

Appendix A – EDI Strategy Progress Updates by Commitment

Objective 1 – Inclusion: Accessibility and Cohesion

Commitment	Progress Update
Refresh Communication Strategy to ensure accessibility	<p>All long form designed and printed publications now include a message that readers can request the document in another language or format by getting in touch with the Communications Team. The tools used for uploading news stories to the council's website and for posting on social media channels also now require the addition of Alt text (wording which describes the image to ensure blind and partially sighted people can access the contents) to images. While this was strongly encouraged before, these tools are now baked in as non-negotiable.</p> <p>The team continues to ensure that the imagery used across corporate channels is inclusive, so that the people pictured reflect Brent's diverse communities. In addition, all written communications are reviewed to ensure that everything published is in plain English and can be easily understood. Part of this involves educating, supporting and guiding internal services.</p> <p>The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 was revised in 2024. Work was undertaken to ensure that the Council website continues to comply with the new Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 AA standard.</p>
Review internal approach and use of inclusive and accessible language	<p>The corporate and HR EDI teams have initiated a project to review the council's use of inclusive and accessible language and will be presenting findings and recommendations at the June 2025 EDI Board meeting. The project so far has involved reviewing the existing inclusive language guide to identify gaps and areas for improvement and identifying best practices from other local authorities.</p> <p>An additional piece of the project has been identified as updating the council's current approach to collecting equalities information to ensure we are using inclusive language in our forms, and collecting relevant and comprehensive equalities information. This work will result in a 'Question Bank' of standardised equalities questions, and a process for updating our existing and new forms to match the updated approach.</p>
Raise awareness of accessibility services (e.g.,	SignVideo, which supports British Sign Language (BSL) users, saw an increase in usage from 236 calls in Q1 to 273 in Q2, reflecting steady engagement. The service is promoted on the council's website to

SignVideo, translation)	<p>improve visibility and awareness. SignVideo is not currently available on service specific council microsites as the majority do not invite residents to call in, but the digital customer experience team are looking into which sites could benefit from SignVideo integration.</p> <p>The DA Languages service, which provides interpretation and translation support, has seen increased usage over the first three quarters, with 4,344 interactions in Q1, 4,410 in Q2, and 4,705 in Q3 with telephone interpretation being the most frequently used. The top five languages requested were Arabic, Somali, Gujarati, Portuguese, and Farsi.</p> <p>The Reachdeck toolbar, which offers speech and translation support on the website continues to be accessed, though usage saw a decline in Q3, with 65,868 instances in Q1 down to 57,113 in Q3. This could be down to a reduction in sessions over the Christmas and New Year period. To improve accessibility and usage, a new navigation link was introduced on the council's website. The team continues to raise awareness of the toolbar with frontline staff, and are reviewing how it can be promoted further in key areas such as CYP and ASC.</p>
Increase awareness of, and establish new forums to better understand residents and communities	<p>The council's external facing forums are: Brent Connects; Pensioners Forum; Brent Multi-Faith Forum; and the Disability Forum. All the forums are resident and member led, meaning agenda topics are tailored to each forum's concerns and needs. The annual attendance across all forums in the last 12 months was 1018 participants.</p> <p>The Community Engagement team continue to increase awareness of all front-facing forums through various engagement methods, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coverage on the council's social media channels, and Your Brent magazine • Sharing forums to related community groups and voluntary sector organisations • Targeted invitations to members and specific groups • Guest speakers from community organisations cascade information to service users who also attend • Sharing information and promoting forums when out in the community, and at events <p>These methods have increased awareness of the forums, and the disability forum has attracted new attendees and interest in membership for the Pensioners forum. Brent Connects has seen a steady</p>

increase in attendance, largely due to a robust digital engagement approach including social media boosters and 'word of mouth' from attendees.

In terms of direct feedback from residents, there has been an increase in participation and registration on the online 'Have Your Say' consultation portal. Currently there are 7,689 registered Brent users on the platform. This is an increase of 3,234 registered users since 2023/24. There have been 3,136 survey participants in 2024/25 compared to 1,947 participants in the previous year.

In community engagement highlights, the Brazilian Community Day Event held in September 2024 was coproduced and developed with the Brent Brazilian Foundation, and saw over 2,500 residents in attendance, surpassing the previous year's 1,500. The event and attendant relationship building led to the formation of the first constituted Brazilian group in the borough, comprised of key Brazilian community leaders. The registration has allowed for the group to effectively source external funding to deliver a range of other community activities which has strengthened their presence and influence in the community. As a result, more residents within the Brazilian community have become engaged, actively using council services and ensuring their voices are heard. This has contributed to greater inclusion and better service uptake, ultimately benefiting the wider community. This engagement model proved to be so successful that it will be mirrored to engage with other seldom heard communities.

The Brent Multi Faith Forum have supported delivery of a 'radical hospitality' initiative to open doors to different faiths and cultures. The unified approach has proven to be successful, with the common priority of climate action resulting in many of the faith leaders signing up to become Climate Champions. This was then reflected in an October 2024 Symposium event which was focused on the connection between climate action and faith.

Brent Care Journeys 2.0 has also seen significant success over the last year. The forum provides participatory opportunities to care experienced young people aged 7-25, forming Brent's 'children in care council'. It provides space and opportunities for different groups to meet in a safe environment to take part in participation activities throughout the year and engage in trips and events in school holidays. Highlights from 2024 include a summer fun day with over 60 people attending, a residential trip for care leavers to take part in team-building activities and workshops where they co-designed new participation projects for

	<p>the following year, such as an employability project, and a new ceramics arts project in partnership with the charity Create Arts.</p> <p>In 2024, young people in Brent Care Journeys 2.0 worked on a proposal for the council to recognise care experience as a protected characteristic. Young people facilitated a workshop at a Corporate Parenting Committee to discuss the proposal with members of the Committee and Council officers. As a result of this work, in November 2024 Full Council passed an unopposed motion to recognise care experience as a protected characteristic.</p> <p>Moving forward, young people in Brent Care Journeys 2.0 will continue to lead projects, including more arts projects and a summer fun day, and the team will work to recruit more young people to engage in participation opportunities.</p>
Adapt services to provide flexible options (e.g., Brent Hubs, Libraries)	<p>In December 2024, Brent launched the new Community Wellbeing Service at the New Horizons site (formerly New Millennium Day Centre), which has been fully refreshed to enhance service delivery. The site now accommodates the Community Wellbeing Service, delivered by Sufra NW London, Brent Hubs, a Day Centre, and, from April 2025, the Housing Options service. This integrated approach aims to support a greater number of residents with diverse needs, with further development planned over the next year.</p> <p>Brent's Libraries have achieved Bronze status as Dementia Friendly Venues and are focusing on improving staff awareness. Staff training sessions are scheduled to take place in Spring 2025, alongside Learning Hub training.</p> <p>Brent's Home Libraries and Outreach Services continue to support literacy and accessibility, particularly for socially isolated and vulnerable residents. Over the past year, more than 37,000 books have been issued to 57 care homes, nurseries, schools, and organisations across the borough. The Home Library Service, which provides monthly book deliveries, has maintained a steady demand, currently serving 121 readers with the help of eight dedicated volunteers.</p> <p>The outreach team actively promotes literacy through initiatives like the Inclusive Under 5's rhyme and story time at Willesden Green Library and school visits from Avenue School, reinforcing the council's commitment to Special Educational Needs (SEN) inclusion. The service also offers work experience and</p>

	<p>volunteering placements, including an ongoing partnership with Woodfield SEN school, where students complete weekly placements throughout the school year.</p> <p>The service plays a key role in early childhood literacy through the BookStart programme, distributing thousands of reading packs to families via health centres and Family Wellbeing Centres. In the last financial year, 2,745 baby packs, 1,022 toddler packs, 2,156 preschool packs, and 136 SEN-specific packs were delivered, ensuring access to books for children of all backgrounds. Collaborating with Public Health and Early Years teams has strengthened distribution efforts, ensuring resources reach families most in need. To further support Brent's multilingual communities, 1,873 dual-language books in 35 languages were recently ordered for distribution through health visitors and library outreach events.</p> <p>Brent Hubs hold a regular Deaf Resident Surgery on the third Monday of every month offering one to one face to face appointments with an in-person advisor on topics such as Council Tax, Housing Benefits, debt, among others. Other issues can be referred on to one of more than 50 specialist partners.</p>
Assess council refurbishments and review accessibility of buildings	<p>Council properties have seen accessibility improvements over the last year, including the installation of 11 meeting pods at the Civic Centre, which was informed in part by staff engagement and input. The pods are wheelchair accessible and are designed for quiet focussed working for up to two hours for 4 people.</p> <p>The commercial property team have launched a survey to assess accessibility across commercial sites, but noted that the feedback from tenants has so far been low. The team is planning to physically visit each property to assess accessibility as part of the asset review process taking place in the spring and summer of 2025.</p> <p>Since December 2024, Brent has successfully accredited 19 venues total under the Dementia Friendly Venues Charter (DFVC). This includes six libraries, two sports centres, two Day Centres, eight Family Wellbeing Centres, and the Brent Civic Centre. Venue managers have been encouraged to attend free Dementia Friends Information Sessions, available to all staff via the Learning Hub. Additionally, they have been asked to promote these sessions among their teams as part of ongoing professional development. The corporate EDI team will continue to work with venue managers to determine the necessary steps toward accreditation, increasing the accessibility of Brent's venues across the borough.</p> <p>The Drum Wembley is a fully accessible venue. Facilities include or can arrange the following:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue badge parking onsite. • Wide doorways and access routes. • Clear signage. • Changing facilities and accessible toilets with support bars. • Flexible seating options for people with varying needs, such as those who require seating with additional support. • Hearing loop systems. • Availability of sign language interpreters or live subtitling during events or presentations. • Multiple lifts to accommodate specific mobility needs. • Accessible emergency exits and routes. • Staff trained to assist people with disabilities in case of an emergency evacuation. <p>The Events team are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to accommodate accessibility requirements for all events. This covers a wide range of topics, including understanding various disabilities, the legal requirements for accessibility, and the specific needs of attendees with physical, sensory, and cognitive impairments. The team is also trained to implement inclusive event practices, such as providing accessible seating, ensuring clear signage, arranging for interpreters or captioning services, and offering dietary accommodations.</p>
Establish a new approach to EDI events, supporting community-led celebrations	<p>A new approach has been agreed by Cabinet in April 2025, outlining councils new 'Enabler Approach' to community cohesion and inclusion events. The approach includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new, upcoming community cohesion and inclusion events grant pot that is available for the community to bid for to lead events that matter to them. It is expected that this will be launched in July 2025. - Clearly defined tiers of support that council offers partners and the community. - Our minimum community cohesion and inclusion events offer, share the events the council commits to organising every year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Holocaust Memorial Day – January ○ Race Equality Week (internal only) – February ○ Refugee Week - June ○ Disability Pride Month - July ○ National Inclusion Week (internal only) – September ○ Black History Month – October

	Islamophobia Awareness Month – November
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Objective 2 - Narrowing the Gap: Addressing Inequalities

Commitment	Progress Update
Refresh EIA approach	Work is underway to refresh the council's EIA template and guidance, and a paper will be presented to the EDI Board in June 2025 containing recommendations and proposed next steps.
Address attainment gaps for vulnerable groups in partnership with Brent schools.	<p>In December 2024, the Setting and School Effectiveness Service launched the Brent School's Race Equality Programme with schools. This programme is being delivered in partnership with Leeds Beckett University to address educational disproportionality. The programme is a free offer of training and support for schools and has several aims listed below to ensure all children regardless of their background are supported to achieve.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To embed an anti-racist culture in all schools in Brent. • To significantly increase the attainment of underperforming ethnic groups. • Every school to have an anti-racist policy that is widely understood, constructed with, and supported by all stakeholders. • Significantly reduce overall exclusions and ultimately put an end to disproportionality by ethnicity. • Every school to have an inclusive and anti- racist curriculum in place which positively represents its community. • For equalities teaching for pupils to be embedded in the whole curriculum model. • To further develop staff confidence in recognising and challenging racist behaviour. <p>Engagement of schools has been positive across all age remits.</p>
Continue to develop 'safe spaces' across the Borough and online.	There are currently 15 safe spaces in Brent. The most recent venue was launched at the London Designer Outlet (LDO) in Wembley in October 2024. The project was facilitated by Solace Women's Aid and was set up in the Guest Services area of the LDO for women needing assistance in relation to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG). Solace Women's Aid have provided training to staff at the LDO to help them identify signs of domestic abuse and ways to support women who may be experiencing domestic abuse or VAWG. A leaflet has been produced to advertise the services available and has been placed in discreet locations.

	<p>The community safety team will be liaising with the team at the LDO and Solace Women's Aid to assess the take up of the service in April 2025. The aim is to establish more safe spaces in Brent through the partnership. The London Fire Brigade have recently approached the team and are interested in making their fire stations safe spaces. The community safety team are facilitating discussions around a partnership working moving forward.</p>
Address disproportionality in fixed and permanent exclusions in schools	<p>Disproportionality in permanent and fixed term exclusions has lowered over the last academic year and this has been achieved by working with headteachers and school leaders to support children and young people from different backgrounds. In Q3, there were 207 Fixed Term Exclusions, 39% were Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic pupils and 25.6% were Black male pupils. All permanent exclusion were male, and none were from a Black ethnic background.</p> <p>Within schools, bespoke mentoring is offered to children and young people as well as pastoral support plans. The Inclusion service has been challenging language used in referrals by schools to ensure the right language is being used to describe behaviours, and this is so individual support can be put in place. Schools have been reflective of the language they are using, and this remains an on-going activity.</p>
Provide targeted cultural and literacy programmes to combat disadvantage.	<p>Brent Libraries have delivered several impactful targeted cultural and literacy programmes through its libraries, arts, and archives services over the last year. The Refugee Outreach Programme in Wembley has provided robotics workshops, BookTrust Story and Rhyme Time sessions, and craft activities for children. While initial attendance was low due to unfamiliarity with the programs, participation has steadily grown, with craft sessions attracting an average of 20 participants.</p> <p>The Dress to Remember programme, supporting people with dementia, engaged 119 participants across 12 workshops in partnership with Tuareg Productions Ltd and Lorna Holder. The initiative also distributed 40 copies of "Style in My DNA" and facilitated a community celebration event, contributing to Brent's social prescribing strategy. A funding application has been submitted to expand the programme.</p> <p>The Reading Well and Reading Friends programmes, funded by The Reading Agency, have provided social and literacy-based activities to combat isolation, including art workshops, mindfulness sessions, and local history talks. These events are held monthly at Kilburn and Kingsbury libraries, with attendance varying from 5 to 30 participants per session. Additionally, the Telling Tales creative writing programme, targeting children aged 7-11 in areas of deprivation, has seen strong participation, with 16-20 children consistently attending sessions in Willesden Green, Wembley, and Kingsbury libraries.</p>

	<p>Further initiatives include Brent Libraries' ongoing efforts to ensure EDI-focused stock selections, and Brent Archives making digital collections publicly accessible.</p>
<p>Improve our understanding of where and why health inequalities exist, in partnership with the NHS, and tailor our services appropriately.</p>	<p>Several of the reports and evidence tools the public health team have generated over Year 1 have had a health inequalities focus, including a needs assessment relating to gambling, a dashboard showing inequalities across Brent neighbourhoods that has been used to inform service prioritisation (including the Radical Place initiative), and a new set of KPIs for the Integrated Care Partnership board to monitor progress in improving health and reducing health inequalities.</p> <p>Some of the KPIs have specific sub KPIs focusing on EDI, e.g. number of women in structured treatment, health checks for those from most deprived areas, and emergency hospital admissions for people from Black ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>For both the gambling and sexual health report, there have been focus groups with vulnerable groups like students, those in treatment for addiction, sex workers, and those with gambling experience so that input is informed by engagement with both known and seldom heard groups.</p> <p>The gambling report has been used to help amplify the challenge of gambling in Brent in work that is being led by the Change and Customer Insight and Policy Affairs teams.</p> <p>The neighbourhood dashboard layout aids with understanding local needs at a lower geography (Integrated Neighbourhood Teams). It will be published online to be accessible not just by a certain set of healthcare professionals but for all professionals and the public. Not all healthcare professionals have access to NHS dashboards, so this will support broader understanding of local needs.</p> <p>Next steps are to publish three further needs assessments on health inequalities topics and to share this evidence widely with colleagues across the Council and partner organisations, for example through the Make Every Contact Count training that the team provides.</p>
<p>Enhance digital inclusion by identifying exclusion areas and improving</p>	<p>Over the past year, the council has expanded its digital offer by improving connectivity, providing digital devices, and supporting residents in developing digital skills. The installation of full fibre broadband infrastructure across 23 commercial council-owned properties (libraries, family wellbeing centres, community hubs, etc.) has improved upload/download speeds, enabling better online access for residents.</p>

connectivity, skills, and device access.	<p>Additionally, small cell deployment has improved mobile connectivity across the borough. In partnership with Streetwave, the council has mapped mobile network coverage, with plans to make this data publicly available to help residents make informed choices about mobile providers.</p> <p>To combat digital exclusion, the council has provided 978 digital devices to residents in need. This includes 47 mobile phones with SIM cards, 239 standalone SIM cards, 664 laptops or tablets through the Resident Support Fund, and 28 laptops or tablets for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.</p> <p>Moving forward, the council will continue to build on these initiatives in line with the Brent Digital Strategy 2022 – 2026. Through the Resident Support Fund, efforts will focus on supporting those impacted by the cost-of-living crisis with devices and internet access. The council will also expand digital inclusion efforts for Looked After Children and Care Leavers and support staff in developing digital skills through the Brent Staff Digital Skills programme, set to launch next year.</p>
Continue to co-design services with communities, building on models like Community Hubs and Family Wellbeing Centres.	<p>The principles of co-design and co-production with communities underpin the Strategic Change Programme and the development of the council's Radical Place Leadership approach, including testing of an Integrated Neighbourhood Team (INT) with partners in Harlesden in 2025 to better support and empower residents.</p> <p>Development of the INT is overseen by a steering group consisting of statutory and voluntary sector partners and key Brent officers. Next steps in the development of the INT include securing resident voices and participation in service design through a new community power approach in early 2025.</p>
Adapt Brent Hubs' support to assist residents facing the cost-of-living crisis.	<p>Brent Hubs, in partnership with Sufra NW London, continue to adapt their offer as part of the new Community Wellbeing Service - which consists of Brent Hubs support aligned with Sufra hot meals, wellbeing support and discounted shops for members - that launched at the New Horizons Centre from December 2024. Initially a two-day per week service, Brent Hubs has scaled in-line with Sufra to three-days per week in March 2025, with four and five day per week services on track to commence in April and May 2025 respectively.</p>
Establish an EDI monitoring dashboard to collect	<p>Our Corporate Performance team has successfully created and implemented the EDI and Anti Racism strategy dashboard. The dashboard provides valuable insights into various metrics, relating to the three EDI objectives and the Corporate Anti Racism Action Plan. By leveraging this data, we can identify areas</p>

and share insights that improve services.	for improvement and ensure that our services are inclusive and equitable for all staff and residents. The dashboard is regularly updated and reviewed to maintain its relevance and accuracy.
Provide specialised employability support through Brent Works and commissioned services to boost social mobility, especially for those facing labour market disadvantages.	<p>Brent Start and Brent Works continue to support residents who need to additional support to improve their life and opportunities to work. The team have commissioned employment support services BEAM and StepUp to support resident with health issues including mental health, thus far 39 residents have accessed the services. In addition, through the mental health forum they work with partner organisations to provide advice and guidance and help residents to secure employment.</p> <p>Brent Start offers digital skills at both at Stonebridge and at the Brent Digital Skills Hub and delivers digital skills suitable for all levels from basic to advanced. In this academic year, Brent Start has supported 396 people through its digital skills courses. Out of the 396, 306 are unemployed and approximately 210 are on benefits.</p>

Objective 3 – Establishing an Inclusive Workforce

Commitment	Progress Update
Strengthen corporate learning to embed EDI within the organisation.	<p>The refresh of the EDI L&D program has introduced new e-learning modules, including Introduction to EDI, Inclusive Leadership, and Anti-Racism, all of which are now part of the “Essentials” package on the Learning Hub.</p> <p>Starting from April 1, 2025, all staff will be required to complete a half-day Anti-Racism and Inclusive Workplace training. This will follow a train-the-trainer model, with staff networks and Equity Champions collaborating with L&D to deliver the sessions.</p> <p>In response to concerns about awareness and support for staff requiring adjustments, Mandatory Reasonable Adjustment Training for managers will launch in March 2025. Available both in-person and online, this training is designed to ensure employees with additional requirements receive timely and effective support.</p> <p>The EDI training program will continue to evolve, incorporating feedback from employees and stakeholders to remain relevant and impactful.</p>

Establish a data informed journey of the employee lifecycle identifying trends across protected characteristics.	<p>EDI deep dives have been presented to the EDI Board. These have analysed data across the entire employee lifecycle, from recruitment and promotion to leaver trends. They have identified disparities and patterns. Insights from these reviews are driving the development of targeted actions to create meaningful change.</p> <p>In addition, bespoke EDI reports are being created for each Directorate to provide a more focused analysis. Where key issues are identified, targeted actions are being proposed, with DMTs, HR Business Partners, and Equity Champions collaborating to implement improvements.</p>
Establish and embed the internal Brent Council Anti-Racism Action Plan.	Continue to use our EDI dashboard to update and refresh our progress against our ambitions and targets. An update report on progress will be provided in March 2025
Ensure all staff have EDI performance objectives tailored to their roles.	<p>As part of our refreshed performance monitoring approach, we will be moving from annual performance reviews to more frequent one-to-one conversations between employees and managers. This new approach places a stronger emphasis on embedding our organisational values, particularly through the Lead Inclusively value, to ensure EDI remains a core focus.</p> <p>In addition, our updated behaviour framework will integrate EDI into individual performance objectives outlining expectations of managers and staff. This will provide a more structured and meaningful way to embed inclusive practices across the organisation.</p>
Provide work experience within the council for young SEND residents.	<p>As a disability confident employer, Brent continues to advertise all its schemes, including work experience and apprenticeships inclusively.</p> <p>Most vacancies are sent to the Looked After Children team to publicise to young people with SEND among the cohort, and they are available to potential applicants for any questions around the scheme. The team has had several people on apprenticeship programmes that require specialised SEND support, though they do not keep data on the numbers as some people have requested that their diagnosis not be shared. The support provided is tailored based on the individual's need, and is given by the training provider and the employer.</p>
Support care leavers with work experience and	The council has employed care leavers in work experience programmes over the years, but does not keep specific data on numbers as some post holders have requested privacy around this.

apprenticeships within the Council	The team is always reviewing their offer across all programs to improve overall inclusivity, but until now has not collected data on cohorts. This is open to review if it would be beneficial moving forward.
Reduce the ethnicity, disability and gender pay gaps.	<p>Currently analysing pay gap data to identify disparities, particularly in recruitment. The Annual Workforce Report highlighted that male new starters (21%) were more likely than female new starters (12%) to begin above the base spinal point, prompting further analysis. Deep dives into ethnicity and disability data have been shared with key stakeholders to inform targeted actions, including addressing pay gaps for specific ethnicity groups and improving recruitment processes for neurodiverse staff.</p> <p>By April 2025, bespoke EDI data-driven reports will be shared at the directorate level to enhance accountability and transparency, reviewing pay gaps and other key EDI concerns.</p> <p>Support for Equity Champions and staff networks continues, ensuring they can effectively assist employees, raise awareness, and align with the Council's objectives.</p> <p>New EDI training, including mandatory sessions on anti-racism, inclusive workplaces, and reasonable adjustment training for managers, is being rolled out. Enhanced understanding through training is expected to contribute to reducing pay gaps.</p>
Empower staff networks to foster open dialogue and support new groups as needed.	<p>Given the recent changes among Staff Networks and sponsors, a relaunch has taken place in collaboration with Equity Champions to strengthen engagement and impact.</p> <p>Strong collaboration is already evident, the co-chair training held in January 2025 helping to establish intersectional priorities alongside individual network goals.</p> <p>Significant progress has also been made in expanding our networks. An Early Careers Network is set to launch, and efforts are underway to establish a Multi-Faith Group.</p>