

HARINGEY COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



Service: Customer Services

Directorate: Corporate Resources

Title of Proposal: Closure of North Tottenham Customer Service Centre

Lead Officer (author of the proposal): Angharad Claydon / Henna Chowdry

Names of other Officers involved: Charmaine Bradshaw, Siobhan Baird

Step 1 - Identify the aims of the policy, service or function

Description

North Tottenham Customer Service Centre (CSC) is one of two centres in the Tottenham area and is the smaller of the two. There are four CSC in the borough and the following states the number of enquiries received in 2009/10.

34,227	North Tottenham
17,865	Hornsey
68,568	Wood Green
46,660	South Tottenham (Apex House)

The saving assumes the closure of the centre by the 1st June 2011 and the deletion of eleven posts.

Impact/Risks

The closure of the service centre would mean that a high number of enquiries would be redirected to the remaining two centres. Although work is underway to encourage service users to contact us through more efficient channels there would be no further resources allocated to South Tottenham or Wood Green CSC to manage the increased demand. Therefore, this would have a negative impact on performance and customer satisfaction as the current performance that is above target would not be sustained.

HFH are also co-located at the centre so service user enquiries would have to be accommodated elsewhere.

Number of Service Users Affected

34,227 enquiries annually but this will include repeat visits.

Step 2 - Consideration of available data, research and information

You should gather all relevant quantitative and qualitative data that will help you assess whether at present, there are differential outcomes for the different equalities target groups – diverse ethnic groups, women, men, older people, young people, disabled people, gay men, lesbians and transgender people and faith groups. Identify where there are gaps in data and say how you plug these gaps.

In order to establish whether a group is experiencing disproportionate effects, you should relate the data for each group to its population size. The 2001 Haringey Census data has an equalities profile of the borough and will help you to make comparisons against population sizes.

http://harinet.haringey.gov.uk/index/news_and_events/fact_file/statistics/census_statistics.htm

2 a) Using data from equalities monitoring, recent surveys, research, consultation etc. are there group(s) in the community who:

- ***are significantly under/over represented in the use of the service, when compared to their population size?***
- ***have raised concerns about access to services or quality of services?***
- ***appear to be receiving differential outcomes in comparison to other groups?***

Bruce Grove, Northumberland Park and Tottenham Hale Wards are characterised as a low income area, young transient population, ethnically diverse with high density social housing. Residents show a strong tendency to access services face to face as opposed to using the internet or telephone services. Currently low take up of internet to access services. White Hart Lane Ward is similar to the other wards. However, higher proportion of middle income Asian families and likelihood of using the internet. *Source: Mosaic and Income Ward Profiling – produced by Policy and Performance (September 2010).*

We are unable to provide equality data for our service users. However, we know that majority of our customers use the Centres for accessing Council Tax, Benefits, Controlled Parking Permits including Concessionary Badges, Estate Parking (HFH), Income Collection, Repairs, Tenancy Management, Home Connection, Prevention and Options, Housing Registration and Admissions.

From the demography and census data for the area, we can conclude that the majority of our users are from ethnic communities, people with disabilities and users with care and housing needs. People in these groups are less likely to be in work, or work on low wages. Some people who do not speak English as a first language or who have recently settled in the UK, may also have difficulty in understanding the complexities of the life in the UK and how to access services, so people from this group may be highly likely to be negatively affected by the closure.

2 b) What factors (barriers) might account for this under/over representation?

Common barriers faced by our Customers:

- They do not speak English as a first language.
- Some are unaware of how to access Council and other Services.
- Some customers have mobility problems
- Many are on Benefits or low income
- May need additional support to access and use Internet facilities

Step 3 - Assessment of Impact

Using the information you have gathered and analysed in step 2, you should assess whether and how the proposal you are putting forward will affect existing barriers and what actions you will take to address any potential negative effects.

3 a) How will your proposal affect existing barriers? (Please tick below as appropriate)

Increase barriers? X	Reduce barriers?	No change?
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Comment

Due to the factors identified in section 2(b) above, some groups, for example, people from some ethnic minority communities, people with mobility issues including older people and disabled people, etc could potentially experience negative effects as a result of the closure. However, the measures set out in 3(b) and 4(b) below will help ensure that any potential adverse effects will be either removed completely or substantially removed.

3 b) What specific actions are you proposing in order to respond to the existing barriers and imbalances you have identified in Step 2?

- Customer Services will be promote alternative services e.g. telephone, On-line Services
- Same services will be available in the remaining centres
- Users will have access to public PC's in the remaining centres and libraries
- Review availability of translation services
- See also Step 4b

3 c) If there are barriers that cannot be removed, what groups will be most affected and what Positive Actions are you proposing in order to reduce the adverse impact on those groups?

Existing services will remain the same, positive action is about redirecting customers to alternative venues or methods of accessing services.

Timetable to be proposed to notify customers of changes enabling them to make informed choices about accessing services

Step 4 - Consult on the proposal

Consultation is an essential part of impact assessment. If there has been recent consultation which has highlighted the issues you have identified in Steps 2 and 3, use it to inform your assessment. If there has been no consultation relating to the issues, then you may have to carry out consultation to assist your assessment.

Make sure you reach all those who are likely to be affected by the proposal, ensuring that you cover all the equalities strands. Do not forget to give feedback to the people you have consulted, stating how you have responded to the issues and concerns they have raised.

4 a) Who have you consulted on your proposal and what were the main issues and concerns from the consultation?

An exit survey was carried out at the Centre in February 2011. This survey asked

- What services the customers came in for.
- Which alternative services they were most likely to use
- What barriers they would experience in using the alternative services.

Through the survey we confirmed that of the people coming in to the centre

- The main reasons for using North Tottenham CSC were as follows; Benefits 53%, 20% CTAX, 13% CPZ permits, 7% Home for Haringey 16%, CTAX, 10%, Concessionary parking 8%, CPZ parking 2%, Free School Meals 2%, Housing 2%
- The significant age ranges were 30-44 (36%), 45-59 (34%), 25-29 (16%), 18-19 (6%).
- 84% came from N17 (Bruce Grove, White Hart Lane, Northumberland Park), 16% N15 (Tottenham Hale, West Green), 2% other
- The main races represented were; Black African 16%, Black Caribbean, 16%, White Turkish 16%, White British 14%, White Other 12%, White Greek Cypriot 8%,
- British 46%, Other White 19%, Black Caribbean 6%, Asian Indian 4%.
- The significant religions represented were; Christian 60%, Muslim 28%, Non religious 8%, Others 4%
- 48% were Women, 52% Men, no one described themselves as gay or lesbian
- 16% described themselves as disabled, 4% were disabled and felt that they would have problems using other methods of accessing services.
- 6% felt that they would have difficulties using alternative methods of accessing services (other CSC, telephone, internet).
- 54% would choose to use South Tottenham CSC as an alternative and 42% Wood Green CSC.
- Of the people who felt they had problems using the alternative methods of access 12% felt that travelling was inconvenient. One person pointed out that the CSC was 'opposite Job Centre and is very convenient for the public'. Another person mentioned that they could walk to this CSC, this is important to people on very low incomes.

4 b) How, in your proposal have you responded to the issues and concerns from consultation?

The concerns of disabled and sometimes elderly customers are addressed in the following ways. The remaining CSC are fully accessible with ramps, induction loops, disabled toilets and enhanced q-matic screens are in place. If a disabled or elderly customer visits a CSC on busy days, a triage system falls in place to fast track customers who may have difficulty standing or have a disability. There are good bus routes and parking bays at the back of the building for those who drive and have concessionary permits. The 1000 number makes accessing services over the phone easier. Service provision for those housebound or unable to make the journey i.e. benefits home visits, CTAX payment cards at various pay-points, ATP line. Authorisation letters allow for friends and family to access services on their behalf (collecting blue badges, benefits, CTAX).

No customer raised concerns with regard to race in terms of the change. However, we know from experience that a significant number of customers are Black African, Turkish, White Other (often Eastern European). Many of these customers speak English as a second language. Most common languages requested are Turkish and Polish. The service provided at the remaining centres is generic and currently translation services are available via a booking system. Available leaflets can be translated upon request. On closure posters can be produced in main languages redirecting customers to alternative provision.

No concerns were raised by parents or mothers to be about travelling to another centre. We might infer that this is because they are most likely to be using public transport on a daily basis. However, we are mindful that this customer group might face particular difficulties. There are good bus links to the alternative CSC's but pregnant women or new mothers may find the journey difficult. Once at the CSC a triage system falls in to place on very busy days. This fast tracks pregnant mothers with difficulty standing and/or those with several children. Authorisation letters allow for friends and family to access services on their behalf. These customers might find also using the 1000 or the internet easier.

There is a general concern about the convenience of travel to alternative CSC. There are good bus links to the alternative CSC Tottenham High Road to South Tottenham CSC (76, 149, 243, 259 bus routes). From North Tottenham to Wood Green (W3,W4, 123, 243 bus routes)

4 c) How have you informed the public and the people you consulted about the results of the consultation and what actions you are proposing in order to address the concerns raised?

Updated Customer Services information on the Haringey Council Website

Step 5 - Addressing Training

The issues you have identified during the assessment and consultation may be new to you or your staff, which means you will need to raise awareness of them among your staff, which may even training. You should identify those issues and plan how and when you will raise them with your staff.

Do you envisage the need to train staff or raise awareness of the issues arising from any aspects of your proposal and as a result of the impact assessment, and if so, what plans have you made?

All Customer Services Staff are generic in role and have received similar training. Any staff relocated and taking up duties within the Contact Centre would need training in telephone skills.

Step 6 - Monitoring Arrangements

If the proposal is adopted there is a legal duty to monitor and publish its actual effects on people. Monitoring should cover all the six equality strands. The purpose of equalities monitoring is to see how the policy is working in practice and to identify if and where it is producing disproportionate adverse effects and to take steps to address the effects. You should use the Council's equal opportunities monitoring form which can be downloaded from Harinet. Generally, equalities monitoring data should be gathered, analysed and report quarterly, in the first instance to your DMT and then to the Equalities Team.

What arrangements do you have or will put in place to monitor, report, publish and disseminate information on how your proposal is working and whether or not it is producing the intended equalities outcomes?

- ***Who will be responsible for monitoring?***

A programme manager will be appointed to oversee the closure of the CSC and the transition arrangements.

- ***What indicators and targets will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy/service/function and its equalities impact?***

- We shall set in place systems for measuring the impact of the new arrangements.
- Customer surveys will address access and quality issues as they affect the equalities groups identified in Step 4 above
- Targets are linked to council 3 year saving plan which is monitored by budget holders

- ***Are there monitoring procedures already in place which will generate this information?***

- SAP CRM used to record customer contact can be used to track how customers access the service after the closure. This can be done by ward, nature of enquiry, volumes, broken down by equalities groups.

- ***Where will this information be reported and how often?***

- Results of monitoring reported via the business plan and relevant boards e.g. HESP, Customer Contact Strategy
- Customer satisfaction via London Connects which reviews effectiveness of service delivery

Step 7 - Summarise impacts identified

In the table below, summarise for each diversity strand the impacts you have identified in your assessment

Age	Disability	Race	Sex	Religion or Beliefs	Sexual Orientation	Gender Reassignment	Marriage and Civil Partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity
<p>Elderly people may find the journey to another CSC difficult. They may also be reluctant to use the internet to access services.</p> <p>1000 number makes accessing services over the phone easier. Service provision for those housebound or unable to make the journey i.e. benefits home visits, CTAX payment cards at various pay-points, ATP line. Authorisation letters allow for friends and family to access services on behalf of them (collecting blue badges, benefits, CTAX).</p> <p>On very busy days, a triage system falls in place to fast track customers who may have difficulty standing or have a disability.</p>	<p>Previous surveys show that distance travelled was less of an issue for disabled customers than the overall accessibility of the buildings. The remaining CSC are fully accessible with ramps, induction loops, disabled toilets and enhanced q.matic screens are in place. The remaining CSC also have more parking bays for disabled people than this site. Authorisation letters allow for friends and family to access services on behalf of them (collecting blue badges, benefits, CTAX). On very busy days, a triage system falls in place to fast track customers who may have difficulty standing or have a disability. Many of the services can be accessed by phone using the 1000 number and the increasing number of services available on the Haringey Website.</p> <p><i>The needs of displaced staff will be addressed individually e.g. moving any aids and adaptations they currently have.</i></p>	<p>There may be barriers for people whose first language is not English or who are not familiar with how to access services in the UK. Most common languages requested are Turkish and Polish</p> <p>The service provided at the remaining centres is generic and some translation services are available via a booking system. Available leaflets can be translated upon request.</p> <p>On closure posters can be produced in main languages redirecting customers to alternative provision.</p>	<p>Change does not appear to impact on this protected equalities group</p> <p><i>Staff at the CSC are predominantly female - 2 Male out of 11 CSO. This will be addressed under wider organisational assessment.</i></p>	<p>Change does not appear to impact on this protected equalities group</p>	<p>Change does not appear to impact on this protected equalities group</p>	<p>Change does not appear to impact on this protected equalities group</p>	<p>Change does not appear to impact on this protected equalities group</p>	<p>There are excellent transport links to the alternative CSC, but pregnant women or new mothers may find the journey difficult. These customers using the 1000 or the internet easier. Once at the CSC a triage system falls in place on very busy days. This fast tracks pregnant mothers with difficulty standing or those with several children.</p> <p>The main enquiries for these customers are; <u>Housing</u> and <u>Council Tax Benefits</u> e.g. new applications and change of circumstances, which can be handled at the remaining CSC. Some processes can be done via the Contact Centre or emailing the Department. <u>Admissions</u> applications are available on line and specific queries can be answered via a phone call. <u>Housing</u>; appointments at Apex (can be made over the phone). New application and Home Connections now on-line. Authorisation letters allow for friends and family to access services on behalf of them.</p> <p><i>The needs of Staff displaced will be addressed individually and taken into account when agreeing new location and shift patterns</i></p>

Step 8 - Summarise the actions to be implemented

Please list below any recommendations for action that you plan to take as a result of this impact assessment.

Issue	Action required	Lead person	Timescale	Resource implications
Disabled Parking Bays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to clarify arrangements for the access to disabled bays around the remaining CSC's. Review whether existing provision is adequate. 	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Review translation services available in CSC and over the phone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to clarify arrangements for accessing translations services as and when required May need to review advice to customers re need to bring an English speaking person with them to provide support 	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Encouraging take up of online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work around this will take place in liaison with other project boards e.g. Channel shift/ HESP Increase number of PC at remaining CSC and publicise public PC at libraries. 	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	On-going By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Consultation with other building users with regard to their plans for relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with affected services and building managers 	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed &	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Publicise the closure of the centre and alternative provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications timetable to be agreed Website updated and item in Haringey People Posters on the closed buildings with some text in community languages. 	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Address needs of relocated staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefings and consultation with individual staff to agree new shift patterns, locations and installation of aids and adaptations moving with the CSO 	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources

Step 9 - Publication and sign off

There is a legal duty to publish the results of impact assessments. The reason is not simply to comply with the law but also to make the whole process and its outcome transparent and have a wider community ownership. You should summarise the results of the assessment and intended actions and publish them. You should consider in what formats you will publish in order to ensure that you reach all sections of the community.

When and where do you intend to publish the results of your assessment, and in what formats?

Assessed by (Author of the proposal):

Name: Paul Ellicott

Designation: Head of BLT and Customer Service

Signature:

Date: 18 February 2011

Assessed by (Author of the proposal):

Name: Angharad Claydon | Henna Chowdry

Designation: Customer Services Managers

Signature:

Date: 18 February 2011

Quality checked by (Policy, Equalities and Partnerships Team):

Name: Inno Amadi

Designation: Senior Policy Development Officer



Signature:

Date: 17 August 2011

Sign off by Directorate Management Team:

Name:

Designation:

Signature:

Date: