Appendix 4

Appreciative Inquiry Questions

INTRODUCTION

Thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for this research and development project which we are undertaking for the Equality and Human Rights Commission. As you know the Commission is focused on building a fairer Britain for All and one of the issues they wish to explore is leadership and how this experienced, developed and supported.

This project is about capacity building. It is about joining up people involved in leadership and the development of leaders across the public, private and voluntary sectors, learning from what they have experienced and then building on that learning. It is about valuing the knowledge of people from very different parts of the community and bringing that knowledge together to support a growing network of thinking, questioning and learning leaders.

If we analyse leadership statistics across the public, private and third sector it is clear that certain groups, specifically minority groups, within the population are under-represented. This has been made clear through numerous surveys and studies undertaken by Universities, commissions and individuals. This project is designed to explore this further, but from a positive stand point bringing together stories from people interviewed with the explorations of two groups who are using Action Research approaches to create and share knowledge. Working within their own work context, those taking part in the action research part of this project will be asking incisive questions about the “whys” that lie behind the disparity that exists and challenging thinking about what could be different. By listening to the stories of colleagues and business associates, by analysing their own experiences and by applying objective research techniques to their situation, participants will be contributing insights into the past and present and creating practical ideas to fuel change for the future.

The insights and stories from all of this work will be shared at a National Conference in June 2010, and will be captured in an end of project publication which will be shared with everyone that has contributed to the work.

THE INTERVIEWS

The interview part of this project will involve some 90 people reflecting on their experience of leaders and leadership and their involvement with leadership development and succession planning. At the end of the project we will be using these stories to illuminate what is the best of what is already happening, and what could be different if we connected and built on the shared wisdom from all the people who have been involved.

The information you provide will be summarised and any specific stories will only be used with your permission and with appropriate measures make contributions anonymous in accordance with your wishes.
The interview will take about 1 hour, and I would like to have your permission to record our discussion. The interview will focus on your understanding of leaders and leadership, your experience of positive leadership and your experience of leadership development and support. It will fall into five sections:

1. Understanding of leadership
2. Your experience of Leadership at its best
3. Your experience of positive leadership development
4. Planning for future leaders
5. Empowering leaders

THE QUESTIONS

First of all I would like you to tell me a little about yourself and your journey to where you are now and your awareness of leaders and leadership.

• What attracts you to the idea of leadership?
• What excites you about being a leader yourself?

I would also like to understand a little about your context:

• What sort of organisation do you work for?
• If you are not working for any particular organisation at the moment what sort of organisation is the one you know best and will use to illustrate your answers?
• What are your organisations strongest leadership attributes?

UNDERSTANDING OF LEADERSHIP

I’d like to know about your ideas of what good leadership is. You have probably experienced a number of exemplars of leadership in your life, think for a minute about a story, one example, of the kind of leadership you value – something you have seen, experienced or heard about.

• What do you value most about this story of leadership?
• Based on this story what is leadership? In your view what does leadership involve? What are the key qualities?
• Based on this story should leadership be different in different places and for different purpose? What would the key qualities be?

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF LEADERSHIP ‘AT ITS BEST’

Looking at your entire experience, can you recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, empowered, well led and most excited about your work.

• What made it an exciting and empowering experience?
• Who were the most significant others?
• Why were they significant?
• What was it about the leadership that made this such a positive experience?
Thinking about yourself as a leader, can you think of a time when you have been at your best.

- What made this such a memorable experience?
- What was it about you that made this such a great experience?
- Without being humble what do you value most about yourself as a leader?

YOUR EXPERIENCE OF POSITIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Development and learning comes in all sorts of forms and approaches, from the academic and formal to the very informal and experiential. I want you to think about some examples of when you have learned about leadership and about yourself as a leader most successfully.

- What made these experiences such a good means of learning about leadership?
- What were the most positive things you learned about leadership in general and about yourself as a leader?
- How did these experiences help you to grow as a leader?
- What was it about you that made it possible for you to learn so successfully?

PLANNING FOR FUTURE LEADERS

Many organisations are now planning how they can grow and support leaders so that they will have a rich resource of leadership for the future. I would like you to think about organisations you know or have worked with or heard about that are actively seeking to grow potential leaders.

- What approaches to identifying and growing future leaders have you heard about, seen or experienced that you think are really successful?
- What is it about the way this work is being done that makes it such a positive experience for both the organisation and the potential future leaders?
- If you could change one thing about the way this work is being undertaken to make it even more positive what would you do?

EMPOWERING PEOPLE

As I said in the introduction to this interview individuals from different minority groups are not well represented in what are called senior leadership positions. I would like you to think about your experience or knowledge of an organisation working positively with diversity to encourage and grow leaders from all parts of the community.

- What is it about this organisation that is so positively supportive of people?
- What qualities does this organisation value most?
- In empowered organisations, people feel significant. People believe they have a chance to “make a difference”. They believe that what they do has significance and they are recognised. What does the
organisation do best when it comes to empowering and recognising people?

IN CONCLUSION

Leadership is all about making a difference. If you could develop or transform the way leaders are identified and developed in the organisation you know best, what are the three things you would do?

Thank you for your time and your support.

Zoë van Zwanenberg
Centre for Confidence and Well-being.
Personal Details

These are collected for statistical purposes only

1. Name...........................................................................................................

2. Age

|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----|

3. Gender........................................................................................................

4. How would you describe your sexual orientation........................................

5. How would you describe your ethnic origin...................................................

6. How would you describe your faith group....................................................

7. Do you have a disability................................................................................

8. If yes how would you describe your disability..............................................

9. Organisation you currently work for................................................................

10. Public, voluntary or private sector..............................................................