

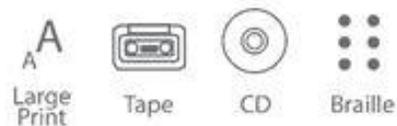
# Annual Equality Report

## Equal People, Different Needs

### 2012-13

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## Introduction

We can only provide an effective service to our community if we recognise the diversity within our communities and enable our workforce to meet the needs and concerns of that diversity.

Equality and fairness underpin the work and ethos of the Council at all levels. We have and continue to strive to achieve fairness in all of our services.

The Council's Annual Report on Equality and Diversity is one of the ways in which the Council makes visible the extent to which it is meeting its obligations to recognise diversity and promote equality. It reflects our work with and within our diverse internal and external communities as well as reporting key equality data/information.

The Council has made significant progress in embracing and progressing equality but recognise there is also more work to be done and we will continue to strive towards excellence.

As an employer our aim is to develop a diverse workforce and ensure that our workforce can work with dignity and respect, free from any type of discrimination or prejudice.

As a service provider our aim is to provide the best possible services to meet the needs of our different customers and ensure that our customers are treated with dignity and respect, free from any type of discrimination or prejudice, in the delivery of our services and decision making.

## Summary

As a public body we are required to publish equality information which demonstrates compliance with the Equality Duty. This report contains information<sup>1</sup> about:

- The protected characteristics of our workforce (where disclose/available)
- The protected characteristics of our communities / customers (where disclosed/available)
- An overview of our equality-related activities

We recognise that a proportion of the data we actively collect relates to small numbers of people, particularly when disaggregated by protected characteristic. Where the number people with a particular protected characteristics is fewer than 10, in line with best practice and guidance sought, we have replaced this number with an asterisk (\*).

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<sup>1</sup> Based on information that has been disclosed and or that is publically available.

## Equality Framework for Local Government

The Council continues to undertake a robust and proportionate approach to equality and diversity, adopting the ethos and principles of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

As part of the Council's on-going commitment to meeting the needs of our different customers and delivering quality services we have been designated as '**an achieving authority**' under the Equality Framework for Local Government through an independent assessment.

This means that we are seen by the community and partners as making a real difference and providing positive outcomes for local people. This is based on our understanding and knowledge of our communities by working with them and engaging – which has helped the Council to provide responsive services that tries to acknowledge and meet the different needs our communities, and ensure that our decision making is informed.

## The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 states that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and equally. The Act has two main purposes. It brings together and simplifies all of the existing discrimination law, and strengthens the law to further support progress on equality.

In the exercise of its functions (including any functions carried out by an external supplier/organisation), the Council must have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.**
- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**
- **Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.**

These are often called the three main aims of the 'general duty' and are detailed in the [Equality Act 2010 Section 149](#).

The Equality Duty is supported by two **specific duties** which require public bodies to:

- **Publish equality information** at least annually.
- **Set and publish equality objectives** at least every four years.

## Equality Objectives

In 2012 the Council set three underpinning equality objectives, this annual equality report reflects the commitment to these.

- Ensure community engagement and consultation is effective
- Embed equalities throughout the Council
- Improve data and analysis in relation to equality and customer information.

Further information on the context behind our equality objectives can be found on the Council's website:

[http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents\\_info.php?documentID=714&pageNumber=5](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=714&pageNumber=5)

There are also a series of business plan level actions and performance indicators that are equality related. These are set out in our Business Plan and will be reported on via our Quarterly Performance Reports which are published on our website.

### Equality related performance indicators (from 2012-13 Q4)

PI Code	Short Name	Responsible Officers	Quarter 4 2011-12			Quarter 4 2012-13			Annual 2012/13	Gauge Aim	Trend	Latest Note
			Q4 2011/12			Q4 2012/13						
			Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status				
STAN 1	Number of people accessing STAN	Service Assurance Manager	296	360		188	360		1,440	Aim to Maximise		Footfall is slightly below target. A number of factors have impacted on footfall this year. Quarter 4 performance has been hit due to the resignation of the STAN advisor/driver and going through the recruitment process. We have now recruited to the post and expect footfall to improve over the coming months. We will be embarking on a number of targeted initiatives and general promotion of the service and it is anticipated that this will further raise awareness of the service and so increase footfall.

												It should also be notes that three Authorities are part of this project, all impact on the targets. The target of 1440 is the annual target form the whole service (each Authority should aim to contribute to this target by at least 480). For 12/13 whilst in Rossendale staff on STAN saw 510 customers. So whilst the overall target was missed our individual target was exceeded.
STAN 2	% of customers satisfied with the service received from STAN	Service Assurance Manager	95.83%	70%		100%	80%		80%	Aim to Maximise 	Customer satisfaction with the service we provide via STAN continues to remain high. Due to the STAN advisor/driver leaving the Authority in December and pending recruitment, Help Direct provided the STAN service. It was not possible to take the van out so the service was provided as close to the original STAN venue as possible. Footfall was not as high during this quarter but a lower footfall is usual during the Winter months. 46 customer satisfaction surveys were issued during the 4th quarter, 14 were returned. This represents a 30.43% response rate. Of those returned all were satisfied with the service. A STAN customer, during quarter 4 fed back: Would recommend STAN to anyone, excellent service. I have visited STAN a few times and was very impressed. The staff have very good knowledge and explain things so you leave knowing it was well worth visiting. If I ever need help again STAN will be the place I visit. Outstanding.	

## Community Population Profile

The Council actively use existing data and intelligence sources such as, Census, Office of National Statistics, Neighbourhood Statistics, Lancashire Profile, JSNA (Joint Strategic Needs Assessment), the Index of Multiple Deprivation and so forth to understand the local profile/make up of our neighbourhoods/communities where available.

Utilising the 2011 Census data and other key publically available data sources the Council has produced a [Borough Profile and a set of Ward Profiles](#), which has been published on our website and circulated to key community groups. These have been received very positively in terms of assisting community group with evidence for funding bids etc.

## Workforce Profile<sup>2</sup>

Rossendale Borough Council as per the period of reporting employs 182 full time equivalent employees (166 full time, 13 part time and 3 casual). Equality monitoring is undertaken at the selection and periodically thereafter.

Appendix 1 of the Report Appendices sets out the data that has been disclosed.

Of those that did disclose information, some highlights are:

- In terms of gender diversity, the majority of the workforce is male; 62.1% male and 37.9% female.
- 3.3% of our employees have disclosed that they have a disability.
- 1.6% of employees identified as BME<sup>3</sup> (Black or Minority Ethnic).
- Over a third (34.6%) of our employees are aged 50-59 years.
- Those aged 20-29 years account for 12% of our workforce.
- The majority of the Council's workforce is heterosexual. Based on the information disclosed, gay, lesbian and bisexual people are underrepresented in our workforce.
- The majority of our workforce is Christian (48.3%). Identification with other beliefs or religions include; Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh. Identification of 'no religion or belief' has increased; this is in line with the trend finding from national Census data.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note that data is based on those that have chosen to respond and disclose information. Not all respondents have chosen to disclose information in relation to all equality monitoring questions.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this report BME includes 'other white' and mixed/multiple heritage'.

- No data in relation to Marriage or Civil Partnership was disclosed/collected in 2012-13.

## **Councillor Profile<sup>4</sup>**

Equality monitoring is undertaken when new Councillors are elected / re-elected as part of their induction process. Appendix 1 sets out the latest data available. It should be noted that a number of Councillors have chosen not to disclose equality information. Of those that did disclose information, some highlights are:

- In terms of gender diversity, 52.8% of our elected Councillors are female and 36.1% are male. A majority of female Councillors remains.
- 86.1% of our Councillors identify as 'White British'. Black and other ethnic minorities remain underrepresented within the profile of the Borough's elected Councillors.
- The majority of our Councillors are aged 60-69 years. The average Councillor age is 55.5 years.
- 5.6% of our Councillors are under 20 or 20-29 years.
- The majority of our Councillors are heterosexual. Based on the information disclosed, gay, lesbian and bisexual people are underrepresented amongst Councillors.
- 35 out of 36 of our Councillors have undertaken relevant equality and diversity awareness training.

## **Employment Monitoring Information**

We embed monitoring at the various stages of employment as appropriate including:

- Application
- Selection and Recruitment
- Sickness absence
- Grievance
- Disciplinary
- Training and Development
- Exit

In terms of recruitment and shortlisting during April 2012- March 2013, while a minority of applications received were from ethnic minority backgrounds, overall the majority of applications were White British. This trend is also the case for shortlisted applicants.

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<sup>4</sup> Please note that data is based on those that have chosen to disclose information. Not all respondents have chosen to disclose information in relation to all equality monitoring questions.

Successful selection data during this period shows that all of successful appointments were male, White British with fair gender diversity. During the 2012-13 recruitment period, those with a disability accounted for between 4-7% of applicants.

In terms of take up of training and development opportunities during this period, the majority of employees were male (58.5%); this should take into account that the majority of training delivered was mandatory health and safety training for our operations employees who have a higher proportion of men. Also the majority of employees accessing training and development were White British, and aged between 40-49 years.

Our entire recorded BME and disabled workforce was able to access training and development opportunities during 2012-13. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish for some of this data.

In terms of sickness related absence warning monitoring, the majority were White British male and aged 30-49. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish.

In terms of monitoring of return to work of disabled employees following sick leave due to a disability, during this period there is an even split between men and women, between 40-59 years. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish.

In terms of return to work after maternity leave during this period, all were White British females, heterosexual, aged 30-39 years. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish.

In terms of disciplinary and related warning monitoring, of the incidents recorded employees were all, male, heterosexual, White British and half with a broad range from 20-59 years.

In terms of termination<sup>5</sup> of employment, over half were male (55.2%). Although there was a broad split across age bands, there was a slight majority of those aged 30-39 years. The majority were White British. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish.

There have been no employee grievances or complaints in relation to discrimination during this period.

See Appendix B for further details where available/disclosed.

## **Flexible Working**

The Council's commitment to enabling and supporting flexible working is set out in its Flexible Working Policy which is currently being refreshed. All staff can request flexible

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<sup>5</sup> Termination here covers all aspects on an employee leaving the council's employment, resignation, compulsory redundancy, voluntary redundancy, dismissal etc.

working arrangements and we recognise that the ability to achieve a work-life balance is an important factor in helping us retain staff while continuing to meet the business need.

The Council also has a flexible working system for the majority of staff which enable them to manage their family life and external commitments within core business hours (7.30am-7pm) in addition to formal requests for flexible working arrangements.

The Council's Flexible Working Policy has been refreshed to reflect requirements and best practice.

There have been formal requests for flexible working in addition to working conditions already available during this period which have been accommodated. There have been formal requests for flexible working in addition to working conditions already available during this period which have been accommodated. The levels of equality data that is available / disclosed is too small to publish.

## **Reasonable Adjustments Made for Employees**

There have been formal and informal requests for adjustments to employees working environment in relation to disability during this period. This has been dealt with on a case by case bases, with adjustments have been undertaken successfully however the level of equality data that is available /disclosed is too small to publish.

## **Employment and Equal Pay**

Key messages:

- Of the staff that live in the borough, 65 (35.7%) in BB4 postcode and 33 (18.1%) in OL13 postcode areas.
- Average basic pay for females is £25,671 pa
- Average basic pay for males is £23,068 pa
- Overall average is £24,041 pa

See Appendix B for breakdown of pay related data.

## **Awareness Raising /Training & Development**

As an employer, the Council has a proactive approach to training and development in order to meet the needs of different learners, and we recognise that it is critical for our staff to have the skills and knowledge to help eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equal opportunities and value diversity. The Council's Organisational Development Plan is one element of the organisation's delivery mechanisms to fulfil its equality commitments. Training and development that has been undertaken during 2012-13 includes:

- Equality Impact Assessment training/awareness for officers

- Introduction to equality in local government sessions for new councillors or those that require refreshers (including understanding of equality impact assessments)
- Update briefings on legislative changes and best practice as required to all appropriate
- Recruitment and Selection training as required
- Assertiveness training
- Discipline skills training
- Equality and Diversity level 2 (EDI)
- ILM Line Management
- Guidance and information on engagement and consulting with different communities as required.
- Individual training as identified through personal development review form staff and Members as relevant to carrying out their roles.

In addition, there has been on-going awareness raising amongst staff and Councillors, this includes events and celebrations as part of our diversity (including health and wellbeing) calendar promotion, general briefings and information sheets, hints and tips for promoting and encouraging equality and diversity which have been received positively. Also, the equality pages of our website provide signposting for the public.

## **Equality Impact Assessments**

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are a structured and transparent way for the Council to fully understand the implications of our decisions and whether they are detrimental or discriminatory by considering the impact on protected equality groups within our community, fostering good relations and protection of human rights. This process is integrated into the Council's policy development and decision making framework.

EIAs are published with the relevant reports which are published on our website on the meetings pages.

## **Engagement and Consultation**

The Equality Duty requires the Council to have an adequate evidence base for its decision-making. A key reason for the Council to engage is to help us understand how our policies affect (or will affect) people who use our services, which can be used to inform and improve decision making.

The Council takes a proportionate<sup>6</sup> and relevant approach to engagement and consultation activity. The Council's approach is to identify what information it already

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<sup>6</sup> Ensuring compliance with the Council's Best Value Duty and Duty to Inform, Consult and Involve.

has available and will seek to determine where the gaps in evidence and understanding are, what it is seeking to find out and from whom, in order that the engagement activity is focused and relevant.

Rossendale Citizen's Panel is an active database of people within the community that the Council can consult with via surveys on key issues throughout the year giving people in the community that are interested in being consulted on specific issues the opportunity to submit their views via the internet or by post. This is open for anyone to join.

We also have four active Neighbourhood Forums through which people can get involved in their local areas.

## **Rossendale Borough Council Compliments and Complaints**

We aim to learn from both complaints and compliments that are made about issues related to equality or discrimination, or from particular groups within the community. However, we recognise that there are certain difficulties in collection of equality data in situations of complaint for robust analysis. The Council's complaints and compliments, including reports of discrimination complaints by staff or customers are recoded formally via the Council's feedback and complaints system. This data is reported quarterly as part of the Council's Performance Report, published on the Council's website.

The Council received **192 Compliments** during the financial year 2012/13.

The Council received **88 Complaints** during the financial year 2012/13, of which **82** were closed at the end of the period with **6** remaining open.

The Council received **2** Ombudsman complaints during the financial year 2012/13; **all** were closed at the end of the period.

No equality information was disclosed or collected in relation to these figures during 2012-13.

## **Providing Accessible Information**

Online - [www.rossendale.gov.uk](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk)

The Council's new website was launched in September 2012, making it easier for communities to access timely and useful information that is relevant to them and are able to undertake many council services online. Other benefits include an improved corporate image, enhanced marketing tools, a future proofed technical design, improved compatibility with new web browsers and compliance with the latest web standards and accessibility guidelines. As well as general consultation, users with specific accessibility requirements were consulted to inform the final website design/function. Accessibility testing was carried out by ability.net who performs a wide range of tests with users that rely on a number of different assistive technologies.

The Council's website has been designed to comply with W3C [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#) (WCAG) as well as [government standards](#). All pages on this site reach level 'A' conformance from the WCAG, with most pages reaching level 'AA' conformance

The Accessibility function pages allow the user to adapt the website to meet their needs; settings can be saved for their next visit. The website also utilises a responsive design that automatically shapes itself to fit to the screen of the device it is being viewed on.

All public Council meeting documents are published on our website and can be requested in hard copy and alternative formats as required in line with our Equality Policy.

### Social Media – Facebook and Twitter

We has increased it use social media as a means of informing and engaging with our communities in a proportionate and appropriate manner, as well as a tool for promoting and awareness raising of local events and activities. The number of people our posts and tweets reach is increasing. Residents also use social media as a means of asking questions and positive feedback has been received in relation to dealing with these in the format.

### Face-to-face

#### Relocation of the One Stop Shop

Our One Stop Shop (OSS) walk in centre is now located in Bacup, Futures Park, which is also where the Council's main office and the Council Chamber are based.

When redesigning the new OSS internally, customer comments and feedback has been taken into consideration, for example privacy issues, more spacious interview booth to allow space for wheelchairs/pushchairs and another. A self-service terminal is also now available for those who wish to help themselves.

It is accessible on a main public transport route with onsite parking. The OSS is Council's main face to face contact centre for the community. Face to face meetings with a council officer from specific team/departments are also available by appointment / request if needed.

Translation / interpretation for face to face meetings (or via telephone) are available on request as needed.

### **Hate crime / incidents and domestic abuse reporting**

Rossendale Council knows that hate crimes and incidents can have a serious impact on victims and their quality of life. It also has a negative impact on the community which is

why we are committed to working in partnership to tackle incidents and crimes motivated by prejudice and hate.

There are various systems in place to record this information:-

Internally during 2012-13 there were no reported cases of discrimination.

Externally, within the community, according to the Safer Lancashire database MADE between April 2012 to March 2013, there were 22 hate *incidents* in Rossendale formally reported via the Police, this is a significant reduction compared to the previous period (2011-12) - down from 48. The majority of these (19) were in relation to race. Within the same period, there were 24 hate *crimes* formally reported, slightly higher than the previous period. Again, slightly less than the previous period, but the majority was in relation to race. It should also be noted that there was an increase in hate crimes reported in relation to disability.

In addition, during 2012-13 the Council's locality based working has recorded/reported 14 incidents, all of which were dealt with in a timely manner:

- 2 racist incidents: 1 Whitworth, 1 Haslingden Greenfield
- 12 offensive incidents: 1 Stacksteads, 1 Whitworth, 3 Worsley, 5 Cribden, 2 Longholme.

According to the Safer Lancashire database MADE during April 2012 to March 2013; there was 942 domestic violence *incidents* formally reported in Rossendale and recorded by the Police. There was 232 domestic abuse *crimes* formally reported in Rossendale and recorded by the Police during 2012-13. Whilst still significant in their own right, both sets of figures show a decrease from 2011-12. However, annual comparison figures from STAR show that total calls to them have increased by over 500 and they received 232 new referrals in 2012-13. Therefore domestic abuse remains an underlying issue within the borough and the Council is currently looking at ways it can best support domestic abuse support services going forward.

## **Service Delivery Monitoring**

Customer satisfaction and equality monitoring is also undertaken within service areas. This varies across services as and where considered appropriate or necessary to do so.

Appendix B (3) set out customer satisfaction and associated equality data where it is available.

## **Summary of our work during 2012-13**

We couldn't possibly fit everything we do with our communities here in this report, but the following pages provide a good example of the breadth of work we have been involved in.

## **Supporting young people to get into work**

The 2012-13 figure<sup>7</sup> show that Rossendale had 151 NEET young people, those not in employment, education or training. The NEET figure for Rossendale has reduced over the past few years from 6.7% to 6.0%. The majority of NEET young people are White British (135), with only a small number (10) identified at BME. Wards with the highest NEETS include Stacksteads, Greensclough and Irwell.

In Bacup Lancashire's Young People's Service (YPS) have delivered an English and Maths Personal Development Opportunity for NEET young people. Further information on the wider work and services of the YPS can be found on the YPS website:

[www.lancashire.gov.uk/yps](http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/yps).

The Borough Council believes that it should lead by example and has continued to supporting the "Get Britain Working" initiative. The initiative is aimed at young people aged between 18-24 years old who are not in employment, education or training ('NEETS') and looks to give young people the opportunity to gain some work experience. This has been a real success; during 2012-13 alone the Council has supported/provide successful placements for 26 local young people. We are working with the Job Centre Plus to monitor progress.

In addition, 19 other work placements were provided by the council during 2012-13. One of which was for a local young disabled person. Another graduate placement through the 'Work Start 4 Graduate' scheme has enabled that individual to successfully secured full time employment with Transport for Greater Manchester.

*"I was eager to get some work experience within the public sector and thoroughly enjoyed my time with Rossendale Borough Council. It was great to get stuck in and support the People and Policy team with a variety of tasks. The experience heightened my confidence to fulfil a role and strengthened my skills, including report writing and utilising Microsoft Office. I have gone on to apply these in my new job with Transport for Greater Manchester as the Customer Smart Programme Office Coordinator.*

*The work placement definitely helped me in my pursuit for a job and I would very much recommend the 'Work Start 4 Graduates' programme to anyone who wants to gain more experience in a proactive role".*

## **Supporting people out of homelessness**

Queen Street: The Council continues to support No.1 Queen Street in Rawtenstall. It provides supported accommodation for young people aged 16 to 25 who have been made homeless, which was fully refurbished at the end of 2011/12. It has provided 4,621 hours of support for young people aged 16 – 25 years; 58 people moved on from the service during the year. The scheme provides 5 units of emergency accommodation

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<sup>7</sup> Lancashire Children and Young Persons Service, 2012-13.

available for up to 28 days, 6 units of supported accommodation and 3 move on flats. One unit is fully disability compliant.

It is services such as this that play a significant role in transforming young lives by offering welcoming accommodation that creates opportunities for people to build confidence and develop new skills.

Empty properties: In summer 2012 the M3 Project who provide Supported Lodging placements for young people in the Borough, secured funding with support from RBC, from the Homes and Communities Agency to bring 3 empty properties back into use to provide shared move on accommodation for 16 – 25 year olds. Refurbishment work will be undertaken by young people themselves via apprenticeships. This has funding until 2015.

Mount Pleasant: Inter-agency work has been undertaken to improve facilities and standards at this House in Multiple Occupation, where many of the residents have vulnerabilities.

Glen Valley Recovery House, Waterfoot: Work has started to develop this drug and alcohol recovery project with 6 units of accommodation. Significant consultation with local residents was undertaken in 2012 and the scheme opened to residents in October 2012. It provides intensive support and volunteering opportunities for recovery.

Single Homeless Funding: Rossendale Borough Council has been leading for Pennine Lancashire in the development and tendering of a scheme which will deliver an accommodation finding service for single people who are not covered by the statutory provisions of the Homelessness Act, together with house sharing and tenancy training, landlord and tenant support.

Domestic Violence Safe Houses (DASH): With funding secured from the Community Safety Partnership and LCC, the Council has led a multi agency group to organise the provision, and support, of up to 3 safe houses across the Borough which will temporarily accommodate families fleeing DV either in an emergency, or as part of a longer term planned move. The major advantages are the ability for families to stay local and for those who may not be able to access refuge provision.

Probation Properties: Funding from the Community Safety Partnership enabled a scheme to provide several houses for people on probation who would otherwise struggle to find accommodation, to be initiated. The Council is working with a private sector partner with multi agency support.

Under the Council led Financial Inclusion Group, a multi agency group of agencies, work to support and extend credit union membership as an alternative to loan sharks and payday loans has been set up, together with a pilot project to develop volunteering opportunities in 2 schools and 2 youth groups around good money management and financial awareness, linking to preparation for independent living and avoiding homelessness.

Homeless 16/17 year olds: Work continues to develop better working practices to help homeless 16/17 year olds, and to commission local preventative services from Government funding.

Close working between Green Vale Homes and the Housing Options Team has started in order to ensure effective support to vulnerable people affected by welfare benefit reform. Targeted support to assist known vulnerable people has been established, including help with benefits and referrals to RAFT, Rossendale's food bank.

### **Promoting Democracy with Young People**

The Council successfully ran Local Democracy Week events during 2012. Activities were offered in schools as well as on Council premises (to incorporate visits to the Council Chamber). High schools were also asked to take part in the Council's budget consultation and encouraged to "have their say" during one of their citizenship themes classes.

A political speed dating event and mock election was held with a school youth council and a specialist residential school took part in a visit to the Council Chamber, a mock committee and received information on democracy and decision making within the council.

### **STAN (Services To A Neighbourhood)**

STAN is Rossendale Council's mobile customer services van. STAN continues to help and assist Rossendale residents by bringing public services closer to local people. A strong local partnership with Help Direct has enabled us to ensure that a Help Direct representative is also on board to assist and refer residents to access the services and support that they need. STAN continues to meet and exceed its targets and receives extremely positive feedback and customer satisfaction, with many customers saying they would not know what they would have done without the service.

During the past 12 months, the welfare reforms have seen many residents coming to STAN for help and advice about these changes. Staff on STAN (and at our One Stop Shop) have seen an increase in people seeking help completing the various Welfare benefits forms.

STAN's mobile customer services driver is also a trained debt advisor and is able to provide a range of advice and assistance for those who need it.

We have found that many residents are still reluctant to transfer to direct debit payment options. Recently we have recently introduced text reminders in relation to Council tax payments. Early indications from our residents are positive. Customers have been into the One Stop Shop stating they had forgotten to pay and the text reminded them. This service will continue to be monitored.

STAN supports a wide range of campaigns, initiatives and services including (but not limited to) the following:

- Council Tax enquiries
- Business Rate enquiries
- Energy efficiency advice and grants
- Benefit claims
- Homecare & repair service
- Handyman service
- Mortgage rescue advice and schemes
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Debt advice
- Homelessness referrals
- Drug misuse services
- Housing applications (Pennine Lancashire Choice Based Lettings scheme)

*The information provided maybe life changing in a positive way. In fact it will be life changing in a positive way.*

See Appendix B (3) for full details of STAN data including footfall, satisfaction, advice and referrals.

### **STAN making a difference – what people said:**

*The relaxed atmosphere allowed you to explain easily without feeling out of your depth, and the staff were conscientious.*

*Very professional. Very understanding and very good listening skills. Very friendly and extremely helpful and understanding. I am extremely happy with the service and outcome of my visit. Thank you.*

*Quick, efficient service. Staff were attentive and caring. Staff offered other help that we knew nothing about.*

*Nothing was any trouble to them. Within one week of seeing STAN, the DWP had arranged a visit. My pension is now being upgraded and I will get help with glasses. I am very grateful. Thank you.*

*Popped in out of curiosity and ended up with information that I needed but wouldn't have known to ask. Very friendly yet professional.*

*The staff could not have been more efficient with their help and information. I was very impressed with all aspects of their service.*

## **Community Grants Scheme – Making a difference**

From debt advice to participation in basketball; from supporting victims of domestic abuse and sexual trauma to growing credit union membership; and from family theatre to community planning, a variety of activities have been supported locally in the Valley through the Council's 3 year Community Grants Scheme. 11 Rossendale based community groups have received community grants – in total £125,000 was available under this scheme.

Grants awarded to Bacup Family Centre, Magdalene Project, White Horse Project, Bacup Consortium Trust, Credit Union, Citizens Advice Bureau, Horse and Bamboo Theatre, Incredible Edible Rossendale, Rossendale Raptors Basketball, Crawshawbooth Community Association, Star Centre under the 3 year funding agreement.

- The grant funding has supported:
- Debt advice and support
- Heads Up Project at Stubblelee Greenhouses supporting people with mental health problems
- Increased growth in Credit Union membership and loans issued to local people
- Increased participation by young people in basketball sessions
- Horse and Bamboo Theatre Family outreach programme
- Increased volunteering opportunities
- Increased numbers of young people at the White Horse project accessing positive activities, help and advice and alcohol and drugs, counselling and mentoring activities to address personal issues, acquiring new skills and moving into volunteering.

The Council's approach to grants provision is being reviewed in 2013, as the 3 year programme draws to a close (2013-14).

## **Neighbourhood Forum Grants – Making a difference to local priorities**

The Borough's four Neighbourhood Forums are also a key means for the Council to support local priorities we have a Neighbourhood Forum grants scheme to help address issues identified within their Action Plans. The Council provides £70,000 over a three year period to each neighbourhood forum. The following was given in grants in 2012/13:

- Bacup - £21,890.00
- Whitworth – £8202.00
- Haslingden - £14,262.50
- Rawtenstall - £14,262.50

Grants awarded include:

- Rossendale District Schools Football Association - £500 towards kits and equipment
- Bacup Consortium Trust – £1300 for events at the Greenhouses and in Bacup centre
- Northern Primary School PTA - £205 towards a sensory garden
- Rossendale Basketball Club - £480 for sessions for children in Bacup
- Whitworth Playgroup and After School Club - £490 towards Summer trip
- Friends of Wallbank - £500 towards set up costs and a Halloween Party
- Haslingden Community Link and Children's Centre - £7886.50 towards Holistic Help
- Head Start - £500 for youth engagement
- Edenfield Residents Association - £200 towards Old Folks Concert and Tea
- Whitwell Bottom Pre School - £500 for internet connection
- Positive Start - £2400 for series of programmes
- Whitaker Park Bowling Club - £500 towards new carpets and blinds for the pavilion.

The Communities Team have worked hard with our four Neighbourhood Forums and have had another successful year tackling issues and priorities locally. Through the Forum, solid partnership working and the availability of neighbourhood forum grants the council is able to continue to support community groups to deliver a range of projects that will improve the quality of life for people in the local area and make a difference locally.

You can find out more from each Neighbourhood Forum's Action Plans [here](#) and newsletters.

### **Communities Team – Other Neighbourhood Working**

Other projects that the Communities Team have worked on during 2012/13 include: Arts and Craft Markets in Bacup at Christmas and Easter, Big Litter Pick in March, Olympic Torch Relay which brought the whole community together to see the torch pass through Rossendale in June 2012, multi-agency based work in Cutler area of Stacksteads and Bacup town centre.

The Communities Team continues to work with local communities to improve play areas in parks. New play areas have recently been developed in Victoria Park and Edgeside Park and several play areas including Cutler Crescent and Worsley Park.

The Communities Team provides support and advice to community groups throughout the Borough including advice on funding, constitutions, insurance and licenses and facilitates the development of new groups. Groups supported during 2012/13 include Stacksteads Allotment Association, Bacup Pride, Friends of Stubblelee Park, Friends of Snig Hole and Bacup Traders group.

Through the Communities Team, the Council applied for and were allocated a sum of money to work with partners to deliver diversionary activities for young people. During 2012/13 these have included: Fusion at Haslingden Sports Centre, Youth Club at Crawshawbooth Community Centre, Basketball sessions for children and young people in Bacup, targeted youth sessions in Bacup town centre and Bacup Family Centre, bus travel passes to enable young people to access school holiday activities and activities in Multi use Games Areas (MUGAs) across the Borough during the Summer holidays.

### **Equality and Diversity – promoting understanding and respect**

On an ongoing basis the Council continues to promote and raise awareness internally and externally of key equality and diversity and health and wellbeing related events, celebrations and campaigns including:

- Disability Learning week
- Men's Health week
- Christmas cultures and traditions around the work
- Lent
- Ramadan
- Mental Health Awareness Week – and drop in sessions
- LGBT History project awareness
- Armed Forces Day
- Alcohol Awareness week with Road Shows
- Credit Union drop in sessions
- National No Smoking Day with cessation advice.
- International Day Against Homophobia and Tran phobia
- Deaf Awareness Week
- Money Advisory Services road shows

### **Summer Fun 2012**

The Council successful coordinated and produced another Summer Fun brochure to promote and raise awareness of local activities and schemes for children and young people during the summer holidays of 2012. These were distributed to schools, Libraries and children's centres as well as advertised via the Council's website.



The Children's trust Partnership was also able to support the delivery of activities as part of 'fun for families.' This publication was positively received and has been supported by the Rossendale Children's Trust again in 2013 which is bigger and better still and was widely distributed and promoted before and during the School Summer holidays.

## Valley Careers Advice Day Success 2012



The Valley's Careers Advice Day on 11<sup>th</sup> July was another soaring success with over 350 people attending to meet 40 local business, employers and colleges who provided free advice and information. The event was aimed at anyone who is of working age – whether they be aged 16 or 65, to promote different training opportunities available to Rossendale people, and how to find out about different careers, and business opportunities, regardless of age or experience. Someone may be on the start of their career journey; others are looking for a complete change in direction.

It was a fantastic chance to showcase that there are many opportunities out there, and that it is possible to have a successful career or business right here in the valley. The event demonstrated that there are many business success stories in Rossendale – and a wealth of knowledge and experience. The careers advice day showed that there are options available to them, and importantly, people to talk to.

It was an outstanding turnout and there has been a real positive response from those that came along to get some advice - many have been followed up already, with connections and contacts made.

The Valley Careers Advice Day was organised by a consortium of private and public sector local organisations. Leading the event were BE Boys, Accrington and Rossendale College Rossendale Council, Help Direct and Lancashire's Young People's Service Rawtenstall.

Following the event:

- Help Direct has arranged 45 interviews for the National Careers Service to provide information, advice and guidance on employment.
- Accrington and Rossendale College:
  - 2 - enrolled on courses starting 23rd July 2012
  - 6 – referred to other departments within College
  - 9 – completed applications for September 2012 starts
  - 16 – followed up with messages left ( for guidance)
  - 1 – adult guidance application booked
- Atrium Legal services invited several people for further assessments for suitability for employment.
- Eldercare received 10 CV's on the day and have since had a further 12.
- ISSL were able to give advice to individuals on IT courses at University.
- Homestart had interest from a possible 10 volunteers.
- Proffitts have had CV's sent to them following the event.

The event is running again in 2013 year with 29 businesses taking part, and all the local secondary schools have been invited to bring 20 pupils each to attend.

### **Warmer Homes Healthy People 2012- 13**

A multiagency group, including the Council and Help Direct, secured funding from the Dept of Health to deliver the 'Warmer Homes, Healthy People' project over the winter months 2012/13 to people on low incomes/benefits, many of whom were elderly. Help included 'warm packs' – blankets, clothing, minor boiler repairs and advice on switching fuel tariffs to support Rossendale most vulnerable households, to minimise the effects of severe winter weather due to cold housing.

As part of the promotion of how to access a 'warmer homes pack' and other advice, the Council identified people on certain benefits who were notified by letter that they are eligible. In addition, we were aware that some people would benefit from support, despite not claiming any benefits. Therefore as part of the campaign we made people aware of what support is on offer and how it could support some the most vulnerable.

Support was in various forms including:

- A Keeping Warm Pack containing: Thermometer, Small hot water bottle, Thermal Cup, Microwaveable Wheat pack, Hat, Gloves, Thermal Blanket and Wind up torch. Plus information on keeping warm in winter.
- Possible Emergency repairs (following assessment of heating system) to heating systems through St Vincent's Home Care & Repair in owner occupied properties (not private rented or social housing)
- Provision of a heater in homes where heating isn't working.
- Support from a Fuel Poverty Advisor through Citizens Advice Bureau to support with issues around bills, energy meters etc.
- Access to advice and information through Help Direct on any other associated issues that may arise.

Customers have the added option of:

Having draught excluders & radiator reflectors fitting

Having an electric blanket that they own tested (and replaced)

### Outcomes of this project

To date over 800 people at risk of fuel poverty have benefitted from this project. They have accessed the above in a combination of support forms - some just wanted a pack, some wanted all of the above, some just wanted information. People reached by this project have aged from 17 to our eldest customer who was 101 years old. The beauty of this project was that it supported people who were on benefits, or those who were working and struggling financially. The effects have gone wider than just giving someone a pack to keep warm. People have been put on the right benefits; have had heating systems fixed and a whole raft of other issues have been dealt with via Help Direct.

Referrals came from a variety of agencies including (and not exclusively):

- Social Services
- Children's Centres
- Veterans in Communities
- GP's
- Domestic Abuse Services
- Falls Prevention Teams
- Employment Agencies
- Job Centre
- Neighbours/Friends
- Registered Social Housing Landlords
- CAB
- RBC

Partners in the project included:

- Help Direct
- RBC
- St Vincent's Home Care & Repair
- CAB
- East Lancs Falls Prevention team
- Age UK Rossendale

## **Community Safety**

Monthly ASBRAC (Anti Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference) meetings held to address instances of anti-social behaviour where the victim's quality of life is being adversely affected. There are currently 18 current cases across the Borough being addressed through ASBRAC.

## **MASH**

Rossendale Borough Council continues to support / be part of the MASH, a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, one project within the overarching Lancashire Improving Futures programme. Further information can be found on the website:

<http://www.lancashirechildrenstrust.org.uk/resources/?siteid=6274&pageid=40175>

## **Other Equality Data**

For other equality data/information please see separate document.