

Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment

Customer First Strategy 2014-2017



Durham County Council – Altogether Better equality impact assessment form

NB: Equality impact assessment is a legal requirement for all strategies plans, functions, policies, procedures and services. We are also legally required to publish our assessments.

You can find help and prompts on completing the assessment in the guidance from page 7 onwards.

Section one: Description and initial screening

Section overview: this section provides an audit trail.

Service/team or section: Head of Projects and Business Services

Lead Officer: Customer Relations Manager

Start date: November 2013

Service Improvement Officer (Equalities)

Subject of the Impact Assessment: (please also include a brief description of the aims, outcomes, operational issues as appropriate)

A review of the Customer First Strategy following consultation on a draft document and feedback obtained from the public consultation exercise.

The refresh of the Customer First Strategy is designed to build on the previous version, learning from both the successes and challenges to date. The revised strategy is intended to set the direction of travel for customer contact, engagement and feedback for the next three years with the continued aim of transforming the way that customers access our services whilst still meeting our financial targets.

There are a number of key drivers for the development and delivery of the Customer First Strategy, these include the increasing financial challenges faced by the Council, a number of significant policy and legislation changes by central government and the changing nature of the communications environment in which the Council operates, increased digital access and awareness and the associated change in customer expectations.

The revised Customer First Strategy will have an overarching vision **“to deliver customer services which provide value for money, flexibility and choice whilst placing our customers at the heart of everything we do”** and three overarching outcomes:

- i) A range of effective and easy to use ways in which our customers can deal with us
- ii) Responsive and customer focussed services
- iii) Customer feedback informs learning and results in improved services

Who are the main stakeholders: **Public / Employees / Elected Members / Partners/** Specific audiences/Other (please specify) –.

Is a copy of the subject attached?

Initial screening

The Customer First Strategy applies to all households equally regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, race and sexual orientation.

The strategy document sets out a clear commitment to ensuring that equality and fairness are key features of the Council's approach to customer service.

There will be a potential impact as the balance of access channels changes to reflect diminishing resources, the Government's strategy of having a digital channel as first choice of access and resident's changing behaviour in relation to technology.

Prompts to help you:

Who is affected by it? Who is intended to benefit and how? Could there be a different impact or outcome for some groups? Is it likely to affect relations between different communities or groups, for example if it is thought to favour one particular group or deny opportunities for others? Is there any specific targeted action to promote equality?

Is there an actual potential negative or positive impact on specific groups within these headings Indicate :Y = Yes, N = No, ?=Unsure

Gender	?	Disability	Y	Age	Y	Race/ethnicity	?	Religion or belief	?	Sexual orientation	?
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What evidence do you have to support your findings?

The Customer First Strategy covers a wide range of activity and we will take this EIA to screening stage only, as other in depth EIA's (Access Points, Contact Centre, Web Services, Customer Feedback) will be completed to cover related services.

Summary of Consultation Comments

The consultation included the following comments

- Some customers may not have online access/I don't use online services/I need to consider individual needs/elderly
- Still need a face to face contact/prefer face to face contact/prefer personal service /prefer phone /prefer letter
- Need to have a balance of technology and personal service
- Need to keep some face to face and telephone contact/prefer personal contact
- Older people and those with disabilities may not want to use or be able to use new technology

- Too far to travel to visit DCC/ don't want to travel
- Don't think online or self-service is best method for elderly / elderly may not have access to technology and may feel vulnerable/ need to provide for people with specific needs
- Not everyone has access to online services/Council needs to cater for everyone/poor internet availability in rural areas

Decision: Proceed to full impact assessment – No Date: June 6 2014

If you have answered 'No' you need to pass the completed form for approval & sign off.

Section two: Identifying impacts and evidence- Equality and Diversity

Section overview: this section identifies whether there are any impacts on equality/diversity/cohesion, what evidence is available to support the conclusion and what further action is needed.

	Identify the impact : does this increase differences or does it aim to reduce gaps for particular groups?	Explain your conclusion, including relevant evidence and consultation you have considered.	What further action is required? (Include in Sect. 3 action plan)
Gender			
Age			
Disability			

Race/Ethnicity			
Religion or belief			
Sexual Orientation			

How will this promote positive relationships between different communities?

Section three: Review and Conclusion

Summary: please provide a brief overview, including impact, changes, improvements and any gaps in evidence.			
Action to be taken	Officer responsible	Target Date	In which plan will this action appear
Review Following Cabinet report	Mary Readman	July 2014	
When will this assessment be reviewed?	Date:		
Are there any additional assessments that need to be undertaken in relation to this assessment?			
Head of Service - sign off: Customer Relations Policy and Performance Manager			Date:
Service equality representative - sign off: Customer Relations, Policy and Performance Manager			Date:

Please email your completed Impact Assessment to the, Service Improvement Officer (Equalities)