



# Cooperative Councils'

Innovation Network

## STRATEGY



Social Partnership



Innovation



Learning



Walking the talk

## London Borough of Hounslow working with Real World Group

### Embracing Diversity Inventory (EDI)

#### Context

Spanning 23 square miles from Heathrow Airport in the west to Chiswick in the east, the London Borough of Hounslow is one of the capital's most diverse areas. With a population of over 250,000, it is home to a vibrant mix of communities, combining urban centres, green belt villages, and cosmopolitan districts. Its excellent transport links, eight London Underground and seven mainline stations, plus proximity to Heathrow, make it a strategic location for residents and businesses alike.

#### Initial Intervention

To reinforce its commitment to diversity and inclusivity and align with refreshed organisational values, Hounslow partnered with Real World Group to implement the Embracing Diversity Inventory (EDI). The goal was to assess how leadership culture was perceived across the Council, with insights segmented by demographics such as race, gender identity, team, and department.

The EDI survey was customised to reflect Hounslow's unique environment and strategic priorities. A broad communication campaign, supported by executive leaders and focus groups, helped maximise participation. While the survey was distributed electronically, hard copies ensured access for all employees.



People-centred councils  
driving social innovation  
putting people first

E: [comms@councils.coop](mailto:comms@councils.coop) | X: [@CoopInnovation](https://twitter.com/CoopInnovation) | W: [councils.coop](https://councils.coop)



## Key Results

The EDI findings triggered several impactful initiatives:

Equality Strategy - Co-created with equality networks and led by elected members to embed EDI principles across all Council programmes.

Local Action Planning - Enabled by Business Partners to share best practices and address improvement areas.

Inclusive Culture - Coaching and mentoring schemes were introduced to foster belonging and development across all staff.

Leadership Development - New programmes launched to develop leadership capabilities and nurture internal talent pipelines.

Conflict Resolution - A framework is being introduced to manage and resolve conflicts sustainably.

Listening Culture - Reinforced through safe spaces, anti-bullying policies, and proactive engagement.

These actions helped reshape leadership perceptions and fostered a culture of respect and belonging, directly enhancing employee experience.

### Follow-Up Intervention

In 2024, the Council repeated the EDI to monitor progress and maintain momentum on its inclusivity agenda. The same core questions enabled comparisons over time, while new items explored the impact of emerging cultural interventions such as conflict resolution.

Employee engagement remained strong, yielding valuable data for organisational development. Feedback sessions were held across directorates and council groups, reinforcing that EDI is a shared responsibility that is not confined to HR and OD.

The Council remains committed to ongoing action based on survey findings, ensuring that equity, diversity, and inclusion continue to drive positive change and organisational growth.

### Recommendation

“We applied Real World Group’s EDI as part of our commitment to becoming a truly diverse and inclusive Council and to support refreshing our values. We wanted to understand how staff perceived leadership in their teams and Directorates, and to analyse findings by key demographics such as race, gender identity, and organisational level.

The EDI was tailored to address Hounslow’s unique challenges and align with our new values. The results helped us build on strengths and identify areas for growth. They have also expanded leadership awareness, showing what is required not only to be more inclusive but to build a future-ready organisation.

As a result of the EDI, we:

- Are developing an Equality Strategy co-created with our equality network groups and led by elected members.
- Have facilitated local action planning through our Business Partnering team.
- Introduced inclusive development activities such as coaching and mentoring, accessible to all.
- Launched the first of several leadership programmes to grow a strong internal talent pipeline.
- Are designing a conflict resolution framework to manage disputes sustainably.
- Embedded our commitment to listening—creating safe spaces and enforcing zero tolerance for bullying and harassment.

“I highly recommend the EDI to other organisations. Real World Group’s insight and responsive, personable approach have enabled us to better understand our organisation and significantly improve the experience of our people.”

Steve Whitehead, Director of People, Equality and Organisational Development

---

### For further information contact:

#### Rob Neville

Head of Cabinet Office – London Borough of Hounslow

[Rob.Neville@Hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:Rob.Neville@Hounslow.gov.uk) | 020 8583 2000 | [www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)

#### Steven Whitehead

Director of People, Equality and Organisational Development – London Borough of Hounslow

[Steven.Walker-Whitehead@hounslow.gov.uk](mailto:Steven.Walker-Whitehead@hounslow.gov.uk) | 020 8583 2000 | [www.hounslow.gov.uk](http://www.hounslow.gov.uk)

#### Kirsty Beasley

Head of Client Engagement – Real World Group

[Kirsty.beasley@realworld-group.com](mailto:Kirsty.beasley@realworld-group.com) | 07535412499 | [www.realworld-group.com/](http://www.realworld-group.com/)



E: [comms@councils.coop](mailto:comms@councils.coop) | X: [@CoopInnovation](https://twitter.com/CoopInnovation) | W: [councils.coop](http://councils.coop)