

Sheffield City Council Race Equality Submission: Business & Employment Hearing

Summary of key points

Sheffield is a hugely diverse city: a fifth of Sheffield's residents are from an ethnic minority background with those of Pakistani origin being the largest single group. The Council has a key role in ensuring that race inequalities are systematically reduced and eventually eradicated, both as one of the biggest employers in the city and in terms of its civic leadership role. Beyond this, we are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty and take this responsibility seriously.

The Council recognises that its workforce is not wholly representative of the city, with a specific issue relating to under-representation of Asian/Asian British people. At a more granular level, only the People portfolio has a workforce that is in line with BAME representation in the working age population of Sheffield.

The picture around senior officers (those earning over £50,000 p.a.) is more challenging with just 7.4% of these roles being filled by people of colour: this demonstrates clearly that as an organisation we have issues to address including our approach to recruitment & selection, leadership development and positive action to help people from BAME backgrounds to progress. Conversely, we have a better story to tell with regard to apprenticeships, where 25.4% of our current Apprentice cohort are BAME.

The Council's current Equality Objectives are, as follows:

- Objective 1: Strengthen knowledge and understanding of our communities
- Objective 2: Ensure our workforce reflects the people that we serve
- Objective 3: Lead the city in celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion
- Objective 4: Break the cycle of inequality and improve life chances

As an organisation we are clear that these are all relevant to our role as an employer in the city, as key statements of intent that ensure that everyone in Sheffield sees the Council as an organisation that understands, respects and welcomes them.

It is clear that as an organisation Sheffield City Council has underinvested in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion over the last decade. We recognise this shortfall, and are now taking urgent steps to address this. This will include:

- Doubling staff capacity working on EDI for the organisation, and formalising roles previously undertaken through volunteering;
- Re-emphasising the importance of EDI in all aspects of what we do and the way we work, for all staff;

- Development and implementation of a one year EDI Workforce Plan, centred around the various stages of employee experiences from attraction, through recruitment and selection to continuous development;
- Dedicated EDI support/training for all senior leaders, including anti-racism training and reverse mentoring

This work will supplement that being undertaken by our Portfolio based staff equality groups, our Strategic Equality Board, and our recently established BAME Safe Space group. Whilst work is progressing we recognise more support is needed to drive forward positive and impactful activities. Our role is not just that of an employer but also a system leader, funding and enabling organisations across the city. With this in mind we have highlighted work that has potential to positively impact citizens over the coming years:

- Our Equality Partnership, which acts as an independent advisory group, enabling our diverse communities to have greater voice and influence over decisions in the city.
- Our work through Sheffield City Partnership Board, and other publicly funded anchor institutions to establish a collective approach to procurement addressing inclusion and sustainability. Although not solely focused on racial inequalities, this work has the potential to be impactful as a model for future collaborative work in other areas, including recruitment and employment.
- The establishment of the BAME Public Health group during the pandemic , creating a model for more inclusive ways of engaging with and listening to BAME groups in the city (work that has been shortlisted for a CIPD award).

With the above in mind, we are keen to hear the findings and recommendations of the Commission and would be interested in particular in their views on the following areas of potential priority focus for Sheffield City Council:

- Better data gathering and customer insight, especially in relation to customer services and grant funding, to aid fuller understanding of the needs of Sheffield's BAME residents
- Learning from the work of the BAME Public Health group to improve engagement and relationships with BAME communities and organisations
- Sustainability of and support for BAME businesses and voluntary organisations
- Leadership and development support to help people of colour progress in their careers, including collaboration across publicly-funded institutions to address this issue collectively

Introduction

Sheffield City Council is committed to making significant improvements on race equality in its workforce, for the public it serves and in the city at large. Sheffield is a hugely diverse city: a fifth of Sheffield's residents are from an ethnic minority background with those of Pakistani origin being the largest single group.

The Council has a key role in ensuring that race inequalities are systematically reduced and eventually eradicated, both as one of the biggest employers in the city and in terms of its civic leadership role. Progress has been made in some areas, with the establishment of the Race Equality Commission (REC) spearheading a new drive to make improvements in areas where we know we are not adequately reflecting and supporting the diversity of the city.

We know there is more that needs to be done, particularly in the areas of data gathering, supporting talented BAME staff to take on senior positions and in our and local engagement with BAME communities. We are committed to the fact that going forward the Council will be more representative of the communities we serve, at all levels. Our aim is to be an inclusive and visibly anti-racist organisation, tackling racism and all forms of prejudice and discrimination in our city wherever it is found. More widely, we mean to prioritise tackling inequality to which the REC is an impetus.

BAME Residents in Sheffield	Proportion of Sheffield's working age population who are BAME	BAME Households in Sheffield
105,861	19%	32,751

Source: Census 2011. The Office for National Statistics estimate that the population with a protected characteristic may have increase by up to 5% points since 2011. The exact increase will be available once the 2021 Census is published.

Introduction to the Organisation

Sheffield City Council remains one of the biggest employers in Sheffield with a workforce of approximately 8000. It provides Sheffield's nearly 600,000 citizens with services from waste collections to social care. It has an annual budget of approximately **£550 million** and operates as part of a wider political ecosystem including regional and national government. The council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty requiring that it demonstrate that it is working to eliminate discrimination, positively promoting equality for BAME people in all its work and service provision, and fostering good relations between communities.

Sheffield City Council's Workforce

Workforce Diversity

As one of the largest employers in an increasingly diverse city, our workforce diversity impacts race inequality in the city.

Our 2019/2020 Workforce diversity report highlight some minor improvements , with further work being needed. The data is monitored annually, with our Portfolio Equality Groups working on interventions to address issues.

Employees are responsible for providing information to help the Council monitor its workforce diversity, but responses to questions are voluntary and an employee can choose which questions they wish to answer. This is supplemented by an annual Workforce Census and published data is based upon known data where employees have declared a response. We continue to encourage completion and raise awareness of the reasons and importance of providing this data. Ethnicity has a 95.6% declaration rate for the workforce, which is a higher response rate compared to other characteristics.

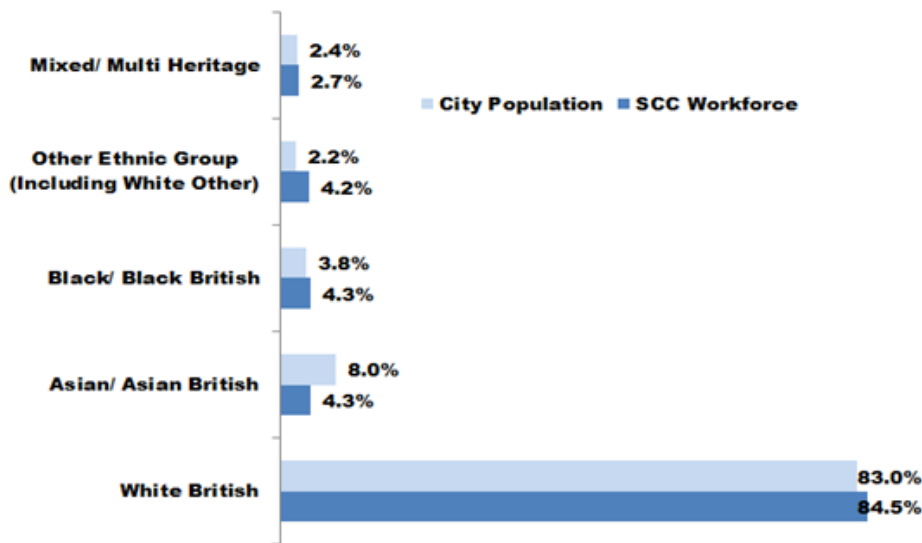
Ethnicity and Diversity

Sheffield City Council Workforce Diversity (2019/20) - BAME Representation by grading group

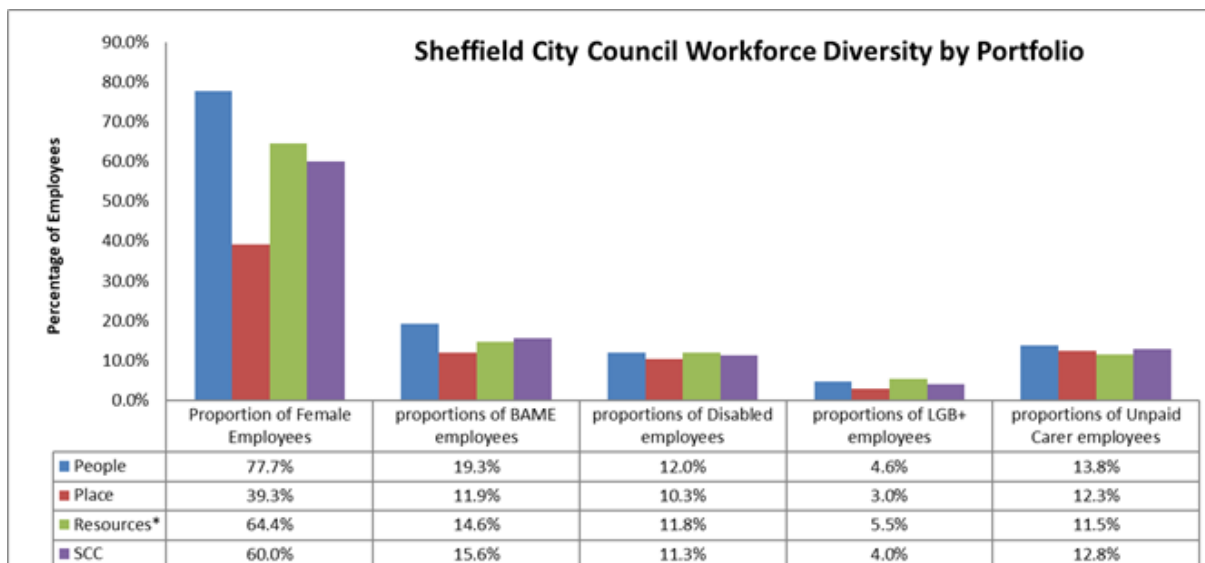
Category	BAME
Sheffield City (Age 16-65)	
2011 Census	19.0%
SCC Workforce	15.6%
Chief Officer Grade	7.4%
Grades 10 to 11	12.7%
Grades 6 to 9	14.6%
Grades 1 to 5	17.4%

This compares to 2011 Census findings of 19% BAME and 81% white British citizens (working age population) for Sheffield. The BAME population percentage in the city has risen year on year and is expected to rise further by anything up to 5% which we will review once the 2021 census results are published. On this basis we will need to work harder to ensure we have a workforce that is representative of the population as the discrepancy could be very significant.

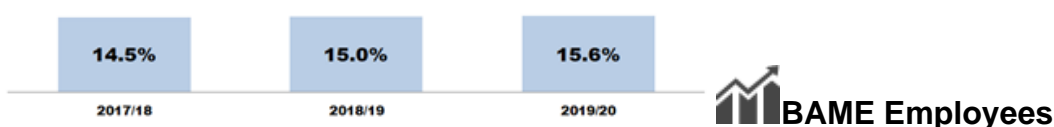
A more detailed breakdown by ethnic group is available here:

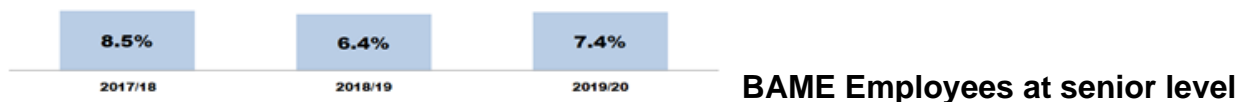


We have an under representation of employees describing their ethnicity as Asian or Asian British. The target audience for any positive action work will cover all BAME groups.



Our People Portfolio forms 44.5% (3495 employees) of our workforce, and has the highest proportion of employees who are BAME. This is mainly in services such as Social Care, and Children and Families.





Targeted work is being developed to ensure that recruitment pools for senior roles are diverse. Any which do not will be required to be readvertised and only proceed once a diverse pool has been achieved. Other interventions are being developed to anonymise our application process and introduce targeted development programmes.

Apprenticeships

There is a high representation (25.4%) of apprentices who are BAME, when compared to the 19% of the working age population of Sheffield

The Council's Approach to Equality

Sheffield City Council's Equality Policy states that it is continuously working to create an environment for our staff and the people of Sheffield:

- That promotes fairness, equality, diversity and inclusion
- That promotes dignity and respect for all
- That recognises and values individual differences and the contributions of all
- Where people are treated fairly and according to their needs
- Where intimidation, discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation is actively prevented and opposed
- Where individuals feel valued, included and able to access services
- That staff of all backgrounds have a positive experience which develops our position as an employer of choice

The council is subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) of the Equality Act 2010 in all its functions meaning that it needs to

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between groups

In response the Council has set out its [Equality Objectives](#) which cover a five-year period between 2019 and 2023. These state that the Council will:

1. Strengthen knowledge and understanding of our communities
2. Ensure our workforce reflects the people that we serve
3. Lead the city in celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion
4. Break the cycle of inequality and improve life chances

Our Objectives, if achieved, will have a real impact on the inequalities experienced by people of colour in the city. The Council is committed to making progress in these

areas and can be held to account by both its staff and citizens in a number of ways. The Council is in the process of developing a one year recovery plan for 2021-22, laying the foundations for a new, longer-term corporate plan from 2022 onwards. Equality objectives must be front and centre in those and the REC could inform the development of ambitious, specific and measurable commitments.

The Council as an accountable and inclusive employer

Sheffield City Council currently employs 4 FTE staff in its Equalities and Engagement team, as well as 1.6 FTE in the HR department. With a workforce of circa 8000, in a city as diverse as Sheffield it has been identified that there has been significant underinvestment and a lack of dedicated capacity.

There is also a heavy reliance on volunteers and therefore a review of the operating model for Equalities started in April 2021 and will conclude in the summer. It is expected to recommend a doubling of capacity, aligned to a central function, with the aim of re-emphasising the importance of EDI in corporate culture. This will be supplemented by validating some roles that are currently voluntary, such as giving formal time and objectives to those who chair groups such as the BAME Safe Space.

A one-year EDI Workforce Plan is being developed, which will run alongside the new One Year Plan for the Council and will centre on the entire employee lifecycle including:

- Marketing the Council as an inclusive employer,
- Working with schools in diverse areas,
- Targeted apprenticeships and internships,
- A review of attraction, recruitment and selection methodology including introduction of anonymised recruitment
- Targeted BAME development programmes.

Alongside this there will be a programme of EDI support/training including dedicated anti-racism training for the senior leadership team to ensure a golden thread of EDI work in all areas.

The council has Portfolio staff equality groups representing all protected characteristics, who develop and implement plans aligned to the corporate equality objectives and action plans, as well as make a real impact on their own areas of work. In light of the increased focus on EDI in the organisation, each of these groups are currently reviewing their plans and promoting / refreshing their membership. Progress will be discussed at the Strategic Inclusion & Equality Board in June 2021.

The Strategic Inclusion & Equality Board has oversight of the Objectives, the Equality Action Plan and monitors workforce diversity statistics. This Board meets quarterly and is chaired by the Executive Director of People, and the Chief Executive also attends. Its membership includes representation from across the portfolio boards and other senior staff including the Director of HR and others in corporate roles.

We recognise there is more to do to support and strengthen these boards and to weave accountability for equality objectives more firmly into the work of every single council employee, starting with all senior officers.

BAME Safe Space Network

POC Staff have also recently established their own BAME Safe Space and BAME Allies networks which have been endorsed in organisation-wide communications by the new Chief Executive Kate Josephs. This reflects the priority she has placed on EDI for the organisation and commitment to ensuring that all have the same opportunities to progress and thrive regardless of background or ethnicity.

The Network has already identified a number of positive actions to take forward with the support of the Chief Executive, including reverse mentoring to drive improvement, and the introduction of BAME specific counselling.

Complaints & disputes

Between April 2019 and March 2020, a disproportionate number of employees who are BAME (25%) raised Dignity and Respect concerns, Whilst this represents a low number of individual cases, it is still an area of concern and is being discussed with colleagues from the BAME Safe Space Network. Due to the pandemic, employee relations activities were paused in April 2020 and therefore we have limited information in respect of recent concerns raised.

External

As well as staff networks, Sheffield City Council has an established network of external advisory bodies called the [Equality Partnership](#). The Sheffield Equality Partnership (previously Equality Hub Network (EHN)) is an independent advisory group established by Sheffield City Council to create a space in which to enable our diverse communities to have greater voice and influence over decisions in the city. There are 7 individual hubs representing the following communities:

- Age Hub (intergenerational)
- BAMER Hub (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, Refugee)
- Carers' Partnership
- Disability Partnership (all impairments)
- LGBT+ Partnership (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, other sexual orientations and gender identities)
- Religion/Belief/No Belief Hub (includes no religious belief)
- Women's Partnership

The BAMER Hub (via its support organisation Faithstar) receives £15000 a year from the council in order to help BAMER citizens raise awareness of community issues and opportunities with the council, as well as to hold it to account on its progress in promoting greater race equality across Sheffield.

Sheffield City Council provides support including grant and other funding to a wide range of organisations in the city, including BAME-led organisations and

organisations providing services to BAME people. We have good data on BAME individuals accessing services provided through these routes, as described in our Communities submission; however our data is less robust on the proportion of funding distributed to BAME-led organisations, and this may be an area that requires attention.

Beyond this there are areas of work with potential for positive impact:

- Work with publicly funded anchor institutions considering how to work collectively to maximise their positive impact on Sheffield. This work initially focuses on procurement and supply chains, but could be built upon to consider employment, recruitment, and leadership development.
- The development of a BAME Public Health group, set up as part of the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and providing a model for a different, more inclusive way of engaging with and listening to BAME groups in the city.

Potential areas for further work for consideration by the Commission

With the above in mind, we are keen to hear the findings and recommendations of the Commission and would be interested in particular in their views on the following areas of potential priority focus for Sheffield City Council::

- Better data gathering and customer insight, especially in relation to customer services and grant funding, to aid fuller understanding of the needs of Sheffield's BAME residents
- Learning from the work of the BAME Public Health group to improve engagement and relationships with BAME communities and organisations
- Sustainability of and support for BAME businesses and voluntary organisations
- Leadership and development support to help people of colour progress in their careers, including collaboration across publicly-funded institutions to address this issue collectively