

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:

- Complaints and compliments

1. What is the main purpose of the policy?

- To ensure that all customer can give feedback about the service they receive and that it is dealt with in a promptly and consistent manor.
- To ensure that feedback is used to make continuous improvements to the level of Customer service provided.
- To ensure that customers are aware and able to make a compliment or complaint.
- To ensure that monitoring is undertaken on complaints and that all groups are treated equally.

2. What main areas or activities does it cover?

- To ensure that compliments and complaints are dealt with efficiently, with a fair and consistent approach.
- To monitor the impact of complaints and change the provision of service accordingly.
- To monitor and track complaints within agreed service standards.
- To monitor and record compliments to promote and develop best practice

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?

- Customers
- Visitors
- Staff

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

- To ensure that compliments and complaints are dealt with efficiently, with a fair and consistent approach.
- To monitor the impact of complaints and change the provision of service accordingly.
- To monitor and track complaints within agreed service standards.
- To monitor and record compliments to promote and develop best practice.

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

- Essex County Council

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?

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

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.

²The 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.

³This 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.

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):

- It ensure that the compliments and complaint process is accessible to all
- That the process is clear and non-discriminatory to any person that needs to use it
- That the process has clear and measurable outcomes

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

- It ensure that the compliments and complaint process is accessible to all
- That the process is clear and non-discriminatory to any person that needs to use it
- That the process has clear and measurable outcomes

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

- It ensure that the compliments and complaint process is accessible to all
- That the process is clear and non-discriminatory to any person that needs to use it
- That the process has clear and measurable outcomes

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

'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+)	<p>We have numerous ways to contact us regarding a complaint and compliment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • By post • In person • By telephone • By contacting your local councillor <p>This ensures all customers can access this service by a means that suits them.</p> <p>Specific support is in place for vulnerable groups. Both flexibility of access and specific support helps to eliminate potential discrimination.</p> <p>Staff contacted by any means can also fill in the required info on the customers behalf.</p>	<p>Customers can choose the most appropriate way for them to use this service.</p> <p>The policy as a whole is designed to ensure individual views are captured as fairly and as comprehensively as possible. This helps to “advance equality of opportunity” between people who share this protected characteristics and those who do not.</p>	Access issues or awareness of the different ways to contact us.	By having a multitude of channels for customers to contact us and staff trained to record these for customers the negative impact on this protected characteristic is minimal.
	Younger people (17-25) and children (0-16)	As above	As above	Awareness of the different ways to contact us.	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
Disability	Physical	As above	As above	Access issues or awareness of the different ways to contact us.	As above
	Sensory	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Learning	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Mental health issues	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Other – <i>specify</i>				
Ethnicity ⁵	White	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Black	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Chinese	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Mixed Ethnic Origin	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Gypsies/ Travellers	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Other – <i>please state</i>	As above	As above	As above	As above
Language	English not first language	As above and in addition we provide “Language Line” a translation service that can be used face to face in the Library community HUB or in a conference call.	If a customer needs to contact us where English is not their first language we can still provide all the same services with the use of the Language Line.	Customers who would rely on the Language line service would only be able to contact us via Face to Face, telephone or online channels.	If a customer relies on translation services they may find it difficult to contact us by post.

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
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women who are pregnant or have given birth in last 26 weeks	<p>We have numerous ways to contact us regarding a complaint and compliment including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online • By post • In person • By telephone • By contacting your local councillor <p>This ensures all customers can access this service by a means that suits them.</p> <p>Specific support is in place for vulnerable groups. Both flexibility of access and specific support helps to eliminate potential discrimination.</p> <p>Staff contacted by any means can also fill in the required info on the customers behalf.</p>	<p>Customers can choose the most appropriate way for them to use this service.</p> <p>The policy as a whole is designed to ensure individual views are captured as fairly and as comprehensively as possible. This helps to “advance equality of opportunity” between people who share this protected characteristics and those who do not.</p>	Access issues or awareness of the different ways to contact us.	By having a multitude of channels for customers to contact us and staff trained to record these for customers the negative impact on this protected characteristic is minimal.
Religion or Belief	People with a religious belief (or none)	As above	As above	Awareness of the different ways to contact us.	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
Sex	Men	As above	As above	As above	As above
	Women	As above	As above	As above	As above
Gender Reassignment ⁶	Transgender/ Transsexual	As above	As above	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	Bisexual, Heterosexual, Gay or Lesbian	As above	As above	As above	As above
Marriage and Civil Partnership	People who are married or in a civil partnership	As above	As above	As above	As above

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.)

Access Issues

Customers may experience some access issues at the Library and Community HUB, however these are minimised by the following:

- Automatic doors
- An escalator
- A lift
- Ground floor Express Zone to access online services
- Private rooms on the ground floor

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.

In addition to these measures a customer is not required to visit the Library and Community HUB in order to raise a compliment or complaint, this can be done via:

- The website
- Over the phone
- In writing
- Contacting their local counsellor

Awareness of the different ways to contact us

All staff are trained, as part of the compliments and complaints process, to encourage feedback of any kind therefore when interacting with a customer who identifies they would like to raise a compliment or complaint staff would explain the best way to contact us.

Access to the language line

Due to this service being accessed by our staff the customer would need to be in contact with us already, this means that writing to us may be more difficult without their own translation services. This negative impact is minimised by the other channels available within the process, by visiting the Library and community HUB customers can access Language line to raise a compliment or complaint either with a member of staff or online in the express zone.

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 X	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 any significant changes to policy