

# Widening Circles of Influence: An evaluation of the Equalities Board

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October 2020

**Report to:** GMCVO AfA management

**Status:** Internal document

*A programme led by:*  
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Thank you to:

Everyone who participated in the co-design and work of the Equalities Board. We learned and benefited immeasurably from your knowledge, experience and wisdom;

Ambition for Ageing programme management, for appreciating and committing to support the value of the co-design process and the EB's commitment to a community-based approach to its work;

LGBT Foundation for hosting the EB, ensuring that our work was embedded in an equalities context and community of practice.

Ambition for Ageing is a Greater Manchester wide cross-sector partnership, led by GMCVO and funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, aimed at creating more age friendly places by connecting communities and people through the creation of relationships, development of existing assets and putting older people at the heart of designing the places they live.

Ambition for Ageing is part of Ageing Better, a programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK. Ageing Better aims to develop creative ways for people aged over 50 to be actively involved in their local communities, helping to combat social isolation and loneliness. It is one of five major programmes set up by The National Lottery Community Fund to test and learn from new approaches to designing services which aim to make people's lives healthier and happier.



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## Glossary / List of new terms

**AfA** = Ambition for Ageing: a Greater Manchester programme that aims to make communities more age-friendly and improve older people's quality of life

**Ageing Equally?** = a programme of community research which focuses on what makes a good place in which to grow older for people who belong to minority communities

**Co-design** = when communities and service providers or professionals work together as equals to design services

**Co-production** = when communities and service providers work together as equals to design, deliver, and evaluate a programme or project

**Collaboration** = working together

**Community organisation** = a not-for-profit group with a formal constitution that is set up to provide services for a specific local community, or community of identity

**Consensus** = reaching agreement on something

**Demographic monitoring** = counting the numbers of people in a group with different characteristics, such as sex or gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, and disability, it is common in equalities work to ensure that a wide range of people are accessing a project or services

**Dissemination** = sharing the findings of research

**Diversity** = a way to describe a community having a lot of different kinds of people in it, or a way of working having lots of different methods and tools

**EB** = Equalities Board: the group responsible for making AfA inclusive and accessible for everyone

**Equalities organisation** = an organisation that works to reduce inequality in general or for a particular group/community, and/or an organisation whose service users belong to a group/community that experiences inequalities, discrimination or marginalisation

**GMOPN** = Greater Manchester Older People's Network

**Inclusion** = working in such a way that marginalised and minority groups are involved and able to participate in or benefit from a programme.

**Intersectionality** = the way that marginalised identities overlap, and specific forms of discrimination intersect or cross over, and make new kinds of discrimination

**LGBT** = Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans

**Lived experience** = knowledge gained through direct experience of an issue

**LDL (Local Delivery Lead)** = the organisations responsible for AfA in the local wards

**Mainstream** = catering for the majority, not specialised

**Marginalised** = the result of being pushed to the margins of society: excluded or ignored

**Social isolation** = a lack of social contact with other people. It is different from loneliness which is a subjective feeling.

# Section 1 Introduction

This report reflects on the work of the Equalities Board (EB), and its value as part of Ambition for Ageing. It shows that the EB had an impact on AfA, as much in the way things were done across the programme, as what was done. The EB had a strongly inclusive culture of collaboration, consensus and community, established through co-production. The EB promulgated an inclusive mindset which influenced the way that older people were thought about within AfA. Through its democratic structure it provided access to this large, well-funded programme for small, community-based equalities organisations, as well as for individuals from minority or marginalised communities.

## 1.1 Purpose of the Equalities Board and structure of this report

The existence of the EB, and the commitment of the programme to host it, ensured that equalities issues – and inequality – were always in mind. The establishment of the Equalities Board (EB) was central to Ambition for Ageing (AfA) meeting its commitment to Principle Two of the strategic plan - to: “[R]ecognise that older people are drawn from a range of social, cultural and generational backgrounds and may experience a range of inequalities”<sup>1</sup> - and the strategic objectives supporting that principle. These were to:

- Provide a voice for older people who are at particular risk of marginalisation and discrimination.
- Ensure that older people from all communities and all abilities are provided the opportunity to get involved in and benefit from the programme.
- Build improved links between localities and the organisations that support communities of identity.
- Develop an understanding of the inequalities of ageing across Greater Manchester and share with stakeholders.

While the EB was not solely responsible for ensuring these objectives were met within the programme, they formed the basis for the EB’s three strategic outcomes<sup>2</sup> which aimed to:

1. Ensure the development of the programme was informed by older people with lived experience of marginalisation.
2. Build the capacity of Equalities Board members to do this work – and to advocate for equality beyond their role in AfA.
3. Support AfA partners to increase their understanding of how marginalisation and inequality shape social isolation, particularly amongst older people in the context of place-based work.

These were in turn broken down into six operational outcomes, with corresponding indicators.

These three strategic outcomes related to the EB’s three main targets for influence: the AfA programme structure, design and operational delivery; the members of the EB; and the

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<sup>1</sup> Strategic Plan, March 2018

<sup>2</sup> EB Outcomes and indicators, agreed October 2017

programme's delivery partners in Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Tameside and Wigan, and for the scaled programmes.

We have written this report envisaging these three target audiences as concentric circles, conceptualising them as outwardly expanding zones of influence.

## 1.2 How we wrote this report

This report is based on a variety of sources, including reports and internal documents by AfA staff and partners;

- a detailed draft evaluation of the co-production process by Hannah Berry; evaluation interviews by MICRA's Camilla Lewis in 2018;
- a survey of EB members in 2019; a workshop-based evaluation of the EB's work by members in January 2020;
- demographic monitoring data collected at EB meetings and events;
- the EB activity log – as AfA was a 'test and learn' programme, we monitored the work undertaken by the EB, and its impact, throughout.

## Section 2: Learning from the Equalities Board and its work

This section of the report looks at the work of the EB, and what we know about its impact on members, its influence within AfA, and its capacity to increase understanding of inequality, marginalisation and social isolation of older people more widely. It begins with the story of how the EB was created through a careful six-month co-design process, and then discusses the EB's work with regard to its strategic outcomes and target audiences.

### 2.1 Establishing the Equalities Board through Co-design

The Equalities Board was established through a co-design process which ran from April to September 2016.

The co-design process strongly influenced the way that the EB subsequently contributed to the AfA programme. The processes developed during the co-design phase lasted throughout the life of the EB, and created its inclusive culture. The staff team's commitment to co-production ensured that the EB exemplified inclusion in both principle and practice. It provided a model for inclusive working, referred to in briefing documents<sup>3</sup> and the Toolbox for Inclusion in Practice<sup>4</sup>.

The EB's location within an equalities organisation was important, both culturally and practically. The staff team benefited from access to equalities resources and training, and supervision by a supportive management. When the lift broke at the LGBT Foundation offices, the organisation was responsive and flexible in supporting the EB staff to make alternative

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<sup>3</sup> For example <http://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/inclusiveneighbourhoods>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/inclusioninpractice> (forthcoming)



arrangements prioritising accessibility of EB meetings. At first an LGBT organisation may not have seemed an inclusive space for some members of the EB, who had little previous contact with the LGBT community. However, EB staff were able to build on LGBT Foundation's commitment to inclusion and intersectionality, and in return share the rich diversity of experience of the EB's members, and our learning from research with LGBT Foundation.

The literature on participation is clear that in order for diverse voices to be effectively, and equally, heard, structures and spaces must be meaningful and participatory. The EB was originally conceived by programme managers as a network of equalities organisations hosted by LGBT Foundation. However, the research co-ordinators employed to run the network proposed instead that it should be co-designed with both older people with lived experience of marginalisation, and equalities organisations. The research co-ordinators felt that this would be more congruent with the participatory ethos of AfA, and its commitment to ensuring that older people drive the design and delivery of the programme.

Co-design is one aspect of co-production, which has been defined as:

*“A relationship where professionals and citizens share power to plan and deliver support together, recognising that both have vital contributions to make in order to improve quality of life for people and communities.”<sup>5</sup>*

Co-production encompasses the whole gamut of co-design, co-delivery (of any and all aspects of project or programme work, including research, training, strategy development, service provision, policy influencing and so on) and co-evaluation. ‘Co-design’ simply means ‘designing together’.

The main reasons for using a co-design process were to build a sense of ownership of the EB's work by the potential members of the board, so that they would feel the EB was an arena for genuine collaboration. Co-design also offered a way to ensure that different requirements for access and inclusion would be more effectively addressed as solutions would be guided by those with expert knowledge of their own access needs. The co-design process was guided by the four core principles of co-production<sup>6</sup>: Diversity, Equality, Reciprocity, and Accessibility.

### 2.1.1 Diversity

Recruitment to the co-design process - and, later, ongoing recruitment to the Equalities Board - was targeted at individuals aged over 50, whose experience of ageing differed in some way from the ‘majority’ in their area because they were from a particular cultural or ethnic background, had been through particular life events (e.g. unemployment, loss of a partner, a long-term health condition) or had experienced inequality and discrimination. This corresponded to factors that increase an individual's risk of social isolation as they age<sup>7</sup> which were used for reference by the Equalities Board throughout its work.

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<sup>5</sup> National Co-production Critical Friends Group (undated) at <https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide51/what-is-coproducton/defining-coproducton.asp>, accessed 07/10/2020

<sup>6</sup> See <https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide51/at-a-glance> accessed 19/08/2020

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 1; the EB's matrix of marginalisation identified characteristics that put people at particular risk of isolation, and was based on characteristics identified through a literature review <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/sites/default/files/Bufel%20Tine%20-%20A5%20Brochure%20->

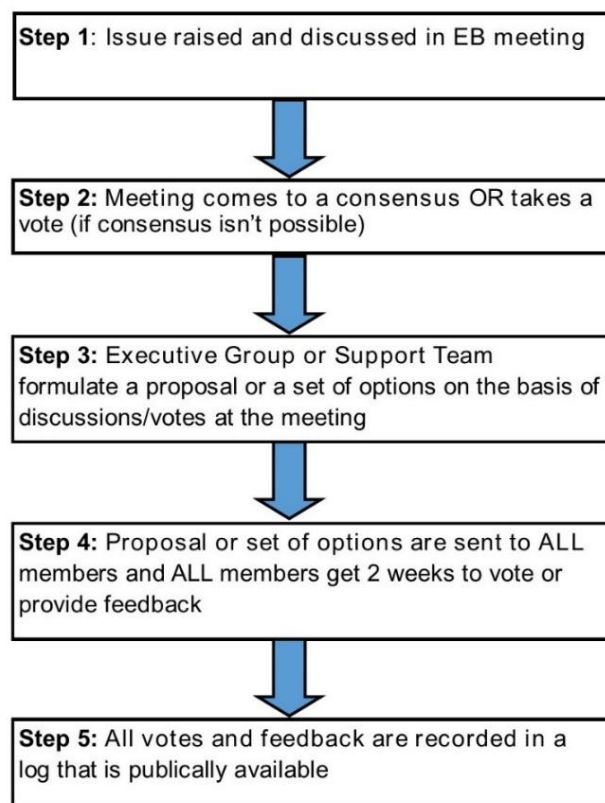
EB staff aimed to recruit older people from all the boroughs covered by Ambition for Ageing, but recruitment beyond Manchester was more difficult. This was likely due to meetings being held in the city centre, and to the limitations of personal and professional networks for outreach. Transport costs were covered, and refreshments provided at all meetings, and this helped to achieve diversity of the membership in terms of economic status. However there were no guidelines for ensuring a balance of membership. Instead staff directed recruitment efforts to filling perceived gaps. Much recruitment was done by calling specialist community of interest support organisations and inviting staff, service users, and volunteers to join. This is common in co-production. As a result, the distinction between individual members and organisational representatives was not entirely clear, and it was usually someone's status as a paid worker that defined their organisation's corporate membership of the EB.

Some organisations did not have capacity to send a representative to meetings, but were involved through outreach by EB staff. It was also difficult at first to find ways to support people with learning disabilities to get involved. There was some inevitable drop-off in membership during the co-production process. This happened to some extent throughout the life of the EB. There were questions about whether new recruitment might undermine the growing sense of unity in the group, but in the end this didn't happen. The staff and a stable core membership held the identity of the EB throughout the project, enabling new people to join with new perspectives, and accommodating loss. Very sadly, two members died during the project.

### 2.1.2 Equality

The co-design process employed a highly democratic, consensus-oriented decision making process. It was based on a commitment to consulting the whole membership for each decision, combining discussion, voting, and the flexibility to input into and feedback on options and decisions without voting.

The decision making process was weighted to ensure that organisational members could not dominate, by giving them one vote each however many members they sent. Due to the prominence of consensus-building in the process, the group discussed the need for checks and balances to ensure that quieter people were properly included and heard equally when decisions were made. These amounted to techniques for inclusive facilitation, such as small group discussion, explicitly inviting quieter people to give input, and creating a buddy system for new members. With the addition of an Executive Group function, this



[%20Social%20Isolation%20%281%29.pdf](#), protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, and specific marginalised communities identified by EB staff in their March 2017 equalities review.

process was followed throughout the life of the EB. The Executive Group was a subgroup of more committed EB members who met between EB meetings to support staff with ideas for new work and planning meetings. It did not take decisions on behalf of EB members.

The original structure proposed by the co-design process was not fully implemented in the end, as local subgroups and task groups never took shape. This was likely due to the capacity and size of the core, regular EB membership, and the concentration of membership in Manchester.

### 2.1.3 Accessibility and inclusion

*“I do find that they’ve gone out of their way to try and make it as inclusive as possible and take the issues on board ... They do take it seriously.”* (Co-design participant)

The EB staff were committed to making meetings as accessible as possible, and put a lot of thought into what would promote inclusion. This included ensuring that the process was accessible to people with a range of different impairments and communication needs.

Printed and presentation materials adhered to accessibility guidelines. Hearing loops and BSL interpretation were offered. Communications were offered in different formats, through different channels – email, phone, post. Remote attendance was possible via livestreaming of meetings – though no one took up this offer. Meetings were designed to ensure that people with different levels of literacy and comprehension could participate together, for example through small discussion groups. Members were consulted on the best times to hold meetings, to ensure religious festivals were respected. Travel and other expenses were reimbursed, and refreshments were provided. One co-design meeting fell during Ramadan, so staff explained by email what arrangements could be made for Muslim EB members, who responded with thanks for the support enabling them to participate.

Accessibility and inclusion is about being open to learning and changing the way things are done. Participants in the co-design process became more open over time about their needs with regards to information and communication. Not all needs could be met – originally it had been hoped that a member of People First (a user-led organisation of people with learning disabilities) would come to co-design meetings. But there was a concern that it would not have been possible to make the meetings accessible to them. Later, when a member of the GOLD<sup>8</sup> research team joined the Equalities Board, he was able to provide suggestions for ways to improve the accessibility of meetings and communications for others with learning disabilities. Throughout the project the team produced simpler summaries – though not Easy Read versions - of all Equalities Board research. However, the staff team remained aware that this was always a weak point in the Equalities Board’s work and communications.

### 2.1.4 Reciprocity

Co-design works well when it is based in trust and safety, and everyone feels supported, encouraged and able to participate. The co-design process used a variety of channels, some of which continued to be used by the EB. For example, the Textlocal service was successfully

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<sup>8</sup> Growing Older With Learning Disabilities (GOLD) <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/GOLD>

used throughout the project to remind people of meetings. However, the Facebook group was not used, and co-designers rarely initiated contact with the staff team.

Trust between the EB staff team and co-design participants was high throughout the co-design process, and remained high throughout the life of the Equalities Board. Trust between group members is often a more challenging issue in diverse groups, but the co-design process was centred on a clear shared purpose, supported by trust in the shared leadership of the participants and staff team.

By the end of the codesign process, there were a number of regularly attending EB members, and staff and members had a clear picture of how they wanted to work together. At the final session an external facilitator ran a focus group to evaluate the process so far, and gain a better understanding of how participants felt about it. The EB was launched one month later with a presentation on the principles of EDI (equality, diversity and inclusion) work and commonly used terms and definitions (more in section 2.2.2 below).

## 2.2 Members' development

The EB aimed to be a diverse group of over 50s with an 'inclusion mindset', who with an appreciation of intersectionality and both the specifics as well the commonalities of experiences of exclusion and marginalisation. To support this, the EB was committed to developing both individual and organisational members' capacities. Organisational members were supported to develop research skills through two EB research projects, in 2017-2018, and as part of 'Ageing Equally?' in 2019-2020 (see also 2.3.4 below). We documented the valuable knowledge gained through providing this support in 'The Value of Small Community-Led Equalities Research Projects'<sup>9</sup>.

Development of individual members' skills, capacity for involvement, and their personal development, were embedded in the ways that the EB worked, as well as the work it undertook. The EB monitored feedback throughout the programme, and the overall trend was for members to report increasing awareness of equality issues, increasing confidence in their role as EB members, and a sense that they were becoming more skilled in various areas.

*"It has made me more confident meeting people from other backgrounds, diversities, communities which I wouldn't have necessarily done before, and this has widened the range. So yes, this has given me some more confidence."* (Focus group participant, 2018)

In January 2020, four years into the project, members talked in detail about how involvement in the EB had boosted their confidence in public speaking, in being 'out' about hidden disability, in empathy and understanding others, and in connecting beyond their own community of identity.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/value>

## 2.2.1 Sharing knowledge

Knowledge development was undertaken in the spirit of knowledge exchange, building in knowledge sharing as well as increasing factual understanding of different topics. EB meetings almost always included a Key Facts presentation: a short talk by an individual or organisational member about their own community's experience of marginalisation (see appendix for full list). The presentations were followed by question and answer sessions, and were filmed and uploaded to a private area of the Youtube channel for members who could not attend. The presentations varied widely, from lively group presentations, such as the one about a Bangladeshi elders' group that included a video of members dancing, to more personal and intimate presentations like the one by a trans member. A survey of members in 2019 found that "gaining and sharing knowledge about different communities" had been one of the main benefits of membership<sup>10</sup>. The question and answer sessions were characterised by a combination of respect and interest, with members curious and glad to learn about other communities, while also assertive in sharing their own knowledge.

*"We come here; we talk to each other a bit more open... coming from a Muslim background I would not have voluntarily gone to a group to say, "Let's discuss LGBT," but now I come here so often. You just come here normally and talk to people... that barrier has gone. Now we can talk to each other one to one."* (Focus group participant)<sup>11</sup>

*"We don't know each other personally, but when we come here we feel confident enough to say what's in our hearts."* (Focus group participant, 2018)

Members were clear that they valued the skills learned through giving presentations and listening.

## 2.2.2 Building knowledge and skills

In partnership with the GMOPN, the EB delivered eleven training sessions for members of both groups. These were designed to build knowledge and skills on a range of topics chosen by members:

- Demographic monitoring
- Self confidence
- Visual impairment awareness
- Making information accessible
- Committee skills
- Conflict awareness and conflict resolution (2 parts)
- Facilitation skills
- Public speaking
- Understanding prejudice and inequality
- Being an expert by experience

Training sessions often used popular education techniques and strategies, designed to encourage knowledge sharing. A number of sessions were delivered or co-facilitated with EB

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<sup>10</sup> Summary of Equalities Board Survey 2019

<sup>11</sup> 2017-2018 Equalities Board Impact Report

members; the sessions on visual impairment awareness (by Henshaws) and on making information accessible (by Manchester People First) were based on the findings of their research, funded and supported by the EB. The conflict awareness and resolution training was given by Good Relations Oldham, co-facilitated by a staff member, and director who was also an EB member. Some training was delivered by staff from the EB team or the GMOPN staff team at Macc. These included the sessions on demographic monitoring, understanding prejudice and inequality, and on being an expert by experience. They were designed to support members' involvement in both the EB or GMOPN, and in other groups in their communities.

Members were involved in knowledge gathering for the EB's three equalities reviews, (see also 2.3.3 below). The reviews looked at progress made by the LDLs<sup>12</sup> in reaching the most marginalised older people in their areas. While EB staff led on the design of each review process and the research, and the writing up of the reports, EB members were involved in the discussions with LDL partners. Their reflections and feedback were helpful in drawing out learning from these meetings. Sometimes people had been on visits in previous years and said that they could see progress in taking an equalities approach. Others said they attended with a particular interest in looking at and how LDLs worked with members of their own community of interest or identity, and reflecting on how that could apply to other communities of identity<sup>13</sup>.

EB members also developed skills in co-design, presenting and public speaking, and event organising through involvement in designing and delivering Equalities Board public events. Three were planned in 2017, 2018 and 2019-2020 (for more on these see 2.4.7 below), although the latter was cancelled at the last minute due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

The field of equalities employs a lot of specialist language. The EB staff team took the view that, as these terms offer effective ways to talk about people's lived experience, it is better to use and explain them than to ignore them. In November 2016, at the launch of the EB, the staff delivered a presentation introducing equalities issues and specific terms such as intersectionality and inclusion. Parts of this presentation were later used as a basis for other presentations on equality and diversity, to other audiences, ensuring consistency in the EB's message and definitions. Glossaries were provided at every meeting and 'J' cards were given out for people to use to request explanations of jargon from speakers. We were careful to ensure that people were encouraged to challenge the use of jargon without explanations. Nonetheless, evaluation towards the end of the programme found that there remained confusion about specialist language, and that some people still felt they did not understand enough to participate fully.

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<sup>12</sup> 'Local Delivery Leads' – the partner organisations that delivered AfA programme work in Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Tameside and Wigan. More details at <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/>

<sup>13</sup> 2018 LDL Review (unpublished)

### 2.2.3 Learning through reflection

Towards the end of the programme, the EB undertook a reflective process to develop a safer spaces policy. Ground rules had been introduced during the co-design process, but there was no record of these, and the EB had operated mostly successfully for four years without written ground rules. The emphasis on mutual respect and attending to everyone's needs had informed the way we behaved when we came together. However, two conflicts within the group, and preparation for a possible transition towards EB members becoming a part of the GMOPN, raised the need for some discussion about inclusive spaces.

The learning involved a two-stage process. We held a workshop in an EB meeting to learn about what is a 'safe space' and discuss what the implications would be for calling EB meetings 'safe spaces'. This discussion was written up by staff with reflections, which were shared with the Executive Group to decide next steps and develop a proposal to take to the next EB meeting. At a subsequent meeting the EB adopted a proposed 'Ways of Working' policy, which we produced as a leaflet<sup>14</sup>. The topic of 'safe space' is notoriously complex and this process allowed valuable time for reflection on issues such as how to negotiate the differences between needs and preferences, taking personal responsibility, the incompatibility of different interpretations of 'safe space'. The EB team also benefited from this space for reflection, learning for example that the more diverse a group the harder it is to define what makes a 'safe space'.

### 2.2.4 Other opportunities

In addition to specific training opportunities organised through AfA, each issue of the monthly email newsletter promoted learning opportunities to EB members. These were selected for being aimed at increasing awareness of equalities issues and marginalisation, or practical skills linked to advocacy and research. By April 2018, 42 such opportunities had been promoted to members. In total there were 33 issues of the newsletter up to March 2020.

### 2.2.5 Evaluating increased knowledge, confidence and skills

Between January 2017 and October 2019 we ran 23 sessions, which included EB meetings and skills sessions (jointly with the Older People's Network). There was a total of 255 recorded attendances at these sessions, averaging 11 per session. We have feedback data on approximately half of these attendances. We asked people to rate whether they were more aware of equality issues, more confident as a Board member and if they felt their skills had increased (see table 1).

	Not at all	A little	A lot
More aware of equality issues?	2.5%	32.5%	65.0%
More confident as Board member?	7.2%	38.7%	54.1%
Feel your skills have increased?	7.3%	45.5%	47.2%

<sup>14</sup> <https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/lgbt-website-media/Files/ef88dc40-ce11-40c2-8344-712326f21e26/WoW%2520booklet%2520A5%2520new.pdf>

Table 1

This data shows that the majority of people attending felt that their awareness, and confidence had increased a lot as a result of the sessions, with just under half feeling their skills had increased a lot. This is likely to be because EB meetings were included that had Key Facts presentations, but did not necessarily include an input on skills. Very few attendees felt that their awareness, confidence and skills had not increased. This may reflect differences in existing levels as a few people said they already had high awareness, confidence or skills before the session.

The higher increase in levels of awareness supports the survey finding in 2019 that the most reported benefit of being an Equalities Board member was increased knowledge about different communities (see table 2). This shows the inherent value of bringing people together to learn from each other's lived experience.

### What have been the (up to 5) main benefits for you personally in being part of the EB?

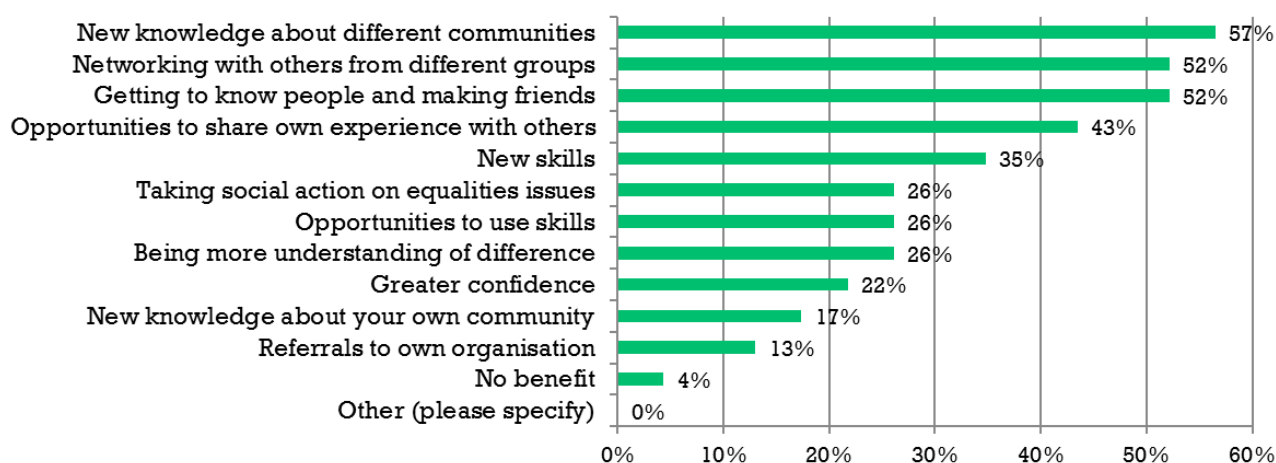


Figure 1<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> EB member survey 2019



## 2.3 Change from within: impact on AfA programme development and delivery

The EB had a direct impact on the ongoing development and delivery of the AfA programme. The EB amplified a diverse range of marginalised voices able to inform the programme of the experiences of marginalised older people. This ensured its work and learning led to development of new programmes work or reorientation of AfA’s priorities. Through its research, and monitoring of accessibility and inclusion, the EB provided internal learning that was used to modify or redirect programme work.

### 2.3.1 Diverse voices

The diversity of the EB was important in ensuring that it supported the AfA programme goal of reaching the most marginalised older people, and those at greatest risk of social isolation. It helped the EB gain a reputation for being able to access a wide range of older people’s voices. As a result the EB was able to respond to requests for members to take part in, for example, selection panels for Scaled Programme funding.

We ensured that the EB was diverse by carrying out demographic monitoring and responding to feedback. Throughout the life of the EB, people from the following communities were all involved in the work of the EB at some point:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• African Caribbean elders</li><li>• African elders</li><li>• Older asylum seekers and refugees</li><li>• Older autistic people</li><li>• Carers</li><li>• Chinese elders</li><li>• Deaf and hearing impaired elders</li><li>• Disabled elders</li><li>• Eastern European elders</li><li>• Iranian elders</li><li>• Jewish elders</li><li>• Lesbian, gay and bisexual elders</li><li>• Older people with life-limiting conditions</li><li>• Middle Eastern elders</li><li>• Migrant communities in general</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Muslim elders</li><li>• Older people who were HIV positive</li><li>• Older people with chronic fatigue syndrome</li><li>• Older people with dementia</li><li>• Older people with learning disabilities</li><li>• Older people with mental health difficulties including lifelong mental illness</li><li>• Older people with substance misuse problems</li><li>• People with visual impairments</li><li>• South Asian elders</li><li>• Stroke survivors</li><li>• Survivors of domestic abuse</li><li>• Older trans and intersex people</li><li>• Unemployed people aged over 50</li></ul>
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*“I think if I wasn’t here, there would be a risk that deaf people would continue to be isolated, so I’m glad I am involved. I think they’ve been very proactive to try to encourage me to come along as a representative of deaf people.”* (Focus group participant, 2018)

However, in their January 2020 evaluation of the EB, a few members said that they would have liked the EB to have been more diverse. They would have liked the EB to reach more people, and include more disabled people. The one Deaf (BSL-using) member was from an organisation with limited capacity to attend meetings, and no one else from the Deaf

community joined. The EB did manage to recruit a member with learning disabilities through the Growing Older With Learning Disabilities (GOLD) research team. Their participation was valuable in helping the EB to develop its thinking on accessibility. Similarly, the geographical spread of the EB's membership did not widen much.

### **2.3.2 Influencing governance**

The Equalities Board fed directly into AfA's governance structure through regular reporting, and through involvement in regular Programme Board meetings, and later participating in the Engagement Panels when the AfA accountability structure changed. These gave EB members a chance to feed back on governance arrangements and programme management. The EB helped to make the Programme Board more accessible to volunteer delegates, suggesting it use plain English in written documents, circulate papers in advance, give everyone name badges and give out a glossary, and not make volunteer representatives wait until the end of the meeting to give their report. When AfA's accountability structure changed, so that EB members no longer presented updates to management, the Engagement Panel allowed for more creative consultation on new areas of work in development. For example, the development of place-based workshops disseminating AfA learning to Local Authorities was shaped by feedback given in a hands-on Engagement Panel session.

### **2.3.4 Monitoring inclusion and accessibility**

The Equalities Board had an important role within the programme, monitoring inclusion and accessibility. Some of this work was routine or ad hoc, such as reviewing draft AfA publications, including internal reports, to ensure that equalities were addressed in the content, and for readability. This often resulted in changes to content and design. The EB was involved in the reviews of LDL contracts six months into the AfA programme, as part of a process of setting improved equalities standards and action plans.

A more regular monitoring role was the EB's work with the LDLs. The EB carried out three annual reviews of the progress of LDLs in reaching marginalised older people in their areas. These reviews looked at the ways that each LDL was working to reach those who were most at risk of social isolation in the wards in which they were delivering the AfA programme. The reviews aimed to support delivery partners, through highlighting which groups were not currently being well reached in an area, and identifying issues with using asset based approaches to work with communities of identity. Although this was challenging at times, it helped to hold delivery partners and the programme as a whole to account, building pressure for change. As a result, targeted work was done which probably otherwise would not have been.

The process each year began with reviewing demographic monitoring in each delivery area, followed up by discussion with each LDL partner about their progress and learning. The specific information gathered in these equalities reviews enabled programme officers to create focused targets, supporting LDLs to reach those most at risk of social isolation.

### **2.3.4 Identifying gaps – and helping to fill them**

The EB's monitoring and review work helped to identify gaps in AfA programme work. This in turn led to the development of new strands of work, including Scaled Programmes.

The Ageing Equally? research programme was developed to build on learning from an EB research project in 2017-2018. It was known that asset based approaches can risk underserving minority communities<sup>16</sup>, and the programme continued to struggle to engage some communities and groups. The small research projects by EB organisational members showed that community-based organisations are ideally placed to dig deeper into their communities' needs<sup>17</sup>. The Ageing Equally? programme commissioned community-based organisations to find out: "What makes a good place to grow older for people from minority communities?" Knowledge produced by the programme also includes learning by the EB staff team about the value of microfunding community organisations to carry out research<sup>18</sup>.

EB staff and members also contributed to the development of other scaled programmes. Roles included participating in design workshops, giving advice and feedback on accessibility and inclusion issues, collating and sharing data on the needs of marginalised communities, and identifying resources and networks for both GMCVO and for contractors. We reviewed draft specifications and sat on commissioning panels for some scaled programmes. The EB designed and ran equalities inductions for the partners commissioned to run the Scaled Programmes.

In the 2019 members' survey, EB members identified a range of ways that they had individually and collectively influenced the AfA programme. Their responses emphasised the value of the EB's remit to raise awareness of invisible minorities. This relates to the focus on working to reach those most at risk of social isolation.

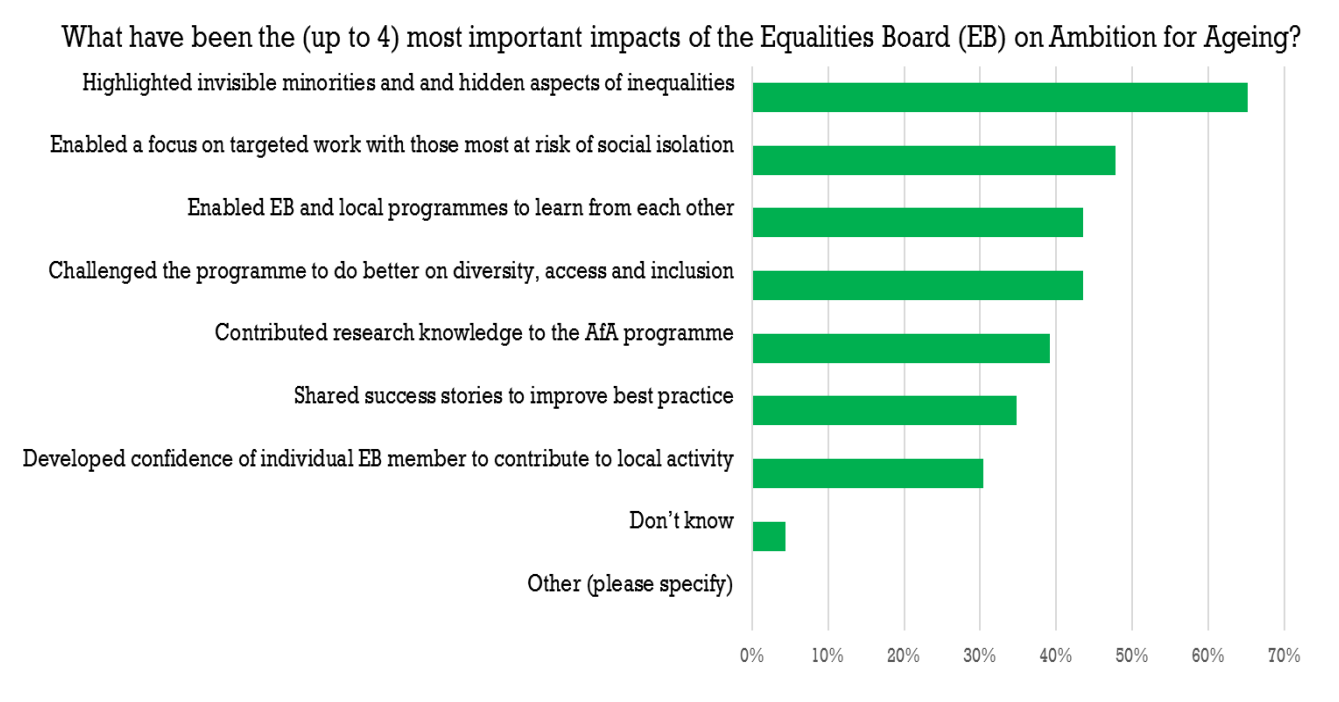


Figure 1<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Briefing Note on Assets and Inequalities, 2017 <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/assetsandinequalities>

<sup>17</sup> See list of research projects prior to Ageing Equally? programme, and 'Equalities Board Research Project Report' <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/ageingequality>

<sup>18</sup> 'The Value of Small Community-Led Equalities Projects' <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/value>

<sup>19</sup> EB member survey 2019

### 2.3.5 Becoming part of the legacy of AfA

In 2019, the members of the EB took part in an evaluation and consultation process reviewing the work of the EB and exploring options for its future. The process included a survey that asked people how they had benefited from being members of the EB, and what their priorities were for its future work. There was a variety of opinions but the responses to the second question showed most people wanted a way to influence the wider policy agenda. This guided staff to ensure that between in the final months of the project they prioritise supporting EB members to bring their equalities expertise into the GMOPN. Although Covid-19 forced changes to work plan, this continues to be adapted at time of writing.

## 2.4 Widening circles of change

The Equalities Board also aimed through its work to increase wider understanding of what causes marginalisation for older people, particularly in the context of place based work. This was primarily aimed at increasing the knowledge base available to AfA partner organisations delivering the programme locally and through the scaled programmes. However, much of the EB's research was produced as a resource for the wider voluntary sector and is publicly available. Furthermore, AfA partner organisations themselves were involved in a wide range of other work, and many continue to be influential in their local communities. In addition to carrying out original research, the EB also used communications channels, training and public events to increase understanding of inequalities and equalities issues, marginalisation and social isolation risk factors, in relation to ageing.

In addition, the EB staff regularly responded to a wide variety of requests from AfA partners across the programme, for example to provide information, promote and reach out to EB members and other contacts, join focus groups, give feedback on drafts of policy and other documents. In this way we were able to share learning from the EB and the AfA programme more widely among partners, and beyond the programme, informally as well as formally.

### 2.4.1 Research reports and briefing documents

The EB also produced external research reports sharing our equalities learning. Some of the EB's research was for internal AfA programme use only, such as the ward inequality profiles produced for each LDL as part of the reviews in 2017 and 2018, and the reports of the LDL reviews (see section 2.3.3 above). Other internal research reports included quarterly reports themed around the agreed indicators measuring operational outcomes. However, the research for the equalities reviews also became the basis for three external AfA briefing documents. The briefing 'Asset Based Approaches and Inequalities'<sup>20</sup> was based on the report of the 2017 LDL 'Making Age-Friendly Neighbourhoods Inclusive'<sup>21</sup> summarised learning from findings of the 2018 LDL review process. Learning from the 2019 LDL review resulted in a briefing that introduces a model for planning work with spatially distributed minority communities, and a

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/assetsandinequalities>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/inclusiveneighbourhoods>

workbook to guide effective use of the model<sup>22</sup>. During the six months following the end of the EB's activities, staff produced a series of 'Equalities Digests' – five short papers looking at the key concerns of the GM Older People's Network through an equalities lens.

'The Value of Small Community-Led Research Projects'<sup>23</sup> was produced by the EB to share learning from commissioning and supporting five EB member organisations as part of the 'Ageing Equally?' scaled programme of research (see section 2.3.5 above). The EB produced 'Insights from the Ageing Equally Research Projects'<sup>24</sup> to draw together key learning from all the shorter and longer projects about minority communities and ageing well in place. 'Inclusion in Practice'<sup>25</sup> takes a strategic look at some principles for taking an equalities approach in place-based work, using examples gathered from across the AfA programme.

The EB was committed to accessibility in all its work, and this extended to a commitment to making research reports more accessible to a wider audience. The EB produced more accessible summaries of the 2017-2018 research projects by EB organisational members, and of all the Ageing Equally? research reports, both of longer and shorter projects. The Ageing Equally? summary reports were produced according to guidelines developed with EB members in a focus group held in July 2019.

### 2.3.2 Sharing EB learning more widely

The EB delivered equalities training for programme partners, ensuring that they understood and could apply basic knowledge about how to work in ways that would meet diverse needs. We shared our learning with other Ageing Better programmes through including our research findings in Ageing Better insights and learning documents<sup>26</sup>, and participating in Ageing Better learning events. The EB was invited to Torquay to advise Ageing Well Torbay<sup>27</sup> on setting up an equalities advisory group. Their framing of diversity was framed in terms of ethnic minority representation, in contrast to the Equalities Board's intersectional approach appreciating that a range of life experiences are major risk factors for social isolation in later life.

Working with AfA partner organisations, the EB was able to share its community practice-based learning directly with other audiences including regional policy makers. At the GM Ageing Hub conference 'Doing Ageing Differently' in 2019, EB members raised concerns and challenges arising from the EB's learning. At MICRA's Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group event 'Turning Urban Research Into Practice' the EB team's presentation on 'Turning Urban Practice into Research' shared learning from establishing and supporting the EB and its members, and from supporting community organisations to conduct equalities research (later published in 'The Value of Small Community-Led Research Projects'<sup>28</sup>). The impact of the EB's work was also visible at 'Doing Ageing Differently' when other panellists and speakers talked about the importance of amplifying the voices and perspectives of diverse older people,

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<sup>22</sup> 'A Spatial Approach to Working with Marginalised Communities' and 'Mapping and Working with Marginalised Communities' <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/equalitiesmodel>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/value>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/ageingequally>

<sup>25</sup> <http://ambitionforageing.org.uk/inclusioninpractice> (forthcoming)

<sup>26</sup> For example: <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/media/documents/ageing-better/Ageing-Better-engaging-BAME-communities.pdf?mtime=20200311102537&focal=none>

<sup>27</sup> <https://ageingwelltorbay.com/legacy>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/value>

the need to co-produce research with communities, and the value of bringing people from different communities together.

*“It is important for policy makers to understand the needs of marginalized groups, but often people in these groups are silent, or there is no channel through which they can be heard. I am an immigrant and I speak English as a second language and have hearing loss; I tried to ignore the impact of this as I got older. In the Equalities Board, we can raise awareness of these issues, and influence Ambition for Ageing.”* (Equalities Board member)

Learning from the work of the EB is embedded in AfA’s ‘legacy’ work, as resources to support the development by local authorities of age friendly models of place-based working for target communities across Greater Manchester. This includes the spatial model of marginalised communities, as well as place-based training and other resources in development. EB members formed an expert panel at the first Building Age-Friendly places event in 2019.

### **2.3.4 Channels of communication and dissemination**

The Equalities Board sent out a monthly email newsletter to organisational and individual members, AfA delivery partners, and programme staff. By April 2020 there were 172 subscribers including 66 signed up EB members and 22 provisional or inactive members, 46 AfA partner contacts and 38 non-member contacts. Although it was first and foremost for members, it was also seen as a valuable programme resource. And though it was primarily an internal programme communication channel, external individuals with an interest in equalities and the work of the EB were welcome to sign up to follow our work. In addition to news of EB and AfA research and events, each newsletter included news about events, research, consultations and other activities related to equalities issues and the work of other equalities organisations. The overall ‘open rate’ for newsletters hovered around the industry average, but for active members was 80-100%.

The EB also had a web presence throughout the project, hosted by the LGBT Foundation but branded separately. The website was used as a ‘shop window’ rather than as an engagement platform, to publish and make available EB publications and other equalities resources. At the end of the programme the EB’s publications will be transferred to the GMOPN website, where they will be hosted for future use and reference by the GMOPN in its ongoing advocacy work.

### **2.4.4 Public events**

The EB ran public events in 2017 and 2018, both of which aimed to increase understanding of how marginalisation and inequality contribute to social isolation amongst older people. Both events also launched new opportunities for EB members to undertake equalities research. Nearly 50 people attended the first event in September 2017. Participants were a mix of members and non-members, older people and younger professionals representing a diversity of organisations from the NHS to arts organisations. The event focused on sharing learning from the equalities reviews of the work of AfA local delivery partners, and on capturing knowledge on inequalities in ageing from participants. This was done through a facilitated discussion process.

The 2018 EB event was called ‘Ageing Equally in Greater Manchester?’ and was held at Manchester Art Gallery. The main purpose of the event was to share AfA’s learning so far about ageing and inequality in Greater Manchester, and to launch the ‘Ageing Equally?’ research programme. Like the previous year’s event, we also ran a ‘knowledge capture’

exercise, which was designed to increase participants' understanding of the ways that different identity-based and place-based factors can intersect to increase social isolation and marginalisation of older people.

The EB planned a final event to be held in March 2020, to celebrate the diversity of the EB's membership. Share learning from EB research over the life of the project. The event plan included workshops for GMOPN members to increase their capacity to advocate for equality in ageing policy following the end of the EB. Sadly the event was an early victim of the coronavirus lockdown and was cancelled a week before it was due to take place.

At the time of writing, an online event is being planned to introduce organisational EB members to the work of the revitalised GM Equality Alliance.

## Section 3: Conclusion and Recommendations

### 3.1 Legacy

Although the activities of the Equalities Board have ended, and the project finally concludes in October 2020, it leaves a legacy in the work of former members, the GMOPN, and the final phase of AfA. Individual and organisational members of the EB are taking their increased knowledge and skills into new and revived equalities networks in GM. One member is taking a leadership role in setting up a new disabled people's organisation in Oldham, and GM Equality Alliance (GM Eq=Al) is inviting EB members to help revive and expand its equalities influencing and advocacy work. The GMOPN is welcoming EB members to bring their knowledge and skills to its advocacy influencing Greater Manchester strategies and regional policy and will continue to make EB publications available to a wider audience. Ambition for Ageing is using EB learning to inform its overall evaluation, and the development of resources and training for age-friendly place-based working.

### 3.2 Value of the EB

Ambition for Ageing was the only Ageing Better programme to host an Equalities Board, making real its commitment to centring and learning about equalities right from the start. The value of this has been clear in the way that the EB's learning influenced both the delivery work of AfA, and the course and direction of the programme overall.

The EB ensured that equality issues were always on the agenda, both centrally in programme development, at delivery level, and for research partners, always informed by the voices of those with lived experience of marginalisation. Delivery partners invested in new ways of working to reach more marginalised people, and innovative new research programmes were developed as a result of the EB's learning.

The EB promoted a deeper understanding of equalities and the structural causes of inequality and through research enabled a deeper understanding of how the asset-based model may not meet the needs of the most marginalised. However, it also provided practical tools and new knowledge to address inequalities and work with those most at risk of social isolation. The EB ensured that equalities learning was always grounded in reality, with a practical outlook.

The EB helped to ensure that the equalities focus and key findings of the programme overall are grounded in the reality of marginalised people's experience, well evidenced, and strongly

articulated. The updated key messages of AfA reflect this<sup>29</sup>. The work of the EB has been instrumental in helping AfA to make the case that understanding and investing in equalities work is key to addressing social isolation.

### 3.3 Working inclusively and effectively

The EB's effectiveness was possible because it was fully integrated into the work of AfA, and was properly resourced.

The EB understood that effective equalities work is about going beyond meeting obligations under the Equality Act 2010<sup>30</sup>, and placing people and communities who are usually on the margins at the centre of programme design. As illustrated in Inclusion in Practice<sup>31</sup>, working inclusively requires knowledge and understanding; a willingness to work in new ways and to work creatively; a commitment to creating, developing and actively maintaining a culture of inclusion and respect; and leadership. The EB led by example, through co-produced beginnings; thorough research – by the staff team, and by member organisations supported by the EB team - and participatory knowledge production; shared decision making and skilled facilitation; and experimentation and innovation. The context of the AfA commitment to taking a 'test and learn' approach enabled the EB to operate flexibly, responsively and creatively.

Notwithstanding the importance of creativity and flexibility, it takes persistence and consistency over a long period of time to achieve positive change for marginalised communities. Change can be slow, and there may be few visible signs of it happening, until a moment of breakthrough, or until there is an opportunity to reflect and assess progress. The EB's capacity to undertake qualitative evaluation, for example in the reviews of local delivery, and self-evaluation, was important in capturing and documenting different types and stories of change.

Sharing power and resources is a key part of working inclusively. The EB staff were able to support a two step application process for funding larger 'Ageing Equally?' projects. The process was constructed to enable small organisations with few resources to apply, and get funding and support to develop their idea. This resulted in a very different scale of organisations getting involved in Ageing Equally? compared to other scaled programme work.

Marginalisation is complex, due to the intersection of social identities, and multiple intersecting barriers created by social structures. Leadership by staff with community development experience and equalities knowledge enabled the EB to understand, unpick and address these complexities, to ask what voices are not being heard and consider ways to include them. One place where value of this could be seen was in the work that the EB did with the GOLD programme researchers, which resulted in a greater inclusion of people with Learning Disabilities in the EB's work. Being located within an equalities organisation was important in supporting the EB staff team's capacity in terms of deepening understanding of equalities and intersectionality.

The complexity of marginalisation also requires the capacity to work responsively and at depth. The EB itself required a high level of staff support to ensure that members' voices were heard

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<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act-2010/what-equality-act>

<sup>31</sup> <http://ambitionforageing.org.uk/inclusioninpractice>



and amplified. In addition, staff also initiated new activities and pieces of research, opening spaces for unheard voices and yielding valuable information and learning. The high levels of staff support for member organisations involved in Ageing Equally? also demonstrated the value of having this capacity.

Inclusion is, at base, about feeling included – it relies on an authentic sense of welcome based in a recognition by facilitators that people’s lives are made more complex by marginalisation. For example, some EB members were going through the asylum process. Community development skills include the ability to support individuals in practical ways, and engage constructively in discussion about themes of personal relevance. It didn’t always work, but on the whole this supported members’ capacity to attend, and encouraged commitment to the group.

*“What was so wonderful about Ambition for Ageing - both the Equalities Board and the Executive Group - was that members and facilitators accepted the views of both groups and individuals, did not judge a person on where they were placed in an organisation but as a whole person and provided a safe place to debate and disagree with mutual respect.”*  
(Founding member of the EB)<sup>32</sup>

### 3.5 Recommendations

Based on our evaluation of the value and achievements of the Equalities Board, we make the following recommendations to commissioners and funders of age-friendly community development programmes; designers and managers of these programmes; and equalities practitioners, equalities organisations, and community development workers. The Ambition for Ageing programme’s commitment to equalities has shown that these recommendations are not unrealistic.

Programme commissioners and funding bodies must support flexibility in programme design; enable co-production and power sharing through devolved decision making; and ensure that equalities is a priority across all areas of programme work – neither isolated in a separate ‘silo’, nor mainstreamed in such a way that it is rendered invisible and meaningless.

Those designing and managing programme work should ensure that equalities work and learning is fully integrated into programme design; that co-production processes are meaningful and well supported; and internal structures and feedback mechanisms are fully accessible and accountable

Equalities practitioners, equalities researchers, equalities organisations, and community development workers must ensure that research is thorough, relevant, and grounded in experience from life and communities’ daily reality, as well as informed by academic theory. They must make sure that co-production methods are used in line with best practice, and that equalities practice is evaluated and developed as communities and their circumstances change.

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<sup>32</sup>Private correspondence with EB staff team, 2020



## Section 4: Appendices

### Appendix 1: Matrix of marginalization

The EB developed this matrix of marginalization based on characteristics identified through a literature review (<https://www.ambitionforageing.org.uk/sites/default/files/Buffel%20Tine%20-%20A5%20Brochure%20-%20Social%20Isolation%20%281%29.pdf>), protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, and specific marginalised communities identified by EB staff in their March 2017 equalities review. It identifies those characteristics that put people at particular risk of isolation.

Economic	Health/Disability	Identity	Other
People living in poverty	People with alcohol and substance use issues	Members of ethnic / cultural / religious / racial minorities	Survivors of domestic abuse
Carers	People with mental health issues	Lesbian, gay bisexual or trans (LGBT) people	Single men
Unemployed over 50	People with learning disabilities	Refugees and asylum seekers	People without nearby relatives
People in insecure employment	People with physical disability and long-term health conditions	Recent European and other migrants	Care home residents / homecare customers
	Blind and visually impaired people	Deaf people	People recently bereaved
	Stroke survivors		
	People with dementia		

### Appendix 2: Key Facts presentations

Key Facts presentations full list:

- Chinese elders, Louise Wong, Wai Yin Society, January 2017
- Trans people, Suzanne Moore, January 2017
- Refugees and asylum seekers, Andrea Taylor-Haynes, March 2017
- Middle Eastern communities, Hanif Bobat, Ethnic Health Forum, November 2017
- Gujarati elders, Deepak Drishti, January 2018
- African and Caribbean elders, Dorothy Evans, ACCG, March 2018
- Autistic older people, Mari Saeki, GM Autism, May 2018
- Older carers, Erica Whittaker-Wallace, Manchester Carers Network, July 2018

- Social Model of Disability, Linda Marsh and Brett Savage, GMCDP, September 2018
- Older LGBT people, Lawrence Roberts, LGBT Foundation, June 2019
- Older Pakistani people, Adil Javed, Alchemy Arts, September 2019
- Living with sight loss, Pauline Coleman, January 2020

## Appendix 3: Members' evaluation

	attendance	More aware of equality issues?			More confident as Board member?			Feel your skills have increased?					
		Not at all	A little	A lot	Total	Not at all	A little	A lot	Total	Not at all	A little	A lot	Total
EB Meeting January 2017	3												
EB Skills Session: July 2017 (Confidence)	11												
Ambition for Ageing for All	36												
EB Meeting November 17	17		8	9	17					2	7	7	16
EB Meeting - January 2018	13		3	10	13						7	6	13
EB Skills Session (Visual Impairment Awareness)	10					3	6	9					
EB Meeting March 2018	10		1	3	6	10				1	6	3	10
EB Skills Session May 2018 (Learning Disabilities)	17					1	4	4	8				
EB meeting May 2018	6			6	6						1	5	6
EB Skills Session (Public speaking)	7					2	4	6					
EB Meeting July 2018	13		3	10	13	3	4	7		3	3	7	13
EB Meeting September 2018	11		1	5	11	1	7	3			9	2	11
EB Skills Session Oct 2018 (Conflict Awareness 1)	9												
Ageing Equally in Greater Manchester?	23												
Winter Warmer AE Panel	5		1	3	5	1	2	2	5	1	1	3	5
EB Skills Session Jan 2018 (Conflict Awareness 2)	2												
EB Meeting February 2019	11		6	5	11	3	8	11			8	3	11
EB Meeting April 2019	10		2	8	10	2	7	9			2	6	8
EB Meeting June 2019	5		2	3	5	1	2	2	5	1	1	2	4
EB Comms Focus Group	7										4	3	7
EB Skills Session Sept 2019	10												
EB Meeting September 2019	11		4	7	11	2	3	6	11	1	4	6	11
EB Meeting October 2019	8		2	6	8	4	4	8			3	5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>Average attendees / % of responses</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>32.5%</b>	<b>65.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>38.7%</b>	<b>54.1%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7.3%</b>	<b>45.5%</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

### AfA key messages on building age-friendly communities

(as at 29 September 2020)

#### 1. **Allocate time and resource for involving older people**

It is important to involve older people in the design and delivery of age-friendly communities. However, time and resource is needed to do this effectively.

#### 2. **Approach equalities in a variety of ways**

To meet the needs of our diverse society, it is important to provide a variety of ways people can get involved in their communities. To fully include marginalised groups, we need to make sure that we are inclusive when we design general opportunities as well delivering targeted approaches.

#### 3. **Support people to broaden their perception of who are “People Like Me”**

Our research has found that many older people feel a sense of belonging to their community when they are around people like themselves. We can help broaden this feeling by allowing older people to get to know others who they perceive as different from themselves and discover similarities.