

30 October 2019

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| Report of | Assistant Director of Communities | Author | Joanne Besant (Equality) & Sonia Carr (Safeguarding) ☎ 01206 506943 / 01206 282978 |
| Title | Equality and Safeguarding - Annual Update Report | | |
| Wards affected | All | | |

The Committee is asked to review this annual report on Equality and Safeguarding

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out the Council's duties and updates for Equality & Safeguarding and illustrates the steps the Council has taken to meet these mandatory requirements and specific duties.

2. Recommended Decision

- 2.1 Committee is asked to review the progress made in meeting the Council's legal duties and objectives in regard to both Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, and to endorse the approach set out at paragraph 7 below.

3. Reason for Recommended Decision

By reviewing the approach in these key areas, the Committee will assist the Council in meeting its legal duties.

- 3.1 The following appendices have been included at the end of this report to assist the Committee in its task:

- Appendix A - Key improvements and initiatives
- Appendix B - Service adjustments for customers

4. Continuation of a Combined Approach

- 4.1 This annual report continues a combined reporting approach to scrutiny in the areas of Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding, bringing the following advantages:
- The two areas of work are mutually supportive and reinforcing.
 - They both involve the principle of proportionality and having "due regard".
 - Each area helps to support, and prevent harm occurring to, vulnerable groups.
 - An approach that reviews these two areas together can help to deliver maximum benefit for customers, the most effective management of risk and the most efficient use of resources.

5. National and Local Developments

Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 In June 2019, new guidance was issued to local authorities on the administration and enforcement of the Blue Badge scheme. This is the biggest change to the scheme in nearly 50 years and will mean that people with less visible disabilities, such as dementia and anxiety disorders will now be eligible. Review of Blue Badge fraud as scheme is extended to those with 'hidden disabilities' - GOV.UK
A new task force has also been launched in order to increase enforcement and help local authorities tackle fraudulent use of badges.

Safeguarding

- 5.2 In April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act came into effect, requiring councils to provide services to all those at risk of becoming homeless in addition to those with a priority need. In August 2018, the Government announced a Rough Sleeping Strategy – a wide ranging document which lays out the government's plans to help people who are sleeping rough now and to put in place the structures to end rough sleeping for good. In December 2018, a Delivery Plan was published, setting out progress and next steps. Rough Sleeping Strategy - Delivery Plan Dec 2018
- 5.3 Revised statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of **children** was published on 1 August 2018. This reflects the new status of local child safeguarding boards as being non-statutory. This guidance was updated in February 2019 to reflect how top tier of local authority with responsibility for children's social care (not district/boroughs) should notify the Child Safeguarding Panel.
- 5.4 There have also been changes over the relevant period in terms of national Governance. On 8 September 2019, Theresa May MP was appointed Secretary of State for DWP (including administration of state benefits and providing support to families and children, disabled people). Elizabeth Truss MP was appointed Minister for Women and Equalities on 10 September 2019. Other changes include Gavin Williamson MP appointed Secretary of State for Education (including children's social care) on 24 July 2019, Matt Hancock MP appointed Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (including social care policy) on 9 July 2018 and Priti Patel MP appointed Secretary of State for the Home Department (including security and terrorism) on 24 July 2019.
- 5.5 At Essex County Council, David Finch as Leader of the Council has responsibility for Equality and Diversity. Louise McKinlay is Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Susan Barker is Cabinet Member for Customer, Communities, Culture and Corporate and John Spence is Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care (which includes Disabilities).
- 5.6 Phil Picton continues to be the independent Chair of both the Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) and the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board (ESAB).

6. Meeting the Duties

Overall Arrangements at Colchester Borough Council

- 6.1 Equality and Safeguarding are each integrated into the day-to-day operations of the Council. However, arrangements are also in place to ensure strategic focus and co-

ordination. The Assistant Director for Communities provides the strategic lead, with support from the lead Officers for Equality & Diversity, and Safeguarding.

- 6.2 The relevant Cabinet Portfolio is Cllr Mike Lilley (Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety).
- 6.3 In the area of Equality and Diversity, the Diversity Steering Group (DSG) provides an active forum for 'advancing equality' for both customers and staff. Its members are service 'representatives' who play a key role in reviewing progress and disseminating best practice.
- In a similar way, Designated Safeguarding Officers, who have an enhanced level of training to provide expertise and assistance to officers, attend quarterly workshops led by the Safeguarding Coordinator, to review legislative changes, safeguarding referrals, training requirements for all staff and improve processes.
- 6.4 Partnership working is key to meeting the Council's safeguarding duties. The Safer Colchester Partnership (SCP) is led by a Responsible Authorities Strategic Group (RASG) which consists of Chief Officers representing local statutory partners and non-statutory partners and organisations. It aims to achieve sustainable solutions following the identification of local needs and priorities. It does this by delivering initiatives and engaging with local communities on a number of issues including 'hidden harms' (i.e. domestic violence, hate crime, modern slavery, child exploitation and cuckooing/mate crime).
- 6.5 Colchester Borough Council also engages positively with the relevant 'Stay Safe' group which comes under the ESCB's governance. This group helps to put into practice effective partnership working to keep children safe from harm including abuse. The Council also attends local 'MACE 2' (Missing and Child Exploitation) meetings which facilitate joint approaches and key information sharing to help protect children from exploitation. In addition, from 2019, the Council attends the new Organised Crime Group Disruption Panel, organised by Essex Police, in which disruption strategies and action planning for those individuals at risk of exploitation are discussed.
- 6.6 The Council works closely with both the Essex Safeguarding Adults Board and the Essex Safeguarding Children Board. Support from, and representation on, both the ESCB and ESAB for District Councils is by way of Board Membership. Colchester Borough Council Executive Director Pam Donnelly sits on the ESAB and feeds back to the Chief Executives Group. The Council is also represented at both the City, District and Borough Leads and Adult Safeguarding Leads meetings.

Equality and Diversity

- 6.7 The Equality Act 2010 imposed a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) upon local authorities including district councils. Under its 'general duty', the Council must "integrate consideration of the advancement of equality" into its "day-to-day business, and across all functions". Councillors and staff 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
- 6.8 The 'protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and

maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but not for all aspects of the duty.

- 6.9 Equality and Diversity training forms part of the induction for new CBC staff and Councillors. A new online training package was designed and implemented in April 2019 and now forms part of the induction training module for new CBC staff and Councillors.
- 6.10 The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance to the PSED remains the best guide to the practical operation of the PSED. In addition, the Council takes due account of the Government's Review of the PSED which endorsed the so-called "Brown Principles". These confirmed that the 'due regard' duty must be fulfilled before and at the time that a particular policy is being considered; it must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind; and that it is non delegable.
- 6.11 The PSED 'specific duties' require us to publish information to demonstrate that we are meeting both the 'general duty', and one or more published equality objectives. During the period 2018-19 we have continued to meet both requirements. Information published on the Council website includes:
- Equality Impact Assessments
 - The Council's Strategic Plan 2018-21 and its Year End Performance Report (including its Strategic Plan Action Plan).
 - The Council's website pages on Equality and Diversity
 - The Council's Equality Information section contains all required information
 - Work undertaken by the Council's Research and Engagement team about service users, customers and the borough's population.
- 6.12 The Council remains committed to the use of the Equality Impact Assessment process. Despite not being a legal requirement, these remain a vital framework through which the Council can continue to identify, evaluate, and mitigate against negative impacts upon the 'protected characteristics'. It allows us to make the right judgements based on sound information and data, in an open and transparent way.
- 6.13 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) training was delivered to CBC staff on 12th July and 25th September, by Essex County Councils Senior Equalities Advisor.
- 6.14 The Council works with a host of agencies and organisations in order to meet its duties and advance equality more generally. Many of these are included in Appendix A.

Safeguarding

- 6.15 Under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004, local authorities "must make arrangements for ensuring (that)...their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children." The Act required district councils to supply information to enable the Local Safeguarding Children Board to perform its function to co-ordinate activity. From 1st October 2019, a revised SET Safeguarding & Child Protection Procedures - October 19 was published, integrated into the Council's Safeguarding Policy. Primarily the key changes made to the procedures are to reflect the new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that came into force nationally from 29 September 2019 and replace Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). Across Southend, Essex and Thurrock the 'Local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnerships/Boards' will co-ordinate these new arrangements on behalf of their named Statutory Partners and will be referred to throughout the SET Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures. The new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA) MASA Plan 2019-20 in Essex will continue to sit

under the Essex Safeguarding Childrens Board to comply with the requirements set out in the statutory guidance Working Together 2018.

6.16 Under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, the local authority must make enquiries to co-ordinate action to support an adult who: (a) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), (b) is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. Although Essex County Council is the *investigating authority*, the Act requires district councils to supply information to enable the local Safeguarding Adults Board to perform its function to co-ordinate activity. There are also agreed SET Safeguarding Adults Guidelines, which were updated in April 2019, for adult safeguarding, integrated into the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

6.17 The Council raises safeguarding concerns with Essex County Council via its Request for Support Portal (in regard to a child) and the SETSAF form (in regard to an adult). Records of referrals made, and any feedback received, are retained in a secure area of the Council network and are reviewed at quarterly Designated Officer Workshop meetings.

In **2018** (1 January – 31 December), the number of referrals made to Essex County Council was 28; 26 of these were vulnerable adult referrals made to Adult Social Care and 2 were vulnerable children referrals made to the Children and Families Hub.

For **2019** (1 January – 30 September) the number of referrals stands at 28; 22 vulnerable adults and 7 children (*3 of which were of same family*).

6.18 Completing Safeguarding Level 1 training is a mandatory requirement for all CBC staff and members, and this is monitored via the HR Team. Between the period July 2017 (when a new system was implemented) to end of September 2019, approximately 327 CBC staff have completed this training. In addition:

- Safeguarding Level 3 (enhanced) training was delivered to Designated Safeguarding Officers in March 2019.
- Level 2 (specialist/advanced) training was delivered to frontline staff and DSO's over the period January 2018 – September 2019. This training included suicide prevention, substance misuse, gangs awareness, cuckooing and mate crime awareness, hate crime awareness and identifying hidden harms (Observers Scheme which includes domestic abuse, modern slavery, child exploitation, county lines and sexual violence).
- Impact of Sexual Violence Awareness and Hate Crime Awareness will also be offered to Members via the Member Development Sessions in September 2019 and October 2019.

CBC Licensing and Community Safety Teams have also jointly delivered a programme of Safeguarding Training to Taxi Drivers and Impact of Sexual Violence awareness to Door Staff during 2019.

6.19 The Council, as chair of the local Community Safety Partnership, has responsibilities under Section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. During the period, (April 2019) the Safer Colchester Partnership published 2 Domestic Homicide Reviews DHR's and has provided relevant information following 'scoping enquiries' on Partnership Learning Reviews, Serious Case Reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews.

6.20 The local Safeguarding Boards audit the approach and performance of partners including Colchester Borough Council in regard to: (a) senior management leadership; (b) lines of accountability; (c) embedding policy; (d) 'early help' and agency work; (e) info sharing; (f) learning and improvement; (g) service development; and (h) recruitment, vetting and allegations.

In May 2019, ESAB announced it would be sending out a staff survey in the Autumn, to replace the Section 11 safeguarding audit. This survey was circulated to all CBC staff on 10th September, with a deadline for completion 4th October. A Safeguarding leads survey was also completed. ESAB are due to deliver a full report February 2020.

In May 2018, the Council completed a remote audit on its child safeguarding responsibilities. Although 75% of criteria were met, specific areas where improvement can be made were identified which forms the basis of an internal action plan which is subject to regular monitoring. These ESCB audits are self-assessments and currently carried out every 2 years (2019).

6.21 Modern slavery encompasses sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced criminal exploitation and domestic servitude. To meet its legal duties under Section 43 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 the Council published on its website its fourth Modern Slavery Transparency Statement in September 2019.

6.22 Sec 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed a new duty upon local authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.”

To assist implementation of the duty in section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, a Home Office Prevent eLearning training package is now available. This is introductory training and provides a foundation on which to develop further knowledge around the risks of radicalisation and the roles involved in supporting those at risk. Plans are underway to enable all frontline staff, DSO's and Members to access this training package.

7. Going Forward

7.1 The Council will continue to raise awareness for staff (and highlight its procedures) on key issues including Prevent, modern slavery, CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation), domestic abuse, criminal exploitation (including cuckooing) and hate crime. To do this effectively, the Council will increase its commitment to online training, alongside delivering schemes such as Observers (upskilling CBC and CBH frontline staff to identify and confidently report hidden harms), Spot it Stop It (working with Police and ESCB to deliver CSE awareness to local businesses to prevent children and young people becoming victims of exploitation).

7.2 As Community Safety takes on the operational lead on safeguarding, the Council is in a good position to continue to deepen partnership working with agencies and voluntary organisations, including through the Safer Colchester Partnership, in order to deliver for residents.

8. Strategic Plan References

8.1 The Council's Strategic Plan 2018-21 is a key mechanism through which the Council monitors how it is meeting its equality and safeguarding responsibilities. In particular, it contains the Council's current 'equality objective';

'Making Colchester an even better place to live and supporting those who need most help'.

It is an integral part of the Council's Strategic Plan under its *Wellbeing* theme. Those priorities which particularly help support the Council's Equality Objective are:

- Work with Essex Police and partners in the Safer Colchester Partnership to make Colchester an even safer place

- Target support to the most disadvantaged residents and communities

9. Consultation

- 9.1 The Council's strategic approach in these areas is underpinned by its Strategic Plan for which extensive consultation took place. CBC's People and Performance team led a review of the Strategic Plan Action Plan in February this year, to ensure the organisation is on plan to deliver the key priorities.

10. Publicity Considerations

- 10.1 The Council's approach to Equality and Safeguarding has the potential to affect everyone who lives, works or visits the borough. It can play a key role in the daily lives of individuals and communities by helping to safeguard vulnerable groups from harm, as well as tackling prejudice and advancing equality of opportunity.
- 10.2 The Equality Information section on the Council's website continues to provide updated information as required by legislation and guidance, along with related content of use or interest to customers, staff and councillors. The Council's website also includes a section dedicated to Safeguarding children and 'adults with needs for care and support' which contains key information for residents along with links for further information.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1 It is important to understand that our obligation to have "due regard" to the three aims of the 'general duty' does not mean that decisions which have a disproportionate impact upon one or more 'protected characteristics' cannot be taken. The Council must nevertheless always seek to remove or reduce negative impacts.
- 11.2 The Council's approach must continue to be proportionate, with key decisions being given due priority. Equality Impact Assessments must remain an integral part of the decision-making process when addressing changes to policies and practices.

12. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 12.1 This report is an annual update about Equality, Diversity and Safeguarding, which helps the Council to ensure it meets its duty and protect vulnerable groups.

13. Community Safety and Health and Safety Implications

- 13.1 The Council's approach to Equality and Safeguarding involves working closely with partners and communities. The Safer Colchester Partnership plays a vital role in helping the Council to meet its legal duties around safeguarding.
- 13.2 By meeting its Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council will help to ensure that employees do not suffer discrimination, harassment or victimisation. This will in turn create a safer working environment, and one which is consistent with the Council's Health and Safety policies.

14. Risk Management Implications

- 14.1 As an employer and provider of public services, the Council could face legal challenges from individuals or groups who have been unlawfully discriminated against, however unintended. Legal cases brought on grounds of discrimination do not have upper financial

limits like those brought through employment tribunals. The Council must meet its responsibilities to ensure it does not discriminate, and this will also help to avoid the potential for significant financial claims.

- 14.2 The Council could suffer significant reputational damage should its staff or councillors fail to comply with their Safeguarding responsibilities. This paper details the Council's strategic and operational approach in this area.

Key improvements and initiatives 2018-19






- The Council distributed over £200,000 of Voluntary Welfare Funding to 'not for profit' organisations to help the Council meet its equality and safeguarding objectives. In 2018-19, the following organisations received funding: Action for Family Carers; Age Concern Colchester; Christians Against Poverty Debt Advice, Colchester Citizen's Advice Bureau; Community 360; Colchester Gateway, Colchester and Tendring Women's Refuge; Copford Pits Wood Trust; Signals; Youth Enquiry Service.
- The Community Safety Team has led on several projects including a *Virtual Crew* in order to deliver key community safety messages to nearly 1,000 year 6 pupils across Colchester. Involving online games and quizzes, the initiative helped to educate and safeguard children around internet safety, gangs and knife crime, antisocial behaviour, drugs and alcohol and hate crime.
- The Community Safety Team also delivered Phase 1 of the Observers Scheme pilot; a scheme to upskill a number of existing frontline staff to become 'champions' in identifying the signs of hidden harms whilst out and about in the community and provide a safe mechanism to report those concerns. To date, 27 frontline staff from both CBC and CBH have become 'champions' and will disseminate the knowledge to respective teams. Phase 2 of the scheme will consist of an eLearning package available to all staff and Councillors.
- The Community Safety Team, working jointly with CBH and Police, have delivered Hate Crime Awareness sessions to 50 members of staff during July 2019. Further sessions will be delivered to staff during Hate Crime Awareness Week in October and again in November. A session will also be available for all Members via Member Development Session in October.
- The Community Enabling Team has worked in partnership with Dementia Friends and the Alzheimer Society in order to raise awareness and understanding across the Council and community. The team arranged for external Dementia Friend Champions to deliver training sessions to an additional 118 CBC staff and 16 Councillors during May and June this year.
- Colchester Borough Council remains a key member of the Dementia Action Alliance and provides representation at regular meetings. The Council is heavily involved in the project to make Colchester a Dementia Friendly town, which is led by Community360.
- Having earned the status of a National Portfolio Organisation, Colchester and Ipswich Museums Service has gained access to an annual £200,000 boost to funding up to 2022. This has helped it to deliver its aims around increasing equality and diversity in its representation within the three museums, as well as promoting inclusion in the workforce and for visitors. Its Visitor Services Team were winners at the first ever National Visitor Experience Awards, facing competition from the Houses of Parliament and National Museums Liverpool.
- Colchester Museums has engaged closely with Colchester's LGBTQ+ community which has played a key role in the Council's consultation on an exhibition at Hollytrees Museum: We are Colchester. Several objects included in this exhibition relate specifically to gender identity. Colchester Museums had a stall at the Colchester Has Pride event on 18 August 2018, which was also marked by the Pride Flag flying at Colchester Castle and the Town Hall. Colchester Museums and Ipswich Museums (also managed by Colchester Borough

Council) offered 'relaxed opening' sessions for people with autism and Ipswich Museums held handling sessions, which were focused on increasing access for Blind and Partially Sighted customers.

- Staff in the CBC Customer Support Team received training sessions from Open Road, on substance misuse which were extremely well received.
- 2018 saw the introduction of a Council-wide Suicide Protocol (on responding to threats or ideas of suicide or self-harm) which included detailed guidance and procedures as well as contact details of dedicated organisations and relevant agencies. The protocol reflects special arrangements agreed between the Council and EPUT's Access and Assessment Team and is due for review November 2019. In addition, 2 Designated Safeguarding Officers attended a 2-day Suicide Prevention Course in order to better understand and react to those customers demonstrating suicidal ideation; the info was disseminated to other DSO's and has led to the agreement that a basic suicide awareness session is required for customer facing roles.
- The criteria for tender in relation to enforcement agents used by the Council's Payments and Debt Recovery service has included support for vulnerable debtors. These contracts stipulate specialist help and advice to ensure that the right support is offered.
- 2018-19 has been a successful year for the Council in terms of funding acquired for a variety of services. There have been successful bids to the CCG, Essex County Council, Active Essex and Sport England, to explore ways for communities to become more active. Programmes developed within the Colchester pilot, will promote increased levels of activity amongst communities, in particular those living in circumstances of deprivation.
- The Licensing and Community Safety Teams, alongside 'Stop the Traffik' have delivered safeguarding training to over 700 existing licensed taxi drivers across the borough during 2019. Safeguarding training for new licensed drivers will be mandatory going forward.
- The Environmental Protection Team continues to subscribe to an air quality forecast service by text which is especially helpful to the elderly, pregnant women, children and babies and those with respiratory issues.
- The Council has through Defra grant funding commenced a project aimed at improving air quality within the borough. The objectives of the project are to raise awareness of air quality, instil a sense of personal responsibility within the community then encourage the wide spread adoption of switching off engines at junctions, level crossings and when parked up and encourage walking and cycling for short journeys particularly through the boroughs Air Quality Management Areas. Poor Air Quality has several health effects but is believed to be particularly harmful to pregnant women, children and babies and those with respiratory issues.
- The team continues to work in partnership with the Essex Countywide Travellers Unit to help ensure equal and fair treatment for people within Roma Gypsy and Irish Traveller communities.
- The Council recognises that there are strong links between improving Public Health and meeting its objectives around Equality and Diversity, and Safeguarding. In order to promote supportive conversations with residents and customers about behaviour change, thereby increasing opportunities to promote health and reduce health inequalities.

- Since November 2018, Colchester Leisure World has provided women only swimming sessions on the first Wednesday of every month. In total, 257 women have attended the sessions since they began, seeing an average of 23 women per week enjoying this activity.
- During 2018-19, Language Line Solutions Ltd continued to provide telephone interpreting and translation services to Council staff, with most enquiries coming from Customer Service. Language Line help with core language services, telephone translation and provide alternative format translation such as braille, easy read and large print.
- The Council adopted a guaranteed interview scheme for armed forces veterans during 2018-19, providing reservists or veterans with better access and support to employment. The council introduced a work placement scheme to veterans, trying to get into sustained employment and for those service personnel being medically discharged from service.
- In August 2019 the Council was awarded a Defence Employer recognition scheme Gold Award, one of only 11 awarded in East Anglia, showing the Councils commitment to support the armed forces community in Colchester.

Service Adjustments for Customers

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|  | <p>WEBSITE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colchester Borough Council's website is BrowseAloud enabled which means that you can have information on the site read aloud to you for free on a Smartphone, Tablet, PC or Mac. BrowseAloud is a suite of products that provides website reading support, highlighting each word as it is spoken in a high quality, human-sounding voice. |
|  | <p>BRAILLE</p> <p>The Council will always consider requests for letters or documents to be produced in Braille.</p> |
|  | <p>ELECTIONS</p> <p>The Council's Elections Team provides the following adjustments at all elections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tactile Template Devices ○ Large versions of the printed ballot paper ○ A magnifying glass |
|  | <p>RUBBISH AND RECYCLING</p> <p>The recycling calendar is available as a PDF and audio version, both of which are downloadable from the website</p> |
|  | <p><u>LEISURE WORLD</u></p> <p>Guide Dogs are welcome at Leisure world on Cowdray Avenue. Officers will be happy to walk sight impaired customers to where they need to go for their activity. Leisure World also offers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Phoenix Disability Swimming Club</u> - Various sports hall-based activities for people with a range of disabilities including sensory. • <u>Endeavour</u> is an activity session on Friday afternoons that offers <i>adults</i> with disabilities access to a range of sports. • Private Hire Ladies and men only Leisure Pool (e.g. Jewish religious groups) • Sport for Confidence • LEAP GP Referrals • Dementia Friendly Activities • Aqua Bump (aquatic classes for Pregnant Mums) • Water Mobility Classes |

COLCHESTER & IPSWICH MUSEUMS

The museum website has information on accessing facilities in the [Visit](#) Section. (Select 'Making a Visit' and scroll down to the section on 'Facilities and Accessibility'.)

- Colchester's Natural History Museum has a number of tactile displays. The redevelopment of the Castle included a variety of adjustments for Blind or visually impaired visitors.
- Colchester Castle offers tactile mapping and audio description options. Audio descriptive guides are free to borrow from reception. There are 'audio wands' available to aid touring the museum. 'RNIB' style maps are provided for visitor orientation. All hands-on interactives have 'raised text' and level 1 Braille instructions.
- Hollytrees Museum in Ipswich offers items for handling and there are several audio interpretation points around the museum.
- Castle Park includes a sensory garden which includes features specifically designed for the visually impaired. It can be found next to the Wetzlar 'formal' Garden which is near Hollytrees. Customers can ask a Park Warden to help locate it. The Sensory Garden "...has been designed so that the flowers and plants provide colour and smell stimulation. This has been complimented by adding mosaics to the floor and sides of the raised beds to stimulate touch."



PARKING PARTNERSHIP

NEPP offices will be happy to complete a permit application or type a challenge (to a parking notice) on a customer's behalf.



MACMILLAN WELFARE RIGHTS

The team will be happy to order Macmillan information leaflets in a larger font as required.



DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS

Colchester Borough Council provides *Disabled Facilities Grants* in order to help sustain independent living. In addition, we administer *Disabled Facilities Assistance Loans* to assist households with works that do not fall within the scope of the mandatory Grant.