

## 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:

- Telephony And Email contact – Customer Service Centre (CSC)

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

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

- To make the Council's telephony service accessible to all callers, regardless of disability, ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation, gender, numeracy or literacy issues, religion or belief.
- To provide excellent telephone customer service that exceeds customer expectations in a relevant and timely manner.
- To provide a wide range of information about council services.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- Customer contact with the CSC

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

- Review of existing policy

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

- Residents
- Staff

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

- To achieve the aims stated above; thus maintaining low wait times and high levels of customer satisfaction.

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

Feedback on key services including telephony services is periodically reviewed and has been taken into account in shaping this service.

7. Are you aware of any relevant information, data, surveys or consultations<sup>1</sup> which help us to assess the likely or actual impact of the policy upon customers or staff?

Feedback on key services including telephony services are periodically reviewed and has been taken into account in shaping this service.

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'<sup>2</sup> and those who do not<sup>3</sup>
- (c) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Click 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.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>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.

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

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):

- By using additional technologies, such as language line and text phone, our services can be accessed by a wider audience.

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

- By using additional technologies, such as language line and text phone, our services can be accessed by a wider audience.

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

- By using additional technologies, such as language line and text phone, our services can be accessed by a wider audience.

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
----------------------------------	--	-----------------	---	-----------------	--

'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+)	New telephony system	Telephony system is being updated using data from customer interactions; ensure the automation is accurate to our customers' needs.	X	Older people are more likely to have a disability – see comments below.
		Queue management	Working to reduce customer wait times and give alternatives at peak times, such as a call back service.		
		High resolution rates	The CSC delivers above expectations on resolving a call at first point of contact.		
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	As above	As above		None identified
Disability	Physical	As above	As above	X	This group may be more likely to find automated options more difficult to use.
	Sensory	As above	As above	X	As above
	Learning	As above	As above	X	As above
	Mental health issues	As above	As above	X	As above
	Other – specify				

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group	
Ethnicity <sup>5</sup>	White	New telephony system	Telephony system is being updated using data from customer interactions; ensure the automation is accurate to our customers' needs.		None identified	
		Queue management	Working to reduce customer wait times and give alternatives at peak times, such as a call back service.			
		High resolution rates	The CSC delivers above expectations on resolving a call at first point of contact.			
	Black	As above	As above			None identified
	Chinese	As above	As above			None identified
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	As above	As above			None identified
	Gypsies/ Travellers	As above	As above		None identified	
	Other – <i>please state</i>					
Language	English not first language	As above	As above	X	This group may not be able to access the service without assistance.	

<sup>5</sup> 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
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	New telephony system  Queue management  High resolution rates	Telephony system is being updated using data from customer interactions, ensure the automation is accurate to our customers' needs.  Working to reduce customer wait times and give alternatives at peak times, such as a call back service.  The CSC delivers above expectations on resolving a call at first point of contact.		None identified
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	As above	As above		None identified
Sex	Men	As above	As above		None identified
	Women	As above	As above		None identified
Gender Reassignment <sup>6</sup>	Transgender/ Transsexual	As above	As above		None identified

<sup>6</sup> 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.

'Protected characteristic' group		Positive Impact	Explain how it could particularly benefit the group	Negative Impact	Explain how it could particularly disadvantage the group
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	As above	As above	As above	None identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	As above	As above	As above	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.)*

**May find automated options confusing**

- Automated options are continuously reviewed with any feedback taken into consideration to ensure they are easily understandable

**There are times when wait times may be longer than customer expectation.**

- We offer a call back service
- We are working to encourage channel shift where possible to minimise wait times

**May not understand Advisors or automated telephone menus**

- We have a text phone service
- Customers can gain access to language line and other translation services may be offered.
- Face to face services in the library

11. Could the policy discriminate<sup>7</sup> against any 'protected characteristic', either directly or indirectly<sup>8</sup>?

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

- *No, due to the steps put in place to minimise all negative impacts*

---

<sup>7</sup> 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'.

<sup>8</sup> 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 <b>X</b>	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:

- Jay Bolaky, Contact and Support Manager

14. Date of completion:

- December 2019

15. Date for update or review of this screening:

- December 2022, unless there are significant changes to the policy