



Equality Impact Assessment

Full Assessment Form

This form is for use in undertaking a full equality impact assessment of a policy following the findings from an equality screening.

Name of Service Being Assessed: Customer Contact Services (CCS)

Service Area: Corporate Services

Lead Officer: Dawn Graham

Team: Rachael Fox-Jackson & Richard May

Completion Date of Equality Screening: N / A: proceeded straight to full assessment

Start Date of Assessment: 30 November 2016

Completion of Assessment:

A. Status and Scope of the Policy Being Assessed

For the purposes of this assessment, the term 'Policy' refers to a Policy, Strategy, Programme, Procedure, Function or Decision

A1. What are the main aims, objectives and intended purposes of the Policy?

The Customer Contact Centre delivers a first point of contact service to residents for all departments of the Council.

A2. What is the status of this Policy? (New, existing or under review).

This impact assessment updates and integrates previous assessments of the Reception Area at South Cambridgeshire Hall, and proposals for the Customer Contact Centre, undertaken during 2011 to 2012. The Council's in-house Contact Service, incorporating Reception, launched in December 2012.

A3. What is the timescale and decision-making route for approval of the Policy?

Ongoing function, though the Reception Area will be undergoing significant reconfiguration during 2017.

A4. Is this Policy associated with the Council's Corporate Plan objectives? If so, please state the relevance and association to the objectives.

Providing an effective customer contact function is essential to the delivery of the Corporate Plan 2016 to 2021 aim to 'Embed a 'Digital by Default' approach to customer access whilst ensuring quality traditional contact channels remain for those requiring them.'

A5. Who are the intended beneficiaries / stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?

Our reception seeks to provide a high-quality first-contact to all customers who include the full range of stakeholders – residents and businesses in the district, visiting representatives of other councils, public and private sector organisations. On average, Reception receives 1,800 to 2,500 visitors each month. During 2015 to 2016, the contact centre received 157,024 calls.

In accordance with the Corporate Plan aim identified in A4 above, the Council's focus will be to maximise self-service opportunities for its customers. In doing so, this should reduce visitor numbers and enable frontline and support staff to spend more time receiving customers who are unable to use digital channels and / or may have more complicated enquiries requiring 'phone and face-to-face contact to resolve.

A6. Are external partners involved in delivering this Policy? If so, what are their roles and levels of involvement / influence?

No.

B. Evidence, Data and Consultation

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the Policy could have a differential impact. Please include examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the Policy?

No monitoring information around the nature of visitors is available. Anecdotally, a wide cross-section of the community is represented, and there are no discernible patterns in terms of specific protected characteristics.

It may be necessary to undertake monitoring work to identify the impact of Digital by Default initiatives to increase self-service upon particular groups.

The latest Internet access survey carried out by the Office of National Statistics concluded that 'Many older people are still to catch up with the digital revolution, with nearly half of single pensioners (47%) still having no internet access at all.' This confirms that 'traditional' access channels will continue to be crucial to the delivery of customer service excellence.

B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?

The population of Cambridgeshire will age substantially by 2026: the number of people aged over 90 years is forecast to more than double, and the number of people in their 80s to rise by more than 50%. This will lead to steep rises in the number of older people with dementia.

The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, a physical disease in which protein 'plaques' and 'tangles' develop in the structure of the brain, leading to the death of brain cells.

The estimate for residents in South Cambridgeshire living with Dementia in South Cambridgeshire in 2012 was 1,842, and this is expected to rise to 3,104 by 2026 – a rise of over 40%. An increase of this size over a short period is likely to put severe strain on existing services.

The 2011 Census identified 12.7% of the district's population as non-White British; it is therefore likely that a proportion of customers will possess protected equality characteristics relating to race, religion and belief.

B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?

We will explore options for carrying out a 'Dementia Friendly' assessment of the Council's Reception Area.

B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?

Customer satisfaction survey forms are available for completion by visitors to South Cambridgeshire Hall. Overall satisfaction with the service received has been high, albeit based on proportionally low completion rates.

B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?

Monthly service review meetings are held between the Customer Contact Services to ensure effective working relationships and identify customer service improvements such as potential new e-forms and business scripts.

B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.

The team preparing plans for the 2017 renovations to the Reception Area explored good practice at other locations, including queue management and self-service terminals at Huntingdonshire District Council.

Comments:

Based on the evidence and information you have gathered, and any consultations you have carried out, you should:

- Identify any opportunities to advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations for people with different protected characteristics (Section C) and;
- Assess the likely differential impact – positive or negative – of the policy on people with protected characteristics (Section D).

It is important to identify whether the Policy would affect some groups of people differently (a 'differential impact'). It is particularly important to consider whether the policy would discriminate against or disadvantage people on the grounds of any of the protected characteristics, or whether there are any opportunities to better promote equality or good relations between different groups of people through modifying the policy.

Use the table below to summarise the findings of the information and evidence you have gathered. This might include statistical data, external research, or feedback from formal or informal consultations with staff or residents. Consider the information as it relates to the range of protected characteristics (listed in the left-hand column) before proceeding to Section D.

If there is no information available about the impact (or potential impact) of the Policy on people with a particular protected characteristic, you should note this in the table.

C. Opportunities to Advance Equality of Opportunity or Foster Good Relations

You do not need to fill in every single box. The questions are there as a guide, and are prompts to help you consider the way that a policy or decision will impact on people with different protected characteristics before proceeding to section D.

What does the information or evidence we have gathered tell us about the impact of this Policy on different groups of people?

Protected Characteristics	Does the evidence suggest that people with different protected characteristics have different needs or experiences in relation to this Policy?	Could any aspect of the Policy amount to discrimination (either direct or indirect) against people on the grounds of a protected characteristic?	In what ways does this Policy promote opportunities to advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations between people with different characteristics (e.g. male and female; different racial groups)	From the evidence you have gathered, what opportunities might there be to better promote opportunities to advance equality of opportunity or foster good relations between different groups of people through modifying the Policy in some way?
Age	Single people aged over 65 are less likely statistically to have Internet access, therefore are more likely to rely on traditional access channels.	–	Play equipment is available for young children whilst their parents / guardians are being served at Reception	–

Disability	Customers with disabilities may have specific needs in terms of contact channels and access to Reception.	–	Assistance provided to customers with disabilities e.g. seated area whilst queueing, water for assistance dogs. The Council's databases allow file notes to be added identifying vulnerable customers with specific support needs.	We will consider undertaking an assessment of our Reception area for its 'Dementia Friendliness'.
Gender Reassignment	–	–	–	–
Marriage and Civil Partnerships	–	–	Separate electronic records maintained for couples where sensitive issues may be discussed e.g. those relating to domestic violence or child protection.	–
Pregnancy and Maternity	–	–	Baby-changing facilities are available. Private breast-feeding area provided upon request.	–

Race	–	–	The Council has a Framework contract for various translation and interpretation services in place. Customer contact staff are trained to deal with interpreters and advocates in phone conversations.	–
Religion and Beliefs	–	–	–	–
Sex	–	–	–	–
Sexual Orientation	–	–	–	–
Others e.g. Rurality; caring responsibility; working pattern etc.	–	–	The Council's location may be difficult to reach for customers in outlying areas. Public transport information is available at the offices and on our website, and a regular service bus to Cambridge stops directly outside the offices.	–

D. Differential Impact of the Policy

Assess the potential differential impact on each of the following protective characteristics. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high.

Description of impact	Nature of impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse).	Extent of impact (Low, Medium, High).
Age: Identify the potential impacts of the policy or function on different age groups.	Neutral	–
Disability: Identify the potential impact of policy or function on disabled people.	Neutral	–
Gender Reassignment: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people.	Neutral	–
Marriage and Civil Partnerships: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people who are married or in a civil partnership.	Neutral	–
Pregnancy and Maternity: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on pregnant or maternal mothers and those women who wish to breastfeed.	Neutral	–
Race: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different religious / faith groups.	Neutral	–

Religion / Belief: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different religious / faith groups.	Neutral	–
Sex: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women.	Neutral	–
Sexual Orientation: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on lesbian, gay men, bisexual, or heterosexual people.	Neutral	–
Other: Rurality: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people who are rurally isolated.	Neutral	–

E. Action Plan

You should now be able to identify whether the Council needs to take any action to eliminate discrimination, disadvantage or unfair impact, or to make changes to more effectively promote equality, diversity or good relations. Alternatively, you might have identified that you cannot fully assess the impact of the policy on different groups until you have more information, data or other evidence. Actions that you might identify at this stage could include:

- Changes to the policy itself
- Collecting and analysing data not currently available
- Consulting further with staff, residents and customers in order to find out more about how the policy or decision will affect people
- Undertaking surveys or other research.

Action / Change Required	Responsibility	Timescale	Resources Required	What Issue / Problem Will This Action Address?
Explore options for 'Dementia Friendly' review of Reception area	Policy Development Officer	January 2017	Assessment potentially has a cost attached.	Elimination of issues that unknowingly cause distress to a person living with dementia, for example relating to colours, shapes and room layout.
Implement improvements to physical layout of South Cambridgeshire Hall Reception	Facilities Manager	2017 (To be confirmed)	Separate budget and project plan identified	Modifications to the current layout, specifically the relocation of interview rooms nearer to the main building, will reduce queues, improve safety and comfort and enhance the overall customer experience.

F. Recommendation

You should now recommend whether the Council should adopt, modify, pilot or reject the policy (please indicate your proposed recommendation from the options below).

Option:	Tick where appropriate ✓
Adopt the policy in its originally proposed format (no issues identified)	–
Modify the policy to address any negative impact or to better exploit any potential to promote equality, diversity and good relations	✓
Continue with the policy despite identifying issues (note: justification must be provided)	–
Reject the policy entirely, due to the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment	–
Pilot the policy and re-evaluate the equality impact after the pilot period	–
Modify the policy to meet separate statutory changes, not linked to equality / diversity	–

Briefly set out the reasons for this recommendation:

The Customer Contact Service aims to deliver a customer-focussed service based around empathy for, and an ability to respond appropriately to, the needs of the individual. Staff are subject to regular and ongoing training and coaching to ensure they are able to adapt their communication style to ensure an inclusive service is provided. Training comprises a mix of 'behavioural' sessions and targeted awareness-raising around disability, mental health and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. The service is undergoing change to move to increasingly a 'digital by default' model of customer contact, encouraging self-service for customers with the means to do so whilst retaining traditional contact channels for customers requiring them, whilst plans to modify the physical environment at South Cambridgeshire Hall will benefit all visitors and are intended to be implemented during 2017. These improvements will enhance equality of opportunity for customers with protected equality characteristics, in compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Sign Off: The officers below confirm that this full assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance

Signature of Lead Officer:

Date:

Signature of Head of Service or Director:

Date:

(Please retain the original form in your service area and return an electronic copy of the completed form to the Policy and Performance Team for publication).