

Hertfordshire County Council

MEETING OUR EQUALITY DUTIES

2016/17 Progress Report

2017/18 Action Plan



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1 Executive Summary

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity as a large employer and provider of services. This Executive Summary gives a short overview of our key achievements between April 2016 and March 2017 and priorities for the coming year. For more details and further examples, please refer to sections 3 and 4.

[Knowing our communities](#) enables us to understand the diverse needs of our service users and better target resources. Our services regularly gather, use and review data about the make-up of our communities and the take-up of and demand for our services. As a result:

During 2016/17 we have

- Piloted 'Safe and Well' community safety visits in Hertsmere to older, vulnerable residents identified through analysis of this data
- Refreshed, updated and promoted Market Position Statements to support current and potential providers to develop the right care and support services for residents
- Used Community Profiles and commentaries on protected characteristics data to inform equality impact assessments and service reviews

During the next year we will

- Launch our new *Herts Insight* and *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment* websites
- Roll out our 'Safe and Well' initiative across Hertfordshire from May 2017
- Improve budget forecasting by launching our Learning Disability dashboard by June 2017

We demonstrate [leadership, partnership and organisational commitment](#) on equality and diversity issues and responsibilities so that they are seen as everybody's business and considered by all areas of the council. As a result:

During 2016/17 we have

- Published our Equality Strategy 2016-2020 and agreed objectives with all departments
- Rigorously considered the equalities implications of all major service and policy proposals
- Celebrated a number of events to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues, including the Year of Mental Health and Carers Rights Day
- Worked with the Community and Voluntary Sector to promote the Hertfordshire Compact

During the next year we will

- Include Equality and Diversity Awareness raising information in Members' Induction and signpost to additional resources, including an updated Members Information System
- Consult on, publish and launch a Hate Crime Strategy for Hertfordshire
- Further strengthen partnership arrangements and resources for tackling domestic abuse
- Continue to involve Herts Equality Council and Herts Interfaith Forum in Hertfordshire Forward and identify opportunities for other interested groups

By [engaging with our communities](#) we give people the opportunity to shape services so they will meet the needs of the people who will use them.

During 2016/17 we demonstrated our commitment to do this by

- Launching our Co-Production Board, working with service users and their families to identify priorities and improve and shape adult care services
- Continuing to support and work with our Learning Disability Partnership Board and All Age Autism Partnership Board to improve a wide range of services
- Consulting on a new model for our in-house day services
- Supporting *Who not What* volunteers to raise awareness of issues affecting young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Hertfordshire

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During the next year we will

- Carry out additional user testing on our new website and use feedback to refine content
- Agree and promote co-production standards and principles across the council
- Survey residents on our Integrated Plan proposals and their views on our wider services
- Provide veterans' families with advice about in-year applications to schools for their children
- Consider how equal access and take up of volunteering opportunities can be improved

We are committed to delivering [**responsive services**](#) that make a difference to people's lives and **good customer care** to everyone who contacts us or uses our services. Our services are always looking for ways that they can improve, innovate and ensure equality of access. As a result:

During 2016/17 we have

- Transformed the lives of some of the most vulnerable children and families in Hertfordshire through our pioneering Family Safeguarding project
- Reduced the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Launched our new 0–25 Disability Service to help children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities get better, joined up support at the right time
- Re-commissioned our community dementia support services to improve access to support
- Worked with partners to better tackle domestic abuse, including improving the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor service and re-commissioning Housing Related Support for victims
- Reviewed our Healthwalks programme and identified ways it can reach more people
- Improved access to information and advice in a number of ways, including launching our new website, better helping people with disabilities travel on public transport and providing Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children with vital support from our interpreting services.
- Held our first event to look at tackling the issues around modern slavery in Hertfordshire.
- Employed a worker to assess work on adult safeguarding and making safeguarding personal.
- Updated and strengthened the Safeguarding Adults business plan and agreed priorities for 2017/18.

During the next year we will

- Develop and improve our Families First portal, acting on feedback from users
- Complete a range of commissioning work to improve equality of access to support
- Re-procure Translation and Interpreting services and promote the new service to staff
- Publish our new Public Health strategy
- Train officers working with the Voluntary Sector on the Hertfordshire Compact
- Take forward the priority areas of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board for Hertfordshire citizens: modern slavery, domestic abuse, self-neglect and scamming.

We also know that we need a [**skilled workforce that is committed to equality and diversity**](#), with the knowledge and tools to work in a flexible, inclusive way. As a result:

During 2016/17 we

- Strengthened our employee offer, including new 'Smart Worker' tools
- Improved learning and development courses that focus on equality and diversity issues
- Reviewed guidance available to support managers to make reasonable adjustments for staff
- Published our [**annual workforce report**](#), which identified our key workforce issues and what is being done to address them

During the next year we will

- Develop a new approach to recruiting and developing apprentices
- Report on our gender pay gap, in line with new national Government requirements
- Launch phase 1 of our Performance Management and Development System review
- Continue to run Unconscious Bias training
- Commission and roll out a new video conferencing tool to help staff work remotely
- Report analysis of staff (e.g. starters, leavers) by protected characteristic groups and confirm actions
- Promote new resources for managers to help them implement Reasonable Adjustments for staff

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2 Our commitment to Equality & Diversity

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity as a large employer of people and as a provider of services. This is about more than legal compliance: we want to ensure that Hertfordshire is free from discrimination and make every effort to positively promote equality and diversity within our workforce and across the services we are responsible for.

As a deliverer of services, we will promote diversity and equality in everything we do to improve the quality of life of everyone living in, working in and visiting Hertfordshire - to create a county of opportunity for all.

As an employer, we are an organisation where diversity drives innovation, progression is based on talent and there is a culture of fairness, respect and equality of opportunity for all staff. We aim for our workforce profile to reflect the demographic make-up of Hertfordshire – in every service and at every level – ensuring that we are better able to connect with the needs of our residents.

Our Equality Strategy sets out how we aim to achieve this and maintain real and lasting progress for diverse groups and individuals in Hertfordshire. Our [new strategy for 2016-2020](#) sets out key objectives over the next four years.

1.1 Equality Framework for Local Government Framework

Hertfordshire County Council uses the **Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG)** as a model to help us deliver our equality duties. The five themes of the framework are:

- i. Knowing our communities
- ii. Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment
- iii. Community Engagement and Satisfaction
- iv. Responsive Services and Customer Care
- v. A Skilled and Committed Workforce

1.2 Governance

Our **Diversity Board** provides strategic leadership on equality and diversity issues and drives forward the equality and diversity agenda across the council. It acts as an advisory board to other Management Boards and elected Members where appropriate and reports in to our Strategic Management Board.

Departmental Groups champion equality and diversity in their relevant department. They implement and oversee an equality related action plan and provide a forum to debate equalities issues and share guidance and best practice.



Figure 1: Equality and Diversity Governance arrangements

1.3 Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

Individual departments carry out EqIAs whenever there is a review of a service or a major policy change in order to make sure our decisions, policies and procedures do not have unintended consequences for different groups protected by law; and are as effective, accessible and inclusive as they can be. The Council continues to carry out EqIAs on key projects and all service reviews and major policy changes. We also carry out an assessment at the end of each year on our [Integrated Plan](#) – our overall service plan and budget proposals – to ensure the cumulative impact of the proposals is fully considered. Recent key projects for which EqIAs have been completed include: a review of our in-house Carers Breaks Service, online self-assessment for carers, new Religious Education syllabus, and charging arrangements for care services.

We make sure our assessments are meaningful but proportionate to the issues and risks involved. The outcome of assessments is given to officers and Members so they can take equality issues into account before making decisions. Opportunities to promote equality and foster good relations are also considered during equality impact assessments. In 2016, we carried out an audit of key EqIAs completed. As a result, improvements have been made to the guidance available to staff in order to ensure there is consistent practice across the council.

1.4 Reporting on progress

This report sets out how we are meeting our equalities duties and celebrates some of our key achievements during the period April 2016 to March 2017, organised under the *Equality Framework for Local Government* themes.

It also sets out our action plan for progressing equalities issues and meeting the objectives in our Equality Strategy 2016-20 during 2017/18.

3 Key achievements in 2016/17

Hertfordshire County Council carries out a wide range of work that challenges discrimination, advances equality of opportunity and promotes good relations between communities. This report does not capture everything we do in relation to Equality and Diversity; instead, it sets out a number of key achievements that show our commitment to improving equality of opportunity and celebrating diversity in Hertfordshire.

3.1 Theme 1: Knowing our communities

Our services regularly gather, use and review data about the make-up of our communities and the take-up of and demand for our services. The Community Information & Intelligence Team, Equality & Diversity Team, Public Health and others regularly promote the use of information and data we hold on Hertfordshire's diverse communities. This ensures staff have relevant and up-to-date information about our communities – for example, the different demands created by our aging population, such as increased demand for carers and more complex support requirements – which combined with service user monitoring data informs the planning and reviewing of services. Examples of key data we promote and that is used across the council include:

- Index of Multiple Deprivation data: used to monitor take up of services and identify gaps to target for the greatest impact – for example, access to psychological therapies for people with mental health problems;
- Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA): used to commission new and improved health and wellbeing services, for example, dementia support services. We have developed a new approach and format for the JSNA this year and launched a [new website](#) to make the information more accessible
- Our Community Profiles and commentaries on protected characteristics data for older people and children and young people: used to inform equality impact assessments and service reviews, for example, our review of day services and employment support services
- National Health Service and adult social care data: operational fire crews piloted 'Safe and Well' community safety visits in Hertsmere to older, vulnerable residents identified through analysis of this data. Public Health evaluated the pilot as successfully supporting older and vulnerable people and it will now be rolled out across the county.

Sharing data to improve people's lives

Hertfordshire Community Foundation (HCF) make grants to local charities and voluntary groups. To improve their offer, they collaborated with Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health Evidence & Intelligence Team and Community Information & Intelligence Unit to produce an evidence base for their work.

Drawing on advice and support from our intelligence specialists, HCF's 'Hertfordshire Matters' report brings together key data on local needs to inform the allocation of grants and provide an evidence-base for setting funding priorities. By working together to ensure their own data report reflects the information sources in Hertfordshire's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), HCF can assure potential donors that their money will be spent in ways which will have the greatest impact on improving people's lives within the county.



Our Adult Care Services department (formerly called Health and Community Services) also refreshed, updated and promoted their Market Position Statements for Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment; Older People; Mental Health; Learning Disability; and Carers. These documents analyse demand, supply and take up data and tell health and care providers the kind of services we want to commission to meet current and future care needs of adults in Hertfordshire.

The following examples from two of our Statements give a flavour of what we know about these care groups and how we use this to plan for future services:

Physical Disability & Sensory Impairment

The numbers of adults aged 18-64 with physical disabilities and sensory impairments living in Hertfordshire are expected to grow, from an estimated 71,000 now to 78,000 by 2025. This is because people with complex needs and health problems are living longer due to medical advances.

Most services accessed by people with a physical or sensory need were community based – e.g. services such as equipment and adaptations, day care and home care. Of these, 40% were accessed by a personal budget or direct payment.

MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

We want to increase the percentage of adults with physical disabilities taking control of their care and support – for example, by getting a direct payment and deciding themselves what support they want to buy.

We also want to develop services that can meet both physical and sensory needs and that are designed around the person – for example, one or two bedroom specialist, wheelchair adapted properties as an alternative to residential care.

Carers

All available evidence – including carers’ feedback, outcomes monitoring and national guidance – points to the need to continue to commission services to support carers.

Although the carer population in Hertfordshire is likely to grow over the coming years, the key driver for demand will be new carers who are identified and seek support. This makes greater carer identification a key objective for all carers’ services.

MARKET OPPORTUNITY

We will be re-commissioning specialist support for carers to complement our core carers provision. Based on the detailed data we have on carers, this could include more condition-specific support (e.g. carers who care for someone who has dementia), support for carers with particular protected characteristics (e.g. carers who are themselves disabled or from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, or young carers), and additional carers breaks capacity.

The full Market Position Statement documents for all care groups can be read [here](#).

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3.2 Theme 2: Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Our **Diversity Board** provides strategic leadership and direction on equality and diversity issues across the council. It ensures equalities issues are considered and monitored by department and necessary actions are taken. During 2016 it oversaw the development of our Equality Strategy 2016-2020 and monitored progress on equalities objectives, including workforce issues. Issues discussed this year included how services use data to monitor how accessible they are; the quality of equality impact assessments across the council; a review of our translation and interpreting service; and various workforce issues, including improving the process for making reasonable adjustments for our staff.

Equality Leads in each department also ensure a consistent approach to equality and diversity. They sit on our Diversity Board and are able to share initiatives, good practice and action plans across departments. Specific departmental groups discuss equality and diversity issues most relevant to their department and take forward and monitor actions.

Our **County Councillors** rigorously consider the equalities implications of all major proposals before making decisions on them. In 2016, they also commented on and signed off our Equality Strategy 2016-2020.

Through the council's Overview and Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny Committees, elected Members also formally scrutinise the work of council officers. Recent examples that considered the needs of protected groups include:

- Adult Safeguarding
- Crime and Disorder (scamming)
- Children Looked After
- Support for Disabled Bus Users

Adult Safeguarding Member Scrutiny

This topic group takes place every year to scrutinise the performance of Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Adults Board. This year, there was a focus on whether the Board was fulfilling the requirements of the 2015 Care Act. Members were seeking assurances that statutory guidance is being met and that the Board is providing an effective challenge to safeguarding practice in Hertfordshire in order to protect our most vulnerable residents.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Members were generally satisfied with the work of the Board, particularly the improvements made to partnership arrangements and the ambitious and detailed programme of work for the coming year. They did however identify some areas to address and made the following main recommendations (which were acknowledged and are being acted on):

- That the Board discusses funding arrangements for the Royston area with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group to support the safeguarding needs of the Royston population
- That the use of pilot schemes is encouraged and tested countywide wherever possible

Full details, as well as the reports from all scrutiny topic groups, can be read [here](#).

Our councillors also allocate funding from their [locality budgets](#) to support a wide range of groups and small organisations to deliver local and countywide projects that meet the needs of particular communities.

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Examples in 2016/17 included:

- £5,000 from a number of councillors to maintain the Domestic Abuse helpline;
- £900 for a football tournament to raise awareness of HIV;
- £2,000 to support therapy trampoline sessions for older and disabled people;
- £4,500 to support the production of 'Sight News' for people with sight loss;
- £8,500 for pupils across the county to learn employability and transferrable skills;
- £500 to help fund a family friendly café;
- Funding to help mark Holocaust Memorial Day, Eid celebrations, Christmas and a conference run by the Ethnic Minority Association

Hertfordshire County Council remain a key member of the [Hertfordshire Compact](#) Working Group and continue to work in partnership with the voluntary and community sector to promote the Compact and ensure its principles are followed.

We also celebrated a number of **events** to raise awareness of equality and diversity related issues throughout 2016. Key events included:

Celebrating and raising awareness of diversity

Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month – A cross-agency event was held in June with Herts Gypsy and Traveller Empowerment (GATE). It was well attended by local councils, the community and voluntary sector, the police and community groups, and consisted of a drama presentation and workshops. The day successfully raised awareness of issues facing the Gypsy, Roma Traveller Community in Hertfordshire and helped develop a plan for future engagement.

Interfaith week – A community event to share information and ideas. The event was very well attended and led to a number of pledges on how different groups and organisations will use their knowledge and experience to meet people's needs – for example, specialist mental health services for different groups. This and other positive work was recognised by the Local Government Association in their [report on working with faith groups to promote health and wellbeing](#).

National inclusion Week – Raising awareness of supporting protected characteristic groups.

Carers Rights Day – Awareness raising and signposting to support, particularly around HCC staff.

Herts Pride – HCC co-sponsors this annual event and celebration. Several of our teams, such as Fostering and Adoption, Youth Connexions and public health teams attended in 2016 to celebrate with the community and raise awareness.

Disability Awareness Day – A day of awareness raising and signposting to support and improving our staff's knowledge and understanding.

Deaf Awareness Day – Raising awareness among our workforce about how to best support service users who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Year of Mental Health – We continued our programme of events to tackle mental health issues. Highlights included suicide prevention training, Elected Member training and veteran mental health GP engagement. In total, over 510 pledges to improve the lives of people with mental health problems were made across Hertfordshire; 12 mental health focused events were held; and 53 new partnerships were made with mental health focused organisations. Work is ongoing to continue these positive partnerships, including creating an accessible Mental Health Directory.

Herts Forward – Hertfordshire's countywide strategic partnership – has broad membership across the county, including the Chairs of Herts Equality Council and Herts Interfaith Forum. Recent issues discussed and promoted by the group include the county's response to the Syrian refugee scheme; Hertfordshire Skills Strategy and supporting vulnerable adults into employment; the priorities identified in the Herts Young People Manifesto; and the health challenges facing vulnerable residents.

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3.3 Theme 3: Community engagement and satisfaction

In 2016, we launched our [Co-production Board](#), working with people who use care services and their carers to help us improve and shape adult care now and in the future. The Board is co-chaired by a service user and meets every two months. The key issues they have talked about this year include the council's adult care budget, how services are commissioned, disabled transport, and how Hertfordshire can be more disability inclusive.

This new board has strong links with our well-established **Learning Disability Partnership Board (LDPB)**, which co-produces its work programme. The LDPB gives people with learning disabilities and their families the opportunity to hear about service developments, raise questions or concerns and be an active part of groups to jointly take action to address these concerns. For example, the Board's Transport Working Group sought to influence train companies and reviewed the information available on bus passes to improve the experiences of people using public transport.

Our **All Age Autism Board** also continued with its co-produced work programme and helped ensure people with autism and their families have a say and influence over service developments.

The County Council wants to move towards **new models of day activities** that enable everyone to age well while meeting a wide range of needs and aspirations in their community. During 2016, we carried out a review and drew up proposals to align our 'in-house' day service staffing structure to a new pattern of services reflecting the lower numbers and increasing complexity of need of the people using the centres. We began a full staff and service user consultation of the proposals in May 2016. All users of the service and their family carers were sent a letter inviting comments and ideas. The consultation continued into the summer to include face-to-face consultation meetings at day centres and wider forums (e.g. with the LDPB).

We remain committed to move to a new model of day activities but also know that we do not have all the answers – the original proposals were updated following the consultation feedback. We have also undertaken to keep people who use the services, families, and staff, involved in any changes agreed, including holding local meetings to ensure these changes take full account of local buildings, people's needs and specific circumstances.

The Council's Corporate Policy Team also updated, improved and promoted **guidance on consulting and engaging** with the public and service users. This will help make sure we have a consistent and accessible approach across all our teams that enables everyone to have a meaningful say on proposals to change services or policies or commission new ones. In 2016 we consulted on a number of areas, including asking patients with long term conditions about the information they need to help manage their own health; schools admissions arrangements for 2017/18; and our Mental Health and our Equality and Diversity Strategies. We provide access to all our formal consultations [here](#).



Who not What volunteers supported by our Youth Connexions service have raised awareness of issues affecting young lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Hertfordshire. They have used their voice to influence and develop:

- The strategic direction of health through work on the Health & Wellbeing strategy;
- Mental health services through work on the Children's and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) review;
- With the Police and Crime Commissioner, work to drive out Hate Crime;
- Priorities for the Hertfordshire Youth Manifesto; and
- Service user monitoring forms

The fantastic work of the group has been recognised by Big Lottery who have awarded them £165,000 to develop and extend their work.

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Other teams that continue to engage with communities to identify issues and improve services include Fire and Rescue and their community advocates and the work Children's Services do with parents and carers of disabled children (Herts Parent Carer Involvement).

Our [new website](#) has also been launched and its content and layout is largely based on extensive user testing. A specialist consultancy consisting of experts by experience was commissioned by us to advise on the accessibility of the new website. A significant number of improvements were made as a direct result of user testing with older and disabled service users and of feedback from people about how they look for information.

3.4 Theme 4: Responsive services and customer care

Significant progress has been made on our pioneering **Family Safeguarding project**. Our multi-disciplinary approach to child protection now means children's social workers sit beside professionals in mental health, drug and alcohol misuse and domestic abuse to focus on resolving the parents' issues that place children at risk of significant harm. This has transformed the lives of Hertfordshire's most vulnerable children and families: more children are growing up in safer homes and fewer are under a Child Protection Plan. The impact of our work has been recognised by England's Chief Social Worker and an evaluation of the programme carried out by the University of Bedfordshire has shown clearly that improved outcomes have been achieved, including increased school attendance and a drop in repeat police callouts due to domestic abuse.

Our **Children Looked After Strategy 2016–2019** sets out Hertfordshire's overarching approach to supporting our children and young people who are looked after. It outlines the work we're doing to ensure they have the best possible chances in life, experience safe and positive parenting and are given every opportunity to achieve their potential. Key achievements of our work to keep children in their families as long as it's safe to do so are:

- A reduction in the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan (now 519 or 19.6 per 10,000 of all under 18s, which is one of the lowest rates in England);
- In 2015/16, we supported 963 children to cease being on a Child Protection Plan;
- In 2015/16, 65 children were adopted and 53 placed with Special Guardians; and
- An 8% reduction in the number of CLA from December 2015 (1,041) to December 2016 (958). This represents a reduction in the CLA rate per 10,000 of all under-18s from 39.8 to 36.3.

Education, health and care services continue to work together and in partnership with **children and young people aged 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families** to support each child to fulfil their potential and provide the right support at the right time. Recent achievements include:

- A new 0-25 SEND Integrated Commissioning Strategy has been agreed, which sets out a new approach to commissioning support. This was co-produced by children, young people, families and professionals;
- We have developed a professional charter to give clarity on how children, young people and families want us to work with them; and
- We have launched our new 0–25 Disability Service (0-25 Together), which will mean that resources are used fairly and effectively so that children and young people get support at the right time and in a joined up way from education, health and care services; and there will be easier access to information, advice and support across the age range to improve young people's transition into adulthood.

On **educational attainment and provision**, Hertfordshire remains committed to 'A good school for every child in every district'. During 2016 there has been a focus on closing the gap between underachieving groups and all Hertfordshire children and young people.

- In 2016, 64.6% of pupils achieved 5 or more A*–C GCSEs, including English and Maths (Hertfordshire ranks 18th nationally, national average 53.5%);

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- In 2015, 90.1% of 19 year olds had achieved a Level 2 qualification – up from 89.2% in 2014. Hertfordshire ranks 12th nationally.
- In 2015, 67.5% of 19 year olds had achieved a Level 3 qualification – up from 65.9% in 2014. Hertfordshire ranked 15th nationally.

However, gaps remain in attainment levels between certain groups – see Appendix 1 for a detailed breakdown. 2017 will see continued work to close these gaps.

Significant work has also been done this year to improve and make clear our approach to **supporting children with autism**, particularly in schools. This includes work to better explain the services and support available; setting clear expectations of schools; introducing an ‘autism friendly’ accreditation for schools; a new approach to training; and linking up with parents and the All Age Autism Partnership Board.

Our **Prince’s Trust ‘Team’ programme** is a 12 week personal development course that helps unemployed 16-25 year olds develop the skills, experience, confidence and motivation to find work or go on to further education or training. Most recently in 2016, 12 young people in Stevenage successfully completed the programme and achieved a recognised qualification. Three more programmes took place during the year.

We continue to **use and review data about who is using our services** and combine this with what we know about the make-up of our communities to make sure they are accessible to and used by those who need them most. The services we commission from external providers are also monitored to ensure the quality of services and to identify and address any issues of particular groups being over or under represented. A recent example is the demographic data, service user data and outcomes data used to re-commission our community dementia support services to improve the support available to carers and access to peer support across the county. As part of work we did to introduce a new Accessible Information Standard across our Adult Care Services department, we also required care providers to sign up to the Standard.

During 2016, we have developed new ways to **recruit foster carers**: using more targeted approaches to recruit carers to foster those groups most in need. This is based on research and analysis that showed that targeted campaigns aimed at recruiting specific foster carers – e.g. those who want to foster sibling groups and teenagers, which we have the greatest need for, are more effective than general recruitment campaigns. For example, we have launched radio campaigns, used data on the make-up of households to raise awareness among particular groups, worked directly with our other services to promote fostering and adoption in the work that they do, created new website material and a social media campaign, proactively contacted faith and community groups to break down barriers and made better links with GP surgeries to share information.

Working together to reduce health inequalities

We launched our new Health and Wellbeing Strategy in June 2016 and a detailed action plan in January 2017, which sets out the main things we will do to improve our residents’ health and wellbeing. A key focus of the new Strategy is to tackle the avoidable difference in health status between different sections of the population. For example, the strategy states that we will try to:

- Reduce the variation in Herts in young children’s level of readiness for school;
- Reduce avoidable disability and premature deaths by enabling working age adults to adopt healthy lifestyles;
- Address the wider causes of poor mental health in children and young people, including domestic abuse;
- Reduce the harm caused to health by smoking, alcohol and drug use among working age adults;
- Reduce preventable winter deaths in people aged 65+



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A new multi-agency **Domestic Abuse Strategy** for Hertfordshire was launched in 2016 as part of a wider improvement programme to tackle domestic abuse. The strategy sets out how we and our partners will work together to prevent and tackle abuse, with a key focus on better coordinating services based on individual need and risk, and prioritising prevention, early intervention and sustained recovery. The programme is already improving services, including the successful re-tender of the countywide Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) service for high risk victims; and the expansion of the Domestic Abuse Helpline.

We identified that there was a need to better coordinate and improve support for **people with a learning disability who also have dementia**. We are therefore leading on a project that aims to develop a clear, consistent and co-produced pathway through all the support that is available – from identification of symptoms to after a diagnosis – in order to help people reduce their isolation and be able to live well with dementia. We have already mapped what is happening now and are now focusing on better coordinating and communicating the support available; addressing gaps in services and improving existing services so they can properly support people with additional needs; and training staff and professionals across various teams – e.g. to understand the new pathway, and to recognise the early signs of dementia.

The Council continues to **support vulnerable people into employment**. We give opportunities to young people, including children who have been Looked After, by employing **apprentices** across our services. Our social care apprenticeships continue to go from strength to strength: the most recent group of apprentices graduated in November and a total of 32 new apprentices were recruited in 2016, including 15 Care Cadets and 10 Social Care Apprentices. Apprentices are also working in other areas of the council, including in business administration, planning, IT & highways.

We also support other groups who may be disadvantaged in the employment market to find employment and improve their skills:

- We have an annual target to offer 200 short work experience placements, 30 traineeships, 20 internships and a range of entry level job opportunities
- Our Work Solutions team offers personalised and tailored support to help people with an illness or disability find and stay in work
- Our Pathways to Employment Board has worked on promoting the Disability Confident Employer Scheme with external organisations and enabling more people with learning disabilities to find work experience
- Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) are involved in a [research project](#) to see if adult community learning has a positive impact on general wellbeing and mental health issues like anxiety, depression, stress and sleep problems. Volunteers will self-assess how they are feeling at the start, middle and end of the course to help determine whether structured training in a supportive, inclusive environment has a positive effect on their wellbeing.

Our Countryside Management Service coordinates a programme of free **Healthwalks** led by trained volunteers. They promote walking and encourage people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to get more active and reap the health benefits. During 2016, the team carried out a comprehensive analysis of who was going on walks and what they thought of their experience. They will make changes as a result so they can reach more people and improve the scheme.

We have improved **access to information and advice** in a number of ways, including:

- Improved the information available to **help people with disabilities travel on public transport**. This has included creating Easy Read guides and better promoting our Orange Travel Wallet scheme
- Worked with *DisabledGo* to launch a detailed access guide to 1000 venues in the county to improve independence, choice and access for disabled people. This helps us visit the places we all want to visit and plan our journeys better.

If you need help understanding this information please contact equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children who came to Hertfordshire in October, and their host families, received vital support from our **translation and interpreting service**. We have also reviewed the use of this service across the council as the contracts we have in place will end in 2017. We are working with regional partners to re-contract the service.
- Delivered dementia awareness training for staff working at our Household Waste and Recycling Centres and promoted our Language Line interpreting service for service users at these sites.
- Our Customer Service Centre introduced a system of real time, interactive British Sign Language interpreters, for service users contacting them. We also continue to provide a range of information in more accessible formats on request for people with additional needs. If there is clear evidence of need, we produce them proactively (e.g. Easy Read materials for our Hate Crime Strategy consultation).

3.5 Theme 5: A skilled and committed workforce

We know that a diverse workforce representative of the people of Hertfordshire helps to promote the council as an employer of choice and deliver services that meet the needs of citizens across the county. Our **‘Putting People First’ policy** sets out the council’s commitment to equality and diversity in employment and our [annual workforce report](#) provides an overview of our key workforce issues and what is being done to address them.

Our employee offer helps support employees to do their job, develop in their job and maintain a good work-life balance. Our offer was strengthened during 2016 and includes:

- Herts Rewards incorporating Healthy Herts (benefits and wellbeing package). This year we have promoted the resources available, in particular those to help with staff mental wellbeing, including dealing with workplace stress
- Skills development and learning opportunities – both online and face to face
- SmartWorking resources – new and improved tools for a different way of working;
- Access to employee-led support groups, including groups for Black and Asian staff; Carers; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender staff; staff with mental health problems; and staff with Asperger’s. The groups give employees the chance to network online or at meetings with others in similar circumstances. They also offer confidential guidance and support and an opportunity to contribute to HCC policies and practices

SMART WORKING

We are helping our workers to be SmartWorkers, with access to the tools and training they need to deliver and work in a flexible way. We want to create a culture where our staff are able to work more flexibly and, as long as service delivery is met, at a time and location that suits them. This will help them get a better work-life balance and support their overall wellbeing.

To be as effective and efficient as we can be, we need to work and manage our time, workspaces and travel differently. Key areas of this programme include developing our technology, policies, working environments, commuting, travel and our staff intranet.

We have a range of approaches, resources and tools to help people change the way they work, whilst taking different needs into account. As well as the focus on new tools, resources and approaches, the programme is also making sure that staff engagement issues are understood and managed appropriately.

Work has started to review the guidance available to staff and managers to help them make **Reasonable Adjustments** for staff. Systems are also being changed so we know more about the needs and experiences of staff who have a disability. HCC adopted the ‘Disability Confident’ scheme in 2016, which demonstrates our support for disabled applicants and employees.

If you need help understanding this information please contact equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

HCC continues to run and refine a number of **Learning and Development** courses that focus on equality and diversity. This ensures there is a strong and consistent commitment to equality and diversity across the Council. Learning is delivered using a variety of formats, including e-learning and face to-face learning (Lite Bites and longer skills courses). The following equality and diversity training is available to all staff:

Induction: managers must ensure any new employees complete their induction within three or four weeks of joining. The E&D iLearn module has been incorporated into induction, which includes interactive case studies around all of the protected characteristics. For managers' induction, the E&D session within the half day face to face training session, which sets a very clear expectation that managers must create a culture that is inclusive and fair, has been very well received.

Unconscious Bias: this popular training continues to raise awareness of the impact unconscious bias can have on decision making in the workplace. Senior managers from across all services have attended training on Unconscious Bias and Inclusive Leadership and we have been working closely with the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion to give additional support.

Dyslexia: following feedback that managers wanted more guidance to help support staff with dyslexia, we engaged a specialist dyslexia consultant to review our policies, advice and practice and suggest a series of recommendations. As a result, our guidance has been updated and training is being offered to front line managers to develop their understanding of dyslexia, suggest practical strategies to support staff and reflect on current working practices.

Other equality and diversity training includes: Equality Impact Assessments e-learning and workshop; Deaf Awareness Lite-Bite; Understanding INTRAN (translating and interpreting service) workshop; Equality & Diversity Awareness for Better Social Care e-learning; Understanding Equality & Diversity e-learning; Equality and Diversity teambuilding workshop; a one-off carer awareness training session was also delivered to managers in our Adult Care Services teams.

We also publish a quarterly bulletin setting out national and local equality and diversity news stories and how these relate to our services, strategies and policies. This helps **raise and maintain staff awareness** of equalities issues.

3.6 Knowing and publishing our Workforce Equalities Profile

We completed our annual [Workforce Profile](#) and published it on Hertfordshire.gov.uk. Analysis of the data was presented to the council's Senior Management Board and to Members in June 2016. Headlines from our most recent profile (March 2016) include:

- An increase in the proportion of staff from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds (from 12.1% in 2015 to 12.9% in 2016)
- Women continue to make up the majority of the workforce (66.8%)
- An increase in the number of employees declaring a disability (from 5.5 % in 2015 to 5.7% in 2016).
- A slight increase in staff from a non-Christian background
- A slight variance in the age profile of staff, although staff aged between 20-29 remain the least represented. A strategy for improving employment options for young people and those disadvantaged in the employment market has been introduced to attract younger people to join and stay with the council. This includes increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities we offer.

Recruitment data suggests we have fewer issues attracting BME applicants, although we do need to address some issues in relation to progression of BME applications and the rate of drop out during the process. Ensuring that recruiting managers are aware of the potential for unconscious bias as part of their wider recruitment training is one way we are starting to do this.

If you need help understanding this information please contact equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk

4 Action Plan for 2017/18

The action plan below highlights the key activities we will carry out over the coming year to address the relevant objectives in our Equality Strategy 2016-20. This plan will be monitored by Diversity Board and action plans for subsequent years up to 2019/20 will address objectives not included this year, as well as additional actions on the objectives below.

	Equality Strategy Objective	Specific Actions in 2017/18	Lead responsibility and target date
1.	We know our communities which enables us to understand the diverse needs of our service users and better target resources		
1.1	Commissioners and project leads will make enhanced use of demographic and other data to inform their projects, commissioning and decision making	Promote the launch of our new <i>Herts Insight</i> and <i>Joint Strategic Needs Assessment</i> websites with commissioners and showcase the information they contain in Spring/Summer 2017.	Community Intelligence & Info Unit and Public Health Summer 2017
1.2	Commissioners and project leads will carry out equality impact assessments (EqIAs), where relevant, to consider the effect of proposals, projects and strategies on different groups	Review EqIA forms and guidance, then produce and promote new forms with commissioners, which will link to the most up-to-date data and capture and share best practice.	Equality & Diversity Team / Diversity Board July 2017
		We will review our Integrated Planning proposals by the end of 2017 to assess potential cumulative impact on all protected groups and publish on our website in Feb 2017.	Integrated Plan Finance Leads December 2017
1.4	We will progress opportunities to integrate understanding of health and social care information to better target community safety interventions to support vulnerable people	Building on success in Hertsmere, roll out our 'Safe and Well' initiative across Hertfordshire from May 2017 and monitor effectiveness of visits.	Community Protection May 2017
1.5	We will improve the budget forecasting process for Older People and Learning Disability residential placements to allow service managers to have a clearer view of forecasts	Launch Learning Disability dashboard by June 2017 and promote to Heads of Service	Adult Care Services June 2017
		Scope other care types and implement where appropriate by the end of December 2017	December 2017
2.	We have strong leadership, partnership and organisational commitment to equality and diversity		
2.1	The Members' Information System (MIS) will contain information and data to support and enable members to fulfil their duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty; and Members will receive Equality and Diversity Awareness raising information	Update the Members Information System so it gives all new Members up-to-date information	Intelligence Group Corporate Policy April 2017
		Include Equality and Diversity Awareness raising information in Members' induction and signpost to additional resources	Corporate Policy May 2017
2.2	We will develop a Hate Crime Strategy to raise awareness in the community and to help address recommendations of Executive Members from the Hate Crime Scrutiny	Consult on draft Hate Crime Strategy (April - June); Review, sign-off, publish and launch (Summer) Set up sub-group to monitor progress on Action Plan	Community Protection August 2017
2.3	We will promote and implement the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Strategy and the Hertfordshire Compact to set out our commitment and principles when working and engaging with our communities & Voluntary Sector partners	Train officers working with the Voluntary Sector on the Hertfordshire Compact and what it means for their role	Compact Champions ongoing

	Equality Strategy Objective	Specific Actions in 2017/18	Lead responsibility and target date
2.4	We will ensure our new Procurement Strategy embeds Equality Duties regarding procurement, including those relating to workers from partner organisations	We will write, agree and publish a new Procurement Strategy that clearly sets out our position and requirements in relation to equality and diversity in procurement	Strategic Procurement Group December 2017
2.5	We will contribute to the delivery of the countywide Domestic Abuse Strategy, to deliver better outcomes for residents affected by Domestic Abuse	Complete the re-commissioning of support for Refuges and identify and take forward other key commissioning work Further strengthen partnership arrangements and resources for tackling domestic abuse in the county. Specific actions will focus on tackling Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), honour based abuse and modern slavery	Adult Care Services and Children's Services ongoing
2.6	We will carry out a review of our collective Integrated Planning proposals every year to assess potential cumulative impact upon all protected groups	Review our Integrated Planning proposals by the end of 2017 to assess potential cumulative impact on all protected groups and publish on our website in Feb 2018.	Equality and Diversity team February 2018
2.7	The countywide local strategic partnership will work in a way that values diversity, addresses inequality and supports the most vulnerable to achieve its ambitions	Continue to involve Herts Equality Council and Herts Interfaith Forum in Herts Forward and identify opportunities for other interested groups to input into their work	Corporate Policy Target
2.8	We will support the implementation of Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy	Use new performance dashboards to monitor and review performance and publish updates on Hertfordshire.gov.uk	Public Health Quarterly
2.9	We will support and celebrate initiatives that promote equality and inclusion and encourage good relations between groups	Celebrate and promote key events, including workshops, stalls, publicity materials. Events this year will include the 2017 Day of Languages (Sept) and Interfaith Week (Nov)	Equality and Diversity team ongoing
3.	We involve communities in developing services and evaluating their effectiveness		
3.2	We will continue to celebrate, promote, co-ordinate and develop an infrastructure for effective volunteering and volunteering opportunities across Hertfordshire	Team Herts – the service we commission to help voluntary and community sector groups find volunteering opportunities – will carry out an equality impact assessment of access to and take up of volunteering opportunities	Community Wellbeing and Team Herts Spring 2017
3.4	We will seek residents' views on the council and the area in which they live	Survey residents on our Integrated Plan proposals Carry out a full survey of our residents	Winter 2017 Spring 2018
3.5	Demonstrate our commitment to the Hertfordshire Community Covenant by improving outcomes for veterans	Provide families with advice about in-year applications to schools for their children; and Encourage veterans to take-up mental health and other relevant services through joint communication campaigns with the NHS	Corporate Policy ongoing
3.6	The council's new website, Communications and Customer Service teams will consider the effect of their proposals, projects and strategies on different groups, and take reasonable steps to meet service users' accessibility needs	Publish a new Communications Strategy Monitor feedback on our Next Generation Website Carry out additional user testing and refine content	Corporate Comms Autumn 2017 Web Team ongoing Web Team Dec 2017
3.7	We will create more opportunities to work with service users to co-produce new service developments	Agree standards and principles of co-production across HCC and promote across the Council	Co-Production Board Summer 2017

	Equality Strategy Objective	Specific Actions in 2017/18	Lead responsibility and target date
4.	We have responsive services that are proactive rather than reactive and consider inter-related and long term outcomes		
4.3	Our early help services will take action to support service users as soon as a problem emerges	Continue to work with our partners to deliver the actions set out in Hertfordshire's <u>Early Help Strategy</u> Develop our Families First portal, in line with user feedback	Children's Services ongoing
4.4	We will embed the practice and operation of multi-disciplinary teams to enable the impact of issues such as domestic abuse, adult mental health and substance misuse to be better understood. We will increasingly deliver protection services on a family basis to improve shared understanding of risk and improve outcomes	2017 will see further work to embed the new way of working, make additional improvements, and share best practice.	Children's Services ongoing
4.5	We will implement real time and interactive British Sign Language interpreters for all service users contacting the Customer Service Centre, and provide accessible information to service users who have additional needs	Review the use of this Service and identify any opportunities that come from the wider translation and interpreting service re-procurement	Equality & Diversity Team Summer 2017
4.6	We will provide translation and interpreting services where appropriate to minimise barriers in accessing council services by people who do not speak English	Re-commission the service in the Summer Promote the new service and update guidance on how to access and use it effectively	Equality & Diversity Team Summer 2017
4.7	We will ensure the core principles of reducing health inequalities and promoting better health outcomes for our communities are embedded in our Public Health Strategy	Publish our new Public Health strategy	Public Health July 2017
5.	We have a high performing, engaged and committed workforce that represents and supports all citizens of Hertfordshire.		
5.1	We will have attraction and sourcing strategies that are inclusive and attract talented people from diverse backgrounds including minority groups and apprentices so we have a workforce that represents all of Hertfordshire	We will develop a new approach to recruiting and developing apprentices in line with the new Apprenticeship Levy Redesign our jobs webpages, including adding the Stonewall and Disability Confident scheme logos. Use social media channels to increase the profile of HCC and look at advertising jobs on websites aimed at particular protected characteristic groups – e.g. disability.	All departments ongoing HR Summer 2017
5.3	We will ensure the workforce is well aligned to our values by giving managers the tools to enable them to create high performing teams, giving staff regular feedback and development opportunities	We will launch phase 1 of our Performance Management and Development System review. This will introduce a simplified form and guidance for managers in having 'career conversations' with employees. Re-launch new 'Lite Bite' training sessions. These include Managing for High Performance and Managing Grievance. Continue to promote Carewell (HCC's employee assistance programme) and Herts Rewards benefits package.	HR Spring 2017 HR Spring 2017 HR ongoing

	Equality Strategy Objective	Specific Actions in 2017/18	Lead responsibility and target date
5.4	We will encourage managers to harness diversity within teams in order to create an innovative working environment	Continue to make Unconscious Bias training available to managers - will be run free of charge in Spring 2017 Use new Apprenticeship Levy to develop our existing staff	HR Spring 2017 HR ongoing
5.5 and 5.11	We will encourage an agile and flexible workforce by giving managers and employees the tools to manage by outcomes We will ensure there is equal access to learning for all the workforce	Commission and roll out a new video conferencing tool to help staff work remotely Create a more flexible 'pick and mix' Learning & Development offer. Learning and practical tools will be available at the time people need them to enable agile working – e.g. when they are about to have a difficult conversation. Explore using webinar software to support.	Improvement Team Spring 2017 HR Summer 2017
5.6	We will analyse the staff survey by the protected characteristics of the workforce and take relevant action where necessary	Report findings to Diversity Board and agree actions Report analysis of staff by protected characteristic groups and confirm actions we will take	Diversity Board and all Departments Spring 2017 and ongoing
5.7	We will review HR equality and diversity information so it is clear and accessible to all employees when they need support and advice	We will update our employee records system (SAP) to collect Disability categories of our employees and employees are regularly encouraged to self-declare data. Create and promote new resources for managers to help them implement Reasonable Adjustments for staff	Equality and Diversity Team and HR Spring 2017
5.8	We will publish an annual workforce diversity profile	This will be published on our website in Summer 2017. We will also publish information on our gender pay gap, in line with new national Government reporting requirements	HR Summer 2017
5.10	We will review the iLearn, induction, and the Herts Manager offering and ensure that equality and diversity is embedded throughout	Relaunch refreshed Harassment and Bullying and Equality and Diversity iLearn modules. Launch revised induction offer in April 2017	HR Spring 2017
5.12	We will analyse leaver information by the protected characteristics of the workforce and take relevant action where necessary	We will publish this information as part of the annual Workforce profile.	HR Summer 2017

Appendix 1: Attainment Gaps in Hertfordshire

Attainment

Hertfordshire remains committed to ‘*A good school for every child in every district*’ and with a particular focus on closing the gap between underachieving groups and all Hertfordshire children and young people. Whilst the general picture is good, gaps remain in attainment levels between certain groups and all pupils achieving the Expected Standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2. The largest gaps are amongst pupils of Gypsy, Roma & Traveller of Irish Heritage, pupils with Special Educational Needs and pupils eligible for Free School Meals.

Gap between certain BME groups and all pupils achieving the Expected Standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2:	Gap	% achieving expected standard
Gypsy, Roma & Traveller of Irish Heritage	55.3	4.0
Black Caribbean	19.3	40.0
White/Black Caribbean	11.4	47.9
Any Other Black Background	18.2	41.1
Pakistani	-1.7	61.0
Bangladeshi	4.0	55.3

Group	Gap	% achieving expected standard
Gap between pupils with SEN (special educational needs) and non-SEN achieving the Expected Standard in reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	50.3	16.8

Group	Gap	% achieving 5A*-C GCSEs or equiv (inc. Eng & Maths)
Gap between pupils with SEN (special educational needs) and non-SEN pupils achieving 5A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths	44.2	27.0
Gap between Free School Meals and non-Free School Meals achieving 5A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) including English and maths	34.1	35.9

The system of reporting results at Key Stage 4 (GCSE's) is changing and School Performance Tables will report on schools' Attainment 8 scores, based on pupils' performance across 8 subjects.

Gap between certain groups and all pupils' Attainment 8 scores	Gap	Average Score
Gypsy, Roma & Traveller of Irish Heritage	39.4	13.5
Black Caribbean	7.4	45.5
White/Black Caribbean	6.4	46.5
Any Other Black Background	3.2	49.7
Pakistani	2.8	50.1
Bangladeshi	0.2	52.7
Gap between pupils with SEN (special educational needs) and non-SEN pupils' Attainment 8 scores	20.9	35.3
Gap between Free School Meals and non-Free School Meals pupils' Attainment 8 scores	14.4	40.9

If you need help understanding this information please contact equalities@hertfordshire.gov.uk