

Reflection of equality and diversity objectives

2021 – 2025

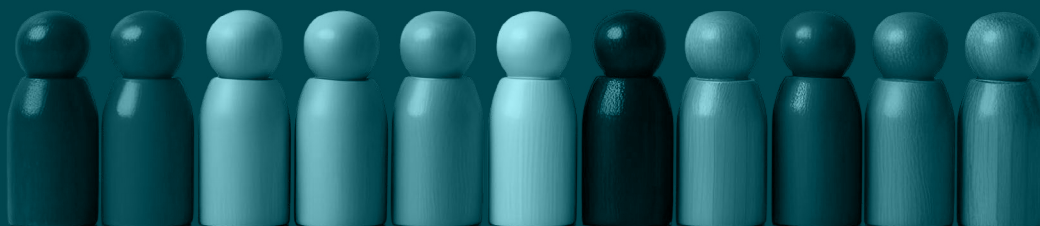


Why equality, diversity and inclusion matter

Bolton Council is committed to delivering equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) opportunities and action, both as an employer and for our residents.

Over the last four years, Bolton Council has worked hard to fully embed equalities into everything we do, ensuring that we fulfil our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Having strengthened our practices and processes and supported our workforce to build their knowledge and understanding of equalities legislation, we have created inclusive services and environments that value the needs of our residents and workforce, regardless of their background and characteristics. Our work throughout this period has contributed to better decision-making, as the use of data and intelligence has improved our understanding of services and how our residents, partners and customers access them. This has benefited key streams of work, including our Tackling Poverty Strategy, which was developed through active engagement with residents, enabling lived experiences and reflections to shape the programme of work.



Public Sector Equality Duty

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a statutory duty, which requires public bodies to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

As a public body, Bolton Council are legally required to demonstrate how we:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

Bolton Council remains committed to delivering on our legal duties around equality and as part of this objective period we have built a culture where listening, sharing best practice and reflection are key to how we learn and develop.

To support this, we have created forums for officers and partners working in this space to work collaboratively, sharing best practice and knowledge.

This proactive collaboration has ensured that our legal duties and commitments to EDI have been threaded throughout our policies, practices and delivery to support groups facing inequality.

In addition to the nine protected characteristics listed under the Equality Act 2010, the council also chooses to make decisions which support equality regarding:

- People's socio-economic conditions
- People's caring status
- Armed Forces /Veterans (2022)
- Care Leavers (2022)



Objective one:

Embed equalities training and awareness at all levels of the organisation

To support our workforce and elected members in building an awareness of EDI, we have developed a range of online and face to face training programmes, ranging from mandatory training to focused programmes on unconscious bias and race in the workplace, as well as bespoke programmes for managers around neurodiversity.

To support our delivery on Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination, ensuring we meet our legislative duties, we have worked with our staff networks to gather feelings of lived experiences, which could be shared as examples with managers.

To date our programmes have been accessed by nearly **3,000 employees**, including our frontline services.

The council has created staff networks aligned with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. These networks collaborate with leadership to drive positive organisational change.

Each year activities take place to support our workforce, celebrate communities and raise awareness of local and national programmes that are important to our workforce and residents.

“The training made me reflect on my own working and how I can be more supportive to different vulnerable groups.”



A comment from transport staff on the Equality and Diversity training.



Disability, health, wellbeing and carers status

In 2025, the council was awarded Disability Confident Leader status for its commitment to disabled people in the workplace. To support our workforce, we offer employees the opportunity to access information that would improve their health and well-being. Through our policies, guidance and events we are able to provide a range of information and access to wider offers from our partners, that support the needs of our employees.



"I love inspiring people and if I can make a difference in one person's life then that's success from me."

Kiera Byland
Triple Gold Medallist

International Women's Day

Each year we celebrate International Women's Day, where we will take the time to reflect on some inspirational women. Throughout the period we ran digital campaigns that highlight the wonderful women from Bolton, those that champion women in business, health and wellbeing, as well as those that work in the heart of our communities and those that have been trailblazers, shaping the town's history and identity.



Armed Forces Week 2025

To recognise, honour and celebrate the contributions of all those who serve or have served in His Majesty's Armed Forces, residents were invited to show their support for our Armed Forces by attending a ceremony on Victoria Square. We also hosted a family fun event, where free activities and re-enactments took place. Service men and women were also invited to a special Mayoral lunch.

Objective two:

Review and improve our processes around equalities and diversity, ensuring that we show due regard to the Public Sector Equalities Duty and transparency in our decision making.

To best support our staff, residents and stakeholders, the council has sought to improve our practices and processes for supporting EDI. At the start of our strategy period the pandemic shone a light on the inequalities within our communities. To improve our services, we undertook a systematic review of our equalities processes, including Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). By working with our democratic services and IT teams, we were able to fully align this assessment process with decision making systems.

This process is enabling us to be more reflective as an organisation, learning from our experiences and sharing this knowledge and best practice across services. An example of this is the decommissioning of a residential Extra Care setting.

Through careful monitoring, engagement and evaluation with those living within the property, we were able to carefully monitor their needs, mitigate against challenging impacts and create a positive experience to significant change.

**“Everyone is so friendly here,
I am more independent and
have a washer, cooker etc.
I would not want to go back to
Campbell. Everyone is so kind and
I feel looked after”.**



Previous tenant of Campbell House Extra Care scheme, following the decommission of the property

Further examples of this objective include:

Community Alliances

In 2023, the council launched Community Alliances in seven key areas of the borough. These alliances have been established as a network of local residents, voluntary groups and businesses, who care about the place where they live and work. They are networks which empower communities to have a voice in the decisions impacting their localities.



ReachDeck

To improve the accessibility of our online services, the organisation has invested into ReachDeck, an online accessibility platform and Sign Alive. These services are providing greater accessibility for residents who may have English as an additional language, low literacy levels, have hearing impairments, or additional needs, in engaging with council services. Our commitment to online accessibility has resulted in the council being awarded the Crystal Mark.



DES

Our Digital, Employment and Skills (DES) team have created a bank of Digital Aiders, engaging volunteers from across the town who can provide support to those that are digitally excluded in accessing friendly advice and guidance with their digital needs.

Since 2022, the DES team, based within the Library and Museum Services, have:

- supported over 1,400 people with basic digital skills via one to ones and drop ins
- distributed over 700 sim cards to people on low incomes
- loaned laptop and tablet devices supporting over 600 people
- gifted over 100 devices including tablets and phones
- helped over 250 people to download and use the NHS app



Objective three:

Ensure that our collection of equalities data is robust and sufficient to provide the required information for our decision-making processes.

As an organisation rich in data and intelligence, regular reviews of this information enable us to identify factual inequalities within the workforce and our population data. This insight is enabling us to make decisions and design strategies and programmes that are evidence based.

This has been effectively demonstrated on our design and delivery of the Tackling Poverty Strategy, where we are exploring how residents access services and where there may be barriers.

To grow our understanding of our workforce population, we have reviewed and reshaped how employees can share their personal information, via a self-serve portal.

This system is enabling us to identify where employees might need greater support, where there may be inequalities and where there is opportunity to develop our staff.

“I like being able to make a difference to people’s lives, no matter how big or small. I am driven by the fact the service (we) provide is for the greater good!”



Employee responding to the staff survey (2023)



Our commitment to engagement with residents is also a key aspect to this objective.

Along with our outreach teams, we regularly engage with stakeholders through consultations and are developing our ambitions around co-design and co-production via a council wide approach to delivery and resourcing.

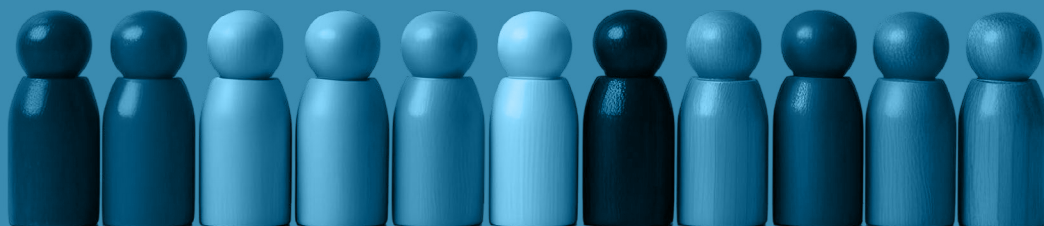
This commitment has provided valuable perspectives that has supported our senior leaders and elected members in their decision making.



We are proud of the work we have undertaken at Bolton Council, alongside our partners, to tackle inequality and strengthen our processes and practices.

This review only provides the highlights, with so many more impactful programmes being undertaken across the whole organisation, from the amazing work our Children's Directorate do with Care Leavers, to the array of work being undertaken in Adults including the work of the Community Safety team with their commitments to tackling Hate Crime.

We are also working extensively with our partners, where we have distributed over £6.5 million to Bolton's VCSE organisations, via the Bolton's Fund. This is enabling community groups to deliver projects, services and activities to Bolton people.



Thank you for joining us on our equalities journey over the last four years and we look forward to working on the next phase of our journey with you in 2026.

As part of our commitment to EDI the council are delivering on the following charter marks and awards.

