

Annual Report 2009/10



All Different All Equal

**Working towards eliminating
discrimination**

**Campaigning for equality of
opportunity**

**Promoting good relations between all
persons in the Borough of Charnwood
in the County of Leicestershire**

**Registered Charity Number: 1088411
Company Number: 4198889**



The Office of the Mayor
Southfield Road, Loughborough,
Leicestershire. LE11 2TX
Ask for: Richard Stratford
Direct Line: 01509 634783
Email: mayor@charnwood.gov.uk
My ref: Civic09
Your ref: HR&EC Annual Report

It has been a great pleasure for the Mayoress and myself to attend some of the many events organised by Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood over the last year. Having served on the former Charnwood Racial Equality Council's Committee a few years ago, this has been a particularly interesting organisation for me to work with during my year as Mayor of Charnwood.

It is impressive and pleasing to note how much the group has grown, and quite remarkable just how busy your group has become throughout the Borough. Sadly, it is regrettable that there remains a need in Britain for groups such as yours to continue to help people from different countries and faiths to settle into society. Nevertheless, I am convinced that your work greatly mitigates such difficulties and it is for this reason you have my appreciation and admiration.

I wish you well for the future and hope that you continue to do splendid work for the Borough of Charnwood.

Councillor Roy Brown
The Mayor of Charnwood



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

Chair	Anne Williams
Vice chair	Val Watts
Treasurer	Trevor Shaw
Company secretary	Peter Lewis

TRUSTEES

Anne Williams	Amrat Bava	Linda Shaw
Trevor Shaw	Daphne Beale	Jewel Miah
Val Watts	Lesley Bowell	John Capleton
Tony Payne		

CO-OPTED TRUSTEES

Shantibhai Patel	Aruna Measuria
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FINANCE & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Anne Williams	Peter Lewis	Trevor Shaw
Jewel Miah	John Capleton	

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Lesley Bowell	Anne Williams	Amrat Bava
Val Watts	Trevor Shaw	Tony Payne

MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PR SUB GROUP

Peter Lewis	Patricia Pinder	Linda Shaw
Apple Sharpe		

BUSINESS PLANNING GROUP

Anne Williams	Trevor Shaw	Daphne Beale
Val Watts	John Capleton	Staff

STAFF

Varsha Parmar	Development Officer/Co-ordinator
Kazi Mashud	Welfare Benefits & Immigration Officer
Chayara Chowdhury	Bangladeshi Liaison Officer
Amina Wadud	Bangladeshi Liaison Officer
Minara Rahman	Bangladeshi Outreach Officer
Khadijah Chowdhury	Link Worker(Learning Disability Project)
Nadja Rein	Youth Project Co-ordinator
Lesley Ansari	Training and Development Officer (HIAP)
Justin O'Brien	Hate Incident Officer

Chair's Report

My final year as Chair has been another interesting one.

Last September, we held an induction event for our new Trustees and staff. This was a very useful opportunity for Trustees to understand the work of the staff and gain a better insight into the tremendous work we do as an organisation.

The Trustee Mentor scheme that we introduced last year in the absence of a Director continues to work well to sharpen up lines of communication for staff to and from the Board and has also been a means of support for staff.



We have successfully delivered the projects and continue to work closely with the funders and communities to ensure our work is in line with the requirements of the ever changing society we live in.

Our partnership work with Charnwood Borough Council and the Leicestershire Constabulary, has been further strengthened through our joint bid to the Equality & Human Rights Commission for the 3 year project on hate crime and on the Government's Prevent Agenda.

Our development work is enabling us to build closer partnerships with voluntary and statutory agencies as well as with groups on all the equality strands.

Throughout the year, we have held events highlighting key issues and raising people's awareness of them (see Project reports and events section). We are very pleased to see that our work is well received and these events are well attended.

Again, it has been a very exciting year of change and we hope that by working in partnership we can help to make Charnwood a better place to live.

Anne Williams

Finance & Property Committee Report

The annual accounts show we held our own financially last year. We were able to maintain all our projects and add a new one but in the present economic climate I have a sneaking suspicion the next 12 months or so could be interesting.

The accounts show an increase in spending on salaries in the General Fund. This came from our taking on Bangladeshi Community work with funding from the Borough and County.

As a company limited by guarantee we have to have a reserve policy to meet all unseen circumstances. Our policy is for us to have £40,000 and our accounts show we have achieved this. I know charities having what seem large reserves causes difficulties with some people (including funders) but with the scale of our operations now, we must be able to cope with the unknown.

Turning to our Nottingham Road premises, we have been able to make them more comfortable and attractive for our staff and clients and we used the excuse of a new floor and decorating downstairs to get rid of years of bits and pieces that were not really needed. We have new "HR&EC" logos on our shop front and attractive display boards. Altogether that has given us a really smarter image to go with our new HREC status.

I know those working on the first floor need our attention next and we hope to make improvements there too.

The advent of the Hate Incident Action project has highlighted a real need for a meeting room where clients and staff can meet in confidence. We have costed the work for an extension at the rear of the property (£30,000) and have made one unsuccessful bid to do this, more are in the pipeline.

As always, my sincere thanks to Varsha Parmar. Thanks also to Alex and Martin at Marsh & Moss Ltd for their patience and advice.

Trevor Shaw
Treasurer

Company Secretary's Report

As always we have complied with all the regulations of the Companies House and Charity Commission by filing in the annual return in good time.

We as an organisation would like our current work to go from strength to strength and appeal to all individuals and organisations to help and support us in our work.

If you are interested please contact the office to see how you could be involved. We are particularly seeking to engage with groups and individuals from all the equality strands.

Trustees Report

HR&EC is a Company Ltd by Guarantee and the Trustees are the Directors of the Company. The Trustees have a legal liability to ensure that HR&EC complies with Companies House rules.

The Trustees are volunteers who give their time, energy and expertise to serve the aims of the HR&EC. One of our tasks is to ensure we have a good balance of committed people to maintain the work and reputation of the organisation and we are always on the look out for others to share in this task. Induction and training for Trustees of a high standard is provided.

The Board have continued to meet 6 weekly with short and well focused agendas. We have appointed sub-committees and short term topic groups to deal with detailed work and report back to the Board.

As a Community Legal Services Quality Mark (CLS) and Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) accredited organisation we are subject to audit from time to time and this has helped us to keep our policies and procedures up to date with the latest requirements. We consider our Business Plan to be a working document and so have spent time ensuring it matches our practical aspirations.

We have continued to organise General Meetings, conferences, public lectures and produce newsletters to enable our members and the people of Charnwood to keep up to date and involved with our work. Details of these activities are included later in this report. We also have a concern for our young people and have continued to offer conferences in Loughborough and other European venues. In all these we work in partnership with other appropriate organisations.

Because of our good record on delivery of outputs relating to their Strategic Corporate Plans we have been enabled to continue our service agreements with Leicestershire County Council and Charnwood Borough Council. Our thanks to Ranjana Kachhela at Leicestershire County Council and Tom Kiernan and Michael Hopkins at Charnwood Borough Council in particular for their support.

This has enabled us to look ahead with our work though with decreased grants. Our future sustainability is important and with the change of government we need to be sure we are aware of the new trends in public service but also willing to challenge both local and national government when necessary.

Our great achievement this year is to finally have our Hate Incident Action Project in place with funding from the Equality & Human Rights Commission. We have been working towards this for several years since the funding for our Racial Harassment Officer ceased when the Commission for Racial Equality became the EHRC and all grants were stopped for a while.

We have applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund jointly with Charnwood Arts to capture the history of the local communities and our work over the last 40 years in exhibition and book form.

We continue our work with volunteers and placement students from local schools and colleges and in the past year have supported over 10 students and currently have 4 volunteers with us on various projects.

In the past year we have also used Recruitment Agencies for providing administrative support for the staff and enable us to carry on developing the work of HR&EC.

We would like to record our thanks to Anne for all her hard work as Chair and Val for the support she has provided to the organisation. Once again our special thanks to Trevor Shaw who as ever does tremendous work for the organisation in all areas.

Finally we would like to give thanks to all our funders for the valuable grants that help us provide our services, and to the communities and the press, particularly Andy Rush at the Echo, for their ongoing coverage of our work.

Tasks of Trustees

- Ensuring the Board has the necessary skills among its members to fulfil its obligations
- Promoting good relations throughout the Borough
- Keeping staff and trustees well trained
- Managing staff and volunteers in a supportive way
- Keeping our finances in good order
- Keeping our buildings fit for purpose
- Keeping policies up to date and in tune with latest legislation
- Ensuring our business plan reflects our strategic direction and is SMART
- Ensuring future sustainability
- Monitoring and evaluating our work
- Maintaining service standards through Community Legal Services Quality Mark and PQASSO guidelines
- Widening our membership to reflect our work.

If you can help us with any of these tasks, please offer your services.

Daphne Beale

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

Marketing Publicity & Public Relations Committee

Our Marketing, Publicity & PR committee consists of 3 elected members at the AGM and members from the Board of Trustees. This last year the elected members at the AGM were Patricia Pinder and Apple Sharpe with one space that was not filled. Linda Shaw and I were the Trustees on this group. On behalf of HR&EC, I would like to express our thanks to them all for their support throughout the year.

The Group has been very active in identifying ways of raising awareness of issues of concern to the local communities and in line with our expanding remit to work on all equalities, bringing issues faced by particular groups to the attention of agencies, members and individuals.

In the last year we had a general meeting held jointly during One World Week, with HR&EC, Loughborough Council of Faiths and Loughborough University Chaplaincy at their new Faith & Spirituality Centre exploring joint working with the University. We also had a coffee morning in December which is always a great opportunity for our members to drop in for a coffee and a chance to meet others and the staff.

The New Year brought a high profile conference on forced marriages and honour based violence held in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough Women's Aid, Loughborough University Chaplaincy and other agencies. (see page 25). A report has been published and is available on our website under the publications section.

Our Annual Public Lecture in April 2010, was held at Loughborough University by invitation of the Vice Chancellor, where the guest speaker, the Right Reverend Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester, delivered an excellent lecture on "Equality, faith and the established Church in England today." (see page 32)

This group is also responsible for the Membership of HR&EC and we are constantly looking at ways of broadening our membership, particularly in light of our widening remit on all the equalities. All applications for new members go to this group for recommendation to the Trustees.

We would like to thank the local press, particularly Loughborough Echo, for the regular coverage we receive on our work. We are always seeking to recruit new members and welcome applications for either individual members or organisations to affiliate.

We also have spaces for co-options to our Board of Trustees and several sub groups, so if anyone is interested in our work and wishes to get involved, please visit our website on www.humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org or ring the office on (01509) 261651.

HR&EC celebrated it's 40th anniversary last year. We would like to mark the occasion with a book capturing the history of the local changing communities in Charnwood, especially Loughborough, and the changing work of our organisation to reflect the communities needs.

We have submitted a preliminary application to the National Heritage Lottery Fund and need to show them that there is an interest and need for the project.

Some of the groundwork for the project is already done. Old newspaper articles and photographs have been found and scanned. There are some wonderful photographs of a psychedelic school bus which was designed by students at Loughborough College, and converted into a toy bus primarily for Asian children who were new to the country. There are also photographs of the Asian vegetable project, and an old clipping with an interview and photo of our first Community Relations Officer, Wendy Blair, which outlines the group's original practical and idealistic vision.

We were pleased to find a record of an early clip from the ITN news of the Mansfield Hosiery Strike – which shows local residents chanting with picket signs. This was the first strike specifically for foreign workers who fought for the right to equal job opportunity and won. The strike made national and international news. The Department of Trade and Industry commissioned a report on the strike which helped to change employment law. This is an important part of our history and we have an opportunity to buy a copy of this clip and use individual images from this newscast in our book.

If you have any personal or family stories or photographs that you think may be of interest for the project we would like to have them. We will be at the AGM and have sheets for you to record your stories and an album which will be kept at the HR&EC for any personal stories, passed down perhaps from parents or grandparents, that you feel should not be lost. We would like to thank Victoria Clarke and Elizabeth Rye, our volunteers working on this project for their commitment.

Peter Lewis CC
Chair of MP&PR

Business Plan Committee

This committee looks at the ever changing needs of the local communities and our work so that this can be reflected in our business plan which is a live working document. The information is monitored, evaluated and updated to be presented at our Annual General Meeting each year. This enables us to identify the gaps in service and look for funding sources to deliver the service. It also gives our funders and partners a clear picture of our structure, our achievements, a community needs analysis and our plans for the future.

Gaps were identified for support on hate incidents/crime enabling us to apply to the Equalities & Human Rights Commission under their grants programme and successfully securing major funding for a 3 year project. The Business Plan group also looks at capacity for delivery both in terms of space and manpower. Although the trustees feel HR&EC does not have the capacity for any new projects at present they intend to ensure the current work of the organisation is strengthened for the future.

Daphne Beale

Personnel Committee Report

The committee is responsible for seeing that the Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood:

- Recruits and manages the right people to work as staff and volunteers to the benefit of the organisation and its users
- Values its staff and volunteers and the contribution they make towards achieving the organisation's aims
- Supports staff and volunteers in gaining appropriate skills and knowledge to meet their responsibilities.

The committee meets regularly to ensure its responsibilities are fulfilled and it reports to each Board meeting. Once again we would like to thank all the trustees, staff members and volunteers who have enabled us to keep such high standards in our work and service to the community.

Staff and trustees had their annual induction in September and have met several times to oversee the recruitment for the Hate Incident Action Project, the South Asian Women's Project and more recently the Prevent Project.

We lost our Learning Disability Project which came to an end on 31 March 2010. Our thanks to Khadijah Chowdhury as the Link Worker for her work and we will maintain our close partnership with the Valuing People Team at County Hall through our various other projects.

The Personnel Committee continues to develop positive strategies, in the absence of a Director, to ensure our staff are well managed and supported. In a new departure for us we are managing the Hate Incident Project in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council (one member) and The Police (one member) and two members of Trustees of HR&EC, forming a Steering Group. The group is supported by a representative from the County Council Hate Incident Monitoring Project. The allocation of Trustee Mentors for each member of staff continues to work well.

Members of the Personnel Committee have continued annual appraisals for staff and made sure they have adequate training for their work and professional development. They also attend, or have feedback from, the regular staff meetings. We continue to review our policies in the light of professional expertise.

Thank you to all our members who give us encouragement in our work.

Val Watts
Chair of Personnel.

Membership

Hon President

The Mayor of Charnwood

Hon Vice President

Dr A Strachan

Hon Treasurer

Mr T Shaw

Individual Members

Mr G Ali	Mr A Bava
Mr J Capleton	Mr J R Catt
Mr R Chander	Mrs A Gimpel
Mr A Gimpel	Mr J Harrison
Mrs M Hopewell	Mr M Jones
Mr R Kershaw	Mr P Lewis
Ms S Meredith Velado	Mr J Miah
Mrs N Morgan	Mrs B Newton
Mr S G Patel	Ms R Pickersgill
Mrs P Pinder	Mr T Priestly
Mr A Reed	Mr M A Shahid
Ms A Sharpe	Mr T Shaw
Mr P Singh	Ms U Solanki
Dr A Strachan	Mrs J Vincent
Mr P Yeo	

Organisations

Age Concern Leics & Rutland	T Young	
All Saints Parish Church	P Pinder	
Bridge	P Nicholls	
BSA	A Hye	
Burleigh Community College	C Horsefall	
Charnwood Arts	K Ryan	
Charnwood Bangladeshi Society	M T Chowdhury	A Shahid
Charnwood Borough Council	J Capleton	G Gay
	D Green	P Lewis
Loughborough Churches Partnership	D Beale	T Payne
Connexions Loughborough	E Rolfe	
Fearon Hall	Z Weatherby	
Geeta Bhawan	H Rana	K Passi
Hate Incident Action Group	L Shaw	
Leics Adult Learning Service	V Watts	P Chowdhury
Leicestershire Libraries	L Bowell	
Leics Teachers Assoc (NUT)	G Gay	
LICA Mosque	D Chowdhury	
Limehurst High School	S Coneran	R Das
Loughborough Baptist Church	S Cramer	M Spreight
Loughborough College	A William	J Spavin
Loughborough Council of Faiths	F Catling	M Graham
L'boro & District Hate Incident Group	L Shaw	H Miah
L'boro & District Victim Support	K Small	I Thurlby
Loughborough Labour Party	N Stoke	
L'boro United Reformed Church	D Beale	T Payne
Loughborough University	L Mansell	
Rendell Primary School	H Coleman	
St Peters' Community Centre	D Bentley	
Swaminarayan Hindu Mission	C Panchmatia	R Limbachia
Thurmaston Jagruti Group	S Valand	K Sharma
Trinity Methodist		
Turning Point	Z Natha	
Voluntary Action Charnwood	N Lambert	S Frost

Welfare Rights and Immigration

This report will focus on the main activities and achievements of the Welfare Rights and Immigration Project for the period from April 2009 to March 2010.

The Welfare Rights and Immigration Officer (WRIO) has been providing advice, support and guidance to Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other communities in the Borough of Charnwood. The WRIO has also engaged in consultation with the Local Authorities and other statutory and non-statutory organisations in Charnwood involving and affecting BME communities, including some development work.

Contacts and Meetings:

- BRAC (Building Resources Across Communities), UK
- BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee), Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Advice UK
- Community Legal Service – Quality Mark
- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
- Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner
- Immigration Advisory Service
- Child Poverty Action Group
- Leicestershire Working Together
- Review and Appraisal meeting with HREC Personnel members
- Board of Trustees Meeting
- Charnwood Health Forum
- Primary Health Care Trust
- The Pension Service
- HM Customs and Revenue
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Leicestershire Social Services Department
- The Bridge Housing Advice
- Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau
- Loughborough Job Centre Plus
- Bangladesh Social Association
- Shree Ram Krishna Centre
- Charnwood Asylum Seekers Forum
- Turning Point

Placement at BRAC Bangladesh:

The WRIO had a voluntary placement at BRAC Bangladesh for 3 weeks in July 2009. The placement was through BRAC, UK (Building Resources Across Communities) to explore the Advice and Advocacy model of BRAC at the Safe Migration Facilitation Centre (SMFC) and develop policy papers identifying gaps and overlaps to match needs and move towards improving Advice and Advocacy methods for vulnerable migrants.

This voluntary placement programme was funded by the Department for International Development UK and HREC has supported this programme with

The WRIO went through a series of activities while on placement which included induction, introduction, meeting/networking, having a snapshot of SMFC's work, reading policies and procedures of SMFC, field visits, meeting with the Chair of BRAC, giving presentations and having discussions on matters related to the labour migration of Bangladesh.

Through these activities the WRIO could get a clear picture about the advice and advocacy work for Labour Migrants in Bangladesh and was able to develop a casework management system in a structured manner with policy and procedures for SMFC and linked to BRAC's Human Rights & Legal Services and other law firms.

The WRIO has agreed to maintain links and networks, sharing relationship and rapport between Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood and BRAC's BAHRU for the welfare of Labour Migrants in Bangladesh as well as in Charnwood.

General Help with Casework:

The WRIO has been providing Advice and maintaining casework on Welfare Rights, Immigration and Nationality, Housing, Health and other areas to service users face to face, by telephone and correspondence on their behalf with various agencies such as Charnwood Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council and Social Services Department, Department of Work and Pension's, Job Centre Plus, Pension Service, Inland Revenue for Child Benefits and Tax Credits.

General Help and Casework is increasing steadily. An average of 6/7 clients visit HREC office on every working day and get help and support with their queries. The number of queries we have dealt with in the year 2009 – 2010 is 1499. The number of clients who received services in 2009 – 2010 is 1257. A detailed breakdown of the service provided to our users has been attached at the end of this report.

We are a Community Legal Service's Quality Mark organisation and regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner.

OISC Continuous Professional Development (CPD):

The WRIO has successfully completed the CPD hours for 2009 – 2010 which is a regulatory requirements to continue Immigration and Nationality advice work set out by OISC. The CPD courses contain both core and non-core modules designed in conjunction with Open University.

Training on Immigration and Nationality Matters:

During the period from April 2009 to March 2010 the WRIO attended several training sessions on Immigration and Nationality issues. Training sessions were held in London and JCWI provided them at a concessionary price.

Nature of cases/queries	Total
Welfare Benefits	566
Housing and Accommodation	476
Immigration and Nationality	190
Social Services Support	48
Training/Education Support	53
Miscellaneous Support	166
Total Cases/Queries	1499

Gender Breakdown	Total
Male	775
Female	482
Total Number of Service Users	1257

Some of the comments from service users:

“Thank you for your support in my destitute situation- there was nothing available for me without your help”

Mrs A, 27 years old (Domestic Violence matter)

“Thank for your support which was essential, because of this my benefits and community care assessment has sorted. Without your help it would not be possible.”

Mrs H, 74 years old.

“You helped me a lot to sort out my immigration matter – there was no one available to support me but with your help my appeal has been allowed.” Thank you very much.

Mrs B, 72 years old.

“Thank you for your advice that I can get Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit while I am working.”

Mr C, 40 years old EEA National.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all the members of the Board of Trustees at the Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood particularly to Trevor Shaw, our Quality Mark representative for management and support for the general help and casework. Also thanks to Ranjana Kachhela, the Commissioning Officer at Leicestershire County Council’s Social Services Department, for her support.

Kazi Mashud

Welfare Rights & Immigration Officer

Bangladeshi Community Project

Since the Ekota Project dissolved in April 2008 both Chayara Chowdhury and Amina Wadud, employees of the project, have been directly employed by the Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood and work for half their time in the HREC office and in the Bangladesh Social Association office the other half of their time.

The Bangladeshi Liaison Officers have played a key role in encouraging their clients to become more independent but on the other hand we recognise that there are still clients who are dependent on our services. Some factors to dependency are: age, ill health, mobility, language barriers, victims of domestic violence, and matrimonial problems, hence there is an increase in women seeking advice from women advice workers.

Our clientele is changing but the needs are still the same. We have seen an increase in European and Arabian clients. Where we are not able to help clients directly we refer them to the appropriate agencies.

To encourage the elderly to become more independent we are encouraging them to take advantage of free bus passes eligible for those who are 60 years and over.

This year we helped a lot of clients to claim Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance with a high success rate of eligibility.

Officers have been attending numerous courses, especially on Immigration and Nationality. The law is changing all the time and we need to ensure that both the Officers are up to date with these changes. OISC, the regulating body for Immigration and Nationality, are now monitoring the advice workers through CPD (Continuing Professional Development), which has to be done on-line. Chayara is now qualified at Level 2 and Amina at Level 1.

Recommendation

Continued support and funding should still be made available for the foreseeable future. We feel that Bangladeshi Community has grown from strength to strength but there are vulnerable people in the community who still require assistance with Welfare Benefits, Housing and Immigration work.

Funding needs to include time for further training so that advisors are up to date with current legislation and proposed changes by present government.

Liaison Work Case Studies

Case Study 1

Mrs X has recently separated from her husband. She was very distressed about her financial situation. We helped her to apply for Income Support, Child Tax Credit, and Housing Benefit. Mrs X was very happy with the service she received.

Case Study 2

Mrs Y is very ill and did not realise that she would be able to claim for any benefit. We informed her that she was eligible to claim Attendance Allowance. We helped Mrs Y to complete the form, her claim has been successful and she is receiving the middle rate of Attendance Allowance.

Case Study 3

Mr B came to our organisation and showed us correspondence from various agencies. Mr B's son is receiving the middle rate of Disability Living Allowance. Mr B was not aware that either Mr B or his wife were eligible for Carers Allowance, we downloaded the form and helped him to complete it. Mr B is now receiving Carers Allowance and very appreciative of our help.

Case Study 4

Mrs S applied for status change after becoming a widow. We wrote numerous letters to the Home office on her behalf but have not been given a positive response. We contacted the local MP who is now helping client further with her case.

Case Study 5

Mrs Z of Caucasian background, with very little English, was devastated when her husband left her and their two young children both below the age of 6. She was left to run the household on her own with no money, including fighting off debt collectors for money owing from early 2009, which she had no knowledge of. Mrs Z came to us for help. We registered her for income support, housing and council tax benefit.

These benefits have been awarded, therefore her rent and council tax have been taken care of. Also she is in receipt of Income support and Child tax credit, so she has some money to run daily errands. Once Income support is awarded children in full-time education are entitled to free school meals, this relieves pressure on paying for school dinners. We got in touch with the debt collecting agencies on her behalf. Monthly direct debits have been set up. Mrs Z is in control of her life and her finances. Also to improve her English she has enrolled on an ESOL course with Loughborough College.

Chayara Chowdhury
Amina Wadud
Liaison Officers

Liaison Casework Statistics

Statistics for work done at both HR&EC and Bangladesh Social Association offices

Immigration/Nationality	344
Employment/Education	55
Welfare Benefits	708
Housing	551
Others	415
Total	2073

Ethnicity

	Female	Male
Bengali	743	566
Gujarati	207	109
Punjabi	23	46
Other	212	168
Total	1185	889

Age Group

Under 18	0	0
18-24	351	82
25-34	298	111
35-44	186	212
45-59	112	251
60+	238	233
Total	1185	889
Disability		
	Male	Female
	210	200

Bangladeshi Community Project Outreach Work

The Outreach Post has proved to be of great value within the local community, particularly for those who are vulnerable and isolated.

Within my job, I have helped many elderly and disabled people to access services and raise their awareness of the services available to them. I have helped a number of people to successfully claim for Attendance Allowance and this in turn has led to them being entitled to other benefits, eg an increase in pension credit; council tax benefit; Blue Badge parking; and Carers' Allowance for the family providing care.

Many people are not accessing available services due to their age, health and, mainly, language barriers. Also, many are not aware of what services are available to them. Often it has been a problem of clients paying for things that they are not responsible or liable for.

Case study 1

Mrs B: non-dependant deductions were made from her Council Tax benefit for the daughter staying with her. Her daughter informed the council when she moved out of the property but the information was not passed on to the appropriate benefit department. Deductions continued to be made for a further 6 months and Mrs B was unaware of this. After looking at her bill I realised it was too high and enquired about it. We realised that the mistake was on the Council's part and the overcharge has since been refunded to Mrs B.

Case study 2

Mr R phoned his electricity supplier to give an up to date reading of his meter but when his bill arrived it was almost twice as much as he expected. As he had provided the reading himself he assumed that it was just the amount of electricity he had used so he contacted the supplier to pay in instalments. After looking at the bill carefully, I realised that the printed reading contained 5 digits instead of 4. After contacting his suppliers, I was able to get it sorted out, reducing the bill by over £400!

Case study 3

Mrs G lives alone and is totally dependent on her daughter, who has 4 young children of her own, which is obviously causing great difficulties. After I told them about the Direct Payments, the daughter felt guilty about getting paid to look after her mother as she felt it was her duty to help. However, I explained that the money could be used to pay anyone to provide the care but as she was the one already doing it and her mother was happy, she could think of it as a 'job', as she was clearly too busy to work otherwise!

Within the Asian community it is very common for the elderly to be dependent on their children for care, and the children feel it is their duty to look after their parents. This often puts a strain on the children's lives as they usually have their own family to look after. Elderly and vulnerable people will not always accept help, care and support from any other sources although there is a great deal of help and support services available. I have made people aware of Direct Payments scheme, which would mean that they could pay for their care including own family members.

As well as helping my clients personally, I am always trying to encourage clients to access services for themselves, although it can be difficult due to language barriers. I have encouraged clients over the age of 60 to take advantage of the free Bus Pass. This would help to make life a lot easier for them, even if only travelling a short distance, for ease of carrying their shopping, visiting the hospital etc. This also helps to lessen the burden on their families whilst boosting the client's health by increasing their activity, walking to the bus stop, rather than being picked up by car.

It also helps to boost their self-confidence by increasing their independence. I have found that a lot of the elderly people are totally dependent on their families but if they are informed about all the services there are available for them then they can do more to help themselves.

Minara Rahman
Outreach Officer

Outreach work statistics

Immigration/ Nationality	0			
Employment/Education	20			
Welfare Benefits	192			
Housing	181			
Others	161			
Total	554			
		Female	Male	
		Bengali	196	101
		Gujurati	16	15
		Other	4	5
		Total	216	121

	Female	Male		
Under 18	0	0		
18 – 45	52	21		
45 – 59	55	19		
60+	109	121		
Total	216	121		
			Female	Male
			70	61

Hate Incident Action Project

In 2009 Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood, in partnership with Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire Constabulary, applied to the Equality & Human Rights Commission for a 3 year project working around hate crime. A grant of £209,100 was successfully awarded in November 2009 and the project is now up and running. Justin O'Brien (Hate Incident Officer) and Lesley Ansari (Training and Development Officer) were recruited at the beginning of the year and started in post in April and March respectively.

Over 65 people attended a high profile event on Wednesday 24th March at the Ramada Hotel, High Street, Loughborough to launch the Hate Incident Action Project. Local groups, organisations and partners were all represented and they were able to find out what is being done around hate incidents in Leicestershire and what the local impact of the project will be.

Patrick Devine from the Commission told the audience the partnership had been extremely successful in securing the money from their Strategic Funding Program as there had been over 2,000 applications but only 61 community and voluntary sector organisations across the whole UK were awarded the funding.

For HR&EC this was a real triumph for everyone who had worked incredibly hard to build up the organisation over the past years and especially for those people who had completed the onerous paperwork for the bid.

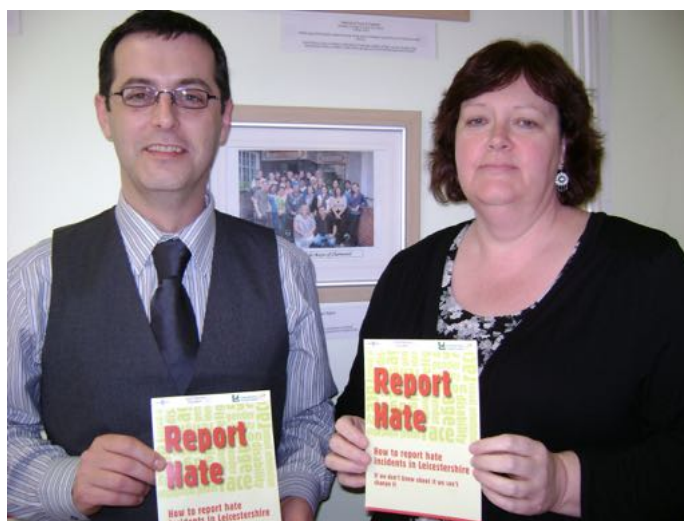


Project Launch held at the Ramada Hotel on 24th March 2010.
Officers present from the Equality & Human Rights Commission, Charnwood Borough Council, Leics Constabulary and trustees and staff of HR&EC.

The project will:

- give support, advice and guidance to victims of hate incidents across all the equality strands (age, race, religion/belief, gender/gender identity, sexuality and disability)
- provide awareness raising training for community groups, schools/colleges and voluntary/statutory bodies to increase understanding of hate incidents and how to report them
- re-visit existing Reporting Centres and establish new ones that are easily accessible and span across all the equality strands
- Work with all the reporting centres to develop a consistent reporting framework
- provide training to Reporting Centre staff
- Work with partner agencies to develop an effective coordinated response to hate crime in the Charnwood area
- develop and build links with key agencies and local groups from the voluntary and statutory sectors and maintain these links with the aim of encouraging joined up working, sharing good practice and developing a multiagency approach to tackling the issues that hate crime raises
- maintain a close positive relationship with the bid partners on all project issues

If your organisation would like to find out how you can be involved or get support from the project please contact Lesley or Justin on (01509) 261651 or email lesley@humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org or justin@humanrightsandequalitiescharnwood.org



**Lesley Ansari
Justin O'Brien
Project staff**

South Asian Women's Project

HR&EC successfully secured a 2 year grant from the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England & Wales for a project working with South Asian women. The project seeks to empower women to play more active roles in society, in their children's education, take on volunteering and further learning opportunities and in general build more mentors and role models in our society.

We have two part-time development officers and they work very closely with women in the community to organise events that engage with women from all different backgrounds and ages, particularly from the South Asian communities.

Events organised from June 2009 to March 2010.

Festival Bazaar - 12 September 2009

A festival inviting women to have stalls on jewellery, clothes, arts and crafts held at Fearon Hall. It was an opportunity to meet local women and introduce the project and worker.

One World Week - Festival of Food & Fashion 24th October 2009

A women's only event was held as part of One World Week 2009. This was a celebration of women from different faiths and cultures coming together to raise money for local women's causes. The event was attended by over 70 women and children representing Charnwood's diverse backgrounds. A total of £500 was raised and given to 'Bridge', a local charity to support women fleeing domestic violence. The event was well supported by women from the South Asian community who volunteered at a number of levels. Many of these women have since been involved in various other events.



Festival of Food & Fashion - held at Rosebery St Peter's Community Centre Oct 2009
HR&EC gave £500 donation raised by women at the event to Bridge for supporting women fleeing domestic violence.

Eid/Christmas Party

The project supported the Agrani women's group, a local South Asian women's group, to hold an Eid/Christmas party for the local women. It was held on December 18th 2009. It was well attended with almost 100 women and children. The Mayor was also present. We supported the event financially but the group was able to draw in voluntary support from many local women who provided entertainment and other activities which were enjoyed by all. This event provided a platform for women from the different faiths to jointly celebrate two major festivals from different faiths. This encouraged dialogue between the faiths and a chance to form new friendships.

Mentor Training

We held a mentor training day for South Asian women on January 27th 2009. The event was facilitated by Mosaic mentoring and attended by 12 local women who have now received training to act as mentors for young people in the community. A follow up event will be organised with local schools to identify young women who could benefit from mentoring.

Where's the Honour?

This was a high profile conference on forced marriages and honour based violence organised in association with:

- HR&EC
- The Bridge
- Loughborough Women's Aid
- Loughborough University & College Chaplaincy
- Charnwood Borough Council (Charnwood Community Safety Partnership)

The conference was held on the 5th February at the University Chaplaincy and was very well attended by over 100 delegates, particularly women from the South Asian community.

Keynote speakers included:

- Jasvinder Sanghera, Co-founder of 'Karma Nirvana' and author of the novel 'Shame'
- Sara Khan, Community Development Specialist, 'Inspire'
- Peter Williams, Detective Inspector, Leicestershire Constabulary Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Adults Co-ordinator

Feedback received was very valuable and women benefited hugely from the information available, with comments that they now felt empowered to challenge these concepts within their community. A report is being prepared and we will be approaching the Borough and County Councils to ensure that similar events, targeting schools and community leaders, is done on an annual basis to raise awareness of this issue. The conference has also strengthened our partnerships with the various agencies, particularly those working with women.

Other work/partnerships

In addition to these events we have worked closely with Loughborough College ESOL tutors and Cobden and Rendell Primary schools to organise smaller initiatives for South Asian women. We helped to set up an exercise class for South Asian mums at Cobden Primary School which is delivered by the Widening Access programme at Loughborough University. The mums attending the class will be invited to an open day at Loughborough University to learn about the opportunities available to them and their children at the University.

A meeting was arranged with the Widening Access Coordinator at Loughborough University and Beverley Grey, head of community ESOL at Loughborough College, in order to organise an open day at Loughborough University for the South Asian women who attend ESOL classes. These women will be unfamiliar with the university and this will provide an opportunity for them to explore the opportunities available at the university.

Parental involvement in schools

We are working closely with extended schools to inform women from the South Asian community of the services provided by extended schools. A meeting was organised to get as many South Asian mothers to meet with the extended services co-ordinators in order to identify the services and courses the women require. We did hold one such event at Rendell Primary school but this was poorly attended. However other meetings are planned for the future. We have met with the heads of Rendell and Cobden to discuss the issue of parental involvement in school. Both were happy that attendance at parent's evenings was satisfactory but any other participation by mothers was poor. This however is not unique to parents from the South Asian community but through the work with extended schools we will aim to draw more mothers in to schools. We still need to meet with Limehurst High School which has a high intake of children from the South Asian community.

Engagement with women's groups – Food & hygiene course

We have met with many of the different South Asian women's groups in Charnwood and the various agencies that can offer support and services to this community. We set up a Food and Hygiene course for the Agrani women's group at their request. This is facilitated by a tutor at Loughborough College and is going very well with 15 ladies attending regularly. We are currently planning an education seminar bringing together the various learning providers in the borough to offer information and workshops on all the learning avenues available and encourage women to take up educational opportunities. We will work closely with the ESOL providers on this project in order to encourage their learners to develop their learning further.

ESOL

Following meetings with the different ESOL providers it was established that the uptake of ESOL classes by South Asian women was very good. There is some concern that some new comers are not accessing courses, particularly those that reside in the Hastings ward, and we have been asked to identify women in this area who could take up ESOL classes. Two Bangladeshi new comers from the area have now been registered on ESOL classes and we will continue to advertise the classes through the various women's groups we have made contact with.

Inter Faith

There seems to be little or no involvement in interfaith engagement particularly from Bangladeshi Muslim Women. We are currently in talks with representatives from St. Philips Centre in Leicester who run leadership courses on behalf of the ICLS (Intercultural Communication and Leadership school). These are residential courses that train young people to become more confident and active in their communities particularly around interfaith activities. We hope to identify a number of Bangladeshi women who can attend one such course that will run in the summer.

Personal Development Training

Many South Asian women, particularly those from the Bangladeshi community, lack the confidence it takes to be more fully active in society. There are now many different self development programmes aimed particularly at women from this community to help empower them and give them the confidence to play a much greater role in all sectors of society. We have spoken to two providers of such programmes and believe that South Asian women in the borough would benefit greatly from the courses on offer. However these courses are very expensive and the costs will fall well over our current budget, therefore organising a course of this kind will be depend on available finances.

Health Fair

A health fair aimed primarily at women from the South Asian community was held in association with the Shree Ram Krishna Centre and Leicestershire and Rutland NHS. The event took place on the 26th February 2010 and was attended by almost 200 people. It was a fantastic opportunity for women to access information about different aspects of health they had never come across before. The women were very keen to find information on diet and nutrition, children's health and mental health issues. They all took part in the first aid demonstration and health checks available. We received excellent feedback and this is something women from this community want to see more of.

International Women's Day

A dinner and fair-trade fashion show was held to celebrate International Women's Day on the 6th March 2010.

We worked with local women to organise the event and had many women from the South Asian community volunteering as models for the fashion show and helping in other ways. The evening was attended by over 100 women representing Loughborough's diverse community and a great time was had by all.



"The Whole Shebang"
A local women's drumming group

Maillem Al-Rawi

Minara Rahman & Nadja Rein

Learning Disability Project

Background

The learning disability project funded by the Leicestershire Learning Disability Partnership, based at Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood, ended on 31st March 2010. The project has been a continual progress since it started in 2007, enabling improved take up of services by people from the Asian communities. The Link Worker helped to provide greater support for carers and families who were not accessing services, as well as providing cultural awareness training to professionals who needed to be aware of 'culture' in order to assist the black and minority ethnic clients.

Project Progress

The project helped people with learning disability, their families and carers, professionals from the health and social care services to build a greater rapport and good trust with the worker. This allowed individuals and groups to get the best possible outcome from the assessment process and access the full range of services, and support options available to them.

Throughout the course of the project, the awareness training events, BME events and launches, has benefited individuals, carers and professionals tremendously. Communication and input of the service users and providers was vital to making a real difference to service users. By voicing their opinion and contributing to discussions, they enabled greater networking and brought a few changes to the services to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities.

Future Plan

The link worker states, "As a BME worker, I have long had a commitment to work for the BME community together with all health and social care professionals. I felt when the project started in 2007, it was very hard to reach the people and individuals with learning disabilities from the BME community, thereafter building contacts and networking with people was the beginning of good relationship, trust, hope and project establishment".

Although the project took time to progress at the beginning, three years on, there have been more positive achievements than negatives. As clients and community staffs started to engage more frequently, individuals who had caring roles were encouraged to become more involved in all aspects of developing services for the people they cared for, as well as themselves. Feedback from staff in all fields stated that they felt more competent in their work to deal with BME service users after attending the cultural trainings and seminars.

The Link Worker hopes in the future a project like this is recognised for benefiting the Black and Minority Ethnic Groups and professionals. It may be that they are the hard to reach community group, but once people know about the project and trust is built, they would definitely access the services more. It is often difficult for groups to build trust. When new projects are set up it takes a long time for it to become properly established and familiar to the service users. It is a shame that once they are taking up the services, the project comes to a close.

Khadijah Chowdhury - BME Link Worker

Training Courses

HR&EC continue to deliver training courses funded by the British Council. In 2009/10 we applied for and ran 3 training courses.

Gaining while giving—EVS (European Voluntary Service) 23rd - 30th May Georgia

The six day training course (TC) '*Gaining While Giving – EVS*' took place in Bakuriani, Georgia from 23rd-30th May 2009. The training course focused on tools, methods and best practice in ensuring quality standards for European Voluntary Service (EVS) activities in cooperation with Eastern Europe and Caucasus EECA) and the development of the cooperation between programme countries and neighbouring partners from EECA within YOUTH in ACTION Programme.

28 youth workers, project managers and young people from 10 countries benefited from the project which aimed at raising awareness on EVS and promotion of EVS in EECA.

During the training course participants developed 2 short movies showing EVS challenges, bad and good practices:

- Language barrier Kills:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ej6b8NvoqQ>
- Film about bad and good practices:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWdFLpwTcXo&feature=channel_page

To see a film about the project follow the links:

- Gaining while giving 1st part: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6zysZ_VaS8
- Gaining while giving 2nd part: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHNR7CCIGjU>

The training course raised confidence and motivation of the participants in organising EVS projects between programme and partner countries from EECA.

These quotes from the final evaluation of the project illustrate the points made above:

'I have learned about EVS, about technical stuff and gained confidence to do this' Zoe, UK.

'We learnt in interactive way! And that made us feel as HO, SO, CO and VOL' Vugar, Azerbaijan.

'I learned practical things - application form etc. Even though I am a volunteer I do not know everything I learnt a lot. I didn't feel any differences between cultures and was surprised with that' Marion, an EVS from France in Poland.

European Citizenship – a Challenge or a Reality

8th - 15th June Moldova

The six day training course *European Citizenship – a Challenge or a Reality* (8th-15th June 2009 including travel days) brought together 22 youth workers representing the EU and EECA regions (10 countries) to discuss and explore the concepts, values and dimensions of European Citizenship.

The training course was organised by Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood, UK, and Youth Generation, Moldova, in partnership and took place in Cosnita and Chicinau, Moldova.

The participants were trained in European Citizenship domain using different methods of non-formal education in order to be able to multiply their knowledge and implement innovative projects with the same topic.

Contemporary Citizenship was emphasized and European Citizenship was explored in terms of feelings, morality and senses of belonging alongside Rights and Duties and Participation. European Citizenship – A challenge or a Reality, Is European Citizenship European Union Citizenship? These themes were debated by participants presenting Programme and Neighbouring countries and the enlargement of Europe discussed.

Another topic of the project was how to put European Citizenship in Action. Here the Youth in Action Programme was presented as a tool to support ideas of the education about European Citizenship and new projects were developed. In this way we promoted the cooperation between young people from different European Countries and increased the motivation of youth workers and youth organizations to run activities on European Citizenship which is a priority of the programme.

The Training Course also provided a platform for the participants to discuss and 'live' (during role plays and stimulation games) differences of countries and cultures and how it could be easy to misunderstand or misinterpret someone. Thus the participants realized that assuming the value of identity for another person or a community is not as straightforward as it seemed to some of them in the beginning.

As a result the project developed and broadened the participants' understanding of European Citizenship and made them actually feel European.

From the evaluation by a participant:

I learned that people can be different but can live and work together. They can be helpful and understanding, tolerant and kind. But all we need more experience on connecting with other people and cultures.

Intercultural evening



Mono-multi role play



Social time



Under the Roof of Human Rights

July 2009, Loughborough, UK

The six day training course (TC) 'Under the Roof of Human Rights' was organised by Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood, UK and Youth Generation, Moldova and sponsored by Youth in Action Programme. The training course which, with the help of non-formal methods of education, gave an opportunity to 18 participants from 10 countries to learn about Human Rights and how they work and are supported in different countries in the European Union and Eastern European and Caucasus Countries. The Mayor of Charnwood and some of the staff, volunteers and trustees of HR&EC have also benefitted from the event.

The training course was focused on founding principles, and mainly on Human Rights involving the principles of liberty, democracy, respect of HR, fundamental freedoms etc. which were widely explored in different sessions.

While talking about duties and responsibilities, the participants had a chance to reflect on real cases regarding violations of Human Rights in their countries and possible ways to fight against it. They were comparing the situation on Human Rights in different European and non European countries such as USA and China and reflecting on whether they really felt Europeans.

The training course concentrated on preparing future Human Rights Educators by equipping them with the knowledge in the field of Human Rights and about the things a good trainer and a facilitator has to keep in mind.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the British Council for funding these valuable conferences.

Nadja Rein
Co-ordinator



Public Lecture

HR&EC's 3rd Public Lecture 2010 was held on 29th April 2010 at the Robert Martin Hall, Loughborough University. The guest speaker, The Right Reverend Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester, delivered an excellent lecture on "Some more equal than others? Equality, faith and the established Church in England today."

Recent debates in Parliament over the Equalities Bill have raised a number of questions. How far should Government determine employment rights for faith communities? Where do religious freedoms begin and end in a secular society?

The Lecture covered issues on whether the Bishops of the established Church have any voice in Parliament on these matters? How far should ancient religious versus traditions accommodate to contemporary views of human sexuality and human rights.

How can we balance religious freedoms and statutory obligations in a plural society? These questions were explored from the perspective of a Bishop in the Church of England who participates regularly in debates in the House of Lords and currently acts as the Convenor of the Lords Spiritual bench.

The Lecture was well attended and raised some very interesting questions and debates. For a copy of the lecture please contact the office on 01509 261651.



The Mayor of Charnwood, Cllr Roy Brown, The Right Reverend Tim Stevens, Bishop of Leicester, Anne Williams, Chair of HR&EC and Cllr Peter Lewis, Company Secretary of HR&EC and Chair of Marketing, Publicity & PR Committee

Loughborough Mela 2010 “Communities Together”



This year's Mela is on Sunday 27th June and promises to be an even greater feast of colour, music, dance and entertainment.

For the second time, the event is in Loughborough Town Centre and is publicised across the whole of Charnwood. The Loughborough Mela is a partnership event presented by the communities in Loughborough and Charnwood Borough Council, Loughborough Town Partnership, Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood, Voluntary Action, Charnwood Arts and local community organisations.

Whilst the core of the Mela remains a celebration of Asian culture, entertainment includes a wide variety of music and dancing from across the world. In addition, we have fairground rides, food and specialist market stalls and the usual friendly relaxed and harmonious atmosphere.

Varsha Parmar, one of the organisers, said "We hope that holding the event in the middle of town will afford easier access to both the local community and the citizens of the borough." She urges all to attend, asking where else you can see both professional and local entertainers for free?

"Charnwood is an amazingly rich and diverse community and the Council believes we should celebrate together and share in that joy wholeheartedly and we hope our Town Centre will be thronged with happy families and friends."

"Mela" is a Sanskrit word meaning to get together and is mainly used in the UK for a multicultural festival incorporating different aspects of British Asian culture. However, Loughborough Mela 2010 is aiming at promoting, celebrating and bringing together ALL the communities in Charnwood.



Other work

Loughborough Council of Faiths (LCoF)

We continue to work very closely with the Loughborough Council of Faiths especially under our brief for working with religion and belief.

Loughborough Council of Faiths was formed in 1996 to create a forum in which different faith communities could meet and work in the interests of the whole community. The Council is not bound by one faith but within it people of different faiths seek high spiritual values together: peace, harmony and a spirit of unity are at the top of our agenda.

Mission Statement

- To show that people of different faiths can share peace.
- To challenge all people of faith to adopt values of respect, tolerance and co-operation.
- To allow people of different faiths to identify common areas of concern and action.
- To point to the significance of faith-issues and spirituality for today's society.

Loughborough Council of Faiths:

- provides a body for consultation e.g. ambulance, resilience, mayoralty, LAs
- promotes harmony and cohesion through increased religious/faith understanding between the faith communities
- enables representatives to go back to their communities to pass on information and take matters for discussion eg in consultation exercises with Local Authorities and agencies
- encourages individuals and communities to bridge and link e.g. to have the confidence to meet and work with others.
- forms strong links across communities to enable peaceful responses in times of crisis (eg following the London bombing)
- promotes good relations across communities by holding events that encourage those of all faiths and none to meet together and learn respect for each other.

Charnwood Refugees and Asylum Seekers Forum

We carry on supporting, and are part of the multi forum of agencies working with refugees and asylum seekers. Issues and concerns are shared at the meetings and we invite people from agencies to respond to any issues raised. In the last year we have had talks on related issues including health, presentations from the Hate Incident Action Project and on the Government's Prevent Agenda.

East Midlands Racial Equality Consortium (EMREC)

Trustees and staff have continued their involvement with the work of EMREC during the year.

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