

Eliminate, Advance and Foster

Hertsmere Borough Council's response to the General Equality Duty 2021/22



Hertsmere is a mixed rural and urban district to the north of greater London. It has a mixed population of 107, 800 spread across the main settlements of Borehamwood, Bushey, Potters Bar, Radlett and the village of Shenley. Hertsmere is a relatively affluent area with low unemployment, good levels of education and a low crime rate. However, this hides significant inequalities between the wards.

Hertsmere Borough Council is committed to addressing equality and diversity, ensuring equality in all we do. Hertsmere is a diverse community and is home to a wide range of ethnic groups. It is the centre of Hertfordshire's Jewish community, who make up 17% of the population. Hertsmere also has a large Indian population and is home to the UK headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Bhaktivedanta Manor

Eliminating Discrimination

- Mandatory training to increase knowledge of equality and diversity; help improve interaction with service users and colleagues and make staff aware of obligations under the related legislation has taken place.
- Dignity at Work policy aims to develop a culture where bullying, harassment and victimisation are unacceptable and not tolerated in the workplace.
- We continue to work in partnership with Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Steering Group, towards the eradication of human trafficking and modern slavery.

Advancing Equality of Opportunity

- Hertsmere's municipal calendar is updated annually and meeting dates are set to avoid Jewish festivals as a large proportion of councillors, and the population of Hertsmere, are Jewish. Other religious festivals also avoided are Eid (Islam), Diwali (Hindu) and Christian festivals.
- We promote equality of opportunity for all by ensuring that all council employees receive pay for work of equal value. A copy of our equal pay statement can be found [here](#).
- We held *Generation Hertsmere*, which was an exciting event aimed at young people looking for a steer in their careers, to get insights and advice from well known employers and new start ups. The Forum of Faiths is a local group organised by faith leaders from different religions and supported by Hertsmere Borough Council, which has taken an active role in promoting interfaith relations and the understanding and tolerance of different beliefs. It provides a platform for faith communities in Hertsmere to have a meaningful voice in local policy-making. We host their meetings and annual events. The Forum of Faiths is represented on the board of our Local Strategic Partnership.
- We launched our successful Friday Night Project, which gives young people in Cowley Hill ward a safe place to hang out, be with friends and take part in sports and activities.

Fostering good relations

- As part of our community engagement work, we held a number of events in partnership with the Borehamwood Islamic Society including, Eid events, a Health Action Day, Bowling, vaccinations pop ups and ongoing gentle exercise.
- As part of our Community engagement work, we held a number of events in partnership with the Borehamwood and Elstree Synagogue including, the This Girl Can Festival, the Older Person's Advice, Learning and Safety event and a vaccination pop up.
- We have maintained our level of funding to the voluntary sector. Through our grants programme we have provided support to organisations, which reflect the growing diversity of the borough. This has included Spirit of Africa, which provided Black History Month workshops for children in Hertsmere, two local foodbanks and funding for the well-established Camp Unity, which brings together children from different religious and cultural backgrounds.
- We recognised Pride month, Black History Month and Armed Forces Day by holding respective flag raisings and ceremonies and we held a service to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.
- We launched our Back2Bowls project, at Aberford Bowling Green. The project, which is situated in the most deprived ward in Hertfordshire, provides a safe welcoming space for residents to take part in gentle physical activity.
- We worked in partnership with our faith and community sectors to deliver our summer meals project, which provided hot vegetarian meals to residents.