

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(Updated Nov 2024)

Item name	Details
Title of service or policy	Unified Communications
Name of directorate and service	Resources Directorate, IT Services
Name and role of officers completing the EIA	Liam Abbott – Head of Digital and Customer Experience
Date of assessment	5 th December 2024

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community. The main aim is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and also to identify areas where equality can be better promoted. Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so leave blank any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
<p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How the service/policy is delivered and by whom ● If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations ● Intended outcomes 	<p>This is a replacement of the existing 'legacy' telephony and contact centre systems with a modern cloud solution. Responsibility for the implementation is with IT Services, Liam Abbott is the SRO and Mandy Bishop is the Executive Sponsor. Intended outcome is a significantly improved experience for residents and service users when contacting the council via methods such as telephone, email, social media, WhatsApp and Webchat. Alongside an improved experience for staff.</p>
<p>1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? ● Is it a national requirement?). ● How much room for review is there? 	<p>Replacement service, modernising our telephone and communications.</p>
<p>1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?</p>	<p>Links to the Customer Experience Framework launched by BANES in 2023</p>

2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
<p>2.1 What equalities training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?</p>	<p>All B&NES staff receive mandatory Equality and Diversity training.</p>
<p>2.2 What is the equalities profile of service users?</p>	<p>Service users could be visitors to B&NES, residents and staff therefore the profile is unknown.</p>
<p>2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>	<p>Gaps identified in areas such as digital inclusion for things like multiple languages and being able to support in areas such as sign language or people who are deaf or hard of hearing.</p>
<p>2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>	<p>No consultations have been undertaken yet.</p>
<p>2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this?</p>	<p>The project is just starting and so this is a moving area. Clare Morris is leading our Customer Experience workstream of the project and will be consulting with residents and service users alongside working with our internal teams to improve access to council services for all users who require equality considerations.</p>

3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
<p>3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics</p>	<p>This the start of project and therefore we haven't completed any mappings yet</p> <p>Throughout the process officers will be following accessibility standards: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps</p> <p>There is anticipation that this project will offer wide ranging improvements in communication means and accessibility options for all residents, visitors and staff.</p> <p>It is already known that the following options will be available at point of contact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Verbal to written word transcription</i> 	<p>Employees will require training and may need individual support to move towards a multi-communication channel service.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to how best communicate the available options to service users as and when it is available.</p> <p>Pilot web bots are already in place on the B&NES website for limited services, these are already demonstrating a high volume of use and initial feedback has been positive.</p> <p>Options of phone calls will still be available for people that prefer this.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A wide range of translated languages.</i> • <i>Web bots to support people who find using the telephone difficult or expensive or are unavailable or unviable to use.</i> <p>The finer details are not yet available as the project is in the early process. Detailed EqlA's will be undertaken and updated throughout the installation of the project.</p>	
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4. Bath and North East Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when

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5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Liam Abbott, Head of Digital and Customer Experience

Date: 5th December 2024