

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.

Directorate: Adults and Health	Service area: Public Health
Lead person: Mindy Grewal	Contact number: 07712 214859

1. Title: Procurement of an existing Grant Agreement for activities supporting the health and wellbeing of asylum seeking women in Leeds

Is this a:

- Strategy / Policy**
 Service / Function
 Other

If other, please specify

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

The current grant agreement being provided by third sector organisation 'Women's Health Matters' will expire on 31st March 2022. We are seeking an extension of one year from April 2022 – March 2023. This work is focused on two target population groups that require a specialist and women only approach to health and wellbeing support and health literacy skills, due to a range of factors including physical, learning, cultural and religious sensitivities, and female specific health needs.

In brief, regular support and activities will provide a safe, social and learning space for women seeking asylum in Leeds and women with learning disabilities. The aim is to reduce social isolation and build personal resilience by building friendships and connecting women to other organisations and groups who can offer advice, help and activities.

The work will promote mental and physical wellbeing and reduce social isolation by engaging women in activities to:

- improve health literacy, access to healthcare and registration with primary care services;
- promote healthy relationships;
- engage in arts, language and social activities to alleviate mental health difficulties including anxiety, depression and stress;
- promote healthy lifestyles
- encourage target populations to have a voice and influence in decision making
- encourage and support access to health protection services such as screening, health checks and vaccination programmes

It is vital work and we want to ensure it is given the best possible opportunity of being sustained in the longer term. It is our view, in Public Health and in Commissioning, that a 3 year contract - commencing in April 2023 - with potential for extension provides this security.

This assessment will reflect on both target communities.

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)

Female refugees and asylum seekers are at risk of poor mental health and health inequality due a range of factors including trauma experienced in their home country and lack of access to health services due to language and / or cultural barriers.

Female refugees and asylum seekers are often socially isolated and disengaged from services due to caring for children, language barriers and lack of knowledge about services within the community. According to research from the Refugee Council UK, “Refugee women can have complex health needs, arising from trauma and deprivation in their countries of origin, which is then compounded by trauma and deprivation in the UK. High quality and appropriate health services, including psychological support, are essential if women are to be empowered to recover from the devastating impacts that violence, including sexual violence, have on their physical and psychological health.”

A recent review of the service found strong evidence that the women being engaged are from within the target audience, and place value on and engage well with a female only workforce and peers. The consultation exercise included interpreter support to ensure we were able to hear the voices of those women who can often be excluded from evaluation approaches due to language barriers.

The activities on offer are informed, planned, shaped and co-developed between staff and women and are aligned to their needs, and this in turn promotes equality, cohesion and integration for asylum seeking women:

- Asylum seeking women and women with learning disabilities will have improved health literacy and wellbeing as a result of their interaction with the service;
- Asylum seeking women and women with learning disabilities will feel less isolated, social connected and develop new friendships;
- Asylum seeking women and women with learning disabilities will feel empowered, gain awareness of and access to additional support services as a result of the service.
- Asylum seeking women will have the opportunity to train as volunteers and use these skills to enter the employment market (once awarded status to remain), as a result of the service.

- **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)

Referrals and self referrals to the service will continue to be made through existing mechanisms such as health and social care professionals, migrant support services and others irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender, disability, beliefs, socio-economic status, social class and location within the city boundaries.

The service brings together women who are seeking asylum and women with learning disabilities, from a range of backgrounds and cultures. The plan of activities on offer to women are co-designed, co-developed and co-delivered by the host organisation, service users and partner organisations who have experience of working with the target communities. During the pandemic, the service engaged women through digital technology and posted out resources that were used for interactive engagement online. The service was able to purchase and loan tools to women such as Ipads and smart phones to remove barriers and trained women on how to use different apps. The service offers a range of activities within a group setting at any one time to ensure they meet the differing needs of their target communities and offer equitable interventions as opposed to 'one size fits all'. This will ensure there is a positive impact on these groups.

The service offers huge scope to strengthen community cohesion by bringing in external partners and signposting and introducing service users to other organisations to meet wider health and well being needs such as legal and housing issues.

- **Actions**

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

Amending the grant agreement end dates will ensure the service can continue to promote positive impact and remove/reduce negative impact by:

- 1) Ensuring continued service delivery that:
 - is fair across protected characteristics
 - co-designs and co-develops activities with service users;
 - engages local partners and experts around design and delivery of activities;
 - considers equality, diversity, cohesion and integration in relation to both service users and staff.
- 2) Ensuring that the host organisation continues to liaise with specialist partner organisations and share best practice. This is encouraged and supported through robust data collection and contract monitoring processes.
- 3) Ensuring the service continues to meet the needs of its service users and adapt their approach to reflect the diverse backgrounds and differing needs of women. . Undertaking monitoring on a quarterly basis to review the usage of the service and ensure that the target groups are accessing the service. Actions will be taken to target and improve uptake amongst any groups that are poorly represented.

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
Caron Walker <i>Caron Walker</i>	Chief Officer/Consultant in Public Health	17 February 2022
Date screening completed		8 February 2022

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: