

# **Fairness Commission – BSL video (Part 3)**

## **Living and ageing well in an accessible city**

We know that being socially isolated is very bad for your health and the best way to prevent this is through social networks and having opportunities to meet with other people and take part in activities.

Professionals, individuals and groups have presented strong evidence on the best ways of addressing social isolation. The arts, community networks, transport to activities good-neighbour schemes, lunch clubs were highlighted as being particularly effective in addressing social isolation and social prescribing – where people are signposted to these types of activities to help them feel better.

We recommend more focus on preventative in the city. This would achieve better results and save money in the long-term.

The city has made a commitment to become an 'Age Friendly City' but the evidence we heard suggests that many of the World Health Organisation's Essential Criteria are not being met or implemented.

## **Recommendations**

We need to do more to prevent social isolation - including digital exclusion - provide better support for carers and access to leisure and employment opportunities.

We are asking the city council and its partner to look at the progress they are making to become an Age Friendly City and have a plan for making better progress.

We are asking the city council and its partners to have a Town Access Group to take action on accessibility issues, including checking planning applications. We think that Brighton & Hove should aim to become a fully accessible city by 2020.

Finally, we think partners should encourage more community buildings, spaces and businesses to sign up to the 'Use Our Loo' scheme and promote it. The city council should lead by example and promote the scheme in all its buildings across the city.

## **Living life to the full**

Residents wanted the city to be a place where EVERYBODY gets an equal chance, not only lucky people. They told us that a fair city supports everybody to live fulfilling lives and have control over their lives and that people who are disadvantaged are able to get the support they need.

Residents said that this means supporting people to get the right skills so they could have better employment opportunities. Support to get into better paid work would help lift people out of poverty.

## A diverse and inclusive city

Residents told us that there were several groups of people who needed additional support so they didn't become more excluded from society and unable to live their lives to the full. We met with many members of the Deaf Community and heard that you can't get the information you need if you use British Sign Language, including from the city council's website. You also told us the Job Centre doesn't give you the support you need to get into employment. You said that you were excluded from public consultations if there wasn't a British Sign Language interpreter. You also told us that the Sussex Deaf Association cannot always help you because the people who work there are not fluent users of BSL.

We heard evidence from other groups with disabilities too.

We heard that women with Learning Disabilities often had their children taken into care and they wanted support so they could be parents.

People with Autistic Spectrum Disorders said that people didn't understand their disability and that life was very difficult for them.

LGBT people, especially Trans people, face discrimination, abuse and exclusion – particularly in relation to housing support. LGBT people are very diverse and include people who face discrimination in others areas: because they are disabled or Black and Minority Ethnic, or have Mental Health issues – services need to recognise this and work better together.

Black and Minority Ethnic people said they needed more support to get a job and that many people in the city were racist.

We heard from many groups and we have made recommendations to support them all and here is the summary.

## Recommendations

We make the following recommendations that will help particular groups feel supported, valued and protected.

We want to improve access and rights for Deaf people who use British Sign Language, and we are asking the city council to sign up to the British Deaf Association's Charter for British Sign Language and implement the following five pledges set out within it:

- Ensure access for Deaf people to information and services and for health care services this should follow the principles of the Accessible Information Standard
- Promote learning and high quality teaching of British Sign Language
- Support Deaf children and families
- Ensure staff working with Deaf people can communicate effectively in British Sign Language
- Consult with our local Deaf community on a regular basis.

For other groups, we are asking the city council to do more to support learning-disabled parents so that they are supported to look after their children and not so likely to be taken into care. We think this will be better for everyone and save public money.

We are asking all partners to develop the Autism Strategy with the full involvement of people with Autistic Spectrum Conditions (or their families/carers) and make sure the resources are available to implement it.

We are asking all partners to do more to make sure people have better awareness of all these equalities issues.

## **Fair employment**

We want to make sure that no-one is left behind and people who face particular barriers to employment, particularly the low-skilled, people with disabilities and some members of the Black and Minority Ethnic community, are properly supported.

Businesses and social enterprises can help to make the city a fairer place to live and work. They can pay the Brighton & Hove Living Wage, support work trials, paid internships and take on apprentices.

We have seen evidence that flexible working and quality part-time jobs are important ways of lifting people out of poverty and supporting parents, especially lone parents and parents of disabled children, into the workplace. There are real benefits to both society and to employers of offering flexible working and quality part-time jobs and this needs to be promoted with support from the city council and the Brighton Chamber of Commerce.