

Chesterfield Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment - Full Assessment Form

Service Area: Customer Services and Organisational Development

Section: Customer Centric Services

Lead Officer: Fran Rodway

Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy the preliminary EIA is being produced for: Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:

Existing

Changed X

New/Proposed

STEP 1 – MAKE SURE YOU HAVE CLEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

What is the aim of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

The aim of the policy is to use the funding available to relieve financial hardship associated with paying housing costs.

Who is the policy, project, service, function or strategy going to benefit and how?

It will benefit Chesterfield residents who are already claiming housing benefit to assist with paying their rent liability.

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

Help claimants through difficult circumstances; offer temporary respite by granting additional financial assistance; prevent homelessness; support vulnerable people in the transition to independent living; and encourage and sustain people in employment. The policy will ensure that these outcomes are achieved fairly and consistently.

What barriers exist for both the Council and the groups/people with protected characteristics to enable these outcomes to be achieved?

This policy aims to assist some of the most vulnerable people in the community and needs to be simple and easily implemented and understood. This is why each claim is considered individually and claimants are given all of the support they need to access the scheme. Officers in Revenues, Customers Service, and Housing are fully aware of DHP's and the process of claiming.

STEP 2 – COLLECTING YOUR INFORMATION

What existing data sources do you have to assess the impact of the policy, project, service, function or strategy?

Existing computer systems, and data collections tools updated for every DHP claim.

STEP 3 – FURTHER ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Please list any additional engagement activities undertaken to complete this EIA e.g. met with the Equalities Advisory Group, local BME groups, Employee representatives etc. Could you also please summarise the main findings.

Date	Engagement Activity	Main findings
Ongoing	With claimants, including through their representatives	Identified that proactive implementation of the policy is needed to achieve maximum effective impact
Planned	Equalities Advisory Group	Not yet known

STEP 4 – WHAT'S THE IMPACT?

Is there an impact (positive or negative) on some groups/people with protected characteristics in the community? (think about race, disability, age, gender, religion or belief, sexual orientation and other socially excluded communities or groups). You may also need to think about sub groups within each equalities group or protected characteristics e.g. older women, younger men, disabled women etc.

Please describe the potential impacts both positive and negative and any action we are able to take to reduce negative impacts or enhance the positive impacts.

Impact on Customers

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
Age – including older people and younger people.	Some of the new customer service channels available are particularly popular with younger people.	Customers may not have access to technology, or the skill sets to use the services. Complex enquiries are often best handled face to face.	Tailor services to needs of customers. Educate customers over time to options available. Continue to provide human contact for those service deliverables where customer reassurance is required.
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.	The Customer Service Centre is a warm welcoming environment, and is easily accessible Having more services based in one location results in customers receiving improved access to employees with specialist skills, e.g. BSL. New communication methods may be preferred, e.g. texting for hearing impaired customers	Customers may not have access to technology, or the skill sets to use the services. Complex enquiries are often best handled face to face.	Assess facilities and access issues and consider opportunities for improvements. Tailor services to needs of customers. Continue to provide human contact for those service deliverables where customer reassurance is required.
Gender – men, women and transgender.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marital status including civil partnership.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider	Recent investment in the Customer Service Centre has improved facilities	N/A	Assess facilities and access issues and consider opportunities for

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
breastfeeding mothers.	for pregnant women and young families e.g. improved seating, rest areas, ramps for pushchairs etc.		improvements.
Sexual Orientation – Heterosexual, Lesbian, gay men and bi-sexual people.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ethnic Groups	Consolidating staff in one contact centre improves access to specialist skills, e.g. interpretation	Those for whom English is not a first language are disadvantaged but translation services are available	Arrange access to translation services
Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.	Customers are able to come to one place to resolve all of their housing and financial issues, as we work closely with our colleagues in Community Housing.	Complex enquiries are often best handled face to face.	Tailor services to needs of customers. Continue to provide human contact for those service deliverables where customer reassurance is required.

Impact on Employees

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
Age – including older people and younger people.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Group or Protected Characteristic	Positive impacts	Negative impacts	Action
Gender – men, women and transgender.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Marital status including civil partnership.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider breastfeeding mothers.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation – Heterosexual, Lesbian, gay men and bi-sexual people.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ethnic Groups	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.	N/A	N/A	N/A

From the information gathered above does the policy, project, service, function or strategy directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group or protected characteristic?

Yes
 No

If yes what action can be taken to stop the discrimination?

STEP 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISION MAKING

How has the EIA helped to shape the policy, project, service, function or strategy or affected the recommendation or decision?

The policy is reliant on contact with customers, and considering equalities has helped to reinforce the need to manage the impact of proposals for all groups. Staff play a significant role in shaping the customer experience. The impact for them has been properly considered too.

How are you going to monitor the policy, project, service, function or strategy, how often and who will be responsible?

The application of the policy will be reviewed after 6 months by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee. Any changes to the policy will be authorised appropriately within the Council.

STEP 6 – KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLICATION

Please note the draft EIA should be reviewed by the appropriate Head of Service/Service Manager and the Policy Service before WBR, Lead Member, Cabinet, Council reports are produced.

Reviewed by Head of Service/Service Manager

Name: Fran Rodway

Date: 5.8.13

Reviewed by Policy Service

Name: Katy Marshall

Date:

Final version of the EIA sent to the Policy Service

Decision information sent to the Policy Service