

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS
Please transfer any actions you intend to take to the Action Plan at the end (as Service Plan)

ASSESSING FUNCTIONS AND POLICIES GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

1. As a result of this exercise, you will have checked that your policy or function does not have adverse impact on target groups and you will have identified relevant action that you need to take, and the likely costs/resources associated with any new service developments. The areas covered are: Race, Gender, Disability, Age, Sexual Orientation, and Religion/belief.

This is not simply a paper exercise - it is designed to make sure that your policy and service development is delivered fairly and effectively to all sections of our local community.

2. We have tried to simplify the assessment process as much as possible and have devised a questionnaire template that covers all the issues that need to be addressed. It should be emphasised that most, if not all, of the activities covered should already be part of your current service planning process, and as such, should not mean any significant additional work.

3. Useful definitions –

- **Direct discrimination** – treating one person less favourably than another on racial, disability or gender grounds – this is Unlawful

- **Indirect discrimination** – this occurs when a rule or condition which is applied equally to everyone:

- Can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular group
- Is to the disadvantage of that group, and
- Cannot be justified

Indirect discrimination is also unlawful under the SDA, DDA and the RRA. However, the legislation allows positive action as a way of overcoming inequality

Positive action - allows you to provide facilities or services (in training, education or welfare) to meet the particular needs of people from different groups

e.g. English language classes or training courses for women into management

- Target job training at those groups that are under represented in particular areas of work, and
- Encourage applications from groups that are under represented in particular areas of work

Positive action plans are only meant to be as temporary solution, and you may need to review them regularly. You

should not use them if the under representation or particular need no longer exists.

(A) A negative or adverse impact:

This is an impact that could disadvantage one or more equality groups. This disadvantage may be differential, where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality group is likely to be greater than on another. The Equality Impact Assessment provides an opportunity to assess this.

For example: an event that was held in a building with no induction loop facilities would have a negative or adverse impact on some attendees with a hearing impairment.

(B) A positive impact.

An impact that could have a positive impact on one or more equality target groups, or improve equal opportunities and/or relationships between groups. This positive impact may be differential, where the positive impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality group is likely to be greater than on another.

For example: A targeted training programme for black and minority ethnic women, would have a positive differential impact on black and minority ethnic women compared with its impact on white women and all men. It would not, however, necessarily have an adverse impact on white women or men.

4. Private or voluntary organisations carrying out functions for the Council –

When a local authority has a contract or other agreement with a private company or voluntary sector organisation to carry out a function, and the duty to promote race equality applies to these functions, the local authority remains responsible for meeting the duties that apply, and therefore should consider what arrangements it needs. It may be appropriate for example to incorporate these duties among the performance or monitoring requirements for the delivery of the service e.g. a contractor could be required to monitor service users by their racial group or gender. In addition, local authorities may promote race equality by encouraging contractors to draw up policies that will help the contractor to avoid unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity

5. Please note that the Council is required to publish the results of these assessments, and updates. Therefore **your completed questionnaire will be a public document.**

6. This questionnaire is for use regardless of whether your function or policy is aimed at external customers or internal staff. Please also be aware that this applies to staffing human resources issues as much as external service delivery issues.

YOUR FUNCTION OR POLICY AREA: Cash Desk

OFFICER(S) COMPLETING THE ASSESSMENT: Shobhan Sen

SERVICE: Customer Service Centre

TEL: 754700

DATE: 5 July 2010

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NO.	QUESTION
GENERAL	
1	Please provide a brief description of the function and/or related policy(ies) including its aims and objectives
	The Cash desk at Ebley Mill Reception allows face-to-face customers to pay council tax, rent etc. over the counter. Payments are taken by cash, card and cheque. The cash desk is open to customers Mon – Fri, 10.00am – 4.00pm. The cash desk comprises of one till operated by one member of the CSC team. It is proposed that the front end customer facing element of the cash desk be replaced by a self service automated payment kiosk. This will also extend cashier opening times to match the office opening hours.
2	Please list the main stakeholders/beneficiaries in terms of the recipients of the function or the target group at whom the policy is aimed
	Customers, both external and internal who use the cash desk to pay or collect monies.
3	If the function is provided by another organisation or agency on behalf of the Council, please give the names of these organisations/agencies
	Not applicable
CONSULTATION	
4	Please list any consultation activity with internal or external customers carried out over the last year: e.g. satisfaction surveys, focus groups,etc
	<p>Council wide satisfaction survey and a pilot face-to face customer survey on visitors to Ebley Mill. We have done spot surveys of customers currently using the cash desk over a period of 4 weeks in 2010. The results were that 70 % of customers said they would use a payment kiosk, 5 % said maybe and 25 % said they would not use a kiosk. The expectation is that these users will migrate to paying by one of the several alternative methods of payment.</p> <p>We have also visited other local authorities who have a kiosk facility to better understand user experiences. All feedback has been positive about customers finding it easy to pay in to a payment kiosk. We have actually observed customers paying in to a payment kiosk and noticed that the transaction is easy, quick and almost all customers made the payment without any staff help. The customers we saw were from a cross section of society, young and old, male and female and various ethnic backgrounds.</p>

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5	Please list any alternative arrangements you have made or are planning for consulting with hard-to-reach groups within the community
	The payment kiosk will be DDA compliant and there will not be any known negative impact on any particular community. Provision will be in place for staff to help customers intensively during the first few months after the kiosk goes live. Even after the period staff will be on hand to assist if any help is required. Given the experience of other authorities who have a kiosk customers have changed over to use the kiosk very well in a relatively short period of time. As shown in Section 11 of this report customers will continue to be able to pay by six different methods including by phone, online and in person at post offices.
6	Please list the equality groups you have consulted with?
	The implementation of the payment will have no known negative impact on any of the seven equality strands. We have consulted with the Stroud Disability Access Group. The proposed payment kiosk is fully DDA compliant.
7	Please state how you consult with members of your staff about your function/policy
	Team meetings every 6 weeks One –to-one meetings Appraisal meetings Team brief by email Specific briefing meetings Proud of Stroud sessions Intranet

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8	Please list any changes to your function or policy that you have made, or you plan to make as a result of consultation with different groups. (Include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	We will ensure that there is staff available to assist customers paying in to the kiosk. In addition there will be a assisted back up facility to use for customers who may have visual impairment or literacy issues. The kiosk will be located in an environment where staff are at hand to assist at short notice if required.
DISCRIMINATION	
9	Please list any evidence you have of the function or policy having an adverse impact on different groups – this can be internal or external
	No known adverse impact.
10	Could the function or policy have an adverse impact on relations between different groups? If so, please describe
	Not evident from experience.
SERVICE DELIVERY	
11	Please list any alternative ways designed to improve access to or use of your service by different groups, (and include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	Customers will continue to be able to pay through Direct Debit, automated telephone payment system, by telephone, online on SDC website, cheques and at authorised outlets like the Post office.
12	Please list any alternative ways designed to improve access to information about your service by different groups (and include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	Website Direct face-face information giving Reception Notice board Consultation process has already raised awareness of this change. There will be extensive lead in information for customers before kiosk goes live.

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13	Please describe how you carry out monitoring of take up of your function/policy
	Face –to face spot surveys planned on the back of successful pilot Customer feedback, complaints and compliments
14	How are the results of any monitoring analysed, reported and publicised?
	Customer feedback is discussed in one-to-ones and team meetings and issues are prioritised and resolved. Quarterly snap surveys are planned from July 2010.
15	Does an analysis of your customer base against baseline population figures for the district show that you are reaching all groups in the Stroud District? If not, which groups are adversely affected?
	No known adverse impact to any particular groups.
16	Please list any changes to your function or policy that you have made or plan to make as a result of monitoring
	See Action Plan.
MISCELLANEOUS	
17	If your function is provided by a private sector or voluntary sector organisation on a contract basis, please list any arrangements you have made or plan to make to ensure that these comply with equality

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	Not applicable
18	Have you received any complaints about your function/policy in respect of equality issues? If so, please give a brief description
	No.
19	Please list any staff training issues on equality arising from this assessment, (and include this in your improvement plan summary attached)
	This will be a culture change for both external and internal customers using the cash desk. They will have to be closely supported in migrating to other channels of payment.
20	Does your function or policy result in any financial support being given to any equality groups within the voluntary and community sector. If yes, please list organisations and amounts
	Not to my knowledge.

EQUALITIES ACTION PLAN

The Service area will contribute to the Service and Council Equalities agenda through the following activities:

Ref	Action	Lead officer	When	Resource	Target/ Objective	Update/Outcome
	Continue to communicate and consult with our external and internal customers	Shobhan Sen	Q1 2010 onwards	In house	To support the transition from not having a cash desk to other payment channels	2 Quarterly surveys completed to date.
	If the Council decides to provide a automated payment kiosk machine training and support will be needed for all users	Matt Simkins	Q4 2010 onwards	In house after initial training from supplier	Make the use of the kiosk easy, simple and reliable for all our customers	Final decision expected to be taken on 10 Feb 2011.
	Review the impact of closing the cash desk and customer take up of other channels of payment	Shobhan Sen	Q2 2011	In house	To review the transition and consider any improvements	