

Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Equality and Diversity Policy including Diversity Statement

Introduction

The Leeds City Region covers a large physical area and spans 10 local authority areas (Barnsley, Bradford, Calderdale, Craven, Harrogate, Kirklees, Leeds, Selby, Wakefield and York), and is the biggest outside London, worth over £69.6 billion and generating 5% of England's output. It has 3 million residents, a workforce of 1.9 million, over 130,000 businesses, 14 Further Education Colleges and 10 Higher Education Institutions, one of the largest concentrations in Europe.

In order to deliver significant growth and productivity gains we aim to remove all barriers to achieving economic performance, resulting in tangible economic benefits to our businesses, residents, visitors, workforce and diverse communities. Our diverse communities will benefit from strong economic growth and no community will be excluded from full participation in economic life and progress.

The competitive advantage arising from local diversity will be harnessed to drive growth. We aim to integrate equality into all that we do, and the work that others do on behalf of the Leeds City Region.

What is Equality and Diversity?

Equality is ensuring individuals or groups of individuals are not treated differently or less favourably, on the basis of their specific protected characteristic, including race, gender, disability, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, age, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

Diversity aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences to contribute and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for all.

Diversity and equality issues impact everyone in the Leeds City Region area, hence we are committed to removing barriers that might restrict people and continue to work towards positive change.

Commitment required

The LEP is committed to achieving diversity and equality of opportunity both as a partnership and as a commissioner of services. In practice this means doing what we can to positively promote equality and diversity across the delivery of projects, programmes and services and in relation to our own structure.

The LEP promotes equality of opportunity and does all it can to ensure that no member of the public, service user, contractor or staff member working within a partner organisation will be unlawfully discriminated against.

What we will do

The LEP will engage with all stakeholders and be inclusive and transparent in all communications. Our priorities and objectives mostly deliver an equality impact, for example, by targeting key sectors, priority groups, and local communities. In addition, we will work with our partners to ensure that all project development, commissioning and tendering procedures support the following principles:

- Advancing equality of opportunity;
- Showing our commitment to support those with a protected characteristic into enterprise and employment;
- Ensuring the elimination of unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

We will ensure barriers to equality are being proactively tackled at delivery level and in delivering our equality and diversity policy we will:

- Assess the impact on equality as we develop our strategies, policies and programmes, and consider what actions, if any, may be appropriate to improve any identified adverse impacts;
- Through West Yorkshire Combined Authority role as the accountable body, monitor our social, environmental and economic impact and the impact on equality as we implement our strategies, policies and programmes;
- Be open and transparent and publish all information regarding our progress on achieving equality and diversity;
- Work in partnership with the range of local, regional, and national organisations to create new and better actions;
- Provide excellent customer care by ensuring that services are provided by knowledgeable and well-trained staff who understand the needs of their communities; and
- Promote best practice.

Diversity Statement regarding board membership and sub groups

Selection for board membership will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. We shall encourage applications from all diverse backgrounds to the board and its sub groups. We shall also endeavour to recruit openly from our community so that the board reflects regional diversity in terms of the protected characteristics. This measure will be assessed annually and the results produced for the board. We shall ensure that all members of the board and its sub groups have had equality and diversity training.

Further to the National Local Growth Assurance Framework (2019) this statement acts as our commitment to ensure that by 2020 at least one third of members of the LEP Board are women with an expectation for equal representation by 2023.

Responsibilities

The ultimate responsibility for our policy rests with the LEP Board members to ensure that there are systems in place to put this policy into practice on a day-to-day basis.

The LEP is responsible and accountable for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring we fulfil our role in addressing diversity issues by promotion of this policy.

The LEP Board and team members will be made aware of their responsibility to challenge discrimination. This Policy will be reviewed every year and any recommendations and changes are to be agreed by the Board.