



# Equality Hub Network Progress Review

## Final Report

Sheffield City Council

February 2016

# Contents

<b>About this Report - Overview .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Acknowledgments.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>1 Context, Scope and Approach.....</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 Context .....	10
1.2 Scope .....	12
1.3 Approach and Methodology .....	13
1.3.1 Desktop Review and Secondary Analysis .....	13
1.3.2 EHN Survey .....	14
1.3.3 EHN Members and Stakeholder interviews .....	15
1.3.4 EHN Feedback and Celebration Event (Facilitated Dialogue) .....	15
1.3.5 Analytical Approach.....	15
<b>2 Key Findings, Themes and Analyses .....</b>	<b>17</b>
2.1 Shared purpose and high level commitment.....	18
2.2 Overall positive progress of the EHN.....	20
2.3 Mixed progress of the individual Hubs .....	22
2.4 Good support from the Council .....	24
2.5 Lack of Progress with the EHN Board.....	26
2.6 Need for shared understanding of the roles and expectations of different EHN stakeholders .....	28
2.7 Need for greater communication and collaboration among the Hubs .....	30
2.8 Need for wider engagement from the community .....	32
2.9 Concerns about insufficient and unfair funding.....	33
<b>3 Analyses and Conclusions.....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 Shared Purpose/Vision: Voice and Influence .....	37
3.2 Strategies .....	37
3.3 Structure and Systems.....	38
3.4 Staff (People).....	38
3.5 Skills and Style .....	39
<b>4 Recommendations .....</b>	<b>40</b>
4.1 Board Development.....	40
4.2 Shared Purpose and Strategic Planning .....	40
4.3 Structure and Systems - Terms of Reference .....	41
4.4 Communication Strategy .....	41
4.5 Funding Resources .....	41
4.6 Skill/Style and Capacity Building.....	42

## About this Report - Overview

This report discusses the findings of a progress review of the Sheffield City Council Equality Hub Network conducted from October 2015 to December 2015.

The Executive Summary provides a brief summary of the full report.

Section 1 provides the context of the Review. The scope and approach of the Review are also discussed.

Section 2 discusses the key findings of the Review.

Section 3 provides the analysis and conclusions based on the findings.

Section 4 provides the recommendations based on the findings and the analysis.

## Executive Summary

Sheffield City Council commissioned Erolin Solutions, an organisational effectiveness consultancy, to conduct a progress review (Review) of the Sheffield Equality Hub Network (EHN). Established in April 2014, the EHN was 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." It was established to:

- Better meet the aim of making Sheffield a fairer place to live and work,
- Support the vision of the Fairness Commission,
- Provide more effective and efficient routes for communities of identity to have a voice and influence in the Council, and
- Support the Council's strategic outcome of tackling poverty and increasing social justice.

The purpose of the Review is to capture the achievements and challenges of the EHN in order to build on what's working well, address issues where possible, and to increase the EHN's effectiveness.

The EHN is made up of the Equality Hubs (Hubs), the Equality Hub Network Board (Board) and EHN-wide joint events. Based on protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, the Hubs consist of the following seven Hubs:

- Age (young and older people)
- BME (Black and Minority Ethnic)
- Carers
- Disability
- LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender)
- Religion/Belief (includes no religion/belief)
- Women

Representatives from each Hub, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality, the Executive Director of Resources and senior officers from other public sector organisations form the EHN Board.

The Review collected data from four key sources to capture the experiences and perspectives from a diverse range of EHN members and stakeholders.

- High level review of relevant documents and resources including information from other local authorities with similar equality hub frameworks.
- Surveys completed by 99 EHN stakeholders;
- Semi-structured phone and face-to-face interviews of 18 stakeholders;
- A 3-hour feedback and celebration event attended by more than 60 EHN stakeholders with the aim of sharing experiences and aspirations;

A briefing with EHN Board members on a draft summary report also provided the Board members an opportunity to provide feedback. EHN members and stakeholders also had an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft final report.

In structuring the data gathering and analyses, the reviewer used McKinsey's 7-S framework for organisational effectiveness. This framework, described in further detail in this report, looks at seven key elements of an effective organisation: shared values, structure, systems, strategies, staff (people), skills and style. While there are other frameworks that may be useful, the reviewer chose this framework given his experience with similar reviews. The framework has been particularly useful in groups or organisations whose core aims were related to inclusion and social justice. This report presents the key findings and themes from the Review, identifies current strengths and possible gaps or areas needing improvement, and provides recommendations moving forward.

The key findings and themes are:

1. **Shared purpose and commitment:** There is general agreement and high level of commitment to the purpose of the EHN and the Hubs. Although some raised issues and concerns regarding lack of clarity and effectiveness in terms of "actual influence", many highlighted the 'potential' of the Hubs and the 'opportunities' the structure provided for voice, influence and collaboration.
2. **Overall positive progress of the EHN:** There was general agreement that the EHN as a whole has progressed well so far or as well as it should given the short period of time and the context. Some respondents were not aware of the progress of the EHN. However, many highlighted and are proud of the EHN events dealing with specific community issues, the opportunities to build relationships and 'bridges', and the opportunities to collaborate with other Hubs.
3. **Mixed progress of individual Hubs:** Progress of the individual Hubs have been mixed. Some Hubs have established effective structures and meetings, getting good participation and attendance, starting to 'function like a Hub' and developing strategies moving forward. Others are quite early in the process and/or dealing with internal organisational and people issues creating barriers to progress.
4. **Good support from the Council:** Many respondents appreciated and were satisfied with the role and level of support of the Council. The Council provides support including providing extensive information through its website such as newsletters and Hubs' meeting minutes. Some respondents raised issues in terms of clarity of roles and expectations, and engagement with other parts of the Council.

5. **Lack of progress with the EHN Board:** A high percentage of the survey respondents are not aware of the purpose and activities of the Board. Many of those interviewed expressed concerns that the Board has not progressed sufficiently and is not meeting its purpose.
6. **Need for shared understanding of roles and expectations:** Some respondents highlighted the need to clarify roles and expectations of the different stakeholders of the EHN. Individuals expressed the view that the EHN seems to be "Council led" and that the EHN lack autonomy and power. In contrast, others appreciated the Council 'not telling them what to do' while providing necessary guidance.
7. **Need for greater communication and collaboration among the Hubs:** Many highlighted the need for improved communication and collaboration between the Hubs, as well as communities and other organisations.
8. **Need for wider engagement from the Sheffield community:** There was a general recognition that the Hubs need to reach and engage more of the community, particularly those 'marginalised' groups and those who are unable to attend events and meetings.
9. **Concerns about insufficient and unfair funding:** Individuals have raised issues regarding the limited funds available, the grants process, and the "fairness" of how grants are allocated.

Based on the findings and themes of the Review, and using the 7-S model as an analytical framework, the EHN has clearly achieved significant progress significant given the short period of time and the complex challenges of the hub framework.

1. **Shared purpose/vision:** The Review revealed a high level of commitment, passion and energy from the different stakeholders to the core purpose and aims of the EHN.
2. **Strategies:** Some of the individual Hubs have begun to develop strategies moving forward in order to ensure their effectiveness. Individual Hubs and the EHN Board may need assistance in developing strategic plans in order to increase their effectiveness and sustainability.
3. **Structure and Systems:** The Council provides extensive communication through its website and the work of its EEI team. However, there continues to be lack of shared understanding of roles and expectations in the overall EHN structure and systems. Specific areas raised by stakeholders include decision-making, participation, accountability, and communication.
4. **Staff (People):** EHN members and stakeholders are highly motivated and believe in the overall aims of the EHN. There is general recognition that there needs to be wider engagement and involvement by others in the community to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

5. **Skills and Style:** Given the diversity of personal and professional experiences, there is a lack of shared understanding and agreement of the skills, capacities and styles required for individuals and groups to succeed in this new model. This has impeded the progress of individual Hubs and the EHN Board.

The EHN has an opportunity to build on its achievements and achieve its purpose and goals. The following recommendations, described in further detail in the report, are intended to address these gaps:

### **1. Develop a high functioning goal-focused Board**

Given the central role of the EHN Board, it is critical that the Board establish effective ways of working in terms of roles, expectations, responsibilities and accountability. Within a high functioning Board, Hub Reps can take leadership role in partnership with the Council and other public sector organisations in addressing current and future challenges of the Hubs.

Based on the current dynamics of the Board, the Board would benefit from working with a trusted third party who can partner with the Board to assess and facilitate development. Board efforts to engage in this process seem to have not progressed sufficiently or effectively. It is recommended that a trusted third party is able to facilitate difficult and courageous conversations to help the Board move forward, make crucial decisions, and fully leverage the potential of the Board.

### **2. Revisit and revised as needed the Terms of Reference in order to develop shared understanding and agreement on the purpose, structure, roles and expectations of the EHN.**

The EHN purpose and individual and group roles, responsibilities and expectations require clarification and revision as needed. The original Terms of Reference, Council proposal, and consultation are available in the Council's website. However, the EHN would benefit from engaging in a process that helps stakeholders gain clarity and shared understanding of the Terms of Reference.

### **3. Initiate and/or continue strategic planning for the EHN as whole and the individual Hubs.**

It is recommended that the EHN Board with the support of the EEI Team begin to develop a flexible strategic plan for the EHN in order to identify and guide its priorities, activities and resources. The EEI and the Board can also serve as a resource for individual Hubs to develop their own flexible strategic plans to guide their work.

### **4. Review the Council's current EHN communication strategy and revised to increase effectiveness.**

The Council and the EEI team have provided extensive communication with stakeholders on the EHN. It is recommended that the EEI Team conduct a review of its communication strategy (newsletters, website, emails, etc) to increase effectiveness where needed. This review should actively involve the

Board and individual Hubs.

**5. Develop and implement ongoing dialogue on funding and resource issues with the goal of developing shared understanding and strategies for expanding and managing future resources.**

Funding and resources were raised as key issues by most EHN members. Although the Council has made considerable efforts to communicate and support the Hubs, an ongoing constructive dialogue on funding and resources is needed. It is recommended that the Board and the EEI team work to further promote transparency and open discussion about resource issues including funding allocation, expenditure and expectations.

**6. Develop a skill/style and capacity building plan for all EHN stakeholders, particularly the EHN Board.**

Stakeholders come with both professional and life experiences that are invaluable to the success of the EHN. However, it is not clear whether EHN members have a shared understanding and agreement on what skills and styles would enhance their ability to achieve their goals and work across differences. It is recommended that the Board, Hubs and EEI collaboratively work together to identify, hone and build those skills and styles necessary for success in this new way of working. This will help individuals support each other, practise flexibility and adaptability, and build resilience.



## Acknowledgments

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all EHN members and stakeholders for their active engagement in this review process and sharing their time and perspectives. Individuals responded positively and were willing to discuss both strengths and areas for development. This creates a strong platform for future improvements. Particular appreciation is extended to the Adele Robinson, Rachel Sanchez and the rest of their EEI team for implementing the Review process.

Should you wish to discuss this review's conclusions further, or have questions please contact us at the details provided in this report. We would be happy to engage in any future conversation to support the EHN's future development.

# 1 Context, Scope and Approach

## 1.1 Context

The Sheffield City Council established the EHN in April 2014 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." It was established to:

- Better meet the aim of making Sheffield a fairer place to live and work,
- Support the vision of the Fairness Commission,
- Provide more effective and efficient routes for communities of identity to have a voice and influence in the Council, and
- Support the Council's strategic outcome of tackling poverty and increasing social justice.

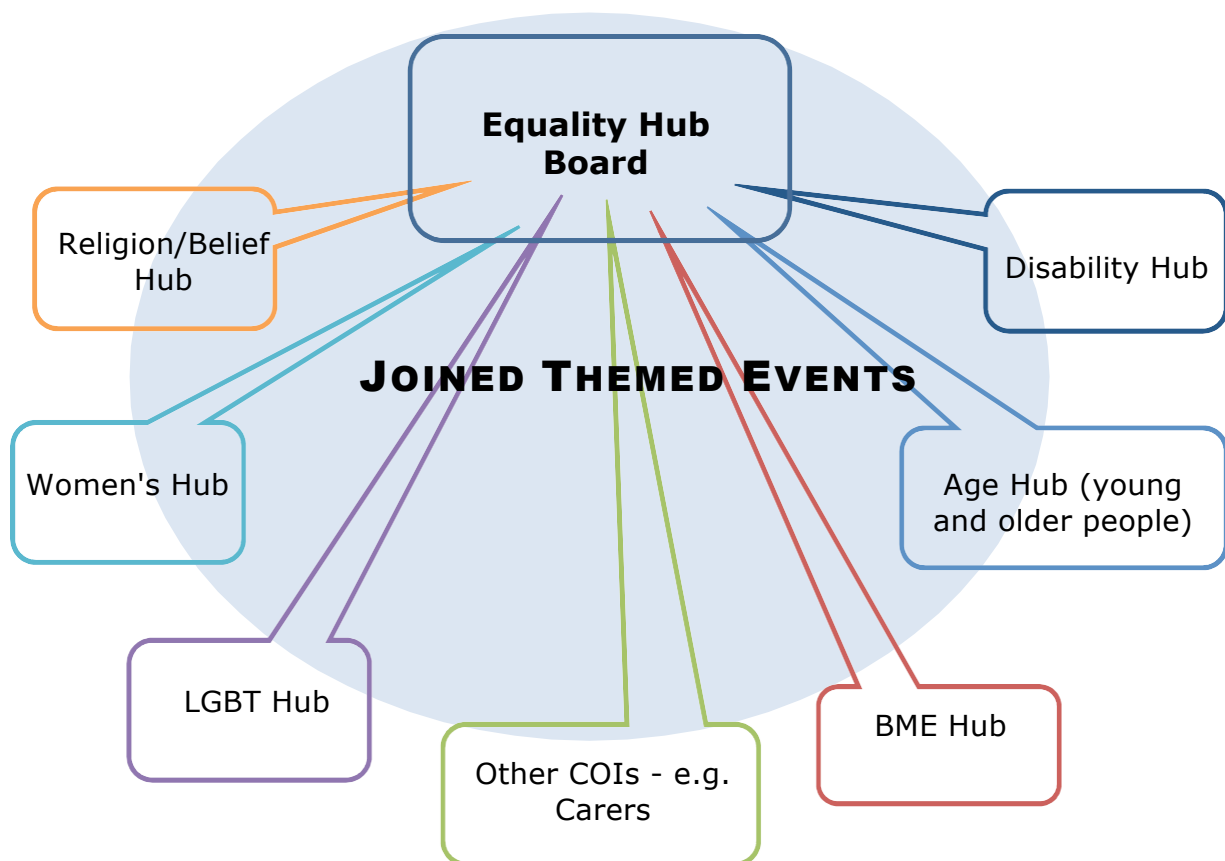
The EHN was based on the Council proposal and consultation to develop a network for individuals and groups who belong to a community of identity (COI) specifically identified as a protected characteristic within the Equality Act 2010. Recognising that people can belong to more than one COI, the EHN would provide opportunities for individuals and groups to engage with and work across communities, and influence the Council. The proposal further noted that,

- The Equality Hub EHN would bring people together and support wider involvement in decision making; it will not be about creating physical spaces, e.g. community buildings.
- The main focus is to assist the Council in meeting its duties under the Equality Act 2010, though this could be extended to other groups, e.g. Carers.
- To encourage joint working on shared issues, by creating a model of support for those who share a protected characteristic with co-ordination support from the Council.
- To complement the recent changes in locality based engagement by enabling people from Sheffield's diverse communities to get access to and have regular engagement with decision makers and influence all areas of the Council's work – with a focus on those COIs who are currently under-represented in existing arrangements.
- The Equality Hub EHN will save costs through streamlining the range of meetings currently held when the Council needs to talk to COIs, and there will be a simple and well-recognised mechanism for getting out to people.
- To provide grant funding via a bidding process for organisations supporting individuals and communities to have more of an influence, get more involved and have the responsibility and ownership for doing some of the things that need to happen in our city to increase fairness and reduce inequality. The Council would offer grants to organisations/groups working together across protected characteristics to support work designed to meet the Council's new Equality/Fairness Objectives.

The EHN is currently made up of Equality Hubs (Hubs), the Equality Hub EHN Board (Board) and EHN-wide joint events. The Hubs consist of the following seven Hubs:

- Age (young and older people)
- BME (Black and Minority Ethnic)
- Carers
- Disability
- LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender)
- Religion/Belief (includes no religion/belief)
- Women

Representatives from each Hub, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality, the Executive Director of Resources and senior officers from other public sector organisations form the EHN Board. The Hubs and the EHN Board would help oversee work on the Equality and Fairness Objectives and provide clear lines of communication to the Council and other key city agencies. A key feature would be the running of a series of joint events around themes to bring together the Hubs.



The specific aims of the EHN are:

- To bring together communities of identity where they can share experiences and good working practice.
- To play a key role in supporting and promoting communications, channelling information, consultation and involvement activities between COIs and the Council.
- To provide advice and challenge to the Council on issues where there are equalities and diversity dimensions, and clearer routes for people from all communities to take part in discussion and activity across a wider range of Council services than at present.

The Review is a critical piece of work consistent with the Council's commitments to equality and fairness. The overall aim of the Review is to capture the achievements and challenges of the EHN in order build on what's working well, address issues where possible, and to increase the EHN's effectiveness. Specific aims listed in the terms of reference are:

- To provide an update on progress of the Equality Hub EHN in line with its aims,
- To involve and conduct stakeholder analysis as part of the Review,
- To increase the confidence of stakeholders in the Equality Hub EHN, and
- To recommend additional approaches and actions in relation to the Equality Hub EHN in order to further the aims.

Additional requirements of the Review included:

- Holding a variety of relevant feedback sessions with Equality Hub EHN members including face to face, group, online and telephone.
- Consulting with other relevant stakeholders via appropriate methods, e.g. face to face, group, online and telephone.
- Holding an Equality Hub EHN celebration event as part of the consultation.
- Benchmarking as relevant against other Councils and organisations.

## 1.2 Scope

The Review was limited in scope. The focus was on building upon current information already available to the Council. The Reviewers sought to obtain qualitative information in the form of individual and groups experiences of EHN stakeholders. These experiences and perspectives were obtained through surveys, individual interviews and a large group dialogue event. Despite these limitations, the results provided sufficient data for sound analysis of the progress of the EHN in relation to its aims, and for development of useful and actionable recommendations.

## 1.3 Approach and Methodology

Per agreement with the Council's EEI team, the reviewer collected data from six key sources to capture the experiences and perspectives from a diverse range of EHN members and stakeholders:

- High level review of relevant documents and resources including information from other local authorities with similar equality hub frameworks.
- Surveys completed by EHN stakeholders;
- Semi-structured phone and face-to-face interviews of stakeholders;
- A 3-hour feedback and celebration event for EHN stakeholders with the aim of sharing experiences and aspirations;
- A briefing and feedback with EHN Board members on a draft summary report; and,
- Email and phone feedback from EHN stakeholders on a draft final report.

### 1.3.1 DESKTOP REVIEW AND SECONDARY ANALYSIS

The desktop review and secondary analysis included the review of more than 130 documents including the following:

- Sheffield Equality Hub Terms of Reference (updated 2015)
- Equality and Fairness Objectives
- Equality and Diversity Inclusion Policy and Corporate Plan 2015-18
- Fairness Commission Report
- Annual Equality and Fairness Report 2014/15
- Individual Cabinet Member (ICM) Decision Record (9 April 2014)
- Equality Hub EHN Proposal
- Equality Hub EHN Proposal - Background Info
- Role of Equality Hub Representative
- Sheffield City Council website on the EHN
- Equality and Fairness Grants Fund
- EHN Update 2015
- EHN launch event presentations and summary (7 June 2014)
- Various EHN events (presentations, summaries, reports and flyers)
- 11 EHN newsletters
- Individual Hubs - meeting agendas and notes (2014-15)
- Website information for other council hubs (Leeds, Barnsley and Edinburgh)
- Leeds City Assembly Evaluation Report (summary and final)
- Interview with Leeds Diversity Manager on Leeds Assembly (hub)

The documents were reviewed specifically to identify the purpose, current commitment, structures and systems, achievements and challenges of the EHN. The information and the issues identified in the documents were also used to guide the initial discussions and questions for individual interviews and the group dialogue.

### 1.3.2 EHN SURVEY

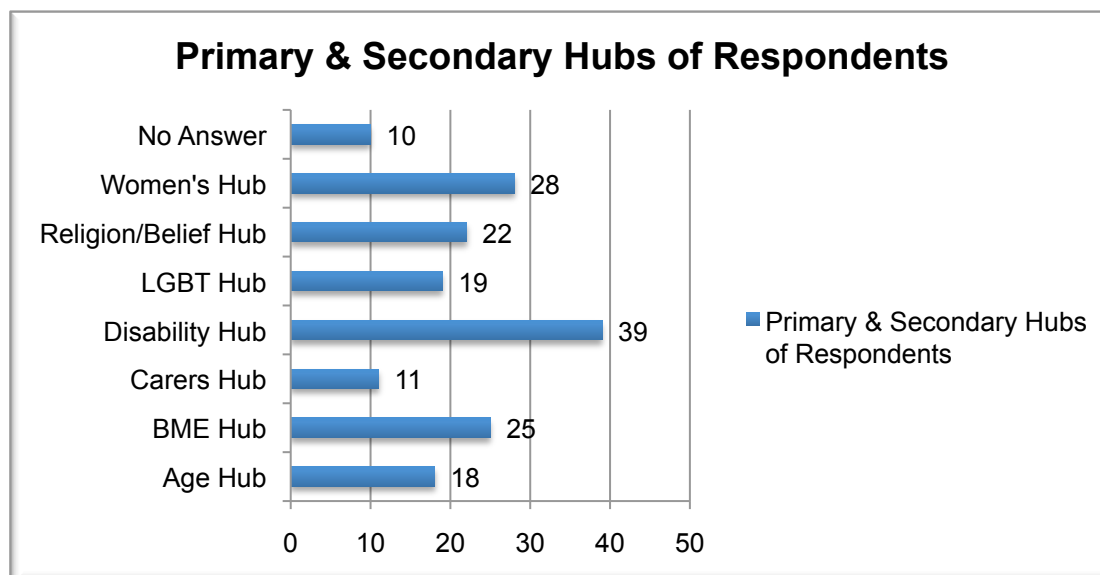
The survey was developed in order to assess individual perspectives and experiences of the EHN.

Survey questions were intended to gather perspectives around 4 main areas:

1. Awareness and support of the purpose and aims of the EHN.
2. Knowledge and satisfaction with the current progress of the EHN as a whole, the EHN Board and the individual Hubs.
3. Engagement and participation with the EHN including ways to improve the EHN.
4. Perception and satisfaction with the Council's support of the EHN including funding.

The survey allowed for more specific information to be inserted in the free text boxes at various stages to place the answers in some context and to support an understanding of the response provided.

99 individuals completed the surveys. Respondents also provided 421 additional comments in free text boxes. Respondents represented the following Hubs (listed the Hub as their primary or secondary Hub) as follows: Age (18), BME (25), Carers (11), Disability (39), LGBT (19), Religion/Belief (22), Women's (28).<sup>1</sup> (See Figure 1)



**FIGURE 1**

<sup>1</sup> Representation from the hubs totalled 162 (as opposed to the total of 99 respondents) since many respondents participated in at least 2 hubs.

### 1.3.3 EHN MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

This element of the review was allocated the greatest amount of time to help ensure depth and breadth of information across the EHN. Given the narrow scope and resources of the Review, a limited number of individuals were engaged in the 1:1 interviews. Focus groups were also made available but stakeholder interest was limited.

The individuals invited for individual interviews were identified based on the desktop review, recommendations from the EEI team, and interest and availability of EHN members and stakeholders. Eighteen (18) individual interviews were conducted. Each interview was 30-45 minutes in length and participants were provided an opportunity to provide follow-up information via email. Representation from Hubs and stakeholders as follows: Age (2), BME (3), Disability (1), LGBT (2), Religion/Belief (1), Women's (4), Councillors (3), Staff (4).

### 1.3.4 EHN FEEDBACK AND CELEBRATION EVENT (FACILITATED DIALOGUE)

A EHN Feedback and Celebration Event for EHN members was conducted. This 3-hour event provided an opportunity for EHN members to come together and share experiences and aspirations. More than 60 individuals attended the event.

Estimated representations from different Hubs and stakeholders as follows: Age (11), BME (16), Carers (3), Disability (8), LGBT (3), Religion/Belief (3), Women's (4), Council Staff (7), Councillors (2), Other Organisations (5). Based on responses from the survey, 15 individuals who attended this event also completed the survey.

### 1.3.5 ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The general approach of the Review utilises the 7-S Framework<sup>2</sup> to analyse the EHN in relation to its stated purpose and aims from the Terms of Reference and the March 2014 Individual Cabinet (ICM) Report. While there are other frameworks that may be useful, the reviewer chose this framework given his experience with similar reviews. The framework has been particularly useful in groups or organisations whose core aims were related to inclusion and social justice.

The 7-S Framework looks at seven elements of a group or organisation:

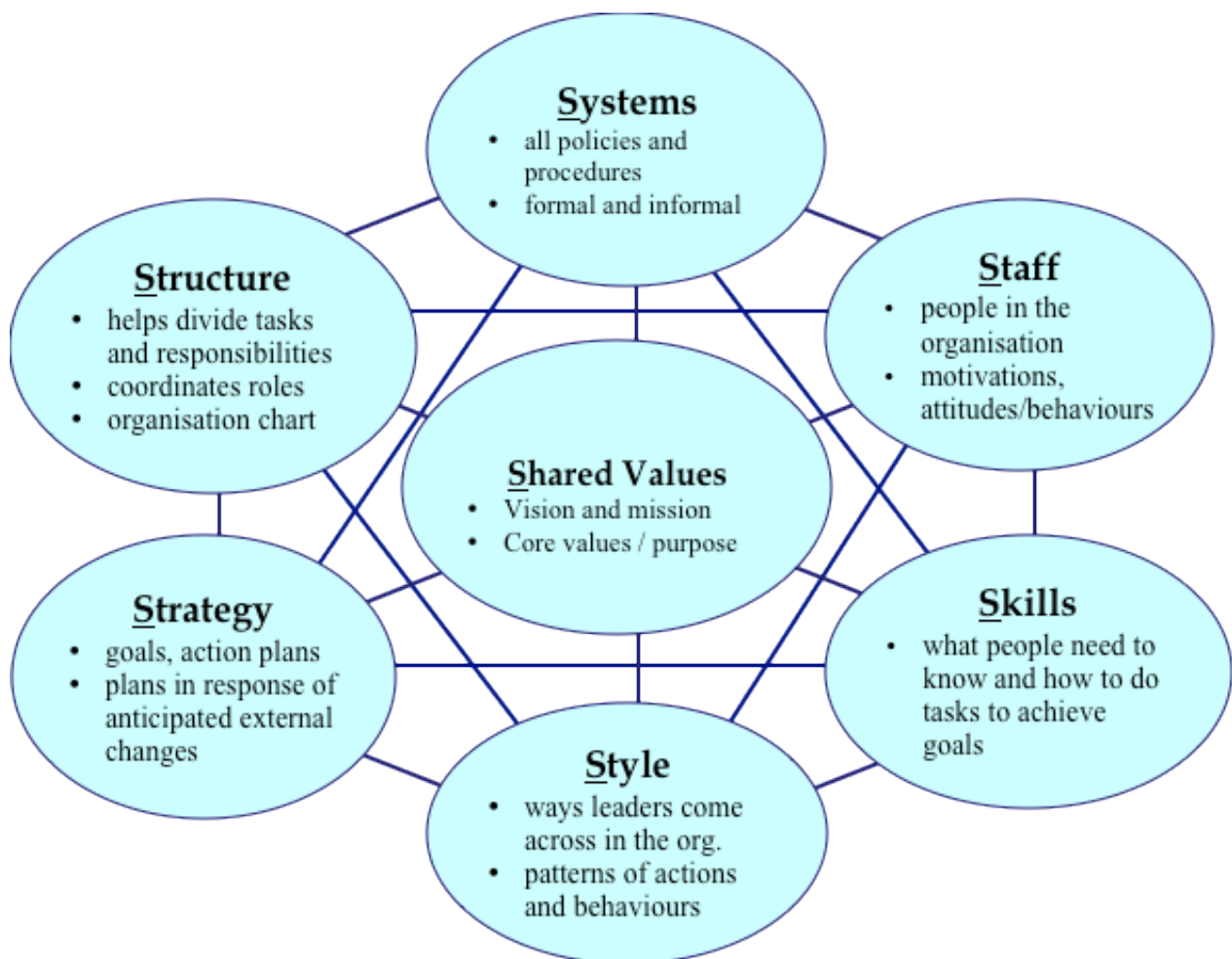
- Shared Values: Core values of the organisation that are evidenced in the group's vision, mission and ways of working (e.g. culture).
- Strategy: The objectives, goals and actions plans devised to achieve group priorities and internal and external challenges.
- Structure: The structures, procedures and processes that divide tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Systems: The policies and procedures, both formal and informal, for carrying out tasks.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from McKinsey 7-S Model; McKinsey and Company; Corporate Leadership Council Research.

- **Staff (People):** The people in the group or organisation and their demographics, motivations, attitudes and behaviours.
- **Skills:** The knowledge, competencies, skills and approaches of the individuals to accomplish goals and objectives.
- **Style:** The work styles and preferences of all individuals, particularly leaders and key individuals.

The framework works from the assumption that shared values (vision, mission and values) underpin all organisations, and levels of organisational and team performance are determined by how well all elements are aligned and mutually reinforcing. The framework is useful in assessing organisational strengths and gaps while ensuring that interventions in certain parts of the organisation are linked to shared values and supported by other elements (S's) of the organisation. (See Diagram 1).



**DIAGRAM 1 - MCKINSEY'S 7-S FRAMEWORK FOR ORGANISATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**



## 2 Key Findings, Themes and Analyses

Based on the information/data gathered, key findings and themes were identified and analysed. Recommendations were developed with suggested timeframes for implementation.

The key findings and themes of the Review are:

1. **Shared purpose and commitment:** There is general agreement and high level of commitment to the purpose of the EHN and the Hubs. Although some raised issues and concerns regarding lack of clarity and effectiveness in terms of "actual influence", many highlighted the 'potential' of the Hubs and the 'opportunities' the structure provided for voice, influence and collaboration.
2. **Overall positive progress of the EHN:** There was general agreement that the EHN as a whole has progressed well so far or as well as it should given the short period of time and the context. Some respondents were not aware of the progress of the EHN. However, many highlighted and are proud of the EHN events dealing with specific community issues, the opportunities to build relationships and 'bridges', and the opportunities to collaborate with other Hubs.
3. **Mixed progress of individual Hubs:** Progress of the individual Hubs have been mixed. Some Hubs have established effective structures and meetings, getting good participation and attendance, starting to 'function like a Hub' and developing strategies moving forward. Others are quite early in the process and/or dealing with internal organisational and people issues creating barriers to progress.
4. **Good support from the Council:** Many respondents appreciated and were satisfied with the role and level of support of the Council. The Council provides support including providing extensive information through its website such as newsletters and Hubs' meeting minutes. Some respondents raised issues in terms of clarity of roles and expectations, and engagement with other parts of the Council.
5. **Lack of progress with the EHN Board:** A high percentage of the survey respondents are not aware of the purpose and activities of the Board. Many of those interviewed expressed concerns that the Board has not progressed sufficiently and is not meeting its purpose.
6. **Need for shared understanding of roles and expectations:** Some respondents highlighted the need to clarify roles and expectations of the different stakeholders of the EHN. Individuals expressed the view that the EHN seems to be "Council led" and that the EHN lack autonomy and power. In

contrast, others appreciated the Council 'not telling them what to do' while providing necessary guidance.

**7. Need for greater communication and collaboration among the Hubs:**

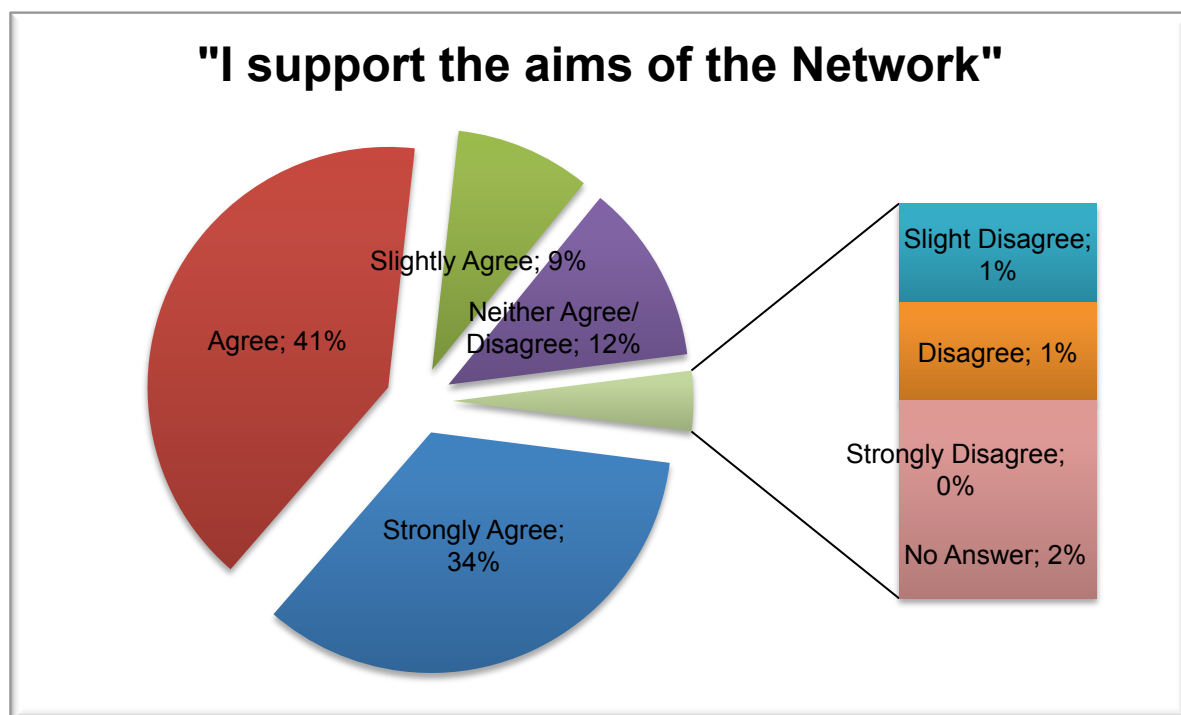
Many highlighted the need for improved communication and collaboration between the Hubs, as well as communities and other organisations.

**8. Need for wider engagement from the Sheffield community:** There was a general recognition that the Hubs need to reach and engage more of the community, particularly those 'marginalised' groups and those who are unable to attend events and meetings.

**9. Concerns about insufficient and unfair funding:** Individuals have raised issues regarding the limited funds available, the grants process, and the "fairness" of how grants are allocated.

## 2.1 Shared purpose and high level commitment

There is general agreement and high level of commitment to the purpose of the EHN and the Hubs. As shown in Figure 2 below, 84% of survey respondents and all stakeholders interviewed supported the aims of the EHN. Many highlighted in the survey, interviews and facilitated dialogue the 'potential' of the Hubs, and the 'opportunities' the structure provided for voice, influence and collaboration.



**FIGURE 2 - RESPONDENTS' SUPPORT OF THE AIMS OF THE EHN**

Examples of comments from respondents in the survey and interviews include:

*The Hub creates a space for communities to look at EDI issues in a structure that is working to get them away from silo working.*

*There is valuable on the ground networking and communications. This supports and promotes cohesion.*

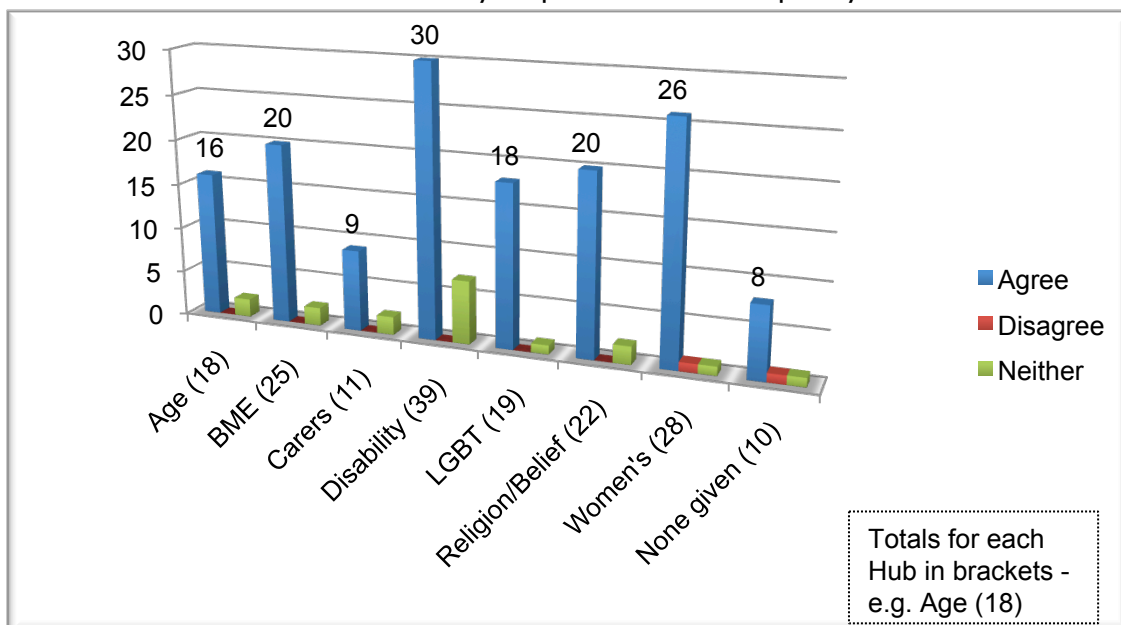
*I feel that the hubs are essential and that their ultimate aim is to reduce the need for hubs for the minority groups as they will be more understood by the mainstream. To this end the separate hubs need to integrate a lot more as we all overlap!*

*It is fantastic Sheffield has such a EHN for community organisations and groups alongside people to come together to further equality and fairness. Thank you.*

*I am committed to equality and opportunities for all and embrace diversity. The hub is a network dedicated to these principles.*

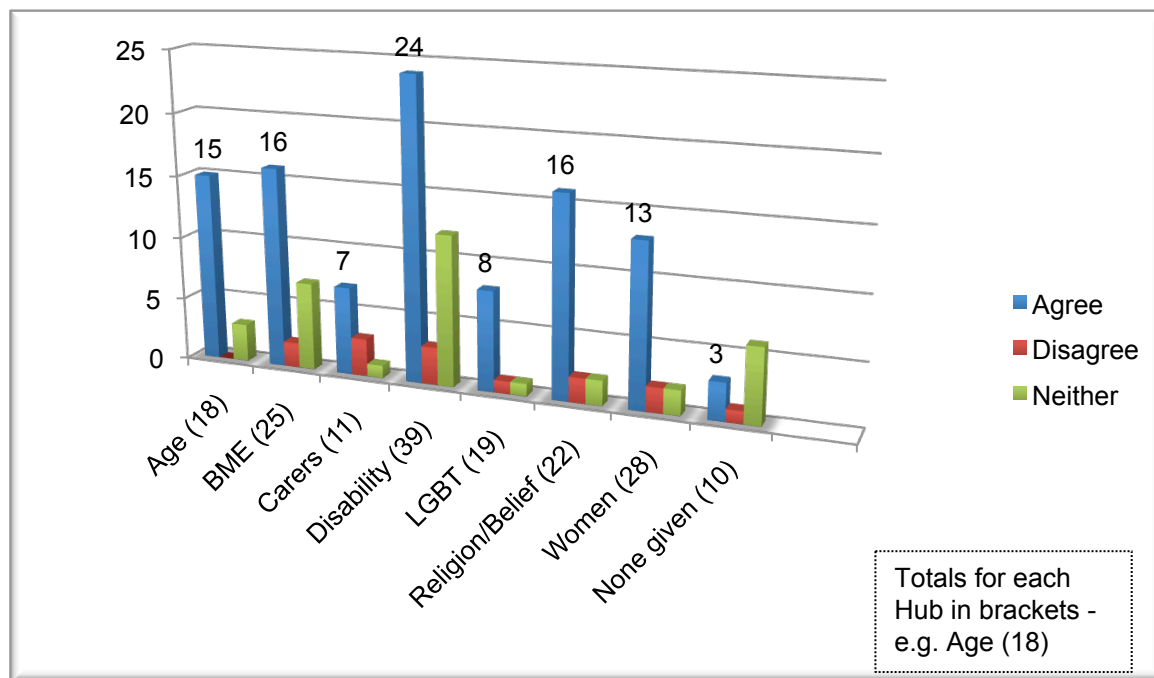
Support of the aims of respondents from each of the hubs was consistently high with 85-95% of respondents agreeing (slightly to strongly) (see Figure 3). Many of the respondents who answered "neither agree/disagree" and other respondents raised the following issues:

- There seems to be a lack of clarity of the purpose and role of the EHN based on what they have experienced in practice working with the Hubs and the Council.
- Some expressed concerns about the lack of clarity of the future goals and direction of the EHN, particularly individual Hubs.
- Some raised concerns about the EHN's lack of 'actual influence' and EHN's insufficient autonomy from the Council, while others note that it is too early to tell whether EHN will have any impact on Council policy.



**FIGURE 3 - SUPPORT FOR THE AIMS OF THE HUB BY RESPONDENTS FROM EACH HUB**

The high level of commitment to the purpose and aims of the EHN was also reflected in the stakeholder interviews and survey respondents. 70% of survey respondents and 78% of feedback event participants planned to work with the Hubs in the next few years. Figure 4 shows a breakdown of survey respondents from each Hub who agreed with the statement that they "plan to work with the Hubs in the coming year".



**FIGURE 4 - RESPONDENTS FROM EACH HUB WHO "PLAN TO WORK WITH THE HUBS IN THE COMING YEARS".**

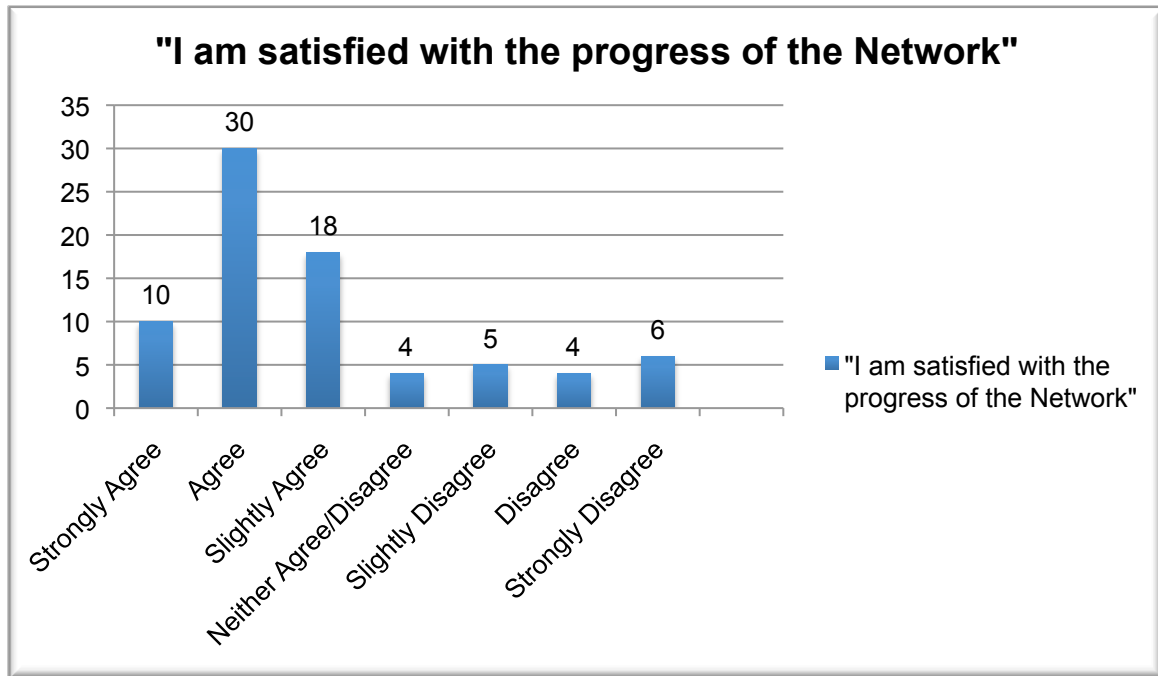
## 2.2 Overall positive progress of the EHN

There was general agreement that the EHN as a whole have progressed well so far or as well as it should given the short period of time and the complexity of bringing diverse communities and groups to work together. Many highlighted and are proud of the EHN events dealing with specific community issues, the opportunities to build relationships and 'bridges', and the opportunities to collaborate with other Hubs.

A review of more than 130 documents and results from the survey, feedback and celebration event, and interviews show significant work and clear progress on establishing the individuals Hubs, planning and holding events on specific issues, and having joined themed events. The Council's website on the EHN provides detailed and current information on EHN events, Hubs' agenda meetings and summary notes, monthly newsletters, and background information on the EHN.

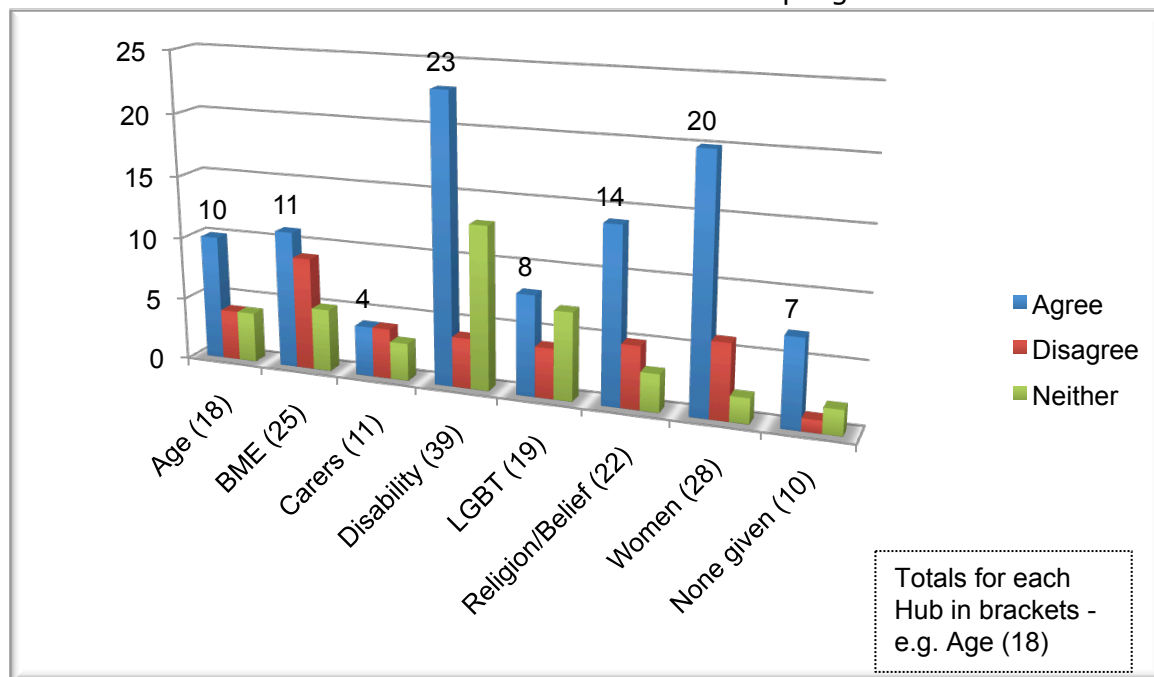
Almost all of the stakeholders interviewed expressed their satisfaction with the overall progress of the EHN. 40% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that they are "satisfied with the progress of the EHN so far",

while 18% slightly agreed with that statement. 15% of survey respondents disagreed with the statement while 24% neither agreed nor disagreed. Many of those who disagreed or neither agreed or disagreed commented that they did not know enough information or it was "too early" to judge. Figure 3 below shows the breakdown of responses.



**FIGURE 5: RESPONDENTS WHO WERE "SATISFIED WITH THE PROGRESS OF THE EHN".**

Figure 6 shows the level of satisfaction from respondents from each Hub. The BME and Carers Hubs show the least satisfaction with the progress of the Hubs.



**FIGURE 6: RESPONDENTS FROM EACH HUB WHO WERE SATISFIED WITH THE OVERALL PROGRESS OF THE HUB**

Examples of comments from respondents include:

*There have been many positive improvements, e.g. people talking and working together, events such as PREVENT seminar, all Hub Hate Incidents seminar, increased diversity at Holocaust Memorial Day due to the dialogue and progress via Religion and Belief Hub.*

*I think the people behind the scenes work hard to bring people and groups together to access opportunities and promote them.*

*I applaud the ambition of the Hub EHN but I think the nature of the work and groups involved will always mean varied levels of success for individual Hubs and this will invariably impact on the speed and level of progress for the EHN as a whole which some I'm sure can find frustrating. I personally think we have to accept that progress might be slower than we'd like.*

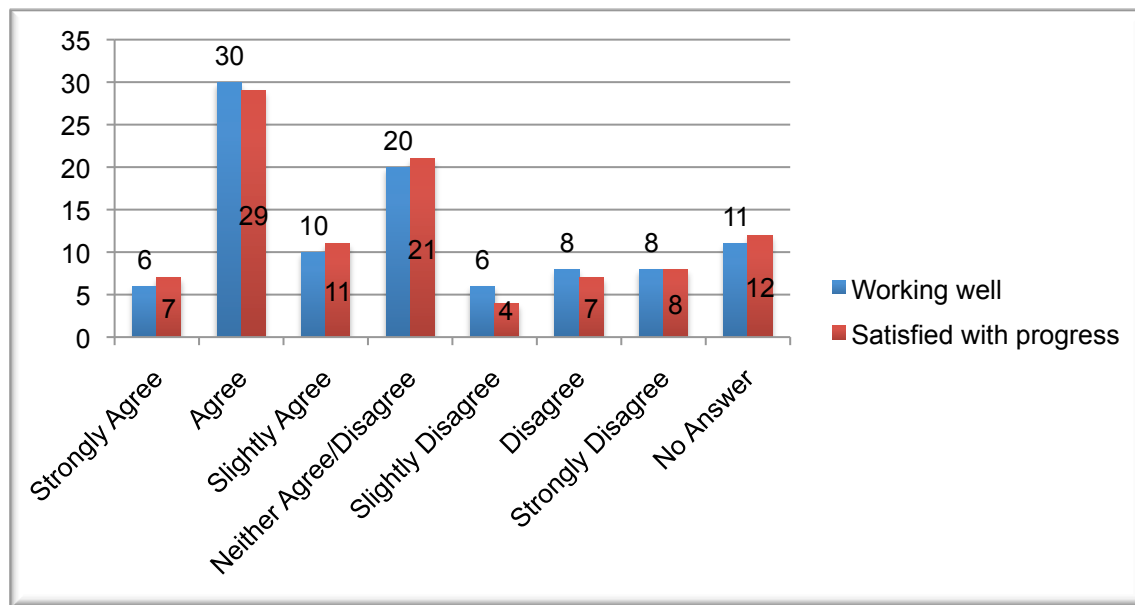
*I have only been a contact for a very short time, so am not able to comment on the organisation's effectiveness.*

*Two years is not long to have established a well functioning structure and activities.*

## 2.3 Mixed progress of the individual Hubs

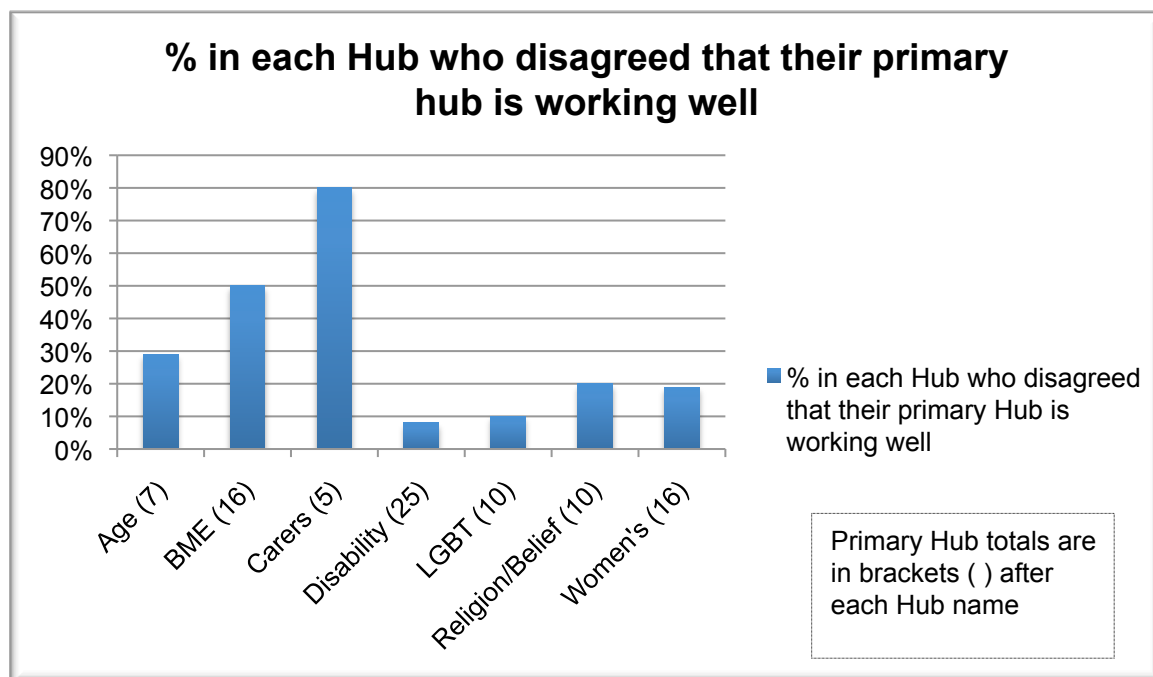
Progress of the individual Hubs have been mixed. Some Hubs have established effective structures and meetings, getting good participation and attendance, starting to 'function like a Hub' and developing strategies moving forward. Others are quite early in the process and/or dealing with internal organisational and people issues resulting in slow progress.

About 46% of survey respondents agreed (slightly to strongly) with the statement that their primary Hub is working well. However, about 22% disagreed with that statement. Figure 4 shows the specific responses along with respondents' satisfaction with their primary Hub's progress. A large percentage (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed that their primary Hub is working well.



**FIGURE 7**

As Figure 8 shows, the BME and Carers' Hubs had the highest percentage of respondents within their Hubs who disagreed with the statement that their Hubs were working well. Four (4) out of the five (5) respondents (80%) whose primary Hub is the Carers' Hub disagreed that their Hub is working well. Eight (8) out of the sixteen (16) respondents (50%) whose primary Hub is the BME Hub disagreed that their Hub is working well (see Figure 5). This finding is consistent with perspectives captured in the stakeholder interviews.



**FIGURE 8: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WHO DISAGREED THAT THEIR PRIMARY HUB IS WORKING WELL.**

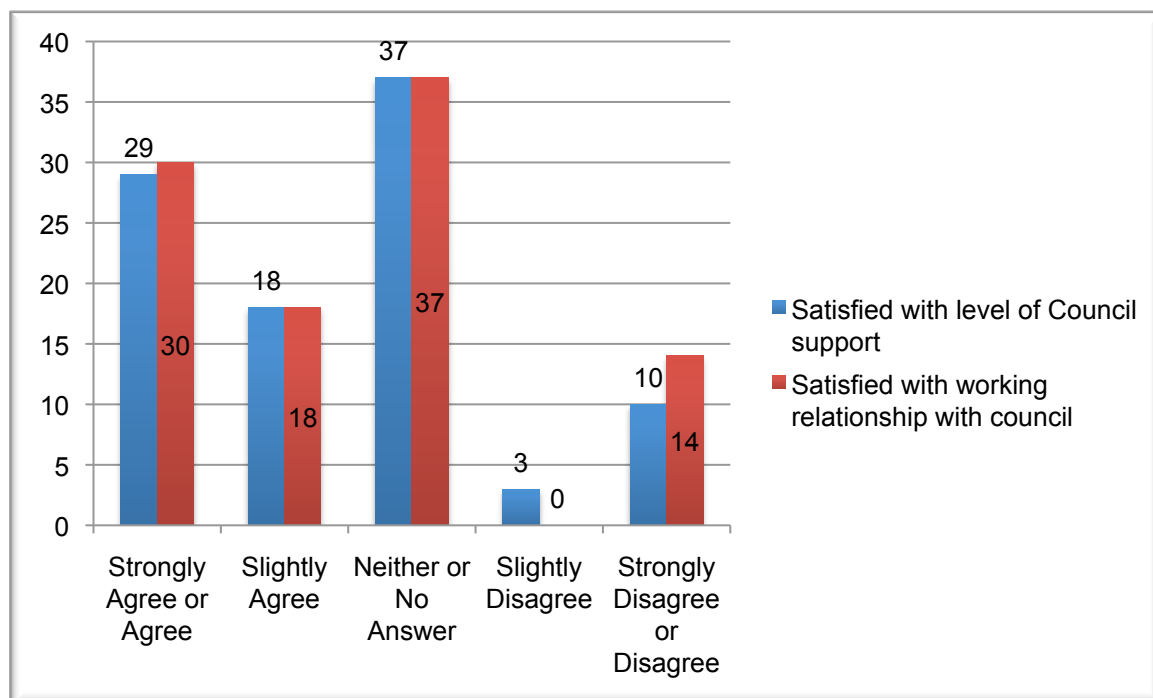
## 2.4 Good support from the Council

Many respondents appreciated and were satisfied with the role and level of support of the Council. 47% of the survey respondents slightly agreed to strongly agreed with the statement that "the Council is providing the right level of support for" their Hub to succeed, while 13% slightly disagreed to strongly disagreed with the statement. A high percentage of respondents (37%) did not answer or neither agreed or disagreed. This finding is also consistent with the survey results in terms of whether respondents were "satisfied with [their] working relationship with the Council." 30% agreed or strongly agreed and 18% slightly agreed. 14% disagreed or strongly disagreed that they were satisfied with their working relationship with the Council. (See Figure 9 below).

Comments from the survey, individual interviews and the EHN Facilitated Dialogue highlighted Hubs' satisfaction and appreciation for the level of support provided by the Elections, Equalities and Involvement (EEI) team (i.e. Rachel Sanchez and her colleagues). Communications from the Council, primarily through newsletters and emails are generally well received.

Some of the issues and concerns raised include:

- Insufficient funding for the Hubs.
- More engagement needed from other parts of the Council, particularly Councillors and senior leaders.
- More autonomy for the Hubs.
- Lack of clarity on the nature of the relationship between the Council and the Hubs.
- Need for stronger links between the Hubs and the Council.



**FIGURE 9 - SUPPORT FROM THE COUNCIL AND WORKING RELATIONSHIP**



Examples of comments from interviews and the survey include:

*Good support from Rachel, we would like more money to support the work but know it needs to be more than Council.*

*I think the support is pitched just right but I do worry that there is a perception from some parties that the Council is driving/steering the direction of the Hub, which may need some attention to set the record straight.*

*Again seems to be really good I see the support and when asked it gets done.*

*Adele and Rachel [EEI team] very efficient at bringing different disparate groups together; Rachel has been brilliant.*

*Good service from the Council's equality unit; good responses; very helpful.*

*Need terms of reference for all Hubs; admin support from Rachel is good.*

*There is a general lack of trust that we are able to run the Hub for ourselves. Too much of a top down approach to governance by Council officers who work for rather than with the Hub . . . .*

*I don't know what the relationship is.*

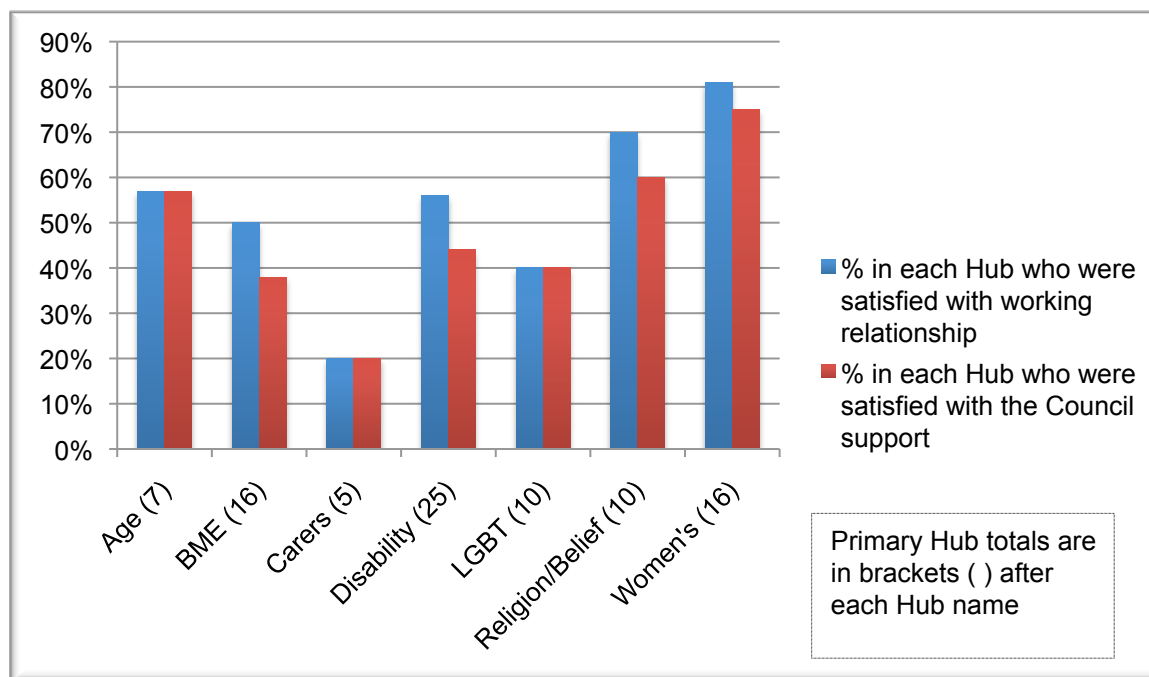
*I feel that there needs to be stronger links in terms of points of influence so that the Hub can have more impact.*

*I don't know enough about what that relationship is to judge.*

*Needs more input from other council departments.*

*Not met very often and really unclear how it fits with all the other strategic bodies relating to carers and young carers.*

A breakdown of responses from individual Hubs (Figure 10) shows the Women's and Religion/Belief Hubs with the highest percentage of respondents satisfied, while the Carers' and BME Hubs reflect the lowest satisfaction.



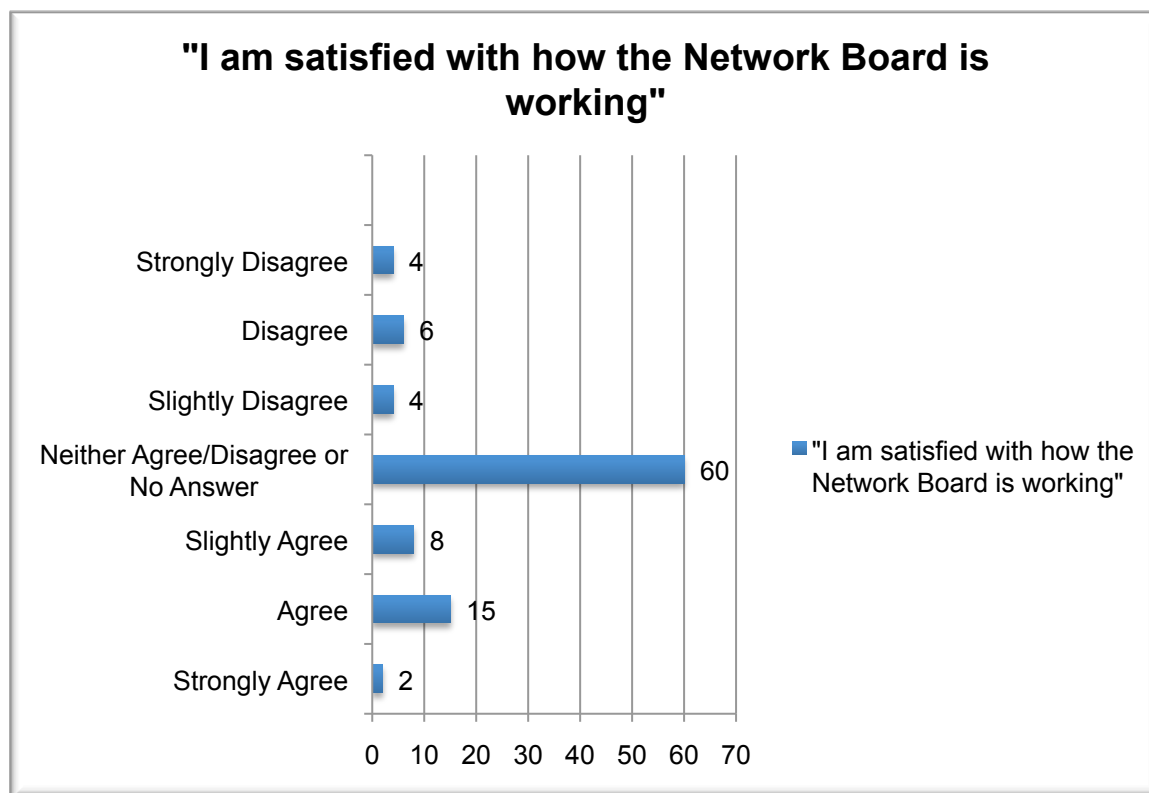
**FIGURE 10 - PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS IN EACH HUB WHO WERE SATISFIED WITH THE SUPPORT AND WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNCIL**

## 2.5 Lack of Progress with the EHN Board

Representatives from each Hub, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Equality, the Executive Director of Resources and senior officers from other public sector organisations form the EHN Board.

Most of those interviewed expressed concerns that the Board has not progressed sufficiently and is not meeting its purpose. Issues raised included how meetings are chaired and facilitated, its role and purpose, and its influence on the EHN and the Council.

49% of the survey respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement that they were "satisfied with the progress of the EHN Board", and 11% did not answer the question. Many respondents from these two groups noted their lack of knowledge or awareness of the Board and its activities.



**FIGURE 11 - SATISFACTION WITH THE BOARD**

Examples of comments from interviews and the survey include:

*I don't really know what it's doing, I would like to know more.*

*What outcomes have there been?*

*I see this as fundamentally an ineffective 'talking shop'. Too few unfocussed meetings with too lengthy agendas and no real autonomy or effective decision making power . . . .*

*I am not sure about the process and it would be helpful to have it explained more within the review and maybe have some key headlines of what's worked well and what have been challenges.*

*It is friendly but again I need more clarity as to its long term objectives.*

*Needs to be clearer about its role and influence and also meetings need better chairing and organisation.*

*Hub Board allocated funding to develop that Board to be effective.*

*Hub Board is supposed to hold it all together and the biggest challenge is working together; coming from different points of learning*

*Issue of 'co-production' with lots of focus on structure but losing sight of outcomes*

*If Hub Board strong, we can hold council to account; wish it could be farther along*

*Although senior council involvement, they need to chair it - no ability to do anything*

*Seems to be council dominated*

*Board not mature enough - other Board members need to be challenging, but bound to happen; early days and no consistency of attendance*

*Steep climb since only quarterly meeting - people don't want to attend meetings*

## 2.6 Need for shared understanding of the roles and expectations of different EHN stakeholders

The interviews and survey responses highlighted the need for shared understanding on the roles and expectations of the different stakeholders of the EHN.

Some individuals expressed the view that the EHN seems to be "Council led", lack autonomy and power, and that meetings are a "talking shop". In contrast, others appreciated the Council 'not telling them what to do' while providing necessary guidance. Respondents' varied perspectives on the support and working relationship with the Council suggest different perceptions of roles, expectations and perhaps needs (see Figure 10). Some interview respondents highlighted the ongoing "debate" around decision-making and influence, along with the idea of "co-production" to fully realise the potential of the EHN. A couple of individuals commented in the survey that the EHN was "just a tick box" and that the Council "did not take the purpose of the EHN seriously."

Other examples of survey comments that reflect the need for shared understanding of roles and expectations include:

*Don't feel nature of this "working relationship" has been made explicit.*

*What the purpose is and what happens in practice is very different*

*This [the purpose] is not however effectively communicated by SCC officers and Members*

*I have read all the material about it, but in practice I am not sure what purpose it seeks to serve.*

*I am aware of the EHN and have attended some meetings, and am aware of its role, but am unclear as to its longer term aims.*

*There is a diversity of opinion over what the purpose of the Hubs is.*

*Not clear where the Hub EHN has any power in terms of where it reports to, what it influences.*

*Lacking in clarity.*

*Seems rather nebulous.*

*Not aware of information at outset as to why network established and at whose behest. Imagine due to Equality Act but this not made clear.*

*I stopped attending because the meetings were time-consuming, lacked direction and had no purpose.*

*Accountability mechanisms are not transparent.*

*No focus, and too many personal agendas.*

*What progress - what have they achieved in the last year? what plans do they have for the future?*

*It is difficult to assess progress when purpose is unclear.*

*No action - where is the feedback on actual change to reduce race inequality.*

*We are not in any budget; our needs are invisible.*

*Better Co-production of the development of the Hubs as a forum for the CoIs/Hubs in the city.*

*Hub Board to have Leader of Council as Chair to signify the importance of EHN to city and Sheffield community*

*Council must put our comments into action = Positive CHANGE must be measured and reported back -otherwise talking shop.*

*How much power do we have? Or are we simply a talking shop?*

*Terms of reference for each Hub which should be on the website; an understanding that the Hubs are open to all and that nothing is confidential - public meeting; put minutes/notes of meetings on website; put names of board members from each Hub on website. Have independent chairs for all meetings. Complaints procedure so that personal complaints aren't brought to a public meeting.*

*I think the relationship with formal decision making processes and governance structures needs to be clearer e.g. what Hubs can do and what they can influence needs to be clearer.*

*Further communication between stakeholders/organisations would be advantageous to promote awareness and internal development.*

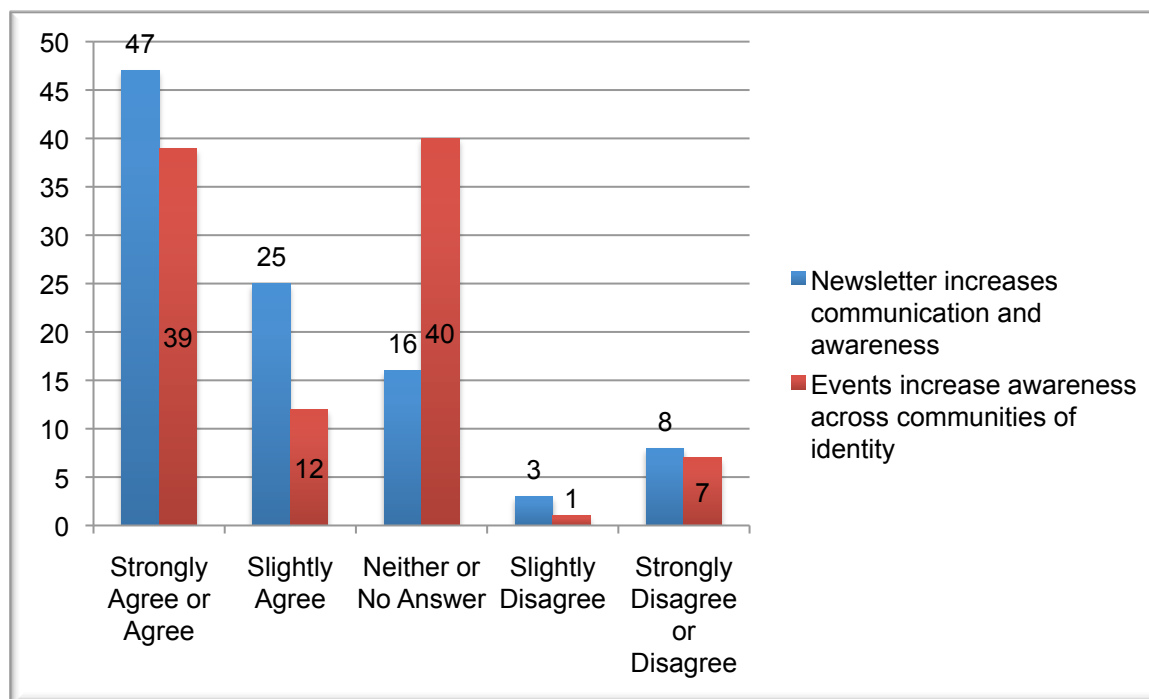
## 2.7 Need for greater communication and collaboration among the Hubs

Respondents, particularly in the individual interviews and the Facilitated Dialogue emphasised the need for greater communication and collaboration among the Hubs, as well as Sheffield communities and other organisations.

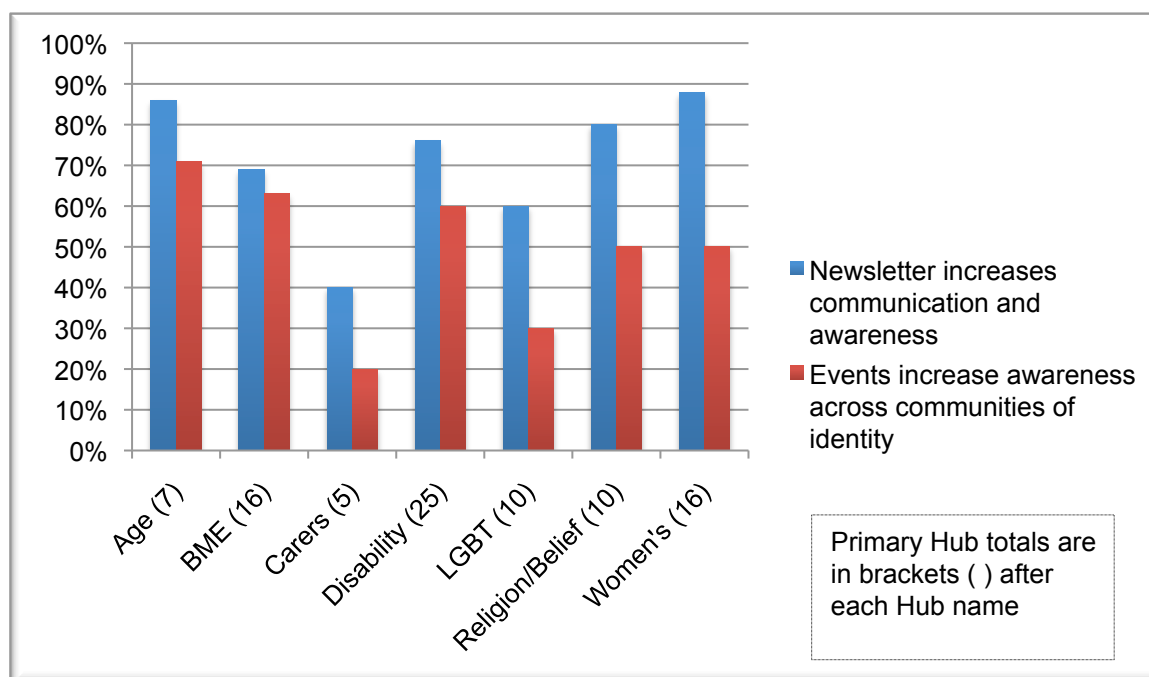
In the EHN Facilitated Dialogue, participants engaged in an appreciative inquiry exercise and dialogue using the S.O.A.R. model (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results). Individuals and Hubs consistently raised communication and collaboration among the Hubs as aspirations for the EHN. There is a general agreement that the Hub structure provides an opportunity to work across differences, collaborate on common issues, and achieve better results.

The EHN newsletter published monthly by the Council's EEI team facilitates communication among the Hubs and other stakeholders. 72% of survey respondents agreed (slightly to strongly) with the statement that the newsletter improves communication and awareness across communities. Respondents also predominantly agreed (51%) with the joint theme events increasing awareness across communities of identities, with only 8% disagreeing. 40% of respondents neither agreed or disagreed or did not answer. 67% of those who attended the events felt that the events increased awareness across communities of identities. (See Figure 12). A breakdown of perspectives from the different Hubs is shown in Figure 13.

Despite these high numbers and as noted in other parts of the findings, there is a significant percentage of respondents who did not have enough information or were not aware of the EHN activities to be able to answer the questions. And, participants in the Facilitated Dialogue highlighted the need for more communication and collaboration across the Hubs.



**FIGURE 12 - RESPONDENTS VIEW OF THE NEWSLETTER AND JOINT THEME EVENTS INCREASING COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS.**



**FIGURE 13 - PERCENTAGE OF INDIVIDUALS FROM EACH HUB WHO AGREED THAT THE NEWSLETTER OR THE EVENTS INCREASE COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS.**

Suggestions and comments from respondents on increasing communication and collaboration include:

*All who work with and for the Hubs trusting each other. Currently this is not the case.*

*Integration and overlapping of people between each Hubs.*

*It would be good to publish stories of individuals' experiences both good and not so good.*

*Be open to emerging issues and take opportunities for collaboration across EH groups and with groups and services across all sectors.*

*More people need to know about the EHN! Social media is key here. Younger people especially will be connected through social media. I think linking up with the Universities would be good too as a lot of their societies could make use of the EHN too and removes the sense of a student bubble.*

*We could have a representative from each Hub attending every other Hub meeting, and also a representative from the Women's Hub (different person each time) could attend local equality/feminist meetings eg Sheffield Feminist EHN, Women's Equality Party, Sheffield Hallam and Feminist Friday meetings etc*

*Creating a central repository to share information and knowledge that is accessible to all.*

*Utilising social media more effectively.*

*Work together more, less meetings but more joint. Can be too negative and too many of the same people talking.*

*More frequent feedback from "committees" to Hubs as a whole.*

*I . . . suggest that Hubs look for ways to work together - especially on shared issues with more cross themed events/activities.*

*better coordination across Hubs - not sure how this conversation happens and where.*

## 2.8 Need for wider engagement from the community

There was a general recognition that the Hubs need to reach and engage more of the Sheffield community in terms of under-represented groups and individuals, other organisations and other Council departments. Respondents particularly highlighted the need to reach 'marginalised' groups and those who are unable to attend events and meetings. Some expressed the need to expand membership beyond the same individuals who are already "doing the work" in their voluntary organisations.

Comments and suggestions from respondents to increase engagement include:

*More publicity/information to hard to reach groups.*



*It would be great if we could get more people from the community involved.*

*More people need to know about the EHN! Social media is key here. Younger people especially will be connected through social media. I think linking up with the Universities would be good too as a lot of their societies could make use of the EHN too and removes the sense of a student bubble.*

*Bring in more council departments to conversations.*

*By ensuring that the GRT communities who are some of the most disadvantaged communities in the city are represented by the Equality Hub.*

*We need to bring more people into the EHN - communities (individuals and orgs) and statutory agencies.*

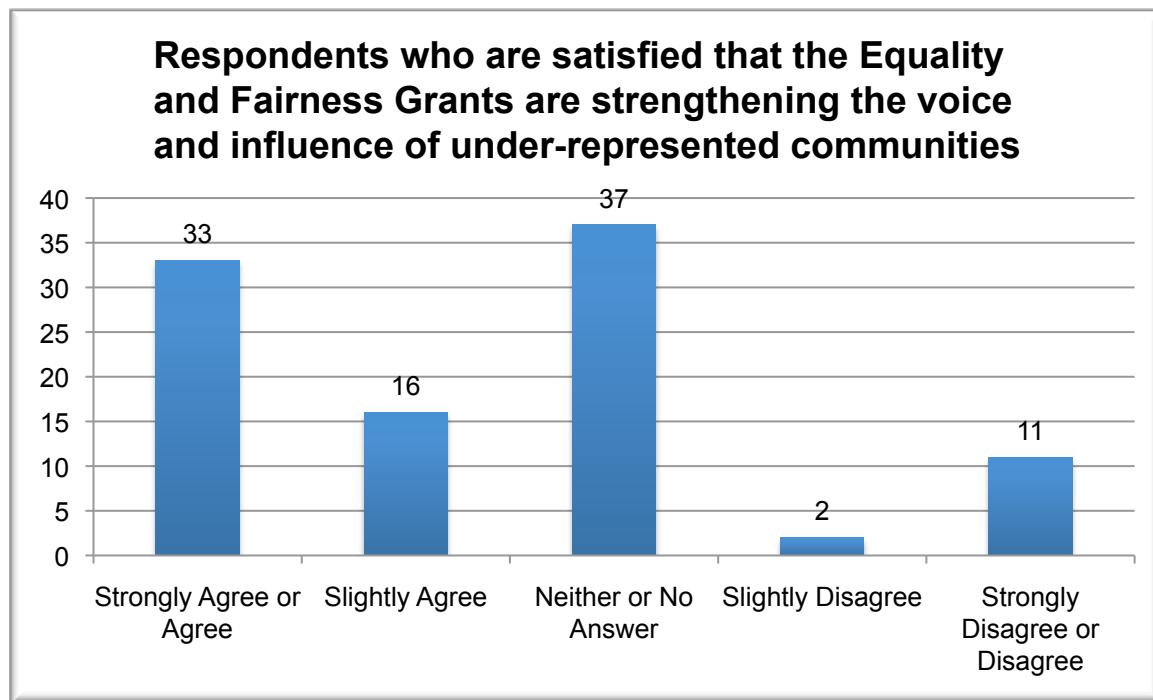
*Awareness raising throughout the city of the equalities Hubs I feel is important. I would recommend a social media presence along side the events that are organised.*

*I'm not sure that events get participation from anyone other than activists-we need to find ways to get across to the unengaged.*

## 2.9 Concerns about insufficient and unfair funding

As noted earlier in this report, the Equality and Fairness Grants was established based on the Council proposal and public consultation. In the Review, individuals raised issues regarding the limited funds available, the grants process, and the "fairness" of how grants are allocated.

Many individuals interviewed raised the issue of the limited amount of funds available to support the EHN and the individual Hubs. These concerns were supported by some of the survey responses. 13% of survey respondents disagreed with the statement that they were "satisfied that the Equality and Fairness Grants are strengthening the voice and influence of under-represented communities." 9% of the 13% strongly disagreed with the statement. Some who disagreed commented that the funds are "not big enough" or "too thinly spread" to achieve the EHN aims. Others felt that the process was unfair. However, 33% of the survey respondents were satisfied with the grants.



**FIGURE 14 - SATISFACTION WITH THE EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS GRANTS**

The comments reflect the mixed perspectives on the Grants:

*Distribution of grant to the Hubs rather than to organisations enhancing greater autonomy for individual Hubs.*

*. . . the council unfairly favours certain groups and dismisses others, shameful!*

*There are marked differences in the process and distribution of the grant.*

*Its creating opportunities for increased voice and influence and its also given opportunities to other and newer groups.*

*The grants are not big enough to be able to achieve our aims and give support to the vulnerable and socially isolated communities*

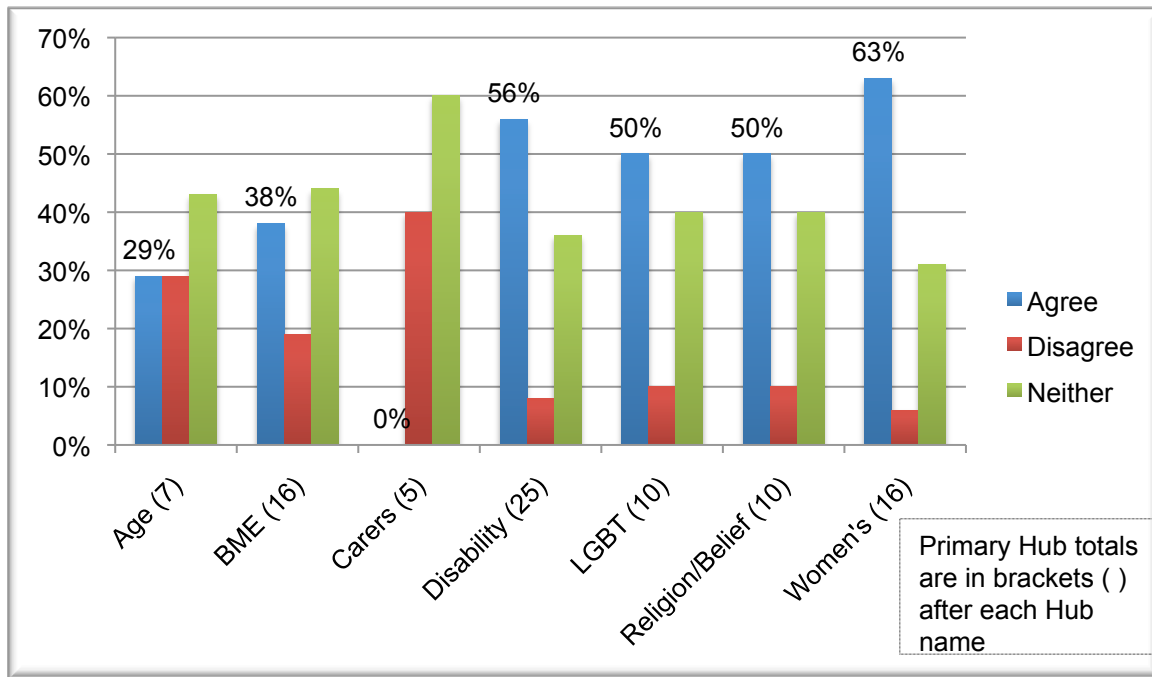
*They are too thinly spread. A condition for receipt of such grants might be that the organisations form partnerships and that they must work through one or more Hubs and the Hub Board.*

*Not sure what these are.*

*Thank you for doing this, especially given the limited resources and finances the Council has!*

*It's a very small pot for a lot of competing communities. Also the timescales, guidance and criteria could be promoted more effectively and timely.*

Survey responses from individual Hubs are in Figure 15. Age, BME and Carers' Hubs showed the lowest satisfaction with the grants whilst the Women's and Disability Hubs showed the highest satisfaction.



**FIGURE 15 - INDIVIDUAL HUBS' SATISFACTION WITH THE EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS GRANTS**

### 3 Analyses and Conclusions

Based on the findings and themes of the Review, the EHN has achieved and progressed significantly given the short period of time. There exists a high degree of energy and passion from citizens volunteering their time and effort to achieve EHN goals. The Council is providing considerable support in terms of staff time and funding, particularly in comparison with similar equality hub networks with other authorities.

This collaborative model between citizens, the Council and organisations is, however, a complex one. This complexity was highlighted in the initial proposal based on the experiences of two other local authorities (Leeds and Barnsley), and in Leeds' own progress review of their equality hubs in 2011. Based on the reviewer's experience with similar models in the UK and the US, the following common characteristics of the model are both its greatest strengths and most significant challenges:

- The diversity of individuals and groups in terms of social identities (and their intersectionalities<sup>3</sup>), perspectives and experiences, and needs and aspirations;
- The flexibility of the structures and systems to meet the different needs and preferences of stakeholders; and
- The long-standing and challenging issues of equality, social justice and inclusion being addressed.

As noted in Section 1.3.5 (Analytical Approach), the Review uses the 7-S framework to analyse the strengths and gaps of the EHN. While there are other frameworks that may be useful, the reviewer chose this framework given his experience with similar reviews. The framework has been particularly useful in groups or organisations whose core aims were related to inclusion and social justice.

The 7-S Framework looks at seven elements of an organisation:

- **Shared Values:** Core values of the organisation that are evidenced in the group's vision, mission and ways of working.
- **Strategy:** The objectives, goals and actions plans devised to achieve group priorities and internal and external challenges.
- **Structure:** The structures, procedures and processes that divide tasks, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- **Systems:** The policies and procedures, both formal and informal, for carrying out tasks.
- **Staff (People):** The people in the group or organisation and their demographics, motivations, attitudes and behaviours.

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<sup>3</sup> Social identity intersectionality is the idea that social identities or categories such as age, class, disability, gender, race, religion and sexual orientation overlap and intersect, often interacting on multiple and simultaneous levels.

- **Skills:** The knowledge, competencies, skills and approaches of the individuals to accomplish goals and objectives.
- **Style:** The work styles and preferences of all individuals, particularly leaders and key individuals.

The framework works from the assumption that shared values (vision, mission and values) underpin all organisations, and levels of organisational and team performance are determined by how well all elements are aligned and mutually reinforcing. The framework is useful in assessing organisational strengths and gaps while ensuring that interventions in certain parts of the organisation are linked to shared values and supported by other elements (S's) of the organisation.

### 3.1 Shared Purpose/Vision: Voice and Influence

The primary purpose and vision of the EHN is to increase the voice and influence of communities of identity or under-represented communities in Council and other public sector organisations' policies and decisions. It is clear from the Review that there exists high level commitment, passion and energy from the different stakeholders to the core purpose and aims of the EHN. This was evident in the extensive process to explore and establish the EHN and the efforts made and resources used in the first two years to progress the EHN.

The purpose of the EHN is well-documented and the vast majority of respondents were aware and supported the purpose and aims of the EHN. The issues and concerns raised by respondents about the purpose and aims of the EHN are more about the "how" - how does the EHN achieve its purpose and aims. The "how" can be analysed in terms of the EHN's strategies, structures, systems, staff (people), skills and style.

### 3.2 Strategies

The EHN as a whole and the individual Hubs would benefit from developing clear strategies for achieving its purpose of increasing voice and influence for under-represented communities.

In establishing the EHN, the Council has developed strategies to achieve the aims of the EHN. These strategies, although not named as such, are in the Council approved proposal, the EHN's Terms of Reference, and the EHN Update Report June 2015. A specific document detailing the strategic plan of the EHN would help build shared understanding on EHN goals, roles and expectations. It would also help guide individual Hubs' activities.

Some of the individual Hubs have begun to develop strategies moving forward in order to ensure their effectiveness. Individual Hubs may need assistance in developing strategic plans in order to increase their effectiveness and sustainability.

Given the EHN Board's central role in the EHN, it is a critical that the Board help develop the overall strategy. The Board can also be a crucial resource for each of the Hubs to develop, coordinate and integrate individual Hub strategies. There

appears to be a lot of expertise within different Hubs, other organisations and the Council to assist individual Hubs in developing strategies.

Key strategic issues that need to be addressed by a EHN strategic plan and individual Hub strategic plans are:

- Administration of current grant funding and the need to expand funding resources.
- Widening Sheffield community engagement in terms of under-represented groups, Council departments and staff, and other organisations.
- Increasing communication and collaboration across Hubs.

### 3.3 Structure and Systems

There is lack of shared understanding of the roles and expectations in this structure. This is characterised by some as the question of whether the EHN is council-led or community-led. There may be lack of clarity or shared understanding on structures and systems for decision-making, participation, accountability, and communication.

A critical structure within EHN, as noted in the initial proposal, is the EHN Board. The lack of progress in developing the Board as an effective body has hindered the development of the EHN and individual Hubs. The EHN model relies on a strong effective Board to help ensure collaboration, 'joined-up' and integrated approaches, and effective and efficient use of EHN knowledge, expertise and resources.

Some individual Hubs have developed and implemented structures and systems for effective working - e.g. communications, meetings, decision-making, etc. Others however are at very early stages or seem to be "stuck" and need assistance. Two Hubs who may need specific attention based on the interviews and surveys are the Carers' Hub and the BME Hub.

Individuals Hubs with previously established structures, systems and leaders (e.g. BME, Disability and 50+) may be experiencing more challenges transitioning to the new model particularly given changes to the funding structures.

Key structures and systems that need to be developed and/or clarified include:

- Communicating across Hubs and with the public
- Decision-making - Board and some individual Hubs
- Success or outcome measures
- Equality and Fairness Grants process, reporting and accountability

### 3.4 Staff (People)

EHN members and stakeholders are highly motivated and believe in the overall aims of the EHN. There is general recognition by all the Hubs that there needs to be wider engagement and involvement by other members of the Sheffield community, particularly from marginalised and under-represented groups. Increased engagement and participation are also needed across Council departments and other organisations. Wider participation would help ensure voice and influence.

Given that most EHN members volunteer their time, and many already do similar work in their organisations, there are concerns about sustainability and resilience. This can be addressed by increasing the number of people and organisations in the EHN, facilitating collaboration, and helping build skills to increase resilience.

### 3.5 Skills and Style

Given the diversity of personal and professional experiences, there is a lack of shared understanding and agreement of the skills, capacities and styles required for individuals and groups to succeed in this new model. This has impeded the progress of individual Hubs and the EHN Board.

Key skill and style areas raised in the findings include:

- Strategic planning
- Facilitating inclusive and goal-focused meetings
- Challenging others and managing conflicts
- Working across differences
- Difficult conversations
- Advocacy and influence

## 4 Recommendations

Based on the above findings, analyses and conclusions, the reviewer recommends the following:

### 4.1 Board Development

**Conduct an immediate Board development assessment and implement a Board development plan within the next six months.**

Given the central role of the EHN Board, it is critical that the Board establish effective ways of working in terms of roles, expectations, responsibilities and accountability. Within a well-functioning Board, Hub Reps can take leadership role in partnership with the Council and other public sector organisations in addressing current and future challenges of the Hubs.

Based on the current dynamics of the Board, the Board would benefit from working with a trusted third party who can partner with the Board to assess and facilitate development. Board efforts to engage in this process seem to have not progressed sufficiently or effectively. It is recommended that a trusted third party is able to facilitate difficult and courageous conversations to help the Board move forward, make crucial decisions, and fully leverage the potential of the Board.

One effective method to "jump-start" this process is to have a 1-2 day Board Awayday to ensure that key decisions are made, effective ways of working are established, trust is built, and plans and strategies for moving forward are agreed upon. While this commitment of time and resources may be very challenging, it is a critical and worthwhile investment to ensure the Board's success and sustainability.

### 4.2 Shared Purpose and Strategic Planning

**Develop a EHN strategic plan aimed at achieving the core purpose of the EHN within the next 6-9 months.**

It is recommended that the Board with the support of the EEI Team begin to develop a flexible strategic plan for the EHN in order to identify and guide its priorities, activities and resources. The EEI and the Board can also serve as a resource for individual Hubs to develop their own flexible strategic plans to guide their work. The strategic planning processes will be a good opportunity to increase shared understanding and publicity of the purpose and aims of the EHN.

Key strategic issues include:

- Widening engagement and participation for each of the Hubs.
- Engaging stakeholders such as Council leaders, Councillors, and other organisations.
- Administration and expansion of funding resources.



- Communication and collaboration strategies with Council and other organisations.

### 4.3 Structure and Systems - Terms of Reference

**Revisit and revise as needed the EHN Terms of Reference with the goal of developing shared understanding of the roles and expectations of EHN members and stakeholders (within the next 6-9 months).**

The roles, responsibilities and expectations of EHN members and stakeholders require clarification and revision as needed. One approach is to revisit the Terms of Reference to ensure clarity, shared understanding and agreement among stakeholders. It is recommended that the Board work with the EEI team to develop a strategy or plan to engage all the Hubs in the process. For some of the Hubs, this process will be a simple and quick task since they have already developed clear ways of working. Others may require assistance from the Board, the EEI team or other resources.

### 4.4 Communication Strategy

**The Council (EEI Team) to review within the next year its communication strategy with the goal of increasing its reach across communities.**

The Council and the EEI team have provided extensive communication with stakeholders on the EHN. It is recommended that the EEI Team conduct a review of its communication strategy (newsletters, website, emails, etc) to increase effectiveness where needed. This review should actively involve the Board and individual Hubs.

### 4.5 Funding Resources

**Within the next year, develop a plan for increasing the effectiveness, transparency and open discussion of the Equality Fairness Grants. Develop strategies (that includes feasibility analyses) for increasing funding from the Council and other organisations.**

Funding and resources were raised as key issues by many EHN members. It is recommended that the Board and the EEI team work to promote transparency and open discussion about resource issues including funding allocation, expenditure and expectations.

As noted above, a funding and resources strategy would assist the Board and individual Hubs plan for funding opportunities and potentially expand resources. The Council already provides assistance and training to Hub members by signposting opportunities along with providing information sessions on grant funding. A funding and resource strategy would further help inform and guide all Hubs.

## 4.6 Skill/Style and Capacity Building

**Develop a guide for EHN members on skills, styles and capacities needed for success, and provide development opportunities for EHN members.**

As noted in the analyses, part of strength of the EHN is its diversity in terms of experiences. Individuals come with both professional and life experiences that are invaluable to the success of the EHN. However, it is not clear whether EHN members have a shared understanding and agreement on what skills and styles would enhance their ability to achieve their goals and work across differences.

It is recommended that the Board, Hubs and EEI collaboratively work together to identify, hone and build those skills and styles necessary for success in this new way of working. This will help individuals support each other, practise flexibility and adaptability, and build resilience.

Some individual Hubs may be dealing with specific issues and/or not progressing in terms of their Hub development. It is recommended that the EEI Team work with these individual Hubs to identify their unique needs and develop a plan to build capacity and increase engagement. For example, the interviews and survey results highlight the lack of progress of the Carers' Hub and the ongoing challenges within the BME Hub.

If you have questions or comments regarding this report, please contact:

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