

## Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

A screening process can help judge relevance and provides a record of both the process and decision. Screening should be a short, sharp exercise that determines relevance for all new and revised strategies, policies, services and functions. Completed at the earliest opportunity it will help to determine:

the relevance of proposals and decisions to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

whether or not equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is being/has already been considered, and

whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Resources	Service area: Revenues & Benefits
Lead person: Shaun Kelly	Contact number: x 27537

1. Title: Local Welfare Support

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening

This screening relates to the development of a Local Welfare Support scheme from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2013.

The need to develop a Local Welfare Support scheme follows on from the abolition of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses by section 70 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

The scheme is to be funded by a settlement from the DWP which will be paid for years 2013/14 and 2014/15. The funding arises from savings made by the abolition of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses from the national Discretionary Social Fund.

The Local Welfare Support scheme is not intended to replace or replicate Community Care Grants or Crisis Loans for Living expenses. In line with the Government's wider localism agenda, funding will not be ring-fenced, enabling local

authority's greater freedom to deliver and dovetail with existing services as they see fit according to local needs. The remoteness of the discretionary social fund administration opened it up to high levels of misuse and did not focus on supporting those that needed it the most.

The scheme in Leeds will meet the need for basic household goods and emergency provision in a crisis for the most vulnerable in Leeds. As it develops it will support initiatives to meet the impact of welfare reform and begin to map out all the local welfare services available to the citizens of Leeds.

### 3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration.

The following questions will help you to identify how relevant your proposals are.

When considering these questions think about age, carers, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	X	
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		X
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment Advancing equality of opportunity Fostering good relations	X	

If you have answered no to the questions above please complete sections 6 and 7

If you have answered yes to any of the above and;

Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to section 4.

Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to section 5.

#### 4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below (use the prompts for guidance).

How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?

Equality and diversity has been and will continue to be considered throughout all aspects of the delivery of the Local Welfare Support scheme. Consideration has been given by;

Attendance and participation at Social Fund reform workshops between DWP and Local Authorities. Meetings of Core Cities Welfare Reform Sub Group.

Consideration of Equality Impact assessment of Locally delivered support to replace Social Fund Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for general living expenses DWP March 2011

Consideration of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans s for Living Expenses awards 2011/12

A Working Group consisting of frontline services and advice agencies currently responsible for identifying and supporting applications for Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans have met on a regular basis in order to develop the proposed scheme.

Consultation with Councillors.

#### Key findings

The abolition of Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for Living Expenses will impact upon the citizens of Leeds. However, the application of the Local Welfare Support Scheme policy will be available to all those who meet the criteria whatever their characteristics.

A locally-delivered system would be better able to identify the most vulnerable people in the area in part because of other related services already being provided and offer appropriate assistance accordingly.

The continuing development of a locally-delivered system will support the creation of an integrated and sustainable resource of local welfare support across Leeds available to all in need whatever their characteristics.

The continuing support for communities in the development of financial advice, furniture re-use and food banks will help to create resilience across all communities in Leeds at a time of personal financial constraint..

As Local Welfare Support will be a new and developing service the scheme will need to be closely monitored and will need to be subject to monthly and quarterly reporting providing data including information on the characteristics of applicants.

## Actions

Continue to consult as the scheme develops.

Monthly and quarterly reporting providing data including information on the characteristics of successful applicants.

Monitor that the scheme continues to be administered fairly and that the characteristics of unsuccessful applicants are identified.

Ensure that the policy and procedure remains flexible to be able to respond to exceptional cases which are outside the priorities.

Ensure that the Local Welfare support scheme policy is part of an integrated local welfare support including Discretionary Housing Payments, Section 17 payments and third sector support.

Earmark some of the devolved funding to support initiatives aimed at improving the sustainability of the local support scheme by increasing the level of debt and benefit advice to help deal with increased demand as a result of welfare reforms. Monitor that these initiatives will support all citizens in Leeds whatever their characteristics.

Earmark some of the devolved funding to support initiatives aimed at improving the sustainability of the local support scheme by supporting the development of food banks and encouraging the use of furniture re-use to help deal with increased demand as a result of welfare reforms. Monitor that these initiatives will support all citizens in Leeds whatever their characteristics.

Provision of information about the services that are or could be available to those who do not qualify for support from the Local Welfare Support scheme.

In the longer term to develop a single source of reference to all local welfare services available to all the citizens of Leeds.

5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.	
Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening		
Name	Job title	Date

7. Publishing This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.	
Date screening completed	14 <sup>th</sup> February 2013
If relates to a Key Decision send to Corporate Governance	
Any other decision please send to Equality Team (equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk)	