

Local Government Training Programme

Impact & Monitoring Report –
1st Cohort

March 2026



Introduction

Social Equity Centre (SEC) exists to increase representation of first-generation migrants in local government and the wider public sector by building a future where migrants can lead and drive change in their communities. By investing in this vision, we aim to create a more inclusive and equitable local government where everyone, regardless of their background can contribute and shape the policies that affect them.

In September 2025 we launched our first Local Government Training Programme, a flagship initiative whose objective is to equip 10 first-generation migrants living in London with the knowledge, skills and confidence to apply for opportunities in local government. The programme is accredited by Skills and Education Group Awards and BIIAB.

Over October and November 2025, the 10 participants selected to take part in the training programme joined engaging workshops – some in-person and some online and an in-person graduation event – covering important topics that shine a light on what it's really like to work in local government.

We were delighted to see the high interest in the programme that reflected in us receiving over 90 applications.

This report covers the key takeaways of the programme, the participants and recommendations for future programmes.

The SEC team will be looking to recruit for the next Local Government Training Programme cohort in Autumn 2026, increasing the number of participants from 10 to 15 to meet the demand. All the relevant materials and information will be available on our website at:

<https://www.socialequity.org.uk/training>



Background

Local government offers many exciting career opportunities, with paths for promotion and diverse job roles and professions to choose from. Working in local government means you can make a real difference in your community.

However, the UK public sector workforces do not always reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. Notably, first-generation migrants are significantly under-represented in decision-making spaces such as local government, and face challenges in accessing roles in the sector and having their voices heard.

Our report: [*Migrant Representation in UK Local Government Workforces: Advancing Justice and Participation for Equitable Governance*](#) revealed that:

75% of migrants respondents to our research survey have never met a council employee from the same background as themselves.

This absence of representation reinforces structural exclusion, weakens public trust and deprives institutions of valuable skills, cultural insights, and lived experience. It also limits access to accurate information about employment pathways.

Migrants bring valuable cultural knowledge, multilingual skills, and cross-cultural navigation abilities—assets that could strengthen community engagement, policy design, and service delivery. At SEC, we believe these skills should be recognised and celebrated.

The Local Government Training Programme

The training programme is designed for first-generation migrants to the UK and is funded through a 3-year grant that we secured from Paul Hamlyn Foundation, therefore free for participants to take part in. Due to limited resources and the need for learners to cover their own travel expenses to attend the in-person workshops and the graduation event, an executive decision was made to offer the training to London based candidates only for this cohort. Despite this, we received enquiries from migrants based outside London with a view to attend future trainings, once we have secured more funding.

The programme covered a wide range of workshops and focused on developing knowledge, practical and transferable skills that migrants can use when applying for opportunities in local government. Each workshop was delivered by the SEC team who are specialists in their respective areas of expertise and have relevant lived experience.

Workshop sessions outline:

Workshop	Type of workshop	Trainer
UK Politics	In-person	Teo Benea
Understanding Local Government	Online (Zoom)	Dr. David Tross
England's Approach to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (1)	Online (Zoom)	Teresa Norman
England's Approach to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (2)	Online (Zoom)	Teresa Norman
Applying for Jobs in the Public Sector	In-person	Adina Maglan
Graduation Event	In-person	All trainers

The Recruitment Process

The recruitment for the programme started in September 2025, details of which were shared across SEC social media pages (LinkedIn, Bluesky and Facebook), the migration sector and local councils.

We received **94 applications for the 10 places available** which shows the huge interest of first-generation migrants to work in local government. Following the selection process, eligible candidates were selected to join the training programme which started in October 2025.

As part of the recruitment process, applicants were asked to commit to [SEC's Values](#) to create a world where first-generation migrants are fairly and proportionately represented across the public sector and where public sector workforces reflect the diversity and demographics of their communities.

Application questions included: previous engagement with their local council or local councillor; existing knowledge on the local council's functions; motivation/reasons for participating in the training programme; past involvement in any community work; confidence levels for applying for a local government job and how they intend to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the training.

Organisations advocating for migrants in the sector have been instrumental in promoting and supporting the programme which has been reflected in the high number of applications received. They express their strong support to see the programme continue.

The participants



The applications we received came from migrants from diverse backgrounds and the 10 first-generation migrants who successfully completed the programme came from a wide range of countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa who now reside in London.

Workshops



The sessions were interactive and encouraged participants to engage through analysing case studies, sharing their experiences, testing the knowledge they've gained through quizzes and provided them with useful tips on how to make their job applications stand out.

A Resource Pack has also been produced to support participants in exploring the training's topics in greater depth which was shared with them at the start of the programme. After each workshop the workshop slides were shared with participants as well as a feedback form.

SEC trainers



The trainers on the programme have a wide and diverse range of expertise.

Teo Benea – CEO & Co-founder of SEC and Local councillor in Brent

Adina Maglan – Executive Director & Co-founder of SEC and PhD candidate at Bournemouth University

Dr David Tross – Consultant at SEC and Professor at Birkbeck University

Teresa Norman – Director of SEC and Diversity Consultant



Wonderful, encouraging and inspiring sessions with knowledgeable instructors. It's especially great to see such a positive atmosphere in the group where both instructors and peers encourage each other. Only massively positive and useful experience.



Thank you so much for creating this learning space for us. The trainers and the organisers are excellent, and they have created a very comfortable environment for us to learn.



I really liked the speakers who were present throughout the entire training. There was a huge amount of information that still needs to be processed and absorbed. It might be useful to include some more practical cases and work on solutions for these cases, either in groups or individually.



Graduation Event

At the end of the programme, a graduation event was hosted at Brent Civic Centre at the end of November to hand out the certificates to participants and celebrate this important milestone with them. The event started with opening remarks from Teo Benea, the CEO of Social Equity Centre welcoming people to the event and providing an overview of the programme. This was followed by Teo introducing **Cllr Muhammed Butt**, The Leader of Brent Council who delivered a speech on the importance of local government reflecting its communities and encourage participants who took part in the programme to apply for roles with local councils. Adina Maglan, the Executive Director then chaired a panel discussion where **Eric Sterling (CEO of Sterling Academy Youth)**, **Lukasz Konieczka (EDI Consultant) & Agnieszka Spruds (Strategy Lead – Policy at Brent Council)** shared their experiences and tips of working in local government, civil service and engaging with different layers of government. The evening culminated in a joyful graduation ceremony, where Teresa Norman, Director of SEC shared her reflections on the programme, presented the certificates to participants and warmly congratulated them for completing the programme. The evening ended with a networking reception.





1-2-1 Support sessions with participants

Following the completion of the training programme the participants were also offered one-to-one sessions to support them with their job applications in local government. Slots were offered to participants in March and April.



Evaluation

The Local Government Training Programme was a transformative learning experience for participants. They all expressed how grateful they were to take part in the programme and how much this has contributed to increasing their knowledge in understanding the different functions of local government, the UK political landscape as well as finding out about the job opportunities available in local councils and the importance of EDI.



Excellent programme structure. The information pack and list of links provided ahead of the start were very useful. The course was well organised, and it's impressive that it was accredited.



Thank you so much for the opportunity. It was a truly wonderfully pleasant learning experience. The only suggestion I had has already been taken care of creating a way for graduates to stay connected with each other and with SEC. Keeping my fingers cross for the Alumni network.



The workshops were well-structured and delivered at a good pace, making it easy to stay engaged throughout. I appreciated the balance between theory and practical examples, which helped connect the concepts to real workplace situations.



The way the training was facilitated was really enjoyable, reflective and interactive. ❤️



I appreciate the welcoming atmosphere and the efficient, clear explanations. The content was delivered effectively, striking an excellent balance between being thorough and concise.

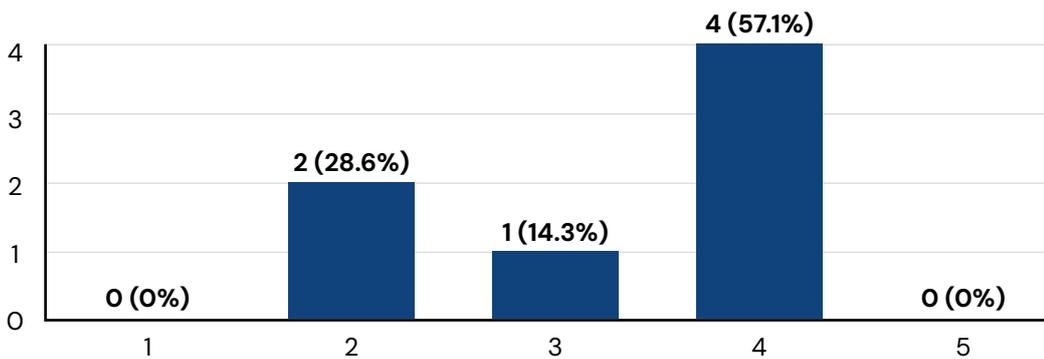


It has been an amazing experience for me! I am so glad I decided to apply for this programme and so grateful that my application was successful! Thanks to this programme I am more confident about engaging or working in local government. From my view I would recommend that the length of the programme to be a bit longer and cover and a session with actual politics topics. Thank you!"

The participants

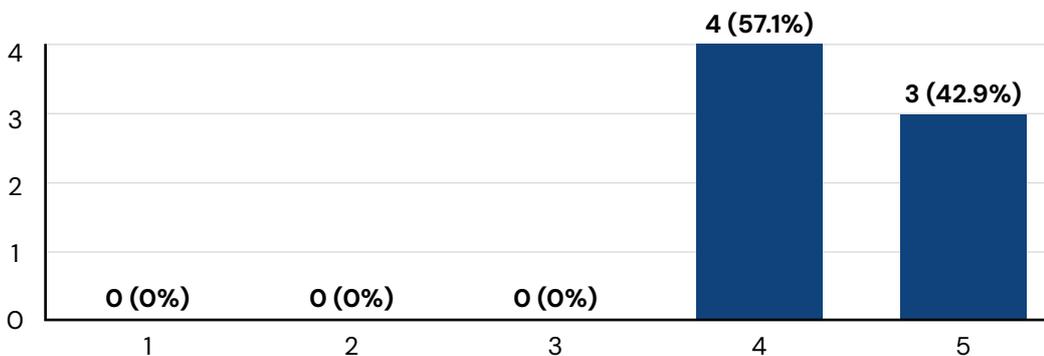
On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your understanding of local government, UK politics, diversity and inclusion, and public sector career pathways before taking part in the programme?

7 responses

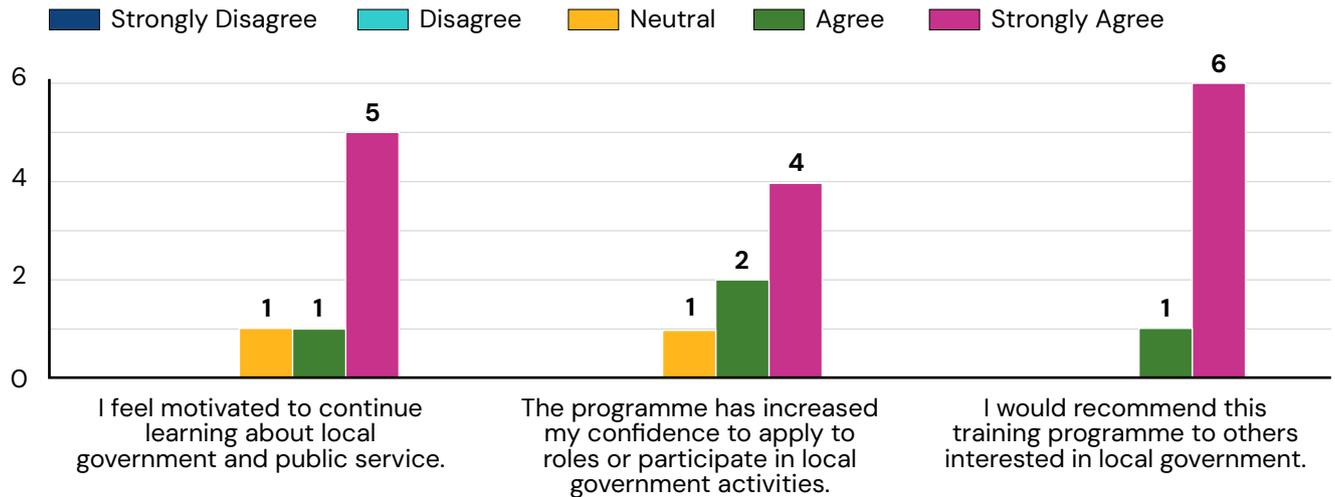


On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your overall understanding of local government, UK politics, diversity and inclusion and public sector opportunities after completing the programme? (1 very low – 5 very high)

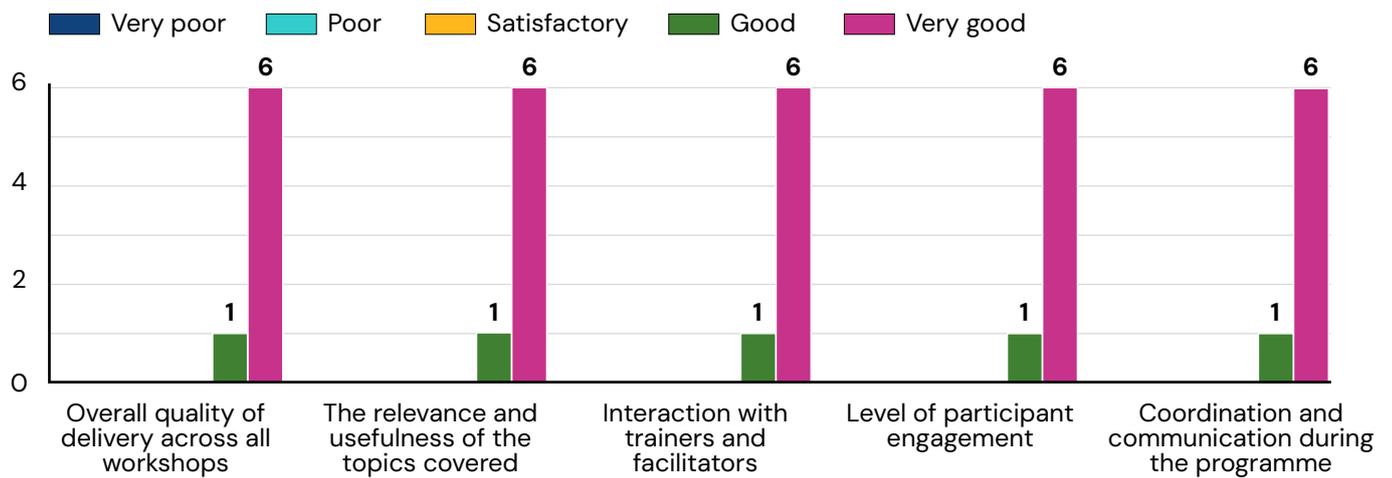
7 responses



Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

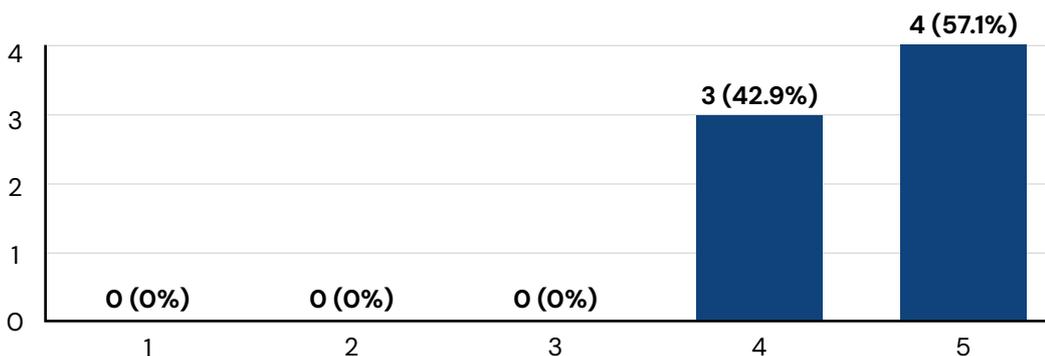


How would you rate the following aspects of the overall training programme?



To what extent did the group discussions, quizzes and interactive exercises across the programme help reinforce your learning? (1 very low – 5 very high)

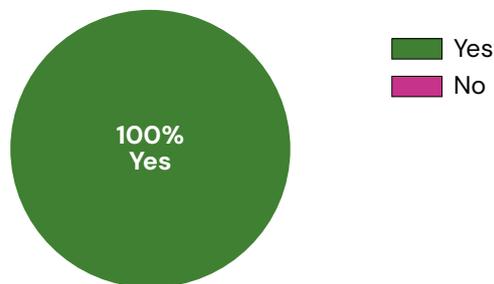
7 responses



We are exploring the idea of creating an alumni network to support continued learning, networking and collaboration among participants with regular catch-ups every 2-3 months over Zoom.

Would you be interested in joining a Local Government Training Programme – Alumni Network to stay connected, share opportunities and continue learning?

7 responses

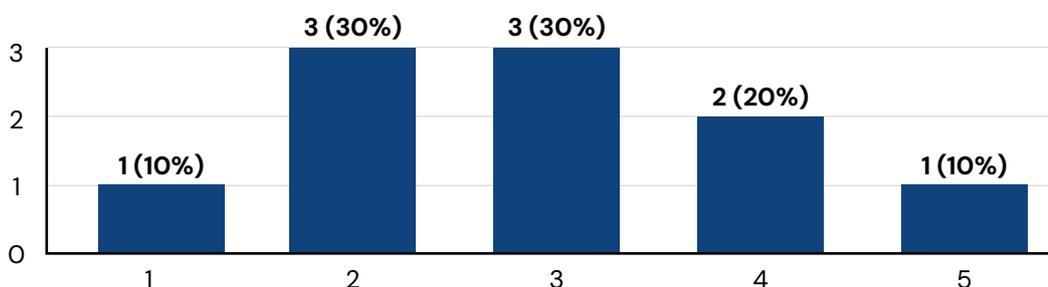


Participants were also asked questions regarding the individual workshops to encourage honesty and constructive feedback about the topics covered during the training. Below we have mentioned the most relevant feedback based on their responses to each workshop.

UK Politics Workshop

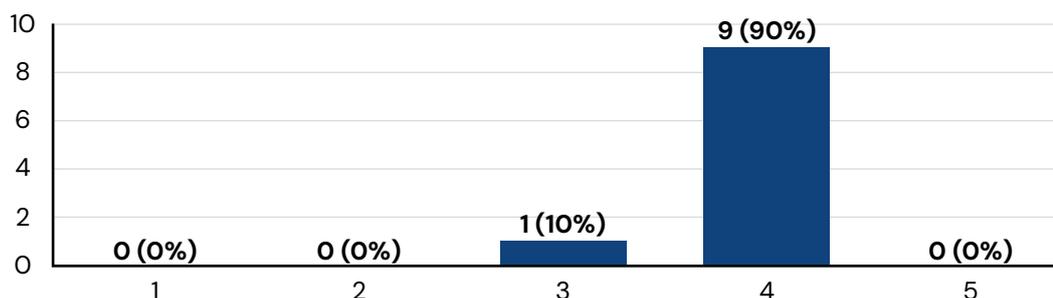
On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your understanding of UK Politics before the workshop? (1 very low – 5 very high)

10 responses



On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate your understanding of UK Politics after the workshop? (1 very low – 5 very high)

10 responses





It was useful for me to learn about political parties in the UK. It was also very informative to understand the difference between a Local Councillor and a Council Officer. It was good to work in a group where people had different kinds of knowledge, and as a team, we could share this knowledge with each other.



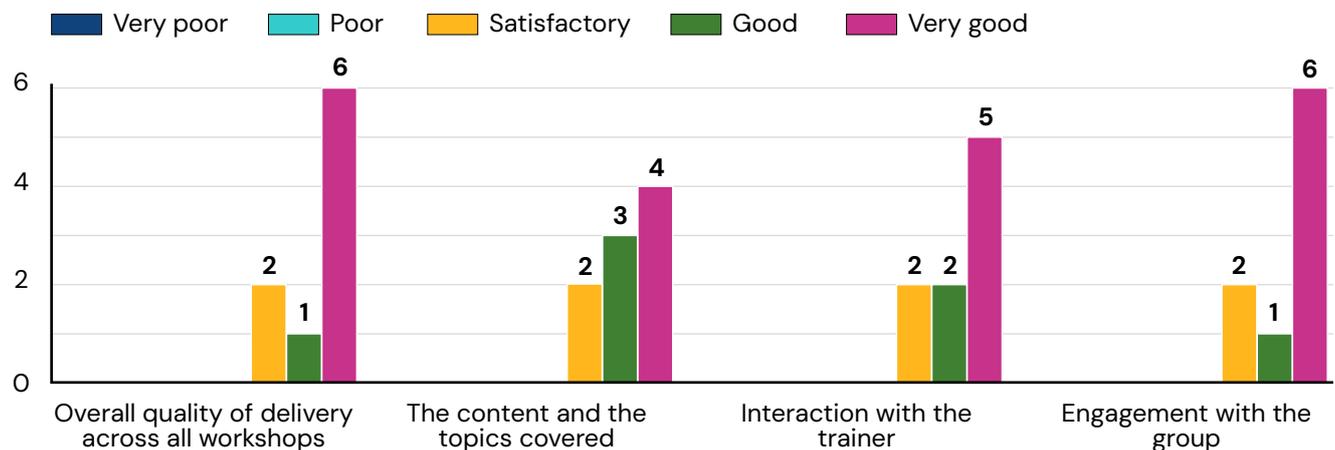
Main differences between local councillors and council officers” I liked this material because it clearly explained the different roles of local councillors and council officers. It helped me understand how local government works in practice. 2. The challenges and opportunities in local government. I liked this material because it showed real challenges that local governments face, such as limited budgets and growing public needs. It also highlighted the opportunities to make a real difference in local communities.



Thank you for delivering such an engaging and informative workshop on UK politics. I really enjoyed it and came away with a much clearer understanding of topics like the difference between councillors and council officers. The organization was excellent, and the pre-session materials were very helpful. I especially appreciated the interactive group quiz at the end; it was a fun and effective way to reinforce what we learned. Overall, a fantastic session. I'd be glad to attend more workshops like this in the future!”

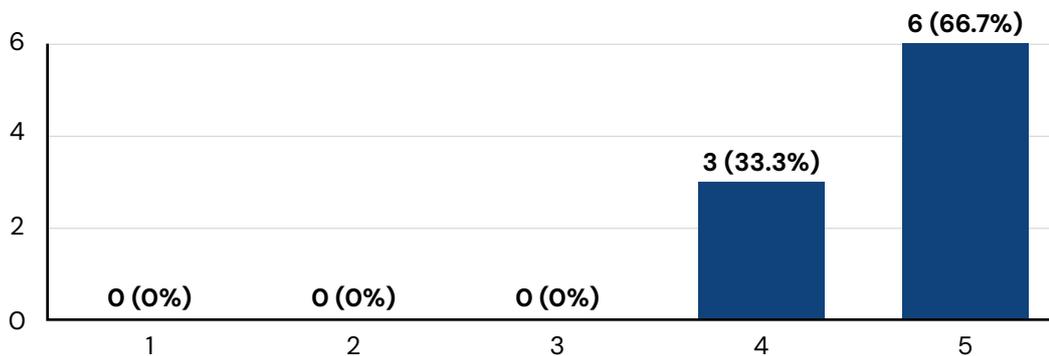
Understanding Local Government Workshop

How would you rate the following aspects of Understanding Local Government workshop?



To what extent did the quiz and community engagement exercise help consolidate your knowledge in an engaging way? (1 very low – 5 very high)

9 responses



The whole workshop was very interesting and engaging. The slides supported the content very well and were very helpful in giving a clear view how local government works. Also, I found very positive the group discussions as it encouraged more participation and made us put in the practice the knowledge we received from the session!



It was interesting to know structure and responsibilities of Local Government.



I enjoyed the group discussion and scenario quiz given to us more.

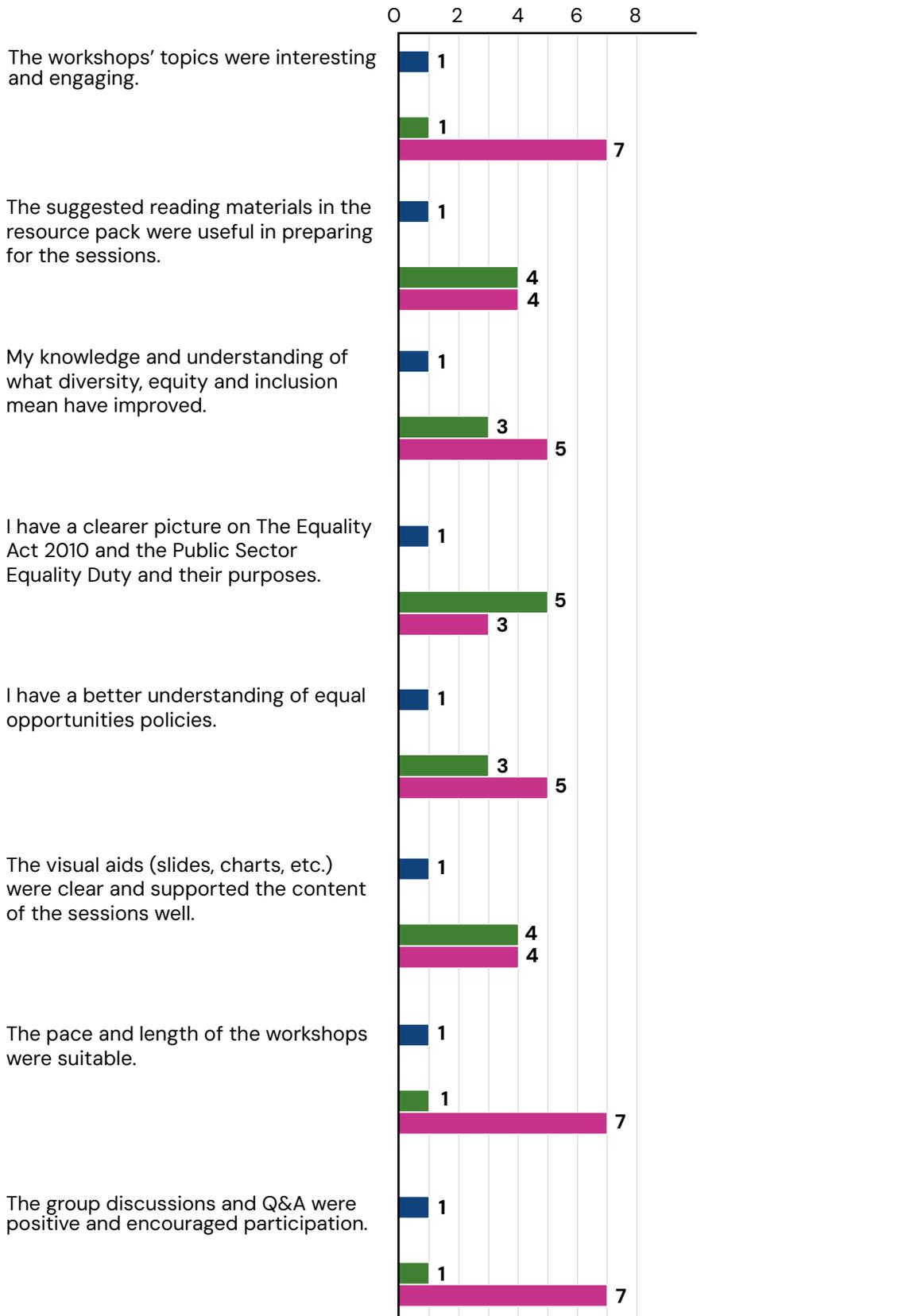


The community engagement exercise, was enjoyable, I find it very interactive and reflective.

England's Approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workshops

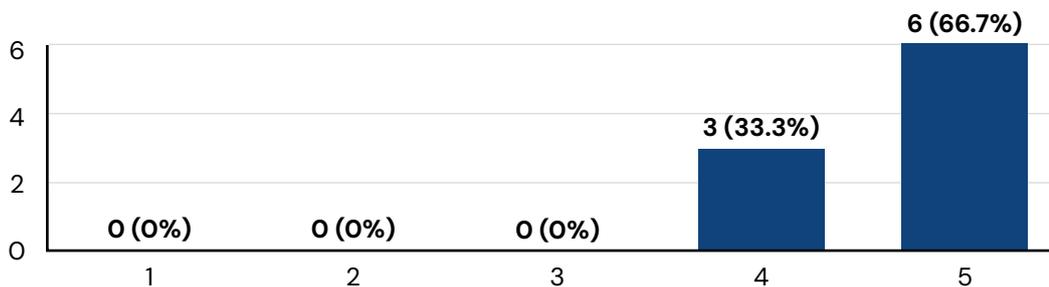
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

■ Strongly Disagree
 ■ Disagree
 ■ Neutral
 ■ Agree
 ■ Strongly Agree



To what extent did the exercises and quiz help consolidate your knowledge in an engaging way? (1 very low – 5 very high)

9 responses



I enjoyed the interactive group activities because they encouraged discussion, allowed us to hear different perspectives, and made the learning more engaging than simply listening. The workshops created a safe space where everyone felt comfortable sharing their experiences. This openness helped build trust and gave me insight into challenges others face.



The group sessions, listening to other people's stories and sharing my own and feeling heard. Also about cultural sensitivity.

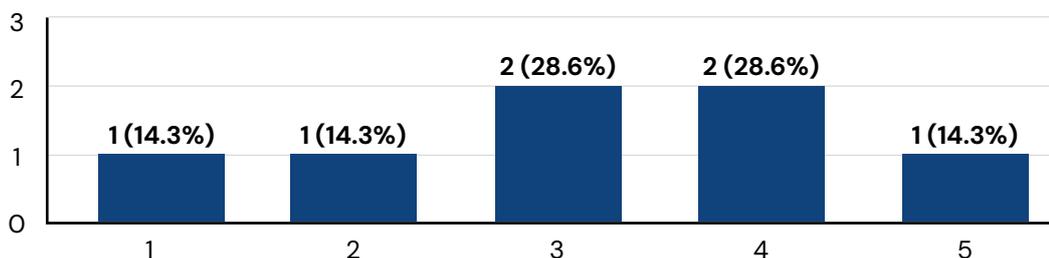


The language used is easy for everyone.

Applying for jobs in the Public Sector Workshop

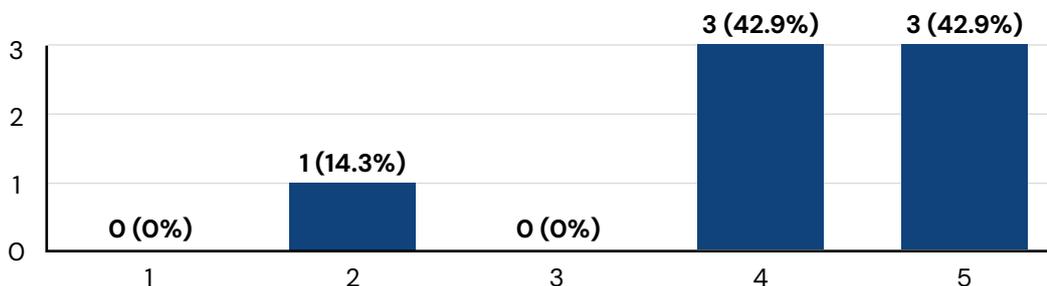
On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your understanding of the process of applying for jobs in the public sector before the workshop? (1 very low – 5 very high)

7 responses



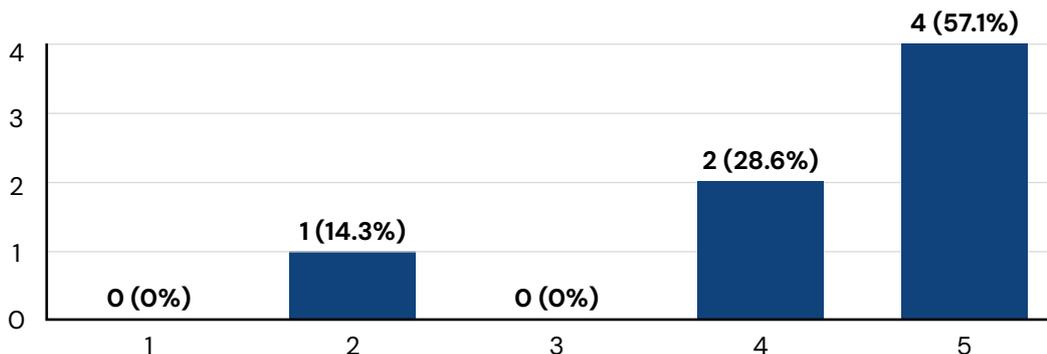
On a scale of 1–5, how would you rate your understanding of the process of applying for jobs in the public sector after the workshop? (1 very low – 5 very high)

7 responses



To what extent did the exercises and tips on making strong applications help build your knowledge and confidence to apply for opportunities in local government? (1 very low – 5 very high)

7 responses



During this workshop, I learned several important nuances to consider when preparing a CV, including how to tailor it to a specific position. It was also valuable to hear that one should always make the effort and not hesitate if they truly want to get particular job.



I loved the whole group vibe! The atmosphere was really welcoming, and it felt great to see everyone getting involved and engaging with each other. It made the workshop feel much more interactive and enjoyable rather than just sitting and listening.



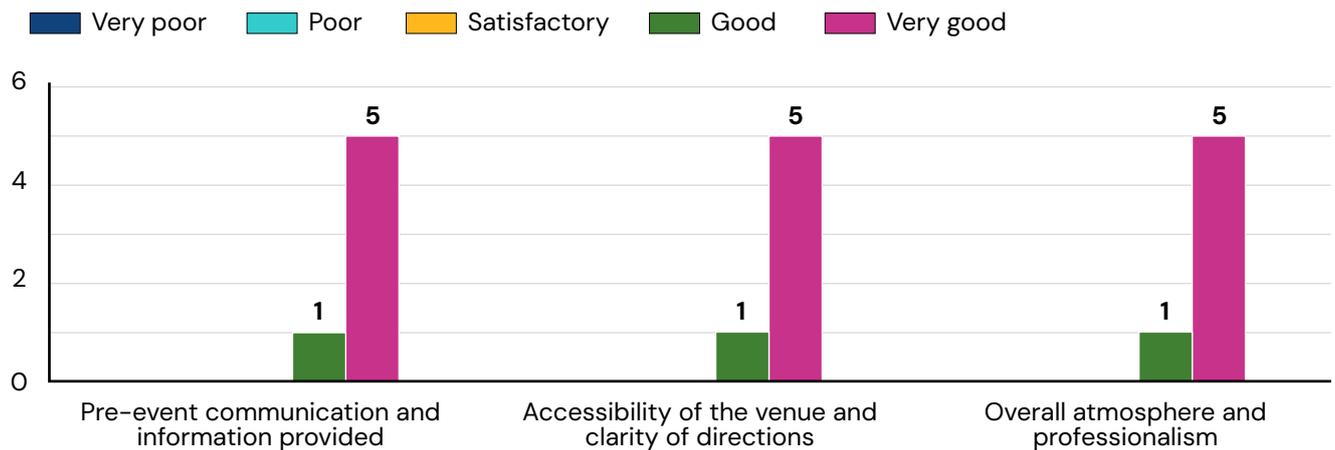
I think it would be beneficial if the workshop could be structured as a regular course, perhaps meeting once or twice a week over a one-month period. This would allow participants to absorb the information better and put what we learn into practice between sessions. I'd also suggest focusing more on practical, hands-on aspects like identifying which positions we're best suited for, navigating the most effective job websites and portals, and learning specific application techniques. Having that structured timeline and practical focus would really help us apply these skills while the knowledge is still fresh.



This workshop was really important. It showed that we need more confidence and should not doubt our desire to get the job and make meaningful contributions. There are many details to consider when preparing a CV and looking for the key tasks in a job description. Everything was quite clear, and now just need practice.

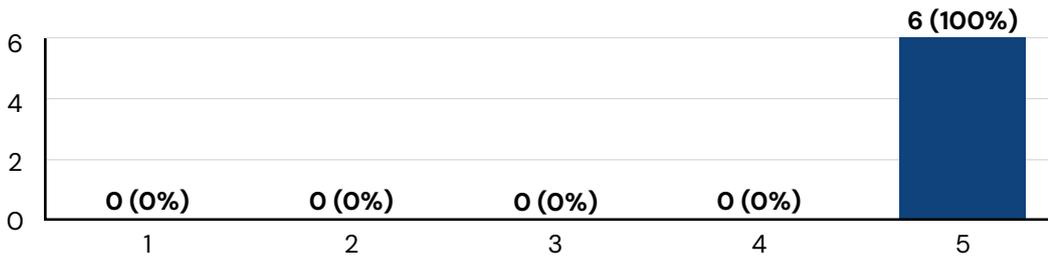
Graduation Event

How would you rate the following aspects of event organisation?

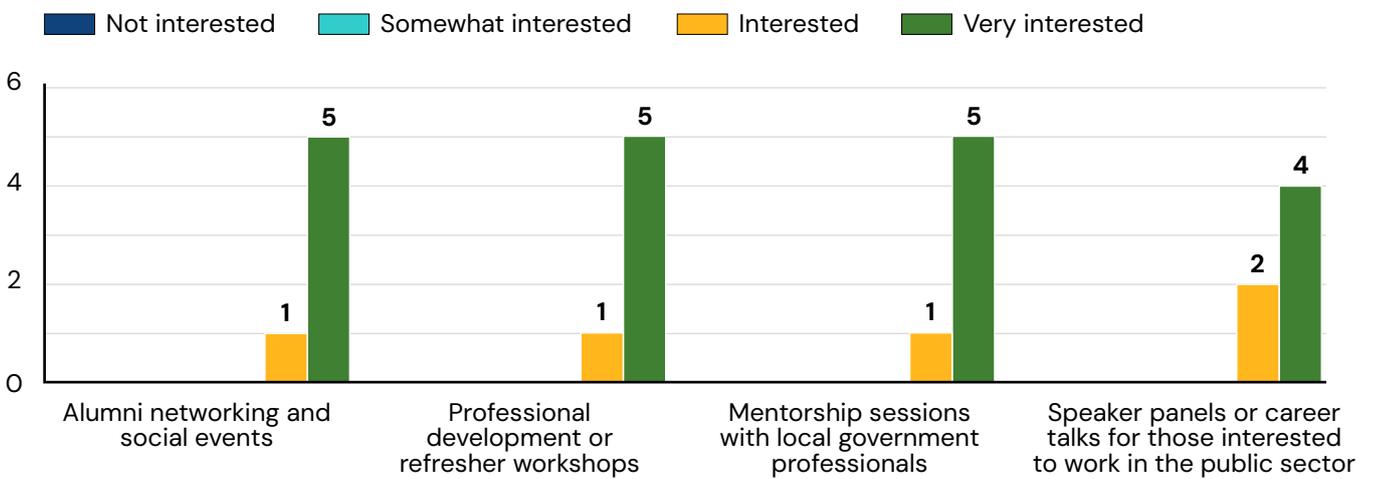


On a scale of 1–5 how valuable did you find the networking for meeting speakers and local government and public sector representatives? (1 not valuable – 5 very valuable)

6 responses



Please indicate your level of interest in attending the following in the future.



I think the structure of the event was very successful. It was an opportunity to feel the connection between the leadership and the community. I felt involved in the development of the community.



The whole event went amazing overall and I really enjoyed it! I found very inspiring the speech of the Brent councillor, and the panel discussion too. With their stories, they gave me courage and motivation that I do have hopes as well to work one day in council or be a councillor.



I found the networking opportunities very valuable, especially the chance to meet the speakers as well as local government and public sector representatives. It was a meaningful experience that allowed me to gain useful insights.

Impact & Monitoring

The Training Programme proved to be a much-needed initiative for first-generation migrants living in London. The demand from applicants residing outside London also demonstrates national interest in this type of training for careers in local government.

As confirmed by feedback above, participants found the training and its content valuable, accessible, and interactive. They also found communication with the SEC team via WhatsApp and email to be accessible and effective.

The quizzes and different exercises testing their knowledge and stimulating meaningful conversations amongst participants were also welcomed.

Support from the SEC team will continue beyond the completion of the training through one-to-one sessions which will help participants to apply for roles in local government. Following the training, all participants have reported that they feel more confident to apply for jobs in the sector and they intend to contact us for guidance and support once suitable roles become available.

There is a demand for creating an Alumni Network to support continued learning, networking and collaboration among participants with regular meetings every 2-3 months over Zoom. The feedback from participants was unanimously that they would really welcome this opportunity and SEC is looking to secure funding to make this a reality.

Monitoring showed that in under three months from graduating, all course participants have searched for jobs in local government. 80% have identified suitable jobs that matched their skills and experience. Some participants have also submitted applications, with one already attending an interview for a refugee support service in a local council. Unfortunately, due to the high interest in the role with a high number of applications being received, they were not offered the role as other applicants had more relevant experience. However, this outcome was very encouraging, and it is testimony to the valuable skills and expertise the migrant graduates hold.

To further support the graduates who may struggle to submit applications, the SEC team is offering online one-to-one sessions in March and April which participants can book to receive tailored advice and support.

Next Steps

As part of the feedback process for the overall training programme and individual workshops, participants were encouraged to share their suggestions for improving the programme. Based on this input, the SEC team is committed to incorporating these in future programmes and enhance the quality of these through the following recommendations:

Increase the number of sessions: add more sessions focused on the UK political landscape to provide more clarity on how this impacts local government and also more sessions on where to find jobs in local government and how to apply effectively for these.

Increase the number of participants: due to the high demand look to increase the selected participants from 10 to 15 for future programmes

More hands-on, practical sessions: have sessions focused on identifying positions in local government, navigating the most effective job websites and portals and learning specific techniques. These sessions to include more real-life scenarios and mock interview exercises.

Interactive sessions: continue having interactive sessions which foster meaningful interactions and conversations providing a safe and welcoming environment for participants where quizzes, group exercises, case studies, real-life examples are included.

Alumni Network: create an alumni network to foster continued learning, networking and collaboration among participants through regular online catch-ups.

Mentors & Speakers: identify first-generation migrants already working in local government to mentor future participants or join the training sessions as speakers to share their experience and journeys.

Programme expansion outside London: consider conducting the training and offer the opportunity to migrants living outside London when future funding is secured.

These recommendations aim to improve and enhance the quality of future programmes and provide the right support for first-generation migrants who want to find a job in local government.

Conclusion

The first Local Government Training Programme delivered by SEC is a flagship initiative that aimed to equip 10 first-generation migrants with the knowledge, skills and confidence to apply for opportunities in local government.

Significantly oversubscribed, the programme highlighted a strong appetite among migrants to contribute to public service and to play an active role in shaping their communities.

Participant feedback reflected the high level of satisfaction with the quality, accessibility and delivery of the training as well as the safe, welcoming and interactive learning environment created by the SEC trainers. As well as this, all participants reported increased confidence in engaging and applying for opportunities in local government.

Recruitment for the second Local Government Training will start in the second half of 2026.

Overall, the Local Government Training Programme represents a vital step towards addressing under-representation in local government by removing some of the barriers faced by first-generation migrants applying for local government jobs, building confidence, and enhancing the valuable skills and lived-experience that they bring.

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