



Leeds Intercultural Profile

November 2022

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This report is based upon the visit of the Council of Europe on 29 and 30 June 2022 including Council of Europe staff and Intercultural Cities (ICC) expert Claire Rimmer. It should be read in parallel with the [Intercultural Cities Index report of Leeds](#), which contains many more recommendations and examples of good practice.

The Council of Europe has defined the intercultural city as encompassing people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief, where:

- Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource;
- The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population;
- The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation;
- The city encourages greater mixing and meaningful interaction between diverse groups in public spaces.¹

Real equality, diversity, meaningful intercultural interaction and participation and active citizenship are four inter-linked values that underpin the development and sustenance of an intercultural city.²

Equality refers to the state of being treated equally, whether before the law, in policy or in practice. This includes equal enjoyment of human dignity and fundamental human rights, and equal access to services and opportunities. More broadly, equality of life chances (or ‘access’) can be distinguished from equality of outcomes, with different political and economic philosophies putting differing emphases on each end of this spectrum. Within interculturalism, equality is most closely linked to the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, and there is particular attention paid to equity: that is, allocating resources and opportunities to each person, according to their circumstances and needs, in order to obtain a more equal outcome.

Diversity is the condition of a group or entity within which individuals differ from one another in various ways, some but not all of which are characteristics protected by human rights law. Aspects of identity such as age, sex, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, mental and physical abilities, social class, education, economic background, religion, work experience, language, geographic location, political opinion, or family status, are among the sources of diversity.

Meaningful intercultural interaction is any constructive encounter in a social setting between individuals or groups from different cultures and lifestyles in an atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation. Intercultural policy speaks of ‘meaningful interactions’ between different cultural or ethnic groups, which recognise both the differences and similarities between such groups/individuals, promote the atmosphere of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation, and counter the tendency towards self-segregation. Meaningful interactions are those that take place on equal terms, be they challenging or positive, and which should ultimately be fulfilling for all involved, advancing common goals.

¹ The Intercultural City Step by Step: Practical guide for applying the urban model of urban integration, Council of Europe, 2019, page 14.

² Council of Europe, Model Framework for an Intercultural Integration Strategy at the National Level, Intercultural integration strategies: managing diversity as an opportunity, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/prems-093421-gbr-2555-intercultural-integration-strategies-cdadi-web-a/1680a476bd>

Participation and active citizenship occur when stakeholders (all citizens, including foreign residents where appropriate) have the right, the means, the space, the opportunity and the support to freely express their opinions and influence decision-making on matters that affect them. In some situations, participation may mean those who are directly affected taking the lead and driving the process. Intercultural participation requires an equal and respectful basis, in which everyone feels heard, and involves tackling obstacles that may hinder certain stakeholders' active participation.

This report provides an updated intercultural profile of Leeds following its first Index Report completed in 2020.

1. Introduction to Leeds

Leeds is a city in West Yorkshire in northern England. An industrial city, Leeds has a large private sector and a growing economy. Financial and business services account for 38% of the economy. Other key sectors include retail, leisure, tourism, construction, manufacturing and the creative and digital industries.³ The GDP per capita of Leeds in 2019 was £30,307 or approximately \$35,850 USD.⁴ There are four universities, a music and an art college and several leading medical research centres. A diverse city, Leeds West Indian Carnival is the longest-running event in Europe and has been going since 1967.

2. National policy context

The United Kingdom (UK) has long been a country of migration. Since the time of the industrial revolution in the 1700s, England has seen people immigrating to seek work, particularly from Ireland, Scotland and Italy. Refugees have also been coming to Britain since that time, such as the Huguenots who fled France in the sixteenth century. Later Britain accepted large numbers of Belgian refugees in World War One. After World War Two the UK saw larger scale migration from its former colonies across the world, including the Windrush Generation: those who emigrated from the Caribbean to Britain between 1948 on the HMT Empire Windrush and the Immigration Act 1971.⁵ The UK then joined the European Union (EU) in 1972, which would mean that both UK and EU citizens later enjoyed freedom of movement, to live and work in other EU States.

In terms of international and regional legislation, the UK is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the situation of Refugees and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. The UK voted to leave the European Union in 2016. Since Brexit, as the UK's withdrawal from the EU has come to be known, EU legislation as it applied to the UK on 31 December 2020 is now a part of UK domestic legislation and will develop and be amended accordingly over time.⁶ Brexit has had a profound impact on the rights of EU citizens living in the UK and UK citizens who lived in the EU. In the UK, the Home Office works with refugee integration, settlement and citizenship at the national level, while the Ministry of Housing, Communities and

³ See the Leeds city website, at: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/leeds-economy>.

⁴ Office for National Statistics, at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/datasets/regionalgrossdomesticproductallnutslelregions>.

⁵ See timeline by Haringey Council, available at: <https://www.haringey.gov.uk/culture/black-history/timeline/windrush>.

⁶ See UK government, EU legislation and UK law, available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eu-legislation-and-uk-law>.

Local Government works with enhancing community cohesion in specifically England. Other departments are on the other hand in charge of varied areas such as adult skills and education. Integration is a devolved matter which means that each of the four nations of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) has its own approach but overall responsibility for migration policy stays with the Home Office.⁷ There can also be legislation or programmes targeting specific groups in the UK, for example, there are independent welcoming programmes for Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas),⁸ the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme,⁹ the Ukraine family scheme¹⁰ and the Ukraine sponsorship scheme¹¹: all with different criteria, funding and guidelines for local authorities.

‘Immigration control’ has been a key issue in UK politics for many years. It was one of the issues discussed during Brexit,¹² and a red line during negotiations.¹³ In order to retain irregular migration, the UK government has implemented a restrictive policy since 2012 including measures to limit access to work, housing, health care, bank accounts for people in an irregular migration situation.¹⁴ According to Citizens Advice ‘No Recourse to Public Funds’ is a condition attached to work, family and study visas which restricts access to welfare for almost 1.4 million people, including around 175,000 children.¹⁵ This is raised to not only affect benefits like Universal Credit and child benefit but other support like homelessness assistance that rely on public funds to operate.¹⁶ It is also raised it can even affect whether migrants can study, for example, to become teachers, as part of the course involves support from schools.¹⁷

In terms of anti-discrimination legislation, The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It sets out the different ways in which it’s unlawful to treat someone. The public sector Equality Duty came into force in 2011. It means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work whether that is developing policy, delivering services or in relation to their own employees. It also requires that

⁷ The Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, Integration Policy in the UK, available at: <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/primers/policy-primer-integration/>.

⁸ See UK government, Guidance Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) welcome programme – information for local authorities, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hong-kong-uk-welcome-programme-guidance-for-local-authorities>.

⁹ See UK government, Afghan citizens’ resettlement scheme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/afghan-citizens-resettlement-scheme>.

¹⁰ UK government, Ukraine family scheme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-ukraine-family-scheme-visa>.

¹¹ UK government, Ukraine sponsorship scheme, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-a-visa-under-the-ukraine-sponsorship-scheme>.

¹² Carl, N. (2018). CSI Brexit 4: Reasons Why People Voted Leave or Remain. Centre for Social Investigation, http://csi.nuff.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Carl_Reasons_Voting.pdf.

¹³ UK Government, UK/EU relations: Written statement – HCWS86. 3rd February 2020.

¹⁴ Yeo C, *Free Movement Blog*, ‘Briefing: what is the hostile environment, where does it come from, who does it affect?’ 1 May 2018, available at: <https://www.freemovement.org.uk/briefing-what-is-the-hostile-environment-where-does-it-come-from-who-does-it-affect/>

¹⁵ See Citizens Advice, available at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-work/our-campaigns/policy-campaigns/no-recourse-to-public-funds/>.

¹⁶ See Citizens Advice, available at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/our-work/our-campaigns/policy-campaigns/no-recourse-to-public-funds/>.

¹⁷ Information provided by a participant at the opening session of the visit to Leeds.

public bodies have ‘due regard’ to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and ‘foster good relations between different people’ when carrying out their activities.¹⁸

In England councils are responsible for social care and some aspects of transport, housing and education as well as local services such as libraries and waste collection.¹⁹ There are different types of councils. Leeds City Council is a metropolitan district council and as such provides the majority of local government services in Leeds.

3. Local diversity and policy context

This report is an intercultural profile of the city of Leeds. Administratively, the city is divided into 33 wards and split geographically across ten community committees that provide a local democratic framework for the delivery of some services, such as environmental services. The committees each have delegated budgets that are determined locally to support improvements across a wide range of subject areas.

Leeds is a diverse city. The population size increased by 8.1%, from around 751,500 in 2011 to 812,000 in 2021. Changes to the population in recent years are a result of emigration of native-born youth, the arrival of large numbers of people originating from the same country, cultural or religious groups, the emigration of middle-class families to peripheral regions of the city and the arrival of large numbers of retired persons from other countries. Through this there has been a shift from the settled community of nationals from South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa and other world areas to more recent communities of EU-nationals which now make up a larger, more diverse proportion of the community. The main (native or foreign-born) ethnic/cultural groups in Leeds according to the British system are: White British, White Other, Pakistani, Indian and Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African. The main foreign groups represented in Leeds are: Pakistan, India and Poland, with EU citizens making up 29.5% of the foreign population. 11.5% of the city population are born outside of the United Kingdom. The census carried out in 2021 may provide additional detail on changes in the demography.²⁰

Published Home Office figures show that at the end of June 2022, 1,297 people seeking asylum were being supported in Leeds while awaiting a decision on their claim. The city estimates around 500 undocumented migrants in the city based on information from the key services supporting destitute migrants.

On a national level, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) groups are recognised as native-born minority groups. The GRT service sits under the Council’s Children and Families directorate. Leeds also reports a number of groups of people of diverse origins which require a special focus. Leeds reports to have over 140 different nationalities and within the city there are several groups that require a particular focus including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, to which the city has a multi-agency approach; undocumented asylum-seekers and those with no recourse to public funds; victims of sexual violence and female genital mutilation, with whom the city has engaged through links with the migrant community. The city also supports migrants with additional needs and disabilities and

¹⁸ See UK government, Equality Act Guidance, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>.

¹⁹ The Institute for Government, ‘Local Government’, available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/local-government>.

²⁰ [Census - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk).

those who have been through traumatic experiences through involvement in the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

Leeds has had several citywide strategies in place such as Future in Mind on children's mental health and the child-friendly Leeds campaign. This is a network that includes schools, activities and partnerships with stakeholders across the city and shows how well Leeds works in partnership, but also how well it incorporates cross-cutting principles into its work. The Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy also includes diversity and inclusion as priorities in all areas of work.

Leeds is a relatively new Intercultural City starting its journey just before the COVID-19 pandemic. It completed a first Index Report, published in 2020, and this first expert visit was an opportunity for Leeds to update its intercultural profile after COVID-19 and provide more information on areas from the Index where gaps were identified, or specific recommendations made (primarily the sections on commitment, education and interaction).

4. Commitment

Since becoming an Intercultural City, a public intercultural statement endorsed by the local council has been adopted; the Mayor has published a policy statement with the city's long-term goals; the city often references its commitment as an Intercultural City; and the Annual Best Council Plan includes a commitment to inclusion and a positive approach to diversity and migration in all priorities.

As with many cities' first reports, the city had not included several areas of work that it currently undertakes. The visit highlighted several such areas of work and showed that Leeds values its intercultural journey and is keen to build on its strong start. Leeds had assessed the different recommendations from the Index Report and created an agenda to reflect the breadth of Leeds's intercultural work. The city also showed a willingness to learn and to engage with other cities in the Intercultural Cities' network.

Leeds had as per the Index Report not yet adopted an intercultural strategy and is however now in the process of developing an action plan. Further, there is at the moment no specific budget or evaluation process in place for these areas. However, it is clear that interculturalism is mainstreamed into Leeds's work and is already covered in other strategies such as the Annual Best Council Plan and the Strategic, Coordinated and Inclusive Approach to Migration in Leeds 2021 – 2025. There is also a wealth of evidence and reporting in place, including to the Scrutiny Board; the Executive Board on the Best Council Plan; the Leeds Strategic Migration Board; the Equality Improvement Plan. For Leeds, then, it is clear that a strategy is in place through the mainstreaming of the principles into other strategies. It is therefore more a case of reflecting on the excellent work the city already does, rather than setting up new strategy or evaluation process, and verifying there are no gaps.

5. Opening session

Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the Intercultural City its distinctive value.

During the visit the city started off with a very interactive session. The Council had invited over 100 local stakeholders to take part in the opening session including from civil society, the police,

universities and the council itself. After hearing the results of the Leeds Intercultural Index Report, there was a participatory round table focusing on three areas: 1) what Leeds is doing well when it comes to interculturalism; 2) what improvements Leeds needs to make in its interculturalism approach; and 3) how to make those improvements.

On what the city is doing well, participants judged that there is a strong community engagement and co-creation of initiatives. Further, Leeds works well with different stakeholders across the city. It was raised that the city feels welcoming to many newcomers and that this is reflected in the diversity of shops and businesses. There is also plenty of cultural and sporting activity that supports diverse participation. Additionally, hate crime is taken seriously and is supported by effective structures.

On what could be done better, participants thought Leeds could more actively promote its good work and its benefits. Leeds can sometimes avoid having challenging conversations, but they are necessary. Participants wondered if Leeds is great with diversity but less good with interculturalism or work that requires interaction between communities. The city should recognise and address some of the structural issues that foster resentment, racism and hostility between groups and do more to address social and cultural education for newly arrived people.

On how this could be achieved, participants saw the Index Report as a positive starting point. They highlighted the need for a communications strategy to promote interculturalism and address racism, rumours, misunderstandings, including community voices and influencers. The 'segregation' in schools could be addressed by more school partnerships and other activities that bring young people together to form friendships across communities. Also, education for adults and children about social/cultural expectations and differences could be a useful tool. There should be more cultural and community activity that encourages engagement across communities rather than just focussed on one group. Leeds also needed to acknowledge and address the structural issues, like access to social housing, where tensions between communities can become acute. It was suggested that the city perhaps could work more closely with private developers towards this goal.

The opening session provided an excellent introduction into how the city had progressed since the Index Report and its priorities going forward. The visits in the city prioritised several other areas of work. The results from the round table and the expert visit will be used to inform the work on the new action plan.

6. Education

Leeds's reporting in the field of education in part reflects the UK education system and in part the segregated nature of education provision together with the need for measures to respond to this.

Depending on the system of education in a country, cities may sometimes need to find more innovative ways to act independently. In England, the Department for Education is responsible for children's services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills. There has also been a drive for more autonomy for schools at local level, including through enabling schools to apply for academy status. Academies and free schools are directly funded by and accountable to the Department of Education. 40% of all schools and 80%

of secondary schools are now academies or free schools.²¹ Local government still plays a role, however, with statutory duties, including: ensuring a sufficient supply of school places; tackling underperformance in schools and ensuring high standards; and supporting vulnerable children.²²

The city was very proactive in addressing issues in the field of education throughout the visit, and keen to show the strides that had been taken since the initial Index Report submission. During the opening event, councillors underlined how the city had worked hard, particularly in bringing in the voluntary sector and young people themselves. The recruitment and retention of teachers was highlighted as an issue the city would be interested in discussing with other cities to exchange learning. There were also participants from universities, schools and clubs.

The first visit looked at some of the city's achievements in education in Harehills. Harehills is an inner-city area of Leeds approximately one mile north of the city centre. There are approximately 117 people per hectare (13 is the Leeds average). It has the highest population of young people as well as the largest and most diverse black and minority ethnic (BME)²³ community in the city. 25% of the population has been in the UK for less than 10 years.²⁴

Harehills Primary School

The first stop was a round table at Harehills Primary School. The school has over 700 pupils, 97% of whom are minority ethnic. There are 23 ethnic groups at the school with 53% of the children of Pakistani heritage, and 22% of Eastern European and Roma heritage. In total, 39 different languages are spoken within the school and 87% of children have English as an additional language.

The school was proud of its intercultural nature and worked hard to inspire pride in the pupils too. In early years children read and share stories with characters from different cultures. At the school children were encouraged to speak in their own language. Since the beginning of the school year in September 2021 there had been 46 new arrivals with English as an additional language and often the children had not attended school previously. Special support was provided for children who were new to English (NtE). Children had two English lessons a week meaning they could catch up quickly. Displays around the school showed other languages and handprints by the children were matched to different flags to display the diversity within the school. There was also a policy of showing rather than telling where possible in class.

Children are involved in planning and leading activities at the school. For example, Year 4 children (aged 8-9) took part in the School Council and planned refugee week activities in June 2022. During the week, 180 children and their teachers walked a mile for Ukraine with sunflowers they had made themselves. Children were also part of the MindMate Ambassadors programme to champion mental health, understand how others may be feeling and help them develop a range of coping strategies.

²¹ HM Government, Academic Year 2021/22, Schools, pupils and their characteristics. Available at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/school-pupils-and-their-characteristics>.

²² Department for Education, Action research into the evolving role of the local authority in education, page 2, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/184055/DFE-RR224.pdf.

²³ Reference term specifically used in the UK context.

²⁴ Information provided by Ash Razzaq, Director of CATCH (Community Action to Create Hope) during the visit.

Parents were also involved in school life. Parents were offered English and basic skills classes. In early years classes parents were encouraged to come with their children and all families had a visit from school when their children were due to start school.



Image 1: Sunflower for World Refugee Day, by children at Harehills Primary school.

There was programme for Year 5 children (aged 9 and 10), called the Young Interpreters Scheme. The children helped give new parents who spoke the same language an introduction to the school, they also helped new children as well as interpreted for parents, for example, at parent-teacher meetings. This recognised the role the children play in helping with language and hoped to inspire pride about their native language and own abilities.

Contrary to the general situation in Leeds, Harehills Primary School had 107 staff from a diverse range of countries including Pakistan, India, Ukraine, Estonia, Romania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Chile, Jamaica and Canada. When asked how the school managed to attract such a diverse teaching staff, the head raised that the school had several policies in place. They had for example changed their website significantly, so it was less 'corporate' but showed the ethos of the school to help them attract the type of teachers they needed. The school also advertised well including in the local community. Staff further gave briefings to new teachers and information was shared on social media as well as through posters around the school. Many of the student teachers who trained at the school had stayed and the positive atmosphere in the school helped with staff retention.

CATCH: Community Action to Create Hope

A round table was held at the CATCH centre. Founded by Ash Razzaq, CATCH has created a safe space for the whole community, but in particular for young people. Harehills has a high level of poverty, including child poverty, which has caused a lot of problems in the past. 15% of school leavers in Harehills are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 6% across Leeds. The area is highly diverse and has experienced tensions. Before CATCH there were few spaces for young people or things for young people to do and there was an escalation of criminality and tension between different groups. The programme started from clearing one unsafe piece of land, where there was fly tipping and where people had been using drugs and has since grown exponentially. CATCH now has a popular youth programme with over 1,000 members providing a range of opportunities for sport, creativity and learning, as well as for volunteering and social action

projects. CATCH promotes positive values and supports neighbours, as well as enables young people to do as much as possible themselves to improve their community. One example is the community centre itself, which was relocated from Wakefield, and which young volunteers renovated. Young people from all over the world are now working and volunteering as a team, including providing a community foodbank during the pandemic.

CATCH also works to create positive pathways for young people away from crime. This includes the Super Stars Volunteer Development Programme. Co-produced by CATCH and Engage, it empowers volunteers of all ages to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and experiences to set them on a path to becoming a leader of the future whilst making a positive difference in their local communities. CATCH partners with many other organisations and is a member of the Leeds Learning Alliance.



Image 2: the café space at CATCH, made with the help of young volunteers.

Leeds Learning Alliance

The Leeds Learning Alliance (LLA) is a consortium of organisations formed in 2019 by a group of leaders who were aiming to improve education in Leeds. There were 15 partners and associates in 2021 including universities, colleges, schools, the Leeds Rhinos and Leeds United foundations, the Ahead Partnership and CATCH (Community Action to Create Hope). The LLA partners recognised that children were facing challenges and families in some communities were having the same problems with the same negative outcomes for children with little changing over several years despite intervention programmes. At the same time the city workforce did not represent the diversity or the talent in the city and not all children were able to benefit from the opportunities a city like Leeds had to offer. The Alliance is unusual in the UK in that it includes education, the public sector and the third sector trying to explore what genuine partnership could mean.

The LLA Restore Provision is unique in the city. It supports up to 16 children at one time who are at risk of being excluded from school. During a pupil's placement at Restore their educational, behavioural and social needs can be addressed with a view to them returning promptly, as appropriate, to mainstream education. Carr Manor Community Schools employs a staff member and rents a space at the CATCH community centre. The school is able to use all the CATCH facilities for

respite and restoration to help that child return to school. CATCH are responsible for the education provision on the premises and also contribute to education at the school itself. At CATCH children are off the school site and are encouraged to learn a whole suite of competencies for more effective pathways including working in public services and digital skills.

As well as the practical work with young people, LLA is developing a LLA Centre for Inclusive Practice working alongside the Leeds Trinity University Research Centre for Inclusion, Diversity and Social Justice. LLA is also developing an Anti-Racism Action Plan and toolkit for LLA leaders.

7. Culture

Culture and sport are both very strong elements in Leeds's intercultural journey. The Leeds City Museum is one of the largest in the UK, with nine venues and 1.3 million objects across the city. In recent years the museum has put a great deal of thought into its place in the city and how it represents its residents. All sites aim to be welcoming and tell stories of the city and its population.



If people are to feel welcome, exhibitions need to be relevant, with care given to language, accessibility and to ensure staff are representative too.

There are several collaborative projects, such as the Voices of Asia exhibition that consulted with local communities who co-curated the space. There is a big hall in the city centre museum branch that hosts community events for free including an annual hip hop event.

Image 3: Co-created exhibition at the Leeds City Museum.

Sport

Sport plays a huge role in bringing people together in Leeds and there was some impressive work in this field. Active Leeds is one of the largest local authority sports providers in the UK. Leeds has 17 leisure centres, 600 staff and a development team in 12 priority neighbourhoods. The two priorities are active environments and active people. There is a focus on everyone becoming more physically active in their everyday lives. The John Charles Centre for Sport is the flagship site and includes an Olympic size pool and stadium. Local schools visit daily from around the city.

The city is involved in everything from elite to participatory events. The World Triathlon took place in Leeds and involved schools from priority areas who took part in a duathlon of cycling and running. A diverse mix of children took part and were provided with official merchandise by a community centre. This ensured that local children could take part in an international event. There is an annual

international women's day event to encourage women to engage in every day physical activities and a Refugee World Cup. Bridge Community Church FC is a local football team made up of asylum seekers. They play in Division 1 of the Yorkshire Christian Football League. Additionally, the Leeds Rhino Community Trust and Leeds Football Club are involved in promoting diversity, while the Run Leeds project supports Eritrean runners in Middleton. Finally, there are many different clubs for people to join run by volunteers such as the Street works soccer academy.

The city encourages people to see sport as being for everyone and helps people access services by inclusive adult social services on ten of their sports sites. The John Charles Centre has moveable floors in the swimming pools so that they can be used for everything from top level diving, to specialised sessions for wheelchair users. There has also been disability and inclusion training for all staff and any new sports development has to make maximum use of its space for the community.

8. Equality

As discussed above, local authorities have statutory obligations to consider equality in the UK. The Equalities Assembly was set up by Leeds to ensure all diverse communities are involved in the council's work and decision-making. It is a forum made up of Equality Hubs, which helps ensure Leeds City Council is engaging with and involving the full range of residents that live in Leeds in the decisions it makes.²⁵ There is an LGBT+ Equality Hub, a religion or belief hub as well as a disability



hub run by the city, who meet to discuss issues that are important to them as well as provide feedback to the local authorities. There are an additional three hubs run externally: a hub for older people, a culturally diverse hub and a women and girl's hub. There is also an Access and User-Ability group that works with the council and private developers to shape the city.

When the city is developing important policies it consults with the hubs, for example, on its housing strategy. This gives the city a unique insight and helps it to better plan. For example, a consultation with the LGBT+ hub on housing showed that many older LGBT+ people preferred city centre housing due to their particular experience and needs as they age.

Image 4: Equality and Creativity banners at Harehills Primary School.

9. Public space

The city centre in Leeds aims to be clean, safe and attractive, taking into account that after COVID-19 and changes in work-life and shopping, many people are now coming to the centre by choice, rather than necessity. The inclusive growth strategy includes planning to ensure the city's development is

²⁵ See Leeds.gov, Equality Assembly, available at: <https://www.leeds.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/equalities-assembly>.

shared with everyone, for example, through good transport connections with poorer areas. The child-friendly Leeds initiative is also included in public space planning. The key to this is to ensure that there are free events and activities for children in the centre. Families from inner-city areas don't always see the city centre as being for them and more needs to be done to attract them.

During the summer there are life size animatronic dinosaurs across the city. Children get a free physical or digital map and can walk round the centre and find the whole collection. To increase the accessibility, there are free buses put on to bring children into the centre to see them. Further, where there are empty shop units, the city works with local artists to decorate them through an open call on Curator Space. There are no specific intercultural criteria for this at the moment, but Leeds 2023 will be a large event celebrating art and culture across the city and ensuring it is accessible to everyone.

The Council lights up the Civic Hall, Town Hall and the City Museum to celebrate or mark specific days. This includes the 28 days to be celebrated throughout the year chosen by the religion and belief hub. The buildings are also lit up for other special events such as Pride. Leeds Pride is a big event, with an important, free procession through the city centre. The Council has two open buses in the parade as and supports the Pride event team in other ways through regular meetings and information provision. The Lower Briggate Freedom Quarter has an iconic rainbow coloured rail bridge that came about through a collaboration with Network Rail.

There has been a full review of statues in the city after the statue of a slave trader was taken down by protesters in Bristol in the south of England. There was a decision to not take down statues in Leeds but to give more context about the background and history associated with the person concerned. In addition, a new bridge is being named after David Oluwale, who travelled to the UK from Nigeria and who died after a racially motivated incident in 1969. The bridge is a partnership between Leeds City Council, the David Oluwale Memorial Association (DOMA) and other stakeholders to both commemorate David but also demonstrate a commitment to equality and inclusion in Leeds.

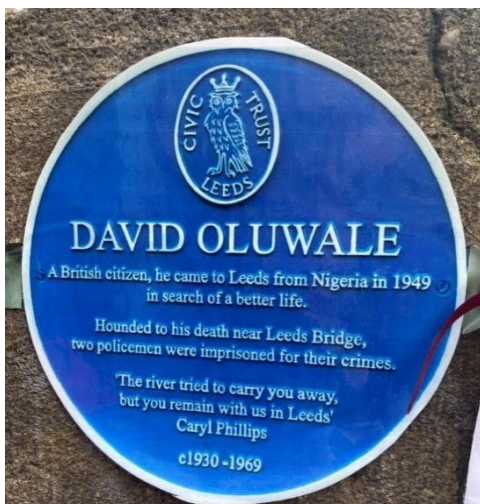


Figure 5: Plaque commemorating the life of David Oluwale.

Leeds City Market

Leeds City Market is run by Leeds City Council. It is based in a historic building and is one of the largest indoor markets in Europe. There is an extremely successful food hall with traders from all

over the world. Traders and customers are diverse and there are products that cannot always be found in supermarkets. It is a good starting point for local people to start businesses with less overheads than a shop. The market takes part in Child-friendly Leeds and has artwork including all the languages spoken in the market and there is also space in the market to showcase music and art. The market hosts free shows and is easily accessible by bus. Further, the market also includes a library, a community hub and voluntary action Leeds, so people can access information and services in one place.



Image 6: One of the colourful stalls in Leeds City Market.

Roundhay Park

Roundhay Park is one of the largest urban parks in the world. It is free to enter and includes allotments, nature reserves, playgrounds, two zoos and a plant nursery, a cemetery and retail outlets. It tries to encourage access for all residents of Leeds and is aiming to increase the diversity of its workforce. It emphasizes partnership working and working with local groups so that the park can respond to their needs. The Friends of Roundhay Park is a voluntary group that helps fundraise for the park and recently expanded with a Little Friends of Roundhay Park for children.

10. Business

Leeds has an Inclusive Growth strategy 2018-2023,²⁶ which has a vision of Leeds as a strong economy in a compassionate city. It prioritises helping create better jobs, supporting communities and targeting priority neighbourhoods. The approach is that inclusive growth is the responsibility of everyone in the city. The city uses its leverage to achieve goals for the good of the city. For example, there could be discounts on business rates for companies that either increase training, pay a real living wage or support schools.

Business support aims to ensure assistance to businesses and the self-employed reaches those who have found it difficult to access support in the past. This means engaging with partners and other intermediaries. The AD:VENTURE programme offers a comprehensive and innovative mix of tailored business support to boost growth and develop businesses in their early years and it is hoped that diverse communities will benefit from it. There is also a Tech Challenge Charter to increase diversity and inclusion in digital roles.²⁷ This is national benchmarking that the Council has signed up to. Another initiative is BUILD – a twelve-week start-up to increase the participation of people who are underrepresented in the tech industry. There is built-in diversity in terms of the cohort, the types of businesses, the sectors and migrants. The Leeds Anchors Network has also created a diversity dashboard for the Leeds city region, starting with larger public sector employers including the Council itself, to show various diversity criteria for their employees including age, carers, disability, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic and sexuality.²⁸ The Future Talent Leeds plan is also being developed. It has undergone two rounds of consultation with the public and aims to collaboratively address issues such as unemployment, inclusion and diversity, digital skills and climate change whilst ensuring support and skills are in place as the city emerges from COVID-19.²⁹

Support for employment initiatives can also be locality based. For example, St James's University Teaching Hospital is close to Lincoln Green, which is one of the most deprived areas in England with high unemployment rates, and a high level of people with English as a second language. The hospital is a major employer but often does not employ people from its surrounding area. Leeds City Council consulted with the Lincoln Green community to identify existing skills, and the hospital to see what skills they needed. A targeted skills programme was delivered to jobseekers in Lincoln Green. At the end of the programme, participants were guaranteed an interview for work at the hospital, which resulted in some excellent job opportunities with good prospects for local residents.³⁰

²⁶ See the Leeds City Council website, available at: <http://www.leedsgrowthstrategy.co.uk/>.

²⁷ See: <https://www.techtalentcharter.co.uk/home>.

²⁸ See Leeds Diversity Dashboard: <https://open-innovations.github.io/diversity-data/leeds-city-region/>.

²⁹ See, Leeds.gov press release, Future Talent Leeds, available at: <https://news.leeds.gov.uk/news/second-phase-of-future-talent-leeds-conversation-begins>.

³⁰ See the Local Government Association, case study, 'Inclusive economies: Leeds City Council connecting residents to local opportunities', available at: <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/inclusive-economies-leeds-city-council-connecting-residents-local-opportunities>.



Image 7: The iconic rainbow bridge in Lower Briggate Freedom Quarter, a partnership with Network Rail.

11. Conclusions and Recommendations

The city of Leeds created a dynamic, interesting and full programme for the visit (see Annex 1. Agenda) that showed off much of the excellent work that Leeds is doing in terms of interculturalism. It was striking how much partnership and interagency work is happening in Leeds, as well as how much work on diversity and inclusion was mainstreamed across the activities shown. The city has a dedicated team from different departments working on its intercultural programme, which in itself is a good practice. Experts visited some inspirational places and met many inspiring people.

Nevertheless, there are always areas that the city could develop more and that would ensure that no area of work falls between the gaps. The main two recommendations for the report are linked and are to:

1. **Reflect on interaction.** The city has very strong policies and practices on diversity, equality and participation but these do not always include increasing meaningful intercultural interaction between different geographical areas or different groups or communities of people. This is important where a city reports areas of concentrated diversity or non-diversity in general and in schools. Promoting social mixing throughout the city will support a general sense of belonging and help build shared values. During the visit, there were very interesting initiatives to bring people into the city centre, for example, and make sure the city or events were accessible to all, as well as that growth is inclusive and benefits everyone. There was less on working to ensure other different areas of the city or different groups mix. Some of this may be happening organically, such as at the market or at sports events, but could potentially be further enhanced through city planning, events focusing mixing, increased public transport options between neighbourhoods and other measures to

increase meaningful intercultural interaction. The city could also look into further increasing collaboration with the voluntary and third sectors who already have a strong presence and networks within the city, also within areas and communities which are harder for the city to reach. At the round table on day one there was a suggestion to have more cultural and community activity that encourages engagement across communities rather than just focussing on one group, which could be valuable. Cultural and sporting events carried out across the neighbourhoods of the city, including in priority areas, could present opportunities to increase interaction between communities and for residents to get to know all areas of the city. It could also be interesting to assess if increased cooperation between the equality hubs could be beneficial, or if additional hubs could be useful to set up to increase and strengthen diverse participation across policy areas. While such cross-departmental cooperation is already reflected in for example the inclusive growth strategy which brings together the inclusive, sustainable and economic agendas or the Leeds Parks and green spaces strategy which includes clear inclusive goals to increase access to green spaces in deprived areas, additional collaboration and diverse input may help further the intercultural agenda of the city.

2. **Reflect on the education sector.** The visit to Harehills school and CATCH showed wonderful initiatives to bring diverse young people together. The Leeds Learning Alliance showed Leeds's strength in working in partnership and involving different stakeholders. There was less evidence of interaction between schools or neighbourhoods, perhaps because time was short. At the round table on day one, participants suggested that any 'segregation' in schools could be addressed by more school partnerships and other activities that bring young people together to form friendships across communities. Also, education for adults and children about social/cultural expectations and differences and intercultural training for teachers were highlighted as being important. Harehills Primary School had some useful strategies it could share on improving the diversity of school staff.

This could also be something that the city wants to follow up with other cities in the intercultural network to see how other cities with less involvement in recruitment in education, encourage diversity in the workforce. The following additional recommendations are anchored in the different needs and possibilities identified in dialogue with the city. They intend to be useful in future developments in the intercultural domain and vary from short-term to long-term processes.

- On its intercultural strategy, the city has no need to start a new strategy or evaluation mechanism unless it should wish to do so. However, it may be useful during the next stage of work on relevant current strategies, reporting and evaluation mechanisms, to look at them through 'an intercultural lens' to verify there are no gaps. Ensuring sufficient budget is tied to intercultural actions can help further support the sustainability of the policies.
- The round table on day one highlighted the need for a communications strategy to promote interculturalism and address racism, rumours, misunderstandings, including community voices and influencers. As such Leeds could consider looking into the Council of Europe's anti-rumour strategy. It could also be useful to ensure the city's communication strategy covers engagement with and monitoring of the press.
- The city could organise technical visits to other cities or take advantage of events and visits with the Intercultural Cities network in order to learn from the practice of others as an effective way of promoting intercultural competence. This also includes good practices

already available within the city, such as CATCH or the Lincoln Green project, which provide models which could be useful to implement in other areas of the city.

- The city already implements a host of participatory processes across the city and could assess the possibilities of leveraging these networks to build increased intercultural interaction. Similarly, the city already carries out work looking at new innovative solutions and processes to increase inclusion, and it could be interesting to assess if joint touchpoints and findings between projects could be identified and built on.
- Leeds already has a strong group working to implement interculturalism further into the work of the city. Considering the holistic work already carried out, general and potentially mandatory intercultural competence training for all city staff could be considered.
- There was a suggestion from the round table to acknowledge and address the structural issues, like access to social housing, where tensions between communities can become acute. Leeds already carries out mediation and housing as an issue was not specifically looked at during the visit. This can be another area, like education, where cities have more or less of a role to play. If this is something the city would like to look at in more detail, the Intercultural Cities' good practice database³¹ has a wealth of creative good practice examples from other cities on this and other areas as well as policy briefs, such as a recent paper on gentrification.³²

The Intercultural Cities programme would like to thank Leeds for an interesting visit. The work done to date is inspiring and several areas were identified as good practices to share with other cities.

³¹ Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/good-practice>.

³² Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/gentrification>.

Annex 1 - Agenda



**Intercultural Cities Network,
Council of Europe visit to Leeds, 29th and 30th June 2022**

A G E N D A

Wednesday, 29 June 2022	
9.30 – 10.00	Registration, Networking
10.00 - 10.10	Welcome and Housekeeping
10.10– 10.25	Ambitions in the new City Plan and Challenges for the City
10.25 – 10.40	Leeds Vision to become an Intercultural City Experiences representing local community
10.40 – 11.40	Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Network Experts - <i>Leeds ICC Index analysis</i>
11.40 – 12.10	Questions and Answers with the Council of Europe
12.10 – 13.00	Round table discussion – Introduced by
13.00 – 13.15	Summary and close
13.15 – 14.00	Buffet lunch and networking
14.35 - 15.35	Harehills Primary School
15.50 - 16.50	CATCH (Community Action to Create Hope)
16:50 - 19:15	Arrival of Lord Mayor, Cllr Bob Gettings Introduction on importance of Lord Mayor's role on community engagement

Thursday, 30 June 2022	
9.15 – 10.10	Welcome coffee and visit Migration stories at the Leeds City Museum
10.30 - 11.15	Leeds Freedom Quarter at Lower Briggate
11.30 - 12.30	Kirkgate Market Business and culture
12.30-13.30	L U N C H at Kirkgate Market
13.45 - 14.30	Arrival at John Charles Centre, Active Leeds
15.00 - 15.45	Parks and Countryside
16.30 - 17:30	Debrief and next steps