



Equality & Diversity Progress Report

2022-2023

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1. Introduction

The [Corporate Strategy](#) for BCP Council, together with the [The Big Plan](#) set out BCP Council's vision, mission, ambition, and priorities, as well as the values that underpin the way BCP Council develops and delivers its services.

The principles of equality were embedded in the Corporate Strategy to ensure that fairness and the progression of equality were central to our development as we grew as a new council and became part of the DNA of the organisation ensuring people's needs remain central to everything we do. This is more evident as our organisational culture matures and is demonstrated in Our values and behaviours, and our approach to 'business as usual'.

Five major concepts made up the Big Plan. They showed how we were delivering our commitment to improve people's lives and recognised the council's commitment to understanding and valuing the diversity of our communities.

In July 2021 we introduced an Equalities Footprint which contributed to monitoring and measuring our progression on equality and the discharge of our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as a public authority, community leaders, service providers and a major employer. It also enabled us to track progress of our vision, and how much we are succeeding in closing the equality gap.

In this report we have assessed our performance against the six domains of the Equality and Human Rights Commissions (EHRC) Performance Measurement Framework for Equality and Human Rights. This framework helps to show the outcomes or difference we have made to people's lives and what progression has been made to ensure equality, diversity, inclusion, and fairness is central to the way that we design develop and deliver our services. It gives a clearer indication whether we are accomplishing the equality objectives that are embedded within the Corporate Strategy. Although we have used the EHRC performance measurement framework to track our progress we are still mindful and pay close attention to each protected characteristics that is defined within the Equality Act 2010, as well as locally adopted characteristics and intersectionality when considering equality impacts and outcomes. The EHRC framework provides us with a systematic way to assess a broader variety of improved outcomes that singularly or cumulatively contribute to the reduction of the equality gap.

This report provides a snapshot of our progress in advancing equality and the achievement of the equality objectives that were embedded within our Strategy and gives an indication of our direction of travel on our journey to date, we recognise that our residents and customers do not all have the same experience or access to our services.

The needs of our residents and staff have been central to our approach to employment practice and business as usual. There is a different feel to equality within BCP Council which is evident from the shift in organisational culture that has taken place since our inception.

2. Delivery of the Equalities Footprint

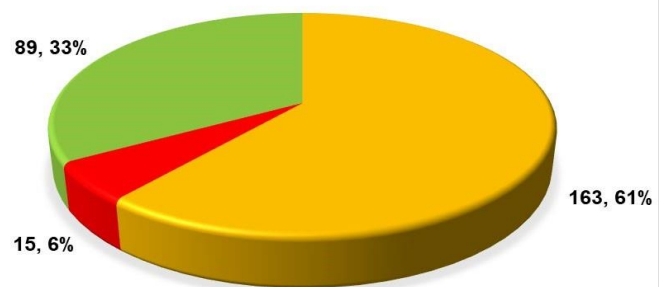
In June 2021 we introduced an [equality footprint](#) which was informed by eight actions to help monitor and gauge our progress on equality at individual, team, and service level.

1. Independent Observers (IO's) can participate in recruitment for Heads of Service and above and roles that attract a salary in excess of £40000 per Recruitment and Selection training has been provided to Independent Observers and as managers from across the council.

Stakeholders and service users have been recruited as Independent Observers to participate in recruitment panels of posts that are Heads of Service or above. Or for roles that attract a salary in excess of £40,000 per year.

2. Equality Impact Assessments are required at the point of registration for all committee reports and portfolio holder decisions on BCP Council's ModGov system.
3. Equality Impact Assessment Panels have reviewed over 260 EIAs since June 2021. Of these, 33% were found to have met the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, 61% required officers to record mitigating actions that had been considered or could be taken to reduce or remove an adverse impact on one or more protected characteristic. EIA panels found that 6% did not meet the requirements of the duty at all. The EIA process has been strengthened following lessons learnt from a recent Judicial Review and a report prepared. The report has yet to be shared with Senior Officers and the Council's Auditors
4. The requirement to demonstrate fulfilment of the requirements of the PSED in annual appraisals process have been built into the council's Talent and Performance Enablement Policy and further work is being undertaken to determine the most appropriate way to cascade corporate objectives which include those pertaining to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
5. A new hybrid training package SkillGate was implemented on 03 April. When fully available, the Learning Management System will be capable of accepting a daily upload of all colleagues and workplace changes from Dynamics Finance and & Operation this will allow the council to monitor the take up of mandatory and other training to ensure people are given equality of access to training and development opportunities and also enables easier identification of areas of non-compliance for mandatory training which enables staff and Councillors to understand their statutory responsibilities such as those required by the PSED.

OUTCOME OF EIA'S PRESENTED TO THE EIA PANEL
SINCE JUNE 2021



An equality diversity and inclusion resource library is under development and will be accessible to Councillors and officer s.

Training Highlights

- 52 managers completed the Leadership & Management Development Programme with 48 going through the current cohorts (including support for Childrens Social Care Aspiring Managers programme. To provide the skills to enable middle managers to progress to more senior positions enabling the council to become more representative at senior levels.
- 166 colleagues trained in recruitment & selection training.
- 227 colleagues have been trained in neurodiversity awareness through No Drama Llamas, a specialist training organisation.
- Disability awareness training attended by 58 Officers and several Members.
- Mandatory training completion rates which include EDI have increased to 45% via i-learn and toolbox toolkits.

Improving Wellbeing:

- 140 managers & 60 colleagues trained in Mental Health Awareness
 - 30 colleagues trained in suicide prevention first aid
 - 12 new Mental Health First Aiders trained to add to existing network of 30
 - Wellbeing Charter created with input from Senior Leadership Network and wider colleagues
 - The Council has a menopause peer support network created
 - Participated in the MIND workplace wellbeing index and awarded Bronze.
 - completion of a user-friendly website that conforms to the public sector accessibility requirements and is easy to read, navigate and access
 - The Council has signed up to the Armed Forces Convenance Action Plan and is improving.
 - The Disability Confident Scheme has been renewed
7. An equality and diversity communication plan and diversity calendar has been produced and the Accessible Communication Standards published
8. A user-friendly website that conforms to the [public sector accessibility requirements](#) has been developed and delivered and is now easier to read, navigate and access.

Delivery of The Equalities Footprint has ensured equality has remained at the heart of the council and enabled BCP Council to adopt more inclusive decision making practices and co-produce and co deliver services for those who work, live, and visit BCP area. These improvements were acknowledged by a peer team who reviewed our progress on EDI when they visited the Council in December 2022.

During the Corporate Peer Challenge in November 2021 the Peer team noted

“There are some green shoots emerging with the creation of EDI Network groups, all of which create a good base for the future”.

At the return visit the Peer Team noted *that “that there has been a significant shift in cultural change within the Council and that equality impacts are an increasingly critical element of decision making in the Councils transformation plans and the approach to ‘business as usual.’*

Equality, diversity and inclusion is seen as a critical element of the council's approach to policy development as well as the design and delivery of its services. The importance of equality and value of diversity is increasingly understood by staff and councillors and the evolution of the councils staff networks. This is also evident from the Governance Structure that sits within the Equality and Diversity Policy.

4. Staff Network Group update

BCP Council have established five staff network groups which are progressing well. The networks provide an avenue for the voice of the workforce and employees to be heard from their unique perspectives and are a key element in the promotion of the equality, diversity, and inclusion agenda in the workplace.

To achieve equity of outcome it is important to improve trust, confidence, representation; participation and engagement from sections of society that are comparatively harder to access, hear or underrepresented in public and civic life. Workplace SNG's are proven to be effective tools to break through down some of these challenges and increase inclusivity and assist in tackling discrimination at work. It is vital that networks do not just exist in a vacuum but engage actively with the rest of the organisation and that they are led by the staff. To fulfil the fourth aim below – providing a collective voice for staff to management – it is essential that buy-in to the work of the networks is secured, demonstrated, and communicated from senior leaders at the very top of the organisation.

- The provision of a safe space for discussion of issues related to an identity or protected characteristic.
- To raise awareness of issues within the wider organisation from their unique perspectives and lived experiences.
- To provide a source of support for individual staff who may be facing challenges at work.
- They provide a forum for a collective voice from unique perspectives from the workforce to management.

Some of the achievements of the Staff Network Groups are set out in an Annex below.

5. EHRC Measurement Framework

According to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) there are six domains or areas of life where efforts should be made to improve outcomes as this leads to a reduction in inequality overall.

Comparing ourselves to the EHRC Measurement Framework allows us to have a more holistic view of our progress in advancing equality as it takes account of the range of activity across the council.

The [EHRC framework](#) set out 10 reasons for mapping progress against it:

1. It has strong theoretical foundations (equality, inequality, capability, human rights, vulnerability and intersectionality) that are applied to equality and human rights monitoring in a practical way.
2. It translates the central and valuable freedoms and opportunities, or critical things in life that people can actually do or be (capabilities), into outcomes for the future of Britain.
3. It has precise indicators and topics to monitor whether we are making progress in achieving the future we want.
4. To assess whether there has been progress, regression or stalling in relation to these indicators and topics, it provides detailed guidance on what structure, process and outcome evidence to look at.
5. It is exemplary in relation to data disaggregation and equalities analysis.
6. It champions a new approach to vulnerability and people who are at higher risk of harm, abuse, discrimination or disadvantage because they face adverse external conditions and/or have difficulty in coping due to individual circumstances.
7. It uses intersectionality as a practical, analytical tool to show the distinct forms of harm, abuse, discrimination and disadvantage experienced by people when multiple categories of social identity interact with each other.
8. It brings consistency to our equality and human rights monitoring, by replacing the different frameworks that had previously existed with a single framework that can be applied across England, Scotland and Wales.
9. It is compatible with major policy and statistics frameworks across the UK and globally.
10. It can be used to drive social change and, ultimately, achieve progress towards equality and human rights (Figure 1.1 illustrates the way in which we view the Measurement Framework as driving social change in terms of progress towards equality and human rights).

Fairness, equality of opportunity and equity of outcome are important to BCP Council. We strive to build environments where everyone can achieve their full potential and are treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to make these freedoms and rights a reality for our residents, customers, visitors, staff and anyone acting on our behalf.

We have a statutory duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to monitor outcomes and report progress. The Equality Performance Framework has been adapted and applied to the local context to measure progress of the equality objectives embedded within the corporate strategy and are presented below.

We have mapped the updates gathered from across the council to create an EHRC dashboard to try to show how we are reducing the difference in experience and outcomes across our communities.

Progress towards the 6 Equality Human Rights Domain



Education



The PfA Team continue to support young people through a strengths-based approach and by raising aspirations to improve outcomes for young people. The team now effectively track young people in year 10 special school placements to ensure those who required Adult Social Care support receive this at the earliest opportunity.

In early years education, the percentage of children attending a school setting rated good or outstanding by Ofsted exceeded the target that was set. This is also the case for the number of children attending primary schools.;

We are promoting lifelong learning for all and delivered a lifelong learning strategy with partners which provides a broad learning offer for work, wellbeing, culture, and arts.

A skills strategy has been developed in partnership with our educational establishments which tackles inequality and supports local businesses. We are supporting young people

and enabling them to access apprenticeships and secure permanent employment through internships and are making steady progress in creating additional capacity within our schools which is aligned with increasing capacity for young people with Special Educational Needs for Disability and made a successful application to the delivering better value to bid which enabled us to balance the high needs block spend against budget.

We are developing a young Carers Strategy to deliver the Transforming Cities Fund sustainable travel initiatives and Improve the accessibility, quality and range of information available to young Carers to increase take up of the services available to support their needs.

School projects are being progressed with an emphasis on business grant provision to further develop local activities and the Food Fund.

Following delivery of the Activities and Food Fund programmes An additional funding request succeeded, allowing us to extend the original offer. Our providers are now testing an eligibility app as part of the new focus on development of the 'food' element of this programme.

Roll out of the £1m BCP Family Investment Fund has provided help for children and families to make up lost ground and restore 'lost childhoods'. A range of services have been commissioned to support young people's mental health. Early Help have commissioned Clinical Support to compliment the services provided Ed by the Edge of Care Team.

There is a 40% reduction in the number of persons killed or seriously injured on the highway which was 127 slightly below our target which was 134.

Health



We have developed a green infrastructure strategy to manage our park, recreation grounds, beaches, and open spaces. Improving access to outside leisure. The walking and cycling strategy have been approved to support people to adopt healthier lifestyles and expand the cycle network across BCP Council area particularly at major destinations. Holiday Activities and the Food Fund targeting children eligible for free school meals

and other vulnerable children were delivered successfully in December 2022. A successful bid for additional funds succeeded which enable to original offer to be extended. An eligibility App is being tested by providers now focus has moved to the food element of the now on the food element of the programme.

The Sandwell school approach to measure wellbeing has been awarded to 11 of BCP Schools and is a fundamental part of making mental health support more accessible to young people.

The proportion of people with alcohol and drug dependencies accessing alcohol and drug treatment services have increased and Government targets met.

Justice and Personal Security



Street lighting has been enhanced and more CCTVs installed to improve public safety and reduce the fear of crime. A partnership and information sharing protocol with Dorset Police to tackle doorstep crime and fraudulent has also been agreed between the Council, Dorset Police and other partners within the Community Safety Partnership.

Participation



The corporate customer services function with BCP Libraries ' is now complete and we have developed our library strategy which reflects the diversity of our local communities from which our neighbourhood hubs have been created and Poole hub now being open.

Building on the success of Festival Coast Live enables us to deliver a vibrant events festivals programme, which engages across the cultural sector and sustains our core tourism offer. Over 14 million people visited Bournemouth and Poole Town Centres during November and December including those who visited the Christmas Tree Wonderland and Poole Maritime Light Trail.

The Volunteer Coordinator role was extended using UK Shared Prosperity Funding. Preparatory work for tendering for support to the Voluntary and Community Sector and General Advice Service is complete with Tendering to commence in April 2023.

We have been proactively engaging our communities to inform policy and future decision making via regular residents' satisfaction surveys, utilising digital tools to engage with new audiences. We have managed and supported approximately 38 consultation or preconsultation engagement exercises and ran our first budget engagement exercise with approximately 1,500 participants. We used a variety of digital engagement methods including online questionnaires, ideas wall, and interactive maps to engage with our residents and stakeholders to broaden engagement and participation.

Lead Member roles and Member Champions were utilised to engage with identified priority groups through the community engagement function. Over 32 community engagement interventions, projects, and initiatives have occurred over the past year, ranging from advice and guidance to training, delivery of events and community-based activities. New relationships have also been developed with newer communities and their representatives, which has assisted us in identifying new communities with whom we need to work. We have worked across community and voluntary sectors to develop mentoring programmes to encourage and support intergenerational interactions and foster positive relationships between different characteristics by encouraging different groups to share their skills and experiences.

We have secured funding to retain the Volunteer Coordinator and Age Friendly Communities Coordinator posts for a further 2 years using UK Shared Prosperity Funding, which has enabled the development of new programmes and facilitated meaningful interactions as part of the aim to make BCP Area become registered as an Age Friendly Community with the World Health Organisation by 2024.

Living Standards



Over half of the actions identified under the Corporate Strategy's Delivery Plan are on target and contribute towards improvement of living standards for our residents. We are helping more people to live safe and independent lives and have higher proportions of adults with a learning disability who with care and support needs who now live in their own home.

We are assisting people to live well through access to better quality social care. We have developed our outreach support with GPs in community-based settings facilitating earlier engagement and improving the quality of life for those residents at risk of worsening health outcomes.

We are tackling homelessness and reducing rough sleeping by increasing access to suitable accommodation and re-modelling a range of sustainable housing support pathways. We have on-going programmes of activities which target prevention of rough sleeping, reducing the dependency on emergency accommodation and are reviewing and providing updated housing pathways for people with additional and complex needs. We have on-going programmes of activities to prevent rough sleeping, which reduced the dependency on emergency accommodation.

There is an increased proportion of adults with a learning disability with care and support needs who can live in their own home, locally and continue to develop further supported living services and explore decommissioning Care Quality Commissioners registered services. Care sector commissioning has been modernised by improving access of existing resource and creating additional ECH capacity through new building.

A new nine bed supported living service in Poole has been completed and a housing needs assessment for supported accommodation drafted to inform further housing acquisition and development plans.

Two new properties were added to the Care Experienced Young People Portfolio during 2022/23, and there are a further 18 in the pipeline for acquisition and occupation over the next 18 months which will lead to reductions in the reliance on residential care.

We also increased the percentage of children with permanence plans by their second LAC Review from 92% to 99.1% so almost all children in care have an identified plan for permanence by the 2nd LAC Review.

Work



There has been no significant change in the profile of our workforce; which is particularly noticeable at senior level. To ensure transparency of process and demonstrate equity in recruitment and selection processes we utilise Independent Observers when recruiting to senior roles.

we continue to promote inclusion, equality and diversity within our employment practices by offering and supporting flexible working so employ a relatively high percentage of part-time staff, the majority of whom are female.

Annex to Equality Progress Report 2022-2023

Disability Staff Network Group

The Disability Staff Network Group (DSNG) have provided qualitative data as 'experts' by experience that has been invaluable in enabling the council to identify where there are opportunities to improve employment practice and enhance its reputation and the experiences of disabled customers and staff.

The staff survey shows that those who live with a disability are consistently less satisfied than those who do not.

As a result of the input from disabled staff Neuro disability specific training has been delivered to 227 staff. Managers are better prepared to provide support to disabled staff so they can achieve their full potential and their advice also contributes to improved accessibility of services and access to employment.

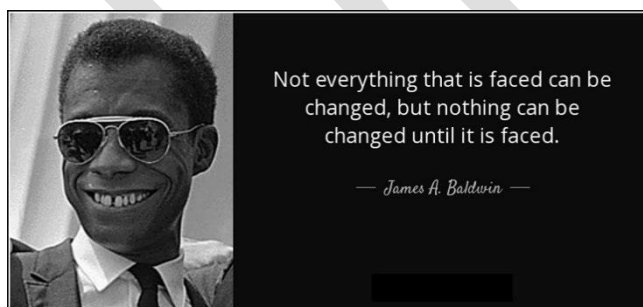
LGBTQ+ Colleagues Network Group

Over the past year the LGBTQ+ group has worked to enhance the council's reputation in key community events such as Bourne Pride and supported the councils in its ambition to be an employer of choice.

BCP Councils LGBTQ+ community. Lanyards have been designed by this group and are worn by staff at all levels including senior managers. This sends a powerful message of the council as an inclusive employer and place of work to staff and potential employees. Senior managers and Councillors also attend the pride event which positively impacted on the Local Governments Peer Challenge review. The groups progress is one of many examples of the BCP Councils more inclusive culture and positive direction of travel as an equality conscious employer and service provider and commitment to continuous improvement.



Race & Cultural Diversity Staff Network Group



The Race & Cultural Diversity Staff Network Group (RCDSNG) was instrumental in securing recognition from the community and support for Jamaican Independence Day and the celebration of Black History Month in 2022. sharing life stories at their event 'Reflecting on the past - Daring to dream' was the first time that Black History Month (BHM) was

marked across the organisation since the establishment of the new BCP Council

The BHM event was attended by over 90 participants, from within BCP Council (43%) and members of public (57%). The latter included representatives from local schools, churches and a range of community organisations and other partners such as the Community Action Network and Dorset Race Equality Council as well as Mayoral representation from the towns of Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole.

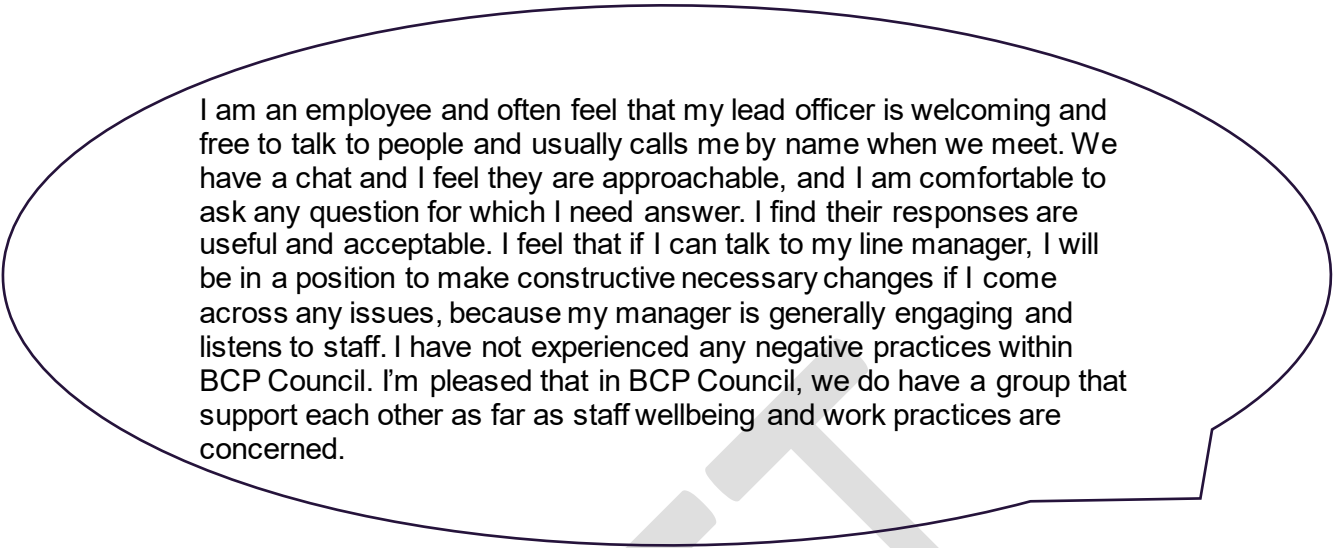
“Reflecting on the past – Daring to dream” was thought provoking and inspirational. It created new opportunities for minority ethnic communities in Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole. Sponsorship in support of the event was provided by BCP Council, Unison, Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services, Dorset Police, and Dorset Police Crime and Commissioners Office, and local businesses such as Turtle Bay Restaurant.

“Black history is about telling hidden or forgotten histories of people with African, Caribbean, or Asian heritage who have been ignored by historians, dismissed by the education system, and literally ‘whitewashed’ out of history.”

Louisa Adjoa Parker

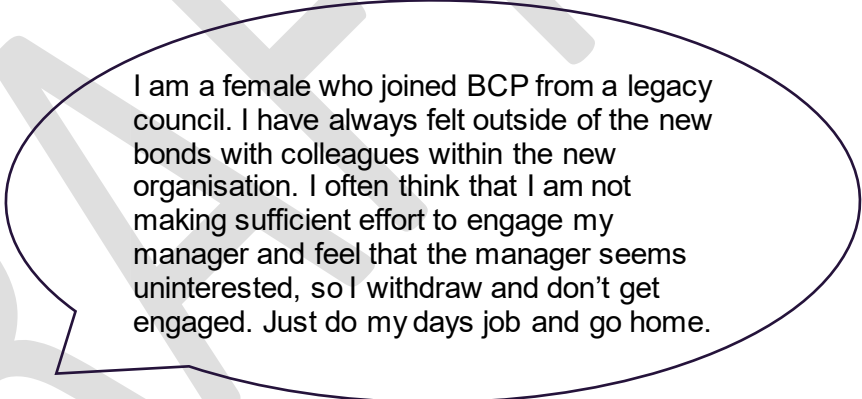
Joined BCP Council in a team supporting adults with long-term physical conditions. As a new started I really appreciated the support of my line manager considering I joined during the pandemic when everyone was mostly working from home. My line manager was coming into the office to support me. Continued support my line manager provided.

A skills survey of the group’s members was undertaken in 2021. The survey captured levels of skills, qualifications, knowledge, and experience and provides a baseline for subsequent surveys. The RCDSNG plan to repeat the survey again at the end of 2023 to measure .from the baseline as well as test the extent to which there has been an effective response to issues identified in the initial survey through the skill and Talent Enablement Strategy



I am an employee and often feel that my lead officer is welcoming and free to talk to people and usually calls me by name when we meet. We have a chat and I feel they are approachable, and I am comfortable to ask any question for which I need answer. I find their responses are useful and acceptable. I feel that if I can talk to my line manager, I will be in a position to make constructive necessary changes if I come across any issues, because my manager is generally engaging and listens to staff. I have not experienced any negative practices within BCP Council. I'm pleased that in BCP Council, we do have a group that support each other as far as staff wellbeing and work practices are concerned.

A skills survey amongst the R&CDSNGs membership identified a wide range of untapped experience, knowledge, and skills that the council can draw on and contribute to a review of the current mentoring scheme and development of the People Strategy



I am a female who joined BCP from a legacy council. I have always felt outside of the new bonds with colleagues within the new organisation. I often think that I am not making sufficient effort to engage my manager and feel that the manager seems uninterested, so I withdraw and don't get engaged. Just do my days job and go home.

The group identified a variety of staff from across the organisation who detail their role to show that there is diversity within the organisation and presented a more diverse cohort of staff who can be used in council publications and media so a more representative public image of the councils' communities and workforce can be put forward.

Religion and Belief Staff Network update

Are the councils smallest but has developed and published BCP Council Information leaflets on the main religion and beliefs within the local community.

Women's Staff Network Group

Approximately two-thirds of the council's workforce are women. A successful Womens Staff Network Group (WSNG) was formed in 2021 and has more than 170 members making it the largest membership of the council's network groups. The meet frequently and have made considerable progress since their foundation.

The group offers a safe space and a supportive environment in which women can share experiences, discuss opportunities, and develop broader links across the council.

The women's' group is a uniquely female only environment and as such is considered by its members as a safe space to process emotions – feedback received from members is that sessions are fun and morale-boosting (some have said they are akin to 'self-care') whilst still tackling serious issues that perpetuate female gender inequality.

"It's a lovely friendly inclusive group and always interesting to hear and share experiences, ideas, and future discussion

"I learn new things every session and come away relieved that it's not just me feeling the things I do."

The WSNG has set up several sub-groups to address Health & Wellbeing, Flexible Working and Equality-Driven Change. They have held an in-person meet-up for International Women's Day and forged strong links with other staff network groups both within and external to the Council.

The WSNG has have been critical to the councils review of its approach to menopause and menstruation awareness, training, and support.

The womens network group continue to provide opportunities for women to share experiences and make links across the Council. The group facilitates learning and development of its members and presented on topics and deliver workshops, on social media safety and the imposter syndrome among other subjects.

"It was fab to see so many women in one place celebrating being women."

The group have opened lines of communication with local Communities and colleagues around the lived experiences of their members and have shared concerns about aspects of personal safety.

They have Invited one of BCP Councils pensions team to deliver a Q&A session on what group members need to know about their pensions.

"The speakers were very entertaining and inspirational, and it was great to see people in person that up until now have only been in boxes on my computer".

Organised an International Women's Day event that "celebrated women at work. The day included stalls and a panel of speakers sharing the highs and lows of their career journeys as women and the advice they have for other women.

- Worked with PPMO to install free period product provision at the Civic Centre, with a view to assess the take-up and consider what may be appropriate in other parts of the council's estate.
- Provide ongoing support and advice on the development of the council's menopause support offer and Supported with the setting up of the Menopause Peer Support Group and helped celebrate their success.
- Assisted HR in the facilitation of an engagement workshop for the Wellbeing Strategy and Talent Acquisition and Enablement Strategy
- Explored members concerns about personal safety and work with the organisation in developing how it supports women.

DRAFT