



Heart of the South West European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy

Appendix 2

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Commitment

Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership is committed to promoting equality and diversity and challenging all forms of discrimination on the basis of age, disability, gender, marital status, maternity, race (including ethnic and national origin), religion and belief, sexual orientation and transgender. We will ensure that all investments considered as part of this strategy are committed to these principles through the procurement processes and by monitoring the impact and outcomes of the projects and investments.

Introduction

This document accompanies the EU Structural and Investment Fund Strategy which sets out how these funds will be allocated to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth across the area covered by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSW LEP).

The areas covered by HotSW LEP are the Plymouth and Torbay Unitary Authorities and Devon and Somerset County Council boundaries. Within this, Plymouth, Torbay and Devon have been classified into transitional areas (i.e. GDP 75-90% of EU 27 average) and Somerset as a more developed area (GDP >90% of EU 27 average) with funding allocated accordingly.

Through extensive work involving all sectors in the area and learning from a series of consultation carried across the area, five integrated activities have been identified in the strategy as priorities for EU Structural and Investment Funds. These are:

- A. Maximising Transformational Opportunities (nuclear, marine, environmental sciences and aerospace)
- B. Enterprise and SME Competitiveness
- C. Global Market Growth
- D. Digital (both infrastructure and literacy)
- E. Addressing Social Inclusion and Unemployment

Evidence

Statistical evidence was collected around employment for the inclusion of groups covered by the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. For some groups there is evidence of inequality (e.g. around gender and particularly the gender pay gap) but for many there is a lack of data or the data is at such a low level it is not statistically meaningful (e.g. for LGBT groups). The statistical evidence is set out in Appendix 1.

As part of the strategy all work commissioned and carried out as part of the programmes of work will include equality monitoring with the aim of increasing the availability of data. This data will be made available through the website to enable informed decisions about the impact in equalities to be made with greater assurance.

An on-line survey was conducted and received responses (not all complete) from the following organisations:

- 10 Parishes Business Group
- Action for Inclusion
- Devon Welfare Rights Unit
- Diversity Trust
- Fawcett Devon
- Intercom Trust, Exeter (covering Plymouth, Devon, Torbay, Somerset and Dorset)
- Midwest European Communities Association, Yeovil

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- Plymouth and Devon Racial Equality Council
- PADAN (Plymouth Area Disability Action Network)
- Plymouth Baha'i Community
- Plymouth People First
- Plymouth Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Racial Awareness, Inclusion, Support and Education (RAISE)
- Transgender Information
- Women's Equality Network Somerset (WENS)
- Individual residents in the LEP area.

A summary of the comments made and evidence presented is at Appendix 2.

Analysis

The evidence would suggest that the areas where the strategy will have positive impacts include age (both young and older people), disability, race, and sexual orientation. The strategy also has the potential to have a positive impact for transgendered groups but this will depend of careful targeting of the projects that come forward as a result of this strategy. Where the impact is likely to be neutral will be religious and belief groups. Where the impact may have a negative impact will be on gender where women may not benefit proportionally from the strategy. Mitigating activities are suggested in the narrative around gender below and in the actions as a result of each integrated activity.

Age

The area has had an uneven age profile in comparison with the rest of the UK. The area is well known for having a higher proportion of older people (65+) living in the area (22% compared with the UK average of 17%)⁽¹⁾, in part as it is considered a retirement destination. This also impacts on the distribution of older people with the greatest concentrations being in the Torbay area.

The LEP area has also a higher than average population at the older end of the working population with around 42% of the population being age 50 and over. There is evidence from Devon that people over 50 feel their age is seen as a negative factor in seeking or changing employment⁽¹⁾.

Clear in the data are a lower proportion of people in the 25 to 45 age bracket which has persisted for decades⁽¹⁾. This is considered to be as a result of the lack of good quality and highly paid employment opportunities in the area, so graduates tend to move out of the region to gain appropriate employment and experience, returning once they are established in their careers. In some areas of the HotSW LEP, the lack of a Higher Education institution contributes to an outflow of young people with evidence of about 6%⁽²⁾ leaving Somerset and not returning until retirement age. It is hoped that the focus on transformational opportunities will help re-dress the balance, retaining talent in the younger age bracket in the region and attracting others from outside.

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In recent years there has been evidence of a lack of ambition for young people in the area and commentary (e.g. evidence presented to Plymouth Fairness Commission) has suggested that this is a result of lack of role models in the 25-45 age bracket for those young people just leaving education and entering the workplace. It is hoped that focus on transformational opportunities will result in retention of talent, providing good role models and so encouraging others from disadvantaged groups to consider careers in the growth areas.

Disability

Where there is data available, it would suggest that the LEP area has a higher than average proportion of people claiming Disability Living Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). Although employment rates for people with disabilities (21.5% of the workforce)⁽³⁾ compare favourably with national figures, the rates are well below the rates for non-disabled people, suggesting high levels of discrimination.

Integrated activity E: Addressing Social Inclusion and Unemployment, will be focused on reaching those furthest from employment and so will have a positive impact on this issue but equality monitoring needs to be in place to ensure that disabled groups are appropriately reflected in the projects and programmes of work which flow from this.

Evidence from disabled groups suggest that it is prejudice from potential employers and access issues within workplaces that impact on low levels of employment. Activities which include the promotion leadership and

management training for employers, as part of these integrated activities, in addressing issues around employing people with disabilities will, therefore, have a positive impact. It is hoped that focus on innovation and advanced technologies will drive investment in areas of industry where access issues will be less.

There is evidence that suggests that, in common with other discriminated groups, that people with disabilities are well represented amongst the self-employed, so avoiding the barriers in employment. Integrated activities B, C and D would be expected to have a positive impact. Again, equality monitoring will need to be in place to ensure people with disabilities benefit proportionally from the activities.

Gender (including marital status and maternity)

Just over half the population of the LEP area is made up of women (52.2%)⁽³⁾. The higher proportion of women may be accounted for by the relatively higher number of older people in the area with women having a higher life expectancy and therefore disproportionately represented in the higher age brackets. This would also contribute to a greater proportion of economically inactive women as opposed to men across the region, with the remainder accounted for the greater number of women working at home caring for children and family.

There is, however, evidence that women are more likely to be employed in part-time, low paid, low quality insecure work than men which is also reflected in the gender pay gap, putting them at greater risk of poverty.

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The gender pay gap for the UK stands at 15.7% (2013)⁽⁴⁾ for full time work with the South West traditionally having a rate around 2% higher than this⁽⁵⁾. Although a lack of relevant skills may be a factor in this, evidence from the respondents to the survey suggested that a lack of good quality flexible employment was a significant.

Integrated activity A has the potential to be both positive and negative. The transformational opportunity employment sectors are largely male dominated and an increase in opportunities in this area is likely to lead to an increase in the gender pay gap for the area. This can be mitigated in the long term by providing leadership and management training to the businesses involved in the sector to ensure structural barriers to employing women (and other under-represented groups) are minimised in their business strategies alongside support and encouragement for girls and women to consider a career in these areas and business support measures introduced which help grow businesses owned and managed by women.

Within the region, the Met Office (where future growth would fall under the transformational opportunities umbrella) has used a government programme promoted by the Government Equalities Office (GEO), “Think, Act Report”, to reduce their gender pay gap from 10.1% to 9.2%.⁽⁶⁾

Race

The black and ethnic minority population (BME) of the HotSW LEP area is relatively low at 5%⁽⁷⁾ in contrast to 7.5% for the South West as a whole⁽⁷⁾. This does, however, mask some significant differences and the issues for

ethnic minorities in urban areas may be very different from those isolated in rural areas. It is also important to note that the communities are growing: in Plymouth the ethnic minority population has trebled in the last ten years⁽⁸⁾. This will have significance over the life of the funding.

Plymouth has the largest BME population in the area at 6.6%⁽⁹⁾. This has also included a growth in the variety of communities represented, driven in part by the designation of Plymouth as a dispersal zone for asylum seekers in 2001. Around 200 asylum seekers are accommodated in Plymouth at any one time and this has led to a settled refugee population of several thousand, with the largest groups being from Iraqi Kurdistan, Iran and China⁽¹⁰⁾. A proportion of the settled refugees came from professional occupations in their country of origin but are underemployed as their English skills are inadequate for them to work in their qualified profession in the UK. Issues of accessing equivalency for qualifications is also a barrier. It is likely that to address issues under Integrated Activity E, the availability of free or affordable ESOL classes for people for whom English is not the first language will need to be assessed across the HotSW LEP area.

As with other groups, evidence would suggest a higher proportion of people from BME backgrounds will be self-employed and own their own businesses⁽¹¹⁾. It is likely, therefore, that the activities that are targeted to support and grow SMEs are likely to have a positive impact.

Migrant communities are well represented in both rural and urban parts of the LEP area but over represented in the unemployment statistics despite evidence that a significant number of newly arrived migrants and refugees are

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young, highly motivated, highly educated and eager to contribute to the economic success of their new homes. With support in areas such as language, equivalent qualification assessment, business advice and support in obtaining work permits, this group could offer a ready-made professional and trained workforce.

Religion and Belief

Christianity is the largest religious group in the area, represented by 60% of the population⁽¹²⁾. Those with no religion or belief are the next largest group representing around 25-30% of the population within the LEP⁽¹²⁾.

Evidence from groups representing religion and belief would suggest that there is no specific impact on these groups, aside from where discrimination is related to perception of race. As the strategy will have an overall positive effect on employment opportunities, it would be expected that people from religious and belief groups would benefit proportionally.

Sexual Orientation

Data for the number of people who identify as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex and transgender) is not available. The data is difficult to collect due to a lack of confidence in the security of data resulting from discrimination in a number of arenas. In collecting data around equality from the projects associated with this strategy, this should be borne in mind and action taken to ensure the security and confidentiality of data collected. It is salutary to note that Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index

for 2014 there are no employers in this geographical area in the top 50 (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue ranked at number 54)⁽¹³⁾.

Stonewall estimates that the LGB population in the UK and somewhere between 5% and 7%⁽¹⁴⁾. There are some suggestions that in this region the number may be at the higher end of this bracket. This would represent 115,000 people in the area. National estimates are that 1:2000 people are born intersex which would suggest an intersex population of around 850.

The survey results suggested that overall the impacts of the strategy would be positive for this group as the evidence that is available would suggest that LGBT people will chose self-employment to avoid workplace discrimination and therefore might be well represented among business owners.

Transgender

There is little accurate data about the number of trans people living in the UK, although estimates suggest around 10,000 people⁽¹⁵⁾. This might give a figure of around 280 in the LEP area although this takes no account of any factors in the local demographic which might increase or decrease the proportion.

Groups representing transgendered people in the local area have evidence that, like other disadvantaged groups in employment, there is a overrepresentation of trans people in self-employment and, particularly for transgendered women, businesses where they are the business owner and sole employee, so ESF funding will take account of the participation of

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micro-level businesses in ensuring an overall positive impact. Integrated Activities A and E which include provision for leadership and management training on business strategy around employment have the potential to be significantly impactful for this group.

- (1) Source: NOMIS, 2013.
- (2) Source: Somerset Universities Partnership Project, 2010
- (3) Source: NOMIS, 2013
- (4) Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, ONS 2013
- (5) Source: NOMIS, 2013
- (6) Source: Government Equalities Office:
'<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/the-met-office>'
- (7) Source: 'Social Inclusion in the Heart of the South West: Data Report' - South West Forum
- (8) Source: NOMIS, 2013
- (9) Source: 'Social Inclusion in the Heart of the South West: Data Report' - South West Forum
- (10) Source: NOMIS, 2013
- (11) Source: 'BME people and small businesses', Black Women Mean Business 2011
- (12) Source: 'Know Your Communities', Devon County Council, Plymouth City Council and Somerset County Council.
- (13) Source: Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2014
- (14) Source: Stonewall
'https://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/sexual_orientation_faqs/2694.asp'
- (15) Source: Home Office funded research by gires:
<http://www.gires.org.uk/prevalence.php>

Action Planning

From the evidence and analysis, it would suggest that the areas where the data and responses suggest need to be a priority to embed equality over the period of EU funding are:

1. Data gathering. It is clear from the evidence gathered, analysis conducted and the responses received from the individuals and organisations who responded to the survey that there is a paucity of accurate data around the protected characteristics and employment or engagement in the local economy. Collecting accurate disaggregated data will be a priority across all the activities and a requirement to do so will be included in the commissioning process.
2. Providing leadership and management training to employers working in the area to ensure their management strategy, policies and practice take into account best practice around employing a diverse workforce and examining structural issues as to why certain groups are not well represented. There are well documented businesses cases for the benefits of employing a diverse workforce so this will have an overall economic benefit aside from improving equality. Business in the Community (BiTC) documents businesses that have benefitted from ensuring equality and diversity is embedded in their business.
3. Working with disadvantaged individuals to provide the support, education, training and access to transformational employment sectors and the establishment and growth of small businesses.

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Again, accurate monitoring needs to be in place to ensure the projects reach the groups identified here currently experiencing disadvantage.

Summary

In conclusion the areas which would expect to see impacts on equality issues are:

A. Maximising Transformational Opportunities (nuclear, marine, environmental sciences and aerospace)

This integrated activity aims to create 'better jobs' from transformational opportunities, thus raising the average wage in our economy. However, the evidence would suggest that employment in these sectors is largely taken up by men. In addition, the gender pay gap in the south west has consistently been around 2% higher than the national average (of 15.7%)⁽²⁾. If the 'better jobs' created by this activity are also taken up disproportionately by men, then the gap is likely to widen.

Ensuring that there is greater participation by women and other under-represented groups in these sectors will be a key element of the funding provision.

We will use ESF funding to:

- Promote leadership and management training for employers in addressing structural barriers to the employment of women and

other less represented groups' participation as part of their overall business strategy.

- Encourage take-up of education, training and employment related to STEM careers by women and other less represented groups
- Encourage take up of entry level employment opportunities by all groups in society, particularly those most at a disadvantage

Encouraging better jobs in the area will encourage those aged 25-45 to remain in the south west and attract others from this age group to relocate to the area. This would balance the age distribution which has been low in this band for a substantial period of time as people have left the area to seek employment opportunities elsewhere. Retaining more people in this age bracket would then provide the good role models which are currently lacking for those just reaching employment age and create a virtuous cycle of employment in better jobs.

B. Enterprise and SME Competitiveness

This integrated activity is likely to have a positive impact on equality.

Evidence would suggest (although accurate data is not available) that a higher proportion of people from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds, LGBT groups and some disabled groups will chose self-employment to avoid workplace discrimination and, for some groups, follow in a family tradition of entrepreneurship , and therefore might be well represented among business owners. However, evidence would also suggest that some minority groups have less access to finance which may

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have frustrated opportunities for growth. Evidence from migrant community groups would suggest that the desire to start up a business is high, but appropriately targeted support, advice and information is lacking. There is evidence that some groups (such as transgendered women) will focus on businesses where they are the business owner and sole employee, so activity will need to take account of the participation of micro-level businesses.

ERDF funding will be used to:

- Make it easier for all businesses to find the support they need, regardless of size, sector and ownership status.
- Provide support to start and grow a business, including business advice, support to become investment ready as well as providing investment for growth, ensuring that this is delivered in appropriate ways for different communities.

Potentially, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development could also be used to:

- Provide support, advice and funding to businesses and entrepreneurs to support the creation and development of SMEs and Micro Businesses in rural areas, including the uptake of new and/or improved business processes and technology.

C. Global Market Growth

As with integrated activity 3, there is evidence of minority groups being well represented as small business owners so there may be a positive impact for these groups.

ERDF funds will be used to:

- Encourage and support more SMEs to enter new domestic and international markets.
- Help more SMEs develop a focused growth business strategy which will drive business performance.

D. Digital (both infrastructure and literacy)

This activity should have a positive impact on equality. Evidence would suggest that older people, those from BME backgrounds, people with disabilities, those from the most deprived parts of the region and women have less direct access to digital connectivity and the skills to use them.

ESF funding will be used target support women and other under-represented groups to increase their participation.

EDRF funding will also be used to support SMEs and social enterprises in their development of ICT products and services and improve their ability to exploit e-commerce opportunities.

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E. Addressing Social Inclusion and Unemployment

This integrated activity will have a positive benefit for equality by targeting those who evidence identifies are the most excluded and most at a disadvantage.

ESF funding will be used to:

- Provide support and training for groups where there is evidence of particular disadvantage and exclusion, such as people with disabilities, young people, older people and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, are enabled to participate

fully in the projects and activities supporting this aim, including access to English courses for those for whom a lack of language skills is a barrier in the workplace

- Promote leadership and management training for employers to strategically address structural barriers to the employment of excluded groups as part of their overall business strategy.

EDRF funding will be used to:

- Provide business skills support and start up finance.

Local Enterprise Partnership

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Appendix 2: Summary of responses to survey

Q6: Is there data/evidence to suggest that the group you represent is less likely to be in employment in the Heart of the SW area?

There is very little or data of the ethnic minority communities in Somerset; however, it is public knowledge that, these groups are highly disadvantaged and are most likely to be unemployed in the heart of the SW area.

Yes: there are known and recognised barriers to employment for LGB people (relating (a) to historical exclusion/self-exclusion from training and skills at the critical period of their development, and (b) to mental health and self-esteem problems which are all too prevalent, especially among GB men).

It is all too widely demonstrated that Trans people (particularly w omen) encounter almost overwhelming

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	<p>barriers to employment, especially in rural areas such as the South West peninsula. These barriers relate partly to prejudice/resistance amongst employers, partly to problems some Trans people live with relating to very low self-esteem and long-term mental health difficulties. These are also related to social prejudice and historic exclusion from mainstream community life, education and training, etc.</p> <p>The antimigration speeches by the government leads to unemployment by migrant communities. Somerset is the second place to report homophobic crime according to Avon and Somerset police hate crime coordinator. There are ongoing incidents at workplaces relating to hate crime.</p> <p>Race: Yes.</p> <p>Religion: No.</p> <p>Data suggests that vulnerable people are less likely to be in employment. Those earning basic pay are more likely to lose their jobs or be in insecure jobs such as on Zero Hour contracts.</p> <p>Transgender: Definitely. However our numbers are so small that it is only anecdotal.</p> <p>I don't know of any regional data but presume it reflects national data w here disabled people are less likely.</p> <p>This question is too restrictive. Because our group focuses on sex (which includes everyone in Devon) our data/evidence gathering does not limit itself to looking only at w omen or only at men (or people w ho may not wish to define their sex or gender) we highlight and push for the elimination of equality gaps w here they exist. For example - the pay gap, or the socialisation of sexes into choosing traditional employment sectors, the ongoing disregard by those who collect and analyse statistics to apply gender disaggregation in their collection or analysis.</p>
<p>Q7: Is there data/evidence to suggest that the group you represent is less likely to be able to access education or skills?</p>	<p>Race: From the limited stats we have available and from our own know ledge and experience it would appear to us that the core sectors chosen have glaringly low numbers of diverse employees and this will just continue if skills, recruitment and culture are not tackled. The LEP should have some ambition and vision in this area and this should form part of each project’s decision making process.</p> <p>LGB: Yes, for reasons parallel to those given under Q6 above</p> <p>Migrant communities and in particular children of migrant parents are less likely to access further education due to lack of A levels or lower marks on GCSEs. Many children come into secondary education</p>

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	<p>without having been through primary education in the South West. This will impact on their further education. According to Somerset College there are only a few students from migrant communities registered with them.</p> <p>Race: Yes.</p> <p>Religion: No.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Transgender: Yes</p> <p>Disability: Don't know of any regional data which doesn't mean to say there isn't any.</p> <p>This question is also too narrow. Yes, we do see inequalities in access to education or skills, but these do not apply uniformly across the protected characteristic of sex. For Fawcett Devon to attempt to represent otherwise would be simplistic. Because 'sex' = everyone, our equalities work focuses on where disproportionate differences manifest themselves and are socially, economically or democratically disadvantageous. This might be to either of the sexes, or to those who do not wish to define their sex, or who may be in transition.</p>
<p>Q8: Is there data/evidence to suggest that the group you represent is less likely to own/manage a business in the heart of the SW?</p>	<p>We carried out a tertiary survey of BME managed businesses few years ago and realised how disadvantaged these businesses are: no public funded agency serving their needs, they do not access business advice, training, planning or access to finance including financial institutions such as Banks.</p> <p>No, but it would be interesting to find out. We would predict that (a) a higher proportion of LGB and Trans people are self-employed than in the general population, and (b) a lower proportion of Trans people own a business that has employees than in the general population.</p> <p>Many migrants wish to open businesses, however a lack of awareness of how to do so and a lack of local contacts prevent this.</p> <p>Race: yes.</p> <p>Evidence suggests that a very small percentage of our clients own or manage a business.</p> <p>Transgender: Yes</p> <p>Disability: I doubt that there is even national data let alone regional data.</p>

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	<p>Again, this question does not allow for a useful response. We do not represent solely men, or solely women, or solely transgendered women or men, or solely those who prefer not to identify their gender/sex. The picture is more complex. Yes, there are signs (but not much useful data gathering/analysis) of differing patterns of ownership/management. Our purpose is to consider whether an equality issue results because of the differing patterns. If an equality gap is evident we highlight it and call for change.</p>
<p>Q9: What could be done to specifically support your community in relation to accessing employment?</p>	<p>As a group, our view is that the strategy fails to address key issues around social inclusion and fails to demonstrate how each of the core sectors identified will encourage and attract diverse communities and how skills will be developed. The strategy would benefit from having a clear vision on how the LEP intends to specifically target diverse communities to better prepare them to enter these sectors.</p> <p>As an organisation directly supporting these groups, we advise that an initial Social Impact Assessment be carried out to enable a set data and evidence of these groups. It is also primary that the LEP work directly with this agency or similar agencies to enable services to the disadvantaged groups. Positive Action training in Employment is one vital but very effective methodologies in getting ethnic people into employment and training.</p> <p>LGBT: Community-based training would be important, but the most important thing is providing community-based and confidential support towards employability for those who are most excluded/self-excluded from the workplace by reason of low self-esteem and/or mental health problems.</p> <p>The promotion of a positive relationship through workforce diversity, in order to enable a better outcomes for the south west. Also the provision of community based English classes should be available for new comers to support positive integration and fair access to employment. In addition the provision of community services to deliver advice on employment related matters such as CV writing, job search skills, vocational training with language support.</p> <p>Members of the Bahá'í community tend to integrate into their local communities so do not require specific support different to other local inhabitants. However, having a skill/profession is a fundamental requirement of a Bahá'í ay of life therefore Bahá'ís would deeply appreciate and benefit from all forms of support and encouragement that would help them secure employment.</p> <p>Many clients have problems accessing good quality secure jobs. Many of our clients have a problem with</p>

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	<p>being given consistent hours or they are easily laid off. Many clients choose to leave their employment because of very poor practice by their employers. Employers need to be educated in terms of employment law and the benefits to their business/organisation if they follow ACAS codes of practice and the costs to their business when employees are ill-treated.</p> <p>Awareness training of employers and agencies that are tasked with finding employment for transpeople. We, as an organisation, are trying to rectify this but do not receive funds to enable us to do this.</p> <p>More publicity to disabled people and employers about government Access to Work support scheme.</p> <p>Being the protected characteristic of Sex, our "community" is, in theory, everyone of working age in Devon. Much research has been done into how women and men seek employment or take up employment. What we would like done is for the LEP to absorb the outcomes of that research and take action to eliminate the inequalities the research uncovered.</p>
<p>Q10: What could be done to specifically support your community in relation to accessing education and skills?</p>	<p>ESIF guidelines on equality and diversity seems to have been little served and we do not understand why. The LEP needs to look at equality and diversity beyond ticking a box next to 'equal opportunities' and look into what the LEP can actually do to start making some structural changes to the area and the opportunities available to the people and the communities that live within it.</p> <p>Community organisations have good access to migrant communities of different ages. Therefore, with funding they are able to offer a flexible service in relation to a range of short courses for migrant communities. Additionally colleges and other organisations could engage with all BME communities through community involvement.</p> <p>Education/learning a craft is of paramount importance to Bahá'ís - something which Bahá'ís take very seriously. Members of the Bahá'í community come from all countries and backgrounds. Most Bahá'í communities tend to be quite diverse. We are not aware of specific discrimination towards Bahá'ís in the South West in the education sector but it would be reassuring to know that everything possible is being done to ensure an unbiased attitude is shown towards all. Again, we ask for the same level of support and encouragement received by other members of the local community</p> <p>Be aware of the skills the community is short of. Set up training sessions and advertise them. Publish the skills the community is short of as this would encourage people to take up these training opportunities</p>

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	<p>because they would have a greater hope of finding employment. Provide more help with CV's and interview techniques and advertise where these can be found and located. Use social media with regards to question 9 and 10.</p> <p>Awareness training of employers and agencies that are tasked with finding employment for transpeople. We, as an organisation, are trying to rectify this but do not receive funds to enable us to do this.</p> <p>More accommodation for disability in apprenticeship schemes.</p> <p>We are a lobbying, campaigning, advocacy group, not a front-line provider.</p>
<p>Q11: What could be done to specifically support your community in relation to owning or managing a business?</p>	<p>BME businesses and business owners have suffered for several years for lack of support. In the days of SREC there was a small business unit assisting this sector, and since SREC has been closed there are no other places of support. Action for Inclusion Network provides very little support without funding or resources and can only so much. The advice is that, Action for Inclusion Network be equipped and supported with adequate resources to be able to help the group positively. Action for Inclusion Network also has qualified Business Mentors, Advisers and Counsellors they would be able to support the LEP to set adequate programme for the ethnic communities.</p> <p>Support our volunteer mentoring programme</p> <p>LGBT: Interesting new challenge. It would be basically a matter of targeted community development. The provision of business skills training in the community setting would enable better access for migrants, and perhaps delivered through BME umbrella bodies.</p> <p>Religion: The same level of support and encouragement received by other members of the local community.</p> <p>More help financially but also educating people on how to manage people as well as employment law and ACAS Codes of Conduct.</p> <p>Awareness training of employers and agencies that are tasked with finding employment for transpeople. We, as an organisation, are trying to rectify this but do not receive funds to enable us to do this.</p> <p>We are a lobbying, campaigning, advocacy group, not a front-line provider.</p>
<p>Q12: How do you think the EUSIF</p>	<p>Race: Positively.</p>

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<p>investments could impact positively or negatively on the groups you represent?</p>	<p>Positively but only if the investments are duly distributed to reach all of the equalities networks.</p> <p>LGBT: Negatively, unless made to be fully inclusive, and relevantly targeted.</p> <p>Religion: Positively.</p> <p>Positively, Improve the quality of jobs by educating managers/employers/owners of businesses on how to manage people in order to get the best from them which in turn will help the business.</p> <p>Disability: Positively.</p> <p>Negatively. If the socially, economically and democratically embedded inequalities WITHIN the protected characteristic of Sex are not corrected, all the inherent inequalities will persist – and there is evidence to suggest some may be made worse-</p>
<p>Q13: Do you have any other comments you would like to make?</p>	<p>The governance of the LEP and decision making needs to be made clearer and should have an ethnic representative/s on decision making Board.</p> <p>Many LGB people and some Trans people are fully involved in South West life, are employed, and are not experiencing problems. Others (and this probably includes the majority of Trans w omen) are extremely isolated, disadvantaged and marginalised. We should focus on imaginatively removing the barriers (both internal and external or social) that maintain this negative situation.</p> <p>MECA has been running services in Somerset, North Somerset, Devon, Dorset and West Wiltshire for the last 5 years with positive impact on the community. We would be very much interested in this partnership work and well placed to do so.</p> <p>Religion: Thank you for this valuable service. It is very encouraging to see how equality and diversity are being systematically strengthened within the South West communities. Much appreciated.</p> <p>Your documentation says that England's unemployment rate is less than EU overall. Is this because people who are on zero hour contracts (who often are not offered work) are considered to be in employment? Do employees in EU have such things as zero hour contracts? European countries have far better employment protection that UK citizens, therefore is there less staff turnover than we have?</p> <p>Bullying in the workplace is very common in this country but has made illegal in a number of European countries which it hasn't here. This results in a very disgruntled workforce with low morale and a high staff turnover which also leads to mental and physical health problems. If w e wish to improve</p>

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	<p>employment by improving attitudes and morale as well as getting people off of benefits, I think we need to look at our European partners and how they protect their employees in the workplace by legislation.</p> <p>Transgender: We are an invisible community that has a lot to give that is constantly being discriminated against. The best way to access us is to have specific training for transpeople in a safe environment, something that an organisation has yet to have the courage to do!</p> <p>Disability: I am sending this in late, as I have only just been sent this in the last 2-3 days, so no time (or resources as we are a voluntary group) to consult members or dig out data.</p> <p>We recommend that decision-makers and influencers inside, and allied to, the South West LEP need to gain an understanding of what equality is, and be able to recognise inequality (clue, equality is not about "fairness" and other tenuous sentiments).</p>
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