

Bolton Council: equality information (January, 2016)

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty

Under the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act'), the council has a general duty to have "due regard" to:

- 1) Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- 2) Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- 3) Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic¹ and people who do not share it

The council also has to meet specific duties, in order to demonstrate its compliance with the general Equality Duty:

- 1) Publish information to show how the council is complying with the Equality Duty. This information should be published (at least) annually.
- 2) Set and publish equality objectives at least every four years².

This document presents information to show how the council complies with the general Equality Duty as a community leader, a service provider, and an employer. Within this, we have sought to provide relevant and proportionate information. Rather than replicate detailed data here, the document contains links to other sources of information. This document will be refreshed every year to ensure that our policy and practice takes into account national and local priorities. This is the January 2016 published version.

2. Our communities

Bolton is home to around 276,800 people³, who live in and around the borough's eight distinct townships. It is a diverse and vibrant borough, with a real mix of people who live in, work in, study in and visit Bolton.

A wealth of data about our population is available, and key information is available on the [Statistics and Census Information page](#) of our website. A summary regarding the diversity of our population is provided below.

The majority of residents in Bolton (83%) describe themselves as white British or from another white background. We have a large black and minority ethnic (BME) population, with 17% of residents considering themselves to be part of non-white ethnic groups. Bolton has sizeable Indian and Pakistani communities. In the 2011 Census these communities accounted for 7.8% and 4.3% of the population respectively. In addition, Bolton is home to a number of new and emerging communities, who have settled in Bolton through economic migration; or Britain's

¹ The Equality and Human Rights Commission's definitions of protected characteristics can be found at the following [link](#)

² Bolton's Equality Policy (published in January, 2012) is available at the following [link](#)

³ Source: *Bolton's 2011 Census information* can be found at the following [link](#) and [here](#) at the Office for National Statistics Website

refugee and asylum arrangements. Christianity is the predominant religion in the borough with 63% of residents identifying as Christians. Islam and Hinduism are also major faiths (12% and 2% of the population, respectively). 17% of residents identify as having no religion.

The age profile of Bolton is similar to that of England, but the proportion of children is slightly higher; and the proportion of working age and older people is slightly lower. However, Bolton for the most part closely follows trends in age groups for both Greater Manchester and England and Wales.

Disability and ill-health are important concerns for our residents. In the 2011 census, 20% of residents said they had a limiting long-term illness or disability. In the region of 11% of the population cares for someone with a long-term illness or disability.

As well as being home to a range of different communities, Bolton is also socio-economically diverse. While parts of the borough are amongst the most affluent in the country, around one quarter of the borough is amongst the 15% most deprived areas in the country⁴. For the council and its partners, reducing socio-economic disadvantage is therefore an essential part of our work to reduce inequality and to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Bolton Family.

3. Eliminating discrimination; and promoting equality of opportunity within our services

3.1 Our Vision: Bolton's Community Strategy

Bolton has a long history of strong and collaborative partnership working, focused on improving the quality of life for everyone in the Bolton Family. This is led by the Bolton Vision Partnership, which is made up of leaders from the public, private and voluntary, community and faith sector ('the voluntary sector'), and Elected Members.

In recent times, the economic environment and public service context has changed fundamentally – economic growth continues to be a challenging national issue; public sector funding is significantly reduced and public service reform continue at a time when demand is increasing.

The Partnership wants the borough to be a place where everyone is able to fulfil their potential, regardless of their background and their beliefs. However, we recognise that outcomes do vary across different parts of the borough and across different communities. Reducing inequality is therefore at the heart of the partnership's work.

To respond to this challenging context the Partnership agreed a Community Strategy for 2012/13 -14/15⁵. A detailed delivery plan sits behind the strategy, and sets out the particular outcomes which the partnership will seek to deliver. These include economic prosperity and narrowing the gap and the related cross cutting themes of skills, health, safe; clean and green; and children and young people.

⁴ Source: *Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010*. An analysis of this is available on Bolton's Council's website, at the following [link](#)

⁵ Bolton's Community Strategy, *Bolton: Our Vision 2012-15*, can be found at this [link](#)

The 2014/15 year end update shows continued advancement against our plans in the last three years. This is impressive given the difficult financial context and pace and scale of reform in recent years and is indicative of the strong leadership and commitment from the public, private and voluntary sector. However, progress remains sluggish in some priority areas such as improving long term health condition outcomes for our most disadvantaged residents and childhood obesity. Such trends are of concern to the partnership, particularly given the severe financial outlook for the public sector signalled in the July, 2015 budget and the ongoing pressure on local services. Accordingly, analysis and learning from these enduring trends alongside consideration of existing good practice are being undertaken which will shape the direction of the forthcoming Strategy. Encouraging areas of progress for reflection and comment include:

- Continued support for the visitor economy, strategic sites and a partnership approach to skills delivery is paying dividends with green shoots of economic recovery apparent in Bolton. Reduction in worklessness numbers, improvement in skills levels and a very successful high profile events programme are instructive of progress and indicate that Bolton continues to capitalise on the economic value locally.
- The continued commitment to “narrow the gap” in areas of greatest deprivation is also delivering some good results. Preventing people from getting to the point of crisis both in terms of mitigating against the effects of welfare reform via the Anti-Poverty Strategy, improved life expectancy and good crime outcomes for our more disadvantaged communities have been notable achievements since 2012 with the caveat that these should be considered within the wider partnership performance landscape where outcomes are mixed and, sometimes, volatile within priority areas.

We continue to face challenges in terms of advancing the wellbeing and equity of opportunity for our residents at the pace required to improve individual's, families' and communities' outcomes and reduce demand on high cost public services. Some of the key challenges for the Council and its partners include:

- Skills remain a critical issue for Bolton both in terms of narrowing the gap and for stimulating economic growth. Bolton needs to build on existing work to increase the proportion of its residents attaining higher-level skills thereby ensuring residents maximise the opportunities available at a local and regional level.
- Bolton mirrors its GM partners in the mismatch between housing supply and resident demand. The need to support and accelerate the rate of house building including the availability of affordable housing will be crucial for Bolton's economic health in the coming years. The devolution agreement and the Housing Investment Fund will be a key part of this drive for more homes in Bolton.

- Childhood obesity remains an area of slow progress and despite some advancement in lowering obesity in Reception age children over the last three years; the obesity rate of children in primary age children and beyond is an area of continued concern.
- The most important factor that contributes to both our internal and external life expectancy gaps is long-term conditions, especially heart disease. While heart disease is reducing it is not decreasing at the rate of other areas. For heart disease and stroke rates, Bolton is ranked 131st out of 150 areas. Key to making progress on health outcomes in the future will be the Council and health partners' approach to tackling these conditions.

These areas highlight the challenge of maintaining outcomes in a climate of diminished resources but also the importance of finding new ways to collaborate to maximise capacity and improve local outcomes. Over the next year, the Partnership will be looking to refresh existing priorities whilst ensuring that these align with and further Greater Manchester's growth and reform ambitions for the region.

This year has seen unprecedented devolution of powers to Greater Manchester. The Devolution agreement and the recently agreed Memorandum of Understanding has the potential to significantly improve our residents' outcomes by accelerating delivery on both local growth and reform and health and social care priorities. Devolution also gives added impetus to Bolton's aim of services which are targeted towards preventative rather than reactive support. Enabling our residents to be more independent and making best use of resources to reduce pressure on services will be a core focus of the Council's Community Strategy refresh this year.

3.2 Our business: equality, business planning and decision making

The Council continues to operate a robust approach to decision making and business planning, with strong and informed political leadership from Elected Members. This process is driven by the Community Strategy's aims of economic prosperity and narrowing the gap.

The Cabinet's philosophy towards the council's budget setting and business planning activity emphasises a firm focus on protecting Bolton's most vulnerable people and meeting our statutory duties. The most recent strategic Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which accompanied the council's 2016/17 savings options report⁶ continued to maintain a commitment to limiting the impact on the Borough's most vulnerable and delivering on council priorities. However, this will need to be considered in the context of a much reduced controllable budget. Set out below is an initial 'high level' assessment of what the organisation's priorities and shape may look like in this context

- A strong focus on creating the conditions to deliver economic growth for the borough and local people

⁶ The Strategic EIA of the 2016/17 savings options report (dated 16 February, 2016) is available on the Committee section of the council's website, at this [link](#)

- Clear co-ordination and leadership of the totality of public services in Bolton to maximises the use of all public resources in a joined-up way. This is very important given the totality of the reductions in public services across Bolton
- Ensuring that services for the most vulnerable children and adults especially in relation to the council's responsibilities for safeguarding continue to be met
- Ensuring that we maintain at least the statutory minimum level of provision for services across the council
- Targeting the remaining resources for universal services to either support economic growth and where possible to continue to at least 'maintain' or 'narrow the gap'

There is, therefore, a clear strategic framework for the targeting of the council's resources in line with Bolton's priority outcomes. The remainder of the council's business planning process is designed to support detailed budget allocations and inform the subsequent size and shape of our services:

The *Medium term financial strategy* sets out the council's financial forecast, and provides financial guidance to services⁷.

Divisional Service Plans explain how services will deliver their budgets, and how they will contribute to the achievement of Bolton's priorities.

Personal development reviews help staff to identify the development and support they need to help deliver Bolton's priorities.

In addition, there are several other tools which the council uses to understand and manage the performance of its services as well as ensuring an integrated approach to equalities and corporate business planning processes. These include:

Performance management of progress against Bolton's priorities. This is an essential part of how the council holds itself to account, and includes reporting of performance to Cabinet Members; Scrutiny Committees⁸, and the wider partnership.

Equality Impact Assessments are used to identify the potential impacts of a policy, budgetary, or other key decision before it is made; and therefore to support the council's decision makers in making informed choices⁹. Relevant actions arising from completed EIAs are incorporated into service plans and monitored through departmental and corporate arrangements. This ensures that equalities is considered not only when a policy is developed and decided upon but also when it is being implemented. In 2011 the council reviewed its EIA toolkit and updated the templates and guidance provided to staff in line with the Equality Act 2010. EIAs are integral to the council's Savings and Efficiency Programme, which is a key part of the budget process. The Strategic EIA, which

⁷ The financial forecast for 2013/14 – 2016/17 is available on the Committee section of the council's website, at this [link](#) (part A) and this [link](#) (part B)

⁸ Corporate Performance reports are taken on a bi-annual basis, and are available on the Committee section of the council's website. This can be searched at the following [link](#)

⁹ EIAs are published alongside the reports to which they relate. Reports can be searched on the Committee section of the council's website, available at this [link](#)

accompanies the budget report, also assesses the cumulative and combined impact of changing a number of policies.

The council's *procurement and commissioning* arrangements include considerations around equality matters. Some contracts/service areas have a greater relevance to equality matters than others and for this reason an outcomes focus is an important part of our work¹⁰.

3.3 Our customers: understanding need

The council and its partners are data rich, and this enables us to ensure that our services are based on a solid understanding of customer need. We use a wide range of data and intelligence to achieve this – this is not solely a statistical exercise.

It is important to stress that the council does not routinely collect the demographic information of all customers, since such a blanket approach may be considered to be disproportionate. Instead, information is requested where it is relevant and appropriate for the service being accessed. We feel that this is appropriate within the context of the government's Best Value Statutory Guidance¹¹.

The sections below explain the types of data which the council uses to plan its services and respond to customer need.

3.3.1 Performance data

As set out in section 3.2, the delivery of the outcomes in the Community Strategy forms a major part of how the council holds itself to account in relation to improving outcomes for local people. Performance management takes place with the council's Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Committees, and the wider partnership¹².

The council's services have access to a wealth of demographic and operational information, which is used to inform service delivery. The type of information varies based on the nature of the service, and helps the council to make sure that its services are appropriate for local need. For example, Bolton's JSNA describes the health and wellbeing needs of local people and provides the key evidence for the development of local strategies along with the commissioning of services to support individual's needs and address and improve the populations' health.

Similarly, analysis of school attainment results shows us where particular children or schools may need additional support to enhance achievement. Intelligence data usage also helps the council to undertake customer segmentation. This helps the council to direct information to customer groups.

The examples given above show how information is used to respond to the particular needs of individual service users, but operational data is also used more generally,

¹⁰ More information about procurement is available on the Tenders and Contracts section of the council's website, available at this [link](#)

¹¹ Paragraph 3 of the *Best Value Statutory Guidance*, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in September 2011 states, "In the interests of economy and efficiency, it is not necessary for authorities to undertake lifestyle or diversity questionnaires of suppliers or residents."

¹² An update on community strategy outcomes including outturn for 2014/15 is available at this [link](#)

to respond to the changing shape of or demand for services. This is used to inform Divisional Service Plans, and EIAs, which are both discussed in section 3.2.

3.3.2 *Satisfaction and complaints*

The council has access to data from a number of regular satisfaction surveys undertaken by the council and its partners (e.g. Adults Social Care Survey, surveys conducted by Greater Manchester Police). These surveys help us understand how people are feeling. In addition to this, the council consult on specific issues using a variety of methods including its own e-view (electronic residents) panel.

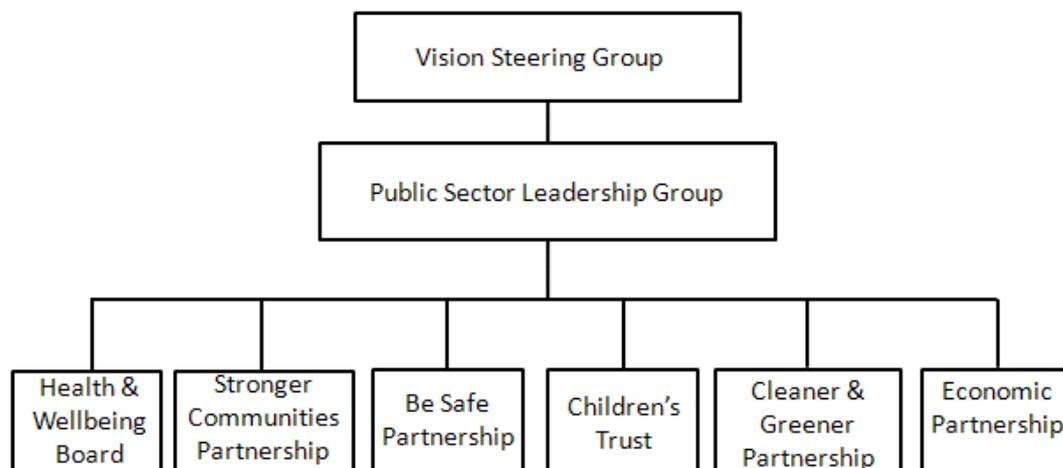
Public fora such as Area Forums enable residents to ask questions, make comments and complaints to council staff and partners including the Police and Fire Services. Staff who work out in our communities, such as Neighbourhood Managers, are also well placed to help our communities to engage with and influence decisions which matter to them.

The council also monitors customer feedback through its customer contact system; from issues raised by local MPs and councillors on behalf of their constituents; and through the council's formal complaints process. This sets out the council's Customer Promise and its standards for customer care. Analysis of complaints, comments and compliments is undertaken which enables us to identify patterns of customer experience, and respond accordingly.

3.3.3 *Partnerships, consultation and engagement*

As set out in section 3.1, Bolton has a long history of strong partnership working, which is led by the Bolton Vision Partnership. Partnership activity in Bolton has a clear direction, as set out in the Community Strategy. It also provides a solid infrastructure for engagement and collaboration across the public, private, and voluntary sector in Bolton. This is structured around the partnership's priority themes.

This structure is set out below.



As well as the formal partnership infrastructure, the council engages with a range of organisations and interest groups on matters of particular relevance. These groups include, but are not exclusive to, the Faith Leaders' Forum; the Disability Partnership, Healthwatch and the Carers' Impact Group. This, along with work within our neighbourhoods, provides opportunities for people from across Bolton to contribute to and influence decisions which are important to them.

In addition, appropriate and effective consultation is an important part of the work the council is undertaking to make savings and fundamentally reshape the organisation. Stakeholder consultations are tailored to individual reviews as they come forward, and the views gathered through the consultations inform the development of the reviews and associated Equality Impact Assessments.

3.4 Our outcomes: making a difference

Over the past four years progress has been made to further embed equality practice throughout the council. This section outlines some of our achievements in the last year.

Throughout section 3, we have sought to demonstrate how the council's core business – including that which it undertakes in partnership – is underpinned by the aim of reducing disadvantage and improving the quality of life for people in Bolton. We have explained the clear political and partnership leadership for this work; set out how concerns around economic prosperity, narrowing the gap and vulnerability guide

the council's strategic decisions; and how matters of equality are integrated into the council's business planning process.

Despite the challenging conditions in which the council and its partners are now operating, much has been achieved in recent years to improve the quality of life for people in Bolton. This is set out in *Bolton: Our Vision 2012-15* and a summary of some of the milestones to date are as follows:

- Life expectancy – a key measure of deprivation – is improving across the borough and the life expectancy gap continues to narrow. This positive trend, which began in 2008/09, shows a gap of 1.8 years for men and 1.5 years for women when compared to the England average. Whilst this performance still highlights a considerable gap, Bolton has improved life expectancy at a faster pace in the last four years than England as a whole.
- Bolton is maintaining the significant progress made over recent years on educational attainment and our performance now exceeds that of our statistical neighbours. Attainment at key stage 2 continues to improve and key stage 4 is in line with the national average:
 - 80% to 81% at Key Stage 2 and
 - 56.8% at Key Stage 4 (5 GCSEs A* - C incl English and Maths)
- Since a large peak in 2013, anti-social behaviour has reduced with a 13% decrease during the last year. Acquisitive crime has largely followed a downward trend also with burglary offences decreasing by 6%, robbery by 20% and vehicle offences by 8% when compared to last year.
- Maintaining cleanliness in a climate of diminished resources is a challenge for the council. A key approach has been supporting local people to become involved and behaviour change campaigns as part of 'love Bolton, hate litter'. The cleanliness pass rate has gone back up to 94% in 2014/15 after a dip to 90% in the last four years. Progress continues on recycling, recent rates show a 1.6% increase in recycling in 14/15 and 8% overall since 12/13.
- The ongoing challenge of the national economic position continues to present us with a challenging operating context. Direct interventions to stimulate the local economy have been a major priority for the Council and its partners over recent years. Specific progress has included work on the Logistics North site, a town centre cinema, family entertainment and restaurants for the Market Place, the travel interchange and a refurbished market.
- The council recognises the importance of attracting and retaining economically active people through the provision of good quality housing. Plans for 1,700 houses at Rivington Chase have been approved and work is on-going to bring forward new housing in the town centre as part of the

strategy for supporting the local economy. One hundred and three affordable homes have been completed, a further 60 new builds have started on site and 53 empty homes have been returned to use through the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) Affordable Housing Programme and Empty Homes programme in the last year.

4. Eliminating discrimination; and promoting equality of opportunity within our workforce

4.1 Organisational culture and support

The council strives to create a culture where diversity is respected and celebrated. Our practices as an employer are underpinned by a clear policy framework, which recognises our obligations of eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation; promoting equality of opportunity; and ensuring fair treatment for all staff. This includes an equality proofed pay and grading structure¹³.

Delivering quality and accessible services would not be possible without staff who have an understanding of Bolton's communities, and an appreciation of the need for responsive services and strong customer care. Our staff are a major asset, and the council recognises the importance of providing effective support and training – evidenced by our Investor in People status¹⁴. A Personal Development Review (PDR) for all staff is a key part of the council's business planning process, and a range of training is on offer to support staff in delivering the council's priorities. The council does not presently monitor the take up of training and development by protected characteristic. This is determined by service and individual need.

Equality naturally features within the council's training programme. It features within training for senior managers and training on specific equality matters is also delivered as required, for example training on Equality Impact Assessments is part of training for project managers as part of the Savings and Efficiency programme. A new e-learning training package has been developed and is available for all staff.

The council undertakes a staff survey every two years, to understand how people feel about working for the council. The most recent staff survey was completed in 2014¹⁵ and 81% of respondents agreed that the council was committed to equality and diversity. 83% of respondents agreed that the council respected individual differences. Both these responses were slightly higher than in recent years.

4.2 The financial context and workforce implications

It must be stressed that these are difficult times for the public sector. The squeeze on public sector finances means that the council's budget is reducing in size, and its workforce is subsequently also reducing.

¹³ Bolton Council's Equality Policy Statement is available on the Equalities and Diversity section of the Council's website, at this [link](#)

¹⁴ A report setting out the messages from Bolton's 2014 IiP inspection and associated action plan is available on the Committee section of the council's website, at this [link](#).

¹⁵ A report setting out the findings of Bolton's staff survey 2014 is available on the Committee section of the council's website, at this [link](#). The survey will be repeated in Sept 2016.

The council has invested significant effort in managing this reduction and minimising compulsory redundancies. External recruitment has all but stopped; vacancy management has been used extensively; and all staff have been offered voluntary severance (VS) and voluntary early retirement (VER). In the last 4 years, the council has managed to secure a reduction of over 1,000 posts all through voluntary means.

The council aims to have a workforce which is broadly representative of the local population in the long-term. The council presently has very little influence over the organisation's overall workforce composition. This is due to the fact that the workforce has been shaped significantly by voluntary leavers; and because opportunities for external recruitment are presently extremely limited.

Some potential remains for staff to move within the workforce as a whole, primarily through opportunities for redeployment and internal recruitment. To date we have redeployed over 100 members of staff as part of a comprehensive redeployment process. This may have some influence in the short and medium-term on how the workforce – and particular groups within the workforce – is distributed, for example across roles or grades.

The Council has had a key role in influencing the public sector's social employment commitments as well as delivering our own employment scheme. Significant progress has been made regarding the support we offer as an employer to support and improve our residents' work and life outcomes.¹⁶ In January, 2014, the Council implemented proposals for a series of opportunities within the Council for people not in work, to give them the skills and experience to become work ready and to ultimately improve their outcomes.

This included 27 two year apprenticeship opportunities, 68 work placements opportunities, 3 graduate trainee contracts. The Council then co-ordinated the engagement of other public service leaders and secured approximately 100 new opportunities for apprentices, traineeships and other supported employment schemes for residents furthest away from the employment market.

During the last three years the council has implemented improvements to pay grades 1 and 2, in order to keep local authority pay rates above the National Minimum Wage, to respond to the national Living Wage campaign and to support Bolton's anti-poverty strategy.

The council monitors the changing shape of its workforce as part of its Savings and Efficiency programme, and publishes the key information in its strategic EIAs of the budget¹⁷.

¹⁶ Bolton Council's Skills Strategy Implementation (1014-16) can be found at this [link](#)

¹⁷ The Strategic EIA of the 2016/17 budget report (dated 16 February, 2016) is available on the Committee section of the council's website, at this [link](#)

4.3 Workforce profile

Information about the council's workforce profile is regularly refreshed through a voluntary staff audit. The profile of the council's workforce as of 31 December 2015 is set out below. Unless otherwise stated most of these details are broadly similar to the previous workforce data published in January 2015. Where there is a significant change this has been commented upon. This data relates only to staff directly employed by the council and information has been kept at headline level, so as not to breach data protection rules or to risk identifying individuals.¹⁸

The information provided in this section comes from a range of data sources e.g. age, salary, full/part time, length of service and gender is from the council's Oracle system. Other data (ethnicity, disability, religion, sexual identity and caring responsibilities) is self-reported collected via a form.

Total employment; length of service; and grades:

- The council directly employs 4,331 people in 4,615 posts; figures below are based on the number of posts
- Almost half the workforce (46%) works part-time, and just over half works full-time 54%
- 61% of employees earn £12 - £24,000 FTE
- 31% of employees earn £24,001 - £36,000 FTE
- 6% of employees earn £36,001 - £48,000 FTE
- 2% of employees earn £48,001 FTE or more
- In 2015 14% of employees had worked for the council for five years or less, compared 17% in 2014 and a third in 2013
- 86% of employees have worked for the council for 5 years or more, with 49% having served ten years or more.

Gender:

- 73% of the workforce is female; and 27% male
- 60% of full-time employees are female
- 88% of part-time employees are female
- Women tend to be employed on a slightly lower grade than men, 62% earning £24,000 (FTE) or less compared to 58% of men, although 66% of the top 8% earners are female
- Matters around gender reassignment are not discussed here, given the relative rarity and sensitivity of such cases

Age:

- The council's workforce is generally older than the workforce population in Bolton as a whole, as set out below.
- Less than 1% of employees are aged 21 or under (compared to 6% in Bolton)
- 7% of employees are aged 22-30 years (compared to 20%)
- 18% of employees are aged 31-40 years (compared to 27%)
- 31% of employees are aged 41-50 years (compared to 23%)

¹⁸ The data does not include information about schools or agency staff. Information on the schools workforce will be published separately under the government's schools workforce audit.

- 35% of employees are aged 51-60 years (compared to 20%)
- 7% of employees are aged 61 and above (compared to 5%)
- In most age groups there is a fairly even split between full time and part time, with the majority in each age groups full time, however, two-thirds (66%) of employees aged 61 or over are part-time.
- 55% of employees aged 51 or over have been with the council for more than 10 years.

Disability:

- Data regarding disability is not held for 10% of the council's employees.

Of those employees we hold data for:

- 3% consider themselves to have a disability. (In the 2011 Census 20% of Bolton's residents said they had a limiting long-term illness or disability¹⁹) and 97% do not consider themselves to have a disability
- 61% of staff who have a disability work full-time, compared with 56% of staff without a disability
- There is good retention of staff who consider themselves to have a disability – 48% of staff from this group have been with the council for over ten years
- 2% of the top 8% earners within the council have a disability

Ethnicity:

- Data regarding ethnicity is not held for 6% of the council's employees.

Of those employees we hold data for:

- 90% describe themselves as White (White British or belonging to a white minority ethnic group). This compares with 83% in Bolton as a whole
- 10% describe themselves as belonging to a black or minority ethnic (BME) group. This compares with 17% in Bolton as a whole
- 55% of staff from BME groups work part time compared to 45% White.
- 40% of BME employees have been with the council for 10 years or more, compared with 51% of white employees
- 5% of the top 8% earners are from BME groups

Religion:

- Data regarding religion is not held for 11% of the council's employees.

Of those employees that have provided data:

- 72% are Christian (compared to 63% in Bolton)
- 9% are from other faiths (compared to 14% in Bolton)
- 19% of employees have no religion (compared to 17% in Bolton)

¹⁹ This was around 40% in the Bolton Health and Wellbeing Survey 2010. *Bolton's 2011 Census information* can be found at the following [link](#) and [here](#) at the Office for National Statistics Website.

Sexuality

- Data regarding sexuality is not held for 34% of the council's employees.

Of those employees that have provided data:

- 2% are gay, lesbian or bi-sexual
- 98% are heterosexual

Caring status:

- Data regarding caring status is not held for 13% of the council's employees

Of those employees that have provided data:

- 43% of employees have no caring responsibilities
- 57% of employees have caring responsibilities

Of employees with caring responsibilities:

- 16% care just for adults
- 74% care just for children
- 9% care for both adults and children
- 48% of those with caring responsibilities work part-time, compared to 42% of employees who do not have caring responsibilities.
- There is good retention of staff with caring responsibilities - 54% have been with the council for over ten years. This has gradually increased over the last 3 years; the figure was 50% in 2014 and 47% in 2013
- 63% of the top 8% earners have caring responsibilities
- Flexible working policies are in place to support staff with caring responsibilities. All employees are now able to apply to reduce their working hours on a permanent or temporary basis in line with the council's Flexible Working Policy and the needs of the service.

Pregnancy and maternity:

- Women who require maternity leave (and parents who require paternity leave) are supported in line with the council's human resources policy framework.

Marriage and civil partnership:

- The relationship status of the council's workforce is not routinely collected

4.4 Leavers, and the changing shape of our workforce

The profile of the council's workforce changes on an ongoing basis as a result of staff turnover. Between 1st January and 31 December 2015 413 people left the employment of the council (equivalent to 426 posts), of these posts:

- 47% resigned
- 21% TUPE'D out
- 14% took voluntary severance, voluntary early retirement or voluntary redundancies.
- 9% retired
- 6% were on fixed term contracts which came to an end
- 3% were dismissed
- 1% passed away while in the service of the council

As set out in section 4.2, the changing shape of the workforce is monitored through the savings and efficiency programme.

5 Fostering good relations

5.1 Leadership and stronger communities

As discussed throughout this document, Bolton is a diverse borough with a distinct local character and strong community relationships. It is a place where people from all walks of life are welcomed, and where tolerance and respect are strong.

This culture did not come about by accident. Partners from across the public, private, and voluntary sectors are committed to building strong communities. Fostering good relations is a key part of our work to build community and social cohesion across the Bolton Family. It is about making sure that people from across Bolton's communities have a voice, and are able to engage with the council and its partners in order to influence decisions which are important to them. More information about engagement is set out in section 3.3.3.

Bolton's Community Strategy, *Bolton: Our Vision 2012-15*, recognises the importance of cohesion as a cross-cutting issue. Strategic leadership is provided by the Vision Steering Group, with support from the Stronger Communities Partnership, which is responsible for creating the conditions in which strong communities can flourish.

One of the biggest contributions to this work is made through the delivery of the partnership's aims of economic prosperity and narrowing the gap. In addition, the work of the Stronger Communities Partnership includes:

- Shaping Bolton's strategy around neighbourhood renewal and narrowing the gap
- Investing in our deprived communities
- Developing the voluntary, community and faith sector and promoting volunteering
- Community cohesion and community relationships
- Anti-poverty strategy and welfare reform

Furthermore, the Faith Leaders Forum contributes towards providing strategic leadership to building social cohesion. The work of the forum includes:

- Stronger and visible leadership with a commitment from faith leaders to attend and contribute in appropriate partnership setting (Vision Steering Group, Stronger Communities Partnership, Voluntary Sector Forum)
- Civic engagement and a commitment to participate in Bolton civic event programmes
- Commitment to provide leadership and participate in key One Bolton events to celebrate the towns diversity ensuring Bolton continues to be a welcoming and tolerant place where everyone – irrespective of their background or belief - is welcome
- Commitment to lead on, support and deliver interfaith activities that promote cohesion

5.2 Stronger communities and the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector makes a significant contribution to the quality of life and relationships within our communities. Voluntary, community and faith organisations are pivotal in building strong, active and cohesive communities in Bolton; and in encouraging people from across the borough to get involved with their community.

Despite the challenges of the current economic conditions, the council and the voluntary sector in Bolton have remained committed to working together to improve the quality of life for local people. However, the council has had to make significant budget savings, which has involved some difficult choices. The precise level of reductions from the 2015/17 budget will require a detailed piece of analysis and consultation with funded groups, which will take a period of months to complete. It will not, therefore be practicable to bring this option forward during 2015/16 and as such it is proposed that the level of resources allocated to the voluntary sector in 2013/15 will be retained for the next financial year on a transitional basis, pending a full review and reductions to apply from 1 April 2016.

The pilot Community Empowerment Fund, which makes resources available for community groups or business to bid for in order to manage demand for council services and/or mitigate the impact of resource reductions is a key response to maintaining cleanliness standards. The fund is being piloted within the priority areas of clean, green, safe and young people's provision as part of the 2015/17 budget and a number of bids have received approval.

5.3 Bolton's Events: Celebrating diversity

In Bolton we believe it is important to bring communities together and encourage harmony. Engaging effectively with our communities is central to the success of this work.

- Interfaith work; faith trails / interfaith young ambassadors.
<http://www.boltoninterfaithcouncil.org.uk/bic-activities.html>
- Christian cohesion – key events through the year; Easter passion / Christmas etc.. <http://www.gmim.org.uk/boltonccc/about-us/>
- Bolton Council of Mosques (BCOM) – open days / breaking fast events during Ramadan etc... <http://www.thebcom.org/index.html>
- Hindu forum – key events through the year <http://www.boltonhinduforum.org.uk/>
- Faith leaders forum – chaired by Canon Matt Thompson
- Bolton Pride – first ever Bolton specific event held in 2015 under the banner 'love Bolton, hate homophobia'. Plans for this year's event in September will

build on this and include a parade and stalls in the town centre.
<http://boltonpride.com/>

- Bolton Wanderers Community Trust – fun days / Third BWFC shirt to raise funds for BLESMA etc. <http://www.bwct.org.uk/>

6 Conclusion

This document acts as the annual refresh of the Equality Information for 2016. The information provided serves to demonstrate how the Council responds to the duties of the Equality Act 2010 as part of its core business.

This document also demonstrates the strong leadership from across the community which underpins the borough's work to reduce disadvantage and to improve the quality of life for everyone in the Bolton family. This is set out clearly in *Bolton: Our Vision 2012-15*, which demonstrates what the council and its partners will do to achieve economic prosperity and narrow the gap in these times of ongoing economic challenge.

Bolton's Community Strategy, *Bolton: Our Vision 2012-15*, is the main means by which we will hold ourselves to account on progress to reduce inequality and improve the quality of life for local people. Bolton's strong partnership leadership will continue to be essential in making progress against these aims, and in supporting our communities to become strong and confident. Performance will be reported regularly to the council's Elected Members and the wider partnership.

We understand that the global economic recession continues to have an impact not only on the council, but on our partners, our customers and our employees as well. In a time of reducing resources, the council has to make some difficult decisions but we continue to seek to make these decisions in a fair and transparent manner, and in line with a clear philosophy, which has the principle of protecting Bolton's most vulnerable at its heart.

Supporting our workforce through these challenges will continue to be important in the coming years. It is also important that the council continues to support its staff to deliver Bolton's aims of economic prosperity and narrowing the gap. As part of this, we must maintain a culture in which diversity is respected and celebrated and in which discrimination, harassment and victimisation are not tolerated.