



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

PLEASE ENSURE YOU READ THE GUIDANCE NOTES BEFORE COMPLETING THIS TEMPLATE

Completing an EIA is the simplest way to demonstrate that the Council has considered the equality impacts of its decisions and it reduces the risk of legal challenge. EIAs should be carried out at the earliest stages of policy development or a service review, and then updated as the policy or review develops. EIAs must be undertaken when it is possible for the findings to inform the final decision.

SECTION 1:

Title	Closure of Orchardson Street Benefit Office
<p>What are you analysing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the policy/project/activity/strategy looking to achieve? • Who is it intended to benefit? Are any specific groups targeted by this decision? • What results are intended? 	<p>Since 26 March 2020 the customer facing reception at Orchardson Street has been closed to the public and it has been decided to close the facility on a permanent basis.</p> <p>The reception at Orchardson Street provides the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-service PCs with assisted self-serve and scanning facility • General advice, including how to claim Universal Credit, and document drop-off • Interviews via pre-arranged appointment • Copying / scanning facilities for supporting evidence <p>There are two reception sites in Westminster, one at Orchardson Street and one at Vauxhall Bridge Road.</p> <p>The reception sites were both closed at the start of the pandemic. At that time the Benefits service implemented a number of changes to ensure that the service provided to the borough's claimants was not reduced. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxed verification requirements informed by the DWP's 'Trust and Protect' initiative • Outbound telephone call support provided to customers who have difficulty in completing the form or needs assistance with complex issues.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements put in place for hard copy forms to be issued if the customer has no online access • Covid-19 compliant procedures to allow the uninterrupted processing of white mail including the transfer of any correspondence received at the closed sites • Signposting to alternative methods of contact including Contact Centre, Online Forms and Email • Updates to the Council's website to inform Customers of the reception closures and removal of details on correspondence • Implementing an online claim process for discretionary housing payments • Development on an Online Evidence Upload form <p>The new processes which were put in place have worked very well, no discernible issues have arisen.</p> <p>Some benefit claimants may still wish to address their benefit query face to face rather than via the telephone service or by using the alternative processes outlined above. Vauxhall Bridge Road site (which has good transport links) will still be available. Vulnerable claimants that are unable to resolve their query will also have the option of receiving a visit ion their own home (subject to an appropriate risk assessment).</p>
Details of the lead person completing the screening/EIA	<p>(i) Full Name: Martin Hinckley</p> <p>(ii) Position: Director of Revenues and Benefits</p> <p>(iii) Unit: Finance and Resources</p> <p>(iii) Contact Details:</p>
Date sent to Equalities@westminster.gov.uk	
Version number and date of update	V1
<p><i>You will need to update your EIA as you move through the decision-making process. Record the version number here and the date you updated the EIA. Keep all versions so you have evidence that you have considered equality throughout the process. However <u>only</u> the most updated version will be saved in the Equalities SharePoint folder.</i></p>	

SECTION 2: Do you need to complete a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?

Not all proposals will require a full EIA, the assessment of impacts should be proportionate to the nature of the project/policy in question and its likely impact. To decide on the level of detail of the assessment required consider the potential impact on persons with protected characteristics.

<p>2.1</p>	<p>Please provide an overview of who uses/will use your service or facility and identify who are likely to be impacted by the proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>If you do not formally collect data about a particular group then use the results of local surveys or consultations, census data, national trends or anecdotal evidence (indicate where this is the case). Please attempt to complete all boxes.</i> <i>Consider whether there is a need to consult stakeholders and the public, including members of protected groups, in order to gather information on potential impacts of the proposal</i> 														
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 824 938 965">How many people use the service currently? What is this as a % of Westminster’s population?</td> <td data-bbox="938 824 1481 965">On average 1300 per month</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 965 938 1059">Gender</td> <td data-bbox="938 965 1481 1059"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 1059 938 1153">Race</td> <td data-bbox="938 1059 1481 1153"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 1153 938 1247">Disability</td> <td data-bbox="938 1153 1481 1247"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 1247 938 1350">Sexual orientation</td> <td data-bbox="938 1247 1481 1350"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 1350 938 1444">Age</td> <td data-bbox="938 1350 1481 1444"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="507 1444 938 1538">Religion or belief</td> <td data-bbox="938 1444 1481 1538"></td> </tr> </table>	How many people use the service currently? What is this as a % of Westminster’s population?	On average 1300 per month	Gender		Race		Disability		Sexual orientation		Age		Religion or belief	
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<p>2.2 Are there any groups with protected characteristic that are overrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population? If so, this could indicate that the proposal may have a disproportionate impact on this group even if it is a universal service.</p>	<p><i>If yes, provide details.</i></p>														

2.3 Are there any groups with protected characteristics that are underrepresented in the monitoring information relative to their size of the population? If so, this could indicate that the service may not be accessible to all groups or there may be some form of direct or indirect discrimination occurring.

If yes, provide details.

2.4 Does the project, policy or proposal have the potential to disproportionately impact on people with a protected characteristic? If so, is the impact positive or negative?

	None	Positive	Negative	Not sure
Men or women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of a particular race or ethnicity (including refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and gypsies and travellers)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disabled ¹ people (consider different types of physical, learning or mental disabilities)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of particular sexual orientation/s	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in particular age groups (consider in particular children, under 21s and over 65s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People who are intending to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process or part of a process of gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Impact due to pregnancy/ maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People of particular faiths and beliefs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People on low incomes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If any of the answers to the questions above is, “negative” or “unclear” you will need to undertake a detailed impact assessment.

¹ Disability discrimination is different from other types of discrimination since it includes the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

2.5	Based on your responses, should a full, detailed EIA be carried out on the project, policy or proposal
	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.6	Provide brief reasons on how have you come to this decision?
	<p>Whilst there will be a negative impact to people on low incomes, we will have put a number of changes in place which could also be seen as a positive impact, the changes are detailed in the actions.</p> <p>A visiting office will remain open at Vauxhall Bridge Road, where residents are unable to travel to this site an officer will make a home visit.</p>

SECTION 3: ASSESSING THE IMPACT

In order to be able to identify ways to mitigate any potential impact it is essential that we know what those potential impacts might be. Using the evidence gathered in section 2, explain what the potential impact of your proposal might be on the groups you have identified. You may wish to further supplement the evidence you have gathered using the table below in order to properly consider the impact.

Protected Group		Positive impact?			Negative impact? If so, please specify the nature and extent of that impact	No specific impact	If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? Please specify any mitigation measures and how and when they will be implemented	What , if any, are the cumulative effects of this decision when viewed in the context of other Council decisions and their equality impacts
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations				
Gender	Men					X		
	Women					X		
Race	White					X		
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups					X		
	Asian/Asian British					X		
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British					X		
	Gypsies / travellers					X		
	Other ethnic group					X		
Disability	Physical					X		
	Sensory					X		
	Learning Difficulties					X		
	Learning Disabilities					X		
	Mental Health					X		

Protected Group		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action)	What are the cumulative of effects
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations				
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual					X		
Age	Older people (50+)					X		
	Younger people (16 - 25)					X		
Gender Reassignment						X		
Impact due to pregnancy/maternity						X		
Groups with particular faiths and beliefs						X		
People on low incomes					X			

SECTION 4: ACTION PLAN

<p>4.1</p>	<p>Complete the action plan if you need to reduce or remove the negative impacts you have identified, take steps to foster good relations or fill data gaps.</p> <p><i>Please include the action required by your team/unit, groups affected, the intended outcome of your action, resources needed, a lead person responsible for undertaking the action (inc. their department and contact details), the completion date for the action, and the relevant RAG rating: R(ed) – action not initiated, A(mber) – action initiated and in progress, G(reen) – action complete.</i></p> <p>NB. Add any additional rows, if required.</p>					
Action Required	Equality Groups Targeted	Intended outcome	Resources Needed	Name of Lead, Unit & Contact Details	Completion Date (DD/MM/YY)	RAG
Relaxed verification requirements informed by the DWP's 'Trust and Protect' initiative	People on Low Incomes	Reduce the need to attend the office to provide original documents – this has been in place since the visiting office closed due to Covid-19	N/A	Janine Gray Head of Revenues and Benefits	Complete 23/11/2020	Green
Outbound telephone call support provided to customers who have difficulty in completing the form or needs assistance with complex issues.	People on Low Incomes	Support by telephone rather than face to face. Face to face will still be available at Vauxhall Bridge Road – this has been in place since the visiting office closed due to Covid-19	N/A	Janine Gray Head of Revenues and Benefits	Complete 23/11/2020	Green
Arrangements put in place for hard copy forms to be issued if the customer has no online access	People on Low Incomes	Hard copy forms can be issued via post, or obtained from Vauxhall Bridge Road - this has been in place since the visiting	N/A	Janine Gray Head of Revenues and Benefits	Complete 23/11/2020	Green

			office closed due to Covid-19				
	Covid-19 compliant procedures to allow the uninterrupted processing of white mail including the transfer of any correspondence received at the closed sites	People on Low Incomes	Post is currently re-delivered and scanned into document imaging system for actioning - this has been in place since the visiting office closed due to Covid-19	N/A	Janine Gray Head of Revenues and Benefits	Complete 23/11/2020	Green
	Signposting to alternative methods of contact including Contact Centre, Online Forms and Email	People on Low Incomes	Signposting is already on the website, this will be reviewed and updated regularly	1	Paul Thomson Contract Manager		
	Updates to the Council's website to inform Customers of the reception closures and removal of details on correspondence	People on Low Incomes	Clear signposting and review of all mailing to remove reference to Orchardson Street	1	Paul Thomson Contract Manager		
	Implementing an online claim process for discretionary housing payments	People on Low Incomes	An application form is currently available on line to download, implementation of an online form will be arranged	1	Gwyn Thomas Head of Policy		
	Development of an Online Evidence Upload form	People on Low Incomes	A link will be applied to the website to allow the upload of evidence	1	Paul Thomson Contract Manager		

THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER

SIGNATURE:

FULL NAME:Martin Hinckley.....

UNIT:Finance and Resources

EMAIL & TELEPHONE EXT: ...07816 215828.....

DATE (DD/MM/YYYY):23/11/2020.....

WHAT NEXT?

It is the responsibility of the service to complete an EIA to the required standard and the quality and completeness of EIAs will be monitored by EMT.

All EIAs for proposed changes to levels of service arising from budget proposals must be completed by (insert date).

All completed EIAs should be sent to Equalities@westminster.gov.uk