner occupied homes focusing on the most vulnerable households. This supports those most at risk of fuel poverty, low income households and those living with disabilities and/or health conditions. By delivering funding to retrofit the least energy efficient homes in the District, residents benefit from improved warmth, better health and wellbeing, and lower energy bills which contributes to

reducing health and economic inequalities.

During 2023 a major project to update and improve the council's website was completed and ensures it is now compliant with the latest disability guidelines. To achieve this the website has incorporated the 'Recite Me' accessibility tool. This tool can make it easier for residents who may have a disability or speak another language to access the services they need.

Arts on Prescription provides a creative outlet for adults with mild to moderate mental health issues/poor wellbeing, to learn new skills and develop their creativity within a small group.

The ACE project is a referral scheme for families on a low income who can access school holiday childcare provision at reduced costs.

Refurbishment of the Denham way Pavilion provides additional tennis sessions for people with a disability. This has also enabled the club to provide a much needed holiday playscheme for children with disabilities to play tennis, additional sessions children with a disability and Tai Chi.

South Oxhey refurbishment provides a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for use by all with floor printed physical activities and a cricket wicket along with benches, board game table and low level pump track access all as part of a consultation with the local community in particular with the Northwick Day Care Centre as they used the park for recreational physical activity.

The council's Leisure Centres aim to provide a wide range of targeted activities for older people including; seniors table tennis, art groups and 50+ aqua aerobics as well as youth clubs, with play schemes and the HAPpy programme for young people. Women only sessions for swimming are available at South Oxhey and those living with health issues and disabilities are supported with programmes as diverse as Swimming after Stroke and supported sessions for the local school supporting pupils with additional needs.

The council continues to provide an assisted collection bin collection service, usually taken up by elderly residents or those with a disability. There are currently 974 residents signed up to this service.

To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities

A review of the 2021 census was undertaken to develop the infographics included within this document. This review has been undertaken at a ward level, to better understand the demographics of our residents and target support and services appropriately. This information has been shared with partner organisations to allow resources to be targeted in the most appropriate areas.

Community engagement has been developed during 2023, with more free community events held for residents, and craft events relating to different communities. Over 48 engagement initiatives have been held with residents in the district, through pop ups, engagement with local groups and working with community leaders.

We work closely with local voluntary sector organisations and continue to fund Watford and Three Rivers Trust to provide support directly to local charities. These organisations tend to work at a local level with community groups and building on these relationships improves council understanding of those communities.

Watford African Caribbean Association (WACA) received funding through the district allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. WACA brings together local African and Caribbean communities and joint working enables the council to be better informed of the cultures and concerns of these communities.

A residents survey closed in March 2023 and was completed by 542 people. The residents survey is an annual survey that aims to collate the thoughts and opinions of our communities in

relation to a range of topics and services delivered by the council.

Involvement in Herts Pride is an important anchor and the council's involvement presents a unique opportunity to engage with local residents in this protected characteristic group to better understand and respond to their concerns and needs. Herts Pride is sponsored by the council and was attended by staff to engage with attendees.

To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.

Watersmeet Theatre hosted South Asian Heritage event showcasing culture, classical dance and music whilst sharing the stories of families from South Asia. Tickets to the event were free to encourage residents from all socioeconomic demographics to attend.

2023 saw Three Rivers District Council become White Ribbon Accredited. The council made the white ribbon promise to never use, excuse, or ignore Violence Against Women and Girls.

A wide range of social media posts have been shared on topics including Herts Pride, volunteering opportunities in the community and national awareness days such as Hate Crime Awareness Week.

During 2023, the Council continued to celebrate and support community activities within the LGBTQ+ community; the Pride flag was raised at the council offices and the Community Partnerships team continued to sponsor and attend Herts Pride.

We hosted an engagement event with WACA at the Otley Way Family Centre to commemorate Windrush Day to share the stories of our Caribbean population who migrated to the UK to assist after World War 2.

A festive craft event was held in South Oxhey Library to celebrate the festive traditions of Romanian and Portuguese communities living in Three Rivers. This highlighted how different cultures celebrate Christmas and disseminated information that may allow residents to understand and celebrate festive customs of others better. Similar events were held to celebrate Eid, Windrush Day, Rosh Hashana and Diwali.

Community Fair's in Leavesden and Mill End were organised to improve service accessibility for residents. Bringing services to residents in areas of limited public transport allows people to find out about the variety of services that are available to them - especially those who are isolated or not very mobile.

Older Persons Activity Learning and Safety (OPALS) event held was a collaboration of services presenting a range of information, e.g. trading standards, fire service, police, Age UK, physical activity, Health & Independent Living Service. This event was free and encouraged attendance from local residents who are over the age of 55.

Watford and Three Rivers Trust and Three Rivers District Council held three digital inclusion sessions for patients from Gade Surgery. Older patients were invited to the sessions with the aim of building confidence in using the NHS App, to book appointments, order repeat prescriptions and other features that would improve access to healthcare.

A girls skate camp was created to promote access for girls to activities seen as a more masculine dominated sport, this was possible as the skate park was designed with the Make Space for Girls campaign design principles.

8. Other Inequalities

UK Armed Forces

- 8.1 Census 2021 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, as a reserve or both. This includes those who have served for at least one day in the armed forces, either regular, reserves or Merchant Mariners who have seen duty on legally defined military operations.
- 8.2 Of the Districts adult population, 2.6% had served in the Armed Forces or the Reserve UK Armed Forces with 5.3% of the districts households including a former member of the UK Armed Forces or the Reserve UK Armed Forces In March 2021.
- 8.3 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 Jon Tankard.
- 8.4 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.

Nested Deprivation and Equality of Opportunity

- 8.5 Three Rivers is one of the 20% least deprived districts/unitary authorities in England, however about 9.7% (1,620) children in the district live in low income families. Whilst the District is prosperous in many areas, there are areas (South Oxhey, Mill End and Maple Cross, Leavesden) that are in the most deprived. Added to this, there are often 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.
- 8.6 Life expectancy is 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.
- 8.7 The Community and Voluntary Sector within Three Rivers are reporting significantly increased service demand whilst simultaneously having fewer volunteers. Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service have seen an increase in clients presenting with debt problems compared to previous years – a concerning trend within this is the increase in numbers presenting who are already in employment.

9. Summary

- 9.1. Reflecting on the actions undertaken by the council, these demonstrate the steps the council has taken to achieve the statutory duties governed by the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 and related regulations.
- 9.2. The potential impact of projects and policies on people with “protected characteristics” is considered, reviewed and managed through the use of Equality Impact Assessments.
- 9.3. The work undertaken in relation to the objectives show how the council is taking steps to achieve the following:

- 9.3.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization
- 9.3.2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- 9.3.3. Foster good relations between different groups

10. The Way Forward

- 10.1 This report includes many examples of how the council, working with its partners, is providing for the needs of “protected” and underrepresented groups in the District. 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.
- 10.2 This work is presented in the context of the longer term impacts of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis, both of which have impacted the way that the council delivers its services, greatly influenced partnership working with the community and voluntary sector and continue to have a disproportionate impact on those whose protected characteristics increase their vulnerability.
- 10.3 The council will continue to maintain and where possible further develop its equality and diversity work in the year ahead. Specific areas for further development in 2024 include:
 - 10.3.1 Development of an action plan to achieve the equality objectives in line with the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.
 - 10.3.2 Implementation of Lunch and Learn sessions for council staff, in addition to e-learning and awareness raising and engagement on the new policy.
 - 10.3.3 Continued delivery of the health inequalities work stream, to address the wider determinants of health. Work to combat fuel poverty and to support those most affected by the increase in energy and other basic costs of living.
 - 10.3.4 Engagement with all council staff during Race Equality Week (pilot). Working to sustain Community Hubs, to ensure local services are accessible within neighbourhoods.
 - 10.3.5 Development of a White Ribbon action plan to continue to progress work tackling violence against women and girls.
 - 10.3.6 Delivery of the final year of the UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan. Further encouragement of increased self-recording of equalities data from staff in relation to their protected characteristics in order to better understand the discrepancies and synergies of the staff cohort with the demographics of the wider district population.
 - 10.3.7 Within the Watersmeet business plan for 2024-2026 we will be providing local students with work experience opportunities allowing them to develop their knowledge of the industry.

The logo for Three Rivers District Council features a stylized, abstract shape on the left side, composed of several overlapping, curved bands in various shades of green, ranging from a deep forest green to a light, almost white green. The shape resembles a stylized '3' or a series of flowing, curved lines. To the right of this graphic, the text 'THREE RIVERS' is written in a bold, uppercase, sans-serif font, with 'DISTRICT COUNCIL' written below it in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font.

THREE RIVERS
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