



Epping Forest  
District Council

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

## Equality Information Report 2019



EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

VIC OFFICES



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If you would like this report in another format, for example large print or Braille, please email:

[equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

More information:

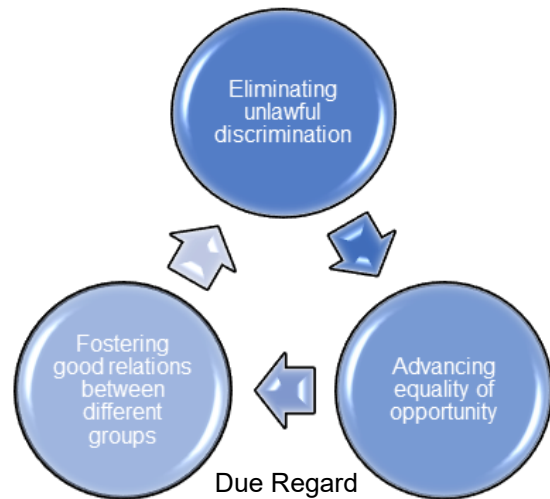
For more information about this report or any aspect of the Council's equality work see [www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk) or email [equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk](mailto:equality@eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

# 1. Introduction

## Statement of commitment to equality

### Short Statement

*Epping Forest District Council is committed to treating everyone equally and fairly according to their needs.*



### Full Statement

- ✓ Epping Forest District Council is committed to ensuring that all individuals and groups are treated with respect and are valued equally
- ✓ We will endeavour to make our services accessible to everyone
- ✓ We will endeavour to eliminate unlawful discrimination through our services and employment opportunities
- ✓ We will consult and involve people from our community, where appropriate, in the design of our services
- ✓ We will collect information about our customers, where necessary, to ensure our services are accessible and that we are providing the right services
- ✓ We will endeavour to promote understanding and good relations between communities
- ✓ We will consider taking positive action to address under-representation and promote diversity in our workforce profile
- ✓ We will publish information about our equality work
- ✓ We will use our procurement opportunities to drive equality
- ✓ We will ensure appropriate resources are available to meet our statutory equality responsibilities
- ✓ We will make sure that appropriate equality and diversity training is provided for all elected members and staff of the Council

This report provides an overview of our work over the last 12 months since July 2018. As an overview of our work, this report doesn't necessarily contain information about everything we do. As an organisation committed to equality, much of what we do is routine and part of our everyday experience. Many of our activities which deliver greater equality, are so integrated into our way of working that they do not stand out as being evidence of compliance with equality legislation. Equality should be embedded and be just the way we do things at the Council. Therefore this report sets out just some of the changes we have made or services we have delivered over the last year.

## 2. Equality legislation and council duties

As a public sector organisation, Epping Forest District Council has a number of statutory duties with regards to equality. The Equality Act 2010 and associated Public Sector Duties require the Council to have 'due regard' to the following three areas:

- ➔ Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- ➔ Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- ➔ Foster good relations between people from different groups

### The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The PSED was created by the Equality Act 2010 and places a duty on public bodies and others carrying out public functions. Its aim is to embed equality considerations into the day to day work of public authorities.

Having 'due regard' means consciously thinking about the three general duty aims as part of the process of our normal business and decision making.

The term 'foster' means tackling unlawful discrimination and promoting good relations between different groups.

Having 'due regard' to the need to advance equality of opportunity involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

### The specific duties:

We have two additional specific duties:

1. Equality Objectives - we have to set equality objectives at least every four years that will help us to further the aims of the public sector equality duty
2. We must publish equality information annually to show the progress we are making to deliver the general duty.

### In 2018 we set the following objectives to take us forward to 2020:

1. To apply robust equality requirements in commissioning, procurement and contract management
2. We will recruit and retain a diverse workforce, developing our capacity so that our employees have the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver our plans
3. We will take into account the equality impacts of our emerging proposals and seek to mitigate any adverse impacts where possible
4. We will embed equalities in all we do and make it part of business as usual

### 3. Workforce Equality Profile (as at 31/03/19)

There are 645 staff working for EFDC



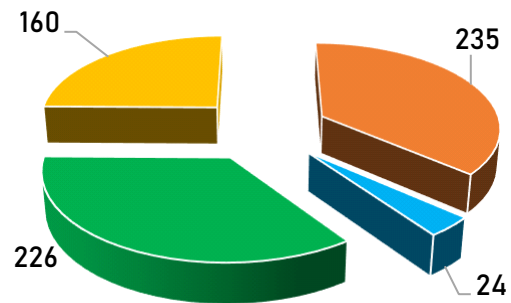
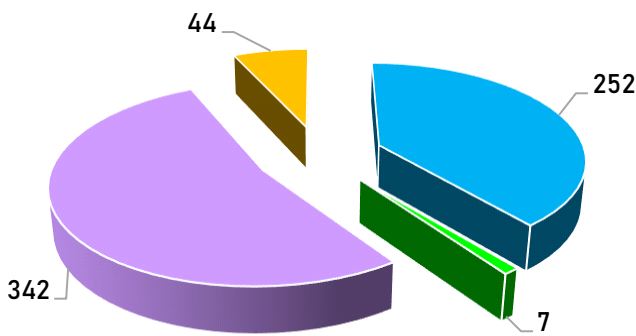
Gender breakdown



259

386

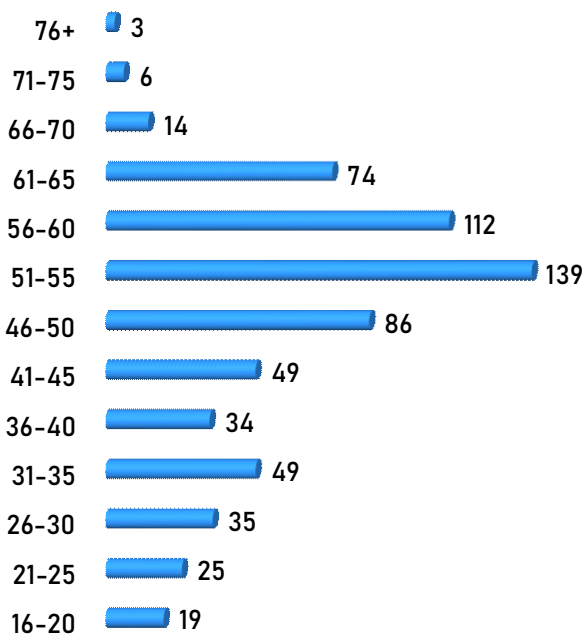
#### Working hour profile by gender



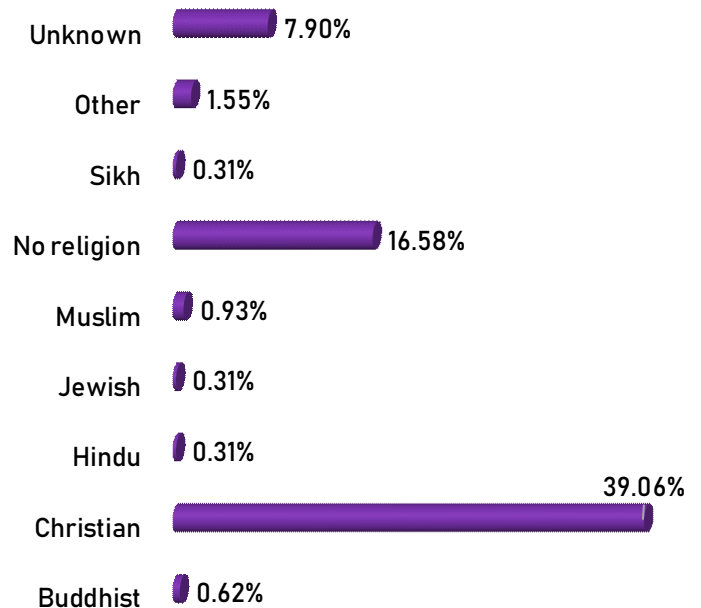
- Male permanent
- Male ft/temp
- Female permanent
- Female ft/temp

- Male full time
- Male part time
- Female full time
- Female part time

#### Age structure in EFDC



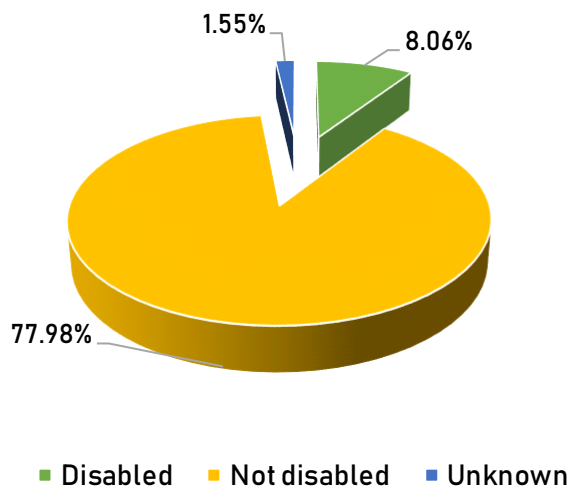
#### What religion/beliefs do EFDC staff hold?



## Disability declarations:

Declared 87.60%

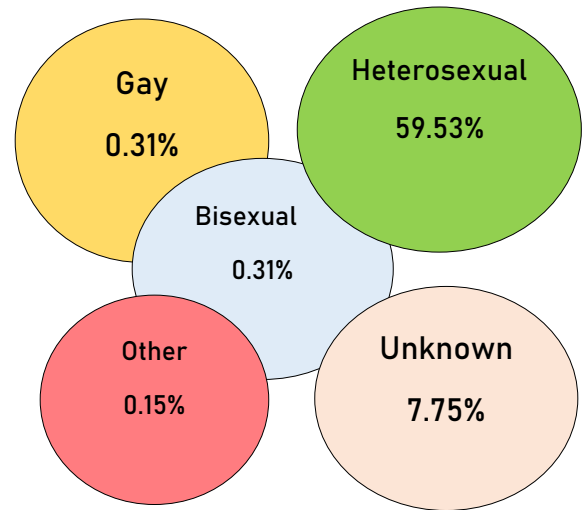
Not declared 12.40 %



## Sexuality declarations:

Declared 68.06%

Not declared 31.94%



## GENDER PAY GAP DATA



The Council's mean gender pay gap is 15.43% and the median pay gap is 17.99%. This means that male employees on average receive 15.43% more pay than female employees. There has been a reduction in our pay gap since 2018, which has decreased by 0.71%.

The percentage of male and female split into quartile figures are as follows:

Band	Pay Quartile	Female	Male
A	Lower	65%	35%
B	Lower Middle	71%	29%
C	Upper Middle	51%	49%
D	Upper	41%	59%

## DECISION MAKING



Just over a third of Epping Councillors are female (34%). It compares to the national average of around 35%, according to a 2018 Local Government Association census of members.

## 4. Equality initiatives and progress

### Mini Play Big Listen

The Museum, Heritage and Culture Service have been reviewing how the museum could be made more accessible to children with autism. A number of initiatives have been developed including our Mini Play Big Listen sessions. These are for parents and carers with children on the autism spectrum and on their way to diagnosis. The museums interactives and sounds are turned off for a relaxed opening and The Space has a chill out tent, sensory toys, and other activities. They also have experts on hand, such as speech and language therapists, to come along and talk to parents about their child's development.



### Clothmaker's Wings

Working with the Gifted, the Museum Heritage and Culture Team undertook a project and exhibition entitled the Clothmaker's Wings. 46 girls were selected to be involved in the project to help build self-esteem, life skills and confidence in order to overcome personal, social or learning barriers. The project resulted in the girls learning about the history of women's role in the textile industry and developing their own work which went on display.

### Museum Movers

Following the launch of our new Museum Movers - which are fun, informal dance sessions, designed to promote health, well-being and freedom of movement for older people. 351 people have participated in the sessions over the past year. People are welcome to do a seated version or can challenge themselves by performing the exercises standing. The sessions provide a range of visual arts, dance and fitness techniques, enabling residents to express themselves through creativity, whilst developing strength and stamina, a sense of well-being and social interaction.





## Of/By/For All

Of/By/For All is an audience development programme run by the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History in California, that provides cultural organisations with tools to help them reach a wider range of audiences. We have pledged to engage 250 members of the local Italian community through a co-curation project, a museum exhibition, and museum events by April 2020.



## Introduction of the Frontline website



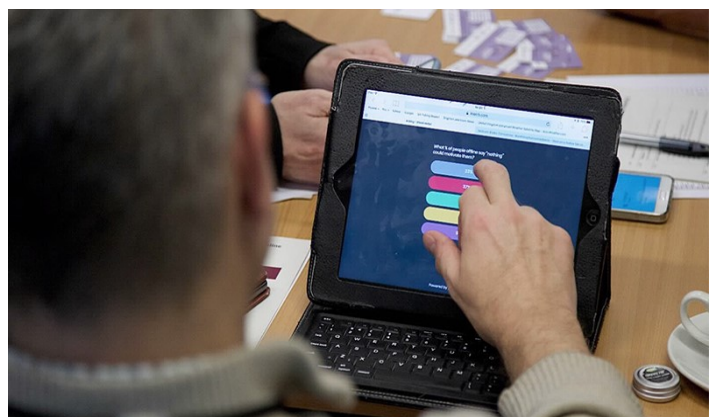
Epping Forest Frontline is an easy-to-use website where residents can find health and wellbeing services across the Epping Forest area. You can browse through the “library” of services or you can search for specific information. The information is listed under: Advice, Family, Older People, Mental Health, Transport, Disability, Addiction, and Wellbeing.

This is initially to be rolled out for the Customer Contact Centre staff and Safer Communities teams, whereby people can be directly referred to external local services, especially the elderly, disabled and vulnerable. Our Customer Services team will also have Epping Forest Frontline as an

app on their desktops to be able to make referrals to the services where a customer identifies as needing help. This will mean that another phone call is not necessary by the customer, and they are referred in as short a timeframe as possible. All referrals are monitored by Frontline to ensure responses are received. This will be rolled out to all staff once the Customer Services team have piloted the app.

## Digital inclusion Project

Working in partnership with Citizens Online, our Digital Inclusion Project seeks to encourage our 21,000 residents who have not recently, or who have never used the internet, to become engaged with all online services. This project involves: looking at where we need to target our resources and services and building a network of Digital Buddies. These digital buddies will be made up of internal EFDC staff and external organisations such as Voluntary Action who go out into the community.





## Apprenticeship Programme

Our Apprenticeship Programme is an integral part of our council and one of our objectives is to help young people in the District to maximise their employment potential. Our apprentices are given the opportunity to work alongside experienced staff, giving them the chance to gain much needed work experience and qualifications at the same time. In 2019, we took on two Higher Level Management degree apprentices who are studying at Anglia Ruskin University. Our current Level 3 apprentices are applying for Higher Level degree apprentice roles in digital marketing, economic development and human resources. We will be recruiting another cohort of apprentices in September 2019. All apprentices have a personal coach/mentor who is a more experienced member of staff, who give up their time support the apprentices.



## Epping Forest Youth Council

Epping Forest Youth Council is made up of 25 young people representing their peers across the district. EFYC gives local, young people a democratic voice to have their say on local issues. EFYC also highlights the importance of building communities where young people are empowered to make a difference. Previous projects run by EFYC include the MiLife mental health, emotional wellbeing project and a drugs awareness project. Their latest project, We R Safe, which launched in July 2019, is about ensuring the safety of young people and can be viewed on the Council's website.

**EFYC** Epping Forest Youth Council **2018-2020**

Contact Diane Gilson-Butler, Youth Engagement Officer  
@eppingforestdc.gov.uk/efyc  
efyc@eppingforestdc.gov.uk  
01992 564365  
07789 372179

**Braeside Independent School**  
Samantha Halcrow, Simran Tiwana, Abigail Whelan, Jyoti Nag-Chaudhury, Onyeka Okeke, Eleanor Nsofor, Archie Flynn, Barnaby Hodgkinson

**Chigwell School**

**Davenant Foundation School**

**Deben Park High School**  
Ashwin Gohil, Jacob McNulty, Rene Kent, Stanimir Bakalov, James Beavis, Oliver Smith, Megan Wilson, Annabelle Yaman

**Epping St John's School**

**King Harold Academy**  
Tomas Gray

**The Ongar Academy**  
Oliver Upson, Harriette Pickering

**Roding Valley High School**  
Jasmine James, Daniel Mehr, Zak Smith, Florence New

**Independent**  
Tatulah Fontenelle

social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and the website eppingyc

## Internships for students and graduates with disabilities



For the fourth year running, we are working with Leonard Cheshire to run the Change 100 summer internship programme. Change 100 is three-month paid summer internship and six-month professional development and mentoring programme for talented students and graduates with disabilities or long-term health conditions. Change 100 seeks to remove barriers experienced by disabled people in the workplace, in order for them to develop their careers and fulfil their potential. The programme provides valuable work experience with a prestigious and inclusive employer in a supportive environment. As well as their designated Change 100 contact for guidance and support, the programme also provides interns with a mentor at their placement, to aid their personal and professional development.

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## Walking Football



Walking Football is a slow-paced version of the game and is aimed at getting players back to playing the sport they love. It is designed to help people have an active life whatever their age or ability. It is a very relaxed session based around socialising with like-minded football fans. The Community and Partnerships Team deliver walking football in Waltham Abbey, with 18-20 people attending each session. This year the walking football group took part in their first ever tournament in Harlow and have played matches against a Harlow walking football team and a Leyton Orient walking football team.

## #consequences

#consequences is a community safety and awareness annual event aimed at year 9 pupils. It is tailored to address issues relating to young people that have been identified as a key concern in the Epping Forest district.

Hosted by Epping Forest District Council's Community, Health and Wellbeing Team, specialist service providers have been commissioned to deliver key messages about personal safety and wellbeing. They highlight the dangers of online safety, look at healthy relationships and the consequences of gang activity. During 2018-19, approximately 1000 pupils in the Epping Forest district received the latest information and guidance to enable them to make the right choices regarding the issues facing them.

**WE R SAFE**

## Mental Health Awareness Week



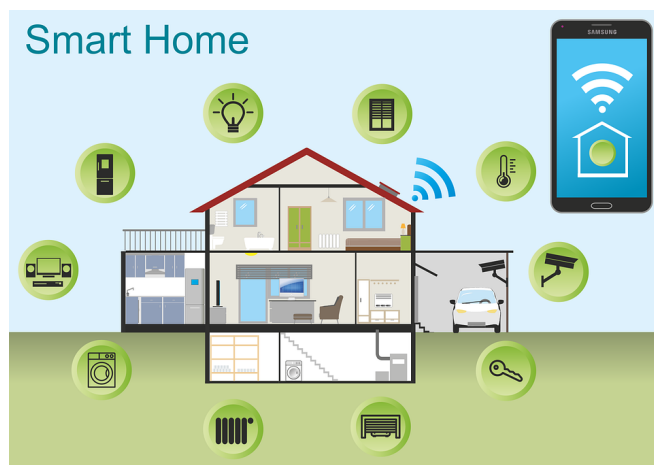
The focus of this year's Mental Health Awareness Week was on body image and the way it impacts our mental health. The Mental Health Foundation reports that over a third of UK adults have felt anxious or depressed because of concerns about their body image. One in five UK adults have felt shame because of their body image in the last year (Mental Health Founda-

tion, 2019). The aim of the week was to increase our understanding of mental health, check in with friends, family members or colleagues and remind us to reflect on our own mental health and well-being. Supervision sessions were available with a therapist for all staff and a range of information, guidance and support was provided.



## Smart Homes Scheme

We are looking at the Smart Homes scheme to install digital equipment into homes to assist the elderly and disabled. CVS Uttlesford, in conjunction with Rainbow Services, Harlow and Voluntary Action Epping Forest, are delivering a programme that will set up a number of homes across the Digital Innovation Zone with the very latest in digital technology. This will enable residents often when experiencing limiting health conditions, to live safely at home. A small number of exemplar homes have already been equipped and officers from DIZ board recently visited the first of these homes to be equipped in the Epping Forest District. The equipment installed consists of an Amazon hub, a small mobile tablet device and movement monitors in various rooms plus door monitors in places such as the toilet and fridge doors. These monitors produce daily data sheets that display daily activity and wellbeing as well as building a picture of normal routine to allow the system to flag any deviation as a potential issue to be investigated.



## MiLife Project

MiLife is a national award-winning project commissioned by young people for young people, exploring how everyone can experience better emotional wellbeing and mental health. Epping Forest Youth Council (EFYC) worked with the Red Balloon Family Foundation, a local charity, which supports a wide variety of children's, youth and families projects along with NELFT. They also teamed up with NHS emotional well-being and mental health service (EWMHS) provider in this part of Essex. EFYC worked them to create the MiLife roadshow which visited all seven secondary schools as well as producing a number of associated resources. To date, over 10,000 young people have taken part in the scheme. Feedback from the project has been used to improve the scheme and this has led to 90% overall enjoying the MiLife intervention.

## Webform for Assisted Collection applications



We are currently working on streamlining the application for an Assisted Collection process by introducing a webform, which is available both on our website and within the Customer Services Contact Centre. This will streamline and decrease the wait time for the elderly, disabled and infirm in obtaining an assisted collection of their containers. Currently, an application form must be posted out, then completed and returned to us for an assessment to commence. This can mean a long delay of some weeks to be able to start the assisted collection service.

By completing the form online, or with one of our contact centre staff over the phone, the application is delivered directly to the area waste management officer within minutes. They can then quickly assess the application and process the change to collections. This could potentially shorten the wait time from a few weeks to 48 hours.



## The Lime Farm FISH ( Food in School Holidays)

The Community and Partnership team at EFDC along with partners Barnardo's Children's Centre's and the Epping Forest Food Bank, provide a holiday club for invited residents that are in need of support during the school holiday. The holiday club particularly focuses around food and nutrition, health and well-being and social interaction. The club runs for two hours, with the first hour consisting of games, arts and crafts and sports and the second hour bringing together residents, volunteers and workers to share a

meal. Since starting the Epping Forest FISH project three years ago, we have also seen and recognised the lack of social interaction that people experience during this time. The club is a fantastic way of alleviating this social isolation as it brings families together and encourages interaction with one another.

## Strength and Balance Project for Care Homes

Delivery of a new project funded by Active Essex, to improve mobility and increase older people's level of physical activity in residential care homes, has begun with five care homes taking part. Our qualified exercise instructor initially visited each care home to deliver activity sessions to residents. The training sessions enable the activity coordinators to deliver safe and effective classes to their residents on a regular basis. In addition, the activity coordinators will receive mentoring and seven different short sessions have been developed on cards as a resource for the care homes to ensure sustainability of the project long-term.



## Stay Well this Winter



The Epping Forest Stay Well this Winter events have been developed by the Community and Partnerships Team, in partnership with the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, to promote Health and Wellbeing particularly over the winter months. The events target Epping Forest residents that are over 60, bringing together local health providers and practitioners who deliver key messages around health and wellbeing, medicine management, falls prevention, support services and accident prevention.

Four successful events took place in November

in Epping, Fyfield, Nazeing and Ongar with over 250 older people attending. The Stay Well this Winter events are promoted via local partners and by targeted promotion to ensure that both the general public, marginalised and hard to reach groups all have the opportunity to attend. We actively seek to break down barriers to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to attend, which includes transport and the use of facilities with appropriate access.

## Innovative housing solution for homelessness



We are embracing the innovative approach of using new, bespoke shipping containers as affordable housing units to help solve a growing housing crisis. The pods provide emergency accommodation to those struggling to find places to live. They are studio or one-bedroom homes and are insulated, fitted with windows, doors, kitchen units, radiators, electricity and running water. They not only provide an independent living solution, but also a cost-effective solution for the Council. Four have been installed as a trial project at our homeless hostel at Norway House in North Weald, providing temporary homes and storage for single people. Norway House already of-

fers 48 rooms including single and double rooms in the main building and five chalets in the grounds for families, couples and individuals who find themselves homeless.

With over 1,500 people on the Housing Register, the pods offer a quick and innovative way of providing temporary accommodation for people facing homelessness, while more permanent places can be found for them. We work hard to provide homeless people with accommodation, advice, support and ultimately a better future. If the pods prove successful, we will be looking to introduce more to meet future needs of homeless people in the district.



## Grant Aid Scheme for Community & Voluntary Organisations

EFDC awarded grants to voluntary and community groups involved in providing community, cultural or sports activities to support these organisations. Grants are awarded in order to provide successful services to residents of the Epping Forest district. In 2018-19, the Council awarded grants to a record number of community-based organisations from a range of groups from sports clubs to older people's services. In 2018-19, our grants totalling £83,450 have supported approximately 19,300 Epping Forest residents and over 1,000 volunteer roles.



## Helping people at risk of domestic abuse



J9 is a Domestic Abuse initiative and its core aim is to raise awareness of domestic abuse and to enable all staff to understand their role and responsibilities. We provide free training courses to staff, agencies and voluntary groups across Essex. The courses explore the dynamics of domestic abuse and the impact abuse has on those involved and how this can differ according to gender, race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, faith, disability, or age.

## A plan of action for victims of domestic abuse

EFDC continue to work in partnership Safer Places and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service providing Sanctuary Schemes for high risk victims of domestic abuse. Additional security measures are also provided, or a 'safe' room is created in the home to provide a sanctuary for people at risk.

## Helping vulnerable victims of crime

EFDC also continue to work with the police, the voluntary sector and landlords to provide crime prevention advice and assistance to vulnerable people. The Homesafe scheme can provide peace of mind to vulnerable residents by making their homes safer and secure. Bespoke risk management plans are developed for people who are vulnerable through age, disability, race or their sexual orientation.

## We are trained to respond

EFDC continue to provide training and refresher training on safeguarding which enables us to help identify vulnerable adults and children. We have also organised a number of bespoke training courses on Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation, Hate Crime Ambassadors and mental health. These training courses are aimed at raising awareness amongst staff and partners and are accessible to all staff and partners working across the district.

## Safeguard children and vulnerable adults

In 2018-19, our safeguarding team received 373 safeguarding reports which involved 372 children and 361 adults. Of these, 97 were reported to Social Care, 33 to the Police, and 54 to other agencies. 151 cases were not referred due to not meeting the statutory thresholds for Social Care however, all concerns were recorded and noted.

## International Women's Day



International Women's Day has been celebrated across the world since the early 1900s. This year, through asking for a £1 donation from staff, we raised just over £150 for Safer Places, who provide support and an outreach service to women affected by domestic violence in our district. The money raised will contribute to helping the survivors of domestic abuse to recover, to empower and to rebuild their lives.

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**'GIVE A GIRL  
THE RIGHT  
SHOES, AND  
SHE CAN  
CONQUER THE  
WORLD.'**  
**MARILYN MONROE**

## **Snapping the Stiletto exhibition**

'Snapping the Stiletto' is an exhibition about Essex women, exploring how women's roles and opportunities have changed since gaining the right to vote in 1918. It also aims to dispel the negative stereotype of 'Essex girls' and their white stilettoes, by highlighting the lives and achievements of Essex women. The exhibition was held at Epping Forest District Museum in Waltham Abbey from 12 January until 16 March. There are some famously owned heels on show including those from Essex actor Dame Helen Mirren and sportswoman Emma Hollis. Epping Forest District Museum is the first of five museums to host this touring exhibition, staged by Essex County Council with funding from the Esmee Fairbairn Collections Fund. Volunteers worked with 11 museums and discovered stories of women campaigning for the vote, improved health and welfare services, and animal welfare. They learnt about the crucial roles women played in wartime, women who ran successful businesses and women working at engineering firms in the county.

## **Disability Inclusion Project**

The Epping Forest Inclusion project has secured funding of £37,600 from Action for Children to provide a wide range of sport, physical and leisure activities for children and young people with disabilities until October 2019. The funding will enable the co-ordination and delivery of a range of sessions and activities enabling us to engage with children and young

people with a wide range of interests. The project not only benefits the child with a disability but also the whole family. The inclusion of siblings at our holiday activities has been crucial for parents. Many parents often don't have the choice or opportunity to send siblings to the same activity as their child with disabilities. Having a child with a disability can often stretch the family unit and small things like being able to do activities together can prevent this. To date, approximately 1000 individual children and young people with disabilities have accessed this project.



## Senior Safety Days in Nazeing



Two Community Champions from Nazeing helped to organise and promote a Senior Safety Day at St Giles Church, Nazeing, in March. Over 50 senior residents attended and were reminded how to keep safe in and around their homes. With speakers from Essex Fire & Rescue Service, Essex Police, Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch who spoke about fraud, scams and fire safety. All attendees went away more aware, having had good interaction with their peers and professionals. The day culminated with Arc theatre delivering

a short piece of interactive theatre, which raised awareness of the various types of scams many people may encounter and gave advice on how to avoid being a victim of scams and fraud. The feedback from those that attended was extremely positive and complimentary about the day.

## Forever active programme

A packed programme of activities, crafts and social gatherings for adults in Epping Forest District is planned for the coming 12 months. Brochures and leaflets on a host of activities have been released covering May 2019 to March 2020. The Forever Active programme includes everyone - there's no restriction on age, ability or fitness.

The programme offers everything from cycling and walking football to yoga and pilates, as well as day trips to some of the country's most popular attractions.

# Foreveractive

Leisure Activities April 2019 – March 2020



## 30:30 Essex challenge



This year, we were involved in the 30:30 Essex challenge - a health and well-being initiative - promoting just 30 minutes of activity for the 30 days of June. 30:30 is a great way for you to get more physically active. The campaign encourages you to do 30-minutes of physical activity for 30 days (throughout the whole of June). You can choose any kind of activity, there are no restrictions on what you choose to do as long as you complete 30-minutes each day. You can tackle those 30-minutes as a block or you can break it down to three 10-

minute sessions or two 15-minute sessions. We have a host of lunchtime classes and activities that helped staff to achieve the 30-minute objective!

## Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre



Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre in Essex celebrated its official opening on Saturday 15 June 2019, welcoming over 1,000 people through its doors throughout the day. Olympic swimmer Sharron Davies MBE opened the multimillion-pound centre in Waltham Abbey with our Chairman, Councillor Richard Bassett. The centre also held an Oceans of Fun event which offered free spaces to kids aged 7 - 14 years to experience different aquatic sports such as mini water polo, synchronised swimming and fast swimming. The event was offered as part of a collaboration between leading

swimming brand Zoggs campaign and Total Swimming, set up by Olympian Steve Parry. It aims to inspire more children to actively get involved in aquatic sports. Attendees also received expert training advice from Olympic Swimmer Grant Turner, who competed in the London 2012 games and Team GB synchronised swimmer, Genevieve Randall. The community facility, which first opened to the public in November last year, has already proved popular, welcoming over 150,000 visitors to date and more than doubling gym memberships within its first eight weeks of opening.

## Buckhurst Hill Social Isolation Project

A key finding from the Social Isolation research work in Buckhurst Hill was the request from residents for a beginner's yoga session. As a result, a beginner's yoga session has been set up at St James Church Hall in Buckhurst Hill, 6.30pm to 7.30pm every Wednesday. The first session took place at the beginning of April with 28 people attending. The session is open to all ages and abilities and is £5 per session.

A toolkit and social isolation awareness information session has been developed and is available to be delivered throughout Epping Forest District to help people understand what social isolation is and how people can help to reduce the levels of social isolation.

## Workplace Health Champion

In January 2019, we called for enthusiastic and motivated people to develop activities and initiatives that promote health and wellbeing across the Council, commencing February 2019. The role gives individuals the opportunity to shape the Wellbeing Programme, which was set up to improve the wellbeing of our workforce. The role requires a commitment of one - two hours a week at work to the project, and successful colleagues receive training, as well





## Rotary Essex Disability Games



Our leisure contract manager, Peter Chairman, the team at Ongar Leisure Centre and Rotary Clubs in London, Essex and Hertfordshire, supported in staging the first Rotary Essex Disability Games. Organisers were looking for a venue and Peter offered up Ongar Leisure Centre from its disabled access point of view. Hilary Wrightman, joint event coordinator and a member of the Rotary Club of Roding, contacted us to register her thanks to Peter, and appreciation for our Chairman, Richard Bassett in attending the event. Cllr Bassett said he thoroughly enjoyed the games: *“The competitors were having a great time trying the various activities and it was really good seeing them having fun supporting each other. Very well done to all the organisers and helpers.*

*These were not people with disability but people with real ability and I was honoured to be part of the event.”* The event was opened by Paralympian Anne Wafula Strike MBE. Around 60 competitors took part in various sports - boccia, bowls, table tennis, darts, bagatelle, stick ball, quoits, wheelchair slalom and new age curling. There was also a wheelchair basketball demonstration and a chance for some of the competitors to try out the special wheelchairs. Plans are already in hand to make this an annual event, with the next Rotary Essex Disability Games set for 17 May 2020.

## Crochet group helps residents in care homes with dementia

Our Community Engagement Officer set up a crochet group to bring residents together. Their project has been making innovative aids to helping people with dementia 'Twiddlemuffs' - as they're known - are knitted, crocheted or fabric tubes with accessories such as buttons, bells, ribbons sewn onto them. They help ease agitation in people with dementia by keeping their hands and minds occupied. Over a month, the group - which meets at the Monkshams Pub, Buckhurst Way, made 14 items and donated them to the Lower Queens Care Home in Buckhurst Hill. *“We met residents so they could select a twiddle muff as a gift. The happiness and joy was so evident and many residents expressed their sincere gratitude,”* said the Community Engagement Officer.



## LGBT History Month and training opportunity



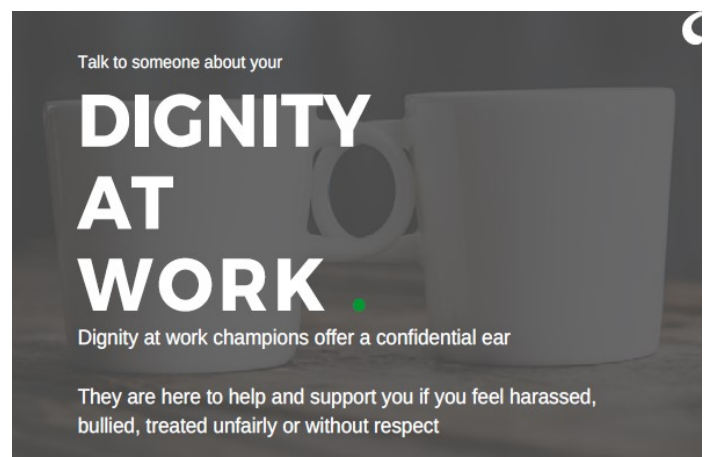
February 2019 was lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) History Month. To mark this event, the Project & Programme Management team invited the charity Outhouse East to deliver LGBT awareness training for staff. A successful pilot of this training took place on 28 January, covering bullying and hate crime, sexuality and gender identity and explored four out of the nine protected characteristics, as set out in the Equality Act (2010). The sessions were in high demand and very popular across all local authorities in Essex, and Outhouse East very kindly offered to deliver a further four sessions to EFDC staff in May.

## Pride Week

Essex Pride is an annual celebration of LGBT+ in Essex and beyond and takes place in Chelmsford Central Park. Essex Pride has been running since 2003. Every year we fly the rainbow flag outside the Civic Offices in support and celebration. This is an event for the whole community. Pride inspires everyone to embrace equality and demonstrates that people from all walks of life can join together and celebrate diversity.

## Dignity at Work

A network of Dignity at Work officers has been created at EFDC. To date, we have enlisted seven people from across the council, from planning to benefits and operations to enforcement. Dignity at Work Contact Officers play a vital role in promoting a positive environment where people are treated fairly and with respect. Their aim is to highlight and erase harassment, bullying, victimisation and any other forms of discriminatory behaviour which are totally unacceptable in the workplace. The role is voluntary and undertaken alongside their day jobs. As well as providing information to individuals, Dignity at Work Contact Officers intend to meet on a quarterly basis to identify common concerns and contribute to the development of positive and preventative action to improve communications and relationships between and amongst staff. They are also available to support anyone who feels they are being victimised in any way.



Find out more, visit [www.efdc.uk/intranet](http://www.efdc.uk/intranet)



## Looking forward

We will publish more equality information in the July 2020 and annually in July thereafter.