



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



# Inclusive Cities

INTEGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE DURING COVID-19

---

Bristol City Council briefing

April 2021

# About this briefing

Bristol 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

While the #WeAreBristol campaign predates the pandemic, city officials repurposed the campaign to highlight the diverse contributions of Bristolians during lockdown. [This #WeAreBristol film](#) looks at how the city and its residents have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and highlights the contribution of diverse communities and individuals.

## 2. Supporting and driving inclusive economic growth

The [New Bristol Economic Recovery Strategy](#) was published in October 2020 with significant focus on Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and refugee entrepreneurship. Among other things, it highlights the likelihood of labour market and skills gaps as a result of the UK's departure from the EU. Crucially, it outlines what can be done locally to address these challenges, with an emphasis on the health and care sector. For example, the Council plans on improving "career pathways into health and care roles, accompanied by better access to in-work training and development and contract terms and conditions".

The Strategy also accounts for the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities. The key issues it aims to tackle are:

- Priority support to manage risks faced by BAME businesses
- Additional financial, legal and HR support to help BAME businesses recover
- Custom financial management and digital training to boost the resilience and capacity of BAME businesses
- Suitable advice, support and funding opportunities for BAME communities and individuals in self-employment and those looking to start businesses

## 3. Connecting communities

The [Everyday Integration Research Project](#), led by Bristol University, has pivoted to focus on community cohesion during COVID-19. Part of this work involves a special survey of residents' experiences of the pandemic and how it has affected their relationships.

## 4. Mainstreaming and building inclusive public services

A report highlighting the impact of the Hostile Environment policy on migrant health, such as incorrect NHS bills being sent to families, was presented to and welcomed by Bristol's Health & Wellbeing Board. A working group has been set up to implement recommendations for improving local experiences of public services.

Bristol City Council established a One City Taskforce to support EEA nationals and asylum seekers in emergency accommodation due to COVID-19. Actions have included:

- The provision of suitable advice and accommodation for asylum seekers. The city is exploring adopting a model along the lines of the Commonweal/Praxis Community Projects (more information can be found [here](#) and [here](#)) to provide accommodation to destitute migrants and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) status.

- A joint campaign with the civil society organisation [Bristol Hospitality Network](#) to recruit volunteers who were willing and able to [house asylum seekers for a period of 3 months or longer](#). The Council provided support on outreach communications.

## 5. Encouraging civic participation and representation

A Taskforce was established to investigate and take action on the impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities.

The city also delivers online leadership training to people from BAME backgrounds, including:

- [The Stepping Up Programme](#) is a leadership programme for professionals of BAME background and equality groups. Its contract to deliver the programme until 2021 was secured in August 2020 with the aim of supporting additional graduates through the programme.
- [Horumar Somali Women's Group](#) aims to increase Somali women's employability and confidence "via the access of inclusive workshops focused on skills development, career strategy, presentation skills, interview coaching, and professional mentoring".

### Case Study:

#### One City Taskforce and migrants with NRPf status

The One City Taskforce was established to address the concerns around migrants with NRPf status in emergency accommodation due to COVID-19, with representation from Bristol City Council and the voluntary sector. This group catalysed greater co-ordinated work within the Local Authority (e.g., between social services and housing) and sparked partnership projects between the Local Authority and civil society organisations. One of these was a campaign to recruit more hosts for the Bristol Hospitality Network hosting scheme. So far, this has resulted in eight new hosts who have welcomed asylum seekers into their homes while they attempt to resolve their legal status and gain access to public funds.



The Taskforce has also started a discussion about adopting London's Praxis model of housing for those with NRPf status in Bristol. Everyone involved in the Taskforce has commented on how it has improved collaborative working on migration issues within the city and is keen to continue in the spirit of partnership beyond the COVID-19 crisis. The positive impact of the taskforce has also been noted in the [NRPf Partnership Working in Bristol report](#), which highlights key learnings from operating the collaborative working groups, upcoming challenges for those with NRPf, and recommendations for retaining partnership work in the future.

## INCLUSIVE CITIES

---

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

---

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

---

This briefing was authored by David Barclay (Good Faith Partnership/Special Advisor for the Mayor of Bristol), Denis Kierans (COMPAS) and Jacqui Broadhead (COMPAS).

Thanks to Ragini Khurana for her assistance.

## CONTACT

---

For more information contact  
Denis Kierans (COMPAS)  
[denis.kierans@compas.ox.ac.uk](mailto:denis.kierans@compas.ox.ac.uk)