

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Of a virtual meeting of the Equalities Sub-Committee held on Monday, 4 March 2024 from 7.05 pm - 8.30 pm.

Present: Councillors

Anne Winter, Chair
Rue Grewal
Raj Khiroya
Sarah Nelmes
Louise Price

Officers in Attendance:

Rebecca Young
Shivani Dave
Jason Hagland
Anita Hibbs

External Attendance:

Paul Warwick – Herts Mind Network
Ashley Riseley – Refugee Council

EQSC13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kevin Raeburn, with the substitute being Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

EQSC14 MINUTES

The minutes of the Equalities Sub-Committee meeting held on 9 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair at the earliest opportunity.

EQSC15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

EQSC16 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

EQSC17 FLOURISH PROJECT

Paul Warwick – Services Manager, Complex Needs and Community from Herts Mind Network shared a presentation, covering the following:

- What we do:
 - 10 sessions (with flexibility depending on need) of one-to-one outreach support in the following areas:
 - Emotional support
 - Practical support

- How we do it:
 - Using an interpreter service to have clear communication with our service users
 - Outreach support
 - Support and advocacy in meetings
 - Groups, providing peer support
- How does it work
- Outcomes
- Case study
- Feedback and compliments



Flourish Presentation
3R.pptx

In response to questions that were raised after the presentation, Paul Warwick advised that service users were initially told that they will be staying in temporary accommodation in hotels for six months, although, some had already been staying there for up to 18 months. However, in recent cases, once the service user is granted citizenship, they are told that they have only 5-7 days to find accommodation elsewhere.

Flourish has recently grown, initially, at the start of the project in July 2020, there were 3 case workers. This number has increased to 9.

Key needs that have been identified are:

- Housing needs
- Provision of food
- Push back from local communities

Provision for online support within the Flourish project for young people is available. Initially, the age limit was 18 years +, this has since been changed to 16 years +. In addition; Children and Young Persons project also provides support, and referrals are also made to Barnardos.

Herts Mind Network are also looking into 5, themed events for separated migrant children to support them with mental wellbeing; the first one to be arranged for May, two in August, one event in October and the final one in February 2025.

Councillor Raj Khiroya praised the work of Paul Warwick and Herts Mind Network.

The Chair, Councillor Anne Winter thanked Paul Warwick for the presentation and all the work they do at Herts Mind Network.

EQSC18 REFUGEE COUNCIL

Ashley Riseley, Resettlement Coordinator at the Refugee Council in the Hertfordshire team provided an update on the following.

It's been a busy period at the Refugee Council trying to rehome families, as two of the Hertfordshire hotels that had been housing Afghan refugee families recently closed.

Supermarket vouchers have been given out to families, as part of the support work. The last £50,000 worth of vouchers will be given out to all of the families in the Afghan Resettlement Schemes.

Work is being carried out on the candidate selection programme for the upcoming Elections. Some of the candidates in a couple of Hertfordshire Districts are standing for the Elections for first time, and the Refugee Council is working with them in the hope that they can bring refugee issues of the local areas into Parliament if they become elected.

The Refugee Council is also working on another campaign called the First Shot campaign, which is focused on getting refugee children equal access to sport, football, in particular. Watford Football Club is working in partnership with the Refugee Council.

As the biggest barrier to access is language, online ESOL working groups have been established across Hertfordshire by an ESOL co-ordinator who has recently been brought on board.

The Refugee Council is working with approximately 50 families across Hertfordshire and 2-3 families are being supported in Three Rivers.

The Home Office provide funding to schools and educational programmes to support refugee children. Currently, schools receive £4,500 for children 5 years and above, and £1,500 for children between the ages of 3 and 4 years.

EQSC19 THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL - REFUGEE SUMMARY

Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager provided an update on the Council's resettlement scheme.

The Council are currently supporting families within the district who have been resettled to the United Kingdom under the Afghans Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) and the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP). There were also a number of Ukrainian families who have been resettled as part of the Ukraine schemes, such as the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) are responsible for the response to the Ukrainian scheme, therefore the funding from central government is claimed by HCC, and they are responsible for the payments, as well as the safeguarding checks of the sponsors.

As of 26 February 2024 a total of 2329 Ukrainian guests have arrived in Hertfordshire under this scheme, and a total of 206 have arrived within Three Rivers. Currently, there are 64 guests remaining in Three Rivers.

The ACRS and ARAP schemes offer relocation to former locally employed staff in Afghanistan. The Council made a commitment to house two families in the district under these schemes. This has been fulfilled, with one family moving to the district in August 2021, and another in February 2022, although the first family decided to leave the scheme 8-10 months after they had moved to the district, to move in with family in the north of the country. A third family that moved to the district after leaving a Home Office bridging accommodation is now also being supported.

EQSC20 RACE EQUALITY WEEK

Shivani Dave – Partnerships Manager shared a presentation on Race Equality Week, covering the following:

- Background
- Worksheets:
 - Day 1: Reflection, Day 2: Micro Aggressions, Day 3: My Name Is, Day 4: Anti-Racism, Day 5: The Big Promise
- Feedback
- Next Steps



Race Equality Week
presentation.pptx

The Worksheets were really well received across the Council.

Although only 10 responses were received to the survey, officers did provide some feedback outside of the survey as well. In future, if the survey could also be added to the intranet, responses can be tracked continuously. Managers could also encourage staff to complete surveys, by promoting it during team meetings.

EQSC21 EQUALITY DUTY INFORMATION REPORT

Shivani Dave – Partnerships Manager introduced the report, covering the key points

- Introduction
- Legislative Framework
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Equalities Sub-Committee
- Three Rivers Communities - based on 2021 Census summary of protected characteristics
- Council Staff – Workforce monitoring statistics
- Equality and Diversity Training
- Delivering Council Services
- To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training
- To improve equality and access to services for all residents
- To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities
- To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.
- UK Armed Forces
- Nested Deprivation and Equality of Opportunity
- Summary
- The Way Forward

Jason Hagland advised that the Council have submitted the White Ribbon Action Plan to White Ribbon for approval, and it's currently being considered. If the plan is approved Jason will attend the next Equalities Sub-Committee meeting to explain what the 3 year plan covers.

EQSC22 EQUALITIES SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

White Ribbon Action Plan to be added to the Equalities Sub-Committee work plan.

Date of next meeting:

10 October 2024

EQSC23 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 4 ABOVE

None received.

CHAIR