

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: LAC Sufficiency Strategy	
Directorate: Children and Young People's Services	Service area: Looked After Children
Lead person: Helen Sweaton	Contact number: 07554436546
Is this a:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
<p>The Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy sets out how Rotherham Children and Young People's Services will fulfil its role as a Corporate Parent and meet its statutory sufficiency duty by providing good quality care, effective parenting and support to children and young people in and leaving care.</p> <p>It describes the principles that are applied when seeking to commission the provision of secure, safe and appropriate accommodation and support, to children in care and care leavers over the next three years.</p> <p>The Strategy provides the underpinning needs analysis that will inform market</p>

management, seeking to ensure that there is the right mix of provision available to meet the needs of children and young people and that this provision mix provides positive outcomes and value for money.

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? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect service users? <i>(Be mindful that this is not just about numbers. A potential to affect a small number of people in a significant way is as important)</i>	X	
Has there been or is there likely to be an impact on an individual or group with protected characteristics? <i>(Consider potential discrimination, harassment or victimisation of individuals with protected characteristics)</i>	X	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns regarding the proposal? <i>(It is important that the Council is transparent and consultation is carried out with members of the public to help mitigate future challenge)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect how the Council's services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from commissioning or procurement)</i>	X	
Could the proposal affect the Council's workforce or employment practices? <i>(If the answer is yes you may wish to seek advice from your HR business partner)</i>	X	

If you have answered no to all the questions above, please explain the reason

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).

- **How have you considered equality and diversity?**

As at 31 March 2022, there were 563 Looked After Children and 293 Care Experienced Young People.

- 90% of these children are in care as a result of abuse or neglect
- 10% are in care due to family dysfunction, absent parenting, the family being in acute stress, parental disability or illness, socially unacceptable behaviour or the child's disability or illness

29% (162) Looked After Children live in in-house fostering homes, 44% (246) live in independent fostering agency homes, 8% (46) live in residential homes and 2% (10) live in in-house residential homes.

See Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy 2023 - 24 for further demographic detail and information.

Rotherham's Looked After Children will have protected characteristics. All care planning will take account of the needs of the individual child and seek to match their needs with an appropriate placement. Issues around race, disability, maternity, belief, gender and sexual orientation are carefully considered in the referral matching process when deciding where looked after children and young people are placed.

The Looked After Children's Council meets regularly. The LAC Council have influenced the development of this strategy, the priorities and delivery plan.

Information regarding ethnicity, age, disability and SEN and gender will inform service development and commissioning intentions to secure homes for children that will best meet their individual needs.

Based on this information our priority areas over the next three years are to:

- More Young People aged 10+ are able to be cared for safely in their families and communities.
- Children and young people have access to a range of homes (internal and external options) that meet their needs and improve their outcomes.
- All services take the Rotherham Family Approach to ensure all Rotherham children and young people are "resilient, successful and safe", evidenced by Quality Assurance activity.

- Children and young people are able to access the support they need when they need it because Health, Education and Care Services share a joint understanding of the needs of children and young people in Rotherham and use this to inform commissioning and service delivery.
- Children and Young People and their families and carers are able to access CAMHs assessment and intervention when needed.
- Children, young people, families and carers benefit from additional social value in Rotherham e.g. more employment opportunities.
- More children, young people and families benefit from additional support to improve outcomes and access employment.

In addition to Looked After Children delivery of the Strategy may impact on other groups:

Rotherham has an existing community of Foster Carers. RMBC meet with this group regularly to ensure that their voice can inform future planning for new recruitment initiatives as well as support package that is available to Foster Carers. Becoming a Foster Carer provides an employment opportunity to Rotherham residents. All initiatives to recruit more Foster Carers should aim to increase the diversity of the Foster Carer profile across all protected characteristics; this will support children and young people to achieve positive outcomes as placements that are a good match will be available.

Rotherham currently works with a number of Independent Fostering Agencies and engages with this group via a Provider Forum.

Plans to open new residential provision within the borough may have an impact on the wider community. Robust arrangements to consult with the community will be considered as part of the commissioning process with new providers in the borough.

- **Key findings**

Looked after children are some of Rotherham's most vulnerable children. This proposal will seek to improve the health, social care and education outcomes and address inequalities for these children.

The updated LAC Sufficiency Strategy 2023 - 2027 sets out a clear need analysis that helps to support work to meet the needs of Looked After Children in the borough. The work will have a positive impact in terms of addressing the diversity of this cohort through a broader range of placement options.

Work to open new residential provision in the borough may be perceived negatively by local communities. Consultation and engagement work will need to be implemented carefully and sensitively. The Local Authority will maintain oversight of this through the commissioning process and ensure that Elected Members are included in the process.

- **Actions**

A range of approaches will be used to ensure that looked after children play a key part in delivery of the strategy. The LAC Council have been involved with the development of the strategy and influence decision making and delivery.

Frontline staff, partner agencies, foster carers and parents / carers have been and will

also be consulted and be able inform the development and implementation.

In summary, these are:

- To continue engagement with the Looked After Children’s Council
- To continue to engage with Rotherham Foster Carers
- To continue to engage with the Independent Foster Carer Forum
- To ensure that consultation and engagement with the public is embedded in all plans to open new residential provision in the borough.

Further Equality Impact Analysis will be completed as required as part of the delivery associated with the Strategy.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	Completed
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	September 2022
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	William Shaw CYPS Head of Commissioning

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Helen Sweaton	Assistant Director Commissioning and Performance	Updated and agreed 19/08/22

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	25 August 2022
Report title and date	Looked After Children and Care Leavers Sufficiency Strategy
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	17 October 2022
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement	25 August, 2022