

## Customer service centres

### Evidence based equality analysis

Main aims, purpose and outcomes and how does it fit in with the wider aims of the organisation:

- To ensure that all residents are able to contact the Council face to face.
- To be able to answer and resolve queries from residents and if unable to, ensure they are signposted to the correct location.

Lead officer: Craig Edwards

Stakeholders: People who visit Council customer service centres for a face to face service, including potentially all residents and visitors.

Equality analysis is a valuable tool to help embed equality into everything we do

While process is important, equality analysis is essentially about outcomes.

Lack of evidence of discrimination is not evidence of a lack of discrimination.

It is not acceptable to say that a policy is applied uniformly to all groups and is therefore fair and equal. Applying a policy or procedure consistently may result in differential outcomes for different groups.

For each of the areas overleaf, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a **positive, negative or neutral impact**, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a **high, medium or low assessment**. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

**High impact** – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.

**Medium impact** – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence

**Low impact** – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Target group / area			
<p><b>Race and ethnicity</b> (including Gypsies and Travellers; migrant workers, asylum seekers etc.)</p>		<p>We use the Big Word to act as an interpreter either on the phone or on a face to face basis, so that we can resolve queries from customers who do not speak English. All staff trained on how to use the Big Word service as part of induction. If face to face is most suitable, an appointment will be made for the customer to come back to meet with a customer services representative and an interpreter.</p> <p>Cultural awareness – training provided to staff including Gypsy and Traveller awareness and customers whose first language is not English.</p>	
<p><b>Disability</b> (as defined by the Equality Act - a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>		<p>Residents with hearing difficulties - all customer service centres are fitted with portable hearing loops for use both on the reception and also in interview rooms.</p> <p>We also provide a British Sign Language interpreter to deal</p>	

		<p>with customers who would prefer to communicate using sign language.</p> <p>Residents with a visual impairment or physical disability – all our customer service centres are fully compliant with the Equality Act and have regular access audits by the Council’s access officer.</p> <p>Assistance – offer one to one assistance with residents for form filling, etc.</p> <p>Signposting – staff know when to signpost customers to DIAL House, Shopmobility and other associated services if applicable.</p>	
<p><b>Gender/gender reassignment</b></p>		<p>Transgender awareness training provided to staff.</p> <p>Appointments – we do set up appointments for residents to speak to an advisor privately in an interview room. This is very good for residents who may have childcare issues and can only come at certain times during the day, as it means that they will not have to queue up.</p>	<p>Most customer service centres open from 8:30am to 5pm (apart from our locations where we work in partnership with the library). Outside of these hours customers can either contact the contact centre or self-serve online at any time.</p>

		<p>Opening hours – outside opening hours people can self-serve online. We now have self-serve points in all our customer service centres so that people have the option to self-serve if they wish.</p> <p>Parents with children – exit surveys suggested that parents would like more activities / toys for children in the waiting areas. We have therefore introduced static toys in suitable waiting areas.</p>	
<b>Religion and belief</b>		Staff have basic awareness of different religions and cultures	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> (including heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual)	No impact		
<b>Age</b> (children and young people aged 0 – 24, adults aged 25 – 50, younger older people aged 51 – 75/80; older older people 81+. The age categories are for illustration only as overriding consideration should be given to needs).	We cater for all age groups.	<p>Appointments – we do set up appointments for residents to speak to an advisor privately in an interview room.</p> <p>This is very good for residents who may be working or have childcare issues and can only come at certain times during the day, as it means that they will not have to queue up.</p>	

<b>Rural communities</b>		<p>i-connect kiosks have been installed in the most isolated rural areas in libraries. These enable residents to call the contact centre and speak face to face with an advisor. All services that customer services deliver can be contacted via an i-connect kiosk.</p> <p>All libraries (including those in rural areas) are trained to a basic level of customer service so that they can answer Council queries and accept in completed forms.</p>	
<b>Areas of deprivation</b>		<p>Customers visiting Ellesmere Port and Chester customer service centres after 3pm can park free of charge in any Council car park.</p> <p>Customers in the Vale Royal area can park in any Council car park free of charge.</p> <p>Customer service centres are sited in locations generally accessible by public transport</p>	<p>Cost of parking when visiting a customer services centre by car.</p>
<b>Human rights</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Health and wellbeing</b> (consider both the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime	N/A	N/A	N/A

and transport, as well as the possible impacts on lifestyles and the effect there may be on health and care services)			
<b>Procurement/Partnership</b> (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Action plan:**

<b>Actions required</b>	<b>Key activity</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Outcomes required</b>	<b>Officer responsible</b>	<b>Review date</b>
Meet with minority groups to look at areas for continual improvement and best practice.	Already have regular quarterly review meetings with several minority groups throughout the borough. Keep these meetings regular to ensure any issues / areas for improvement are identified and acted upon.	Medium	Improvements to service delivery for minority groups. Services based on consultation and involvement of residents (including minority groups).	Craig Edwards	1 January 2014
To ensure everybody working on face to face is trained up to a level so that they can deal with any of the diverse customers we deal with on a daily basis.	Ongoing awareness training for all staff.	High	Staff able to deal with any customer who comes in to a customer service centre.	Craig Edwards	1 January 2014

Library staff able to offer a full range of customer services (and vice versa in areas were libraries and customer services are working in partnership).	Ongoing training for both library and customer services staff.	High	Any member of staff should be able to deal with a customer service or library enquiry from a customer.	Craig Edwards	1 January 2014
Ensure Make or Buy review considers equality impact	Review analysis as proposals emerge	High	Any changes to service need to be considered in light of potential impact	Craig Edwards	1 January 2014

Sign off	
Lead Officer:	Craig Edwards
Approved by Head of Service:	Maria Byrne on 3 July 2013
<b>Moderation and/or Scrutiny</b>	
Date:	Moderated at directorate equality group 18 September 2013
<b>Date analysis to be reviewed based on rating</b> (high impact – review in one year, medium impact - review in two years, low impact in three years)	

**Please forward the completed Equality Analysis to the Equality and Diversity Managers for publishing on the Council's website**