

# Equality and Diversity Action Plan



## Introduction

SELNET as the lead partner on the Building Better Opportunities – Age of Opportunity project for Lancashire has worked hard to ensure the partnership is made up of diverse partners so as to reflect the demographic of Lancashire. The final partnership contains services providers who have portfolios of specialist staff, skills and experience of working with disadvantaged individuals aged 50+ who face multiple and complex issues and/or have a protected characteristic.

The Equality and Diversity action plan will underpin the Age of Opportunity Project and its activities to address issues that lead to disadvantage, isolation and lack of understanding. There is recognition at this stage that there may be needs identified along a beneficiary's journey that fall outside of the services available in the partnership. To this end provision of spot purchasing, specialist support has been considered in developing the project plan.

In developing the Equality Action plan consideration has been given to the nine protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, given the issues of disadvantage suffered by all of our communities across Lancashire. Protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, are defined below:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The Equality and Diversity action plan plots the steps and measures that have been and will be taken from the start of the project development to project delivery and evaluation. The following 6 steps have been identified and actions, indicators and targets are detailed in the table below.

1. Identifying Potential Partners
2. Understanding the needs and challenges of participants
3. Addressing difficulties people may have in finding out about the project
4. Specific activities delivered to ensure people are not disadvantaged when accessing the project
5. Equality and Diversity in management and delivery
6. Implementation and review of equalities policies and procedures

Indicators have been assigned to each barrier/issue and where outstanding will be updated on a quarterly basis as participant data and targets are recorded.

While partners have been assigned responsibility for certain deliverables, Selnet as lead partner holds ultimate responsibility for the implementation of and adherence to the plan and will continually monitor through the project lifetime.

<b>Step 1: Identifying Potential Partners</b>					
<b>Barrier/issue</b>	<b>Steps, actions &amp; activities to overcome/address barriers &amp; issues</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Reviewed/completed</b>	<b>Traffic Light Status</b>
<p><b>Ensuring information on the programme was widely accessible by a variety of organisations across Lancashire</b></p> <p><b>Attracting suitably qualified and experienced organisations to form the delivery partnership</b></p>	<p>Engagement activities and events held across Lancashire as part of awareness raising of BBO have provided opportunities for potential partners to access information about the programme and highlight some of the barriers and issues their 50+ service users face when trying to access services.</p> <p>The activities and events were promoted to over 4500 organisations and groups across Lancashire via One Lancashire’s networks &amp; through partners. Two events were held in Preston and in Blackburn in October 2014 with the aim of giving organisations an overview of the BBO programme. These events led onto some workshops which were offered for organisations who wished to take the next step and further develop ideas for project delivery for the target groups. Workshops were held in Preston, Burnley and Blackpool. Attendee organisations were asked to complete an SOI (Statement of Interest) form if they wished to be considered as a project partner.</p> <p>A total of 182 potential partners completed and returned SOIs which helped identify some of the needs and challenges faced by the various different groups and assess their suitability to deliver by asking about current and past projects which have been delivered for target groups. To ensure that all interested organisations were able to express an interest, additional support was offered to them by organisations such as Lancashire BME Network (LBN). LBN supported its member organisations with advice and support in completing the SOIs and accompanying documents.</p>	<p>ONE Lancashire through Big Lottery Development Funding</p>	<p>4500 VCFS groups reached</p> <p>170 attended briefing events</p> <p>145 registered to be on database</p> <p>182 SOIs completed</p>	<p>October 2014- May 2015</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>

Step 2: Understanding the needs and challenges of participants					
Barrier/issue	Steps, actions & activities to overcome/address barriers & issues	Responsibility	Indicator	Reviewed/ completed	Traffic Light Status
<p><b>Planning and designing the programme based on the needs and challenges faced by the potential participants</b></p>	<p>From the briefing events and workshops we were able to identify organisations which were recognised as current leaders with specialisms which would be valuable to the BBO project. The themed areas of work were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Inclusion</li> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Volunteering and Skills</li> <li>• Employability</li> <li>• Enterprise</li> <li>• Financial Inclusion</li> </ul> <p>Focus groups have been held with beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds from across Lancashire aged 50+ by Community and Business Partners, Intact and Lancashire BME Network in areas of high deprivation and those who are disadvantaged.</p> <p>A questionnaire was also distributed via project partners for individuals to complete. The focus groups and returned questionnaires provided data that gave greater depth to the project's understanding of needs and barriers faced by the 50+ in relation to employment, learning and barriers. The focus groups were key to ensuring that equality of opportunity and equality of outcomes was centric to the project development.</p> <p>To reinforce the project's understanding of the needs and challenges faced by those who are 50+ and disadvantaged, an Equality and Inclusion consultation was carried out with partner organisations. The information from the surveys has been included in this plan. The survey responses</p>	<p>Selnet with lead partners Bootstrap for employability, CBPartners for enterprise, Blackpool Volunteer Centre for Volunteering, Women's Centres for digital inclusion, Age UK for engagement, Advice Lancs (CRBs) for financial inclusion.</p> <p>Supported by Lancashire BME Network</p>	<p>182 SOIs</p> <p>4 focus groups held</p> <p>59 questionnaires completed</p> <p>Research and Development by professional bid writer</p>	<p>June 2015- March 2016</p>	<p><b>Green</b></p>

	<p>have also informed project development and resource allocation. This survey asked the following questions of partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specific barriers do your beneficiaries have in relation to accessing employment/ volunteering and learning opportunities?</li> <li>• How can we as whole and you as a partner address those needs and challenges? What activities/support could be offered?</li> <li>• What might be the best way of promoting the project to your beneficiaries? Is there a method of communication that works better than others?</li> <li>• What special measures might you use in order to engage with those who don't access services currently and who you would consider the hardest to reach?</li> <li>• Are there any specialist skills within your organisation which might be used to support clients to access the BBO project?</li> </ul> <p>From the early development stages, equality of opportunity and gender equality have been at the heart of discussions. To this end a partner organisation (LBN) has been working alongside the project development team, so that where necessary there has been scrutiny of decision making processes and full understanding of the importance of embedding equality in to the project.</p>				
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**Step 3: Addressing difficulties people may have in finding out about the project**

Barrier/issue	Steps, actions & activities to overcome/address barriers & issues	Responsibility	Indicator	Reviewed/ completed	Traffic Light Status
<p><b>Potential participants are not engaging with mainstream services and/or not known to mainstream service (i.e. not claiming benefits, not registered with GP)</b></p>	<p>A comprehensive communication and engagement plan, which is multifaceted will underpin the promotion and publicity of the project, taking into account the needs of groups with protected characteristics and those facing multiple disadvantages.</p> <p>Various engagement techniques and activities will be used, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilising networks and partnerships especially those that engage with individuals with protected characteristics or have gender specific aims and objectives.</li> </ul>	<p>Selnet Age UK All delivery partners who are working with potential participants</p>	<p>256 number of eligible participants on programme</p> <p>All participants have engaged direct with project partners. This achieved</p>	<p>Reviewed March 2017</p> <p>Strategic review every quarter</p> <p>Ongoing partner updates</p>	<p><b>Amber</b></p>

<p><b>Potential Participants hear about the programme but lack confidence in accessing it or engaging</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using various media such as: Talking newspapers (for sight impairment), Asian newspapers, Pendle Radio, Lancashire Telegraph, local papers, newsletter, tenants' TV and newsletters</li> <li>Using Social media such as Facebook and Twitter pages, which are becoming more popular with the 50+ group</li> <li>Traditional poster and leaflet campaigns targeting: GP Practices, Health Centres, Hospitals, Opticians, Leisure Centres, Community Centres, Libraries, Places of Worship, Support Groups, Vets, social clubs, Housing Associations and Credit Unions</li> <li>Dedicated website and promotion on partners websites</li> </ul> <p>Additional engagement techniques will include; Outreach Activity (face to face engagement). This will be done by having a presence at venues such as; supermarkets, Bingo Halls, Cafes, Hospitals, Post Office, Markets, Bus Stations, Train Stations, Food Banks, Places of Worship, DIY Stores.</p> <p>Awareness raising for all employers to benefits of employing staff aged over 50, in particular the participants of the BBO project.</p> <p>Create multiple referral mechanisms and pathways Self-referral systems through the dedicated website, through any project partner, messaging through social media, walk in centres, phone and email Peer referral option - so friends and family can support referral into the project &amp; provide emotional support There will be organisational referral available by creating referral pathways i.e. by working with the Locality managers of the eight Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) across Lancashire we can create a system whereby GP's can refer to the project (social prescribing model). This model has already been successfully used in East Lancashire.</p>		<p>through numerous routes</p> <p>Service delivery is designed to meet each participant personal preference for support interaction.</p>		
<p><b>Step 4: Specific activities delivered to ensure people are not disadvantaged when accessing the project</b></p>					
<p><b>Barrier/issue</b></p>	<p><b>Steps, actions &amp; activities to overcome/address barriers &amp; issues</b></p>	<p><b>Responsibility</b></p>	<p><b>Indicator</b></p>	<p><b>Dates Reviewed</b></p>	<p><b>Traffic Light Status</b></p>

Low confidence levels	All activities will be person focused with a specific emphasis on the individual's needs. Engagement will be seen through a variety of routes and partners have been selected based on the ability to engage with those specific groups known as 'hardest to reach'. <b>Navigators will hand hold each participant through their journey.</b>	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X/650 participants report increased confidence	Data collection commences March 17.	Amber
Long term unemployed or never worked and/or fear of working environments	Participants will engage through interventions in their local area and in some cases with agencies (Partners) they have or have had an existing relationship with. Partners will work with participants to build trust, encouraging them to enrol on to activities that will build confidence and develop skills. The navigator will be involved in the journey progression to enable the participant to make informed choices and be able to react should the Personal Action and Development Plan need to be reviewed. Interventions will develop routine and interaction with others so as to focus on preparation for employment e.g. volunteering opportunities can reduce fear of working environments.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	126/702 participants engaged in activities to improve their work readiness	March 2017 Then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and claim data	Amber
Lone parents with childcare issues	The project will offer childcare whilst the participant is actively engaging with project activities. Post activity, the Navigator will support the participant to source local affordable provision should this be a requirement for work.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X/75 supported with childcare responsibilities	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
People with caring responsibilities i.e. for other Adults-partners, parents	The project will offer support with caring responsibilities whilst the participant is actively engaging with project activities. Navigators will offer support to identify day care provision, buddying or befriending and other support services.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X/100 carers receive support through the programme	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber

Low income, or low disposable income to purchase necessities essential for job hunting	Project will support provision for essentials i.e. stationary, bus fare, interview clothing. Crisis provision for emergency situations could be accessed through existing partner provision- i.e. food, furniture etc.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X participants supported with provisions	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Homeless people no fixed abode so no benefits	The project will ensure a referral pathway to external support services i.e. through homeless charities, the Lancashire Citizens Advice Service who can support beneficiaries in accessing welfare support.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X homeless participants supported	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Ex-offenders struggling due to offending record & stigma	Project partners will engage with employers both large and small scale to change mind-sets towards ex-offenders. As part of the Personal Action and Development Plan the Navigator can look volunteering opportunities and/or work experience to rebuild a participant's experience and referee portfolio.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	8 Ex-offenders supported	March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
People with poor literacy levels	Support with literacy and numeracy will be delivered through employability activity. In addition to referrals and introductions to informal and formal community learning programmes and statutory provision.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X/200 participants will improve their basic, digital financial or personal skills	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Lesbian, gay & bisexual and	Lancashire LGBT will be a key stakeholder within project delivery. Project management Group will also identify a LGBT champion, while the	Age UK with support from	Participant data	No longer a funder	Green

transgender people suffering from discrimination	navigator will create a Personal Action and Development Plan sensitive to the individual's needs.	all delivery partners		requirement for capture	
Gypsy Roma Travellers	<p>Navigators will keep abreast of culturally and diverse issues amongst traveller communities. Project partners will actively work with Lancashire's Gypsy Roma Traveller Service to engage with this group. Services are co-located to venues or even on traveller sites to encourage uptake.</p> <p>Where needed the project management group will source cultural awareness training, taking into account the diverse makeup of Lancashire.</p>	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	Participant data	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Living in isolated or rural areas	Project services will be peripatetic aiming to make services accessible to all participants. Navigators will work from various geographic locations and will deliver outreach support. Options for co-location have been mapped, included underused venues and IT suites. Ensuring that locations used are accessible with good transport links.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	Location data	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Those with English as a second language	The navigator will create a Personal Action and Development Plan sensitive to the individual's needs. Where language is a barrier ESOL providers will support both accredited and non-accredited provision. Mapping of language support amongst partners has already taken place and this information will be provided to partners via a 'partner's digital platform'.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	x/300 participants will identify learning opportunities to overcome their skills gaps	<p>Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data</p> <p>Selnet currently mapping ESOL provision</p>	Amber

Refugees	<p>Navigators will keep abreast of cultural and diverse issues amongst refugees. Issues such as language barriers, health or confidence issues would be supported through project activity, the journey/ Personal Action and Development Plan will be designed to help build skills and abilities to engage in employability activity.</p> <p>Staff will also be able to access specialist support from partners using online forum, where best practice and lessons learnt will be recorded.</p>	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	Participant data	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Beneficiaries with mild to moderate mental & physical health problems or disabilities	<p>The project will deliver demand lead person centred activities, taking the service to the participants when need demands.</p> <p>Navigators are equipped to deal with people disadvantaged through health and wellbeing inequalities and will be able to access support from specialist project partners.</p> <p>Peripatetic service provision and use of co-location model will make access to the project easier for those with health and mobility issues.</p> <p>Furthermore, signposting and referral to recreational/health&amp; wellbeing activities will help improve beneficiaries' physical &amp; mental wellbeing.</p> <p>Co-location model, readily available list of venues that are DDA compliant, including disabled access, induction loop systems. Mapping of disability specialisms amongst the partnership has taken place and this information will be made available on 'partner's digital platform'. All literature produced will include disability friendly formats such as easy read and talking papers.</p>	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	x/140 participants with disabilities on programme	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Those with moderate to severe mental health & physical health problems	<p>Navigators will work one to one to undertake a needs assessment of all participants. If it is identified that these individuals require specialist support or their needs are not met by the project, they will be referred onto external specialist services such as the Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs).</p>	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	x/140 participants with disabilities on programme	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Lack of ambition/motivation and confidence	<p>Navigators will work one to one with all participants and agree the best route forward for the participant.</p>	Age UK with support from	X/650 participants report	Data collection commences March 17, then	Amber

	The Personal Action and Development Plan will give the option to bring a friend or chaperone to activities for emotional support and will detail activities of a particular interest to the participant to support reengagement and/or increase positivity.	all delivery partners	increased confidence	ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	
Lack of or low level qualifications	The Navigators needs assessment will identify the best route to complement and increase the beneficiary's skills. This may include introduction to accredited learning provided by colleges or community learning providers. Project development team have mapped educational providers and the information will be available on the partner's digital platform.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	x/300 participants will identify learning opportunities to overcome their skills gaps	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Skills not suited to current labour market	The employability and enterprise partners have a particular role in supporting the project development and further identifying which industries and sectors currently have a skills shortage. Beneficiaries identified as being suitable to train in the skills needed will be directed to training providers that are able to provide required training. Where the beneficiary is in need of skills such as IT, basic support will be provided through project partners who specialise in digital training.	Bootstrap with support from all delivery partners	x/300 participants will identify learning opportunities to overcome their skills gaps	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Domestic abuse, trauma, exploitation	Key stakeholders will include external agencies who provide specialist services to support participants who suffer domestic abuse, trauma, exploitation etc. It is hoped that these issues would be recognised by the navigators and referrals can be made directly into these agencies. Partners with the staff skills to deliver counselling can be spot purchased as identified. Gender specific services through Lancashire Women's Centre can be delivered on a County wide footprint.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	Participant data	No longer a funder requirement for capture	Green
Drug, alcohol and substance misuse	Although this expertise is not covered within the partnership, Navigators would detail specialist service provision as part of the participants Personal Action and Development Plan.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	Participant data	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at	Amber

				quarterly review meetings and from claim data	
Lack of access to IT & internet	The Navigators needs assessment will identify the best route to support participants with no access to IT and the internet. Should IT support be required this will be provided through the partnership and may include; mobile IT suites that are internet ready. Additionally, the digital platform will contain a list of static IT suites available across the county. Partners delivering under the digital Inclusion theme will support this element of participant needs and provide this data for use on the partner platform.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X/200 participants will improve their basic, digital financial or personal skills	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Debts	Financial Inclusion is a key element of the project design. The Navigators needs assessment will identify the support needs and best route for the participant, debt and welfare advice will be available through specialists, Lancashire CABs as part of the partnership offer and provide tailored one to one support.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	X/200 participants will improve their basic, digital financial or personal skills	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Long term illness	Returning to work after a long term illness is a particular barrier to both the individual and to the employer. The Personal Action and Development Plan will address this through a detailed discussion and exploration of options with the participant. The Plan may include a programme of re-engagement, Health and Wellbeing activities or volunteering that will consider low intensity mobility etc.	Age UK with support from all delivery partners	Participant Data	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings and from claim data	Amber
Fear of losing benefits	The Navigator assessment interview will be conducted in adherence with the confidentiality code of conduct, the Information governance and safeguarding policies referenced within the Partnership agreement.	Lancashire CABs with support from	X/200 participants will improve their basic,	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at	Amber

	<p>Navigators and partners will work with participants to build trust encouraging them to overcome barriers.</p> <p>Welfare advice will be provided through Financial Inclusion activity.</p>	all delivery partners	digital financial or personal skills	quarterly review meetings and from claim data	
Cultural sensitivities	<p>Navigators will keep abreast of cultural and diversity issues of all participants. We have a diverse range of project partners able to acknowledge and embrace cultural sensitivities.</p> <p>Navigators will utilise the depth of the partnership in creating and agreeing the Personal Action and Development Plan and where specific services are required these will be offered through specialist partners and in venues that are accessible and acceptable to the participant.</p>	Lancashire BME network supporting all delivery partners	X/150 people from ethnic minorities on programme	Data collection commences March 17, then ongoing at quarterly review meetings.	Amber

**Step 5: Equality and Diversity in Management and Delivery**

Barrier/issue	Steps, actions & activities to overcome/address barriers & issues	Responsibility	Indicator	Dates Reviewed	Traffic Light Status
<p>Representation at Strategic Level and within delivery partners</p> <p>Creating accountability and a support network</p>	<p>From the onset Equality and Inclusion has been centric to developing the project.</p> <p>Overall strategic direction is provided to SELNET through a Board of Directors. The directorship is made up of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including; BME females, a Faith Sector Representative, individuals aged 50+, physical and learning disability. Having diversity at a strategic level ensures an in-depth understanding of some of the issues and barriers that beneficiaries of the project may face.</p> <p>A project development group consisting of SELNET, lead partners and the Equality Inclusion representative will be created. The group will be established to drive this project forward and will continue to make extensive efforts to be inclusive of the views and voices of the wider partnership when further developing and delivering the project.</p> <p>To date an Equality and Inclusion lead has been party to project development meetings which ensured consistency of approach. The Equality Lead will feature heavily in the future management of the project and the role will be to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a resource for partners on E&amp;D matters and queries</li> </ul>	Selnet Lancashire BME Network	Project Development group to forma and meet quarterly	Group not formed – Action for Q3 2017	RED

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review project documentation from an E&amp;D perspective</li> <li>• Advise on how to include E&amp;D within project evaluation</li> <li>• Role on Steering Group</li> <li>• Support partners to implement, improve or amend E&amp;D policies and procedures.</li> </ul> <p>Any Recruitment to project teams will follow equality and diversity policies and procedures and project partners will be supported in adopting a minimum standard. Recruitment policies have been approved and are in place and will be used as a benchmark for partner's recruitment policy and procedures. No person or group will be treated less favourably in recruitment due to having a protected characteristic.</p>				
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**Step 6: Implementation and review of equalities policies and procedures**

Barrier/issue	Steps, actions & activities to overcome/address barriers & issues	Responsibility	Indicator	Dates Reviewed	Traffic Light Status
<b>Ongoing support and implementation of the equality and diversity action plan</b>	As part of the due diligence checks in the SOI document, all partners had to demonstrate they had an Equality and Diversity policy and procedure in place	Selnet	45 partners have E&D policies checked.	May 2015	<b>Green</b>
	The project development group will meet quarterly to review progress against the equality action plan. Equality will be a standing item on the agenda at these meetings and will include partner feedback to identify any gaps in provision, shortfalls against equality targets and direction. Progress will be measured at these meetings using an agreed template, identifying risk and mitigation.	Selnet		Group not formed – Action for Q3 2017	<b>RED</b>
	All partners will be able to access support to review and enhance their E&D policies, procedures and practice to ensure consistency in understanding and delivery of the project across the partnership.	Selnet and Lancashire BME Network		Yes through: Quality Officer working in conjunction with E&D consultant – in post July 17	<b>Amber</b>

	A Partners forum will be established to form a supportive network to ensure good practice can be shared with others.	Theme Leads		Monthly partner meetings	Green
	Data collection, monitoring and review will provide the steering group with a picture on progress. Support plans will be put in place with partners if necessary including 1-1 and peer support.	Selnet		After first claim period	Amber
	Service users/beneficiaries will be encouraged and supported to provide feedback on service provision through regular consultation and feedback and this will be reviewed quarterly by the steering group any actions taken to address any issues.	Theme Leads		Yes through: Quality Officer working in conjunction with E&D consultant – in post July 17	Amber
	Evaluation of the whole programme half way through delivery. Any outstanding Equality and Diversity issues will be addresses	Selnet		January 2018	Amber