

Bristol City Council



Equity and Inclusion **Annual Progress Report 2024-25**

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Executive Summary

In 2023, Bristol City Council launched a new Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework (2023–2027), built around five core equality objectives:

Equality Objective	Our ambition	What we cover in this report
E01: Leadership	“a respected reputation for innovative best practice.”	Our governance processes, activities of our Directors and senior leaders and our staff-led groups. Also includes activity of our ‘One City Approach’.
E02: Diverse workforce	“a diverse and inclusive workforce which reflects our communities.”	Progress towards diversifying our workforce, the annual staff survey, workforce diversity initiatives and review frameworks.
E03: Council Services	“Equitable, inclusive and quality services that promote wellbeing.”	Equality action plans, equality impact assessments and data and evidence. We also cover a selection of policies and strategies.
E04: Partnerships	“To lead and strengthen partnerships so everyone shares in the city’s success.”	Our partnership work such as tackling race inequality, the Bristol Equality Network and the equality commissions.
E05: Communities	“Tackle prejudice and promote understanding amongst communities”.	Community work including the Community Champions programme, support for refugees and asylum seekers, and our Health Equity project.

Overview and Strategic Direction

This 2024–25 annual report details our progress against the strategic framework, demonstrating the breadth of equity and inclusion activity across the council. The report includes many inspiring case-studies. Whilst these represent only a snapshot of ongoing work, they illustrate our cross-cutting approach and commitment to transparency, accountability, and the Public Sector Equality Duty. We want Bristol to be a city where everyone’s hopes and aspirations can be realised, and where success is shared across all communities.

Key Trends and Achievements

Leadership

A new governance structure—featuring a Strategic Leadership Board, Directorate forums, and Divisional equity and inclusion groups—has been fully embedded. These mechanisms have improved oversight, director-level engagement, and cross-service collaboration. Biannual Community of Practice sessions and empowered staff-led groups further support inclusion, allyship, and shared learning.

Diverse Workforce

Overall representation across the workforce remained broadly stable, with slight gains in younger, and racially minoritised staff. Tools such as workforce diversity data dashboards enabled evidence-led planning, while workforce initiatives have improved access to development opportunities. High numbers of equality-related course completions were recorded, with expanded access to inclusive leadership and Disability equity training.

Council Services

500+ Equality Impact Assessments were completed, with quality and consistency improving year on year. An internal audit informed updated EqIA processes, including SMART mitigation actions and clearer sign-off. Though 82% of Equality Action Plan actions progressed as expected (below our 90% target), improvements were seen in data use and service planning. Co-designed strategies in Adult Social Care, SEND, and communications reflect our commitment to inclusive service design.

Partnerships

Through initiatives such as the Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group, Race and Health Equity Group, and citywide collaborations, Bristol continues to lead on system responses to inequality. Key achievements include the Race and the City 3 conference, renewed data tools (e.g. Race HR Product), and international recognition as a semi-finalist in the European Capital of Innovation Awards.

Communities

We have maintained our strong track record of supporting community development and cohesion through programmes that encourage inclusive participation. By working in co-production with Disabled residents, young people, and care-experienced individuals, we are helping to shape fairer and more equitable services.

Challenges

Representation Gaps

Persistent underrepresentation in senior roles—especially among Disabled, and racially minoritised colleagues—remains a key challenge.

Resource Constraints

Financial limitations impacted delivery of training, engagement, and innovation across several service areas, affecting the pace of progress.

Perceptions and Outcomes

Public satisfaction with council services has reduced. Life expectancy gaps, digital exclusion, and housing satisfaction remain city priorities, particularly among Disabled residents, and minoritised and deprived communities.

Next Steps

Refreshing Our Workforce Strategy

A new strategy—aligned with the Corporate Strategy—will be considered in July 2025, shaped by engagement with colleagues, staff-led groups, and trade unions.

Strengthening Monitoring and Evaluation

Improved data tools, disaggregated reporting, and peer-reviewed frameworks will support accountability and impact tracking across all objectives.

Embedding Inclusive Practice

Revised EqIA processes, a new Accessible Communications Policy, and targeted training will further embed equity into everyday decision-making.

Sustaining Collaborative Leadership

We will continue working with regional and national frameworks—including Disability Confident and the Women in Business Charter—and citywide partners to deepen our collective impact.

Conclusion

Bristol City Council remains committed to building a city where equity and inclusion are integral to every decision and every service. While challenges remain, we move forward with purpose—grounded in transparency, collaboration, and a determination to ensure that no one is left behind.

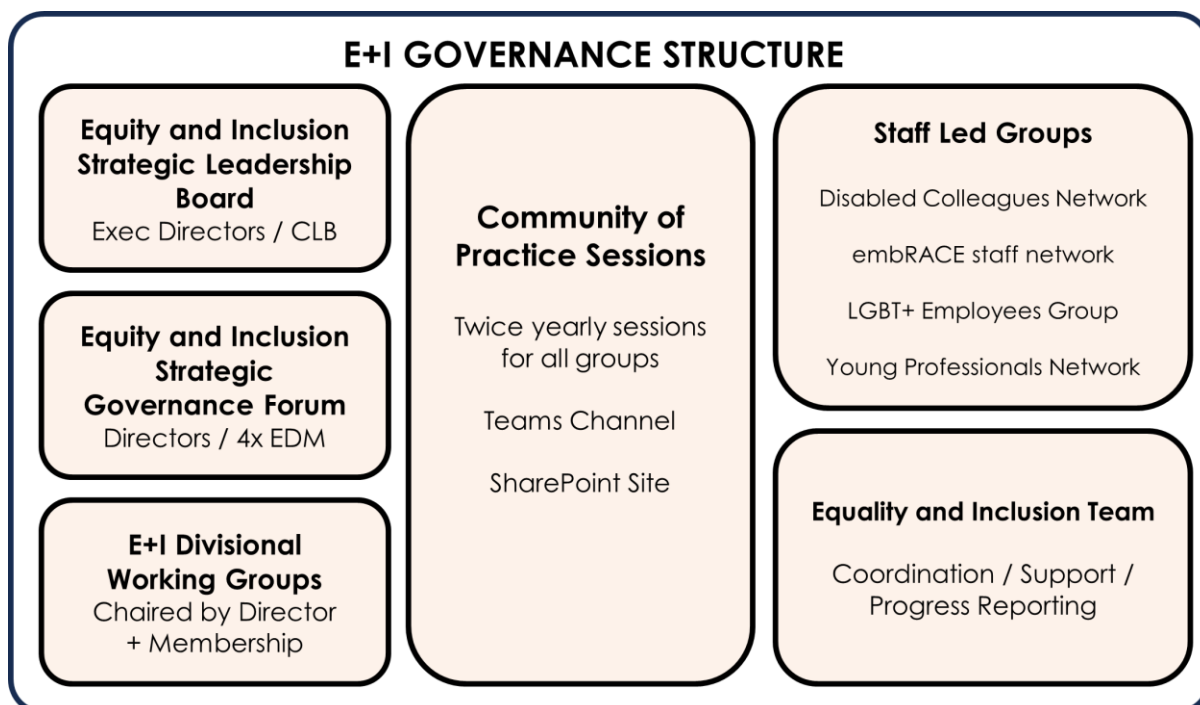
E01: Leadership

Equality Objective E01 – “a respected reputation for innovative best practice.”

This objective is about how the Council will make fair decisions and adapt to change.

Embedding our Equity + Inclusion governance structure

In 2024-25, we embedded a new governance structure within our revised strategic framework to strengthen oversight and accountability for equity and inclusion (E+I) across the organisation.



Equity + Inclusion Strategic Leadership Board

The aim of this Board is for senior leadership to lead on and oversee equity and inclusion priorities across the council. Meetings are structured around the objectives of our Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework, ensuring a balance between internal and external issues.

Equity + Inclusion Strategic Governance Forum

Directors from each of the council's Directorates meet quarterly to implement the strategic direction set by the leadership board. These sessions identify and address challenges specific to each Directorate.

Divisional Equity + Inclusion Working Groups

Each council Division (a group of services led by a Director) now has an equity and inclusion focused working group, ensuring full organisational coverage. These working groups provide:

Leadership + Vision - Directors lead the groups, integrating E+I into divisional operations.

Inclusive Representation - Groups include staff from all service areas and levels, ensuring diverse perspectives.

Utilising E+I Champions Past E+I Champions are encouraged to transition into working group roles, maintaining continuity and frontline engagement.

Workstreams + Leads Each group establishes workstreams to address priorities from Equality Action Plans, with assigned leads for accountability.

Equality Action Plans Groups contribute to drafting and reviewing realistic service level equality action plans

Regular Meetings + Progress Tracking Quarterly meetings ensure ongoing progress, with Directors providing oversight and feedback.

Beyond direct improvements in equity and inclusion, we also expect the new working groups to contribute to:

- **Improved Employee Survey Outcomes** –increased wellbeing and confidence in raising concerns.
- **Stronger Allies** – employees develop into better allies for colleagues with protected characteristics.
- **Leadership Engagement** – Regular Director involvement fosters a stronger connection to E+I work.
- **Cross-Service Collaboration** – Diverse employee input drives more relevant initiatives.
- **Opportunities for Staff** – Working group members gain leadership exposure and influence.

Community of Practice Sessions

To further strengthen collaboration, we have introduced new biannual Community of Practice sessions for Bristol City Council employees. These sessions bring together:

- Leadership
- E+I working group members
- Staff-led equality groups

The first session, held in March 2025 at City Hall, covered:

- The new Accessible Communications Policy
- The Workforce Race Equality Standard
- Updates from staff-led groups
- Workshops to identify cross-cutting priorities

Feedback from this session led to physical accessibility improvements in our Conference Hall.

Monitoring Progress

The Equality + Inclusion team, in partnership with senior leaders, tracks progress against our four-year strategic framework. This includes:

- Benchmarking progress against original objectives
- Assessing impact through data and lived experiences
- Engaging in peer review and external scrutiny to refine our approach

Feedback from external reviews will continue to inform and improve our E+I delivery, ensuring meaningful change across the organisation.

Facilitating our staff-led groups

Our Staff Led Groups (SLGs) act as ambassadors to the Council, ensuring that decisions are shaped by diverse and representative perspectives. Each group is led by a committee of employees who share a common characteristic, working together to promote inclusivity across policies, processes, and training.

SLGs provide support for their members and lead initiatives and events aimed at improving the organisation and raising awareness. Members elect co-leads and establish steering groups to coordinate activities, with this core team responsible for setting the group's agenda and overseeing its delivery.

SLGs manage their own budgets, and co-leads are allocated protected time to fulfil their roles effectively. They also hold regular meetings with the Equality and Inclusion, HR, and Learning & Development teams to align on work programmes.

Towards the end of 2024-25, we began a collaborative refresh of the Staff Led Groups' terms of reference, agreements on corporate support, and the protocol for forming new groups. This ongoing work will provide greater clarity and empowerment.

Disabled Colleagues Network

The purpose of our group is to:

- Ensure that Disabled colleagues have a voice and are fully involved in helping shape and improve how the council operates.
- Maintain a network for Disabled colleagues to provide a sense of belonging and self-empowerment, whilst creating a safe space to share lived experiences and expertise.
- Work in partnership with the council to improve the recruitment, retention, training, and career developmental opportunities for Disabled colleagues.
- Promote and champion diversity, equity, equality and inclusion, by raising awareness, reviewing and challenging existing policies and procedures, and promoting and advising on best practice.
- Provide signposting to advice and support if you are experiencing issues within the workplace
- Support the council in its aspirations to be an employer of choice for Disabled people.

embRACE Staff Network

- We're a platform for Black, Asian and Minoritised staff to ensure all voices and lived experiences are heard and to help shape and develop a council leadership approach that's more inclusive.
- We work in collaboration with and on behalf of our embRACE members in partnership with senior leadership and other key stakeholders. We work to ensure that Black, Asian and Minoritised staff are supported to be themselves at work, treated fairly and given the opportunity to progress within an inclusive and progressive organisational culture.
- EmbRACE practices a distributed leadership model, where committee members lead on each priority area. The role of the co-lead is to coordinate, align and support committee members to lead.
- EmbRACE coordinates training and development, cultural and wellbeing workshops, and social events.

LGBT+ Staff-Led Group

- The LGBT+ Employee Group is a space where we support LGBTQIA+ BCC employees and raise awareness of the work that needs to be done to ensure LGBTQIA+ equality within the council.
- The group is open to all those who identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ spectrum, at all levels of the organisation.

We aim to:

- provide a supportive and friendly place for LGBTQIA+ employees to meet one another
- support and advise the council on resolving LGBTQIA+ issues within the workplace
- ensure LGBTQIA+ voices are taken into account, and used to shape and influence key decisions or policy
- run events to increase awareness and support for LGBTQIA+ topics
- interact with LGBTQIA+ organisations in the city, and support those LGBTQIA+ people within the city through the work the council does

Young Professionals Network

The purpose of our group is to:

- support young staff working for the council with their development and wellbeing
- promote a more diverse and younger workforce
- provide training opportunities to staff: young people for their personal development, and to not-young people on how to support and encourage the young people they work with
- provide a space to network and socialise with colleagues your age
- work with senior leaders on policies and programmes that support and promote young staff in the council and get more young people working with us

Visible Commitment from Senior Leaders

As part of our city-wide efforts, senior leaders play an active role in key working groups, partnering with equality organisations to tackle systemic inequalities. These collaborations, detailed in Section 4, enable us to share best practices, celebrate excellence, and draw on local expertise to strengthen our impact.

Key contributions include:

- Our Chief Executive chairing the Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group
- Our Director of Workforce and Change leading the Tackling Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System workforce representation pillar group
- Our leadership of, and participation in the Bristol Race Equality Practitioners Group, and Disabled Colleagues Project Board.

Through these initiatives, we demonstrate our commitment to meaningful change and a more inclusive city.

Bristol's One City Approach

The Bristol One City approach brings together partners from the public, private, voluntary, and community sectors to work collaboratively towards a fairer, healthier, and more sustainable Bristol. It enables the city to respond effectively to both immediate and long-term challenges that cross organisational boundaries.

The One City Plan outlines a shared vision for Bristol in 2050 and the steps required to achieve it. The fourth iteration of the plan was published in 2023, following input from the One City Boards and wider stakeholders to refine its annual goals. In 2024–25, collaborative work began to update the plan, which will be refreshed in 2025.

The One City Approach mobilises city-wide stakeholders to act on the goals set out in the plan. The City Office supports this work by facilitating meetings and engagement opportunities that promote collaboration across all sectors.

The One City Boards include a diverse range of stakeholders, including senior leaders from the council. Each new version of the plan reflects current priorities, taking into account the legacy of COVID-19, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, changes in national policy, and global events. It is also supported by a broad range of policies and strategies that advance equality and inclusion.

The current plan includes several goals aligned with the Council's equity and inclusion objectives, particularly in reducing disparities in education, health and wellbeing, and economic outcomes. The One City Approach also provides a framework for responding to emerging issues that disproportionately affect people with specific Protected Characteristics.

Case Study: Diversifying One City Boards

Over the past year, the One City Children and Young People Board has made significant strides in ensuring that youth voice is central to its work. Recognising the importance of young people's perspectives, the Board has ensured that a representative is consistently present at meetings, with the opportunity to actively contribute to discussions. To further empower youth participation, the Board has reserved dedicated space on the agenda for the young person representative to raise issues directly with partners, fostering open dialogue. Meetings are scheduled at times that accommodate young people, such as after school hours, to ensure accessibility. Additionally, the Board has sought input from young

people via email, particularly when considering which opportunities and career pathways are most appealing to them, ensuring their views help shape decisions. This approach has not only strengthened youth engagement but also ensured that young people's needs and priorities remain at the heart of the Board's work.

City Office have begun using equalities monitoring to help us improve our One City Boards and events. The equalities data that we collect using optional questions provided by the Equalities Team, is analysed appropriately and anonymously to provide City Office a better understanding of how we can improve our services. This activity reflects City Office's commitment to providing services that are inclusive, diverse, and representative of Bristol.

Case Study: Golden Motion to make Bristol the UK's most accessible city

In October 2024, Bristol City Council unanimously approved a formal Motion to make Bristol the UK's most accessible city. Central to this commitment is full engagement and co-production with Disabled people, ensuring that all our policy committees collaborate with local Disabled people led groups to identify and implement improvements.

The Motion sets ambitious goals, with a primary focus on enhancing accessibility in transport, alongside a broader commitment to equity and inclusivity. Recognising the need for everyone to share in Bristol's success, the council is dedicated to removing existing barriers to participation and designing services and projects that prevent new obstacles from arising. This citywide approach requires action across policy areas, close collaboration among committees, and partnership working to embed accessibility into decision-making. To lead this effort, the council has pledged to work closely with the Bristol Disability Equality Commission, which represents major Disabled people's organisations in the city, as well as other local Disability led organisations. Beyond transport specific improvements, the Motion includes core commitments central to the council's operations including:

- To create a highly inclusive and accessible council, improving life for Disabled and residents, workers, and visitors.
- To ensure Disabled people's voices are heard, with Policy Committee Chairs and the One City Partnership committing to ongoing dialogue with Disabled people led organisations.
- To embed co-design in decision-making, ensuring that affected individuals are involved in shaping new projects whenever possible.
- To report back on progress, with formal updates to Full Council

Measures of success

E01: Leadership	Trend	Comment on progress 2024-25
We publish information at least once a year summarising progress against our equity and inclusion objectives and outlining any challenges we are facing in moving forward.	-	Our <u>annual reports</u> , available externally since 2019, summarise our progress against our objectives.
Progress against this strategic framework is a standing item on senior leadership meeting agendas and features regularly in internal communications to colleagues.	-	Our newly embedded governance structure ensures senior leadership have accountability for our agreed objectives. The Equality and Inclusion team facilitate upskilling of new elected members to ensure they are aware of our equality commitments.
Self-assessment against external peer review frameworks and audit reports shows the organisational improvements we have made.	-	Peer-review frameworks are covered in section 2 of this report and illustrate the progress we have made.
All Tier 3 and above managers have clear Equity and Inclusion objectives as part of their ongoing performance review.	-	This indicator was included in our strategic framework as a reminder for our managers to remain committed to developing Equity and Inclusion practice.

E02: Diverse workforce

Equality Objective E02: “a diverse and inclusive workforce which reflects our communities.”

This objective is about the Council's role as an employer.

Workforce diversity reporting

We have developed a Workforce Diversity Dashboard, available to all managers via the internal intranet. This dashboard provides tailored data for each team and service area, enabling managers to identify differences in representation and

outcomes across protected characteristics. It supports evidence-based decision-making and helps inform positive action initiatives.

The dashboard is updated monthly, giving managers access to near real-time data. It includes anonymised information from our HR records on headcount, representation, sickness, and starters and leavers. This data excludes Locally Managed Schools and Nurseries, councillors, casual, seasonal, and agency staff.

The data is drawn from the equality monitoring information staff are encouraged to complete on their HR Self-Service profiles. This helps ensure our diversity data is accurate, up to date, and complete. To protect privacy, granular reporting is not available for small teams where individuals could be identified.

Managers use the dashboard to identify representation gaps and develop Equality Action Plans. Senior leaders continue to encourage all staff to update their personal information—where they feel comfortable doing so—so that internal initiatives are grounded in robust evidence.

A summary analysis of our workforce diversity data is included in Appendix 1.

In addition, the Council contributes to the city-wide Bristol Race Equality Data Product, a collaborative effort to map diversity and performance across Bristol's public sector employers (see below). We also feed data into the Workforce Representation pillar group as part of the Tackling Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System initiative.

Analysis of our progress

When comparing Bristol City Council workforce profile changes between March 2024 and March 2025, demographics show there was overall relatively little change in representation levels:

- In relation to age, there were slight increases in the number of younger aged colleagues with increases in 16-29 and 30-39 age brackets.
- The percentage of colleagues aged 50-64 was slightly lower (1.18%) than last year.
- The percentage of Disabled people within our headcount has lowered slightly (0.5%). The percentage of senior leaders who are Disabled people is 6.8% (3.6% last year)
- The percentage of Asian or Asian British people has increased (0.7%) as has Mixed ethnicity (0.1%). The percentage of White employees has reduced slightly by 0.4%. The percentage of senior leaders who are from ethnic minority communities is 10% (9% in 2024)
- The proportion of female colleagues still remains relatively high (60.4%) but has decreased by 0.3%. This still remains higher when compared to the Bristol population of 49%.
- The percentage of Christian employees decreased by 0.6% in comparison to last year and other religions increased (0.1%).
- Those identifying as LGB had slightly increased by 0.8% to 7.4% (9.1% for Bristol), trans people percentages had remained at 0.2% (0.8% for Bristol)

Workforce Strategy

The council's Workforce Strategy (2021-2022) is being refreshed to reflect our new Our Corporate Strategy vision - to be an organisation that is working together for a sustainable and equitable Bristol that enables everyone to be safe, well and thrive.

Our Workforce Strategy will help us work together as One Council for an inclusive and high-performing workplace that delivers the Corporate Strategy priorities and delivers good services for the people of Bristol. It will help us understand the workforce requirements to meet the vision for the future council, and put in place the right resources, support and development to achieve it.

The strategy has been driven by both quantitative data (data on demographics, characteristics, pay gaps and staff survey results) as well as input from various focus groups with colleagues, managers, trade unions, Staff Led Groups and HR Committee members to gather insights into the workplace experience and help shape the strategy by identifying priorities that reflect the lived experience of colleagues.

One priority theme is 'equity and inclusion' which includes improving our diversity to reflect the city we serve; championing and leading workplace equity and inclusion to ensure colleagues feel treated fairly; and working with our colleagues, staff led groups and trade unions to improve the workplace experience for all. The strategy will be due for consideration at Strategy and Resources Committee in July 2025.

Learning and development

All employees have access to our eLearning platform, which offers a range of both mandatory and non-mandatory Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) courses. In addition to these standalone courses, we are committed to embedding EDI principles across all our in-house learning and development provision. This ensures that inclusive practices are consistently reinforced throughout our leadership and professional development pathways.

In 2024-25, we extended access to EDI-focused learning for our wider workforce. This included the launch of an enhanced *Reasonable Adjustments* course, delivered through a combination of an eLearning module and a one-hour interactive workshop. To date, 649 colleagues have either started or completed this training, which has now been made mandatory for all employees in leadership roles.

We also integrate equity and inclusion awareness into our coaching and development activities. This includes dedicated modules on effective communication, inclusive leadership, and face-to-face workshops designed to promote respectful, productive dialogue across diverse teams.

Our proactive efforts to raise the visibility of these learning opportunities—through internal campaigns and manager engagement—have resulted in a marked increase in course completions. The following provides a detailed breakdown of completions by course:

Course title	# Completed
A Guide to the Menopause	188
Deafblind Awareness	29
Disability Hate Crime: Mate Crime	45
Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)	44
Equality Inclusion and Diversity: Your rights and responsibilities	925
Managing Diversity	167
Managing Mental Health by Mind	140
Modern Slavery	937
Neurodiversity and Neurodivergency	74
Reasonable Adjustments eLearning	536
Reasonable Adjustments Live Session	209
Reasonable Adjustments Reflection and Information Capture	274
Recruitment and Selection Refresher	107
Step Up: Isolation and Loneliness by ZSA	13
Suicide: Let's Talk by ZSA	20
Trans Inclusive Guidance	50
Why weight? Changing the Narrative about Living with Obesity	11

These initiatives support our continued commitment to fostering an inclusive culture where all colleagues feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute.

Leading with Cultural Intelligence (CQ)

During 2024-25, we reviewed and enhanced our 'Leading with Cultural Intelligence' workshop in response to colleague feedback. The revised format is now a one-day course with a focused exploration of behavioural differences and the influence of culture on these behaviours.

To date, 98 colleagues have completed the behavioural preference self-assessment and participated in the updated workshop.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants consistently reporting a marked increase in confidence when discussing cultural dynamics and their impact on workplace interactions. Many described a shift from feeling "not confident" to feeling "confident" as a direct result of attending the workshop.

Leadership and management development

There are a number of courses which are aimed at managers across the organisation. These include:

- A Guide to the Menopause
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Managing Diversity
- Managing Mental Health

- Key Information for Managers
- Team leader development programme

During 2024-25 we have seen a further 973 completions against these courses.

The Organisational Development team run bespoke Leadership Development programmes for various areas of the business. The programme includes a session on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to ensure that managers take an inclusive approach that supports diverse teams.

We offer a series of leadership webinars aligned with our Leadership Framework, which underpins all of our leadership development initiatives. These one-hour sessions cover a range of key topics, including understanding reactions to change, recognising different working styles, developing team strengths, enhancing coaching skills, and fostering inclusion while addressing exclusion.

Case Study: Older People Awareness and Challenging Ageism

As part of our commitment to fostering inclusivity across all age groups, during 2024-25 we co-designed a new e-learning training module with the Bristol Older People's Forum titled *Older People Awareness & Challenging Ageism*. This interactive training aims to break down age-related stereotypes, raise awareness of the local challenges faced by older people in Bristol, and provide practical tools for respectful engagement. By tackling both overt and subtle forms of ageism, the module encourages participants to use inclusive language, avoid reductive labels, and challenge ageist attitudes in professional and everyday contexts.

Through real-life scenarios, reflection exercises, and a localised focus, the training aims to help participants recognise the diversity within older populations and question common assumptions—such as those about capability, adaptability, and value. The goal is to build confidence in addressing non-inclusive behaviour and support a culture where older people are seen and treated as individuals with unique strengths and contributions.

Workforce diversity initiatives

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships continue to play a pivotal role in diversifying our workforce and building internal talent. So far in 2024–25, we have achieved 178 new apprenticeship starts, contributing to a cumulative total of 1,197 since May 2017. A significant proportion of this year's starts have been internal candidates, reflecting our ongoing commitment to supporting career development across the organisation.

To further strengthen support and community for apprentices, we have continued to grow our Apprenticeship Network. This inclusive platform enables apprentices to connect, share experiences, and take part in events—fostering a sense of belonging and supporting both personal and professional development.

Staff supporting apprenticeships have also helped shape our Workforce Strategy, embedding apprenticeship opportunities throughout the organisation. Our approach remains quality-driven and inclusive, with a continued emphasis on paying the Real Living Wage and applying diverse recruitment practices to attract candidates from a wide range of backgrounds.

Diverse Voices

Diverse Voices is a positive action initiative designed to support under-represented groups with their career development. The programme was refreshed for 2024 based on feedback from previous cohorts. The new programme now includes a broader range of career development opportunities including action learning sets, workshops and 2-to-1 coaching available for all participants to support with their career progression.

Stepping Up

The council has facilitated places on the Stepping Up programme - a career development programme which aims to unlock potential and develop talent. The programme comprises formal leadership training for people from under-represented groups including women, Disabled people and racially minoritised colleagues. The council had 20 employees on the 2024-25 cohort.

Project Bristol internship

Project Bristol has been running since 2012 and is an internship for young adults aged 18-24 with an Educational Health Care Plan. This includes young Disabled adults. It is a programme which aims to develop the skills required to match job opportunities within the council and help to obtain permanent roles or apprenticeships. Seven interns have completed the programme this year.

Strive internship

We worked alongside Sanderson Recruitment to establish the Strive Internship scheme which aims to offer at least 50 paid internships annually to Black and racially minoritised ethnic university students and graduates living or studying in the West of England. Internships last for a minimum of four and up to 12 weeks and are available across a range of organisations and sectors in the West of England. The internship will be continuing again throughout the summer months, with two internships happening with the internal audit team and one with the Portfolios, Programmes and Projects team.

Young professionals mentoring scheme

In January 2025 the Young Professionals Network (YPN) relaunched its mentoring scheme. The YPN mentoring scheme matches members with senior colleagues from across the council for a six-month long mentoring relationship consisting of six hour-long meetings.

The new mentoring scheme is open all year round and members can apply at any time. Matching with mentors is based on the needs of the mentees, to ensure that all relationships have the strongest chance of being successful.

Benefits for mentees include:

- Increased awareness of own strengths and weaknesses
- Identifying options for own development and career progression
- Planning and acting on own personal and career development

Benefits for mentors include:

- Improved people skills
- Time to reflect on own practice
- New perspectives and approaches to organisational culture and processes

Review frameworks

Stonewall Workplace Equality Index

Having been awarded a Stonewall LGBTQ+ Inclusive Employer Silver Award in 2023, instead of resubmitting an application for 2024-25 we instead committed to establishing a working group to review the feedback provided and, where appropriate, implement actions to improve our practices.

Disability Confident Employer

In 2024, we continued to hold Level 2 status in the Disability Confident employer scheme. We hope to achieve 'Leader' (level 3) status when we re-new our accreditation in 2026. To support progress, our Disabled Colleagues Project Board—focused on improving the workplace for Disabled colleagues—has set up a working group to review our current approach and develop a more robust self-assessment and action planning framework.

Women in Business charter

The [Bristol Women in Business charter](#) was launched in 2019, with Bristol City Council as a founder signatory. The charter aims to drive progress for women in Bristol's workforce. As part of our commitment, we recognise three core objectives, each of which is regularly monitored and reported on:

- ✓ Encouraging and supporting females in lower paid and lower skilled occupations to progress through the organisation through appropriate training and other ongoing support
- ✓ A focus on implementing recruitment, appraisal, personal development and promotion processes that are non-discriminatory towards women and are free from unconscious bias
- ✓ Supporting women where they are under-represented through mentoring and women's networks

Our work to promote these goals includes reviewing and improving support for staff balancing work with family or caregiving responsibilities; helping women in these positions advance through targeted training, structured support, and succession planning, with clear, measurable goals; and addressing the gender pay gap – further details are included in the Appendix.

We maintain regular engagement with the charter's organisers, sharing both challenges and best practices. The Bristol Women in Business Charter publishes an annual impact report reflecting the progress of all signatory organisations.

Improving the workplace for Disabled colleagues

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

As part of our work to improve the workplace experience for Disabled colleagues, we have worked with the Disabled Colleagues Project Board to refresh our Reasonable Adjustments Policy and create new guidance material and training.

This includes:

- An updated Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- A new mandatory reasonable adjustments e-learning module and workshop
- A how-to guide for colleagues
- A process overview
- A template for making personal reasonable adjustments plans

We have renewed our commitment to the Social Model of Disability recognising the right to self-identify as a Disabled person, and that people are Disabled by barriers in society such as lack of physical access and communication, not by any impairment.

This means that the vast majority of reasonable adjustment requests should not require any referral to, or input from, Occupational Health services, where previously there may have been an unnecessary reliance on this which runs contrary to our adoption of the Social Model. There is now a presumption that requests will be agreed to quickly, even if they take some time to implement.

Disability Equity Workshops

As part of our continued commitment to building an inclusive and equitable workplace, the Disabled Colleagues Network (DCN) and Learning and Development team are working to deliver Disability Equity in-person training workshops, commissioned through an external partner. These workshops are mainly for those in leadership and decision-making positions, but also for colleagues who directly influence and support our commitment to Disabled colleagues - including Corporate Leadership Board, HR Committee members, Corporate Landlord teams, HR teams, Trade Unions, and Staff Led Groups.

The sessions are designed to empower colleagues to:

- Understanding and applying the Social Model of Disability in their roles.
- Differentiating between equality and equity, particularly in relation to Disabled individuals.
- Embedding inclusive practices into policies and procedures, ensuring they are actively monitored and promoted.
- Recognising inclusion as an ongoing commitment, not just a one-time initiative.
- Identifying and implementing practical improvements at both individual and organisational levels.
- Demonstrating inclusive leadership across our 6,000-strong workforce and beyond.

Staff survey

Our annual staff survey is divided into eight sections covering various aspects of our colleagues' work experience. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential and is available in accessible formats such as EasyRead.

We want to hear from as many colleagues as possible to get the clearest understanding about what's going well and where we need to improve.

Summary of 2024 survey results

In 2024, 3,147 colleagues (51%) responded to the staff survey—an increase from 43% in 2023. Overall, 65% of responses were positive and 10% negative, showing improvement from 61% positive and 13% negative in 2023. Most themes saw a slight rise in positive responses, particularly 'Me and the Organisation' and 'Senior Leadership', though the latter still had the highest proportion of negative responses at 23% (down from 25%). 'Me and My Team' remained the most positively rated theme (79%), while 'Working Environment and Fairness' saw a small dip in positive responses.

Staff experiences by different characteristics

The 'About You' section of the staff survey helps us understand how experiences vary across different employee groups.

Overall commitment to diversity: 79% of staff believe the council is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace (same as 2023).

Fair treatment improvements: Notable improvements were seen in responses about fair treatment, including a 4-point rise in positive responses from transgender colleagues and a reduction in negative responses from colleagues who are pregnant or recently gave birth.

Disabled colleagues: Positive responses increased across all themes, reversing the downward trend seen in 2023. The biggest improvement was in confidence in senior leadership (up 5 points).

Younger colleagues (16–29): Reported small increases in positive sentiment across most areas, except for 'Working Environment and Fairness' and 'Me and the Organisation'.

LGBT+ colleagues: Feedback was mixed, with some drops in positive responses, especially around 'Working Environment and Fairness', though 'Me and My Team' remained a strong area.

Ethnically minoritised colleagues: Positive responses rose overall, though some areas—such as 'Me and My Manager', 'Senior Leadership', and 'Working Environment and Fairness'—saw little or no improvement.

Case study: attracting a diverse workforce

Filling vacancies in the Finance team has been a challenge for many years with few candidates applying and those that did often not meeting the required standard for the roles, either in terms of qualification or experience. Despite having a large number of vacancies only two people were recruited from October 2023 to March 2024. This meant an increasing reliance on interim staff, at a far higher cost than permanent staff, and an aging workforce that was becoming out of step with the demographics of the city.

We therefore radically changed our recruitment processes, with the support of HR colleagues. There is now a [website that presents a picture of the role of the Finance team](#) within the council, people who work here and more colour on the roles for which we are advertising. We have also simplified our recruitment process to make it simpler and easier, candidates now just need to email their CVs and a supporting statement to an email address.

The result has been a large increase in applicants and the suitability of those applicants for our roles has also increased with around 15 people recruited in the first six months. The new people have diversified our workforce with a number of younger appointees, in particular four new apprentices, helping to address the council-wide issue of an aging workforce and preparing us better for the future with opportunities for succession planning. The new recruits have also increased our diversity in terms of ethnicity with a number of new joiners coming from under-represented groups. Finally, through showing a greater openness to experiences outside of local authorities, we have become more diversified in terms of our experience with new people bringing useful knowledge and skills picked up outside of the council finance roles and the public sector to help us become a better team. We envision the site continuing to operate indefinitely since there are always some vacancies and continuing to help broaden the appeal of roles in our team across the city.

Bristol Living Wage City:

Bristol has been at the forefront of the real Living Wage movement, demonstrating how fair pay can drive equity and improve lives. Since becoming a Living Wage City in 2019, Bristol has seen significant progress with over 6,000 people having their salaries uplifted to the real Living Wage.

In 2024, the proportion of jobs in Bristol paid less than the Living Wage was 8.2%, significantly lower than the national average of 15.7%. The real Living Wage, currently set at £12.60 per hour outside of London, is the only wage rate based on the cost of living. Nationally, over 15,000 employers are accredited, benefiting 480,000 workers annually. This wage is crucial in addressing pay inequalities, particularly for women and ethnic minorities who are disproportionately represented in low-paid jobs.

New research by Cardiff Business School, commissioned by the Living Wage Foundation, found that if just a quarter of those earning below the Living Wage in the South West saw their pay rise to the real Living Wage, the increase in wages, productivity, and spending would deliver £84,791,000 back into the economy.

In Bristol, businesses have embraced the real Living Wage not just as a moral imperative but as a strategic advantage. The impact of the real Living Wage in Bristol is clear: it reduces in-work poverty, promotes social equity, and enhances the quality of life for thousands of workers. As more businesses join this movement, Bristol continues to set a powerful example for the rest of the UK.

Measures of success

E02: Diverse workforce	Trend	Comment on progress 2024-25
Annual pay gap reporting.	-	See Appendix
Annual employee survey and other staff feedback.	-	The staff survey will continue to be published on an annual basis and the outcomes are covered in this report.
Targets for representation, progression and pay and other outcomes by characteristic.	-	See Appendix

E03: Council services

Equality Objective E03 – “equitable, inclusive and quality services that promote wellbeing”

This objective is about the Council's role as a deliverer and commissioner of services.

A cross-organisational approach

Our Equity and Inclusion Strategic Framework sets an intention to align and coordinate many strands of equity and inclusion across the council in a consistent and strategic way. Given we are a large organisation, with over 6,000 employees, everyone has responsibility for developing our services, with the aim of achieving equality of opportunity. This also includes ensuring organisations providing services on behalf of the council have robust policies and a proper commitment to equity and inclusion.

Throughout the year, we have taken the time to promote the new strategic framework, to make sure all services are clear on our revised priorities and what we want to achieve. The newly established governance structure has allowed for better information sharing and further insights into the equity and inclusion work that is happening across the council, to provide a holistic view of our progress.

Equality Action Plans

As part of the annual business planning cycle all Council service areas conduct a review of their functions to produce an updated Equality Action Plan. Each service is required to identify priority issues and relevant actions to address these issues. Service areas outline the outcomes that they would like to achieve, provide success measures and the timeframes in which they hope to deliver. Services are required to report twice a year on how their actions are progressing against their timescales. Equality Action Plans are linked to the five objectives, outlined in the Equity and Inclusion strategic framework to ensure a coordinated approach to delivery.

The Council has a key performance indicator (KPI) to “increase % of all Equality Action Plan actions reporting expected progress (or better),” which acts as an aggregate to help us understand overall progress, with reporting requirements from services twice a year.

In 2024-25 we missed our ambitious target of 90%, with an actual percentage of 82.0%. Several actions saw less progress than expected because of budget and funding constraints, which limited the delivery of planned initiatives such as training, mentoring, inclusive service improvements, and community or partnership engagement. However, we have seen improvements in areas such as improved equality impact assessments, and better use of equality data to inform decision making. For 2025–26, services have been advised to align actions with current operational challenges and available resources.

Equality Impact Assessments

The council uses Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) to evaluate how proposed decisions may affect people with different protected and other relevant characteristics, ensuring compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

In 2024–25, we completed 507 EqIAs to support a wide range of activities, including decision-making, the development and review of policies and strategies, commissioning and procurement processes, operational works, and budget setting.

To support this work, the Equality and Inclusion Team offers one-to-one guidance to council officers, helping them understand the potential equality impacts of their decisions and identify any necessary mitigations to promote equity for all.

Since EqIAs were introduced, council officers have become increasingly confident in completing them and using them to inform their decision-making. The quality and consistency of EqIAs have continued to improve, making them a valuable tool in effective decision-making. They are regularly referenced in high-level council meetings as evidence that decisions are being made with fairness and equity in mind. The public is also becoming more aware of EqIAs and their availability as a resource to better understand the council's decisions.

In January 2025, an audit of our Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process found that while our risk management, internal control, and governance arrangements were generally sound—largely due to the robust guidance and support provided by the Equalities and Inclusion team—there were areas for improvement. These included the need to ensure that all EqIAs are properly reviewed and signed off before publication, and that any mitigating actions are framed as SMART goals and effectively followed up by services. In response, we have updated the EqIA form and guidance, communicated these changes to all leadership and EqIA authors, and recommended that all services track the progress of mitigating actions identified in their assessments.

We also offer an e-learning module on Equality Impact Assessments, including a step-by-step video guide. In 2024–25, 62 employees completed this training, bringing the total number of completions to 1,364.

Understanding the cumulative impacts of decisions

We conduct cumulative equality impact assessments to understand how multiple decisions may collectively affect equality, especially where overlapping actions could disproportionately impact certain communities. For instance, in recent years, we have assessed the overall impact of our budget savings proposals. This approach helps decision-makers consider whether the combined effects may negatively or unfairly affect citizens, service users, or employees—particularly in relation to protected and other relevant characteristics. By analysing these cumulative effects, we can identify patterns that risk deepening existing inequalities and develop strategies to mitigate or prevent them.

Using data and evidence to inform decisions

We use a wide range of data sources to ensure our work is informed by evidence of the communities we serve. Identifying suitable evidence sources is a keyway in which we understand the potential impact of decision making on groups who could be most affected within the city, develop our policies and design initiatives to support equity. We have been promoting intersectional data analysis to understand the lived experiences of people with multiple or combined characteristics.

A guide on [Equalities Statistics: What is available and where to get it?](#) outlines the main sources of equalities statistics for Bristol.

Census Data 2021

Our Strategic Intelligence and Performance Team have developed analytic tools using Census 2021 data. This wide range of data and information about the city and its population helps us understand the changing profile of Bristol's diverse population. Headline results are in the Census 2021 Dashboard and data for areas within Bristol are in the Census Data Profiles Dashboard - both available at the page [Census 2021](#)

Detailed analysis by equalities group is available in a series of population profiles on the [Population of Bristol](#) web page (see "Population by Equalities Group" section). These are published for religion, trans population, sexual orientation, Somali population, ethnic groups and Disabled population. These population profiles provide significant insights into the lived experiences of different groups with a range of indicators including age, economic activity, health and wellbeing, housing and qualification data plus map population groups across the city.

Quality of Life data

The [Quality of life in Bristol](#) survey provides a snapshot of Bristol resident's lived experience using a wide range of indicators including crime and safety, health and wellbeing, community and education and skills.

Findings from the 2024 survey are available in the document [Quality of Life 2024/25 Priority Indicators Report \(pdf, 501 KB\)](#) including:

- how 50 headline measures of lived experiences for people in Bristol have changed over the last few years, and how these experiences differ in the most deprived areas
- a summary of 'actions to improve quality of life' that people want to see in Bristol

Full results for all indicators, including ward and demographic group data, see the [Quality of Life dashboard](#).

This data can be disaggregated by over 30 equality and demographic groups and also by geographical locations. The data is regularly used within equality impact assessments to help decision makers understand the impact of decisions on different

groups by outlining the current state for different demographics of people within the city. This data is published externally and shared widely with different equality stakeholders we work with.

Deprivation and ward profile data

We use deprivation data and ward profiles to help inform our decision-making. Based on the most recent data from 2019, Bristol has 41 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) ranked among the 10% most deprived in England for multiple deprivation. These levels of deprivation can have a significant impact on life expectancy, general health and wellbeing, and educational outcomes.

There is growing recognition that localised solutions are essential to addressing inequality of opportunity. We will continue to encourage our services to consider how geographical location influences people's life experiences.

Case Study: 'Care experience' as a locally protected characteristic

'Care experience' is having spent any time in foster care, residential care, or receiving support from a leaving care service. This includes adoption or arriving in the UK as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child.

In January 2025 Full Council unanimously approved a recommendation to formally recognise care experience as a locally 'protected characteristic'.

The decision means Bristol joins over 100 other local authorities in the UK who recognise care experience as a locally protected characteristic. Although care experience is not legally recognised as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, this means that individuals in Bristol who have experienced being in care can expect the council to routinely consider their needs and expect equal treatment in areas like employment, education and access to services.

To support this going forward, 'care Experience' is being added as a category for consideration in our Equality Impact Assessments and will be included in our recommended diversity monitoring questions for survey and ongoing engagement.

For more information about Bristol City Council's commitment to care experienced people see our Corporate Parenting Strategy [Children in and leaving care: plans and policies \(bristol.gov.uk\)](#)

Case Study: Procurement and contract management

Equality considerations in procurement brings a huge benefit to Bristol City Council (BCC). BCC serves a diverse community when procuring any works, goods and services. As such we must proactively ensure that those works, goods and services are appropriate and accessible to meet the needs of our service users. Working to advance equality of opportunity also helps to ensure that goods and services are fit for purpose. Providers are expected to share our commitment to the promotion of equality and diversity

In 2024 the Procurement & Contract Management Service (P&CMS) worked closely with the Equality and Inclusion Team to reflect on the current approach to considering equalities within the procurement process. We did this in conjunction with the learnings taken from the current ways of evaluating equalities and in turn designed, trialled and in October 2024 launched a new approach.

We developed the new Equality & inclusion evaluation process whilst keeping both the corporate principle of equality and inclusion – ‘Pro-actively and intentionally improve equality and inclusion across the city by designing it into everything we do’ and the P&CMS strategy – ‘Supplier diversity: We believe it’s important that the suppliers who deliver services to Bristol support our equality and diversity aims and reflect our city. We will ensure that before we procure a contract, we will meet our responsibilities to consider diversity and how we can both positively affect equalities and put plans in place to reduce or remove any risks - and we will ensure that our suppliers share our commitment to these values’ in mind.

Over a period of around six months the Procurement Lead and the Equality and Inclusion Delivery Manager worked together to develop a new process for evaluating equalities within the procurement process. We ensured that together we were considering the responsibility that BCC have for ensuring that the Public Sector Equality Duty is maintained throughout the procurement lifecycle. In addition, it was also about considering the level of evaluation carried out by either the procurement or the equality officers, wanting to ensure that the need was proportionate for both bidders and evaluators.

With this in mind we introduced a tiered approach for evaluating Equalities within the procurement process - Low Impact, Medium Impact and High Impact. The impact level being dependent purely on the nature and scope of the goods/services/works being procured. The outcome of the impact defining the level of equalities evaluated from bidders and the level of self-certification versus evaluation by the Equalities team.

In terms of proportionality, as you’d expect, with the higher impact procurements, (which we deemed to be those where the outcome of the procurement directly impacts any person, resident or child), we have a higher expectation in terms of what the bidder is expected to achieve. For example they are tested on their ability to design and adapt their practices in their operational day to day activities based on the protected characteristics and needs of the people who use their services.

Whilst those procurements that are deemed Low Impact (where the service/product/works does not directly impact people), bidders are expected to self-certificate through a set number of questions that they meet and understand the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

Regardless of the impact level set, all procurement activity with a value over £25,000 is included within the remit of the Equality and Inclusion Procurement Guidance.

The procurement service continues to meet with the Equalities team regularly to review the new process to ensure that it is meeting its target of being proportionate to both providers who wish to work with BCC and the internal teams that evaluate their responses.

Policy and strategy development

Equity and inclusion is central to all policy and strategy development across the council. We aim to ensure inclusive design and base our decisions on evidence and genuine understanding of our communities' diverse needs. Our key policies and strategies demonstrate our commitment to embedding equality and inclusion throughout the council's work.

Accessible Communications Policy

Accessibility is central to how we communicate—both with the public and with each other. We also have a legal duty to provide information in accessible formats and ensure that everyone can understand our messages.

However, findings from sources like the Bristol Quality of Life Survey show that not all groups experience our communications as accessible. Internally, unclear or inaccessible communication can also make us less effective as an organisation.

In 2024–25, we introduced a new Accessible Communications Policy to improve how we connect with all audiences. This policy sets a consistent standard for both our external communications—such as public announcements and publications—and our internal content, including emails, messages, and documents shared between colleagues.

At the core of the policy is the understanding that accessible communication is everyone's responsibility. We all need to learn how to communicate clearly and in ways that are appropriate, inclusive, and easy to engage with.

What the Policy Covers

The first part of the policy introduces five key principles that underpin all accessible communication:

1. **Proactive:** Don't assume that your communication will reach the most diverse audience possible. Think about how you can go further in reaching and speaking to those who may be harder to reach.

2. **Positive:** Think about how people from our key groups will view your communications. Will they see a positive representation of themselves?
3. **Timely:** Make sure you account for the extra time it will take to check your communications for accessibility, for additional formats to be created and the extra time certain groups may need to receive and respond to your communications.
4. **Collaborative:** Consider how you can engage people who will benefit from accessible communications in the design and delivery of your communications.
5. **Prioritising well:** When there is limited time and budget, consider which accessibility changes will have the biggest impact on our key audiences.

The second part focuses on ensuring that our communication is clear and easy to understand. This includes writing in plain English, avoiding jargon, and presenting information in a logical and user-friendly way.

The third part is to support colleagues with practical tools and guidance to make sure we're providing information in the right format.

Together, these elements provide a strong foundation for improving accessibility in everything we say and share—as a council and as individuals.

Case Study: Making information more accessible

The Private Housing Service have produced a Private Tenant Information Guide which aims to provide information and advice about the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords and covers topics relevant to all stages of the tenancy process: [Private tenant information guide](#). The guide has been translated into the top five languages spoken in Bristol (from the 2021 Census): Polish, Spanish, Somali, Romanian and Arabic. As well as the guide being on the Bristol City Council website, the Private Housing's Tenant Liaison Officer contacted a number of tenant organisations including ones which represent ethnic minorities such as SARI and the Bristol Somali Resource Centre and distributed the guide to them.

Adult Social Care Co-Production Policy

In December 2024 our Adult Social Care committee launched a new [Adult Social Care Co-Production Policy](#), developed collaboratively by a working group that included individuals with lived experience, representatives from community-led organisations, and members of the council's Adult Social Care team.

The policy defines co-production and offers practical guidance for services planning and delivering co-produced Adult Social Care projects. It sets out when and how co-production should take place to ensure meaningful involvement.

By embedding co-production from the outset, the policy aims to improve service design and delivery through direct input from those who use services. This approach supports more inclusive, fair, and equitable outcomes.

The Co-Production Policy forms a key part of Our Vision for Adult Social Care, which sets out what people can expect from Bristol City Council in terms of support, information, and opportunities to live well.

Anti-social Behaviour Policy

Our new Corporate Anti-social Behaviour Policy was adopted in April 2024 and is managed by our Safer Communities Team. The policy sets out how Bristol City Council works to prevent, intervene in and tackle incidents of Anti-social Behaviour (ASB). The aim of this policy is to prevent and minimise instances of ASB and to resolve them as early as possible through timely and appropriate interventions.

The policy outlines how we will use an evidence-based, trauma-informed and victim and child centred approach and what this means within the context of ASB. The policy recognises that, although ASB can affect anyone, people who live in urban areas with higher levels of deprivation are or more likely to witness or experience ASB. Disabled people are also statistically more likely to have experienced ASB and young people are more likely to experience a significant impact from ASB, demonstrating the need for a person-centred approach to support. Incidents of ASB can also be hate crimes if they are perceived by the victim to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act (2010). The policy illustrates our commitment to eliminating all kinds of discrimination and the steps we are taking towards tackling the root causes of ASB, with the aim of creating safer communities.

Bristol Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy

Bristol's Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy 2024 to 2027 was developed in collaboration with those impacted by domestic abuse and with partners across Bristol, including the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Survivors Forum.

This strategy sets out the framework through which partners will work together with individuals and communities across Bristol to overcome barriers and ensure survivors of all backgrounds and identities can access support that is right for them.

We will work to eradicate domestic abuse and sexual violence in all areas of our city, supporting all victim-survivors, challenging unacceptable behaviour, and holding perpetrators to account, now and for generations to come.

The development of this strategy follows on from work already undertaken in the last three years including the Commission on Domestic Abuse Report, public engagement and consultation on recommissioning activities, and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence needs assessments.

Bristol Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028

In January 2025 our new local area Bristol Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2028 approval by the Children and Young People Committee. The strategy has been informed and co-produced by Bristol City Council with education, health and social care partners, the Bristol Parent Carer Forum, as well as community organisations including WECIL and The Listening Partnership.

Children and young people with SEND and their parent carers also played a major part in the development of this strategy. Their contributions have helped to shape the priorities and actions identified in the document.

To support the new strategy, the Bristol local area partnership also created and recently launched a new Bristol Co-production Charter and Memorandum of Understanding

Women's Safety Charter

Originally launched in 2022 by Bristol Nights, the Women's Safety Charter aims to create a safer environment for women in Bristol, particularly during night-time activities. The Women's Safety Charter is a 7-point code of commitments aimed at helping venues and night time businesses address harassment and discrimination. Signing up to the Charter demonstrates an organisation's commitment to adopting a zero tolerance approach to all types of harassment, including sexual harassment and gender-based violence, and to making Bristol a fair and inclusive city where everyone is welcome. The need for the Women's Safety Charter is underscored by concerning statistics. In 2023-24, Bristol recorded a rate of 4.0 sexual offences per 1,000 population, significantly higher than the national average of 2.91.

The Women's Safety Charter has garnered international acclaim. In December 2024, Bristol Nights won the prestigious Music Cities Award for Best Night Time Economy Initiative. This award recognises the Charter's impact in promoting a zero-tolerance approach to harassment in music and nightlife venues. The initiative has also been instrumental in training over 500 night safety champions, with over 90% of participants recommending the training to others. The training has been developed in collaboration with Bristol nightlife and is rooted in the experiences of night workers.

Bristol's Women's Safety Charter is a testament to the city's commitment to safety and inclusivity. By fostering a network of safety advocates and implementing comprehensive training programs, the Charter is making significant strides in reducing harassment and ensuring that everyone can enjoy Bristol's vibrant nightlife without fear.

Measures of success

E03: Inclusive Services	Trend	Comment on progress 2023-24
All service areas have an annual Equality Action plan which is approved by a director as part of the annual service planning cycle.	-	In 2024-25, all services had an equality action plan, which includes shared plans across some larger areas of the council. Newly established Divisional E+I working groups will coordinate efforts to review, update, and monitor action plans more effectively.
Increase % of all Equality Action Plan actions reporting expected progress or better.	Lower	In 2024-25 service reported 82% of actions were progressing as expected or better, compared to 86% in 2023-24. See above for detailed commentary on the reasons for this.
Reporting shows our progress in implementing recommendations and actions from Safeguarding Adults reviews and Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.	-	<p>During 2024-25 Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership (KBSP) received eight referrals for Safeguarding Adult Reviews, similar to 2023-24 where KBSP received nine. There was an increase in publication of reviews from two in 2023-24 to five in 2024-25 which shows the efforts made to improve communication with stakeholders and progress around recommendations has led to the completion reviews in a more effective and timely manner.</p> <p>During 2024-25 KBSP were working on two high profile Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPRs). Work has already started on implementing the learning which will go live during 2025-26 following the transformation across Children's Services.</p>
Reduction in the gap in life expectancy between the most deprived and the least deprived areas in Bristol.	Lower	The most recently available <u>data</u> shows the life expectancy gap is 6.9 years which is somewhat lower than previously (7.2 years)
Reduction in the proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training.	Higher	6.3% of the total cohort are not in education employment or training (6.1% in 2023-24. Our teams make regular contact with these young people and capture their interests to create or sign post to opportunities that are tailored to the young person's needs. We continue to operate from locality spaces

		and family hubs, working closely with colleagues who also support vulnerable NEET learners to that they can put plans in place to support or encourage young people to engage.
Increase in % of citizens satisfied with the way Bristol City Council runs things.	Lower	In 2024 the average was 32.5% and in 2023 it was 38.7%. Disparities exist within this indicator with some groups higher than the average e.g. Black, Asian and minoritised ethnic – 38.9%, and some significantly lower (10% most deprived = 26%, and Disabled people = 24%).
Increase in % of citizens who are comfortable using digital services.	Higher	The percentage of citizens who are comfortable using digital services was slightly higher this year (81.1%, 2024/25) in comparison to last year (78.8% 2023/24).
Increase in % of council tenants satisfied with their overall current accommodation.	Lower	The latest quality of life survey data (2024) shows the percentage of council tenants satisfied with their accommodation is 62.2% which is significantly lower than previous year (72.3%) and lower than the Bristol average (80.1%)

E04: Partnerships

Equality Objective E04 – “to lead and strengthen partnerships so everyone shares in the city’s success.”

This objective is about the Council’s role as a leading agency in the city.

Bristol City Council is playing a lead role in embedding, delivering and strengthening partnerships right across the city to tackle inequalities. There are many varied specialist groups operating to ensure everyone in Bristol can share in the city’s success, with all groups working together to tackle the most prevalent issues. The below captures some of the key workstreams and partnership groups being led directly by Bristol City Council and the Equality and Inclusion team, alongside a vast array of city stakeholders.

Bristol’s Race Equality Strategic Leaders’ Group

Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group - Bristol One City

Bristol’s Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group (RESLG) was established in 2015 in response to the Bristol Manifesto for Race Equality and this year will see the 10th year of the group.

During the year this group (Chaired and co-ordinated by Bristol City Council) has continued to see full attendance and representation from all (16) major Public Sector agencies in the city, as well as excellent support and scrutiny from wider strategic partners such as SARI, VOSCUR, and Black Southwest Network.

The continued growth of the group has enabled us to formally agree strategic and collaborative annual work plans and projects for delivery in order to produce tangible outputs to share through our networks and with our wider city stakeholders.

2024 saw the group deliver a number of outputs for the city. The group led Bristol's annual programme of race focused themed events, titled Race & the City 3, delivering major focused events and a large scale Conference, for all individuals, groups, communities and sectors in the city, free of charge to our communities, to encourage maximum attendance and engagement.

RESLG also facilitated a variety of deep dive sessions and good practice sharing opportunities, ensuring members are briefed and connected to all other major emerging race focused groups and initiatives working in Bristol and beyond. This ensures the group lead on connecting our city's race equality eco-system. Our eco-system mapping tool has been widely promoted and further expanded this year following the positive feedback from users of the tool across the city.

In addition, further key highlights during 2024 were our two large scale events : -

Race & the City 3 – A Spotlight on Race & Health inequality.

The vast attendance, engagement and positive output from these events was testament to the appetite for stakeholders across the region and city to come together to collaborate on such vital issues, challenges and opportunities. The group's work has facilitated such important gatherings leading to change and forming new key connections to organisations across the city. We have shared evaluation and feedback throughout the year at group meetings on these events.

Race & the City 3 Conference

During this reporting year, the Equality and Inclusion team lead the delivery of the Race & the City 3 Conference, welcoming over 200 city and regional stakeholders to an in-person event aimed at collectively sharing and tackling some of Bristol's most current and significant challenges on race equity. The event also focused on disproportionality that exists in education and across our criminal justice services with input from leads working in all areas of tackling racial inequity in service provision for local people in Bristol. The Conference also focused on how we can better support young people in the city too, with a dedicated session at the Conference focusing on hearing the voices of Bristol's young people.

The event saw leaders and interested parties from all sectors and communities in the city, with a varied range of key note speakers, presentation sessions and roundtable discussions and activities to share thoughts, ideas and responses to key issues of race inequality. The conference also provided a platform to connect the range of groups, partnerships and networks that exist in the city's race eco-system with the

aim of creating greater impact and alignment by exploring joined up responses and collaboration.

Whilst recognising the extent of the issues and work remaining to address these challenges, attendee feedback and evaluation proved highly positive with one attendee stating:-

"Days like these, that bring together education, criminal justice and services, to work together to tackle disproportionality, are vital. When education services fail young people, there is a high chance the same young people will end up in the criminal justice system, to become one of the statistics we talk about when we discuss disproportionality. Our young people need support, and opportunities to achieve. It's encouraging to see the work that is already happening but there is much more to do".

Case study: International recognition - European Capital of Innovation semi-finalists

2024 was a particularly notable year for the Race Equality Strategic Leaders' Group and for its wider partnerships across the city, with the group and its work being recognised for the first time on an international scale. Bristol's system approach to tackling race inequality in partnership led by RESLG made the semi-final stages of the European Capital of Innovation Awards 2024.

This achievement saw Bristol made the final 6 out of 36 applicant cities. A number of BCC colleagues and our RESLG members contributed to the bid submission and also to the semi-final presentation where members showcased the work of our city to a panel of global leading judges. Judge feedback described Bristol's work as being extremely positive as well as 'unique and brave'.

Our city's work on tackling race inequality through a whole system approach, saw us outscore 30 other applicant cities to be shortlisted for the semi-final alongside the following cities :-

Espoo (Finland)

Tallin (Estonia)

Tampere (Finland)

Torino (Italy)

West Midlands Combined Authority (United Kingdom)

Through this iCapital award, the European Union recognises cities with inclusive innovation ecosystems. The prize identifies cities that successfully connect the citizens with academia, the private and public sector to improve the wellbeing of the whole society, while at the same time boosting game-changing innovation. Reaching the semi-final and receiving such positive feedback for our submission and presentation on Bristol's work was a significant milestone for the city.

The award winners of this prestigious *European Capital of Innovation category* received a prize of €1 million while the two runners-up each won €100,000 each.

Further information on the achievement and the awards can be found here : - [European Capital of Innovation Awards \(iCapital\) 2024: discover the semi-finalists!](#)
- [European Commission](#)

Bristol's Race Eco System

During the year the Equality and Inclusion team led the review and update refresh of Bristol's race equality eco system tool. This is a product open to be used by all stakeholders in the city to better understand the landscape in the city covering a range of leading partnerships and initiatives working to achieve race equity in the city.

The interactive tool can be found here and is available to share with all networks and colleagues : [Bristol Race Equality Eco-System booklet](#)

More background information about the tool can be found here : [Bristol's Race Eco System - Bristol One City](#)

Bristol's Race Equality Practitioners Group

This group is the operational arm of the Bristol Race Equality Strategic Leaders' Group and throughout this year has continued to bring together all sector organisations in the city to work collaboratively on key defined topics on race. Its overarching objective is to improve the representation of racially minoritised colleagues within the Bristol workforce. Part of the collaboration across the city has been to understand how H.R. is embedding best practice in equity and inclusion across each organisation, which has included an understanding of the training that has been delivered around culture change and recruitment.

The group has met consistently throughout the past year, to discuss and learn across a wide range of H.R and equality and inclusion topics. Throughout the year there has been a specific focus on developing approaches to data collection, learning from each other on best practice related to ethnicity categorisation to feed into the next iteration of the Race Equality H.R. Data Product. Meetings also included collaborative discussions on responses to the race riots that occurred in Bristol in Autumn 2024, information sharing around equality impact assessments and inclusive recruitment practices.

Bristol's Race Equality H.R. Data Product

Preparations are underway to deliver the fourth iteration of Bristol's Race Equality H.R. Data product. Bristol's [award-winning Race Equality H.R. Data](#) product provides baselines of ethnicity data across all major public sector, and other sector organisations in the city. It was first developed in 2017 and is now entering its fourth iteration. It is one of the main outputs of the [Race Equality Strategic Leaders group \(RESLG\)](#). The product has previously presented organisational make up, and data on pay levels, sickness, grievance, disciplinary, board and executive representation by ethnicity as well as mapping trends and performance. It is designed to deliver more effective, thorough and transparent approaches to recording and monitoring

ethnicity data across key partners on an evolving basis. The last version of the data product analysed a sample size of 50,000 employees across the city.

Through the work of the previously mentioned practitioners' group, applicant, retention and intersectional data have been identified as priority indicators for the fourth version of the product. Members of the group have fed into the approach for more disaggregated ethnicity data categories, which were then approved by the Race Equality Strategic Leadership group. The fourth iteration will also comprise a new approach to displaying the data into a dashboard, to make it more accessible and dynamic. Partners remain engaged and committed to transparently displaying their data in this format, and there are plans to have the product launched by the end of 2025 for organisations to utilise.

Equality Commissions

Women's Commission

During the year of reporting Bristol's Women's Commission moved to a regional model, funded by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority. Through the new model, the Commission hopes to connect more widely across the Southwest region. Membership of the revised model is being finalised but will incorporate representatives from areas across the West of England region.

The Women's Commission hosted an event for International Women's Day focusing on women's health. The event was attended by BCC's public health colleagues, the Minister for Health and Social Care, MP's, members of the Integrated Care Board and the founder of Black Mothers Matter as well as others. The Commission continues to deliver across a range of workstreams such as safety, education and health, to improve outcomes for women.

Commission on Race Equality

The Commission on Race Equality is currently inactive, after the Chair of the commission stepped down at the end of 2023.

Disability Equality Commission

The Disability Equality Commission is led by Disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations in the city. The commission listens to Disabled people and works with city partners to help improve the lives and opportunities for those living in the city.

The commission is Chaired by Alun Davies MBE who was appointed in September 2021. Alun has 40+ years of experience as a national and local activist for equal rights and opportunities for Disabled people. The commission has nine active commissioners who are Disabled people from intersectional backgrounds, with organisational representation from Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People; Bristol Disability Equality Forum; West of England Centre for Inclusive Living; and Bristol Reclaiming Independent Living.

The Disability Equality Commission reported to Full Council in January 2025. The report summarises activities completed throughout the year across a wide range of

themes including employment, policy development, housing and health. The commission continues to engage with a wide range of stakeholders across the city including Police, the Integrated Care Board and via the One City Partnership Boards.

Race and Health Equity Group

This group, previously called the Bristol Race Equality COVID-19 Steering Group, was initially set up to address policy recommendations from a rapid review on the impact of COVID-19 on people from Black and minoritised backgrounds, along with recommendations in the Public Health England 'COVID-19: understanding the impacts on BAME communities' report.

The group membership includes an evolving, wide range of representatives from public health experts, NHS (National Health Service) Trusts and the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector.

Some of the key outcomes of the group have been working across the health system to increase the data that is available to us, including the development of the Race and Health Data Product.

Over the past year of this report, the group have covered a wide range of topics including:

- An update from the Cabinet Office in relation to national developments on maternal health and engaging Bristol in this work.
- The vehicle Dwellers Report.
- A review of asylum seeker and refugee health needs presentation.
- A maternity Inequalities update.
- Race and Health Data; Sharing known data sets; engaging with partners to identify additional data set and gaps in data.
- Independent Advisory Group for Race and Health – progress updates.
- 2024 Workplan Priority - Deep Dive sessions : Race and Health Data.
- Gypsy Roma Travellers : Health Outcomes: alcohol use in Roma, Gypsies, Travellers and Boaters communities
- Workplan priority 'Increasing immunisations with focus on Measles, Mumps & Rubella (MMR) and Human Papillomavirus (HPV)'
- Responses to the city demonstrations / riots from partners; from the Refugee Resettlement Service and the Safer City Team

Race & the City 3 - Alongside this, the group also hosted a Race & the City 3 event – A spotlight on Race & Health Equity.

This was a free event for all city and regional partners & all sectors. It achieved excellent attendance of c100 regional stakeholders with extremely positive feedback received from attendees and showcased the work of our group, whilst creating a platform to share lived expertise and took a life-course journey approach to the event.

The event delivered Q&A sessions and panel debates with strategic system leaders for all stakeholders to raise key matters and questions. Race & Health also featured as keynote speech at Race and the City 3 Conference in April 2024.

As well as this, the Work of the Race & Health Equity Group (RHEG) was a key area included in Bristol's bid for the European Capital of Innovation Awards 2024. From 36 contesting cities, Bristol made the final 6 getting the opportunity to present and showcase our work. The REHG Co Chair was part of the city panel presenting Bristol's bid which an expert EU panel of judges described as 'innovative, brave & unique'.

Race & Health Data Project

In 2024 Bristol's Race and Health Equity Group approved a 'Race & Health Data Project' to be a key priority for the work of the group for that year and beyond.
[Bristol's Race and Health Equity Group - Bristol One City](#)

The project was proposed and agreed in order to try and meet a need across the city and region for a central area collating the range of broader health-related data reports, tools and dashboards, that contain elements of ethnicity related data across Bristol and the wider BNSSG (Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire) region.

From the research undertaken it became apparent that many of our partners have access to a varying range of ethnicity related data sets, however there was a lack of clarity on best sources to use to understand the city and region landscape on race and health. A key deliverable as part of this project was to collate a home area and library space to gather all these existing reports / tools and dashboards in one space to provide an accessible and comprehensive picture of Bristol and the wider region to provide consistency, improve knowledge and increase access to key data sets for all stakeholders in the city and region.

More information on the project can be found at the following link, where users can also access the range of collated resources, reports and data sets on race and health :- [Race & Health Data Project - Bristol One City](#)

Tackling Disproportionality in the Criminal Justice System

The Identifying Disproportionality in the Avon and Somerset Criminal Justice System Report, published in 2022 stated that "In order to achieve a fairer criminal justice system in which every group and every individual can have confidence, we need to work together to remove discrimination root and branch from UK society and its institutions."

The report was commissioned by the Avon and Somerset Local Criminal Justice Board. It set out 83 recommendations for all agencies involved in delivering criminal justice across Avon and Somerset, in the below areas:

- Stop and Search in policing
- Out of Court Disposals (OCD)

- Youth Justice
- Prisons
- Human Resources – recruitment, retention and progression of employees from racially minoritised communities

The aim is to drive the cultural change required to ensure that the criminal justice system is more equitable, so people can feel and see the difference through their experiences in the future.

During this year, Bristol City Council has taken a leadership role on the workforce representation pillar group, working to grow a broader partnership membership to achieve greater impact in tackling the relevant workforce related recommendations in the report. Bristol City Council is supporting the response to these recommendations and taking an active role in helping to achieve the changes the report urges. BCC has also presented on its work during the year on this programme to the Independent Scrutiny Board and Strategic Leadership Group from the Criminal Justice System that oversee the whole programme. During this presentation the group shared its progress and barriers with the aim of enabling greater impact.

BCC has led the implementation of a partnership 'tracker' document and 'plan on a page' to be able to clearly demonstrate baseline and aspirational data to all partner engaged, as well as concisely summarising the group's priorities and targets to wider stakeholders and potential new group members.

Bristol Equality Charter and Bristol Equality Network

In November 2018 we launched the [Bristol Equality Charter](#) - a city-wide initiative co-produced by 20+ private, public, and voluntary sector organisations in conjunction with Bristol City Council. The charter sets out commitments to help with the aim of making Bristol a fairer, safer, accessible, and inclusive city where everyone feels they belong, has a voice and an equal opportunity to succeed and thrive.

The Bristol Equality Charter continues to have a growing number of signatories (now 305+), and we provide ongoing support to the Bristol Equality Network, which is open to representatives of organisations who have signed the Bristol Equality Charter.

The purpose of the Bristol Equality Network is to support network members to achieve the aims and commitments of the Bristol Equality Charter, develop excellent equality practice through cross-sector partnership working and knowledge sharing, and encourage more organisations to sign the Bristol Equality Charter and participate in the network. The network is chaired on a rotating basis and has four main meetings a year where members come together to promote partnership working and to share information and good practice.

The Bristol Equality Network continued to meet digitally throughout 2024-25. As well as working collaboratively on priority actions such as collaborating to provide meaningful work, apprenticeships, and volunteering opportunities; promoting

positive action activities; and improving city wide data on diversity to support the case for making changes, the Network held sessions focusing on themes such as:

- Supporting colleagues and colleagues' affinity groups
- LGBTQ+ Inclusion in the Workplace
- Refugee and Asylum support work
- Support for women in street-sex work
- Understanding technology facilitated abuse

Case Study: Promoting employment opportunities and addressing barriers to employment

The Private Housing Service has been working with University West of England (UWE) to promote employment opportunities for ethnic minorities and exploring ways of providing practical work shadowing experiences to students within Private Housing. In recent recruitment, a UWE student has been employed through this collaboration with UWE said:

"As a recent graduate and an immigrant, starting my career in Environmental health has been made easier by Bristol City Council's strong commitment to equality and inclusion. Feeling genuinely welcomed and respected has not only helped me to settle into my role with confidence but has also encouraged me to bring my whole self to work and contribute meaningfully to the team."

BCC was also able to offer sponsorship to another successful applicant to a post within the Private Housing team. Having recently completed a degree in environmental health and with their graduate visa coming to an end, we were able to assist with fees associated with a Skilled Worker visa application and a contribution towards relocation expenses to enable the successful candidate to be in a position to take up the post. The officer said:

"As an international student, finding a job even with the relevant degree is not very easy but BCC offered me a sponsorship and also made everything easier for my relocation after graduation. When your potential employer helps you even before you start with them, you'll be more relaxed about your workplace, because you know that it's going to be a healthy environment so you can then focus on your work."

Case Study - Bristol Business and Enterprise Support

Free-to-access information, advice, and coaching to start or grow a business has been available in Bristol for a number of years. While previous support programmes have been well used, some of the city's minority groups and more deprived communities have historically been underrepresented in take-up.

The current Bristol Business and Enterprise Support (BrisBES) project has been designed by the Economic Development team in BCC to directly address this

imbalance. Delivered by YTKO Ltd, the project includes contractual targets to achieve *over-representation* of key minority communities within the client base. A major innovation is the inclusion of a £200,000 Community Connector Grant Fund, supported by MCA funding, which empowers local grassroots organisations to reach and support underrepresented entrepreneurs.

So far, two funding windows have been delivered.

Window 1 awarded 9 grants totalling £89,000. Of this, 52.89% was allocated to projects working with priority demographics. Notably, 41% of funding in this round supported organisations helping women, non-binary, and agender individuals.

Window 2 awarded £110,523.90 across another five organisations.

This approach has enabled trusted, community-based partners to engage residents in Bristol's most deprived wards—introducing them to BrisBES and offering tailored enterprise support. Key examples include:

- ACH working with refugee communities
- CCBED supporting Black and racially minoritised young people
- Noods Levels' *Two Step* project reaching underrepresented creatives in areas such as St Paul's, Filwood, Knowle, and Lawrence Weston—where 42% of neighbourhoods face significant socio-economic challenges.

This targeted, partnership-led model is increasing inclusivity and improving access to enterprise support across the city.

Case Study: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Team partnership working and engagement

The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Team (GRT Team) regularly work with ethnic Romany Gypsy, Eastern European Roma and Irish Traveller communities with the aim of improving GRT outcomes by dealing with the needs and priorities of the GRT communities in a culturally sensitive and accessible way. These communities can be highly vulnerable and may have a number of barriers to accessing services in addition to a negative public perception. We are doing what we can to reach out and support them through our partners such as the NHS, schools and Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI).

An example of the team's work has included working with schools and working with the children on our two Traveller sites in the city, exploring what family means to them through creative arts and flag making. The GRT Team has met with various groups including community groups and councillors to try and improve their understanding and raise a positive profile of the GRT community. During the last GRT History month, the GRT Team and SARI were at an event with the Bristol Lord Mayor present at Easton Community centre.

GRT History month in 2025 will be during June when the GRT flag will be raised outside of City Hall and remain flying for the entire month. A series of other events will be announced closer to June.

A report presented to Homes and Housing Committee in February 2025 brought vehicle dwellers into public discussion and sought to answer questions and agreed a range of activities on the development of a new policy on how the city will manage and support this community during 2025.

During 2024-25 the team continued to manage the five Vehicle Dweller Meanwhile sites and submitted two planning applications to open two further sites creating in the region of 35 additional vehicle dweller pitches and further potential sites are being assessed for their suitability.

Measures of success

E04: Partnerships	Trend	Comment on progress 2023-24
Successful delivery of citywide action plans and work programmes to improve performance.	-	Positive progress during the year with setting of agreed city priorities and delivery as agreed.
Regular progress and data reporting provided to multi-agency partnerships e.g. strategic race equality leaders group.	-	Progress reporting on all priorities set has continued across all above partnership groups throughout the year.
Feedback and evaluation of large-scale city-wide equity focused initiatives and events.	-	Evaluation has taken place on all events delivered for both race stakeholders and our city's communities and the feedback received on events has been extremely positive.
Increase in % who are satisfied with the way BCC asks for their views.	Higher	This indicator has slightly increased, with 30.3% as an average in 2024, compared to 28.7% in 2023. This is not statistically significant.
Increase in the consultation response rate for the most deprived citizens.	Higher	1.8 in 2024 compared to 0.99 in 2023. The percentage of responses from people in the most deprived areas varies depending on the consultation or engagement topic and the methods used to target communication to underrepresented communities. In 2023-24, the

	<p>consultation and engagements with the highest response rates from deprived areas involved proposals that directly affected those communities—such as the Council Tax Reduction Scheme—and where paper surveys were mailed to households in the most deprived parts of Bristol. We are continuing efforts to increase participation from people in deprived areas. However, some recent consultations had especially high overall response rates and proportionately more responses from residents in the least deprived areas, which has influenced the overall figures.</p>
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E05: Communities

Equality Objective E05 – “tackle prejudice and promote understanding amongst communities”.

This objective is about the Council's role in the community.

Fostering good relations

To meet our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, we must actively promote positive relationships between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not. This means taking deliberate steps to improve mutual understanding across communities. Our work in this area is broad and includes initiatives that support wellbeing and resilience by enabling residents to collaborate and create positive change for everyone. Our ‘One City, Many Communities’ approach sets out our strategic priorities, drawing on Bristol’s local expertise and aligning funding to strengthen and sustain community-led action.

Investing in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector

Bristol's voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector plays a vital role in tackling prejudice and promoting understanding amongst communities. Continued investment in the sector and our relationship with it has enabled VCSE organisations to carry out work focused on equity and enabling positive relationships in neighbourhoods and between communities.

Between 2022 and 2025 we funded VCSE infrastructure organisations VOSCUR and Black South West Network (BSWN) to provide support to Bristol's VCSE sector. This reflected our aspiration to be more intentional about addressing inequity and building the capacity of organisations led by equalities groups. These organisations have helped leverage millions of pounds of additional funding into the VCSE sector

and enabled thousands of people to participate in funded activities. The programme will continue between 2026 and 2030.

In 2024/25, we used a £300,000 allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to give grants to community hubs. Some of the funding was used to codesign two workshops, attended by 25 community and equity hubs. These workshops brought together organisations working in place-based and equity-based communities with our Communities service for relationship building, problem solving and knowledge sharing. It also funded a series of facilitated reflective sessions for eight equity hubs, defining their role as equity hubs and identifying opportunities to build upon it.

Resourcing Community Projects

Part of our holistic approach to building thriving communities is resourcing them via our grants programmes. We take a strategic approach, prioritising projects aiming to tackle inequality.

Bristol Impact Fund 2 (BIF2)

Now over halfway through the BIF2 programme, we are starting to see impacts of the equitable approach to funding VCSE organisations. An independent evaluation published in Autumn 2024 highlighted that 42% of funded organisations are led by Black, and other racially minoritised communities; of people participating in BIF2 funded projects, 32% are Disabled people, 55% are from Black and minoritised ethnic groups, 7% identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bi or other non-heterosexual orientation, 4% identify as Trans, and 35% are aged over 65. Over £5.2 million additional funding was leveraged into the city in two years. In terms of outcomes for the communities who experience the greatest inequity, the things reported the most were a greater sense of connectedness, wellbeing and increased understanding of knowledge and rights. All these things build community power and resilience.

BIF3 has now been approved and will launch in April 2026. Our approach builds on what is strong, centring equity, capacity building and focusing on communities (equalities and place based) who experience the greatest inequity. BIF3 will embed a one city many communities approach, which recognises that power, connection and inclusion are key to creating a fair, healthy and more sustainable city. There are 4 key impacts that form the framework for BIF3- more resilient and connected communities; people are empowered; stronger VCSE organisations and communities influence city decision making. Organisations applying will need to show how their work will contribute to these impacts.

Social Action Grants

Working with Quartet Community Foundation the Social Action Grants programme began in 2022 as part of our commitment to communities through the cost-of-living crisis, supporting the grassroots, community led action that was so important to the city-wide response. It has evolved over the past two years, supporting over 160 projects and activities that build community power and resilience through connection, peer support and action.

In 2024/25, the focus of the Social Action Grants programme was serious violence, acknowledging how it has affected communities across Bristol. This included knife crime and violent extremism that has impacted on young people, families and communities.

This Social Action Grant programme aimed to support activities run by diverse and inclusive organisations and groups, in the communities most impacted by serious violence. The programme was aimed at small and grassroots groups and organisations which are rooted in their communities. The grant panel was made up of partners with professional and lived experience of serious violence. Funding was awarded to nine organisations working in innovative ways across neighbourhoods including in Hartcliffe and Withywood, Knowle West, Southmead, St Pauls, Lawrence Hill, Easton and Barton Hill. Projects funded included youth, women and Black and minoritised ethnic led work, such as peer support for young people, a project to bridge gaps between refugee families and schools, a residential camp for young people who have experienced violent crime, and a project to tackle sexual harassment.

Community Resilience Fund

The Community Resilience Fund is a one-off capital grant fund to support community and voluntary organisations working in and with communities that experience the greatest inequity in Bristol to survive and thrive in the future. A key aim of the fund is to improve accessibility of community buildings in the city, and to ensure this is done to a high standard, we partnered with WECIL who are supporting organisations working to improve access of their community spaces. Facilitated by WECIL Disabled people have from the WECIL Access and Inclusion Team (WAIT) team carried out 20 access audits and 178.5 hours of 1:1 consultancy, sharing their lived experience to provide meaningful, relevant and holistic advice. This support has provided organisations with short term recommendations related to their projects and long-term recommendations that they can build into future development works. This means that organisations are equipped with increased knowledge of accessibility to enable them to implement changes to their buildings to be more inclusive for the long term.

Community Development

We continue to embed equity and enabling positive relationships in different neighbourhoods into our work. Below are a few examples of our work.

In Bedminster, we delivered a Forum Theatre performance called Welcome to Bedminster. This was written and performed by residents and supported by our partners ManyMinds and Breathing Fire. Welcome to Bedminster explored issues of immigration, gentrification, poverty and cultural differences. Over fifty people took part and interacted with the performance to explore solutions to local issues and what Bedminster means to them. A short video of the performance can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/989559812>

We have supported the development of a One Love Hub in Knowle West, which is a multi-cultural group of local people who come together to share skills and passions

to create an inclusive space for people to connect, and from this a new Somali resident led group has formed. Through continuing this work, we will co-create a more welcoming community and improve access to opportunity for everybody.

Here are a selection of stories highlighting our work in South Bristol: [South Bristol - The Summer 2024](#)

We have been working to build positive relationships across communities and neighbourhoods, while also supporting our equity communities through a range of recent challenges. These include the Barton House evacuation, the Israel-Gaza conflict, summer far-right protests, and serious violence. . In each case, we used our asset-based community development approach and worked with a strong network of community champions to bring people together and activate local leadership and energy.

These events had a significant impact on our communities, and fostering unity was essential to managing their effects. We hosted several community conversations on issues important to equity communities and shared positive stories to highlight their strengths and resilience.

We have also been working closely with equity communities to shape major city developments—such as Fromegate and Temple Quarter—based on co-design and co-creation principles. Two members of our team are dedicated to advancing race and disability equity in communities. For more information, please see [North Central East Bristol 2024 so far](#)

Community Exchange meetings

Community Exchange is a fortnightly meeting that brings together community hubs and Welcoming Spaces from across the city to connect, share learning, and plan for the future. Originally launched during the COVID-19 response to improve communication between Bristol City Council and the voluntary and community sector, it has since evolved into a growing city-wide platform.

The focus has shifted from crisis response to proactive planning around key city-wide themes. Hosted by Bristol City Council, the meetings are attended by partners such as the NHS, advice centres, mental health services, universities, employment services, and a wide range of community and voluntary organisations.

Equity and inclusion are central to the discussions, with hubs coordinating efforts and sharing good practice on key issues such as housing, employment, community cohesion, and access to advice. The Community Exchange is also developing new thematic areas to support a more strategic, community-led approach—one that builds on local strengths, supports resident-led solutions, and channels collective energy into meeting shared challenges.

Community Cohesion

Following the riots in August 2024, we collaborated with Bridges for Communities to deliver a series of Listening Spaces in neighbourhoods and with communities significantly affected by the unrest. These sessions provided safe, facilitated

environments for residents from different backgrounds to come together, share their experiences, and express concerns in a respectful and constructive manner.

The Listening Spaces aimed to promote mutual understanding, dispel myths and misinformation, and foster empathy between individuals who may otherwise feel divided by the social and political tensions heightened during the riots. In several cases, these dialogues helped to de-escalate local anxieties and enabled communities to begin rebuilding trust.

In addition to fostering dialogue, the sessions were used to identify common concerns and priorities, which were then fed back into local service planning. This approach not only empowered residents to be part of the recovery process but also laid the groundwork for longer-term community cohesion initiatives.

In addition, the Community Recovery Capital Fund enabled us to secure buildings and premises identified as vulnerable during the riots. Working in close collaboration with colleagues from Avon & Somerset Police's Design Out Crime Team, we carried out site assessments and implemented a range of protective measures to enhance the physical security of community assets.

These measures included the installation of improved lighting, CCTV systems, reinforced entry points, and other crime prevention modifications based on Secured by Design principles. Priority was given to premises such as community centres, places of worship, that had either been targeted or were considered at heightened risk.

This proactive approach not only helped to reduce the potential for further incidents but also provided visible reassurance to residents and community groups. It demonstrated a clear commitment to safeguarding shared spaces and supporting community resilience in the longer term.

Working with Quartet Community Foundation the Community Recovery Fund, has funded 37 community projects that achieve one or more of the following objectives:

- Empower and support the recovery of Black and racially minoritised communities who were the target of discrimination, hatred and public disorder.
- Build and strengthen community connections particularly between people who would not otherwise come together e.g. across generations, cultures, neighbourhoods, faith.
- Create safe spaces for community conversation.
- Empower communities of interest who face multiple social, cultural, physical, economic barriers to participation.

Community Recovery Fund is also enabling a programme of training and development for community and voluntary organisations across Bristol in relation to community cohesion, extremism and hate crime.

Inclusive Community Safety

The Stapleton Road Partnership is a collaborative effort involving the Police, Bristol City Council (including Bristol Waste), and the local community—businesses, residents, community, voluntary, and faith organisations. Its shared goal is to take a focused, coordinated approach to improving Stapleton Road.

Community meetings are held every two months. Initially, these meetings were tense, with residents demanding accountability from the Police and the Council on issues such as drug dealing, sex work, litter, and fly-tipping in the area. In response, and with support from the Community Development Team, the format of these meetings was transformed. They are now held in a more open and cooperative environment, co-designed with local residents and focused on finding practical solutions.

Meetings now follow a roundtable format where community members and agency representatives discuss specific issues, share updates, and work together to identify solutions. Topics for discussion are based on priorities raised at previous meetings, and any proposed solutions are given dedicated time and space to be explored in more depth.

This approach has fostered a more collaborative and constructive atmosphere. Some of the community-led solutions discussed and developed include:

- A resident steering group to co-design meetings and oversee actions
- Street-level community groups tackling issues like drug dealing
- A monthly community litter pick
- Expanded youth engagement, including regular meetings for young people to share their views
- A neighbourhood plan for Stapleton Road
- A Positive Image Campaign, featuring a Business Forum and a potential street market

These initiatives are being further developed by community members through smaller working groups held between the main Partnership meetings, with continued support from the Community Development Team.

Welcoming asylum seekers and refugees

Community Development practitioners in Bristol City Council have been working alongside refugees and asylum seekers to continue to build welcoming communities across Bristol. We have facilitated connections with established organisations, fostering venues for communal interaction within their respective communities across Bristol. Through these initiatives, individuals have been engaged in various activities, allowing for the exchange of skills, talents, and cultural insights. These activities have provided avenues for cultural enrichment and cross-cultural learning experiences.

For example, in Redcliffe, we have worked alongside the Redcliffe Hub to provide a regular drop-in space at the Mercure Hotel, making connections into the wider

Redcliffe community and enabling refugees and asylum seekers to organise their own activities and cook cultural appropriate foods.

We have been working with Refugee Women of Bristol as one of our community hubs and are working to support refugee women and families . This also includes coordination and liaison with refugee sector to ensure better communications. We have also been supporting new communities moving into the city through social connection in areas such as Lawrence Weston , Southmead and Hillfields and Frome Vale.

Promoting Health Equity

The Swap to Stop project addresses health inequity created by nicotine addiction. We have trained 14 Health Champions to run targeted work reducing smoking in the inner city, specifically in minoritized communities and communities disproportionately affected by the harms of smoking. Smoking is a key factor contributing to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and premature death amongst Black and minority communities. As part of the scheme, bilingual champions have been trained to provide community-based stop smoking sessions at community venues, events and on high streets. This recently launched project is showing promising signs supporting this group who are amongst those most at risk from the negative health impacts of smoking.

Bristol has also commissioned a new universal smoking cessation service to launch in July 2025. This service will apply the principle of proportionate universalism to its working with communities and will work closely with partners and residents in high smoking prevalence communities across the city to provide a specialist service which is culturally appropriate, accessible and high quality.

Case Study: Ensuring grassroots representation at Bristol Community Festival

Bristol Community Festival celebrated collective action with a two-week programme of events highlighting social action across the city. Funding was available for voluntary organisations and resident-led groups working with and in the 30% most deprived areas in Bristol and city-wide equalities groups to host an event as part of the programme.

Recognising that meaningful change often starts at grassroots level, a proportion of grants were made to resident-led groups—many of whom had never accessed council funding before. This enabled communities to platform the positive change they are making themselves and empower others to get involved. For groups without a bank account, we used Social Change Nest, an organisation that hold funding on behalf of a community group, to award the grant and allow the group to draw down funds. This flexible approach acted as an entry point by breaking down financial barriers, increasing transparency and opened up opportunities to communities who would often be ineligible for traditional grant programmes.

By ensuring funding criteria was open to resident-led groups, we saw applications from underrepresented and minority groups. One example is a newly formed Roma group, who hosted a successful community-led event and have since secured further funding to run a sports day. This is further strengthening community bonds and amplifying voices that are often unheard.

Case Study: Social Housing drop-in events

Social Housing drop-in events for Bristol City council tenants were first trialled during 2023 in partnership with Black Southwest Network (BSWN). These events were set up to provide a response to concerns that BSWN had highlighted from research around Black and minoritised communities facing barriers in accessing support with social housing issues.

Social Housing drop-in events, in partnership with Bristol City Council and Housing Matters, are intended to provide a useful starting point to bridging this gap by addressing questions and concerns members of minoritised communities have regarding social housing. By providing a space for engagement, these events were intended to improve accessibility to council housing services leading to a more productive relationship between the Council and these communities.

The events are focused on the following issues identified by BSWN from work with minoritised communities: Anti-Social Behaviour, Damp and Mould, HomeChoice, Repairs, Welfare Rights and Monday Advice Service.

The events are organised so residents can move from theme to theme (if they chose to) with access to a one-on-one meeting with a Bristol City Council housing representative from each of the above service areas. Officers from Bristol City Council Tenant Participation Team are also in attendance to support the events.

Following two successful initial drop-ins in 2023. It was agreed to continue to build on this partnership work with BSWN and trial a wider pilot during 2024. Holding drop-ins as bi-monthly events in different locations around the city and with support of other local partner organisations. Over 90 residents attended a drop-in event.

Positive Impacts:

- Attendees said they appreciated the opportunity to engage with the housing team.
- Sessions were described as well-planned and resident focused.
- Some attendees expressed increased knowledge and understanding after the event and clearer understanding of housing processes.

Working with BSWN and partners, Bristol City Council Housing and Landlord Services want to use the feedback to evaluate and continue to develop our approach to increasing access and encouraging involvement from minoritised communities.

Case Study: Dual Language Book Gifting for GRT Families in Bristol

BookTrust transforms lives by getting children and families reading. In partnership with Bristol Libraries and St Paul's Children's Centre, a dual language (Romanian and English) book gifting project was delivered for Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) families as part of the St Paul's GRT Families and Baby Group Christmas Party. The initiative grew from a smaller gifting of BookStart books in 2023, which sparked deeper engagement with the group. In 2024, five BookTrust dual language books were gifted at the Christmas event, enabling children to read to their parents in their home language—many for the first time. Being able to take the books home made for a truly meaningful Christmas gift. This recognition of the group's needs helped secure an Arts Council MicroGrant, allowing the team to plan further resources, activities, and potentially an interactive Romanian-speaking storyteller. The project reached GRT families who attend St Paul's Children's Centre, part of Central and East Bristol Children's Centres, and aimed to build inclusive connections with libraries through books and reading.

Feedback from the event:

"Event was a huge success, food and dancing and lots of good connections made."

"I believe they felt valued, and this helped from our perspective of engagement, to continue to provide a space of belonging and an opportunity to learn from each other."

"Families were thrilled with the books in their home language, and thought we were amazing to 'bother to get these for us!'"

"One of our families have a sister who has additional needs—presents as a global learning delay—she was really excited about the books in Romanian ... her family were able to read them to her – a magical moment."

"The children were able to share them with us and demonstrate the literacy skills they have acquired, something we would never have seen."

Measures of success

E05: Communities	Trend	Comment on progress 2023-24
Reduction in % of those living in the most deprived areas who feel fear of crime affects their day-to-day life.	Lower	In 2024 the percentage of those living in the 10% most deprived areas whose fear of crime affects their day to day lives was 40.9%, lower than in 2023 (44.4%).
Increase in % of citizens who agree people from different backgrounds get on well together in their neighbourhoods.	Higher	In 2024 this was 72.9%, which is very slightly higher than 72.5% in 2023
Increase in % of citizens who feel they belong to their neighbourhood.	Higher	In 2024 the Bristol average was 64.8%, slightly higher compared to 2023 (63.8%). Disparities continue to exist with the 10% most deprived reporting 45.4% and the 10% least deprived reporting 77.4%.
Increase in % who feel police and public services successfully tackle crime and anti-social behaviour locally.	Lower	This figure has very slightly decreased from 20.6% in 2023 to 20.3% in 2024.
Reduction in residents who report experiencing discrimination or harassment in the past year.	Higher	In 2024–25, 2,639 hate crimes were reported to police, up from 2,279 in 2023–24. A spike in reporting during this period coincided with the violent disorder in Bristol, which was partly driven by far-right, racist, anti-immigration, and anti-Muslim sentiment. Racially motivated hate crimes remain the most common, increasing by 15% year-on-year. The August 2024 unrest likely contributed to both the rise in incidents and reporting. The Strategic Partnership Against Hate Crime (SPAHC) continues to raise awareness and has improved data systems to help partners identify repeat perpetrators and victims. Bristol also funds the Hate Crime & Discrimination Service and is developing a strategic framework to support community cohesion.

Appendices

Workforce Diversity Data

The following workforce diversity data shows levels of representation for Bristol City Council employees by category, compared to the Bristol working age population (or equivalent group where more appropriate e.g. age band). The report excludes data for locally managed schools/nurseries, councillors, casual, seasonal and external agency employees. The report is based on the sensitive information that colleagues provide confidentially on our HR system. Some data for categories where there are fewer than 50 employees has been redacted.

Category	March 2025 Bristol City Council		Bristol population %	Difference to Bristol population	Trend since March 24 increase or decrease %
Age 16 - 29	843	12.2%	39.0%	-26.8%	0.7%
Age 30 - 39	1,546	22.3%	24.0%	-1.7%	0.9%
Age 40 - 49	1,680	24.3%	16.0%	8.3%	0.2%
Age 50 - 64	2,597	37.5%	21.0%	16.5%	-1.7%
Age 65 +	240	3.5%	-	-	-0.2%
Disabled	535	7.7%	12.0%	-4.3%	-0.5%
Not Disabled	3,960	57.2%	88.0%	30.8%	-5.2%
Prefer not to state Disability	192	2.8%	-	-	-0.1%
Unknown Disability	2,234	32.3%	-	-	5.8%
Asian or Asian British	256	3.7%	5.8%	-2.1%	0.7%
Black or Black British	391	5.6%	5.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Mixed ethnicity	249	3.6%	2.9%	0.7%	0.1%
Other ethnic groups	-	0.6%	1.0%	-0.4%	0.0%
White	5,385	77.8%	85.0%	-7.2%	-0.4%
Prefer not to state ethnicity	111	1.6%	-	-	0.0%
Unknown Ethnicity	486	7.0%	-	-	-0.9%
Female	4,182	60.4%	49.0%	11.4%	-0.3%
Male	2,669	38.6%	51.0%	-12.4%	0.1%
I use another term	-	0.2%	-	-	0.0%
Prefer not to say	56	0.8%	-	-	0.2%
Civil Partnership	38	0.5%	-	-	0.1%
Declared Partnership	22	0.3%	-	-	0.0%
Divorced	131	1.9%	-	-	0.2%
Married	1,476	21.3%	-	-	2.3%
Partner	687	9.9%	-	-	1.8%
Single	1183	17.1%	-	-	2.9%
Widowed	-	0.2%	-	-	0.0%
Prefer not to state Marital Status	218	3.1%	-	-	0.7%
Unknown Marital Status	3,149	45.5%	-	-	-8.2%
Christian	1,749	25.3%	43.5%	-18.2%	-0.6%
Other religion or belief	444	6.4%	7.3%	-0.9%	0.1%

Category	March 2025 Bristol City Council		Bristol population %	Difference to Bristol population	Trend since March 24 increase or decrease %
No religion or belief	3,192	46.1%	41.5%	4.6%	2.8%
Prefer not to state Religion	997	14.4%	7.7%	6.7%	-1.4%
Unknown Religion	539	7.8%	-	-	-0.9%
LGB	510	7.4%	9.1%	-1.7%	0.8%
Heterosexual	4945	71.4%	90.9%	-19.5%	1.3%
Prefer not to state Sexual Orientation	965	13.9%	-	-	-1.3%
Unknown Sexual Orientation	501	7.2%	-	-	-0.9%
Trans person	-	0.2%	0.8%	-0.6%	0.0%
Not a Trans person	3,907	56.5%	92.5%	-36.0%	8.6%
Prefer not to state Trans	106	1.5%	-	-	0.3%
Unknown Trans	2,892	41.8%	-	-	-8.9%

Targets for representation, progression and pay and other outcomes by characteristic

Measure	2023-24	2024-25	Trend
Increase the percentage of employment offers made to people living in the 10% most deprived areas.	6.35% ¹	7.02%	Higher
Increase the percentage of senior leaders who are from minority ethnic communities.	9%	10%	Higher
Increase the percentage of senior leaders who are women.	66.47%	73.79%	Higher
Year in year increases in the proportion of colleagues who self-declare their	Ethnicity: 7.7% Religion/Belief: 8.5%	Ethnicity: 7.0% Religion/Belief: 7.8%	-

¹ This is based on Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data, which ranks areas in England from most to least deprived. The percentages indicate the proportion of employment offers made to individuals living in the 10% most deprived areas.

diversity characteristics. (measured via reduction in % unknown)	Sexual Orientation: 7.9% Disability: 27.0% Marital Status: 52.4% Trans: 49.5%	Sexual Orientation: 7.2% Disability: 32.3% Marital Status: 45.5% Trans: 41.8%	
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Annual Pay Gap reporting

Measure	2023-24	2024-25	Trend
Gender pay gap (mean)	2.76%	3.67%	Higher
Race pay gap (mean)	6.10%	6.02%	Lower
Disability pay gap (mean)	4.02%	4.50%	Higher

Summary of Equity and Inclusion Learning and Development Offer

Detail is provided below for a few elements of the equity and inclusion related training and development. Further information is contained in other sections of this report, e.g., under Workforce Diversity Initiatives and/or on the Source the council's intranet.

E-learning available through [Learning Hub \[internal link only\]](#)

- A Guide to the Menopause
- Accessible and Inclusive - Train the Trainer module
- Equality and Diversity – Your Rights and Responsibilities
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Hybrid Working
- Introduction to Reasonable Adjustments
- Managing Diversity
- Managing Mental Health at Work
- Managing Stress and Anxiety
- Navigating Change
- Older People Awareness and Challenging Ageism
- Recruitment and Selection refresher

- Trans Inclusive Guidance

Trainer Facilitated Courses available through ESS (Employee Self Service) - on iTrent

- Corporate Induction which includes an equality and inclusion session
- Cultural Intelligence
- Deaf Awareness
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Leading Inclusively
- Mental Health First Aid
- Recruitment and Selection
- Stepping Up
- Supporting Attendance with Effective Conversations