Equality Impact and Needs Analysis (EINA) for Revenues & Benefits Front Office Procedures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directorate:</th>
<th>Finance &amp; Corporate Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service Area:</td>
<td>Revenues &amp; Benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of service/ function/policy/ being assessed:</td>
<td>Revenues &amp; Benefits Front Office Procedures EINA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer leading on assessment:</td>
<td>Jacky Warren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other staff involved:</td>
<td>Kim Anderson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PREPARATION FOR THE EQUALITY IMPACT AND NEEDS ANALYSIS

1. Briefly describe the service/ function/ policy:

The Revenues and Benefits Team operates a Front Office function in the atrium of the Civic Centre. The purpose of this is to provide a face-to-face service to customers who wish to discuss or make a new claim for their Housing/Council Tax Benefit, Council Tax or Business Rates. In 2011/12 there were 25,949 Revenues and Benefits visits made to the atrium. In 2011, 36% of all visitors to the Atrium were Revenues and Benefit customers (21% Housing/Council Tax Benefits and 15% for Council Tax).

The service is available during normal business hours, Monday to Friday, without appointment. A numbered ticketing system is in place to be used by most customers, with signage at reception explaining its use. This ensures that customers are seen in order of arrival. The exception is customers making a new claim for Housing and Council Tax Benefit. As these visits can be more complex and time consuming, specialist staff members are available to deal with these visits separately.

Customers wishing to discuss their situation in private can request this. Where possible this will be arranged straight away, however, due to limited room availability, an appointment may be necessary.

The front office function is staffed by a dedicated team from within the Revenues and Benefits service, supplemented by staff from the back office, as and when they are required. Staff members dealing with benefit overpayments and Business Rates are available to see customers as necessary, as are more senior staff should this be required. The design of the atrium provides a safe and welcoming environment for staff and customers. Staff members have access to alarm buttons and there is an agreed procedure for dealing with them. Staff members also undertake specific safety and conflict management training.

Staff members have guidance available to enable them to help customers with special needs e.g. customers who are deaf, as well as those who need help with spoken English.

A recent customer satisfaction survey showed that 98% of customers rated the Civic Centre environment as welcoming and user friendly.

2. Why is the equality impact and needs analysis being undertaken?

No service EINA has been undertaken in the last two years.
3. **Has this service/function/policy undertaken a screening for relevance?**

If so, which protected characteristics and parts of the duty were identified as of high or medium relevance and why? Please attach screening for relevance as an appendix to this EINA.

If not, make an assessment of which protected characteristics and parts of the duty are of high or medium relevance and explain why:

Yes, please refer to Appendix 1.

4. **What sources of information have been used in the preparation of this equality impact and needs analysis?** For example, this could include equalities monitoring information, performance data, consultation feedback or needs assessment. Please provide the details in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civic Centre Atrium Policy and Procedures</td>
<td>This document details LBRuT policies and procedures for staff and visitors to the atrium at the Civic Centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face to Face Survey 2011 results</td>
<td>We aim to see customers within 10 minutes of arrival. When last surveyed in 2011 93% of customers were seen within ten minutes. 97% felt their wait time was acceptable. 36% of all visitors to the Atrium are Revenues and Benefit customers (21% Housing and Council Tax Benefits and 15% for Council Tax). 98% of customers rated the environment as welcoming and user friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with difficult customers training</td>
<td>In the last 12 months, five front-line staff have received refresher handling conflict training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalities Processes – Customers with Special Needs</td>
<td>Dealing with customers with special needs guidance notes and accessing translation services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANALYSING IMPACT, NEEDS AND EFFECTS**

*It is important that the analysis addresses each part of the duty assessed as relevant to the area being examined* (see further Guidance on RIO).

5. Key questions to consider:

a. What does the data tell you about the groups identified as relevant to the area being assessed?

b. What does customer feedback, complaints or discussions with stakeholder groups tell you about the impact of the service/function/policy on the protected characteristic groups, where assessed as relevant to area being examined?

Other questions to consider:

- How well are diverse needs met?
- Have any differences in access to services/functions been identified for any group?
- Has the area identified any disadvantages experienced by groups, which need to be addressed?
- Have there been any complaints about a failure to receive an appropriate and fair service?
- Is there any other evidence of differential impact or different outcomes which needs to be addressed?
- Is there any evidence that participation in areas of public life is disproportionately low for any particular relevant protected characteristic group?
- Have the needs of disabled people been identified and addressed where these are different from the needs of non-disabled people?
- Have you identified any need to tackle prejudice or promote understanding between different relevant protected characteristic groups?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected Group</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>The table below shows the age breakdown of respondents from the recent 2011/12 Customer Satisfaction survey. The results indicate that the majority for visitors to the atrium were of working age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over 65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to this service may be affected by age. Older customers who find it difficult to visit the atrium can request a home visit. Staff members who make home visits are able to complete forms, answer general queries and collect evidence for claims for Benefits or Council Tax discount and exemptions, as well as signpost customers to other sources of help and advice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>The results from the 2011/12 Customer Satisfaction survey have shown that the recorded breakdown of customers visiting the Atrium was:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensory</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability/difficulty</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long standing illness or health condition</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Access to this service may be affected by disability. Disabled customers who find it difficult to visit the atrium can request a home visit. Staff members who make home visits are able to complete forms, answer general queries and collect evidence for claims for Benefits or Council Tax discount and exemptions, as well as signpost customers to other sources of help and advice.

Staff members have access to guidance for helping customers who may visit the Atrium with a range of physical or sensory disabilities.

There is no training currently available for dealing with customers who have Mental Health issues or Learning difficulties.
Both males and females have equal access to this service. Gender is usually known, but the individual would be treated equally, regardless of this.

In 2011/12, the gender breakdown of visitors to the Atrium was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No impact has been identified at this stage.

We do not envisage any impact on individuals that have undergone or are undergoing gender reassignment as gender is not taken into consideration.

No impact has been identified at this stage.

The 2011/12 Customer Satisfaction Survey recorded Ethnicity of visitors to the atrium as the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White British</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Irish</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Eastern European</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Spanish</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed White and Black African</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed White and Asian</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghan</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British Caribbean</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British African</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other Black background</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy/Traveller/Romany</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Customers of all race/ethnic groups have access to this service.

Staff members have access to the Council’s translation service if required. Due to current staffing within the Revenues and Benefits team, translation can often be done without the need of a third party.

Corporate “Rich Mix” training is due to be re-launched in 2013 for all staff.

1 Only in relation to the first part of the duty: eliminate discrimination and harassment
In 2011/12 the recorded breakdown of visitors to the atrium was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikh</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Faith</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No impact has been identified at this stage.

In 2011/12 the recorded sexual orientation of visitors to the atrium was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sexual orientation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay man</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay woman</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sexual orientation of customers is not a factor that is considered when accessing this service, therefore, we do not envisage any impact on these grounds.

6. **Have you identified any data gaps in relation to the relevant protected characteristics and relevant parts of the duty?** If so, how will these data gaps be addressed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gaps in data</th>
<th>Action to deal with this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We do not have any data regarding customers with learning difficulties or mental health problems.</td>
<td>Review any information held elsewhere in the Council. Consider if specific training is need in these areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS**

7. Set out the key findings from the equality impact needs analysis of the service/function/policy. Key questions to consider when completing this section:
   - Are there findings of unlawful discrimination?
   - Can you address any identified adverse impact?
   - Can you mitigate any negative impact?
   - Please provide rationale if you are unable to address any adverse impact.
   - Have you identified any ways of advancing equality in this area? For example, meeting diverse needs?
   - Is there a need for any actions to promote understanding between different protected groups?
In addition to the front office, customers can also use the following contact channels:

- telephone
- visiting services
- email
- In writing
- Web based forms

There are a number of pages on the Council’s website dealing with various aspects of Revenues and Benefits.

Customers can be signposted to other external and internal sources of help and advice for example

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Welfare rights Groups
- Social Services
- Housing
- Debt Management Services

CONSULTATION ON THE KEY FINDINGS

8. What consultation have you undertaken with stakeholders or critical friends about the key findings? What feedback did you receive as part of the consultation?

ACTION PLANNING

9. What issues have you identified that require actions? What are these actions, who will be responsible for them and when will they be completed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue identified</th>
<th>Planned action</th>
<th>Lead officer</th>
<th>Completion Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information and Training in the areas of Learning Difficulties and Mental Health</td>
<td>Review any information and best practice that may be available elsewhere in the Council. Consider specific training</td>
<td>Jacky Warren</td>
<td>July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not all Front-Line members of staff have received Rich Mix Equalities &amp; Diversity training.</td>
<td>Human Resources have introduced a new programme of Equalities &amp; Diversity training for 2013. Revenues &amp; Benefits staff will be required to attend training.</td>
<td>Team Leaders</td>
<td>Throughout 2013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. How will the actions in the action plan be monitored and reviewed? For example, any equality actions identified should be added to business, service or team plans and performance managed.

Action will be added to Revenues and Benefits service plan

PUBLISHING THE COMPLETED ANALYSIS

11. When completed, the equality impact and needs analysis should be approved by a member of DMT and published on the Council’s website. Please provide details below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>FCS Equality and Diversity Steering Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of approval</td>
<td>March 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of publication</td>
<td>February 2014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

12. Has a copy of this EINA or summary of key findings been provided to key decision-makers to help inform decision making, for example as an appendix to a Cabinet or Committee report?

- If so please provide the details including the name of the report, the audience i.e. Cabinet/Committee, the date it went, and the report author.
- Please also outline the outcome from the report and details of any follow up action or monitoring of actions or decision taken:

Not applicable
Appendix One
Screening for Relevance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Directorate</th>
<th>Revenues &amp; Benefits – Front Office service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact</td>
<td>Joseph Hixon – Acting Policy Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>020 8891 7621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>020 8891 7933</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/ Function</th>
<th>Are the areas listed below relevant to your service/ function?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Please answer H, M or L for ‘High’ Medium or Low’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Office service EINA</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Disab’</td>
<td>Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re &amp; B</td>
<td>Religion and Belief</td>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GeR</td>
<td>Gender re-assignment</td>
<td>P&amp;M</td>
<td>Pregnancy and maternity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>