

# Eliminate, Advance and Foster

## Hertsmere Borough Council's response to the General Equality Duty 2019/20



Hertsmere is a mixed rural and urban district to the north of greater London. It has a mixed population of 104919<sup>1</sup>, 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 variations 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 14.3% 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](#).
- 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.

### Fostering good relations

- Cowley Hill ward in Borehamwood is one of the most deprived in Hertfordshire. It was agreed to appoint a qualified research and insight organisation to undertake a detailed study of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics, to establish the causes of deprivation and to make recommendations on how to address the challenges in the locality.
- Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2019-2023 was approved. The strategy includes measures to support vulnerable people and avoid homelessness, including rough sleepers, those with complex needs and victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery.
- Developed a Severe Weather Emergency policy (SWEP) with local organisations to safeguard those who regularly sleep round in the borough. This policy was activated twice when the temperature dipped below freezing.
- We have maintained our level of funding to the voluntary sector. Through our grants programme we have provided support to organisations delivering services for those with disabilities and promoting cultural cohesion. This included tennis coaching and fitness training in tennis for disabled people; two local foodbanks and a local dementia club received funding.
- The universal language of football brought together schoolchildren from primary schools across Hertsmere to learn more about different faiths at a special Diversity event organised by Arsenal Football Club.
- We recognised Armed Forces Day by holding a ceremony and we also held a service to mark Holocaust Day.

<sup>1</sup> Hertsinsight mid 2018 population estimate