

Fairness, Inclusion and Equality

About our Services
March 2026 Report

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Introduction

We are pleased to present Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's (SMBC) Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) Report 2026 relating to our role as a large service provider and community leader.



**Councillor
Karen Grinsell,
Leader of the Council**



**Paul Johnson,
Chief Executive**

We will continue to achieve our priorities and deliver for everyone who lives, works, learns and relaxes here in Solihull.

We have set and work hard to deliver key priorities for everyone who lives, works, learns and relaxes here in Solihull.

Equality is much more than a duty, it's an opportunity to make our borough a better place whilst improving the lives of so many who live here.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a statutory duty on all public authorities. It ensures organisations consider and demonstrate how their work affects people with different protected characteristics. This includes their decision-making, policies and practices.

Since reporting obligations commenced in 2011, Solihull Council has published annual reports covering our role as a service provider and an employer, and we have provided links to other equality information. We have also published Gender Pay Gap reports since they were introduced in 2017.

We are **small enough to care but big enough to make a meaningful difference** to people's lives and their lived experiences, both through our work and in partnership with others. Fairness and inclusion are fundamental to our behaviours, the way we work and our values, which are to be ambitious, adaptable, respectful and trustworthy.

Our vision is to make Solihull a great place to live, work, invest in and enjoy, and ensure that it remains an attractive and aspirational place. We will:

- Create the right conditions for everyone to thrive.
- Offer the right services at the right time and in the right place.
- Support children and young people to have the best possible outcomes.
- Maximise wellbeing and independence for adults.
- Generate a vibrant economy and develop opportunities and fairer outcomes through the climate change agenda.

Executive Summary

As a public authority, Solihull Council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. This requires us to have 'due regard' to the three aims of the Act when designing, delivering and reviewing our services to:

1. **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**
2. **Advance equality of opportunity**
3. **Foster good relations between people from different groups**

The Act also requires councils to publish relevant equality information each year by 30 March, demonstrating how we meet our legal responsibilities across all protected characteristics. This report provides examples of how we have embedded fairness, inclusion and equality into our services throughout 2024/25.

Across the year, Solihull Council has taken clear action to improve access to services, support vulnerable residents, reduce inequalities and strengthen community connections. These actions support our ambition to create a borough where everyone can thrive, regardless of background, identity or circumstances.

Below is a summary of how we have delivered against the three PSED aims across the services covered in this report.

1. Eliminating Unlawful Discrimination

We continued to make services fairer, more accessible and safer for all residents. This included providing information in alternative formats, physical access improvements, safeguarding support, and clearer complaints processes. Fair Treatment Assessments helped ensure that decisions and service changes do not disadvantage protected groups.

2. Advancing Equality of Opportunity

We worked to improve access to services and opportunities for children, families, adults, and communities who may be disadvantaged or under-represented. This included early help, SEND support, youth programmes, health and wellbeing initiatives, digital and face-to-face access, employment schemes, and targeted work with minority and newer communities.

3. Fostering Good Relations

We strengthened community cohesion by working with cultural, faith and voluntary partners, celebrating major cultural events, supporting new communities, and delivering programmes that build trust, reduce isolation, and bring people together. This helped build understanding between different groups and supported safer, stronger communities.



Summary

Across 2024/25, we continued to embed equality, diversity and inclusion across all Council services. Our actions demonstrate our commitment to eliminating discrimination, widening opportunities and strengthening relationships across our diverse communities. We recognise that this is a journey, and we welcome feedback as we continue to deliver our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.



Solihull Council Plan

The Solihull [Council Plan 2025-2030](#) was developed following public consultation. It sets out our overall strategic direction of the Council and our delivery aspirations for the next five years and beyond. The Plan provides background information about the borough, its geography, the diversity of our residents, our delivery plan and our strategic priorities and deliverables. On equality, the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 is aligned to the Council Plan, ensuring that inclusive principles are embedded across corporate priorities and service delivery, and that equality considerations are integral to achieving the Council's strategic objectives.

Our work is informed by Solihull's increasingly diverse population. We welcome people from all backgrounds and cultures. We fully recognise that diversity enhances innovation, fosters creativity and supports effective decision making, meeting diverse needs, promoting community engagement and the fostering of healthy workplaces.

Knowing our communities enriches our strategies, policies and operational practices in the face of meeting increased demand and financial challenges.

The most recent [annual report](#) of the Council Plan is published and available on the Council's website.



Solihull Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Solihull Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, is aligned to the Council's published EDI Roadmap and statutory Equality Objectives, where the Strategy provides a framework for achieving fairness, equality and equity across the organisation and the borough.

The Council's Equality Objectives are to:

- Protect fairness, dignity and respect of individuals.
- Promote Solihull as a sustainable and an inclusive place to live, work, study and visit.
- To be a diverse and inclusive employer.

The Strategy is expected to deliver consistent implementation across the organisation, embed inclusive practice into business-as-usual activity and achieve measurable progress against the Council's equality objectives. By doing this we aim to:

- Be recognised as a forward-thinking Council that values an inclusive culture of fairness and where diversity is valued.
- Enjoy a strong reputation as an inclusive place in which to live, work, study and visit.
- Demonstrate that local residents and visitors are satisfied with our services and their experiences.
- Ensure that senior leaders feel more equipped to lead and drive an impactful and ambitious EDI agenda.
- Make the best use of talent and views of diverse staff and external partners to deliver the equality, diversity and inclusion agenda.

We have improved how we monitor and make decisions about EDI. We now have clear frameworks to guide us and help ensure that the aims of the EDI Strategy are achieved.

More information about the EDI Strategy and associated documents can be found at:

[Equality, diversity and inclusion \(EDI\) | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

Other Equality Information for 2025

Other reports with equality information published alongside this report include:

- [Fairness, Inclusion and Equality – About our Employees \(2026\)](#)
- [Gender Pay Gap - Reporting data by 30 March 2026](#)



SMBC values on an inclusive culture

Accessible Solihull

We are proud of our commitment to make Solihull an accessible place for the community and visitors. We want people to have inclusive experiences by making places and facilities more accessible for people with diverse needs.

Our new refurbished Core Theatre in the heart of Solihull provides step-free entrance, accessible toilets and wheelchair seating. Approaches such as holding 'relaxed' performances, welcoming assistance dogs and supporting performers with mobility challenges ensures that people with physical and sensory impairment are warmly welcome.

Accessible transport is the key to supporting people with limited mobility. Solihull train station has step free access. Most buses are low-floor and wheelchair accessible. Residents who are state pension age and over can benefit from free or discounted bus travel passes. Most public car parks have free parking for Blue Badge holders who can use wider designated parking bays.

We are proud to continue working with AccessAble who provide online information about accessibility of key places so that people can enjoy Solihull with the confidence and knowledge about venues such as shops, hotels, and restaurants. Visitors can check AccessAble's [website](#) before planning a trip to Solihull to check if places they plan to visit have step-free access, wide-bay parking and facilities for people with physical disabilities, those who use assistance dogs and people looking for dementia friendly venues.

Our main town centre shopping complex, the Touchwood Shopping Centre, hosts the 'Shopmobility' scheme that supports guests wishing to use mobility scooters, power and manual wheelchairs that are available free of charge. Our local cinema house offers audio-described and subtitled screenings from time to time. Resorts World provides outlet stores, restaurants and entertainment offers are dedicated to quiet hours every Saturday for more peaceful enjoyment.



We have created sensory walks so that people can enjoy local parks and green spaces safely and independently. Solihull's leisure centres are accessible and have pool hoists for supported swimming.

Accessible Council services

Our Customer Charter includes a promise ‘to be fair in the way we deliver services, and treat all members of the community as individuals, recognising their differences’. Our operational practice is to keep customers informed about the services provided and we aim to get things right first time.

Our services are easy to access. We give choices whenever possible and provide accurate and easy to access information. We improve communication through reasonable adjustments such as:

- a. British Sign Language Signer.
- b. Face to face and telephone interpreting.
- c. Translating printed material into Braille and community languages.
- d. Proving papers in large print and in alternative formats.
- e. Working through carers and advocates.



The Recite Me tool on our website enables users to change font and text size, background colours and have the information read in English and several other languages.

Our Digital Strategy 2022-2027 is an essential part of life for customers and the community for accessing information and our services, and to connect with us and our partners. Our Digital Offer is based on the principles of giving a universally good service to all residents and supporting people who cannot access services digitally. As part of our goal to build vibrant communities, we share Council meeting updates and other news through the Bluesky platform.



Our website offers tools and training for people to use technology, for example via the [Learn My Way](#) website, which can be accessed from home or a Council library. The training is suitable for people with little or no knowledge of computers and supports people to learn about internet shopping and banking. Our Connect Offices and libraries have free to use computers for the Council’s online services such as paying bills and requesting services. [Do it online | Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council](#)

The ‘Solihull MyLife’ website provides information about help, advice and services available across the Borough and how to access them. Information is categorised under the headings of organisations, halls for hire, local speakers, tutors and sports clubs, residential care homes, home help, health and well-being and debt advice.

Residents can see us face to face at the Solihull Connect walk-in centres. Staff handle enquiries and deal with routine requests such as applying for a Blue Badge and paying bills.

The offices are accessible for people with mobility impairment. Hearing loops and other facilities are available on request.

Accessible complaints

SMBC's Complaints Policy and procedures are aligned with statutory requirements, such as the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Codes.

Local Government &
Social Care
OMBUDSMAN

Our ethos is to handle complaints impartially, objectively and professionally. We treat customers the way we would wish to be treated. Our approach is to support people who need help to complain. We accept complaints via advocates, such as family members and carers, and deal with issues appropriately and sensitively, for example when dealing with cases involving children, vulnerable adults and people who need to be safeguarded.

The 'Our voice, Our services' initiative support children and young people to complain.

Our dedicated teams handle complaints about specific services such as:

- Access to information
- Adult Social Care services
- Children's Services
- Schools
- Housing
- Customer Services

In 2024/25 the Council received 741 complaints and 921 compliments. The majority of complaints were resolved and closed at stage 1, 14% (103) progressed to stage 2 and 12% (76) were escalated to stage 3. 64% of complaints were received digitally, 34% by telephone and the rest in person.

We monitor and analyse complaints to help improve services and aid learning. For example, we introduced woodchip to help absorb excess ground water so that people visiting cemeteries are protected after heavy rainfall.

Solihull as an inclusive place to live, work, study and visit

Delivering good services for children

SMBC's Children's Services were judged as 'Good' in the OFSTED inspection in October 2025. Inspectors noted that children in Solihull benefit from early help and a much-strengthened approach to give children help at the right time and in the right way. Strong multi-agency work, safeguarding, clear management oversight, strong partner involvement and well applied thresholds ensure proportionate decisions that reflect a child's individual circumstances. OFSTED concluded that SMBC clearly understands the needs of children and provides timely, appropriate and proportionate support.

Reducing child poverty

Through the government's Household Support Fund SMBC provides food support during the Christmas term to children who receive free school meals. Families who meet the means tested criteria receive £50 supermarket e-gift cards. We use our records to contact parents and target known families who could qualify. Families can choose to use the money to buy food, personal hygiene, cleaning products and other household essentials.

The Children with Disabilities Team supports children aged up to 18 who have learning, physical or sensory disabilities, chronic and life threatening or life limiting conditions. The purpose is to ensure that children get the necessary social care support. The Team also works closely with our Occupational Therapy Team to explore options for equipment and home adaptations for children to remain independent for as long as possible.

Protecting Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children

We work with children who come to Solihull as asylum seekers to help plan their education and living needs, resolve their immigration status and support them towards independence. The Solihull and Birmingham Children in Care organisations have developed work resources about local and national services and support.

Where appropriate, we refer children to Coram Voice, an organisation that champions children's rights and works to improve lives of children in care, care leavers and others who face difficult circumstances.

An example of a child we supported includes an asylum seeker who was a year 5 student. The student did not speak English and was unable to integrate and learn. We worked with a community-based organisation who provided the child with one-to-one support.

Championing early child development and healthy lives

SMBC's Healthy Babies Programme 2025-28 aims to reduce infant deaths, increase the proportion of babies born with a healthy weight and improve outcomes for vulnerable babies and their families. The programme helps to reduce risks for babies who are



vulnerable and are likely to be in low-income families and disadvantaged communities. We work to improve the experience and outcomes for ethnic minority families and support the development of positive and trusting connections. We have upskilled colleagues so that they can assess risks for families with complex needs and strengthen referral pathways between different services such as mental health and addictions during pregnancy and in early parenthood.

We are proud of the work we do to encourage children and young people to use our libraries at The Core in Solihull town centre and at other venues across Solihull. Events and activities for early years and children include Rhymetime that provide fun through rhymes, actions and musical instruments. We aim to develop early reading skills. Meet and play sessions at the Core Library provide opportunities for young families to meet and connect.



Our partnership work with Solihull Special Care Dental Service, Brilliant Brushers, supports over 120 3–5-year-olds with a supervised toothbrushing programme that aims to reduce tooth decay, a leading cause of school absence for 5–9-year-olds. Tooth decay causes pain, infection, hospitalisations and difficulties with eating and sleeping,) making it difficult for a child to concentrate at school. It can impact attainment, confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Making holidays happier

We continue to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which runs during school holidays in February, Easter, Summer, October & December each year. Over 50 activities are delivered by 35 providers, including arts and crafts, cooking and sports. Nutritious meals are provided to children who receive free school meals. Activities enable children to learn new skills and become more independent whilst having fun.

Reasonable adjustments are made for children with special educational needs (SEND) to ensure inclusion. Attendance from children with SEND needs has increased each year since 2021. Compared to our target of 29%, attendance levels of 39% and 37% were achieved respectively in the Summer and October 2025 sessions. 224 children attended specialist SEND sessions in Summer HAF 2025. Funding for additional staff and equipment is in place to meet the needs of children with special needs. £72,000 was spent in 2025 for this purpose. Family members can join sessions and get a meal if they meet the necessary criteria. Funding is available for the programme to continue in 2026 – 2029.

Supporting young adults

A new sixth-form college, The Grove, supports learners with additional needs when they leave school. It provides education opportunities for SEND children and those with disabilities. The newly refurbished building offers modern facilities, including common rooms, quiet places and outdoor areas.

Our work with younger adults continues to flourish. There are four youth groups, a youth work programme and the Young Opportunities Solihull initiative that brings together the

voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to support young people with funding, network and training.

Youth activities during the October half-term were funded by the Violence Reduction Partnership and included work in partnership with the Police to prevent and reduce anti-social behaviour. Youth initiatives are achieving better outcomes for young people, such as reducing the number of children prevented from leaving schools and supporting young adults to get jobs.

We gathered views of young people and local residents to find out about their needs. Youth services are delivered through a range of community and voluntary providers who collectively deliver our aspirations for young people in Solihull to have a positive transition into adulthood.

We marked the Youth Work Week in November and launched the Youth Voice Network, a work experience programme for teenagers. SMBC's Skills for Success workshops help young people to write CVs, seek job and apprenticeship opportunities and provide one to one advice on making applications.

Community parenting for care experienced young adults

Community Parents support young adults who have care experience. We deliver our corporate parenting responsibilities in partnership with communities and businesses to deliver meaningful outcomes for young people.

The Children's and Public Health Directorates work together to support children leaving care. We match care leavers with families and potential employers. The Matchmyproject.com, our digital interface with providers and the community, has been supported by our Social Value Team to obtain laptops, starter packages, education packs and forged stronger links with our local community and beyond.

We marked the Care Leavers Month by launching the Care Leavers Hub that has been set up by our Children's Services staff and community parents. The dedicated Hub provides safer and secure settings where they can network with others, enjoy refreshments and use cooking and laundry facilities. Service users access regular drop-in sessions to support their wellbeing, employment and life choices at an important stage in their lives.

In June, ten of our care experienced young people showcased their sporting skills in a football tournament in which 24 different teams took part. They played at the Molineux, home ground of a local football team Wolverhampton Wanderers, and were proud to represent their hometown in a national competition and valued the experience and the atmosphere of playing in a major stadium. The initiative was funded by sponsors from local businesses and community groups.

The West Midlands Employer Alliance's initiative enabled 20 care experienced young adults to undertake work experience with local employers such as Severn Trent Water, Kier Construction and the NEC Group. We recognise that young, care experienced adults are four times more likely not to be in employment, education or training (NEET).



We are enormously proud that four of Solihull's young care leavers aged 18-25, had the opportunity to join Birmingham Airport on work experience. They enjoyed workshops designed to equip them with transferrable, professional skills needed for successful careers. Over the two weeks at the airport, they joined various departments and gained an insight into jobs in the aviation industry. They had a guided tour of an Airbus A-380, a session with the airport's Air Traffic Control team and a workshop on preparing CVs. The scheme also provided opportunities for some participants to spend more time with specific departments of particular interest and to be considered for apprenticeships. Following the successful completion of the programme, one individual has now secured a permanent position in the airport's Customer Experience team.

Working with disadvantaged families



Our four Family Hubs provide safe places where children, young people and families can get help and support on issues such as health and wellbeing and participate in activities to make friends and create lasting relationships. Examples of activities include health visitor and midwife clinics, toddler sessions, emotional and practical support for women, and money management advice sessions. The 4 Family Hubs are

supplemented by an Outreach Centre in Shirley.

Solihull residents have supported us to work closely with external partners to deliver a more comprehensive offer, such as offering sports and healthy cooking at the Family Hubs.

We also launched a new Family Helpline to support families and people working with parents and children. A team of experts are on hand to provide advice on topics such as parenting guidance, child development, school attendance and child behaviour issues. This aims to deal with issues early on so that they can be dealt with quickly before they escalate.

Families living in areas of higher deprivation are supported to overcome barriers to school engagement. We organised cultural events such as the Mid-Autumn Festival to build community connections and encourage families to engage with schools. Partnerships with organisations provided activities like drama sessions and sports projects, which strengthened community ties and supported integration. These efforts helped to prevent non-attendance and improved engagement with education.

Working with adoption and foster families

We marked the National Adoption Week to celebrate the life-changing impact adoption can have on children and families. We aim to increase the number of adopters and reduce wait

times for children to become part of families. Our fostering team marked the annual Foster Care Fortnight by celebrating the amazing contribution made by foster carers, who provide safe and loving homes to Solihull children. Both new and long serving carers were invited to an event at the Civic Suite, to mark Britain's biggest annual fostering awareness campaign. The event was hosted by the Mayor of Solihull and provided an opportunity for carers to meet and share their experiences.

We value the enormous responsibilities undertaken by our Foster Carers and Foster Families. To show our appreciation, we held a dedicated Christmas party where families and children get together. For some children, the event could have been their first ever Christmas party.

The Unite Trade Union donated £500 to help support groups who help foster care families, who have benefited from a range of outdoor games for our annual foster carers picnic.

Supporting minority communities

We worked with communities where vaccine uptake, such as flu jabs, was low, including amongst Black African, Black Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and newly arrived groups such as Hong Kong British National Oversees and Ukrainian refugees. To understand concerns, and help to build trust, we held focus groups in places of worship and community centres, delivered online sessions for those unable to attend in person, and attended cultural events like Eid and Vaisakhi Mela. Faith and cultural leaders were recruited to act as "vaccine champions," and tailored resources were created based on feedback from these sessions.

We supported Ukrainian refugees and Hong Kong British National Oversees residents to access mental health services and reduce isolation. Two wellbeing programmes were delivered in community venues with interpreter support to ensure cultural sensitivity. We worked closely with partners such as Entraide and Refugee Action to provide one-to-one casework and link individuals to family hubs and wider community services. Feedback showed improved emotional wellbeing and confidence, with some participants moving into volunteering and education.

Under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, we supported families moving from sponsorship to independent living. This included practical help such as financial assistance for deposits and rent top-ups, alongside advice to prevent homelessness.

Protecting people from harm

We continue to mark the campaign '16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence'. The 2025 event was launched by the Mayor and Leader of the Council and supported by our Community Safety Team in a campaign to protect women from harm. The event brought together the Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid, staff from across the Council and other partner organisations. A range of other events took place over the two weeks, including displays in Solihull town centre and in Chelmsley Wood to spread the message that nobody should suffer in silence. Events included the Solihull Women's Stride Squad Glow Walk and a



film show arranged by the Solihull Soroptimists, a floral display at the gates of a popular park and an exhibition at St Alphege Church.

Solihull stands together against domestic abuse.

An example is a woman who was experiencing domestic abuse who did not speak English, felt isolated and did not know how to get help and support. A direct

referral to Women's Aid ensured that the female could get safe and confidential advice.

SMBC's Community Safety Team aims to make Solihull a safer, stronger, and more supportive place to live. The service brings organisations together to prevent and tackle crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour. Our aim is to prevent and engage early to resolve problems before they escalate, protect and support victims, and ensure that people responsible for harmful behaviour are held to account. We work with communities to understand ongoing and emerging safety concerns and identify areas and groups with increased risk from harm. We lead initiatives designed to build trust, increase confidence, and encourage reporting, especially in relation to hidden or under-reported crimes such as domestic abuse and hate crime. We ensure that vulnerable individuals feel seen, heard, and supported, while strengthening the wider community's ability to recognise and respond to harm. An example is the implementation of a Public Space Order in a specific location to reduce anti-social behaviour and create greater community safety.

Activities have focused on awareness-raising campaigns delivered in partnership with specialist organisations, community engagement sessions to improve understanding of rights, support pathways, and reporting mechanisms and the creation of safe spaces at key borough events, offering confidential support and signposting for those affected by abuse or discrimination.

Maximising employment and skills for residents

The Employment and Skills Team, part of our Public Health Directorate, brings together job seekers, students, employers, schools, and colleges to maximise opportunities for access to jobs and further education and training.

Under the Connect to Work initiative, we support people with disabilities and health conditions, those from disadvantaged groups, and 18-21 years olds to access work and training. 90% of all participants were economically inactive. Of the group, 57% were young people aged under 24. Within that younger group, 25% were economically inactive, and 56% lived in areas of high deprivation in three north wards of Chelmsley Wood: Kingshurst, Fordbridge and Smiths Wood.

We work with local employers on supported internships coupled with structured study programmes with the ultimate aim to achieve paid employment. Young people aged 16-24 are equipped with Education, Health and Care plans (EHCP) and supported to get the skills they need for paid work.

The Supported Employment Scheme enables residents with learning disabilities, autism or other disabilities to get dedicated help to enter the job market. We work closely with Experts by Experience, Colebridge Trust and Ideal for All to help engage people to enhance their career options.

Over 1000 young people, parents and carers attended the Apprenticeship Pathways Show in October 2025 where they had the chance to speak with 40 employers and training providers, including HSBC Bank, Balfour Beatty, VINCI, British Airways, University College Birmingham, Solihull Moors Foundation, Halfords, Warwickshire Cricket Foundation and our own staff.

Supporting healthier lives

We have a long tradition of encouraging greener travel and offer training to new cyclists and people who want to refresh their cycling skills. Sessions for adults take place at the Tudor Grange Park. Training includes how to carry out safety checks of bicycles and safety on the road. Our 'taster' session, dedicated for our newer communities encouraged Hong Kongers to enjoy the social, physical and mental health benefits of cycling.

The Council loans to schools specially designed helmets for children with thick hair, long plaits and those who wear top knots.

The 'Try before you bike' scheme offers a flexible approach to hiring or buying a bike for people who want to try cycling without the initial cost of purchasing a new bike and accessories. Our offer includes insurance, bike lock, lights and a helmet. Residents can opt out and return the bike or go on to purchase it if they are enjoying cycling – the money paid during the hire period is taken off the purchase price.



The Solihull Lifestyle Service is built on the principle that small, practical changes, supported by the right encouragement, can lead to big improvements in health and wellbeing. By focusing on education, peer support, and confidence-building, the service empowers people to take charge of their health and sustain positive changes long after the sessions end. The service plays a vital role in supporting residents across the borough to live healthier, happier lives. Over the past year, we have worked with more than 450 people experiencing mental health challenges, long-term conditions, or social isolation, helping them to make sustainable lifestyle changes and reconnect with their communities. A key part of the service's success has been the delivery of group programmes that make healthy living accessible, social, and practical. The sessions help people learn together, share experiences, and build confidence in a supportive environment.

Cooking on a Budget has been one of the most popular initiatives. These friendly, hands-on sessions teach participants how to prepare healthy, affordable meals, reduce food waste,

and cook with confidence. Many people who joined the group reported saving money on food, improving their diet, and gaining new friendships through shared cooking experiences.

The Pre-diabetes Support Group helps individuals understand their medical risks and take early action to prevent Type 2 diabetes. Through a mix of education, peer discussion, and goal setting, participants learn about healthy eating, physical activity, and weight management. Several people have achieved measurable improvements in their health, including reduced blood sugar levels and weight loss, as well as increased motivation and energy. Beyond physical health, the Lifestyle Service recognises the strong link between wellbeing and social connection. Many clients come to the service feeling isolated, anxious, or lacking in confidence. Through group activities, one-to-one coaching, and connections to community opportunities, participants rebuild social networks and regain a sense of belonging. Participants reported improved confidence and mood as well as social connection following involvement. Group work was delivered in accessible community settings, reaching people who might not otherwise engage with health services.

Rekindling memories

Our Adult Social Care Team has introduced new experiences and rekindling memories for people through technology. Virtual reality is offering our Day Care residents new experiences like deep sea diving or exploring another country. The technology is supporting people who have dementia, are older or have and learning disabilities, through entertainment and interactive games and fitness activities.

Our Community Development Team hosted the Connecting Communities Dementia event. The purpose was to bring together other dementia-friendly organisations so that expertise and practices could be shared and greater collaboration can be achieved. The event enabled organisations to showcase their work and wealth of knowledge.

Our staff support residents to improve their lives and remain independent through use of technology such as smartwatches and smart speakers. Technology can help people to take medication at the right time, attend virtual medical appointments and do daily tasks such as switching on lights and television, operating blinds and curtains and get help in an emergency.

Celebrating diverse communities

We mark events that celebrate Solihull's diversity. Some events are arranged by the Council, others by external agents. Events arranged include the Refugee Week, Chinese New Year, Eid, South Asian Heritage Month, Black History Month, Diwali and Christmas.

Our library service produces reading materials and exhibitions, including working with the Solihull and Birmingham Caribbean Family History Group to host a two month-long exhibition as part of Black History Month.

Solihull's first ever Pride Event was held in September and attracted hundreds of people over a weekend to join in an organised walk, enjoy music, food and drink.



Newer communities were welcomed and their contributions were marked at the Refugee Week event. We continue to support cultural markets in central Solihull where groups can showcase cultural traditions, food, handicrafts and music.

In November, Solihull Music took 21 young people aged 7–20, many with additional and/or complex needs, to perform at the Music for Youth Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, London. Such events can help children and young people to overcome significant personal barriers and help them to navigate the social care system and reduce isolation. Some of our young people carry the responsibility of caring for others.

We marked the Armed Forces Week with developing a Military History Trail covering 11 sites in Solihull town centre which hold rich histories of military past.

The 80th anniversary of VE Day in May 2025 was marked with a series of events for people to come together to celebrate, reflect and reaffirm the commitment to world peace.

During the Mental Health Awareness Week, we embraced the theme of ‘community’ and worked with organisations to showcase their work, including a local organisation, ‘Re Imagine Me’, that works with people living with dual diagnosis of addiction and mental health issues. Participants were shown a mini documentary of people sharing their personal experiences and journeys, from diagnosis to recovery through compassion, connection, and peer support.

Another group that is proving to be popular is the Men Walking and Talking. The group supports equality by creating a safe, stigma-free space for men to connect, share experiences, and access peer support. It helps challenge traditional gender norms that discourage men from seeking help, and promotes early intervention, wellbeing, and social inclusion.

Building Community Understanding and Enrichment

The Council has worked with partners across the public, faith, community and business sectors to establish a new Community and Faith Leadership Group, in direct response to growing local and national community tensions. This group has now established a shared vision: “We strive to foster a cohesive, trusting community where people of all backgrounds feel safe, connected and a sense of belonging, enabled to shape a stronger future together” and activity has started, which can help realise this vision.

The **Invictus Games 2027** will be held in Birmingham, from 10th to 17th July 2027 primarily at the NEC in Solihull. The eighth iteration of this event, which supports the recovery of wounded, injured and sick service personal and will feature 550 competitors from over 25 nations. The event focuses on showcasing the resilience of veterans and providing a platform for rehabilitation and community connection.



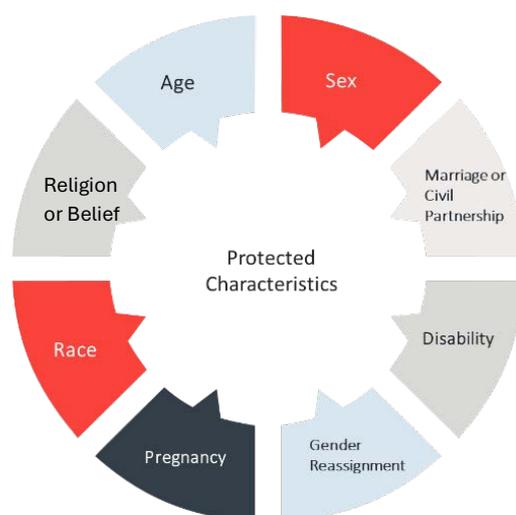
Making homes healthy

Our Making homes healthy scheme is about delivering energy efficient homes that are more comfortable, prevent damp and mould, and improve the indoor air quality. The initiative, funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority, is being delivered in partnership with Act on Energy. We are focussing on the Chelmsley Wood area under the initiative 'Your Future Chelmsley Wood'. Residents are benefiting from updated Energy Performance Certificates for homes with an EPC rating of D or below, a free home retrofit assessment and indoor air quality measurement. The retrofit assessment could lead to energy upgrades such as insulation, solar panels and heat pumps.

Assessing the equality impact

We continue to undertake Fair Treatment Assessments - FTA's (which is the Council's local equivalent to the more nationally known Equality Impact Assessments) to inform our decision-making process in meeting our duty under the Equality Act 2010. These assessments provide a comprehensive way of ensuring that services are inclusive and that they can be accessed and used by all sections of the community.

The Equality Act 2010 covers nine protected characteristics which are considered in FTAs.



In addition to the characteristics covered above, FTAs also consider:

- Care Experienced People- introduced from a decision by the Full Council in July 2024
- Carers
- Health Inequalities
- Human rights
- Military status
- Safeguarding arrangement
- Socio Economic

We set out below some examples of FTA's completed against service changes or new services:

- Adaptive street lighting
- Advocacy services
- Better care at home
- Carers support services.
- Dementia support service
- Home Improvement Agency
- Public place protection order
- Statement of community involvement
- Supported housing for children.

All reports presented to councillors for decision include a section on the consideration of equality implications, ensuring that proposed policies and decisions are informed by their potential impact on different communities or protected groups.

How we will check progress

To ensure the Council's work on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is delivered effectively, the Council has a clear framework below that explains how the Council will check and measure progress. It shows who is involved and how often updates will be made.

1. CLT, Wider CLT and Assistant Directors (AD) Groups

These senior leadership groups will check progress every three months. They look at what is going well, what needs more work and what actions are required. They make sure EDI stays a priority across the whole Council.

2. Council Plan

Progress will also be checked every three months through the Council Plan. This helps us see how EDI work links to the Council's bigger goals. It makes sure equality and inclusion are part of the Council's overall performance.

3. Directorates

Each directorate will report on its own progress every three months. They will explain what has been done, what is working well and any challenges. These updates help the Council see where extra support or changes are needed.



4. Directorate EDI Leads Meetings

EDI Leads from each directorate meet every two months.

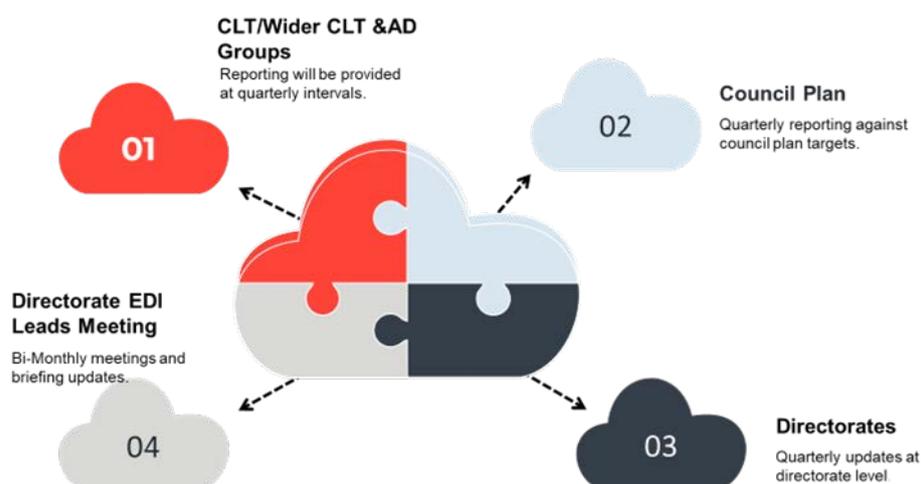
They share updates, learning and any concerns.

These meetings help everyone stay on track and work in the same way.

What this framework does

The framework helps the Council to:

- check progress regularly
- share information across teams
- fix problems early
- keep equality, diversity and inclusion at the centre of its work



The framework makes sure the Council is open, organised and consistent in how it delivers on its equality commitments.

The Council recognises that we are on a journey to further advance equality, diversity and inclusion in the organisation.

We welcome any feedback that will be considered as we review progress on the EDI strategy.

For contact, please email: equalities@solihull.gov.uk

