



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Updated and published December 2020

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (the Authority) is required, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010), to publish information in order to demonstrate compliance with the Act. In particular, this includes information relating to people who share relevant protected characteristics that may be affected by our policies and practices.

The Authority is committed to the delivery of the Equality Duty as demonstrated in this Statement.

1. Strategic Documents and Policies

The Authority has a number of significant strategic documents and policies that require consultation across a wide spectrum of interested parties and organisations.

1.1 Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2019-2024

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/about/national-park-management-plan/>

The National Park Management Plan (NPMP) is the single most important document for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is prepared by a partnership of 16 delivery organisations and shares a vision for the National Park and a set of ambitions for 2040 that guide 50 measureable objectives. It is a plan for everyone with an interest in the National Park - its communities, businesses, residents, visitors and the many organisations that operate here:

“Through their passion for this special place, local people and businesses will keep the Yorkshire Dales National Park a thriving area. Its unique cultural landscape will be treasured for its stunning scenery, exceptional heritage and wonderful wildlife, and every year millions of people will be inspired to be a part of it.

By 2040 it will be:

- *A distinctive living, working cultural landscape that tells the story of generations of people interacting with their environment.*
- *A friendly open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities.*
- *Home to the finest variety of wildlife in England.*
- *Resilient and responsive to the impacts of climate change, storing more carbon each year than it produces.*
- *Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need.*

- *Providing an outstanding range of benefits for the nation based on its natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage, which underpin a flourishing local economy.”*

The Management Plan for the period 2019 – 2024 was adopted by the Authority in September 2018. To ensure equality opportunities were fully considered, the emerging Plan was the subject of two Equality Impact Assessments prior to adoption.

The following objectives in the current Management Plan are particularly positive towards equality groups eg: age, disability, race and religion/beliefs:

- B1** Benefit a wide variety of users by raising the standard of all public rights of way so that 90% are ‘easy to use’ by 2023.
- B3** Carry out works to improve access on appropriate public rights of way and established permissive routes so that 262 km (10%) are suitable for users of all ages and abilities by 2024.
- B4** By 2024 provide 6,000 people from under-represented groups with activity days that enable them to access the special qualities of the National Park, and so increase their understanding, enjoyment, health and well-being.
- B5** Through educational and skills-based activities inspire 6,000 young people from in and around the National Park to explore and enhance their environment each year.
- B7** Give people from all backgrounds an opportunity to enjoy and contribute to the National Park by providing at least 7,000 volunteer days per year, with 15% coming from under-represented groups.
- E6** Develop and promote new events, festivals and attractions based on the National Park’s special qualities and local distinctiveness so that at least 10% of visitors each year are coming for the first time.
- F1** Support the completion of 400 dwellings in a range of tenures, sizes types and prices, by 2024.
- F2** Undertake a 5-year programme of measures to promote the National Park as a place to live for younger, working age households (18 to 44 years) to help halt the decline in their numbers.
- F3** Retain access to services – like primary schools and GP surgeries - that are essential to the long-term viability of local communities, using the four main service ‘hubs’ (Sedbergh, Hawes, Reeth and Grassington) and their surrounding ‘spoke’ settlements to create economies of scale.
- F5** Through ‘Great Place: Lakes and Dales’ deliver a programme of research and investment in local culture, arts and heritage so as to retain and attract younger people and businesses to the rural corridor linking Skipton to Grasmere.

More generally, the other objectives have positive outcomes for groups with protected characteristics. This should be expected for a Plan that seeks to widen public access to the National Park:

1.2 National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2020-21

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/park-authority/how-we-work/corporate-plan/>

The ambitions set out in the National Park Management Plan are carried through into the Authority's **Corporate Plan**, which sets out the specific objectives that we intend to achieve, and the progress we want to make on them, in the year ahead.

Our performance throughout is underpinned by our Core Values, which include an emphasis on equality:

Improvement - We will continually strive to improve our performance in delivering National Park purposes.

Accountability - We will explain and take responsibility for our decisions and actions.

Commitment - We will do what we say we will do.

Integrity - All our relationships will be built on honesty, transparency, equality and impartiality.

Open and approachable - We will work with others honestly and openly to achieve our objectives in ways that help them meet theirs.

Valuing and empowering our people - We will value the people who work for us and will work to ensure that they are equipped and empowered to provide professional services to the public.

1.3 Local Plan

<https://www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/park-authority/living-and-working/planning-policy/local-plan-2023-40/local-plan-process/>

The Authority has in place a Local Plan 2015-2030 for the “pre August 2016” National Park area. The ‘extension area’ is currently covered by extant local plans prepared by the constituent district and county councils.

The Local Plan contains strategies and policies that are used to determine planning applications and shape the future pattern and type of development in beneficial ways. It is prepared within a statutory public participation process and, like the NPMP, is the subject of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The Local Plan Assessment is also evaluated by an independent inspector as part of the formal Local Plan examination.

The Authority is now working on the next Local Plan which will guide new development during the period 2023 to 2040. It will cover the whole of the extended National Park. The new Plan will be the subject of equality assessment at stages throughout its four-year production. The EIA will form part of the Local Plan Sustainability Assessment.

1.4 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The Authority is committed to eliminating discrimination, victimisation and harassment; advancing fairness and equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between different people and groups. Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy is integral to the delivery of this value, and it applies both to the Authority's role as an employer and to the provision of public services.

2. Employment Information

As the Authority has less than 150 staff, we are not required to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of our employees. However, we must demonstrate that we have fully considered the aims of the General Equality Duty across our employment functions.

2.1 Recruitment and Selection

We have robust recruitment and selection processes that demonstrate our commitment to the provision of equal opportunities in employment and to ensure that no job applicant is treated less favourably on unjustifiable grounds. We apply the disability confident principles for candidates when they declare they have a disability on their application.

We monitor our performance in relation to equal opportunities, and gather information using monitoring forms which all applicants are asked to complete. This data is reported to senior management annually to help shape future practice.

2.2 Employment Policies

The Authority has a range of employment policies which go over and above the statutory requirements, including special (compassionate and emergency) paid and unpaid leave, flexible working, maternity, paternity and adoption policies, parental leave and shared parental leave.

Sickness absence is monitored and return to work meetings completed after every absence. If there are particular health concerns, managers can access an Occupational Health service for employees which can provide valuable information, guidance and support on rehabilitation of long term sickness, return to work programmes, appropriate equipment for workstations etc. The Authority can encourage employees to access the Government's 'Access to Work' scheme which provides financial support towards equipment and help for disabled employees.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available for all staff which provides emotional support and practical guidance including counselling.

2.3 Investors in People

The Authority has been continuously recognised, each year, as an “Investors in People” organisation since 2001. IIP is a Standard which sets out the criteria for high performance through people, benchmarking the effectiveness of leadership and management practices in the organisation.

3. Engagement and Evidence

The Authority aims to work both with, and through, local communities to maintain and enhance the National Park’s natural and cultural qualities, and to promote and expand opportunities for wider understanding and enjoyment.

3.1 Engagement

The Authority works with several organisations including the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust, Natural England and The National Trust as well as local and national government bodies, voluntary organisations, environment agencies and private sector organisations. We recognise the importance of our key partnerships in encouraging diversity and promoting equality. In addition to this we are committed to engaging and involving other relevant stakeholders in how our approach to equality and diversity is devised, developed and implemented.

3.2 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group (EDIWG) is a cross-Authority working group which meets to monitor, and progress action on, equality issues. A representative of the trade union, Unison, is a member of the EDIWG as is the Member Champion for Corporate Management.

The EDIWG is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this Statement annually, and putting systems in place that enable the Authority and its officers to ensure that legal responsibilities and best practice are met.

3.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An Equality Impact Assessment is an analytical tool which identifies any discriminatory or negative effects or impacts an activity or decision might have on a particular group or sector of the community, or the workforce, in respect of their protected characteristics - in particular disability, gender and race. It highlights opportunities to promote equality, including any that may have previously been missed or could be better used, as well as identifying any adverse or negative impacts that can be mitigated or removed where possible.

Although EIAs are not compulsory in law, the Authority believes that they continue to be the best way of ensuring that equality and diversity issues are considered in relation to policy making and service provision.

4. Examples of what we currently do to promote equality and diversity

The Authority's Corporate Plan sets out Objectives to ensure the Yorkshire Dales National Park is accessible and relevant to a diverse range of groups.

For example, the 2020/21 Action Plan includes the following targets to fulfil those Objectives:

- Identify a further 11km of *Miles without Stiles* Routes.
- Trial "Dark Skies" experiences for families, school children and other groups.
- Review the Learning and Engagement strategy.
- Deliver a "menu" of activity days to 500 young people in primary and secondary education.
- Recruit 2 "Youth volunteering ambassadors".
- Support and develop 4 "corporate" apprentices, including recruitment of new wildlife and planning apprentices.
- Provide equality and diversity training for officers and Members

This is just a few examples of the work we do to fulfil our Equality Objectives; to find out more please visit our website www.yorkshiredales.org.uk

5. Customer Service Excellence Award

The Authority first gained the Customer Service Excellence Award in 2010 and continues to maintain the standard with the last assessment having taken place in October 2019. This accreditation demonstrates that, amongst other things, the Authority:

- has an in-depth understanding of the characteristics of its current and potential stakeholder groups;
- has developed insight into its stakeholder groups, to better understand their needs and preferences;
- makes particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and has developed its services in response to their specific needs;
- Has a strategy for engaging and involving stakeholders using a range of methods appropriate to the identified needs of particular groups.

6. What's Next?

The Authority will continue to set Corporate Plan targets which provide challenging goals and include consideration of equality and diversity issues, and to monitor and publish information on performance against those targets.

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Working Group will meet twice a year to ensure the Authority adheres to equality legislation and continues to strive for best practice.

The Authority will continue to maintain the Customer Service Excellence Award and the Investors in People Standard.

This Statement will be updated annually and published on the website.

Any queries should be directed initially to Vikki Thomas, Head of HR on 01969 652331 or at Vikki.Thomas@yorkshiredales.org.uk

November 2020