



Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood

Business Plan

July 2009



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HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITIES CHARNWOOD Business Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mission

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood promotes justice and equality of opportunity between individuals and groups of people from different backgrounds. Our targeted services are developed to achieve community cohesion, integration and a life free from discrimination and prejudice.

The HR&EC will:

- Work towards eliminating discrimination
- Campaign for equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between all persons in the Borough of Charnwood, in the County of Leicestershire

Values

- Respect for the Person
- Confidentiality in services provided to clients, individual or group
- Transparency in the operation of our business
- Integrity in our relationships with funders
- Mutual responsibility between trustees
- Sharing of knowledge and experience between members, staff and trustees
- Trust and co-operation with partners

Background

We are Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood (HR&EC). We were first established as the Charnwood Community Relations Council in the Borough of Charnwood in May 1969 (then known as "The Garden") and became the Charnwood Racial Equality Council in November 1996. We finally became HR&EC on 9 September 2008.

Our new name is designed to reflect our widening brief. We now work on all equalities (Race, Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability and Religion & Belief and their sub-groups) in partnership with others

Over the years the organisation, responding to the changing needs of the community and the need for specific services, has employed many long term and short term staff to offer advice and support to individual clients, community groups and statutory agencies.

Membership

HR&EC is a membership organisation with a wide cross-section of local organisations and individuals who elect the Trustees. There are 32 member organisations and 34 individual members. We currently have 1 Company Secretary, 11 Trustees with 1 vacancy, which will be filled during the year, 2 co-opted trustees and 4 spaces for co-options.

Beneficiaries

Individuals, especially those in the Borough, who are at risk of discrimination or harassment or vulnerable in other ways. Local voluntary and community organisations,

statutory agencies, local employers and businesses, local schools, colleges and University and local faith groups.

Partnership

HR&EC is engaged in strategic work with statutory service providers and works in close partnership with local voluntary agencies and groups.

Funding

Current funding comes mainly from Leicestershire County Council and Charnwood Borough Council. At present we also have projects funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation and the British Council.

Capacity Building

HR&EC has an ongoing capacity building agenda to ensure the staff and trustees have regular training and development to meet the quality standards. All policies/procedures were reviewed in 2008 and are available on the website for all trustees and staff to access.

A skills audit of trustees has been carried out and a trustee's code of conduct has been produced. In the absence of a Director, trustee mentors have been appointed for each member of staff. An analysis of current trustees and identifying new trustees are all part of ensuring we work as efficiently and as professionally as possible.

Current Services Provided

Welfare Rights Immigration and Nationality Advice
Learning Disability Project
South Asian Women's Project
Strategic Work
Conferences, training courses for young people
And other work

HR&EC also provides space for volunteers and staff to co-ordinate events, which aim to improve community cohesion, e.g. Loughborough Mela, Feast of Faiths, One World Week and European wide Youth Conferences.

Evidence of need

Welfare Rights and Immigration
Hate Crime
Community Cohesion
Hard to reach groups
Rural areas of Charnwood
Work on equalities
The Political scene
Employment
Education
Health

Quality Assurance and Monitoring

Each of the projects managed by the HR&EC is monitored and evaluated both for the funders and internal information on a quarterly basis.

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood

- is accredited to level 2 (working towards Level 3) of OISC, Ref. N200100221

- is accredited by CLS Quality Mark, Ref. NOTT0149
- is working towards PQASSO quality standards
- The Company Secretary ensures that all our legal requirements are met with the Charity Commission and Companies House.

The Future

In line with the new Equalities and Human Rights Commission (replacing the former Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Disability Rights Commission), Charnwood REC has moved to being a Single Equalities organisation working in partnership with groups and agencies on all the equalities. HR&EC is committed to signposting clients to appropriate agencies, raising awareness of services available, identifying any gaps in services and finding and applying for appropriate funding.

HR&EC is in the process of negotiating a service agreement with Charnwood Borough Council and their Service Agreement with Leicestershire County Council is renewed on a yearly basis at present.

We are also looking at how our current projects and services can link in with Charnwood Borough Council's Corporate aims and work together to ensure projects are delivered in the most effective way.

We are currently working on the following:

Increase our capacity to do strategic work and offer support needed for groups working with all the equalities

Increase our capacity to deal with welfare rights and immigration and continuing work with the Learning Disability Partnership

Support and develop work on hate crime/incident issues

Community Cohesion

- Build on work with South Asian Women
- Continue and increase our work with young people both locally and Europe wide
- Organise events

Build on our work with refugees and asylum seekers

Build on our work in the rural areas of Charnwood to break down barriers

Build on our work on issues about extreme political groups in the electoral process

Further in the future we want to look at:

Work needed on issues of employment, education and health in the Borough.

Work needed to support migrant workers in the Borough.

1. MISSION

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood promotes justice and equality of opportunity between individuals and groups of people from different backgrounds. Our targeted services are developed to achieve community cohesion, integration and a life free from discrimination and prejudice.

The HR&EC will:

- Work towards eliminating discrimination
- Campaign for equality of opportunity
- Promote good relations between all persons in the Borough of Charnwood, in the County of Leicestershire

2. VALUES

- Respect for the Person
- Confidentiality in services provided to clients, individual or group
- Transparency in the operation of our business
- Integrity in our relationships with funders
- Mutual responsibility between trustees
- Sharing of knowledge and experience between members, staff and trustees
- Trust and co-operation with partners

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Background to the organisation

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood is a registered charity.

HR&EC was first established as the Charnwood Community Relations Council in the Borough of Charnwood in May 1969 (then known as “The Garden”). In 1991 the organisation moved from Church Gate and bought the property on 66 Nottingham Road with a mortgage.

In November 1996 the name was changed to Charnwood Racial Equality Council to reflect the commitment to racial matters and in April 2001 it became a Company Limited by Guarantee.

From 9 September 2008 Charnwood Racial Equality Council changed its name to Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood (HR&EC), to reflect the widening brief to work on all equalities (Race, Age, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability and Religion & Belief) in partnership with others.

HR&EC is part of a national network of Racial Equality Councils, a founder member of the East Midlands Racial Equality Consortium, and has benefited from the former Commission for Racial Equality's Capacity Development Programme.

3.2 Previous services provided

Initially the organisation employed only a Community Relations Officer with administrative support working under a very active elected Executive Committee. Over the years the organisation, responding to the changing needs of the community and the need for specific services, has employed many long term and short term staff to offer advice and support to individual clients and community groups.

Earlier work has included:

- Policy & Development support (Race Equality Schemes),
- Gypsies and Travellers,
- Racial Harassment Project,
- Community Cohesion,
- Employment Advice and Rights Projects,
- Advice work for the Bangladeshi community,
- Research - Pathfinder,
- Racial Harassment and Schools Project,
- Action for Racial Equality Across Leicestershire

Publications/Research:

- Pathfinder
- Nearly All White so Why Bother
- Racial Harassment Resource Pack
- Loughborough Our Home

We also support students on placement from local schools and colleges including the RNIB.

4. MEMBERSHIP 2008/2009

HR&EC is a membership organisation with a wide cross-section of local organisations and individuals who elect the Trustees.

4.1 Honorary Positions

Hon President The Mayor of Charnwood
Hon Vice President Dr Alec Strachan
Hon Solicitor Ian Nicholson
Hon Treasurer Trevor Shaw
Company Secretary Amrat Bava

4.2 Trustees

Anne Williams (Chair)
Cllr Peter Lewis (Vice-Chair)
Trevor Shaw (Treasurer)
Daphne Beale (Managing Trustee)
Ranjit Jalota
Jewel Miah
Val Watts
Tony Payne
Usha Solanki
Linda Shaw
Lesley Howell

4.3 Co-opted Trustees

John Capleton
Aruna Measuria

There are currently four places for co-options and we are actively seeking co-options to reflect the wider equalities.

4.4 Member Organisations

Adult Learning Services LCC
Age Concern Leicestershire
All Saints Parish Church
Bangladesh Social Association
Burleigh Community College
Charnwood Bangladeshi Society
Charnwood Borough Council
Cobden Primary School
Connexions Loughborough
Fearon Hall
Geeta Bhawan
Hate Incident Action Group (former L&D Racial Harassment Contact Group)
Leicestershire Libraries
Leicestershire Teachers NUT
Limehurst High School
Loughborough Baptist Church
Loughborough Churches Partnership
Loughborough College
Loughborough Council of Faiths
Loughborough Islamic Cultural Association
Loughborough Labour Party
Loughborough United Reformed Church
Loughborough University
Rendell Primary School
Shree Ram Krishna Centre
St Peter's Community Centre
Swaminarayan Hindu Mission
The Bridge (Shelter)
Thurmaston Jagruti Group
Turning Point
Victim Support
Voluntary Action Charnwood
(32 organisations)

4.5 Individual Members (34 members)

4.6 Friends of HR&EC (membership introduced to encourage young people to join – no voting rights).

5. BENEFICIARIES

- Individuals, especially those in the Borough who are at risk of discrimination e.g through race, gender, sexual orientation, religion & belief, age and disability or because they are newly arrived immigrants, refugees or asylum seekers or visitors residing in the country.
- Vulnerable people and those who lack understanding of how systems work eg for benefits, housing, education, social services, health services or employment.
- Local voluntary, community organisations and groups, especially those representing any of the six equality strands.

- Local statutory agencies e.g. Charnwood Borough Council, Leics County Council, Leics Constabulary etc.
- Local employers and businesses and Loughborough Chamber of Commerce.
- Local schools, colleges and Loughborough University
- Local Faith groups
- Socio-economic groups

6. PARTNERSHIPS

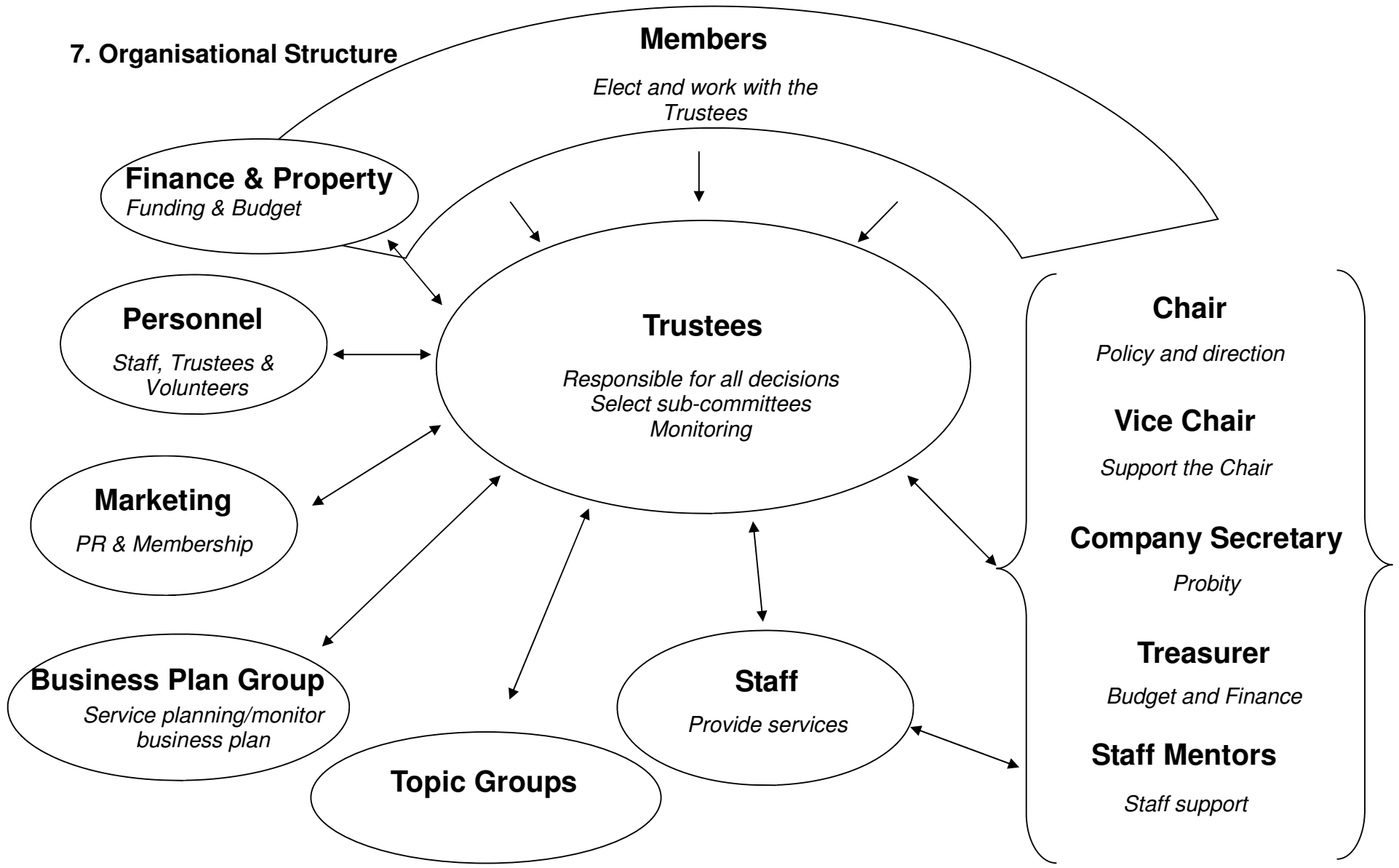
HR&EC maintains active partnerships with various organisations in the Borough and beyond and has strong and long term relationships with:

Charnwood Borough Council
 Leicestershire County Council (Charnwood Together, Leicestershire Together)
 Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership
 The Leicestershire Constabulary
 Voluntary Action Charnwood
 Citizens Advice Bureau
 Benefits Agency
 Department of Work and Pensions
 Loughborough Youth Affairs
 Charnwood Independent Youth Action
 Turning Point
 Leicester Gay Bi-sexual & Transgender Centre
 Shree Ram Krishna Centre
 Bangladesh Social Association
 Geeta Bhawan
 Sikh Temple (Gurudwara)
 Loughborough Council of Faiths
 Charnwood Refugees and Asylum Seekers Forum
 Agrani Women's Group
 Moira Youth & Community Centre
 Fearon Hall Community Centre
 St Peter's Community Centre
 Other local community groups/centres
 Local schools and colleges and the Loughborough University

HR&EC has also over the past years formed very strong links and networks with the British Council, Minorities of Europe, Youth Across Frontiers and has links with partner organisations all over Europe and has hosted and attended conferences, training events and youth exchanges in many European venues as well as in England.

HR&EC has good relationships with many of the local non statutory organisations, most of whom are in HR&EC membership, sending representatives to general meetings, AGMs and providing a source of people who are able to play an active part in the governance of HR&EC, whether as trustees or as a members of a sub committee or working group. As an organisation, HR&EC needs to be pro-active in maintaining better relationships with existing partners and to recognise when opportunities for new partnerships arise, such as with the growth of new communities of people from eastern Europe. There are skills and expertise to be shared and realised and building the relationship itself is a good way to promote cohesion and harmony in the community as a whole.

7. Organisational Structure



8. FUNDING

HR&EC is currently financially supported by Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council. The organisation has also successfully applied to the British Council for various projects and conferences working with young people. Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales have also given HR&EC a grant to fund a 2 year project to work with South Asian Women. HR&EC is always seeking to apply to other funders for needs in the community as they are identified.

9. CAPACITY BUILDING

The result of the capacity building programme has been the ability of the organisation to deliver outputs that reflect the needs of local communities. The projects that HR&EC manages continue to give service in the field of benefits and immigration casework, learning disability support, discrimination and harassment, inter faith work and community cohesion. We have developed an induction process for Staff and Trustees, a skills audit of Trustees, and updated our policies.

There is a continuing need for a Chief Executive Officer to oversee day-to-day operations in the office, to offer guidance and support to the staff, and to provide advice and knowledge to the trustees in the development of the organisation.

10. CURRENT SERVICES PROVIDED

Current staffing

- 1 full time Welfare Rights and Immigration Officer providing advice up to the Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) level 2
- 2 part time Bangladeshi Liaison Officers
- 1 part time Bangladeshi Outreach Officer
- 1 full time Co-ordinator who co-ordinates the work of the various projects of the HR&EC and administers the office
- 1 full time Learning Disability Link Worker employed by the Learning Disability Partnership (Valuing People Team – Leicestershire County Council)
- 1 part time Development Officer working with South Asian Women for a 2 year project funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation

10.1 Welfare Rights, Immigration & Nationality Advice

This service is funded by Leicestershire County Council and Charnwood Borough Council to provide advice to individual clients. We have one full time Welfare Rights & Immigration Officer and two part time Bangladeshi Liaison Officers who help clients in liaising with the Home Office and various benefits agencies.

Assistance is given to clients in completing necessary forms on issues such as housing, education, adult and social care, health, welfare benefits, immigration and nationality. We also have a part-time Bangladeshi Outreach Officer who can do home visits for elderly, disabled and vulnerable people who are unable to visit our offices. The staff work very closely with other agencies both public and voluntary and

refer clients as appropriate. Staff speak a number of ethnic community languages and use their skills when necessary to interpret for clients and agencies.

Two of the staff are qualified at OISC level 2 and are working towards level 3; the other is qualified at level 1 working towards level 2. All three staff are working on their Continuing Personal and Professional Development (CPD).

10.2 Learning Disability Project

This project is funded by the Leicestershire County Council Learning Disability Partnership (Valuing People Team) and has been extended over the last 2 years from an initial one year project. The project works to support people with learning disabilities, particularly from the Black and Minority Ethnic communities and their carers. This project is now secure till March 2010.

10.3 South Asian Women's Project

A two year project funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales to work with South Asian Women. The project aims to encourage and engage women's group and individual women to build their confidence in taking a fuller role in activities in the Borough of Charnwood, to organize cross cultural events and to liaise with educational, health and leisure agencies.

10.4 Strategic work

HR&EC is engaged in strategic work with statutory service providers on their policies and practices, working with health, housing, social services, employment and education agencies, with the Police, criminal justice agencies and the County and Borough Councils. HR&EC is represented at Charnwood Together (the Local Strategic Partnership) and is a member of the Stronger Communities Group.

Charnwood Borough Council and the Police consult HR&EC for advice and assistance with aspects of their strategy documents and on matters relating to local hate crime incidents.

The HR&EC Co-ordinator has been seconded as the Development Officer to work on expanding the organisation's remit to include all equalities and broaden and strengthen the partnerships of the organisation from March 2009, for a few months.

10.5 Conferences/Training courses for young people

HR&EC has been directly involved in organising youth conferences, training programmes and exchanges, and engaging young people to participate in similar events all over Europe and the UK. Most conferences involve at least 14 to 15 countries with participants of around 28 to 30 young people and team leaders. We involve local young from Charnwood, local agencies and partners in these conferences including staff and volunteers from Charnwood Borough Council, Charnwood Arts, Voluntary Action Charnwood, Loughborough Council of Faiths, community centres and religious centres. We have build extensive contacts with students from local schools, the colleges and the University and other individuals.

10.6 Other work

The HR&EC employs a full time coordinator who brings together the work done by the staff and volunteers. This includes co-ordinating events which aim to improve community cohesion, e.g. Charnwood Mela, Feast of Faiths, One World Week and European wide Youth Conferences, and also developing work with Loughborough Council of Faiths and Charnwood Refugees & Asylum Seekers Forum. HR&EC co-ordinates the East Midlands Racial Equality Consortium (EMREC).

11. EVIDENCE OF NEED

11.1 Welfare Rights and Immigration (please see statistics in our annual report)

One of the continuing needs over the last 40 years has been to provide free, unbiased advice on welfare rights and immigration. Clients need access to information on all types of issues and where necessary to be referred on to other appropriate agencies. Access to the service needs to be offered to all whatever their race, religion, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

11.2 Hate Crime

Where people suffer from hate crime, whatever the cause, there is a need for them to have access to a free and independent source of support to help them to take appropriate action. The centres for reporting such cases need to have experienced back up where they can refer cases on.

It is known by several statutory and voluntary agencies that there are issues with under-reporting and barriers to reporting of hate crime incidents. In 2008/09 according to the Hate Incident Monitoring Project, based at Leicestershire County Council, there was a total of 210 hate incidents recorded by the Police and the Common Monitoring Project for Charnwood.

11.3 Community Cohesion

Over the years Charnwood has received a substantial influx of people from different cultural, faith and racial groups. This process is supported with the growth of the Loughborough University and the increasing number of the overseas students. These have gradually become part of the whole community with help from various, mainly voluntary, organisations, including HR&EC. However, there are outside influences, which do stir up dissension from time to time.

Some places in Charnwood are identified as 'pockets of deprivation' such as the Bell Foundry Super Output Area in Loughborough which is the most deprived in the county. People living in the area experiences multiple deprivation and needs constant work focused on the improvement of the situation in the area.

Also, some areas, especially rural like Rearsby, experience the 'ageing' of the population whereby young people leave their places of origin for various economical and other reasons.

There is a perceived and existent intergenerational problem in the Borough resulting in tensions between younger and older people as for example in the Ashby Road area in Loughborough (see Sustainable Communities Strategy document on Charnwood together website).

11.4 Hard to reach groups

11.4.1 The town houses a considerable number of **South Asian women**. Many of these are fully part of the whole community but among them are a significant number of new arrivals and women who belong to culturally traditional families who are mainly confined to their homes. Islamophobia and the so called 'war on terrorism' have made local conditions difficult for Muslim women in particular. They need one to one encouragement to involve themselves in the wider community and improve their confidence and qualifications.

11.4.2 Currently we have a small but significant number of **asylum seekers and refugees**, mostly concentrated in the town of Loughborough. The HR&EC is working closely with the Charnwood Refugees and Asylum Seekers Forum which monitors the situation in the area and we take joint action when necessary, e.g. over election propaganda and the basing of an Immigration Reporting Centre in the centre of town.

11.4.3 Newer to the town are the **migrant workers** particularly from European countries. Locally we have a long term resident Polish community but they are not in a position to support the newer migrants who plan to stay for a short time only. Although we started to look at the issues of exploitation by employers and whether they are able to access support services, we no longer have a Community Cohesion Officer to do this.

11.5 Rural areas of Charnwood

Engaging with particular groups is one part of the process of community cohesion but there also needs to be wider view, which takes in the whole mixture of people making up the Borough of Charnwood and how barriers can be broken down and new friendships and partnerships developed. We have a brief for the whole Borough but have not had the staffing to be able to look at the rural areas and the work that needs to be done there. The report 'Nearly all white, so why bother?' produced by Action for Racial Equality Across Leicestershire in 1998, in which the HR&EC played a major part, shows the extent to which people in rural areas can feel isolated from support. This work shows the kind of research needed to cover Charnwood and should include the six equality strands and human rights issues.

11.6 Work on Equalities

Research on the needs of those belonging to the EHRC equality strands has begun and anecdotal evidence already shows the need for a central referral point for all clients wanting to report instances of discrimination or harassment where information can be given and cases expedited.

Our research has found no local organisations dealing with rights issues, harassment or discrimination for any of the equalities other than race. There is a need to co-ordinate work on these issues. There are however various bodies looking at some specific issues concerning local people e.g. Women's Aid deals with cases of domestic violence, Age Concern supports elderly people, Loughborough Council of Faiths brings faith representatives together and looks at special needs for the faith communities, the Royal National Institute for Blind College works on issues for blind people, there is a local Disability Forum and the Leicester Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender Centre is anxious to promote work in the Borough.

All these groups need support and encouragement and a co-ordinating body to tackle issues of discrimination, harassment and hate crime.

11.7 The Political Scene

National trends show the growth of influence and electoral success of politically divisive attitudes, particularly associated with organised political parties, which, while legitimately constituted and recognised, specifically include within their policies discrimination against groups on grounds of race, or faith, or personal lifestyles, or who directly challenge Human Rights legislation. This causes some real concerns. For example, there is a growing presence of BNP support in Charnwood, where in May 2007 in East Goscote one candidate secured a seat in the Borough Elections. However, several other Borough seats were also strongly contested, as were Parish Council seats across Charnwood.

These gains were followed up in the County Council Election, June 2009, and there was a BNP candidate for the first time in every electoral County Division across Charnwood. The Charnwood BNP Councillor from East Goscote also contested for the European Parliament, but without success. Nor did that candidate gain a County Council seat in the election.

The overall voting figures within Charnwood for the County Council election were Conservative 23,063, Labour 12,395, Liberal Democrat 10,558, BNP 8,550. In County Divisions in Sileby and the Wolds, Birstall, Rothley & Mountsorrel and the Valley BNP candidates won more votes than Labour. Significantly, in NW Leicestershire, the BNP candidate secured the Coalville Division from Labour, and therefore sent the *first* BNP County Councillor to County Hall, one of only two in the whole UK, the other being in Lancashire.

HR&EC have been working with EMREC on a project assessing the rise of 'extreme political groups in the electoral process', and also with ICOCO at Coventry University. As can be seen from these developments over the past two years, there is no doubt Charnwood and North West Leicestershire are priority political targets, and consequently HR&EC works in both Districts on many of these projects in order to counter victimisation and exclusion wherever it occurs, both within or outside the official political process, to offer support and advice to those who may feel adversely affected, and to foster democratic inclusiveness from all of our citizens.

11.8 Other areas

11.8.1 Employment

Overall unemployment in the Borough has increased from 1.5% in March 2008 to 3% in May 2009. In Hastings ward the increase was from 5.5% to 5.9%, Lemyngton ward from 3.6% to 5.9% and in Shelthorpe ward from 2.3% to 4.6%. The unemployment rate for the Asian population was 2.2% compared with 1.9% for the white British community.

11.8.2 Education

The proportion of the working age population with no qualifications is highest amongst the Bangladeshi community. The percentage of people with a degree or equivalent is lowest amongst the Bangladeshi community.

The Education and Inspection Act 2006 placed a duty on schools to promote community cohesion to come into force from September 2007. This may be an area for future partnership between the HR&EC and local schools.

11.8.3 Health

Across Leicestershire and Rutland the hospitalisation indicators for diabetes, coronary heart disease and heart failure indicate morbidity levels at least twice as high in ethnic minority population. Suicide rates in young Asian women are more than double those for young white women. Rates of severe mental illness (SMI), injury and stroke are higher in ethnic populations. There is a need to reduce smoking amongst BME communities.

12. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND MONITORING

12.1 Quality Assurance

Each of the projects managed by HR&EC is monitored and evaluated both for the funders and for internal information.

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood

- is accredited to level 2 (working towards Level 3) of OISC, Ref. N200100221
- is accredited by CLS Quality Mark, Ref. NOTT0149
- is working towards PQASSO quality standards
- The Company Secretary ensures that all our legal requirements are met with the Charity Commission and Companies House.

12.2 Monitoring and evaluation

- Staff provide regular reports to Trustees on the progress of their work and projects. Reports include, as appropriate, statistics and achievement against each relevant objective and output. In ordinary circumstances all members of staff may attend meetings of the Trustees.
- Staff maintain their Continued Professional Development (CPD)
- The Business Plan Group monitors the actions described in this business plan and reports to Trustees on a quarterly basis.
- Skills audit of current and new trustees is done annually and on going training is been identified for both staff and trustees, which will be carried out in stages over the year.
- Training and personal development ensures that staff are fully competent
- Trustee Mentors have been appointed for each member of staff who have regular contact with them to address any concerns, issues and provide support in their work
- Annual appraisals are carried out for each member of staff
- Induction packs have been put together with procedures and policies (which are constantly kept updated) for all existing and new trustees.
- We work to PQASSO guidelines.
- Questionnaires have been prepared for clients to get their feedback.
- Feedback is always sought on any events held.
- Annual audit takes place to meet the funders and legal requirements and funders are sent end of year reports with statistics and accounts.

- Quarterly newsletters and the Annual Report are sent to funders, members and partner agencies on progress/work of the organisation.
- A Reserves Policy is in place.
- Contingency policy and adequate insurance is in place for carrying on with business in case of fire, flood etc.

13. THE FUTURE

In line with the new Equalities and Human Rights Commission (replacing the former Commission for Racial Equality, the Equal Opportunities Commission, and the Disability Rights Commission), Charnwood REC has moved to being a Single Equalities organisation working in partnership with groups and agencies on all the equalities. HR&EC is committed to signposting clients to appropriate agencies, raising awareness of services available, identifying any gaps in services and finding and applying for appropriate funding.

The HR&EC has seconded the Co-ordinator for 2 to 3 months to work as the HR&EC Development Officer to work on expanding our remit to include all equalities and broaden the partnership of the organisation from March 2009.

HR&EC is forming new partnerships and strengthening existing relationships with local organisations.

HR&EC is in the process of negotiating a service agreement with Charnwood Borough Council and has a Service Agreement with Leicestershire County Council which is renewed on a yearly basis at present.

We are also looking at how our current projects and services can link in with Charnwood Borough Council's Corporate aims and work together to ensure projects are delivered in the most effective way.

Our priorities from our current work and the evidence of need:

- Increase our capacity to do strategic work and offer support needed for groups working with all the equalities
- Increase our capacity to deal with welfare rights and immigration and continue work with the Learning Disability Partnership
- Support and develop work on hate crime/incidents issues
- Community cohesion is vital to good relations within the Borough of Charnwood so we need to:
 - Build up work with the South Asian Women
 - Continue and increase our work with young people both locally and Europe wide
 - Organise events bringing people together which is a vital part of this
- Build on our work with refugees and asylum seekers
- Build on our work in the rural areas of Charnwood to break down barriers
- Build on our work on issues about extreme political groups in the electoral process
- Work is needed on issues on employment, education and health the Borough

- Work is needed to support Migrant Workers in the Borough

Choosing from these priorities we are currently working on the following:

Increase our capacity to do strategic work and offer support needed for groups working with all the equalities

We are currently working with the Charnwood Borough Council to increase our capacity to work with other organisations and to enable HR&EC to support the various projects that are already on-going and to look at other necessary future work.

HR&EC is at present carrying out development work to engage and build links with the groups on other equalities and identify gaps and where services can be linked and clients signposted for supported.

Increase our capacity to deal with welfare rights and immigration and continuing work with the Learning Disability Partnership

We are providing free accessible service to clients with language support, working with Charnwood Borough Council on issues of housing, accommodation, council tax, housing benefits, welfare rights, healthy living etc

We are working with Leicestershire County Council on issues of adult and social care, disabilities, benefits, direct payments, healthy living etc and their Valuing People Team supporting people with learning disabilities, their family and carers.

We are working and liaising with the Home Office, advising service users on immigration, nationality, passports, appeals etc and working with other agencies with Work & Pension Dept, HM Revenue & Customs, educational and health bodies etc

Support and develop work on hate crime/incidents issues

Currently, HR&EC is working closely with Charnwood Borough Council, Leicestershire Police and other relevant bodies to identify funding for support for victims of hate incidents/crime. We have submitted an initial proposal to the Equality & Human Rights Commission for a project to support existing reporting centres and establish new ones, encourage increased reporting from people from all equality strands and to provide training to schools, communities, individuals and agencies on hate incidents/crime so as to reduce the number of incidents and raise people's awareness of the issues.

Community Cohesion

1. Build up on work with the South Asian Women

We are working with Charnwood Borough Council to explore how our South Asian Women's Project can link into future work on the Government's Prevent Agenda. This project is also linking in to other smaller projects and initiatives around the Borough.

2. Continue and increase our work with young people both locally and Europe wide

HR&EC intends to continue running conferences for young people from Charnwood giving them an opportunity to travel to other countries and learn about cultures, religions and practices.

HR&EC is exploring projects and funding for working with and engaging young people in Charnwood to promote active citizenship and to play a more positive role in the community. This would link to Charnwood Borough Council's Corporate Plan and would again link into the Government's Prevent Agenda.

3. Organise Events

One way to encourage community cohesion is to bring people together to organise and participate in specific activities. HR&EC works in partnership with the Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough Council of Faiths, Charnwood Arts, Voluntary Action Charnwood and other local agencies and community groups to organise events to bring people together. After the successful event for women in 2008 we received a number of requests for the event to be repeated. Thus our work includes the plans to be a lead body in partnership with other agencies in organising the International Women's Day in March 2010. We are also planning to be involved with the Charnwood Mela, several events for One World Week and the annual Feast of Faiths. These events cross age, cultural and faith boundaries and bring new confidence to work with people from different backgrounds and with different needs.

Build on our work with refugees and asylum seekers

We currently support and co-ordinate the Charnwood Refugees & Asylum Seekers Forum which involves agencies working together on issues facing refugees and asylum seekers.

Build on our work in the rural areas of Charnwood to break down barriers

Through organising events we aim to engage with the villages and towns in Charnwood and encourage people to be more actively involved. Our hate crime work would also extend to the rural areas and encourage people from all equality strands to report hate incidents/crime, and also to raise their awareness through training. We would also seek to establish new reporting centres for rural areas.

Build on our work on issues about extreme political groups in the electoral process

This is becoming increasingly important in the current political climate. We have one Charnwood Borough Councillor from the BNP and they won a County Council seat in an adjacent borough at the latest election.

Work is needed on issues on employment, education and health in the Borough.

Work is needed to support Migrant Workers in the Borough.

These are areas we would need to look at in the future depending on funding being available.

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood
66 Nottingham Road
Loughborough
Leicestershire
LE11 1EU

Tel (01509) 261651
Fax (01509) 267826

Email:

info@humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org

Website:

www.humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org



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