

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) 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 or has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

Directorate: Children & Families	Service area: Corporate Parenting
Lead person: Ben Finley	Contact number: 0113 3783691

1. Title: Care experience as a protected characteristic

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy **Service / Function** **Other**

If other, please specify

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

The Council's Equality and Diversity Policy and EIA process and associated guidance, and whether they consider the impact of care experience on lifelong outcomes for individuals in this group.

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3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

All the council's strategies and policies, service and functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – city wide or more local. These will also have a greater or 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)

Care experienced people face significant barriers that impact them throughout their lives.

Despite their resilience, society often does not take their needs into account. Care experienced people often face discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system.

The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care published in May 2022, included recommendations that the “Government should make care experience a protected characteristic”. It also noted that making care experience a protected characteristic would provide greater authority to employers, businesses, public services, and policy makers to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced people.

In its response: Children’s social care: stable homes, built on love (February 2023), government advised that: “Our ambition remains to extend corporate parenting responsibilities to other government departments and relevant public bodies, subject to legislation (when parliamentary time allows). We believe this will ensure that policies and services that affect children in care and care leavers better take account of the challenges that they face and provide opportunities for them to thrive”.

Although the recommendation to make care experience a legally protected characteristic has not been formally adopted by central Government, many local authorities have taken forward the motion to pass this legislation locally. In response to the national campaign led by Terry Galloway, co-founder of Care Leaver Offer, 57 local authorities have so far introduced care experience as a locally protected characteristic, recognising the disparity and disproportionality faced by those with care experience in relation to health, education, housing, employment, and criminality amongst other indicators.

The proposal is for the Executive Board to agree to treat care experience as a locally protected characteristic. This will mean that Leeds City Council will give experience of care parity of status with the protected characteristics already recognised by Leeds City Council, including those not covered by the Equality Act 2010.

Evidence shows that people with care experience are more likely to experience poorer outcomes across a range indicators. The proposal will impact positively on all individuals

with care experience (including children looked after, care leavers and those who were in care at some stage in their life and for whom the local authority no longer owes a statutory duty) in that proposals for changes to services and policy will need to consider their views and the needs of care experienced individuals. The proposed amendments to the Equality and Diversity Policy and EIA Process and associated guidance would also take intersecting protected characteristics into consideration.

There is strong evidence that outcomes for care experienced people today are extremely poor. It is estimated that 26% of the homeless population have care experience; 24% of the prison population in England have spent time in care; that 41% of 19-21 year old care leavers are not in education, employment or training (NEET) compared to 12% of all other young people in the same age group (Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2020; Williams et al., 2012; Department for Education, 2021b); and adults who spent time in care between 1971-2001 were 70% more likely to die prematurely than those who did not (Association of childhood out-of-home care status with all-cause mortality up to 42 years later: ONS Longitudinal Study Murray et al., 2020).

Care leavers and care experienced people are also more likely to have needs arising from other protected characteristics that intersect and are impacted by the inequality arising from care experience. Government statistics from the national 903 data report indicates that “children from Black, Mixed and Other ethnic groups were over-represented in the numbers of children in care” and the and within the criminal justice system. Care leavers are more likely to identify as having a disability or long-term health condition that impacts upon their quality of life, health and wellbeing. (Linda Briheim-Crookall, 2020). Care experienced adults with SEND needs also significantly disproportionately represented in the adult prison population. (Hunter, 2022) (Office of National Statistics, 2022).

Consultation has also taken place locally with a group of care leavers who identified areas where they feel stigmatised and disadvantaged due their care/leaving care status which are in line with national data.

- **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)

Treating care experience as if it were a protected characteristic would help to address inequalities faced by many people who have spent time in the care of a local authority as a child.

The recommendations of the report to the Executive Board are intended to promote and increase equality of opportunity for ‘care experienced’ people living in Leeds. In many instances, care experienced persons will also have other protected characteristics recognised under The Equality Act 2010. It is expected that adoption of this proposal will enable the council to take positive action to understand and respond to the structural disadvantage and stigma care experienced people face and work to reduce social inequalities and improve lifelong outcomes for care experienced people.

Protecting care experienced people against discrimination is similar to existing legal protections afforded to disabled individuals, through a non-symmetrical model. Offering dedicated protection to care leavers does not discriminate against those who have not been in care. Care experience cannot be gained other than through being looked after by any other means than by being accommodated under the provisions of the Children Act 1989.

As Corporate Parents we want the best for children in care and care leavers. By enshrining care experience as a locally protected characteristic, Leeds City Council will be enabled to take positive action to address the impact of structural disadvantage, reduce social inequalities faced by care experienced young people face, and improve lifelong outcomes for care experienced people, by promoting employment opportunities within the “Family Business”, for example. In addition, it will provide a platform for the Council to formally call upon other bodies, services and partners to treat care experience as a locally protected characteristic and to adopt the Corporate Parenting Principles, until such time as they may be introduced by legislation.

The proposal will address the disparity and disproportionality faced by those with care experience in relation to health, education, housing, employment, and criminality amongst other indicators by ensuring that the views and needs of care experienced people are taken into consideration by Council services when changes to services and policy are made, with the aim of improving the life chances, and thereby the health and wellbeing, of those individuals.

- **Actions**

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

The council will assess future services and policies made and adopted by the council through Equality Impact Assessments to determine the impact of changes on people with care experience. This means ensuring that services are inclusive and accessible for all care-experienced people, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or transgender identity. It also means working to address the structural and systemic barriers that can prevent care-experienced people from achieving their full potential.

This will require an amendment to the Council’s EDI policy to include care experience as a protected characteristic and to the EIA process and associated guidance to ensure that the views and needs of care experienced people are taken into consideration when any changes to services or policy are being proposed.

The report proposes that the Council will Include care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and annual information relating to protected characteristics.

The report to the Executive Board also recommends that responsibility for planning the work to achieve the changes required and embedding them across council services and the implementation of any specific measures that respond to the experience of care being recognised as a locally protected characteristic is delegated to the Director of Children’s Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Children’s Social Care and Health

Partnerships. The report also recommends that progress and achievements are reported to the Corporate Parenting Board.

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
Farrah Khan	Deputy Director, Social Care	8 10 2023
Date screening completed		8 10 2023

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 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: