

Equalities Assembly and Hubs – A Guide for Services



What is the Council's Equalities Assembly?

The Equalities Assembly is a forum, made up of Equality Hubs, which helps to ensure the council is engaging with and involving the full range of citizens in Leeds in the decisions that it makes. It provides a way for the council to understand local people's views, helping to improve the services and employment opportunities it offers.

The Equalities Assembly is community led with membership drawn from across all equality strands and communities of interest. It was set up to strengthen the involvement of the city's diverse communities in decision making and enable Leeds' residents to challenge the council's progress on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The Assembly symbolises a shift from consultation to involvement and takes a community development approach, moving away from one off events to developing long term and sustainable relationships.

Equality Hubs

There are currently 6 Equality Hubs within the Equalities Assembly:

- Age Hub – to represent younger and older people's views (currently only representing older people's views. Work is ongoing to establish appropriate structures to engage with younger people).
- Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Hub – to represent people from BME communities
- Carers Hub – to represent people who provide care for someone who could not manage otherwise because of frailty, illness or disability
- Disability Hub – to represent people who have a physical, sensory or learning disability or have a mental health condition or long-term illness
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Hub – to represent the LGBT community
- Religion or Belief Hub – to represent members of all religion or belief communities

Gender – although there is not a separate hub, gender issues will be considered within all the hubs.

Work of the Equality Hubs

Each Hub will identify key priority areas that they want to work on over the year. Relevant services will then be approached by the Equality Team to look at establishing an appropriate way of working together.

There will also be an opportunity for services to proactively engage with the Equality Hubs.

Role of directorate/services

Services can consult with and involve the equality hubs in projects they are undertaking. There needs to be clear information on what is expected from the Hub members and also clear deadlines. Hubs require a minimum of 8 weeks for Hub members to respond on consultation/involvement documents.

Attending meetings

Senior managers from services may also attend the quarterly Hub Meetings or Hub Representatives Network to consult on specific issues. This could be at the invitation of the Hub or where the Service is actively seeking consultation/engagement opportunities. More in-depth consultation can also be arranged with smaller focus groups or workshops.

If you are interested in attending a Hub meeting or working with members of any of the Hubs please contact the Equality Team using the contact details below.

Hub Representatives Network

Each Equality Hub will have up to 3 representatives, who will have been nominated by their fellow Hub Members. Their role will be to attend quarterly Hub Representatives Network meetings to:

- Discuss cross-cutting issues that have been raised in their individual hub meetings and which may affect several hubs.
- Provide the Council with an understanding of barriers to access.
- Provide feedback which can be taken back to the individual Hub Meetings and to Services.

The Hub Representatives Network may also hold thematic workshops. The themes will be based around the issues raised at the quarterly Hub Meetings and relevant senior managers will be asked to attend the meetings which are appropriate or relevant to their areas of responsibility.

The Hub Representatives Network will have the opportunity to meet with Leeds City Council's Assistant Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to inform them of issues and concerns raised and agreed at the Hub meetings. The ability for local people from a diverse range of communities to meet with those who are in a position to make decisions helps ensure that services and employment opportunities provided by Leeds City Council are as accessible as possible to everyone.

Contacting the Equalities Assembly and Hubs

There are over 400 contacts on the Equalities Assembly database, which is made up of:

- individuals who identify with a particular equality group or groups and
- representatives from community groups and organisations

For data protection reasons the Equality Team is unable to share this information. However we can send information out by post on your behalf if you provide hard copies of the documents. Services may wish to use this database to communicate or consult with different equality groups. Postage will be charged to the service.

Information can also be sent out by e-mail. We are currently gathering email addresses for all our contacts. Information sent by this method will not be chargeable.

For more information about the Equalities Assembly and how you can get involved, please contact the Equality Team on: 24 74190, text: 07891 270 162 or email: equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk

Website is: www.leeds.gov.uk/equality