

London Resilience Equalities Partnership

Terms of Reference

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1. Context

Emergencies – from the COVID-19 pandemic to flooding, terror incidents, fire, or the cost-of living crisis – do not affect all communities equally. People already facing structural inequality often face the greatest harms. While the equalities organisations that support marginalised communities during crises play a vital role in promoting community wellbeing and resilience and offer valuable insights into what more inclusive responses to shocks can look like in practice, they are rarely included in official resilience planning or decision-making. We define equalities groups as organisations or collectives whose primary purpose is to support, represent, or advocate for people and communities who experience discrimination, disadvantage or exclusion linked to one or more protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. We define marginalised groups as those facing systemic inequalities, discrimination and/or violence due to an aspect of their identity.

To address this equalities gap in emergency preparedness and response, London Resilience commissioned Protection Approaches to coordinate the establishment of an Equalities Partnership within the London Resilience Forum (LRF), following a key recommendation from the 2024 *Equalities Engagement Report*. The Partnership will bring together interested equalities groups to support LRF members in ensuring that their emergency preparedness and response efforts centre the priorities, perspectives and needs of marginalised groups in London. Membership will be open to all equalities groups that meet the definition of equalities groups mentioned above and the criteria set in section 6 below.

To inform how the Partnership can most effectively enable equalities groups to meaningfully engage with and influence emergency preparedness and response in London, Protection Approaches carried out consultations with 80 equalities and resilience stakeholders. These included equalities groups working with LGBTQI+ people, disabled people, young people, older people, migrants, racialised communities, and women, alongside government representatives.

The consultations generated clear insights into the specific risks and priorities facing marginalised groups during emergencies, practical routes to more inclusive preparedness and response, and the support equalities groups need to engage effectively with the London Resilience Forum.

Risks facing marginalised groups in times of emergency reported in consultation included:

- **Financial precarity**, leaving communities without the means to meet basic needs or weather disruption.
- **Inaccessible emergency guidance and communication**, with vital information often unavailable in translated, easy-read, or accessible formats.
- **Deteriorating physical and mental health**, driven by loss of care, isolation, and barriers to medical and social support.
- **Limited access to safe shelters and spaces**, where design and facilities often don't meet the needs of disabled, migrant, and single-parent households.
- **Mistrust and fear of statutory authorities**, rooted in experiences of discrimination that discourage engagement or compliance during emergencies.
- **Increased exposure to identity-based violence**, particularly against racialised and migrant communities during moments of crisis.

Pathways identified for more inclusive approaches to resilience and to reduce risks included:

- **Building bridges** between equalities groups and emergency responders, ensuring that lived experience shapes planning and decision-making.
- **Embedding accessibility** across communications, guidance, and services before, during, and after emergencies.
- **Developing shared understanding and clear roles**, so equalities groups know how and where to engage with the resilience ecosystem before, during and after emergencies.
- **Investing in capacity-building and funding** for equalities groups and LRF members, enabling them to work together meaningfully and deliver sustainable results.
- **Advocating for systemic change**, so that lessons from local crises lead to fairer, more inclusive resilience policy and practice across London.

Core requirements of equalities groups to engage effectively within the Partnership and the wider resilience system included:

- **Sustainable and adequate funding**, to enable meaningful participation beyond meetings and support expanded organisational capacity without compromising core advocacy work.
- **Capacity-building support**, including understanding LRF systems, conducting robust community-led risk assessments, and strengthening technical, soft, and emergency preparedness skills.
- **Evidence of impact and sincere engagement**, ensuring consultation findings are acted upon and equalities expertise is visibly embedded and recognised in emergency planning.
- **Clarity of roles and responsibilities within the Partnership**, so all parties understand expectations, points of engagement, and where their contributions add most value.

2. Purpose

The Equalities Partnership brings together equalities groups to inform how London prepares for and responds to emergencies and to ensure that the perspectives and needs of those facing systemic inequalities are central to these efforts. The Partnership builds upon existing efforts such as the work of the London Communities Emergencies Partnership (LCEP) and the Faith and Belief Sector Panel to ensure that marginalised groups most affected by emergencies are central to London's resilience planning. Together, these efforts work to ensure that emergency preparedness and response efforts in the city are fit to support all Londoners. Within this overarching aim, the Partnership works towards five key objectives:

- **Bringing equity and inclusion into the heart of London's emergency planning**, through consistent equalities representation in the London Resilience Forum (LRF).
- **Facilitating the provision of accessible emergency communications**, so every Londoner can access lifesaving guidance.
- **Building the capacity of LRF members** and support them to work inclusively and confidently with equalities groups and marginalised communities before, during and after crises.
- **Facilitating joint planning and rapid response**, connecting local networks directly to decision-makers.
- **Advocating for systemic change**, so lessons from emergencies improve future policy and practice.

Together, these changes will ensure those most at-risk are included in emergency preparedness and response, while strengthening London's overall resilience.

The Partnership is an advisory and influencing body and does not hold statutory authority or decision-making power within the London Resilience Forum. Its role is to provide insight, challenge, and recommendations to strengthen inclusive emergency preparedness and response.

3. Key functions

The Partnership is an independent, non-statutory-led body that works to ensure that equalities groups are able to shape the London Resilience Forum's emergency preparedness and response efforts, towards increased inclusion and effectiveness.

The key functions and responsibilities of the Partnership are shaped by the Partnership co-chairs and members. They include:

- **Convening equalities groups** to develop and implement strategies for more inclusive emergency preparedness and response efforts within the LRF's work
- **Developing concrete activity-based workplan** for Partnership activities and methods of engagement with the LRF. This may include but will not be limited to:
 - **Advocating for the development and dissemination** of more accessible emergency communications; and the provision of accessible evacuation services
 - **Establishing feedback loops** between the London Resilience Forum and equalities groups
 - **Facilitating capacity-building and scenario-planning** activities for equalities groups and LRF members
 - **Advocating for systemic change** in resilience policy and practice towards increased inclusion.
- **(Representatives) attending, preparing for and following up on the London Resilience Forum and London Resilience Programme Board meetings** to ensure equalities considerations remain on the agenda and are prioritised and actioned. These meetings each take place three times a year.
- **Amplifying the visibility of equalities groups in the resilience space**, including by developing an independent website for the Partnership. The website will include:
 - Information about the Partnership's purpose and key functions
 - A directory of the Partnership's co-chairs, members and secretariat
 - The Partnership's terms of reference
 - How to get involved and what support is available

- Findings of the consultations conducted by Protection Approaches with equalities and resilience stakeholders to identify Partnership priorities and engagement methods
- **Conducting outreach to key equalities and resilience actors** to ensure more joined up, inclusive and effective work across both sectors
- **Sharing learnings and encouraging dialogue** between equalities and resilience actors to strengthen overall emergency preparedness and response efforts in London

4. Resources

Equalities Groups have been clear that, for the London Equalities Partnership to deliver greater impact, sustainable and adequate funding will be necessary. This funding is needed to enable meaningful participation beyond meetings and to support expanded organisational capacity, without compromising core advocacy work.

The secretariat of the Partnership is committed to securing sustainable funding that will enable a wider range of equalities organisations to engage more deeply in the work of the Partnership. At a minimum, the organisations where the co-chairs are based will receive funds to ensure that their staff time is adequately resourced. The amount of funding available for co-chair roles will be published during the co-chair recruitment process.

5. Governance

The Pan-London Equalities Partnership is commissioned by London Resilience and operates as a collaborative, member-led body bringing together equalities groups across London to strengthen inclusion within emergency preparedness and response. The governance of the group will run as follows:

- Leadership and Secretariat
 - The Partnership is co-chaired by two representatives from London-based equalities organisations.
 - The Secretariat function is provided by Protection Approaches, who will be responsible for coordination, administration, and supporting the delivery of Partnership activities.
 - Membership is open to all London-based equalities groups (see section 6 “Membership”).
 - The Partnership is chaired by representatives from two equalities organisations/groups who have longstanding experience and expertise on working with/for marginalised groups in London (see section 7 “co-chairs”).

6. Membership

Membership of the Partnership is open to any London-based organisation or collective whose primary purpose is to support, represent, or advocate for people and communities who experience discrimination, disadvantage or exclusion linked to one or more protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, and who meet the following criteria:

- Work directly with communities and/or be led by people with lived experience of marginalisation

- Are willing to share insights from lived experience and engage before, during and after emergencies to ensure marginalised groups are supported and centred in LRF efforts
- Share a commitment to equity, inclusion, intersectionality, anti-discrimination and human rights for all
- Are willing to agree to the Partnership's terms of reference (including the code of conduct)

Joining process

- Interested parties are able to complete a membership form hosted on the [London Equalities Partnership website](#).
- Membership will be offered to all organisations that meet the criteria of being an equalities group. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their applications within two weeks of submission.
- To finalise their membership, successful applicants will be asked to review and consent to this terms-of-reference document.
- Members will be welcome to contribute to Partnership activities, participate in meetings, and shape and scrutinise efforts to strengthen inclusive resilience across London.

The Partnership's secretariat will work to ensure that membership reflects a diverse set of equalities groups who work with different marginalised groups across London. This will include but will not be limited to groups working with people with disabilities, racialised communities, migrants, youth, the elderly, women and LGBTQI+ people.

Membership expectations and ways of engaging

The Partnership recognises that equalities organisations have different capacities, priorities, and constraints. Membership is therefore designed to be flexible and non-prescriptive, reflected in the following:

- Partnership meetings open to all members will be held regularly (generally quarterly). Attendance at meetings is encouraged but not mandatory.
- For some members, participation may primarily involve receiving updates, correspondence and opportunities to input remotely.
- For others, participation may include attending meetings regularly, contributing to working groups, or engaging in specific pieces of work.
- Members may change their level of engagement over time, depending on capacity, interest and organisational priorities.

The Partnership will also seek to offer capacity-building opportunities for members, which may include training, peer learning, scenario planning, or support to engage more effectively with the resilience system. Participation in these opportunities will be optional and based on member interest and availability.

No minimum level of engagement is required to retain membership, and members will not be penalised for limited participation.

7. Co-chairs

The Partnership is chaired by two co-chairs, who are named individuals based at two different member organisations (see Section 6 “Membership”). Co-chairs provide strategic, facilitative leadership on behalf of the Partnership and act as a key bridge between equalities groups and the London Resilience Forum. Their work will support the following objectives:

- Bringing equity and inclusion into the heart of London’s emergency planning through consistent equalities representation in the London Resilience Forum (LRF).
- Facilitating the provision of accessible emergency communications so all Londoners can access lifesaving guidance.
- Building the capacity of LRF members to work inclusively with equalities groups and marginalised communities before, during and after crises.
- Facilitating joint planning and rapid response by connecting local networks to decision-makers.
- Advocating for systemic change so lessons from emergencies improve future policy and practice.

Co-chairs are expected to act in the collective interests of the Partnership, rather than representing the views of their own organisations, and to uphold the values and principles set out in this Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.

Role and responsibilities

With the support of the Secretariat, co-chairs will:

- Provide inclusive, facilitative leadership that enables diverse equalities groups to participate meaningfully and safely in the Partnership’s work
- Plan and chair quarterly and ad-hoc Partnership meetings, ensuring agendas reflect member priorities and allow space for challenge, learning and collaboration
- Attend, prepare for and follow up on London Resilience Forum and London Resilience Programme Board meetings, feeding back to members and amplifying collective Partnership perspectives
- Support constructive relationships between the Partnership, London Resilience Forum members, and other relevant stakeholders
- Work closely with the Secretariat to develop and deliver Partnership priorities, workplans and outputs
- Represent the Partnership at ad-hoc meetings with London Resilience Forum members, policy stakeholders and funders, where agreed by members
- Support the consistent and fair application of the Partnership’s Code of Conduct, including responding to concerns alongside the Secretariat
- Champion equity, accessibility, trauma-informed practice and non-extractive engagement across all Partnership activities

Accountability and decision-making

- Co-chairs are accountable to the Partnership’s membership as a whole. They do not hold unilateral decision-making authority and are expected to act transparently, share information openly, and seek member input on strategic issues wherever possible.

Appointment of co-chairs

- In the first year of the Partnership, April 2026 – March 2027, to aid the establishment of the partnership, interim co-chairs will be recruited through an open online call for applications. Interested parties will submit a short application form and possibly attend an interview.
- Interviews will be conducted by a panel comprising representatives from London Resilience, Protection Approaches, the London Communities Emergencies Partnership (LCEP), and at least one equalities group that did not apply for co-chair positions.
- Interim co-chairs will follow a short onboarding process and will serve a one-year term to support the Partnership's formation and initial operations.
- After the one-year start-up period, in April 2027 co-chairs of the partnership will be selected by the members through an open and transparent election process
- From April 2027 co-chairs will sit for a three-year term with two-term limit for any organisation.

8. Meetings and outputs

Meetings

The co-chairs and secretariat will be responsible for scheduling and facilitating Partnership meetings.

Meetings open to all members are expected to take place online quarterly but may take place more regularly when needed. The frequency, agenda and format of meetings will be reviewed regularly in discussion with members.

The Secretariat will work to ensure the provision of accessibility requirements for members and/or co-chairs where needed.

Observer participation

The Partnership recognises that, at times, it may be valuable for statutory partners, funders, or other relevant stakeholders to attend meetings as observers in order to strengthen understanding, transparency and collaboration.

- Observer participation is not automatic and will be discussed and agreed by Partnership members.
- Observers may be invited for specific agenda items or meetings where their presence is considered helpful by members.
- Observers will not hold decision-making or voting rights within the Partnership.
- Observers will be expected to adhere to the Partnership's Code of Conduct, including principles of confidentiality and responsible sharing

Outputs

The Partnership may produce outputs such as recommendations, briefings, learning summaries, or other resources to inform inclusive emergency preparedness and response in London.

These outputs will be shared with Partnership members and, where appropriate, with the London Resilience Forum and other relevant stakeholders, with clear agreement on attribution, confidentiality, and use.

9. Code of conduct

The Pan-London Equalities Partnership is committed to creating a respectful, inclusive and psychologically safe space in which equalities groups can share insights, challenge ideas, and shape London's emergency preparedness and response in ways that centre marginalised communities.

All members, co-chairs, invited observers and guests agree to the following expectations when participating in Partnership meetings, communications, and activities:

Respect, dignity and inclusion

- Treat all participants with respect, professionalism and care, recognising the diverse lived experiences in the room.
- Communicate in ways that are non-discriminatory, non-stigmatising, and attentive to power dynamics (including race, disability, gender, faith, sexuality, immigration status, and socioeconomic status).
- Disagreement is welcome; disrespect is not. Critique ideas and approaches, not individuals or communities.

Anti-discrimination and safeguarding

- Harassment, bullying, intimidation, hate speech, or discriminatory language/behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Members are expected to uphold the Partnership's commitment to equity, intersectionality, anti-discrimination and human rights.
- If safeguarding concerns arise, these will be handled promptly and appropriately, including through signposting to relevant safeguarding channels where necessary.

Confidentiality and responsible sharing

To enable honest discussion, particularly around sensitive issues, risk, harm and lived experience, members agree to follow a "responsible sharing" approach:

- Default: contributions should not be attributed to individuals or organisations outside the Partnership unless explicit consent is given.
- Any notes, reports or outputs will clarify what is attributable, what is anonymised, and what is confidential.

Lived experience and non-extractive practice

- The Partnership recognises the value of lived experience and community expertise and will avoid extractive approaches.
- Members should not pressure others to disclose personal experiences, case details, or sensitive information.
- Members recognise that sharing lived experience can carry emotional risk, and no one is expected to educate others or repeatedly recount traumatic experiences.
- Where the Partnership draws on community insight, it will seek to do so with transparency about purpose, use, and benefit and with appropriate resourcing where feasible.

Accessibility and participation

- Participants will support inclusive participation by using accessible communication practices (e.g., clear language, allowing space for different communication styles, avoiding acronyms where possible).
- The Secretariat will coordinate accessibility requirements where requested, and members will help to create conditions that enable participation

Constructive engagement and shared accountability

