

## Equality Impact Assessment – Form Template (September 2010)

This form is intended to guide and prompt you about the questions and evidence that you need to think about. As indicated in the guidance, Assessments should take into consideration each of the so-called “protected characteristics” listed in the Equality Act 2010. As such, each of these – race, age, gender etc – are listed in the below questions (Q9 – Q17).

Don't be put off by the apparent length of this form. Many of the questions will not require a specific response, other than “no impact” – to help you complete the form, please refer to the advice note which will answer most queries.

<b>Service Area</b> Customer & Information Services	<b>Head of Service:</b> Mark Neilson	<b>Person responsible for the assessment:</b> Kit Wilson	<b>Date of Assessment</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> November 2012	
<b>Name of the function to be assessed:</b> <i>Universal Credit Pilot Project</i>			<b>Is this a new or existing function</b>	This is considered as a new function

**1. Briefly describe the aims of the function**

The main aim of the pilot would be to greatly increase the number of Council customers accessing services through non-mediated channels. This will benefit to the customer as non-mediated channels are often simpler, quicker and more convenient, as well as delivering increased efficiency for the Council in operating services.

The pilot will prove the concept that 'digital by default' is a realistic aim for Universal Credit and put Newport into the position of market leader, in Britain, for self- service transactions.

A key aim of the pilot will be to prove that if you make services available online (and through other non-mediated channels) and execute the right resources on promotion and encouragement of these channels then a step change in customer behaviour is possible.

The key ways this will be achieved will be as follows:

- Increase the number of services available through non-mediated channels. This will include the introduction of online revenues and benefits.
- Through the promotion of self-service channels. Promotion will include existing Council/partner communications e.g. Letters, reminders, newsletters etc. Social Media, Radio and newspaper advertising, banners on bus stops and buses and large billboards.
- Cross selling of self-service channels. This will be completed through existing channels such as the Corporate Contact Centre and Information Station at the point when a service is requested
- Supporting customers during the transition by talking them through the process either over the phone or at a self-service kiosk within the various council locations

<p><b>2. Name any associated policy, function etc.</b></p>	<p>Customer Services Strategy  Improvement Plan  Channel Shift Strategy  Welsh Language Scheme  Welsh Language Act 1993</p>
<p><b>3. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the function</b></p>	<p>The Service areas and employees of Newport City Council  Residents of Newport city in particular all Newport City Council Housing  Benefit claimants will have the opportunity to migrate to self-service channels</p>
<p><b>4. Who performs the service?</b></p>	<p>The Project Structure is as follows</p> <p><b>Workstream Leads</b>  Customer Services: Customer Services Manager  E-Access: E-access officer</p> <p><b>Project Manager:</b> Customer Services Manager</p> <p><b>Project Sponsor :</b> Head of Customer and Information Services</p> <p><b>Corporate Board:</b> Customer Services Programme Board, Chair Head of Customer &amp; Information Services</p>

<p><b>5. What outcomes are wanted from this function?</b></p>	<p>Increase in claimant’s ability to access online services and reducing their need for mediated support</p> <p>Supported customers during the transition</p>
<p><b>6. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?</b></p>	<p>Failing to get the technology right. Implementing a system that is difficult to use or includes bugs/errors will discourage take up of self-service channels and may result in loss of customer trust. This will be mitigated through close work with the supplier and extensive user testing.</p> <p>Being unable to reach/convert all customer types. Failing to target promotions correctly, or invest resource in supporting customers during their transition to self-service could result in additional errors, requests for help and complaints. To mitigate this risk, customer insight data will be used and members of the Customer Services team available to walk customers through the process.</p>
<p><b>7. Is full information and analysis of users of the service available?</b></p> <p>Please include future information gathering and analysis in your Equalities Action Plan</p>	<p>Yes housing claiming benefit claimant records are kept by Housing Benefits team</p>

<p><b>8. What consultation has taken place?</b></p> <p>Please include future consultation in your Equalities Action Plan</p>	<p>Consultation has taken place between service areas to prepare the application to the Welsh Local Government Association to become a pilot authority for this initiative.</p> <p>Consultation &amp; engagement with other Welsh local authorities and central UK government has also taken place</p>
<p><b>9. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to age?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>The elderly have traditionally been an excluded group in the deployment of ICT. Even though their use of ICT is increasing, there is still a significant age-based digital divide. The pilot will include supported 1 on 1 training with all groups to promote the use of ICT to apply for relevant benefits</p> <p>According to the Eurostat's data on Internet usage (2011), in 2010, 37% of individuals between 55 and 74 years of age used the Internet on average at least once a week, in the 27 countries of the European Union. Comparing to 90% of the individuals between 16 and 24 years of age, and to 73% of individuals between 25 and 54 years of age.</p>
<p><b>10. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to disability(including learning disabilities, mental health issues, mobility or sensory impairments)?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>

<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>In May 2000, when home access was much lower than it is currently, Oftel (2000) found that 17 per cent of disabled adults had home Internet access, compared with 25 per cent of non-disabled adults. A nationally representative survey in August 2000, commissioned by the then Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (Research Surveys of Great Britain, 2001), found ownership of computers and the Internet considerably lower for disabled people compared with the total population. At that time, 32 per cent of disabled people were found to own a computer compared with 44 per cent of the total population, the figures for Internet access in the home being 19 per cent and 30 per cent respectively. Those with a disability specifically affecting computer use were also very much less likely to own a computer (23 per cent) than those with a disability affecting normal activities (35 per cent), the figures for Internet access in the home being 9 per cent and 18 per cent respectively. The survey also found that people with disabilities were less likely ever to have used a computer or the Internet than the total population. In a follow-up to this survey, commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), carried out in November 2001 (Russell and Stafford, 2002), 36 per cent of respondents with a disability had ever used the Internet, compared with 55 per cent of the total population.</p> <p><b>Disabled people and the Internet Joseph Rowntree 2004</b></p>
<p><b>11. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to gender reassignment?</b></p>	<p>No</p>

<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>No issues have been identified that have an impact on gender reassignment</p>
<p><b>12. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact due to marriage and civil partnership?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>No issues have been identified that have an impact on marriage or civil partnerships</p>
<p><b>13. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to race?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>Some communities of race are less willing to engage with public organisations than others. This initiative will need to identify the best way to engage with all communities to ensure service provision is provided to all who are applicable.</p> <p>Black and minority ethnic service users felt mainstream services were often inappropriate for their needs and that services made assumptions based on stereotypes and prejudice about what the needs of these users may be or what they may want to access</p> <p><b>Joseph Rowntree 2000</b></p>

<p><b>14. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to religion or belief (or absence of either)?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>Religious and cultural identity was very important to many people from minority ethnic communities but it was rarely responded to by mainstream service providers. People sometimes experienced discrimination and prejudice within their own community and faith groups, <b>Joseph Rowntree 2000</b></p>
<p><b>15. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to sex (gender)?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>The predominance of work is office based or with the customers community and carried out by a various of staff, all of whom are employed in accordance with Equal Opportunities legislation.</p>
<p><b>16. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to sexual orientation?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b></p>	<p>No issues have been raised through consultations that have an impact on the grounds of sexual orientation</p>
<p><b>17. Are there concerns that the function <u>could</u> have a differential impact on people due to Welsh language?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>



<b>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</b>	The lowest proportions of Welsh speakers are seen in areas such as Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Merthyr Tydfil and Newport (under 10%).
<b>18 .How will the function be monitored?</b> Please include answer in your Action Plan	Senior Management Team & the Customer Services Programme Board will receive regular reports on activity and improvements to the function.  Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys  Take up of online services  Staff views are monitored via team meetings and Managers meetings
<b>19. How will the impact of the function be evaluated?</b>  Please include answer in your Action Plan	Take up of online services Customer Service Satisfaction Surveys

<b>Equality Action Plan</b>			
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Milestones (with dates)</b>	<b>Any associated Performance targets</b>	<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>
Development of online facilities to be undertake in consultation with community and equalities groups	April 2013		E-Access Officer
Development of customer service support training to be undertake in consultation with community and	April 2013		Customer Services Manager

<b>equalities groups</b>			
<b>Communications plan to consider requirements of effective communications with hard to reach groups</b>	<b>April 2013</b>		<b>Customer Services Manager</b>

Signed (lead officer) \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (Head of Service) \_\_\_\_\_

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