Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

Deciding what needs to be assessed

In theory all policies, decisions, services, projects and programmes should be impact assessed. The most practical approach is to assess as the proposal is being developed or as processes, services and policies come up for review making the EQIA part of the development process. Do not be put off by the list below, it does not mean that long and detailed assessments are required every time you are engaged in one of the activities. However, it does mean that you should always consider the equalities implications of your proposals.

Policy

- New policy development
- Substantial revision of an existing policy or process
- Any change which may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group

Decision

- Key decision
- Decision for management board/cabinet
- Budget change decision

Service

- New service
- Service review, including the decommissioning of services
- Any service change which may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group

Projects and programmes

- All, at planning stage

Further information: Equality Impact Assessments - a user's guide

Section one

No.	Question	Response
1.1	**Name of policy/decision/service/ project/programme being assessed**	Use of an AI-driven solution, Magic Notes, supplied by BEAM, to record, transcribe, and document conversations and actions across the council. The tool is automated, but the final processing and quality checks will be undertaken by trained staff.
1.2	**Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/decision/service/ project/programme**	The intention is to use Magic Notes to support council staff by improving the efficiency of recording conversations, reducing the time to complete this task, and thereby releasing professional time for higher-level expertise activities. The tool aims to improve quality and ensure compliance with all regulations. Additionally, the project will assess the potential benefits of extensibility across the wider organisation for recording and documenting conversations/meetings. The tool will not make decisions or take full automated actions regarding the writing up of conversations; the practitioner must always have the final decision, applying appropriate quality checks and oversight.
1.3	**Who is affected by the policy/decision/service/ project/programme?** (For example, employees/service users/supplier/contractor)	All relevant council professionals. Those in receipt of council services will actively consent to have their conversations recorded. If consent is not given, the current process will be used.
1.4	**What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this proposal?** (For example, with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Conversations have taken place between Emerging Technology and various council services, determining an opportunity for improved use of digital tools. There is openness to using AI for improved efficiency and quality recording of conversations. Internally, professionals have engaged with suitable volunteers for participation. Further conversations, product reviews, and the approach to the implementation have taken place

		with BEAM. Stakeholders involved in this process will be actively informed and have opportunities to provide feedback. Regular engagement, communications, and updates will be undertaken with relevant key stakeholders. Emerging Technology is working closely with Information Governance, the Chief Digital Officer, and relevant department heads to ensure appropriate oversight, governance, and consultative advice.	
1.5	**What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?**	The overarching outcome sought by the services are: • Assessed quality of information recorded meets suitability standards • Time to record and process conversations is reduced • Cost/benefit determines value of using an AI driven solution Regular assessment of user feedback and use of the solution will be undertaken and shared. Overall success will be evidenced against agreed measures; these will be baselined against existing data. Progress against measures will be reviewed regularly and mitigating actions will be implemented throughout the course of the project where needed.	

Section two – protected characteristics

Protected characteristic group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact? Is the impact neutral?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (for example, adjustment to the proposal)
Disability	Positive	The technology used will have a positive impact for some individuals with this characteristic as it meets certain accessibility needs. Evidence has been gathered through the	N/A

		Proof of Concept to demonstrate this.	
Gender reassignment	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A
Race	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	The technology requires clarity of speech. We are conscious that people's nationality / race / accent may impact results.	We ensured diversity of race, accents, and languages in our trial groups and evidence from the proof of concept shows the tool can recognise a wide range of accents and languages and transcribe and summarise the conversation accurately. We will continue to monitor this and feedback to the supplier.
Religion or belief	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A
Sexual orientation	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A

Sex (gender)	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A
Age	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A
Children in care and care leavers	Neutral. There will be no impact for individuals with this characteristic	N/A	N/A

Section three – evaluation

No.	Question	Explanation/justification
3.1	**Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?**	No, we don't believe this activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people. The main concern we had was regarding race/accents/languages. However, following the Proof of Concept with are very confident that this tool can successfully achieve its aim regardless of accent or language based on the diversity of our trial group. We had 0 issues identifies based on these factors, so tool can recognise a wide range of accents and languages and transcribe and summarise the conversation accurately. we will continue to monitor and address any challenges the tool may face with accents and languages throughout its use at SBC.

No.	Final Decision	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1	No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed		

2	Stop at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3	Adapt or change the event in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4	Barriers and impact have been identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (for example, in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, proceed with caution with this knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision	✓	

Section four – record keeping

Question	Response
Will this EqIA be published* (*EqIA's should be published alongside relevant event paperwork including cabinet papers):	Yes
Date completed	11/07/2024
Review date (if applicable)	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change made
Charlie Johnson	11/07/2023	1	EQIA Drafted

Responsibilities

Question	Response	Date completed
Name of person leading this EqIA	Charlie Johnson	11/07/2024

Question	Response
Names and roles of people involved in the consideration of impact	Grace Lynch – Director of Commissioning, Improvement and Assurance Mike Ibbitson – Chief Information Officer

Question	Response	Date signed
Name of Director signing EqIA	Grace Lynch	