

MID SUSSEX DISTRICT COUNCIL

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of Service: Customer Contact Centre and Reception

Division: Communications and Customer Services

Lead Officer: Diane Talbot

Date Assessment completed: March 2013

1. SCOPING

1.1 What are the aims of the service?

Customer Contact Centre: To provide excellent customer service to all customers telephoning the council and to resolve as many enquiries as possible at first point of contact

Out of Hours Service: To provide an out of hours contact to all customers with an emergency need (such as damaged buildings, flooding etc) and to provide continuity of service for customers between the Contact Centre and Out of Hours service

Help Point/Reception: To provide an excellent customer service to all customers visiting the Council Offices and to resolve as many enquiries as possible at first point of contact, or to successfully signpost customers to the correct service both within and external to Council services.

1.2 Who does the service affect? Who are the main customers (internal or external)?

Reception: Affects both internal and external customers as is the first point of contact for any visitor to the Council. Also provides a resource for staff within the office.

Customer Contact Centre: Affects any person wishing to contact any Council staff. This includes residents, contractors and visitors to the area. As the Customer Contact Centre takes initial enquiry calls for several council services, it also affects those services as the Contact Centre is the first point of contact for them. Any correspondence that is not to a specific service is also dealt with here (general enquiries in letter and email format mostly).

Out of Hours: Affects any person wishing to contact the Council outside of normal working hours. This could be residents or contractors as well as emergency services.

1.3 What equality information is available, including any evidence from engagement and analysis of use of services?

There are several examples of engaging customers across the whole of the Customer Services business unit. However, this concentrates more on the customer's satisfaction with the service received and does not ask specific equality questions.

The Customer Contact Centre Customer Relationship Management System (Lagan) has the capability to hold additional information on customers calling in if they are residents of Mid Sussex and although this is not yet in use, notes on specific contact issues are recorded (such as hard of hearing, assisted bin collection etc). There are also comment cards in Reception that customers are urged to complete with any suggestions or issues. Corporately, the Council has invested in resident profiling, allowing the Council to target customer service for specific groups of residents (Experian and Mosaic Profiling).

1.4 What does this information tell us about the equality issues associated with the service and implications for the protected groups?

The information currently stored is analysed to improve that specific issue (e.g. access issues due to disability).

The corporate profiling of residents informs both Reception and the Customer Contact Centre of groups that may benefit from alternative service delivery.

Feedback from customers to reception staff highlights access issues in reception such as problems caused by the lack of direct access to toilet facilities.

1.5 Are contractors or partnerships used to deliver the service? Y/N Yes

Identify the contractors/partnerships used to deliver the service.

Invicta Telecare Limited provide the Out of Hours service.

What is their contribution to equality in service delivery and the promotion of equality?

The nature of the calls (emergencies only) means that all calls are treated equally, in accordance with the out of hours procedure.

How are equality issues addressed through contractual arrangements and service level agreements?

As above, the contractor adheres to MSDC policies and procedures, as outlined in the service contract.

2. Assessment of Impact; Analysis and Action Planning

Any gaps in information or provision, opportunities to promote equalities and good relations identified above need to be translated into SMART actions and recorded here. These actions need to be delivered and monitored through the service planning process.

Opportunity to promote equality, good relations and/or address barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of different ethnic groups including white minorities, but also established white communities				
<p>All signs and the majority of information posters are in English</p> <p>Specific service surgeries are held within Reception</p>	<p>The website has an online translation application and if leaflets or other information is needed in another language, Customer Service staff can take this request (and if necessary engage the relevant service). Staff on Reception will try to assist with any specific service requests in regard to community specific information, language or disabilities.</p>	<p>Current service information does not indicate further services are required.</p>	<p>Diane Talbot/ Lynne Standing</p>	<p>Through resident profiling information, corporate customer forums and customer comments/requests</p>
The needs of men and women. Including taking account of pregnancy and maternity.				
<p>There is no public access toilet or baby changing facilities in the Reception area.</p>	<p>There is a customer use disabled toilet with baby changing facilities but there is no direct access for the public and Reception staff must escort customers. There is public access to a toilet in the Planning reception.</p>	<p>Consideration of provision of new disabled access public toilet facilities to be incorporated in any future refurbishment plans</p>	<p>Diane Talbot/ Emma Grundy</p>	<p>Customers able to use direct access facilities.</p>
The needs of disabled people				
<p>There is limited access to Reception and public meeting rooms. Access is via ramps, stairlifts to the Council Chamber and a lift.</p> <p>There is a hearing loop within Reception for those with hearing difficulties.</p> <p>There is no public access disabled toilet in the reception area.</p>	<p>Regular inspections of the stairlift and lift are carried out. Public meetings are normally held in ground floor or accessible rooms.</p> <p>There is a customer use disabled toilet but there is no direct access for the public and Reception staff must escort customers.</p> <p>The Council has signed up to the Thumbs Up Campaign, to support people with learning difficulties through our customer service.</p>	<p>DDA regulations considered in any reception refurbishment.</p>	<p>Emma Grundy</p>	<p>Improved DDA compliance.</p>

Opportunity to promote equality and/or barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of people with a religion or belief				
None identified.	Not applicable.			
The needs of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and heterosexual people				
None identified.	Not applicable.			
Issues from marriage and civil partnership				
None identified.	Not applicable			
The needs of different age groups, for example older and younger people				
<p>Reception provision for parents with young children.</p> <p>Access issues for older people are linked to the disability section above.</p>	<p>There is a play table for younger children and there are seats available for those customers that are waiting to be seen by other services.</p> <p>There is a hearing loop within Reception for those using that technology.</p> <p>There is access to a disabled toilet that also has baby changing facilities.</p>		Diane Talbot/ Emma Grundy	

Opportunity to promote equality and/or barriers to service/differential impact	Current action taken to address these	Further actions required and timescales	Lead Officer	How will impact be measured
The needs of transgender communities				
None identified.	Not applicable.			
The needs of people who are disadvantaged by socio-economic factors such as low incomes, skill or living in a deprived area				
<p>Housing Needs, Shelter, HMRC and Housing Benefits all hold surgeries within Reception. Reception staff will alert relevant teams when their services are required in Reception.</p> <p>Reception and Customer Contact Centre aware of and able to sign post to facilities and resources available for a wide range of residents, the above included.</p>	Rooms are also provided for external services when requested and there is contact with CAB that is also based at MSDC Campus.	Opportunities may arise for further surgeries within the Reception area as and when Office refurbishment occurs.	Diane Talbot	Number of surgeries provided and levels of attendance.
The needs of people who live in a rural area				
Reception and Customer Contact Centre staff are aware of surgeries held by other services in alternative locations e.g. all Help Point locations, Parish and Town Council Offices and the availability of home visits.	More transactional services are being made available through the Council's website.			

3. Mid Sussex District Council Equality Impact Assessment Summary

Key Findings	Future Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Contact Centre and Reception provide the first point of contact for a variety of services and will try to resolve the service request at first point of contact or signpost the customer to the correct service. • All Customer Service Officers are aware of the variety of ways in which services can be accessed. • The reception area does not provide direct access to public toilets. Access to a disabled toilet with baby changing facilities can be provided by Reception staff escorting customers. • Specific service surgeries are held within reception such as Housing Needs, Housing Benefits and Shelter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential office moves will see the integration of planning reception into the main building reception and offer the opportunity for improvements to accessibility and the provision of public conveniences. • Opportunities may arise for further surgeries for specific services and outside agencies. • Further accessibility awareness training to be provided for customer contact and reception staff.

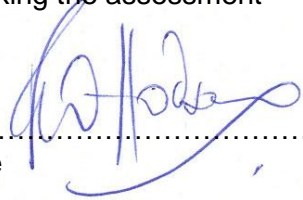
4. Signing off this assessment and action plan

SignatureDiane Talbot.....
 Person undertaking the assessment

Date 15th April 2013

Signature
 Head of Service

Date 15th April 2013



Please send your completed impact assessment to Neal Barton for publication on the website.