

**Leeds The Compassionate City: Tackling Inequalities**

**Equality Improvement Priorities Summary  
2016 - 20**

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# Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 – 2020

## Introduction

We know that some of our communities have poorer outcomes than others and this affects them individually as well as the city as a whole. It is important for everyone to benefit from being part of a strong economy and our focus on a compassionate city approach will help us do this.

We are committed to making equality a reality for all the citizens of Leeds. Leeds will be a city where people are able to recognise, value and embrace diversity and difference. We will support people from different backgrounds and ages to feel comfortable living together. We will work with organisations across Leeds to promote a clear and consistent message that prejudicial views or behaviour that could result in hate incidents or crimes are not tolerated or condoned. We will work with communities to ensure people are treated with dignity and respect and the causes of unfairness are understood and addressed. We value the contributions that all citizens in Leeds make to our city and we want everyone to recognise and appreciate these.

We will ensure that we show kindness, and empathise with the difficult situations people find themselves in. We will do what we can to work with them to help them alleviate these.

In our aim to be a compassionate city, we want to live in an equal society which recognises different people's different needs, situations and goals and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be. We will consider all the protected characteristics covered in the Equality Act 2010, and we will also widen our considerations to others who are disadvantaged in other ways eg by poverty. Our priorities do not include all our work across all the protected characteristics, but highlights those areas where there are significant differences in outcomes for people due to those characteristics. We believe that by addressing these areas we will make Leeds a better city for everyone.

We welcome all communities here and value the contributions that our citizens make to our city.

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The following pages outline our equality priorities which have been developed because we recognise that there are currently different outcomes and experiences for different groups and communities. This is not acceptable and we will address these differences where ever we can.

More information about the equality priorities and how they have been developed is in the **Equality Action Paper**. These priorities are clearly referenced within the Council Business Plan which also has equality underpinning it and running through it.

## Compassionate City

### Living safely and well, living at home, and valuing communities

#### Why this is important:

317 new cases of child sexual exploitation recorded in Leeds between April 2014 and March 2105

Over 14,000 reported incidents of domestic violence in Leeds in 2014/15, and over 80% of victims are women

2,406 hate crimes and hate incidents in 2014/15 in Leeds (involving race, sexual orientation, disability, faith and transgender)

Reducing fuel poverty increases life expectancy, improves mental health and wellbeing and reduces health inequalities.

People using Adult Social Care services tell us they do not have the information they need , or that it is in a format or language they find difficult

Over the next 15/20 years it is projected that 68% of council tenants will be over 55 with 18% of these being over 85

2,339 young people (16-24 year olds) presented themselves as homeless in Leeds in 2014. 30% of these were 16/17 year olds

2,861 (5%) of lead tenants in council properties are between 16-24

#### Key Actions

Create a team of practitioners dedicated to supporting victims and families affected by child sexual exploitation

Support 200 targeted families through perinatal education

Improve communications

Review the way Housing Leeds supports tenants with additional support needs

Develop understanding of new and emerging communities in each locality

Consider and adopt appropriate models to strengthen communities working together

Review the support models available for older tenants

#### Key Indicators

Reduce repeat incidence rate of domestic violence and abuse

Reduce number of repeat victims of hate incidents and hate crime

Increase availability of housing choice and provision including Extra Care and Sheltered Schemes across Leeds for older people

Reduce number of households in fuel poverty

**Our Equality Priorities** – although specific protected characteristics are identified for each priority, work in these areas will improve the position for everyone

Women: Reduce the prevalence and impact of domestic violence and abuse

Young people; boys and girls from South Asian communities: Protect children from child sexual exploitation

BME, LGB T, and disabled people: Reduce the impact and occurrence of hate crime

Young people: Improve housing options

Those in poverty: Improve perinatal education

Older and disabled people: supported to live safely and as long as they wish in their own homes

BME: Understand the context and impact of migration on Leeds

Older people and disabled people: Identify and remove as many organisational barriers as possible to people who need access to Adult Social Care services

Those in poverty: reduce fuel poverty

## Compassionate City

### Enjoying culture and sport, inclusive access and language access

#### Why this is important:

Annual sports customer survey identified access as an issue for some groups, particularly women and people with disabilities

Inclusive design acknowledges diversity and difference and can help create buildings and places for everyone

Elderly and disabled people tell us that they have problems with obstructions on pavements, and this makes it difficult to get out safely.

People with mobility impairments tell us it is easier to get around the city centre if you know the average time it takes to walk to a destination

Between Sept 13 and June 15 the council successfully prosecuted 274 individuals due to their misuse of blue badges and disabled parking facilities in Leeds. This illegal parking prevents disabled people from using these spaces

Sign language users have had to wait 2 weeks for an interpreter to support them at Customer Services in the council

There are higher numbers of people wanting to access council services who have limited English and this prevents them from doing so easily

#### Key Actions

Identify barriers to female participation in sports

Carry out external consultation and involvement of the council's Equality Assembly and/or the Access and User-Ability Group in the design of the Inclusive Design and Access document

Take action against residents who are causing access problems on public pathways eg wheelie bins, A boards, overgrown hedges

Provide relevant and appropriate information in a way that is accessible to all

#### Key Indicators

Number of access audits undertaken on museums and galleries in Leeds

Increase the percentage of parks and countryside community parks which meet Leeds Quality Parks Standard

Percentage of staff trained in equality, disability awareness and adapting activities (sport)

Produce and adopt the guidance on inclusive design and access

Reduction in service requests in relation to access to pavements

**Our Equality Priorities** – although a specific protected characteristic is identified for each priority, work in these areas will improve the position for everyone

BME, people of faith, young and old, disabled people:  
Improve the quality of parks

Older people, children, disabled people, BME:  
Improve access to Leeds city centre, pavements and disabled parking

Older people, children, disabled people, BME:  
Improve access to cultural opportunities and sport

Older people, children, disabled people; Ensure that simplified street space is safe

Older people, children and disabled people:  
Produce and adopt a Supplementary Planning Document on Inclusive Design and Access

Those in poverty, and new to Leeds: Improve recycling rates

Deaf people and those with limited English: Improve awareness of availability of ESOL classes and improve BSL interpretation

## Strong Economy

### Achieving potential, and improving representation

#### Why this is important:

Children living in poverty do not do as well at school and this affects their life opportunities. The gap between the proportion of those eligible for free school meals and those not eligible achieving 5+ A\*-C GCSEs has remained relatively constant.

10% learners on apprenticeships are from BME groups compared with 19% of the adult learners as a whole

15,450 Employment Support Allowance/Incapacity Benefit claimants of working age in Leeds have a mental and behavioural disorder

23% of premises in W Yorkshire with the poorest connectivity (no superfast broadband provision) are in the 20% most deprived areas of the country.

Over 6,000 accessed Leeds Local Welfare Support Scheme for both emergency (food and fuel) and basic needs provision (household goods)

Research in 2010 indicated that lone parents (38%) were more likely than the average survey sample to use high cost sources of credit, have less savings and be experiencing financial difficulties

At March 2015 the council employed 15605 staff, of these 2% disclosed they were LGB T, 6% disabled, and 13% BME

#### Key Actions

Targeted support and challenge for schools with significant proportions of relatively low achievers from vulnerable groups, including academies

Promote affordable credit and banking service as an alternative to high cost lenders

Increase disclosure rates of council staff by leading a campaign around the topic of 'why we need your information'

#### Key Indicators

Reduce educational achievement gaps

Increase the number of people experiencing mild to moderate mental ill health moving into work

98% of premises across W Yorkshire and York able to access superfast broadband by end 2018

Growth in credit union membership

Increase the proportion of people with protected characteristics recruited into the council

Reduce the gaps in representation between % of board membership and resident population, of specific identified boards

**Our Equality Priorities** – although a specific protected characteristic is identified for each priority, work in these areas will improve the position for everyone

Those in poverty: Support people out of financial hardship

Child carers, those on free school meals, disabled children: Reduce the gaps in learning outcomes

Those in poverty: Increase digital inclusion

BME people: Increased access to apprenticeships

BME, LGB T, women and disabled people: Increase board representation

Those with mental health issues: Increased access to employment

BME, LGB T, women, and disabled people: Develop a skilled and diverse workforce

“Our vision is for Leeds to be a compassionate, caring city that Helps all its residents benefit from the effects of the city’s economic growth. We will focus on creating the right conditions for the economy in Leeds to prosper and, hand in hand with that, ensure a consequence of that growth is a reduction in the inequalities that exist in Leeds.”

Cllr Judith Blake, Leader of the Leeds City Council  
Tom Riordan, Chief Executive of Leeds City Council  
(2015)