

2022

# Inclusion Report



# Introduction

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Council's Annual Equality Monitoring Report, which represents the Council's approach to providing information on its work in respect of equality and diversity.

The Council is required, as part of its Public Sector Equality Duty, to report annually on how it has met the General Equality Duty set out in the Equality Act 2010. This document contains the information required in order for the Council to meet these duties.

Swindon aims to be a place recognised for its safety, openness and community spirit where everyone who lives and works here has a strong sense of belonging. As a council and in partnership with others we aim to address the needs and aspirations of local people to create a place of opportunity for all; a borough where everyone to has equal life chances and are able to work free from discrimination in a society that values diversity.



**Susie Kemp**  
Chief executive  
Swindon Borough Council

# Equality Legislation and Council Duties

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires all public bodies to publish one or more objective(s) every four years. The purpose of these objectives is for organisations to set out what they will do to meet the General Duty. The General Duty requires us to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We also have a specific duty to produce annual equality information demonstrating how we are meeting these objectives and for it to be published every year.

Public authorities covered by the specific duties must publish information to demonstrate their compliance with the general equality duty. This information must include information relating to people who share a protected characteristic who are its employees, or affected by its policies and practices.

## Vision for Swindon

Our equality and diversity vision remains as follows:

- Swindon will be a place which protects and promotes equality and diversity through opportunity, access and fair treatment, whilst understanding and reducing the costs of inequality for the borough's diverse population.
- Swindon will be an equal society which recognises and respects people's different needs, situations and goals, establishing real freedom by removing the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.

The objectives we have set to deliver the council's vision and the public sector equality duty are:

- Equality data - our policy, strategy, plans, commissioning and service delivery are informed by and take account of appropriate evidence based equality data and information.
- Workforce - we ensure our employment and recruitment processes promote fairness and equality for all.

- Community engagement - we work with local people to ensure that diverse communities within Swindon are included in a fair and equitable way in all of our work, services and development.
- Analysing the equality impact - we robustly analyse the equality impact of our decisions and service developments to ensure that all new strategic developments will support the delivery of our equality vision and statutory duties.

## Public Sector Equality Duty

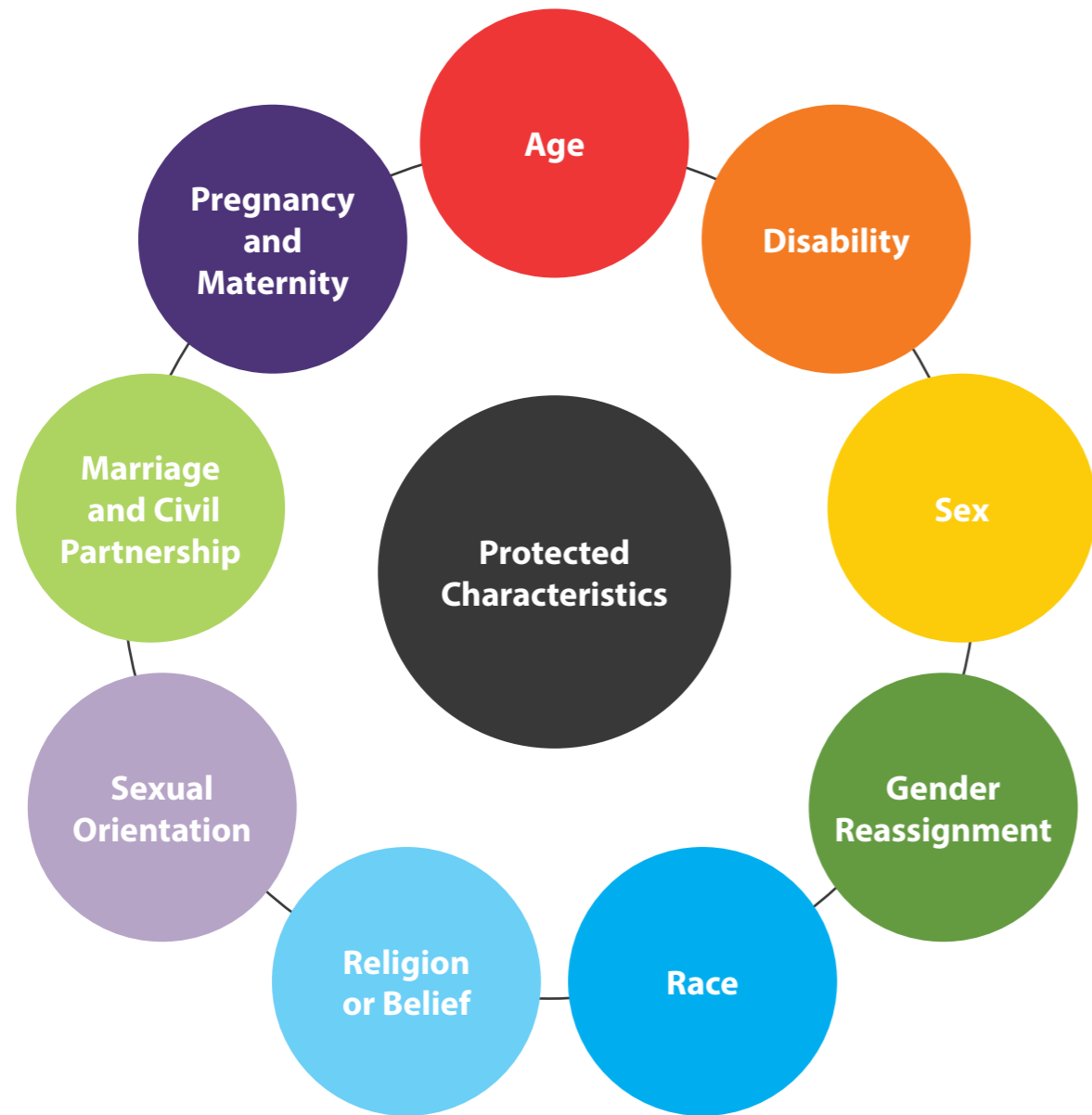
The PSED was created by the Equality Act 2010 and places a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. Its aim is to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public authorities.

The term 'foster' means tackling unlawful discrimination and promoting good relations between different groups.

Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about the three general duty aims as part of the process of our normal business and decision making. Having 'due regard' to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.





## Children in Care and Care Leavers

At Swindon Borough Council, we have added an additional category of Children in Care and Care Leavers for equality assessment purposes within our Diversity Impact Assessment process. While Children in Care and Care Leavers are not specifically covered within the Equality Act 2010, we wish for them to be considered as a protected group to ensure that additional attention is given, in all our projects and services, to how their needs can be met to provide greater opportunities and improve their outcomes.

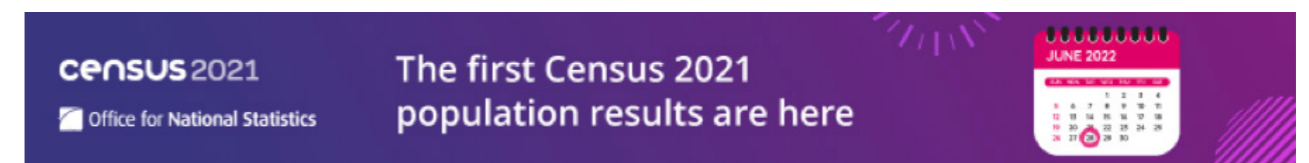
## Equality Impact Assessments

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a mechanism which helps the council to determine the impact of its proposals. It is particularly useful for determining how proposals involving changes to services and those that have a material impact on service users, will affect groups or communities who experience inequality, discrimination, social exclusion or disadvantage.

While there is no specific requirement to carry out an EIA, the council believes that it makes sure we think carefully about the impact of our work on the people of Swindon, particularly under-represented communities or groups who might be disadvantaged by the way we carry out our business.

By asking questions about how the policy or service will affect different groups we can design them so they promote the positive effects and minimise any negative impacts. It will also allow councillors and senior officers to make informed decisions as part of the council's decision-making process. By understanding and meeting the needs of different people we can deliver a better service to them.

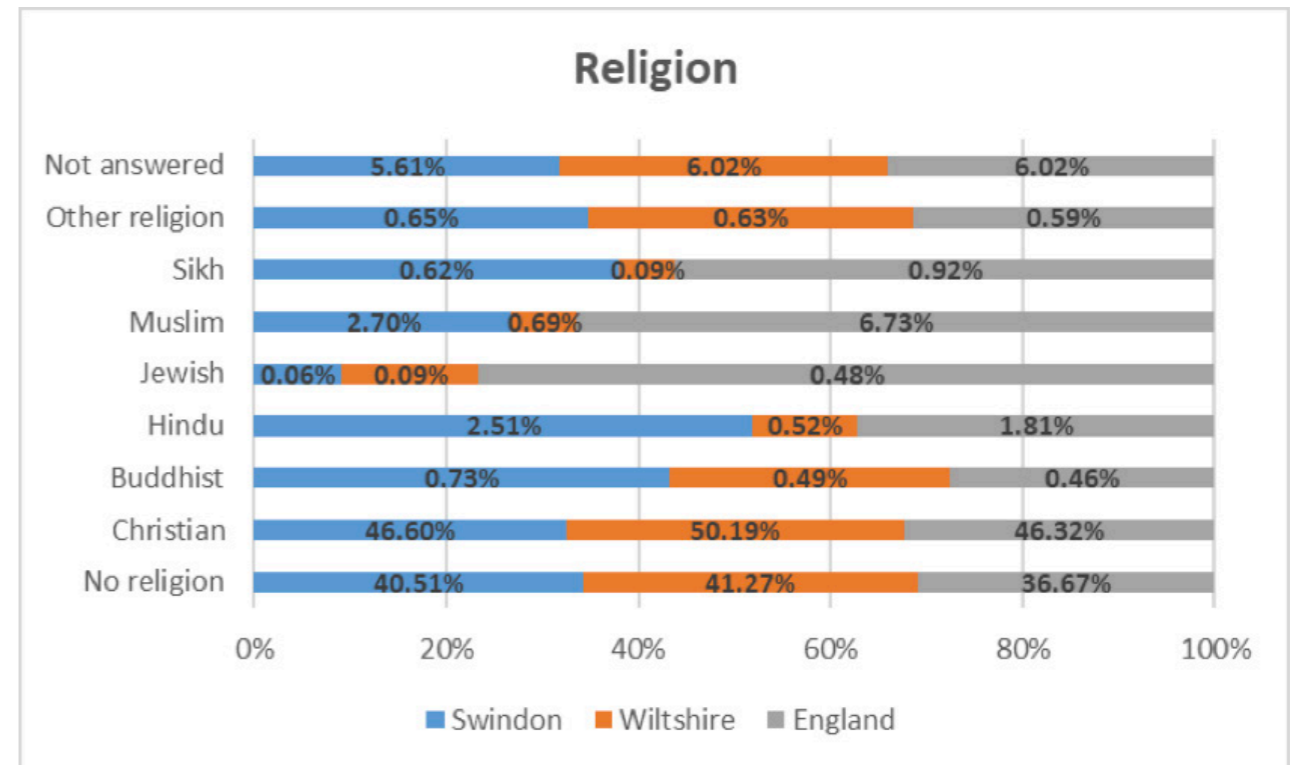
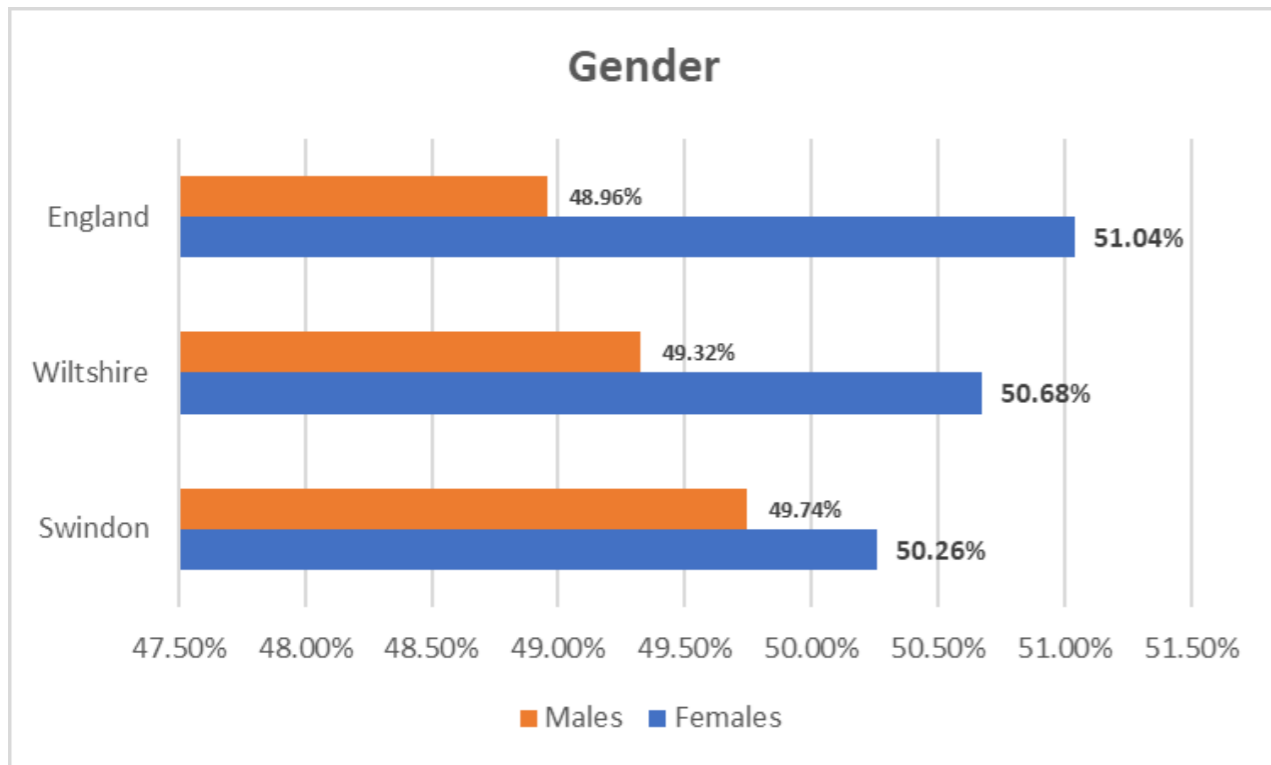
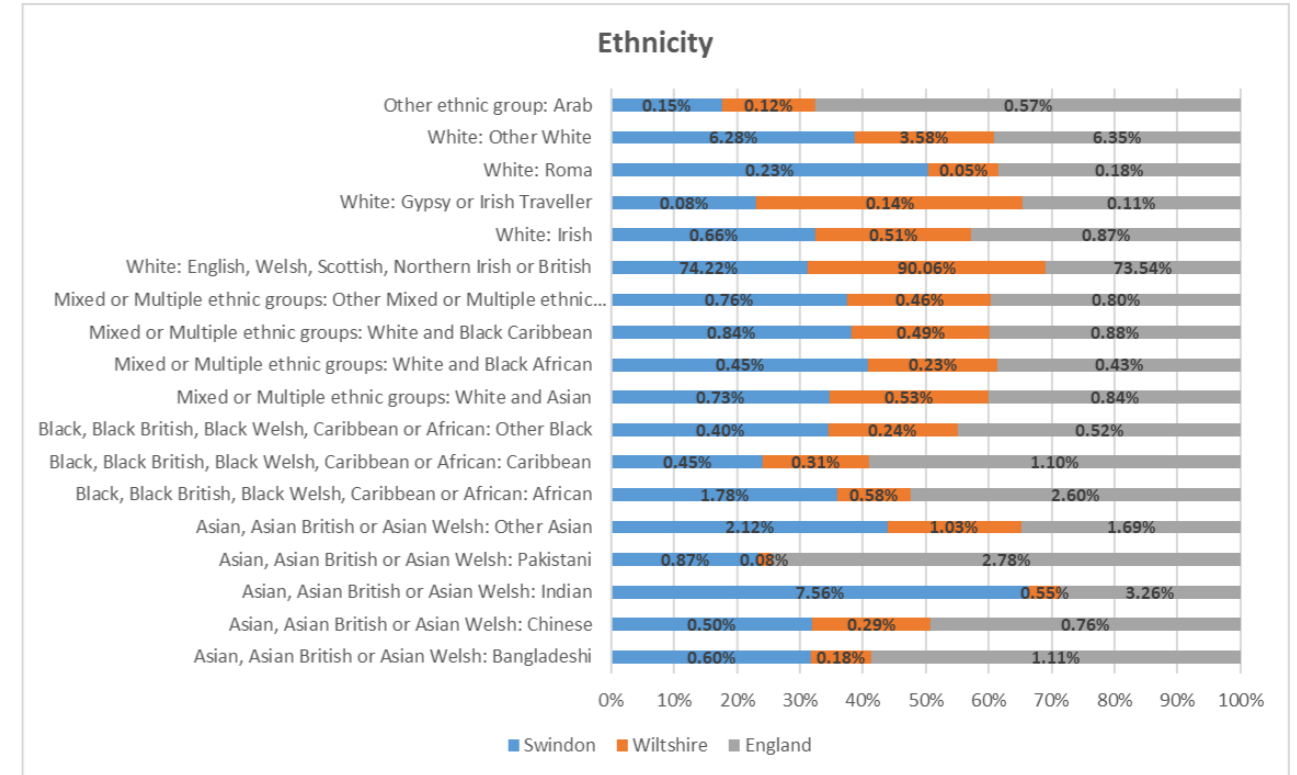
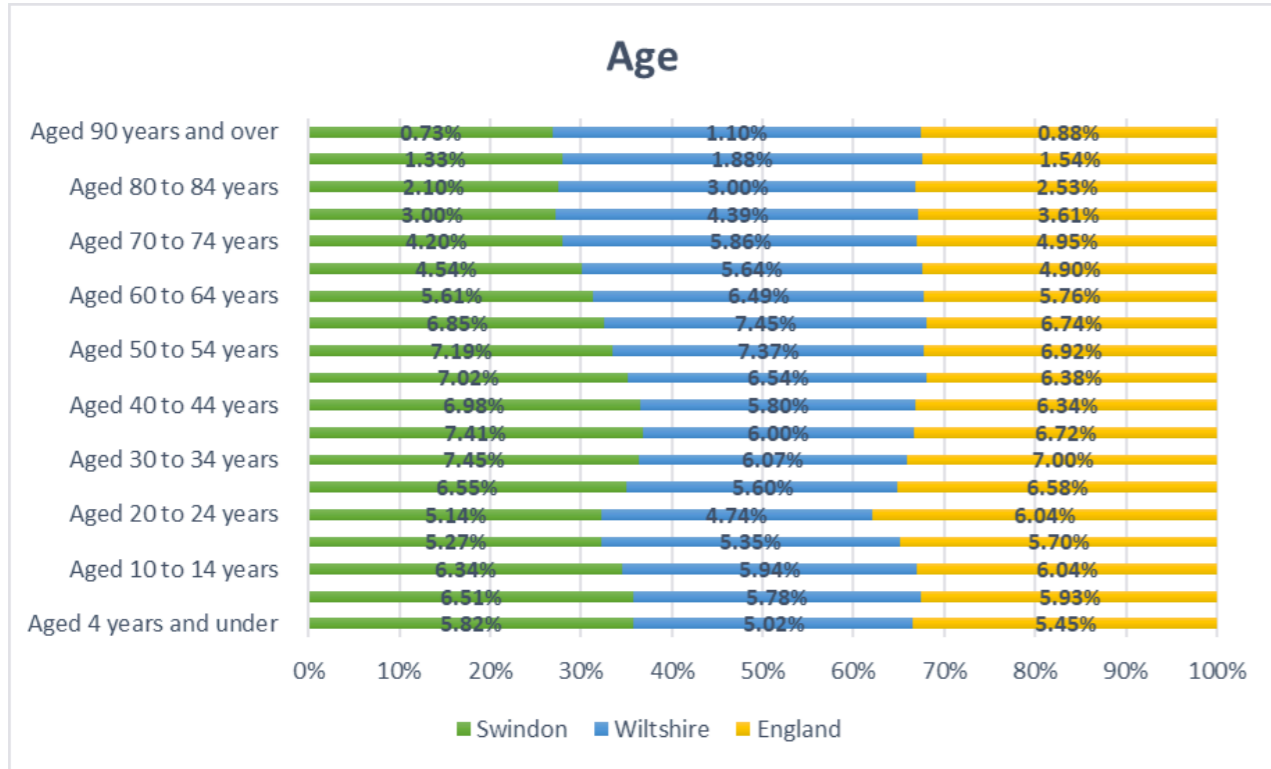
## Knowing our community

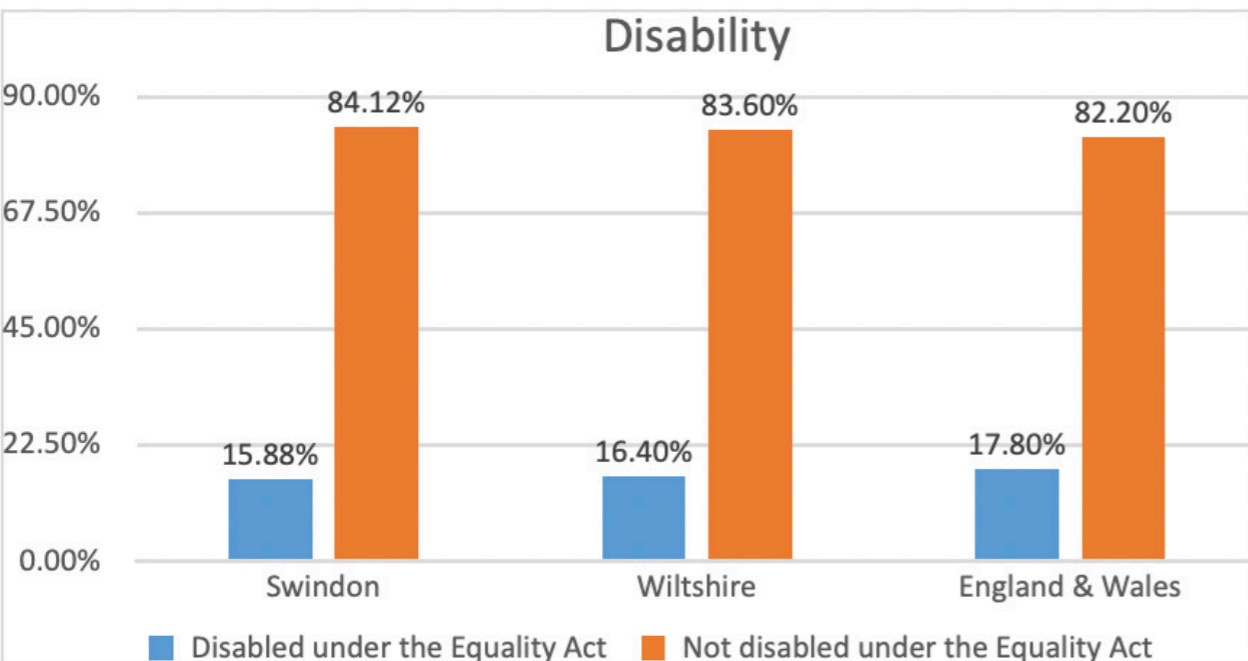
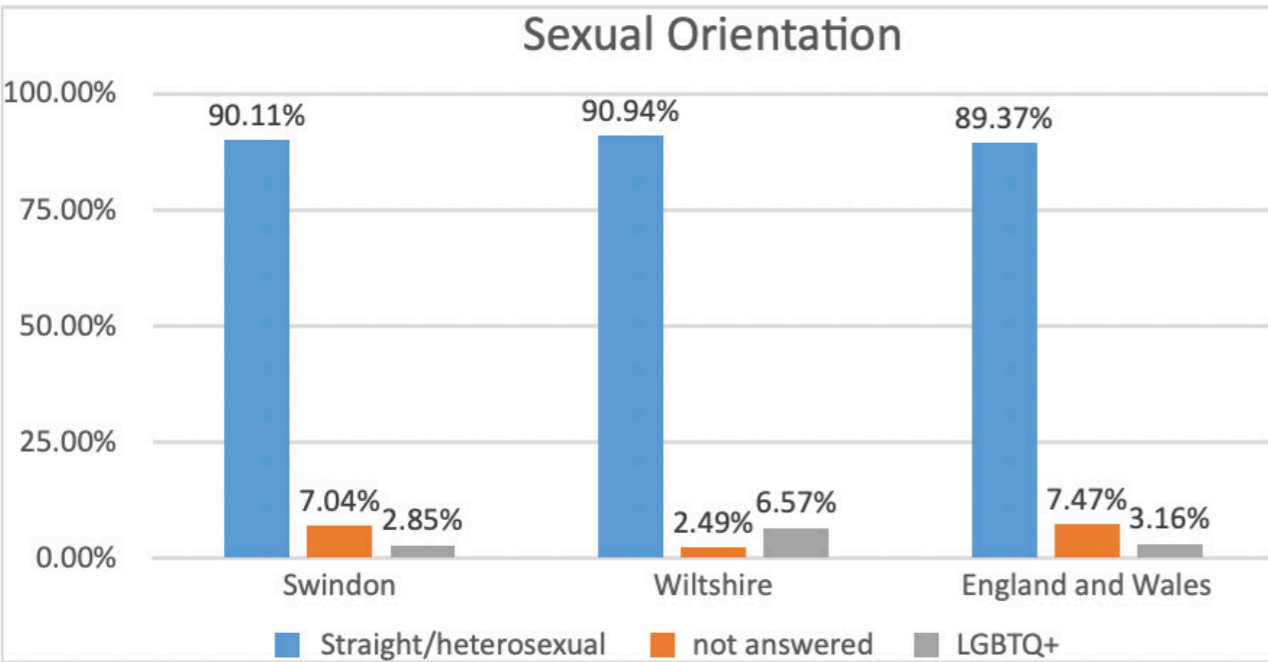


The Office of National Statistics states that a staggered release of data from the 2021 Census will begin in late spring of 2022 with demographic data being released from October 2022 through to year end. Therefore, it is likely that this section will be updated with the latest information in the 2023 Equality Information Report.

In Swindon, the population size has increased by 11.6%, from around 209,200 in 2011 to 233,400 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%), where the population grew by nearly 3.5 million to 56,489,800. At 11.6%, Swindon's population increase is also higher than the increase for the South West (7.8%).

There has been an increase of 28.6% in people aged 65 years and over, an increase of 8.0% in people aged 15 to 64 years, and an increase of 12.4% in children aged under 15 years.





## Decision Making

Just under a third of Swindon Councillors are female (31.5%). This compares to the National Census of Local Authority Councillors 2022 which reports that 59 per cent of councillors were male, and 41 per cent female.

Two points of note.

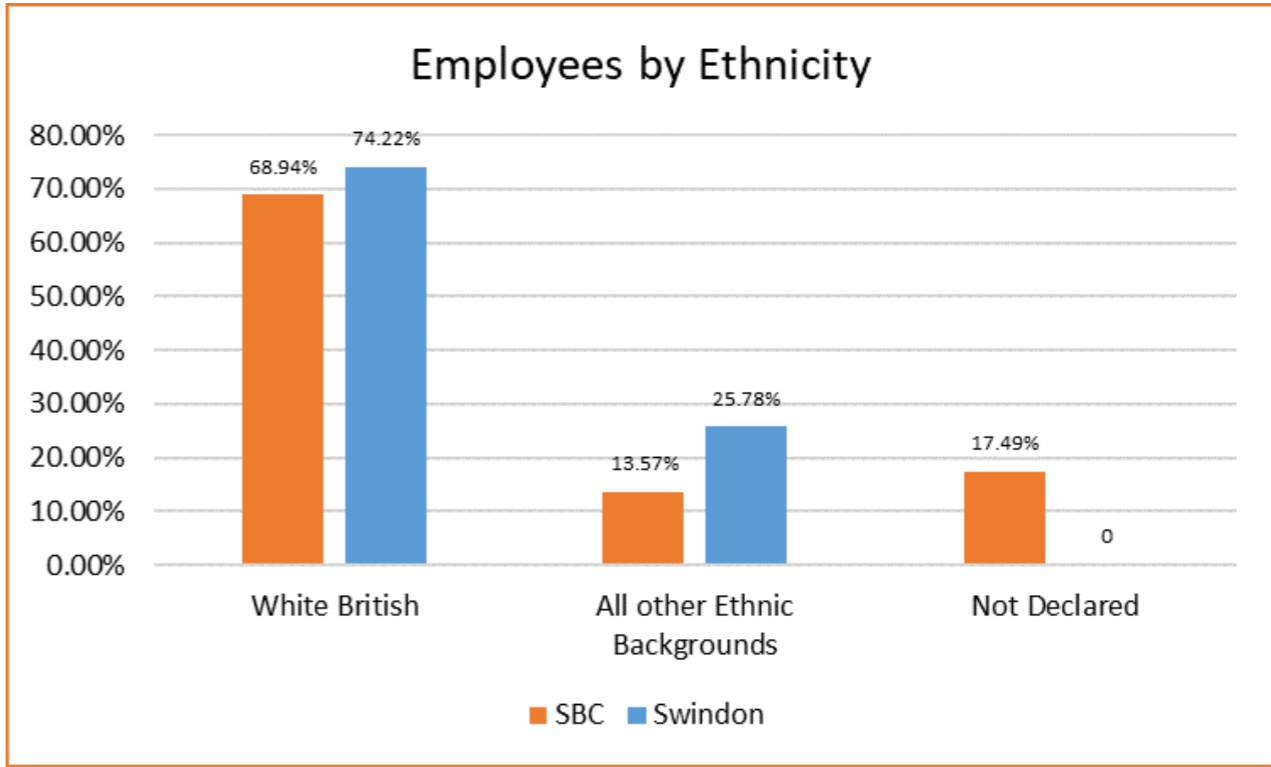
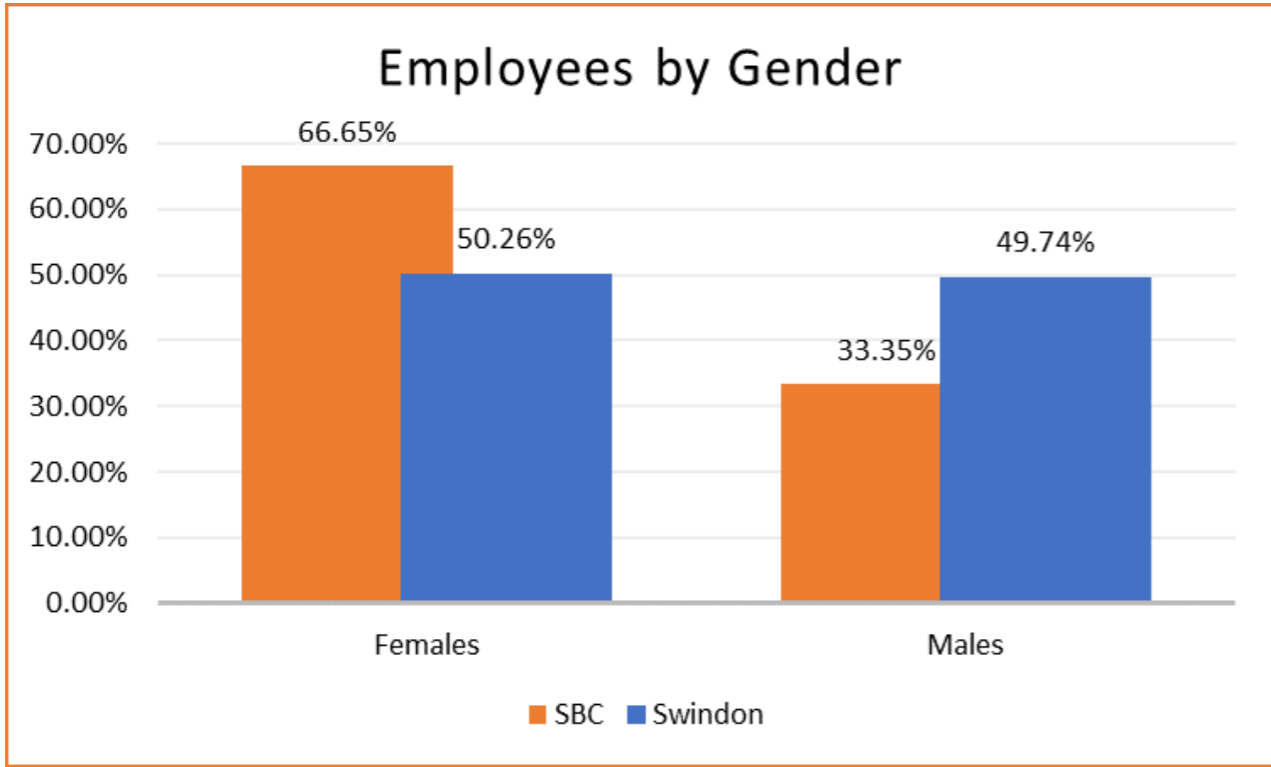
- The national census had a response rate of 30%. Whilst the number of respondents was sufficient to be statistically significant, the lower response does, however, mean that sub-national estimates should be treated with caution
- It should be noted that figures collated by Oscar Research show proportions of 64.4 per cent male and 35.6 per cent female (more in line with previous censuses)

## Employee Equality Data

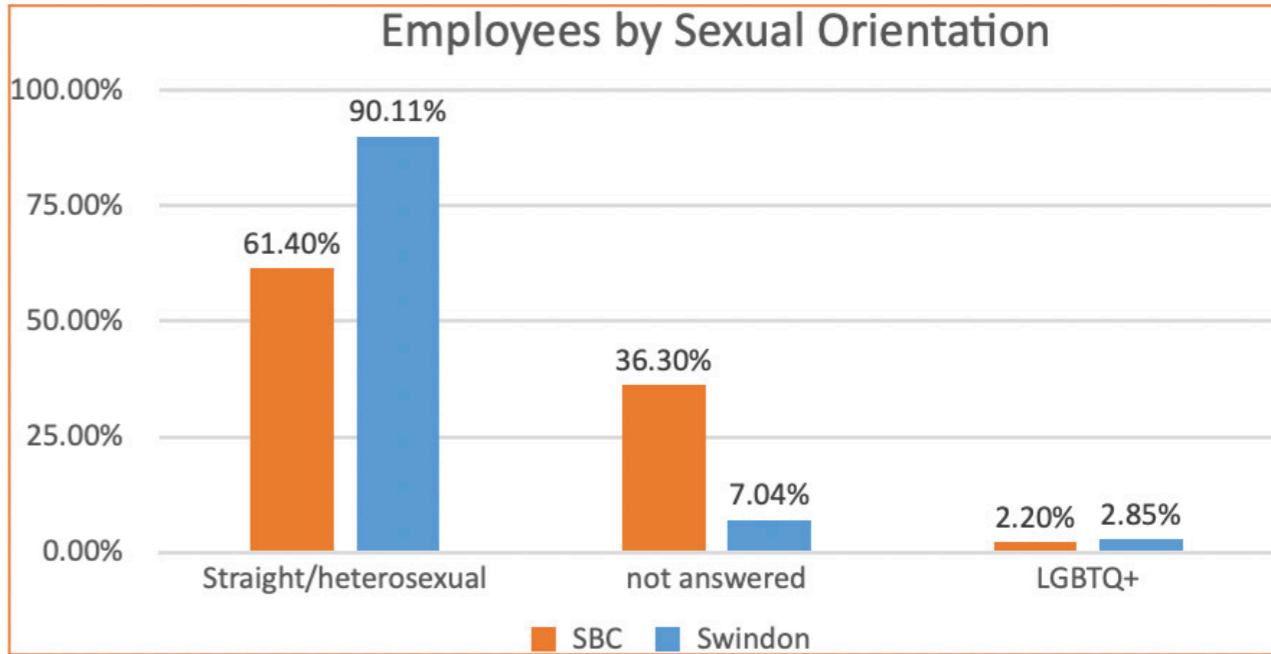
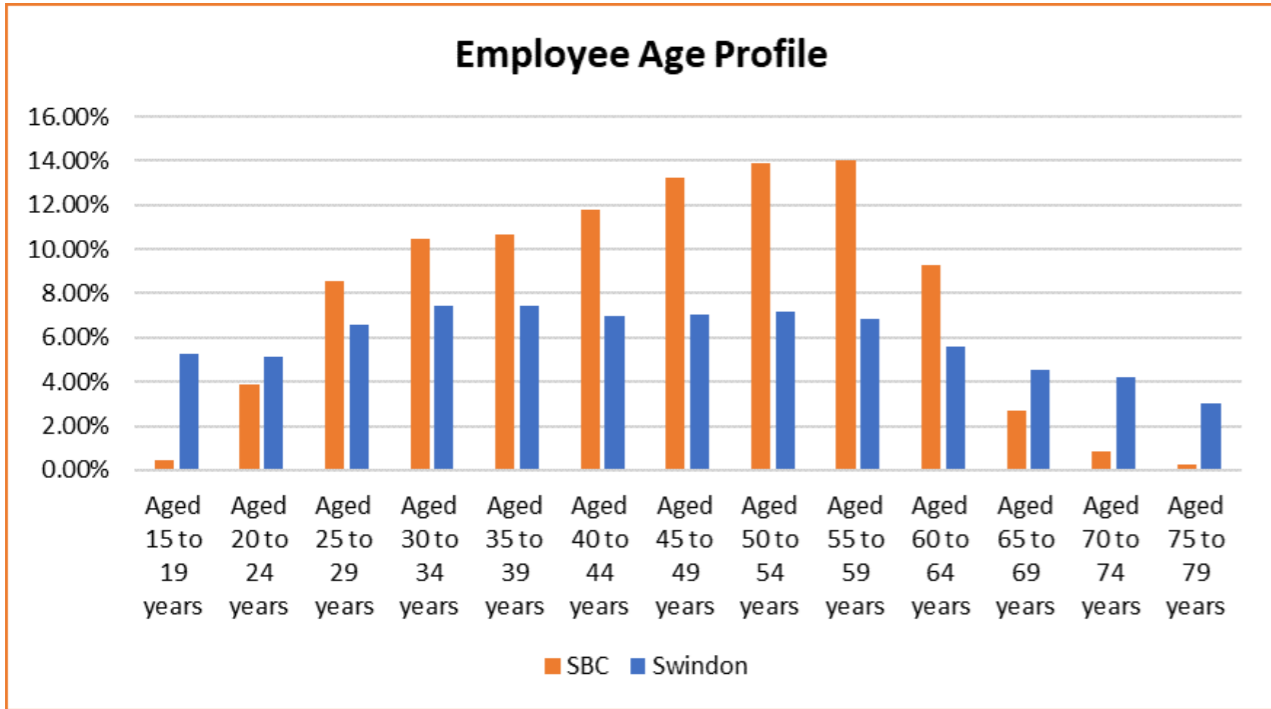
Swindon Borough Council recognises that to be a great place to work, we need people from all backgrounds and experiences to challenge current ways of thinking and bring fresh ideas and perspective. We believe that diverse and inclusive teams have a positive impact on the delivery of our services, and help us better serve our residents. And when people feel respected and included they can be more creative, innovative, and successful. So we're building a culture where difference is valued. Treating everyone with respect and dignity at all times, we strive to lead with our values and beliefs creating an environment where everyone can be themselves.

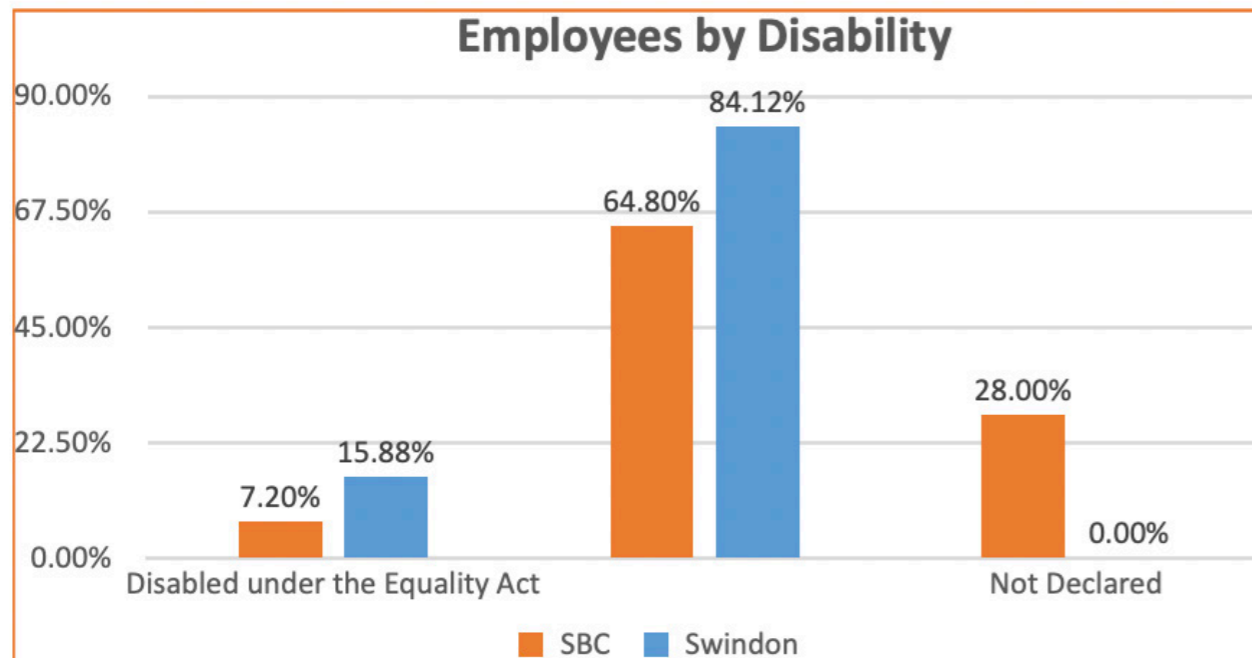
We will uphold the right of each employee to be judged on merit and competence, regardless of age, disability, race, sexuality, sex, gender identity, religion, marital status or maternity/pregnancy and we will fulfil this responsibility by promoting equality of opportunity through our employment policies, practices and service delivery arrangements; making Swindon Borough Council a great place to work.

As an inclusive employer we welcome applications from a diverse range of communities, and in particular disabled people and black and minority ethnic applicants. We are a Disability Confident Employer and will guarantee interviews to disabled people who meet the minimum selection criteria for the job they have applied for. We are also a member of the Mindful Employers Initiative and are committed to the Armed Forces covenant.



Note: the 2021 census data categories do not match the data collected on the HR system. This is being corrected but for the purpose of reporting, we have consolidated the data into just 3 categories.





## Employee Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Action Plan

In the autumn of 2021, the Local Government Association (LGA) undertook a 'health check' of SBC's employee Diversity and Inclusion practices. The feedback received acknowledged the council's genuine desire to have a fair and inclusive working environment and commended SBC on the work it had done to date. However, it was acknowledged that there was more work to be done including more regular and better communication with employees about the activity we are undertaking. As a consequence of the health check, a comprehensive Employee Diversity and Inclusion Vision and Action Plan was created, approved by the At our Best board and shared with employees. This plan now forms the basis of our activity in the employee space.



Altogether is our internal, employee-led Swindon Council employee network group; a business focused resource offering collaboration amongst and encouragement to employees whilst promoting and demonstrating the value of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion at SBC.

### They do this through three key activities:

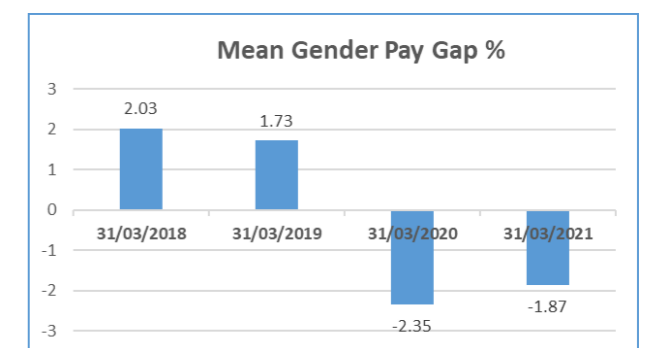
- Acting as visible role models and promoting an inclusive culture.
- Providing support to colleagues through networking opportunities and the provision of educational resources.
- Acting as an advisory group to the business supporting the corporate ED&I agenda with activity and messaging.

## Gender Pay Gap Update

As of the data snapshot date of 31st March 2021, the Council's headcount of all employees in scope was 2747 (913 men and 1834 women). This gives a gender profile of 33% men and 67% women.

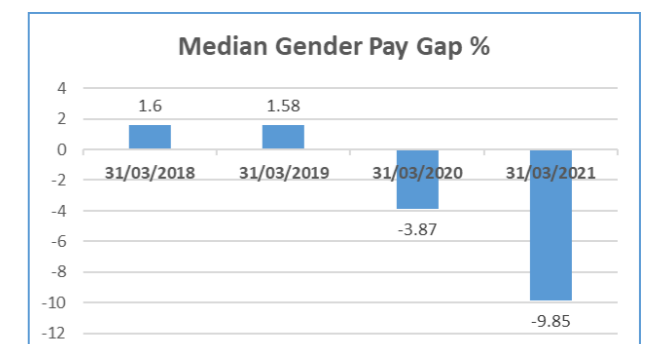
### Mean Gender Pay Gap

Mean pay is calculated as the average of all hourly pay within the Council. The Gender Pay Gap on mean hourly pay is -1.87%. This is a small increase from last year's mean pay gap of -2.35%. But, on average, females are still paid more than males.



### Median Gender Pay Gap

Median pay is the exact midpoint of our pay data set. Half of all employees in the data set earn more than the median and half less. The Gender Pay Gap on median hourly pay is -9.85%, compared with last year's figure of -3.87%.





## Swindon Equality Coalition

The Swindon Equality Coalition is a network of groups and people who are interested in making equality reality in Swindon. It has a role in challenging the Council and our partners about how they make decisions and deliver service from an equality perspective. The Equality Coalition also provides a way for the Council to have an on-going conversation about equality with Swindon people and forms a core part of our regular consultation.

The equality coalition works in a number of different ways:

- It holds regular events where there are presentations and discussions about current issues. These are a chance for people to come together and find out more about what is happening, identify successes and difficulties, and be part of a solution
- It invites individuals and groups to take part in specific activities like consultations or working groups looking at particular equality issues

## Compassionate Swindon Community Navigators

The Community Navigator service offers one to one support to individuals who have been diagnosed with one or more long term health condition. The Navigators work with clients for up to 8 sessions, encouraging them to self-manage their condition and improve their quality of life by introducing healthy habits to improve wellbeing and by encouraging wider participation in community life.

## Safely home service

The aim of the Safely Home Service is to offer support to patients who are in hospital and have been assessed as medically fit for discharge, but do not have the support of family or friends during the first few days/weeks of their return home.



## The Enterprise Works

The Enterprise Works has been providing opportunity, support and training for disabled people in the community since 1963. Supported employment offers an innovative process that enables employment as an achievable goal for people with disabilities just as it is for non-disabled people in our society.

Supported Employment has been successfully used for decades as a personalised model for supporting people with significant disabilities to secure and retain paid employment recognising that work plays a pivotal role in defining an individual's quality of life and is an integral part of a person's overall life experience. The model has at its heart the notion that anyone can be employed if they want paid employment and sufficient support is provided.

Alongside the core retail business of wooden garden products, the team at the Enterprise Works have also created and installed raised flower beds and a seating area at OK4U and raised flower beds at Cockram Court, a sheltered housing development in Swindon Town Centre. They have also supported Headway Swindon, a charity for local people affected by brain injury, through the provision of timber offcuts which the users make into products for sale.

## OK4U

**OK4U is a day centre for adults with learning and physical difficulties.**

Personal Rights – Independence - Choice and inclusion - These are the core themes for the people we support at OK4U. Our aim is to enable individuals to embrace life's challenges in order to lead full, rewarding and healthy lives.

## Forget me Not Cakes

Forget me not Cakes is a wonderful project where local volunteer bakers, bake birthday cakes for some of our residents which includes Swindon Circles clients, and residents in homeless hostels.

This project was restarted in February 2022 after an absence of 2 years due to Covid. A birthday cake may seem inconsequential, but in reality it's a magnificent gift that touches the heart of the recipient.



## The Swindon Big Knit

The wonderful knitted blankets and children's wear below were crafted by Swindon Big Knit volunteers. We donate the woollies, blankets, scarves, hats, gloves and baby clothes to those in most need.



## Local Heroes

Pictured below are Tony, Debbie and Ned, who together took on a Local Heroes task on a rota basis over several months. Helping one of our residents every two weeks meant that they only needed to volunteer once every six weeks, but their combined effort ensured the task was completed and the recipient was very grateful for their efforts. Local Heroes is a great way to volunteer within the time you've got to give.



## Swindon Circles Befriending

Swindon Circles began as a way to improve our loneliest residents' well-being through friendship. Loneliness equates to poor well-being, while connecting with others increases well-being. Swindon Circles connects a volunteer with an isolated resident who has poor mobility and rarely leaves their home. Our fabulous volunteers support some of our most isolated residents by recognising how much each person has to offer and understanding the value of friends.

## Covid Vaccination Programme

Our Steam Volunteers have supported the vaccination roll out from day one, giving their time and energy to make the whole process as easy and worry free as possible for our residents. We have coordinated hundreds of vaccination volunteers on a regular basis. The thanks to those volunteers from those receiving their jabs has been huge and this was reflected by the volunteers being included in the Pride of Swindon Award for 'the vaccinations team at Steam'. The nominations, which were read at the event, painted our volunteers in glowing terms and confirmed the part they played in the success of the vaccination roll out. Our vaccination volunteers continue to regularly support the vaccination boosters, not only at Steam but at walk in's and pop up clinics around the Borough.

## Pride of Swindon Awards

The awards, first made in 2008, recognise people and teams whose work makes their community a better place. Cllr Perkins announced the opening of nominations during a ceremony at the Civic Offices attended by VIPs, sponsors and supporters. Swindon Borough Council leader David Renard stressed that the true owners of the award were the people adding "the council obviously had an inaugural role in this and we continue to support it, but I think it's really important that this award is owned by everybody - which clearly it is.

## Swindon and Wiltshire Pride

This year we were one of the proud sponsors of Swindon and Wiltshire Pride's picnic. Shoppers in the town centre were met with an unexpected delight as the eye-catching parade flowed past Swindon stores. After the parade marched through the shopping centre, it headed to Queens Park to mark the start of a day of pride celebrations. Organisers said the free event was met with overriding positivity from the local community, who braved the heat to enjoy a packed day of music and picnics in the town-centre park.

## Employee Sharing Circles

Sharing circles are dedicated groups where our colleagues can feel safe raising their feelings, concerns and ideas among those who might share similar life experiences. They provide a safe and confidential environment to discuss matters and stories with like-minded individuals from similar backgrounds. Currently running are Cultural Diversity, Disability and LGBTQ+.

## Slow Cookers

The Community Health and Wellbeing Team have started to dish out 60 slow cookers to some of our residents in supported housing schemes across Swindon. The residents are also benefiting from dedicated slow cooking demonstrations from Supported Housing Officers, which helps the residents make the most of their cookers and share recipe ideas.

## Homes for Ukraine

Swindon has an existing, well-established Warm Welcome Team, set up in 2021 to support the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers from Afghanistan. The team has extended its offer to welcome refugees arriving from Ukraine and working with partners across the statutory and voluntary sectors have placed 42 families through the homes for Ukraine scheme.

## Rough Sleepers

Help is available for every rough sleeper in Swindon. We currently commission an outreach service which provides dedicated support to those sleeping rough and we were delighted to see the numbers reduce. The outreach service is often the main contact point for rough sleepers and plans are in place to expand this service.



## Get Swindon Active

Live Well Swindon's Physical Activity team are here to help support and empower individuals to achieve better health through the promotion of physical activity and healthy living.

Their work focuses on tackling health inequalities and assisting those who would benefit from being more active, more often through a person-centred, motivational approach. The offer is open to all Swindon residents, referrals and self-referrals, specifically focusing on individuals who:

- are at risk of, or living with a long term health condition
- have a disability
- are at risk of falls
- have poor mental health
- are currently inactive
- are in need of support to help build confidence around being more active

## Wheels for All



The Wheels for All programme offers friendly inclusive cycling sessions which give individuals a chance to build cycling skills and confidence. The sessions take place on a safe, flat, traffic-free circuit with access to a variety of bikes, including specialist adapted bikes. The programme is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all, however it is targeted at adults with physical and/or learning disabilities or poor mental health.

A parent summed it all up – 'this is a fantastic facility, run by a fantastic team who are here in all weathers. It really is such a benefit to my daughter'.

## Looking Forward

**We will continue to work with partners to promote and support equality and diversity with our communities and within our organisation.**

- Providing employees with training and development opportunities so that they have the skills, abilities and confidence to recognise and respond appropriately and sensitively to diversity and discrimination, both within the workplace, when delivering services and, ultimately, in their everyday lives. Delivering ongoing equality and diversity refresher training as required with services and a range of additional awareness raising modules on locally relevant themes.
- Equipping our young people with the education and skills they need: through additional and enhanced skills and higher education opportunities.
- Working in partnership with local organisations to provide support, and where required, accommodation to anyone experiencing domestic abuse.
- Delivering housing services that encourage and support rough sleepers to come off the streets and into safe accommodation.
- We will re-affirm our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Working with residents so that more people and their carers are supported to live as independently as possible.
- Delivery of a borough-wide approach to increase the impact of volunteering, enabling more people to be active in supporting others.
- Offering care leaver apprenticeships, work experience and supported employment placements.
- Maintaining our Disability Confident, Mindful Employer and Carer Award status, including participating in local employer networks to share knowledge and best practice.

This document forms part of Swindon Borough Council's demonstration of its legal compliance against the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which is part of the Equality Act (2010). The document will inform the on-going work of the Council's Equality Objective action plan, and any future review of the objectives.

Any documents referred to in this report, unless otherwise identified, are available at [www.swindon.gov.uk](http://www.swindon.gov.uk).