



Diversity & Inclusion

Annual Report 2020-21

Communities, Partnerships and Services

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இந்தத் தகவலைப் பரிந்துகொள்ள உதவி தவேப்படுமாயின், equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk என்ற மின்னஞ்சல் முகவரியில் எங்களதைத் தொடர்புகொள்க

URDU

اگر آپ اس معلومات کو سمجھنے میں مدد لینا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ مہربانی equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk پر رابطہ کریں۔



Foreword

Hertfordshire is a diverse place to live and work and our county's demography reflects a broad range of people from different backgrounds. We are committed to ensuring we demonstrate diversity in everything we do; making our services accessible for everyone, and ensuring our policies and practices are inclusive.

We are committed to tackling discrimination and racism in Hertfordshire. In February 2021, County Council Members supported a motion demonstrating Hertfordshire County Council's commitment to rejecting racism, hatred and discrimination and advancing equality of opportunity and the promotion of good relations between its communities. A minute's silence was held to mark Holocaust Memorial Day which is usually observed on 27 January each year.

The pandemic of 2020-21 has been challenging for all our residents, but we know some of our residents have been disproportionately affected, whether that be because of health inequalities or pressures through financial hardship. We are proud of the hard work that our council officers have done during this period, working alongside many community groups and partners to develop targeted messages, educational webinars and continue to build and develop new partnership arrangements. An example of this is our collaboration work with the Herts Inter Faith Forum and prominent religious leaders, with several webinars held by our Director of Public Health and the Equality and Diversity team ahead of major festivals to allay their fears and offer support to our communities.

We want to make sure that all our communities and citizens are at the forefront in delivering a cleaner, greener, healthier Hertfordshire. The County Council recently agreed to invest £9.6 million in supporting



Cllr. Richard Roberts

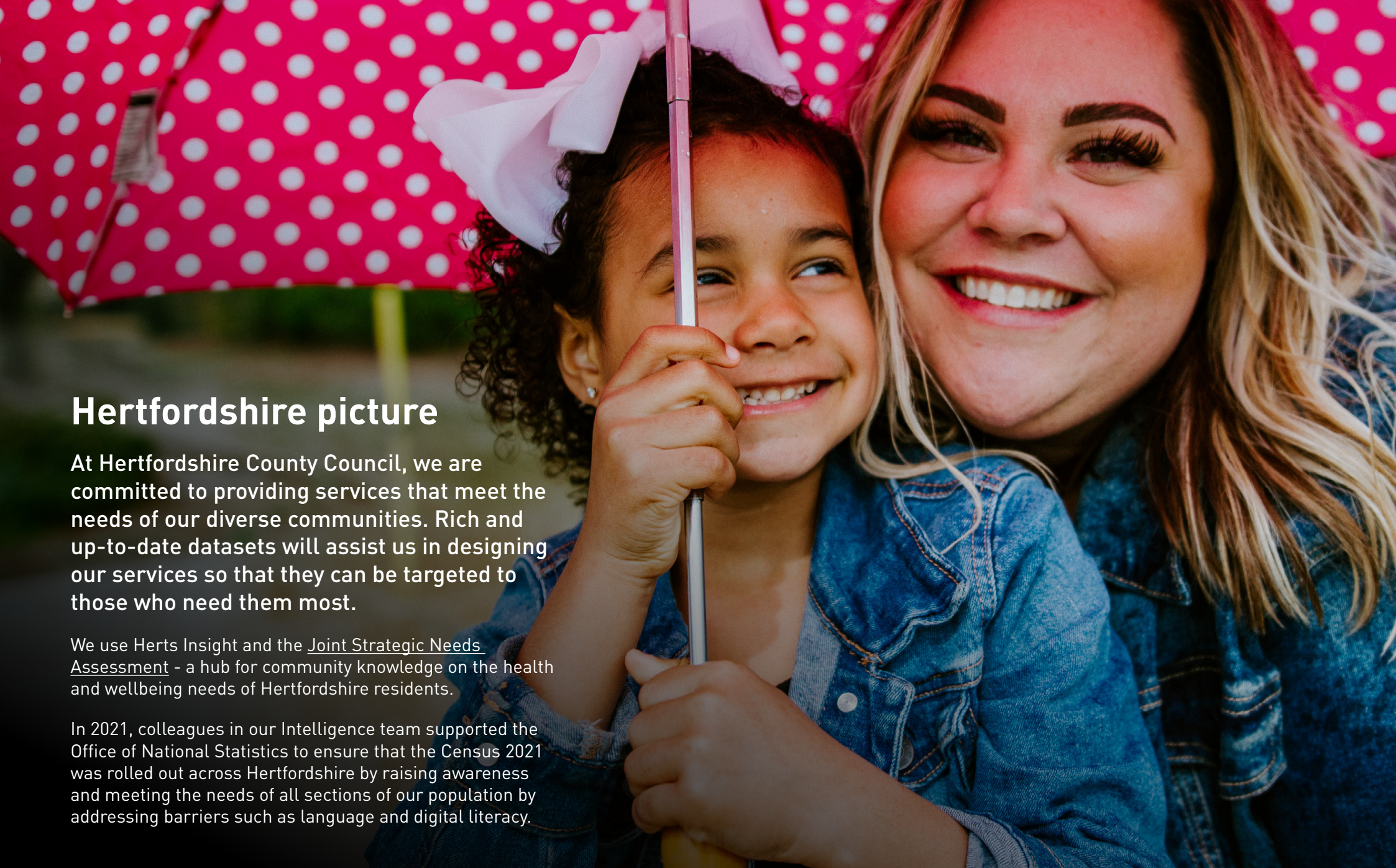


Owen Mapley

the county recover from the impact of the pandemic. We need to work closely with all our communities to deliver this just as we did during the pandemic itself. This may mean developing our community capacity, so communities are better positioned and more resilient to meet future challenges. We can only do this by working with our residents and our partners in the public, private and voluntary sector to develop partnerships which deliver for all.

This Diversity and Inclusion report 2020-21 highlights our key achievements and progress made against our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024 for Communities, Partnerships and Services. Please note, progress made against our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for workforce will be reported as a separate report in due course. To read our Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for Workforce, go to: [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2020 \(hertfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk).





Hertfordshire picture

At Hertfordshire County Council, we are committed to providing services that meet the needs of our diverse communities. Rich and up-to-date datasets will assist us in designing our services so that they can be targeted to those who need them most.

We use Herts Insight and the [Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#) - a hub for community knowledge on the health and wellbeing needs of Hertfordshire residents.

In 2021, colleagues in our Intelligence team supported the Office of National Statistics to ensure that the Census 2021 was rolled out across Hertfordshire by raising awareness and meeting the needs of all sections of our population by addressing barriers such as language and digital literacy.



CENSUS 2021

The Intelligence Group in Resources worked with the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to help everyone in Hertfordshire complete the 2021 Census. The 2021 Census, run by the ONS, took place in March 2021.

The Census will help identify the inequalities people are experiencing, their needs and will help to ensure that the big local and national decisions required following the coronavirus pandemic are based on the best information possible.

The Census 2021, for the first time, included questions about serving in the armed forces and sexual orientation and gender identity.

What did we do?

We assigned the nationally prescribed local roles of “Census Liaison Manager” and “Assistant Census Liaison Manager” to work with the ONS who undertook the following in the run-up to census day:

- Signposted the local ONS teams to Herts Insight,
- Developed an interactive dashboard and mapping tool to display such relevant characteristics as ethnicity, age, county of birth and religion.
- Verified and updated analyses by District area of the “Hard to Reach” groups to include Gypsy/Travellers, Rough Sleepers, low income households, those lacking digital skills and Refugees.
- Advised on and helped to co-ordinate the communications campaign and signposted to ONS support resources including: translation booklets, braille guidance, easy read leaflets, interpretation services and so on.

- Held group sessions and webinars with interfaith groups, the BAME network, Watford African Caribbean Association, One Vision and Herts Migration Forum.
- Provided posters promoting the census to Libraries and Register Offices.
- Provided elected Members with a “Councillor Handbook” containing relevant details.

How do we think we did in Hertfordshire?

- The Census completion rates in 686 out of the 690 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Hertfordshire were above the levels forecast at the outset by the ONS.
- The remaining 4 LSOAs were in line with the projected completion rate for those areas

On this measure, we believe that the 2021 census in Hertfordshire was a success. The census outputs begin to come on stream in March 2022. We will be studying this data very carefully to ensure we fully understand the very latest analysis of Hertfordshire as a diverse place to live and work, in which the county’s demography reflects a broad range of people from different backgrounds.



HERTFORDSHIRE POPULATION

The mid-year 2020 POPULATION

estimate puts Hertfordshire's population at

1,195,672

Recent pandemic has shone light on health inequalities experienced by certain protected characteristics including BAME and disabled people. This might mean the need for pro-active needs analysis and assessments.

This is projected to rise to

1,243,138

by mid-2043

GENDER

585,403 (49%) MALES

610,269 (51%) FEMALES

Males are more predominant amongst those from Mixed, Asian and 'Other ethnic' groups

MALES FROM GYPSY/TRAVELLER

backgrounds make up 5.1% less of the group's population compared to the White British

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Of the estimated total population of Hertfordshire at mid-2020,

246,649 (20.6%) were aged under 16

Over **25,000** children live in poverty

According to ONS, Health State Life Expectancies report, **Male life expectancy** at birth in Hertfordshire is **81.0 YEARS** and **female life expectancy** at birth is **84.2 YEARS**

OLDER PEOPLE

Of the estimated population of Hertfordshire at mid-2020, In 2019, approximately

4.6% people, aged 65 and over were diagnosed with DEMENTIA

205,909 (17.2%) were aged 65 and over

HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE



East Herts, followed by North Herts, have the largest population of older people in Hertfordshire

DISABILITY



6.2% HERTFORDSHIRE RESIDENTS

in 2011 had a long-term illness or disability that limited their day-to-day activities a lot

8.1% HERTFORDSHIRE RESIDENTS

in 2011 had a long-term illness or disability that limited their day-to-day activities a little



THERE WERE 5,159 pupils (2.6%)

with a statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan in Hertfordshire

BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC (BAME)

Approximately 19.2% of Hertfordshire residents identified themselves in ethnic groups other than White British, which compares to 11.23% in 2001



3.2% Hertfordshire households do not have anyone speaking English as the main language



WATFORD has the highest concentration of non-English speakers with 7.6% of households. (Predominantly speaking South Asian languages)



WELWYN HATFIELD has the next highest concentration, with 4.3% of households not speaking English as their first language (Predominantly speaking Other European languages)

RELIGION AND BELIEF

Breakdown of Hertfordshire religious groups in 2011

58.3%

STATED THEY WERE CHRISTIAN

2.8% MUSLIM
1.9% JEWISH
1.9% HINDU
0.5% BUDDHIST
0.5% SIKH



Herts Interfaith Forum has representatives from Inter Faith Associations across Hertfordshire who provide faith related intelligence and views

LGBTQ+

Approximately

6,200 SAME SEX cohabiting or civil partners live in Hertfordshire

census 2021

The new Census 2021 has included a question about

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

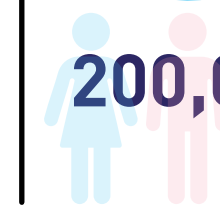
and therefore more up-to-date information will be available in a year or so.

TRANSGENDER



ROBUST DATA ON THE UK TRANS POPULATION DOES NOT EXIST

The Government Equalities Office tentatively estimated in 2018 that there are approximately



200,000-500,000

TRANS PEOPLE IN THE UK

In Hertfordshire, TSG holds transgender and non-binary support groups.



Our commitment to Public Sector Equality Duty

At Hertfordshire County Council, we are committed to meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

The PSED is a duty on public authorities to consider how their policies or decisions affect people who are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The protected characteristics are; age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity and marriage and civil partnerships. Although not a protected characteristic, carers are also a key consideration for Hertfordshire County Council and are protected under the Act by association with protected groups.

The PSED requires public bodies to pay due regard to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The Council's new [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024](#) for Communities, Partnerships and Services, published in March 2021, outlines these three key themes to ensure our commitment to the PSED is fulfilled:

- Connecting with our communities
- Be the change
- Working in partnership for an inclusive Hertfordshire

These key themes are aligned to the [Council's Corporate Plan 2019-25](#) priorities and broadly follow the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG).



Our key achievements in 2020-21

Key theme 1: Connecting with our communities

We want to empower our communities by providing them with the platform to ensure their diverse voices are heard, celebrate the uniqueness of our residents, respond to their needs and challenges and establish a shared culture that is Hertfordshire.

Co-producing adult social care

Co-production is helping to shape adult social care in Hertfordshire. Working with people who have experience of using services, family carers and partner organisations we can draw on their expertise, networks and trusting relationships within communities to find out what's important to them. Co-production is a really different way of working - challenging, inspiring, spirited and ambitious.

We brought a range of people together as equal partners, using their knowledge and different experiences to shape the plan to make services better for everyone. Our plan now sets out this joint vision and ambitions for adult social care into the future, guiding the development and transformation of services for people we support.

Co-production won't end here. The shared aspirations in the plan will be delivered through working together with those who have the knowledge, lived experience and community networks to develop and improve vital services, united in a common understanding of what we want to achieve together. Find out more about co-production and how to get involved here: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/coproduction.

Co- Production with Parents, Carers, Children and Young People with SEND

To ensure co-production and that our families with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have their views and needs embedded from inception across the workstreams projects we have ensured that we have Herts Parents Carers Involvement partners engaged across each workstream.

Our Herts Parents Carers Involvement partners also co-produce the content on our Local Offer website to ensure the content is informative, relevant, clear and concise.

Hertfordshire Home Library Service – a 'lifeline' to many

The Library Service has for decades offered a Home Library Service delivering books to vulnerable customers, a service many describe as a "lifeline."

In the days following lockdown staff responded, developing a doorstep service so that Home Library Service customers could continue to receive a supply of books delivered safely, to their door. By the end of March 2020, 215 people received a collection and by October over a thousand deliveries were made. When arranging these deliveries over the phone, customers said they were glad of someone to talk to, as they were unable to go out or have family or friends visit them.

The Home Library Service could not exist without the support of volunteers. Included with the books are social care information leaflets and details about services that may be of interest. Very often calls become befriending conversations, an aspect which staff and volunteers describe as being mutually rewarding.



Children's Services focus on LGBT+ young people

LGBT+ Multi cultural project

The Services for Young People LGBT+ Multicultural Project is for young black, Asian, minority ethnic and refugee (BAMER) people in Hertfordshire who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or who are questioning their sexuality or gender assigned to them at birth.

LGBT+ Schools Project

Works with 10 secondary schools per term across Hertfordshire to improve inclusivity for LGBT+ young people. The project offers schools free:

- Awareness raising and anti-bullying presentations and workshops
- Support with setting up LGBT+ ally schemes and groups
- Break time pop-ups for awareness raising and signposting for further support

Who Not What

Who Not What represent the voice of LGBT+ young people in Hertfordshire.

Who Not What is a group of LGBT+ young people who, supported by Youth Workers from Services for Young People, work to improve services for the young LGBT+ community in Hertfordshire.

Services for Young People runs youth projects in every district in Hertfordshire for LGBT+ young people aged 13-17. The projects run every week (term-time only) and are safe and confidential spaces for you to meet other young LGBT+ people, get support and take part in a range of activities. We also run one transgender project and two projects for 18-24 year olds.

From July 2020-December 2020: A total of 157 young people accessed support through the Services for Young People district LGBT+ projects from July 2020- December 2020.



Case study: Breeze in Hertfordshire, a cycling initiative inspires women from diverse backgrounds to discover the joy of bike riding

Breeze, so named to capture the fun and freedom of cycling, was set up in 2011 alongside Sport England and with the support of National Lottery funding.

Hertfordshire has 66 trained Breeze Champions (volunteer ride leaders) who actively organise and lead the HSBC UK Breeze women's only rides within their communities. These were availed by women from all cultures and notably from Muslim women. Average monthly figures include a total of 133 Breeze Rides conducted throughout each of the 10 districts of Hertfordshire; attended by 428 women of all abilities.

The Watford Cycling Hub has one of the fastest growing Breeze Rides programmes, offering beginner Breeze Rides to local residents each week. Importantly, the Watford Cycle Hub Breeze Rides invite participants to hire the Beryl Bikes from outside the Watford Cycle Hub, allowing women who do not own their own bike to participate. The Breeze Rides offer a brilliant continuation for those who have recently completed Watford Cycle Hubs' absolute beginners learn to ride programme to ensure they continue to practice their new skills in a safe, fun and friendly environment.

Did you know? There is a Google map to assist public rights of way network

Countryside and Rights of Way released a Google map of the Hertfordshire public rights of way network. The map can be loaded onto a smartphone, making it easy to follow your location as you go. This is much more user friendly for all, especially for those with certain disabilities. It is available at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/rowmap



Key theme 2: Be the Change

We recognise our role as an organisation to ensure that diversity and inclusion are embedded in everything that we do. We continue to build a culture of inclusion, mutual respect and education within our services.

We will take responsibility to accept where we can improve as an organisation and look for opportunities to ensure that our organisation continues to uphold our values of diversity and inclusion.

In line with the commitment outlined above, Hertfordshire County Council operates a structure designed to provide ownership and leadership on diversity and inclusion at all levels of our organisation. This includes the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive issuing statements condemning racism and signalling our zero-tolerance approach on all forms of discrimination.

Our Members' Diversity and Inclusion Reference Group provides elected members ownership and supervision for diversity and inclusion issues.

Our corporate Diversity and Inclusion Board (DIB) provides strategic leadership and direction on equality and diversity issues across the council. From September 2021, this Board will be chaired by the Chief Executive.

Our departmental Diversity and Inclusion Boards identify equality and diversity issues relevant to their departments and take forward appropriate mitigations and monitor actions and feed into the Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Board.

Our Adult Care Services and Children's Services department participated in phase one of the Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard. This is a Department for Health and Social Care and Department for Education initiative.

Our Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process is embedded in decision making processes and informs our County Councillors and senior leadership about potential differential equalities implications for all major proposals and raises awareness of any necessary mitigations. Our annual audit of EqIAs provides quality assurance to this process and helps identify areas where improvement is required.

Diversity matters when commissioning our services

More and more services are being commissioned or outsourced. Equality, diversity and inclusion must be considered at an early stage of the commissioning process. The guidance considers information about equality obligations, needs of potential target groups and equality monitoring to inform future commissioning cycles to provide consistency at the heart of commissioning from start to finish. It is a contractual requirement for all suppliers to have an Equality & Diversity policy. The Procurement Team have recently revamped the supporting guidance to ensure that it is up to date and relevant.



Our new fire appliances embrace inclusion messages

Community Protection continues to invest in the best equipment for Hertfordshire's Firefighters to support the delivery of high-quality services to the public and in early 2021 they distributed some new appliances to their stations.

All fire appliances carry safety or awareness messages and the directorate's Staff Inclusion Network Group came together to design a message which promoted inclusion and supported their commitment to eliminate discrimination both as an employer and as a provider of services.

"The message was designed to promote Hertfordshire's recently launched Diversity and Inclusion Strategies with the hashtag #MakingInclusionPartOfOurDNA and sends out an important message to colleagues and members of the public that we have a genuine commitment to inclusion for all" (Hannah Sherwood, Inclusion and Engagement Manager).

Look out for the messages on a fire engine near you!



HERTS
Reusable
Nappies

A GREAT FIT

Choose the best routine for you

WasteAware.org.uk/ReusableNappies
#ChangingNappies



Be Included Outcome Bee

Children' Services are fully aware of the need to ensure young people from diverse backgrounds feel included and feel represented in our 'Outcome Bee' framework. This is to ensure an accurate picture of what children and young people think. For this reason, a 7th Bee - 'Be Included' - was included in this framework to increase engagement with more children and young people from diverse backgrounds who have had varied experiences of receiving services. Targets and outcomes for this bee will be decided by considering the views of children and young people.

The Herts Reusable Nappy Scheme attracts people from diverse backgrounds

The Herts Reusable Nappy Scheme launched in November 2020 to encourage residents to use reusable nappies and reduce the number of disposable nappies in Hertfordshire bins. The scheme imagery was designed to be as inclusive as possible, for example including images of fathers representing different races, ages and abilities. The scheme has had notable attention, including recognition from the national lobbying group 'The Nappy Alliance' who stated Hertfordshire are "operating in a much more modern way than many other schemes out there".

Since November 2020 the new 'HERTS Reusable Nappies' scheme has engaged over 500 residents from diverse backgrounds by offering 15% off the purchase of reusable nappies and accessories across 8 partner suppliers.



Did you know?

THERE ARE



5,159 pupils (2.6%)

WITH A
**EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLAN
IN HERTFORDSHIRE**



Case study: Fostering Diversity Task Force

This year the Fostering Service has been working to implement the 'One Team' Fostering Strategy, which aims to grow and improve in-house fostering in Hertfordshire.

As part of this work, staff and foster carers fed back that they thought diversity and inclusion should be included throughout the whole Strategy, and so we formed the Fostering Diversity Task Force to lead on this. This group includes staff from fostering and partner teams as well as foster carers. The group will be looking at all elements of diversity and inclusion, including gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, and religion. They have been identifying and delivering a series of actions to increase diversity within fostering, and to ensure all foster children, carers and staff have their needs met.

One of the key task identified by the Task Force is the need for more support for foster carers who look after children from different cultural or racial backgrounds.

The Task Force took on this challenge by setting up an online diversity resource hub for foster carers. The hub included links to websites, podcasts and other sources of information about diversity. New bespoke guidance is also being written by Hertfordshire carers and social workers. This will contain advice and tips about how to find suitable books and toys for diverse children, correct terminology, hair and skin care for black children, and how to help a child have a positive sense of their ethnic background and identity.



Key theme 3: Working in partnership for an inclusive Hertfordshire

We understand the benefits of collaborative partnerships. We want to work with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sector to develop partnerships which deliver a fairer outcome for all and create an inclusive society in Hertfordshire.

We are committed to providing effective platforms for greater community cohesion and will play an active role in seeking opportunities to engage with our stakeholders. We will work with community leaders, experts by experience and residents for developing services to reflect the needs of our diverse communities.



Hertfordshire County Council is the lead agency in several diverse partnerships across Hertfordshire such as:

- Hertfordshire Forward
- Herts Inter Faith Forum
- LGBTQ+ Partnership
- BAME Network and Health inequalities partnerships
- Learning Disability and Herts Care Providers.

Hertfordshire Forward spotlights diversity and inclusion in Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire Forward is the countywide strategic partnership which brings together all the key agencies in the county to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of Hertfordshire residents. At their last conference in November 2020, a session was dedicated to Diversity: working together for a safe and inclusive county of opportunity. The speakers included; David Williams, then Leader of Hertfordshire County Council; Lionel Wallace, DL, High Sheriff of Hertfordshire; Kate Belinis DL, CEO of Community Development Action; and Elaine Hickling of the BAME Staff Group, Hertfordshire County Council. This was very well received by attendees.



Faith communities step up their support to communities in Hertfordshire during the lockdown - update by Herts Inter Faith Forum

The pandemic arrived in March 2020. Places of worship were closed and the faithful had to find new ways of communicating. Zoom and Teams became the vehicles of choice.

Priorities in Faith Groups were to maintain contact with vulnerable congregants and devise safe methods to hold services. Most Faiths around the county arranged phone rotas to the elderly and vulnerable, organising shopping and medical visits. Early into the lockdown, Watford were providing weekly prayers on Zoom, North Herts were providing dialogues on zoom, St Albans Abbey offered services with music, Broxbourne had three prayer sessions a week.

Christian worship adjusted to the zoom media though Communion was not possible. Hindus have adapted to the Zoom media and are able to contact Temples around the world to augment their home alter. There were limits to using Zoom for Orthodox Jews, who could not use any electrical equipment during the Sabbath or Holy Days and whose service depended on the presence of ten adult males. Most synagogues compromised with a service just before Sabbath and one after, both on Zoom. Liberal and Reform Jews were able to use Zoom prayers through the sabbath. Our Muslim friends, who are required to pray with at least four others, found compromises. Individual prayers were allowed. Some Mosques broadcasted prayers, talks and reminders.

Places of worship were closed in March 2020 and did not reopen till July 2020 with a reduction on capacity to comply with social distancing. Masks were mandatory, services were reduced in length and attendance was by invitation only. Any equipment had to be disinfected before and after the service and no singing was allowed. This continued till November 2020 when the second wave closed everything. They reopened in December 2020 with the same restrictions and closed again in January 2021. They opened again in April with restrictions.

While the loss of capacity was easily managed for the rest of the year, festivals raised new challenges. For the Jewish New Year and the

Day of Atonement, schemes included splitting the festival into small services, attendance by booking and much reduced services to limit the exposure time.

For funerals and social events, there were limits on those who could attend and often the event was done on Zoom.

With the introduction of the vaccine, faith leaders encouraged everyone to be vaccinated in spite of many fears among the congregants.

We now approach the loosening of restrictions and are planning to adapt back to our old norms. It may be that the congregations are now used to limited access to places of worship and the task of faith leaders is to bring them back to the fold. The value of Zoom will not disappear. It is a convenient media especially for winter months but the face-to-face meetings are still preferred.



One Vision Watford rises to the challenge and supports vulnerable groups during the pandemic

Founded in August 2018, One Vision is a community project which provides practical support to vulnerable individuals and families in Hertfordshire particularly in the district of Watford and Three Rivers.

One Vision is supported and has strong links with agencies and organisations such as Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service, the Police, Housing providers and many other referral paths into the community.

When reports of the Covid-19 began circulating in early 2020, One Vision immediately set to work, delivering over 100,000 hot meals and 50,000 bags of groceries to vulnerable families throughout 2020/2021.

Currently, One Vision provides a free food programme, delivering fresh meals and groceries door to door within the Watford and Three Rivers areas. This is community spirit at its finest with a collaboration of joy bringing together the contributions of all involved to help and serve those who need support.

One Vision recently launched the One Voice initiative, 'bringing communities together'. Along with working with young people through setting up the Watford Youth Council in August 2020. One Vision are now expanding into community Mental Health support.



Hertfordshire's VPAC transitions towards recovery

The Voluntary and People Assistance Cell (VPAC) is a multi-agency partnership which, as part of the county's Local Resilience Forum, mobilised the county's voluntary and community sector to support vulnerable and often under-represented groups (including those that are clinically extremely vulnerable and were previously 'shielding') affected by COVID-19. Part of the VPAC consists of colleagues from across voluntary sector organisations, districts and boroughs, health and across multiple departments from within Hertfordshire County Council.

In helping people to be cared for at home and not in hospital and supporting people when discharged from hospital, the services played an important role in reducing pressure on the NHS and Social Care, as well as supporting citizens during this period. The programme has moved from the initial response to COVID-19 and is now focusing on transitioning towards recovery and ensuring sustainability.

Government funding has allowed new support offers established as part of VPAC's COVID response. HertsHelp, a network of community organisations working together, has been the principle gateway contact point for signposting and support to wider preventative services across Hertfordshire providing care, medication and food support where required, including access to volunteer shoppers for food, medication deliveries and befrienders via the Community Help Hertfordshire partnership, and an enhanced Hospital and Community Navigation Service. The three-tiered Crisis Intervention Service has supported residents in need, including with food, energy/utility costs and other essentials (e.g. white goods), as well as preventative Mental Health and wellbeing services.

As part of VPAC's offer of support, carers have received support via Carers in Herts with keeping in touch calls, digital inclusion, information and advice and PPE, as well as helping with contingency planning by implementing a Carers In Case of Emergency plan via a portal.



Hertfordshire BAME network creates opportunities for difficult conversations

The Hertfordshire BAME Network was born out of discussions within the Hertfordshire Community Reassurance Cell, part of the county's resilience response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Launched in September 2020, the Network aims to provide a voice for the BAME Community of Hertfordshire; lobbying for changes to inequality and providing an avenue for minority voices to be heard.

The network is chaired by Clive Saunders OBE, Chair of the Watford African Caribbean Association. Kate Belinis DL, CEO of the Community Development Action is the vice-chair. The group membership is made up of public and voluntary sector professionals who provide much needed expertise and focus for the network.

Highlights over the past year has been the facilitation of a series of thought-provoking conversational webinars about the BAME experience. These included;

- Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on the Hertfordshire BAME community
- A conversation on adult mental health and
- A conversation continued – Youth and Education, exploring the themes of the effects of the pandemic on our BAME young people from an educational viewpoint

These webinars included distinguished panellists from their field and a large participation of people from diverse groups in Hertfordshire.

The group's action plan has been updated as a result of the discussions at these webinars. Plans include future programmes that support people from BAME backgrounds to maximise their impact and make positive changes for local people.



Hertfordshire's Hate Crime Strategy 2021-2026

Hertfordshire's Hate Crime Strategy has been developed by Hertfordshire's County Community Safety Unit and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

This strategy outlines Hertfordshire's plans for reducing the harm caused by Hate Crime to individuals, families and communities. It has been informed by Hertfordshire Hate Crime Analysis 2020, Hertfordshire Hate Crime Strategy 2017-2020 and the Action Against Hate action plan, 2016. The strategy will be supported by an annual delivery plan, to be overseen by the Hate Crime Partnership Board and delivered through working groups as required.

More information can be found in the [Hertfordshire Hate Crime Strategy](#).



Did you know?

THE



INTEGRATED TRANSPORT UNIT

REDESIGNED THE TRAVEL CARD HOLDERS

available to people with disabilities, with Braille included on the front of the card holder.



Adult Care Services' Provider Support Hub for home care providers, a service to be immensely proud of...

The Hertfordshire Care Providers Association (HCPA) Provider Support Hub was created in collaboration with Hertfordshire County Council at the start of the pandemic. From creation the Hub has run a service which has supported Care providers seven days a week both in and out of service hours on all things COVID-19 related.

The hub offers both a dedicated telephone helpline and email. Since its inception in March 2020, has been staffed by a dedicated team of HCPA colleagues offering a triage service and a complex enquiry response service, to ensure rapid support is provided when it is required. Supported by a network of partners across Hertfordshire's health and Adult Care Sector, the Hub is heavily integrated with the HCC Care Home Outbreak Cell and the strategic vaccination cell.

The aim of the Hub has been to deliver consistent messaging around guidance and information with an immediate response throughout the pandemic.

The key to the success of the hub has been its strength in continued conversation and a collective vision to offer the best guidance and support possible for providers.

Being reactive and responsive has been the key to the Hubs success....

With over 4660 calls and 7227 emails to date it is evident that the Hub has been a lifeline to Providers, supporting them across all aspects of care and other challenges that have arisen throughout the pandemic.



Case study: Just Talk Ambassadors Scheme, part of Hertfordshire's multi-agency mental health campaign

Steered by young people, coordinated by Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health team, and involving 35 partners from across our Hertfordshire mental health system, Just Talk encourages young people to widen their toolkit of coping strategies and normalises activities which will protect their mental health, including reaching out to someone for support if they are struggling. www.justtalkherts.org provides a wide range of free resources for children, young people, their parents, schools and other professionals, as well as details of who to contact, for advice and help.

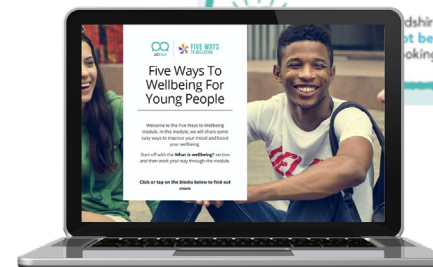
The Just Talk Ambassadors scheme was established in 2020, providing training, support and resources to young people, so they can champion and promote positive mental health messages in their schools, colleges, youth groups and communities. Despite the impact of COVID-19, the scheme has continued to grow since it was established, with Ambassadors engaging via online platforms. There are currently around 50 Ambassadors aged 12-22 (July 2021), including young people from under-represented groups. They led some innovative activities throughout November 2020's Just Talk campaign week, which, due to COVID-19 took place entirely online. Ambassadors created short films, delivered assemblies within their schools and created daily form time wellbeing activities.

Several students attending West Herts College in Watford and Hemel Hempstead have joined the Just Talk Ambassadors Scheme, taking part in activities to help themselves, as well as their fellow students at the college including:

- Creating promotional videos for the campaign
- Organising a takeover of Just Talk's Instagram account
- Running focus groups and peer-led focus groups, with students on various emotional wellbeing topics
- Taking part in televised interviews for the college community, sharing their views on the importance of talking and that it's OK to not be OK
- Attending Mental Health First Aid awareness training sessions, wellbeing workshops and hearing from expert motivational speakers
- Helping shape the campaign and recruit new ambassadors

A Student Support Coordinator at West Herts College said:

During COVID-19, the Just Talk Ambassador Scheme supported not only the students, but also the staff during such an unprecedented time. This allowed sharing of resources and tools, and made it easier to reach out to others. Sessions were also held to provide a safe space for students and staff to relay their fears and gain support to become resilient through these times. We had a lot of open communication with external partners who listened to our needs and responded accordingly.



To find out more, visit: www.justtalkherts.org and/or follow the campaign on social media, for useful tips and updates on young people's health and wellbeing in Hertfordshire:

 JustTalkHerts  @JustTalkHerts  @JustTalkHerts



Next Steps

As stated in our [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2024](#), we aim to take forward these actions;

Connecting with our communities

We will:

- learn more about our communities by establishing a comprehensive set of information about our local communities' protected characteristics, needs and outcomes. This analysis will be regularly updated, published and used to identify priorities for a local area.
- work with communities and deliver policies that are based on sound evidence and research around the needs of our communities for example; health inequalities, protection from hate-crime, disabilities, socio-economic impacts, education, older people and carers.
- identify areas where there are gaps in our service knowledge, areas where we can improve as an organisation and implement measurable actions.
- seek to establish effective targeted communication and engagement methods to engage with a wider cross-section of Hertfordshire's local communities, providing them with a voice and opportunity to shape how our services support their needs.

Be the Change

We will:

- lead by example, establishing a culture of inclusion, acceptance and education in the services we deliver in order to meet the needs of our diverse communities.
- objectively measure and improve the participation of underrepresented communities in public life and Council engagement events.
- promote and celebrate different cultures in Hertfordshire, working to educate residents on the traditions and beliefs of their fellow communities that call Hertfordshire home.
- ensure that we deliver a strong vision for improving equality outcomes in Hertfordshire. We will ensure that as an organisation we are compliant with our public sector equality duties, with county councillors taking the lead in scrutinising our performance as an organisation and advancing our pledge to reduce inequality and challenge discrimination in Hertfordshire.
- apply a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and hate in our procured, commissioned and council run services by ensuring robust policies and their implementation in all our service delivery.
- ensure that our governance process reflects our organisational commitment to deliver on matters of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Working in partnership for an inclusive Hertfordshire

We will:

- work closely with our partners including; the BAME Network, the Herts Inter Faith Forum and the Hate-Crime Partnership to develop and deliver shared strategic goals around embedding equality, diversity and inclusion in Hertfordshire.
- be an active partner and encourage the pooling of evidence, resources and action planning to deliver achievable and measurable change. We will strive to establish a culture of accountability and ensure we collectively champion equality and inclusion in everything that we deliver.
- work closely with our local partners in health, the police, the voluntary sector and the private sector to deliver a collaborative and combined approach to narrowing the equality gaps in Hertfordshire.





Diversity & Inclusion

Annual Report 2020-21

Communities, Partnerships and Services