

Gender Equality Charter

Progress Report 2019



Committed to the



Introduction

In my first year as Cabinet Member for Equality and Diversity, I have been impressed by the obvious and ongoing commitment of the borough, its residents, community groups, the Council and its partners, to the cause of improving outcomes for women and girls.

2018 was a milestone year, celebrating the centenary of some women first getting the vote. We marked this with a year-long programme of events called HerStory, which included confidence building workshops, knitting projects, an all-female line up at Barking Folk Festival, theatre and dance performances, the creation of a women's anthem and so much more.

2018 also marked the 50-year anniversary of the Ford Dagenham strikes – a proud moment in our borough's history. The strikes were a catalyst for the Equal Pay Act 1970 and pay was a big talking point during this year.

For the first time, companies with over 250 employees were required by law to report on their gender pay gap in April 2018. Although it is important to understand the difference between equal pay (being paid the same for the same or equivalent work) and the gender pay gap (the difference between the average earnings of men and women in a company), these reports show that we are still some way from achieving equality in the workplace.

The reasons for the gender pay gap are complex and often overlapping – including more men being in senior positions and higher paid sectors, the effect of caring responsibilities and part time work, and outright discrimination. By forcing companies to publish data and take the time to look at this issue, we are taking a big first step. We are setting the expectation that the inequalities that women face at work should not be ignored.

Whilst 2018 was undoubtedly a big year for gender equality, we must now continue to push forward with the same energy, determination and enthusiasm that we saw last year.



As we acknowledge every year, achieving equality is not an easy task. The inequalities that women face in the home, at work, in politics and public life are the result of long-standing, complicated and inter-related social, cultural and economic factors - none of which we can easily fix. But we remain committed to our aim of creating a fairer, more equal society where no one is left behind. We will continue to work together as one borough, one community, building on the progress we made last year and striving to do even more next year.

This report summarises the progress and some key achievements from 2018. I hope that you enjoy reading it, and that the stories we share here inspire you to think about how you can contribute to creating a more equal society for all.



Councillor Lynda Rice
Cabinet Member for Equalities and Diversity

Key Information

Below are some important indicators for measuring women's equality in the borough.

Health



- The life expectancy of women in Barking and Dagenham is 82.1 years. This is 4.3 years more than local men (77.8 years).
- However, local men have a longer healthy life expectancy (62.8 years) than local women (62.3 years) who can expect to live 19.8 years in poor health before they die.

Economy



- 59% of women are in employment. This is 9.5% behind the London average (68.5%) for women in employment.
- 80.7% of men are in employment meaning that the local employment gap between women and men is 21.7%.
- The average full time weekly pay is £670.80 in London. For local women, this figure is £534.70, which is £50.70 lower than the average full time weekly pay for local men in full time work (£585.40).
- Nationally the gender pay gap for all employees was 17.9% in 2018.

Education



- In terms of GCSE results, the average attainment 8 score for girls is higher at 49.1 than for boys (43.3).
- Girls typically experience inequality in the higher tiers of education. For example, girls are behind in terms of success at A-levels. Nationally, 20.6% of girls achieve AAB or better; whereas 21.7% of boys achieve AAB or better. Locally, the gap is larger with 8.8% of girls achieving AAB compared to 11.4% of boys.

Caring



- Women make up 57.5% of carers in the borough. 61% of carers who provide 50+ hours of care per week are women.

Safety



- Between January 2018 to December 2018, there were 2619 reported incidents of domestic violence or abuse in Barking and Dagenham. 79% of victims in these incidents were female.

Political representation



- 41% of local councillors are women. Nationally this is only 34%.
- 60% of Cabinet members are women.

Gender Equality Charter - Our Pledge

We believe that men and women are equal and no man or woman should face discrimination, abuse or hardship however they identify in terms of gender.

Our ambition is for Barking and Dagenham to be a place where people understand, respect and celebrate each other's differences - where tolerance, understanding and a sense of responsibility can grow and people of all genders can enjoy full equality and fulfil their potential.

In signing the charter we pledge to support everyone in Barking and Dagenham to:

- receive equal pay across all sectors and have equal opportunities to succeed irrespective of their gender;
- achieve equal representation in all walks of life including in communities, politics, business and industry;
- work with schools and colleges to promote gender equality and raise awareness of gender equality issues;
- to stand up against violence against women and girls and ensure everyone understands that such behaviour will not be tolerated;
- support those with caring responsibilities and promote equal parenting, care giving and shared responsibilities in the home; and
- strive to promote gender equality and equal treatment of women and ensure our own communications support this.

We commit to developing and implementing a plan that takes this agenda forward in a meaningful way and reflects the views of local women.

Progress in 2018

The **HerStory** grants of up to £1,000 supported projects and activities around the theme of Women and Activism and were awarded to individuals, community and voluntary groups in the borough. Seven grants were awarded to seven initiatives and the activities took place between June and December 2018.

The projects funded by the HerStory grants were:

- Barking and Dagenham Youth Dance developed and performed a piece on "women and activism" at the Broadway Theatre
- U Matter Weekend run by Rivers of Joy focused on BAME young women in Barking and Dagenham, with a specific aim to increase voter registration.
- Women's Empowerment Events by Triangoals brought together women from different cultures and backgrounds, to create a safe space to express themselves
- Your Time is Now was a series of workshops run by Positive Change, aimed to increase self-confidence of women and help them to make positive, sustainable changes.
- Girls Like Us was a programme aimed to increase confidence of BAME female year 10 and 11 students at Jo Richardson secondary school
- Her Dynamic celebrated women's emancipation and their contribution to family, community and society. Organised by the Excel Women's Centre, it included a theatrical performance about an ancient queen in Somali tradition.
- The Women and Activism documentary, by Bluebird Pictures, explored local women's fight to be seen and heard in different ways, past and present, using archive footage and interviews.

Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Service (BDCVS) led on the empowerment of women community leaders through the design and delivery of the participatory grants making programme, where five local women activists decided on how funding from the HerStory Grant programme should be spent.



Not On Your Own App

Following the **Gender Equality Hackathon** in February 2018, the winning team, the Council, BDCVS and Digilabs worked in partnership to develop their idea into an app. **NOYO** – which stands for Not On Your Own – aims to tackle street harassment and make our streets safer place for everyone. It was launched at the Women's Empowerment Awards in November.

The fourth annual **Women's Empowerment Month** were held in March 2018, with a launch event held on International Women's Day. There was a panel discussion, featuring successful and inspirational women from politics, business, education and culture who spoke about a wide range of issues, including equal representation and outdated gender stereotypes. A range of events were held during March that celebrated the achievements and success of women, including dance classes, business workshops and an afternoon tea.

The **Women's Empowerment Awards** were held in November. A total of 109 nominations were received, recognising the achievements of women in the borough across a range of categories.

The Council developed a **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy**, aligning with regional, national and global strategies. This recognises that women and girls experience high risk violence and abuse more often. It is known that men and boys can also be victims, and LGBT people also experience

domestic and sexual violence. The Council will continue to work with the community and partners to protect all victims, recognising that violence and abuse are direct threats to gender equality.

A flag raising ceremony was held on 26th November to mark the **International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women** and was followed by 16 days of activism against gender-based violence including a healthy relationships music event for young people, community awareness raising sessions, learning events and a human library event where survivors shared their experiences.

The Council adopted the **J9 initiative** to raise awareness of and to help victims of domestic abuse. The J9 initiative is named in memory of Janine Mundy who was killed by her estranged husband in June 2003 while he was on police bail. Her family developed resources to raise awareness of domestic abuse. Several J9 sessions were delivered by the Council and by or with partners, including resident-led organisation North Meets South, substance misuse service CGL, Coventry University London, refuge accommodation provider Hestia, and Nia. Throughout 2019, the momentum will be kept up by writing this programme into local specialist support contracts and delivering it regularly throughout the year with different professional, voluntary and community sector groups. The aim is to run one event every month throughout the year.

CARE International #March4Women on 4th March 2018. Each sash incorporated a piece of African print into the iconic green, white and purple design, to represent black women and people of colour, who often do not feel that they can relate to the story of the suffrage movement 100 years ago.

The **Barking Enterprise Centre (BEC)** supported 172 new businesses in 2018, 72% of which were female led.

BDCVS supported the establishment of **27 new community groups** in the borough which were started by women – this represents 87% of all new groups.

BDCVS has held seven Women's Forum meetings for organisations working on women's issues or providing services for women.

The **Council's Women's Staff Network** continues to grow, holding regular events including a talk about local suffragette heroes, hearing from successful women in leadership and networking sessions. Female council staff were offered mini career coaching sessions with an external coach. The sessions aimed to help women think about career planning, aspirations and removing barriers.

80 women attended **Creative English lessons at the Excel Women's Centre**, where they learnt English, with lots of practical examples, pictures and role plays to build their confidence and communication skills.

BDCVS held three workshops and information sessions for women with **no recourse to public funds**, supporting 19 women in total.

At the launch of **Votes for Schools** in October, young people from the borough's primary and secondary schools pitched ideas on how to get more young women into politics to an expert panel that included local councillors, a Guardian journalist and Countdown presenter Rachel Riley. The Votes for Schools scheme gives young people a voice on topical matters and debates. Other topics covered include whether the suffragettes be happy with today's Parliament and whether it is possible to treat everyone equally in the UK.

The **All Women's Network** was shortlisted for the Community Organisation Award for Gender at the National Diversity Awards 2018. They provide a range of activities and events for women, including a monthly meet up to empower women and provide opportunities to improve self-esteem and confidence, learn new skills and get back into employment.



Suffragettes 'Three Lamps'

The Three Lamps outside Abby Green, which was a meeting point for Suffragettes, were covered in crocheted green, white and purple "lamp-coat" as part of HerStory and to celebrate the Borough's connection to the Suffragettes. The knitters were all part of the Ageing Well Programme, which is a group that meets weekly to enjoy social activities, such as bingo and crafts.

An event was held at CU University on 7th June to mark the **50th anniversary of the strikes at Dagenham and Halewood Ford's**, to recognise the achievements, historical value and stories of the women from the factories. Local school girls were invited to learn the history of the event and to meet some of the women who helped them to have the rights they do today.

Pupils from Sydney Russell School took part in a year-long creative project called **Change Makers**, co-ordinated by The Barbican. They explored the strong female figures from the Borough, past, present and future. They performed the story of the first female abbess of Barking Abbey and created an exhibition which was on display in Valence House between December 2018 and February 2019.



Objectives for 2019

In 2019 we will continue to work with partners and signatories of the Gender Equality Charter to promote gender equality within the Borough.

Our priorities for the year ahead include:

-  Continue to promote the Gender Equality Charter, increase the number of signatories and raise awareness gender inequality.
-  Hold the 5th annual Women's Empowerment Month in March and the Women Empowerment Awards in October.
-  Promote the app NOYO (Not On Your Own) and encourage usage
-  Develop a place-based gender equality action plan through ongoing conversations with partners, local organisations, community groups and residents to identify gaps in the work currently being done.
-  Attract sponsorship from businesses and organisations to support Women's Empowerment Month and awards, and other events relating to gender equality from 2019 onwards.

Find out more

To find out more about the Charter and pledge your support visit:

www.lbbd.gov.uk/gec

Contact

Policy and Partnerships Team
Town Hall, Barking, IG11 7LU
Email: **gec@lbld.gov.uk**



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Silver
Until 2020

©2019 London Borough of Barking and Dagenham.
Publication reference number: MC8607
Date: March 2019