

Kirklees Council

Inclusion and Diversity

Annual Report 2021



Introduction

This annual report on Inclusion and Diversity in the Council has two primary aspects to it. Firstly, it reflects on the areas of improvement set out in the last annual report and establishes what progress has been made. Secondly, the report outlines the range of work that has taken place across the organisation as part of a tackling inequalities programme, which has begun to address some of the systemic issues adversely impacting on our communities. These issues were bluntly exposed by the Covid pandemic. Our response to this was to place inclusion at the heart of all that we did in the initial phase, where we had to meet a range of needs quickly and effectively, while also taking into account the disparate nature of our communities and the uneven spread of the virus.

Addressing areas of improvement from the last annual report

The current I&D Strategy – ‘From Equality to Inclusion: 2017-2021’ and the previous annual report were constructed around the following key themes:

- A committed and diverse workforce
- Taking a positive and inclusive approach to everything we do
- Zero tolerance on abuse, harassment, bullying and violence
- Demonstrating our commitment through the way we do things in Kirklees
- Inclusive policies
- Spreading the word about inclusion and diversity
- Listening and acting for ongoing improvement

The current I&D Strategy was constructed around the following eight themes.

Summary of actions from the last annual report:

- Need equality profile information on all nine protected characteristic groups.
- Need to attract apprentices and improve the profile of the workforce especially at grade 12 and above from BAME communities.
- Better prepare care leavers for apprenticeships by piloting paid work experience one day a week.
- On the gender pay gap, recruitment for all posts is open and inclusive. The Council is committed to reducing the gender pay gap and will take additional initiatives to address this further.

1. A committed and diverse workforce

1.1 Achievement

Introduction of name blind recruitment

This has been introduced for all vacancies across the Council. In practice, this means all applications for Council vacancies do not show names or any other personal characteristics to the recruiting panel. This removes any potential for bias in the shortlisting process.

Improved data collection across all equality groups

We now capture information on sexual orientation and religion. This has been the case for the last two municipal years, which is in addition to the existing categories we had for age, gender, disability, and ethnicity. However, non-reporting – especially in the sexual orientation category – remains a noticeable weakness in the data and the organisation needs to engender greater confidence in employee declarations in this regard.

Virtual work experience

The pandemic drastically reduced the amount of contact the Council's apprenticeship recruiters could have with local schools and colleges. In response, a pilot virtual work experience scheme saw Year 10 pupils from three schools in areas of deprivation across Kirklees engage on a range of online activities, supported by colleagues drawn from a range of services. The feedback from the pilot programme was very positive and the scope of the engagement was widened. Four work experience programmes have now taken place.

Apprentice recruitment

The Council now has a more developed apprenticeship scheme. However, due to Covid, face-to-face recruitment fairs in sixth forms and FE colleges could not take place, with the result that applications were down this year on previous years across all protected characteristic groups.

BAME leadership programme

The cohort for the level 5 Solace leadership programme this year was five colleagues, with a further colleague taking up a Level 7 BAME Fellowship with the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Partnership.

For the previous year, statistics as of 22 December 2020 show that:

- 79 BAME colleagues attended priming sessions (3 attended non-BAME sessions)
- 33 (46%) either attended further courses or had further discussions with Learning & Organisational Development (L&OD)
- 13 (18%) Fully engaged (i.e., attended more than one session or had ongoing discussions with L&OD)
- 13 (18%) engaged (i.e., brief discussions e-mails with L&OD)
- 18 (25%) attended career focus
- 4 attended BAME Interview Skills
- 12 (15%) attended introduction to management.

Project Search

With only 9% of people with learning disabilities in paid work in Kirklees, the Council entered into a partnership with DFN Project Search, a national organisation, and Kirklees College to provide 10, one-year internships.

Careers site

Just been launched in September 2021, this is a new landing page for job vacancies and is intended to serve as an improved showcase for careers with the council. The site has an inbuilt focus on services with ongoing recruitment and retention issues, with content changing regularly to reflect this. The site also features a section on inclusion and diversity in the recruitment process and represents a significant improvement on the previous offer.

1.2 Impact

Introduction of name blind recruitment

The new name blind recruitment process will be evaluated in January 2022, a year after its introduction, to assess its impact.

Virtual work experience

Over 100 young people took part in three courses, with a further course reserved solely for care leavers. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and many of the Year 10 pupils have gained valuable insights into the many areas of employment the Council can offer.

BAME leadership programme

As an example of the impact of the leadership programme, a BAME colleague decided to take part in two training courses: Introduction to Management and Career Focus for BAME colleagues. They reported having really enjoyed the courses and found that they helped them to focus on what they'd learned in their career to date as well as giving valuable opportunities to share thoughts and feelings with co-workers, as well as exploring barriers to progression and how these could be overcome. The Personal Development Plan was of particular value, as it allowed them to map out what they could realistically achieve within a certain time period.

This led onto a career focus course that included a smart options test designed to highlight career direction options that in turn led to them attending an Introduction to Project Management course, which clarified the direction they wanted to take. In terms of training progression, they have now successfully completed an Approved Project Management qualification leaving them optimistic about the future and hoping for an opportunity to work within a project team.

Project Search

The programme, which started in October 2021, is running from the Council's High St building, with Kirklees College delivering training support from there as well. Fifteen internship roles have been identified across the Council, and each intern will undertake two placements each, on a rotational basis.

Improved data collection across all equality groups

Improved insight into the workforce profile across the organisation. The figures for 2021 reflect the integration of former KNH employees into the Council's overall workforce with the addition of a fifth directorate – Growth & Regeneration, adding a further 793 employees to the total headcount.

The percentage gender balance shows some slight movement from the previous year, all other protected characteristic groups have remained fairly static in percentage terms across the last two years:

2021 Marital Status	Headcount	%
Civil Partnership	34	0.4
Cohabiting	504	6.0
Divorced	289	3.4
Married	3188	37.9
Separated	86	1.0
Single	2248	26.7
Widow	68	0.8
Unknown	1989	23.7

2020 Marital Status	Headcount	%
Civil Partnership	22	0.3
Cohabiting	283	4.0
Divorced	234	3.3
Married	2899	41.2
Separated	60	0.9
Single	1792	25.5
Widow	63	0.9
Unknown	1675	23.8

2021 Disability	Headcount	%
Not Disabled	6550	77.9
Disabled	326	3.9
Unknown	1530	18.2

2020 Disability	Headcount	%
Not Disabled	5814	82.7
Disabled	244	3.5
Unknown	970	13.8

2021 Ethnicity	Headcount	%
White	6376	75.9
BME	1219	14.5
Unknown	811	9.6

2020 Ethnicity	Headcount	%
White	5529	78.7
BME	1014	14.4
Unknown	485	6.9

2021 Gender	Headcount	%
Male	2896	34.5
Female	5510	65.5

2020 Gender	Headcount	%
Male	2106	30.0
Female	4922	70.0

2021 Sexual Orientation	Headcount	%
Bisexual	40	0.5
Gay Man	47	0.6
Gay Woman / Lesbian	31	0.4
Heterosexual / Straight	2811	33.4
Other	16	0.2
Unknown	5461	65.0

2020 Sexual Orientation	Headcount	%
Bisexual	7	0.1
Gay Man	13	0.2
Gay Woman / Lesbian	4	0.1
Heterosexual / Straight	1239	17.6
Other	4	0.1
Unknown	5761	82.0

2021 Religion	Headcount	%
Buddhist	12	0.1
Christian	1356	16.1
Jewish	1	0.0
Muslim	228	2.7
Sikh	33	0.4
Any Other	100	1.2
None	1256	14.9
Unknown	5420	64.5

2020 Religion	Headcount	%
Buddhist	5	0.1
Christian	777	11.1
Jewish	1	0.0
Muslim	94	1.3
Sikh	18	0.3
Any Other	61	0.9
None	479	6.8
Unknown	5593	79.6

We can now report every quarter on seven protected characteristic groups, enabling the organisation to analyse gaps in the workforce profile and target interventions appropriately.

1.3 Areas for improvement

We now report on seven of the nine protected characteristic groups, but work is underway to incorporate the final two areas of gender reassignment and pregnancy/maternity. It is envisaged that the new Data Strategy currently in development will support services to develop data monitoring measures to capture the full range of protected characteristics.

We require improved take up of Project Search from services across the Council to offer a variety of internships.

The most recent gender pay gap for 2021 shows that while the mean gender pay gap is down 0.5% against the previous reported figure of 9.8% in favour of males. However, the median pay gap for males is up by 2.9% against the previous reported figure of 12.4%. In terms of bonus pay, this shows that 0.57% of males received a bonus, as opposed to 0.81% of female employees.

Summary of areas from the last annual report:

- The Council needs to tap into the external support and challenge from organisations such as Inclusive Employers to enhance best practice and address under performance.
- The I&D Hub will continue to provide leadership and extra capacity; however, all services need to incorporate I&D as part of their service priorities and day to day activities.

2. Taking a positive and inclusive approach to everything we do

2.1 Achievement

Diversity calendar

Now part of Corporate Calendar, which means that I&D events form part of ongoing Council plans. We now use a diversity calendar to help plan events throughout the year, which is linked to our Corporate Calendar and plans and celebrates diversity.

Kirklees Diversity Awards

The event celebrated the diverse nature of Kirklees by recognising and rewarding organisations and teams that are passionate about inclusion and diversity. It also honoured organisations that promote outstanding inclusion and diversity, and individuals who have been acknowledged for their contributions and commitment to improving practices and making working environments more inclusive.

Inclusive Employer Bronze Standard

The Council has attained the Inclusive Employer's Bronze Standard. This was recognition for the Council's progress on diversity as an employer and covers areas such as positive engagement with staff at all levels on inclusion; developing and supporting employee networks; embedding inclusion in recruitment and training processes; and demonstrating how we are continuously learning and drawing on best practice.

Diversity = Innovation Network

This is a group of employers and businesses in the Kirklees district that is focused on reaping the opportunities of the diversity advantage in the labour market and enterprise. Participation in the network allows officers and managers to share best practice in open forum meetings with other D=I members, participation in the planning and delivery of themed webinars, and greater interaction between public, private and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations.

The D=I network is the business aspect of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities programme (ICC).

2.2 Impact

Inclusive Employer Bronze Standard

The award has given us a benchmark on our internal I&D processes, which we've begun to build on and will be reflected in our 2021/22 strategy.

Diversity = Innovation Network

The network, which includes all major Kirklees anchor institutions and businesses, along with representatives of the local VCS, has strengthened partnership working around inclusion and diversity. Sharing best practice on this agenda has been very successful, with webinars being organised by different members on a variety of topics, including ‘George Floyd – one year on’ and ‘Reflections on 10 years of the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty’ and a planned future event looking at financial inclusion.

The network has developed a Charter, which now boasts 15 signatory organisations. This is a commitment to mainstream diversity and interculturalism into each respective organisation.

2.3 Areas for improvement

The Council is now tapping into the external support and challenge from organisations such as Inclusive Employers as well working with partners via the Diversity = Innovation Network. However, learning from best practice elsewhere needs to be ramped up and embedded as a way of working, along with increased collaboration with partners.

Over the last 2 years, inclusion has been given a much higher profile within the organisation, and services have been engaged with and asked to incorporate inclusion via fora such as the Kirklees Leadership Forum – where managers have been asked to offer internships under Project Search and to recruit apprentices in line with the agenda set by the virtual work experience programme.

3. Zero Tolerance on abuse, harassment, bullying and violence

Summary of actions from the last annual report:

- Need to raise employee and management awareness to combat under reporting of hate crimes.
- Equip managers to better support staff experiencing such incidents.
- Better understanding of people’s perception of bullying and harassment.

3.1 Achievement

Hate crime awareness and reporting

Several campaigns, both internal to the Council and externally in the community at large, have taken place over the past 18 months to increase hate crime awareness and encourage reporting of incidents. This work is continuing and will be included in learning and development programmes and incorporated into the People Strategy.

3.2 Impact

Hate crime awareness and reporting

Across the five established monitoring strands (disability, faith, race, sexual orientation and transphobic) there has been an increase in reported incidents in each one apart from transphobic, which fell by 3.8% across Kirklees.

Although this is concerning, the increase across the other four areas, which ranged from 16% for race, 37% for disability, 53% for faith to 56% for sexual orientation, can be seen as positive due to increased awareness and publicity campaigns. There was a particular focus on this in National Hate Crime Awareness Weeks in 2019 and 2020; nonetheless, this is an issue that will need to be reinforced and revisited on a regular basis and there is a need to ensure information reaches our dispersed workforce.

3.3 Areas for improvement

Hate crime awareness and reporting

Greater awareness among all employees about the process of reporting incidents is required – under reporting is a national issue particularly on hate crimes.

Consideration is now underway about how awareness is increased and how managers are equipped to support their staff experiencing such incidents.

4. Demonstrating our commitment through the way we do things in Kirklees

Summary of actions from the last annual report:

- Improve communication about working carers' passports to managers and employees, along with improved monitoring of their effectiveness.
- National Inclusion Week involvement needs to be the basis of a more coordinated approach to celebrating and promoting good I&D practice throughout the whole year.

4.1 Achievement

National Inclusion Week

We continue to highlight and take part in National Inclusion Week (NIW), with this year's theme being 'united for inclusion'. The week began with the Council's Executive Team discussing the importance of inclusion and what it meant to them both as individuals and leaders with the organisation. Activities during the week ranged from the importance of valuing staff to anti-racism, a quiz, and Coffee Roulette, where people were 'matched' with other colleagues from across Kirklees, profiling the employee networks and a webinar hosted by the Diversity = Inclusion network and led by a speaker from the Equality and Human Rights Commission looking at the first 10 years of the Equality Act/public sector equality duty.

The LGBT Pride

The Council and particularly its LGBT+ network lent its support to the success of 2021 Pride events. This year marked the 40th anniversary of London Pride coming to Huddersfield in a widely-applauded act of solidarity with the local LGBT+ community, which was facing police harassment in the form of an attempt to close down a Huddersfield venue, the Gemini Club. The attendant publicity saw the club keep its licence and a number of charges being dropped against members of the LGBT+ community.

Black History Month

Events taking place this year included Stories of Protest – a primary school history project; an exploration of black lives in the library archives and the Windrush Achievement Awards – an online event to celebrate the contribution of the Caribbean community to cultural and economic life in West Yorkshire. The month culminated in a celebration led by the Iroko Project, which promoted both Black History Month and the co-production work happening here in Kirklees by the Black African and Caribbean communities, the Iroko Ambassadors and the project's Community Change leadership graduates. The far-reaching and exciting programme of work was shortlisted for a European Diversity Community Project Award after a successful three-way nomination that embraces the Kirklees BAC community, Amber & Greene and Kirklees Council.

South Asian History Month

The inaugural Sangam festival took place in July and August 2021 as a community festival celebrating South Asian arts, culture and heritage that was intended to bring people together to enjoy heritage and multi-arts events in a spirit of celebration, positivity, and harmony. Over four weeks in the summer, events were held to commemorate and celebrate history and culture and give a wider understanding of the diverse heritage that links the UK with South Asia. The four-week festival covered the history of the South Asian communities in Kirklees and the contribution immigration has made to both local and national life – starting with the Sikh warrior memorial in Greenhead Park, which commemorates the service, suffering and sacrifice of Sikhs in both World Wars.

Other events during the month covered mental health and wellbeing support – with emphasis on the impact of the pandemic on the South Asian communities; music, in particular the evolution of Bhangra music and dance; and the important place of food in South Asian culture – with particular emphasis on Bangladeshi and Bengali cuisine.

4.2 Impact

National Inclusion Week

Active involvement in this week continues to help highlight the importance of inclusion and raise its profile across the organisation. This year all the activities were online, which in some respects gave greater reach. For example, the D=I webinar had over 75 attendees from a variety partner organisations and other local authorities, with free tickets available via Eventbrite. As a result of many of the activities, including the webinar and Coffee Roulette, new relationships have been formed between people from different backgrounds and some will lead on to further collaborative work on inclusion.

4.3 Areas for improvement

Reaching the dispersed workforce

Due to the pandemic, National Inclusion Week this year was virtual. In one respect this gave us greater reach with partners external to the Council, however, there is a real concern that the information and organised activities did not reach frontline workers and those members of staff who do not have access to IT at work. It is hoped that this will be partly addressed the future by the introduction of a MySpace App, which will give employees smartphone access.

While it is positive that the [working carers'] passports are in place, communication about them to managers and employees needs to be improved and their effectiveness needs to be monitored.

Our involvement in National Inclusion Week needs to be the basis of a more coordinated approach to celebrating and promoting good practice on I&D throughout the whole year. As stated earlier in this report we are now members of Inclusive Employers which will help in respect of external support and resources.

The Council now regularly promotes and celebrates a number of events and themed days and weeks in its Corporate Calendar, for example Mental Health Week, Black History Month, Pride, LGBT History Month, Men's Health Week. These events are now far better coordinated, and we work in collaboration with the Council's Communications Team, who promote them both internally and externally on a range of media that encompass different methods of qualitative evidence capture, for example restorative listening circle feedback.

5. Inclusive policies

Summary of areas from the last annual report:

- While the People Strategy is explicit about the importance of I&D and this being part of our cultural transformation, work is still needed to embed this and make it a reality.
- Need to ensure a stronger I&D focus across a range of work areas – for example through looking at inclusive recruitment, inclusive communication, inclusive leadership and management, induction etc.

5.1 Achievement

The new Council Plan 2021/23 has inclusion as a key value, stating that there will be equal access to opportunities, removing barriers and discrimination and the promotion of a culture of inclusion and diversity. This principle runs throughout all the shared outcomes within the plan and agreed priorities. The revised People Strategy also has inclusion running throughout it, but with a particular focus on supporting under-represented sections of the workforce – either through recruitment or internal development. Examples of these include: the introduction of name blind recruitment; Project Search, which provides work experience and training to young people with learning disabilities to improve employment prospects and life skills; BAME Leadership Programme, intended to address traditional areas of under-representation at senior management level (Grades 13 and above). Also in development is the Kirklees Inclusive Communities Framework, which is being co-produced with partners and communities and is intended to improve community safety and cohesion.

5.2 Impact

There has been real progress in key strategic documents incorporating inclusion as part of their principles and specified outcomes. As demonstrated with the examples above, the principles are being translated into practice via a range of programmes and interventions to address inequalities and under-representation.

5.3 Areas for improvement

While the People Strategy is explicit about the importance of inclusion and diversity and this being part of our cultural transformation, much more work is still needed to embed this and make it a reality.

We will need to ensure a stronger I&D focus across a range of work areas – for example through looking at inclusive recruitment, inclusive communication, inclusive leadership and management, induction etc.

The induction programme has been relaunched under the title Our Kirklees Welcome and is designed to offer a warm welcome to colleagues that are either new or returning to work for the Council, as well those changing roles internally.

Our Kirklees Welcome covers the first 12 months' employment, with a greater emphasis on I&D than was previously the case.

6. Spreading the word about inclusion and diversity

Summary of areas from the last annual report:

- Need to improve our internal and external communications on I&D to raise awareness of good practice, call people and services to action and engage communities and partners to collaborate more effectively in the future.

6.1 Achievement

Kirklees has been recognised for its positive work on the inclusion and diversity agenda by a number of national and international award nominations.

EUSS

As a result of the decision to leave the European Union, the UK government introduced the European Union Settlement Scheme, which established a form of indefinite leave to remain for EU citizens living in the UK. In Kirklees, this led to a programme of engagement with a range of communities, employers, and faith groups to ensure maximum take up of the scheme. For many people, this required an inclusion-based approach, with information translated into EU languages and family groups contacted by schools and other locally based organisations. The work was recognised with a nomination for a Local Government Association Award.

Iroko Project

The Iroko Project is an innovative eight-month community-led initiative seeking to uncover inequalities and racism, improve the relationship between the council and Black and African Caribbean communities and build a framework to continue these relationships and identify systemic changes that will benefit Black and minority ethnic communities for generations.

The project takes a culturally responsive co-production approach, where the Black and Caribbean communities design, create, and spotlight their important issues. They share their lived experiences, their challenges, and their strengths and identify the steps and actions they feel will bring about impactful change. The Project has enjoyed a high level of support, with 111 attending its formal launch and over 200 pre-ordering tickets for the culmination of the Project's first phase at the end of Black History Month on 29 October. Iroko was been shortlisted for best community project at the European Diversity Awards 2021.

The Project's achievements included:

- The pilot and evaluation of a new engagement framework focused around:
 - a) #HearMyVoice, (Community Engagement) – which had 99 attendees;
 - b) #SupportMyVoice (Community Action Planning) – with 77 attendees; and
 - c) #GrowMyVoice (Community Capacity Building) – 65 attendees.
- The co-production of a 12-month action plan developed with Black communities
- Growing a reference group of community leaders who can continue to cultivate a relationship with the council, helping to build capacity in the community and ensure the communities voice is represented.
- Introducing learning and development for employees focused on improving skills in inclusion and cultural competence in anti-racist practice

Kirklees Apprenticeships for All/Project Search

The Council's strategic lead for employability and promoting inclusivity and diversity won the HR Champion of the Year and the 2021 European Diversity Awards for his work in developing the Council's apprenticeship programme and in supporting a range of anchor institutions to attract, grow and support apprenticeships across the region. In addition, he was also instrumental in getting the Council to sign up to DFN Project Search, an internationally-acclaimed programme that helps young people with learning disabilities and autism to access the world of work.

6.2 Impact

The Council, along with Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre (KCALC) obtained Home Office funding to raise awareness and provide support for those needing to access the European Union Settlement Scheme. The Council's Community Cohesion Team worked closely with a team of locally recruited community connectors and also ran street stalls and other information raising initiatives to ensure information on EUSS was disseminated as widely as possible to communities, including schools, employers, and faith groups. This led to 16,910 EUSS applications from Kirklees residents, which exceed the Home Office's estimated figure of 13,000, out of the total figure, 14,690 were determined by the 30 June deadline, with 45% of applicants granted settled status, 37% pre-settled and 13.1% still be decided at the deadline date. The scale of the engagement work undertaken here in Kirklees led the Home Office to use the programme we developed as an exemplar for other authorities, including the use of individual Kirklees residents' case studies. The work of the Council, KCALC and other partners in raising EUSS awareness and supporting applicants from our citizens was shortlisted for a Local Government Chronicle Award.

On a broader plain, the Council plays a full part in the Diversity=Innovation network, which was formed under the auspices of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities (ICC) programme. The D=I network is comprised of major anchor partnership organisations, including Huddersfield University, West Yorkshire Police, major local private sector employers – including Syngenta and Cummins Turbo Technologies and local further education and sixth form colleges. Part of its work involves both sharing good practice and collaborating on a range of projects and programmes, for instance planning and participation in webinars on such topics as policing, financial inclusion and a retrospective on the public sector equality duty and the Equality Act on the 10th anniversary of its enactment. Following the inaugural Kirklees, I&D Awards in February 2020, we are now working with the D=I network to deliver the second Awards in September 2022. These will focus on the role of I&D in pandemic recovery and the work of individuals and organisations that has been undertaken both during and after the pandemic itself.

Over the past year, the Council has increased its messaging on I&D internally, with a number of articles by senior officers on topics including the menopause, working carers, highlighting Project Search – a work experience initiative for people with learning disabilities - and also promoting staff wellbeing, particular in light of the pandemic.

A Kirklees Leadership Forum in September 2021 was devoted exclusively to inclusion and diversity, which informed senior and middle management about the work of the Tackling Inequalities Programme, progress on the three priority areas from 2020 (e.g. improving health check participation, becoming a more inclusive employer and the Breaking Barriers programme), and the progress of the Iroko Project, which focused on the Kirklees Black African and Caribbean community and was instrumental in creating relationships built on trust and mutual benefit between members of the Black community and the Council.

The Council is also a founding member of the West Yorkshire Mayor's Fair Work Charter programme, and several officers will be contributing to the work of this major regional initiative over the coming months – a sign that the importance of our I&D work is being recognised at a regional level.

6.3 Areas for improvement

In terms of the Iroko Project, there is a recognition of the need for greater skills and awareness across the organisation to respond to the needs of Black African and Caribbean communities, who having suffered the effects of inequalities for many years saw them exacerbated by Covid.

There is also a wider requirement for the whole organisation to become more culturally confident, enhancing understanding and across all employees to meet the needs of all protected characteristic groups more effectively.

7. Listening and acting for ongoing improvement

Summary of actions from the last annual report:

- Our commitment at the beginning of 2017 to rejuvenate all employee networks has seen progress by the Young Employees Network and the Black and Minority Ethnic Network. However, more work still needs to take place to support all the other networks to enable them to thrive, with increased recognition by services and managers of the positive contribution made by networks to the Council's core business.

7.1 Achievement

Our commitment to rejuvenate all the employee networks, first set out in 2017, continues to gain impressive results, with the Young Employees, BAME and Working Carers Support Networks all making changes to their leadership structures and widening their offer to both existing members and newcomers. The Disabled Employee Network took a leading role in consultations for the return to office working and changes to recruitment processes, while the LGBT+ Network made important contributions to this year's Pride celebrations – which marked 40 years since London Pride came to Huddersfield.

Moves commenced last year to encourage attendance and involvement in network activities have also continued, with the active support of senior management network champions and the Chief Executive.

Whilst the YEN and BAME Networks continue to be the most active, the other networks have been provided with additional support and are now far more visible and confident, which has enabled them to attract more members and independently organise events. There is also greater collaboration across networks, for example YEN support for some Working Carers Support network activities.

As will be seen in the work undertaken jointly between the Working Carers Support Network and the Young Employees Network (below), and previous work on menopause awareness and mental health wellbeing support, network intersectionality is developing on a shared experience basis, something that has been particularly noticeable during the pandemic in relation to YEN and issues of isolation and anxiety.

7.2 Impact

Young Employee Network

YEN is composed of all Council employees aged 30 or under. The Network is led by a team of leads and two co-chairs who commit their time, alongside their jobs to delivering the networks priorities and championing young people in Kirklees. Here are some examples of the work we have done and continue to do:

- Empowered staff to talk about and improve their health and wellbeing through the Men's Minds Matter and Working Women's Wellness events.
- Helped managers find new ways to support their young employees through the Manager's Meet-Up workshop, leading to young employees taking over as Head of IT for a week.

- Supported age diversity and recruitment of young employees through attending apprenticeship recruitment events and enabling young employees to be consulted on our new recruitment system.
- Helped young employees get to know each other through regular socials and our weekly virtual 'Tea'n'Talks'.
- Mental Health Awareness week activities such as the wellbeing walks
- Built the power of employees' voices by facilitating discussions across the staff networks.
- Shaped Council strategy on inclusion and diversity through our membership of the Inclusion and Diversity Hub.
- Hosted themed workshops for young employees with guest speakers, recent examples include our Climate Change and Pensions Workshops.
- Built the profile of young employees in the Council through the best Young Employee Network Awards yet, with the largest number of attendees to date.
- Made a difference to lives through volunteer hours organised and delivered through YEN and fund raising for local charities.
- Annual activities to champion and celebrate local democracy week.
- Supported the Council's Kickstart Scheme and Virtual Work Experience offer.

YEN is also currently engaged in 'succession planning' and will soon be recruiting to vacancies within its leadership team, including that of co-chair. Any employees aged 30 and under can apply for these roles and take a leading part in helping the network deliver on its priorities and further their skill set at the same time.

The Working Carers Support Network

The Working Carers Support Network (WCSN) aims to support Kirklees employees who have the additional responsibility of caring for a family member or friend in an unpaid capacity alongside their day-to-day role with the council.

The network offers monthly virtual meetings for members to catch up and benefit from peer support from other working carers. The meetings also provide the opportunity for guest speakers to provide information about support that is available for working carers both through the council and through local charities and organisations.

The network also enables working carers to be able to share their experiences and ideas with council officers and our two Network Director Champions, who continually work to ensure that Kirklees Council is an inclusive and supportive employer of and for working carers.

The Working Carers Support Network as an employee network is run by its members, supported by two co-chairs.

While the Working Carers' Passport is still operational across the organisation, there is still work to do to ensure it is applied consistently and enjoys recognition across all services and directorates.

LGBT network

The LGBT employee network works to ensure the wellbeing of its membership, and also that no Council employee suffers from discrimination as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity. If needed, help in this regard can be sought anonymously via the network chairs.

The network feels that representation in the workforce is something is a paramount requirement for an inclusive employer. It works across the Council to mark notable periods such as LGBT History Month and Pride, with events for both Council staff and residents alike. The main aim is to showcase the contribution that LGBT staff make to Kirklees, everything that the Council has done to make itself an inclusive and welcoming place in which LGBT employees can thrive, and to focus forwards on what can still be done to improve even further. The network promotes awareness and education around the LGBT community and bolsters wider allyship.

During the pandemic, regular meetings have become more important than ever, giving members the chance to connect and facilitate that all-important social interaction, albeit digitally. Further to this, and despite the coronavirus restrictions, the network has maintained the work needed to deliver virtual Kirklees Pride 2021, and it continues to work with the Kirklees senior leadership teams on further improving the experience of LGBT staff, with a particular focus recently being on that of non-cis-gendered employees.

In terms of who can join our network, membership is open to anyone who both works for the Council and is a member of the LGBT community.

Disabled Employees Network

The network has spent a large part of its time supporting members during the pandemic, but there have also been a wide range of consultation and further support activities, including the following:

- Provided 1 to 1 and group support to members of the network on ad hoc issues arising in the workplace
- Supported development of a state-of-the-art design for disabled living at Cherry Trees respite care centre for people with learning disabilities in Shepley.
- Supported managers in areas such as, how to approach a conversation with a disabled employee around disability and adjustments, providing information and signposting to other information resources
- Participating in citizen engagement sessions to provide a disability perspective.
- Supporting the organisation to improve its document accessibility more generally
- Provided views from members to our strategic director to support the organisation's recovery plan
- Input into new recruitment processes and guidance on approaches for managers to enable a more inclusive recruitment process from start to finish (current focus on reasonable adjustments and making info available to managers around what may be able to be offered).

BAME Network

Over the past year, the Network has increasingly used social media to access its work with colleagues. It continued to steer on Learning and Development, Inclusion and Diversity, Cultural Events, Health & Wellbeing Awareness and Anti-Racism campaigns where BAME staff could talk about their lived experiences and others were able to listen and share thoughts and feelings. The Network also engaged with local BAME communities through its collaborative work with the Iroko Project to build infrastructure with communities' groups. The pandemic continued to have a significant effect on the Network's cultural events, but virtual meetings have given it the opportunity to demonstrate, deep dive and explore our cultural richness and the amazing contributions various cultures had made in enriching society. The Network's varied and exciting programme began in May 2021 with the Local History Month' project.

May 2021 – Local History Month

In May the 'Local History Month' project was launched as a partnership collaboration between Kirklees Libraries, Local Studies, West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees BAME Employee Network, and the Councils' Cohesion Team – all working alongside Dr Hannah Rose-Murray of Edinburgh university – whose research this piece of work is built upon. Due to the Covid 19 restrictions, a virtual tour was created that highlighted several venues and sites across Kirklees during the 19th Century where Black African American Abolitionists came to campaign to end the cruel Transatlantic Slave Trade. The project was very successful with lots of people joining the live event on 20 May 2021 – plus many more viewing the recording in the following weeks. The project was well received and therefore, it was decided to continue the theme of 'Abolition' into Black History Month and the International Women's Festival in March 2022.

June 2021 – Windrush Week

For the first time ever in Kirklees history, an official Windrush Design flag flew from each of the four Town Halls across Kirklees. The week's theme was aptly named 'Flagtastic Windrush Week in Kirklees' with a range of complimentary activities suggested and promoted through the specially designed brochure.

Once again, the BAME Network worked closely with Kirklees Libraries and the Cohesion Team to deliver the programme. A select handful of Elders and Council Staff engaged in a photo opportunity alongside the Mayor of Kirklees with a promotional clip being released thereafter. It is envisaged that the flag flying will become an annual event each June during Windrush Week in Kirklees – creating a true legacy.

July 2021 - Kirklees South Asian Heritage Month

The inaugural Kirklees South Asian Heritage Month was launched in the House of Commons in July 2019. The celebrations ran from 18 July to 17 August, celebrating South Asian Heritage Month, a month of activity to explore the shared cultures and histories of the UK and South Asia. This event was a great success for its vibrancy, colour, splendour, and impressive opulence.

September 2021 – Health & Wellbeing Awareness

This year's Know Your Numbers! Campaign was low-key due to the pandemic. However, we had the opportunity to remind members of the importance of the UK's biggest blood pressure testing and awareness week.

October 2021 – Black History Month

Staying with the theme of Abolition (also bringing awareness of up-to-date social justice movements) the BAME Network once again partnered with Kirklees Libraries and the Cohesion Team to develop two main projects: The story of Ellen Craft (a black female abolitionist who visited Kirklees with her husband in the 1900s, a small exhibition has been created and toured four libraries and a community centre during October. It is aimed at primary aged children (also offered as a school classroom visit). It again creates a legacy as it is available for bookings beyond October and BHM.

Secondly, the internal staff offer was a virtual presentation entitled 'The Power of Platform' delivered by Andrew Muhammad (AKA the Investigator). Over 55 employees logged on to watch in the live chat room at lunchtime on Wednesday 20 October with lots of engagement and discussion afterwards. The attendance was very diverse in terms of ethnic background, gender, age, and role within the organisation. Feedback has been extremely positive, and the recording is still available to view on the Councils' YouTube Channel.

In addition, each Wednesday during October complimentary content was released onto the staff intranet for staff to engage with. This concluded with a quiz and prize draw on Friday 29 Oct.

Furthermore, support and guidance/sharing were given to Locala who wanted to start to embed BHM within their organisation and subsequently organised a small walking tour of the abolitionist virtual tour for some staff on 16 Oct.

31 October Local Community Group-Cycle of Life

Finally, on Sunday 31 October, a local community group, Cycle of Life, which promotes Black male wellbeing via a weekly cycle activity also rode the abolitionist route. A more formal evaluation meeting between partners is planned in November so that learning and planning for BHM 2022 can begin much earlier.

8. Areas for improvement

All networks will need continued support moving forward and part of this will be about exploring allyship. To link in employees who want to make a difference and actively support protected characteristic groups would be a powerful way to help the networks progress even further.

8.1 Tackling Inequalities Programme and priority areas 2020/21

The continuing focus on tackling inequalities over the past year was heightened by the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on certain communities and particular equality groups, plus the murder of George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement. This next section outlines the main areas of work that have been undertaken to address some of these inequalities.

Over the last year, this programme has included projects already outlined in this report, including Project Search and the Iroko Project, it has also had a focus on anti-racism in the workplace building on the outcomes of the employee listening circles (see 7.1 and 7.3, above and 8.2, below). Whilst it is very positive that inclusion is being discussed in key forums, there is still a need to ensure this is happening throughout the whole organisation at all levels and with all employees.

8.2 Achievement

Set out below are the three priority areas agreed by Cabinet and Council in October 2020.

Health Checks pilot project

The National Health Service Health Check programme has been delivered in General Practices in Kirklees since March 2012. The Health Check offers a cardiovascular disease risk assessment and personalised advice to all individuals aged 40-74, who do not have pre-existing cardiovascular disease or related conditions. It is offered once every five years to all eligible individuals.

Data shows that a high proportion of people experiencing health inequalities (e.g. BAME groups, people living with mental health conditions or those living in areas of greater deprivation) don't access the National Health Service Health Checks at the same rate as the general population. In February 2020, Kirklees Public Health commissioned Kirklees Council (Wellness Service) to develop and deliver a pilot project to look at ways of maximising the impact of the health checks programme. The aim of that pilot is to find innovative ways to target and reach those most at risk and provide more person-centred support for health improvement, leading to better health outcomes for people.

The pilot runs for six months and began in early November 2021.

In the winter of 2020, a series of focus groups facilitated by Healthwatch provided feedback to shape the Health Checks pilot.

In spring 2021, engagement with clinical directors and practice managers in the [Kirklees Primary Care Networks](#) identified Batley & Birstall, Viaduct and Greenwood PCNs as pilot areas.

In summer 2021, five Wellness Health Coaches (who can support individuals on a 1:1 basis to develop personally tailored health and wellbeing goals) were recruited and completed a 10-week training programme to deliver Health Checks.

In October 2021, Health Checks promotion and targeted invitations to community venues commenced.

Inclusive Employer

The aim has been to attract and retain a workforce which represents the communities we serve. A workforce who are supported, well managed, developed and rewarded as individuals who respond with pace and innovation as we transform the way we work.

Our commitment to advancing equalities in everything we do to further foster an inclusive culture where all people feel their differences are valued, respected, and accepted is clear.

Among the achievements a named blind recruitment process has been operational for 12 months (see section 1.1 for details).

Breaking Barriers

In 2020 the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement echoed that of the Stephen Lawrence case emphasising the need for targeted work to close the gap on racial inequality and promote an anti-racist culture. In Summer 2020, 'Conscious Youth' were approached by the leaders of Kirklees Council to discuss how we could work collaboratively to start identifying ways to create a positive change in Kirklees and develop a programme with the aim to: 'Redress historical injustice and inequalities to make a step-change in improving outcomes for young black people in Kirklees and to support public agencies to be fair and inclusive service providers.'

In October 2020, Conscious Youth developed Breaking Barriers in conjunction with Kirklees Council. The suite of projects was designed to educate, inform, and involve young adults in developing their life skills, cultural knowledge, leadership, potential, and aspirations to want better for themselves. The programme is aimed at black communities but remains open to all that are interested. Projects include:

- Voices to Action Campaign ([Voices to Action – Conscious Youth](#)) Youth-led social action to highlight the lived experiences of black and minority young people living in Kirklees. The campaign provides a safe and accessible platform for **ALL** young people to talk openly about race, culture and identity and Break Barriers!)
- Conscious Boys ([Conscious Boys – Conscious Youth](#)) grassroots youth-led initiative focused on improving the educational attainment and resilience of boys aged 11-18 years old. Conscious Boys is focused on delivering meaningful engagement and positive youth-led activities that range from self-development workshops to voice and influence.
- Stepping up and Stepping out ([Our services – Conscious Youth](#)) programme of six workshops to support young people to set goals, build resilience, care for and about themselves and those around them and identify strategies for building a positive future.
- Back To Our Roots ([Back to our Roots, a youth-led initiative by Conscious Youth](#)) youth-led initiative, creating an all-year programme of history and cultural events and activities relevant to local young people. The project is led by a steering group of young people of African and Caribbean heritage and aims to engage the wider community and improve cultural understanding.

Supported by Kirklees Council seed funding, Conscious Youth were successful in securing funding for the next phase of the Breaking Barriers programme. Since October 2020 they have raised over £150,000 (additional funding) including funding from Amazon, Paul Hamlyn, and Ellis Campbell Foundation and in-kind work from Wild PR.

In 2021, Conscious Youth formed a youth steering group of 14 young people for 'Voices to Action and Back to Our Roots'.

Achievements

On International Men's Day 2020, Conscious Youth launched the 'Conscious Boys' project by recording a series of four introductory podcasts targeting young black men. The podcasts highlighting the life experiences of black men from different walks of life and were aired throughout Black History Month 2021. This programme of workshops with young men at risk of exclusion and exploitation was piloted in conjunction with North Huddersfield Trust School. The project was delayed due to the pandemic, however Conscious Youth started working with Year 10 at the school in June 21 and are still working with that cohort now they have progressed to Year 11.

Through the Stepping Up and Stepping Out project in North Huddersfield Trust School, six young black males were identified for additional support to prevent them from school exclusions. They will be receiving one-to-one mentorship from a new staff member starting in October 2021.

During Black History Month 2020, Conscious Youth launched their 'Back to our Roots Black History Month' Programme and delivered a series of four educational webinars. Additionally, they produced seven mini videos on local role models and three 'in conversation' live interviews with local sporting celebrities. This activity engaged over 43,000 people, 73% of whom were from Kirklees. The audience split in the target age range (13-30) was 39% male and 50% female.

In Spring 2021, Conscious Youth was granted accreditation of their level 3 blended learning leadership programme by the Institute of Leadership Management. The leadership programme will launch in October 2021 and be available to 30 young people aged 16-30 from marginalised communities (Black, Asian and minority ethnic). The programme involves other local key partners (Kirklees Council, Amazon, NHS, Transpennine Express, Kirklees Active Leisure and C&K Careers) who will support recruitment, delivery and participant sponsorship and mentorship.

In September 2021, Conscious Youth was chosen as Amazon's BEN (Black Employee Network) charity to support. Amazon has allocated a community engagement representative to support the organisation's work by providing mentorship, resources, and delivery support for the leadership programme.

8.3 Impact

Health checks pilot project

The pilot's focus is on increasing access for groups less likely to take up the NHS Health Check and who are at most risk of poor health outcomes. The impact of project is being evaluated by the University of Huddersfield and will be available in Autumn 2022.

Inclusive Employer

We have developed an approach that captures quantitative data to direct and measure interventions in this space. As part of the initial scoping activity, data analysis shows that:

- The proportion of disabled starters was 11% in Sep 2020 - Aug 2021, compared to only 4% in Sep 2019 - Aug 2020.
- The proportion of LGBTQ+ starters was 42% in Sep 2020 - Aug 2021, a significant increase compared to 13% in Sep 2019 - Aug 2020.
- BAME colleagues were twice as likely to have an Employee Relations Case raised in Sep 2020 - Aug 2021, with 2.3% as opposed to 1.05% for White colleagues. This is part of a consistent similar picture across the three years from 2018-2021.

Breaking Barriers

Over the past year, Conscious Youth has worked collaboratively with public, private and third sector partners to help further inform and support their work. Partners now include Amazon (Black Employee Network), NHS Huddersfield and Calderdale, Cummins Turbo Technologies, Transpennine Trains, Huddersfield New College, Kirklees College, North Huddersfield Trust, The University of Huddersfield, Ellis Campbell Foundation, C&K Careers, Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL) and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

To date, Voices to Action has engaged with 580 young people via social media and face-to-face across Kirklees. Voices to Action has also published a blog. The success of their activism has meant that they have partnered with '[In place of war](#)' a worldwide organisation that empowers young people to take action on things that matter to them. Conscious Youth, with Voices to Action and nine other organisations from across the U.K. will take part in '100 Agents of Change'.

Since June 2021, through Stepping up and Stepping out, Conscious Youth have worked with 65 of the most disengaged and vulnerable young people at North Huddersfield Trust, covering topics such as inequality, attitude, racism, and discrimination. When this work began in June 2021, 43% of those young people said they did not fully understand what racism was and did not feel they could challenge it. By September 2021, 91% better understood racism and felt confident to challenge it appropriately. Additionally, feedback from school staff indicates that the programme has been successful in creating a positive change in the attitude of participants and has improved attendance.

Two young women from the Stepping up and Stepping out programme have joined the Conscious Girls initiative to combat isolation and loneliness and are receiving further mentorship. One boy on the programme was permanently excluded from school. However, due to the relationship built with Conscious Youth, will join the Conscious Boys initiative, and receive 1-2-1 support to get back on track.

Feedback from the 'Back to our Roots Black History Month Programme' showed that the audience found the material engaging, thoughtful and inspiring.

8.4 Areas for improvement

Health checks pilot project

The pilot is a chance to understand what works and what does not to test out new and innovative ways of working with minimal risk. For example, will communities be more likely to take up health checks if they are provided at workplaces, faith settings, sports venues or libraries and could greater engagement with health coaches have a positive impact on health inequalities? By autumn 2022, the project expects to have recommendations for the future design and delivery of health checks within Kirklees that will positively influence the tackling inequalities agenda.

Breaking Barriers

In winter 2021, Conscious Youth will create a programme board for partners and stakeholders. This programme board will help support the direction of the programme, establish new relationships, and discover areas of collaboration.

8.5 Regional impact

The West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership responded promptly to the heightened risks Covid posed to ethnic minority communities and people, including health and care staff. Resources for those in high-risk roles were produced to support and advise colleagues on health risks and how to mitigate them.

The [West Yorkshire Race Equality Network](#) was a critical partner in developing and delivering the Partnership's priorities, providing constructive challenge and support whilst bringing people's lived experience into discussions. Kirklees played a key role in this work and the Council's Leader, Cllr Shabir Pandor, became the ambassador for the Partnership's [Anti-Racism Movement](#).

Working in partnership with other local authorities in the region and the wider NHS health and social care sector, the following work was successfully undertaken:

- The development of a Racial Inequalities Training package.
- Recruitment was overhauled across the entire Partnership to emphasise the importance of inclusive processes and to encourage diverse talent, this was supported by the launch of an award-winning Fellowship Programme and a Health Inequalities Academy.
- The Health Equity Fellowship demonstrates the Partnership's commitment to tackling health inequalities and promoting a more equitable West Yorkshire.
- The launch of the Partnership's [Anti-Racism Movement](#) in August 2021. The Movement garnered support from 584 organisations and community allies across West Yorkshire and Harrogate and saw six local districts (Bradford district and Craven; Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield) make their own commitments to becoming anti-racist organisations.

ACHIEVING INCLUSION