

Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening



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, diversity, cohesion and integration.

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

Directorate: Resources	Service area: Registrars
Lead person: Steve Coupe	Contact number: 76686

1. Title: Collecting Marriage and Civil Partnership Ceremony Fees in advance

Is this a:

Strategy / Policy

Service / Function

Other

If other, please specify

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

Traditionally customers pay for their ceremony at the Town Hall on the day of the ceremony. From 1 January 2012 we propose to ask all customers arranging a ceremony in Leeds to pay the ceremony fee in advance (12 weeks) of the ceremony date rather than collecting the fee at the time of the ceremony.

From June 2012 it is likely that the Registrars service will relocate to 2 Great George St although the ceremonies function will remain at the Town Hall. Staff will therefore need to walk between the 2 sites and, under current arrangements, carry ceremony fees (up to £2,000) which could pose a security risk to staff. Taking fees in advance will remove the need for staff to carry large amounts of cash.

3. Relevance to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

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

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
Is there an existing or likely differential impact for the different equality characteristics?	x	
Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		x
Could the proposal affect how our services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, located and by whom?		x
Could the proposal affect our workforce or employment practices?		x
Does the proposal involve or will it have an impact on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminating unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment• Advancing equality of opportunity• Fostering good relations	x	

If you have answered **no** to the questions above please complete **sections 6 and 7**

If you have answered **yes** to any of the above and;

- Believe you have already considered the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 4**.
- Are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration within your proposal please go to **section 5**.

4. Considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

If you can demonstrate you have considered how your proposals impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you have carried out an impact assessment.

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

- **How have you considered equality, diversity, cohesion and integration?** (**think about** the scope of the proposal, who is likely to be affected, equality related information, gaps in information and plans to address, consultation and engagement activities (taken place or planned) with those likely to be affected)

Payment can be made by post (cheque/postal order), by telephone (credit/debit card) or in person (all payment types).

From an equality, diversity and cohesion perspective it is possible that customers who do not have a credit/debit card or cheque book may be unequally inconvenienced by having to visit the Town Hall to pay in person by cash.

However customers will be able to pay their ceremony fee at any time between giving notice of their ceremony and a date which is 12 weeks prior to the ceremony date. We anticipate that most (given sufficient advance notice and the correct information) will pay when they visit our office to give notice.

- **Key findings** (**think about** any potential positive and negative impact on different equality characteristics, potential to promote strong and positive relationships between groups, potential to bring groups/communities into increased contact with each other, perception that the proposal could benefit one group at the expense of another)

We already deliver other services where customers are required to pay in advance eg Nationality Checking Service and notices of marriage/civil partnership. Customers must also pay for ceremonies at Approved premises eg hotels in advance. To date we have not received any complaint or negative comment from customers.

Conversely we have previously received complaints from customers who have objected to having to pay on the day of the ceremony. In a recent survey 24 out of 28 customers also said they would be happy to pay the ceremony fee at the time of giving their notice. The remaining 4 said they would possibly be happy to do so.

• **Actions**
(think about how you will promote positive impact and remove/ reduce negative impact)

- **Publicise the need to pay in advance eg update web-site / leaflets**
- **Ensure that customers are aware in advance so that they can make arrangements to have sufficient funds available – make sure contact centre provide relevant information at time of booking.**
- **Ensure sufficient staff available to deal with extra payments**
- **Introduce e-payments enabling customers to pay on-line**
- **Train staff in receiving payments**
- **Monitor customer reaction/feedback**

5. If you are not already considering the impact on equality, diversity, cohesion and integration you will need to carry out an impact assessment.

Date to scope and plan your impact assessment:	
Date to complete your impact assessment	
Lead person for your impact assessment (Include name and job title)	

6. Governance, ownership and approval

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

Name	Job title	Date
Steve Coupe	Superintendent Registrar	16 December 2011

7. Publishing

This screening document will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given. If you are not carrying out an independent impact assessment the screening document will need to be published.

Please send a copy to the Equality Team for publishing

Date screening completed	16 December 2011
Date sent to Equality Team	16 December 2011
Date published	20 th December 2011