

## Business as usual (BAU) Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

1. Business as usual service activity		
<b>Name of the activity being assessed</b>	Customer First Office – Complaints	
<b>Purpose of activity</b>	Corporate and Statutory complaint management for all council services accessed by residents and visitors. This service can be accessed via Web ( <a href="https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/page/7856/complain-about-council-services">https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/page/7856/complain-about-council-services</a> ), Telephone, Email or in person at Council buildings.	
<b>Who is the activity intended to benefit?</b>	Customers: Residents, visitors Service Teams throughout the Council can use this information to make service improvements by learning from previous mistakes.	
<b>Version of EqIA</b>	<a href="#">Version 1</a>	
<b>Date this version created</b>	<a href="#">07/06/2023</a>	
<b>Confidential</b>	no	
<b>Directorate</b>	<a href="#">Corporate Strategy and Customer Services</a>	
<b>Service</b>	<a href="#">Customer Service and Digital Strategy</a>	
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Service or organisation</b>
<b>Principal author</b>	Eilidh Cook	Customer First Office
<b>Additional authors</b>	Ruth Barfoot	Customer Service Programme
	Carol Girvan	Customer First Office

2. Groups impacted		
Does the project impact upon?		If yes, what is the estimated number impacted and the Level of impact this will have on the group (high, medium, low)?
Service users	yes	600 (average number of complaints registered) – Medium
Carers or family of service users	yes	Min 600 – medium
Residents	yes	206,000 – Medium
Visitors	yes	6.6 million – Low
Staff	yes	4,500 including Elected Members – Low
Partner organisations	yes	Equans, Capita, NHS – Low

3. Evidence gathering and engagement		
	Internal evidence	External evidence
What evidence has been used for this assessment?	Service area satisfaction survey (Internal teams), Complaint satisfaction survey (service user)	- <a href="#">Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual review letter to Council</a> -Housing Ombudsman Annual Report to Council - Published December 23 -Residents Survey
Have you carried out any engagement in relation to this activity?	yes	
If yes of what kind and with whom? If no, why not?	<a href="#">Annual complaints report</a> 22 -23 published 30 November 23 6 monthly reports to service teams on complaint activity 6 monthly service team reviews Satisfaction surveys	
Is there any information you don't have?	no	
If yes, why is this information not available?	None identified as yet	

4. Impact on groups with different characteristics			
Legally protected characteristics	Potential positive impact identified	Potential negative impact identified	Description of the potential impact and evidence used in the assessment (mitigations are not included here)
Age	no	no	
Disability	no	yes	Not all services might be fully accessible by all channels. People who are deaf / blind may suffer a delay in accessing the service until interpretation or translation can be arranged.
Gender reassignment	no	yes	Potential for customer to be misgendered by the officer they are engaging with. regards to their titles and pronouns

Marriage & civil partnership	no	no	
Pregnancy & maternity	no	no	
Race	no	yes	Communication may not be in someone's first language. Delay to service if an interpreter is needed to translate. Potential for unconscious bias towards certain groups
Religion or belief	no	yes	Potential for unconscious bias towards certain groups
Sex	no	no	
Sexual orientation	no	yes	Potential for unconscious bias towards certain groups
Intersectionality	no	no	
<b>Non-legally protected characteristic</b>			
Carers	no	yes	May have a negative impact on carers who, due to their caring responsibilities, could find it challenging to complain within the 12 month time limit.
Socio-economic disadvantage	no	no	

<b>5. Achievement of the Authority's Public Sector Equality Duty</b>		
<b>Will the activity contribute to any of the following?</b>		<b>If yes, how?</b>
<b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment</b>	N/A	
<b>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</b>	yes	Being an accessible service to give everyone an equal opportunity to make a complaint and receive an outcome communicated in a way that can be understood.
<b>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</b>	N/A	

6. Negative impacts		
Potential negative impact	Can it be reduced or removed?	If yes how? If no, why not and what alternative options were considered and not pursued?
Disability / Race - Communication Support	yes- reduced	<p>The Authority is committed to ensuring that everyone has equal access to all services and part of this is to make sure this procedure is easily accessible. To support this process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• complaints are accepted over the telephone, in person, in writing, by email, via the website or by any other reasonable means.</li> <li>• we can provide information and responses in alternative formats including, Braille, large print, easy read format, other languages where needed; and</li> <li>• provide translators (including sign language interpreters) where needed.</li> <li>• Provide advocates where needed</li> <li>• Plain English training – we undertake Customer Promise reviews of complaint responses .</li> <li>• Translation service available if needed.</li> </ul>
Race - Communication Support	yes- reduced	<p>The Customer First Office can arrange the assistance of an advocate if needed. This will be supported if it will help facilitate full and effective consideration of the complaint. Whilst appointing an advocate it may be necessary to extend the response date of the customers complaint.</p>
Gender reassignment/ sexual orientation/ race and religion conscious / unconscious bias	yes- reduced	<p>Equality and Diversity training for all staff who administer and process complaints.</p>
Carers	yes- reduced	<p>Authorisation act on behalf of the customer is requested from the carer at point of contact.</p>

		The time limit will be applied with discretion and will consider any exceptional circumstances or specific reasons that may have impacted the customer's ability to make a complaint within the 12-month timescale.
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7. Action plan					
Actions to gather evidence or information to improve NTC's understanding of the impacts on people with protected characteristics and how best to respond to them	Responsible officer name	Responsible officer service area	Target completion date	Action completed	
Annual complaints report	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	31/10/2023	yes	
Actions already in place to remove or reduce negative impacts	Responsible officer name	Responsible officer service area	Impact		
Colleague Equality and Diversity training	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	reduce		
Customer Satisfaction Survey	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	reduce		
Internal Customer satisfaction survey	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	reduce		
NTC access statement included at all points of the complaint process – including letters, emails and Statements of complaint	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	reduce		
Actions that will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts	Responsible officer name	Responsible officer service area	Impact	Target completion date	Action completed
Annual report feedback and review by Customer First Manager	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	reduce	31/10/2023	yes

Publication of BSL video providing information around the complaints service and how to access it	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy	Reduce	30/03/2024	In progress
<b>Actions that will be taken to make the most of any potential positive impact</b>	<b>Responsible officer name</b>	<b>Responsible officer service area</b>		<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Action completed</b>
Annual report lessons learnt, and key priorities identified for the following year	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy		31/03/2024	in progress
<b>Actions that will be taken to monitor the equality impact of the activity</b>	<b>Responsible officer name</b>	<b>Responsible officer service area</b>		<b>Target Completion Date</b>	<b>Action completed</b>
Review Customer Satisfaction surveys	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy		31/10/2023	yes
Review Service team survey	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy		31/10/2023	yes
<b>Date review of EqIA to be completed</b>	<b>Responsible officer name</b>	<b>Responsible Officer Service Area</b>			
23/11/2023	Eilidh Cook	Corporate Strategy			

#### 8. Outcome of EqIA

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Please explain and evidence why you have reached this conclusion:</b>
The proposal is robust, no major change is required	There is sufficient engagement with customers to understand need and design services and approach to meet those needs.

#### 9. Corporate Equality Group member approval

<b>Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?</b>	<a href="#">Choose an item.</a>
<b>If disagree, please explain why?</b>	
<b>Name of Corporate Equality Group member</b>	
<b>Date</b>	<a href="#">Click or tap to enter a date.</a>

#### 10. Director/Head of Service approval

<b>Do you agree or disagree with this assessment?</b>	<a href="#">Choose an item.</a>
<b>If disagree, please explain why?</b>	Free text
<b>Name of Director/Head of Service</b>	Free text
<b>Date</b>	<a href="#">Click or tap to enter a date.</a>

Please return the document to the Author and Corporate Equality Group member.