

Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

Equality and Diversity Policy including Diversity Statement

Introduction

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 LEP Board and Advisory Panel membership

It is recognised that the composition of representatives on the LEP is important as a breadth of interests must be taken into consideration to ensure that growth strategies are relevant, representative and widely supported across the Leeds City Region. The aim of each recruitment exercise for private sector representatives is to promote and achieve representation that reflects the diversity, industry and geography of the region.

Selection of private sector representatives by the LEP Board for LEP Board membership will be on the basis of aptitude and ability, in accordance with the LEP's Recruitment and Appointment Procedure for Private Sector Representatives. The Recruitment and Appointment Procedure also covers appointments of private sector representatives to the Advisory Panels appointed by the Combined Authority which report to the LEP Board. We encourage applications from all diverse backgrounds

and endeavour to recruit openly from our community so that the LEP Board as a whole reflects regional diversity in terms of the protected characteristics.

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. We are pleased to report that we have met both these commitments in 2020.

We ensure that all members of the LEP Board including any co-optees have equality and diversity training.

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.

At its annual meeting, the LEP Board identifies a member of the LEP Board to act as **diversity champion**. Their role is to encourage diversity and ensure that the LEP is acting in line with this policy (including the diversity statement).

The LEP Board **Members' Code of Conduct** requires each member of the LEP Board to act consistently with this policy (including the diversity statement). They are obliged by the Code not to do anything which may cause the LEP Board or the Combined Authority to breach any duty relating to equality or contribute to any failure to comply with the LEP's policy.

Combined Authority officers serve both the LEP and the Combined Authority. They must comply with the Combined Authority's **employee equality and diversity policy**.

Review and monitoring

This policy (including the diversity statement) is reviewed by the LEP Board as a minimum every year at the LEP Board's annual meeting, at which the LEP Board also receives an **annual report on diversity** discussing progress in encouraging diversity (including the gender balance) on the LEP Board, and how improvements can be made.