



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

2023-2024



Introduction

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan for 2023-24 aims to make EDI central to the council's culture. We have many ambitions for EDI here at the council, and we will be transparent and open with our people and residents about our intentions, including how we will take responsibility for achieving them.

Our Council Plan sets out how we, as a council, will support the achievement of the Barnsley 2030 vision for the borough through four major thematic priorities: Healthy Barnsley; Learning Barnsley; Growing Barnsley; and Sustainable Barnsley. Our final additional priority is Enabling Barnsley, which is driven by our ambition to be even better i.e., a modern, inclusive, diverse, efficient, productive and high-performing council.

Our overarching Barnsley 2030 ambition is that we want Barnsley to be The Place of Possibilities for everyone and our EDI action plan is an important part of ensuring that we achieve our ambition.

A key enabler of our work is our [People Strategy 2022-25](#). This supports the delivery of both the Council Plan and our Barnsley 2030 ambitions. We know that our greatest asset is our people, who make such a positive difference to the quality of residents' lives, enabling our communities to be even better connected and to help themselves and each other. Our People Strategy demonstrates the value we place on our people, their energy, ideas and innovation with many ways of involving and collaborating with colleagues in its implementation and delivery.

Our EDI Action Plan is both about how the council serves its residents and communities, and its role as a major employer in the borough. The plan is therefore intrinsically linked to our People Strategy. We want the council to be an employer of choice, recommended first and foremost by our employees. We want to be high performers in being an inclusive and diverse council, where all employees are afforded dignity and respect, able to be themselves at work and offered equity of opportunity at all levels. We want our people to have a sense of belonging, where they can bring their whole selves to work.



Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010 contains an integrated Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which requires all public bodies to consider the needs of protected groups* when designing and delivering services. The three key pillars within the act are:

- 1 To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.**
- 2 To take forward (advance) equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.**
- 3 To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.**

*The act covers people who share the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

Annual Equalities Report and Objectives

We publish an annual equalities report, which provides an overview of how we are meeting the Equality Act 2010 and associated PSED. As a local authority, we understand that it is imperative to assess the potential impacts of the range of external and internal activities on diverse groups of people across Barnsley.

This involves looking at evidence, engaging, and building relationships with all communities, employees, partnerships, customers, stakeholders, and service providers across the borough. Our equality objectives demonstrate the council's commitment to challenging inequality, ensuring equity in service delivery, and ultimately promoting a fair and inclusive Barnsley.



To ensure equality and diversity are considered in everything we do, we have developed five core objectives:

1 Understand our communities by developing effective engagement strategies that enable interaction with diverse groups, fostering strong relations that build trust and confidence.

2 Work with our partners to implement strategies to explain, where necessary reduce, and where possible eliminate, disproportionate outcomes and enhance public service.

3 Understand the impact of our policies and practices on people with different protected characteristics by conducting equality monitoring and take steps to remove or minimise disadvantages.

4 Achieve a positive shift in our workplace culture where people, no matter what their background and circumstances, feel confident to disclose their protected characteristics.

5 Attract, engage, develop and retain a workforce that is representative of the wider communities we serve.

Some minority groups are currently under-represented within the organisation. We are progressing our inclusivity agenda so that we promote inclusive opportunities, for our people and our communities.

Inclusivity Statement

Everyone at the council takes personal responsibility to help create an inclusive workplace, where employees respect one another, feel valued for their differences and can be themselves. We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments wherever needed, so everyone feels welcome and can flourish.

We are committed to meeting our legal and moral obligations to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and promote good relations.



We strive to ensure all employees have equity in employment where advancement is based upon knowledge, experience, competency and performance.

We have streamlined our EDI Action Plan to enable us to focus on the immediate things that will really make a difference, with achievable goals. A major theme of activity for 2023-24 is to significantly improve what we know about our workforce. The aim is to be able to effectively assess our workforce diversity profile and allow us to target interventions for people who fall under the relevant protected characteristics. This year, we will strive to achieve the following:

- 1 Our Senior Management Team will make, and publish, a Diversity and Inclusion Pledge.
- 2 Collate protected characteristic data from all employees to better aid workforce analysis and reporting.
- 3 Review the workforce diversity profile of each directorate and work in partnership with the directorates to develop SMART objectives, seeking to address any areas of underrepresentation.
- 4 Review, update and promote the suite of diversity and inclusion (D&I) training courses provided, including the introduction of mandatory D&I training for everyone.
Improve our equalities data across the council, by developing a framework in which to capture, monitor and report on key data highlights across a wide spectrum of council services. The first priority will be focused on customer complaint equalities data, but we will also review our IT systems to ensure that up-to-date protected characteristics are captured and reported upon.
- 5 Review and strengthen the Dignity at Work policy and undertake an awareness raising campaign for all employees to encourage reporting of harassment/discrimination when witnessed, coupled with providing guidance around ownership and accountability.
- 6 All council employees will undergo training by means of a 'Diversity Workshop' including topics such as unconscious bias and cultural awareness, and we will monitor adherence. Employees involved in recruitment and selection panels will also be expected to undertake the 'Recruitment' module.
- 7 Establish BME, Disability, Neurodiverse and Women's employee networks, using learning from the LGBTQ+ employee network and the most recent Employee Survey (September 2022).
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How will we monitor progress?

We will monitor progress and the difference we're making through a variety of ways, such as performance metrics, outcomes and findings from assessments and reviews. Additionally, regular progress reports will be provided to the People Board, who will ultimately oversee the progress and delivery of the outcomes outlined in this plan.

No Place for Hate

In June 2023, a 'No Place for Hate' Task and Finish Group was established to:



- Provide strategic leadership to give assurance to SMT and political leadership that we are delivering effectively in relation to Barnsley's community cohesion agenda.
- Oversee and ensure delivery of a programme of improvement activity.
- Report back to SMT and cabinet as appropriate.

Some of the initial key actions included:

- Research how other traditionally white working-class areas have successfully approached the cohesion agenda and whether a formal strategy or policy statement would benefit and guide our work.
- Engage with the Equality and Human Rights Commission/Local Government Association for advice and best practice.
- Linking to our emerging enrichment programme for children and young people, explore the engagement and education with our younger residents so that we are raising our next generation to be more open to new cultures and accepting of change.
- Revisit our approach to staff training so that our employees are more able to recognise problems and offer appropriate challenges when working with our communities, as well as ensure that our policy and decisions are cognisant of cohesion issues.
- Revisit our EDI training offer for managers, including a diversity workshop covering topics of unconscious bias and cultural awareness.
- Celebrate religious/cultural events both externally and internally, being much more visibly inclusive.
- Ensure we are capturing hate incidents against our workforce through the violence and aggression process and that these are logged with partners.
- Revisit our approach to elected member development so that our councillors have the skills and confidence to champion this agenda.
- In conjunction with our Barnsley 2030 partners, review our approach to communications to ensure that we are sharing positive real-world stories that promote the benefits of a diverse society and working more closely on joint community events.
- Explore the opportunity of Barnsley becoming a 'City of Sanctuary'. There are two schools progressing 'Schools of Sanctuary' in the borough along with our libraries working towards becoming 'Libraries of Sanctuary'.

Development of our EDI Action Plan 2023-26

Our 2023-24 plan has been streamlined to enable us to deliver a more realistic programme of activity, with achievable goals. We will not stop there. This year's plan will form part of a more detailed three-year plan which will be refreshed at the end of each reporting period. Work is currently underway to develop this plan, which will be our EDI Action Plan 2024-26, and embed this year's activity within it. By way of introduction, our three-year action plan will cover the three key themes of our People Strategy, plus a further two additional themes:

1. Leadership (effective leadership, values and culture)
2. Maximising organisational capacity and capability (delivering inclusive services)
3. Employee experience
4. Knowing and engaging our communities
5. Communication and engagement

We will develop our plan as below, with the aim of publishing a final version in early 2024.

Theme 1: Leadership (effective leadership, values and culture)

Ambition

Work together towards a common vision and values that is understood by all. We have strong, resilient, influential and transformational leaders within our organisation. Leaders at every level support and champion our aim for a more diverse organisation and inclusive culture. Moreover, members and senior officers are champions of EDI, acting as role models and demonstrating their commitment to tackling inequality.

1.1 Support for progression for employees from under-represented groups

- Continue to identify succession planning for Senior Management Team (SMT) and other senior leadership positions within the council, in line with our EDI aspirations.

1.2. Training for culture change within management

- Review all current EDI training provisions within the council.
- Continue to roll out the relevant e-learning opportunities for all employees.

1.3 Career/leadership development for under-represented employees

- Refine and publicise the current career development offers, including targeting to under-represented employee groups.
- Review data on under-represented groups across the workforce. Use this data to inform a career development programme for under-represented employee groups.



Theme 2: Maximising organisational capacity and capability (delivering inclusive services)

Ambition

We have effective and efficient solutions, plans, frameworks and resources in place to support the delivery of the priorities set out in our council plan and people strategy. Our services are responsive to individual needs, so all residents can access services easily and have opportunities to improve their outcomes.

2.1 Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

- Revise and refine EIA templates and guidance.
- Create a network of champions to support EIAs within service areas.
- Provide a training programme to EIA champions and colleagues who are involved with re/shaping policies and services.

2.2 Supporting and working with the community/voluntary sector (VCSE)

- Support the VCSE sector to continue to improve EDI practice in the sector.
- Work with the VCSE sector to ensure appropriate and targeted support to those most vulnerable to cost-of-living issues.

2.3 Embedding EDI in procurement and commissioning

- Undertake a review of EDI guidance on procurement issues.
- Embed elements of our EDI action plan and strategy into our procurement processes in order to use our supply chain to become advocates of our EDI approach.

2.4 Community of practice

- Continue to build our cross-council EDI community of practice to improve information sharing and service design and delivery from an EDI perspective.

Theme 3: Employee Experience

Ambition

We are an inclusive organisation where wellbeing and a people-centred culture keeps employees healthy, safe, engaged, motivated and productive. We will strengthen the diversity of our workforce and move to an inclusive culture that values difference, where all employees feel they belong and have opportunities to succeed.



3.1 Agile and accessible workplace

- Continue to support the council's work on implementation of reasonable adjustments, and act on the recommendations of the workplace adjustments evaluation, including engaging with feedback from employee networks and trade unions.
- Work with colleagues in housing/planning/policy to identify a 'Barnsley standard' for building accessibility and (where relevant) an agreed programme of works for remediation of issues with existing buildings.
- Ensure that the new building projects are developed with user feedback and will provide access to the agreed 'Barnsley standard'.

3.2 Understanding the experience of employees from under-represented groups

- Completing employee reviews focusing on the experiences of disabled, LGBTQ+ and BME employees in a way that produces good quality evidence.
- Use evidence from the employee reviews to develop clear improvement plans, including around recruitment and retention policies for employees from under-represented groups.
- Develop a business case and options appraisal for a 'speak-up' service to support employees experiencing discrimination at work.

3.3 EDI training

- Current EDI e-learning modules to be made mandatory for all employees, including addition to the induction pack for new starters.
- A diversity workshop, including unconscious bias and cultural awareness training, to be rolled out and offered to all employees.
- Review current EDI training provision to ensure that employees have appropriate skills to support EDI.
- Develop new training provided as part of induction, training for managers and leaders, training on carrying out Equality Impact Assessments and training on Allyship and Shared Barriers.
- Review what further training may be needed based on evidence from employee reviews and other feedback.

3.4 Recruitment and retention

- Work with HR to develop an 'Inclusive Recruitment' programme and implement actions arising from it.
- Use data from employee reviews to improve recruitment and retention of employees from underrepresented groups.
- Analyse data from new joiners, exit interviews and employee surveys to measure the impact of EDI work.

3.5 Employee data reporting and monitoring

- Use the opportunity of moving to a new HR system to encourage all employees to report their demographics through a 'check your data' day.
- Use this data to carry out a periodic refresh, and to assess the feasibility of carrying out ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting, in addition to the already established gender pay gap reporting.

3.6 Membership of Charters

- The council will strive to become members of certain charters such as Diversity and Inclusion, Race at Work, Inclusive Employer, and achieving disability confident 'leader' rather than 'employer' status. These charters are adopted by some other councils and will feature in the Recruitment Action Plan.

Theme 4: Knowing and engaging our communities

Ambition

Use the best information available and foster good relations with and within our communities, to work with them to address their needs and maximise local participation.

4.1 Research into experiences of lesser-heard communities and groups

- Work with the stronger communities team to develop a portfolio of examples of where and how existing research has improved service delivery and practice.
- Draw together the strands of research and locality-based work into a suite of compelling 'so what' stories to help service planners understand how to apply the knowledge to their areas of work.
- Ensure the intelligence gathered through our community-focused work is used to inform Equality Impact Assessment completion across the council.
- Continue to improve the council's ethnographic research base, including work on barriers to skills and employment, financial inclusion and cost of living.

4.2 Continue to work with residents and representative groups across Barnsley to improve outcomes and services and increase local community participation

- Seek regular updates from VCSE colleagues on community participation work, any key feedback they are gathering, and opportunities for liaison – and report on these as required.



Theme 5: Communication and Engagement

Ambition

Theme 5: Employee Experience

Clearly communicate a radical approach to EDI across the organisation (internal) and to residents (external).

5.1 Digital accessibility

- Commission a review of current digital accessibility work, and produce a report with a prioritised list of actions.
- Set up a Digital Accessibility working group to implement the immediate-term actions from this review.

5.2 Creating inclusive communications and campaigns for target audiences

- Develop an agreed calendar of inclusion events and activities in agreement with the employee networks and other stakeholders to enable clearer focus and prioritisation of resources and budget to support these over the year.
- Look to increase diversity in voices that are chosen to represent the council's communications both internally and externally. Use the employee intranet as a way of boosting the visibility of diverse viewpoints and voices.

5.3 Working with partner organisations to ensure accessible and inclusive communications

- Share the emerging data from the 2021 Census with partners and stakeholders across Barnsley to inform our approach to accessible communications.
- Communications support to help build an appreciation of different cultures in communities.
- Communications support to help raise awareness of neurodiverse conditions.

5.4 Improve access to EDI information for all employees

- Review methods of communication for employees who do not have access to corporate IT systems.
- Consider non-digital options for 'all employees' communications for those who need it.

On an ongoing basis, we will also:

- Review our webpages to ensure currency and fit for purpose.
- Revisit our approach to training/briefing so that our employees are more able to recognise problems and offer appropriate challenges when working with our communities, as well as ensuring that our policy and decision making is cognisant of cohesion issues.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2023-24

Action	Linked to People Strategy Theme/Action	Responsible Officer	Reporting Deadline	RAG Rating	Status	Resource Requirements and Comments
1. Our Senior Management Team will make and publish a Diversity and Inclusion pledge, which is supported by at least one relevant objective recorded in PDRs.	Effective leadership, Values and Culture	Place, Policy and Equalities Manager	October 2023	Amber	Not started	
2. We will collect protected characteristic data from all of our employees to better aid employee reporting data.	Employee Experience	Senior Policy and Equalities Officers	October 2023 - ongoing	Amber	In progress	
3. We will review the workforce diversity profile of each directorate and work in partnership with the directorates to develop SMART objectives, seeking to address areas of under representation.	Maximising Organisational Capacity and Capability	Senior Policy and Equalities Officers	December 2023	Amber	In progress	
4. We will review and update the suite of diversity and inclusion training courses (POD courses) including the introduction of mandatory training modules.	Effective Leadership, Values and Culture	Senior Policy and Equalities Officers	October 2023	Amber	In progress	
5. Improve our equalities data across the council, by developing a framework in which to capture, monitor and report on key data highlights across a wide spectrum of council services. The first priority will be focused on customer complaint equalities data, but we will also review our IT systems to ensure that up-to-date protected characteristics are captured and reported upon.	Effective Leadership, Values and Culture	Place, Policy and Equalities Manager	March 2024	Amber	In progress	

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6. We will review and strengthen the 'Dignity at Work' policy and undertake an awareness raising campaign for all employees to encourage reporting of harassment/discrimination when witnessed in the workplace.	Employee Experience	Senior Policy and Equalities Officers	December 2023	Amber	Not started	
7. All council employees will undergo training by means of a 'Diversity Workshop' including topics such as unconscious bias and cultural awareness, and we will monitor adherence. Employees involved in recruitment and selection panels will also be expected to undertake the 'Recruitment' module.	Maximising Organisational Capacity and Capability	Place, Policy and Equalities Manager	March 2024 - ongoing	Amber	Not started	
8. We will establish a series of employee networks (for example: BME, Disability, Neurodiversity and Women's), using learning from the already established LGBTQ+ employee network. We will also incorporate learning from our most recent Employee Survey.	Employee Experience	Senior Policy and Equalities Officers	March 2024 - ongoing	Amber	In progress	