

Including the voice of Lived Experience



Key principles to meaningful involvement

1. **Power sharing is essential.** Move beyond consultation to shared decision-making. Include people with lived experience from the start and actively devolve power and control.
2. **Equal roles.** People with lived experience should not be treated as advisors or consultants.
3. **Lived and Learned Experience have equal value.** Treat personal insight as equally important to professional or academic expertise.
4. **Ongoing, not one-off: Build lasting relationships** — meaningful involvement takes consistency and trust.
5. **From agenda setting to implementation:** People with lived experience should help decide priorities and setting the agenda, not just providing feedback and identifying solutions.
6. **Inclusive and Accessible by default:** Accessibility and inclusion should be considered from the outset — who isn't in the room, and why?
7. **Remuneration matters:** All contributions should be recognised.
8. **Fair and appropriate compensation** must be provided for people's time and insight based on the type of involvement and their own personal circumstances
9. **Project/policy leads should seek support** from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)/Job Centre Plus where they are remunerating someone who's circumstances might be affected by being in receipt of income, regardless of method of payment.

This document is an output of the Equalities workstream of the [Greater Manchester VCFSE Accord](#), led by the [GM Equality Alliance \(GM=EqAl\)](#).

Greater Manchester
VCFSE Leadership Group
The sector's voice in devolution

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Minimum recommended remuneration

Level of commitment	Expected min level of remuneration	Mechanism to deliver	Considerations
One off meeting with open invite.	Travel expenses covered.	Perry cash or bank transfer on the day.	Produce template to keep record of payments and store receipts.
Regular attendance in short term, time-limited process e.g. 3 monthly meetings as part of co-design group.	High street vouchers/gift card/raffle prizes PLUS travel expenses.	Vouchers given out on the day and travel expenses arranged as above.	Purchase vouchers in advance. For those in receipt of benefits, gift cards should be declared as income unless they are given as a thank you gift – this must be made explicitly clear to avoid any doubt.
Ongoing long term membership/attendance.	Hourly payment for attendance and prep time. Minimum suggested rate is £12.21 (real living wage at time of writing) but ideally £150/day or £75/half day OR use Bursary mechanism.	Create a standard BACS form to enable standing payment. Benefits declaration form including information about where to seek advice should be provided.	Rate of payment should be clear from outset and whether this includes prep time as well as attendance. Check with DWP that you are following any requirements for those claiming benefits and in receipt of payment for involvement.

Implementation checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	I have identified where lived experience can shape my project	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have made time for early engagement
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am using inclusive and accessible language*	<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand and can explain remuneration options
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am building relationships with community groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	I have asked for feedback on how we involve people

*Check out our Inclusive Language Guidance for support:

www.vcfseadershipgm.org.uk/resources/gm-equal-inclusive-language-guidance

Read the full version for more information and additional resources:
www.vcfseadershipgm.org.uk/resources/including-lived-experience