

Birmingham City Council Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2025 – 2026

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Purpose of the report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of how the Council has considered and embedded equality across service areas, service provision, decision-making, commissioning and working in partnership. This will evidence the ways Birmingham City Council has complied with the Equality Act 2010 and its specific duties.

The Act provides protection against discrimination and other prohibited conduct (harassment and victimisation) relating to the identified protected characteristics – age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. In addition to these, the Council has voluntarily agreed to treat care experience/care leavers as a protected characteristic as care experienced people face significant challenges, including discrimination and lack of security when they begin their adult lives.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is a requirement under the Equality Act 2010 and ensures that public bodies and other organisations that carry out public functions consider how equality can be promoted in daily functioning in terms of decision-making, policies (both internal and external facing), procurement, service provision and in recruitment and performance management.

The PSED describes three general duties that a public authority must adhere to, which are:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
- Advance equality of opportunity between those that share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between those that share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This is further supported by specific duties which require public bodies to:

- Publish equality information to show compliance with the general duty – this includes information relating to employees who share protected characteristics and people who share protected characteristics and are affected by our policies and practices (e.g. service users).
- Publish equality objectives to demonstrate the organisation intends to make progress on the aims of the general duty (these must be specific and measurable to focus attention on the priority equality issues and should lead to improvements in policymaking, service delivery and employment, including resource allocation).

The report highlights our key achievements from 2025-2026.

About Birmingham and the Council

Birmingham is a major UK city, and Birmingham City Council is one of Europe's largest and most diverse local authorities. The Council is committed to promoting equality and diversity, ensuring that services and opportunities are fair and inclusive. Our aim is to enable all citizens to reach their full potential and to reduce preventable inequalities in life outcomes. Discrimination, structural barriers and institutional bias remain key drivers of inequality. Our policies and actions focus on creating the conditions in which strong leadership and a skilled, diverse workforce can deliver the best outcomes for all citizens.

Ensuring diverse and inclusive leadership at every level strengthens our ability to understand and respond to the needs of Birmingham's communities. We aim to ensure that services reflect the needs of our increasingly diverse population and take targeted action to address known inequalities. By directing support to those who need it most, we raise standards and improve outcomes for all.

The Council is one of Birmingham's largest employers, with over 9,200 staff, and acts as a commissioner and service provider in partnership with key local organisations. This position enables us to play a leading role in ensuring that all residents have fair opportunities and feel a sense of belonging.

This report outlines how we have engaged with citizens and used public insight to strengthen decision making and improve the services we deliver.

Birmingham's City Vision and Corporate Plan

The City Vision was developed in collaboration with citizens and partners. The missions are:

- Growth and Prosperity in Birmingham
- Knowledge and Opportunity in Birmingham
- Health, Equity and Inclusion in Birmingham
- Safety and Sustainability in Birmingham
- Connected Birmingham.

The Plan brings together the Council's contribution to the City Vision¹ and its own Improvement and Recovery Plan.

Birmingham's Corporate Plan sets out the Council's priorities for the next three years – focused on improving how the Council operates, meeting the Council's statutory responsibilities, and delivering better outcomes for citizens through genuine partnership with communities, stakeholders and strategic partners.

Focused areas to achieve improved outcomes address:

- Poverty and well-being
- Education
- Housing
- Health
- Employment
- Community Safety

By embedding a partnership--focused, city-wide, locality and neighbourhood-based- way of working aligned to citizens' priorities, the Council can deliver on its commitment to a fairer, more inclusive and prosperous city for all.

Birmingham Profile

Birmingham has a population of 1.18 million people (2024, mid-year estimate, ONS). Below is a summary of the demographics of Birmingham in relation to protected characteristic groups, deriving from census publications, Birmingham City Observatory data platforms, the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Race

Birmingham is one of the first 'super diverse' cities in the UK, where citizens from ethnic minority groups make up more than half the population². 48.6% of the city's population is White (556,608), 31% are Asian/Asian British (355,384), 11% are Black/African/Caribbean/Black British (125,760), 4.8% are mixed (55,205), and 4.5% is categorised as 'other ethnic' (51,965).

Age

Birmingham is one of the youngest cities in England with 38% of the population (435,641) being aged 25 and under. 20.9% (239,348) are children aged under 15, 66.0% (755,082) are adults aged 15 to 64, and 13.1% (150,486) are aged 65 and over.

Birmingham has a median age of 34 years. Even though Birmingham is younger than the national median (40 years), the increase in median age (from 32 in Census 2011) suggests an increasingly ageing population.

Disability

17.3% of Birmingham's population (198,064) is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 ('the 2010 Act'). 26.5% of households (112,069) have at least 1 disabled person under the 2010 Act. 8% of households (33,890) have 2 or more disabled people under the 2010 Act.

Marriage/ Civil Partnership

40% of the 16 and over population in Birmingham (355,416) is married or in a registered civil partnership.

Sexual Orientation

87.6% of Birmingham's population aged 16 and over is straight or heterosexual (779,054). 1.3% of the population aged 16 and over is gay or lesbian (11,968). 1.3% of the population aged 16 and over is bisexual (11,258). 0.3% of the population aged 16 and over is pansexual (2,527). 0.1% of the population aged 16 and over is asexual (468). 0.04% of the population aged 16 and over is queer (322). 0.03% of the population aged 16 and over is 'other sexual orientation' (261).

Sex

There are slightly more females (584,496; 51.1%) than males (560,423; 48.9%) in Birmingham – and this observation can be seen at the national level (England and Wales), as females account for 30.4 million (51.0%) of the population, whilst males make up 29.2 million (49.0%).

Gender Reassignment

The following are experimental statistics by ONS, as there are differences in understanding of the question by ethnicity, religion and respondents' fluency in English. 0.5% of people aged 16 and over (4,168) have a gender identity that is different from the sex registered at birth, but they did not give a specific identity. Trans men make up 0.2% of the 16 and over population (1,405). Trans women make up 0.1% of the 16 and over population (1,327). All other gender identities make up 0.1% of the 16 and over population (924).

Religion

34% of the city's population is Christian (389,406). 29.9% of the city's population is Muslim (341,811). 24.1% of the city's population has no religion (276,327). 2.9% of the city's population is Sikh (33,126). 1.9% of the city's population is Hindu (21,997). 0.6% of the city's population is 'other religion' (6,367). 0.4% of the city's population is Buddhist (4,340). 0.1% of the city's population is Jewish (1,687).

Pregnancy/ Maternity

In 2023, there were 14,238 live births in Birmingham, a fertility rate of 1.62 (average number of children born to a female over their lifetime). In 2021-2023 there were 242 stillbirths (foetal deaths occurring after 24 weeks of gestation), which is an average of 81 per year; a rate of 5.6 per 1000 births.

Care Experienced/Care Leavers

In 2025, the Council was responsible for 2,377 children and young people looked after by the local authority³. Birmingham also supported a total of 367 care leavers aged 17–18 and 850 care leavers aged 19–21⁴. For older care leavers, the Council recorded 275 aged 22, 314 aged 23, 280 aged 24, and 262 aged 25⁵.

Our Equality Objectives

In 2024, the Council refreshed its equality objectives initially set out in 'Everyone's Battle, Everyone's Business' ('EBEB'). This focusses our ambitions targeting equity where it is most needed focussed on:

- Being an employer of choice with a workforce that reflects Birmingham's diversity.
- Ensuring services, partnerships, commissioning and procurement align with best equality and inclusion practice.
 - Investing in evidence based internal and external solutions.
- Recognising and sharing effective approaches that tackle structural inequalities.
- Strengthening cultural competency by understanding communities and amplifying engagement voices and lived experiences.
- Embedding place based approaches.

For 2024 to 2027, the Council proposed four equality objectives to help drive equality and inclusion across all areas of the Council's work, as well as demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- **Equality Objective 1: Putting our Citizens First**
- **Equality Objective 2: Inclusive & Culturally Competent Leadership, Partnership and Organisational commitment**
- **Equality Objective 3: Responsive Services and Citizen care**
- **Equality Objective 4: Developing an Inclusive & Diverse Workplace**

Progress Update 2025-2026

The following section provides an update on the progress the Council has made against the equality objectives.

Equality Objective 1: Putting our Citizens First

Key element 1: Insights to build a better understanding of our communities

The Council benefits from strong data infrastructure, including the Birmingham City Observatory, comprehensive Ward Profiles, Community Health Profiles, and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Birmingham City Observatory

The City Observatory⁶ provides an open data resource which includes data sets covering protected characteristics and inequality across a wide range of subjects. It is regularly updated and constantly being extended to reflect new and improved datasets. A new version of the platform is currently being implemented to provide improved usability and access.

Race Disparity Dashboard

This dashboard⁷ is included in the Observatory and was developed in partnership with the Birmingham Race Impact Group to support their strategy for taking the city Beyond Racism. The purpose of the tool is to develop a comprehensive understanding of racial inequality in Birmingham in comparison to the West Midlands, Core Cities and the national average. It contains 40 indicators relating to housing, education, employment, criminal justice, and health and wellbeing. The data provides a strong basis for evidence informed partnership work.

Area and Ward Profiles

The Ward Profiles⁸ provide a standard set of point-in-time data for each ward in the city. They are being updated to support the new ward planning system being introduced in May 2026, which will strengthen the ability of local citizens to work with their councillors to address issues in their area. In addition, the Council has produced data books for each of the eight Pride in Place areas. These will support the Neighbourhood Boards in identifying priorities for their area. Behind these fixed products we are developing extensive data sets which can be updated and added to and will provide users with the tools to analyse a wider range of data for their area.

State of the City Report (2025)

This report⁹ provides an objective, data-informed assessment of the opportunities and challenges facing the city in 2025. It provides a baseline of metrics linked to the five missions in the City Vision 2035, focussed on tackling inequalities, and enabling the City Partnership Board to focus on the biggest challenges in the city. The City Vision Measures' interactive dashboard¹⁰ that sits behind the report will be updated to enable the monitoring of progress.

Birmingham City Partnership Board¹¹

The City Partnership Board was relaunched in April 2025, alongside the launch of the City Vision 2035 and is charged with taking forward the commitments in the Vision, including to be a world leading Anti-Racist City and to address inequalities across health, community safety, skills and employment and connectivity. It includes community and faith representatives alongside the main public sector institutions and the business.

Our Future City: Central Birmingham Framework 2045¹²

A long-term regeneration framework aiming for a fairer, greener and more connected city centre, addressing structural inequalities and improving access to housing, employment and public spaces through extensive consultation and cross-agency collaboration. Developed through partnership collaboration and community consultation to meet with the City Vision missions.

Key element 2: Accessibility, engagement and participation for all citizens influences the Council's decision-making

Shaping Birmingham's Future Together (SBFT)

Shaping Birmingham's Future Together is an initiative that seeks to change the way the Council works with communities and partners – sharing power, changing services to be more inclusive and co-produced, empowering neighbourhoods and community organisations. Initial work involved intensive community engagement that led to the City Vision 2035, including its commitment to being a world leading Anti-Racist city and to tackling inequalities across five missions including health, safety, connectivity, skills and prosperity. It also underpins the Council's commitment to being a better partner and to working at a neighbourhood level.

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)¹³

The JSNA provides a collaborative assessment of Birmingham's health and social care needs, using dashboards, deep dive analyses and locality profiles to guide targeted interventions and inform Equality Impact Assessments. It is the responsibility of the Health and Wellbeing Board and developed in collaboration with Public Health and the Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System.

The purpose of the JSNA is to inform local organisations enabling them to plan services for the future, including informing the Birmingham Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy (Creating a Bolder, Healthier City 2022-2030). This strategy is reviewed annually, with the most recent published review taking place in 2024, covering the second full year of delivery for the strategy.

The JSNA provides a comprehensive analysis of the current and future health and social care needs of a population. Conducted collaboratively by local authorities, healthcare providers, and community partners, the JSNA helps identify key priorities for improving public health and well-being. The JSNA is structured as a library of products, from JSNA dashboards¹⁴ and summary documents, profiles and deep dives.

Deep Dives¹⁵

Deep dives are in-depth assessments into health and wellbeing inequalities that affect specific communities within Birmingham. They form part of the JSNA and topics are

selected by the Health and Wellbeing Board. The reports combine published evidence, local evidence, data analysis and stakeholder and citizens voices and draw out recommendations for action. Recently published deep dives include:

- Learning Disabilities in Birmingham
- Dual Diagnosis (Co-Occurring Mental Health Problems and Substance Misuse) in Birmingham

Adult Social Care Vision and Strategy¹⁶

The strategy commits to embedding coproduction with service users and carers due to their lived experience across commissioning, citizen engagement and service improvement.

- Powered by People Adult Social Care Co-Production Summit and report
- Adult Social Care Data drives and guidance (frontline workers) for sensitive demographic data collection
- Adult Social Care EDI strategy (citizen facing) Diverse by Design

BeHeard Consultation Platform¹⁷

The Council's online consultation hub provides residents with opportunities to participate in surveys, consultations and engagement exercises.

Birmingham's Inclusion Strategy 2023-2028¹⁸

This Strategy aims to ensure that all children and young people, including those with SEND have access to high quality education, support to thrive and achieve as well as their peers and community inclusion. The strategy was developed through engagement events and surveys and consulted key stakeholders such as parents/carers, headteachers, focus groups in primary and secondary schools and partners/practitioners.

Community Health Profiles (CHPs)¹⁹

Public Health has produced over 20 Community Health Profiles, highlighting health inequalities across protected characteristics, with an LSE evaluation (2025) confirming their value for policymakers, NHS partners, community groups and researchers. They will be updated in May to support the Council's commitment to being a Marmot City.

Gender-Focused Health Inequality Reports²⁰

The Inclusion Health Team has produced evidence-based reports on women's health, and men's health, highlighting intersectional inequalities and priority actions.

Healthy Streets

Healthy Streets aims to enhance the social, economic and environmental sustainability of our streets by improving their design and management, removing physical barriers, ensuring safe crossing points, mitigating the impacts of traffic, and creating welcoming public spaces that support health, well-being and social interaction.

City of Nature and Environmental Justice²¹

The City of Nature Delivery Plan aims to improve access to green space utilising a measurement tool for Environmental Justice for all people. The city has developed a map that shows where in the city compound issues are being felt most. From 2022 to 2027, we will be focusing our efforts on the following 6 wards – Balsall Heath West, Bordesley and Highgate, Nechells, Gravelly Hill, Pype Hayes and Castle Vale.

Period Literacy Toolkit²²

The Period Literacy Toolkit is a co-produced resource designed to support people experiencing homelessness by improving access to clear, practical information and essential products related to menstrual health. Developed with women with lived experience and frontline practitioners, it reduces stigma, builds staff confidence through culturally competent and trauma-informed guidance, and helps ensure people who menstruate can manage their periods with dignity. This work enhances inclusion across homelessness services and supports better health, comfort and confidence for service users.

Be a Councillor Programme²³

A partnership with the Local Government Association aimed at diversifying local democracy by encouraging people from under-represented groups to consider standing for election.

Key element 3: An outcome-based approach is creating cohesion, referencing neighbourhoods and communities

Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities²⁴

The strategy outlines Birmingham's vision for a cohesive, resilient city and emphasising partnership working and monitoring social issues that could affect community relations. The Council also holds weekly updates with the lead cabinet member to review emerging issues and coordinate appropriate actions.

Internal Communications

The Council issues clear communications opposing hate crime and raising awareness of hate crime and Islamophobia.

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week²⁵

The Council backed the UK wide ASB campaign with local events, multiagency partnerships and victim support actions.

To contribute to the campaign, the Council launched a series of actions under the theme of 'Making Communities Safer' with a strong focus on ensuring guaranteed support for victims of anti-social behaviour, campaigning to reduce delays in the justice system, supporting a national information sharing agreement so services can act more quickly, and improving access to reporting tools so residents can raise concerns with ease.

Operation Fearless²⁶

A partnership led initiative delivering targeted safety interventions that achieved measurable reductions in crime. This was launched as a long-term strategic initiative and was designed to target areas which required intensive intervention and partnership-led problem solving.

Eid Al-Adha Community Safety Operations²⁷

A partnership led initiative delivering targeted community safety interventions that delivered safe celebrations, reduced hate rhetoric and crimes.

National Knife Surrender Campaign²⁸

A partnership led initiative to reduce knife crime.

Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy (2024–2029) Violence against women and girls strategy²⁹

Developed with city-wide partners, the strategy aims to prevent domestic abuse, provide timely support and ensure multi-agency accountability, informed by partner sessions and a public Be Heard consultation.

Key element 4: Recognisable increase in access, engagement and participation with all our citizens

Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR) Implementation Board³⁰

BLACHIR identified seven priorities and an implementation board (now a sub-committee of the Health and Wellbeing Board) is delivering improved demographic data, cultural competency frameworks, community engagement and NHS Health Checks in diverse communities.

Birmingham Deep Engagement Partner Programme³¹

Led by Public Health, the Deep Engagement Partner programme works with 15 organisations representing seventeen communities to strengthen insight, leadership and participation in improving health and wellbeing across Birmingham. The programme increases understanding of community experiences, builds health literacy, and supports communities to design and lead their own initiatives. It ensures that diverse and seldom heard groups influence strategy and policy development, while making use of existing community strengths to create practical, culturally informed solutions that address local health needs.

Early Careers – Coproduced Work Experience Programme³²

A structured programme providing young people with direct experience of Council services, with participant feedback informing future cohorts.

Family Hubs Programme³³

Family Hubs support families from conception to age 19 (25 for SEND). They are delivered in partnership with the VCFSE sector, Birmingham Children's Trust, NHS partners and West Midlands Police, providing coordinated early-help and community-based support.

Bring It On Brum! Holiday Activity and Food Programme³⁴

A funded holiday programme for children on free school meals, delivered through partnerships with local providers and a national charity, demonstrating strong cross-sector collaboration.

Equality Objective 2: Inclusive & Culturally Competent Leadership, Partnership and Organisational commitment

Key element 1: Inclusive and culturally competent leadership and sponsorship with employees and communities

Race Equality Code³⁵

The Council has adopted the Race Equality Code, establishing a clear accountability framework for tackling racial inequality. The Code of Conduct sets expectations for respectful behaviour, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, embedding equality obligations into employment practice and defining consequences for harassment or discriminatory behaviour, and education across the Council.

The Birmingham Cultural Intelligence Framework³⁶

The Birmingham Cultural Intelligence Framework (BCIF) was created by Public Health as an output of BLACHIR. BCIF is designed to help staff and organisations develop deeper understanding of communities of identity through reflective practice, peer review and competency-based learning. It was piloted within the Council and alongside three external partners (Sport Birmingham, West Midlands Combined Authority and Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust), and the aim was to test its application across different settings. An external academic evaluation of the pilot has been completed to inform future rollout.

Birmingham Cultural Humility and Safety Framework³⁷

The Birmingham Cultural Safety and Humility Framework (BCHSF) was developed by Public Health in response to BLACHIR. It is designed to build staff confidence in maintaining relationships based on trust, respect and cultural safety by encouraging self-reflection, awareness of personal and systemic biases and a better understanding of power imbalances. BCHSF has been piloted across several organisations, including the Council (Public Health, Housing and Adult Social Care), Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust and the Birmingham and Solihull Local Maternity and Neonatal System. During the pilot, participants undertook externally delivered training and completed baseline and follow-up surveys to assess changes in knowledge and practice.

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)³⁸

The Council's approach to Equality Impact Assessments was refreshed in 2024. EIAs undergo a three-stage review (Director, EIA Officers, Legal), with citizen-related EIAs published for transparency. Most include mitigation actions supported by EIA Policy Officers and Legal. Some incorporate lived-experience insights. An annual report for the budget summarises mitigation impacts.

The Council delivers regular training webinars and Directorate specific workshops around the process to complete EIAs and detailed examination of equality considerations to include on the specific function/activity. This is led by designated EIA Policy Officers and delivered to all tiers of officers across the Council.

Adult Social Care³⁹

Adult Social Care ('ASC') is embedding equality considerations in service transformation programmes evidenced in EIAs. All ASC Leadership Team is required to complete mandatory Cultural Humility Training.

- Birmingham and Solihull (BSOL) Transformation group and the Provider collaborative Executive Steering Group, to develop a group to focus on Health Inequalities for people with LD and/or Autism.
- Adults Social Care and Public Health Integrated Workshops – ASCH have hosted a series of integrated workshops focused on embedding prevention into everyday practice across Adult Social Care and Health. These sessions unite professionals from multiple sectors to co-design and implement proactive, preventative approaches that reduce escalation, promote independence, and improve citizen outcomes. By pooling resources, expertise, and local intelligence, we are transitioning from reactive service delivery to a forward-looking model that anticipates needs and builds stronger, more resilient communities. The objectives of these workshops are to: Reduce escalation, promote independence and improve outcomes for citizens.
- Direct Payment uptake research in relation to ethnically minoritised citizens
- City wide Occupational Therapy and Social Work assessment hubs
- Collaborative working within locality hubs

Key element 2: Strategic Partnerships City-wide are committed towards tackling inequality

Health and Wellbeing Board⁴⁰

Birmingham Health and Wellbeing Board sets the strategic direction for improving population health and reducing inequalities across the city, using robust evidence from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to guide priorities and commissioning. It brings together partners across local government, the NHS, the voluntary and community sector to coordinate action on shared challenges, ensuring that decisions reflect the needs and voices of Birmingham's communities. The Board supports the delivery of the Council's equality objectives by promoting inclusive, citizen-centred approaches, strengthening culturally competent practice, and ensuring services respond effectively to different communities and across the life course.

Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility⁴¹

The framework emphasises local employment, ethical procurement, and social value, requiring contractors to contribute to inclusive growth and community benefit.

Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)⁴²

BVSC is a key strategic partner strengthening volunteering, community leadership and social action across the sector, supporting collaboration through training, consultancy, research and infrastructure support.

Birmingham SEND Local Area Partnership⁴³

The partnership includes the Council, the Parent Carer Forum⁴⁴, Birmingham Children's Trust⁴⁵, the Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group⁴⁶ and the Children's Partnership⁴⁷ – received a mid-range Ofsted/CQC inspection in June 2025, reflecting progress since the 2021 and improved experiences for some children.

Birmingham Community Safety Partnership⁴⁸

A multiagency partnership addressing safety priorities, including hate crime, safeguarding, violence reduction and community harm. The Partnership's current projects, dating from January 2024 until present, are Offensive Weapons Homicide Review, Supported Exempt Accommodation, and Antisocial Behaviour ('ASB') Hotspot Pilot Project.

Autism and ADHD Partnership Board⁴⁹

The board brings together autistic people, people with ADHD, carers, the Council, NHS partners, voluntary organisations, and other agencies to improve life outcomes and reduce inequalities, with improvements needed in monitoring life outcomes, safety, wellbeing and embedding lived experience influencing policy decisions. The Board has been shortlisted for the Diversity and Inclusion category of the Local Government Chronicle Awards.

Birmingham Youth City Board⁵⁰

A representative youth board that influences Council policy, participates in strategic partnerships, and enhances civic engagement for young people aged 11–18.

- Youth Service – Global Iftar across Youth Centres
- Out central – LGBT youth group
- Anti- Racist Youth Work network meetings

Volunteer Brum⁵¹

Volunteer Brum is Birmingham's citywide volunteering platform, launched by BVSC, which connects residents with accessible volunteering opportunities across the city and supports charities, community groups and local causes to recruit volunteers. It provides an easy-to-use directory of roles suitable for people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, including opportunities that support older adults, disabled people and those seeking to build confidence or skills.

Equality Objective 3: Responsive services and citizen care

Key element 1: Commissioners of services inclusively consider the needs of all Birmingham citizens, neighbourhoods and communities

Neighbourhood Network Schemes⁵²

Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS) are a citywide programme funded by the Council to help adults aged 50 and over, and adults aged 18–49 with long-term disabilities or additional needs, to stay happy, healthy and independent in their own homes and communities. Each of Birmingham’s 10 constituencies has its own NNS, delivered mostly by voluntary and community sector organisations that work with local groups, services and residents to develop community-based support. By strengthening local networks and expanding access to low cost, inclusive activities through the Connect to Support Community Directory, NNS helps build more supportive neighbourhoods and reduces isolation across the city.

Procurement Guidance

Procurement guidance sets roles, responsibilities, and approval thresholds, supported by mechanisms covering social value, Real Living Wage, ethical procurement and financial accountability.

Housing Strategy 2023-2028⁵³

The Council’s housing strategy effectively utilises data and evidence to respond to customer needs. It identifies a series of priorities, targets and measures, commitments, and associated strategies and delivery plans. The housing strategy links to the overall priorities of the Council and their 2019 Council plan. The housing strategy has three overall priorities:

- Strong supply of affordable housing.
- Neighbourhoods are enhanced and the quality of existing housing is improved.
- Citizens can access and sustain the right home for them.

The targets and measures include tenant satisfaction measures, decrease in homeless presentation, amongst other key measurements. The strategy identifies monitoring and governance measures in place to deliver it. The Transforming Temporary Accommodation: Housing Acquisition Programme was shortlisted for the Housing Category of the Local Government Chronicle awards.

The Customer Service Strategy⁵⁴

The Customer Service Strategy 2022 and Beyond outlines BCC’s commitment to improving accessibility by using publicly available data to understand the make-up of Birmingham to shape services. It includes building a customer service centre of excellence, a customer charter and customer-centred training for staff. The strategy states that publicly available data will be utilised to understand the make-up of Birmingham to shape our services.

Examples of commissioned services

Children's Centres and Family Hubs through Birmingham Forward Steps⁵⁵

Birmingham Forward provide health and wellbeing services for babies and children up to five years old. A variety of support is offered, including child speech and language development support, Community engagement workers, healthy lifestyle advice, behaviour management, parenting education, and online virtual support.

School Health Support Services⁵⁶

The School Health Support Service is delivered to all children and young people and their families where the child or young person is enrolled to attend a Birmingham mainstream school within the local authority boundary which is publicly funded. This includes academies, community schools, foundation schools, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled, free schools and alternate provision pupil referral units, or a resident of Birmingham and is out of school (electively home educated).

The Birmingham School Health Support Service is led by Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (specialising in Public Health School Nursing) and commissioned by the Council. School nurses are part of the Birmingham school health support service⁵⁷ which the Council commissions. School nurses work across all mainstream schools to protect and promote the physical and emotional health of children and young people and to ensure that they get the most from their education.

The Council also commissions a Children and Young People Occupational Therapy service⁵⁸ which provides assessment and aids, equipment and adaptations at home for children and young people with disabilities.

Children and Young People's Travel Service⁵⁹

The Children and Young People's Travel Service provide transport to over 5000 pupils via 1100 travel routes across the city. Many children and young people are vulnerable with special educational needs or disabilities, and unable to make their way to school either independently or accompanied by an adult. The Council provides travel assistance to pupils who meet the eligibility requirements for transport, aged 5-16, post-16 and post-19, ensuring pupils are safely transported to and from school. The Council offers Independent Travel Training programmes to help pupils achieve independence as they move to becoming young adults. Support available includes a personal travel budget, Passenger assistant, School minibus, a Travel pass, and independent travel training.

NHS Health Checks⁶⁰

The NHS Health Check programme is a statutory public health responsibility delivered and overseen by Public Health with GP practices across the city to provide free health checks for adults aged 40–74. The service identifies early warning signs of conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes, helping residents understand and reduce their risk. By commissioning and coordinating the programme locally, Public Health ensures checks are delivered equitably, with outreach and invitations targeted in line with Birmingham's population health needs. This approach helps reduce long-standing health inequalities, particularly for communities with higher prevalence of chronic conditions or lower engagement with preventative services.

Key element 2: The Council illustrates how service design and delivery is producing positive outcomes

Special Education Needs Assessment and Review Service⁶¹

Special Education Needs Assessment and Review service (SENAR) fulfils the Council's legal duties to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) between the ages of 0-25. Working in partnership with its education, health and social care partners, SENAR:

- Conducts education, health and care (EHC) needs assessments ensuring the participation of children, young people and their families throughout this process.
- If a child or young person has an EHC Plan, maintains their EHC Plans by ensuring they receive the support and educational placement they require.
- Reviews all EHC Plans at least annually to ensure children and young people continue to receive the right support for their identified needs.
- Supports children and young people's development to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Services⁶²

Transitions and Preparation for Adulthood Service (TAPS) is designed to support more young people and engage with them earlier to ensure a smoother transition into adulthood. Using a tiered offer, the service aims to create more personalised support for each young person that needs it. This support will vary from one-to-one sessions for young people with more acute needs to joint group session to signposting. However, support will always be individually tailored to best meet their needs and aspirations, with the young person having control in what that will look like. For Transitions and Statutory Support, the aim is to support young adults, between the age of 18-25 with a learning disability or autism and eligible needs, to access a funded service from Adult Social Care based on the Care Act eligibility criteria. The team helps them to set their own goals and make positive choices to help achieve them. For Preparation for Adulthood and Non-Statutory Support, the aim is to support young people and adults between the ages of 14-25, they provide 1 to 1 support to improve emotional well-being and resilience.

Birmingham Youth Service⁶³

Birmingham Youth Service provides a range of activities, projects, and programmes for young people aged 11 years and above in 16 youth centres around the city. This offer includes: information, advice and support by a qualified youth worker; Umbrella⁶⁴ provides sexual health programmes, sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing and condoms; targeted programmes about pre-vocational education (PVE), youth violence, sexual health, health, and employment; youth participation – an opportunity for a young person's voice to be heard; intensive support for young people that are not in education, employment, or training (NEET); and OutCentral – a youth group for young people aged 11 to 19 years, who are LGBT or may be questioning their sexuality.

Brumchat⁶⁵

Brum Chat is a new self-help platform designed to empower residents with 24/7 access to personalised advice, support plans, signposting, FAQs and AI-powered chat

assistance for bespoke queries. Tailored guidance is available through different gurus (AI-powered advisors) offering support in the following areas: Housing Guru – Provides help with applications, landlord disputes, and repairs; Employment Guru – Assists with job searches, workers' rights, and CV preparation; Health & Wellbeing Guru – Guides users on NHS navigation, mental health, and healthy living; Finances Guru – Helps with budgeting, financial aid, and debt management; and Technology Guru – Supports digital literacy, online safety, and accessibility.

Working Together to Improve Engagement and Participation⁶⁶

Developed with parent-carer groups and partners, the document draws upon their lived experience and sets out a whole-system collaborative approach to engagement across education, health and social care.

Case studies such as the Stay and Play Group and Communication and Autism Team (CAT) parent engagement workshops demonstrate how parents and practitioners have co-produced services that have improved outcomes for children and families.

SEND Co-Production Silver Award (Early Years Inclusion Support Service)⁶⁷

The SEND service earned the Silver Award for sustained co-production with parents, carers and families across the four “Cs” (co-commissioning, codesign, codelivery, co-assessment). This plan was developed over several months of dedicated leadership, whole service meetings, and collaboration with children and families. The award demonstrates the service is actively working with children, young people, parents and carers to shape the services they receive.

Supported Internship Programme (14–19 Participation and Skills Team)⁶⁸

This programme supports young people with learning disabilities and autism to gain work experience, with the Heartlands Hospital cohort achieving strong employment outcomes.

In the UK, only 4.8% of young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) secure full-time employment. Supported Internships aim to change this by providing the essential support these young people need and develop personalised employment pathways.

Ward End Green Skills and Dolphin Centre Youth Club⁶⁹

Ward End Green Skills and Dolphin Centre Youth Club provides Projects and activities at Ward End which have sought to create new capacity to develop skills and enterprise using the park as a focal point. The impacts are: Ward End Park House Renovation - Working with National Trust to bring a vacant Grade II Listed building back into use as a key community asset; Green Skills /Employment Agenda - Building on New to Nature Scheme to get people from under-represented backgrounds into the environmental sector; and Environment - Improved understanding of biodiversity improvements in public spaces.

Equality Objective 4: Inclusive and Diverse Workforce

Workforce: A separate report will be published addressing gender, race, and disability pay gap data with regards to the Council’s workforce.

This section represents workforce composition, declaration rates, staff experience insights, intersectional analysis, and targeted actions to advance equality and reduce disparities across the employee lifecycle.

The Council has transitioned from static, annual reporting to a high frequency monthly HR “snapshot” hub. This enables real-time intersectional analysis of protected characteristics alongside operational outcomes (e.g., absence, employee relations, retention). A notable outcome is the rapid increase in declaration rates, especially for disability, now enabling the Council’s first Disability Pay Gap report in 2026. Staff survey data shows strong work life balance and mental health support perceptions, with Black and Asian colleagues reporting a higher sense of belonging and autonomy than White colleagues.

Key element 1: Breaking down systemic and structural discrimination working towards gender, race and disability equal pay parity

Data Scope, Quality & Method

- Data source: Monthly HR metrics hub (snapshot-based), staff survey sentiment/dimensions, and HR policy/programme tracking.
- Protected characteristics: Age, disability, gender reassignment/gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- Data quality: Coverage is improving across most characteristics. Disability and ethnicity show strong progress; gender identity remains a target area.
- Intersectionality: The hub enables cross-cutting analysis (e.g., ethnicity × ER case outcomes; disability × retention).

Key Metrics & Progress (Headlines)

Data Milestones

- Disability Declaration: 60% achieved (Dec 2025)
 - Result: Triggers the inaugural Disability Pay Gap report for the 2026 financial year.
- Workforce Ethnic Minority Representation: ↑ from 39.7% to 41.7%.

Declaration Trends (latest positions)

- Faith/Religion: 72% → 75%
- Sexual Orientation: 71% → 74%
- Ethnicity: 87%
- Gender Identity: 44% (target: 50% by end of FY 2026)

Staff Sentiment

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Colleagues stated that equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging are important to BCC. Scoring 3% higher than the organisations overall score.
- Feel supported on mental health: 64%

- Belonging & autonomy: Black and Asian colleagues higher than White counterparts.

Flexible Working & Workforce Structure

- Part time: 25% of workforce, 82% female.
- Action: Expand flexible options (compressed hours, term-time, job shares) to mitigate the unpaid pressure trend affecting women.

Key element 2: HR policies and procedures tackle workforce inequality and create inclusive workplaces

Strategic Interventions & Policy Evolution

Passports (Portability of Adjustments)

- Carers Passport: Formal recognition to embed permanent adjustments for caring responsibilities.
- Health & Wellbeing Passport: Replaces “Reasonable Adjustments” passport; covers statutory disability and non-statutory needs (temporary illness, menopause, menstruation). Ensures portability across role/manager changes.

Policy Consolidation

- Disciplinary + Grievance → single policy (clarity, consistency, reduced procedural confusion).

Flexible Working

- Expansion of **compressed hours, term-time, and job share** to improve equity and reduce pressure disproportionately experienced by women.

Menopause Action Plan (MAP)

- Moving beyond a policy into a functional action plan co-designed with networks; broadened scope to include menstruation.

Executive Sponsorship & Leadership

- CLT Sponsorship: Every staff network has a named Council Leadership Team sponsor.
- Strategic Alignment: Sponsors bridge staff experience with executive decision-making and policy implementation.

Network Expansion & Evolution

- Active review to extend/strengthen coverage for: Sex & Gender, Faith, Age.
- Menopause & Menstruation: The Menopause Staff Network leads implementation of the MAP, reflecting impact across a 58% female workforce.

Operational Role

- Informed Conversations: While formal consultation remains with Trade Unions, networks are engaged for policy intelligence and workforce insight.
- Diversity Declaration Campaign: Networks instrumental in driving Disability Declaration to 60% (Dec 2025).
- Belonging & Autonomy: Network activity correlates with stronger belonging scores among Black and Asian staff.

Support Tools & Intersectionality

- Health and wellbeing passports championed and utilised by networks.
- Portability safeguards continuity of support when employees change managers/roles.

Nuance & Operational Friction

- Gender Identity Data Gap: Sex is well-recorded; gender identity declaration remains at 44%.
 - Implication: Limits intersectional visibility (e.g., gender identity × progression).
 - Need: Focused communications on why the data matters, what it's used for, and privacy assurances.
- The “Don't Know” Vector:
 - 58% feel their wellbeing matters; a significant share of the remainder selected “don't know”.
 - Implication: Communication gap—employees may not be seeing/recognising existing support or how to access it.
- Employee Relations (ER) Monitoring:
 - First-time monthly monitoring of ER cases by protected characteristic to identify/neutralise disproportionate patterns in outcomes.

Conclusions and Future Focus

The Council has implemented targeted interventions to advance equality of opportunity, strengthen community engagement, broaden civic participation among underrepresented groups, and reduce inequalities. We will continue to build on this progress by applying external frameworks such as *Marmot Places* to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities, and by working towards becoming an anti-racist city.

The Council continues to embed equality across all functions and has strengthened its equality and inclusion operating framework. We are committed to continue to develop and further these advances:

1. Putting our citizens first

- Birmingham's City Vision and Corporate Plan set ambitions for a fairer, more inclusive and prosperous city for all
- Digital, knowledge and Insight: We use data and intelligence to inform policy and practice, improving access, experience and outcomes. Robust data drives continuous improvement and strengthens our engagement with communities.

2. Inclusive and culturally competent leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

- Leadership and accountability: Inclusive and accountable decision making, with leaders committed to addressing inequalities.
- Corporate Equalities Board: Provides cross directorate coordination and monitors equality performance.
- Public Health and Legal Services: Provide quality assurance for Equality Impact Assessments
- Directorate self-assessments: Informed by the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).

3. Responsive services and Citizens Care

- Directorate Equality Leads: Support equality delivery within each directorate.
- Community Safety and Resilience: Lead work on cohesion and social justice.
- Customer Services – providing consistent, respectful, accessible, culturally competent and inclusive communication service

4. An inclusive and diverse workforce

- HR, OD and Transformation (EDI&B Team): Drives improvements in workforce diversity, culture, belonging, talent retention, leadership capability and inclusive practice.

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