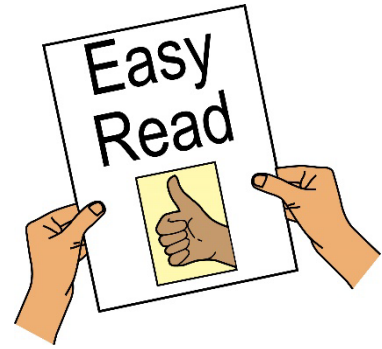




Brent



Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy



2024 - 2028

This is the easy read document of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Equity: this means giving everyone access to the same opportunities while knowing that not everyone starts at the same place.

Diversity: here, this means people from all different backgrounds living and working together in the borough.

Inclusion: this means everybody can take part in our borough, no matter what their background is.

Strategy: this means a big picture plan.

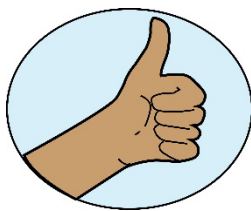
Opening message and Introduction

Opening message



This strategy is our promise to deal with **inequalities**. It is our plan to support individual people and families.

Inequalities: this means when people do not have equal rights and opportunities.



We want to support people in our borough to do the very best that they can.



We want to move Brent forward together. We want to make sure no one is left behind. This is what our **vision** is all about.

Vision: here, this means what we want the future of Brent to look like.



We want our communities to thrive. We want to celebrate our differences.



That is why our strategy is all about equity and inclusion.



Brent is one of London's most diverse boroughs. We are very proud about this.



Diversity brings together our experience and ideas. It brings together our different points of view. This is a really important way to make our borough amazing.



We know that it is really important that our communities are strong. Living in strong communities can make people's lives better.



Living in strong communities means:

- Having relationships within communities
- Having support networks that bring people together



Living in strong communities can bring people together. People can share strengths and skills.



We have come up with this strategy by engaging with our:

- Service users, people who use or get help from the Council
- Staff, People working for Brent Council
- Residents, people living in Brent





We have listened to your ideas and suggestions.



You have told us how we can celebrate local people. You have told us how we can engage with local people and empower them.



We are proud of our diverse **workforce**. We know that diversity is more than just celebrating differences.

Workforce: here, this means anybody who works for Brent Council.



It is also about listening to different points of views and experiences.



Diversity is about using these points of views to be creative to push for change and success.



We want to do more than just **representation**. We want to push for an inclusive work environment.

Representation: this means when people from different backgrounds are represented in the workplace.



We want everybody in the organisation to:

- Be curious to learn
- Want to make the council's culture better
- Use their knowledge to serve our communities in a better way



We want to be an **employer of choice**. We want people to come to work every day with a clear sense of purpose.

Employer of choice: here, this means an organisation with a really good work environment. For example, there is a good working culture, benefits and leadership.



We want our staff to be confident about the positive changes they are making for Brent's people, communities and businesses.



We know that we will always have more to do. We will never stop pushing for change.



Our strategy sets out how we will build an inclusive **workforce**.



We look forward to keeping you updated about our work.

We will tell you about the progress we are making as we try to reach our goals.



This opening message was written by:

- Councillor Donnely-Jackson – She is the Cabinet Member for Customers, Communities and Culture.
- Kim Wright – She is the Chief Executive of Brent Council



Introduction



As a Council, we put these things at the centre of everything we do:

- Communities
- Businesses
- The Workforce



Our borough is one of the most diverse boroughs in London and in the whole country. Diversity is our biggest strength.



Our differences are what make our borough strong. Our differences have positive effects on our community.



Almost 2 in 3 people in Brent are from Black, Asian and **minority ethnic groups**.

Minority ethnic groups: this means people living in the UK who are not from White British communities.



There are lots of different languages that are spoken in the borough.

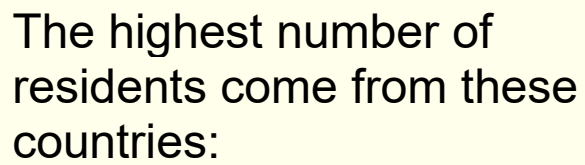
34 in 100 residents use a main language that is not English.



Some of the languages that are spoken the most in the borough are:

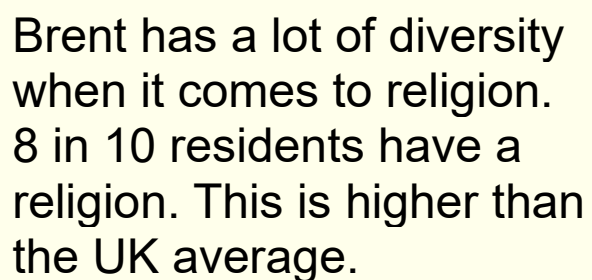
- Gujarati
- Romanian
- Arabic
- Portuguese

Over half of our residents were born in countries outside the UK.



-

- Romania
- Portugal
- Italy



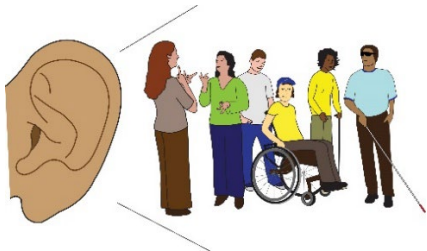


Our biggest religious group is Christian. Then, Muslim. Then, Hindu.

Within these religious communities there is even more diversity.



We want to carry on understanding our residents. We want to carry on representing them and serving them.



We want to listen to residents whose voices are not usually heard.



Brent is also diverse when it comes to the workforce:

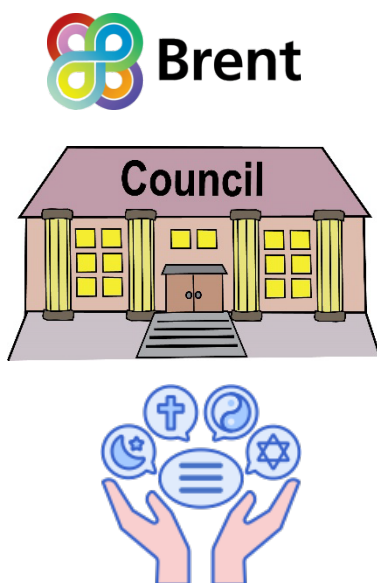
- Nearly 7 in 10 Council workers are Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. This is compared to just over 4 in 10 workers across London.



- Over half of our workforce is aged 41-60 years old.
- Nearly 2 in 3 workers are women.
- Just over 4 in 100 workers are **LGB+**.
- Just under 1 in 100 workers are **transgender**.

LGB+: this means people who are sexually attracted to people who are the same genders as them. Or, they are attracted to both genders.

Transgender: this means when a person's gender identity is different to the sex that they were when they were born.



The council workforce is diverse in terms of religion:

- 50 in 100 are Christian
- 15 in 100 are Hindu
- 11 in 100 are Muslim
- 16 in 100 workers do not have a religion



Disabled workers are less well represented in our council. Around 8 in 100 workers in Brent are disabled. This is below the UK average of 18 in 100.



We know about the challenges that our residents face. We know what needs to happen to bounce back from **Covid-19**.

Covid-19: this is a virus that spread all over the world over the past few years. It changed the way we all live and work.



The **cost-of-living crisis** is affecting our residents in unequal ways. We know how to deal with this.

Cost-of-living crisis: this means when the costs of basic needs such as food and bills has gone up a lot. But people are still getting paid the same amount. This is happening right now in the UK.



This strategy is our plan to make sure everyone in Brent has the same opportunities and access. This means people living, working and studying in Brent.



We want Brent Council to be the employer of choice. This is for our residents and beyond.



If we want to reach our goals, we must deal with challenges in a bold way.



We have also made a Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan.

This is a bold plan. It sets out our journey to becoming an organisation that is **anti-racist**.

Anti-racist: this means standing up to and getting rid of racism at every level. This can be reached through ideas and actions.

Racism: this means when a person is treated in an unfair way because of their race.



The plan sets out how we will work with other organisations to stand up to **racial injustice**.

Racial injustice: this means bad or unfair experiences that a person faces because of their race. They face these experiences because of the racist systems and structures within our society.



We also sign up to the:

- London Local Government Anti-racism Statement
- UNISON's Anti-racism Charter
- These are wider plans to push for anti-racism.



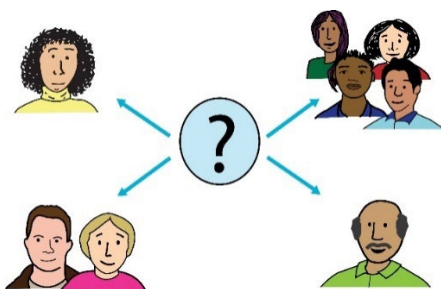
Over the past years, we have made big steps towards equity, diversity and inclusion.



We have run programmes, events and projects to make sure that Brent is truly inclusive.



We want people of all cultures and backgrounds to be represented and celebrated. We want them to feel like they belong here.



When writing this strategy, we spoke to our:

- Service users
- Communities
- Staff



We wanted to understand what makes them feel valued.



We want people to take part in building a strong community in Brent.

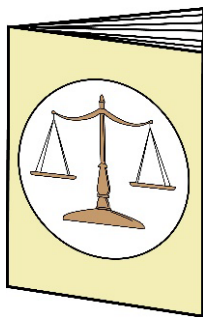
We hope that this strategy will bring power to these words.



The strategy sets out:

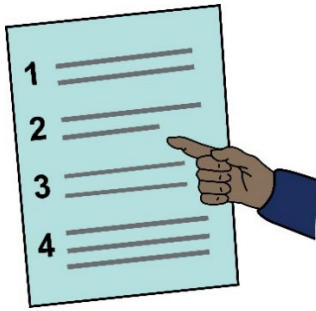
- How we will take action
- How we will move forward
- What the most important actions are

Our progress – What has changed since 2019?



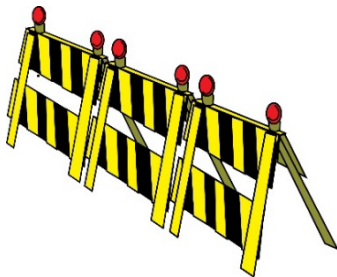
We had an **Equality** Strategy for 2019-2023 called: Removing inequality – building a better Brent. It set out our vision.

Equality: here, this means everyone having access to the same support, resources and opportunities.



This strategy sets out 4 important aims.

These were our aims around how to push for equality in the borough.



Here are the aims:

1. Understand the **barriers** to equality in Brent. Get rid of them.

Barriers: here, this means things that stop people in Brent from reaching their full potential.



2. Give accessible information and services to meet people's needs.

3. Stand up to hate, **harassment** and **victimisation**.

Harassment: this means abusing, insulting or harming somebody on a regular basis.

Victimisation: this means when somebody is treated in an unfair way because they have been part of a complaint about harassment.



4. Lead the way to encourage to grow in Brent.



We have been successful at meeting the aims set out in the equality strategy. We have met these aims in lots of different ways.



Now, we will talk about some of the work that we are really proud of.



Brent Health Matters

Our Brent Health Matters project works with communities. It supports people to make their health better in the ways they want.

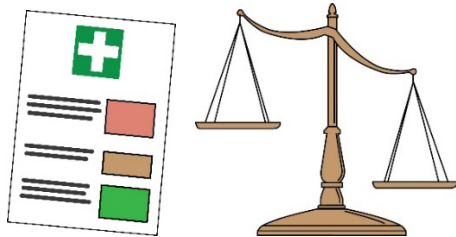


At our events, we offer health and care services in the community at a time and place that suits our **residents**.



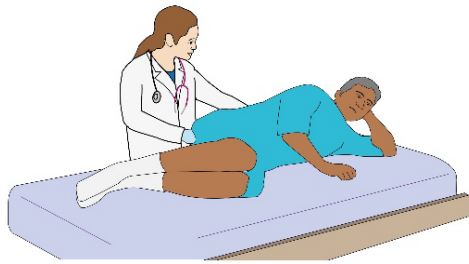
In 2023, there were 115 **outreach** events offering health support. Over 4,000 people went.

Outreach: this means going into communities and bringing services to the people who need them.



We want to carry on this project to help us understanding who face the most **health inequalities** in Brent and why.

Health inequalities: here, this means unfair differences in the health of people in Brent.



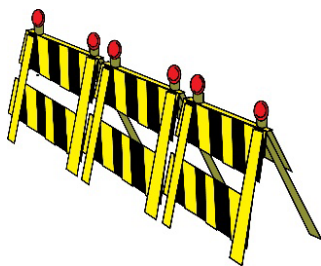
We listened to the worries that people in our community have. For example, Black men told us they had difficulties getting a **screening for prostate cancer**.

Screening for prostate cancer: this is a test that looks for the early signs of prostate cancer in men.

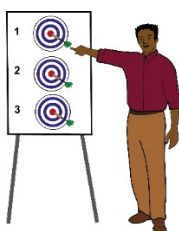


- **The Moving on Up programme**

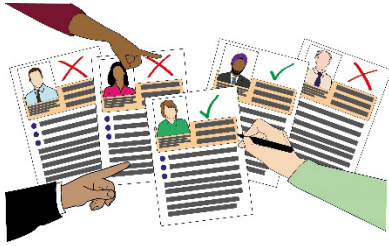
This programme supported young Black men in the workplace. It aimed to support them with getting jobs.



It aimed to raise awareness about the issues and barriers that they face in the workplace.



The programme supported 484 Black men into jobs and careers.



The project gave support with:

- Finding jobs
- Working with employers
- Mentoring, this means giving help and support



• **Black Community Action Plan**

We designed this plan with our local Black communities. The aim was to deal with **racial inequalities**. This was in 2020.

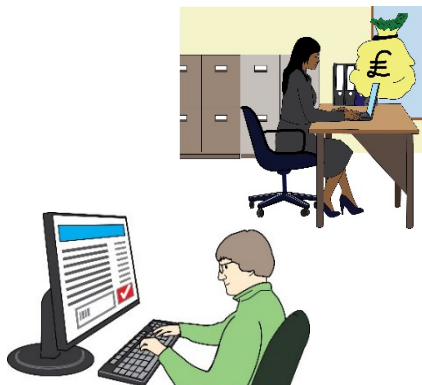
Racial inequalities: this means when a person has less opportunities in life because of their race. They face barriers because of the racist systems and structures within our society.



This is a plan for 10 years. It aims to push for stronger leadership in the community. It aims to look at priorities for change.



For the first 3 years, the plan looked at education and jobs. The project has supported over 600 adults and young people.



It has supported with:

- Schools
- Jobs
- Mentoring
- Financial literacy, this means being able to understand and use skills around money
- Entrepreneurship, this means setting up or running a business
- Digital skills, this means being able to use devices like phones or laptops



- **Community Safety**

The Council has been working on safety in the community. We have been working on dealing with violence.



We have been looking at violence against women and girls.



We have been doing this through our Safer Brent Partnerships.



We have signed up to the Women's Night Safety Charter. This is a project to protect women in the **night-time economy**.

Night-time economy: this means workplaces that run at night. For example, bars, restaurants and clubs.



We will carry on working with staff in the night-time economy. This is all to make women's safety better across Brent.



- **Disability Confident Leader**

The Council is a **Disability Confident Leader**. This means that we work with businesses. We lead the way in supporting them to become Disability Confident.

Disability Confident: this means knowing how to hire and work with disabled people. It means knowing how to support them in the workplace.



In Brent, 64 local employers have signed up with the Disability Confident scheme.



We will keep pushing to make our buildings more accessible.



We will keep making sure we are inclusive. We will make sure that all the information we give out is inclusive.



- **Supported Internships Programme**

Brent Council has been running a Supported Internships Programme since 2020.



The programme supports young **neurodiverse** residents. It gives them the opportunity to get important work experience.

Neurodiverse: this means having a brain that works differently than the average person.



The programme helps neurodiverse residents to learn skills for work. This support helps them to kickstart their careers.



The programme is based at Brent Civic Centre.

68 residents have taken part.

33 people have completed the programme.

14 people have got a job.

12 people have gone into **further education**.



Further education: this means education after secondary school, that is not university education.



We will carry on **evaluating** the work from the last strategy to help develop a new strategy. We want to challenge ourselves even more.

Evaluating: this means weighing up what is going well and what could be done better.



We want to use the power of Brent's diversity. We want to use it to push for inclusion. We want everyone to feel valued and empowered.



Brent should be a place for growth and new ideas. This must be true in the community and the workplace.

Objective 1 – Inclusion, Cohesion, and being accessible

Objective: this means the goals set out in this strategy.

Cohesion: here, this means having strong social relationships within a community.



We got lots of feedback about the Council. People told us that the Council must be accessible for everyone.



This means physical spaces being accessible. For example, buildings and transport.



This also means all our communications must be accessible. It means meeting people's needs and listening to what they want.



It means everybody is accessing the same quality of information. It doesn't matter how they are accessing it.



You told us that the Council must carry on **collaborating**. We must work to understand what matters most to meet your needs.

Collaboration: here, this means the council working with people in the borough to reach a goal.



It is important that we offer opportunities to celebrate Brent's diversity. It is important that we make sure that communities have a voice.



You talked to us about community events, programmes and projects.

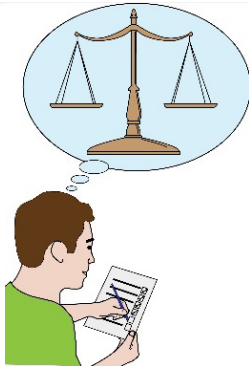


You told us that these are important ways of making Brent a more inclusive place.



The Council should support with building a strong feeling of being together for all communities in the borough.

Objective 2 – Narrowing the gap – Dealing with inequalities



We want to understand inequalities. To do this we must collect the right data from the right people. We must collect data in the right way.



You told us that we must keep working on solutions in our local area. These meet diverse needs. We must make sure that no one is left behind.

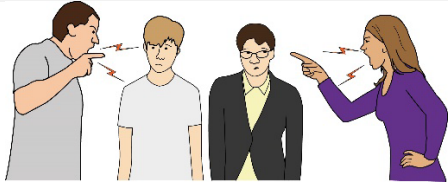


You told us to work with communities that are not usually heard. You told us to use data to target the areas with issues.



For example:

- Offering better support and opportunities for young people.



- Putting better resources into dealing with violence among young people.
- Putting better **resources** into pushing for safety for all.

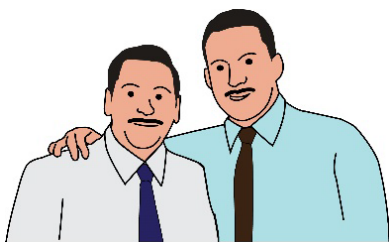
Resources: here, this means money, time, staff or anything else needed.

Objective 3 – Building up an Inclusive Workforce

Workforce: here, this means anybody who works for Brent Council.



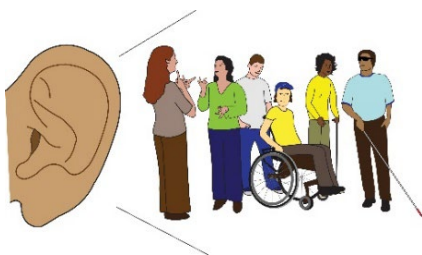
We want Brent to be a truly diverse and inclusive workplace. We want everyone in our workplace to feel like they play an equal role at work.



We want everyone to feel valued and supported at work. This means everyone. It doesn't matter who they are or what they do for Brent Council.



To make sure this happens, we will keep on learning from the experiences of our workers.



We will listen to their voices to understand their worries and points of view.



We will make the best use of our **staff networks** and **staff champions**.

Staff networks: this means a group of people who work together. They come together as a network to support each other.

Staff champions: these are members of staff whose role is to share issues and worries that people are facing at work. They can act as a voice for other members of staff.



We want to make sure that the Council is an environment where everyone can thrive.



We are proud of our diverse workforce. But we know that diversity is not just about recognising and celebrating the differences within our teams.



It is about using the power of our different points of views and experiences to push for change and to be creative.



We want to go beyond **representation**. We want to push for an inclusive work environment.



We want a work environment where everyone wants to:

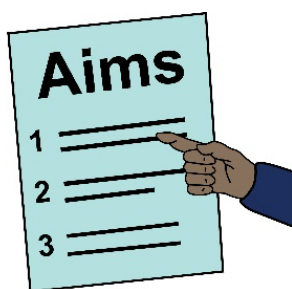
- Learn
- Make the Council culture better
- Use their knowledge to better serve our communities



This means at every level of the organisation



A big part of being an inclusive workplace is becoming an anti-racist organisation.



The goals set out in the Corporate Anti-Racism Action Plan show how we will meet our objective around being inclusive.

What you told us:



You told us to:

- Give Equity, Diversity and Inclusion training to all our workers.

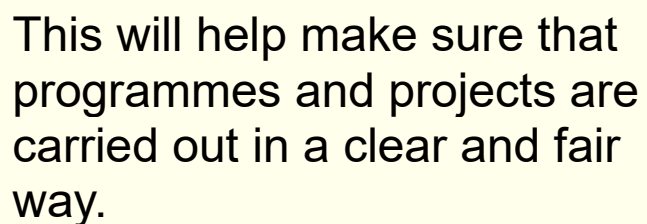
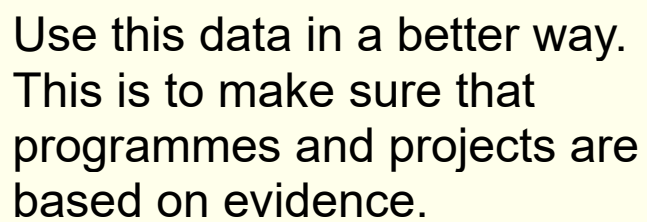
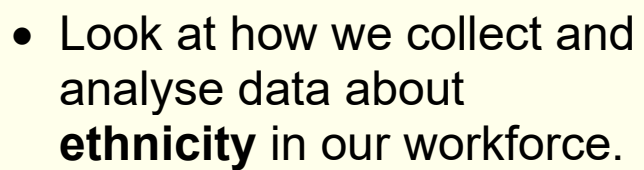
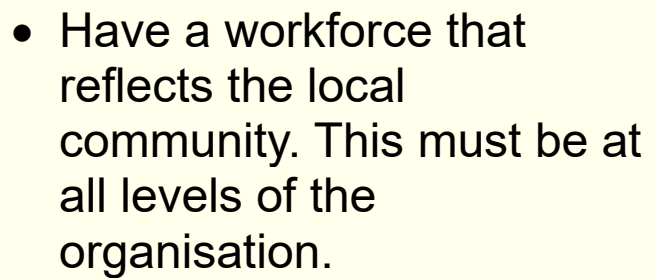
This is to raise awareness about **intersectionality** and to make sure services are run in a better way.

Intersectionality: this means the different parts of a person's identity. These different parts come together to make them who they are.



- Make sure that policies and the way we work are truly inclusive. This should be for the whole time a person works for the Council.

Policy: here, this means rules made by the Council.



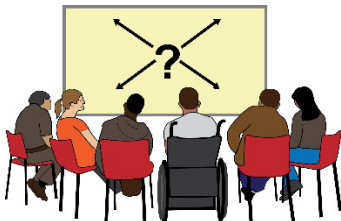


- Aim projects and programmes at supporting workers with **protected characteristics**.

Protected characteristics: these are parts of a person's identity that are protected. By law, they are protected from discrimination. For example, race, disability or gender.



- Make sure that the workplace is an environment where everyone feels safe to be themselves.



- Carry on supporting the Council's Staff Networks.



- Make ethnicity, disability and gender **pay gaps** smaller.

Pay gap: this means the difference in pay between two groups of people who do the same job. For example, men are often paid more for doing the same job that women do.

What are we going to do?



We will:

- Make our **corporate learning and development** better. We are working towards making Equity, Diversity and Inclusion a part of the organisation.

Corporate learning and development: this means making our organisation better by helping our teams and people do their best work.



- Collect data about the journey of our workers throughout their time at the Council. Look at data around protected characteristics.

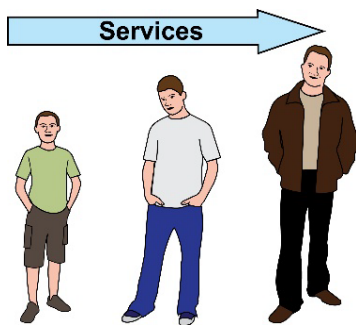


- Set up the Brent Council Anti-Racism Action Plan. Make sure it is part of our culture at work.



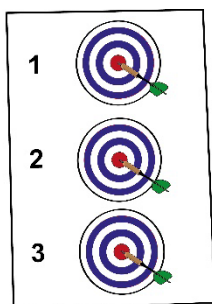
- Support our young residents with **Special Educational Needs**. Support them with work experience within the Council.

Special Educational Needs: this means when a young person has a learning disability. Because of this, they need support at school to meet their needs.



- Support **care leavers** with work experience and apprenticeships within the Council.

Care leaver: here, this means a young person aged 16-25 years old who have been in care at some point since they were 14 years old. And they were in care on or after their 16th birthday.

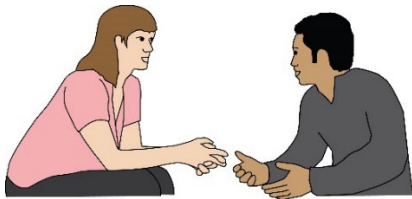


- Make sure all staff have **performance objectives** on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Performance objective: this means work targets that a person is expected to meet at their job.



- Make sure these objectives are tailored to meet the needs of the organisation, service, or person.



- Make sure staff networks can offer a space for open and honest talks. Make sure staff can talk about their worries and issues that are affecting them.



- Teach staff about these issues. Make sure staff have the power to set up other groups and networks.

How will we measure this work?



We will:

- Listen to feedback from our workers. We will use this feedback to shape our learning and development offer.



For example, offering training on neurodivergence and anti-racism.



- Carry out **monitoring and evaluation**. Do this with:
 - Findings from reports
 - Surveys
 - Action plans

Monitor: looking at how our services are being run and the effect they have on our communities and workers. Keeping a record of how things are going.



For example, our:

- Workforce Report
- Staff survey
- Anti-Racism Action Plan



- Monitor people with protected characteristics. Monitor how they take part in Council projects and programmes.



- Collect information about our workplace every year. This includes information about hiring and how workers progress within our workplace.

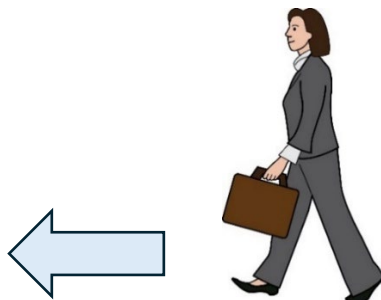


- As part of this we will look at the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people who apply for jobs at the council.

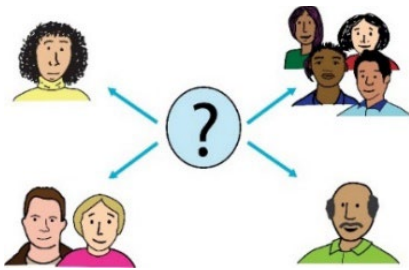


- We will compare this to the number of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people who actually get jobs at the council.

Monitor



- We will gather information about workers who are leaving the organisation. This must include collecting data about protected characteristics.



- We will reach out to more workers about our staff Network.



- Monitor pay gaps. We must do this every year. This is for gender, race and disability.



- Make sure that more workers with protected characteristics share data with us.

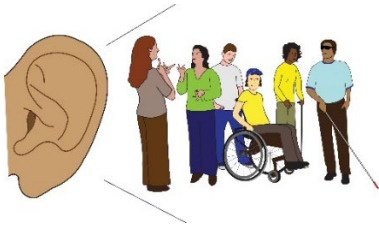


- We want to keep our Level 3 status as a Disability Employer.

How we will monitor and carry out our services



We will keep checking and reviewing the services we offer. We will do this by learning from the information we collect.



We will also listen to what our residents and workers tell us.



To do this, we will:

- Set up a board for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. This board will push for and shape the organisation's **priorities**.



We will monitor and review all:

- Work
- Projects
- Ideas
- Action plans



The board will make sure that services are making progress and that they are being held responsible for this.



The board will make sure that services are using best practice when carrying out work.



They will be responsible for making sure that important strategies and workstreams are put into place.



As part of this, they will make sure that the Anti-Racism Action Plan is being put into place.



We will also keep working on the way we carry out **Equality Impact Assessments** in the best way possible.

Equality Impact Assessment: this is a tool that helps us to put Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at the centre of everything we do. It helps us to make sure that our strategies, policies and work is meeting the needs of everyone that we serve.



- We will make sure that we have a really good way of looking at how our policies and decisions affect different groups.



- Share **best practice** and **benchmark** with our partners so we can learn from them. It is so we can make the way we work better.

Best practice: this means a set of guidelines which sets out the best way of working.

Benchmark: this means comparing our performance with other Councils across the country. This is to help us see how we are doing.

**This is the end of the document.
Thank you for reading.**

This document was put into Easy Read by the Empower Team at People First. www.peoplefirstltd.com

Information is Power!

