



**CHESTERFIELD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# **Equality and Diversity Annual Report 2015/16**

## ARE WE ACCESSIBLE TO YOU?

### If not, ask us

- ✓ We want everyone to be able to understand us.
- ✓ We want everyone to be able to read our written materials.
- ✓ We aim to provide what you need for you to read, talk, and write to us.

### On request we will provide free:

- ✓ Language interpreters, including for British Sign Language.
- ✓ Translations of written materials into other languages.
- ✓ Materials in braille, large print, on tape, in Easy Read.

### Please contact us:

Telephone: 01246 345247

Email: [enquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk)

## **1. Introduction from Cllr Sharon Blank, Executive Member for Governance – To be agreed**



## **2. Chesterfield equality and diversity forum**

2.1 During 2015/16 the Chesterfield equality and diversity forum have continued to work together to share ideas, best practice, challenge and raise awareness in the community of equality and diversity. One of the most important contributions of the forum is the successful engagement with the wider community, once again this year there have been some excellent educational and awareness raising activity led by the forum. The forum has acted as a critical friend for many of the Council's services during the year and has played a key role in the scrutiny and development of equality impact assessments which inform the Council's decision making process.

### **2.2 *A message from Nicky Hoskin-Stone, Chair of the Chesterfield Equality and Diversity Forum – to be agreed***



## 2.4 **Equality and diversity forum meetings and engagement**

A key aim within the Forum's action plan is to raise awareness of equalities and issues affecting local people. The Forum now has 187 members who receive regular information about the meetings, events and equalities news. Some of the participants represent a community group, or statutory organisation, while others are there as individuals from the community with an interest in promotion of equality and diversity.

During 2015/16 there was high levels of engagement at the meetings with a variety of issues being considered including:

- Event and activity planning
- Theatres access group launch, development and links
- Care act implications
- Chesterfield Royal Hospital – accessibility and translation services
- Review of CBC parking payment accessibility
- Accessibility of the new Queen's Park sports centre and timetabling of activities

## 2.5 **Equality and diversity forum events and activities**

During 2015/16 the Equality and diversity forum have continued to organise, host and support a number of events throughout the year on a range of equality themes that are relevant to the community. We continued to work on these events in partnership with a number of partner organisations to maximise the impact we can all make in the community and to pool our limited resources. Because of the increasing popularity of the Equality and diversity forum events, and the number that are held throughout the year, we established an event planning working group as a sub-group of the forum, to coordinate the events. We would like to thank all those who have given up their time to support and help plan the following events that have taken place over the past year. Events during 2015/16 included:

## **Deaf and hearing support**

In October 2015 the equality and diversity forum worked with deaf and hearing support to host a talk to highlight some of the facts and misconceptions and hearing loss. The talk included a lip reading exercise to highlight the challenge and gave practical advice on customer service delivery, equipment and provisions. The talk was well attended with members of the community, Chesterfield Borough Council and partner agency staff.

## **Dementia action alliance launch event**



Working in partnership with the dementia friends' alliance we helped to fill the Market Hall assembly rooms in May 2015 with members of the community finding out more about how to create dementia friendly communities.

Since their launch the dementia friends alliance have gone from strength to strength and are now working with Derbyshire County Council and other

key partners on a Derbyshire roadshow to enable the community and service providers to learn more about dementia, its impact and how to make Derbyshire more dementia friendly. The equality and diversity forum are pleased to have been able to assist this new group with a fantastic launch.

### **Holocaust memorial day**

The theme for holocaust memorial day 2015/16 was don't stand by. To mark this day and raise awareness the equality and diversity forum held a free evening of videos, performances and displays at the Rose theatre in Chesterfield.



The event included:

- A pledge tree to help us to end discrimination and persecution
- A video from the holocaust memorial trust entitled learning from the past
- An original Chesterfield Pomegranate youth theatre play entitled – not my problem

- Chesterfield college exercise to raise awareness of the holocaust and more recent genocides
- Chesterfield college students performed songs and poems

- One minutes silence to reminder the victims of the holocaust and genocides



Chesterfield equality and diversity forum would like to thank the following organisations for making the event so successful:

- Derbyshire Law Centre (organising event and tea and cakes)
- Pomegranate Youth Theatre (for Not my Problem performance)
- Chesterfield College students for all their hard work
- Chesterfield Borough Council (funding and organisation)
- All the staff at the Rose Theatre

### **3. Promoting equality and diversity through our services**

3.1 Throughout the year, a range of activities and developments take place in the Council's services which contribute towards our commitment to embrace diversity and treat everyone fairly.

## 3.2 Customer services



The Council's Customer Services has retained its accreditation against the Customer Service Excellence standards. Retaining the accreditation

gets harder each time as we have to prove that not only do we continue to deliver good customer service but we have also improved since the last assessment.

The Customer Service Excellence standards consist of 5 key areas:

- Customer Insight
- The Culture of the Organisation
- Information and Access
- Delivery
- Timeliness and Quality of Service

Through our case studies and evidence, we were able to demonstrate that there had been a high standard and overall improvement in the customer service delivery over the five areas, and a commitment to continual improvement providing a quality customer service to our customers.

## 3.3 Community Assemblies and Community Development

During 2015/16 the community assemblies have considered and challenged service providers on a variety of key community issues including:

- Crime and community safety issues
- Health and wellbeing
- Air quality management
- Community and voluntary sector advice agencies
- Devolution

- Funding and service priorities
- HS2
- Derbyshire libraries

The Community Assemblies have continued their grant system over the past year, awarding minor grants and larger amounts to a range of local groups, many of which contribute towards promoting equality and diversity in the community. Here are just a few of the projects supported by the funding that have helped to promote equality and celebrate diversity in the community:

- Assistance to Loundsley Green Community Centre to upgrade facilities
- Improved accessibility at various allotment sites
- A number of luncheon clubs and activities for older people
- Start up assistance for an arts group in Brimington, Chesterfield Dementia Action Alliance and Everybody hurts which offers support for parents suffering abuse from children
- A variety of activities, equipment and coaching for children and young people
- Village games at Holmebrook Valley park to improve health and wellbeing
- Diversionary activities for young people in Barrow Hill
- Accessibility improvements to assist bowling clubs

We also continued to support and facilitate the successful financial inclusion partnership project, "Health, Wealth and Wellbeing", continues to be a success. A number of Chesterfield Borough Council services have continued to work with Derbyshire County Council Public Health and partner agencies to provide advice and support to key target

communities including Holme Hall, Grangewood, St. Helens/Stonegravels and Middlecroft during 2015/16. Advice was available on financial inclusion, becoming job ready, law, credit union, health and wellbeing and housing.

We also delivered a series of meet, treat and eat campaigns to encourage children and their carers to adopt healthier lifestyles, again in targeted locations for maximum impact. Our Community Development worker has also been supporting a number of different community and voluntary sector groups to apply for external grant funding and increase capacity.

### **3.4 Other community and voluntary sector funding**

During 2015/16 Chesterfield Borough Council awarded £276,160 of funding via service level agreements to key community and voluntary sector organisations. This included Derbyshire unemployed workers centre, Citizens advice bureau, Derbyshire law centre, Links and Shopmobility. Many of these organisations are facing unprecedented levels of demand due to the vast range of austerity issues impacting on our communities.

### **3.5 Queen's Park Sports Centre**

In January 2016 we opened the new £11.25 million Queen's Parks Sports Centre. Improved accessibility and customer experience was at the forefront in the planning and building of the new centre. Community consultation and access assessments led to improvements in the number of disability and family car parking spaces, village changing rooms, different counter heights to assist people in wheelchairs or mobility scooters, buggy/wheelchair/scooter parks, improved signage

and customer flow etc. Developing a brand new sports facility in these austere times is a real partnership achievement and our residents agree. The number of visitors to the centre between January and April is 19,000 higher than for the same period in 2015. There are also 1,400 more members at the new site than at the old.



### **3.6 Sports Pavilions at Eastwood Park**

The whole community in and around Hasland, especially younger people are benefiting from the opening of a new pavilion at Eastwood Park, Hasland, funded by the council and Sport England. The new pavilion, built by the council's apprentices, provides much needed changing rooms for the sports clubs, as well as meeting space and kitchen facilities for use by local community groups.

### **3.7 Parks and open spaces**

Green flag awards recognise and reward the best parks and green spaces across the country and part of the criteria includes accessibility. During 2015/16 Eastwood Park was successful in obtaining green flag status for the first time. We now have five open spaces with this prestigious award – Queen's Park, Eastwood Park, Holmebrook Valley Park, Poolsbrook Country Park and the Crematorium grounds in Brimington. We have also continued to invest in our smaller neighbourhood parks and open spaces with several getting makeovers and new facilities during 2015/16.

### **3.8 Housing**

During the last year, the council invested £32 million in its own housing stock and plans to spend a further £29 million in the coming year to ensure that all 9,600 of our tenants continue to benefit from a decent

and affordable home. We have recently completed a £3 million investment in a new housing scheme at Parkside. Overlooking Stand Road Park, the scheme provides 22 high quality homes for older and vulnerable people.

We have also improved tenancy support and introduced pre-tenancy support, advice and assessments to reduce the number of tenancies breaking down and ensure people can afford and manage their home.

We are also working hard to secure more private sector housing to support our economic aspirations and the needs of a growing and changing population. This includes ensuring the provision of more affordable housing like the homes recently completed at Chesterfield Waterside and helping local people to take their first step onto the property ladder through the council's active participation in the local authority mortgage scheme.

### **3.9 Apprenticeships town and improving our economy**

During 2015/16 we have been working with Chesterfield College to lay the foundations for Chesterfield to become an apprenticeships town. We have own successful apprenticeships scheme but we want to support all young people in our communities to gain employment, further education and skills. This has included the City Region skills made easy programme, to encourage local employers to up-skill their existing workforce and establish new apprenticeships. To date 335

training plans have been agreed across 184 Chesterfield employers. Local labour clauses have been agreed on 100% of eligible developments during 2015/16 to bring more work into the local labour market.



We recently took the decision to apply to become full members of the Sheffield City Region Combined Authority and to join a devolution deal

that will bring millions of pounds and hundreds of new job opportunities to the borough. This builds on a strong relationship that has already delivered significant investment to Chesterfield - £100 million of tax breaks on plant and equipment purchase to attract new businesses to invest at the Markham Vale Enterprise Zone, £5.1 million to fund the site enabling and infrastructure works at Chesterfield Waterside and £2.8 million to build the access road into the Peak Resort development. Together we are looking forward to a thriving Borough where all our young people can access work, education and skills.

### **3.10 Arts and culture accessibility**

During 2015/16 a new theatres accessibility group was launched. This community group has worked with the council to support accessibility improvements at the theatre including a new induction loop, disability platforms to aid concert viewing and to organise improved accessibility to performance and screening. This includes signed performance, relaxed performance and audio description.



Chesterfield Borough Council has continued to support arts and culture for young people with a variety of activities including young people taking part in drama, dance and music and a variety of interactive displays and events at Chesterfield Museum.

### **3.11 Equalities training for our staff**

We continue to deliver a Corporate Equality Induction to all new employees and Councillors, and an Equality Refresher Course to update the Council's existing employees about our equality values and the role

they play in ensuring that the Council continues to promote equality in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. We also deliver an Equality and Diversity training programme for volunteers at the Council and bespoke training for service areas as required. Many of our frontline staff have accessed additional training around mental health awareness and creating dementia friendly services to improve the accessibility of our services and improve customer experience.

### **3.12 Springboard**

Chesterfield Borough Council employees have also participated in Springboard, a national women's personal development programme. The programme enables women to identify the clear, practical and realistic steps that they want to take to make a better world for themselves at work and home, whilst building the practical skills and confidence to take these steps. The programme focuses on the following areas:

- realistic self-assessment
- aspects of being a woman
- identifying priorities
- assertiveness skills
- setting practical yet stretching goals

- improving health
- stress management  
presenting a positive  
image
- improved communication  
skills
- building better  
relationships
- building networks



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## **4.0 Equality impact assessments**

- 4.1 The Council is required to show that the relevant equality issues have been considered before changes are made to policies, projects, services, functions and strategies, or new ones are created. Chesterfield Borough Council does this through its robust Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The EIA process enables us to look at our work in depth to see what impact it has on different equality groups, and to mitigate against any potentially negative impacts that are identified. Staff received training in the completion of EIAs ensuring that the process is embedded across all council services.
- 4.2 During 2015/16, the Council undertook around 24 full Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) for a variety of changes to policies, strategies and projects. The EIAs were published with the relevant reports to the Council's Cabinet, and can be viewed in the equalities section of our website.
- 4.3 Through the EIA process, we have been able to address any negative impacts on sections of the community promote equality by identifying and acting on opportunities to implement positive impacts for groups where possible.

## **5.0 Looking forward to 2016/17**

- 5.1 There is much to look forward to over the next year, as we continue to work with partners to promote equality and diversity in our community and within the organisation. Some of the key activities include:
- Reviewing our Equality, Diversity and Social inclusion strategy and associated policies and procedures to ensure we are maximising

benefits for our communities and where possible exceeding equality law and best practice.

- Continuing to facilitate and support Chesterfield's Equality and Diversity Forum to act as a 'critical friend' to the Council on matters that impact on equality for our employees and the community, and to work with partners to deliver a range of equalities events designed to raise awareness of local issues and celebrate diversity
- Continuing to work with the Chesterfield theatres access group to improve accessibility of shows and increase community participation
- We will work with Sheffield City Region to facilitate business access to apprenticeships and workforce training via the Skills Bank programme to further reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training.
- We will be switching to a new website that will provide our customers with improved access to our services
- We will be investing a further £29million in our Council Housing Stock to ensure that it continues to meet the Decent Homes Standard and delivers affordable warmth for our tenants. There will also be a further £200,000 of assistance to vulnerable homeowners through the provision of an interest free loan
- We will be developing a Health and Well-being strategy and action plan that focuses on community level initiatives and improvements
- We will be reviewing and re-prioritising our community and voluntary sector funding to ensure it continues to meet the needs of our diverse communities
- We will be extending our partnership financial inclusion project into four more key areas. This will increase access to financial inclusion, health and well-being and housing advice for a further 600 households

## **6.0 Further information**

If you have any comments on our Equalities Annual Report or would like to request further information or copies of any of the documents highlighted in the report please contact:

Katy Marshall

Policy Officer

Tel: 01246 345247

E-mail: [katy.marshall@chesterfield.gov.uk](mailto:katy.marshall@chesterfield.gov.uk)

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