

Cambridge City Council Equality Impact Assessment



Completing an Equality Impact Assessment will help you to think about what impact your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service may have on people that live in, work in or visit Cambridge, as well as on City Council staff.

The template is easy to use. You do not need to have specialist equalities knowledge to complete it. It asks you to make judgements based on evidence and experience. There are guidance notes on the intranet to help you. You can also get advice from David Kidston, Strategy and Partnerships Manager on 01223 457043 or email david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk or from any member of the Joint Equalities Group.

1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:

Electoral Services - Elections

2. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

To assess voting facilities for customers, to ensure they are reasonable and practical and fit for purpose. Ensuring every station is accessible to electors who are disabled, while remaining within electoral legislation.

3. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)

- Residents
- Visitors
- Staff

A specific client group or groups (please state):
Eligible and registered electors.

4. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)

- New
- Revised
- Existing

5. Responsible directorate and service

Directorate: Chief Executive's

Service: Democratic Services (Electoral)

6. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?

No

Yes (please give details):

7. Potential impact

Please list and explain how this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could **positively** or **negatively** affect individuals from the following equalities groups.

When answering this question, please think about:

- The results of relevant consultation that you or others have completed (for example with residents, people that work in or visit Cambridge, service users, staff or partner organisations).
- Complaints information.
- Performance information.
- Information about people using your service (for example whether people from certain equalities groups use the service more or less than others).
- Inspection results.
- Comparisons with other organisations.
- The implementation of your piece of work (don't just assess what you think the impact will be after you have completed your work, but also think about what steps you might have to take to make sure that the implementation of your work does not negatively impact on people from a particular equality group).
- The relevant premises involved.
- Your communications.
- National research (local information is not always available, particularly for some equalities groups, so use national research to provide evidence for your conclusions).

(a) Age (any group of people of a particular age, including younger and older people)

Rising 18's (16 & 17 year olds are entitled to register in advance of their 18th birthday) and young people/students (the 18-24 age group is traditionally under-registered and disengaged with democracy). POSITIVE impact: Increased voter engagement activity and publicity from registration drives and Electoral Commission campaigns. Working with schools/colleges to loan ballot equipment and visit in conjunction with external groups. Publicity on forthcoming changes to registration will increase awareness.

Older electors - traditionally registered but may have difficulty accessing voting facilities. POSITIVE impact: Polling stations are kept under review to ensure that as far as is reasonably practical, premises are accessible. This is achieved by providing clear signage to the station, installing temporary ramps where required, providing seating for those who may need to rest and training staff to assist as necessary. Access for voters arriving at the polling station by car are considered but not always possible at some locations. The option to have an absent vote is promoted.

(b) Disability (including people with a physical impairment, sensory impairment, learning disability, mental health problem or other condition which has an impact on their daily life)

Physical impairments that limit mobility - POSITIVE impact: Polling stations are kept under annual review to ensure that as far as is reasonably practical, premises are accessible. This is achieved by providing clear signage to the station, installing temporary ramps where premises do not already have permanent disabled access, ensuring the layout of the room can facilitate wheelchairs or people with walking frames/crutches and providing seating for those who may need to rest. Access to polling stations for voters arriving by car is considered but not always possible at some locations.

Visual impairments - POSITIVE impact: Poll cards are provided in an increased size and magnifiers, large version example ballot papers and a braille ballot overlay template are available in polling stations. Where control over ballot paper colour is permitted, its use by partially-sighted electors is considered to provide clearer print visibility. A braille booklet explaining the election process is available on request.

Learning disabilities - POSITIVE impact: A booklet is available in an easy-read format explaining the election process.

In all cases, polling staff are given guidance and training in order to be able to assist any elector who may need help with the voting process. Provisions in law allow the Presiding Officer to mark a ballot paper for an elector if they are unable to do so themselves. Alternatively, provisions also allow electors to have assistance from a relative/friend to help them vote.

(c) Gender

No known impact.

(d) Pregnancy and maternity

POSITIVE impact: polling station staff are given guidance and training to assist as required and seating at polling stations is made available. The layout of the polling station is such that access for prams/pushchairs is considered.

(e) Transgender (including gender re-assignment)

No known impact.

(f) Marriage and Civil Partnership

No known impact.

(g) Race or Ethnicity

NEGATIVE impact: Current electoral law does not allow printing of official election materials (e.g. application forms, ballot papers, postal vote packs, polling station signage) in any language other than English or Welsh. Translations of explanatory materials, (leaflets, booklets etc.) can be provided on request.

(h) Religion or Belief

NEGATIVE impact: Use of religious or consecrated building may discourage other faith groups from voting. There are currently 18 out of 33 buildings in use which belong to a particular faith group. Due to the requirement to provide polling stations in a specified area (a polling district) and the requirement to make them accessible to all, it is often not possible to secure the use of a more generic facility. In these cases, we promote the absent voting facilities if the use of such a building is unavoidable. These buildings have been in use for many years without this particular issue arising, however it should be kept under review and considered as part of the process when selecting new polling station buildings.

(i) Sexual Orientation

No known impact.

(j) Other factor that may lead to inequality (please state):

8. If you have any additional comments please add them here

The conduct of elections is heavily legislated as well as under scrutiny by the Electoral Commission. In general such regulations and guidance are intended to promote equal access to elections, but some constraints are imposed which prevent further action being taken. E.g. the provision of official documents in languages other than English/Welsh.

9. Conclusions and Next Steps

- If you have not identified any negative impacts, please sign off this form.
- If you have identified potential negative actions, you must complete the action plan at the end of this document to set out how you propose to mitigate the impact. If you do not feel that the potential negative impact can be mitigated, you must complete question 8 to explain why that is the case.
- If there is insufficient evidence to say whether or not there is likely to be a negative impact, please complete the action plan setting out what additional information you need to gather to complete the assessment.

All completed Equality Impact Assessments must be emailed to David Kidston, Strategy and Partnerships Manager, who will arrange for it to be published on the City Council's website. Email david.kidston@cambridge.gov.uk

10. Sign off

Name and job title of assessment lead officer: Vicky Breading, Electoral Services Manager

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:
Thomas Mears, Electoral Services Officer

Date of completion: 1 November 2013

Date of next review of the assessment: November 2014

Action Plan

Equality Impact Assessment title:

Date of completion: 3 September 2013

Equality Group	Age
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Disability
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Gender
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Pregnancy and Maternity
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Transgender
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Marriage and Civil Partnership
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Race or Ethnicity
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Equality Group	Religion or Belief
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	Use of consecrated buildings as a polling station.
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	Careful consideration of whether such a building should be used. If unavoidable, electors should be offered a postal or proxy vote.
Officer responsible for progressing the action	Vicky Breeding
Date action to be completed by	Annually or each time a new polling station is required.

Equality Group	Sexual Orientation
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	

Other factors that may lead to inequality	
Details of possible disadvantage or negative impact	
Action to be taken to address the disadvantage or negative impact	
Officer responsible for progressing the action	
Date action to be completed by	