



# Hertsmere Borough Council

## Eliminate, Advance and Foster

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(Hertsmere Borough Council's response to the General Equality Duty)

### Introduction

Hertsmere Borough Council is obliged to publish information to demonstrate compliance with the General Equality Duty across all our functions. Published information should include the effect our policies and practices have had on people with a protected characteristic including those within our workforce.

This information will be based on both quantitative and qualitative data that has been collected by Hertsmere and other partners.

The information we must publish is:

- Evidence of analysis undertaken
- Details of the information we have considered
- Details of engagement we undertook

This document was first published in January 2012 and has been refreshed and updated in accordance with the duty. This document contains a summary of the work Hertsmere Borough Council has been doing to comply with the General Equality Duty including a variety of new case studies, and, where possible, updated data to show this.

### Background

The Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. On 5 April 2011 the new Public Sector Equality Duty came into force to bring together the previous duties on race, disability and gender into a single duty and extending that duty to cover age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment.

The general duties in force require us, when exercising our functions, to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; promote equality of opportunity for all and foster good relations with individuals with protected characteristics.

The Equality Duty has three aims. It requires us to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- **Advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- **Foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decision reached by us – such as how we act as employers; how we develop, evaluate and review policy; how we design, deliver and evaluate services and how we commission and procure from others.

An updated Equality Policy has been developed in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The policy aims to ensure that Hertsmere Borough Council meets all the obligations placed on us by equality legislation. This policy was approved by the Executive in December 2011. A copy of the policy can found [here](#). This policy is currently being updated and will be published once approved.

Hertsmere Borough Council recognises the need to include all protected characteristics within this policy, to ensure a full commitment to promoting equality and diversity.

We are committed to integrating equality considerations into all our future strategies, policies and procedures

## **The Hertsmere Context**

Hertsmere's geographical location is to the north of Greater London. This has an impact on the local economy, as whilst it generates inward investment, it also places added pressure on our infrastructure. With three major roads (M1, M25, A1) and good rail links running through the borough, the population is very mobile and over 60% of residents commute to work outside the area.

The Council is part of a three-tiered political structure in Hertfordshire, with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) responsible for social care, education, waste disposal, highways etc. In addition to the district council, there are also town and parish councils in the borough.

The population estimate of the borough, based on the 2014 ONS mid year estimate is 102,400. The largest age group in Hertsmere is the 45-49 year olds at 7,700. This indicates a drop of 199 people when compared to the 2011 Census. The largest increase compared to the 2011 Census is 65-69 years olds which has risen from 4,475 to 5,300, a growth of 825 people. After Watford, Hertsmere is the most diverse district in Hertfordshire.

Hertsmere is also the centre of Hertfordshire's Jewish community - almost 67% (an increase of 7%) of the Jewish population live in the borough, making up 14.38% of the population; larger than that of all the London boroughs, except Barnet and Hackney according to the 2011 census. Hertsmere also has a large Indian population of 3,723

people, who mainly follow the Hindu faith and is home to the UK headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, Bhaktivedanta Manor.

Hertsmere is a relatively affluent area with low unemployment, good levels of education and a low crime rate. Key contributors to the area's economy include the concentration of the creative film industry in the borough, including the BBC Studios and the world renowned, Council owned, Elstree Studios. Unemployment based on the Job Seekers Allowance claims, has reduced from 2.3% in December 2012 to 1.8% in November 2013 and to 1.4% in November 2014. As at May 2016 the number of people claiming job seekers allowance has decreased to 0.9%. However, this hides significant variations between wards, with Borehamwood Cowley Hill having the 4<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment rate in the County. There are a number of localised pockets of deprivation in areas. The 2010 Census shows that Borehamwood Cowley Hill is highlighted as 27.61 households or over in poverty and Borehamwood Brookmeadow 22.01 – 27.6 households in poverty. Potters Bar Oakmere is also highlighted as 17.91-22 % of households are in poverty. This deprivation contrasts sharply with the equally concentrated areas of affluence that characterise other areas of the borough, particularly Radlett and Aldenham. Consequently, we are mindful of the diverse community we have in Hertsmere. It is anticipated that the Indices of Deprivation will be updated during 2014, as and when the information is available it will be included in this document.

Please see '[Knowing our community](#)' for detailed statistical information we currently hold on the new protected characteristics.

Most local residents agree their area is a place where different people from different backgrounds get on well together. According to the 2008 Place Survey, the percentage of residents who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area is 81%. A recent study by think tank Policy Exchange has identified Potters Bar as the fourth most integrated place in the UK and Bushey as the 7th. More information is available [here](#).

The 2014 Residents' Survey revealed that 70% of residents agree that Hertsmere Borough Council treats all people fairly, an increase of 5% from 2011.

The office for National Statistics undertook a detailed study on measuring national wellbeing in 2012/13. This showed that nine out of 10 Hertsmere residents were satisfied with the area as a place to live and satisfaction overall was on the increase in the borough. The study also showed levels of personal happiness across the UK. Hertsmere has the highest mean average in Hertfordshire for personal happiness. The study and results can be found [here](#).

## **Hertsmere Borough Council – Values and Priorities**

Hertsmere Borough Council is a public service organisation whose purpose is to deliver high quality, value for money services for our communities. Our vision, 'working with you, for you, improving our communities, our places' reflects our commitment to:

- Being an enterprising council
- Planning for the future
- Supporting our communities

Supporting the vision are our values which are:

- Being of service
- Value for money
- Integrity and openness
- Ensuring equality in all we do.

These are behaviours that are important to us, and which together with our business principles and performance improvement, provide a framework for our actions to support the vision. One of our core values is '**ensuring equality in all we do**' - we will value and listen to each other and understand and acknowledge the contributions our differences make.

We will continue to promote a cohesive community by supporting organisations such as the Forum of Faiths, which actively promotes tolerance and understanding. We will continue to celebrate our diverse communities through our support for activities and events such as Interfaith Week and Holocaust Memorial Day.

We recognise that there are many different communities within Hertsmere, from locality-based communities, faith communities, ethnic origin communities and business communities, to common-interest groups, and transient communities. We also recognise the key place shaping role that has been given to councils and councillors, and reflects the diverse places in our borough. Our towns, villages, neighbourhoods, buildings, parks and amenities all contribute to our unique sense of place.

The Community Strategy was approved in April 2013 and is currently under review. Our priorities are designed around our knowledge of our places and communities, the challenges and opportunities presented by wider national, regional and county agendas, and the feedback from local residents on issues that are important to them.

#### **Safer communities**

- To create safer environments by tackling crime (particularly dwelling burglary and vehicle crime), anti-social behaviour and alcohol-related disorder.
- To improve lives by reducing harm caused to communities by drugs.
- To reduce offending and manage offender behaviour.
- To build community confidence and increase feelings of safety.

#### **Thriving communities**

- To provide accessible opportunities to skills development and financial advice.
- To increase community involvement and cohesion so people feel empowered and that they belong.
- To enable people to take part in decision making processes, increasing pride in communities and assisting ideas to thrive.
- To support the development of volunteering, social enterprise and business opportunities
- To improve living conditions and sustain a vibrant environment, working locally with families in need.

#### **Healthier communities**

- To promote healthy weight and increase physical activity.
- To improve mental health and emotional wellbeing.
- To create a healthy culture across all services, all communities and all workplaces.

In 2014 we produced a Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Hertsmere. The following priorities were identified using the Health Profiles 2013 and 2014, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment as well as consultation with partners and residents.

- Increase physical activity and healthy eating
- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Reduce alcohol and drug related harm
- Increase numbers of people giving up smoking
- Reduce hip fractures and excess winter deaths

## Complying with the General Equality Duty

In October 2009, the council was recognised as an 'Achieving' authority following an assessment by the Improvement and Development Agency for local government. We aim to ensure that all our services are delivered on an equitable basis and take into account the needs of our local communities.

The Council's Equalities Policy 2011 provides all staff and members of the council, partner organisations and Hertsmere residents with a clear statement of the council's strategic direction on one of its key objectives to promote a cohesive community, to promote equality and diversity and eliminate discrimination in service delivery and employment. It makes clear the council's commitments in fulfilling its legal obligations to achieve equality of opportunity in the areas of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We published our [equality objectives](#) in April 2012 and continue to achieve these objectives.

Hertsmere Borough Council maintains the Local Joint Committee (LJC) which is made up of staff, Councillors and Union representatives to analyse and assess the impact of new policies and procedures on all staff.

Hertsmere is represented on various networks, i.e. Herts Diversity Network, Herts Equality Council, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT) Group and the Domestic Abuse Forum; this enables us to share and access information and good practice.

The Council continues to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects our local population. An equality monitoring survey was carried out in December 2016. Of the 113 responses received:

- The percentage of employees who have declared a disability was 2% (However, we are aware of more disabled employees due to making reasonable adjustments for them).
- The percentage of employees from ethnic minorities was 10%.
- 55% of employees are women.
- All of the council-owned buildings are accessible to people with a disability.

The increasing diversity of our workforce is also reflected in areas such as age, sexual orientation, marital status, social class, religion or belief. We recognise that the quality of the services provided to the people of Hertsmere depends to a large extent on the ability, motivation and effectiveness of the people employed to deliver those services. The Council

seeks to become and remain an “employer of choice” attracting the best range of candidates for any vacancies arising and retaining existing, valued staff wherever possible. [‘Knowing our Workforce’](#) shows in more detail Hertsmere Borough Council’s workforce profile as at December 2016.

In 2013 a new council tax benefit scheme was introduced. Central Government advised local authorities to follow three key principles – protection of pensioners (statutory requirement), protection of vulnerable groups and the proposal to include incentives to work. Hertsmere also agreed to protect disabled people as well as lone parents with children under the age of 5.

Due to the changes in how Council tax benefit was calculated and changes in Government legislation to introduce a tax on spare rooms, it was agreed that Hertsmere would set-up a hardship fund of £70,000 to help those residents who have difficulty paying the increase. By the end of March 2015 there was a balance of £33,811.54. From April 2015 to December 2015 we paid £16,955.58 to 107 residents. In 2016/17 (at 2 November 2016 124 applications were received and 69 were approved totalling £12,642.

The information below outlines how Hertsmere Borough Council, across its different services, has fulfilled the general equality duty and the three main aims; to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. More detailed information is provided in the case studies attached.

## **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act**

Hertsmere Borough Council aims to eliminate unlawful discrimination by ensuring that no existing or potential employee or service user receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of race, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

We ensure everyone is treated with dignity and respect at all times regardless of their backgrounds; we provide a positive and supportive work environment for all employees which is free from harassment and where individuals are encouraged to realise their full potential. We also take complaints/grievances seriously, investigate them, take appropriate action to deal with the perpetrators and support the complaint/grievant.

### **Training**

The council has a programme of training for staff to further the aims of the council under the general equality duty for its employees and for others with an interest. This includes Equality and Diversity Political Leadership and Committee briefing for Councillors, Equality and Diversity training and Equality Impact Assessment training.

Hertsmere is committed to promoting equality and diversity and to achieving an inclusive culture for our staff and the communities we serve.

We recognise that to do this, we need to be fully informed about how we can best meet the needs of our customers and colleagues. Mandatory training has been introduced for all staff which will:

- Increase knowledge of equality and diversity

- Help to improve interaction with service users and colleagues
- Make staff aware of obligations under the related legislation

The training consists of three modules, each with a short assessment at the end to determine what has been learnt.

- Equality & diversity training for staff
- Disability equality training
- Managerial equality & diversity training

The first two modules are designed to be completed by all staff, with the third module being more appropriate for those in a managerial role.

In May 2016 we hosted an event 'Working towards ending harmful practices' which was run in partnership with the Asian Women's Resource Centre. This event was to raise awareness about harmful practices such as, Honor Based Violence (HBV), Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Faith Based Violence (FBV). The training was open to all frontline practitioners from the police, education, early years, youth, Children's Services, social workers, health visitors, midwives, housing, faith and voluntary sectors.

We have a Dignity at Work policy which aims to:

- develop a culture where bullying, harassment and victimisation are unacceptable and not tolerated in the workplace
- ensure all employees are aware of their responsibilities in relation to bullying, harassment and victimisation
- ensure all employees are aware of the type of behaviour that is inappropriate and the type of behaviour that is expected
- provide a clear and fair process for dealing with bullying, harassment and victimisation if it occurs

## **Equality Impact Assessments**

We have been carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) since 2007. These impact assessments review how our policies and procedures may affect different groups of people. It enables us to identify what we are doing well which promotes equal opportunities for all groups within the communities we serve; as well as the areas where we need to improve the services we provide in order to ensure that no group is disadvantaged

An EIA of the customer services strategy has been undertaken. The outcomes of the EIA together with action taken to improve access to services led to the introduction of a multi-language line, Sign Language cards at all receptions, facilities for Type Talk, hearing loops, interpretation and large print. We are also registered on Direct Enquiries national database dealing with access issues for disabled people. We introduced a low-level terminal with adapted mouse in the Civic Offices reception area for wheelchair users / people who need to sit down to use the system.

Monitoring and equality impact assessment in relation to recruitment and selection led to the council adopting the Two Ticks (Disability) Symbol, encouraging the use of Access to Work Scheme, encouraging more flexible work arrangements including part-time working, and producing a new Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure, and Recruitment and Selection Operational Handbook to improve access to employment for all job



applicants. Our recruitment and selection procedure and operational handbook incorporate equality laws and best practice in recruitment and selection.

## **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**

We ensure we promote equality of opportunity for all by ensuring all employees receive equal pay for work of equal value, encourage people of diverse backgrounds to participate in any of the changes or improvements made and ensuring membership of decision making bodies, panels and committees take account of equality issues. Our Environmental Health Team regularly run food hygiene training and where English is not the first language have provided a trainer who is conversant with the appropriate language, so far this has included Chinese, Bengali and Spanish.

Our procurement strategy requires any major procurement exercise to consider equality and diversity when assessing bids. Contractors, agencies and consultants are required to abide by the council's equality policy in connection with the work they carry out for the council.

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 in Hertsmere, are Jewish. It has also been agreed that Eid (Muslim) and Diwali (Hindu) festivals would also be avoided.

Democratic Services held an open evening to encourage people from a variety of backgrounds to attend to see what being a councillor entails.

Human Resources work with a company called Work Solutions who support motivated people with mental ill health, learning disabilities, Aspergers, physical disabilities and sensory needs who often find it difficult to get and keep a job.

The placements are worked on a voluntary basis. In previous years 2 individuals were offered fixed term contracts having been successful at interview.

DisabledGo launched a new disability access guide which provides information for 1,000 venues across Hertfordshire. This access guide helps increase independence and choice for disabled people. By providing detailed information on the access features of venues and public spaces people can find out if a venue or service is going to suit them.

## **Housing**

Our Housing Strategy contains a special section on housing for people with special needs. The action plan contains actions for the following:

- Gypsies and Travellers
- Older People
- People with learning disabilities
- People with mental health issues
- Young people
- People with low levels of literacy



- Young families
- People with physical disabilities
- People with both physical disabilities and learning disabilities

Our Housing Options Team have been trained to advise people on their housing options and are developing specialisms in different client groups – for example, one officer is specialist in assisting people with physical disabilities and another is developing a specialism in domestic violence.

We have facilitated new affordable housing schemes that are accessible for people with physical disabilities.

Our Homelessness Strategy includes:

- Development of a supported housing scheme for young vulnerable people with learning and physical disabilities
- Introduction of a Sanctuary scheme for women at risk of domestic violence,
- Development of a debt and money advice service, including a mortgage rescue scheme,
- Bringing Empty Homes back to use through Place Scheme Rent and Bond deposit Scheme
- In partnership with Hertfordshire County Council and a grant from Homes and Counties Agency, Hightown Praetorian Churches Housing Association we have successfully developed 11 x 1 bedroom supported housing in Borehamwood

Research has been carried out into the Hertsmere Housing Market to provide good information on the operation of the open housing market in the borough. This research has been split to cover the five main settlements of Hertsmere and is attached as a case study [here](#).

## **Grants**

Following the Comprehensive Spending Review and consequential cuts to local authority spending we have maintained, and continue to maintain, the level of grant funding to voluntary/community organisations. A review of our core funding resulted in a change of policy which enables organisations to apply for revenue grants as well as capital.

Through our grants programmes we have provided, and continue to provide, support to organisations delivering services for those with disabilities, examples of which include:

- Friends of Care Homes – funds were awarded to help cover the cost of entertainers and refreshments at a weekly event, which is held at Phillimore Court for families and friends of relatives who are in care homes, assisted living establishments and sheltered accommodation.
- Hertsmere Inclusive Theatre – this theatre gives all children and teenagers the opportunity to participate in dance, drama and music in an inclusive environment. Inclusive means that children with special needs/circumstances learn and perform alongside children from mainstream schools.

- Visually Impaired Club – funds were awarded to enable this group to purchase 50 boom boxes for use by recipients of their talking newspaper.
- ActOne ArtsBase – funds were awarded to enable a UV night club –which is fully accessible for disabled and non-disabled young people – to be held.
- Learning through the Arts – they were awarded funds to put on events during Black History month for young people.
- Hertfordshire Disabled Cricket Association – funds towards the delivery of cricket sessions for visually impaired people.

The council also supports voluntary organisations by charging pepper-corn or reduced rents on council-owned properties.

During 2015-2016 disabled facilities grants were completed to a total value of £254,064. A further £117,387 has been committed for ongoing grants. Currently, there are around 180 new enquiries for disabled facilities grant aid.

The Health and Wellbeing Group commission various organisations to provide activities that meet the Health and Wellbeing Strategy's priorities which are:

- Increase physical activity and healthy eating
- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Reduce alcohol and drug-related harm
- Increase numbers of people giving up smoking
- Reduce hip fractures and excess winter deaths

Among those organisations who were commissioned to provide activities that met with the priorities were:

- Hertfordshire Crossroads South – 'Happy Days' project for older residents across the borough. These sessions consisted of weekly, free events for 6 weeks. The activities were interactive, therapeutic and recreational. The objectives of the project were to improve the emotional wellbeing of participants and to increase physical activity and healthy eating, The sessions were also open to those who had carers.
- Groundwork Hertfordshire – 'Wild Play' sessions. These sessions were provided to give parents/carers of young children the confidence to be physical active and adventurous outdoors which in turn helps to maintain a healthy weight. The project was run over 32 days for young families with children aged 4 -8 years old.

## **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**

This aim of the equality duty involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others. Hertsmere Borough Council actively works to tackle prejudice and promote understanding between people from different groups and backgrounds through a variety of projects.

More than 200 people from across Hertsmere converged on Potters Bar for a candlelit parade and ceremony to mark Holocaust Memorial Day in January 2016.

The, then, Mayor of Hertsmere, Councillor Martin Worster, led the parade and ceremony, which was marking the anniversary of the liberation of the largest Nazi concentration camp. The event culminated with a ceremony with a selection of videos, stores and musical performances.

In July 2016, tributes were paid to mark the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, which took the lives of more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim boys and men, at an event which was attended by, among others, the Mayor of Hertsmere Councillor Pete Rutledge.. The event was organised by the Hertfordshire Bosnian Association in partnership with CVS Broxbourne and East Herts and Hertsmere Borough Council.

The council has engaged with the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme and has successfully accommodated a family of 4 from Syria in Hertsmere.

The case studies below reflect the Councils commitment to working in the community with partners to improve community cohesion.

## **Forum of Faiths**

The Forum of Faiths in Hertsmere is a local group organised by faith leaders from different religions and supported by the Council which has taken an active role in promoting inter faith relations and the understanding and tolerance different beliefs. It provides a platform for faith communities of Hertsmere to have a meaningful voice in local policy-making.

In Inter-Faith week 2016 the Forum of Faiths hosted an interfaith celebration around the theme of 'Travelling together in peace'. There were representatives from various faith groups including Judaism, Islam, Hinduism (Hare Krishna) and Christian

## **Sports**

The council has awarded grants to various sports clubs and community organisations to promote disabled sporting activities. More information on this can be found [here](#).

Sport England recognised that there was an underrepresentation of women and girls in sport. In order to address this inequality, an innovative sport and fitness programme exclusively for females aged 14-25 was launched to get more women and girls more active thanks to £162,750 of National Lottery funding from Sport England's Community Sport Activation Fund.

Hertsmere was among 36 projects to receive a share of £5.9m to support grassroots sport activity across the country. The project has been set up by the council in partnership with Hertsmere Leisure, after consultation identified a need for more physical activity opportunities for this female age group. The funding has helped to develop a programme especially for women and girls over three years, starting in January 2014.

The 'We Move She Moves' programme includes a number of different sports and activities such as netball, badminton, football and athletics with sessions taking place across the borough in leisure centres, parks, schools and community venues. Special features of the

programme will include an online hub to help participants monitor progress and free gym and swimming sessions.

Since the launch of the programme a total of 3,375 women and girls have taken part in the programme. A monthly e-newsletter is produced which highlights the success of the programme and details upcoming events. Recipients also have the opportunity to take part in votes to have their say on what activities they would like included.

All of Hertsmere's leisure centres are accessible with pool hoists, wheelchair access to poolside, accessible changing rooms and toilets. Also included is accessible gym equipment.

## **Herts Pride 2016**

Hertfordshire hosts an annual PRIDE event which is a celebration of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) life within the county and beyond. Included in the day were information stalls, educational events, entertainment, community outreach and celebrations of diversity.

This event allowed LGBT people to come together to celebrate their lives, make new friends, and help other people gain a greater understanding of LGBT.

The cross-Hertfordshire LGBT group produced a [guide](#) to services in and around Hertfordshire, for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans\* people, and those questioning their identity (LGBT\*Q people). It provides local and national information as well as giving practical tips and advice. Contributions are from statutory and voluntary Hertfordshire services, as well as local people.

## **National Older People's Day**

To celebrate national older people's day in October, the council offered small grants of up to £300 for organisations to do something to celebrate older people's day and Silver Sunday. Nine organisations applied for funding for various celebration events from a party for people living with dementia and their carers, coffee morning and line dancing and trips to garden centres. Approximately 400 residents across the borough benefited from these activities.

## **Hertfordshire Community Covenant**

The Council continues to support the Hertfordshire Community Covenant. This covenant is a commitment from public and private organisations in the county, to support the active and retired Armed Forces community living and working in Hertfordshire. This includes raising the profile of the Armed Forces in Hertfordshire and to celebrate and honour the commitment and sacrifices that they have made.

The transient nature of the work of our Armed Forces sometimes means that either during or after active service, they can be at a disadvantage when it comes to accessing local services. These service men and women often put their lives on the line in the course of their work and we in Hertfordshire firmly believe that they should not be disadvantaged because of the work that they do. Some service leavers could also benefit from advice or

assistance to ensure a smooth transition into civilian life and, where sought, Community Covenant partners are committed to providing this help. For the Armed Forces community, the Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

The Covenant covers four themes:

- Raising the profile of the Armed Forces in Hertfordshire
- Celebrating and Honouring
- Fair access to services
- Helping those who have helped us

Hertsmere's portfolio holder for Leisure, Culture and Health has championed access to leisure services across Hertfordshire on behalf of the Board.

In 2013 we amended our housing allocations policy for Armed Forces personnel. Those households being discharged from the Armed Forces where they have served a minimum of two year and have a local connection are placed in the 'very high housing need' band.

## **PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

We work closely with partners who do their own service delivery and monitoring, i.e. Hertsmere Leisure and the Citizen's Advice Bureau. The information they collect also helps shape our service delivery.

## **CONCLUSION**

Hertsmere seeks to ensure that all its services are fully accessible to all parts of the community in a way that ensures equality of opportunity. We are also committed to effective communication with the public and provide a wide range of information about our services.

During 2017-18 we will continue with the refresh of all completed equality impact assessments as part of the 3 year cycle.

We will continue working towards our objectives which were published in April 2012.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

[Knowing our Workforce](#)  
[Knowing our Community](#)

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