

Shine a light on inequality, discrimination and racism



In June 2020 the death of George Floyd in the US brought a surge of reaction from across the world. In the UK protests around Black Lives Matter caught the public imagination and as a result at EQulP we held a series of online discussions 'From Protest to Positive Action'.

'Our thoughts are with everyone grieving the death of George Floyd in the US and we kneel united with all those that peacefully protest against inequality, racism and discrimination, that exists within our society and across the world.

Whilst this debate centres on the US, the UK has its own share of issues to deal with.

We believe now is the time to insist on positive action and we ask that you join us in standing against racism and discrimination. Here at EQulP, our work focuses on embracing equality and diversity, rejecting racism and promoting inclusion.

We will continue to shine a light on UK's own challenges with racism and champion fairness, equality, justice and respect. We also welcome any views and comments you may have regarding the 'Black Lives Matter' and urge you to get in touch with us.

If you have experienced discrimination, prejudice or unfair treatment whether at work, in accessing services or experienced or witnessed hate crime, please get in touch.'

EQulP June 2020

During 2020 and 2021 we have now held 7 events around the themes of:

- Criminal Justice
- Health
- Employment
- Access to Services
- Vaccination
- International Women's Day #ChoosetoChallenge
- Violence Against Women and Girls



274 people participated.

All events were delivered with a number of very informative and interesting speakers including:

Philip Seccombe, Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire
 Zeb Ghumra, BLM Nuneaton
 Adrian Biggs, BLM Rugby
 Chief Superintendent Ben Smith, Warwickshire Police
 Chief Inspector Faz Chishty, Warwickshire Police
 Dr Shade Agboola, Director of Public Health, Warwickshire
 Safia Tharoo, Employment Practitioner and Head of Pupillage, 42 Bedford Row Barristers
 Ruby Rai, Senior Associate, Employment Team, Brethertons Solicitors
 Gemma McKinnon, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Warwickshire County Council
 Imran Dean, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service
 Sharon Forman, Warwickshire County Records Office
 Dr Sarah Rastrick, Chair of North Warwickshire and Coventry & Rugby NHS CCG
 Joe Patterson, Cybercrime Officer
 Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive, Warwickshire County Council
 Rachel Shuter, Warwickshire Refuge
 Rachel Jackson, Lead Commissioner Vulnerable People, Warwickshire County Council

Questions from participants are responded to during the sessions, and detailed summary notes are sent to all participants. Everyone is asked to complete a feedback form or an online survey and the responses have been completely positive.

Participants are from a variety of different sectors with a good mix of community members, charity and voluntary sectors, and frontline staff at each event. We have experimented with evening and daytime events and find both formats are successful.

In detail each event included:

On Thursday 18th June 2020, EQuIP held its first virtual event - 'From Protest to Positive Action' focusing on **Criminal Justice System**, Black Lives Matter, Stop and Search, Warwickshire Police recruitment.

The objectives of this event were to:

- **Increase awareness around the local response to Black Lives Matter**
- **Ensure communities are aware of their Stop and Search Rights**
- **Communities to be aware of Warwickshire Police and their Positive Action Initiative**
- **A platform to shape the way forward**

Guest speakers included:

Philip Seccombe Police and Crime Commissioner for Warwickshire

Recognition of the BLM movement and commitment to addressing issues within Warwickshire

Zeb Ghumra

1. Reflection of the BLM protest in Nuneaton
2. Reflection of BLM agenda and local policing / What needs to change?

Adrian Biggs

1. Reflection of the BLM protest in Rugby
2. Reflection of BLM agenda and local policing / What needs to change?

Chief Superintendent Ben Smith

1. Overview of Stop and Search and lawful use of force
2. The role of the Legitimacy Board.
3. How is disproportionality being addressed by Warwickshire Police?

Chief Inspector Faz Chishty

1. What is Warwickshire Police doing to diversify its workforce?
2. What can communities do to get involved?

The event was well attended, and feedback received was very positive. EQuIP put the questions received from participants to Warwickshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner and will continue to work with them to address some of the concerns raised at the meeting.

Health

A second event focused on Health, Covid-19 and why it appears to have a greater impact on BME communities and the new Test and Trace in Warwickshire with guest speaker:

Dr Shade Agboola, Director of Public Health, Warwickshire

The event took place on 13th August 2020 and was well attended with a mix of community members, voluntary sector and public sector colleagues.

Dr Shade Agboola covered the following points:

Public Health in Warwickshire continue to work very hard. They are firefighting what has been an extraordinary outbreak of Covid-19, as a new virus they are learning much about it but it has been very much a battle to delay the spread, keep people safe and getting a vaccine. A lot of work is being undertaken to understand the reasons why it has had and continues to have a disproportionate impact on BME, older people, those with underlying health conditions. It is clear that there is also a link to socio-economic factors but still a long way to go in understanding those factors. For instance, the first 11 doctors who died were Black and Minority Ethnic but it can't be said that they all had underlying health issues and lived in poverty. Research is ongoing and we will understand more of the underlying factors in the next year.

Shade was very clear we need to ensure that we have culturally competent services in Warwickshire, that Covid 19 is not a quick win, but a long haul, and that taking precautions is crucial. We all have a duty to make a noise about continuing to tackle it and take precautions. We need to better understand the ethnic profile of Warwickshire but not forget other underlying health issues such as diabetes.

Shade also explained the Test and Trace system that has been put into place in Warwickshire as a collaboration with Coventry and Solihull. It has been relatively quiet so all the provisions have been put in place.

The dedicated website is <https://staysafecsw.info/>. Shade delivered a very refreshing and empowering discussion and answered many questions from community members.

Employment

The third workshop in the series took place on the 25th November 2020 and the focus was employment rights and discrimination. The webinar covered employment issues around Covid, including the furlough scheme.

Our speakers on the night included **Safia Tharoo**, Employment Practitioner and Head of Pupillage from 42 Bedford Row Barristers and **Ruby Rai** Senior Associate, Employment Team from Brethertons Solicitors.

25 participants joined us and a wide range of questions were raised around fairness at work.

Access to Services

EQuIP hosted an 'Access to Services' online event on 25th February 2021, which attracted 28 participants and focused on three areas of particular interest.

Speakers at the event included:

Gemma McKinnon, Health and Wellbeing Delivery Manager, WCC who explained the strategic priorities of the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Imran Dean, Equality and Diversity and Inclusion lead for Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, who provided information on Smokehoods as a safety device and implications for residents from a cultural, religious and disability perspective.

Sharon Forman, Warwickshire County Records Office. Sharon discussed the role of the County Records Office, how and what information is stored and the need to diversify their records. She is particularly keen to ensure their collection includes seldom heard voices and materials and during the conversations had connected with a number of community groups with relevant and unique materials to share.

Vaccination – What are the facts on Warwickshire

EQuIP hosted an ‘Vaccinations’ online event on 11th February 2021 which attracted 29 participants. The purpose of the event was to discuss the Vaccination roll out across Warwickshire and to highlight the misinformation and scams that are circulating among communities.

Speakers at the event included:

Dr Sarah Raistrick, Chair of the NHS Rugby and Coventry CCG explained the background of the Vaccine development and the different delivery arrangements in the County.

Joe Patterson, the WCC Cybercrime team, presented on definitions of cybercrime, the types and examples of scams which are spreading across the county.

In a fast moving Covid-19 environment, the speed of roll out of vaccination in Warwickshire has been very positive, but there are still areas to fill and EQuIP continues to work with partners to help tackle vaccine hesitancy and tackle scams.

International Women’s Day 2021 Celebration



On Thursday 11th March 2021, EQuIP celebrated International Women’s Day online. We were joined by guest speaker **Monica Fogarty, Chief Executive of Warwickshire County Council**. Monica talked about her role and the County Council’s stance in terms of Gender Equality. This was followed by a discussion on Challenging Gender Discrimination in Warwickshire and what needs to change led by EQuIP Equality Officers.

The event was very popular and over 70 women booked onto the event.

Developing a women and gender focus programme of activities, forums, information sharing and mentoring will be a key development for EQuIP over 2021-22.

Then in a slight change to the anticipated event, in light of an increased awareness of violence against women and the very sad circumstances of the deaths of Sarah Everard, and sisters Nicole Smallman and Bibaa Henry who were stabbed in London last year, we focused on women and keeping safe.

International Women's Day part 2 was held on 25th March 2021 and focused on Violence Against Women and Girls

Rachel Shuter, Manager at Warwickshire Refuge explained her work on behalf of women in the county and explained the Domestic Abuse Bill currently going through parliament.

Rachel Jackson, WCC lead commissioner Vulnerable People explored the VAWG strategy in the county.

There was an appetite for more events and for a focus on areas such as policing and women, the Crown Prosecution Service and Probation, education particularly in terms of tackling racism, bullying and gender in schools and further and higher education. Another event focused on women and inequalities around economic activity is planned.