



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	Responding to Complaints, Comments and Compliments
Lead Officer	Paul Knight
Team	Paul Williams, Andrew Francis
Start date of assessment	10/08/09
Completion of assessment	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?

The policy provides Council Officers and Members a formalised and clear structure defining what constitutes a complaint, comment or compliment, and a framework for responding to this correspondence.

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

The policy is clearly related to the Handling of Unreasonable or Unreasonably Persistent Complaints Policy, and also links in with the new Council Action of working towards meeting the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

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 puts in place a clearly defined system detailing how the Council will register and respond to complaints. This could feasibly be of benefit throughout the district, and will clearly benefit those who complain about a Council service (around 150 a year).

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

The policy will be implemented across all corporate service areas and will be applied to all complaints, comments and compliments that are received by the Council.

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.

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

It is a new policy that will formalise existing Council procedure.

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 will go to the Portfolio holder over the next few months.

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

Members of the East of England Regional Assembly Customer Service Managers Network were also consulted whilst researching for the policy.

C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION		
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.		
DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
No restrictions are placed on how people can go about registering a complaint, so as to not disadvantage those who may not be able to complain in writing.		
GENDER: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women	Neutral	
RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different race/ethnic groups	Neutral	
Foreign language complaints would be dealt with in the same manner as English language complaints.		
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people	Neutral	
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups	Neutral	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people	Neutral	
RELIGION/FAITH: Identify the potential impact the policy on different religious/faith groups	Neutral	
OTHER - Rurality	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?

Having an effective policy for responding to complaints, comments and compliments helps to promote excellent community relations, and also helps work towards being a listening Council. Managerial discretion is used when dealing with individual complaints in order to ensure that equality of access is preserved for all.

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.

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

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress
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

Signature of Lead Officer		Date:
Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:		Date:

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