

Reasons for carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment:

To look at how an initiative will be delivered to the community we serve and consider the following:

- Do we understand the diverse needs of our community?
- Do our services meet the diverse needs of our community?
- Do we provide an *'appropriate and professional service'* to people regardless of their gender, race, disability, language, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief?
- Do our staff understand and meet the diverse needs of our community?

This is not a new idea.



What are Equality Impact Assessments?

Equality Impact Assessments have been developed to help the public sector to assess the likely impact of an initiative on certain groups of people who are protected under anti-discrimination law. The aim is to identify potential risks of unlawful discrimination and opportunities to promote equality. To do this we need to look at what impact attitudinal, institutional and environmental barriers are likely to have on people's opportunities to access services and realise their potential. (See social difference diagram).

**You are not alone -
Doing equality is everyone's duty.**



Who is protected under anti-discrimination law?

People covered by the legislation include women, men, disabled people, people from different racial groups (including gypsies and travellers), people of different religions or beliefs, lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transsexuals.

Other commitments on equality

We are committed to treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality in the conduct of public business and administration of justice. We also have commitments to consider how to promote the rights and inclusion of Children and Young People (age 0 – 25 years) and Older People (over 50 years).



One size does not fit all

What does 'impact' mean?

There are two possible types of impact – negative (adverse) and positive:

Example of a negative impact - An event is held in a venue that is not physically accessible to disabled people.

Example of a positive impact - An event is run to target older women to raise awareness of the health benefits of good home heating.

We are looking for evidence of a risk of discrimination occurring or continuing unless remedial steps are taken. For example, lower take-up rates among certain groups of people or an eligibility criteria which unintentionally disadvantages some people. There is nothing to fear in finding out whether an initiative has a negative impact for equality – that is the purpose of an equality impact assessment – We are more vulnerable if we fail to identify something that we can remedy. By doing this we will be able to improve how we deliver our services to the diverse community we serve.



Better access for disabled people = Better access for all

How do we do an Equality Impact Assessment?

There are 3 parts to carrying out an equality impact assessment.



Don't leave it too late - Think ahead.

Part A – Screening

We screen the initiative to estimate its relevance to our general equality duties and its likely impact on people covered by equality legislation. This will help to establish whether the initiative is likely to have a **high, medium, low or no risk** in terms of the general equality duties. This takes into account the number of people affected, the nature of the service, the scale and public profile of the initiative. The level of risk will determine whether a detailed equality impact checklist should be carried out and the timescale for completion.



Involve different people to get different views.

Part B – Equality Impact Checklist

We carry out a more detailed checklist to identify opportunities within the initiative to promote equality and good community relations between different

groups of people. This part looks at activities that are covered by specific equality duties and codes of practices, including consultation, accessibility, staff training, procurement, harassment and equal opportunities monitoring of customers and staff. This will help to build evidence to better inform policy development and business planning. Such evidence may be *quantitative* (e.g. statistics, surveys) or *qualitative* (e.g. national policy, customer complaints or anecdotal). This information should be readily available or accessible.



Be prepared to learn as you go.

Part C – Conclusions

Finally we draw conclusions from the assessment on how well we are meeting the diverse needs of our community and what steps we can take to mitigate any risk of unlawful discrimination and improve our overall performance. This is where we can identify barriers to achieving improvement, such as gaps in data, lack of resources or capacity issues. Tackling these barriers may form the basis of future action. Such actions should be **SMART** (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timebound) and include ways to monitor equality outcomes. Also in this part we can include examples of best practice in promoting equality and good community relations.



Different angles = Different solutions.

How do we report the outcomes of an Equality Impact Assessment?

There is a statutory duty to publish the outcomes of equality impact assessments as evidence of compliance with the legislation. It is suggested that a narrative report be produced setting out the outcomes of the assessment and actions to be taken to mitigate the risk of discrimination and improve our equality performance. The outcomes of the assessment should inform relevant action plans, business plans and/or operational plans.

Making what we do better for everyone



Benefits

It is recognised that carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment is a challenging task, but it is essential to fulfil our statutory duties and will improve service delivery by ensuring that our customer's needs are met and staff are better able to respond to the community we serve. Other benefits include:

- Promoting equality, fair treatment and respect
- Increasing customer and staff satisfaction
- Better understanding and sensitivity to people's needs
- Improving business planning and value for money
- Promoting good practice to external organisations

Part A: Screening

Name of initiative	
Introduction of Customer Service Charter	
Name of lead officer	Bev Davies
Directorate/Department	Customer Service, Resources Directorate
<i>What is the main purpose of this initiative? (please give a brief description)</i>	
To state explicitly the minimum customer service standards the citizens and customers of Bridgend can expect from ALL STAFF for ALL SERVICES of the Council.	
<i>What are the main activities covered by this initiative? (please give a summary)</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Single telephone number, address and email address ➤ Telephone calls will be answered within 30 seconds ➤ Voice mail use kept to a minimum ➤ Visitors calling at our offices will wait no longer than 10 minutes to be seen ➤ We will aim to respond to correspondence with 5 working days (minimum of an acknowledgement telling customers what happens next and when) ➤ Improved access to services – hearing loops, self serve kiosks, increased number of private meeting rooms, digital signage ➤ Access to services in alternative formats e.g. Braille, large print, Minicom, Welsh and other languages, BSL ➤ A fully bilingual (Welsh/English), transactional website 	
<i>Who will be directly affected by the delivery of this initiative? (e.g. staff, general public, specific section of the public)</i>	
<p>ALL STAFF in ALL SERVICES across the organisation. The Customer Service Centre staff at the Civic offices will act as advocate and conduit for customers' enquiries through the Civic offices however support will be required from all service areas to process tasks not within the remit of the Customer Service Centre. [Unclear at this stage how other services will measure effectiveness of the delivery of the commitments made in the Charter]</p> <p>The citizens of Bridgend – accessibility to services has been available on request or an ad-hoc basis previously however this is the first time we have corporately 'set out our stall'.</p>	

Prioritisation Matrix

Estimate the relevance of the initiative to the public duties on equality and good community relations.		Yes	No
Do the main activities of the initiative involve direct customer contact with the general public? (please tick)		x	
If so, what proportion of job roles involved in delivering the initiative will have direct contact with the general public? (please tick below as applicable)			
More than 70% of job roles	x	More than 30% of job roles	Less than 30% of job roles

Relevance to specific public equality duties	Yes	No
Could this initiative help the Council to do any of the following? (please tick below as applicable)		
<i>Promote equality of opportunity between women and men?</i>	x	
<i>Promote equality of opportunity and good community relations between people from different racial groups?</i>	x	
<i>Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people?</i>	x	
<i>Take steps to meet disabled people's needs even where this involves treating disabled people more favourably than others?</i>	x	
<i>Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?</i>	x	
<i>Encourage participation of disabled people in public life?</i>	x	
<i>Eliminate unlawful discrimination on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief?</i>	x	
<i>Tackle harassment on grounds of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief?</i>	x	
<i>Ensure the equal treatment of English and Welsh languages?</i>	x	

Relevance Scoring Matrix			
Relevance to duties	Yes + more than 70% = 4 Yes + more than 30% = 3	Yes + less than 30% = 2 No = 0	4
Relevance to specific duties	Yes x more than 6 = 4 Yes x 3 to 5 = 3	Yes x less than 3 = 2 No = 0	4
Total Relevance Score			8

Estimate the likely impact of the initiative on the public and good community relations. (please tick below as applicable)	Yes	No
<i>Could our lack of awareness of customer needs prevent a customer from fully benefiting from the initiative?</i>	x	
<i>Is this initiative delivered along with other public sector partner organisations or contractors?</i>		X
<i>Do the main activities of the initiative directly affect the quality of life, environment, prosperity, community safety, health or social inclusion of people in the community we serve?</i>	x	
Impact on specific equality groups	Yes	No
<i>Could the initiative impact on any of the following groups of people?</i> (please tick below as applicable)		
Women?	x	
Men?	x	
Disabled people?	x	
People from different racial groups?	x	
Welsh speakers?	x	
Young people (under 25 yrs)?	x	
Older people (over 50 yrs)?	x	
Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people?	x	
People of different religion or belief?	x	

Impact Scoring Matrix			
Impact on the public	Yes x 3 = 4 Yes x 2 = 3	Yes x 1 = 2 No x 3 = 0	4
Impact on equality groups	Yes x more than 6 = 4 Yes x 3 to 5 = 3	Yes x less than 3 = 2 No = 0	4
Total Impact Score			8

Priority level	Relevance Score		Impact Score	Total
	8	+	8	16

Score	Priority level	Recommendation
12 - 16	High	Carry out Part B +C within 3 months.
7 - 11	Medium	Carry out Part B + C within 6 months.
4 - 6	Low	Carry out Part B + C within 1 year.
0	None	No further action required.

Part B: Equality Checklist

Involvement of customers and partner organisations	Yes	No
Have customers been involved, or consulted with, in formulating this initiative?	X	
Have you used the Citizens Panel to gain input?	x	
Have you involved organisations that are representative of equality groups in the planning process?	X	
Have you taken specific action to involve people from equality groups in the planning stages? (please tick as applicable)	x	
<i>Women?</i>	X	
<i>Men?</i>	X	
<i>Disabled people?</i>	X	
<i>People from different racial groups?</i>	X	
<i>Welsh speakers?</i>	X	
<i>Young people (under 25 yrs)?</i>	X	
<i>Older people (over 50 yrs)?</i>	X	
<i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people?</i>	X	
<i>People of different religion or belief?</i>	x	
Is the involvement data broken-down by equality groups?	X	
Did people/organisations have an opportunity to provide feedback on their involvement in the planning process?	X	
<p>Evidence and options for improvement:</p> <p>Minimum standards are equal to or better than those offered by comparable organisations. Public consultation on Customer Charter attempted with all groups invited but little response at public meeting.</p> <p>It is the intention to carry out satisfaction surveys and gather suggestions from all customer segments when new Centre operational. Where appropriate we would publish suggestions and the actions taken to meet them in the Centre (using digital signage or other means). It is our intention to engage with the voluntary sector and other relevant organisations to hold 'open days' to meet with citizens and raise awareness of the help and assistance they can provide. Members have a meeting room in the Centre to hold 'surgeries' with Ward constituents. It is an objective of the CSC to become focal point in the community. Website is currently not bilingual and a major project is required to translate the English site into Welsh. Work is underway to meet the minimum 16 transactions (from CLG in England) mentioned in the WAG/SOCITM Strategy for Developing Council websites in Wales and this work has a completion target date of December 2008.</p>		

Monitoring for equality	Yes	No
Do you regularly collect information on your customers?		X
Is this customer information broken-down by equality groups?		X
Do you regularly use census, employment or other population information to compare with your customer profile?		X
Do you use this baseline data to monitor changes in your customer profile over time across the equality groups?		X
Do you use this monitoring information to inform your service's business plan or relevant operational plan?		X
Have equality or human rights issues been raised during an inspection or audit of an activity covered by the initiative?		X
Do you have any national or local performance indicators/targets relating to equality groups?		?
<p>Evidence and options for improvement:</p> <p>Information, appropriate to each service area, may have been collected by other Directorates, however as there is no common customer database this is not available across the organisation. The Charter will be initiated by the new Customer Service Centre with contacts being logged on the newly developed CRM system (an adaptation of the system developed by Cardiff City Council). This will enable the collection of data on number of visits/calls/emails to the Civic offices and the reasons for them. The CRM can hold customer preferences/additional needs to ensure communication with customer continues in the required/most appropriate format, however again as this is not a shared database customers will need to tell us more than once as the CRM will not update other customer databases.</p>		

Delivery to customers – Access issues	Yes	No
Is the service responsive to the different needs of people from the specific equality groups? (please tick as applicable)		
<i>Women?</i>	x	
<i>Men?</i>	x	
<i>Disabled people?</i>	x	
<i>People from different racial groups?</i>	x	
<i>Welsh speakers?</i>	x	
<i>Young people (under 25 yrs)?</i>	x	
<i>Older people (over 50 yrs)?</i>	x	
<i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people?</i>	X	
<i>People of different religion or belief?</i>	x	
Do you regularly ask customers about their access needs?		X**

Appendix A (i)

Is promotional material for the initiative available in Welsh?	x	
Is promotional material for the initiative available in alternative formats?(i.e. large print, Braille, easy read)	X*	
Does the initiative include provision for people's different language needs? (i.e. Welsh language, British Sign Language or minority languages)?	X	
Does the initiative include provision for people's different communication needs? (such as assistive technology, e.g. hearing loops, Minicom, SMS text, accessible web pages)	X	
Are these language and communication options well publicised to the public and staff?	X	
Are staff trained to be aware of people's different language and communication needs?		X
Is the service delivered from buildings or facilities that are physically accessible to customers?	X	
<p>Evidence and options for improvement:</p> <p>** this will commence when CSC and CRM operational</p> <p>* will be available on request, preference will be noted on CRM</p> <p>The Customer Service Centre is a new operational area, going live on 7 July 2008 and as such we will gather and act on information from customers. As there is no common, shared customer database this information will not be accessible by all services of the Council.</p> <p>The Customer Service Manager is in the process of recruiting Welsh speakers for the Customer Service Centre, however there are only a few Welsh speakers across the organisation. Other language requirements will be met via 'The Big Word' translation service and any requirement for BSL will be arranged via appointment with local BSL providers. Staff will be on hand to show customers how to use self serve kiosks. The CSC staff will ask customers for feedback i.e. if there is anything we should be doing that we're currently not doing to help make their experience of dealing with BCBC a better one. By optimising on the visits from third party organisations CSC staff will learn how to adapt our service delivery and add value.</p> <p>Staff in the CSC and across the organisation need training on equalities. It is unclear how other service areas will meet the commitments made in the Customer Charter and there is concern how good practice in the CSC will be cascaded through other service areas and consequently customers will receive a varying degree of service across the organisation.</p>		

Delivery to customers – staffing issues	Yes	No
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Appendix A (i)

Do you know whether the staff delivering the initiative reflect the diversity of the community served?		X
Are the staff delivering the initiative aware of their duties under the equality legislation?		X
Have staff received training to make them aware of the issues involved in delivering this initiative to the different equality groups? (please tick as applicable)		x
<i>Women?</i>		X
<i>Men?</i>		X
<i>Disabled people?</i>		X
<i>People from different racial groups?</i>		X
<i>Welsh speakers?</i>		X
<i>Young people (under 25 yrs)?</i>		X
<i>Older people (over 50 yrs)?</i>		X
<i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people?</i>		X
People of different religion or belief?		X
Do staff need further training to make them aware of the issues involved in delivering this initiative to the different equality groups?	x	
<p>Evidence and options for improvement:</p> <p>Some staff have received equalities training however the quality of training delivered and/or time lapsed since last training unknown. All staff should have same quality training delivered as soon as possible to ensure consistency. Equalities to be regular agenda item for team meetings and feature in PDPs.</p>		

Delivery - Partnerships	Yes	No
Do you regularly inform partner organisations and/or contractors about the Council's commitment to equality?		x
Do you regularly request partners and/or contractors to provide evidence of their commitment to equality?		X
Do you include equality requirements in partnership terms of reference, contracts, or service level agreements?		X
<p>Evidence and options for improvement:</p> <p>[this section seems to refer to external partners and organisations however consideration should be given to provision of evidence by each directorate and/or service area regarding their commitment to the equalities agenda]</p> <p>Partnering agreements with Service areas to be amended to expressly state a commitment to equalities by both the service area and the Customer Service Centre. Any third party organisations partnering with BCBC via the CSC will be required to demonstrate their commitment to equalities.</p>		

Harassment, discrimination and human rights	Yes	No
Have there been any complaints about discrimination or possible discrimination involving the initiative from employees, service users, members of the public or Councillors?	X	
Have there been issues raised about discrimination or potential discrimination involving the initiative from employees, service users, members of the public or Councillors?	X	
Have there been any complaints or issues raised about human rights?		X
Have harassment, domestic abuse or hate crime figures informed the development of your initiative?		X
Evidence and options for improvement: Written complaints received about lack of availability of Welsh speakers. Welsh speakers are being recruited, 'Big Word' translation service will be available for other languages, BSL practitioners can be arranged by appointment. Kiosks and service desks are varying heights to accommodate wheelchair users. Text Phone and hearing loops available for hearing impaired customers. Training is required to deal with specifics such as domestic abuse and hate crime.		

Improving	Yes	No
Is there a system by which feedback from customers, including those from the different equality groups, can be used to make changes and improvements? (please tick as applicable)		
<i>Women?</i>	X	
<i>Men?</i>	X	
<i>Disabled people?</i>	X	
<i>People from different racial groups?</i>	X	
<i>Welsh speakers?</i>	X	
<i>Young people (under 25 yrs)?</i>	X	
<i>Older people (over 50 yrs)?</i>	X	
<i>Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people?</i>	X	
People of different religion or belief?	X	
Is there a system by which feedback from staff can be used to make changes and improvements?	X	
Evidence and options for improvement: [This is the 'to be' rather than the 'as is' situation] The Customer Charter provides several methods of contact (phone, email, minicom, letter, BSL, multilingual, Braille etc). Regular team meetings with staff to discuss customer needs and issues as they arise. Customers will be encouraged to give us feedback and make suggestions as to how we could		

improve.

Improving the services offered by other customer contact points and using a 'battle bus' to tour the remote areas and bring services to citizens.

Part 3: Conclusions

Are there any examples of equality best practice in your initiative that you would like to highlight?

The approval and publication of the Customer Charter is the first step in the 'services for all' vision, for services to be accessible to all our community, regardless of circumstances and access requirements.
Hearing loops, availability of Welsh speakers, translation service for other languages, provision of BSL, counters and self serve kiosks suitable for wheelchair users and private interview rooms will be provided in the CSC however an action plan is needed for all service areas to detail how they will ensure consistency of delivery regarding access to services.

Are there any options for improvement and potential future action that you would like to highlight?

Whilst the customer service centre will be the main point of contact for the organisation customers will interact with the organisation at other contact points and additional services and accessibility will be of varying standards.
Broadening the remit of the customer outreach points.
Using a 'battle bus' to tour the more remote parts of our catchment and bring services to citizens

Are there any barriers to achieving these improvements?

Lack of awareness – staff don't know what they don't know
Lack of training
Cost of provision of additional services
Other priorities

