

## LGBTQIA+ Strategic Framework

[Background](#)

[Development](#)

[The Aspirational Framework](#)

[Overview of the themes and aspirations](#)

[Accessibility & Service Provision](#)

[Intersectionality](#)

[Demographics & Data](#)

[Informed Allyship](#)

[Participation & Engagement](#)

[Community Resilience & Belonging](#)

[Approaches](#)

[Direct change](#)

[Partnership](#)

[Influence](#)

[Accountability & Measurement](#)

[Hackney LGBTQIA+ Community Panel](#)

[Success Measures](#)

[Appendices](#)

[Appendix 1](#)

[Appendix 2](#)

## Background

Hackney's Single Equalities Scheme 2018-2022<sup>1</sup> identified the need for an LGBT+ Action Plan and a Trans, Nonbinary, Intersex and Gender Non-conforming (collectively known as "Gender Diversity") inclusion strategy.

A Gender Diversity inclusion review<sup>2</sup> of existing services was completed in early 2020 which made broad recommendations for service improvements, however further work was delayed due to the global pandemic. The review has been incorporated into the underpinning evidence base in development of this strategy, which brings together both the LGBT+ action plan and Gender Diversity Inclusion Strategy into a framework which looks to set aspirations for Hackney to become a borough in which LGBTQIA+ people can thrive, and lay out a plan for how we may reach those aspirations.

## Development

The work began with a substantial research piece - a "Data and Insight Synthesis"<sup>3</sup> - drawing on all the local information available and incorporating national data and insight, to identify key features that underpin LGBTQIA+ wellbeing and what supports genuine transformation. Through this research work, six key themes were identified which form the basis of the aspirations. These aspirations were then tested on a small scale with people who live, work or study in Hackney to see whether they were worded in a way which made sense and to explore what achieving those aspirations might look like.


The small scale testing involved three methods;


- Two community-based group conversations<sup>4</sup>, one with LGBTQIA+ Volunteers aged 25-50 and one with young people aged 15-21.
- An online portal using Google Sites for LGBTQIA+ individuals to provide detailed feedback anonymously
- A topic on "Hackney Matters"<sup>5</sup> - this was open to all panel members, whether they were LGBTQIA+ or not


The feedback was largely positive, with the aspirational framework approach well received. There were two negative responses on Hackney Matters which challenged usage of the word "queer" and "intersex" and raised concerns about the safety of women and girls. Some challenging responses of this type may be expected, given the current media climate which has magnified unevidenced fears around trans inclusion. Such responses should not prevent the work moving forward, and should be seen within the context of the need for the work to be both sensitively tackled and rooted in the evidence base.


The community conversations were limited by needing organisations and individuals to give up their time without recompense, with limited resources, however the feedback gained was entirely consistent with Hackney's previous focus groups with Trans and Nonbinary residents and so it is with confidence we can state that the issues that matter to our gender diverse residents have not changed.

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<sup>1</sup>  single-equality-scheme-2018-2022.pdf

<sup>2</sup>  Report on Trans Inclusion in Hackney

<sup>3</sup>  Synthesis of insight and data LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney [internal] (public version also available)

<sup>4</sup>  LGBTQIA+ Strategy Update (Community Conversations)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.hackneymatters.org.uk/about\\_us](https://www.hackneymatters.org.uk/about_us)

As specific initiatives, projects and transformation work is carried out across directorates, it may be that further community engagement will be required. It is strongly recommended that residents and organisations which participate in these are recompensed in some way for their time, in order to avoid an issue of power imbalance often cited by these groups whereby Hackney uses the labour of marginalised people without rewarding it.

### The Aspirational Framework

An “Aspirational Framework” is one that sets aims for Hackney to work towards which promote transformative work rather than nonperformative<sup>6</sup> statements, single project workstreams or “tick box” activities. It frames our goals as part of a learning journey in line with the principles of systems change.

The framework is designed to be iterative, collaborative and flexible. In place of providing a list of recommendations for directorates to action, the framework outlines the shared goals for the Council to work towards and encourages services to consider what can be actioned to achieve those aims.

Within an aspirational framework, we look at what the desired outcome is, and work backwards to identify what actions we can undertake which will enable change towards the goal. This will likely take the form of both individual projects/initiatives as well as work that promotes long term systems change, and indeed both will need to take place concurrently.

### Overview of the themes and aspirations

Theme	Hackney Council Aspires to...
<a href="#">Accessibility &amp; Service Provision</a>	ensure LGBTQIA+ people are able to access services that meet their needs where they are listened to, understood, and taken seriously without judgement
<a href="#">Intersectionality</a>	recognise and celebrate the diversity of our LGBTQIA+ communities, paying attention to those who are often least heard and represented
<a href="#">Demographics &amp; Data</a>	improve our knowledge of our LGBTQIA+ communities through responsible data collection and use this information when planning services
<a href="#">Informed Allyship</a>	be visible allies, open to learning and reflection, working in coalition with residents and organisations to promote LGBTQIA+ rights
<a href="#">Participation &amp; Engagement</a>	empower LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney to be able to influence the council on matters and policy that affect their communities
<a href="#">Community Resilience &amp; Belonging</a>	be a place where LGBTQIA+ people feel free and safe to express themselves with opportunities to connect with

<sup>6</sup> Ahmed, S., 2006. [The nonperformativity of antiracism](#). Meridians, 7(1), pp.104-126.

	others
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See [Appendix 1](#) for original wording

## Accessibility & Service Provision

*“Hackney aspires to ensure LGBTQIA+ people are able to access services that meet their needs where they are listened to, understood, and taken seriously without judgement”*

According to the research<sup>7</sup>, the biggest factor in whether LGBTQIA+ people feel they've had a good service is when they're listened to, taken seriously and that they are not judged. The research suggests that this is more important to people than having their problem solved - so they clearly matter a great deal.

Understanding what makes people feel heard and taken seriously will help us develop training and resources for our front line staff. It's useful to know what it might look like if you were accessing a service and you felt like the person you spoke to really showed they understood what you were telling them.

### Example activities

- Ensuring any database that holds resident information is able to accurately reflect their personal data, including options to add gender neutral titles (e.g. Mx) and pronouns, and that this information is secure and used appropriately.
- A directory of LGBTQIA+ specific services so residents can be referred to specialist services
- Training for all staff who come into contact with the public on LGBTQIA+ identities and issues
- Knowledge repositories for staff to access about minority identities and specialist services

## Intersectionality

*“Hackney aspires to recognise and celebrate the diversity of our LGBTQIA+ communities, paying attention to those who are often least heard and represented”*


This theme showed up in the research in two ways -

1. The need to understand how LGBTQIA+ people may have different needs or experience discrimination in very different ways due to other Protected Characteristics - for example their race or religion - or other life experiences such as their immigration status, socio-economic situation or long term health challenges.
2. There are multiple LGBTQIA+ communities; Lesbians, Gay men, Bisexuals, Trans people, Queer folk, Intersex or people with variations of sexual characteristics, Asexual and others can and do have distinct needs and a "one size fits all" approach for may not always work or be the most effective course of action.

### Example activities

- An understanding of Intersectionality is embedded into all relevant training training
- Equality Impact Assessments have a section designed to draw out potentially intersectional impacts

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<sup>7</sup>  Synthesis of insight and data LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney [internal] (public version also available)

- Intersecting needs are considered during grant making and commissioning processes
- Equality of outcomes are represented across all council strategies and plans, with clear links and signposting to relevant cross-service work

### Demographics & Data

Without good data, it's hard to target funding and resources where they're needed most and to ensure our services are reaching those who are in need of them.

While the 2021 Census asked a question about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity for the first time since the census began has provided data about our communities as a starting point to understand who may be in need of services, it remains difficult to collect identity data about those using - or unintentionally being excluded from - our services as it is very personal and private information, which not everyone feels comfortable or safe to share. We need to think about how we can make people feel confident to share their personal data with us, and that it will be secure and safe. The safer people feel to give us this information, the better our data will be.

There was some evidence during the census 2021 that some organisations view SOGI data as purely for equalities monitoring purposes. In order to improve services for LGBTQIA+ people, we need to commit to actively using this data in service planning as we would with other demographic information. There needs to be a consistent approach to collecting LGBTQIA+ data across the organisation so that we can understand who is accessing services and how they feel about those services; as well as understand who is not accessing our services, and explore why. Our systems and databases need to be able to accurately and respectfully record information about people's gender identity.

### Example activities

- Review the organisation's data collection strategy to ensure personal information data collection is trauma informed and consistently applied across the council
- Ensure that Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity is used in service development and commissioning.
- Ensure when collecting data about service user experiences that SOGI data captured in order to include this as a factor when determining user satisfaction
- Work with staff networks to improve staff disclosure on HR systems and during staff surveys

### Informed Allyship

Many organisations are starting to have rainbow lanyard schemes, support Pride marches or have pronoun badges or pronouns in their emails, which is great for visibility; however if these gestures aren't backed up by the organisations actively working to make LGBTQIA+ people's lives better, it can be harmful. If an organisation is displaying pride flags when a service user experiences LGBTQIA+phobia or a lack of understanding about the impact of their identity on their need for the service, it may give the impression that organisation isn't serious about their commitment to LGBTQIA+ Equality, and could potentially backfire and decrease trust in the organisation. Therefore it's important to go beyond visual allyship, and back it up with ensuring our services are culturally humble, well informed and ready to listen and learn when we don't get it right.

Hackney has launched a new Rainbow Lanyard scheme in 2022 - this needs to be underpinned by a coherent learning and knowledge building programme to equip all staff, particularly public facing staff, with the confidence and awareness to be visible allies.

### **Example activities**

- A communications and dissemination plan for initiatives that support LGBTQIA+ communities (internal and external)
- A varied package of training materials for staff to understand the key needs and issues for LGBTQIA+ service users, building on the Gender Diversity FAQ
- Engage with LGBTQIA+ residents and organisations to understand what they would like to see from the organisation. E.g. a community form, a local pride etc

### **Participation & Engagement**

Events, projects and services should not only include LGBTQIA+ communities but should actively involve communities at the development and planning stage. We need to make sure that where funding is available we're putting it into events and initiatives that genuinely make a difference. Identifying different and creative ways to allow people to participate is important, as formal focus groups are not always the best way to talk to communities with experience of discrimination or not being listened to. As a council we need to make sure we're making the effort to reach out to parts of the LGBTQIA+ community who are often less heard (one of the reasons good data collection is so important) and that we're seeking out lived experience expertise within our communities.

### **Example activities**

- Creation of a Hackney LGBTQIA+ panel, similar to the Older People's Reference Group, who are recompensed for their participation.
- Direct co-production with the Hackney LGBTQIA+ panel in relevant council business, e.g. creation of policy matters, funding decisions, public safety

### **Community Resilience & Belonging**

A key priority for LGBTQIA+ communities is to have safe access to daytime spaces and events which are not built around nightlife or alcohol. Many of the LGBTQIA+ venues in London have closed over the last few years, and while there are some great late-night bars and clubs in Hackney, we have fewer sober spaces or places to go to during the day. We also know that LGBTQIA+ people were significantly impacted by feelings of isolation and loneliness during the pandemic. We've been told that our public spaces don't always feel safe, and that people want more opportunities to be able to meet together in Hackney spaces. Research suggests that not all LGBTQIA+ people feel safe reporting to the police, and that there need to be better ways at dealing with hate crimes and harassment and how people are supported, as well as work to prevent it happening in the first place through looking at public space improvements.

### **Example activities**

- Revising booking procedures for council-owned community spaces which allow residents to use these spaces at minimal costs
- Reinstatement of the LGBTQIA+ Business Forum for LGBTQIA+ run local businesses and venues

- Investment in preventative and transformative justice approaches to reduce reliance on the criminal justice system

## Approaches

There are two approaches to this work based on where the council has the most opportunity to effect change. While the two approaches may in some cases take place concurrently, there is some foundational work the council needs to carry out before the influencing stage can be genuinely effective.

## Direct change

Where we implement transformation within the council through, for example

- training,
- onboarding,
- knowledge production and sharing,
- policy review,
- incorporation of equalities actions unilaterally across different strategies and work plans

Some change can, and should, be made as soon as possible, some is already underway. Other work is the slow, complex work of systems change. Both short term and long term work is necessary, as any short term initiatives needs to be backed up by work that seeks to shift the entrenched, structural LGBTQIA+phobia within the system. This approach both mirrors and supports the Anti-racist strategy, with which there is much in common; not least that LGBTQIA+ people of colour experience compounded marginalisation by being at the intersection of gender, sexuality and race. As the Council develops its competency in dealing with the impacts of structural discrimination, linking up such strategies will become easier.

Work that needs to be delivered in the short term takes three main forms - “quick wins” which meet community demand while being relatively simple to initiate; “priorities” which are those most pressing to LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney; and “foundational”; work which needs to take place in order for the long term work to be successful.

## Partnership

Due to the iterative, collaborative and flexible nature of the framework, it is adaptable for other partners and organisations to adopt for their own transformation work. Our partners can adopt this framework in partnership with Hackney Council which will support alignment of goals and promote collaborative and co-productive approaches.

Discussions are underway with both CAMHS and local NHS partners to adopt the framework as a shared approach.

## Influence

As the council builds our internal competencies we can use our experience to influence partners to implement change within their own organisations through for example

- partnership working



- supplier policy
- commissioning policy
- shared training & peer learning opportunities

The influencing approach will need to be **relational**, consisting of utilising existing positive networks and relationships alongside a proactive strategy of reaching out to organisations and communities representing gaps, cold spots, seldom heard voices, small populations and those with multiple intersecting marginalisations.

Identifying who owns this work, how it is coordinated and systematised will need to be explored during the direct work.

## Accountability & Measurement

### Hackney LGBTQIA+ Community Panel

Creation of a community panel or reference group is central to the strategy. This group would be broadly similar to the Older People's Reference Group and hold three core functions

- Holding the Council to account in working towards the six aspirations
- Acting as a critical friend for new guidelines, policies and initiatives
- Measurement of the journey travelled towards the aims

The LGBTQIA+ community panel would be actively engaged, and this engagement would be reflected in all development work, not just within Equality Impact Assessments.

Responsibility for the Community Panel would require a strong lead with cross-cutting reach.

### Success Measures

Improvement in Workforce activities will be linked to Stonewall benchmarking e.g. Hackney achieving Silver or higher in the Stonewall Workforce Equality Index

Individual workflows within this framework would have measurement determined at initiation and agreed by the LGBTQIA+ Community Panel.

For example - a workstream initiated to produce a joined up and consistent approach to collecting equalities data across the council would be measured through:

- seeing lower rates of "prefer not to say" - this would indicate that residents feel safer in providing us with their details and understand why we are collecting this information.
- Data being available via ICT's data lake on LGBTQIA+ residents in Hackney
- Services actively include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity as core demographic information along with Ethnicity, Religion, Disability etc.

Overarching measures of success of this programme would be:

- Hackney develops robust data on our LGBTQIA+ population, and this data is actively used to understand the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney and their satisfaction with services. Collecting and utilising this data will allow us to measure, for example.

- Experiences of LGBTQIA+ people with Housing services and the number of LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney who experience insecure housing
- Complaints raised by LGBTQIA+ residents, and where they felt their identity impacted on the service they were provided.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Original Wording of the Aspirations, prior to community conversations


<b>Theme</b>	<b>Hackney Council Aspires to...</b>	<b><i>Original text (prior to community conversations)</i></b>
Accessibility & Service Provision	ensure LGBTQIA+ people are able to access services that meet their needs where they are listened to, understood, and taken seriously without judgement	<i>ensure that all LGBTQIA+ people who come in contact with public services are listened to, understood, and taken seriously without judgement</i>
Intersectionality	recognise and celebrate the diversity of our LGBTQIA+ communities, paying attention to those who are often least heard and represented	<i>recognise and celebrate the diversity within the LGBTQIA+ community and understand the impact of multiple identities and experiences particularly those who are often least heard and represented</i>
Demographics & Data	improve our knowledge of our LGBTQIA+ communities through responsible data collection and use this information when planning services	<i>understand LGBTQIA+ communities and use information about our communities in making decisions</i>
Informed Allyship	be visible allies, open to learning and reflection, working in coalition with residents and organisations to promote LGBTQIA+ rights	<i>vocally and visibly support LGBTQIA+ communities and listen &amp; learn from mistakes</i>
Participation & Engagement	empower LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney to be able to influence the council on matters and policy that affect their communities	<i>enable LGBTQIA+ people in Hackney to be able to make decisions and influence the council on matters that affect us</i>
Community Resilience & Belonging	be a place where LGBTQIA+ people feel free and safe to express themselves with opportunities to connect with	<i>be a place where LGBTQIA+ people are safe to be our authentic selves and have opportunities to connect with each other</i>

	others	
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Appendix 2

Mural board compiling feedback from three community conversation methods

[Link to Mural](#)

Open as PDF:  LGBTQIA+ Strategic Framework\_2023-06-27\_16-12-20.pdf