



“All of Us” in Bracknell Forest

Equalities Monitoring Annual Summary Report 2022-23



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Appendices: Service Level Reports

- A. Adult Social Care Equalities Monitoring Report
- B. Children’s Social Care Equalities Monitoring Report
- C. Community Safety Equalities Monitoring Report
- D. Customer Services Equalities Monitoring Report
- E. Early Help Equalities Monitoring Report
- F. Education Equalities Monitoring Report
- G. Housing Equalities Monitoring Report
- H. Leisure Services Equality Monitoring Report
- I. Library Services Equalities Monitoring Report
- J. Place, Planning & Regeneration
- K. Monitoring Report
- L. Welfare Services Equalities Monitoring Report

The reports on each of these services are also available using the following link:
(To be added)

1) Introduction

The Bracknell Forest Council Plan 2023-27 sets out our ambitions and the goals we want to achieve for and working with residents, businesses, and partners.

Our vision for the borough is where...

we put residents first, working together to grow sustainable, resilient, and inclusive communities.

It outlines what we will prioritise as a council in the borough over the next 4 years focusing on 3 external priorities to achieve this ambition:

1. Engaged and healthy communities

To help create opportunities where people can succeed, be happy and feel safe.

2. Thriving and connected economy

The local economy includes many different aspects, such as businesses, jobs, skills, accommodation, and services.

3. Green and sustainable environment

Our environment includes everything around us, our parks, our cycleways and our road networks.

In delivering these priorities, our services must be inclusive and accessible, and we want to work with residents to achieve this. We are committed to creating an inclusive borough and tackling inequalities cutting across everything we do and goes beyond our legal responsibilities.

Within the principles of fairness and opportunity, we believe that:

- reducing inequalities benefits everyone in the borough.
- strengthening community unity makes for a better borough.
- understanding and promoting diversity improves people's lives.

We work closely with our partners to support and engage the borough's increasingly diverse communities and organisations ensuring that everyone feels included, connected and able to contribute. Our values are inclusive, ambitious, and always learning; these inform all that we do.

The Public Sector Equality Duty

As a public authority, Bracknell Forest Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act 2010. The PSED includes both general duties, and specific duties. In the exercise of our functions, the general duty requires the council to have paid due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited in the Act,
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Our vision for working together to develop inclusive communities means we need to understand the effect of our services, policies and practices on equalities and involves looking at evidence, engaging with people, staff, service users and others and considering the effect of what we do on all communities.

The specific duties under the PSED requires the council to publish annual 'equality information' to demonstrate our compliance with the general duty, set one or more 'equality objective' at least every four years in support of the achievement of the general duty and annually Gender Pay Gap information.

This monitoring summary report **shares how we have advanced equalities and inclusivity** and demonstrates how the council has embraced our commitments set out in equality legislation over the period from 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 and the activities that contributed to meeting our 2022-2025 Equality Objectives.

The duty applies across the nine 'protected characteristics' (detailed below) covered by the Equalities Act – for marriage and civil partnerships, the council is only required to ensure it eliminates discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on these grounds.

In addition, the council considers how our services, policies and practices may also impact on other groups for example people with caring responsibilities, people facing financial hardship and the military and veteran community.



2. Bracknell Forest Council Equality Scheme 2022-25

Bracknell Forest Council's Equality Scheme (2022-2025) sets out our commitment to advancing equity and inclusion within Bracknell Forest. The scheme describes how

equity, diversity and inclusion are essential to the way we operate as a community leader, a service provider and an employer and is integral to everything we do.

The Equality Scheme provides a framework for our equality objectives, it sets out clearly the priorities for whether it is in how we work with residents, in the services we provide or through the retention and recruitment of our workforce.

The Equality Scheme is linked to our service planning process to ensure that the implementation of the equality objectives is integrated wherever possible into the mainstream delivery and monitoring of services across the council.

Bracknell Forest Council has four Equality Objectives, three of which are outward looking focussed on residents and service users, and one of which is inward-looking, focussed on our workforce:

Our equality objectives are:

- 1) Inclusive in all we do
- 2) Accessible for all
- 3) Accountable and fair
- 4) Diverse and inclusive workforce.

3. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Highlights 2022-23

This report does not seek to capture everything undertaken in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion. Instead, it highlights some of the key achievements across customer facing teams over 2022-2023. Individual service reports (detailed above) and the Workforce Annual Report 2022-23 should be read alongside this report.

The following are examples of work done over 2022-23 and our commitment to meeting our equalities responsibilities.

1) Inclusive in all we do

We will continue to make our services more inclusive and culturally competent in a borough where everyone is made to feel included and valued.

- The Council led with partners in organising the first ever Bracknell Forest Annual Pride Event in the Lexicon
- A Community Day event was co-produced with local partner organisation and community groups celebrating the borough's cultural diversity building awareness, understanding and respect.
- The ethnicity of adult learners is accessed to be broadly in line with the local Bracknell Forest population.
- National leader for SEND delivered training for all headteachers on inclusive leadership in schools.
- The Learning Disability and Autism Service facilitated an Autism Social Group and Autism Drop in to reduce the needed for long term support.
- The Thames Valley wide Diverse Communities Partnership (Domestic Abuse) Board continued to meet, examples of work completed include a sheet for Ukrainian guests and a Zimbabwean culture booklet sharing cultural knowledge.

- Members of the Prevent Steering Group engaged with a wide range of communities, recognising that different communities may have unique needs and concerns.
- The Community Safety team completed risk assessments with victims to consider the impact on people with protected characteristics.
- The Early Years Team ensured highly effective teaching of phonics for all pupils (early reading is a key lever for advantaging the disadvantaged). The outcomes in BFC were ranked 13th out of 151 nationally.
- The youth service operated a weekly LGBTQI+ youth group for young people from across the borough providing a safe space for young people.
- The migration team supported and delivered various government migration programmes for displaced people including those arriving from Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Syria, amongst other countries.
- Leisure Services provided a free fully funded six-month Disability Programme pilot, offering a variety of sessions for adults with any physical or learning disability.
- Public Health offered 'Making Every Contact Count' training to all frontline staff including those within and outside the council.
- All planning policy documents public consultation actively targeted ensuring accessibility for disability and minority ethnic communities.
- The Financial Hardship team ran targeted campaigns to work with pension age customers resulting in over £100,000 of additional income for those of pension age.
- The Early Help Service supported young people's local participation and engagement with the Councillors, the UK Youth Parliament, and the British Youth Council.
- Accessibility guides provided detailed information about accessibility for people with disabilities including facts, figures, and photographs for multiple venues throughout the borough.
- Feedback from the customer services satisfaction survey for 2022/23 confirmed that the levels of satisfaction across most age groups contacting the council to be above 75% and 83% for people with a disability.
- The council proactively offered and provided reasonable adjustments to customers requiring additional support to communicate with the council and access services. Reasonable adjustment guide produced for staff.

2) Accessible for all

We ensure that we provide information, engage and communicate in ways that are easy to understand for all.

- Bracknell Forest Council's public website pages are in the top 30 of the UK Councils SilkTide index for accessibility.
- Customer Services provided interpretation and translation services as required, council staff volunteers speaking other languages were available along with access to specialist companies to provide translation or interpretation services.
- Visitors to customer services had access to gender neutral toilets appropriate for persons with a hidden and or unhidden disability.
- Access support arrangements are provided for people who are deaf to aid communication, e.g., induction loops and phones automatically connect to a service user hearing aid.

- Leisure Services appointed an Active Communities Manager to increase participation of underserved groups.
- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were undertaken prior to implementation of key policy/strategies, projects or proposed changes to identify potential impacts on equality and barriers to inclusion.
- Adult Social Care used translation apps with staff able to speak several languages available to communicate with residents where English is an additional language.
- The council's 'My Community Map' provides residents with information on local groups, activities and societies that are run by local people for local people.
- Adult Social Care operated an assessment suite for people to use assistive technology to prevent, reduce or delay the need for more intensive intervention.
- Annual guides for Secondary and In year school applications were published in foreign language versions and the School Admission pages made available as spoken word documents using ReadSpeaker.
- Children Social Care increased access to translation services to advocates and independent visitors providing greater accessibility for people who may struggle to engage with professionals or involvement in proceedings.
- The Early Help Partnership Group continued to meet supporting children and families in the borough to advance opportunities to support each other.
- The Youth Justice team received a Youth Justice SEND Quality Mark Award for working with children.
- The Early Help service supported young people's participation and engaged with the elected member of the UK Youth Parliament and the British Youth Council.
- CSC have launched a Fostering Transformation programme to support recruitment of in-house foster carers.
- The council is part of the National Transfer Scheme and has pledged to support Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) on a continual basis into adulthood as care leavers.
- Housing Service used various channels to communicate including in person, visits to residents' homes, rough sleeper outreach services, a dedicated phone line and opportunities to communicate via digital channels.
- Parks and Countryside Service ran a Local Countryside Access Forum to improve access to spaces.
- The cost-of-living programme was promoted to all residents ensured that information about help was available to all sectors of society, engagement events held working partnership with a Voluntary, Community and Faith Network.
- Resident could access a discount for over 60s railcards, and a grant payment to a community transport provider for those unable to access mainstream public transport through either age or disability.

3) Accountable and fair

We will treat all people fairly without favouritism or discrimination while recognising some people will need additional support.

- Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) were completed and attached to all budget proposals to advance equity and mitigate potential discrimination.
- New Hope drug and alcohol support service regularly reviews its intake and assessment processes for the people using services to eliminate any potential

biases likely to disproportionately affect individuals with specific protected characteristic.

- Adult Social Care Assessments are person- centred focusing on individual needs and characteristics with people's protected characteristics recorded.
- Adult Social Care annual audit programme was embedded into the governance cycle. 53 audits were completed with 90% were graded good and outstanding.
- The Early Help Strategy was launched in January 2023 outlining the vision, objectives, and commitments for the wider partnership committed to advancing equality of opportunity for all.
- Public Health commissioned a survey to understand the impact of COVID-19 on Bracknell Forest.
- £1.6m of physical access work were identified at maintained schools of which £0.20m address severe barriers or hazard for people with disabilities
- Housing Service reviewed its housing allocation policy, any proposed changes were subject to a formal equalities impact assessment.
- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) steering group produced local authority specific topic packs analysing health inequality groups, namely homeless people, and vulnerable migrants.
- Work started to develop the Youth Strategy supporting all young people, including those with protected characteristics to advance opportunities.
- The Learning Disability & Autism Partnership Board supported adults with Learning Disabilities & Autism and their families to advance opportunities to support each other.
- The Community Safety Service attended the council's Community Cohesion Engagement Partnership, Faith and Belief forum, and routinely supports community events.
- Leisure services launched the Health & Wellbeing Services to address health inequalities through increasing physical for people living with one or more long term health conditions.
- The Economic Development team worked with partners to deliver activities that aim to reach all groups such as Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) sessions for events in the town centre.
- The Disability Advisory & Access Forum acts as an advisory and consultative body on issues relating to disability and access within the Borough to the Executive, Overview & Scrutiny and other Committees and officers of the council as appropriate on these issues.

4) Diverse and Inclusive workforce

We are committed to developing an inclusive and people focussed culture where diversity is valued and celebrated. Our values of being inclusive, ambitious and always learning ensures that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity and respect. The progress made includes:

- The council's Equalities Group leads and champions the work of the council on behalf of the Corporate Management Team in advancing service and staff equity, diversity and inclusion.
- The council has taken a zero-tolerance approach any instances of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation, from staff and customers using our services.
- Workforce monitoring/EDI data dashboards issued to services to address key equalities issues.

- The council's anonymised recruitment process eliminates any bias as we do not receive personal information prior to shortlisting.
- All staff have access to e-learning on equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- An Equalities reciprocal mentoring pilot scheme was developed.
- The council's Wellbeing Network is made up of various employee wellbeing support groups including Neurodiversity working group, LGBTQIA +group Menopause group the Pause for, equality allies and Get Active group.
- Annual Workforce Equality Report produced for 2023 to review relevant information and data to recognise areas of strength and identify areas for improvement.

4. Monitoring Our progress

Each equality objective is underpinned by annual priority actions as required that take the council towards the achievement of the 3-year strategy. Equality actions identified within the Equalities Scheme will be incorporated within directorate service plans.

The progress made in the implementation and delivery of each of our equality objectives is monitored quarterly by the council's Equalities Group with the progress regularly reported to our corporate management team. A detailed summary of progress made is detailed at point 6.

5. Conclusion

This report and the associated service area reports show that Bracknell Forest Council is making good progress in meeting the Public Sector Equality duties to eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people in 2022-2023, although more clearly remains to be done and we are not complacent. The progress made in achieving council performance measures relating to equalities is summarised below.

The delivery of the annual priority actions supporting the equality actions incorporated within directorate service plans is on track to be delivered. With mitigating actions in place where the performance is below that expected.

6. Annual equality priority actions as at 31 March 2023	Status	Due date	Percentage Complete
1.02.02 Identify and engage low income households	Green	31/03/2024	95%
1.02.03 Review Workforce and Organisational Development Strategy	Green	31/12/2023	75%
1.02.06 Deploy Recruitment and Retention Strategy	Green	31/03/2024	60%
1.02.17 Deliver the Digital and ICT Strategy	Green	31/12/2024	76%
2.01.02 Develop a Supplementary Planning Document in relation to Affordable Housing supply	Amber	31/03/2024	20%
2.02.02 Work on development of The Deck and the sustained viability of Town Centre	Amber	31/03/2024	30%
2.02.03 Develop an Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategy	Amber	31/03/2024	85%
2.03.01 Develop a strategy for governor recruitment though the governance reference group	Green	31/03/2024	75%
2.04.02 Deliver the work programme set out by the Economic Skills and Development Partnership	Green	31/03/2024	75%
2.04.03 Provide support for Local Economy	Green	31/03/2024	80%
2.04.05 Prepare and publish a borough-wide Economic Strategy	Green	31/03/2024	90%
2.05.05 Commission a feasibility analysis for the Business Improvement District	Amber	31/03/2024	50%
2.07.07 Secure grants for transport and infrastructure	Green	31/03/2024	50%
3.04.03 Undertake a comprehensive review of all youth services	COMPLETE	31/03/2024	100%
3.05.01 Continue to increase the number of apprenticeship roles throughout the council	Green	31/03/2024	80%
3.05.02 Effectively use the apprenticeship levy	Green	31/03/2024	70%
3.07.01 Support care leavers to access education, training or employment	Green	31/03/2024	60%
3.08.01 Establish a culture of high expectations for all children	Green	31/03/2024	75%
3.08.04 Deliver the agreed actions within the Written Statement of Action (WSOA)	Amber	31/12/2023	77%
4.01.01 Increase participation in sports, leisure and cultural activities	Green	31/03/2024	80%
4.01.02 Implement and monitor the key actions set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Green	31/03/2024	98%
4.01.04 Deliver the financial hardship action plan	Green	31/03/2024	90%
4.01.05 Deliver the pilot first phase of "Thriving Communities" programme	Amber	31/03/2024	30%
4.01.07 Develop People Strategy	Amber	31/03/2024	70%
4.07.01 Family hub services expansion and development of multi-disciplinary teams	COMPLETE	31/12/2023	100%
4.13.01 Coordinate and lead on the work of the Bracknell Forest Civilian Military Partnership	Green	31/03/2024	75%
4.13.03 Support the delivery of a Berkshire Civilian Military Partnership	Green	31/03/2024	75%
5.03.01 Implement parking bay schemes	COMPLETE	31/03/2024	100%

5.06.07 Improve energy efficiency for low income households	Amber	31/03/2024	59%
6.02.01 Support for Community Associations	Green	31/03/2024	75%
6.02.03 Develop the offer in Libraries to support the Adults and Children's agendas	Green	31/03/2024	85%
6.07.01 To provide property support for the initial phases of development of Opladen Way	Green	31/03/2024	50%
6.10.08 Support community engagement with and integration of displaced people who arrive in borough	Green	31/03/2024	90%
7.017 Deliver and monitor the implementation of the 2022 - 2025 'All of Us' Equality Scheme and act	Green	31/03/2024	75%
7.019 Support maintenance of high levels of cohesion and the integration of our diverse communities.	Green	31/03/2024	75%
7.021 Celebrate the diversity of the workforce	Green	31/03/2024	60%
7.209 Delivery of the commitments set out within the DWP and BFC Partnership Agreement.	Amber	31/03/2024	75%
7.309 Renew the contract for consultation and engagement services	COMPLETE	31/12/2023	100%

