

3.2.08 Community Cohesion

Introduction: why is this important?

In Bradford District, the following definition of community cohesion is used:

“Community cohesion in the Bradford District means building a shared vision and values and a sense of belonging for all within a culturally rich and diverse environment. It is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities are valued and can live together with mutual respect, understanding and tolerance. It is a District where people are treated fairly, feel safe and secure, understand their rights and responsibilities, and play an active role in the social, civic and economic life of the community”.

From 5th April 2011 The Equality Act placed on public sector bodies, including the Local Authority and the NHS, the “equality duty”:

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- to advance equality of opportunity
- to foster good relations

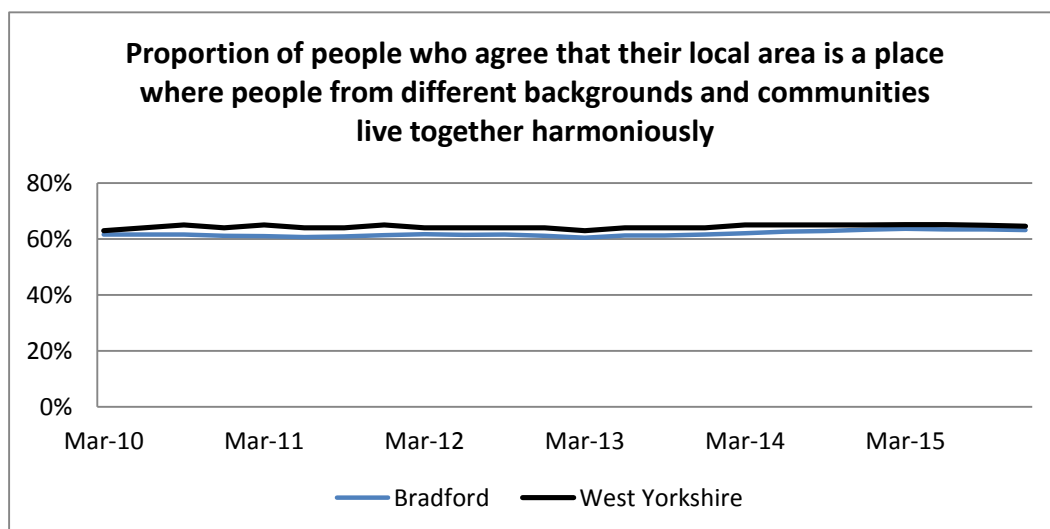
In respect of the following “protected groups”:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment (with a wider definition than previously – a transgendered person no longer has to show they are under medical supervision)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)
- religion or belief (including lack of belief)
- sex sexual orientation

What do the facts and figures tell us?

There is a vast divide between poverty and wealth; some urban areas are among the poorest in the country, whilst some rural areas are among the most affluent. 76% of the District is rural and this can affect people’s ability to access services.

Bradford District has seen large increases in population numbers at the older and the younger end of the age spectrum and has a diverse population with around a quarter of local residents coming from one of the many ethnic minority communities.



The above graph taken from iQuanta (an internet-based analysis tool developed and maintained by the Home Office Performance Strategy Directorate) shows that there has been a small increase of the 'proportion of people who agree that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds and communities live together harmoniously' both in Bradford and West Yorkshire

What strategies, policies and best practice have been developed locally and nationally?

In 2010 and 2011 Bradford Council undertook face to face Residents Perceptions surveys, which included questions previously used to calculate National Indicators. However findings from these surveys are not directly comparable to the previous Place Surveys because of the different methodologies. The Place Survey was a largely self-selecting postal survey whereas the Residents Perceptions surveys were conducted face-to-face at respondent's homes and the achieved sample was quota controlled to ensure it was representative of the wider population.

Hate incidents and hate narrative undermine our efforts to improve cohesion between our communities. Therefore we have developed various approaches to reducing hate crime which include:

- Education approaches that reduce prejudice and raise emotional intelligence
- Support to increase reporting and support to victims of hate crime
- Taking effective action against perpetrators
- Strategy group supported by partnership networks to target resources effectively

Relevant strategies and local documents include:

- The Compact
- Stronger Communities Delivery Plan
- Community Cohesion and Inclusion Framework
- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Hate Crime Strategy
- New Arrivals Strategy
- ESOL Strategy

The recently published Bradford District Plan 2016-2020 includes a key priority of promoting 'Safe, Clean and Active communities'.

What challenges have been identified in a local context?

Pressures on public services can create new or additional sources of tension and resentment between communities with people believing that other groups are receiving preferential treatment.

An increase in deprivation will have a disproportionate effect on deprived communities amongst which Black and Minority Ethnic communities tend to be concentrated.

Financial pressures for public services, including funding to voluntary, community and faith sectors will hit at the same time as the needs of the communities they serve increase.

There may be increases in anxiety and depression, alcohol and domestic abuse, gambling and other forms of addiction. There will be an impact on the ability of some families to maintain a healthy diet.

What do our stakeholders tell us?

In Bradford and Airedale the local NHS trusts are working together through the newly formed Bradford and Airedale NHS Equality Group to respond to the public sector equality duty and to implement the Equality Delivery System (EDS), a framework for assessing and improving equality performance within NHS organisations.

Representatives of “local interests”, largely from the voluntary and community sector, have been recruited to this group. The group is identifying priority equality objectives for the NHS in Bradford and Airedale and using EDS to improve equalities work. The work of reaching consensus on these priorities will contribute towards the legal duty to “foster good relations” between those people from a protected group and those who are not and between different protected groups.

Recommendations: What do we need to do? How do we ensure this remains a priority?

We have to focus on the following priorities:

- To develop a proposal to establish a network of ‘community interveners’ and active citizens who could play a role in building community resilience to a range of issues and present this to the Community Safety Partnership
- Continue to monitor the impact of austerity on community relations within the District
- Support and promote a range of community events that promote different groups and build stronger relations between groups through increasing awareness

There are a wide range of initiatives taking place in Bradford, the aim of which is to bring communities together and promote cohesion. These include:

- Intergenerational work, bringing children and older people together
- Schools twinning, linking schools in different parts of the District
- Interfaith events and initiatives, helping people learn more about the beliefs and lives of others
- Initiatives, such as the annual Easier Access event, bringing together people with and without disabilities
- The annual “Pride” week celebrating the contribution of the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) community
- Community Accord, the local Neighbourhood mediation body, who offer conflict resolution services
- Work done by Bradford University, including the Faith and City Programme

References

Bradford District Plan 2016-2020

<https://www.bradford.gov.uk/media/2312/bradford-district-plan-final.pdf>