

# Eliminate, Advance and Foster

## Hertsmere Borough Council's response to the General Equality Duty 2020/21



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.
- The Council passed a Black Lives Matter motion in July 2020, which called on the Borough to unreservedly stand with the BAME community, who faced historical challenges.
- In April 2021, the Council passed a motion pledging to make the Borough safer for women.

### Advancing Equality of Opportunity

- Hertsmere's municipal calendar is updated annually and meetings dates are set to avoid religious 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 continue to support their meetings and events. The Forum of Faiths is represented on the board of our Local Strategic Partnership.

### Fostering good relations

- We have maintained our level of funding to the voluntary sector. Our grants programme was split into three funding streams this year, supporting community organisations who were helping residents with issues that have been made worse by the pandemic, such as mental health, social isolation, physical activity, substance abuse and homelessness. The second strand was aimed to support organisations to reopen safely or to make changes to how they deliver their services due to the pandemic.
- Through this, we were able to support local foodbanks, local dementia clubs and local sports organisations who are among many organisations who have provided invaluable support to our communities during the pandemic.
- During Black History Month, we supported Elstree and Borehamwood Unity Network's Diversity Festival and hosted a lunch and learn event with Hertfordshire Police.
- During Herts Pride Week, Hertsmere Borough Council raised the Pride Progress Flag.
- 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