

Equality Impact Assessment Templates

Quick Guidance Notes

Stage 1. Screening Stage

Stage 1 of the template is classed as the Screening Stage. This should always be completed. **Remember it should be an integral part of policy development not a last minute thought.**

At this stage you should be assessing obvious negative/positive impact or gaps in knowledge about likely impact. It should be a relatively short process which makes use of any previous consultation results, any differences in user satisfaction among groups, personal knowledge and experience, research, reports, existing equality data about service usage, internet searches, internal and external specialist advice, employees with previous experience of similar work, known inequalities etc. **If the likely impact on a particular group is unknown, then action should be taken to acquire this information.**

If the impact is positive (i.e. the outcome will benefit an Equality Group) then no further action is required. If no positive or negative impacts are identified then no further action is required. If the activity has the potential to cause adverse/negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community it will require a full impact assessment (Stage 2).

In some cases it might be easy to put in place simple adjustments to eliminate any negative impact while you are working through the screening process, especially if you already have clear evidence/consultation and the process is an integral part of your policy development. It should only be done if you are absolutely confident that no other impact will be identified. If you choose to do this you should clearly document the reasons/evidence and put in place monitoring to ensure action is taken if unanticipated impact occurs.

Stage 2. Full Equality Impact Assessment Report

Stage 2 of the EIA process guides officers through the full impact assessment process, ensuring that research/consultation with relevant equality groups has been carried out and leads to an action plan aiming to minimise the negative impact/s.

Consultation involves engaging with representatives from equality groups who are likely to be affected by the activity. It could involve engaging with employees and Members, trade unions, other public bodies, voluntary and community groups. It is important to ensure sufficient time and resources are dedicated to the consultation process to encourage full participation. You should refer to the Consultation Toolkit to ensure your consultation follows good practice. The Focus system should also be used and is able to give you information relating to other consultation activities across the council as well as existing groups/volunteers you may be able to access.

Take a Proportionate Approach

Your approach to assessing the equalities impact of a policy, strategy or service should be proportionate to the likely impact it will have. Issues you should consider include:

- the number of people likely to be affected

- the size of the budget/amount of money involved
- the extent of the proposed change
- wider public policy implications

This means you will assess more rigorously policies which are likely to have a significant impact on the local community.

Additional guidance notes to help you through the process are available in the Equality Impact Assessment Guidance Document.

Stage 1 and 2 Equality Impact Assessment Templates

Directorate: People & Customer Services
Support

Service: Customer

Accountable Officer: Becky Edwards

Telephone & e-mail: 853464 rebecca.edwards@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk

Date of assessment: 06/08/25

Names & job titles of people carrying out the assessment: Becky Edwards- Customer Support Manager

Name of service/function/policy etc: Customer Access Strategy
Is this new or existing? Revision of existing strategy

Stage 1: Screening Stage

1. Briefly describe its aims & objectives

The Customer Access Strategy 2026–2029 sets out a clear and inclusive vision for customer access over the next three years. It builds on the successes of the previous strategy (2020-2023), has an enhanced focus on inclusivity, responds to customer feedback, and aligns with the Council's commitment to improving service delivery, accessibility and digital inclusion. The strategy has clear goals and an associated action plan which will guide the Council's efforts to ensure that all residents can access services in ways that suit their needs. The strategy aims to deliver equitable, responsive, and user-friendly services that reflect the diversity and expectations of our customers.

2. Are there external considerations? (legislation/government directive etc.)

- Equality and Diversity Act 2010
- Public Sector Bodies Accessibility Regulations
- Data Protection Act 2018

3. Who are the stakeholders and what are their interests?

Residents, businesses, visitors, organisations and charities: any group or individual who accesses Council services.

Frontline staff and back-office teams: delivery of customer service and support service delivery and digital infrastructure.

Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Members: responsible for reviewing and approving the strategy's direction and implementation timeline.

Partner Organisations: Voluntary and community sector groups who support vulnerable residents and external service providers such as ICT suppliers.

4. What outcomes do we want to achieve and for whom?

The strategy aims to create a more inclusive, accessible, and responsive customer experience across all council services by:

- Ensuring that services are easy to access for everyone.
- Achieving enhanced customer satisfaction with customers feeling heard, supported and valued.
- Delivering services in a timely, respectful and efficient manner.
- Empowering residents to be digitally confident with support available for those who may need help whilst recognising that others will continue to prefer to contact the Council by more traditional methods. Customers have a choice in how they interact with the Council and there will be consistency in the service provided irrespective of the method of contact.
- Ensuring that no one is disadvantaged due to language, location, disability, or socioeconomic status.
- Empowering staff with the right tools and training and using resources effectively to deliver high-quality services.

5. Has any consultation/research been carried out or relied upon?

Internal engagement was undertaken with staff from a variety of departments. Staff were engaged and provided constructive feedback in respect of what worked well and in identifying areas for improvement.

External engagement was undertaken between 02.04.25-30.04.25 with a survey open to all on the Council website. This was promoted on our telephone lines and social media channels with paper versions of the survey available. Local organisations, businesses, charitable and voluntary organisations were also contacted individually. A survey was also sent to secondary schools for their students to complete.

6. Are there any concerns at this stage which indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? (Consider and identify any evidence you have - equality data relating to usage and satisfaction levels, complaints, comments, research, outcomes of review, feedback and issues raised at previous consultations, known inequalities) If so please provide details.

The strategy recognises that not all residents are able or willing to use online services and subsequently advocates multi-channel access. Customer service for all areas will be fully accessible to all, with the same level of service received irrespective of the chosen method of contact. We will ensure that traditional contact methods such as telephone and in-person services remain available.

The strategy also has a renewed focus on translation services, easy read formats and alternative communication methods.

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7. Could a particular protected characteristic be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? (Positive – it could benefit, Negative – it could disadvantage, Neutral – neither positive nor negative impact or Not sure?)

	Type of impact, reason & any evidence
Disability	Positive – whilst the strategy does not specifically refer to disability, the ethos of the strategy is to ensure that all customers can easily access our services.
Race (including Gypsy & Traveller)	Positive – whilst the strategy does not specifically refer to race, the ethos of the strategy is to ensure that all customers can easily access our services.
Age	Positive – whilst the strategy does not specifically refer to age, the ethos of the strategy is to ensure that all customers can easily access our services.
Gender	Neutral – no perceived negative impacts. There is no part of the strategy which would disenfranchise customers in terms of their gender.
Transgender	Neutral - Neutral – no perceived negative impacts. There is no part of the strategy which would disenfranchise customers in terms of transgender.
Sexual Orientation	Neutral – no perceived negative impacts. There is no part of the strategy which would disenfranchise customers in terms of sexual orientation.
Religion/Belief	Neutral – no perceived negative impacts. There is no part of the strategy which would disenfranchise customers in terms of any religion or belief.
Pregnancy & Maternity	Neutral – no perceived negative impacts. There is no part of the strategy which would disenfranchise customers in terms of pregnancy.
Marriage/ Civil Partnership Status	Neutral – no perceived negative impacts. There is no part of the strategy which would disenfranchise customers in terms of marital or civil partnership status.

8. Could other socio-economic groups be affected e.g. carers, ex-offenders, low incomes?

Yes. The strategy outlines our approach in ensuring that all customers, irrespective of their socio-economic group are able to easily contact us and receive the service they require.
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9. Are there any human rights implications?

Yes. Under the Human Rights Act 1998, all public bodies have an obligation to protect the human rights of individuals and to ensure the requirements of the act are applied without discrimination.

10. Is there an opportunity to promote equality and/or good community relations?

Yes. The review of the Customer Access Strategy and the ongoing work in achieving its aims will further our commitment to multi-channel access. By ensuring that all of our

services are available digitally and by more traditional methods we will ensure that all customers are able to access our services.

The achievements of the strategy will be publicised, and the goals of the strategy include working with partner organisations.

11. If you have indicated a negative impact for any group is that impact legal? (not discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation)

No negative impacts have been identified.

12. Is any part of this policy/service to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors?

No.

Please note that normally you should proceed to a Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report if you have identified actual, or the potential to cause, adverse impact or discrimination against different groups in the community. (Refer to Quick Guidance Notes at front of template document)

13. Is a Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report required?

No. Equality Impact Assessment has not identified any actual or the potential to cause adverse discrimination against different groups in the community. Equality implications will continue to be considered throughout the review and development of any procedures or workstreams associated with the strategy.

14. Date by which Stage 2 is to be completed and actions

Not applicable.

Please complete

We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out and a full impact assessment **is not required**.

Completed by: Becky Edwards

Date: 20.10.25

Role:

Countersigned by Director/Chief Officer:



Date: 21/10/25

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Stage 2: Full Equality Impact Assessment Report

15. Summarise the likely negative impacts for relevant groups identified in the screening process (Refer to Stage 1, Questions 7-8, start to think about possible alternatives)

16. What consultation/involvement activities have taken place or will need to take place with groups/individuals from each relevant protected characteristic or equality group? (refer back to Stage 1, Question 5)

17. What other research has been or will need to be carried out to help you with the assessment?

18. Results of research/consultation (what does it tell you about the negative impacts?)

19. Conclusions & Action Planning

You should explain what and how negative impacts have been reduced or removed and how positive impacts are to be improved or included.

Your final decisions or recommendations may include making immediate changes, stopping or proceeding with a new policy, justifying a decision or adding objectives/targets to the service development plan/equality scheme (long term changes).

You could use the template below to record your conclusions/actions. You should also make reference to any additional monitoring or research that is still required, or was not retrievable at the point of assessment, but will be required in subsequent reviews or in order to complete actions.

Impact/Issue	Action/Objective/Target or Justification	Will this remove negative impact?	Resources	Lead Officer & Timescale

20. How will you monitor, evaluate and check the policy in the future?

21. When will a review take place?

Please complete

We are satisfied that a full impact assessment has been carried out.

Completed by:

Date:

Role:

Countersigned by Director/Chief Officer:

Date:

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