

Southwark's Customer Access Strategy Refresh 2017: Equality and Health Analysis

Section 1: Equality analysis details

Proposed policy/decision/business plan to which this equality analysis relates	Customer Access Strategy Refresh 2017-2020
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Equality analysis author		Alex Skerten, Project Officer			
Strategic Director:		Gerri Scott, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation			
Department		Housing and Modernisation	Division	Modernise	
Period analysis undertaken		January - February 2017			
Date of review (if applicable)					
Sign-off	Richard Selley	Position	Director, Customer Experience	Date	20 Feb 2017

Section 2: Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

1.1 Brief description of policy/decision/business plan

The Customer Access Strategy Refresh 2017 sets out the council's plans for ensuring that the customer access needs of its customers which include, residents, businesses, partners, visitors and education are met. At the same time the service provided must be efficient, modern and inclusive in order to meet expectations.

The strategy recognises that in all sectors, technology is playing an increasingly important role in improving the way customers can access services at times and locations that are suitable to them. Moreover the strategy remains aware that access channels need to be easily accessible for all customers including its most vulnerable households.

This strategy is the latest of a number of new and refreshed strategies which together, aim to deliver improved IT and digital services and an improved customer experience for all. The Customer Access Strategy, along with the complementary Digital and Modernisation strategies, set out our approach to these challenges over the next four years.

The strategy effectively breaks up the visions for the next four years into five sections.

- Transformation, which includes proposals for the future role of the contact centre, the website and digital alternatives.
- Understanding, which provides details and commitments for how we plan to consult with and listen to our customers to inform our decision making processes.
- Enhancement, which focuses on My Southwark refresh and improvements to our services for businesses.
- Awareness, which explores how we will inform our customers of the services available to them as part of our plans for channel shift.
- Inclusion, to ensure all of our customers can easily access information and have all of their needs considered.

In summary, the aims are;

- To improve customer satisfaction through the provision of modern and more convenient ways of doing business with us.
- Provide better value for money in terms of more cost effective service provision.
- Work with service units to encourage channel shift through the provision of more convenient services through digital means.
- Ensure that all of our customer facing activities accord with the requirements of our vision for equalities.
- Invite regular feedback on how we are doing and let our customers know when we improve our service provision as a result of feedback received.

Section 3: Overview of service users and key stakeholders consulted

2. Service users and stakeholders	
Key users of the department or service	All internal (officers and councillors) and external customers (residents, communities, businesses, partners and visitors to the borough).
Key stakeholders were/are involved in this policy/decision/business plan	The Leader, The Chief Executive, Strategic Director of Housing and Modernisation, Cabinet Member for Finance, Modernisation and Performance, Chief Officer Team, Directors in all departments, Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Officers from all departments of the council.

Section 4: Pre-implementation equality analysis

This section considers the potential impacts (positive and negative) on groups with 'protected characteristics', the equality information on which this analysis is based and any mitigating actions to be taken.

The first column on the left is for societal and economic issues (discrimination, higher poverty levels) and the second column on the right for health issues, physical and mental. As the two aspects are heavily interrelated it may not be practical to fill out both columns on all protected characteristics. The aim is, however, to ensure that health is given special consideration, as it is the council's declared intention to reduce health inequalities in the borough. The Public Health Team can assist with research and data.

Age - Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (e.g. 32 year olds) or range of ages (e.g. 18 - 30 year olds).

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>There is an emphasis on channel shift to online self serve options in the customer access strategy, therefore access to the internet is a consideration for equalities analysis.</p> <p>32% of Southwark residents over the age of 60 years have no access to the internet at home compared to 0% of 16-24 year olds. Access to the internet is directly linked with the ability to use it. A high number of people aged 60 and above are unable to perform basic tasks online such as completing an application form online (52%), using a search engine (41%) or sending or receiving an email (33%). It is identified that those in the community over the age of 60 are more likely to be digitally excluded than those who are younger.</p> <p>Some of the impacts are expected to be positive. Old age is linked with mobility and improvements to online self-serve will allow customers continual access to services from their home.</p>	No current data available.
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
Southwark residents survey - September 2016	No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
The council will ensure traditional customer access services will remain available, so that everyone has access to high quality services. The contact centre will continue to handle emergency requests, such as housing repairs emergencies and pest control	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

<p>emergencies, which will support those over the age of 60 with few digital skills to access services.</p> <p>Significant work is being undertaken in the community to minimise digital exclusion which includes Digital Hubs providing one-to-one digital skills and training. An EU funded project will create new community engagement tools for various groups in our communities.</p> <p>Service areas in developing digital projects will be required to identify any potential negative impacts on the community due to an individual's age, and implement measures to minimise this.</p> <p>'Digital literacy' is improving with every generation, so over time, the risk of inequality is reduced.</p> <p>We will monitor customer satisfaction and aim for year on year improvement in satisfaction with fewer formal customer complaints made.</p> <p>We aim for volunteer digital champions to train at least 500 new learners to develop digital skills by 2020.</p> <p>We will conduct surveys and use our volunteers to check on progress of all customers who have received digital skills training to see if it has really helped them to get online to use our services.</p> <p>We will review of customer access services to ensure digital inclusion is fit for purpose following any potential closure of the Service Points. Review to be completed by December 2017.</p> <p>For customers who need help to get on line we will refer them to one of our libraries or Digital Inclusion Hubs for free training.</p>	
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Disability - A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>There is an emphasis on channel shift to online self serve options in the customer access strategy, therefore access to the internet is a consideration for equalities analysis.</p> <p>83% of Southwark residents with a disability have access to the internet at home. This is compared with 96% of residents who do not have a disability. In relation to digital skills the disabled community have a lower rate of digital capability. 79% of disabled residents have sent or received an email compared to 95% of non disabled residents. 65% of disabled</p>	No current data available.

<p>residents have completed an online application form compared to 90% for non disabled residents. This disparity demonstrates that both access and digital capability is an issue in the disabled community.</p> <p>It is anticipated that there will be positive impacts based on disability of the customer access strategy. For customers with mobility restrictions improvements to online self-serve will allow customers continual access to services from their home.</p> <p>The refreshed council website allows for the pages to be read audibly, to assist visually impaired customers, as well as being able to enlarge the font size.</p>	
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
Southwark residents survey – September 2016	No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
<p>This strategy is closely linked to the Digital Strategy, which has undertaken much work already to mitigate any inequality risks.</p> <p>Significant work is being undertaken in the community to minimise digital exclusion which includes Digital Hubs providing one-to-one digital skills and training. An EU funded project will create new community engagement tools for various groups in our communities. Engagement with deaf forums in Southwark will improve access and information for our deaf community ensuring that needs are met.</p> <p>Service areas in developing digital projects will be required to identify any potential negative impacts on the community due to disability, and implement measures to minimise this.</p> <p>The contact centre will continue to handle emergency requests, such as housing repairs emergencies and pest control emergencies, which will support disabled customer with few digital skills or access to the internet to be able to receive services.</p> <p>'Digital literacy' is improving with every generation, so over time, the risk of inequality is reduced.</p> <p>We will monitor customer satisfaction and aim for year on year improvement in satisfaction with fewer formal customer complaints made.</p> <p>We aim for volunteer digital champions to train at least 500 new learners to develop digital skills by 2020.</p> <p>We will conduct surveys and use our volunteers to</p>	<p>None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.</p>

<p>check on progress of all customers who have received digital skills training to see if it has really helped them to get online to use our services.</p> <p>We will review of customer access services to ensure digital inclusion is fit for purpose following any potential closure of the Service Points. Review to be completed by December 2017.</p> <p>For customers who need help to get on line we will refer them to one of our libraries or Digital Inclusion Hubs for free training.</p>	
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Gender reassignment - The process of transitioning from one gender to another.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the customer access strategy that specifically target gender reassignment. It is therefore probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative impacts on the transgender community.	It is probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative health impacts on the transgender community.
Equality information on which above analysis is based.	Health data on which above analysis is based
No current data available.	No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Marriage and civil partnership – In England and Wales marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman but now includes a marriage between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples and must be treated the same as married couples on a wide range of legal matters. **(Only to be considered in respect to the need to eliminate discrimination.)**

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
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There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target those that are married, in a civil partnership or neither. It is therefore probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative impacts on anyone who is married, in a civil partnership or not at all.	Please see comments to the left
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
No current data available.	No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Pregnancy and maternity - Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target gender, pregnancy or maternity. It is therefore probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative impacts on pregnant women or those on maternity.	It is probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative health impacts on pregnant women, or those on maternity.
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
No current data available.	No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Race - Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. N.B. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller are recognised racial groups and their needs should be considered alongside all others

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>The customer access strategy will focus on equality of access and opportunity for all customers. A positive impact is therefore anticipated.</p> <p>In Southwark the white and BME community both have high access to internet at home (white: 92% and BME: 96%) and a high percentage of people have the ability to perform basic online functions.</p> <p>There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target people based on their race. It can be assumed that digital exclusion as a result of race will be minimal.</p>	<p>It is probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative health impacts on individuals based on their race.</p>
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
Southwark residents survey- September 2016	No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
Service areas in developing projects will be required to identify any potential negative impacts on the community due to an individual's race, and implement measures to minimise this.	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Religion and belief - Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition.

Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target individuals based on their religion or beliefs. It is therefore probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative impacts on individuals based on their religion or beliefs.</p>	<p>It is probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative health impacts on individuals based on their religion or beliefs.</p>

Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
No data sets record religion or belief.	No data sets record religion or belief.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Sex - A man or a woman.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>Whilst not all of the council's customers are residents of the borough, the majority are. Approximately 49% of Southwark residents are male and 51% are female. 51% of Southwark employees are female and 49% are male.</p> <p>There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target an individual based on gender. It is therefore probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative impacts on anyone based on their gender for both internal and external customers.</p>	It is probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative health impacts on individuals based on their gender.
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
Southwark workforce report 2015-16 Southwark residents survey- September 2016	No data available currently.
Mitigating actions to be taken	
None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.	None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Sexual orientation - Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)

There are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target an individual's sexual orientation. It is therefore probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative impacts on anyone based on their sexual orientation.	It is probable that the Customer Access Strategy will have no particular positive or negative health impacts on individuals based on their sexual orientation.
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
No data sets record sexual orientation.	No data sets record sexual orientation.

Mitigating actions to be taken None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.	
Socio-economic disadvantage – although the Equality Act 2010 does not include socio-economic status as one of the protected characteristics, Southwark Council recognises that this continues to be a major cause of inequality in the borough. Socio economic status is the measure of an area's, an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, health, living conditions and occupation.	
Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan	Potential health impacts (positive and negative)
<p>There is an emphasis on channel shift to online self serve options in the customer access strategy, therefore access to the internet is a consideration for equalities analysis.</p> <p>89% of social tenants have home internet access compared to 96% of all homeowners. 13% of those not in work have no internet access at home compared to only 3% of those in work. It is evident that those not in work and those who reside in social housing are more likely to be digitally excluded than otherwise.</p> <p>This disparity is also noted in the ability to perform basic online tasks between the two groups. Only 75% of those not in work have completed an online application before, compared to 93% of those in work.</p> <p>Whilst there are no areas of focus or key work streams within the Customer Access Strategy that specifically target an individual's socio-economic status it is recognised that those in low paid work, the unemployed, or those in social housing will be more likely to be digitally excluded. Engagement activities will focus on trying to mitigate this.</p>	No data available currently.
Equality information on which above analysis is based	Health data on which above analysis is based
Southwark residents survey- September 2016	No data available currently.

Mitigating actions to be taken	
<p>This strategy is closely linked to the Digital Strategy, which has undertaken much work already to mitigate any inequality risks.</p> <p>Significant work is being undertaken in the community to minimise digital exclusion which includes Digital Hubs providing one-to-one digital skills and training. An EU funded project will create new community engagement tools for various groups in our communities.</p> <p>Service areas in developing projects will be required to identify any potential negative impacts on the community due to an individual's socio economic disadvantage, and implement measures to minimise this.</p> <p>We will monitor customer satisfaction and aim for year on year improvement in satisfaction with fewer formal customer complaints made.</p> <p>We aim for volunteer digital champions to train at least 500 new learners to develop digital skills by 2020.</p> <p>We will conduct surveys and use our volunteers to check on progress of all customers who have received digital skills training to see if it has really helped them to get online to use our services.</p> <p>We will review of customer access services to ensure digital inclusion is fit for purpose following any potential closure of the Service Points. Review to be completed by December 2017.</p> <p>For customers who need help to get on line we will refer them to one of our libraries or Digital Inclusion Hubs for free training.</p> <p>Libraries remain a key component of the customer access strategy and provide customers with internet access if they do not have this at home.</p>	<p>None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.</p>

<p>Human Rights</p> <p>There are 16 rights in the Human Rights Act. Each one is called an Article. They are all taken from the European Convention on Human Rights. The Articles are The right to life, Freedom from torture, inhuman and degrading treatment, Freedom from forced labour , Right to Liberty, Fair trial, Retrospective penalties, Privacy, Freedom of conscience, Freedom of expression, Freedom of assembly, Marriage and family, Freedom from discrimination and the First Protocol.</p>
<p>Potential impacts (positive and negative) of proposed policy/decision/business plan</p>
<p>There are no anticipated negative impacts on Human Rights as a result of the customer access strategy.</p>

Information on which above analysis is based
No current data available.
Mitigating actions to be taken
None at this point. Will be reviewed as appropriate.

Section 5: Further actions and objectives

5. Further actions			
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail the key mitigating actions or the areas identified as requiring more detailed analysis.			
Number	Description of issue	Action	Timeframe
1	Lack of complex data referencing protected characteristics	Commence data collation within each project	From March 2017-onwards
2	Impacts for each protected characteristics	Major projects will need to carry out an impact analysis and take action to mitigate negative impacts	From March 2017-onwards
3	Over time the capability and access to services may change for different protected characteristic groups. These require monitoring.	Detailed trend analysis with the resident survey and will need to take place on an individual project level also	From March 2017-onwards

5. Equality objectives (for business plans)				
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail any equality objectives that you will set for your division/department/service. Under the objective and measure column please state whether this objective is an existing objective or a suggested addition to the Council Plan.				
Objective and measure	Lead officer	Current performance (baseline)	Targets	
			Year 1	Year 2
None at this point	None at this point	None at this point	None at this point	None at this point

5. Health objectives (for business plans)				
Based on the initial analysis above, please detail any health objectives that you will set for your division/department/service. Under the objective and measure column please state whether this objective is an existing objective or a suggested addition to the Council Plan.				
Objective and measure	Lead officer	Current performance (baseline)	Targets	
			Year 1	Year 2
None at this point	None at this point	None at this point	None at this point	None at this point