

Colchester Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment Form - An Analysis of the Effects on Equality

Section 1: Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Name of policy to be assessed:

- Housing Information Communication Technology (ICT) Systems.

NB: 'Policy' is meant broadly to mean policy, strategy, service, function, activity or decision.

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

- Management of Housing ICT systems that CBC uses for managing Council Housing Stock and tenancies throughout life cycle.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Within CBC, Capita Housing is the key corporate enterprise Housing Management system providing a modular database for management of property and tenancy information, rents, arrears, reporting, allocations, homelessness, tenancy enforcement and repairs. The database and interfaced systems (Optitime, Codeman, Repairs Locator, Open Contractor, Total Mobile, Capita Connect, Academy Document Engine, BI Query Reporting suite and Abritas) enable the effective functions required to manage workloads, efficient processing and reporting of customer and property data and the enablement of customer self-serve technologies. The Capita Housing system also interfaces with the corporate ICT systems including AIM (income management), Revenues Academy (Housing Benefits), the General Ledger and IDOX.

3. Are there changes to an existing policy being considered in this assessment? If so what are they?

- No

4. Who are the main audience, users or customers who will be affected by the policy?

- Staff of Colchester Borough Council
- Staff of Colchester Borough Homes
- Users of Morrisons (Gas Contractors)
- Tenants and Leaseholders both Former and Current.

5. What outcomes do you want to achieve from the policy?

- Property, tenancy and income information is accurately maintained and is fit for purpose.
- Case management of housing advice customers is provided with a consistently high level of customer service which is equitable.
- Rent, Service and Garage charges information sent to customers is accurate, consistent and timely. Garage allocations are accurately recorded.
- Repairs information is recorded in an efficient and timely manner. Information is interfaced into other systems that allow prioritisation and costings of work and mobile working of repairs operatives.
- Customer access to enable self serve.

6. Are other service areas or partner agencies involved in delivery? If so, please give details below:

- Colchester Borough Homes
- Morrisons Users
- Capita, Xmbrace, Northgate and Gistix, M3 Housing and Abritas (all software suppliers)

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations¹ which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy upon customers or staff?

- Informal consultation with and feedback from staff regarding system functionality and proposed improvements to functionality, ensuring that systems are improved over time in accordance with internal customer's needs.
- Various system audits carried out to ensure compliance with security and data management requirements.

If so provide details and include a link to the document or source where available.

¹Click on [surveys or consultations](#) for more information. The Council's surveys and consultations include 'equality monitoring information' to help us identify any particular concerns or views expressed by any particular group or 'protected characteristic'. It can also help us to assess how representative of our customers the respondent group is. Local Data on the Protected Characteristics is available [on this page](#) of the Hub.

8. The 'general duty' states that we must have "due regard" to the need to:

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a 'protected characteristic'² and those who do not³
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not⁴

Not all policies help us to meet the 'general duty', but most do.

Where applicable, explain how this policy helps us to meet the 'general duty':

The policy helps us to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation' in the following way(s):

- Consistent, systematic and secure recording of data and information about customers helps prevent unlawful discrimination against any group.
- Access to systems is designed around profiles for job roles, ensuring consistent access amongst officers in similar roles appropriate to the requirements of the role.

The policy helps us to 'advance equality of opportunity...' in the following way(s):

- These systems set the framework for how customer data is captured and recorded, enabling officers to work efficiently to identify and meet individual customer needs, and to remove or minimise any disadvantages experienced by the 'protected characteristics'.
- Digital Inclusion, offering alternative channels for contact and management of tenancies.
- Offering alternative working options, including home and mobile working for officers.

² The Equality Act's 'protected characteristics' include age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sex and sexual orientation. It also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but not for all aspects of the duty.

³ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it, and (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

⁴ This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.

The policy helps us to ‘foster good relations...’ in the following way(s):

- None Identified

9. This section helps us to identify any disproportionate impacts. Please indicate in the table below whether the policy is likely to particularly benefit or disadvantage any of the ‘protected characteristics’.

Remember to include reference to any relevant consultation, data or information.

‘Protected characteristic’ group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Age	Older people (60+)	X	These systems set the framework for how customer data is captured and recorded, enabling officers to work efficiently to identify and meet individual customer needs, and to remove or minimise any disadvantages experienced by the ‘protected characteristics’. Software Suppliers have embedded input masking on key data fields within systems to ensure accurate data capture. Systems are available through the Virtual desktop enabling both hot desking and home/mobile working.	None Identified	None Identified
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Disability	Physical	X	As Above	X	Some employees with a disability may find it more difficult than those without a disability to work with the systems and software
	Sensory	X	As Above	X	As Above
	Learning	X	As Above	X	As Above
	Mental health issues	X	As Above	X	As Above

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
	Other – <i>specify</i>	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Ethnicity ⁵	White	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
	Black	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
	Chinese	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
	Gypsies/ Travellers	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
	Other – <i>please state</i>	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Language	English not first language	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Sex	Men	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
	Women	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified

⁵ National Census 2011 categories are: Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Other Asian (Asian or Asian British), African, Caribbean, Other Black (Black or Black British), White and Black African, White and Asian, White and Black Caribbean (Mixed), British, Irish, Other White (White), Chinese, Other (Other Ethnic Group).

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Gender Reassignment ⁶	Transgender/ Transsexual	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	X	As Above	None Identified	None Identified

10. If you have identified any negative impacts (above) how can they be minimised or removed?

(This is a key section: Please deal with each negative impact noted above in turn.)

- Where difficulties are identified the Council will endeavour to make 'reasonable adjustments' in accordance with their statutory duty.
- Regular meetings are held with Capita and Software Supplier Account Managers which provide an opportunity to address any equality and diversity issues. There are also regular user groups and focus groups on software development.
- Staff training on the use of systems and software is provided via Line Management to all new starters and refresher ad new module training is provided as and when required.
- Health and safety risk assessments help to minimise adverse impacts.
- Permissions to access and use systems are based on job role profiles, to ensure access is restricted to relevant data required to perform tasks.
- With Self-Serve technologies processes are in place to ensure early monitoring and support to assist anyone encountering issues with accessing and using the system. This web based product can be utilised using accessibility features built into web browsers to personalise usage where required. Self-Serve is

⁶ The protected characteristic of gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as “a person proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.” This is a personal process that may involve medical interventions such as counselling, psychotherapy, hormone therapy or surgery, but does not have to. NB: It is generally held that transgender people disguise their features or clothing to resemble their preferred sex, whereas transsexual people wish to change their body to completely resemble their preferred sex.

provided as one channel for engagement between tenants and CBH, alternative channels are available and publicised. Colchester Borough Homes Tenancy Services is pro-active in ensuring appropriate support is in place to help tenants sustain tenancies. This takes into account specific needs associated with the 'protected characteristics'.

- Mobile devices provided to officers to access, have normal accessibility features built in to allow personalisation for users as required. One to one training is provided for these devices with all users.

11. Could the policy discriminate⁷ against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly⁸?

(Please read the footnotes below before completing this section.)

- *No*

⁷ The Council has a general duty to 'eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation'. Direct discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably than another in a comparable situation because of their 'protected characteristic' whether on grounds of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity; religion or belief; sex (gender), sexual orientation, or marriage and civil partnership. Indirect discrimination occurs when an apparently neutral provision or practice would nevertheless disadvantage people on the grounds of their 'protected characteristic'.

⁸ If you answer 'yes' to question 11 (above) you will need to complete this section *and* go on to complete Section 2 in order to conduct a full Equality Impact Assessment.

Summary and findings of Initial Equality Impact Assessment

12. Please put a tick in the relevant box to confirm your findings, and what the next step is:

Findings	Action required
No negative impacts have been identified <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and finish.
Negative impacts have been identified but have been minimised or removed ✓	Sign off screening and finish.
Negative impacts could not be minimised or removed <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.
There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sign off screening and complete a full impact assessment – Section 2.

13. Name and job title of person completing this form:

- Daniella Woraker

14. Date of completion:

- June 2015

15. Date for update or review of this screening:

- June 2018