

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: Corporate Debt Policy	
Directorate: Finance & Customer Services	Service area: Revenues, Benefits & Payments
Lead person: Steven Ward	Contact: steven.ward@rotherham.gov.uk
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
The Corporate Debt Policy details the principles to be adopted by the Council when undertaking collection of debt in Rotherham from both people and businesses. It explains how the Council will attempt to maximise debt recovery in accordance with Best Value duties whilst treating people fairly and with respect.

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?**

The Council has a statutory duty to collect outstanding monies owed to it and to do that fairly has created a policy governing its practices. Whilst we do encounter diverse groups we do not routinely gather information on those groups (except for disability for appropriate discounts).

The policy states that the Council believes in openness, fairness, and equality in the way it provides services to Rotherham's diverse communities, and that every individual is entitled to be treated with respect.

- **Key findings**

When recovering a debt to the Council, there will be no discrimination against any individual for cultural, ethnicity or national origins, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, socio-economic status, appearance, or lifestyle. However, it is acknowledged that the practices detailed in the policy could affect some service users.

- **Actions**

Whilst the policy states the over-riding principles of equality and diversity an equality impact assessment will provide further evidence that the policy does not have an adverse impact on individual protected groups.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	01/11/24
Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	31/12/24
Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Steven Ward Operational Manager for Account Management

5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Rob Mahon	Assistant Director for Finance & Customer Services	25/09/2024

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	25/09/2024
Report title and date	Corporate Debt Policy 21/08/2024
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	19/09/2024 & 26/09/2024
Date screening sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	25/09/2024