

Brighton & Hove City Council Third Sector Prospectus 2025-29

Communities Engagement Report

Period of Reporting: 1 st April 2025-31 st March 2026		Report Deadline: 15 th April
Lead contact for this report	Vikki Gimson	
Partners involved in this delivery	Sussex Interpreting Services	
Staffing directly funded by this grant (list posts and number of hours for each post)		Project Manager 1.5 hrs/wk Project Co-ordinator 4 hrs/wk
Contracted self-employed staff		Bilingual Community Researchers 0.75 hrs/wk
Total volunteer hours contributed during the reporting year to this project. Please include Trustee time based on proportion of project v. total organisational budget		Trustees; insignificant Linguists; 14 hrs Community Members; 10 hrs - 5 x Portuguese speakers 10 hrs - 5 x Turkish speakers 4 hrs - 2 x Arabic speakers
Community(ies) of Identity report covers (please tick all relevant boxes) ☐ Black and racially minoritised yes ☐ Gypsy, Roma, Traveller ☐ Disabled ☐ Learning Disability ☐ Carers ☐ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex ☐ Autistic People ☐ Women yes		

Please provide some narrative information in response to the following questions. This will be included in the annual reporting to our commissioners.

1) Please highlight any positive impacts (service responses or changed/ new delivery) resulting from your engagement. Please include a photo and quote if available. (250 wds max)

TCIF funds the Community Voices Group which is led by Bridging Change – their report will specify the direct impact of CVG on policy and practice in BHCC and NHS services.

SIS has focussed on bringing the voices of people with language needs into the CVG. As result of our involvement we have been able to amplify their voices further than previously imagined, particular within maternity services. CVG explored this topic in 2024-25 and as a result were invited to support our Service Users (SUs) at 3 additional participatory events that they would otherwise have been excluded from.

- **Sussex Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership – Listening Event** (Nov 2025), 15 SUs from 3 language communities were able to share their experience of maternity care at Brighton & Sussex University Hospital Trust
- **Sussex Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership – Involvement Event** (Mar 2026), 25 SUs from 4 language communities helped co-design potential solutions to issues identified in the previous event
- **Independent National Maternity and Neonatal Investigation – Family Panel** (Feb 2026), SIS used its CVG tested methodologies and trusted community relationships to reach people the National Panel had been unable to engage with through their offer of interpreting support alone. 20 SUs from 4 language communities made a significant contribution by filling a key gap in evidence. This was especially important given the well documented, poorer maternity outcomes experienced by women from racially minoritised communities.

2) Please highlight any engagement you carried out at a neighbourhood, or intersectional, level with partners. (200 wds max)

SIS delivered a briefing to TCIP partners aimed to empower attendees with knowledge, confidence and tools to make the delivery of their services more accessible for Refugees, Asylum-seekers and Migrants, and support effective culturally appropriate and trauma informed engagement. Feedback from the session was very positive.

“Thank you for delivering the session - your knowledge, experience of working with RAM communities and compassionate person-centred approach really came through”

“I thought the point about community interpreters not directly translating but interpreting in a way that is understandable to service user was insightful”

We have gone on to offer and/or provide more bespoke consultation support for various BHCC departments and commissioned services. However, lack of resources has not enabled any of these ideas to be realised;

- Family Hubs to improve accessibility of their Cost of Living community advice sessions
- Outdoor Events team to improve accessibility of their community meetings
- Public Health to source and promote translated information about flu vaccines
- One Voice Partnership to suggest translation of information about terror incidents and staying safe
- Sussex Resilience Forum to make the Community Resilience Campaign resources more accessible

3) Please tell us about any challenges or learning you have experienced. (150 wds max)

One of the primary challenges is engaging communities during a period of heightened national and local anti-migrant rhetoric, often compounded by previous negative experiences with public services. This requires additional time, care and relationship-building to reassure participants.

Designing engagement that is both meaningful for the council and accessible for participants is an ongoing challenge. While the CVG has expressed interest in many topics, those selected are often complex and multifaceted, requiring careful framing to ensure discussions are accessible without creating unrealistic expectations about possible outcomes.

Limited budget and capacity necessitated difficult prioritisation e.g. reducing the number of topics explored, restricting each topic to a single language community, and limiting participant numbers. Financial constraints can also restrict outcomes; for example, the work on racism in schools informed draft guidance for parents and schools, resources which are unlikely to be translated into community languages, despite significant community input.

Many participants expressed a desire to remain involved beyond a single activity. This highlighted the importance of building clearer progression for sustained involvement rather than one-off consultation.

4) Please include a case study demonstrating the impact of your engagement on the council's priorities [A better Brighton & Hove for all - the council's new plan for the city](#), and please include a photo and quote if available. (500 wds max)

TCIF is an integral part of SIS engagement strategy. It enables us to invite our Service Users, who are members of the Refugee, Asylum Seeking and Migrant Communities, to engage with public services in a non-judgemental, safe, respectful, space. By using Bilingual Community Researchers, who have a shared lived experience of migration journeys and cultural background, we can ensure all activity is fully accessible, culturally rooted and language supported allowing participants to contribute with confidence and authenticity, deepening trust and improving the quality of insight gathered.

Through our database of over **5,000 service users**, we are able to target invitations carefully so that topics feel relevant and meaningful to individuals, supporting higher-quality engagement and more honest dialogue.

Our work has enabled BHCC to demonstrate a high level of cultural sensitivity helping to validate the City of Sanctuary status and contribute to BHCCs intention of becoming a "Local Authority of Sanctuary". This has been particularly important in 2025-26 when, both nationally and locally, there has been an increase in anti-migrant rhetoric and actions such as the "raising the colours" flag campaign.

"This project showed our voices and ideas are valued"

Our Service Users have really appreciated the opportunities SIS has presented to them through TCIF and other engagement, research and participation initiatives.

"It was great to be able to speak out through the support of a bilingual researcher, since we have felt silenced by the system due to culture and language barriers."

Many have expressed an interest in maintaining their involvement.

"I would like to do something like this again, please let me know if you have other activities in the future"

Beyond informing council priorities, it has been particularly gratifying to observe the significant personal impact on Service Users gaining in confidence and becoming less socially isolated as a result of their participation – swapping contact details with other attendees, arranging to meet up and planning social events together. This has demonstrated that participation has social value beyond consultation.

"This was my first time doing a group activity. Thank you for inviting me because I don't go anywhere. At first I was nervous, but I found it much easier than expected, we laughed a lot."

"It felt meaningful to connect with other women, especially when we realised we had similar life experiences."

TCIF, and the Inclusive Communities Partnership that preceded it, directly supports *A Better Brighton & Hove for All* by:

- Promoting equity, inclusion and belonging
- Strengthening trust between communities and public services
- Ensuring lived experience shapes decision-making

TCIF has also enabled SIS to collaborate more extensively with partners across the city , including **Climate for Communities, Research Engagement Network and UOk** contributing to a more joined-up, community-led approach to the council's priorities.