



East Midlands Inclusion Framework
Inclusion Matters: From Rhetoric to Reality

One East Midlands

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East Midlands Inclusion Framework - *Inclusion Matters: From Rhetoric to Reality*

One East Midlands

1. Introduction

This document has been developed by One East Midlands to build on the previous work of the East Midlands as a leader in social inclusion policy. It builds on the experience, knowledge and perspectives in the region and the third sector as expressed in several key strategic documents to form a Framework usable by all sectors to work against exclusion and poverty.

We know 'inclusion' isn't working. For many people, groups and communities inclusion remains rhetoric and an aspiration rather than a reality. That is the only conclusion that can be reached from the research undertaken to inform this document – a new East Midlands Inclusion Framework. It might be unusual to start with the conclusion but this is the inescapable reality that our Framework seeks to address.

It aims to serve as a working/practical focused document that will make a difference at strategic, operational, community and individual levels, seeking to:

- Act as a tool to support and influence the work of policymakers and commissioners to add value to the development of policy and procurement systems.
- Support One EM member organisations to:
 - hold one another and themselves to account against the framework
 - self-assess their own practice against the framework
 - use the framework to help develop their own policy and practice.

This is a forward looking document. It does not seek to analyse the history of inclusion initiatives and neither is it intended as a definitive statement on all aspects of inclusion. It is not an academic research document or a treatise. It does not focus solely on issues and solutions for the most excluded but includes those experiencing exclusion and at risk of exclusion within the current system including those in employment but who continue to live in poverty and poor quality housing.

It sets out to:

- Identify some of the major challenges we face in the East Midlands in overcoming and tackling exclusion
- Highlight examples of good practice in the region and nationally
- Identify key Inclusion Principles for consideration and adoption though what we have described as an 'Inclusion Checklist'
- Make recommendations for change.

We believe everyone has a role to play in helping to bring about change, starting with the people who experience exclusion themselves and who use services designed to help and including:

- National and Local Government
- Public Partnerships, for example Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and Public Services
- Funders and Commissioners
- Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) infrastructure/umbrella organisations
- Local Communities and Community Groups
- Local Providers – large and small.

There are urgent and pressing problems to be addressed. In contribution, we offer a useful framework for local decision-makers, providers, individuals and communities to inform local strategies and plans, policy development, commissioning and investment decisions and practice on the ground with the aim to help move inclusion from rhetoric and aspiration (or policy goal) to reality in the East Midlands region.

The evidence for this can be seen in the poor levels of social mobility nationally and in the East Midlands in particular, high levels of poverty including in-work poverty and levels of homelessness including rough sleeping. These are just some of the examples highlighted by our research. Too many people continue to be excluded from the opportunities, services and support they need and might expect to receive as a right. In addition, and to compound the problem, they continue to experience significant obstacles and barriers to involvement in the decision-making processes that inform the plans and strategies that could help change this.

There have been a number of helpful strategic initiatives and developments in the East Midlands over the last 25 years that have contributed to achieving inclusion. These include Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the Integra programme to the more recent strategic

emphasis on Inclusive Growth, explored in more detail below. They also include a number of Big Lottery Funded programmes including the 'A Better Start' programme in delivery locally in four of Nottingham's most disadvantaged wards through the innovative Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) programme and the joint Big Lottery/European Social Fund (ESF) Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programme delivered across the East Midlands and nationally. The BBO programme focuses on working with people with complex needs, financial inclusion and getting people back into work.

There are many examples of good practice locally and nationally including City-wide strategies and plans as well as smaller scale initiatives delivered by trusted local organisations and groups making a real difference in local communities. A handful of such examples are highlighted within this document as exemplars for all local organisations to consider and learn from.

This document and its recommendations of course cannot overcome the structural, economic and cultural barriers to inclusion. One respondent to our survey commented:

'The inequities in our social and educational system are so embedded that fine policies are unlikely to have any impacts. And the current government's policies will ensure that exclusion continues - and will get worse - regardless of small attempts to redress the inequities.'

We acknowledge that everyone is out there trying to do their best, doing good and valuable work in highly demanding and difficult circumstances. However, the reality is that for too many people little has changed and for many their situation has arguably grown worse.

'[We have seen] money being channelled into communities and money invested in large programmes over years and with little real impact...' (VCS representative to local LEP Board)

This sentiment is echoed across all sectors.

Today the majority of households living in poverty are in work...skills shortages are a significant factor, but so too are the proliferation of low-skilled jobs. Deprivation has an economic as well as a social cost and is estimated to account for 38% of the productivity shortfall of the UK's Core Cities. Austerity has heightened the challenge; local government spending has reduced and re-profiled around reactive spend rather than pro-active investment...' (Refreshing the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan: The case for inclusive growth, October 17)

There is clearly still a long way to go...

2. Understanding Inclusion

One of the central difficulties when dealing with Inclusion is that it means different things to different people depending on where they stand in relation to their experience of Inclusion/Exclusion.

For example an abstract macro-economic analyst can say that 'Inclusion means employment'; whereas an excluded person - inactive, poor, demoralised, struggling with complex problems - is several steps away from even engaging with any employment initiatives. For them Inclusion is *literal* – they want to participate in something meaningful to them.

So, when we talk about inclusion it is worth asking what it is that we can all expect to, that we have a right to, be included in. From our perspective this is not just about the economy, jobs and work, though those things are undoubtedly important. Inclusion should encompass every aspect of life including such things as:

'Housing, Neighbourhood/environment, Work satisfaction, Good relationships, Safety, Green spaces, Secure/suitable work, Having enough money, Financial security, Culture/Hobbies, Local facilities, Skills and education, Community spirit, Good transport, Good services, Tolerance, Feeling good.' (Oxfam Human Index 'Framework')

Inclusion at its simplest is *'the state of being included'* but it is a bit more complicated than that. It is used by activists to promote the idea that all people should be freely and openly accommodated without restrictions or limitations of any kind.'

(Adapted from the work of Miller and Katz, 2002)

If one looks at a definition of its opposite, (Social) Exclusion, *'or marginalisation, is the social disadvantage and relegation to the fringe of society'*. (Silver, 1994)

Thus Inclusion would mean countering that marginalisation, removing that disadvantage or bringing-in from the fringe.

A more recent concept in the field is that of Inclusive Growth, we will explore this in the next section but let us start with a wide ranging European Commission definition: 'Inclusive growth is *connecting* people at risk of poverty and exclusion to opportunities' (our emphasis).

This idea of connecting is, of course, two-sided:

1. The opening of growth to include a wider swathe of society, and
2. The movement of those not benefitting to closer participation in growth.

Our view is that Inclusion requires tackling from both sides: by making growth, wealth, development, quality of life... accessible to all. But it also requires **Active** measures to assist those not participating fully to overcome the barriers that prevent them.

This can be expressed as an attention to both **Inclusive Growth** (connecting people at risk of poverty and exclusion to opportunities); and **Literal Inclusion** (actively working with those affected individuals or communities to overcome exclusion).

These two approaches would be most effective if integrated together within one strategic overview.

2.1 Inclusive Growth

The RSA (Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce) Inclusive Growth Commission defines it as: ‘*broad-based growth that enables the widest range of people and places to contribute to economic success, and to benefit from it too. Its purpose is to achieve more prosperity alongside greater equity in opportunities and outcomes.*’

It is a concept fundamentally concerned with the economy but takes a much more inclusive approach than either the traditional ‘growth for growth’s sake’ approach or a narrow growth approach.

The RSA’s five principles for Inclusive Growth are:

1. *Creating a shared, binding mission*
2. *Measuring the human experience of growth not just its rate*
3. *Seeing growth as the whole social system, not just a machine*
4. *Being an agile investor at scale*
5. *Entrepreneurial, whole-place leadership*

[RSA Inclusive Growth, Principles into Practice, March 2107]

Inclusive Growth is a major and welcome step forward in economic thinking and development that is beginning to inform local economic strategy and planning. For example, *Refreshing the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan: The case for inclusive growth (October 2017)* [RSEP] recommends that:

‘An inclusive growth framework is applied to all strategic and investment decisions relating to priorities identified in the [new D2N2] SEP. In this way inclusive growth becomes the lens through which priorities are identified and decisions made.’

Traditional economic growth strategies conceive of growth as the product of activities of private sector firms and public sector spending, with at best a secondary concern being who experiences the *benefits* of growth.

‘A reframing along inclusive growth principles would conceive of growing labour market activity and spending power among those currently excluded and deprived as being the most impactful source of growth itself. It is about people being the growth, and understanding themselves as such’. (RSEP)

Whilst there is a growing case for and commitment to pursuing inclusive growth there are barriers to its development and implementation. It is neither widely accepted nor being successfully implemented locally as yet:

'NCC's commitment to inclusive growth is challenged by the macro economic problems facing the local economy including the casualisation of labour, Universal Credit roll-out and short-term national and European funding initiatives which limit the potential/impact of NCC interventions. Despite these difficulties and the year on year reduction in the Council funding, NCC is genuinely committed to ensuring that economic growth benefits all the residents in the city'. (Nigel Jackson, Nottingham Jobs Manager, Nottingham City Council)

However, it is stating the obvious that a healthy inclusive economy would be a major driver in promoting and achieving inclusion:

'The way we organise our economy underpins every aspect of how we live our lives and how our communities function...we were excited to explore what new ideas are being tested and demonstrated in cities around the UK as to ways in which the economy could work better to create liveable places, sustainable equitable prosperity, connected communities and all the other desirable aspects of a well-functioning economic system. Currently these aspects are absent from mainstream approaches to economic development.' (Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol)

And of course, the private sector has a vital role to play in this. Inclusion is not just the concern of the VCS or strategic and statutory stakeholders:

'Companies must ask themselves: What role do we play in the community? How are we managing our impact on the environment? Are we working to create a diverse workforce? Are we adapting to technological change? Are we providing the retraining and opportunities that our employees and our business will need to adjust to an increasingly automated world? Are we using behavioural finance and other tools to prepare workers for retirement, so that they invest in a way that will help them achieve their goals?' ([Larry Fink, Chair and CEO, Black Rock, Annual Letter to CEO's, 2018)

The following quote demonstrates both the local commitment to Inclusive Growth and the work that remains to be done before it is accepted and adopted:

'[We need to] create a shared and common narrative around inclusive growth and build the business case – mainstreaming an inclusion approach is the only option remaining as current policy fails to deliver social mobility despite years of investment – creating a guide for the LEP/ to guide and influence all partners – and attain all partner buy in would help.' (Rachel Quinn, D2N2 Careers, Employability & Inclusion Manager)

However structured, on its own does Inclusive Growth go far enough in addressing the barriers and obstacles to full or literal inclusion – and achieving its own goals?

Let's take a look from the other side...

2.2 A View from the Frontline

The message from people using inclusion services, those at the sharp end of social and economic exclusion, involved in the development of this Framework is a very simple one:

Just include us!

Whilst this is an obvious message to many of the individuals and organisations involved in inclusion work and many organisations are doing just that, it has still to penetrate fully at both strategic and operational levels when it comes to planning, designing, commissioning and delivering services. The people we consulted spoke of an institutional arrogance, a 'we know best approach' that means the 'experts by experience' i.e. people experiencing inclusion and disadvantage themselves, continue to be excluded from decision-making process or are included as a form of 'lip service' or 'box ticking exercise' in their words.

For them inclusion starts with 'just asking and listening'. What they want and rightly expect is that:

- They are not included as an afterthought or token gesture but are central to the development of strategies, plans and services.
- They are given plenty of notice of requests to include them in a particular process.
- They are able to say what they want to say and not what those asking the questions want to hear.
- They are listened to.
- Their views are acted on.
- They are given feedback on the impact of and outcomes from their involvement.

Of course inclusion is not just about involvement in strategy and plans. It has to involve such things as recognising their talents, skills and abilities and providing opportunities to use them. These are not just through training and volunteering initiatives; or routes through to well-paid employment, flexible job-design and in-work support. It means providing accessible and readily understandable information; providing activities that engage the energy and participation of those not engaged; providing support to tackle anxiety and trauma; offering a sense of purpose and a sense of belonging; taking time and offering understanding; enabling everyone to feeling appreciated and valued amongst many other things. None of this should be too much to ask or expect.

It is a pointed irony that many of the most excluded people, those most marginalised in society feel themselves also marginalised in the very actions supposed to move them towards Inclusion. If exclusion rests on inability to participate, Inclusion action must rest on participation within the action – not just as a target of it.

2.3 Literal Inclusion and Our Definition

Our view is that we should develop a literal definition of Inclusion and seek to promote the adoption of such a definition by all stakeholders involved in moving forward inclusion initiatives across the East Midlands.

It is our view that, whilst inclusive growth is welcome, it only takes us so far down a pathway to true inclusion. This document calls for inclusion policy and strategy that uses/focuses on a wider, more literal definition of inclusion designed to make inclusion a reality for all in all aspects and all areas.

We fully support the RSA's first principle for Inclusive Growth - *the creation of a shared, binding mission, locally designed and implemented, involving business, civil society and citizens* - but this document calls for such a shared and binding mission to apply to a more literal definition of and approach to inclusion.

Our definition of Inclusion

This Framework is a working document, aimed to transform actual practice of Inclusion work and to take forward a more strategic integration of Inclusion approaches from both sides of the problems: the Growth side and the Combatting Exclusion side.

So rather than a final definitive formulation we have aimed at a working understanding that supports actual activity:

Work towards inclusion must be *active*, it must involve better understanding that we all have something to contribute. It encompasses people having control over their own support and making their own decisions, directing their own participation and presence in their own communities.

This is essentially based on a literal definition as suggested by L→Power in 'The Key to Inclusion' report (2007) as:

'being about circumstances, barriers or problems keeping individuals or communities outside of full participation'...

... as opposed to what might be described as a partial definition of exclusion:

'that attempts to reduce or substitute categories or classifications, usually relating to disadvantage and make the work part of other initiatives'.

We recommend such an understanding – and more importantly such a methodology in developing it to all Inclusion practitioners at all levels.

3. A Call To Action

This Framework is intended essentially as a practical document, hoping to shape actual action that works towards Inclusion. It is aimed at, and has been designed to inform, organisations and individuals at all levels that suffer exclusion or are working for Inclusion.

If those organisations and individuals do nothing else we ask you to take the following essential steps:

- 1. Sign-up to the East Midlands Inclusion Framework**
- 2. Decide what Inclusion means for your organisation / group / service**
- 3. Make it Central to your Agenda**
- 4. Involve those who are currently excluded / at risk of exclusion in co-production / co-design / co-development at all opportunities and all levels – and be clear about what that means**

This sounds simple but may in many cases be quite complex. To assist actual change we have distilled a set of practical steps which will help achieve this. They are expressed as a Checklist.

4. The East Midlands Inclusion Checklist

The following are the key points taken from research findings that organisations involved in inclusion work at all levels should consider and pursue as key principles that promote and help achieve inclusion:

1. Involve, Empower, and Co-produce services, strategies and plans (at all levels and in all arenas) with people who are currently excluded or at risk of exclusion.
2. Invest in this process with time, money, resources and training. Quantify and record this. (N.B. additional resources will not always be needed, utilise existing resources differently).
3. Have a written and inclusive Inclusion Policy co-designed / produced with the people who use your services.
4. Take opportunities to innovate/ commission innovation but allow opportunities to test approaches, systems, services and allow for failure.
5. Learn from failure and success by systematically building lessons learnt into new project design and programme development.
6. Demonstrate links between Inclusion work and organisational Equality and Diversity policies and practice.
7. Produce policy, strategy documents, meeting agendas and notes etc. in ways that are accessible to all – (including for example using pictures and symbols for people with learning difficulties and using readability tests.)
8. Follow/Contribute to an integrated Place-based Approach. This has been defined as; *‘...a person-centred, bottom-up approach used to meet the unique needs of people in one given location by working together to use the best available resources and collaborate to gain local knowledge and insight.’* (Place-Based Working, Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS), Munro, 2015)
9. Ensure partners are included from all relevant sectors and document this.
10. Ensure that inclusion is embedded in commissioning processes through construction of specifications / invitations to tender, creation of specific lots and scoring frameworks which values / weights involvement of local organisations.
11. Measure the impact of initiatives to promote inclusion including using levels of target **community involvement** in design and delivery of programmes and outcomes, and **social mobility** as key measures.

5. Challenges and Barriers

The major challenges identified through our research that inform this Framework and the recommendations it makes are largely familiar but nonetheless worth highlighting.

- **Social Mobility**

The Midlands is the worst region of the country for social mobility for those from disadvantaged backgrounds – half the local authority areas in the East Midlands are social mobility ‘cold-spots’.

*The East Midlands...has the lowest social mobility scores in the country – with the worst outcomes for disadvantaged children during early years, school and youth life stages....[the region] suffers from low-quality secondary schools, poor transport links and significant rates of low pay. In the East Midlands, almost one in three secondary schools that children eligible for free school meals attend is judged less than good by Ofsted, and the region has the lowest attainment and university entry rate for disadvantaged young people... Coastal and older industrial towns – places like Scarborough, Hastings, **Derby and Nottingham** – are becoming entrenched social mobility cold-spots.*

(State of the Nation 2017, Social Mobility in Great Britain, Social Mobility Commission)

This is fairly damning and indicates the scale of the problem. We recommend that improvement in social mobility is used as one of the key indicators to measure progress towards inclusion and the impact of the Framework itself.

- **Economic exclusion, poverty and in-work poverty**

Our research clearly indicates that work on its own is not the solution. The majority of households living in poverty are in work and therefore continue to face economic and social exclusion. In the D2N2 area, about 30% of those in work earn less than the Living Wage (based on 2014 data), in Mansfield district the figure is 38% whereas in Rushcliffe it is 18%. Nationally the figure is estimated at 25%.¹

However, we recognise that a minimal level of economic wellbeing/security is an essential starting point, an essential platform that needs to be in place to enable people to begin to feel included in, that they have a stake in society. People living in poverty are clearly not in a position to think too much about inclusion in its broader sense when they don't have enough money to feed the kids or pay the bills!

¹ Figures taken from 'Refreshing the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan: The case for inclusive growth, October 2017'.

'...if people have to put all their energy into raising cash day to day they have no energy or time to be included. Poverty also embarrasses people into excluding themselves.'

[Survey Respondent]

Therefore work to tackle poverty and economic exclusion, such as the Inclusive Growth agenda and some of the current Building Better Opportunities (BBO) programmes across the region, have a vital role to play in helping to achieve inclusion.

Tackling poverty through employment is an essential part of sustainable development. Personal wellbeing, social cohesion and inclusion, and 'opportunities for all' are part of the UK's principles for sustainable development that should be considered by all contracting authorities, not just those that have a 'poverty brief'.

[Inclusive Growth Commission, Making our Economy Work for Everyone, RSA]

- **Homelessness**

Homelessness across the region and nationally continues to get worse. Continued austerity has led to cuts to essential support services including mental health, drug and alcohol and housing and homelessness support. Vulnerable people have suffered dramatically as a result. For example, rough sleeping in England has increased for seven consecutive years with official figures showing 4,751 people having slept rough in 2017, (this figure is likely to be a significant underestimate), and the number of children in hostels and temporary accommodation has risen to over 120,00 during that time. If we are serious about inclusion we need to find ways to tackle homelessness – starting with getting people off the streets and providing the support they need to start to tackle their problems and begin to feel 'included'.

- **Rural Inclusion**

There are specific structural issues relating to rural areas that serve as additional obstacles and challenges to achieving inclusion in a rural context, and this won't change unless and until there is additional investment in infrastructure in transport links, IT, availability of and access to local services. This means starting to move away from city-centric investment plans and strategies, for example.

Other structural challenges and issues arising from our consultation and conversations include:

'Traditional hierarchical organisations which perpetuate and reinforce oppressive power structures...For us oppressions intersect making it harder to achieve social mobility.'

One survey respondent highlighted

'Rigid thinking, attitudes and criteria in professionals and services'

One of the organisations we consulted talked about the need to overcome what they see as 'institutional arrogance' when it comes to planning, designing and commissioning services aimed at excluded people and this was echoed by people using services themselves.

Many of the individuals and organisations we spoke to highlighted commissioning and procurement processes as a real barrier for smaller organisations in securing resources for inclusion-focused work:

'Commissioners need to find ways of simplifying procurement processes and making them more inclusive. Smaller organisations just don't have the time or the resources to be able to compete.' (Survey respondent)

Others highlighted the need to ensure that people with 'lived experience' of exclusion are fully involved in commissioning and procurement and the obvious benefits of doing so:

'Joined up commissioning could help us to provide holistic services...People with lived experiences need to help steer service provision.' [Survey respondent]

In addition, a regional focus on measures including Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Value Added (GVA) was highlighted as an obstacle as was an emphasis on achieving Best Value which can override any other considerations when services are planned and commissioned. There is a strong call to find new and more focused ways of measuring progress towards inclusion.

'...strategically we should include a direct question on inclusion when we consider the impact of policy or action on health inequalities. We should shift our approach from considering which groups we should target for action or intervention and instead aim for the more positive approach of inclusion.' (Survey respondent)

Unsurprisingly, a lack of resources was highlighted by many of the organisations consulted:

'Lack of staff resource is a barrier for undertaking co-production in a meaningful way. It is time and staff intensive if it is done properly. There are cultural barriers. It will take time to change custom and practice of staff to ensure they leave enough time in the run up to taking commissioning decisions to ensure ideas can be identified and developed co-productively.' (Survey respondent)

Everything we have read and all the conversations we have had point to these issues as the major barriers for organisations and individuals in the East Midlands.

- Poverty
- Homelessness and Poor Housing
- Class
- Health, Disability & Trauma
- Loneliness – as both symptom and cause
- Discrimination
- Skills.
- The Benefits System including the consequences of the introduction and roll-out of Universal Credit and the punishing Sanctions Regime.

There is not the space here to examine each of these issues in any depth and nor do we consider it necessary. They are familiar to all of us and this framework on its own cannot resolve or remove them. What it can do is highlight and promote initiatives designed to help tackle them.

6. Good Practice Examples

This section highlights a number of initiatives that might be seen as current best practice in working to promote and achieve inclusion. It presents examples at strategic level and operational and delivery levels including a local private sector initiative. Clearly, there are many more examples of excellent work that cannot be included here for reasons of space only. This is a small selection of what the authors consider particularly helpful examples that could be adapted and adopted by local organisations working in the inclusion arena.

– Strategic Level & System Change Initiatives

Nottinghamshire: Nottinghamshire County Council Adult Social Care & Health Statement of Intent (2016): ‘Working Together - Learning Together’: This document identifies how Nottinghamshire County Council Adult Social Care and Health (NCC ASCH) will put into practice co-production throughout its strategic commissioning processes – recognising *‘the benefits that can be achieved from involving all stakeholders.’* It is written in clear and straightforward language, sets out clear commitments and expectations of all involved and includes what it describes a coproduction toolkit identifying seven key things to consider and do to achieve effective co-production.

Birmingham: The Birmingham Business Charter for Social Responsibility (Charter) is a set of guiding principles which the Council adheres to and invites all organisations to adopt as a mechanism for managing how they deliver social value. Charter signatories consider and describe how they can improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Birmingham that result from their activities. This includes indirect outcomes through commissioning and procurement. Commissioning and contracting decisions take account of the principles of the Charter, it informs BCC contracts and Grant Aid decisions.

Bristol: In Bristol, a major initiative has been the establishment by the Mayor of the City Office, an approach to mobilising energy and resources from multiple sectors around key hard-to-tackle issues, for example rough sleeping and equitable access to good quality work experience for young people. The principle is to get things done by working through new networks including local businesses and citizens as well as the public sector bodies who have traditionally had responsibility for solving these problems.

(Please refer to the Bibliography for the breadth of strategic good practice examples available as identified in the key documents researched to inform this Framework.)

– **Operational/Service Delivery Initiatives**

Opportunity Nottingham - Expert Citizens & The Pledge. Opportunity Nottingham is a Big Lottery Funded programme working with people with multiple and complex needs in Nottingham. The 'voice' of lived experience is central to the development and delivery of the service and informs key decision-making processes. The Expert Citizens are Beneficiaries of Opportunity Nottingham who 'feel ready and able to get involved and have their say'. They have developed what they have called 'The Pledge' and 'Facts about Me'. 'The Pledge' is designed to improve the experience of service users and front-line staff working in services that help and support people with multiple support needs. It provides a simple checklist that identifies what service users want and how they want to be treated for organisations to sign-up to and adopt. 'Facts About Me' is a pro-forma for services to use that provides information about an individual that goes beyond just the usual basic facts – it identifies how people prefer to be known and what it is that 'makes them tick' – giving services a real insight into who they are and how to work with them more effectively.

B-Inspired (Leicester): B-Inspired were recommended by a number of individuals and organisations involved in our consultation process as an example of good practice for their work on the Braunstone Estate in Leicester. They take an asset-based approach to working with local people, operate an open door policy at all times, focus on getting to know and getting alongside local people and work to help other organisations understand and work effectively with the local community on the estate. A key delivery mechanism for them is a team of Inclusion Workers (funded from their own resources) who take a generalist approach to inclusion and get involved in all aspects of their work.

Chat'Bout: is a Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) led young people's participation network based in Nottingham whose aim is to inform and provide a voice for young people to influence local service development.

- **Private Sector initiatives**

Pathway Care Solutions is a successful BAME-led businesses in Nottingham, employing around 200 local people in 12 residential settings for children with learning or physical disabilities or with social, emotional or behavioural issues. Their work is recognised as an example of good practice in inclusive employment in the Refreshing the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan document which highlights that:

'[They] introduced a zero qualification system, where recruits could come into the organisation without any qualifications and would be guaranteed an education. Part of the deal was that if they were given employment, they agreed to sign up to at least an NVQ level 3. 75% came in with no meaningful qualifications, and all left with at least NVQ level 3. By recruiting locally Pathways' retention rates were very high, and all of their care homes were rated either good or outstanding.'

7. Beyond the Checklist, Further Recommendations

We have distilled from our research and consultation the key points that we believe organisations involved in inclusion work at all levels should consider and pursue. This distillation is expressed as an Inclusion Checklist (see Section 4 of this document). Behind these are amplifications, issues or other recommendations that emerged. Together with the checklist these form, in essence, principles that promote and help achieve inclusion. These additional issues are set out below under the headings of the Checklist itself:

First, though, an issue that seems, logically, to go before all other considerations:

Develop a Shared Understanding of Inclusion

As the development of this document itself illustrates (see section 2) we believe a vital part of developing Inclusion work is an appropriate working understanding of what Inclusion (and, of course, Exclusion) is. So – almost as a precursor to effective working on Inclusion (from general economic development to people-centred services – from high level strategic planning to day-to-day details of micro-delivery) is a shared understanding by all agents involved in planning, commissioning, and undertaking the work. Therefore, it is important at the commencement of further development of local inclusion strategies, policy and plans, that those Partners involved: Strategic; Intermediary or Provider organisations:

- a. **Agree a shared working understanding of inclusion. This may be expressed as a shared *definition* (echoing the discussion in section 2 of this document) as a starting point and**
- b. **Develop a Regional Inclusion Forum and invest in training in what inclusion is and what it means.**

1. Involve, Empower, and Co-produce services, strategies and plans with people who are currently excluded at risk of inclusion at all levels and in all arenas.

- This involves ensuring the people who are ‘experts by experience’ (people who are currently excluded or at risk of inclusion) are involved in the commissioning and procurement of all inclusion services.
- Prioritise & incentivise Inclusion within investment decisions and processes – through accessible and inclusive commissioning that enables small organisations to bid for contracts and grants.
- This approach, if extended more generally, will require developing leadership as an element of Inclusion work itself – with an emphasis on, and an approach rooted in, Inclusive Leadership.

2. Invest in this process with time, money, resources and training. Quantify and record this.

- All local stakeholders should put inclusion firmly on the agenda especially when making decisions regarding revenue and capital investment. They should sign-up to and make a commitment to adopting the EMIF to ensure inclusion drives action by prioritising and embedding inclusion within all local SEPs and other key plans and strategies – link and add to Inclusive Growth Agenda.
- Work to create capacity at local level – building and on utilising the expertise of local Community Groups.

3. Have a written and inclusive Inclusion Policy co-designed / produced with the people who use your services.

4. Take opportunities to innovate/ commission innovation but allow opportunities to test approaches, systems, services and allow for failure.

5. Learn from both failure and success by systematically building lessons learnt into new project design and programme development.

- Encourage and invest in innovation without an emphasis on immediate results/success – to enable and allow mistakes and learning from mistakes.
- Learn from the examples of what works locally and nationally and promote/invest in them.

6. Demonstrate links between Inclusion work and organisational Equality and Diversity policies and practice.

This concerns the imperative on delivery agencies to combine (Active) **Inclusion** work with **Inclusivity** (Equality and Diversity) by:

- Operating an open door approach as far as possible.
- Recognising the importance and value of promoting and providing a sense of belonging to something is worthwhile as a key inclusion enabling mechanism.

7. Produce policy, strategy documents, meeting agendas and notes etc. in ways that are accessible to all – (including for example using pictures and symbols for people with learning difficulties and using readability tests.)

8. Follow/Contribute to an integrated Place-based Approach.

9. Ensure partners are included from all relevant sectors and document this.

10. Ensure that inclusion is embedded in commissioning processes through construction of specifications / invitations to tender, creation of specific lots and scoring frameworks which values / weights involvement of local organisations.

- Focus on trusted and effective local organisations, big and small, with the local knowledge, expertise, networks and relationships that enables them to know what works locally.
- Seek specific investment to stimulate, support, and enable local networks that are representative of smaller organisations – including investment in Community Coordinator roles.

11. Measure the impact of initiatives to promote inclusion including using levels of target **community involvement** in design and delivery of programmes and outcomes, and **social mobility** as key measures.

- Invest in the development and adoption of specific inclusion impact measures (for example impact of capital investment on social mobility) and develop and promote a new and specific model Inclusion Impact Assessment.
- The discussion in this document highlights a pressing need to combine Inclusive Growth approaches (connecting people at risk of poverty and exclusion to opportunities) Active Inclusion approaches (actively working with those affected individuals or communities to overcome exclusion). Monitoring and Evaluation should echo that synergy. In particular social mobility should be seen as a key measure of success of general Economic Development initiatives (rather than limiting measures to GVA or GDP or the number of jobs created). It is clearly definable, it can be measured, it currently is measured – the need now is to put it at the centre of an *Inclusion* measure of growth.
- Develop mechanisms to hold organisations to account through specific Inclusion Reporting processes using agreed inclusion impact measures. This process could include using people with ‘lived experience’ of exclusion and using ‘inclusion’ services.

Additional Strategic Recommendations

These two strategic recommendations, one practical and immediate the other aspirational and longer-term (although overdue) are worth stressing here:

- Promote social inclusion through such mechanisms as the implementation of the 2017-20 ESIF programme, and engagement in the design of the **UK Shared Prosperity Fund**.
- **Develop and adapt a Regional Inclusion Action Plan for the East Midlands** – LEPs and other Strategic Partners – building on the work already underway in some local areas and picking up the recommendation made in L→Power’s ‘Key to Inclusion’ Report back in January 2007.

8. Other Considerations

We have identified the following issues as significant findings from our research and consultation. At this stage they are neither recommendations nor necessarily principles but we believe it is relevant to highlight them here. They are important considerations that merit further exploration and discussion.

Devolution as a key enabler: Our research has highlighted that the cities that appear to be making real progress towards inclusive growth and inclusion are those with independent mayors including for example Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Preston.

'The advent of combined authorities has created new drivers of change within England. Local authorities have collaborated in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Tees Valley, the West of England, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and the West Midlands. In these six combined authorities, metro mayors were elected in May 2017 with devolution deals based on 30-year investment funds, ranging from £450 million to £1.1 billion.'

(State of the Nation 2017, Social Mobility in Great Britain, Social Mobility Commission, 2017)

The need for joined-up services and service commissioning and the importance of local approaches and local solutions.

'Housing/Health/Employment are interlinked. Joined up commissioning could help us to provide holistic services. Local approaches: We need to focus on localities. Start by understanding the issues, understanding the range of provision offered, identifying and bridging gaps.' (Survey respondent)

The role of Advice Services as key inclusion gateway services. An interesting example is provided by work in a number of areas for example in Derbyshire where Advice Services are working from GP surgeries in order to help people tackle debt and other pressing issues at the same time as receiving treatment for health problems.

Inclusion is not just about work readiness and training programmes – however flexible. Many excluded people are situated so far from these interventions that immediate intervention is required of a more remedial kind. **The importance of helping to tackle trauma** through promoting and investing in Trauma Informed Care (TIC) of people is a vital first step for many of the most excluded people, particularly homeless and other people with complex needs, to enable them to move along a pathway to work. Many people will need TIC as a first step and they will need in-work support if they are to access and sustain work. We have coined the phrase 'Psychologically Informed Employment' to summarise this.

Tackling Health Inequalities. Any definition of inclusion should include promoting wellness and wellbeing. The starting point for many people will be work that helps address and overcome current and glaring health inequalities.

‘Embedding of good health literacy practice across the health and care system coupled with community development and health and wellbeing programmes such as the updated ‘Skills for Health’ programme to address health literacy top down and bottom up...’ (Survey Respondent)

Some of the organisations we spoke to highlighted the importance of Public Health England’s ‘Five Ways to Wellbeing’:

1. Connect
2. Be Active
3. Take Notice
4. Keep Learning
5. Give

Tackling loneliness and social isolation and the importance of a sense of belonging and community. Many of the people we spoke to talked about the importance of working to tackle loneliness and promote a sense of belonging within a community, including a community of interest. They emphasised the need for work that focus on building relationships, building connections and encouraging a sense of place as an essential starting point in work to promote inclusion.

The importance of an inclusive approach that challenges traditional power structures and hierarchies and celebrates, values and promotes diversity:

‘...it’s important that those who want to change the power hierarchies the present system gives us do not merely replicate them in their own movements. Poor people, people of African and Asian descent, women, these voices must be held at the forefront. Too often people pursuing ‘good’ aims lose the ability to recognise or appreciate the significant role that power and privilege play in their movements and so enforce the very social ills they profess to be fighting.’ (Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol)

The importance of volunteering as a route to inclusion. Volunteering was highlighted by a number of organisations as an important mechanism to encourage involvement and inclusion.

9. Measuring Impact

Our aim is that that this document will have an impact on the development of inclusion strategies and plans, policy development, commissioning processes and service design and delivery across the East Midlands. This section highlights ways in which the impact of the Framework in these arenas might be measured. It focuses on measuring the impact of the Framework itself rather than on direct inclusion impact measures – there is clearly a distinction to be drawn here – as agreed by attendees at the initial EMIF Launch Event. Measuring the impact of inclusion initiatives themselves is a more complex challenge that requires more time and further investment.

We need more emphasis on co-production and realistic timescales for change. The impact of initiatives that drive inclusion is difficult to evaluate in the short term...few inclusive innovations are able to demonstrate real impact within the nationally driven timescales. This needs to be addressed at a national level and support and guidance on impact assessment provided to smaller providers especially within the third sector where there is a huge disconnect between the work to ensure people are at the heart of services, and the economic drivers from funders and commissioners.

[Sarah Collis, Director, Self Help Nottingham]

Improvements in commissioning practice measured by the level/degree of co-production involved in designing and commissioning services using ‘experts by experience’. The following proposed subjects of measurement for the Framework have been identified from our conversations and consultation process including discussions at the EMIF launch events and they borrow from discussions that have taken place within the D2N2 Social Inclusion & Equalities Advisory Group (SIEAG). We are aware that they require further consideration and consultation. They are here as suggested measures only at this stage.

Strategic Issues:

- Agreement to develop an East Midlands Inclusion Strategy by key strategic organisations.
- Adoption of the EMIF, key findings and recommendations in local strategies and plans.
- Embed Social Mobility as a measure in evaluation of inclusion impact of initiatives.
- Work towards what we might term ‘Inclusive Growth +’ - adopting and promoting a broader definition of inclusion as used within this Framework to inform strategic economic plans.

Procurement Issues:

- Development of agreed and accepted Inclusion Goals in commissioning and procurement of services.
- Development and adoption of simpler and less time/resource intensive procurement processes that enable smaller organisations groups to improve their chances of winning contracts.

Investment Issues:

- Increase in levels of targeted investment for local community groups and initiatives.
- Investment that encourages and supports Best Practice and at the same time gives service providers the opportunity to test initiatives and learn from failure.
- More effective assessment of the impact of investment on inclusion using measures such as impact on social mobility.

Service Delivery Issues:

- Sign-up to the EMIF, its findings and recommendations.
- Adoptions of written inclusion policies by all organisations involved in inclusion work.
- Commitments to co-production by all service providers.

Finally, it's worth concluding by repeating our call to action. If those organisations and individuals that this document is aimed at, and has been developed to inform, do nothing else we ask you to take the following essential steps/actions:

- 1. Sign-up to the East Midlands Inclusion Framework**
- 2. Decide what Inclusion means for your organisation / group / service**
- 3. Make it Central to your Agenda**
- 4. Involve those who are currently excluded / at risk of exclusion in co-production / co-design / co-development at all opportunities and all levels – and be clear about what that means**

Annex A: Approach and Methodology

The approach and methodologies used to develop the EMIF were designed to be as inclusive as possible within the timeframe and resources available. We have attempted to involve and include agencies and individuals across the region and to gather a diverse range of views - from the people who use 'inclusion services' to senior managers of service providers and local umbrella/organisations to representatives of the major strategic agencies in the region including Local Authorities and LEPs.

- One to one Interviews

We have held one to one interviews and conversations with 30 individuals from across the voluntary, statutory and business sectors. All those interviewed were asked a standard and consistent set of questions to establish their role in promoting/helping achieve inclusion and gather their views on obstacles and barriers, what works and examples of good practice.

- Meetings and discussions

We have held discussions and consultation meetings and attended local meetings and forums involving over 70 local organisations and groups.

(A list of all individuals and organisations interviewed or involved in meetings and discussions is available on request)

- Inclusion Survey

We undertook a consultation survey with as many local organisations as possible, using our database of members and key contacts and inviting other specific organisations to take part. Almost 50 local organisations completed the survey questionnaire.

(The Inclusion Survey questions are available on request)

- Research

We also undertook research into a number of key documents relating to Inclusion and the development of inclusion strategies, initiatives and plans. These documents are listed at the Bibliography below.

New Ground Consultancy – July 2018

Annex B: Acknowledgements

New Ground Consultancy were commissioned by One East Midlands to undertake this research and our thanks goes to them for all their work to date.

We would like to thank all individuals, groups and organisations who contributed to the development of the East Midlands Inclusions Framework with particular thanks to the people with lived experience of exclusion who gave us valuable insight into their experiences and the change they want to see come about.

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