

Ashford Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessments

Stage 1 - Screening tool

General information		
1.	Name/s of policy, procedure, or practice:	Customer Care Policy
2.	Service:	ICT & Customer Services
3.	Policy Owner:	Julie Rogers
4.	Lead officer:	Rob Neil
5.	Date of screening:	1 st November, 2008
6.	Is this a proposed or existing policy, procedure or practice?	Updated existing policy
Aims of policy and monitoring arrangements		
7.	What are the overall aim/s or purpose of the policy, procedure or practice?	The document has been designed to provide corporate policy guidelines to support the delivery of customer care throughout the Council.
8.	Who is intended to benefit from the policy, procedure or practice?	Staff, customers, partners, contractors, third party suppliers, voluntary sector.
9.	Are any other Services involved in the delivery of the policy, procedure or practice?	Yes. All Services
10.	Are any partner agencies involved in the delivery of the policy, procedure or practice?	Yes. All partner agencies, e.g., KCC, VAB, CAB, HI Kent, Post Office etc.
11.	Do you monitor the policy, procedure or practice in relation to any of the following?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complaints <input type="checkbox"/> Eligibility criteria <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PIs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service uptake <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> User satisfaction <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
12.	If you answered yes to any of the above, do you collect this data broken down by any of the following?	<input type="checkbox"/> Age <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Gender <input type="checkbox"/> Faith <input type="checkbox"/> Race <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
13.	Has any related consultation with service users taken place on the policy, procedure or practice within the last two years?	Yes If Yes, who was consulted and what were the findings? Commencing 9 th September 2008, customer services undertook to communicate with groups/organisations from the six strands of diversity to develop a dialogue and perform a consultation process for reviewing the

	<p>customer service policy document. The dialogue and consultation process was as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mails, telephone calls and letters were sent to twenty-one groups/organisations representing the six strands of diversity requesting participation and input to improving contact with the Council and customer service. • Follow-up e-mails and letters were sent 10 days after original contact and invited representatives to a Focus Group in October. • Due to the number of apologies sent, the meeting was cancelled. • Contact was made with all the representatives to ask their most favoured method for consultation. Completing a survey was the most popular choice. • Survey was produced and sent to all representatives. • Lead officer attended an International Assoc., open day at International House and hand distributed surveys to many of the diversity groups and discussed their views on accessing Council services. • Despite many attempts to receive the completed surveys, only four have been returned. • Comments received from face to face discussions and from survey returns have been incorporated into the revised policy document. <p>Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out on a regular basis throughout the year and views and comments are taken into consideration in reviewing how the Council serves its customers.</p> <p>Participation in a Mystery Shopper exercise is carried out on front line services on an annual basis, and results are duly considered to improve service delivery.</p>
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Making a judgement				
14.	Does the evidence considered above indicate that the policy, procedure or practice affects any groups differently, or that needs may be unmet?	Yes If yes, state whether this is positive or negative	No X	Issue / evidence
15.	Age Older people (50+) Younger people (17-25) and children			
			X	
16.	Disability Mobility Sensory Learning Mental health		X	
			X	
			X	
			X	
17.	Gender Women Men Transgender		X	
			X	
			X	
18.	Race White Mixed Asian or Asian British Black or Black British Chinese or other ethnic group Other not listed		X	
			X	
			X	
			X	
			X	
			X	
19.	Religion & Belief Faith Groups		X	
20.	Sexual orientation Lesbians Gay men Bisexuals		X	
			X	
			X	
Conclusions				
21.	If the policy, procedure or practice affects any group differently, can this be legally justified?	Yes/No N/A		
22.	Does the policy, procedure or practice miss any opportunities to promote equality or good inter-group relations?	No		
23.	Is there a need to gather more information than is currently available to assess the impact of the policy, procedure or practice?	Yes Due to the lack of interest shown from the groups representing the six strands of diversity and lack of willingness to participate in the consultation process, it would be beneficial to continuously strive		

		to make contact and develop a dialogue with these communities to encourage feedback and identify any future improvements.
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Conclusions		
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24.	Is it possible to easily modify this policy, procedure or practice to address any issues highlighted above? Please give details of how and when this could be implemented.	<p>Yes: It is easy to modify the policy, but cascading new/improved practices and procedures throughout a Council, where many staff and contractors are its interface with the public, can take time. It is suggested however, that the policy be revised on an annual basis and to accommodate any improved methods for delivering customer services that are highlighted from the ongoing consultation process with all customers including representatives from the six strands of diversity.</p>
25.	Based on your answers to the questions above, what is the relative priority of this policy, procedure or practice for full assessment?	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low* <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p>*Low priority policies, procedures and practices do not have to under-go full assessment.</p>
26.	If you identified this policy, procedure or practice as a medium or high priority, why was this?	<p><input type="checkbox"/> It is a major policy, procedure or practice, in terms of its scale or significance for ABC's activities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High relevance to equality, equal opportunities or good inter-group relations / likely to have a significant impact on people from diverse groups</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Possible/actual negative impact identified.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient information/evidence to make a judgement.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____</p>
27.	Please indicate the date a full assessment is proposed to commence:	

Additional comments

If you have any additional comments to make, please include here:

SIGNED:

Screening Lead Officer:

Head of Service:

Diversity Champion: