



**Leeds**  
CITY COUNCIL

Appendix 1

**Equality Progress 2020 – 2021**  
**Leeds – The Compassionate City: Tackling Inequalities**



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## Introduction

“Our ambition is for Leeds to be the best city in the UK: compassionate and caring with a strong economy; which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities; working towards being a net zero carbon city by 2030. We want Leeds to be a City that is distinctive, sustainable, ambitious, fun and creative for all, with a council that its residents can be proud of as the best council in the country. But most of all, in light of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, we want Leeds to be a safe city”

(Councillor James Lewis, Leader of Leeds City Council and Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council (*Best Council Plan 2020 – 2025 Tackling Poverty and Reducing Inequalities*))

The Equality Improvement Priorities 2018 - 2022 have been produced to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and to compliment the ‘Best City’ ambition aimed at tackling inequalities: for Leeds to have a Strong Economy and to be a Compassionate City.

The council’s equality improvement priorities have taken into account the protected characteristics as required under the Equality Act 2010. We continue to recognise poverty as a barrier that limits what people can do and can be. We have, therefore, included priorities that address poverty as we recognise that a number of the protected characteristics are disproportionately represented in those living in poverty.

We are conscious that there is not an equality priority for every protected characteristic but all characteristics are taken into account. We are committed to equality for all our citizens and believe that improving a service for one community will have a positive impact for all communities. We will continue our work across all the protected characteristics, whether or not there are specific equality improvement priorities which are explicitly focussing on them. We will consider all communities when we give due regard to equality at both strategic and operational activities.

## Demographics: A Changing Population

The population of Leeds was estimated to be 793,000 people in 2019 (ONS mid-year estimate) - an increase of 0.5% (3,800 people) in the year since the previous 2018 mid-year estimate. The population has increased by about 42,000 compared to the 2011 Census.

Based on the ONS 2019 MYE, there are estimated to be:-

- 153,600 children and young people aged 0-15
- 516,100 people of working age (16-64)
- 123,500 older people aged 65 and over
- 50.9% (403,794) are female and 49.1% (389,345) are male
- One in ten people (10%) are in the 20-24 age band reflecting the large student population

Looking at the 10 years between 2008 and 2018:<sup>1</sup>

- It is estimated that the Leeds population increased by 6.4% (47,500 people).
- The working age population had a smaller percentage increase (3.0%) than both the population of children and young people (13.7%) and the population aged 65 and over (13.1%).
- The population of older people aged 65 and above increased by 14,200 people. Although the 65 and above age group still has more women than men, there has been a bigger increase in the number of men, with 8,400 more men aged 65 and over resident in Leeds in 2018 than in 2008 (compared to 5,800 more women).
- There was a very significant increase in the number of primary school age children in Leeds, with an increase of 18,900 (20.7%) in the 0-10 age group.

Looking at the projected population 2018 to 2028:<sup>2</sup>

- Over the 10 years 2018 to 2028, the peak of those primary age increases will start feeding into secondary school, with a large increase in the number of teenagers in Leeds. There are projected to be 12,500 more young people aged between 11 and 17 by 2028 (21.5%).
- In the next 10 years, the increase in the older population is projected to be even bigger; with 20,000, more people aged 65 and over resident in Leeds in 2028 than in 2018.
- The Leeds population overall is predicted to continue to grow, reaching 830,500 by 2028; a 41,300 (5.2%) increase from 2018. The working age population will have a smaller percentage increase (2.6%) than both the population of 0 to 15 year olds (6%) and those aged 65 and over (15.3%).

The makeup of the City is outlined below:

- Leeds continues to become more ethnically diverse. The national 2011 Census showed that 18.9% of Leeds population was from a Black, minority ethnic background.
- According to the 2020 School Census the proportion of the school population from Black, Asian, minority ethnic backgrounds has nearly doubled since 2005, increasing from 17.9% in 2005 to 35.5% in 2020.
- The greatest ethnic diversity is in younger age groups, with 36.6% Black, Asian, minority ethnic pupils in primary schools and 33.6% Black, Asian, minority ethnic pupils in secondary and post-16 settings.
- In 2020, 20.5% of Leeds school pupils speak English as an additional language, with the top five main languages being Urdu, Polish, Romanian, Arabic and Panjabi.
- According to the national 2011 Census, the population aged 65 and older is less ethnically diverse than younger age groups, but the proportion from Black, Asian, minority ethnic backgrounds will increase as people who settled in Leeds, as young adults grow older.
- The religious profile of the City is changing. In the 10 years between the 2001 Census and 2011 Census, the proportion of people who said they are Christian decreased from 68.9% to 55.9%. The proportion with no religion increased from 16.8% to 28.2%. Compared to England and Wales, Leeds had higher than average proportions of people stating their religion as Jewish (0.9% compared to

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<sup>1</sup> ONS mid-year population estimates 2008-2018

<sup>2</sup> ONS 2016-based projections

0.5%), as Muslim (5.4% compared to 4.8%) and as Sikh (1.2% compared to 0.8%). The Muslim community had the youngest age profile.

- There is no direct count of disability for the whole population, but the Census 2011 collected information about 'long term health problems or disability'. In Leeds 83.3% of people said that their day-to-day activities are not limited by long-term health problems or disability, 7.9% said they are limited a lot and 8.9% said that they are limited a little.
- The 2011 Census collected information on civil partnerships for the first time, reflecting the Civil Partnership Act 2004, which came into effect in the UK in December 2005. In Leeds, 41.5% of adults were married, which is lower than the England and Wales rate of 46.6%; 0.2% of adults were in a registered same-sex civil partnership, which is the same as the England and Wales rate; 40.8% of adults were single (never married or never registered in a same-sex civil partnership), which is much higher than the England and Wales rate of 34.6%; 17.5% of adults were separated, divorced or widowed, which is slightly lower than the England and Wales rate of 18.6%.

The latest socio-economic analysis (notably the analysis based on the 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation and the 2019 update of the council's Poverty Fact Book) show that a range of inequalities persist across the City and, linked with deprivation levels, are particularly concentrated in specific localities with long-term related challenges such as access to employment, housing, language and literacy, skills, health and care responsibilities. The Leeds Joint Strategic Assessment is currently being updated and will be published during 2021.

A significant number of people in Leeds were already being impacted by low income and poverty before COVID-19 took effect in March 2020. The slow economic recovery alongside reductions in public spending has significantly impacted the poorest members of society. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 show the geographic concentration of deprivation in the communities of Inner East and Inner South Leeds, confirming the wider analysis of poverty and deprivation undertaken in the Joint Strategic Assessment 2018.

Based on the IMD 2019:-

- Leeds has 114 neighbourhoods (24% of its 482) in the most deprived 10% nationally. Although the IMD is based on neighbourhoods and is designed to identify pockets of deprivation, the government also publish summary measures for larger areas like local authorities. There is no single 'best' local authority measure, and the ranking of Leeds varies depending on the measure used.
- Local authorities are often ranked on the proportion of neighbourhoods in the most deprived 10% nationally. Leeds is ranked at 33 out of 317 local authority districts (1 is most deprived) on this measure. However, there are two measures which identify local authority districts with large numbers of people experiencing deprivation. These are the income scale and the employment scale. The income scale ranks local authorities on the number of people experiencing income deprivation. Leeds had the 4th highest number (with Birmingham ranked 1, Manchester ranked 2 and Liverpool ranked 3). The employment scale ranks local authorities on the number of people

experiencing employment deprivation. Leeds had the 3rd highest number (with Birmingham ranked 1 and Liverpool ranked 2.)

## **Equality Progress**

Progress against each of the council's equality improvement priorities during 2020 – 2021 is outlined below. This update is not intended to give a comprehensive view of all the work that has been undertaken but provides an overview and examples from across all Directorates and from a locality perspective.

During 2020- 2021 the council and the City had to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Progress updates in this report includes specific work or where work was re-purposed to support the City's communities and council staff who were affected by the pandemic.

The equality improvement priorities recognise that there are currently different outcomes and experiences for different groups and communities. They were developed to support the Best Council ambitions of Compassionate City and Strong Economy and progress is reported against these. The progress updates also identify work that is linked to the council's Breakthrough Projects and locality focussed work.

## **Compassionate City – Living Safely and Well, Living at Home, and Valuing Communities**

**To ensure that the move to strength based social care (including Asset Based Community Development) has a strong focus on tackling inequalities and that implementation of new ways of working take into account the needs of individuals and communities from protected characteristics**

### **Responding to the Pandemic**

Over the last year Adult Social Care Service focused its effort and resources on the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating impact this has had on individuals, families and the communities they serve.

This required them to strengthen their community connections and collaboration with health partners and community organisations, to ensure they remained responsive to the needs of people requiring care and support. The main focus has been on community out-reach as well as ensuring a focus on the protection and dignity of those who need help the most.

Adult Social Care have also been guided by the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care confirming the needs and strengths of all individuals were respected and kept central to decision making processes. The framework introduces a set of core ethical values and principles, which has guided the work to ensure strengths-based social work values are embedded when organising and delivering the Adult Social Care Service.

During the pandemic, the 12 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) pathfinders in communities across the City were able to quickly bring people together to establish mutual aid. A number of the pathfinders became community hubs, co-ordinating support for communities at a local level. The pathfinders developed innovative ways to keep people connected and active from food sharing schemes to car park discos.

### **Exposure of Inequalities**

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the persistent health, social and economic inequalities which are present in our communities, in particular, within our Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health needs. Building on the 'strengths-based approach' to social work, which takes account of individual strengths, wishes, aspirations, families and community context, the service have been able to support people in a way which respects and responds to any protected characteristic.

In addition to this, the global Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests across the world have been a catalyst for change and Adult Social Care has responded to this challenge with a refocus on their approach to anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice. As a profession that upholds human rights and challenges social injustice it has been important to demonstrate that anti-discrimination and anti-racist practice is visible in service provision, continued learning and the support that provided to people.

The emphasis on anti-racist practice has also brought into sharp focus the experience of Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff and workforce race equality. It is vital that the service has a clear and accurate understanding of the challenges faced by their staff, including their experiences, so the service have adopted Workforce Race Equality Standards (WRES) for social care from 1st April 2021. The key driver for the WRES for social care is to support local authorities and other employers to truly adopt anti-discriminatory and anti-racist cultures. Phase 1 will see the service working with social care departments in 18 Local Authorities to see how data is captured and monitored locally, and to measure progress against indicators of workforce race equality. Throughout the first year, the service will listen to staff, management and the sector directly on what gaps exist and what areas need strengthening.

The work in this area recognises the need for us to build a workforce more reflective of the communities we serve by promoting opportunities for Black, Asian and minority ethnic people to enter and advance within the organisation.

### **Approach to Collaboration**

#### **Individuals and communities are better connected**

Adult Social Care frontline services have been transformed and their response to the pandemic has seen a huge shift in how they collaborate across systems. They have strengthened their connections with colleagues, community groups, and health and care professionals by using video calls and other online platforms. This shift in practice and new ways of working has enabled them to adapt and enhance

their practice, knowledge and skills, as well, as ensuring they continue to have a vision of putting people first and working to understand the needs of communities.

An evaluation of the ABCD programme undertaken by Leeds Beckett University in 2019-2021 found strong evidence that this programme has supported better social connections. The research found examples of greater community cohesion; bridging differences in generations and neighbourhoods being more inclusive of people with disabilities. There is evidence that social connections were fostered and neighbourliness increased during the pandemic with people signposted to other support, services and local activities. Connections with local organisations and those further afield were made.

A particular area of attention has been on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and their access to services. As a service it has looked at who is approaching adults social care for help from Black, Asian and minority ethnic Communities. The service have found that working age adults from Asian communities are not approaching them for help in the numbers they would expect and that African people do come forward in the numbers expected but then a smaller number of people then take up services. This pattern of referral and take up of services was particularly marked during the first wave of the pandemic from March to May 2020. It has also been found that people from Caribbean communities are over-represented in the engagement of services and there needs to be a better understanding of the issues that drive this.

The Better Lives Board have agreed to sponsor a piece of work to address these issues and has called it “The Listening Project”. The project aims to ensure:-

- There is equity of access for all communities;
- People are knowledgeable about what the council and wider community services are available to support their health and well-being; and
- Adult Social Care is able to offer a choice of culturally competent services

In order to achieve these objectives, the service needs to consult with people from these communities and listen to what they have to tell us about how they go about getting advice and support to live fulfilling lives, what they know about adult social care services and other community services, what are the barriers and possible solutions.

### **People Have Good Friends and Live Fulfilling Lives**

The Neighbourhood Social Work teams have been both innovative and creative in their response to the pandemic. Whilst the teams have been mostly working remotely, they have ensured that they continue to provide an Adult Social Care Service to our communities and some of our most vulnerable people.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the way the service has needed to work in the last year. It has highlighted the importance of human relationships and our focus on putting people first demonstrates how responsive social workers were to meeting the needs of vulnerable people and their families. Through the use of

various online platforms, teams have been able to offer vital assessments of need to people that have been unable to participate in face to face assessments in their own homes.

The teams have also used these digital platforms to stay connected to people that have been isolated and in need of a 'check in' call where their support networks have been diminished or restricted during the lock down. There has also been an increase in staff knowledge and understanding of the benefits of digital technologies and how these can enhance our social work practice; providing more options for how we connect with communities as well as understanding how technology can support in the promotion of independence, choice and control.

The lockdown also saw a City-wide response to homelessness with this group of people being moved to a hotel in the City. The Social Work teams worked collaboratively with housing partners and a 'Talking Point' was set up at the hotel to provide help and support to people in need of advice and information. This has been a successful collaboration and ensured a strengths-based approach, coupled with an emphasis on prevention to support the 'move on' plans for these individuals.

The Leeds Beckett University evaluation of the ABCD programme showed promising evidence of friendships, with a plausible causal chain from foundations to meaningful relationships. The research demonstrated that ABCD provided opportunities for people to join in and connect with others; that confidence, independence and wellbeing grew as people engaged with others; that new friendships were built within groups and supportive relationships were formed and that some friendships carried on outside these formal structures. The research reflected on the impact of the pandemic on communities and the new friendships that emerged for many people during the past year.

A pilot Social Return on Investment study was undertaken as part of the Leeds Beckett University research and showed promising evidence of the social value of ABCD through increasing friendships and volunteering. The estimated social value for the established pathfinder was within the range of £5.27 and £14.02 for every £1 invested.

The Leeds Beckett University evaluation showed strong qualitative evidence that communities are identifying and working to bring about the changes they want to see. In 2019/2020:-

- 146 new Community Connectors (individuals actively engaging in developing their communities) were recruited;
- 36 new self-sustaining groups involving 304 citizens were formed in the pathfinder areas;
- 25 Third Sector organisations and 326 individuals participated in ABCD training sessions (with 100% positive feedback); and
- 33 "small sparks" grants were made to communities to support them to make the changes they wanted to see.

The Leeds Beckett University research included examples of citizens sharing ideas and planning together through informal conversations, to establishing new groups and taking part in consultations and steering groups. The research also included some examples of the impact of positive community action to deliver change in neighbourhoods.

### **Focus on Hospital Discharge and System Flow**

Another area of development has been the introduction of the “discharge to assess” guidance and the principles of this approach have rapidly grown and changed over the last year. During this period there has been a move to place Social Work teams outside the hospital setting and shift to a community pathway. These developments have added new working practices with an application of ‘Home First’ principles. Using a strengths-based approach to social work, the Adult Social Care Service will be strategic in ensuring the “home first” principle is embedded with system partners and the redesign of these pathways.

Within the Care Delivery Service staff have been responsive to the City’s needs to support system flow. For example, services have been reconfigured to provide dementia services, discharge to assess beds, designated COVID-19 “hot” wings and supporting the homeless community in hotels. Services have been tailored around individuals and have broadened to offer increased digital and remote support. When communities re-open fully, alongside the Government roadmap, accessing community resources and assets will assist people in having a mixed package of support and better meeting their goals and aspirations. Support to family carers in partnership with commissioners and Carers Leeds has grown to ensure that carers are at the heart of service delivery and redesign, alongside people who access the service and prospective users.

People’s experiences have led to a significant number of staff increasing their knowledge and understanding of barriers experienced by older and disabled people. As a result, staff are feeling more confident about their interactions and provision of care and support for older and disabled people.

### **Focus on Mental Health and Learning Disabilities**

An area of development in terms of working with people with dementia has been the integrated discharge initiative with regards to patients in a mental health facility. This is a multi-agency swift response to ensure that people with dementia and their families are not subject to any inpatient delays and are supported to be discharged from hospital either back home or into an appropriate provision in a timely way. This approach has facilitated a significant number of hospital discharges over the last 12 months, reduced delays and has ensured that individuals and their families receive a knowledgeable and timely response whilst working in true multi-disciplinary collaboration. Carers have provided positive responses.

A strengths- based approach has been implemented within the Learning Disability service with a focus on the promotion of greater independence, greater autonomy

and the maximisation of community relationships. This has been underpinned by the 'Being Me' strategy written by people with a learning disability and their family/carers. The focus of the work has essentially been in relation to improved access for people with learning disabilities and / or autism, and / or physical disabilities to access opportunities for education, training and employment.

The pandemic brought a number of challenges with regards to lockdown and social distancing which created significant distress for people with autism specifically, the loss of routine was problematic, as was, the loss of tactile contact. An initiative with colleagues from West Yorkshire Police reviewed a less punitive approach to individuals essentially breaking the lockdown rules. A collaboration strategy was implemented to ensure a compassionate and informed approach to supporting individuals on the autistic spectrum and often with a learning disability to find mechanisms to support adherence to social distancing and to reduce levels of distress. A fundamental aspect of working with individuals during a pandemic has incorporated two key principles:-

- How can I uphold the inherent dignity of people?
- How can I uphold human rights?

These two pillars have been used to enhance and promote strengths-based processes with individuals specifically within an adult safeguarding context to ensure that practice is consistent with people's wishes and aspirations.

The service will continue to improve these pathways as well as understanding the impact of these models and the experiences of those who have experienced them. Despite the challenges the service has had good feedback and compliments from people in receipt of their services.

### **To improve access to social care services for LGBT+ people through training, quality assurance and redesign of policies and processes**

Work has continued on implementing LGBT+ awareness training within Social Care Services and with the ongoing pilot with Opening Doors London (ODL) and their Pride in Care quality standard.

The LGBT+ awareness training has been delivered in partnership with Yorkshire MESMAC who have continued to deliver training in registered care homes and at the council's central Social Care training venue. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, sessions are now delivered virtually. The training has had excellent uptake and received very positive feedback. It is hoped the training will continue and expand when face to face training in care homes can be restarted.

The Pride in Care quality standard pilot has been continuing with two registered care homes, one from the independent sector and one council run home. Upon completion of the Pride in Care quality standard with the two pilot homes there is provision in the pilot for a third home or other type of social care service to undertake the quality standard assessment.

Another element of the pilot, is the recruitment of older LGBT+ ambassadors by ODL to assist in evaluating services going through the quality standard assessment. Actions have led to LGBT+ awareness training being delivered within fourteen registered care settings with five more care homes being scheduled in before having to be postponed due to the pandemic. There has also been sessions delivered for wider social care staff on a regular basis and then online since the start of the pandemic. This has helped ensure that staff better understand the experiences and perspective of LGBT+ care home residents, the experience of LGBT+ people in society and in a social care setting. This has meant staff feel more confident in delivering person centered care and understanding the needs of LGBT+ people.

Based on 52 feedback forms completed by some of the care home staff who attended the MESMAC training, they assessed that: -

- 80% felt that the training was successful in that they met the aims and outcomes they wanted to achieve;
- 85% believed the training was delivered well and efficiently and effectively; and
- 90% believe their knowledge on LGBT+ improved following the training

Outlined below is some feedback received from some of the care homes that have undertaken the training :-

Care Home A: *'Thank you for sending the presentation information and for delivering such a great training session yesterday. Myself and the team are so driven to make changes within our care setting and have already starting putting actions together for our Love is Love project'*

Care Home B: *'(Yorkshire MESMAC) have delivered the LGBT+ training this morning. Just so say excellent. I would if at all possible in the future like to book another session'*.

Care Home C: *'It was brilliant, very information and all of the staff really enjoyed it'*.

Actions have led to two homes undertaking the Pride in Care quality mark assessment to showcase them as LGBT+ inclusive care settings upon completion of the assessment. Funding has been renewed for the LGBT+ awareness training which in the immediate term will continue online. As lockdown restrictions ease, the plan is to restart face to face delivery within social care settings, as soon as, feasibly possible.

### **To improve health outcomes for Leeds Migrant Communities**

Since April 2019 relevant Public Health commissioned services have been asked to use the council approved 'UK citizen or other' question in order to monitor access to services by migrant groups. Initially, for the purposes of monitoring

progress by the Migrant Health Board the main focus is on the 'One You Leeds' and the 'Better Together' contracts.

### **Better Together**

Better Together is a community health development contract which is focused on building the health capacity of the whole populations in deprived communities, including marginalised groups, such as, migrants. This is delivered by Third sector teams working in these communities across Leeds.

It is very difficult to compare 2020/21 data against the 2019/20 due to the impact that COVID-19 has had on service delivery. Better Together rapidly and effectively re-purposed delivery to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable citizens during the pandemic. In addition to offering online groups and one-to-one telephone support in place of face to face activities, they played an important role in the community hub work – co-ordinating and supporting local hubs to make sure that people who needed support received it. The success of this work is testament to the community facing nature of the service and the strong links with local communities that they have developed.

Better Together has responded well to the changes that have been needed, but understandably the numbers of new people accessing the service are smaller than in previous years and the level of intensive outreach that would normally be taking place has not been possible due to COVID restrictions. Providers have reported that being asked about residency can be intimidating and off-putting for some service users, so there has been extra sensitivity around this issue during this period. The figures for uptake are:-

- **East North East Leeds** - There were more females (329) accessing the project with 45 of these answering the residency question (14%). The corresponding figure for males was 29 out of a total of 232 service users (13%). Of those answering the question, the majority of service users were British UK citizens (61) with 42 female and 19 male. There were 4 EU nationals (1 female 3 male) and 9 asylum seekers (3 female, 6 male). The proportion of people answering the residency question is significantly lower than in 2019/20 (31% female and 49% male).
- **South Leeds** - Again there were more females accessing the project (135), with a total of 54 answering the residency question (40%). Of these, 40 were British UK, 9 EU nationals, 3 refugees and 1 asylum seeker. The corresponding figure for males was 6 out of a total of 68 service users (9%). Of these, 5 were British UK and 1 was an asylum seeker. As with the East North East area the proportion of people answering the residency question is lower than in 2019/20 (55% female and 46% male).
- **West Leeds** – In contrast, the West team has increased the proportion of people who were prepared to answer the residency question. Out of 186 females, a total of 182 answered the residency question (98%) and the corresponding figure for males was 100 out of a total of 102 service users (98%). Female service users predominated again, as did the British UK section

of both female (145) and male service users (56). There were 3 female EU nationals, 11 refugees and 19 asylum seekers. 4 females described themselves as 'other'. There were 4 male EU nationals, 21 refugees and 18 asylum seekers.

Conversations will take place across the Better Together partners to share best practice from West Leeds to try to increase the proportion of this information from the other two areas. Better Together providers are encouraged to work closely with local migrant and refugee groups. In the past year during the pandemic, this has increased, especially through the emergency response they helped to provide in community hubs.

A new Locality Health Development and Improvement Service is in the process of being procured. The specification will stress the importance of supporting newly emerging communities and making links with specialists in supporting people from these communities appropriately.

### **One You Leeds**

The service has now established fields in the database to identify residency status of all service users and further broken down by the element of the service used. In Q1 to Q3 2020/21 which coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic the service saw a total of 3,473 new service users with a response rate of 94% for the residency status question (3,279 people). Of these, 101 were EU Nationals, 3 Asylum seekers and 8 refugees. It should be noted that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the service was required to move to a totally remote service offer which may have impacted on the numbers of people accessing.

The main priority for the One You Leeds service continues to be the delivery of services in areas of the City in order to attract and support those people who experience the worst health outcomes linked to their usual healthy living behaviours. Although the service had to adapt quickly in response to the pandemic and move to a new delivery model, the service has been widely promoted across various media to continue to attract those living within deprivation quintiles 1 and 2 with over 60% of service users attending from Q1-3 2020/21 accessing from those areas. As the service moves back to face to face service provision, outreach and communications activity will continue to focus in these priority areas.

There is a progress measure to Increase identification and treatment of Latent Tuberculosis (LTBI) by screening with a target improvement of a 'Year on year increase in the number of latent TB cases identified as a proportion of individuals tested'

From April to December 2020 79 new entrants were screened for latent TB with 15 resulting in a positive test, 19% success rate.

Due to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and travel restrictions the numbers of new entrants being screened in Leeds dropped. Only essential work was sustained within the TB service. Screening for latent TB was put on hold from April 2020 until September 2020; it was not found to be an essential part of the TB

service as people are well, asymptomatic, and non-infectious and they do not pose a risk to the public. A waiting list was developed for all eligible people needing screening in Leeds.

There is also a gap in the national Flag4 data of new GP patient registrations which the TB Service has historically received notifying the team of new entrants with the Latent Tuberculosis Infection (LTBI) criteria in order to initialise the LTBI screening process. This continues to be a national issue and has been escalated as a risk with Public Health England at local and national levels and the Leeds Health Protection Board.

As part of COVID-19 reset and recovery work the TB service intend to work closely with partners within Leeds to identify new entrants who have not been screened for latent TB during the pandemic.

People with LTBI who are not ill and do not have any symptoms, can become ill as a result of reactivation to active TB years or decades later. It is likely that LTBI reactivation causes most of the active cases in the UK. Individuals who were born or spend considerable time in a country where TB is very common are more likely to have LTBI. The Leeds TB Service programme of LTBI screening and treatment has prevented Latent TB reactivation to Active TB which is highly contagious for families and communities. The impact of Active TB can have serious health and wellbeing impacts from long term poor outcomes for individuals if left untreated. Therefore the TB Service has identified and treated these LTBI cases and improved the health and wellbeing of those patients.

The progress measure on Measles, Mumps and Rubella Vaccination (MMR) which includes areas with high migrant populations shows a small decrease in the percentage of children receiving both MMR1 and MMR2 vaccination, with a more significant decrease in 2020 in identified areas.

The decrease in attendance for both MMR vaccinations during 2020 may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown and some families isolating and shielding. Work was undertaken during the lockdown periods by 0-19 and Children's Centre services to ensure families were still aware of the importance of attending for vaccines and in some cases accompanying attendance.

### **Migrant Health Board**

During the last year the priorities of the Migrant Health Board action plan had to shift to ensure that there was an immediate and effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As was the case with many groups and boards the Migrant Health Board itself was paused during the pandemic. It is recognised that the health and wellbeing of migrant communities and asylum seekers has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. As a consequence there was a significant amount of activity to respond to the needs of migrants and asylum seekers during the pandemic.

A key issue that has affected many people during lockdown has been sustaining mental wellbeing and this has clearly disproportionately impacted the most vulnerable including migrants and asylum seekers. Additional COVID-19 funding was allocated to the council to support the delivery of a range of activities to respond to this issue including:-

- Providing physical activity opportunities and sessions to improve mental wellbeing of asylum seekers who were being housed in emergency accommodation in Leeds for a prolonged period. Following a series of focus groups with asylum seekers accommodated in hotels during the pandemic it was recognised that the mental wellbeing was being negatively affected by uncertainty, lack of social interaction and lack of opportunity for physical activity. Funding was provided to deliver a series of wellbeing and physical activity sessions including the provision of equipment which a number of asylum seekers participated in. Following delivery of the wellbeing sessions, Refugee Education Training Advice Service (RETAS) is now encouraging staff working with asylum seekers to train as mental health first aiders to raise their confidence in recognising and offering initial support to people around mental wellbeing;
- Developing a mental wellbeing campaign for those who have been most impacted by the pandemic, including refugee and asylum seeking communities; and
- Securing further funding for Refugee and Asylum Seeking women to stay physically active during the pandemic. This was following soft intelligence that highlighted women were afraid to go outside for fear of catching coronavirus. The work started in January 2021 and was co-developed and co-delivered by the women themselves to ensure maximum participation and engagement. Using a peer to peer approach Women's Health Matters have trained volunteers to deliver sessions to the women virtually through Zoom.

### **Communication**

There was a large amount activity to address a number of identified COVID-19 related communication issues which included:-

- Distributing previously used smart phones and tablets to refugee and asylum seeking communities via the Migration Partnership to support digital inclusion and people who have struggled to connect with services. As so much information and service provision was suddenly reliant on remote delivery;
- Establishing a grants fund to support organisations working with faith and culturally diverse communities. 40+ organisations received three pieces of funding; the first was for messages specifically promoting positive COVID-19 messaging focusing on safety and mental wellbeing, the second was to release capacity within the organisations for continued engagement. A third pot of funding was released in March 2021 to support vaccine messaging; and

- Developing and disseminating a range of resources by Public Health in several languages, both written and using various media to promote key messages including, staying safe, testing etc.

### **Vaccine Uptake and Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy**

The COVID-19 Vaccine Inequalities Plan 'Leaving No One Behind' aims to mitigate inequalities to access and ensure that underserved populations have access to the COVID-19 vaccine close to where they live in Leeds. There is a roving approach with a Bus vaccination clinic that is complementing the main vaccination sites across the City.

The inclusion approach complements the place based and inequality approaches and focuses on supporting 'socially excluded' groups to access to the vaccine. This approach will support Asylum seekers, people living in domestic violence emergency accommodation, people in alcohol detox centres, Gypsy and Travellers, homeless people, refugees, Roma communities, prison leavers, sex workers and people with no recourse to public funds. The vaccines are delivered by Bevan Healthcare, a social enterprise company, commissioned by NHS England to provide responsive NHS GP services to socially excluded groups. Also key has been close partnership working with a number of Third Sector and community groups to identify and support these groups to receive their vaccination. More than 600 people have been supported to get their vaccine through this route. The progress of this work is overseen by a small group of partners including Bevan, Public Health and NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group.

Public Health has worked with the Refugee Council to develop ways to engage migrants and refugees over the vaccine and reduce hesitancy and encourage uptake. This included:-

- The Refugee Council ran a number of sessions, both face to face and via Zoom about the COVID-19 Vaccine for people accommodated in Leeds hotels. These sessions have been supported by volunteer interpreters and have been attended by Public Health England who reassured people about worries they had about the vaccines; and
- The Refugee Council are now looking into the possibility of producing a short film in collaboration with NHS England featuring volunteers from asylum seeking or refugee backgrounds and addressing myths, facts and concerns about the vaccine.

Public Health produced a webinar about the COVID-19 vaccine approach in Leeds for frontline workers, one session has been held and another was planned for the end of March 2021. The session is also accessible through the Public Health You Tube play list. Further training sessions and resources will continue to be delivered for frontline staff across the City to address vaccine hesitancy and staff working with vulnerable groups will be encouraged to attend.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the delivery of services like One You Leeds and Better Together and changed the priorities of the Migrant Health

Board. However there has been a rapid and effective response to minimise the impact on communities and improve vaccine uptake amongst key groups.

One You Leeds has embedded residency questions as part of the registration process with the service and all first point of contact staff are trained around appropriate language when talking to new clients. This has already resulted in an improved response rate which is currently 94% (Q1-Q3 2020/21).

Although it does appear that COVID-19 has impacted on attendance for both MMR vaccinations, work has continued to progress to support families to understand the importance of having the vaccination when called and as a result there has been a relatively smaller decrease than might have been expected.

Partnership working has continued throughout the pandemic to improve vaccination take up, including community appropriate messaging, doorstep contacts and accompanying people to appointments.

Migrant and Asylum Seeker health and wellbeing remain a priority for Public Health and work will continue with internal and external partners to take a holistic approach to health and wellbeing for these groups. The work of the Migrant Health Board needs to be reviewed and refreshed in the light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants and asylum seekers.

The Migrant Health Board was reconvened in March 2021 and members reviewed the terms of reference and will review the short and long-term priorities with the intention of developing a revised action plan. A short-term priority was agreed to be work around language support and consent to improve access to health services. Connections have been made with the new regional Migrant Health Network to potentially develop solutions to this issue together.

### **Improve the well-being of young people that identify as Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transsexual (LGBT+) across the City**

Children and Families Services and its partners undertake a significant amount of work to support and improve the wellbeing of LGBT+ young people and their families in Leeds.

LGBT+ young people and those who may be questioning their gender or sexual identity have an increased risk of adverse mental health. The impact of COVID-19 with young people home schooling and those being “at risk’ at home” has exacerbated these issues. It has been important to enable practitioners and school staff to be able to understand young people’s needs, and where needed, offer them support and advice and/or direct them to further resources and organisations specifically aimed at supporting LGBT+ young people.

It was also equally important to gain the views and experiences of LGBT+ young people to ensure services are delivered in a way that recognises their needs.

Children and Family Services has a role in ensuring its support for LGBT+ young people is consistent and constant despite any external pressures. This may include being visible in support to all LGBT+ children and young people despite challenges, and ensuring the offer to LGBT+ young people is clearly communicated to all partners.

Work undertaken includes:-

### **Supporting staff to effectively support LGBT+ young people and their families through training, information sharing and communications, etc.**

#### **Training**

In 2020 training has continued to be delivered to staff on the issues affecting LGBT+ young people, their possible needs and how best to support young people to achieve their best and be happy in themselves. A range of information and training courses are available to staff to help them to do this. Examples of training provided include:

- Stonewall Train the Trainer sessions;
- Youth Mental Health First Aid training that covers awareness raising, and how to support a staff to appropriately respond to a young person in crisis, and signpost to support. \* *Details of this course, who it has been delivered to as well as feedback on the course is provided as supported evidence;*
- Increasing Resilience, Reducing Risk Training: Talking to Looked After Children and Young People about Physical Health, Emotional Wellbeing, Resilience, Relationships and Risk;
- Healthy Self Esteem training for professionals to support young people;
- Free training by Barnardo's on tackling Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying; and
- Training recently delivered to schools and settings on the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) guidance

Training is being developed within Children & Family Services that includes the voices of LGBT+ young people that will be delivered in teams. In addition, the LGBT+ Staff Network will be delivering LGBT+ Awareness and Gender Identity training during 2021.

#### **Information and Guidance**

Information and guidance has continued to be provided to staff to ensure they are able to access the latest information, legislation and resources to support them to support LGBT+ young people.

Examples include:

- The School Wellbeing Website, includes links to external resources for staff to use; for example, Stonewall's 'Creating an LGBT-Inclusive Primary Curriculum';
- Regular bulletins from the Health and Wellbeing Service about resources and links;
- Membership of Stonewall's Children and Young People's Services Champions programme which includes access to a wide range of resources, information and

training sessions, etc. specifically aimed at supporting staff, teachers and professionals to effectively support LGBT+ young people;

- Individual support and signposting to schools. These could include visits which cover information, legislation and resources where requested; and
- The development of the RSHE Policy Guidance and Checklist for schools by the Health and Wellbeing Service to assist schools to meet their both their statutory and local requirements.

### **Supporting LGBT+ young people and young people who may questioning their gender or sexuality and providing them with advice and guidance**

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns have resulted in a sense of fear and anxiety. This has led to short-term as well as long-term mental health implications for children and young people. A recent poll conducted for Barnardo's by YouGov reported a rise in issues related to mental health and wellbeing for at least one in three of the participating 4,000 children and young people.

The impact on young peoples' mental health was one of the main concerns for the Youth Service.

The Youth Service was quick to respond to impact of COVID-19, particularly, in relation to the provision of its youth groups - 'Out 2 18' and 'Transtastic' who were no longer able to meet physically. The Youth Service moved the groups online to ensure young people did not miss out on support and were able to receive important public health messages. Members of the groups who didn't feel comfortable with Zoom were contacted separately outside of group settings to support them in a way that suited them.

Despite the move to hold virtual meetings during the lockdown, Out to 18 and Transtastic group members felt and were physically isolated throughout the periods of lockdown and experienced anxiety as a result. One young person who contacted a youth worker said they hadn't left their bedroom in months and some members of the group ('Out 2 18') had never actually met each other. To support these young people, the Youth Service set up a trip to Herd Farm to give them opportunity to get out and take part in some outdoor activities. Feedback from the young people went on the trip was really positive, the young people said they had enjoyed themselves and it had the effect of boosting the confidence and self-esteem.

Youth group members (members from Out 2 18 and Transtastic) recently completed a 6 week project on the subject of mental health which covered coping mechanisms, information about support services, symptoms of poor mental health, being able to recognise their own mental health and being able to support their friends or families.

More generally, support to young people from 'Out 2 18' and 'Transtastic' has also been provided from other organizations such as Gender Identity Development Services (GIDS). For example, a young person with learning difficulties wasn't fully aware of what was happening during their transition process and the actions being undertaken to facilitate it. Youth workers contacted GIDS to gain support for this particular young person. Subsequently GIDS worked with the young person and

their family to explain what was going to happen to support this person's transition to ensure they were able to provide informed consent to the actions within the process.

**Providing opportunities for LGBT+ young people to meet peers and access local resources available to LGBT+ people.**

Youth Service youth workers offer advice and support young people who don't want to join either 'Out 2 18' or 'Transtastic' but still need support to come out to parents, families and friends. Youth workers are happy to talk to young people's families and/or friends either with the young person or on their behalf. They also try to keep in touch with young people who have left the group to let them know about any opportunities they may be interested in.

Youth workers provide one-to-one and group support to young people as well as offer them advice and guidance to enable them to safely engage with activities that help with their confidence building, personal development, and the ability to make friends with peers. They provide young people with a space where they can experience inclusion, acceptance, gain peer support, and have fun in a safe environment.

As part of the 'Out 2 18' and 'Transtastic' group sessions a variety of professionals have been brought in to support young people and let them know about their services, these sessions have included staff from GIDS, Forward Leeds, Leeds Sexual Health, Thackray Medical Museum, MindMate, Leeds Art Gallery, the Independent Sexual Violence Unit as well as many others. These professionals help young people to find out about their services, ensure young people know these services are LGBT+ friendly, and what to do if they experience hate crime or need sexual health support, etc.

**Engaging and consulting with LGBT+ young people to gain their views and ensure their voices are heard;**

It has been recognised that to effectively support young people and their families, the workforce needs to be able to understand the needs of the diverse communities in Leeds.

A Cultural Identity/Inclusion Steering Group was established in 2019 to look at issues such as recruitment/progression and representation of the communities of Leeds. As well as, the confidence and competence of practitioners to understand, and, therefore, effectively support, the range of differing cultural needs of children and families across the City. This work has included reviewing how to incorporate the voice and influence of children and young people, parents and carers into improving practice for both internal and external customers.

Consultation opportunities are often available to members of the two youth groups for LGBT+ young people - 'Out 2 18' and 'Transtastic' to gain their views to help improve services. Below are some examples of consultation undertaken with these two youth groups:-

- Involvement in developing training resources for council staff about how to work with and talk to young people about sexuality and gender;
- Sharing their views about NHS services regarding how the young people in 'Transtastic' feel when accessing NHS services. The questions asked of young people by the registered nurses training to become Public Health Nurses are provided as supporting evidence; and
- Involvement in developing a training resource for professionals working in local authority residential homes. This work involved the young people sharing their experiences of being LGBT+ with professionals to support them on how to work with, and support, other young LGBT+ young people, particularly trans young people. The training was delivered by a small group of young people from 'Transtastic' but the larger group were involved in the development of the training resource itself. This training was well received and a feedback was positive.

People and organisations often contact the LGBT+ group workers about young people being involved in consultation and engagement exercises. Group workers ensure they discuss possible opportunities with the young people themselves to find out if they want to be involved, for example, the NHS consultation discussed above. All requests are shared with the young people to discuss beforehand to ensure they are fully informed about the request and what is being asked of them and to be able to decide if they are happy, and wish to be, involved in the consultation.

### **How Children Services communicates/ demonstrates its support to LGBT+ young people**

To communicate the Youth Service's youth groups, 'Transtastic' and 'Out 2 18', the service produced an 'Information for Professionals' document that details the two groups and outlines how young people can contact the service and or attend one of the groups to source support, information and advice as well as meet peers. These documents are included as evidence, see below.

One minute guides have been developed for staff. They provide information on terminology, the use of correct pronouns and links to further information, advice and guidance. They also provide information on the support available to young people themselves, such as local and national organisations and resources, such as, the local groups discussed above and links to organizations such Stonewall and Mermaids.

Work is currently being undertaken to review these guides to ensure they continue to include the latest information, for example, relevant legislation and terminology, and ensure the included links to further advice, support and resources remain up to date and accessible.

In terms of demonstrating its support to LGBT+ young people, Children and Families Services is a member of Stonewall's Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) Champions Programme.

Stonewall describe the CYPS Champion programme as “A unique tool for local authorities to measure LGBT+ inclusion, in terms of policy and practice, across their Children’s Services. It looks at LGBT+ inclusion across five key areas including training, strategic support, as well as the support the local authority offers schools and settings.”

In 2019 Leeds scored 95 out of 130 against the award and was one of three local authorities from across the country to receive the Silver CYPS Champion Award. It achieved this result by scoring highly across all five performance areas.

The 2019 CYPS Champion Award submission was drafted by the Stonewall Task Group. The group includes representatives from Children and Families to ensure the Leeds Submission reflected the variety of work being done across services to support LGBT+ young people and their families in Leeds.

Teachers and professionals from across Children and Family Services have received a number of different training packages designed to inform them of the experiences and issues LGBT+ young people and young people questioning their gender or sexual identity may face; how best to support them, and how to access information on where to go to for further advice and support either for themselves or the individual young people they are working with.

Schools also have access to the School Wellbeing Website to obtain advice, support and links to further information, as well as, receive regular bulletins, newsletters and communications on information, updates and resources available to support staff and/or the young people they work with. The Health and Wellbeing Service actively supports schools to ensure they are deliver on their statutory and local requirements. The development of the RSHE Policy Guidance and Checklist for schools is example of this support.

It is hoped that ensuring practitioners and staff have access to the latest information, advice and support, as well as links to further resources, has enabled them to feel adequately supported, in an area that can sometimes can be complex and difficult.

### **The Impact on Young People**

Services were adapted during the pandemic demonstrates Children and Family Services, in particular, the Youth Service ongoing support to LGBT+ young people during the most difficult times.

LGBT+ young people have sought support, guidance and advice from the Youth Service, particularly, the youth workers supporting the youth groups ‘Out to 18 ‘ and ‘Transtastic’. Young people value these services and consider them to be a trustworthy source of support.

Young people have and continue to be encouraged to be involved, in the day to day delivery of services, in particular, those aimed to support all young people including LGBT+ young people and young people who may be questioning their

gender or sexual identity. In doing so, services are more informed about the experiences young people face and how they could be best supported.

In addition, young people are given autonomy to be involved with and make the decisions that affect both groups - 'Out 2 18' and 'Transtastic' including what is discussed at each session, the consultations they are involved in and even where and when the group meets. The groups develop their own action plans and the young people have clear expectations about what they expect from the workers and vice versa.

Children and Families Services will continue to support to LGBT+ children, young people and their families. More specifically as a result of the pandemic support around the psychological impacts on children and young people is one of the key focuses of the work being planned during 2021. Work is being undertaken already under the umbrella of "The Future in Mind Strategy: Leeds Strategy Refresh".

In particular, moving into the recovery phase the Youth Service aims to expand its offer to other groups of vulnerable young people accessing specialist/targeted provision such as LGBT+ youth groups and young carers service.

### **Stonewall CYPS Champions Programme Award**

In 2021, Children and Family Services will be working on its submission against the CYPS Champions Award. To facilitate this work the Children and Family Services Stonewall Task Group will gather relevant evidence and ensure it reflects the broad range of the work being undertaken to support LGBT+ young people in Leeds over the last two years.

Additional group members will continue to be sought from across Children and Family Services to help support this work. This will ensure the 2021 submission accurately demonstrates the work being done across services and with partners to support LGBT+ young people in the City. The group will also be aiming to demonstrate how the support provided to both staff and LGBT+ young themselves has progressed since our last submission in 2019.

### **Keep people safe from harm**

Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) can affect anybody regardless of their protected characteristic. However, there are statistical differences between protected characteristics and their experiences of Domestic Violence and Abuse. For example, women are significantly more likely to be victims overall, and Black and minority ethnic women are at an increased risk of honour-based abuse and forced marriage. Additionally, LGBT+ people are underrepresented at Multi-Agency Risk Assessment conferences (MARACs), and on average older people experience Domestic Violence and Abuse for twice as long before seeking help compared with those under 61.

Work continues to increase the number of self-reported Domestic Violence and Abuse incidents to enable services to respond appropriately to victims and

survivors and keep them safe from the harm. A significant amount of work continues to be undertaken by the Safer Leeds Safeguarding and Domestic Violence team to progress this priority, some of which is highlighted below.

### **Developing a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy**

The new Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy and action plan is currently in development and an Equality Impact Assessment is being undertaken as part of this process. Whilst this work is ongoing, some actions are already being progressed to ensure due attention is being given to equality, diversity and cohesion as the strategy develops, including establishing the Domestic Abuse Voice and Accountability Forum.

### **Domestic Abuse Voice and Accountability (DAVA) Forum**

In preparation for the launch of the new Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy, the Domestic Abuse Voice and Accountability Forum (DAVA) has been established. This will act as a 'critical friend' to the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board undertaking a quality assurance role in relation to equality issues and ensuring that the Board is fully apprised on the views of victims and their families, using this knowledge to deliver the strategy. Hearing and understanding the voice of victims and survivors in this way will aid the effectiveness of the work to increase self-reporting of Domestic Violence and Abuse incidents. In particular, the DAVA forum are keen to ensure there is a focus on underrepresented groups, including, Black Asian and minority ethnic women, those with uncertain immigrations status and those with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF).

### **Training**

The Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Team deliver training sessions to professionals from multiple agencies across the City. Training sessions have been updated to facilitate online delivery in response to the COVID-19 'work from home' directive. Although a number of face to face sessions were cancelled early in the pandemic, 1420 participants have attended training between April 2020 and February 2021, a significant proportion of which has been delivered remotely. Attendees include colleagues from a range of council services, as well as NHS, West Yorkshire Police, Third Sector and more.

There are a broad catalogue of training sessions available which includes general domestic violence and abuse awareness sessions, through to more specialist sessions focusing on specific topics, such as, Coercive Control, Stalking, MARAC's and Lessons Learned from Domestic Homicide Reviews. Statistics used in training sessions have been updated this year to in relation to ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation which aims to raise participants' awareness of the need to consider these groups in their contact with service users and members of the public.

Other sessions have a particular focus on improving safety and outcomes across certain protected characteristics, such as, age, sexual orientation, as well, as other

characteristics such as immigration status. For example: briefings on young people and DVA, DVA in relationships between older people have been developed and soon to be rolled out. Sessions on LGBT+ DVA and the particular issues when a victim has No Recourse to Public Funds have been delivered throughout the year.

Training participants this year have also included staff members and volunteers from organisations supporting refugees and migrants to improve practice around recognising and responding to domestic violence and abuse. This has had a particular focus on Black Asian and minority ethnic communities and religion and belief. A new briefing session has also been developed focusing on Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage which will provide practitioners with a better understanding of the risks and issues whilst challenging views around what is 'culturally' acceptable.

### **Public Awareness Campaigns**

As part of the Leeds White Ribbon Campaign 2020, a video featuring influential male figures from the City including Leeds Rhinos player Jamie Jones-Buchanan was produced and shared widely across social media. It was also played on the screen in Millennium Square. The video saw men taking the White Ribbon pledge and signposted viewers to help and support if they are worried about their own behaviour towards their partner, or if they need help because they are victims of domestic abuse.

New and updated awareness resources were created, which includes posters signposting victims to support in 12 different languages, as well as posters and social media assets which aim to raise awareness of domestic violence and abuse in the LGBT+ community.

Resources focusing on the increase in domestic violence and abuse incidents during the pandemic were produced. These highlighted the increased risk as victims and perpetrators are required to "stay at home". A digital poster was also created to be displayed on screen at COVID-19 vaccination centres across the City, reassuring victims that they are not alone and signposting them to support that remains available despite the pandemic restrictions.

### **Domestic Violence Quality Mark**

Every year a number of organisations are supported to work towards and achieve the Domestic Violence Quality Mark accreditation, which promotes the minimum service standards required to improve the responses to victims, perpetrators and children.

Organisations who have completed Level 1 and Level 2 accreditations in the last 12 months include Age UK and Women's Health Matters who work with a wide range of women including asylum seekers, women with learning disabilities and women who have experienced complex trauma.

The Domestic Violence team request feedback from participants following each training session. Some examples of how the training has helped professionals to identify and support victims of domestic violence and abuse in their roles includes:-

- Better understanding the signs that somebody might be experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence and abuse;
- Increased knowledge about how people with different protected characteristics may be affected by domestic violence and abuse, for example, religion or belief and honour based abuse;
- Feeling more confident in approaching conversations with their service users where there are concerns; and
- Knowing where and how to signpost or refer victims to when they are concerned about abuse or a disclosure has been made.

This increased knowledge and understanding supports both professionals in their roles, and increases the likelihood that victims will get effective support with the ultimate aim that they will be kept safe from harm.

It is of course difficult to measure the direct impact of publicity campaigns. However, anecdotally, we know that at least one individual has disclosed that they are a victim of domestic violence and abuse as a result of the White Ribbon campaign video.

The team have undertaken a priority neighbourhood mapping exercise. This involved consultation with a range of organisations delivering services in the priority neighbourhoods. Organisations/services provided answers to a series of questions relating to the following themes:

- Levels and complexity of domestic violence and abuse, for example, how much, types, impact;
- Enablers and barriers that help or hinder organisations in supporting service users with domestic violence and abuse issues;- and
- Improvements, developments and workforce development needs

When answering, organisations were asked to give particular consideration to perpetrators, children, groups that experience prejudice, mental health, substance misuse and NRPF. Whilst the exercise didn't form a formal part of the consultation for the Domestic Violence and Abuse Strategy, relevant information will be shared to inform the strategy.

**Prevent and reduce levels of hate incidents by ensuring victims, witnesses and third parties of hate incidents are supported and offenders are brought to justice**

Targeted work has been delivered through The Hate Crime Strategic Board and Hate Crime Operational Group to raise awareness in communities and increase levels of reporting in the City.

This includes:-

### **Disability Hate Crime**

A joint funding application with United Response has been submitted to appoint a disability champion working in the reporting center in the Seacroft area of the City. One of the main duties of the role will be to review the reporting centers across the City.

### **National Hate Crime Awareness Week**

As part of National Hate Crime awareness digital webinars were delivered with numerous partners including Housing, Universities, NHS, & Leap1 Disability Charity. Targeted sessions were also delivered to support Asylum Seekers currently residing in temporary hotel accommodation.

### **Community Cohesion**

COVID-19 lockdown work was undertaken with all faith groups to ensure compliance with Government guidance. Faith leaders visited various different places of worship to share best practices and to discuss the problems of worship for their communities.

Some of the hard to reach communities were identified as not following the COVID-19 guidelines and so work was undertaken to identify new community contacts to identify the barriers. Through discussions with these key individuals there was a better understanding of the problems impacting upon those communities. Messages were sent out in several different languages through new information streams to explain what people had to do to keep themselves and their families safe but also to stop false information being spread about the COVID-19 crisis.

During the lockdown there has been false information put out on social media intending to cause ill feeling against various racial groups especially towards the Muslim and Roma communities. Support has been given to these communities to counter these negative messages and ensuring that the correct information has been posted.

Also many different faith groups have reached out to wider communities with the support of Police and Safer Leeds colleagues to help those vulnerable families in need. This has led to a greater sense of community spirit and a wider understanding of different faiths.

Targeted work has been undertaken to promote reporting in schools.

City wide statistics over the last year have seen a 1% increase in all hate incidents reported over a 12 month period, but have identified a decrease in reporting of LGBT+ hate incidents with transgender hate crime cases seeing the highest

decrease at 19%. The impact of COVID-19 pandemic and the decline of the night time economy are believed to have caused the reduction in reporting.

During 2021 a review will be undertaken of all Hate Crime Reporting Centres across the City. This will potentially identify gaps in staff development issues around the understanding of Hate Crime and ensure the centres have the right tools and confidence to deliver the service. A Third Sector partner involved in the Operational Hate Crime Group who specialises in supporting people with disabilities and Autisms have applied for funding to support the auditing of the reporting centres. This will ensure the criteria above is met, as well, as ensuring there is sufficient accessibility. It is hoped that this will leave a legacy of trained auditors within the community who can assist with other projects relating to Hate Crime/incidents.

Tackling Hate Crime remains a priority for the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team with increasing awareness and reporting in all communities across the City.

#### **Improve the approach to migration in Leeds:**

- **Improve access to services;**
- **Change attitudes and behaviours;**
- **Increase awareness and understanding;**
- **Strengthen resilience and build capacity;**
- **Strong partnership approaches**

During the last year, partners in Leeds have continued to work together to help the City and communities through the COVID-19 pandemic. Many services were required to close face to face support, understand and comply with national government guidance, negotiate the furloughing of staff, and manage the additional risks associated with COVID-19 and the health and wellbeing of service users, volunteers and staff.

A summary of some of the key activities to respond to some of the challenges are outlined below:-

#### **Improve Access TO Services**

- An emergency response to the most vulnerable in the City was very quickly set up, developed and monitored. This included virtual drop-ins, provision of essential items such as hygiene packs, food, including cultural food, technology, vouchers, donations of various items, including clothes, toys and activities, organizing collection and delivery, ensuring welfare checks, providing ongoing advice and guidance;
- Supporting Public Health with the COVID-19 response through the development of more effective local information and communication resources to meet local need, setting up of the local test and trace service, COVID- 19 funding to organisations and groups, door knocking to connect

directly with residents and the provision of advice and guidance in community languages;

- Statutory and voluntary sector partners continue to work together to meet the emergency responses to asylum seekers being placed in hotels through a range of local and regional meetings and direct delivery;
- Community Connectors provided important links to local services as well as signposting to regional services ,such as, Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre and national such as the Home Office for those vulnerable migrants who were unable to renew their indefinite leave to remain due to losing job, benefits;
- Developed partnerships through coordination and facilitation to embed migration activity within local services to improve service user confidence to access local support;
- At the start of the pandemic, the majority of projects suspended face to face delivery. A number of projects maintained contact through phone calls, social media, online channels, such as, Zoom and printed materials issued by post. The POMOC (Help) services has been delivered weekly on a virtual basis to support vulnerable eastern European communities to access services that they otherwise would have at local community hubs, and many who do not access services. This drop in increased to four sessions per week to meet the demand and as a result over 100 families have been supported on a range of issues including access to welfare support; housing; registering to the EU Settlement Scheme;
- The Brexit transition period came to an end on 31 December 2020 and many vulnerable Romanian and Romanian Roma nationals struggled to provide ID documentation as part of registering to the EU Settlement Scheme. As a result of the council's support The Romanian Consulate (Edinburgh) visited Leeds on 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and delivered surgeries that allowed processing of 630 passport applications for those vulnerable people who struggle with ID documentation. Two further information and awareness raising sessions have been delivered for the Spanish and Romanian communities. As a result this will assist many as a first step to applying to the EU Settlement Scheme;
- Despite the pandemic, the Community Connectors Project exceeded the target of supporting 100 migrant households by 167%. They have supported 267 households with the majority in the most deprived neighbourhoods;
- Many Language Hub projects adapted to deliver online and post resources out to participants in the light of the pandemic. Sustaining networks throughout the pandemic was vital, and had countless benefits in terms of reducing isolation. One participant who has diabetes and associated health problems and has been the pillar of her group, said: "And the most important thing is you know, it doesn't matter how low you feel, how bad like your health is, if you come in the group you feel welcome." Another participant shared 'I've learned to build my confidence, and I can make friends and talk to other people. I've learned how to share ideas too. I still feel shy but I can be part of it and talk in front of people. I make myself try and go, even if I feel miserable. Then I think thank goodness I came.'
- Trust developed between organisations and participants through delivering Language Hub projects allowed them to support people when issues came

up due to COVID-19. This included meeting the need for food and other support when financial difficulties started to bite. In one case a project leader was able to support a woman who was experiencing domestic violence. As a result the project leader initiated partnership discussions with Leeds Refugee Forum to support with frontline needs as a community response team;

- Language Hub project leads were able to repurpose elements of the budget, for example, venue hire, transport costs and refreshments to support buying data for certain participants facing financial difficulties to allow them to continue. These efforts were supported by the experience and expertise of the Leeds Migration Partnership who gave specific advice about providing data and engaging participants without using up their data allowances. Another project was able to provide 25 families with laptops on loan allowing them to continue to participate and support their children's education;
- Complex issues have been resolved through case management and partnership working, for example, two women on separate occasions were supported to flee domestic violence and led to successful domestic violence concession applications and supported with interview skills gaining employment in the care sector. This is as a result of staff representing the diversity of the population they serve and having lived experience that enabled positive and trusting relationships;
- During the pandemic, whilst carrying out welfare checks a number of households were supported with advice on universal credit, the furlough scheme, housing, employment and skills. A number of EU national families who were not exercising their treaty rights were threatened with eviction and homelessness due to financial crisis. As a result safeguarding referrals were made and service users were supported under Section 17 of the Children's Act;
- The council's Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) Outreach and Inclusion team have provided a virtual service and use of social media during the pandemic. As a result 35 families per week were supported;
- Many services were able to provide some online provision and contact by telephone by providing general support and checking in with clients and staff. Immigration advice, access to benefits and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes and support with completing applications has also been provided. There has also been issues with the availability of resources which included access to mobile phones; technology; data and Wi-Fi availability. 80 refurbished mobile phones were donated to asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants by the council and 10 laptops by Solidaritech. Further work continues to build on this capacity;
- Partnership working with 100% Digital Leeds and Migrant English Support Hub is contributing to the regional response to the digital access challenge. Members of the Migration Team have supported the fundraising activities of Digital Access West Yorkshire and applications for grant funding to support further capacity in the City;
- Accessing services for specialist support for victims was exacerbated by the pandemic. The Community Connectors continued engagement and

promotion of services. They worked with services to support outcomes for service users;

- COVID-19 Recovery plans were developed and approved in line with health and safety regulations during the pandemic. As a result this allowed some frontline staff to continue providing a service to some of the most vulnerable in the City;
- A mailshot was undertaken during the pandemic following data made available by the Home Office of asylum seekers in dispersed accommodation in Leeds. Over 500 households were contacted and as a result over 40 asylum seeking households responded and were supported with a range of support needs including access to schools; free school meals; free school transport; GP registration; signposted to charitable organisations; donations of clothing;
- Elected Members raised concerns over the lack of activity available to asylum seekers residing in hotels within their wards. As a result of raising this further, the Third Sector were able to engage with service users and later deliver activities;
- The Leeds Migration Partnership fortnightly operations meetings were well attended and enabled services to be better informed of the presenting issues and support available support during the crisis such as accommodation to the destitute asylum seekers and compliance with government guidelines.
- The Cultural Food Hub has provided over 8,832 cultural food parcels, servicing over 23,333 with people experiencing a range of circumstances including unemployment, low incomes, COVID-19 related issues, no recourse to public funds and people seeking asylum. Through the cultural food hubs people are being connected to wider service support to assist in addressing challenges.

### **Change Attitudes and Behaviours**

- Sharing knowledge and expertise to better understand the experiences of migrant communities through the Communities of Interest network to ensure needs are picked up in the whole system response;
- Inspiring and sharing ideas from other local authorities within the region in responding to the needs of vulnerable migrant communities during the pandemic;
- Supporting people into employment sectors often seen as less desirable;
- Employing those with lived experience to the Migration Team to strengthen the team and reflect the diversity of the communities served.
- The Migration Team and Migration Yorkshire delivered an introduction to migration training session to council staff which was attended by 35 staff (with a waiting list of 73). A session was also held with Elected Members with a request to deliver another session in the future;
- Community Connectors have supported migrant families on overcoming barriers and myths around providing personal care. As a result some households successfully pursued this employment opportunity;
- Supported Housing Services to understand the issues associated with those who have limited leave to remain. For example, a council tenant was

served notice to seek possession on the grounds of rent arrears as the tenant was unable to renew their leave to remain due to financial hardship and their disability. A Community Connectors contacted a Solicitor who requested a fee waiver from the Home Office which was granted and service user issues were resolved;

- Many households in priority neighbourhoods live in poverty and their financial burden is exacerbated when they are charged for letters of support. The council has waived internal charges for immigration letters providing proof of tenancy;
- Two asylum seeking families were subject to hate crime and bullying. This impacted on their mental health and wellbeing. They feared reporting the incidents to West Yorkshire Police and Migrant Help. As a result of multi-agency interventions and empowering the families to appraise their options and understand the processes ongoing issues were resolved.

### **Increase Awareness and Understanding**

- The Communities of Interest work was developed by the council working with Forum Central, Voluntary Action Leeds and Healthwatch. This work was also supported by a range of partners who provide specialist support to the City's diverse communities who are acting as link organisations. The aim of this work was to get a picture of and understanding of any disproportionate or differential impact on inequality due to COVID-19 across Leeds. This work has led to significant development of work practices across services to address concerns collectively;
- The Migration Team supported Public Health to connect local residents with COVID-19 messages, information, and guidance and lockdown restrictions. Key messages were tailored and communicated using a variety of formats - infographics, BSL, easy read formats, audio, video, street signage, social media and community radio stations. Local data was analysed to understand languages spoken by Leeds residents and messages were translated and interpreted into 12 priority languages;
- Asylum seeker health needs have been a concern. As a result the Third Sector has provided support with face to face and virtual activities There has been a partnership approach to raising awareness of and sharing COVID-19 messages;
- The Migrant Access Programme and the Migrant Community Network developed a Facebook page and produces regular newsletter to share messages. For example, the Migration Team worked with Comenius Czech Supplementary School who signposted people for support through POMOC and provided language support;
- The Migration Team support work in the City on Modern Slavery Board and have facilitated engagement with key communities to raise awareness and deliver projects;
- Supported consultations and ensured migrant issues are included in key work, for example, the Inequalities and COVID-19 report, Healthwatch Digital Exclusion Report, State of the Sector Report, Third Sector Resilience);

- Audited cross council activity on migration through membership of the Intercultural Cities Network;
- Promoted and raised awareness of migration projects and approaches to support local services, reduce duplication and strengthen partnerships;
- Joined and shared specialist knowledge and expertise at the monthly no recourse to public funds panel; follow up support with social workers; attending team meetings with statutory services and the Third Sector; and
- The Leeds Migration Partnership continued to meet with support provided by the council with more regular meetings taking place during COVID-19 to connect providers to information and support. The online blog provides information sharing to over 309 partners who signed up to receive weekly updates.

### **Strengthen Resilience and Build Capacity**

- Language Hub grants were suspended due to the pandemic. Many services were able to adapt and offer alternative ideas of delivery to ensure continued engagement;
- The council continued to provide support to the Leeds Migration Partnership with the operational and strategic arrangements to facilitate sharing of information, joint working and to progress shared priorities around health, housing, safety and inclusion and employment and education;
- A range of services led by/ and for migrant communities providing advice; support; advocacy; work skills; signposting increased during the pandemic to meet the needs of communities. In particular, migrant grass root organisation came to the forefront to work in partnership with the Cultural Food Hub;
- Several organisations in the Language Hub network are part of Leeds's volunteering effort to assist residents in need due to COVID-19 and they continue to provide invaluable evidence on the experiences of some of the most marginalised communities in the City. As a result the majority of projects have continued to reach out to communities for social inclusion and welfare checks throughout the pandemic;
- The Migration Team facilitated the redistribution of donations and delivered them to those in most need. Items, such as, clothes, hygiene products, IT equipment, activities for children and much more were collected and delivered. This significantly increased confidence amongst households that they are being listened to and supported;
- The diversity of the staff recruited to the Migration Team has been an asset in the pandemic at a time when many agencies are facing challenges to meet the needs of vulnerable households. The immediate team collectively speak a range of languages including Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Italian, French, Spanish, Vietnamese, Mirpuri, Swahili, Lingala, Arabic and Afemai. The team have been able to support speakers of other languages by holding three way conversations, allowing issues to be resolved faster;
- Migrant Community Networkers have continued to support their communities in a number of different ways. This includes attending the weekly virtual drop-in, providing hot meals; distributing donations and connecting people to services. WhatsApp groups have been set up in

different languages where Migrant Community Networkers shared messages and sought feedback from communities;

### **Strong Partnership Approaches**

- Development and production of the city's ESOL Strategy;
- Supporting the distribution and monitoring of COVID-19 grants to diverse communities and ensuring reach and spread across the City;
- The Cultural Food Hub are working in partnership with over 36 partner organisations across the City including Community Care Hubs, schools, Third Sector organisations and grass root groups with a number led by Migrant Community Networkers who are supporting people with access to food;
- Maximised on opportunities for communities through increased partnership working to ensure they had access to services;
- The POMOC (Help) drop-in brought together Customer Access, PATH Yorkshire, Comenius Czech Supplementary School, St Vincent's and Kirklees Citizen's Advice and Law Centre to collectively respond to complex issues for vulnerable eastern European communities. In February 2021 a total of 95 drop-in session have taken place which were led by the Migration Team. Face to face services at Community Hubs were ceased during the pandemic. However, 41 complex EU Settlement cases were resolved in partnership with OISC registered services; St Vincent's and Kirklees Citizens Advice and Law Centre;
- Rough sleepers were accommodated in temporary accommodation as part of the government's 'Everyone In' scheme. Some of this client group had no recourse to public funds and had multiple needs, such as, mental health issues and were destitute. To resolve issues for EU and non EU nationals a toolkit/checklist was developed to better understand issues and provide housing staff the information and support to resolve such cases;
- The Migration Access Programme delivered 40 virtual sessions during the pandemic. As a result information and messages were shared on a newsletter to provide concise and clear information for Migrant Community Networkers who valued this as their space and platform to receive and share accurate communications;
- The ESOL strategy was developed in partnership with the key stakeholders in the City reflecting areas of need, gaps, challenges and opportunities.

National funding has allowed the delivery of successful projects that have supported services and migrants across the City. These project models should be longer term and sustained to enable good practice and embedding within services.

### **Improve equality outcomes across the six priority neighbourhoods with a focus on addressing inequality and poverty**

The Locality Working model aims to respond to the national Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data, which in 2015 identified sixteen neighbourhoods in Leeds

that were categorised as being in the most disadvantaged 1% of neighbourhoods nationally.

As part of this approach, six priority neighbourhoods were identified to accelerate the council's approach to tackling poverty and inequality in the City. These six neighbourhoods are New Wortley; Beeston Hill; Cliftons and Nowells, Recreations; Lincoln Green and Boggart Hill.

The approach was based on the council's ambition to be a compassionate city with a strong economy, which is inclusive of the communities in the City and with a view that a smaller neighbourhood focus creates the opportunity to develop a more detailed process for understanding and responding to communities affected by poverty. The approach also identifies a specific location for testing and aligning the approaches of council services and partner agencies, including the alignment of investment and resources.

The council has driven the implementation of the locality working approach by applying a strategic framework which places the most disadvantaged communities in Leeds at its centre. The approach is split into the three key strands, working through Community Committees; target wards and priority neighbourhoods. Working in this way has created a way for council departments/services and partners to target their existing investment and resources and align new resources, for example, through external funding, bids and grants to best effect.

Six 'Core Teams' have been established in the priority neighbourhoods; alongside a number of partnership arrangements for improving the City's target inner City wards. Core Teams comprise of Officers from within the council, Elected Members, NHS, Police, Department for Work and Pensions and representatives from the Faith and Third Sector. A number of reporting mechanisms have been developed to support this new way of working including, importantly, the appropriate Community Committee and ensure that challenges and opportunities and the work to address them is well articulated to decision makers.

Locality working update reports were submitted to the council's Executive Board and the Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board in 2020. Both were very well received, with positive feedback given to the approach, the response of locality working partners and the programmes of locality working.

Locality working is evolving through collaboration, innovation and good practice. It is making best use of the physical and human assets we have in our local areas and harnesses the community spirit within our localities. It is rooted in the democratic accountability of local elected members to their wards, Community Committees, strong community leadership, early intervention, reducing the need for residents to continuously engage with expensive council or health services unnecessarily.

Bringing people together, from elected members, individual residents, businesses, community and faith groups, community leaders and public sector bodies, to create a focus around our most disadvantaged communities to target investment and resources.

The expected outcomes in the medium to long term is to see an increase in active citizenship and more community ownership of issues, challenges and solutions. Building community resilience is key to driving this change requiring investment and continual buy-in of all those involved and impacted.

However, the impact of COVID-19 has been high in the poorer areas of the City where the ability to withstand shocks is restricted. Work has been taking place in Leeds to understand and get a picture of the disproportionate or differential impact on inequality that is happening due to COVID-19. This work is supported by Voluntary Action Leeds, Forum Central and a range of partners who provide specialist support to the City's diverse communities. This includes gathering evidence of the impact on Communities of Interest, some of which is evidence based and some, which is anecdotal. It also shows that there is overlap across many Communities of Interest. This mirrors work that is being undertaken by Public Health on wider health inequalities of COVID-19.

The emerging evidence highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated social and economic inequalities and we need to further understand what these impacts are on communities in Leeds. What it tells us so far mirrors national evidence and the local narrative that Covid-19 does have a disproportionate and differential impact based on where you live, your gender, your ethnicity and your job.

Examples of progress include:-

### **Political Leadership**

In March 2020 it was recognised that there was a need to have an immediate and agile response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Executive Member for Communities and Director of Communities and Environment approved the use of 2020 -2021 Wellbeing funds (£10K per ward) to support COVID-19 related activities at the discretion of local elected members. This was underpinned by a fit-for-purpose decision-making process; with members deciding on spend for each ward.

### **Example of funded project: Mafwa Theatre**

Mafwa Theatre is a community theatre organisation working at One Community Centre in Lincoln Green with women from refugee, asylum seeker and settled communities. They use movement, voice and drama to increase confidence, improve English language and build resilient communities. They responded to COVID-19 by ending face-to-face delivery on the 13<sup>th</sup> March and transforming their 'Cooking with Parveen' project focusing on food and femininity into a postal project. Each week they sent out a creative pack with activities, letter writing task, recipe, bus ticket, food voucher, responses from other members and a stamped addressed envelope. They sent out 274 packs to 51 women. A WhatsApp group and weekly phone calls enabled them to keep in touch with the group and keep a sense of community alive. Wellbeing funds were granted by the Inner East Community Committee to purchase smart phones and data to enable them to

begin to run online zoom sessions as well as provide digital support and training to their group. 19 women benefited from this digital access support.

### **Building Self-Reliance and Resilient Communities** **School Uniform Recycling**

Fall into Place, Seacroft Community on Top and LS14 Trust organised a pop up school uniform shop at Kentmere Community Centre ready for schools returning. A vast amount of clean, good quality uniform were donated and then offered to families for free. This was hugely successful with hundreds of items chosen by families, alleviating the financial pressure of purchasing new school uniform and the first steps towards regular school uniform recycling within Seacroft.

### **POMOC (Help)**

The team, in partnership with other services led and delivered the POMOC service through a virtual weekly drop in to targeted Eastern European communities. Referrals were received from local, statutory services and churches, to provide support to service users mainly from priority neighbourhoods, around welfare, housing, EU Settlement Scheme and further signposting.

### **Place Based Integrated Working** **Kingsdale Court**

The Neighbourhood Improvement Board agreed in April 2019 to consider a long-term comprehensive solution to the challenge of Kingsdale Court, utilising the full powers of the Council and partners to tackle this site in the short, medium and long term. As part of landmark action taken by the Leeds Anti-Social Behaviour Team (LASBT) and West Yorkshire Police at Leeds Magistrates Court in February 2020, a three-month closure order was subsequently granted for each flat located in Farnley House) with a further extension to this order being kept in place until August 2020. An additional closure order was granted for Gilstead House, and extended until November 2020. In securing these orders, this is the first time wholesale action has been taken against private sector leaseholders and administrators in one block. In addition, the council are currently progressing a longer-term strategy for the Kingsdale Court site. The council's Executive Board have given permission to acquire a portfolio of around 40 of the 88 flats. Formal negotiations are now underway to progress a deal as quickly as possible. Work is also taking place to acquire the remainder of the site.

### **Early Intervention and Prevention**

A place based integrated working approach has achieved a sustained reduction in youth hate crime and anti-social behaviour. Part of this strategy is to enable and empower local youth leadership and the delivery of youth activities in a new purpose built youth and community hub in the Nowells.

### **Nowell Mount Youth Hub**

Over £200,000, capital funding was sourced to build an extension to Nowell Mount Children's Centre. Despite losing 8 weeks during lockdown, works have continued and the building is complete. The extension will enable the creation of a youth and community centre. The Communities Team are working with Third Sector organisations CATCH and BARCA, Youth Service, Active Leeds, Safer Leeds and Nowells Community Group to explore next steps in terms of the next 6 months to support the COVID-19 recovery phase in the Nowells.

### **CATCH on Wheels**

CATCH supports young people from a host of backgrounds and with a range of challenges, providing them with safety, stability and purpose. They have secured some funding to work with up to 10 - 15 young people from the Nowells area. These will specifically, be recruited for the purposes of up-skilling them to become volunteers. The intention is to carry out one to ones with the young people and group work. The focus is to build their skills, confidence and knowledge about volunteering following the CATCH "Youth Community Builders" programme. We will also work with them to plan the use of the new Nowells space, plan the activities that will be running within the centre and how best to engage the local young people in these activities. By allowing young people from the Nowells to be part of the initial planning will create ownership and pride in the space.

### **Getting to the Root Causes, Sharing Knowledge Pop up' Covid-19 test centre in Harehills**

In response to a clustering of cases in LS8, Public Health, Communities, Housing and Adult Social Care, along with Third Sector volunteers, worked extremely hard to set up and run the 'pop up' COVID-19 test centre at the Bilal Centre in Harehills. They door knocked on local streets and engaged local people, raising awareness of key messages and the local testing offer. Volunteers from Voluntary Action Leeds were able to support the door knocking with community languages (Czech, Urdu and Punjabi). The centre was well attended by local residents and the testing positivity rate was high which suggests effective engagement. Positive and strong communication through Bilal centre's Facebook and WhatsApp platforms have helped raise awareness of the testing site with over 300 members. Local elected members have played a key role in shaping the approach and promoting and engaging with local residents through posting repeatedly on the Inner East Community Committee Facebook page and local radio stations Breeze and Fever FM. The success of the centre is a testament to partnership working across the council and the wider system. Following a visit by a Number10/Cabinet Office COVID-19 taskforce, Leeds was commended for displaying 'huge evidence of collaborative approach across partners and engagement with communities.' Further learning from this approach highlighted the importance of local testing sites to residents. As a result, a site was set up in Beeston Hill at a local community venue Rowland Road WMC which was well utilised.

### **Working Differently and System Change Youth providers**

Youth providers have been using digital platforms to engage with young people, examples, include chat rooms, online CPR sessions, support with schoolwork and Bike 100 mile challenge and couch to 5k challenge. Youth Service have been working alongside the Neighbourhood Policing Teams providing detached youth work to engage with young people and reinforce the COVID-19 guidelines. Funding has been secured to put together activity and information packs, inclusive of activity booklets, young person friendly Covid-19 information and advice materials on coping with stress. Cardboard boxes filled with resources to promote play, physical activity and art/design have also been delivered to the doorsteps of the most vulnerable families.

### **Community Care Hubs**

Voluntary Action Leeds (VAL) in partnership with Leeds City Council launched a new volunteering programme - Community Care Volunteers. In order to ensure that volunteers could be deployed to support people locally the Communities Team worked in partnership with VAL to set up a new network of volunteer 'hubs' across the City. 33 Community Care Hubs were established, through 27 Third Sector organisations. These hubs continue to provide emergency support, with a number of hubs developing ongoing legacy opportunities.

### **Community Care Volunteer Hub Beeson and Holbeck - Slung Low**

A theatre company, Slung Low, with the help of volunteers, became very busy picking up shopping and prescriptions, delivering food parcels and hot meals, dog walking and carrying out welfare calls. They also put together the beautiful LS11 Art Gallery where local people submitted artwork, which Slung Low used to line the streets. This was a far cry from their usual role producing large community theatre performances, showcasing the work of artists in Holbeck and running their Cultural Community College. The Slung Low team feel that they don't want to go back to exactly what they were doing before. They've discovered new areas of the local community which they previously had little contact with, new partnerships have formed with organisations they'd never been in touch with and amazing individuals have stepped up to help. Slung Low have now returned to doing some of their day-to-day work albeit in a COVID-19 secure environment, such as, outdoor performances to families and are even a drive thru show. The way that Slung Low have completely changed their service delivery and adapted to COVID-19 is huge and has made a massive impact to the local community.

Not every challenge or opportunity that has been identified by the Core Teams can be addressed locally, despite best efforts. As a result, each Core Team has presented a number of 'Big Asks' that represent the most significant challenges in each of the priority neighbourhoods. These will be progressed as part of a thematic work programme for the Neighbourhood Improvement Board (NIB). The NIB is asking relevant council Scrutiny Boards to drive the work programme through their board meetings, working directly with the relevant Directors and Executive Board portfolio holders.

The impact of COVID-19 has been high in the poorer areas of the City where the ability to withstand shocks is restricted. A COVID-19 recovery and Resilience Plan: Locality Working is being developed to support recovery and resilience building in our most disadvantaged communities. Undoubtedly, the way that locality working has evolved and the connections it has made between the delivery of integrated services in neighbourhoods and the engagement of the communities of Leeds has underpinned a significant part of the COVID-19 response in the City with positive and effective collaboration across council directorates and with partner organisations at neighbourhood level. It is timely now to consider what we have learnt from the experience of the last six months, hardwire the best of it into the council's working practices and ensure that it drives organisational design activities in the months to come.

## **Ensure fair and equal access to taxi and private hire services for disabled people**

### **Compliance with Mystery Shopping and Test Purchases**

In 2020 the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team had planned a further programme of test purchases to check driver compliance. This test purchasing has proven to be successful in previous years. The programme was put on hold because of the COVID-19 pandemic as it would have exposed participants to avoidable risk and it would have been difficult to meet the social distancing requirements.

In 2019 three drivers were prosecuted for refusing to take assistance dogs. One was found guilty, one not guilty and the third accepted a Home Office caution.

In 2019 there was one successful wheelchair prosecution (failure to secure). To put this in context in England and Wales in 2019 there were under five prosecutions recorded for wheelchair discrimination.

In 2020 there were two wheelchair prosecutions outstanding and two assistance dog prosecutions outstanding. Court proceedings have been delayed because of COVID-19. These are expected to complete in 2021 due to a backlog in Court cases.

Following prosecution in 2019, one driver attended training with Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (GDBA) in 2020.

In the year ending 31 December 2019 in England and Wales (including London) there were 32 prosecutions recorded for offences committed by taxi and private hire vehicle PHV drivers and operators in relation to sections 168 and 170 (assistance dog refusals by taxi and PHV drivers), and section 165 (wheelchair user discrimination by taxi and PHV drivers).

### **Reduction in Disability Based Complaints**

It is believed that fewer passenger journeys were made in 2020 because of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions on the night-time economy. Observations from Officers suggest that night-time journeys may be down by as much as 80% because of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions to the night-time economy and day-time journeys may be down by as much as 40%. Figures from the Department for Transport will be available at the end of the second quarter of 2021. It has not been possible to ascertain whether there has been a corresponding decrease in the number of journeys made by disabled passengers.

Work continues to log complaints. In 2020 the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team received 10 disability complaints compared with 14 the previous year. Although the figure is around 30% lower than in 2019, proportionately the figures do not necessarily point to a decrease in complaints per journey. Ensuring fair and equal access to taxi and private hire services for disabled people will continue to be a priority.

In 2020 the schedule of forums with representative groups was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The meetings are not only an invaluable source of information for the service who believe that the complaints are under reported. The forums also serve to build trust and confidence of users in the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing team. The meetings will resume at the earliest opportunity in 2021.

The postponed wheelchair/assistance dog access programme for 2020 will run in 2021, as soon as it is safe to do so. It includes test purchases working with established partners using assistance (guide) dogs, as well as developing existing partnerships to carry out test purchases so that we can monitor driver compliance and improve access for wheelchair users.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the overall number of journeys made but we have no statistics which could give insight into how many journeys are made (or not made) by wheelchair users. Many Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) are available for hire to all passengers, not just wheelchair users. There are no figures available for how many journeys WAVs made with wheelchair users.

The number of WAVs has remained constant in the Hackney Carriage fleet at 347 vehicles. However, it should be noted that the number of WAVs in the private hire fleet has dropped from 97 to 81. It seems that a significant owner of WAVs did not re-invest in the same type of vehicle when those vehicles no longer met the age criteria (the vehicles were too old to be licensed in Leeds).

The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team has long understood that taxi and private hire vehicles are a particularly valuable means of transport for disabled people. Last year's Department for Transport survey suggests disabled people and people with a mobility need are around three times more likely to use taxi and private hire vehicles and are vulnerable when the service booked is late or fails to arrive.

The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team will consider ways of increasing the number of WAVs in the private hire fleet. The present arrangements meet statutory

requirements and the age criteria for licensing a WAV is more generous than for other vehicles. It was intended that WAVs would be exempt from the Clean Air Zone charge (an annual saving of around £2000 to the driver) but that concession has been negated with the suspension of the Clean Air Zone. Purchasing a WAV costs considerably more than other vehicles and the vehicle owner bears the cost.

Another recorded suggestion following a complaint from an exasperated passenger is that the Licensing Committee will be asked to consider whether larger private hire operators should be required, by making it a Condition of their license to operate, to have a certain percentage of their licensed vehicles being wheelchair accessible.

In Leeds, some 53% of Hackney carriage vehicles are wheelchair accessible. This figure should not leave us complacent as other Metropolitan areas across England there is an average of 82% wheelchair accessible taxis. This figure does not include London where all taxis are wheelchair accessible. The figures are similar to last year, so Leeds has some way to go to be 'average'

### **Taxi and Private Hire Licensing to work with key partners in Leeds and to make sure hate crime incidents are reported, action taken, and information fed back**

There are two broad areas of concern regarding hate crime and hate incidents. Firstly, Taxi and Private Hire drivers may be victims of hate incidents and hate crime, subject to inappropriate language and behaviour from passengers and the public. Secondly, passengers may be the victims of hate incidents and hate crime, subject to inappropriate language and behaviour from drivers.

#### **Reduced Feedback at Trade Meetings about Hate incidents aimed at Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Drivers**

All new taxi and private hire drivers and operators are given contact phone numbers and email addresses so they can report all incidents of a criminal nature, including hate incidents/crimes to West Yorkshire police. They also attend a training seminar where they are encouraged to report such incidents to their Operator or Association. This means that there is the possibility for that business to refuse bookings from passengers who cause drivers problems. Operators and Associations have a single point of contact for reporting stone-throwing incidents.

Operators and Associations normally give feedback to the council on hate crimes and incidents at the Trade Forums which are held 3-4 times a year). In 2020 these have been postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Emails to all Private Hire Operators and Hackney Associations for feedback on hate incidents against drivers have yielded one reply.

The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team are aware that historically such incidents and crimes are under-reported. It is likely that incidents have occurred but not been reported.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a particularly negative impact on Hackney and Private Hire drivers. The majority of Leeds licensed drivers belong to ethnically vulnerable groups and may have reduced their hours or ceased working in order to protect themselves and their families. Drivers who have continued to work are acutely aware that passenger numbers are much lower than in previous years (lockdown, school closures, suspension of the night-time economy) and may be less inclined to report incidents.

Many drivers continue to be concerned about stone-throwing in certain parts of Leeds. The concern is well-founded but as so many types of vehicle are often targeted – buses, vans, domestic vehicles driven by people of wide-ranging racial and religious backgrounds it is difficult to evidence as a hate crime. Incidents on Bonfire Night in East Leeds were widely reported and documented in the press.

Emails to all Private Hire Operators and Hackney Associations for feedback on stone-throwing incidents against drivers have yielded one reply. The Operator reported the incident to the Police who was unhappy with the initial response. However, after engaging the support of local Elected Members a series of meetings with the Police and drivers resulted in action to try to catch the perpetrators, but with no success. The Operator understands it is a City wide problem.

The Police responded quickly to another incident in East Leeds in which a bus was also attacked. The Private Hire driver needed stitches and his elderly passenger was very upset. The culprit was a child and was returned to his parents.

### **Hate Incidents Against Passengers**

Complaints about race discrimination by drivers in 2020 were slightly down on the previous year. 11 complaints were received in 2020 compared with 12 in 2019. However, we believe that significantly fewer journeys were made in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which case complaints about race discrimination show a significant increase in proportion to the number of journeys made.

In 2020, no prosecutions were made for Race or Sex discrimination.

Drivers who were the subject of complaints were all interviewed by Enforcement Officers in order that they could give their version of events. Actions regarding required changes in behaviour and attitude were logged on the individual driver file.

### **Improved Perception of LGBT+ issues in Feedback and Complaints**

Two complaints were made in 2020 compared with 4 in 2019, which means that proportionately there has been little change.

Leeds taxi and private hire driver training includes content on LGBT+ people's right to fair access to taxi and private hire vehicles, and to LGBT+ people's expectation to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect while in a taxi or private hire vehicle. One question with a mandatory correct answer is included which asks whether it is

acceptable to refuse to pick up a passenger who is LGBT+. There is a follow up question (correct response is not mandatory) on what it might be appropriate to say to a passenger.

### **Improved perception of disability and disability related hate incidents.**

10 disability complaints were made in 2020, compared with 14 the previous year. Although the figure is around 30% lower than in 2019, proportionately the figures suggest an overall increase in complaints per journey made.

Leeds taxi and private hire driver training includes content on disabled people's right to fair access to taxi and private hire vehicles, and to disabled people's expectation to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect while in a taxi or private hire vehicle. A question is included in the test for drivers which asks whether it is acceptable to refuse to pick up a passenger from one of the protected categories (including disability). The driver training specifically includes Equality Act 2010 law relating to passengers with wheelchairs and guide or assistance dogs.

### **Improved Perception and Confidence from the Taxi Trade that the Council and Police will Investigate and Respond when Drivers make Complaints about Hate Crime**

The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team continues to work with a number of agencies and organisations to raise awareness that taxi and private hire vehicles should be a safe place for all people. These include:

- West Yorkshire Police Hate Crime Team;
- Safer Leeds;
- Stop Hate UK – promoting Stop Hate UK as a safe reporting medium; and
- Unite / British Transport Police / Network Rail

Consultations involving the 2019 working group on options to update the CCTV policy for Hackney and private hire vehicles did not complete in 2020 because of the pandemic. The working group was unable to present its conclusions to the Licensing Committee.

### **More/Better Referrals of Current Drivers for Anger Management and De-escalation training/classes.**

In-house training for referred drivers has continued (except during lockdowns) throughout the year. The numbers of attendees per session were reduced so that the service were COVID-19 compliant. Customer care training was suspended from March 2020.

Private Hire Operators and Hackney Associations can use a single point of contact to report attacks on drivers and vehicles to the Police.

Training has continued to emphasise to new and referred drivers that all passengers are equal, regardless of race, disability, sexual orientation, gender,

religion and age, and that all passengers need to be treated fairly, with dignity and respect.

Working with stakeholder groups, particularly, those representing disabled passengers, have led to expectations of improved service and increased awareness that the service respond constructively to incidents which are reported.

Work with key partners in Leeds to make sure hate crime incidents are reported, action taken, and information fed back remains an on-going priority which needs to be incorporated into the new more targeted approach that the Council intends to adopt. This includes a criteria to measure improvement and to ensure effective and accessible records are maintained.

Future work will include:-

- Closer working with West Yorkshire Police regarding driver safety. Stone-throwing incidents are a real concern to drivers. They are a danger to drivers and the travelling public; they cause emotional damage to the victims and financial costs to vehicle owners;
- Overcoming the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic and to enable Taxi Operators and Hackney Associations to meet in some format and share experiences. For example, it may be that successful collaboration with the Police in 'Trojan' type Police operations may have repercussions for Taxi Operators whose vehicles are used;
- The CCTV working group reaching a conclusion. Many Taxi Operators are anxious to support driver safety and would like fewer delays in viewing CCTV footage;
- Continue the training programme and consider a variety of ways in which the service can increase drivers' awareness of how their behaviour can impact on passengers' access to work, health, education and leisure; and
- Consider approaches to encouraging license holders to invest in WAVs, particularly, in the private hire fleet but also in the Hackney fleet where we fall well below the national average:

### **Electoral Services will actively engage with electors to help them understand their voting options for the May 2021 polls**

The Government confirmed that all elections/referendums scheduled for 6 May 2021 will go ahead. However, concerns were raised by the Electoral Commission, Association of Electoral Administrators and Electoral Services on how safely these elections could be run during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Electoral Services liaised with Public Health to ensure safety measures were considered and implemented in polling stations to make them safe places to vote. However, it was anticipated that some electors will be hesitant appearing in person to cast their vote.

It was important that electors understood their voting options for the May 2021 polls including what they needed to do to apply for an absent vote in time for the polls. A letter enclosing a postal vote application form and prepaid envelope was mailed to all electors that do not already have postal voting arrangements in place. This targeted approximately 470,000 electors.

The letter provided the reasons for the mail and informed all electors of their options and the timescales required to apply to vote by post at the May 2021 elections. Media communications were also used to ensure all persons entitled to vote are registered and aware of their voting options.

Other considerations for electors that were taken into account included:-

- Social distancing measures were required and not all designated polling stations would be available/suitable to use due to COVID-19 restrictions. For example, some electors would have a different polling station which could be further away from their home;
- Social distancing measures could result in queues at polling stations; and
- Voters would be asked to wear a mask or face-covering if able to do so, and to comply with hand sanitising and any other COVID-19 related requirements.

### **To support the provision of food aid and contribute towards tackling the issue of food poverty in Leeds**

The Leeds Food Aid Network (FAN) exists to help bring different people, initiatives and institutions together who are involved in tackling food poverty in the City.

The Environmental Health Food Safety Team is working with FAN to provide expert advice on food safety to a wide range and number of Third Sector partners providing food aid. This includes working with Food Banks, Food Drop In's/Soup Kitchens, Street Outreaches/Soup Runs, Parish/Food Pantries and certain forms of Social Enterprise.

The Food Safety Team have also used their database of food premises to assist FAN to map the location of all food aid providers in Leeds. This will make it easier for people to access the appropriate food aid support within their locality.

48 Food Aid Providers have been contacted by the Food Safety Team and given guidance and advice on food safety, hygiene and compliance with food regulations.

Around 130 food aid providers have been identified and to date 30 of these have been mapped and are now displaying their locations and food services on the FAN website. The impact of the pandemic is likely to increase levels of food poverty. The Environmental Health Team will continue to work in partnership with FAN to further develop the map and provide food safety support and advice.

**To focus on changing how the Environmental Action Service is seen by communities both in terms of being a service provider and potential employer**

It was identified that staff within the Environmental Action Service were not adequately engaged with the council's equality and diversity offer and work, particularly access to, use of and ownership of the staff networks.

Whilst a considerable amount of work has been undertaken over the last few years to improve the number of Black Asian and minority ethnic and women staff in the service, the service still has a workforce that is over represented of certain groups of the population. The service also has relatively few Black Asian and minority ethnic or women managers and supervisors. This does not adequately reflect the communities we serve in Leeds, particularly in the priority neighborhoods.

A focus was put on staff access to the work of the staff networks and their collective offer. This was to help realise the short to medium term goal to reflect the population of Leeds more closely in the services staff profile. The aim is to encourage more inclusive engagement with all communities and staff feeling they are represented within the council.

Analysis of the workforce within the Environmental Action Service has shown that there is an under-representation of certain groups of the population, for example, women and Black Asian and minority ethnic staff in operational and managerial roles within Parking Services and the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team.

Pre and COVID-19 work in the council's priority neighbourhoods has also found a general apathy and/or mistrust of statutory services that hinders progress and behavioural change in those areas. This particularly affects the delivery of environmental enforcement. Attempting to ensure that the workforce is more representative of the population of the City should increase engagement as people see members of their own community working for the authority.

Due to how the Cleaner Neighbourhoods Team (CNT) have been working over the last 12 months, the sheer focus of the services efforts on getting critical environmental services out under significant pressure due to the pandemic, driving forward on the action areas identified has not been possible. Especially in light of staffing levels being as low as 40% across CNT's and Refuse and Household Waste Sites.

However, some good work has taken place in key areas, such as, engagement, recruitment and opening up access to the staff networks. Despite COVID-19 the service have encouraged wherever possible named regular representatives to attend each of the staff networks meetings and organised events. This serves as an anchor to the work of each staff network and is a means of sharing feedback and is a key development opportunity for the staff involved. Feedback from staff representatives has been positive.

The Environmental Services business as usual service review has brought together the former Environmental Action Service and Waste Services as a single set of Environmental Services. This has created the opportunity to establish a joint Leadership Team to drive forward some of the key equalities priorities across the service. These include the need to recruit more Black Asian and minority ethnic and women staff into managerial and supervisory roles. For example, the service are looking to change more work and shift patterns in refuse and CNT's in order to make front-line roles more attractive to women.

Refuse Services have made good progress over the last few months in recruiting more women and in March 2020 the first ever all woman refuse crew was deployed.

The @Clean Leeds Twitter account has been used to promote the equalities and diversity work that is carried out across the service along with the council staff and staff networks Facebook groups. This included publicity and engagement of events for International Women's Day, Black History Month and International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

There is a better understanding of the work of the staff networks but more work is required across the service. This will embed the importance of these networks and their programmes of work throughout the year as engines for change within the organisation and build trust in them from staff across CNT. It is hoped that staff surveys on equality and diversity experiences will be carried out during 2021 to understand the impact of current work. This will also include work to reflect on some aspects of Black Lives Matters movement activities over the last few months and the councils commitment to Black Asian and minority ethnic staff through the joint Corporate Leadership Team/ Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network action plan.

### **Reducing Fuel Poverty and improving energy efficiency**

#### **Working to improve properties and assist tenants living in fuel poverty over the next four years**

The Heights East & West are two high rise blocks in the West of Leeds, each having 60 homes and 120 flats in total. All flats were supplied heat and hot water by inefficient electric storage heaters (ESH) and hot water cylinders. Tenants had little heat control and fuel bills were high.

The council planned to install new Electric Night Storage heating in both blocks, however, after being presented with the advantages and environmental benefits of a range of alternative technologies ground source heat pumps (GSHP) were the chosen option. These would provide residents with more efficient heating and hot water.

The council appointed specialist contractor Cenergist Ltd as the main contractor who in turn worked with Kensa Contracting to install the system. The project is currently being evaluated by both Leeds University, to understand in more detail the energy efficiency improvements and Leeds Beckett University to evaluate the social and environmental impact. The successful pilot project has helped inform further major investment to potentially 47 more blocks across the City.

GSHP have been installed to 109 properties across the two blocks. This has resulted in:

- Reduction in residents fuel bills by 50-70% giving them greater disposable income – the average fuel bill for a social housing tenant with a GSHP system is £167 to £278 per year based on space and water heating assumptions;
- Reduced carbon emissions contributing to the council's commitment to tackling climate change through carbon reduction;
- Helping tenants to reduce their own carbon footprint;
- Energy performance of the properties improved significantly resulting in residents paying lower bills, lower carbon emissions, and more reliable heating and hot water systems in each property;
- Building performance rating improved by 2-3 bands
- Carbon savings of >750 tonnes per year – equivalent to taking 160 cars off the road, fitting 28,000 LED light bulbs or planting 900 acres of trees; and
- Increased use of less carbon intensive renewable energy for heating and hot water, by equivalent of 450 homes

As part of the social value commitment work placements and training were offered to Leeds College students looking to get into the construction industry. Where feasible, the contractor purchased from local merchants, to maximise the economic contribution to the City and invest in smaller, local businesses.

Cenergist's initiatives as part of the community investment commitment during the project included:-

- Installing a new heating system into a local church;
- Local food bank donations;
- Installation of a community defibrillator;
- Redecoration of the flat used by the local residents' association;
- Daily litter walks;
- 'Green boxes' for residents – water saving devices, LED bulbs, energy saving and tariff advice helping residents reduce their carbon footprint further; and
- The provision of sleeping bags to homeless charities

### **Customer Satisfaction**

Residents have been asked to complete satisfaction surveys. Some of the comments received have been:-

*"I am really happy with the work. The new systems have definitely made a marked and welcome difference to the heating in my flat – just in time for the winter months!"*

*"I am so happy with the new heater... they all did a good job. I want to thank them all"*

*"The central heating system is amazing and has totally changed the atmosphere of my whole flat, all the staff are very friendly and informative if you need to ask any questions... I am no longer stuck with extortionate storage heaters that cost £1.50 per night for just 1 of them on... All my radiators come on once the temperature drops and its used about 3 quid in 4 days"*

*"Everything is toasty warm..... so much better than the electric heaters"*

*"Would just like to say a big massive thankyou to all the workers, couldn't have asked for a better team, and the heating as made such a difference. Over the moon with the overall work and workers thankyou"*

*"Thank you for doing an excellent job on installing the new heating system in my flat, not only are the financial savings most welcome, but the actual heat and hot water are a blessing! thanks once again, 10 out of 10 for an excellent job all round"*

The project and technology has already been rolled out to a further two high rise properties and is likely to be deployed extensively in the Leeds Clustering for Warm Initiative to a further 26 blocks totalling some 1,493 homes. The Council intends to also evaluate a further 25 blocks for their suitability. The pilot initiative and roll out has the potential to be installed in around 2,600 energy inefficient properties. If this is achieved the project would go on to:

- Reduce fuel bills and the individual carbon footprint for a significant number of residents;
- Reduce approximately 16,500 annual tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>; and
- Increase installed renewable energy generation in the City by 11.7 to 15.6 Mega Watts

### **Reducing child poverty in Leeds by improving housing conditions and meeting specialist needs**

For the year ending March 2021 the Leeds Benefit Service records showed there were 349 under occupation claims from council tenants, with 518 children living in the households of these claimants who were seeking additional support to meet their housing costs. There were also 145 council tenancies affected by the Benefit Cap, with 605 children living in the households affected, representing a combined weekly reduction in Housing Benefit for council tenants of around £6,000 each week.

To support these families impacted by Universal Credit, the Benefit Cap and other welfare changes, Housing Leeds provided a proactive tenancy management service. This was delivered through generic Housing Officers, specialist Housing Income Officers and specialist Housing Support Officers to help these tenants meet their housing costs. Alongside individual help, guidance and support, regular social media campaigns were run throughout the year signposting a range of services to help reduce or prevent child poverty and increase household incomes. This promoted Leeds Credit Union, English for Speakers of Other Languages, the Money Buddies service and awareness campaigns around loan sharks and gambling support.

Work continues to support council tenants in moving to Universal Credit and focus activity on mitigating the impact of moving to Universal Credit on rent arrears. At the end of February 2021, 14,846 Housing Leeds Tenants have moved to Universal Credit with an average increase in arrears of £0.21 per claimant.

During 2020/21 Housing Management supported 1,759 households (which include children) to access approximately £1.8m of additional income. Support has been provided with a wide range of benefits and sources of income, including:-

- Housing Benefit (approx. £403k);
- Universal Credit (approx. £301k);
- Discretionary Housing Payment (approx. £118k);
- Council Tax Support (approx. £91k); and
- Personal Independence Payments (approx. £50k)

The following case studies illustrates the difference the actions have made:-

**Mr & Mrs A** are joint tenants with two children, but no longer in a relationship. This provided complications with benefit entitlement involving both Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. Mr A was difficult to engage with initially and struggled putting his trust in any form of support work. The Housing Officer Income managed to develop a relationship with Mr A and assisted him in making a claim for Universal Credit so both tenants were receiving the correct housing support. The Housing Officer Income successfully appealed a Housing Benefit overpayment and secured 'Under Occupancy' exemptions for both claims, ensuring full rent is payable moving forward. Following intensive work, Mr A agreed to further housing support referrals being made, ensuring he is supported in the long term helping make a more sustainable financial future for the children's parents.

**Miss B**, is a vulnerable young tenant who is pregnant and was suffering from domestic violence and financial abuse from her partner. The team's Housing Officer Income:

- Identified this as a MARAC case and liaised with all relevant professionals ensuring all safeguarding concerns were reported;
- Made referrals to the Leeds Welfare Support Scheme to assist with emergency food and utility costs;

- Liaised with DWP who backdated Universal Credit Housing element costs, clearing £1,700 of rent arrears;
- Helped the tenant with an online banking application to prevent benefits being paid into her abusers account, which had led to incidents of financial abuse in the past; and
- Social services are now undertaking a financial capabilities assessment and ongoing support is being provided by Engage Leeds.

Feedback from tenants, colleagues, and partner agencies around the impact of this work has been extremely positive:-

*“An officer spent over an hour on the phone to me and helped me sort out my arrears, and also helped to get support for myself and my son. Over the past year I have suffered with depression and anxiety burying my head in the sand (as the saying goes). I cannot praise them enough for his dedication and help, he is a credit to the team at Housing Leeds”* (Feedback from a tenant who was supported to clear £4,000 of debt).

*“[Officer] has been there for me throughout this horrible pandemic, has dealt with my tears my desperation always with a positive tone and reassuring words. [Officer] has picked me up from the depths of desperation and thoughts of losing my tenancy I don't know what I would have done without her, she has gone above and beyond for me in this last year and she is a credit to LCC”*. Feedback from a tenant supported to remain in their property with their family through support from an officer.

*“[Officer] is a very thorough and experienced Benefit Advisor who strives for the best outcomes for our tenants. This case is an example of her hard work and commitment to this. She works with a ‘no stone left unturned’ ethos. Working so methodically and with care”* (Feedback from colleague where the tenant was supported to clear £1,200 of debt)

*“You have truly done incredibly well on this case.... you never cease to amaze me! You keep on doing this time after time, well done, great work”*. (Feedback from manager where an officer helped a family who have been really struggling during the pandemic to claim a backdate of £2,542)

Universal Credit activity and support has been mainstreamed within local housing teams, retaining specialist Housing Officers Income so we are able to give specialist advice on a range of income and benefit issues, including the most complex UC cases.

The focus for the year ahead is to help ensure local housing teams are fully informed and able to effectively identify those tenants who need support so that more specialist interventions can take place.

## **Increase the satisfaction of younger residents by improving digital access and engagement opportunities**

In November 2020 the Housing Leeds launched Your Voice Leeds an online engagement website to share projects and proposals with tenants for their comments and feedback.

Using Your Voice Leeds the service are able to undertake both local, community focused consultations, such as, sharing initial plans for new council housing, an estate walkabout, present citywide consultations or asking for feedback to the Tenant Scrutiny Board to help them with their reviews.

Content on Your Voice Leeds automatically resizes for smart phone users many of whom will be younger residents. A number of 'tools' can be used to ask and gather feedback in a number of ways, depending on the nature of the consultation. For example, a consultation can have a discussion forum, quick poll, survey, an ideas board, a story board, message board, guestbook or an interactive map that users can leave comments on.

Tenants can either be invited to take part in the consultation, on an email, text or social media post, or can find the website from the main council consultation page.

Since the launch of Your Voice Leeds in November 2020 to the end of March 2021, the service have published 13 projects on a number of different issues or projects, taking place in various communities. In total, published consultations have resulted in:-

- 4,700 people being 'aware' of at least one consultation, having visited a project page following an invitation to take part in the discussion;
- 1,050 people being more 'informed' about a consultation they can take part in, having looked at additional information about the consultation like a supporting document, or viewed others comments;
- 144 'engaged' people – tenants and residents actively participating by leaving comments, posting ideas, asking a question or completing a survey or quick poll; and
- 214 people have registered to Your Voice Leeds, allowing us to send updates about new consultations, and give feedback on existing consultations they have taken part in and to let them know the difference their feedback has made.

To remove as many barriers as possible to registration and participation a user is not required to tell us their date of birth. However, 80% of visitors to the site arrive from a link in a social media post, usually in Facebook, which is most favoured by the 25-34 age group. Your Voice Leeds is therefore likely to be including younger residents in engagement activity to a greater extent than other forms of non-digital engagement.

### **Cottingley Virtual Walkabout Consultation:-**

This was a project seeking environmental related feedback and improvement

ideas which was promoted solely via the local residents group, Cottingley in Bloom and Friends of Cottingley Community Centre Facebook groups. The consultation was viewed by 331 residents, with 17 residents actively participating in giving comments and ideas. These ranged from highlighting parking problems, suggestions for play and green space improvements and queries and ideas about improvements to green and black bins. Previously face to face walkabouts were not well attended by the local community but the digital model has highlighted 17 residents who are actively engaged and who we can maintain contact with.

Your Voice Leeds gives all tenants, especially those of a younger age profile access to take part in local and citywide consultations that are relevant to them, in a way and at a time that's convenient. Feedback about Your Voice Leeds so far includes:-

*'It gives the general public the opportunity to get involved and have their say'*

*'Great to see what ideas people have and get support for your own idea'*

*'There is now a place for residents to share their opinions and think beyond the day to day issues too'*

### **To deliver a Housing Growth Programme that provides housing of the right quality, type, tenure and affordability in the right places to meet the needs of our customers**

As part of the 'Everyone In' initiative, approximately 15,000 people nationally, who were sleeping rough, in unsafe communal settings or at imminent risk of rough sleeping were placed into emergency accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) promoted by the Ministry for Communities Housing and Local Government aimed to make available the financial resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to prevent these people from returning to the streets.

Leeds was successful in obtaining £2.6 million of government funding to support the NSAP. £1 million of this funding was allocated to the council for the purchasing of 20 one bedroom properties for rough sleepers. This approach contributed to achieving the legacy aim of the programme by providing additional housing for people recovering from rough sleeping.

The project will have a positive impact on vulnerable rough sleepers and it will offer good quality supported accommodation for up to a period of 2 years with the aim of:-

- Preventing vulnerable people from starting to sleep rough:-
- Having a rapid intervention when vulnerable people start to sleep rough to help them off the street; and
- Promoting a person's recovery once they are off the street to build positive lives that stop them returning to rough sleeping

The properties will be managed by the council with a specialist team from the commissioned housing support provider delivering intensive support to people rehoused in these properties. The properties will be:-

- Available to both males and females recovering from rough sleeping;
- Dispersed across the City in sustainable locations taking into account availability of relevant support services in the area and available property type; and
- Owned and managed by Leeds City Council and let at social rents

A dedicated team of specialist Housing Navigators, working closely with Housing Management and Housing Options teams will provide intense support to people who have previously been sleeping rough. The Housing Navigators will have the specialist skills to work with people who display challenging behaviour, as this can often make it difficult to establish relationships. This will help to:-

- Support people to settle and thrive;
- Improve personal and social skills; and
- Build resilience to sustain a tenancy and live positively within the community

The service are currently working to a deadline of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 for all 20 customers to have moved into their new fully furnished homes. The first properties are due to be ready for occupation from mid / end May 2021. Accompanied viewings are being offered with prospective tenants before they make any commitment to moving in. Progress to date includes:-

- 9 x 1 bedroom properties have been successfully purchased and are currently being refurbished;
- 3 x 1 bedroom properties are awaiting purchase approval;
- 6 x 1 bedroom properties have been identified and are under review for suitability; and
- 1 x 1 bed property is awaiting imminent inspection

Steps being taken to secure additional properties include:-

- Undertaking daily checks on open market;
- Liaising with local estate agents to identify suitable 1 bed properties;
- Securing temporary additional resource to support prompt property inspections once they become available;
- Having dedicated legal support to progress with conveyance / purchases;
- Employing a less rigid approach to property selection (now considering use of suitable flats not just houses); and
- Being 'on the list' to pick up previously viewed properties if private sales fall through

Interviews have taken place to appoint the Housing Navigators. An allocation panel has been established with housing staff and relevant partner agencies. The panel meet on a weekly basis to ensure that every aspect of a person's support

needs are discussed pre allocation. The panel have started to identify individuals for properties and will continue to do this.

## Compassionate City – Enjoying Culture and Sport, Inclusive Access and Language Access

### Improve access to cultural opportunities and sport

- **Working to ensure equality groups are fully involved in Leeds 2023**

Throughout 2020- 2021 the Leeds Culture Trust continued to establish itself as an independent cultural organisation working at grass roots to engage the wider City with culture. As well, as providing distinct leadership to promote the values of a fair and inclusive City.

### Organisation Development

Further recruitment of staff has increased the capacity to deliver community-based work. New appointments include:-

- Executive Producer;
- Producer (Community Collaborations and Partnerships); and
- Children and Young People’s Partnership Manager.

Posts currently released for recruitment include a Creative Technologist whose remit will include supporting the City’s digital inclusion agenda.

### Development of Strategic Plans

The Leeds Culture Trust have finalised their strategic plans for the delivery of the Leeds 2023 festival year and legacy. These plans acknowledge the diversity of communities and citizens in Leeds in the following ways:-

- Internationalism to acknowledge the 170 different languages spoken across the City;
- Engaging with communities to consider the impact of COVID-19 on older people, less affluent communities, people from ethnically diverse backgrounds, and younger people whose educational experiences have been disrupted;
- The newly developed vision, mission and values will underpin both recruitment of diverse staff and freelance specialists and the creative opportunities they will deliver for the benefit of every community in Leeds “*We want to create an open, accessible and universal experience.*”; and
- The programme aims to build a network across 33 wards in the City with Ambassadors / Advocates of Leeds 2023 deepening reach and engagement that the Leeds Culture Trust will build on as a legacy beyond the festival year.

Led by the Leeds 2023 Creative Director, ‘the five’ was formed which brings together five female ‘Black and Brown’ cultural leaders in Leeds to promote diversity and inclusion across all areas of culture and to promote social justice.

Over the last year, the council maintained both financial and practical support to facilitate the ongoing development of the Leeds 2023 programme and enable diverse public engagement with the programmes.

### **Supporting under-represented creatives**

Some creative activity was supported during 2020 which enabled opportunities to be targeted at artists from under-represented communities these included:-

- A specially convened conversation was hosted with disabled artists. This will support planning for greater access and inclusion for both disabled artists and disabled community members. Staff training will also take place increasing awareness and understanding of access and inclusion in working with Leeds citizens;
- Four places for artists from under-represented communities were offered on a young producer training scheme. These participants gained new skills and experience which will support them to find further creative employment in Leeds; and
- The Bus Pass project created performance opportunities for older artists. This led to increased public awareness of issues experienced by older people in the city and celebrated the contributions that older people make to the city.

### **Digital Inclusion**

Engagement plans have been produced that include specific consideration to digital inclusion supporting access to any digital offer and boosting digital skills particularly for older people or people from less affluent communities.

### **Community engagement planning and consultation**

The Leeds Culture Trust Communities Team has created a detailed engagement and consultation plan which will be undertaken until June 2021. This will target priority ward areas with the potential outcome of increased opportunities for under-represented groups to engage, participate and take a lead in cultural activity. This should also enable further opportunities for disadvantaged young people to gain employment through creative activity.

The Leeds Culture Trust's planning and scoping has been undertaken with the following communities of interest and networks as the initial areas of focus:-

- Young People (11-25)
- Religious Groups
- Neighbourhood Planning Forums
- Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board
- Community Committee for Inner and Outer wards Local Care Partnerships
- Priority Ward Network
- Leeds Older People Forum

- Volition Leeds
- Communities of Interest Network
- Peoples Voices Group Local Care Partnerships
- Leeds BME HUB
- Voluntary Action Leeds/Doing Good Leeds
- Leeds Refugee Forum/ LASSN
- Forum Central

Moving forward the council's Culture Development Team will:-

- Continue to monitor progress against the amended grant agreement with Leeds Culture Trust;
- Provide support to enable increased public access to the Leeds 2023 festival year as part of the maximising our impact area of the Culture Strategy Delivery Plan;
- Work strategically to build on a strong commitment to equality and inclusion across the Culture Service so that council's cultural provision in 2023 raises the bar for equality and inclusion;
- Continue to work with the Leeds Culture Trust to ensure that the Leeds 2023 evaluation framework and Legacy Plan supports delivery of ongoing benefits for the wider city and its communities beyond the festival year; and
- Proactively engage colleagues across other council departments and directorates to underpin future development.

Finally, work will be undertaken to scope and deliver 'The World Reimagined' in 2022. This is a major project across up to 10 UK cities and international cities. This is intended create a platform to facilitate open discussion and debate about race and culture. This programme will be used to segue into Leeds 2023 and its key diversity themes, for example, Windrush.

### **To Improve inclusion and diversity across Active Leeds Services**

Through the COVID-19 pandemic the Active Leeds service moved swiftly to adapt and modify the offer of physical activity provision. This included continually engaging and re-engaging with the hardest hit communities and effectively supporting all staff. There have been many highlights and examples of this which included:-

#### **Marketing & Communication**

- Subtitles and written instructions were added the Active Leeds video content which was posted on social media and YouTube throughout the pandemic;
- Creation of "Active Leeds for Health" in the first week of lockdown in 2020. This was a virtual platform for all ages returning or new to exercise, including those with long term health conditions and included a new

webpage, content for YouTube, face book, twitter and newsletters. Printed resources were also made available and distributed;

- Online and virtual face to face consultation was undertaken regarding potential changes to Active Leeds services, ensuring a wider range of people could feed into this. Equality Impact Assessments were also completed for all proposed changes;
- From March 30th 2020 to April 11th 2021 Active Leeds website had 117,225 views, with 43,837 views on the Healthy at Home page. 18,731 people also accessed the live streams page on the website. Active Leeds app downloads grew to 35,646, with 34,927 unique views on live streams through the app since December 2020. The number of subscribers on the Active Leeds YouTube page grew from 11 to 794 since March 2020; and
- Working with an Elected Member to ensure imagery and programmes are reflective of the communities the leisure centres serve. To breakdown the stereotypical concepts that you have to be fit or sporty to come to the leisure centres and especially the gym environment.

### **Women and Girls**

- A virtual couch to 2. 5k running programme was launched supporting 140 women initially running alongside a 5 week virtual pre and post-natal programme and buggy fit classes;
- The Leeds Girls Can programme (managed by Active Leeds) supported RJC Dance to deliver their weekly classes free over Zoom, enabling over 50 women from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities to take part in dance from the safety of their homes during lockdown;
- Leeds Girls Can working alongside Public Health and provider “Bumps and Babes” delivered online pre and post-natal classes for 176 (predominantly Black Asian and minority ethnic) women to connect with other expectant or new mothers like themselves. The women fed back that the mindfulness sessions (Yoga), helped them focus on their own mental health at a very anxious time in their maternity journey; and
- Leeds Girls Can Teens–E-zine was launched, aimed at 14-17 year olds, a diverse and inclusive magazine that included content created by teen girls living or residing in Leeds. The magazine has a strong focus on positive messages around the benefits to keeping yourself well both mentally & physically, and allowing young people the opportunity to reach out to Leeds Girls Can. One young person emailed; *“Firstly, I would like to thank you for giving my school an opportunity to get involved in the Leeds girls can magazine. I would also like to thank you for believing that girls can become what they dream to become, as we still live in a world where girls being discriminated for their passions is.”*

### **Local Sports Clubs**

- Working with corporate services Active Leeds supported voluntary sports clubs in the city to access £1.2m worth of funding; and
- COVID 19 sports equipment grant was distributed to 54 sports clubs of which *“priority was given to clubs who are located in areas of higher*

*deprivation or those who are offering activity that helps to increase participation of under-represented groups (in physical activity) including those with a disability, Black Asian and minority ethnic communities or female”.*

### **Active Leeds Staff**

- During the first lockdown 90 full time members of staff were redeployed to other service areas including Adult Social Care, schools, waste, city-centre, grant support, parks, cemeteries, telecare, PPE and food distribution;
- Virtual safeguarding, swimming and COVID-19 specific health and safety training was undertaken with all Active Leeds staff;
- 390 members of staff undertook the new Active Leeds online equality training course (which was created at the start of the pandemic); and
- A Black Asian and minority ethnic networking session was introduced with staff to gather their thoughts about the service and what the issues are. A working group was set up to look into this and the opportunity to increase representation of the workforce with the catchment areas they sit in.

### **Leisure Centre Provision**

- When the pandemic was declared communication was sent to all staff, customers and public with confirmation of all membership payments being stopped and credits being administered for over 25,000 health and fitness members, 11,000 swimming lesson and gymnastics parents, swim/diving and synchronised swimming scheme parents, clubs, schools and other Active Leeds service users and groups;
- 27,000 duty of care calls were made by Active Leeds staff to some of the most vulnerable fitness members during the first lockdown;
- From August to November 2020 leisure centre’s reopened Active Leeds reduced the cost of direct debit membership to £16.95 per month, with 15,500 people continuing to access the service;
- Mobile COVID-19 testing sites were set up at Kirkstall, Armley, Morley and Kippax. Alongside a permanent module at Fearnville Leisure Centre. John Charles and Fearnville Leisure Centre car parks to accommodate the traveler community to ensure the groups didn’t move around during the pandemic which included washing facilities being made available;
- By the end of December 2020 5,000 children had accessed swimming lesson programmes since they re-launched. Swimming “pods” were set up to allow COVID-19 safe groups of 4 or 6 people to swim together, with 3920 bookings between re-opening in July and closing in December 2020;
- 72 people accessed hydrotherapy sessions at Holt Park and Armley Leisure Centres on a regular basis in November and December 2020; and
- In total 390,899 leisure centre visits were made between 25<sup>th</sup> July 2020 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2021- 225,274 by women, 164,665 by men (and 947 unspecified).

## **Community Sport & Physical Activity**

- Throughout 2020 Active Leeds ran the Leeds Kickstart project where intensive four week programmes were delivered to learners who were unemployed, not in education employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming so- providing learners with the tools to get into employment, education or training;
- Leeds Parks Community tennis programme facilitated over 48,000 tennis court bookings during this period (an increase from 8,000 in total the previous year)- allowing free tennis opportunities across the City, with 8% of bookings from IMD decile 1;
- The Run Leeds Project undertook two surveys to assess running habits affected by COVID-19 and major life changes. Respondents were from a diverse range of socio-economic positions (covering a range of IMD), with 322 responders in survey 1 (63% female) and 289 responders in survey 2 (72% female); and
- Active Leeds Positive Futures team supported the Healthy Holidays Programme with the Community Hubs in six venues, targeting children and young people from 5 to 12 years old, engaging them in physical and cultural activities (arts and craft, secret cinema, storytelling and theatre) during the summer holidays, whilst providing breakfast and a nutritional hot/cold meal for all participants.

## **Health Programmes**

- Active Leeds Health Programmes team supported asylum seekers living in hotels in Leeds to be active during lockdown;
- In late summer 2020 Leeds Let's Get Active Parks programme for people who were shielding enabled 48 people across 4 park sites to regularly exercise; and
- A "Keeping Well at Home" booklet was designed with Public Health and distributed food parcels and other supportive packages (such as, free play at home table tennis equipment) to the most vulnerable families in the City.

## **Disabled People**

- The addition of subtitles and descriptions to Active Leeds video content has enabled a more accessible viewing experience for people who are deaf or hard of hearing and for people where English is not be their first language. It is often easier to interpret written English than it is to listen to fast spoken words from an exercise instructor for example; and
- Leisure centre provision remained open during lockdown periods for the Aspire Day Care Service, disability sport, school PE programmes and elite sport to operate. This enabled at least some face to face opportunity for some of our most vulnerable service users to remain active in a leisure centre setting.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

- Active Leeds undertook wellbeing surveys throughout the lockdown periods, enabling the service to reach out to users to see how they were getting on during the restrictions and determine what support they required to keep them motivated and stay active. Over 4,000 people completed the first survey informing Active Leeds how they were managing to stay active in lockdown and what support they required. 1600 people completed the survey during the third lockdown at the start of 2021, with 68% of respondents were women. The results highlighted how important physical activity has been to people's lives during the current climate;
- "Get Set Leeds" was a city-wide conversation about physical activity, undertaken in 2019. The results of this conversation were analysed by Leeds Beckett University and reported back to the Get Set Leeds Design Group in May 2020. The conversation was open to everyone who lives and works in the City, but a targeted approach was taken to try to ensure views were not just gathered from physically active people. Inactive people and those with protected characteristics were specifically targeted via online / website based communications and face-to-face engagement. The results of the research highlighted specific communities for prioritisation of future physical activity work. These include women and girls, young people, LGBT+ communities, disabled people and those with long-term health conditions and people from South Asian communities. Priorities for future work are currently being co-produced with partners and residents in the City;
- In addition to the Get Set Leeds (GSL) research an additional Literature Review was undertaken by Leeds Beckett University to determine the impact of COVID-19 on the findings in the GSL conversation research. This research further highlighted the need to prioritise all Black Asian and minority ethnic communities, those living in areas of deprivation, young people and their families, people who were shielding and those with mental health conditions. This work also highlighted the importance of meaningful community engagement to support COVID-19 recovery and the future resilience of Leeds communities; and
- "Active Leeds for Health" has ensured improved representation for those living with long term health conditions in Leeds, providing various avenues and platforms to find ways to 'keep moving' or begin, whilst at home. The newsletter has allowed the service to have a one stop shop which can be easily navigated to help people find support and activity.

## **Travelling Community**

- During the first lockdown the John Charles Centre for Sport and Fearnville Leisure Centre were opened up as welfare facilities to support the travelling community.

## **Children and Young People**

- A significant aspect of the "Ready Set Rainbow" resource that was developed was children's mental health. Through its growth mindset and

mindfulness cards, the toolkit encouraged children from priority localities to focus on the positive, develop resilience and take time out from what was a very intense and turbulent time; and

- Working with West Yorkshire Police Early Interventions Team, the Inspirations Programme with the Pivot Academy was a huge success allowing young people at risk the opportunity to explore new activities, engage in discussions with the Police and get active during lockdown in November 2020.

### **Older People**

- The Sport England funded “We are Undefeatables” project delivered by Active Leeds since January 2020 has enabled adults and older adults (primarily with physical and mental health conditions) to become more physically active.

### **Priority Localities**

- Active Leeds worked with a group of individuals that are residents in the council’s priority neighbourhoods which fall into the bottom 1% nationally in terms of multiple deprivation. Using a coproduction approach a physical activity project was designed and implemented that works with individuals that are in recovery from drug and alcohol abuse. Using running as a catalyst for long term behavior change and to aid the recovery process, the project reduced or removed a range of complex barriers to ensure individuals from disadvantaged communities that are on the recovery process can access sport and physical activity sessions either in the community or with The Growing Rooms recovery facility;
- “Ready Set Rainbow” scheme was designed by Active Leeds to provide physical activity ideas and games for families to play at home. 3,000 packs were distributed (generally to peoples doors) across the 6 priority neighbourhoods;
- Online training for walk/run leader and explorer orienteering was undertaken to focus in specific localities;
- During the summer months weekly outdoor dance, yoga and fitness sessions were held in Pudsey Park, Temple Newsam and Little London Primrose circus specifically for women and girls;
- The Get Set Leeds – local project was funded by Sport England and has been running for nearly 18 months. This project focusses on four localities within Leeds that are all within the top 1% for deprivation (IMD) nationally. The overall objective was to develop systematic and sustainable changes in physical activity levels in those communities by utilising an asset-based approach. The project engages with the lived experience and challenges for individuals in those localities and build meaningful engagement. A key partner in this project is the process learning partner ERS who undertook their first evaluation report in January 2021. This report outlines that the project is effectively building knowledge about the communities and trust within these communities. The value of physical activity is increasing and is becoming more integral to the work of local partners. GSSL provided much needed support to the local Covid-19 emergency response and has enabled

some of this support to be scaled up to other areas of 1% deprivation (IMD) within the City;

- Through the Get Set Leeds Local project (Beeston Hill, Holbeck, New Wortley & Seacroft), Active Leeds responded to community need during lockdown by supporting people living and working within the councils priority localities to reconnect with their local green spaces. Using a coproduction approach the service designed a fully inclusive physical activity training package that supports capacity building and upskilling of local communities- Enhancing employment opportunities; providing an engagement tool for hard to reach groups/families; increased physical activity opportunities in local green spaces and improving self-esteem and confidence;
- Active Leeds worked with PingPong4U to fund home use adapted table tennis packs, with approximately 275 families receiving these within Holbeck, Beeston Hill, within tower blocks in New Wortley as well as Seacroft, Lincoln Green and Nowell Mount. These provided opportunity for informal play within the home for many families, along with developing a pathway of opportunity for access within green spaces, local schools and community settings;
- Through the Get Set Leeds project, Active Leeds have been working with a Beeston Hill resident through Good Deeds, to develop the foundations for new activities. At the heart of this work is the commitment to togetherness, by developing Inter-Faith opportunities, as well as creating new positive opportunities for whom young people may not have had previous chance to access; and
- Leeds Girls Can ran specific projects with Women's Health Matters, supporting women experiencing or surviving Domestic Violence, and female asylum seekers, in the inner South of the City.

### **City Wide**

- The consultation on changes to Active Leeds services was conducted online and face to face virtually, which meant that whilst potential changes would affect specific localities the opportunity to have your say on proposals was open to a wider range of people- all groups and individuals from across the City could have their say;
- The implementation of new digital technology features enabled citywide, nationwide and worldwide access to Active Leeds content and programmes; and
- Leisure centre provision whilst focused in specific locations continued to serve people from across the whole of Leeds.

### **Improve access to Leeds City Centre pavements by making Leeds City Centre more user friendly and accessible by all communities**

Prior to the implementation of the Legible Leeds Pedestrian Wayfinding Project, the mapping and signage network across Leeds City centre was a patchwork of different signage styles, and it did not offer a coherent and high quality network, that people could easily follow.

Since implementation of the Legible Leeds Pedestrian Wayfinding Project around 10 years ago, it has delivered:-

- About 100 on-street wayfinding signs which will be increased to over 120 as more get installed as part of Highways and Public Realm schemes in 2021;
- A new, clear, standardised map for the City Centre highlighting the key destinations and attractions; and
- Downloadable and printed maps. The map is the most downloaded document from the Visit Leeds website and the printed map has been printed over 1 million times since implementation.

The Legible Leeds system has helped connect the West End, Waterfront, South Bank, First Direct Arena and other 'fringe' locations to the retail core of the city centre.

The overall benefit of Legible Leeds has been to raise awareness of, and improve visitor numbers to the City's key destinations supporting the city centre economy. Since Legible Leeds was introduced, it has brought the following benefits in terms of accessibility and user friendliness:-

- 'Heads up' mapping, is more accessible for users that are not comfortable using 'North up' maps to orientate themselves, as it represents what they see directly in front of them;
- Pedestrians with limited mobility prefer to know the average length of time it takes to walk to a destination;
- Pedestrians with limited knowledge of written English or with visual impairments are supported with universally understood symbols and large, uncluttered maps without clashing logos styles. Pictograms (illustrated buildings) are highlighted as destinations but also act as landmarks for users;
- Pedestrians without access to digital technology such as international visitors or those lacking in digital skills are provided for with paper based and high quality on-street mapping;
- On-street maps are free and accessible for all to use revealing the city centre's attractions and indicating a welcoming and open for business City; and
- Sign direct users to destinations using accessible routes.

The network of signs is currently being expanded from around 100 signs up to over 120. This expansion covers areas such as Westgate, New Briggate, Vicar Lane and New Station Street, where changes to the streets and spaces mean that new wayfinding signage is important in ensuring people can navigate the new environment.

Specifically, the remodelled New Station Street and Bishopgate Street will need particular attention as this is the primary 'gateway' location for visitors to the City centre.

**Deliver well designed streets and transport infrastructure that is inclusive, people focused and accessible to all**

During the design and delivery stages of Highways Schemes project leads and the communications team regularly attended the Accessibility and Use-ability Group (AUAG), Disability and Wellbeing Network (DAWN) meetings and provided briefings to other hard to reach groups.

Leeds Involving People are used as advocates throughout the design and delivery stages and they have attended events, engaged with local communities and share the scheme information, benefits and provided outreach to maintain engagement with groups and communities.

Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken on all programmes to address any special characteristics of the scheme, address any localised or wider issues/concerns raised from groups or individuals.

Connecting Leeds have developed an online engagement offer. During the COVID-19 pandemic this has proved invaluable in ensuring communications are maintained with residents and businesses that are directly impacted by the delivery of the works. The online offer has been complemented by virtual meetings with groups/residents to ensure reach out to all stakeholders.

During the construction phase of schemes there are regular onsite meetings with the council's Access Officer and Health and Safety Officer to ensure any access issues/concerns are addressed, for example ensure correct signage and that any obstacles on the pathway are removed.

Newsletters are shared widely to keep all groups, forums and residents updated with progress and these are updated into "easy read" formats.

The strategy and objectives of the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme (LPTIP) are focused on enabling easier access to public transport through the delivery of the Bus and Rail packages. These include:-

**Bus Delivery**

A range of schemes to support improved connectivity within and between Leeds Communities include:-

- Improvements to Bramley, Middleton, White Rose and Compton Road Transport Hubs;
- Improved walking and cycling links in Robin Hood, Pudsey, Lincoln Green, East End Park and Little London to improve access to key bus routes;
- 1000 new real time screens across Leeds;
- New Digital Hub for delivering Community Transport;
- 190 low emission (EuroV1) buses in services;
- The number 5 electric service is in operation – x6 fully electric buses;

- Alongside the Clean Bus Technology Fund retrofitting buses to improve emissions from buses travelling into Leeds;
- Delivery of Electric buses and electric charging equipment at Stourton Park and Ride;
- Increased customer facilities and retail options at Leeds Bus Station; and
- A new map of the Leeds Core Bus Network services that provides clear linkages to the bus stops, shelters and buses (DUE TO LAUNCH Spring 2021).

**Rail Delivery** (includes business cases approvals to develop scheme designs)

- Accessibility improvements at Cross Gates and Horsforth stations;
- Pudsey Park and Ride car parking improvements;
- Leeds Station improvements; and
- New Stations (Business Case development)
- White Rose
- Thorpe Park
- Leeds Bradford Airport

**Bus Infrastructure**

- Widening of pavements across the city centre and along bus corridors;
- Improved public realm;
- Improved bus shelters/waiting;
- Introduction of bus priority measures – increasing punctuality and improved services; and
- Reduction of congestions for buses – improving the bus experience/use of public transport

The improved outcomes on all the packages within LPTIP will enable easier access and improved bus experience for all users, improving reliability and confidence to use the bus (public transport) as the main mode of transport to access jobs, health settings etc.

**To deliver accessibility standards as part of the Core Strategy Selective Review and adoption via the examination process**

Two accessible housing standards policies for new build houses have been adopted as part of the Core Strategy Selective Review (CSSR). These standards have come about as a result of changes to national planning policy and Building Regulations. These introduced optional housing standards which a Local Authority can introduce if they demonstrate a need and viability for these through the Local Plan Process. This allows a Local Authority to require the provision of accessible dwelling targets as part of new residential developments to meet the needs of residents. In Leeds there is an evidenced need for accessible housing, to provide

housing suitable for disabled people, older people and families with young children.

The Accessibility Standards Policy H10 (accessible housing) which forms part of the CSSR, introduces a requirement for a proportion of new build dwellings both to be designed to be more suitable, particularly, for disabled and older people . The dwellings which are known as M4(2) or M4(3) should provide choice of size, location, type and tenure for people who need them.

The policy requires 30% of new build dwellings to be built to M4(2) standards 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' which are more suitable for many disabled people, older people and many families with young children and includes:-

- Step free access provided into the dwelling. For a house there will not be steps in through the entrance and for a flat above or below entrance level this can be accessed via a lift;
- Additional space is provided where parking is required to make it easier to get in and out of the vehicle;
- More spacious circulation areas and wider doorways;
- A ground floor toilet which is slightly larger than standard;
- bathroom and WC/ cloakroom walls which is strong enough to attach grab rails to if needed; and
- Additional space in key areas to allow people to maneuver and use them.

The policy also proposes 2% of new build dwellings to be built to M4(3) standards 'wheelchair user dwellings' which are designed to be easily adapted so that they are suitable for wheelchair users and include:

- Step free access provided into the dwelling. If it is a house there will not be steps in through the entrance, and if it is a flat above or below entrance level it can be accessed via a lift;
- Additional space is provided where parking is required to make it easier to get in and out of the vehicle; and
- Enough space in the dwelling and with doorways wide enough for a wheelchair user to maneuver.

Most M4 (3) dwellings will need some additional work to make sure they are suitable for wheelchair users like the fitting of grab rails in the bathroom. A needs assessment was undertaken that showed there is a need for the policy and that appropriate targets would be beneficial in particular for many disabled people, older people and many families with young children.

Adopted as part of the Core Strategy Selective Review in September 2019, the policy, is now being monitored to assess: its implementation; the number of planning applications and the impact of these planning applications. As the policy has only been recently adopted and this monitoring is at an early stage, it not possible to say yet what the positive impact has been. However it is now being applied to all planning applications which meet the threshold of the percentages required.

Leeds is one of the first Local Authorities to apply the policy having gone through a robust process through the local plan process to get it adopted. It is anticipated that a direct result of introducing the policy will be provision of good quality accessible housing for all, which in particular benefit disabled people, the elderly and young children as well as young families.

The Accessibility Standards Policy H10 is being monitored through the planning application process. This shows that between September 2019 and October 2020 there have been 618 M4 (2) accessible and adaptable dwellings and 30 M4(3) wheelchair accessible dwellings secured in new developments. These dwellings would not have otherwise been required were it not for the H10 policy requirement to do so. A monitoring framework has also been established to monitor the completion of the M4(2) and M4(3) dwellings on site, though given the time lag between the grant of planning permission and developments being completed, it is likely to be some time before the completions rate matches the number of dwellings secured at planning application stage.

**To improve the quality of parks in Leeds with a focus on community parks that provide and develop facilities and activities available for everyone who wishes to visit. Particularly for Black Asian and minority ethnic communities, people of faith, young and old, disabled people.**

The Parks and Countryside service has continued to focus on the quality of provision at Community Parks seeking to meet the aspiration of the outgoing Parks and Greenspace Strategy. This is to have all Community Parks meet the Leeds Quality Parks standard. This has been informed by previous research conducted by the University of Leeds and by consultation undertaken to inform the forthcoming Parks and Greenspace Strategy for Leeds.

The University of Leeds research provided usage information including demographic data down to site level that demonstrates that parks users are representative of the wider community in the City across all protected characteristics. This information builds upon previous surveys conducted between 2004 and 2009 that showed similar results.

However, it was notable from the data gathered there is a reduced level of visitation from the elderly and those identifying as having a disability. This has informed the design of consultation activity for the revised Parks and Green Space Strategy for Leeds and led to the development of an access audit tool that will be used to assess provision and establish a benchmark to inform future developments.

In addition the Parks and Green Space Forum identified improving access as one of their key improvement priorities and forum members are planning to undertake volunteer led access assessment at community parks. This will be published on the internet to enable visitors to make informed choices ahead of visiting parks as well as informing development plans.

The Parks and Countryside Service is currently finalising a Parks and Greenspace Strategy for Leeds due to be published in 2021 and this will be informed by the above work.

### **To make the council website (and all associated websites) accessible for all our users**

In 2020, [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk) alone had 14.6m page views, an increase of over 3m on the 2019 figure. During this period, the dedicated COVID-19 web pages which provide all stakeholders with timely content on getting help and finding key information had 1.7m page visits. Self-service transactions have also increased over this same period. The latter has included businesses applying for crucial financial support, customers requesting council tax breaks, booking a slot at a recycling site and updates for the vulnerable.

It is estimated that 20% of the world population has some kind of disability, but not all of these people have disabilities that make it difficult for them to access the web. To put this in context, in 2018 Leeds had around 800,000 (eight hundred thousand) citizens. If just 5% of those citizens, which is 40,000 (forty thousand), have a disability that makes browsing the web difficult. No organisation wants to lose these levels of engagement, especially for the council where in most cases there is no other choice.

These trends highlight the growing importance of the work undertaken by the Web Team in gradually removing the barriers making things difficult, this includes:-

- Making the content clear and up to date;
- Ensuring that most people can use it without adapting it;
- Making sure those who do need to adapt it, can do so easily; and
- Sharing knowledge across the organisation to increase awareness and responsibility

As part of this work the service have been able to determine and present to council Leadership Teams the current web accessibility compliance position and future work required. Whilst this situation is being managed for internally hosted sites/systems, unfortunately, this work has highlighted a number of areas of ongoing non-compliance for the majority of the large externally hosted websites and systems (approximately 100). This has resulted in:-

- Websites which are un-supported and/or have no budget to develop; and
- Sites that are council owned/funded which have either been independently commissioned, or procured without accessibility being verified.

Along with sustained ownership and responsibility for meeting these regulations, the above are ongoing major challenges. They potentially reduce the likelihood of the sites concerned delivering value, and also increase the risk of financial penalties and reputational damage.

To be able to deal with this volume of specialist work and manage ongoing compliance the council have recruited a specialist team to develop an approach applying innovative cost effective solutions and processes.

The resource plan for the team was based on supporting internal sites but it now plays a growing ongoing role in supporting services who have external hosting arrangements. If resources are reduced, in the current circumstances there will be issues with undertaking significant user centred content redesign work and manage the web accessibility compliance position.

To help address this, the Digital Information Service (DIS) have work planned that will mitigate these risks in the short and longer term. Failure to meet accessibility requirements or to provide a satisfactory response to a request to produce information in an accessible format, will be seen as failing to make reasonable adjustments. This means that we will be in breach of the Equality Act 2010.

As the City continues to digitally transform, it is fundamental that the council continue to ensure the accessibility of all products and services or there is a risk of widening the digital divide and excluding a significant percentage of the population.

Disability whether temporary, situational, or permanent is something that can affect people at any time. So our designing with and for people with disabilities leads to greater innovations for everyone. ICT accessibility is not only important for people with disabilities but also benefits the increasing elderly population, people who do not have English as a first language and people with lower levels of literacy.

This has never been more paramount during the current pandemic where reliance on the council's digital content has increased. The work to date has attracted national recognition and it is now included as part of the official guidance issued by gov.uk. This has included:-

Standardising and transforming our digital content e.g. replacing documents with user focused e:forms and webpages

Through all of this work the council have been able to identify problem areas with the extensive use of documents being one. The starting point was over 9,500 documents on [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk). There is a plan to replace existing documents, details of which are updated in each website's accessibility statement.

Providing innovative solutions for sharing messages with all of our users through helping to build trust in the website through establishing content standards, the principles of which are based on:-

- Identifying user needs;
- Content is based on user behaviours, analytics and feedback;
- Accurate and quality information; and
- Content is clear, written in plain English and presented in the most appropriate format

This progress has helped to set the foundations for review work, as well, forming the basis of maintenance plans for refined content.

Discovery and design work with the COVID-19 emergency work content reviews have recently been completed for Emergency Planning, School Admissions, Jobs, Adults and Health and Communities and Environment. Plus a whole host of ad-hoc work covering service, legislative and seasonal changes.

To help promote campaigns and reach wider audiences the service have also been innovative, and are working on:-

- Campaign sites, for example, Clean Air Leeds;
- Messages to share in easy reads and translations; and
- Applying separate brand/identity into [www.leeds.gov.uk](http://www.leeds.gov.uk)

### **Carrying out site/system audits & reports**

KPI – 95 audits & reports are completed by the Web Team and as a follow-up to the audits (each of which take several days to do) the team continue to spend a significant amount of time providing specialist support to services and third party organisations on what is needed to comply with the regulations.

Detailed accessibility statements for publishing on both internal and external sites/systems and KPI-68 accessibility statements are published but it is worth noting:-

- In the vast majority of these statements we do not state by when we will fix areas of non-compliance (which is required in the guidelines), but, they do provide alternative contact information;
- 26 sites/systems have out of date or no statements published; and
- We are still to schedule audits for several sites, blogs and apps

## Strong Economy – Achieving Potential and Improving Representation

### Reduce the gaps in learning outcomes for vulnerable learners including Children Looked After and children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities including Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Leeds is striving to ensure that education in the City is equitable through acknowledging that not every child starts at the same point and ,therefore, focusing extra support to ensure that children who are disadvantaged make accelerated progress and achieve the same outcomes as their peers.

In Leeds, the continued ambition is to improve outcomes for all children and young people and we know we need to do more to make a difference for children and young people who are particularly vulnerable. The 3As Strategy focuses on closing the gap, through raising the attendance, attainment and achievement levels of vulnerable learners.

The three obsessions identified in the 3As Strategy are:-

- **Obsession 1:** All children make the best start to learning
- **Obsession 2:** All children 'In Need' are safe, supported and successful in school
- **Obsession 3:** All children in Leeds read for learning and fun

Due to the unprecedented impact of COVID-19 on children and families across the City, the equality priorities for the Directorate, and indeed the entire council, have shifted and now encompass an even greater number of children and young people who are deemed vulnerable. In addition, since the most recent version of the priorities, there has been insufficient data in terms of the aforementioned performance measures due to assessments not taking place in 2020 as a result of the pandemic. This update provides an update on the work being undertaken by Children and Families Services in response to COVID-19 and in supporting all children in Leeds, incorporating vulnerable children and young people and with a focus on the impact on schools. Child poverty is also particularly relevant at this time due to the impact and multiple effects of the pandemic on families.

In order to address the equality improvement priority, the service and partners have had to evaluate the initial and subsequent ongoing impacts of COVID-19. As the pandemic is unprecedented the Children and Families Directorate has had to redeploy resources to areas of need with the highest priority.

COVID-19 and subsequent lockdowns have resulted in a sense of fear and anxiety, which has led to short-term as well as long-term mental health implications for children and young people. The magnitude of the impact on children and young people is yet to be fully understood but will be determined by many vulnerability factors that create existing inequalities ,such as, development age, physical health and pre-existing mental health conditions (their own/parents), living in poverty or in the care system.

The disruption caused by the pandemic and successive lockdowns has impacted on the daily lives of children and young people, resulting in lost routines and reduced social contact. The single biggest change for the majority of children during the pandemic has been not attending school. At a time of heightened anxiety, some of the most vulnerable children in the City were unable to access the things that routinely support their wellbeing.

A recent poll conducted for Barnardo's by YouGOV reported a rise in issues related to mental health and wellbeing for at least one in three of the participating 4,000 children and young people. Over two-thirds said that not seeing their friends was one of the hardest things about lockdown. Emerging evidence (Anna Freud National Centre for Children & Families Report - December 2020) indicates that young people with eating disorders, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) have reported a worsening of symptoms. Young people with physical health conditions and disabilities are not affected uniformly, with some experiencing lower levels of mental health difficulties than their peers.

The pandemic has also exacerbated existing inequalities, with those living in the most deprived communities affected the most. COVID-19 has exposed and amplified existing inequalities facing children, meaning those already facing the worst life chances have felt the greatest burden from the virus. Before the crisis, disadvantaged children were 18 months behind their wealthier peers in their learning by the time they finished their GCSEs. The full impact of school closures on children's outcomes is not yet known, but the closures are likely to have worsened the disadvantage gap.

School closures have not only affected children's education, they have also potentially left children more vulnerable. Children and young people with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), experience of the care system or other forms of disadvantage have reported higher than usual levels of anxiety and stress. Even before the pandemic struck, there were nearly 2.2 million children in England living in households affected by any of the so-called 'toxic trio' of family issues: domestic abuse, parental drug and/or alcohol dependency and severe parental mental health issues. This equates to six children in the average classroom growing up with potential risk due to their family circumstances. A Centre for Mental Health report notes a 20% increase in phone calls to Childline during the first four weeks of lockdown.

The Children and Families Directorate is undertaking multiple work streams to support the vulnerable children and families in Leeds which are outlined below:-

- Bronze area meetings have continued throughout the pandemic, now held on a fortnightly basis in each area of the City, South. The meetings are an invaluable forum for identifying and responding to local needs in a multiagency and multidisciplinary context. One main area of current focus is ensuring that children who are Clinically Extremely Vulnerable and also have a social worker are seen, safe and engaged in learning;

- Primary, Secondary and Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILC) Bronze Schools Meetings continue to take place monthly to support school leaders with ongoing queries or concerns related to the pandemic;
- For the early years, the council funds childcare providers for children aged 2, 3 or 4 years old under the Free Early Education Entitlement funding (FEEE). In the autumn term, providers continued to receive FEEE funding based on historical attendance (Autumn 2019) in order to offer some protection against loss of income after low attendance due to COVID-19;
- The restrictions announced nationally on 4 January 2021 indicated that early years' provision should remain open. This had a mixed response across the sector, with some settings pleased that they could remain open, and others expressing significant concerns about staff safety and the contradiction between advice for school staff and early years' staff;
- In early years' settings, the focus has been, and continues to be, on effectively managing each day with all of the challenges and uncertainties it brings. Currently the focus is on staff testing, protecting those staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable, ensuring those settings which are open have sufficient staffing and that appropriate risk assessments are in place;
- Children's Centre Family Services Teams are continuing to offer services virtually, in the main, although doorstep visits are taking place and full home visits to those where there is a safeguarding concern. A third edition of the home learning activity packs for two year olds is being distributed to appropriate families;
- From 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, all mainstream schools were closed to all but vulnerable pupils and the children of critical key workers. All Special Schools and Alternative Provisions were required to remain open to all learners;
- Learning Improvement and Learning Inclusion colleagues have worked with schools to navigate through the government guidance and to support where messages have been open to interpretation, for example, key worker status, statutory requirements on delivery of Education, Health and Care Plans, attendance coding and whether maintained school nurseries were to remain open;
- The government identified clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) children and advised them to shield. This meant that these children were advised not to attend school due to the nature of their medical condition as they were at risk if they were to contract COVID-19;
  - The council has continued to support schools in making the decision about the safest and most appropriate option for each student in line with medical advice and guidance. If a CEV child is also a 'child in need' or 'vulnerable, or the child of a key worker without alternative child care, arrangements could be made for the child to return to school in a safe 'bubble' following an individual risk assessment or remaining at home (with arrangements for remote learning);
  - Government guidance, published in January 2021, stated that all children of key workers should have a place at on-site provision if this was required. The council put together a letter for parents which Head Teachers could send out, re-iterating the message that in order to reduce transmission of the virus in school, therefore reducing the risks posed to the wider local

community, advice to key workers was only to request a place if they absolutely had to;

- Head Teachers were concerned that the guidance did not set out a minimum number of children per bubble. As a result, a number of schools had classes that remained at 30, which was unlikely to reduce transmission;
- In light of the new guidelines, the council Health and Safety Team revised the Risk Assessment document provided to schools. Factors to be considered when making risk based assessments, on the number of children and staff that could safely be accommodated in schools, were strengthened in order to support school leaders in their decision making process;
- The specific nature, size, staffing and circumstances of each school meant that all schools had unique challenges to manage in responding to the guidance and needs of their student cohorts. School leaders were impacted significantly by the constant organisational issues, frequent changes in guidance and responding to an ever-changing situation;
- DfE (Department for Education) and Ofqual issued a joint consultation on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021 inviting stakeholders, such as parents, pupils and teachers, to comment on their proposals for grading GCSE, A-levels and vocational and technical qualifications in summer 2021;
- Children and Families Services made a submission of behalf of Leeds City Council. All secondary heads in the City were invited to a secondary bronze meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 in order to discuss some of the more contentious issues. The Voice and Influence Team held an event in order to garner the views of pupils which fed into the submission.
- There were particular concerns over the disadvantage faced by children with English as an additional language and in particularly those new to English. In schools, these children often make accelerated progress as soon as they become immersed in English. However, being at home where they may be speaking their first language continually, and not having opportunities to speak English, their performance may not have been indicative of their ability. The concern was and continues to be that these pupils may find themselves progressing on to courses that meet their grades, when they are capable of accessing, and succeeding on, a more challenging course;
- The lack of universal digital access has been a significant issue. The local authority created a survey which went to leaders in the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 asking for an indication of how many children in their schools did not have regular access to a digital device which was not their mobile phone, and how many households in their school community did not have internet access. The information was submitted to the DfE to support a request for additional resources;
- Leeds has continued to see a significant rise in notifications of elective home education (EHE) post the first lockdown period. The number of young people registered as EHE on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 was 843 (420 primary, 423 secondary) compared with 535 on same date in 2019;
- There have been 372 new notifications since the start of the academic year 2020/2021 with the majority of reasons being COVID-19 related concerns. The data shows a particular increase in the number of Key Stage 1 children

becoming EHE. In the same period there were 105 closures to EHE with approximately 75% returning to school. Whilst the number of notifications for EHE steadied during the last lockdown it is anticipated that these may rise again as school attendance became mandatory from the 8th March and anxieties are still high

- The EHE team continued with usual practice and protocol despite the increase in volume, of safeguarding calls / garden visits to parents, check-ins with social care and review of suitability of education plans – and annual check-ins focused on year 11 and post 16 pathways;
- The School Attendance Team returned to full operational services in September 2020 with a focus on - Children Missing Education (CME), whereabouts known, support into a school place as soon as possible, safeguarding follow up to those not returned / transferred, traded support to schools, response to school / parent queries and continued check-in on the attendance of Children Looked After for the first half term;
- The second part of term saw the start of some legal work on penalty notice for term time holidays of which there were 342 notices, significantly lower than the previous year. Schools were encouraged throughout the Autumn term to take a restorative approach to initial non-attendance around COVID-19 concerns and to work with the families to provide support and reassurance to promote a return to the school. This restorative approach is encouraged to support the return to school and build confidence following the government announcement of a full return on the 8th March 2021;
- Since January 2021, the attendance team resumed its focus on the most vulnerable cases, Children Missing Education, which continued to be around 70 new cases a week, and following up to the previous term. Fair Access processes remained in place so pupils could be added to school rolls and receive remote learning if not in the vulnerable categories;
- From January 2021, in the third lockdown, children and young people with an Education Health and Care plan (EHC) were again encouraged to attend school, as they were considered to be vulnerable learners, however, it was not mandatory for them to do so. Settings assessed their whole risk as a school to be able to operate safely and where possible offered face to face teaching alongside a blend of on-line and remote learning. In March 2021, the government made it mandatory for all learners to return to full school attendance;
- During the third lock-down the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centres (SILCs) were working with families to co-produce and communicate the offer that is in place, working on an individual basis. The SILCs are now working towards a full face to face return for all learners. There are weekly SILC Principal Meetings held with local authority officers to support them with any practical issues around provision and testing. This is also supported with the SILC Bronze Meetings, which is a partnership meeting, again in place to support individual families at this time;
- Learning from the first lockdowns, there was a much smoother transition into the third lockdown with all risk assessments and processes in place for those children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The following provides an update on areas / teams offering SEND support:

- Direct teaching has been maintained in settings, for example, within the Visual Impairment Team (VIT) and the Deaf and Hearing Impairment Team (DAHIT);
- The Educational Psychologist Team maintains its offer to schools for work to take place virtually where possible and still offers some direct support;
- The DFE wellbeing project has been ongoing in addition to teams supporting the Youth Justice Service, Signpost and Early Help Hubs;
- STARs Autism Support Team has supported parents in accessing the telephone consultations to support home learning;
- Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Team (SENIT) continued to offer support to schools and it was noticed that there were more requests in the third lockdown in comparison to previous lockdowns. A high number of cases persisted and the Early Years Team continued to support in settings;
- The Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Panel continued to meet virtually to support Area Inclusion Partnerships (AIP); and
- The Educational Psychologist Team (EPT) delivered critical incident support to 11 settings over the autumn. The team also continued engagement in development work with other services impacted by lockdown, for example, Neurodevelopmental Pathways.

As with previous lockdowns leading to school closures the focus has been firmly fixed on the wellbeing of children and young people on their return to school. Children and Families Services has undertaken the following in support of pupil wellbeing:-

- An offer for all schools to attend live wellbeing training using resources provided by the DFE. There are more sessions to follow and ultimately in excess of 150 delegates will have had the training;
- Recorded training (as above without the live element) has been offered via YouTube and made available to those settings who had not yet accessed the sessions. Children and Families colleagues have also had access to the training;
- All resources from training are available on Leeds for Learning website;
- Over the course of January and February 2021 all schools were given access to a cluster meetings with Educational Psychologists focused on staff wellbeing;
- Schools who participated in the training had access to group support sessions facilitated by the Educational Psychologists Team with a focus on implementation of the training into their school; and
- Plans are in place for all schools to have access to free recorded introductory training on – Formulation of Children and Young People with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs, Emotion Coaching and Extended School Non Attendance (also referred to as emotionally based school refusers);
- Young people have been encouraged to contribute to the MindMate blog, to express their thoughts, feelings and experiences on topics relating to mental health. One example is 'Being Black and Being Me', in which a young black woman from Leeds discusses how racism can affect the

mental health of those who experience it, and the ways we can combat the prejudice that exists in society;

- In addition to expressing their views and ideas through blogs and podcasts, young people across Leeds have also been actively involved in informing the Leeds Future in Mind strategy. Their voices have been fundamental in planning how people will work together, across services in the NHS, Leeds City Council and in the community, to improve children and young people's emotional and mental health in the City;
- Throughout the pandemic schools have been required to consider all requests for in-year admission, responding to applications as quickly as possible. The annual cycle process which allocates places to start in September operated as normal in 2020 and is on track to allocate places in the usual way for September 2021. Year 7 places are allocated on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and Reception places allocated on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021;
- In April 2020, amendment regulations to the School Admissions Appeal Arrangements Regulations were issued. This removed the requirement for appeals to be heard in person where COVID-19 restrictions prevented this from being reasonably practicable. These regulations have now been extended until September 2021. Leeds City Council introduced 'remote access' appeals via video calls and over 1000 school admission appeals have been heard in this way to date. While restrictions remain in place which prevent appeal panels from safely meeting in person, remote access appeals continue to be heard and are being planned for the April to July 2021 block appeal hearings. Clerks and volunteer panel members have all received training to support them in this approach;
- The lockdown measures have had significant implications for children and families living poverty in Leeds and across the country;
- Free School Meal (FSM) entitlement has been a critical indicator for schools and catering providers during this period to ensure that families most in need are receiving food and support. It has been noted that there has been an increase in the number of FSM claims since the start of COVID-19 which has risen at an accelerated rate since lockdown first took effect. Over lockdown, Catering Leeds has supported schools and settings to support the increasing number of children eligible for free school meals with vouchers, meals and hampers; and
- The Director of Children and Families Services provides regular bulletins to schools, incorporating guidance from the Department for Education and the Directorate has established a single point of contact for schools to communicate their views and to submit questions which can be responded to quickly and effectively; and
- Services across the local authority have continued to support schools in matters including but not restricted to Human Resources, Health and Safety, Governors Services and Health and Wellbeing.

The actions described above have resulted in vulnerable children and families in Leeds being supported through the most challenging time in many of our lives.

In listening to the voices of children and young people and to schools the Directorate are aware that three of the main concerns are:-

## **Exams and Assessment**

- Students in Leeds are acutely aware of how much lost learning took place over the Autumn Term of 2020 due to the high levels of ‘collapsed bubbles’. Some students have reported missing up to a month of on-site learning. They felt they were being placed at a particular disadvantage compared to students in other parts of the country which, at that time, had much lower infection rates. This issue has been compounded further by schools being closed for most students at the start of 2021;
- Students were increasingly concerned about the lack of certainty and clarity over how they would be assessed this academic year and even once the process was clear, many reported feeling anxious about how fair the process would be. Students who prefer to sit exams have told us that they fear they will not do as well with teachers giving the assessments. Furthermore, students are worried that any centre-assessed coursework they completed prior to January 2021 may now not count towards their final grades. Finally, students have said that if final grades are based on predicted grades by their teachers this could also be unfair as those predictions are based on student performance during a period of high stress and lost learning from collapsed bubbles / lockdowns; and
- The council has regular Bronze Meetings with Secondary Head teachers and also monthly Bronze Youth Meetings with children and young people. With regards to exams and assessments for 2021 the council consulted with these groups in advance of making a submission to the Department for Education’s (DfE) consultation over the process for grading assessments this year. This enabled the voices of children, young people and schools to be heard and taken into account in the DfE’s final decision.

## **Remote Learning Offer**

- Young people reported feeling there has been a mixed experience in terms of the remote learning provisions for schools and colleges in Leeds over the course of the pandemic;
- Remote education is not the same as on-line education. It is a broad term encompassing any learning that happens outside of the classroom, with the teacher not present in the same location as the pupils. It can be delivered in a number of different ways. This includes working through worksheets, reading practical textbooks and undertaking physical activity are all examples of remote education, as well as the live streaming of lessons or accessing pre-recorded on-line lessons;
- Whilst it is possible to receive a remote education without a digital device or internet access, it is certainly beneficial to have both;
- The council has supported schools in accessing the required digital devices for those vulnerable children who did not have prior access;
- The government has run a number of schemes to supply laptops and internet access to those pupils who do not have them. As of 3rd February 2021, 10,992 devices have been provided to maintained schools in Leeds;
- A further 8678 devices have been delivered to Multi Academy Trusts in the city although as some of these organisations span more than one local

authority it is hard to quantify exactly how many have come directly to pupils in Leeds; and

- The allocations are in addition to the devices distributed in summer 2020. That is, the 382 devices to Year 10 disadvantaged and 2181 to children with social workers.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing / Psychological Impacts**

Support around mental health needs of children and young people is one of the key focuses of the work being undertaken now and also planned for the coming months. The City's social, emotional and mental health strategy, Future in Mind, has been refreshed to take into account the significant impact of Covid-19.

Some of the predominant impacts on young people include:-

- Young people who have experienced trauma through the pandemic including bereavement, witnessing domestic violence and families who have fallen into poverty;
- Young people who have experienced loneliness and isolation, grief at losing aspects of their childhood such as going to the Prom and other societal rituals;
- Mental health services have experienced increased presentations around eating disorders and self-harm, including later presentations, that is, nationally more presentations of young people needing urgent treatment for eating disorders;
- Some of the psychological impacts for very young children are currently unknown in terms of brain development and socialisation in the context of Covid-19. These children have been social distancing for much or all of their lives and have therefore had limited opportunities to socialise with peers, family members or the wider community;
- Through the identification of the impacts listed above the local authority, clinical commissioning group and partners have been able to position resources to support the areas of greatest need and where the most impact can be made. Universal support for emotional health and wellbeing / SEMH needs:-
  - Has been and continues to be available to all schools;
  - Cluster support / Continued Professional Development focusing on specific themes e.g. extended school absenteeism, emotion coaching; and  
(Trauma Informed work with Clinical Commissioning Group has been integrated with this universal and targeted work)
  - Critical Incident response on going.

It is also predicted that there are a number of key groups who might be additionally disadvantaged by the pandemic in terms of their holistic development. This includes children and young people who already have an identified special educational need or where one is emerging. Examples include:-

- Children and young people with neuro-diverse needs. The lockdown has provided some children and young people with a consistent but more limited environment and reduced some of the environmentally mediated factors;
- Children and young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs who were struggling with systems;
- Children and young people who are care experienced;
- Children and young people in alternative provision; and
- These key groups may find it difficult to manage the transition back to school and it may be manifested in a number of ways including impact on relationships, their development, an increase in fixed term exclusions, reduction in attendance, learning outcomes etc.

There is the need to consider the transition back to school as a longer process than merely the return to school. Needs should be considered in terms of the pandemic increasing the vulnerability for many children and young people. It is possible that issues may arise later but still be a result of the lockdown and school disruption.

Points of transfer will be key. That is, children and young people who have transferred from one school to another, with an identified need. Systemic change reduces protective factors. Attending school is not the protective factor. It is the school system and community that offers the resilience within the relationships, routines, known factors etc.

School closures have had the most significant impact on the education of children and young people in Leeds. Several issues have been identified as long term impacts of COVID-19 including: how to catch up on missed education and how to prepare a quality remote learning offer should similar incidents occur in the future.

The longer term impact of Covid-19 on the early years is as yet unknown, as the duration of the pandemic is not known which will affect how long any sort of recovery will take. The duration of the pandemic could make the difference between this being one significant element in the early life of the current group of under-fives or the defining factor in those children's early lives and possibly beyond.

Support around the psychological impacts on children and young people is one of the key focuses of the work being planned for the coming months. Much work is being undertaken already under the umbrella of "The Future in Mind Strategy: Leeds Strategy Refresh".

The main concerns from the Youth Service in Leeds echo those reported by the National Youth Agency as being: Increased mental health problems, children missing from education and those "at risk at home". In response to these concerns the service is currently focused on street based youth work and outdoor educational activity days. Moving into the recovery phase the service aims to expand this offer to other groups of vulnerable young people including those;

- Identified via the street based youth work sessions;

- Accessing specialist/targeted provision such as LGBT+ youth groups and young carers service;
- Known to statutory services such as Children’s Social Work Service and Youth Justice Service;
- Referred from schools, clusters or Early Help Hubs due to identified vulnerabilities or low school attendance; and
- That are not in education, training or employment.

Since the beginning of the pandemic and the closure of schools, there has been a growing conversation on ‘pupil wellbeing’ in Leeds that has led to collaborative work between a number of Children and Families’ Services, including the Health and Wellbeing Service and Educational Psychologists, to develop a dedicated set of wellbeing surveys. Data collected from these surveys will help Children and Families Services direct resources in the future.

Long COVID has a range of different symptoms which can impact on people weeks or months after being infected by COVID-19. In some cases the initial virus may not have made individuals feel significantly unwell before feeling the effects of Long COVID. Whilst there is evidence that Long-COVID has affected a small number of children and young people, there is still very little known about this version of the virus. Over the coming months, there is likely to be a greater focus and more work done on this long term variant of the virus.

**Improve access to apprenticeships, particularly for young people and Black Asian and minority ethnic communities**

The council’s Employment and Skills service worked in partnership with the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council to commission research in 2016 into the awareness of apprenticeship opportunities and the challenges and barriers facing young people from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities in accessing these.

Building on these key learning points an Inclusion Plan was developed which aimed to build on the lessons learnt, address the challenges and continue improving access to apprenticeships for young people from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities.

The service has delivered a range of targeted interventions to support access to apprenticeships for young people in Leeds from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities which includes:-

- Commissioning Prospects Services to promote apprenticeships specifically to young people aged 16-25 years in Black Asian and minority ethnic communities and to support those young people in making apprenticeship applications;
- Supporting a pilot pre-apprenticeship recruitment and training programme with the council’s Active Leeds service aimed at developing a more inclusive and representative workforce;

- The delivery of additional apprenticeship engagement sessions in secondary schools and colleges with the highest Black Asian and minority ethnic student population in the City. Sessions were delivered to students, their parents and carers, as well, as careers practitioners;
- Facilitating a number of focus groups to explore and understand the barriers that young people from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities face when considering or accessing apprenticeships;
- A series of apprenticeship seminars delivered by local employers to provide information to students and their parents so that they are able to make informed choices post 16 and post 18;
- Sessions delivered to students in advance of the Service's annual apprenticeship fair;
- Promotional material for events delivered by the service has been reviewed to ensure it is more reflective of Black Asian and minority ethnic communities in the City; and
- Promotion of Start in Leeds (the City's on line careers platform)

Working with businesses to challenge diversity and recruitment and support businesses to develop a workforce which is reflective of the City's profile.

The research activity raised the profile of apprenticeships among Black Asian and minority ethnic young people and communities, creating interest in this agenda.

The 12 month contract "Participation in Apprenticeships" (Prospects) actively engaged more than 400 Black Asian and minority ethnic young people across the City, of which 29 applied for a minimum of 3 apprenticeship opportunities. 63 received intensive individual support.

The Active Leeds pre-apprenticeship recruitment and training programme achieved 10 applications (7 Black Asian and minority ethnic staff) and 2 starts on programme of which 2 successfully completed their traineeship.

Whilst outside the period of this progress update there is some data which indicates that some of the targeted work carried out has resulted in an increase of awareness of apprenticeships especially young people from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities who attended the online Leeds Apprenticeship Careers festival. For example, of all the attendees who booked for one of the live Meet and Greet sessions with an employer 29% stated they were from a Black, Asian or mixed or multiple ethnic group.

### **Data**

In 2015/16 overall apprenticeship starts in the City from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities were 11.4% In 2016/17 this increased to 12%

The Figures from the 2019/20 Leeds City Region Final Learner cube show the overall apprenticeship starts for the 3 years.

	<b>Total apprenticeship starts for all Leeds postcodes</b>	<b>Starts by ethnicity – i.e. all ethnicity apart from white, not known</b>	<b>% of all starts by ethnicity – i.e. all ethnicity apart from white, not known</b>
2017/18, Final	5,607	653	11.6%
2018/19, Final	6,624	949	14%
2019/20, Final	4,879	614	12.6%
	<b>17,110</b>	<b>2,216</b>	<b>Average for all years 13%</b>

*The age range is for all ages not just young people i.e. Unknown, Under 16, 16-18, 19-24, 25+*

### **The National Picture**

- All regions saw a fall in the number of apprenticeship starts between 2018/19 and 2019/20. The North East had the largest proportional fall in apprenticeship starts, with 23% less starts. The East Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber both had 20% less starts;
- Nationally, the proportion of starters from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities was 13.1%. This was an increase from 12.3% in 2018/19;
- Leeds performed better than the national average in 2018/19 with 14% of all starts from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities;
- In 2019/20, there were 322,500 apprenticeship starts in England. The number of starts fell in 2019/20 due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic from March 2020. The pandemic and lockdown period saw a disproportionately negative impact on apprenticeship starts for those aged under 19, and those starting an intermediate level apprenticeships; and
- Nationally 23,400 fewer people were participating in an apprenticeship in 2019/20 than in 2018/19.

Leeds starts were in line with this national picture of overall starts, however, 12.6% of starts were from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities.

Work will continue to develop and deliver the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Inclusion plan to improve access to apprenticeships. This includes:-

- Continued stakeholder engagement within the City to include: schools, key influencers, Elected Members, council services, faith and community groups, specialist providers, apprenticeship training providers, 'Leeds BME Hub' and the council's 'Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network'. This is to ensure working together as a City for Leeds is key to the approach. This will ensure good practice and lessons learned are shared and contribute towards a collaborative City wide response;

- Increasing understanding of Black Asian and minority ethnic community barriers and needs. Colleagues in the Employment and Skills service will support Black Asian and minority ethnic people accessing their programmes , ensuring provision is targeted through the European Structural and Investment Fund funded Employment Hub contract ;
- Maximising secondary school, 6<sup>th</sup> form and Further Education college engagement through the delivery of information sessions to students, parents and carers and practitioners via the Leeds Apprenticeship Hub
- Working with the businesses community to increase the number of apprenticeships in the workplace;
- Looking to develop the Leeds Apprenticeship Ambassador programme. This will aim to ensure a range of ambassador profiles and roles reflective of both males and females from different ethnic backgrounds. The participants will include ambassadors who have completed apprenticeships in a range of different sectors and occupations, business ambassadors, key influencers in the community and council colleagues from across teams and services who have a delivery responsibility within target areas of the City; and
- Continuing to track data to ensure that targeted actions result in increased awareness and take up of apprenticeship opportunities by Black Asian and minority ethnic young people in the City

**Provide effective support to disabled people and people with long term health conditions with a focus on those with poor mental health to access the labour market and sustain employment**

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic Leeds has a higher than average employment rate of 80.4 % but against this backdrop, the highest proportion of claimants in receipt of out-of-work benefits were doing so on the grounds of ill-health and the duration of claims was increasingly long term.

In August 2020 (the data was released in February 2021) there were 25,753 people claiming Employment Support Allowance (ESA) with 54% (13,622) of these claimants reporting a mental health condition, 62% (15,941) claiming for more than 5 years and 53% (13,770) aged 50+.

Many disabled people still face barriers when accessing services and they also face disproportionate social isolation, prejudice, stigma and disability hate crime.

Research carried out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission states “that disabled people are being left behind in comparison with others in society and some groups of disabled people – in particular those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities – experience even greater barriers. More families that include a disabled person live in poverty; access to mental health care is inadequate; and housing and transport fail to support disabled people to live independently and fulfil their potential and aspirations.”

According to the Office for National Statistics disabled people more frequently than non-disabled people indicated that the pandemic affected their well-being. It made their mental health worse (41% for disabled people and 20% who were not

disabled), they are feeling lonely (45% and 32%), they spend too much time alone (40% and 29%), they feel like a burden on others (24% and 8%) and they have no one to talk to about their worries (24% and 12%).

It is acknowledged that although the City benefits from a flexible and committed workforce striving to improve employment outcomes. However, there is a need to better connect organisations and align existing support measures which traditionally separate an individual's employability and health needs. Data from the All Age Mental Health Strategy indicates the incidence of mental ill health is increasing linked to COVID-19 and the rise in Universal Credit claimants.

As a result the strategy has been refocused to supplement the ongoing work across the existing 8 priorities with targeted support to populations, particularly, impacted by COVID-19 to stay mentally healthy. One of the priorities is people who have been made unemployed during the pandemic.

Priority 3, which focuses on employment, education and training also picks up those within the workforce that are experiencing mental ill health. Strategic and operational evidence also demonstrates the issue in terms of its scale and intransigence.

Jobshop Services have been accessed by 821 people between April 2020 to March 2021. Of those, 5% declared a physical impairment, 3% declared poor mental health.

This figure is significantly reduced as a result of COVID-19 but even in pre pandemic times the self-declaration picture has remained reasonably static over time but does not reflect the experience of front line staff which indicates a steady increase in the number of people presenting with poor mental health. Estimated at nearer 50%, this more closely mirrors the number of individuals receiving Employment Support Allowance on account of mental ill health (54%). The network of Community Hubs works in partnership with a number of specialist organisations supporting those people experiencing mental ill health.

Pre COVID-19 the arrangements with some of these organisations - Remploy, Scope and Touchstone included a presence in Hubs to make access to services more open and immediate. Moving this online has reduced visibility and engagement but a return to physical delivery will be targeted once this is feasible post June 21<sup>st</sup> 2021.

The Employment and Skills service has expanded their employability programme offer which has enabled them to support an increased number of customers which has enabled and in support interventions to be tailored.

The Employment Hub has developed tailored programmes of support around supporting unemployed disabled residents and people facing barriers due to mental ill health.

Advisors undergo initial assessments with all participants on programmes that highlight specific participant needs. Effective communication channels ensure that

these are shared as necessary to ensure that recruitment support is tailored to promote activity amongst groups who face particular labour market disadvantage.

The Employment and Skills Service bid successfully for a European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) £2.91m programme. The Employment Hub (Mental Health) programme commences in July 2021 after considerable delays due to contractual and resourcing difficulties related to COVID-19. This will deliver interventions to address complex barriers to employment, raise aspirations, and deliver skills and training and broker opportunities with local and national employers. It will support 1,100 young people in Leeds and Bradford who identify as having mental health issues and who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The programme will be delivered in partnership by Leeds City Council, Bradford City Council, BARCA and Specialist Autism Services (SAS).

The service has been working collaboratively with primary care, the Local Care Partnerships (LCP) Development Team, Public Health and the Third Sector to deliver consecutive remote pilots of Developing You (DY). This a 10 week pre-employment support programme which targets people with mild to moderate mental health challenges. The programme uses modules around wellbeing (including sessions with low-level physical activity) and employability to increase confidence and realise potential. Sessions are held with local and city wide wellbeing and employability support providers and a warm handover to partner organisations is arranged to facilitate ongoing support. Modules are delivered by the Employment and Skills commissioned Adult Learning providers and the Public Health funded Better Together providers.

### **Informed Choices**

The Employment and Skills young people focused work strand provides the following programmes:-

- Supporting Lighthouse Futures Trust with the paid internship programme which includes Leeds City Council placements;
- Virtual Special Educational Needs and Disabilities careers activities for Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre's;
- Promotion of support from Leeds Hearing Sight Loss services; and
- Targeted promotion of employment opportunities through partners who support young people with disabilities

### **Adult Learning**

The Adult Learning Programme provides a broad range of learning that brings together residents of different ages and backgrounds, living in the most deprived areas of the City with the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience they need, in order that they can learn how to:

- Improve their health and well-being and reduce social isolation;
- Raise their personal skills, knowledge and self-confidence to progress towards formal learning, employment or volunteering opportunities; and
- Develop stronger communities.

Learners who experience/are recovering from mental ill health are included as a priority group of the programme.

Due to the needs of vulnerable learners and the nature of courses, pre COVID-19 all adult learning was delivered face to face in a classroom setting. Once lockdown started in March 2020, all ongoing delivery had to cease immediately. Sub contracted partners were supported in various ways to adapt to new methods to be able to continue with pastoral support for vulnerable learners in the interim until an online learning platform could be developed and deployed.

The new online capability has continued into 2021 with blended learning and remote delivery options added to the modes of delivery to engage the hardest to reach learners and home learning resource packs created to assist those without access to the internet. Some face to face delivery and outdoor learning returned following the end of the first lockdown period, however, this has now ceased following the further period of lockdown which started in January 2021.

### **Leeds Learning Disability Employment Task Group (LLDETG)**

In November 2020 the Leeds Learning Disability Employment Task Group which is a cross-sector group comprising a range of public and Third Sector organisations representing people with Learning Disabilities (LD) developed an action plan and a 5 year action statement. This group deliver the Employment outcomes in the Being Me Strategy. This work will show how Leeds plans to increase the number of people with Learning Disabilities who are in meaningful, paid employment. The Task Group meets bi-monthly and have formed a series of sub groups to focus on different elements of the action plan.

In February 2021 the following subgroups were formed and met for the first time.

#### **Steering Group**

A scoping exercise was undertaken to take up a rent free retail outlet in the City centre for use as either a retail unit, café, social or employment hub space for people from the LD community. Placements and work opportunities will be created as part of the initiative.

#### **Virtual Learning Disability Hub**

The Hub will host information on employment support services, skills training and employment opportunities available in Leeds, across public, private and the Third Sector. The key aim is to provide better co-ordination across services and agencies by pulling information, networks, support and opportunities together in one place to support access to employment

Connect in the North were commissioned by the Employment and Skills service to design, test and launch the virtual hub which will be known as Being Employed Leeds. A steering group has been set up and design is underway following extensive consultation with groups with Learning Disabilities. The prototype website has a 93% accessibility rating. Comprehensive user testing, employer

interface and communications plan will follow prior to a soft launch later in the year.

### **Employer Engagement**

Work is underway with the Key Account Management Team in Economic Development to convene a group of 20/25 major employers in Leeds for an employer forum. A June 2021 launch date has been booked and the council's Chief Executive will host a round table event. The forum will create paid and unpaid opportunities for the LD community, organise reverse jobs fairs and promote Disability Confident training.

### **Pathways/Skills Development**

Gap analysis is being undertaken to identify need to enable the prioritisation of funding applications. Initial scoping discussions have taken place with a number of stakeholders around creating an LD-bespoke version of the Developing You pre-employment support programme. This programme will prepare those within the LD community with an aspiration to join the workforce for any opportunities that arise from the Employer Forum or elsewhere.

### **Autism Employment Group (AEG)**

Due to COVID-19 the 'Hidden Talents' Employment Fair focusing on adults with autism did not go ahead. Plans are in place to hold the fair in October 21, which will be funded by Employment and Skills and facilitated by DWP. This will build on previous successes when circa 200 people attended to engage with some of the City's key businesses and attract a significant number of disabled jobseekers.

Discussions are underway to join with the LLDETG in order to maximise opportunity and resource whilst not losing sight of important condition-related distinctions in terms of need.

### **Anchors Healthy Workplace**

The Leeds Healthy Workplace Pledge was developed as a framework for Anchor Organisations in the City to create healthier and more inclusive workplaces. The Anchor Organisations signed up to the pledge and conducted a review of carer's culture in the summer of 2020. Recommendations around policy, training and communications were approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in Autumn 2020. COVID-19 has interrupted preparations although an implementation plan is being developed.

In December 2020 to mark International Day of People with Disabilities (IDPD) the Anchors Healthy Workplace Group collaborated with the council's Disability And Wellness Network (DAWN) to deliver an exciting programme of remotely delivered events. This brought together a rich array of speakers and sessions to celebrate the lived life of people with a disability in Leeds.

## **Leeds City Council staff network groups – Healthy Minds, Disability And Wellness Network (DAWN) and Merrion Social**

The networks have offered a variety of online wellbeing events, sessions and initiatives which have increased connectivity, reduced isolation and provided reassurance, support and signposting for council staff during the pandemic. The Employment and Skills service continues to be represented at steering group level to help drive direction and target and expand the offer.

### **All Age Mental Health Strategy (AAMHS)**

The Employment and Skills service has taken a lead role in priority 3 of the All Age Mental Health Strategy which aims to improve access to employment education and training for those with mental health issues.

A working group has been established to map existing provision and develop a comprehensive plan around ways to align and communicate services, schemes and initiatives more effectively especially to priority groups and in priority neighbourhoods.

The priority has a dimension around prevention which looks to develop best practice approaches to positive mental health in the workplace including increasing the City wide take up of the Mindful Employer and Disability Confident schemes.

The multiple nationwide lockdowns due to COVID-19 have impacted all the service's face to face provision in terms of new recruitment, delivery and the achievement of positive outcomes.

It has also delayed the establishment of new provision, for example, the Employment Hub Mental Health contract, so in many cases it is too early to measure impact.

Nevertheless much scoping, mapping and planning activity has taken place which will bring benefits in the next period.

Some delivery did take place with positive outcomes for local people which is highlighted below:-

### **Employment Hub**

Since March 2020, over 300 people who describe themselves as disabled have been supported through relevant employment hub programmes.

Since Sept 2020 there have been 141 residents register their interest with the DY pilot programme of which 26 have started and 10 completed. Online sessions run until July 2021 by which time another 30 learners will hopefully have completed.

Plans are in place to re-locate to community settings once restrictions allow and successful funding bids have brought increased resource and programme capacity into the service.

Face to face DY pilots are planned for September 2021 in the Local Care Partnership areas of Armley, HATCH (Harehills and Chapeltown) and York Road. Each pilot will see up to 15 local residents per pilot with additional capacity being provided by remote versions of the programme for those that prefer.

Post successful evaluation the programme will be rolled out incrementally to a wider LCP footprint in the Spring of 2022.

### **Staff Network Groups**

Pulse surveys indicate that whilst COVID-19 has presented unique challenges the council wellbeing offer has provided a reassuring level of support which has been accessed regularly throughout the year.

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on communities already experiencing disadvantage and the increased and sustained unemployment levels have exacerbated the incidence of poor mental health across all groups impacted by the pandemic.

Work continues to address and reduce inequality across all initiatives as per below:

### **Informed Choices**

- Continued promotion and delivery of targeted services and collaborations supporting young people with disabilities.

### **Adult Learning**

- Work continues with delivery partners across the City to support accessibility to learning with planning for term 3 delivery from April to July 2021 taking into account the Government's four step roadmap to ease restrictions in England.

### **Increase digital inclusion particularly for those in poverty to provide greater access to jobs, skills and learning to reduce poverty**

Anyone who is digitally excluded was also at risk of increased isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes older people, those with long-term health conditions, people with mental health issues, those with physical and learning disabilities, people where English is not their first language, people living in poverty and those at risk of or living with homelessness.

Providing support for digital access has been at the heart of Library Services since the introduction of the People's Network back in 1997. Libraries are safe, non-stigmatised spaces at the heart of the community, increasingly referred to as community anchor institutions and as such are well placed to tackle the barriers to digital inclusion. Libraries provide free access to computers, the internet and increasingly in a number of local authorities tablet lending schemes. Crucially the service also has a skilled staff team who, as Digital Champions, are able to support customers with the motivations and skills development through free training and support programmes

As local, trusted spaces Library Services have good engagement from individuals and local communities. Every year there are 26 million hours of internet access provided by libraries. In Leeds, there are 34 libraries and around 700 public access PC's, as well, as a similar number of tablets (677) as part of the community tablet lending scheme. During the course of a normal year Leeds would welcome approximately 56,000 people to use computers with a total of over 430,000 sessions booked. Library Services are also in the process of refreshing the staff skills programme and all 400 front facing Community Hub staff in Leeds (including library staff and customer service staff) are currently undergoing refresher Digital Champion training to enable them to have positive digital conversations as part of their engagement with service users.

Librarians continue to work flexibly with community groups to support digital skills development as well as developing and delivering a range of creative digital programmes to support residents, including children young people and families to engage in digital activities.

The Library Service has also been leading on programmes of activity as part of the City's 100% Digital Campaign where there has been a focus on working with Third Sector organisations and health and care settings to increase their digital inclusion capacity and confidence. To support service users to be more independent and prevent the most vulnerable in society from having to rely on costly interventions

Library Services also provide a range of digital resources through their 24/7 libraries – everything from free ebooks, newspapers and magazines to information resources to support business start ups

The COVID-19 pandemic has of course emphasised the importance of digital access and a blog from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation highlighted the impact that the closure of library buildings in the first period of lockdown had on digital inclusion. Particularly, for some of the most economically disadvantaged residents in the City's communities. For this reason libraries have exemptions to continue to offer PC access during the current phase of lockdown.

During the past year the service has pivoted to a digital model of service delivery with a focus on supporting residents with digital access. An expanded help line was introduced to include supporting quick digital enquiries and also introduced bookable 1 to 1 digital support sessions. The expanded enquiry support service has handled over 16,000 calls since July 2020 and library staff have delivered over 150 digital support sessions by telephone. This helped customers use their

devices to download eBooks and access newspapers, set up and use video calling apps like Zoom, provide support in completing forms online and help them meet many more digital challenges.

The Libraries At Home encompasses the virtual library where citizens can access the full range of library services from home as well as information and links to some of the best online resources available. A free library card gives access to the full range of library services from home including free eBooks, eAudio books, newspapers, magazines and guides to further resources online by subject.

A new online service, Niche Academy, was set up in June 2020 and provides free information and links to some of the best online resources available, tutorials on accessing resources for various devices as well as the most popular apps for email, social media, video calling and word processing.

The Befriending Project launched in summer 2020 has seen librarians making 6000 calls to citizens aged 70 and over and in the current phase, targeting 60-70 year olds with over 3500 calls made. All phone calls have included a digital conversation and feedback from customers has illustrated the impact of these calls in terms of supporting them to access digital services ensuring they feel more connected to their libraries.

In July 2020 the council's Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure, Investment & Inclusive Growth ) considered a report which set out the priority activities for the 100% Digital Leeds work in libraries across the following areas:-

- Supporting and developing the 100% Digital Leeds network;
- Working together to strengthen the digital health and wellbeing offer;
- Accelerating the digital robustness of the Third Sector;
- Increasing digital capacity and connectivity in communities; and
- Enabling digital services across the council and partners

Examples of activity included:-

- Delivering a series of webinars to over 500 attendees focused on increasing digital inclusion for people improving their mental health and wellbeing; people with learning disabilities; older people; people with sensory impairments in partnership with Forum Central, Healthwatch Leeds, BID Services and Deaf Blind UK; English for Speakers of Other Languages learners in partnership with the council's ESOL Strategy Team;
- Launching a grants fund to support the Third Sector health and wellbeing response to COVID-19. Over 100 Third Sector organisations benefitted from the fund;
- Digital Champions training in GP practices;
- E-Learning tools developed for the NHS app and remote consultation methods for GP practices;
- Embedding Digital Champions training into existing team training sessions with Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust;

- Implementing the my COPD self-management app through Primary Care in areas of high prevalence; and
- Supporting Digital Champions in Leeds Breathe Easy groups to set up virtual exercise sessions to enable peer-support to continue through the pandemic.

Throughout the pandemic the service have also supported many of the Neighbourhood Networks in Leeds to develop and embed digital inclusion within their services. This included the launch of a Neighbourhood Network Digital Inclusion Group in partnership with Leeds Older People's Forum in December 2020. The group was designed to create a dedicated space to develop resources and share best practice and learning on the theme of digital inclusion across the Neighbourhood Networks in Leeds.

Work is currently taking place to develop the digital support programme in the Library Service and as part of this they will be looking to introduce the concept of a network of digital health hubs in all 34 of libraries across the City. There will be a City wide marketing campaign to promote the digital help offer in the Spring of 2021.

### **Leeds Business and Intellectual Property Service (BIPC)**

Throughout the pandemic the team at BIPC Leeds has continued to provide a business support service through remote delivery. General business enquires are dealt with via email and telephone with customers requesting a range of information and support for their businesses. The absence of face-to-face delivery required the team to increase their research offer to customers unable to directly access resources and in recent months, this has included the introduction of online one-to-one support sessions.

One to ones delivered by our partners were immediately moved from face to face to telephone, ensuring there was no interruption in the service.

The BIPC Team worked with partners to make sure the Enterprise Club (a range of start-up talks) was quickly accessible via webinars early in the pandemic. During the summer of 2020 the BIPC Leeds Start-Up Summer School was introduced. These were a range of webinars featuring a number of new topics such as "Funding options and forecasting cash-flow" and "Selling online", in addition to the regular Enterprise Club topics.

Since October 2020, in partnership with the British Library, BIPC have been delivering an exciting programme called 'Reset. Restart' which is helping to support small and medium-sized enterprises. This has enabled the team to introduce a new range of webinar topics with follow up specialist one-to-ones unique to the programme. The Launch event for this programme included one of the Leeds success stories, Siobhan Thomas founder of What's Your Skirt.

During the period from the end of October through to mid-December 2020 the team has delivered:-

- 356 enquiries via telephone and email; and
- 73 one-to-one business support sessions in the areas of Intellectual Property, specialist business advice and business information support, delivered by partners and the BIPC team; and
- 9 'Reset. Restart' webinars in the areas of networking, marketing, finance and business basics.

### **Leeds Action To Create Homes (LATCH)**

A charitable organisation that refurbishes derelict and run-down houses in the Chapeltown, Harehills and Burley areas of Leeds. When they're fully modernised and furnished properties provide supported housing for people who are homeless or in housing need. LATCH are currently looking to install broadband connections in their shared occupancy tenancies, so that tenants can share Wi-Fi within a block and are not digitally excluded because of data costs.

*"LATCH is now planning to make digital inclusion one of key areas of our support work and service development as we recognise how crucial this is to our tenants."*

### **Leeds Recovery Hubs**

Since lockdown, service users haven't been able to have visits from family and friends and keeping in touch has been hard. Digital technology and digital inclusion has been a lifeline and made such a difference to so many.

*"Many of the family members were telephoning the service daily to receive updates on their loved ones prior to using the technology but now with the iPads they can hear their voices and see their faces which has reduced anxieties for both customers and families."*

### **Care Homes**

COVID-19 has had a huge effect on Care Homes across Leeds, residents have not been able to see friends and family and the pandemic has disrupted routine and affected mental wellbeing.

*"We were able to support one family whose loved one was at the end of her life stay in touch with daily video calls and they were able to say the Lord's Prayer together and have quality conversations where they could see each other in her last days."*

The Library Service have also been engaged in a programme of work in South Leeds with the Local Care Partnerships in Beeston and Middleton. This supports health and care providers in the Inner South and Inner East areas of Leeds to develop and test a place based model for enabling inclusion to digitised health and care services, with the aim of reducing health inequalities.

The outputs/outcomes from this work will include:-

- More organisations in the area engaged with digital inclusion;
- More Digital Champions active in the community;
- More resource brought into the area to tackle barriers to digital inclusion;
- Improved links between local organisations across all sectors and local healthcare providers;
- Improved Third Sector knowledge of health and care pathways and systems, putting organisations in a better position to support their service users to access health and care provision;
- Improved awareness of and signposting to digital inclusion support in the community; and
- More residents benefiting from these interventions

Digital inclusion/exclusion will continue to be a City priority that has been accelerated and exacerbated by the pandemic.

The Library Service is the main agent in the delivery of digital support within the council, and the Service will continue to drive the digital inclusion agenda at a neighbourhood level to develop the vision and ensure digital inclusion contributes to the strategic plans and priorities of partners across the Council, health and care and third sector.

The core offer of access to free pcs, Wi-Fi and support to develop digital skills, as well, as through developing our programme to help to use digital technologies such as smartphones, tablets, computers or laptops to build digital skills will continue.

A new programme of 'Digital Help' sessions will be introduced which will extend the existing one to one digital support sessions and will include future support from digital volunteers. This programme will be supported by a City wide marketing and communications campaign.

The sessions will provide further one-to-one support over the phone or via video to help individuals and groups develop basic digital skills and confidence and will focus on:-

- Accessing the internet and email;
- Keeping in touch with friends and family;
- Saving money online;
- Making digital health accessible to everyone;
- Completing online forms; and
- Supporting less digitally confident friends, family or neighbours.

### **Ensuring digital inclusion to provide greater access to jobs, skills and learning to reduce poverty**

Lack of connectivity impacts on peoples' ability to easily and readily access services and opportunities which adds to financial and rural exclusion.

Leeds City Council has worked in partnership with other West Yorkshire Local Authorities, as well, as City of York Council to enable access to superfast broadband through delivery of the Superfast West Yorkshire and York contract two. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority contracted with Openreach to deliver improved infrastructure and superfast internet services to premises across the six local authority areas. As of 26/04/2021 98.21% of premises in the Leeds district can access superfast broadband products (24mbps or above). This compares with an England average of 97.58% of premises. The next phase of the project will to boost coverage to 99% of homes and businesses by October 2022

By enabling 99% of homes and business with access to superfast broadband (at least 24 Mbps) by 2022 this will improve residential and business utilisation of broadband so they can take advantage of digital services and opportunities which may alleviate financial, social and digital exclusion. Many of the premises that have not yet benefitted from commercial investment (and hence are in scope for investment through this publicly funded programme) are in rural areas of the District. The programme is, therefore, also helping to counter elements of exclusion based on rurality/location.

To move beyond the contract two target of 98% of premises in West Yorkshire with access to superfast broadband by 2021 the Superfast West Yorkshire and York partnership sought additional funding to enable further rollout. Taking advantage of £6.89m of Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) capital funding has allowed the partnership to procure a Contract 3. On completion of this contract in October 2022 99% of premises in West Yorkshire will have access to superfast broadband.

In addition to the Contract 3 work noted above which will take superfast broadband to 99% of premises in West Yorkshire the council has continued to engage with market operators to understand their commercial investment plans for the City.

The Connectivity Board provides a forum to bring together Officers from across the council to understand the broadband infrastructure position of the City. Openreach, Virgin Media and CityFibre are all rolling out full fibre networks to homes and businesses across Leeds. The full fibre solution (Fibre to the premises or FTTP) is the next generation from superfast and is necessary for the industry to meet the Government pledge to deliver gigabit capable services across the UK by 2025.

The council will continue to engage with these operators to ensure that they are able to optimise their delivery in the City. As of 21/04/21 49.50% of premises in Leeds district have access to an FTTP connection, this is ahead of the national (England) average of 21.10%. If Virgin Media connections are added into the calculation (VM use an alternative technology called DOCSIS 3.1) 38.62% of premises in England can order a gigabit capable service, in Leeds this rises to 86.15% of premises.

The council is also engaged in 10 year contract with BT to deliver corporate network services to a large number of council owned buildings in Leeds. These

services will be delivered over a new full fibre infrastructure which is being built by Openreach.

Where residential or business premises are not in scope for either commercial investment or intervention under the Superfast West Yorkshire programme the council will continue to work with partners to explore other interventions which may be forthcoming from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The 'outside in' programme is due to support premises in rural areas which are not targeted for any other investment activity. However, this programme is likely to focus on the most hard to reach of premises, typically in very rural locations. This means there may not be many opportunities for premises in the City to receive support through this programme.

#### **Support people out of financial hardship:-**

- **Helping people out of financial hardship**
- **Tackling the financial challenges of poverty, deprivation and inequality**

The Financial Inclusion Team in Leeds works on multiple projects and strategies in order to contribute towards the reduction of poverty and inequality in the City. The work to address financial inclusion in the City is based on a strong evidence based approach and collaboration and partnership working which lead to the actions and initiatives undertaken.

Long term projects include the Money Information Centre (MIC) website, which brings together free, independent and quality marked money and financial support for the City. This covers a range of subjects, such as, benefits, debt, loans and savings, affordable credit, household budgeting and emergency food support.

The Financial Inclusion Team also produce the 'Leeds Poverty Fact Book', which compiles data, information and analysis in relation to poverty levels, incomes, welfare reform impacts, food and fuel poverty and levels of debt for the City. The Fact book is publically available in order to enable effective monitoring and information sharing.

Working with partners and external agencies, many of whom work directly with people experiencing financial exclusion, enables the council to ensure all projects and initiatives are directed and influenced from the voice and influence of Leeds residents, particularly, those impacted by poverty and inequality.

Since 2003 Leeds City Council has implemented a strong partnership based approach in order to tackle poverty, deprivation and inequality in the City. This approach contributed to the formation of the Leeds Financial Inclusion Steering Group (established in 2004). The Leeds Financial Inclusion Steering Group brings together representatives from across the council, the third and private sectors. Their role is to monitor the City wide picture, sharing best practice and improving financial inclusion outcomes for residents of Leeds.

Projects and initiatives have included:-

- COVID-19 Emergency Response work;
- Partnership working with Leeds Credit Union;
- Partnership work with advice agencies and supporting integrated advice approach across the City;
- Partnership and support work with Food Aid providers through the Leeds Food Aid Network and Fareshare;
- Supporting the Healthy Holidays Programme;
- Leeds Uniform Reuse Scheme;
- Funeral Poverty Project;
- Leading work on addressing Gambling Related Harm;
- Financial Inclusion Staff Training;
- Digital Inclusion Projects;
- Support for Leeds Poverty Truth; and
- Stakeholder Contribution to Research Project – ‘Welfare at a (Social) Distance: Accessing social security and employment support during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath’

The Financial Inclusion Team also continues to participate in, conduct and share research in order to ensure an evidence based and relevant approach to emerging and ongoing poverty and equality related issues. The household survey undertaken in 2004, was repeated in 2010 and 2018. The research concluded that although there has been some improvement since 2010, the 2018 respondents were less resilient and not prepared for an external shock or crisis than in 2004 with significantly lower propensity to save and higher likelihood of being in debt. The COVID-19 pandemic has proven to be such a crisis which has pushed many households into financial hardship for the first time and worsened existing poverty related issues for many others.

In early March 2020 the council established weekly Bronze Group meetings on financial inclusion and separately on emergency food with representatives from internal council services and external partners. The aim of both meetings was to ensure key services and organisations were kept up to date on how services were being delivered and to develop collaborative approaches to addressing issues which arose.

This work has ensured that despite the additional challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, support and access to services for residents has been maintained, with organisations working together to overcome barriers and adapt to new ways of working. This has enabled residents to seek information, support and guidance across the city when they need it, and in a variety of ways.

The weekly Bronze Group meetings led to:-

- Information and changes to how services were operating which was updated on the Leeds Money Information Centre website and circulated via mailing lists and on social media;
- Flyers being produced which provided full details of where and how to access emergency support in the City including food, welfare support, debt

advice etc. These were distributed to Leeds residents via partners and in the council's Emergency Food Parcels;

- Identifying at the earliest opportunity any trends in customer contacts and any areas to investigate further or adapt communications;
- Sharing best practice and resources on social distancing for advice/support and for partners to purchase Personal Protective Equipment through the council;
- Reallocating workforce capacity to support emergency COVID-19 services, for example, Customer Service Operators moving to the COVID-19 helpline and emergency food provision;
- Reporting significant increases in Universal Credit claimant counts;
- Ensuring that Leeds Credit Union branches remained open throughout the first lockdown in March 2020 which enabled members to access their finances and to administer fuel payments for the Local Welfare Support Scheme; and
- Reporting into the Silver Group Communities meeting and the quarterly Financial Inclusion Steering Group.

### **Partnership working with Leeds Credit Union**

Leeds City Council continues to work in close partnership with Leeds Credit Union (LCU). Throughout the pandemic LCU has maintained its normal lending policy and continued to offer face to face services at four of its branches. Three are based in the council's Community Hubs ensuring residents could access money and financial services in accessible community locations. The Credit Union has also given payment holidays on over a hundred loans for members struggling due to COVID-19 which totalled £200,000. In addition, the introduction of the new and improved online banking app has ensured additional support for members isolating or not able to come into the branches due to COVID-19.

An unexpected consequence of COVID-19 is that the savings deposited by members into the credit union rose to an all-time record of £23M. This means that the Credit Union has a considerable capacity to provide more affordable loans into the community in competition with door step lenders and help to get the local economy working again. Although the challenge of getting people to come to the Credit Union instead of turning to the high cost lenders persists. This increased capacity has ensured affordable and accessible lending options are available to all Leeds residents, particularly, those with vulnerabilities and those experiencing financial exclusion and/or at risk of using illegal money lenders.

### **Partnership working with Advice agencies and supporting integrated advice approach across the City**

Since 2018 Citizens Advice Leeds (CAL) has been awarded the Leeds Advice Service contract. CAL sub-contracts Chapeltown Citizens Advice (CCA) and Better Leeds Communities (BLC) to deliver some of the services. The Leeds Advice Service encompasses the following:-

- City centre and office drop-in and appointment services;
- Telephone, Email and webchat services ;

- Mental Health Outreach Service;
- Primary Care Outreach Service;
- Outreach Advice Service (funded by Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group);
- Welfare Benefits, Immigration and Housing casework; and
- Children’s Centres Outreach Service

Due to COVID-19 restrictions face to face advice services have remained suspended. All staff resources are being diverted to telephone, email and webchat channels, so that access to advice can be maintained throughout the changing COVID-19 pandemic situation.

To date, the advice contract has resulted in the following outcomes:-

<b>2020-2021</b>		<b>Year to date</b>
LEEDS ADVICE SERVICE	Total no. unique clients assisted	19,419
LEEDS TELEPHONE SERVICE	No. calls dealt with	17,189
	No. clients assisted	14,032
LEEDS CASEWORK	No. unique clients assisted - total	1,196

### **Partnership and support work with Food Aid providers through the Leeds Food Aid Network and Fareshare**

Council teams and partners working in the area of food poverty and insecurity came together to implement a system for emergency food provision as a result of COVID-19 related challenges. This included:-

- Opening a new warehouse facility which designed to provide a central location in Leeds for food storage and distribution, relocated frontline customer service staff, fleet vehicles and drivers for food deliveries and collections. This larger premises allowed food to be packaged within social distancing guidelines;
- Establishing the COVID-19 Helpline alongside the existing Local Welfare Support Service. Both helplines recorded food referrals and systems were in place to ensure food and support was provided and accessible to those most in need and impacted by COVID-19. In addition to food parcels, the service offered other support ,such as, help with shopping, prescriptions, welfare calls etc;
- Support which was delivered by the council and in conjunction with the Third Sector and volunteers through 27 Community Care Hubs which were located to support residents across all 33 Leeds wards; and
- Adaptions to the service and food bag contents were made to respond to cultural and dietary needs.

In total over the first 24 weeks of the Leeds Emergency Food Response there were 25,971 referrals for services, such as, food parcels, shopping, prescriptions and fuel. This information represents data collected by the council and does not capture all the work being delivered by partners and Third Sector organisations. The first 24 weeks represents the time the food warehouse was in operation from week commencing 23 March to week ending 6 September 2020.

Data available by ward reveals that of the total 25,971 referrals; 10% of the requests were from residents in the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward. Seven wards made up 50% of all referrals and provides an indication of areas with high demand for support. The seven wards are:-

- Burmantofts & Richmond Hill;
- Hunslet & Riverside;
- Gipton & Harehills;
- Beeston & Holbeck;
- Armley;
- Middleton Park; and
- Killingbeck & Seacroft

The referrals recorded by the council helplines resulted in an estimated 64,000 food bags (equivalent of 34,000 food parcels) being distributed from the food warehouse over the course of 24 weeks. In addition to this support, the council also provided breakfast and lunch bags to up to 230 homeless people every day that were being rehoused in hotels and B&B's. This resulted in over 68,000 meals to the homeless. From September 2020 this provision was handed over to St George's Crypt.

Since August 2020, as lockdown and shielding measures began to ease and demand for emergency food has reduced. This has led to a gradual handover of direct deliveries to the Community Care Hubs and wind down of the food warehouse and the COVID-19 helpline. Calls to the helpline are now diverted to the Local Welfare Support Scheme where referrals are being recorded and passed to Community Care Hubs. This process has been in place since early September 2020 and demand is being monitored.

### **Winter Grant Scheme Funding**

On the 8th November, 2020, the Government announced a £170 million COVID-19 Winter Grant Scheme (CWGS). Leeds was allocated £2,837,556.77.

The funding had to be spent between early December 2020 and the end of March 2021 and was ring fenced for the provision of support to families with children, other vulnerable households and individuals for help with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking and lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials.

In Leeds the funding has been used to provide:-

- Free school meals over the school holidays at Christmas 2020 and February 2021 to an estimated 35,000 children living in poverty;
- Food, fuel and essential items support directly to low income families with children under the age of 4 and care leavers;
- Assistance towards the cost of fuel for people claiming Council Tax Support; and
- Support to Third Sector organisations and charities who support vulnerable families and individuals for food and essential items. This included groups who support Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers, people who are homeless or rough sleeping, women, and low income people of pension age.

This funding has enabled the council and partners to increase access to services for low income and vulnerable residents, through additional emergency provisions and essential items for the short term relief of poverty related issues. Although the funding itself is for a limited period, and emergency provisions will not address the long term drivers of poverty overall. The strong partnership approach in the City, ensures that by accessing direct support ,such as, food and fuel vouchers etc. vulnerable households and individuals will also be offered access to wrap around support such as Leeds Credit Union and Advice Services. These wrap around services can help to address long term issues, such as, debt and low income.

The Financial Inclusion Team has committed to supporting Third Sector organisations in the City as part of the partnership approach to tackle poverty and inequality. Maintaining strong links with the Leeds Food Aid Network (FAN), has resulted in positive outcomes including successful funding applications. This has enabled FAN to provide grants to independent emergency food providers, assisting them to provide food support to vulnerable Leeds residents.

### **Healthy Holidays**

The Financial Inclusion Team has supported Healthy Holiday programmes since 2018. The programme brings together support from the council, schools, third and private sectors and is an example of how the City has been able to come together to tackle food poverty and insecurity, As well, as providing wrap around support to families impacted by poverty.

Due to COVID-19, the plans for Healthy Holidays delivery was significantly adapted, compared with previous years. Provisions have provided food parcels and take home meals, as well, as a variety of both digital and practical activities for children to complete at home and in line with social distancing guidelines.

Key outcomes of the Healthy Holidays project have included:-

- Providing/increasing access to nutritious food for children in low income households. As well as the immediate provision of food access, the project provides longer term assistance to families, for example, through cooking skills and promotion of healthy eating habits;

- The provision of digital devices has increased digital access for vulnerable children;
- Reducing negative impacts of poverty for vulnerable children, including digital exclusion;
- Increasing trust levels and relationship building between families in need, Third Sector and statutory organisations; and
- Increasing the accessibility of wrap around services to families in need

Healthy Holidays 2020 was also able to provide support to digitally excluded children by:-

- Purchasing and lending 97 tablets with data allowance to Healthy Holidays Community Hubs and schools with support from 100% Digital Leeds; and
- Funding the Tech Angels initiative which is managed by Solidaritech CIC as part of Digital Access West Yorkshire. They have a target of securing 200 donated laptops to refurbish and donate, with a data allowance, to children via Healthy Holidays community groups.

### **Uniform Reuse Scheme**

Leeds City Council and Leeds Community Foundation funded Zero Waste Leeds (ZWL) to bring a co-ordinated uniform reuse scheme to the City. The overall aim of the Uniform Reuse scheme is to reduce the amount of uniforms sent to waste, reduce the stigma of wearing second hand clothing and tackling poverty through encouraging more families to reuse and donate rather than to feel pressured to buy new uniform every term.

Work to date has created a map of over 90 school uniform re-use opportunities in the City, increasing accessibility of schemes and meaning more families and individuals are able to find or donate articles of uniform anywhere in Leeds.

Establishment of the Uniform Exchange social media page has also increased opportunities for residents and organisations (including schools) to get involved, donate, volunteer, exchange and access uniform items.

The launch of the Inspiration Guide has encouraged more schemes to be set up, particularly, in areas of deprivation. The Inspiration Guide includes advice and information on running a successful, accessible, engaged uniform re-use service.

In the first 10 weeks of the project alone, ZWL estimated that a minimum of 600kg of textile waste, 8.1 million litres of water and 10,800kg of CO2 was saved as a direct result of the project. In addition, 12 new schemes were set up during this time. Supporting this work contributes to the council's priorities for tackling poverty and climate change.

ZWL linked in with Healthy Holiday projects and promoted the scheme to all summer provisions. Through this partnership and co-ordinated effort, the scheme has also been able to prevent the waste of a large donation of brand new uniform, totalling over 10,000 individual uniform items (1147 boxes), with a retail value of

approximately £72,500. The Uniform has been distributed via schools and school clusters. Schools participating in the Healthy Holidays programme were given first priority. To date, 28 schools have ordered, received and distributed uniform donations to families in need.

ZWL have now been awarded funding for 'Phase two' of the project. As well as, continuing to develop the original project, this will also include the launch of 'The Big Leeds School Uniform Giveaway'. This is a branded, bi-annual City wide coordinated event to promote uniform reuse through both school and community schemes. ZWL will also launch a tailored Leeds School Uniform Exchange web platform to improve access and search facilities and allowing the scheme to become user-led. This will further increase the amount of good quality low cost uniform available to more families, including those on low income.

### **Funeral Poverty Project**

Funeral Poverty is a growing concern and currently only 3 local authorities in the UK offer a low cost funeral option. Working with cross council colleagues and partners, the Financial Inclusion Team have developed a 'Leeds Funeral Costs' help booklet and digital guidance. In the long term, the project aims to develop and establish a council low cost funeral option. The actions undertaken so far have meant that Registrars in Leeds are able to provide bereaved residents with links to affordable funeral options, as well, as details of support agencies in the City. The resources are available online, and have also been offered to cross council colleagues and external partners in order to increase awareness of affordable funeral options and support available amongst staff and bereaved residents.

### **Addressing Gambling Related Harm Projects**

In 2016 the Financial Inclusion Team Council commissioned Leeds Beckett University to conduct a study into the prevalence of problem gambling in Leeds. The aim was to provide a baseline and guide funding of projects to prevent and mitigate adverse effects of problem gambling.

The research estimated that there are approximately 10,000 problem gamblers in Leeds (1.8% of the adult population) and a further 30,000 people (5/6% of adult population) who may be at risk of harm from gambling.

The research also highlighted that whilst problem gambling can affect anyone at any time, there are certain equality groups who are more vulnerable to gambling related harm. These include:-

- Young people (including students);
- Adults living in constrained economic circumstances;
- Certain Black Asian And minority ethnic groups;
- Homeless people;
- Those living in areas of greatest deprivation;
- Adults with mental health issues;
- People with poorer intellectual functioning and learning disabilities;
- People who have been through the criminal justice process; and

- Migrants

Following the research, the Financial Inclusion Team set up the Problem Gambling Project Group, with representation from across the council, Public Health, advice partners, GambleAware, Gamcare, the Gambling Industry and the NHS. The aim is to raise awareness of how to recognise, help, signpost and support those suffering from or at risk of gambling related harm.

On the strength of the research and the proactive partnership approach adopted by Leeds City Council and partners to addressing gambling related harm, a Leeds based Northern NHS service led by Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust, and a Leeds Community Gambling Service led by Gamcare was launched. This service provides support for gambling related harm and began delivery in Leeds from September 2019.

Discussions within the Project Group have led to the following work areas relating to supporting equality groups:-

- Beat The Odds Marketing and Communications Campaign. This local campaign regularly aims to raise awareness of available support, as well, as reducing the stigma associated with talking about problem gambling. Digital and printed campaign material has been developed to allow targeting of vulnerable groups highlighted in the research via social media campaigns, community radio advertising as well as being visible on bus shelters, billboards and public venues such as community hubs, libraries GP surgeries and health centres.
- Supporting Licensing – In addition to providing local evidence to licensing committee and responding to national consultations, a mapping tool to inform local area risk assessments was developed. This tool provides new licensing applicants an opportunity to undertake a risk assessment of vulnerable groups in an area before applying for a gambling licence in the city.
- Public Health - Locally the team are working with Forward Leeds (the drug and alcohol addictions service), the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) teams and other commissioned services to raise awareness of problem gambling and discuss treatment options. A survey of GPs and primary care clinicians to gather information on the awareness of the issue, as well, as their ability to identify, treat and refer problem gamblers in Leeds, has also been undertaken.
- Children and Families - The 2018/19 Leeds My Health, My School survey found that 24% of secondary aged pupils had taken part in gambling activity, in comparison, 13% had smoked a cigarette, 7% had tried illegal drugs and 51% had tried alcohol. Of the secondary aged pupils that had gambled 65% did so with their parent/carer's knowledge. The most popular types of gambling were via gaming or skin betting (21%), bingo (20%) and betting on sporting events (19%). The findings of this survey have been the impetus to initiate work to ensure schools, children and parents are aware of the issues surrounding underage gambling, particularly online, and the

links to harmful behaviours. Building on this work, council officers from Children's Services, Public Health and the Financial Inclusion Team are working with GamCare and the Young Gamblers and Gamers Trust to develop over the next year a communications campaign and a training programme to raise awareness of the issue. The results of this work are currently being analysed and processed and the results will inform the campaign and training packages which are being developed in 2021.

### **Financial Inclusion Training**

The Financial Inclusion Team has continued to provide training opportunities for staff and volunteers working with residents affected by poverty. This will help frontline staff are to be aware of services and referral routes to assist with financial difficulties,

A staff survey for staff employed by Children and Families Directorate was recently delivered, in order to identify training needs and inform the workforce development offer for Children's Social Workers. The survey highlighted an opportunity to increase awareness of advice agencies, specifically those relating to debt and benefits.

Training sessions were delivered in collaboration with partners including Citizens Advice, Chapeltown Citizens Advice, Money Buddies, Better Leeds Communities, Leeds Credit Union and Housing Leeds. Attendee feedback suggests that since attending the training session, staff are more likely to refer/signpost service users and clients to advice agencies for financial help such as debt, benefits and/or other related issues. The feedback from attendees rated the training useful for their professional practices and confirmed they would recommend the session to colleagues/partners.

### **Digital Inclusion**

Leeds City Council and partners are looking at ways to tackle digital inclusion through existing schemes such as Healthy Holidays and 100% Digital Leeds. The council is also currently exploring further options for new initiatives which could provide digital devices for those in need. This will involve working with teams across departments, as well, as alongside external partners, such as, Leeds Credit Union, Leeds Community Foundation and Zero Waste Leeds.

### **Supporting Leeds Poverty Truth Commission**

Leeds City Council strives to ensure that Financial Inclusion work undertaken in the City continues to consider, reflect on and include the voice of residents affected by these issues who are experts by experience.

Leeds Poverty Truth Commission received funding from Customer Access and Welfare Social Inclusion Fund for the continuation of project work until January 2021. This project has developed training resources, tools and presentation materials to increase awareness and understanding of the impact of poverty in Leeds, among frontline workers and organisations. This will also ensure a deeper

understanding of poverty can be deployed strategically to shape City wide approaches to tackling poverty.

### **Leeds University – ‘Welfare at a (Social) Distance: Accessing social security and employment support during the COVID-19 crisis and its aftermath’**

Leeds City Council was approached by Leeds University for participation in the research as a key stakeholder. Members of the Financial Inclusion Team agreed to take part on behalf of the council. They have contributed to the project by providing researcher organisers with insight into the range of support available to residents and the unique partnership approach operating in the City. The team have also assisted in the development of interview and survey questions, and provided feedback and input as the project has progressed.

The aim of this research is to provide insight into how well the UK Benefits system is meeting the challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis. The findings will be used to inform policy and practice and to highlight areas where additional or alternative support may be needed in order to provide help and support to benefit claimants and those suffering financial hardship. The findings will also be published and utilised in public reports, studies and conferences.

Priority areas and neighborhoods have been identified as areas in the City with exceptionally high levels of deprivation (based on IMD 2015). These areas benefit from focused resources and attention by the council and partners. Although any activities and initiatives with focus on financial exclusion, poverty and low income will inherently benefit a higher concentration of people in these areas. It is recognised that in every area there will be individuals who are experiencing deprivation and others who are not and the IMD ranking cannot be used to identify areas of affluence or deprivation at a household level. Therefore, while some projects may focus or impact on specific priority areas, or communities, the work of the Financial Inclusion Team overall is to tackle poverty and inequality across the City for all Leeds residents.

For example, Healthy Holidays provisions in Leeds are delivered via schools, Community Hubs and Third Sector organisations who successfully apply for funding via Leeds Community Foundation. A limited total amount of funding is available each year meaning not all applications can be funded and choices must be made by the decision making panel, and areas identified with the greatest need are prioritised for funding.

Although priority will be given to the areas identified as priority neighbourhoods by Leeds City Council and its partners, it is recognised that there are pockets of deprivation and areas of need throughout the City, therefore, the Healthy Holidays program is open to applications from all areas.

In addition, Community Care Hubs (CCH) were established as part of the COVID-19 Emergency food response. Each CCH provides local support to specific ward areas, ensuring a locality based approach is maintained for every ward in the City. This approach has proved highly successful, in responding to the varying needs of each ward area. In addition, additional resources have been deployed to support

Cultural Food Hubs, which have been established in order to provide specialised food support for the diverse range of communities across the City.

Both Leeds Credit Union membership and provision of welfare and debt advice have become even more vital due to the impact of COVID-19, however due to lockdown restrictions and wider effects of the pandemic overall service provisions have not been able to increase. Throughout the pandemic organisations in Leeds have demonstrated resourceful capabilities in order to provide modified services. Challenges for specific groups have been identified, for example, those that requiring face to face support, and as the situation continues to remain unstable and changeable, organisations in the City continue to respond and adjust services wherever possible.

**A skilled and diverse council workforce – achieving potential and improving representation:**

- **Representative of the City**
- **inclusive and welcoming workforce where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and people say “I feel like I count“**
- **one where every person who works for the council will have an appraisal and development plan which gives them the opportunity to develop their careers with the council**
- **inclusive at all levels of the organisation**
- **engaged, empowered and motivated to take personal responsibility for creating an inclusive and diverse workforce**
- **safe, well and at work**

The council's People Strategy 2020 – 2025 sets out the ambition to be the Best Place to Work with a clear focus on creating a great all round experience for all staff, with the support of their leaders and managers working in a positive organisational culture, driven by the council values.

From April 2020 to March 2021 there has been a range of corporate work supporting this work across the council which concentrated on some of the pertinent issues raised during what was a unique and challenging year. This work focused on:-

- Supporting all of our colleagues throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and particularly those most at risk, through Individual Risk Assessments, individual call backs and support where needed;
- A voice for all – opportunities for all to have their say and / or access support through a range of methods including the introduction of pulse surveys; and
- Developing responses to the death of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter movement, jointly with the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and the council's Corporate Leadership Team.

## **Engaging and supporting all of our colleagues**

The council's staff networks continue to play a positive and influential role across the organisation in the past year more so than ever before. More than 1,000 colleagues continue to actively engage across the seven staff networks. They have played a key role in working with the organisation to address some of the challenges presented by COVID-19 – in particular, the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff network and the Disability and Wellbeing network (DAWN) played a key role in developing the Individual Risk Assessment process and briefings for staff. Members of the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and the Corporate Leadership Team worked together to create a joint statement and action plan in response to the Black Lives Matter movement and the death of George Floyd .

Work has been undertaken with staff networks and a whole range of internal partners to engage staff in the wellbeing offer with the ultimate aim of making sure it meets the needs of all staff groups. One of the primary engagement tools has been the wellbeing pulse surveys. These have provided a lot of information about how members of the workforce are feeling and what we can do to support them. A core wellbeing offer booklet (pulling all support together in one place) and the #BeWellbulletin to engage staff members in the wellbeing offer, communicate key messages and share the great wellbeing work happening across teams was also launched.

## **Responding to the death of George Floyd and Black Lives Matter**

In July 2020, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 and the growing Black Lives Matter movement highlighted a broad range of issues for Black Asian and minority ethnic employees working in the council, some new and many longstanding.

The Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network called for urgent action and a chance to meet with the Corporate Leadership Team to share their experiences and work together to bring about positive change. The council's strong track record on inclusion and commitment to fairness and equality is clear. The call to action from Black Asian and minority ethnic employees has provided a further opportunity to reflect on how far we have come, and play a strong and visible role as a lead employer on this agenda.

The Corporate Leadership Team have collectively met with Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network on three occasions. Initially to listen to experiences, concerns and challenges and subsequently to build action plans and monitor progress.

The Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network have conducted a survey of Black Asian and minority ethnic colleagues in the council. 800 employees responded. The council will continue to seek out and use staff feedback to refine our understanding and response. It is recognised that capturing a 'single view' to represent all Black Asian and minority ethnic staff is a flawed notion. There is no substitute for on the ground engagement with as many individuals as possible.

Everyone is different, and has their own unique set of experiences to share. The Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network, however, does act as a representative group. They are also in touch with how many Black Asian and minority ethnic employees are currently feeling.

A joint commitment to stand against all forms of racism and inequality in the council and the City has been agreed between the Corporate Leadership Team and the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network. This has support and endorsement from the Leader of the Council and the council will be:-

- Inclusive at all levels of the organisation; and
- Engaged, empowered and motivated to take personal responsibility for creating an inclusive and diverse workforce

In December, the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care partnership released the report findings of an independent review into health inequalities due to COVID-19 and the impact on Black Asian and minority ethnic communities and employees. There are recommendations which relate to workforce and the wider community. The council is currently setting out its own contribution and next steps. There are strong connections to the council's Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Network plan and *the* network Chair joined network leads and the West Yorkshire and Harrogate System Leadership and Development Programme to support in the development of a leadership development programme. This programme is focused on Black Asian and minority ethnic employees.

The Senior Placement cohort was aimed specifically at experienced leaders who are looking to bridge practical experience gaps coupled with strategic board level and system leadership development. This has proved a barrier to career progression in the past. This was a significant collaborative effort, co-produced with the regional Race Equality Network leading to a Black Asian and minority ethnic employee from the council joining the first cohort of the programme.

The council's Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network lead continues to support and progress a range of key work streams at a regional level. These include the measurement and impact of priorities. As well as further supporting the development of a workshop for senior leaders across the system to raise awareness of key issues which impact Black, Asian and ethnic minority communities.

Leeds City Council has joined a number of local authorities in pioneering a new Social Care Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES). This will help us explore whether or not they are fully achieving race equality in the workplace. A key element of the WRES will be a focus on data analysis and measuring impact to drive improvement for the workforce. There is potential for this work to inform the evidence based approach to change across all areas of the council, not just in social care.

Leeds City Council also continues to engage with its partners, including, the Anchor Institutions, the Health and Social Care Academy, NHS and other networks, to share its policy and practice, learn from others and augment its impact across the City and its communities.

**Increasing the proportion of People with protected Characteristics recruited and current workforce profile**

The council knows that they can do more to make sure that they are representative of the City (compared with 2011 census data and the trend since 2011 continues to show that there has not been significant real change or improvement in the diversity of the workforce.

The council continue to work to encourage staff confidence to share equality information corporately.

The profile of council staff is outlined below:-

Workforce Profile March 2020		Headcount	% of overall headcount	2011 census says
	Overall	14710	100%	
<b>Gender</b>	Male (including Trans)	5760	39%	51% of Leeds residents are female, 49% male
	Female (including trans)	8950	61%	
<b>Age</b>	16-25	921	6%	15% of Leeds Citizens are aged 16-24
	26-39	3868	26%	
	Over 40	5785	39%	
	Over 55	4142	28%	
<b>Ethnicity</b>	BAME	2050	14%	19% of Leeds citizens are BAME
	Non BAME	11269	77%	
	Prefer not to say	29	0%	
	Not declared	1362	9%	

<b>Disability</b>	Disabled	903	6%	17% of residents have a long term health problem or disability
	Not disabled	12213	83%	
	Prefer not to say	109	1%	
	Not declared	1485	10%	
<b>Carer</b>	Carer	1370	9%	10% of Leeds residents give at least 1 hour of unpaid care per week
	Not a carer	7921	54%	

The council continues to work on a range of fronts that will help us build a more inclusive and representative workplace.

### **Maintaining 'living wages' across the council workforce**

Following approval at Full Council in February 2021, the lowest pay point on the pay structure is £9.50 in line with the Living Wage Foundation recommendation. This became effective and was paid to staff from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. The council is committed to continuing to match the Living Wage Foundation rate (subject to affordability) for future years.

### **Gender Pay Gap**

There are more women represented in the higher paid quartiles. This year there has been a very slight increase in our gender pay gap:-

- Mean is 6%, which is an increase of 0.1%; and
- Median is 10.4% which is an increase of 2.6%

The 2.6% increase in the median can be attributed to the increase of women in the lower middle and top quartiles of the workforce. Leeds City Council is also linked into and contributing to work on the City wide gender pay gap reporting which is being led by Yorkshire Water.

## Increasing representation at Leadership and Management Levels – Apprenticeships

The council's apprenticeship programme continues to develop a wide range of new and existing opportunities for staff to support progression. Services are engaged and apprenticeships are embedded as a strong development tool to support skills gaps in both the new and existing workforce.

Despite the pandemic the council have managed to maintain good numbers of apprenticeship starts. As at the end of March 2021 the council employed 720 apprentices who continue to work towards achieving their qualifications. The council have apprenticeships operating in over 90 different standards across all levels from 2 to 7.

For the period ending March 2021 720 employees were still undertaking a live apprenticeship and the breakdown is outlined below:-

	Male	Female	
	<b>308</b>	<b>412</b>	
<b>New apprentices</b>	62	70	<b>132</b>
<b>Conversions</b>	246	342	<b>588</b>
<b>BAME</b>	43	74	<b>117</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	13	22	<b>35</b>

203 employees were undertaking and achieved their apprenticeship during April 2019 – March 2020 and the breakdown is outlined below:-

	Male	Female	
	96	107	
<b>New apprentices</b>	40	35	<b>75</b>
<b>Conversions</b>	56	72	<b>128</b>
<b>BAME</b>	14	17	<b>31</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	5	5	<b>10</b>

### Progression

Of the 203 apprentices that achieved their apprenticeship:-

- 103 progressed into a higher graded role;
- Of the 103, 15 were Black Asian and Minority Ethnic staff (15%);
- Of the 103, 4 were disabled staff (4%);
- Of the 103, 56 were male (54%); and
- Of the 103, 47 were female (46%)

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	
	49 (45%)	59 (55%)	<b>108</b>
<b>BAME</b>	6 (6%)	9 (8%)	<b>15</b>
<b>Disabled</b>	3 (3%)	0	<b>3</b>

The Government public sector target requires that 2.3% of the workforce are apprentices. The council currently sits at 1.3%, which is representative of other Local Authorities nationwide and sits in the top percentile of those Local Authorities within Yorkshire and the Humber. The council have ensured that staff have a positive experience and this is demonstrated by an 80% pass rate for apprentices. There is also a high retention rate with around 90% of apprentices gaining full time employment with the council following completion of their apprenticeship.

As a continued member of the National Apprenticeship Ambassador Network the council are able to share information and experiences with a range of sectors in the Yorkshire and Humber region and also provide feedback on legislation and guidance nationally. The council were able to secure support from this network to provide awards for our apprentices.

In Autumn 2020 a new Levy Match website was created to maximise the use of the 20% transfer facility to support small and medium sized enterprises in Leeds to access training opportunities.

In line with developing the People Strategy the council continue to work with services to better forecast potential opportunities through workforce planning. The introduction of the People Strategy in 2020 has meant a focus across the council on workforce planning, management development, linked to a wider and more robust talent management framework. The successful development of these over the next 12 months will help upskill managers.

The council are proud to deliver an Apprenticeship Programme that not only provides development, enhancement of careers and confidence to the workforce. It also acts as a catalyst in the City to further the Inclusive Growth Strategy. Working together to grow the Leeds economy and ensuring that everyone in the City contributes to, and benefits from, growth to their full potential.

The People Strategy 2020 – 2025 will act as the main framework to enable long term strategic diversity and Inclusion activity and will inform the review of our strategy in 2021-22.

## **Directorate Workforce Equality Improvement Work**

This section outlines the progress that has been made by council Directorates on their workforce equality improvement priorities and actions undertaken to contribute to:-

### **A skilled and diverse council workforce – achieving potential and improving representation:**

- **Representative of the city**
- **inclusive and welcoming workforce where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and people say “I feel like I count“**
- **one where every person who works for the council will have an appraisal and development plan which gives them the opportunity to develop their careers with the council**
- **inclusive at all levels of the organisation**
- **engaged, empowered and motivated to take personal responsibility for creating an inclusive and diverse workforce**
- **safe, well and at work**

The council know that they need to do more and for the past few years, inclusion and diversity has been a central part of the ‘Doing our Best’ culture change programme, including the values, manager habits appraisal and approach to engagement.

Since the Leadership Conference in October 2015 the council have further renewed efforts on the inclusion agenda and have made strong commitments around objectives for senior leaders, support staff networks and setting new ambitions around workplace and buildings inclusion.

#### **Adults and Health Workforce Equality Improvement Work**

The council has undertaken 3 staff wellbeing pulse surveys since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent being carried out between 20th and 27th October 2020. At this time cases of COVID-19 had been increasing for a number of weeks in Leeds and across the country. Restrictions had been brought in through a new 3 tiered approach in many areas. Leeds had recently been increased to tier 2, reducing staff ability to meet and socialise with the possibility of increasing the level of restriction to tier 3. Seasonal changes had also begun - summer to autumn and the overall national disposition was low. During the same period, further proposals regarding cost savings to meet the council’s financial challenges, were being submitted to the Executive Board, and many staff had recently committed to taking the Early Leavers Initiative (ELI) to leave the council.

The survey was kept brief with the same 2 key questions as the previous surveys, to establish solid benchmarking data. These asked ‘How do you feel?’ and ‘How do you feel about the support you receive?’ with each followed up by an open text question. A further question was asked to those that were not happy (fairly or very

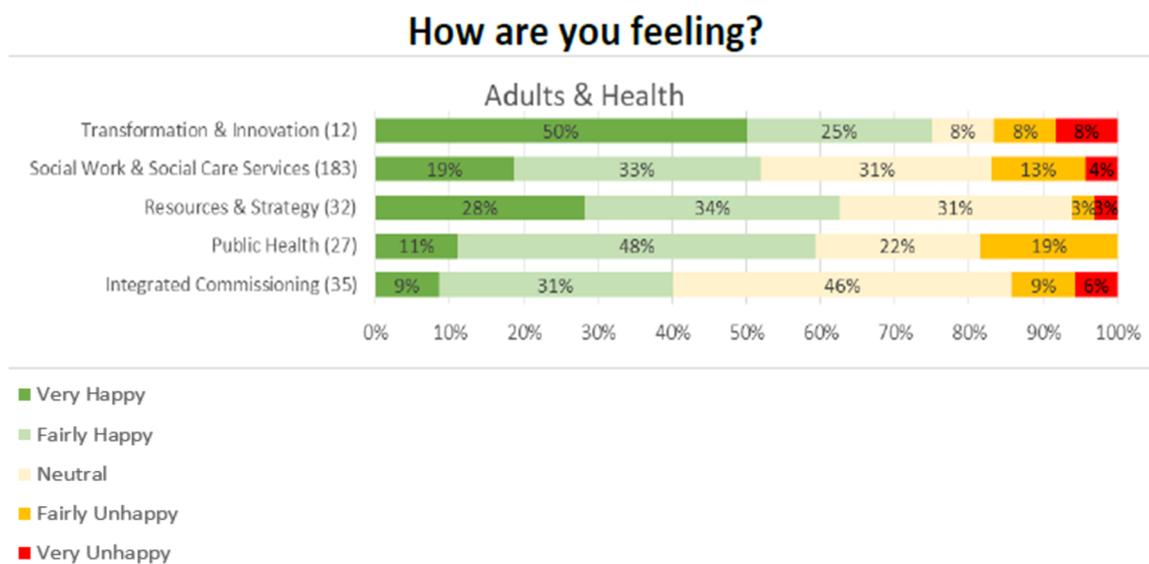
unhappy and neutral) to quantify what they were feeling particularly concerned about. The free text for the 'support' question asked all staff if they think there is anything further the organisation can do to better support them.

Just over half of the staff in Adults and Health reported feeling positive (52%) and four in five (80%) said they felt happy with their current level of support. The most common themes in the comments of the unhappy respondents were around feeling depressed / low / upset and having a high /stressful workload. Staff from Transformation and Innovation again reported the highest level of positivity, and staff in Resources and Strategy reported the highest levels of feeling supported. Staff from Integrated Commissioning reported the lowest levels of happiness and were the least positive about their level of support.

The October/November 2020 wellbeing pulse survey completion results were:-

Directorate	Offline			Online			All Staff		
	Staff	Surveys completed	% Completed	Staff	Surveys completed	% Completed	Staff	Surveys completed	% Completed
Adults & Health	36	36	100%	1512	262	17%	1548	299	19%

The overall results by Service Area were:-



Overall representation indicates very little change when comparing the figures at March 2020 to those at February 2021. The number of female employees [including trans] remains constant. The proportion of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic employees has decreased from 263 [17%] of the Adults and Health workforce to 243 [16%]. The number of employees who have declared themselves as having a disability has increased from 97 [6%] to 100 [7%].

The amount of carers increased from 227 to 234 but remains at approx. 15%. Staff who declared their religion; has increased marginally from 1025 to 1036 equating to a 1% increase. The overall age profile of the directorate remains constant.

The percentage of employees who have not disclosed their ethnicity has reduced from 6% to 5%. A trend also noted in the staff disclosing if they are a carer with a

reduction from 40% to 38%. There are no changes to the percentage of staff who have not made a declaration for the remaining characteristics. Staff not declaring their status remains high in the following protected characteristics: LGBT+ [38%]; Carers [38%]; Religion [32%].

The tables below outline the profile of staff in Adults and Health:-

#### Overall Figures for March 2020

	Headcount	%age	Not declared
Total	1528		
Women	1258	82%	
BAME	263	17%	6%
Disabled	97	6%	8%
LGBT	53	4%	38%
Carers	227	15%	40%
Religion stated	1025	67%	32%
Age – under 40	441	29%	
Age – over 41	1087	71%	

#### Overall Figures for February 2021

	Headcount	%age	Not declared
Total	1534		
Women	1259	82%	
BAME	243	16%	5%
Disabled	100	7%	8%
LGBT	58	4%	38%
Carers	234	15%	38%
Religion stated	1036	68%	32%
Age – under 40	445	29%	
Age – over 41	1089	71%	

The data for all new starters from 1.4.2020 to 1.3.2021 in Adults and Health shows that there is still work to be done in order to take positive action to recruit people into the organisation with protected characteristics.

The health, safety and wellbeing of staff has been at the forefront of the effort during the pandemic. In Adults and Health this included:-

- The reallocation of available staff which supported many of services including Assisted Living and Adults Care deliver;
- Working with the Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group to set up a testing offer Social Care Staff ; and
- Working with managers throughout the pandemic to support them with individual risk assessments for those staff that are CEV or CV

Through the Adults and Health Workforce and Organisational Development Team with support of Human Resources staff 122 people were recruited into work from 27<sup>th</sup> March to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020 through assessment centres for the We Care Academy. Staff were placed in the council, private, voluntary and independent sectors.

### **Children's and Families Workforce Equality Improvement Work**

Children's and Families has delivered on much of the planned activity for 2020 - 2021 despite the impact of COVID-19. The anticipated improvement/outcomes, however, have been limited due to the prioritisation of meeting urgent additional needs of both workforce and community with reduced resources. The Directorate are reviewing strategic improvement plans for 2021 in order to effectively target limited resources and maximise potential impact especially for minority groups.

#### **Cultural identity and inclusion**

A Cultural Identity/Inclusion Steering Group in 2019 to look at issues, such as, recruitment/progression/representation of the community of Leeds and confidence and competence of practitioners to understand and support a range of cultural needs for children and families. This includes reviewing how the Directorate incorporate the voice and influence of children and young people, parents and carers into improving practice for both internal and external customers.

Key actions include:-

- Updating the complaints guidance to include practice guidance on cultural identity and inclusion has been completed;
- Children and young people working with the Directorate to improve training and resources on cultural identity and inclusion;
- Prompts for managers in the new supervision framework to discuss cultural identity and inclusion as part of effective case management and recording;
- Introducing themed practice months to raise awareness of particular equality practice issues and to improve professional practice;
- Producing a number of cultural profiles representing the range of ethnicities across Leeds to improve practitioner knowledge. There are some gaps and these are being identified;
- The development of An 'attraction plan' in partnership with local Universities to ensure that there is a diverse talent pipeline from which to recruit practitioners especially in terms of employees from a Black Asian and minority ethnic background.

The Cultural Identity and Inclusion steering group have an action plan which is reviewed regularly.

## **Living Wage**

All staff received a salary of at least the 'real living wage' which increased to £9.30 in April 2020.

## **Staff Engagement**

A high quality Children and Families digital learning offer including wellbeing and remote supervision was launched in May 2020 to meet the needs of staff working remotely. This enabled staff engagement in learning to be maintained during COVID-19.

## **Appraisals**

Appraisals have been impacted by COVID-19. Instead of the usual mid- year and full year reviews in 2020 informal health and well- being check ins were carried out.

## **Manager Training**

The digital training offer includes support for managers, such as, 'Supervision Working Remotely' to ensure that positive and productive relationships are maintained between managers and their teams whilst working from home.

## **Apprenticeships**

The take up of apprenticeships in Children and Families since 2018 has been 164 with 119 female/45 male. This is a rate of 72.5 % for women which although high is an under representation in terms of the workforce. The number of completions has been 52 with 35/67% female 17/33 % male. There is a shortfall in female completions, 20 out of 23 withdrawals, which needs to be explored.

78% of all apprentices in 2020 were female. This is just under the representation of women in the Directorate which is 81%. Black Asian and minority ethnic apprentices are also slightly under represented at 12% in 2020.

## **Values based learning**

The continued monthly roll out of Restorative Practice training which has been run virtually since April 2020, supports improved communication, effective support and challenge and developing collaborative relationships. The restorative culture promotes the use of positive role modelling and inclusive practice. Approximately 15,000 internal and external colleagues have benefitted from this learning.

## **Volunteering**

Staff are offered 10 hours per year to undertake volunteer work with local communities which increases understanding and awareness of diverse communities. Volunteering in the most deprived areas is supported and encouraged as a route to employment through initiatives, such as, Families First.

Volunteering amongst staff has increased during lockdown with additional support for foodbanks and other essential services. The Healthy Holidays programme, run by volunteers, engaged with 5,000 children over the summer of 2020 and provided 45,000 meals during lockdown prior to Christmas 2020.

### **Recruitment and diversity**

In 2019 the Directorate developed further the mentoring scheme for graduates. This was to ensure that they felt valued and achieved their potential, as well, as progressing in the organisation. Access to apprenticeships to support leadership development has been a priority. The approach to graduate recruitment has developed with opportunities, such as, video interviews to increase access to applicants with learning and other disabilities. Unfortunately due to COVID -19 we have been unable to offer graduate placements.

### **Child Friendly Leeds**

There is a Child Friendly Leeds enrichment offer for vulnerable children, including, Children Looked After and Care Leavers which provides targeted opportunities in both social and career development. Support has been provided virtually since March 2020 which has had some benefits and plans are being made for a blended approach for 2021.

### **Women**

The Women's Voice Staff Network is now chaired by the Children and Families Service Workforce Development Lead. This is enabling the Directorate to make a fuller contribution to cross council equality improvement. Targeted learning and development through the Women's Voice Staff Network including mentoring opportunities and career confidence workshops has been provided.

Work is currently taking place to review the 2018 Women's Voice manifesto and developing an outcomes based action plan to further deliver on the 5 pledges and consult with front line staff about next steps.

### **LGBT+ Equality**

Children's and Families have a strong working relationship with Stonewall. In January 2020 the Directorate achieved the Silver award for Stonewall's new Children and Young People's Services Champion (CYPS) for work undertaken in 2019. The Children and Families Equality Group has a Task and Finish sub group which works on the annual Stonewall education submission.

### **Leeds Equality Network**

This multi- agency partnership meets bi-monthly. The terms of reference of the City wide partnership is to work collectively to identify and address inequalities that exist in Leeds and improve outcomes, including for 'vulnerable and seldom heard from communities.' This group informs good practice in the workplace.

## **Voice and Influence**

Work continues to improve the Voice and Influence of young people, parents and carers. The current Young Mayor has a focus on... "Be Yourself, Love Yourself and Respect all others" which links very well to what we are trying to achieve for the workforce.

The voices of children and young people are reflected in the learning and development offer especially through the use of film. Some recent examples include the Independent Travel Training film with COVID-19 safe information.

## **Hate Incident Reporting**

The partnership approach with schools and clusters is being reviewed in order to be more proactive in providing support to communities at risk of experiencing hate. This will explore the reasons for the reduced levels of reporting in schools over the last couple of years.

## **City Wide Approach**

The City wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the 'Thriving' Child Poverty Strategy contain key priorities for the citizens of Leeds including the workforce.

## **Recruitment**

Children's and Families have Increased the numbers of graduates on placement to improve the representation of young people in the workplace, from 5 in 2018 - 2019 to 8 in 2019 - 2020. Of these, two graduates were offered permanent positions in 2018 and in 2019 three were employed beyond the end of the programme.

In September 2020 three Supported Internship placements were offered to young people with SEND. It hoped that at least 12 months paid employment will be offered to one of the interns following their placement.

## **Workforce Profile**

The mean gender pay gap for Children and Families in 2018 was 8.6% and in 2019 was 8.8% which was very consistent with the national picture. The mean gender pay gap for the Directorate has increased in 2020 to 9.5%. This gap is expected to increase further in 2021 due to the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on women.

The number of employees aged 16-25 in the Children and Families Service workplace in 2020 has increased to 220 and 9.7 % of the total compared to 192 and 8% of the total in 2019. However the level of apprentices in this age group has fallen with 33% of the 2019 cohort aged 16-25 being apprentices compared to 27% in 2020.

The number and proportion of female apprentices has also reduced between 2019 and 2020 with 85% in 2019 and 78% in 2020. Black Asian and minority ethnic apprentices are at 12%.

The proportion of female employees in Children and Families in 2020 is the same as 2018/19 at 81%. There is a lower % of female/Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in the higher the pay grade.

In 2020 72% of JNC (Senior) officers in the Directorate were female. This is an under representation of 9%. The proportion of Black Asian and minority ethnic at JNC grades is 10% which is an under representation of 4%, according to declared and falling levels of ethnicity, in the Children and Families workforce.

The proportion of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees has reduced across the last 2 years from 16% in 2019 to 14% in 2020.

The proportion of employees with a declared disability is the same over both years at 5% with an undeclared rate of 11%.

In 2019 there was a 3% increase in the reported number of carers although the % not declared was still 41%. In 2020 number of carers was 7%. The number of colleagues not declared as carers or not in 2020 was 40%.

The reported proportion of heterosexual employees went up from 53% in 2018 to 57% in 2019 with a rate of not declared at 40%. In 2020 the rate of declared heterosexual employees was 58% and not declared was 38%.

In terms of religion there was a not declared rate of 32% in 2019 and 31% in 2020

There seems to be an ongoing lack of confidence in employee declarations when completing equality monitoring. It is hoped that the work on cultural identity and inclusion will have an impact on this area.

### **Apprenticeships impact on progression**

Since 2018 In terms of career progression, following completion of apprenticeships, thirty five colleagues progressed and 89% of these were female. This is slightly over representative of the female workforce of 81%. This demonstrates that apprenticeships are a valuable tool in supporting progression for female employees and this should be considered in the offer/approval of apprenticeship requests. This is one possible route to an improved representation at a senior leadership level. We need to ensure that individual support is provided to enable completion of apprenticeships especially for women.

### **Recruitment/leavers**

The comparison of internal recruitment levels of women versus external recruitment is interesting. 100% of all internal appointments in 2020 were female compared to 61% of external recruits. External recruitment is significantly more

likely to take place for senior appointments. 77% of leavers in the same period were women.

### **Women's Voice Staff Network**

A Career Confidence workshop for women was piloted in March 2019 which was repeated a couple of times through the year. This was attended mainly by colleagues early in their career and received excellent feedback from the group. At least 2 of the original cohort have achieved promotions since the workshop was delivered.

In Children and Families Services there are 25 locality 'clusters', 7 Restorative Early Support Teams and 3 Early Help Hubs all targeting resources to those most in need.

### **Early Intervention Youth Fund**

Targeted Workforce Development was funded through the Police and Crime Commissioner from April 2019 to March 2020 in two wards in the City.

This focused work looked at poverty, education, identity and vulnerability to risk/crime with the aim of increasing positive engagement with the council and improve opportunities for young people/diverse representation in the workforce.

### **Early Help workforce**

The Workforce Development Group have improved access to qualifications to support staff development and progression. These include the Level 3 Skills for Justice Qualification in Early Intervention and a Level 4 Apprenticeship in Early Intervention which has recently been added to the apprenticeship framework.

The vast majority of these Early Help colleagues are female, many of whom are working part time due to caring responsibilities. A number these are new returners to the workforce with limited prior qualifications.

### **City Development Workforce Equality Improvement Work**

To look at how representative the City Development is at all levels, an equality analysis was undertaken. This compared staffing data for the Directorate from March 2020 to February 2021 (most recent data available). This enabled the City Development to look at the current staffing profile across the different protected characteristics, as well, as identifying any changes over the previous 12 months. It would be useful to know why individuals have not shared this information but it should be noted that 'not declaring' is not the same as 'prefer not to say'.

### **Findings**

- City Development currently employ 1614 employees (1417 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). This is a reduction of 53 FTE from March 2020 with more colleagues due to leave on voluntary severance on 31 March 2021.

The reduction in FTE's is in response to the savings required across the organisation;

- 58% of employees across City Development are male (including Trans), 42% are female (including Trans), 5% are disabled and 7% are recorded as carers. Despite the total reduction in staffing numbers the percentage splits across all the above characteristics have remained unchanged over the last 12 months. The age profile across the Directorate has also remained fairly static. This shows that the FTE reductions to date have affected all groups equally. There have not been any targeted staffing reductions;
- 21% of employees are currently aged between 55 and 64 but this will reduce on 1 April 2021 once the Early Leavers Initiative (ELI) leavers have left as the majority of those leavers will be within this age group. Whilst it may then look like this age group has been adversely affected by the reductions, ELI is entirely voluntary. In some instances these changes may also provide development and promotion opportunities to other staff going forward. It also provides an opportunity to rethink recruitment options to posts in the new structures; and
- Currently 9% of employees in the Directorate are from Black Asian and minority ethnic groups. This is a 2% reduction from March 2020 and is below the organisation wide figure of 14% Black Asian and minority ethnic employees. However, at JNC level (senior officers) Black Asian and minority ethnic representation in the City Development has increased by 4% this year to 12%. This is now in line with Black Asian and minority ethnic representation at JNC level across the organisation as a whole (12%). The increase of 2 Black Asian and minority ethnic. FTE in the JNC cohort is despite an overall reduction of 7 FTE posts at JNC level across City Development.

### **Apprenticeships**

City Development has continued to actively promote and support apprenticeships and currently have 148 apprentices. This is over 24% of all the apprentices across the organisation. The male/female split in the apprentices reflects that of the wider City Development workforce.

11% of apprentices in the Directorate are from Black Asian and minority ethnic groups. This is a slight reduction from March 2020 (13%) but is higher than the proportion of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees at all levels across City Development (9%).

It is worth noting that despite falling FTE numbers, there are 8 more apprentices in February 2021 than in March 2020, demonstrating City Development's commitment to learning and development. It is also worth noting that 27% of current apprentices are aged 41 and over so these formal learning opportunities are open to all employees.

City Development continue to work closely with the council's Apprenticeship Team to promote opportunities to all groups, particularly, at entry level where the Apprenticeship Team make good use of their existing contacts with schools in target areas.

## **Best Place to Work**

City Development is committed to the council's ambition to be "the best place to work". To do this the City Development want to have a skilled and diverse workforce that is representative of the City, is inclusive and welcoming to all, and where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and the culture is one of fairness, diversity and collaboration.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that some of City Developments priorities became more important than others, some new ones came to the fore and some things had to be paused, for example, 100% appraisal target.

## **Safe, well and at work**

In the initial response to COVID-19 the immediate priority was for all employees to be safe, well and at work (although not necessarily *in* the workplace). This has continued to be a priority throughout the year with a big focus on employee health and wellbeing.

## **"I feel like I count"**

It was also recognised early on in the year/pandemic that everybody would have different needs based on their own individual circumstances. Some of these needs may be related to particular protected characteristics, for example, sex (nationally more women, often in lower paid roles, were taking on more of the childcare/home-learning responsibilities), disability (for example, having the appropriate kit to be able to work from home) and ethnicity (increased risk of COVID-19 identified in Black Asian and minority ethnic groups) and some would be applicable to all staff.

The commitment to being an inclusive employer where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and people say "I feel like I count" became even more essential during this challenging year.

Raising awareness and improving representation at all levels both remained priorities throughout. Corporately the Black Asian and minority ethnic Staff Network took the lead on the response to the Black Lives Matter movement and it was agreed that as an organisation "We stand together against all forms of racism and inequality in our council and our City. This is a time for action and change". City Development took steps locally to communicate and reinforce the council's Commitment to:-

- Listen more;
- Not shy away from hard truths;
- Do all we can to eliminate racism and inequality;
- Zero tolerance approach;
- Take all allegations of racism seriously;

- Challenge and address inappropriate behaviour;
- Immediate change, long term commitment; and
- Everyone in the council to play a part

Corporately there have been three Wellbeing Pulse Surveys throughout the year to find out how staff were feeling and to provide the opportunity for individual call-backs for people who wanted additional support. This enabled the council to see how people were feeling.

In the most recent survey in October 2020 City Development had the highest response rate of all the Directorates at 22%. Of those who responded, just over half (53%) said they were feeling positive. This is above the council figure of 51%.

74% of those who responded reported feeling happy with the level of support they receive. This is the same as the organisation wide response to this question. The most common themes in the comments of the unhappy respondents were about missing face to face contact with colleagues / customers and having a high / stressful workload. The non-happy staff were more likely to identify job security and workload as particular concerns for them.

Due to low staff numbers in some protected characteristics the survey responses were not analysed against the protected characteristics at Directorate level.

### **Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Ally ship – Inclusion Week conversation**

During National Inclusion Week 2020 the Director of City Development spent time in conversation with a Senior Leader from a Black Asian and minority ethnic background. A range of discussions took place including the need for Black Asian and minority ethnic allies in the workforce. They began by talking about the diversity agenda for the City as a whole, before talking about some of the challenges faced by Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in the workplace. They recognised that for things to improve people need to feel comfortable talking about diversity in the workplace. They highlighted the need for every individual to take a step back and think whether they could be doing more to make a difference themselves, rather than relying on others to make changes. They also highlighted the need to consider diversity as part of any decision making process. The Director committed to asking his Chief Officers to lead discussions in their own services to find out more about the real life experiences of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees across the City Development.

Their conversation was filmed and shared across the council's social media platforms during National Inclusion Week.

### **Listening to real life experiences**

A number of services in City Development held listening events with Black Asian and minority ethnic employees to hear about their experiences in the work place and to identify what improvements are needed. The discussions were across a range of issues including recruitment, opportunities for development and

progression, dignity in the workplace etc. Highways and Transportation also ran 'mentimeter' surveys before and after their event, giving people the added opportunity to comment anonymously about their experiences if they wished to do so. Whilst there are some lessons to be learned, overall the comments of recent experiences of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in the City Development were positive. Action Plans will be developed focussing on priorities for the next 12 months.

In response to the council's commitment to having a zero tolerance approach, the Director of City Development has asked to be alerted to any instances of alleged racist behaviour within the Directorate. All such instances will be taken seriously and managed in line with agreed policy and procedures with the Director updated on outcomes.

### **Safe, well and at work**

A key focus throughout this year has been ensuring the wellbeing of all employees. Regular wellbeing check-ins have taken place for all colleagues across City Development, with formal check-ins for everyone recorded in December 2020.

Individual Risk Assessments were completed for all employees who could not work from home and/or were at an increased risk from COVID-19, for example, Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, Clinically Vulnerable and from Black Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds). Training was provided to managers to ensure that they were able to undertake these effectively.

In services with front line operations there were regular meetings between Service Managers, Human Resources and Trade Unions to discuss and address any concerns about work practices or health and safety in the workplace. Where necessary, based on either Government advice or Occupational Health input, some colleagues remained at home for their own safety and wellbeing throughout the pandemic.

### **Raising awareness**

In addition to the council response to Black Asian and minority ethnic employees which has been shared widely across the City Development, an Inclusion Calendar has also been developed and shared via Senior Management Teams meetings and Manager Communications. This includes links to a variety of on-line training opportunities which will increase employee awareness and understanding.

Highways and Transportation also have their own Inclusion and Wellbeing Calendar. Each month a different team takes on responsibility for raising the profile of any national 'days' across the wider service. An example action from one month is shared below:-

*To mark Black History Month, Flood Risk Management hosted a series of presentations to share the stories of Black figures and voices within Leeds and beyond. The presentations, led by 4 members of the team, were an opportunity to*

*learn more about Black experiences and achievements in history and take that knowledge forward. Presentations featured Thomas Arthur Benjamin France MBE, David Oluwale, Jason Robinson and Doreen Lawrence, Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon, OBE.”*

The service also have an electronic staff newsletter which includes a range of service specific updates as well as information on wellbeing and equality topics to increase employee awareness.

### **Equality and Diversity Working Groups**

Active Leeds have refreshed their Equality and Diversity Working Group and similar groups have been established in Asset Management and Regeneration and Highways and Transportation. The groups are made up of representatives from across each service and enable staff at levels to get involved. Initial meetings have been held and the groups are currently drafting and agreeing priority actions plans for their respective services. In the first year the focus is likely to be on raising awareness, commitment to training and communication of actions/progress.

The working groups are currently putting together equality plans for their services which will be shared with all staff once agreed. These will ensure that everyone has a good understanding of the priorities and are clear on how any proposed actions will support the service in achieving these.

### **Career Development at all levels**

A Black Asian and minority ethnic Senior Leader in City Development has been supported to be released on a part time basis to complete a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Fellowship programme. This is aimed at aspiring leaders and delivered by the West Yorkshire Health Care Partnership. This secondment will be increasing to full time from June 2021. The opportunity enables that individual to develop their career by accessing a broad range of experiences at a senior level, connecting across sectors and completing an accredited qualification.

City Development continue to support apprentices at all levels of the organisation. A recent article in a national newspaper recognised and celebrated the achievement of a Black Asian and minority ethnic apprentice in Highways and Transportation who is pursuing a career in civil engineering via a HND Apprenticeship with City Development.

### **More representative decision makers**

A number of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees at a senior level in the Directorate have recently undertaken Hearing Officer training. This has ensured that decision makers hearing employment cases across the organisation are representative of the wider workforce.

## **Equality Groups**

In addition to service equality working groups City Development have re-established a wider group that was paused during COVID-19. The group will initially review and refresh their terms of reference and objectives, ensuring that they are fit for purpose and in line with current priorities. They will lead on Directorate wide equality priorities as well as being a forum where service representatives can update on local equality plans/actions and share good practice with their colleagues.

## **Recruitment**

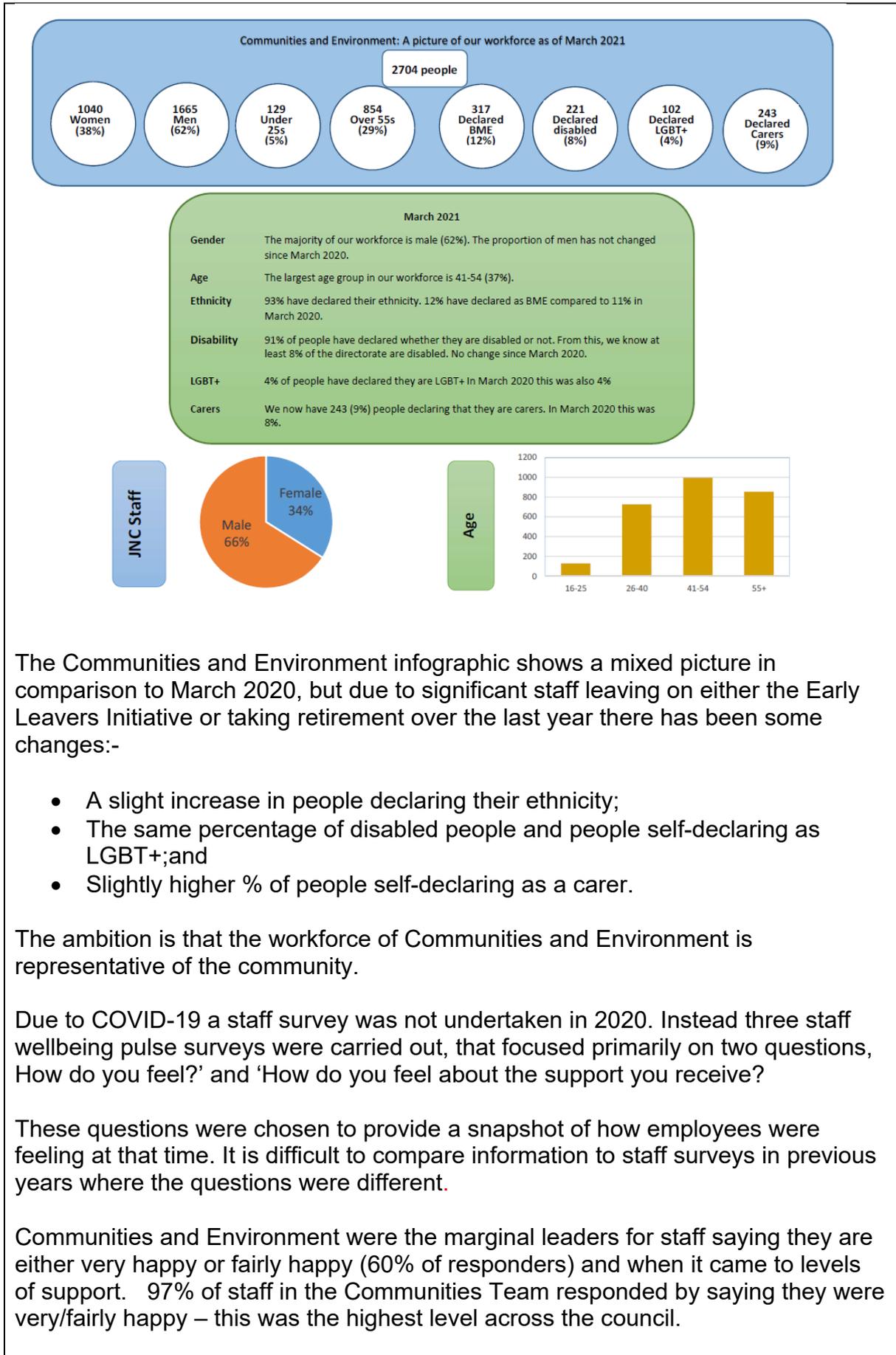
Due to the financial position of the council, as well, as potential difficulties in successfully inducting new starters into the organisation whilst most people are working from home, there has been a lower level of recruitment activity this year compared to previous years. Where recruitment has been approved posts have been advertised internally first to support the reduction of staff numbers overall. However this has meant that the Directorate are recruiting from the current pool of council employees so it is difficult to change the overall profile of the workforce.

As lockdown eases and new structures are agreed following leavers on the Early Leavers Initiative/Service Reviews, this will provide the opportunity for more external recruitment, particularly, to specialist roles and entry level posts. Discussions have begun around where posts are advertised and how to make use of existing links in the community to broaden the range of people who see our adverts. Senior recruitment tenders have also referenced the requirement to broaden the representation of the workforce. Links with schools who have a diverse mix of pupils are also being considered.

Active Leeds have committed to a planned change in emphasis of their recruitment to better try to represent the communities they service.

## **Communities and Environment Workforce Equality Improvement Work**

The staff profile for the Communities and Environment Directorate is:-



The Directorate responses for staff saying they were very or fairly happy for Pulse 2 and Pulse 3 is outlined below:-

How are you Feeling?

Pulse 2 = 64%

Pulse 3 = 53%

Feel about level of support?

Pulse 2 = 81%

Pulse 3 = 75%

All council Directorates reflected a similar drop in happiness levels and level of support received between Pulse 2 and 3.

The Black Lives Matter movement during the summer of 2020 raised a number of issues that triggered the council to understand better the lived experiences of its Black Asian and minority ethnic employees and how effective conversations around race and equality are taking place in all Directorates.

**Staff representation**

There are still gaps in knowledge of the demographic profile of staff and work is taking place to encourage staff to engage with the 'bring your whole self to work' campaign. However, there is sufficient evidence of under representation in some areas for targeted work to take place.

It is recognised that there are difficulties in changing the levels of representation due to the current restrictions on recruitment. However, work is taking place where possible to encourage applicants from under represented communities and to look at new ways of recruitment.

**Increasing representation from Black Asian and minority ethnic communities, and women**

The Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Team has a lower proportion of female officers in the Enforcement and Vehicle Examiner Teams. Recent recruitment included inclusion statements and posts were advertising at local colleges to try to encourage under-represented people to apply. This is recognised as a difficult area to change as Enforcement Officers and Vehicle Examiners need technical qualifications (like security industry or MOT tester), so applications usually come from those already working in this male dominated area. One way of aiming to address this is by use of Apprenticeships, and arrangements are being made to secure a Licensing/Regulatory Apprentice in 2021.

The amalgamation of Environmental Action Services and Waste Services with a joint Leadership Team has created the opportunity to drive forward some of the key equalities issues that need to be addressed. This includes recruiting more Black Asian and minority ethnic and women staff into managerial and supervisory roles. Concerted efforts has been made by using different recruitment approaches, such as, video shortlisting and interviewing. Also changes to work and shift patterns across the services were made in order to make front-line roles more attractive to women.

## **Increasing representation of younger people**

The proportion of the workforce aged 25 or under has dropped over the last 21 months. However, a significant number of staff are due to leave at the end of March 2021 which will impact on the average age of the workforce. The 16-25 age group at the end of February 2021 was 5% of the workforce, compared to 6% at the end of February 2020.

Recruitment to apprenticeships has been affected by the financial measures brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. There are currently 72 apprentices in Communities and Environment which is significantly higher than the target of 62. At the end of March 2020 there were 89. 30 of the apprentices fall into the 16-25 age group. The average age of apprentices at all levels is 31.6.

## **Inclusive culture**

### **Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA)**

Communities and Environment continues to promote and to support MHFA. A Directorate wide group has been established which meets bi monthly to provide networking, support and development opportunities.

The aim was to promote training of new MHFAs in areas of the Directorate where they were under represented. However, no training has taken place over the last year so this will be a focus as restrictions are lifted.

### **Championing Equality**

The Communities and Environment Leadership Team continues to champion equality and drive change. Over the year discussions have focussed on each of the protected characteristics and these have resulted in actions for the Communities and Environment Equality Working Group to develop further.

Leaders are actively being encouraged to be more visible and to recognise and address issues of abuse, harassment or bullying, using the menu of tools developed by the Directorate.

Over the last year significant work has been undertaken by the Communities and Environment Leadership Team to work with all staff networks and in, particular, with the Black Asian and minority ethnic Staff Network to develop effective channels of communications.

Conversations have taken place across Directorate Teams to raise issues and concerns. These conversations have been:-

- To respond to concerns raised by staff in relation to unacceptable language;
- Having extended leadership discussions to discuss, for example, Black Lives Matters, cultural challenges, discrimination and inclusivity, to share

personal experiences, followed by challenges to take the conversations further;

- To promote better understanding and to share information/resources to provide a platform for discussion, for example the YouTube privilege walk, sharing the documentary 'The school that tried to end racism', encouraging wearing red for Show Racism the Red Card and how to report race hate crime;
- To respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and provide risk assessments/ reassurance, particularly to Black Asian and minority ethnic employees; and
- To promote and encourage attendance and participation with the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network.

In addition the following specific work has taken place:-

- Support to help and shape staff network events, for example, Islamophobia Awareness Month;
- A joint Directorate Equality Board and the Equality Working Group workshop was held in November 2020. This gave the opportunity for open conversations about understanding the reality of lived experiences for staff in Communities and Environment. Experiences were shared and pledges made by all participants, many of which focused on better connecting with staff and challenging poor behaviours; and
- Provision of diversity training alongside training on language and workplace banter.

The Women's Voice, DAWN and Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Networks have continued to work closely with the Directorate that has added richness to the discussions in relation to protected characteristics.

International Women's Day has been widely celebrated in the Directorate for many years. In 2021 the Women's Voice Staff Network delivered a career confidence workshop and support provided for women accessing mentoring. The Black Asian and minority ethnic Staff Network organised a Heroine's event asking for nominations for front line staff and held an awards event.

Work will continue to be led by the Directorate Leadership Team who have quarterly equality themed meetings.

The Communities and Environment People Plan (which incorporates equality aims and actions) will be updated and will ensure a continued focus on ensuring inclusion principles continue to be embedded.

### **Resources and Housing Workforce Equality Improvement Work**

The staff profile for the Resources and Housing Directorate are outlined in the tables below. Figures are compared between April 2020 and March 2021. This is due to changes in reporting lines which impacted which services were included in the Resources and Housing figures.

Controls on recruitment have been in place since July 2020 and the Early Leavers Initiative scheme was re-opened across the whole council at the same time and a large number of people left. The headcount in Resources and Housing has reduced from 6575 to 6239 during the course of the year. This is likely to have impacted changes to representation levels.

### Resources and Housing headlines

Resources & Housing	Mar-21		Apr-20	
	Declared	% Not declared	Declared	% Not declared
% of women employed at senior levels (JNC)	45%	N/A	43%	N/A
% of BAME staff in workforce	15%	12%	16%	12%
% of BAME staff employed at senior levels (JNC)	11%	3%	9%	2%
% of workforce between 16-25	6%	N/A	7%	N/A
% of workforce identifying as carers	9%	33%	10%	34%
% of workforce identifying as LGBT	3%	36%	3%	37%
% of workforce identifying as disabled	6%	12%	6%	12%

The representation of women at JNC (Senior Officers) level has increased from 43% to 45%. It is likely some of this will be down to implementation of new structures within Financial Management, Procurement and Commercial Services where there was an increase in women being appointed at JNC level.

The overall representation of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees has fallen slightly from 16% to 15% but there has been an increase of representation at JNC level from 9 to 11%.

There has been a slight reduction in the number of carers from 10% to 9% and also the 16-25 category from 7% to 6%. Again, the impact of COVID-19, the controls on recruitment and the financial challenge may be the reasons for this, for example, the graduate scheme was put on hold.

### Declaration

The table above shows there has been a slight increase in the number of people declaring their carer status and sexual orientation in the Resources and Housing.

Civic Enterprise Leeds (CEL) which makes up nearly half of the whole of Resources and Housing headcount have regularly asked their staff to declare their equality data. The table below shows the improvements made:-

	CEL				
	% Not declared Mar 2018	% Not declared Mar 2019	% not declared Nov 19	% Not declared Mar 2020	% Not declared Mar 2021
Ethnicity	30	20	21	23	12
Disability	20	17	19	18	12
Carers	47	40	39	40	33
Sexual orientation	63	50	51	53	36
Religion	56	41	43	39	30

Not all areas listed have seen an improvement in the levels of staff who have not declared. Now only 12% of colleagues have not declared their ethnicity or disability status. The highest area for declaration rate improvement is sexual orientation, a further 17% of staff have declared this information. This was an area CEL wanted to improve.

### Representation Apprentices

	Apr-20	Mar-21
<b>R&amp;H</b>	% Apprentices	% Apprentices
<b>Women</b>	50	46
<b>BAME</b>	21	19
<b>Disabled</b>	6	6
<b>Carers</b>	7	7
<b>LGBT+</b>	4	4

Numbers of staff completing apprenticeships fell from 321 in 2020 to 271 by end of March 2021. It is likely that this is due to the impact of recruitment controls and the financial challenges impacting the commencement of new apprenticeships. The table above shows the numbers of apprentices identifying as LGBT+ and as carers have been stable over the last two years. The number of female and Black, Asian and minority ethnic apprentices have seen slight reductions.

### Staff Survey Scores

Due to COVID-19 a staff survey was not carried out in 2020 -2021. Three wellbeing pulse surveys were carried out instead. The first survey was carried out in May 2020 and Resources and Housing had the highest percentage of employees overall who reported feeling positive at 61% and 85% saying they were happy with the support received. CEL accounted for many of the higher ratings with over four in five staff (85%) saying they were happy with the level of support they were receiving. By the time of the second survey in June/July 2020, the number of people feeling positive had increased to 70%. The third survey was carried out at the end of October 2020 after Leeds had been moved to tier 2 of COVID-19 restrictions and the financial challenge options had been submitted to the council's Executive Board. Resources and Housing again had the highest

number of staff reporting feeling positive but it had reduced to 59%. 80% were still happy with the support being received.

### **Appraisals**

Appraisals were impacted by COVID-19 and the full year reviews which normally take place in April-June were cancelled. A wellbeing conversation replaced the mid-year review in December 2020 to January 2021. It is not therefore, not possible to compare appraisals outcomes to last year.

### **Equality Training and Awareness**

Due to COVID-19, a significant amount of training and awareness sessions have had to be postponed due to organisational impact. However, some events were still hosted which included:-

Digital Information Service (DIS) held events for LGBT+ Awareness, Dementia Awareness, Stress Awareness, Anxiety, Black Asian and minority ethnic Awareness, Mental Health at Work, Tackling Ageism and issues with gambling addiction.

Human Resources regularly promoted all of the staff networks and their events to all of their staff. They encouraged attendance and encouraged their staff to also support these events professionally, for example, offering advice on employment matter to carers during their 1to1 support event. Human Resources have held development sessions for staff on Equality Impact Assessments, Understanding the organisational experience of Black and minority ethnic employees and Money awareness. As Human Resources staff are asked to support all council Directorates with improving inclusion and diversity, the awareness of issues is part of appraisal objectives and expectations. Staff can request further development and this is incorporated into a service-wide development programme.

Democratic Services employees have engaged in team discussions on equality and diversity matters, including the Black Lives Matters movement last year and staff have been signposted to the staff networks. A programme of work has begun to share resources to improve awareness and understanding among employees, including, highlighting available Unconscious Bias training and information on cultural awareness and micro messages/behaviour.

Legal Services requested all managers to still make sure development on equalities training is given sufficient attention in the check-ins/appraisals.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, Housing Leeds offered training opportunities online throughout the year. Building on the success of Diversity Month that had been held during September for a number of years, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is now firmly embedded in the day to day activities of teams as part of the Housing Leeds People Plan. Promotion of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is through their staff Champions and regular staff e-bulletins. This makes it an all-year-round learning opportunity for staff with an increased focus during National Inclusion Week in September. Throughout the year staff have had the opportunity to take part in

online training and awareness sessions including Mental Health Awareness, Autism Awareness, Islamophobia Awareness events, Unconscious Bias e-learning, Race Relations and Cultural Awareness webinars, Breastfeeding Awareness, Leeds Pride celebrations online, Equality Diversity and Inclusion photography competition, Carers guidance and support, gambling awareness e-learning, regular Equality Diversity and Inclusion People Champion meetings, South Asian Heritage Month events, Black History Month events, International Women's Day events, Faith and Religion awareness videos and training events, including, awareness and celebration of the various faith events throughout the year. In addition to this, regular open and honest team discussions were held linked to the Black Asian and minority ethnic Staff Network position statement following the Black Lives Matters movement.

The Chief Officer Strategy and Improvement has initiated new listening sessions with a range of different groups of colleagues, in line with the council staff network groups. These sessions aim to enable senior colleagues to understand perspectives of colleagues at all levels, encourage sharing of lived experience and generate new ideas for implementation.

Strategy and Improvement have also held service engagement events, focussing on equality issues, including a presentation about the council's Black Asian and minority ethnic action plan, sharing a 'white privilege' video and input from experts to provoke thoughts and discussion and action across all areas. This service hold monthly local manager development sessions which also often touch on equality issues, for example, through the council values, discussions around what a good 1 to 1 looks like, with some sessions more specifically focussed on inclusion.

Shared Services have done the following on raising awareness and training:-

- Three members of the service are Women's Voice Ambassadors and are sharing key messages from the network across the service;
- Promoted flexible working during the pandemic to reduce the stress of the typical working day and juggling child care which has impacted predominantly on the female workforce;
- Additional risk assessments undertaken with all Black Asian and minority ethnic and Clinically Extremely Vulnerable employees across the service;
- In October 2020 they supported Show Racism the Red Card and wore something red. They also posted a photo collage on their team SharePoint site to raise awareness;
- Two employees are involved with the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network. They were involved in organising a Black Asian and minority ethnic themed discussion at the Strategy and Improvement Leadership event and supporting event planning for Black History Month in October 2020;
- One member of the team is active with the Healthy Minds Staff Network. They have shared their own experiences and strategies they have developed to overcome some of their difficulties. Feedback was really positive and they have been invited to take part in further presentations;
- Promoted men's health week between 15 and 21 June 2020 and the theme was COVID-19 and the effect on men's health;

- Promoted National Inclusion week across the service in September 2020;
- Promoted the DAWN Staff Network care, share coffee and chat sessions that have taken place throughout the year;
- Promoted Black History Month in October 2020 and encouraged staff to take part in sessions discussing Black Asian and minority ethnic issues ,such as, unconscious bias and 'white' privilege;
- The InSite team have attended webinars on accessibility such as: GDS/BBC Webinar: Accessibility Culture eats WCAG compliance for breakfast; What would Marie Kondo do? How to clear your website of inaccessible PDFs; Making accessibility accessible: the secret to engaging your workforce; How to avoid common accessibility statement fails; An Introduction to Digital Accessibility Regulations; Global Accessibility Awareness Week – Days 1,2, and 3; and
- Some team members have attended training on safeguarding, LGBT+ Awareness, gender matters, bullying and harassment, disability etiquette, challenging inappropriate behaviour, inclusive leadership, understanding unconscious bias and creating an environment based on respect.

### **Staff Representation**

The largest service in Resources and Housing is Civic Enterprise Leeds (CEL) and they have continued to encourage their staff to provide equality data.

### **Apprenticeships**

DIS continued to support apprenticeships across the service. 44 staff continued or started apprenticeships across a variety of fields.

CEL have 72 apprentices who work within their services in many varied roles.

Legal Services is continuing to support legal and management apprenticeships, which include three Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees.

Finance have supported one colleague to undertake a Leadership and Management apprenticeship.

Housing Leeds continue to support staff to undertake apprenticeships at all levels. There are currently 64 staff in total undertaking apprenticeships. In the last 12 months, 11 staff have started an apprenticeship and 28 staff have completed one. Managers in Housing Leeds continue to act as mentors, holding regular support meetings and attending virtual end point assessments.

Shared Services continue to promote apprenticeships:-

- One apprentice was appointed into the service in 2020-2021. They currently have three apprentice positions that are in progress at the moment. These apprentices are being recruited via employment and skills projects so it is likely that they will be NEET.

- Of the 2020 cohort of apprentices, three are now in permanent A1/A3 positions, three are in B1 positions, two are in C1 positions and four are still in apprentice positions;
- They have three employees still undertaking the payroll administrator apprenticeship and are starting to identify employees in the service who would be suitable for the next cohort;
- Two employees are undertaking the Associate Project Manager qualification;
- Two employees have completed Level 3 Management apprenticeships this year. Both employees aspire to undertaking additional responsibility at a more senior level moving forward; and
- Promoted the Leeds 150 Legacy Programme to recruit five young people to join discussions to help shape the future of the City.

### **Apprenticeship awards**

CEL were delighted to see their apprentices recognised as part of the Apprentice Awards 2021 with 28 nominations received. One was a winner and there were three runners up. This information was shared with all staff in CEL to not only celebrate the brilliant apprentices who had been recognised but to also empower more staff with the confidence to go for an apprenticeship.

Shared Services had five apprentices nominated in the Apprentice Awards in 2021. One team member was the winner in the 'Personal Achievement' category and one was a runner up.

In the council Apprenticeship Awards during National Apprenticeship Week, Housing Leeds had a number of nominations across the categories, winning the Development Award and coming runner up in the Learner of the Year Award.

### **Work placements**

DIS continue to employ student placements as part of their sandwich degree. The students work within specific technical teams, such as, Microsoft Server/IDM/DBA. Four student placements were appointed in August 2020.

Legal Services completed 10 remote work experience placements for undergraduates as part of Leeds University's Pathways to Law scheme. This includes students who identify as Black Asian and minority ethnic as part of its target cohort and also one work experience placement as part of the Law Society's Diversity Access Scheme. They have also worked with students to ensure options on career choice and support through mentorship.

### **Inclusive culture**

CEL are proud to work closely with all staff networks, effectively promoting these on a regular basis to all staff within the service and also highlighting the value and benefit that these can bring to service areas and people. Their close relationships ensure that the views and needs of offline staff are not forgotten about and in

many situations, have worked with the network to adapt approaches to meet the needs of their workforce.

Housing Leeds continue with activity through their People Plan. This is led by a network of 150 People Champions who are committed staff from a diverse range of teams from across Housing Leeds. Their activity is supported by senior People Plan Lead Officers, who are responsible for the overall delivery of the plan and report progress regularly to the senior management team leads. People Plan Lead Officers and the People Champions meet every 6-8 weeks to get feedback from the People Champions about their teams and issues emerging in the workplace and develop and implement actions in response. The People Plan was 're-launched' in response to COVID-19 stressing the importance of the support available to staff and how we can all support each other during this time. This included a video of People Champions explaining what the People Plan was and what it meant to them, along with contributions from senior leaders reaffirming their commitment to the plan.

Housing Leeds continue to support staff to engage with the People Plan and staff networks allowing staff time out to take part, share ideas and experiences and enhance their own skills. People Plan events and People Champion meetings have continued virtually this year across the service with feedback and outcomes acted on and shared with all staff through the staff e-bulletins.

### **National Inclusion Week 2020**

National Inclusion Week was a busy time in CEL. All staff were provided with details of all activity taking place and allowing them time to be involved. In addition they held a range of localised activities taking place. These were geared around staff getting to know each other better and building confidence that they were safe to 'bring their whole selves to work'. They were also keen to find accessible activities that services could do together, utilising social media groups or WhatsApp groups that would be fun, enjoyable and support inclusion in really positive ways. Activities were spread through the week and included: staff sharing their favourite recipes either from their childhood, culture or family meals; staff sharing how they celebrate festivals/religious days, for example, Christmas, Eid, Diwali, Hanukkah or more general celebrations. Staff shared where they are from - this could be where they were born or their parents/grandparents and asking staff to share a flag or just post the country name so we can see how far and wide the staff stretch across the world. The week was finished with a poll of the number of languages staff could speak – the highest number was one colleague who could speak 5 languages! This was a really brilliant week of activity with lots learned about colleagues and how everyone is beautifully unique.

Housing Leeds staff were given the opportunity to set up virtual 'Inclusivi-tea' sessions with other teams across the council, building better working relationships and understanding between teams and services.

## **Carers**

DIS had to put planned sessions on hold due to COVID-19, however, events promoted by the Carers Staff Network were shared with all staff.

Housing Leeds linked with the Carers Staff Network and promoted corporate events, information sessions and help and support avenues. They supported International Carers Day in November 2020 through the staff e-bulletin 'Housing Leeds Matters' to raise awareness and understanding of this issue. Their established structure of 1 to 1 discussions with staff provides a platform for quality conversations and an opportunity to explore any issues or difficulties staff may be experiencing with their caring responsibilities, with an increased awareness of the additional pressure caused by COVID-19.

Shared Services:-

- Supported all employees with carer responsibilities (including childcare) with flexible working arrangements during the pandemic;
- Set up a new carers subgroup to support those colleagues across the council with children / young people with additional needs / medical issues. They have had guest speakers from Children Services, Carers Leeds and Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust; and
- Promoted national carers week and the associated events happening in June 2020

## **Black Asian and Minority Ethnic**

CEL established their own Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Working Group with representatives from each service area to identify any service specific issues or barriers that staff may experience whilst at work. A plan was jointly developed and the group meet every 6 weeks to discuss progress, feedback on areas of development and identify any new activities or matters which may have come to light. This group is already growing in numbers and all members are clear that this group will see outputs which make a difference for Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in CEL.

Promoting and amplifying corporate messages and activities is a core part of the social media platforms utilised across all service areas in CEL to ensure the offline and 'hard to reach' staff hear all about the corporate activities taking place. This was particularly evident as part of Black History Month and ensured materials and activities were really engaging. They reposted all of these messages onto their own social media accounts, combined this into service update newsletters and ensured all staff were aware of and able to participate in the corporate activities and utilised this window to launch their in-service Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Group.

Human Resources have put together a service Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Activity Plan and will be progressing this with a working group from across the service. Some of the activity planned will include:-

- Ensuring there is more Black Asian and minority ethnic representation on recruitment and selection panels;
- Setting out clear development and progression plans for Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in the service;
- Reviewing current Recruitment and Selection approaches and check for any possible bias;
- Encouraging more diverse decision making and allocation of work in the HR service;
- Training and engaging all HR staff, to collectively raise cultural awareness and appreciation of difference and how that sits alongside HR values and expectations;
- Continuing to have regular conversations with Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in HR;
- Adopting any recommendations that are put forward as part of work between the Corporate Leadership Team and the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network; and
- Organising service/team events and development sessions such as the 'the uncomfortable conversation sessions' and 'building an inclusive team workshops and activities'

A Housing Leeds Black Asian and minority ethnic action plan was created towards the end of the 2020 in consultation with Housing Leeds People Champions with input from the Chair of the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network. This action plan reflects and develops a more unique housing response following council wide commitments to tackle discrimination and inequalities experienced by Black Asian and minority ethnic colleagues. The three themes of the Housing Leeds action plan are 'awareness', 'staff voice' (understanding the lived experience) and 'data, recruitment and training'. Actions include:-

- Creating awareness for all staff and stakeholders around the Housing Leeds People Plan, equality, diversity and inclusion theme and the forward plan;
- Reviewing what data is telling them to get a better understanding of the representation of the protected characteristics within teams;
- Creating awareness and share messages from the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and ensure that staff are aware of how to get in touch;
- Each Senior Leadership Team member taking responsibility for action across their service areas, based on the lived experiences of Black Asian and minority ethnic employees in their teams; and
- Managers talking to their Black Asian and minority ethnic employees and listening to some of the issues that they face in the workplace.

In addition to the Black Asian and minority ethnic action plan, Housing Leeds held regular awareness sessions and online training opportunities were shared throughout the year linked to faith and culture, with faith awareness heavily promoted during Inter Faith Week. A 'Cultural Awareness in the workplace' learning video has been shared regularly for staff to watch and this has received good feedback from staff.

During COVID-19 all Housing Leeds services undertook individual risk assessments for Black Asian and minority ethnic employees, where they couldn't exclusively work from home. This helped to highlight any additional needs and considerations.

Legal and Democratic Services have held a number of well attended Staff Communication events, focussed on equality in the workplace, the Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Network and Black Lives Matter. The Lord Mayor was a principal speaker at the September 2020 event and the March 2021 event included items and guest speakers on Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Allyship. A number of Black Asian and minority ethnic break-out discussion groups have been formed, with staff representation from across Legal and Democratic Services. The forums provide a safe space to have "uncomfortable conversations" about the lived experiences of colleagues and to help with shared learning and identify and address any issues and possible actions which might arise from those discussions.

Legal Services' Equality Steering Group has continued to meet to discuss equality related matter, as well, as representation from Democratic Services. Staff from Legal Services coordinated and led a number of internal council events and initiatives for Black History Month.

## **Women**

A number of DIS staff are on the Women's Voice Staff Network and have supported network events over the course of the year. A planned session on gender roles did not go ahead due to COVID-19 but is on the 2021 -2022 roadmap. A DIS staff members is an active member of the Black Asian and Minority Staff Network and has partnered with Women's Voice to organise events. This included International Women's Day events around Women's Health and Women's Empowerment Black Asian and Minority Ethnic Women's Events.

Housing Leeds supported national campaigns throughout the year to raise awareness amongst staff including International Women's Day and International Day to end Violence against Sex Workers. Additionally the service has promoted awareness and training for staff around breastfeeding, menopause, and endometriosis.

CEL supported International Women's Day 2021, sharing the corporate activity and promoting some of the activities, such as the 'Our Heroine's' Award .CEL received 24 nominations for 10 staff as part of this process and it was a really positive exercise which staff enjoyed.

## **Disabled staff**

DIS had to reschedule a planned session on Deaf Awareness due to COVID-19. However, DAWN network events were shared with staff via email.

The Equality Steering Group for Legal and Democratic Service have undertaken detailed reviews of external studies relating to the Law Society "Legally Disabled" findings and are looking to work with DAWN and external charities to start the next

step of staff awareness on issues in the workplace. This work is currently in its infancy but breakout sessions are due to be launched in July 2021.

During the year, Housing Leeds promoted training and awareness around:-

- Autism Awareness, including a personal story from a colleague of their journey;
- Deaf Awareness;
- Mental Health Awareness; and
- Various events to celebrate International Day of Disabled People

## **LGBT+**

The Chair of the LGBT+ network has led a number of events such as LGBT+ Awareness training and IDAHOBIT sessions with DIS staff, as well, as sharing resources on key visibility days.

Housing Leeds continue to have representatives on the LGBT+ Staff Network and support national campaigns through raising awareness and offering ongoing training.

## **Digital inclusion: making sure everyone is connected and can interact with us digitally.**

CEL is a service which employs over 3,100 staff, who are of course also Leeds residents and service users. Communicating with offline CEL colleagues is not an easy thing to do but they work across many different platforms to ensure staff are fully engaged and kept informed. They utilise platforms, such as, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and also write to staff as the need arises. Keeping staff informed is an essential focus and CEL regularly seek their views on how they are doing. CEL posted Facebook 'Lives' in their closed staff group as the pandemic progressed, helping staff get to know their Head of Service understand what was happening each step of the way and to feedback on any areas of concern or flag any worries that they may have had.

Housing Leeds recognised that with the majority of staff working from home over the last 12 months there was an increased need to focus on ensuring that staff had the tools and training to be able to do their job effectively. As well, as engaging with their colleagues. Managers held individual conversations with staff to ensure that they had the correct equipment, such as, monitors, keyboards, head sets, and specialist chairs to be able to work safely from home. Staff were given the opportunity to collect equipment in a COVID-19 safe environment or have it delivered to their home if they were unable to do this themselves. Additional training was offered to staff to ensure that they were able to actively participate in team meetings and wider meetings using the various meeting platforms. Training was offered on the new CATS software and also other technology was used and shared to help staff adapt to working from home, for example, YouTube, Trello.

## **Financial inclusion**

The majority of the CEL workforce are amongst the lowest paid workers in the council. Money Awareness Week in January 2021 was used to highlight a range of 'regular money issues' and match each issue with the appropriate support. This included sharing details of trusted advice groups, specialist help in relation to gambling issues, advice about credit union versus pay day lenders and an open offer for staff to come to CEL with their specific issue in confidence to then link them up with the right group. This was further reinforced in an article in the Equality and Diversity newsletter.

CEL continued to build on the successful pilot of the 'dual roles' scheme which commenced in 2019 - 20/20 and during 2020 - 2021 this was extended to include ten staff working on a full time basis across a number of service areas in what would have historically been separate roles within different teams. This has enhanced quality of life for the staff involved, shortened the working day and reduced challenges, such as, having multiple managers, annual leave can cause. This is being evaluated now to determine future plans.

## **Improving communications and engagement**

During the initial lockdown, CEL instigated a communications programme across their workforce, ensuring key messages were shared consistently and staff were kept fully informed. The majority of services in CEL ran throughout the pandemic, although many in a slightly different way to usual business operations. The workforce showed amazing resilience and commitment to the organisation throughout this time, always stepping forward to support services and partners as required.

Cleaning and Facilities Management have held a number of virtual communication sessions to keep staff updated during the pandemic. These have focused on business updates, wellbeing areas, such as, gambling awareness, alcohol awareness and as a way to stay in touch with staff. These were well received by staff. Generally CEL have seen higher numbers of staff joining sessions than would have physically attended in the past all without a need to travel. This is seen as a positive step.

Housing Leeds undertook the following on improving communications and engagement:-

- Responding to the regular Pulse surveys which were reviewed and actions taken as needed;
- The People Plan Lead Officers and Champions developed a 'Managers Pledge' following staff feedback. All managers across the service signed up to this pledge and included commitments around daily verbal contact with each member of staff, weekly team meetings, regular attendance from senior managers at team meetings, regular discussions linked to People Plan activity, regular 1 to1s with staff, encouraging staff to share positive stories and listen to each other and supporting staff to take regular and sufficient breaks from work;

- Managers encouraged team activities to support health and wellbeing ,such as, quizzes, challenges and competitions; and
- Set up an email address for staff to provide feedback specifically linked to People Plan activity.

### **Thank you and Recognition**

CEL frontline staff and leadership enjoyed the corporate Celebrations Week in December 2020. CEL asked all staff to thank their colleagues and we received absolutely loads of positive staff stories and comments throughout the week. This definitely buoyed up staff who had been working so hard throughout the pandemic and were feeling tired before the Christmas break.

HR have an online appreciator tool where people can publicly thank colleagues. A version of this was developed specifically around the work being done to support COVID-19. HR also use their weekly Shout Out meeting to thank staff.

Shared Services delivered a ‘thank you’ presentation from the Head of Service to all staff, highlighting the key achievements of each team during the pandemic and thanking everyone for their support and flexibility during this time. They also send out a weekly ‘thank you’ e-mail every Friday from the Head of Service to all employees, with the awarding of a ‘virtual bouquet’ and a motivational song for the weekend.

### **Staff volunteering and corporate social responsibility**

CEL were unable to undertake their Christmas Shoebox Appeal in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, however, residual shoeboxes and some that came from a community group were shared with Little London Primary School (approx. 70 gifts) which were really well received and went to their most deprived pupils as Christmas gifts.

DIS have a number of colleagues who regularly take part in volunteering activity and also encourage teams to undertake volunteering as part of their team building activities.

The SEAQ service have taken part in two volunteer sessions with Parks and Countryside, planting trees and maintaining signs and interpretation boards in Mean Wood Park which has helped in maintaining team cohesion. Prior to COVID-19 the team regularly arranged social events in the City centre and beyond and these were organised to be inclusive as possible.

Shared Services have supported colleagues in many volunteering activities, for example, delivery of Shine magazine/food hampers, and fundraising events.

In Housing Leeds, staff found that due to COVID-19 restrictions, traditional volunteering opportunities weren’t available over the last year. However, staff continued to work together to support local organisations and projects remotely. This helped to maintain relationships with local communities. As the number of families and individuals accessing food banks increased, Housing Leeds staff

wanted to support their local communities as best they could. They came together to complete 'Laps 4 Leeds' to raise money for the local Leeds foodbanks through a sponsored run. Acknowledging that they wouldn't be able to get together to complete the usual Abbey Dash in November 2020 to support Age UK, staff once again came together to complete the 'People Plan Dash' to raise money for this good cause through individual 10K runs, walks and cycles.

## **Health and Wellbeing: *safe, well and at work***

### **Mental health**

DIS Senior Leadership Team have circulated and endorsed this year's key messages around the safeguarding of staff's mental wellbeing. This included circulating the wellbeing booklet to all staff along with key messages around Men's Health Awareness Month. DIS also held a Stress and Anxiety session in September 2020 led by the Healthy Minds network.

HR staff were encouraged to adopt the Digital wellbeing pledge to manage online meetings in order to support with mental health and general wellbeing.

CEL Wellbeing Champions, in partnership with Mental Health First Aiders hosted a virtual staff drop in session in September 2020, which focused on 'The New Normal' for staff to be able to share any concerns about returning to work and the COVID-19 situation.

As part of Suicide Prevention Day and to support positive mental health, CEL staff were encouraged to get involved with 'Positive Pebbles' where they decorated a pebble with a positive message and then hide them in their local areas for others to find to promote positive mindfulness and helping others. This initiative was well received with many lovely pictures of pebbles shared and hidden.

CEL set up a Men's Wellbeing Group in Fleet Services at the beginning of 2021. Getting this group of mechanics to discuss men's health matters, sharing info about appropriate groups, such as, Andy's Man Club and talking openly about mental health and struggles has been really worthwhile. This was certainly difficult at the beginning but staff are already starting to feel more comfortable and are being really supportive of each other.

CEL worked with the Healthy Minds Group and Mental Health First Aiders to provide 'out of hours staff drop in sessions' aimed at frontline staff.

CEL are very proud to have 75 mental health first aiders trained within the service, offering support to their colleagues who may be struggling with their mental health. Free (non-compulsory) suicide awareness training was offered to CEL staff from the Zero Suicide Association as part of Suicide Prevention Day in September 2020. This was completed by around 15 staff who shared positive feedback and messages on social media – all supporting the 'talk more about mental health' approach.

Housing Leeds have increased their Mental Health awareness, support and training opportunities over the last 12 months in recognition of the additional pressures caused by the pandemic. Staff are regularly encouraged to take part in the available sessions alongside team and individual discussions around the importance of taking care of your mental health. Additionally, bereavement support has been a key focus over the last 12 months in acknowledgement that many staff have lost family and friends. The Healthy Minds Staff Network have a number of housing staff involved with the network. The service continues to support and help prevent stress and anxiety by undertaking Stress Risk Assessments when appropriate.

### **World Mental Health Day and Stress Awareness Month**

As World Mental Health Day fell on a Saturday in 2020, the CEL wellbeing champions shared different initiatives throughout the month to promote positive mental health and a range of activities with something for everyone. These included a walk or activity for staff to do either on their own or with family and friends, utilising the Leeds Owl Trail, which promoted physical, outdoor exercise and also a half term activity for families; promoting Active Leeds and their home workout video library; pay it forward/positivity day to do something nice for someone else; pass on a virtual bouquet on social media to say thank you or show someone you are thinking of them; shared support numbers, contacts and guidance for staff using the CEL specific documents that were created for this purpose.

### **Domestic Violence**

In the first few weeks of 'lockdown', in recognition of the stressful home environments some families were experiencing, a need to support colleagues and their families due to the heightened risk of domestic violence was identified. Domestic Violence Ambassadors are appointed across the council and are trained to support individuals on a confidential basis to seek further advice and guidance. In Legal and Democratic Services, the details of Ambassadors in the service and other useful information (including contact details for local and national support services and specific guidance for line managers) were provided to all staff. Ambassadors continue to receive regular updates and materials from the council's Domestic Violence Team and offer their support to colleagues in need.

**For enquiries about this report please contact:-**

**By email:** [equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk)

**By post:**

**By telephone:** 0113 3785998

Safer, Stronger Communities Team  
Leeds City Council

**By text:** 07891 270162

6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Merrion House

**Website:** [www.leedsgov.uk/equality](http://www.leedsgov.uk/equality)

Merrion Way  
Leeds  
LS2 8BB

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### **Arabic:**

إن كنت لا تتحدث باللغة الإنجليزية وتحتاج لمساعدة لفهم هذا المستند؛ الرجاء الاتصال بالهاتف على الرقم أدناه، واذكر اسم لغتك. حينئذ، سوف نطلب منك أن تنتظر على الخط حتى نتصل بمترجم.

### **Bengali:**

যদি আপনি ইংরেজিতে কথা বলতে না পারেন এবং এই দলিলটি বুঝতে পারার জন্য সাহায্যের দরকার হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে নিচের নম্বরে ফোন করে আপনার ভাষাটির নাম বলুন। আমরা তখন আপনাকে লাইনে থাকতে বলে কোন দোভাষীর (ইন্টারপ্রিটার) সাথে যোগাযোগ করব।

### **Cantonese:**

如你不懂說英語而需要協助以明白本文件，請致電下列電話號碼並說明你的母語。我們將會請你稍候以聯絡口譯員。

### **Hindi:**

यदि आप इंग्लिश नहीं बोलते हैं और इस दस्तावेज़ को समझने में आपको मदद चाहिए, तो कृपया नीचे दिए गए नंबर पर फोन करें और अपनी भाषा का नाम बोलें। उसके बाद जब तक हम किसी दुभाषिण (इंटरप्रिटर) से संपर्क करेंगे, हम आपको होल्ड पर रखेंगे।

## Punjabi:

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇੰਗਲਿਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੰਬਰ ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਦੱਸੋ। ਫੇਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹਾਂਗੇ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਇੰਟਰਪਰੈਟਰ (ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀ) ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰ ਸਕੀਏ।

## Kurdish:

گەر زمانی ئینگلیزی نازانیت و پێویستت به هاوکاریه له تیگه‌یشتنی ئەم بە‌لگه‌نامه‌یه‌دا، تکایه ته‌له‌فۆن بۆ ژماره‌که‌ی خواره‌وه بکه و زمانی ئاخاوتنی خۆت بلی. ئیهمه‌ش تۆ راده‌گرین له‌سه‌ر ته‌له‌فۆنه‌که‌ تا وه‌رگێڕیکی زمانت بۆ دابین ده‌که‌ین.

## Tigrinya:

እንግልሽ ዘይትግረብ/ብ, እንተኾንካ/ኪ, እሞ ነዚ ደኩመንት/ሰነድ/ኪ ንምርዳእ ሓገዝ ምስ ዘድልዩካ/ኪ ቋንቋኻ/ኸ, ብምሕባር ኣብ'ዚ ኣብ ታሕቲ ተገሊጹ ዘሎ ቁጽሪ ተሌፎን ደውለልና/ደውልልና። ብድሕሪኡ ንሕና ኣስተርጓሚይ ክሳብ ንረክብ ኣብ መስመር ከነጸብዩካ/ኪ ኢና።

## Urdu:

اگر آپ انگریزی نہیں بولتے ہیں اور اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے کیلئے آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ مہربانی نیچے دیئے گئے نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں اور اپنی زبان کا نام بتائیں۔ اس کے بعد ہم آپ سے انتظار کرنے کا کہہ کر آپ کیلئے کسی ترجمان سے رابطہ کریں گے۔

## Czech:

Jestliže nemluvíte anglicky a potřebujete, aby vám někdo pomohl vysvětlit tento dokument, prosím zavolejte na níže uvedené číslo a uveďte svůj jazyk. Potom vás požádáme, abyste nepokládal(-a) telefon a mezitím zkontaktujeme tlumočníka.

## French:

Si vous ne parlez pas anglais et que vous avez besoin d'aide pour comprendre ce document, veuillez téléphoner au numéro ci-dessous et indiquez votre langue. Nous vous demanderons d'attendre pendant que nous contactons un(e) interprète.

## Polish:

Jeżeli nie mówią Państwo po angielsku i potrzebują pomocy w zrozumieniu tego dokumentu, prosimy zadzwonić pod poniższy numer telefonu. Po podaniu nazwy swojego ojczystego języka prosimy poczekać – w tym czasie będziemy kontaktować się z tłumaczem.

## Slovak:

Ak nehovoríte anglicky a potrebujete, aby vám niekto pomohol vysvetliť tento dokument, prosím zavolajte na nižšie uvedené číslo a uveďte svoj jazyk. Potom vás požiadame, aby ste nepokladali telefón a medzitým skontaktujeme tlmočníka.