

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. In all appropriate instances we will need to carry out an equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment.

This form:

- can be used to prompt discussion when carrying out your impact assessment
- should be completed either during the assessment process or following completion of the assessment
- should include a brief explanation where a section is not applicable

Directorate: Children and Families	Service area: Early Help
Lead person: Jayne Bathgate-Roche	Contact number: 0113 378 5564
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: commenced 18/07/2024, finalised 9/9/24	

1. Title: Child Bereavement UK – child bereavement service contract closure
Is this a:
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify

2. Members of the assessment team:

Name	Organisation	Role on assessment team For example, service user, manager of service, specialist
Jayne Bathgate-Roche	Leeds City Council	Strategic Commissioning Programme Lead
Sakinder Ali	Leeds City Council	Commissioning Officer
Maninder Hayre	Child Bereavement UK	Director of Services and Partnerships
Clare Bullen	Child Bereavement UK	Head of Support Services

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:
<p>As part of the efficiency savings to be delivered in 24/25 within the Children's and Families directorate and as part of the programme of decommissioning, the contract held with Child Bereavement UK for the delivery of the Leeds child bereavement service was deemed to be in scope for decommissioning. This contract is due to expire on 28th February 2025.</p> <p>This assessment reviews the impact the end of this service will have on staff, service users and the wider system.</p>

4. Scope of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment (complete - 4a. if you are assessing a strategy, policy or plan and 4b. if you are assessing a service, function or event)
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4a. Strategy, policy or plan (please tick the appropriate box below)	
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input type="checkbox"/>
The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes and the supporting guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>
A specific section within the strategy, policy or plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail:	

4b. Service, function, event please tick the appropriate box below	
The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A specific part of the service (including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide detail:

This looks at the ending of the Leeds child bereavement service delivered by Child Bereavement UK.

5. Fact finding – what do we already know

Make a note here of all information you will be using to carry out this assessment. This could include: previous consultation, involvement, research, results from perception surveys, equality monitoring and customer/ staff feedback.

(priority should be given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration related information)

Previous performance management information gathered from the provider is referenced and conversations that are currently being undertaken with the provider as we embark on the decommissioning process. These conversations include support and advice from:

Child Bereavement UK

Leeds City Council:

- HR
- Legal
- Procurement
- Public Health
- Children and Families Commissioning

Public consultation as part of the key decision process to exercise the contract break clause.

Equality

Child bereavement is one of the most damaging adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). As part of Leeds journey to become more trauma informed in the way we support children, young people and families, feedback from our public consultation has noted the need to prioritise child bereavement.

The Child Bereavement service supports many vulnerable families who will represent those communities who are identified by protected characteristics.

The service supports families across Leeds with the highest referrals this year coming from a number of our deprived communities:

- South Leeds - LS10 (Belle Isle, Middleton)
- East Leeds - LS14 (Seacroft), and
- West Leeds - LS12 and LS13 (Armley/Wortley and Bramley).

As we embark on this impact assessment, we know that there is a gap in the data we have relating to understanding the true impact of this service ending on vulnerable cohorts and those with protected characteristics.

The Leeds child population (under 18) has grown 10.9% in the last decade. This growth has seen an increasingly diverse child population and a child population weighted towards more deprived communities and families with low income.

In 2023 the rate of children in care in Leeds was 84 per 10,000, which is the 6th highest rate out of 11 statistical neighbours. It is also the 4th highest rate out of 8 core cities.

(Leeds Sufficiency Strategy 2024-2027).

There is a 10-year difference in life expectancy between those people living in the most and least deprived areas (Leeds Mental Health Strategy 2020-2025).

ONS 2022 data shows there were 12.5 deaths by suicide per 100,000 people in West Yorkshire and 11.9 per 100,000 in Leeds, which is higher than the England rate of 10.3. (Leeds Health and Wellbeing Board March 2024).

Diversity

The service works with complex bereavement cases and operates a train the trainer model with schools (currently 127 individual schools). The current offer delivers support to both children and their families – building capacity within families to provide ongoing support. as well as to professionals in schools across Leeds.

The children, young people and families who are supported by this service represent some of our most vulnerable communities who are already affected by the impact of poverty.

The 2022-2023 annual report noted that the service had supported 311 individual families and professionals via the Helpline (telephone and email support).

135 of these resulted in referrals to the local Leeds service where they needed in-depth further direct support. A total of 232 referrals were taken during 2022-23 supporting 1083 individual children and young people over 1264 sessions.

Child Bereavement UK, Leeds have a key link with the clusters and have aligned to Early Help, providing a place within the systems to belong.

The removal of this offer will mean that provider staff (2 in total) will go through the redundancy process within Child Bereavement UK. This in turn may leave staff without employment either for the short or long term which brings about the impact of poverty.

Cohesion and Integration

Our vision of an integrated and cohesive community includes ensuring that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities. The removal of this service will have an impact on those communities who already are vulnerable and lack some life opportunities. Understanding the communities most affected is vital to ensure we target the system support going forward to those most in need.

Consultation feedback notes that there is evidence to show that adults who struggle with crime, homelessness and severe mental health issues have experienced bereavement at a young age and have not received any support. The removal of child bereavement services means that only those who are able to pay for specific bereavement support will be able to access it. Leaving the most vulnerable in society without.

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information

Please provide detail:

Service user demographic information

Action required:
Request from provider to understand true impact on vulnerable cohorts and those with protected characteristics – received 9/9/24

6. Wider involvement – have you involved groups of people who are most likely to be affected or interested

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Current service offer in place until 28/2/25 at an annual cost of £133,447.

The service had previously been operating at a loss (to Child Bereavement UK) of £4000 per month.

A staff member left and was not replaced which now leaves the current service operating at a loss of £2000 per month.

A further member of staff is on maternity leave.

This leaves the current commissioned service operating with 2 full time members of staff.

One staff member is also the team leader and therefore service user practitioner time is reduced to 1.5 FTE.

Feedback has been received from service users and professionals as part of the public consultation to exercise the break clause within the Child Bereavement UK contract.

This feedback has provided strong support for the service but also identifies the gap the removal of this service will bring.

The data below presents an overview of the numbers of those supported by the service.

Impact Data Report 2019-2024

	Helpline supported (Individual families)*	Total referrals taken by the Leeds Child Bereavement Service	Individual children and YP receiving support	Individual sessions delivered
2023-2024	271	226	972	1185
2022-2023	311	232	1083	1264
2021-2022	367	243	553	1193
2020-2021	263	187	446	1246
2019-2020	239	229	289	341

** Number of families – NOT individuals. In any one family the service may have supported a number of family members. For example 2022-2023: 311 (families supported) and 1083 (individual children and young people supported) and over 1264 sessions delivered in period.*

Leeds City Council is not alone in having to make extremely difficult decisions in relation the ending of service contracts. Due the challenging financial landscape a number of bereavement services have ended across Leeds including:

- Leeds Bereavement Forum closed at the end of April 2024 due to a lack of sustainable funding support from the Integrated Care Board.
- In 2024 all one-to-one bereavement support at Wheatfields Hospice has ended with their bereavement staff being made redundant.
- The long-term counselling offer previously delivered by The Market Place has ended this year.
- A reduction in the service that Cruse Bereavement provide in Leeds.
- OWLS (Overcoming Worry, Loss and Sadness) children's bereavement counselling, which was funded by Jane Tomlinson Appeal, is currently closed until further notice.
- Martin's House Children's Hospice bereavement service is currently on pause as they review their offer in the face of increased cost pressures.
- Mind – Grief and loss support service closed March 2023.

We have attempted to shield the Child Bereavement service from facing any reductions or closure however we are now in a position where the financial situation makes this unattainable.

We acknowledge that the impact of these reductions will be widespread and that it is important to act as close to the values, understandings and principles set out within the COMPACT for Leeds.

However, we acknowledge that as these savings are to be enacted at speed there may be challenge linked to the above.

Input from internal Leeds City Council colleagues alongside Child Bereavement UK colleagues is ongoing to enact these savings recommendations.

In addition, shared communication developed by Children and Families commissioning team (approved by CFLT) and Child Bereavement UK will be shared with both the service and service users (including referees) to communicate the decision.

We will work with colleagues across the Children and Families directorate and wider system to signpost children and their families to other services who may be able to support for example the newly commissioned Time for Young People service being delivered by The Children's Society. This service will be able to support children with many social, emotional and mental health issues including bereavement. Whilst this does not replicate the counselling offer provided by Child Bereavement UK and the support will be more generic than specific, children and young people can be supported initially through their brief intervention model and would be able to access more structured support (up to 10 sessions) if deemed appropriate. We will work with providers across the system to understand service pressures and service gaps as the impact of the service closure becomes live.

Action required:

Continued communication with provider to ensure impact on staff and servicers is minimised.

Work with commissioned services to understand the support available to children who have been bereaved (notably The Children's Society).

Work with providers across the system to understand service pressures and service gaps as the impact of the service closure becomes live.

7. Who may be affected by this activity?

please tick all relevant and significant equality characteristics, stakeholders and barriers that apply to your strategy, policy, service or function

Equality characteristics

Age

Carers

Disability

Gender reassignment

Race

Religion or Belief

Sex (male or female)

Sexual orientation

Other

(Other can include – marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, and those areas that impact on or relate to equality: tackling poverty and improving health and well-being)

Please specify:

The service will support children and families that fall under all equality characteristics. It is important to understand service user demographic information as detailed in section 5.

Stakeholders

- | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Services users | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Employees | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Unions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners | <input type="checkbox"/> Members | <input type="checkbox"/> Suppliers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other please specify | | |

Potential barriers

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Built environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of premises and services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Information and communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer care |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Timing | <input type="checkbox"/> Stereotypes and assumptions |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Consultation and involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment and training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function | |

Please specify

There is a need to work through how service users will be supported following the end of the service particularly looking at how service users are signposted to universal services as appropriate. There may be financial implications as families who would have been supported at an earlier point through this service may now have to wait longer (or indeed no longer receive support at an earlier level) which may in turn increase risk and their then need to access higher cost services.

8. Positive and negative impact

Think about what you are assessing (scope), the fact-finding information, the potential

positive and negative impact on equality characteristics, stakeholders and the effect of the barriers
8a. Positive impact:
The information gathered through this impact assessment and assessing the risk to families will be used to reset the future role and function of the Children and Families directorate alongside our system partners.
Action required:
The impact assessment will be used as a tool to support the reset of Leeds City Council as we develop within the unprecedented financial challenging landscape with our system partners. As part of the public consultation YLL and Forum Central are aware that other services providing social, emotional and mental health support to children and young people are in increasingly high demand. For example, the demand for the shorter-term counselling provided by Barca, GIPSIL and Northpoint in schools is currently unable to be met. YLL and Forum Central would be keen to support any mapping of other provision and the levels of demand they are experiencing to ensure that children and young people still receive the support they need. Feedback received through the public consultation exercise also expressed a need to understand the nature of support available i.e. the appropriateness of online/digital solutions.

8b. Negative impact:
Removing access to timely bereavement support may mean that there is an increase in families who need to access our high-end support services due to an increase in vulnerabilities and risk. The removal of this service offer may also result in negative public feedback due to less families being able to access timely bereavement support and thereby achieving our ambitions as a city to provide timely support to those we need it most. Feedback received through the public consultation notes the high level of support for this service. As we undertake our programme of decommissioning in order to achieve the efficiency savings required other services who may have been able to support these families will also come under pressure to fill gaps in service offer. All of this impact affects our most vulnerable families who will represent those communities who are identified by protected characteristics.
Action required:
As we work with the provider, Child Bereavement UK, to decommission the child bereavement offer it will be key to gather information in relation to how service users will be supported going forward and we seek to mitigate this impact by signposting service users to alternative support services.

In order to minimise potential public conflict in relation to the service ending it will be important to ensure a consistent communication to those who both refer to the service, use the service and work within the service.

This message will be developed by members of the Children and Families directorate alongside Child Bereavement UK.

Children and Families Leadership Team will be provided with detail that will inform them of the impact of the removal of this service in order for them to understand the risk that Leeds City Council will now hold as a result of the termination of this service.

With regards to the impact on provider staff, there is a reliance on corporate HR, legal and governance processes which provide the necessary reassurances of EDCI consideration.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

The removal of a service places greater strain on relationships of staff and service user groups.

Action required:

Continuous and consistent communication between Leeds City Council and Child Bereavement UK through the Children and Families commissioning team.

10. Does this activity bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other? (for example, in schools, neighbourhood, workplace)

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

The removal of this service may mean that those families who would have accessed support may now seek support from other services which in turn will create pressure on other system providers.

Action required:

As we work with the provider, Child Bereavement UK, to decommission the child

bereavement offer it will be key to gather information in relation to how service users will be supported going forward.

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another? (for example where your activity or decision is aimed at adults could it have an impact on children and young people)

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

The removal of this service will have impact on both adults and children who would have received support through this service offer.

Action required:

As we work with the provider, Child Bereavement UK, to decommission the child bereavement offer it will be key to gather information in relation to how service users will be supported going forward.

12. Equality, diversity, cohesion and integration action plan

(insert all your actions from your assessment here, set timescales, measures and identify a lead person for each action)

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
Request service user demographic information	By 30 th November 2024	Information received in order to understand impact on vulnerable cohorts	Jayne Bathgate-Roche
Agree consistent communication to be shared with service and service users	By 30 th November 2024	Communication shared with providers to ensure a consistent message is shared around the decision to decommission.	Jayne Bathgate-Roche
The impact assessment will be used as a tool to support the reset of Leeds City Council	By 31 st December 2024	Work with YLL and Forum Central to map service offer going forward.	Jayne Bathgate-Roche
Determine how service users will be supported going forward working with colleagues from across the system and communicate with provider	By 31 st December 2024	Agreed support process for current service users and work with provider to signpost/access this support. Front line practitioners understand where to signpost for support.	Jayne Bathgate-Roche

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person

13. Governance, ownership and approval

State here who has approved the actions and outcomes from the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment

Name	Job title	Date
Date impact assessment completed		9/9/24

14. Monitoring progress for equality, diversity, cohesion and integration actions (please tick)

As part of Service Planning performance monitoring

As part of Project monitoring

Update report will be agreed and provided to the appropriate board
Please specify which board

Children and Families Leadership Team

Other (please specify)

15. 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 impact assessment 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 impact assessments 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 assessment was sent:

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:

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