Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter

I was elected Chair of Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group (LECG) on the 4th March 2016, having had several years’ experience of chairing a number of organisations, the most recent being Three Oaks Homes, subsidiary of the East Midlands Housing Group.

LECG has established a strong countywide membership base with representatives from a diverse range of organisations reflecting the groups that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. The past nine months have been very busy and we have achieved quite a lot in a short space of time, for more information see work programme on page 6. I hope to bring in new members to help us to continue to be achieve our aims.

I am assisted by Lucy Smith, the Vice Chair, Carine Cardoza, LECG Engagement Officer and Derk van der Wardt, Consultation & Engagement Manager at Leicestershire County Council. Please feel free to contact us (details on page 6) if you have any events or contributions for the newsletter or any agenda items for our quarterly meetings.

Thank you to all LECG members for your commitment and support in ensuring that the group continues successfully into the future - to promote the importance of equality, diversity, community cohesion and human rights across Leicestershire.

Finally, as we approach the end of 2016, may I take this opportunity to wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Warm regards,

Colin Norman
Chair LECG
CIH Award: Tenant Lifetime Contribution

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Press Launch of LECG Website
9th December 2016
1pm to 2pm
All Members
Welcome
Sparkenhoe Room
County Hall
Glenfield
Leicester
Charnwood VCS Forum
There are networking opportunities for VCS organisations in Charnwood at John Storer House, Ward’s End, Loughborough LE11 3HA. At these sessions you can:
- hear from a range of interesting speakers
- discuss what your organisation is doing and learn about each other’s organisations
- share strengths, expertise and common issues
- explore how the VCS in Charnwood can work together to deliver local solutions

For more information please contact Karen.frostick@johnstorercharnwood.org.uk or Libby Wigginton, Service Team Leader, Tel: 01509 631761.

Transgender Training
Soroya MacDonald organised Transgender training at Mountfields Lodge Youth Centre for Supporting Leicestershire Families staff and school teachers in the Loughborough area and from surrounding villages.

Lisa Vine from the LGBT centre in Leicester attended to provide information. The feedback from staff was very positive with every participant saying that they had more confidence.

This training will have a positive effect on young people within schools that need support.

Soroya intends to roll this out further in the New Year within the County.

She has also set up a LGBT champion in schools. This is a member of staff who wears a rainbow lanyard to let young people know who to approach if they are questioning their sexuality or have any issues like bullying etc.

If you would like to know more about the training programme, please email soroya.macdonald@leics.gov.uk

AgeUK LLR Surviving Winter campaign is asking local people to consider donating some or all of their winter fuel allowance or, if not eligible for this benefit, to donate the equivalent of a week or months fuel cost or the cost of a basket of groceries.

These funds will go some way to helping some of the 31,000 households living in fuel poverty across Leicestershire and Rutland. If you are not able to donate funds then please raise awareness of this campaign.

More details can be found on www.llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk and all funds raised during the campaign will be split between AgeUK LLR and the Leicestershire and Rutland Community Foundation.
**Better care together (BCT)** is a partnership between local NHS organisations and councils seeking to transform health and social care across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) by joining up services to better meet local people’s needs. The BCT partners have been engaging the public on changes to the health and social care system for some time now, finding out what people want and need from in health and social care, and their views on improvements. A draft sustainability and transformation plan (STP) for LLR currently being developed by BCT, builds on this engagement work.

Every health and care system in England has been asked by NHS England to create an STP looking at:
- improving quality and developing new models of care;
- improving health and wellbeing; and
- improving efficiency of services.

BCT submitted its draft plan to NHS England at the end of last month and the Leicestershire Equality Challenge Group will be working with BCT, advising on equality as the plan moves forward.

BCT is eager to share the STP widely with people once the document, currently in draft, has been finalised.

Visit the BCT website for more information about the partnership and for the latest update on the STP - [http://www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk/](http://www.bettercareleicester.nhs.uk/)

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**Countywide Accessible Policy Review (CAPR)**

The Leicestershire Equalities Challenge Group is working with Leicestershire County Council to support the Council in a Countywide Accessibility Policy Review which will inform new policy for 2018 onwards. A range of Council supported public and community transport services are within the scope of this review. We have formed an Equalities Reference Group for this project to work with the Council to try and ensure that any future new accessibility policy is as fair as possible to people facing different challenges in life.

For more information about this task group, please email carine.cardoza@ageukleics.org.uk

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ITP consultants and LECG members at the Equalities Reference Group meeting on the 4th October 2016.
Leicestershire County Council - Financial Correspondence Review

Social Care Services Charging Policy

The Care Act 2014 allows local authorities to charge all service users a contribution towards their care service. This is based on a means test of their individual financial circumstances.

The means test is different for residential and non-residential care but is based on government guidance. If anyone has sufficient capital (over £23,250) they are deemed to be “full cost” – for residential care they have to organise their own service, for non-residential care the Council will organise the service but will charge an administration fee as well as the contribution.

The charging process is complex and can be confusing for service users and families because they don’t understand how the charge is calculated. Some service users choose not to take up the care service when they find out how much they are required to contribute.

Adult Social Care (ASC) is reviewing the whole finance pathway with a view to making it more streamlined and effective, reducing the number of hand-offs between staff, improving the service to the service user and trying to reduce duplication. Part of this review will be a fundamental look at all advice, information, guidance and correspondence relating to the charge.

At its meeting on 9th December 2016, LECG will be working with ASC to review the information which is available to the public and to service users with the intention of making the information accessible and easily available.

If you would like to know more about the review, please contact Colleen Smith, Strategic Lead & Business Change Manager, Adults and Communities Department, Leicestershire County Council.

email: colleen.smith@leics.gov.uk

Making Christmas Special

AgeUK LLR are working to support Leicestershire Hospitals campaign that highlights older people that spend Christmas alone in hospital.

They are requesting for small gifts to be donated so that the patients will have a gift on Christmas Day.

For further details on how you can donate and what you can give please go to http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk/aboutus/our-news/making-christmas-special/

The closing date for gift bags is Friday 16th December 2016.
Who has heard of OPEN?

The Older People’s Engagement Network, known as “OPEN” is the County network of older people with a collective voice for older people.

OPEN has been an effective engagement mechanism since 2007 working in partnership with the Leicestershire Police as well as organisations in Health and Social Care in Leicestershire who provide services that are of benefit to the Health and Wellbeing of older people.

From the 1st April 2013 with the support of the Leicestershire Police OPEN went forward independently as the Leicestershire - Older People’s Engagement Network, still known as OPEN.

Our strength has been that OPEN members come from all Districts of Leicestershire, where they represent local groups and forums of older people. The personal contact reach of OPEN members throughout Leicestershire is over 3000.

OPEN Representatives have been involved:

In Leicestershire
- LLR Age UK
- Dementia and Social Care Task Groups
- Digital Inclusion and Participation involving older people
- Frail Older People's Unit, Loughborough
- G.P. Patients Participation Groups
- Leicester Mercury Patient Panel
- Leicestershire County Council Equality Challenge Group
- Leicestershire Healthwatch
- NHS Stakeholders
- PPI - Patient and Public Involvement reference group
- The Leicestershire Police - support and consultations
- LLR Alliance Patient and Public Partnership Group
- Two successful inter-generational events were held in 2014 and 2015 in partnership with OPEN, Leicestershire Police and County Youth Council Leicestershire. Over 100 people attended both.
- A third one has been planned to take place on Saturday 18th March 2017.

In the Region
- Community Involvement Panels
- Crown Prosecution Services
- Hate Crime, older people panel
- The East Midlands Later Life Forum Digital Participation Group
- The East Midlands Later Life Forum
- The East Midlands Housing Association
- Research by Sheffield University into effects of ageing

Nationally
- Age Action Alliance, Attitudes to Ageing working group
- Age Action Alliance money matters working group
- Age UK, Services Sounding Board
- Hosting workshop for national Age UK
- National Ageing Network
- The National Pensioners Convention

The profound changes in health and social care over the last few years are challenging and new ways have to be found to work together to help older people live as independently as possible. I believe “OPEN” has taken an important and positive step forward but, progress and successful solutions can, in my opinion, only be achieved if we work in partnership with service providers.

Effective two-way communication is a vital part of dealing with the Ageing Agenda.
Lucy Smith - Chair - “OPEN” E-mail lucygsmith@hotmail.co.uk
LECG WORK PROGRAMME

This year LECG members have participated in a number of key Leicestershire County Council consultations and reviews. Examples include:

- Highways Maintenance Review
- Leicestershire County Council Equality Strategy & Action Plan
- Consultation on Community Life Choices
- Better Care Together Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (page 3)
- Countywide Accessibility Policy Review (page 3)
- Financial Correspondence Review (page 4)
- Mental Health Support Services consultation

In addition, a number of members have had the opportunity to present their organisation’s work during our quarterly meetings and in conjunction with The Race Equality Centre, we provided bespoke equalities training for LECG members. To strengthen our identity and to facilitate communication to a wider network of community groups and organisations, LECG members working in a small task group developed a logo, this newsletter and a website www.leicestershirecommunities.org.uk/lecg that contains our terms of reference, list of members, agenda papers & minutes, reports, etc. The website will be launched by County Councillor Pam Posnett on the 9th December 2016.

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