## A Year of Progress at Brighter Places

As we come to the end of 2025/26 we're taking a moment to look back at the progress we've made as an organisation deeply committed to inclusion and equity. We're also looking ahead to the next steps on our journey.

During 2025/26 colleagues and customers have helped shape meaningful change across Brighter Places that has strengthened our culture and improved how deliver services.

**Building an inclusive culture**

Our latest cultural review showed that colleagues most commonly describe Brighter Places as inclusive, friendly and supportive. Seeing "inclusive" come through more than any other word highlights the positive shift we've been working towards

This year we:

- delivered anti-racism and bias training to all colleagues
- expanded our lived experience learning programme, including a dedicated menopause session
- celebrated a wide range of cultural and awareness events to help build connection and understanding
- strengthened our specialist response to hate crime to better support customers
- successfully piloted inclusive service design tools
- enhanced colleague voice and made sure leaders listen and act on feedback
- improved outcomes for customers across several key service areas
- saw a rise in customer scores around being treated fairly and with respect and being kept informed
- now hold EDI data for 78% of customer that helps us make better decisions and shape improvements in areas such as damp and mould prioritisation, safeguarding reviews and communication.

- **Key Performance Highlights**
- Workforce diversity reached 61%, with leadership diversity at 56% — both above target
- Engagement with equal opportunities rose to 85%
- Gender pay gap (16.2%) and disability representation (14.8%) remain priority areas, with positive movement this year
- customer feedback around fairness, respect and communication continued to strengthen
- customer EDI data (78%) now drives service design and risk management
- inclusive service design tools are ready to roll out across the organisation in 2026/27

**Looking Ahead to 2026/27**

As we move into the year ahead, we'll continue to embed equity, diversity and inclusion into everything we do ensuring Brighter Places remains a place where everyone feels valued, respected and heard.

We will

- Embed inclusive service design across all directorates
- Strengthen community relationships and partnerships
- Continue to expand our lived-experience learning programme
- Developa shared understanding of what "equal opportunities" means across Brighter Places
- Keep colleague and customer voice at the heart of how we work

Next year is about building on the momentum we've created and continuing to make Brighter Places a place where everyone belongs and can thrive.