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HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUALITIES CHARNWOOD

CELEBRATING
45 YEARS OF

WORKING TOWARDS ELIMINATING
DISCRIMINATION

CAMPAIGNING FOR EQUALITY OF
OPPORTUNITY

PROMOTING GOOD RELATIONS

Annual Report
2013/14

sponsored by Paragon Law

Registered Charity Number: 1088411
Company Number: 4198889



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10th March 2014

To whom it may concern,

Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood Annual Report Letter

It has been a great pleasure for my Consort, Roger and I to attend some of the many events organised by Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood during my mayoral year. And in doing so we have come to appreciate how great is the need for services such as you provide. We have been greatly impressed by your work throughout the borough in helping those from other countries and with other faiths to settle and integrate into society. We also appreciate the work you do to mitigate the difficulties of those who, for whatever reason, are marginalised in society.

I have personally been very moved and impressed by your work with young asylum seekers and I intend to keep in contact with this group once my mayoral year is over.

You have both our appreciation and admiration and we wish you continued success in the great work that you do throughout the Borough of Charnwood.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Sandie Forrest



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Board of Trustees

OFFICERS

Chair	Debbie Green
Vice chair	Jill Vincent
Treasurer	Trevor Shaw
Company secretary	Peter Lewis

TRUSTEES

Linda Shaw	Rumana Khan	Pauline Joyce
Steve Phipps	Nilesh Shukla	Manuel Alonso
Justin O'Brien		

CO-OPTED TRUSTEE

Mike Willis	Shelina Shaheduzzaman
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FINANCE & PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Steve Phipps	Trevor Shaw	Pauline Joyce
Justin O'Brien	Mike Willis	

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Debbie Green	Trevor Shaw	Manuel Alonso
Justin O'Brien	Rumana Khan	

MARKETING, PUBLICITY AND PR SUB GROUP

Peter Lewis	Jill Vincent	Linda Shaw
Patricia Pinder	Tony Payne	

BUSINESS PLANNING GROUP

Debbie Green	Jill Vincent	Pauline Joyce
Steve Phipps	Nilesh Shukla	Trevor Shaw

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
Minara Rahman	Chances for All Project Officer
Tahmena Gul	Chances for All Project Officer
Nadja Rein	Youth Project Co-ordinator

Chair's Report

It has been quite a year. And we will have more challenges in the year ahead as we continue to explore new ways of meeting the needs of our local community and seek grant funding.

We lost all the Leicestershire County Council Funding at the end of March this year. This was because the council decided to only fund Adult Social Care and to put this out to one tenderer for the whole of the county.



The County funding paid for our advice work and associated running costs. This was the core activity most people see and is a much needed service for the many who use it. Despite many funding applications, it is clear that funding for advice work is very scarce, which is unsettling given that there is a great need. Our workers were upset that many of their service users were being left with no alternative provision and have offered some hours unpaid in order to continue some level of service. I would like to thank Kazi, Amina and Chayara for this amazing offer and I hope that we will be able to re-establish some paid advice work soon. In the meantime, we would welcome donations so that we can run the office during these sessions.

Legal Aid cuts and local government budget limitations mean that our advice service is still greatly needed. We often work with those who struggle to engage with official agencies, either through confidence, language, illness or lack of knowledge. We are also able to feed back to agencies how and why people are struggling and encourage them to improve their service provision to these people.

On a more positive note, The Chances for All Project is now in it's second year and has gone from strength to strength. It is having a positive impact amongst the many South Asian Women in Loughborough who are benefitting from the new opportunities the project is offering.

We also have secured some European Social Funding, through Enable for a new project "Stepping Forward into Work". This was set up after our advice work showed that there were many who were struggling to comply with Job Centre Plus requirement to complete job searches and apply for jobs due to lack of IT skills, English and confidence. We are providing basic ESOL and IT training, interview skills etc on a one to one basis. We are currently working with 14 learners over a 6 month period but have a waiting list for this service and hope to secure more funding for this. With the loss of the County funding, Kazi, Amina and Chayara have accepted some hours to do this new work.

Our European work has continued with 3 very successful conferences (see reports included on each conference) for young people. Thanks to Nadja for this exciting area of work.

We have been very sorry to lose Manuel Alonso as a Trustee due to his work commitments. Manuel has been a very active chair of Personnel and we are a lot stronger for his excellent input. We will also be losing Linda Shaw who will finish her term as a Trustee. Linda has been a friend of HR&EC for many years, and has been a great person to have as a Trustee. Thanks Linda. Please keep on touch and I hope you will come back after your year off!

Thank you to Paragon Law for sponsoring this Annual Report and the wonderful Dee Sheahan for her talk at the AGM on “The Impact of the Immigration Act 2014 on Equality & Human Rights”.

This will be my third and last year as Chair of Charnwood Human Rights and Equalities Charnwood. I hope to remain a trustee and support my successor in whatever way I can. Thanks to our brilliant staff and for all the commitment from all the trustees over the past 3 years who have been very patient and supportive to me. Although these are tough times for Charnwood HR&EC I really believe that this is an organisation worth fighting for. Please support us in whatever way you can – financially, as a member, trustee or friend.

Debbie Green
Chair

45 years

I think it's appropriate to add something in this year's report about the organisation's 45 years continued work with the mainstream voluntary, statutory agencies, including local minority disadvantaged groups, individuals on a number of matters including race relations, human rights, equalities, welfare rights, immigration, employment, education and empowering of disadvantaged groups etc.

Our appeal to all is that the organisation is always keen to continue with its valuable work and contribution to communities in the coming years and makes every effort to raise funds to support the activities offered by the organisation. Therefore, we would appreciate assistance from all, particularly in the future fund raising activities in order that the organisation is able to continue to serve the people of Charnwood.

Nilesh Shukla -Trustee

Some board members



Treasurer's Report

In her Chair's report, Deb Green mentions the loss of our Leicestershire County Council funding that provided for our core advice and information service. This service has now sadly ended. What I would like to do in this report is set out my view of this loss for the future for HREC's finances.



As a "company limited by guarantee" our trustees have a legal duty to ensure that we are a "going concern" at the time our annual accounts are prepared. This is something I have to report on formally to our auditors each year and obviously this year, this needed careful consideration.

Fortunately I was able to tell the auditors that we are a "going concern". Thanks to funding from Charnwood Borough Council, Lloyds Bank Foundation and the Henry Smith Charity we will be able to employ our Development Worker and cover most of the running costs of 66 Nottingham Road. Also, the Chances for All project, funded by the Big Lottery is secure for a further three years.

We have begun to work in new directions and have secured European Social Funding for a "Stepping into Work" project. Our local Job Centre Plus office acknowledge the need and we may be able to work with them in the future to build on this.

But we can't sit back - we will have to ensure that our day by day income and expenditure is carefully monitored against our budget.

We have given a lot of thought as to how we can be sustainable and meet the needs of the many people who look to us for help in the light of diminishing local authority funding. Here are a few of our thoughts:

- Use the experience and skills of our staff in new ways (we have already worked on debt advice and training people into employment)
- Ensure we keep contact with people who used our advice and information service (the voluntary advice work that Amina, Chayara and Kazi are doing is invaluable)
- Where appropriate, ask for donations to cover our costs when providing advice and information
- Build on our Chances For All and Stepping into Work projects to apply for a long term Big Lottery project
- Partnership bidding for appropriate tenders
- Build on our Strategic Partner relationship with Charnwood Borough Council
- Finding new funding sources and fund-raising ventures
- Social enterprise (can we earn money by using 66 Nottingham Rd in new ways?)

Finally, I would like to thank Alex and Martin from Marsh & Moss Ltd, our auditors, for their patience and professionalism and Varsha Parmar for her day to day running of the accounting system.

Trevor Shaw - Treasurer

Marketing Publicity & Public Relations Committee

On our Marketing, Publicity & PR committee there are 3 external members elected at the AGM and several members from the Board of Trustees. This last year the elected members at the AGM were Patricia Pinder, Tony Payne and Peter Lewis. Linda Shaw and Jill Vincent, 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 delivered 3 more youth conferences, all in the UK funded by the British Council. We are very proud of our track record and the benefits these conferences bring to the young people involved. We had our usual 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.

Our Annual Public Lecture held in June 2014, was held at Loughborough University by invitation of the Vice Chancellor, where the guest speaker, William Baldet, Prevent Co-ordinator for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, from St Phillips Centre, Leicester gave a very interesting talk on “Virtual Voices, Real Lives”.

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 also continue to work on PQASSO standards that are relevant to this group.

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.

Peter Lewis CC
MP&PR

Membership 2013/2014

Hon President

The Mayor of Charnwood

Hon Vice President

Dr A Strachan

Hon Solicitor

Mr D Pagett-Wright (Moss Solicitors)

Hon Treasurer

Mr T Shaw

Individual Members

A Akram	A Bava	J Capleton	J R Catt	H Clegg	A Gimpel
A Gimpel	J Harrison	M Hopewell	R Jalota	M Jenkinson	M Jones
P Joyce	R Kershaw	P Lewis	J Miah	N Morgan	J O'Brien
B Newton	J Pacheco	S Phipps	P Pinder	T Priestly	T Shaw
N Shukla	V Silva	P Singh	A Smith	S M Velado	J Vincent

Organisations

All Saints with Holy Trinity	P Pinder	D Green
Ashmount School	D Deacon	D Thomas
Brahma Kumari	M Sisodia	N Steel
Burleigh Community College	C Horsfall	
Bridge	P Snape	
Charnwood Arts	K Ryan	R Abrahams
Charnwood Borough Council	J Capleton	G Gay
	D Green	P Lewis
Fearon Hall	Z Weatherly	
Geeta Bhawan	R Chhabra	
Leics Adult Learning Service	V Watts	
L'borough Baptist Church	S Cramer	
L'borough Churches Partnership	D Beale	T Payne
L'borough College	A William	C Holden
L'borough Constituency Labour Party	M Draycott	
L'borough Council of Faiths	M Graham	F Catling
L'boro Hate Incident Action Group	L Shaw	
L'boro United Reformed Church	D Beale	T Payne
Loughborough University	Rev S Richardson	
Rawlins Community College	C Ore	H Fern
Rosebery St Peter's C C	D Bentley	L Shaw
RNIB	J Murray	
Swaminarayan BAPS Sanstha	C Panchmatia	
Thurmaston Jagruti Group	S Valand	K Sharma
Voluntary Action Charnwood	S Leong	S Frost

Welfare Rights and Immigration

April 2013 to March 2014

1. Introduction:

We have provided information, advice and limited advocacy service on welfare benefits, housing, health & hospital, immigration and nationality matters and also taken up individual casework and liaised with the local authority, Home Office and other agencies.

Practical support and assistance were given to service users, mainly from Charnwood in Leicestershire, in completing necessary forms, writing letters and making phone calls to other agencies on their behalf. We also made referrals to appropriate providers such as Leicestershire County Council's Adult & Social Care, Charnwood Citizen's Advice Bureau, Charnwood Borough Council when it was necessary and often received referrals from them as well.

We are a Community Legal Services Quality Mark organisation and regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. We are also working towards PQASSO.

This report focuses on the main activities and achievements of the Welfare Rights & Immigration Officer (WRIO) for the period from April 2013 to March 2014.

2. Meetings, Contacts, and Liaison:

During the year 2013 - 2014, WRIO has established and maintained regular contacts, meetings and liaison with various statutory and non-statutory organisations. This was necessary to enhance services and for the best interest of our service users. Following is a list of some of these organisations and contacts.

- Leicestershire County Council's Adult & Social Care Department.
- Equality Challenge Group at Leics County Council.
- Charnwood Borough Council
- Charnwood Connect Forum
- Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau
- Loughborough Job Centre Plus
- NHS North West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Loughborough Council of Faiths
- Loughborough Mela
- Bangladesh Social Association
- Shree Ram Krishna Centre
- Charnwood Asylum Seekers Forum
- OISC (Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner)
- Home Office's UK Border Agency.
- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants
- Advice UK
- Department for Work and Pensions.

3. Consultation and Campaign:

a) North West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group's consultation on Equality Delivery System:

In order to deliver improved access to best quality Health Care and related services for the people of Charnwood, WRIO had been through a series of consultations with NHS North West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group. The consultations were held mainly on issues facing people from Black and Minority Ethnic and other protected backgrounds ensuring better access in the Equality Delivery System.

b) Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group:

Leicestershire Working Together now called Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group was formed in 2013 to improve the quality of life in Leicestershire by addressing important issues affecting those who live and work here, such as health, wellbeing, housing, community safety, transport and education and employment.

HR&EC has been part of the Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group and WRIO is representing HREC in the Group.

To secure the provision of accessible facilities and services to meet the needs of all local people, having regard to the particular needs of the young, old and hard to reach families the WRIO has emphasised the importance of appropriate interpretation and translation provision. Information "through word of mouth" works very well for many individuals and families, especially from BME, refugee and migrant workers background.

4. Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner's (OISC)

a) Workshops and Seminar:

The WRIO has attended a day long Workshop and Seminar in London in May 2013 arranged by the OISC. The Workshop and Seminar were focussed mainly on the issue of the best interest of clients and Supervision.

b) CPD for OISC:

In order to continue the Immigration Advice service, the WRIO has successfully completed the online assessment test for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) and has achieved required the CPD core and non-core hours for the year 2013 - 2014. The online training courses were on immigration matters e.g, family migration, nationality, professional conduct in immigration advice and EU law etc.

5. Welfare Rights and Immigration Casework and Service Users:

The table below shows the number of cases and queries we have dealt with in the year 2013 – 2014

Nature of cases/queries	Total
Welfare Benefits	653
Housing and Accommodation	481
Immigration and Nationality	204
Social Services Support	126
Employment, Training and Education Support	100
Miscellaneous Support	254
Total Cases/Queries	1818

Gender Breakdown	Total
Male	870
Female	485
Total No of Service Users	1355

Ethnicity Breakdown	Total No of service users
White British	75
Other White Background	127
Gypsy/Roma	7
Indian	435
Bangladeshi	359
African	39
Chinese	52
Other European	52
Pakistani	30
Other Asian Background	65
Caribbean	34
White and Asian Mixed	12
Not Stated/Not obtained	68
Total	1355

6. Some of the comments from service users:

"Just to say a Big Thank you for all your time and hard work. We are very happy to get our indefinite leave to remain in the UK through your support"

Mr. V Fouad Naman, 84 years old.

"Thank you very much for the help you have given throughout these years. Well appreciated. Thank you all".

Mr Njobo Pauline Baldeh, 40 years old.

"Thank you for your advice that I could get Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit while I am working in Loughborough, UK."

Mrs A Karnilovich, 35 years old EEA National.

Kazi Mashud
Welfare Rights & Immigration Officer.

Bangladeshi Community Project

The project employed two part time Liaison Officers, Amina Wadud and Chayara Chowdhury. The officers divided their time between the HR&EC and Bangladesh Social Association offices.

The officers provided services on immigration and welfare benefits, as well as liaising with private, statutory and voluntary organisations. We advocated on behalf of our clients and negotiated the best possible outcome for them, something they could not have done on their own.

We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of clients of European Nationality, in particular Italian and Austrian. The clients accessed our organisations through referrals from friends and relatives who are using or have used our services in the past. These new clients really appreciated the help that they were receiving or have received. Without the service we provided they would not have been able to access all the relevant services available to them.

The consensus on female clients wanting to see female advisors is the same as stated in past annual reports by Chayara Chowdhury and Amina Wadud. The majority of the female clients seen are reluctant to see male workers as they feel much more comfortable discussing their issues with a female worker. Whether on welfare benefits, immigration or other personal matters. Therefore it is crucial that we are aware of their wishes and address their needs. The service is vital for the community, especially for vulnerable females and elderly in the community, as well as the new arrivals from Europe.

Due to a lot of cut backs made by the government, clients have seen a rise in their council tax bills whereas in the past clients who were on benefits received the full council tax benefit. The Liaison Officers have helped a large number of clients with understanding the new Bedroom Tax as well as Council Tax benefit. A lot of our clients feel that the system is quite unfair as they were housed by the local authority in the first place and the number of bedrooms given was allocated by the local authority. Clients in private rented accommodation were also affected by the new changes. The rule of this new Bedroom Tax is if you live in a 3 bedroom property instead of 2 bedroom property according to the age of your children your housing benefit will be reduced. The elderly and disabled have been very hard hit by this new legislation.

The Liaison Officers have helped a number of clients with Personal Independence Payments application forms which are gradually replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The process is quite rigorous and lengthy as self-assessment is carried out at medical centres or visits made at home by medical experts to check a person's physical and mental state. A report is then drawn up by the medical expert before benefit is allowed or disallowed. Clients in vulnerable positions are frustrated by the length it is taking to process the applications.

The Officers have attended a number of courses, especially on immigration. As the law is changing all the time therefore we need to ensure that the officers are up to date with the changes. Both Amina and Chayara have completed their Office for the Immigration Service Commissioner (OISC), Continued Professional Development (CPD) for 2013 as this is mandatory. This allows the Liaison Officers to give Immigration advice at the level at which they are registered with the OISC body, Amina Wadud at Level 1, Chayara Chowdhury at Level 2.

Due to the cut back in funding the Liaison Officers jobs came to an end at the end of March 2014. The workers feel that Leicestershire County Council and the Borough Council need to address the issue of funding the project in the future. There will be many people in the community who will be affected, especially vulnerable women, and the elderly in the community who were very dependent on the service provided. English is the second or third language of many of our clients; therefore accessing other services will become very difficult for these people and, they will not get necessary help. There is a danger that they will become isolated and forced to live on the streets. Many of the clients are not able to manage their own financial matters, hence they may fall behind on their rent and council tax etc. Jobseekers allowance has changed for the worse, the form filling has become extremely lengthy, which makes applying very off putting for clients. For this reason they rely more on their parents support.

Overcrowding has become a major issue as people cannot afford to move out of their parental home and because of this relationships are breaking down. We have found this to be affecting all communities. Moreover, if Jobseekers Allowance is filled correctly, the benefit is sanctioned meaning people have no money and are relying more and more on hands-outs/food parcels given out to various charities.

We appreciate the continued support from the voluntary and statutory organisations and our funders in the past. We recommend that funding is made available to continue advocacy work for vulnerable people in the community for the foreseeable future.

Case Studies

Case Study 1

Mrs N had been diagnosed with breast cancer, but due to her financial circumstances she was forced to continue working. Since then she has had to take extra chemotherapy and her health has deteriorated even more. Because of this she was not able to continue working. Mrs N was confused with what benefit she could receive. She came to us because of our specialist language skills. With the aid of Turn2us website tool we were able to calculate her eligibility and rights to the correct benefit that she was eligible for. The best option for Mrs N was to add her onto her husband's pension credit claim rather than making any individual claims.

Case Study 2

Mr A was in receipt of incapacity benefit before the benefit was changed to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Mr A Was re-assessed under the new ESA, and his benefit was dis-allowed. With the help of the Liaison officer Mr A appealed the decision and after submitting sick notes for a continuous 15 months. Mr A's ESA was re-instated, and all the monies owed were re-imbursed as Mr A received a lower rate of benefit while the appeal was lodged.

Case Study 3

Mrs P got married to her husband in Africa but found the application process very daunting. The income criteria for bringing over spouses from abroad have changed and Mrs P was frightened that she couldn't meet the requirements. After assessing Mrs P's financial circumstances. We helped Mrs P draft letters, fill out the form and take the savings route to meet the earnings criteria. Mrs P has submitted her documents to the British embassy in Nairobi and is waiting for her husband's visa so that he can join her in the U.K.

Casework statistics

Types of queries	Total
Immigration /Nationality	441
Employment / Education	111
Welfare Benefits	1021
Housing	978
Others	463
Total	3014

Disability	Male	Female
Mental health	55	17
Physical	156	169
Learning	2	1
Total	213	187

Age Group	Male	Female
Under 18	3	7
18-64	782	1102
65-74	41	23
75-84	13	0
Total	839	1132

Ethnicity	Male	Female
African	2	9
Punjabi	2	6
Other Mixed	21	18
Indian	146	173
Bangladeshi	609	814
Chinese	8	11
Other	51	101
Total	839	1132

Chayara Chowdhury & Amina Wadud
Liaison Officers

Outreach Work

The outreach service is being regularly accessed by more and more people and the clients are finding this service very helpful and supportive for them. This year, there have been huge changes made to the welfare benefits system which is impacting on our workload.

We have found that some application forms have been redesigned and some are quite complicated. Certain benefits are changing including council tax benefit and the introduction of bedroom tax for claimants on housing benefit. A lot of clients who used to receive Income Support have now been moved to Employments Support Allowance. This requires them filling in lengthy and detailed medical questionnaires about their health which, on the basis of the form, a decision will be made about their entitlement to the benefit. There is also very noticeable reduction on people who are successful in claiming Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance although they are genuinely suffering and in the past would have received it without any problems.

Case study 1

Mr U is in his 70s and has various health problems. He struggles with his mobility and needs constant help with his personal care. We made him aware of the various services available for him through social services. Following an assessment, his case was referred to an occupational therapist for some alterations to be made around the house. Unfortunately the waiting time was very long, however, once they got in touch they were able to help with some adaptations around the house. This has made it easier for Mr U to lead a more independent Life.

Case Study 2

Mrs A couldn't keep up her utility bills and got in debt with her energy suppliers. As a result of this, a prepayment metre was installed and the debt was recovered by a fixed amount being deducted each week from the top-up. During the cold weather, it was very difficult for Mrs A to keep her house warm as there wasn't enough left on the meter after the deductions were made and the increase in energy prices were an added pressure on the household budget. I helped Mrs A to apply for a grant through the British gas energy trust fund. Luckily, she qualified for the grant which cleared all her debts leaving her in a better financial position.

Outreach work statistics

Types of queries	Total
Immigration /Nationality	0
Employment / Education	48
Welfare Benefits	285
Housing	208
Others	191
Total	737

Disability	Male	Female
Mental health	28	17
Physical	54	61
Learning	0	0
Total	82	78

Age Group	Male	Female
Under 18	0	0
18-64	118	291
65-74	15	45
75-84	25	17
Total	158	359

Ethnicity	Male	Female
African	0	0
Punjabi	0	0
Other Mixed	0	0
Indian	6	27
Bangladeshi	150	325
Chinese	0	0
Other	2	1
Total	158	353

Minara Rahman
Outreach Officer

Stepping forward into work

We have successfully secured some short term funding from the European Social Fund Community Learning & Skills Grants Programme.

This funding will provide 1-2-1 support for 14 people who lack confidence, language and IT skills by empowering them with the abilities that will enable them to progress and enhance their employability skills. It offers them support to progress to mainstream IT/ESOL classes and this can provide them with the chance to participate more fully both in work and more widely as active citizens.

This work started from 1st May and will end in October 2014.

Co-financed by



**Skills
Funding
Agency**

Chances for All Project

The project aims to empower women from South Asian communities in deprived wards of Loughborough. Our aim is that they should be reaching their highest potential by empowering them to learn about the opportunities that are available to them and playing active roles in the community.

Facing issues in all areas of life e.g. home life, being a wife, a parent, or tackling depression, isolation, anxiety, stress, we aim to help women make good decisions for themselves and their families. Making any lifestyle changes is always difficult but the support of two local community development project officers will ensure help and support to the South Asian community.

We have now completed the first year with Chances for All project. Within the year we successfully completed many new activities that are still currently taking place, building on and continuing to make strong links with the South Asian community, local services, local projects and helping South Asian Women make huge positive changes in their lifestyles.

CFA Activities held 2013-2014

April 2013 – Dress making, sewing, knitting class.

June 2013: Gardening SAW growing their own vegetables at local allotments

July 2013: Basic IT classes, SAW learning how to use computers and laptops eventually being signposted to professional CLAIT courses. Also SAW learnt how to use new technology on the market i.e. tablets, smartphones.

September 2013: Health event at John Storer House

October 2013: Ladies only swimming sessions and learning to swim sessions.

November 2013: Parliament week invited Nicky Morgan local MP to talk to SAW about how to get involved, importance of voting

December 2013: Second health event in partnership with Loughborough University

January 2014: Health event with Rosebery Medical Centre

February 2014: Second Healthy living Session taking place

Arts & Crafts sessions taking place in partnership with Loughborough Library.

First Aid training for local South Asian Women in partnership with Marios Tinenti Centre.

March 2014: Fairtrade International Women's Day event with Shree Ram Project and Fairtrade.

May 2014: Our South Asian Women we have been closely working alongside planned their own event celebrating their new independence and acknowledging and thanking key community workers who have helped South Asian communities.

Through the variety of sessions we have held in the past year our local South Asian Women have shown a growth in confidence and a thirst to learn. These sessions have provided women with the fundamental first steps encouraging them to keep going on forward learning and developing.

We record all our information with SAW every quarterly to evaluate and compare their progress.

We have had a few of our SAW demonstrating great progress and where possible we have begun case studies to show how much of a difference Chances for All project has helped. It maps their levels of confidence, skills, knowledge on a regular basis and captures the difference engaging with our project.

We have had women go on to:

- Apply for and secure jobs
- Lead group sessions
- Arts and crafts for local community i.e. Rainbow Hospital for children, displays at libraries and at local schools.
- Engage in cultural integration activities
- Organise their own events
- Identify new targets they want to achieve

We have been planning new activities to go forward with our year 2 objectives. Our plans for year 2 are:

May 2014 – Health event in partnership with Loughborough University – Loughborough University research

June 2014: - Food and hygiene course

Healthy living sessions for Adhaar Project members with specific health needs (acute mental health)

IT and learning to access the Internet working in partnership with the library to increase usage with our local SAW.

July 2014: Race for Life fundraising

August 2014: Health Event in partnership with Rosebery Medical Centre

September: World mental health day event

We have continued many of our activities and implemented new activities as our SAW requested.

Here are some quotes from our SAW taken from our case files:

Mrs A (Aged 62) “I feel so happy now; I have met so many new women and made friends. I hope project stays for a very long time.”

Mrs B (Aged 48) “I thought I was leading a healthy lifestyle but now I understand what I need to and what changes I need to make, I now feel more energetic and those pounds are finally shifting.”

Mrs C (Aged 59) "Tahmena and Minara are so friendly, when I attend sessions they are so positive happy smiling being around them makes you feel happier and more positive. They are perfect for project very very helpful."

Mrs D (Aged 54) "I am so grateful for projects like this helping our South Asian community, people do not realise it but we do need help and we need to change a little to live healthy life, we might be older generation but we need to know to stay healthy and teach our grandchildren."

We would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund for giving us this grant to carry out this valuable work.

***Minara Rahman & Tahmena Gul
Project officers.***



Parliament Week
discussion meeting
with Nicky Morgan MP
and Peter Lewis CC



Pictures above and side: women at
creative sessions run at the
Loughborough Library in partnership
with Charnwood Arts.



Picture above: Celebrating
International Women's Day
"Go Bananas" promoting Fair



International Youth Training Courses

Compass

26th July to 2nd August at Fearon Hall, Loughborough

Human Rights Education Youth Project TC “Compass” was a training course based on the Council of Europe’s Human Rights Education Youth Programme. The project aimed at increasing the competences of youth leaders, youth workers and educators in the field of Human Rights Education through non-formal education.

The project’s objectives were: training participants in Using the “Compass” Manual for HRE, reflecting on HRE practice in youth work, mainstreaming HRE in youth work and developing future HRE-related projects in partner promoter countries.

Working methods included: non-formal activities from the ‘Compass’ manual, ice-breakers, energizers, team-building activities, intercultural learning workshops, intercultural evening, site visits and project development workshops.

This seven-day project involved 31 participants from three European Union and four EECA countries (UK, Poland, Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia).



The Compass project was recommended for best practice by the project office Alessa Goller from British Council as very interesting and practical training course.

We also had an on spot audit for this project that had only one practical recommendation regarding the recoding of the age of the participants in case it is requested by the programme.

Some comments from the evaluations:

‘I enjoyed working with Compass Manual very much. Designing workshops was particular method for me. It showed us the ways of designing good workshops and how to use Compass Manual.’

‘I enjoyed Mosque in Sleepwille [workshop]- putting ourselves in someone else`s shoes. Yes/No on “hot” issues- learning discussions with people who have opposite opinions. I enjoyed city game and visit in mosque.’

‘Yes, especially discussion about penalty, rights to abortion and gay marriage. I also heard lots of interesting points of view about all the participants.’

‘I liked role game, because it made me look too the eyes of real life. One is standing in the front for all like and other one is always at the back of the line.’

Migration, Integration and Inclusion Policies in Europe

19 - 26 July 2013

Radmoor Centre, Loughborough College.

The seminar was held in Loughborough in July 2013 and involved 30 participants from nine European countries (Croatia, Romania, Italy, Bulgaria, Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, Cyprus and the UK). The project lasts 7 working days.

This was a Youth in Action – Action 4.3 seminar. It focused on the consequences of migration and reflecting on the practice of migrant integration and inclusion in European countries.

The main aim of the project was to share best practice in tackling migration, integration and inclusion in youth work. The project's objectives include: sharing project and programme experience, exchanging tools and methods in addressing migration, integration and inclusion in youth work, learning about migration and integration work done by third sector organisations in Leicestershire, developing participants' competences in delivering youth work projects on migration, integration and inclusion and development of future YiA projects.

The project was based on non-formal learning principles and methods developed by the Council of Europe, UN High Commissioner for Refugees and International Organisation for Migration.

Some of the comments from participants:

"I am going to cooperate with English and my association. I will upload my photos on Facebook and spread my new experience among my friends. Recommend this project to everyone."

"I got more information about group work, difficulties, needs of group. And some of the exercise I will use in my life and work."

"First of all I am planning to share my experience when I am back to my country. I am involved in that kind of activities and I will improve my working process."

"I understand other cultures and I have seen Both sides of migration."

"Visiting mosque was important experience. It taught me to be a more tolerant person. I gain for example to be more open with initiative to communicate better and understand to each other, as a person with the same minds."

"It was interesting to hear about situation in UK. I am glad that I managed to break some communication barriers."

"I liked the most all the group tasks about integrating with local people. I learnt a lot about different countries, their culture, opinions. And I realized that being migrant is a big thing and really difficult to be integrated."

**Rural and Women Entrepreneurship PBA
1-8 August 2013 Fearon Hall, Loughborough**

The PBA "Rural and Women Entrepreneurship" had empowered rural and women entrepreneurship by offering a space for skills development in the domain, share of good experiences and set up pilot projects and partnerships among different organizations coming from rural area. Participants got familiar with European rural reality and explored the similarities and differences of participating countryside and deprived areas. They shared the social problems of their community, and found out how other countries are dealing with them in particular using the concept of social entrepreneurship.

The project came together to mobilize the potential productivity of rural people, especially of women, who can contribute to economic growth and globalization. women's role, productivity and equality had been explored in the context of entrepreneurship and employment.

The PBA had informed participants about the possibilities offered by Youth in Action programme and other European institutions supporting youth initiatives, involvement and development of rural youngsters.

The project had been run between 1-8 August 2013 in Loughborough, UK as a result of co-operation among 9 organisations from Programme Countries (the UK, Italy, Spain, Turkey, Romania, Estonia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Poland).

Nadja Rein - Youth Conferences Co-ordinator



Rural and Women Entrepreneurship PBA

Thanks to the great weather and also the nature of the project we had several workshops outside that include the green between Fearon Hall and the Parish Church, local villages and Staunton Harold working estate and Ferrers Art and Craft Centre.

Two participants joined local choir on the Charnwood Community Heroes Day during lunch break on 4th August (The choir has classes at Fearon Hall and participants joined them in the evening to get ready for the big sing)



Two intercultural evenings gave a brilliant displays and presentations on the local areas of the countries represented on the project. For some it was first visit of a foreign country, or first Youth in Action project or they for the first time saw people from Estonia, and they loved it.



Above: workshop on sharing of expectations, contributions and learning blocks on a first day of the training.



Annual Public Lecture

Virtual Voices, Real Lives

By William Baldet

This year's annual Public Lecture was held on 5th June 14 at the Cope Auditorium, Loughborough University. The guest speaker was William Baldet, Prevent Co-ordinator for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, from St Phillips Centre, Leicester. The topic of the lecture was "Virtual Voices, Real Lives".

William is responsible for the strategic delivery of the Government's PREVENT strategy. Unlike most regions, he is community-based and keen to empower all communities, regardless of culture, politics or faith to develop resilience to dangerous and violent ideologies and work together to combat extremism in all its forms.

Quoting him "To my mind, it is not just about policing, it is about safeguarding all our communities from violence and hatred". This talk will focus on the use of the internet to perpetuate and reinforce extremist ideologies and its role in grooming vulnerable people to these causes.

The talk was concluded by a short presentation from Owen Jones, from the "Hope not Hate" campaign which linked into the lecture.

As per previous years, the University very kindly hosted the event, and the pre-lecture reception for invited guests. We would like to thank Loughborough University for their continuous support in making this an annual event.



Loughborough Mela 2014 “Communities Together”



This year's Mela is set to take place on Sunday 17th August in Loughborough Town Centre, Market Square, from 12noon to 5pm.

Loughborough Mela has risen in prominence from a small event celebrating the town's cultural and ethnic diversity into a popular and important date in the calendar of the summer festival season. Taking place in Town Centre in the heart of the community of Loughborough, there is more to Loughborough Mela than just music- the event also features stalls, fairground rides, diverse range of food, children's activities and a diverse entertaining programme. The aim is to ensure that all visitors, young and old, will find something to entertain at this free event.

In the past many people are known to head to Loughborough Mela to enjoy performances by stars such as Navin Kundra, Mumzy Stranger, Tasha TA, Unai Kaiden, Irfan Khan and most recently the up and coming Raxstar and Faze. In addition to this the local talent such as Desi Bhuv Sharma, Lacky C and various local groups such as Hum Hey Hindustani have also had the chance to strut their stuff.

This year's Mela looks forward to opening its arms to a variety of artists (names to be announced in due course).

The Loughborough Mela is a partnership event presented by the communities in Loughborough and Charnwood Borough Council, Human Rights & Equalities Charnwood, John Storer Charnwood, Charnwood Arts and local community groups and individuals. The Mela is the perfect place to experience South Asian arts and culture in all its diverse and colourful forms, from spectacular Bollywood and Gidda dancing to storytelling, poetry and henna painting. The aim of the event is to both celebrate the performers' national heritage as well as their more recent history as British citizens.

Melas originate from the Indian sub-continent (the word 'Mela' means 'to meet' in Sanskrit, the ancient Indian language), where they are traditionally a gathering of people celebrating their community, much like village fairs in Britain. Loughborough Mela organisers and the committee strive to attract visitors from the various villages in the county and have been successful in doing so far the past many years.

For more information including holding stalls at the Mela please contact Leylah Bhamra via email: loughboroughmela@gmail.com or via mobile 07894880525.

Leylah Bhamra - Mela Co-ordinator

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, local authorities
- 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 e.g. 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
- 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.

Charnwood Disability Forum

We have supported the Charnwood Disability Forum with partners from Loughborough University, BID, Charnwood Borough Council and individuals to revise the Disability Access Guide. Funding was secured from Loughborough University (Inside Out Fund), Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council (Big Society Grant).

25% discount on initial consultation fee:
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