

Chair of Lewisham Disabled People's Commission

Expressions of Interest

Background

Lewisham Council's Corporate Strategy 2018-2022 commits to the establishment of an Disabled People's Commission. The Commission is to be led by disabled people and is intended to identify barriers faced by disabled people in Lewisham and make recommendations to address them. The Commission is also intended to have a coordinating role to ensure that disabled people meaningfully influence the design and delivery of services provided by the Council for disabled people.

The Commission will work to the social, rather than medical model of disability¹ and examine the experiences of people in relation to the following barriers:

- Physical
- Attitudinal
- Socio-economic

Given the consultative structures already in place for disabled children the Commission will focus on Adults. The Commission will also consider the needs of those aged 16-18 and help inform the work of the new Transition and Preparing for Adulthood service within the Council.

The Commission will be formally launched on International Day of Disabled People on 3 December 2019. A Chair for the Commission is being sought for appointment in advance of this date.

The Role

The Chair will have a key role in developing and directing the scope of the Commission. The role will lead the delivery of activities and oversee the implementation of recommendations made by the Commission. The role will involve working with Lewisham councillors and officers to develop the Commission's strategic direction

The responsibilities of the Chair include:

- Chairing and facilitating the meetings of the Commission
- Ensuring that meetings are inclusive and accessible and all commissioners have their access requirements met
- Working to the social model of disability
- Liaising with the Council and partner agencies
- Representing the Commission at appropriate events, meetings or functions
- Acting as the principal spokesperson for the Commission

¹ The Social Model of Disability was developed during the 1960s and 1970s and is summed up by Barbara Lisicki in 2013 as recognising "disability as something that is socially constructed. Disability is created by physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers and these can be changed and eliminated. This gives us a dynamic and positive model that tells us what the problem is and how to fix it. It takes us away from the position of "blaming" the individual for their shortcoming. It states that impairment is, and always will be, present in every known society, and therefore the only logical position to take, is to plan and organise society in a way that includes, rather than excludes, Disabled people." For more information see: <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/>

- Working with Lewisham Council and partners to agreeing research and reports required by the Commission
- Attending relevant Council and partner meetings as a representative of the Commission where appropriate

The Person

The Council is seeking a Lewisham resident who identifies as a Disabled person with a track record of promoting the rights of Disabled people.

Desirable personal qualities include:

- Commitment to the aims of the Commission
- Commitment to taking a rights focused, Social Model of Disability approach
- Commitment to equality and diversity
- Experience of working collaboratively and inclusively
- Strong interpersonal and relationship-building abilities
- Integrity, strategic and good/independent judgement
- A willingness and availability to devote the necessary time and effort to the duties of Chair
- Ability to take appropriate decisions consistent with the aims of the Commission
- Good, independent judgement
- Good communication skills
- Tact and diplomacy
- Willingness to speak one's mind and listen to the views of others
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team.

Desirable experience

- Prior experience of committee/trustee work
- A wider involvement with the voluntary sector
- Leadership and campaigning roles

Time Commitment

The average time commitment is expected to equate to approximately two days per month for approximately 12 months or a maximum of 24 days in total. This will include both daytime and evening commitments.

NB: This position can be remunerated up to £250 per day depending on circumstances

Application process

If you are interested in becoming the Chair of the Commission please submit a short (less than 2 sides of A4) supporting statement as to why you think you would be suitable for the role by 5pm on Monday 7th October.

Please submit your statement to Pauline.richards@lewisham.gov.uk. If you would like to have an informal conversation regarding the role please call Pauline on 020 8314 8637 who will arrange a time for this.