

ANNUAL REPORT

2021/22



equality
action



TABLE OF CONTENTS

02	CHAIR'S REPORT	18	GOLDEN AWARD RANK FOUNDATION
05	TREASURER'S REPORT	19	OUR YEAR IN PICTURES
06	HEALTH INEQUALITIES - THE KING'S FUND	20	OUR STAFF
08	HIGHLIGHTS	21	OUR TRUSTEES
09	WHAT WE HELP WITH	22	THANK YOU
10	POSITIVE MINDS PROJECT	23	MEMBERS
14	VITAMINDS PROJECT	24	NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Chair's Report

"We only know too well that what we are doing is nothing more than a drop in the ocean. But if the drop were not there, the ocean would be missing something" - Mother Theresa



A very apt quote relevant to Equality Action. In these uncertain and difficult times for people, the issues affecting our communities have a huge impact on the work of Equality Action. At times it may feel like we are swimming against the tide and we may ask ourselves if we are making a difference!! Make no mistake. The outcomes speak for themselves.

Equality Action has had another successful year working together with a huge amount of background activity. We remain active in many fronts and for an organisation the size of Equality Action, I feel we punch well above our weight. I would like to celebrate our successes by highlighting some of our achievements over the past year. We have supported over 350 individuals and families with case work, from our diverse communities. Our mental health and well-being projects have had and continue to have far reaching impact not only in Loughborough but also across the county. At a time when inequalities in healthcare, especially for people in the BAME communities is being widely debated, we had the pleasure of hosting a thought provoking annual public lecture on that very topic. We were privileged to hear Toby Lewis from the Kings Fund.

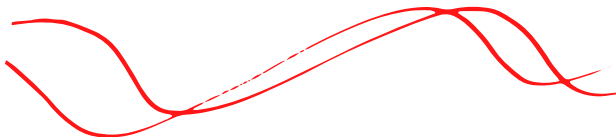
Chair's Report continued...

None of the above would have been possible without the hard work, dedication, resilience and a can-do attitude of all the staff of Equality Action, guided and supported by Varsha Parmar, Executive Officer. I wish to express my gratitude to all the trustees and sub-committees for their commitment and support throughout the year. I would also like to acknowledge the enthusiastic support and invaluable contributions of our past Chair, Lisa Vine.

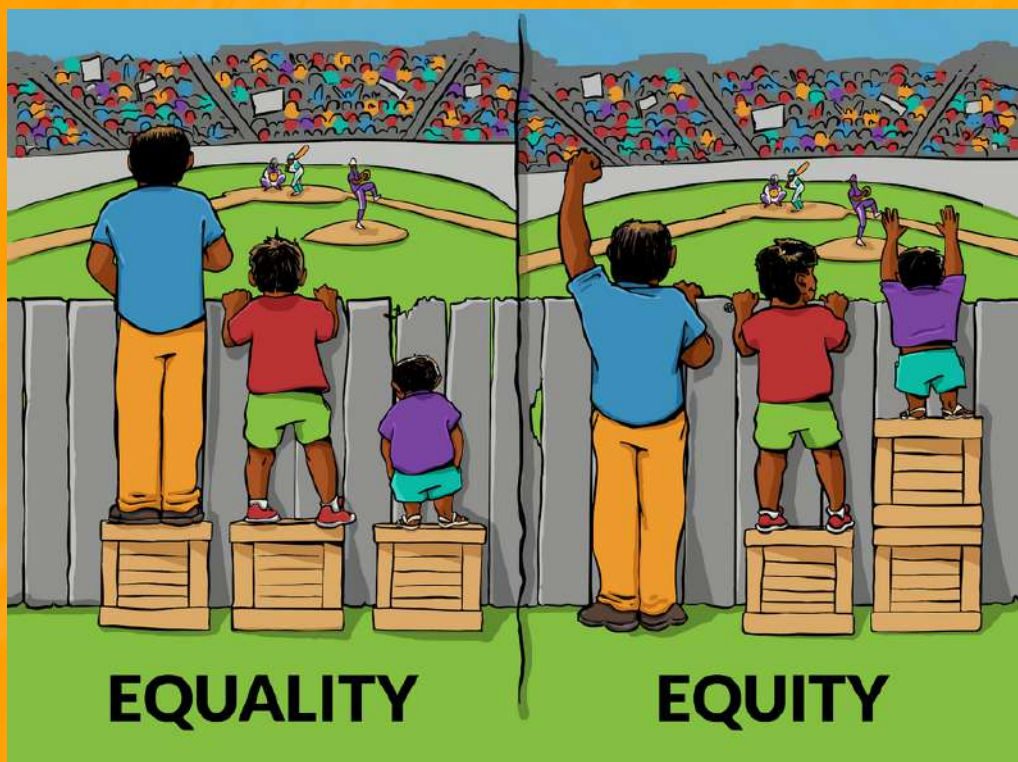
Equality Action will not be able to serve the communities without the financial support of our funders and collaborative working with our professional partners who have shown total confidence and trust in our ability to deliver and provide value for money. We look forward to building on that relationship and to working with them as we look to the future.

The year ahead will be challenging on many fronts with a backdrop of rising cost of living and rising fuel prices, but I have no doubt that Equality Action will step up to that challenge and go from strength to strength.

Geetha Bala



IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT EQUALITY...



"Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire."
interactioninstitute.org and madewithangus.com.

Treasurer's Report



In my 2021 report I said that, as the number of our funders and projects we have to account for had grown, we decided to enhance our accounting package. I am pleased to say we are now successfully using Sage Accounts 'charity' version. The expansion of our services has continued over the past year so this decision has proved the right one.

Another plus is that we have been able to recruit a finance administrator for one day each week. Matthew Frost started with us in this role in July 2022 and is already proving valuable to us.

Most of our new work is now delivered across a wide area of our Borough, and the wider county, which means we are not just a Loughborough centred organisation. However, the amount of casework we do at 66 Nottingham Road remains on a steady daily basis.

Looking forward to the next year, our finances are healthy and together with our dedicated staff and the wonderful improvements to our office environment I am confident we will be able to meet our funders' and clients' expectations.

Trevor Shaw





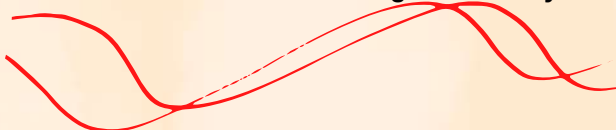
Tackling health inequalities: How long can we wait and what are we waiting for?

Toby Lewis, Senior Fellow, Health Inequalities - The King's Fund

We were delighted to welcome Toby Lewis as guest speaker at our Public Lecture at Loughborough University on 10th May 2022 where he spoke about "Tackling health inequalities (notes of the lecture are available from our office). We would like to thank the University for hosting this event.

Toby grew up in Loughborough. He undertakes research at The King's Fund, focused on health inequalities and poverty. He contributes to their ground-breaking work on integrated care and health system reform, and has a particular interest in how the NHS can contribute to local regeneration and to changing disparities of outcome.

Before joining The King's Fund, Toby worked in the health services for more than 25 years in mental health, primary care and hospital services. He has held director roles since 2005 across University College London Hospital, Mid Yorkshire Hospitals, Bart's Health, and was Chief Executive of Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals for eight years. He worked in the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit from 2003, holds degrees from the University of Oxford and the University of London, and is studying for a third in public health medicine with Edinburgh University.



Health Inequalities



What are we waiting for and why are we waiting?



Health inequalities are avoidable, preventable, treatable.



Half of all in poverty are themselves disabled or care for someone who is.



We need to share that learning across different traditions, health, local government and the third sector.

Notes of the public lecture are available. Please contact the office.

HIGHLIGHTS

**400 group
participants across
all projects**



**£3600 generated in
donations**



**Engagement with
new projects and
funders**



**1250 cases
supporting clients
with specialist advice**

**150 referrals to
partner agencies**



What we help with...

Customer & Utilities



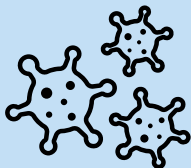
Immigration



Benefits



Isolation & Lockdown



Employment & Upskilling



Testing & Vaccines



Housing



Debt



Mental & Physical Health



We try to help people with issues they are facing when they come to us and when we cannot support them directly we refer them to relevant partner agencies. Above are just a few of the areas we have helped with over the past year.

We often see individuals coming in about a particular issue but our caseworkers take the time to find out about their holistic situation, gaining their trust and go on to support them with other issues. Our clients are frequently supported by our Positive Minds and Vita Minds projects for support on mental and physical health, upskilling, and employment.

15-25
women



100-150
women



10-15
women



20-35
women



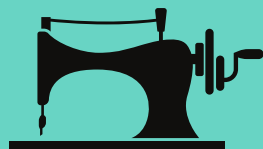
20-35
women



15-25
women



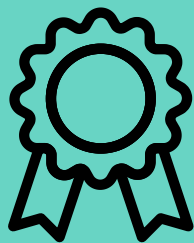
8-15
women



10-20
women



Our project officers achievements



MENTAL HEALTH TRAINER

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION
ENGLAND

COUNSELLING COURSE



BE GENUINELY CURIOUS
ABOUT OTHERS

VALIDATE OTHERS'
FEELINGS

SHARE WHO YOU
ARE

BE AN ATTENTIVE
LISTENER

DISCOVER
SIMILARITIES

IMAGINE YOURSELF IN
OTHERS' SHOES

Empathy
THE AWARENESS OF THE
FEELINGS OF OTHERS



We are in the fourth year of our 5-year Positive Minds Project. Our year so far in pictures and some quotes from beneficiaries:

Really enjoy working with the community and working with PM is the highlight of my week!



We look forward to our weekly meetups and can't imagine life without this group!



Coming across this project has been life changing for me. I feel so relaxed and comfortable around the people I meet in the weekly sessions and the activities we do!



The day I found this project it was such a blessing and really changed my life.



When I tell people the yoga sessions and English classes are free, they are shocked. It's truly a blessing and accessible for all communities.



**POSITIVE
VIBES**



"The quality of my life has improved so much since working with Positive Minds"

"Since getting recommended by the development officers I have received so much more paid casual work."

Falguni
Yoga instructor

"The network of people I have met since associating with Positive Minds has improved my mental health and my life in general. Its great how Positive Minds gives people like me an opportunity to work and network with other organisations."



VitaMinds Project

We started our Vita Minds project in April 2021. It is a five year project and we are one of the community partners for the Vita Health Group in Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Service across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) for people, particularly from BAME backgrounds.



VitaMinds aims to:



Raise awareness of the IAPT services and refer people to the free service provided by Vita Health Group on behalf of the NHS.



Build trust and confidence to reduce stigma and reluctance to engage with mental health services.



Increase the number of people from BAME communities being treated using evidence based approaches to deal with anxiety and depression.



Run a range of community support and engagement sessions throughout LLR to support physical and mental health.



We also want to build the capacity of the communities with regard to mental health by training up community champions and mentors to support this work.

Music & Beats Project

We have targeted youth groups for our music and beats project. We collaborated with a local rapper from Loughborough to reach out to the target audience and build awareness on mental health. The music and lyrics were devised by young BAME males and captures their take on perceived barriers to accessing help.

"I felt honoured and privileged to be a part of Vita Minds mental health project. I'm hoping the song will encourage youth groups especially of BAME communities to come forward if they are suffering with their mental health. Or at the very least to spark conversations which can eradicate the negative stigmas surrounding men's mental health, thus encouraging them to get the help and support that they need. To be reminded it's ok not to be ok and there is help and services available to aid in their well-being." -Lakhbir Legha (Lucky C, rapper)



Ugandan Asian 50-year anniversary

Keeping minds and hands busy can help our well-being in many ways. Working with the wonderful women from Jalaram Sadavrat in Belgrave was a real pleasure. We will be running regular VM mindfulness sessions over the summer. Here we are decorating a scrapbook to commemorate the 50 year anniversary of Ugandan Asians arrival in Leicester



Other VitaMinds Projects & Sessions



International
Women's Day



Men's coffee morning



VM online event



Faith & Friendship
Tent



VM workshop with
the Somalian Centre



VM health event



Men's swimming
session



Mindfulness session



Caribbean Court



Diwali Crafts
Wellbeing workshop



Arts & Crafts session



Sikh Community
Wellbeing session

People's experiences with the VitaMinds Project

Service Users



I was reluctant about contacting the VitaMinds Officer for help. But felt reassured by her listening without judgement and providing cultural insight. I'm being kinder to myself now and although there are more challenges ahead, I am far more confident in expressing how I feel to my loved ones and maintaining a healthy work/life balance.



I cannot thank you enough. I was sinking further into bad ways, feeling lost and hopeless. Now I'm in a better place; healing and getting stronger each day. It may take time because I know I have to make changes and that isn't easy. Talking helps as does keeping busy, but also finding time for myself is important'.

Session Mentor & Community Champion



I always look forward to the swimming session that Equality Action/Vita Minds organise. It has become a very popular weekly physical activity session for families and friends in Loughborough, where people from different cultures meet and participate together.

Feel so happy that I am able to share my thoughts and experience with others at the session and considering its popularity, we need similar sessions targeting local youth.

Thanks a lot to the project officer for supporting me and having confidence in me to run the session efficiently.





GOLDEN AWARDS PROJECT

Our Youth Apprentice Project took place over the summer of 2022. The project aimed to empower young people in meaningful activities such as fundraising events, workshops and residential and educational trips in a fun environment.

The project ran over 6 weeks exploring different themes, including:

- Entrepreneurship
- Local charities
- Local history
- Project planning and delivery
- Social media and marketing.

The group of boys that were part of the project also went on a residential to Scotland, where they participated in team-building activities and skills.

One of the boys said about what he enjoyed from the residential:

"The thing that stood out to me the most was the bonfire because we got to support each other by talking about our life problems, sharing experiences and listening to others."

The project saw the boys planning, marketing and running their fundraising project. The young people chose to raise money for a local food bank through a car wash and charity dinner. They raised £555 and used that money to go to the local supermarket to buy items to deliver to local food bank.

The young people really enjoyed the project taking on tasks, showing initiative, learning new skills and taking on the challenges of being on camera. We are really proud of what our first Youth Apprentice Project group achieved and are hoping to look at more opportunities to engage and empower young people in the future. We would like to thank the Rank Foundation for the generous award and to Hameed Miah and Akkas Miah for making this a success.





Our year in pictures



OUR STAFF



Varsha Parmar
Executive Officer



Minara Rahman
*Positive Minds
Project Officer*



Yesmin Choudhury
*Positive Minds
Project Officer*



Anita Barrand
*VitaMinds
Project Officer*



Mehraj Alamgir
*Vitaminds
Project Officer*



Chayara Chowdhury
*Caseworker/Vitaminds
Project Officer*



Amina Wadud
Caseworker



Kazi Mashud
Caseworker



Mina Galliara
*Administrative
Assistant*



Matthew Frost
Financial Administrator

OUR TRUSTEES

Our trustees play a vital role to ensure our organisation's governance is in line with the Charity Commission and Company House rules and we work to our mission, aims and objectives. They have been a great source of support for us throughout the year ensuring the well-being and safety of our staff and clients.



Geetha Bala



Emily Keightly



Trevor Shaw



Monica Sharman



Kirit Mistry



ZamZam Yusuf



Alea Hanif



Jill Vincent



Charles Dobbin



Ben Smith



Osas Adetutu

Thank you!



To our supporters, funders and members for your support throughout the year.

**Charnwood Borough Council
Leicestershire County Council
The Access to Justice Foundation
The National Lottery Community Fund
The Rank Foundation
Vita Health Group
Awards For All
Community Foundation Leicestershire & Rutland
Lloyds Bank Foundation
NHS Commissioning Support Unit
Enterprise Holdings**



**And everyone who has donated time, money, tech or goods to our work throughout the year.
We are so grateful.**

Members

- Hon. President** The Mayor of Charnwood
Hon. Solicitor Mr D Pagett-Wright (Moss Solicitors)
Hon.Treasurer Mr T Shaw

Individuals

- Ali Y
Akram A
Bala G
Bava A
Blackshaw E
Capleton J
Catt J
Clark A
Clark V
Clegg H
Cramer S
Das S
Dobbin C
Featonby D
Gimpel Anthony
Gimpel Ann
Hanif A
Hayes J
J Hunt
Jones M
Joyce P
Karia D
Keightly E
Kershaw R
Lewis D
Lewis P
Meredith Velado S
Maffioli G
Miah J
Morgan N
Newbitt L
Newton B
O'Brien J
Shahid M A
Shaw T
Silva I V
Vincent J
Vine L
Williams A

Organisations

- All Saints with Holy Trinity Church
Ashmount School
Brahma Kumaris
Bridge T 260500
B S A T 611723
Charnwood College T 554400
Charnwood Arts
Charnwood Bangladeshi Society
CBC
Falcon Centre
Loughborough Churches Partnership
Loughborough Constituency Labour Party
Loughborough College
Fearon Hall
Geeta Bhawan
Gorse Covert CC
John Storer Charnwood
Limehurst Academy
Loughborough Baptist Church
Loughborough College
Loughborough Council of Faiths
LICA Mosque
Loughborough URC
Loughborough Uni
Loughborough University F&S Centre
Rawlins Academy
Rosebery CC
Sikh Temple (Gurudwara)
Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPs)



“

**NOTE FROM
VARSHA PARMAR
[EXECUTIVE OFFICER]**

CHALLENGING BUT EXCITING TIMES AHEAD

We are in an exciting time for our charity and look forward to the future and what it brings. I want to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to our board, members, staff, volunteers, partners and funders for supporting us.

I would like to thank Adnan Wadud, our Intern who designed this report.

”

CONTACT US



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