



Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK)

CLAUK's response to Hackney Council's Single Equality Scheme consultation

24/05/2013

1. The Single Equality Scheme sets out the Council's approach to equality and cohesion. Do you agree with the overall approach?

Agree

Please add other comments

We agree with the general approach to equality and cohesion and the priorities identified. However, we find that Latin Americans, the ethnic minority that our member organisations work with, face some situations and challenges that are not considered in the report of "Progress against the Sustainable Community Strategy Priorities". We will address these issues below.

2. What do you think are the most pressing equality issues in Hackney today?

The main issues affecting Latin Americans in Hackney are:

- Lack of access to health services and other services, greatly due to poor access to information in Spanish and Portuguese, and the absence of translation and interpreting services;
- Lack of access to ESOL provision due to funding requirements (i.e. most Latin Americans are in employment but in low paid jobs (e.g. in the cleaning industry), so they don't qualify for ESOL funding and are unable to pay high fees);
- Lack of access to information about labour rights and available advice services in Hackney;
- Lack of access to opportunities for democratic participation and community engagement for Latin Americans in Hackney

3. The scheme covers all the main actions which the Council delivers to promote equality and cohesion. To what extent do you agree that the scheme addresses the main equality issues and needs in Hackney?

Disagree

Please add other comments

We find that the proposed scheme does not acknowledge the importance of developing a strategy to gather statistical data on BME communities that are not yet included in ethnic monitoring, such as Latin Americans.

Equality Objective 1

It is indispensable to incorporate actions to tackle in-work poverty. Although 85% of Latin Americans are in work, they are employed in low-skilled and low-paid jobs, which offer extremely poor working conditions and make people vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination. Being in work, particularly in the informal sector, does not ensure sustainable employment for BME groups, as these continue to experience economic instability and poor living conditions.

There are no highlighted actions directed towards identifying new (and growing) groups of residents who have poorer outcomes than the wider community and the reasons why these groups are underrepresented in services, such as it is the case with Latin Americans in Hackney.

Equality Objective 2

Being that one of the aims is "to encourage a better dialogue between the Council, residents and service users", we consider that Hackney's review of the way the council engages with the community should take into account the important role of BME community organisations that often act as the main source of information and services. This is also important in order to achieve a better understanding of people's communication preferences for the delivery of a new communication strategy.

As Latin Americans are widespread around London, there are many organisations catering Hackney's residents from outside the borough. Out of the 9 member organisations of CLAUk, there is one based in Hackney: Latin American Women's Aid (LAWA). The communication strategy should take into account the role of those key organisations even if these are not based in Hackney.

Whereas one of the workstreams is to "*work together with partners to build a better understanding of the needs of our residents especially the needs of residents whom we know little about*", there are no actions in the delivery plan directed towards identifying/reaching out to groups not acknowledged in monitoring yet. As a coalition providing a voice for the collective interests of Latin Americans in the UK, this is a great concern for us. It is important to monitor and ensure that Latin Americans, as one of the fastest growing communities in London, have equal access to services and rights in Hackney.

We welcome the fact that there is a strategy targeted at improving the access of LGBT, disabled and young people to services and employment opportunities. However, we believe that the specific needs of women – as one of the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 – should also be addressed. This is particularly the case for BME women that suffer from multiple discrimination.

4. Are there any issues or needs that need to be better addressed in the scheme?

The new scheme needs to address the fact that current ethnic monitoring forms fail to account for the real diversity in the borough. This has important consequences for those who are not included, as this statistical invisibility means that their needs are not addressed and their experiences of inequality completely ignored both by decision makers and service providers.

5. The scheme aims to cover the key needs of all groups who share protected characteristics under the Equality Act. Are there any protected groups whose needs are not fully addressed in the scheme?

Gender identity or reassignment

Race or ethnicity

Multiple discrimination

If you have selected any box, please provide more information

We consider that ethnicity, as one of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act should be updated to reflect the real landscape built up by the so-called "new migrant" groups, as these bring a wider diversity to the borough in terms of language, economic and cultural contributions and ways of integration in the labour market.

In the case of Latin Americans, according to the latest report (No Longer Invisible, 2011), there were 113,500 Latin Americans in London in 2008, with Hackney being one of the boroughs of highest concentration. In general terms, it is a highly qualified group, with 85% in employment. However, Latin Americans have limited access to services and very low rates of welfare take up (only 1 in 5 receive some form of state welfare benefit).

6. Are there any other groups whose needs are not fully addressed in the scheme?

Ethnic minority groups such as Latin Americans.

7. What should the Council do to improve good relations between different communities?

It would be very useful if the Council could establish effective channels of communication with charitable organisations and service providers working with disadvantaged groups, and provide platforms that encourage collaborative work between different communities. As mentioned above, this may include organisations that are not based in Hackney but work with Hackney residents.

8. The Council works closely with local public sector agencies, service providers and local organisations to deliver services that meet the needs of the local community.**Are there any local partners who we should be working with more closely?**

Voluntary and community sector

Additional comments

By highlighting voluntary and community sector we aim to express our interest in working closely with the Council. As mentioned above, in the case of Latin Americans there is just one community organisation based in Hackney: LAWA, a refuge for women facing domestic violence and another organisation that currently has a targeted programme for Hackney's and Haringey's Latin American residents: Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) However, other organisations also serve Latin Americans residing in the borough, including the rest of our coalition members (more information below).

The Coalition of Latin Americans in the UK (CLAUK) is made of the following member organisations:

- [The Latin American School of Artistic and Cultural Education](#) (ESFORAL)
- [Indoamerican Migrant and Refugee Organisation](#) (IRMO)
- [Latin American House](#)
- [Latin Support Group](#)
- [Latin American Women's Aid](#) (LAWA)
- [Latin American Women's Rights Service](#) (LAWRS)
- [Naz Latina](#)
- [Teléfono de la Esperanza](#)
- [The National Secretariat for Migrants from the Ecuadorian Government](#) (SENAMI, Observer)

For more information, please visit www.clauk.org.uk or contact CLAUK's Advocacy & Campaign Coordinator Lucila Granada at lucila@lawrs.org.uk