

“All of Us” in Bracknell Forest

Equalities Monitoring Annual Report 2019-20



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Appendices: Service Level Reports

- A. Adult Social Care Equalities Monitoring Report
- B. Children's Social Care Equalities Monitoring Report
- C. Community Safety Equalities Monitoring Report
- D. Customer Services Equalities Monitoring Report
- E. Early Help Equalities Monitoring Report
- F. Education Equalities Monitoring Report
- G. Library Services Equalities Monitoring Report
- H. Welfare and Housing Equalities Monitoring Report

Full reports on each of these services are also available using the following link:
<https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/equality-and-diversity/monitoring-equality>

1 Introduction

Bracknell Forest is the borough of opportunity and a place where diversity and cultural heritage are recognised as a strength. The council is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind, isolated or disadvantaged and to ensuring that Bracknell Forest is a borough of opportunity for everyone. The council will continue to work with and encourage vibrant local groups. We will work closely with partners to support and engage our different communities and organisations to ensure everyone feels connected and able to contribute.

The aim of equalities monitoring is to indicate the extent to which the council provides a fair, accessible and appropriate service to all residents.

The Equality Act 2010's [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) outlines the specific duties that the council is required to meet to demonstrate its compliance with its equality duties. The council must publish equality information annually and publish equality objectives every four years.

The [Equality Act 2010](#) places a legal duty on Bracknell Forest Council to have due regard in all its activities to:

- Eliminating unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relationships between people

The duty applies across the nine 'protected characteristics' covered by the Act - with regard to marriage and civil partnerships, the council is only required to ensure it eliminates discrimination, harassment and victimisation on these grounds. The council also considers how its services and policies may impact on other groups including for example people with caring responsibilities, people facing financial hardship and the military community.



2 Bracknell Forest Council Equality Scheme 2017-21

The [Bracknell Forest Equality Scheme](#) 2017-21 sets out what the council intends to achieve in terms of advancing equality and diversity and includes the council's equality objectives. The equality scheme is linked to the service planning process to ensure that the implementation of the equality objectives will be integrated, wherever possible into the mainstream delivery and monitoring of services across the council.

Bracknell Forest is a thriving, welcoming and inclusive community. As our community grows and changes, Bracknell Forest Council is committed to ensuring no one is left behind, isolated or disadvantaged. We take great pride in our support for vulnerable groups and individuals: we want to make sure Bracknell Forest is a borough of opportunity for everyone.

At Bracknell Forest Council, we believe:

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

This report and the individual service reports should be read alongside the Equalities Monitoring - Workforce Annual Report 2019-20 which summarises the council's employment information.

To assess whether Bracknell Forest Council's services are fulfilling the three equality duties, information on access, outcomes/ performance and satisfaction has been analysed for these [service areas](#). Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on council teams and some contracted out services this year we have been unable to produce reports for the following service areas but these will be included in future reporting for 2020-21:

- Public Health
- Leisure Services.

3 Equality highlights 2019-20

The following are examples of work done in 2019-20 to meet the objectives of the scheme and refer to the scheme's key objectives.

3.1 Access to our information, services and facilities is fair and equitable for everyone

Bracknell Forest Council's Community Safety Team were part of a two-year Thames Valley BAMER (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic and Refugee) project 2018-20. The project was funded by the Home Office VAWG (Violence Against Women and Girls) Transformation Fund and supported by the local authorities across the Thames Valley and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

The project set out to identify barriers experienced by women from ethnic minority communities subjected to abuse or violence when needing to access support, and to identify lessons for improving service responses. An evaluation report is due to be

published Autumn 2020 which will outline recommendations from the project to be implemented locally. The report will be shared with relevant local Boards and BAED (Black, Asian Minority and Ethnically Diverse) Project Board has been formed to continue the momentum of the BAMER project work and oversee local delivery of the recommendations from the report.

A specialist Rough Sleeper Team was formed in 2019 to proactively reach out to and support rough sleepers and break down barriers in accessing the service. Outcomes for these groups are access to healthcare, safe and sustainable accommodation and opportunities for employment.

3.2 High levels of community cohesion are maintained

The council's Community Cohesion and Engagement Partnership continues to meet regularly and monitor Hate Crime and Prevent referrals. The Community Safety report details all the work being done in this area including around Domestic Abuse, Modern Slavery and Exploitation and Anti-Social Behaviour and current issues around equality of access.

The Library Service runs a large programme of events and activities for people of all ages and are socially inclusive. These include reminiscence sessions for the older people, coffee mornings for carers with experts on hand to provide advice on benefits, chess clubs to improve memory, knitting and craft activities, sensory story times for children with special needs, and a range of activities to promote health and well-being, such as yoga, mindfulness and Tai Chi.

In order to foster good relations between different community groups, the Library Service hosted its first literary festival in October 2019. This was a week-long programme of different cultural activities, including Indian cookery demonstrations and talk on traditional Asian dress. Feedback was that it had been a fascinating insight into another culture, and similar events were requested. Following on from the success of the festival, Bracknell Library began a series of multicultural story times in different languages led by volunteers, including Italian, French, Polish, Russian and Hindi, and a wide range of children's books were purchased in dual languages.

3.3 Gaps in outcomes for citizens are narrowed

We aim to support the most vulnerable people in the borough through prevention and self-care which is tailored to different segments of the local community and their needs.

As a targeted early help service, Early Help works on the premise that children, young people and their families are offered help when needs and concerns are first identified and that the support provided improves their situation and supports sustainable progress.

In late 2019 the council's transformation of its in-house early help service established multi-disciplinary teams in a family hub arrangement across the borough. The family hubs, previously known as children's centres, provide 4 geographical locations from which both universal health provision and targeted early help is delivered. The family hubs comprise of Early Help Professionals (EHPs) with specialisms in family work,

evidenced-based parenting and domestic abuse programmes, early years, youth work and education welfare. More recently the forming of the Getting Help team has rectified the absence of a tier 2 mental health provision within early help.

The attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils continues to be a very high priority. At the end of the 2018-19 academic year, the gap in pupil outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers narrowed at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and at the end of Key Stage 1. The gap narrowed at the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics, but this was then not reflected in the combined measure, where the gap increased by 1%. The progress that disadvantaged pupils made between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 improved and the progress gap between these pupils and their peers narrowed.

While the overall picture at primary is improving, the attainment gap at the end of Key Stage 4 widened in 2019, although the progress measures remained broadly static, suggesting that this cohort was lower attaining on entry. Further work will be done to narrow the gaps in attainment at all stages as a high priority for the council.

3.4 A positive, diverse and inclusive workforce is ensured and promoted

We are committed to having workforce policies and practices that do not discriminate. We provide equal opportunities for employees to progress and develop and are responsive to the needs of the workforce. We also ensure our workforce understands and supports our equality commitments.

The council's Equality Group has recently been strengthened to ensure it is representative of different areas across the council. An Elected Members equality group is also being set up with representatives of all political parties. This will develop Members' involvement and engagement on equality. It will foster best practice in meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty and advancing the equality of opportunity for staff and residents, ensuring members have a good understanding of Bracknell Forest's changing communities.

The workforce equality monitoring report 2019-20 will be published by 30th March on the Council's website.

4 Equality Issues

Although this report relates to April 2019 – March 2020 it is important to note the many issues around equality that have been highlighted as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic from March 2020. Many existing inequalities have been exacerbated by the effects of the pandemic which has disproportionately affected certain groups including those from ethnic minority backgrounds and more vulnerable residents. Following two reports published in June by Public Health England; a report on COVID-19 inequalities in relation to the BAME community was submitted to the Corporate Management Team in September. An action plan has now been put into place to respond to the findings of the report.

The council undertook a [detailed phone survey](#) in July 2020 to determine the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on residents, their family and the local community. The responses highlight the negative impact of the pandemic on more vulnerable residents. Certain population groups including those living in social housing, disabled, older residents, those living in social housing and more deprived areas of the borough have been more adversely impacted and may require more support than others to recover from the experience of the pandemic.

There were also questions regarding future recovery of the borough and the council's priorities to help the borough recover. The results showed residents want the council to support the local economy to recover, while supporting vulnerable people to recover, keeping residents safe and promoting and enforcing public health messages and guidelines. Supporting more vulnerable residents to recover reflects the work being done as part of the council's community response to the pandemic.

Adult Social Care have found issues which have been highlighted by the pandemic including social isolation and loneliness among older adults. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Care will look to identify actions and work with partners to address this.

The council as a part of its recovery planning is exploring how it can continue to support residents and the local economy recover from Covid.

5 Conclusion

Bracknell Forest Council is committed to providing excellent customer service and to providing fair and appropriate access to services that are tailored to meet the individual needs of the residents and diverse communities living in Bracknell Forest.

This report and the associated service area reports show that Bracknell Forest Council made good progress in meeting the three Public Sector duties in the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people in 2019-20.

The 'All of Us' Equality Scheme developed in 2017 was due to be updated and replaced in April 2020. However, following the development of a new Council Plan which came into effect in January 2020, it was agreed to extend the life of this scheme until March 2021. A new Equality Scheme is currently being developed for 2021-26 and will be published in due course. It will aim to address current equality issues and the inequalities highlighted and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

6 Council Performance Indicators Relating to Equalities

Note: Where indicators are quarterly the Q4 figure has been used

People Directorate

Ind Ref	Short Description	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
L360	Adults with learning disabilities in employment (Quarterly)	16.9%	15.3%	13.8% ¹	10.1%	15.6%
NI155	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (Quarterly)	37	73	97 ²	147	N/A
L030	Number of lifelines installed (Quarterly)	833	1176	1050	1032	N/A
NI181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events (Quarterly) ²	4.0	3.2	4.0		
L382	HBNC1 - Time taken in days to process housing benefit (New Claims)				15	16
L383	HBCC1 - Time taken in days to process housing benefit (changes in circumstances)				4	2
L161	Number of looked after children (Quarterly)	98	115	138	158	145
L287	Number of children in need supported under S17 of the Children Act (as at 31/03 in any given year)		645	743	742	617
L289	Average caseload per children's social worker (as at 31/03 in any given year)		18.0	17.2	18.2	
L290	Rate of referral to children's social care		151.1	155.7	200.9	150.7
NI062	Stability of placements of looked after children - number of placements	17.3%	9.6%	13.8%	19.6%	13.9%
NI063	Stability of placements of looked after children - length of placement	63.0%	45.5%	56.0%	64.5%	52.3%
L368	Achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at KS2				20.0%	28.0%
L369	Attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at KS4				11.0%	16.0%
L370	Progress gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at KS4				-0.4	-0.6
NI 117	16 to 18-year olds who are not in	4.0%	3.9%	3.2%	1.2%	2.0%

	education, training or employment (NEET)					
L374	L374 % 16-17 yr olds whose current activity is not known				6.5%	2.9%

Delivery & Central Directorates

Ind Ref	Short Description	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
BV156	Percentage of buildings open to the public which are suitable for and accessible to disabled people (Annually) ¹	94.7%	94.7%	94.7%	100.0%	N/A
L066	Top five percent earners - women (Annually)	50.0%	49.6%	53.2%	49.77%	53.22%
L067	Top five percent earners - minority ethnic communities (Annually)	4.84%	8.4%	9.9%	12.9%	14.77%
L068	Top five percent earners - with disability (Annually)	3.2%	6.7%	6.8%	7.6%	7.6%
L070	Percentage of employees with a disability (Annually)	1.9%	2.2%	2.4%	2.3%	2.7%
L071	Percentage of black and ethnic minority employees (Annually)	5.8%	6.1%	7.3%	7.5%	8.6%
L072	Gender pay gap (Annually)	18.1%	16.3%	16.2%	18.3	17.8
NI001	Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area (Triennially – Residents Survey)	-	96%	-	-	-
NI023	Perceptions that people in the area are not treating one another with respect and consideration (Triennially – Residents Survey)	-	12%	-	-	-

¹ No longer measured as 100% council buildings are now accessible.