

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: Environment & Housing	Service area: Housing Leeds
Lead person : Daniel Cullum or Simon Swift	Contact number : 07712 216598 or 0113 3782284

1. Title: Report on the provision of a specialist team to deliver support to customers who are affected by Welfare Change..

Is this a:

☐

Strategy / Policy

☒

Service / Function

☐

Other

If other, please specify

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

It is essential that tenants affected by Welfare Change are provided with suitable advice and support to enable them to deal with the change and improve their financial position when possible.

Housing Leeds has been engaging with tenants affected by Welfare Change since August 2012. In particular those who Under Occupy their Council home, along with those affected by the Benefit Cap. Initially this was to increase awareness of the impending Reforms when they were introduced in April 2013, and to allow tenants to prepare themselves financially and make informed decisions on possible solutions to resolve their situation.

This document supports the Delegated Decision Notice that is asking for the Director

of Environments and Housing agreeing to fund a specialist Welfare Reform Team to the sum of £500k for a period of twelve months. The team will have a specific caseload that includes working and supporting tenants who have been affected by different elements of Welfare Change. The team will be tasked with working intensively with those affected.

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. Also those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being.

Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	Yes	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?	Yes	
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	Yes	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	Yes	
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment Advancing equality of opportunity Fostering good relations 	Yes Yes Yes	

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?**

(think about the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

The service is open and to all tenants who have a housing tenancy with Leeds City Council and are affected by Welfare Change. Access to the service can be through an Officer referral or direct contact from the team. The team is to operate city wide so is not limited to any particular geography. The team will be predominantly based in offices currently occupied by Housing Leeds staff, and where there are sufficient meeting rooms available. The team may also operate from community based venues such as Children Centres, One Stop Centres, and Community Centres. Many of our customers are already accessing these facilities. The service will also be taken to tenants via a home visit.

Due regard of equality and diversity has been taken account of by considering the protective characteristics. This will have particular interest and positive implications on:

- BME tenants: Providing translation / interpreting service
- Disabled tenants: They will be held in equal access venues, provision of BSL interpreters will be available
- Carers: range of location and times as well as out outreach service if required
- Sexual Orientation: We do not consider there to be any direct implications
- Religion/Belief: We do not consider there to be any direct implications
- Gender: range of location and times- including children's centres
- Age: outreach service available if needed
- Gender-Reassignment: We do not consider there to be any direct implications

- **Key findings**

(think about any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

The interview times the service provides are available at different times and venues through the day. There is also opportunity for an interview on every day of the week.

Where access or travel arrangements prevent customers attending surgeries, then a home visit can be offered. Should a customer wish to attend another Leeds City Council building, this can also be considered. Another advantage of holding the sessions in different venues is that customers are made aware of other the services that are available in their local area such as parenting support in the children's centre etc. Customer surveys will be undertaken at the initial point of engagement, and at later date to capture feedback on the service and what has gone well, and what may be improved upon.

- **Actions**

(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

The service supporting those that are affected by welfare change and compliments key council priorities. In particular dealing with the issues of tackling debt, poverty and deprivation in the city. This is detailed in the Best Council Plan, objective 1 "supporting communities and tackling poverty".

It provides customers with additional support provisions and also sign posts to local third sector organisations.

Should someone wish to access any of the support that is not currently affected by welfare change, a referral to the local Housing Officer may be appropriate to provide the necessary support.

Customer surveys will be undertaken at the initial point of engagement, and at later date to capture feedback on the service and what has gone well, and what may be improved upon.

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:	Not required – completed section 4
Date to complete your impact assessment	Not required – completed section 4
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	Not required – completed section 4

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening

Name	Job title	Date
Simon Swift	Service Manager – Income	23 rd April 2015
Date screening completed – 23rd April 2015		

7. Publishing

Though **all** key decisions are required to give due regard to equality the council **only** publishes those related to **Executive Board, Full Council, Key Delegated Decisions** or a **Significant Operational Decision**.

A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:

- Governance Services will publish those relating to Executive Board and Full Council.
- The appropriate directorate will publish those relating to Delegated Decisions and Significant Operational Decisions.
- A copy of all other equality screenings that are not to be published should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk for record.

Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:

For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to	Date sent: Not applicable
---	---------------------------

Governance Services	
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate	Date sent: Input date
All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk	Date sent: Not applicable