

London Hate Crime Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG)

Membership and Governance Structures

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1. Background and context

The Hate Crime Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) is an independent, non-statutory led body, set up to ensure that people from communities targeted by hate crime and with expertise in hate crime, have a strong voice in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) governance and decisionmaking structures for hate crime.

The SRG is an open and informal group comprising a broad range of stakeholders. It seeks to build on previous systems of engaging stakeholders by enabling an independent structure, led by those with expertise and lived experience.

The SRG is facilitated by a Coordinator appointed under contract by MOPAC. The Coordinator role is currently undertaken by Equally Ours. Part of the Coordinator role is to support the SRG in formalising its membership and governance structures. It also plays a role in those structures, set out below. These structures are designed to ensure that the SRG has a voice in how effectively statutory partners deliver their response to hate crime and can function as a forum to address emerging and systemic issues.

2. Membership structure

To ensure the credibility of the SRG, the membership needs to include a broad range of stakeholders. This includes organisations and individuals that represent all the communities affected by hate crime, and those who work in hate crime, in a professional, voluntary or academic capacity. This breadth of membership brings a wide and varied range of experience and expertise and the SRG has agreed the following structure to harness this experience and expertise

2.1. Tiered membership

Stakeholder Reference Group member organisations: Open to organisations and groups of all sizes and structures working to address hate crime in London through support to victims of hate crime; policy; prevention; awareness-raising; evidence gathering; reporting, and more. This tier includes organisations representing communities directly affected by hate crime, community groups, civil society organisations and statutory bodies.

If a member representing an organisation can no longer take part in the SRG, they will be asked to nominate another representative from their organisation.

Stakeholder Reference Group individual members: Open to the wider community of stakeholders who do not represent an organisation but have a range of expertise on hate crime in London. For example, individuals with lived experience or expertise, academics and professionals, and individuals with an interest in preventing hate crime and improving services in London.

2.2. Membership audits

To ensure the group remains representative of all hate crime strands and communities affected by hate crime, the Coordinator will conduct an annual audit of SRG member organisations. This will be used to identify gaps and inform our work on bringing new member organisations on board.

Members are encouraged to suggest new members, especially where this can help make the SRG more representative of people affected by hate crime in London.

The Coordinator will periodically reach out to potential new members, for example in response to emerging issues or where the group would benefit from growing an area of expertise.

See **Appendix 1** for an organogram of the tiered membership structure.

2.3. Role of members

SRG member organisations: Take on key functions and responsibilities which are outlined in the SRG Terms of Reference. This includes:

- Attending and participating in quarterly SRG meetings which act as a mechanism for transparency and accountability for the Metropolitan Police Service, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and statutory partners' response to hate crime.
- Being eligible for nomination to Co-Chair or steering group roles
- Contribute to solutions-focused dialogue with MOPAC and MPS, including through:
 - Bringing lived, professional and/or academic experience and expertise to dialogue in the SRG
 - Feeding into MPS, MOPAC and statutory partners' current strategies, Programmes and working groups on hate crime
- Co-produce solutions in thematic, task-and-finish working groups and in ad-hoc events throughout the year

SRG individual members: Take part as volunteers sharing their professional, lived experience or academic expertise and particular interests. This includes:

- Attending and participating in topical SRG meetings and annual events
- Being eligible for nomination to Co-Chair or steering group roles
- Share evidence, critical feedback and propose solutions on the MPS, MOPAC and statutory partners' response to hate crime.
- Feed into activities taken on by the SRG.
- Co-produce solutions in thematic, task-and-finish working groups and in ad-hoc events throughout the year

2.4. Participation agreement

The SRG has agreed a set of behaviours and expectations that all members will be required to observe. Existing members have agreed to abide by these behaviours and

expectations, and all new members will be given a copy and by accepting membership will also be agreeing to abide by the behaviours and expectations.

Members commit to ensuring that meetings of the SRG are **respectful, inclusive, and accessible**, and take a **constructive approach** to dialogue and solutions.

To achieve this, all members must commit to observe the spirit and letter of the Equality Act 2010*.

*The Equality Act is a law which protects us from discrimination, harassment, or unfair treatment on the basis of a person's protected characteristics. These include:

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

Below are a few examples of behaviours members can do this by:

- Helping to identify, and where appropriate, taking action to advance equality in membership and participation of all grounds covered by the Equality Act 2010, for example helping to fill gaps in membership or supporting newer members to play a full role.
- Supporting the Coordinator to put in place reasonable adjustments.
- Respecting one another's input and taking critical feedback in a constructive spirit.
- Recognising that hate crime can be an emotive subject and show patience with one another.
- Providing input and communicate in a respectful way, for example try to avoid commentary about a particular individual and instead think about that person's role or the role of the organisation they represent.
- Assuming that what is said, is said with a good intention.
- Listening to understand, not to respond.
- Making a conscious effort to respond to what's in front of you, not to what you may assume or expect a person to be saying.
- Taking an active role in finding solutions.
- Sharing the air – taking responsibility for helping everyone have time in the conversation, including by taking less time than you might usually to make your points.

If any member of the SRG fails to uphold the Behaviours and Expectations, their invitation to participate in the SRG may be withdrawn or their ability to take part in certain activities of the SRG may be restricted. See section on dispute resolution below for further details.

2.5. How to become a member

An organisation or individual that meets the criteria above may join the SRG by contacting the Coordinator and requesting to join, directly or via a form on the webpage. They may be asked to provide information to demonstrate that they meet the criteria, for example telling us about their work on tackling hate crime or supporting affected communities. They will also be asked to provide information to support access and inclusion goals, including, for example, the type of hate crime that they work on or the community that they represent.

Member organisations must provide a named contact who will be included on the mailing list for all communications with the SRG.

All new members will be offered an induction meeting with the Coordinator, who can give more information on how the SRG operates and support new members to identify how they can best contribute to its work, and any support they may need to do this. This could include, for example: identifying adjustments to remove barriers to access, more detailed information on the role of the group and answering specific questions on how it works, identifying issues where the new member has particular expertise or interest, support understanding of the broader policy context, information on the role of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and other statutory partners.

3. Governance structure

The following structure has been agreed by the SRG:

The Stakeholder Reference Group: is the overarching body through which the main functions are delivered. It will meet quarterly and act as a forum for engagement with the Metropolitan Police Service, Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and other relevant agencies. It will ensure that those with expertise in hate crime and hate crime victims have a strong voice and representation in the MPS and MOPAC governance and decision-making structures for hate crime. The forum will enable participants to develop solutions to emerging and systemic issues in tackling hate crime.

Co-Chairs: Will provide strategic direction and support for the Coordinator and chair discussions. They will work with the Coordinator and the steering group to set out the work plan for the SRG. The Co-Chairs will be appointed by the SRG following the process below and will be reviewed annually by the Coordinator to manage stakeholder workload and capacity.

Steering group: The steering group will be chaired by the Coordinator and support them and the Co-Chairs in setting out and delivering a workplan for the SRG, which will be agreed by the whole membership. By virtue of their role, Co-Chairs will be members of the steering group and play a leadership role within its discussions.

3.1. Role of the Co-Chairs

The Co-Chairs will be the 'voice' of the SRG. They will chair the SRG meetings and be able to implement the decisions of the SRG, such as engaging in correspondence with statutory agencies to communicate the views of the Group. They will also act, alongside the Coordinator, as arbiters in the case of disputes among members, or where there are concerns that a member is not observing the participation agreement. For further details see annex 1, Role Description for Co-Chairs.

3.1.1. Nomination and appointment process

The SRG appoints the Co-Chairs, using the following process:

SRG members will be asked to nominate members for the Co-Chair positions. Members can nominate themselves.

1. As the SRG is independent and not led by statutory agencies, representatives of statutory organisations are not eligible to stand. Furthermore, ideally at least one of the Co-Chairs should not be service providers who are in receipt of MOPAC funding. MOPAC funds projects and services via a number of funding streams, which may mean that this is not possible. If all nominees are in receipt of MOPAC funding, this must be declared by the candidates and their nominations can then go forward.
2. All candidates will be asked to prepare a short statement for circulation to all members, setting out:
 - Why they are standing for the role of Co-Chair
 - What experience, expertise or other qualities they bring to the role
 - If they are in receipt of MOPAC funding
 - Any other information they think members should know about them

The information provided will be shared with all members and may become public, so candidates are only expected to share information they are comfortable with becoming widely available.

In the event of no self-nominations, the Coordinator will ask the steering group for suggestions and may approach members to put themselves forward for the Co-Chair role.

3. If three or more nominations are received, the Coordinator will facilitate an online vote. All members of the SRG will be eligible to vote.
4. Once the final two candidates are identified through this process, the SRG will be invited to approve appointment of the Co-Chairs.
5. The co-chairs will serve for a period of **two** years. Co-Chairs can be nominated and elected to serve for a further two years but the tenure should not exceed a continuous period of more than **four** years. Chairs standing down after **four** years will not be permitted to stand as Co-Chair for a minimum of **one year**.

6. If a Co-Chair stands down before the end of their two-year period, the steering group can co-opt one of its members as interim Co-Chair. If there is less than 6 months until the next planned nomination and appointment process for CoChairs, the interim Chair can remain in post until the end of the period. If there is more than 6 months left, the Coordinator will organise a nomination and selection process to fill the vacant slot.

3.2. The steering group

3.2.1. Make-up of the steering group

The steering group will comprise organisational and individual members, representing all strands of hate crime covered by law (faith-based, ethnic and racial, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment), and both large and grassroots organisations. The aim is for an optimum size of 10 members, two from each hate crime strand and ideally one each from large and grassroots organisations. However, allowing for the fact that the participation of many SRG members is voluntary, no maximum or minimum number is prescribed for the membership of the steering group.

Steering group meetings will require a minimum of 5 attendees, including one of the Co-Chairs, to be quorate.

Steering group members serve for a period of two years. They can be nominated and serve for a further two year period. Tenure should not exceed a continuous period of more than **four** years. Steering group members standing down after **four** years will not be permitted to stand again for a minimum of **one year**.

Membership will be reviewed periodically to ensure the group continues to be balanced in its representation and can bring intersectional perspectives on hate crime issues. Steering group members will be invited to recommend new members and, along with the Coordinator, are responsible for ensuring that the group is functional (in terms of its size) and as representative as possible.

By virtue of their role, Co-Chairs will be members of the steering group. Upon stepping down from the Co-Chair role a Co-Chair ceases to be a member of the steering group but may be co-opted back onto the group (see further below).

Steering group meetings will take place in-person, online or by email.

3.2.1. Role of the steering group

The steering group will support the Coordinator in setting out a workplan for the SRG, which will be agreed by the whole membership. Other responsibilities include designing the quarterly meetings and taking forward agreed actions. This group will also liaise with the MPS Strategic and Tactical Partnership Boards, MPS Hate Crime thematic Working Groups, the London Victims Board and other, ad-hoc meetings where appropriate.

The group may also:

- nominate SRG member or members to attend meetings on behalf of the group
- authorise the Co-Chairs and Coordinator to write to relevant statutory agencies or other stakeholders on behalf of the SRG
- set up ad-hoc internal working groups on specific topics
- agree to other actions to achieve the goals of the SRG that are in keeping with the SRG Terms of Reference

3.2.2. Nomination and appointment process

Every two years, SRG members will be asked to nominate members for the steering group. Members can nominate themselves and the Coordinator may ask for nominations from people representing specific hate crime strands or groups where these are underrepresented.

For the purposes of independence, transparency and avoiding conflicts of interest, the representatives of statutory partners are not eligible to be a part of the steering group.

Existing members can be nominated for re-appointment, but can't be members for more than four years in a row.

All candidates will be asked to prepare a short statement setting out:

- Why they want to be part of the steering group
- Which hate crime strand, group or community they represent or have most experience with

The information provided will be shared with all members and may become public, so candidates are only expected to share information they are comfortable with becoming widely available.

In the event of no self-nominations, the Coordinator will ask the steering group for suggestions and may approach members to join the steering group.

If the number of nominations received would result in a balanced and representative steering group the Coordinator may recommend that the SRG appoint all candidates to the steering group. If the number of nominations is high, or there is an overrepresentation of candidates from a particular background, the Coordinator may, in consultation with the Co-Chairs, decide to hold an online vote.

3.2.3. Co-option

As members' ability to participate may vary during their two-year tenure, the steering group may co-opt other members to ensure its ability to function and that it remains broadly representative. This includes being able to co-opt a former Co-Chair who has stepped down.

In order to be co-opted, a member must complete the short statement outlined above and the co-option must be agreed by a majority of the steering group.

3.3. Stakeholder Reference Group relationship with statutory partners

Representatives of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) and the Metropolitan Police Service will attend the quarterly meetings of the SRG. They will not attend steering group meetings, in order to maintain the independence of SRG.

The Terms of Reference for the SRG illustrate the Metropolitan Police Service hate crime governance structure, which comprises the Strategic Partnership, the Tactical Partnership, and Working Groups – thematic task- and-finish groups to address specific issues. The working relationships with each of these governance mechanisms should work as follows;

Strategic Partnership: A number of members of the SRG also attend the Strategic Partnership Board, acting in a strategic capacity. Because of that cross-membership, we don't envisage the need for formal SRG attendance at the Strategic Partnership Board. However, the SRG will have the ability to formally write or report to the Strategic Partnership if it considers that a specific issue needs a strategic resolution.

Tactical Partnership: This is where Metropolitan Police Service tactics, activities and performance are reviewed and is the driver for best practice and improved response. It is also where thematic Working Groups will be identified and established. As such, we feel that it is at this level that the voice of the SRG can add value. This could be by attendance and participation by members of the SRG steering group or other nominated members.

Thematic Working Groups: There are two types of working group that the SRG may participate in:

1. The Metropolitan Police Service establishes thematic working or 'task and finish' groups. Participation by members or representatives of the community at the centre of the thematic issue will play a significant role in the effectiveness of these groups. For example, the Metropolitan Police Service sought the participation of Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations in the Working Group investigating barriers to reporting disability hate crime.

The SRG will actively promote and encourage members to participate in such task-and-finish groups.

The secretariat for these groups will be provided by the statutory partners concerned. SRG members nominated to take part in these groups will represent both their own organisation and the SRG and will be expected to provide updates either in writing or in person to the quarterly meetings.

2. The SRG may also choose to set up a working group of its own to explore a specific area of hate crime policy or experience. The specific parameters of a working group, including scope of work, frequency of meetings and expected outputs, will be agreed by the steering group.

Basic secretariat functions of setting meeting dates and circulating information will be provided by Equally Ours, subject to the availability of resources. Other roles, including Chairing, note taking, reporting to the SRG etc will be allocated to working group members when a group is established.

Victims Board: This board reports to the London Crime Reduction Board (LCRB) on issues and developments that impact on victims. It is primarily made up of statutory agencies working in the criminal justice service and its discussions generally focus on the strategic developments that impact on all victims, rather than on victims of specific crime types. A discussion between the SRG Co-Chairs and the Chair of the Victims Board will explore the potential for a reporting relationship or how to provide mutual support.

See **Appendix 2** for an organogram of the statutory partners.

3.4. Role of the Stakeholder Reference Group Coordinator

The Coordinator plays a key role in ensuring that the SRG is able to meet its functions and responsibilities. They will ensure that meetings and activities are delivered in line with the terms of reference and work with the Co-Chairs and steering group to take forward the Groups' priorities. They will make initial decisions on membership requests and provide advice on what actions the SRG, Co-Chairs and/or steering group may want to take and provide secretariat support for activities such as corresponding with stakeholders.

4. Decision making and dispute resolution

4.1. Decision making

Decisions will be made by consensus within the SRG and its steering group. Where this is not possible, a vote can be taken either by a simple show of hands or an electronic vote by e-mail.

4.2. Dispute resolution

Membership of the Stakeholder Reference Group is open to a wide range of organisations and individuals, with different backgrounds, experience, communication needs and styles and expectations. While this is a strength, it can give rise to conflict and all members are required to adhere to the standards set out in the Behaviours and Expectations outlined above,

Wherever appropriate and possible members should seek to resolve issues or disputes informally between themselves in restorative ways through dialogue.

Failure to adhere to the standards set out in the Behaviours and Expectations outlined above will be addressed using the following process:

- The Co-Chairs and/or the Coordinator may intervene if any participant displays an egregious breach of the standards during a meeting. This would be an

extreme measure and would only be enacted to prevent the targeting of another participant(s) or protect the integrity of the meeting.

- Any member who is concerned that the standards are not being met may approach the Coordinator and/or Co-Chairs informally to make them aware of an incident or experience and/or seek advice, support and resolution where an informal process is suitable for the nature of the issue. If an informal approach is unsuitable or unsuccessful, a member who feels that the standards have been breached can submit a complaint in writing, after or outside of the meeting, to the Coordinator.
- Disputes or complaints must not be discussed in full SRG or steering group meetings. This is to protect the confidentiality of those involved and the integrity of the Dispute Resolution process.
- The Coordinator or another staff member of Equally Ours will discuss the complaint with the person concerned, hear their perspective and seek to find a solution. This may include for example an apology or an assurance to raise issues using the proper processes and in accordance with the standards.
- The Coordinator will report on any such solution to the Co-Chairs. If they agree that it is adequate the matter will be closed.
- If no adequate solution can be found, the Co-Chairs may, on the recommendation of the Coordinator, remove the invitation to the person or organisation concerned from membership of the SRG or limit their participation in aspects of the work of the SRG, such as working groups.
- The Coordinator will endeavour to complete this process as promptly as is practicable, keeping parties informed of developments and timelines.
- This process also applies to Co-Chairs and members of the steering group.
- If one or both of the Co-Chairs are party to a complaint (i.e. they are either the complainant or the subject of a complaint), they will play no role in the arbitration of the complaint. The Coordinator will act as the sole arbiter, reviewing the complaint against the standards set out in the participation agreement and determining the appropriate actions.
- Any complaint against the Coordinator or one of the statutory partners in the SRG must be made in line with that organisation's own complaints processes.

5. Other governance matters

5.1. Accessibility

The Coordinator will ensure the SRG and its outputs are fully accessible to members of all communities and all abilities by embedding the following practices:

- Ensuring reasonable adjustments are anticipated, planned and budgeted for;
- Following inclusive practice when facilitating meetings;
- Identifying any barriers to participation facing actual or potential members of the stakeholder group and putting in place measures to remove them;
- Ensuring that all venues used for the group are fully accessible; • Translating key documents into Easy Read and BSL;
- Including accessibility as a measure in evaluation.

5.2. Publication of documents

A webpage will be set up for the SRG, hosted on Equally Ours' website and minutes of meetings and other relevant papers (such as position papers) will be published online.

Appendix 1: Role Description for Co-chairs of the Hate Crime Stakeholders Reference Group

Co-chairs

- The co-chairs will be elected from the membership of the Hate Crime Stakeholders Reference Group (SRG).
- The co-chairs are, like the members of the SRG, volunteers who work alongside, but independent of, MOPAC and the MPS. They will represent the views and opinions of the SRG. These views may not necessarily reflect those of MOPAC or the MPS, or their policies.

The role of the Co-chairs

- To chair meetings of the SRG in an impartial, structured and orderly manner.
- With the SRG Coordinator, plan the agenda for SRG meetings.
- To represent the SRG at meetings, seminars, conferences, briefings etc. as appropriate, with prior discussion with the SRG Steering Group and input from the SRG. The co-chairs will provide feedback to the SRG at its next meeting.
- To act as a single point(s) of contact for SRG members (organisational or individual) seeking to raise specific issues or concerns.
- With the SRG Steering Group, establish and maintain working relationships with MOPAC and MPS governance structures.

Election of the Co-chairs

- The co-chairs will be elected remotely i.e. not at an SRG meeting, and will serve for a period of **two** year. Co-chairs can be nominated and elected to serve for a further two years but the tenure should not exceed a continuous period of more than **four** years. Chairs standing down after **four** years will not be permitted to stand as co-chair for a minimum of **one year**.
- Members can self-nominate or, with their consent, be nominated by other members of the SRG. Nominations will be submitted in advance to the Coordinator at HateCrimeSRG@equallyours.org.uk
- In the event of more than two nominations for the co-chair roles there will be a secret ballot. All individuals standing for election as co-chair will be invited by the Coordinator to submit a written address which will then be issued to all members. The address should be no more than 1 page and a maximum of 400 words.

- Voting will take place electronically, using the discreet SRG email address HateCrimeSRG@equallyours.org.uk when invited to do so by the Coordinator. Only those organisations or individuals who have registered with the Coordinator as members will be invited to vote.
- If one of the co-chairs is no longer able to carry out the role, a member of the SRG Steering Group can be invited to assume a co-chair role until the next cochair elections.

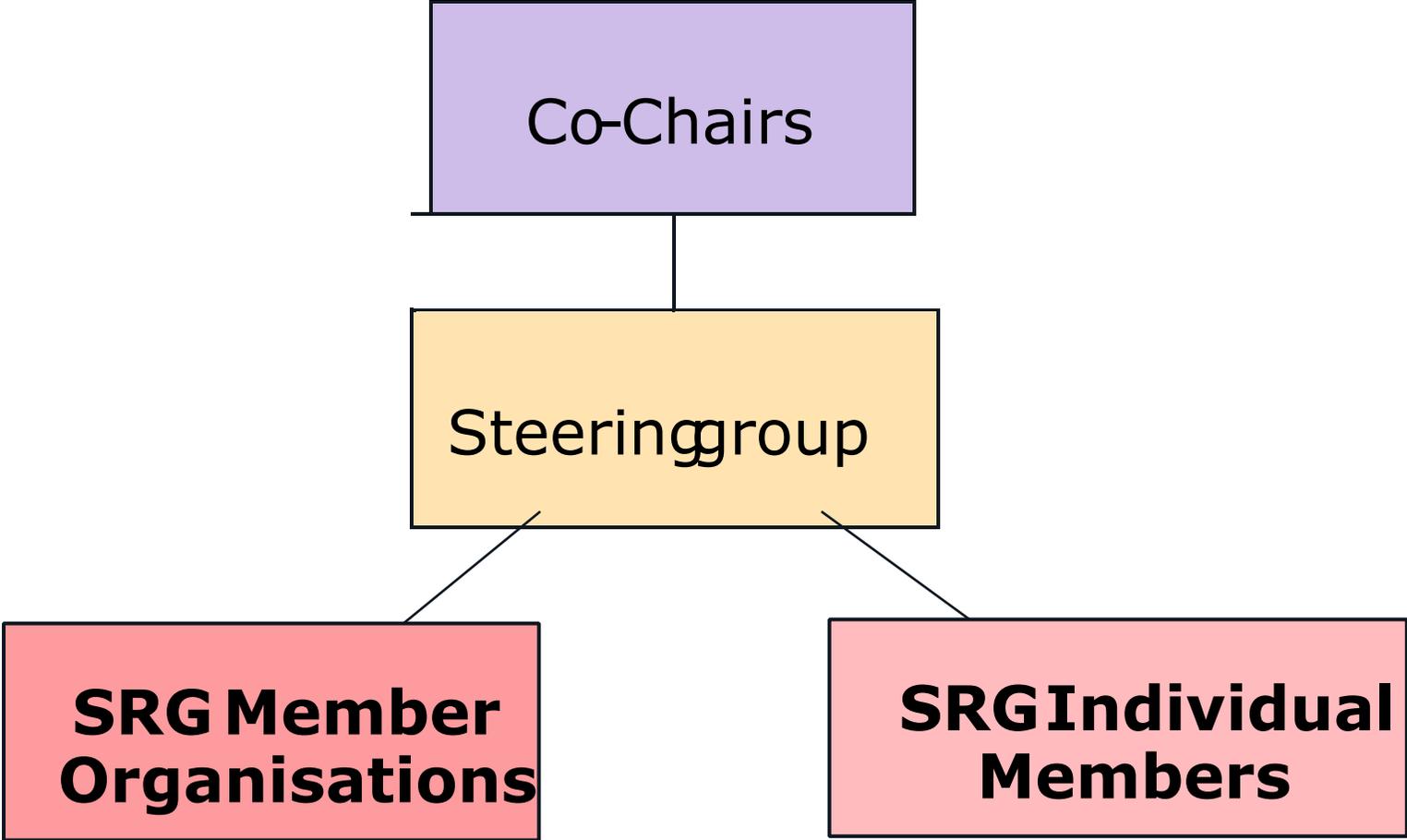
Removal of Co-chairs

- Co-chairs are expected, along with SRG Steering Group members, to lead by example in upholding the Behaviours and Expectations as described in the SRG Governance and Membership paper.
- If a co-chair or member of the Steering Group fails to uphold the Behaviours and Expectations, their invitation to participate in the SRG may be withdrawn, as is the case with any member.
- If the SRG membership takes the view that a co-chair is failing to represent the views of the membership, or is not meeting the requirements of the role description, (but has not failed to uphold the Behaviours and Expectations) they should express their view in writing, with a full explanation of how this view has been reached, to the SRG Coordinator at HateCrimeSRG@equallyours.org.uk.
- The Coordinator will liaise with the co-chairs and the Steering Group to address any concerns raised. If no satisfactory resolution is reached, members can request a 'Vote of Confidence' in the co-chair. A vote will not take place if there is less than 4 months (i.e. one SRG meeting) before the next election of cochairs is due.
- The voting process would be undertaken by the Coordinator and would follow the process used for elections. Any Vote of Confidence will be decided on a simple majority.

Revision and Review

- This role description is next due for review in December 2025 and at intervals of no more than two years after that.
- Any revision to the role description will be agreed in consultation with the SRG membership, MOPAC and the MPS.

Appendix 2: Organogram of the tiered membership structure



Appendix 2: Organogram of the statutory partners

