

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: Communities, Housing and Environment	Service area: Leeds Housing Options
Lead person: Piers Donno-Fuller	Contact number: 0113 3789563
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: May 2023	

1. Title: Approval of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028.

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

 Service / Function

 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
Piers Donno-Fuller	Leeds Housing Options	Deputy Housing Options Manager
Rebecca Farnham	Leeds Housing Options	Principal Housing Advisor
Simon Hodgson	Community Safety Services	Head of Community Safety Services

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:

An assessment has taken place of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028. The strategy sets out the council's ambitions, alongside the priorities and themes identified by our citywide partners, to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping, with a focus on prevention and building the right and varied mix of housing options for people. The strategy is a legal requirement and has been informed by a homeless review of the Leeds district in January 2023. The term of the strategy is 5 years. At the heart of the Strategy is people, with an ambition to achieve better outcomes with safe and sustainable housing solutions for everyone - Where every contact counts and those who are vulnerably housed or groups who are disproportionately impacted by homelessness are reached in the first instance.

At the heart of the council's Best City Ambition is tackling poverty and inequalities and this is reflected in the strategic direction set out in the Strategy. At the centre of the Best City Ambition are the Three Pillars which provide focus on our city goals. The development of this Strategy has been guided by these, particularly in a context of Health and Wellbeing and Inclusive Growth.

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)

4a. Strategy, policy or plan

(please tick the appropriate box below)

The vision and themes, objectives or outcomes	<input checked="" 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:

The strategy sets out four ambitions and reflects the priorities of the city that have been captured through extensive consultation and engagement with partners and customers to encompass the vision of the city. The Strategy sets out actions to be taken by the council to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. It sets the strategic direction for the council and partners for service provision and design, and how it will be shaped through a focus on partnerships and lived experience, where customers are at the heart. It aims to achieve better outcomes for people in Leeds with targeted approaches to groups in the community who may be over or underrepresented. The Strategy recognises the need to reach people

vulnerably housed in the first instance, utilise expertise across the sector with strong integration and customer focussed pathways, having a mix of accommodation to make the 'right offer', and addressing health and wellbeing as part of offering accommodation. Whilst recognising that people who are affected by homelessness are often part of one, or more, protected characteristic groups, and that by addressing health and wellbeing alongside accommodation, more sustainable accommodation/target outcomes can be achieved.

The Ambitions are –

- a) **Universal Prevention** - Education throughout the City to promote self-help options and accessing services at the earliest point, with a focus on under & overrepresented groups.
- b) **Targeted Prevention** - Reaching people whose homelessness is hidden from services and to prevent and reduce, repeat homelessness, rough sleeping and youth homelessness in Leeds.
- c) **Intervention and Recovery through Strong City Partnership Working** - The Homelessness Prevention Forum has identified four key themes to enhance our intervention and recovery offer, particularly for rough sleepers or those at risk. We will drive forward the actions identified in partnership with the City.
- d) **A Shared and Integrated Approach to Building on our Offer of Housing Options** - Our approach must be integrated to make every person matter, and every contact count. We will expand our private sector offer and build on having the right and varied temporary and supported accommodation options.

Through extensive consultation and engagement, partners across the sector identified the following priorities –

- i.* Repeat and Hidden Homelessness
- ii.* Having the Right Services Working in the Right Way
- iii.* Providing the Right Accommodation and Making it Accessible
- iv.* Health & Wellbeing Support

Each of our ambitions and priorities have equality impacts reflected in their focus. Education on homelessness and the cross-sector and statutory support available is key in reaching people who may be hidden from services and engaging people to approach for assistance at the earliest opportunity. Homelessness and rough sleeping is often experienced by people who have one or more protected characteristics.

Taking targeted steps to prevent homelessness for groups of people whose homelessness may be hidden from services, or are over/under represented, will help achieve better outcomes. The Strategy recognises that pathways into services must be accessible to those who are hardest to reach, and that these pathways take account of specific support needs and characteristics. There are people in the homeless community affected by issues for example, related to their gender, race or sexuality.

The city has a rich variety of partners who can provide specialist assistance. Through working effectively in partnership, the Strategy aims to create better intervention and recovery outcomes for people where services take a trauma, gender, psychologically informed approach. Our initiatives to date in reducing rough sleeping in Leeds indicate people who are at risk of, or are rough sleeping may have multiple and complex needs, where vulnerabilities, or having one or more protected characteristics, may put a person at higher risk – for example from exploitation or violence. Through strong city partnership working, driven in part by the Homelessness Prevention Forum, will have equality impacts. Reaching out and educating partners across the City on options available for those experiencing homelessness is vital to embed positive working relationships and empower communication, intervention and support at the earliest opportunity.

Expanding our offer of accommodation, and building on having the right and varied temporary accommodation options seeks to ensure that the specific needs of people are met. This ambition seeks to ensure that those with one or more protected characteristics have the right options available to them, to meet people’s needs.

This assessment considers the equality impact of the overall Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028. It does not consider the equality impacts of each ambition and theme as separate considerations, as this will be given as part of local service decision making.

4b. Service, function, event

please tick the appropriate box below

The whole service
(including service provision and employment)

A specific part of the service
(including service provision or employment or a specific section of the service)

Procuring of a service
(by contract or grant)

Please provide detail:

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)

The information used to carry out this assessment has been gained in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders – through the Homelessness Prevention Forum, third sector and statutory partners have provided insight, both qualitative and quantitative, to highlight

how our ambitions and priorities will impact the City and people experiencing homelessness. A wide range of Council officers have also been involved. The design of the Strategy has also been informed by research, national and local data, and the 2021 Census.

The homeless review completed in January 2023 has highlighted the following –

- The labour market profile on the ONS report highlights that 3.8% of the population of Leeds is currently unemployed.
- Universal Credit is the main benefit entitlement for those who are claiming a benefit and have made a homelessness application in Leeds between 2019-2022.
- The main applicant for most of the homelessness application made in Leeds come from people who are ages 22 – 41.
- In 2021/22, 16 / 17 year olds were over represented with 3% of homelessness applications being made by this group. This is higher than the average in England of 1% and regionally of 2%.
- Black African, Caribbean, and Black British applicants are represented as 12.2% of homeless approaches during 2021/22, although account for 5.6% of the population in Leeds in the 2021 census. This indicates this group of people are overrepresented within homelessness and are therefore an at-risk group.
- During 2021/22, almost 29% of households approaching as homeless stated they had a history of mental ill health.
- In equality monitoring, 65% of people who made homelessness application declined to answer their sexuality.
- Victims and survivors of domestic abuse are a group at higher risk of homelessness, with this being the 2nd highest cause of homelessness in 2021/22.
- 75% of households who approached at the point they were homeless, rather than at an earlier stage (threatened with homelessness), were single households.
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2018 requires Housing Authorities to assess a households support needs when resolving homelessness. Of all homelessness application received since 2018, the three main needs for support are –
 - Mental ill health
 - Physical ill health and disability
 - Requiring support to recover, or be safeguarded from domestic abuse.

Some examples of how we have received customer feedback to inform the strategy is through monthly attendance of the LGBT+ Social & Wellbeing Café, from those with lived experiences attending the Homelessness Prevention Forum, and through the early stages of creating a youth hub – young people have met with council officers to feedback their experiences.

**Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information
Please provide detail:**

The homeless review and consultation to inform the strategy has been thorough in engaging as many partners, stakeholders and people with lived experience to incorporate feedback into the strategy. A wide range of data has been analysed and compared against the 2021 census. It is not felt that there are gaps in equality and diversity information.

Action required:
N/A

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

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

We have consulted through the Homelessness Prevention Forum attending by a wide range of partners providing specialist services who work with people with protected characteristics. Feedback highlighted that there may be more people vulnerably housed or sofa surfing than we knew. It is particularly apparent that certain, potentially vulnerable groups, are disproportionately affected by hidden homelessness and its negative impacts. The forum has also been attended by those with lived experiences.

We continue to attend the monthly LGBT+ Wellbeing Café – members of the LGBTQ+ community are disproportionately likely to experience homelessness, with one example being conflict with their families over their sexuality or gender.

We have met with 16/17 year olds who have experienced homelessness and welcomed feedback on their experience and the offer of accommodation and support provided to ascertain areas for improvement and engagement to encourage approaches and tailored offers. A new joint protocol between Leeds Housing Options and Children Social Work Services is being designed to ensure a collaborative approach that seeks to achieve the best outcomes for young people. A youth hub has been established in the city centre where young people can approach for housing assistance. The hub is attended by Housing Options, Our Way Leeds and Children Social Work Services.

Action required:

- Continue to attend the LGBT+ Wellbeing Café, capturing feedback to shape service design and how Leeds Housing Options can proactively support the LGBTQ+ community.
- To use the Homelessness Prevention Forum as an opportunity to learn from other services across the sector, who are providing specialist support to those with one or more protected characteristics.
- To drive forward the expansion of the youth hub and implement the joint protocol.

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

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex (male or female) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 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: Tackling poverty and improving health and wellbeing

Stakeholders

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

Potential barriers

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

Please specify

The cost of living crisis is increasing the number of people in financial hardship which can result in losing their home, being unable to afford their day to day living costs and accruing debt.

Increased interest rates and housing market value is increasing rent costs but the local housing allowance has not increased, impacting those on low incomes or benefits who cannot afford to use money from their income or other benefits to meet the shortfall within their rent.

The availability of accommodation that can be procured or used to positively prevent or relieve homelessness.

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:

At the heart of the strategy is our ambition for every person to be able to access homelessness assistance, where barriers can be removed and our cross-sector approach is informed by people's needs. It will have a positive impact on those who are seeking homelessness assistance, but also help the council and partners reach those who are hidden from services and make positive change at an earlier stage. It's designed to meet the needs of all and provide strategic direction for services to take steps in preventing groups of people, with one or more protected characteristic, being disproportionately impacted by homelessness.

The Strategy has a section on how success will be monitored, with performance frameworks, and 'we will' commitments throughout. There will be regular monitoring and scrutiny on its progress, with the Strategy intended to be a living document, that is adaptable, flexible, and able to change and evolve should priorities changes, or issues emerge through the Strategy term.

Action required:

Regular monitoring and scrutiny of identified performance measures being delivered and progress of the actions outlined in our commitments throughout the document.

8b. Negative impact:

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028 should not have any negative impacts on the city. It should encourage a cross-sector approach to remove barriers, and collaboratively reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. Those with protected characteristics should not be negatively impacted as equality, diversity, cohesion and integration has been a key underlying principal.

Action required:
N/A

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

Yes No

Please provide detail:

The Strategy is designed to promote strong city partnership working and to take steps to work with communities to understand better why they may be at higher risk of homelessness. The Strategy seeks to promote inclusivity and better outcomes for people.

Action required:

Continue to utilise the Homelessness Prevention Forum to engage with the city partners and those with lived experience.

Progress and expand the youth homelessness hub underpinned by a new joint protocol for 16/17 year olds.

Engage with communities and groups of people identified as being over or under represented.

Continue attendance of the LGBT+ Wellbeing Café.

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

Yes No

Please provide detail:

Our universal prevention ambition is to build knowledge, awareness, and support available for people experiencing homelessness and to enable intervention at an earlier stage. Community outreach and educational work is part of actions set out in the strategy – one example group is 16/17 year olds.

Action required:

In addition to the actions detailed in Section 9 –
Targeted outreach work into the community
Offer training / briefings / attend schools so people and young people are up to date with the housing pressures in the city, but know the support available and how to access it.

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:

Action required:

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
Monitor progress to achieve the Strategy's target outcomes	The term of the Strategy	Measures detailed in the Strategy document and relevant boards reported to.	Piers Donno-Fuller
Promote the Strategy with partners across the city and LCC housing services to embed target outcomes	The term of the Strategy	Monitor reference to the Strategy by third sector and statutory services, and in shaping service delivery.	Piers Donno-Fuller
Maintain engagement through the Homelessness Prevention Forum, Youth Hub, LGBT+ Wellbeing Café	The term of the Strategy	Successful engagement and feedback captured	Piers Donno-Fuller
Targeted outreach to communities and universal education	The term of the Strategy	Successful engagement with communities, and proactive education delivered	Piers Donno-Fuller
Approve the joint working protocol for 16/17 year olds	By August 2023	Approval of protocol and operational implementation of it	Piers Donno-Fuller / Phil Pelter

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
Kerrie Murray	Head of Homelessness	19 May 2023
Date impact assessment completed		May 2023

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 – **Executive Board**
- 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: