

Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy/Service/Function	Waltham Forest Interpretation, Translation and Transcription Service
Date of Assessment	09 th January 2008
Directorate	Environment Services
Head of Service	David Wilde
Names and Roles of the people carrying out the EIA	Penny Charlish Jackson Roger Brown Joe Parsons – Community Inclusion Officer Jane Brown – Head of Diversity Unit
Why is the Equality Impact Assessment being done?	Service Review

1. Introduction and Background

A service review focussing on the financial viability of the Council's in-house translation service (WFiTTS) has been completed. The review found that the service is not financially viable and would be more cost effective provided by external suppliers. A recommendation has therefore been made to provide this service using a range of external service providers and to wind down the current in-house provision.

This EIA relates to the implications for Waltham Forest residents/customers that arise from the decision to switch from supplying the service on an in-house basis to a "pay –as – you- go" service offered by a range of external providers.

2. Profile of groups affected as customers and/or staff

During the calendar year 2007 WFiTTS took bookings to the value of £439,655. Approximately £397,606 of booking came from external clients accounting for 90% of the total bookings.

The most frequently requested language was Turkish and the number of bookings for Turkish interpreters and translators was approximately 4 times that of the second most requested language, Urdu.

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The five most requested languages during the calendar year of 2007 are:

Language	Hours	No of Bookings	Invoice value
Turkish	3301.25	2830	£114,114
Urdu	926.75	773	£32,965
Somali	858.0	754	£30,041
Polish	741.0	692	£26,277
Mandarin	714.5	703	£25,288

The majority of WFITTS customers are either PCT members or other public and charitable organisations. These sections account for 90% of the income generated annually. The other 10% of income comes from sections within Waltham Forest.

Unfortunately, WFITTS has never recorded information concerning age, gender, faith or other demographic statistics of the members of the public who ultimately benefit from the provision of the interpreters and translators.

However, we can conclude that almost half of the people benefiting from the interpretation and translation services are Muslims (Turkish, Urdu and Somali language demands account for 45% of the total). The other two large groups using the interpretation and translation services are Mandarin speakers (religion unknown – could be Yu, Fo, Tao, Christian or Muslim) and Polish speakers (Catholics).

2.1.1 Age Equality – No information collected

2.1.2 Disability equality – No information collected

2.1.3 Gender equality – No information collected

2.1.4 Race equality – No information collected

2.1.5 Religion/Beliefs – see the above paragraph for conclusion

2.1.6 Sexual Orientation – No information collected

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3. Questions this assessment addresses

3.1 What kind of equality impact may there be?

The impact on individual WF customers/residents could be positive, negative or neutral depending on the level of success in implementing the transition arrangements. In the event that the transition is not handled well there is a risk of a negative impact on individual WF customers wishing to access the service. If the transition is handled well and the transition is seamless from the customers' perspective the impact will be neutral. If the relationship with new suppliers develops well and the quality of service improves there is the potential for this change to have a positive impact on customers.

Four members of staff will be affected by the switchover. Of these;

- Two are agency/temporary staff who will be released from their contracts/not have their contracts renewed
- One will be assimilated into a similar job role
- One member of staff with a disability will be subject to the Council's redeployment procedure

3.2 How significant is it in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?

With regard to staff, one disabled member of staff will be directly affected and subject to redeployment.

In the last calendar year of 2007 WFiTTS received 9862 bookings from internal and external customers. The interpreters and translators delivered 11,259 hours of interpretation and translation. Those members of the public who benefited from this activity will not lose the opportunity to access this service in the future as Waltham Forest will supply Interpreters and translators through another supplier.

3.3 Is the impact positive or negative (or is there a potential for both)?

The impact on staff members could be positive or negative depending on the success of the assimilation and redeployment procedures.

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As set out in 3.1 above there is the potential for both a positive and negative impact on WF customers depending on the effectiveness of the transition arrangements and the quality of the ongoing arrangements with suppliers.

3.4 On what aspects of the Equality Duties will this impact be?

Overall the provision of this service is relevant to the Council's duties to promote race and disability equality in respect of service delivery and employment.

Given that the Council is only switching suppliers and not ceasing to provide translation services there is no direct impact on our compliance with the duties. Careful handling of the transition phase and monitoring of the new arrangements will ensure that the change in delivery arrangements does not result in race or disability discrimination.

With regard to staff redeployment the provision of reasonable adjustments in the implementation of the redeployment procedure will ensure disability equality is provided.

3.5 Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination?

No, provided the transition does not result in a customer being denied access to a service to which they are entitled and provided the disabled member of staff receives the reasonable adjustments to which he/she is entitled.

3.6 What further information is required to gauge the probability and extent of the impact?

During the early stages of the switch over it will be important to gather information from service managers on the live impact of the switch over on the delivery of their services.

3.7 Where and how can that information be obtained?

Feedback can be verbally collected from service managers / directorate equality boards in Spring 2008.

4. Action Planning Questions

4.1 What action do we need to take to reduce negative impact?

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Ensure that the transition arrangements lead to a seamless service from a Waltham Forest customer perspective by maintaining clear communication with heads of services about how to operate in the new arrangement

Ensure that the disabled member of subject to redeployment staff receives the reasonable adjustments they are entitled to and that all redeployment opportunities are explored

Meet with service managers on equality boards to establish how the new arrangements are performing and to explore whether or not they would benefit from the provision of monitoring information

4.2 If the action proposed will not fully mitigate adverse consequences for equality, or if the decision is to take no action, why is this, and can we justify it?

Not applicable

4.3 Can any further action be taken to promote equality of opportunity in relation to any of the equality strands?

Yes. In the event that the Council moves from the “pay-as-you-go” option to a longer term contractual arrangement this will present an opportunity to ensure equality requirements are designed into the service specification. In particular this should include the provision of monitoring reports/management information to the Council on the volume of transactions and the languages/support requested. Such information will be potential helpful to service managers in better understanding changes amongst their customer base and to the Community Cohesion Task Group in detecting any changes at the community level.

4.4 Do we need to undertake any further consultation or research?

No

5. Conclusions and Next Steps

5.1 The key areas, which were improved as a result of this assessment, were:

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- Avoiding unintentional discrimination by paying close attention to ensuring that service heads know how to implement the new arrangements
- Explicitly ensuring that the member of staff subject to deployment receives the reasonable adjustments they need
- Taking steps to gather information from Service Heads on the implementation of the new arrangements and to promote them at directorate equality boards
- Identifying opportunities to enrich our data about customers in the event of entering into a clear contract

6. Action Plan

Action required	Lead Officer	Time Scale	Comments/Outcomes
Repeat communications to service heads to ensure smooth transition	Penny Charlish Jackson	During Jan and Feb 2008	The next communication will confirm the Councils decision
Organise to attend directorate equality boards to promote and receive feedback on the new arrangements	Roger Brown Penny Charlish Jackson	During Feb & March 2008	Meetings booked in Feb. for Adults and Community and Children's Services equality group meetings
Ensure reasonable adjustments of redeployed member of staff are met during the redeployment process	Roger Brown	January 2008 onwards	Second staff meeting has taken place and a number of one to ones with individual staff
Ensure equality is designed into any future contract specification including the provision of monitoring data	David Wilde	If/when required	
As part of responding the Government's 10 point plan on cohesion (point 6 - rebalancing translation services) ensure that the current policy on translation is debated/discussed by the Council's community cohesion task group as part of its 2008/9 work programme	Robin Tuddenham	During 2008	

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Action required	Lead Officer	Time Scale	Comments/Outcomes
and takes account of the level of need being demonstrated by Muslim people from different backgrounds and new migrants from Poland.			