

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: Children and Families	Service area: Commissioning and Market Management
Lead person: Cat Henderson	Contact number: 0113 37 85430

1. Title:

Awarding of innovation grant funding in support of the National Adoption Commissioning Programme 2023/24 and 2024/25

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

Decision to award a contract to Family Action (PAC-UK) to deliver an innovation project in support of the National Adoption Commissioning Programme 2023/24 and 2024/25. This follows a decision taken in May 2022 for Leeds to accept grant funding from the Department for Education and act as a Lead Authority to commission services supporting the National Adoption Strategy.

The contract will run from 01/02/2024 to 30/09/2025 with a total contract value of £325,000.

The Adoption UK Barometer 2022/23 and the PAC-UK Big Consult <https://www.pac-uk.org/pac-uk-publish-big-consult-findings/> has rated services for adopted adults as poor. It is nationally acknowledged that there is an inadequate provision for adopted

adults, with a confusing regional offer and no clear pathways to access adoption records, particularly exacerbated since the regionalisation of services in some areas. There is a clear lack of access to information, advice and support to access records. There is also very limited access to funded intermediary services across the country, with adopted people are using social media sites, DNA tests and personal research to find and contact birth family. We know that this does not provide the most successful, safe or enduring outcomes with an increased chance of further rejection and retraumatising.

The Joint Committee on Human Rights report, *The Violation of Family Life: Adoption of Children of Unmarried Women 1949–1976*, highlights a particular need for support to be offered to those unmarried mothers who had their babies taken for adoption in the late 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s, including to improve access to counselling and remove barriers to accessing adoption documents.

RAA Leaders are keen to explore the development of services at a national level to address these gaps and create fair and equal access across the country. This pilot will also enable demand to be tested, as well as whether better value for money can be achieved through economies of scale. It would also create the conditions for growth in the market of intermediary support providers.

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)

- This proposal provides strong support for the refreshed Children and Young Peoples Plan and the Council's ambition to be a Child Friendly City. The outcomes delivered through this grant funding will contribute to a number of the outcomes and priorities within the plan, including the outcome to ensure all young people are safe from harm and the priority to help children live in safe and supportive families.
- This proposal also supports the 2020-25 Best Council Plan priority to make Leeds a Child Friendly City where families are supported to give children the best start in life.
- There is a positive impact in respect of equality and diversity in that it will advance equality of opportunity for children that are looked after, particularly those most vulnerable i.e. those with special educational needs and disabilities; those from BME backgrounds and older children awaiting adoption

• **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)

See above

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

The RAA board will be responsible for the promotion of positive impact.

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
Sarah Johal	National Adoption Strategic Lead	
Date screening completed		24/01/2024

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: