

# Equalities Impact Assessment:

## Full Assessment

Before completing this form you should have completed an Equalities Screening Tool and had sign off from your Head of Service and the Fairness and Equality Team.

This Equality Impact Assessment should be completed where the Screening Tool identifies a potentially negative impact on one or more specific groups but it can also be used to highlight positive impacts.

### Summary of proposal

|                                  |                                     |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Name of proposal                 | Contact Centre Omnichannel solution |
| Reference number (if applicable) |                                     |
| Service Area                     |                                     |
| Date assessment completed        | 06/02/23                            |

Before completing the EQIA please read the guidance and FAQs. For further help and advice please contact [equality@islington.gov.uk](mailto:equality@islington.gov.uk).

# 1. Please provide a summary of the proposal.

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

Islington residents can current contact the council via 3 contact centres.

## **Access Islington**

Access Islington is the main front door for residents to access council services and support and manages calls on behalf of range of services including Council Tax, Housing Benefit, Housing Needs, Environment, Parking and Registrars. The service receives on average 400,000 calls and 45,000 emails a year.

The service also manages emails and out of hours calls for services including Housing Repairs, Anti-Social Behaviour and the Emergency Duty Team. Approximately 60,000 calls a year are received out of hours.

## **Housing Repairs**

Housing Repairs is the main front door to report repairs to the Council's social housing stock. This service is open 8am – 8pm and takes on average 180,000 calls a year from residents.

## **Homes and Community Safety**

Homes and Community Safety manage the main front door for Council Tenants, delivering transactional housing services and customer triage into the wider tenancy teams. This service receives approximately 80,000 calls a year.

These contact centres offer a range of channels for customers to contact the council. Including telephone, face to face, email and webchat. The type of channel available is service dependant.

To help direct residents to the right place a contact centre solution is in place to direct transactions to the correct service area. This technology is old, out of support and does not provide the organisations with a platform to transform resident experience.

Basic components of a modern system are missing or not fit for purpose. For example:

- Workforce planning does not support agent scheduling, demand management or adherence.
- Detailed performance data is not available making the impact of change difficult to evaluate
- Real time data is not available for agents
- Call back functionality is not available
- Customer feedback cannot be gathered

Please provide:

- Context on how the service currently operates (if relevant) and the scope of suggested changes
- The intended beneficiaries and outcomes of the proposal
- Reference to any savings or income generation

These issues are causing residents to experience long wait times and lead to high levels of abandoned calls.

A new system is required to:

- Direct calls appropriately
- Provide in queue messaging and callback functionality
- Ensure the workforce is in place to meet demand,
- Data reporting provides detailed information to understand areas of concern and monitor the impact of change
- Quality monitoring can be carried out in-situ to help improve agent performance
- Customer feedback can be gathered on every call and satisfaction levels monitored

A new 'omnichannel' solution will allow the council to handle interactions with customers from multiple channels in a way that allows customers to seamlessly switch back and forth across channels.

This will help enable shorter queue wait times, lower abandoned call rates, offer a wider range of channels, provide opportunities to gather and improve resident satisfaction. Telephone numbers will not be changed so residents will not need to do anything differently.

## 2. What impact will this change have on different groups of people?

Please consider:

- Whether the impact will predominantly be external or internal, or both?
- Who will be impacted – residents, service users, local communities, staff, or others?
- Broadly what will the impact be – reduced access to facilities or disruptions to journeys for example?

The implementation of the new system will impact both staff and residents.

### **Staff**

A new omnichannel solution will provide staff with greater visibility of the contact centre operation. This functionality will allow managers to ensure resources are allocated to the correct areas to manage demand appropriately. It will also make forecasting and operational reviews more accurate and simpler to establish. The new solution will also provide detailed information on agent performance. This information can be used to support opportunities to upskill staff, provide coaching support where required and provide evidence to support performance reviews. Staff will also have greater access to their advanced rotas and annual leave planning and booking.

### **Residents**

The new technology will provide a platform to enable residents to get to the right place, in a timely manner and leave feedback regarding their transaction with us.

The delivery of a single solution across all 3 contact centres will help ensure the delivery of consistent, high-quality service regardless of how and where residents contact us.

Through greater data capture and reporting the new omni channels will enable root cause analysis to help understand demand and design solutions to support residents.

## 3. What impact will this change have on people with protected characteristics and/or from disadvantaged groups?

This section of the assessment looks in detail at the likely impacts of the proposed changes on different sections of our diverse community.

### 3A. What data have you used to assess impacts?

Please provide:

- Details of the evidence used to assess impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups (see guidance for help)
- A breakdown of service user demographics where possible
- Brief interpretation of findings

The proposed implementation of an omnichannel solution for Islington's contact centres will have a positive impact all residents who contact the council.

The data collection and reporting tools will help support a greater understanding of residents contact reasons and needs. This intelligence will be especially important to provide support for vulnerable and minority groups.

It is expected that the following positive impacts will be enabled following the delivery of an omnichannel solution:

- Reduced time taken to get through to the council
- Clear information provided on telephony messaging
- Additional channels offered across a wider range of services allowing residents to transact with us by the channel of their choice
- Opportunities to feedback experience directly following the interaction

3B: Assess the impacts on people with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups in the table below.

Please first select whether the potential impact is positive, neutral, or negative and then provide details of the impacts and any mitigations or positive actions you will put in place.

Please use the following definitions as a guide:

Neutral – The proposal has no impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Positive – The proposal has a beneficial and desirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

Negative – The proposal has a negative and undesirable impact on people with the identified protected characteristics

| Characteristic or group | Positive/Neutral/Negative | What are the positive and/or negative impacts?  | How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?                                 |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Age                     | Neutral                   | The new technology will provide the opportunity to turn on additional channels and change opening hours with ease to help support the requirements of different age groups. | Access to a greater range of channels over a longer period of time will be designed to support residents of all ages. |

| Characteristic or group     | Positive/Neutral/Negative | What are the positive and/or negative impacts?  | How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?   |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Disability (include carers) | Positive                  | The omnichannel solution will provide greater access to channels to give residents with disabilities (and their carers) a choice of channel to contact us on, making it easier to contact us. | As the omnichannel solution is further developed it will help provide greater integration with other service back office systems to help front line staff provide support and advice to residents (and carers) with disabilities. |
| Race or ethnicity           | Positive                  | The new technology will provide the opportunity to deliver targeted messaging to support specific groups or to divert calls directly to teams that can provide help.                          | As contact centre functionality is embedded and further enhanced opportunities to integrate language line technology will be explored.  |

| Characteristic or group                                      | Positive/Neutral/Negative | What are the positive and/or negative impacts?  | How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?   |
|--|---------------------------|---|---|
| Religion or belief (include no faith)                        | Positive                  | The omnichannel will provide opportunities to target information to callers in the call queues. This messaging can be changed quickly and easily and used to provide specific information during religious festivals. | As contact centre functionality is embedded and customer feedback gathered improved targeted messaging will be delivered to support particular religious or faith groups. |
| Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary) | Neutral                   | The omnichannel solution will provide greater access to channels to give residents a choice of channel to contact us on, making it easier to contact us.  | As outlined above, enhanced functionality will provide improved data, messaging and access choice to ensure targeted support for residents.                               |

| Characteristic or group    | Positive/Neutral/Negative | What are the positive and/or negative impacts?   | How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| Maternity or pregnancy     | Positive                  | <p>The omnichannel solution will provide greater access to channels to give residents who are pregnant or on maternity leave a choice of channel to contact us on, making it easier to contact us at a time that suits them.</p> | <p>As outlined above, enhanced functionality will provide improved data, messaging and access choice to ensure targeted support for residents.</p> |
| Sex and sexual orientation | Neutral                   | <p>The omnichannel solution will provide greater access to channels to give residents a choice of channel to contact us on, making it easier to contact us.</p>  | <p>As outlined above, enhanced functionality will provide improved data, messaging and access choice to ensure targeted support for residents.</p> |

| Characteristic or group  | Positive/Neutral/Negative | What are the positive and/or negative impacts?   | How will potential benefits be enhanced or negative impacts be eliminated or reduced?   |
|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| Marriage or civil partnership  | Neutral                   | The omnichannel solution will provide greater access to channels to give residents a choice of channel to contact us on, making it easier to contact us.   | As outlined above, enhanced functionality will provide improved data, messaging and access choice to ensure targeted support for residents. |
| Other Age (e.g. elderly) (e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees) | Positive                  | <p>Targeted messaging, campaigns and Promotion of other council services while be provided to support specific groups while waiting on calls.</p> <p>This messaging can be different depending on the number called, time of day, month or year.</p> | As outlined above, enhanced functionality will provide improved data, messaging and access choice to ensure targeted support for residents. |

## 4. How do you plan to mitigate negative impacts?

Please provide:

- An outline of actions and the expected outcomes
- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

No negative impacts have been identified as part of this proposal

## 5. Please provide details of your consultation and/or engagement plans.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

Staff at all levels within the contact centre will be involved in requirements gathering for the new solution to ensure the system is fit for purpose.

Staff at all levels will also be involved in testing the new system.

To ensure no disruption to service is experienced go live will be rolled out to contact centres in a phased approach.

Please provide:

- Details of what steps you have taken or plan to take to consult or engage the whole community or specific groups affected by the proposal
- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
- Methods used or that will be used to engage or consult
- Key findings or feedback (if completed)

A training plan to ensure all contact centre staff and managers know how to use the new system will be rolled out. A phased approach to the roll out will be taken to ensure teams have a detailed understanding and the system is working as required before it is rolled out to the next team.

## 6. Once the proposal has been implemented, how will impacts be monitored and reviewed?

Please provide details in the table below.

| Action   | Responsible team or officer  | Deadline              |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Monthly reporting outlining call waiting times and abandoned call levels                               | Access Islington Team<br>Housing Repairs Team<br>Homes and Community Safety Team | Monthly from Dec 2023 |
| Monthly reporting on positive abandonment where callers have chosen to change channel due to messaging | Access Islington Team<br>Housing Repairs Team<br>Homes and Community Safety Team | Monthly from Dec 2023 |
| Customer Service feedback  | Access Islington Team<br>Housing Repairs Team                                    | Monthly from Dec 2023 |

| Action | Responsible team or officer     | Deadline |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------|
|        | Homes and Community Safety Team |          |
|        |                                 |          |

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Please send the completed EQIA to [equalities@islington.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@islington.gov.uk) for quality checking by the Fairness and Equality Team. All Equality Impact Assessments must be attached with any report to a decision-making board and should be made publicly available on request.

This Equality Impact Assessment has been completed in accordance with the guidance and using appropriate evidence.

| Member                            | Name          | Signed   | Date       |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|------------|
| Staff member completing this form | Laura Hannan  |  |            |
| Fairness and Equality Team        | Molly Corlett |  | 7/2/23     |
| Director or Head of Service       | Manny Lewis   |   | 13/02/2023 |