**LCRCA Equality Scheme Consultation Brief**

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is looking to commission community and voluntary sector organisations to consult with citizens across the six districts of Liverpool City Region (Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral) about the development of its Equality Scheme and objectives.

The purpose is to get focused engagement sessions to ensure that we have representative responses from groups with certain protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

**Background**

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority brings together six local authorities – Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral - and is led by Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, first elected in 2017.

The Combined Authority has devolved powers on transport, strategic planning, business support, employment, adult education, culture, digital and strategic housing, in relation to all of which it invests in projects with a £0.5bn Strategic Investment Fund. £400m has already been invested in schemes to:

* Create jobs and apprenticeships
* Make it easier to travel in and around the city region
* Renovate and improve schools and colleges
* Help long-term unemployed families back into work
* Support cultural events, such as the return of the Giants

In the 10 years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Liverpool City Region experienced reduced unemployment, down from a peak of 10% in 2010 to 4%, a lower rate than the national average. However, this improvement in unemployment is not fully mirrored amongst BAME communities and disabled people. In addition, women, BAME and disabled people disproportionately work in insecure and low paid roles in those sectors highly likely to be most negatively impacted by COVID-19, sectors that are in turn over-represented in the LCR economy. In addition, occupations in the health and care sector tend to employ higher proportions of women and BAME people compared to the labour market overall, the very sectors where there is above average risk of exposure to COVID-19.

It can therefore be anticipated that COVID-19 will have a harder impact on equality in the LCR, exacerbating a situation that was already worse than elsewhere. For example, as an illustration of the persistent health inequalities experienced in the city region, pre-COVID-19 every local authority in the City Region had a higher prevalence of mental health disorders than national levels. This serves to underline the importance for the Combined Authority of applying a strong Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) lens to its work and the vital significance of the Equality Scheme and objectives we are developing. It is also vital that we hear the voices of people with protected characteristics from across our diverse communities in setting our equality objectives.

LCRCA has already framed its Declaration of Intent in terms of racial equality, setting ambitions, actions and achievements for its role as an employer, a commissioner and a civic leader. This will now form the template for disability/age, LGBTQ+/gender re-assignment/marriage and civil partnership, gender/pregnancy and maternity, and socio-economic status.

**Covid-19 guidance**

Although Liverpool City Region is not under Covid-19 restrictions the pandemic remains a serious health risk. It therefore remains our practise to ensure social distancing is observed, hand washing/sanitation takes place frequently and face masks are worn where appropriate. Any focus group activity must therefore adhere to these requirements. Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> for the latest advice and updates.

**Objective**

To engage with specific groups of citizens according to protected characteristics, specifically:

* LGBTQ+/gender re-assignment/marriage and civil partnership
* Gender/Pregnancy and maternity
* Socio-economic status

to obtain opinions on the development of the aims of LCRCA’s equality scheme.

**Outputs**

To engage with citizens across the 6 districts of Liverpool City Region (Liverpool, Knowsley, Halton, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral), delivering a minimum of 3 sessions across the Region, with a max of 10 in participants in each group and a minimum of 6.

Please note, you do not have to apply to supply in relation to all strands, this is just the minimum required for the whole project. If you can only complete 1 or 2, we may select other organisations to reach the total. It is also up to you to decide which district in the Liverpool City Region these individuals are from, it can be one, a few or all.

**Example:**

You can choose which and how many of the segmented groups (please see descriptions below) your organisation will be able to engage with. For example, you can decide to engage with LGBTQ+ citizens in the Liverpool district plus disabled citizens in the Knowsley district. Or you could choose to engage with individuals from all segmented groups in Sefton. This is at your discretion. Whichever combination of districts/Segmented groups, or all, please just ensure this is clear in the application.

**Segmented Groups and description of citizens**

* Residents from bottom 10%IMD areas - Those living in the most deprived / poorest communities in the City Region (minimum 1 x 10-person minimum events)
* LGBTQ+/Gender re-assignment/marriage and civil partnership (minimum 1 x 10-person minimum event)
* Gender/Pregnancy and maternity (minimum 1 x 10-person minimum event)

**Research topics to discuss**

What should be the aims, actions and achievements in relation to the particular protected characteristics referred to above, in terms of LCRCA’s role as an employer, as a commissioner and provider of services, and as a civic leader. The Race Equality Programme Declaration of Intent (**see Appendix A**) can be used as a template. Note that the discussion needs to be focused as much as possible on LCRCA’s areas of competence as outlined above. Again the Race Equality Programme Declaration of Intent is a helpful guide in this context.

At this stage the focus of LCRCA is to develop its headline aims/objectives and further work will be undertaken on the supporting actions and achievements over the next 12 months. Nonetheless feedback that goes beyond aims and into actions and achievements will be welcomed and will inform the next stage.

**Reporting**

Provide a detailed report from each of the sessions telling us what insight you have gained from the conversations you have had at each of the sessions. You can choose how you present this; it could include mind-maps, images, recordings, transcripts etc.

Please note that all submissions and reports need to be sent online, no hand delivered or posted submission will be considered.

We would ask that each participant could fill in the below demographic data sheet **that we will provide.** We do not need each individual sheet but ask that you provide a summary of the demographic data collected from participants of focus groups within your final report.

**Timescales**

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| Opportunity sent to Community and Voluntary Organisations | 20 August 2020 |
| Outlined proposals to be submitted online to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) | 5pm 2 September 2021 |
| LCRCA to notify applicants of proposal outcome | 7 September 2021 |
| Introduction online meeting via Microsoft teams LCRCA lead and successful applicant | 8 September 2021  1pm to 2pm |
| Delivery of sessions commence | 9 September 2021 to 30 September 2021 |
| Submit Focus Group Report | 6 October 2021 |

**Incentives**

We recognise it may be more difficult to engage during these unprecedented times and you may want to consider incentivising participation with a voucher/renumeration up to the value of £20 per participant per session.

**Budget**

£5,000 for the entire project.

Please complete the proposal template below and email submission to [community@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk](mailto:communities@liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk) by **5pm 2 September 2021**

