

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 and Housing | Service area: Housing Leeds |
| Lead person: Simon Swift, Income Service Manager | Contact number: 378 2284 |

1. Title: : Former Tenant Accounts Requiring Write Off

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 proposed that 172 irrecoverable former tenant accounts with total arrears of £65,480.33 are written off. Furthermore it is proposed that 113 long standing former tenant accounts with a total credit balance of £7965.29 are written off.

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? | | 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?** (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)

Fostering good relations with tenants, either current or former, (and where appropriate their families and carers) is key to maintaining a positive reputation for the Council. It is considered prudent financial management to regularly write off un recoverable debts and clear information is given on the grounds for this. The details of the report are published for all tenants to be able to access who can see that the Council will pursue debt where practical and economical to do so.

Due regard of equality and diversity has been taken account of by considering the protective characteristics. This report will have an impact on all former tenants with an account due for write off. Certain particular groups may be more impacted by this report as follows;

- BME tenants: We do not consider any direct implications for this group
- Disabled tenants: We do not consider any direct implications for this group
- Carers: We do not consider any direct implications for this group
- Sexual Orientation: We do not consider there to be any direct implications for this group
- Religion/Belief: We do not consider there to be any direct implications for this group
- Gender: We do not consider any direct implications for this group
- Age: Care Leaver's and Minor's (for which we have a Statutory duty) may see an improvement in their circumstances if their debt is written off. Also higher proportions of young people under 25 are struggling to pay their rent and may therefore have former tenant arrears.
- Gender-Reassignment: We do not consider there to be any direct implications for this group.
- Tenants with Mental health issues who have been pursued for the former tenant rent arrears may see an improvement in their mental health if their debt is written off.

- **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)

Gaps in information held on former tenants have meant that contact has not been maintained and some former tenants have therefore not received credits due to them. This will not impact on existing tenants but may affect them when they terminate their tenancy.

- **Actions**

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

Promotion of the Policy will encourage existing tenants to provide contact details to the Council following termination of their tenancy which should reduce the need to write off Credits in the future.

Publicising the report will allow tenants to see that the Council rigorously pursues former tenants to collect any debt but that there are also valid reasons why some debt is considered for write off. The write off debt is a very small percentage of the rent roll and this should help to improve relations with tenants who are able to see the Council is increasing the amount of money collected relating to former tenants arrears.

5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.

| | |
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| 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) | |
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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6. Governance, ownership and approval Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening | | |
| Name Simon Swift | Job title Income Service Manager | Date 22 May 2017 |
| | | |
| Date screening completed | | 22 May 2017 |

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| 7. Publishing | |
| <p>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.</p> <p>A copy of this equality screening should be attached as an appendix to the decision making report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Complete the appropriate section below with the date the report and attached screening was sent:</p> | |
| For Executive Board or Full Council – sent to Governance Services | Date sent: |
| For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate Directorate | Date sent: |
| All other decisions – sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk | Date sent: |