

#BETTER ForUs 2021-4

Placing people at the
heart of procurement

About Aspire's campaign

Aspire's #BetterForUs campaign promotes better work and sustainable procurement through providing advocacy, research, information and the voice of lived experience to key stakeholders and opinion formers to stimulate the use of community-based procurement as an equitable response to UK procurement legislation changes.

The context

Over recent years, local communities have faced unprecedented challenges: increasing poverty and inequality, a global pandemic, crises in public services and the climate challenge.

Aspire's #BetterForUS Campaign focuses on the world of work and how to create better work for frontline workers who are all too often stuck in low-paid, low-status jobs through the procurement process.

The campaign recognises that we must work in different, more equitable ways to achieve effective outcomes to meet these societal challenges.

An essential part of achieving this is for organisations both in the public and the private sector to use their purchasing power more effectively to create value that advances equity for communities that have been historically discriminated against, face the cost of living crisis and have been left behind by status-quo ways of working.

The problem

Increasingly, there is unequal access to good work within London and other local labour markets, with those most at risk being people who have suffered from past and existing discrimination who are also more likely to be experiencing the worst effects of the Cost of Living Crisis.

Aspire has campaigned for better work conditions to be recognised in the procurement process using its #BetterForUs campaign, currently funded by the Trust for London.

Aspire's work on the campaign was recognised in the Queen's Awards 2021.

The solution

To achieve better work, particularly for frontline workers involved in the everyday economy, commissioners can use conditions of contract that include the Real Living Wage, Good Works Standards and provide for employee voice and respect; promote the use of reserved contracts within the public procurement process for community organisations that support disabled and disadvantaged workers; use lots and lower value contracts to support the fuller engagement of SMEs; and communitise their procurement processes by providing for citizen voice and the voice of lived experience to be listened to and acted upon throughout the commissioning and procurement process.

Aspire's objectives are to use the opportunities provided by the new UK Procurement Bill, which is currently going through Parliament, to influence the commissioning landscape so that purchasing power is used to maximise better pay and working conditions for London and the country's low-paid employees working in commissioned services.

Our initiatives

Our ongoing and planned initiatives include:

- Political lobbying to improve the Procurement Bill – we have worked to improve the conditions for reserved employment in the Bill and have proposed other amendments and ideas which we submitted as evidence to the House of Commons Bill Committee. Copies of our outstanding amendments are available at <https://bills.parliament.uk/publications/49896/documents/2975>
- Research within the London Boroughs of local authority behaviour concerning how better work is incorporated into the procurement process currently combined with recommendations on how it could be better integrated. Further research and guidance into the use of Section 1 of the Equality Act within public authorities. We will campaign for its voluntary adoption by London public authorities and others. Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies when making decisions of a strategic nature to have due regard to exercise them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.
- Sharing information between London boroughs on responses to the research outlined in 2, on preparations for the new Procurement laws, and developing a free online module for commissioners to use in developing staff skill sets on commissioning for better work and communitising the procurement process.
- Updating Aspire's guide to Procurement for Community Public Good and broadening its scope to include the private sector and, in particular, Tier 1 contractors who can use their supply chains to promote better work at a local

level and for SMEs to provide better working conditions through more opportunities for good procurement.

- Establishment of a Community Procurement Forum made up of people with lived experience of services or of delivering services in the everyday economy to act as storytellers, advisers and partners in this phase of the #BetterForUs campaign.
- Research into the SME sector - the barriers and opportunities for introducing better work, particularly in the context of the cost of business crisis.

Sign the pledge



Do you support our goals? We ask individuals and organisations to sign our pledge for equity in the everyday economy.

Further information about our principles is available here <https://betterforus.org.uk/our-5-principles/>.

If you are able to support our principles, please get in touch with us by email at better@aspirecommunityworks.com.

We are not asking for financial donations but would like to publish your name as a supporter of the campaign this year and that's the only catch.