



# Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

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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.*
- *Providing an outstanding range of benefits for the nation based on its natural resources, landscape and cultural heritage, which underpin a flourishing local economy.*
- *Home to strong, self-reliant and balanced communities with good access to the services they need.”*

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:

- 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 2021-22

<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, and to 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 these values, 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 more than 150 staff, we are required to publish information relating to the protected characteristics of our employees. The Workforce Data Report provides the information, based on data available on 31 March 2021.

We must also 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 have signed up to the Disability Confident scheme, and ensure candidates that declare they have a disability on their application are guaranteed an interview if they meet the essential criteria of the person specification for the job concerned.

With the intention of increasing the diversity of the workforce, each of our adverts includes the wording 'Our recruitment process treats all job applications equally, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic. That said, we particularly encourage applications from people from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, as this group are currently under-represented throughout the Authority.'

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 and Members 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.

As a response to working arrangements during the Coronavirus pandemic, the Authority has introduced blended-working agreements for those roles that can accommodate some working from home. This change in working practices hasn't involved any contractual changes and the Authority remains a predominantly office-based organisation.

Sickness absence is monitored and return to work meetings completed after every absence. If there are particular health concerns, Occupational Health advice and guidance is sought, principally for long term sickness absences, return to work arrangements, appropriate equipment for workstations, suggested reasonable adjustments 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. Staff can also access Able Futures, which is a practical programme providing 9 months of free and confidential mental health support to assist employees to stay at work.

During 2020, the Authority supported 6 members of staff to become qualified Mental Health First Aiders. They are available to provide a supportive service, signposting staff to other support initiatives and programmes in place.

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), provided by Health Assured, is available for all staff which offers emotional support and practical guidance on various topics, 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 and inclusion. In addition to this we are committed to engaging and involving other relevant stakeholders in how our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion 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, and the Member Champion for Corporate Management are members of the EDIWG.

The EDIWG is responsible for monitoring and reviewing this Statement annually, and for 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, process or decision might have on a particular group or sector, in respect of their protected characteristics. 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, diversity and inclusion**

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.

The 2021/22 Action Plan includes the following targets to fulfil those Objectives:

- Offer “a night under the stars” experience for people who wouldn't normally get the opportunity to experience the tranquillity of the Dark Sky.
- Identify a further 15km of *Miles without Stiles* Routes.
- Work with the Peak District NPA and Defra to develop an application to the Green Recovery Fund to increase opportunities for people from BAME backgrounds to take part in recreational activity in the National Park.
- Deliver “recover and re-connect” activity days to people for whom Covid has had a disproportionate effect including the elderly, BAME communities, people on low incomes and young people in social housing.
- Deliver year 1 of the Uplands for All project, engaging young people with the natural heritage of the Tees Swale area, through a mix of face to face and virtual engagement.
- Develop a pilot social prescribing programme connecting young people with the health and wellbeing benefits of the Park, and look for funding for implementation.
- Deliver curriculum linked educational activities to 1,500 young people in primary and secondary education.
- Through ‘Great Place: Lakes and Dales’, develop a programme of training and advice for local authorities to promote/market the National Park to younger people as a place to live and work.
- Recruit 4 new Westmorland Dales Landscape Partnership apprentices.

These are 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](http://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 June 2021. 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; and
- 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, diversity and inclusion 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.***

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