



August 2011



EQUALITY MATTERS

Newsletter of Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council

Challenging Inequalities Across Bedfordshire

Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council



**AUGUST IS THE MONTH
OF
RAMADAN!**

**WISHING PEACE AND
HAPPINESS TO ALL OUR
READERS!**

RAMADAN

Do you have staff/volunteers who observe the month of Ramadan?

Ramadan is of major significance to Muslims all over the world.

The requirement to fast during the month of Ramadan represents one of the Pillars of Islam. Muslims refrain from eating & drinking during the hours of daylight. This has implications on the way Muslims shape their daily activities. Apart from making arrangements to “break” the fast on time, Muslims also make extra effort to pray in a Mosque.

This year, Ramadan is due to start or near to the 1st August 2011 and conclude with Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations on 31st August. The period of fasting will be for approximately 18 hours each day.

(The Islamic calendar is based on the lunar phases and there may be slight variation in the dates provided).

Some helpful information:

- Staff that are fasting may suffer lethargy and be weak from lack of food and drink, especially near sunset. This may impact on their performance.
- Where practicable, refreshment times should coincide with the breaking of the fast (known as Iftar) which will occur at around 9.30pm on the first day of Ramadan and shortening to 9.00pm on the 30th day.
- During Ramadan, Friday prayers (known as Jum’a) are of particular importance. Muslims are required by their faith to pray at this time. This will normally occur around 1pm and last for approximately 45 minutes. Prayers are conducted at a local Mosque. Line managers should look favourably in allowing their staff to attend the mosque during this period – perhaps during their lunch break.
- The remaining prayers do not necessarily have to be undertaken at a Mosque but they must be performed. The timings of the most frequent request will be around 1pm and 7pm – both of which should last no more than 10 minutes. These requests should be permitted where possible, but can be at the Line Manager’s discretion.
- Where a prayer room is not available, reasonable adjustments should be considered – such as allowing the use of a quiet office or a designated space identified for this use during the month of Ramadan.

Line Managers tend to face certain challenges to ensure operational commitments are met while still valuing the diversity of staff and volunteers.

What can you do?

- Line managers should discuss rotas with staff at the earliest opportunity to ensure the needs of the business are maintained and the duty of care is properly balanced. Generally there should not be a need to make significant (if any) amendment to rotas and general working conditions.
- Give practical consideration to requests for annual leave/lieu and time off. These requests should be looked upon favourably and with consideration to promoting equality & diversity and not discriminating against those with a particular religion or belief
- Where practicable, remind staff/volunteers to request time off in advance, in order for Line Managers to reasonably consider the request. *(Please note that Eid-ul-Fitr is usually announced the night before as it is dependent on the sighting of the moon, and therefore it will be difficult for individuals to give advance notice.)*
- Suggest that staff/volunteers use Time Off In Lieu/Flexi time to cover additional prayer times and break fasts
- Swapping rest days with other shift workers
- Swapping of Christian-based Bank Holidays
- Annual leave
- Flexible working

Eid-ul-Fitr in the Muslim calendar is comparable to Christmas in the Christian calendar. Many staff will wish to book leave to celebrate on that day. There is normally only 2-3 days window when Eid-ul-Fitr is celebrated and therefore request with only limited notice should be considered.



Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council

Annual Charity Ball and Awards Evening!

FRIDAY 14TH OCTOBER 2011!

7:30pm - Late!

**Dress: National Costume, Black Tie or Evening Dress
at**

The Barns Hotel, Cardington Road, Bedford

**To book your tickets or find out about sponsoring an award please contact
Robyn or Purva on 01234 350459 or
email: bedfordrec@btconnect.com**



BEDFORDSHIRE RACE & EQUALITIES COUNCIL

CHARITY BALL & EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

AWARDS EVENING

Friday 14th October 2011

***The Barns Hotel, Cardington Road,
Bedford***

7.00 pm – Late

Dinner served at 7:30pm

**Dress: Black Tie, Evening Dress
Or Traditional Costume**

£25 per Ticket

Admits one person

**3-course dinner, prize draw, dancing till late all in beautiful
surroundings**

**All proceeds from the Prize Draw will support projects
delivered by the R&EC**

SELLING FAST SO BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW!

Applications for awards available from Bedfordrec@btconnect.com

Sponsorship can be provided at a level of your choice. There are 4 levels of support as a sponsor:

Level of Sponsorship	Package Provided
£2000	Your organisation's name/logo included in event programme & all Beds Race & Equalities Council publicity for 1 year 10 Tickets for the Event Equality & Diversity Champion Award named & engraved as sponsored by your organisation Presentation of the award can be made by your nominated representative
£1000	4 Tickets to the event Organisation listed as a sponsor in the event programme & event publicity 1 award named & engraved as sponsored by your organisation Presentation of the award can made by your nominated representative
£500	2 Tickets to the event Organisation listed as a sponsor in the event programme & event publicity 1 award named & engraved as sponsored by your organisation
£250	For corporate table of 10 people Organisation listed as a supporter in the event programme

1. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CHAMPION OF THE YEAR – Individual Award** – For the individual who has excelled in equality & diversity and who has brought about definitive change in equality and diversity practices in their organisation
2. **LEADING CHANGE - Organisation Award - Making a sustainable difference by leading on initiatives that made a significant change to the equality & Diversity practices of the organisation**
3. **TRAINING – Organisation Award** – Positive Contribution to Equality & Diversity Agenda through innovative and creative training
4. **PARTNERSHIP WORKING – Organisation Award** – Successful Partnership(s) that have contributed to the promotion and embedding of Equality & Diversity
5. **INNOVATION – Organisation Award** – What project/initiative has been innovative in furthering Equality & Diversity
6. **BALBIR DUTT COMMUNITY CHAMPION AWARD** – Individual Award—For the individual who has championed community initiatives & encouraged activities in their role that have made a significant difference to the community - Sponsored by Luton Law Centre
7. **BEDFORDSHIRE RACE & EQUALITIES COUNCIL SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD** chosen by the Chief Executive & Trustees of Beds R&EC.

To sponsor an award or book tickets please contact Robyn Anderson or Purva Joshi on 01234 350459 or email us at bedfordrec@btconnect.com with the following details:

- **The name of your organisation**
- **The level of sponsorship you wish to purchase**
- **Name of the Award Category you would like to sponsor**

EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION CASEWORK

Have you, or a friend or relative, suffered discrimination in the work place as a result of your:

- **Gender**
- **Race**
- **Disability**
- **Age**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Religion or belief?**

Discrimination may happen at any stage of the employment relationship, e.g.:

- Recruitment
- Treatment at work: transfer, promotion, training, pay, benefits, disciplinary action, work allocation etc
- Dismissal
- Post dismissal if connected with the employment, e.g. adverse reference

We are able to provide advice on what you can do about discrimination in the work place. There are strict time limits for taking action about discrimination so early advice is vital. If you think we may be able to help you then please telephone us on 01234 350459 and ask to speak to Linda, or email lindabrec@btconnect.com

Supported by the Equality & Human Rights Commission &



BEDFORDSHIRE RACE & EQUALITIES COUNCIL

FREE ADVICE SURGERY

REGARDING THE

FOLLOWING:

Immigration & Nationality

Welfare Benefits

Housing

Debt

Discrimination at Work

PREEN FURNITURE BANK

The Preen Centre, Shortmead Street
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire SG18

Every 1st & 3rd Monday of each Month

10.00am—1.00pm

No Appointments Necessary

For further details please call 01234 350459



RACE

“A man who was involved in placing a pig’s head on a pole outside the possible site of a mosque in Nottingham has been given a suspended sentence.

Christopher Payne, 25, from Beardsmore Grove, Hucknall, admitted racially aggravated public order offences after the incident on 23 June.

Nottingham Magistrates heard Payne failed to stop others placing the pig’s head and had also left racist graffiti.

He was sentenced to 6 weeks imprisonment, suspended for a year.

The court was told Payne had taken delivery of a pig’s head, that was later pinned on the pole outside waste ground on Collington Way, in the West Bridgford area.

Payne also admitted writing “no Mosque here, EDL Notts” on the pavement near the site of the proposed mosque.

He admitted causing racially or religiously aggravated harassment, alarm or distress and racially or religiously aggravated criminal damage.

He was also ordered to pay a £250 fine with £85 costs, complete 100 hours of community service and stay out of West Bridgford for 12 months.

In sentencing, District Judge Morris Cooper told the court he had reduced Payne’s sentence by a third because he pleaded guilty.” Source: [BBC News](#), 21 July 2011.

RELIGION & BELIEF

Commission proposes ‘reasonable accommodation’ for religion or belief is needed

Judges have interpreted the law too narrowly in religion or belief discrimination claims, the Equality and Human Rights Commission has said in its application to intervene in four cases at the European Court of Human Rights all involving religious discrimination in the workplace.

If given leave to intervene [1], the Commission will argue that the way existing human rights and equality law has been interpreted by judges is insufficient to protect freedom of religion or belief.

It will say that the courts have set the bar too high for someone to prove that they have been discriminated against because of their religion or belief; and that it is possible to accommodate expression of religion alongside the rights of people who are not religious and the needs of businesses [2].

The Commission is concerned that rulings already made by UK and European courts have created a body of confusing and contradictory case law. For example, some Christians wanting to display religious symbols in the workplace have lost their legal claim so are not allowed to wear a cross, while others have been allowed to after reaching a compromise with their employer.

As a result, it is difficult for employers or service providers to know what they should be doing to protect people from religion or belief based discrimination. They may be being overly cautious in some cases and so are unnecessarily restricting people’s rights. It is also difficult for employees who have no choice but to abide by their employers decision.

The Commission thinks there is a need for clearer legal principles to help the courts consider what is and what is not justifiable in religion or belief cases, which will help to resolve differences without resorting to legal action. The Commission will propose the idea of ‘reasonable accommodations’ that will help employers and others manage how they allow people to manifest their religion or belief.

For example, if a Jew asks not to have to work on a Saturday for religious reasons, his employer could accommodate this with minimum disruption simply by changing the rota. This would potentially be reasonable and would provide a good outcome for both employee and employer.

John Wadham, Group Director, Legal, at the Commission, said:

"Our intervention in these cases would encourage judges to interpret the law more broadly and more clearly to the benefit of people who are religious and those who are not.

"The idea of making reasonable adjustments to accommodate a person's needs has served disability discrimination law well for decades. It seems reasonable that a similar concept could be adopted to allow someone to manifest their religious beliefs."

The intervention follows a report for the Commission which found that many people do not understand their rights around religion or belief. The Commission is concerned that this could be preventing people from using their rights.

For more press information contact the Commission's media office on 020 3117 0255, out of hours 07767 272 818.

SEX

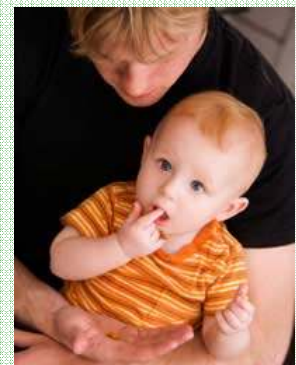
NEW RIGHTS FOR FATHERS IN 2011

If you are a new dad and your partner is returning or has returned to work, you could have the right to up to 26 weeks' Additional Paternity Leave.

Following a recent review of the rights and regulations for paternity leave and pay, you could qualify for Additional Paternity Leave and Additional Statutory Paternity Pay

To find out more and to see if you qualify, visit www.direct.gov.uk or follow the link below.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Moneyandworkentitlements/WorkAndFamilies/Paternityrightsintheworkplace/DG_190788



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Gay people contribute £40bn every year to fund Britain's public services. As a Stonewall supporter, you'll remember the hard battles we fought to ensure that every one of Britain's 3.7 million lesbian, gay and bisexual citizens is now treated equally by each one of those services

So imagine our surprise to find that the Equality and Human Rights Commission – publicly-funded itself - thinks that guaranteeing fair treatment for gay people doesn't offer adequate 'accommodation' for those seeking to discriminate against us using the cloak of religious belief to disguise their prejudice. The Commission has applied to intervene in a European Court case involving, among others, Lillian Ladele and Gary McFarlane, and water down our hard-won protections.

The Commission should be crystal clear that if it seeks to defend the claimed right of any public servant to turn away any user of a public service, it will face the strongest opposition from us. It would be unthinkable for it to support a religious nurse who wanted to refuse to treat an alcoholic or a social worker who declined to assist single mothers. It's shocking that it should even be considering a dilution of a settled legal position that gay people have fought so hard for.

Source: Stonewall Bulletin July 2011

DISABILITY

CHANGING PLACE NOW IN BEDFORD

Most accessible disabled persons' toilets do not meet the needs of many disabled people. However, 'Changing Places' toilets provide a height-adjustable adult-sized changing bench, a hoist and plenty of space to meet the requirements of many thousands of people living in the UK today

Bedford has now joined the growing number of towns and cities which have a 'Changing Place'. It is located on the first parking floor of River Street multi-storey car park, close to the disabled persons' parking spaces, and served by three large lifts. It has been funded by the Borough Council through an 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' grant and with support from Bedford MENCAP. It will be officially opened by Bedford's Mayor, Dave Hodgson, in a brief ceremony on Friday 1st July 2011

Immediately after the official opening, there is an invitation for anyone interested in the facility to take a look at the provision and ask any questions about how and when it can be used in the future. This opportunity can be taken from 11.15am until 1.00pm.

Commission response to the Supreme Court decision in McDonald care case

John Wadham, Group Director, Legal, at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, said:

'We are disappointed with today's ruling which is a significant setback for people who receive care in their home. Ms McDonald is not incontinent, however this judgment means she will be treated as such.

'Local authorities will now have greater discretion in deciding how to meet a person's home care needs and will find it easier to justify withdrawing care. This means that older people's human rights to privacy, autonomy and dignity will often be put at serious risk.

'The Court has missed a significant opportunity to interpret the law to protect some of the most vulnerable people to harm in society. The Commission's inquiry into care in the home has already highlighted some of the problems with the current system of home care. This judgment will only fuel those problems.'

AGE

Age UK have recently published an article detailing case studies for older people and technology.

"Age UK wants to make sure that none of us are left behind when it comes to what's called digital inclusion, and over the past 10 years we've reached over 150,000 older people with our [technology programmes](#). But don't just take our word for it - we'd like to introduce you to Anne, Leonard and Hazel, who all started using computers in later life, and haven't looked back."

If you would like to read the article in full, go to <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/>

Children born in 2011 have a much greater chance of reaching the age of 100 than previous generations, according to official figures.

The latest Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) research indicates that girls who are born this year may have a one in three chance of living to see their centenary year.

For boys, there is a one in four chance of this occurring.

The statistics also show that those who are currently aged 20 are now three times more likely to see their 100th year than their [grandparents](#).

See more at: <http://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-news/more-youngsters-set-to-reach-100?ito=1890&itc=0>

Source : Press Association Published on 04 August 2011

LEARNING DISABILITY



Nearly one in five people in learning disability hospitals such as Winterbourne View have been there for more than five years, *Community Care* has found.

Although these facilities are intended for short-term assessment and treatment, patients had been living in them for 23 months on average. The client group typically involves people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour or other complex needs, with places commissioned by the NHS.

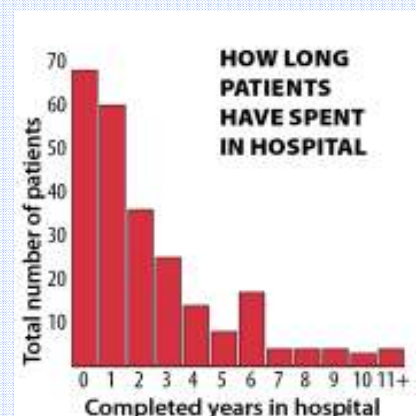
Information gathered under the Freedom of Information Act from 32 primary care trusts, covering 247 patients, showed 18% had been in hospitals for five years or more and 3% had been resident for more than 10. The longest stay was 20 years.

"It's truly shocking," said shadow care services minister Emily Thornberry. "It seems that primary care trusts have found an easy route for when people are difficult to place - they are just parked somewhere because people don't want to address the issue."

The spotlight turned on learning disability hospitals recently when [BBC Panorama screened footage of alleged abuse of patients at Winterbourne View in Bristol](#), sparking a police inquiry, a serious case review and plans for a national inspection programme. After the broadcast, [86 experts and organisations](#) called on the prime minister to end the use of learning disability hospitals citing "poor outcomes, often at very high cost".

For more info please visit

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2011/07/19/117198/patients-left-in->



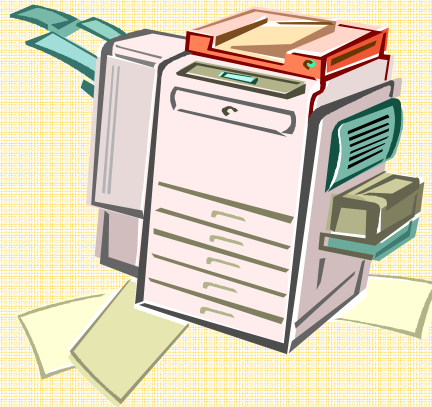
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Email: bedfordrec@btconnect.com

Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council

You can now follow us on

facebook.

See us at Bedfordshire Equalities for all the latest updates, info, news and events on equality matters and human rights!





Children with Disabilities Central Bedfordshire

Have your say on the Draft Short Breaks Statement for Central Bedfordshire

From October 2011 all Councils will be required to publish a Short Breaks Service Statement so that families know what services are available to them.

We would like to find out your views on the Draft Short Breaks Statement for Central Bedfordshire. Please read the [draft statement document](#) then complete the [online questionnaire](#). The website link is

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/consultations/default.aspx>

Your feedback will help shape the final Statement for Short Breaks Services.

Please complete this questionnaire by 12 September 2011.

For further information please contact Christine Collis on 0300 300 6311 (please leave a message and I will return your call) or email

christine.collis@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

FREE TRAINING

Are you a community group?

Do you give information or advice to your community?

Would a quality system help you to develop your services?

BR&EC is running a regular series of free training programmes for groups that give information or advice to their communities.

The training will help groups develop and improve their services by supporting them to obtain a local quality mark called Q-cas. This quality system has been developed especially for small community groups in Bedfordshire.

Contact us to join
the register for the
next

programme due late
2011/early 2012



Q-cas
A quality system for
community advice services

Q-cas has 4 themes
A wareness of your community
B uilding your organisation
C ompetence in giving advice
D elivering high quality advice

For more information about the
programme contact Purva Joshi:

purvabrec@btconnect.com

01234 350459



Bedfordshire Race
& Equalities Council



Volunteers for Children in Care

Do you have time to spare on Saturdays? Could you volunteer to offer friendship, fun, support and a sense of cultural identity to a Black African or Asian boy living in foster care? We are seeking male or female volunteers, aged over 18 years and able to give a long term commitment to this role. You would be linked on a one-to-one basis with the child enjoying outings and activities. You would meet with them once every 2 weeks, on a Saturday, taking them out for a few hours.

You need use of your own car for this role. Travel and out of pocket expenses will be paid.

You need to offer commitment, be reliable, tolerant and non-judgemental,

Full training and support is given. Training takes place in Bedford.

All Applicants will be subject to Enhanced Criminal Records checks, costs will be met by the organisation

If you would like to find out more

Contact Carol or Jenny on 01234 330866 email: cthirlwall@spurgeons.org



Spurgeons Bedfordshire Independent Visitors

Public sector duties help schools to meet the needs of pupils

The **public sector equality duties** are helping schools in England and Wales to improve outcomes for their pupils, according to recent research released by the Equality & Human Rights Commission.

Most schools (93 per cent) can describe something they have done to meet the disability equality duty which has contributed towards positive outcomes for pupils. For example, more than half of schools (54 per cent) have taken steps to make their facilities more suitable for disabled pupils, or have plans to do so.

Nine out of ten schools said they had made measurable progress in meeting the race equality duty, including organising cross-cultural events and tackling racist bullying. The majority (82 per cent) had taken measures to meet the gender equality duty, and had seen improved participation in clubs and activities by both sexes, for example. Gender equality appears to be the least well-developed area, with three in five schools (59 per cent) saying that they do not have an action plan with set targets for this.

Fewer than four in ten schools (38 per cent) were aware of the new public sector equality duty which was introduced earlier this year as part of the Equality Act 2010. This extends their existing equality duties for gender, race and disability into new areas. Limited progress has been made on equality issues like sexual orientation, gender re-assignment and maternity and pregnancy. This indicates that schools have a steep learning curve following the introduction of the new legislation.

Commencement of the Specific Public Sector Equality Duties Delayed

The **specific public sector equality duties** are aimed at assisting public authorities in the better performance of the general public sector equality duty contained in the Equality Act 2010, which has been in force since 5 April 2011.

The Regulations bringing into force the specific public sector equality duties will not come into force in **July 2011** as previously expected.

The draft Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 were laid before Parliament on 28 June 2011, but have not been approved by Parliament before the summer recess. The Government had previously stated that it expected the Regulations to come into force in July 2011, but now says that the debate on the draft Regulations in the House of Lords is expected to take place in **September 2011**. It is not known when the Regulations and the specific duties will come into force.

The Regulations provide for two specific duties:

- the duty to publish equality information and
- the duty to publish equality objectives

Under the specific duty to publish equality information, a public authority must publish information to demonstrate its compliance with the general equality duty, including, in particular, information relating to persons who share a relevant protected characteristic who are: its employees; and other persons affected by its policies and practices. The requirement to publish information about employees does not apply to public authorities with fewer than 150 employees.

The draft Regulations provide that public authorities (except schools) must publish this information no later than 31 January 2012, and subsequently at intervals of no more than one year. Schools have until 6 April 2012 to publish the information.

Under the specific duty to publish equality objectives, a public authority must prepare and publish one or more objectives that it thinks it should achieve to comply with any part of the general equality duty, no later than 6 April 2012, and subsequently at intervals of no more than four years.

- The Public Sector Equality Duty Information about the progress of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 through Parliament is available on the Home Office website.
- The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011—The draft Regulations are available on the Home Office website.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/equalities/equality-act/equality-duty/>

Remembering Balbir "Bob" Dutt

It has been a year since the sad and sudden death of our great friend and colleague, Balbir "Bob" Dutt. To celebrate his life and provide an opportunity for family, friends, colleagues, associates and for all those who knew and appreciated Balbir, to come together, share memories and enjoy some community hospitality there will be a special event at the Guru Ravidass Community Centre, Ashburnham Road, Bedford on:

SUNDAY 11TH SEPTEMBER 2011

2pm to 6pm

All welcome for food and refreshments, entertainment and shared memories

Please advise of your attendance by contacting either:

Mr Kuldip Rupra OBE krupra@ntlworld.com or
email Beds R&EC to bedfordrec@btconnect.com

Please note this is not a faith celebration or religious service of remembrance. The faith memorial is being held separately.

Luton Law Centre sponsor an annual Bedfordshire Race & Equalities Council Community Champion Award as part of the Equality & Diversity Awards event. We welcome nominations for this award and if you would like to apply for this award or nominate an individual, then please contact us for an application form by calling 01234 350459 or email Purva Joshi or Robyn Anderson to: bedfordrec@btconnect.com



Services Provided by Bedfordshire R&EC



- **Assessment & Audit of Equality Impact Assessments**
- **Equality Impact Assessment Training**
- **Equality & Diversity - Managing Diversity Training**
- **Conferences & Seminars: facilitation & organisation**
- **Cultural Awareness Workshops**
- **Consultations & Research**
- **Community Leadership & Development Programmes**
- **Equality & Diversity Self Assessment**
- **Trustee Board Training**
- **Multi Faith Calendars**
- **Quality Assurance Training for Advice Services**

To discuss any of these services please contact Wendy Anderson-Welsh on 01234 350459 Ext 117 or email: wendybrec@btconnect.com

WANT TO JOIN US?

Opportunities include:

- **Volunteering on Projects**
- **Bedfordshire Women's Forum**
- **Trustee Board Membership**
- **Mentoring with BME Education Support Service**
- **Work Experience**
- **Trainee Volunteer Adviser**
- **Student Placement**

For more information: Tel: BR&EC on 01234 350459

or

Email: bedfordrec@btconnect.com