

Equality Strategy refresh

Scrutiny Committee early engagement

Background

- Current Equality Strategy was adopted in 2020 and runs until 2024.
- Since then, significant change in both the Council and global equality environment:
 - Covid 19-Pandemic and its long-term impacts
 - Black Lives Matter movement
 - Significant changes in working practices post-pandemic
 - Croydon Council RIPIs and S114 notices
 - New Corporate Management Team and EDI Board established
 - Mayor's Business Plan developed and published
- These have driven changes in Croydon's approach which this refresh seeks to address.

Snapshot of progress since 2022

- Launched Equalities Pledge in March 2022 and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge in May 2022. So far 37 organisations have signed up for the pledges in total:
 - 19 - George Floyd Race Matters Pledge.
 - 18 - Equalities Pledge.
 - 6 - both Equalities Pledge and George Floyd Race Matters Pledge.
- Croydon Council designated a Spotlight Organisation for Race Equality Week 2022 and 2023.
- Bronze Trailbreaker Award for Tea Breaks initiative from Race Equality Matters – November 2022.
- Zero pay gap for gender for first time. Other pay gaps below London average (though still more work to do).
- Pilot organisation for Chief Executives of London Councils (CELC) Tackling Racial Injustice peer review programme.
- Adopting gender and anti-racism local protected characteristics.
- Established new staff networks for Christians and for Young Professionals.
- Invited to be a case study for Equality and Human Rights Commission's Public Sector Equality Duty Specific Duties monitoring project.

Challenges of the strategy

- New initiatives have been adopted which are not incorporated.
- Capacity and focus of the organisation has changed – need to reflect this and recognise the level of change.
- Strong on intent in the Strategy but not as clear on actions and ownership.
- Based on 2011 Census data.
- Ownership across the Council not as strong as hoped.

Objectives of the Equality Strategy refresh:

- Refresh and build on progress achieved so far.
- Reflect the priorities of the Mayor's Business Plan.
- Incorporate George Floyd and Equalities Pledges, CELC programme and initiatives.
- Draw on 2021 Census data.
- Better reflect the current Croydon and global equality context.
- Strengthen the Equality Strategy reporting framework.

New EDI policies, plans and pledges:

1. ***People and Cultural Transformation Strategy 2022-26:*** 7 pillars for organisational change, one of which is focused on EDI.
2. ***Equality Pledge (2022):*** 10 commitments
3. ***George Floyd Race Matters Pledge (2022),*** 10 commitments
4. ***CELC Tackling Racial Inequality Standard:*** 7 sections; 55 actions – LBC a pilot authority
5. ***2023 Race Equality Week - Big Promise:*** 6 commitments.
6. ***Council adopted definitions of Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia***

Equality Strategy 2020-2026: outcomes & priorities (1)

OUTCOME 1 The Council addresses social inequities as a community leader and employer

1. The Council's workforce reflects our diverse communities at all levels.
2. The Council acts as a role model and champions a fair society.
3. We ensure equality training is central to the way we work, is regularly undertaken, and is reviewed to meet changing needs.
4. Council staff proactively hold challenging, targeted conversations, holding themselves to account, listening, learning, believing and taking action on systemic issues concerning equality.
5. The Council demonstrates that it is becoming an inclusive, diverse and anti-racist organisation by embedding this principle in its strategies, decision-making, actions and behaviours and promotes anti-racist practices

OUTCOME 2 We work with residents to better understand our communities

1. Continue to increase our network across seldom heard groups.
2. Information about the Council's work towards tackling inequality is easy to access and understand.
3. Data about local communities is more effectively collected, analysed and used to inform decisions and improve services.

Equality Strategy 2020-2026: outcomes & priorities (2)

OUTCOME 3 Use partnerships to improve access and meet individual needs as they arise

1. Enable better education outcomes by offering support to groups who need it most.
2. Support the creation of jobs that enhance quality of life.
3. Services are proactive in targeting groups that have accessibility issues as a result of age, mental health, disability, language, digital and/or physical barriers.
4. **Systemic** inequalities that lead to school exclusions and young people entering the criminal justice system are addressed, specifically for Black boys, White working-class boys, Gypsy Roma and Travellers, and those accessing free school meals.

OUTCOME 4 People in Croydon are supported to **lead healthier and independent lives for longer**

1. Work with partners to tackle social isolation.
2. **Work** with our partners to **understand and reduce health inequalities**.
3. Work with our partners to **ensure equitable access** to health **and care** services, and **enable** residents **to** know where and how to access services.

Consultation

- Full public consultation was undertaken on the original Strategy which will remain the core of the refreshed document.
- Four staff workshops were held as well as workshops with CMT, each DMT and the EDI Board to feed into the Strategy refresh.
- Two public consultations were held on Equality Pledge and George Floyd Race matters Pledge during 2021.

Embedding the Strategy

- Introduce an updated EQIA template.
- Internal communications campaign on the aims and ambitions of the new Equality Strategy and how it affects them.
- Staff workshops and engagement sessions on exploring anti-racism and how it should be manifested in service delivery.
- Staff training across Directorates on the new EQIA template and local protected characteristics.
- New reporting framework to be agreed by the EDI Board who will monitor the implementation of the Strategy going forward.