

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

November 2015

## THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES STATEMENT

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

<b>NAME OF NEW OR REVISED PROPOSAL*</b>	Review of opening hours of Customer Service Centres
<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	Corporate Services
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	Customer Services
<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>	David Titley
<b>DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW OR REVISION</b>	After council has made a decision on whether to implement or change the proposals

**\*Throughout this Equalities Impact Assessment Form, 'proposal' is used to refer to what is being assessed, and therefore includes policies, strategies, functions, procedures, practices, initiatives, projects and savings proposals.**

## INTRODUCTION

The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that Equalities issues have been consciously considered throughout the decision making processes of the work undertaken by every service area in the Council and work done at a corporate level.

The form should be used if you have identified a need for a full EIA following the screening process covered in the Equalities Implications in Committee Reports Guidance document (available on the Equalities and Welsh Language Portal on the intranet).

The EIA should highlight any areas of risk and maximise the benefits of proposals in terms of Equalities. It therefore helps to ensure that the Council has considered everyone who might be affected by the proposal.

It also helps the Council to meet its legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011. There is also a requirement under Human Rights legislation for Local Authorities to consider Human Rights in developing proposals.

The Council's work across Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights is covered in more detail through the Strategic Equalities Objectives and Action Plan 2012.

This approach strengthens work to promote Equalities by helping to identify and address any potential discriminatory effects before introducing something new or changing working practices, and reduces the risk of potential legal challenges.

When carrying out an EIA you should consider both the positive and negative consequences of your proposals. If a project is designed for a specific group e.g. disabled people, you also need to think about what potential effects it could have on other areas e.g. young people with a disability, BME people with a disability.

There are a number of supporting guidance documents available on the Equalities and Welsh Language Portal (the Committee report guidance mentioned above, the Consultation and Monitoring guidance) and the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language team can offer support as the EIA is being developed - the contact email is [equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk).

## PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

<b>1</b>	<p><b>What is the proposal intended to achieve?</b></p> <p>The proposal is to reduce the opening hours of the Customer Services Centres and discontinue the Mobile Customer Service Centre as part of a package of measures to reduce costs. The proposals would also standardise opening hours across sites and harmonize them with co-located Libraries.</p> <p>All sites apart from Penallta House will close 1 full day each week. Newbridge Cash Desk is currently closed 2 days each week and is not affected by these changes.</p> <p>To minimise the impact on customers at least 3 centres will be open every weekday morning and all centres will remain open for full days on Monday's, Tuesday's and Fridays as these are the busiest days of the week</p> <p>Saturday morning opening at Caerphilly, Risca, Hanbury Chapel and Blackwood have been retained to ensure that customers who cannot visit centres during the week, for example those who rely for transport on a relative who works full time during the week, are not disadvantaged.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Who are the service users affected by the proposal?</b></p> <p>The Centres are for the use of the general public to access council services or to pay for council services or bills. Surveys and research has shown that customers with the following characteristics are more likely to use the Centre's than the population as a whole.</p> <p>People with a disability or long-term health problem Older People People claiming welfare benefits</p>

## IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC AND STAFF

3	<p><b>Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals?</b></p> <p>There will be no change to the accessibility of the service apart from the changes in opening hours. All customers will be affected. However, the customers most affected by these changes will be those who have limited choice in the times that they are able to visit centres due to time constraints such as work or other commitments. Customers who have a disability or long term health problem, or are older, or receive welfare benefits are less likely to be in full time employment than the population average.</p>
	<p><b><u>Actions required</u></b></p> <p>Ensure that customers are aware that Penallta House is fully open throughout the working week (09:00 to 17:00) and that Caerphilly, Bargoed, Blackwood and Risca Centres are open on Saturday mornings.</p> <p>When centres are closed on weekdays customers are signposted to the nearest centre that is open.</p> <p>Ensure that customers are aware of other access channels (principally phone, web and other self-service processes) and are supported in accessing them. Ensure that customers are aware of other ways of making payments, e.g. Post office, Phone, Direct Debit, Web Site.</p>
4	<p><b>What are the consequences of the above for specific groups?</b></p> <p>The group most affected by change will be customers who would have difficulty in visiting centres during certain days in the week rather than any groups with protected characteristics.</p>
	<p><b><u>Actions required</u></b></p> <p>Use of the centres by customers with protected characteristics will be monitored after/if the changes have been made.</p>

## INFORMATION COLLECTION

<b>5</b>	<p><b>Is full information and analysis of users of the service available?</b></p> <p>The Centres are for the use of the general public to access council services or to pay for council services or bills. Surveys and research has shown that customers with the following characteristics are more likely to use the Centre's than the population as a whole.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People with a disability or long-term health problem</li><li>• Older People</li><li>• People claiming welfare benefits</li></ul> <p>This disproportionate use of the service by customers with these characteristics is consistent with the range of services offered and the access channel used, i.e. face to face.</p>
	<p><b><u>Actions required</u></b></p> <p>Use of the centres by customers with protected characteristics will be monitored after/if the changes have been made.</p>

## CONSULTATION

<b>6</b>	<p><b>What consultation has taken place?</b></p> <p>A consultation programme is in place to gather the views of customers. Survey forms and related committee reports are available at all sites and there are posters in the centres to ensure that customers are aware of the forms. Postal questionnaires are being sent to a random sample of customers to gain their views on opening hours, waiting times and waiting areas.</p>
	<p><b><u>Actions required</u></b></p> <p>The results of the surveys will require analysis. After any changes have been made (if agreed) customer satisfaction and opinion will be monitored through the use of randomised post-contact surveys, exit polls and exit surveys</p>

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

<b>7</b>	<b>How will the proposal be monitored?</b>  After any changes have been made (if agreed) customer satisfaction and opinion will be monitored through the use of randomised post-contact surveys, exit polls and exit surveys.  Use of the centres by customers with protected characteristics will be monitored after any changes are made.
	<b><u>Actions required</u></b>  Implement surveys, exit polls, etc
<b>8</b>	<b>How will the above be evaluated?</b>  After any changes have been made (if agreed) customer satisfaction and opinion will be monitored through the use of randomised post-contact surveys, exit polls and exit surveys.  Use of the centres by customers with protected characteristics will be monitored after any changes are made.
	<b><u>Actions required</u></b>  Implement surveys, exit polls, etc.
<b>9</b>	<b>Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified?</b>  No
	<b><u>Actions required</u></b>  None

<b>10</b>	<p><b>Where you have identified mitigating factors in previous answers that lessen the impact on any particular group in the community, or have identified any elsewhere, please summarise them here.</b></p> <p>Ensure customers are aware of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Longer opening hours at Penallta House</li> <li>Saturday opening</li> <li>Self-service options</li> <li>Other access channels</li> <li>Other payment methods</li> </ul> <p>Support customers in accessing services via other access channels</p>
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<b>11</b>	<p><b>What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment?</b></p> <p>The report may be used as part of the decision making process and will form part of our customer insight activities.</p>
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	<p><b><u>Actions required</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIA, when completed, to be returned to <a href="mailto:equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk">equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk</a> for publishing on the Council's website.</li> </ul>
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<b>Completed By:</b>	David Titley
<b>Date:</b>	10 November 2015
<b>Position:</b>	Corporate Customer Services Manager
<b>Name of Head of Service:</b>	Lynton Jones