

# 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	Resident Experience Programme
Reference number (if applicable)	
Service Area	Across all Services
Date assessment completed	16/09/2024

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

## **Context on how the service currently operates**

- 1.1. The Resident Experience Programme was launched in March 2023 and is structured into three phases. Between March 2023 and September 2024, the programme focused on Phases 1 and 2. Phase 1 delivered improved telephony functionality in the council's contact centres (including Access Islington and Housing contact centres). Phase 2 has been focussed on the in-house discovery phase of service reviews across all resident facing services. This work informed the development of the business case and proposals for Phase 3.
- 1.2. The business case for Phase 1 and 2 of the programme was approved at the Executive meeting on 20 April 2023 under agenda item D1. At that meeting, the Executive was asked "To note the expenditure for Phase 3 which is projected to cost in the region of £10.000m one off plus ongoing expenditure, which will be established in Phase 2 of the programme."
- 1.3. Since that point, detailed analysis of front door demand and opportunities to improve resident experience have taken place and this has informed the Phase 3 business case.
- 1.4. The business case, attached as Appendix 1, outlines the future Target Operating Model for Islington resident experience, the principles which will be applied in delivering the programme, and the financial and non-financial benefits the programme aims to achieve.

## **Intended Beneficiaries and Outcomes**

**Residents:** All residents who contact the Council will benefit from enhanced services designed to be simple, accessible, and inclusive. Special focus will be given to digitally excluded individuals to ensure they have access to services.

**Staff:** The programme will empower staff with the necessary tools, training, and support to deliver high-quality services. It will promote a culture of continuous improvement and provide competitive pay and career paths to attract and retain excellent staff.

- 1.5. Phase 3 of the Resident Experience Programme will build on improvements already delivered in Phases 1 and 2 to improve resident experience across several key areas to achieve the following outcomes:

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- **Enhancing opportunities for residents to do things online**, providing easy access to information and the ability to complete enquiries and transactions at a time and place that works for the resident, reducing the need for phone calls or face to face visits.
- **Improving the telephony experience for residents who call the council**, by reducing call waiting times and call handling times, and increasing the amount of telephone enquiries that are resolved at the first point of contact by 50%. By the end of the programme telephone enquiries will account for 15% of council contact (current figure is 60%).
- **Encouraging residents to do more online** by promoting the council's digital channels and providing an assisted digital self-service offer both over the phone and face to face. By the end of the programme digital resident transactions will account for 75% of council contact (current figure is 27%).
- **Providing tailored support for those who need it**, such as residents who are more vulnerable or who have more complex needs, within the council's Access Islington Hubs.
- **Making best use of data and digital solutions** to increase efficiency and productivity in the way that resident enquiries and transactions are handled and responded to.
- **Providing services that are accessible for all** across all contact channels considering the needs of those with protected characteristics – and in particular the needs of disabled people or those who are "limited a lot".

### Investment and Savings

- 1.6. A detailed review of resourcing requirements for Phase 3 against current council capacity and capability has been undertaken, identifying opportunities to further reduce the Phase 3 delivery costs, by drawing more extensively on in house skills and capacity to deliver the programme.
- 1.7. As a result, the Phase 3 investment request of £4.411m is significantly lower than previous projections. The programme will deliver net annual savings of £2.775m.
- 1.8. This investment will have a payback period of 5.24 years, after which it will deliver ongoing savings for the Council.

## 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?

### **Who will be impacted**

The implementation of a new customer services Target Operating Model which seeks to put the resident at the heart of everything we do will offer a positive impact predominantly for residents in how they transact with council services. However, staff will also be empowered by having the necessary tools, training, and support to deliver high-quality services and bring them better job satisfaction.

### **Residents**

The Resident Experience Programme will deliver significant improvements to the experience residents receive when contacting the council. Resident facing services will be reviewed and re-designed against the following principles:

1. We will place the resident at the centre of service delivery.
2. We will make council services accessible, easy to use, consistent, secure, and inclusive.
3. We will build trust and empower residents through increased transparency and communication.
4. We will improve the online offer to make it the 'channel of choice'.
5. We will work closely with partners to provide the right support at the right time.
6. We will be data-led by capturing insights and feedback to deliver continuous improvement.
7. We will make sure the right information and support is available to resolve issues at first point of contact.
8. We will increase collaboration and alignment across teams, so services look and feel like one organisation throughout. Residents will be able to achieve the outcome they set out to do without having to navigate the internal structures of the council.

These principles will guide the delivery of transformation and improvements within Phase 3 of the programme. They will also provide a guide for all service design and change within the council for the foreseeable future to deliver the best resident experience

### **Staff**

The Resident Experience Programme will provide staff with the tools and training to help provide high quality resident experience. The programme aims to impact staff in the following ways:

- Provide training to enable staff to have an empathetic, professional, engaging, “can do” and honest tone of engagement with residents no matter what channel the resident uses.
- Provide our staff with the right tools, systems, information, training and support so that they are empowered, knowledgeable and flexible enough to deliver the best services for our residents.
- Investing in our resident facing staff, so pay and conditions and career paths are competitive, fair and support the attraction and retention of excellent resident facing staff.
- Staff are encouraged to support a culture of continuous
- Empower staff enable them offering the right resolution for our residents at the first point of contact.

## What will the impact be

### Impact for Residents:

- **Improved Access to Services:** Residents will benefit from enhanced digital channels, making it easier to access information and complete transactions online at their convenience. This includes self-service options, reducing the need for phone calls or face-to-face visits.
- **Better Telephony Experience:** Residents who call the council will experience reduced wait times, quicker call handling, and an increase in first-contact resolution. This will lead to a smoother, more efficient phone service, with fewer repeat calls required.
- **Tailored Support for Vulnerable Residents:** Residents with more complex needs will receive specialised, holistic support, both in-person at Access Islington Hubs and in community locations. This ensures that vulnerable and minority groups receive the right assistance, in the right place, at the right time.
- **More Inclusive Services:** The programme focuses on ensuring services are accessible to all, with particular attention to disabled residents and those with protected characteristics, ensuring equitable access to council support.
- **Higher Satisfaction Levels:** The programme aims for a significant improvement in overall satisfaction, targeting an 85% satisfaction rate for online, telephony, and face-to-face services.
- **Cost-Efficient Services:** As the programme reduces failure demand and improves processes, residents will experience more streamlined, cost-efficient services, enhancing the overall experience with the council.

### Impact for Staff:

- **Enhanced Tools and Technology:** Staff will have access to improved systems, such as consolidated contact centre technologies and digital solutions that allow for a “single view” of residents. This will enable staff to handle enquiries more effectively and deliver higher-quality service.
- **Changes in Workload Through Channel Shift:** As more residents move to digital self-service, staff workloads related to phone and face-to-face enquiries will be reduced, allowing them to focus on more complex and value-added tasks.

- **Training and Support for Culture Change:** Staff will benefit from enhanced training focused on improving customer service, digital literacy, and adapting to new ways of working. This training will support a shift in organisational culture towards continuous improvement of resident experience.
- **Improved Collaboration and Efficiency:** By using better data and digital solutions, staff will be able to collaborate more effectively across departments, leading to more efficient service delivery and faster resolution of resident enquiries.
- **Better Data-Driven Decision Making:** With improved data collection and reporting, staff will have a clearer understanding of resident needs and behaviours, enabling them to make more informed decisions and provide targeted support where necessary.

### 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

To assess the impacts of the Resident Experience Programme, we used a combination of data sources and evidence to understand the needs and service experiences of residents, particularly those with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups. Key data sources used are:

- Islington population data and resident contact data from the 2021 National Census
- Insights from the "Let's Talk Islington" survey and resident focus groups

#### **Resident Demographic Data:**

- Islington has a population of over 216,000, with approximately 10% of the population classified as disabled and "limited a lot," making it the second-highest proportion of disabled residents in Greater London. This highlights the need for accessible and inclusive service delivery that prioritises people with disabilities.
- 42.1% of households in the borough live in socially rented properties, further emphasising the importance of effective management of housing-related contacts and services for disadvantaged groups.

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### **Resident Contact Data:**

The council receives approximately 1.7 million resident contacts annually. The current channel mix includes:

- 27.7% digital
- 60% phone (office hours)
- 8.6% phone (out-of-hours and telecare)
- 2.7% face-to-face
- 1% postal mail

This data informed the need to drive a digital channel shift while maintaining support for vulnerable residents who rely on in-person or telephone services.

### **Resident Feedback and Surveys:**

- The "Let's Talk Islington" website survey, conducted from February to December 2023, revealed that 62% of respondents prefer online as their contact channel of choice. This insight guided the focus on enhancing the digital experience to meet growing demand, while ensuring support for non-digital users.
- Feedback from focus groups highlighted concerns regarding inconsistent responses and long resolution times, particularly impacting residents with complex needs. This input was used to inform improvements to first-contact resolution rates and tailored support for vulnerable groups.

### **Breakdown of Service User Demographics:**

- **Young Population:** Islington has a relatively young population with a median age of 33, meaning many residents are more likely to prefer digital self-service options.
- **Disabled Residents:** 10% of the population is classified as disabled and "limited a lot."
- **High Levels of Deprivation:** The borough is ranked as the 6th most deprived local authority in London, indicating that many residents face socio-economic disadvantages, and services must be tailored to meet their complex needs.
- **Digital Access:** While broadband connectivity is widespread, 3% of adults in Islington have never used the internet or are lapsed users, indicating a need for ongoing digital inclusion efforts.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The data and feedback gathered suggest that while there is a strong preference for digital services among many residents, a significant proportion of the population, particularly those

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with disabilities or from disadvantaged backgrounds, still require face-to-face or telephone support. The Resident Experience Programme is designed to balance these needs by enhancing digital channels for the majority while providing tailored support for those with more complex needs.

The programme's goals include improving accessibility across all channels and achieving 85% resident satisfaction for digital, telephony, and face-to-face services by 2028. Additionally, the council's efforts to drive channel shift to digital will not only increase efficiency but also free up resources to provide more focused support to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.



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	Positive	The programme will deliver enhancements to all existing channels, new digital channels, and ensure opening hours and access to services are reviewed to meet the needs of residents across all age groups.	Access to a greater range of channels over a longer period will support residents of all ages, ensuring ease of access and flexibility for younger, tech-savvy residents and older residents who may prefer face-to-face or telephone contact.

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 development of a single, accurate, integrated view of residents through investments in systems and data will better inform how contact channels are designed to meet the specific needs of disabled residents and their carers.	Improved data collection and regular feedback will support proactive management of services for those with disabilities, ensuring continuous service improvement. Accessibility of digital services will be enhanced, ensuring compliance with WCAG standards.
Race or ethnicity	Positive	The programme will design processes and resident-facing services to support targeted messaging for specific ethnic groups and direct queries to teams that can provide culturally appropriate assistance where needed.	Further opportunities to integrate translation services, like language line technology, will be explored to better support non-English speaking residents and improve inclusivity.

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 programme will support the delivery of targeted messaging for residents of specific religious or faith groups, especially during important religious periods.	Customer feedback and insights will be used to refine and improve targeted messaging to ensure timely support during periods of religious significance.
Gender and gender reassignment (male, female, or non-binary)	Neutral	The programme will provide improved access to all channels, offering residents a choice of how they contact the council, with equal access for all genders. Opportunities to provide feedback will help refine services.	As feedback is gathered, the council will ensure services are adapted and refined to meet the specific needs of residents of all genders, ensuring equitable access and experience.

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	The programme will improve access to a variety of channels, making it easier for residents who are pregnant or on maternity leave to contact the council at times that suit them.	Feedback and insights will help refine services to better support residents during pregnancy or maternity, ensuring flexible access and targeted support when needed.
Sex and sexual orientation	Neutral	The programme will provide greater access to a variety of channels, offering residents more options to contact the council based on their preferences.	Ongoing feedback from residents will guide the council in refining services to ensure inclusivity and targeted support where needed, although current service design remains neutral.

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 programme will enhance access to different contact channels, ensuring that residents in any form of partnership can easily reach the council.	Feedback mechanisms will allow for continuous refinement of services to support residents in different types of relationships, although no specific impact is expected based on marital status.
Other Age (e.g. elderly) (e.g. people living in poverty, looked after children, people who are homeless or refugees)	Positive	The programme will use enhanced data collection to design contact channels that meet the diverse needs of residents, including the elderly, people in poverty, and vulnerable groups.	The council will use data and feedback to identify the specific needs of disadvantaged groups, ensuring services are accessible and tailored to these populations. Special attention will be paid to accessibility for elderly residents and support for vulnerable populations such as refugees or homeless individuals.

## 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

While no negative impacts were identified during the assessment the programme ensure that there is an ongoing review of the EQIA as part of the programme risk management and Governance of the programme as follows:

### **Outline of Actions and Expected Outcomes:**

#### **Inclusive Service Design:**

**Action:** Ensure that all service channels (digital, telephone, and face-to-face) are designed to meet the needs of residents with protected characteristics and from disadvantaged groups. This includes making online services fully accessible and ensuring face-to-face services remain available for those who cannot use digital channels.

**Expected Outcome:** This will minimise the digital divide and ensure that residents with disabilities, low digital literacy, or limited access to technology are not excluded. The goal is to ensure an equitable experience across all platforms.

#### **Data-Driven Enhancements:**

**Action:** Invest in data collection and analysis to proactively identify areas where residents face barriers in accessing services (e.g., language, disability, or complex needs). We will use data to continuously monitor and refine services, particularly for vulnerable groups.

**Expected Outcome:** Improved understanding of resident needs, enabling targeted interventions to address barriers before they become negative impacts, particularly for groups like disabled residents, elderly individuals, and those facing economic hardship.

#### **Digital Inclusion Initiatives:**

**Action:** Implement digital inclusion programmes, such as providing digital skills training or assisted digital services (e.g., in-person or over the phone), to help residents who are not digitally proficient.

**Expected Outcome:** These initiatives will enable more residents to access digital channels, reducing the potential for exclusion and enhancing overall service reach and satisfaction.

#### **Language Support and Cultural Sensitivity:**

**Action:** Continue integrating language support tools (e.g., language line) and ensure cultural sensitivity in communication and service delivery. This includes ensuring that non-

Please provide:

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- Any governance and funding which will support these actions if relevant

English speakers and culturally diverse groups have clear, accessible ways to engage with services.

**Expected Outcome:** By improving accessibility for non-English speakers and ensuring culturally appropriate service, we will prevent exclusion of residents from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

**Accessible Infrastructure:**

**Action:** Ensure that all digital platforms comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) standards, and that physical access to services, such as Access Islington Hubs, meets the needs of residents with disabilities or mobility challenges.

**Expected Outcome:** Residents with disabilities will have equal access to services both online and in person, reducing the risk of discrimination or exclusion based on disability.

**Governance of These Actions:**

**Governance:** The Resident Experience Programme is overseen by the Resident Experience Board, which is responsible for ensuring that all service improvements adhere to inclusive service design principles. The board includes cross-council representation to ensure alignment with strategic priorities. Regular progress reviews and resident feedback loops are built into the governance structure to assess impacts and address any negative outcomes quickly.

Through these actions, continuous feedback, and oversight from governance bodies, the Resident Experience Programme will mitigate negative impacts and ensure that all residents receive equitable and accessible services.

## 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)

### **Details of Steps to Consult or Engage the Community:**

An external consultancy firm was engaged to carry out resident and staff engagement along in addition a survey was carried out in 2023 'Let's Talk' these findings informed the business case and the EQIA. We will continue to carry out a range of engagement activities to ensure that the Resident Experience Programme meets the needs of the entire community, including specific groups with protected characteristics and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

**Resident Surveys:** We have conducted surveys to gather feedback on resident preferences for contact channels and identify any challenges they face when engaging with council services.

**Ongoing Feedback Mechanisms:** The programme includes provisions for continuous feedback through channels such as post-call surveys, online feedback forms, and resident satisfaction surveys after interactions with council services.

### **Who Has Been or Will Be Consulted:**

**Residents from Diverse Demographics:** Residents of all ages, ethnicities, faiths, and socio-economic backgrounds have been included in surveys and focus groups. Special attention has been given to those with protected characteristics, such as people with disabilities, elderly residents, pregnant women, and those from minority ethnic groups.

**Vulnerable and Disadvantaged Groups:** We have specifically engaged with groups such as residents living in social housing, those experiencing poverty, people who are homeless, refugees, and residents who are digitally excluded when they visited our Access Islington Hubs.

**Community Stakeholders and Partners:** Local community organisations, disability advocacy groups, and the voluntary sector will be consulted to ensure that we receive feedback from a broad representation of the community, especially those working with vulnerable groups.

### **Methods Used for Engagement:**



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
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**Digital Surveys:** Online surveys have been distributed to a broad audience to capture feedback on service delivery preferences, barriers to access, and resident satisfaction with current council services.

**Focus Groups and Interviews:** In-person and virtual focus groups have been conducted with residents, especially those from protected groups, to discuss specific challenges and gather more detailed qualitative feedback.

**Targeted Engagement with Hard-to-Reach Groups:** We have worked with community organizations to engage residents who may not typically participate in formal consultation processes, such as homeless individuals, non-English speakers, and those with low digital literacy.

**Customer Feedback Mechanisms:** Post-service feedback forms and surveys are integrated into service interactions (e.g., after phone calls or face-to-face appointments) to gather real-time feedback from residents.

**Key Findings and Feedback (Completed So Far):**

**Digital Preference:** The "Let's Talk Islington" survey revealed that 62% of residents prefer to engage with council services online. However, it also highlighted the need for digital inclusion support for those who are less digitally literate.

**Concerns About Wait Times:** Focus groups indicated concerns over long wait times for telephone services and a desire for faster first-contact resolution. This feedback is driving improvements in telephony systems and contact centre consolidation.

**Accessibility Challenges:** Feedback from disabled residents and advocacy groups pointed to challenges in navigating the council's website and digital services. This has informed the decision to prioritize compliance with WCAG standards and improve accessibility across digital platforms.

**Vulnerability and Complexity:** Residents with complex needs, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, expressed the need for more holistic, wraparound support. This insight has led to the programme's focus on providing tailored assistance at Access Islington Hubs and other community locations.

**Next Steps in Consultation and Engagement:**

**Regular Engagement Sessions:** We will continue to hold workshops and focus groups with specific community groups to gather ongoing feedback as the programme progresses.

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- Who has been or will be consulted or engaged with
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**Resident Panels:** We plan to establish resident panels for continuous dialogue throughout the implementation of the programme, ensuring that improvements are informed by direct resident input.

**Partnership with Local Organisations:** We will deepen our collaboration with community groups, including those representing ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and vulnerable residents, to ensure that all voices are heard and that the services provided meet their specific needs.

These engagement efforts will ensure that the Resident Experience Programme is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all residents, especially those who may be disproportionately impacted.

## 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 through Resident Experience Programme Board	Programme Director and Team	ongoing
Monthly reporting on service levels and customer feedback	Access Islington Team Housing Repairs Team Homes and Community Safety Team	ongoing

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	Jo Kelly	JKelly	19/09/2024
Fairness and Equality Team	Denise McCausland	DMcCausland	19/09/2024
Director or Head of Service	Raj Chand	RChand	19/09/2024