



**Global  
Exchange**  
on Migration & Diversity  
at COMPAS



# Inclusive Cities

INTEGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE DURING COVID-19

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Brighton and Hove City Council briefing

April 2021

# About this briefing

Brighton and Hove is a participant in the Inclusive Cities programme – a city-led knowledge exchange programme facilitated by the Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity at the University of Oxford.

The programme aims to support local authorities to create a step change in their approach to the inclusion of newcomers at the local level. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, local authorities and their partners have had to adapt their inclusion programmes, often at speed, to support their newcomer and longer standing communities. These briefings capture the learning from these adaptations, as well as ongoing work to promote inclusion and integration undertaken between March 2020 and October 2020 (unless otherwise stated), against the five thematic areas set out in the Inclusive Cities Framework.

- Briefings from the other Inclusive Cities are available [here](#)
- The Inclusive Cities Framework is available [here](#)
- A series of policy and research briefings on COVID-19 and inclusion, arising from the programme is available [here](#).

## 1. Leading in the development of a shared local story of inclusion

During the pandemic, Brighton and Hove City Council made raising awareness about the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) one of its priorities. The Council sent a postcard to every address in the city, with a message that read, "Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme. We want EU Citizens to stay in Brighton & Hove." Beyond alerting EUSS-eligible residents about the scheme, this message also signalled to *all city residents* that EU citizens and their family members are valued members of the community.

These postcards were branded as part of the #WeAreBrightonAndHove campaign, which "celebrates what it means to belong to the city." The campaign highlights the "innovative, passionate, inclusive, and compassionate" character of the city and showcases what makes Brighton & Hove the vibrant place it is. The campaign is part of an effort to champion Brighton & Hove's diverse communities, talented workforce, valued visitors and many cultural and creative attractions. The Council is now looking at whether the #WeAreBrightonandHove campaign can be extended beyond the EUSS and used to anchor a broader citywide narrative.

The [One Voice Partnership](#), which includes the Council, faith groups and other communities, launched the #WeStandTogether campaign to express regret for, and voice opposition to, acts of terrorism and racism in the UK and beyond.

The Council also issued an [anti-racism pledge](#) to work "in partnership with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people including council staff, residents and community groups to directly shape our anti-racism strategy through their lived experiences and diverse perspectives." One strand of this work features a [review](#) of "all plaques, monuments, statues and street names on public land to ensure that we're celebrating legacies that reflect our city's values". The team responsible for Inclusive Cities leads this work and synergies between the two initiatives are being explored.

## 2. Supporting and driving inclusive economic growth

The Council has made efforts to support and drive inclusive economic growth during the pandemic. The administration of COVID-19 business grants was monitored and efforts to publicise them amongst Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and businesses were redoubled when there

were concerns that BAME businesses were under-represented. The Council set up [an online application and information portal](#) for business grants and emailed 3,000 businesses that were likely to be eligible.

These efforts also link to the above-mentioned anti-racism pledge, which includes a commitment to support BAME businesses through the Council's procurement processes.

The local English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Network, supported through MHCLG's Controlling Migration Fund (CMF), continues to meet virtually and provide opportunities for formal and non-formal ESOL providers to share expertise and good practice, including around the challenges of digital provision. The volume of provision across the city is being monitored and referral routes have been expanded to maximise uptake. Many providers are positive that the extra work that they have put in to ensure newcomers can access online ESOL lessons during the lockdown will result in wider educational and employment opportunities for newcomers moving forward.

The Council is in discussions with funders to address the barriers faced by newcomers in progressing from

education to employment. This work builds on learnings from the CMF-funded [Migrant ESOL Support Hub \(MESH\) project](#) that was set up to provide individual migrants with information, advice and guidance. During the pandemic, much of this work focussed on digital inclusion, including the establishment of [a list of free online ESOL courses](#) compiled by Brighton and Hove City of Sanctuary.

### 3. Connecting communities

Work is being undertaken through the [City of Sanctuary](#) movement in schools, colleges, nurseries, universities, clubs, and the central library to create places of sanctuary which are inclusive of forced migrants, particularly at the neighbourhood level. City of Sanctuary currently focusses on refugees and asylum seekers, but those working with migrants in the city have suggested that there is potential for the movement to have a larger impact on inclusive practices by engaging more broadly with migrants and longer-standing communities. The Council hopes to improve understanding of the effects of this programme on inclusion work in general and to meet the challenges that the pandemic presents to work in this area.

The Upstanders project is a Brighton and Hove-based network bringing diverse grassroots community groups (e.g., BAME, LGBTQ, faith groups, disabled residents, women's groups) together with services (e.g., the local authority, police, Crown Prosecution Services) to stand against hate and all forms of extremism by sharing experiences, learnings and good practices, as well as undertaking joint projects. The project is developing training modules for member organisations on establishing social media profiles and effectively using social media to produce counter-narratives to online hate speech.

### 4. Mainstreaming and building inclusive public services

A new regular meeting was organised as part of the Council's COVID-19 response, which looks at the 'Equality and Access' implications of the pandemic and lockdown. The meeting includes representatives from community-based organisations to understand vulnerable people's concerns during the COVID-19 lockdown, convey these concerns to senior decision-makers and accordingly adjust service provision.

As part of the above response, the Council set up a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) work stream. This has brought together Council departments with responsibility for responding to residents with NRPF status and the key charities with a remit for supporting destitute migrants, including female survivors of domestic abuse. An action plan has been developed through this group, which adopts an 'inclusive by default' approach for the use of discretionary funds administered by the Council. The NRPF work stream is also tackling challenges around emergency accommodation for destitute households with NRPF and has created clear communications on the procedures to be followed when the Council is approached by destitute households with NRPF status. A further aspect of this work – the provision of legal advice – is detailed in the following section and subsequent case study.

Data collected through Brighton's [International Migrants Needs Assessment](#), published in 2018, is being used by Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) groups and statutory services as evidence for funding bids and the development of other projects.

A Council-funded training project was developed by a migrant rights organisation, [Voices in Exile](#), to deliver training to frontline staff of public services. Prior to the pandemic, it was progressing well – for example, by delivering training to library staff as part of the 'Library of Sanctuary' work – but it has since been paused. Frontline housing officers are due to receive training in 2021, as part of an improvement of the Council's approach to migrant inclusion.

[The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service](#) has continued to carry out its inclusion work with schoolchildren online and has expanded its work to offer advice and support to migrant families on a range of issues, including communicating public health advice.

#### Case Study 1: NRPF work stream

The Council has set up a No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) work stream that feeds into the public health COVID-19 response mechanisms via the wider Vulnerable People's work stream and an Equality and Access work stream – this in turn situates the work in the context of broader equality promotion. The NRPF work stream includes representatives from adult and children's services; the legal, revenues and benefits and housing teams; and local migrant support and domestic abuse charities. The broad membership of the work stream has enabled it to produce recommendations on how to implement an 'inclusive by default' approach with regard to discretionary funds that the Council administers, including those related to COVID-19.

The issue of eligibility for emergency accommodation for destitute households with NRPF status remains a challenge. The Council has written a letter to the Home Secretary to call for people with NRPF status to be eligible for discretionary Council funding. Brighton and Hove, along with other cities participating in Inclusive Cities, took part in a webinar on NRPF during COVID-19 and helped to prepare a briefing on the subject, available [here](#).

## 5. Encouraging civic participation and representation

The [Fair and Inclusive Action Plan](#) sets out measures for the Council to address the under-representation of local BAME communities within its own workforce.

A BAME representative has been appointed to the Council's main decision-making body – the Policy and Resources Committee – as well as the Tourism, Equalities, Culture and Communities committees.

The Council has continued to push forward with its outreach work around the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) (see above for more detail). Brighton had made a document scanner available in Council premises for EUSS applicants, but the service has been temporarily suspended because of COVID-19.

The availability of legal advice across Sussex is a problem, but the Council intends to work on addressing this issue with neighbouring authorities. This is a recommendation coming out of our work on NRPF (see Case Study 1, above).

### Case Study 2: COVID-19 messaging in languages other than English

Closely working with the local City of Sanctuary group throughout the pandemic (via a weekly Zoom meeting) has facilitated quick input from migrant-supporting organisations on the appropriateness of Council's communications on COVID-19 in languages other than English. This group has also facilitated quick consultations with migrant support organisations on issues such as vaccine hesitancy amongst migrant communities.

### Case Study 3: Public health webinars

A public health specialist doctor attended the city's Refugee and Migrant Forum (now meeting online, chaired by Brighton and Hove City Council) to answer questions about COVID-19. Feedback from the meeting indicated that the session was reassuring and useful for attendees. This led to a number of further Q&A webinars for member organisations of the Forum (NGOs working directly with migrants) where interpreters were used to ensure that questions from individuals could be addressed in real time by public health specialists.

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### Apply to the EU Settlement Scheme

We want EU citizens to  
stay in Brighton & Hove

#WeAreBrightonAndHove



### EU citizens must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) before 30 June 2021

If you are from the EU, or from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein and you want to continue living and working in the UK, you should apply to the EUSS.

**We want our EU citizens to remain in Brighton & Hove.** If you have EU family, friends, neighbours or colleagues, please tell them about the EUSS. **It's free to apply to the scheme.**

Apply online [www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families](https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families)  
Or call the EU Settlement Resolution Centre **0300 123 7379** if you need help.

If you need digital support with your application please contact  
**We Are Digital** [visa@we-are-digital.co.uk](mailto:visa@we-are-digital.co.uk) 03333 445 675.

EUSS guidance is available in different European languages  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/settled-status-for-eu-citizens-and-their-families-translations](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/settled-status-for-eu-citizens-and-their-families-translations)

For more information about Brexit in Brighton & Hove and how we're supporting our residents and communities [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/brexit](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/brexit)

#WeAreBrightonAndHove



## INCLUSIVE CITIES

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Inclusive Cities is a knowledge exchange initiative supporting UK cities and their local partners to achieve a step-change in their approach towards the inclusion of newcomers.

Drawing on innovative ideas and practices from Europe and the United States, Inclusive Cities aims to support the development of an approach to inclusion which is strategic across the city administration. This approach consistently uses positive messaging to develop an inclusive narrative for the city which informs and drives practice and is local authority led, working in close partnership with business, public and voluntary sector organisations to achieve shared goals.

Inclusive Cities is supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

[www.compas.ox.ac.uk/project/inclusive-cities](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/project/inclusive-cities)

## THE GLOBAL EXCHANGE ON MIGRATION AND DIVERSITY

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The Global Exchange on Migration and Diversity is an ambitious initiative at the Centre on Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) opening up opportunities for knowledge exchange and longer term collaboration between those working in the migration field.

[www.compas.ox.ac.uk/global-exchange](http://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/global-exchange)

## ABOUT

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