

Bristol City Council Equality Impact Assessment Form

(Please refer to the Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this form)



Name of proposal	Adopting International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of Antisemitism (Equality and Inclusion Policy update)
Directorate and Service Area	Mayor's Office
Name of Lead Officer	Marvin Rees - Mayor

Step 1: What is the proposal?

Please explain your proposal in Plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon. This section should explain how the proposal will impact service users, staff and/or the wider community.

1.1 What is the proposal?

That Full Council adopts the updated Equality and Inclusion Policy 2018 – 2023 as part of the council's Policy Framework, including the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

This definition was adopted by UK Government in December 2016.

For more information on this definition see:

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

Step 2: What information do we have?

Decisions must be evidence-based, and involve people with protected characteristics that could be affected. Please use this section to demonstrate understanding of who could be affected by the proposal.

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

In the period Nov 2018 to Nov 2019 there were 101 reported incidents of religious motivated hate crime in Bristol of which five were recorded as anti-Jewish. We are not aware of any recent formal complaints of antisemitic conduct against members, officers or council employees.

The 2011 Census included the question 'What is your religion?' The question was the only question that was voluntary, so people were not required to respond to it if they chose not to. 0.2% (n=777) of Bristol residents said they were Jewish¹. Based on population increases this might mean there are now about 1,244 Jewish people in Bristol in 2020.

Bristol City Council commissions the Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Services (BHC&DS) which are carried out by a group of six partner organisations brought together to provide a complete service for victims of hate crime in Bristol. It is led by SARI (Stand Against Racism & Inequality), together with Bristol Mind, Brandon Trust, LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) Bristol, the Avon and Bristol Law Centre, and Bristol Mediation.

SARI and BHC&DC use a person-centred definition of hate crime and discrimination and will support anyone who feels they are facing antisemitism on a case-by-case basis. However they have recently also adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism.

2.2 Who is missing? Are there any gaps in the data?

Due to the voluntary nature of the question on faith there is likely to be significant under reporting in census data for Jewish communities. Approximately half of all UK Jews do not belong to a synagogue².

2.3 How have we involved, or will we involve, communities and groups that could be affected?

Engagement has been undertaken with several groups and individuals representing Bristol Jewish communities, some of whom approached the council and Mayor proactively about this issue. There was unanimous support amongst these stakeholders for the council to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

All councils have also received correspondence from Rt. Hon Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, requesting its adoption.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts on people with protected characteristics must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts in this section, referring to all of the equalities groups as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics?

¹ <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/33107/Equality+Profile+Faith+groups.pdf/fc09c705-ad31-4a3d-b0d1-1d3bfadeb882>

² <https://www.bod.org.uk/jewish-facts-info/jews-in-numbers/>

Whilst we have not identified any significant potentially negative impacts from this proposal, we need to ensure that we are doing everything we can to tackle hate crime and discrimination for all faith communities in Bristol.

Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Services have stated that as well as the working definition of antisemitism, they welcome the working definition of islamophobia, as put forward by the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims³, and hope that it will also be widely accepted by organisations and statutory bodies alike.

3.2 Can these impacts be mitigated or justified? If so, how?

Work is underway to explore adopting the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims definition of islamophobia, subject to appropriate stakeholder engagement and further consideration. An update on this will be noted with the proposed broader update to the council's policy in June or July 2020.

We will continue to use a person-centred approach, enabling people to self-identify when they felt that they have been the victim of hate crime or discrimination. Adopting the formal definition will support this process by providing a clear understanding of the nature and scope of antisemitism.

3.3 Does the proposal create any benefits for people with protected characteristics?

Having specific and agreed working definitions of religious hatred should lead to a more coherent and cohesive approach to tackling this type of hate crime and discrimination. Citizens, council employees, and commissioned services are more likely to recognise and report religious hate crime if they have a clear working definition to refer to.

3.4 Can they be maximised? If so, how?

We will integrate / refer to the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in our equality diversity and inclusion training, code of conduct, internal and external communications etc. as appropriate.

Step 4: So what?

The Equality Impact Assessment must be able to influence the proposal and decision. This section asks how your understanding of impacts on people with protected characteristics has influenced your proposal, and how the findings of your Equality Impact Assessment can be measured going forward.

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

The assessment has highlighted the need to ensure that any changes to our Equality and Inclusion policy are embedded throughout the council's functions to maximise impact.

4.2 What actions have been identified going forward?

See 3.2 and 3.4 above

4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured moving forward?

Ongoing hate crime monitoring / reporting

Service Director Sign-Off:

Equalities Officer Sign Off:

*Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion
Team*

Date:

Date: 5/3/2020