

Appendix 3

PART A - Initial Equality Screening 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 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 (Part B).

Further information is available in the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance – see page 9.

1. Title	
Title: Cabinet Response to the Outcomes from the Review Group of the Health Select Commission on the Rotherham Community Hub	
Directorate: Adult Care, Housing and Public Health	Service area: Strategic Commissioning
Lead person: Nathan Atkinson	Contact: nathan.atkinson@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a: <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

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

The Rotherham Community Hub was established rapidly as part of the Council's response to the Covid-19 crisis. Its purpose was to provide support to any Rotherham resident who has been affected by Covid-19 and may be self-isolating or experiencing hardship, with no other support networks available to them.

Residents were able to make a request for help/support via an online form or by calling the helpline number managed by Customer Services. Assistance from the Rotherham Community Hub included help with food shopping, prescription collection, dog walking and befriending, as well as providing emergency food parcels for those in urgent need.

In line with the Cabinet recommendations from the 16th of August 2021, the Health Select Commission Scrutiny function held a spotlight session on the 10th of September 2021 focusing on the Rotherham Community Hub and the support for loneliness and isolation.

Three recommendations were generated by Members of the Health Select Commission which derived from discussion during the spotlight session with service leads from the Council with responsibility for the Rotherham Community Hub and colleagues from the Rotherham Federation of Communities and the Rotherham Volunteer Centre representing the Rotherham Befriending Network. The recommendations were:

- a) *That the excellent work of Rotherham Community Hub be commended, especially in respect of the befriending service which helped relieve loneliness and isolation throughout the pandemic.*
- b) *That Members be encouraged to add the Community Hub to their Ward priorities and e-bulletins to better support vulnerable residents and families.*
- c) *Whereas the current Community Hub model is due to end in March 2022, should there be a further evolution of the Community Hub model, that an update be brought in 12 months' time.*

The Rotherham Community Hub received 8,252 support requests during the period of operation from the 24th of March 2020 until the 8th of March 2022 (the Community Hub ceased to formally exist on the 31st of March, but due to Community Hub officers moving to alternative roles, interventions ended slightly earlier on the 8th of March to facilitate a safe closure of the service).

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, disability, sex, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, civil partnerships and marriage, pregnancy and maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc.

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 explain the reason		

The Rotherham Community Hub service ceased to operate from 31st March 2022 as Government published the *Covid-19 Response: Living with Covid-19* strategy 21st February 2022 signalling an end to the expected statutory responses from the Council and the removal of specific Covid-19 central grant funding to support the operation of the service through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) for 2022/3.

Given that the Rotherham Community Hub has ceased operations to the public in response to Covid-19 and all Council staff have either returned to substantive posts or secured alternative roles, there are no ongoing equality impacts.

The service offer from the Rotherham Community Hub was universal with the driver being that an individual/household required support because of the impacts of Covid-19. Support was provided to help with food shopping, prescription collection, dog walking and befriending, as well as providing emergency food parcels for those in urgent need.

The service was established as an emergency response at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic and the first national lockdown. Consequently, systems and processes for data capture were limited to essential information only recorded on the CXM case management system to facilitate support. Not all protected characteristics information was recorded on the system with information limited to age and gender. The collection of these characteristics was important in appropriately referring people to befriending services and to facilitate matching with volunteers.

Should the Council look to set up a similar service in the future, then the ability to capture all protected characteristics on the CXM system would be recommended from day one of operation. This would enable more insightful trend data to be obtained as to areas of demand and identify any gaps where certain people were underrepresented or unable to access the offer, despite this being universal, for example people with disabilities or

carers.

Information on the age of the person receiving support from the Community Hub was only captured from April 2021 for example. There is strong data about the Ward distribution as to where the support requests came from, but it is difficult to draw conclusions as to the main customer base for the Community Hub from the limited available data.

Rotherham East (768) and Boston Castle (634) Ward residents made the greatest number of support requests. Wickersley North (23) and Bramley & Ravenfield (11) the least requests. The support from the Rotherham Community Hub was therefore more acutely felt in central Rotherham areas with higher levels of deprivation.

The gender breakdown of service requests was 61% female and 39% male. This may indicate more support was sought for family units (emergency food parcels made up 24% of all requests to the Hub), but the nature of data collection means that this cannot be verified.

In terms of age ranges for support requests, only 5% were from over 65s, with the majority, 58% being people aged 30-50. People aged 16-29 made up 20%, and 17% were aged 51-64. This may suggest that the greatest level of challenges for households were in the working age population, with older people able to access support from other sources.

The nature of support requests made to the Rotherham Community Hub shifted during the pandemic from the original purpose to support people shielding from Covid-19 to a higher proportion of people presenting financial difficulties and as a result a requirement for emergency food. This may reflect the findings from the Ward access points and possible use of the service by family groups. Findings from the approaches taken by the Rotherham Community Hub and the positive learning should be considered as the Council looks at ways of supporting households in distress experiencing the negative impacts of the cost of living rises.

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 before decisions are made.

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 using the prompts for guidance and complete an Equality Analysis (Part B).

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

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Steve Eling	Policy & Equalities Manager	23/05/2022

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	17 th May 2022
Report title and date	Cabinet Response to the Outcomes from the Review Group of the Health Select Commission on the Rotherham Community Hub
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	20 th June 2022
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	