

Fairness, Inclusion and Equality

About Your Services

January 2015

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Background

This report provides information on how Solihull Council is meeting its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, during the delivery of services we provide and in other key aspects of our work. It is published with regard to the specific duty to publish equality information to demonstrate compliance with the three aims of the Equality duty and make this information publicly available. This report follows on from the one we published in January 2014

The Equality Duty

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

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

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

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

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

Specific duties

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

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

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

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

Our equalities objectives (2012-2016) were published separately in April 2012 and are updated at least once every four years. These objectives are evidence based and underpinned by consultation with partner agencies and staff, analysis of the data we hold on the protected characteristics and benchmarking our performance and practices with the wider local authorities.

More information on the Public Sector Equality Duty, including the specific duties, can be found in the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s [Equality Act 2010: Technical Guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty - England](#)

Future Actions

We will work to identify information gaps and extend our analysis in future reports. Actions will be identified to address concerns arising from the information analysed in each section and will contribute towards our updated Equality Objectives, which will be published every four years.

Our aim is to present this information in a way that provides members of the public with an accessible overview of our activities to promote greater equality.

General information

Subsequent sections of this report consider our role as a service provider from the perspective of individual protected characteristics (see page 6). This section covers the wider picture and cuts across the various characteristics.

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

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

Equality profile

The main part of the analysis in this section is based on the 2011 Census which provides the most accurate and detailed breakdown of local populations. However the Office of National Statistics (ONS) also provides annual modelled population estimates for local authorities, the most recent of which is for mid-2013. At this point the ONS estimates that the Solihull population was 208,900 (101,400 males, 107,500 females) an increase of 2,226 persons on the 2011 figure (+1.1%).

Solihull's total population of usual residents in 2011 was 206,674 of which 99.2% lived in households and 0.8% in communal establishments (1,587 individuals). 106,322 are females (51.4%) and 100,352 males.

Solihull now has 39,500 residents aged 65 and over of which 19,100 are aged 75+ and 5,500 are 85+. 85.8% (177,248) of Solihull residents describe their ethnic group as White British, compared with the England average of

79.8% and the West Midlands average of 79.2%. Solihull is becoming increasingly diverse, with the number of people from a Black or Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) group increasing by 11,638 (108%) between 2001 and 2011 compared to a fall of 4,481 (-2%) in the white population. BAME groups now represent 10.9% of the total population compared with 5.4% in 2001. The following tables show population changes for various groups in Solihull since 2001.

	2001 Count	2011 Count	2011 %	Change 2001-2011
White: British	182,099	177,248	85.8%	-3%
White: Irish	4,138	3,935	1.9%	-5%
White Other	2,488	3,061	1.5%	23%
Mixed: White and Black Caribbean	1,401	2,395	1.2%	71%
Mixed: White and Black African	145	247	0.1%	70%
Mixed: White and Asian	599	1,156	0.6%	93%
Mixed: Other Mixed	420	606	0.3%	44%
Asian or Asian British: Indian	3,636	7,098	3.4%	95%
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	983	3,413	1.7%	247%
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	84	633	0.3%	654%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	671	906	0.4%	35%
Asian or Asian British: Other Asian	371	1,511	0.7%	307%
Black or Black British: Caribbean	1,527	1,930	0.9%	26%
Black or Black British: African	224	852	0.4%	280%
Black or Black British: Other Black	144	457	0.2%	217%
Other Ethnic Group	587	1,226	0.6%	109%

Source: ONS Census 2001, 2011

In terms of religion, the majority of Solihull residents describe themselves as Christian (65.6%), with no religion the 2nd largest group (21.4%). The number of Christians has fallen by 13% (-20,421) since 2001, with 'no religion' increasing by 84% (+20,154). This is consistent with the pattern nationally. In terms of other religions there are significantly more Muslims (+3,610, 221%), Sikhs (+1,938, 124%) and Hindus (+1,834, 99%) than in 2001. Additional key facts about Solihull are available on the Statistics and Census page on our website.

Protected characteristic	% of population (source Census 2011)
Age	
0-15	17.6
16-24	12.0
25-44	23.7
45-64	27.5
65 and older	19.2
Disability	
Yes	17.9
No	82.1
Sex/Gender	
Female	51.4
Male	48.6
Religion/Belief	
Buddhist	0.2
Christian	65.6
Hindu	1.8
Jewish	0.2
Muslim	2.5
Sikh	1.7
Other	0.3
None	21.4
Declined to Specify	6.4

The Solihull Way

'The Solihull Way' is the culture that we are creating in the Council where lean principles underpin everything we do and where we all live our brand of being open, honest, approachable and keeping our promises. It's the way we do things in Solihull. It is our lean thinking and learning philosophy and it is our way of enabling all Members and staff to live the Council's Brand. It is also our strategy and approach to transforming Solihull Council into a world class lean thinking and learning organisation. One that:

- Has a rigorous understanding of its purpose (i.e. knows what the customer needs and wants); its processes (i.e. having the right processes in place to fulfil the purpose); and its people (i.e. having the right people skilled and organised to run the processes).
- Focuses on the best possible outcomes (quality and value) to its customers.
- Continually improves.

Essentially, lean thinking is about the elimination of waste and a focus on the activities that add value to the customer. Our 'Going Lean' programme has two elements. Firstly, a programme of deep reviews aligned to the Council's priorities. These are designed to deliver a step change in the quality and value of services received by customers, whilst making the processes as efficient as possible. Secondly, a programme of skills and knowledge building to embed the principles of lean thinking widely across the organisation.

Not only do we need to continually strive for maximum customer value, but we also need to 'do the right things in the right way'.

In an increasingly challenging climate, where massive changes and difficult decisions are being made, we need to think about what we do in terms of lives not services, and make sure we treat each other and our residents with the decency and respect they deserve.

Equality and Diversity Policy

Solihull Council's Equality and Diversity Policy expresses our commitment "to promoting equality of opportunity and equality of access that is free from discrimination, prejudice, harm, stereotyping, harassment, victimisation, and any other form of discrimination"

Socio-economic disadvantage

Although the Equality Act 2010 does not include this as a protected characteristic (see page 3), socio-economic disadvantage is an important concept for Solihull Council. There are very clear divisions in the Borough between the wealthier areas and those experiencing problems of poverty and disadvantage. This is illustrated by differences in life expectancy, which varies by nearly a decade across the Borough. Narrowing the gap of inequality caused by these differences is one of our key drivers; this is why we have included it as a separate section within this report.

Tackling hate crime

We are actively working with West Midlands Police to improve our approach to hate crime across the Borough.

Hate crimes (<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/hatecrime>) are taken to mean any crime where a person's hostility or prejudice against a person or group of people is a factor, for example disability, race, and sexual orientation.

We will continue to work with the Police to improve our hate crime reporting framework in the borough and increase places for people to report to the police or a third party hate crime reporting centre. A third party reporting centre is a place where you can tell someone what has happened and then they report it to the police for you <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/hatecrime>. Introduced by the Safer Solihull Partnership, the centres are based within access points of a wider range of existing services such as children's centres and community voluntary organisations. Their role is to give both victims and witnesses a safe and supportive environment to report incidents. In 2013, the Council in partnership with Solihull Police delivered refresher training to a number of hate crime reporting centres to help build their capacity as reporting centres. We also consulted with a small number of

voluntary and community organisations and tenants and it is clear from that consultation that there is much more work to do to address hate crime in the borough and increase people's confidence to report.

National research and local evidence suggests that hate crimes across the country are underreported. It is essential therefore that the Council continues to work with the Police and our local community to identify and breakdown the barriers to reporting and tackle discrimination and prejudice in our communities.

Communities given more power to tackle anti-social behavior

New powers to tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) came into force from 20 October 2014, giving more support and empowerment to communities.

The new legislation help members of the Safer Solihull Local Police & Crime Board jointly deal with ASB and implement better unified solutions to specific issues.

A new victim initiated process known as the 'Community Trigger' which forms part of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014, means partners – including the Council, police, landlords and health teams – will work together to review ASB cases.

Anyone can activate the Community Trigger if their concern is about anti-social behaviour or a hate crime/incident and meets the following criteria:

- have reported three separate incidents relating to the same problem in the past six months to the Council, police or your landlord or;
- have reported one incident or crime motivated by hate (due to race, religion, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity) in the last six months and no action has been taken or;
- at least five people from different households have made reports about the same problem in the past six months to the council, police or landlord and no action has been taken.

The trigger aims to give victims and communities the right to request a case review to examine how local agencies have responded to their reports of ASB and consider whether further action could be taken.

The Safer Solihull Local Police & Crime Board is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and making Solihull a safe place for people to live, work and visit. The Board understands the stress and worry that anti-social behaviour can cause. For this reason, the Board will continue to work closely with communities in Solihull to take action and reduce the impact it has on people's lives.

For more information, including details of how to activate the Community Trigger, visit <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/communitytrigger>

or call **0121 704 6644**.

Solihull Health Profile

Health in summary

The health of people in Solihull is generally better than the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 16.7% (6,400) children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is higher than the England average.

Living longer

Life expectancy is 9.8 years lower for men and 10.3 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Solihull than in the least deprived areas.

Child health

In Year 6, 14.7% (301) of children are classified as obese, which is better than the average for England. The rate of alcohol specific hospital stays among those under 18 was 31.8*, which is again better than the average for England. This represents 14 stays per year. Levels of breastfeeding are worse than the England average. Levels of GCSE attainment are better than the England average.

Adult health

In 2012, 16.3% of adults are classified as obese, which is better than the average for England. The rate of alcohol related harm hospital stays was 625*. This represents 1,280 stays per year. The rate of self-harm hospital stays was 143.5*, which is better than the average for England. This represents 289 stays per year. The rate of smoking related deaths was 245*, which is again better than the average for England. This represents 309 deaths per year. Estimated levels of adult smoking are better than the England average. Rates of sexually transmitted infections, people killed and seriously injured on roads and contracting.

TB rates are better than average. However, rates of statutory homelessness and new cases of malignant melanoma are worse than average. Rates of violent crime, long term unemployment, drug misuse and early deaths from cardiovascular diseases are better than average.

The Commissioning Grants Prospectus is developed!

A new approach, the Commissioning Grants Prospectus for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing in Solihull has been developed. This approach, through setting aside some significant amount of funding, seeks to enable our partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector to deliver services in our local communities. Being able to set aside this funding is significant in the context of the very challenging economic climate in the public sector.

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (The Council) including Public Health and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (Solihull CCG) have designed this new approach to the way we fund voluntary and community organisations to deliver health, social care and wellbeing outcomes for people of Solihull.

The outcomes we are looking for are taken from identified local commissioning priorities and have in the main been produced with service users, carers and other key stakeholders.

In preparing and delivering this Prospectus, Solihull Council and partners must also be mindful of the statutory requirements of the Care Act 2014, a major piece of legislation that affects us all.

The Prospectus offers opportunities for existing and new organisations to work in partnership with Solihull Council and Solihull CCG to improve outcomes for local people. An example of an outcome, or something that will be different for people as a result of the commissioning grant, might be that older people are supported to live independently and safely in the community. We have identified the following outcomes we seek to achieve:

1. Older People are supported to live independently and safely in the community
2. Mental Health and Vulnerable People - 'hard to engage' vulnerable people including those with Mental Health support needs and people who are socially excluded are enabled to access supportive services and links to their community
3. People with dementia are assisted to seek early diagnosis and dementia friendly support to enable them to 'Live Well' with their dementia in the community of their choice, making informed choices that are free from stigma and promote equity
4. People with disabilities and/or people with long term conditions are supported to live independently and safely in the community
5. People with learning disabilities are supported in person centred ways which promote their valued role and contribution to the community
6. Carers are respected and their needs are recognised and supported

Meeting the needs of our growing and diverse local populations is of particular interest for local commissioners, and this is reflected in the commissioning objectives which underpin these outcomes.

The service areas covered in this first prospectus include:

- Information and advice for all client groups
- Prevention and Early Intervention in respect of the following client groups:
 - Older People
 - People with Mental Ill Health
 - People with Dementia
 - People with Long Term Conditions and Physical Disabilities
 - People with Learning Disabilities
 - Carers

The initiatives outlined below have been developed as a result of data analysis, recognised best practice and customer feedback. As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of age equality, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on people of different ages.

The Pathway Project

The Pathway Project was set up to support the cultural change that underpins the successful implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Project uses the 10 Early Support principles, underpinned by the partnership approach, to guide its work. The principles cover the following:

Valued uniqueness.

Planning partnerships.

Key working.

Birth through to end of life.

Personal achievement.

Informed choices.

Ordinary lives.

Participation.

Working together.

Workforce and community development.

The aim of the project is to

1. Understand what the principles look like when they are implemented
2. Discover ways to support the implementation of the principles
3. Find out if the implementation of the principles makes a positive difference to children, young people and their families
4. Establish if the principles are of value and whether they need to be changed.

The Pathway Project has a number of strands all contributing to the successful implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Ultimately the aim is to move communities towards a person-centred culture; a culture more in line with the Solihull Way and towards a shared vision of a community in which everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and more prosperous.

Work developed by participants has ranged from the development of coproduced training courses through to parents developing an audit tool that can support professionals to recognise what 'good' looks like when the principles are implemented. The Partnership Pathway Toolkit is already a rich resource but the real legacy has been the change in working practices of those who developed the tool rather than the tool itself. Our vision for this year is to study the difference that this work is making and share this information with others so the learning can be maximized.

Although the focus of the project has been on children and young people with a special educational need and/or a disability the feedback from some project participants has been that the impact of this work has the potential to reach a much broader group.

"It's a no brainer, why wouldn't you want to work in this way with all children and families?" J Nichols Dickens, Head teacher, Heath Primary School, Solihull

“You can see it working in the school. The teachers do things differently, they ask me how I am and smile and say hello. As both my boys have difficulties they understand that we need to be treated as a family unit. The biggest difference is that I can be flexible with how my children arrive at school - I can bring them into school away from others, or through a quieter door, and can arrive earlier or later depending on how our morning has been, with no questions or comments. Before this, coming to school was a nightmare. Now we can arrive happier, calmer and more confidently.”

Parent Solihull

“I can see the Pathway Approach working in my life through a change in my confidence. I have two children with autism and have many appointments to attend. I asked if my children could see the Paediatrician together rather than me having to make two trips. The Parent Workshop gave me the confidence to ask.” Parent Solihull

Participants have shared that they value the cultural shift that working with this approach brings about. The work has enabled contexts to focus on families and children where there are multiple vulnerabilities and learn from success stories and improve practice where working practices mitigated against success.

Early Education Funded Childcare Places

Some two year old children in Solihull are able to access a funded childcare place of up to 15 hours per week. Specific criteria to access this funding are based on the family being in receipt of certain benefits. Funding is also available for two year olds with special learning and care needs. Two year olds who are looked after or who have left Local Authority care for specific reasons are also able to access funding.

Active engagement with young people

We continue to take steps to ensure that we are continuously implementing good practice in engaging with communities at a local level, as well as how we evaluate and measure the impact of engagement and how this informs and shapes our policy and services. An example of this is how Solihull aims to improve engagement with children and young people from disadvantaged groups to give them a voice in a range of ways. An example of this is work with children and young people in care which includes:-

- Having a formal Children in Care Council (CiCC) – where young people from the CiCC attend part of Corporate Parenting Board to give their views to senior officers.
- Having a more informal CiCC network consisting of age appropriate groups for children and young people to identify issues that important to them. Recent achievements of this work have included:
 - Newly revised ‘Promise’ to children and young people in care
 - A set of standards agreed by CiCC / Network by young people in ‘Promise’
 - Young people proposing how they want the CiCC to work in future including how it links better with Corporate Parenting Board.
 - Young people helping design and deliver training on
 - i) voice of child to social work staff and carers and
 - ii) corporate parenting training to elected members.

We currently have a draft new active engagement strategy for children and young people that will help ensure that they are actively engaged in working with the Council, and its partners, on issues that are important to them. Part of this work involved a group of young people who helped agree a set of active engagement standards with a self-assessment / inspection tool. This tool will be available for managers to self-assess their service, and for young people to inspect services against. The strategy includes strengthening arrangements for giving children and young people in care and care leavers a voice through our Children in Care Council (CiCC) and network arrangements. This includes plans to involve children and young people in an annual event with corporate parents to agree top three priorities to work on in the next year. The Children in Care Council will also continue to give children and young people a voice in decision making process.

Assistive Technology and Telecare (ATT) (often referred to as “Useful Gadgets”)

Assistive Technology is: “any device or system that allows individuals to perform tasks that they would otherwise be unable to do, or increases the ease and safety with which tasks can be performed”

Solihull’s vision is to enable older people, people with disabilities, people with mental health problems and other vulnerable people to live as independently as possible in their own homes. Technology plays an increasing role in promoting such independence.

The use of ATT is a way of supporting people with care needs, and those that care for them, to have greater choice and control over their own lives. We have an assistive technology and Telecare demonstration flat that has recently been renovated and has on show a range of equipment in a real-life setting so that people can try it out for themselves and see how it works. As a result of user feedback, we have launched a quarterly assistive technology newsletter and are filming video case studies for staff and service users. The newsletters are published every quarter can be accessed via:
<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/adultsocialcare/28218.htm>

We want to make assistive technology and Telecare available for more people in need.

We now have more than 1700 people who use the “safe & sound” community alarm scheme, enabling them to summon help at the press of a button. More than 200 people in the borough are now using ATT in their home.

Telecare has been installed in 3 extra care schemes across 5 supported living schemes. Telecare has been installed in a new respite facility for people with learning disabilities.

Case Study-Telecare

Mrs Gilbert has dementia and diabetes. She lives alone and her daughters live in other parts of the UK. She receives daily support from a Care Agency and from a Community Nurse. She has a pendant alarm from Solihull Community Housing's Safe & Sound scheme. Following a fall, Mrs Gilbert was admitted to hospital. Her memory and diabetes had both got worse. Her Social Worker and family members were concerned that she wasn't sleeping well and might be letting strangers into her property. They were worried that she might need residential care.



The Social Worker decided that using the Just Checking electronic assessment tool would provide evidence about Mrs Gilbert's ability to live independently. Mrs Gilbert was happy to use the equipment so it was installed by the Gadgets Team.

After 3 weeks the Telecare Officer wrote a summary report of the findings and fed them back to Mrs Gilbert, her daughters and her Social Worker.

The main findings were:

- Mrs Gilbert's night time routine was not unusual
- There was no evidence of unexpected visitors
- Mrs Gilbert was spending long periods of time alone at home

The result

- Solihull Community Housing provided a wrist-worn falls detector in case Mrs Gilbert had serious fall.
- Mrs Gilbert, her family and the Social Worker agreed that existing care/support arrangements were satisfactory
- The Social Worker worked with Mrs Gilbert to support increased day-time activities
- The lack of unexpected visitors reassured Mrs Gilbert's family that she was safe
- Mrs Gilbert remained living at home

Libraries

Our libraries provide a wide range of informal adult learning opportunities as well as hosting agencies such as National Careers Service and Connexions who provide youth and adult careers and employment guidance. Basic computer tuition is available for all ages but is primarily required by and delivered to those 55+, as individuals and groups. Taster sessions occur during Adult Learners' Week;

Family History courses are delivered each term at Solihull Central Library and primarily attended by those aged 55 and over.

Solihull Libraries are dedicated to meeting the needs of families with pre-school, school age and teenage children, and to promoting equality of access, through:

- providing access to a wealth of resources to inspire the start of a lifelong love of reading for pleasure and for learning
- providing access to materials to help build and develop reading skills
- providing access to Bookstart packs
- delivering a range of opportunities to develop communication and concentration skills and to support families
- providing homework support and study space as well as information in support of the curriculum and of leisure interests
- providing access to quality online resources and directing children and young people to authoritative and appropriate online information
- providing teenage reading groups
- running a Summer Reading Challenge, to encourage literacy throughout the summer holidays for 4-14 year olds.

Solihull Active (Sports and Physical Activity)

In 2013, we carried out a review of Solihull Active to make sure that we have targeted work to increase participation in sport and physical activity across the different equality groups. According to research, 83% of people over the age of 60 give their main barrier to sport and physical activity as 'health, injury or disability'. To take account of this Solihull Active, now has on offer less vigorous and low impact activity provided to older people. The service provides access to swimming, gentle exercise classes and water mobility

classes as well as Borough wide walking programme and tai chi, extend and dance programming with a focus on the social benefits. More recently the Solihull Active cycling project, Wheels for All, has provided older people who are less confident or have mobility issues access to safe cycling provision. For those with long term conditions and in need of additional support GP Referral and chronic condition exercise classes are provided for those with a heart condition, lung condition and services are being developed for those with cancer.

Solihull Independent Travel Training

The Council is proud of its achievement with our Solihull Independent Travel Training service (www.solihull.gov.uk/traveltraining) that has gone from strength to strength in a year. The service provides personalised training to teach young people how to travel on a journey safely and independently. The service is available for anyone who would like some support to get to school, college or place of work. Being able to access public transport helps people make their own choices about how they live and what they want to achieve. Our trainers will plan a route to match the person's needs. The route is then agreed with parents/carers and the trainee. We then travel with the trainee to build their skills and develop their confidence. Our travel trainers work with young people throughout Solihull.

Since the service started in January 2014, the service has trained over 20 students who can now travel to and from school, college or work independently. We continue to promote the service and attend many schools and other events in the borough to raise the profile and importance of this service in increasing the independence of our young people.

Supporting unemployed young people

Solihull Council's Kickstart Project is offering a wage subsidy to local businesses that create new jobs for unemployed young people aged 16-17 years who live in North Solihull. Wage subsidies vary according to business size and sector from 50% to 100%.

The Council recognises that getting that all important first job makes a huge difference to the life of a young person. Therefore, this project offers them a paid job to help them to take their first step towards a new career.

Solihull's Winter Warmth programme is helping vulnerable and elderly people around the borough.

Case Study – Winter warmth

One such resident is Irene Green, who was informed about the programme at her local Age UK Solihull club in Olton. Irene explains: "The help has been invaluable. I wasn't sure how to use my new central heating system, but the Age UK volunteers explained what to do and helped set the temperature to 21C in my living room." Irene also received assistance with switching to a cheaper tariff and obtaining her Warm Homes Discount of £140.



The Solihull Winter Warmth Helpline (0121 704 8080) can supply emergency heaters, electric blankets and warm clothing and bedding. It also offers help to residents with debt and bills, benefits and grants, energy efficiency and an energy and winter preparedness survey.

Please make sure to ask for a free temperature/information card when you call. For more information visit www.solihull.gov.uk/winterwarmth

Disability:

The initiatives outlined below have been developed as a result of data analysis, recognised best practice and customer feedback. As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of disability equality, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on disabled people.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

On 3 December 2014, Solihull Council and other local organisations held the Borough's second celebration of the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) following the success of our inaugural celebration in 2013.

Again, representatives from various services within Solihull Council and several other local organisations were involved in the planning of the day.

The aim of IDPD is to showcase and celebrate the contributions that people with disabilities make to their communities, as well as to highlight some of the physical, social, economic and attitudinal barriers that can exclude them from participating fully and effectively as equal members of society. This year's international theme was: "Sustainable development: the promise of technology."

There was a daytime event held at Park View Day Centre, which is a day centre near the centre of Solihull for people with learning disabilities. Officially opened by the Deputy Mayor, the day included guest speakers with disabilities talking about their experiences and demonstrations of supportive technology, as well as discussion groups. There was entertainment during the day, including a dance troop from Park View, a keyboard player, a school choir, and a drama about attitudes to learning disability. In all, more than 30 local organisations were involved in the event, either as direct participants or by holding information stands.

In the evening, SoLO (Solihull Life Opportunities) hosted a disco in North Solihull and there were static promotional displays in Touchwood Shopping Centre and the Bluebell Centre during days leading up to the event.

All the immediate feedback on the Day has been extremely positive, with visitors finding the events interesting and enjoyable. There is every indication that Solihull's IDPD celebration is now established as an annual event.

Mental Health and Dementia Services

Our specialist mental health services have been extended to cater for those people who would previously have been excluded. Adult and child and adolescent services are now supported through the specialist mental health services.

We commissioned a service across all Birmingham and Solihull hospitals. To assess the level of care being provide, we have developed a dementia strategy co-produced with people with dementia, their carers and dementia service providers to get a better understanding of what they felt would help them live better with their dementia. This strategy is now out for consultation.

We are working in partnership with Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Services Foundation Trust, to ensure that people with dementia, whose physical health needs support, can have these services provided in their own home. Previously people with dementia would have had to go into hospital to receive support for certain physical health conditions which, had they not had dementia, could have been provided in their own home.

We are also working with the Alzheimer's Society to develop information for people with dementia.

Consultation with vulnerable groups

We continue to consult with vulnerable people in Solihull on various issues that affect them. As an example, recent consultation with residents who receive home care support led to the Council reshaping a new specification for home care providers. Current and potential home care providers were

invited to tender for new contracts based on the specification. Evaluation took place during January 2013 for new contracts to be awarded, which came into force in April 2013.

Key findings from the consultation were published on the Council website in standard and easy read formats (<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/consultation/29055.htm>). Individual service users affected by the tender process, for example those whose existing providers were unsuccessful in preliminary stages of the tender, have been kept informed by their social work teams.

People with learning disabilities nationally have had fewer opportunities to live independently (with appropriate support) than the wider population. In Solihull, for historical reasons the percentage of people with learning disabilities living in residential care is higher than the national average. Additionally, there is a shortage of social housing, particularly property suitable for people with disabilities, and it was identified locally that there was a need to raise awareness of these issues in order to increase the pace of future change.

Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs

Experts by Experience: A group of “experts” has been established who have a range of experience in social care and support. They are supported by a permanent Making It Real lead officer. Through a co-production process the experts are involved in both planning and delivering key adult services. A programme of training and development for Experts has supported individuals to build confidence and skills.

Experts are contributing to a range of aspects of social care commissioning, delivery and evaluation including: tender evaluations, service review and redesign, staff training, promoting assistive technology, staff recruitment and adults safeguarding service improvement.

Some of the experts have been trained as dementia trainers and are now delivering dementia training to staff within homecare, non-dementia specialist residential care homes and hospital settings to improve the way that staff support people with dementia accessing their services.

Case Study – Experts by Experience

Experts are people who have direct experience of using our services or care for someone who uses our services. In other words, local people telling it like it is! Through their experiences, Experts by Experience are helping Solihull to provide better services so that other people have a better experience of them. One such Expert by Experience is James Doyle who briefly shares his experience in this role as follows:



“I have been very fortunate in that I have over many years been involved in various work streams that Solihull Council has worked on. Most recently being commissioned to be an ‘Expert By Experience’ whereby I have worked with many commissioners, managers, service providers and spoke with service users. Having lived and being educated in Solihull all my life I feel it is a privilege to serve our Borough. I have achieved many personal and professional achievements in my life, but this is one of the proudest times of my life serving our Community and supporting a younger Disabled adult onto the Special Educatory Needs and Disability Board.”
For more information visit www.solihull.gov.uk/winterwarmth

Review of Day Services for people with Learning Disabilities

Since Cabinet Member and Scrutiny approved the recommendations to redevelop the services, work has been undertaken to modernise and develop them as required. As a result of this two out of three hubs have been identified for people using services in the North of the Borough with the building work commencing on these premises early in the New Year and with a view to people being able to use the new venues from early Spring 2015.

Park View Learning Disability Centre has extended the range of options available to people who use it – as well as inviting other people in to be involved in the activities and options on offer, through two strands called ‘The Hive’ and ‘Links’

displays, and, most importantly for the people with learning disabilities and family carers who had initiated the group, the opportunity to raise questions and speak to senior Council Members and staff.

This event met its aim of raising awareness (among senior staff in housing team and housing associations, and Council Members etc) of the housing issues faced by people with learning disabilities, partly through the questions asked at the event and through the preparation and the consideration of issues required for individuals involved in the event. Additionally, those involved were made more aware of the importance of involving people with learning disabilities and family carers in service development. The event contributed to the development of Solihull’s draft Independent Living and Extra Care Strategy, ensuring that it reflected the needs and aspirations of people with learning disabilities.



David has joined a local gym and attends sessions regularly twice a week



David and Len tending the gardens at Solihull Hospital - they both love the outside life and an honest hard day’s work!



Linda and her new friends at the aqua aerobics session at Tudor Grange Leisure Centre. Linda has always enjoyed swimming and now has the opportunity to go every week



Office skills – many people have enjoyed the opportunity to “surf the internet finding out about the world around them.



New Volunteers are sharing their skills – Geoff is excellent at craft work.



Solihull MBC Park Rangers are involved with a project to “spruce” up our garden areas. Charlotte absolutely loves helping with the gardening and potting plants

Equipment and housing adaptation

Solihull Independent Living is a not-for-profit partnership between the Council and Solihull Community Housing (SCH), which offers people who are older, disabled or on a low income, an affordable way to repair, improve or adapt their homes. This scheme has successfully delivered a speedier turnover of work and reduced waiting lists for adaptations. Further information on this service is available from [SCH](#).

The Solihull Gateway Project

The [Solihull Gateway project](#) is a major highway improvement scheme for the Station Road and Poplar Road area of Solihull town centre, a key 'Gateway' for access into the town centre. It aims to make the town centre safer, more accessible and convenient, as well as to update the appearance of the area and make it a more desirable location to visit for shopping and business. The scheme is being developed in partnership with Centro - the region's public transport body. Access for buses and their passengers is being improved which will lead to better journey times and reliability.

One of the means of achieving these aims is to remove the priority for vehicles travelling through the area in favour of pedestrians and cyclists. The initial idea was to remove controlled 'pelican' crossings in favour of more open 'courtesy crossings' on the understanding that pedestrians had right of way all along the scheme.

Although there was a very positive response to the initial consultation in February 2014 with over 80% support for the scheme, some concerns were raised over plans to replace push button signal crossings with 'courtesy' type crossings, particularly from blind and partially sighted residents and people with learning difficulties.

As a result, there has been a series of meetings and positive discussions with stakeholders that represent the interests of blind and partially sighted people and people with learning disabilities, as well as older people who may have mobility problems. This group of stakeholders became known as the Vulnerable Road Users (VRU) Group and their meetings directly informed a Fair Treatment Assessment (FTA) that was undertaken on the project.

Through these discussions, an amended scheme plan was developed that included three zebra crossings at the start of the Pedestrian Zone in Station Road, in Poplar Road and in Herbert Road. These will provide additional crossing facilities for people who are unsure about crossing at 'courtesy' type crossings. The amended plan was welcomed by the VRU Group and was approved by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways at a meeting on 23 October 2014. The Cabinet Member's decision was informed by the completed FTA.

Through these discussions and the FTA, other measures are being put in place to ensure that people who may be vulnerable during the building works and in adjusting to the new arrangements are given the support they require. These include on site targeted training and education for regular visitors, especially those with mobility, sensory or learning disabilities. Safe & Active Travel officers and Independent Travel Trainers will be available to perform this training and education.

In addition, the VRU Group will have an on-going involvement throughout the delivery of the project and post scheme monitoring to help ensure any further issues impacting on vulnerable road users are identified and addressed.

Enabling maximum choice and control

Mental Health service users living independently, with or without support, have seen significant improvements in the last year. There has been a slight drop in the proportion of mental health service users in settled accommodation.

Proportionally, referrals and assessments in Solihull are more likely to lead to the provision of services for people with mental health problems. There has been a significant increase this year in the proportion of service users getting a service earlier in the pathway, i.e. at contact stage.

96% of the eligible population receive a personal budget or direct payment, which is much better than the West Midlands average. The provision of direct payments is particularly strong. Year on year for older adults, Solihull has increased its provision of direct payments to its service users aged 85 years and older, most significantly when compared to both the other adult age groups.

Supporting Dementia Friendly Communities

Dementia is a term for a group of illnesses that cause progressive damage to the brain. People with dementia may have problems with: understanding, memory, changes in behaviour/mood, communication, day-to-day activities, falls, managing their own health. Dementia can affect everybody. It can affect adults of working age as well as older adults. Over the next 7 years it is estimated that the number of people living with dementia in Solihull will increase by 31% (from 2,798 now to 3,800 by 2021).

Dementia is not a normal part of growing old, but with the right services and support it's possible for people to live well with the condition. Solihull Council and the NHS, alongside voluntary and community organisations are working together to make the borough dementia friendly and aim to have 4,500 Dementia Friends in Solihull by 2015.

Being a Dementia Friend isn't about volunteering or fundraising (though people can do that too if they want). It is just about understanding a bit more about dementia and the small things everyone can do to help people with the condition.

Case study-getting on well with dementia

Christine Logan is one of Solihull's Dementia Friends Champions and runs information sessions for people wanting to become Dementia Friends. She explains why she became involved.



“Around the time Mum died I started noticing that Dad’s behaviour had changed. My husband and I were about to retire and move to France. But I decided I needed to spend some time with Dad and moved in with him for a couple of weeks. That was nine years ago and we are all still here in the same house in Solihull.

“When we moved in I discovered Dad had been storing everything, even bits of broken clocks, in boxes which filled the house. He would try to boil an egg by putting it in the electric kettle and heating it up on the stove. And once we found him in the car, wondering why it wouldn’t work when he told it to ‘take me home’.

“Dad was diagnosed in the middle stages of dementia. He needs 24 hour care and I am his main carer.

“I felt helpless at first, but decided I needed to learn as much as I could to help dad. Then I realised I wanted to help others like me so when I heard about Dementia Friends I knew it could make such a difference.

“The training day run by the Alzheimer’s Society in Birmingham was brilliant. I thought I already knew quite a lot but I learned loads more on the course. Anyone can go on the Champions training. Then you need to decide if you’re confident enough to deliver information sessions for other

people. I started by running sessions for friends and family.

“In my experience people who come to the sessions are often worried that a family member might have dementia. They want to find out more and there is always a ‘light bulb moment’ when I say something that rings true with them.

“In the session we talk about the brain being like a bookcase. Dementia rocks the bookcase and books containing people’s most recent memories start falling out from the top shelf. Once they’ve fallen out you can’t replace the books so memories and information are lost. That’s why people with dementia may seem to have gone back in time and why the present day can be confusing.

“Having a community full of Dementia Friends means that we can start to remove the stigma of dementia and dispel the myths surrounding the condition. We need to help people continue to do the things they can do.

“For example, if someone, like my dad, tries to boil the electric kettle on the stove, the wrong thing to do is stop them from making a cup of tea. If they had an old fashioned whistling kettle to go on the stove and some loose leaf tea, they could make themselves a cup of tea the way they remember doing it.”

Can dementia be prevented?

There is no certain way to prevent all types of dementia. However, a healthy lifestyle can help lower your risk of developing dementia when you are older.

To reduce your risk of developing dementia it is recommended that you:

- eat a healthy diet
- maintain a healthy weight
- exercise regularly
- do not drink too much alcohol
- do not smoke
- keep your blood pressure at a healthy level

For more information visit the NHS Choices website www.nhs.uk and search for 'dementia guide'.

Supporting independence in Adult Social Care - Independent Living & Extra Care

Extra care housing is an alternative to residential care. It gives people the opportunity to live in their own homes, knowing that 24 hour care and support is available on site if they need it. It's ideal if people are frail or less able to manage on their own.

We have reviewed and updated our specification for extra care service provision, ensuring that extra care is a real alternative to residential care and can meet a wide range of social care and support needs. This specification has been adopted during a tender process for the re-commissioning of extra care at two existing services. Equality and diversity has been considered with respect to the needs of the service users throughout this process. We have also reviewed the Supporting People Programme. This involved service re-designs to improve service quality.

In addition, we have established a regular meeting of Social Care Commissioners and Housing Strategy Officers to ensure that we share information on community needs and provide opportunities for future supported housing development. We have undertaken the closure and re-provision of two residential care homes in Solihull Lodge, one for older

people with dementia and one for adults with learning disabilities, following extensive work with residents, family carers and staff.

We will provide people in Solihull with a far greater range of supported housing:

- 28 x one bedroom flats supporting people with Mental Health needs.
- Completion of a new extra care service for older people and people with disabilities, including 33 x 1 bedroomed apartments for rent and 18 x 2 bedroomed apartments for shared ownership sale by a social landlord who will adopt our newly revised extra care specification.
- The two residential homes we have closed and demolished in Solihull Lodge will be replaced with extra care services; one will be for over 55s and people with disabilities and the other will be aimed largely at adults with learning disabilities.
- Development of further extra care services in North Solihull and more rural areas.
- More supported living opportunities for people with disabilities who are coming out of residential colleges.
- Looking to develop more dementia residential respite provision locally.

Shopmobility

We continue to provide a Shopmobility Scheme (<http://www.solihull.gov.uk/shopmobility>) that promotes and enhances the independence of people with limited mobility through the use of mobility equipment to get around the town centres with confidence. No membership is required for this scheme. We continuously use the feedback from our service users to improve our service offer.

Participation of people with disabilities in sports

In 2013, we carried out a review of Solihull Active to make sure we have targeted work to increase participation in sport and physical activity across the different equality groups. Nationally the number of disabled people who take part in sport has risen with 3% more people participating now than in 2005/06, but barriers remain.

Weekly participation in sport among people with a long-term limiting illness, disability or infirmity is at 18.5%. That's around half of the general population level of 39.2%.

The picture varies however depending on the type of disability; people with sensory impairments have a much lower participation rate, at just 13.4%. National research carried out into the barriers to participation for disabled people found health limitations (74%) were the main barrier for disabled adults, while disabled young people mentioned lack of money and the unsuitability of sports facilities in addition to health (all 37%).

Local research identified the following key points:

- Swimming was the key activity they wanted to do more of;
- Staff awareness of the issues facing people with disabilities;
- Improving the awareness of the services on offer;
- Cost of service; and
- Support to access services.

Following local research, a programme of activities has been developed for people with disabilities as part of the Solihull Active Step into Solihull project.

The programme includes:

- Yoga;
- Archery;
- Multi-sports session;
- Racketball;
- Cycling through Wheels for All;
- Solihull Gets Active Games.

Funding has also been received for a swimming and aquability project that started in October 2014.

Disabled Go

The Council is fully committed to maximising the independence and choice for disabled people in accessing their local area and the places we all want to visit. Since 2007, the Council has commissioned Disabled Go– to provide an online detailed disability access information guide to venues across the Solihull area that includes many Council and public offices, shops, pubs, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, railway stations, and many more venues. Disabled Go currently works with over 80 local authorities, over 50 universities, over 80 colleges and over 25 NHS trusts.

In partnership with Disabled Go we have held consultation events with local disability groups in Solihull who have worked jointly with us to review and update the venues of the online guide, as well as provide feedback on additional features on the site such as its accessibility tools. Venues are reviewed annually in October/November of each year and all new venues were visited and assessed by a surveyor using a research template developed by disabled people, which is used across the UK. In 2013 we added a further 36 venues to the online Solihull guide and our data shows that from the previous year of January 2013 to October 2013, the number of visits to the Solihull site has increased by 25% - with most traffic coming from users based in Solihull, Birmingham, London, Coventry, Worcester and Leicester. This is a real success in actively welcoming disabled people to Solihull and breaking down perceptions and barriers to people travelling independently.

Employment support and training (for people with disabilities)

We continue to increase the range of available employment options for people with learning disabilities, for example, through helping them set up small businesses.

Key programmes include the Solihull Mind Employment Support Service which supports people with depression and anxiety to remain in, or to go back into, employment. Among the services provided are career counselling, job searching and accompanied visits to colleges and appointments. In the last two years, demand increased by an average of 20%.

Parks and open spaces

We recognise that through the effective design of outdoor public space, we are able to address some of the barriers that may prevent disabled people from participating in activities that other people take for granted.

Since 2008/09 there have been 23 new/improved play spaces created throughout the borough. This has included targeted consultation with disabled children, and children and young people with additional needs, to find out what would encourage them to use play spaces more often. The key issues arising from the stakeholder consultation meetings included a lack of provision within play areas for people with disabilities. This has been addressed through the use of inclusive design in all 23 Playbuilder sites.

Following a review, our [parks webpages](#) now provide more detailed information on the facilities available within our principal parks and access within our parks for people with disabilities.

Feedback from park users is reviewed, and appropriate action taken as necessary, to improve access or facilities within public open space. To increase overall access to parks and following discussions with various members of the community, we provide a Park Mobility Scheme. The scheme allows people to borrow wheelchairs on a similar basis to the Shopmobility scheme. The wheelchairs are fully collapsible so they can be taken in a vehicle to be used in any park and open space within the

Borough. We work closely with Shopmobility and other agencies to promote this service.

Interpretation and translation

We have provision for communicating with disabled people who have specific communication needs. We have access to British Sign Language, Sign Supported English and Deafblind Interpreters for the Deaf community as well as audio transcription, and translation into Braille, Makaton, Moon and other formats suitable for blind and visually impaired people.

Pregnancy and Maternity:

The initiatives outlined below have been developed as a result of data analysis, recognised best practice and customer feedback. As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of equality for pregnant women/new mothers, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on pregnant women.

Our public buildings

Our public buildings are welcoming places for women to breastfeed, with staff aware of women's rights to breastfeed in public, and facilities in larger buildings for mothers to breast feed in privacy if desired, as well as baby-changing facilities.

Reviewing commissioning for sexual health services in Solihull

Sexual Health Competitive Procurement Exercise

This was a competitive procurement exercise to re-commission existing sexual health services in partnership with Birmingham City Council (BCC) and agree a new five to seven year contract, to commence August 2015.

An assessment, equality impact assessment (fair treatment assessment, FTA), to find out how this exercise would impact on different groups of people, has been completed as an integral part of the procurement and mobilization of re-modelled Sexual Health Services. This re-modelled service will deliver a defined system and better deliver local and national strategic sexual health and well-being outcomes.

Sexual Health services do not currently function as a coherent system and reflect historical patterns of commissioning. The transition of commissioning responsibility from the NHS to the Local Authority provides an opportunity to remodel service to reflect changes in need and to better reflect the Council's priorities alongside mandatory service functions and national frameworks for sexual health.

The FTA will contribute to ensuring improved sexual health outcomes for the

Solihull population overall and particularly the following identified Priority Groups:

Children in need and care leavers

Substance misusers

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) people

Homeless people

Offenders

People with mental health problems

People with learning disabilities

Sex workers

Gypsies and travellers

Trafficked people

New arrivals from abroad

Men who have sex with men (MSM)

The Priority Groups identified above reflect groups with protected characteristics and often experience stereotyping, negative treatment and discrimination.

Services are being procured through a tender process that will remodel services based on an assessment of local population needs, reconciliation of the service areas that the Council is mandated to deliver and national policy. This FTA formed an integral part of the assessment of local population need during the tender, and serves to inform the incoming provider as it mobilises services.

This procurement maintains the Council's statutory responsibilities and does not seek to reduce or limit service access. Sexual health services are accessed by the whole population with the majority of users being in the 15-44 age range.

The priorities of sexual health commissioning strategy have a positive impact on populations with protected characteristics, and the needs of these populations have been considered and evaluated in determining both the outcomes framework and the Priority Groups (see above).

Initial data suggests that inequalities in Sexual Health still persist within Solihull by age, ethnicity, sexuality and geography. The wider determinants of Sexual Health such as deprivation, migration, race, culture and neighbourhoods are influential and partially understood. Data refreshed for the Sexual Health Needs Assessment in Solihull (2013) also suggest the current distribution of Sexual Health service provision is still based on historical patterns of provision. The availability, access to, and quality and range of Sexual Health and contraceptive services within primary care is variable; this understanding of needs, has informed a strategic approach to the future commissioning and, therefore, the proposed procurement.

Services associated with Sexually Transmitted Infections are accessed by proportional quantities of males and females. Reproductive sexual health services are used by males and females with an emphasis of contraceptive services catering for women.

A local needs assessment confirmed the service needs of the wider Solihull population and also the defined needs of particular population groups e.g. in terms of age and sexual health and teenage conceptions, race and rates of HIV prevalence, gender and the disproportionate incidence of sexual violence on women and girls. The wider Community also has needs in relation to Health Promotion and defined populations have needs for targeted outreach. There is an overall need to reduce stigma associated with Sexual Health.

The procurement proposal aims to address identified needs and provide opportunity to develop the service offer in Solihull to improve sexual health.

This will lead to a reduction in sexually transmitted infections and disease and improvement in reproductive sexual health choices to ensure Sexual Health is better addressed as a component of overall Health and Wellbeing.

Overall the new system is designed to address the needs of groups with protected characteristics and to further develop the existing service based responses.

The new procurement system will maintain a focus on the needs of Young People and will further develop the service response to groups of Young People with greatest needs e.g. Looked after Children.

The system will also better address the needs of women by offering integrated services that also are more clearly focussed on issues of sexual violence. The system will better address the needs of men who have sex with men.

The system will further address the HIV testing needs of Black African and African Caribbean populations and associated late diagnosis.

Physical activity

Research shows that babies born to a family where one parent is obese have a 30-40% chance of becoming obese themselves; this increases to 70-80% where both parents are obese. Pregnancy is identified as a time in a woman's life where she is at a high risk of developing obesity, i.e. putting on extra weight during pregnancy that she is never able to lose. Research shows that eating habits, food preferences and activity levels are learned early in life. Therefore avoiding the development of unhealthy lifestyles in the first place provides the best chance for a child to avoid obesity. The Living Well Project, managed by the Solihull Active Team, offers a weight management programme for pregnant women and new mums. It works with the woman to help minimise weight gain during pregnancy, helps in weight loss following birth and provides information to help the whole family to adopt a healthier lifestyle to ensure their child gets the best start and to prevent childhood obesity. The programme works with women with a (pre pregnancy) Body Mass Index over 30.

Race (or Ethnicity/Ethnic Origin):

The initiatives outlined below have been developed as a result of data analysis, recognised best practice and customer feedback. As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of race equality, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on people of different ethnic backgrounds.

Black History Month

October is Black History Month in the UK, and there were many events across Solihull borough, taking place to celebrate! Black History Month is aimed at celebrating the significant contributions that black and minority ethnic people have brought to our country -socially, economically and culturally.

Black History Month both educates and reminds us and new generations about how our society has been shaped. As part of these many activities to mark Black history Month, a free exhibition called 'And we were there too' took place all month in Solihull Central Library, highlighting the presence and involvement of Caribbean people in the First World War. The Solihull & Birmingham Caribbean Family History Group and The WAWI (Why Are West Indians) Project, who collaborated on this exhibition, also offered free genealogy assistance to people who were interested in searching for their ancestors - including those ancestors who may have been involved in World War I.

The event was supported by a parade of Caribbean ex-service people displaying the regimental standards of West India and British West India in Solihull Theatre Square on the launch of the event. This was followed by an introduction from the Mayor of Solihull and talk by The WAWI Project in the Library Studio.

At the Library Studio, a new play, *The Hallowed Turf*, was performed. Set in the trenches of the First World War, this is the story of Walter Tull, the second Black professional footballer in Britain - and the first Black combat officer to serve in the British Army.



Mayor of Solihull with some WAWI members displaying the regimental standards at the event.

A small exhibition was also in the Orchard House reception. This exhibition aimed to provide some insight into the numerous, yet often overlooked, historical contributions from the Black and Asian communities who have served in the British armed forces.



An exhibition attended by the Mayor of Solihull

Safeguarding vulnerable people

A small working group has been set up to ensure adult people from our Black and Ethnic Minority Communities are safeguarded from harm and abuse. This working group is looking at ways to raise awareness and ensure information is accessible to adults from Black and Ethnic Minority groups and ensure training to staff includes issues of diversity and equality.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) service

The English as an Additional Language (EAL) Service works with schools and families to help children for whom English as an additional language to acquire better English. It helps international new arrivals (who are from diverse ethnic backgrounds) to integrate into school and to access the curriculum. The EAL Service also supports those children whose families have been long established in the UK and have English as an additional language. Support for children is accessed through schools and with parents' permission.

The EAL Service can offer additional short-term support at all Key Stages to international new arrivals, that are unable to benefit fully and immediately from the curriculum offered, because their first or home language is not English. Support is aimed at equipping them to become part of the school academically and socially, as quickly as possible. It aims to avoid anxiety or disruption to their education.

The number of pupils who had been supported directly by the EAL Service and for whom a final report was written between September 2013 and July 2014 is 48; this includes children from all key stages as well as Early Years Foundation Stage. The small number of pupils in each year group means overall judgements and comparisons of pupil progress are not reliable.

Solihull is the most successful authority in the West Midlands for EAL learners at GCSE, with 69% getting 5 A* - C.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2014>

Case Study Accelerated progress in an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC) in secondary school.

Aarif arrived in the UK in January 2013 having travelled here from Afghanistan as an unaccompanied asylum seeker. Aarif had attended a Madrasah in Afghanistan but was not literate in his first language and had only a very basic understanding of numbers. He was experiencing a high degree of trauma having been separated from his family and placed with carers in Solihull. On arrival Aarif received some one-to-one instruction from a member of the LACES (Looked-After Children's Services) team and some input from his carer.

When Aarif started school he was able to recognise some numbers and most letters and was beginning to be able to write some simple words using his knowledge of letter sounds. He was admitted mid-way into year 9.

The EAL Service supported Aarif with induction and provided a training session for staff. Aarif received in-class support for five lessons per week. He continued to be supported by a member of the LACES team on a weekly basis for ten weeks. This work focused on discrete grammar activities and English language work; the LACES team liaised with the EAL Service to ensure that there was continuity.

Half-termly meetings with carers and staff focused on targets in Aarif's individual language plan (ILP) which was drawn up by the EAL team. These meetings allowed EAL staff to highlight concerns and to give advice and guidance to staff. Aarif was also encouraged to contribute to these meetings and an interpreter provided to facilitate this. The school used Pupil Premium finance to pay for additional spoken English lessons as well as a cricket kit so that Aarif could attend a local club.

Aarif continued to have EAL support throughout year 10 and, with the guidance of the Learning Support Department, achieved an Entry Level 2 certificate in English. He is now hoping to achieve an Entry Level certificate in Science, a certificate in Vocational Studies as well as GCSEs in English, Maths, ICT, Catering and Design.

Aarif's progress between March 2013 and July 2014 in English was fast and comes within the accelerated progress range.

Libraries

Our libraries provide a range of books in languages other than English. A Community Language collection comprising Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati and Punjabi is situated at Solihull Central Library along with a range of newspapers and periodicals. There is also a section with European language novels, and children's dual language books are available.

The installation of Self Service Kiosks in all Solihull libraries has ensured that all library customers are able to self-issue/discharge and renew materials and pay charges easily without having to wait in queues to see library staff. Customers can easily operate the kiosks by the use of on-screen written prompts and visual images/directions. To ensure equality of access the kiosks have been programmed with up to four alternative languages – which can be changed to meet the profile of the local community.

Interpretation and translation

Solihull Council is committed to ensuring that all members of the public can access our services and the information we provide. We recognise that some people speak little or no English, or have other communication requirements, and may require an interpreter or translator to access Council services. We have separate suppliers for face-to-face and telephone based interpreting services, and for translation work. Most of our interpreting work is in the support of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

During 2014, the Council reviewed its contract arrangements for Interpreting and Translation, establishing a more systematic framework for people seeking a range of interpreting and translation services, including sign language interpreting and 'easy read' translations. By offering a selection of approved suppliers for each aspect of interpreting and translation work, service managers will have greater opportunity to en-

sure value for money and the identify the most suitable supplier for their requirements .

Religion or Belief:

The initiatives outlined below have been developed as a result of data analysis, recognised best practice and customer feedback. As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of religious equality, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on people of different religious backgrounds.

Religious events

'Lifting the Veil' exhibition is a success

With the support from Solihull Youth Service a group of young women who attend/attended Solihull Sixth Form College recently devised and delivered an exhibition named 'Lifting the Veil,' as part of Black History Month.

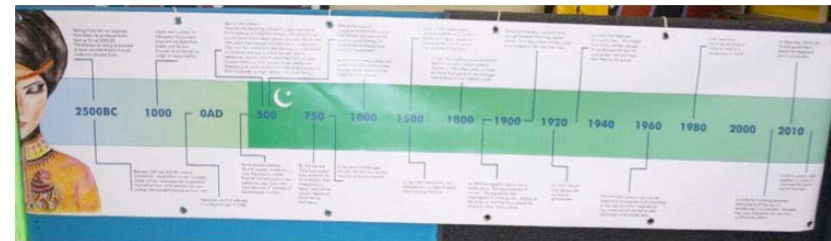


The exhibition, launched on 23 October 2014, was hosted at Kingshurst Youth and Community Centre and attended by 35 students from Smith's Wood Sports College. The exhibition made information about the hijab (a scarf worn around the heads of Muslim women), more accessible, through the engaging and interactive workshops the planning group created.



Hijab styles created during the tutorial workshop by young people from Smiths Wood Sports college.

This project received almost £4,000 from both Solihull Youth Opportunity Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund to enable young women to explore the decision-making process in regard to culture and in particular wearing the hijab. One of the aims was to break down barriers and stereotypes created through the lack of knowledge and understanding regarding why young Muslim women wear the hijab.



The launch was extremely successful and comments from the young people who attended included 'I have learnt it's a choice to wear the hijab', 'just because they wear it doesn't mean they are dangerous', 'it shows they are the same as us', and 'I won't feel scared or intimidated anymore'.

Sex (or Gender):

The initiatives outlined below have been developed as a result of data analysis, recognised best practice and customer feedback. As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of gender equality, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on people of different genders.

Employment support

Employment support is available to all unemployed Solihull residents and can be provided in a public location of their choice at a time to suit their circumstances. We work closely with Children's Centres who can provide a crèche facility for the children of parents who are receiving employment support.

Data capture sheets are used to ensure that we are appropriately targeting our service delivery, and include questions on gender.

Physical activity

Participation in physical activity differs by gender and decreases with age. National research shows 40% of men and 28% of women meet the minimum recommendations for physical activity in adults, with a gradual increase in numbers achieving these levels between 1997 and 2006. To contribute to increasing female participation in physical activity, DocSpot provides a range of activities which are attractive to females; as a consequence, 62% of participants are women.

The Step into Solihull project specifically targets women as participation levels in physical activity by women in Solihull were below national and regional levels. The project has engaged with 1,357 women since the project began in activities including walking,

tai chi, Extend, Nintendo Wii, and aerobics.

Our Neighbourhood Sports Programme provides opportunities for male and female participants. As part of our sports strategy, women and girls within the north of Solihull are a priority group. We are still successful in running the Active Women (Us Girls) programme, which promotes activity to young women aged 16-25 years within North Solihull. Us Girls has now established new doorstep sport interventions, new training packages and new ways of thinking that are tailored to meet the specific needs of young women in Smith's Wood, Chelmsley Wood and Kingshurst.

The Active Women Programme is now co-ordinated by the Solihull Active team and our monthly data returns to the Home Office and StreetGames show that between April 2012 and December 2013, more than 680 males and 230 females took part in Neighbourhood Sports activities.

Libraries

Our Summer Reading Challenge for 4 to 14 year olds has targeted boys, due to the recognised literacy differences that regularly place boys below girls.

Domestic abuse work in Solihull

Domestic Abuse cuts across ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, disability and religion or belief and class/status. Domestic Abuse can affect any individual within society; however some specific groups are more vulnerable or suffer more abuse because of additional factors, such as their gender, age, mental health, learning disabilities or religion or beliefs. It is recognised that there is significant under reporting: women may be fearful to report being a victim; men may feel embarrassed; minority ethnic groups may be subject to cultural and religious pressures; etc.

Local data shows that victims in Solihull are predominantly young

and female. In March 2013, the definition of domestic abuse was to include those aged 16 and 17 and wording changed to reflect coercive control. Nationally and locally there is a growing concern about the impact of domestic abuse on children and young people.

Solihull Council is committed to tackling domestic abuse and continues to work in partnership with a range of agencies to help victims of domestic abuse. At the moment female victims of domestic abuse who live in Solihull can access advice, information and support from:

- A local helpline run by Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid
- A community based drop-in
- One-to-one independent support
- Refuge accommodation

Men who are at high risk because of domestic abuse are able to access local specialist support and, in 2014/15, we are considering how we can make sure more people are aware of what domestic abuse is and have access to information, advice and support.

Case Study – Working with people who experience domestic abuse

Angela has stayed in two other refuges but had to move as her ex-partner found out where she was. The second time her family told him, so she has now had to break contact with them. She has been in Solihull refuge for 10 months and says 'it feels like home, I feel safe here.'

Angela has been in the UK for 11 years but did not have status, which meant that it was harder for her to leave as she had fewer choices. Her relationship was abusive and her ex-partner was very violent to her, after the last incident it was her youngest child begging her to leave that gave her courage. Angela's non-status was one of the reasons she stayed in the relationship. She has a scar from the last

incident and says 'when I see it every day it makes me sad and I want it gone, but at the same time it is a reminder how far I have come'. When Angela was in the relationship her health visitor and the police both asked if she was in a violent relationship, but she said no. She says she never disclosed to anyone until she went to a local CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau) for advice about claiming money to pay rent for a home for her and her children. They referred her to the council homeless team, who linked in with Social Services. As she had no access to public funding, she was initially given £20.00 per week for her and two children to feed, clothe and pay heating/lighting in the refuge (support staff have helped to negotiate this since).

Support staff in Solihull refuge have secured funding for Angela and her children to stay in the refuge. They helped her access legal aid and referred her to legal advice to deal with her immigration status and she has just been granted leave to remain. She has applied for her benefits and is intending to start college when she settles into her new home. Angela is excited about moving out but also very worried, as she will be alone. She has to make new friends and has trust issues due to being betrayed in the past. Support staff have worked with Angela on safety planning, they have helped her to understand how important it is for her not to disclose to extended family or friends where she is living, they have helped her find alternative places to meet her cultural needs including food shopping. When asked what was important to her in the refuge she says that the ability to stay in your own flat when you want to be private and the choice to go to communal areas when you want company. She values the friends she has made at the refuge and how sharing experiences with others has helped her not feel so different or alone. She particularly values the availability of staff to talk with when she feels low, worried or stressed and is grateful that this place was here for her when nothing else was available. Angela believes that her children would have been taken in to care if she had not been able to stay in a refuge as she would have been homeless and unable to provide for them.

Complaints

At all of our Children's Centres, we continue to monitor complaints. We try to deal with any complaints as efficiently as possible using our established procedures depending on whether a complaint is a statutory or corporate one. For the past year we have not had any complaints to report on from any of our Children's Centres.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment:

As part of our decision making processes we consider the relevance of equality based on sexual orientation and gender reassignment, specifically highlighting when targeted consultation has taken place and the likely impact of the decision on people of different sexual orientation and gender reassignment. We recognise that gender reassignment and sexual orientation differ, but our policies tend to address Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans* (LGBT) people together in recognition of the shared experience of discrimination they may face.

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

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender update

Our aim is to increase the confidence and trust of the LGBT community in the borough to become directly involved in helping to shape and inform our public services and make those services better and more cost-effective. We want to capture and understand the interests and requirements of our LGBT community on how we deliver more efficient, innovative and fair services and as well as making the borough a place where LGBT communities feel valued and safe to live, work, visit or study. We continue to work with the Police to improve the way in which we address homophobic hate crime in the borough and are very keen to involve our LGBT community in this work.

LGBT History Month

We are committed to raising awareness and educating local people about our LGBT community whilst also supporting our LGBT

employees. In February 2014 we celebrated LGBT History Month on the lives and achievements of the LGBT community with an exhibition and featured LGBT books display in the Library with a further exhibition in the Council House.

Implementing the New Rights on marriage for same sex couples

We have embraced the new rights on marriage for same sex couples and on Wednesday 10th December 2014, when couples could legally convert their Civil Partnership to a Marriage, we had two couples converting that same day.



The couples were friends and they were able to sit in on each others conversion to celebrate each others marriage. We congratulated the couples by offering each of them a rose and it was clearly a lovely day celebrated by all

Socio-Economic Disadvantage:

Families First Programme

Impact of Families First Approach on outcomes for families in Solihull.

In 2012, the multi-disciplinary Families First approach was created in Solihull. This aims to better meet the needs of families facing multiple problems and improve their life chances by providing them with the right support and encouragement.

In addition to delivering our local ambitions to improve the lives of families facing multiple problems, the Families First approach also meets the objectives of the national Troubled Families programme targeted at breaking inter-generational cycles of disadvantage by:

- (a) Increasing the number of children who attend regularly and succeed at school; and
- (b) Increasing the number of adult family members who can, and do work, and
- (c) Reducing the number of children who get involved in crime and anti-social behaviour.

Solihull has committed to working with 355 families who meet these criteria over three years, funding the work through grants from the national Troubled Families programme and Local Area Agreement Reward Grant funding, received from previously achieved performance reward targets.

The latest published data for all Local Authority areas provided results up to 31st October 2014. At this point, Solihull had 'turned around' 77% of our Troubled Families cohort, compared to the national average of 71%. Solihull is also performing strongly against other areas in relation to getting families into work, achieving 8.5% compared to a national rate of 5%.

Solihull	Current Position as at 31 Oct 14	
	Number	%
Families identified:	355	
Families worked with:	355	100%
Families achieving crime/anti-social behaviour/education result:	242	68%
Families achieving continuous employment result:	30	8.5%
Families turned around:	272	77%

Securing improvements

Many of the families do not have a strong history of working, so the aspiration to work is not evident for both the adults and young people. This means that the focus of activity is to support individuals to be work ready, and then provide links into the job market.

Case study 1

One of our Family Workers has set up and run a successful cookery course for 10 parents to get them engaging with others and learning new skills. The feedback has been very positive with 8 attendees then going on to do a DIY course. After the DIY course, the aim is to get parents enrolled on adult learning courses. For many these small steps are instrumental in moving them on in their journey towards employment.

Working with this group of parents in this way, has helped to develop their confidence through participation in informal learning. As well as enabling them to access further learning, this has also linked them into community support networks; e.g. a number of Families First parents now attend the community café at Chelmsley Wood Children's Centre and some have become volunteers themselves. This has further contributed to community cohesion

The Families First team also works closely with partners e.g. neighbourhood police, Solihull Community Housing, youth services and the youth inclusion support programme, to target diversionary activities from anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime. The Information Sharing Agreement signed by 12 partner organisations is one factor enabling effective joint working as well as strong commitment from each of the partner agencies.

As a result of the success of this approach, there have been significant reductions in ASB among the families we are working with. 16 of 20 families who had recorded incidences of ASB prior to referral to Families First, have had a reduction in the number of ASB incidents since receiving support with the majority having no incidents at all in the last 12 months.

There are 33 families who had a member of the family with a proven

criminal offence when they came to Families First. Of these, 22 have not re-offended for at least 12 months. Of those that have re-offended, there has been a significant reduction in the number of subsequent offences.

We have also diverted several young people away from crime.

Case study 2

In one family we have a young male who had suspected gang links and had not been at school for a year. By arranging the correct education provision and allowing him to receive one-to-one tutoring over the summer at Families First, he has been attending college since September and had no involvement with the gang or Police.

Case study 3

Another young male had repeat involvement with the Police, was violent at home and causing issues in the community. By placing him in secure accommodation away from the area for a short time he has reflected on his behaviour and has now returned to the area, moved house with his family and had no further involvement with the Police.

As demonstrated above, Families First is a highly personalised approach to meeting the needs of individuals and families, providing them with the right support and encouragement to improve their life chances. On-going monitoring of the impact of Families First demonstrates that it is having a strong positive effect on the majority of families

Local Discretionary Housing Payments and Grant Schemes

The Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) funds Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) through an annual grant which is administered by the Council. DHPs are free-standing payments made at the discretion of the local authority, dependent on meeting the set criteria.

The Government has abolished nationally administered Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans and transferred the responsibility for grant payments to local authorities, who in turn, are given the flexibility to operate schemes that match local needs. The scheme for Solihull is now known as 'Local Welfare Provision'.

The Council is working with partners to ensure Local Welfare Provision can enhance existing support for particular groups to access funding. These include care leavers, ex-offenders on release, people experiencing domestic violence and people receiving homeless support as part of a resettlement plan.

Employment

The Council has identified a programme of opportunities to utilise the Council's role as an employer to tackle local skills issues and to develop a model that can be replicated by other local employers.

By providing these opportunities the Council will have a positive impact not just on the lives of those supported, but also on the current and future cost of potential support services. Supporting local people to make informed and supported choices about their future careers has the potential to create significant savings to public services with year on year pay back. Currently three programmes are under development:

- Step Up – connecting schools with the world of work
- Kick Start - Pre-Apprenticeship/Apprenticeship Programme –

targeted at younger people

- Re-Start - Unpaid Work Placements/Work Experience/Volunteering – targeted at older people

Once the programmes have been finalised, the Council will work with our partners to identify suitable candidates.

Employment Work Clubs

Work Clubs are provided in areas with statistically higher levels of worklessness, or areas which have high levels of unemployment. They are currently provided in Smith's Wood, Chelmsley Wood, Shirley and Hobs Moat. By using accessible venues in the community, such as Excellence in the Communities centres and libraries, the Work Clubs are available to the most disadvantaged residents who may not normally access Council services. Registration forms collect information about age, gender, ethnicity and barriers to employment that people face. This information is used to refer people to other services, which may provide them with the most appropriate, individualised support.

The Council's Employment & Skills Team is on hand to provide support and guidance. Alongside the Solihull for Success website dedicated to local vacancies, the team run regular work clubs throughout the borough.

Case Study: Work Club brings success for local unemployed

One resident who was able to benefit from work club support is Derek Rudge, who found himself out of work after 10 years in the same job, and unsure of how to begin his job search.

“I used the work club at Shirley library to search and apply for jobs. The process has changed beyond recognition since I was last job hunting, which was a big challenge.”

The employment outreach advisors at Shirley work club helped Derek update his CV, create cover letters and job search effectively. They also made him aware of local recruitment campaigns including Sainsbury’s in Dorridge and Next in Shirley.

After support to prepare for interviews with both, Derek was offered a permanent job with Next and underwent training before the store opened.

Regeneration of North Solihull

The Regeneration Programme of North Solihull is not just about physical regeneration. The goals of the North Solihull Stewardship and Legacy programme are to complement the physical regeneration taking place by focussing on the social and economic benefits to the local community once the physical regeneration is complete. This approach is applied across all the Village Centres within the North Solihull Regeneration Programme and one of the areas of focus in each location is business and enterprise. This area of focus enables local businesses to flourish and deliver local services and increase the number of businesses operating in North Solihull. Also, it enables local third sector groups to manage local assets and buildings. The Chelmund’s Cross Enterprise Centre is part of the major investment programme into North Solihull, including the new village centres of Chelmund’s Cross and Smith’s Wood.

The Centre provides high quality serviced offices, for two to eight people, aimed at new start ups or businesses wishing to expand. There is also a monthly licenced “Touchwood” co-working space-desks, soft seating, wi-fi connectivity, meeting space and refreshment facilities-perfect for one person start ups or those looking to separate work from home.

Case study: Chelmund's Cross Enterprise Centre welcomes its first tenant

The recently completed Enterprise Centre had its first tenant, J Parkers Recruitment, by October 2014. J Parkers Recruitment was set up by Jo Parkers in May 2014.

Jo has been a resident of Chelmsley Wood for more than 18 years. Her business will recruit for the education, child care and construction sectors.

Jo said "Having worked for a number of companies, I decided it was time to be my own boss. As someone with dyslexia, my different working strategies, for example using voice memos, made working in mainstream offices difficult. Now I'll be able to work in a way that might inspire others to achieve their goals."

"I was looking for a good quality space and suddenly the perfect office block appears right on my door step.

"I have also been supported by the Council's Enterprise for Success business start up programme to successfully apply for the North Solihull Partnership's Kick Start grant, which will help me grow my new business."

Libraries

In recognition of the large geographical spread of the Borough, we opened a new flagship library in Chelmsley Wood in 2009. Library usage has increased significantly since re-opening in the new location with large numbers of new customers joining the library, as well as increased borrowing statistics.

Our library opening hours and locations are designed to ensure access for the community. 25% of library users live within 0.5 kilometres of their local library. In partnership with Warwickshire County

Council we offer a modern and accessible Mobile Delivery Service. The mobile library visits a mix of rural locations and sheltered housing over a three week cycle. The new joint service provides budget efficiency for the two councils whilst providing a more inclusive service to the community. Ongoing evaluation of services and customer satisfaction surveys help refine and develop services to meet the needs of all communities.

We provide a range of family learning programmes, a breadth of resources and free access to computers with a range of software and internet access across all of our libraries. This enables access to information and communication technologies for people of all ages and backgrounds to connect with friends, do their homework, look for jobs and find information. Free public WiFi facilities are available in both Solihull and Chelmsley Wood libraries, where users can access the internet using their own devices. To help people make use of these facilities staff can provide basic support.

There is a mix of computer courses available and a range of accessibility devices and software, such as adjustable desking, track balls and big keyboards.