

# 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 or has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an impact assessment.

<b>Directorate: Communities and Environment</b>	<b>Service area: Customer Access and Welfare</b>
<b>Lead person: Lee Hemsworth</b>	<b>Contact number: 07891 278048</b>

## 1. Title: Universal Credit

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

Universal Credit is part of the Governments Welfare Reforms and is being implemented by the Department for Work and Pensions however it will impact directly and indirectly on a number of services delivered by and for Leeds City Council. Furthermore it will potentially change the way in which over 55,000 benefit residents on low income receive financial support.

Universal Credit is an integrated working-age benefit that will provide a standard allowance with additional elements for children, housing and other particular needs or circumstances such as caring, childcare and disability. It will support people both in and out of work, replacing Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and income-related Employment and Support Allowance. It will primarily support working age adults and children, up to an upper age limit linked to the qualifying age for Pension Credit

It differs from legacy benefits in the following ways:

- It is a single monthly payment made to a household.
- It is accessed and managed online
- Increased conditionality is applied to awards depending on the circumstances of the claimant and their partner. Failure to adhere to this may result in loss of benefit.

- Housing costs are paid directly to the claimant, generally a month in arrears

### 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?	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"> <li>• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment</li> <li>• Advancing equality of opportunity</li> <li>• Fostering good relations</li> </ul>		No

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 design and implementation of UC is entirely the responsibility of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the council has no direct control over any impacts that might affect equality groups. The DWP have separately prepared their own equality impact assessment.

The council has nevertheless attempted to mitigate some of the potential and predicted impacts on citizens and a full action plan of preparation for UC was developed and delivered in the run up to full service roll out of UC. All impacted groups of people were considered and a series of engagement and communication events were undertaken over a 2 year period to ensure the implications of UC were understood by council Officers / Stakeholders and impacted citizens across the city. These events were delivered by the council, third sector organisations and DWP. Work with communities and locality groups to raise awareness within the community played a large part of the delivery.

- **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)

Responsibility for identifying impacts rests with the DWP and is documented on their Departmental web site.

- **Actions**

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

Universal Support is being offered by the Council to ensure people are supported to make and manage a Universal Credit claim. This support arrangement will transfer to Citizens Advice (CA) from April 2019. From April the council will continue to support people irrespective of circumstances.

Customers who need to make a claim for Universal Credit can come into use the self-serve PCs at any of the one stop Centres, Community Hubs or Libraries across the city. Residents who require intensive support to make their claim and require support until their first payment will be directed to CA/job centres for this support.

Customer Access will still provide support on helping residents maintain their claim, this will include: money management support, helping residents update their journals, referral to the job shop for support with accessing work and training, referral/signposting to support with any other vulnerability issues they present with re housing, homelessness, mental health issues etc.

Money management support and Welfare Support services will obviously still be available over the phone to residents via the contact centre if they choose to use this channel.

Transitional protection will also be calculated and awarded by DWP to ensure anybody

negatively impacted by the change from legacy benefits to UC will not see a reduction in their financial position.

The rollout of Universal Credit is unpredictable and outside of the control of the City Council. The rate at which residents will migrate onto this new benefit will be determined by external factors and will happen gradually.

The rollout schedule has been amended consistently and policy changes have affected the original intentions of the scheme. Further policy changes would impact the way in which Universal Credit delivers and affects residents.

The Department for Work and Pensions is implementing Universal Credit via an agile approach using a test learn philosophy. Subtle changes to legislation can have either a small impact on significant numbers or often a large impact on a smaller cohort.

**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:	
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Date to complete your impact assessment	
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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	Job title	Date
Lee Hemsworth	Chief Officer (Customer Access and Welfare)	28/03/2019
<b>Date screening completed</b> 26/03/2018		

**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](mailto: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 <b>Governance Services</b>	Date sent: 28/03/2019
For Delegated Decisions or Significant Operational Decisions – sent to appropriate <b>Directorate</b>	Date sent:
All other decisions – sent to <a href="mailto:equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk">equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk</a>	Date sent: