

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality and Diversity Annual Position Statement - Draft

2023/2024

Introduction

This statement provides an overview of 2023/2024 in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion in South Kesteven. This Council promotes equality of opportunity across all its functions.

South Kesteven District Council is committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in everything it does, whether it is the services provided, the money spent or the people employed. The Council is a community leader, service provider, commissioner and employer. It defines an equal and inclusive district as one where all residents, service users, Council staff, Elected Members and the voluntary, faith and community sectors are supported to fulfil their potential. These individuals and agencies are treated with respect and are actively involved in shaping decisions that will affect the workplace and the wider community.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the decisions the Council makes on how to deliver the best possible outcomes for communities across South Kesteven. High standards of service delivery continues and the workforce is committed to tackling discrimination and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in everything the Council does.

This document provides general information relating to how the Council works across South Kesteven, a retrospective perspective in terms of the make-up of the people who live and work within the District and highlights activity which supports equality of access to the services available.

The Equality Act

South Kesteven District Council has a responsibility to meet the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty which is set by law as part of the Equality Act 2010. The duty gives protection for all persons who might be discriminated against because of their age, race, sex, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnership. The Council must consider what the impact of policies, procedures and functions have on people in relation to their socio-economic status and on those with formal or informal caring responsibilities.

The duty requires the Council to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The specific duties placed on public bodies are to:

- **Publish information to show compliance with the Equality Duty** – including information relating to employees who share protected characteristics and information relating to service users. This is achieved through the production of this document.
- **Set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years.** The Council's objectives are outlined below. These can be reviewed and revised as required within the published timeline which, for South Kesteven District Council, is currently 2024-2028.

South Kesteven District Council Equality Objectives 2024-2028

Our commitment to equalities is about long-term, continuous improvement. It is the responsibility of all Officers and elected Members to implement the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our equality objectives will be supported by a delivery plan as part of the People Strategy, which will include actions from all service areas. This will ensure consideration of the needs of our staff and our residents is at the heart of what we do – from the earliest stage of development, through to decision-making and implementation.

Objective	How this will be achieved
Continue to maintain an inclusive, diverse workforce that feels valued.	<p>In all parts of your work life we will work in a fair and equitable manner.</p> <p>Encourage celebration and support our differences.</p>
Continue to build and promote a culture of equality and inclusion into all the services, functions and projects we deliver.	<p>Develop a network of equality allies across the Council who are empowered to support and advise their colleagues on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Ensure all projects, policies strategies and reports which have a direct impact on people are accompanied by a robust equality impact assessment.</p> <p>Consult with residents on all aspects of the Council's work that have a direct impact on them as our customers</p>
Continue to develop and support resilient, connected and inclusive communities that have a voice in the decisions that affect them.	<p>Ensure the Council's services are responsive to different needs and treat service users equitably, with dignity and respect.</p> <p>Involve, listen and respond to our communities effectively.</p> <p>Engage with communities to promote opportunities for funding and project support.</p>

Profile of the District of South Kesteven

The district of South Kesteven is one of seven within the county of Lincolnshire and borders North Kesteven to the north, South Holland in the east, the unitary authorities of Rutland and Peterborough to the south and the counties of Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire to the west.

The District covers 943 square kilometres (365sq miles) with the administrative centre in Grantham and three further market towns of Bourne, Stamford and Market Deeping. Two-thirds of the population lives in one of the four market towns and the remaining third live in one of over 80 villages and other rural settings in the area. According to Census 2021 figures, the number of domestic dwellings in South Kesteven is 62,850, with Grantham being the largest urban settlement. The District is divided into 77 parishes and has 30 Wards, represented by 56 Councillors.

Community make-up

In South Kesteven there are 153 people per square kilometre, this compares with an overall Lincolnshire average of 130 people per square kilometre. Figures released by the Office for National Statistics in its Mid-Year Estimate for June 2023 state a population of 145,758, which shows an increase in population of 11,970 since the census taken in 2011 and an increase of 21,970 since the 2001 Census. The overall population size is currently projected to increase to 149,777 by 2030 and 155,821 by 2043, through a potential net increase in international and internal migration, in addition to typical population growth.

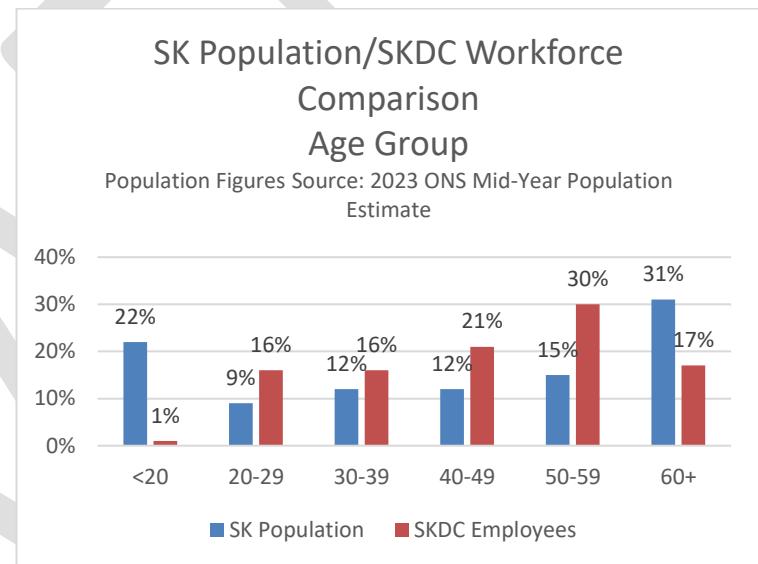
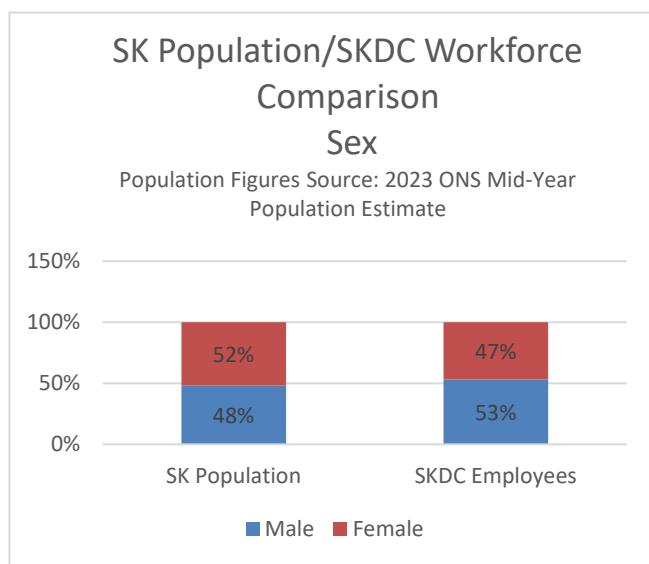
Mapping and local intelligence within the District shows significant increases in minority ethnic communities with the greatest concentration of diversity located in Grantham. This soft intelligence was borne out by the 2021 Census which shows that ethnically diverse communities account for 9.5% of the District's population.

The greatest number of people from any one country from outside the United Kingdom (UK) making their home in South Kesteven are from Poland (1.26% of residents). Additionally there are pockets of small communities, sometimes individual families, who need Council services, help and advice and are unable to speak, read or write in English. Census 2021 data shows the top ten languages (after English) spoken in the District have changed in the ten years since the last Census with Romanian, Tamil, Spanish and Nepalese replacing Cantonese, Slovakian, Tagalog and French. These languages are still present in the District, meaning numbers for the other languages have increased at a higher rate. The Council provides translation and interpreter services on request.

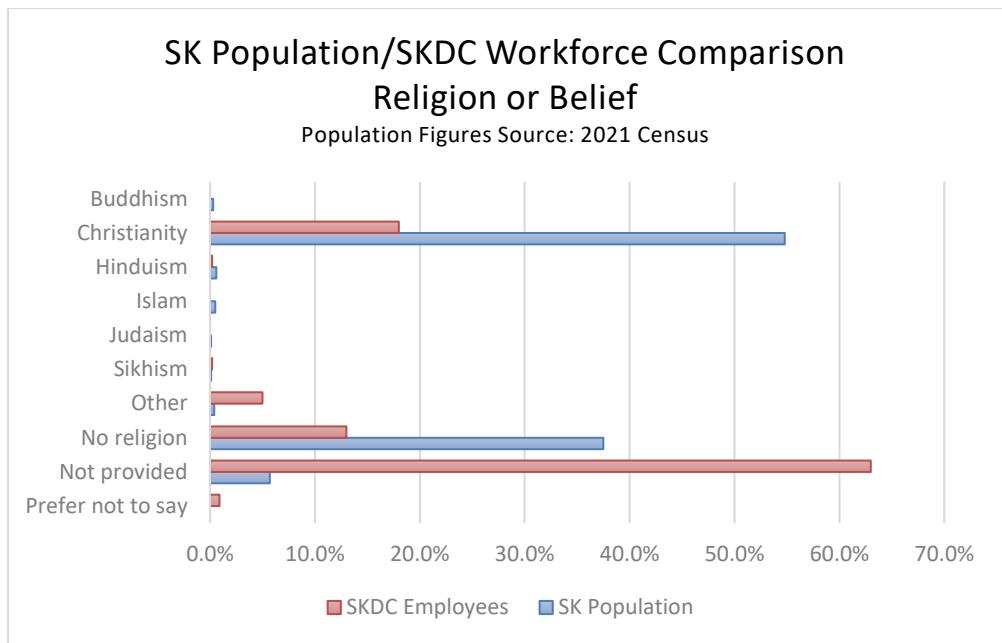
Office for National Statistics (ONS) internal migration figures published in July 2024, as part of its Mid-Year Population Estimate, show that in the year to June 2023, there was net internal migration of 1,229, with a total of 8,573 new residents from other parts of the United Kingdom. The Mid-Year Estimate states there are 43,040 people aged 60 and above who are resident in South Kesteven. This shows this age group remains at 30% of the total population of the District. The proportion of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase significantly by 2040 according to POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information). Using figures reported in the ONS Mid-Year Estimate, the current number of people aged over 75 in the District (based on the 2023 ONS Mid-Year Population Estimate) is 17,266. This figure is projected to increase to 26,800 by 2040 (i.e. a 55.21% increase).

Demographic and Workforce Comparisons

Using data available through the Census and Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Estimates, the Council is able to build a statistical picture of the District's residents. When used as a comparison against the information held in relation to the workforce, this determines how representative South Kesteven District Council is of the population the Authority serves. Carrying out such comparison helps the Council to identify any gaps in the knowledge base relative to the population of South Kesteven and the workforce, as well as providing opportunities for organisational development and change, as necessary, to ensure the Authority remains representative of the District. The following graphics illustrate a direct comparison, based on percentages, between the population of South Kesteven and the workforce of the Council. Information relating to certain protected characteristics is currently not collected by the Council. Where no direct comparison is possible, separate charts have been provided. Mandatory equality information now forms part of the Council's recruitment process, with the option of 'Prefer Not to Say'. This approach should reduce the percentage of information which is not known.



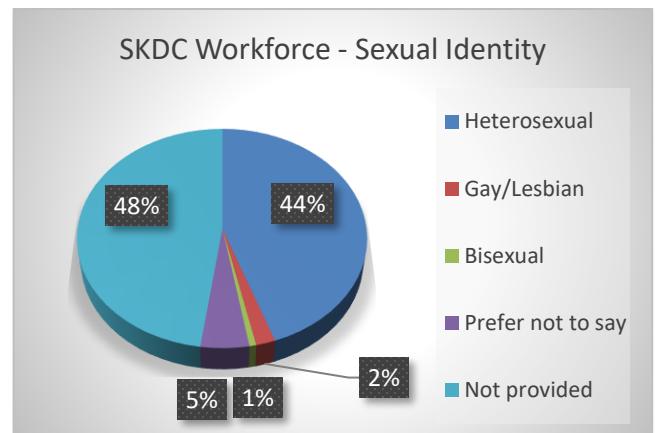
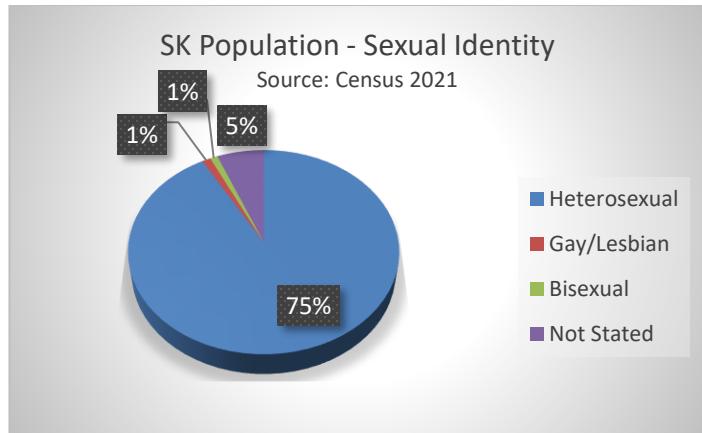
The figures provided relating to age range show what appears to be a large imbalance between the SK population figure and the figure provided to show the percentage of employees. We must bear in mind however that the population figure includes all persons from birth to 19 whilst the workforce figure represents people aged 16 and above. When calculating the < 20 age-group SK population figure to include only those of working age the percentage reduces from 22% of the SK population to 4%. It could be similarly argued that the percentage difference for those aged 60+ would also reduce dramatically if the comparison was specifically related to working people.



The images above provide an illustration, by age-group and sex, of the population of the District directly compared with the workforce of South Kesteven District Council.

The following images provide information relating to other key protected characteristics taken from the 2021 Census alongside the South Kesteven District Council workforce data with supporting narrative where available.





Population and SK Workforce Statistics

Data provided by the 2021 Census shows the population of South Kesteven as 90.5% white British. Ethnically diverse identifiers therefore account for the remaining 9.5%. Statistics for some of the protected characteristics are not known for a large proportion of the workforce. For example, ethnicity data held shows the Council's employees as 68.3% white British which is a slight reduction on 2022/2023 (68.90%), with 4.5% representing ethnically diverse identifiers (an increase on 2022/2023 where a figure of 3.9% was recorded). 0.2% of the workforce responded with "prefer not to say", whilst 26% did not provide an answer.

Supporting our Staff

During 2023/24 there were a total of 575 employees within the Council.

The statistics show 16% of the workforce were aged 29 and under, and 47% are over 50. The Council is continuing to increase the appeal of working for SKDC. Actions include:

- Building relationships with local schools and colleges to advertise roles
- Offering a wide range of apprenticeship options both externally and internally
- Graduate scheme which offers a Level 7 leadership qualification as well as placements across the Council.
- Offering summer internships and a significant number of work experience placements

The Council has a new recruitment website and has produced new recruitment materials to attract to a wider talent pool. The Council also has an in depth workforce development plan which is populated by individual's development requirements and the needs of the Council in line with succession planning.

The Council has a comprehensive engagement and wellbeing plan for colleagues which is built from staff feedback. There are also a number of staff network groups to support colleagues including the Carers Network, Menopause Café and Parents Forum. Educational initiatives, awareness and activities are also regularly promoted with staff on areas such as mental health, physical wellbeing and social wellbeing.

Launched in March 2022, the People Panel is made up of 31 colleagues from departments across the Council. The Panel has been set up to be a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance that will affect colleagues. The meetings provide an opportunity for employees to raise issues of interest or concern, share their opinions and views and get more involved in how the Council operates.

Mandatory equality information now forms part of our recruitment process, with the option of 'Prefer Not to Say'. These are not used in the recruitment process and hiring managers conduct 'blind shortlisting' to reduce unconscious bias.

Our gender split is 53% male/47% female and our gender pay gap, last reported in March 2023, is - 0.98% mean and 0% median pay gap, implying there is effectively no gender pay gap at the Council.

The Council's People Strategy 2022-25 looks at ways to increase the diversity of our workforce, to ensure it reflects the demographics of our district. Progress towards the aims of the People Strategy is monitored through quarterly key performance indicator reporting of the Council's Corporate Plan through our Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Strategy is also regularly reviewed by our Employment Committee and Corporate Management Team. The People Strategy 2022-25 can be found [here](#).

Ensuring Equality and Inclusion for our Workforce

Wellbeing: The Council puts on a varied wellbeing programme for staff. Regular staff surveys help shape the programme which has included a range of educational and awareness initiatives on topics such as mental health, breast cancer and strokes.

First Aiders for Mental Health: It is predicted by 2025, there will be in excess of 15,000 living with a common mental health disorder in South Kesteven. It is therefore, increasingly important for staff to be supported. The Council now has 33 First Aiders for Mental Health amongst staff and elected Members who can listen and signpost colleagues to other support services.

Employee Assistance Programme: The Council recognises the demands placed upon staff in their working and personal lives. To help staff deal with these demands, the Council offers an Employee Assistance Programme. This programme, which is also available to elected Members, is a free confidential service providing year-round support and information on a range of personal and work-related issues.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

2022/23 saw the introduction of an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group. This group, made up of Officers from across the Council who represent some of the protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act 2010, explored opportunities to help the Council become more inclusive, promote equality and diversity and share information on a range of topics to help improve the awareness of Officers. This group will be rebranded and relaunched during 2024/25.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Allies: The Council has a network of Equality Allies across the workforce. There are currently ten Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Allies. These allies provide support to colleagues on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, acting as critical friends during the equality impact assessment process. The Council has a further three champions who support as described above and are also LGBTQIA+ Allies.

People Panel: Launched in March 2022, the People Panel is made up of 31 colleagues from departments across the Council. The Panel has been set up to be a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance that will affect colleagues. The meetings provide an opportunity for employees to raise issues of interest or concern, share their opinions and views and get more involved in how the Council operates.

Recruitment: The Council's People Strategy 2022-2025 looks at ways to increase the diversity of the workforce, to ensure the demographics of the district are reflected. One action taken to achieve this is to remove the potential of unconscious bias through implementing Name-Blind Recruitment as part of the recruitment process.

Ensuring Equality and Inclusion for our Customers and our Communities

Equality Impact Assessments: The Council's Equality Impact Assessment process requires consideration is made in the development or review of every policy, function, project or procedure impacting South Kesteven residents. Copies of Assessments are published along with committee reports to ensure due regard is given throughout the decision-making process.

Translations and Interpreters: Any document can be provided in an alternative format on request. This includes translating into other languages, documents in large print or Braille and information in audio format. All staff have access to Language Line for instant translation services and in-person interpreter services are provided when required. Staff and customers have access to Text Relay to assist with calls to, and from, the Council for people with a hearing impairment.

Disabled Facilities Grants: The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide disabled facilities grants to adapt the homes of disabled people. Financial and technical assistance is available to residents who live in their own home, are a private tenant or a housing association tenant to support the needs of disabled children and adults. Eligibility is based on an assessment by an Occupational Therapists (OT). The grant will pay for the essential adaptations the OT identifies as necessary and appropriate in accordance with the Council's standard specification. A total of 132 adaptations were completed with grants in excess of £1.2million.
(Figures provided may cross more than one financial year).

Funding to Food Support Agencies: A ring-fenced funding pot is available to support the work of agencies and community groups within the District which provides access to food and essential supplies to those in need. This support is offered to the four Foodbanks within the District along with community larders, agencies providing hot meals to vulnerable individuals and community cafés operating on a 'pay what you can' basis.

Assisted Bin Collections: A permanent and temporary assisted collection service is provided. This service is offered to households where no resident at the property is able to put the waste out for collections because of frailty, disability or ill-health.

Cost of Living Support: The Council has two dedicated Cost of Living Support Officers. The aims and objectives of the Cost of Living Team are to support our most vulnerable residents who cannot access any other income, to sustain their home, health, family, and security. The value of financial support issued to residents through this team since it was established in 2021 amounts to £2.114m with £1.019m being issued during 2023/24.

Alternative formats and languages

This information can be made available in other languages, large print, Braille, or audio. If you, or someone you know, might benefit from this service, please contact us.

To request a document in a specific language or format please contact:

01476 40 60 80

pr@southkesteven.gov.uk

Polski / Polish:

Skontaktuj się z nami, korzystając z powyższych danych, jeśli potrzebujesz przetłumaczyć ten dokument na swój język

Lietuviškai / Lithuanian:

Susisiekite su nami naudodami aukščiau pateiktą informaciją, jei jums reikia šio dokumento, išversto į jūsų kalbą

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Entre em contato conosco usando os detalhes acima se precisar deste documento traduzido para o seu idioma

Română / Romanian:

Vă rugăm să ne contactați folosind detaliile de mai sus dacă aveți nevoie de traducerea acestui document în limba dvs

Magyar / Hungarian:

Kérjük, vegye fel velünk a kapcsolatot a fenti elérhetőségeken, ha szüksége van erre a dokumentumra az Ön nyelvéről lefordítva

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Lūdzu, sazinieties ar mums, izmantojot iepriekš norādīto informāciju, ja jums ir nepieciešams šis dokuments jūsu valodā

русский / Russian:

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தமிழ் / Tamil

இந்த ஆவணத்தை உங்கள் மொழியில் மொழிபெயர்க்க வேண்டும் என்றால், மேலே உள்ள விவரங்களைப் பயன்படுத்தி எங்களைத் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்

Español/ Spanish

Póngase en contacto con nosotros utilizando los detalles anteriores si necesita que este documento se traduzca a su idioma.

Nepali / Nepalese:

यदि तपाइँलाई यो कागजात तपाइँको भाषामा अनुवाद गर्न आवश्यक छ भने कृपया माथिको विवरणहरू प्रयोग गरेर हामीलाई सम्पर्क गर्नुहोस्

*The languages listed above represent the top ten spoken, after English, in South Kesteven. If you know someone who needs information in any language beyond what is listed please contact us as above.