

# HARINGEY COUNCIL

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM



**Service:** Customer Services

**Directorate:** Corporate Resources

**Title of Proposal:** Closure of Hornsey 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

#### Closure of Hornsey Customer Service Centre

##### **Description**

Hornsey Service Centre is located in Hornsey Town Hall and is the only current customer service visiting option in the west of the borough. There are four customer service centres in the borough and the following states the number of enquiries received in 2009/10.

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

The saving assumes the closure of the centre by the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011 and a deletion of three posts.

##### **Impact/Risks**

The closure of the service centre would mean that there would be no face to face option sited in the west of the borough. The closure would encourage service users to use alternative channels of enquiry. The most inexpensive channel is the web and work is continuing to influence a change in service user's behaviour when contacting the council.

However, there would still be a number of enquiries where service users would prefer to see an officer of the council and this would require them to visit one of the other centres. Subsequently this would have a negative affect on performance in the other centres where additional resources would not be available to meet the demand of customers who previously used Hornsey CSC.

Part of Children Services are co-located at the centre so service user enquiries would have to be accommodated elsewhere.

##### **Number of Service Users Affected**

17,865 enquiries 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](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?**

Residents of Crouch End are characterised as being young and well educated, there are many single sharers however many own their own homes. Many of the properties are converted Victorian residences but there is also smart newly purpose built flats. Fortis Green, Hornsey and Muswell Hill Wards are similar but with a higher proportion of wealthy people. With Highgate ward showing some lower income families. These wards have pockets of elderly people who have lived in the area for most of their lives. All the wards show a higher preference to access services via the Internet and Telephone/ Mobile phone rather than face to face contact.

We know that majority of our customers use the Centre for accessing (in order of demand); Council Tax, Housing and Council Tax benefit (student sharers), controlled parking permits, concessionary parking, Admissions and School Transfers, Some Homes for Haringey services for the pockets of social housing in the area.

Hornsey CSC has lowest footfall at 60 a day, generally for services where customers visit to submit documents or have permits issued. Younger customers prefer to use the phone and increasingly on-line services.

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

Customers using this CSC do so out of convenience rather than a need. The main concern would be for those customers with mobility problems and the older people living in the area. This is illustrated by the number of people applying for concessionary permits & CPZ rates. Some older users prefer to use Handy Till rather than pay-points or ATP. Unfortunately the Handy Tills have been out of service for the last year.

### 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? <b>X</b>	Reduce barriers?	No change?
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#### **Comment**

As indicated in the summaries in Step 7 of this EqIA, for some groups, for example, disabled people, older people pregnant women and women with young children, the closure could potentially increase barriers to access to services. However, the mitigation measures detailed in section 4(b) of this EqIA will help ensure that any potential negative effects are either removed altogether or substantially reduced.

#### **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 promote alternative methods of accessing services e.g. telephone, On-line Services
- Same services will be available in the remaining CSC
- 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 and how often
- 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 Hornsey CSC were as follows; 30% Benefits, 20% CTAX, 13% CPZ permits, 7% Homes for Haringey, 3% Concessionary parking
- The significant age ranges were 60+ (34%), 45-59 (26%) and 30-44 (20%)
- 46% came from N8 (Hornsey Ward), 22% N6 (Stroud Green/Highgate), 12% N10 (Muswell Hill), 12% N4 (Harringay/Hornsey).
- The significant religions represented were; Christian 39%, Non religious 30%, Muslim 19%
- The main races represented were; British 46%, Other White 19%, Black Caribbean 6%, Asian Indian 4%
- 46% were Women, 54% Men. 2% described themselves as Gay and 2% Lesbian
- 16% described themselves as disabled
- 21% felt that they would have difficulties using alternative methods of accessing services (other CSC, telephone, internet)
- Of the people who felt they had problems using the alternative methods of access
  - 32% Were women who felt using Wood Green to be inconvenient. 6% cited the journey would be difficult with children
  - 16% were over 60 and felt other centres were not convenient. 4% were disabled and cited mobility problems
  - 20% were men who cited Wood green to be inconvenient, 10% cited parking in Wood Green to be a problem
  - 1 disabled male, aged 65 to 77 felt that using the Council Website would be out of the question

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

The concerns of elderly and disabled 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 systems 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 behalf of them (collecting blue badges, benefits, CTAX).

The concerns of women, especially those who are mothers to be and /or travelling with children.

There are good bus 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 to place on very busy days. This fast tracks pregnant mothers with difficulty standing and/or those with several children.

The main enquiries for these customers are; Housing and Council Tax Benefits 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. Admissions applications are available on line and specific queries can be answered via a phone call.

There is a general concern about the convenience of travel to alternative sites and parking provision, especially in the Wood Green area.

There are good selection of buses from the wards affected by the closure. The main routes link to Wood Green from Hornsey (41 bus route) from Fortis Green and Muswell Hill (W3 and 144 Routes)

There is excellent parking in Wood Green including the Shopping City car parks and various pay and display bays, in easy walking distance.

***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?***

We will update 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 equalities impact of the new arrangements.
- Customer surveys will address access and quality issues as they affect the equalities groups identified in Step 4 (Consultation) of this EqIA
- Targets are linked to the Council 3 year savings 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 etc, 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. We consider that this will improve accessibility for this group of customers</p> <p><i>The needs of displaced staff will be addressed individually e.g. moving any aids and adaptations they currently have. No one requires parking bays</i></p>	<p>Change does not appear to impact on this protected equalities group</p> <p>No history of requesting translation services</p>	<p>No adverse impact is envisaged. However, some women cite travelling to alternative CSC inconvenient</p> <p><i>Staff at the CSC are all staff are female. 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>There are good bus 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 and 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.</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"> <li>▪ Need to clarify arrangements for the access to disabled bays around the remaining CSC's.</li> <li>▪ Review whether existing provision is adequate.</li> </ul>	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Extending online services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work around this will take place in liaison with other project boards e.g. Channel shift/ HESP</li> </ul>	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"> <li>▪ Meeting with affected services and building managers (Children's Services)</li> </ul>	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"> <li>▪ Communications timetable to be agreed</li> <li>▪ Website updated and item in Haringey People</li> </ul>	Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	By 1 June 2011	From existing resources
Pilot customer service operations in local libraries ( trial Community Hub model)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss with libraries feasibility of providing some CS Services at a library in the area affected by the closure to absorb extra volume likely to be experienced by remaining CSC's.</li> </ul>	HESP / Programme Manager – To be Confirmed	Ongoing	From existing resources
Address needs of relocated staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Briefings and consultation with individual staff to agree new shift patterns, locations and installation of aids and adaptations moving with the CSO</li> </ul>	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: