

Equality Information Report 2026

Foreword from the Leader of the Council:

Norwich is a city defined by its people; a community enriched by diversity, creativity, and resilience. This diversity is not just something we celebrate; it is what makes Norwich stronger and more vibrant.

Equality, diversity, and inclusion remain at the heart of our vision for the city. Guided by *We are Norwich*, our [Community-Led Plan](#), we are committed to ensuring that fairness and opportunity shape every decision we make and every service we deliver.



Over the past year, we have continued to work towards creating a city where everyone can thrive. From improving access to affordable housing and supporting health and wellbeing, to building safer, more connected neighbourhoods, our focus has been on tackling the issues that matter most to our residents.

We know the challenges facing our communities are real and complex – from the cost-of-living crisis to persistent inequalities. That is why we are working closely with partners across the city to provide practical support and long-term solutions. Together, we are determined to make Norwich a place where no one is left behind.

This report sets out our equality objectives, shares progress against our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, and provides insight into the diversity of the people we serve. It reflects both the progress we have made and the work still to come.

Cllr Mike Stonard
Leader of the Council



Accessibility: for further information about alternative formats and support accessing this report, go to the [Accessibility information section below](#).

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SECTION ONE: Our Duty

Introduction

1. Building a fairer Norwich is central to our mission. We want a city where everyone feels a sense of belonging, where diversity is valued, and where no one is excluded. Achieving this means understanding the different needs of our communities and removing the barriers that limit opportunity.
2. Our commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion underpins everything we do. It influences how we design and deliver services, how we listen and respond to residents and other local community groupings, and how we work with partners to address the root causes of inequality. By prioritising fairness, prevention, and early support, we aim to create a city where everyone has the chance to thrive.
3. This Equality Information Report sets out our equality objectives, provides an overview of the diversity within our communities, and tracks progress through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Appended to this year's Equality Information Report is a progress report.
4. It highlights the achievements we have made so far as we continue working towards a fairer Norwich.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024/27

5. These ambitions and the outcomes we seek to achieve by working with the people of Norwich are summarised in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) Strategy 2024/27](#) which was published in July 2024.
6. This strategy sets out three core aims within the EDI context, which form our equality objectives. These objectives are the outcomes we will report against this year and in the future. The next section of this report outlines these aims in detail, along with key highlights of what we have delivered over the past year to achieve them.

Definitions and scope

7. As a public sector organisation, we are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation; promoting equality of

opportunity; and fostering positive relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not. These duties are set out in [section 149\(1\) of the Equality Act 2010 under the Public Sector Equality Duty](#).

8. This means we work to address discrimination, harassment, and victimisation linked to the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act. They are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origins); religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.
9. In addition to meeting the requirements of the Equality Duty and addressing the nine protected characteristics, our ambitions extend further. We also focus on supporting migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers; individuals who have served or continue to serve in the Armed Forces; people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage; and those facing health-related inequalities.
10. Details of these characteristics, along with our definitions of equality, diversity, inclusion, and discrimination, are set out in our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2024–27](#), which also covers Reasonable Adjustment. The policy explains the legal framework, our approach to Reasonable Adjustment, and the standards of behaviour expected from councillors and employees. It also outlines our responsibilities as an employer and service provider, and how we deliver services in line with these principles.

Meeting our Equality Duty

11. We use various tools to meet the duties described above and to promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across our communities:
 - a. **Shared ambitions with strategic partners to reduce inequality:** We share a common ambition with our partners to create a fairer, more inclusive city. By working collaboratively with community organisations, local businesses, the voluntary sector, and other public services, we can pool our strengths and resources to address inequality. This involves taking joint action on priority issues, exchanging ideas and expertise, and developing solutions that deliver meaningful and lasting benefits for everyone who lives, works and learns in Norwich and those who visit the city.
 - b. **Inclusive Workforce Plan:** Through the Inclusive Workforce Plan the council seeks to embed fairness and transparency across

employment practices. It focuses on improving workforce diversity, addressing underrepresentation through SMART objectives, and publishing ethnicity pay gap data. The plan also promotes anti-racism and strengthens data confidence, while supporting staff wellbeing through initiatives like mental health first aid training and free flu vaccinations. Together, these actions help create an inclusive, equitable, and healthy workforce.

- c. **Training and development provision:** We provide ongoing training for officers covering key areas such as equality and diversity duties and responsibilities, equality impact analysis, trauma-informed practice, and safeguarding for children, young people, and adults at risk.
- d. **Community demographic and asset mapping:** The council ensures that councillors and officers have access to up-to-date information about the makeup of Norwich's communities through regular briefings, [State of Norwich](#) reports, and links to key data sources such as [Norfolk Insight](#) and the council's [Community Conversations, Data and Insights Hub](#). These tools support evidence-based decision-making and help ensure policies and services are informed by a clear understanding of local demographics and community assets.
- e. **Equality planning, policy and strategy:** Over the past two years, we have embedded our new [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2024–27, which incorporates our Reasonable Adjustment Policy](#) and the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024–27](#). The strategy is underpinned by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2024–27 (approved in January 2025). Delivery of the Action Plan remains a priority, with actions being implemented across the organisation. This plan continues to guide our work, ensuring equality and inclusion remain central to everything we do.
- f. **Socio-Economic Duty (SED)**
The council formally adopted the Socio-Economic Duty in January 2025, reinforcing its commitment to addressing inequalities linked to poverty and financial hardship. To embed this duty into our work, we have strengthened our Equality Impact Assessment process to ensure that all decisions consider how policies and services can help reduce inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage. This approach ensures that tackling socio-economic

inequality is a core part of our decision-making and service planning, supporting fairer outcomes for our communities.

g. **Equality Impact Assessments:** The council has strengthened its EqIA process this year to make it clearer, easier to use, and more consistently applied. EqIAs are carried out to eliminate discrimination and promote fair access when the council develops actions, policies, and strategies. Recent improvements include updated templates, guidance and training, better access to resources, and the introduction of EDI Champions across the organisation to provide local support. These changes ensure equality considerations are embedded in decision-making and service planning.

h. **Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs):**

Through our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy and the community-led plan *We Are Norwich*, we have committed to targeting resources where they can have the greatest impact. Using data from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation alongside local insight, we have identified neighbourhoods within the 10% most deprived nationally as our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs). These areas are a key focus for our efforts to reduce inequality across the city, guiding strategic decision-making and informing where council and partner resources and investments are best directed. This targeted approach ensures that our work is evidence-based and prioritises communities experiencing the greatest disadvantage.

Data

12. The final section of this report presents a range of charts and data illustrating the demographic profile of Norwich's residents, our customers, and our workforce. These insights are drawn from sources such as the [Office for National Statistics](#), [Norfolk Insight](#), [LG Inform](#), and other national and local research.
13. Each year, we publish datasets that provide an overview of key statistics about our residents, the city, its economy, and overall wellbeing. These can be accessed on our website under [State of Norwich](#) and complement the data presented in this report.
14. This report presents factual data relating to equality, diversity and inclusion across the organisation. It does not seek to interpret or speculate on the reasons behind any changes or trends observed. The

purpose is to provide a transparent and objective overview to support informed decision-making and further analysis where appropriate.

15. As with last year's Equality Information Report, we have adopted a consistent colour scheme for charts to improve accessibility for people with visual impairments, such as colour blindness. The design avoids clashing colours and includes alternative identifiers, such as varied marker shapes, for different data series. The colour scheme was created using [Venngage](#), a trusted resource for accessible colour palettes.

Targeting our resources

16. The council is committed to directing resources where they will have the greatest impact. Our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs, see item 10h) framework identifies neighbourhoods in Norwich experiencing the highest levels of disadvantage, using the latest data and local insight. This approach ensures that support is focused on the communities most in need, in line with our [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) and the [We Are Norwich](#) plan.
17. We have refined the RITA framework to make it more accurate and meaningful. This enabled us to identify smaller pockets of deprivation that were previously overlooked. We have also worked with officers and partners to adjust boundaries using local knowledge and community insight.
18. Embedding RITAs across council services and with partners remains a key priority. This means ensuring that RITAs are considered when developing policies, strategies, and making decisions, and that progress is monitored through outcome-based accountability.

SECTION TWO: Meeting our Equality Objectives

Our objectives

19. Our equality objectives are listed within our [EDI Strategy 2024/27](#), described as 'aims'. They are:

- Aim 1:** Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.
- Aim 2:** Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.
- Aim 3:** Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

20. A breakdown of these objectives, the priorities underpinning them, and progress made is provided in the appendices to this report. Over the past year, the council has made substantial progress, with key highlights including: the formation of a dedicated Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group focused on accessibility; the recruitment of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champions across service areas; and the award of over £3.7 million in home adaptation grants to more than 780 residents; empowering them to live more safely, healthily, and independently.

Aim 1: Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.

21. This objective focuses primarily on the council as an employer and aligns with our commitment to being an *Open and Modern Council*, as set out in our [Community-Led Plan](#). Our priorities under this objective are:

- Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market.
- Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies.
- Support colleagues to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.

Aim 2: Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.

22. This objective focuses on how we design and deliver services to benefit everyone. Like the previous objective, it aligns with our *Community-Led Plan*, reflecting our commitment to delivering excellence (as part of our priority to be an *Open and Modern Council*) and tackling the root causes of disadvantage (as part of the *A Fairer Norwich* priority). Our priorities under this objective include:

- Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion.
- Undertake service-specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition.
- Ensure that our knowledge about the people and communities we serve informs our service planning, and that their voices are heard.

Aim 3: Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

23. This objective is about ensuring we are equipped to provide an equal and fair chance for everyone we and our partners serve, directing resources and influencing investment where the need is greatest. It aligns

with all priorities in our Community-Led Plan. Our priorities under this objective include:

- Ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes.
- Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this.
- Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities.
- Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource.
- Mitigate the disproportionate inequalities of climate change impacting specific sectors of the community.

Responding to motions and local initiatives

24. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan brings together a range of commitments agreed by the council, including motions adopted before the launch of the EDI Strategy in January 2024, as well as more recent pledges. The plan turns these commitments into practical actions, ensuring the council's approach reflects priorities set through democratic decision-making. The council is also reviewing new and emerging issues, such as those linked to the recent Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of sex and motions addressing hate-related issues in the city. Appropriate responses are being developed, and where relevant, these may lead to additional actions being incorporated into the EDI Action Plan over the coming year.

SECTION THREE: Information about our People, Customers, and Employees

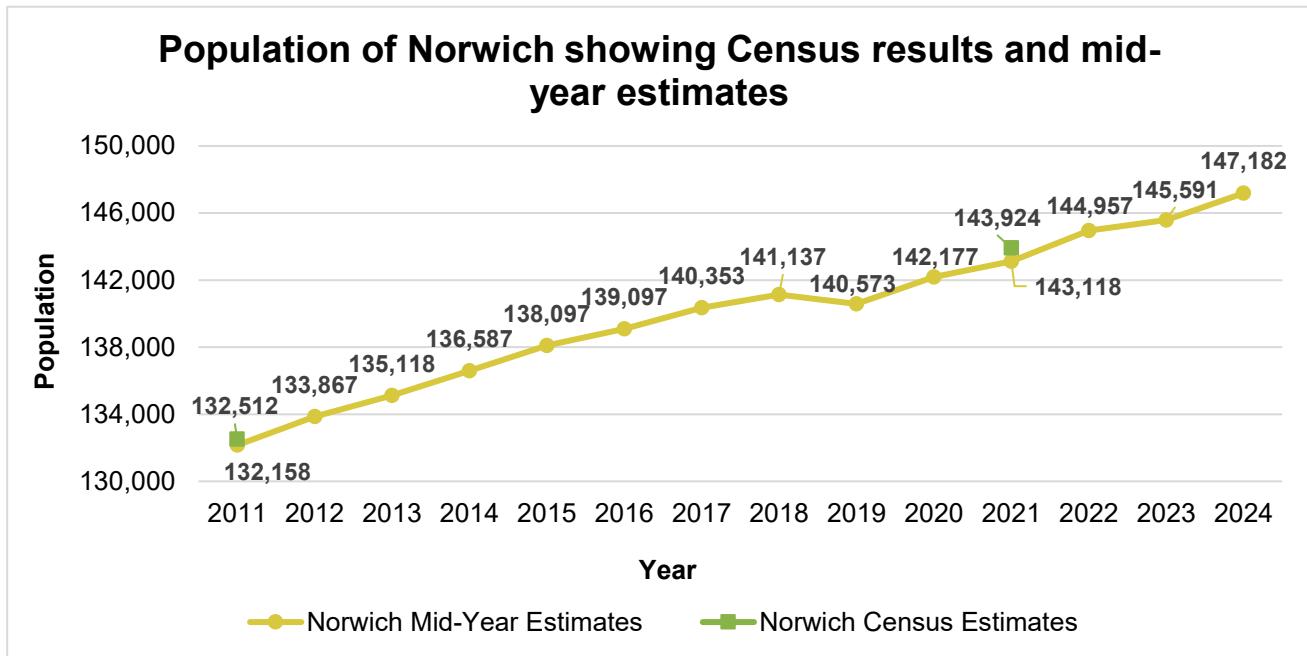
25. Our annual [Equality Information Reports](#) include a range of data and visual summaries that show the demographic makeup of our communities, customers, and workforce. This information is drawn from reliable sources such as the [Office for National Statistics](#), [Norfolk Insight](#), [LG Inform](#), and other national and local research.

State of Norwich

26. Each year, the council publishes a dataset that provides an overview of key statistics about Norwich, covering its residents, the city itself, the local economy, and overall wellbeing. This information is available on our website under [State of Norwich](#).

POPULATION

27. On Census Day (21 March 2021), Norwich had a usual resident population of 143,924 - an increase of 9% (11,412 people) since 2011, when the population was 132,512. This places Norwich 15th out of 39 districts in the East of England by population size. The latest mid-year



estimate for 2024 shows the population has grown further to 147,182.

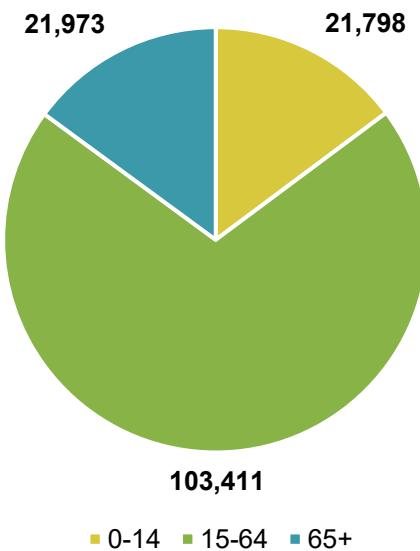
28. Norwich's population growth of 9% is slightly higher than the regional average of 8% for the East of England and the national average of 7% for England overall.

29. As of 2021, Norwich ranked 4th out of 45 local authority areas in the East of England for population density, with 36.9 people per hectare. In comparison, the regional average is 3.31 people per hectare, and the national average for England is 4.34. The East of England also recorded the highest population growth of any region in England and Wales between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.

Population by age

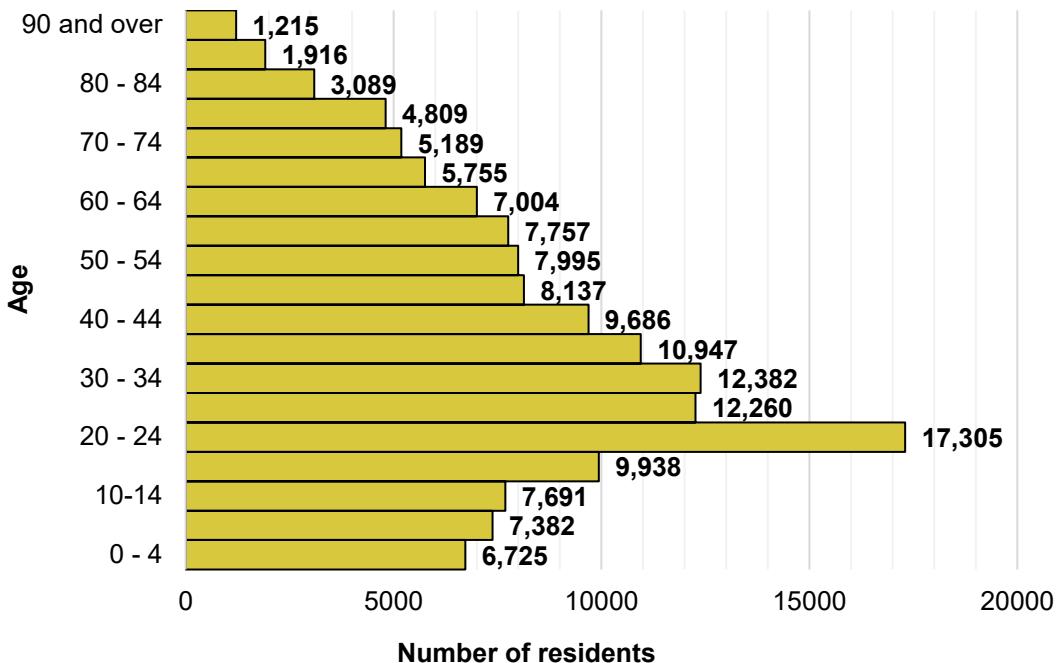
30. According to the 2024 mid-year population estimate, Norwich had 147,182 residents. Of these, 14.8% (21,798) were children under 15, 70.3% (103,411) were adults aged 15 to 64, and 14.9% (21,973) were aged 65 and over. Within this, 2.1% (3,131 people) were aged 85 or older.

Population by three broad age groups for Norwich (2024)



31. According to the 2024 mid-year population estimates, the largest age group in Norwich is 20–24-year-olds, with 17,305 people (11.75% of the population). *Graph appears next page.*

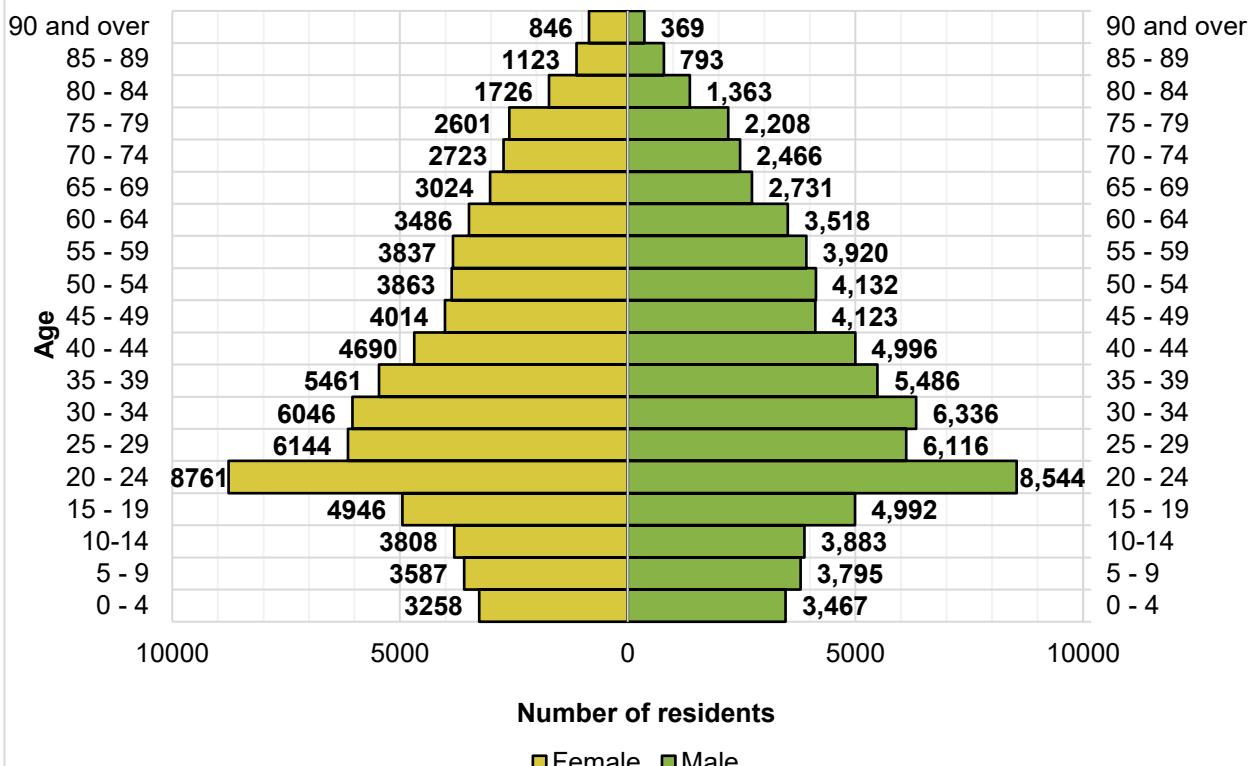
Graph displaying the breakdown of Norwich residents by 5-year age gaps



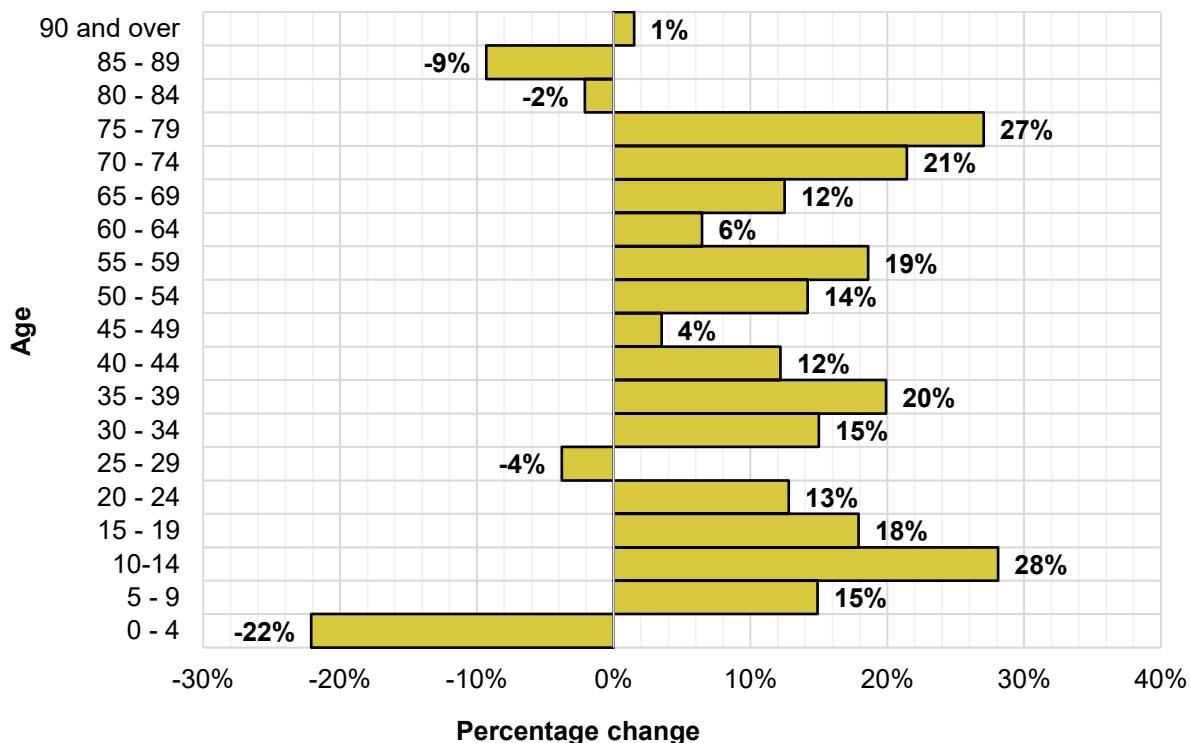
Population by sex and age

32. As of the 2024 mid-year estimate, Norwich's population was 147,182, made up of 73,944 women (50.2%) and 73,238 men (49.8%). In comparison, the 2011 Census recorded 67,245 women (50.7%) and 65,267 men (49.3%).
33. Since 2011, the female population has grown by 9.5%, while the male population has increased by 11.5%.
34. Life expectancy in Norwich is 78.1 years for men; slightly below the England average of 79.3 years and 82.7 years for women, compared to the national average of 83.2 years.
35. The gap in life expectancy between Norwich wards is significant: 8.8 years for men and 8.1 years for women, comparing the highest and lowest areas.
36. The chart on the next page shows Norwich's population by sex across five-year age bands. It highlights that women tend to live longer than men, resulting in a higher proportion of females in the older age groups.

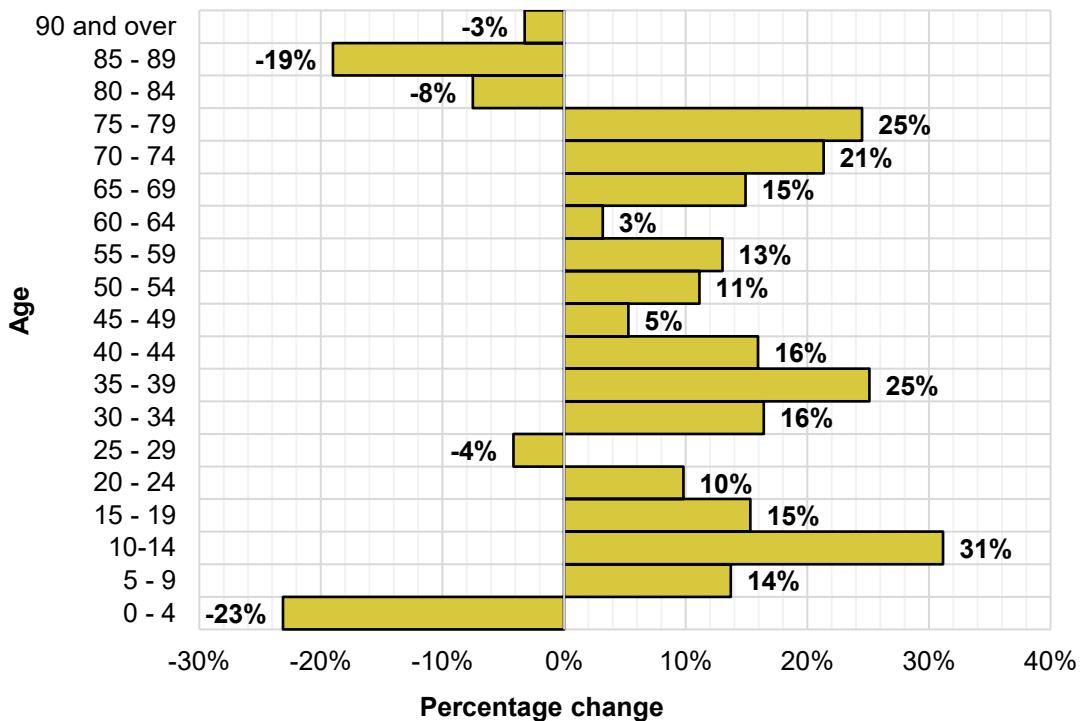
Breakdown of Norwich residents by sex and 5-year age gaps



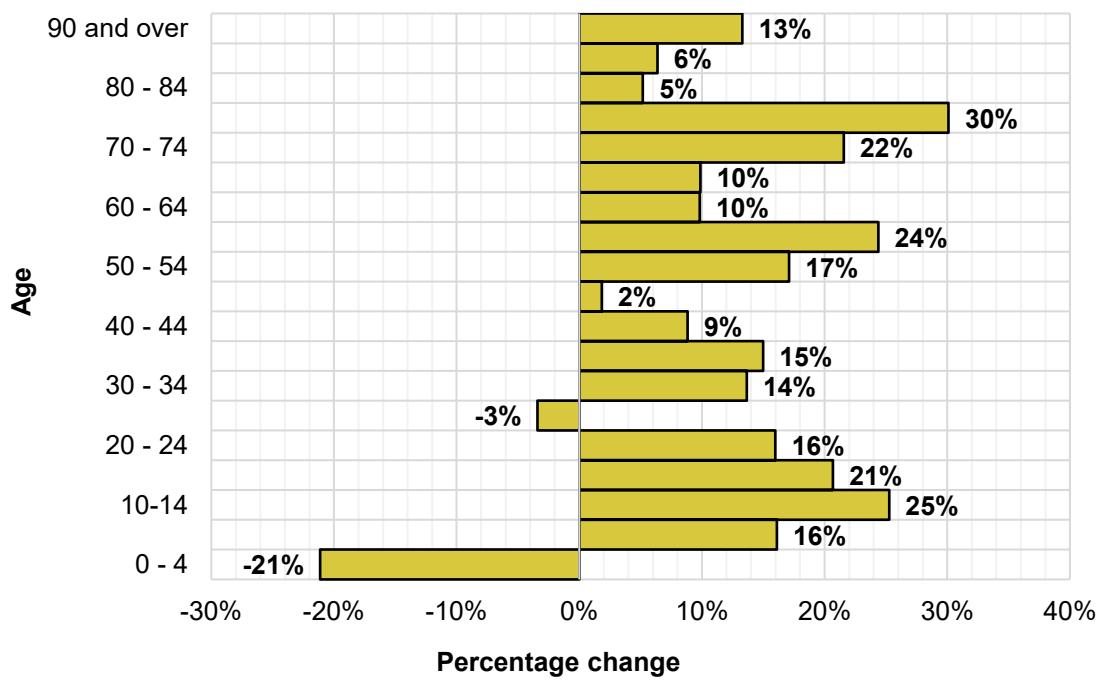
Percentage change of Norwich residents by age band, between mid-2011 and mid-2024



Percentage change of female, Norwich residents by age band, between mid-2011 and mid-2024



Percentage change of male, Norwich residents by age band, between mid-2011 and mid-2024



Sexual orientation

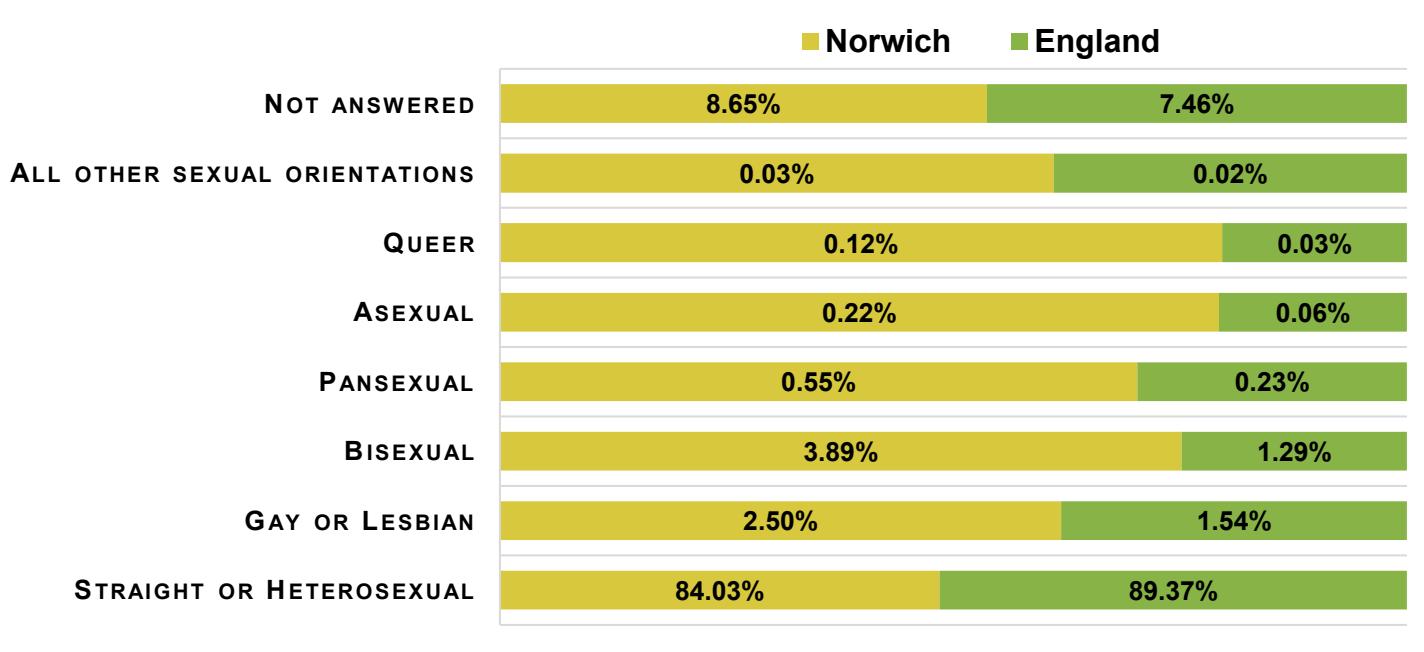
37. Because detailed data on sexual orientation at district level is collected infrequently, the most recent information available comes from the 2021 Census. This was the first census to include a question on sexual orientation, providing more accurate data on the LGB+ population (those identifying as lesbian or gay, bisexual, or another sexual orientation). This information supports monitoring and compliance with anti-discrimination duties under the Equality Act 2010.

38. The question was voluntary and asked only of people aged 16 and over: “Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?” The response options were:

- Straight or heterosexual
- Gay or lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other sexual orientation

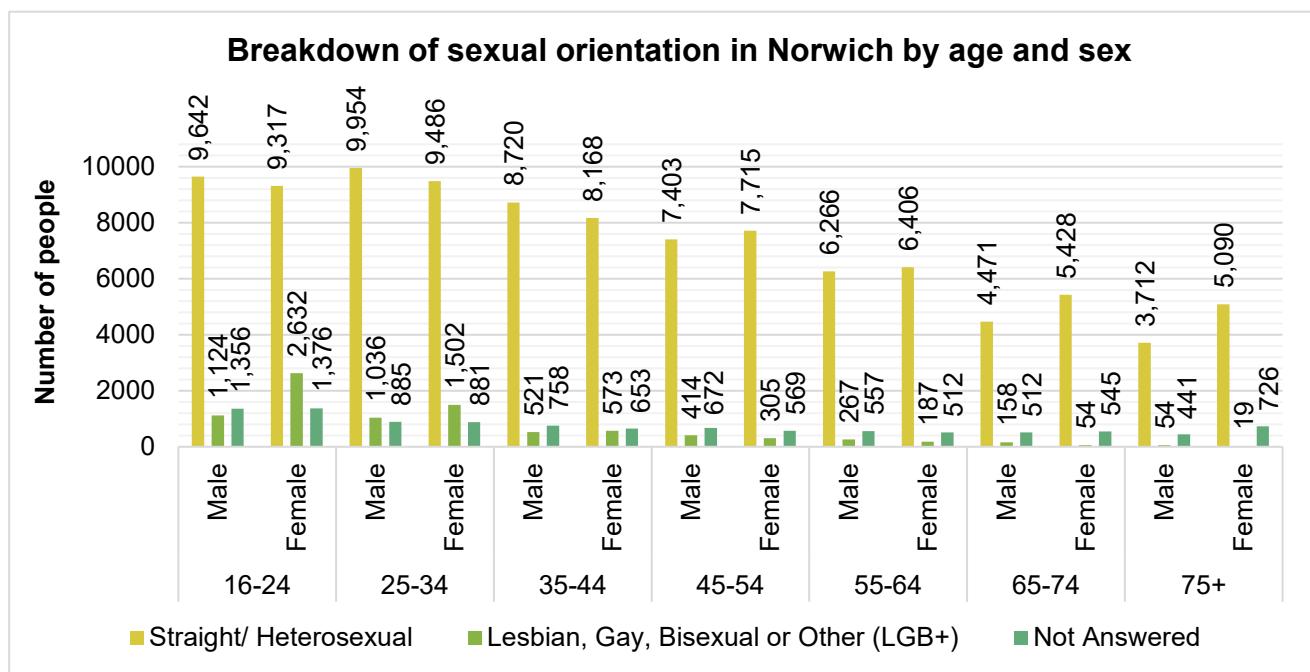
39. The charts and tables on this and the following page show how people in Norwich responded to the Census question about their sexual orientation in comparison with the overall figures for England.

Population by sexual orientation



Sexual orientation	Norwich		England	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Straight or Heterosexual	101,477	84.03%	41,114,478	89.37%
Gay or Lesbian	3,025	2.50%	709,704	1.54%
Bisexual	4,700	3.89%	591,690	1.29%
Pansexual	669	0.55%	107,852	0.23%
Asexual	267	0.22%	26,614	0.06%
Queer	143	0.12%	13,928	0.03%
All other sexual orientations	41	0.03%	9,963	0.02%
Not answered	10,443	8.65%	3,432,728	7.46%
Total	120,765		46,006,957	

40. The table below shows the breakdown of sexual orientation in Norwich by age and sex for individuals aged 16 and over (Census 2021).



Support for those seeking sanctuary

41. The council has continued to strengthen its commitment to sanctuary, welcome and inclusion through a range of initiatives. Highlights include hosting Refugee Week activities, such as an official launch event in the council chamber and community-led projects that foster connection and understanding.
42. Training sessions like “Speak Up for Sanctuary” have equipped over 30 officers and members with practical tools in how to have difficult conversations and we have updated our EqIAs to include particular reference to refugees and asylum seekers alongside other vulnerable groups.
43. We actively participate in government funded schemes and we use the Home Office asylum dispersal funding to improve equitable access to essential services for these vulnerable groups.
44. We are currently working alongside local statutory and voluntary sector partners with an organisation called Belong to deliver a series of communicating for cohesion sessions in the city which tackle mis- and disinformation as well as building skills amongst the community to communicate effectively with each other.

Homes for Ukraine (H4U)

45. Since March 2022, we have continued to work with Norfolk County Council and neighbouring districts to support people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. The Homes for Ukraine (H4U) scheme provides wrap-around support for guests living in Norwich, with wellbeing remaining a key priority.
46. To date, the council has supported over 320 guests, including more than 80 children, helping many to move from hosted arrangements into private rental or social housing, or to return to Ukraine. We also continue to assist hosts, over 190 of whom have generously opened their homes; some for more than three years.
47. In 2025, the team began supporting guests with applications for the Ukrainian Permission Extension Scheme (UPES), which allows them to remain in the UK for an additional 19 months.
48. We remain incredibly grateful to the hosts and community members whose generosity and commitment have made this scheme a success,

helping Ukrainian guests feel safe and supported during such uncertain times.

Child Poverty

49. In Norwich, about 31.6% of children live in households below the poverty line after housing costs are taken into account. This means nearly one in three children in the city are growing up in poverty, which is above the Norfolk average (25.4%) and slightly higher than the national (England) average (27.8%).
50. This measure looks at income after housing costs, as rent and housing expenses significantly affect what families have left for essentials. The figures were produced by the Centre for Research in Social Policy for the End Child Poverty Coalition, using government low-income data adjusted with local rent and household survey information to provide a more accurate picture of living standards.

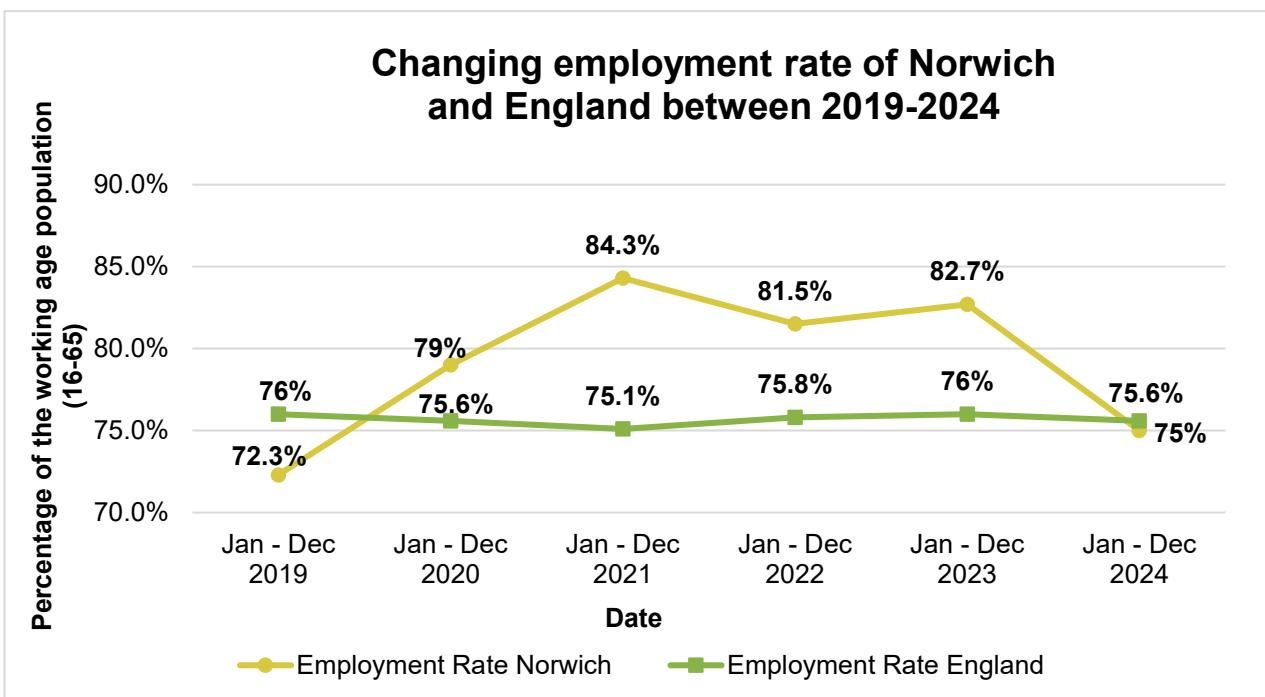
Free school meals

51. Free school meal eligibility continues to rise nationally. For the 2024-2025 academic year, around 2.2 million pupils were eligible across England, representing 25.7% of all pupils.
52. In Norfolk, eligibility has remained broadly stable, with a slight decrease of 0.1% over the past year. This means 27,712 pupils are currently eligible, and of these, 21,815 (78.7%) are receiving free school meals.
53. The table below shows changes in both the number and percentage of pupils eligible for and receiving free school meals in Norfolk, compared with the average for all county local authorities in England.

Year	No. of pupils eligible for FSM		No. of pupils taking FSM		% of pupils eligible for FSM		% of pupils taking FSM	
	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean	Norfolk	England Mean
2018/19	16,457	14,687	12,483	11,398	14.3%	11.7%	10.8%	9.1%
2019/20	18,843	17,082	14,603	13,303	16.2%	13.5%	12.5%	10.5%
2020/21	22,719	21,170	18,199	17,177	19.3%	16.7%	15.5%	13.5%
2021/22	24,950	23,429	19,465	17,227	21.1%	18.3%	15.6%	13.4%
2022/23	26,870	25,387	20,766	19,494	22.5%	19.6%	17.4%	15.0%
2023/24	27,740	26,595	21,371	20,456	23.3%	20.5%	17.9%	15.7%
2024/25	27,712	27,488	21,815	21,296	23.5%	21.2%	18.5%	16.4%

Overall employment rate

54. Employment measures the number of people aged 16 and over who are in paid work, including those temporarily away from their job. The employment rate refers to the proportion of people aged 16 to 64 who are employed.

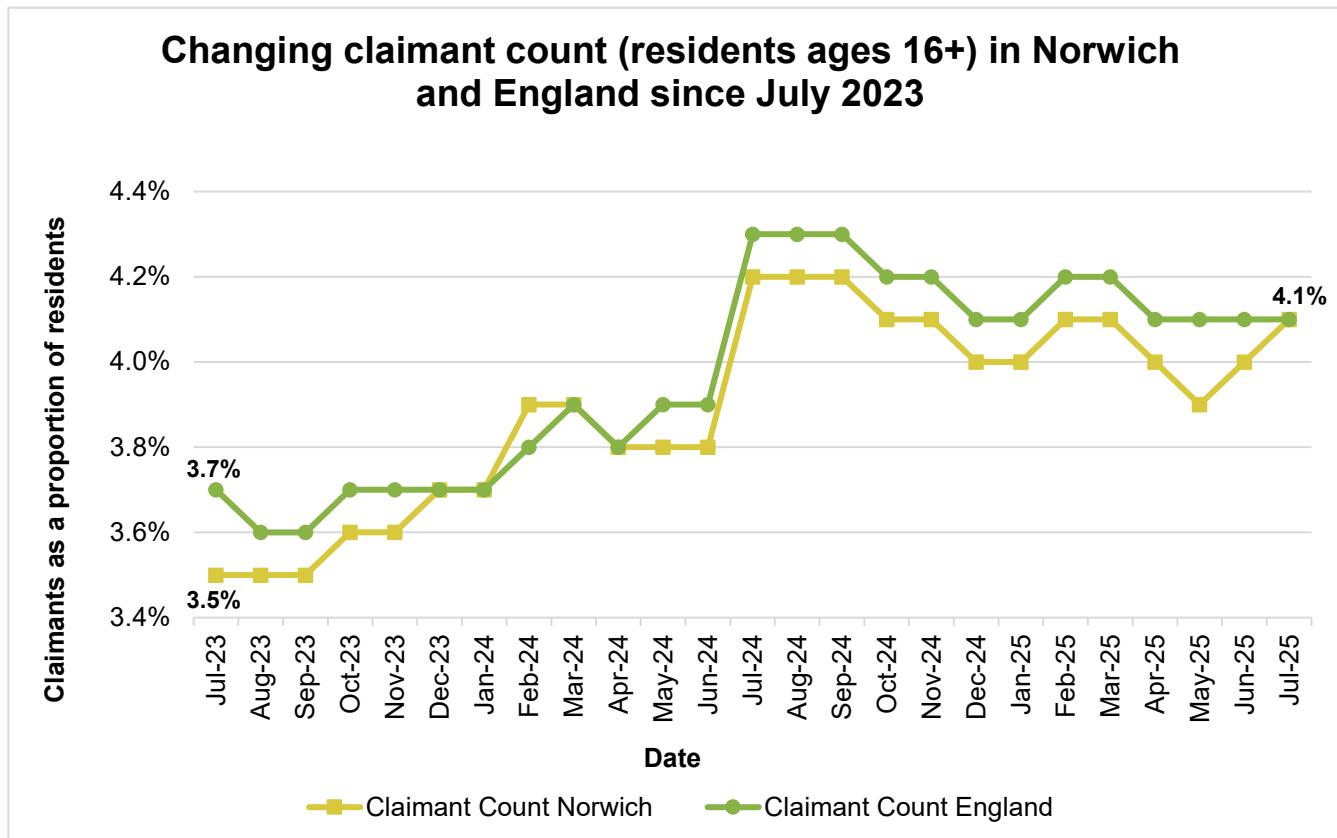


55. At the end of 2024, Norwich's employment rate was 75%, down from 82.7% in the previous period. Despite this decrease, it remains close to the England average of 75.6%.

Claimant Count

56. The claimant count measures the number of people claiming benefits primarily because they are unemployed, based on individual records from the benefits system. It provides a useful indicator of how unemployment is changing at a local level.

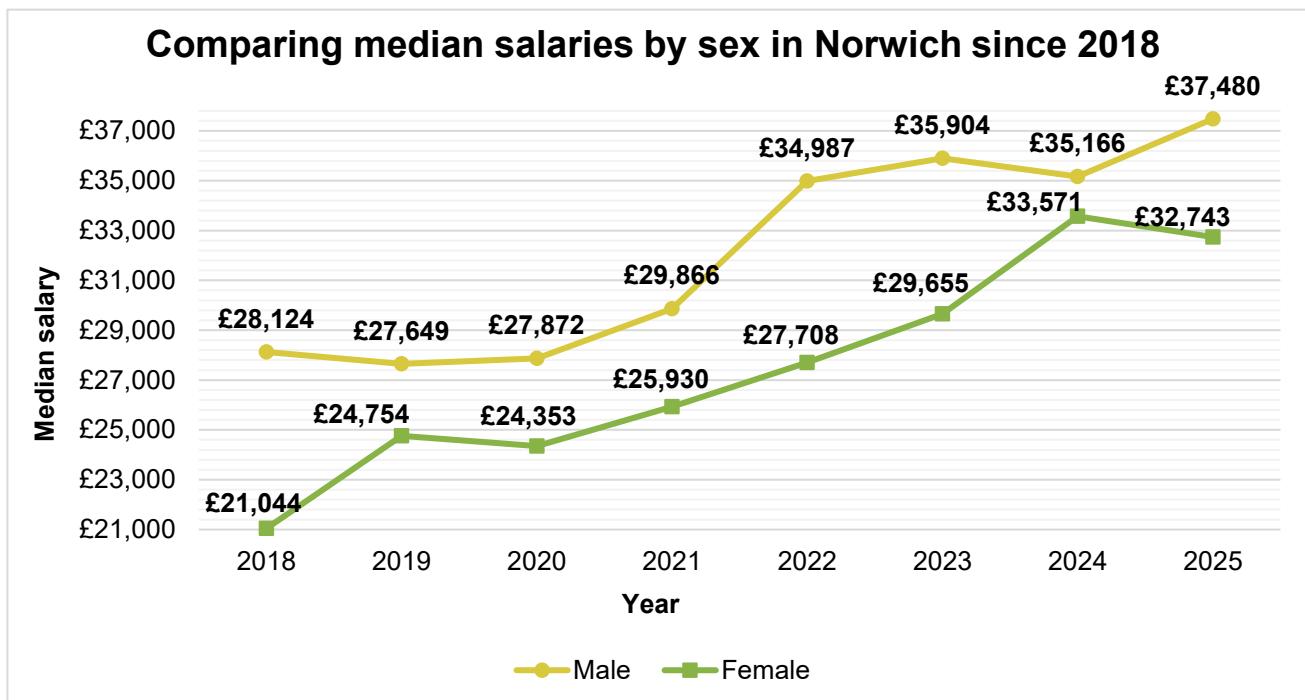
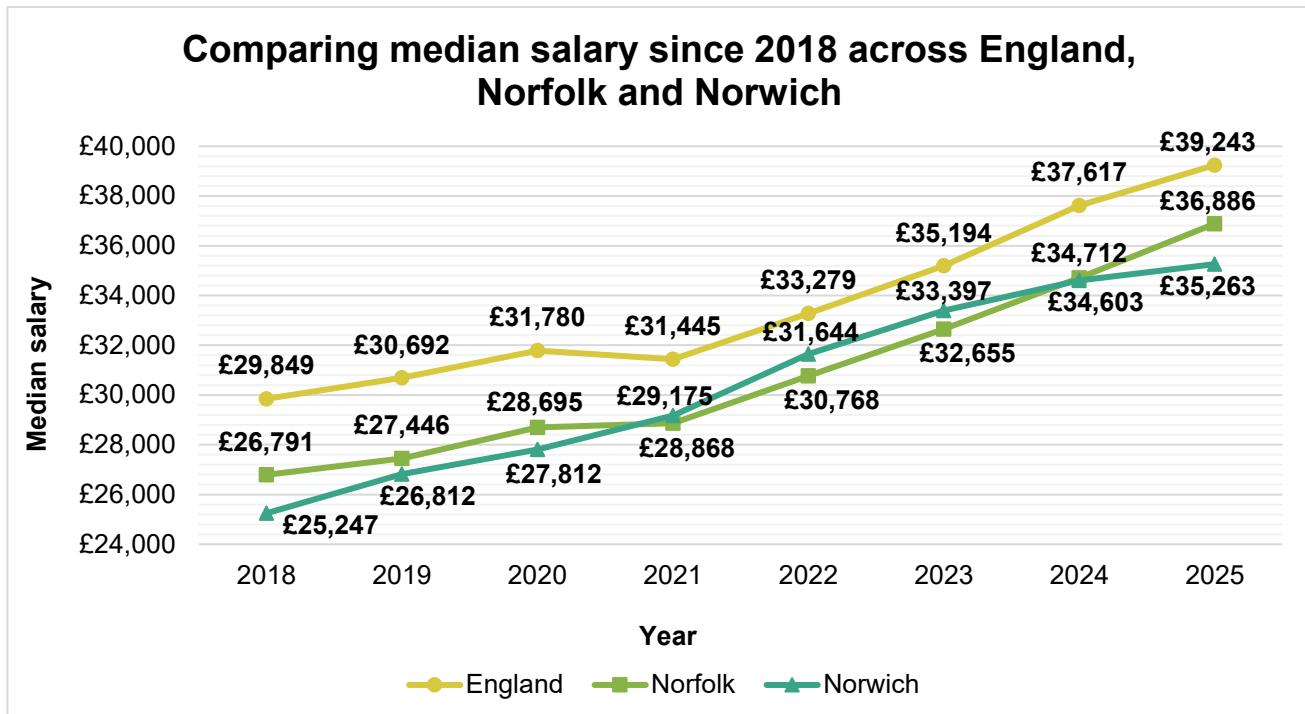
57. In July 2025, Norwich's claimant count rate was 4.1%, slightly higher than in July 2023. This matches the rate for all English single-tier and county councils in the same month, which was also 4.1%, compared to 3.7% earlier in 2025.



Median Gross Annual Pay of Norwich Employees (by Residence)

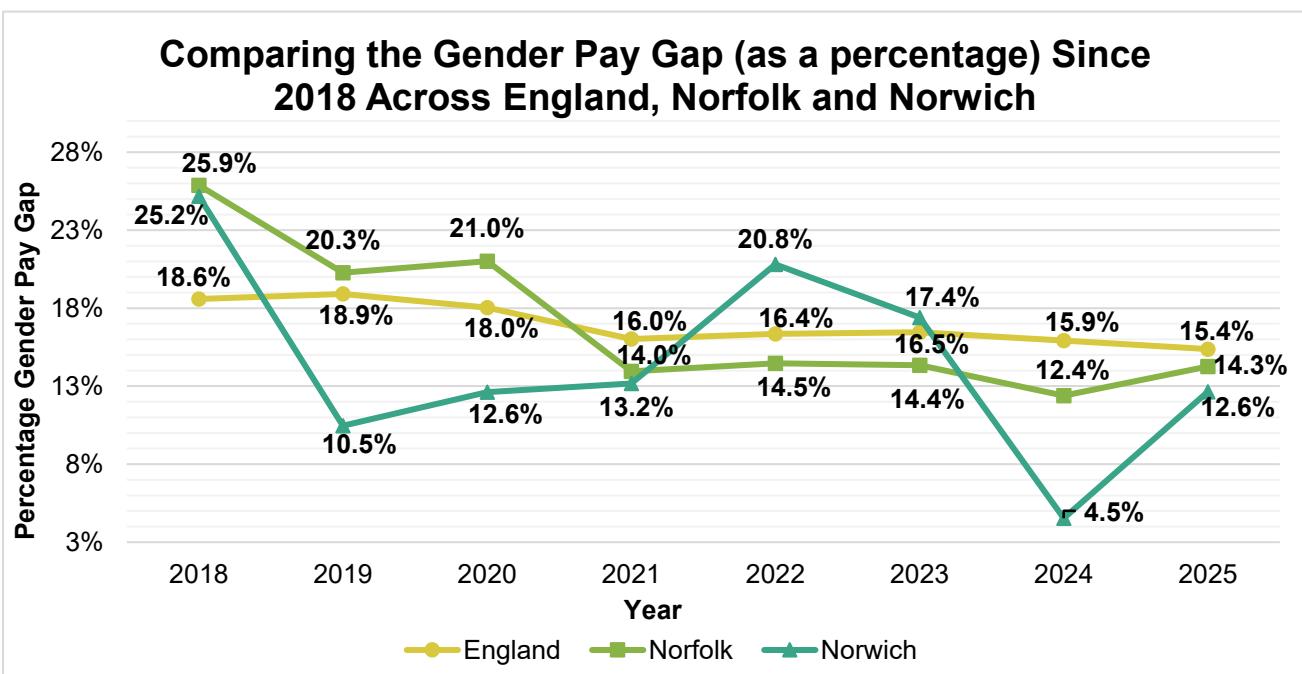
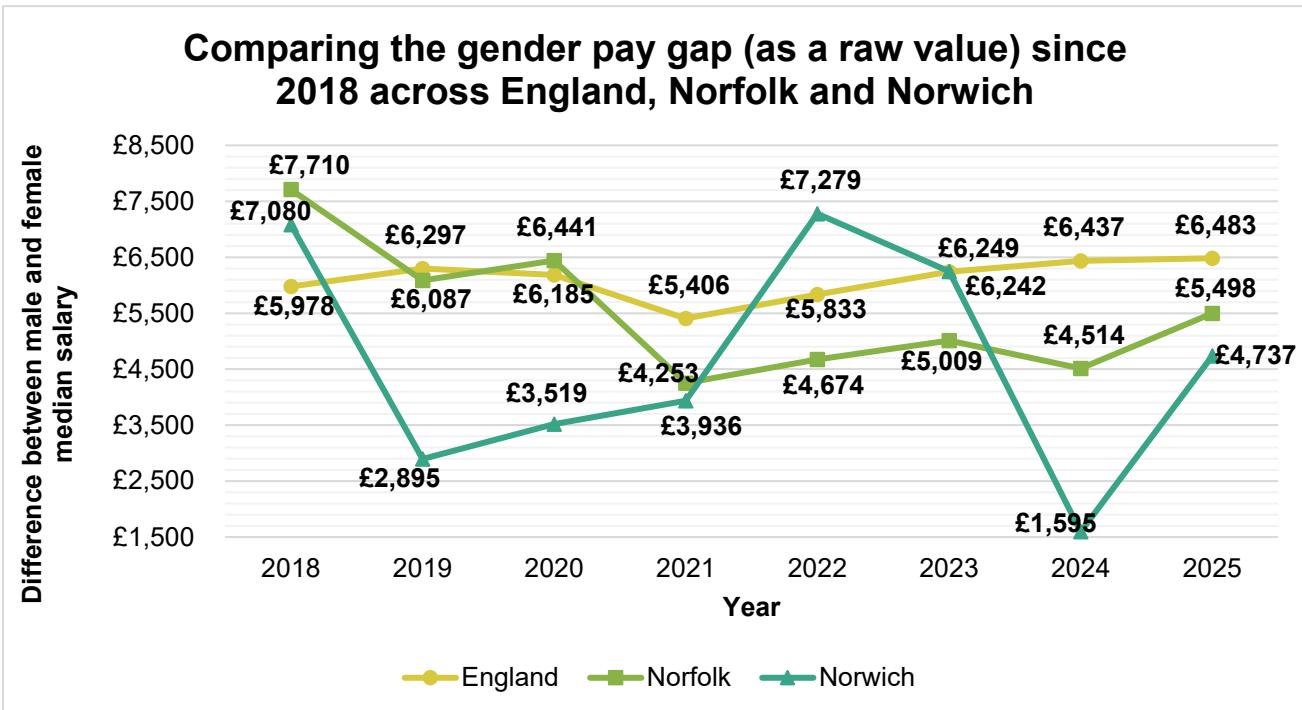
58. The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), carried out each April, provides detailed information on pay levels, distribution, and working hours for employees. The dataset focuses on employees living in an area who are on adult rates and whose pay during the survey period was not affected by absence. This makes it a useful indicator of local earnings and potential economic resilience.

59. The chart below compares median salaries for England, Norfolk, and Norwich. In 2025, the median salary in Norwich was £35,263 per year - a 1.9% increase on the previous year. This figure is slightly below the Norfolk median of £36,886 and lower than the England median of £39,243.



60. Below are two graphs analysing the gender pay gap in Norwich, showing changes in male and female salaries since 2018. The gender pay gap is

presented both as a raw value and as a percentage difference, calculated as a proportion of the male median salary.

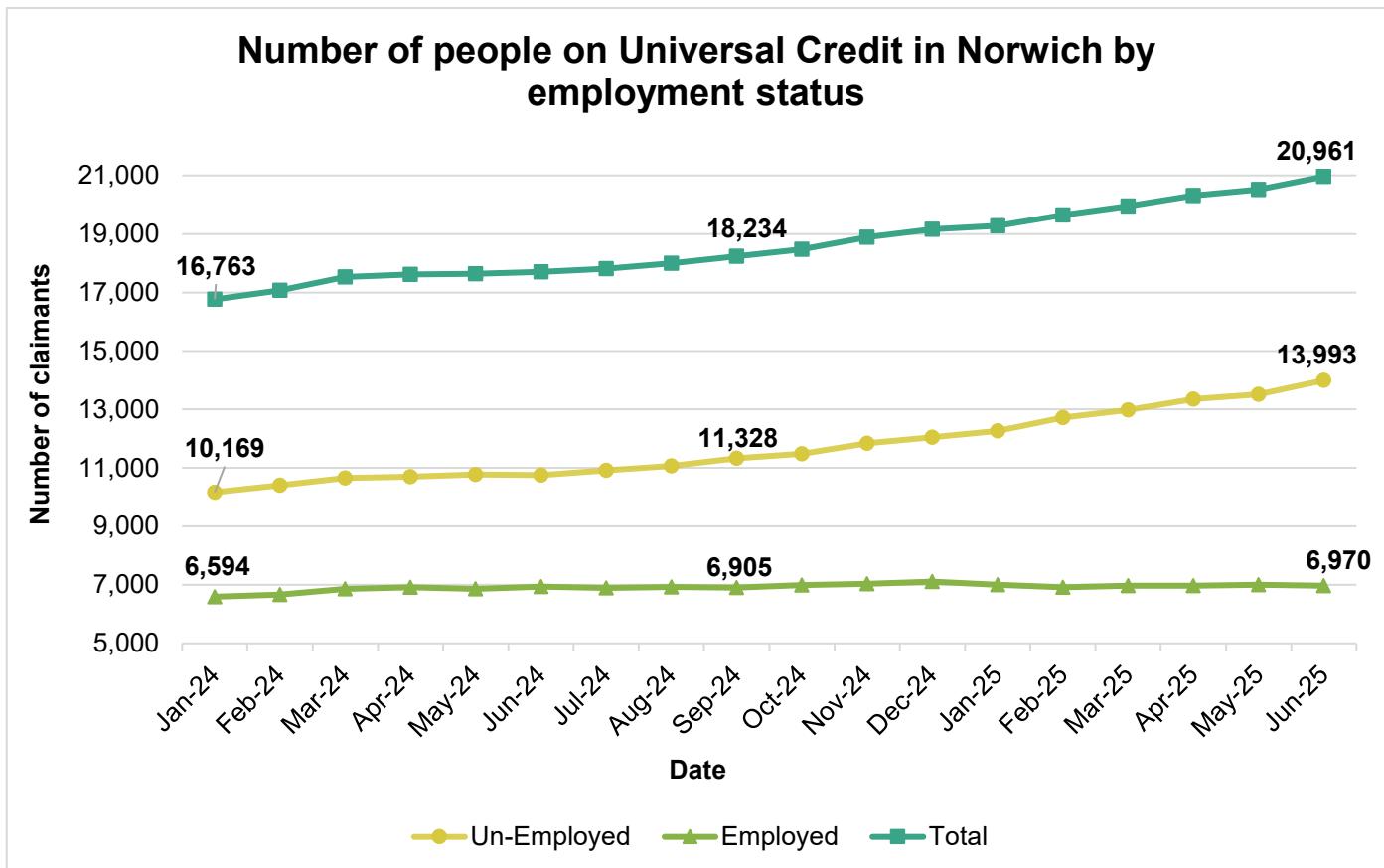


Universal Credit

61. This data covers the period from January 2024 to June 2025 and shows the total number of people in Norwich claiming Universal Credit, including

those in and out of employment. Figures for claimants by employment status are published one month later than the overall total.

62. In June 2025, 20,961 people in Norwich were claiming Universal Credit. Of these, 13,993 were not in employment, while 6,970 were in work. Overall, the number of claims has risen by 16.9% compared to June 2024.



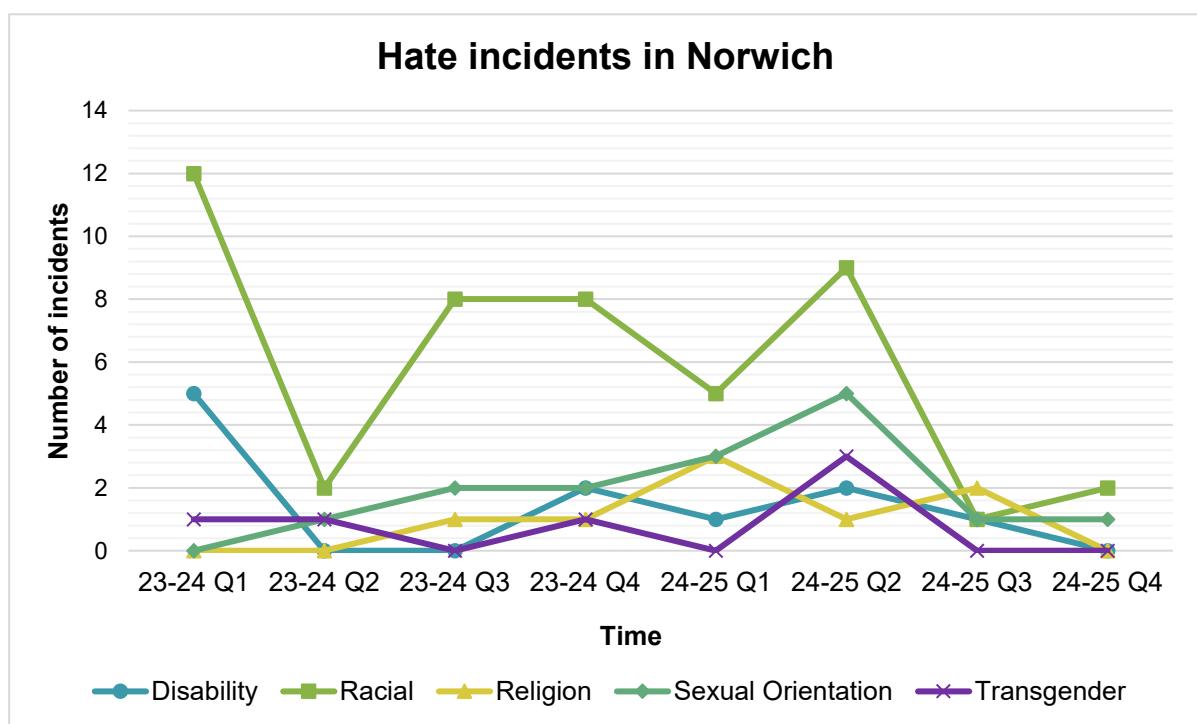
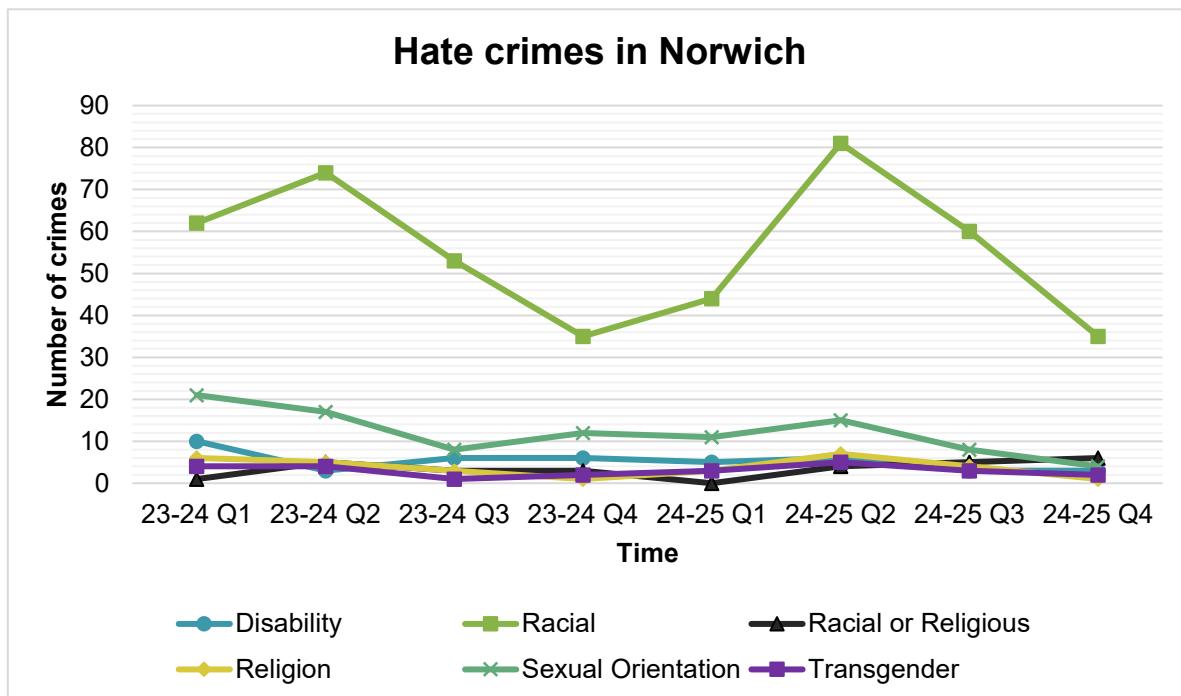
Hate crimes and incidents

63. A hate incident is any incident perceived by the victim or by anyone else as being motivated by prejudice or hatred. It may or may not constitute a crime.

64. Hate crimes, by contrast, are criminal offences committed against someone because of a protected characteristic. It is widely recognised that many hate crimes and incidents go unreported, so higher figures do not necessarily indicate more crime; they may reflect greater awareness or confidence in reporting.
65. Since the last Equality Information Report, Norwich has seen a slight decrease in reported hate crimes and incidents. Between the first and fourth quarters of the 2024-2025 financial year, 358 cases were reported - 34 fewer than the previous period, representing an 8.7% reduction.
66. A detailed breakdown of reported hate crimes and incidents for Norwich, covering the period from Q1 2023/24 to Q4 2024/25, is provided in the table on the following page.

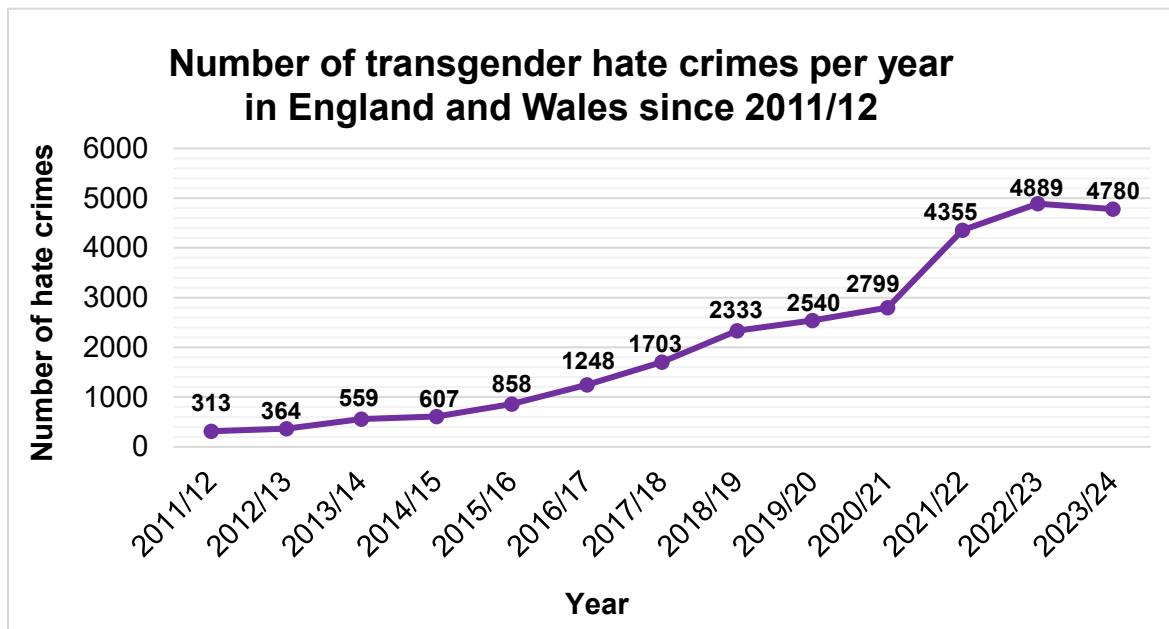
Type	2023-2024 Q1	2023-2024 Q2	2023-2024 Q3	2023-2024 Q4	2024-2025 Q1	2024-2025 Q2	2024-2025 Q3	2024-2025 Q4
Crimes	104	108	74	59	66	118	83	51
Disability	10	3	6	6	5	6	3	3
Racial	62	74	53	35	44	81	60	35
Racial or Religious	1	5	3	3	0	4	5	6
Religion	6	5	3	1	3	7	4	1
Sexual Orientation	21	17	8	12	11	15	8	4
Transgender	4	4	1	2	3	5	3	2
Incidents	18	4	11	14	12	20	5	3
Disability	5	0	0	2	1	2	1	0
Racial	12	2	8	8	5	9	1	2
Religion	0	0	1	1	3	1	2	0
Sexual Orientation	0	1	2	2	3	5	1	1
Transgender	1	1	0	1	0	3	0	0
Total	122	112	85	73	78	138	88	54

67. The charts below show that racial crimes remain the most frequently reported type of hate crime and incident.



68. The number of hate crimes targeting individuals who identify as transgender has risen significantly over the past decade. Nationally, these offences remain far higher than they were 10 years ago.

69. The chart below illustrates this trend, showing the number of transgender-related hate crimes recorded in England and Wales since 2011/12. Figures for 2023/24 are accurate as of 31 March 2024.



70. This data contributed to the evidence base underpinning the development of our Safer Norwich Strategy 2023-2026. The strategy outlines targeted actions aimed at enhancing safety within our communities and neighbourhoods.

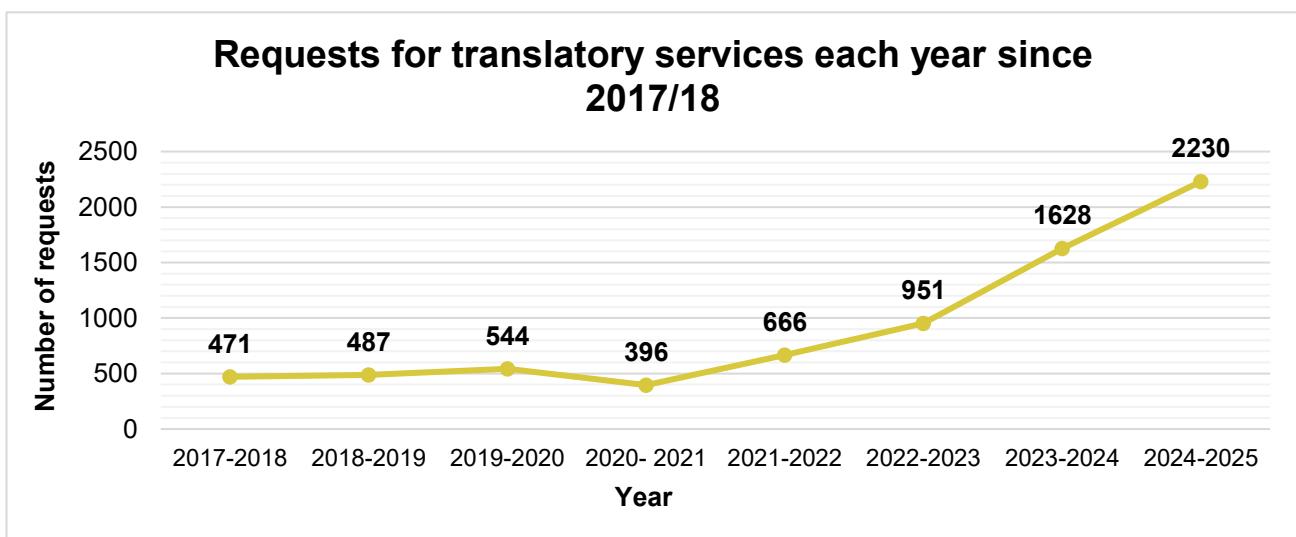
CUSTOMERS

Translations and interpretations

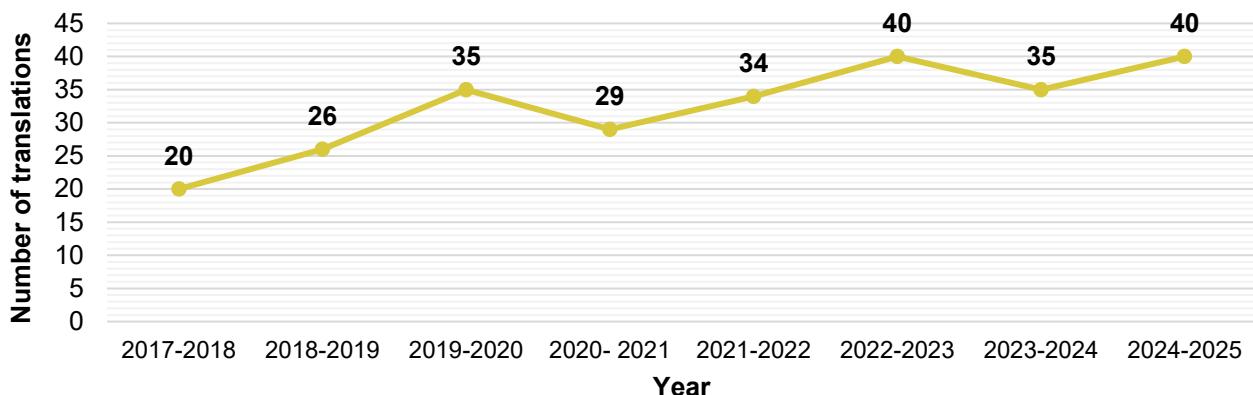
71. This year, the council recorded a 37% rise in the use of translation and interpretation services by customers. Additionally, the range of languages requested expanded from 35 to 40.

72. The table below presents the ten most frequently requested languages over the past six years.

2019-2020	2020- 2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Arabic	Lithuanian	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
Lithuanian	Portuguese	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Kurdish - Sorani	Kurdish - Sorani
Polish	Arabic	Polish	Polish	Lithuanian	Pashto
Portuguese	Hungarian	Bengali	Kurdish - Sorani	Ukrainian	Tigrinya
Kurdish - Sorani	Romanian	Kurdish - Sorani	Ukrainian	Pashto	Lithuanian
Hungarian	Polish	Italian	Portuguese	Polish	Dari
Romanian	Spanish	Portuguese	Romanian	Dari	Romanian
Bengali	Bulgarian	Mandarin	Albanian	Tigrinya	Ukrainian
Amharic	Turkish	Sudanese Arabic	Tigrinya	Portuguese	Farsi
Russian	Mandarin	Bulgarian	Vietnamese	Farsi	Sudanese arabic



Number of unique languages translated each year since 2017/18



Go4Less

73. Our [Go4Less card](#) offers eligible residents free access to discounts of up to 50% on sport, leisure, and cultural activities at council-run venues, alongside other associated benefits.

74. To help improve health outcomes and support longer life expectancy across our communities, we have simplified the application process. Residents can now apply either online or by contacting us directly. We have also expanded collection points to include City Hall, Riverside Leisure Centre, and the Norman Centre and now offer to send the card by post, driving take up and supporting accessibility.

75. In addition to individual applications, referrals are made on behalf of eligible individuals including asylum seekers and refugees through New Routes Integration and Norwich International Youth Project. This year, we have welcomed new referral partners including St Martins Housing and YMCA.

76. The table below presents the total number of Go4Less cardholders from 2023 to 2025:

Year	Number of Go4Less card users
2023	649
2024	828
2025	925

77. The following table presents the evidence submitted by users:

Evidence provided	Number of cards issued
Bus Pass	329
Universal Credit	182
Post-16 Student	11
Child/ Young Person	80
Partner referral	22
Total	624

78. The table above continues to highlight strong engagement from key groups, including residents at or over state pension age (bus pass holders), individuals from low-income households (Universal Credit recipients), and young people.

79. Card usage at the Norman Centre during 2025 is shown below:

Activity	Number of attendances
Gym (pay as you go only)	887
Bowls	1235
Nifty 50s multi sports	121
Badminton	36 (courts)
Short tennis/Pickleball	7 (courts)
Table tennis	81 (tables)

80. The chart below displays Go4Less card usage at Riverside Leisure Centre during 2025. As of September, a total of 161 unique individuals had used the scheme at this location, collectively accessing leisure activities 2,423 times.

Activity	Number of attendances 2025
Swimming	1434
Family swimming	203
Group workout	305
Gym	254

Complaints

81. The following tables provide a breakdown of complaints received by the Council between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, categorised by race, age, disability status, and sex.

Age	Count	Percentage
20-29	226	6.5%
30-39	654	13.2%
40-49	691	13.8%
50-59	674	13.6%
60-69	529	8.9%
70-79	261	7.1%
80-89	134	2.9%
90-99	24	0.5%
100 and over	5	
Unknown/declined to answer	892	33.4%
Total	4,087	

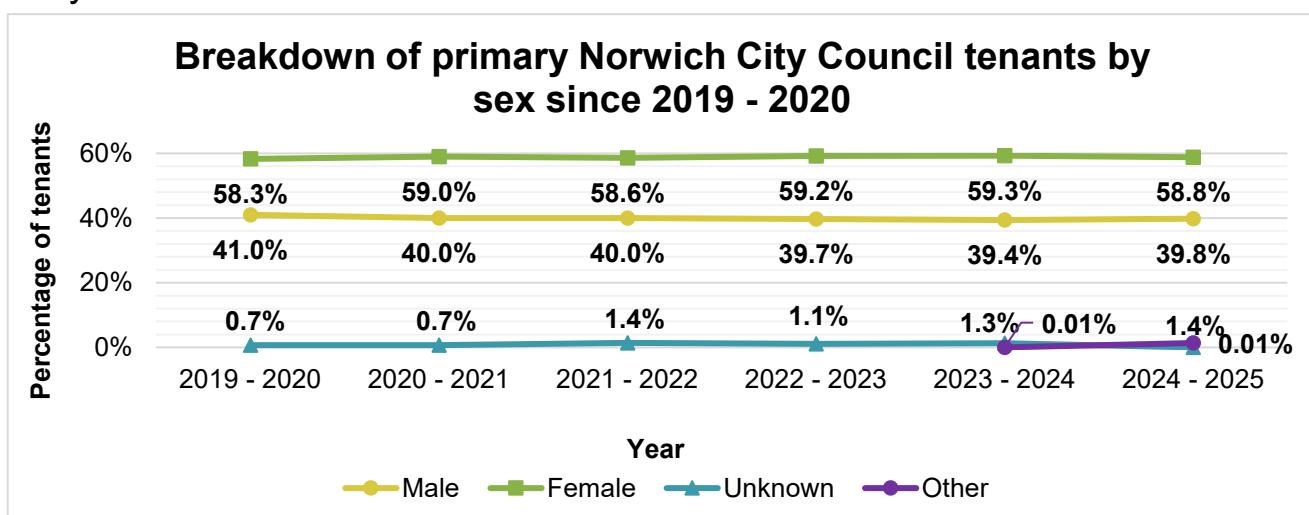
Disability	Count	Percentage
Non-Disabled	1849	45.2%
Disabled	920	22.5%
Unknown/declined to answer	1318	32.2%
Total	4,087	

Tenant profiles

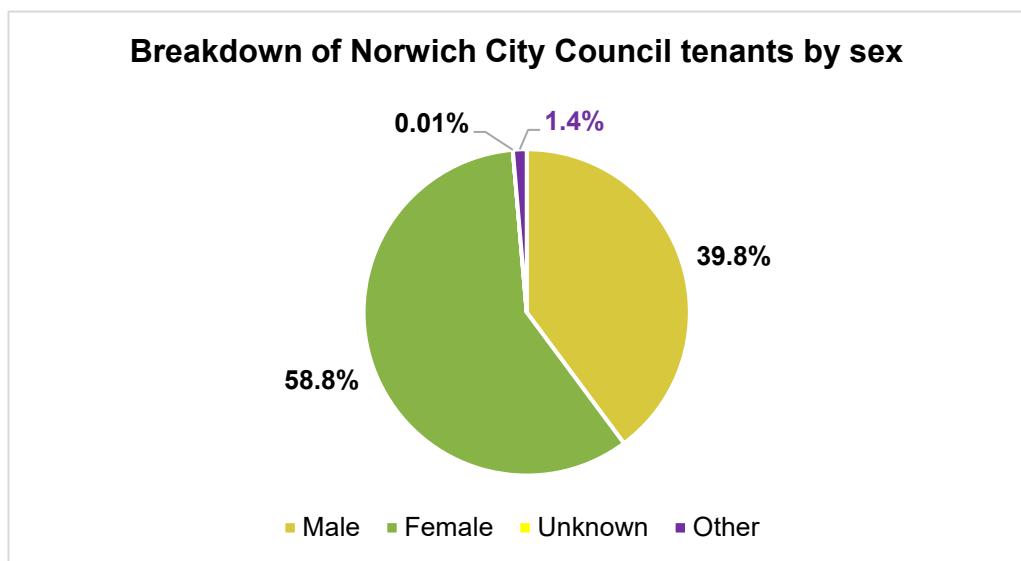
Race	Count	Percentage
Black African	17	0.4%
Black Caribbean	3	0.1%
Black Other	3	0.1%
Other	9	0.2%
Other Asian	33	0.8%
Other Mixed	13	0.3%
Romany Gypsy	0	0.0%
White & Asian	2	0.05%
White British	940	23%
White European	37	0.9%
White Irish	2	0.05%
White Other	33	0.8%
Unknown/declined to answer	23	0.6%
Not recorded	2972	72.7%
Total	4,087	

Sex	Count	Percentage
Female	2113	51.7%
Male	1318	32.2%
Unknown/declined to answer	656	16.1%
Total	4,087	

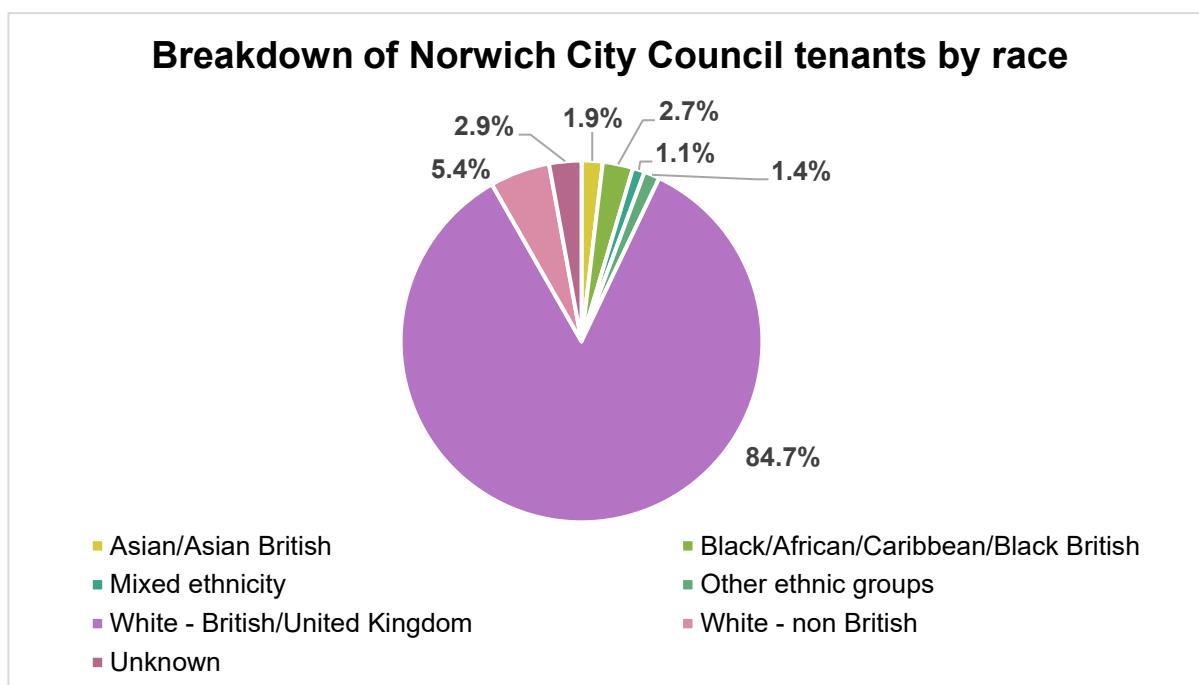
82. Tenant data in this section refers specifically to the named lead and joint tenants of Norwich City Council properties, rather than all household members, as of 31 March 2025. The charts below illustrate the breakdown by sex, race, age, and disability declaration, alongside five-year trends for each characteristic.

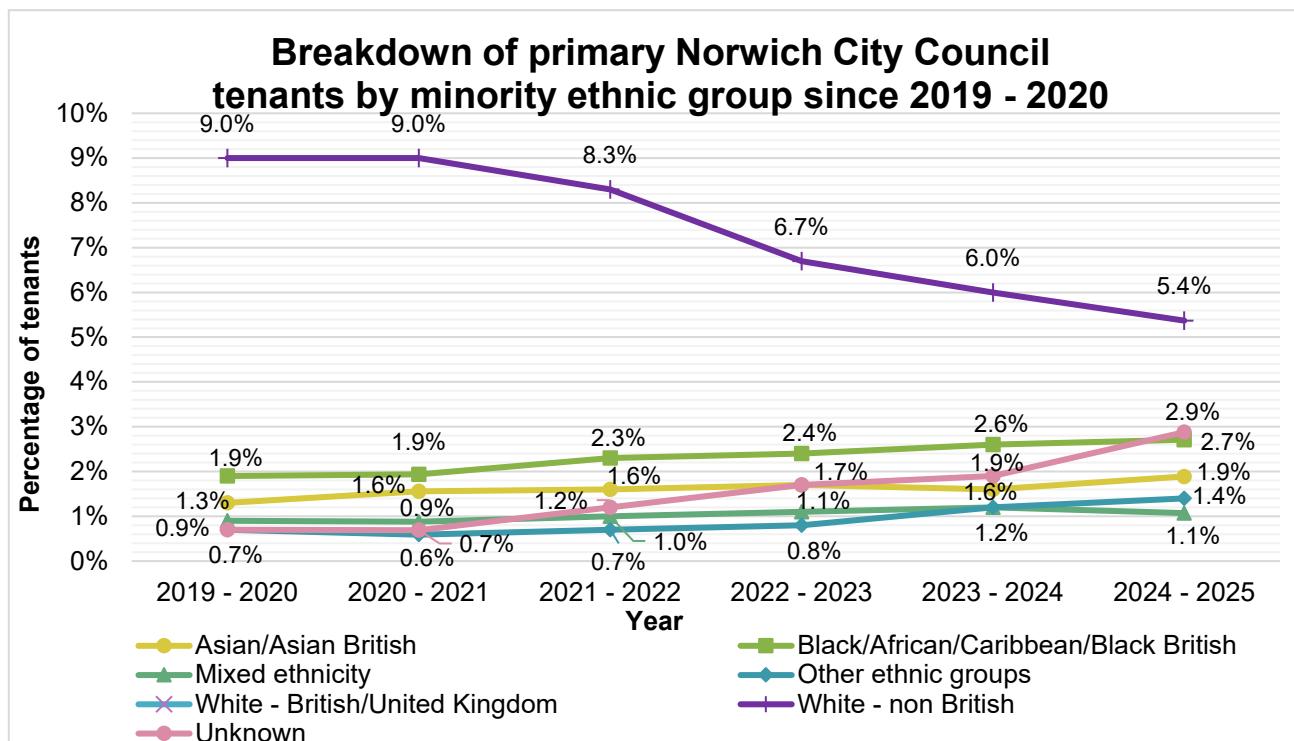


83. There has been minimal change in the gender distribution of our tenants, with women consistently representing a larger proportion, approximately 60%, compared to men at around 40%.

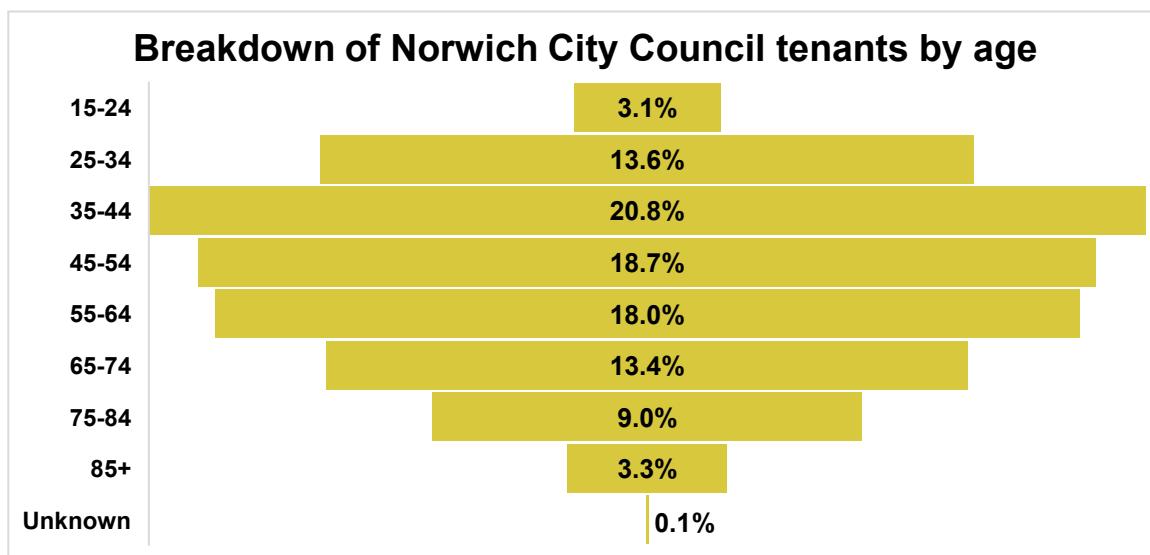


84. The chart below illustrates changes in the ethnic composition of residents in council-owned homes. White British individuals continue to make up the majority at 84.7%, a figure that has remained largely consistent over the past five years. However, there have been more noticeable shifts among minority ethnic groups. The proportion of White residents who are not British has declined since 2020–2021, while most other 'non-white' ethnic categories have seen modest increases. One exception is residents of mixed ethnicity, whose representation has slightly decreased over the past year to 1.1%.

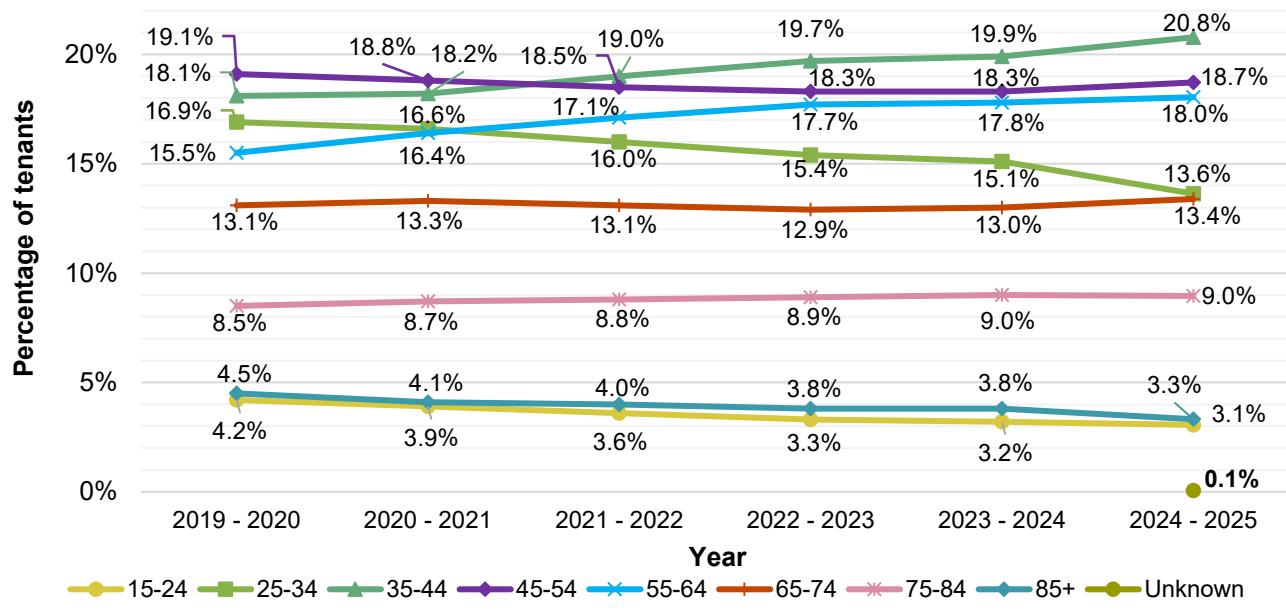




85. Age distribution among tenants has remained largely consistent over the past year, with the 35-44 age group continuing to be the most represented. However, there has been a steady rise in the number of tenants aged 55-64 over the past five years, making this group the third largest and surpassing those aged 25-34. As a result, 43.8% of tenants are now aged 55 or older.

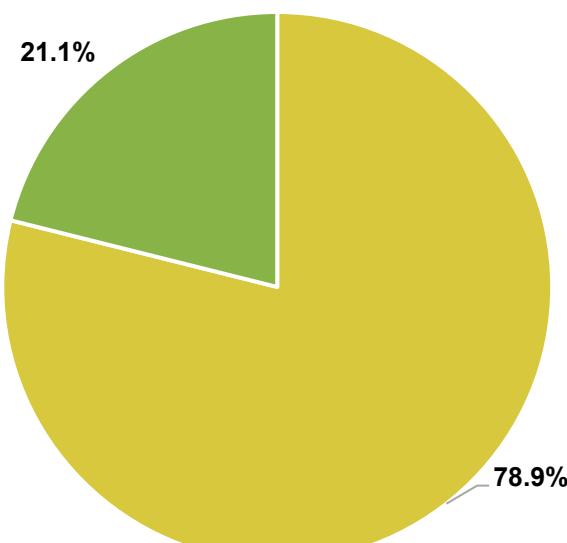


Breakdown of primary Norwich City Council tenants by age range since 2019 - 2020

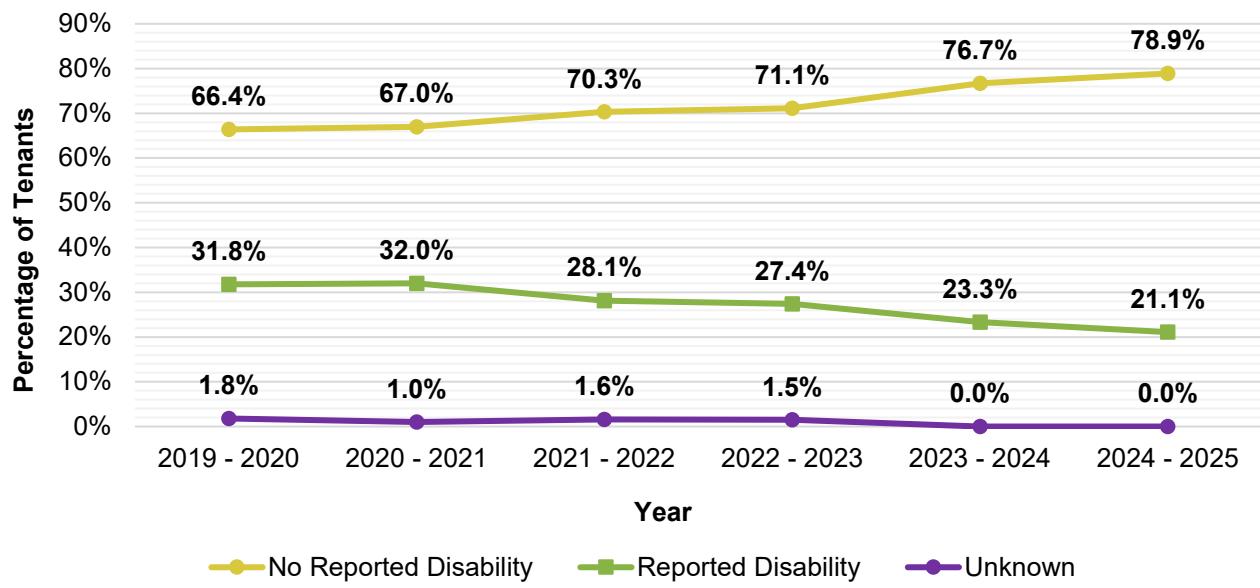


86. The proportion of tenants reporting a disability has steadily declined, falling from 31.8% in 2019-2020 to 21.1% in 2024-2025.

Breakdown of Norwich City Council tenants by declared disability



Breakdown of primary Norwich City Council tenants with declared disabilities since 2019 - 2020



EMPLOYEES

Profiles

87. The diversity data presented in this report is based on a headcount of 763 employees as of 9 September 2025, sourced from the council's Human Resources system. The analysis excludes agency staff, contractors, and individuals not directly employed by Norwich City Council.

88. The table below outlines the overall declaration rates for each reported characteristic as of 9 September 2025.

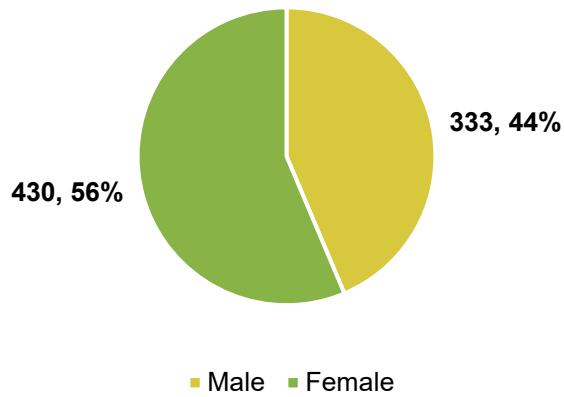
Protected Characteristic	Proportion (%)	Number of employees
Sex	100%	763
Race	69.3%	529
Disability	63.2%	482
Sexual Orientation	35%	267
Age	100%	763
Religion or belief	36.7%	280

89. The data presented below shows the council's workforce by protected characteristic as of 9 September 2025. Workforce composition by sex, race, disability, sexual orientation, age and religion.

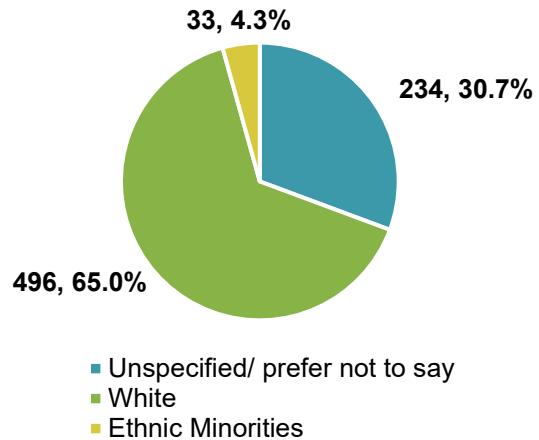
90. Also included is a breakdown of employees by working pattern. Norwich City Council supports a range of flexible working options, allowing eligible staff to request changes to how they work. Unless otherwise specified, all advertised roles are open to both full-time and part-time applicants.

91. Each graph presents both the number of employees and the corresponding percentage of the total workforce for each characteristic.

Breakdown of employees by sex

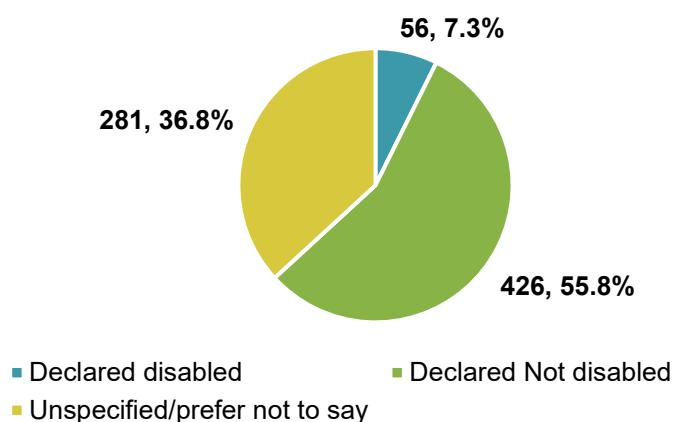


Breakdown of employees by race

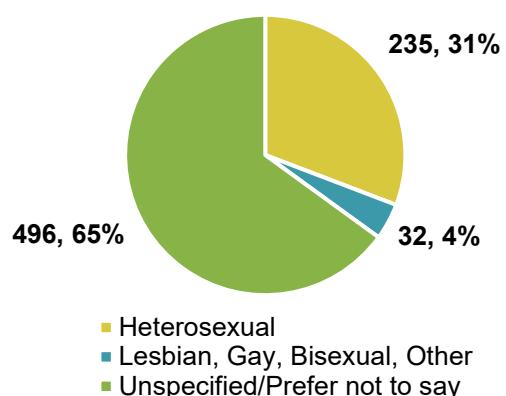


Please note: data on employee race and religion or belief is not broken down into specific minority ethnic groups or individual religions. This is because publishing datasets based on fewer than ten employees may pose a risk to employee confidentiality.

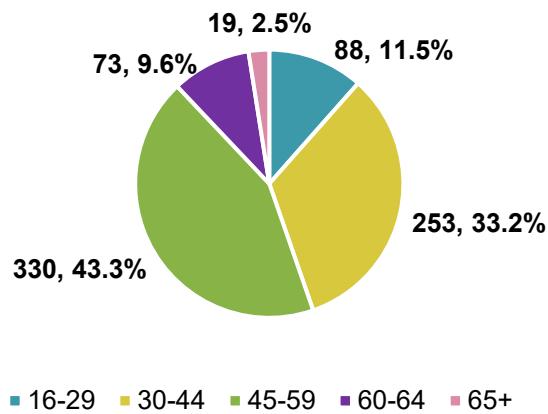
Breakdown of employees by disability



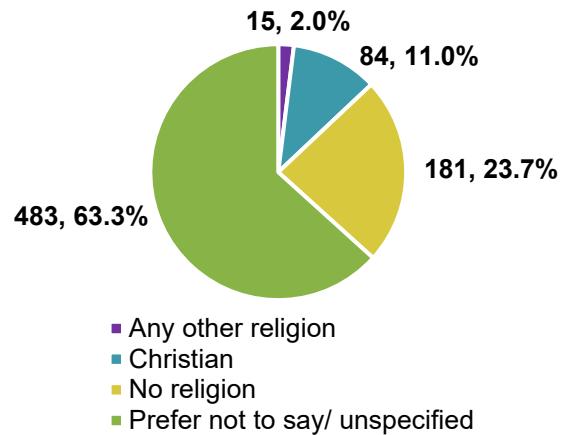
Breakdown of employees by sexual orientation



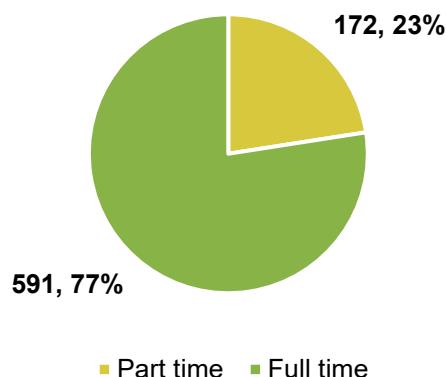
Breakdown of employees by age



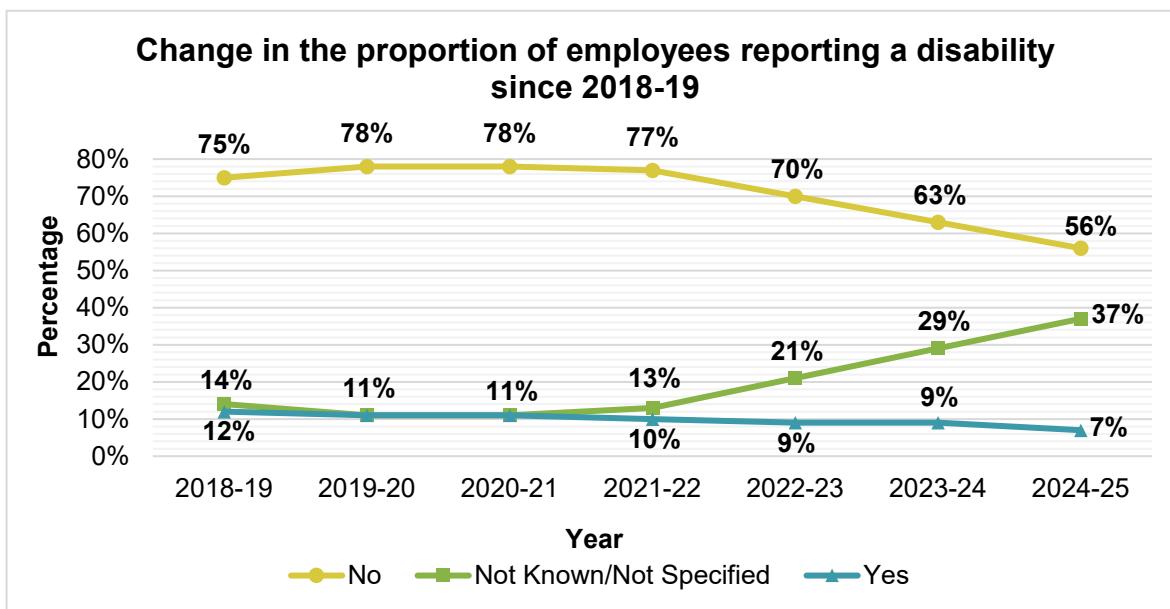
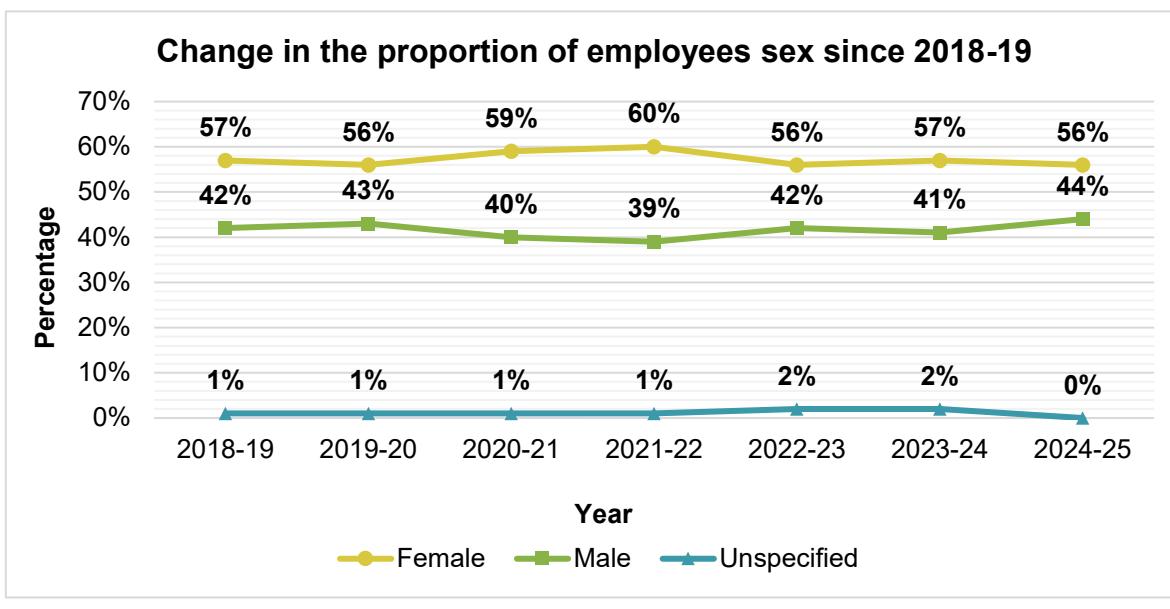
Breakdown of employees by religion or belief



Breakdown of employees by working pattern

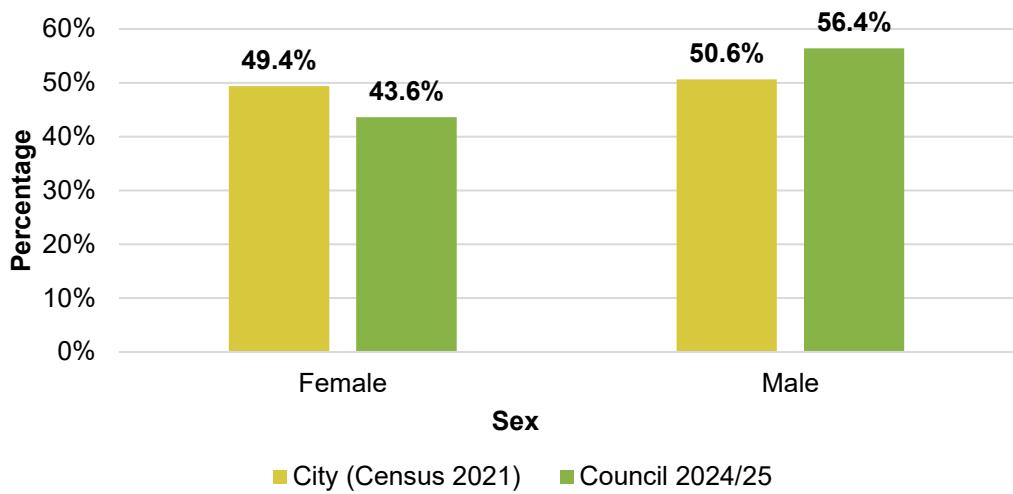


92. The graphs below show that the sex profile of our workforce has remained largely unchanged over the past six years. However, this year shows an increase in the number of employees without a disability; this change can be attributed to an increase in the number of employees declaring whether they have a disability or not. Latest data indicates that 7% of our workforce (who chose to answer the question) are reporting a disability.

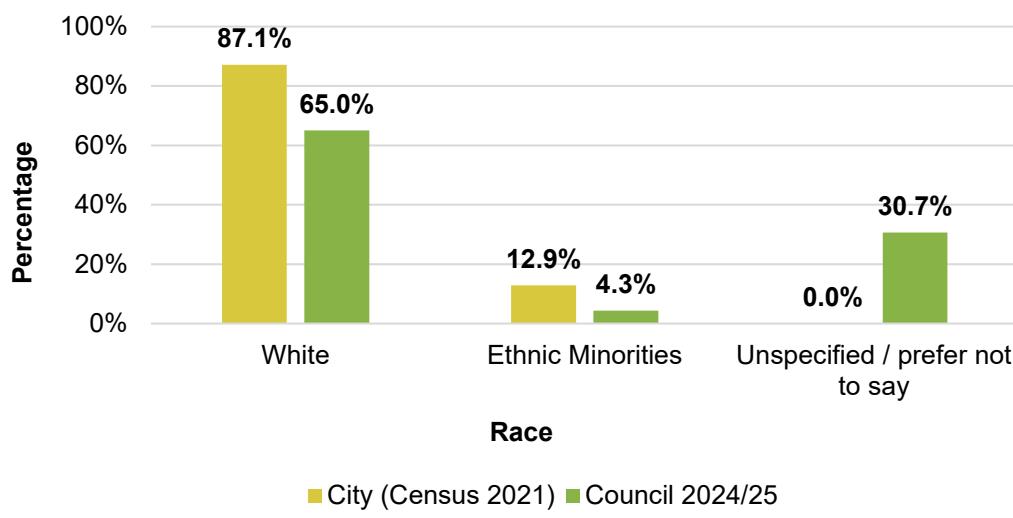


93. As previously noted, the council aims for its workforce to reflect the city's economically active population. The comparisons below, based on 2021 Census data, show how employee demographics align with those of the wider community across sex, race, disability, and religion or belief.

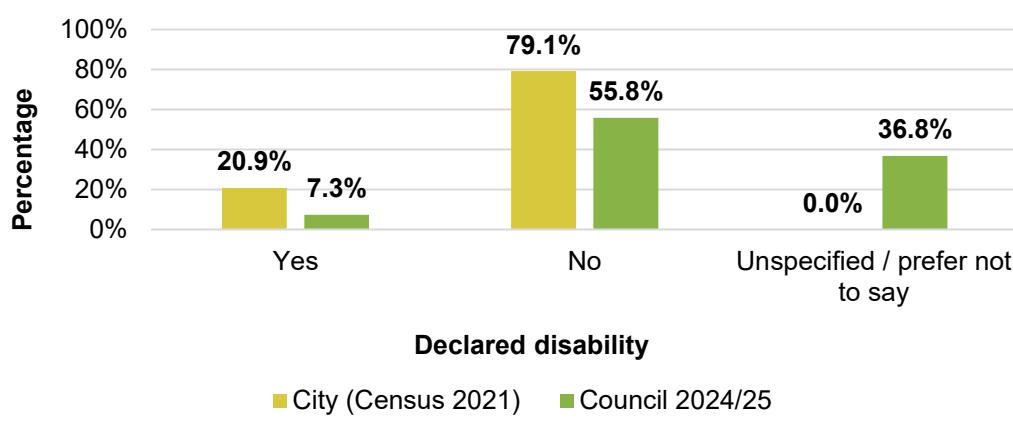
Comparing proportion of the sexes between the city and the Council

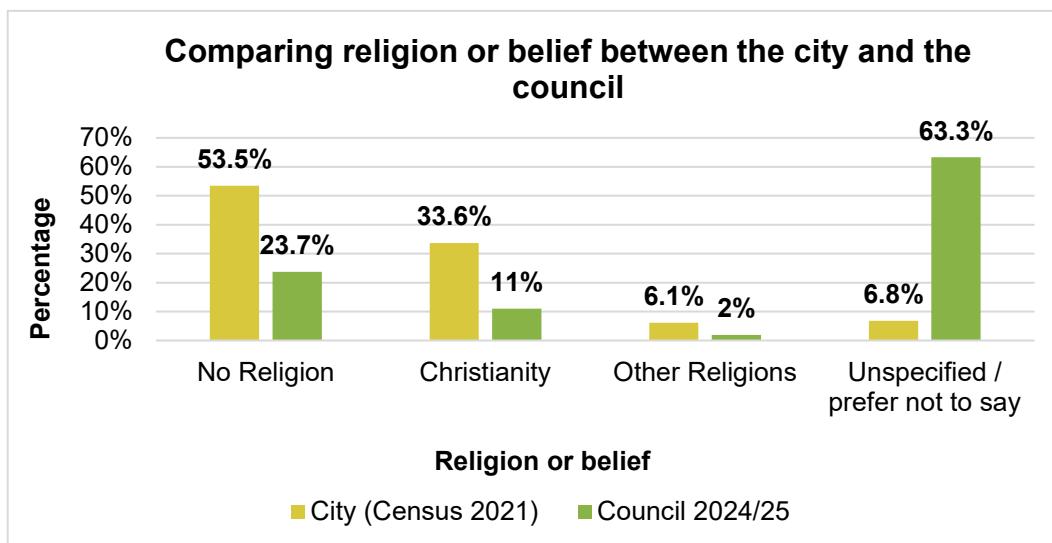


Comparing race between the city and the council



Comparing declared disabilities between the city and the council





94. In the Census, a 'yes' response to the disability question includes individuals reporting both mild and severe impacts on daily life. For the purposes of this analysis, we have assumed that those experiencing severe limitations are less likely to be economically active. Excluding this group provides a more accurate comparison between our workforce and the economically active population in the local community. It is also worth noting that 36.8% of council employees either chose not to respond or selected 'prefer not to say' when asked about disability status. Continued engagement with staff to encourage disclosure will help improve the accuracy of future reporting.

95. Overall, the council still has progress to make in ensuring its workforce reflects the city's economically active population. While Census data includes individuals who are not economically active, and a significant portion of employees have not disclosed certain characteristics, the available data still highlights the need to improve representation of disabled individuals, religious groups, and minority ethnic communities within our workforce.

96. Due to the small number of cases (fewer than ten), the data for disciplinary actions, grievances, leavers, and promotions for the year 2024/25 has not been published to protect employee confidentiality.

Recruitment

97. The council continues to focus on attracting, retaining, and developing a diverse workforce through inclusive recruitment strategies and the use of social media to promote opportunities. Job adverts are reviewed to ensure accessible language and include positive inclusion statements. Reasonable adjustments are available to support candidates throughout the recruitment process.

98. The table below presents data on applicants at each stage of the recruitment process between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025. The analysis covers race, disability, and sex.

99. During this period, Norwich City Council received 633 applications for advertised roles, with 46 candidates successfully appointed following interview.

Characteristic	Applicants	Offered
Race		
Asian, Asian British, Asian Welsh	138 (21.8%)	4 (8.7%)
Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African	92 (14.5%)	6 (13%)
Mixed or multiple	15 (2.4%)	1 (2.2%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	73 (11.5%)	1 (2.2%)
White	299 (47.2%)	34 (73.9%)
Other ethnic group	16 (2.5%)	0 (0%)
Sex		
Female	288 (45.5%)	29 (63%)
Male	294 (46.5%)	17 (37%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	51 (8.1%)	0 (0.0%)
Disability		
Disabled	86 (13.6%)	6 (13%)
Non-disabled	459 (72.5%)	38 (82.6%)
Unspecified or prefer not to say	88 (13.9%)	2 (4.4%)
Totals	633	46

100. The Covid-19 pandemic prompted a rapid cultural shift within the council, leading to the widespread adoption of home working for the first time. In response, a hybrid working policy was introduced in April 2022, offering staff the flexibility to work from home while attending the office based on business needs and personal circumstances. The council remains committed to supporting colleagues who require workplace adjustments, including the provision of appropriate equipment.

101. Most council service areas operate flexible working arrangements, allowing duties to be carried out across a range of hours. Employees can request changes to their working patterns, including applying for roles on either a full-time or part-time basis. The council also considers requests for term-time working, annualised hours, and compressed hours.

Gender pay gap

102. The most recent Gender Pay Gap report was published on 31 March 2025, covering the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. In accordance with statutory requirements, Norwich City Council's next Gender Pay Gap report, reflecting data as of 31 March 2025 is scheduled for publication by 31 March 2026. Once available, it will be published on the [GOV.UK Gender Pay Gap Service](https://www.gov.uk/government/services/gender-pay-gap-service).

Useful links

[Community safety in Norwich](#)

[Community support | Norwich City Council](#)

[Cost of living support in Norwich](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Get Talking Norwich](#)

[Greater Norwich Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025](#)

[LUMi - Community portal](#)

[Norwich 2040 City Vision](#)

[Norwich 2040 Inclusive Economy Vision](#)

[Norwich City Council's Community-Led Plan 2024-2029 - 'We are Norwich'](#)

[Norwich Economic Strategy 2019-2024](#)

[Norwich Good Economy Commission](#)

[Norwich Food Network](#)

[Norwich Food Poverty Action Plan](#)

[Norwich Town Deal](#)

[Public Sector Equality Duty](#)

Further Information and Accessibility

If you would like any further information about the contents of this report, please call us on 0344 980 3333 or email us at strategy@norwich.gov.uk

If you need this report in a different format like large print, accessible PDF, audio recording or Braille, please follow our advice on our accessibility page: www.norwich.gov.uk/accessibility or call us on 0344 980 3333.

Should you require this report in an alternative language, please follow our advice on our interpretation and translation page:

<https://www.norwich.gov.uk/intran> or call us on 0344 980 3333.

The council aims to make all the ways that we communicate accessible for everyone, including those with impairments to vision, hearing, mobility, thinking and understanding. As the proportion of our communications that are digital continues to increase, changes we have made to make communications more accessible have been informed by Government's [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#). WCAG is based on four design principles, these being: perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust.

Examples of changes we have made to increase accessibility include:

- Making key documents and publications available as web pages rather than PDFs, for example the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Community (TLC) magazine. Content is also structured logically and can be navigated and read by a screen reader or other assistive technologies.
- Ensuring online content works well on mobile devices.
- Using descriptive links so users know where a link will take them, or what the downloadable linked content is.
- Providing text alternatives ('alt text') for any non-text content and the addition of subtitles to videos.
- Implementing simplified and uncluttered formats and design in all communications.
- Ensuring sufficient colour contrast for online and printed design.
- Ongoing review of information to ensure it can be easily understood with calls to action that provide a clear onward journey.

As per our 2025 Equality Information Report, in order to improve accessibility, we have chosen a consistent colour scheme that is accessible to individuals with vision impairments, such as colour blindness. This is designed in a way that avoids using clashing colours, as well as providing alternative identifiers for different data series, such as different shaped markers. The colour scheme was generated using [Vennage](#), a reliable online resource for accessible colour palettes.

EDI Action Plan 2025-2026 Progress Report

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
EDI Aim 1: Norwich City Council is an inclusive place to work.				
EDI Aim Priority: Ensure that the profile of our workforce broadly reflects the city's population and the local labour market.				
1.1.1	<p>Continue to deliver the actions under our Inclusive Workforce Plan to ensure that we are supporting a healthy and diverse workforce.</p>	<p>Promote organisational awareness of the inclusive workforce plan, sharing it with all employees.</p> <p>Continue to provide appropriate recruitment training to hiring managers and team leaders to ensure we adhere to best practice within our recruitment processes.</p> <p>Review the workforce diversity profile of each directorate and work in partnership with directorates to develop</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We remain committed to building an inclusive, equitable, and healthy workplace. We continue to implement its Inclusive Workforce Plan, with a strong focus on improving diversity, wellbeing, and inclusive practices across all directorates.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to review workforce diversity profiles and develop SMART objectives to address underrepresentation. Ethnicity pay gap reporting was completed and published in April 2025, and efforts are underway to improve data transparency, particularly around non-disclosure rates. A communication plan and changes to onboarding will be developed to encourage confidence in data sharing among new starters.</p> <p>Norwich City Council maintains a strong and ongoing commitment to being anti-racist and to UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter, working to ensure fairness, equity, and inclusion across all areas of</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
		<p>SMART objectives, seeking to address areas of under representation.</p> <p>Continue to work with the Norwich City Council UNISON branch to promote the diversity of our workforce and further develop inclusive working practices.</p> <p>Maintain our ongoing commitment to UNISON's Anti-Racism Charter.</p>		<p>employment. This includes actively identifying and addressing racial disparities, promoting transparency, and fostering a workplace culture where discrimination is not tolerated.</p> <p>To support employee wellbeing, 16 new mental health first aiders will be trained in November 2025. A new occupational health provider, Medigold, is now in place, offering managers enhanced support and providing all staff access to the <i>Thrive</i> wellbeing app. Additionally, 100 free flu jabs were offered to staff this autumn which marked the first time in three years this initiative has been delivered.</p>
EDI Aim Priority: Continue to develop inclusive working practices and policies.				
1.2.1	Continue to work with the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) to develop a range of robust policies and procedures to	Promote organisational awareness of our new internal domestic abuse policy and resources to aid our employees to	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	We continue to work with the Norfolk Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (NIDAS) to strengthen support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse and our employees. Over the past year, we have published domestic abuse policies for residents

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
	assist our employees working to support victim-survivors of domestic abuse. This includes support for our employees who may experience domestic abuse themselves.	identify domestic abuse and provide access to appropriate support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse.		<p>and staff on our website, added resources to our wellbeing SharePoint, and displayed NIDAS information across City Hall. NIDAS staff also spend time with council teams, including the Home Improvement and Specialist Support Teams, to provide direct advice.</p> <p>Training remains a priority, with sessions available through the Learning Room to help staff identify domestic abuse and respond appropriately. In 2024/25, we received 403 domestic abuse contacts and provided assistance in 77% of cases. These efforts demonstrate our commitment to raising awareness and ensuring timely, effective support for those affected.</p>
1.2.2	Ensure our flexible and hybrid working policies are aligned with the work/life balance and lifestyle needs of our workforce.	In consultation with the Norwich City Council UNISON Branch, review the content of HR policies impacting the work/life balance of employees and make appropriate changes to ensure they support the varying needs of staff.	Iterative (ongoing)	We are currently undertaking a full review of its HR policies, including those relating to hybrid working and flexible leave. This work is being carried out in consultation with the Norwich City Council UNISON Branch to ensure policies reflect the diverse needs of staff and support a healthy work/life balance.

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
1.2.3	Explore our workforce's interest in the establishment of new employee networks.	<p>Gauge demand for additional employee networks through internal communication campaigns.</p> <p>Support employees to establish and manage employee networks.</p> <p>Ensure opportunities for the employee networks to be heard by our Senior Leadership Team and other relevant groups as appropriate.</p>	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>Council employees maintain a 'Pride' network for colleagues identifying as LGBTQIA+ and allies, offering a safe and inclusive space to connect, share experiences, and support one another. This group was a critical and essential tool in informing the development of our EDI Policy.</p> <p>Staff have shown interest in setting up more employee networks including a young employees forum. A communications plan, including a video from senior leaders, is ready to promote this. It will go to the Executive Leadership Team for approval, and further talks will decide which networks employees want to create.</p>
1.2.4	Maintain our Armed Forces Covenant Silver Award and support for veterans and ex-members of the armed forces.	Through the provision of online training, ensure employee awareness of the benefits realised through our participation in the Armed Forces	Iterative (ongoing)	We remain committed to supporting the armed forces community and upholding the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant. We also continue to offer support through guaranteed interviews for reservists who meet the essential job criteria, and special leave provisions outlined in HR policies.

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
		Covenant Recognition Scheme.		<p>Awareness-raising continues through two dedicated e-learning modules for staff and managers, and a reservist information page hosted on our intranet.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of embedding support for the armed forces community in recruitment, policy, and practice, and will explore opportunities to improve visibility, strengthen links with cadet organisations, and ensure policies reflect this commitment.</p> <p>War pension income for both Council Tax Reduction and Housing Benefit claimants is 100% disregarded. (Central Government disregard the first £10 per week and the remainder is disregarded under a local disregard).</p>
1.2.5	Make reasonable adjustments for employees with physical, sensory, mental and/or learning disabilities/difficulties.	Where appropriate, incorporate reasonable adjustments in all relevant HR policies and workplace practices. Endeavour to anticipate adjustments needed for	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to strengthen our approach to reasonable adjustments in the workplace. A dedicated webpage has been drafted and will be published once the new council website is launched, improving visibility and guidance for staff. Accessibility considerations are also being factored into future planning for City Hall.

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
		other groups falling within the scope of our EDI policy.		Plans are being considered to pursue <i>Disability Confident Leader</i> status, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive employment.
1.2.6	Explore the feasibility of an employee volunteering initiative which benefits the city and provides learning and development opportunities for employees.	Explore the feasibility of implementing an employer-supported volunteering initiative.	Medium-term (2026-27)	We continue to offer volunteering opportunities internally, though these are not widely promoted. To improve visibility, a new recruitment webpage is being developed with a dedicated section for work experience and volunteering, helping employees to more easily access opportunities that benefit communities and support personal development.
1.2.7	Strengthen our commitment to age friendly recruitment and support employees of all ages to flourish in a multigenerational workforce.	Sign up to the Age-Friendly Employer Pledge.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We are proud to have registered its interest in the Age Friendly Employer Pledge, reaffirming our commitment to fostering a workplace where people of all ages feel valued, supported, and empowered to thrive.</p> <p>We have already begun taking meaningful steps toward this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce data analysis is ongoing to better understand age representation across our organisation as shown in metrics.

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job adverts have been reviewed and refined to ensure they are accessible, inclusive, and welcoming to applicants of all ages. Flexible working arrangements are already in place, supporting work-life balance across all life stages. Our recent introduction of the <i>Thrive</i> wellbeing app continues to offer holistic support for mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing. <p>As part of this journey, we are also updating our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) policies to explicitly reflect an age-positive approach. We remain fully committed to completing our final submission by February 2026 and are excited to embed age inclusivity more deeply into our organisational culture.</p>
1.2.8	Continue to provide volunteering opportunities for Norwich residents within designated service areas.	Promote volunteering opportunities for residents at cultural activities and events.	Medium-term (2026-27)	We continue to offer volunteering opportunities across a range of service areas. While these opportunities are currently under-promoted, a new recruitment webpage is being developed with a dedicated section for work experience and

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				volunteering, making it easier for residents to find and engage with available roles.
EDI Aim Priority: Support colleagues to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to consider equality in all their work.				
1.3.1	Demonstrate our political and corporate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.	Appoint an EDI champion within our Senior Leadership Team. Recruit equality, diversity and inclusion champions across service areas.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	We have recruited nine Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champions from across different service areas. Training for these roles is underway, equipping them to support colleagues and promote inclusive approaches within their teams. In addition, we have now appointed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Champion within our Senior Leadership Team, reinforcing our corporate commitment to embedding EDI in everything we do. This role will help drive forward inclusive practices and ensure that Equality Impact Assessments are being undertaken across council services.
1.3.2	Continue to develop our internal Equalities Information SharePoint site to enable colleagues to understand and consider	Upload additional informative content and guidance to help employees build upon the basic equality's	Iterative (ongoing)	We have updated the Equalities Information SharePoint site with new Equality Impact Assessment templates (EqIAs) and corresponding guidance to help officers effectively consider the impact of their work on equality. A new network of

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
	equalities across everything they do.	knowledge gained through their corporate induction and mandatory training.		<p>EDI Champions has also been recruited and will play a key role in promoting equality across services.</p> <p>In July, the Strategy Team delivered an all-staff briefing on Equality Impact Assessments, followed by tailored training sessions for service areas on request.</p>
1.3.3	Support our employees to consider equality outcomes in their work through strengthening and fully embedding our Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA) process across all service areas.	Provision of EqIA training for all relevant staff.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We have taken steps to embed Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) more firmly into our decision-making processes. Updated EqIA templates and detailed guidance are now available on our Equality Information SharePoint site, giving staff practical tools to assess the impact of their work on equality.</p> <p>To strengthen compliance, our committee report template has been revised so that any decision regarding a relevant project or workstream is informed by an EqIA. Alongside this, we have delivered an all-staff briefing and provided tailored training sessions for services that requested additional support.</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				A new network of EDI Champions is also in place to promote good practice across the organisation.
1.3.4	Review and refresh the equality, diversity and inclusion training provided to our employees.	Explore, develop and implement modular e-learning courses for relevant employees.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We continue to provide a wide range of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) training to staff and councillors. Current provision includes mandatory e-learning on the Equality Act 2010, unconscious bias, inclusive leadership, and mental health awareness, alongside specialist workshops and development sessions delivered by external trainers.</p> <p>Staff also have access to wellbeing resources via our intranet and targeted training covering key themes including inclusive leadership, equality legislation, unconscious bias, mental health and wellbeing, domestic abuse awareness, and support for vulnerable groups. We have also delivered training aligned with the Armed Forces Covenant and continues to support wellbeing through initiatives like Mental Health First Aider training and the Wellbeing Champion programme.</p> <p>Further consideration is being given to how this training offer can be strengthened, including the development of modular e-learning courses to</p>

Action ID No.	Action	Outputs / Milestones	Timescale for Delivery	Progress Made
				ensure relevance, accessibility, and alignment with best practice.

EDI Aim 2: Our services will be joined up, accessible and inclusive.

EDI Aim Priority: Improve a range of communication platforms and channels to enhance accessibility, including for those facing digital exclusion.

2.1.1	Deliver the Customer and Digital Strategy 2024-29 Action Plan.	<p>Provide services which are easy to access for all customers.</p> <p>Continue to provide traditional contact options for those that face challenges with accessing digital services.</p> <p>Develop our approach to best serve our customers expecting a digital service by default.</p> <p>Ensure IT and digital solutions are reliable and secure.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>Progress is being measured against the customer and digital strategy 2024-2029 action plan on a quarterly basis. Results are shared with the Executive Director for Resources on a quarterly basis and with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) when requested.</p> <p>To date, 30% of actions which relate to the 'easy to access' objective are complete, 78% of actions which relate to the 'digital by default' objective are complete, 32% of actions which relate to the 'safe and secure solutions' objective are complete.</p> <p>Progress quarter on quarter is showing a steady increase in objectives achieved - with a high level of confidence that all objectives will be met by 2029 (strategy end date).</p>
2.1.2	Incorporate consideration of the council's EDI strategy within our communications strategy.	<p>Follow equality guidance on use of language.</p> <p>Always aim to represent a range of diversity through our visual and written content, internally and</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We are developing a new strategic communications plan that will be aligned with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. This approach will help ensure our communications use inclusive language, represent diverse voices and perspectives, and amplify voices that are less often heard.</p>

		<p>externally.</p> <p>Use comms channels to amplify lesser heard voices.</p>		
2.1.3	<p>Signpost residents and customers to local digital support offers to mitigate digital exclusion.</p>	<p>Maintain an up-to-date list on our website of local services, activities and guidance aimed at supporting residents to access digital skills training, IT equipment and digital volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Signpost residents to digital support through traditional (non-digital) means of communication.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>To mitigate digital exclusion, we continue to signpost residents to local digital support offers through both digital and non-digital means.</p> <p>As part of our website redesign project, we have updated the local digital support directory and Digital Inclusion (DI) pages to ensure residents can easily access information on digital skills training, IT equipment, and volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>We are actively supporting Norfolk County Council's bid to the Government's Digital Innovation Fund, which aims to expand the successful Tech Skills for Life programme, targeting low-income households, older residents (60+), jobseekers, and deprived areas of Norwich.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Age Friendly Transport Group, we are exploring alternative communication methods to reach digitally excluded individuals.</p> <p>While non-digital engagement remains resource-intensive, we continue to seek partnership opportunities to broaden our reach. Notably, during the consultation on local government reorganisation, we delivered a comprehensive engagement strategy including in-person roadshows across all 13 wards, VCSE workshops, drop-in and 1:1 sessions, and a Youth Advisory Board meeting. This approach ensured</p>

				inclusive participation and highlighted the importance of clear, transparent communication throughout the reorganisation process.
2.1.4	Improve the accessibility of our planning, licensing and regulatory processes through the standardisation and digitisation of planning, licensing and regulatory forms.	Review and digitise our suite of planning, licensing and regulatory forms to improve their accessibility.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We are making it easier for residents and businesses to engage with our planning, licensing and regulatory services by digitising key processes. This year, we launched online forms for taxi and private hire licensing, allowing drivers to apply quickly and securely. Additional improvements include online DBS checks and DVLA licence verification, significantly reducing processing times.</p> <p>From December 2025, we will introduce tamper-proof vehicle plates and holographic badges to enhance public safety and prevent fraud. These changes align with new driver standards and conditions being rolled out.</p> <p>We are also expanding digital access to other services including premises licences and gambling applications, which will be available online before the end of 2025.</p>

EDI Aim Priority: Undertake service-specific equalities reviews, so every service reflects our ambition.

2.2.1	Provide a range of affordable community, educational and recreational opportunities within our leisure centres, ensuring these remain fully accessible and inclusive to all who wish to use them.	Develop and offer a wide range of accessible recreational activities for disadvantaged groups, including those living with physical, sensory or mental disabilities, refugees and asylum	Iterative (ongoing)	Funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is supporting new projects at the Norman Centre to make leisure activities more inclusive. These include <i>Nifty 50s</i> , offering health walks, tailored exercise classes, and wellbeing advice for older residents; a pilot programme of activities for people with learning difficulties; and a 12-week weight management course.
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		<p>seekers and those experiencing social isolation.</p> <p>Work with local disability, access and inclusion advocates and partners as part of a rolling programme of accessibility audits, to ensure all council-owned and operated leisure facilities meet the requirements of all customers and that they conform to current accessibility standards.</p>		<p>All aim to improve physical health, mental wellbeing, and social connections for those who may otherwise face barriers to participation.</p>
2.2.2	<p>Promote the health and wellbeing of our residents by encouraging greater uptake of our Go4Less sport, leisure and culture discount card by eligible residents.</p>	<p>Review the Go4Less scheme and integrate the scheme's online enrolment process, so that eligible residents may automatically access their Go4Less card through their 'My Norwich' account.</p>	<p>Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)</p>	<p>Work is underway to launch a digital version of the Go4Less discount card, making it easier for eligible residents to access their card online through their 'My Norwich' account. While this is still in development, a postal option is now available for those unable to collect their card from Riverside Leisure Centre or the Norman Centre. We are also putting the necessary information governance in place so we can start collecting demographic data on Go4Less users, helping us to better understand who is benefiting from the scheme.</p>
2.2.3	<p>Advance our efforts to install physical adaptations to council-owned public buildings</p>	<p>Accessibility audits are carried out on public, council-owned buildings and wherever else</p>	<p>Iterative (ongoing)</p>	<p>Accessibility remains a key priority in all council projects. Audits and improvements are ongoing, and accessibility is being built into major developments such as The Halls and the upgraded facilities at</p>

	to facilitate greater accessibility for all.	required; adaptations aimed at improving the experience for customers with disabilities and other additional needs are made.		Sloughbottom Park to ensure spaces are welcoming and inclusive for everyone.
2.2.4	Support eligible city residents, regardless of tenure, to remain living in a safe and secure environment, through our Healthy Homes scheme and the provision of a range of grants, loans and funding.	Offer financial assistance and support residents to access funding for adaptations to their homes, promoting longer, healthier and more independent living.	Iterative (ongoing)	Over the past 12 months, 788 grants have been successfully delivered, with distribution of more than £3.7 million in funding. These grants support a wide range of improvements, including disabled adaptations such as level-access showers and ramped entrances, heating upgrades for low-income households, and essential works that facilitate hospital discharge.
2.2.5	Facilitate minor tasks in older residents' homes which promote safety and independence.	Launch an accessible tenure neutral handy-person service for older residents.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	A new handyperson service has been launched to help vulnerable residents with small tasks that improve safety and independence at home. The service is already being used by key VCSE partners to support those who need it most.
2.2.6	Pilot early support provision which we may offer to reduce a variety of risks to council tenancies.	Review tenancy breakdown data to enable early identification of those at risk of experiencing difficulties in maintaining their tenancies.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	We have begun piloting early support for residents at risk of tenancy breakdown. Since January 2025, 27 individuals have been referred for support, though none are currently council tenants. A dedicated Tenancy Coach, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund until March 2026, is working closely with housing teams to identify and assist those who may benefit. Support for tenants was expanded from June 2025, with the Tenancy Coach offering help to both council and non-council tenants.

				It is too early to assess the impact on tenancy breakdowns as this data will likely take six months to become evident, but uptake of support is growing and will be monitored over time.
2.2.7	Through our bereavement and burial service provision, continue to work closely with local faith groups to ensure conformity to specific burial traditions and customs.	Maintain effective relationships with local faith groups and continue to support them to conform with the burial traditions and customs maintained within their religions and beliefs.	Iterative (ongoing)	Progress on this action is pending while the new Cemeteries Team is being established. Bereavement Services Officers are being recruited in late 2025. Once the team is in place, a list of priorities will be shared with them, including engagement with local faith groups to ensure burial practices continue to reflect religious traditions and customs.
EDI Aim Priority: Ensure that our knowledge about the people and communities we serve informs our service planning, and that their voices are heard.				
2.3.1	Develop and embed an improved, accessible and consistent approach to public and partner consultation on the activities we undertake.	Work with council colleagues to develop the best engagement/consultation approach for each project, ensuring transparency and a clearer understanding of the degree to which views can influence outcomes.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	We are reviewing our consultation and survey processes to make them more accessible and consistent, while ensuring compliance with statutory obligations. Priority will be given to consultations that provide meaningful insights and have the potential to influence council decisions, helping to ensure transparency and clarity for all participants.
2.3.2	Develop a Norwich Council of Sanctuary strategy to guide our work and ensure service provision is truly supportive of	Through engagement with the City of Sanctuary, develop a strategy to guide our positive action, delivering	Medium-term (2026-27)	A Norwich Council of Sanctuary Strategy has been fully drafted and shared with key stakeholders and voluntary sector partners for feedback. The strategy was developed through co-production, including two workshops with organisations supporting sanctuary seekers, individuals with lived experience, and council

	our refugee and asylum-seeking community.	a welcome environment, and ensuring the safety and inclusion of refugees and asylum seekers within our service provision and beyond.		officers. Its priorities reflect what sanctuary seekers identified as most important. Once any final feedback from partners has been incorporated the strategy will go through our governance process for approval. Alongside this, we hosted Refugee Week events such as the official launch in the council chamber, “Speak Up for Sanctuary” training for over 30 officers and members, and community activities including a football match with sanctuary seekers. The council has also worked closely with the police and VCSE partners to respond to recent community tensions and to help ensure community safety.
2.3.3	Refresh the Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) framework to identify areas of the city facing disproportionate levels of deprivation.	Build a framework and toolkit which officers and partners may use to target resources in the areas of Norwich that need it most.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	Last year, we refreshed our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) framework to better focus resources where they are needed most. Using the latest deprivation data and local insight, nine neighbourhoods have been identified as priority areas, and these will be reviewed again following the release of new Indices of Multiple Deprivation data in October 2025. The framework is being rolled out with partners to influence how local resources are targeted, helping address disproportionate levels of hardship in these communities. For example, we are working with the Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership to reduce health inequalities in RITA areas, ensuring that interventions are directed where they can have the greatest impact.
2.3.4	Celebrate gender diversity and advance equality and inclusion	Review our service provision and implement changes which promote equality and inclusion for	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	Following the recent Supreme Court ruling on the legal definition of biological sex, we are awaiting national guidance before making any changes to policies or procedures. This will ensure that any updates are compliant with the law and informed by Equality Impact

	<p>for Transgender and Non-Binary people.</p>	<p>Transgender and Non-Binary communities.</p> <p>Review and ensure our communications, including our website and forms, are free from gendered language.</p> <p>Implement changes to EDI training for our employees to promote knowledge of Transgender and Non-Binary communities.</p>		<p>Assessments (EqIAs), so that no group is disadvantaged when accessing council services or within our workforce. In readiness, an audit to identify where potential updates might need to be applied has been undertaken.</p> <p>While some work has been deferred until the guidance cited above is published, we have made progress in other areas. Forms within our control are being updated to remove gendered salutations, using first name and surname only. As part of our website redesign project, we are reviewing around 250 online forms to remove title fields entirely. Some have already been updated, and the remainder will be completed by March 2026.</p> <p>We are also improving how we collect demographic data to avoid conflating gender and biological sex. For example, on our digital consultation platform, Get Talking Norwich, people can now provide both gender identity and where relevant their biological sex, with neither field being mandatory. This work has been informed by the Sullivan Report.</p> <p>Additionally, our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion webpage will soon include a directory of LGBTQIA+ support services to help residents access the information and assistance they need.</p>
2.3.5	<p>Maintain our offer to assist waste collections for residents with reduced mobility or other factors which limit their ability to do this independently.</p>	<p>Continue to work closely with our waste collection contractors to offer free assisted waste collections for anyone in Norwich who needs it.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to offer free assisted waste collections for residents who are unable to put their bins out due to reduced mobility or other factors. To make this service easier to access, we've updated our website with a dedicated "Get help with putting out your bins" button on the Bins and Recycling homepage, along with a new page explaining how to apply and the eligibility criteria.</p>

				<p>These improvements ensure the process is clear and accessible.</p> <p>Over 900 residents are receiving assisted collections, covering services such as domestic waste, recycling, food waste, and garden waste. Most recipients are aged over 65, our records show that over 350 recipients identify as disabled.</p>
2.3.6	Make reasonable adjustments for service users with physical, sensory, mental and/or learning disabilities/difficulties.	<p>Where appropriate, incorporate reasonable adjustments in all relevant service strategies/polices.</p> <p>Endeavour to anticipate adjustments needed for other groups falling within the scope of our EDI policy.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to make reasonable adjustments for service users with physical, sensory, mental, and learning disabilities wherever needed. These adjustments are being built into relevant service strategies and policies, and we are working to anticipate the needs of other groups covered by our EDI policy through the completion of Equality Impact Assessments to ensure services are accessible and inclusive for everyone.</p>
2.3.7	Improve accessibility to our services, through continual collaborative engagement with partners, such as the Inclusive Norwich Partnership, to identify areas requiring improvement and co-design alterations to service delivery.	Co-design improvements to our services with external partners who support local disadvantaged groups and have lived experience.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We have continued to work closely with the Inclusive Norwich Partnership (INP) to make our services and public spaces more accessible. Over the past year, the INP has played a key role in shaping major council projects, including the design of our new website, improvements to Hay Hill, the Mile Cross roundabout, Lakenham Way, Castle Gardens, and Norwich Market, as well as the accessibility review of City Hall. They have also contributed to the Sloughbottom Park steering group and other local initiatives.</p>

				<p>The INP's network now spans over 400 local contacts, enabling them to gather valuable feedback and lived experience to inform consultations. Beyond council consultations, the INP has represented disabled communities at strategic forums such as the Norwich Cultural Strategy roundtable and a Future Norfolk Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Workshop. They have also delivered practical solutions, including a mobility bus scheme developed with Norwich City Football Club and local charities to help disabled fans travel to the Carrow Road football ground.</p> <p>The Partnership continues to evolve, prioritising co-production and recently re-establishing the Norwich Access Group to strengthen collaboration with disabled residents. Alongside this, a Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group has worked with the INP to develop recommendations for embedding inclusive design into council policy, focusing on the built environment, transport, and support services. Together, these efforts ensure accessibility is not an afterthought but a core principle in how we design and deliver services.</p> <p>Additionally, our Equality Impact Assessment templates and guidance have been updated to reflect accessibility as a core principle for consideration when we are developing new proposals.</p>
2.3.8	Strengthen our data driven approach to addressing local inequality.	<p>Continue to undertake Community Conversations across the city, focussing on our most deprived communities.</p> <p>Develop an internal EDI</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	We continue to strengthen our data-driven approach to tackling inequality. The annual <i>State of Norwich</i> report provides headline equality data for everyone to access, and we've refreshed our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) to focus resources where they are needed most. Nine neighbourhoods have been

	<p>data platform for officers/councillors to use and guide decision-making.</p> <p>Ensure EqIAs are used to record the results of EDI impact analyses on our activity after a project or change has been implemented.</p>		<p>identified using the latest deprivation data and local insight, and these will be reviewed again after the new Indices of Multiple Deprivation are released in October.</p> <p>Internally, we have improved how we track and use equality data. A central log of Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) is now available for officers, making it easier to update assessments throughout a project's lifecycle. We have also refreshed our EqIA process, including updated templates, guidance, and training. Work is underway to develop an equalities dashboard to support evidence-based decision-making.</p>
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EDI Aim 3: Norwich is a fair city where people facing inequality can share in and contribute to the city's success.

EDI Aim Priority: Ensure that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion outcomes inform wider council policies, strategies and programmes.

3.1.1	Meet all requirements for our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.	Demonstrate our commitment to providing quality and timely support for victim-survivors of domestic abuse, by implementing and embedding policies and procedures aimed at ensuring we respond effectively when made aware of domestic abuse within our housing stock.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We are progressing towards DAHA accreditation, reaffirming our commitment to supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse. In 2024, all required documentation was submitted, and a new safety-led case management system was launched in early 2025. Key improvements include a full review of policies and procedures, and the development of a domestic abuse e-learning package for staff, which is currently being finalised.</p> <p>We're working with the Norfolk DAHA group to create shared resources and webpages, and are incorporating learning from the new Domestic Abuse Related Death review process. In 2024/25, the council received 403 domestic abuse contacts and provided support in 77% of cases.</p>
3.1.2	Support our tenants with low incomes to reduce their energy bills through the development of a new asset management strategy, outlining how we will manage, improve and utilise our physical assets to deliver the best outcomes for our	Publish a refreshed Asset Management Strategy to guide our continued efforts to ensure our housing stock meets national safety and quality standards and we accelerate our decarbonising efforts to reach our goal of	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>An Asset Management Strategy has been developed and will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in December 2025. This strategy sets out our approach to managing housing stock and provides a foundation for future plans. Background work, including stock condition surveys, energy performance checks, and retrofit studies, has informed the strategy and will continue to guide investment decisions and shape</p>

	tenants and the city more broadly.	becoming a net-zero Norwich by 2045.		future asset management approaches. The action will be complete by the time this report is published.
3.1.3	Support residents experiencing financial hardship through the provision of financial relief on their council tax bills.	<p>Conduct regular reviews of our local council tax reduction scheme, whilst maintaining our discretionary support offer for care leavers, those taking in refugees and those fleeing domestic abuse.</p> <p>Support eligible residents in receipt of a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to find longer term solutions which reduce the gap between their housing costs and the ability to meet those costs.</p> <p>Support residents to maximise their income by promoting and supporting take-up campaigns.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We have recently updated our web pages to make information about discretionary support clearer. We have presented options for the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme to members, but with Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) on the horizon, we do not plan to make major changes at this stage.</p> <p>We work closely with our Housing Team and the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to support tenants facing rent shortfalls. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are intended as a short-term measure while tenants find longer-term solutions. The DHP policy is reviewed annually, and spending is monitored monthly, with regular meetings to address any issues.</p> <p>We also meet regularly with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to help support people into work. When asked, we promote take-up campaigns through in-person engagement, social media, and our website.</p>
3.1.4	Work to support council tenants on low incomes to access discounted and affordable furniture when	Work with charity partners to reuse furniture left in our properties following the end of tenancies.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	Since its launch in April 2025, the upcycling project has cleared more than 20 empty properties, recovering over 60 items - including chest of drawers, microwaves, fridge freezers, and TV units. These items have been repurposed and saved from landfill and are credited to

	taking on a new tenancy with the council.	Offer eligible council tenants vouchers to purchase second hand furniture from our charity partner.		an account that enables council residents to access essential household goods at significantly reduced prices.
3.1.5	Update our licensing policies to implement new legislation and improve the accessibility of local taxi and private hire services.	Review and publish a suite of revised taxi, driver and vehicle policies which implement new legislation and promote greater awareness and access for users with disabilities.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We have reviewed and updated our taxi and private hire driver policies in line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance. These updated policies were presented to Full Council on 30 September 2025.</p> <p>Next, we will review vehicle standards in quarter three 2025/26 and plan to consult on these in quarter four, with implementation expected in September/October next year (2026).</p> <p>The revised standards will align with DfT guidance and include measures to improve accessibility.</p> <p>The review of vehicle standards has not yet started, so we cannot confirm what changes will be proposed at this stage. We will provide an update once the consultation begins.</p>
3.1.6	Continue to promote local businesses which produce wider positive social impacts through offering our business merit awards.	Using our business merit awards, promote and celebrate local businesses who provide additional environmental and health related benefits to their consumers through best practice.	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to champion local businesses that go the extra mile for their communities and the environment through our Business Merit Awards. This initiative highlights and celebrates those who embed positive social impacts into their work, from promoting healthier lifestyles to adopting sustainable practices.

				The scheme remains active, and we are proud to see businesses across Norwich recognised for their commitment to best practice.
3.1.7	Review and, where possible, adopt key policies covered under the 'socio-economic duty'.	<p>When developing strategies and policies, consider what more can be done to reduce the inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Formally incorporate poverty and socio-economic disadvantage, alongside the existing nine protected characteristics in equality impact assessments, equality plans, and our broader decision-making processes and strategies.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We have adopted the socio-economic duty, ensuring that poverty and socio-economic disadvantage are actively considered in strategic decision-making and policy development. A new Vulnerability Framework sets out the clear steps we will take to support those impacted by socio-economic disadvantage and has been shared with Cabinet and key staff across the organisation.</p> <p>To embed this approach, revised equality impact assessment templates and guidance now prompt further consideration of how council work affects those experiencing hardship. The refresh of the Reducing Inequality Target Areas has also helped direct resources to communities most affected by disadvantage.</p>
3.1.8	Support eligible residents and businesses struggling to pay their council tax /business rates by offering temporary hardship relief.	<p>Eligible businesses are offered temporary relief from some or all of their business rates.</p> <p>Eligible residents are offered short-term assistance with their council tax bills.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to support residents through a 100% Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme. In addition, there are a range of council tax discounts and exemptions, and central government sometimes provides extra grants for specific situations such as flooding or national emergencies.</p> <p>Businesses can access several types of relief, both mandatory and discretionary. We also have a hardship relief policy, which is intended as a temporary measure</p>

				<p>to help businesses recover rather than sustain those that are no longer viable.</p> <p>We work closely with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) and monitor performance and Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) uptake. Where funding is likely to be underspent, we collaborate with Members and the FIC to encourage appropriate claims.</p>
3.1.9	Develop an inclusive approach to support multifaith events / significant dates.	A calendar of dates we support and detail what this support looks like.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We are currently working on the development of a multi-faith and awareness calendar that highlights key dates important to our communities and aligns with council priorities. Once complete, this calendar will be shared and embedded across all council services, helping teams work together to support events and activities that celebrate diversity and inclusion.</p>
3.1.10	Review how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, can be embedded within the revised Contract Management Framework and Procurement Strategy.	<p>Develop a revised Contract Management Framework.</p> <p>Develop a revised Procurement Strategy.</p> <p>Produce guidance outlining the role of procurement in promoting EDI.</p> <p>Deliver training on our responsibilities for</p>	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>Our new Contract Management Framework (CMF) went live on 1 October 2025. It references that the foundations for successful post-award contract management are supported by a thorough procurement process, ensuring all the right elements (including EDI) are included within the specification that underpins the contract and the delivery of goods and/or services. Compliance of managers to adhere to the whole CMF will be reported to our Assurance Board in quarter one of the 2026/27 financial year.</p> <p>It has been determined that due to Local Government Reorganisation a revised Procurement Strategy shall not be drafted.</p>

		Procurement Team and contract managers.		<p>The Procurement Team are reviewing the wide scope of social value, environmental impacts and EDI in conjunction with the Strategy Team.</p> <p>Training for Procurement Team and contract managers shall be incorporated into a Contract Managers Forum meeting. Content and date are to be determined; however, it is anticipated this will be complete by 31 March 2026.</p>
3.1.11	Promote inclusive play within our parks and open spaces.	<p>Continue to deliver a programme of investment within our parks and open spaces which improves wider accessibility for all, including families.</p> <p>Update our website to include useful information about the inclusive play equipment and accessible play areas within our parks and open spaces.</p>	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>A major consultation on play has recently been completed by the Parks Team, with strong engagement and valuable feedback from residents. These insights will help shape a new Play Strategy, which is now in development. In early October, the Youth Advisory Board presented their "Making Play Matter" work at a Members Briefing, which was warmly received. The new strategy will guide future investment in inclusive and accessible play across our parks and open spaces.</p>
3.1.12	Ensure ethical debt recovery which considers debtors' individual circumstances.	<p>Encourage customers to discuss debts owed to the council at an early stage, and to seek support and advice before their situation worsens.</p> <p>The council and its</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>The Revenues Recovery Team now offers drop-in sessions for anyone who has received a summons, giving people the chance to discuss their financial situation before going to court. These sessions have been well received.</p> <p>We continue to provide an extra reminder before issuing a summons; an approach introduced during the</p>

		<p>enforcement agents recognise vulnerability and have procedures in place to support debtors.</p>		<p>pandemic to give people more time to pay or contact us. We are also working with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to find ways to support people earlier, before their situation becomes critical.</p> <p>In June 2025, Cabinet approved a new Corporate Debt Strategy, Policy, and Vulnerability Framework. Enforcement agents operate under the Enforcement Board Code of Conduct and our policy, with vulnerable cases referred to specialist teams or us for further support. Quarterly contract review meetings monitor performance, including complaints.</p> <p>As part of new contracts, we will hold joint drop-in sessions with enforcement agents at City Hall, starting in January 2026, so people can discuss debts face-to-face.</p> <p>Following a finance restructure, a Corporate Debt Manager has been appointed to continue work from the debt project, which has so far resulted in £4.5 million of income being collected, written off, or placed in repayment arrangements.</p>
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EDI Aim Priority: Focus our efforts on the places and communities in the city that face the biggest disadvantages, improving our use of data to help us do this.

3.2.1	<p>Maintain our commitment to supporting a minimum of 90 refugees per financial year to access suitable and safe accommodation through the UK's Resettlement Schemes.</p>	<p>With continued financial support from Norfolk's six other district councils, we will continue to work closely with Norfolk County Council's People from Abroad Team to</p>	<p>Iterative (ongoing)</p>	<p>Using targeted government funding, we have established a specialist team within the Housing Options service.</p>
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		<p>support and house refugees under the ARAPs, ACRS, H4U and other national government resettlement schemes.</p>		<p>This team focuses specifically on preventing homelessness among those granted refugee status and supporting their transition into settled accommodation.</p> <p>The team has developed strong, positive relationships with statutory and support agencies to provide an enhanced service, carry out assessments and provide personalised housing advice to those clients at risk of homelessness having been granted refugee status.</p> <p>In the past year the team has supported over 140 refugees into accommodation.</p>
3.2.2	<p>Maintain our gold standard for homelessness and prevention services by continuing to support residents facing homelessness and rough sleeping through the provision of accommodation and holistic wrap around support tailored to individual need.</p>	<p>We will continue to deploy the 'Housing First' principles to support individuals facing on-street homelessness and rough sleeping.</p> <p>Working in collaboration with housing association partners, we will provide bespoke and supportive plans aimed at addressing vulnerable people's housing needs, in addition to the many other complex needs that often accompany those facing homelessness.</p>	<p>Iterative (ongoing)</p>	<p>We continue to perform well in the prevention of homelessness, meeting all targets and in 2024/2025 preventing homelessness for 83% of clients seen. We have recently used external funding to establish new posts to work with ex-offenders facing homelessness and entrenched rough sleepers with complex needs.</p>

3.2.3	<p>Through the work of our Neighbourhood and Community Enabling Team, support local communities to build on their asset base, focusing efforts within our Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs).</p>	<p>We will advance our support for local community groups through the provision of a variety of grants aimed at helping community projects and groups to establish themselves.</p>	<p>Iterative (ongoing)</p>	<p>The Neighbourhood and Community Enabling Team has continued to support local communities in Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs) through small grants that help groups build on their strengths.</p> <p>Grants awarded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Growing: 1 grant (£485) • Get Started: 4 grants (£1,200) • Get Together: 6 grants (£274) <p>Examples of Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melbourne Cottages (Get Together): A small grant funded the purchase of a CD player and radio for use during weekly coffee mornings at this sheltered housing scheme. This simple intervention has helped residents come together in a shared space, reducing isolation and encouraging social interaction through music and conversation. • Autism Explorers (Get Started): This new group received support to become formally constituted, including advice on legal structures. The grant enabled them to secure liability insurance and affordable hall hire, allowing them to launch weekly social groups for autistic children and peer support for families. They have since expanded their offer to include sessions for home-educated autistic children and were recognised with a Flourish Award in the Friends and Family category.
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherbourne Place (Get Together): A £50 grant supported a community garden celebration attended by 70–80 residents from Sherbourne Place and nearby estates. The event featured healthy cooking demonstrations using garden produce and brought together neighbours including elderly and disabled residents who had not left their homes in months. This helped them to build new connections and celebrate shared achievements. • Yare Valley Meadow Makers (Get Growing): Funding supported the purchase and hire of equipment for wildflower meadow creation. This volunteer-led project is enhancing local biodiversity while bringing people together to make a lasting environmental impact. The initiative also provides opportunities for residents to engage in outdoor activity and environmental learning. <p>These initiatives demonstrate the value of small-scale funding in fostering inclusion, wellbeing, and community resilience.</p> <p>Norwich has secured £20 million over the next decade through the Government's Pride in Place programme. This funding will give local communities greater influence over how money is spent in their neighbourhoods, whether that's improving parks and green spaces, revitalising high streets, or upgrading leisure facilities. The areas of Heartsease, Pilling Park, Bowthorpe and West Earlham will benefit most.</p> <p>These neighbourhoods are part of our Reducing Inequality Target Areas, where we're already working</p>
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				with residents to expand opportunities, strengthen community assets, and create safer, greener public spaces. This investment allows us to accelerate that work and ensure funding is directed towards what matters most to local people.
3.2.4	Take every opportunity to challenge religious or faith-based hatred within our city and celebrate the benefits that come from diversity and the important role different faiths play in communities.	Work collaboratively with religious or faith representatives to initiate a dialogue and explore opportunities to support and share the celebration of faith-based festivals, recognising the diversity of faith groups in the city and their contribution.	Short-term (delivered by Feb 2026)	<p>We continue to support faith events and celebrations across the city, such as Eid and Hanukkah. Our Events Team provides safety advice and logistical support where needed, helping ensure these occasions are inclusive and welcoming for all communities.</p> <p>To support our commitment to challenging faith-based hatred and celebrating diversity, we have subscribed to the Norwich Interfaith Link, a local forum that brings together representatives from multiple faith communities. This membership enables ongoing dialogue, provides insight into issues affecting faith groups, and creates opportunities to consult diverse perspectives when shaping policy or responding to community concerns. Through this collaboration, we can better recognise and celebrate faith-based festivals, strengthen relationships across communities, and ensure the contributions of different faith groups are valued within the city.</p>
3.2.5	Support our residents to become more active and realise the benefits of physical activity on their overall health through referrals to the Active NoW service.	Where need is identified, we will refer residents to the Active NoW service, through which they can access tailored physical activity programmes, incorporating leisure,	Iterative (ongoing)	We and our health partners continue to refer residents to the <i>Active NoW</i> service, which provides tailored physical activity programmes to support health and wellbeing. By early September 2025, 1,247 referrals had been made across Norwich, with many participants coming from areas experiencing higher levels of deprivation. Around a quarter of those referred identify

		community and digital options.		as having a disability, and the service is reaching people of all ages, particularly older residents, who benefit most from staying active and connected.
3.2.6	Work closely with local organisations and community groups to aid the delivery of accessible events and encourage participation of people who typically might not engage.	Continue to ensure all council-run events are inclusive through the provision of facilities such as accessible viewing areas, quiet areas and, where appropriate, the use of our parks and open spaces for free.	Iterative (ongoing)	The Lord Mayor's Weekend has been awarded bronze accreditation from <i>Attitude is Everything</i> , recognising our commitment to making events more accessible for everyone, including attendees, performers, staff, and contractors. We are using the learning from this to improve accessibility at future events, starting with the Festive Light Switch-On, and will share best practice with external organisers to help make events across the city more inclusive.
3.2.7	Continue to ensure people experiencing domestic abuse are able to access a range of housing options and support through our Sanctuary Scheme.	Our trained housing and domestic abuse advisors offer tailored support to victim-survivors of domestic abuse and, where required, arrange for free security focussed adaptations which promote safety within properties.	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to provide a specialist housing advice service to victim-survivors of domestic abuse. We also fund specialist support services, a 'sanctuary' scheme and has recently added to its refuge and safehouse provision for those who have experienced abuse.
3.2.8	Empower and support those experiencing self-neglect and/or a hoarding disorder to make positive changes by working in partnership to deliver the Safe and Habitable Homes Service.	Support residents on a tenure neutral basis to access specialist tailored advice and support to address issues of self-neglect and/or a hoarding disorder.	Iterative (ongoing)	The Safe and Habitable Homes Service is now fully operational, with a dedicated team supporting residents across all housing tenures. The service is in high demand, with a full caseload and a waiting list. Residents are being supported to make meaningful changes, significantly reducing risks in their homes linked to self-neglect and hoarding behaviours.

				The Safe Habitable Homes Service received 53 referral this year and are currently working with 40 individuals, and have a waiting list of 17.
3.2.9	Implement our Sustainable Warmth Strategy.	<p>Deliver our Green Doctor fuel poverty advice service.</p> <p>Offer emergency winter fuel payments to eligible residents.</p> <p>Domestic retrofit capital grants.</p>	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We continue to deliver a wide range of measures under its Sustainable Warmth Strategy to support residents in fuel poverty. Through the £5 million Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, insulation and solar panels have been installed in 250 of the least energy-efficient council homes.</p> <p>Further investment is being delivered through the £12 million Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund, with £10 million in council co-funding. This will upgrade 1,482 council homes by 2028, including the installation of 1,400 solar PV systems, 140 air source heat pumps, and a ground source heat pump system for 24 dwellings, all targeted at energy inefficient homes.</p> <p>In the private sector, £4.7 million from the Warm Homes: Local Grant will support upgrades to 330 owner-occupied and privately rented homes, focusing on low-income households in the most deprived areas. pre- and post-works EPC surveys will be used to track improvements.</p> <p>We continue to work with the '<i>Green Doctor</i>' service, which has completed over 300 home visits to fuel-poor households, offering free energy advice and simple energy-saving measures.</p> <p>Fuel poverty in Norwich has fallen from 15.5% in 2021 to 12.1% in 2023. While 2024 sub-regional data is not yet available, regional figures show a continued downward trend. The percentage of homes in Norwich</p>

				<p>with an EPC rating of C or higher has also increased, from 49.01% in November 2024 to 49.71% in October 2025.</p> <p>Heat pump installations more than doubled in 2024 compared to 2023, and are expected to rise further in 2025, supported by ongoing capital grant programmes.</p>
3.2.10	Support those experiencing fuel poverty to reduce their energy costs through the implementation of our Citywide Climate Action Plan.	Develop and deliver a citywide domestic retrofit plan.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We continue to support a range of initiatives to help residents reduce energy costs and improve home energy efficiency.</p> <p>We are commencing delivery of works under the Warm Homes: Local Grant following a successful £4.7 million funding bid. This is expected to upgrade 330 private sector homes (owner-occupied and privately rented) with energy efficiency measures and low-carbon heating systems by March 2028, at no cost to residents. Support is targeted at fuel-poor households in the most deprived areas of the city.</p> <p>Community schemes such as 'Solar Together' and the 'Big Community Switch' have also been promoted. In 2024, 492 households registered for Solar Together, with 345 registrations so far in 2025.</p> <p>In June 2025, 101 households switched to a better energy deal through the Big Community Switch scheme, which helps households to access a cheaper energy tariff whilst switching to green electricity (sourced from renewables).</p> <p>We continue to offer a 'Flex' service for national insulation and energy schemes, widening eligibility to include residents with medical conditions and other</p>

				<p>indicators of vulnerability. This has helped more households access funded improvements.</p> <p>As of October 2025, the average domestic EPC score in Norwich is 66.5 (high D rating), and we are working towards achieving an average rating of C. Heat pump installations in Norwich more than doubled in 2024 compared to 2023, and are expected to rise further in 2025, supported by capital grant programmes.</p> <p>Citywide CO₂e emissions also continued to fall from 474 kilotonnes in 2022 to 419 kilotonnes in 2023, reflecting the impact of ongoing decarbonisation efforts. Data from 2024 onwards is not yet available, however, it is anticipated emissions have continued to fall. We will continue to monitor the latest available emissions data to assess the impact of citywide decarbonisation efforts.</p>
3.2.11	Promote resident wellbeing through the implementation of our Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2032.	Development of a nature recovery network to improve wellbeing through improved access to nature.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We have recently secured £775,000 in grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for 'NatureCityNorwich' a three-year partnership project with Norfolk Wildlife Trust, Norfolk County Council, and South Norfolk & Broadland District Councils. Running until 2028, the project will engage communities across Greater Norwich to plan the development of an urban Nature Recovery Network (uNRN), alongside developing innovative funding models, enhance biodiversity and improve doorstep access to nature for households in Norwich.</p> <p>Pilot projects are already underway, including 'Back Garden Nature', which enhances biodiversity in underused council housing gardens. Planning is also underway for improvements at Heartsease Recreation</p>

				<p>Ground this winter, where 315 metres of mixed native fruiting hedge and 6,000 m² of wildflower meadow will be introduced - boosting biodiversity while preserving space for play and sport.</p> <p>We continue to support partner-led initiatives such as The Common Lot's <i>Household to the Marsh</i> nature-show which was free and toured the city's parks making it accessible to 1000s of people. We are monitoring Natural England's Accessible Greenspace Standards data on access to nature and Eco-system services, to track progress.</p> <p>This work reflects our commitment to improving wellbeing through better access to green and blue spaces and improving the quality of the environment through nature-based Solutions.</p>
3.2.12	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Retrofit Programme.	Develop and deliver a retrofit plan for the council's 15,000 social housing dwellings.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>We continue to invest in improving the energy efficiency of its social housing stock, through the delivery of capital grant retrofit programmes. Under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave one, solid wall insulation was installed in 45 of the least energy-efficient council homes. This work has continued under another wave of SHDF funding, which is currently delivering solar panel and insulation upgrades to 260 dwellings.</p> <p>Most recently, we secured £12 million from the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund with an additional £10 million committed in co-funding by us. This will support improvements to 1,482 council homes by 2028, targeting those most at risk of fuel poverty.</p>

				<p>Retrofit planning is also underway for all low-rise blocks (around one third of our housing stock) in partnership with a specialist architect firm. This work will help identify the most equitable and cost-effective ways to achieve improved energy efficiency and decarbonisation in these dwellings.</p> <p>The Environmental Strategy Team is contributing to the HRA Business Plan to ensure energy efficiency and decarbonisation are embedded in both short and long-term planning. As of October 2025, the average standard assessment procedure (SAP) score for council dwellings is 70.8, equivalent to an EPC rating of C. Progress will continue to be monitored through EPC ratings.</p>
3.2.13	<p>Identify and deliver mitigations to support those disadvantaged by the 'Poverty Premium'.</p>	<p>Identify opportunities to increase the take up of low-cost home contents insurance for council tenants.</p> <p>Promote awareness of the affordable services offered by local credit unions and community development finance institutions.</p> <p>Review the use and effectiveness of homeless prevention loans.</p>	<p>Medium-term (2026-27)</p>	<p>A proactive case finding pilot is underway, using Household Support Fund and housing data to identify residents who may be financially vulnerable. Direct contact is being made, and those struggling with debt are being signposted to appropriate support services. This reflects a wider increase in demand, with Norfolk Community Advice Network reporting a 20.1% rise in debt and money advice referrals in 2024/25 compared to the previous year.</p> <p>Despite efforts to promote low-cost home contents insurance for council tenants, uptake has declined from 1,068 tenants in March 2024 to 996 in March 2025. Policy restrictions linked to rent arrears and increased costs for accidental damage may have contributed to this reduction.</p>

				Work is ongoing to promote awareness of affordable financial services, including credit unions and community development finance institutions, and to review the effectiveness of homeless prevention loans.
3.2.14	Tackle and reduce the prevalence of child poverty in Norwich.	Work with financial inclusion and other partners to develop a clear picture of child poverty within Norwich, developing plans to mitigate the risk of further children falling into poverty.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	<p>Targeted work is underway in the Pilling Park area, led by the health inequalities sub-group. This involves close collaboration with local stakeholders including St Matthew's Church, Lionwood Surgery, local schools, the library, and the wider community, to better understand local needs and shape support accordingly. Public Health funding is enabling community-led projects that, while health-focused, also help reach families in financial hardship.</p> <p>Data continues to inform our approach. Support is being targeted using RITA and health data, and figures from Norwich Foodbank show a slight reduction in demand: in 2024/25, food was provided to just over 12,500 people, including 4,100 children, down from 13,200 people and 4,500 children the previous year.</p>

EDI Aim Priority: Develop our leadership capacity and capability around equalities.

3.3.1	Realise an Age Friendly Norwich through collaboration with our partners and local community, and encourage our older population to remain active, connected and supported as they grow older.	Engage our older residents and wider community to understand what an Age-friendly Norwich looks like to them and co-design improvements to the built environment and services	Iterative (ongoing)	Since starting our Age Friendly Norwich journey in October 2024, we've been working closely with Age UK Norwich and other partners to make the city more inclusive for older residents. Our first priority has been transport, and we've set up the Age-Friendly Norwich Transport Group to improve accessibility and mobility support. This group is creating a plain-English guide to help older and disabled residents navigate local transport options, including passenger assistance
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		which address barriers to ageing well.		<p>schemes and ticketing, and ensuring information is available in both digital and printed formats.</p> <p>Alongside this, Age UK Norwich is leading work on housing and encouraging local businesses to become Age Friendly Employers. So far, 12 local employers have signed the pledge and met the accreditation criteria, helping to make Norwich a more inclusive place to work. We're also collaborating with other Norfolk districts to share ideas and best practice, recognising that many visitors to Norwich come from neighbouring areas.</p>
3.3.2	Work to address the problem of in-work poverty through the continued promotion of the 'Real Living Wage'.	<p>In partnership with the Norwich Living Wage Action Group, lead the campaign to make Norwich a Living Wage city.</p> <p>Use our influencing power to raise the profile of this socio-economic challenge and encourage and support local employers to implement the Real Living Wage for their staff.</p>	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to campaign to make Norwich a Living Wage City, in partnership with the Norwich Living Wage Action Group. However, the cost-of-living crisis, a rising National Minimum Wage, and increased National Insurance contributions have made it more difficult for some employers to commit to or maintain Real Living Wage accreditation. The loss of a few large, accredited employers within the city has impacted overall figures.</p> <p>As of the end of October 2025, Norwich had 80 accredited Real Living Wage employers, collectively employing 6,400 people. Of these, 1,039 employees received a pay uplift directly resulting from their employer's commitment to the Real Living Wage.</p> <p>Public narratives around struggling businesses have also created a more cautious environment for recruitment of new Living Wage Employers. Despite these challenges, a new three-year Living Wage Action Plan is being drafted to support re-accreditation later in</p>

				2025 and to renew efforts to raise awareness and influence local employers.
EDI Aim Priority: Continue working with partners to influence investment and target resource.				
3.4.1	Continue to support Norwich's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) to deliver their services and positive outcomes for Norwich residents.	We will support local VCSEs to develop their capacity, through provision of equipment loans, access to data, funding, governance advice, and networking support.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to work closely with a wide range of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) partners to strengthen their capacity and deliver positive outcomes for residents. Examples of this include regular engagement with organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers in response to recent community tensions, as well as focused work in Reducing Inequality Target Areas to build localised community networks and partnerships.</p> <p>Ongoing networking events help identify local issues from the perspective of residents, ensuring resources are targeted effectively. In addition, we provide practical support such as equipment loans through the LUMi platform, alongside access to data, funding advice and governance support to help VCSEs thrive.</p>
3.4.2	Continue to work in conjunction with local VCSE groups to alleviate food poverty and target resources effectively towards those facing food insecurity.	We will continue to facilitate and support local voluntary organisations to operate social supermarkets and foodbanks within the city. Where possible we will provide access to council owned premises from which these services may	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to play an active role in tackling food poverty by supporting local voluntary organisations and networks.</p> <p>Notably, we previously helped establish Norwich's first social supermarket and the Norwich Food Network, while much of our current work is driven by the Nourishing Norfolk Network, which brings together grassroots groups to ensure communities have access to affordable, healthy food.</p>

		be offered to those who need them.		<p>Two social supermarkets in Norwich operate from council-owned properties at peppercorn rents, reducing costs for providers. In addition, through the Household Support Fund, we have issued 551 awards totalling £76,000 this financial year to help residents facing financial hardship with essential costs such as food and energy.</p> <p>These efforts aim to ensure that no one in Norwich goes hungry and that resources are targeted where they are needed most.</p>
3.4.3	Uphold our commitment to working with residents and community groups to improve green spaces across the city, so that they may better serve and be enjoyed by residents.	Provide opportunities and support for residents and community groups to assume responsibility for local green spaces, so that they may provide health and social benefits for local communities. Examples include using green space to garden and grow food.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to support residents and community groups in taking responsibility for local green spaces, helping transform them into vibrant, community-focused areas that provide health and social benefits. Across Norwich, 44 groups now care for 72 community garden sites, with six new sites adopted by local residents this financial year. These efforts showcase the commitment of Norwich's communities to improving shared spaces, creating opportunities for gardening, food growing, and social connection.</p>
3.4.4	Support community associations to run council-owned community centres and provide affordable leisure, cultural, educational and social activities across the city.	Maintain council-owned community centres so that they remain accessible and welcoming spaces from which a wide range of social activities may be offered to residents.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>We continue to support community associations in operating 15 council-owned community centres, which provide affordable, inclusive opportunities for residents across Norwich.</p> <p>These centres deliver significant social value, attracting around 137,000 visits annually, with three-quarters of usage by local residents and more than half of activities</p>

				<p>priced at or below the city's affordability benchmark, including an average of 64 free sessions each week.</p> <p>They play a vital role in reaching those who need them most, with 39% of visitors from high-deprivation neighbourhoods and 34% from the city's lowest-income areas, while supporting 168 local jobs and generating £440,000 in annual participant spend.</p> <p>Over 370 volunteers help deliver a diverse programme of leisure, cultural, educational and social activities, ensuring the centres remain welcoming spaces for all ages.</p>
3.4.5	Offer culture grants which support local organisations and community groups to host events aimed at celebrating diversity and providing opportunities for people from a diverse range of backgrounds and needs to engage with local activities.	Invite applications for small culture grants to support our local creative talent, and to keep innovating and producing activities which enrich our society and bring people together to improve lives.	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Our Small Culture Grants have supported 12 projects across music, theatre, heritage, dance, and other cultural activities. These projects are helping engage a wide range of communities, including children and young people, families, people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers, residents in RITA areas, those facing economic barriers, the LGBTQ+ community, and individuals at risk of loneliness.</p> <p>The events also provide opportunities for early-career creative practitioners and freelancers.</p> <p>Guidance on evaluation has been included in grant offer letters to help track the impact of these projects.</p>
3.4.6	Promote better health and wellbeing outcomes for residents experiencing challenges related to their	In partnership with local public health and charitable organisations, provide bespoke support	Iterative (ongoing)	<p>Over the past year, the INTERACT service received 630 new referrals, successfully completing support with 281 individuals. Currently, 141 people are actively being supported by the service. Notably, 39% of referrals</p>

	housing circumstances, through referrals to the INTERACT service.	on a referral basis to residents facing difficulty resulting from their housing circumstances.		came from our Reducing Inequalities Targeted Areas. Of those referred, 67% were working-age adults and 33% were older people. The service achieved significant outcomes, including increasing clients' annual income by over £192,000 and connecting them with more than £37,000 in grants. People reported greater independence, were supported to maintain their tenancies, and experienced improved wellbeing among carers with carers receiving vital support to prevent breakdown and avoid long-term residential care.
3.4.7	Strengthen partnership working to ensure those in need of additional support are assisted to access all of the relevant services to address their needs.	Work in partnership to shape how we deliver our support services in a more joined up way, through the Early Help Hub and Support Now referral system.	Iterative (ongoing)	We continue to strengthen multi-agency working through the Early Help Hub and Support Now referral system. The Early Help Hub meets weekly and is attended by over 30 partner organisations, ensuring a joined-up approach to supporting residents. Regular information sessions are held on a range of topics and are well attended, helping partners stay informed and connected.
3.4.8	Continue working with partners through the Norwich Health & Wellbeing Partnership (NHWP) to influence investment and target resource to improve the health of local residents and address health related inequalities.	Develop and publish a new Norwich Health and Wellbeing Partnership Strategy, which outlines how the partnership will target available resources towards improving the wider determinants of health, including socio-economic disadvantage.	Long-term (beyond 2027)	Proposals to use funding to join up RITA and health work in North City and Pilling Park projects, to address health inequalities and provide succession planning after year end 2026 are currently on the table. Other sources of local funding through businesses are being explored through the Pilling Park project. The NHWP strategy 25-35 is now drafted and will be finalised for December 2025. A full health inequalities action plan has been published for 2025-35 and priority areas for 2025-26 are being reviewed.

3.4.9	Support those experiencing financial hardship through the implementation of the Financial Inclusion Action Plan.	Continue to work in partnership with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to implement the Financial Inclusion Action Plan, aimed at improving the processes through which we and local financial support agencies assist those facing socio-economic hardship in Norwich.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We continue to work closely with the Financial Inclusion Consortium (FIC) to deliver targeted support for residents facing financial hardship. In 2024/25, FIC partners supported 1,307 debt management cases, with an average individual debt of £7,922. Over £1.48 million in debt was written off, renegotiated, or reduced. Additionally, 2,191 new welfare benefit cases were supported, generating over £4.39 million in annualised benefit income.</p> <p>We are also part of the newly formed Norfolk Anti-Poverty Alliance, led by Norfolk Community Advice Network and Norfolk County Council. This partnership brings together local authorities, VCSE organisations, people with lived experience, and other stakeholders to improve crisis support delivery, food provision, and tackle the wider drivers of poverty.</p>
EDI Aim Priority: Mitigate the disproportionate inequalities of climate change impacting specific sectors of the community.				
3.5.1	Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan for Norwich which works to alleviate the disproportionate impacts of climate change on our socio-economically disadvantaged residents.	A Climate Adaptation Plan and workstreams to ensure Norwich remains, resilient and prosperous as the climate changes.	Medium-term (2026-27)	<p>We are finalising its '<i>Net Zero Pathway for Norwich</i>' which will serve as a decarbonisation and climate mitigation plan for the city. Work to develop a Climate Adaptation Plan is ongoing and will form part of our Climate Responsive Norwich Programme 2025-2035.</p> <p>We already have resilience arrangements in place for extreme weather events, in line with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and continues to work with partners through the Norfolk Resilience Forum.</p>

				<p>To support long-term climate resilience, we are developing data tools with our partners, such as heat hazard index mapping to identify areas most vulnerable to rising temperatures, particularly where these overlap with Reducing Inequality Target Areas (RITAs). This work reflects recognition of the need for a just climate transition, ensuring that the impacts of climate change do not fall disproportionately on those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
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