Understanding and improving
Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in the
local government workforce across
the UK, 2023

A spotlight on data collection and good
practice

October 2023

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Solace in Business is deeply committed to fostering a culture of equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across our organisation. We believe that every individual, regardless of their background, deserves equal opportunities, respect, and recognition. We are dedicated to encouraging a sector where diversity is celebrated and where all employees feel valued, empowered and supported. Our commitment to EDI extends beyond our organisation, as we actively engage with our partners and stakeholders to promote these principles throughout our sector and the broader community. Solace in Business is dedicated to making EDI a cornerstone of our identity, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of our decision-making and service delivery, while consistently driving positive change.

1. Introduction

This research was commissioned by Solace and funded by Solace in Business as a result of the growing emphasis on workforce equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within the sphere of local government. It builds upon last year's report which looked at the 152 metropolitan districts, county councils, London boroughs and unitary authorities of England. The report focused on the availability of workforce ethnicity data and supporting councils to improve their understanding of the importance of improving ethnic diversity within local government employment. This report has widened the scope of research to include the district councils of England, as well as looking at the Scottish and Welsh unitary authorities, analysing a total of 371 councils. Northern Ireland was initially included in this research; however, as they do not have a duty to publish workforce ethnicity data there was little information publicly available at the time of the analysis.

Workforce diversity is crucial in an organisation that is fair and that provides services catering to the population's needs. Actively mitigating unconscious bias in recruitment promotes equal opportunities and widens talent pools. A diverse workforce brings varied ideas, skills, and perspectives, and enhances decision-making, productivity, understanding of community needs, and creativity. Ensuring diversity at all levels improves retention and boosts morale and engagement.

1.1 Variations in the Public Sector Equality Duty

The Equality Act 2010, which covers all four nations of the United Kingdom, mandates councils to prevent discrimination and harassment and consider individuals' protected characteristics. In England, Scotland, and Wales, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public authorities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations. It also focuses on reducing disadvantages, addressing unique needs, and increasing participation.

The PSED varies slightly across England, Scotland, and Wales:

- In England, public authorities are required to disclose information about their employees and individuals affected by their policies and practices. However, this obligation does not apply to public authorities with fewer than 150 employees. Specifically, these authorities must:
    - Annually publish equality information to demonstrate their adherence to the equality duty.
    - Create and release equality objectives at least once every four years.

- In Scotland, there are more specific duties in place to ensure the effective implementation of the general equality duty, to promote equality and prevent discrimination. Authorities in Scotland must:
    - Report progress on mainstreaming the general equality duty.
    - Publish equality outcomes and report progress.
    - Assess new or revised policies and practices.
    - Review existing policies and practices.
    - Gather, use, and publish employee information.
    - Use and publish member information.
    - Publish gender pay gap information.
    - Publish an equal pay statement.
    - Consider award criteria and contract conditions in relation to public procurement.
    - A further duty is imposed on Scottish Ministers to publish proposals for activity to enable listed authorities to better perform the general equality duty.

- In Wales, specific duties are similarly in place to promote equality and address discrimination across various aspects of public life, but they also vary slightly from England and Scotland. Welsh authorities must:
  - Prepare and publish strategic equality plan and equality objectives.
  - Review these plans and objectives at least every four years.
  - Engage with equality groups when carrying out the other specific duties.
  - Publish information about how they have complied with the duty by 31 March every year.
  - Include equality information and employment information detailing those employed under each protected characteristic, and with men and women being broken down by job, grade, pay, contract type, and working patterns.
  - Carry out assessments on the impact of proposed policies and practices and monitor their impact.
  - Consider the Welsh language standards to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language in Wales – complying with standards in service delivery, policymaking, formulating new policy, operation, promotion, and record keeping.
  - Welsh Ministers have a special duty to publish a report on how public authorities in Wales are meeting their general duty every four years with an interim report every two years.

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) helps councils meet Equality Act obligations, encouraging local adaption and sharing best practices. It comprises four modules: community engagement; leadership commitment; responsive services; and a diverse workforce.

1.2   Key findings

This report explores the extent to which workforce ethnicity data and pay data are being published by councils of the UK, and analyses whether a council's workforce compositions is reflected by local demographics.

To understand the nature of data being published, councils' reports were grouped into three categories. For consistency, the definition of complete and partial data remains the same as last year:

- 'Complete information': councils that published a detailed report or table specifying the numbers or percentages of employees from each ethnic category.
- 'Partial information': councils that published a report or table only stating the overall percentage of ethnic minority employees.
- 'No information': councils that do not publish any information on the ethnicity of their workforce.

The key findings from this analysis include:

- **Upper tier council publication trends:** over the past year, 65% (100 councils) of upper tier councils have published new workforce ethnicity data.
- **Greater completeness of data from upper tier councils:** while last year's report revealed that 56% (84 councils) of upper tier councils had complete data, this year, that figure has risen to 59% (90 councils), showcasing a positive trend in the completeness of data.
- **Upper tier councils publish more data than other types of council in England:** upper tier councils (59%) publish more complete data compared to district councils (37%).

- **Regional disparities:** data collection reveals that in England, all regions have councils where workforce data is either unable to be located or where data that is published is incomplete, indicating ongoing inconsistencies in the publication of EDI information within local government.
- **Regional variation in data publication**: London emerges as the region with the most comprehensive data on workforce ethnicity, whereas the South West publishes the least complete data.
- **High data publication rates in Scotland and Wales**: 100% of Scottish and Welsh councils published either complete or partial workforce ethnicity data, demonstrating the highest rates of workforce ethnicity data publication.
- **Inconsistencies in EDI reporting**: the analysis highlights persistent disparities in the publication of EDI information among councils. While some councils provide only basic workforce data, others fail to publish any data at all, thus falling short of their statutory duty.
- **Challenges in data analysis:** despite improvements in data completeness, analysing workforce data remains challenging due to varying levels of detail and categorisation across councils, even with upper tier councils reporting more complete data than last year.
- **Regional representation**: compared to the regional working-age ethnic minority population, it is evident that ethnic minorities are consistently underrepresented in the workforces of councils across all regions of England and Wales.
- **Ethnicity pay publication (all nations)**: of all councils, 39% (144 councils) reported some ethnicity pay data – 72% (23 councils) of Scottish councils reported ethnicity pay, 36% (116 councils) of English councils and 23% (5 councils) of Welsh councils.
- **Ethnicity pay publication (upper tier)**: of the upper tier councils, 34% (51 councils) provided new ethnicity pay information compared to 2022.
- **Ethnicity pay representation**: analysing ethnic minority representation in leadership roles is challenging due to the absence of standardised reporting and the voluntary nature of reporting on ethnicity pay. However, existing literature suggests that ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in leadership positions in local government.

2. Methodology

This research began with an inception meeting with Solace. The purpose of this meeting was to gain an understanding of how this research could build upon last year's report which only analysed English upper tier councils' data. Several key research questions were identified to guide the research and analysis, and the scope of the report was also discussed.

The scope of this research was formally defined and agreed with Solace, outlining the commitment to undertake analysis of data from a total of 382 individual councils. These included the metropolitan districts, county councils, London boroughs, unitary authorities, and district councils of England, the Scottish and Welsh unitary authorities, and the Northern Irish local government districts. However, Northern Irish local government districts were removed from the analysis due to there being no requirement to publish workforce ethnicity data and no data available. Maintaining consistency of methodology as last year, the first phase of the research began with desk research and the extensive data collection of all those councils. This data was collated into a spreadsheet, organised by the workforce profiles of individual local authorities. For each authority, the spreadsheet included data and percentages of the council's workforce composition, the year of the most recently published workforce profile report, and the availability of ethnicity pay gap or grade data. This data showcased the current EDI landscape across England, Scotland, and Wales.

In the first part of the analysis, councils were grouped into three categories based on the availability and detail of their workforce ethnicity data. To ensure continuity, the definition of complete and partial data remains consistent with last year's definition:

- 'Complete information': councils that published a detailed report or table specifying the numbers or percentages of employees from each ethnic category, e.g., white, Asian British, Black British, etc.
- 'Partial information': councils that published a report or table only stating the overall percentage of ethnic minority employees, e.g., white and then ethnic minority as a whole.
- 'No information': councils that do not publish any information on ethnicity of their workforce.[1]

The second part of the analysis looked at the representation of local authority workforces compared to their local demographics. The 2021 Census data on working age population was used when doing comparative analyses with the workforce populations of individual councils. When doing regional analyses, the average percentage of ethnic minorities per region have been weighted to account for the difference in headcount between councils. It should be noted that with the analysis on whether workforces are under or overrepresented in terms of ethnic minority representation, a degree of caution should be taken. Some councils have large proportions of 'prefer not to say' or 'unknown' data responses which can have a skewing effect when looking at representation of ethnicities. This is explored further in section 3.4: To what extent are councils demonstrating good practice on data publication and representation of local communities in their workforce? It is also important to mention that a small number of councils have gone through reorganisation, with some formed over the past year. Therefore, there may be councils that have not yet published data on workforce ethnicity.

The third part of the analysis encompassed the accessibility of ethnicity pay data, an analysis of ethnicity representation within various grade and/or salary bands, as well as an evaluation of any

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[1] It is worth noting that these councils may not necessarily be in violation of the Equality Duty, as some may be in the process of updating their data or are newly formed or merged councils.

existing ethnicity pay gaps. This segment of the analysis also looked at the representation of senior leadership within local government. It is noteworthy that the publishing of such data is voluntary, and councils choose to report this data in various forms. However, councils could be classified into two groups based on the availability of this data:

- Councils which publish information on pay and/or grade by ethnic group.
- Councils which do not publish any information on pay and/or grade by ethnic group.

The final phase of the research was dedicated to a more in-depth exploration of five case studies (This included four councils, and despite being removed from the analysis, a case study on Northern Ireland). The case studies that were selected are:

- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Leeds City Council
- Sutton Council
- Bristol City Council
- Northern Ireland

The areas chosen reflect diversity, both geographically and politically, and in terms of where they are in their journey towards addressing EDI. Developing these case studies entailed desk research and structured interviews with council representatives to gather comprehensive insights into their ambition, achievements, and challenges.

To ensure the validity and applicability of the findings to the broader sector and its aspirations, a sensemaking workshop was conducted with the Solace EDI reference group. This workshop provided an opportunity to rigorously test the findings and discuss their implications for the wider sector.

3. Analysis of findings

In the following sections of this report, we present the analysis and key findings as follows:

- What is the availability and date of published data? (all nations)
- What is the availability of data by nation and type of council?
  - English upper tier and district councils and by region
  - England, Scotland, and Wales comparison
  - Type of council – all nations
- How representative are council workforces of their local population? (England and Wales)
- To what extent are councils demonstrating good practice on data publication and representation of local communities in their workforce?
- What does the data tell us about pay by ethnicity?

In last year's report, the 152 upper tier councils in England were analysed; however, this year the scope was widened to look at 371 councils across England, Scotland, and Wales. This includes the metropolitan districts, county councils, London boroughs, unitarity authorities, and district councils of England, as well as the City of London and the Isles of Scilly. It also includes the Welsh and Scottish unitary authorities. Northern Ireland was initially included in this analysis; however, as they do not have a duty to publish workforce ethnicity data there was little information publicly available at the time of the analysis. The analysis explores the extent to which workforce ethnicity data and pay data is being published by councils of the UK, and whether councils' workforce compositions are reflective of their local demographics.

3.1 What is the availability and date of published data? (all nations)

### 3.1.1 Published data – availability

This pie chart illustrates the current landscape of workforce ethnicity data across all 371 councils from England, Scotland, and Wales.
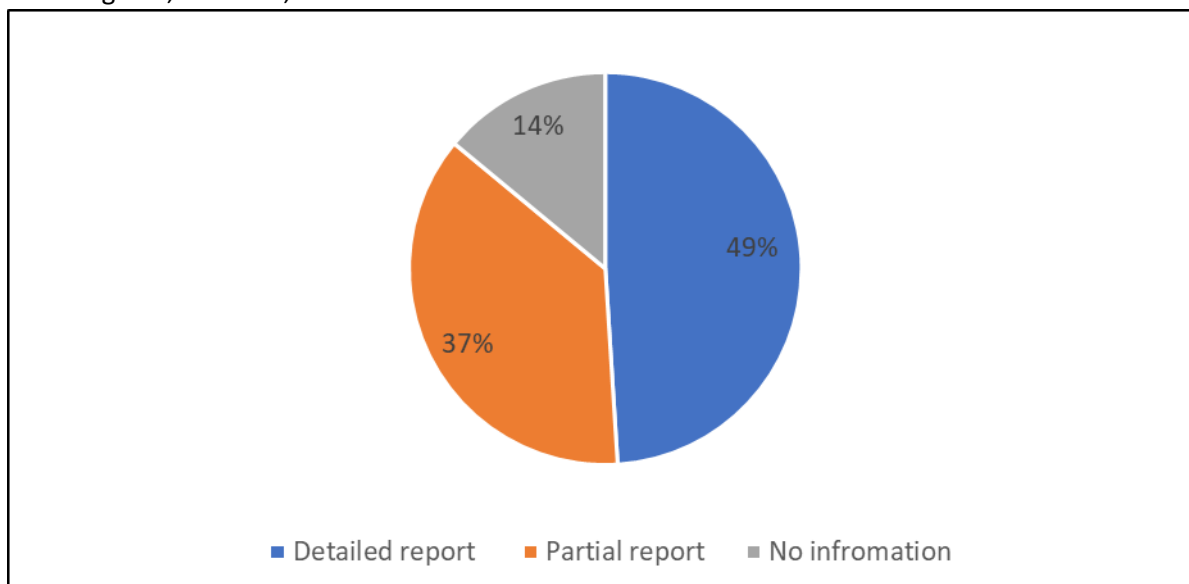
The research found that 86% (319 councils) of councils across England, Scotland, and Wales published either complete or partial data, 49% (181 councils) of which had complete information available. For 14% (52 councils) of councils, published information on the ethnicity breakdown of their workforce could not be located.

3.1.2 Published data – dates

This graph depicts the most recent year in which workforce ethnicity data was published by councils in England, Scotland, and Wales, encompassing the 319 councils that had information available.


The year councils published data
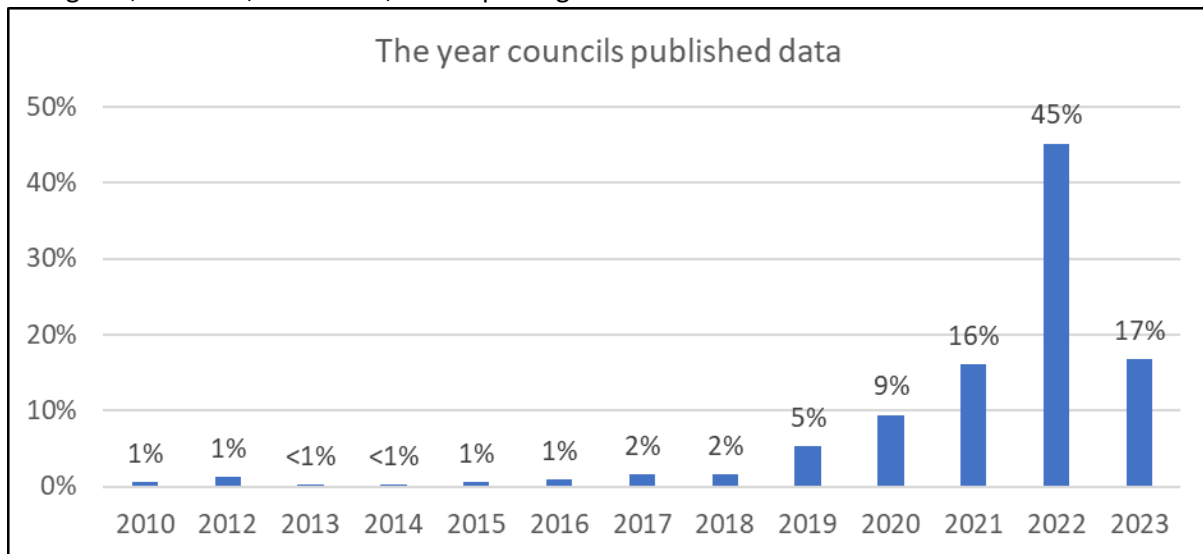
Similarly to last year, the data shows that there is variation regarding the dates in which reports are being published. While the majority of councils have published reports in the last two years, some councils have not published reports for several years. The fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic may still be affecting the development of workforce monitoring surveys and the subsequent publishing of results. For the councils included in this year's research, dates of published reports ranged from 2010 to 2023. Out of the councils that have published data, most (78% or 248 councils) have provided information on workforce ethnicity since 2021.

Focusing in on the 153 upper tier councils who were the subject of last year's report, 85% (121 councils) of these councils published information on workforce ethnicity over the past two years. This shows an increase of 4% from last year's report where 81% (114 councils) of councils had published data in the last two years. Additionally, the oldest report this year in the upper tier council cohort dates back to 2014 compared to 2012 in last year's report.

3.2   What is the availability of data by nation and type of council?

3.2.1 English upper tier councils and district councils

The map below shows the geographical distribution of workforce ethnicity data availability and detail of reports for upper tier councils in 2022.
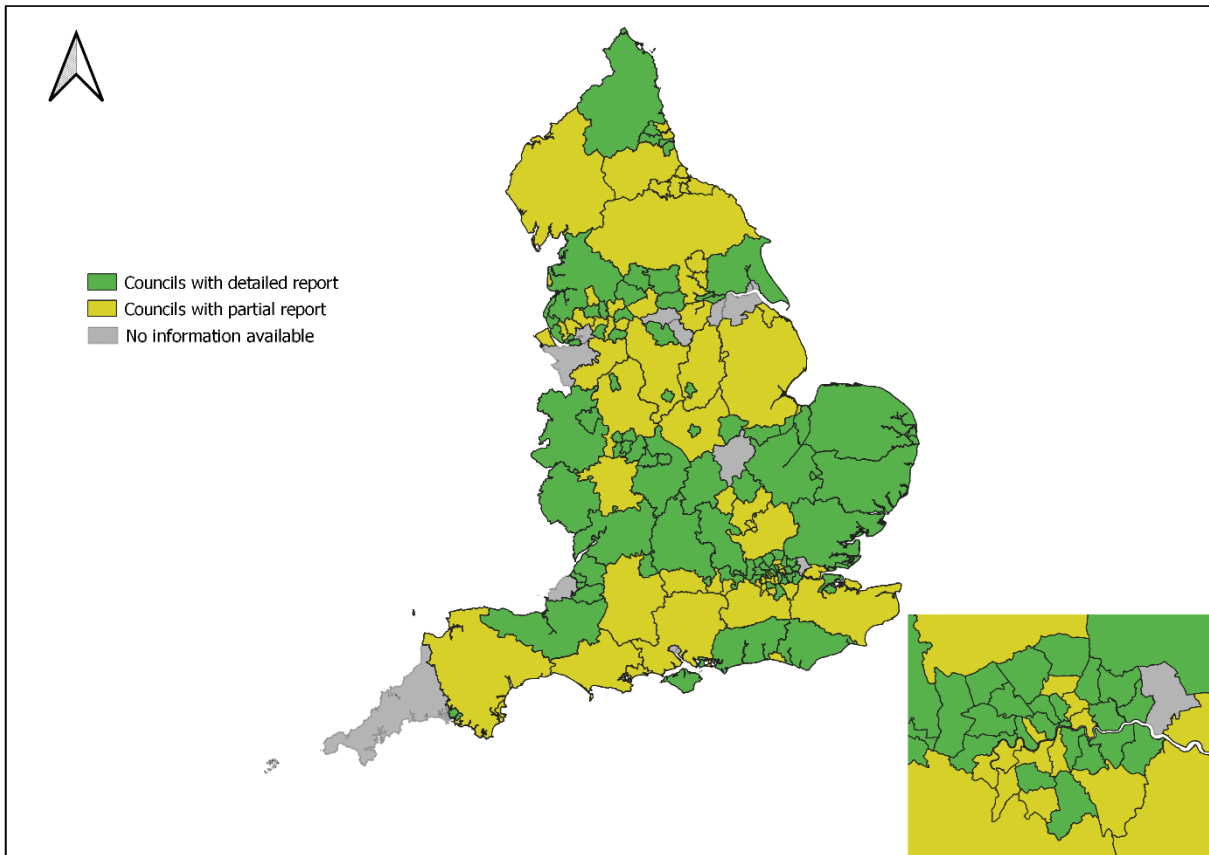
The map below shows the geographical distribution of workforce ethnicity data availability and detail of reports for upper tier councils in 2023.
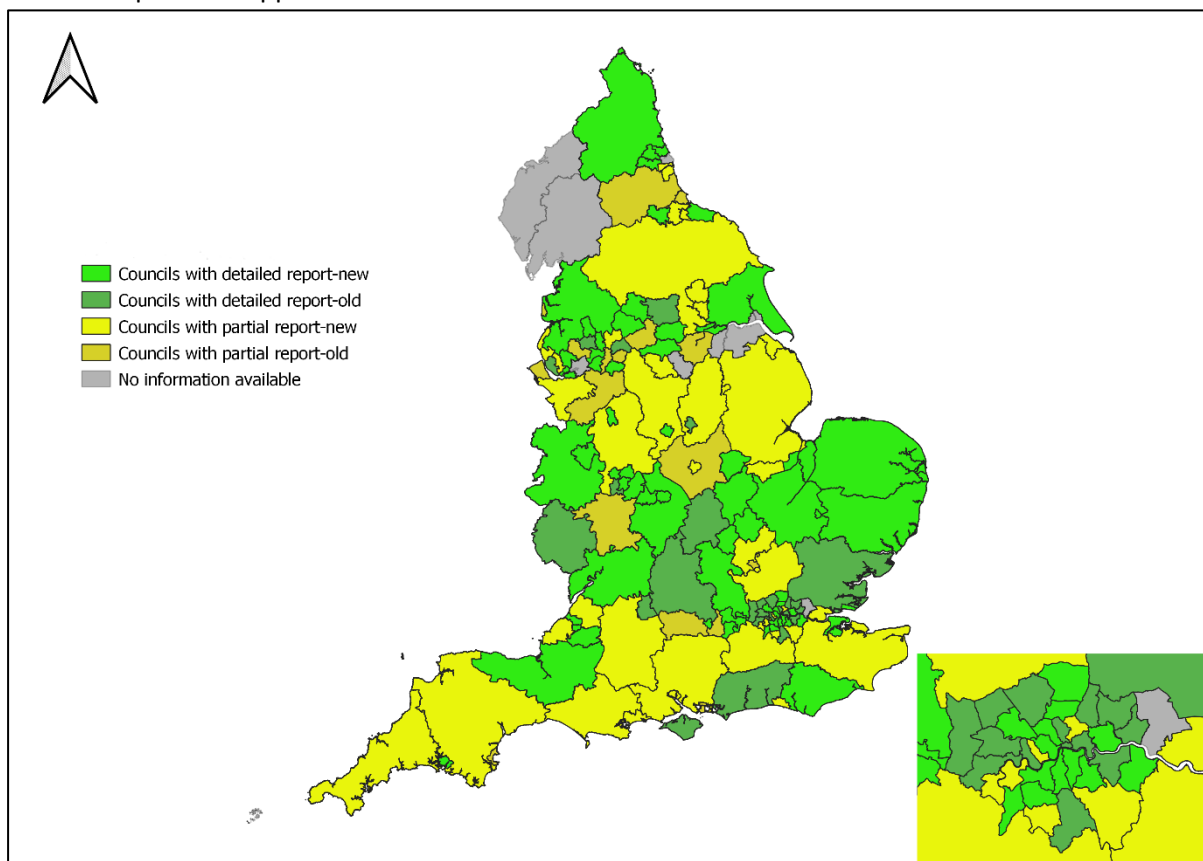

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The maps above present a comparative analysis between the data collected in the previous year's report (2022) and this year's report (2023). The dark green illustrates where there are detailed reports, while the dark yellow indicates where there are partial reports. Conversely, the grey signifies where data could not be located. The bright green in the 2023 map highlights where there is new complete workforce ethnicity data since last year's report and the bright yellow denotes where there is new partial workforce ethnicity data since last year's report.

This table shows the breakdown of workforce data in upper tier councils, displaying where there was new data added since last year's report.

N=153	Complete – new	Complete – old	Partially – new	Partially – old	No	total
Upper tier councils	62 (41%)	27 (18%)	37 (24%)	17 (11%)	9 (6%)	153 (100%)

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[2] Some councils have been newly formed in the last year and therefore may not have data available.

The map below shows the geographical distribution of workforce ethnicity data availability and detail of reports for district councils in 2023. Those councils shaded in black were not included in this analysis, due to them already being analysed in the upper tier analysis above.
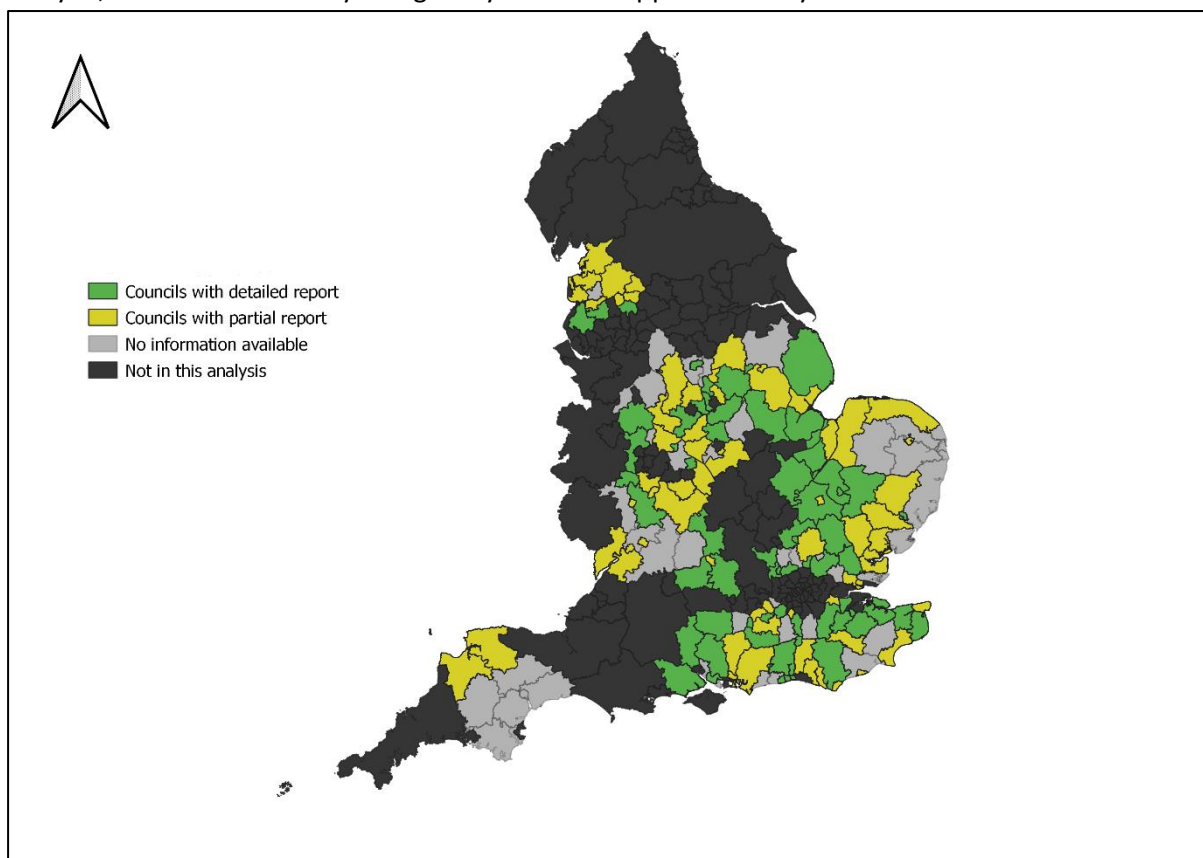
This table shows the breakdown of workforce data availability in both the upper tier and district councils.

	Complete	Partially	No
Upper tier	59% (90)	35% (54 councils)	6% (9 councils)
Districts	37% (61 councils)	38% (62 councils)	25% (41 councils)

The landscape of data publication among upper tier councils is notable for its progress. The majority (93%, 144 councils) of upper tier local authorities have published some form of data. Of these councils, 59% (90 councils) have published full data and there were 6% (9 councils) where data could not be located. This is an improvement from the 2022 report, with 3% more upper tier councils publishing complete data and a 1% increase of upper tier councils reporting overall (92% in 2022).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that 65% (100 councils) of the upper tier councils have actively published new data, either complete or partial, since last year's report.

When looking only at the district councils, a different landscape is observed. Of the districts, 75% (123 councils) have published data, with 37% (61 councils) being complete. This is less than upper tier authorities in both measures. Furthermore, 38% of the data (62 councils) was partial, compared to 35% (54 councils) for upper tier councils. Compared to upper tier, the districts publish considerably less complete data.

### 3.2.2 English regions (all England councils)

This table displays the percentage split of complete reports, partial reports, and no information available broken into regional divisions in England.

Region (N = 317)	Complete	Partial	No	Total
East Midlands	38%	44%	18%	100%
East of England	44%	34%	22%	100%
London	82%	15%	3%	100%
North East	50%	42%	8%	100%
North West	39%	50%	11%	100%
South East	51%	34%	14%	100%
South West	21%	48%	31%	100%
West Midlands	55%	30%	15%	100%
Yorkshire and The Humber	40%	40%	20%	100%

Breaking England down regionally, London has the highest complete data publication rate at 82% (27 councils), while the South West had the lowest at 21% (6 councils). Shifting focus to partial data, the North West had the highest percentage at 50% (18 councils), and London had the lowest at 15% (5 councils). Looking at the absence of data, the South West had the highest percentage of unlocatable data at 31% (9 councils), while London had the lowest at 3% (1 council).

### 3.2.3 English regions (upper tier councils)

This graph shows the breakdown of detailed reports, partial reports, and no information in upper tier authorities by region.
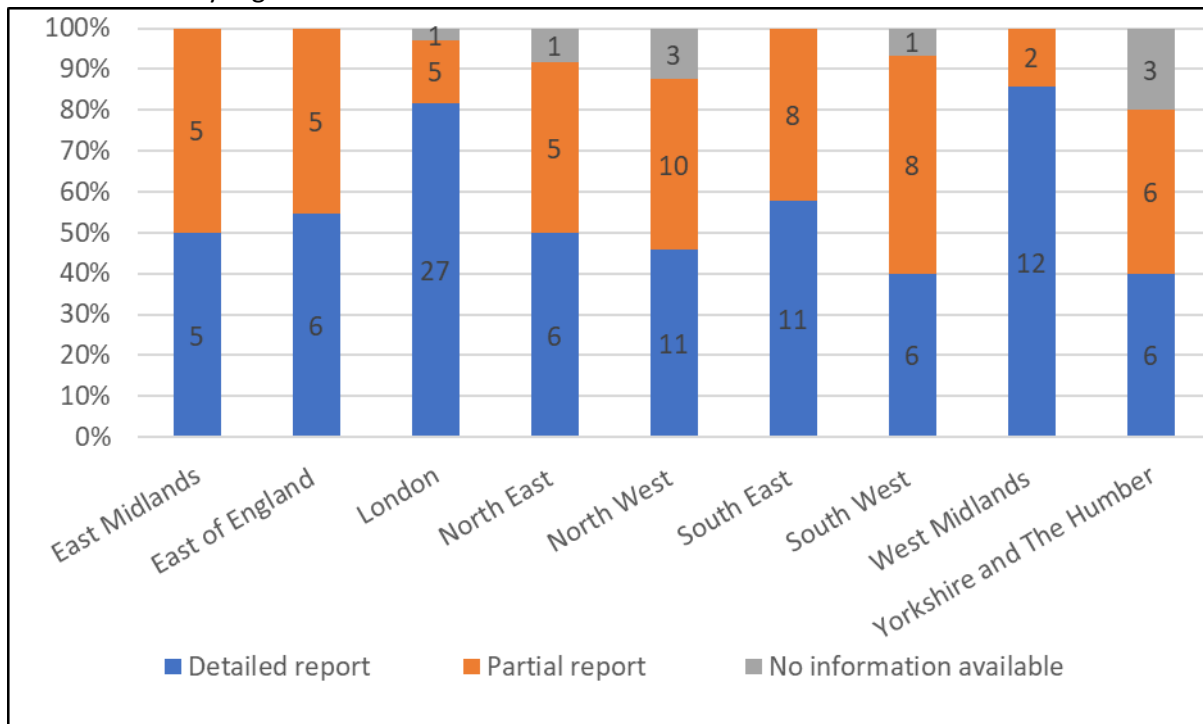

In last year's report, the East Midlands had one council where infromation was not locatable. However, this year, every council in the region had published a report on workforce ethnicity. Another notable improvement from last year is the number of detailed reports in London. Last year there were 22 detailed reports; this year however, it has risen to 27. Despite this, London still has one council where information was not locatable. Notably, this is the same council that was identified in last year's report. Overall, there have been improvements in data publiation across the upper tier councils, with only nine councils where workforce ethnicity data could not be found, compared to last year's count of 12.

### 3.2.4 England, Scotland, and Wales comparison

The map below shows the geographical distribution of workforce ethnicity data availability and detail of reports for Scottish unitary authorities in 2023.
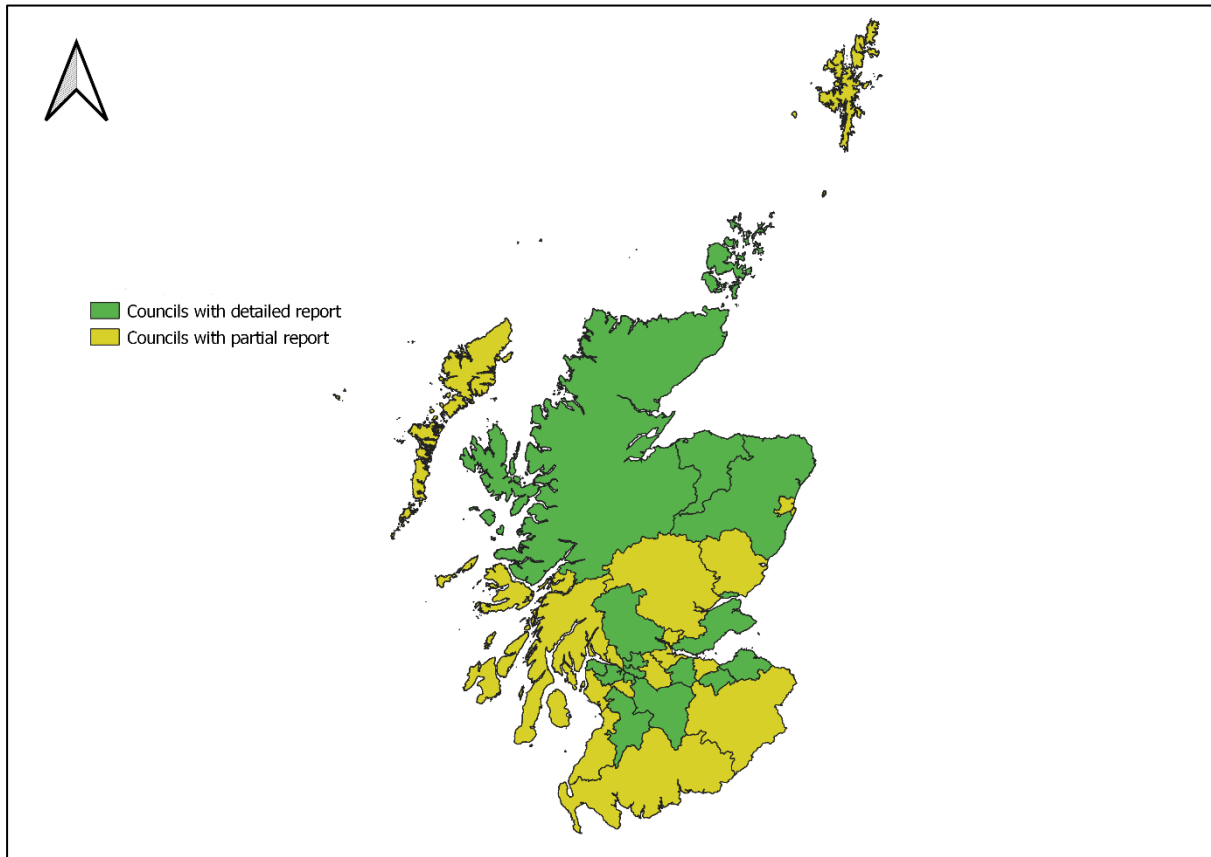
The map below shows the geographical distribution of workforce ethnicity data availability and detail of reports for Welsh unitary authorities in 2023.
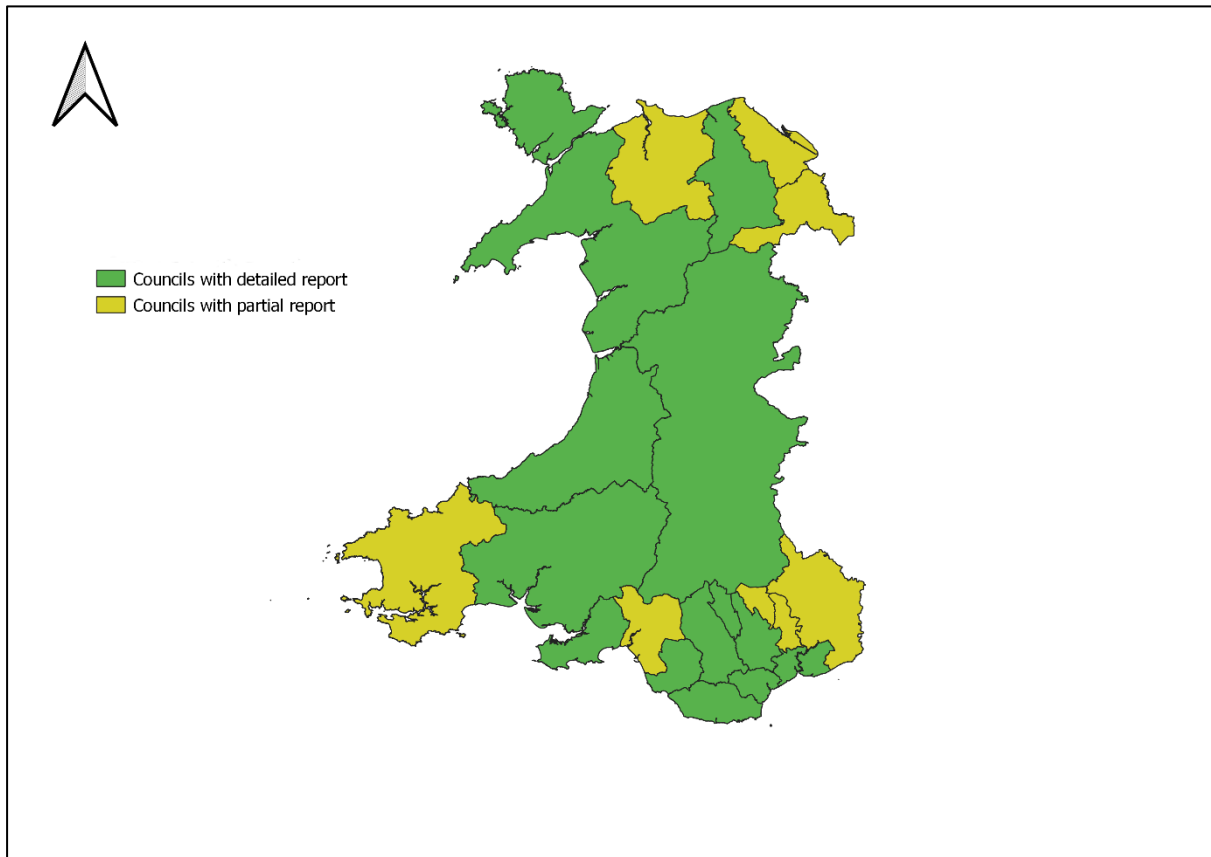
The pie charts below display the percentage split of complete reports, partial reports, and no information available in England, Scotland, and Wales.
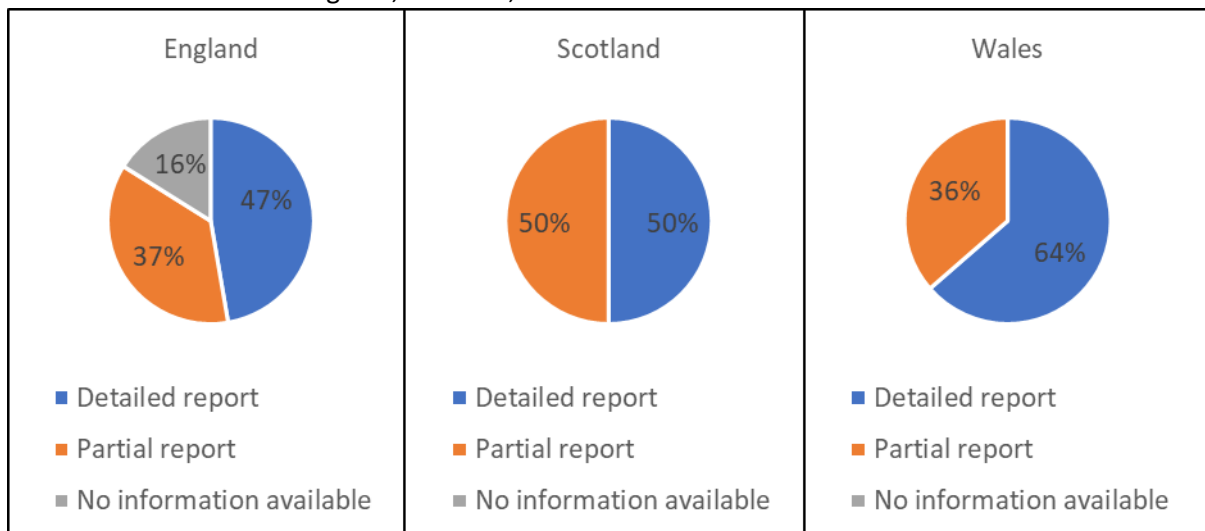
The data publication analysis of England revealed that the percentage of data being published stands at 84% (267 councils), with 47% (151 councils) being complete, 37% (116 councils) being partial, and with unlocatable data for 16% of councils (50 councils). Upper tier councils demonstrate a stronger inclination towards complete data publication, as compared to the districts.

All 32 of the Scottish councils published data with 50% being partial and 50% being complete. 100% of Welsh councils published data with 64% (14 councils) being complete and 36% (8 councils) being

partial. However, it should be noted that for two of the Welsh councils, the data published was indiscernible due to the format of the graphs, being pie charts with no figures attached.

Further examination has highlighted the lack of uniformity in data presentation across England and Wales. There is a lack of a standardised reporting style as well as the categories used – councils adopted various approaches, including equalities profiles, monitoring reports, and workforce strategies. Presentation methods varied as well, ranging from web-based platforms to downloadable documents. However, there was more uniformity in Scottish data. It could usually be found in mainstreaming reports, and the five main census categories were typically used. It is notable that in all nations, some percentages did not always add up to 100% in their published total count and there were cases where the data was unreadable, like in the case of those two Welsh councils.

3.2.5 Type of council (all nations)

The graph below shows the breakdown of complete reports, partial reports, and no information by type of authority.
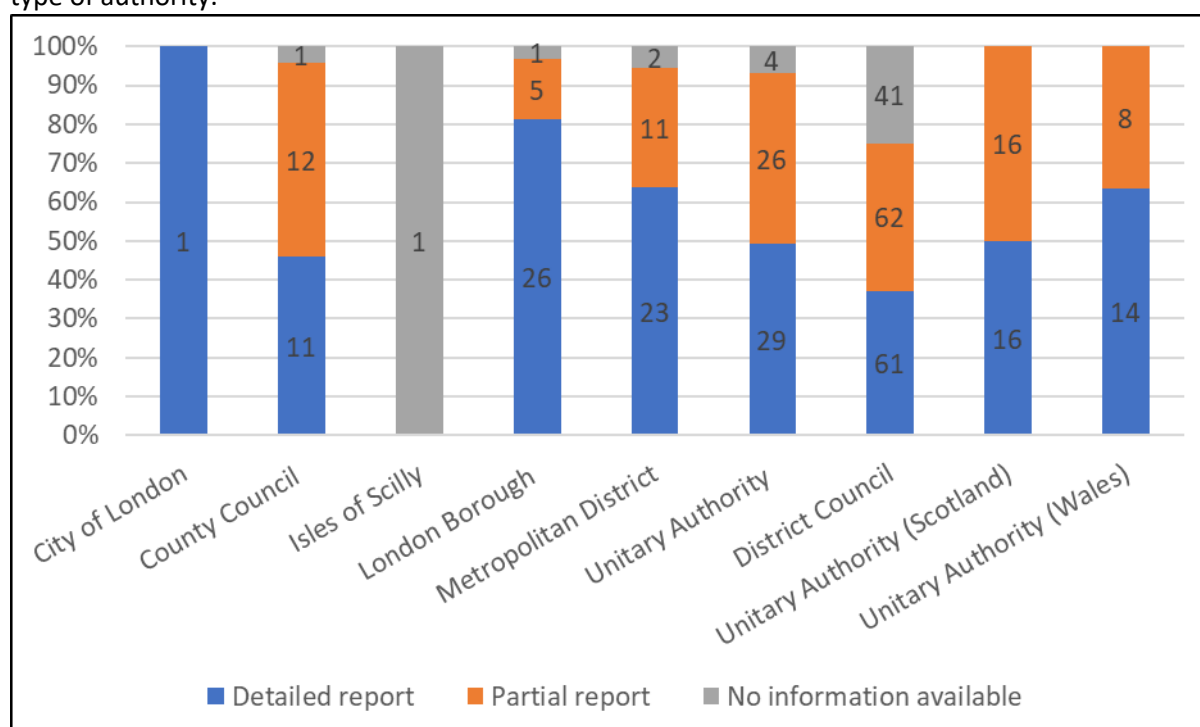
A substantial 87% (321 councils) of councils have published either complete or partial reports, with 49% (181 councils) being complete. A significant 84% (151 councils) of councils in England have published either full or partial data. London boroughs were the category with the highest proportion of published data, with only 1 out of 32 councils not having locatable data. Scottish and Welsh unitary authorities have the highest percentage of publishing either complete or partial data at 100% each. Conversely, among the various types of councils, district councils have the lowest proportion of councils publishing data, with 25% of councils (41 councils) having no locatable data.

3.3 How representative are council workforces? (England and Wales)

This map shows the average percentage of ethnic minority council employees by region.
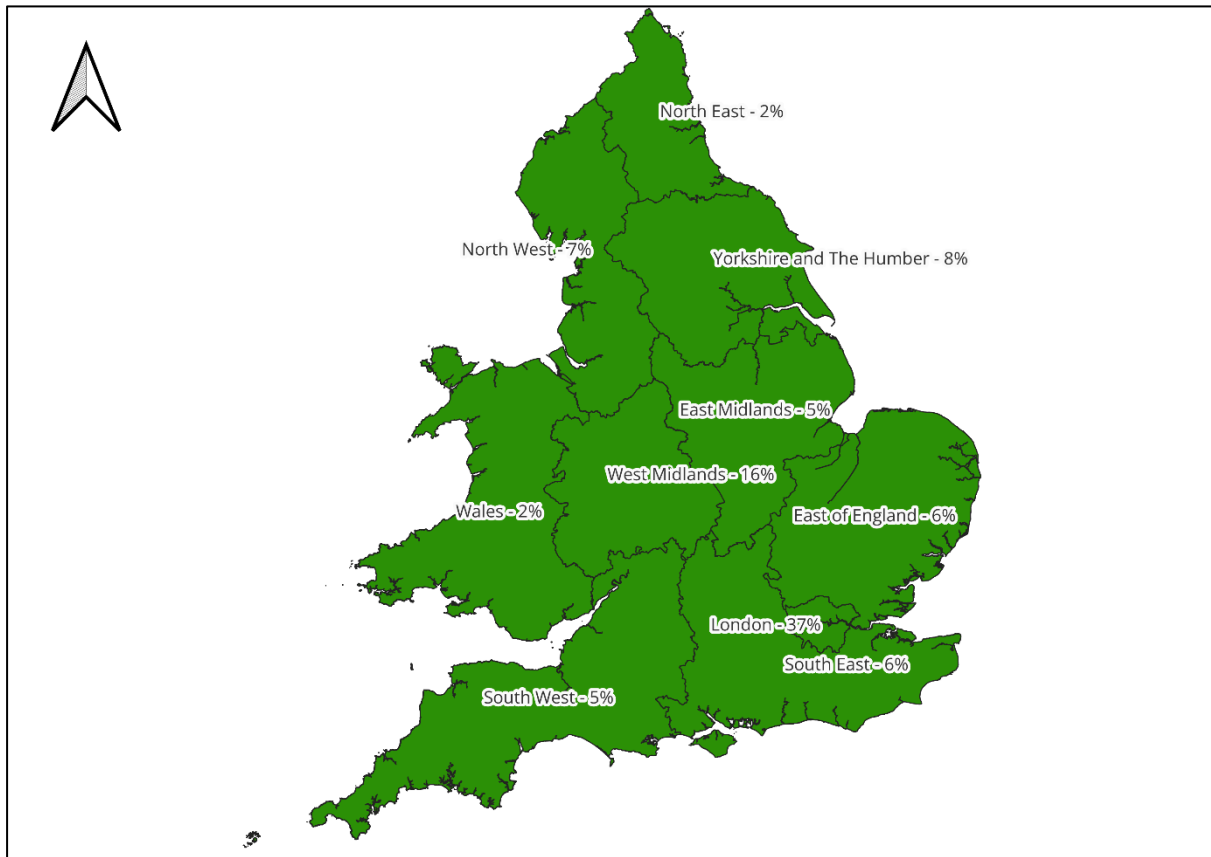
This graph compares the average percentage of ethnic minority council employees by region with the percentage of the region's population aged 16–64 who identified as an ethnic minority.
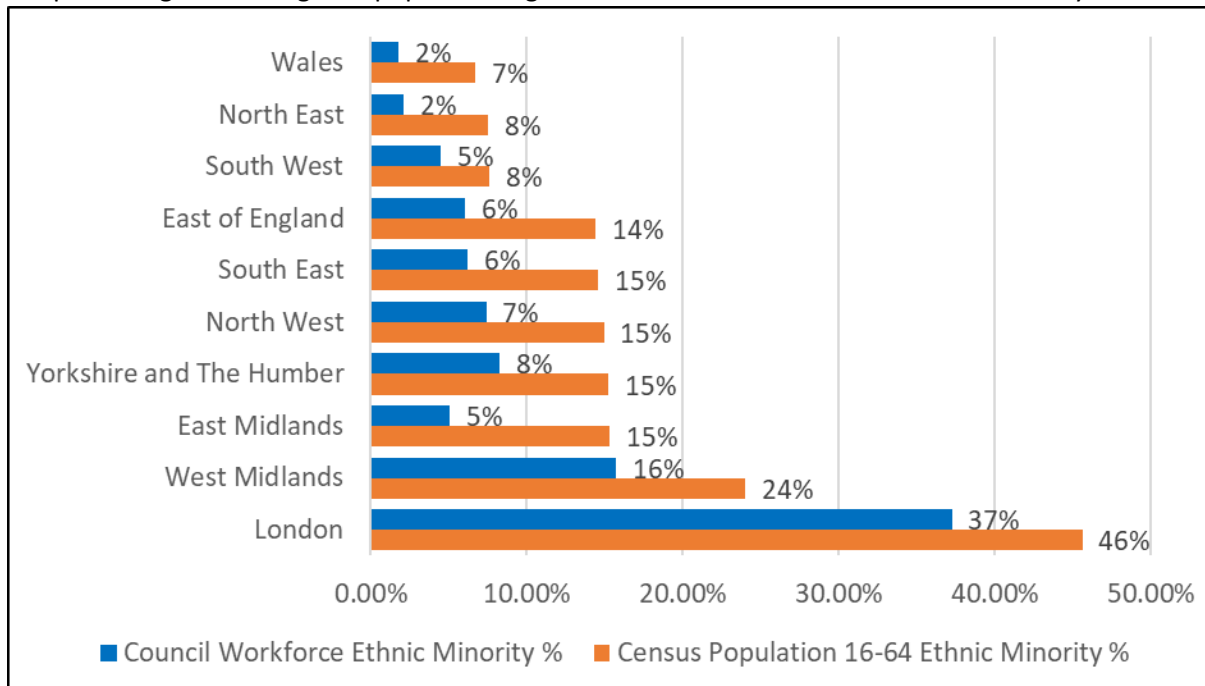
This analysis aimed to estimate the overall ethnic minority representation percentage within the local government workforce based on regions. As census data for Scotland was not available at the time of the analysis, the analysis focused on the 251 councils in England and Wales that had workforce ethnicity data available. The average ethnic minority percentage was worked out by creating a weighting that was applied to each of the councils to then calculate the average percentage for ethnic minority representation in local government by region.

The graph above shows that ethnic minorities are underrepresented in all regions, some much more than others. For example, while the working age ethnic minority population in the North East is 8%, on average only 2% of the North East council's workforces are comprised of ethnic minorities. This requires a significant 300% increase of ethnic minorities in their council's workforces to be representative of their local demographic. On the other hand, London councils' workforces were the most representative of their local demographic, with 37% being comprised of ethnic minorities, while the working age ethnic minority population in London was 46%. It is noteworthy that London would require a 24% increase in ethnic minorities in their councils' workforces to be representative of their local demographic.

This map presents the distribution of ethnic minority underrepresentation across different regions.
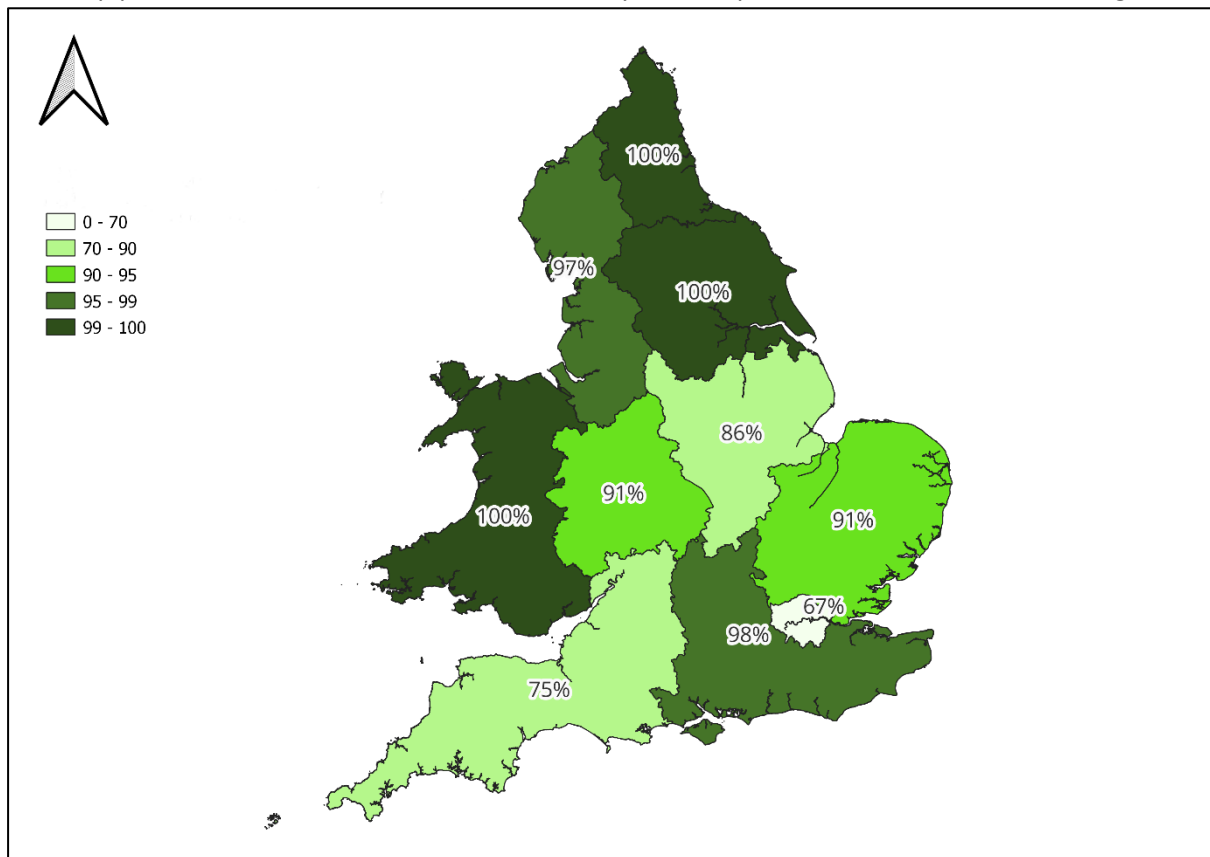
This analysis is similar, but slightly different to the previous one. Again, it analysed the data published by 251 councils, from England and Wales. By cross referencing individual council data with the 2021 census data, councils that were under or over representative of ethnic minorities were identified. These councils were then grouped by regional divisions, and the proportion of councils underrepresenting ethnic minorities in relation to their local demographics was calculated.

Notably, three regions – Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East, and Wales – experience a 100% rate of underrepresentation across all councils analysed[3]. Nearly all regions, apart from three, demonstrated a significant underrepresentation rate of at least 90% concerning ethnic minorities. The region that displayed the lowest percentage of underrepresentation was London at 67%.

3.4   To what extent are councils demonstrating good practice on data publication and representation of local communities in their workforce?

This map presents a three-pronged analysis including availability of workforce ethnicity data, availability of ethnicity pay data, and representation of ethnic minorities by upper tier councils and Welsh unitary authorities (175 councils).
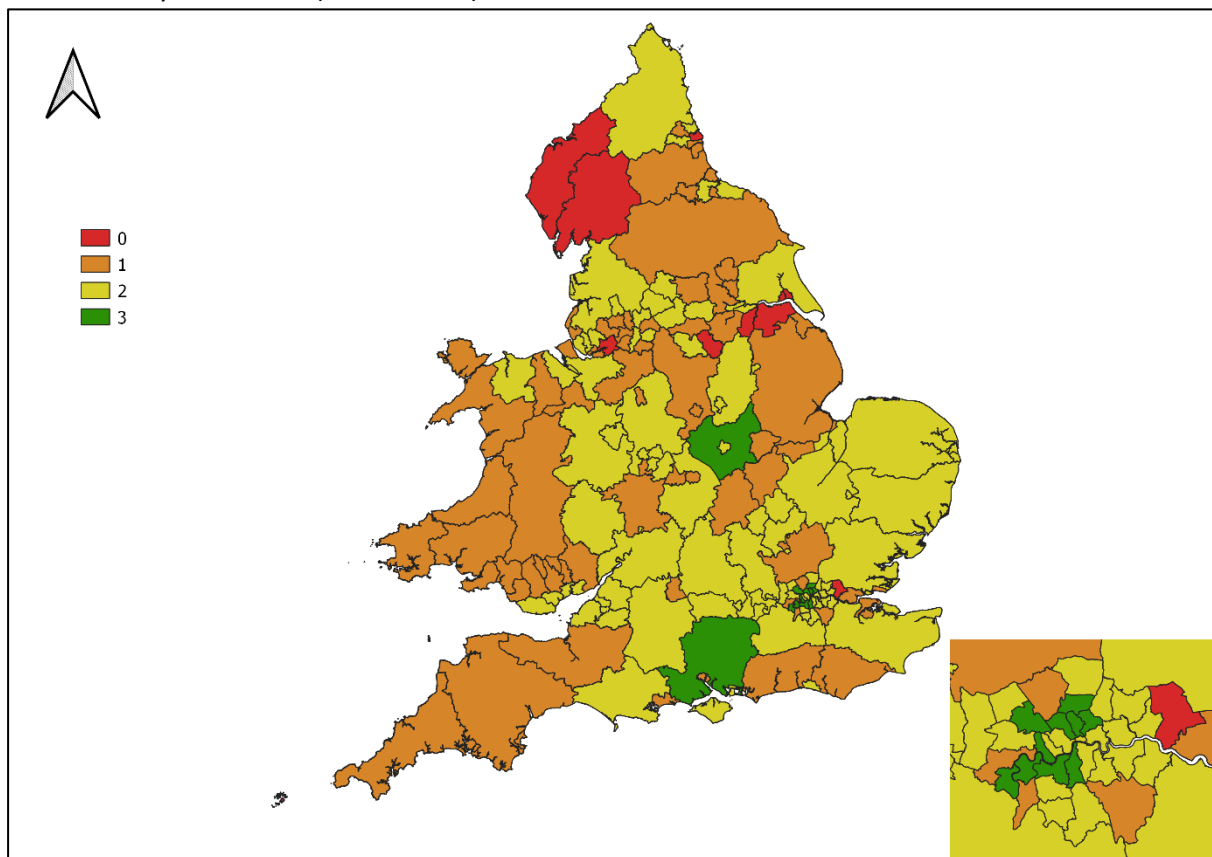
Each council has been ranked from 0–3 and the analysis looked at availability of workforce ethnicity data, availability of ethnicity pay data, and representation of ethnic minorities. Every time a council delivered on one of those markers, they were awarded one point and when they did not meet one of those markers, they were not given a point. Scotland was not included in the analysis because at the time of the analysis there was no publicly available census data. The analysis found that 5% (9 councils) scored 0 out of 3, 41% (71 councils) scored 1 out of 3, 48% (84 councils) scored 2 out of 3, and 6% (11 councils) scored 3 out of 3. The vast majority, 89% (155 councils), scored 1 or 2 out of 3.

In the analyses of representation, it was noted that the census data did not include 'prefer not to say' and 'unknown' categories, unlike many workforce data reports. This needed to be considered in the analysis[4]; if a council had a high percentage of 'unknown' and 'prefer not to say' data, it could skew

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[3] All the councils analysed in those three regions underrepresented ethnic minorities in comparison to their local population.
[4] It is important to note that exercising caution in the analysis of representation should not detract from the findings presented in the report.

the overall interpretation of the data, leading to inaccuracies when looking at representation of the workforce. For example, one council had 70% 'unknown' responses and 28% 'white' responses. This large unknown percentage had therefore skewed the white percentage. By cross referencing with the census data, it highlights that 76% of councils working age population are white. Therefore, an analysis would suggest that white employees are substantially underrepresented in that council, whereas this may not be entirely true.[5]

3.5   What does the data tell us about pay by ethnicity?

This pie chart illustrates the current landscape of ethnicity pay data across all 371 councils from England, Scotland, and Wales.
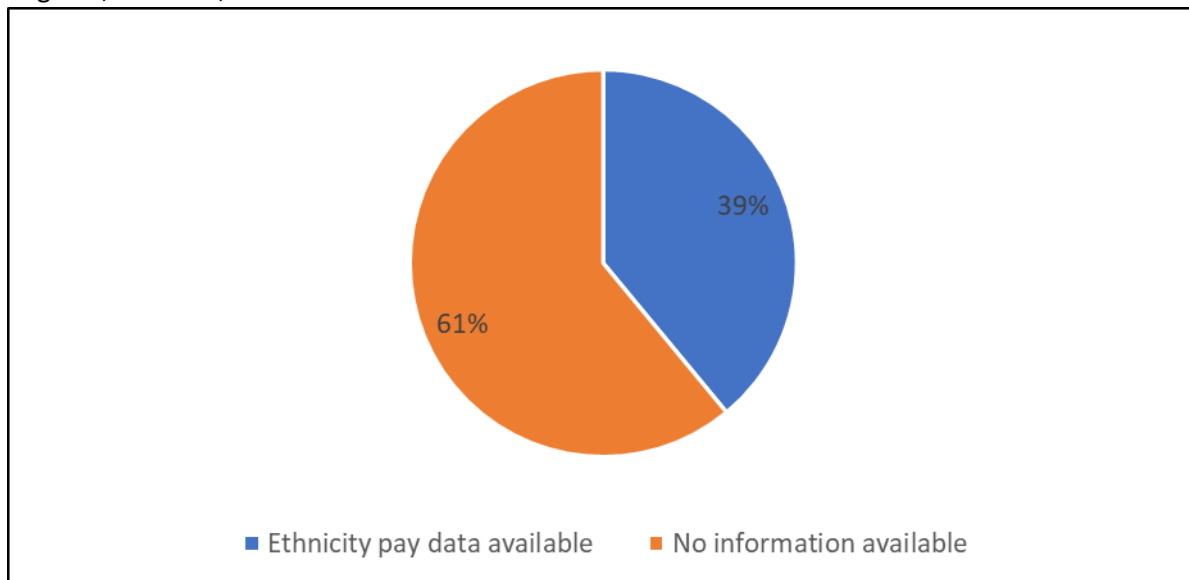
This analysis should be contextualised by acknowledging that reporting ethnicity pay data is not mandated by law. Consequently, local councils voluntarily engage in this endeavour, which may explain the inconsistent and limited availability of information regarding the ethnicity pay gap, grade distribution, and leadership representation. Of all the councils, 39% (144 councils) reported some form of information on ethnicity pay while 61% (227 councils) of councils did not. In England, London provided the most information with 85% (28 councils) of councils reporting on ethnicity pay. The South West had the lowest percentage of ethnicity pay reported with 17% (5 councils) of councils reporting information. More than half of English upper tier councils (56%, 85 councils) published information about ethnicity pay whereas 19% (31 councils) of district councils published information. Of the upper tier councils, 34% (51 councils) provided new ethnicity pay information compared to 2022. Out of the nations, 72% (23 councils) of Scottish councils reported ethnicity pay, 36% (116 councils) of English councils, and 23% (5 councils) of Welsh councils.

For English councils that reported, the information was mostly in the form of a statement on ethnicity pay gap or a statement about pay grades within larger reports, i.e., equality reports or gender pay gap reports. Scottish councils often published information on ethnicity pay in mainstreaming reports or alongside information on gender pay. The information provided was often on ethnic pay gap including the mean and sometimes, median pay gaps. Of the five out of 22 Welsh councils that published information on ethnicity pay, four of these were a statement on ethnicity pay and one on grade.

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[5] It should be noted that high levels of 'prefer not to say' and 'unknown' also limit councils' ability to accurately monitor diversity.

Improvements in the numbers of councils reporting complete and new data on their ethnicity workforce breakdown, including data relating to pay, does indicate progress in authorities' awareness of ethnicity, inclusion, and diversity. There has also been moves for authorities to report on the levels of representation in senior leadership and across different bands and grades.

Many of the findings from last year's report relating to pay data and seniority continue to be relevant in this research. The previous research and wider literature highlight that representation of minority ethnic groups drops significantly at senior or leadership positions, and among the top earners. Accurate estimation of senior and leadership representation is difficult to conclude due to disclosure rates dropping at these higher levels[6].

Analysis of this year's data presents a nuanced picture of representation and leadership within councils, making it challenging to draw overarching conclusions. However, several key observations can be made:

- A striking observation is the minimal emphasis placed on diversity and inclusion regarding minority ethnic groups in leadership roles within the reports included in this research.
- A significant hurdle in drawing meaningful insights stems from the substantial inconsistencies in reporting practices between councils and across different reporting years. These discrepancies become evident in various ways, such as the shifting approaches taken by councils in reporting and presenting ethnicity pay and leadership data from 2022 to 2023. This lack of uniformity and lack of structure makes it difficult to draw conclusions between councils across different years.
- The concept of seniority and leadership itself is subject to diverse interpretations and definitions within the reports. Some councils employ multiple indicators of seniority, including factors like the top 5% of earners, individuals with incomes exceeding a certain threshold (e.g., £50,000), pay grades and bands (e.g., HAYs, JNC), and considering chief officers, directors, and senior management collectively or separately as leadership roles.
- Further complicating the analysis is the lack of consistency in categorising individuals by ethnicity when reporting on leadership and seniority. While some councils utilise the term 'BAME' to encompass all minority ethnic groups, others opt for census ethnicity categories (e.g., Asian/Asian British) when discussing the breakdown of senior leadership and pay.

In sum, while this year's data offers valuable insights into the state of representation and leadership within councils, the aforementioned complexities and inconsistencies underscore the need for standardised reporting practices and a more focused commitment to addressing diversity and inclusion in leadership roles. A standardised approach would be beneficial in facilitating meaningful cross-council and cross-year comparisons and advancing the equitable distribution across local government.

To help get a better understanding of diversity and leadership representation of ethnic minorities in local government, a desk review was conducted. A series of reports were reviewed, ranging from 2018–21. The key findings from these reports have been collated and are presented below.

The findings are consistent in that, despite commitments for greater change, leadership positions are still underrepresented in terms of those from ethnic minority backgrounds. For example, in 2018 the Green Park Leadership Series' annual report on Local Government Leadership revealed a lack of diversity, particularly among Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic CEOs in local government bodies. This

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[6] Previous report, page 11

issue was especially pronounced in London, where only 2 out of the 32 boroughs had ethnic minority CEOs. This report did identify the increasing representation of ethnic minorities in the top 20 senior management positions in London boroughs. However, overall, the report highlighted a systematic problem of inadequate ethnocultural diversity throughout the public sector in the UK, with ethnic minority CEOs making up 3% of leadership positions despite the country's 13% non-white population.

Similarly, in 2020, Green Park also published The Colour of Power which revealed a persistent lack of diversity in leadership across various sectors in the UK. This research found that ethnic minority individuals only held 4.7% of the most influential positions. It also highlighted that progress in increasing diversity had been relatively slow, with a 1.2% gain in the number of ethnic minority-held roles since 2017. Finally, it found that Black individuals were particularly underrepresented, holding only 1.5% of these influential roles. Additionally, in 2021, The Wales Centre for Public Policy conducted a report on Improving Race Equality in Leadership and Representation which echoed these concerns. The report emphasised the underrepresentation of Black, Asian, and Ethnic Minority individuals in leadership positions in Wales. Current literature highlights that there is still much to do in terms of ethnic minority representation at leadership levels within the local government, emphasising that this is a pervasive issue that affects all regions.

4. Case studies

The purpose of these case studies is to highlight positive examples where councils have made progress on their EDI journey. In particular, they highlight challenges and how they are attempting to overcome them.

4.1   Case study 1 – Cheshire West and Chester Council

Context

Cheshire West and Chester Council has been championing work on addressing EDI in the workplace for many years. In 2014, the council was one of the first local authorities to achieve the 'excellent' level of the 'Equality Framework for Local Government'. The authority continues to hold several accreditations and certificates around EDI, including being a member of Inclusive Employers.

The council developed equalities-focused governance structures that provide mechanisms to shape the strategic direction of work on EDI as well as ensure delivery on the council's ambition. Senior leadership are engaged in these structures and are committed to ensuring change within the council workforce. Representatives from a range of council staff networks focused on protected characteristics, such as the Embrace Network and Disability Networks, also feed in consistently to these structures, ensuring the lived experience of the workforce is informing decision-making.

Challenge: lack of mechanism to collect data on ethnicity and other protected characteristics in the workforce

The EDI and HR teams recognise that the current collection of demographic data of the workforce is a challenge for the authority due to the data not being collected consistently, and staff members choosing not to disclose their data. These factors have resulted in gaps in the data and understanding of the diversity of the workforce. Although the council recently transitioned to a new HR system, there is still more to do to ensure demographic data can be captured consistently. This data is key to the council as it helps the organisation deepen its understanding of its diverse workforce and continue to evolve and improve its offer as an employer of choice.

Overcoming the challenge

The council is addressing this issue in two ways. Firstly, the HR and EDI teams have worked together to create a diversity monitoring questionnaire to collect data on workforce protected characteristics and backgrounds. The questionnaire is in a more user-friendly Google form format that is quick to complete, and the form makes it clear why the data is being collected, how it will be used and stored, and that responses are confidential. Secondly, this data collection initiative is embedded in a wider approach to building trust with staff members through demonstrating the council's ambition and the steps it is taking to ensure it is an inclusive organisation. This encompasses the range of efforts being made within the council: forming dedicated governance structures to shape and drive action; specific campaigns such as 'Be You' to create a culture of 'belonging'; sharing lived and ally experiences to enable all colleagues to 'bring their whole selves to work'; and embedding the THRIVE values and behaviours of staff. In addition, the council has facilitated dedicated EDI events such as a recent 'colleague connect' where leaders and network representatives shared their thoughts on 'Be You', and provided assurances to staff who have queries or concerns over giving their data.

What did they achieve?

While data collection is part of an ongoing exercise, data from a quarter of staff has been collected. Current data, which may change with greater responses, suggests that 6% to 7% of the workforce are from an ethnic minority group. This is a higher percentage of ethnic minorities than reported in previous reports, at around 1%. This new percentage is reflective of the residents in Cheshire West

and Chester, with the 2021 census data recording that 4.7% identify as an ethnicity outside of the various 'white' descriptions.

Next steps

The council will continue to work towards creating an environment that enables employees to feel comfortable disclosing their personal information with the support of council networking groups and the leadership team. The HR and EDI team envisage an increase in survey responses due to the existing, but continually developing, inclusive workplace environment. They aim to ensure that they continue the conversation relating to EDI and promote the advancements made to policies, development, and progression as a result of disclosure.

4.2   Case study 2 – Leeds City Council

Context

One of the three core aims within Leeds City Council is to be an inclusive employer. They want to promote diversity and embed equality as a central theme in all the decisions they make that involve their workforce. The council has made good progress on their messaging, encouraging colleagues to see the positive work of EDI as a journey for everyone to take, and involving their workforce in decisions to help champion this programme. The public backing of Leeds City Council's Chief Executive, Tom Riordan, has driven these programmes forward and has been an important element of the development of a workforce community that centres EDI in all work that they do. This is through a five-point approach focussing on recruitment, progression, zero tolerance, training, and data and monitoring.

Challenges: fostering trust and transparency in information sharing among staff

Leeds City Council has a strong record in collecting data within their workforce; however a challenge they have faced is finding ways to encourage staff to declare their information and to trust that their information would be shared with the right people as a tool to take positive action.

Overcoming the challenge

Sharing data and promoting their work internally has been an effective way for the council to build trust and create an environment for employees to feel comfortable to declare their information and share workplace experiences. The council uses a HR tool powered by Microsoft's Power BI data visualisation software which provides a visual database of the protected characteristics of teams within the council and compares the data with Leeds as a whole. This gives managers a practical overview of diversity within their team and encourages them to look at their recruitment, retention, and promotion practices in an inclusive way.

Designing EDI resources to engage with frontline colleagues who are not digitally connected has also been a priority at Leeds City Council. Addressing this challenge has involved providing EDI training to frontline supervisors and collaborating with staff networks to gain a clearer understanding of pain points in staff experiences.

The council has also developed a mandatory EDI five-step training programme for all managers, which was co-produced with members of their workforce and delivered to all 2,200 managers in the council. This collaborative approach to EDI training has created a learning environment where managers and employees can learn from each other and foster a sense of accountability that encourages ongoing commitments to EDI at the council. They also recently appointed a 'Freedom to speak' guardian to encourage a 'speak up' culture in their workplace where employees can share their experiences in Leeds City Council with an independent agent.

Achievements

The feedback from managers and staff members has been positive. In their most recent staff survey with over 7,000 respondents, nine out of 10 employees felt that their team was committed to EDI work, and 75% of employees felt comfortable to speak up about their experiences in their workplace.

The data from the Power BI tool has also had a positive reception among managers and has helped the council identify pockets within the organisation where the proportion of staff who feel comfortable speaking is lower than the baseline, providing managers with extra support in creating a diverse and inclusive workforce.

Next steps

Leeds City Council will continue to work with and actively involve their staff members in championing their EDI programme. In the new year, they will be embarking on step five of their five-step training programme. The final step is to share reflections and updates on how this new approach has worked well and areas that can be improved, and talk with managers about ways the council can help them.

4.3   Case study 3 – London Borough of Sutton

Context

Sutton Council's approach to addressing EDI has received significant recognition over the past few years. In 2022, they were honoured with the 'Workforce Transformation' Award at the MJ Awards for their achievements with Kingston Council in enhancing the representation of women and Black, Asian, and minority ethnic staff at senior levels. In 2023, they jointly won the 'Inclusion and Diversity Programme/Initiative' award with Kingston Council. Sutton has also recently been awarded the Silver Trailblazer award by Race Equality Matters, the first local authority in the council and one of only three organisations in the UK.

In 2020, the authority established a working group chaired by the Chief Executive Officer to address issues shared by its Black, Asian, and multi-ethnic workforce and developed a dedicated race equality action plan to review their processes. Since then, Sutton Council has implemented several initiatives to improve EDI in the workforce. These initiatives include: organising listening events centred around their policies; education and celebration to identify systemic barriers to diversity; and promoting staff confidence in challenging specific council processes.

Challenge: representation at senior levels and data disclosure rates

A particular challenge has been around ensuring diversity is considered in recruitment processes and that staff are able to progress into senior positions. These areas were raised through the Multi-ethnic Network as issues faced by communities in the workforce. In particular, staff felt they could be judged by their names through the application process and that they didn't see diverse faces on interview panels.

There are also issues around disclosure rates of ethnicity data among the workforce, with 15% of the workforce choosing not to disclose their ethnicity during the recruitment process.

Overcoming the challenge

In response to the issues around recruitment and progression in the council, Sutton created an internal 'Aspiring Leaders programme' to enable participants to explore and develop their leadership. By creating an internal programme, it enabled Sutton to shape the values and approach of a local government leader. For each of the cohort programmes, colleagues apply directly to join the

programme through a criteria that encourages underrepresented groups. This allows opportunities for staff to progress independently without the requirement of their manager's nomination.

They also developed a 'manager's programme' after listening to staff members who were not managers but wanted experience and training. They are now on cohort three and are oversubscribed due to the high demand. Furthermore, they also made changes to recruitment processes including anonymous recruitment, changes to job descriptions and diverse interview panels, following the advice of staff networks.

The council also has a share/not declare campaign which explains that respondents' data is not shared but staff are regularly updated on practices. This includes annually condensing and presenting workforce data findings in a 30-minute session internally. Keeping staff informed about the uses of their data could be a way to drive down disclosure rates.

Achievements

These changes have correlated with an increase in the headcount of multi-ethnic employees earning more than £50,000, which rose by 8% since 2019/20 to 22% in 2022/23. Furthermore, within their managers programme they have seen at least three promotions in the last year. The 'Aspiring Leaders programme' has also seen some organisational mobility and although some attendees who took the course have moved onto other organisations, they still see the training as successful and having provided a launchpad for progression.

As mentioned, Sutton Council has received recognition of the progress they have made to address EDI in the council through awards from the MJ awards, Public Services People Managers Association (PPMA) and Race Equality Network.

Next steps

The council will continue to work with and actively enlist staff networks to continue to progress EDI, taking an intersectional approach across the council. This includes continuing to promote representation of the local community at all levels in the council to match the 43% of residents from a multi-ethnic background.

4.4   Case study 4 – Bristol City Council

Context

The council engages with several activities to improve EDI, both internally and externally. Internally, the council has a number of staff networks and adopts a cumulative approach to budget planning equality impact assessments, understanding the overall impact of several policies on particular groups. A significant amount of Bristol's EDI activity involves external convening and empowering partners, the community and wider public sector. For example, the health and race equity group which the council established during the COVID-19 pandemic has been continued to maintain a focus on understanding why racially minoritised people have worse health outcomes.

The council has recognised their position at the centre of the public sector. Therefore, the council has led the way in workforce practices and encouraging the wider public sector to prioritise EDI and representation.

Challenge: lack of ethnicity representation in the workforce

At the start of his term Bristol City Councils' Mayor declared the council institutionally racist, due to failings in the council's treatment of a local resident. Further to this, the council is not representative of the local population. There is also a lack of representation within the wider public sector.

Lack of trust in public services is prevalent within some local communities, leading to additional barriers in certain groups applying for roles within the public sector and the council.

Overcoming the challenge

Since the Mayor's declaration the council has taken steps to embed equity and inclusion into their frameworks, strategies and practices, and address underrepresentation in the workforce. The council convenes a Race Equality Strategic Leaders Group to bring together representatives from Bristol's public sector, including police, health, and fire and rescue. The group was founded on the idea that the wider public sector should be representative of the population it works for and to respond to representation across the whole public sector workforce, as well as on an organisational level. The group regularly convenes to compare workforce data, creating a benchmarking exercise between different public organisations and producing a data product. Over time the group evolved to include a wider range of activities around different EDI priority areas called "Race & the City". These include employment, education, skills, and criminal justice.

The group have held two "Our City: Your Jobs" career fairs where representatives from different public sector organisations promoted their organisation to minoritised residents. The jobs fair aimed to raise awareness and encourage the pursuit of career opportunities within the council and public sector by minoritised groups.

Achievements

The feedback from attendees was positive and interest in this year's fair was greater than last year. The job fair, and wider activities of the race equality strategic group, have laid the foundations to develop trust with groups who have had disproportionally negative experiences with the public sector. Through ongoing engagement with racially minoritised groups, this cross-public sector group envisages greater trust and therefore interest by minority groups to enter the workforce.

In the most recent data comparison activity, there have been improvements in representation across most public sector organisations although attributing this to the groups activity alone is difficult.

Next steps

Bristol City Council will continue to convene the public sector, with a view to include the private sector when appropriate. This will continue to build trust within communities and encourage minoritised groups to enter the workforce. Whilst the council will continue to act as a convener, they will support individual organisations to take accountability of their own EDI activity.

Internally, Bristol City Council will consider the future of their own EDI journey in a council committee system, moving away from a mayoral system. Mayor Marvin Rees has been a significant influence in prioritising EDI. With the change in how the council is governed, the priorities relating to EDI may also shift.

4.5   Case study 5 – Northern Ireland

Context

Unlike the other three nations, Northern Ireland does not have a Public Sector Equality Duty; however, it is still making progress. The Councils are subject to the full range of antidiscrimination laws as well as the positive statutory duties of Section 75[7] and the Disability duties. In addition, the Councils are specified under Fair Employment legislation and therefore the employer duties in respect of their workforces apply. The Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC), was established under the Local

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[7] Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998: due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between nine categories; regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between three categories.

Government Act (1972), to exercise oversight of council employment practices and promote fairness, consistency and equality of treatment.

Across the 11 councils in Northern Ireland, there is a wide variation in approaches and attitudes towards EDI, and it is worth noting that legislation often serves as a significant factor that encourages local authorities to disclose data related to ethnic minorities.

The current picture and challenges

In Northern Ireland, councils are obliged to report on their workforce in relation to gender and community background. In council recruitment processes, applicants must also complete a monitoring form which includes ethnicity, so the data is captured for new entrants. However, this data only goes to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and is not typically held or reported. Additionally, very few councils regularly gather new workforce data.

In 2012, the LGSC established the Equality and Diversity Group (EDG), chaired by Solace to oversee and promote EDI initiatives within local government. It merged various existing groups and expanded its scope to include equality and diversity work in councils, such as addressing Section 75 duties and establishing equalities networks for dialogue and understanding across different equality strands. The EDG has subsequently appointed a network of diversity ambassadors (officers and elected members) within councils to actively promote the EDI agenda.

Additionally, in 2013, the EDG drafted and launched the Equality and Diversity Framework, which includes wider representation from the Equality Commission, trade unions, former high-profile individuals in the field of race-related issues, elected members, and a few officers. Endorsed by all 11 local authorities, it is a strategic level document that outlines how each council will promote equality and diversity.

In 2020 SOLACE, the EDG, and Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) endorsed guidance on *Section 75 – Demonstrating Effective Leadership in Local Government* – which aimed to improve decision making and engagement with those potentially affected by the development of public policy and service delivery.

Whilst there is currently a lack of comprehensive data collection and inconsistent monitoring the EDG are progressing work on model monitoring guidance for local government and seeking greater political support and collaboration for EDI initiatives through the Diversity Ambassador Programme. Northern Ireland has made significant progress but without a statutory requirement, progress will be voluntary.

'Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Baseline and Impact Study' (2022)

In 2022 an 'Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Local Councils Baseline and Impact Study' was commissioned by the EDG. It was carried out independently and its purpose was to establish a quantitative and qualitative baseline on EDI in local government in Northern Ireland.

All 11 councils engaged positively in the research, underscoring their dedication to establishing a baseline, highlighting successes and challenges, and sharing best practice. The study concluded that creating a comprehensive EDI baseline is unfeasible due to the absence of required data, thus impeding a council's ability to gauge progress and showcase best practice. Regarding ethnicity, six out of 11 councils could provide data on the racial group profile of employees, but a substantial proportion of the data was in the 'prefer not to say' or 'unknown' category.

The study presented six recommendations designed to empower councils to establish a comprehensive baseline for EDI. These recommendations highlighted that councils:

1) Go beyond statutory requirements to measure, monitor, and share a complete set of equality and diversity data to drive diversity action plans and demonstrate the impact of their work on equality, diversity and inclusion.
2) Create a comprehensive baseline; it is recommended that councils commit to working together to develop an annual regional data gathering and collation system on every category of equality and diversity for both employees and elected members.
3) Commit to working together to develop one user-friendly data collection tool that is efficient in terms of cost and time, and that addresses all of the issues of methodology, consistency, security, and privacy.
4) Share good practice and develop strategies for reducing the number of unknown responses that currently limit their ability to accurately monitor diversity.
5) Continue to develop leadership and culture that moves beyond simply compliance in equality and diversity, and that is visible to both existing staff and potential job applicants.
6) Use robust research and evaluation of practices in relation to equality and diversity action plans to measure their impact against intended objectives in relation to staff communities.

Next steps

Northern Ireland's journey towards EDI within local government has seen significant strides but faces challenges in data collection, reporting, and achieving consistency across councils. Northern Ireland is in the early stages and will continue to work to promote a fairer and more equal environment in councils. The LGSC, EDG, and councils are working together to address these challenges and promote positive change; however, the main driver of behaviour is considered to be a lack of defined legislation. Greater collaboration, trust building, and enhanced reporting mechanisms will be vital in ensuring a more inclusive future for Northern Ireland's local government.

5. Core principles of good data

The core principles of good data, for the most part, are the same as last year's principles. For councils to understand and improve equality, diversity and inclusion within their workforce, they must collect and collate good quality data. Acknowledging that councils have different objectives, resources, and organisational cultures, data may be collected in a variety of ways. However, councils should strive to meet the core principles of good quality data in relation to workforce diversity, which aim to ensure clarity, consistency, and scope. These core principles are as follows:

- Producing the total headcount of the council workforce and recording the ethnic data as a number and percentage of this total. This can help more easily compare workforce profiles with the local profiles at a high level.
- Using the categories of ethnicity that match the census categories to record the workforce ethnicity profile, to enable analysis and comparison of the council workforce and its local population.
- Presenting the demographic profile of the area the council represents (taken from the census data) for transparency in how the council is performing in terms of diversity.
- Providing annual publications of the workforce ethnicity profile.

Publishing and the presentation of the data are as important as the collection process since effective communication is key to improving transparency. When publishing the data, councils must ensure that the reports are easily accessible, and the key figures are clear and visible.

While charts can certainly enhance visual understanding, it is advisable to consider them as a supplementary tool rather than the exclusive method for presenting data. This recommendation becomes even more pertinent when we take into account the considerable volume of ethnic categories. Furthermore, this precaution is underscored by the fact that certain data points on charts may not be clearly discernible, which was highlighted during the data collection phase of this research. Councils that consistently produced high-quality reports typically opted to present their data in tables. In this format, precise percentages of employees within each category were employed, and they avoided the use of 'less than' and 'more than' signs. This format will allow users to understand the representation for each ethnic group, aggregate into broader categories, and monitor progress against the previous year.

6. Summary of findings

This research focused primarily on 371 councils and explored the extent to which workforce ethnicity data and pay data is being published by councils of the UK and analysed whether councils' workforce compositions are reflected by their local demographics. This report has set out good practice, gathered through this research, to tackle inequalities relating to race and ethnicity.

The key observations that came from this research were:

- Over the past year, 65% (100 councils) of upper tier councils have taken significant steps to publish new workforce ethnicity data, displaying a strong commitment to transparency and fulfilling their statutory obligations.
- Data completeness among upper tier councils has improved compared to the previous year's report. While last year, 56% (84 councils) had complete data, this year, that figure has risen to 59% (90 councils), indicating a positive trend in data completeness.
- Upper tier councils publish more complete data compared to the district councils (59% versus 37%).
- The data collection reveals that in England, all regions have councils where workforce data is either unavailable or incomplete, highlighting ongoing inconsistencies in the publication of EDI within local government.
- Regional variation is noticeable in data publication, with London presenting the most comprehensive workforce ethnicity and pay data and the South West publishing the least complete data.
- Scotland and Wales stand out for their high rates of data publication, with 100% of councils in both regions releasing either complete or partial workforce ethnicity data, demonstrating the highest rates of workforce ethnicity data publication.
- In all regions of England and Wales, ethnic minorities consistently experience underrepresentation in council workforces when compared to the regional working age ethnic minority population.
- Among all councils, 39% (144 councils) provided ethnicity pay data. Specifically, 72% (23 councils) of Scottish councils reported ethnicity pay, while 36% (116 councils) of English councils and 23% (5 councils) of Welsh councils did the same.
- Compared to last year's report, of the upper tier councils, 34% (51 councils) provided new ethnicity pay information.
- Analysing ethnic minority representation in leadership roles is challenging due to the absence of a standardised reporting and the voluntary nature of reporting on ethnicity pay. However, existing literature suggests that ethnic minorities are often underrepresented in leadership positions in local government.
- Persistent disparities exist in the publication of EDI information among councils. Some provide only basic workforce data, while others fail to publish any data at all, thereby falling short of their statutory obligations.
- Despite advancements in data completeness, challenges persist in analysing workforce data due to varying levels of detail and categorisation across councils, even though upper tier councils are reporting more complete data than in the previous year.

While the legislation is clear on what local government must publish, in order to gain the trust of the workforce, greater action needs to be taken. As pressure increases on local services, councils must tackle inequalities and disparities experienced by communities to ensure the workforce reflects the diversity of the communities served. This is key to ensuring services delivered fully meet the needs of

local communities and to promoting equal access and opportunities into employment and career progression.

7. Recommendations

Throughout the process of this research, we have identified a number of practical recommendations to improve ethnicity data collection, reporting, and publishing which include:

Research to gather greater insight

- **Explore barriers to publishing workforce ethnicity data:**
  Collaborate with associations like the District Councils' Network, County Council Network, and Local Government Association to identify and address enablers, barriers, and best practice in publishing accurate ethnicity data.
  This could involve developing a series of 'lunchtime learning sessions' with a specific focus on, for example, district councils to thoroughly explore the obstacles hindering the understanding and publication of workforce ethnicity data. The purpose of these sessions would be twofold: to facilitate open discussion and knowledge sharing among council members and share learning about overcoming common challenges and building buy-in to improving EDI; and to generate insights on the types of challenges councils are facing and the support needs that can inform Solace and other partners' roles in supporting councils going forward.

Good practice guidance

- **Set out an ambition and develop guidance to help councils reduce the proportion of 'unknown' data:**
  Acknowledging that high levels of 'unknown' data makes it difficult to fully understand the ethnic diversity in the workforce, Solace could set out the ambition to reduce the level of unknown data to less than 10% of each council's workforce. In doing this, Solace could develop guidance and templates and provide opportunities to bring councils together to collaborate and share approaches to gathering more accurate data on the make-up of the workforce.
- **Leverage good practice from Scotland and Wales:**
  Explore the approaches being used in Scotland and Wales that have led to more complete data collection. Support the application of these in district councils in England and councils in Northern Ireland to encourage similar practices and improve the understanding of ethnicity in the workforce.
- **Standard approach of recording ethnicity pay:**
  Encourage councils to adopt a standard approach of recording ethnicity pay at £10,000 pay bands and/or mean/median pay gaps would be the most effective method to adopt. This will allow analyses of ethnicity pay between different councils and between councils across different years.

Specific initiatives and support offers

- **Develop a council buddying or peer mentoring system:**
  Develop and implement a council 'buddying' or peer mentoring system aimed at fostering collaboration and support between councils, allowing them to learn from one another's experiences and challenges.
- **Develop a series of action learning sets:**
  Establish action learning sets to serve as a valuable platform for small groups of councils to exchange insights and work through practical issues to ethnicity data collection and publication. Groups of councils could be themed by council type (districts, upper tier, etc), or mixed in terms of type but regionally based in order to share a broader mix of perspectives.
- **Explore the development of a supportive sector-led improvement offer:**

Establish a sector-led improvement initiative that offers tailored, one-to-one support to circa 20 councils annually. This programme could focus on helping councils improve their ethnicity data collection and reporting and promote knowledge sharing between councils.

8. Annex

1. Summary report Excel spreadsheet (separate document)

2. Data presentation template

Broad ethnic group	Ethnic group	Number of employees	Percentage of workforce	Previous year (change)	2021 Census working age population
Asian or Asian British	Indian				
	Pakistani				
	Bangladeshi				
	Chinese				
	Any other Asian background				
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	Caribbean				
	African				
	Any other Black, Black British, or Caribbean background				
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	White and Black Caribbean				
	White and Black African				
	White and Asian				
	Any other Mixed or multiple ethnic background				
White	English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British				
	Irish				
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller				
	Roma				
	Any other White background				
Other ethnic group	Arab				
	Any other ethnic group				
	Prefer not to say				
	Unknown/Did not disclose				
	Total headcount		**100%**	**100%**	