

## Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

### Equality and Diversity Policy including Diversity Statement

#### Introduction

In order to deliver quality and significant growth with productivity gains we aim to continually remove all barriers to achieving economic participation and performance, resulting in tangible economic benefits to our businesses, residents, visitors, workforce and diverse communities. Our vision is to be a leader recognised nationally for our focus and commitment to EDI. It is therefore critical that diverse communities will benefit from strong economic growth and no community will be excluded from full access and participation in economic life, progress, and security.

We embed equality, diversity and inclusion into all that we do, and integrate equality, diversity and inclusion in the work that others do on behalf of the Leeds City Region.

#### What is Equality and Diversity?

**Equality** is about creating a fairer society where everyone can participate and has the same opportunity to fulfil their potential. Equality is focussed within a legislative framework – the main piece of legislation is the Equality Act 2010. The Act is designed to address unfair discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. There are nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act: age, disability, gender reassignment (transgender), marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex (gender), and sexual orientation.

Everyone is treated equally and equitably under policies, practices and have the same rights as everyone else. Everyone is provided with equitable access to opportunities, and there is parity between the outcomes everyone can achieve from those opportunities.

**Equity** is the recognition and understanding that some groups are disadvantaged, and others are advantaged and in order to achieve equal outcomes for all, specific action needs to be taken to level this out.

**Diversity** involves more. It is about valuing the full range of differences between people in the workplace and wider society. Promoting diversity acknowledges entry into the workplace, an employee reaching their potential once there, or a user/partner accessing the CA's services. Opportunities can be impacted / influenced by a range of factors beyond the protected characteristics included within the equality legislation, including social, economic, and educational background, professional background, hierarchal level, and working styles. It involves an understanding of the perceptions and experiences of others. Diversity is also a description of the way an organisation looks and how well it serves its people, place and regional populations. It reflects a picture of different types of people at different

levels in the organisation and how well different needs are met in service planning, commissioning, and delivery. This is the result of 'harnessing and valuing difference'. The legislation is an important element, but the scope of diversity is far richer than the legal basis.

**Intersectionality** is the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. People who represent more than one minority group and therefore define into more than one of the nine protected characteristics.

**Inclusion** within the equality and diversity context:

- Is about including and nurturing all people
- Is about the culture, environment, and processes operated by the organisation
- Is measured by how people feel
- Requires proactive effort to be achieved

## What we will do

The LEP will engage with all stakeholders and be accessible, 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 the following principles are supported:

- 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.

The LEP will actively champion equality of opportunity (and/or, equality, diversity and inclusion) and do all it can to ensure that no member of the public, contractor or staff member working within a partner organisation will be unlawfully discriminated against.

We will ensure that any barriers to equality, diversity and inclusion are being proactively tackled and in delivering our equality, diversity and inclusion policy we will:

- Assess the impact on equality, diversity and inclusion as we develop our strategies, policies and programmes, and consider what actions, if any, may be appropriate to improve and where necessary, mitigate any identified adverse impacts with due regard;
- Through West Yorkshire Combined Authority role as the accountable body, monitor the impact on, diversity and inclusion as we implement our strategies, policies and programmes as well as in the work we commission
- Be open and transparent and publish all information regarding our progress on achieving equality, diversity and inclusion;

- Work in partnership with the range of local, regional, and national organisations to celebrate activities and progress as well as create innovative and better actions; and
- Promote best practice and leverage relationships in working together for an inclusive West Yorkshire

## **Diversity Statement regarding LEP Board and CA Committee 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 CA Committees, 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.

We ensure that all members of the LEP Board including any co-optees have completed equality, diversity and inclusion training within the last three years.

## **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 equality, diversity and inclusion 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 enable, educate, empower and nurture equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that the LEP is operating in line with this policy.

The LEP Board **Members' Code of Conduct** requires each member of the LEP Board to act (behave and perform) 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, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty, and/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, vision and champion the principles of the statement, whilst role modelling EDI in the CA's values.