

**Bury Council 2020-2024
Inclusion Strategy Review**

Jun 2024

Background

The 2020-2024 Inclusion Strategy was developed jointly by the Bury Council and CCG partnership following a 2020 internal review into inclusive practice. The strategy was co-produced by staff groups, community leaders and senior champions. The internal review and the strategy formed part of the commitment from the partnership to improve equalities and inclusion practice as an employer, service provider and commissioner.

Aims

The 2020-2024 Strategy aimed to support the development of a strong foundation with equality diversity and inclusion which focused on getting the basics right .

Seven objectives were identified to improve inclusive practice across the partnership and in the borough, with each objective having specific actions to deliver the objective. Some objectives and actions were specific to either the council or CCG, with some being shared objectives and actions.

In 2022 the Bury Council and CCG partnership was dissolved with the creation of NHS GM and the Integrated Care Board, as such this report focuses on the conclusion and outcomes of the objectives and actions specific to Bury Council.

Objectives, actions and Outcomes

Objective 1: Performance and Scrutiny
(a) ensure that there is a robust performance/scrutiny function in place for current and future Inclusion work (b) Establish effective governance arrangements (c) resource through internal staff expertise at a senior level and drive forward the implementation of the Inclusion Strategy
Action 1: Establish an Inclusion Implementation Group, with an Executive Lead, membership to be determined by the Council, in order to implement the Inclusion Strategy and actions monitored across the organisation
Outcome: Action met An Inclusion Working Group has been formed which continues to oversee inclusion activity in the Council. Inclusion is now part of a dedicated cabinet portfolio with the cabinet member with responsibility for inclusion and the Director of People and Inclusion members of the Inclusion Working Group. The group's remit expanded to include activity from Team Bury organisations with representatives from VCFA, Persona and Bury GMP. Over time the group has become focused solely on council activity with varied attendance levels from council colleagues and external partner organisations. There is a need to review governance and engagement of this group as part of the new EDI strategy
Action 2: Identify and establish reporting arrangements for the Inclusion Implementation Group
Outcome: Action partially met The Inclusion Working Group reports into the Council's health and wellbeing board however this link is not formalised the new EDI strategy gives an opportunity to develop a more formal reporting arrangement.

Action 3: Establish an annual review process of the equality objectives and implementation plans actions and set appropriate objectives and actions for subsequent year
Outcome: Action not met Implementation plans are reviewed by the Inclusion Working Group as and when required however the link back to the strategy's objectives could be strengthened as could the process for reviewing EDI objectives and actions .
Action 4: Produce an annual report on progress made against objectives and actions
Outcome: Action partially met The council publishes an Employment Equality Report annually which is an analysis of colleague demographics and workplace activities relating to work/life balance and development opportunities. The EDI manager produces a quarterly progress report on strategy objectives however this is not annualised.
Action 5: Identify a named senior leader who will act as a Champion for the Equality Employee Groups
Outcome: Action met The council's Director of People and Inclusion which is responsible for championing and advancing inclusion across the organisation.
Action 6: Establish a Head of Equality post
Outcome: Action met An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager post has been created with a manager in post.
Overall Outcome: Objective partially met
<p>The aims of this objective were in three parts, to create an inclusion implementation group, develop review and reporting structures and to assign specific responsibilities for inclusion through senior leadership and an EDI manager post.</p> <p>The first part has been achieved with the formation of the Inclusion Working Group, which focuses on Council inclusion activity. The group expanded to include Team Bury however attendance is inconsistent and there is a need to review the remit and governance of this group.</p> <p>The second part of creating a review and reporting structure is partially being met with progress reports being produced each quarter, however there are no formal reporting structures and no annual reporting taking place.</p> <p>Finally, the third part of this objective has been fully achieved with an EDI manager post created and filled alongside inclusion coming under the remit of the Director of People and Inclusion providing senior leadership responsibility and championing of inclusion</p>
Recommendations for future:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess whether the model of the Inclusion Working Group is effective and fit for purpose as a multi organisation model • Include the need for an effective 'Team Bury' approach to inclusion into the next strategy • Deliver a formal reporting structure as part of the new EDI strategy. • An annual EDI report is developed and published combining the Employment Equality Report, update on strategy actions and EDI activities throughout the year

- Consider an executive sponsorship model for employee networks to champion the networks and support EDI development for senior leaders

Objective 2: Equality Data and Information

(a) improve data collection with regard to the protected characteristics of employees and service users

(b) ensure that the Council is meeting its legal obligations to have due regard to the general equality duty and to be able to demonstrate compliance

Action 1: Carry out a full data cleanse of the iTrent (HR system) in order to take the initial step of improving data collection on the protected characteristics of employees

Outcome: Action met

Up to April 2023 there was no automatic transfer of equalities data from Greater Jobs to iTrent this had to be transferred manually and was only done when resources allowed meaning a continual exercise of data update and cleansing was required to preserve the integrity of the data. A data cleanse has been carried out and the process is now automated.

Action 2: Introduce consistent data collection requirements across the protected characteristics for all departments and service areas

Outcome: Action partially met

Colleagues are able to update and change their equalities information at any time on iTrent and regular reminders are put out to encourage colleagues do this.

Monitoring is added to council surveys both internal and external

There is a set of standard monitoring questions however there is work to do to ensure these are being used consistently across Council services

Action 3: Design and implement a robust system across each department to confirm, QA & record EA screening of policies takes place

Outcome: Action met

Records of QA and EqIA review are kept by the EDI manager through a tracker that tracks receipt, QA status and sign off of all EqIAs

Action 4: Insert an EA section into formal reports in order to provide a written explanation of the outcome(s) of either conducting an initial or full EA

Outcome: Action met

EqIA section included with formal reports highlighting information about completed EqIA

Action 5: Implement a robust system whereby approval of a formal report is paused when the 'Equality/Diversity implications' section is left blank and approval will only be given when this section is completed

Outcome: Action met

All EqIA should be reviewed and signed by EDI Manager. Checks are carried out on cabinet reports where these are submitted on time. A further check is carried out at the cabinet agenda setting meeting, where EqIA can be requested or the report progress is paused. - Other formal reports do not have this check in place

Action 6: Identify all staff who are required to undertake EAs and implement a robust system to ensure these staff attend tutor-led EA training

Outcome: Action met

Briefing sessions on the EqIA process and tools have been delivered with all Senior Leadership Teams as well as open briefing sessions for all colleagues.

Strong guidance to support completion is available with the EqIA tool. Additional support is provided from the EDI manager on an ad hoc basis

Action 7: Establish a reporting mechanism of EA work conducted departmentally to the future Inclusion Implementation Group in order to monitor progress made and to establish an accountability and assurance function

Outcome: Action partially met

The EDI manager retains a tracker to record and track EqIAs which go through review and QA by the EDI manager. EqIA activity is reported in the quarterly report but is not broken down by department or progress analysed by the Inclusion Working Group. Directorate representatives also report on local activity into the Inclusion Working Group.

Action 8: Update current EA Template and Guidance

Outcome: Action met

The council's EqIA template, guidance and process has been reviewed, updated and rolled out to the whole council through management briefing sessions. Additional training and support is provided by the EDI manager on an ad hoc basis

Overall outcome: Objective partially met

The overall aims of this objective were to ensure robust collection and storage of accurate equalities data and develop an Equality Impact Assessment tool, process and reporting structure.

In terms of data collection, there is a system available which keeps confidential data which can be updated by colleagues at any time. Regular communications go out to colleagues to remind them and show how they can update their data.

Monitoring forms for collecting data from service users are available but are used inconsistently across services with services lacking systems to record this data confidentially and in a way that meaningful analysis can be undertaken.

The council has reviewed its EqIA tool, guidance and process which has been rolled out and is managed by the EDI manager who is responsible for the QA of each EqIA. The EDI manager also keeps copies of all EqIAs that are signed off and maintains a tracker to track EqIA progress.

Recommendations:

- Develop a campaign to encourage colleagues to self declare equalities information in the iTrent system
- Support managers of front line staff to find a solution to inputting their equalities data confidentially
- Monitoring questions are reviewed annually to ensure these use current acceptable terminology
- Monitoring questions are used consistently across Council services with service user data collated and analysed at least annually by services

Objective 3: Community Engagement

(a) improve community engagement

(b) Ensure members of local BAME* Communities, through the 'Listening Exercise', to have been genuinely heard

*The acronym BAME has been discontinued by Bury Council, the term ethnic minority is used to refer to this group of people however it should be recognised this is an umbrella term for different ethnicities, nationalities and races rather than a term to describe a homogenous group.

Action 1: Produce a Community Engagement Strategy co-designed with communities across the protected characteristics with a clear implementation plan
Outcome: Action partially met The Council's LET'S Do It! vision for 2030 is a community inclusion strategy which has set out principles for community engagement. These principles do not directly address engagement with specific protected characteristics.
Action 2: Introduce Regular Listening Events & reports back with members of communities with protected characteristics/community leaders/voluntary and community sector representatives
Outcome: Action partially met Listening events have taken place around race conversations which have been reported back. Other characteristics have been covered in ad hoc conversations and engagement through VCFA groups, charities and community networks.
Action 3: Ensure the full findings of this exercise is shared with relevant key staff across departments
Outcome: Action met A full report from the race conversations in 2021 has been produced and shared
Action 4: Report on progress made against these actions to the Inclusion Implementation Group and to the people who participated in the Listening Exercise
Outcome: Action partially met A full report from the race conversations in 2021 has been produced and shared however follow up on progress on actions has not been consistently reported.
Overall Outcome: Objective partially met
This objective focused on positive engagement with communities of identity and interest around the protected characteristics. The action to produce a community engagement strategy to be applied to all protected characteristics was not met with no formal strategy in place. Communication routes do exist with some protected characteristics such as Bury LGBTQI Forum, Bury Faith Forum and Bury Older People's network and the Bury VCFA provide support here. However such groups do not exist for other characteristics that experience the most disadvantage and discrimination. The council commissioned a Race Conversations exercise in 2021, creating forums for residents and community groups to give their views from lived experiences of being from an ethnic minority in Bury. From this, a full report with recommended actions was produced in 2022. The report has been shared with key stakeholders. However, whilst a number of actions were progressed there is a need to strengthen feedback here and coordinate response work.
Recommendations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strong engagement approach with protected characteristic and intersectional groups to encourage and strengthen community voices • Maintain the two way conversations with the current groups that engage with the council on their specific protected characteristics • Incorporate the findings of the Race conversations into the 2024-2028 EDI strategy
Objective 4: Representative Workforce
(a) Progress development of a Council workforce that is representative of Bury's population

(d) make real progress against the current WRES action plan
Action 1: Open up vacancies for external recruitment
Outcome: Action met All vacancies will be made open as a redeployment opportunity for council staff to reduce colleague attrition and redundancies where roles become obsolete. Where vacancies are unable to be filled internally, these are posted externally on Greater Jobs
Action 2: Where there is an under-representation of staff at all levels compared to the local population across the protected characteristics, identify positive action measures and take action to progress these, with a particular focus on Race in 2021 and a particular focus on Disability in 2022
Outcome: Action partially met Some positive action measures have been put in place in conjunction with other actions plans i.e. Disability Confident and guaranteed interview schemes. Bury has led on developing an Inclusive Recruitment Toolkit with the council championing some of the positive actions this encourages which includes application by CV as standard which is a more accessible method of applying for roles and some teams are now offering working interviews which combine an interview, onboarding and training into a 3-4 day work trial which has increased success in filling some front line roles, increased retention and reduced the overall recruitment timeframe.
Action 3: Adopt the NHS Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) and produce a WRES Action Plan
Outcome: Action partially met The WRES was conducted in 2022 and 2023 but was not published The WRES was designed to be used NHS trust wide with a very large colleague headcount and in line with data from the NHS ESR system. The calculations also rely on accurate data which the council's unknown data levels would likely affect the integrity of WRES results. These standards are set to be superseded by a GMCA led People Inclusion Standards framework from October 2024
Action 4: Set workforce targets/aspirations, which are monitored across each department's performance against these targets
Outcome: Action partially met The council has not set targets or aspirations at department level although the council does have an aspiration to have workforce that is representative of the residents we serve. Setting specific targets could mean falling beneath the Equality Act 2010 and lead to bias taking place in recruitment processes. Additionally, the volatility of the labour market could make such targets unachievable.
Action 5: Adopt the NHS Workforce Disability Equality Standard (WDES) as part of their future objectives setting for 2022
Outcome: Action not met The standard has not been adopted council wide. The WDES was designed to be used NHS trust wide with a very large colleague headcount and in line with data from the NHS ESR system. The calculations also rely on accurate data which the council's unknown data levels would likely affect the integrity of WDES results. These standards are set to be superseded by a GMCA led People Inclusion Standards framework from October 2024
Overall outcome: Objective partially met
This objective sought to increase workforce representation in terms of underrepresented groups, specifically around race and disability. It focused on adopting positive actions towards increasing representation with race and

disability. There are positive action measures which have been adopted which have helped to contribute to a small rise year on year in the percentage of ethnic minority and disabled colleagues at the council.

The second part of this objective focused on adopting the NHS WRES and WDES standards as a performance measurement. Whilst these standards were calculated in 2022 and 2023, no actions were taken in respect of the respect of these results.

Recommendations:

- Adoption of the GM People Inclusion Standards from October 2024
- A specific workforce representation plan to be included as part of the new 2024-2028 strategy

Objective 5: Learning and Development

(a) Upskill council staff and elected members and to enable them to effectively raise awareness and contribute to the implementation of the Inclusion Strategy

Action 1: Provide tutor-led bespoke equality and diversity training and other learning opportunities to different cohorts within the Council. Take action to ensure compliance

Action outcome: Action partially met

Tutor led and bespoke EDI training has been delivered to managers as part of the Management Development Programme and to senior leaders through an EDI Masterclass both sessions are led by the EDI manager. Annual EDI training is also offered to all Members.

It has not been practical to provide tutor led EDI training for all colleagues given the size and complexity of the workforce at the council. All colleagues are required to complete a mandatory EDI e-learning module every three years. This has been converted to a webinar for front line staff and can be tutor led on request. Other ad hoc EDI training can be delivered by the EDI manager with specific groups of colleagues on request.

Action 2: Replace the mandatory e-learning EDHR module with tutor-led bespoke EDHR training

Action outcome: Action not met

It has not been feasible given time and resources available to deliver the e-learning module as a tutor led module due to the size and complexity of the workforce. The module has been recoded as a webinar and is available on paper formats to enable greater access to this module for colleagues who are not desk based.

Action 3: Design and implement a Diversity-Based Reverse Mentoring Programme

Action outcome: Action met

Senior leaders and colleagues who identify as ethnic minority or disabled have access to a mutual mentoring scheme through the Inclusive Public Services project

Overall outcome: Objective partially met

This objective aimed to provide tutor led EDI learning to all colleagues in the council. Tutor led programmes and learning allow learners to explore the topic of EDI with a subject matter expert who can answer questions and guide learning of this subjective and emotive subject in a safe environment which maximises the

learning experience. It has not been practically possible to provide mandatory tutor led training to all colleagues.

The second part of this objective has been met fully with Bury leading on the development of a mutual mentoring programme which is available to all colleagues who are from an ethnic minority background or are disabled. Participants are paired with a senior leader.

Recommendations:

- Include a 30 minute EDI workshop led in person by the EDI manager as part of the corporate induction process
- Refresh the corporate mandatory e-learning to ensure this is current and reflects the Council's values and inclusion objectives

Objective 6: Improve user access and experience

This objective was solely aimed at CCG practices and therefore there were no actions for the council under this objective

Objective 7: Framework Delivery

(a) continually improve the Council's work on equality

Action 1: Determine which EFLG criteria/sub criterion is prioritised on a yearly basis

Action outcome: Action not met

The council has not adopted a specific EDI framework or criterion to work towards. This is due to a changing landscape in the GMCA space with framework development activity taking place through the GM Equality Panels and Inclusive Public Services project

Overall outcome: Objective not met

Recommendations:

- The development and adoption of a GM wide framework is to be included in the 2024-2028 strategy

Conclusion

The 2020-2024 inclusion strategy has been delivered against the backdrop of the covid-19 pandemic which presented significant challenges to our residents and the council as an employer and service provider in terms of building and maintaining inclusive practice.

None of the objectives set out in the strategy have been fully met, mainly due to a fast moving and changing landscape as the council, town and region emerged from the pandemic and into pandemic recovery phase. In addition, the dissolution of the CCG and formation of the Integrated Care Partnership has changed the nature of the council's working relationship with primary health care and social care over this period.

The overarching aims of the strategy were to solidify the council's EDI function, assign accountability and governance and lay strong foundations to build effective community engagement and activity all of which have been achieved. The strategy outcomes can therefore be regarded as being successful. These successes provide a strong base for the 2024-2028 EDI strategy to build on and focus council inclusion activity on workplace culture, workforce and resident representation and taking a lead on collaborative approaches to inclusion locally and regionally.

Bury
Council