



Annual Report 2018/19



**Promoting equality and diversity,
dignity and respect through
inclusion.**

Registered Charity Number: 1088411

Company Number: 4198889

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Chair's report



It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 2018/19 Annual Report. I was appointed Chairperson at the 2018 Annual General Meeting, taking over from Justin O'Brien who had served in the position with great aplomb. I would like to thank him for his invaluable input during his time as Chair and am delighted that he has continued to serve as a Trustee.

As always this has been a very busy year, maintaining our important 'day-to-day' work as well as our ongoing projects. Our most recent initiatives, funded by the Big Lottery, are 'Chances for All' and 'Improving Lives' with themes of empowerment, healthy living and well-being and confidence among women and men from South Asian communities. Our new project is 'Positive Minds', which aims to address mental and physical health among women from Black, Asian and Ethnic Minorities (BAME).

This is a five-year project and is already proving to be an important and timely programme designed to empower those who might otherwise not seek help and support. I would like to thank

Minara Rahman and Yesmin Choudhury for taking the lead on this important work.

We have continued our tradition of advice and support to individuals and groups and are ever grateful to our case workers, Chayara Chowdhury, Amina Wadud and Kazi Mashud, who along with Mehraj Alamgir, is also one of our two Improving Lives Project Officers.

We are very fortunate to have such a wonderful and professional team ably headed by our Executive Officer, Varsha Parmar. With ever increasing changes to the likes of immigration law and digital protection and the need to be compliant with our funders' and partners' requirements, the pressure on our staff does not go unnoticed. To this end we have recently appointed Mina Galliara to be our 'front-of-house' person and help with administration. She has already established herself as a most welcome addition to the team.

We are always on the lookout for people who are interested in our work to join our Board of Trustees. During the year we were delighted to welcome on board Emily Keighley as a full Trustee and co-opted Revd. Charles Dobbin and Lisa Vine. All our Trustees bring to their role a host of experience and talents, but most important of all a passion to share in our Mission Statement to 'Promote equality and diversity, dignity and respect through inclusion'.

You will discover in this report some of the events we have run and hosted in the course of the year. From the annual football tournament to our most recent public lecture delivered by Baroness Shami Chakrabarti, we continue to seek to be relevant to the needs of our community and the wider world.

2019 marks the 50th anniversary of the organisation. From the early days back in the late 1970s/80s when we were known by the charming name of 'The Garden – where good things grow' to our present identity as 'Equality Action', the specifics might have changed but the ethos and commitment to serve have not.

We are publishing a book as part of our celebrations which will cover some of our past history whilst looking forward to the future.

We will be launching this in the near future and complimentary copies will be available from the office in Nottingham Road. Thanks to all those who have made contributions and to Charnwood Arts who are helping in the production.

I could not finish this introduction to our report without a big thank you to Trevor Shaw. Trevor had served for many years as our Treasurer and was grateful to have handed over the task to one of our Trustees at the last AGM.

Unfortunately, due to personal circumstances, the job has fallen back into Trevor's lap. Thank you so much, Trevor, for agreeing to remain in post for our current year.

As always the work of Equality Action could not happen without the support of local voluntary and community organisations, our dedicated staff and of course our various funders not least of all the Big Lottery Fund.

We look forward to the challenges, opportunities and privilege of serving the people of Loughborough and Charnwood into the future.

David Featonby
Chair

Advice Work

We continue to provide casework on benefits, welfare, immigration, housing etc. The range of queries are varied and our clients come from diverse backgrounds. During the year we have seen over 350 clients, some with multiple issues.

Our advice service is often a route to other forms of help. In the first instance we help clients deal with their immediate problem such as responding to a gas bill or completing a form. This provides a useful diagnostic to identify their needs for support with language and IT so that we can signpost them to one of our projects and to English language classes. They are also able to learn better budgeting and money management. Increasingly, BAME older generations feel more comfortable using iPads, smart phones etc.



For advice appointments please call the office or pop in and make an appointment to see one of our caseworkers. We ask for donations to cover our costs.

Case study 1

An Asian client has elderly parents and didn't know what to do to help maintain care in the home for them both. With our help they have now got social services involved, a lot of adaptations have been made to the home, they have started to claim attendance allowance and stopped paying council tax (which they shouldn't have been doing for several years). This has helped the whole family manage keeping the elderly parents in the home and look after them.



Case study 2

A white lady came to us when she was: three years beyond her retirement age; still working part time and struggling to manage her finances; living in a rented property; paying council tax; and not claiming any benefits. She wasn't even claiming her state pension as she didn't know about it.

Through a friend she heard about our services, came to see a caseworker and is going to get back-dated state pension (several thousands); no longer paying council tax; entitled to claim for pension credit; and is so happy that she finally has some money. She was crying as she has been living under a lot of stress and was struggling financially and eating very basic food as she couldn't afford much. She is delighted with the help she has received from us.

Positive Minds Project

Following the success of our last 5-year big lottery project Chances for All which ended in April 2018, we identified that mental health had to be a priority in our next project. This new 5-year project is funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Our sincere thanks to them for funding this valued work.



The Positive Minds project started on 1st August 2018 with our launch on 2nd October 2018.

Project outcomes:

Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) people are aware of mental health issues and understand the symptoms and take up support (both for people suffering and their carers)

BAME women continue to improve their health and take a lead in running health activities, particularly women aged 50+

BAME women improve their employment, volunteering and further education opportunities

Positive Minds Project



Celebrating the start of the project with ladies from the Anand Mangal group

The project has a steering group with people and groups who work in mental health. Since setting up in August, we engage with over 40 women on a weekly basis. We hold sessions at local community venues where the women get together to do activities and have an opportunity to talk about mental health and issues that affect them.



Positive Minds Project

Time to Talk Day

We celebrated “Time to Talk” day by hosting an event at Fearon Hall on 7th February 2019. This was attended by over 60 women. We showed a YouTube video in Bengali (with English subtitles) showing people talking about what mental health really is, with some real-life cases of people who have suffered mental health and who have come out of it by talking and getting help.



Positive Minds Project

Dementia Friends Workshop



This was delivered by the Alzheimer's Society at the Anand Mangal Group where women learned about what support is available and how to help those suffering with dementia.

Improving Lives Project

Our Improving Lives project, funded by the National Community Lottery Fund, is now in Year 4 and is aimed at men from Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority backgrounds.

Project outcomes:

Improved health, wellbeing, confidence to be more active in society and ability to deal with family issues.

Increased employability skills through IT and language training

Increased knowledge, awareness and building community resilience to radicalization and extremism.

Men-only swimming sessions

One of our most popular activities is the regular men's swimming sessions that are held weekly. Some of the participants were first time swimmers, who had the opportunity to learn from Level 2 instructor which we provided. These men came along with their sons. This helped at a cross generational level, giving these men and their sons quality time to enjoy a physical activity and spend time talking and listening to each other.

Men Only SWIMMING

All men over 18 years of age are welcome!!

VENUE: CHARNWOOD COLLEGE SWIMMING POOL
Loughborough, LE11 4SQ

Time: Every Sunday 2:30pm-3:30pm
(from 13th March to 13th May)

A very good exercise and recreational session for local men

Swimming instructor for learners

This pool has the capacity for maximum 40 people in one session
(booking in advance required as a first come basis)

Children over 8 years can join, must be accompanied by parents

For more information contact us
Phone: 01509261651

Comment from one beneficiary who attends the swimming sessions: "My son and I don't spend any time together at home as he is mostly in his room or at school, but since we have started to attend the swimming sessions, we find that this helps us catch up and talk.

My son tells me a bit more about what he does at school and who his friends are. I feel that this has helped us get closer".

Improving Lives Project

Annual Football Tournament

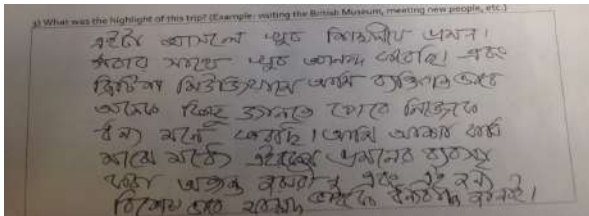
Our 3rd annual football tournament took place on Sunday 26th August, 2018 at Loughborough College, where 6 teams participated from different ages, cultures and backgrounds for a friendly 7-a-side football tournament. Over 40 people attended. The tournament was highly successful and an opportunity for cross-cultural integration. All the teams who participated in this tournament have joined a WhatsApp group, which we created. Through this group they keep in touch, regularly communicate with each other and organise their own football tournaments at the local leisure centre. We believe that due to our football tournaments over the years, a lot of the young men from the different faiths, cultures and backgrounds are interacting with each other and coming together for sporting activities. This is helping break down barriers and promote diversity.



Comment from our Chair David Featonby, who presented the trophies at the last tournament: "It's great seeing so many young men of different backgrounds come together for a friendly tournament".

Improving Lives Project

Visit to the London British Museum



Above comment in Bengali from one of the participants of the trip

Translation: It was a very good educational trip; I had a good time with everyone. I have gained knowledge on many things from this British Museum trip, which I did not know before, which has pleased me the most. I believe this sort of trip should be planned quite often and for this I would like to thank the project staff.



Improving Lives Project

Hate Crime Awareness event



This event provided a safe platform for the people to share their opinions and experiences on hate crime. Officers from the local Police and Council were present and talked about the reporting method and the support people can receive and the where the local reporting centres are based. Following the discussions people helped identify potential areas for local agency collaboration and participation.



Session with the team at Leicestershire Fire & Rescue on home safety.

Some beneficiaries signed up for free smoke alarms to be fitted.

Improving Lives Project

Café sessions

We hold sessions every Monday from 11am to 1pm at Fearon Hall. Each week between 15 and 18 men attend and do various activities like painting, making greeting cards or handicrafts, playing card or board games. They also participate in various physical exercises like chair-based exercise, group walks, yoga etc. These men usually do not go out and look forward to this.



Comment from a beneficiary: *It is great to meet others and talk about politics, current affairs and issues that concern us all. I feel I have something to look forward to each week.*

Comment from another beneficiary: *I look forward to Monday mornings when I can go to the café and meet my friends. Every week we do new things and I am really happy to be involved.*



Improving Lives Project

Radicalisation Awareness for Parents

28th March 2019

Our guest speaker, Nicola Benyahia's son, Rasheed, 19, from Birmingham, was a normal teenager from a loving family who was an engineering apprentice by day and who enjoyed parkour (free running) in his spare time. On Monday 1st June 2015, he suddenly travelled to Syria to volunteer as a foreign fighter for the self-styled Islamic State. He never returned.

The conference also included a presentation from Parents' Zone on how parents can be better equipped to look out for the signs of their children becoming radicalised, especially online. There were three workshops in the afternoon for delegates to join - Understanding the Referral Process; Understanding Online Safety and Understanding Vulnerability.



Quoting Revd. Wendy Dalrymple, Rector of the Parish Church in Loughborough, who chaired the event: *"I'm pleased to have participated in this important event. As a religious leader I'm acutely aware of how beliefs and ideology can be misused. In an internet age where communication can bring people together or drive them apart, we all need to be aware of the messages people are absorbing. Radicalisation and its avoidance is something we should all be talking about".*

Staying up to date

Training with Clark PR & Media

Getting savvy with social media

Thanks to our recent Capabilities Grant from the National Community Lottery Fund, we are able to train up staff and trustees on social media and how to raise our profile.



A tweet from one of our Trustees

I'm proud to be a Trustee for Loughborough's [@EACharnwood](#). It was fantastic to be at another board meeting last night & to be able to use my expertise to support work moving forward for our [#LGBT](#) communities. I'm also so excited to celebrate Equality Action's 50th year this year!

Getting GDPR ready (General Data Protection Regulation)



Between clearing up confidential papers and looking for material for our forthcoming publication capturing and celebrating 50 years of our work, we have come across many interesting photos, articles and material.

It's amazing how many people have supported our work, been involved and helped make a positive impact on the lives of many. We welcome any new members who want to get involved.

Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

Chair	David Featonby
Vice-Chair	Abida Akram
Treasurer	Lynne Newbitt
Assistant Treasurer	Trevor Shaw
Company secretary	Linda Foukes

TRUSTEES

David Featonby	Abida Akram	Lynne Newbitt	Linda Foukes
Tony Payne	Alea Begum Hanif	Emily Keightley	Justin O'Brien
Yasmin Ali	Charles Dobbin (Co-opted)	Lisa Vine (Co-opted)	

FINANCE & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

David Featonby	Lynne Newbitt
Trevor Shaw	Justin O'Brien

PERSONNEL OFFICER

Trevor Shaw

MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PR SUB GROUP

David Featonby	Jill Vincent	Yasmin Ali
Emily Keighley	Charles Dobbin	

STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Varsha Parmar	Executive Officer
Minara Rahman	Positive Minds Project Officer
Yesmin Choudhury	Positive Minds Project Officer
Mehraj Alamgir	Improving Lives Project Officer
Kazi Mashud	Improving Lives Project Officer & Caseworker
Chayara Chowdhury	Caseworker
Amina Wadud	Caseworker
Mina Galliara	Admin

We value all the volunteers who support us in our work throughout the year.

Membership

Membership 2018/2019

Hon. President The Mayor of Charnwood

Hon. Solicitor Mr D Pagett-Wright (Moss Solicitors)

Hon. Treasurer Mrs L Newbitt

Individual Members

A Akram	Y Ali	A Bava	J Capleton	J R Catt	V Clark
S Cramer	S Das	D Featonby	A Gimpel	A Gimpel	A Hanif
M Jenkinson	M Jones	E Keightley	R Kershaw	D Lewis	P Lewis
J Miah	N Morgan	L Newbitt	B Newton	J O'Brien	J Pacheco
D Paterson	S Phipps	M Shahid	T Shaw	I V Silva	S M Velado
J Vincent					

Organisations

All Saints with Holy Trinity	P Pinder	D Green
Brahma Kumari	M Sisodia	N Steel
Bridge	P Snape	P Davey
Charnwood Arts	K Ryan	
Charnwood Borough Council	T Parton	P Ranson
	J Tassell	S Maynard-Smith
Falcon Centre	M Mooney	M Davies
Fearon Hall	J Lenny	
Geeta Bhawan	R Chhabra	
Gorse Covert Community Centre	V Watts	L Gilmore
John Storer Charnwood	S Leong	S Frost
Limehurst Academy	J Mellor	
L'boro Baptist Church	S Cramer	
L'boro Churches Partnership	D Beale	T Payne
L'boro Labour Party	M Draycott	J Vincent
L'boro Council of Faiths	N Steele	
L'boro United Reformed Church	D Beale	T Payne
L'boro University	A Akram	M Alonso
Rosebery St Peter's C C	D Bentley	L Foukes

We are celebrating 50 years of Equality Action (1969 - 2019) and will be launching a publication later this year. We want to thank everyone who has supported us over the years.



Celebrating 50 years service
to the communities of Loughborough and Charnwood

Photography courtesy of Kathleen Jackson

Design by Natalie Chabaud - Charnwood Arts

Watch this space!!!!

Our contact details



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We would like to thank all our funders for the generous grants that enable us to continue with our work

