

Equality Duty Information Report 01/2026

Foreword

Fairness. Equality. Understanding.

These are more than words to me – they are the principles at the heart of my political beliefs and the values that guide me as a person, as an elected councillor, and as Leader of Three Rivers District Council.

They also reflect the values of the council itself, which has at its core a proud, respectful and passionate team of individuals dedicated to serving our communities. Together, we are committed to challenging inequality, prejudice and discrimination wherever they arise. Through strong partnerships with local organisations, we work to embed these values in everything we do and in every service we provide to those who live in, work in and visit our district.

The cost-of-living crisis continues to affect so many across society. As the price of everyday essentials rises, inequality deepens for some of our residents. We know that many people in Three Rivers are struggling to make ends meet, and we remain determined to do all we can to help ease these pressures and support those most affected.

This Equality Duty Information Report highlights the key work undertaken by the council and demonstrates our progress against our Equality Objectives for 2022–26. In the pages that follow, you will find detailed examples of the actions we have taken and the impact they are making. The report also sets out our emerging vision for the new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2026–30 and the accompanying Equality Objectives for 2026–30.

Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE
Leader, Three Rivers District Council



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1. Introduction

1.1. This is the council's annual Equality Duty Information Report, setting out the achievements made in supporting equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in Three Rivers during 2025.

1.2. The report highlights key pieces of work undertaken by the council and, where relevant its partners, and sets out the future direction in the provision of fair and inclusive services.

1.3. Progress is reported against the context of the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2023-26, which contains the following objectives:

- To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training
- To improve equality and access to services for all residents
- To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities
- To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.

1.4. Details of the councils current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy can be found at: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/equality-and-diversity>

2. Legislative Framework

2.1. As a public sector organisation, the council has statutory duties governed by the Public Sector Equality Duty in the Equality Act 2010 and related regulations. Under the Act, public sector organisations with over 150 employees are required to show that they have identified and considered the impact of their activities on people with "protected characteristics".

2.2. Protected characteristics are defined in legislation as Race; Age; Sexual Orientation; Disability; Sex; Religion or Belief; Gender reassignment; Marriage and Civil Partnership; Pregnancy and Maternity. In addition to considering the needs of those with protected characteristics. The council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy references disadvantages that may arise from caring responsibilities, people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people and rough sleepers, looked after children, (ex) armed forces personnel and the councils work as a signatory to the Armed Forced Community Covenant and neurodiversity.

2.3. The Public Sector Equality Duty which requires the council to have due regard to the need to:

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

2.4. Due regard involves:

2.4.1. Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics and

2.4.2. Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups, where they are different from the needs of other people.

2.5. This general equality duty applies to the council as an employer as well as a provider and enabler of public services.

3. Equality Impact Assessments

3.1. A core element of the council's work to ensure that it meets its equalities duties is the use of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs). Where there are major changes to a service area, new policies or projects being considered, council officers and members must undertake, review and give consideration to an EIA at key scoping, planning, decision making and implementation stages.

3.2. Completed impact assessments are included with relevant Committee reports (the inclusion of a section on equalities impacts is a mandatory requirement) and published on the council's website.

3.3. EIAs are completed by the applicant for all Community Infrastructure Levy applications made to the council and reviewed by the equalities lead and the assessment panel.

3.4. EIAs are used to identify not only any negative impacts that could result from the proposals, but also where there may be opportunities to further promote equality, remove barriers to services which have or could have a differential impact on the protected groups in Three Rivers or address disadvantages which could arise from disparities of income, skill level and by virtue of where people live.

3.5. Over 2025, a new template has been developed for the core EIA, and additional EIAs produced to support decision making in casework and parking programmes.

3.6. The Connecting Three Rivers Fund, which is overseen by the Connecting Three Rivers Board now requires EIAs to be completed for any funding applications as well.

4. Equalities Sub-Committee

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

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

4.3. This year, the Equalities Sub-Committee received presentations on the topics of workforce monitoring and refugee support.

4.4. In May 2025 it was agreed for the Equalities Sub-Committee to transform into an Equality Forum. The Equality Forum will provide an opportunity for organisations, charities and community groups to collaborate and jointly develop initiatives and provides residents an opportunity to hear about the work being undertaken.

4.5. The Forum will not be decision-making body for the council; however, The

Forum can support and act as a consultee for the development of initiatives. It also allows partner organisations and places of worship, representing Three Rivers residents with protected characteristics, a place to convene and explore opportunities to work in collaboration to address challenges and barriers experienced by their communities. Additionally, all district councillors are invited to attend these meetings. The terms of reference for this Forum were agreed at a Full Council meeting held on 21 October 2025.

5. Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group

- 5.1. The Inclusion Working Group was developed in 2024. In 2025 this expanded to form the Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group.
- 5.2. This is an internal group made up of 16 officers across all council teams. The group aims to foster a thriving and inclusive work environment where officers can excel both personally and professionally. The group has undertaken work to identify the needs of the council staff communicate information relating to inclusion and wellbeing, and develop a workforce where staff feel a sense of belonging.
- 5.3. The group has been meeting quarterly, and has developed awareness raising resources, the action plan included within this report and initiatives to improve inclusion corporately and within the community.

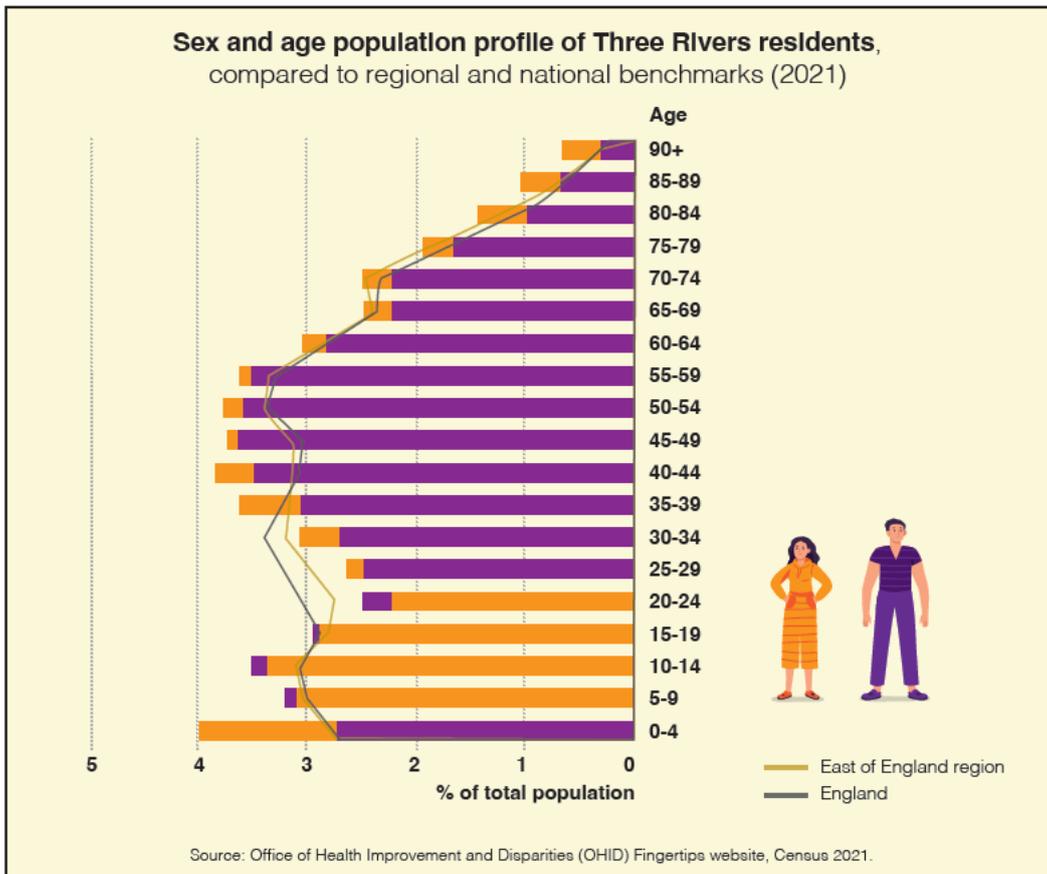
6. Values and Behaviours

- 6.1. The council has embedded Values and Behaviours which underpins equality, diversity, and inclusion. Three Rivers is committed to demonstrating and promoting the following values. We are proud. We are respectful. We are passionate. A behaviour framework has been implemented to encourage and enable staff to develop behaviours connected to the values in line with their roles. It is used in staff 1-1 meetings as well as in performance development reviews (PDR's).

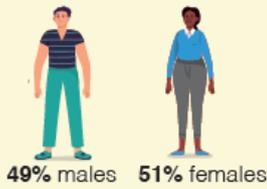
7. Disability Confident Leadership

- 7.1. The council has been successful in obtaining the Disability Confident Leadership accreditation.
- 7.2. The Disability Confident scheme is a national initiative that supports employers to recruit, retain, and develop disabled people. There are three levels, and Leader is the highest. Becoming a Disability Confident Leader demonstrates a strong, independently validated commitment to recruiting, supporting, and developing disabled people. It recognises that disability inclusion is embedded in policies, leadership, and everyday practices.

8. **Three Rivers Communities** – series of infographics based on data from 2021 Census to provide a summary of protected characteristics.



The 2021 Census estimates that the population of Three Rivers is **93,800** with



18% of the population aged **65+**

It is projected that the number of people aged 65+ in Three Rivers will increase by **7%** by mid-2043
(ONS 2018 - based population estimates)

The most common age of Three Rivers residents was



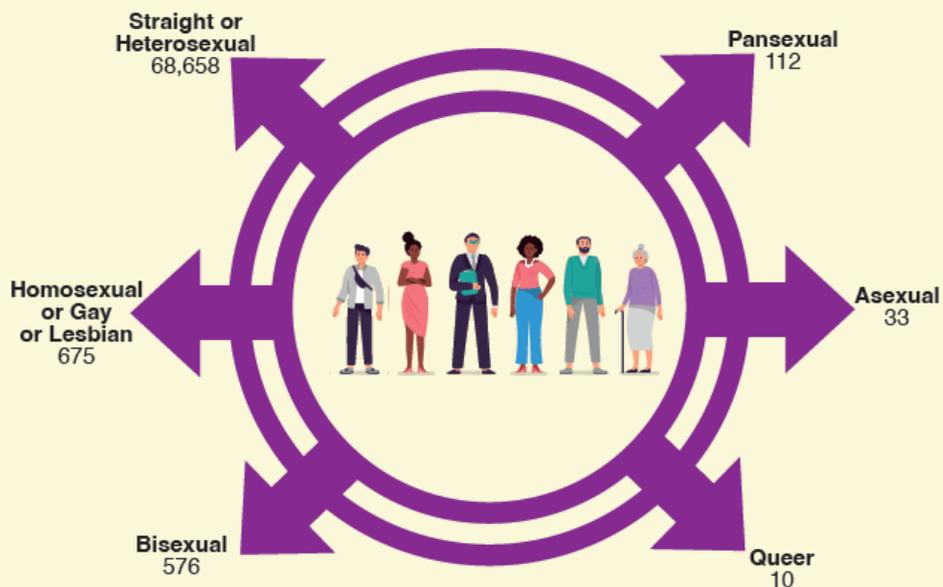
Three Rivers had a higher proportion of the population in these age brackets compared to the regional and national averages.

However,

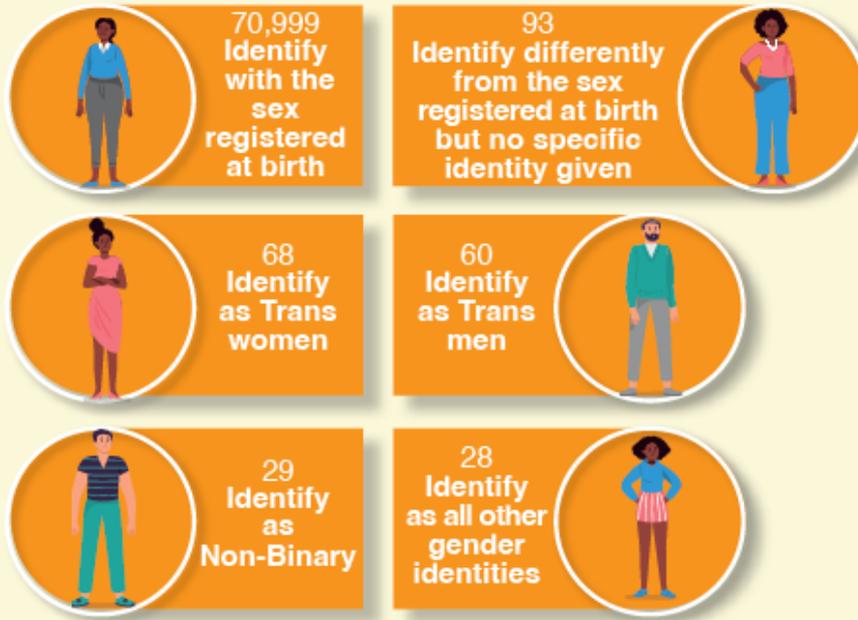


Three Rivers had a **lower proportion** of males and females **aged 20-34** than regional and national averages

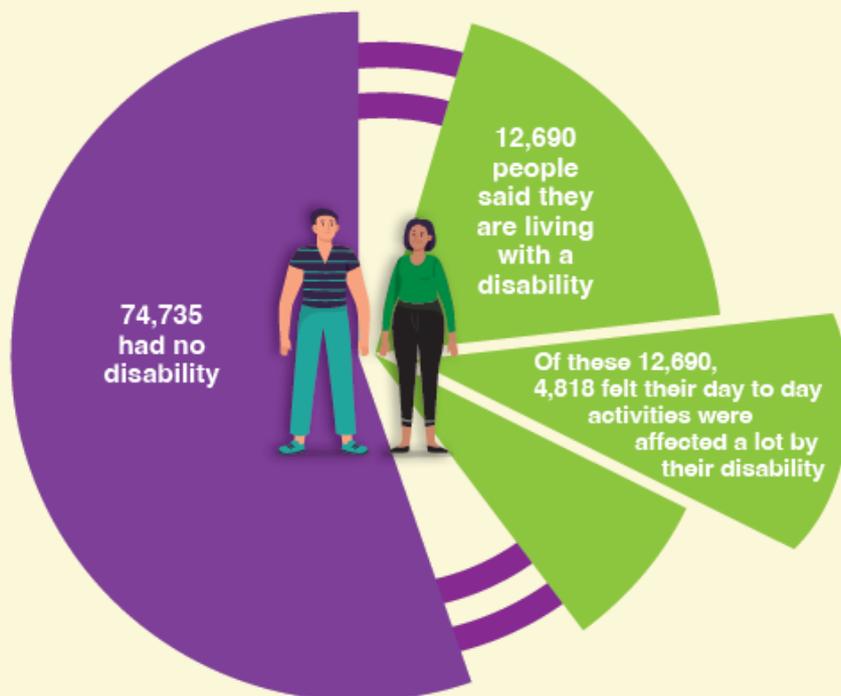
Sexual orientation profile of Three Rivers residents from the census data

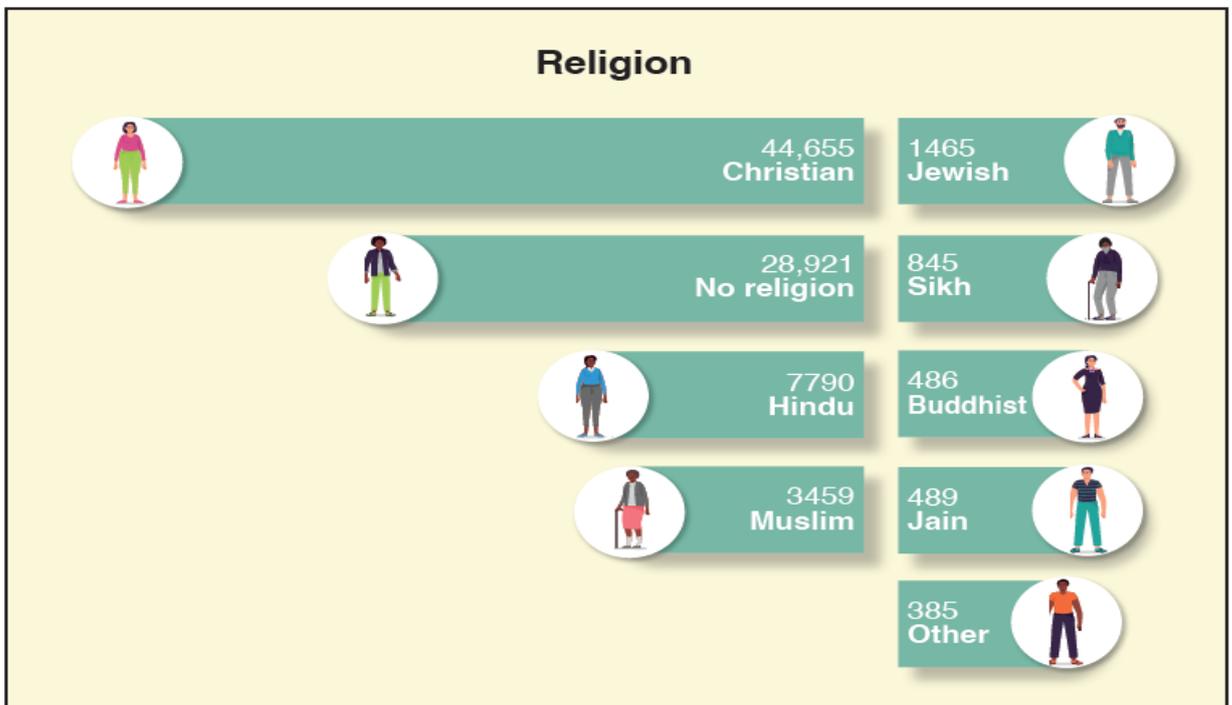
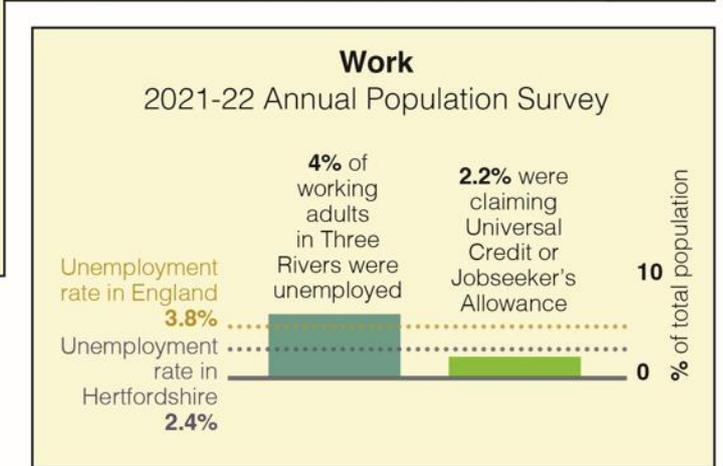
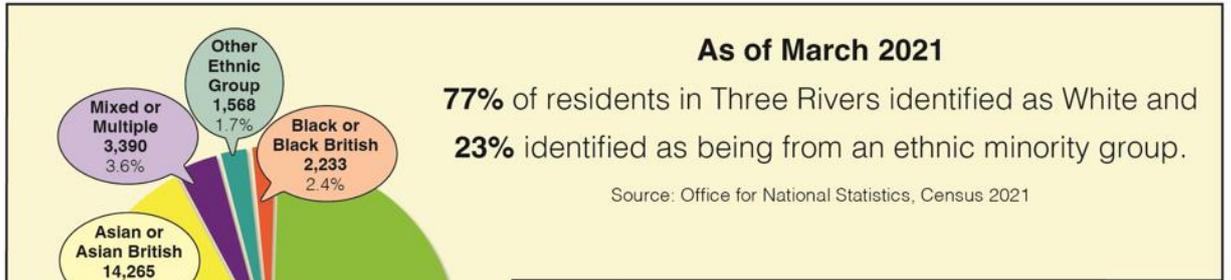


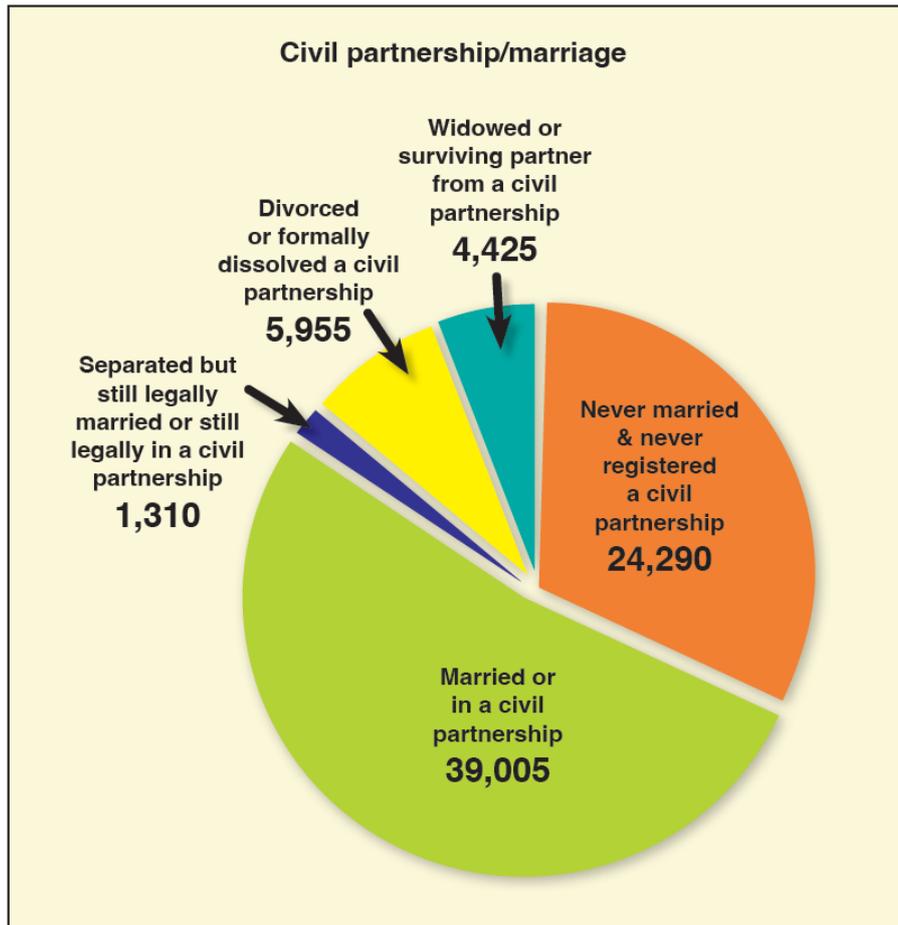
Gender Identity



Disability







Organisations providing support to Gypsy, Roma and Traveler Communities, and LGBTQ+ communities have highlighted that their communities are hidden from the census breakdown. Gender identity, sexual orientation and ethnic background is not always shared within the census.

9. Council Staff

- 9.1. As part of the requirement to publish Equality Data, the council publishes annual [Workforce Monitoring Report](#) detailing the composition of our staff compared to the background population of Three Rivers District. This includes information about age, sex, disability, faith and ethnicity and is published on the council's website. The council's [gender pay gap](#) is published separately at the end of each financial year.
- 9.2. As of 1 September 2025, the council had 339 employees. There is a low percentage of employees choosing to record their protected characteristics. Therefore, it is difficult to compare council employees with protected characteristics to the population of Three Rivers District with protected characteristics.
- 9.3. Several internal campaigns have been held over the year to encourage staff to provide this information, the number of staff providing information has increased from 23% in 2023 to 38% in 2025.

Age

9.4. The age profile for council employees on 1 September 2025 is indicated in Table 1 below: Table 2 further breaks down this data by pay grade groups.

Table 1: for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

Age Group	Total of employees	% of employees
29 and under	54 (53)	15.93 % (15.36%)
30-39	62 (57)	18.29% (16.52%)
40-49	67 (70)	19.76% (20.29%)
50-59	92 (104)	30.14% (34.04%)
60-64	50 (47)	14.75% (13.62%)
65 +	14 (14)	4.13% (4.06%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

Table 2: for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

Pay Scale / GRADE	29 and under	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-64	65 +	Grand Total
Scale 6 / and below	35 (36)	26 (24)	25 (25)	50 (58)	31 (25)	8 (9)	175 (177)
SO1 to MG1	19 (17)	27 (25)	31 (31)	30 (30)	15 (20)	6 (4)	128 (127)
MG2 to MG3	0 (0)	7 (6)	7 (9)	9 (12)	4 (2)	0 (1)	27 (30)
MG4 to MG5	0	2 (2)	4 (5)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (9)
Director/ Head of Paid Service	0	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0	0	2 (2)
TOTAL	54 (53)	62 (57)	67 (70)	92 (104)	50 (47)	14 (14)	339 (345)

9.5. The median age of council employees is between 40 and 49 years old, with most employees aged between 50-59. This is in line with the working age demographic of the District, with the highest number of working age adults being between 40-55 in the 2021 census. Over 46% of the council's workforce is over the age of 50 presenting succession planning challenges for the council but also opportunities to increase diversity.

9.6. A range of initiatives have been put in place to increase the number of young people coming to work in the council. Examples of these include provision of work experience placements and the continuation of the Customer Service Centre Academy.

Gender

9.7. The council's gender profile on 1 September 2025 is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: *for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets*

SEX	Total no of employees	% of employees
Female	145 (154)	42.77% (44.63%)
Male	194 (191)	57.23% (55.37%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

Table 3a breaks this down into pay grading.

Table 3a: Percentage of Female Workforce by Grade
for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

GRADE	Broad Description	Total no of female employees	% of female employees
Scale 6 / Band 5 and below	Most front-line jobs	49 (54)	33.79% (35.06%)
SO1 to MG1	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors/ technical specialist	79 (81)	54.48% (54.48%)
MG2 - MG3	Professionals grades/managers/ Service Heads	10 (11)	6.90% (7.14%)
MG4 -MG5	Associate Directors/Service Heads	5 (6)	3.45% (3.90%)
Director / Head of Paid Service	Director / Chief Executive	2 (2)	1.38% (1.30%)
Total		145 (154)	100%

9.8. 42.8% of the council's work force is female (compared to a 51% female population in Three Rivers as a District in the 2021 census), a small increase from the previous year. It is notable that whilst female staff are employed in 47.2% of the council's most senior posts they are significantly under-represented in lower grade roles where male employees are disproportionately high in number at 57.2% of the workforce.

9.9. The council uses the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure equality of pay between sexes.

Disability

9.10. A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on ability to perform normal day-to-day activities. "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial and the effect of the impairment will have lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months.

9.11. The statistics on council employees declaring that they have a disability at 1 September 2025 are shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

DISABILITY	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Yes	9 (10)	2.65% (2.90%)
No	106 (114)	31.27% (33.04%)
Not Stated	224 (221)	66.08% (64.06%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

9.12. The actual figure for 2024-25 is 2.65%. It is worth noting that many employees have not stated if they are disabled or not (224 out of 339 employees). If you strip out the not stated employees and just look at the Yes and No respondents, then 7.82% of employees declared themselves as disabled. This is compared against a population figure of 13.53% of the 2021 census population having a long-term illness or disability.

Gender reassignment

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

Marriage and Civil Partnership

9.14. The marital status of council employees at 1 September 2025:

Table 5 for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

Marital Status	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Married	66 (73)	19.47% (21.16%)
Divorced	5 (5)	1.47% (1.45%)
Single	42 (43)	12.39% (12.46%)
Civil Partnership	0(0)	0.00% (0.00%)
Widowed	1 (1)	0.29% (0.29%)
Separated	4 (5)	1.18% (1.45%)
Not Stated	221 (218)	65.19% (63.19%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

Race/Ethnic Minority (REM) background

9.15. The ethnic composition of council employees at 1 September 2025:

Table 6: for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

Ethnic Group	No of employees	% of employees
White: British	99 (104)	29.20% (30.14%)

White: Irish	1 (1)	0.29% (0.29%)
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
White: Roma	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
White: Other	11 (12)	3.24% (3.48%)
Mixed Ethnic group	5 (5)	1.47% (1.45%)
Asian: Indian	6 (7)	1.77% (2.03%)
Asian: Other	1 (0)	0.29% (0.00%)
Black: African	1 (2)	0.29% (0.58%)
Black: Caribbean	2 (2)	0.59% (0.58%)
Black: Other black	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
Other Ethnic Group	2 (2)	0.59% (0.58%)
No Data Held	211 (210)	62.24 (60.87%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

Table 6a breaks down the number of staff declaring they are of Racial or Ethnic Minority (REM) heritage: *for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets*

REM / NON-REM	No of employees	% of employees
REM	17 (18)	5.01% (5.22%)
NON-REM	111 (117)	32.74% (33.91%)
No Data Held	211 (210)	62.24 (60.87%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

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

Table 6b: *for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets*

Pay Scale / Grade	Broad Description	Total no of employees	No of REM	% of REM
Scale 6 and below	Most front-line jobs	175 (177)	6 (6)	35.29% (33.33%)
SO1 to MG1	Senior officers, team leaders, supervisors/ technical specialist	128 (127)	8 (8)	47.06% (44.44%)
MG2 - MG3	Professionals grades/managers/Service Heads	27 (30)	2 (3)	11.76% (16.66%)
MG4, MG5	Associate Directors/Service Heads	7 (9)	0 (0)	0.00% (0.00%)
Director/ Head of Paid Service	Chief Executive/Director	2 (2)	1 (1)	5.88% (5.55%)
Total		339	17	100.00%

		(345)	(18)
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9.16. The total number of employees declaring they are from a REM background for 2024-2025 was 17 or 5.01% of the workforce. However, 13.29% of Council staff did not report their ethnicity. 23% of people living in Three Rivers identified as being from an ethnic minority group in the 2021 census.

Religion

9.17. The religious beliefs of Council Employees at 1 September 2025:

Table 7: for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

Religion	Total no of Employees	% of employees
Christian	59 (67)	17.40% (19.42%)
Hindu	5 (5)	1.47% (1.45%)
Jewish	3 (3)	0.88% (0.87%)
Other	2 (1)	0.58 (0.30%)
Muslim	2 (1)	0.59% (0.29%)
Sikh	1 (1)	0.29% (0.29%)
No Religion	52 (51)	15.34% (14.78%)
Not Stated	215 (215)	61.95% (62.32%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

9.18. In the 2021 census 63.5% of the district population stated they follow a religion, but only 21.21% of council employees follow a religion. However, 61.95% of staff did not provide this information in the equality monitoring form.

Sexual Orientation

9.19. The breakdown of staff sexual orientation is shown in Table 8:

Table 8: for comparison 2024 figures are in brackets

Sexual Orientation	Total no of employees	% of employees
Bisexual	4 (6)	1.18% (1.74%)
Gay or Lesbian	0 (0)	0.00% (0.30%)
Heterosexual	109 (113)	32.15% (32.75%)
Not stated	217 (216)	64.01% (62.61%)
Prefer not to say	9 (10)	2.65% (2.90%)
Total	339 (345)	100.00%

9.20. The breakdown of staff sexual orientation is shown in Table 8. It is noted that most employees (64.01%) have not completed this section in the equality monitoring form.

9.21. The current percentage of LGBTQ+ staff at 1.18% is below the district Census percentage of 1.49%. However, the LGBTQ+ community has been identified as a hidden community. Work on embedding the Inclusion and Wellbeing Working

Group and Values & Behaviours within the council may encourage staff to disclose their sexual orientation.

Pregnancy and Maternity

9.22. During 2024-25, six female members of staff took maternity leave (seven in 2023/24).

10. Training

10.1. All staff are required to complete an equality and diversity on-line training module. Compliance rates are reported to the Corporate Management Team.

10.2. Equalities training for Members is also provided via the online training module with additional training on specific topics promoted regularly.

10.3. Disability Awareness training was held for council staff, which received good attendance and positive feedback.

10.4. Officers are in the process of building a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion e-learning module, and this will be reviewed by the Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group prior to finalisation.

11. Equality Objectives

11.1. This section identifies service provisions, projects and improvements targeted for those with protected characteristics as well as for those who may find it difficult to access services by virtue of where they live, a lack of certain skills or low income.

11.2. The actions listed on the following tables demonstrate the work the council is doing to meet the Equality Objectives listed in Section 1. Some of the projects, services or initiatives address a range of equalities issues and often relate to intersectionality (multiple protected characteristics).

11.3. These actions and updates have been summarised on the following tables:

To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training

Action	Service Area	Outcomes to achieve	Update
Develop and promote integration of the Inclusion Working Group across the council.	Strategy & Partnerships	Dissemination of EDI related workstreams throughout the council. All council involvement in objective delivery Delivery of initiatives for awareness days delivered by the Group.	The Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group aims to improve the inclusivity and diversity of Three Rivers District Council in order to build upon the “Values and Behaviours” of the council – particularly the value of Respectful, address equality and equity for council staff and residents, build on the “Responsive and Responsible Leadership” strand of the Corporate Framework, and the “Belonging” theme of the Community Strategy. Additionally, the group aims to play a significant role in fostering a thriving and supportive environment where it’s staff members can flourish both personally and professionally through Health and Wellbeing messaging communicated through different forms to appeal to individual needs of the workforce.
Maintain and promote Disability Confidence Leadership Accreditation	Strategy & Partnerships	Improve accessibility to work for people with disability. Improve workforce retention for people with disabilities.	Accreditation is in place until 1 March 2028. Vesting day for new Unitary Authorities in Hertfordshire is proposed as 31 st March, renewing accreditation will be at the discretion of the shadow/new unitary authority.
Training: Disabilities (general), Neurodiverse, BSL, menopause & menstruation, mental health.	Strategy & Partnerships and Customer Experience	Improve staff knowledge to support residents with the range of needs.	Disability Awareness – this awareness session took place on the 8th of October was attended by 35 members of staff. It was open to all staff to attend. Neurodiversity and Menopause training had been arranged for managers in the previous financial year, and toolkits for all staff made accessible on the intranet. BSL training - one session took place on the 30th of April 2025 Deaf Awareness and Basic BSL - it was open to all staff.

			Mental Health - Mental health first aid took place on the 1st of March 2025.
Promote work and development opportunities for younger team members in preparedness for retirement of other colleagues.	Waste & Environment	Younger members of staff are identified to “step up” to resolve single point of failure and succession planning.	One member of the frontline staff has now been promoted into the position of Waste Supervisor One member of the frontline staff has now been promoted into the position of Environment Enforcement Officer One member of staff currently being considered to role of Grounds Maintenance Manager
Work experience for apprentices from Mission Employable with the Grounds Team	Waste & Environment	To support those taking part to develop employability skills.	A number of meetings held with Mission Employable to identify suitable candidates to work alongside internal grounds maintenance staff. Mission Employables proposal was presented to CMT who supported the initiative. Discussions held as part of the Aquadrome Project, we are encouraged by our main funder (National Lottery Heritage Fund), to work with other local lottery funded projects where the primary two are Colne Valley Regional Parks project and the Woodoaks Farm project. A potential idea that the three projects could collaborate on or work in partnership for is Green Skills Team. The Green Skills Team is an initiative run by Colne Valley Regional Park where they run 6-week programmes with adults not in education or employment; and aim to equip them with experience and skills working in the natural environment. At the end of the 6 weeks, the participants are assisted with interviews or where applicable have the opportunity to interview for a position if one is available. Therefore, the high-level idea is that the Colne Valley Regional Park run one of their Green Skills Team; the team are hosted at both Woodoaks Farm and the Aquadrome and then the council, Grounds Maintenance team with

			support from us, assist with providing them with work (especially at the Aquadrome). Developing on from this, there is the potential to include an apprentice Grounds Maintenance Position to be funded within the Aquadrome Project.
Engagement with partner organisations and awareness to be incorporated into “Friends of Watersmeet” coffee morning’s.	Customer Experience	For the Friends of Watersmeet to have an increased appreciation of ethnic and disability groups. Watersmeet to invite community partnerships to attend these on an ad hoc basis.	Watersmeet Venue Manager to contact the Friends of Watersmeet in January 2026 to get their approval and suggest dates as to which coffee mornings partner organisations can attend.
Promote opportunities for work experience – engagement with local schools / those struggling to get placements for pupils.	Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group	To give pupils the opportunity to experience a work environment.	Promotion of the opportunities of work experience have been promoted to the Information, Advice and Guidance Team at Services for Young People. Opportunities for work experience placements have been explored with Mission Employable, a local charity training young people with learning disabilities in employability skills. The council has confirmed capacity to take a regular placement, once a suitable candidate is identified by the charity.
Blind recruitment trial – personal information won’t be shared with those reviewing applications to remove any unconscious bias.	HR	To remove risk of subconscious bias in recruitment	We trialled blind recruitment, where personal information as excluded from applications during the review process to help eliminate unconscious bias. This trial received some positive feedback from hiring managers; however some managers expressed concerns around the useability of the system. Therefore, we have paused this approach for now while we seek further support from the service provider.
Disability Awareness, Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation training undertaken with all licensed taxi drivers	Regulatory Services	To improve access to support and appropriate adaptations to service delivery.	All drivers and private hire operators are required on first application to take a safeguarding course and provide their pass certificate. All Hackney Carriage drivers and wheelchairs accessible drivers are also required to take the safeguarding course and additionally hold an advanced

			<p>driver qualification, NVQ or similar, that includes wheelchair user handling training.</p> <p>In person meetings with the trade will continue to occur whereby advice from relevant departments, services can deliver training / information on key topics.</p> <p>Officers will review any changes in legislation and adopt the relevant taxi policy to ensure service standards align with government guidance / expectations.</p>
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To improve equality and access to services for all residents

Action	Service Area	Outcomes to achieve	Update
Explore use of captions (live subtitles) on teams/8x8 video meetings	ICT	Explore what would be necessary changes would need to be made integrate accessibility practices.	<p>Captions and subtitles are already enabled in both 8x8 and Teams. The links below describe how to use them as desired</p> <p>8x8 https://docs.8x8.com/8x8WebHelp/8x8-work-for-desktop/Content/meeting-subtitles.htm</p> <p>Teams https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/office/use-live-captions-in-microsoft-teams-meetings-4be2d304-f675-4b57-8347-cbd000a21260</p>
Promotion of how accessible we are as a council in relation to our comms and videos.	Customer Experience	Promote our efforts through our comms channels to make services accessible for all e.g. access card at Watersmeet and accessibility tool	With the introduction of Orlo we have managed to put in a rule that will not allow us to post an image without alt text. All videos produced by the communication team have captions added. This is a manual process as using AI tools does not always provide the correct captions. The inclusion

			<p>or the Recite me tool continues to support this and we are about to renew this service for the next three years.</p> <p>Watersmeet have worked with Nimbus to introduce two levels of disability proof. A free digital essential companion pass which is valid at the venue only and a nationwide Access Card, valid for 3 years (£15) giving customers the opportunity to independently assess their needs without bias at many venues including Watersmeet.</p>
Utilisation of Alt text on graphics promoted on council social media channels	Customer Experience	All material being produced on social will be accessibility compliant & addition of alt text will be added to all our graphics on FB, X and LinkedIn. Screen reader will recognise the alt text and read it out for them. Any videos used where someone is talking we will add captions to improve accessibility.	With the introduction of Orlo we have managed to put in a rule that will not allow us to post an image without alt text. All videos produced by the communication team have captions added. This is a manual process as using AI tools does not always provide the correct captions
Engagement with community groups to address and reduce digital exclusion through accessibility tool	Customer Experience	To promote use of the accessibility tool	The Recite me tool continues to support this. We are about to renew this service for the next three years In the quarter July 2025 – Sept 2025 some sample results from the tool bar use are 620 pages viewed, 255 Unique users, 2,061 screen reader playbacks, 58 translations, 683 styling changes and 6 reading aids.
Maintain and develop information for public displays, such as notice boards and printed posters.	Customer Experience	Improving access to services for residents.	Over the last 12 months we have replaced seven old style notice boards across the district to improve how posters are displayed. We continue to update the 40 boards across the district each month.
Expand the film programme at Watersmeet to include relaxed performances targeting neurodiverse customers, those	Customer Experience	To improve access to residents with protected characteristics. Watersmeet is screening 2 dementia films per year, and has been trailing	Watersmeet has screened 2 x dementia films: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My Fair Lady - Mamma Mia

with additional needs or disabilities and those with daytime childcare responsibilities.		earlier films aimed at those with daytime childcare. Additional to this Watersmeet will screen 2 dedicated relaxed screenings one of which will fall on a weekend.	Watersmeet has added an 11am screening to its film programme which will be trialled until the end of March. This time targets those with young children at school, fitting in with school drop off/pick up times allowing working parents access to the arts.
Improve accessibility of resources being produced and circulated both internally and externally	Customer Experience	To ensure material is accessibility compliant, reaches it's target audience and is as accessible as possible to increase engagement.	All PDF documents that are uploaded to our website are designed to meet accessibility criteria. If this is not possible this is added to our exception list. This ensures the website is compliant with WCAG2.2. We also monitor our website with the Siteimprove tool on 4 main key areas Digital Certainty Index, Quality Assurance, Accessibility and SEO. The scores change daily but we are always around the government benchmark on scores in these areas. Also, the introduction of strong brand guidelines has helped address historic issues with how printed and digital documents are produced.
Accessibility activity	Customer Experience	To raise awareness of the challenges some may encounter when navigating our website with just the keyboard	Work has taken place with our website provider to ensure that any issues that we are aware of or are flagged via Siteimprove are addressed and solutions put in place an example of this is how the back to top button functions with screen readers and different accessibility tools to ensure it can still be accessed
Referrals to Healthy Hub for those digitally isolated	All services Partnerships to update	To improve digital inclusion for residents	No referrals received into the Healthy Hub for digital isolation, however the Hub provided 69 incidences of digital support
Referral for data package if digitally isolated, on low income, insufficient access to data in or outside home, and over age 18.	All Services Partnerships to update	To improve digital inclusion for those on low incomes.	2 referrals received and data packages provided. Promotion has been undertaken with council officers.
Healthy Hub to host Digital Inclusion sessions with Watford and Three Rivers Trust.	Strategy & Partnerships	To improve digital inclusion for those who require support to use digital equipment.	Drop in sessions took place in July 2025. Further support and signposting was provided via promoting Watford and Three Rivers Trust initiatives such as computer literacy and

			M365 workshops and promoting similar training opportunities provided by Step2Skills.
Delivery of White Ribbon Action Plan, to identify council actions to tackle violence against women and girls.	Strategy & Partnerships	Delivery of actions around Strategic Leadership, engaging men and boys, changing cultures and Raising awareness to be completed over 2 years.	The White ribbon action plan is ahead of schedule, it's due to be completed by September 2026 but we would estimate that the action plan will be completed by March 2026 in it's entirety. During 16 days of activism, the white ribbon flag was raised by the leader of the Council Stephen Giles-Medhurst MBE. The White Ribbon promise was shared within the council offices and on social media.
Secure funding for and manage delivery of the Community Support Service (CSS)	Strategy & Partnerships	One to one support for residents with mental health needs Improve access to support services Promote personal management of mental health needs	The council continue to fund the CSS service delivered by Herts Mind Network.
Raise awareness through delivery of White Ribbon presentation at the council's staff day, Domestic Abuse blogs and social media initiatives.	Strategy & Partnerships	Improve awareness of Domestic Abuse and improve access to support.	During 16 days of activism, social media posts were shared daily on the support services available to residents of Three Rivers experiencing Domestic abuse. Formal professional training session delivered by The Centre for Domestic Abuse was held at Three Rivers house on 10 th December 2025. Training staff and service professionals on extended support for residents of Three Rivers.
Period poverty - A campaign to promote reusable period products to address both environmental and cost issues.	Waste & Environment	Aims to reduce inequalities	Over £1,270 has been spent with Hey Girls across Hertfordshire since June to provide reusable period products to those in need for free. Those who may be in period poverty are targeted through engagement with places like food banks and family centres.
Confident Continence & Reusable Nappies - A campaign to raise awareness of reusable nappies to address both environmental and cost issues.	Waste & Environment	To promote accessibility to these products	Confident Continence & Reusable Nappies - Uptake of this scheme is slow, we are currently working with local Nappy Libraries, and exploring working with local Care Homes and Retirement Homes to increase awareness and uptake - making use of support networks and communities already established.

Delivery of assisted bin collection service, which allows elderly or disabled residents to request support.	Waste & Environment	To assist the elderly and infirmed	As of 15/12/25 there are 1,042 households with an assisted collection.
Provision of bulky waste collection service - subsidised service offered to residents on benefits.	Waste & Environment	Allow residents on low income to appropriately dispose of bulky waste.	On-going service provision. Reduced bulky waste reductions from 01 April - 15 December 2025; 34 council tax benefit 30 Housing benefit 100 Universal credit
Grand Union Community Energy "Energy Champion" to attend Healthy Hubs and Leisure Centres	Climate Change	To raise awareness of funding available for home energy efficiency improvements and provide energy-saving advice for residents on lower incomes and with disabilities/health conditions.	A trained energy advisor from Grand Union Community Energy has provided free, in-person advice at Healthy Hubs across the district throughout 2025. Older residents and residents experiencing fuel poverty in particular have benefitted from free small energy-saving measures, home visits, and energy bill analysis that have helped them stay warm and save money.
Home Energy Support Service (Better Housing Better Health) to provide free-to-call home energy helpline for residents to remove digital isolation barrier.	Climate Change	Residents in or at risk of fuel poverty supported with free, independent advice. Funding opportunities and relevant discounts/benefits signposted. In-person home visits to vulnerable/elderly residents offered.	The Better Housing Better Health service continues to support residents of any tenure or income level with free, independent energy advice.
Develop and participate in Unity in the Community event	Strategy & Partnerships	To improve access to local services	An event was held with 47 charities promoting their work and services to over 1,000 attendee's (including performers and organisers). The council was involved with the planning and delivery on the day.
Attendance at local events to promote council services. Herts Pride Watersmeet Fun Day Abbots Langley Carnival	Strategy & Partnerships	To improve awareness of council support and encourage accessing council services	The listed events were attended. 32 partnership initiatives were held or attended by the Strategy and Partnerships team – the target was 18. Initiatives delivered in partnership with local organisations to address issues relating to community safety, health,

Unity in the Community South Oxhey Family Day			volunteering, inequalities.
Food Box Project Provide families and individuals referred by a professional with fresh produce to last a week, once a month for 6 months.	Strategy & Partnerships	Improve cooking abilities and providing residents on low income with 6 weeks of food, one per month.	124 households received support from Foodbox project.
Delivery of Healthy hub and pop up hubs within local neighbourhoods	Strategy & Partnerships	Improve awareness and access to services	18 Healthy Hub pop ups delivered within the community.
Dissemination of "Warm in winter" bags to elderly and isolated residents.	Strategy & Partnerships	These bags include information on local services to improve access for those who are digitally isolated.	Council collected 150 Warm in Winter Bags from Small Acts of Kindness and these are being distributed to residents over the winter period.
Develop Equalities Forum, bringing together councillors and community representatives	Strategy & Partnerships	To improve access and address inequality.	Development of the Equalities Forum was agreed by councillors in May 2025, and Terms of Reference for the meeting were agreed by Full Council in October 2025. The first meeting will be held in March 2026.
Delivery of face to face service or phone support for residents who are digitally isolated.	Revs & Bens Housing	Improve access to service	Housing Services - Face to face appointments available in the visitors centre (VC) and healthy hubs. IT equipment for those with no access to digital services. Officers are able to take application via online meeting/telephone if customer unable to travel to VC. Continue to offer face to face and telephone appointments. Revenues Inspectors will carry out home visit and report back findings to the back office to award (without them having to complete an online form).
Development of pathway to refer residents who are digitally isolated for additional support.	Revs & Bens	Improve access to support services.	We signpost residents to third parties where appropriate.

ACE referral scheme – 2 bands, free or self referral for reduced rate. This goes beyond TRDC provision, local groups too. Accept childcare vouchers. Access to holiday provisions.	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	To ensure those most in need have access to high quality, out of school provision during the school holidays.	91 ACE codes given to children/families
Use of Makaton style images for play schemes	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	To improve communication with children & those with additional needs.	Makaton used for supporting children with additional needs.
Provide one to one support when possible at Playschemes, for children with additional needs and disabilities	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	To provide high quality play and social experiences for those with additional needs. Access to play provision outside of the home, also provides respite for parents, carers and siblings.	One to one support provided at Easter and summer playschemes to 7 children
Plan inclusive play areas	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	To consider sensory perception and inclusion when undertaking play area design	This is already included in all tenders for play areas. We now have an approved play space strategy with a section dedicated to inclusive play opportunities.
Leisure activities can be accessed by vulnerable people, and those with access or mobility needs	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	To ensure accessibility of services	Activity programme is fully inclusive.
Maintain and explore opportunities to open more outdoor fitness zones across the district.	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	Improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable with this free resource.	Maintenance of all outside fitness zones is undertaken by TRDC grounds team weekly/monthly and externally by a RoSPA approved inspector annually. This is in line with all other outdoor leisure facilities in TRDC parks and open spaces. All opportunities to increase the physical activity of all residents through the leisure provision in our parks and open spaces, remains a key objective for any refurbishment works or new installations of leisure assets.
Ensuring step free access at Rickmansworth Aquadrome across the whole site	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	Improve access of the site	Step free access is available to enter the site and for moving around the site to all the facilities, including pedestrian entrances, car parking facility, café, both toilet blocks, step free access to the DDA fishing swim, lakeside

			viewing platform and access to all pathways across the site is step free. There is an accessibility audit taking place shortly which will identify any areas that are not step free within the Aquadrome.
Include DDA fishing swims at the upgrade of the swims at Rickmansworth Aquadrome	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	Improve access to service	This was completed in May 2025.
Improve communication with playscheme parents via a Whatsapp channel	Leisure & Natural Infrastructure	Improved communication and updates of playscheme information	WhatsApp channel used for summer playscheme.
Attendance at Healthy Hubs to improve accessibility to residents	Customer Experience & Housing	Improving access to services for residents.	183 Customer Experience queries 3 Housing queries
Maintaining Service Level Agreement with Refugee Council (or another provider) to provide support for refugee families living in Three Rivers	Housing	To respond to support required by Refugee households.	Ongoing.
Housing support home visits	Housing	To consider this on each approach to the Service and visits to households carried out if appropriate.	Procedure adopted in 2024 that ensures Officers undertake a home visit to every homelessness applicant to explore every option to prevent homelessness.
Home Connections website to translate the application form into different languages.	Housing	To ensure customer who do not speak English as a first language are able to access services.	Implemented and ongoing.
Use of Language line to support residents who do not speak fluent English.	Housing	To ensure customer who do not speak English as a first language are able to access services and understand advice given.	Ongoing.
Residents presenting for housing support who are Veterans will receive priority housing	Housing	Priority given to Veterans on the Housing Register complies with government guidance and the Armed Forces Covenant	Housing Allocations Policy updated and agreed by P and R in Dec 2025. Fully compliant with Gov. guidance on Veterans.

<p>Housing referral service to Citizens Advice provides clients experiencing financial deprivation with offer of support in 2 days.</p>	<p>Housing</p>	<p>Priority referral service for customers engaging with the housing service to Citizens Advice for financial support and guidance, in place.</p>	<p>Ongoing. Between 1 April – 30 September 241 clients who were threatened with homelessness were supported.</p>
<p>Development of cost-of-living project to support clients experiencing deprivation</p>	<p>Housing</p>	<p>The policy is currently being developed with registered providers (eg Thrive, Homegroup, Watford Community Housing etc). The aim is to support households who are experiencing deprivation to maintain their tenancies, provide kitchen essentials and promote educational/employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Working alongside registered providers to ensure clients are referred at the earliest opportunity to provide support in relation to mediation and rent arrears. Preventing the build up of rent arrears supports residents with cost of living.</p>
<p>To engage with local diverse groups and partners in order to co-develop red cross building</p>	<p>Property</p>	<p>To deliver a new ground floor community space to local community group(s). Providing a focal point for engaging existing and newly formed groups.</p>	<p>Since establishing this project, the council has reached an agreement for Croxley Green Parish Council to take a lease of the entire ground floor to provide new Parosh Offices, and more importantly, a new community hall for use by users and groups from the surrounding area.</p> <p>Whilst TRDC will not be directly involved in the management or bookings for the community hall, it is a great opportunity for TRDC's Community Team to support the work that the Parosh Council plan to do with the space.</p> <p>A community engagement event was held on 14 July at Croxley Green Library where local residents and interested parties were invited to attend the unveiling of proposed plans. During the event and the following fortnight, where the display was erected in the Parish Council offices, feedback was received and utilised to refine the final building designs.</p>

To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities

Action	Service Area	Outcomes to achieve	Update
Attend more working groups in relation to community groups, e.g. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities.	Planning Policy	Improve understanding of community needs	<p>In June 2025, a member of the Planning Policy team attended a virtual workshop to discuss Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Communities in Hertfordshire with a range of other stakeholders. This workshop allowed the numerous stakeholders to discuss their experiences with working with the travelling community in Hertfordshire, their needs and how these could be better met. A similar workshop/working group is due to take place early 2026.</p> <p>As part of the Local Plan process, the planning policy team has been in correspondence with consultants working on behalf of GATE Herts.</p> <p>The planning policy team commissioned and published a Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) in August 2025, which sets out the accommodation needs for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people across the district.</p>
Improve engagement with young people in relation to the local plan.	Planning Policy	Improve understanding of community needs	The planning policy team have continued to work collaboratively with the digital team to ensure that Local Plan consultations are advertised in as many ways as possible, including using social media and posters, which are more engaging for younger people.
Undertake work via outgoing councillors to understand what if	Committee Services	Understand barriers to access	Members have identified when residents are attending who require extra support e.g. accommodations in the committee question process to account for disabilities.

any, barriers exist to resident access to committee meetings.	Elections		
Community engagement as required in relation to changing community ambience.	Strategy & Partnerships	Understand community ambience Communicate shared learning with broader council and Community Safety Partnership.	Continue to work with Police and Hertfordshire County Council on any community tensions across the District. Tensions have been addressed this year via social media platforms and communications have fed into the community by the council and Herts Connected.
Promotion of Healthy Relationships Programme to engage with younger demographics in the district.	Strategy & Partnerships	A significant funding bid has been placed (awaiting the update) for the ability to deliver a Healthy Relationships Programme in all schools within the district.	The Healthy Relationships programme is not being delivered due to lack of engagement from schools.
Promotion of the health and wellbeing survey	Strategy & Partnerships	Encourage local residents to fill out the wellbeing survey to support the most vulnerable residents	The health and wellbeing survey has been promoted at Healthy Hubs, pop ups, via social media campaigns, the health and wellbeing newsletter and through partner organisations throughout the year.
Facilitate enriching experiences to refugee residents	Strategy & Partnerships	Find activities, clubs and experiences that give the families positive memories	The council are funding swimming lessons for families. The community liaison officer arranged two trips for separate families to the British Museum. The community liaison officer arranged and offered work experience at the council for two people.
Integrate clear vision for health objectives into Inclusion Working and spread wellbeing messaging throughout councils.	Strategy & Partnerships	Encourage staff members to prioritise health and wellbeing through education, training, and interactive initiatives.	Various sessions, materials and events have been arranged to support staff health and wellbeing.
Engagement on consultation with local community groups, SEN school & temporary accommodation sites.	Leisure and Natural Infrastructure	Provide high quality provision for those with additional needs. For play spaces, this will follow the PIPPA (Plan Inclusive Play Areas) principals.	A total of 10 primary schools across Three Rivers were consulted for the new Play Space Strategy in January 2025. 697 children took part in the consultation expressing their views on why they like visiting play areas, what they like to see in play areas and their favourite equipment.

Community Group leaders and representatives to attend CSC team meetings to improve awareness of customs and challenges.	Customer Experience	To improve understanding of challenges and customs of diverse community groups.	Watford and Three Rivers Trust have engaged with the team, which resulted in additional pop up sessions at Three Rivers House for residents to understand what support is available through Watford and Three Rivers Trust.
Support the employment needs of refugee clients who have been in the UK less than 5 years	Housing	Offer one to one support to individuals and host drop in session where clients can be supported by partner organisations.	Support to refugees in district by the council's Community Liaison Officer. Refugees on relevant resettlement schemes are eligible for external support, funded by Home Office grant. Ongoing.

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

Action	Service Area	Outcome	Update
To sponsor and attend Hertfordshire Pride	Strategy & Partnerships	To promote council services Engagement with LGBTQ+ communities.	Officers attended and sponsored the event.
Implement resident recommendations from the Community Conversations climate change consultation that took place in Feb/March 2025.	Climate Change	To improve engagement with different communities on sustainability initiatives, specifically seeking to include marginalised and "hard to reach" groups.	The viable recommendations from the Community Conversations climate change consultation were adopted in the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan update in October 2025. This included re-designing the Environmental Forum to engage more diverse and harder-to-reach groups, launching an Environmental Champion Award to recognise individuals and groups who help protect the local environment, continuing to run careers fairs for local students and jobseeker with an emphasis on job and training pathways in "green" industries, and more
Host internal initiative to celebrate National Inclusion Week	Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group	To improve inclusion within the Council	In September 2025, The Inclusion & Wellbeing Working Group hosted a cultural day for staff as part of National Inclusion Week at Three Rivers House. Staff members were

			invited to bring in food that represents their background, upbringing, or country of origin. Within the session there were fun interactive activities, an opportunity to hold conversations around culture, a chance to show off your flag and try different cuisines.
<p>Awareness initiatives arranged for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Armed Forces Day - VE Day - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month - Stephen Lawrence Day - Herts Pride - IDAHOBIT - 	Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group	Improve officer awareness of issues relating to the set themes	<p>Armed Forces Day – flag raising</p> <p>VE Day – flag raising and coffee morning with veterans</p> <p>Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month – information provided by Gate Herts shared on social media.</p> <p>Stephen Lawrence Day – partnership reflection and memorial event.</p> <p>Herts Pride – attendance and sponsoring of Herts Pride</p> <p>IDAHOBIT – promotion of Hate Crime awareness campaign</p>
Coordinate Purple Tuesday event in Three Rivers	Inclusion and Wellbeing Working Group	Improve accessibility for people with disabilities	An event was arranged in partnership with Good Vibrations, who performed in Rickmansworth High Street while officers, dressed in purple, raised awareness of the day. The event was supported by a donation of purple doughnuts from Wenzels.
Social media posts on festivals/culturally significant dates	Customer Experience	Celebrate diverse cultures and communities	<p>In 2025, we posted the following on our social media accounts:</p> <p>Chinese New Year – 29 January</p> <p>Ramadan - 28 Feb</p> <p>Pesach/Passover – 12 April</p> <p>Easter Sunday – 20 April</p> <p>Rosh Hashanah – 22 September</p> <p>Diwali – 20 October</p> <p>Hanukkah – 14 December</p> <p>Black History Month – throughout October</p> <p>Christmas events – throughout December</p>

			Christmas Day and Happy New Year – we will also schedule a Happy Christmas post on the day as well as a New Year’s Eve post on 31.12.2025.
Street lighting improvements to allow for residents feelings of safety to improve. Particularly in relation to violence against women and girls.	Property	To enhance community life and improve feelings of safety	All TRDC owned lights have been upgraded to either energy efficient LED, Solar or hybrid. A regular annual inspection will take place to ensure these are working as expected
A programme of works to maintain footpaths, alleyways and roads that are the responsibility of TRDC	Property	To ensure the continued safety of all residents	A 5-year programme is underway – year 2 completed
The Council is working closely with Croxley Green Parish Council to create a community facility for the ground floor of the redeveloped building. The Parish Council will actively manage the community space and encourage a diverse range of groups and users to utilise the facilities.	Property	To create a community facility that caters for a diverse range of groups and users.	<p>Since the start of the project, the Council has worked with Croxley Green Parish Council to secure a lease on the entire ground floor of the redeveloped building. This will enable the Parish Council to establish new offices and, importantly, create a community hall for use by a wide range of local groups and residents.</p> <p>The community hall will provide a valuable opportunity to support and collaborate with the Parish Council as they develop and promote the new space.</p>

12. Other Inequalities

Armed Forces

12.1. Census 2021 was the first census in which residents (aged 16 years and over) were asked whether they had previously served in the UK armed forces, either as a regular, a reserve or both.

12.2. 2.6% had served in the Armed Forces or the Reserve UK Armed Forces, with 5.3% of the district's households including a formed member of the Armed Forces or the Reserve UK Armed Forces

12.3. The council is committed to the Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant. This is a statement of support between the civilian community and its local Armed Forces community. Further information on the Covenant can be found at [Hertfordshire Heroes](#). As part of this commitment, Three Rivers District Council appoints an Armed Forces Champion, currently Cllr Sarah Nelmes.

12.4. The council is an active member of the [Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant Board](#) who work in partnership to deliver the [Armed Forces Covenant](#) locally. It brings together business, military organisations, charities, NHS and local authorities in a shared commitment to ensure that those who serve and have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly.

Deprivation

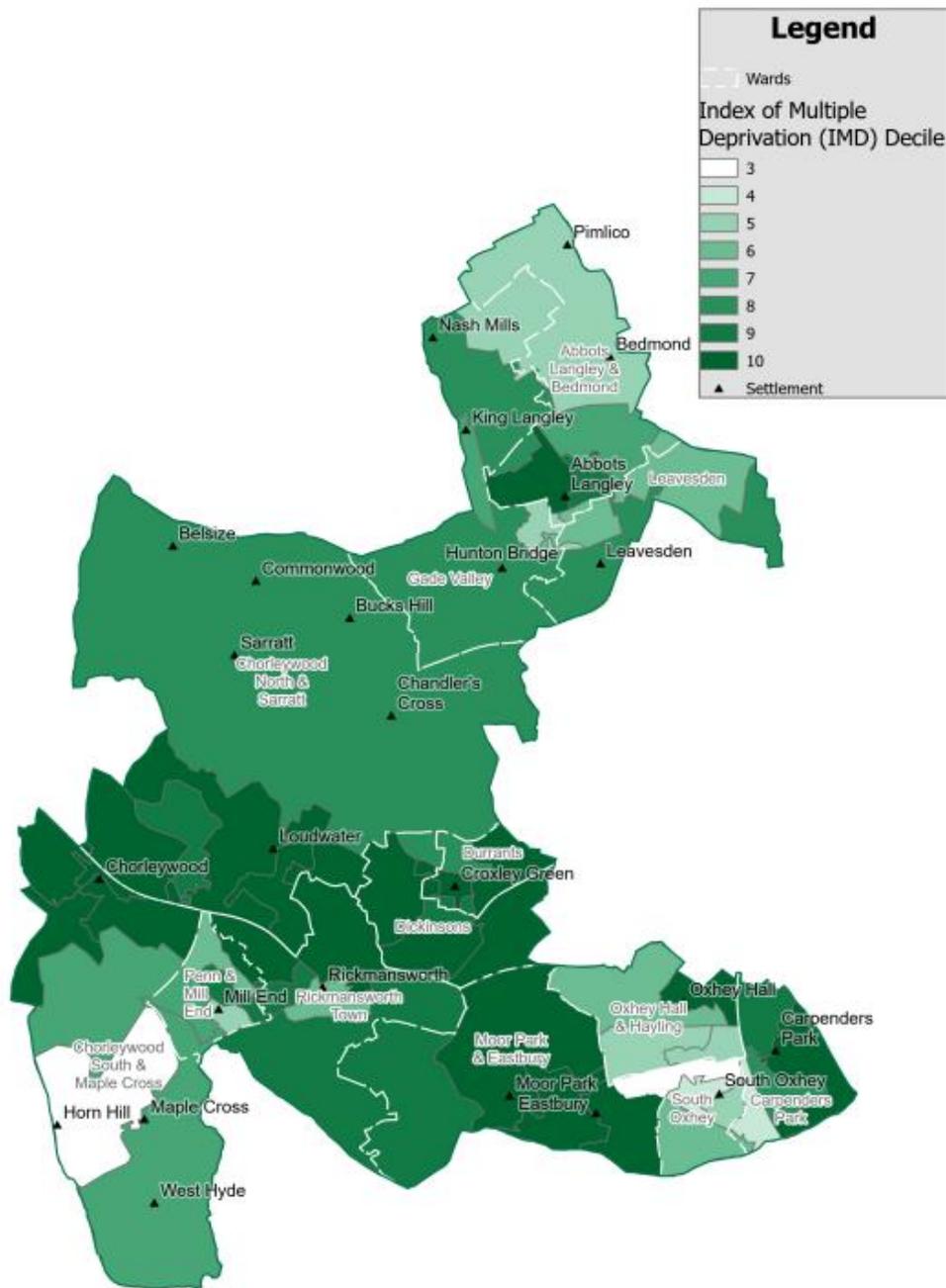
12.5. There are hidden pockets of deprivation within our communities, where individuals and families on low incomes live alongside more affluent neighbours. This leads to a perception that many of our communities are seen to be comfortable places to live, masking the real needs of many people living there. The map below shows 2025 deprivation data by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA).

12.6. The data shows that although Three Rivers no longer has LSOA's within decile 1 or 2, parts of Maple Cross and South Oxhey are the same in terms of deprivation.

12.7. In 2021 life expectancy was 7.2 years lower for men and 5.1 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Three Rivers than in the least deprived areas.

12.8. The community and voluntary sector within Three Rivers are continuing to report significantly increased service demand whilst simultaneously having fewer volunteers.

12.9. Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service continues to see an increase in clients presenting with debt problems compared to previous years.



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13. Summary

13.1. This report sets out how the council, in collaboration with its partners, is meeting the needs of protected and underrepresented groups, while also raising awareness and adapting services across the district.

13.2. It provides an overview of ongoing work to prevent—and where necessary address—disparities linked to protected characteristics, geography, income, and skill level. It also demonstrates the actions the council has taken to meet its statutory responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty within the Equality Act 2010.

13.3. Activity undertaken in support of the council's objectives illustrates progress towards:

13.3.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimization.

13.3.2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups.

13.3.3. Foster good relations between different groups.

13.4. In 2026, the council will produce a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, alongside new Objectives for the Inclusion and Wellbeing Working group to progress with their respective teams.

13.5. In March, 2026 the council will be holding the first meeting of the Equality Forum, which will create the opportunity further develop equality and diversity work in the year ahead.

