

**2024/25**

**Equality, Diversity  
and Inclusion  
Report**



# Contents

Introduction	3
Hartlepool Population Equality Fact File	5
Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce Equality	9
- Our workforce profile compared to the community we serve	10
- Our workforce profile in 2024/25 compared to our workforce profile in 2023/24	13
- Recruitment	15
- Leavers	16
- Gender Pay Gap	18
- Consultation and Employee Engagement	20
Update on the Council's Equality Objectives	22
- Progress made in 2024/25	23
- Activity planned for 2025/26	40

## Introduction

As a Council, we are committed to challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity in all aspects of our work. Our approach to Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) outlines our commitment as an employer, as a service provider, and as a community leader. We aim to focus on people who access our services by looking at their whole identity and recognising and valuing that each individual resident, visitor, partner, service provider, service user and employee is unique. The Council is committed to promoting a community and organisational culture that fully respects and values everyone's differences and needs.

We are clear that EDI should influence how we act as an employer; how we develop, evaluate and review our policies; how we design, deliver and evaluate services, and how we commission and procure from others. Equality Impact Assessments form an integral part of our decision-making process and reports to Council and all Council Committees must demonstrate how EDI has been considered in the proposals being brought forward so that Elected Members can make informed decisions. Procurement and commissioning activities also require consideration of EDI as a matter of routine.

As a Council we take all complaints seriously and they are responded to following the Council's agreed Corporate Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure. The outcome of complaint investigations and lessons learned from complaints are actioned and monitored. Any complaints relating to equality characteristics are considered by senior managers. We are also keen to understand the views of our local community and to involve them in shaping our services through our consultation and engagement activities. We recognise that some people may have difficulties accessing traditional consultations and we endeavour to be as open and inclusive as possible. Where individuals face barriers to being involved we are keen to work with them to identify alternative methods for engagement or provide additional support to enable them to be involved e.g. sign language interpreters or easy read formats of documents.

The information collected through consultation helps to inform the Council when it is thinking about things like changing services, checking on how well services are performing and deciding what should be the Council's priorities in the future. People can access consultations through the Council's Your Say, Our Future site.

Within our EDI Policy, agreed in March 2023, we have extended our approach to EDI beyond the 9 legally protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 to also give consideration to those who are care leavers and the Armed Forces Community (as established in our Armed Forces Covenant). We also consider inequality related to poverty and disadvantage recognising that this relates to individuals as well as children and families.

Through the publication of this Equality Report we aim to demonstrate our compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty with regard to people affected by our policies and practices and our employees. We are also using this report to publish our gender pay gap data.

## Hartlepool Population Equality Fact File

Data from the 2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in July 2025 unless stated otherwise.

### Total Population = 98,180

Population aged 16+ = 79,636

Households = 40,930 (Source: Census 2021, ONS)

### Sex:

Percentage of the total population who are male = 48.9%

Percentage of the total population who are female = 51.1%

Percentage of population aged 16+ who are male = 48.2%

Percentage of population aged 16+ who are female = 51.8%

### Age:

Total population broken down by age bracket (percentage)	Male only population broken down by age bracket (percentage)	Female only population broken down by age bracket (percentage)
15 and under = 18.9%	15 and under = 20.0%	15 and under = 17.8%
16 – 25 = 11.6%	16 – 25 = 12.2%	16 – 25 = 11.0%
26 – 35 = 12.6%	26 – 35 = 12.5%	26 – 35 = 12.7%
36 – 45 = 12.3%	36 – 45 = 12.0%	36 – 45 = 12.6%
46 – 55 = 11.7%	46 – 55 = 11.6%	46 – 55 = 11.9%
56 – 65 = 14.2%	56 – 65 = 14.0%	56 – 65 = 14.3%
66 – 75 = 10.4%	66 – 75 = 10.4%	66 – 75 = 10.4%
76 – 85 = 6.1%	76 – 85 = 5.6%	76 – 85 = 6.6%
86 and over = 2.1%	86 and over = 1.6%	86 and over = 2.6%

Data from the Census 2021, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

**Ethnicity:**

Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh = 1.7%

Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African = 0.5%

Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups = 0.7%

White = 96.5%

Other ethnic group = 0.6%

**Religion:**

Christian = 52.5%

Buddhist = 0.2%

Hindu = 0.2%

Jewish = 0.0%

Muslim = 1.3%

Sikh = 0.2%

Other religion = 0.3%

No religion = 40.1%

Not answered = 5.1%

**Disability:**

Long-term health problem of disability where day-to-day activities are limited a lot = 11.4%

Long-term health problem of disability where day-to-day activities are limited a little = 11.5%

Day-to-day activities not limited = 77.1%

**Gender:**

Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth = 94.5%

Gender identity different from sex registered at birth = 0.4%

Not answered = 5.1%

**Sexual Orientation:**

Straight or Heterosexual = 91.1%

Gay or Lesbian = 1.5%

Bisexual = 1.1%

Other Sexual Orientation = 0.2%

Not answered = 6.1%

**Other areas of priority from the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy:**

**Armed Forces:**

Proportion of usual residents who previously served in UK regular armed forces = 4.1%

Data from the Census 2021, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)

**Care Leavers:**

Total number of care leavers aged 17 to 18 = 27

Total number of care leavers aged 19 to 21 = 94

Total number of care leavers aged 22 to 25 = 99

Data from the annual SSDA903 Children Looked After Return as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 (reporting year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025)



**Poverty and Disadvantage:**

Percentage of children living in families with less than 60% of the median UK household income, after housing costs have been taken into account = 31.9%\*

2023/24 data from the Local Child Poverty Statistics 2025 produced by the Loughborough University Centre for Research in Social Policy and commissioned by the End Child Poverty Coalition.

\* The data above is based on calculations that build on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC Children in Low Income Families dataset, published in March 2025. This DWP dataset estimates the percentage of children living in households with below 60% median income in each local area. The data are produced by adjusting the Before Housing Costs (BHC) statistics available in the Children in Low Income Families (CiLIF) release, using administrative data on rents for local authorities, combined with household-level data from the Understanding Society longitudinal survey to estimate the relationship between housing costs and the relative risk of being in poverty before and after housing costs.



## Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce Equality

This section of the report provides a summary and analysis of Hartlepool Borough Council's workforce, excluding Local Authority Maintained Schools. The workforce profile is shown as at 31st March 2025, while the data is for the period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. The data included in this section of the report is based on individuals and their main posts in the Council, excluding Local Authority Maintained Schools, and not workers e.g. casuals. Therefore, where an individual holds more than one post with the Council (e.g. multiple part time positions) they will only be included once.

Hartlepool Borough Council's aim is to have a workforce that reflects the diversity of our residents, customers and stakeholders and we recognise that promoting equality benefits public services for all.

The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations between people. As part of this Act, the public sector equality duty requires the Council to show how it is meeting its responsibilities as an employer, including a requirement to publish information regarding our workforce. This report forms part of the Council's response to that duty, providing a summary and analysis of Hartlepool Borough Council's workforce against protected characteristics.

## Our workforce profile compared to the community we serve

Hartlepool Population		Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce
<p>Population = 98,180*</p> <p>*of which 79,636 are aged 16+</p> <p>(Source: 2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in July 2025)</p>	<b>Headcount</b>	<p>Employees working for HBC = 2,107</p> <p>Total Full Time Equivalents = 1705.3</p>
<p>Male = 48.2%*</p> <p>Female = 51.8%*</p> <p>* Percentage of population aged 16+</p> <p>(Source: 2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in July 2025)</p>	<b>Sex</b>	<p>Male = 27.5%</p> <p>Female = 72.5%</p>
<p>66+ = 23.0%*</p> <p>56-65 = 17.5%*</p> <p>46-55 = 14.5%*</p> <p>36-45 = 15.2%*</p> <p>26-35 = 15.6%*</p> <p>16-25 = 14.3%*</p> <p>* as a percentage of the population aged 16+</p> <p>(Source: 2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in July 2025)</p>	<b>Age</b>	<p>66+ = 3.6%</p> <p>56-65 = 27.3%</p> <p>46-55 = 24.2%</p> <p>36-45 = 20.1%</p> <p>26-35 = 18.5%</p> <p>16-25 = 6.3%</p>

<b>Hartlepool Population</b>		<b>Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce</b>
<p>Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh = 1.7%</p> <p>Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African = 0.5%</p> <p>Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups = 0.7%</p> <p>White = 96.5%</p> <p>Other ethnic group = 0.6%</p> <p>(Source: ONS Census 2021)</p>	<b>Ethnicity</b>	<p>BME = 1.1%</p> <p>White / Other = 71.6%</p> <p>Undeclared = 27.2%</p>
<p>Christian = 52.5%</p> <p>Buddhist = 0.2%</p> <p>Hindu = 0.2%</p> <p>Jewish = 0.0%</p> <p>Muslim = 1.3%</p> <p>Sikh = 0.2%</p> <p>Other religion = 0.3%</p> <p>No religion = 40.1%</p> <p>Not answered = 5.1%</p> <p>(Source: ONS Census 2021)</p>	<b>Religion / Beliefs</b>	<p>Christian = 24.9%</p> <p>Buddhist = Suppressed, less than 5</p> <p>Hindu = 0.0%</p> <p>Jewish = 0.0%</p> <p>Muslim = 0.2%</p> <p>Sikh = 0.0%</p> <p>Other religion = 1.2%</p> <p>Not stated = 48.6%</p> <p>Prefer not to say = 1.7%</p> <p>None = 23.3%</p>
<p>Long-term health problem of disability where day-to-day activities are limited a lot = 11.4%</p> <p>Long-term health problem of disability where day-to-day activities are limited a little = 11.5%</p> <p>Day-to-day activities not limited = 77.1%</p> <p>(Source: ONS Census 2021)</p>	<b>Disability</b>	<p>Disabled = 2.9%</p> <p>Not disabled = 64.0%</p> <p>Undeclared = 32.9%</p> <p>Prefer not to say = 0.1%</p>
<p>Proportion of usual residents who previously served in UK regular armed forces = 4.1%</p>	<b>Armed Forces</b>	<p>Undeclared = 99.5%</p>

<b>Hartlepool Population</b>		<b>Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce</b>
Data from the Census 2021, produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS)		<p>Previously served in Reserve Armed Forces = Suppressed, less than 5</p> <p>Previously served in Regular Armed Forces = Suppressed, less than 5</p> <p>Spouse of someone currently serving in the Regular Armed Forces = Suppressed, less than 5</p> <p>Spouse of someone previously served in the Regular Armed Forces = Suppressed, less than 5</p>

## Our workforce profile in 2024/25 compared to our workforce profile in 2023/24

Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce 2023/24		Hartlepool Borough Council Workforce 2024/25
Employees working for HBC = 2,113 Total Full Time Equivalents = 1,670.1	<b>Headcount</b>	Employees working for HBC = 2,107 Total Full Time Equivalents = 1705.3
Male = 26.5% Female = 73.5%	<b>Sex</b>	Male = 27.5% Female = 72.5%
66+ = 3.1% 56-65 = 27.4% 46-55 = 25.2% 36-45 = 20.4% 26-35 = 18.1% 16-25 = 5.8%	<b>Age</b>	66+ = 3.6% 56-65 = 27.3% 46-55 = 24.2% 36-45 = 20.1% 26-35 = 18.5% 16-25 = 6.3%
BME = 0.9% White / Other = 68.1% Undeclared = 31.0%	<b>Ethnicity</b>	BME = 1.1% White / Other = 71.6% Undeclared = 27.2%
Christian = 21.2% Buddhist = Suppressed, less than 5% Hindu = 0% Jewish = 0% Muslim = Suppressed, less than 5% Sikh = Suppressed, less than 5% Other religion = 1.2% No religion = 19.3% Not stated = 56.8% Prefer not to say = 1.3%	<b>Religion / Beliefs</b>	Christian = 24.9% Buddhist = Suppressed, less than 5% Hindu = 0.0% Jewish = 0.0% Muslim = 0.2% Sikh = 0.0% Other religion = 1.2% No religion = 23.3% Not stated = 48.6% Prefer not to say = 1.7%
Disabled = 1.9% Not disabled = 60.1% Undeclared = 38.0% Prefer not to say = N/A this data was not available in 2023/24	<b>Disability</b>	Disabled = 2.9% Not disabled = 64.0% Undeclared = 32.9% Prefer not to say = 0.1%

## Workforce Summary

The data highlights that:

- 55% of the workforce are over 45 years old and over a quarter of the workforce are over 55 years old. The aging profile of our workforce is recognised and we are making plans to support succession planning and the development of future leaders and managers in the organisation. This profile has not changed significantly from the previous year;
- We have a predominantly female workforce which can in part be attributed to a greater number of female part-time workers across the Council and the flexible/family friendly working policies available to Council workers;
- Limited information has been provided by our employees in relation to their ethnicity, religion/beliefs and disability status. Employees have the ability to update their own personal details online through the Council's HR/Payroll system and provided a paper form is available for those employees without access to the internet at work. This has resulted in a small reduction in the percentage of employees undeclared/not stated for ethnicity and religion/beliefs. A prefer not to say option has been expanded to some categories this is to enable employees to provide a more accurate response.

## Recruitment

The following table sets out the profile of the 1,942 internal/external applicants, applying for job vacancies with the Council, during 2024/25 and how this compares with the previous year:

	<b>Applications Received 2023/24</b>	<b>Applications Received 2024/25</b>
<b>Sex</b>	Male = 29.02% Female = 57.68% Undeclared = 13.30%	Male = 30.8% Female = 53.2% Undeclared = 16.0%
<b>Age</b>	65+ over = 0.31% 56-65 = 6.34% 46-55 = 13.87% 36-45 = 19.79% 26-35 = 31.13% 16-25 = 28.56%	65+ over = 0.5% 56-65 = 6.3% 46-55 = 13.4% 36-45 = 17.6% 26-35 = 28.5% 16-25 = 33.7%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	BME = 7.27% White / Other = 69.02% Undeclared = 23.71%	BME = 10.0% White / Other = 68.2% Undeclared = 21.8%
<b>Disability</b>	Disabled = 2.94% Not disabled = 69.59% Undeclared = 27.47% Prefer not to say = N/A this data was not available in 2023/24	Disabled = 3.6% Not disabled = 72.0% Undeclared = 24.2% Prefer not to say = suppressed less than 5

## Recruitment Summary

The data highlights that:

- The majority of applicants were female (53.2%).
- Over half of the applicants were aged 35 and under.
- The percentage of BME applicants had increased compared to the previous year.
- The percentage of disabled applicants had increased compared to the previous year.



## Leavers

The following table sets out the profile of the 316 employees who left the Council during 2024/25 and how this compares with the previous year:

	Leavers 2023/24	Leavers 2024/25
<b>Sex</b>	Male = 33.0% Female = 67.0%	Male = 30.1% Female = 69.9%
<b>Age</b>	66+ = 9.4% 56-65 = 27.3% 46-55 = 15.7% 36-45 = 16.1% 26-35 = 16.1% 16-25 = 15.4%	66+ = 6.6% 56-65 = 24.7% 46-55 = 15.5% 36-45 = 16.8% 26-35 = 18.4% 16-25 = 18.0%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	BME = Suppressed, less than 5 White / Other = 65.5 % Undeclared = 33.7%	BME = 1.6% White / Other = 69.0 % Undeclared = 29.4%
<b>Religion / Beliefs</b>	Christian = 17.6% Other religion = Suppressed, less than 5 No religion = 21.3% Undeclared = 57.7% Prefer not to say = Suppressed, less than 5	Christian = 23.4% Other religion = 2.2% No religion = 28.5% Undeclared = 44.0% Prefer not to say = Suppressed, less than 5 Muslim = Suppressed, less than 5 Sikh = Suppressed, less than 5
<b>Disability</b>	Disabled = 2.6% Not disabled = 59.6 Undeclared = 37.8%	Disabled = 1.6% Not disabled = 63.6% Undeclared = 34.8%

## Leavers Summary

The data highlights that:

- The turnover rate of the Council for 2024/25 was 15.0%.
- Of those who left the organisation:
  - 49.4% left by voluntary resignation

- 10.4% left to retire
- 40.2% left for other reasons

## Gender Pay Gap

The Council's mean gender pay gap:

2024/25	2023/24
-3.16%	-1.69%

The mean is the average of the figures and is calculated by adding up all the figures and divided by the total number of figures.

The Council's median gender pay gap:

2024/25	2023/24
0.73%	0.74%

The median is the salary figure that sits in the middle when all figures are ordered lowest to highest.

The overall mean gender pay gap for the Council is -3.16%, which means that female employees, overall, receive, on average, 3.16% more total pay than male employees.

The Council's gender pay gap falls well below the national public sector mean and median of 12.9% and 13.5% respectively\*.

\* Data Source: ONS 2024 Provisional Public Sector Gender Pay Gap

### Understanding our gender pay gap

Female employees continue to receive more total pay than male employees do. This can be attributed to the higher percentage pay increase, applied to the Councils lowest paid employees, combined with a greater proportion of the lower paid employees being female.

What are doing to ensure our 'pay gap' does not increase?

- Making the workplace more accessible, by enabling greater flexibility via a range of policies that allow for flexible working, flexitime,

emergency dependants leave, shared parental leave, hybrid, 9 day fortnights, compressed hours and home working.

- The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy recognises the value of 'helping all those who work for the Council to develop their full potential so that the talents and resources of the workforce are utilised fully to create a borough of opportunity for all.'
- Continue to provide learning and development opportunities to all employees, including developing/enhancing our digital offer to enable access for the whole workforce
- Continue to develop and where possible expand apprenticeship opportunities, including degree level apprenticeships for both new and existing employees. This will assist employees to fulfil their aspirations and support them to progress within their chosen career path.
- Monitor the annual review and 1:1 process through the employee annual employee survey and corporate compliance monitoring. This is to ensure all employees are provided with the opportunity to discuss any concerns with their manager and identify development opportunities.

<b><u>Gender Pay Gap – Quartile Analysis by Employee</u></b>					
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>
Lower Quartile	527	429	98	81.4%	18.6%
Lower Middle Quartile	527	340	187	64.5%	35.5%
Upper Middle Quartile	527	375	152	71.2%	28.8%
Upper Quartile	526	384	142	73.0%	27.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2107</b>	<b>1528</b>	<b>579</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>

## Consultation and Employee Engagement

### Consultation with Trade Unions

The Council works in partnership with Trade Unions and meets regularly to discuss issues affecting the Council and its workforce, including matters in relation to equality. The Trade Unions can also provide a range of support to their members on individual workplace or personal issues.

### Employee Engagement

We are committed to employee engagement and seek to ensure that the right conditions are in place for all members of our workforce to give of their best each day. We want our employees to be committed to our organisational goals and values and be motivated to contribute to the overall success of the organisation whilst being supported to enhance their own sense of well-being.

There are various ways in which we undertake employee engagement and some approaches vary between departments. Whole Council engagement activities that are delivered corporately include:

#### **Executive Leadership Team (ELT) Roadshows**

ELT Roadshows are held twice a year and are open to all employees. Multiple sessions are held across 2 weeks and all are led by a member of ELT covering the same content. The sessions are delivered at different times and days and at a range of venues across Hartlepool to enable as many employees as possible to attend. There is also an online session included which is recorded and made available for any employees unable to attend.

ELT Roadshows provide an opportunity to hear first-hand about emerging areas of Council work such as the budget setting process or development of the Council Plan. They are also an opportunity for employees to ask questions of senior managers and get involved in activities to inform the development of Council policy such as Hybrid Working.

#### **Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) Managers Forum**

The HBC Manager Forums provides monthly online briefing / discussion sessions with all employees who have managerial responsibility. It is chaired by the Managing Director. Recent sessions have covered budget updates, the Council's Transformation programme, community cohesion, risk management and the Employee Wellbeing Strategy.

**Annual Employee Survey**

An employee survey was undertaken in autumn 2024 and the findings and corresponding action plan to address areas identified for improvement have been shared. In future employee surveys will be undertaken once a year to benchmark progress.

**Staff Equality Network**

The aim of the Staff Equality Network is to facilitate direct engagement with employees representing the full range of protected characteristics. The network also welcomes employees who actively support the promotion of equality and diversity or who have a specific personal interest in the subject area. The network has a dedicated Teams Channel to enable regular and timely communication with one another. The network also feed ideas into the annual campaign calendar to help facilitate engagement across the wider workforce.

**Your Say Staff Hub**

Our online Staff Hub available to all staff via the Council's consultation and engagement platform. Only employees can access the Staff Hub and it is used to share employee specific consultation for example the development of our hybrid working policy or quick polls on specific topics of interest. The Staff Hub also provides host to a mental health hub, menopause hub, cost of living crisis support hub and the equality network hub.

## Update on the Council's Equality Objectives 2021/22 – 2023/24

Until April 2025, the Council's equality objectives have been based on the strategic objectives set out in our Council Plan. By doing this we aimed to demonstrate that EDI was a core part of what we do as an organisation and not an add on activity. The Council's vision as set out in our Council Plan 2021/22-2023/24 provided the equality objectives for 2024/25:

Hartlepool will be a place...

...where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives;

...where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm;

...of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all;

...that is sustainable, clean, safe and green;

...that has an inclusive and growing economy;

...with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.



## Progress made in 2024/25

**Hartlepool will be a place where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.**

### **Maximising the opportunities that people with additional needs have.**

We have developed our volunteer offer and have supported 33 individuals with additional needs in a volunteer placement.

Working with a reablement officer we have supported 9 young people with additional needs in travel training to improve their experience and confidence in independent travel that will help them access our supported internship programme in the future.

We have also worked with Adult Social Care providers to develop opportunities for volunteering, work experience and supported internship placements.

We have delivered Supported Internship programmes for young people aged 16-24 and people with additional needs aged over 25 years old. In 2024/25 3 young people successfully gained full-time employment.

### **Support Hub Wellbeing Offer**

The Support Hub continues to act as first point of contact for Adult Social Care. Following the principles and values of the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI) Community Led Support (CLS) programme, the community navigators take a strength based, person-centred approach to working with people to empower them to maximise their independence and reconnect with their community.

### **Dementia Friendly Hartlepool**

Hartlepool Community Hubs delivered dementia friendly social activities during Dementia Action week which were promoted along with the other activities in the week. The team also supported with the creation of publicity materials to promote all DAW activities. The team continue to sit on the Dementia Friendly Hartlepool steering group.

### **Reading Well Collections**

We have continued the expansion of the Reading Well Collections in our Community Hubs. This includes a series of self-help book collections to support adults with minor mental health issues, long term conditions and those living with dementia. Reading Well for Dementia books were added to the collection (one

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set in Community Hub Central, one set in Community Hub South). These were promoted during Dementia Action Week. Other collections continue to be available and promoted across venues.

**Development of Waverley Allotment into Waverley Outdoor Community Hub**

At Waverley, we welcome everyone, especially people with limited access to nature. In 2024 we joined the Safe Place Scheme to ensure anyone who may be/feel vulnerable can visit if they don't feel safe or need some help.

At the allotment, we have/had 15 active volunteers and 2 supported interns. We have also worked in collaboration with the following support services to support disadvantaged groups; the Council's Resettlement Team, Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Mental Health Services, Horizon School, Groundworks, Thirteen Group. Feedback suggests service users are vastly benefiting from their therapeutic interventions at the site. We also delivered our summer Holiday Activity and Food Programme provision in Summer 2024 onsite and welcomed families accessing the Resettlement Team to provide a safe and welcoming place for people from diverse communities.

**Blood Pressure Checks and Support at Community Hubs**

In a pilot programme with North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board, blood pressure (BP) kiosks and home monitoring kits have been sited in Community Hub's Central and South, with staff on hand to provide advice to residents to improve the uptake in BP readings and early detections of many serious health conditions.

During the pilot, Hartlepool had the highest number of BP checks completed overall (182 checks in six months). There are two established permanent testing stations in Community Hub Central and Community Hub South, as well as outreach in Seaton Carew Community Hub, Tofts Farm Depot, community events and Salaam Centre.

The checks are favouring towards more deprived populations quite significantly (lots of checks in IMD 1 – the most disadvantaged communities in Hartlepool), which is one of the project aims.

After initial BP checks 28 people have gone onto home monitoring and GP review and 29 referred to the GP for review who may have not wanted to home monitor. There have been 6 people who have been referred for a same day

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review with their GP for very high BP results. This equates to a minimum of 6 people whose risk of heart attack, stroke and other serious health problems has been identified in the community via a non-clinical intervention available for free to all residents.

**Free menstruation packs at Community Hubs and branch libraries**

The “Ask for Sandy” packs are available in all Community Hubs and libraries and posters are displayed in all toilets regardless of gender to be fully inclusive of anyone who needs menstruation products. Stocks are maintained via partner donations and staff donations.

**Refurbishment of Seaton Carew Library**

Rebranded Seaton Carew Community Hub, the venue reopened on 2nd April 2025. The venue now has accessible doors and toilet, plus dimmable lighting for those with sensory needs.

The venue is running regular activities including Stories and Rhymes, adult social group, Scrabble group, reading groups, Stretch and Tone sessions. It has also welcomed author events and will be facilitating Learning for Inclusion courses delivered by Hartlepool Jobs and Skills in 2025/26.

**Jobs & Skills Hubs**

We continue to develop our Jobs & Skills Hubs to engage priority groups including disability/health problems, economically inactive and lone parents so they receive tailored support to progress closer/into work.

In the last 12 months, the Jobs & Skills Hubs have delivered employment support to 1,717 unique residents and this has led to, at least, 190 adults progressing into employment over this period within Hartlepool. In addition, at least 544 have progressed into education or volunteering in the last 12 months via the Hubs.

There were 2,781 individual engagements over the last 12 months which was an increase of 254 or 10% from 2023/24. The main reasons for visiting the Jobs & Skills Hubs were:

- 16% for Jobsearch/Application Support
- 25% for Course Information
- 32% for Independent Careers Guidance

**Hartlepool will be a place where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.**

- 11% for Digital Support
- 8% for CVs & Interview Preparation
- 8% for Work Placements

The main Jobs & Skills Hub is based in Community Hub Central. Over the last 12 months, the Service has expanded to provide outreach at Seaton and Hub South.

Over the next 6 months, the Service is working to have dedicated Jobs & Skills Hubs in both Headland Library and Community Hub South. This will expand the support so more adults can be supported to move into work in Hartlepool.

**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Courses**

There were 31 adults enrolled on bespoke ESOL courses at the start of September 2024 across Entry 2, Entry 3 and Level 1 with these courses continuing until July 2025.

In addition, there have been 230 adults on wider accredited ESOL skills courses between September 2024 and March 2024.

The ESOL provision continues to be delivered in partnership with Hartlepool College of Further Education, Jobcentre, and the Council's Resettlement Team. Our bespoke courses incorporate both the ESOL qualification alongside activities so that adults integrate within the community such as shopping, health improvement and signing up to Library Service.

**Independent Living and Employability Programmes - Care Leavers, young carers and ex-carers**

A 12-week course was delivered by the Jobs and Skills Hub for 8 young care leavers and in partnership with the Council's Staying Close Team. This included topics such as cooking, cleaning, booking appointments, budgeting, and housing. A further programme is being discussed with the Team.

In addition, there were two sessions delivered alongside Hartlepool Carers. This supported 13 young carers who were provided with dedicated support around independent living and employment support. In addition, partnership working is continuing to improve pathways for young carers and to ensure that they can access our provision including Careers Events.

**Hartlepool will be a place where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.**

### **Changing Place Facilities**

Two new 'Changing Place' facilities were constructed in 2024/25 with 50% of the funding coming from a government grant. There is a new facility in the Central Hub and another facility attached to the new toilet facilities at Seaton Carew. Both facilities were approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and Changing Places. There are now 4 registered changing place facilities within the Borough of Hartlepool.

### **National Autism Society (NAS) – Advanced Status Award**

The Centre for Independent Living has been awarded advanced status by the NAS for its work for people with Autism.

### **World Mental Health Day**

The event held at the Centre for Independent Living was held on 10/10/2024 and attended by over 200 people. There were 18 stall holders, wellbeing activities throughout the day and a choir. The event was hosted by Healthwatch Hartlepool, with support from a number of local organisations. The focus was on mental health at work. Together all the online mental health support provider worked with public health to create a wellbeing wall, whilst staff and members of the public benefitted from mindfulness sessions hosted by Alice House Hospice.

### **National Safeguarding Awareness Week (NSAW)**

The NSAW across Tees focused on the theme "Working in Partnership" with daily sub-themes. Key activities included:

- a Social Media Campaign which reached over 22,000 people.
- Radio and Newspaper Ads featured on Hits Radio, the Gazette, and Hartlepool Life.
- Webinars covered topics including professional curiosity, autism and suicidality, financial abuse, and exploitation.
- Community engagement included podcasts, local business collaborations, and information dissemination in diverse communities.
- Workshops and Presentations were held for adults with learning disabilities.
- Educational Resources included safeguarding videos and learning briefings.

**Hartlepool will be a place where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.**

The campaign also coincided with Carers Rights Day, integrating its themes into the activities.

### **A Spotlight on Carers – Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB)**

The Spotlight on Carers Week and Elder Abuse campaign aimed to raise awareness about the needs and challenges faced by carers and older adults.

Key activities included:

- workshops and collaborations partnered with local carers services.
- posters were created and shared detailing carers services and support across Tees.
- Webinars were held including sessions on identifying and supporting carers, and spotting and stopping abuse of older adults.
- The launch of the "Hidden Harms" animation by TSAB
- TSAB newsletter distributed to over 2000 professionals.
- A new carers webpage was promoted.

The campaign emphasised the importance of recognising carer stress, conducting carers assessments, and addressing domestic abuse and homicide among older adults.

### **Learning Disability week**

Several events and activities were held at the Centre for Independent Living to mark Learning Disability week:

- art exhibition
- a social care quiz
- people wrote about what it was like to have a learning disability and what was important to them.
- A coffee morning was held which was attended by over 100 parents, carers and people with a learning disability.

Throughout the week the Community Learning Disability Team gave out advice on the importance of staying well and active and spoke to parents and carers about annual health checks and health action plans.

### **A Spotlight on Discriminatory Abuse**

The Spotlight on Discriminatory Abuse campaign was hosted by TSAB and aimed to increase awareness due to a noted decrease in understanding of this issue. Key activities included a Social Media Campaign to raise awareness.

**Hartlepool will be a place where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.**

Online Webinar delivered by Karl Mason, attended by 57 professionals, with 100% reporting increased knowledge and confidence in applying what they learned.

TSAB Webpages were updated to include a resource toolkit including comprehensive information and resources on discriminatory abuse. The campaign successfully enhanced understanding and provided valuable resources.

**Bariatric chairs**

Bariatric chairs have been available in Community Hub Central and Community Hub South since June 2024. These are available to ensure those people requiring a chair that can support a greater weight, are able to access community hubs, activities and the People's Network. They will be able to do that safely and comfortably, reducing the risk of injury.

**Safeguarding, PROTECT and PREVENT Training for Community Hub Staff**

Staff are trained in Safeguarding, PROTECT and PREVENT. Community Hub venues now have safety lockdown/lock-in procedures in case of emergency to ensure we can keep users of our services safe. Staff continue to be trained in mandatory training, along with additional safeguarding training such as Leisurewatch.

**Safeguarding, Mental Health and Prevent training**

The Jobs & Skills Service continues to promote a wide range of learning opportunities available to staff, residents and businesses covering key themes including Safeguarding, Mental Health, Protect and Prevent. Over the last 12 months, training has been delivered to businesses/organisations in key sectors including Early Years, Education, Healthcare and Construction. Jobs & Skills also ensured that these topics are embedded within all of our learning.



## **Hartlepool will be a place of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.**

### **Poverty Truth Commission**

The Poverty Truth Commission, facilitated by Thrive Teesside with support from the council's Poverty Action Group, continues to work to shine a light on hardship and normalise conversations around talking about life's struggles with the aim of communities helping each other through a network of Hartlepool Helpers, Community Champions and Navigators. The official launch took place in May 2024. The Commission is a unique and powerful way of developing new insights and initiatives to tackle poverty. The idea is built on the concept that lasting social change only happens when people who are struggling come together with those in positions of power to tackle key issues. The creation of the Hartlepool Poverty Truth Commission was a recommendation that came out of an investigation into family poverty by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee.

### **Crossing the Tees Festival – June 2024**

Twoomph!, an open mic poetry event for all genders, was delivered. Poets from Tees Women Poets and others presented work which covered a range of topics, many relating to lived experiences which covered topics such as abuse, gender reassignment, and grief, using poetry as an outlet to express their emotions.

Event hosted with Trisha Ashley in Conversation with Juliet Greenwood where Trisha, a visually impaired author, spoke about her work, and how her sight loss has affected the way she approaches her writing.

### **Colours of Courage – Building an Inclusive Teen Zine Sanctuary**

A project to maximise the library offer for teenagers by creating a DIY zine library and creation station was delivered in the summer of 2024. The project combined art and literacy skills in workshops to create zines, learn creativity methods to improve wellbeing, a stronger, inclusive Hartlepool Community, to inspire young people, develop their self-awareness and break down barriers; whilst also providing a safe creative space for the LGBTQ+ community during pride and beyond. The project included:

- Creation of "The Den", a dedicated teen zone with a zine creation station, which is now a permanent area in the first floor of Community Hub Central.
- Activities in the run up and during Hartlepool Pop-up Pride, with young people from Hart Gables LGBTQ+ charity.

### **Hartlepool will be a place of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.**

- An exhibition from queer artists displayed in Community Hub Central during July.
- Hartlepool's first Zine festival at Community Hub Central.

The events were enjoyed by many people from across the community.

### **Community Volunteering offer across Preventative and Community Based Services**

Volunteer recruitment and management has been centralised for all volunteers across Preventative and Community Based Services by the Community Hubs Volunteer Coordinator. Paperwork has been reviewed and amended, and pathways have been agreed. All potential volunteers who want to volunteer within Community Hubs, Museum of Hartlepool, the Art Gallery, Cemetery and Crematorium, Active Hartlepool, and Tees Archaeology all start their journey with the Volunteer Coordinator to do their paperwork, DBS, inductions and are then supported by a member of staff in the locality service where they volunteer. This has improved the experience of volunteers and the learning from this will be used to review volunteering across all the Council.

### **Reading for Wellbeing offer**

Community Hubs have delivered a Reading for Wellbeing offer, supported with Know Your Neighbourhood funding, to target residents at risk of chronic loneliness to take part in social activities surrounding reading for pleasure.

Two part-time Community Reading Officers have established a number of reading groups across the town, targeting LGBTQ+, care leavers, 18-40 men and residents of sheltered accommodation. They have also provided 1:1 reading support to many residents. The groups have also engaged in a number of social activities outside of their regular meetings, including activities at Hartlepool Art Gallery.

The programme was due to end in March 2025 but has been extended until the end of July 2025.

"First attending the wellbeing reading group at South Hub, I felt quite anxious, I'd never been to anything like this before and to be honest I didn't read much. However, I felt desperately lonely. New to the area with no one I knew I met Lesley [Community Reading Officer] at Seaton library, and she invited me to attend. Within the first ten minutes I'd say I'd never laughed so much for ages, my sides ached, and we even talked about different things we'd read, but in a

### **Hartlepool will be a place of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.**

fun way. I think I learnt far more than I expected too over the weeks and months and little by little I built my confidence and friends. Now I am applying for a job with the council because I heard about it through the group. It sounds dramatic, but my life has actually changed because I went to the reading group, I feel happier, less lonely and actually now understand what community spirit means”  
– Rae, Hartlepool LGBTQIA+ Reading Group attendee

### **Opening Hours for Libraries and Community Hubs**

A four-week consultation was completed between May and June 2024 with 922 contributions, 22% of which did not use a Community Hub service at a time.

Proposed opening hours following the consultation were agreed and the opening hours changed in November 2024. This included Saturday opening at Community Hub Central, longer hours on Saturdays at Community Hub Seaton Carew, and later evening hours until 5pm or 6pm at least 1 day a week at each venue.

This has made the venues more accessible to those who are in education or full-time employment.

### **Health Improvement Training Programme**

Introduction of a Health Improvement Training Programme to improve health literacy, awareness and understanding to empower local people. Delivered in a way that is meaningful and accessible to residents. Good health literacy can overcome some of the barriers of health inequality. The Health Improvement Trainer has delivered:

- weight loss programmes to 50 attendees.
- Delivered Making Every Contact Count (MECC) training to 146 frontline staff from HBC, VCSE and businesses
- Developed two Health Zone areas in Community Hub Central and South which is an area where people can get their BP monitored, get weighed, access MECC Gateway online service directory, and home to information resources, posters, leaflets and display models.
- Campaigns have been delivered around healthy eating, alcohol consumption, cancer and these have been in the Community Hubs, within HBC wider teams and at community events.
- 170 women attended the women’s health event at Community Hub South in March 2025.

## **Hartlepool will be a place of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.**

### **Learning for Inclusion offer**

Our Learning for Inclusion provision provides fun and flexible informal learning opportunities which engage adults to address some of the needs and priorities of our local communities. Our offer is designed to improve social mobility, enhance wellbeing, improve essential skills, and increase community cohesion in Hartlepool.

We have a wide range of activities available such as woodturning, horticulture, family homework clubs, and cooking. Since August 2024, 631 adults have enrolled on Learning for Inclusion provision within Hartlepool.

### **Literacy & Numeracy Strategic Partnership**

The first Literacy Summit was held 24th February 2025 with:

- 95 attendees from local businesses, NHS, VCSE, elected members, and HBC staff
- 85 attendees completed pledge forms to join the literacy network
- 76 attendees indicated their commitment to thematic sub-groups.

### **Hartlepool Art Gallery**

The BM exhibition at the gallery explored themes of identity and sexuality and was a great success, with Young Producers co-curating the Council collection which was exhibited alongside world renowned artists. The Learning Team worked with the artist EC Carter to provide a six-week programme of work, which was displayed in the community exhibition space at the gallery, with a celebration event for students and family. Young People speaking on camera about the exhibition can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/reel/427155713550540>

We continue to support Young Producer (YP) programme via regular meetings, opportunities and events. YP are currently working on plans to create an interactive mystery activity within the museum. One member of YP has been working with Gallery staff to create their own exhibition based on women's health, which will be displayed on one of our sites.

Artist Julie Cockburn worked with the members of the Women's Health Hub on practical skills such as embroidery and weaving, resulting in an exhibition of their works.

### **Hartlepool will be a place of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.**

The learning team staff worked with artist EC Carter and START to hold a six-week engaging art project exploring themes of addiction, mental health and resilience. This resulted in an exhibition for Recovery Month 2024.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/165bgQV5LL/>

Hartlepool's first Pop Up Pride event on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2024 was hosted by the Gallery in partnership with Curious Arts and HartGables. The event was a great success with large scale engagement. We collected physical and digital contributions that have been accessioned into the Council's LGBTQ+ collections.

The Council have supported community days at the waterfront museum sites including a community day with South East Asian community in Tees Valley hosted in April with the National Museum of the Royal Navy.

Marsha Garrett was commissioned to research into our collections with an African provenance. Marsha spent quality time with our collections and created a bespoke talk using her research at the gallery for the public, which was very well received by all.

The team worked with Transformers HPL to deliver a range of activities during Black History Month including:

- Traditional African drumming workshops at Hartlepool Art Gallery and Museum of Hartlepool.
- Question and Answer sessions with the public.
- A display an exhibition of objects and art for the month at Hartlepool Art Gallery.
- A cooking session with The Vestry Café, teaching students how to create traditional African meals, which were then served at the café.

The service took part in Tees Valley Museums Group (TVMG) Togetherfest working with a targeted group, Hartlepool Families First, along with open access sessions ranging from babies to older children to have a 'Tiger who came to Tea' themed storytelling session, crafts and activities.

We continue to embed Poverty Proofing throughout our venues and programmes with Family Sessions and school groups remain free of charge.

Through the Stories from the Sea project, we have been examining the queer and global majority histories of Hartlepool through our maritime and social history collections. We have worked extensively exploring these collections,

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building relationships, creating exhibitions and putting on events such as free arts activities on LGBTQI+ History Month.

During Creative Careers Week in November the Team visited English Martyrs school to promote creative careers industries to students. We took a range of objects, sign-up sheets and information.

We held some consultation days at the Museum of Hartlepool with free arts and crafts activities, refreshments and information gathering activities to gain insight from visitors. We regularly converse with targeted groups to gain their input and held our first ever Arts Day for home educators, as part of a joint initiative with TVMG.

**Hartlepool will be a place that is sustainable, clean, safe and green.**

**Waterfront Connectivity**

The Waterfront Connectivity Phase Two project, part of the Hartlepool Town Deal, began in March. The project will see improvements to footpaths, cycling routes/facilities, streetlighting and signage in and around Hartlepool marina and The Waterfront, and builds on the success of a pedestrian route linking Seaton Carew to Hartlepool Marina which opened in 2023.

**Jobs and Skills Website**

The digital enrolments module was successfully launched in August 2024, in advance of the 2024/25 Academic Year. This is part of the Jobs & Skills website which allows residents to find out about all the current and future courses which are available across a wide range of subjects including Literacy, Numeracy, Digital, ESOL, Education, Early Years, Health & Social Care, Business and Learning for Inclusion.

## **Hartlepool will be a place that has an inclusive and growing economy.**

### **Health and Social Care Academy**

The Health and Social Care Academy (HSCA) at the University Hospital of Hartlepool was officially launched in September 2024. One of five of Hartlepool Borough Council's Town Deal transformation projects £1.25m in funding was secured back in 2022 to support its development at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust. The new academy has a dedicated academy manager and clinical training team. It includes a bespoke 'at home' simulation suite, an immersive suite, a four-bed training bay, ICT suite, trainee common room and several flexible training and classrooms.

### **Young People in Tech**

The BIS, the centre for creative businesses in Hartlepool, hosted a special event aimed at young people interested in successful tech careers. Students from Hartlepool Sixth Form College and others from across Tees Valley attended the Powering Potential event organised by education charity The Talent Foundry and funded by Dell Technologies. The event gave the students the opportunity to gain a unique insight into the tech industry and receive tailored mentoring from professionals. Over the course of the day-long Powering Potential event, the students took part in a series of workshops and masterclasses covering different areas of the tech sector, and they were supported by volunteers from a range of local and national tech companies.

### **ESOL Pilot Course**

A bespoke Level 1 ESOL course has been developed to incorporate both the ESOL qualification alongside employment related activities so that adults can gain the skills needed to progress into work. There are 10 adults enrolled on the course which started in September 2024 and will finish in July 2025. This is being delivered together with Jobcentre.

### **Employment Events**

The Jobs and Skills Service took part in the following events:

- Work, Wealth and Wellbeing Event as part of National Older Workers Week
- Careers Event as part of National Careers Week
- Jobs Fair as part of Youth Employment Week

### **UKSPF Move Forward Programme**

Led by the Council's Jobs and Skills Service across the Tees Valley, Move Forward has supported 637 adults which is 117 more than the contract target by the end of March 2025. In the same time period, 184 have progressed into employment which is 64 more than the contract target. This success has led to the programme being extended for a further 12 months by TVCA.



### **Hartlepool will be a place that has an inclusive and growing economy.**

#### **Multiply Programme to improve numeracy skills**

Led by the Council's Jobs and Skills Service, Multiply has been highly successful with 1,355 undertaking bitesize provision by the end of March 2025. In the same time period, 340 have completed substantial learning which is 20 more than the contractual target for 2024/25.

This impact has led to TVCA highlighting our provision as best practice and we were the best performing Multiply contract within Tees Valley.

#### **Employment Pathway**

In the last 12 months, since launching the employment pathway the Jobs & Skills Hubs have delivered employment support to 1,717 unique residents and this has led to, at least, 190 adults progressing into employment over this period within Hartlepool.

In addition, at least 544 have progressed into education or volunteering in the last 12 months via the Jobs & Skills Hubs.

### **Hartlepool will be a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.**

#### **Workforce**

The Council has delivered a range of activity for our workforce to reflect our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

- Relaunched Workforce Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy.
- Implemented an EDI action, ensuring EDI is embedded into our working practices and is central to our culture.
- Ensured all new employees and those changing job roles, are aware of the Council's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion by including in the new Council induction Arrangements.
- Made all new employees aware of the Staff Equality Network, how to become a member and/or feed into the group on an ad-hoc basis.
- Promoted the Staff Equality Network to existing employees to encourage new membership and engagement.

**Hartlepool will be a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.**

- All new managers were requested to complete the Manager's Induction Programme, including attending the mandatory Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training.
- Improved and promote the EDI learning and development offer to all employees through the Workforce Development Programme 2024/25.
- Identified, promoted and delivered EDI Lunch and Learn Sessions to all employees on topics including mental health and care leavers.
- Promoted Apprenticeships to care leavers by working with the Through Care Team as part of the annual apprenticeship recruitment campaign
- Developed a policy and process for an annual Work Experience Programme including Care Leavers, individuals with SEND, students and ad-hoc requests.

**Scrutiny Investigation - Accessibility of Council Services in Hartlepool for Those with Disabilities and Long-Term Conditions**

Since the Scrutiny Investigation was completed, work has been underway to deliver on the agreed action plan. Updates for 2024/25 include:

- Guides to creating accessible content and booking interpreters are available for staff.
- A Text Relay service is now in use via customer services for all Adult Social Care Team including Adult Safeguarding / ISPA with access to the Relay UK app. This has also been introduced in the Support Hub.
- Deaf awareness training is available for all staff and has been added to the Workforce Development Programme from 2024/25.
- Compatibility checks have been conducted on the civic centre loop system and have confirmed compatibility with modern hearing aids.

**Accessibility of Council Governance Arrangements**

The range of activities that the Council has in place to improve the accessibility of Council governance arrangements have been promoted in Hartbeat, the Council's magazine that goes out to every household in the Borough. These activities include:

- The use of accessible locations at a range of times (morning, afternoon and early evening).
- Notices of meetings published online and displayed on the notice board at the Civic Centre.

**Hartlepool will be a place with a Council that is ambitious, fit for purpose and reflects the diversity of its community.**

- Agendas of meetings are available on request in a range of both paper and electronic formats, including larger font sizes, other languages and in audio format.
- A loop system, microphones and presentation screens are used in committee rooms and the Council Chamber and video recordings of Full Council meetings are published on the Council's website.

### **Armed Forces**

The Council has retained our Employer Recognition Gold Award (Armed Forces). This recognises the work that we do to ensure that staff who were previously members of the armed forces / reservists are not disadvantaged as part of the recruitment process and are supported as employees.

### **Elections 2024**

The Council's local elections in May 2024 saw the first councillors from minority ethnic backgrounds being elected to the Council in the Hart and Rossmere wards.

### **Jobs and Skills - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion training**

The Jobs and Skills Service continues to promote a wide range of learning opportunities covering key themes including Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. Over the last 12 months, training has been delivered to businesses/organisations in key sectors including Early Years, Education, Healthcare and Construction. Jobs & Skills also ensured that these topics are embedded within all of our learning which so that all learners are aware who have enrolled with the Service.

## Activity planned for 2025/26

From 2025/26 onwards the Council has agreed that it will be beneficial to make our Equality Objectives more specific and for them to sit within the Council Plan underpinning the agreed priorities. New equality objectives have been developed by the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer Group using the findings from the Big Conversation and recent scrutiny investigations into accessibility and poverty. It is intended that this approach will provide more specific focus on areas of the most significant disparity where there are identified gaps and areas of concern or under-representation in our activities.

In April 2025, the Council's Finance and Policy Committee agreed the following Equality Objectives.

- We will make Hartlepool a safe and welcoming place for people from diverse communities.
- We will ensure that our services and information are easily accessible by everyone, including those with additional needs.
- We will develop our knowledge and understanding of our communities.
- We will act as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ambassador.
- We will be an equitable employer.

**We will make Hartlepool a safe and welcoming place for people from diverse communities.**

Activity planned for 2025/26 includes:

- Taking part in National Safeguarding Adults Week with a week of publicity to promote the Anne Craft Trust week of learning.
- Spotlight campaigns linked to adult safeguarding on themes identified from the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board annual survey.

**We will make Hartlepool a safe and welcoming place for people from diverse communities.**

- Coffee morning to update local safeguarding champions and promote the work of the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board.
- Raising awareness of the 16 safer places in Hartlepool with an article to be published in Hartbeat promoting the most recent safe place and informing public of the other venues registered as safer places.
- Develop a social Justice training programme for staff focused on celebrating inclusion and diversity.
- Health Protection Planning to look at diverse community support in the event of incidents
- Continuing the individual placement support (IPS) service supporting those on their recovery from substance use into work.
- Recovery connections are currently commissioned into Hartlepool to support the integration of those on their recovery journey from using drugs or alcohol into communities.
- Working with Hartlepool Food partnership (HFP) to support communities around food growing, enabling people from diverse backgrounds to be part of food growing projects.
- Working through Hartlepool's Antipoverty Strategy Group to ensure fair access to resources for families with different needs.
- Supporting the development of a Hartlepool Diversity Network, supporting diverse communities to have a voice.
- Delivering ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses in Hartlepool Jobs and Skills service to ensure residents have the language skills to integrate and contribute to the local economy.
- Working with our Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector partners to create a Welcome to Hartlepool resource for anyone new to the town to ensure they have information on all support services and feel welcomed to Hartlepool.
- Celebrating diversity within the Community Hubs through our diverse student celebration events where cultural awareness is shared and food is made and shared.
- Utilising our VCSE partners at Salaam Centre to launch a Hartlepool Jobs and Skills Employment & Training Hub for people from diverse backgrounds, this will be in partnership with Job Centre Plus.
- Continuing to celebrate diversity within the Community Hubs through events, activities, gallery exhibitions and book displays which align to national awareness days/campaigns, through working with local partners

**We will make Hartlepool a safe and welcoming place for people from diverse communities.**

and through engaging with national partners (such as The Black British Ballet exhibition).

- Ensuring our library stock reflects the diverse population of Hartlepool, including books in other languages and representation within stories.

**We will ensure that our services and information are easily accessible by everyone, including those with additional needs.**

Activity planned for 2025/26 includes:

- Launching a new Council website with improved accessibility features.
- The Council's Literacy Champions working to ensure the information produced and given to residents is accessible to all residents by auditing the literacy levels of all information and amending it to be accessible.
- Training Council Literacy Champions to ensure their departments also review how they work with residents including verbal communication and how they check understanding of information shared.
- Refreshing the information available to the general public on the Teeswide Safeguarding Adults Board website. The Council will contribute with a refresh of information linked to our new website and rebranding.
- Full page promotion of the Sensory Loss services and the implementation of SignVideo in partnership with NT&H FT Trust (University of Hartlepool Hospital) in Hartbeat Magazine.
- Updating of our Sensory Loss Register with letters to people on the register (where appropriate) informing them and seeking permission to share information with them / keeping them on the register.
- Hosting a promotional event at the Centre for Independent Living for World Mental Health Day.
- Developing an AI Chatbot on Hartlepool Now for better navigation and accessibility of Hartlepool Now Equipment Finder and Information, Advice and Guidance.
- Monitor the BAME Information and Advice service and monitor outcomes.
- Work with the Citizenship Group, Sensory Loss groups and other seldom heard communities to review accessibility of information and advice, including easy read information on complaints and advocacy.
- Develop an Aspirations and Ambitions programme for young people.

**We will ensure that our services and information are easily accessible by everyone, including those with additional needs.**

- Relocating the Sexual Health Service to an accessible site, with more bus routes available and suitable parking after listening to user feedback. Also, looking at accessible clinics in community areas
- Health Protection will be looking at how messages are given in the event of incidents of public health as part of future communications plans.
- The Stop Smoking Services across Hartlepool will continue to be situated in 4 areas across the town (Family Hubs and Community Hubs). These buildings are accessible on bus routes and have ramp access to all. Community Navigators and Family Hubs staff members are present to assist with additional needs.
- Ensuring that health literacy is considered with all public health messaging.
- Delivering the work of the literacy task force and ensuring that the information that is shared / used (letters, website etc) is accessible and understandable to residents.
- Deliver 12 monthly health promotion campaigns to targeted populations / communities within Hartlepool, using evidence-based health promotion messages and signposting to support for communities. Delivery is by a range of methods to ensure understanding and accessibility
- Working in partnership with Hartlepool food partnership (HFP) to produce information on the food partnership web page enabling people to access affordable food in Hartlepool. This will include recipe videos for the public, low/no cost food leaflet and details of low/no cost food places in Hartlepool with an online map highlighting locations in Hartlepool where food is available.
- Developing a plan on a page for the Hartlepool Antipoverty Strategy so that information is more accessible. Priorities include ensuring support/information is available to groups who may have less access to information/services e.g. Electively Home Educated children and children with Special Educational Needs, disability or caring responsibility
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy Year One Actions include consideration of inclusion in any changes to information/services
- Deliver accessible Governance arrangements (in partnership with the communications team) including the production of agendas / reports in accessible formats as part of the launch of the new website, redesigning relevant webpages and exploration of committee management packages to improve digital access.

**We will ensure that our services and information are easily accessible by everyone, including those with additional needs.**

- Continuing to make our buildings and services accessible to everyone including installing a new lift in Community Hub Central to remove the risk of lift access being unavailable.
- Developing and promoting a stepped reading ability offer so that the library can be more accessible to those with varying literacy levels.
- Utilising the Literacy for Life Resident Panels, which will be independently led by Hartlepool Carers, to review all Learning and Skills service information to check user understanding.
- Working with a professional artist to deliver arts projects working with children in care, home educators, Hart Gable and Hartlepool Youth Service.
- Providing flexible options for learning, such as online courses, in-person sessions, and blended learning approaches, to cater to the needs of our communities.

**We will develop our knowledge and understanding of our communities.**

Activity planned for 2025/26 includes:

- Developing a Hartlepool Community Cohesion Strategy utilising the community engagement work Belong have been commissioned to deliver.
- Launching a new Single Impact Assessment within the Council to help us understand how our actions affect different communities and to inform our decision-making process.
- Completing a Health Impact Assessment following the unrest in July 2024.
- Action for Deafness: New contract in place from 01/07/2025, Provider meeting with the community (including Hartlepool Deaf Centre Members) to seek views on how the new service will be delivered.
- Continuing to look for opportunities in new venues and continue to do 'pop up stalls' within areas such as Middleton Grange for our Stop Smoking Services. This will help us to develop a knowledge and understanding of the communities within Hartlepool. The H&SH bus is also going to offer some out of hours clinics such as weekends and evenings in areas across Hartlepool which may require additional support (such as areas with higher smoking prevalence). The services also do a



### **We will develop our knowledge and understanding of our communities.**

holistic assessment and will refer and signpost to other services as needed, to help reduce health inequalities across Hartlepool

- As part of healthy living pharmacy work, supporting pharmacies in Hartlepool to deliver 12 agreed health promotion campaigns. (6 national and 6 locally agreed) using resources to share key messages and listening to user feedback to change delivery actions.
- Working with Hartlepool Food Partnership to produce a survey for schools about growing food and what schools were doing and what support they would benefit from to enhance children's understanding of food and where it comes from.
- Continuing to work with residents on the Anti-Poverty strategy and Poverty Truth Commission so that they are central to decision making and proposed actions are based on understanding the community. Plans include using local data to understand local need and target action more effectively
- Delivering the year 1 actions of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy which include seeking community insights e.g. Barriers to healthy eating in early years that could be overcome with system action. Priorities are based on local data demonstrating need.
- Engaging in regular consultation, in focus groups (such as with our Community Hubs Youth Board) and with wider residents, to ensure our Community Hub services reflect the current and emerging needs of our community.

### **We will act as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ambassador.**

Activity planned for 2025/26 includes:

- Holding Citizenship Meetings (Quarterly) to include people with a Learning Disability, promoting Annual health Checks and Health action planning with our health colleagues.
- Supporting those with sensory loss through the publication of new contracts / providers and rolling out of on demand British Sign Language (BSL) support in partnership with University of Hartlepool Hospital.
- Refreshing the Autism Plan on a page, developing an autism user group to inform future service design and ensuring current provision is fit for purpose.

### **We will act as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ambassador.**

- Developing support for people with autism including technology to support neuro diverse people to live independently more effectively.
- Providing specialist training and raising awareness around autism.
- Developing the community offer to better meet the needs of autistic people.
- Working with Cleveland Fire Brigade (CFB) on the Stay Safe and Warm campaign, to support with readability of literature given to residents when visited by fire officers during stay safe and warm delivery
- Public Health working with the Hartlepool Food Partnership to host open forums.
- Encouraging participation by Hartlepool workplaces in the Better Health at Work Award (BHAWA) to experience the health and well-being benefits participation can bring to all staff in workplaces.
- Taking part in the Hartlepool Anti-Poverty Group and preparing a new poverty strategy for the Borough.
- Delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training programmes to improve the knowledge and skills of staff members and individuals within our communities across Hartlepool.
- Developing targeted employment support provision which is tailored to the needs of diverse groups and in partnership with community organisations across Hartlepool
- Continuing to provide volunteering opportunities to residents from all backgrounds which reflect their goals and interests, whilst supporting them throughout their volunteer journey
- Working with START on a project with professional artists for those in drug and alcohol recovery, resulting in a community exhibition.
- Hosting a Pop-Up Pride at Hartlepool Art Gallery in July and work with colleagues to support Hartlepool Pride.
- Implementing a 'sensory corner' at the Art Gallery with ear defenders, fidget toys, visual stories and portable stools free for visitors to use.
- Museum of Hartlepool working with Men's Suicide Prevention Charity Andy's Man Club on a project to explore and tell the story of PSS Wingfield Castle through research and creating a handling box to use with care home residents, community groups, schools and the public.
- Delivering sports sessions in our park over the summer providing the opportunity for inter-generational play.
- Training staff in dementia friends / Making every contact count.

### **We will act as an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion ambassador.**

- Promoting BAME ladies swim session and swim costume relaxation and consult the ladies on the provision at Highlight.
- Hosting a Kabaddi competition and liaising with predominantly Asian men around developing the offer across the town.
- Promoting the disabled access facilities for Highlight with pool pods etc.
- Exploring out-swimming cancer sessions and how they can be implemented.
- Exploring working with the Parkinson charity grant funding available to set up sessions across the leisure service.
- Promoting the all-inclusive gym kit as each site opens the gym with new Technogym equipment.
- Attracting disabled users by promoting relevant classes and highlighting the suitability of each session.

### **We will be an equitable employer.**

Activity planned for 2025/26 includes:

- Improving the recruitment and selection Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data to better understand trends and gaps for all protected groups and identify actions to improve.
- Exploring quality standards for EDI for example Stonewall, the Race Equality Charter and others.
- Reviewing feedback from leavers and agreeing any actions needed to improve equality.
- Reviewing feedback on the Annual Employee Survey and agreeing any actions needed to improve equality.
- Promoting Employee Benefits through Vivup to enable employees to spread the cost of purchasing goods.
- Promoting Apprenticeships to care leavers by working with the Through Care Team as part of the annual apprenticeship recruitment campaign
- Identifying, promoting and delivering EDI campaign programme to all employees to increase awareness and understanding.
- Continuing to identify, promote and deliver EDI Lunch and Learn Sessions to all employees.

**We will be an equitable employer.**

- Promoting e-learning EDI training to all employees and monitoring compliance with mandatory EDI training.
- Taking part in the Celebration of Social Work Day - to celebrate our newly Qualified workers and those who achieved success in the previous year, educational attainment, best practice, personal development
- Contributing to the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (SC-WRES) which is a continuous improvement programme designed to support social care organisations achieve anti-racist workplaces.
- Working with North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust and Hartlepool College of Further Education to maximise opportunities within the Health and Social Care Academy.
- Promoting social care career pathways linked to national and regional campaigns.
- Ensuring that staff who were previously members of the armed forces / reservists are not disadvantaged as part of the recruitment process and are supported as employees.
- Working with our recognised trade unions to adopt an anti-racism charter.

## Data sources

The data used in this report includes:

2024 Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) in July 2025.

Census 2021, published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Data from the annual SSDA903 Children Looked After Return as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 (reporting year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025).

Local Child Poverty Statistics for 2023/24, published by the Loughborough University Centre for Research in Social Policy and commissioned by the End Child Poverty Coalition in 2025. These statistics are based on calculations that build on the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC Children in Low Income Families dataset, published in March 2025.

Hartlepool Borough Council workforce and recruitment data from internal systems.

## Data Check (office use only)

Officer responsible for inputting data:	CG
Date completed:	8.8.25
Officer responsible for checking data:	JW
Date completed:	8.8.25

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