

Equality impact assessments – for services, policies and projects

What is an equality impact assessment?

An equality impact assessment is an important part of our commitment to delivering better services for our communities. The form will help us find out what impact or consequences our functions, policies, procedures and projects have on our communities, as well as employees and potential employees.

By undertaking an impact assessment, we are able to:

- Take into account the needs, experiences and circumstances of those groups of people who use (or don't / can't use) our services.
- Identify any inequalities people may experience.
- Think about the other ways in which we can deliver our services which will not lead to inequalities.
- Develop better policy-making, procedures and services.

Background

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| Name of service / policy / project and date | 2020 Vision - Business case for sharing customer and support services |
| Lead officer | Mark Sheldon |
| Other people involved in completing this form | Mark Sheldon, Richard Gibson, Judy Hibbert |

Step 1 - About the service / policy / project

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| <p>What is the aim of the service / policy / project and what outcomes is it contributing to</p> | <p>The aim of the business case for sharing Customer and Support Services is to share the service with the 2020 partnership; this will be a 4-way share between Cheltenham, Cotswolds, Forest and West Oxfordshire Councils.</p> <p>For the first year, the service will be shared on an “as is” basis, with no changes to the way the service is delivered. From year 1 onwards, it is likely that the service will be delivered through a Teckal company, though this will be subject to a separate business case to be considered by the Councils in late Summer / Autumn 2016.</p> <p>Customer Services are the main point of contact for all enquirers who do not contact individual services directly, whether by phone, face to face or email. Customer Services either handle the enquiry at the first point of contact, signpost and redirect to another service/organisation or work in partnership with another service to resolve the enquiry or fulfil the customer’s requirements.</p> <p>The council’s payment system is managed within the customer service function and enables customers to make payments in person at the cash hall, postal payments, mediated telephone payments, automated telephone payments and electronic payments via the council’s website.</p> <p>The Support Services team provide support to the entire organisation, managing incoming and outgoing post and goods, providing a courier service to the satellite locations, including Cheltenham Borough Homes and the Cheltenham Trust. They manage a central purchasing facility for stationery, office supplies and furniture. The team are the named key holders for the Municipal Offices and are responsible for opening and securing the building at the start and close of business. The team also undertake the car park income collections from the council’s off street car parks and provide change to the Cheltenham Trust.</p> <p>Through a cabinet Member Working Group, members agreed the most important outcomes that the services deliver:</p> <p>For the council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater service resilience if things go wrong • Greater understanding of our customers so that we can use this to meet needs and expectations • Improving standards of service for customers • Empowering customer service staff to be champions for our customers • Improving efficiency of dealing with customer and community enquiries via members making sure that staff have the right tools to do their jobs <p>For our customers/communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication with customers through all parts of their journey e.g. emails to confirm payments, |
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| | <p>change in details etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A system that already knows who the customer is and their previous interactions so they don't have to repeat personal details and it's as speedy as possible • Meeting expectations about efficient interactions using more online technology e.g. planning application payments • A service that is available beyond the usual 9-5. • Avoiding customers having to repeat information across departments and potentially different partners, by investment in systems which provide 'a single view of the customer' • Automated telephone responses used appropriately to balance resource but be mindful that this is not to everyone's taste • Accessibility to ensure all our customers can enjoy a great service • Customers know that they are contacting CBC (branding and phone numbers) and will benefit from speaking to staff with local knowledge <p>Special requirements that we need to think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interface with Ubico is very important • Interface with CBH e.g. two area offices • Developing a system that can be integrated and good communication with CBH and the Trust on areas of shared interest e.g. what's on in tourism, cricket? • Must maintain link with REST and any retained services or any future devolved services. • Service/technology solutions must be transportable in order to support the office relocation to Delta Place. • Service design solution must be scaleable to allow more partners to join or for services to be sold. |
| <p>Who are the primary customers of the service / policy / project and how do they / will they benefit</p> | <p>Indicative service data</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors to main reception – 25,000 per annum • Telephone calls to 262626 – 6,000 – 7,000 per month • Emails – 700+ per month • Works orders raised for Ubico - 16,000 per annum • Bookings taken for bulky waste collections - 2,000+ per annum • Garden waste subscription renewals – 15,000+ generating over £0.5m • Municipal Office cashiers processed nearly 57,000 payments totalling £11.75m in 14/15 • Collect and process £3.5m car parking income per annum |
| <p>How and where is the service / policy / project implemented</p> | <p>The service is based at the Municipal Offices</p> |

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| <p>What potential barriers might already exist to achieving these outcomes</p> | <p>Declining budgets has seen significant amounts of funding already taken out of the service. Accessibility to the municipal offices for the disabled and elderly No corporate collection or recording of equality data to benchmark against.</p> |
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Step 2 – What do you know already about your existing / potential customers

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| <p>What existing information and data do you have about your existing / potential customers e.g. Statistics, customer feedback, performance information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service take-up (inc number of customer visits /telephone call/accessing services) • Customer Surveys • Customer Complaints • Informal Customer Feedback • Performance data |
| <p>What does it tell you about who uses your service / policy and those that don't?</p> | <p>We do not have a CRM system so are unable to benchmark who access the service (in terms of their equality profile) against the profile for the population of Cheltenham.</p> |
| <p>What have you learnt about real barriers to your service from any consultation with customers and any stakeholder groups?</p> | <p>Informal consultation and customer feedback has resulted in the way we deliver some of our services e.g. location of Chip and Pin devices identified following consultation with customer in wheelchair.</p> |
| <p>If not, who do you have plans to consult with about the service / policy / project?</p> | <p>None at this stage</p> |

Step 3 - Assessing community impact

How does your service / policy / project impact on different groups in the community?

| Group | What are you already doing to benefit this group | What are you doing that might disadvantage this group | What could you do differently to benefit this group | No impact on this group |
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| People from black and minority ethnic groups | <p>The service treats all its customers within a legislative framework</p> <p>Relevant corporate policies re-enforce the belief that all customers should be treated fairly and equally (e.g. Think Customer)</p> <p>Varied levels of service provided to meet the different needs of customers including working with other agencies where necessary</p> <p>Staff trained to an appropriate level. Subscribe to and use a telephone interpretation service to overcome language barriers.</p> <p>Participate in corporate awareness initiatives e.g Bangladeshi womens' group</p> | <p>Forms/leaflets are not produced in different languages. There has not been any demand for this and documents/communications can be translated as and when required using the translation service.</p> <p>No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements.</p> | <p>Current arrangements satisfactory</p> | |
| Gender | <p>The service treats all its customers within a legislative framework</p> <p>Relevant corporate policies re-enforce the belief that all customers should be treated fairly and equally (e.g. Think Customer)</p> <p>Staff trained to an</p> | <p>No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements.</p> | <p>Current arrangements satisfactory</p> | <p>No differential impact on this group</p> |

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| | appropriate level | | | |
| Gender Reassignment | | | | No differential impact on this group |
| Older people / children and young people | <p>The service treats all its customers within a legislative framework</p> <p>Relevant corporate policies re-enforce the belief that all customers should be treated fairly and equally (e.g. Think Customer)</p> <p>Staff trained to an appropriate level.</p> | <p>No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements.</p> <p>Some challenges remain with access to the Municipal Offices with people with mobility problems due to steps at front of the municipal buildings. Though good disabled access from the rear of the building.</p> | Difficult to make any further improvements to access within current building. | |
| People with disabilities and mental health challenges | <p>Provision of hearing loops and meeting rooms.</p> <p>Improved disabled access</p> <p>Provision of low level counters for customers in wheelchairs.</p> <p>Flexible and varied levels of service provided to meet the different needs of customers.</p> <p>Customer Service staff can assist customers with the completion of forms.</p> | <p>No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements.</p> <p>Some challenges remain with access to the Municipal Offices with people with mobility problems due to steps at front of the municipal buildings. Though good disabled access from the rear of the building.</p> | Difficult to make any further improvements to access within current building.. | |
| Religion or belief | <p>The service treats all its customers within a legislative framework</p> <p>Relevant corporate policies re-enforce the belief that all customers should be treated fairly and equally (e.g. Think</p> | <p>No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements.</p> | | No impact identified |

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| | Customer) Staff trained to an appropriate level | | | |
| Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual people | The service treats all its customers within a legislative framework Relevant corporate policies re-enforce the belief that all customers should be treated fairly and equally (e.g. Think Customer) Staff trained to an appropriate level | No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements. | | No impact identified |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | | | | No differential impact on this group |
| Pregnancy & Maternity | | | | No differential impact on this group |
| Other groups or communities | The service treats all its customers within a legislative framework Relevant corporate policies re-enforce the belief that all customers should be treated fairly and equally (e.g. Think Customer) Staff trained to an appropriate level. Customer Service staff can assist customers with the completion of forms. | No formal monitoring is undertaken to evidence the impact of current working arrangements. | | |

Step 4 - what are the differences

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| <p>Are any groups affected in different ways to others as a result of the service / policy / project?</p> | <p>The service goes the extra mile to make sure that all customers can access the service. There are access challenges to the Municipal Offices but these cannot be resolved easily. Instead, access to the service will be significantly improved with the planned office relocation.</p> <p>We do not have a CRM system so are unable to benchmark who access the service (in terms of their equality profile) against the profile for the population of Cheltenham.</p> |
| <p>Does your service / policy / project either directly or indirectly discriminate?</p> | <p>None identified</p> |
| <p>If yes, what can be done to improve this?</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Are there any other ways in which the service / project can help support priority communities in Cheltenham?</p> | <p>Continue to explore training opportunities for staff.</p> |

Step 5 – taking things forward

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| <p>What are the key actions to be carried out and how will they be resourced and monitored?</p> | <p>Ensure service accessibility and the discretionary support the service provides to those that need it most continues within the shared service set-up – captured in the proposed outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Who will play a role in the decision-making process?</p> | <p>Our two elected members on the Joint Committee</p> |
| <p>What are your / the project's learning and development needs?</p> | <p>None identified</p> |
| <p>How will you capture these actions in your service / project planning?</p> | <p>Within the annual service plan.</p> |