



European Union
European Structural
and Investment Funds

Sunderland Community Led Local Development

Equal Opportunities Policy

The Sunderland CLLD Partnership recognises and values, the diversity of people within the city and is clear that everyone should be treated as equals, irrespective of their circumstances or background. The Sunderland CLLD Partnership is committed to equality and diversity. The policies, practices and procedures by which it operates reflect the varied needs, expectations and culture of all members of the local community. This is especially important in Community-led Local Development as it will focus on disadvantaged neighbourhoods and people and a robust approach to equalities is vital to ensure that all available talents and abilities are harnessed. Every effort will be made to ensure that no member of the community receives less favourable treatment when accessing and engaging with CLLD on the grounds of the following 'protected characteristics':

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

This policy sets out the top level commitment to promoting equality in the Sunderland CLLD Partnership. Although this policy has been specifically constructed for the CLLD programme, it will align to the underlying criteria and objectives of Sunderland City Councils Equality Scheme.

Sunderland CLLD Partnership will ensure that it complies with the current and forthcoming statutory requirements and standards, and seeks to influence and encourage partners and providers to meet their obligations through agreement and contractual arrangements. To support this aim, the Sunderland CLLD partnership has adopted the following principles:

- Value the talent, needs and desires of all members of the community;
- Employ principles of equity and fairness in consultation and community engagement;
- Promote good relations between all sections of society;
- Ensure a 'whole programme approach' to equality;
- Strive for continual improvement, through setting objectives and targets and monitoring and review;
- Promote activities that address disadvantage and inequality by working with those groups and communities that tend to miss out on employment, skills, enterprise or community development opportunities.

Through the development and implementation of these principles, the CLLD Partnership will continue to promote equality of opportunity amongst different groups of people and ensure that potentially vulnerable groups and individuals are supported, and their needs are addressed, in ways

that are best suited to them. Working to foster good relations between different groups and communities in the city will be enhanced.

The Sunderland CLLD Local Action Group (LAG) will be responsible for enabling and ensuring equality of opportunity within the CLLD programme and this will be delivered through:

- Ensuring that LAG membership is gender balanced and inclusive, as far as possible, and represents the widest possible cross section of the local community.
- Promotion of the programme and the encouragement of applications specifically to individuals and groups who have or share one or more 'protected characteristics'.
- All applicants, beneficiaries, partners, stakeholders, the public and colleagues will be treated with fairness, respect and honesty.
- Particular efforts to support individuals who lack experience and wish to make project applications in completing funding applications.
- Ensuring that the application process is as straightforward as possible and that the selection procedure is non-discriminatory and transparent.

The LAG is firmly committed to promoting equal opportunities whilst delivering activities funded by the European Structural Investment Funds, and will require a similar assurance from all delivery providers and their sub-providers. Lessons learned from previous programmes and good practice locally will be shared with prospective applicants and delivery partners. During project design, organisations will be asked to consider:

- How they can best promote gender and other forms of equality in their project;
- Offering or referring clients to information, advice and guidance;
- Providing or procuring childcare support where this might be a barrier to participation;
- The structure and content of activities is suitable and appropriate for women and men;
- Ensuring that provision is accessible, flexible and gender-sensitive where necessary.

As part of the project application process, applicants will be encouraged to undertake an Equality Analysis to consider the potential impacts of a projects activity during preparation and implementation. The equal opportunities policies of lead providers and their sub-providers will undergo a basic initial assessment at application stage to ensure that a policy exists or that the key elements of the policy have been drafted, and complement the CLLD policy.

The LAG will work with local organisations to ensure that the strategy, and the projects that flow from it, meet and promote accessibility requirements. Organisations will be encouraged to adopt a number of measures such as:

- Ensuring that organisations and staff understand the 2010 Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Encouraging organisations to regularly review whether their project / services are accessible to disabled people;
- Providing regular training to staff;
- Implementing their equality policy and reviewing its effectiveness;
- Putting in place an easy to use, well-publicised complaints procedure and using this to identify problems that need to be addressed;
- Consulting disabled customers, organisations representing disabled people and staff in the design stage of the project, and during its implementation to ensure it remains inclusive.