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Background

This report provides a sample of information on how Solihull Council delivers a range of excellent services to the diverse community in the borough, whilst also meeting its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

It is produced with regard to the specific duty to publish equality information to demonstrate compliance with the three aims of the Equality Duty. This report follows on from the one published in January 2016.

The Equality Duty

As a public sector organisation, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council has duties under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality – the Equality Duty. The Equality Duty requires that we have “due regard” in carrying out our activities, including making decisions, of the need to:

• Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
• Advance equality of opportunity by considering the need to:
  – remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics
  – meet the needs of people with protected characteristics
  – encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or other activities where their participation is low
• Foster good relations between communities

The Equality Duty applies in relation to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

When the Equality Duty is considered to be highly relevant we undertake Fair Treatment Assessments (FTAs), to systematically analyse the impact of our services, policies and decisions on our staff and customers to ensure we deliver our services in a fair way.

We refer to ‘fair treatment’, rather than ‘equality impact’ because our level of equality analysis goes beyond the provisions of the Equality Act, and considers fairness in a wider sense, including aspects such as socio-economic deprivation, human rights and sustainable communities.

Specific duties

In order to meet the requirement of the ‘general duty’ we have to do two specific things:

• Publish equalities information, demonstrating our compliance with the Equality Duty on an annual basis and
• Publish our equalities objectives that support the aims of the Equality Duty

Our equalities information is updated at least annually and is available on the Public Sector Equality Duty page on our website. The information duty covers two areas, which are published in two separate reports:

• Our employees
• Our services and the people affected by them (covered in this report)

Our equality objective for (2016-2020) was published separately in April 2016 and will be updated at least once every four years.

More information on the Public Sector Equality Duty, including the specific duties, can be found in the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s Equality Act 2010: Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty—England
General information

This section covers the wider picture and cuts across the various characteristics.

We continue to develop our work to promote equality. This report provides some insight into the work we are doing. We also recognise that we all have multiple identities. Although examples are given on individual characteristics, the benefits of the work cut across a number of protected characteristics.

Subsequent sections of this report consider our role as a service provider from the perspective of individual protected characteristics.

We provide a large amount of information about our services and the local population on our website, and data in particular on the Solihull Observatory’s webpage. The Observatory provides a centre of excellence in research, data collection and analysis, supporting the local commissioning process as well as evidence-based policy-making. Amongst the information it provides are regularly updated ward profiles.

Equality profile

Solihull People and Place – Summary

Solihull wards can be divided into three broad geographic areas:

Urban West: Castle Bromwich, Lyndon, Elmdon, Olton, Silhill, St Alphege, Shirley East, Shirley West and Shirley South.

Regeneration: Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst & Fordbridge and Smith’s Wood.

Semi-rural South and East: Blythe, Bickenhill, Knowle, Dorridge & Hockley Heath and Meriden.

Solihull is in the midst of dynamic and rapid socio-demographic change. The most notable feature of the Solihull population profile is the relatively higher proportion of older people in the borough, with 19.1% of the population aged 65 and over compared with 16.3% in England and 16.9% in the West Midlands.

The Black and Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) population has more than doubled since the 2001 Census and now represents nearly 11% of the total population. The borough is less diverse than England as a whole (and significantly less so than neighbouring Birmingham), but with BAME groups representing a relatively higher proportion of young people in Solihull (over 15% of those aged 15 and under) this representation is set to increase.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) provides annual modelled population estimates for Local Authority areas.

The ONS estimates that Solihull’s resident population was 210,445 in 2015. This estimated an increase of 8,800 (4.4%) since 2005 and 500 (0.2%) since 2014.

At the time of the 2011 Census the Solihull population was 206,674 (100,352 males and 106,322 females), having increased by 3.6% (7,100 persons) since the 2001 Census. This compares with population increases of 7.2% in England and was 6.1% in the West Midlands over the same period.

Socio-economic disadvantage

The Equality Act 2010 does not include socio-economic disadvantage as a protected characteristic. We have however included this subject in this report, as it is an important issue for us.

There are very clear divisions in the borough between the wealthier areas and those experiencing problems of poverty and disadvantage. This is illustrated by differences in a number of factors such as health and life expectancy, which vary across the borough. Narrowing the gap of inequality caused by these differences is one of our key drivers; this is why we have included it as a separate section within this report.
Health, we are changing how services for children and adults work together to provide support—planning for people with disabilities and want to develop prevention and early help services for children and adults, including support to carers and families first. Under the priority, Managed Growth, we have the Solihull for Success and the Solihull College and University Centre. The Solihull for Success programme is designed to stimulate inward investment, which will in turn lead to creation of jobs, while the completion of Solihull College and University Centre will ensure that some of the business and industry skills needs are met locally. In Building Stronger Communities, we are for example, investing in priority communities, with a focus on North Solihull. We know from our equality profile, that this is the part of the borough where we have high levels of deprivation. We want to build resilience in such communities and close the economic inequality gap that some of the people in this area experience. We also have a programme of providing the right kind of housing to meet local needs, support growth and prevent homelessness.

All these and other programmes in the Council Plan are designed to reduce inequality gaps within our communities.

Equality and Diversity Policy

We all have a right to be treated fairly with dignity and respect, with an equal opportunity to fulfil our potential in our lives. For this to happen we have a responsibility as a public body to ensure that our own actions and behaviours of others who provide services on the Council’s behalf, are fair and transparent.

We are in the process of revising our Equality and Diversity Policy, which expresses our commitment “to promoting equality of opportunity and equality of access that is free from discrimination, prejudice, harm, stereotyping, harassment, victimisation, and any other form of discrimination”. Once the policy has been approved it will be published on the Council’s website.
West Midlands Combined Authority

As part of the West Midlands Combined Authority we have secured the biggest devolution agreement in the country. A devolution agreement is one where the handing down of powers and money from central government (Whitehall) to local authorities takes place so they can make decisions and spend money for the benefit of the region, as they see fit.

The agreement will bring £636 million of investment into transport infrastructure in Solihull alone. Many colleagues across the Council are working hard to deliver our growth strategy to ensure we deliver the quality of service our residents expect and deserve.

Working in partnership with other organisations to deliver better outcomes for people continues to be a key theme for us in Solihull. One example is the development of the Birmingham and Solihull Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP), which sets out how we will improve the health and wellbeing for people living in these areas. With increasing demand and reduced funds for health and social care, it’s crucial we make sure people get the right care and support, in the right way, when they need it, and in the place that’s best for them.

Solihull Place Survey 2016

Each year we conduct a Place Survey that collects the views of people living in the borough on a range of issues concerning where they live and their local services. The survey was representative of the make up of the borough’s diverse population and carried out by the Council in the summer of 2016 on behalf of the Solihull Partnership. A report was then compiled summarising the headline findings of the survey details of which can be found here: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/SearchResults?q=place%20survey

A large majority of respondents to the 2016 Solihull Place Survey say that they are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (85%).

The survey also shows that Solihull is a cohesive borough, with 83% of respondents saying that people from a different background get on well together in their local community.

A small number of respondents say they have personally experienced some form of harassment or intimidation, with only small differences between the three areas of the borough (7.7% in North Solihull, 4.1% in Urban West, 3.8% in Rural).

Ethnicity was the most common type of harassment or intimidation cited, although this involved just 14 out of over 700 responses (2%) as set out in the table below.
Suffered Harassment or Intimidation By Reason

Source: SMBC - Place Survey 2016

Making Solihull Safer and Hate Crime

A hate crime is one where a person’s hostility or prejudice against a person or group of people is a factor, for example because of a person’s disability, race, and/or sexual orientation. We continue to work to improve the support to people who have been subjected to or affected by a hate crime or incident, which is why we have reviewed all of our independent third party reporting centres across the borough. A third party reporting centre is a place where you can tell someone what has happened and then they report it to the police for you.

Introduced by the Safer Solihull Partnership, the centres are based within access points of a wide range of existing services such as children’s centres and community and voluntary organisations and designated housing and Council customer service points. Most recently the Solihull Walk-in Centre is now a third party hate crime reporting centre. Its role is to give both victims and witnesses a safe and supportive environment to report incidents.

In March 2016, the Safer Solihull Equality Group was shortlisted for a West Midlands Police Diamond Award. Launched five years ago, these awards allow members of the public, police officers, staff and partners to highlight individuals and teams that have made a significant contribution to helping make the West Midlands a safer place to live, work and visit.

The group, which consisted of staff from the Council’s Community Safety Team, Equality and Diversity Team alongside Solihull Police and the West Midlands Fire Service, were nominated for the Working in Partnership category because of their work on the Equality & Diversity Integration project. This has involved progressing equality issues with the aim of increasing trust and confidence in Solihull people, based on priorities such as hate crime, domestic abuse and other areas.

An awards ceremony was held on Thursday 3 March at The National Motorcycle Museum where the winners of all Diamond Awards were announced. Sadly the team didn’t win their category but were pleased for being shortlisted for their hard work.

For more information about the Safer Solihull Partnership visit http://www.solihull.gov.uk/safersolihull

Information on hate crime can be found at www.solihull.gov.uk/hatecrime

Mayoral duties

The Mayor of Solihull Council is elected annually by the Council from among the elected councillors. The primary role of a Mayor is to preside over meetings of the Council. The Mayor is committed to fairness and equality and over the years each Mayor has continued to develop and maintain positive relations between different groups in the community.

During 2016, the Mayor visited or entertained in the parlour many diverse groups of people, including:
Street Associations

Over the last two years the Solihull Partnership has commissioned U-Turn UK CIC to form seven Street Associations in Solihull. U-Turn UK is a Birmingham based organisation, a Community Interest Company (CIC), who pioneered the Street Associations initiative to restore both communities and the values on which communities depend.

For more information visit: https://solihull.mylifeportal.co.uk

Engaging with our diverse communities

Engaging with communities is key to ensuring the Council meets its priorities and we are always looking at ways or tools to engage our service users and residents. ‘Solihull Get Involved’ is a successful Solihull community based website for news, information and useful links that provides an opportunity for all residents to become involved or keeping in touch with things happening in Solihull.

One of our most recent developments is the Council joining Pinterest—a new social media tool to engage residents. Using an array of topics, boards and pictures the site enables users to see what is going on at the Council as well as being easily directed to important online forms, documents and events making internet services even easier. Joining a number of other councils on Pinterest will give us a visual overview of other authorities’ services and how we can improve.

You can follow the Council on Pinterest at: https://uk.pinterest.com/solihullcouncil and Solihull Get Involved at http://www.solihullgetinvolved.co.uk

Solihull MyLife

This is a portal providing advice, guidance and information for the people of Solihull. The portal has a variety of advice, guidance and information for, example, for promoting independence for adults and older people and their carers.

For more information visit: https://solihull.mylifeportal.co.uk

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Case Study – Building Stronger Communities

Greenhill Way Extra Care

This extra care scheme has been a really good example of how services can support the building of stronger communities. Positive feedback has been received about equality and diversity and inclusion at Greenhill Way. The scheme has joined, welcomed and supported the Street Association project, and offered the use of their communal room for events like coffee mornings, parties and gatherings bringing together the community and older tenants.

The staff have been very friendly and have gone way above and beyond the call of duty to help support the partnership working. Tenants have benefited from building relations in the community with younger neighbours and promoting intergenerational cohesion.

People in the community have commented:

“It has been a very enjoyable day and my children loved it.”

Solihull Together

Solihull Together for better lives means improving lives of people from the borough through joined up care between health and social care services.

Being ill or needing care can be frustrating and difficult – especially when it comes to getting the help and support you need. In Solihull, we want to change all that. The aim is to make sure that all people who live in the borough of Solihull get the right care and support, in the right way, when they need it, and in the place that’s best for them. We aim to do this through ‘integrated care.’ Put simply, this means joining together health and social care services so that you can’t tell when one ends and the other starts. This will lead to a good quality of life for all Solihull residents.

Another aim of Solihull Together for better lives is to ensure that people are only in hospital when they need to be. No one should have to go into hospital unnecessarily, and they should be able to leave as soon as they’re well enough. This should include being able to get the longer-term care that they require in a place where they’ll be more comfortable, and where they can get the right kind of help and support for them. Above all, we want to involve you much more in the way we design and deliver your services – after all, they’re your services, not ours.

One tenant commented that: “Had a really wonderful time especially with the children as they made me feel young again.”

The Street Association stated a: “Special thanks to Sasha, Martin, Ruth they were fantastic and they really don’t need to do this for us!!”
This is a chance for everyone in Solihull to take more control of their own care, helping to make sure the answers we end up with are the right ones.

The Vulnerable Road Users Group

The Council has a commitment to create safer environments for pedestrians and reduce vehicle speeds and road casualty rates in key shopping locations.

The Vulnerable Road Users group was formed as part of the consultation for Solihull Gateway. It has now been established as a standing group to consider major highways projects and other related issues.

During 2016, the group was consulted on Solihull Connected - the revised transport strategy. Members of the group have also been consulted on the development of our Street Charter – to address issues of on pavement parking and obstructions among other things.

The group has members from voluntary organisations involved with disability access – including DIAL, SoLO, Guide Dogs, RNIB, Age UK and Solihull Pensioners Convention. It now meets on a quarterly basis.

Services at The Core, located in Theatre Square:

Solihull Community Advice Hubs

The success of the first community hub pilot scheme led to a second Community Advice Hub being set up in Solihull town centre at The Core.

The Community Advice Hub is managed by Age UK Solihull on behalf of Solihull Council and Solihull CCG and brings together local voluntary organisations including DIAL, Independent Advocacy and BID Services to provide information and advice to support Solihull residents. It is part of Solihull Together for better lives, the borough’s shared commitment to improve local health and care services.

The Community Advice Hubs in Chelmsley Wood and Solihull town centre are open Monday to Friday from 10am to 2pm. You can contact the Hubs by email: admin@solihullcommunityhub.org.uk or on: 0121 705 3588.

Health Hubs

In June, Chelmsley Wood and Hobs Moat Libraries celebrated the launch of their new Health Hub Facilities in partnership with Public Health and Health Exchange. The new dedicated area in each library has enabled residents to have health checks carried out, access information or advice and training on progress towards their own personal health goals or managing existing health conditions. A Blood Pressure/Weight/BMI machine along with a touchscreen kiosk has been installed and a programme of self-organised groups is promoted.

Solihull Public Library Service

Solihull Public Library Service provides a service which is open and accessible to all.

There are 13 libraries spread across the borough, a 24/7 virtual library, a mobile library, a home library service for residents unable to get to a library for themselves, as well as a Local History and Archive Service. Libraries offer a range of services, which includes free Wi-Fi and an e-book scheme.
The information gathered will:

- Enable the service to redeploy resources in an efficient and effective manner to better meet customer needs
- Make adjustments to current service offers
- Develop new customer offers
- Create maximum benefit to the customer
- Form the basis of an action plan

The questionnaire is closed to the public and data is now being analysed by Solihull Observatory.

Awareness events which have taken place in libraries in 2016 have included:

- The Core Library hosted the final event to celebrate UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The event took place on 6 December within the library itself and a mix of stalls, books and activities taking place on the day, gave it a unique community flavour.
- Black History Month
- Elder Abuse Day
- Mental Health Awareness
- Macmillian coffee mornings
- Hate Crime Week
- Wear it Pink

Local groups and self-help groups which operate out of the libraries include:

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Self Help Group which operates out of Chelmsley Wood Library
- Health Trainers in some libraries with awareness sessions for the public
- IT courses in some libraries

The Library holds a range of stock and information that is available across a number of equality groups such as religion and faith, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation. We have an excellent 24/7 virtual library with newspapers in over 26 languages available for free download, along with other genres, which can be viewed in different formats for people with visual impairments or other health issues.

The nature of what a library is, what it does, and how people interact with it is changing. People value their local library highly and see it as a key part of a thriving and resilient community. To create an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to get involved in shaping what libraries offer, dates were set for a series of consultation and engagement events called “Your Library Your Say” which were held at all our library locations between 15 October and 4 November 2016.

The consultation and engagement programme was key to listening to the needs and demands of customers and helping the council to understand what encourages people to use the service.
Local History Groups:

- Family history - researching your family history has never been more popular or easier to begin. We offer courses, groups and resources that can save you time and help you to avoid common mistakes.
- Caribbean family history - you can now research some of your Caribbean ancestors without leaving Solihull, thanks to the efforts of the Solihull & Birmingham Caribbean Family History Group and the Jamaican Family Roots Group.
- Solihull Heritage Gateway

Other events have included:

- Craft groups are held in a number of libraries to improve dexterity, wellbeing and provide a social outlet.
- Sight Loss Resource Centre situated in the Core Library with a regular group meeting.
- Councillors Surgery—these are face-to-face meetings held by councillors for local people to raise issues in their area. First and last Saturday of the month, 10.00am-12.00pm
- Twins Plus Story Time—a story time especially for twins and multiples. Enjoy stories and rhymes followed by time to chat and share experiences with others.
- Booktivity – for people interested in all things about books: art and craft, quizzes and games, our activity group for ages 10+.
- Rhyme Time in libraries - a short interactive session for 0–2s that includes finger and action rhymes and songs. Come along and meet up with other parents/carers and discover what the library can offer your child.
- Meet and Play—a new Meet and Play session offers the chance for young families to meet up, relax, chat, play, sing or make music together. The session is for families, led by families. Toys and musical instruments are provided.
- Story Times sessions for under 5s
- Silent Reading Café at the Core to encourage people to take time out of their busy lives
- Poetry and reading groups
- Listeners’ Circle for people who read talking books

Homework Club for children who are 8+
Teenage groups
Excluded Pupils workgroups
Employment Support Groups at a number of libraries
The age profile of the North Solihull regeneration wards is significantly younger than the rest of the borough. 29% of the population in North Solihull are aged 19 years and under and 20% aged 20-34 years, compared to 23% and 15% respectively in the rest of the borough. At the other end of the spectrum just 14% of the North Solihull population is aged 65 and over and 1.4% is aged 85+, compared to 20% and 3%.

Helping people in our community through our Neighbourhood Services Team (NST)

Every year the NST are allocated a limited budget to work on projects that involve working with other Council teams, local resident and voluntary groups, individuals, partner agencies such as the Police, Youth Services, Probation Service and Solihull Community Housing. The aim of the service is to meet the needs and wishes of those who live, learn, work and play in the borough and to create safer, stronger and healthier communities.

On page 14 there are two case studies of work that the team has undertaken to improve the well being of older people in the borough.

Case Study – Victims of crime

Trading Standards, the Fire Service and Police went to visit four people who were victims of scams. In addition to providing reassurance, the exercise also enabled our respective agencies to consider what support can be provided and how it is provided to the vulnerable, often elderly people, who fall victim to this type of crime.

The team has also worked with the Solihull Safeguarding Adults Board to support them with a targeted awareness campaign during Fraud Awareness Week, to visit local elderly community groups in the Lyndon area to advise them how to avoid being scammed and keeping safe over the winter.

For more information on Trading Standards visit www.solihull.gov.uk
Case Study – Garden maintenance

As we age, life circumstances change including our health and risk of injury. Caring for your garden should be an enjoyable activity that calms the mind as well as assisting in maintaining your physical health. There can come a time however, when tending to your garden is no longer possible. This presents a challenge for some older people as the cost of having this work done privately can become unaffordable and it is not a general service that the Council provides.

One resident who was too old and infirm to cut back some overhanging vegetation that had overtaken the alley at the rear of his bungalow and made pedestrian access difficult, received some voluntary help from the team.

Alongside one of the Council’s contractors Amey, the officers from the team cut back the overhanging vegetation which also served the interests of anyone using the alley. The work also improved the overall appearance of the area.

Other work from the Team has included:

- Supporting the Engage team from Children’s Services to help with socially isolated mothers and young children.
- Leading on the Hobs Moat Fun day to help young people in the area with career options and sign posting them to youth provisions in the area.
- Neighbourhood Services supported the renovation of the Simon Wilcox Scout Hut, which is a community project to improve the Lode Lane facility that is used by a wide range of youth groups and for larger public events. The aim of the project is to improve energy efficiency and modernise the facility. This has involved creating a disabled accessible toilet in addition to a standard toilet and installing a ramp access in line with disability requirements. Our one-off funding contribution has helped with the second stage of a larger funding bid for these works. The facility is used by Signpost Inclusion amongst others.
Public Health works across all age groups

Our Public Health team aims to: enable people of all age groups and across a wide range of equality protected characteristics to choose healthier lifestyles; protect people’s health; and improve the quality of health and care services. They design and commission a range of services to enable people to live healthier lifestyles.

The team is continuing to promote cancer awareness and screening programmes. We are working with GP practices and partners to normalise the conversation about cancer and ensure information is available to members of the public. As more people are surviving cancer we have ‘cancer survivorship classes’ for the third year running. The classes provide support to survivors on lifestyle choices after cancer.

We continue to promote a range of immunisation programmes such as flu vaccinations.

We have published the Solihull Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2017-18 that sets out four key priorities:

- People will live longer and have healthier lives
- Give every child the best start in life
- Ageing well – healthier older life
- Healthy & sustainable places and communities

The strategy can be found on the Council’s website at www.solihull.gov.uk

Meaningful engagement with children and young people

The meaningful involvement of children and young people in decision making, evaluation, planning and delivery leads to services that are effective in meeting their needs.

If you are a child or young person from Solihull reading this and would like to share your views and opinions about safeguarding with the Local Children Safeguarding Board (LSCB), please email lscbtrain@solihull.gov.uk with the subject ‘my views.’ Please do not use this email if you need to access help and support.

The Local Children Safeguarding Board (LSCB) has also placed a number of resources that may assist professionals and agencies in ensuring the safe, sound and sustainable participation of children and young people in the services they take part in. For further information on resources that may assist in engaging young people, please visit the Solihull LSCB website http://solihulllscb.co.uk/children-young-people.php

Eat Well, Move More

Solihull families who would like help to achieve healthier lifestyles for 7–11 year olds and their families are being offered the chance to join a new free community programme.

The Eat Well Move More course started on Tuesday 20 September at St Mary’s Church Hall, Hobs Moat for eligible children and their families.

The sessions include healthy eating and nutritional advice including learning about portion sizes, sugar, fats, 5 a day and making and tasting different foods. There are also fun activities and games, a treasure hunt and tips and ideas for being more active.

The family weight management and healthy lifestyle programme will run for 10 weeks and families will need to join at the start of the course and commit to coming each week.

Sessions take place every Tuesday, and families can choose whether to attend at 4.00pm-5.15pm or 5.30pm-6.45pm.

For more information and to find out whether your family is eligible for the programme please call Solihull Active on 0121 704 8207 or fill out an enquiry form at www.solihullactive.co.uk
Independent Travel Training

The Independent Travel Training (ITT) service teaches people how to travel safely and independently and is provided by Safe and Active Travel officers within the Highways team.

We work in partnership with individuals to meet their goals while also recognising their achievements and efforts.

What is Travel Training?

It is personalised training to teach a person to travel to and from their destination on their own whether it be school, college or work. Being able to access public transport helps people make their own choices about how they live and what they want to achieve. Our travel trainers work at the pace of the individual every day to develop their skills and confidence.

School Travel Training Team

We teach young people who currently travel to school in provided taxis. We work on a one to one basis every day teaching the skills to travel a specified route to and from school. Once a young person has successfully learnt the skills to travel independently; we will provide them with a travel pass which replaces the taxi provision.

An Independent Travel Training Video is available to watch on the Council’s website. You can access the video and information on Independent Travel at http://www.solihull.gov.uk/traveltraining

Protecting children from sexual exploitation

The seven West Midlands local authority areas – Solihull, Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton and the West Midlands Police and partner organisations have an agreed framework setting out how agencies across the West Midlands will work together to protect children from child sexual exploitation (CSE).

The strategy aims to ensure those children or young people being sexually exploited, or at risk of being sexually exploited, are identified as early as possible. It also sets out ways to ensure that victims are listened to and receive effective and timely support to meet their needs to prevent the abuse from happening, or continuing.

A regional See Me, Hear Me campaign website is available as a one-stop shop for information, help and advice for young people, parents and carers, professionals and schools. Visit www.seeme-hearme.org.uk

If you are a parent/carer of a young person and have some worries about their relationship with an older boyfriend or girlfriend or about what happens to them when they are missing from home: either returning late or not coming back overnight then you should talk to somebody.

Your child will already have contact with a number of services who you can approach for advice. This could be:-

• Your child’s school/college
• Your child’s GP
• Your child’s school nurse

Contacting the School Nurses is usually done via your child’s school, clinic or GP. However if you wish to contact them directly, please see below:

Clinical Leader School Nursing
Heart of England Foundation Trust
3 The Green
Stratford Road
Shirley
Solihull
B90 4LA
Tel: 0121 746 4403
**Better Living Centre**

The Better Living Centre in Solihull opened in 2016 and is a service providing help and support to elderly adults, young disabled adults and carers. It gives free and impartial advice from trained staff and demonstrations of useful gadgets, adaptations and equipment.

The Better Living Centre is located in Unit 4, Elmdon Trading Estate, Bickenhill Lane, Solihull, B37 7HE. You can view further information about the centre on the Council’s website.

**Independent Living and Extra Care**

Extra care housing offers a new way of supporting people to live independently for as long as they possibly can. It gives you the privacy and security of a home of your own; a range of facilities on the premises; and access to 24 hour care and support services should you need this.

Some extra care schemes have a mixture of rented and owner occupied properties, including low cost home ownership options, but each scheme is different.

Extra care can cater for a wide range of needs but is suitable for people with health problems as well as those who are healthier when they move in.

Solihull has several extra care schemes, including those for older people and those for adults with learning disabilities and we are looking at ways to provide additional extra care schemes for the future.

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**Case Study - Garden Transformation**

**Greenhill Way Extra Care Centre**

Love Solihull supported Greenhill Way Extra Care Centre over the summer with the transformation of their garden after residents became unable to manage the overgrown space. The Greenhill Way Extra Care Scheme provides 24/7 support to allow those who wish to live independently to do so, safe in the knowledge that care and support is available if required.

Members of Birmingham and Moseley Rugby Club, Shirley Neighbourhood Police Team, Greenhill Way Street Association, Solihull Neighbourhood Rangers and Solihull Community Housing all joined together to spruce up the gardens. Local businesses also played their part by making donations to assist with the makeover.

Love Solihull’s involvement was to supply the tools and equipment, co-ordinate the work on the day and promote the project to partners.
Case Study – Involving young people in their neighbourhood.

Congratulations to Merstone School, located in Solihull!

At the end of the summer term a competition took place for pupils to design a litter bin sticker that would encourage litter being placed into the litter bin and not dropped, as part of a High Rise Recycling Enhancement programme. The programme involved 37 high rise blocks within the borough that looked at enhancing the recycling facilities at multi occupancy buildings. After much deliberation, the winning design came from Merstone School. The sticker is now on the bin and is located on Windward Way. Well done to all the children that took part.

For further information please contact Tammy Rowley on 0121 704 6565 or email: trowley@solihull.gov.uk
The approach to IDPD for 2016 was very successful and enjoyable by all those taking part.

**Experts by Experience CIC**

The Experts by Experience Group are now a fully functioning Community Interest Company (CIC).

The Group is made up of service users who have a say in service improvement or service redesign in the Council’s Adult Social Care (ASC) department.

If you would like any more information about the Experts by Experience Group, please contact the Commissioning Team on 0121 704 6000.

**Case Study – Helping disabled people in our community**

St Francis Lodge

Issues were raised by disabled elderly residents from St Francis Lodge, Cornyx Lane, who were struggling to drive their mobility scooters along a stretch of footway to and from the shops on Yew Tree Lane due to raised kerbs. The route was subsequently walked by officers and Councillors so they could see the problem first hand and the difficulties were demonstrated by residents in their scooters. As a result of this, work was completed to remedy the problem.
Solihull Street Charter

The Charter developed in conjunction with the RNIB, has continued to progress through partnerships with local stakeholders including blind and partially sighted residents and organisations such as: Solihull Vulnerable Road Users Group; Solihull Association for the Blind; and Guide Dogs.

By committing to the Solihull Street Charter, the Council is aiming to improve highways access and movement for vulnerable road users in the borough, and has promised to continue to develop and change to meet their needs and requirements.

Vulnerable road users are those of us who may have difficulty seeing or hearing approaching traffic, or may have decreased mobility. This can include the elderly, the disabled, children or even cyclists and horse riders.

As part of the Charter, going forward the Council will promote easy ways for vulnerable road users to report issues and will involve and consult vulnerable road users on new highways developments and, where reasonable and possible, make changes to those schemes.

Other commitments include carrying out regular checks of advertising boards and street or café furniture; ensuring pavements remain clear and accessible; and reviewing and auditing pedestrian crossings.

Further information on the charter is available here: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/news/ArtMID/820/ArticleID/1469/Solihull-Councils-Street-Charter-launched

Solihull libraries:

Solihull libraries have signed up to a national libraries initiative called Six Steps which commits us to continuing to provide support for those with a visual impairment.

Dementia Awareness:

As a commitment to improving the quality of life for dementia sufferers and their carers the Arts and Libraries service has been working with partners to:

- Increase the understanding of the condition within the community.
- Promote the support available for sufferers and their network of family and friends
- Raise understanding of the condition amongst staff, library stakeholders and volunteers.

There have been regular Dementia Friends events and a partnership with Public health and the CCG has led to an increase in dementia resources being made available.

Books on Prescription:

Reading Well Books on Prescription is a library based service that helps people manage their health through evidence based self-help in anxiety, depression, self-esteem and stress. In Solihull, collections are based at Chelmsley Wood, The Core and Hobs Moat. In 2015 the collection was extended to include specific titles on dementia.

Virtual library tour of Chelmsley Wood and The Core:

Autism West Midlands has worked in partnership with Solihull Council to create virtual tours of both libraries. The virtual tours were designed to give people with autism the opportunity to familiarise themselves with a venue before they visit it. They are also useful to provide general awareness for anyone wanting to view the libraries before they visit us.

Case Studies:

Help for her sister who has visual impairment:

A member of the public queried the use of the magnifier at Knowle Library as her sister was visually impaired and needed to read some legal documents. We contacted the person concerned and arranged that she would have privacy in order to read the documents, showing her how to use the magnifier. We then contacted her again when The Visual Impairment Team were visiting the library to see if they would be able to...
Changing Places - New facility makes Solihull more accessible

Two new Changing Places facilities have opened in Solihull—one in the Touchwood Shopping Centre and the other on the ground floor of The Core.

This specialised toilet facility enables people with profound and multiple learning disabilities, (as well as other disabilities that severely limit mobility), their carers, assistants and families to enjoy days out. Solihull Council worked with the Changing Lives group to decide on the colour scheme of the facility and where it should be situated. The toilet has equipment including a hoist and bench designed to support disabled people who need assistance.

Support for carer whose husband has dementia:

A lady came in to Knowle Library with her husband who suffers from dementia and asked a member of staff if any help was available to her as she felt quite isolated. The staff member suggested she try attending a Dementia Café and gave her the details. The lady came back in the next week and thanked the member of staff for her help and support as she had found attending the café a great help and would continue to attend whenever possible.

Dad who is a carer – learnt children rhymes and action before birth of child:

A young man came to a new Daddy Rhymetime Session for babies and toddlers. The information about the session was given to him on a visit to Solihull Hospital via the antenatal appointment he attended with his wife. He was not local to the community and rang ahead for details of our location. On arrival a member of staff explained what Daddy Rhymetime was about, took him into the children’s area pointing out the various services which were on offer and gave him a selection of the nursery rhymes that would be used in the session. He also recapped popular rhymes and actions he could remember. He expressed his thanks and said “I’m glad I found something for the dads”.

The Library service has also reached out to a resident of a neighbouring authority. The parent in question received resources to help him bond and develop his own special relationship with his child. The parent is also looking forward to meeting with other male carers when he returns to the session with his new child.

offer her any more advice and support. The lady arranged for a relative to bring her into the library and was very pleased that we had remembered her.
Safe Places Scheme

Safe Places Solihull is a new project which helps people with learning disabilities if they feel scared or at risk while they are out and about in the community and need support right away.

People who might need to use Safe Places carry a Safe Places card with emergency contact details. If they need help, they can go to public places, like shops, libraries and restaurants that have a Safe Places sticker in their window like the picture below and ask staff there for help.

Solihull Action Through Advocacy, who is leading on the Safe Place scheme on behalf of Solihull Council, asked 100 people with a learning disability in Solihull where they live and where they go when they are out and about. It was decided that the Safe Places scheme should start in Solihull town centre.

A training film has been made about Safe Places and involved a number of disabled residents in the borough taking part in the film. The filming was enjoyed by residents and the video will shortly be available.

Thirteen people have said that they would like to be Safe Places Champions and training has started ready for the launch of the scheme in early 2017.

This facility will make a huge difference to a great number of residents who would not have felt comfortable to come into the town centre previously. It is an important step in ensuring that Solihull provides for all its residents regardless of a disability.
Case Study – Helping disabled residents

Cornerways is a Solihull Community Housing development mainly occupied by people with learning disabilities.

It was discovered that residents were unable to enjoy the garden area as it was inaccessible and unmaintained.

Jointly, the Neighbourhood Activity Programme, Amey and volunteers cleared the garden and remodelled it so that maintenance is minimal and access is improved.
Case Study Working with Changing Lives – a user’s perspective

I attended the International Day for Disabilities event in 2015 and through networking with Solihull Advocacy at the event, an opportunity arose for my role as Macmillan Cancer Information Officer to work with Changing Lives. The Changing Lives group represent the views of people with learning disabilities in Solihull. Following subsequent discussions, and attendance of an initial meeting withChanging Lives they agreed to review Macmillan easy read publications.

The review consisted of splitting into small groups and reviewing leaflets with a set of appropriate questions. This resulted in the feedback of vital information to Macmillan, who has implemented the changes within their range of easy read publications.

This work has also led to the group discussing and arranging talks about screening and developing a plan to create a cancer support group for people with learning difficulties, creating benefits for the group specifically, as well as generally improving access to clearer information for people with learning disabilities.
As our 2011 Census data shows, Solihull is now an ethnically more diverse community than it was a decade ago. In this respect, the Council recognises the importance of taking this into planning, commissioning and delivery of services, in order to meet the needs of different ethnic groups of people. We also recognise the importance of people getting on well together and taking diverse needs into account.

Ethnicity

85.8% (177,248) of Solihull residents describe their ethnic group as white British, compared with the England average of 79.8% and the West Midlands average of 79.2%. 22,430 (10.9%) of Solihull residents come from a Black or Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) group. To place this in context, this is at the lower end of the spectrum for neighbouring local authorities in the West Midlands Metropolitan area, where 42% of Birmingham’s population is from a BAME group and 26% of Coventry’s.

The largest BAME group in Solihull is Asian or Asian British with over 13,500 residents (6.6% of the total population or 60% of all BAME residents), followed by mixed race (4,400), and Black or Black British (3,200).

In addition there are 70 gypsies or Irish Travellers living in Solihull, a new population group introduced for the 2011 Census.

Solihull is becoming increasingly diverse, with the number of people from a Black or Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) group increasing by 11,638 (108%) between 2001 and 2011 compared to a fall of 4,481 (-2%) in the white population. In context the BAME population across England as a whole increased by 73%.

The number of Asian or Asian British residents increased by 7,816 (136%), Mixed Race by 1,839 (72%) and Black or Black British by 1,344 (71%).

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<td>587</td>
<td>1,226</td>
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Source: ONS Census 2001, 2011
The Census 2011 shows that the urban west of the borough has the highest concentration of BAME residents in Solihull, although only Silhill (17.2% of total population), Shirley East (16.9%) and Olton (15.7%) have a higher proportion than the England average. The rural wards of Dorridge & Hockley Heath, Knowle and Meriden (all 4.8%) have the smallest BAME populations in the borough.

Asian and Asian British residents account for 72% of the BAME population in the urban west of the borough and 61% in the wards of semi-rural south and east. However, the composition in three North Solihull regeneration areas is different, with those from a Mixed Race background accounting for 43% of the area’s BAME population and Black or Black British representing a further 42%.

15,386 (7.4%) Solihull residents were born outside of the UK, which proportionally is much lower than the England (13.8%) or West Midlands (11.2%) averages.

Of those born outside of the UK 70% have been resident in the UK for 10 years or more, this shows that immigration has been a less significant feature of Solihull’s demography than many other parts of the country; 49% of those born outside the UK have been resident for less than 10 years across England as a whole.

It is notable that a much smaller percentage of Solihull residents born outside the UK were born in those countries that joined the European Union in March 2001 than across England as a whole. In Solihull 9% (1,385) were born in the countries that formally joined the European Union in March 2001 (compared to 12%) and 7% (1,051) were born in April 2001 to those countries that formally joined the European Union in March 2011 (compared to 15%).

There are 1,150 households (1.3%) in Solihull where no people in the household have English as their main language, proportionally this is much lower than the England (4.4%) or West Midlands (3.7%) averages. A further 2,057 (2.5%) households have at least some people in the household who do not have English as their main language, again much lower than England (5.1%) or the West Midlands (4.8%).
The event brought together staff, councillors, residents and members of the Jewish community to deliver a powerful message that we must not stand by but we should speak out against persecution whether we may be directly affected or not.

**School chef wins regional culinary award**

The chef at Marston Green Infants Academy in Solihull recently won the prestigious title of West Midlands School Chef of the Year 2017. Jose, who is part of the Solihull Catering Services team, showcased his culinary expertise and flair against two top chefs from Birmingham and Coventry to win the regional award.

With a maximum of £1.30 to spend, the chefs had just one and a half hours to prepare a main course and dessert which was not only healthy but also likely to appeal to your average 11 year old. Jose impressed the panel of chefs and catering professionals with an Indian inspired main followed by mango frangipane using mashed potato as a twist.
On winning the regional award, Jose said: “I would like to thank all my colleagues and family for their support and blessings for helping me to achieve the West Midlands School Chef of the Year for 2017 and put Solihull Catering Services on the map.

“Looking forward to the national final, I will definitely put my heart and soul into competing against the other finalists to achieve one of my goals.” Jose will now compete against nine chefs for the top culinary title School Chef of the Year 2017 on Thursday 2 March 2017.

Black History Month

October is Black History Month in the UK. This year, Solihull, in partnership with other agencies, celebrated Black History Month.

We focused the month on awareness raising measures including the use of social media to inform people of hate crime and where they can report it. This work was done in partnership with Solihull Police that also included a Hate Crime Drop In stand in The Core, which members of the public could visit.

For a number of years Solihull Central Library has been an affiliate Family Search Centre, where you can browse millions of records. We have worked successfully with the Solihull and Birmingham Caribbean Group to make this happen.

Solihull Central Library holds Caribbean records and, for a small charge, you can order any available records that we don’t yet have. See our guide to ordering Family Search records.

We’ve compiled an individual island register to assist people when searching for particular records.

More records are being ordered, especially for Jamaica, so do check back regularly.

For BHM 2016, the Caribbean Family History group in partnership with the WAWI (Why Are West Indians) held an exhibition and a public Open Day at the Core in Solihull where people were able to receive free help to build their family tree.

There was also a parade in Theatre Square followed by educational talks highlighting Caribbean presence and contribution to the First World War.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service

The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service works with children and young people in the borough whose first language is not English. The Department for Education (DfE) defines this group of people in the following way:

‘A first language, where it is other than English, is recorded where a child was exposed to the language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community. Where a child was exposed to more than one language (which may include English) during early development, the language other than English is recorded, irrespective of the child’s proficiency in English.’

In Solihull there are 7% recorded EAL learners, although the number is thought to be higher as data collection is not always accurate. The numbers in individual schools vary enormously, with some schools having upwards of 35% and others as few as 1%.

EAL learners are not a homogenous group; this is well illustrated by the example of a class in a local secondary school where two of the EAL
learners exemplify the extremes. Pupil A is here with his family, having come from an international school in Beijing. His parents are professionals with university degrees who speak good English and he has already achieved fluency in two languages. Pupil B is an unaccompanied asylum seeker child (UASC) who has made a hazardous and lengthy journey from Afghanistan, with an extended stay in “the jungle”. He has no previous experience of school and had spent his life prior to leaving his home country, herding goats on the mountains. The starting point for pupil B was to learn how to hold a pencil.

Assessment:

The EAL Service has, with the support of SSAB, created its own assessment system for EAL learners known as the Solihull Profile of Competence. Such a system is essential in order to provide fair and meaningful information on pupil progress in English, as rather than focus on age-related expectations it looks at establishing a baseline on arrival to the UK and tracks English language development from that point. National Curriculum assessments and standardised assessments used in school are not appropriate or fair for pupils new to English as they are based on the premise that a child has been learning English for all their lives. If such assessments are used on children with English as an additional language they will not reflect their ability or their progress, and will provide information that makes it appear that these children have made little or no progress.

The Profile of Competence is now being used by all schools in the borough and this has made it easier for schools to be able to track and monitor this group of learners effectively both within and between key stages. The DfE recently amended its school census requirements so that all schools are expected to provide a proficiency level for their EAL pupils. The Profile of Competence has proved to be an essential tool in enabling schools to provide accurate information for this purpose. Alongside the assessment tools the Profile of Competence also includes a Tracker which provides advice on strategies and resources to support EAL learners at all stages. The documents have been well received by teachers both within and beyond Solihull and are being used in many schools up and down the country.

The full set of documents can be viewed here: http://socialsolihull.org.uk/schools/sab/useful-links/

Supporting unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASCs) and refugees in Solihull schools:

The EAL service prioritises support for children and young people who are here as unaccompanied asylum seekers or as refugees with their families. The service works closely with the Looked After Children’s Education Service (LACES) and other agencies to ensure that this particularly vulnerable group is adequately supported in schools. This group’s needs are often quite different from other EAL learners both in terms of their psychological and emotional well-being and in terms of the academic support they require. Many UASCs and refugees have had no or limited education or have had a disrupted education due to conflict and war. They have experienced trauma and may still be facing uncertain futures as their claims for asylum are being processed. As well as providing schools with advice and support with regards to appropriate strategies and resources to support their education, the EAL service staff frequently find themselves as advocates for the children, young people and their families and can provide vital information to other agencies, such as LACES and social services. The Service is currently working with the LACES and social services to provide training to designated members of staff for Looked After Children (LAC). We are also working in partnership with colleagues in Birmingham to develop a resource pack for schools.

Solihull EAL Ambassadors:

The Service is currently developing a scheme to provide additional support for children, young people and their schools and families. There is huge and often un-tapped potential within schools and communities, and the scheme aims to use these skills and knowledge to support EAL learners and to enable them to feel safe, settled and valued. The EAL Ambassadors scheme will support schools in training groups of children and young people to be EAL Ambassadors. The children and young people will be selected based on their personal qualities as well as their linguistic skills, and it is envisaged that they will be able to support and reassure new arrivals as well as teachers and parents. The focus of the training is on
developing empathy among English speakers. It aims to promote the value of being bilingual, to encourage others to see it as a positive attribute as well as to provide practical support to schools and families. Bilingual pupils will be able to use their language skills in a variety of ways to help new arrivals access English and feel part of the school. Alongside English-only speakers, they will learn different strategies to clarify, explain and ‘interpret’ a whole range of school activities, systems and procedures to new entrants through the medium of pupil-friendly English where first language isn’t shared by other pupils or adults. The first groups will be starting in January and the Service is excited to see how the scheme develops.

Libraries

Our libraries continue to provide a range of books in languages other than English. A Community Language collection comprising Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati and Punjabi is situated at The Core Library along with a range of newspapers and periodicals. There is also a section with European language novels, and children’s dual language books are available. The range of our Community Language collection is reviewed continuously and is informed by customer needs.

Use of the Self Service Kiosks in all Solihull libraries has proved to be very successful to library customers who have been able to self-issue/discharge and renew materials and pay charges easily, without having to wait in queues to see library staff. Customers can easily operate the kiosks by the use of on-screen written prompts and visual images/directions. To ensure equality of access the kiosks have been programmed with up to four alternative languages – which can be changed to meet the profile of the local community. These languages include French, Polish and Portuguese. 60.66% of all renewals and 95.74% of all issues were through the kiosk during the year 2014/15. For the current year the figures show 69.13% of renewals and 96.13% of issues are being processed through the kiosk. The library staff continue to provide customer support as and when required.

Interpretation and translation

We continue to provide an Interpreting and Translation service for people using or accessing Council services where English is not their first language, and there are no other formats in which we can communicate with the service user.

We have separate suppliers for face-to-face and telephone based interpreting services, and for translation work. There is now a more established systematic framework for people seeking a range of interpreting and translation services, including sign language interpreting and ‘easy read’ translations. This system, comprising of approved suppliers of interpretation and translation work, will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure value for money and appropriateness to the needs of our communities.
Religion

In terms of religion, the majority of Solihull residents describe themselves as Christian (65.6%), with no religion the second largest group (21.4%). The number of Christians has fallen by 13% (20,421) since 2001, with no religion increasing by 84% (20,154). This is consistent with the pattern nationally. In terms of other religions there are significantly more Muslims (+3,610, 221%), Sikhs (+1,938, 124%) and Hindus (+1,834, 99%) than in 2001.

33% of residents in North Solihull who answered the religion question in the 2011 Census say that they have no religion, a much higher proportion than in the rest of the borough (20% in urban west wards, 21% in rural wards). The urban west of the borough has the highest concentration of residents from a non-Christian religion; 81% of Muslims in the borough live in the urban west wards as well as 78% of Hindus and 69% of Sikhs. Although in the case of the latter, the largest concentration is in the semi-rural ward of Blythe (14% of Sikh population of the borough).

Additional key facts about Solihull are available on the Statistics and Census page on our website.

Working in Partnership with Faith Communities

New research reveals that half a million pounds a year is given in time by Solihull churches and faith groups to local social action projects.

Throughout 2016, we have continued to strengthen relationships with faith communities in Solihull, building on the development of the Solihull Faith Covenant in September 2015 which commits the Council, its partners and faith communities to working together constructively. Progress we’ve made includes:

- A coordinated response to the Syrian refugee crisis through the Solihull Faiths Forum. Faith groups responded generously with food, furnishings, equipment & other support.
- Building relationships e.g. dialogue with Council’s Bereavement Services Team about how the needs of different faith groups are met.
- The Council gave the Solihull Faiths Forum a small grant to support its programme of events; including the Go Green Fair (engaging the public in the environmental agenda) and its AGM (a dialogue with partners about the role of faith groups in community based social action).

A copy of Solihull Faith Covenant can be found at: http://www.solihull.gov.uk/Portals/0/Partnership/Solihull_Faith_Covenant.pdf. More information on the Solihull Faiths Forum can be found on www.solihullfaithsforum.org
Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment

As part of our service planning, commissioning, delivery and decision making processes, we continue to consider the needs of people based on their sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Although gender reassignment and sexual orientation differ, our policies tend to address Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* (LGBT) people together in recognition of the shared experience of discrimination they may face. Such an approach to our policies is in line with the law and national trends.

We continue to take steps to increase the confidence and trust of the LGBT community in the borough and involve people or groups representing the LGBT community in developing and shaping our public services. We are open to working with individuals and organisations to help us to understand the interests and requirements of our LGBT community. We want to make our borough a place where LGBT communities feel valued and safe to live, work, visit or study. We continue to work with the Police to improve the way in which we address homophobic hate crime in the borough and are very keen to involve our LGBT community in this work.

*Note* – we use the term Trans as the preferred umbrella term used to describe anyone who feels that the sex that was assigned to them at birth incompletely describes or fails to describe them. This term includes people who are transsexual, are intersex, identify outside the female/male binary, or have a gender expression which differs from their perceived sex.

Working with schools:

One area of support provided to schools and education providers in Solihull is to enhance pupil wellbeing. In 2015 Solihull Education Improvement Service within the Council made a successful bid to become a Stonewall training partner. The key purpose of the charity Stonewall is to support individuals to make a positive difference for lesbian, gay, bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people at work, home and in their communities. They equip people with the tools and confidence to connect with, influence and enable others in their communities, by challenging homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic bullying, celebrating difference and improving inclusion and visibility of role models. Sessions with schools during the period of January-December 2016 have led to the following outcomes:

- 3 Train the Trainer (staff are up skilled to go back and deliver training within their school communities) sessions delivered, 1 primary, 1 secondary, 1 cross phase (in addition to the primary session in 2015);
- School Champions - all secondary schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), 72% of schools with primary age children and 2/5th of special schools have at least one member of staff trained to deliver awareness raising around LGBT issues and challenging LGBT phobic behaviour.

Examples of actions identified to be implemented in school/impact upon staff attending training are:

“I have a better understanding of associated vocabulary. Clear ideas about how to challenge instances of HBT bullying. Good resources that can be used to support staff meetings.”

“I felt totally ‘clueless’ about implementing this in my school before the course. Now I feel much more confident and able to impart my new knowledge to staff / children / parents.”

“Most enjoyable, useful, positive training I have attended in 18 years of teaching! I’m really looking forward to using this knowledge and confidence to equip our staff, pupils and families.”

“How to be consistent as staff. To plan staff training. To plan parent workshop to look at appropriate resources. Staff working party to ensure Behaviour Policy, E-safety, Anti-bullying, are addressing these areas.”

“Learning that this is a very real issue within the local area and that, as a school, we need to develop policies, a culture and strategies for educating staff and students and for supporting our HBT students.”

Currently two schools have achieved Stonewall’s Bronze Award for their work around tackling homophobic, bi-phobic and trans-phobic (HBT) bullying and celebrating diversity. Criteria relate to the following –
February 2016 we celebrated LGBT History Month. This year’s focus was displays in the Council House Reception and Solihull Central Library with information and books on LGBT.

Public Health

LGBT people can now access specialist Sexual Health provision, especially tailored to meet their needs at the new Umbrella Sexual Health clinics which run at the Birmingham LGBT centre in Birmingham. Although the services are mainly based in Birmingham, Solihull residents can access all of them and may well be travelling into Birmingham for the other opportunities the centre and wider LGBT community offer. There is also some outreach into Solihull venues. The services are all:

• Free and accessible
• Confidential and non-judgmental
• Professionally and sensitively delivered
• Tailored to be comfortable and appropriate for LGB and T people

The BLGBT/Umbrella sexual health team offer advice and support around sexual health and well-being needs as well as facilitating access to other services and activities. The service comprises a range of specialist roles to ensure services are accessible to all members of the LGBT community - lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people.

More information is available on the BLGBT website: http://blgbt.org/sexual-health and the Umbrella website: https://umbrellahealth.co.uk which provides a lot of information about sexual health in general and local sexual health services.

All Umbrella services and clinics aim to provide good services for LGBT people.

LGBT History Month

We are committed to raising awareness and educating local people about our LGBT community whilst also supporting our LGBT employees. In
Socio-Economic Disadvantage

Solihull Partnership Assembly

On Wednesday 8 June, the annual Solihull Partnership Assembly took place at Solihull College. The event was an opportunity for partners and stakeholders from across the borough to come together around the theme for the event ‘Growing Stronger Together’.

The keynote speech was given by Dominic Campbell, the CEO of FutureGov, who talked about how we can encourage more social action by individuals and groups to make a difference to the quality of people’s lives and the places that they live. There were also three workshops designed to stimulate new ideas and approaches for building stronger communities - ‘communities in action: Three Trees Community Centre’; ‘the role of digital technology in building stronger, safer communities’ and how to ‘develop community enterprise’. Lots of new and innovative ideas were discussed and new relationships formed, some of which are now bearing fruit in the form of new community projects or social enterprises.

Action Against Poverty

In the light of the changes in the period since it was first approved, the Action Against Poverty strategy has been reviewed and refreshed by the multi-agency Action Against Poverty Champions Group and approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board on 14 June 2016.

The refreshed three year strategy for 2016 to 2019 was informed by a comprehensive need assessment. As is set out in this strategy, the causes of poverty are complex and wide-ranging.

One of these causes is where you live. So, in Solihull one in every seven children are living in poverty, but this isn’t just any one child in any seven.

For most children living in Solihull they have just 8% chance of living in poverty. For those born in the 20% most deprived areas, their chance of living in poverty is 38%. And this isn’t just about parental worklessness – most children who experience poverty live in families where at least one parent works. As the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission found in 2013, “too often demography is destiny in our country. Being born poor often leads to a lifetime of poverty.”

To address poverty therefore means not just providing information and advice to individuals, but working to ensure decent-paying jobs are created; to strengthen communities and their social capital; to provide access to affordable housing; to increase financial resilience; and to influence the wider strategic decision making which shapes where poverty happens and what forms it takes.

The strategy focuses on four priorities to make a difference to those residents in Solihull who are at risk of living in poverty:

- Providing good quality, sustainable employment opportunities that enable a reasonable standard of living for residents;
- Helping residents to be financially resilient;
- Access to stable affordable housing in sustainable neighbourhoods; and
- Shaping wider policies and decisions so they reduce the risk of poverty.

For details on Solihull’s Action Against Poverty Strategy 2016-19 please visit the Council’s website.

Employment

Solihull Council’s Employment and Skills Team support local jobseekers to move into employment, training or education. Over the past five years the team has helped over 1,200 people move into a positive outcome. They have many years’ experience helping residents to find work and have lots of knowledge about the local labour market and new job opportunities. They offer practical support providing a personalised service, including help with CVs, job applications, interview preparation and job searching.
Case study 1

John was a Year 11 leaver. He had recently finished studying a pre-16 course at Solihull College earlier in the year and had been applying for employment and training without any success. John wasn’t very confident and needed support with looking for employment and training opportunities.

Anita, Employment & Skills Outreach Officer, met with him to discuss the options open and to look at how the team could support him. John had an interest in Construction but had no previous work experience and low qualifications.

Together they updated John’s CV and started to look for suitable opportunities.

The Team’s Employer Engagement Officer highlighted four apprenticeships that were available at a local construction company. Anita contacted John who said he was interested in applying, she forwarded his CV to the employer and he was invited to an interview the following week.

They met again to give John some advice on researching and planning for his interview and to build up his confidence.

John attended his interview and was offered the Construction Apprenticeship shortly afterwards.

Case study

Carol had recently moved to Solihull from China. She came to the Solihull Job Shop for support with looking for employment as a Librarian.

Carol had been in her previous role for nine years so she hadn’t applied for any other jobs for quite a while. We discussed job searching and where to look for suitable opportunities.

We tailored her CV to apply for librarian roles ideally as this was her first choice.

Carol went on to apply for a position at a University in High Wycombe and Birmingham City University.

Carol was invited for an interview in High Wycombe and emailed me to say that she had to do a presentation as part of the interview process. I met Carol again and we discussed some useful tips on presentations, styles and what to include in her presentation.

Carol attended her interview and called me the same evening to say she had been offered the position; she was really pleased and came in to thank me the following week.

Carol has successfully moved location and started her new job which she is really enjoying.

Comments:

‘From the bottom of my heart, I thank you very much for all your help on my job applications. I met you at Jobshop on the fourth day after I came back to the UK. Your pertinent comments on my CV helped me to get it updated with a concise structure and the brief contents. Thanks for checking my updated CV patiently.

As I had not been in a face-to-face job interview since I started my previous job nine years ago, I came to you after I was offered with the interview invitations. Your professional advice and the collected professional tips for library job interviews brightened my way for the interview preparation. I have learnt from you on different types of presentations for job interviews. I must say, without your great help, I would not get my professional job application successfully in such short time period - within three weeks, I applied, I was interviewed and I got it! Thanks to your excellent job at the JobShop! Hug hug hug.

It was really nice to know you. Although I’m leaving the area, you and people I met here will be missed. I wish you all the best!’
Case Study – Solihull Gateway

The Station Road/Poplar Road public realm scheme was completed during the winter of 2015. The public realm is how we look at external places in the borough such as publicly owned streets, pathways, right of ways, publicly open spaces and public buildings that are accessible to all. These are the everyday spaces that we move through. The scheme in Station Road/Poplar Road has created a pleasing environment with bus hubs which are much more user friendly. Pedestrians have a much safer place to use public transport whilst previously the location was ranked as being one of the most popular sites in the borough for collisions.

Following on from the scheme, a video was produced by the Council’s Highway Services Team that explained how new shared use areas are to be used. It highlighted the needs of groups, such as blind or wheelchair users, that motorists should be aware of.

For more information, please visit the Council’s website.

Save money with Switch ‘n’ Save

Solihull Council has managed three successful Collective Energy Switching Schemes called Solihull Switch ‘n’ Save with the aim of helping residents find a better/more cheap deal on home gas and electricity bills.
This type of scheme is known as Collective Switching, which uses the collective bargaining power of groups of people to get better prices for electricity and gas from energy suppliers.

This scheme means residents won’t need to negotiate the often confusing world of energy suppliers and tariffs.

It is envisaged that we will have helped over 700 people get a better energy deal with potential total savings of up to £250,000 that can be used to boost the local economy.

We ran the scheme in October 2015, May 2016 and again in October 2016 and the results were:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Registrations</th>
<th>Average Savings</th>
<th>Number of Switchers</th>
<th>% of Switchers</th>
<th>Total Bill Savings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 2015</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>£ 264.92</td>
<td>247</td>
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<td>£ 65,435</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>1107</td>
<td>£ 346.99</td>
<td>442</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Oct 2016</td>
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<td>£ 220.06</td>
<td>156</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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<td>£277,32</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>35%</td>
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</tr>
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If you wish to find out further information on any of the contents featured in this report please contact us on equalities@solihull.gov.uk or phone 0121 704 6442 or visit the Council’s website:  www.solihull.gov.uk