

“All of Us” Equality Scheme 2012-16

Bracknell Forest – the borough of
opportunity



Making a difference:
assessing the scheme's impact 2013-14

1. Introduction

This report summarises the progress made during 2013-14 in implementing Bracknell Forest Council's 'All of Us' Equality Scheme 2012-16.

The scheme is a result of extensive consultation with our partners and communities and highlights the key inequality issues that Bracknell Forest is facing over the period 2012-16.

The scheme has a set of objectives which set out our priorities. Its action plan describes in detail how we intend to achieve these objectives in practice and how we will evaluate the scheme. The action plan has been monitored; the monitoring report is contained in Appendix One. Both the Equality Scheme and the action plan can be seen at

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bracknellforestequalityscheme201216>

Growing together

Bracknell Forest is a thriving, welcoming and inclusive community. As our community grows and changes, Bracknell Forest Council is committed to ensuring that no one is left behind, isolated or disadvantaged. We take great pride in our support for vulnerable groups and individuals: we want to make sure that Bracknell Forest is a borough of opportunity for everyone.

Our vision, our commitment

Bracknell Forest Council's vision is simple: to make Bracknell Forest a place where all people can thrive - living, learning and working in a clean, safe and healthy environment.

At Bracknell Forest Council, we believe that:

- reducing inequalities benefits everyone in the borough
- strengthening community unity makes for a better borough
- understanding and promoting diversity improves people's lives

Bracknell Forest borough is home to people and communities with varied and distinct needs, wants and aspirations. At Bracknell Forest Council, we are determined to make sure that our work - the services and support we offer - is fair, appropriate, accessible and tailored to all our residents and communities.

Our Equality Objectives 2012-16 are set out below:

1. Support our older and vulnerable residents by further developing our approach to ensure that people are safeguarded against abuse. Including through maintaining low levels of hate crime (racist, homophobic, transphobic, faith and disablist).
2. Work with partners to improve the life chances of children, young people and their families who are living in poverty.
3. Reduce the number of young people (16-18 year old) who are not in education, training or employment.
4. Maintain high levels of community cohesion in Bracknell Forest. Including through:
 - Supporting the integration of our diverse communities
 - Working with partners to maintain the provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.
 - Supporting children and young people with English as an additional language in schools
 - Closing the attainment gap in schools with a particular focus on gaps in relation to deprivation, gender and ethnicity.
5. Reduce overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse and increase the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults with injury.
6. Empower communities and partners to address identity-specific bullying of children and young people.
7. Reduce fuel poverty through helping people improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
8. Enable older people, people with a disability, mental health issue, autistic spectrum disorder or long term condition to have a choice of support to meet their needs.
9. Improve recruitment, development and progression, employment and settled housing opportunities for members of the community with disabilities.
10. Support groups and organisations run by and that work with people from our diverse communities.
11. Influence the provision of public transport to ensure it is physically accessible for people with disabilities.
12. Ensuring Bracknell Forest Council is an 'Employer of Choice' where diversity is respected and valued. Including through:
 - Ensuring all Council employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to available opportunities and enjoy fair treatment.
 - Continuing to take steps to make the Council's workforce more representative of the community it serves
 - Addressing the Council's gender pay gap.
13. Review equality monitoring information annually in order to develop actions, where needed, to increase levels of satisfaction or take up of specific services by under represented groups.

Equality Peer Review

Bracknell Forest Council is working at the achieving level of the Equality Framework. This was recognised by the Local Government Association (LGA) in March 2014, when the council was successfully reaccredited. The framework helps local authorities improve their performance on equality and diversity.

The reviewers agreed the council showed evidence of how it has built on its experience and expertise in tackling inequality since the previous assessment in 2010, and showed how it had adapted its methods and structures to address the new challenges it faces. The LGA also commented that the council has a good understanding of its communities and also how the diversity of residents has changed in recent years and is still changing and has prioritised its activities accordingly.

For further information go to:

<http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/fairnessandopportunityinbracknellforest>

2. 'All of Us' Equality Scheme – Our Successes 2013-14

Tackling Hate Crime

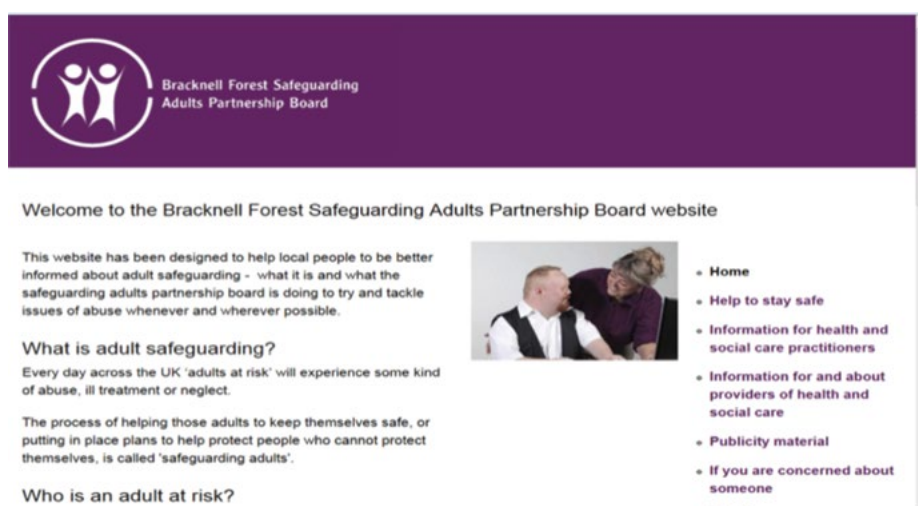
Equality Objective 1: Support our older and vulnerable residents by further developing our approach to ensure people are safeguarded against abuse. Including through maintaining low levels of hate crime (racist, homophobic, transphobic, faith and disablist).

A new website has been launched to help adults at risk and older people to stay safe.

The Bracknell Forest Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board has launched an online guide to help local people become better informed about adult safeguarding, what it is and what the board is doing to tackle abuse.

This website offers practical help and information to everyone, from carers and professionals to friends and neighbours who suspect someone they know is at risk of abuse. There is also information about training providers running courses on adult safeguarding plus a link to an e-learning package including how to recognise potential signs of abuse and when and how to intervene.

They are the first adult safeguarding board in Berkshire to have their own dedicated website - find out more at www.bfsapb.org.uk



Trends in Hate Crime - 2009 to 2014					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
April-March	73	74	46	33	54
Source: Thames Valley Police website					

Providing practical early intervention and support services for vulnerable children and young people

Equality Objective 2: Work with partners to improve the life chances of children, young people and their families who are living in poverty. Including through:

- **Provide accessible, safe and practical early intervention and support services for vulnerable children and young people in the borough**

Bracknell Forest Homes and Bracknell Forest Council working in partnership with United Savings & Loans have established a credit union in Bracknell Forest. The service is managed by Bracknell Forest Homes with a financial contribution toward the total cost from the council.

The credit union has a regular presence across Bracknell Forest sites where we know that clients will be most likely to access the service. Sites include Bracknell Town Council office foyer, children's centres and the council's Time Square office.

The credit union enables local residents to borrow money at reasonable rates without turning to doorstep lenders and payday loan organisations. Local residents are also able to take advantage of a unique budgeting system called a Jam Jar account; these accounts help with money management and prioritising key household bills.

United Savings & Loans supports the whole community by providing affordable loans, current accounts and savings accounts for their members.

They pride themselves on presenting a friendly face and reaching out a helpful hand to the community. A credit union operates solely for the benefit of its members and is governed by the Financial Services Authority (FSA) so therefore offers a safe and secure solution to manage personal finances. The Credit Union is now developing a Money Matters training programme to take into our schools.



Key facts

- 79 people in Bracknell Forest have registered for the credit union since it opened in January 2014.
- 100 per cent of eligible 2 year olds identified as disadvantaged have been placed in early years settings, like childminders and full day care settings.
- The free school meal achievement gap has reduced in 2013/14 by a further 4.3 per cent to 21.8 per cent.
- The council has met the Troubled Families Government initiative target of turning round 36per cent of families (41 in Bracknell Forest).
- 235 families have been identified for support for the phase two bid the Troubled Families programme.

Increasing the participation of school leavers in employment, education and training

Equality Objective 3: Reduce the number of young people (16-18 year old) who are not in education, training or employment.

A pioneering work pairing scheme supported by the council and national crime reduction charity Nacro is helping to change young people's lives Bracknell Forest.

The post-16 team has been working with Nacro (a crime reduction charity) and Adviza (formerly Connexions, a charity inspiring people to help them progress in learning and work) to help young people across Bracknell Forest get work experience and learn new skills. The scheme is aimed at teenagers between 16 and 19 who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) and has been very successful so far. The scheme works by offering young people weekly sessions with a trained advisor to identify a sector and role that they are keen to enter based on interests, skills and desires. They then get an opportunity to work at the company or business twice a week. The scheme allows young people to get relevant experience and also spend one day a week in class improving their maths and English skills, while adding the experience to their CVs and improving interview techniques. The team also work with local secondary schools, colleges, training providers and council services to proactively support those who may become or are NEET, ensuring there are opportunities to gain the training and skills necessary to gain employment.

The scheme has helped reduce the number of young people in Bracknell Forest who are NEET and is now at its lowest ever level.

It's just one of the programmes designed to help reduce the number of young people becoming NEET.

Statistics

- Bracknell Forest Council has reduced the number of 16 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET), from 3.7per cent last year to 2.1per cent this year
- The 16-18 NEET figure has also gone down from 5.7per cent to 4.3per cent.



Community Integration

Equality Objective 4: Maintain high levels of community cohesion in Bracknell Forest. Including through:

- **Supporting the integration of our diverse communities**
- **Successfully delivering the agreed outcomes for the third year of the European Integration Fund (EIF) Nepali Project relating to adult learning, public health and access to services**

The Healthy Voices project was devised by Berkshire East Primary Care Trust and Bracknell Forest Council in 2010. It was developed specifically to address the integration needs of the Nepali community in Bracknell Forest and ensure that newly arrived Nepalese can access appropriate support and services in the UK. The three year project, which was funded by the European Integration Fund (EIF), ended on 30 June 2013.

The project focussed on three areas:

- Educational - providing cultural integration provision followed by English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) lessons alongside skilled for health tuition and an ESOL linked health awareness programme sponsored by the Department of Health.
- Training - employment of a team of health activists and health trainers from the local non-EU communities.
- Health - the delivery of the New Entrant Health Assessment Service (NEHAS) designed to integrate new arrivals into health and other appropriate services.

Feedback from participants during the project's evaluation was excellent and it highlighted that English speaking and reading has improved for all participants. Participants are also reaping the benefits due to improvements in their understanding of healthy eating and exercise.

“Without English language life is difficult in Britain. By learning English I can understand people and things around me more clearly. Also I am able to communicate with people in my workplace, my neighbours, without being afraid or nervous.” Quote from Healthy Voices participant.

Three participants completed a Health Activist and Health Trainer Level 3 qualification and were employed by the project as translators. As well as helping their personal development it also ensured that the local community was engaged with the project.

“I feel proud that I am doing something for the Nepalese community.” Quote from Healthy Voices participant.

The NEHAS programme allowed female participants to attend the doctor without the need for interpretation by a family member. The availability of a translator and allocated appointments with a GP allowed privacy and meant participants found it easier to discuss medical issues and were more likely to attend the doctor's in the future.

"I got lots of time to explain my feelings; they listened...the interpreter was there to explain." Quote from Healthy Voices participant.

Key facts

- 106 project participants received health assessment/signposting service (NEHAS) and a further 27 participants took part in the Expert Patient Programme.
- Four project participants now have a Preparing to Teach in Adult Learning qualification (PTTLS).
- 98 per cent of learners feel more integrated into British society now they understand English better.

Supporting pupils with English as additional language

Equality Objective 4: Maintain high levels of community cohesion in Bracknell Forest. Including through:

- **Support children and young people with English as an additional language in schools**
- **Closing the attainment gap in schools with particular focus on gaps in relation to deprivation, gender and ethnicity**

The Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS) has been set up to help support pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and has helped to raise the profile of support available in Bracknell Forest schools. There were 145 new arrivals into Bracknell Forest Schools in 2013/14 speaking a variety of languages including Polish, Nepali, Lithuanian and Thai.

Sandy Lane Primary School had 17 new arrivals with EAL and has been working with the EMTAS team to improve provision. This work included improving the whole schools ethos by establishing the school as a multilingual environment. This was achieved by displays and assemblies reflecting different languages spoken in the school, a language of the month and inset sessions for teachers and teaching assistants on strategies to support new arrivals. There was also an induction policy for new pupils which included using an interpreter where necessary and signposting parents to other local services where relevant. A weekly after-school English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) class was set up by Bracknell and Wokingham College for new parents whilst the children worked with the EAL coordinator.. A member of administrative staff was given specific responsibility for EAL learners and has been working in partnership with EMTAS to ensure provisions for new arrivals are in place and using the EMTAS induction pack. Pupil progress was monitored using Language in Common scales - a national assessment tool that assesses pupil progress in line with National Curriculum levels. The project has improved outcomes for new arrivals and all the children are making good progress with teachers reporting new starters being able to access the curriculum by the end of the first term.

Respect, Responsibility and Rights - Sandhurst Town Council

Equality Objective 4: Maintain high levels of community cohesion in Bracknell Forest. Including through:

- ***Supporting the integration of our diverse communities***

Sandhurst Town Council has led on engagement with the Sandhurst community for many years through the linked campaigns of 'Sandhurst Pride' and the three key principles of Respect, Responsibility and Rights (RRR). Working with very limited resources and utilising partnerships with Bracknell Forest Council, local people and community groups; residents have been engaged and encouraged to take ownership of the campaign. The themes of the community initiative perfectly links with and complement the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools programme supported by the council, which has been operating in all Sandhurst primary schools since 2005.

Whilst not studied directly the RRR initiative may be having a positive effect on community relations in Sandhurst where the Nepali community leaders have been supportive of the campaigns and no community relations issues have arisen during this time.

This approach has been evaluated independently by the Institute of Community Cohesion and Southampton University. They reported that the campaign has made a significantly positive impact on community cohesion including reduction in anti-social behaviour particularly around the Memorial Park. This has led Thames Valley Police to declare Sandhurst a low crime and anti-social behaviour area, enabling resources to be diverted to other areas. The campaign was recognised by the iESE (Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise) which awarded Sandhurst Town Council the Gold Award, in the Community Matters category in 2014.



Respect Responsibility and Rights Campaign – IESE Awards March 2014

Key facts

- The satisfaction of residents living in Sandhurst and the perception that people treat each other with respect have both increased from an already high base in recent years. Specifically, between 2009 and 2012 overall satisfaction of living in Sandhurst rose from 86 per cent to 92 per cent, and the belief that people did not treat each other with respect and consideration declined from 27.5 per cent to 11.8 per cent over this period.
- 87 per cent of Bracknell Forest residents surveyed agreed that individuals from different backgrounds got on well together in the borough (2012 Residents' Survey), a significant improvement on the findings of the 2008 Place Survey 82 per cent.
- The majority of residents (78 per cent) felt there was little problem with people not treating each other with respect within their local area; a minority of residents (14 per cent) considered this to be a problem. This was a significant improvement on the 30 per cent who found this to be a problem in the 2008 Place Survey.

Tackling Domestic Abuse

Equality Objective 5: Reduce overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse and increase the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults with injury.

- ***Work with partners to reduce overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse***
- ***Use one to one perpetrator programme to engage with fathers of children on Child Protection Plans as a result of domestic abuse (DA)***

Domestic violence, also known as domestic abuse (DA) is a pattern of behaviour which involves the abuse by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, cohabitation, dating or within the family. There are a number of programmes running in Bracknell Forest to help reduce overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse.

The council's Youth Offending Service (YOS) runs a group called Stepping Up to promote non-abusive, positive and respectful behaviour. It is aimed at boys and young men supervised by YOS who may have had inappropriate relationship behaviour modelled to them and who are behaving abusively towards female family members and/or in dating relationships. Stepping Up is a six week group programme promoting positive male behaviours, challenging gender stereotypes and addressing issues of power and control in relationships using different forms of multi-media.

The Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Service (DAPS) is for males known to children's social care and runs on a one-to-one basis which gives the opportunity to carry out intensive work and focus on specific problems. It uses motivational interviewing and helps to explore the participant's attitude in a non-confrontational way. The work also involves incident reconstruction and teaches the participant to identify and counteract negative self-talk to prevent it from becoming abusive. They look at the incident clinically to help identify where anger levels rise. There are also modules focusing on communication skills, emotional regulation, relaxation techniques and healthy management of children's behaviour.

During 2013/14, 20 children were removed from child protection plans in cases where the father had worked with DAPS.

Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) has been provided with funding to support enhanced victim support and a dedicated Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) to work exclusively with Bracknell Forest clients. BWA also received additional funding to provide enhanced support to victims who are being worked with and supported through the Domestic Abuse Service Coordination (DASC) project to support victims and encourage reporting.

Although the repeat rate for domestic abuse has risen from 45 per cent in 2012/13 to 48.1 per cent in 2013/14 this is due to the work that has been done with the Domestic Abuse Service Coordination to support victims and encourage reporting.



Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership in partnership with regional experts from Thames Valley Police, Bracknell Forest Police and Berkshire Women's Aid, has set up a website to support local victims of domestic abuse. The website www.itsneverok.co.uk went live in June 2014 and offers impartial advice, resources and strategies to help stop domestic abuse in the area.

Promotion of positive understanding of the Gypsy Roma Traveller community

Equality Objective 6: Empower communities and partners to address identity specific bullying of children and young people

Over the past two academic years Richard O'Neill, the internationally acclaimed Gypsy storyteller, has been engaged to work in schools on the topics of prejudice, stereotyping, bullying and racism.

Five schools have welcomed Richard so far: College Town Infant and Junior, Owlsmoor Primary, Sandhurst and Brakenhale. His work involves helping to promote literacy and inclusion in schools through storytelling, children aged five to 16 have been delighted and shown great enthusiasm with the sessions.

In March 2014 Richard worked at Birch Hill Primary for the day, Edgbarrow for a morning and then carried out an afternoon session with Bracknell Forest Council staff.

The members of the Gypsy Roma Traveller communities in Bracknell Forest and in those schools have seen themselves and their culture highlighted whilst boosting confidence in their ethnicity. The visits have especially educated the secondary pupils about racism and prejudice, allowing students to be more comfortable within their school.



Reducing fuel poverty

Equality Objective 7: Reduce fuel poverty through helping people improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

The council is helping residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes by encouraging insulation measures and improvements to homes throughout the borough. They are reducing the number of low Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) homes (those with a rating of SAP 50 or less) by 2.5 per cent annually, which equates to 300 homes by 2016. This initiative is supported by energy efficiency measures funded by the NHS Warm Homes Healthy People grant and improved data collection.

Key facts

- The number of homes that are below SAP50 has been reduced by 19 per cent in 2013-14 (from 2,415 to 1,959).

e+ Card – Increasing the range of choices available

Equality Objective 8: Enable older people, people with a disability, mental health issue, autistic spectrum disorder or long term condition to have a choice of support to meet their needs. Including through:

- **Increase use of the e+card and increase the range of choices available to people using the card**

The Bracknell Forest e+ smartcard enables all residents to access a variety of borough services through a single card. These include library and leisure membership and, if eligible, a national bus pass or PASS proof of age card.

Wherever an applicant signs up to the scheme, the e+ management system securely joins them to all chosen services straight away. Eligibility and proof documents only need to be shown once. Using a single card design removes stigma previously associated with various membership types.

Bracknell Forest Council is continually developing the e+ scheme to make provision of more services easier and more accessible to all. The most recent innovation is the combined e+ Visa prepaid card. Initially the pilot scheme will see cards issued to selected Direct Payment recipients. It will then be rolled out across adult social care to all Direct Payment recipients. There is also a free app – the e+ discount directory- which is now available to download on Apple or Android devices, enabling users to check out the offers available in the Bracknell Forest area while are on the move.

The council can plan its services better by checking uptake of services using the e+ card against anonymous equality data – making sure that there are no barriers to its services for any group of residents.



Supporting people with learning disabilities/mental health issues to take up or remain in employment

Equality Objective 9: Improve recruitment, development and progression, employment and settled housing opportunities for members of the community with disabilities.

According to provisional data, Bracknell Forest is on track to achieve the 2013/14 target for the number of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems being helped into employment. The target for the number of people with learning disabilities in settled accommodation has also been exceeded.

Person-centred planning is used to enable individuals to help plan their own life and support. This means it is easier to understand the types and location of accommodation that will meet the needs of those with learning disabilities. Through partnership work with local organisations, and shared ownership opportunities; a pool of ordinary housing can be provided and developed for people with learning disabilities to enable them to live in the community.

Through a partnership with a local housing association, new living accommodation is being developed that will be accessible, affordable and adapted to the specific needs of some people with learning disabilities. The new accommodation will be available in 2015.

The supported employment service Breakthrough continues to provide a range of support to enable people to access a variety of employment opportunities. These include, help with job seeking and sourcing work experience or voluntary work. They also assist with interview preparation and job coaching. Employers are also advised how to support people with learning disabilities and what reasonable adjustments can be made to enable them access to work.

Key facts

- Adults with learning difficulties in employment rose from 16.9 per cent in 2012/13 to 17.4 per cent in 2013/14, exceeding the target of 15 per cent and the South East average of 8.1 per cent .
- The percentage of adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment in 2013/14 reached the target of 13 per cent and exceeded the South East average of 6.8 per cent.
- In March 2014, the number of people with learning disabilities in settled accommodation, meaning living with their family or in an ordinary house or flat like anybody else was 87.4 per cent of all adults with learning disabilities supported by Adult Social Care, Health and Housing. This exceeded the target of 85 per cent, the 2012/13 figure of 86.8 per cent and also exceeds the South East average of 70.7 per cent.



Raising Awareness of the diverse faith and beliefs in the borough

Equality Objective 10: Support groups and organisations run by and that work with people from our diverse communities.

- **Work with Involve (formerly BFVA) to support the development and activities of the Bracknell Forest Faith and Belief Forum.**

As part of Interfaith Week in November 2013, the Bracknell Forest Faith and Belief Forum held a Sounds of Faith event at St Michael's Church in Sandhurst. The aim of the event was to share music and readings and to promote a greater understanding of different faiths. There were contributions from Muslim, Buddhist, Baha'i and various Christian groups as well as the Bracknell Islamic Society.

Key Facts

- 45 faith and belief groups are now members of the forum.

Bracknell Forest Access Group Conference

Equality Objective 10: Support groups and organisations run by and that work with people from our diverse communities. Including through:

- **Support the Access Advisory Panel to advocate for the needs of people with disabilities across the borough**

Residents with disabilities, carers, and other people who have difficulties with access to the borough's shops, businesses and amenities came together at the first Bracknell Forest Access Group conference held in July 2013.

More than 80 people attended the event Disability and Access in Bracknell Forest, where participants had a chance to find out more about the regeneration of Bracknell town centre. Attendees took part in a workshop to reflect on the challenges and barriers to accessing Bracknell Forest shops, services and facilities.



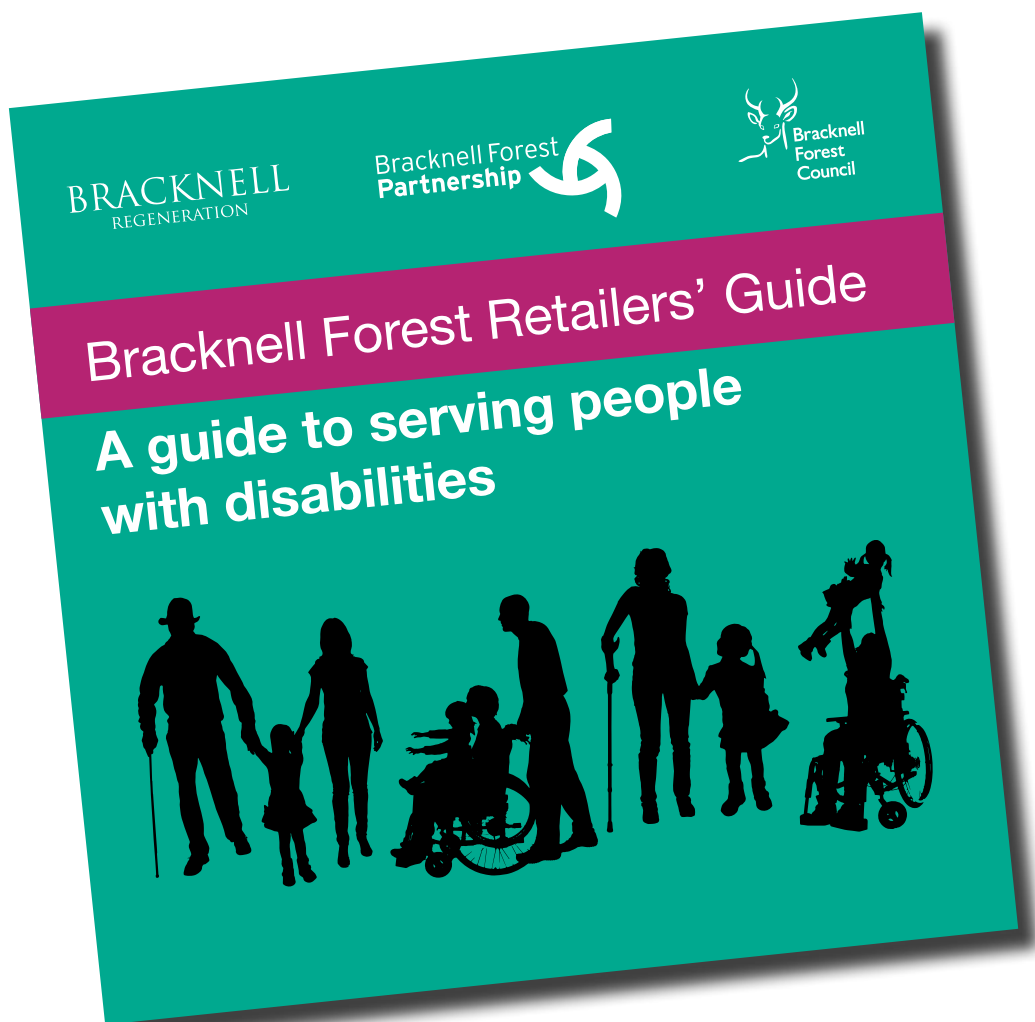
There was an opportunity to find out more about the work of Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action (now relaunched as Involve), Shopmobility, Disabled Go and Bracknell Forest Council's assistive technology team.

The conference was attended by over 70 people and has come up with many useful ideas for improving the accessibility across the borough. The Access Group continue to work with the Bracknell Regeneration Partnership (BRP) to support them in making the new town centre as accessible as possible.

Bracknell Forest Retailers' Guide – A guide to serving people with disabilities

One of the many ideas that came out of the Access Conference in 2013 was the production of a retailers' guide to service people with disabilities and support the aspiration that the whole of the borough is a beacon for disability access. The guide's purpose is to help Bracknell Forest retailers attract people with disabilities as customers and in turn provide them with excellent customer service.

The guide was developed through a working group consisting of representatives from disability groups as well as representatives from the Bracknell Regeneration Partnership and retailers. The guide will be launched at the Annual BRP Retailers Awards in November 2014 and promoted and distributed to retailers across the borough.



Listening to children and young people in care

Equality Objective 10: Support groups and organisations run by and that work with people from our diverse communities. Including through:

- **Work with the Children in Care Council, and SiLSip (Say it Loud Say it Proud) to identify children or young people who experience the greatest barriers to participation and prioritise work to promote their engagement.**

In autumn 2011, Bracknell Forest Council had a Leading Improvements for Looked after Children (LILAC) assessment. One of the recommendations was that Bracknell Forest Council offer participation training, developed with the help of young people who had experienced living in care. It was advised that the training should be carried out as part of new staff inductions.

Young People from SiLSiP, the Bracknell Forest Children in Care Council, expressed an interest in becoming involved in Foster Carer training, in order to communicate the experience of being in care to those caring for them.

This led to the development of the Do you Know? training session. The key aims were to give looked after young people in Bracknell Forest an opportunity to develop and deliver their own training, which would reflect their own experiences as well as provide the young people who participated with an opportunity for skills and personal development. The young people developed a two hour training session that includes participatory exercises so attendees can experience how it feels to be in care. The young people also created their own publicity including a logo and t-shirts for the young trainers.

There is currently a pool of five young people able to carry out training and they have delivered four sessions to 31 adults, including senior officers at Bracknell Forest Council and members of the Corporate Parent Advisory Panel. Participants have commented that they will take away:

“A better understanding of what it is like to be in care”

“A real picture of young people in care and some of the challenges they face.”

Training will continue to be offered to Bracknell Forest foster carers (including independent foster carers who are currently caring for Bracknell Forest young people) staff and councillors so they are more aware of the issues affecting young people.

Gateway Award – Helping adults with learning disabilities

Equality Objective 10: Support groups and organisations run by and that work with people from our diverse communities. Including through:

- **Fund organisations supporting people with a learning disability through the Learning Disability Development Fund (LDDF)**

The Gateway Award is a programme of activities open to adults of any age with learning disabilities or an autism spectrum disorder. Similar to the Duke of Edinburgh award it teaches individuals new skills and gives them the opportunity to experience new challenges. Delivered through workshops and independent activities it helps to increase self-esteem and confidence. It also develops independence, team-building skills, making friendships and encouraging new interests.

The award has five units; hobbies, adventure challenge, lifestyle, fitness and volunteering. Two workshops take place every week and participants learn a variety of transferable skills that they can apply in their daily lives including first aid, healthy eating and map reading. They can also learn a creative skill, which not only helps develop interests and social skills, but can also increase hand/eye co-ordination. Participants are encouraged to take the initiative and undertake some of the units by themselves.

This is a very popular and successful project which has had very positive outcomes. One participant has been offered a job at the café where he had completed his volunteering unit. A number of participants received training in order to get the bus to Syngenta at Jealott's Hill, this has proved so successful that the participants are now able to get to Syngenta on their own. This is a significant achievement for the group who received volunteering certificates in recognition of their work at Jealott's Hill. Many participants have achieved awards or are now working towards bronze, silver and gold awards.



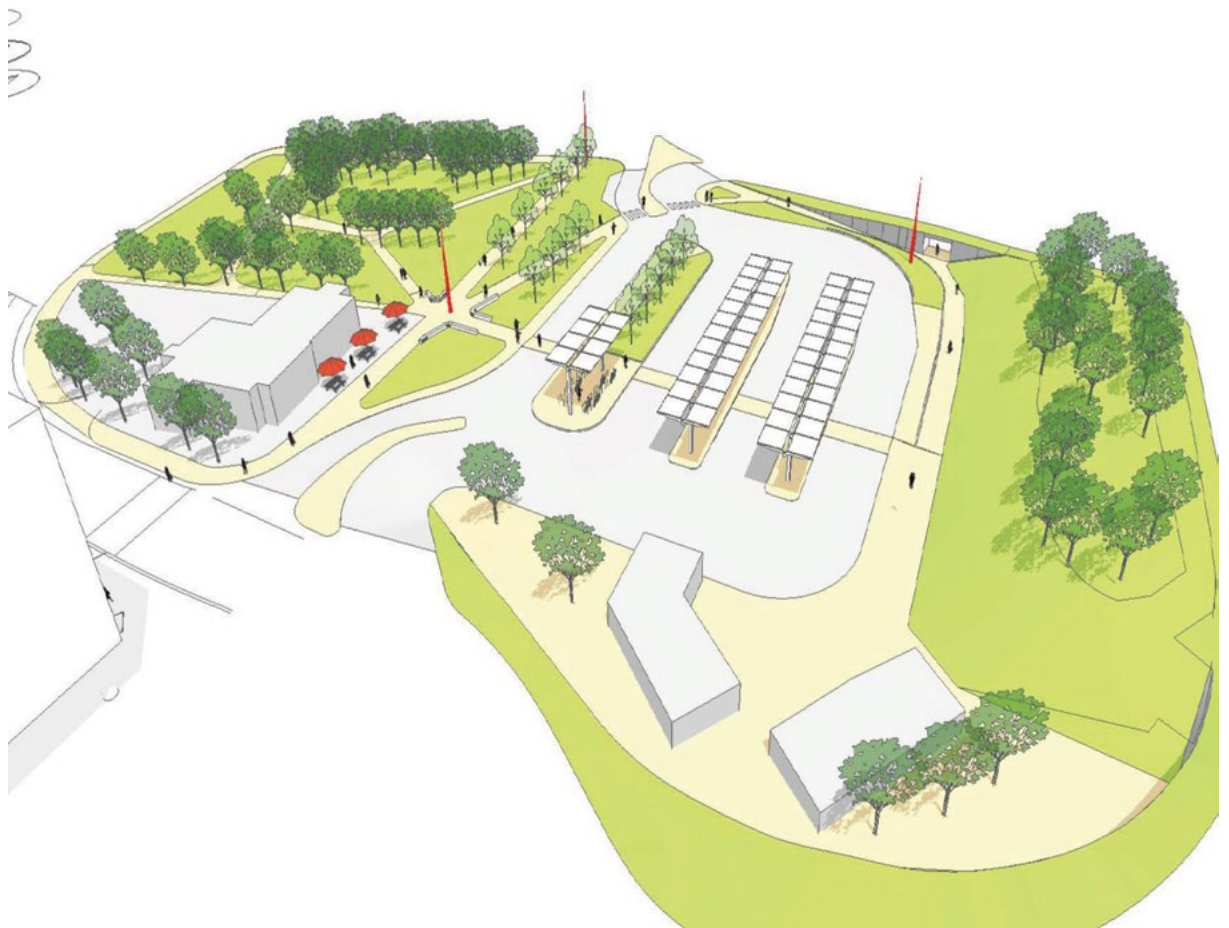
Public transport - accessibility improvements

Equality Objective 11: Influence the provision of public transport to ensure it is physically accessible for people with disabilities

Work has now started on the improvements to Bracknell Bus Station due to finish in 2015. The improved pedestrian environment is part of the regeneration of Bracknell Town Centre, and makes it easier to access the town centre from the rail and bus stations.

Other improvements:

- A replacement new vehicle for the R-Bus community transport scheme for people with learning disabilities is now in use which is both accessible and efficient
- All 84 hackney carriages are now wheelchair accessible and a 100 per cent accessible fleet will be maintained
- A trial training session has been held to deliver disability training awareness training for taxi drivers. A venue is now being sought to enable delivery of further sessions.



Bracknell Forest Council: employer of choice

Equality Objective 12: Ensuring Bracknell Forest Council is an Employer of Choice where diversity is respected and valued. Including through:

- **Ensuring all council employees and potential employees have fair and equal access to available opportunities and enjoy fair treatment.**
- **Continuing to take steps to make the council's workforce more representative of the community it serves**
- **Conduct annual workforce monitoring broken down by protected characteristics; schools and non-schools and by department**

A staff survey is being conducted in Autumn 2014 and the results will be available in next year's report and the outcomes communicated to the workforce. Staff surveys are carried out every three years to gather employees' opinions and to enable action plans to be made and progressed. Results are analysed by protected groups, and extra questions are being put in the forthcoming survey to enable analysis by a wider set of protected characteristics including marital status and pregnancy/maternity.

The staff survey carried out in 2011 drew responses from 63 per cent of staff with the majority of people reporting that they enjoy working for the council and think it's a good employer. As a result of the responses several initiatives have been put in place including the development of coaching and mentoring support, workshops on managing stress and emphasising messages about fair treatment.

The council uses and promotes the Two Ticks disability symbol and this reinforces our positive attitude to recruiting and retaining staff with disabilities.

Workforce monitoring ensures that we know the composition of our existing workforce to see how closely it reflects the makeup of the borough. This information is analysed by protected characteristics such as race, disability, age and sex. The report also analyses recruitment statistics by protected characteristics as well as those who have left and those attending training courses. The Workforce Monitoring report is published annually on the council's website. www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk

A personal details exercise was carried out in September 2013, asking people to verify their personal information, including their protected characteristics. We received a larger response enabling us to get a better picture of the workforce.

Key facts

- Recruitment training – 24 managers attended fair recruitment training
- Safeguarding recruitment training – 34 managers attended
- Equality and diversity e-learning - 129 staff completed this training online
- Equality and diversity training – 39 staff attended

3. Conclusions

The council has been successful to date in implementing the strategy. This can be seen from the key performance measures against which the success of the strategy is being judged, namely: 73 of the 103 key actions in the Equality Scheme action plan are on track to be completed on schedule with 25 already completed within the allocated timescale. Only three have been identified as amber (may fall behind schedule) and only two red (action behind schedule), the details of which are set out below.

Amber

2.3 Continue to work with schools to close the attainment gap in relation to pupils eligible for free schools meals and their peers.

Schools monitor the performance of all their pupils, including vulnerable and disadvantaged children in order to achieve the best outcomes for them. Various strategies are used to address needs, with advice and guidance from the council. For some groups there is a gap in achievement between children with those characteristics and their peers - children eligible for free school meals (FSM) are one of those groups. The gap in attainment between children eligible for FSM and their peers is greater in 2014 than in 2013, so schools will have to refresh their strategies for working with these children. Schools now receive the Pupil Premium - additional funding for children eligible for FSM and with other needs - which is intended to fund additional support and strategies. The amount is increasing year by year and its effect should be evident in the coming years

5.2 (b) Ensure members of the Domestic Abuse Forum (DAF) have a Domestic Abuse (DA) policy.

Work continues to ensure that all members of the Bracknell Forest DAF have a DA policy in place.

10.2 Work with Involve (formerly Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action) to support the Bracknell Forest Minorities Alliance to fulfil its objective to represent ethnic communities across the borough

The Minorities Alliance has not met and it is likely to be wound up in 2014/15. The Bracknell Forest Faith and Belief Forum is very active, meeting regularly and including representation from all faith groups.

Red

5.1 Work with partners to reduce overall repeat incidents of domestic abuse:

There has been a rise in the repeat rate from last year due to work carried out by the Domestic Abuse Service Coordination (DASC) project to encourage reporting. Work has been done to reduce reporting in a small number of persistent cases it is hoped will have a positive effect on future numbers.

5.2 Increase the detection rate for domestic abuse assaults with injury.

The target rate of 50 per cent has not been met although the TVP target of 45 per cent has been reached (46.8 per cent). Difficulty in encouraging witnesses to give evidence in court is part of the reason and the number of violent assaults has reduced substantially over the year. The Community Safety Partnership continues to be committed to achieving the target of 50 per cent.

The council's performance is also measured through testing residents' perceptions, the findings of the 2012 Residents' Survey should also be noted:

- 87 per cent of Bracknell Forest residents surveyed believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in the borough, a significant improvement on the findings of the 2008 Place Survey which was 82 per cent.
- The majority of residents, 78 per cent, felt there was little problem with people not treating each other with respect within their local area; a minority of residents, 14 per cent, considered this to be a problem. This was a significant improvement over the 30 per cent who found this to be a problem in the 2008 Place Survey.

A residents' survey will be conducted in Autumn 2014, so updated data will be available for next year's report.

However we are not complacent. Families in Bracknell Forest are still experiencing financial hardship and we recognise that national changes to the benefits system have placed additional pressure on some households; we will do our best to continue to provide advice and support to mitigate the impact of these changes.

We recognise there will always be more that we can do to ensure the council improves the quality of its service delivery; ensuring services are provided fairly and appropriately to all its residents; as well as making sure that residents can have their say about how the services should be delivered. Making these improvements will be the focus of our work going forward.

The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis as the council continues to implement its Equality Scheme over the next two years.

Copies of this booklet may be obtained in large print, Braille, on audio cassette or in other languages. To obtain a copy in an alternative format please telephone 01344 352000.

Nepali

यस प्रचारको सक्षेपं वा सार निचोड चाहिं दिइने छ ठूलो अक्षरमा, ब्रेल वा क्यासेट सून्नको लागी । अरु भाषाको नक्कल पनि हासिल गर्न सकिने छ । कृपया सम्पर्क गनुहोला ०१३४४ ३५२००० ।

Tagalog

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