

# **Single Equality Approach**

## **Foreword**

The Single Equalities Approach 2024-2028 replaces and refreshes the framework from 2020-2024. This new framework will underline our commitment to make equality a priority in Lewisham.

In the last four years, we have achieved a great deal, including our recent re-awarding of Borough of Sanctuary status, of which we were the first in the country to be awarded in 2021. Last year, we celebrated homing our 100<sup>th</sup> family under this commitment, marking a landmark achievement in refugee week. In 2023, we responded in detail to Lewisham Disabled People's Commission report, *If Not Now, Then When?* The report highlighted a series of recommendations that needed more consideration if Lewisham was to strive to be a good place to live for deaf and disabled people. We are well on our way to actioning these recommendations, and this framework goes further to explain how we will fully complete all recommendations proposed by the commission.

This framework also highlights the ways in which Lewisham Council's workforce strives to be more equitable. The Council is committed to ensuring we employ a workforce which is representative of our borough's demographics and protected characteristics, ensuring decision-making in our Council reflects the diversity of thought in the Borough. A workforce that looks and feels like our borough's population can help us work more closely with residents and give them confidence that we can continue to provide services they rely on with better understanding of their lives and lived experiences.

We will continue working closely with residents. This starts with undertaking a broader mapping of all our channels of engagement, and seeing how these can be better aligned. We will also continue using our co-production model where appropriate, as well as utilising the knowledge and experience of our residents to develop our ideas that meet their needs. We understand the value of centering lived experiences to further understand how policies can be better and fairer on residents.

We hope this framework can be considered as an important mark to our continuing commitment to equality.

## **What built our objectives?**

As part of our obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council is required to publish and monitor at least one equality objective. Over the course of 2023, we conducted extensive work to ensure that the objectives we choose to include in this document reflected the views of our workforce, residents, partners and experts in EDI.

The Council commissioned an independent and external group to undertake a benchmarking exercise of our equalities approach, and although the findings were positive, we know that there is more to do to create the step change in equalities that we want to achieve. In particular, the feedback the Council received highlighted the

importance of improving the process that exists around our Equalities Impact Assessments and ensuring that we have systems in place to ensure our workforce is reflective of the borough we serve.

In addition to the above, Lewisham's [Safer Stronger Communities Committee](#) assessed the Council's progress against its previous equalities objectives and [presented several recommendations](#). These focused on improving the work of our Corporate Equalities Board, ensuring that future equalities objectives were more specific and measurable, and better defining what we expect from our staff in relation to how they consider equalities in their decision making.

The Council has made significant progress against the objectives it has previously set itself, and further work, such as our response to the Lewisham Disabled People's Commission, outlined our commitment to creating a more accessible Council and borough. This report set out the steps the Council will take over the coming year to improve the lives of deaf and disabled residents, building on the recommendations of commission members with lived experience, and following through on our commitment to undertake this work alongside residents and within a social model of disability.

Following the publication of the 2021 Census data, we have also gathered new insights about Lewisham, utilising the information that has been published to assess the challenges faced by different demographics, as well as the intersectional challenges that exist in a borough as diverse as ours. Some of the information from this Census is outlined below and helps form part of our evidence base, but we have also considered information that's been gathered through frontline services and consultations to assess our key EDI priorities for the years ahead.

### **Understanding the challenges**

Lewisham is a diverse borough, and although that diversity is a source of strength, there are also complex and intersectional challenges within the borough which the Council has an obligation to tackle.

We know that inequality can impact the way that our services are delivered across a wide range of areas. Younger adults, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, and people on low incomes are more likely to experience housing affordability problems. The BLACHIR report set out clearly the evidence that there are social, economic and environmental reasons that determine significant inequalities in health outcomes amongst Black African and Black Caribbean communities, both locally and nationally. Overall, we know that there are challenges across our services and tackling inequality within Lewisham is not just about challenging overt examples of discrimination, it is about tackling the fundamental disadvantage that is experienced by some of our communities.

The information below provides an overview of the make-up of the borough, it highlights some of the challenges ahead, and the disproportionate impact of societal issues on specific groups. This understanding of who the residents of Lewisham borough are has helped to build the objectives that are set out on this document, as well as the actions that the Council intends to take in order to achieve its objectives.

## **Demographic overview**

- At the 2021 Census, Lewisham had 300,600 residents, an increase of 9% since 2011.
- 51.5% of residents identify as white, and 26.8% identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African"
- The percentage who identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category decreased; 9.3% in 2011 to 9.0% in 2021.
- 23.4% of residents are aged 19 or younger
- 32.5% of residents are married
- 9.6% of residents are aged over 65
- 52.5% of residents are women
- 55.8% identify as having a faith.

## **Age**

- Lewisham remains a young borough, however the average age has increased from 33.6 in 2011 to 35.2 in 2019
- 65.5% percent of boys are achieving a good level of development as defined by the early years foundation stage. Slightly above the London average of 61.7%. 73.7% percentage of girls are achieving a good level of development, slightly below the London average of 74.1%
- In 2022, 5% of 16- and 17-year-olds were not in education, employment or training (including Not Known).

## **Disability**

- In 2021, 7.9% of Lewisham residents were identified as being disabled and limited a lot. This figure decreased from 10.6% in 2011.
- 4% of Lewisham residents are economically inactive due to being long-term sick or disabled
- An estimated 23.1% of women and 14.7% of men meet the diagnostic criteria for at least one Common Mental Health Disorder, which amounts to roughly 40,000 residents within the borough of Lewisham.

## **Gender Identity and Reassignment**

- In Lewisham, 7.62% of people aged 16+ did not answer the question, 91.36% have a gender identity the same as their sex registered at birth, 1.02% have a gender identity different from their sex registered at birth.

| Gender Identity   | Lewisham     | London       | England      |
|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Gender identity the same as sex registered at birth                                   | 91.36%       | 91.21%       | 93.46%       |
| Gender identity different from sex registered at birth but no specific identity given | 0.42%        | 0.46%        | 0.25%        |
| Trans woman   | 0.18%        | 0.16%        | 0.1%         |
| Trans man   | 0.17%        | 0.16%        | 0.1%         |
| Non-binary  | 0.17%        | 0.08%        | 0.06%        |
| All other gender identities   | 0.08%        | 0.05%        | 0.04%        |
| <b>Not answered</b>   | <b>7.62%</b> | <b>7.88%</b> | <b>5.98%</b> |

## **Ethnicity**

- The majority of people in Lewisham are White, at 51.5%, followed by Black at 26.8% and Asian 9%. 8.1% of people identify as having a Mixed ethnic background and the Other ethnic group makes up 4.7% of the population.
- Whilst White remains the largest ethnic group, it has also seen the biggest decrease of all ethnic groups – down from 53.5% in 2011 to 51.5% in 2021. Mixed or multiple ethnic groups and Other ethnic group have both seen an increase of 0.7% and 2.1% respectively in comparison to 2011 census.
- New Cross Gate, Deptford, and Bellingham are wards with the highest proportion of people whose identified ethnicity is Black, Asian and Multi-Ethnic background.

## **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

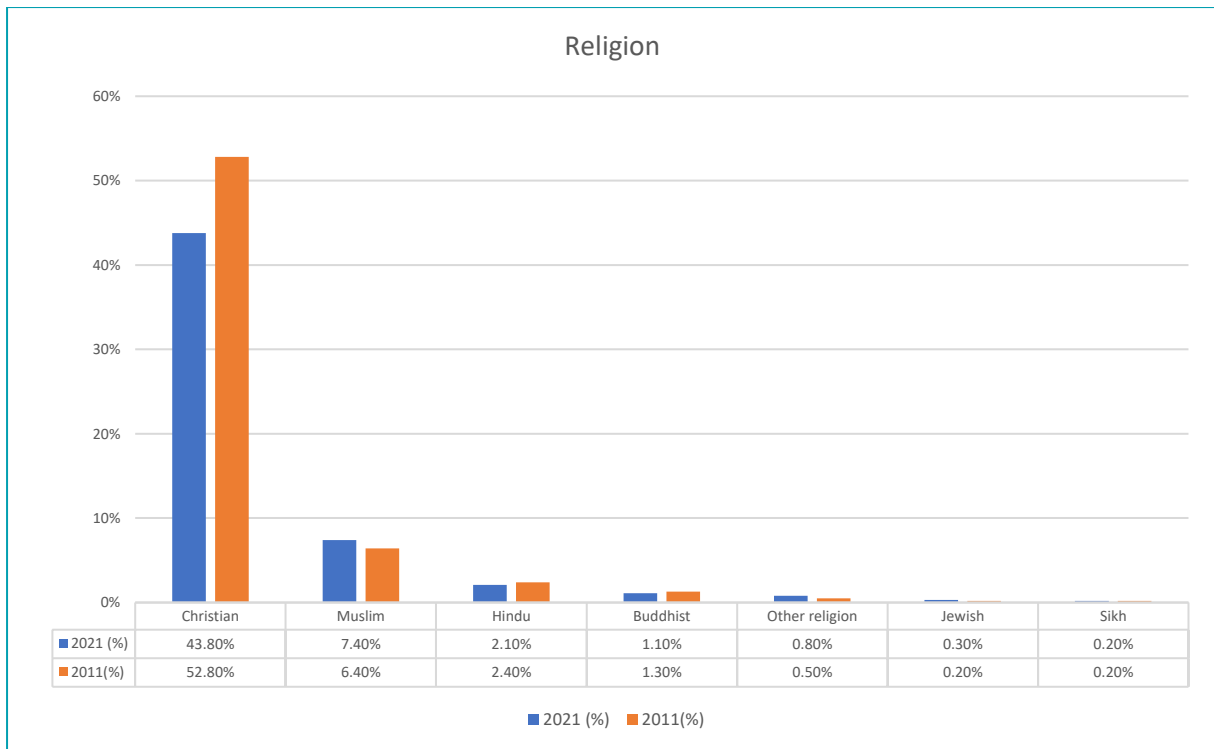
- Of Lewisham residents aged 16 years and over, 53.4% said they had never been married or in a civil partnership in 2021, up from 49.7% in 2011.
- In 2021, just under one in three people (32.5%) said they were married or in a registered civil partnership, compared with 33.3% in 2011. The percentage of adults in Lewisham that had divorced or dissolved a civil partnership decreased from 8.1% to 8.0%. It should be noted that these figures include same-sex marriages and opposite-sex civil partnerships in 2021, neither of which were legally recognised in England and Wales in 2011.

## **Language**

- 83.8% of people in Lewisham speak English as their main language. In keeping with the diversity of the Borough, a large minority identified a language other than English as their main language (16.2%), higher than the national average of 9.2%.
- The most common main languages, other than English, were: Spanish (2.36%), Portuguese (1.08%), Polish (0.92%), and Chinese (0.92%).
- Lewisham had nearly 80% of households where all adults in a household speak English. There are 9.1% households where no people in a household speak English.

## **Religion or belief**

- 36.7% of Lewisham residents reported having "No religion", up from 27.2% in 2011. The rise of 9.5 percentage points was the largest increase of all broad religious groups in Lewisham. Across London, the percentage of residents who described themselves as having "No religion" increased from 21.0% to 27.1%, while across England the percentage increased from 24.8% to 36.7%.
- In 2021, 43.8% of people in Lewisham described themselves as Christian
- Following "no religion" and Christian, the next highest percentage was "Muslim" which 7.4% of residents identified with.



## **Sex**

- The sex difference is most pronounced in the 25 to 34-year-olds, 35 to 49-year-olds, and 50 to 64-year-olds. Females in these three age brackets account for 32.24% (29.25% in 2011) of Lewisham's total population, while males account for 28.5% (28.31% in 2011).
- The proportion of 25 to 34-year-old females has increased by 0.5 percentage points (pp), while the proportion of males in the same age category has decreased 1.04 pp.
- Similarly, the proportion of 35 to 49-year-old females has increased by 0.3pp, whereas for males in this age bracket there has been a decrease of 0.47pp.
- In contrast, the proportions of both males (1.7pp) and females (2.21pp) in the 50 to 64-year-old bracket have increased from 2011.

## **Sexual Orientation**

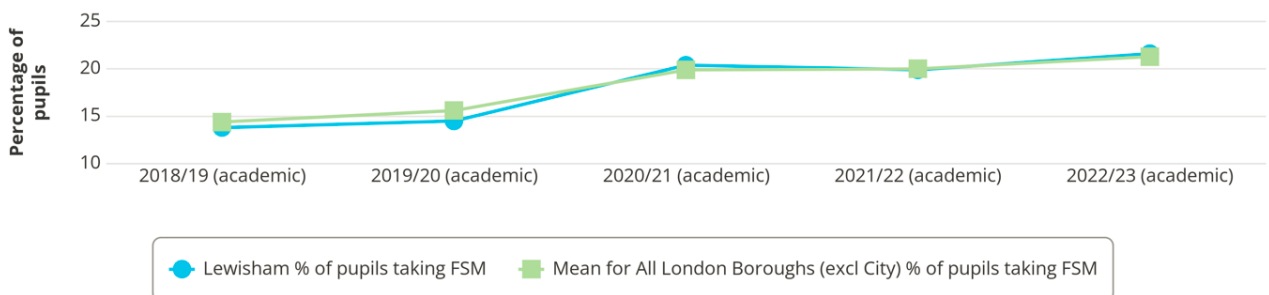
- 2021 was the first time this question had been asked in the survey and so comparable baseline data is challenging to obtain.
- In Lewisham, 6.14% identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or other (LGB+), nearly twice that of the 3.1% for England.
- 84.12% identified as straight or heterosexual, lower than in England (89.4%).

## **Socio-Economic Disadvantage**

- 16.4% of the population was income-deprived in 2019. Of the 316 local authorities in England (excluding the Isles of Scilly), Lewisham is ranked 51st most income-deprived.

- In the least deprived neighbourhood in Lewisham, 4.0% of people are estimated to be income-deprived. In the most deprived neighbourhood, 33.4% of people are estimated to be income-deprived. The gap between these two, is referred to as internal disparity, is 29.4 percentage points in Lewisham
- In November 2023, Lewisham Foodbank reported a growing need for food support provision, with a 40% increase in demand in 2023 compared to 2022 ([Source](#)).
- On average, more than 2,000 people are receiving food support per month, compared to 1,400 in 2022. Over 20,000 people have received support this year so far (as of November 2023.)
- Food banks struggle to meet the growing demand which has been outstripping donations since 2022. As of late 2023, only 60% of food support is covered by donations, the remainder needs to be purchased.
- Beneficiaries that accessed food banks the most were aged between 25-64 years old. The age group of child beneficiaries accessing food banks the most was 5-11 years old.
- The demand level in Lewisham is now at 4.5 times the England average, compared to 3 times before 2019.

**Percentage of all pupils eligible and taking free school meals (from 2018/19 (academic) to 2022/23 (academic)) for Lewisham**



### **Lewisham Council Staff**

- The staff make-up of Lewisham Council is 58.2% female, and 41.8% male.
- The ethnicity of Lewisham Council's staff is:
  - Asian: 5.0%
  - Black: 39.6%
  - Mixed: 5.1%
  - Other: 1.5%
  - White: 44.7%
  - Unavailable: 4.1%
- 9.3% of Lewisham's staff are disabled, although it should be noted that no disability data is held on 19.2% of staff.
- 19.1% of Council staff are over 60 years old
- 71.1% of staff are heterosexual, whilst data is not held on 24.1% of staff who have indicated that they prefer not to say.

## **Equality Objectives**

Over the next four years, the Council has outlined five clear priority areas:

- Improving representation in our workforce
- Making our borough more accessible
- Increasing the quality of life of residents by tackling preventable illnesses and diseases
- Improving how we consider the impact of intersectionality in our decision making
- Engage and co-produce more effectively with our residents.

Within each of these priority areas, we have outlined specific and measurable objectives, where we will be able to monitor and publish our progress as a Council. When this framework is fully renewed in 2028, our intention is that we will be able to evidence how the work we have undertaken has made significant improvements to each of these priority areas, and to the lives of those who live within the borough of Lewisham.

Although these objectives are what we have assessed to be our key EDI priorities based on the evidence that we have available to us and the feedback that we have received from our residents, they will not be our only focus. The Council will continue to undertake extensive work on EDI through the delivery of all its services. Our [Corporate Strategy](#) sets out that our focus on equality is at the heart of everything that we do, and although the five areas above will remain the Council's core equality objectives, all Council services will hold objectives of their own in relation to EDI.

The process through which service specific objectives will be delivered, and the Council's newly revised method for ensuring each service prioritises EDI, is outlined below as '[Delivering on Equalities](#)'.

## **Improving representation in our workforce**

### **What we'll measure**

- By 2028, we will employ a workforce which, on the basis of protected characteristics, is representative of our borough.
- By 2028, the top 5% of our earners will, on the basis of protected characteristics, be representative of our workforce.

### **Why we're measuring it**

We know that about [50% of residents trust the Council to make the best decisions](#), and although we're proud that this figure is substantially higher than the London average of 32%, it's clear that there's more to do. Employing a workforce that looks and feels like our borough's population can help us work more closely with residents and give them confidence that those providing the services they rely on understand their lives and lived experiences.

We also want to show our staff that Lewisham Council is a meritocracy, where the best individuals are given opportunities, regardless of their background. Having a leadership team which is truly representative of the workforce it manages will



showcase to our staff that we are aiming to do all we can to eliminate biases in our hiring processes, and working to ensure that the best people can access the right roles for them.

Diversity in Lewisham has always been one of the boroughs strengths, and we know that we are a better organisation if our workforce reflects the borough the serve. Ultimately, the Council must strive as an organisation to represent the borough in order to ensure that we understand residents' needs are able to deliver services as effectively as possible for our residents.

### How we'll measure it

| Information source                                 | Metric  |
|--|---|
| Annual Employment Profile/<br>Lewisham Observatory | Representation of the workforce in comparison to the borough  |
|  | Representation of the top 5% of the workforce in comparison to the borough                                |
| Annual Employment Profile                          | Ethnicity pay gaps, staff retention and representation across management levels.                          |
| Equalities Action Plans                            | Progress reporting from Directorate Equalities Action Plans   |
| Staff Surveys                                      | Bullying and Harassment complaints, satisfaction with the Council as a workplace, other relevant metrics. |
| Unison Anti-Racism Charter                         | The Council becomes a signatory of Unison's Anti-Racism Charter   |

### Current position

The Council's workforce across almost all ethnic groups is under-represented when compared to the borough profile. The exception to this is black staff, who exceed the borough population profile by 10.4 percentage points. Despite this, black staff are disproportionately under-represented at senior levels of the Council and experience a pay-gap of over 10%.

|                 | 2022/23 | 2021/22 | London Councils average (median) | Lewisham Borough Profile |
|-----------------|---------|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Asian           | 4.6%    | 4.1%    | 13.2%                            | 9%                       |
| Black           | 37.2%   | 35.2%   | 26.5%                            | 26.8%                    |
| Dual Heritage   | 4.8%    | 5.1%    | 4.1%                             | 8.1%                     |
| Other Ethnicity | 1.4%    | 1.3%    | 1.8%                             | 4.7%                     |
| Undisclosed     | 4.8%    | 8.2%    | -                                | -                        |



|              |              |     |       |       |
|--------------|--------------|-----|-------|-------|
| <b>White</b> | <b>47.2%</b> | 46% | 54.4% | 51.4% |
|--------------|--------------|-----|-------|-------|

On Sexuality, the Council holds limited data for this protected characteristic as a result of the large number of officers who prefer not to disclose this information.

|                               | 2022/23      | 2021/22 | Lewisham Borough Profile |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---------|--------------------------|
| <b>Bisexual</b>               | <b>0.8%</b>  | 0.7%    | 2.3%                     |
| <b>Gay/ Lesbian</b>           | <b>2.2%</b>  | 2.3%    | 3%                       |
| <b>Other</b>                  | <b>0.2%</b>  | 0.3%    | 0.7%                     |
| <b>Prefer not to say</b>      | <b>28.4%</b> | 30.9%   | 6.5%                     |
| <b>Straight/ Heterosexual</b> | <b>65.4%</b> | 60.6%   | 89.9%                    |
| <b>Undisclosed</b>            | <b>3%</b>    | 5.2%    | -                        |

On Disability, people who are disabled are underrepresented within the Council's workforce, although Lewisham has better representation than the average London local authority. It should be noted that positive work has been undertaken in recent years to reduce the number of officers who prefer not to disclose their disability status.

|                          | 2022/23      | 2021/22 | London Councils average (median) | Lewisham Borough Profile |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Disabled</b>          | <b>7.5%</b>  | 4.9%    | 6.5%                             | 20.4%                    |
| <b>Not Disabled</b>      | <b>69.3%</b> | 40.9%   | 93.5%                            | 79.6%                    |
| <b>Prefer Not to Say</b> | <b>15.6%</b> | 17.2%   | -                                | -                        |
| <b>Undisclosed</b>       | <b>7.6%</b>  | 37%     | -                                | -                        |

Further detailed information on how representative the Council's workforce is can be found in the annual employment profile of the Council.

### **Making our borough more accessible**

#### **What we'll measure**

- We will improve accessibility within our public realm, including in our streetscape and our buildings.
- We will deliver on the commitments in our response to the Disabled People's Commission Report.

## Why we're measuring it

As was set out in the [Council's response to the Disabled People's Commission Report](#), Lewisham Council has an ambition to 'set the standard as one of London's most accessible boroughs'. To achieve this, we want more of our businesses and buildings to be as accessible to all residents as is possible. Over the course of the next four years, the Council will undertake various activities, all designed to improve accessibility in our public realm. It is vital that in order to ensure we deliver the best services possible for our residents, we make everything we as accessible as possible.

This commitment overall extends beyond our infrastructure and our assets. Making our borough more accessible will mean creating more accessible services, living our values as a borough that is committed to the social model of disability and ensuring that we co-produce services whenever possible. We want all residents to be able to access, understand and have a say in the work that we do.

Delivering this work in a meaningful way will mean undertaking transformational work to change the 'front door' of the Council. This is something that Lewisham is committed to, and over the course of this framework it is the Council's intention to significantly change the way in which any resident can access a Council service.

## How we'll measure it

| Information source   | Metric  |
|--|---|
| Health and Safety Quarterly Report                                     | Compliance with the Health and Safety Checklist   |
| Independent review of the Disabled People's Commission Report response | Progress against the agreed actions contained within this response  |
| Equalities Action Plans  | Progress reporting from Directorate Equalities Action Plans   |
| AccessAble   | The number of buildings contained within the borough which are registered on AccessAble, and the quantity of traffic to the website |
| Strategic Change Board reporting                                       | Key Performance Indicators for the 'No Wrong Front Door' transformation programme   |
| Love Clean Streets   | The usage of access reporting functionality on the Love Clean Streets application.  |

## Current position

Lewisham Council does not currently hold data specifically designed to provide information on the accessibility of its buildings, although this information is provided through other means such as the quarterly Health and Safety checklist. The Council is currently in the process of procuring specialist advice to better build our

understanding of accessibility within our assets, and future reviews of this framework will provide and report on that information once it is obtained.

On AccessAble, the Council's digital tool for showing accessibility information, we currently have 234 buildings/open spaces listed across the borough. Annual reporting for this tool shows that from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, 20,092 users accessed the tool with 64,675 pages viewed.

In terms of services more broadly, our 2021 Residents' Survey showed that while 64% of residents indicate it is either very or fairly easy to access Lewisham Council services, 26% find this difficult to some extent.

At the time of publication for this report, the Council is only beginning the work outlined in the response to the Disabled People's Commission report. As this work progresses the Council will report internally on progress made against its own objectives, before commissioning an independent review of the work as a whole after roughly 24 months.

## **Increasing the quality of life of residents by tackling preventable illnesses and diseases**

### **What we'll measure**

- Improving data collection by working in partnership with our local hospital trust. Breaking down information by specific ethnicity and considering the differences within ethnic backgrounds and nationality.
- Support improvements to comprehensive training with regards to the needs of LGBTQ+ residents for primary care (GPs, pharmacies, VCS groups delivering health activities), as well as acute trusts.

### **Why we're measuring it**

The Birmingham and Lewisham African and Caribbean Health Inequalities Review, launched by Lewisham Council in 2022, highlighted the issues that exist across the health sector with data collection. Too frequently, data collection does not consider the cultural differences between different demographic groups and treats all ethnic minority communities as a single 'other'. This has led to gaps in available data and limits our understanding of the needs of communities within Lewisham.

Furthermore, we know that for many residents, the distinctions between which organisations or services are responsible for particular areas of health are frustrating and challenging to navigate. That's why, although we know the Council doesn't hold all the necessary levers to tackle preventable illness and disease, we're still committed to this objective and to working with colleagues across systems to improve outcomes for our residents.

### **How we'll measure it**

| Information source                       | Metric  |
|--|---|
| Lewisham Strategic Partnership Reporting | Relevant KPIs attached to the 'Should I really be here' project |

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Equalities Action Plans     | Progress reporting from Directorate Equalities Action Plans                      |
| Health and Wellbeing Board  | Progress of BLACHIR actions  |
| Public Health Commissioners | The accreditation of all health care providers in Lewisham in Pride and Practice |

### **Current position**

The BLACHIR report highlighted the layers of disadvantage faced by Black African and Caribbean Communities in terms of health outcomes. It noted that *“Treating all ethnic minority or ‘Black’ communities as a single ‘Other’ group does not consider the cultural differences between Black African and Black Caribbean people”* and that this has led to gaps in the data we hold on our communities within the borough. We know those gaps still exist and work is being undertaken across systems to improve the quality of data we hold on specific ethnic groups.

The current Lewisham Strategy Partnership Community Action Plan outlines work that will be undertaken to develop a project focused on the improving mental health outcomes for black boys within Lewisham. Early work scoping this project has been undertaken, and subsequent reviews of this framework will provide updates on its progress.

The March 2024 LGBTQ+ Joint Strategic Needs Assessment outlines the disproportionate burden of ill-health faced by this community. It notes that focus group surveys based in Lewisham found that 46% believe their GP needs more training on LGBTQ+ issues and 37% believe their GP has a good knowledge of LGBTQ+ experiences. This feedback highlights the need to improve training within Primary Care and provide more confidence to residents that healthcare professionals understand their lived experience.

### **Improving the way we consider the impact of intersectionality in our decision making processes**

#### **What we’ll measure**

- 100% of Council Key Decisions recognising inequality through the completion of either an Equalities Impact Screening, or Equalities Impact Assessment.
- All strategic decisions made by the Council will be accompanied by an Equalities Impact Assessment or Screening.
- The progress of each of the Council’s Directorate-level Equalities Action Plans.

#### **Why we’re measuring it**

In 2020, the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee review into *‘How Lewisham Council embeds equalities across its service provision’* recommended that “Intersectionality should be considered as part of the Equalities process”, as well as socio-economic background.

In the 2020-2024 Single Equality Framework, this recommendation was progressed, and consideration of intersectionality was embedded into the Equality Impact Assessment process. Now, as the Council looks forward to the next four years, we

want to keep momentum and continue improving the processes that we have. For this reason, we're committing to ensuring more transparency in how we monitor the equalities impact of our decisions, and a renewed focus from all Council Directorates on how they've considered equalities throughout the decision-making process.

### **How we'll measure it**

| Information source                        | Metric   |
|---|--|
| Equalities Action Plans                   | Progress reporting from Directorate Equalities Action Plans  |
| Published Council Key Decisions           | The number of Equalities Impact Screenings or Assessments    |
| Equalities Impact Screenings/ Assessments | Reviewing the effectiveness and consistency of these reports |

### **Current position**

At the time of writing this report, the Council's Directorate Equalities Action Plans, which will drive this work, are being drafted. It is intended that at the first review of this Single Equalities Approach, the Council will have in place an action plan for each Directorate.

All Council Key Decisions are accompanied by either an Equalities Impact Assessment or an Equalities Impact Screening. However, these documents are not always consistent and the quality of data on which they are based can vary. Despite this, independent feedback on the quality of the Council's framework for completing these documents has been extremely positive, noting that the Council utilises metrics such as socio-economic background and intersectionality, providing an opportunity for a full consideration of potential impact.

### **Improving how we engage and co-produce with our residents.**

#### **What we'll measure**

- The Council can evidence its progress against an ambition that consultations will be representative of those impacted by the work being consulted on.
- The Council can evidence increasing use of effective co-production models in policy development.
- That there is an increase in the proportion of residents who feel Lewisham Council seeks the views of residents before making decisions.

#### **Why we're measuring it**

The Council's most recent [Residents Survey](#) reported that compared to 2015, fewer residents now agree that the Council consults on decisions (42% agreed, 16% disagreed). It also noted that 22% of residents don't believe the Council explains the decisions it makes. We are determined to change this perception of Lewisham, and increase the number of our residents who feel engaged in our decision making process. We saw during the Covid-19 Pandemic the power of active citizenship and the huge contributions that residents make when they work together to resolve

issues within the borough. We want to harness that power and build on the knowledge and experience of our residents through using co-production in developing our new ideas.

We also know the importance of hearing from across the diverse communities that reside in Lewisham. People's perspectives, experiences and lived experiences impact the way they receive information from the Council and the actions they want the Council to take. Therefore, over the course of this framework we'll be working to ensure that when we do consult with residents, we hear from people who represent our borough and act on their views.

### **How we'll measure it**

| <b>Information source</b>  | <b>Metric</b>   |
|--|---|
| Citizen Space  | Responses to standardised equalities monitoring questions   |
| Independent review of the Disabled People's Commission Report response | Progress against the co-production actions contained within this response   |
| Directorate reports  | The instances of co-production models being used in policy development  |
| Residents Survey   | Questions relating to decision making compared to 2021 results  |
| Corporate Review of Engagement   | Completion of a corporate review of the Council's programme of engagement in 2025.<br><br>Subsequent completion of the actions contained within that review (2025-28) |

### **Current position**

As is noted above, our most recent Residents' Survey indicated that the Council has more to do when it comes to showing our residents that their views are taken into account during our decision-making processes.

The 2023 Single Equality Framework Review highlighted that, whilst the Council does deliver excellent instances of co-production work to develop and deliver services, this was not as widespread as it could be across all areas of the Council. Models such as the Young Mayor, the use of the Portage Service in the development of Adventure Playgrounds and the Disabled People's Commission show how effectively co-production can be when properly delivered.

Although the Council does not currently track and report on instances of co-production across the entire organisation, reviews of this framework will highlight where and when effective work has taken place so that services across the authority can learn from them. Additionally, the upcoming review of the Council's engagement work will provide new metrics on which successful engagement with residents can

be measured, providing assurance that the Council is reaching out to a diverse range of voices, and hearing from those who are directly impacted by the decisions we make.

The Council does not currently collate the responses to standard equalities monitoring questions across the entire organisation. However, following the publication of this framework, this work will be undertaken and in subsequent reviews that information will be provided to monitor how effectively the Council is engaging with the diverse communities that exist within the borough.