

Equalities Assembly #2

Rochdale Borough Equalities Assemblies are a series of quarterly events, for people who work in and contribute to the borough, including grassroots organisations, statutory partners and volunteers.

The aim of the assemblies is to listen and learn. Conversation topics are brought to the Assembly by people who understand inequality, through experience, through supporting others or through insight, data and intelligence.

Inequality and injustice will not be eradicated unless we design it out

Chair

Councillor Sara L. Rowbotham
Labour Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holder Health & Well Being

Presenters

Samina Arfan

Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Strategic Lead
NHS Heywood Middleton and Rochdale Clinical
Commissioning Group

[Click here for
presentation](#)

Kate Jones

CEO Healthwatch Rochdale

[Click here for
presentation](#)

Kuiama Thompson

Consultant in Public Health, Public Health & Wellbeing
Rochdale Borough Council

[Click here for
presentation](#)

11 Grassroots Conversations Held

- Inequalities within Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
- COVID19 and Older People
- Choices and Chances for young people
- Black History Month and 'Back to School'
- COVID19 and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Inequality
- COVID19 and Patient Access
- Black Lives Matter
- Learning Disabilities and the Disability Forum
- Multiple Disadvantage, Mental Health and Addiction
- Digital Poverty and Inclusion
- 'Open Space' inequality discussion

Assembly Insight and Reflections

100 People
attended

14 orgs
contributed

Key themes raised in conversations

- Female leadership and representation, much of the community organising and local leadership has been undertaken by women
- Isolation, mental health and wellbeing is a key concern in communities
- Training for VCFSE staff is needed around use of tech, inc. testing processes
- Peer support model is key around financial support and personal resilience
- Need to support communities and individuals to be able to challenge behaviour and risk safely
- Arts, culture and volunteering are methods to engage people and help people 'feel part' of community response to the pandemic and encourage a whole community approach to tackling inequality
- There is positivity within the pandemic; we need to share real stories of hope
- Communication is the biggest barrier and biggest opportunity to solve issues

Planning and Promotion

- The event was planned with Rochdale Council, Public Health and Communication partners, HMR CCG Equality Diversity Inclusion Strategic Lead, Action Together and VCFSE sector partners
- Event Registration took place via Action Together's website
- The Assembly was promoted through all partners comms routes and networks using the #TogetherRochdale comms platform

Content

- The grassroots conversations were themed around topics that communities have highlighted as being important to discuss now
- These topics were chosen by the Inclusive Messaging Group and at Grassroots Gatherings (30+ orgs offered the opportunity to host conversations)
- Presentations were chosen because of their relevance to the themes of COVID19 and Inequality

Delivery

- We used Zoom as our Assembly Platform with breakout rooms for themed conversations
- We used NESTA's guide to hosting inclusive online meetings and events to inform the delivery
- Presentations were shared on the screen, some conversation hosts shared powerpoints or pdfs or presented verbally
- We did not record the session but instead each room had support to capture content

Who was in the room?

- Action Together captured the main clients/ beneficiaries of the VCFSE partner organisations
- Healthwatch Rochdale captured demographics of the attendees
- Statutory Partners provided us with details of who attended the event
- [Click for Housekeeping presentation we shared with attendees](#)

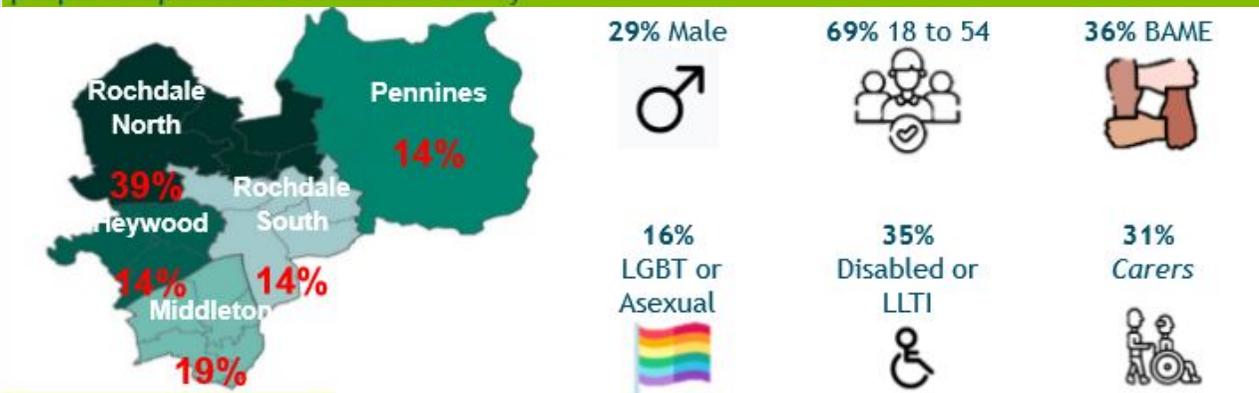


Equalities Assembly #2 Evaluation

Rochdale Borough Equalities Assemblies are a series of quarterly events, for people who work in and contribute to the borough, including grassroots organisations, statutory partners, volunteers and service users.

The aim of the Assemblies is to listen and learn. Conversation topics are brought to the assembly by people who understand inequality, through experience, though supporting others or through insight, data and intelligence.

The 2nd equalities assembly was held on the 29th October 2020, 100 people logged on to the event via zoom. Healthwatch Rochdale has independently evaluated the event to ensure the event is representative of the demographics of the Rochdale borough. Of the 100 attendees, 48 people completed the evaluation survey.



Rochdale Residents	10%
Community, Voluntary, Faith or Social Enterprise organisation	52%
Rochdale Borough Council	17%
Other	21%

74% of attendees said they agreed/strongly agreed that the event met their objectives

76% of attendees said they agreed/strongly agreed that the event improved their knowledge

67% of attendees said they agreed/strongly agreed that the event will help them in the future

95% of attendees said they found the Healthwatch Rochdale presentation informative or very informative

90% of attendees said they found the presentation on the equality, diversity & inclusion strategy informative or very informative

54% of attendees said they agreed/strongly agreed that taking part in this event increased their confidence

- Improvements suggested from attendees:**
- Breakout rooms could be more solution driven
 - More time talk in the breakout rooms
 - Better management of the chat functions
 - Plan the event to be outcome based with clear follow up actions
 - speaking to groups hosting breakout rooms about their content and the structure of the sessions so they are as effective and informative as possible.

- Positive Comments from attendees:**
- Really loved the event
 - Well structured and very impactful

- Healthwatch Rochdale Recommendations**
1. Demographic information to be gathered at the point of booking onto the event to ensure full demographic information is gathered for all attendees of the next equalities assembly
 2. Targeted, increased representation from residents and service user for the next event to gather more lived experience of inequalities in Rochdale
 3. Increase BAME representation from specific grassroots communities across the Rochdale borough.

[Click here](#) to see more assembly feedback

↻ Action Together Retweeted



Nigeria Community Association Rochdale @NigeriaCom... · 30 Oct

So much respect for Rochdale 4 their stand against inequalities in our community. You will forever be remembered for your good deed to humanity. @RochdaleCouncil @WeActTogether

For me what works and what I personally feel is so important with the Assembly, is that people who would not usually have an opportunity to listen to someone from another group, are able to.

Very interesting listening to the boys views on COVID19, the challenges of people with disabilities especially in the present times, and experiences around reaching new volunteers .

Sue Moncaster

Social Prescribing Link Worker, Rochdale Health Alliance



Bev Place @bev_place · 29 Oct

Another fantastic #Rochdale #community event. #Thankyou 🙏
@WeActTogether and everyone who contributed and participated. We will get #Equality right because we all care.
#TogetherRochdale

I'm positive this will have an impact on all our individuals who need our services across the borough

Bev Fowler
Veterans In
Communities



Sabrina Branwood @SabrinaBranwood · 29 Oct

Great morning at today's @WeActTogether #EqualitiesAssembly on Zoom #TogetherRochdale . As a Rochdale resident with #SelectiveMutism (SM) I'd like to see the borough be more communication accessible & more awareness of SM. #Inclusion cant happen unless #CommunicationMatters



Cartwheel Arts @CartwheelArts · 29 Oct

Really interesting to hear about the work that is going on behind the scenes in Rochdale on the Joint EDI Strategy - representation, inclusivity and co-design, presented by @ArfanSamina at the #EqualitiesAssembly with @WeActTogether #TogetherRochdale

Thank you for providing me an opportunity to become the voice of so many, who have potential to contribute towards society but are waiting for that vital support they need.

Councillor Sameena Zaheer
Milkstone and Deeplish ward

Continuing the Conversation

Conversations to create equality will continue to be held in many spaces, groups and structures and we know not one conversation can solve inequality. We hope that this event and following Equalities Assemblies will become a space to collectively hear many conversations, perspectives and begin to work together to design out inequality.

We will:

- Share report and connected equalities work via #TogetherRochdale comms group, COVID19 Outbreak Plan Engagement Board and Mental Health Partnership Board (including Healthwatch evaluation focused on demographics)
- Arrange a follow up conversation around Mental Health support for Black Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, supported by Thinking Ahead
- Arrange a follow up conversation around female leadership and representation
- Organise [#WednesdaysWeekly](#) training sessions on the topics of:
 - Resilience, led by Elephant Trail
 - How to challenge behaviour of others safely and with respect, supported by Rochdale Community Safety Partnership
- Produce and share a follow up report 'Continuing the Conversation' detailing work that has taken place following the Equalities Assembly #2

Action Together and Rochdale Borough Council (Adult Social Care) will:

Host a workshop to consider the needs people are likely to have around money matters over the next year, and what we can do collectively to support these. This event is for anyone who has experienced financial hardship, has accessed support for financial well-being or is involved in delivering support for people struggling financially. [Event details here.](#)

Connect with us

To join the fortnightly Community Zoom, to discuss COVID19 related community issues, hosted by Rochdale Borough Council email Sajjad.Miah@Rochdale.Gov.UK

To join the fortnightly Grassroots Gathering, to meet and share asks/offers with VCFSE groups or to engage with collaboration groups including:

- Food Solutions Network
- Economic Support Network
- Women's Services Forum
- Disability Forum
- Inclusive Messaging Group
- Digitech Library

Visit Action Together's website and [Register to attend a meeting here](#)

The next Equalities Assembly will be held in February 2021.

Read previous reports:

[Equalities Assembly #1](#)

[Equalities Assembly #1 'Continuing the Conversation'](#)

[EA#2 Full Conversation Capture notes](#)



For questions and reflections

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Kerry Bertram
Strategic Locality Lead, Action Together
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Conversation Hosts - online

[Disability Forum](#)
[Rochdale in Rainbows](#)
[Digitech Library](#)
[Rochdale Youth Parliament](#)
[Councillor Sameena Zaheer](#)
[Elephant Trail](#)
[HMR Circle](#)
[Healthwatch Rochdale](#)
[Caring and Sharing Rochdale](#)
[Nigeria Community Association](#)
[Turning Point](#)
[Action Together](#)

