

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: Children's services	Service area: Learning, Skills and Universal Services
Lead person: Jody Sheppard	Contact number: 0113 2950295
Date of the equality, diversity, cohesion and integration impact assessment: Initial paper written in January with additions and updates in February and March 2013.	

1. Title: School clothing allowance
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 e.g. service user, manager of service, specialist
Jody Sheppard	Leeds City Council	Lead for Family Support and parenting
Fiona Walker		School Governor
Gail Palmer-Smeaton	Leeds City Council	Primary school Head teacher
Andrew Cameron	Leeds Revenue and Benefit service	Executive Officer
Stephen Featherstone	Leeds City Council	Policy, Planning & Procedures Leader
Dawn Lewis	NHS Leeds Community Healthcare	Interim Manager School Nursing
Barbara Temple	Leeds City Council	School Improvement
Sarah Newell	Leeds City Council	Project Manager

Michael Purchess	NW SILC Principal	
Doug Martin	Governor	Leeds Carnegie College

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

Currently Leeds City Council operates a discretionary school clothing allowance scheme for parents, family carers or guardians of children at maintained schools. Eligibility is based on free school meals. If a child qualifies for free school meals and attends a maintained school, they automatically qualify for a school clothing allowance cash payment under the Council's scheme. This allowance is to assist with the purchase of suitable school wear which is in line with the individual school's uniform policy.

In 2012/13, it is estimated that the allowances paid under the Council policy would cover around eighteen thousand children who attend maintained schools at an estimated cost of £0.6m. There are a further three thousand three hundred pupils who have previously qualified for the payment in 2012/13 whose financial circumstances have changed and therefore would no longer qualify for the award.

The Council-wide scheme does not extend to academies. However, the Council does offer an administrative service to academies, including the payments of allowances and eligibility checks. This accounts for a further four thousand six hundred children who attended various academies received the allowance managed through the Leeds Benefits Service, for which the costs are recharged to the academies

In order to be eligible, claimants need to be in receipt of any of the following: Income Support, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Job seekers Allowance (Income Based), Incapacity Benefit (with or without Child tax credit) and the guaranteed element of state Pension credit with Child Tax Credit.

By its nature, the annual cost of the policy to the Council does vary; the budget in 2012/13 was £0.6m. The proposal to end the School Clothing Allowances policy is part of the Council's response to its significant medium-term financial challenges and cost savings of £0.6m have been factored into the Children's Services 2013/14 budget strategy which was approved by Full Council on the 27th February 2013.

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)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Procuring of a service (by contract or grant) (please see equality assurance in procurement)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please provide detail:	
<p>Children whose parents (s) / guardian (s) are on a low income currently qualify for free school meals which are a statutory benefit. If a child qualifies for free school meals, they automatically qualify for a discretionary annual school clothing allowance cash payment to help with the purchase of specified school uniform. The majority of payments are made in June / July as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For reception year children £27.50 • For children in years one to six £20.00 • For children in year seven £37.50 • For children in years eight to eleven £30.00 <p>The above figures equate to approximately £305 per child over their school lifetime and broken down further approximately 49 pence per week.</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)

In 2006 consideration was given to ending the school clothing allowance scheme. This was not subject to a consultation.

While the ending of the grant would affect more disadvantaged families; we are considering opportunities to seek to mitigate this impact.

The public consultation has had four strands

- ∇ Postal questionnaire with direct beneficiaries and non-benefiting families with school aged children
- ∇ Professional consultation with head teachers. chairs of governors and cluster managers
- ∇ Children's centres in the lowest super output areas
- ∇ Focus groups with young people in the most affected wards.

Letters and consultation forms have been mailed out to 100 families with school aged children whom are eligible and 108 families who aren't eligible. We have asked the opinions of non –eligible families as a means of a Leeds residents approach. This is to capture views from a range of families. The families for the general residents' consultation were chosen at random by 4 families per cluster. The families currently receiving the allowance have also been chosen at random to participate in the consultation.

The public consultation has taken the form of asking for views on what they think the impact might be if the school clothing allowance ceased, but also on the best ways of making school uniforms affordable to everyone. **See Appendix 1 for a copy of the consultation questions.**

There is a focus group approach which includes groups of young people in the bottom 20% SOA (super output areas) within the most affected wards.

There are also 8 Children's Centres in East Leeds whom have been asked to participate in the consultation, with a total of 100 parents of children who attend these centres and would be potential beneficiaries of free school meals and the discretionary school clothing allowance. There is an expectation for approximately 20 responses from each Centre.

The consultation with professionals is being undertaken in the form of a briefing and consultation questions emailed to 246 Head teachers, 246 Chair of Governors, 25 Cluster Chairs and 25 Cluster Managers.

Of the local authorities in Yorkshire only one other offer an allowance to primary school aged pupils.

Bradford	Operates a discretionary voucher scheme with the same qualifying criteria as Leeds. Paying £26 per child on an annual basis
York	Operates a scheme for free school meal secondary school pupils years 7-10 £60 in year 7 and £30 for years 8 and 9. Nothing is available for primary school pupils or pupils in year 11.
North Yorkshire	Clothing grant available for free school meal children in year 7 only.
Calderdale	Ended their scheme in 2005
Kirklees	Ended their scheme recently
Wakefield	Ended their scheme in 2006

Consideration Is being given to:

- What the issues are likely to be if this proposal is agreed ,
- How best to reduce the impact
- Are there key groups that need to be involved
- How best to communicate changes to the service

Are there any gaps in equality and diversity information

Please provide detail:

Results are still to be analysed.

Action required:

Schools /Clusters would be encouraged / supported to :

- Set up or further develop second hand school uniform exchanges.
- Review school uniform policy in relation to cost
- Consider the options of using some of the Pupil Premium as a means of funding school uniform. Consider setting up a local hard ship fund.
- Seeking support from local businesses/agencies could help

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

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Eligible Families
Households that have been selected at random
Potential Beneficiaries
Cluster Chairs
Cluster Managers
Ward Members
Head teachers
School Governors

Leeds Revenue and Benefit service NHS Leeds Community Healthcare (in relation to Child Poverty)
Action required: Please see section 5 for more information on wider involvement

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 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 type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other		

(for example – marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background, education or skills level)

Please specify:
This grant is funded from the Council’s core budget and benefits poor families. There is a higher proportion of Black and Black British children entitled to free school meals (36.8%) and a higher proportion of children with statements of SEN who are entitled to free school meals (36.2%.) This compares with the FSM rate of 21.1% for all pupils. All 26,000 pupils currently receiving free school meals and the discretionary school clothing allowance.
Families in poverty
Vulnerable children / families
Potential beneficiaries
Families who have moved into Leeds during the year.
BME / Asylum seeker families
Children with SEN

Stakeholders

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Services users	<input type="checkbox"/> Employees	<input type="checkbox"/> Trade Unions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Partners	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suppliers

Other please specify

Potential barriers.

Built environment

Location of premises and services

Information and communication

Customer care

Timing

Stereotypes and assumptions

Cost

Consultation and involvement

specific barriers to the strategy, policy, services or function

Please specify

Information and communication:

- A 1% sample of eligible families has been sent the consultation. The same numbers of non-eligible families have also been written to.
- Briefings have been given at Head teachers forum
- Around 180 parents at Children’s centres have been surveyed as has the 10 focus groups of young people in the bottom 20% SOA in the 10 most affected wards

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:

The budget savings are being realigned to LCC priorities to maintain essential front line services.

The savings will assist the council balancing the budget.

Schools are in a better position to target tailored support and have access to the Pupil Premium to support the school clothing needs. This change is in line with the majority of other Local Authorities in the area.

Action required:
Remove the anomalies that exist in the current system at a time when other benefits are changing.

8b. Negative impact:
Impact on families with a low income Adverse media coverage Possibility of a drop in school attendance Possibility of vulnerable children at risk of bullying If the savings are not achieved they will have to be found elsewhere which would result in service cuts.
Action required:
Press release has been prepared to inform the public. All direct beneficiaries to be contacted in May 2013 and notified of the results of the consultation and any changes to the school clothing allowance clearly explained. All schools to be contacted with the results of the consultation. If the school clothing allowance is to be withdrawn, schools and families would be advised of ways to mitigate impact e.g. – accessing school uniform exchange.

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: It allows for schools to target resources more effectively and build links with local groups / agencies to develop school uniform exchanges.
Action required: If a decision is made that the grant will cease it is proposed to mitigate the impact by asking schools to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review their uniform policy • consider allocating part of the additional funding that they have been paid for the Pupil Premium (£900 per pupil eligible for free school meals) to defray some of the costs of a school uniform for such pupils. (The Council would propose to offer help and guidance to schools in drafting a policy and setting up a procedure to implement this). • encourage parents/schools to undertake uniform exchanges or to set up a shop to recycle previously worn clothing • review their supplier arrangements • consider setting up a discretionary fund for hardship cases • publicise details of external organisations that could offer financial help to parents.

Share good working practices with other schools.

Following the decision by Executive Board, the Director of Children's Service will take the appropriate steps to inform the Schools Forum and schools and Academies Families to be contacted as soon as decisions confirm the change in policy.

Ask schools to review their school uniform policy and to consider taking steps to mitigate the impact of the decision of the discretionary school clothing allowance ending.

Ask schools to consider the use of the pupil premium, and put in place or further develop a uniform exchange / uniform swap shop.

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

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Two of the recommendations to reduce the impact is to further develop local uniform exchanges and develop cluster relationships with suppliers. This should build up partnerships between parents, schools and other local agencies.

Action required:

Alternative arrangements to providing school clothing – school uniform exchange service.
Hardship fund.

Contribution by schools via the pupil premium.

Greater links with local agencies

11. Could this activity be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another?

Yes

No

Please provide detail:

Action required:

Ensure that the explanation of this change is made in a clear, accessible and concise format to all concerned.

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	Lead person
The letter and consultation to be checked and signed off Final approval from Councillor Blake and Nigel Richardson. Authority to proceed with sending these out.	22nd February 2013	Andrea Richardson Nigel Richardson Cllr Judith Blake
Letters and consultation to be sent via email to Head teachers, Chairs of Governors and Cluster Chairs Email sent from purpose made temporary email address. Results come in directly via SNAP system	27th February 2013	Jody Sheppard Andrea Richardson
Focus groups for families and young people consultation to be planned Decision made to consult with 3 areas: Young people Children's centres Parents (via schools)	27 th February 2013 – 22 nd March 2013	Jody Sheppard Andrea Richardson Jean Davy
Mitigating actions to measure from the consultation with Head teachers, Chair of Governors and Cluster managers Go through the consultation responses from both professionals and families. Document	25th – 28th March 2013	Sarah Newell – now Cindy Costigan as SN is not available from 25th March – 3rd April. Emma Jackson

Action	Timescale	Lead person
the results ready for writing the report ensuring all responses and percentage / number of responses received		
<p>Analysis from the consultation results to write up in report format.</p> <p>Formalise the results in report form for Jody Sheppard</p>	25th – 28th March 2013	Cindy Costigan Emma Jackson
<p>Report for CSLT to write including results so far from consultation process</p> <p>CSLT meeting is on 26th March. Results so far can be reported on at this meeting with the understanding the consultation period is still running.</p>	19 th March 2013	Jody Sheppard
<p>Final report and Equality Impact Assessment for Exec board to write with results from consultation</p> <p>Report to be completed with results from consultations. Exec board meeting is on 8th May 2013.</p>	Submit to Governance services by 4 th April 2013	Jody Sheppard

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

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

15. Publishing	
Date screening completed	
If relates to a Key Decision send to Corporate Governance	
Any other decision please send to Equality Team (equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk)	

Appendix 1 Consultation for families

What do you think the impact might be if the school clothing allowance ceases?

Please read the 3 statements below and rate them in order of preference on which you think would be the most helpful to families (1 being the highest preference)

- All items of school uniform to be available from supermarkets and low cost chain stores.
1 2 3

- Every family to have access to good quality second hand uniforms from school.
1 2 3

- Every school to have a named person who parent/carers can go to if they need help buying school uniform. 1 2 3

Please tell us any other suggestions you may have to help families if the school clothing allowance ceases.