

Section 4

Equality Analysis Toolkit

Customer Access Service

Reduction of operating hours within Customer Access Service

V1.0 – 14/11/2018

What is the Purpose of the Equality Decision-Making Analysis?

The Analysis is designed to be used where a decision is being made at Cabinet Member or Overview and Scrutiny level or if a decision is being made primarily for budget reasons. The Analysis should be referred to on the decision making template (e.g. E6 form).

When fully followed this process will assist in ensuring that the decision-makers meet the requirement of section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need: to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other unlawful conduct under the Act; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard means analysing, at each step of formulating, deciding upon and implementing policy, what the effect of that policy is or may be upon groups who share these protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act. The protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, race, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation or pregnancy and maternity – and in some circumstances marriage and civil partnership status.

It is important to bear in mind that "due regard" means the level of scrutiny and evaluation that is reasonable and proportionate in the particular context. That means that different proposals, and different stages of policy development, may require more or less intense analysis. Discretion and common sense are required in the use of this tool.

It is also important to remember that what the law requires is that the duty is fulfilled in substance – not that a particular form is completed in a particular way. It is important to use common sense and to pay attention to the context in using and adapting these tools.

This process should be completed with reference to the most recent, updated version of the Equality Analysis Step by Step Guidance (to be distributed) or EHRC guidance at

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/private-and-public-sector-guidance/public-sector-providers/public-sector-equality-duty>

This toolkit is designed to ensure that the section 149 analysis is properly carried out, and that there is a clear record to this effect. The Analysis should be completed in a timely, thorough way and should inform the whole of the decision-making process. It must be considered by the person making the final decision and must be made available with other documents relating to the decision.

The documents should also be retained following any decision as they may be requested as part of enquiries from the Equality and Human Rights Commission or Freedom of Information requests.

Specific advice on completing the Equality Analysis and advice, support and training on the Equality Duty and its implications is available from the County Equality and Cohesion Team by contacting

Jeanette Binns (Equality and Cohesion Manager) at

Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk

Name/Nature of the Decision

Proposal to change the operating hours for the Customer Access Service (CAS) to bring it in line with the other corporate services delivered through Customer Access. Citizens of Lancashire, partners, and other professionals are currently able to contact the authority through the CAS between 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday. This proposal, if agreed, would result in a reduction of staff in CAS which would be managed in the first instance through vacancies and would follow the LCC staffing consultation protocols.

What in summary is the proposal being considered?

Changes to the operating hours for CAS to bring it in line with the other corporate services delivered through CAS. Citizens of Lancashire are currently able to contact the authority through the CAS between 08:00 and 18:00 Monday to Friday. However, County Hall and the Schools Service cover 08:00 to 17:00. CAS would reduce their hours to match County Hall and Schools Service.

Is the decision likely to affect people across the county in a similar way or are specific areas likely to be affected – e.g. are a set number of branches/sites to be affected? If so you will need to consider whether there are equality related issues associated with the locations selected – e.g. greater percentage of BME residents in a particular area where a closure is proposed as opposed to an area where a facility is remaining open.

The proposal does not impact on any specific group. The effect could potentially be unnoticeable. CAS only handle 1.3% of their calls during the last hour of the day.

Could the decision have a particular impact on any group of individuals sharing protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, namely:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/ethnicity/nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership Status

In considering this question you should identify and record any particular impact on people in a sub-group of any of the above – e.g. people with a particular disability or from a particular religious or ethnic group.

It is particularly important to consider whether any decision is likely to impact adversely on any group of people sharing protected characteristics to a disproportionate extent. Any such disproportionate impact will need to be objectively justified.

Although this proposal would affect all citizens of Lancashire the impact of the change, managed appropriately, would be seamless, as most back offices are closed and no non-emergency reports are handled until the next working day.

If you have answered "Yes" to this question in relation to any of the above characteristics, – please go to Question 1.

If you have answered "No" in relation to all the protected characteristics, please briefly document your reasons below and attach this to the decision-making papers. (It goes without saying that if the lack of impact is obvious, it need only be very briefly noted.)

The change would mean no change to the handling of customer reports, only the ability to speak to a CAS advisor between 17:00 and 18:00. Online, email and emergency options would remain as now.

Question 1 – Background Evidence

What information do you have about the different groups of people who may be affected by this decision – e.g. employees or service users (you could use monitoring data, survey data, etc. to compile this). As indicated above, the relevant protected characteristics are:

- Age
- Disability including Deaf people
- Gender reassignment/gender identity
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race/Ethnicity/Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Sex/gender
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or Civil Partnership status (in respect of which the s. 149 requires only that due regard be paid to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment or victimisation or other conduct which is prohibited by the Act).

In considering this question you should again consider whether the decision under consideration could impact upon specific sub-groups e.g. people of a specific religion or people with a particular disability. You should also consider how the decision is likely to affect those who share two or more of the protected characteristics – for example, older women, disabled, elderly people, and so on.

On average Monday to Friday CAS handle 1.3% of their calls each evening between 17:00 and 18:00. These are from users of a variety of services.

The logging service offered by CAS during this last hour of the day can be seen as unnecessary as no action is taken to resolve these queries until the next working day when the back offices are open.

Question 2 – Engagement/Consultation

How have you tried to involve people/groups that are potentially affected by your decision? Please describe what engagement has taken place, with whom and when.

(Please ensure that you retain evidence of the consultation in case of any further enquiries. This includes the results of consultation or data gathering at any stage of the process)

No engagement/consultation has taken place as no approval has been received to proceed with this cash savings option.

Question 3 – Analysing Impact

Could your proposal potentially disadvantage particular groups sharing any of the protected characteristics and if so which groups and in what way?

It is particularly important in considering this question to get to grips with the actual practical impact on those affected. The decision-makers need to know in clear and specific terms what the impact may be and how serious, or perhaps minor, it may be – will people need to walk a few metres further to catch a bus, or to attend school? Will they be cut off altogether from vital services? The answers to such questions must be fully and frankly documented, for better or for worse, so that they can be properly evaluated when the decision is made.

Could your proposal potentially impact on individuals sharing the protected characteristics in any of the following ways:

- Could it discriminate unlawfully against individuals sharing any of the protected characteristics, whether directly or indirectly; if so, it must be amended. Bear in mind that this may involve taking steps to meet the specific needs of disabled people arising from their disabilities
- Could it advance equality of opportunity for those who share a particular protected characteristic? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so?

- Does it encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so?
- Will the proposal contribute to fostering good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not, for example by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding? If not could it be developed or modified in order to do so? Please identify any findings and how they might be addressed.

No specific group would be disadvantaged by the proposed changes as they would be applicable to all citizens of Lancashire. However the impact to staffing will need to be considered. This could also be a positive change as staff impacted would be offered to take up work patterns that are more work life balance friendly, particularly staff with caring responsibilities, staff who use public transport, etc, which would also have a positive impact on recruitment and retention.

Question 4 –Combined/Cumulative Effect

Could the effects of your decision combine with other factors or decisions taken at local or national level to exacerbate the impact on any groups?

For example - if the proposal is to impose charges for adult social care, its impact on disabled people might be increased by other decisions within the County Council (e.g. increases in the fares charged for Community Transport and reductions in respite care) and national proposals (e.g. the availability of some benefits) . Whilst LCC cannot control some of these decisions, they could increase the adverse effect of the proposal. The LCC has a legal duty to consider this aspect, and to evaluate the decision, including mitigation, accordingly.

If Yes – please identify these.

Not anticipated.

Question 5 – Identifying Initial Results of Your Analysis

As a result of your analysis have you changed/amended your original proposal?

Please identify how –

For example:

Adjusted the original proposal – briefly outline the adjustments

Continuing with the Original Proposal – briefly explain why

Stopped the Proposal and Revised it - briefly explain

Continuing with the original proposal, the transition should be negligible to service users.

Question 6 - Mitigation

Please set out any steps you will take to mitigate/reduce any potential adverse effects of your decision on those sharing any particular protected characteristic. It is important here to do a genuine and realistic evaluation of the effectiveness of the mitigation contemplated. Over-optimistic and over-generalised assessments are likely to fall short of the “due regard” requirement.

Also consider if any mitigation might adversely affect any other groups and how this might be managed.

Politically, this could be seen as a withdrawal of service. The communication of this change would need to be clear in that the service is not being withdrawn and that LCC would still be dealing with emergency situations as normal.

Question 7 – Balancing the Proposal/Countervailing Factors

At this point you need to weigh up the reasons for the proposal – e.g. need for budget savings; damaging effects of not taking forward the proposal at this time – against the findings of your analysis. Please describe this assessment. It is important here to ensure that the assessment of any negative effects upon those sharing protected characteristics is full and frank. The full extent of actual adverse impacts must be acknowledged and taken into account, or the assessment will be inadequate. What is required is an honest evaluation, and not a marketing exercise. Conversely, while adverse effects should be frankly acknowledged, they need not be overstated or exaggerated. Where effects are not serious, this too should be made clear.

The reason for this proposal is as a contribution to the cash savings programme for the authority. The savings will be generated by a reduction in the pool of CSAs that cover at the times we propose closing.

Question 8 – Final Proposal

In summary, what is your final proposal and which groups may be affected and how?

Changes to the operating hours for CAS to bring it in line with the other corporate services delivered from County Hall and the Schools Service – 08:00 – 17:00 Monday to Friday.

No specific groups are affected as the service remains in place the change is to 'the team' delivering the service at these times.

Question 9 – Review and Monitoring Arrangements

Describe what arrangements you will put in place to review and monitor the effects of your proposal.

The effects of this proposal will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as calls received out of hours can be quantified using Genesys. We will also review feedback from customers.

Equality Analysis Prepared By - Terry White/Fiona Macauley

Position/Role - Customer Service Manager/Change Manager

Equality Analysis Endorsed by Line Manager and/or Service Head-
Sarah Jenkins

Decision Signed Off By

Cabinet Member or Director

Please remember to ensure the Equality Decision Making Analysis is submitted with the decision-making report and a copy is retained with other papers relating to the decision.

For further information please contact

Jeanette Binns – Equality & Cohesion Manager

Jeanette.binns@lancashire.gov.uk

Thank you