



# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

## Partial Assessment Form

<b>Policy, practice, function or project assessed</b>	Handling of Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Paul Knight
<b>Team</b>	Paul Williams, Andrew Francis
<b>Start date of assessment</b>	10/08/09
<b>Completion of assessment</b>	28/10/09

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

## **A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED**

### **A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?**

A small minority of complainants may pursue their complaints in ways that can impede the investigation of their complaint or impose a significant and disproportionate resource requirement on the Council. These complaints may be justified but inappropriately pursued. The policy outlines the procedure for identifying such complainants, suggested actions that may be taken and the ways in which decisions will be taken and reviewed. The aim of the policy is to ensure that unreasonable or unreasonably persistent complainants are dealt with fairly, honestly and properly, whilst protecting other service users, officers, Members and the Council against unnecessary detriment.

### **A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?**

It is related to various other Council policies, including Responding to Complaints, Comments and Compliments, and also links into the new Council Action of working towards Customer Service Excellence across the authority.

### **A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community?**

The policy is intended to protect Council staff and Council resources. It could potentially affect any complainant to the Council (of which there are around 150 a year), although it is expected that the policy will be applied rarely (fewer than 10 times a year).

### **A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching?**

The policy applies across all Council service areas and can feasibly affect any complainant.

### **A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details.**

No changes are expected in the near future.

### **A6. Is this a new or existing policy or function?**

It is a new Council Policy.

**B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION**

It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

**B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?**

On closure of complaints, a satisfaction survey is issued. This is accompanied by an equality monitoring survey. Unfortunately, there has been a very poor response rate to this survey.

**B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?**

There has been no comparison so far, as the data required to carry out such an exercise is lacking. **ACTION:** It will be necessary to try and improve the collection rates of this data, in order to make a valid comparison with the wider South Cambridgeshire community.

**B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?**

Improvements need to be made to the data collection process in order to try and improve response rates.

**B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?**

In forming this policy, the Local Government Ombudsman's guidance has been consulted extensively. Consideration was also given to other local authority examples of unreasonable complaint policies.

**B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?**

The policy has been formed through extensive consultation with HR and the Service First Steering Group, and has also been taken to EMT and the relevant portfolio holder.

**B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.**

<b>C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION</b>		
Assess the potential impact on each of the equality strands/groups. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.		
<b>DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT</b>	<b>Nature of Impact</b> (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	<b>Extent of Impact</b> (Low, Medium, High)
The policy is applied equally based on the circumstances of each complaint. There will be no specific impact on any of the equality strands.		
<b>GENDER:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women	Neutral	
<b>RACE:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups	Neutral	
<b>DISABILITY:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people	Neutral	
<b>AGE:</b> Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups	Neutral	
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION:</b> potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people	Neutral	
<b>RELIGION/FAITH:</b> Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups	Neutral	
<b>OTHER - Rurality</b>	Neutral	

**PLEASE NOTE:** Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

**C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.**

No adverse impacts have been identified.

**C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?**

Equality of access is encouraged since all complaints are dealt with fairly and equitably.

**C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.**

Complaints are reported quarterly to the Service First group, Senior Management Team and the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Customer Service. This reporting will now include details on the application of this policy.

<b>D. CONCLUSIONS</b>			
<b>D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?</b>	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “NO”, what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?</b>
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?</b>	Yes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If “YES”, will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?</b>
	No?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?</b>	Yes?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>If “YES”, have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities?</b> Further work will need to be done to encourage returns of the Equality Monitoring form.</p> <p><b>Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when?</b> The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.</p>
	No?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p><b>Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments?</b> No.</p>
<b>D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?</b>			

**ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice**

<b>Recommendation/ issue to be addressed</b>	<b>Planned Milestone</b>	<b>Planned completion of milestone (date)</b>	<b>Officer Responsible</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Ensure that equality monitoring is happening across all equality strands	April 2010		Paul Knight	
Work towards improving collection rates of equality data	April 2010		Paul Knight	

**RESOURCES - Does the above action plan require any additional resources?**

No additional resources are required.

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING - Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.**

Actions will be monitored by the Equality and Diversity team, and through Service First.

**SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance**

<b>Signature of Lead Officer</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:</b>		<b>Date:</b>

**Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.**