

Eliminate, Advance and Foster Hertsmere Borough Council's response to the General Equality Duty 2018/19



Hertsmere is a mixed rural and urban district to the north of greater London. It has a mixed population of 104200¹, 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 14.29% 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.
- A communication campaign was undertaken to inform staff and residents that abusive behaviour will not be tolerated. Staff have been reassured that they will receive support if they report abusive behaviour.

Advancing Equality of Opportunity

- Hertsmere's municipal calendar is updated annually and meetings dates are set to avoid Jewish festivals as a large proportion of councillors, and the population of Hertsmere are Jewish. Other religious festivals are also avoided are Eid (Islam), Diwali (Hindu) and Christian festivals.
- We promote equality of opportunity for all by ensuring that all council employees receive pay for work of equal value. A copy of our equal pay statement can be found here.
- The Forum of Faiths is a local group organised by faith leaders from different religions and supported by Hertsmere Borough Council, which has taken an active role in promoting interfaith relations and the understanding and tolerance of different beliefs. It provides a platform for faith communities in Hertsmere to have a meaningful voice in local policy-making. We host their meetings and annual events. The Forum of Faiths is represented on the board of our Local Strategic Partnership.

Fostering good relations

- We are working with Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service and a local educational charity to enhance verbal and written English skills to support migrants who have been in the United Kingdom for 10 years or less with school children. They are being encouraged to learn English and how to better integrate with their local communities.
- We have maintained our level of funding to the voluntary sector. Through our grants programme we have provided support to organisations delivering services for those with disabilities and promoting cultural cohesion. This included workshops and an event during Black History month; tennis coaching and fitness training in tennis; providing archery and family orienteering for young disabled and transportation and travel costs for partially sighted and blind people to enable them to attend support services.
- The universal language of football brought together schoolchildren from primary schools across Hertsmere to learn more about different faiths at a special Diversity event organised by Arsenal FC. Approximately 55 children from primary and secondary schools were taught about Islamic, Jewish and Christian traditions at the event as well as participating in a physical activity.
- We recognised Armed Forces Day by holding a ceremony and we also held a service to mark Holocaust Day.