

This is Our Redbridge **Equity and Inclusion Strategy** 2024 - 2028



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Executive Summary



Jubilee Street Party 2022 Ilford



Redbridge is a global community of cultures and faiths, reflecting the diversity of London. In the past decade the population of London has moved eastwards and called Redbridge home, with a host of benefits for our communities, culture, heritage, and local economy. We are extremely proud of our diversity and believe it is one of our strongest assets.

Our population increased by 11 percent between 2011 and 2021, from 278,970 to 310,300 - greater than the overall increase for England (6.6 percent) and London (7.7 percent). Levels of disadvantage in Redbridge are modest but vary significantly within the borough with pockets of significant disadvantage (Goodmayes, Hainault, Ilford, Loxford and Seven Kings), and acute social challenges for the residents who live there.

Looking beyond Redbridge, we recognise wider structural and institutional determinants for those with protected characteristics reflected in Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review, which highlighted “The levels of social, environmental and economic inequality in society are damaging health and wellbeing”¹.

In our most deprived neighbourhoods, a third of residents are income deprived. Eleven percent of our wards can be found in the top 30 percent most deprived in the UK, and 58 percent of non-white women are economically inactive with the gender pay gap at £8,000 per year (London average is £3,000). This has been made worse by the cost-of-living crisis because of the government’s mini-budget on 23 September 2022.



Pioneer Point, Ilford

¹. Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review (accessed 14 Mar 2024, <https://www.instituteofhealthequity.org/resources-reports/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review/build-back-fairer-the-covid-19-marmot-review-executive-summary.pdf>)





Queens Jubilee street party June 2022

Despite these wider challenges, we have come together as a community, responded to existential crisis, and become stronger. However, our ability to respond has been severely limited. Since 2010 we have lost 54 percent of Government Grant Settlement Funding and Redbridge is the third-lowest funded London borough, per head.

Our 2021 resident survey also revealed that residents who have one or more protected characteristics are more likely to have a low sense of belonging and not likely to continue living in Redbridge. The perceptions of safety and levels of satisfaction in their neighbourhoods are lower for residents with one or more protected characteristics.

Our communities in Redbridge are globally connected with deep affiliation to Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Middle East. This was closely felt following the conflict on 7 October 2023. We responded by convening, engaging, and listening to our communities and understood the need to focus on activities to promote community cohesion with diverse representatives from across the borough.

We want to focus on examples of coming together as a community like when we celebrated Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee and the coronation of King Charles III. We have also mourned together for Her Majesty the late Queen Elizabeth II.



Our new strategy will build on our strengths and work with our communities to overcome challenges. **The strategy has three themes and six outcomes to deliver the public authority you deserve.**

Through our new approach we want to actively engage with seldom heard groups as well as new communities, to influence decision-making and to shape our future. Our new strategy commits to creating an Equity and Inclusion Board where residents and community groups can come together to understand the progress achieved through the strategy and hold us to account. This will be chaired by the Leader of the Council with regular reporting from our Chief Executive Officer. We will ensure our service design and evaluation is informed by the experience gathered from all our service users especially those with protected characteristics.

Our values of honesty, fairness, excellence and collaboration are reflected in this strategy and will be at the cornerstone of ensuring its success. We are committed to creating a workforce and senior leadership which reflects modern Britain and represents the diversity and talent of London. I hope you can get behind our endeavour.

We thank everyone who has contributed to creating this strategy and look forward to working with our residents and partners to create an equitable and inclusive borough for our all.



Councillor Kam Rai
Leader of Redbridge Council



Councillor Namreen Chaudhry
Cabinet Member for Leisure,
Culture and Communities



Our vision and duty



Opening Day Hainault Forest Visitor Centre



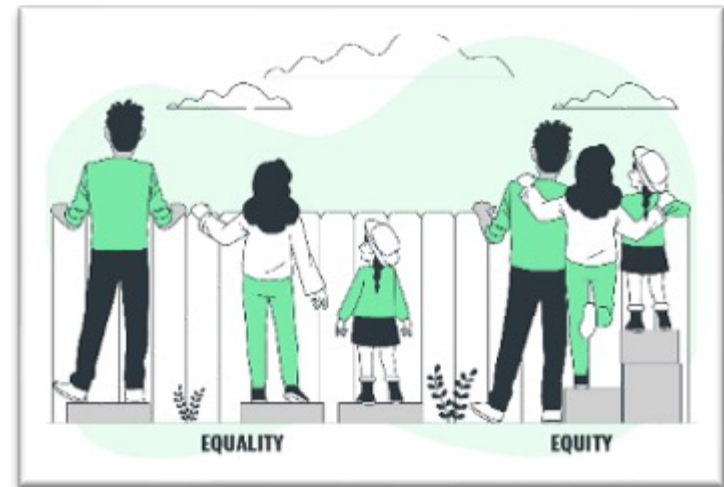
We want Redbridge to be an inclusive and welcoming London borough, where we directly tackle discrimination, communities value each other and embrace their collective contribution to a fair society.

This strategy outlines a vision of the type of public authority we want to become. We have identified themes and their outcomes to deliver a step change in how we listen, include, and celebrate our residents and celebrate local communities.

We are committed to taking an intersectional approach to understand our communities and the issues they face. Our work is grounded in extensive knowledge of our residents and potential service users. These insights guide the strategy, ensuring it is not just well-intentioned but informed and evidence based.

Why Equity and Inclusion?

Equity is the foundation of our strategy, acknowledging discrimination in our communities and committing to tackling it head-on. Unlike equality, which treats everyone the same, equity acknowledges that individuals and communities have different needs and circumstances. We want to ensure equitable outcomes for Redbridge residents and businesses, a commitment which requires the Council to understand discrimination and barriers to services in the borough and actively mitigate these for everyone in Redbridge. If equality means providing everyone the same opportunities, then equity, for the Council means, using an evidence-based approach to focus our resources to improve the life outcomes of residents with protected characteristics.



Inclusion is a fundamental part of this strategy. Redbridge is London's third most diverse borough, and our commitment to inclusion demonstrates our understanding that the active involvement of our communities is at the core of our work. Through inclusive practices, we aspire to become a borough where every voice is heard, valued, and empowered, creating a more equitable and inclusive community for all. Inclusion means the Council commits to proactively including seldom heard groups in our decision-making.



The Equality Act 2010

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a legal duty to:

1. **advance equality of opportunity,**
2. **eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, and**
3. **foster good relations between different groups of people.**

Legislation supports decision-making by ensuring we consider how different people will be affected by our activities, helping us to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective, accessible to all and meet people's diverse needs. The protected characteristics outlined by the Equality Act 2010 are Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Pregnancy and maternity, Race and ethnicity, Religion and belief, Sex, and Sexual orientation.

The Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The PSED applies to public bodies delivering public services and was introduced to ensure that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.

We acknowledge that it is our legal duty to consider 'sex' as a protected characteristic is defined in the Equality Act as 'a man or a woman'. Our work and this strategy refer to both 'gender' and 'sex' where appropriate, to be more inclusive of all gender identities in both our policy and our services. In a similar way, understanding our legal duty to protect individuals who have undergone or are undergoing 'gender reassignment', we also extend this category to 'gender identity' to be inclusive of all gender identities.

In addition to the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act, we further recognise socio-economic and care leaver status as a key characteristic to be considered in our work.



Overview of the borough



Ilford Town Centre, Jubilee Day



For decades, Redbridge has promised its residents a great quality of life. We have high performing schools, relatively affordable housing, great transport connections, valuable green space, and strong communities.

From east end working class communities leaving the inner city, to Punjabi, Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi or Romanian families traversing continents in search of a new life, we have always welcomed new communities to our borough where they can find opportunity and safety.

Redbridge's population has grown and changed substantially over the past two decades. It is projected to rise by up to 60,000 over the coming decade as the Elizabeth Line brings new residents into Ilford and its surrounding neighbourhoods. This makes us the fourth fastest growing part of the country, as well as the third most diverse London Borough. The borough has excellent transport links to the rest of London, with stations on both the Elizabeth and Central Line along with the newly introduced SuperLoop bus route.

Our population is getting both younger and older - driving increased demand in both adults and children's services. A growing population has placed huge pressure on a housing stock built for a different era. The pace of change to meet these challenges is considerable.

Our borough has become polarised between a wealthier north and west and a poorer south and east. About 11,200 people of the working age population in Redbridge are unemployed (7.5 percent), more than the London average (5.6 percent) and the England average (4.4 percent).



Fairlop Waters, Barkingside





Marylon Road, Ilford

A further 57,500 (29 percent) of working age residents are economically inactive. As with unemployment, this is a higher percentage than reported for London (21 percent) and England (22 percent).

Residents also face increasing challenges in securing and affording suitable accommodation. Redbridge is in the top 10 most expensive London boroughs for house price affordability. The ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile gross annual earnings is 17, above the London average of 16. Redbridge has the highest private renter eviction rate in London – almost double the London average. The number of new rough sleepers recorded in Redbridge almost trebled between 2018/19 and 2020/21. Recent evidence shows that the borough has the highest rate of temporary accommodation in London with 26 households per 1,000 households.

Redbridge is also home to high performing schools and several colleges and universities, as well as a wide range of shops, restaurants, and leisure facilities. The coming years will see Redbridge continue to grow and change, and through this change we and our partners remain committed to achieving the priorities we set out in our joint Partnership Plan for 2025:

- Ensuring regeneration benefits our communities
- Being a great place for family life
- Tackling the root causes of social challenges



Valentines Mansion



This is the Redbridge Way



Redbridge Town Hall, Ilford

Through the Redbridge Way we articulated a set of principles to deliver the ambitions in the Redbridge Plan 2022-26. This reflects a long-term commitment to changing the way we deliver our services and engage with our residents – beyond the lifetime of the Redbridge Plan.

We will commit to the same ways of working to eliminate discrimination and deliver an equitable and inclusive Redbridge. In the Redbridge Plan we identified three main ways of working, which have been adapted for this strategy.

Prevention

How our activities and planning help to address issues at an early stage and prevent increases in demand or worse outcomes.

We will promote harmonious relationships between our communities and address biases which prevent community cohesion. Promote mutual understanding, respect, and knowledge of the beliefs and practices are at the core of our communities and their common ground to promote good relations between different faiths.

As a leader of our community, we will be open and transparent with our progress, share information and celebrate success, while learning from our mistakes. We will endeavour to improve representation from seldom heard groups with a focus on protected groups.

Collaboration

How we collaborate with residents, businesses, public bodies, voluntary and community sector, and others to achieve greater results.

We will work hard to deliver our commitments. However, this must be a joint endeavour with partners and residents. We request residents, service users and partners to treat council staff, elected members, our neighbours, visitors to our borough with respect and fairness.

Responsibility

How we set out the responsibilities of the council and those of our residents, businesses, and partners.



As an employer

We will create a representative organisation with a truly inclusive culture. One where we leverage our differences to drive innovative solutions to meet the needs of our residents and tackle the challenges we face in Redbridge.

We will do this by listening to our diverse communities, allowing them to lead in finding solutions and taking an intersectional approach in everything we do.

As a commissioner and service provider

As a commissioner and service provider we will ensure services are accessible and tailored to the diverse and individual needs of our communities. Demonstrate behaviours according to Redbridge Staff Code of Conduct. Officers will not discriminate against anyone and by treating residents, colleagues, elected members with respect.

Regularly carry out Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) to consider the impact of our work on protected groups and mitigate unequal impact. We will use this process to ensure we take every opportunity to advance equality.

Collect and monitor relevant equalities data from the Council to understand effectiveness of our services for our diverse communities. Being data driven will help us understand the needs of our residents, design policies and services to meet those needs.

Use procurement and commissioning to drive forward our commitment to equity and fairness by ensuring services encourage payment of the London Living Wage and add social value to the borough. We will work with a range of suppliers to drive forward social, economic, and environmental benefits for our borough.



This is how we will contribute to the Council's priorities



The Redbridge Plan: A better borough for everyone (2022-26) provides the ambition and priorities for Redbridge. They are the top of the golden thread that links the work of individual staff to the vision A better borough for everyone.

The successful delivery of the strategy will achieve the following outcomes identified under the following Redbridge Plan Priorities:

Redbridge Plan Priority	Redbridge Plan outcome measures
Clean and Green	1. We will collaborate with residents, visitors, and businesses to take responsibility to ensure our streets, public areas and green spaces are clean, attractive, and welcoming.
Jobs and Skills	2. We will continue to improve educational attainment, closing achievement gaps for children and young people from all backgrounds, support families to give children the best start in life and create a Child Friendly Borough.
Homes and Neighbourhoods	3. We will create a borough where our diverse communities are involved in shaping decisions which affect them or their neighbourhood.
Safe and Healthy	4. We will challenge all forms of hatred and radicalisation and promote a deep understanding between communities.



This is what we will do

Our approach will evolve the organisational culture to deliver services with an equity and inclusion lens.

Eliminate
discrimination



Know our
Communities



Celebrate our
Communities





Eliminate discrimination

At the core of our work is becoming a borough that works to eliminate discrimination and ensure equity for our residents and customers. The Council provides over 600 services, and it's imperative that these services not only meet the requirements of all residents but are delivered without discrimination, are accessible for and responsive to the diverse needs of our communities and visitors to Redbridge.

Our commitment to working to eliminate discrimination is at the forefront of our strategy. Discrimination, in all its forms, poses significant challenges to the cohesion and prosperity of our diverse communities. Whether it's based on race, ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected characteristic, discrimination undermines the fundamental principles of equality, justice, and human rights. Eliminating discrimination goes beyond mere tolerance; it requires proactive measures to dismantle systemic barriers and foster a culture of inclusivity and belonging. Our strategy focuses on several key pillars to achieve this goal including education, policy reform and community engagement.

Moving forwards, by prioritising the elimination of discrimination, we aim to address the underlying systemic factors that perpetuate inequality and exclusion within our communities. By fostering a culture of respect, dignity, and equality, we will not only enhance cohesion but also unlock the full potential of every individual to contribute to our collective prosperity. Through sustained efforts in education, policy reform and community engagement, we envision a future where discrimination is no longer tolerated, and everyone can thrive regardless of their background or identity. Together, we can build a more inclusive and equitable Redbridge for all our residents.

All public service delivery should reflect the respect, empathy, and commitment to equity and inclusion.



Child Friendly Redbridge





Eliminate discrimination

THEMES

- At the core of our work is eliminating discrimination and ensuring equity for our residents and customers.
- The Council provides over 600 services, and it's imperative that these services not only meet the requirements of all residents but are delivered without discrimination, are accessible for and responsive to the diverse needs of our communities.
- All public service delivery should reflect the respect, empathy, and commitment to inclusivity.



OUTCOMES

1. Become a council that works to eliminate discrimination in service delivery. We will adopt ways to deliver services equitably resulting in a sense of fairness from our residents.
2. Become a council that transforms lives of our most economically deprived communities. We will work with partners to ensure underrepresented and marginalised communities have better life outcomes.
3. Become a council that is open and accessible for our diverse communities. We will adopt good practices in open government to ensure our decisions are understood and communities feel empowered to hold us to account.

EXAMPLES

1. **Our Anti-Poverty Programme** has delivered outreach sessions to take services to our communities over the past year, including Welfare Benefits and Work Redbridge. This work is multi-sectoral involving voluntary and private sector partners to provide insights into the needs of our residents.
2. **UNICEF Child Friendly Community**, the Council is in the process of achieving accreditation. Putting the voices of Children at the heart of local decision through a child rights-based approach. We are always working to ensure that children and young people in Redbridge to feel safe, heard, cared for and able to flourish.
3. **Future Leaders UK programme** was established with the Council to provide young people from disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable backgrounds to be agents of positive change in their community. The programme targeted young people at high risk of social exclusion by providing them with a range of opportunities and putting them on a path of future success through education and employment opportunities.





Know our communities

We will engage with communities to respond to their needs. Through ongoing training, development, and support, Redbridge Council staff will be empowered to champion E&I and embed good practices in our work. Elected members will be equipped to understand specific challenges faced by our communities and work with officers to develop a progressive organisational culture.

This will be achieved through comprehensive community mapping exercises to identify the diverse demographic groups, their geographic distribution, and specific needs. We recognise building meaningful relationships with our communities requires cultural competence and sensitivity. The council is committed to investing in training and capacity-building for our staff to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to engage effectively with diverse communities.

The Council already demonstrates our commitment to knowing our communities through a multifaceted approach. The Council has a coordinated engagement approach, pairing online tools and in-person events, to facilitate accessible and widespread community engagement.

By further deepening our understanding of our communities and fostering meaningful engagement, we will build trust, social capital, and resilience within our borough. This will enable us to develop more targeted and effective interventions to address local challenges, promote inclusion, and enhance quality of life for all residents.

Through sustained efforts in community mapping, culturally competent engagement, co-production, and infrastructure support, we will create a more connected, cohesive, and resilient Redbridge where every individual feels valued, heard, and empowered to participate in shaping the future of their community. In knowing and embracing the richness of our diverse communities, we will unlock their full potential as drivers of positive change and collective prosperity.



Amana, a Serving Humanity Foundation volunteer





Know our communities

THEMES

- We will engage with communities to respond to their needs.
- Through ongoing training, development, and support, Redbridge Council staff will be empowered to become Equity & Inclusion champions and embed good practices in our work.
- Elected members will be equipped to understand specific challenges faced by our communities and work with officers to develop a progressive organisational culture.

OUTCOMES

4. Become a council that understands and draws insights from our communities. We will adopt principles of public engagement centred around co-creation to ensure diverse groups are included within design and decision-making.
5. Become a council with a workforce that represents the diversity of the borough. We will grow a workforce representative of London with the skills, knowledge of public service, and sensitivity required to serve our diverse borough.

EXAMPLES

1. Community Voice panel, we run a panel with residents, demographically representative of Redbridge, to provide early feedback on novel policies, programmes and projects.
2. Community based eco-projects, our award-winning activity support local people to live more sustainably, taking pride in their neighbourhood and helping to make the borough a cleaner and greener place to live.



Litter Picker Jan, Clayhall





Celebrate our communities

We will promote community pride, unity, and empathy by hosting events, spreading awareness, and creating visibility of E&I initiatives across the borough. The Council alongside local partners will create spaces for open dialogue and collaboration where relationships are based on trust and respect, and all parties are equal.

By celebrating our communities, we foster a sense of belonging and pride that transcends differences and unites us as one Redbridge. The Council is deeply committed to the celebration of our communities, regularly convening at the Town Hall to celebrate.

By actively supporting local initiatives, through cultural festivals, public art, and intercultural dialogue, we create spaces where diversity is not just tolerated but celebrated as a source of strength and resilience. We aim to foster a vibrant community spirit, encouraging participation and collaboration among local residents and businesses.

In celebrating our communities, we nurture a sense of shared identity and collective ownership of our borough's future. By embracing the richness of our cultural diversity, we lay the foundation for a more inclusive, harmonious, and resilient Redbridge where every individual feels valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to the common good.

Together, we will continue to celebrate the diversity that defines us, recognising that our differences are what make us stronger and more vibrant as a community.



Ilford Town Centre, Jubilee Day





Celebrate our communities

THEMES

- We will promote community pride, unity, and empathy by hosting events, spreading awareness, and creating visibility of Equity & Inclusion initiatives across the borough.
- The Council alongside local partners will create spaces for open dialogue and collaboration where relationships are based on trust and respect, and all parties are equal.

OUTCOMES

6. Become a council that meaningfully celebrates our communities. We will develop pathways to build community cohesion, improve visibility of seldom heard groups and share successes widely.

EXAMPLES

1. Holocaust Memorial Day, annual commemoration at Valentine's Park.
2. Flag-raising ceremonies St George's Day, Pride, Armed Forces Day, Srebrenica Genocide, Windrush and others.
3. Over 100 events and street parties to celebrate the King's Coronation in 2023.



Street party, Jubilee Day



This is how we will use data

We will collect and monitor data on the protected characteristics of our customers and residents.

This means that we will analyse information about our service users with protected characteristics to understand our current situation and chart a pathway to providing a fair and equitable service. We will make service changes based on our analysis.

We will:

- ask our service users for information on their protected characteristics with an option to opt out if they would prefer not to give it.
- be compliant in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).



This is how we are accountable

This strategy forms part of the Council's commitment outlined in the Redbridge Plan to tackle inequality.

1

Councillors represent the views of their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process in their role as community leaders.

2

A **new** Equity and Inclusion Board to form part of the Council's Committee structure is made up of elected members and co-opted community groups, representing different protected groups. **The Board is the forum by which the Council can oversee its processes to eliminate discrimination and promote equity and inclusion.**

3

The Corporate Leadership Team will provide visible leadership on equality ensuring it is embedded into policy, strategy, service delivery, our culture and behaviours as well as ensuring that the Council is meeting its legal duties.

4

A lead director to be identified to oversee delivery of the strategy. Corporate Directors are responsible for the development of individual action plans and will report to the Board on performance and progress for their objective.

5

Our workforce are responsible for delivering services, working with our communities and working with one another in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures in regard to tackling inequality and promoting equity and inclusion. Senior Officers throughout the Council are responsible for ensuring that everyone who works for Redbridge follows this strategy in all aspects of their work.



This is Redbridge

Population

Redbridge population is **310,269**



Redbridge is the **11th** largest London Borough

Redbridge has a growing population of **310,260**, an 11% increase between 2011 and 2021 and the 8th largest population increase in the same period.

Age

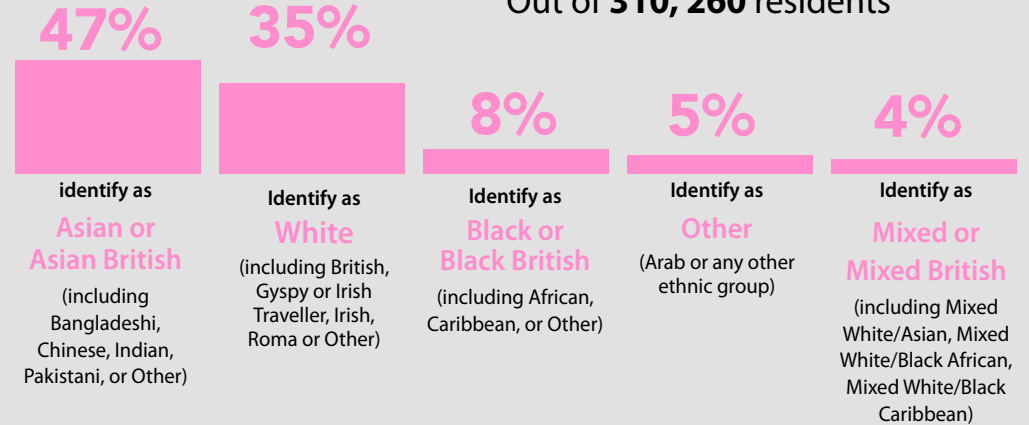
36

Average age of a Redbridge resident is **36**, in line with the London average of 35 years and below the national average of 40 years.

63%
increase in over 85 population from 2016 to 2026.

Race and ethnicity

Out of **310,260** residents



Disability

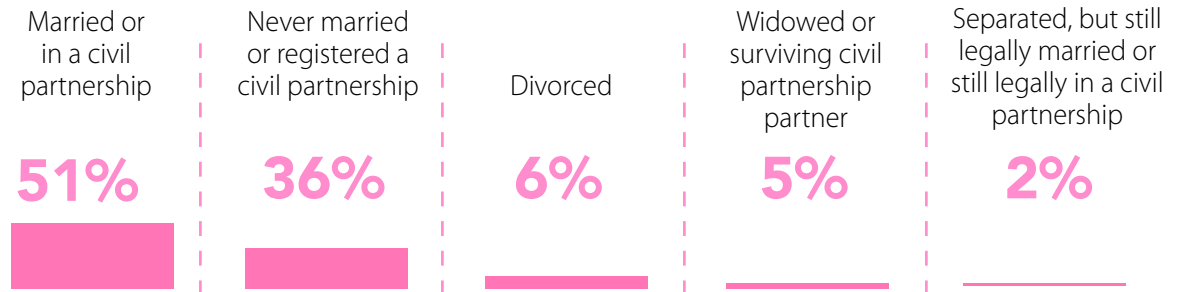


Just under **12%** of Redbridge residents are disabled under the Equality Act 2010

18% of residents (16+ years) have mental health disorders.

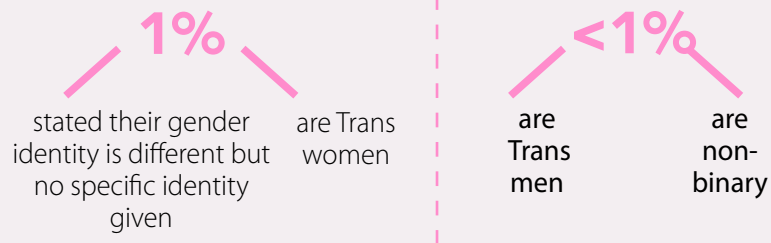


Marriage and civil partnership



Gender Identity

91% stated their gender identity is the same as their sex registered at birth.



8% did not answer the question



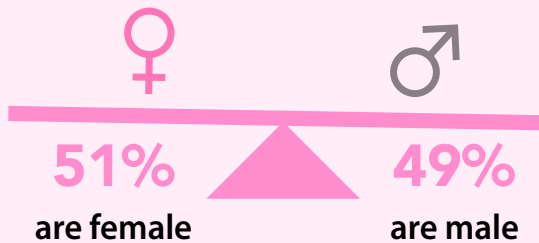
Religion and belief

82%

Redbridge residents hold religious beliefs, compared to 57% nationally.

- 31%** Muslim
 - 30%** Christian
 - 13%** no religion or belief
 - 11%** Hindu
 - 6%** Sikh
 - 2%** Jewish
 - <1%** other
 - <1%** Buddhist
- 6%** did not answer

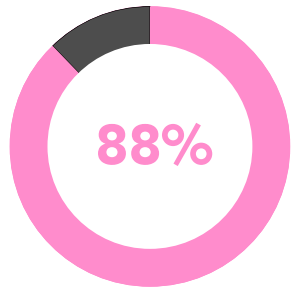
Sex



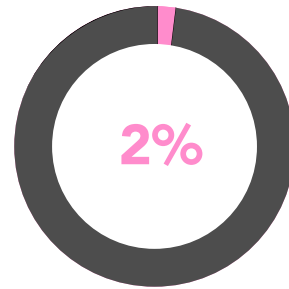
Gender pay gap is **£8,000** per year (London average is **£3,000**)



Sexual Orientation

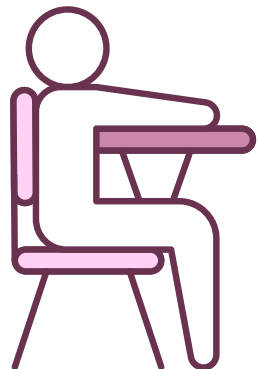


identify as
straight or
heterosexual



identify as
**gay, lesbian, bisexual,
pansexual, asexual, queer or
another sexual orientation**

Socio-Economic Status



60% are economically active
(excluding full-time students)

2% are economically active and full-time
students

78% of 19-year-olds have Level 3
qualifications

Of the **37** economically inactive,

14% retired

8% students

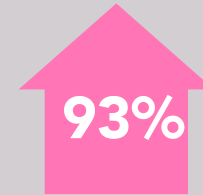
8% looking
after home or family

3% long-term sick

4% other



At the end of March 2024
there were **168 Care
leavers in Redbridge**
of Care leavers aged 17-24:



were in suitable
accommodation



67%
were in education,
employment, or training,
which is higher than the
London Average of 56%



Feedback

Feedback is essential to this process; all comments about the Equity and Inclusion themes and objectives can be sent by email: cset@redbridge.gov.uk

