

Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A)

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 and diversity.

A **screening** process can help judge relevance and provide 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 and diversity
- whether or not equality and diversity is being/has already been considered, and
- whether or not it is necessary to carry out an equality analysis.

Directorate: Finance and Customer Services	Service area: Finance
Lead person: Rob Mahon	Contact number: 01709 254518

1. Title:

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

On 1st May 2020 the government announced a new discretionary grant fund scheme that would aim to provide grant support to those businesses affected by Covid-19 who did not receive any support under the first tranche of business grants. The proposed scheme gives local authorities a degree of discretion to design their own scheme, however, it does indicate the business types that government intend the funding to be used to support. Predominantly the grant is aimed at businesses who don't pay business rates but have high fixed costs and have suffered significant financial losses due to Covid-19.

These grants are primarily and predominantly aimed at:

- Small and micro businesses, as defined in Section 33 Part 2 of the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 and the Companies Act 2006;

- Businesses with relatively high ongoing fixed property-related costs;
- Businesses which can demonstrate that they have suffered a significant fall in income due to the Covid-19 crisis;
- Businesses which occupy property, or part of a property, with a rateable value or annual rent or annual mortgage payments below £51,000.

In the guidance government take this further asking that the following businesses are given priority:

- Small businesses in shared offices or other flexible workspaces. Examples could include units in industrial parks, science parks and incubators which do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Regular market traders with fixed building costs, such as rent, who do not have their own business rates assessment;
- Bed & Breakfasts which pay Council Tax instead of business rates; and
- Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief.

Local authorities should set out the scope of their discretionary grant scheme on their website, providing clear guidance on which types of business are being prioritised, as well as the rationale for the level of grant to be provided (either £25,000, £10,000 or amounts less than £10,000).

Following internal discussions across key Council teams and through assessing the schemes being developed across neighbouring and other local authorities, the following scheme is proposed:

- All businesses in shared accommodation will be paid a minimum grant ranging from £1,000 to £3,000 depending on their level of fixed costs and financial losses.
- All eligible B&B's will be paid a grant of £1,000 to support their fixed costs and financial losses.
- All Charity properties in receipt of charitable business rates relief which would otherwise have been eligible for Small Business Rates Relief or Rural Rate Relief, to receive a grant of £10,000.
- Private Childcare Nurseries with a rateable value up to and including £15,000, will be paid £10,000.
- Private Childcare Nurseries with a rateable value of greater than £15,000 and less than £51,000, will be paid £25,000.
- Regular Market Traders to receive a grant averaging £1,300 for those with significant fixed rental costs.

3. Relevance to equality and diversity

All the Council's strategies/policies, services/functions affect service users, employees or the wider community – borough wide or more local. These will also have a greater/lesser relevance to equality and diversity.

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 and any other relevant characteristics (for example socio-economic status, social class, income, unemployment, residential location or family background and education or skills levels).

Questions	Yes	No
Could the proposal have implications regarding the accessibility of services to the whole or wider community?		X
Could the proposal affect service users?		X
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics?		X
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal?		X
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		X
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices?		X

If you have answered **no** to all the questions above please complete **sections 5 and 6**.

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above please complete **section 4**.

4. Considering the impact on equality and diversity

If you have not already done so, the impact on equality and diversity should be considered within your proposals prior to carrying out an **Equality Analysis**.

Considering equality and diversity will help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and take active steps to create a discrimination free society by meeting a group or individual's needs and encouraging participation.

Please provide specific details for all three areas below and use the prompts for guidance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How have you considered equality and diversity? n/a 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key findings n/a 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actions n/a 	
Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	n/a
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	n/a

5. Governance, ownership and approval

Please state here who has approved the actions and outcomes of the screening:

Name	Job title	Date
Judith Badger	Strategic Director – Finance and Customer Services	4 th June 2020

6. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.

If this screening relates to a **Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision** a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.

A copy of **all** screenings should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.

Date screening completed	4 th June 2020
If relates to a Key Delegated Decision, Executive Board, Council or a Significant Operational Decision – report date and date sent for publication	
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	