



Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan

Progress 2025-2026



Be part of it!



Introduction

In 2023, Active Cumbria developed a comprehensive Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP), reaffirming our commitment to improving skills, knowledge and practice around inclusivity.

This report outlines progress against the ambitions set out in the DIAP and the key priorities identified in the 2024-25 Progress Report. It highlights the work undertaken over the past 12 months to embed equality, diversity, and inclusion (ED&I) across our organisation, programmes, and themes.

During this period, Active Cumbria underwent an organisational restructure. While progress has been made across all priority areas, this process has temporarily slowed our progress across multiple workstreams.

Following the restructure, the ED&I Group was refreshed to review progress and strengthen representation. The group now reflects a broader range of genders and lived experiences.

As Active Cumbria enters the final year of its current DIAP, developing the next plan will be a key priority to ensure continued progress and alignment with organisational goals.

Cover Images (Clockwise from top)

1. Cumbria School Games
2. Advantage! Barrow Raiders Community Foundation Albe Raiders project
3. Fit4Life Maryport

This report provides an opportunity to reflect on achievements to date and identify the next steps in our ED&I journey.

Our stated ambitions are:

Ambition 1: Our people are truly reflective of the population of Cumbria.

Ambition 2: Our people talk confidently about, and are committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion.

Ambition 3: Our culture, practices, and ways of working are inclusive.



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Advisory Board ED&I
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ED&I Lead Officer

Ambition 1:

Our people are truly reflective of the population of Cumbria



Progress in 2025-2026:

Priority	Progress	Note
Review role profiles for any new vacancy at both Staff and Advisory Board level, to ensure they are inclusive and accessible.	Complete	All role profiles were successfully reviewed and enhanced through accessibility assessments, including gender de-coding and improved readability.
Ensure we follow the inclusive recruitment policies that Cumberland Council have in place.	Complete	Our recruitment practices are aligned with and delivered in accordance with Cumberland Council's inclusive recruitment policies.
ED&I Group to prepare a proposal for the Senior Leadership Team that wraps an extra bespoke ED&I process to enhance Cumberland Council's existing recruitment policy when there are staff vacancies within the team.	Complete	This work was successfully completed and passed by the Senior Leadership Team and Advisory Board.

Priority	Progress	Note
Review the Advisory Board Recruitment Pack and ensure it meets relevant accessibility criteria.	Complete	This work was successfully completed and formally approved by both the Senior Leadership Team and the Advisory Board.

We have made good progress against Ambition 1. However, as Cumbria's population continues to evolve and become more diverse, we recognise that this work is ongoing. We will continue to monitor these areas to ensure our people are reflective of the communities we serve. The strong foundations built over recent years will allow us to focus on areas where further improvement can be made.

We continue to achieve our Advisory Board membership target. Following an internal restructure, the Active Cumbria Leadership Team is now more diverse, with both male and female managers.

A new inclusive recruitment process was developed, approved by the Leadership Team and partially implemented. This included:

- Targeted communications to reach a wider range of audiences.
- Interview panels with people from diverse lived experiences.
- Face-to-face and remote interview options in line with Cumberland Council policy.
- More accessible job descriptions through gender de-coding and reading-level checks.

Approved in February 2026, the proposal is now being promoted for wider adoption through the Cumberland Council ED&I Strategy Group.

Highlights

Highlights of our work with projects and partners that have had a positive impact on ensuring the workforce is more reflective of the population of Cumbria:

- 36 walk leaders and 9 ride leaders trained from a wide range of lived experiences including people with long term health conditions, disabled people and people from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- Pre-event meeting with a delegate requiring reasonable accessibility adjustments for a training course which, created a supportive relationship, boosting confidence and their experience.

Priorities for 2026-2027

- Undertake analysis of Advisory Board applicants, to ensure we are receiving applications from a wide range of backgrounds.
- Undertake the annual analysis of the diversity of the team and board.
- Role profile for Advisory Board ED&I Champion to be reviewed.

Ambition 2:

Our people talk confidently about, and are committed to, equality, diversity, and inclusion



Progress in 2025-2026:

Priority	Progress	Note
Staff to complete Inclusive Behaviours Self-Assessment tool and organise Staff and Advisory Board training for various topics that emerge.	Slow	Following the organisational restructure and ongoing staff recruitment, this area of work was intentionally paused with delivery now scheduled as a priority for 2026–2027.
Support the sport and physical activity sector to be more proactive regarding ED&I.	Purposeful	This was achieved through training, resource promotion, and signposting. The Sport Welfare Officer played a key role in progress.
Provide catch up training opportunities for any current or new staff member.	Purposeful	Catch up training, including Safeguarding Awareness, was provided as and when required.

Priority	Progress	Note
Review how ED&I is incorporated into annual appraisal, retention and induction processes.	Slow	ED&I is incorporated into our induction process and annual appraisals in line with Cumberland Council processes. Further work needs done to incorporate it into retention processes.

Active Cumbria's ED&I Lead Officer is embedded within the ED&I Steering Groups for Cumberland Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, the national ED&I Community of Practice for Active Partnerships, and subsequent steering group. This is allowing us to embed best practice from the network of active partnerships and influence both councils.

ED&I group members are involved with a variety of themed networks, including communities of practice, where they feel more confident talking about ED&I. Learning is shared with the wider Active Cumbria Team. As an organisation we received training on Race Equity and Poverty Awareness.

Highlights

Highlights of our work on projects and with partners which upskill them in being able to talk confidently about ED&I related themes and commit to making changes as a result:

- Active Cumbria's National Governing Body (NGB) Forum has incorporated EDI-focused discussions, including themes such as Cumbria United Against Suicide and accessible facilities.
- New Safeguarding Adults training has enabled us to strengthen our approach to safeguarding adults while incorporating additional support and training for those at greater risk in sport and physical activity.
- The Safeguarding and Protecting Children course uses sexuality and gender-based scenarios to prompt discussion and help clubs identify ways to better support their members.
- Staff delivered sessions to NHS 'Staying Steady' participants, promoting accessible sport and physical activity opportunities for people with long-term health conditions and advocating the benefits of being active.

Priorities for 2026-2027

- Provide opportunities through stakeholder events and forums to focus on issues and raise awareness of inequalities in sport and physical activity.
- Continue to have a focus on initiatives and campaigns that support ED&I.
- Staff to complete Inclusive Behaviours Self-Assessment tool.
- Respond to the findings of the Inclusive Behaviours Self-Assessment tool.

Ambition 3:

Our culture, practices,
and ways of working
are inclusive



Progress in 2025-2026:

Priority	Progress	Note
Continue trialling changes for the organisation to better encourage diverse perspectives.	Purposeful	Greater representation on thematic groups and more input from people with diverse backgrounds at team meetings is helping inform more inclusive decision-making across the organisation.
Collaborate with the People Group and Senior Leadership Team to implement changes on the themes identified from the People Survey 2025.	Slow	Following the restructure, responsibility for the People Plan has been embedded within the Leadership Team, who are now actively progressing its delivery across the organisation.
More regularly capture and spread the message of ED&I and the work we are doing externally to our partners and the wider physical activity sector.	Purposeful	The ED&I Group has implemented a structured process to capture and share inclusive activity, which is now being used across the organisation. This will be an ongoing priority.

Staff have strengthened their inclusive practices through continuous improvement and professional development. Learning from initiatives such as the Systems Leadership programme has been embedded into our approach to partner engagement, ensuring stakeholder voices are heard and valued. This has enabled people with lived experience to directly influence the design and delivery of services, including Travel Actively projects and Let's Move! activities.

As part of Active Cumbria's commitment to creating an inclusive culture and ways of working, staff were invited to complete a People Survey in November 2025. The findings informed the development of a People Plan, which was approved by the Advisory Board.

A follow-up survey was conducted in May 2026 to assess progress against the People Plan and understand whether the intended changes are being realised. The results are currently under review.

Representatives from every Active Cumbria team are helping to embed inclusive practices across the organisation by championing discussions within team meetings and sharing insights from group discussions.

Highlights

Highlights from our work with projects and partners that make progress towards improving culture, practices, and ways of working:

- A range of accessible and inclusive activities and events were delivered, creating opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in sport and physical activity. These included School Games events and festivals led, walks and bike rides, and a Walking Festival, which engaged 107 participants.
- Travel Actively funded 11 projects, totalling £95,974, providing

inclusive and accessible opportunities for people to access active travel as part of everyday journeys.

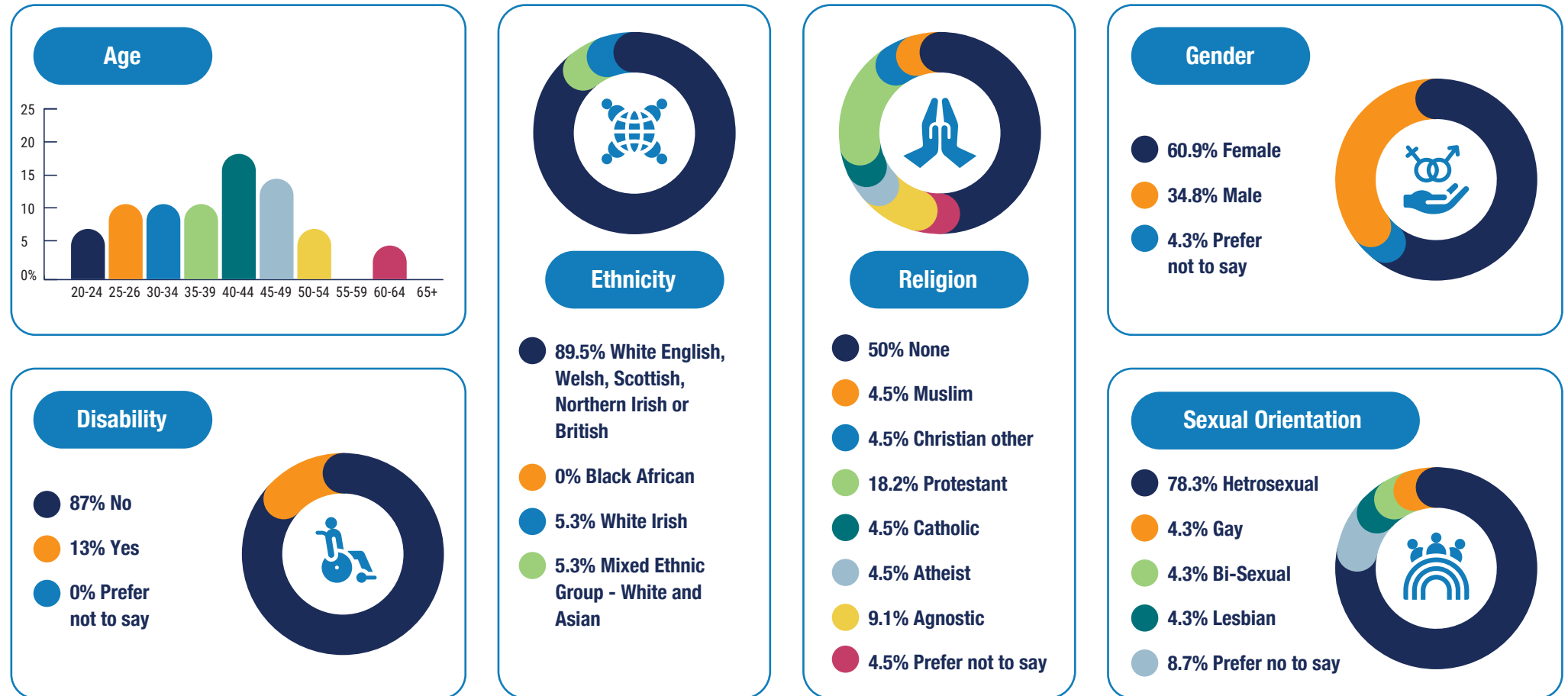
- Through investment of £87,530 from Westmorland and Furness Council and the UK Government via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, 14 projects were supported to improve the inclusivity and accessibility of sports clubs and expand opportunities for priority audiences to participate in physical activity.
- The Reconditioning Fund supported 18 projects county wide that challenged ageism by providing a range of opportunities for older adults to be more physically active, to a total of £50,849.
- Youth voice conversations at a School Games Boccia event captured young people reflecting on how it felt to represent their school at the event, describing it as amazing, exciting and made them proud of themselves.
- Communications were shared to support accessible and inclusive community-based opportunities including an accessible Danceathon event.

Priorities for 2026-2027

- Continue trialling changes for the organisation to better encourage diverse perspectives.
- Collaborate with the Leadership Team to ensure that staff perspectives on equality, diversity, and inclusion and organisational culture are effectively captured through the annual staff survey, with insights translated into actions that support continuous organisational improvement.

Diversity within Active Cumbria

Survey completed by 21 people, 68% of the total organisation size, which included a mix of Staff and Advisory Board members.



What is it like to work for Active Cumbria?

Taken from the Pulse Survey completed by 18 staff members

- 78%** agree or strongly agree that my wellbeing matters to my organisation.
- 61%** agree or strongly agree that they feel listened to.
- 66%** agree or strongly agree that teamwork, supportiveness and collaboration is embedded.



What is it like to work with Active Cumbria?

Taken from the Stakeholder Survey 2026 – completed by 99 partners

- 88%** agree or strongly agree that there is trust and respect for each other.
- 92%** rated the extent to which working with us had a positive or very positive impact on their organisation.
- 96%** rated being satisfied or very satisfied with the quality and advice provided by Active Cumbria.
- 96%** rated being satisfied or very satisfied with the professionalism and helpfulness of our staff.



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