

Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Screening Form – V2 Template – November 2024

A successful EQIA screening will look at 5 key areas:

1. Identify the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option to be assessed.

A clear definition of what is being screened and its aims.

2. Gathering Evidence and Stakeholder Engagement

Collect data to evidence the type of barriers people face to accessing services (research, consultations, complaints and/or consult with equality groups).

3. Assessment and Differential Impacts

Reaching an informed decision on whether or not there is a differential impact on equality groups, and at what level.

4. Outcomes, Action and Public Reporting

Develop an action plan to make changes where a negative impact has been assessed. Ensure that both the assessment outcomes and the actions taken to address negative impacts are publicly reported.

5. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Stating how you will monitor and evaluate the **Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option** to ensure that you are continuing to achieve the expected outcomes for all groups.

Section 1: Identify the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option

Name of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option to be screened	Provision of Customer Services
Reason for change in Policy or Policy Development	
List main outcome focus and supporting activities of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option	To provide a professional and efficient first point of contact to our Fenland residents for council services across all access channels (online, web chat, social media, phone, email, face to face & written correspondence).

Name of officer completing assessment (signed and date)	Aimee Markillie
Assessment verified by (signed and date)	Claire Wright

If applicable, please provide further details about the name and description of policy being analysed

Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required

Introduction

The objective of the My Fenland Team is to enable all members of the community to access and obtain FDC council services. We seek to maximise customer satisfaction levels whilst delivering equality of service to all customers. By triaging the customer's needs at the 1st point of contact we are then able to provide a bespoke approach.

Background

The new My Fenland Team launched on Monday 27th July 2020 and amalgamated the Customer Services team, Communities Environmental and Leisure support team, Assets and Projects admin team and the Business Centre admin team forming one single highly skilled customer focused team. The team share knowledge of FDC services and experiences, driving change, playing a key role in helping shaping processes and future development.

The team has introduced some new roles known as Technical Champions, who provide some delivery teams with additional support at a technical level and ensure that there is greater resilience within the team. The areas that these officers currently support is Licensing, Environmental Health and Environmental Services, Assets, Property and Estates, Cemeteries and Harbour. Since October 2022, Private Sector Housing and Economic Growth are now also being supported by the Technical Officers.

In addition the team provide support to, and facilitate meeting / conferences for tenants and other users at our Business Centres in Chatteris and Wisbech.

The way that we deliver our Customer Services has changed significantly since 2020 to reflect the changing needs of our customers. Most of our customers access us via our contact centre, through our info@fenland.gov.uk email address and also web chat. We continue

to offer a face-to-face service via appointments that are on a pre booked basis across our 4 market town locations to ensure our customers have full access to our service. These appointments are carried out by our Technical Officers.

Main Purpose

Principal objective of the My Fenland Team is to deliver the most effective access channel, high quality, value for money services that meet the diverse needs of our customers and improve their quality of life. The Technical officers provide dedicated support to the individual service area ensuring work is completed in a timely manner. Advisors have a first point of contact to refer customers to when they have an enquiry. Up to three technical officers cover each service area on a rota basis which provides resilience to the service. The My Fenland Advisors act as first point of contact to our customers across our many access channels and aim to resolve the enquiry there and then.

Main Duties – Technical Officer

To provide admin support to their assigned service area and liaise with the service manager. Deliver responses to enquiries or undertake actions as directed.

Utilise designed processes to contribute to the provision of high quality, efficient and effective administration services to internal and external customers.

Responding to emails in the appropriate specialist inboxes, raising service requests when necessary and forwarding to relevant officer.

To undertake general administration duties such as service requests, basic correspondence, filing, copying, record keeping, upkeep of supplies, archiving, assist with the provision of research material, the development and preparation of reports, databases, spreadsheets and contract documentation together with financial and performance management systems.

Process orders, creditor invoices, claims, debtor accounts and assist with year-end procedures. Monitor and deal with outstanding payments as needed.

To develop partnership working to enable access to a broader range of public services via Fenland Council's access channels.

To encourage, support and enable customers to transact online.

Main Duties – My Fenland Advisor

To work as part of a team to provide a professional and efficient first point of contact for council services across all access channels (online, web chat, social media, phone, email, face to face & written correspondence).

To encourage, support and enable customers to transact online.

To staff the reception desk at our Business Centres – Boathouse in Wisbech and South Fens in Chatteris.

To set-up meetings and conference facilities at our business centres to meet user requirements, ensure appropriate room layouts and function equipment is provided. Assist and problem solve with the IT equipment as required and provide refreshments as required.

To assist with internal and external communications to include sorting and dealing with mail, collation and enveloping of documents, taking conference bookings, sending out confirmation letters.

Main Duties – My Fenland Team

PayPoint gives residents more choice, options and convenience when paying their bills for council services, available at any Post Office and local shops who provide the free PayPoint service. Across the district there are approximately 28 locations that customers can choose to pay their bills and invoices such as Council Tax.

Customers continue to have the option to make payments on request over the telephone or can be sign posted to the auto payment facility via the phone or to our website.

Our services are offered in various formats to meet the needs of the diverse needs of our customers. There are no limitations or barriers to any of our customers choosing to access our services.

Our officers are highly trained in meeting customer expectations and delivering a frontline service in a variety of methods to make all channels accessible to everyone.

The officers have access to telephone interpreters to assist with any translations on a need's basis for customers who do not have English as their first language.

There are other alternative access channels available to all our customers such as the Website including web forms, emails, phone, and written communication.

We have a customer phone in the reception area at Fenland Hall, The Boathouse Business Centre and both Whittlesey and Chatteris libraries pre-set with FDC/partner services frequent contacts. Customers can choose from the following options Pay by phone, FDC contact centre, Cambs County Council, Clarion (Housing Association) and Universal Credit helpline.

Self Service is encouraged; however, we also offer a comprehensive assisted digital support service which is heavily subscribed on a needs basis to customers who may be vulnerable, face barriers due to their level of literacy who have limited IT skills.

When seeing customers face to face, we have Portable Hearing Loops to remove any barriers for customers with hearing difficulties. Documentation can be produced in braille or large print on request, or assistance for sign language arranged by pre booking this service.

All our 4 locations have ground level (accessible) access to accommodate all customers.

The customer satisfaction survey is completed yearly and indicates how customers feel about our service.

The data is analysed and will provide future evidence for development within the team, accessibility to our services and the website.

The data captured within the survey will assist with the continuous development of FDC service and processes.

The channels available for customers to access our services are constantly being monitored and developed to ensure the highest quality of service is delivered and accessible.

To minimise costs for our customers the incoming telephone number for the contact centre is charged at a local call rate.

We are able to offer appointments in a private secure interview room in three of the four locations within Fenland. This allows customers to be seen in a private setting as required.

Main Beneficiaries

The service area/service manager that the Technical officer supports.

The team's response rate enables 85% of all service requests to be delivered at the first point of contact and engagement. Providing an accessible channel of communication for the public to contact us on a variety of issues.

Promote and encourage customer migration via channel shift external partnership links both current and developing new ones where appropriate.

All FDC service areas as the My Fenland Team are the 1st point of contact for customers.

Section 2: Gathering Evidence and Stakeholder Engagement

The best approach to find out if a policy, etc. is likely to impact positively or negatively on equality groups is to look at existing research, previous consultation recommendations, studies or consult with representatives of those groups. You should list below any data, consultations (previous relevant or future planned), or any relevant research or analysis that supports the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option being undertaken.

Reminder – protected characteristics include age, disability, race and/or ethnicity, religion or belief (including lack of belief), gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

Name any research, data, consultation or studies referred to for this assessment	State if this reference refers to one or more of the protected characteristics	Do you intend to set up your own consultation? If so, please list the main issues that you wish to address if the consultation is planned; or if consultation has been completed, please note the outcome(s) of consultation.
3C's policy and procedure – the Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Procedure.		
Language Line – interpretation and translation service	Race	The team has access to telephone interpreters to assist with any translations on a need's basis, for customers who do not have English as their first language.
Risk Assessments		

Structured Web Forms		
General Data Protection Regulation		
Delivery Team Support		
Customer Satisfaction Survey Results		
Portable Induction Loop Assistance		
Business Continuity Plan		
Customer Service Excellence		

If applicable, please provide further information about stakeholder engagement or detail used for customer analysis

Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible

Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey was completed in February 2024, this year we developed it to include a free text box to give us a greater understanding of our customers issues and identify any areas for continuous development.

Section 3: Assessment and Differential Impacts

Use the table below to provide some narrative where you think the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option has either a positive impact (contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group) or a negative impact (could disadvantage them) and note the reason for the change in policy or the reason for policy development, based on the evidence you have collated.

Please note that:

- a Positive Impact could benefit an equality group and a negative impact could disadvantage an equality group
- for reasons of brevity race is not an exhaustive list – please edit the list if appropriate to reflect the complexity of other racial identities
- a definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)
- there are too many faith groups to provide a list, therefore, please input the faith group e.g., Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus, etc. Consider the different faith groups individually when considering positive or negative impacts

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristics	Positive Impact	Neutral	Negative Impact	Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts
Sex or Gender	Women		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Men		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Transgender		X	No identified negative impacts	
Race	White	We use Language Line which is a telephony interpretation and translation service to assist the team in answering any customers where English is not there first language. Written materials can be provided in different languages if required.	X		
	Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups	As Above	X		
	Asian	As Above	X		
	African	As Above	X		
	Caribbean or Black	As Above	X		
	Other Ethnic Group	As Above	X		
Disability	Physical disability	All our locations are accessible on ground floor.			

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristics	Positive Impact	Neutral	Negative Impact	Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts
	Sensory Impairment (e.g. sight, hearing)	Our team is equipped with Portable Induction Loop Assistance and many of our forms / letters can be provided in braille or large print on request so no customers are excluded.			
	Mental health		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Learning disability		X	No identified negative impacts	
LGBT	Lesbians		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Gay Men		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Bisexual		X	No identified negative impacts	
Age	Older people (60+)		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Younger people (18-25)		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Children (0-16)		X	No identified negative impacts	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	Women		X	No identified negative impacts	

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristics	Positive Impact	Neutral	Negative Impact	Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts
	Men		X	No identified negative impacts	
	Lesbians		X	No identified negative impacts	
Pregnancy and Maternity	Women		X	No identified negative impacts	
Religion and belief	See below		X	No identified negative impacts	

Summary of Protected Characteristics most impacted	Race and Disability characteristics are positively impacted as we ensure they are equally able to access our service.
Summary of Socio-Economic impacts	We are able to make referrals to partner agencies who can assist with a number of services we may identify as beneficial to the customer during our interaction with them.
Summary of Human Rights impacts	Any human rights issues would be dealt with on an individual needs basis and referred to the appropriate service delivery team / partner for assistance.
Summary Explanation of the scoring against the protected characteristics	<p>We are committed to ensuring we identify access issues and barriers to our services which some people may face in order to remove them and make improvements.</p> <p>With this in mind we have made sure there are no specific issues for any of the key characteristics, positively or negatively.</p> <p>We offer a range of access channels to our customers to ensure they have a number of ways of being able to contact us. For e.g. Phone, Online, Email, Webchat, Telephone or pre booked face to face appointments to assist with completing online forms and signposting to partner services.</p>

Section 4: Outcomes, Actions and Public Reporting

Screening Outcome	Yes, No or not at this stage
Was a significant level of negative impact arising from the project, policy or strategy identified?	No
Does the project, policy or strategy require to be amended to have a positive impact?	No
Does a Full Impact Assessment need to be undertaken?	No

If applicable, please state the overall outcome of the assessment, impacts and customer analysis

Section 5: Monitoring outcomes, evaluation and review

The Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) screening is not an end in itself but the start of a continuous monitoring and review process. The relevant Service responsible for the delivery of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option, is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing the EQIA Screening and any actions that may have been taken to mitigate impacts.

Arrangements for Monitoring	The service is reviewed annually or if there are any changes to service delivery procedures.
Timing of the current review	December 2024
Next scheduled review	December 2025

If applicable, please provide details of the arrangements for future monitoring:

Note when analysis will be reviewed; include any equality indicators and performance against those indicators

If applicable, please provide details of any supporting data/ research linked to monitoring arrangements (both FDC & Partners):

Legislation

Equality Act (2010) – the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties)

The 2010 Act consolidated previous equalities legislation to protect people from discrimination on grounds of race, sex, being a transsexual person (transsexuality is where someone is changed, is changing or has proposed changing their sex – called ‘gender reassignment’ in law), sexual orientation (whether being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual), disability (or because of something connected with their disability), religion or belief, having just had a baby or being pregnant, being married or in a civil partnership and age.