

Service Impact Assessment

BASILDON COUNCIL

A Service Impact Assessment (SIA) is an assessment tool that helps to ensure that the Council promotes equality and does not discriminate against our staff, service users or residents. It is a way of making sure that teams and services think carefully about the impact of functions, policies, projects, decisions, strategies, service provision, activities etc. on different groups based on their protected characteristics. These protected characteristics (also known as protected groups) are listed under the Equality Act 2010 as race, sex, religion/belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnerships and age. SIAs also help the authority to demonstrate 'due regard' when making decisions. This is a requirement of the equalities legislation and is currently the area the council is most likely to receive a challenge on equalities grounds. In Basildon we also use SIAs to address other issues such as Human Rights, Community Cohesion, socio-economic, health inequalities, issues relating to part time workers, carers etc as part of best practice.

There are 5 sections to complete in total, (See Flow Chart Appendix 1, Page 11)

Section 1 is purely information required on those who are likely to be affected.

Section 2 requires you to enter baseline data,

Section 3 requires you to assess against the protected groups, community cohesion, Human Rights

Section 4 & 5 requires you act on your outcomes and finalise your decision based on consultation outcomes following findings of negative impact.

The SIA is a live document which can be updated at anytime during the development and implementation stages of your project, policy, strategy, service provision etc. The best time to undertake an SIA is when you have a draft policy, project proposal or outline of service provision. You should use the SIA to inform the final end product. If a project changes direction, it is also critical to review the SIA to make sure the new direction does not adversely impact on the protected groups.

What is meant by impact?

There are three possible impacts that can happen:

1. A **negative or adverse impact** is when the impact of a policy/project could disadvantage one of the groups mentioned above. This could be differential, where the negative impact on one group is likely to be bigger than on another. For example, if an event is held in a building with no access for people with mobility difficulties, this could have a negative or adverse impact on attendees who have mobility difficulties, such as wheelchair users, people with pushchairs, people with Zimmer frames etc.
2. An impact that will benefit an equality target group is a **positive impact**. This could improve equal opportunities or community cohesion. There may also be a differential impact, where the positive impact on one particular group is likely to be greater than on another. For example, a health programme targeting Somali residents would have a positive differential impact on Somali people compared to other ethnic groups, but it would not have a negative impact on other groups.
3. A **neutral impact** where there is no likely change and therefore no potential impact on any of the protected groups

What do you require to undertake an SIA?

Baseline data: This is any data that relates to the people who are likely to be impacted by your service, functions, policy, project etc. It could include their profile based on the protected characteristic, feedback from consultations/surveys and any information including anecdotal that is available.

Joint Arrangements and Partnership Working

When working on joint policies, it is the service lead that should be ultimately responsible for the SIA. Even in partnership arrangements, we must be able to demonstrate that Basildon Borough Council as an organisation is fulfilling our duties even where we are not the lead organisation. When contractors are delivering services on our behalf, we have to ensure that they are delivering accessible, discrimination free services. 'Due regard' is non-delegable, and the onus remains with us as a council.

SECTION 1

Service Impact Assessment for	Customer Resolution Centre – Contact Centre
Department:	Customer Resolution Centre
Service area:	Resources
Name of lead assessing officer:	Claire Wade
Job title:	Manager, Customer Resolution Centre
Telephone number	01268 533333
<p>What are you assessing?</p> <p>Policy/Strategy..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Project..... <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Service..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Function..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Decision..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Other please specify _____</p> <p>New or Proposed..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Changing/Updating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Review of existing <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>Has this been through an SIA Challenge <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (Contact Inclusion & Diversity for information on challenge)</p>	

SECTION 1 – INFORMATION ON ITEM UNDER ASSESSMENT

Section 1a) Please give a brief description of the item being assessed

Brief description: To deliver a new, more advanced omni-channel capable contact centre solution compatible with the hybrid working model adopted by the Council. To deliver a scalable, consistently reliable platform which will allow contact centre and frontline staff (the Customer Resolution Centre being the primary service adopters) to efficiently manage, report and take steps to improve the processing of resident demand. For residents approaching the Council with enquiries, this means replacing the current telephony-only platform with a new service offering greater opportunities for multi-channel service delivery.

Aims and Objectives: The current Mitel contact centre solution is no longer supported and does not support the hybrid working model that has been adopted by the Council, creating a less than ideal customer experience and additional telephony costs that the Council seeks to minimise. Additionally, the current contact centre golden number is presented via ISDN30 connections which are now obsolete. The proposed solution must implement a modern, secure, and scalable cloud hosted contact centre solution, that supports the Council's hybrid working model, whilst removing reliance on physical ISDN lines, and ensuring compatibility with MS Teams platform for non-contact centre users, who utilise a range of hunt groups to manage their demand.

Who will it impact on? Residents of Basildon and customers contacting the Customer Resolution Centre and any other service areas currently contactable via the "IVR" (the phone system which allows callers to interact with the telephony platform for the purposes of directing / routing their call to the appropriate team e.g., CRC, Recovery, ASB, Morgan Sindall etc). Council staff within the service areas of deployment – primarily Customer Resolution Centre, Recovery, Business Rates, Sundry Dent, HBOverpayments

Section 1b) Has any other local authority or similar service provider implemented the item under assessment?

Yes No

Section 1c) Will this item be carried out wholly or partly by contractors/subcontractors.

Yes No

If yes have you included Equality & Human Rights considerations into the contract?

Equality Yes No

Human Rights Yes No N/A

Section 1d) Have those identified in question Q1a been consulted or involved in the development of the item under assessment?

Yes

No

If Yes, can you give details of the consultation including methods and outcomes? Customers in an Inclusion and Diversity group were consulted using an online survey on their contact preferences and indicated a continued preference for telephony as the main means of customer contact, and the responses showed strongly that direct person to person interaction is still seen as the main method by which residents wished to communicate. A smaller but still significant number of residents preferred to contact the Council by email / online forms, and the current contact centre solution does not provide for their needs as it is solely based on telephony provision. Whilst the Council does provide email and forms as methods of contact, these are not part of the main contact centre solution. Customer working groups were also used to help shape direction with regards to the IVR and attended site for a face-to-face feedback session. Their feedback was adopted into the last IVR restructure. The IVR has remained largely untouched since April 2023.

Consultation was also undertaken across Shared Services (Revenues, Benefits, Recovery, Business Rates, Customer Resolution Centre) based on what deliverables were required to meet, understand and where possible reduce or otherwise identify efficiencies in the processing of customer demand. This included testing of a proposed new contact centre solution with rigorous interrogation and on-hands testing by both front-line staff, managers, service analysts and Customer Development Leads and forms the basis for the current "Requirement Specification for Cloud Contact Centre" work flow which aims to address all feedback received during the previous testing phase and deliver a contact centre solution fit for purpose which enables Council staff to put the needs of residents first.

If No, when are you going to involve or consult those identified in Q1? NA

SECTION 2 –BASELINE DATA

Section 2) In relation to those identified in Q1a do you have any data the protected equality groups or other groups that will be affected by the item under assessment?

Groups	Baseline data staff  CRC Team Structure.pdf	Baseline data community https://www.basildon.gov.uk/BasildonBoroughProfile
i) People from different racial ethnic groups (gypsies & travellers, refugees & asylum seekers)	N/A – does not affect staff	As attached – whole community affected
ii) people of different sex (male or female)	N/A	As attached
iii) People from different religions or beliefs	N/A	As attached
iv) Disabled People (for example, physically disabled: (including wheelchair user), sensory impairment, mental health conditions, learning difficulties	N/A	As attached
v) People of different ages	N/A	As attached
vi) People of various sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual)	N/A	As attached
vii) People who have undergone or are undergoing gender-reassignment	N/A	As attached
viii) Marriage & Civil Partnership	N/A	As attached
ix) Pregnancy or maternity	N/A	As attached

Section 2) In relation to those identified in Q1a do you have any data the protected equality groups or other groups that will be affected by the item under assessment?

Groups	Baseline data staff	Baseline data community https://www.basildon.gov.uk/BasildonBoroughProfile
x) Carers	N/A	As attached
xi) Part time workers	N/A	As attached
xii) Other (Socio Economic issues, ex-offenders etc)	N/A	As attached

SECTION 3 – ASSESS LIKELY IMPACT ON EQUALITY GROUPS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	<i>Don't know (consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
Race and culture	Language barrier	Translation services can be arranged if required – contract in place and compatible with proposed solution	Voice recording allowing easier interpretation and translation of pre-recorded contact API compatibility – ability to link and recognise resident phone numbers with Council system for easy identification of caller and any specific needs e.g., for interpreter.		
Sex	No impact		No impact		
Disability	No impact		API compatibility – ability to link contact centre		

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	<i>Don't know (consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
			<p>solution with other Council systems means customer record (e.g., name, address, specific health or other needs we have been notified about) are automatically loaded when contact received (e.g., from a nominated / linked phone number or email). Staff can ensure appropriate support provided</p> <p>New contact centre solution also compatible with contractor used for those with hearing</p>		

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	<i>Don't know (consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
			or visual disabilities and text relay services		
Sexual Orientation	No impact		No impact		
Religion	No impact		No impact		
Age	No impact		Ability to create and link a phone number or email with Council system using an API means children / young adults could be added to priority register e.g., if known to be fleeing abuse. Calls from nominated number could have rules applied to offer		

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	<i>Don't know (consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
			priority service based on safeguarding requirements		
Gender Reassignment	No impact		No impact		
Marriage & Civil Partnership	No impact		No impact		
Pregnancy & Maternity	No impact		No impact		
Carers	No impact		Nominated carer, if added as Trusted contact on Council system with resident's approval, could be identified based on calling number and allow staff to understand relationship to resident and any specific requirements or		

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	<i>Don't know (consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
			rules to follow		
Socio-economic	No impact		Improved reporting and links with customer records will allow better understanding of contact and demand trends where socio-economic or other data has been captured on Council systems.		
Health	No impact		Using API and auto number recognition, residents identified as at risk (e.g., fleeing domestic abuse, suffering serious health conditions inc poor mental health)		

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	<i>Don't know (consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
			could be flagged automatically at point of contact and prioritised or otherwise receive targeted support		
Human Rights  Human Rights Standards.pdf	No impact on human rights.		No impact		
Other (Offenders, parts-time workers etc, low literacy, geographical position)	No impact		Again, by linking contact centre solution with Council system in time it would be possible to populate information in Council records which can be used to identify and better support residents.		

Section 3 a) Could the item under assessment in the way it is implemented/applied have a negative impact on any protected equality groups or other groups think about community and staff?



Issues to consider, please click on document

Group	<i>Describe any negative impact or inequality to the best of your knowledge</i>	<i>Identify any possible solutions to eliminate or reduce negative impact</i>	<i>Describe any positive impact</i>	<i>Describe and neutral impact</i>	Don't know <i>(consultation required – add to Initial Assessment Plan)</i>
			Improved analytical capability will enhance Council understanding of customer base and respective needs.		

SECTION 3b) – COMMUNITY COHESION

Section 3b) How will the item under assessment help to foster good relations? Explain.	N/A
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SECTION 4: OUTCOMES OF YOUR ASSESSMENT

<p>Outcome 1. You do not have enough data on all relevant groups to come to a conclusion. You must seek data or consult with the relevant groups</p>	<p>Next steps: (To be entered into SIA Action Plan with timescales)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect relevant baseline data • Consult with relevant groups to collect data • Continue undertaking the Impact Assessment
<p>Outcome 2:</p> <p>Potential (negative impact) to one or more protected characteristics has been found but you can easily adjust or amend item to remove the barrier.</p>	<p>Next steps: (To be entered into SIA Action Plan with timescales)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details of how you are going to amend or adjust policy to address the negative impact • Monitor item under assessment to ensure that there is no future impact on protected groups and others • Set a review date to ensure • Communicate the findings of the SIA
<p>Outcome 3:</p> <p>Negative impact has been found. It is not easy to adjust or amend item. You may or may not have options/ideas as to how the negative impact can be amended. Enter the issues found and the planned consultation into the SIA Action Plan.</p> <p>You need to consult with the relevant group and enter any issues/ actions following the consultation into the SIA Action Plan.</p>	<p>Next steps: (Enter consultation information into SIA Action Plan with timescales)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details of findings and options/ideas • Consult with relevant group on your options/ideas or to establish a solution • Complete Final Assessment Improvement Plan outlining the results of consultation and your final decision • Monitor item under assessment to ensure that there is no future impact on protected groups and others • Set a review date to ensure • Communicate the findings of the SIA
<p>Outcome 4: Unlawful discrimination has been found and the item should be removed, stopped or changed. Seek legal advice or speak to the Inclusion & Diversity team.</p> <p>STOP, change or remove item:</p>	<p>Next steps: (To be entered into SIA Action Plan with timescales)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give details unlawful discrimination and what you will do to remove it and include this in the Initial action plan • Monitor item under assessment to ensure that there is no future impact on protected groups and others • Set a review date to ensure • Communicate the findings of the SIA

<p>Outcome 5: This is an initial SIA which will be updated as the item under assessment progresses. There is no adverse impact identified at this stage</p>	<p>Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enter the action to update the SIA as the item under assessment progresses into the action plan section along with any other identified actions at this stage. • Complete section 5 if you have changed the item under assessment as a result of consultation where negative impact had been identified or where there was no data
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SECTION 5 – MAKING A FINAL DECISION

<p>Section 5a). What consultation have you undertaken in relation to the negative impact/no data available (include Human rights, community cohesion where relevant).</p>	
<p> </p>	
<p>Q5b) Based on the consultation what changes will be made to the item under assessment to address negative impact? If no changes can be made, <u>you must justify why</u> and provide any relevant evidence.</p>	
<p>Changes made as a result of consultation: N/A</p>	
<p>No changes to be made</p>	<p>Justification:</p>
<p>Section 5c) Taking everything into account what is your final decision?</p>	
<p>The proposed project will not negatively impact any particular group and instead will facilitate realisation of benefits as listed but not solely confined to within this document</p>	

5 d) NEXT STEPS

Next steps:

- Any final amendments to be entered into Final Assessment improvement plan with timescales
- Communicate your final decision
- Monitor item under assessment to ensure that there is no future impact on protected groups and others
- Set a review date to ensure

Service Impact Assessment Action Plan. List the nature of any adverse impact (issues) and recommendations (actions) that you plan to implement as a result of this assessment. This should include Community Cohesion findings if relevant.

Department: Customer Resolution Centre

Title of Service Impact Assessment: Customer Resolution Centre – Contact Centre

Lead assessing officer responsible: Claire Wade

Issues identified (Outcomes)	Actions Required	Timescale	Costs	Officer Responsible	Comments	Date Completed

Final Assessment Sign off

Approval of I & D department (please allow two weeks turnaround) :

I & D team signature:

G. Simpkin

Date 26/07/2023

Name and Signature of Service Manager:

Date

If an Action Plan is required at this stage, please ensure that the I & D Department approves the SIA and improvement plan prior to sign of by the

APPENDIX 1

