



# Understanding and Improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Local Government Workforce

A spotlight on data collection and good practice

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August 2022

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# Introduction

This research was commissioned by Solace, working in partnership with the Local Government Association and University of Birmingham (INLOGOV) and was funded and supported by Zurich Municipal. It was commissioned as a result of an increasing focus on equality, inclusion and diversity of workforce within local government. It builds on a body of evidence across “upper tier” councils and identifies best practice examples, focusing on improving ethnicity and race within the local government workforce. In the chapters of this report, the research partners, Shared Intelligence, set out the findings against the 152 Metropolitan Districts, County Councils, London Boroughs and Unitary Authorities in England.

Workforce diversity is fundamental in an organisation that is fair and which delivers services that meet the needs of the population. A recruitment system that makes an active effort to mitigate unconscious bias helps to ensure provision of equal opportunities to diverse populations while broadening the talent pools within an organisation. A diverse workforce increases the potential for a greater breadth of ideas and processes, a broader range of skills and experiences, and a wider range of perspectives and viewpoints within an organisation. This allows for greater potential for improved decision-making, higher productivity, better understanding of the needs of those the workforce serves, and a broader capacity for more effective and creative means to reach solutions. Furthermore, ensuring diversity at every level of seniority and salary is more likely to increase employee retention, and boost employee morale, engagement, and motivation levels.

Recent events such as the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement have brought into question the inequalities experienced by specific communities, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people. As greater pressures are put on local services and authorities to tackle inequalities and disparities experienced by communities, it has become ever more important to ensure the workforce of local services reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. This is key to ensuring services fully meet the needs of residents and promote equality of access and opportunities into employment and through career progression. Moreover, recent devolution deals have been shifting more power over local services to local government and mayors. This places greater emphasis on ensuring the control and influence over local decision-making reflects the local communities served.

The Equality Act 2010 places statutory obligations on councils to prohibit discrimination, harassment or victimisation in employment. It also focuses on users of public services, based on nine protected characteristics, including: race, sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The Act challenges organisations to collect data on such characteristics of their workforces and local communities and understand how those with lived experience of these characteristics may describe their experiences. The Public Sector Equality Duty is section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and requires public authorities, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to three aims:

1. To eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
2. To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
3. To foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) also states public authorities must have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it, in particular, the need to:

- a. Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic.
- b. Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it.
- c. Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) produced by the Local Government Association, provides a structure which helps local councils to meet their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 including the PSED. It also aims to help organisations, in discussion with local partners including local people, review and improve their performance for people with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. The EFLG continues to encourage local adaptation with a focus on local issues and problems, and prompts learning from, and the sharing of, good practice. The framework sets out four modules for improvement, underpinned by a range of criteria and practical guidance that can help a council plan, implement and deliver real equality outcomes for employees and the community. The four modules are:

- Understanding and working with your communities
- Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Responsive services and customer care
- Diverse and engaged workforce

The rest of this short report sets out the methodology to the research, analysis of findings focusing on data across ethnicity and race, identifies data challenges and opportunities and shares best practice.

# Methodology

The research began with an inception meeting with Solace, Local Government Association (LGA) and University of Birmingham (INLOGOV) partners. The purpose of this initial discussion was to gain clarity on the direction of the project and current equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) landscape with a focus on ethnicity and race. It was also to share insights on key literature and data sets to examine and contacts to speak with as part of this research.

This then led into the second stage of the project, which began with desk research and data collection of the workforce profile reports of the 152 “top tier” local authorities in England. This report data was collected into a spreadsheet, broken down by, where available, the data and percentages of each local authority workforce profile, the year of the latest published workforce profile report and whether the report also provided the pay grade or seniority levels of staff by ethnicity. The data available enabled a high-level overview of the current EDI landscape across England and identified where local authorities were well advanced or just starting out on their EDI journey.

Councils were grouped into three categories based on the availability and detail of their workforce public information:

- Complete information: Councils that publish a detailed report or table specifying the number or percentage of employees from each ethnic category.
- Partial information: Councils that publish a report or table only stating the overall percentage of BAME employees.
- No information: Councils that do not publish any information on ethnicity of their workforce. 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.

For the purpose of this report, ethnicity data declared as “unknown” and “prefer not to say” were not considered. This is standard practice when analysing survey data but is an important point to consider when information is incomplete. A further explanation about this limitation in the context of EDI reporting is provided in section 4.

The reference figures to compare councils progress in workforce diversity is the 2011 Census data on working age populations (2011 Census, table DC2101EW- Ethnicity by age groups). Until the second phase of the 2021 Census is released, the previous census remains the only reliable measure of population by ethnicity group at the local area level.<sup>1</sup> Average percentages of ethnic group at the regional and national level have been weighted to account for the difference in headcount between councils.

A second dimension of EDI data was evaluated, which consists of the ethnicity representation by grade and/or salary band, and/or the ethnicity pay gap. It is worth mentioning that publishing this information is not required by the Public Sector Equality Duty and is therefore provided by each council's own initiative. Given the limitations and variety of formats in which this data is presented, councils were only grouped in two, based on availability of 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 quality and detail of the information they publish was not evaluated as it is not regulated by law.

The latter part of the research then focused on exploring the position of four councils in their EDI journey in greater depth. The data gathered was used to identify the councils that would be invited to participate in "deep dives" in order to produce case studies. The councils were selected to ensure geographical spread, varied political holding, include rural and urban profile, and be at different stages of their EDI journey. The deep dives that were selected were Hackney, Suffolk and Bristol. These deep dives consisted of further desk research and structured interviews with the council leads, where available, and aimed to gather in-depth research on the work of councils. This considered their overall ambition, geographical ethnicity profile, challenges in collecting ethnicity data, examples of action and steps to improve workforce diversity and any advice to other councils. The findings from these conversations and the desk research were then analysed to understand best practice, trends, challenges, strengths and weaknesses.

A sensemaking workshop was then undertaken with representatives from Solace and the LGA to test the findings and make sense of what they mean for the wider sector and its ambitions.

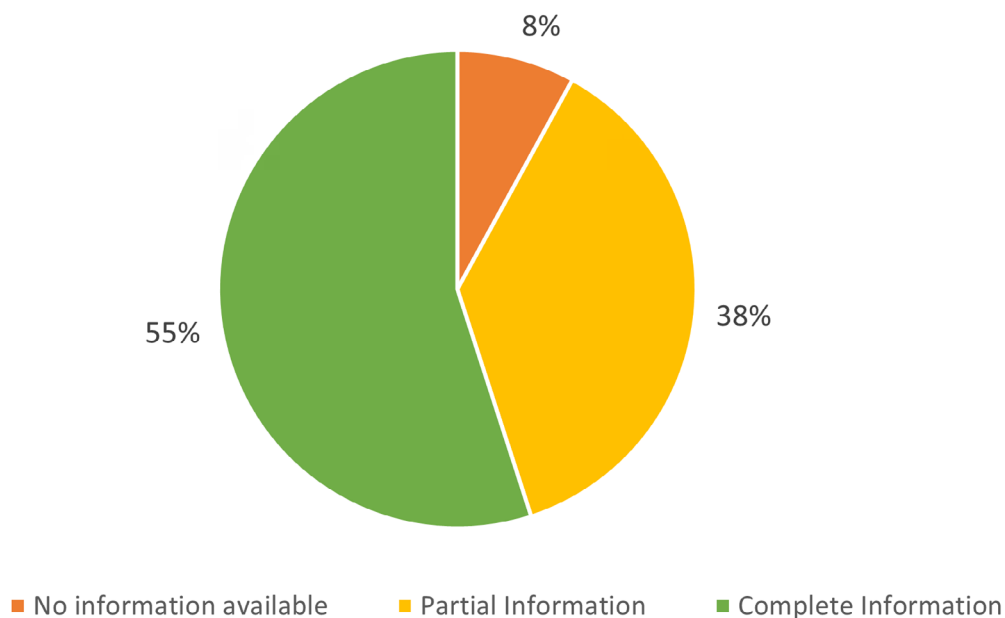
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<sup>1</sup> Released June 2022

# Analysis of Findings

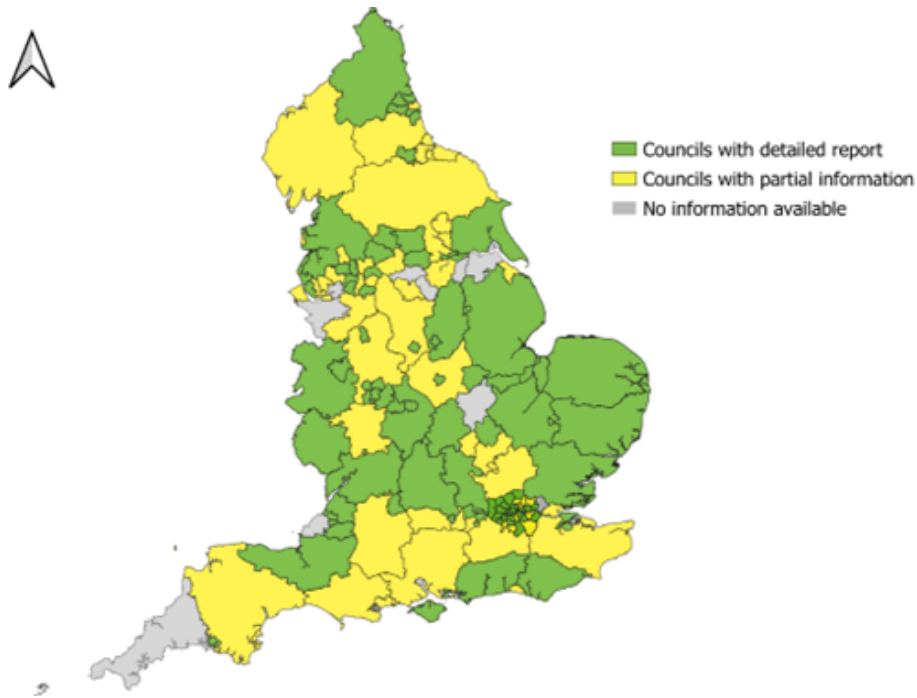
Considering the availability, accessibility and quality of EDI information from Upper Tier Councils, detailed analysis has been produced as set out below. This includes all 152 Upper Tier councils which includes Metropolitan Districts, County Councils, London Boroughs and Unitary Authorities. The data has been collated and processed to allow for an estimate of BAME employees in this part of the local government workforce, as well as setting out examples of how work complies with the Equality Duty.

The research found that 83 councils publish detailed statistics of their workforce in terms of ethnicity and provide the necessary level of information to compare with the local workforce by sub-category of ethnicity. This translates to 55% of Upper Tier Councils, while 38% only disclosed an overall percentage of BAME employees. EDI Workforce reports were not found for 12 councils.

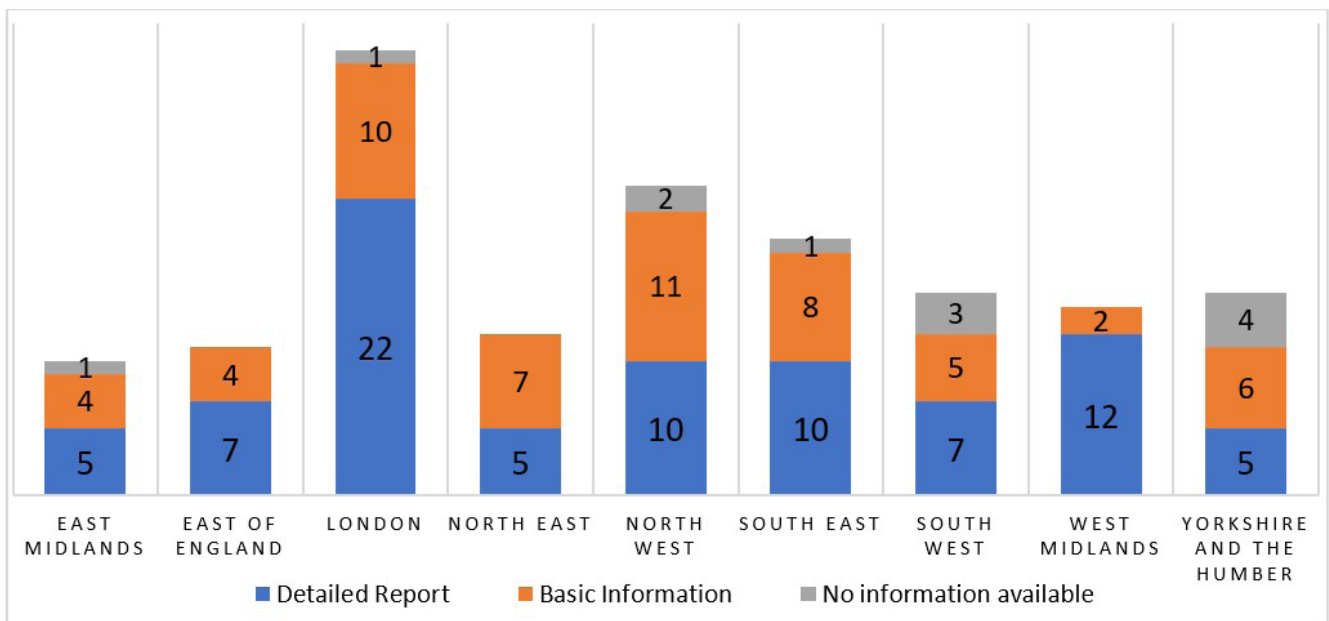


<sup>2</sup> As of 15 August 2022, 2 of these councils have provided some data after a request from LGA. The information is not included in the report.

The map below shows the geographical distribution of the three groups.

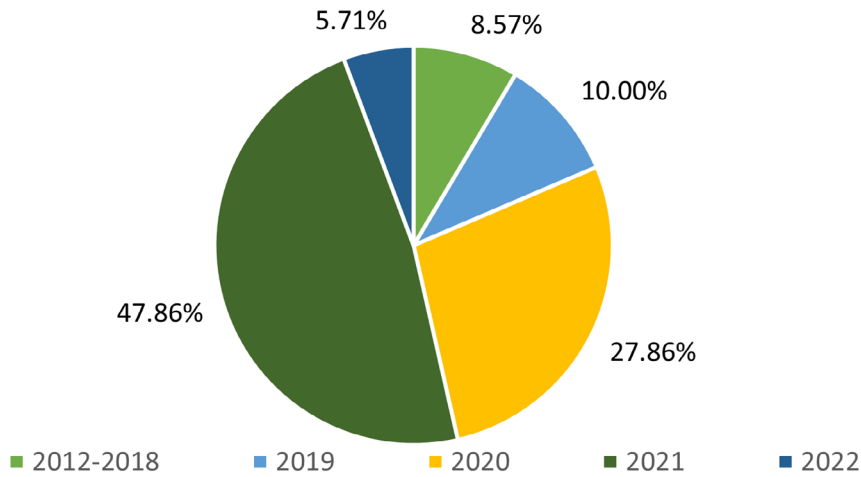


The graph below shows the breakdown of the three groups by region. The best performing area is the West Midlands, with 12 of their 14 councils publishing complete data. Conversely, Yorkshire and the Humber had the highest number of Upper Tier councils with no information available (4), followed by South-West (3). In terms of authority type, Unitary Authorities produced the highest number of detailed workforce reports (27). While London Boroughs produced the highest proportion of detailed workforce reports (22 out of 32), some councils do not report progress in data available to the public. County Councils however, produced the lowest number of detailed workforce reports (13) even though every County Council in England produced either basic or detailed workforce reports.

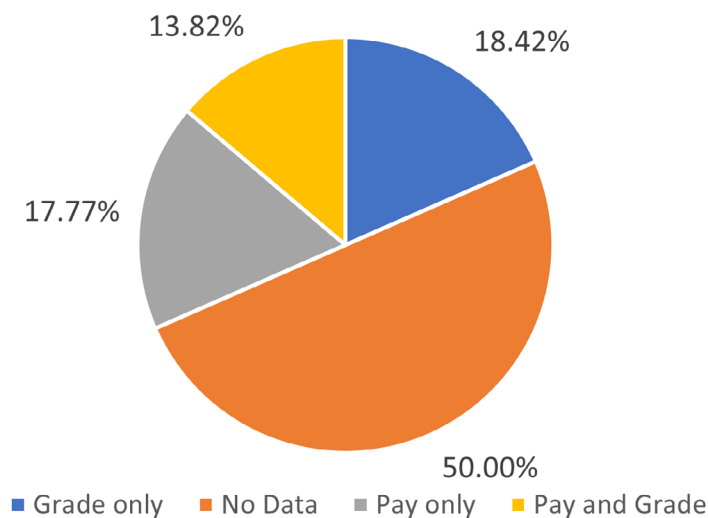




An additional finding of the research relates to the inconsistency in publishing dates of the reports. Although most councils perform an annual review and produce a yearly report, some have lagged by several years. The disruption caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic may have affected the development of workforce monitoring surveys and subsequent publishing of results. Despite this, of the 140 available reports, 114 have been published in the last 2 years. There are, however, several reports that were produced over 3 years ago, including one dating from 2012. The chart below shows the distribution of reports by year of publishing.



In terms of pay and grade information by ethnicity, the review found a more limited amount of information. As mentioned in the methodology section, pay reporting by ethnicity is not a legal requirement for councils; therefore, there is no agreed method of calculation or classification for the data. In this regard, this work was able to identify 75 councils which provide pay or grade information, which amounts to roughly half of all Upper Tier Councils. Most councils included this information within their Workforce Monitoring reports, but some are published separately as part of an independent pay gap analysis. The chart below shows the availability of pay and grade information among Upper Tier Councils.



The presentation of this data varies significantly. Some councils calculate an ethnicity pay gap in a similar format to the gender pay gap, which is required by law. This is done by comparing the number of employees disclosing they are of an ethnic origin other than white, against the earnings of employees who are white and excluding those who have opted to “prefer not to say” or who have not disclosed any information on their ethnicity.

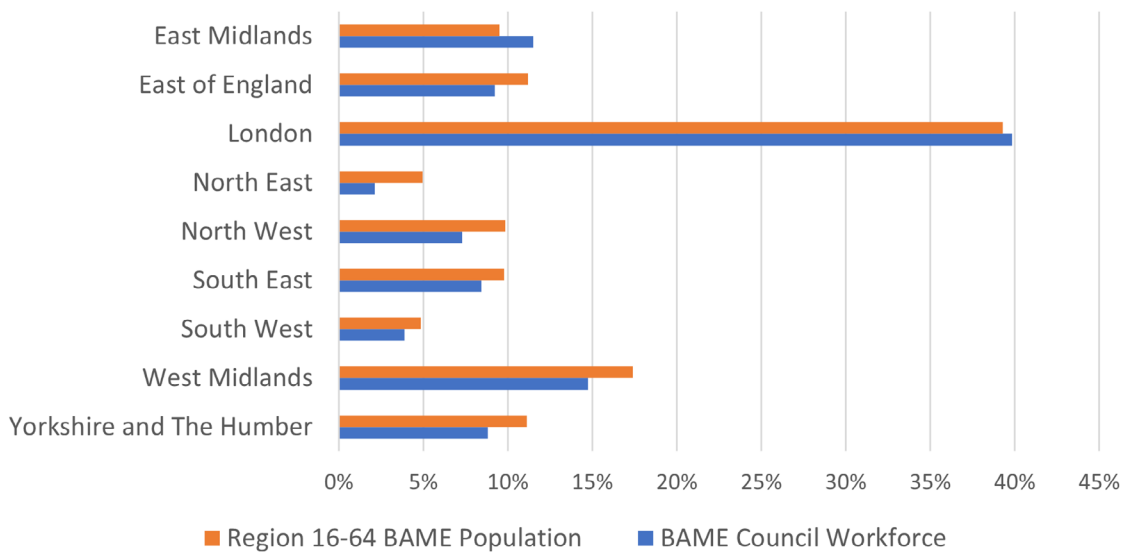
Other councils provide a breakdown of percentages by £5,000 or £10,000 pay bands.

Another common measure was the percentage of BAME employees in the top 5% of earners.

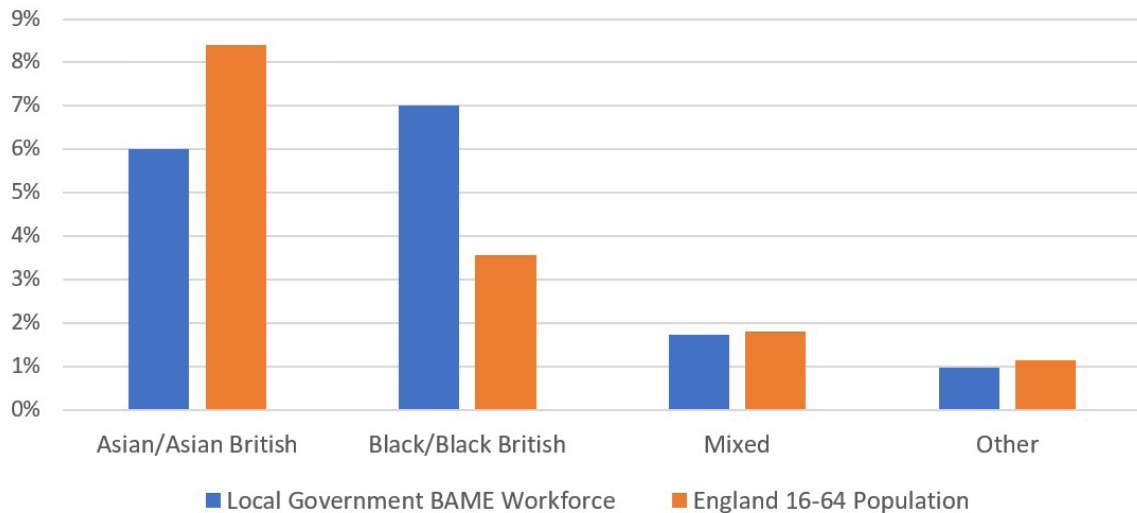
### Representation in the workforce: percentages by ethnicity categories

Based on the analysis of data published by the 140 councils with complete and partial information, an estimate of general BAME representation in the local government workforce has been calculated. In many reports, progress is compared with the local area’s working age ethnic minority population based on the 2011 Census. This follows the same method detailed in section 2 and helps to monitor progress in terms of developing a workforce that reflects their communities’ diversity. The review found that in 49 councils, the percentage of BAME employees is greater than the BAME working population. This varies among ethnic groups. Where data was available, the research found that in 63 councils, the Black/Black British Group is over represented. This compared to only 7 councils where the percentage of Asian/Asian British employees was higher than the local figure.

The graph below compares the average percentage of BAME council employees by region with the percentage of the region’s population aged 16-64 that identified as an ethnic minority.



It is possible to drill down by ethnic categories based only on the 83 councils with complete information. As seen in the graph below, the Asian/Asian British group is underrepresented in the local government workforce, with approximately 6% of council employees identifying themselves in this category compared with 8.4% in the working age population. On the other hand, the Black/Black British group is over represented, with approximately 7% against a national figure of 3.6%. This is consistent with the interpretations found in several workforce reports, as well as the London Councils Tackling Racial Inequality 2021 report.<sup>3</sup>



## Representation by grade and salary band and ethnicity pay gap

Since the data collected lacks a common structure, a general evaluation was made. The analysis confirms that representation of minority ethnic groups drops significantly at senior or leadership positions, and among the top earners.

Providing an overall estimate of BAME representation by pay and grade bands is not possible without a standardised classification. It is even more difficult when attempting to drill down by ethnic group, if available. However, the analysis of data does provide several key insights at a general level.<sup>4</sup>

The emerging picture shows that in the vast majority of councils, the proportion of BAME employees in senior positions and higher pay bands decreases. Of 22 councils that provided information on grade, 16 mentioned a decrease in representation at higher grades. In terms of pay, decrease in representation were identified at several pay bands. One council mentioned a significant decrease after the £40,000 pay band, six councils reported barriers above the £50,000 pay band, and one after the £60,000 band. Another five councils reported a reduced BAME representation among the top 5% of earners compared to the overall workforce figure.

Eight councils published a separate ethnicity pay gap report. Among these, the mean pay gap is usually higher than the median pay gap and stood below 5%.

<sup>3</sup> [London local government: Tackling Racial Inequality programme | London Councils](#)

<sup>4</sup> Individual observations are noted for each council that published pay and/or grade data in the appendix

In many councils where the number of BAME employees is below 100, grade and pay information at higher levels is usually suppressed to maintain anonymity. Results may also be grouped in an estimated range, making it difficult to draw further insights.

Another key finding is that across most councils that provide pay or grade data, the rate of response tends to drop at the higher levels. Given the reduced number of staff at these grades or pay bands, respondents may feel discouraged to participate as they would be more easily identified. This may affect the accuracy of the survey and provide distorted results.

## Case Study - London Borough of Hackney

### Recruitment

- At the initial stage, Hackney practices anonymous recruitment to remove unconscious bias. It also advertises jobs through LinkedIn or shares job opportunities within networks to have a broader reach for wider communities. Previously advertisement was solely through Guardian Jobs. More jobs are also advertised internally within the council for candidates who can evidence their progress rather than external consultants being hired.
- The job descriptions of senior posts, such as that of the Chief Executive, have changed to emphasise commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Candidates applying for senior positions within the council are asked to submit videos on why they are an inclusive leader. These videos are then reviewed by 'inclusion champions' and members of the community.

### Workforce data

- Workforce scorecards have been written up for the organisation to aspire to.
- Online HR system 'ITRENT' – allows staff to record their protected characteristics so the workforce equality data can be collected and harvested. Directorate managers can use the filters and develop their own individual workforce profiles, while also using the dashboard, which is housed on the 'Qlik' programme, to show improvements over time and proportions of staff characteristics by percentages.
- The HR department also produces data about grievances and disagreements by ethnic category.

# Data Challenges, Opportunities and Best Practice

## Barriers to collecting sensitive data

The research heard that workforce members may be reluctant to provide information regarding their equality characteristics as they may question how collecting such information relates to the service they provide. The research also heard how some members of staff may even be concerned this information might be used to discriminate against them. Equally, members of staff may feel uncomfortable collecting data on equality characteristics from other members of staff due to its personal and sensitive nature.

Response level can be low because equality monitoring may be difficult for workforce members to understand, particularly if trust has not been developed within the organisation or in the rationale presented to them for data collection. This makes it important for councils to identify and explain the purpose and benefits of collecting equality characteristics at the first available opportunity. The “right time” to ask for this information must also be considered so staff feel more comfortable with the process. The research found that often action to address the barriers needs to be part of wider work on developing a culture change and establishing trust with employees.

Some councils found that explaining its purpose and collecting equality data during staff training was beneficial as it helped with gathering the most sensitive data. This supported aims to build staff understanding of the value of these types of data. It is generally recommended that data are collected directly from the individual, rather than by proxy, particularly for sensitive information such as a person’s sexual identity or orientation. It is also recommended to provide respondents with a “prefer not to say” option, which respects a person’s choice not to disclose information. Including this as an option also enables data analysis to determine where the question was asked, and the response is not missing or unknown for other reasons.

Some of the difficulties expected from collecting ethnicity data are manifested in the quality of the output. In addition, the lack of a base timescale in council reporting makes a uniform comparison impossible. In order to calculate ethnic group percentages, results from different years are measured against the 2011 Census, which is the only reliable data by age group. The first results of the new 2021 Census have been published, with ethnicity data expected by the end of the year.

Another point to consider when measuring a workforce ethnic diversity against a defined geographical area is the impact of commuting. While an analysis of the origin-destination census data could help reduce this uncertainty, the rapidly changing patterns of working make it an outdated measure.

In some cases, the published data does not reflect the work that is being delivered within councils. While the information may be compliant with the equality duty requirements, detailed data that is collected internally may not be easily available to the public.

## **Data standardisation vs participative, bottom-up approach**

Data analysis is often associated exclusively with the collection and processing of quantitative information. When exploring information relating to ethnicity and a person's identity, the approach may be more complicated; there are multiple dimensions to this type of information.

As described in the 'Analysis of findings' section, the percentage of employees who do not disclose their ethnicity or respond to the survey varies significantly, and in some cases exceeds 40%. The challenge lies in encouraging people to disclose their information to their employer. By co-designing and co-developing the workforce profile with the people involved, councils may motivate the workforce to participate and obtain a higher response rate. This way, they may also collect better insights which can be more powerful than just data. Effective mechanisms for obtaining insights include the staff equality groups, or opening spaces for groups who are interested in being heard. They can be helpful to act as mediators and obtain feedback from their colleagues.

While the approach of working has clear benefits in terms of depth, a standardised approach keeps data integrity and uniformity across councils, allowing for better indicators of progress. The challenge is therefore to devise a mechanism that is flexible enough to adapt to local organisational cultures and employee needs, while maintaining quality standards for effective tracking and comparing. In any case, as each council gathers data and classifies it in its own way, it is necessary to have a guide of best practice to be able to look at the greater picture.

## **Best practice in data analysis, visualisation and presentation for publishing**

Diversity in the local government workforce has improved in the past decades, and significant advances have been made in terms of monitoring the process. Providing clear and accessible information is still a work in progress, however, and there is significant scope for councils to improve their reporting.

Workforce data in councils is usually incomplete or unreliable for a number of reasons. Although information is captured at recruitment stage, the changeover of systems in an employee's journey means that data is often not transferred over, or details are not fully recorded. This means employees must be asked again for their information. It is necessary for councils to simplify and streamline this management of data, so that information given at recruitment, which is more precise, can be tracked over time. Until this issue is addressed, employee surveys will need to continue to be used as the main tool for workforce monitoring.

The first action required when analysing workforce monitoring results is to recognise limitations in data and be clear about the quality and completeness of the information. It is also essential to include the response rate, in order to understand participation, track progress across years, and allow for further analysis.

A consistent, well-defined approach to collect and present data is needed. It is necessary to follow a standard categorisation of ethnic groups, preferably at sub-category level. This could follow the 2021 Census categorisation in order to simplify the adoption of a standard across local governments. This would also prevent some common errors or inconsistencies, such as the “White non-British” category being counted as BAME.

Minor changes in the presentation of data can help make workforce profile reports much more user friendly and allow for a quick analysis. In terms of pay, a standard approach of recording ethnicity at 10,000 pound pay bands and/or Mean/Median Pay Gaps would be the most effective methods to adopt.

# Core principles of good data

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 to 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 within which 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 is 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.

Charts are a helpful visual aid, but given the large number of ethnicity categories, it is advised they serve as a complement and not as the sole display of data. Councils that published high quality reports generally presented the key data in a table. This format will allow users to understand the representation for each ethnic group, aggregate into broader categories, and monitor progress against the previous year. A suggestion is provided in Annex 1, using the new 2021 Census Ethnicity Groups.



# Developing a framework

As outlined in the methodology section, the latter part of the research focused on best practice identified by council leads on the EDI agenda. Consistent among those councils with a positive EDI journey were a number of themes which illustrate how their approach has led to some positive outcomes. All of the councils reflected that there was a need to constantly challenge behaviours and understand the benefit and impact of a diverse workforce. These areas all help to build trust within the workforce and encourage long-term talent.

The four themes emerging include the need to have:

1. A clear governance with demonstrable ownership and leadership across directorates and elected members.
2. A clear workforce vision embedded across strategy and policy.
3. Consistent and complete data built from a deep understanding of place demographics and dynamics.
4. Involvement from stakeholders including staff, suppliers and local community leaders.

## Clear governance with demonstrable leadership

Central to this theme is the need to create an inclusive workforce culture through effective use of staff networks, senior staff and elected members. In considering the steps that need to be taken to deliver this, these can be divided into actions which are fundamental to the approach, and without which will hold back progress – the foundational requirements, require a strategic approach, and which are more practical in nature.

### Foundational

- This requires senior political leadership to set the aims and ambitions of the council in driving ethnic diversity across councils.
- It also required staff and elected members to take responsibility, collective ownership and accountability across the whole leadership team.

### Strategic

- Building in time across the organisation to build allyship, discuss key reports and events to influence behaviour change i.e. the Black Lives Matter movement, implications of COVID and home working on people from different backgrounds.
- Identifying senior champion in HR as well as in individual directorates, at CEO and elected member levels.
- Giving clear direction and support to middle managers to implement decisions.
- Identifying staff ambassadors to encourage dialogue and build allyship.

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<sup>5</sup> Allyship is a continual investment of time in supporting others, holding ourselves accountable when mistakes are made, apologizing and being prepared to rework the approach towards allyship as needs change.

## **Practical**

- Establish groups and networks to fully represent the workforce with formal reporting mechanisms and delegated responsibility.
- Raise awareness of staff-led groups' activity through learning and development, events and facilitated discussions.
- Built in "work time" to perform staff led activity.
- Consider allyship and reverse mentoring for developing shared ownership, which is informed by lived experience.

## **A clear workforce vision embedded across strategy and policy**

This theme is essential in developing an organisational development approach which includes EDI. To make progress, there needs to be well trained human resource (HR) and organisational development (OD) practitioners who understand this area.

## **Foundational**

- Establish a strong organisational development approach which includes EDI, consisting of well-trained HR OD practitioners, who thoroughly understand this area as they will write policies, design metrics, create learning & development programmes and tools, and are likely to be responsible for analysis.

## **Strategic**

- Embed ambitions to achieve representation of those with all protected characteristics throughout strategic documents from the Corporate Plan to individual policies.
- Incorporate EDI objectives in performance frameworks and reviews with learning and development modules and toolkits (see Suffolk County Council approach).

## **Practical**

- Consider ways to encourage better representation across recruitment, service plans, workforce plans, workforce metrics, learning and development programmes and equality analysis.
- Build in time for dialogue and ensure vision is informed by work of staff led groups.

# Case Study - Suffolk County Council

## Networks and Forums

- Suffolk County Council has nine staff networks: including a Black and Asian network, and the Council also has various forums, including a race equality board which the race network chairs sit on, which evaluates progress against the Council's race equality action plan. Of the 45 actions on the plan, roughly two thirds were rated green as complete or on track in April 2022. The senior leadership community forum, which includes the top 130 senior level council staff, have racial equality as a regular agenda item. This helps to facilitate discussion, prioritise EDI progress, and constantly raise awareness.
- There are also 6 key measures of progress towards race equality, including one where senior staff rate themselves in terms of awareness. This process has allowed Suffolk County Council to illustrate the progress they've made in recent years.

## Performance Reviews

- There is a requirement for all staff to have at least one EDI objective within their performance review, with examples provided of what that could be and a lot of guidance around it. Dip sampling will happen later in the year to assess compliance against this expectation.

## Consistent and complete data

Although the legal duty to publish information around equality, diversity and inclusion is limited, councils performing well in this area have a solid understanding of workforce data. This is built from a deep understanding of place demographics and dynamics ensuring that the workforce represents the local population. While the earlier part of this report sets out some best practice relating to the recording of demographic information, there are a number of additional considerations as listed below.

### Foundational

- Clarity of local ethnicity demographics and current workforce profile is essential to understanding where there is a mismatch.
- Data transparency is essential to building trust in the workforce and use of data must be clearly justified.
- Move beyond monitoring to understand the value of a diverse workforce. Diversity leads to better decision making, and greater understanding of and ability to address the needs of local communities more effectively and efficiently, thereby increasing productivity.

## Strategic

- Regularly develop, update and disseminate workforce diversity information to promote inclusion.
- Break down legal requirements, standards, and frameworks to inform longer-term planning and map out key activity to achieve diversity.

## Practical

- Map out legislation to ensure data capture can incorporate new requirements.
- Deliver regular staff surveys to capture ethnicity data and use qualitative surveys to capture lived experience of minority ethnic staff.
- Provide a clear purpose for collecting data to help build trust and encourage staff to give their data.

## Engage with stakeholders

There are many ways to improve the diversity of the workforce. This could be through recruitment channels, building a longer-term pipeline of talent and understanding the quality of the employment offer. The best examples of councils removing barriers involve a range of engagement and action with their internal workforce, recruitment organisations and local community leaders. These three categories of stakeholders are set out below with a set of actions.

### Staff and the sector

- Continual use of team meetings, staff conferences and leadership meetings to discuss issues of race and racism will encourage staff to be open and begin to build trust.
- Encourage the use of appropriate messaging and language but be aware that agreement on the right language should not inhibit action being taken.
- Share learning with other councils to tackle issues and consistently deliver best practice.

### Recruitment companies

- Recruitment companies supporting council workforce needs must be aware of and alert to equality, diversity, and inclusion and the need to supply diverse talent pools.
- Share learning across recruitment channels to develop cross-sector best practice.

### Community

- Engage with community leaders to understand individual barriers to employment within communities so councils can deliver effective engagement and talent pipeline.
- Be conscious of the right messaging and language but encourage participation and dialogue without reproach.

# Case Study - Bristol City Council<sup>6</sup>

## The pilot scheme Diverse Voices

- This pilot aims to tackle the lack of under-represented groups in senior leadership positions. There are 11 people in cohort one with another 13 in cohort two, and a waiting list. The scheme involves a package of coaching and development for existing managers as well as the opportunity for participants to take part in leadership forums such as Corporate Leadership Board each week for one month. This helps provide diverse perspectives in Council decision making, whilst offering a development opportunity for the participants.

## The Diverse Recruiters scheme

- This is designed and managed by the Equalities and Inclusion Team to help the council recruit the best talent for roles within the council. The objective is to help managers and candidates get the best possible outcome from a job interview. Diverse Recruiters also help to ensure interview panels are aware of potential bias and have sufficient diversity of thought and experience. Our Diverse Recruiters scheme has 70 participants to ensure recruitment panels include members from under-represented groups in our workplace.

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<sup>6</sup> This case study has been developed based solely on desk research

## Summary and Next Steps

This report has set out best practice gathered through this research to tackle inequalities relating to race and ethnicity. While it focuses on the 152 upper tiers councils (Metropolitan districts, County Councils, London Boroughs and Unitary Authorities) in England, much of the best practice is relevant for all parts of the public sector.

Recent events including the COVID-19 Pandemic and events surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement have highlighted the inequalities experienced by specific communities, including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

While the legislation is clear in 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 promoting equal access and opportunities into employment and career progression.

Our recommendations for the next steps to support this important topic include:

- Continuing the research to review EDI published information across the remaining 181 lower tier councils to gain a full perspective of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Delivering a review of unitary authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, respecting the varying legislation and ambitions around communities.
- Create an outcomes framework to measure and evidence the progress made across EDI data capture and promote improvement to deliver better outcomes.
  - o Identify, define and publish “what good looks like” in local government ethnicity diversity.
  - o Tracking the data over a longer period of time to review progress made by local government.
  - o Develop a toolkit which captures case studies and begins to build a database of information, advice and guidance.
- Work closely with partners such as the Local Government Association to continue to drive this agenda beyond data into wider workforce and talent.

# Annex

## 1. Data presentation template

### 1

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				
	<b>Total Headcount</b>		<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

