



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



Inclusive Cities

INTEGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE DURING COVID-19

Cardiff City Council briefing

April 2021

About this briefing

Cardiff 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

Cardiff City Council is exploring options for a grassroots campaign about the history of migration in South Wales, which will focus on storytelling and local people of different backgrounds. The Council will assess whether its work on facilitating community conversations could also support the co-production of a local story-telling campaign, depending on whether it can be delivered safely and attract a diverse online audience.

The view of the Council is that narrative work is vitally important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic as there has been a notable resurgence of negative rhetoric in relation to migrant and minority communities. However, the development of thoughtful and effective narrative resources requires a significant time commitment and must be balanced against urgent priorities relating to immediate welfare concerns and critical public health messaging.

To manage the increase in negative and prejudiced comments on social media channels, the Council has begun to moderate comment sections robustly to ensure any comments which are not

compliant with the relevant policies are deleted quickly. This approach has been chosen in favour of trying to counter these viewpoints with factual information, because that could result in further provocation.

2. Supporting and driving inclusive economic growth

[Evidence](#) from national sources shows that particular population groups have been more negatively affected by COVID-19 physically, socially and economically, and the Council is factoring these heightened vulnerabilities into its plans.

In September 2020, Cardiff City Council published its new four-year [Equality & Inclusion Strategy](#) which incorporates the Socioeconomic Duty of the Equality Act, due to come into force in Wales in April 2021. The Strategy draws upon the emergent evidence base to identify population groups who are most impacted by COVID-19 in terms of income, health, job security, mental health, isolation and other themes. Departments across the Council will be required to detail their specific activities to support these population groups in their biannual reports on progress in implementing the Strategy. Refugees,

asylum seekers, EU nationals and other migrant groups are identified as priority groups in a number of action areas.

The Council has identified the promotion of inclusive economic growth as a priority for the years to come. At this point, the Council's work focuses on protecting as many jobs and incomes as possible and providing a universal safety net where possible (e.g., anyone at risk of homelessness is provided with accommodation irrespective of immigration status and benefit eligibility checks are not carried out when distributing food parcels).

Cardiff City Council has also supported a local immigration advice charity to access an additional £50,000 of funding in anticipation of increased demand as a result of the UK's exit from the EU, the implications of immigration policy reform, and the EU Settlement Scheme's cut off dates. The Council considers advice services key to preventative support and has established referral pathways to the service via its own advice services and Citizens Advice Bureau.

3. Connecting communities

While the Local Authority has not been able to host community-based events since March 2020, there are a number

of active online forums and networks including mutual aid groups which have emerged across Cardiff during COVID-19. This has included targeted mobilisation to support particular groups (e.g., asylum seekers).

The Council is considering options for delivering its planned community conversations programme via the [Rumourless Cities](#) project. Cardiff City Council hopes to run these sessions as in-person community-based events in spring 2021 and has already recruited participants through street-level outreach.

Other community-based projects that revolve around football, boxing, cricket and the arts, are on hold until at least spring 2021.

Cardiff hopes to participate in a future research project with the [Institute for Public Policy Research](#) (IPPR), exploring how COVID-19 has impacted community relations in the city's Dynamic Districts (areas that have experienced recent and significant population change as a result of migration). The project also aims to produce recommendations on how to support communities to be more connected throughout COVID-19 recovery.

4. Mainstreaming and building inclusive public services

Cardiff's new Equality & Inclusion Strategy integrates the Public Sector Equality Duty and Socio-Economic Duty across all key corporate deliverables in the overarching city strategy, [Capital Ambition](#). It looks ahead to COVID-19 recovery, with particular considerations for different population groups.

In planning for post-pandemic recovery, the Council has made one to one advice sessions available in all service areas to assist with redesigning services in a way that accounts for barriers faced by particular groups and identifies mitigating actions. Bolstering data collection across all services and developing an equalities data dashboard is a key deliverable of the city's new Equality & Inclusion Strategy. This will allow the Council to more easily provide briefings on trends and evidence in relation to service outcomes and pathways for particular groups.

Low-income pupils of all backgrounds, including child asylum seekers and children with NRPF status, who do not have digital access have received a Chromebook to support home learning.

5. Encouraging civic participation and representation

Cardiff has established a Race Equality Taskforce which is likely to consider civic participation and representation as a priority work stream. Its focus would be on both voter registration (the franchise has been extended in Wales to include EU nationals in Council and Welsh Parliamentary elections) in preparation for the 2021 Welsh Parliamentary elections and the 2021 census. Members of the Taskforce were selected through a public appointment process and include representatives from the private sector, small and medium sized enterprises, and arts and culture organisations. The Taskforce will also produce recommendations for improving workforce diversity and access to median wage jobs for BAME communities and individuals.



Case Study: The REACH project

In June 2019, Cardiff launched the [REACH project](#), which aims to simplify and streamline the experience of accessing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision for refugees. In an effort to deliver a 'people-centred approach', the REACH project began offering ESOL+ courses where ESOL learners can combine ESOL learning with a grounding in language linked to a vocational course. ESOL+ courses are offered in business administration, hairdressing, customer service, health and social care, accountancy and more.

While REACH was able to move quickly to online delivery, the pandemic has also presented challenges. REACH project coordinators have suggested that there has been a significant drop in the number of people accessing ESOL, with average attendance down almost 50% on the previous year. The pandemic has highlighted the disparities in digital access, with many learners reporting difficulties in accessing Wi-Fi and/or appropriate devices.

In response to these challenges, the REACH project, through Cardiff and Vale College, has applied to the Welsh Government's Financial Contingency Fund to help students fund the cost of an appropriate device and meet the cost of Wi-Fi.

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

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

ABOUT

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