

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Assessment details		
Assessment area		Electoral Registration and Elections
Date of assessment		December 2021
Directorate and Service		Corporate Services / Electoral Services
Manager		Electoral Services Manager
Officer conducting assessment		Electoral Services Manager
Step 1: Scoping the assessment		
1	What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?	Delivering an accurate and complete Register of Electors that covers all eligible electors, including hard-to-reach groups, and to deliver efficiently run elections which includes accessible polling places.
2	Who will be affected?	All qualifying electors and members of the public. Those entitled to the full register (British Library, Courts Service, Credit Organisations and political parties and candidates). Commercial companies purchasing the open register of electors.
3	How does the activity or proposal contribute to: a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?	<p>Electoral Services are subject to Electoral Commission Performance Indicators in respect of the performance of the Returning Officer and the Electoral Registration Officer.</p> <p>The registration service is also subject to key performance indicators, monitoring the additions and deletions to the Register of Electors.</p> <p>There is a statutory duty to provide electoral registration services and to conduct elections – this duty resides with the Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer in a personal capacity.</p> <p>Electoral Services underpin and support the effective delivery of Council services and enable the proper functioning of democratic processes.</p>

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4	Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?	All electoral services are driven and originate from legislation of which the most important is the Representation of the People Acts and Local Government Act. Some of this legislation is highly prescriptive but some allows an element of local discretion by the Returning Officer / Electoral Registration Officer, supported by guidance from the Electoral Commission.
Step 2: Information collection		
5	What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected? i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment)	<p>Information about the electorate is collected from the Canvass communication forms which are significantly collected during the Annual Canvass.</p> <p>The inspection of other records is undertaken to identify potential electors who are not registered, which includes groups of people who may be under registered.</p> <p>Information received includes age, disability and nationality.</p>
6	What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings	<p>During reviews of Polling District and Polling Places a wide range of local community groups are consulted, including access groups.</p> <p>In accordance with section 189C (1)&(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, the authority must carry out and complete a compulsory review of its polling places every four years. As part of this review, representation from such persons who have particular expertise in relation to access to premises, or facilities, for persons who have different forms of disabilities are sought.</p>
7	Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?	None relevant.
Step 3: Assessing the equality impact		
8	<p>Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the General Equality Duty:</p> <p>a) tackling unlawful discrimination</p>	

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<p>b) promoting equality of opportunity c) promoting good relations</p> <p><u>NOTES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration • For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each relevant protected group • For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each relevant protected group • If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the 'No Impact' box and explain why in question 9 • If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the 'Unknown' box and explain why in question 9 					
		POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
a	Age	The Electoral Registration Officer actively encourages persons under the age of 18 to register to vote. Known as 'attainers', these electors once registered, are able to vote as soon as they turn 18 years old.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Disability	<p>The electoral services team have worked closely with local disability groups to encourage registration and provide MENCAP guides when appropriate.</p> <p>Regular communication is held with local care homes to ensure that residents are aware they can register and their voting options.</p> <p>Polling staff receive training on assisting electors with disabilities and devices such as braille devices, enlarged ballot papers and magnifiers are available at all polling stations.</p>	Although a review is carried out on all polling stations, not all buildings or units used, are able to offer easy access for all.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c	Gender (including reassignment)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Race	<p>Nationalities are collected as part of Annual Canvass to assist in the registration process.</p> <p>No under representations have been identified and</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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		where resources are available, applications forms are sent in alternative languages. During Annual Canvass, electors can respond by telephone using the following languages – French, Gujarati, Hindi, Lithuanian, Polish, Portuguese, Somali, Turkish and Urdu.			
e	Religion/Belief			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Sexual Orientation			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	Pregnancy/Maternity			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	If ‘no impact’ or ‘unknown’ was selected, please explain	The areas which were marked as ‘no impact’ are not areas of data used for the registration / election services, and has no bearing on the service.			
10	If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups	Any applications to register have to be verified with the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP). Occasionally an application cannot be verified for numerous reasons – human error, change of circumstances or not on the DWP records. To ensure that electors are not disenfranchised, the service tries to verify the application with local records or seeks documentary evidence in accordance with legislation and Electoral Commission guidance.			
11	Any other comments	None			

Step 4: Action plan
<p>12. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address:</p> <p>a) any gaps in information and consultation b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated</p>
<p>a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?</p>

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Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?					
Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Persons with disabilities	Review of polling stations annually to ensure that there is disabled access at polling stations and continued staff training on the assistance that can be provided	That all electors are able to cast their vote if eligible	September 2019 (next full review to be completed by January 2025)	Polling review and the Electoral Provisions Sub-committee review annually.	Returning Officer/ Electoral Services Manager

Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring	
13	Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by? Electoral Registration Officer
14	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the activity or proposal on the equality groups? Annual review
15	When will you review this Customer Access Review? December 2022
Step 6: Final steps	
16	Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Projects Officer
17	If the subject of the Customer Access Review is going to committee, summarise your findings in the committee report
18	Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded