



South Cambridgeshire District Council Equality Scheme 2024 – 2028

Version	Approval	Date
1.0	Final Draft	31.05
1.1	CMT	11.06
1.2	LT	26.06
1.3	Informal Cabinet	July
1.4	Scrutiny	July
1.5	Cabinet	September

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Introduction and Context

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into effect on 1 October 2010, bringing together all previous equality legislation into a single Act, strengthening laws to prevent inequality, and extending equality law to include some forms of discrimination previously unrecognised within legislation.

Under the Equality Act, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of any of the following 'protected characteristics':

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act includes the public sector equality duty, which came into force in April 2011. This duty applies to a range of public authorities, including local authorities, and is made up of 'the general equality duty' and 'specific duties'.

The general equality duty requires public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

These are often referred to as the three aims of the general equality duty. To comply with the duty a public authority needs to have due regard to all three of these aims.

The Act explains that having 'due regard' for advancing equality 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 (including taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities)

- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

In relation to the third aim, the Act describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups.

Local Authorities are also required to complete the following specific duties:

- Publish information annually to demonstrate how the General Duty is being met. This is achieved through two methods:
 - The annual publication of [equality in employment information](#).
 - The publication of information to show steps that have been taken to have due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- Prepare and publish one or more objectives to meet any of the aims of the General Duty every four years.

Equality Scheme Purpose

The purpose of our Equality Scheme is to:

- Set out our equality objectives for the period 2024-2028 and provide details to show how these will contribute towards the aims of the General Duty.
- Present the Council's approach to embedding equality within Council services.
- Provide details of the equality responsibilities of the Council, its employees, and elected representatives.
- Set arrangements for monitoring and checking progress against our equality objectives.

Our Equality Pledge

As a signatory of the Cambridgeshire Equality Pledge, South Cambridgeshire District Council appreciates and values the benefits that different communities contribute to the district and wider region. More specifically our pledge states that:

"We believe in the dignity of all people and their right to respect and equality of opportunity. We value the strength that comes with difference and the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community. Our aspiration is for South Cambridgeshire and the wider region to be safe, welcoming, and inclusive."

More information about the equality pledge, including details of how to sign up as either an organisation or individual, are included on our [Equality and-Diversity webpage](#).

Embedding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In addition to the equality objectives and action plan set out below, the following approaches are taken to the embedding of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) through the range of activities undertaken by the Council:

EDI Calendar and Promotion of Key Dates

SCDC celebrates and promotes diversity by marking key dates within the calendar through the design and delivery of a programme of internal events, communications, and promotion of key resources. This is contributed to by the EDI Staff Forum, who have worked to develop a Calendar of Notable Dates to be marked and are continuing to maintain and update this on an ongoing basis.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) are completed during the development of policies, procedures, projects, functions, strategies, and services. EqIAs provide a methodical approach to the assessment of impacts of new proposals across the nine protected characteristics. This allows us to plan mitigating action and to seek to maximise opportunities to advance equality within our services. Once completed, EqIAs are published on the [Council's website](#).

Member Champion for Race and Equality

EDI Member Champion - to champion the programme of EDI initiatives and events hosted by SCDC, to Members. Engage with officers, supporting the drafting and delivery of schemes and strategies for embedding EDI within our workstreams. Identifying EDI training and development needs for members. Regularly meeting with the EDI Team to discuss future plans and progress.

Staff and Member Training

South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to ensuring that it is operating fairly and equitably in both service delivery and employment. To ensure that equality and diversity standards are upheld during the delivery of services, essential and compulsory training will be provided to all staff and members.

Additional equality and diversity training can be provided to any staff who find it required, needed or wanted for their specific service requirements.

Staff Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Forum

A staff Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Forum was set up in January 2021 to help identify improvements to narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community. Since the Forum launched, its members have worked to develop an internal Inclusive Language Guide, a calendar of notable events to be marked through various means, and recommendations regarding inclusive recruitment practices and processes around the identification and implementation of reasonable adjustments for disabled staff.

South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership

Through the South Cambridgeshire Community Safety Partnership, SCDC undertakes joint work with Police, Fire, District Councils, County Council, Integrated Care System (ICS) and voluntary group partners to protect vulnerable people within the district, including those who may be subject to Anti-Social Behaviour, Hate Crime or at risk of Modern Slavery.

Language Services for non-Native English Speakers

The Council has access to an external translation and interpreting services provider. This can be used for the translation of documents and interpreting of verbal communication to allow barriers faced by residents and other stakeholders who do not use English as their first language (including users of British Sign Language etc.), to be overcome. Further information about how these services can be accessed is available by emailing equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk

Public/Community Forums and Stakeholder Liaison Meetings

The Growth Team run regular public/community forums to hear the concerns and thoughts of residents. In addition to this liaison meetings area held with stakeholders during the development of new communities/developments.

Community Hubs

Cambs Acre and the Council's Communities Team continue to provide community hubs as an opportunity for residents to socialise in a place where there are refreshments and opportunities to get support and advice on a range of issues (these were previously Warm Hubs).

Key Policies

Officers' Code of Conduct - All employees of South Cambridgeshire District Council are expected to work to our code of conduct, including fair and equitable treatment of all staff, customers, and residents.

Dignity at Work Policy - SCDC positively encourages and promotes a working environment where all persons are treated with dignity and respect. The Council is committed to creating a fair and safe working environment where employees can work free from abusive, threatening, or unwelcome behaviour. Complaints of harassment and/or bullying or victimisation will be taken seriously and dealt with fairly, sensitively, and confidentially.

Pay Policy - The Council is committed to ensuring that its pay strategy is fair and equitable, affordable, transparent, and easily understood. This enables the organisation to attract, retain and develop a skilled and flexible workforce. Our staff salaries are evaluated using the National Joint Council (NJC) Job Evaluation Scheme which is based on the principle of joint ownership, openness, transparency, and equality.

Recruitment Process – SCDC’s Recruitment and Selection policy and procedures are designed to recruit staff in a fair and consistent way that supports equality of opportunity. Our recruitment processes are open and robust with procedures for checking that interview attendees are eligible to work in the UK and for requesting and following up applicant references. We also ensure that interview panel members have received equality and diversity training, to ensure a consistent and fair process.

Safeguarding Policy - SCDC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk of harm and their families. The council works under Cambridgeshire County Council’s Adult Safeguarding policy guidelines and procedures. We take our responsibilities seriously and expect all staff, partners, and contractors to share this commitment. We ensure our procurement and contracting policies and procedures adequately reflect our safeguarding responsibilities. All incidents of poor practice, allegations and suspicions are taken seriously, reported, and are always responded to. Additionally, all staff are expected to attend regular safeguarding training.

Whistleblowing Policy - The Council encourages staff, contractors and elected Members who have serious concerns about any aspect of the Council’s activities, to come forward and voice those concerns. Our Whistleblowing Policy has been prepared in consultation with staff and with the help of the independent charity, Public Concern at Work. It commits the council to ensuring that whistle-blowers will suffer no recrimination or victimisation as a result of raising a genuine concern about malpractice.

Race Equality Motion

At the Council meeting of the 14th July 2020, a motion was passed setting out the Council’s beliefs that:

- Racism in all forms, both structural and in individuals, continues to be a serious and often unseen problem in the UK. This is as true in Cambridgeshire, where the ethnic minority population is 18.6%, as it is in areas with greater diversity.
- Although progress has been made in combating racism, work to eradicate it entirely is far from complete.
- This Council, representing people in South Cambridgeshire, has a duty as a public leader to actively lead that work.

This motion also brought forward a number of commitments in relation to the Council’s work to promote race equality, which have been incorporated within the equality objectives section of this scheme.

Care Experience Motion

At the Council meeting of the 27th February 2024, a motion was passed setting out the Council's beliefs that:

- Councillors should be champions of children and young people in care and challenge the negative attitudes and prejudice that exists in all aspects of society.

The motion brought forward a number of commitments in relation to the Council's work to consider care experience across a number of different factors. Some have been incorporated into the scheme whereas others, such as the updated Equality Impact Assessment form, have already been completed.

Equality Objectives and Action Plan

The following equality objectives have been set for 2024 to 2028 to help the council in meeting the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty and to reflect the context detailed within the facts and figures included at **Appendix Ai** (Facts and Figures).

Objective 1 - Understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and identify, prioritise, and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

Objective 2 - South Cambridgeshire District Council is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings

Objective 3 - Protected groups are included and have their voices heard in discussions about the future shape of the district

A plan is set out on the following page, providing details of the actions that will be taken to achieve these objectives, as well as measures of success. The RAG status denotes the success of these objectives. Purple is complete, red is stalled, amber is delayed but with a completion plan agreed, and green is on track.

Objective 1: Understand the diversity that exists within the South Cambridgeshire population and identify, prioritise, and deliver actions that will narrow the gap in outcomes between disadvantaged groups and the wider community

Action	Measure	Lead Teams
Use survey feedback and profiling to develop our understanding of tenant demographics and needs	This will be done via new tenant satisfaction surveys and reporting on top of tenant profiling expected by Q4 2024/25	Housing Strategy (Service Manager of Housing Strategy)
Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) needs assessment to ensure we are meeting our Public Sector duty	Review of results from Accommodation Needs Assessment of Gypsies, Travellers, Travelling Showperson and Bargee Travellers and other caravan and houseboat dwellers (which will inform the Local Plan) - reviewing stopping up sites - drop in sessions hosting for the GRT community - tackling issues on private sites (through planning enforcement)	Housing Strategy (Service Manager of Housing Strategy)
Endeavour to provide inclusive services for residents	Representative communications to improve the accessibility and visibility of the services using different channels.	Housing Advice and Options (Service Manager of Housing Advice and Options)
Endeavour to provide inclusive services for everyone at South Cambs Hall	Hearing loops at South Cambs Hall – installation of hearing loops in the main meeting rooms at South Cambs Hall (Jeavons, Swansley, Monkfield and Council Chamber)	Facilities (Facilities Manager)

<p>Making sure that period poverty does not impact those being educated within, living or working in the district.</p>	<p>Work with RECAP partners to promote washable nappies, wipes & period & incontinence products. Providing free menstrual cups.</p> <p>New campaign providing free period products to those in need .The campaign will focus on providing reusable period products and a resident can select from either a reusable cup, reusable pads, or reusable period pants and they will be delivered directly to their door from the supplier.</p> <p>In the food parcel delivery service that the Council operates residents have the option to request period products and those would be disposable ones.</p>	<p>Waste Policy Team and Cost of Living Team (Waste Policy Office and Cost of Living Officer)</p>
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Developing our Safeguarding provision to ensure that the voices of those with Protected Characteristics are heard and respected in the Council's response.	Domestic Abuse Awareness training for staff - spotting older person victims and perpetrators	Housing Advice and Options (Head of Housing Advice and Options)
Developing our Safeguarding provision to ensure that the voices of those with Protected Characteristics are heard and respected in the Council's response.	County led cuckooing strategy led by police (partnership working)	Housing Advice and Options (Head of Housing Advice and Options)
Developing our Safeguarding provision to ensure that the voices of those with Protected Characteristics are heard and respected in the Council's response.	PREVENT – Training and prevention of radicalisation.	Communities (Communities Manager)
Developing our Safeguarding provision to ensure that the voices of those with Protected Characteristics are heard and respected in the Council's response.	To analyse stock and tenancies to identify potential victims - preventative rather than reactive	Housing and Estate Management – Housing Enforcement Team (Housing Enforcement Team Leader)

Making South Cambs a welcoming place for parents, ensuring they have a voice in the future of the district.	FreetoFeed campaign - working with over 90 local cafés, bars, restaurants, and other businesses across the District to help parents feel welcome, confident and relaxed to feed their infants when out and about	Communities Team
White Ribbon Accreditation - Ensure that the staff culture at SCDC means everyone has an understanding of violence against women and that we are taking steps at leadership level to prevent it.	HR policy/policies adequately cover men's violence against women and domestic abuse, and these are shared and understood.	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)
White Ribbon Accreditation - Engaging men and boys in White Ribbon, from ambassadorships, training and engaging with men and boys in the community	There are at least 4 White Ribbon Ambassadors from within all staffing levels and departments of your organisation. All White Ribbon Ambassadors are required to agree to the White Ribbon Code of Conduct and Make the Promise.	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)
White Ribbon Accreditation	Promote across your male workforce: Making the White Ribbon Promise The importance of wearing the White Ribbon amongst your staff. Knowing and able to have a conversation about what it means to wear a White Ribbon.	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)
To meet both our Safeguarding duty and White Ribbon accreditation, ensure that communication about where to go for help is effective and visible to staff and residents	White Ribbon UK messaging and the White Ribbon is displayed visibly in a wide range of settings such as on a website, signage and promotional materials. All information is clearly displayed and accessible	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)
White Ribbon Accreditation - Engaging men and boys in White Ribbon, from ambassadorships, training and engaging with men and boys in the community	Identify and forge links with local sports clubs to raise awareness, gain support and encourage accreditation.	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)

Ensuring our communities are given help during the cost of living crisis to narrow the advantage gap	Cost of Living support - This can be by signposting communities to existing support available, helping facilitate existing schemes to reach those most in need, supporting community groups that wish to start projects that support those in need, and by providing direct support from the Council	Communities

Objective 2: South Cambridgeshire District Council is an employer that values difference and recognises the strength that a diverse workforce brings

Action	Measure	Lead Teams
Collect data from South Cambridgeshire District Council workforce to monitor and analyse perception of EDI actions	Annual staff surveys inviting members and officers to comment on EDI efforts throughout the year	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Collect data about the South Cambridgeshire District Council workforce to monitor and analyse representation of people from different protected characteristics	Produce an annual analysis of the workforce to understand the diversity among council staff	EDI Team
More transparency in pay and equality in employment.	Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap reporting and Pay Policy Statement.	People Team
Improving training provision for officers to progress through the organisation	New leadership and management academies to be run this year (2024-2025)	Learning and Development (Learning and Development Officer)

Ensure our websites are kept up to date with accessibility legislation (WCAG 2.2)	Review of accessibility of documents a. Documents published on website. b. Documents published on insite SharePoint c. Documents on Public Access and the GCSP website (planning) PDF and website training for staff to teach about web editing.	Communications Team
Ensure our websites are kept up to date with accessibility legislation (WCAG 2.2)	Ensure all existing and new customer-facing processes (IEG4 forms, golden number) are accessible, involving discussion with Communications and web editors	All staff
Ensure our websites are kept up to date with accessibility legislation (WCAG 2.2)	Redesign website with accessibility in mind, ensuring it never drops below 90% compliance via our checking tools	Communications Team
Making digital inclusion a priority across the organisation	Keeping to our 60/30/10 model, where 60% of users will be able to solve council queries by going online, 30% with a phonecall, and 10% needing to come in person, ensuring users regardless of digital proficiency or disability can self-serve on the website or access our services without difficulty in another manner	All staff
Translating motions adopted at Full Council to our business-as-usual processes	Create and have a new Equality Impact Assessment template signed off that has provision for care experience and digital inclusion.	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)

Build on Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation, Improving the accessibility of South Cambridgeshire Hall.	Undertake a disability friendly assessment of our office buildings and buildings that we are designing and delivering	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Build on Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation, Improving the accessibility of South Cambridgeshire Hall.	Make sure Evac-Chair training is done so our disabled staff are safe in the building	Facilities Management (Facilities Manager)
Build on Disability Confident Level 2 accreditation, Improving the accessibility of South Cambridgeshire Hall.	Ensure all disabled staff have PEEPs, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan	Health and Safety and People Team (Health and Safety Advisor and People Team)
Continue to develop South Cambridgeshire as a disability friendly organisation	2024 review of the Reasonable Adjustment Passport scheme	People Team
Continue work to become menopause accredited	Work towards becoming a menopause-friendly organisation	People Team
Uphold our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant	Upholding the Armed Forces Covenant – supporting current, former and partners of the Armed Forces, and adding extra leave entitlement for military reservists.	People Team
Uphold our commitment to the Care Leaver Covenant	The measure will be to recruit and retain individuals from a care experience background and support them in their employment journey.	People Team
Continue to develop South Cambridgeshire as an Anti-Racist Organisation	Sign the Anti-Racism Charter by end of Q2 24/25. Develop forward planning for anti-racist training. Increased reporting on race related statistics i.e. pay gaps.	UNISON People Team EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Improve mental health provision for staff after indications in EDI survey they would like more	Mental Health support and Awareness – including training , communications and First Aiders.	EDI Team; People Team (Policy and Performance Officers and People Team)
Improve suicide awareness and training for staff	Suicide awareness and prevention training for staff, with additional support and mental health checks for front line staff	EDI Team and Housing Advice Policy and Performance Officers and Head of Housing Advice

Continue to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in SCDC through awareness, engagement and training	International Women's Day	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Continue to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in SCDC through awareness, engagement and training	International Men's Day	EDI Team (Corporate Programme Manager)
Continue to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in SCDC through awareness, engagement and training	Lunchtime learn sessions	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Continue to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in SCDC through awareness, engagement and training	Equality commitment for staff to complete as part of training. Creation and roll out of new e-learning modules on completing Equality Impact Assessments	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Continue to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in SCDC through awareness, engagement and training	Ensure an EDI award is created as part of the GEM awards	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Continue to embed the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in SCDC through awareness, engagement and training	Deliver a calendar of dates and heritage months/weeks which are determined and representative of our staff and communities. Continue our programme of engaging partner organisations (such as Papworth Trust; Friends, Families and Travellers) to deliver webinars, discussions and resources. A commitment to deliver certain heritage dates (including but not limited to Black History Month)	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Collect data about the South Cambridgeshire District Council workforce to monitor and	Analyse annual staff satisfaction surveys around equality, diversity, and inclusion, and publish 'you said, we listened' examples	People Team

analyse representation of people from different protected characteristics	internally following analysis of the survey results. This feedback about inclusive recruitment and training opportunities to be actioned.	
White Ribbon Accreditation	Staff training includes aspects of men's violence against women (sexual violence, coercive control, consent, and domestic abuse).	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)
Anti-Harassment Policy, White Ribbon, Staff Conduct and Values; EDI Survey results;	All staff do not behave in sexist, harassing and abusive behaviours, and understand that they are unacceptable in all contexts and with a zero-tolerance approach.	Multi Team Approach
White Ribbon Accreditation	There is a clear report-handling mechanism for making, assessing, dealing with and informing on incidents of violence against women and girls (sexism, harassment, abuse, sexual assault, domestic) for the Local Authority and a support function for those involved in a report (victim, reported and whistle-blower)..	White Ribbon Steering Group (Communities Project Officer)
White Ribbon Accreditation	All staff, and others (e.g. partners, service users, contractors and community members), are encouraged to wear the White Ribbon and make the White Ribbon Promise.	White Ribbon Steering Group; All staff and Members

Objective 3: Protected groups are included and have their voices heard in discussions about the future shape of the district

Action	Measure	Lead Teams
<p>Improve provision for disabled residents, ensuring buildings are designed with them in mind</p>	<p>All new build community facilities at Northstowe to have Changing Places facilities. Council has delivered one with 3 more planned. Delivered in early 2026 Northstowe Comm Centre - designed to RNIB principles, hearing loops and changing places include sanitary bins, and there is a shared disabled toilet/baby changing facilities.</p>	<p>Housing New Builds – Acquisition and Development (Service Manager Acquisition and Development)</p>
<p>Improve provision for disabled residents, ensuring buildings are designed with them in mind</p>	<p>New homes to be adaptable and a minimum of 5% (4/74) of new build homes to be built wheelchair accessible. Cambourne SCIP scheme all delivered to M4 and 4 will be M4(3)</p>	<p>Housing New Builds – Acquisition and Development (Service Manager Acquisition and Development)</p>
<p>Ensure young people are included and have a voice in the shaping of their communities</p>	<p>Involving and consulting young people on the delivery of council services Supporting village colleges in delivering information about democracy and the elections process. Communicating young people’s feedback with Combined Authority, particularly on issues such as public transport. Inviting young people to attend committees such as the Climate and Environment Advisory Committee</p>	<p><i>To be confirmed</i></p>

Ensure protected groups are included and have a voice in the shaping of their communities	Surveys of attendees at community forums	Communities Growth Team (Development Officer)
Improve provision for disabled residents, ensuring buildings are designed with them in mind	Cambridgeshire Aids and Adaptations policy review in partnership with SCDC, HDC and City	Housing Strategy (Service Manager of Housing Strategy)

Making sure our residents feel safe where they live	Anti-Social behaviour reporting review (to include hate crime reporting)	Housing Strategy (Service Manager of Housing Strategy)
Ensuring all residents, no matter their language, are able to participate in educational discussions	Ensure that our translation provider's contract is available to schools to support guests; contract will be reviewed in April 2025.	EDI Team (Policy and Performance Officers)
Ensuring all our residents live in safe environments	Homelessness strategy	Housing Advice and Options (Service Manager of Housing Advice and Options)
Improve provision of and ability to choose Plans for residents	Support Communities/Parishes to create a Community Led Plan. Your Plan could aim to achieve anything from organising regular litter picks, buying a defibrillator for a community building, through to setting up an environmental group. The important thing to remember is that it is led, driven, and resourced through action taken by people who live in your community.	Communities Team
Meeting our commitment to Net Zero and our declaration of a Climate Emergency	The Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Point Scheme provides grants to community organisations and parish councils to install EV charging points.	Climate and Environment Team
Meeting our commitment to Net Zero and our declaration of a Climate Emergency	The Six Free Trees scheme offers 6 free trees to every parish council in the district. This helps to offset the effects of development, with trees absorbing and storing the carbon dioxide emissions that are driving global warming – an equality consideration as negative effects from	Climate and Environment Team

	global warming often hit disenfranchised people first.	
Meeting our commitment to Net Zero and our declaration of a Climate Emergency	The Zero Carbon Communities Grant provides £15,000 of funding for projects which reduce carbon emissions and/or engage communities on climate change.	Climate and Environment Team
Meeting our commitment to Net Zero and our declaration of a Climate Emergency	The Action on Energy scheme provides advice, support and funding for installing energy efficiency measures on private housing.	Climate and Environment Team

