

Directorate:	Corporate Services	Function:	Customer Services – Worcestershire Hub and Worcestershire Hub Shared Service
Assessment by:	<p>Ros Stinton- Programme Officer Worcestershire Hub Shared Service</p> <p>Karen Shakespeare-Jones- County Services Development Manager</p>	Related Policies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Connecting Worcestershire (Worcestershire Partnership)</li> <li>➤ Strategic Local Area Agreement 2008- Stronger Communities section</li> <li>➤ Worcestershire County Council Equality and Diversity Policy</li> <li>➤ Corporate employment and recruitment policies</li> </ul>
Date:	2008/09	Related Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Commissioning T&amp;I services for customers</li> <li>➤ Use of Accessible Formats directory</li> <li>➤ Procurement</li> <li>➤ DDA compliance (Property Services)</li> </ul>

<p>Equality Impact Assessment Working Group</p>	<p><b>Names</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Karen Shakespeare- Jones County Services Development Manager</li> <li>➤ Ros Stinton Programme Officer Worcestershire Hub Shared Service</li> <li>➤ Sharon Ryder Channel Manager- Telephony</li> <li>➤ Rachel Brown Worcestershire Hub Marketing and Communications Officer</li> </ul>	<p><b>Role within the Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contributor- County Council Services</li> <li>➤ Contributor -Equalities, Strategy and Partnership Development, Customer Services and Worcestershire Hub Shared Service</li> <li>➤ Contributor- Operational Management Group representative, Worcestershire Hub</li> <li>➤ Contributor-Communications Officer, Worcestershire Hub</li> </ul>
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**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB AND THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB SHARED SERVICE**

Step	Assessment	Stated aim of programme	Checklist of achievements, and issues raised
1a	<p>Description of Programme Transfer of access to council services to the Worcestershire Hub as the single entry point for customers to access the services they need</p> <p>Gathering equalities information relating to customer access to the Worcestershire Hub, Worcestershire Hub Shared Service and Worcestershire County Council Customer Service.</p> <p>Planning service improvements</p>	<p>Continuous improvement of access to services for residents and stakeholders, provided by a range of partners from the statutory and voluntary sector.</p>	<p>Single point of access to information and services across all LAs in the county via a range of access 'channels'. <i>delivered</i></p> <p>Both county and district services can be requested in one contact <i>delivered</i></p> <p>Common technology gathers and records the customer information required for those who deliver services, across a range of services <i>improved technology planned for September go-live</i></p> <p>Reference numbers linked to service requests facilitate follow-up of service requests with service areas – <i>in place</i></p>

			<p>County and District councils are working with Hub to standardise the way they work after the access points have been moved to the Hub, in order to improve services customers receive <i>Work continuing</i></p> <p>Service areas provide information to help the Hub tell customers what they can expect <i>Work continuing</i></p> <p>The Hub is staffed by trained customer service advisors, who work to common high standards of customer service - <i>delivered</i></p> <p>Customer satisfaction is monitored as routine, and consultation undertaken with a range of groups. <i>Work continuing</i></p> <p>The Hub aims to ensure a range of customer needs are met appropriately in one contact, and that the customer receives a complete service where possible. <i>In development, for example, Blue Badge can be offered 'end to end' in one visit to the local centre.</i></p> <p>Offering a number of ways customers can contact us means more people can get in touch with</p>
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<p><b>b</b></p>	<p><b>c</b></p> <p><b>d</b></p> <p><b>Development of a Worcestershire Hub Shared Service- a legally constituted body to provide ways for customer to access Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City and Malvern Hills services across a range of channels. The Shared Service will run in tandem with the other district partners in the wider Worcestershire Hub</b></p> <p><b>An improved Customer Relationship Management technology tool, to support the Worcestershire Hub Customer Service</b></p> <p><b>Continuing improvements to telephone systems</b></p>	<p>To achieve a more efficient and effective value for money service through sharing how we offer County Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council services to customers.</p> <p>Co-location for telephone access channel, (contact centre) together with shared management structure across all channels More 'intuitive' system, which can be 'customised' by the Hub to ensure more effective service</p> <p>Improved performance and useability</p>	<p>us using whichever method they prefer, no matter what their circumstances. Current ways include- face to face, telephone and on-line- <i>further ways are being explored, including greater focus on online channel</i></p> <p><i>Details incorporated in to this document</i></p> <p><i>Issue raised</i></p> <p><i>We must ensure the system is suitable for use with 'add on's' to support customer service advisors who have physical or sensory impairment or disabilities</i> <i>Technology has been identified to improve prospects for employment opportunities for diverse groups</i></p>
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2	Outcome	Existing Evidence	Information obtained and actions required
a	Improved customer understanding about how to access Council services, via the Worcestershire Hub	The technology produces reports showing trends relating to the range of services accessed via the Hub across all current access channels. Work is ongoing to improve reporting.	<p>Percentage of residents who are members of diverse groups using the Hub, and via which channel</p> <p><i>Action- Need to identify ways to determine above going forward, and develop innovative consultation mechanisms</i></p> <p>Most requested services for different groups (consultations at community events and access group meetings)</p> <p>Customer satisfaction surveys/questionnaires showing customer satisfaction levels across all channels (not by diverse groups)</p> <p>The numbers of people who use services compared to the population of an area</p> <p><i>Post code information linked to concentrations of diverse groups (based on census 2001)</i></p> <p><i>New information is obtained from R&amp;I relating to population changes between census reports.</i></p>
b	Wider range of services offered across the three access channels	<p>Customer satisfaction surveys- we survey a percentage of customers every month- ongoing (telephony)</p> <p>Customer satisfaction surveys completed via the centres (face to face)</p> <p>Online poll (web team)</p> <p>Past consultations and surveys to gauge customer awareness of the Hub, on-going with organisation consultation opportunities</p> <p>Service information from service areas</p> <p>Customer information from current groups we talk to including Disability Action groups, Worcestershire County Council Citizens panel- (ongoing- managed by Research &amp; Intelligence)</p> <p>Equalities consultations at district and county council levels, including access groups in Bromsgrove and Malvern Hills</p> <p>Information about populations held by Research and Intelligence teams, and numerical data supplied by them, sourced from DWP</p> <p>Engagement with English Spoken as Other Language groups test online provision and understand what the Hub offers</p>	



<p>d</p> <p>e</p> <p>f</p>	<p>Trends in requests for specific services via the Hub by diverse groups</p> <p>Preferred ways to contact the Hub</p> <p>Reasons specific groups do not use the Hub</p>	<p>to find any barriers for less able employees</p> <p>Offer supported placements/apprenticeships/work experience</p> <p>Reports produced by the technology tool to identify peaks in service demand according to postcode, and cross match with service user profiles where possible. (Specific customer service feedback surveys, and contact with different groups).</p> <p>Information about how customers prefer to contact the Hub can be found by the technology tool, and consultation opportunities.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction surveys collecting equalities information about services where available, cross referenced to information about the local population</p> <p>Information about customers requesting/entitled to the service and which channel was used</p> <p>Best practice in asking people from different</p>	<p>diverse groups</p> <p>Ability to identify customer issues early (eg hate incidents in a particular area) with R&amp;I information being used to make sure services respond appropriately to changing trends across a range of agencies such as community safety partnerships.</p> <p>Focus on development of preferred channel to support different groups to access the Hub. Seek solutions to any problems, to encourage customers to use the most effective way of contacting the Hub.</p> <p>Identify and put in place best practice in reaching different groups, using information gained from other authorities and from services, and talking to members of different groups</p> <p>Target communication at those who do not use services, but who may be entitled, by population, ethnicity etc.</p> <p>Support the aims of the strategic and local area agreement /community strategies</p>
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<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>a</b></p> <p><b>b</b></p>	<p><b>Assessing the Impact</b></p> <p><i>Potential impact of Worcestershire Hub and Worcestershire Hub Shared Service on ability of all citizens to ask for and receive appropriate services from all those working with the Worcestershire Hub</i></p> <p><i>Potential for employment of diverse groups impacted by the move to a shared service, and change to the CRM</i></p>	<p><b>Could some groups be affected differently? If so state which ones</b></p> <p>All different groups across the population of the county</p> <p>Some groups will benefit from the move to a shared service, and a centralised working environment where buildings and working practice can be developed with the needs of different groups can be provided for. Opportunities can be explored for technology to support employees with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>List the barriers to and opportunities for promoting equality and diversity</b></p> <p>New CRM technology tool in both customer contact points and in the areas which provide the relevant service, may not be accessible to current or future employees from different groups, without significant investment to support them</p> <p>Increasing movement towards access through ways other than face to face may have significant implications for both employees and customers in relation to language (translation, interpretation,</p>

			<p>transcription, signing).</p> <p>Countywide improvements are dependent on making ensuring high standards of customer service across the county. The Worcestershire Hub Shared Service should drive improved standards across the county for customers with particular needs.</p> <p>Lack of awareness of cultural issues may lead to failure to access service if the Hub/service fails to recognise where special arrangements need to be made to support members of religious/ethnic minorities</p> <p>Lack of understanding or tolerance of and by members of different communities may have an adverse impact on those employed in front line posts</p> <p>Failure to provide 'fit for purpose' language 'mediation' may have a harmful effect on overall access by members of different groups, through inadequate language provision.</p> <p>Centres need to provide facilities for people with disabilities to legal standards as a minimum, though talking to those with disabilities may lead to better provision.</p> <p>Improved online/telephone services could benefit those from different groups</p> <p>Opportunities will be created for</p>
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			<p>employment for members of diverse groups by the increased drive to change the pathways through which customers come to the Hub.</p>
		<p><b>Negative impacts</b></p> <p>Lack of it for 'fit for purpose' language mediation service – (interpretation, transcription, signing, translation) customer access via the Hub compromised/ employee access compromised</p> <p>Failure to address access issues- customer access via the Hub compromised/employee access compromised</p> <p>Failure to address diversity- customer access via the Hub compromised/employee access compromised</p> <p>Customers do not receive the service for which they are entitled- impact felt economically and socially</p>	<p><b>Positive impacts</b></p> <p>Offering more than one pathway for people to access the Hub maximises opportunities for different groups to request services in the most appropriate way, improving opportunities for customers to receive services they need.</p> <p>Venues developed using 'access for all' design principles to ensure everyone can use the centres.</p> <p>Technology is procured for employees with specific needs to improve employment opportunity. Different groups employed in face to face centres provide role models.</p> <p>Improved career opportunities encourage people from different groups into management posts. Further development of different ways of contacting the Hub will</p>

			improve access for a wider range of people
		<p>Could these be justified?</p> <p>In developing or upgrading a new site, time and resource will be needed to make buildings suitable for those with particular needs. Resources may not be available immediately.</p> <p>Fewer applicants from different groups apply for posts within Customer Service/Worcestershire Hub, although the County Council's Human Resources team is looking at how to attract applicants from the wider community as part of a corporate drive to improve the number of people from different communities employed by in the County Council. The Worcestershire Hub is working with HR to support these initiatives, and create better opportunities.</p>	<p>What, if anything, could be done to improve positive impact or promote equality?</p> <p>Take potential employee requirements into account when acquiring technology/buildings to support the Hub, and/or ensure that provision is made for improvements over a specific period of time</p> <p>Improve recruitment to attract applicants from different communities, for example attend job fairs with representative customer service advisors. Understand the employment needs of particular groups, provide tools to support them and ensure that the recruitment process is inclusive and open to view.</p> <p>Make positive choices where applicants are level scoring as appropriate</p> <p>Ensure that all channels identify and implement best practice in providing ways for customers to request a service.</p>

		<p>Further developments in terms of ways to access services will involve consultation with 'communities of interest', to ensure non discriminatory practice and delivery</p>	<p>Ensure awareness training is given to all Hub staff at induction, and arrange refresher training regularly. Develop and adapt different ways for customers to contact us for different groups as populations change.</p> <p>Ask particular groups how we can make contact with us easier, and explain what we can or can't do</p>
		<p>What are the reasons for adverse impact? Is it illegal? Is it unavoidable? State why?</p> <p>Provision of Interpretation and Translation Service is not standard across Hub, and accreditation by providers is not currently guaranteed- this may lead to confusion, and failure to offer consistent, accurate service. There is a failure to ensure that effective on-line translation is available.</p> <p>New premises being sought for enlarged Hub</p>	<p>I&amp;T is currently subject to implementation of review of service. Current situation is temporary, but is not be fit for purpose for Hub. Hub may need to explore its own solution for an interim period.</p> <p>Budget to be identified to ensure</p>

		<p>Shared Service contact centre, an Equalities Impact Assessment needs to be part of the scoping exercise, to identify and document issues, and recommend actions for the whole of the shared service project.</p>	<p>necessary work can be completed. Full health and safety audit to be undertaken before completion of contract.</p>
<p><b>4</b> Pg 12-14</p>	<p><b>Consider the alternatives</b></p>	<p><b>What would make it possible to reduce or eliminate adverse impact?</b></p> <p>Training for customer service advisors.</p> <p>Being aware of cultural issues &amp; better understanding of the needs and entitlements of needs of migrant communities.</p> <p>Awareness raising or developing other more acceptable access channels for key groups- eg traveller communities and young people</p> <p>Find out what people need and/or prefer need/preference. Find new affordable ways for customers to contact the council via the Hub</p> <p>New migrant communities not able to contact us because they have limited English</p> <p>Ensure the Hub can provide language translation and/or interpretation which is suitable for all</p>	<p><b>Action</b></p> <p>Make sure training meets the needs of customer service advisors across the Hub, and via all channels to improve customer experience.</p> <p>Talk to members of particular groups who do not use council services groups, for example, travellers, to understand their needs.</p> <p>Investigate alternative channels to encourage access by the most acceptable means.</p> <p>Work with ESOL/R&amp;I to support the learning of English, and to ensure we provide for the needs of new communities.</p> <p>Monitor requirement and current cost across all partners</p>

		<p>customers, whether they have English as a second language, or need other forms of communication</p>	<p>Find and use a value for money provider appropriate for Hub. Build requirement for language mediation into base budget</p> <p>Work with partners and professionals across the Hub, to ensure they comply with Equality Standards in providing services, compatible with those offered by the Hub.</p> <p>The Hub supports the current and future aims and objectives of the Local Area Agreement, and local Community Planning aims with particular reference to wider communities of interest</p>
<p><b>5</b> Pg 15-16</p>	<p><b>Consult Formally</b></p> <p><i>Identify existing consultation data that you need</i></p> <p>Customer satisfaction- general Customer satisfaction- different groups find out what the barriers are to using the Hub</p>	<p><i>Existing consultation sources:</i></p> <p>'Ask Me' toolkit and planner Community consultation Consult with specific groups (including at district level, eg Bromsgrove and Malvern Hills) Customer satisfaction surveys and customer feedback interviews Citizens Panel English Spoken as Other Language students</p>	<p><i>What does this show you?</i></p> <p>Broad based conclusions about customer service and how people want to contact the council.</p> <p>Some more detailed comments about customer experience, preference and satisfaction, so that we can plan services to be more</p>

			effective
	What new consultation, if any, do you need to undertake?	<p><b>Who</b> Customers from the 6 equality groups (via local and county forums groups), travellers and young people</p> <p><b>How</b> Telephone questionnaires, and targeted feedback surveys, specific visits to user groups/schools/youth centres/community centres-work with youth services, and gypsy services/ use publications/online opportunities to reach target groups</p>	<p>Consult young people re understanding of role of councils in their life, and how to access practical help.</p> <p>Ask Older Persons forums how their members get in touch with the Hub.</p> <p>Ask Traveller Groups how they would like to contact their councils, and if they understand what services we provide</p>
6 Pg 17-18	<p><b>Recommended Actions</b></p> <p>Ensure all groups and communities across the population can and do contact their councils (as represented by their proportion to diversity across population)</p> <p>Training delivered to staff to make sure they understand customer needs</p> <p>Target consultation- for example young people and travelling community</p>	<p><b>Summary of Actions/timescale</b></p> <p>Devise a plan to capture customer information relating to difference at point of contact or via consultation methods Provide 'baseline' (starting point) measurement</p> <p>Improve training programme, and ensure all customer service advisors receive adequate training Monitor all staff, to make sure they take advantage of the training on offer, including refresher training</p> <p>Ensure consultation takes place with groups who are unpopular in the wider community, to understand their needs.</p>	<p><b>Priority and ownership</b></p> <p><i>Development manager is responsible December 2009 (baseline) December 2010 (report)</i></p> <p><i>Hub Trainer to review. Operational manager will be responsible Commence April 2009</i></p> <p><i>Development Manager to plan To begin September 2009</i></p>

	<p>Channel development to facilitate access by diverse groups</p> <p>Identify and work with groups with English spoken as a second language, to ensure Hub provision is appropriate in changing demographic environment</p> <p>Ensure Hub is equipped to deliver a fit for purpose value for money service for interpretation and translation</p> <p>Ensure cost of provision to support equalities is calculated into the budgetary requirements of the Hub going forward</p> <p>Understand customer needs and plan for improvements to service delivery, including requirement for language provision</p> <p>Ensure Hub equalities development supports the current and future aims and objectives of the LAA, and local Community Plans.</p>	<p>Ensure existing channels are effective for diverse groups.</p> <p>Develop business case for one new channel access end September. Initiate and deliver project end 2009</p> <p>Work with ESOL/R&amp;I to access information about new settled migrants/migrant communities, and to ensure our service meets their needs</p> <p>Audit equalities requirement and associated cost across all partners</p> <p>Implement value for money, solution <b>appropriate for Hub</b> as per recommendations of the Interpretation and Translation review</p> <p>Include in service planning, and budget forecasting</p> <p>Monitor requests for language interpretation/translation across the range of services, and plan requirements accordingly</p> <p>Specific targets to be set during LAA Refresh and delivery programme, with particular reference to diverse groups, and developing a partnership approach in specific work streams</p>	<p><i>Development Manager take responsibility for this</i></p> <p><i>Development Manager and communications officer to plan consultation calendar with ESOL providers June 2009 and on-going.</i></p> <p><i>Operational team to deliver end June 2009</i></p> <p><i>Development Manager to influence and support the development of a new way of providing language mediation. Commence June 30<sup>th</sup> 2009 Operational and programme support to oversee.</i></p> <p><i>Operational and development managers to own and monitor On-going</i></p> <p><i>Development Manager will own and review Development Manager to take responsibility following completion of individual projects, and Local</i></p>
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	<p>Work with partners and service providers across the Hub, to ensure implementation of Equality Standard in the service delivery areas compatible with that delivered by Hub</p> <p>Ensure front of house staff and CSAs represent the diversity of the population</p>	<p>Develop monitoring plan and template to cross reference achievement of standards</p> <p>With HR, improve recruitment to attract applicants from diverse groups. Understand the employment needs of diverse groups, make provision for the procurement of enabling resources, and ensure that the recruitment process is inclusive and transparent. Explore the potential to make positive choices where applicants are level scoring.</p>	<p><i>Area Agreement refresh.</i></p> <p><i>Development Manager to own</i></p> <p><i>April 2009</i></p> <p><i>Operational manager to be responsible for this area Commencing 2009</i></p>
<p><b>7</b> Pg 18-19</p>	<p><b>Make the monitoring arrangements</b></p>	<p>What monitoring arrangements are in place?</p> <p>Monitoring template to be designed and monitoring timetable developed in line with service plan. Service panning meetings will receive updates of progress</p> <p>Achievements will be published as part of the Worcestershire Hub service plan</p>	<p>Who will monitor?</p> <p><i>Development manager</i></p> <p>As part of the published service plan EIA refresh Hubbub <i>Operation and Development Manager Communications officer</i></p>

8 Pg 20-21	<b>Publish assessment results</b>	<p>Implementation of the actions listed will be published as part of the Worcestershire Hub Customer Services service plan</p> <p>A summary report will be based on activities identified, owners, and timetable for delivery</p>	<p><i>Development Manager/communications officer</i></p> <p><i>Development Manager/communications officer</i></p>

Signed (Completing Officer) Ros Stinton.....

Dated 06.05.2009

Signed (Lead Officer) Rachel Hill .....

Dated 06.05.2009