

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: Voluntary Sector Infrastructure and Advice Services	
Directorate: Assistant Chief Executive's	Service area: Policy, Performance and Intelligence
Lead person: Fiona Boden	Contact: fiona.boden@rotherham.gov.uk
Is this a:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service / Function
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
If other, please specify	

2. Please provide a brief description of what you are screening
This report makes recommendations for the next three-year Infrastructure SLA and Advice Services SLA for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2027, including the results of the co-design process undertaken in June and July 2023 as outlined in the Rotherham Compact. The report also takes account of seeking to achieve “excellent” accreditation under the Equality Framework for Local Government.

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?**

Infrastructure services are at the core of support for the diversity of the VCS. This, along with the equalities data from current advice service provision, will be the starting point for the Equality Analysis. The equalities planning and Equality Analysis have already been an integral component of the co-design of services in accordance with the Rotherham Compact, which in turn has specific commitments around equalities.

- **Key findings**

Advice services are response driven, meeting demand for support, often by the most vulnerable people in society. Much of the advice demand, especially around benefits, debt and immigration are accessed by people with protected characteristics. Planning of the services has full regard to the needs of protected groups.

VCS Infrastructure Services are one of the key drivers for equalities in the VCS and community, championing the provisions of the Rotherham Compact. Specifically, the Rotherham Compact states:

An important way in which the VCS can promote equality effectively is by working with public sector organisations on equality issues. VCS organisations undertake to:

- *Take practical action in partnership with the public sector to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and build community links.*
- *Show committed leadership (especially at senior levels) to promote equality and, where necessary, put strategies in place to achieve it.*

In terms of equalities, many of VAR's members, particularly small groups, are delivering excellent support to people with protected characteristics. There are also some larger charities working on equalities, but more is needed. There is an intersectional aspect to the work of many VCS groups as they are working with people with several protected characteristics. For example, a group may be working with BAME disabled women, or perhaps with older men from different faiths on issues of isolation/loneliness.

- **Actions**

There will be further consideration of equality outcomes following Cabinet approval, when the detailed delivery plan and the Equalities Analysis Form B will be finalised as part of the Service Level Agreement.

Date to scope and plan your Equality Analysis:	December 2023
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Date to complete your Equality Analysis:	January 2024
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Lead person for your Equality Analysis (Include name and job title):	Fiona Boden, Head of Policy, Performance and Intelligence
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5. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Jo Brown	Assistant Chief Executive	

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	15.09.2023
Report title and date	Voluntary Sector Infrastructure and Advice Services
If relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision – report date and date sent for publication	Cabinet Report for 20 th November Cabinet Meeting
Date screening sent to Policy, Performance and Intelligence equality@rotherham.gov.uk	23.10.2023