

## Community Cohesion in Leicester, United Kingdom

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## Leicester's Changing

- City in geographical centre of country
- 10<sup>th</sup> largest in UK
- Population 300,000
- Nearly half have ethnic minority background



## Leicester's population

- 60% white
- Nearly 30% Indian
- Smaller groups
  - 4% African Caribbean
  - 3% Somali
  - 2% Pakistani
  - 1% Bangladeshi
  - Zimbabweans, Turks, Afghans, Iraqis, Kurds



## Community Cohesion in Leicester

- Applies to both white and ethnic minority communities
- Applies to ethnicity, gender, faith, age, disability and sexual orientation
- Applies to new communities as well as longstanding communities



## Social Exclusion: Poverty

- Leicester is a poor city
- Deprivation and poverty on both outer estates and amongst newly arrived communities
  - 2/3 of city can't read or write English easily
  - High unemployment levels
  - Poor health



## Social Exclusion: Cultural Adjustment

- Immediate needs:
  - Communication – language barriers
  - Community v individual approach
  - Legacy of personal history esp. Asylum seekers and refugees
  - Need for advice and advocacy
- Barriers to integration:
  - Knowledge of 'systems' e.g. schools admissions, housing
  - Employment barriers
  - Physical and mental health issues



## So what do we do?

### Understand our communities

- Map what communities live in our city and what are their needs
- Anticipate tensions
- Understand perceptions and myths
- Work with the media – Leicester Multicultural Advisory Group



## So what do we do?

### Work across communities to develop understanding and trust

- Examples such as school twinning, sports and arts programmes, inter-faith networks and activities for older people
- Special projects to bring young people together around anti-bullying, street sports, football, creative arts and holiday activities



## So what do we do?

### Build capacity

- Work with health services and the police
- Develop community leaders
- Make it mainstream – in schools, housing, neighbourhoods, public transport and in the workplace



## Social Exclusion and Community Cohesion

- Needs political will and leadership
- Is complex, challenging and changing
  - new migrant communities
  - threat of violent extremism
  - international events
- It's all about learning to live together in 'One Leicester'

