

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) impact assessment

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: Adults & Health	Service area: Integrated Commissioning
Lead person: Alison Ferguson	Contact number: alison.ferguson@leeds.gov.uk
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: January 2024	

1. Title: Recommissioning a support service for victim-survivors of domestic abuse
Is this a:
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> 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
Alison Ferguson	Leeds City Council	Lead Commissioner / Contract Manager
Blythe Hughes	Leeds City Council	Commissioning support

3. Summary of strategy, policy, service or function that was assessed:
The service involved in this assessment is the Leeds Domestic Violence Service (LDVS), which provides emergency accommodation and community support for individuals and families who have been affected by domestic violence and abuse. This

service is delivered by a consortium of three organisations: Leeds Women’s Aid (lead), Behind Closed Doors and Women’s Health Matters.

The current contract comes to an end in March 2025. Approval is being sought to recommission the domestic abuse service directly with the same providers to ensure that high quality domestic abuse support continues to be available for people in Leeds. The new contract will be for 3 years. There will be no significant changes to the service specification.

The current contract is divided into two Lots:

Lot 1:

- Advice and Support
- IDVA Support
- Community Based 1-1 Support
- Drop-Ins
- Groups and Courses

Lot 2:

- Emergency Accommodation
- Resettlement Support

Hereafter in this assessment, Lot 1 will be referred to as ‘Community’ and Lot 2 will be referred to as ‘Refuge’.

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 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:	

4b. Service, function, event

please tick the appropriate box below

The whole service (including service provision and employment)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Please provide detail:</p> <p>A new 3 year contract will be put in place with the current providers. There will be no significant changes to the service specification.</p>	

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)

Consultation & Feedback

As part of a review of the current service, consultation was undertaken with the current providers, stakeholders and analysis of service user feedback.

Some responses raised the following points regarding equality, diversity and inclusion:

- Limited support specific to men, the LGBTQ+ community and children
- Few services offer support for families (both adults and children together)
- There is a lack of wheelchair-accessible accommodation provision
- Limited services for people who have disabilities; staff need to have better understanding of disabilities
- Difficulty for people to access who do not speak English or for whom English is not their first language
- Perceived barriers of stigma for people from Traveller backgrounds
- Perceived barriers for men and LGBTQIA+ people that the service is only for cisgender, heterosexual women
- For some people their disability can mean abuse is ‘hidden’
- Barriers to access based around faith/cultural norms for people from some ethnic and religious backgrounds
- Perception that the service will not support people if they have alcohol and/or drug issues which can lead them to return to the perpetrator
- The service currently struggles to reach Middle Eastern and Eastern European migrant communities

The current service is open to people from all communities, and so a review of service publicity is required to raise awareness of the support offer and who it is for.

As a result of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, there is an increased focus on supporting children as victims of domestic abuse in their own right, with several sources of support in Leeds currently, however demand is increasing. Under the existing commissioned service, children in refuge receive specialist support. It would be beneficial to work with partners to seek the views of children and young people to develop knowledge and understanding of what the issues are for them and the impact so that services can be responsive. We know that the service is developing mechanisms to get the views of CYP

Service User Demographics

Age

	% of service users admitted to LDVS community		% of service users admitted to LDVS Refuge		% of total Leeds residents
	2022-23	2023-24	2022-23	2023-24	Census 2021
Under 25	12.8	12.0	21.3	17.3	32.9
25-64	85.1	86.0	78.7	82.7	51.5
65 +	2.2	2.1	0	0	15.6

Breakdown of age within LDVS shows the majority of clients are aged 25-44:

Age Range	COMMUNITY		REFUGE	
	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
13-17	5	3	0	0
18-24	71	55	13	9
25-34	212	182	33	22
35-44	191	148	13	17
45-54	73	55	0	4
55-64	31	31	2	0
65-74	6	5	0	0
75 +	7	5	0	0

Very few people over 45 access the refuge.

Ethnic background

LDVS Community support: Most clients are White British. The next most common ethnic backgrounds are Asian Pakistani, Eastern European, Black African and Asian Indian. The least common ethnic backgrounds accessing the Community service are Asian British, Mixed White & Black African.

LDVS Refuge: Most clients are White British. The next most common ethnic backgrounds are Asian Pakistani, Asian Indian, Black African and Arab. Ethnic backgrounds which are rarely or never accessing the refuge are White Irish, White Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Asian British, Asian Bangladeshi, Chinese, White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, Black British, Black Caribbean.

Sexual orientation

Most clients admitted to the Refuge identify as heterosexual, with only a handful of other sexual orientations represented.

Sexual orientation of clients in the Community service is more mixed, with most identifying as heterosexual but also a notable number of clients who identify as Bisexual, Gay Men and Lesbian.

Gender

COMMUNITY	Female	Male	Non-Binary	Of these, no. who identify as Trans
2023-24	435	45	1	4
2022-23	550	43	1	1

REFUGE	Female	Male	Non-Binary	Of these, no. who identify as Trans
2023-24	52	0	0	0
2022-23	60	1	0	1

The vast majority of clients identify as female, particularly in the Refuge where only 1 male was admitted in 2022/23, and none in 2023/24. Very few men or other genders and only a handful of transgender clients have accessed the service.

Disability

It is very important to note that over half of clients in Community support have at least one form of disability. This is a higher proportion than the general Leeds population. The proportion is lower in the Refuge, but it is worth considering whether this is due to some referrals being rejected because the Refuge was unable to accommodate needs related to disability.

A significant number of clients have mental health conditions.

COMMUNITY	Hearing	Learning	Mental Health	None	Physical	Visual	Long Term Condition	More than 1 disability	Percentage of clients who have a disability
2023-24	13	39	177	224	75	6	62	92	55%
2022-23	13	20	200	279	73	11	31	75	53%

REFUGE	Hearing	Learning	Mental Health	None	Physical	Visual	Long Term Condition	More than 1	Percentage of clients
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								disability	who have a disability
2023-24	0	1	14	33	4	0	6	5	37%
2022-23	0	3	17	32	3	1	4	6	48%

All the spaces where groups are held can support people with mobility needs or physical disabilities. The rooms have wider doors, lifts in the building, and accessible toilets.

Carer Responsibilities

COMMUNITY	No. of new admissions who have carer responsibilities	% of new admissions
2023-24	71	14.7
2022-23	71	11.9

REFUGE	No. of new admissions who have carer responsibilities	% of new admissions
2023-24	5	9.6
2022-23	6	9.8

It is important to consider that almost 1 in 10 new admissions to the Refuge state they have carer responsibilities, and nearly 15% in the Community service. Having such responsibilities may have a significant influence on a person's decision to seek support and especially refuge, as it may feel impossible to leave the person(s) they are caring for.

Leeds Support in Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment 2022-23

The Needs Assessment identified the difference made by the extra provision funded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC). It is helping to fill a gap which had previously been highlighted around the need for additional support for victims-survivors with complex needs and those from marginalised groups.

Funded separately from the LDVS contract but working in partnership, the Sanctuary Support Team is a team of Domestic Abuse Practitioners, managed by Leeds Women's Aid, with support workers based in various third sector partner organisations. It is funded through the DLUHC New Burdens funding. Each organisation has a specialism regarding under-represented and marginalised groups (LGBTQIA* communities; men; people with disabilities; older people; pregnant people; people at risk of honour-based violence or forced marriage; people from culturally diverse and migrant communities; refugees and asylum-seekers), bringing valuable expertise and knowledge to the team meaning they are well informed and have an enhanced understanding of the different communities supported.

5% of referrals for refuge accommodation were rejected due to the applicant having No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF). Although it is a relatively low figure, this will continue to

be monitored and work is ongoing to determine how this vulnerable group can be supported.

Current provision

The current contract requires that the service is accessible to people from all communities in Leeds. However, while this means the service is accessible to anyone in principle, misconceptions exist regarding who can access support. Recently the service has updated their website to be more neutral and will include more testimonials from people of different backgrounds, e.g. men.

We know from LDVS performance monitoring that there are occasions when referrals to the Refuge cannot be accepted as the service cannot meet people's mobility needs or needs relating to their disability (i.e. when the units that are fully accessible are already in use). By awarding the new contract we acknowledge this means the service will continue using the current refuge building for the duration of the contract and so these limitations will persist, however commissioners will work with the service and the Refuge building's landlord to minimise accessibility barriers as much as possible.

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information

Please provide detail:

Voices of children and young people
Demographic data on Religion

Action required:

Further work required to better understand the demographic profile to identify those which are underrepresented and how the service can target accessibility improvements for those identified groups.

Work with partners to seek the views of children and young people to develop knowledge and understanding of what the issues are for them and the impact so that services can be responsive.

Monitor trends regarding referrals rejected due to the person having no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and consider approaches to this.

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 used the light-touch consultation feedback and quarterly feedback from service users to inform the changes made

Action required:

Regular engagement with Voices service user forum to ensure service is equally accessible

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

Age

Carers

Disability

Gender reassignment

Race

Religion or Belief

Sex (male or female)

Sexual orientation

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:

Pregnancy & maternity, care leavers

Stakeholders

Services users

Employees

Trade Unions

Partners

Members

Suppliers

Other please specify

Potential barriers

Built environment

services

Location of premises and

Information and communication

Customer care

Timing

Stereotypes and assumptions

Cost

Consultation and involvement

Financial exclusion

Employment and training

specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function

Please specify

It is important to ensure all information and communication about the new service is accessible and promoted widely to ensure that the public knows what support is offered and how to access it.

Stereotypes and assumptions can be a barrier for people to access the service, e.g. men thinking that the service is aimed at women, people thinking that the service will not welcome different cultural backgrounds or LGBTQ* communities. Again, service publicity and branding should make this clear and be welcoming in order to remove this barrier.

Financial exclusion for refuge/dispersed accommodation – housing benefit is ‘means tested’; therefore, a person’s earnings are taken into account i.e. if they receive a low wage there may be support via Housing Benefit, however this still may mean victim-survivors need to contribute to the rent top-up payments themselves. If a person receives a higher wage that’s over the threshold, it is likely they will need to pay in full, which is a significant barrier to accessing refuge or dispersed accommodation. This would not be a barrier to accessing Community support and advice.

The cost of living crisis is creating an additional barrier whereby due to affordability victim-survivors stay with abusive partners/perpetrators.

Location of premises and services – if people happen to already live near to the location of the refuge or dispersed properties, they are unable to be placed there as they may be too close to the perpetrator(s).

Built environment – we are limited on the building stock we can use for this service due to availability in the city. There is, however, a wider Housing Related Support offer and advice available regarding alternative housing e.g. private rented.

Cost – the budget available to provide this service has not increased since the last contract was commissioned in 2017, while costs have significantly increased. We have enhanced the service offer using the domestic abuse grant funding from Government (Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities), linked to the New Burdens in the Domestic Abuse Act.

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:

Continuation of core service which is accessible to all communities. Continuation of different types of support to meet different communities' needs, e.g. support specifically for men, and a choice of attending groups, drop ins or 1:1 support Security for existing third-sector providers and continuity for clients and partner agencies
Action required:

8b. Negative impact:
People with No Recourse to Public Funds will still not be eligible for housing support (5% of referrals for refuge accommodation were rejected due to the applicant having No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) – Needs Assessment) May have to reduce some of the service due to increased costs, increased demand and complexity of needs, and no increase in funding available.
Action required:
Assess the impact of reduced service delivery if that becomes necessary.

9. Will this activity promote strong and positive relationships between the groups/communities identified?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Please provide detail:
The service will promote peer support in groups and drop in. Individuals and families in Refuge accommodation will be supported to live positively together in communal facilities.
Action required:
Include in contract specification that the service should proactively foster good relations between service users.

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

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

People from all backgrounds may come into contact with each other in communal areas of Refuge accommodation, or in the support groups or drop in sessions which are part of this service.

Action required:

Ensure environments are welcoming and foster cohesion and a sense of community

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:

Despite the service being open to all, it is possible that it may be perceived as for cisgender and heterosexual women only, and not accessible to men, other genders or people in other types of relationships.

Action required:

Ensure that service publicity materials and campaigns clearly show that the service is for people of all genders and encourage men to access.
Include in contract specification that the service must carry out outreach to men and other genders in a variety of settings.

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
Further work required to better understand the demographic profile to identify those which are under-represented and how the service can target accessibility improvements for those identified groups (already in progress by the service)	Ongoing	Increase in numbers accessing the service from under-represented groups	Service Commissioning Manager
Work with partners to seek the views of children and young people to develop knowledge and understanding of what the issues are for them and the impact so that services can be responsive.	End of March 2025	Report outlining findings	Service
Monitor trends regarding referrals rejected due to the person having no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and consider approaches to this.	Ongoing	Referral data	Commissioning Manager
Regular engagement with Voices service user forum to	Ongoing	Details of the feedback from the service user forum and evidence that this information	Service Commissioning Manager

Action	Timescale	Measure	Lead person
ensure service is equally accessible		is influencing service delivery and accessibility	
Assess the impact of reduced service delivery if that becomes necessary.	By 30 th April 2026 (i.e. after 1 year of delivery of the new contract)	Full year data showing the number of people supported and their outcomes	Commissioning Manager
Include in specification that the service should proactively foster good relations between service users.	By end of July 2024	Text in the specification	Commissioning Manager
Ensure environments are welcoming and foster cohesion and a sense of community	Ongoing	Service user feedback	Service
Ensure that service publicity materials and campaigns clearly show that the service is for people of all genders and encourage men to access.	Ongoing	Demographic data	Service Commissioning Manager
Include in contract specification that the service must carry out outreach to men and other genders in a variety of settings.	Ongoing	Text in specification	Commissioning Manager

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
Alison Ferguson	Commissioning Manger	30 th May 2024
Date impact assessment completed		30 th May 2024

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
- 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: