

Our commitment to equality and inclusion

Here at SCC, we pride ourselves with being an exemplar employer, pioneering and modelling best practice in the public sector.

Equality and inclusion is one of our corporate priorities, and we have a lot of work and activity focused in this area. It is also a key part of our core values, **We Aspire** – the first ‘e’ stands for equality. Every member of staff is expected to have at least one objective linked to equality in their annual performance plan.

Here is a flavour of some of the work we are doing, across various protected characteristics:



Race

- We have a comprehensive Race Equality Action Plan. 66% of our 45 actions on it are rated green, which means they are complete or on track.
- We have a Black & Asian staff network, who have informed all of our race equality work.
- Race equality e-learning is mandatory for all our staff.
- We are putting in place a reverse mentoring scheme, to enable some of our most senior leaders to have a better understanding in terms of race equality.
- Our staff data shows that we have a higher proportion of Black people in our staff than in the Suffolk population, and that both Black and Asian people are more than represented at our most senior levels. 89% of our staff have disclosed their ethnicity on the HR system, which indicates a high level of confidence in this area.
- We put on a number of events and awareness sessions throughout the year: for example, over 600 of our staff attended events to mark Black History Month in October.
- We are in the process of signing up to [UNISON's regional Anti-Racism Charter](#).

Sex, and pregnancy & maternity (two linked characteristics)

- Each year, we publish a Gender Pay Gap Action Plan, with wide-ranging activities to reduce our gap, support women and remove any barriers to women achieving senior roles. Our gender pay gap has reduced incrementally in the 5 years we have been reporting. Two thirds of our most senior roles are held by women, and our Chief Executive is a woman.
- We have a women's staff network, and another network for the Fire Service, called Suffolk Women in Fire Together.
- We are part of the Menopause Friendly Workplace scheme and have Menopause Guidance, regularly host menopause cafes, and are investing in training for managers on the menopause.
- We have a range of enhanced benefits and support for our working parents, including: enhanced maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental pay; extra fully paid leave for parents of premature babies; an offer of coaching support upon the return to work; guidance and toolkits to support returning parents; guidance to support breast- or chest-feeding



parents; and a Parents Together buddy scheme. These are day 1 entitlements for every employee.

- We have a Carers Policy, offering a range of support and guidance, and an entitlement to an extra week of fully paid leave for carers. We are members of Carers UK, and are seeking to achieve national accreditation in the Carer Confident scheme.
- We have a culture where flexible working is the default. 100% of our jobs offer multiple specific types of flexible working. 44% of our staff work part-time. We have had communications campaigns to promote flexible and part-time working in senior roles. Our work in this space saw us shortlisted for 2 national awards in 2019, from Working Families and Personnel Today.
- We mark relevant occasions through the year, such as International Women's Day in March and White Ribbon Day in November.

Disability

- We have achieved Level 2 on the national Disability Confident scheme, and are finalising accreditation at Level 3, Leader status, which is the highest national status. We have a commitment to shortlist disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for a role.
- We have disability and mental health staff networks, and mental health first aiders. A new staff network is forming to support staff who are deaf or have hearing impairments.
- We have Reasonable Adjustments Guidance, a Disability Leave Policy and disability passport to help support our disabled staff.
- We have done work to remove barriers to our roles for disabled people that were created by unnecessary travel or driving requirements.
- Well-being is a core part of our values (the 'w' in We-Aspire). We offer Occupational Health assessments and support, an Employee Assistance Programme, including access to self-referral counselling, as standard to all of our staff, as needed.
- We have accessibility guidance that staff producing communications are expected to follow.
- We hold disability training events for our staff – over 200 staff attended a webinar in 2022.
- We are pulling together a disability action plan to reflect the work we are undertaking.



LGBT+ (two linked characteristics)

- We are LGBT+-inclusive, and have featured in Stonewall's Top 100 employers 5 times.
- We have guidance on Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse staff.
- We train our staff on trans inclusion, for example a webinar in 2021 that 180 staff attended.
- We encourage our staff to declare their pronouns in their email signatures, and many, including many of our most senior staff, do.
- Many of our staff choose to wear rainbow lanyards to show their support for LGBT+ people.
- Our Grievance Policy mentions that outing other people without their permission, and/or misgendering or deadnaming them deliberately or repeatedly, can be a disciplinary offence.
- We use inclusive language wherever we can; for example in our parental policies.



- We have an LGBT+ staff network, which marks occasions through the year, such as Trans Day of Visibility, Lesbian Visibility Day, Ace Awareness Week, Bi-Visibility Day, etc. We fly the rainbow (progress) flag from our main buildings each LGBT+ History Month.
- We financially support Suffolk Pride every year.

Religion & belief

- We have a Christian Fellowship, that meets to support Christians of various denominations and holds prayer meetings, carol services and other events throughout the year.
- We also have the first ever Vegan staff network in a local authority. This network has been pivotal in spearheading our climate change work and ambitions to be the greenest county.
- We mark events such as Holocaust Memorial Day every year.

Age

- We have a young adults' staff network, who offer a range of mentoring, support and awards to recognise the contribution of our younger members of staff.
- We have a commitment to shortlist for interview anybody who is a care leaver and who meets the minimum criteria for a role.
- We offer a range of apprenticeship, intern and graduate opportunities as part of Suffolk's Rising High programme. These are open to people of any age, but disproportionately benefit younger people entering the workforce.
- Our staff population peaks in the 50s age bracket, and currently goes up to age 80. We value the contribution of staff of all ages who work for us.
- We have a Flexible Retirement Policy and a competitive pensions scheme.

