

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan

2024 to 2026

Introduction

Our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) action plan for 2024-26 will be transformative, building on the work already commenced with EDI embedded throughout our work as part of Enabling Barnsley.

EDI will be evidenced and analysed with continual improvement for our employees, residents, and partners. Barnsley will be ambitious, bold, brave, and innovative as we strive to be an employer of choice.

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

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

A key enabler of this is our **People Strategy 2022-25**, which supports the delivery of both the Council Plan and Barnsley 2030. We know 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 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. It aims to create a workforce that is inclusive and representative of the diverse communities we serve. We will better understand the barriers to developing a representative workforce at all levels. We will develop a more inclusive culture where all employees feel valued and supported and recognise that diverse perspectives can help us solve many of the complex and challenging issues facing local government.



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.**

Three key pillars within the Act known as the General Duty 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 nine protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010 are:

1. Age
2. Gender reassignment
3. Disability
4. Sex
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Marriage and civil partnership
9. Sexual orientation

Our values

We're a team

We all work together towards shared goals to make Barnsley the place of possibilities.

We're excellent

We're clear, fair, and reliable, helping people to understand what we are doing and why.

We're proud

We provide the best quality services and value for money for the people of Barnsley. Only our best is good enough.

We're honest

We take pride in our work, and we're dedicated to making Barnsley the place of possibilities.

Our context

Population data taken from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census and employment figures from the ONS December 2023 figures. Workforce data taken from our Equality Monitoring and Carers Responsibility Survey as of February 2024.



Progress so far

We are taking steps to address gaps in our approach to EDI, and we are making significant strides to improve within our organisation and borough. Our 2023-2024 action plan successfully identified missing links in our work and our key achievements are highlighted below.

Our senior management team has made and published a **Diversity and Inclusion pledge** and we recognise the importance of our leaders taking a proactive approach to EDI to promote the positive ethics and culture of the organisation.

Education is one of the most important ways to increase people's knowledge, understanding, and awareness of EDI issues. We are reviewing our Dignity at Work Policy and we have introduced new mandatory training courses which cover Bullying and Harassment, and Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging. We also recommend a variety of further learning activities to all employees. All employees and elected members are aware of their responsibilities, general and statutory, in ensuring that they, their colleagues, service users, and partners treat everyone with respect and dignity. In 2020, we adopted our "No Place for Hate Campaign," which demonstrates our determination and zero tolerance approach to any form of discrimination, victimisation, or harassment.

We are proud to have already established or are developing several employee networks (employee experience, menopause, LGBTQ+, young employees, disability and neurodiversity, carers, Black, Asian and minority ethnic, veterans and age friendly network) to promote inclusivity and provide safe spaces for employee discussion and networking.

Equality monitoring data is crucial for insight into workforce and the people who access our services. Data about who uses our services will tell us if the available support is sufficient and if our service delivery is meeting their expectations. We have made significant strides through our ongoing Equality Monitoring and Carers' Responsibility Survey that provides us with workforce data. We will work with our services to implement actions to address any areas of underrepresentation. Our customer resolution team is also collecting equality monitoring data of customer complaints to determine if there are any protected characteristic groups overrepresented in the complaints process.

We are confident in our ability to improve the diversity of our workforce. We use key performance indicators to monitor applications and the make up of our workforce. We monitor and address barriers to applicants and work to improve any underrepresentation observed in our analysis. Unconscious bias training for all employees involved in recruitment to help mitigate any biases.



Senior Management pledge

We value the difference that a diverse workforce brings and the importance to our communities of seeing themselves and others represented in our workforce. We want Barnsley to be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive place where everyone can thrive and contribute towards a fairer society.

To do this we will:

- Make our services accessible and usable by as many people as possible, frequently asking for feedback, improving accessibility, and measuring our improvements.
- Operate a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination, calling out discriminatory behaviour, and providing a safe environment for our workforce to be themselves and thrive without fear of harassment or bullying.
- Encourage all employees to sign up to our equality pledge, which includes completing EDI training every three years, with managers accountable for achieving this target.
- Publish our pay gap for gender, ethnicity, and disability on an annual basis.
- Actively create opportunities for our employees to achieve their full potential by having clear career pathways in place for as many roles as possible.
- Encourage applications from diverse and under-represented groups by ensuring the language we use is inclusive and aim to remove bias from our recruitment processes.
- Commit to scrutinising and removing unnecessary requirements in our recruitment processes, especially where they may exclude potential candidates.



Internal audit report findings

As part of our programme for 2023-2024, we commissioned our internal audit team to **provide an assurance review of the council's EDI framework** to ensure compliance with our statutory legal obligations, particularly, if we are meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The review also assessed the EDI Action Plan and its alignment with the People Strategy, Council Plan and Barnsley 2030.

There were positive findings in the review which identified we have the following good practice in place:

- An approved EDI action plan.
- Our Senior Management Team receive regular updates.
- An employee project team was established to facilitate our ongoing Equality Monitoring and Carers' Responsibility Survey.
- There is regular promotion of EDI across the council.
- The EDI team supports services to understand their responsibilities and inform decision making.

There were also areas of further improvement identified:

- The absence of an up-to-date annual report.
- Lack of access to mandatory EDI courses for some frontline employees.
- Our EDI policy and Equality Monitoring Guidance were identified as being outdated.



Inclusivity statement

Everyone 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.

Achieving and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion is a responsibility shared by all elected members, the Barnsley Leadership Team (BLT), SMT, managers, employees, contractors, partners, stakeholders, and our communities.

Elected members fulfil their statutory responsibilities under equalities legislation to promote good community relations in all their work, particularly in their community leadership role. Members have a duty to take account of equalities considerations when reaching decisions and are to demonstrate this.

SMT will actively help to promote good practice around equality, diversity, and inclusion within directorates, respond to any issues, and ensure that quality Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are completed (where appropriate).

BLT will champion and lead by example, using the Public Sector Equality Duty to encourage the integration of EDI principles in all aspects of our work.

Managers will maintain an overview of equality and diversity for the directorate and ensure effective development, implementation and monitoring of service EDI objectives and related actions, including ensuring effective completion of EIAs.

Employees will be encouraged to demonstrate commitment to equalities by taking active steps to challenge discrimination and harassment, feeding into equality and diversity objective setting, reviewing processes in their departments, and supporting managers in their effective implementation.

Contractors will incorporate the council's Public Sector Equality Duty commitments in all dealings and practices on behalf of the council in all areas assessed as relevant to the duty.

Partners will be aware of the council's equality and diversity policy commitments and objectives in all relevant areas.

Stakeholders and communities will feed into the process of setting equality and diversity objectives and action plans, and monitoring and reviewing these.



Community cohesion

We are committed to making Barnsley a fairer place to live, where services, as well as opportunities such as jobs and leisure activities, are open to everyone.

We recognise the benefits that difference and inclusion can bring to Barnsley for employment, social, and economic reasons. It is essential for key partners to work together to promote and embed effective relationships and celebrate differences in order to thrive.

Cohesion is most effective in a safe and tolerant environment where differences are valued, people and communities are respected, and where issues are managed sensitively and resolved promptly.

Multi-agency drop in

Our multi-agency drop in includes partners in the Borough such as Migrant Action, the Polish Library, the Educational Learning Support Hub and Feels Like Home. The drop-in provides greater insight into the needs of asylum seeker, refugee, and migrant communities in Barnsley. It also provides an opportunity for services to better understand and adapt how their services are offered.

Prevent

The Prevent agenda in Barnsley is delivered as part of the wider National Counter Terrorism Strategy. Prevent is concerned with stopping individuals being drawn into terrorism and safeguarding those members of society that are susceptible to radicalisation and challenging those terrorist ideologies that exist within society. To achieve this, we will endeavour to support our communities to be confident to report concerns in Barnsley and our work will be supported by:

- Raising awareness about Prevent.
- Training employees using best practices.
- Being proactive and working closely with our partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector, education, healthcare, and the public.



Community cohesion

Cohesive and Resilient Communities Sub-Group

This group is made up of key partners from across the borough and looks at promoting positive cohesion, inclusivity and making Barnsley a welcoming place for all. Over the next two years, the group will continue to consolidate their partnership to build stronger, resilient, and cohesive communities in Barnsley by:

- Working together to understand our communities and raise awareness of these by providing a mechanism for them to have a voice and influence.
- Celebrating diversity in Barnsley and ensure we are inclusive in our approach.
- Understanding the needs of the partnership in relation to raising awareness around diversity and commission the appropriate training for staff to access to achieve this.
- Supporting the awareness of hate crime in Barnsley, how and where to report and encourage stakeholders to educate their staff and service users to report hate crime in Barnsley.
- Ensuring they utilise their voice and influence to raise the awareness of diversity in Barnsley along with being champions.

No Place for Hate Group

The No Place for Hate Group consists of core members from Barnsley Council and partner organisations, including South Yorkshire Police, Barnsley Hospital, and Barnsley and Rotherham Chamber of Commerce. Our Elected Members Equalities Champion also sits on this group.

The group has ownership of the Barnsley Cohesion Strategy, focusing on key aims identified below:

- Everyone is confident and proud of their identity and heritage, and able to take advantage of the opportunities that Britain offers.
- People, whatever their background, live, work, learn and socialise together based on shared rights, responsibilities, and opportunities.
- Many religions, cultures and opinions are celebrated, underpinned by a shared set of British values that champion tolerance, freedom, and equality of opportunity.
- Everyone has a part to play in upholding those values – both those who are already living here and those who want to make it their home.

Hate crimes reporting

We are committed to Creating a Safer Barnsley by reducing harm and preventing any form of hate crime in our communities.

A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is real or perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards a person based on their identity.



How to report hate crimes



In person

Visit any of our libraries.
Visit our Adult Skills service
in Wellington House



Telephone

Call
01226 773 555



Email

safer@barnsley.gov.uk
with the word **HATE**
in the subject line



South Yorkshire Police

In an emergency call **999**
and ask for the police.
If it is not an emergency call **101**.
[Report hate crime online.](#)

We want to encourage everyone to report hate crimes and incidents, even if they are unsure if they fit the crime criteria. Responsible officers and trained professionals will be able to advise you appropriately.

Help us on this journey to make Barnsley the Place of Possibilities and a No Place for Hate.

Annual Equalities Report

We publish an annual equalities report, which provides an overview of how we are meeting the Equality Act 2010 and associated PSED. 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 our commitment to challenging inequality, ensuring equity in service delivery, and promoting a fair and inclusive Barnsley.

Setting our equality objectives

We are committed to treating everyone with respect and dignity, and working towards creating a fairer Barnsley where everyone is welcome and feels that they belong. Our equality objectives will support us achieve at least one of the three main aims of the Equality Act 2010 general duty.

Our equality objectives address the challenges facing those with a range of protected characteristics whilst ensuring they align with our corporate strategies and visions. We also want to acknowledge that everyone has their own unique experience of discrimination and in some instances, an individual may face multiple forms of inequality or disadvantage.



Care leavers commitment

In addition to the formal protected characteristics, in the summer of **2024 Councillors passed a motion to formally acknowledge the experiences of care leavers as a protected characteristic in the borough.** This demonstrates our commitment to tackling barriers that care leavers face, including stigma and disadvantage which leads to inequality, so that they have the same opportunities as all young people in Barnsley.

Our commitment to providing children and young people in our care with the best quality support is lifelong. By treating their experiences as a protected characteristic, we can continue to fulfil our commitment to reducing barriers for them.

We will:

- Treat the experience of care among young people as a protected characteristic in the borough.
- Evaluate future decisions, services, and policies with equality impact assessments to determine the impact of any changes on care-experienced young people, alongside those who formally share a protected characteristic.
- Proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care-experienced young people when developing new policies that affect them.
- Call on our partners, local service providers, employers, and local businesses to also treat care experience as a protected characteristic to promote equality and inclusion in our borough.



Action Plan Objectives

Objective 1: **Leadership** **(Effective Leadership,** **Values and Culture)**

Our leadership will have the required skills and knowledge to lead and be EDI champions to support our aim for a more diverse organisation and inclusive culture.

Objective 2: **Maximising Organisational** **Capacity and Capability** **(Delivering Inclusive Services)**

Our services will be effective, efficient, and responsive to individual needs, so all residents can access services easily and have opportunities to improve their outcomes.

Objective 3: **Employee Experience**

Our workforce will be diverse and representative of the communities we serve, and employees are welcomed, healthy, safe, productive and flourish.

Objective 4: **Communication and Engagement**

Our residents and employees will be aware of our proactive and transparent approach to EDI, ensuring they are fully informed and engaged.



Immediate Actions: July – October 2024

Objective 1: Leadership (Effective Leadership, Values and Culture)

- 1) Identify underrepresented groups in our workforce using our Equality Monitoring and Carers' Responsibility survey data to develop areas of attraction and recruitment focus resulting in a more diverse and representative workforce.

August 2024

Objective 2: Maximising Organisational Capacity and Capability (Delivering Inclusive Services)

- 2) All employees must complete mandatory Unconscious Bias Training before being involved in recruitment and selection activities.

September 2024

- 3) Treat the experiences of care leavers as a protected characteristic in the borough, and meet the priorities outlined in our care leavers commitment.

October 2024 and ongoing

Objective 3: Employee Experience

- 4) Use best practices from neurodiversity partnerships to draft guidance to managers on supporting neurodivergent employees in the workplace.

September 2024

Objective 4: Communication and Engagement

- 5) 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.

October 2024



Medium-Term Actions: November 2024 – March 2025

Objective 1:

Leadership (Effective Leadership, Values and Culture)

- 6) Adopt and champion an Anti-Racist Charter (with input from Trade Unions).

January 2025

Objective 2:

Maximising Organisational Capacity and Capability (Delivering Inclusive Services)

- 7) Revise and refine Equality Impact Assessments and Equality Monitoring templates and guidance.

November 2024

- 8) Introduce an offer of reciprocal/reverse mentoring between WBLT and BME colleagues so WBLT can understand the unique challenges faced by employees from under-represented groups.

March 2025

Objective 3:

Employee Experience

- 9) Implement an interview preparation development activity specifically designed for underrepresented groups.

March 2025



Long-Term Actions: April 2025 – March 2026

Objective 4:

Communication and Engagement

10) Develop bi-annual EDI content for newsletters to keep our employees and residents informed on how we are delivering an inclusive workplace and borough.

July 2025

How we will monitor progress

It is important that we monitor, analyse, and report our progress in achieving the aims set out in this action plan. This will allow us to adapt our approach to ensure we are achieving agreed outcomes. We will monitor progress and the difference we are making through a variety of ways, such as:

- Outcomes and findings from assessments and reviews.
- Regular progress reports to the People Board, who will oversee the progress and delivery of the outcomes outlined in this plan.
- Publication of an annual report that will outline the activities undertaken each year and progress made.
- Internal performance metrics.

Resource implications

This action plan has minimal resource implications because most of the work is carried out as part of the day-to-day duties of the officers and services.

Any additional costs are minimal and will be covered by the service's budget, as determined by the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Thank you for your support

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Barnsley – the place of possibilities.



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