

Sheffield Equality Hub Network

Terms of Reference



Purpose

For under-represented communities in Sheffield to be able to have a say on issues that affect them and noticeably influence the decisions that are made in the city

Objectives

- To bring together communities of identity* where they can share experiences and good working practice
- To encourage Hub Members to raise key issues so that the needs of the city's diverse communities are heard, understood and effectively responded to
- To involve Hub Members in identifying barriers to services and participation
- To involve Hub Members in influencing the decisions the Council and other organisations make to overcome these barriers
- To work with the Council and other organisations to ensure that due regard to equality and diversity is given to services, strategies, policies and employment opportunities
- To contribute and challenge the Council's and other organisations' approaches to equality priorities, consultations and involvement opportunities
- To provide regular contact among communities of identity, the Council and other organisations. Due consideration must be given to Hub Members' access, communication and support needs. This includes sign language interpreters, induction loops, personal assistants and information in alternative formats

Overview

The Sheffield Equality Hub Network (Network) is made up of Equality Hubs (Hubs), the Equality Hub Network Board (Board) and Network-wide joint events.

The Network offers communities of identity the opportunity to make the city's decision makers aware of the issues which have a direct impact on them and influence the decisions that are made in the city.

The Hubs provide a welcoming environment where Sheffield's communities of identity discuss themes and issues which affect their quality of life. Organisations representing Sheffield's communities of identity are also involved in these discussions.

Each Hub is represented on the Board by 2 Equality Hub Representatives (Hub Representatives). The Board is chaired by an independent person. Other members of the Board include the Council's Cabinet Member with responsibility for Equality and senior officers from the Council and from other organisations.

Network-wide events are based on themes that cut across the Hubs' communities of identity. The events are open to anyone in the city who is interested in equality and fairness in Sheffield.

Each Hub will produce a short annual report which will feed into an overall Annual Hub report.

These Terms of Reference are to be reviewed annually and amended if agreed by the Board.

*Communities of identity are defined on the next page under Equality Hubs Membership.

Equality Hubs

Membership

- Membership of the specific Hubs is open to anyone who self defines as being part of one of the following equality characteristics:
 - Age
 - Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic, Refugee (BAMER)
 - Carers
 - Disability
 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and other gender minorities (LGBT+)
 - Religion or belief (includes no belief)
 - Women
- Membership is also open to organisations representing, working with or interested in Sheffield's communities of identity.
- Hub Members can be involved with more than one Hub.
- If officers from the Council or other organisations want to join a Hub in a personal capacity, they must declare any expressions of interests and be actively conscious that they are attending in their personal capacity and not representing their organisation. They should be aware of potential conflicts of interest and be sensitive to the concerns of Hub Members.
- Hub Members can attend as an individual and do not have to be involved with any other voluntary, community or faith sector organisation.
- Hub Members are expected to support Hub Representatives.
- Hub Members are asked to promote the work of the Hubs and feed back information to their wider networks.
- Issues discussed at Hub meetings must be ones which have been agreed by the Hub Members. The Hub meetings are not the appropriate place to discuss personal situations or cases unless taken up as a wider non-specific issue.
- Hub Members are expected to be courteous and respect fellow Hub Members, for example, not interrupting, giving everyone the opportunity to contribute to the discussions and recognising diverse needs.
- Hub Members are asked to listen and respect guest speakers. Guest speakers may be attending Hub meetings for the first time and they should try to encourage ongoing positive relationships.

Meetings

- Hub meetings are held regularly at least twice a year.
- Other task and finish/working group meetings can be held in between Hub meetings as necessary.

Committee/Organising Group

- Each Hub elects/selects its Committee/Organising Group annually.
- Committee/Organising Group Members are selected through self nomination, then Hub Members select/vote for their chosen candidates. Elections are held at a Hub meeting through a secret ballot. Prior notice (at least 4 weeks) of the elections is given to the Hub to allow for Hub Members to consider standing, as well as to ensure Hub Members can vote.
- Each Hub decides how many Committee/Organising Group Members to elect/select and what their roles are.
- At minimum, Committee Members fulfil the roles of Hub Representatives on the Board and Chair for the Hub meetings.
- Hub Representatives can serve as other roles on the Committee/Organising Group as well.

- Hub Committees should be led by the community of identity of that Hub.
- Committee/Organising Group Members are supported to undergo training for their roles.

Age Hub

- Intergenerational with focus on young people and older people
- The Age Hub Committee is made up of 2 Hub Representatives, Chair and other Members (roles not specified).
- 1 Age Hub Representative - young people and 1 Age Hub Representative - older people
- Aside from Hub Representatives, other Committee Members don't have to self-identify as either young person or older person.
- Anyone interested in age and ageing issues can attend Age Hub meetings.

BAMER Hub

- The BAMER Hub Committee is made up of 2 Hub Representatives, Chair, Vice Chair and Working Group Leads.
- Aside from Hub Representatives, other Committee Members don't have to self-identify as BAMER.
- Anyone interested in BAMER issues can attend BAMER Hub meetings.

Belief and/or Religion Hub

- The Belief and/or Religion Hub Committee is made up of 2 Hub Representatives, Chair, Vice Chair and Working Group Leads.
- 1 Belief and/or Religion Hub Representative - of religious belief and 1 Belief and/or Religion Hub Representative - of no religious belief.
- Anyone interested in issues relating to religion or belief (including no belief) can attend Belief and/or Religion Hub meetings.

Carers' Hub

- This Hub is virtual.
- The CEO of the Carers Centre represents the voice of carers on the Board.

Disability Hub

- The Disability Hub Organising Group is made up of 2 Hub Representatives who also serve as Chair and Vice Chair and other Members (roles not specified).
- Aside from Hub Representatives, other Committee Members don't have to self-identify as disabled.
- Anyone interested in disability issues can attend Disability Hub meetings.

LGBT+ Hub

- The LGBT+ Hub Committee is made up of 2 Hub Representatives, Chair and Vice Chair.
- Aside from Hub Representatives, other Committee Members don't have to self-identify as LGBT+.
- Anyone interested in LGBT+ issues can attend LGBT+ Hub meetings.

Women's Hub

- The Women's Hub Organising Group is made up of 2 Hub Representatives, Chair, Vice Chair, Working Group Leads and other Members (roles not specified).
- All Organising Group Members must self-identify as women.

- Women's Hub meetings are only open to self-identified women. Male guest speakers may be invited to Hub meetings.
- Women's Hub events may be open to all.

Equality Hub Representatives

- Hub Representatives must belong to the community of identity they represent.
- Hub Representatives must live or work in Sheffield.
- Each Hub Representative can only represent one Hub.
- The role of a Hub Representative is to:
 - Attend meetings of the Hub being represented and participate in its discussions
 - Attend the Board meetings and participate in its discussions
 - Feed back the discussions of the Hub being represented to Board
 - Advise and challenge Sheffield City Council and other organisations on the Board
 - Feed back the Board's discussions to the Hub being represented
 - Liaise with other Hub Representatives
 - Establish good relations with other members of the Board
 - To try to attract more members to the Hub being represented and promote its diversity
 - To provide input and help organise the Network-wide joint events
 - Feed back the discussions of the Board and the Hub being represented through existing and new networks and communication routes
- Hub Representatives may be asked to attend additional meetings to further the work of the Network.
- Hub Representatives must have the capacity in terms of time, experience, skills to fulfil the role.
- If a Hub Representative cannot attend a meeting, they must notify the chair and arrange for a deputy from the Hub's Committee/Organising Group to attend. If the Hub Representative fails to do this for 3 consecutive meetings, they will be asked to step down as a Hub Representative.

Equality Hub Network Board

The Board oversees the Network.

Membership

- Board Members are:
 - Independent Chair
 - Hub Representatives
 - Council's Executive Director of Resources
 - Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Equality
 - Senior officers from other organisations (by invitation)

Meetings

- Board meetings are held quarterly.
- Other task and finish meetings can be held in between Board meetings as necessary.

Equality Hub Network events

- Network-wide events are based on themes that cut across the Hubs' communities of identity.
- Themes are chosen by the Board.

- The events are open to anyone in the city who is interested in equality and fairness in Sheffield.

Invited speakers or Guests attending Hub and Board meetings

- Hubs can request guest speakers (from the Council and other organisations) to attend meetings to provide up to date information on their area of expertise/responsibility.
- Guest speakers are expected to be clear about how Hub Members can contribute to their organisation's business plan, priorities and strategies.
- Guest speakers are expected to feed back to the Hubs and the Board on progress.

Equality and Fairness Grants

- Organisations funded by an Equality and Fairness Grant co-ordinate and support their Hub, Committee/Organising Group and Working Groups in a way that:
 - Is inclusive and enables a wide range of people to participate.
 - Enables effective dialogue among communities, Sheffield City Council and other statutory organisations, that is to work with but also challenge and be a critical friend.
 - Feeds a range of views/opinions into the Equality Hub Network and city wide consultations.
 - Facilitates events that raise the visibility and awareness of the COI.
 - Raises awareness of issues relating to equality, diversity and fairness.
 - Develops a plan for the Hub that identifies the longer term strategic issues/outcomes, in order to proactively influence and change things for the better.
 - Effects positive change on equality, diversity and fairness in Sheffield.
 - Ensures effective Board representation by supporting Hub Representatives to participate in meetings and to feed back to Hub meetings.
 - Works together with other Hubs and other groups to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the Equality Hub Network.
 - Promotes the Hub and the Equality Hub Network.

Council officers supporting the Equality Hub Network

- The Council's Equalities and Involvement Team works closely with the grant-funded organisations supporting the Hubs and helps to:
 - Liaise with Council services and other organisations and promote the work and purpose of the Network.
 - Act as a conduit on behalf of the Hub Members, Council services and other organisations – this involves requesting information from services to disseminate to Hub Members and asking relevant officers to attend future Hub and Board meetings.
 - Make sure that Hubs have the opportunity to influence Council and other public sector organisations' services, strategies and policies through the process of giving due regard to equality and diversity.
 - Support Hubs when they request to work or share information on equality issues with the Council or other organisations, including publishing a monthly Network newsletter.
 - Support the Network in organising the Network-wide joint events.
 - Provide administration for the quarterly Board meetings and the Network-wide joint events, including booking meeting rooms at Town Hall.
 - Provide reasonable adjustments for all Hub Members.
 - To provide a clear policy regarding when and to whom expenses can be provided.
 - Ensure appropriate training is provided for Committee/Organising Group Members to undertake their roles.