



Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

Updated and published November 2023

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 (NPMP) 2019-2024

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

The NPMP is the most important document for the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It is a five-year work programme produced and monitored by a partnership of local organisations that operate across the area and contains 49 specific objectives that we are working together to achieve. 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, businesses and organisation 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 ongoing 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 NPMP 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 (EIA) prior to adoption.

The following objectives in the current Management Plan are particularly positive towards equality:

- 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, other objectives have positive outcomes for groups with protected characteristics and this should be expected for a Plan that seeks to widen public access to the National Park.

1.2 National Park Authority Corporate Plan 2023-24

<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, respect, transparency, equality and impartiality.

Open and approachable - We will be open to new ways of doing things and will work positively with others 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, supported 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>

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 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 determine what development takes place between 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 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 staff. The Workforce Data Report provides the information, based on data available on 31 March 2023.

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 are a Disability Confident employer, and ensure candidates that declare they have a disability are guaranteed an interview if their application meet the essential criteria of the person specification for the vacancy.

With the intention of increasing the diversity of the workforce, each of our adverts includes the wording 'We are committed to equal opportunities and our recruitment process treats all job applications fairly, regardless of age, disability, gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic. We aspire to have a diverse and inclusive workplace and strongly encourage applicants from all backgrounds to apply and join us'.

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 the recruiting manager for each vacancy after the closing date. A summary of the data is also shared annually with senior management and Members 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.

The Authority offers blended-working arrangements for those roles that can accommodate some working from home. This new working practice 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, frequent short term sickness absences, phased return to work arrangements, appropriate equipment for workstations, suggested reasonable adjustments etc.

The Authority encourages staff to access the Government's 'Access to Work' scheme which can provide financial support towards equipment and help for staff with a disability or make recommendations for the Authority to consider. Staff can also access Able Futures, which is a practical programme providing up to 9-months of free and confidential mental health support, to assist staff to stay at work. The employee assistance programme (EAP) provided by Health Assured also offers support to staff, and their families, for any of life's issues or problems, including confidential counselling sessions.

There are eleven officers in the Authority who are qualified Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs). They are not experts or specialists but are equipped to provide on-the-spot advice and support. There to help staff if they feel they may be developing a mental health issue, have a history of mental illness or need assistance with longer-term mental health issues.

2.3 Investors in People (IIP)

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.

2.4 Training

The Authority has a comprehensive training and development programme available to all staff that includes a general equality, diversity and inclusion awareness course and more specific topics, including: neurodiversity in the workplace, managing mental health, mental health awareness, mental health first aid and menopause awareness.

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 National Park Visitor Centres are one of the most tangible, and visible, ways the Authority demonstrates to visitors this area is a National Park. It is also important to maintain a face to face service from an inclusivity perspective too. Not everyone is able or wants to use digital or printed material, particularly people with a sensory, mobility and/or learning disabilities

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 (EDIWG)

The EDIWG is a cross-Authority group which meets to monitor, discuss 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 understood and met.

The Member Champion for Corporate Management is a member of the EDI WG and has written and shared communications both internally and externally on why the group was formed and what their focus is on.

3.3 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

An EIA is an analytical tool designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups.

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.

3.4 National Park Management Plan

As with previous Management Plans, it is proposed that the initial consultation will provide an opportunity for a wide range of people to participate. Various mechanisms will be used to generate engagement with different audiences, these include:

- a) Using platforms like Instagram, which is popular amongst younger audiences, with bespoke social media posts being delivered to the newsfeeds of individuals by age and location. Posting in Facebook groups, which are similarly used by younger/hard to reach audiences, and on TikTok and YouTube.
- b) Three levels of youth participation have been identified:
 - i. Information aimed at young people aged 14-25 years
 - ii. Consultation aimed at young people aged 16-30 years
 - iii. Collaboration aimed at young people aged 18-30 years
- c) Producing consultation materials in a range of accessible formats will open opportunity for more people to engage in the consultation process, for example having the awareness film signed/audio described and using large font and easy read guides. The Authority will help to widen the reach of the consultation by raising awareness with the groups and communities that are worked with through the engagement programme, other partnership organisations may choose to do the same.

3.5 All the Elements

In 2022, a project between all UK National Park Authorities and All the Elements was created to investigate the work that is happening in the outdoor sector around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and the work that is happening within National Parks.

Following the All the Elements phase 1 report being shared, a national EDI working group has been created, with 10 National Park Authorities represented. A representative from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is a member of the group and provides regular updates to the EDI WG.

3.6 Europarc Youth Manifesto

The Authority is signatory to the Europarc Youth Manifesto, which aims to be a source of ideas and inspiration for decision makers in protected areas and rural communities to ensure the involvement and empowerment of young people, with the aim to create a vibrant future for them, for nature and for rural areas.

3.7. 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 July 2023. 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.

The Authority is required to evidence significant effort and substantial achievements during these assessments to demonstrate the Authority is accessible and provides excellent customer service to a diverse range of people that live, visit and work in the Park.

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 2023/24 Action Plan includes the following targets to fulfil those Objectives:

- Produce leaflets to promote a further 3 cycle routes, 2 horse riding routes and 2 walking route
- Run the 'Wild Escape' project to engage families and school children 7-11 with nature in the Dales
- Develop a marketing campaign to promote the new Changing Places facility to attract new users
- Use the learning from the family-friendly project to provide a welcome corner to meet the criteria of the Kids in Museums manifesto
- Conduct repair works across the National Park so that 90% of routes are 'easy to use'
- Through Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected, run a farming film and photography festival in Swaledale, engaging farmers, communities and visitors with farming through the seasons
- Provide 8 'Go Wild' activities to help families find out more about the special qualities of the National Park
- Run year 1 of 'Creatively Connected' to engage communities and visitors with the Tees-Swale project area through artistic activity
- As part of the NLHF Access to Eden project produce an access audit of potential 'miles without stiles' routes in the project area, including a sensory trail; and trial a buddy walking programme from Kirby Stephen
- Carry out a 'Major Project Review of the Authority's 'Miles Without Stiles' programme
- Carry out detailed surveys to identify a further 14km of routes that meet the Miles without Stiles criteria
- Produce leaflets for accessible town trails for Hawes and Grassington

- Explore options for a new accessible route at Aysgarth Falls, with a view to submitting applications for planning and NE consent
- Work with Peak District and North York Moors NPAs and Peak District Mosaic to develop and submit second stage application for 'Championing National Parks for Everyone' to increase opportunities for people from BAME backgrounds to take part in recreational activity in the National Park
- Produce material providing a 'quick guide' to the National Park for new visitors
- Work with Dalesbus to support the development of improved public transport provision from East Leeds to the National Park
- Run 'discover and connect' activity days for people from groups under-represented in the National Park, including young people, BAME communities, people with health conditions and people on low incomes
- Work with outdoor providers to offer people from under-represented groups opportunities to enjoy the landscape and improve their health and wellbeing through a more varied range of activities
- Continue to work with the NHS to deliver socially prescribed walking activities
- As part of Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected, run year 3 of the 'Uplands for All' project, engaging new groups of young people with the natural heritage of the area
- Expand the 'Ambassador School' programme to a further 3 schools to help them embed National Park outdoor learning and environmental education in their curriculum
- Run curriculum-linked educational activities for young people in formal education in the National Park and surrounding urban areas; reaching 5 additional schools
- As part of Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected run year 3 of the 'Uplands for Education' project, providing education activities for school children in Northallerton, Reeth and Bedale
- Through the National Lottery Heritage Fund's 'New to Nature programme, host a 12-month trainee placement
- Provide opportunity for volunteer days for young people (age 11–29) through Young Rangers, 'Upskill-Down Dale' and 'Dales Action Days'
- Run one-off practical 'Dales Action Days' to attract new people to volunteering in the National Park
- Run 'social prescribing' Young Rangers project with at least 1 secondary school, connecting young people with the health and well-being benefits of the National Park through volunteering
- Recruit and support a new Farming & Nature trainee and a Community Engagement trainee for the Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected programme
- Support existing apprentices in Communications and Wildlife, and recruit a new Cultural Heritage apprentice
- Promote opportunities for horse-riding through leaflets and on-line content such as film
- Produce the Sustainability Appraisal and Equality Impact Assessment to support the Publication Local Plan
- Install a Changing Places toilet in Grassington

These are 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

The EDIWG have recently been looking at the British Dyslexia Association [Dyslexia Style Guide](#) in order to discuss, and consider recommending, the adoption of its basic principles. The recommendation has received approval and work has begun on developing the principles and accommodating these into the Authority's documents, templates, processes and practices.

5. 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 continue to 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 Vikki.Thomas@yorkshiredales.org.uk

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