



# 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.

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 is a mixed rural and urban district to the north of greater London. It has a population of 103,500 (mid 2016) spread across the main settlements of Borehamwood, Bushey, Potters Bar, Radlett and the village of Shenley.

With three major roads (M1, M25, A1) and good rail links running through the borough, the population is very mobile and in 2011, over 60% of residents commuted to work outside the area.

Hertsmere's population is expected to grow by 22.85% to 125,800 by 2039, slightly below the growth rate of Hertfordshire (2014-2039) but higher than that for the East of England and England as a whole. The number of households in the borough is also projected to increase by 31.48% from 41,000 in 2014 to 54,000 in 2039, ahead of the Herts and England average.

Hertsmere is a particularly diverse community and is home to a wide range of ethnic groups. The level of diversity recorded by the 2011 census illustrates a dramatic change from that recorded in 2001. In 2001 13.83% of residents considered themselves nonwhite British. This had grown to 24.27% by 2011. The largest groups are 'other white', 'Asian or Asian British: Indian' and 'Black or Black British: African'.

Hertsmere is also the centre of Hertfordshire's Jewish community - almost 67% (an increase of 7%) of the County's 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 Job Seekers Allowance claims is at 0.8% (Nov 2017) in line with the County average.

However, this hides significant variations between wards, the updated Indices of Multiple Deprivation identifies the Leeming Road area of Cowley Hill in Borehamwood was identified as the most deprived LSOA in Hertfordshire and in the top 10% of deprived areas nationally. Other areas of deprivation include an area of Potters Bar Oakmere (top 30% nationally), other areas of Borehamwood particularly in Hillside and Brookmeadow (also in top 30%) and Bushey North (top 40%). Conversely only 18 out of the 60 areas in the borough fall in the 50% most deprived in the Country with 16 LSOAs in the 10% least deprived with areas of Bushey Heath, Aldenham West and Aldenham East are in the top 1% least deprived

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

## **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 reviewed and approved in July 2017. Our vision is 'continuing to build a better future for the communities of Hertsmere through partnership working'. Our challenges are:

- To create a healthier community for all
- To create a safer community for all
- To create a thriving community for all

Our priorities under each of the three challenges are:

### **Healthier communities**

- Promote healthy weight and increase physical activity
- Improve mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Support the reduction of smoking, drug and alcohol misuse
- Enhance our environments and increase use of green space

### **Safer communities**

- Create safer environments by tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and extremism
- Build community confidence and increase feelings of safety by empowering our communities
- Raise awareness and take action against domestic abuse
- Support and protect vulnerable people affected by emerging issues, such as child sexual exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking

### **Thriving communities**

- Support and empower people to have a good start in life and age well
- Develop volunteering, social enterprise and business opportunities
- Provide accessible opportunities for skills development and financial advice
- Ensure a healthy standard of living for all and prevent homelessness

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

This strategy will be reviewed during 2018.

## Complying with the General Equality Duty

The Council's Equalities Policy 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. These objectives will be updated in 2018.

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 2017.

The increasing diversity of our workforce is 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 2017.

### Consultation

The importance of working together, the need for more volunteering and a renewed sense of community were some of the sentiments that emerged from a pioneering community-led initiative called Making a Difference Together.

Hertsmere Borough Council have hosted two Making a Difference events in the past 18 months, one in Borehamwood and one in Radlett. The events are aimed at exploring ways of making the community a healthier, happier and safer place to live. Looking at the positives of living in the area and what we as a community could do more of rather than focusing on the negatives and what we are lacking.

The events attracted a diverse range of people aging from 14-80 from all over the borough. At both events there were nearly 100 participants. The findings from the event were used for information gathering purposes and informed work like the Local Plan and Community Strategy.

Consultation on the new Local Plan has been carried out during 2017. Innovative ways of doing this consultation included [filming](#) local residents and asking their views; drop-in sessions hosted by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and staff members. Also there were question and answer sessions held across the borough.

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.

## **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**

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 on-line 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.

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

Under the Equality Act 2010 employers are responsible for not only their own conduct but are also liable for any discriminatory acts or harassment committed by their employees in the course of employment - whether or not committed with the employer's knowledge and approval. Employees can also make a complaint against their employer where they are harassed by someone who does not work for the employer (ie a customer). Employers must therefore take all reasonably practical steps to prevent harassment in the workplace.

### **Abuse of staff**

We carried out an online staff survey during August and September which was sent via all staff emails. Hard copies were also sent to the Waste Depot. Overall, 78 members of staff responded.

Following the results of the survey we are currently working on a communication campaign aimed at both staff and residents, that aims to:

- Reassure our staff that we will not tolerate abusive behaviour; that they will receive support and to inform them of the action we will take if they make a report.
- To inform residents that abusive behaviour will not be tolerated and that we will take appropriate action.
- To explain to residents what is and isn't appropriate behaviour, as well as advising of the actions they can take if they want to pursue a complaint about a specific issue.
- To reduce the number of reports of abusive behaviour towards our staff.

### **Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking**

Modern slavery and human trafficking is closer than you think, it happens all over the world, including in Hertfordshire. Victims could be labouring on a nearby building site or giving manicures at a nail salon.

This short [video](#) show that it is the responsibility of each of us to be vigilant in our roles as council staff to put a stop to this crime.

We hosted two training sessions in July at the Civic Offices which were designed specifically for staff. The sessions included a combination of trainer led presentations, group discussions and case studies and covered:

- The definition of modern slavery and human trafficking
- Signs to look out for
- The National Referral Mechanism
- Our responsibility as a first responder

The session was delivered by Hertfordshire Constabulary's Operation Tropic team, a new dedicated unit launched to tackle modern slavery and human trafficking in Hertfordshire.

At the July meeting of Council, a motion was tabled that Hertsmere Borough Council recognises:

- that the UK Government is committed to leading international efforts to defeat modern slavery and has introduced the Modern Slavery Act 2015 which makes slavery and human trafficking illegal.
- that slavery takes many different forms (forced labour, human trafficking, servitude, slavery) and may be present in a range of sectors (sex industry, service and hospitality industry, farming, etc.).
- that the UK Government estimates there are an estimated 13,000 victims of trafficking in the UK and consequently slavery and trafficking are occurring in our locality and we have a duty to work in partnership with other agencies to raise awareness of this issue, identify and protect those vulnerable persons involved as well as tackle those perpetrating and facilitating this crime.

And that the Council commits to:

- working towards the eradication of human trafficking and slavery in Hertsmere.
- raising awareness of Modern Slavery amongst all employees, councillors and partners, how it presents and what they need to do should they come across it given that the council has a statutory duty to report any incidents encountered.
- ensuring a multi-agency approach to this issue, by engaging with the Hertfordshire Modern Slavery Steering Group and supporting its work on a local level.
- taking relevant steps towards implementing the Transparency in Supply Chain provisions of the Modern Slavery Act to prevent Modern Slavery from occurring in its own supply chain.”

It was resolved unanimously that the motion was adopted by Hertsmere Borough Council.

### **WRAP (Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent) Training**

As part of our commitment and duty to raising awareness of Prevent, part of the Government’s Counter-Terrorism Strategy CONTEST, Hertsmere Borough Council hosted free WRAP training sessions at the Civic Offices in June 2017

The one and a half hour session used videos and interactivity to:

- understand what the aims of the Government’s Prevent Strategy are
- help change perceptions of 'Terrorism' and where Prevent sits on the path of violence
- help the audience think about what makes someone vulnerable to radicalisation
- understand how vulnerabilities present themselves
- understand the procedure for sharing concerns

### **Child sexual exploitation**

We coordinated some training on child sexual exploitation for schools across Hertsmere. This was undertaken by AlterEgo’s ‘Chelsea's Choice’ which is an innovative and powerful production highlighting the very serious and emotional issue of child sexual exploitation. The production shows how young people, boys and girls, are groomed by adults for the purposes of sexual exploitation using various methods, ensnaring young people and eventually taking complete control and dominating their whole lives. The audience gain a



better understanding of the devastating impact that sexual exploitation has on a young person's life. This is a very useful and innovative way of raising awareness of the issues relating to sexual exploitation and reaching young people, giving them some skills and knowledge to be able to protect themselves from this form of abuse.

## **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.

In relation to recruitment and selection the council has achieved the Disability Confident Employee level of the government's Disability Confident scheme which is designed to help recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions. We have produced 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.

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.

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**

We are currently rewriting our Homelessness Strategy in light of the changes that are required by the emerging Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

We have developed 8 units for temporary accommodation. Also, we have created a Temporary Accommodation Team to liaise with accommodation providers to ensure homelessness clients that require ongoing support are supported and to monitor that all blocked booked accommodations are effectively used.

We are exploring the option of creating a wholly owned Local Authority Property Development Company.

An empty homes refurbishment and lease scheme (PLACE), which is made up of a consortium of local authorities, exists to assist owners of long term empty properties to bring them back into use.

The Homeless Prevention forum brings together all statutory and voluntary agencies that have an interest in enhancing housing provisions and preventing homelessness across Hertsmere.

We work with Herts Young Homeless who help young people aged 16 to 25 who are threatened with homelessness by providing advice services and carrying out needs assessments as well as emergency night shelters.

We work in partnership with One YMCA who provide a hostel to combat homeless for single homeless people aged between 18 and 59. Residents can be supported for up to two years so they can move on to safe accommodation and a more stable lifestyle.

In Hertsmere we take domestic abuse very seriously. The council, along with Citizens Advice and Safe Places can advise residents on their tenancy rights and give advice or help with re-housing and may refer to a refuge in emergencies.

Former members of the armed forces may be considered as vulnerable as a result of different factors set out in the Housing Code of Guidance. The council's allocation policy ensures they are supported to find housing where appropriate.

## **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:

- Borehamwood Community Choir – funds were awarded towards the cost of transporting disabled members to rehearsals and shows.
- Small Acts of Kindness – were awarded funds to purchase items for their Winter / Christmas gift bags which are distributed to elderly residents in the borough.

- Bosnian and Herzegovina Association in Hertfordshire –were awarded funds towards putting on an event to mark the 25 years of evacuees from Serbia and Bosnia.
- Herts Aid –were awarded to stage a BME football tournament and family fun day with a key objective to maximise the number of African men and coming forward for HIV Rapid testing.
- Unit Synagogue – funds were awarded to stage an event with the aim of improving community and interfaith relations engaging and education about Judaism.
- Herts Mind Network –were awarded funds to hold weekly 2 hour sessions for people living with dementia.

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

During 2016-2017 disabled facilities grants were completed to a total value of £516,397. In addition to this, £186,220 was committed for ongoing grants and a further 233 enquiries were received 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
- Herts Mind Network - 'Healthy Body- Healthy Mind' project. The health priorities in Herts are to reduce levels of obesity, increase levels of physical activity in adults, reduce the prevalence of smoking, and to help the growing older population maintain their health.

A particular focus of the project was addressing the local needs (as identified in the Herts Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017) to improve the mental health and physical wellbeing of residents and reduce health inequalities.

The project's core aim was to improve physical health, increase health literacy and encourage self-monitoring regarding physical health. The health checks provided included height, weight, BMI, blood pressure and blood glucose, and clients can be signposted to their GP if necessary, or to advice such as the Stop Smoking Service. Working in this partnership way will reduce duplication and ensure the best possible outcomes for the client.

- Watford football club – ‘Shape Up’ project. This project is a 12 week Weight Management Programme for males aged between of 18-60. The programme consists of one 1.5 hour session per week for 12 weeks. The sessions are divided into a 30 minute Health Education information session on healthy eating and living followed by an hour of physical activity which would be tailored to the needs of the participants. The programme is not a diet but aims to improve health and wellbeing by encouraging sustainable behaviour change.

## **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 gathered in Radlett for a candlelit parade and ceremony to mark Holocaust Day 2017.

The, then, Mayor of Hertsmere, Councillor Pete Rutledge, 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. Members of the Hertsmere Bosnian community took part along with the Borehamwood Community Choir.

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.

The Forum of Faiths held a ‘Great Faiths Get Together’ which was open to everybody regardless of faith. Those who attended visited a Muslim centre, United Synagogue and St Michael’s C of E church in Borehamwood which culminated in a picnic in a local park.

**United Synagogue** were awarded funding to develop a project aimed at improving community and interfaith relations by engaging and educating about Judaism

Through educational, materials and local community engagement this project aims to combat misconceptions and stereotypes aligned to antisemitism through lack of knowledge and understanding, resulting in the furthering of good community relations, a reduction in antisemitism as a result of ignorance and the fostering of a stronger local community.

This event supports Hertsmere by ensuring informed quality community relations and addresses both the Prevent agenda and interfaith and community dialogue.

Students and teaching staff will benefit by having an improved understanding of Jewish Life as it is lived today. This supports their knowledge of Judaism Religious Education as a statutory subject and supports the Citizenship curriculum.

## **Sports**

The council has awarded grants to various sports clubs and community organisations to promote disabled sporting activities.

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 four years, starting in January 2014.

The 'We Move She Moves' programme includes a number of different sports and activities such as yoga, dance, kickboxing and trampolining with sessions taking place across the borough in leisure centres, parks and community venues.

Since the launch of the programme a total of 4,930 women and girls have taken part in the programme. A regular e-newsletter is produced which details upcoming events and celebrates the success of the programme. Recipients also have the opportunity to take part in votes to have their say on what activities they would like to see added to the timetable.

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 2017**

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 be 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

Our housing allocations policy for Armed Forces personnel states that those households being discharged from the Armed Forces where they have served a minimum of two years 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. Hertsme 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.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENT**

Knowing our Workforce

Published: 31 January 2018