



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



Inclusive Cities

INTEGRATION POLICY AND PRACTICE DURING COVID-19

Greater London Authority briefing

April 2021

About this briefing

The Greater London Authority (GLA) 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, the GLA shifted their #LondonIsOpen campaign to the #LondonTogether campaign, “inviting Londoners to shine a light on the inspiring examples of courage, kindness and generosity being shown amidst the coronavirus crisis.” The campaign placed particular emphasis on sharing stories about the contributions of migrant and refugee frontline workers. For example, the Mayor of London sent a letter to film maker and Syrian refugee Hassan Akkad to thank him for his service to the city as a hospital cleaner during the pandemic, stating, “thank you for telling the untold stories of your NHS colleagues, whose everyday heroism symbolises the hard work of so many migrants and refugees who fulfil important roles across the NHS and other key sectors.”

The Mayor’s #LondonTogether campaign shared and celebrated examples of London’s community, individuals and businesses coming together to make a difference during the pandemic. The campaign videos and other content are [available here](#).

2. Supporting and driving inclusive economic growth

As part of its [Social Integration Strategy](#), the GLA launched a Workforce Integration Network which aims to improve pathways for underrepresented groups in the workplace, beginning with supporting young black men between 16 and 24 years old into living wage employment in London. The network commissioned a new research report, [Voices of the Underrepresented](#), which was conducted by the Runnymede Trust, the UK’s leading independent race-equity think-tank. The research centres the voices of young Black men and focuses on their experiences in the technology and construction industries to highlight sector-specific barriers. It draws out key similarities in their experiences and, importantly, emphasizes the role of employers in increasing representation and inclusion of young black men. The report compliments the [inclusive employers’ toolkit](#), a step-by-step guide for employers to improve the representation and inclusion of young black men (see case study below).

The GLA launched a new [ESOL Plus Arts programme](#), awarding £100,000 grant funding for four innovative projects

delivered in partnership between organisations providing courses in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and practitioners in the arts, culture and heritage sectors. Partners are working together on projects that creatively meet the needs of Londoners who face barriers to accessing or progressing in formal ESOL provision. The projects are supported by volunteers and involve:

- Informal language learning, using a participatory approach to ESOL
- Creative or heritage activities
- Progression pathways for participants after the project
- A methodology that enhances social integration for participants and volunteers
- Contribution to a model or resource, as part of a community of practice organised by the GLA, that will embed the project’s learning and impact past the life of the ESOL Plus Arts programme

Through these partnership projects, ESOL Plus Arts will facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration to improve social integration in London by testing and evidencing approaches that can be mainstreamed, scaled, or disseminated

as models of good practice in a range of settings. The evaluation of the projects and the programme as a whole will inform future City Hall policy and programmes, enhancing access to opportunities for Londoners learning English and unlocking the knowledge and resources in London's creative industries to support social integration.

3. Connecting communities

The GLA invited Londoners to take part in shaping the post-pandemic recovery process and the future of London by hosting online discussions through the [Talk London platform](#). It also provided funding to partners to host [community conversations](#) about London's recovery from COVID-19. The aim of these conversations was to hear Londoners' views on the areas of work that the London Recovery Board proposed to focus on to guide the city's recovery from the pandemic.

Practical support to host community conversations was offered in the form of access grants and a toolkit for hosts. By the end of the process in September 2020, 78 community conversation submissions had been received, which involved the participation of over 1,000 people. Participants primarily self-defined as young people, older people, and Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME).

4. Mainstreaming and building inclusive public services

London's recovery is led by the London Recovery Board, chaired jointly by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and the Chair of London Councils. The Board brings together leaders from London's government, business and civil society, as well as the health and education sectors, trade unions and the police, to oversee the long-term recovery effort.

Its aims are to: a) reverse the pattern of rising unemployment and lost economic growth caused by the economic scarring of COVID-19, b) support the city's communities, including those most impacted by the virus, c) help young people to flourish with access to support and opportunities, d) narrow social, economic and health inequalities, and e) accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London.

The programme is taking a missions-based approach to recovery, based on the work of the [Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose](#) at University College London. It states that 'missions should be time-bound and specific. They should be designed to be bold, ambitious yet realistic enough so that they can gather wide support for delivery. The key is on fostering widespread collaboration across different sectors.' The programme has nine missions, several of which relate directly to inclusion. For example, the 'Building Stronger Communities' mission aims to ensure that by 2025 all Londoners will have access to a community hub where they can volunteer, get support and build strong community networks.

City Hall has been working hard to ensure that equality is a key part of its work. It is already reporting on its ethnicity pay gap and developing a pioneering action plan to close it. It is offering COVID-19 risk assessments across the GLA family, including for colleagues from BAME backgrounds, and is working through the Mayor's forthcoming Action Plan to increase the trust and confidence of London's Black communities in the Metropolitan Police Service. Whilst distinctive from work on integration and inclusion of newcomers, there is clear overlap between these two areas of work.

The GLA is leading a large programme to support Londoners with insecure immigration status. Projects will improve local authorities' ability to secure the residence and citizenship rights of non-UK national children in their care, provide immigration advice and support to non-UK national rough sleepers, and enable European Londoners and young Londoners to access information and advice about their rights post-Brexit.

Another area of strategic focus is the provision of immigration advice to EU citizens. [The European Londoner's Hub](#), hosted on the london.gov website, has received over one million unique visits. A key challenge will be to inform people about the differences

Case Study 1: Improving translation and interpretation of public health messages

Significant investment was made in [translating messages and communication on COVID-19](#) to ensure that speakers of languages other than English had access to accurate information. The GLA funded Doctors of the World to sustain their work on translating official government COVID-19 guidance, thereby improving the distribution of key messages amongst London's multilingual communities.

The Mayor of London also supported Doctors of the World to produce [wellbeing guides](#) in 27 languages that respond to the specific challenges faced by migrant communities. Paid advertising on social media was used to ensure that word got out.

The GLA has continued to update their resources with infographics and videos about [lockdown rules](#) and [religious celebrations](#).

between the pre-settled and settled immigration statuses and how they can switch from pre-settled to settled status.

The Mayor has been investing strategically in immigration advice and support services to meet the needs of Londoners with insecure immigration status, including through the funder collaboration "[Justice Together](#)". The programmes highlighted above continue that strategic investment, and seek to improve coordination of immigration advice provision for Londoners disproportionately impacted by both COVID-19 and Brexit. More detailed information about the objectives and expected outcomes of this work is available [here](#).

5. Encouraging civic participation and representation

As part of the launch of the [inclusive employers' toolkit](#), the Mayor committed to lead by example by making City Hall an actively anti-racist organisation and, along with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), pledged to take the following actions:

- Launching an organisation-wide cultural change programme underpinned by an independent review into the structural barriers that prevent the progression of BAME staff
- Setting targets for the proportion of Black male and Black female staff across the GLA and MOPAC, and specifically in the senior leadership teams, to reflect the wider working age population of London
- Finally, the GLA partnered with Shout Out for [London Voter Registration Week 2020](#). This included developing resources in multiple languages to encourage voter registration

Case Study 2:

Inclusive employers' toolkit

The [inclusive employers' toolkit](#) offers practical guidance to businesses for diversifying their workforce and fostering a truly inclusive workplace culture. Black men in the capital are significantly more likely to experience unemployment than their white counterparts, with an estimated 33% of black men out of work compared to 15% of white men in 2019, according to the Annual Population Survey. These disparities persist even amongst highly educated populations, with an unemployment rate of 13% for black graduates compared 4% for white graduates.

The toolkit offers practical guidance to companies for reviewing their processes in the following areas:

1. **Commitment** – companies are urged to clearly pledge their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, conducting reviews of past underperformance where necessary and providing relevant training for staff in order to achieve better outcomes in future.
2. **Engagement and Recruitment** – businesses are encouraged to produce coherent strategies with measurable targets for the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups. This could include refreshing marketing materials, removing bias from the application process and ensuring interview panels are diverse.
3. **Retention and Progression** – companies are challenged to affirm their position by taking swift action in response to claims of racism or discrimination while offering clear pathways to promotion and further development for underrepresented groups.
4. **Suppliers** – businesses are asked to evaluate diversity in their supply chain and consider using BAME-led suppliers and those demonstrating an active commitment to diversity.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "Our capital's diversity is its greatest strength, but the makeup of too many organisations, especially at their highest levels, fails to present a true picture of modern London.

"Your background, gender and ethnicity should have no bearing on what you can achieve which is why part of becoming actively anti-racist involves acknowledging the fact systemic racism remains pervasive across society. Employers and businesses must do more to embed anti-racist practices in their operations and their company culture.

"That is why, in declaring City Hall an actively anti-racist body, I am proud to share this toolkit with London's business community. Helping them strengthen their workforce through the enrichment diversity brings and building a more resilient capital with genuine inclusivity at its core."

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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