

Equality, Human Rights & Partnership Team Achievements 2011

A briefing for Elected Members and Non-Executive Directors
from Councillor P D Price (Diversity Portfolio Holder)

January 2012

What people have said:

- Thanks a million for your support throughout all this. I really appreciate the way you put yourself out to be there when I needed someone to lean on.

Council Employee

- I am just writing to thank you for speaking at the workshop of this conference in Hereford. Your contribution was well received and I am grateful to you for providing your experience and specialist expertise to so many front line staff.

Independent Chair,
Herefordshire Safe-
guarding Children Board

- Hip, hip, hurray for the diversity team!

Interpreter

- Thank you for providing an excellent, professional service. I found the two translators I met to be thoughtful, highly motivated and conscientious, and I would recommend them without hesitation. Excellent news on the price too. It's always good to come in under budget.

Hereford Cathedral,
Mappa Mundi Trust

Definitions

The Equality, Human Rights & Partnership Team is the new name of the Corporate Diversity Team, reflecting a slightly wider remit.

Herefordshire Public Services (or HPS) are referred to throughout this document, and this term refers to the partnership of Herefordshire Council and the retained Primary Care Trust.

One year on...equality and human rights in Herefordshire

The Equality & Human Rights Charter

The Herefordshire Equality & Human Rights Charter was launched in November 2010. In 2011, several local partners signed up to it, including Herefordshire Voluntary Action, Herefordshire & Worcestershire Fire & Rescue Service, Halo and ECHO. The charter demonstrates to our communities our shared commitment to equality and human rights and that, by working in partnership, the Council, NHS Herefordshire and our partners are committed to promoting human rights and equality of opportunity, good community relations and to tackling all forms of unlawful discrimination.



Aleid Wolfsen (Mayor, City of Utrecht), Carol Trachonitis (Herefordshire Council), and Friso Roscam Abbing (EU Fundamental Rights Agency)

Work with the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA)

In June 2011, the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) heard about the work of the Corporate Diversity Team, and invited them to join five European countries (Spain, Belgium, Netherlands, Sweden and the Czech Republic) to participate in their project: "Connecting Rights; a joined-up governance approach to fundamental rights implementation".

So in July, Herefordshire hosted two focus groups - facilitated by the FRA - which explored what impact an improved knowledge of human rights has had locally, and developed lessons for the European perspective.

In October, the Equality & Human Rights Manager was invited to attend a meeting in Utrecht (Holland) to discuss the preliminary findings of the project and consult on next steps. It was also an opportunity to showcase the Herefordshire Equality & Human Rights Charter.

Following this, 17 key messages (eg. around consultation and leadership) were published to ensure that projects and human rights work is successful.

Corporate initiatives

Statutory Requirements

The Equality Act, which took effect in April 2011, brought with it a new General Equality Duty and various Specific Duties. The team has taken full responsibility for raising awareness of the requirements of the Duty and ensuring that HPS remains compliant with legislation.

The bulk of the team's work involves:

- collating and publishing an equality analysis of the workforce (due January 2012)
- preparing and publishing equality objectives (due April 2012)
- communicating changes to the Equality Impact Assessment process and the need for "due regard"
- revising training programmes to reflect the new legislation

Training

Training is a fundamental mechanism for increasing awareness and understanding, airing real-life difficulties, and challenging myths. The team do not currently charge for their training. The following sessions were carried out in 2011:

Session	Duration	Audience	No. of sessions
Central induction	3 hours	New Council and PCT employees	7
Hospital induction	½ hour	New Wye Valley Trust employees	6
Induction	1½ hours	New Councillors	1
Disability equality	3 hours	Sixth Form College, No 1 Ledbury Road	4
LGBT awareness	3 hours	The 3 Hereford colleges	9
Race equality	3 hours	Sixth Form College, Fairfield High School, Monmouth Girls School, Hereford College of Technology	5
Hate crime	1½ hours	People with learning disabilities	3
WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent)	3 hours	Student social workers	1
Challenging behaviour	3 hours	Council employees	2
People value	1½ hours	HPS managers	1
Tailored generic diversity	Various	Courtyard employees, Phoenix Fostering, Wigmore High School, CAB, Taxi Licensing	8
Equality & Human Rights Charter	Various	Community development workers, Voluntary Workers Forum, Sustainable Communities Directorate Management Team, learning providers, Women @ No 14, Herefordshire Disability United	7

Crucial Crew

The team collaborated with others in the authority to deliver 8 full days of training to Year 6 school children through Crucial Crew in July 2011. A 20-minute workshop focusing on bullying due to social identity was delivered 9 times on each day, reaching 1,470 children.

Police Training

The team will be delivering 10 x 3 hour sessions on the impact of the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty to the local policing team from January to March 2012, so this year has seen development meetings and much work done to put together the content. These sessions will also cover some specific issues around Eastern European communities and irregular migrants.

Poll Clerk and Presiding Officer Training

In April, the team delivered a series of short sessions as part of the comprehensive training for poll clerks and presiding officers, in collaboration with Electoral Registration. It focused particularly on the needs of disabled voters.

Equality & Human Rights Group

The Joint Corporate Diversity Group disbanded in January 2011 due to the significant re-organisation of HPS, and the new Equality & Human Rights Group met in November for the first time. Chaired by the Assistant Director of People, Policy and Partnerships, the group has representatives from each directorate in HPS, and representatives from each of the three employee groups.

It is tasked with ensuring meaningful Equality and Human Rights objectives are set and achieved. Initially the group has established the following task and finish groups to focus on key areas of work:

- Procurement
- E-learning and mandatory diversity training
- Equality data for the workforce

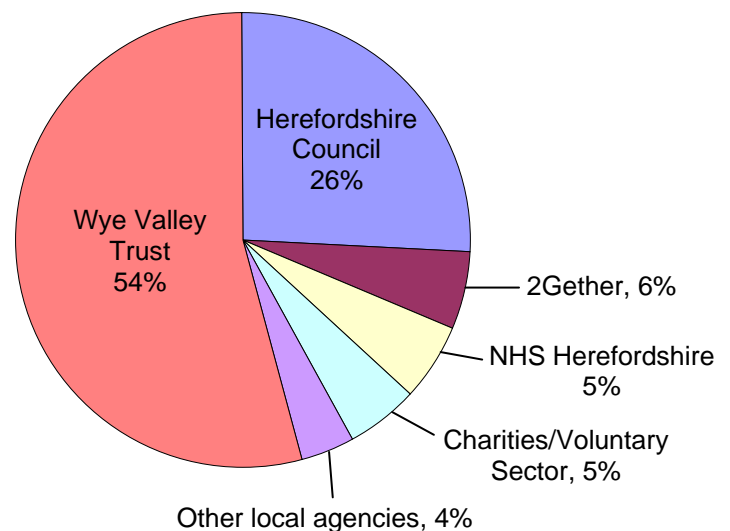
The group exists to contribute positively to the advancement of equality and good relations, promote and advance equality of opportunity, and discharge a corporate lead responsibility for ensuring that HPS fulfil their statutory obligations and civic duties in regards to Human Rights, Equality and Diversity.

Herefordshire Language Network

2011 has seen a huge increase in the number of assignments handled by the Network. The average number of jobs per month was 130 (compared to 60 in 2010). Here are some key achievements for this 12 month period:

- The Network handled 130 translation and 1,456 interpreting assignments to the value of nearly £62k
- The Network has saved local organisations an estimated £109k
- 36 interpreting assignments were provided free for charities and schools - paid for by [MIRA](#) funds
- 28 small jobs were carried out free of charge, or cancellation fees waived
- 11 linguists achieved a Level 2 or 3 qualification in Community Translation
- 2 linguists achieved Level 3 Community Interpreting
- 1 Foundation Training for Interpreters course was held, attended by 16 linguists
- 2 professional development events were held, attended by 35 linguists
- A private on-line forum for members of the Network was established

Language assignments by source (2011)



Employee Groups

The Race Equality group met 5 times, and the LGBT and Disability groups 3 times each.

The Race Equality group had a very productive workshop to come up with actions for the action plan of the Equality & Human Rights Charter. The LGBT group have requested that a statement about equality be put on the recruitment pages. Both groups are moving some meetings to the hospital to enable health colleagues to attend.

Partnership Working

Members of the team regularly attended meetings of around 16 local and regional partnerships and groups, eg:

- Herefordshire Learning Disability Partnership Board and the Adult Safeguarding Board (developing and supporting the work on the Safe Places initiative)
- Prevent Peer Support Group (West Midlands) (supporting the review of the Prevent training package)
- Regional EDS Peer Support Group (West Midlands) (reporting to the Strategic Health Authority on the implementation of the NHS Equality Delivery System)

Work within the community

Casework

The team provides support for staff and members of the public, to support them if they have experienced discrimination or abuse, and to do this they provide an exceptional level of customer care. They exceed expectations laid out in the complaints procedure by spending time with individuals and allowing them the space to express how they are feeling. They advocate for them if necessary, signpost where they can, or just listen.

Issues handled by the Corporate Diversity Team 2011	Internal*	External*
Complaints	4	7
Queries/requests for guidance, support or advice	13	17

* *Internal: Relates to a Council service, or activity within the Council's control*

External: The issue relates to the community or to another organisation

Hate Crime Panel

Launched in 2011 by the team, the Hate Crime Panel met three times. Its functions include:

- Review cases and offer advice and support on live cases
- Work to deter repeat offending
- Share information to increase the safety of people in Herefordshire
- Achieve a greater understanding of why some people will report an incident and why others will not

54 hate crimes and incidents were reported to the police in the county from January-September 2011.

Diversity Leads Network

The Corporate Diversity Team has facilitated a county-wide networking group since 2005. It currently has 37 members from 19 different organisations. The group meets only once a year, in December, to share information, resources and best practice. In between, regular electronic bulletins are sent out to aid networking. 2 bulletins were circulated in 2011.

Out in the Sticks

The 2011 LGBT-themed festival ran from 21-28 May, and comprised of live events and a film festival. Events were held predominantly at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts in Hereford city, with a family barbecue being held at Queenswood Country Park. There was an overall loss of £5k which was absorbed by the Courtyard.

Migration & Integration in Rural Areas (MIRA)

The MIRA project, which officially started in September 2009, draws to a close in January 2012. The MIRA Project Officer was appointed in January 2010 on a two-year contract and reports directly to the Equality & Human Rights Manager. In 2011 the team was successful in extending the Project Officer's post for a further 12 months by reprofiling the money we received from the Migration Impact Fund.

Here are the key achievements of the MIRA project in 2011:

- 35 people attended training for bilingual classroom assistants
- 10 schools are using Community Mentors (volunteers who become a link between school and family)
- Grants were given to 2 EAL Teaching Assistants to study Bilingualism in Education (both completed study)
- Around 120 people were supported in an emergency situation (such as homelessness), and 9 were repatriated through the voluntary repatriation scheme
- Family ESOL classes have been delivered in 3 venues with a total of 110 people attending
- 20 learners completed the OCN (Open College Network) ESOL courses
- 20 learners achieved the recognised Skills for Life ESOL qualification
- More than 300 people voted in Polish Parliamentary elections at the Hereford polling station facilitated by MIRA



- Over 350 people visited the exhibition "From Exile to Freedom" at the Shire Hall in November, prepared by the Polish Expats Association and facilitated by MIRA
- Over £800 was spent on bilingual resources for the new resource centre available for all the Children's Centres and Nurseries across the county

St. George's Day

St George's Day was celebrated on 23 April 2011 in High Town. The Golden Valley Singers performed traditional English songs, there were competitions, games, face painting and quizzes all supported by the Wyvern FM Street Stars who were giving away chocolates and flags. St George himself was present – giving speeches throughout the city centre. The event was well attended by passers by, and feedback was extremely positive from those spoken to on the day.



Fundamental Rights Conference

Dominika Lipska (MIRA project officer) was invited to attend the 2011 Fundamental Rights Conference in Warsaw on 21-22 November on "Dignity and Rights of Irregular Migrants". The event brought together about 300 policy makers, practitioners and experts from across the EU to support the development of policies to improve fundamental rights for irregular migrants. Dominika's attendance and travel to the conference was fully funded by the European Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA).

The FRA research indicates that lack of a legally recognised status makes irregular migrants vulnerable to severe fundamental rights violations, including various forms of exploitation, lack of access to basic services, and obstacles in accessing justice.

Welcome to Herefordshire

The website, launched in 2006, was maintained throughout 2011 in English and three other languages. Usage of the website remains consistently high, with 32,400 visitors in 2011.



Same But Different

The team acted in an advisory capacity to the Rural Media Company, who developed the Same But Different film in 2011. The film, which can be used as a training tool, consists of a number of short interviews with local people with different protected characteristics talking about their life and experiences.

Safe Places Campaign

Devised by the team, this is a campaign that will help people with a learning disability who are experiencing hate crime or who are feeling frightened in some way. It offers access to a building that has been identified as a safe, secure and supportive place to be. The buildings supporting the campaign will have a Safe Place poster displayed in a prominent position.

People with a learning disability in Herefordshire will each be given a Safe Place card to carry with them when they go out. The cards carry information which can be used by the person in the Safe Place building trained to offer support.

The campaign has experienced a delay due to the previously unforeseen need to ensure that people in the Safe Place building are trained in safeguarding theory and practice. But it should be launched early in 2012.

Taking Part in Politics

This initiative, originally launched in 2008, is designed to increase awareness of the political process among people with a learning disability, and encourage them to vote. Two further training sessions were held in 2011.

May Fair

The team arranged for a group of volunteers to be available from 10am-8pm on one day of the Fair's visit to Hereford. The volunteers were on call to support anyone who needed help to get around High Town, or to access the rides if they wanted to. Volunteers had all been CRB checked and had attended a Manual Handling course.

Challenges and opportunities for 2012

Budget Restrictions

2011 has seen significant challenges for local authorities, and Herefordshire has been no exception. The team has had to make significant savings and much of the external funding that was anticipated was withdrawn. This had a particularly significant impact on the work they were able to do around the MIRA project and the Language Network. After reprofiling the budget they have managed to safeguard the continuation of the MIRA project for a further 12 months. However, without access to external funding this will come to an end in 2012. The team is looking to European funding to support this work in the future.

The suspension of all discretionary spend at the beginning of the financial year had an impact on the team, as it restricted opportunities to attend training or conferences to help them keep up with new Equality legislation. However, due to the work they have been doing on the Herefordshire Equality & Human Rights Charter, and this being recognised both nationally and internationally, they have been able to attend events and join in research projects that have been supported and funded by the European Fundamental Rights Agency, the British Institute of Human Rights, the Local Government Improvement & Development and the UK Ministry of Justice. This has enabled officers to be in the forefront of developing a Human Rights approach to public service delivery.

Prevent

The Government recently completed a review of the Prevent strategy. The new Prevent will not significantly alter the approach to tackle extremism. In Herefordshire, the Equality, Human Rights & Partnership Team will continue to work closely with the police to ensure that the local concerns which Prevent is intended to address are understood.

The new WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) which supports this agenda is designed for public sector staff and is more inclusive than before. Two members of the team are trained to deliver WRAP and will be promoting the three hour sessions in January 2012.

Income Generation

As with many other areas of Local Government, the team is planning to generate income in order to offset some of its costs. Any income will also help to maintain and further develop the services to ensure that they remain up-to-date and fit for purpose. We intend to implement this from April 2012 (the new financial year) and we will review on a 3-monthly basis. Income will be generated by:

Training

The team has developed a number of training sessions aimed at various audiences. To date, the training has been provided free, but in April 2012, a charging structure will be put in place aimed at covering costs rather than profit-making.

Herefordshire Language Network

The Network has grown and flourished continuously for 3 years, and demand has significantly increased year-on-year. For all this time, the costs of administering the Network has been absorbed by the team, and 100% of the invoice amount for each translation or interpreting job goes to the linguist. However from April 2012, a small administration fee will be added to the cost of each job.

In both cases, flexibility is built in to offer free or discounted services for charities and voluntary organisations.

Disability Initiatives

- A high profile event will mark International Day of Disabled People and Disability History Month in December.
- Baywatch will once again be promoted, with articles in the press and the erection of further permanent external signage in car parks.
- The team are working in close collaboration with Hereford Access for All and Markets & Fairs to increase the accessibility of the May Fair and the number of disabled people who visit it.