

Directorate: Adult Social Care	Service area: Programme Office
Lead person: Jenny Friday	Contact number: 0113 2476693

1. Title: Assistive Technology Hub

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

 Service / Function

 Other

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

Leeds City Council in partnership with the NHS in Leeds is developing a new centre of Assistive Technology at Clarence Dock. The aim is to produce a single point of contact within a multi-purpose centre for Assistive Technology services in Leeds.

Assistive Technology is equipment that helps people carry out tasks and activities that they can no longer perform due to impairment, illness or old age. This includes walking sticks, hoists and alarms and sensors which send an alert to a response centre if a problem is detected (telecare).

The Leeds Community Equipment Service provides and delivers community equipment, while the TeleCare Service install, monitor and respond to the various alarms and sensors. These city wide services aim to support people in Leeds to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible and ultimately, enjoy a better quality of life.

The Leeds Community Equipment Service has been based at the same site in Roundhay Road for 18 years. During this time the demand on the service has increased greatly, and the building no longer has the space and facilities for the service to grow to meet future demand. Other services such as Tele Care, Blue Badge Assessment and Assistive Technology training are spread across the city, making it difficult for them to work effectively together.

As a solution to these problems Leeds City Council and the NHS have decided to develop the Assistive Technology Hub at Clarence Dock. The Hub will host the Leeds Community Equipment Service, Tele Care, Blue Badge Assessment and Assistive Technology training in a modern, specially designed building. Locating all of these services together will mean there will be just one site where older people, disabled adults, disabled children, carers, service users and social care professionals need to go to access specialist advice from the above services.

The scope of this screening tool represents the *first phase* of the project, which will

host the following features and services:

- An assessment venue
- Blue badge assessments
- Equipment cleaning and refurbishment workshop for the Leeds Community Equipment Service and Telecare
- A supply and delivery centre for the Leeds Community Equipment Service and Telecare
- Office base for several different groups of staff, including flexible desk space for health and social care staff to use when they visit the building.
- An information point for older and disabled adults and disabled children and their families

Additional future developments for phase 2 of the Assistive Technology Hub are also planned. This may include a shop, a smart house that will demonstrate equipment, and a product trial area where service users can test and give feedback on new equipment or ideas. Phase 2 is not within scope for this assessment and will be subject to a separate Equality Impact Assessment.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration		
Questions	Yes	No
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	√	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		√
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?	√	
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?	√	
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 	√	

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration? <p>Consideration of the impact on service users has been made in the following way:</p> <p><u>Profiling of service users</u> using existing customer data taken from Telecare, Leeds Community Equipment Service and Blue Badge Assessment. This provided detailed information on age, gender and ethnicity of likely service users. This work supports the assumption that due to the nature of services to be hosted at the Assistive Technology Hub, mobility and access will be key issues for service users.</p>

An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out from May to October 2011 to determine the impact of Leeds City Council's local implementation of the national Blue Badge reforms. The assessment included a survey of 966 people identified as Blue Badge holders and asked for their views on the reforms. A number of recommendations relevant to the AT Hub project were made, specifically around the issues of accessibility, opening times and transport.

The recommendation to make the new assessment centre as accessible, easy to find and comfortable as possible has been applied to all service areas within the building. The recommendation for Saturday opening has been incorporated into the project plan, though more detailed planning is required later in the project plan to ascertain how this will work in reality and how this change would be managed from a HR perspective.

Across February and March a series of site visits to the AT Hub for staff, service users, councillors, partners and other stakeholders were held. These enabled all stakeholders to tour the site, view plans and ask questions. Over 120 people attended the site visits and a range of feedback was collected. The vast majority of feedback from the site visits was positive, however concerns emerged relating to car parking provision for staff and customers, issues with sign posting, and unsuitability of the nearest bus stop for wheelchair users. These issues are being addressed.

A stakeholder engagement workstream has been implemented to consider how to best capture the specific needs and views of service users, their families and carers. This group has overseen all consultation work carried out as part of the project and detailed within the action section of this document.

A changing the workplace workstream has been developed to address staff concerns. This has included staff engagement meetings with employees from the six service areas affected by the first phase of the project. The questions and issues raised have been combined with feedback from the programme of site visits and collated into a log which will enable the project team to evidence how feedback has been incorporated into the project.

A perception survey has also been sent to staff. This had a response rate of 52% and showed that a significant number of staff were dissatisfied with their current premises in terms of cleanliness and tidiness. The majority said moving to the AT Hub would improve the service they and LCC provide.

A detailed Access Report has been produced via Leeds City Council's Corporate Property Management Team to ensure that the building and services accessed via the AT Hub are accessible to all users particularly disabled people under paragraphs 149 and 153 of the Equality Act 2010. The report makes a number of recommendations and has informed the architect's initial designs with regard to:

- External approach to site – gate position and size
- Pedestrian access - inclusion of dropped kerbs and ramped approach
- Car Parking – adequate numbers, position and size of disabled parking bays
- Entrance Doors – size and position
- Reception area – size, position, signage and décor
- Hearing enhancement systems

- Waiting Area – seating types
- Public Toilets - disabled requirement, baby changing facilities, décor.
- Internal steps and stairs – contrast markings, handrails
- Lifts – operational in fire evacuation
- Door widths – exceed minimum requirements to accommodate large wheelchairs
- Meeting rooms – exceed minimum dimensions and leave turning space for wheelchair users
- Inclusion of a Changing Places toilet within the reception area

The standards noted within the Access Report will be integrated into detailed designs.

A series of visits to similar projects in Salford and Liverpool have provided an opportunity for the project team to examine accessibility arrangements for service users in a fully functioning building.

- **Key findings**

The analysis of existing service user data taken from Telecare, Leeds Community Equipment Service and Blue Badge Equality Impact Assessment supports the assumption that the majority of people accessing the Assistive Technology Hub for Blue Badge Assessment and equipment assessment are likely to be either older people or disabled, or a parent or carer. The Assistive Technology Hub will benefit these groups by:

- supporting people to live longer at home
- developing more personalised services, with improved information, access and choice of equipment - all on one site
- providing more choice and control
- delivering earlier interventions to promote independence
- providing comprehensive information and guidance via a single point of information

The Blue Badge Equality Impact Assessment identifies the need for extended opening hours, location information on appointment letters, and inclusion of the site on public transport and Access Bus routes. These findings form part of the action plan that follows later in this document.

Key findings from the site visits reflect the issues identified in the Blue Badge Equality Impact Assessment. Key issues for service users are around the building being accessible easy to find and as comfortable as possible, including:

- provision of sufficient car parking
- unsuitability of the nearest bus stop for wheelchair users
- adequate sign posting on public roads
- frequency of public transport

The visits to Salford and Liverpool resulted in some additional features being incorporated into the building design with the aim of providing an improved experience for visitors to the building. This included a confidential space within the reception area and spilt level reception desks.

- **Actions**

The range of activities relating to this Equality Impact Assessment has given the project team a strong indication of the likely gender, ethnicity and age of service users. This work has also drawn attention to the need to further consider other equality characteristics. With this in mind, a consultation event was held in late September 2012 and was attended by representatives from a wide range of equality groups including the DiAL, LINK, Carers Leeds, Parents Groups, Voluntary Action Leeds, Access for Leeds, Association of Blind Asians, Leeds West Indian Centre Women's Group, Older People's Forum, EPIC, William Merritt Disabled Living Centre and Leeds Involving People. The event provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the project, and allowed potential service users to see and comment on designs for the building.

Attendees were overwhelmingly positive about the AT Hub and the benefits it will offer service users, specifically the opportunity to access more joined up services, to have greater input into the types of equipment recommended and to have access to a range of services through a single point. The attendees were positive about the outline design of the building, the potential for reducing bureaucracy, reassurance that services are located together on one site and plans for the inclusion of Changing Places Toilet and Fire Evacuation lift.

A number of concerns were raised by attendees including the location of the site, potential difficulties using public transport to reach the site, concerns about the availability of car parking, corridor and door width and disabled toilet size. These concerns have informed the design of the building and will continue to do so.

To further raise awareness amongst wider equality groups a questionnaire with supporting information will be sent to members of the Equality Forum and other groups identified via the Adult Social Care consultation team. 65 responses were received to this questionnaire. It again indicated strong support for the project with 89% backing the concept. Whilst people had concerns about the location, more people favoured the proposed site (44%) than opposed it (31%). The survey indicated the three most popular transport methods which would be considered by people getting to the site were car (58%), bus (48%) and taxi (31%). The survey also indicated a strong preference for Saturday and evening opening hours. This and other comments received about the detail of the proposals will inform the development of the designs and operations of the building.

The project team have identified the need for further consultation with young people and parents as the groups have not been included with any consultation activity as yet. An event for disabled children and parents / carers is planned for Summer in 2013 with Children's Services and EPIC (a parent / carer forum in Leeds) to consider the impact on children with a wide range of physical impairments, learning development impairments and autism.

Outstanding actions from the Blue Badge Equality Impact Assessment will be incorporated into the travel plan/strategy for the project. This will include:

- Information about membership of *YourCard* services and information about any accessible buses stopping very near the centre to be included with the letter inviting applicants for an assessment.

- Recommendation to Yorkshire Metro that the AT Hub is included as a designated stop for all *Access Bus* city routes

Via consultation and activity already carried out the project team have identified that future actions and a communication plan will be required to resolve and reassure staff and public around several key issues. This includes:

- concerns around car parking
- sign posting
- appropriate access requirements incorporated within alterations to the building

It is also likely that further issues and actions will emerge as outcomes from the service user consultation event, questionnaire and staff perception survey. It is imperative that this feedback is captured and acted upon and that feedback is provided.

5. If you are *not* already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you *will need to carry out an impact assessment*.

Not applicable, the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration is already being considered.

6. Governance, ownership and approval

Name	Job title	Date
Liz Ward	Head of Service for Access and Inclusion	21/02/2013

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.

If this screening relates to a **Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, full Council** or a **Significant Operational Decision** a copy should be emailed to Corporate Governance and will be published along with the relevant report.

A copy of **all other** screening's should be sent to equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk. For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file (but not published).

Date screening completed	21/02/2013
If relates to a Key Decision - date sent to Corporate Governance	21/03/2013
Any other decision – date sent to Equality Team (equalityteam@leeds.gov.uk)	