

 Brent	Cabinet 7 September 2026
	Report from the Chief Executive
	Lead Member - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources (Councillor Gwen Grahl)
Delivering Brent's 2024-2028 EDI Ambitions: Two Years On	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	Key
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
List of Appendices:	Two Appendix A: Y2 EDI Strategy Updates by Commitment Appendix B: Anti-Racism Action Plan Updates
Background Papers:	2024-2028 EDI Strategy, Anti-Racism Action Plan
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	Sarah Milner-Barry, EDI Strategy Lead 020 8937 2891 sarah.milner-barry@brent.gov.uk Grace Hall, Policy and Performance Manager 020 8937 1471 grace.hall@brent.gov.uk Angela Chaudhry, Senior HR Business Partner – EDI angela.chaudhry@brent.gov.uk

1.0 Executive Summary

- 1.1 As we reach the halfway point of our 2024-2028 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, we have continued to make progress towards creating a more inclusive, fair and connected borough. During Year 2, we have strengthened accessibility and inclusion across council services, expanded opportunities that help tackle inequalities, and continued to embed anti-racist and inclusive

practices within our workforce and culture. From improving access to interpretation, translation and digital inclusion support, to increasing community participation, investing in employment pathways, and strengthening our use of EDI data and insight, we are turning our commitments into meaningful action. This report sets out the progress made in delivering the EDI Strategy, Anti-Racism Action Plan and EDI Board priorities during Year 2, highlights the impact of this work, and identifies where further effort is needed. While challenges remain and there is much more to do, we remain committed to tackling inequities, supporting residents and employees to reach their full potential, and ensuring no one is left behind.

- 1.2 This report also helps to fulfil the council's obligation under the Public Sector Equality Duty to publish annual information demonstrating how we are complying with the equality duty.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

Cabinet is asked to:

- 2.1. Endorse the progress made in Year 2 of the EDI Strategy 2024-2028, Anti-Racism Action Plan, and EDI Board priorities.
- 2.2 Agree that information in this report be turned into public-facing communications materials highlighting Year 2 achievements.

3.0 Detail

3.1 Cabinet Member Foreword

- 3.1.1 As we reach the halfway point of Brent's four-year Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, this report highlights the progress made during Year 2 towards creating a borough where everyone feels valued, included, and able to thrive.
- 3.1.2 Over the past year, we have continued to strengthen accessibility and inclusion across our services. This has included improving access to interpretation and translation services, expanding participation in consultation and engagement activity, supporting community-led projects through the Love Where You Live Celebrating Diversity Fund, and creating more inclusive spaces through initiatives including the Dementia Friendly Venues Charter. We have also continued to reduce barriers to support through programmes tackling digital exclusion and community-based services that help residents access advice, wellbeing, and practical support closer to home.
- 3.1.3 The report also highlights progress in creating opportunities and tackling inequalities across the borough. During Year 2, we continued to expand supported internships, apprenticeships, and employment pathways, helping more residents access skills, training, and employment opportunities. Alongside this, we have continued to strengthen our understanding of inequalities through improved data, community engagement and partnership

working, helping ensure that services are better informed by the experiences and needs of Brent's diverse communities. We have also taken steps to invest in our workforce, recognising that an inclusive and representative organisation is essential to delivering the best outcomes for residents.

3.1.4 While there is still more to do to address the inequalities experienced by some of our residents and communities, the progress set out in this report demonstrates Brent's continued commitment to turning our EDI ambitions into meaningful action. As we move into Year 3, we will continue working with residents, partners, and staff to build a fairer borough where everyone can thrive.

3.1.5 This report contributes to each of the Borough Plan's priorities, recognising that equity, diversity, and inclusion cuts across all five key priorities, and is central to everything we do as an organisation. The council's 2024-2028 EDI Strategy helps to ensure that we achieve the ambitions of the Borough Plan by delivering high-quality, effective, and inclusive services to residents, having a workforce that reflects our diverse population, and ensuring that residents and employees can achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to Brent.

3.2 Background

Context

3.2.1 The Corporate EDI Board was set up in March 2024 to provide leadership and oversight for the council's EDI work. It meets every three months and is chaired by the Chief Executive. The Board oversees delivery of the EDI Strategy, the Anti-Racism Action Plan and the Black Community Action Plan (BCAP), as well as its own annual priorities.

3.2.2 The sections below describe the progress made and the activities underway to deliver our EDI ambitions in both the Board and Strategy's second year, with a focus on impact. These sections are supplemented by appendices which provide detail on the various activities underway as part of each commitment:

- Appendix A – EDI Strategy updates
- Appendix B – Anti-Racism Action Plan updates

EDI Strategy Updates:

3.2.3 The council's [2024-2028 EDI Strategy](#) was adopted in April 2024 and lays out how we will foster a borough in which all residents feel valued and have equitable access to opportunities. The strategy has an overarching focus on promoting inclusivity, through three objectives:

- Inclusion: Accessibility and Cohesion
- Narrowing the Gap: Tackling Inequalities

- Establishing an Inclusive Workforce

Objective 1 – Inclusion: Accessibility and Cohesion

3.2.4 This objective aims to ensure that all council services are accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of Brent's communities. Examples of key progress include:

- **Improving inclusive communications and accessibility:** The council launched updated Inclusive Language and Equality Monitoring Guidance, introducing a standardised approach to equality data collection and expanding coverage to include care experience and socio-economic status. These tools are helping to improve consistency, inclusivity and confidence across services when engaging with residents and collecting equalities information.
- **Increasing access to services:** Demand for accessibility and language support services remained high, with more than 1,260 SignVideo calls and almost 15,000 interpretation and translation requests during the year. This demonstrates the continuing importance of accessible communications to enable residents to access council services.
- **Strengthening resident voice and participation:** Registered users of the Have Your Say platform more than doubled from 3,849 to 8,639, with participation increasing by over 500%. The introduction of translation functionality and targeted engagement activity has helped broaden participation and improve access for a wider range of residents.
- **Supporting community cohesion and belonging:** The new Love Where You Live Celebrating Diversity Fund allocated £30,000 to 12 community-led projects designed to bring communities together, tackle isolation and celebrate Brent's diversity.
- **Improving the accessibility of council spaces and services:** The Community Wellbeing Service at New Horizons is now operating at scale, with Housing Options supporting around 100 families per week and Suфра supporting more than 500 members. In addition, 19 council venues have now achieved Dementia Friendly Venue accreditation, helping create more accessible and inclusive environments for residents.

3.2.5 Whilst progress is encouraging, challenges remain. Consistent adoption of the updated Equality Monitoring Guidance across services is still developing, some communities including Gypsy, Roma, and Travelers remain underrepresented in consultation activity, and further work is required to strengthen evaluation of long-term outcomes arising from engagement activity.

Objective 2 – Narrowing the Gap: Tackling Inequalities

3.2.6 This objective focuses on identifying and addressing the disparities experienced by different groups. Key initiatives toward this objective include:

- **Strengthening inclusive decision making:** The council refreshed its Equality Impact Assessment framework, introducing stronger requirements around the use of data, lived experience and intersectional analysis, alongside six-month reviews for significant impacts and a central repository to support organisational learning.
- **Addressing educational inequalities and disproportionality:** The Brent Schools Race Equality Programme continues to expand, with participating schools strengthening anti-racist practice, improving the use of data and embedding more inclusive approaches. Early evidence shows exclusions among Black boys reduced from 201 in 2023/24 to 100 in 2024/25, while exclusions among children and young people with SEND fell by 27.7%.
- **Supporting vulnerable residents through Safe Spaces:** Brent now operates 15 Safe Spaces across the borough, with plans to expand into libraries to improve accessibility, awareness and support for residents experiencing domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.
- **Reducing digital exclusion:** The council has continued to improve digital access through targeted support and infrastructure investment, including the distribution of almost 1,000 digital devices and expansion of full-fibre connectivity across council sites, while delivering targeted digital skills programmes for residents most at risk of exclusion.
- **Using evidence to tackle health inequalities:** Public Health has strengthened its understanding of local inequalities through new needs assessments, neighbourhood-level insight and targeted engagement, reaching more than 4,000 residents through public health activity and supporting more targeted service design and prioritisation.

3.2.7 Despite positive progress, many inequalities remain rooted in wider socio-economic factors and require sustained partnership working and preventative approaches to achieve long-term change.

Objective 3 – Establishing an Inclusive Workforce

3.2.8 To reflect the diversity of the community we serve, the council has continued to strengthen its approach to workforce inclusion, learning and organisational culture. Key achievements include:

- **Embedding anti-racism and inclusive leadership:** More than 700 employees have completed Anti-Racism and Inclusive Practices training, with feedback showing over 90% reporting increased understanding of privilege, bias and inclusion and a stronger commitment to inclusive practice.
- **Strengthening workforce data and accountability:** Directorates now have access to bespoke EDI dashboards and employee lifecycle analysis

covering recruitment, progression, retention, representation and pay, enabling more targeted action planning and accountability.

- **Expansion of inclusive employment pathways:** The council continues to expand opportunities for young people and underrepresented groups through supported internships, apprenticeships and work experience programmes. There are currently 19 Brent residents participating in the Supported Internship Programme, with placements delivered across council services and external partners. Work is also underway through the Brent Inclusion Strategy and Employment & Skills Strategy to strengthen pathways into employment, improve employer engagement and develop new vocational opportunities for young people with SEND. The Inclusion Service is working to strengthen tracking of longer-term outcomes for young people with Education, Health and Care Plans, including progression into supported internships, apprenticeships, employment, and further education.
- **Strengthening employee voice and influence:** Staff Networks and Equity Champions have become increasingly embedded within governance structures, supporting organisational learning, surfacing lived experience and contributing directly to initiatives such as Anti-Racism training and Directorate action planning.
- **Improving organisational capability:** EDI expectations continue to be embedded within learning, leadership development and management pathways, helping to build confidence and capability to lead inclusively across the organisation.

3.2.9 However, workforce inequalities remain, particularly in relation to progression into senior roles. Continuing to improve data quality, disclosure rates and consistent implementation of inclusive leadership practices remains a priority.

Anti-Racism Action Plan Updates:

3.2.10 The council's [Anti-Racism Action Plan](#) is a component and delivery strand of the EDI Strategy, spanning the same duration. The action plan set a new level of ambition for Brent: becoming an Anti-Racist organisation.

3.2.11 Progress against the Anti-Racism Action Plan has continued throughout Year 2, with increasing integration into mainstream organisational processes rather than delivery through stand-alone activities. Notable achievements include:

- **Strengthened governance and accountability:** Anti-racism is increasingly embedded within mainstream governance arrangements, with the EDI Board providing strategic oversight and Directorates now using workforce dashboards to monitor representation, progression, recruitment and pay-related disparities.
- **Building organisational capability:** More than 700 employees have completed Anti-Racism and Inclusive Practices training, supported by

Equity Champions and Staff Network representatives who helped design and deliver the programme, creating greater organisational understanding of racism, privilege and inclusion.

- **Using data to identify and address structural inequalities:** Workforce analysis continues to inform targeted action in areas including recruitment outcomes, senior representation, progression and pay gaps, helping move the organisation towards a more evidence-led approach to tackling inequality.
- **Embedding anti-racism within systems and processes:** Anti-racism considerations continue to be incorporated into workforce policies, performance discussions, learning and development activity and organisational guidance, helping shift anti-racism from a standalone initiative to a core organisational responsibility.

3.2.12 While progress is evident, addressing structural inequalities remains a long-term endeavour which will require sustained leadership focus, continued challenge and evidence-led action

EDI Board Year 2 Priorities Updates:

3.2.13 In its second year, the EDI Board focused on three main priorities to help drive forward the EDI Strategy and Anti-Racism Action Plan. These priorities were chosen because of their focus on long-term cultural and organisational change. Below is a summary of what each priority involved and the progress we've made.

Establishing a Strategic Approach to Community Engagement

3.2.14 A report was presented to the EDI Board in December 2025 exploring how the council engages with Brent's diverse communities and how organisational learning from engagement activity can be strengthened. The report highlighted examples of effective engagement taking place across the organisation, including place-based approaches, community-led activity and increased participation through digital engagement platforms. It also recognised the value of sustained, trust-based engagement with seldom-heard communities, building on learning from successful initiatives delivered across services.

3.2.15 The Board identified opportunities to improve consistency in engagement practice, reduce duplication, and strengthen how insight and learning are shared across the organisation. A key theme was the need to move beyond one-off consultation exercises and create a more strategic approach that supports co-production, long-term relationship building and greater community influence on decision-making. As a next step, work is underway to develop a more coordinated corporate approach to community engagement, helping services apply consistent principles, strengthen engagement with seldom-heard communities and better demonstrate the impact of resident feedback on service design and policy development.

Embedding EDI within Artificial Intelligence and Automation

- 3.2.16 A report was presented to the EDI Board in September 2025 examining the opportunities and risks associated with the increasing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation across local government. The report considered how the council can ensure that innovation and efficiency are balanced with fairness, transparency and accountability, particularly where automated tools may influence decision-making or resident outcomes.
- 3.2.17 The Board discussed a number of key themes, including the risk of algorithmic bias, governance and accountability arrangements, maintaining resident trust and confidence, and the opportunities AI presents to improve accessibility and inclusion when implemented appropriately. The discussion established a number of principles to help inform the council's future approach to responsible AI adoption and governance. Moving forward, these principles will help shape the development of relevant policies, governance arrangements and future implementation plans as the council's use of AI and automation continues to evolve.

Supporting Brent's LGBTQ+ Community

- 3.2.18 A report was presented to the EDI Board in June 2026 focusing on this priority area, which was selected in recognition of LGBTQ+ communities as a relatively seldom-heard group, hindering inclusive service planning, alongside evidence from the LGBTQ+ staff network documenting homophobic incidents within the council. The report explored available evidence, current engagement activity and opportunities to strengthen support, visibility and inclusion.
- 3.2.19 Key themes emerging from the discussion included improving representation of LGBTQ+ voices within engagement and consultation activity, strengthening organisational understanding of LGBTQ+ experiences and inequalities, increasing support for LGBTQ+ employees through staff networks and leadership, and improving the use of data and insight to inform future policy and service development. The Board agreed that supporting LGBTQ+ communities should not be viewed as a standalone activity but as part of the council's wider ambition to create an organisation and borough where all residents and employees feel safe, valued and able to thrive. Future work will focus on strengthening engagement, improving understanding of community needs and identifying areas where services and policies can better support LGBTQ+ residents and employees.

Next steps

- 3.2.20 Cabinet is asked to endorse progress made toward commitments within the EDI Strategy 2024-2028, Anti-Racism Action Plan, and Year 2 EDI Board priorities.
- 3.2.21 The EDI Board will continue to drive progress on each of the council's EDI commitments, and present Cabinet with another annual update in 2027.

4.0 Stakeholder and ward member consultation and engagement

- 4.1 As this is an update report, no stakeholders or ward member consultations or engagements took place.

5.0 Financial Considerations

- 5.1 There are no financial implications of this update report.

6.0 Legal Considerations

- 6.1 As a local authority we are under a general duty of best value to “make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness”. The EDI strategy and supporting documents are one way in which the council can demonstrate that it is achieving this requirement and reviewing progress ensures we are continuously assessing and improving on the delivery of our functions.

7.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Considerations

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty, as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who have a “protected characteristic” and those who do not share that protected characteristic. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The council also internally recognises care experience and socio-economic status as protected characteristics.
- 7.2 Having due regard involves the need to enquire into whether and how a proposed decision disproportionately affects people with a protected characteristic and the need to consider taking steps to meet the needs of persons who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it. This includes removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- 7.3 The EDI Board's Year 2 progress update demonstrates continued progress in delivering the council's EDI Strategy 2024-2028 and Anti-Racism Action Plan. During Year 2, significant work has been undertaken to improve accessibility, strengthen community engagement, enhance the council's approach to identifying and addressing inequalities, and develop a more inclusive workforce culture. Particular progress has been achieved through the refresh of Equality Impact Assessments, expansion of anti-racism learning and development, strengthened workforce data analysis, investment in digital inclusion, and improvements to inclusive communications and equality monitoring practices. While challenges remain around tackling structural inequalities, particularly in relation to workforce progression and representation at senior levels, the

council is increasingly using evidence, engagement and accountability mechanisms to drive continuous improvement.

- 7.4 The EDI Board will continue to drive forward the council's EDI agenda, with a focus on accountability, improving data quality and usage, and consistent community engagement.

8.0 Climate Change and Environmental Considerations

- 8.1 There are no climate change or environmental considerations.

9.0 Human Resources/Property Considerations (if appropriate)

- 9.1 There are no Human Resources/Property Considerations

10.0 Communication Considerations

- 10.1 Communications materials highlighting key achievements from the EDI Strategy and Anti-Racism Action Plan's second year are being developed and will be promoted along with related messaging to staff via internal channels. External communications will be developed based on feedback from Cabinet and communications colleagues.

Report sign off:

Kim Wright

Chief Executive

Legal considerations provided by:
Biancia Robinson

Finance considerations provided by:
Kitu Thevarajah