



Equalities Committee

Thursday 7 April 2016 at 6.00 pm

Board Room 6 - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley HA9 0FJ

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Pavey (Chair)

Kansagra (Vice-Chair)

Harrison

Tatler

Thomas

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Colwill and Maurice

For further information contact: Peter Goss, Democratic Services Manager
020 8937 1353, peter.goss@brent.gov.uk

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit:

www.brent.gov.uk/committees

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members.

Item	Page
1 Declarations of interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant financial or other interest in the items on this agenda.	
2 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 4
3 Matters arising (if any)	
4 Deputations (if any)	
5 Digital Inclusion and Online Accessibility for Brent residents	5 - 10
In October 2014 Cabinet formally agreed a new Community Access Strategy which set out a vision for transforming the way in which our residents are able to access information, advice and services. The strategy seeks to create modern and relevant access arrangements that are tailored to meet the needs of differing demographic groups, help us to respond positively to the difficult financial pressures we face and to target our most personalised contact arrangements to those who are most vulnerable and have more complex needs.	
Ward Affected: All Wards	Contact Officer: Margaret Read, Director, Customer Services Tel: 020 8937 1521 margaret.read@brent.gov.uk
6 Progress update of Cllr Pavey's review on HR and Equalities and Cllr Pavey's action plan	11 - 32
This report provides a progress update of the impact from Cllr Pavey's review of HR and Equalities based on the available qualitative and quantitative information.	
Ward Affected: All Wards	Contact Officer: Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality Tel: 020 8937 3154 andreyana.ivanova@brent.gov.uk

7 Brent Council's policies, programmes and initiatives supporting employees and applicants with disabilities 33 - 38

Brent is a disability positive employer and a member of the Positive about disabled people scheme awarded by the Job Centre Plus with the Two Ticks symbol. In March 2016 the council successfully retained its Two Ticks accreditation showing its commitment to disability inclusion and good employment and recruitment practices. However, the council recognises that there is still a lot to be done and works hard to promote disability inclusion and minimise barriers facing disabled employees and applicants, in partnership with organisations such as Remploy, the Business Disability Forum (BDF) and enei.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Mildred Phillips, HR Director
Tel: 020 8937 5442
mildred.phillips@brent.gov.uk

8 Quarterly update on the Council's Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme 39 - 46

The Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme was approved by CMT in December 2015 and launched in January 2016. It aims to promote and facilitate regular dialogue between senior managers and staff as a means of empowering junior staff members, fostering good cross-organisational working relationships, developing a greater understanding of diversity from differing perspectives and improving the sense of belonging to One Council.

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality
Tel: 020 8937 3154
andreyana.ivanova@brent.gov.uk

9 Update on Council's Aspire Leadership and Development programme 47 - 56

Ward Affected: All Wards
Contact Officer: Mildred Phillips, HR Director
Tel: 020 8937 5442
mildred.phillips@brent.gov.uk

10 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting of the committee will be agreed by the Annual Meeting in May 2016.

11 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or his representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 64.

Date of the next meeting: **will be agreed at the Annual Meeting in May 2016.**



- Please remember to ***SWITCH OFF*** your mobile phone during the meeting.
- The meeting room is accessible by lift and seats will be provided for members of the public.



MINUTES OF THE EQUALITIES COMMITTEE **Monday 11 January 2016 at 6.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Kansagra (Vice Chair, in the Chair) and Councillors Harrison, Pavey, Tatler and Thomas

Apologies for lateness were received from: Councillors Pavey and Tatler.

1. Chair

Given the lateness of the Chair, the Vice-Chair took the Chair and remained so for the duration of the meeting.

2. Declarations of interests

None declared.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 October 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Deputations

None.

6. Update on Accessibility Improvements to the Civic Centre

Russell Burnaby, Facilities Management, introduced the report stating that further to the progress report of 12 October 2015 and the update provided to Members in December 2015, this report set out recent progress on the access related works undertaken to the Civic Centre to further improve accessibility to the building.

He informed the Committee that the improvements were based on practical usage and feedback from residents, relevant groups and users of the building and in accordance with recommendations set out in the Accessibility Audit carried out in August 2014.

Members thanked Russell Burnaby for the update welcoming the improvements that had been implemented.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the report and the further improvement works delivered to date be noted;
- (ii) that the improvements programmed for the future and the process by which feedback received by building users would be monitored, considered and addressed, be noted.

7. Report on equality and diversity related complaints received by Brent Council (April-September 2015)

Peter Gadsdon, Director, Performance, Policy and Partnerships, introduced the report stating that the Equalities Committee had requested a report on equality and diversity related complaints at their meeting in July 2015.

He stated that the report provided an overview of the diversity profile of people who have made complaints to the council (complainants) and any associated equalities issues. The report covered both corporate and statutory social care complaints during the first half of the year (April 2015 to September 2015) where this information has been declared or provided.

Members noted that, in the first six months of the year 2015/16, the council had received a total of 984 first stage complaints, comprising 921 Corporate Complaints and 63 Statutory Complaints.

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, informed Members of the Committee that the statistics of the complainants were in line with the general profile of Brent's population.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the findings of this report be noted;
- (ii) that it be noted that based on the findings there was no evidence of discriminatory practices or trends.

8. Cllr Pavey Action Plan Review of Equalities (December 2015 update)

Councillor Kansagra welcomed Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing to the meeting.

He invited Phil Porter to provide an update on the *Achieving Excellence in Employment and Management Practice* strand for which he is the CMT lead.

Phil Porter stated that a staff survey would be designed and undertaken towards the end of March 2016, he informed Members that the results would then be analysed and fed into the new Corporate Plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Tatler, he stated that nationally benchmarked questions would be used to form the survey. These questions could be shared with the Committee if Committee members wished.

Councillor Tatler asked about staff members being encouraged to declare mental or physical disabilities. Phil Porter stated that the Council's staff fora would be used to encourage staff to declare a disability. He stated that, historically, some staff had been reluctant to do so but that progress was being made in this area.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

9. Brent Council's Collaborative Mentoring programme

Mildred Phillips, HR Director, and Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality, introduced the report.

It was noted that the Collaborative Mentoring programme was approved by the Corporate Management Team in December 2015 and would be rolled out from January 2016. The aim of the programme was to promote and facilitate regular dialogue between senior managers and staff as a means of empowering junior staff members, fostering good cross-organisational working relationships, developing a greater understanding of diversity from differing perspectives and improving the sense of belonging to One Council.

The programme would be managed by the HR team and participants would be provided with relevant support and guidance.

Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive, stated that senior managers would also be encouraged to shadow junior staff. An all staff communication would be sent out that week encouraging expressions of interest.

Councillor Pavey asked how the programme would be evaluated after it had ended.

Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality, stated that it was anticipated that the proposed initiatives would have a positive impact on all participating staff members, particularly those from under-represented groups as they would have a regular exposure to senior managers, which will hopefully increase their confidence in interacting with senior managers and applying for more senior roles within or outside the organisation. The diversity profile and feedback of participating staff members would be monitored and the Equalities Committee would receive a progress update at the next meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the contents of the report and supporting Appendices be noted;
- (ii) that a progress update on the Collaborative Mentoring programme be submitted to this committee in April 2016.

10. Leadership Development Programme Proposals 2015 - 2016

Mildred Phillips, HR Director, introduced the report stating that, following the report to the Council's Corporate Management Team on the Leadership Development Programme in August 2015, this paper provided more detail on the proposals.

She stated that the paper demonstrated how input from HRIG and other key stakeholders have ensured that the programme met the Council's individual, manager and organisational needs, including the Councillor Pavey review.

Mildred Philips stated that the Hr Improvement Group had agreed that there would be two levels of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI) qualification. The CMI Level 3 Certificate for PO1 to PO4 which would be completed in three to six months and the CMI Level 5 Diploma for PO5 to PO8 in 9 months.

The number of employees to be put on the scheme would depend on the number of applicants but it was anticipated that there would be about 30 employees in this first cohort. A further update on the programme and selected cohort would be provided at next meeting.

RESOLVED:


- (i) that approval be given to the Leadership Development Programme which would start in February 2016;
- (ii) that a progress update on the Leadership and Development programme be submitted to this committee in April 2016.

11. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm

S KANSAGRA
Vice Chair, in the Chair

 Brent	Equalities Committee 7 April 2016 Report from the Strategic Director Resources
Information	Wards affected: ALL
Report on Digital Inclusion and Online Accessibility for Brent residents	

1.0 Summary

In October 2014 Cabinet formally agreed a new Community Access Strategy which set out a vision for transforming the way in which our residents are able to access information, advice and services. The strategy seeks to create modern and relevant access arrangements that are tailored to meet the needs of differing demographic groups, help us to respond positively to the difficult financial pressures we face and to target our most personalised contact arrangements to those who are most vulnerable and have more complex needs. The overall aims of the strategy are to :

- Develop a consistent and excellent experience for our residents whenever and however they make contact with us
- Develop Community access arrangements that are designed to meet the differing needs of our residents, and focused on the Community not internal service boundaries
- Develop an improved digital offer, better confidence in digital access channels and significantly increase take up and use of digital access channels
- Improve the efficiency of resident's access arrangements so as to better manage demand, remove duplication and failure and prevent demand arising in the first place

- 1.1 The strategy is being delivered through a portfolio of projects that commenced in early 2015. These projects have included significant work to improve Brent's on line offer to our residents, making it easier to use and extending the range of services and information available through digital channels so that residents can access these when they want rather than having to rely on more traditional access channels such as phone or face to face contact.
- 1.2 This briefing provides an overview of the arrangements that have been put in place to ensure that digital / on line services are accessible and responsive to the needs of all residents, particularly those who face barriers to self-serve due to their age, disability, language and/or socio-economic status. It is important to note the development of our digital offer has not limited access to other contact channels and has in fact increased access options. Residents can still phone, write, email and visit face to face if they chose to do so and can obtain assistance to use self service facilities at the Civic Centre Customer Services Centre. The only exception to this is parking services where there is no longer an option to visit a face to face access point.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Equalities Committee are asked to:
- note the contents of this report and the range of online services that are available to customers to date

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 There are a number of strands to Brent's overall digital offer for residents. These include :
- The information, advice and signposting available through our main website
 - The facility to apply, report, book or pay for a range of services on line
 - The facility enabling residents to manage and view accounts on line for Council Tax and Housing Benefits, with access to BHP rent accounts shortly becoming available
 - The facility for residents to create a personalised " My Account " which enables them to access a range of services through one log in and password and conveniently access services through a personalised account without having to navigate through numerous web pages.
 - The facility to report environmental issues through the Cleaner Brent App including litter, illegal rubbish dumping, and other problems in streets, parks and cemeteries
- 3.2 The Brent website has been designed so as to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) requirements to AA standard. These are international web standards which specify how to ensure content is accessible, particularly for people with disabilities—but also through devices such as tablets, smart phones and mobile phones. There are over 60

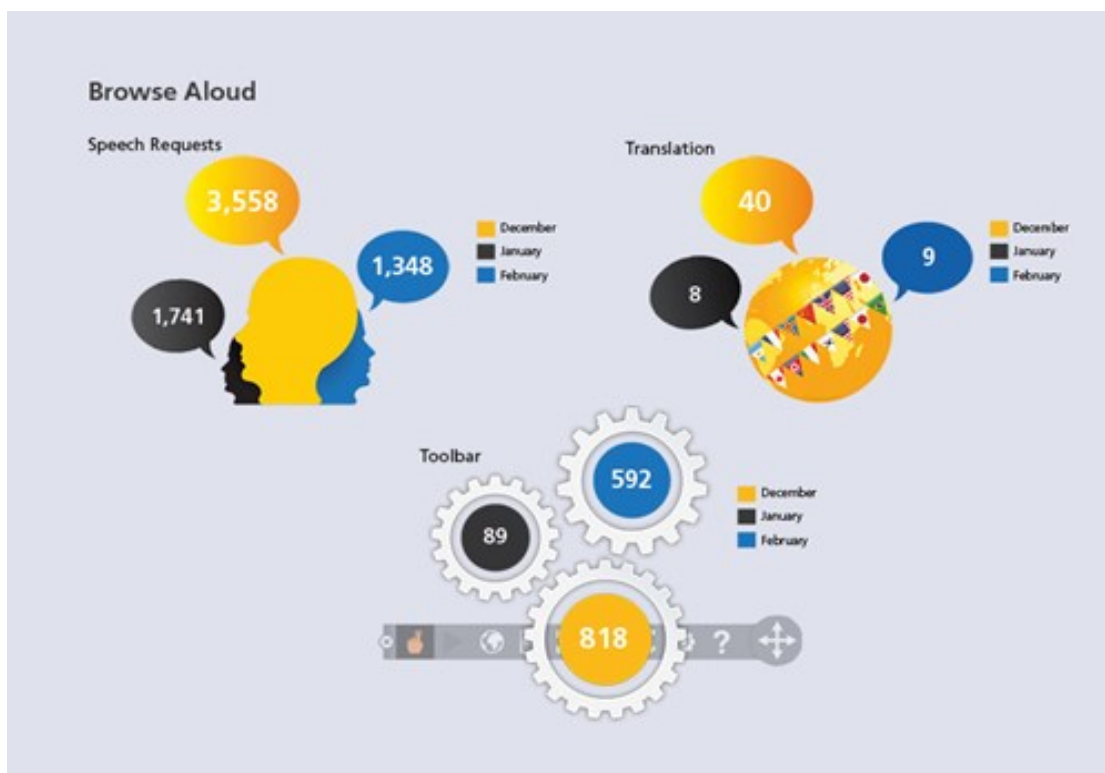
standards and examples include: captions with videos for sight impaired user, ability to change font sizes or colours and consistent use of menus, icons and buttons throughout a website. Of course compliance to AA standards cannot be relied upon exclusively to eliminate barriers to on line access however it does provide an important design feature which supports this.

3.3 To further improve the accessibility of our website a new feature called Browse Aloud went live in July 2015. This is a versatile tool that enables anyone using the Brent website to adapt the way content is displayed, to meet their specific needs. It's features include :

- A button to convert text to speech for the visually impaired or assist those with literacy or learning disabilities such as dyslexia to be able to access information easily.
- A screen mask which allows users to light up lines of text as they move through a page- making it easier to focus on a few lines at a time
- A simplify tool- that simplifies the text content on a page to make this easier to read
- A text magnifier that enables users to adjust font size to suit their needs
- A translation tool which covers over 150 languages .With over 150 languages spoken in Brent and with up to 20% of households where no one speaks English, this is a really important feature

Browse Aloud is available from every web page and is clearly visible at the top of each page as an orange icon.

3.4 The diagram below provides details of Browse Aloud usage between December 2015 and February 2016. What is clear is that the most popular features are speech related- either in English or other languages. It can also be seen that the number of users increased significantly in December, specifically over the Christmas period. This is likely to be related to the fact that phone and face to face services are were not available and residents were accessing our website to find out information or access services.



- 3.5 A joint Customer Insight Survey was carried out in October 2014 between Brent Customer Services (BCS) and four Job Centre Plus (JCP) offices in Brent to better understand how our residents contact us and how satisfied they are. This survey only covered residents who are in receipt on Housing Benefit and thus is not representative of the population as a whole. It has however helped us to understand the basic barriers that some of our most vulnerable residents may face in trying to access on line services.
- 3.6 The survey was carried out from 1st October to 31st October 2014 and we received 954 responses. Of those surveyed, under a quarter (22.3%) advised they didn't have access to a computer and 8.8% didn't have access to the internet from home (broadband) . However separate studies have indicated that most households do have access to mobile devices such as smart phones or tablets and thus could access on line services provided information is displayed in a mobile responsive way- typically this requires automatic formatting of information to fit the screen size. The Brent website is mobile responsive as is the My Account facility within it. Mobile responsiveness is now a requirement of all new on line services and where possible we will work with existing on line services to evaluate how this could be achieved.
- 3.7 Free e learning training packages are available to all Brent library users and these cover basic navigation and how to set up an email account. Library staff are available to assist residents with basic navigation as are Customer Services Officers in the Civic Centre Customer Services Centre. There are 34 self service PCs available specifically for access to Brent services in the Customer Services' Centre (28) and the Library at Willesden (6) and Customer Services staff provide assistance to those who are not computer literate or lack confidence in using on line services. Prior to the launch of the

new “ My Account ” we trained a range of voluntary and community organisations on how to set up and access services using My Account. This is helping to ensure that residents can access support across the Borough , not just by visiting Council buildings.

- 3.7 The My Account facility went live in late October 2015 as part of our wider plans to improve our digital offer to residents. This has been designed to WCAG AA standard and is mobile responsive. It allows residents to access services securely and easily through one log in and password, avoiding the need to navigate and search for services, using any device at a time that is convenient to them. A range of help facilities have been incorporated to assist and guide residents using the facility, including videos, frequently asked questions and prompts which clearly state the information required to authenticate access to a service, for example Council Tax Account number. Since going live nearly 30,000 residents have created a My Account and numbers continue to rise on a weekly basis. We are planning to hold resident focus groups during 2016 to gain feedback on experience of creating and using the Account, in particular seeking feedback from protected groups such as the elderly, disabled or those experiencing language barriers. This along with analytics of user journeys will inform future improvements and developments. My Account also enables users to rate their experience whilst accessing services through it and this feedback has already helped us to improve help facilities and navigation through the site.

- 3.8 The following provides a summary of the results of a survey of web site visitors undertaken in July 2015 .

62% found it easy to find what they were looking for
70% thought the wording on the website was clear
63% were able to complete they set out to do on the website
81% were confident using on line services

15% of respondents considered themselves to have a disability- this is broadly comparable to Brent’s overall Borough profile
36% of respondents were white- this is broadly in line with Brent’s Borough profile
29% of respondents were Asian- this is slightly lower than Brent’s Borough profile of 34%
17% of respondents were black- this is broadly in line with Brent’s Borough profile
2% of respondents stated that their gender identity was different to that assumed at birth.(comparison to Borough profile not known)

- 3.9 The survey indicates that residents from all protected characteristics are accessing on line services and there is no significant under representation when compared to the overall Borough profile. There is work to do to improve residents experience when accessing the web and over the past year significant work has been undertaken to improve content, search facilities and navigations. Work is also underway to introduce a simple web survey on all main pages that will help to inform further improvements.

3.10 Preparation for Universal Credit (UC) and Digital Inclusion

As part of the wider Welfare Reform agenda, Universal Credit is currently being rolled out nationally. Brent is currently for single claimants only so there has been only minimum impact up to this point. However between 2017 and 2020 Universal Credit will be rolled out to over 40,000 Brent residents and this will have a significant impact for them and for Brent.

- 3.11 Universal Credit customers will expected to apply online and will be expected to maintain their claim electronically too. This will include reporting any changes, getting updates for interviews and keeping their job search records. Whilst this is a common feature of Brent's existing Housing Benefit service, it is clear that DWP do not plan to provide the level of support and assistance that we are currently offering to our residents. Brent's proactively in supporting residents to access on line services now is helping our residents to be better prepared to manage their Universal Credit claim when their claim migrates to DWP. Digital skills are also increasingly becoming an essential skill for work and life – including shopping, banking, insurance and tax. We are working closely with DWP to ensure that help is specifically targeted to working age Housing Benefit claimants to ensure that they develop the basic digital skills required to claim and maintain their Universal Credit claim.
- 3.12 Work is continuing in the development of our digital / on line offering with a further 11 service becoming available through My Account over the next 12 months.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officers

Margaret Read
Director of Brent Customer Services

STEPHEN HUGHES
Strategic Director, Resources



Equalities Committee

7 April 2016

Report from Mildred Phillips HR Director

Report Title: Progress update on impact of Cllr Pavey's review on HR and Equalities

1.0 Summary

This report provides a progress update of the impact from Cllr Pavey's review of HR and Equalities based on the available qualitative and quantitative information.

2.0 Recommendations

The Equalities Committee is asked to note the contents of this progress update and the supporting appendices.

3.0 Detail

At the time of writing this report, the significant majority of actions in Cllr Pavey's action plan (60 out of the 64 or 94 per cent) are completed or ongoing. The remaining four actions (six per cent) are on target for completion as per the indicated timescales. The detailed progress update on the action plan is attached as **Appendix 1**.

3.1 Some of the notable achievements and positive outcomes identified to date against the objectives set in Cllr Pavey's action plan are listed below:

3.1.1 To achieve excellence in employment and management practice and learning from practice is used to improve performance

- A more consistent approach to monitoring and reporting on the diversity profile of job applicants, current staff and leavers
- CMT, the Diversity Reference Group, HRIG and staff equality networks receive quarterly HR and Equalities updates
- DMTs have a clear role in respect of compliance with HR and equalities policies and procedures
- The HR team reviewing and learning from discipline, grievance (including bullying and harassment) and capability procedures
- The HR team systematically reviews learning from employment tribunal cases and reports quarterly to HRIG and annually to CMT
- Monthly case management review meetings held between HR, Legal and relevant Strategic and Operational directors
- Annual reporting on findings from exit interviews and equal pay audits to help inform workforce planning and retention strategies.

3.1.2 To ensure best practice in implementing recruitment policies

- Taleo was introduced to ensure that equality details of job applicants are captured and monitored
- Equality data is collected at long list, short list and interview stage
- Recruitment information is reported to Directors on a weekly basis and to CMT quarterly
- A mandatory e-learning module on Recruitment and Selection incorporating Unconscious Bias for hiring managers / panels
- Hiring managers are also required to set up a diverse recruitment panel to ensure the selection process is fair and unbiased
- HR advice note and pro-forma is emailed to recruitment panel prior to every shortlisting
- Staff equality networks will be encouraged to complete the Selection and Recruitment and other relevant training, and to take part in recruitment panels
- Unconscious Bias is now embedded in Members' training programme
- A workforce planning and talent management strategy is currently being developed and incorporates recommendations from IIP.

3.1.3 To ensure Brent's HR policies and procedures reflect best practice and establish a more coherent competency framework

- The Code of Conduct has been revised and HR policies reviewed by the LGA and found to be sound
- The Competency Framework revised and supported by training on appraisals and mid / end of year guidelines for managers
- Compliance with HR is monitored by DMTs and reported to CMT on a quarterly basis via the HR Dashboard reports
- This year for the first time Strategic and Operational Directors, including the Chief Executive will be subject to a 360° appraisal
- The HR Intranet pages revamped and a Communications forward plan developed to ensure regular and consistent communication.

3.1.4 To engage staff in developing workforce strength and diversity and to ensure their views are used to shape decision-making

- A number of focus groups carried out and the recommendation incorporated in the 2014/15 Master Equality & Diversity action plan
- Four staff equality networks (Cultural Diversity, Gender, Disability and LGBT+) established and meet quarterly
- A staff survey launched on 21 March 2016 and the outcomes of the survey will inform the Council's 2020 vision
- Staff self-disclosure rate is currently at 89% (where staff have disclosed equality information on four or more characteristics)
- The Oracle system was adapted to make entry easier and a new staff self-disclosure campaign will be re-launched from April 2016
- Regular dialogue between Senior Managers and staff via the Collaborative Mentoring programme (on the agenda).

3.1.5 To ensure excellence in our approach to disabled staff

- As of 24 March 2016, 95 per cent of the actions identified in the 2014 Brent Civic Centre Access audit have been completed
- In December 2015 Brent was awarded with the DWP Disability Confident Employer status
- In November 2015 the Council won the 2015 Business Disability Forum Disability-smart premises award
- Brent was also recognised as a best practice example in the government's Accessible Britain Challenge
- Guidance on reasonable / workplace adjustments launched in June 2015 and supported training carried out
- A detailed report on the Council's policies and initiatives supporting employees with disabilities on the agenda.

3.1.6 To ensure there is a creative approach to the development of talent & leadership and under-represented groups

- Council's Aspire Leadership and Development programme launched in March 2016
 - All participating staff supported by mentors and coaches throughout the programme
 - Unsuccessful applicants received constructive feedback and have access to a training and development support package
 - The cohort is reflective of the Council's and Borough's diversity profile, with under-represented groups being over-represented
 - A detailed progress update is available as a separate item on the agenda.
- Council's Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme launched in January 2016
 - An enhanced programme of opportunities fostering a regular dialogue and interaction between senior managers and staff
 - Programmes includes shadowing and back to floor days, reverse mentoring circles, 360° appraisal for Strategic and Operational Directors, including the Chief Executive
 - To date over 50 staff members have taken part in one or more of the above initiatives
 - A detailed progress update is available as a separate item on the agenda.
- Staff equality networks
 - Four staff equality networks (Cultural Diversity, Disability, Gender and LGBT+) established and meet quarterly
 - The networks are sponsored by each of the Strategic Directors
 - The Chairs of the networks are members of the corporate Diversity Reference Group chaired by the Chief Executive
 - Some of the priority areas identified by staff networks include: raising the profile of the networks among staff from under-represented groups, promoting the importance of staff diversity self-disclosure, workplace adjustments, flexible working.

3.1.7 To review and refresh the apprenticeship and graduate schemes so they are high quality programmes leading to employment

- National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP)
 - The internal management arrangements reviewed and improvements implemented in June 2015
 - Improved programme in place for cohort 17 that started in October 2015
 - All graduates have been allocated Strategic Directors, Operational Directors or Heads of Service as mentors
 - A local graduate recruitment exercise was held in December 2015.
- Council's apprenticeship programme
 - An independent review undertaken by Grant Thornton in June 2015, with all recommendations already implemented
 - Regular sessions and catch ups held to capture apprentices' feedback and experience from the scheme
 - HR are working with the Looked After Children team to proactively market the apprenticeship and graduate positions
 - A careers fair targeted at local people was carried out on 20 January 2016 and will be held on a regular basis.

3.1.8 To ensure staff and elected members are aware of the outcomes of the HR and equalities policy review

- The HR and Equalities review action plan owned by CMT and overseen by the Equalities Committee quarterly
- Quarterly updates are also considered by DRG, DMTs and staff equality networks
- Staff updates on HR and Equalities are provided via the internal communication channels and events
- CMT report on the progress on HR and Equalities to the Scrutiny Committee annually (annual report presented on 5 April 2016).

3.2 Feedback from employees

Employees' views on Equality and Diversity at Brent were sought via staff events, Departmental meetings, equality networks and other staff forums. Over 100 staff members were provided with the opportunity to share their views and suggestions, including staff who took part in Cllr Pavey's focus groups. The feedback has informed this paper and the draft 2016/17 E&D action plan.

The consultation feedback is summarised below. Overall, the majority of employees were positive about equality and diversity at Brent and identified a number of improvements over the past year. However, a minority of respondents still hold negative perceptions and the view that things haven't improved much.

Areas for improvement identified by respondents

As probably expected, **restructuring** was the main theme of concern for staff, with the majority of comments summarised in the following two quotes: *“Less cuts, more staff”* and *“Stop restructuring every few months”*.

The other most discussed theme was the **lack of diversity at senior levels**. Some staff members also referred to the **lack of ‘open door’ policy**. One respondent to our survey wrote *“Brent needs to adopt more of an “open door” policy and help negate the fear of rebuttal for individuals to come forward if they are not happy with a present situation or feeling workload pressure etc.”*

There were a couple of negative comments related to the **Aspire programme**. One respondent felt it was a *“waste up”*, while the other one who is also a delegate in the first cohort wasn’t satisfied with the induction session.

Notable improvements from employees’ perspective

When asked ‘What has improved in the organisation over the past year?’ the majority of staff mentioned. **Senior management visibility and top down communication**, as well as more awareness of various equality and diversity and health and wellbeing topics. One respondent to our survey wrote: *“The visibility and communications around various equality and diversity topics, including health and wellbeing, has been really good.”*

Staff members specifically praised the **shadowing and mentoring opportunities** offered by Senior Managers, as well as the staff equality groups and events. One respondent wrote: *“There are different {staff} communities and group events within the council such as mentoring group etc”*

The second most mentioned improvement was the **Aspire programme** and respondents demonstrated a detailed level of understanding of the rationale and objectives of this programme. One of the respondents to our survey wrote: *“The introduction of the Aspire programme has been a good move by Brent going forward and the aim was to support and assist aspiring individuals within BAME groups.”*

Other key improvements mentioned and valued by staff were the **graduate and apprenticeship programmes**. One respondent wrote: *“Graduate and apprentice schemes are quite good ways of bringing young people into organisation.”*

The **diversity programme, equalities monitoring and impact assessment** for all changes affecting staff were also mentioned as areas with notable improvement.

Employees’ suggestions for further improvements

When asked: ‘What more can we do to make Brent Council an even better place to work?’, **communication and improved feedback** were identified as key areas for improvement.

Increasing the **diversity profile of the senior management** was another frequently mentioned theme. When asked what else the Council should be doing to improve this, respondents' views gravitated around the suggestion: *"Instil confidence in staff to solve problems or at least come with solutions to managers"*. The following comments from a respondent to our survey summarises the nature of the feedback on this theme: *"The council can continue to find creative ways for more diverse representation in senior management."*

A couple of respondents to our online survey referred to the **equality and diversity programme and policies** with the following suggestions: *"More diversity programme"* and *"Keep reviewing equality policies."*

There were a couple of employees staff members who **felt very positive about equality and diversity** at Brent. One of them wrote: *"I have never been under an impression that Brent Council is a place where equality and diversity is not taken seriously."* Another respondent to our survey wrote: *"Keep going along the road we are travelling along but keep an eye out for the signposts along the way so that nothing is forgotten & everything remembered."*

Contact Officers:

Mildred Phillips, HR Director

Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality

1	ACHIEVING CONSISTENCY IN STAFF PROGRESSION AND DIVERSITY AT MANAGEMENT LEVELS CMT Lead, Andy Donald, Strategic Director, Regeneration & Growth
---	--

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To ensure best practice in implementing recruitment policies and procedures	Train all managers and elected members who participate in recruitment and selection, incorporating unconscious bias into training	100% managers and Members involved in recruitment and selection to be trained so unconscious bias does not impact on recruitment and selection decisions. 90% good or excellent satisfaction levels on training	Members of the Senior Staff Appointments Sub Committee to be trained by end April 2015. Unconscious bias training for these Members undertaken by end of April 2015	Completed	Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members' training on unconscious bias took place in April 2015
			Build training on unconscious bias and recruitment and selection into annual Member development programme, May 2015	Completed	Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training on unconscious bias is now embedded into Members' annual training programme Brent Council has become the first London Borough to achieve the 'gold standard' Charter Plus Award for Elected Member Development
			New e-learning module on recruitment including unconscious bias training to be developed by end of April 2015 and rolled out to all managers by the end of June 2015.	Completed Roll out began in June and all Managers trained in advance of sitting on panels.	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New e-learning module incorporates UB elements and is mandatory for hiring managers Roll out began in June 2015 and all managers are trained in advance of sitting on panels

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
Page 18	Ensure decisions made at each stage of the recruitment and selection process are properly recorded	100% managers involved in recruitment and selection are trained	Recruiting managers issued with advice note and pro- forma amended by end of April 2015.	Completed New pro-forma and guide emailed prior to every shortlisting	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New advice note and pro-forma emailed to recruitment panel prior to every shortlisting
			Quarterly reporting on recruitment and selection to HRIG from September 2015.	On target	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly recruitment information sent to Directors • Equalities statistics collected at long list, short list and interview stage
	Collect and report on equalities data at all stages of the recruitment process. Analyse recruitment diversity statistics by pay grades	Robust data collection and analysis. Corporate HR KPIs demonstrate a positive direction of travel to demonstrate diversity at all levels of the workforce.	Implement recommendations in current annual equalities report throughout 2015	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report completed and signed off by DRG and CMT in September 2015. The recommendations were incorporated in the Master Equality and Diversity (E&D) action plan, with the significant majority implemented
			Equalities data for all stages of the recruitment process to be included in the Annual Equalities Workforce report 14/15, by June 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report signed off by DRG and CMT in September 2015 and published on the Council's E&D web page
			Incorporate new reporting requirements in the annual Equalities Workforce report by April 2016.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New recruitment system Taleo introduced to ensure that equality reporting requirements are met

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To ensure best practice in implementing HR policies	Ensure consistent application of HR policies and procedures and adherence to them by Managers.	Achievement of liP Gold level Evidence of monthly case management meetings	Guidance on the role of DMTs in respect of workforce and equalities to be developed by end of April.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance was produced in April 2015 and considered by all DMTs in October 2015
			Quarterly reporting to DMTs on departmental compliance with HR policies and/or procedures commencing May 2015.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Departmental breaches reported at DMTs from July 2015
			Annual report with recommendations for improvement produced in October 2015 and reported to HRIG.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual report produced in October 2015 and reported to HRIG
			Review of progress to achieve liP Gold to CMT April 2015	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMTs reviewed progress against liP Gold level from April to July 2015
Page 19		Evidence of senior management engagement in employment tribunal cases and other complex employee relations cases	Achievement of IIP Gold level December 2015.	Completed	Lorraine Langham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment carried out in September 2015. The outcome of the assessment was a confirmation of Brent's Silver level for further three years
			Monthly case management reviews with HR and Legal April 2015 onwards.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting reviews have been happening between HR and Legal teams since April 2015.

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
			As routine, meetings with relevant strategic and operational directors, HR Director and legal to consider all complex employee relations cases and potential employment tribunals	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with SDs were set up in August 2015, and since then are arranged as and when required
To ensure there is a creative approach to the development of talent & leadership Page 20	Develop a leadership development programme for staff from under-represented groups to support promotion into senior manager posts Prepare a report establishing how to identify talent internally in a structured way.	Minimum of 90% satisfaction rating from all participants. Increasing proportion of: BAME senior managers; One female senior managers; disabled senior managers. Managers are supported in ensuring that staff are linked to and benefit from development opportunities and support required to progress.	Programme developed by May 2015 and agreed by HRIG, TUs and CMT by June 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership and Development provider Premier Partnership appointed in September 2015 • Accrediting Body programme agreed by HRIG in October 2015 • Programme and application form process communicated in December 2015 • Information sessions were held in January 2016
			Participants identified and programme rolled out between September 2015 and March 2016.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates of the first cohort selected by DMTs with support from HR in February 2016 • Programme was launched on 16 March • Delegates to be supported by mentors and career coaches throughout the programme

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
Page 21			Programme evaluated April 2016.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMT discussed 9 box grid of talent management solution. • Referred to HRIG for further work to produce a holistic talent management and appraisal package for next appraisal year April 2016
			Report prepared for December 2015, incorporating feedback from IIP Gold Assessment	On target	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report was discussed by CMT and HRIG in December 2015 and January 2016, respectively • Workforce planning and talent management strategy is currently being developed and incorporates recommendations from IIP assessment
			Recommendations rolled out by April 2016.	On target	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations shared with ODs and SDs • Work in progress from January 2016

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To support the development of under represented groups	Introduce innovative coaching and mentoring arrangements, including a diversity mentoring programme to support under-represented groups and reverse mentoring arrangements	100% new senior managers have mentors 100% apprentices and national graduates have mentors	New programme and coaching and mentoring policy developed and agreed by HRIG, TUS and CMT by May 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New programme for coaching and mentoring developed and rolled out
			New policy rolled out by June 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All graduates have been allocated Strategic Directors, Operational Directors or Heads of Service as mentors
		Staff to participate in reverse mentoring and the pilot is well reviewed.	Pilot reverse mentoring scheme from September 2015 and review in July 2016	Back on target	Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Collaborative Mentoring programme was approved by CMT in December 2015 and launched in January 2016 • The programme comprises initiatives such as shadowing days, reverse mentoring circles, live web chats/forums and 360° Feedback for senior managers • A regular progress update presented to Equalities Committee
		Upper quartile staff satisfaction levels on staff and management development in staff survey	Build diversity mentoring and coaching arrangements into the BAME senior management development programme from September 2015	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporated as part of programme content • Premier Partnership to provide mentoring and coaching opportunities as part of the programme content

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To review and refresh the apprenticeship and graduate schemes so they are high quality programmes leading to employment	Evaluate the effectiveness of the current apprentice programme establish improvements	Internal schemes to grow our own future workforce are solid and effective.	External review of apprentice programme undertaken by end of April 2015 and recommendations implemented by June 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent Review was undertaken by external partners Grant Thornton • Final report received in September 2015 • Report went to CMT in October 2015 with recommendations already implemented
		Brent in top quartile for number of apprentices in London Councils. Support to reduced unemployment within the borough. 95% satisfaction with Brent graduate programme. 95% graduates get jobs in Brent Graduates more reflective of the community	Review to incorporate focus group with apprentices to capture views about programme and opportunities for them to continue their career within Brent.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the 'passing out' ceremony for apprentices, a session was held to capture their feedback and experience from the scheme • There will be at least two catch-up meetings with apprentices a year going forward • HR are working with the LAC team to proactively market the apprenticeship and graduate positions • A local graduate recruitment exercise held in Dec 2015 • A careers fair targeted at local people held on 20 Jan 2016

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
	Review and improve the internal arrangements in place for the management of the National Graduate Development Programme for Local Government.		Review and agree changes to the Graduate Programme by June 2015. Roll out improved internal management arrangements of programme in advance of new intake in September 2015.	Completed Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following a review of the Graduate programme and a report to CMT, changes have been made to the scheme in June 2015 Improved programme in place for cohort 17 that started in October 2015
	Introduce a local graduate development programme to complement the national scheme.		Proposals considered and agreed by October 2015 and rolled out in January 2016 to attract graduates graduating in June 2016.	On target	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Graduate programme agreed by CMT in July 2015 and launched in January 2016
engage council staff in developing workforce strength and diversity.	Ensure all staff have updated their equalities profile on Oracle. Review equality reporting categories.	100% equalities profile reporting on Oracle Achievement of corporate KPIs for recruitment to under represented areas at a senior level.	Ongoing campaign to encourage staff and managers to update equality profile on Oracle to increase reporting levels for all equalities reporting data.	Ongoing	Head of Equalities / DMTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oracle system adapted to make entry easier for staff As of 23 March 2016, staff self-disclosure rate is 89% (where staff have disclosed information on four or more protected characteristics) New campaign will be launched from April 2016, with the support of DRG, DMTs, staff equality networks and the Communications team

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
	Consider implementing indicative, non binding targets for recruitment of under-representative groups at senior levels.		Review KPIs for recruitment of under-represented groups at a senior level by June 2015. Consider report at CMT by October and then at General Purposes Committee.	Completed	Head of Equalities / DMTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on voluntary targets discussed by CMT in October 2015 and the decision was to carry on with current monitoring arrangements as they were considered to be sufficiently robust
	Collect feedback during Induction regarding experience of recruitment process.		Feedback reported quarterly to CMT from July 2015. Annual report on recruitment incorporates experience of new employees, from September 2015.	On target	Mildred Phillips / Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sep - Mar 2015/16 report to go to CMT in May 2016

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

CMT Lead, Mildred Phillips, Director of HR

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To ensure Brent's Human Resources policies and procedures reflect best practice so managers are supported well in leading and	Review and update policies in accordance with LGA feedback	100% managers complete Brent Manager Essential training	Consider and make minor policy changes by the middle of March 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant policy changes have been made
	Review the equality analyses of HR policies every three years	100% managers who undertake investigations are trained in disciplinary and grievance investigations	Revise Code of Conduct by end of April 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Code of conduct revised and agreed by CMT
			Provide a written explanation where an LGA recommendation is not being implemented by the end of April 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter of explanation sent to LGA March 2015

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
managing their teams.		100 % Adherence to procedures and timelines in HR policies	Consult with trade unions and HRIG on proposed changes by end of March 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All changes agreed by the TU, HRIG and CMT
			Agree minor policy changes with CMT & Lead Member by end of April 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed with Lead Member
			Revise the Recruitment Policy by end of April 2015 to stipulate all managers must be trained before interviewing.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All managers trained before interview. HR keeps central record of training take-up
			Publish revised policies on intranet by end of April 2015. Communicate changes to policies to staff and managers by end of April 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy published and promoted to staff and given high profile on new intranet
			First review to be undertaken in June 2015	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring system in place • HR dashboard reports on compliance • Review on adherence December 2015

3 **ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICE**
CMT Lead, Phil Porter, Strategic Director, Adult and Social Care

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To establish a more coherent competency framework for the Council which defines clearly different behaviours and personal skills that determine how all staff should do their jobs.	Produce a new competency framework and embed it in the work of the Council	and selection reflects the competencies framework. 100% appraisals reflects the competencies	Develop a framework setting out a set of revised staff competencies and incorporate this into the next Appraisal process.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised Competency Framework agreed by CMT August 2015
			Review our approach to bullying and harassment and ensure best practice is captured in the revised competencies.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed by LGA and found to be sound Monitoring of bullying and harassment cases included in CMT quarterly reports
			Ensure relevant policies recognise the requirement to be competency based by September 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New competency framework included in performance and development scheme guidance
			Devise a training programme that supports the framework for implementation from July 2015.	Completed	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is covered by training on appraisals and guidance provided to all managers
To ensure the views of staff are used to shape the development of the Council.	Establish and carry out a staff survey every two years		<p>Staff survey designed and undertaken by March 2016.</p> <p>Results analysed and fed into the new Corporate Plan</p>	Completed	Rob Mansfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methodology agreed by CMT in February 2016 Staff survey launched on 21 March 2016

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
Page 28	Organise a series of regular focus groups with different staff groups.		Programme of focus groups for BAME staff, disabled staff, women and LGBT staff agreed by DRG by June 2015	Completed	Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A number of focus groups were carried out from April 2015 by external facilitators, supported by the Equality Team. A report was published on the intranet and the recommendations incorporated into the Master E&D action plan Based on the feedback from staff focus groups, four staff equality networks (Cultural Diversity, Gender, Disability and LGBT+) were established in November 2015. The Chairs of the networks represent them at DRG
			<p>Focus group on recruitment and selection arrangements undertaken by June 2015 and any recommendations incorporated into annual report to CMT in September 2015.</p> <p>Other focus groups underway by September 2015 and outcomes reported to DRG on a quarterly basis from December 2015</p>	Completed		
To ensure excellence in our approach to disabled staff	Develop guidance for managers on reasonable adjustments		Guidance for managers on reasonable adjustments agreed by DRG, HRIG and TUs and rolled out by June 2015.	Completed	Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance on reasonable / workplace adjustments was published on the intranet in June 2015 The staff disability network will review the impact from the guidance to ensure that it is effectively implemented

Page 29

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To achieve excellence in employment and management practice	Undertake an Equal pay audit	100% staff are being paid equal pay for work of equal value	Equal pay audit undertaken by end of March 2015 and recommendations reported to DRG by April 2015 with any agreed action underway by May 2015	Completed	Head of Equalities and Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equal Pay audit was undertaken in April, reviewed by DRG in May and communicated to all staff in May 2015• The next Equal Pay audit will commence at the end of April 2016 and will be published by the end of May 2016
	CMT & DMTs to consider equalities and workforce issues on a more regular basis.		Quarterly equalities and HR updates to CMT and DMTs commencing in May 2015.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quarterly HR and equalities updates are communicated with DMTs and CMT. Whenever possible, updates are communicated with DMTs first before going to CMT
	Review equalities data on a regular basis and oversee implementation of HR and equalities action plan.		Quarterly reporting to DRG on a core set of equalities data from September 2015.	Ongoing	Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data on workforce profile, Equal Pay Audits, etc on DRG forward plan
			Quarterly monitoring of the roll out of the HR and equalities action plan by DRG and HRIG, commencing in May 2015.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips / Head of Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The action plan is on DRG, HRIG and CMT forward plans, and is monitored on a quarterly basis

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
			Member monitoring of the Plan through Member Equalities Committee.	Ongoing	Peter Goss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The action plan is a permanent item on the Equalities Committee agenda and forward plan The Committee had its first meeting on a quarterly basis
To ensure learning from practice is used to improve performance Page 30	Implement a systematic approach to learning from internal discipline, grievance (including bullying and harassment), capability procedures and employment tribunals.	Effective management of employee relations and cases.	Process for review developed and agreed by HRIG by end of March 2015 and CMT in April.	Completed	Mildred Phillips / Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Team systematically reviews learning from employment tribunal cases Learning points reported quarterly to HRIG and annually to CMT Monthly case reviews discussed by Resources
			Roll out new review arrangements from May 2015. Monthly case management meetings with HR and Legal commencing April 2015	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips / HR Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly HR and Legal meeting held since April 2015
			Ad hoc meetings with relevant director, HR and Legal on Employment Tribunals, commencing April 2015.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips / HR Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings scheduled as and when needed
			Regular HR reports (including B&H) commencing May 2015	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips / HR Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR reports (including bullying and harassment) taken to CMT on a quarterly basis

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
	Develop an annual report highlighting the learning from the implementation of the Council's policies on discipline, grievance and capability as well as the learning from employment tribunals.	Better employee management practice and stronger understanding of employee perceptions	Report on progress quarterly to CMT commencing in May as part of the HR report. Annual analysis on findings of exit interviews to be considered by HRIG in April 2015 and incorporated into HR annual report 2016.	Ongoing	Mildred Phillips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMT receives quarterly HR reports • A report on the findings of exit interviews will be taken to CMT in April 2016

4	SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE BY BETTER COMMUNICATION AND BY INVOLVEMENT OF ELECTED MEMBERS CMT Lead, Lorraine Langham, Chief Operating Officer
----------	--

Objective	Key Activities	Success criteria	Progress Milestones	Progress to date	Owner	Actions Taken
To ensure staff and elected members are aware of the outcomes of the HR and equalities policy review	Review Council's approach to internal communications.	Upper quartile satisfaction rates on internal communication in the staff survey.	Review of internal communication arrangements undertaken by June 2015 and new strategy implemented from July 2015	Ongoing	Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review complete Internal Communication strategy deferred to allow incoming CE to input - in the CMT forward plan New intranet successfully launched September 2015
	Communicate outcome of review and action plan to staff and Members.	100% of actions in action plan delivered on time	Publish action plan on intranet by beginning of May 2015, with references made too in various internal publications such as the Chief Executive's Blog, e-Sight lite.	Completed	Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review was published in January 2015 and the Action Plan is published at regular intervals to share progress
	Establish a committee of elected members to oversee progress towards the Excellent level in the EFLG		<p>Action plan on HR and Equalities review to be considered by Scrutiny Committee end of April 2015.</p> <p>Six monthly reporting of progress reported to CMT and Members Equality Committee commencing September 2015.</p>	Completed	Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CMT reviewed the progress against the action plan in September 2015 and January 2016 Action plan reviewed by Equalities Committee at each meeting (quarterly) In addition to Members Equalities Committee, the Scrutiny Committee considered this action plan in April 2015 and received a progress report on 5 April 2016
			Establish a committee in May 2015 to review progress towards Excellent in the Equalities Framework for Local Government Meetings held quarterly, commencing in June 2015.	Completed	Peter Goss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Committee was established and met in July 2015, and since then is meeting on a quarterly basis. The minutes of the meetings are available on Brent website



Equalities Committee

7 April 2016

Report from Mildred Phillips HR Director

Report Title: Brent Council's policies, programmes and initiatives supporting employees and applicants with disabilities

1.0 Summary

Brent Council is committed to having a diverse workforce that is representative of the equalities profile of its communities, and has legal duties to advance equality of opportunity for disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments to its workplace practices and environment.

In December 2015 Brent was awarded with the Department for Work and Pensions Disability Confident Employer status, which demonstrates the Council's commitment to ensuring that its facilities, services, working environment and employment practices are accessible and inclusive to people with disabilities.

Brent is a disability positive employer and a member of the Positive about disabled people scheme awarded by the Job Centre Plus with the Two Ticks symbol. In March 2016 the council successfully retained its Two Ticks accreditation showing its commitment to disability inclusion and good employment and recruitment practices.

However, the council recognises that there is still a lot to be done and works hard to promote disability inclusion and minimise barriers facing disabled employees and applicants, in partnership with organisations such as Remploy, the Business Disability Forum (BDF) and enei.

2.0 Recommendations

The Equalities Committee is asked to note the policies, programmes and new initiatives supporting employees and applicants with disabilities.

3.0 Detail

In line with best practice the council has implemented a comprehensive support package of policies, initiatives and programmes that are either directly or indirectly benefitting disabled employees. Some of these are listed below (non-exhaustive list):

3.1 Attendance, stress management and supervision policies

The Attendance policy requires managers to complete return to work interviews for their employees, and clearly outlines the specific provisions around absences due to an employee's disability or long term health conditions to ensure that employees are treated fairly.

A revised Stress policy supported by relevant training was introduced in January 2015. The new policy clearly sets out the health risks to Brent staff in relation to stress, including workplace stress, and the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff in preventing and managing stress and its effects.

Additionally, the Supervision guidelines require managers to hold regular one-to-one meetings with their staff and proactively encourage discussions about their staff health and wellbeing.

3.2 Reasonable / workplace adjustments

The council's Guidance refreshed in June 2015 and training on workplace adjustments enable managers to effectively carry out their role in creating an open and supportive environment for staff with disabilities and those with long or short term health conditions.

The guidance provides managers with information on how to deal with reasonable adjustments requests and gives practical examples of types of reasonable adjustments. The guidance also contains an Access to Work factsheet and a Workplace Adjustments form, along with relevant contact details (e.g. Occupational Health, EAP service).

Brent is a member of the Business Disability Forum (BDF) and staff can register with their Brent email addresses to access useful BDF resources. Line managers can also contact the BDF free and confidential Advice Service to answer any queries about disability and workplace adjustments on 020 7403 3020 or advice@businessdisabilityforum.org.uk

3.3 Flexible Working policy

The Flexible Working provision is highly praised by Brent staff and can also be applied as a reasonable adjustment for employees who require changes to their working patterns due to disability, long or short terms health conditions.

According to the Flexible Working survey, undertaken in February 2015 and completed by 724 employees from across all council departments, 82 per cent of respondents benefit from one or more of the available flexible working arrangements and the majority feel that the council gets the best out of them. The proportion of respondents with disabilities / long-term health conditions (9.3 per cent) was representative of the disability profile of the workforce (10 per cent).

3.4 Employee Assistance Programme

The confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to all staff and their families. The EAP provides a free 24/7 helpline for employees and their families to access advice on legal matters, counselling and practical support on emotional wellbeing. The service also offers health and wellbeing webinars and useful guidelines for employees to access online.

3.5 Occupational Health service

The in-house Occupational Health (OH) service is available to staff who have been referred to OH by their managers or by Human Resources. The OH Adviser provides support to staff with a wide range of health conditions and/or disabilities, including Mental Health and Eating Disorders.

3.6 Council's Health and Wellbeing programme

In August 2014 Brent Council signed up to the London Healthy Workplace Charter, an assessment framework that provides standards to promote employee health and wellbeing. By October 2014, the council was awarded the Achievement level of the Charter and is now working towards the highest Excellent level.

There are a number of ways in which staff, including disabled employees, benefit from Brent's health and wellbeing programme, including:

- Inclusive health and fitness opportunities to encourage healthy lifestyles for staff
- Regular health and wellbeing days and an annual health and wellbeing fair which includes stalls from organisations such as Brent Mind, Diabetes UK, Community Action on Dementia, Stroke Organisation, Occupational Health
- Awareness raising campaigns on themes such as Mental Health, Eating Disorders, Dementia, etc

In its journey to Excellence, the Council will continue to provide disability inclusive practices and positive health and wellbeing initiatives.

3.7 Staff disability network

The network was established in November last year and is sponsored by Phil Porter, Strategic Director of Community and Wellbeing. Its role is to raise awareness of different types of disabilities / health conditions and to help remove barriers affecting disabled staff. Some of the priority areas identified by the staff disability network include: promoting the importance of staff disability self-disclosure, workplace adjustments, flexible working, Mental Health in the workplace.

However, the council recognises that there is still a lot to be done and works in partnership with organisations such as Remploy, the Business Disability Forum (BDF) and enei to further improve its recruitment and selection practices and increase employment opportunities for disabled people.

3.8 Selection and recruitment policy and process

Brent is a disability positive employer and a member of the Positive about disabled people scheme awarded by the Job Centre Plus with the Two Ticks symbol. All council vacancies and recruitment correspondence contain the Two Ticks symbol and a positive about disability statement to encouraging disabled people to apply for available vacancies.

The new recruitment system, Taleo, now monitors and reports on applicants' protected characteristics at long list, short list and interview stage. Disabled employees who cannot apply for a job via the system can apply for a job offline, and if they meet the minimum criteria for the post, they are invited for an interview.

As part of the recruitment process:

- HR advice note and pro-forma is emailed to recruitment panel prior to every shortlisting
- In addition to the Disability Confident e-module, hiring managers and members of the interview panels are also required to complete the e-module on Recruitment and Selection incorporating Unconscious Bias
- Hiring managers are required to set up a diverse recruitment panel to ensure the selection process is fair and unbiased
- Members of staff equality networks will be encouraged to complete the above and other relevant e-modules, and will be provided with the opportunity to take part in recruitment panels.

From April 2016 findings from exit interviews and equal pay audits will be reported to CMT on an annual basis to help inform workforce planning and retention strategies.

3.9 Work-based experience policy

The council provides a variety of paid and unpaid opportunities that offer valuable and relevant work placement opportunities, including work experience opportunities, internships, volunteering, apprenticeships and graduate placements, for the community.

The work-based experience policy is open to everyone but the council is particularly targeting people with disabilities such as learning disabilities and Mental Health needs.

3.10 Partnership working with Remploy to provide employment opportunities for local people with disabilities

At their last meeting members of the Diversity Reference Group approved the proposal for the Council to work with Remploy to identify and provide suitable employment opportunities for local people with disabilities.

Remploy will manage the identified opportunities on behalf of Brent Council, from start to finish, identifying any reasonable adjustments for the individual, pre and during employment or placement.

Process outline:

- Role specification hourly rate hours, shift patterns and location to be sent to Remploy Business Development Manager
- All vacancies received from Brent Council to be loaded onto Remploy's vacancy management system
- Vacancies to be cascaded to selected centres, with particular focus on Brent residents
- Remploy to shortlist and invite successful candidates to a pre-screen held at a Remploy office
- The list of Remploy selected candidates who have passed the pre-screen to be forwarded to the Brent hiring manager
- Remploy to liaise with the hiring manager to arrange interview slots and reasonable adjustments
- Hiring manager to ensure that the interview panel is diverse and that interviewers have completed the mandatory training (disability confident, unconscious bias) prior to the interviews
- Remploy to support the successful candidate and their employment advisor in completing any further documentation prior to start date
- Remploy to provide the employee with in-work support, where needed
- The HR and Equality teams to support the hiring manager with training, advice and guidance. Guidance and support is also available from Remploy.

Brent is in the process of agreeing the final recruitment and monitoring arrangements. Remploy will also support the Council in retaining disabled employees into employment.

Contact Officers:

Mildred Phillips, HR Director

Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality

This page is intentionally left blank



Equalities Committee

7 April 2016

**Report from Mildred Phillips
HR Director**

**Report Title: Progress report on the Let's Talk Collaborative
Mentoring programme**

1.0 Summary

The Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme was approved by CMT in December 2015 and launched in January 2016. It aims to promote and facilitate regular dialogue between senior managers and staff as a means of empowering junior staff members, fostering good cross-organisational working relationships, developing a greater understanding of diversity from differing perspectives and improving the sense of belonging to One Council.

2.0 Recommendations

The Equalities Committee is asked to note the first quarterly progress update and staff feedback on the programme.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1** As of 24 March 2016, 49 staff members participated in one or more of the following initiatives: shadowing the Chief Executive or a Senior Manager, hosting back to floor days, attending a reverse mentoring circle with the Chief Executive. Some staff members took part in all of the above listed activities.
- 3.2** The representation across the different departments was fairly even, although the Resources department was slightly over-represented compared to the rest of the departments, partly because some of the staff members participated in more than one of the above activities. Staff from Brent Housing Partnership and The Living Room also took part in some of the Let's Talk initiatives.
- 3.3** In terms of the grade profile of participants, 19 (39 per cent) were between PO1 and PO4, 15 (31 per cent) were below PO1, 13 (27 per cent) were between PO5 and PO8 and the remaining two were at Hay 4 and 5, respectively.
- 3.4** 32 out of the 49 employees (65 per cent) who took part in the Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme were women, which is reflective of the gender profile of the workforce.
- 3.5** Of those who have declared their ethnicity profile (39 participants), 28 staff (72 per cent) were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Groups (BAME excluding the White - Other category). Overall, BAME staff were much more likely to take part in two or more of the Let's Talk initiatives compared to the rest of the participants.

- 3.6** In total 15 participants (31 per cent) completed our feedback form available in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.7** The detailed feedback is available in **Appendix 2**. Overall, respondents' feedback was very positive, with few of them making some useful suggestions on how we could further improve the Let's Talk activities. All respondents stated that they would register for other initiatives in the Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme (Q 4) and that they would recommend the programme to their colleagues (Q 5).
- 3.8** Senior Managers involved in the programme were also encouraged to share their feedback on the Let's Talk activities. Their feedback is available in **Appendix 3**.
- 4.0** The Equality team will continue to provide Equalities Committee with quarterly updates on the Let's Talk Collaborative Mentoring programme.

Contact Officers:

Mildred Phillips, HR Director

Andreyana Ivanova, Head of Equality

Appendix 1: Collaborative Mentoring Programme evaluation form

Collaborative Mentoring Programme evaluation form



Thank you for participating in the Collaborative Mentoring Programme. To help us to further improve and develop the programme, we would really appreciate your feedback.

Name of participant (optional):

Department:

Service:

I am: Officer / Manager / Agency worker (* please delete as appropriate)

Activity: Shadowing / Back to floor day / Reverse mentoring circle (* please delete as appropriate)

Name of the senior manager involved:

Date / month when activity took place:

1. What did you learn from the session and how will you make use of this learning?

2. What did you enjoy most about the session and what did you least enjoy?

3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions for improvement?

4. Will you register for other initiatives in the programme? Yes / No (* please delete as appropriate)

5. Will you recommend the programme to your colleagues? Yes / No (* please delete as appropriate)

You can also complete the evaluation form [online](#) if you prefer.

Thank you for taking time to complete this form. Your feedback is much appreciated!

Please email your completed form to letstalk@brent.gov.uk or post it to Andreyana Ivanova, Brent Civic Centre, 8th floor.

Appendix 2: Feedback from staff members

Collaborative Mentoring Programme evaluation form



Summary of staff feedback

1. What did you learn from the session and how will you make use of this learning?

Reverse mentoring circle with the Chief Executive

The session was a great opportunity to discuss issues affecting staff and hear different perspectives. The points that resonated with me the most were making your own luck and that if we want change we have to be the change. I will make use of this learning by applying for more opportunities offered by the council.

I found it very helpful to be in a room with likeminded people. I have already made changes in my department such as people being encouraged to chair team meetings.

I learnt that some services are not aware of our events and support programmes. Going forward I will circulate relevant information directly to my new networking contacts I have made in these services.

Shadowing experience (CE and Senior Managers)

It was great to hear that the CE and all strategic directors share the same view as those of us that really want to encourage change and play a huge part in improving the services that we provide to our customers.

It has been extremely interesting and very inspirational to observe XX's leadership and management style and how she adjusts to situations / individuals. I learned about the importance of senior member of staff showing visible support for staff initiatives and working together with Operational Directors and external partners. I will apply this learning as part of my development on the graduate scheme.

I learnt what the strategic director does and their path before being appointed as strategic director. I also learnt what the different services in this directorate do. I will use this experience to improve my performance as I am more aware of the needs of clients and service users.

I learnt about different parts of the Council that I normally don't have much involvement with. It was interesting to understand the role of the Chief Executive, what responsibilities she has and what meetings she attends. It made me appreciate how much happens in the Council too.

I learnt about how it is useful to have a pre-meeting with other key stakeholders for important meetings. Mainly as a chance to coordinate and synthesise information beforehand so the meeting runs smoothly and the Chair can draw the maximum from the meeting itself. I also learnt how important it is to be aware of the timings and not let the agenda get out of control so that the meeting drastically overruns. I also recognised the fine balance between allowing participants to have extended says on agenda items and needing to move the agenda swiftly and appropriately to cover all of the items.

I was able to understand the vast brief of a chief executive and her corporate management team.

I learnt that the council isn't diverse at the top end of the scale.

2. What did you enjoy most about the session and what did you least enjoy?

Reverse mentoring circle with the Chief Executive

Most enjoyed

The opportunity to be allowed to have the freedom to make suggestions and that Carolyn actually listened to us. I really appreciated the fact that it wasn't structured with themes as this meant there was no restriction.

Appreciation of Carolyn's time and feeling comfortable to speak to the Chief Executive.

I enjoyed the opportunity to speak with the chief exec and hear different perspectives from staff.

Carolyn's knowledge of what is happening around the WHOLE council.

I enjoyed the group discussions and hearing the views of other employees.

Least enjoyed

It would be better if there were more staff members from different departments.

The session was at one point hijacked by staff from one of the departments.

Can't see the organisation's culture changing a lot from sessions like this.

Shadowing experience (CE and Senior Managers)

I enjoyed the whole day.

Thoroughly enjoyed the meeting I observed and learned a lot through observation and reflection.

I enjoyed being trusted with confidential issues and access to reports.

I enjoyed most my 1:1 conversation with XX.

I was impressed by the knowledge of the participants.

I enjoyed getting some background insight about the session from XX and it's importance and having a de-brief afterwards. This was useful to inform my learning when observing the meeting. There were perhaps times when the content of the meeting went over my head in terms of understanding, but I understand that this is inevitable when shadowing a different department to my own.

I enjoyed being able to see and hear how decisions are made, issues that we are facing that are not information known to staff on my level. I least enjoyed no tea or biscuits for nearly a three hour meeting, but addressed this with XX.

I enjoyed being able to interact with Carolyn and hear her candid perspective on things in the Council.

Least enjoyed

I felt a little intimidated to speak openly in front of certain senior managers.

I learnt that there is a lot of work based on dealing with ASB/ nuisance in the borough. However, there was no direct application to my job function.

3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions?

Reverse mentoring with the Chief Executive

Thank you for a very positive meeting, allowing staff to feel comfortable to speak out with their concerns and suggestions. I am hoping this will be the start of us all working towards empowering staff and putting heads together with ideas for dealing with situation we face in Brent.

It would be great if future sessions have themes/ topics. It would make it easier to focus on specific solutions rather than generic ideas.

Have a theme OR a statement that is challenging and get feedback from the group.

Possible themes:

- How to empower staff to do better?
- How to change people's thinking and encourage individuals to see things from a different perspective?

Use post it notes to identify three things that work well and not so well and what could be done to improve them.

Use a flip chart to record points and avoid repetition.

Focus on solutions and next steps.

Shadowing experience (CE and Senior Managers)

This was a great opportunity and I'm very grateful that Carolyn participated in this, considering her busy schedule.

I wish we had a short conversation at the end of my shadowing to debrief on the experience

Perhaps if you could expand it to being a full day of shadowing to get a flavour for the different facets of a Strategic Director's role?

General comments

It is a brilliant scheme and I hope that the scheme will continue to exist.

Sometimes decisions are made from the top, with not much knowledge of how the work is really done, maybe meetings with a small group of staff to understand how we work, may give CMT a better understanding as to how to make changes to sections.

I think that Carolyn is a warm and approachable senior manager which means that she will be open to comments and ideas from a range of people at different levels.

4. Will you register for other initiatives in the programme?

All participants answered Yes.

5. Will you recommend the programme to your colleagues?

All participants answered Yes.

Appendix 3: Summary of feedback from Senior Managers

Summary of feedback from Senior Managers



Back to floor

I love back to the floor - it's a great way to understand what staff really do and to hear about their work and issues first hand.

I think it would be useful to attend a team meeting of the service and observe.

Shadowing

I have enjoyed having people shadow me. I think it works best when you can find different activities to illustrate our roles. It's hard to know what people will find valuable.

I enjoy 121 talking with staff members and the chance to understand their ambitions and how we might help them on their way.

General comments

I have enjoyed the initiatives and would be interested to know what colleagues found most helpful.

This page is intentionally left blank

ASPIRE

Leadership Development Programme

Progress update – March 2016

ASPIRE

- Bespoke leadership development programme, specially designed for aspiring managers here at Brent
- Developed in partnership with Premier Partnership

Main Objectives

- Help identify and develop talent for the future at all levels
- Opportunities for aspiring managers to network, advance their careers and share best practice
- To provide aspiring managers with greater confidence and competence
- Develop leadership knowledge, skill, competence

Cohorts

- Two cohorts for Level 3 Chartered Management Institute (CMI) Certificate for PO1 – PO4
- One cohort for Level 5 CMI Diploma for PO5 – PO8
- Ethnicity of delegates representative of diversity of the workforce
- Support - Access to CMI portal and trainers

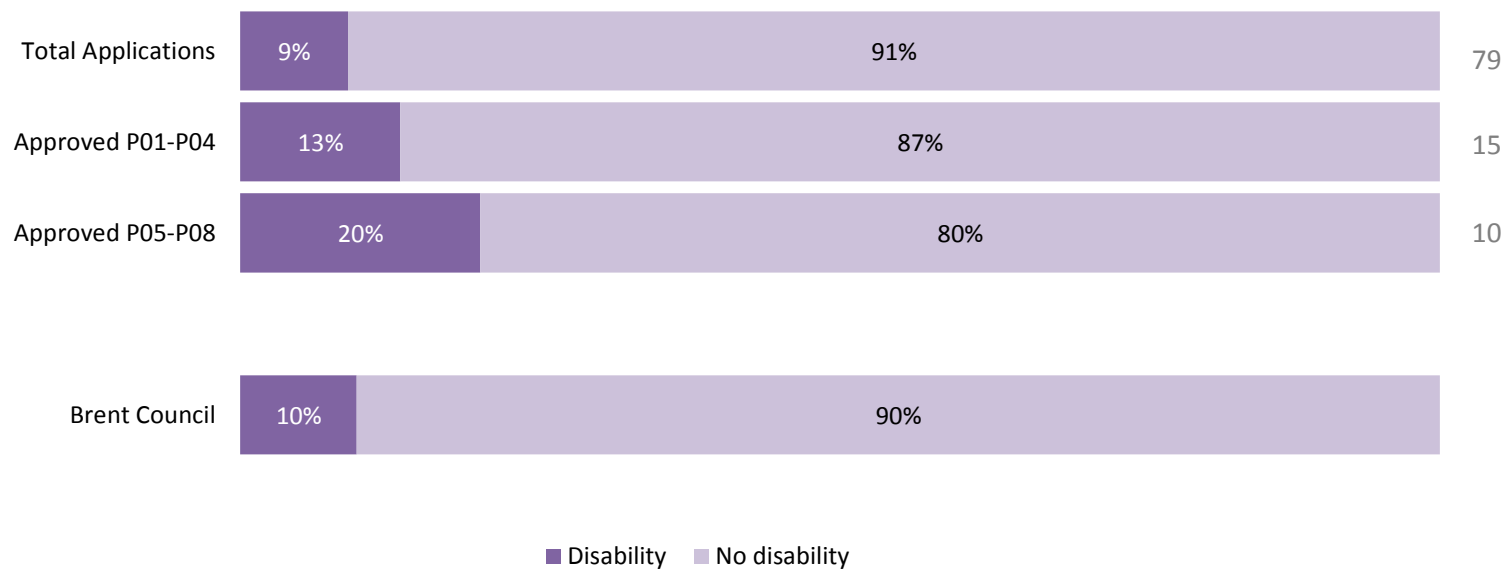
Selection Process

- Completion of application form supported by Head of Service
- DMT – selected applicants for programme
- Feedback provided to unsuccessful applicants
- Induction

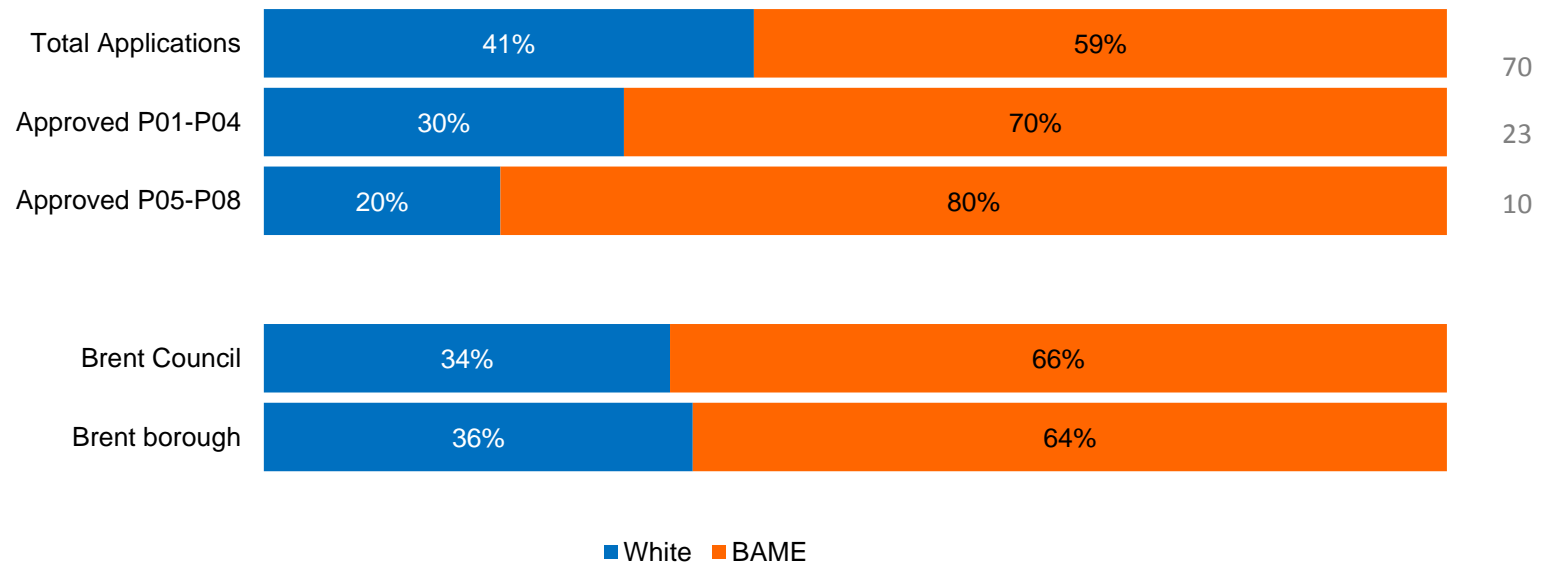
Data

- 103 applications
- 72 applicants for 27 places for PO1 – PO4
- 31 applicants for 12 places for PO5 – PO8

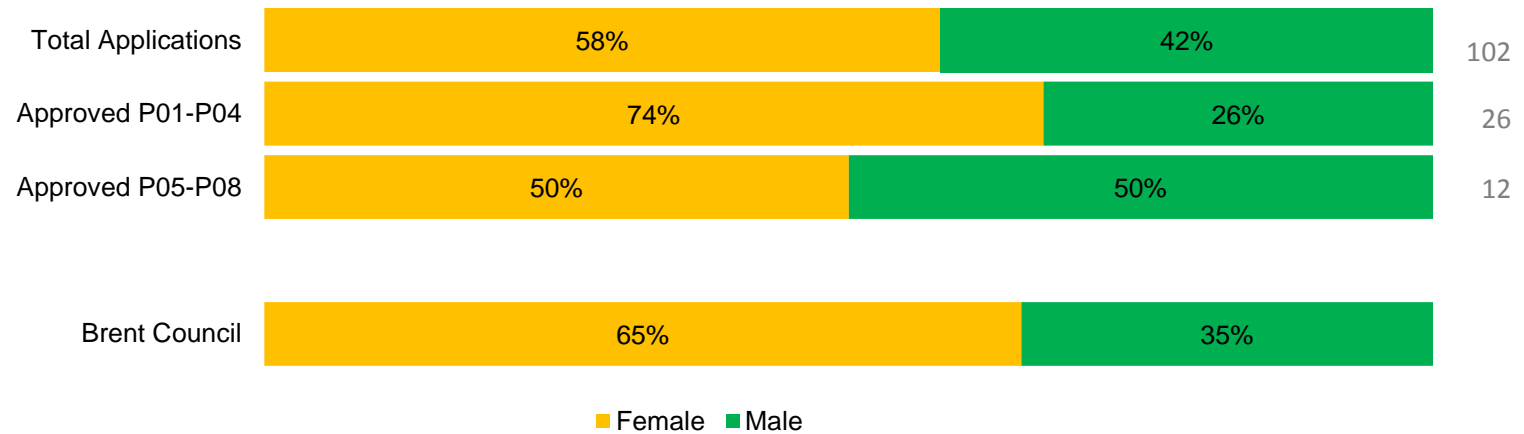
Disability



Ethnicity



Gender



Next Steps

- Workshops are already in progress
- Cross departmental working - OBR
- Project working – Yambassadors (comms)
- On- going evaluation of programme
- Next cohort