

SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Equality and Diversity
Annual Position Statement
(*Draft*)**

2024/2025

Introduction

South Kesteven District Council is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity. This statement provides an overview of actions across the District during 2024/2025 in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The Council is committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in everything it does whether as community leader, service provider, commissioner or employer. The Council strives for an equal and inclusive district where everyone, including residents, staff and councillors as well as the voluntary, faith and other community sectors are supported to reach their full potential. Individuals and agencies are treated with respect and are actively involved in shaping the decisions which affect the workplace and the community.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are central to the ways the Council and its staff deliver services and improves outcomes across South Kesteven.

This document provides general information relating to the people who live and work within the District and highlights the Council's activity to improve equality of access to its services.

The Equality Act

The Equality Act 2010 established nine protected characteristics:

- age
- race
- sex
- gender reassignment
- disability
- sexual orientation
- religion or belief
- pregnancy and maternity
- and marriage and civil partnership

The Act also sets out a Public Sector Equality Duty which means Council must consider the potential impact of policies, procedures and functions on people with any of the above characteristics and also in relation to socio-economic status and 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 publication of this Annual Position Statement).
- **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. For South Kesteven District Council, this is currently 2024-2028.
- **Equality Objectives 2024-2028**

The 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.

The equality objectives are supported by a delivery plan as part of the People Strategy which includes actions for all service areas. This ensures the needs of our staff and our residents are 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.	In all parts of your work life we will work in a fair and equitable manner. Encourage celebration and support our differences.
Continue to build and promote a culture of equality and inclusion into all the services, functions and projects we deliver.	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 Ensure all projects, policies, strategies and reports which have a direct impact on people are accompanied by a robust equality impact assessment. Consult with residents on all aspects of the Council's work that have a direct impact on them as our customers
Continue to develop and support resilient, connected and inclusive communities that have a voice in the decisions that affect them.	Ensure the Council's services are responsive to different needs and treat service users equitably, with dignity and respect. Involve, listen and respond to our communities effectively. Engage with communities to promote opportunities for funding and project support.

Profile of South Kesteven District

South Kesteven is one of seven districts in Lincolnshire. It is bordered by 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 an administrative centre in Grantham and three other market towns of Bourne, Stamford and Market Deeping. Two-thirds of the population lives in one of the four towns and the remainder live in one of over 80 villages or in other rural settings. According to Census 2021 figures, South Kesteven has 62,850 domestic dwellings. Grantham is the largest urban settlement. The District is divided into 77 parishes and 30 Wards which are represented by 56 councillors.

Population

South Kesteven has a population of 145,758. This is an increase of 11,970 since 2011 and of 21,970 since 2001 (*Source: Office of National Statistics (ONS)*).

This equates there are 153 people per square kilometre this compares with a Lincolnshire average of 130 people per square kilometre.

The overall population size is projected to increase to 153,027 by 2035 and to 159,188 by 2045. This will be due to a net increase in international and internal migration as well as typical population growth.

People in South Kesteven are predominantly White British (91%) with ethnically diverse communities making up the remaining 9%.

The country which has the highest number of people living in South Kesteven from outside the United Kingdom (UK) is Poland (1.47% of SK residents).

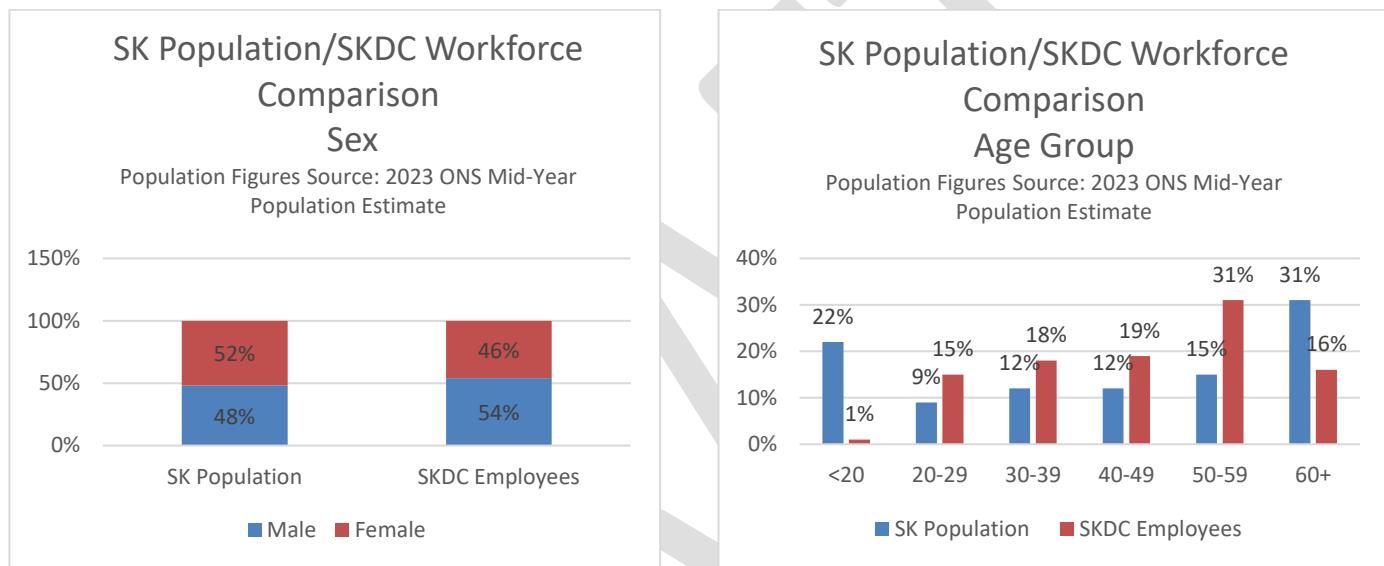
Many people of diverse nationalities and ethnicities have made their home in South Kesteven. The top ten most numerous are from Germany, Lithuania, India, South Africa, Romania, Latvia, Portugal, Hungary, United States and the Philippines. The Council provides translation and interpreter services on request for residents whose first language is not English.

During the year to June 2023, there was net internal migration of 1,229 people with a total of 8,573 new residents from other parts of the UK. The greatest movement in terms of both inflow and outflow was from the 20-24 age bracket. The figures also showed a significant outflow of 15-19 year olds which were -294 down on the previous year.

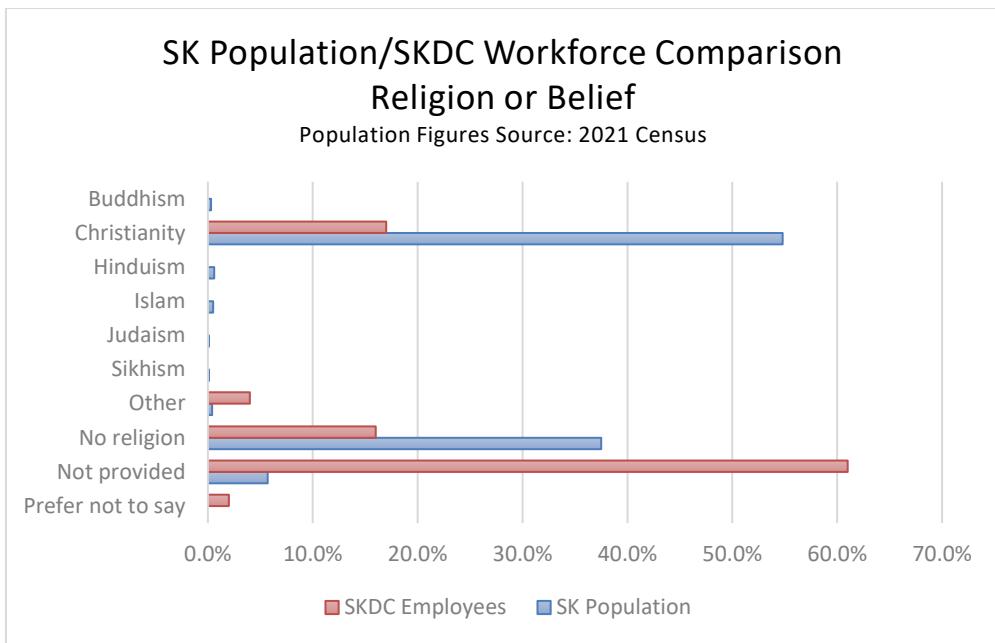
The proportion of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase significantly by 2040 according to POPPI (Projecting Older People Population Information). The current number of people aged over 65 in the District is 34,362 which accounts for 24% of the total population of the District. This figure is projected to increase to 48,500 by 2040 (i.e. a 41% 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. By comparing this information with data held in relation to the council's workforce, it is possible to determine the extent to which the staff of the Council reflects the local population. Such comparison enables the Council to identify any gaps in the knowledge base relative to the population, as well as providing opportunities for organisational development and change to ensure the authority remains representative of the District. The following graphs illustrate a direct comparison, based on percentages, between the population of South Kesteven and the workforce of the Council. Some 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 should improve the quality of data available to the council.



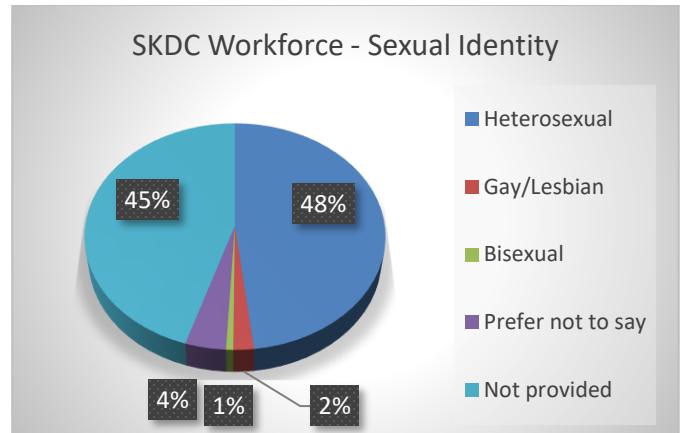
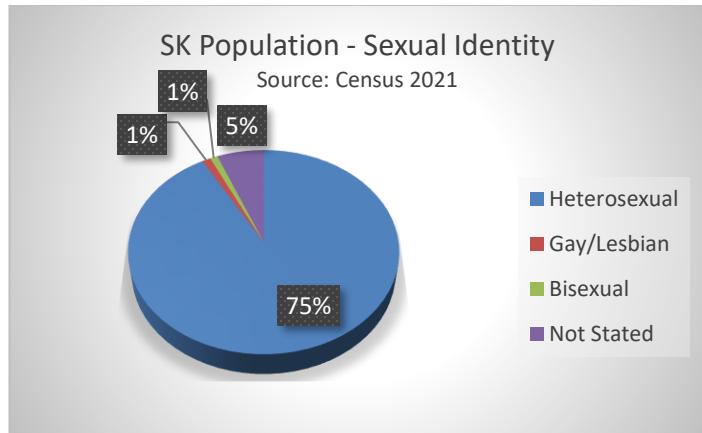
The figures relating to age range appear to show a large imbalance between the SK population and the Council's workforce. However, the population figure includes all persons from birth to 19 while the workforce figure only represents people aged 16 and above. When calculating the <20 age-group SK population figure to include only those of working age the percentage reduces from 22% of the SK population to 4%. It could similarly be argued that the percentage difference for those aged 60+ would 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% white British which is a slight reduction on 2023/2024 (68.03%), with 5% representing ethnically diverse identifiers (an increase on 2023/2024 where a figure of 4.5% was recorded). 0.1% of the workforce responded with "prefer not to say", whilst 27% did not provide an answer.

Supporting our staff

During 2024/25, the Council had a total of 590 employees.

The workforce 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
- a range of apprenticeship options
- a graduate scheme which offers a Level 7 leadership qualification as well as placements across the Council.
- 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 a detailed workforce development plan.

The Council has a comprehensive engagement and wellbeing plan for colleagues built from staff feedback. There are also staff network groups to support colleagues including the Carers Network, Menopause Café and Parents Forum. Education and training awareness activities are also promoted to staff on topics such as mental health, physical wellbeing and social wellbeing.

Since March 2022, the Council has had a People Panel made up of 31 employees from across the Council. The panel provides a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance affecting colleagues.

Mandatory equality information now forms part of our recruitment process and includes an option of 'Prefer Not to Say'. These are used for monitoring and are not used to inform the recruitment process. Hiring managers conduct 'blind shortlisting' to reduce unconscious bias.

The Council has gender split is 54% male / 46% female. The 'gender pay gap', last reported in March 2024, was a mean of 4.83% (0.98% in 2023) and a median of 0.80% (0% in 2023).

The Council's People Strategy 2022-25 and supporting Action Plan has introduced a number of proactive measures to increase the diversity of its workforce to ensure it reflects the demographics of the District. Progress towards the aims of the People Strategy is monitored via the quarterly reporting of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relating to the Council's Corporate Plan through Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Strategy is also regularly reviewed by the Employment Committee and Corporate Management Team (KPI). The People Strategy 2022-25 can be found [here](#). This document is being refreshed during 2025.

Ensuring Equality and Inclusion In 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 Allies: The Council has a network of eight 'Equality Allies' across the workforce to provide support to colleagues on issues of equality, diversity and inclusion, and to act as critical friends during the equality impact assessment process. The Council has three more 'champions' who offer similar support and are also LGBTQIA+ Allies.

People Panel: Since March 2022, the Council has had a People Panel made up of 31 employees from across the Council. The panel provides a forum for feedback and involvement on issues of strategic importance affecting colleagues.

Recruitment: The Council's People Strategy 2022-2025 and supporting action plan is introducing proactive measures in order to improve the diversity of the workforce, so that it reflects the demographics of the district. One such measure is name-blind shortlisting which reduces the potential for unconscious bias during 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.

Funding to Food Support Agencies:

Ring-fenced funding is available to support the work of agencies and community groups which provides access to food and essential supplies to those in need. This support is offered to the Food banks in the four towns as well as community larders, agencies providing hot meals to vulnerable individuals and community cafés operating on a 'pay what you can' basis.

Translations and Interpreters:

Any document can be provided in an alternative format on request. This includes translation 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.

Changing Places Facilities:

The Council supported the installation of Changing Places facilities in Wyndham Park, Grantham, the Meres Leisure Centre and South Street toilets in Bourne.

Access to the Arts:

The Council operates two Arts Centres within the District. Each venue provides a varied programme of workshops, live performance and cinema. Signed and relaxed pantomime performances at the Guildhall yearly. Stamford Arts Centre has audio description equipment for cinema, for people who are visual impaired/blind to be able to enjoy cinema. The venue also has 'Watchword' installed for cinema, whereby deaf customers use glasses personal to them that display the subtitles and describe the noises happening on screen. These glasses have opened up the number of screenings deaf customers can attend as they aren't only relying on captioned screenings. Stamford Cinema also provides captioned cinema screenings. Regular programming of LGBTQAI+ performances across both, including Monocle (inspired by the secretly notorious 1930s Parisian lesbian club Le Monocle), and well known drag artists such as Danny Beard and Bagga Chipz. The Groove at Guildhall Arts Centre is a safe disco/club experience for adults with additional needs and their families/carers.

Play Areas:

Consultation with residents, as part of the funding application for large scale refurbishment projects of the play areas at Gonerby Hill Foot and Beeden Park, Grantham, has resulted in inclusive equipment being installed in each of these play areas. This provides more opportunities for users to access a healthy lifestyle. Multi-functional fitness equipment was installed at Dysart Park with the support of the Rotary Club of Grantham.

Positive Futures: The Council and LeisureSK Ltd work closely with Positive Futures who use sport and physical activity to engage with young people in deprived communities, by allowing them use of the facilities to provide these programmes. Sessions are provided free of charge to those attending.

Volunteers and Events: The development of the Council's Volunteer Policy has enabled the recruitment of parks volunteers from diverse backgrounds. This has provided opportunities to develop their social and interaction skills with members of the public. Volunteers support the running of the visitor centre and assist with regular events including; Grantham Deaf Group Coffee Morning; Building Brighter Futures; Introduction to BSL for adults and children; dementia awareness training; Young Adults social group for those with learning difficulties; and 'Let's talk about Ageing-Well'.

Cost of Living Support
The Council has two dedicated Welfare and Financial Advice Officers. The aims and objectives of this 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 £2.722m with £607,900 being issued

Age Friendly Communities: Age Friendly Communities work to ensure our district is a good place to live and grow old. SKDC has signed the Age Friendly Employer pledge and will start to promote this to businesses and organisations within the district.

Physical Activity: The Council completed a Moving Communities Community Survey and established there was a need to provide more sessions for beginners into physical activity, women and girls and for older people. As a result, these sessions are being delivered directly via the leisure centres.

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

Português / Portuguese:

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

Latviski / Latvian:

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

Deutsch/ German:

Bitte kontaktieren Sie uns unter den oben genannten Kontaktdataen, wenn Sie dieses Dokument in Ihre Sprache übersetzen lassen möchten

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.