

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration (EDCI) 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: Communities, Housing and Environment	Service area: Financial Inclusion
Lead person: Lee Hemsworth	Contact number: 0113 3782477

1. Title: Household Support Fund 6 for Leeds

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify: Government Grant Funding

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

The Government have extended provision of the Household Support Fund to local authorities for the period of the 1st of October 2024 to the 31st of March 2025. Leeds City Council will therefore receive £7,098,648.16 from the Department for Work and Pensions Household Support Fund Round 6 (HSF6) to support vulnerable residents with the costs of food, fuel and other essentials. This funding must be utilised in accordance with guidance provided by the government.

Approximately 45% of the funding will support households in receipt of Council Tax Support. This will ensure that households on the lowest incomes in the city receive support directly, without the requirement of an application process. The proposed allocation provides that pensioner households in receipt of Council Tax Support but not Pension Credit, thereby on a low income but ineligible for a Winter Fuel Payment, receive a higher level of support.

This funding will also support the existing Local Welfare Support Scheme and applications for Discretionary Housing Payments which will enable more households in financial hardship to receive support. The funding will also enable Children’s & Families and Public Health to provide support to their priority groups.

This funding will also provide housing support via Housing Leeds and Leeds Housing Options to ensure that tenants in exceptional circumstances and those threatened or experiencing homelessness can receive support in line with DWP’s criteria.

Third sector support will also be provided enabling locally based and targeted assistance to be delivered, including to people who do not wish to engage with the Council.

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)

The focus of the Household Support Fund is to support vulnerable households within Leeds with the costs of food, fuel and essential items ensuring communities and individuals who are most effected by the cost-of-living crisis are linked to support and advice within the city. The strategic and organisational arrangements put in place have representation from across Council services and the Third Sector. This ensures that the approach has been considered from a range of perspectives and concerns have been highlighted at the earliest opportunities. The Council's approach to the cost-of-living crisis has also been presented and consulted upon at the equalities assembly, and with a wide range of groups and forums including those specifically representing minority groups.

- **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)

Key findings from meetings, discussions and engagement sessions highlighted:

- Need for both online and offline communications, information, advice and guidance.
- Consideration of language and accessibility for communications, information, advice and guidance.
- Ensuring that funding supports a wide range of Third Sector Organisations both in terms of size, scale and focus.
- Continued engagement and discussion with partner organisations, city and community forums and groups.

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

The focus of this work is to ensure vulnerable households can access support with the costs of food, fuel and essential items. This has resulted in the following to ensure this work is accessible and inclusive:

- Accessible communications through developing online and offline campaigns.
- Ensuring resources and information sources are up to date and available in a range of formats and languages.

- Consulting and involving other Council Services and third sector partners in our approach to delivery of HSF6.
- In terms of practical support, ensuring that this is accessible e.g. by providing support within our network of community hubs and libraries.
- Maximising access to direct cash awards through the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme which allows residents to withdraw their payments at their local post office prompting an approximate 95% redemption rate.
- A Welcome Spaces network which will focus on helping those most at risk during the cold weather e.g. those affected by fuel poverty, low income or related issues. During winter 2022/23, over 65% of Leeds residents were within a 10-minute walk of a warm space. During winter 2023/24, the Welcome Spaces network achieved greater diversity, with provision taking place in LGBTQ+ spaces, in Chinese Churches and in a Mosque. A targeted call saw additional applications from organisations specialising in working with disabled people and with armed forces veterans and representation of 3 localities previously unrepresented. We intend to use HSF6 to replicate and further develop this approach this winter.
- Ensuring funding is supporting people on the lowest incomes with the costs of food, fuel and essential items. A proportion of the funding will be directed through Third Sector Organisations to ensure equality groups receive support, this has included funding organisations focused on health and social care, diverse communities and women.
- Ensuring funding supports a wide range of Third Sector Organisations in terms of scope, scale and focus allowing us to support a wide range of communities and individuals including those who may not wish to engage with the council directly.

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 Community Hubs, Welfare and Business Support	15/10/2024
Date screening completed		

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: