**Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council**

**Section 75 Equality and Good Relations Screening template**

**Part 1. Information about the activity/policy/project being screened**

**Background**

The Council’s Protocol for Opening Books of Condolence was last updated in 2016. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, in line with health and safety measures, Council successfully operated virtual books of condolence. The revised Protocol aims to continue to practice opening virtual books, with the physical books opened in exceptional circumstances only at the Mayor’s discretion.

**Name of the activity/policy/project**

Revision of the Protocol for Opening Books of Condolence

# **Is this activity/policy/project – an existing one, a revised one, a new one?**

The new policy is a minor update on an existing policy with no change to the criteria.

**What are the intended aims/outcomes the activity/policy/project is trying to achieve?**

The intended aims/outcomes of this project are:

* To build on good practice in support of the Council’s digital strategy
* To increase access to Books of Condolence by making them available virtually
* To reduce cost associated with books of condolence
* To reduce staff time monitoring and amending the books

**Who is the activity/policy/project targeted at and who will benefit? Are there any expected benefits for specific Section 75 categories/groups from this activity/policy/project? If so, please explain.**

The main objectives of the proposed activity are not targeted at any specific Section 75 groups however the provision of online Books of Condolence may provide incidental benefits for some Section 75 groups.

**Who initiated or developed the activity/policy/project?**

Corporate Communications and Administration

**Who owns and who implements the activity/policy/project?**

The project is owned by Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council and will be implemented by the Corporate Communications and Administration Department.

**Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the activity/policy/project?**

No

**If yes, give brief details of any significant factors.**

N/A

**Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the activity/policy/project will impact upon? Delete if not applicable**

**Staff**

* Chief Executive
* Senior Management Team
* Heads of Service
* Corporate Communications Unit

**Service users**

* Rate payers
* Members of the public

**Voluntary/community/trade unions**

N/A

**Other**

* Elected Members

**Other policies/strategies/plans with a bearing on this activity/policy/project**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of policy/strategy/plan** | **Who owns or implements?** |
| Digital Innovation Strategy | LCCC |

**Available evidence**

**What evidence/information (qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered or considered to inform this activity/policy? Specify details for each Section 75 category.**

The following information has been considered in revising the Protocol for Opening Books of Condolence:

* Financial implications
* Consultation with the Mayor
* Review of previous practice
* Review of practices in other organisations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **Details of evidence/information** |
| Religious Belief | We do not hold information on the categories of people who contribute to Books of Condolence.  Elected Members, staff and the general public who are likely to be affected by the proposed changes will come from a range of backgrounds. |
| Political Opinion |
| Racial Group |
| Age |
| Marital Status |
| Sexual Orientation |
| Men & Women Generally |
| Disability |
| People with and without Dependants |

### Needs, experiences and priorities

**Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular activity/policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **Details of needs/experiences/priorities** |
| Religious Belief | No different needs or experiences identified in relation to religious belief, political opinion. |
| Political Opinion |
| Racial Group | Council information should be accessible for everyone including people who do not have English as their first language. The online book can be translated into a range of languages using existing software. |
| Age | Any older person affected by mobility issues can access the books from any location. |
| Marital Status | No different needs or experiences identified for these groups in relation to the proposed changes. |
| Sexual Orientation |
| Men & Women Generally | No different needs or experiences identified for these groups in relation to the proposed changes. |
| Disability | People with different disabilities have different access needs when it comes to information. Online books can be more accessible for those with mobility issues. Anyone with sight impairment can also use the website’s Browsealoud software to read out the commentary. |
| Dependants | People who have dependent children or adults, including those with disabilities, may benefit from being able to access books of condolence online. |

**Part 2. Screening questions**

**1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this activity/policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **Details of likely impact – will it be positive or negative? If none anticipated, say none** | **Level of impact -** **major or minor\*** - see guidance below |
| **Religious Belief** | No differential impact by religious belief or political opinion as the proposed changes apply equally to all. | None |
| **Political Opinion** |
| **Racial Group** | Transcriptions into a range of languages available through Browsealoud software. | Minor – positive |
| **Age** | Some older people may appreciate the opportunity to access books of condolence in their own time and at their own pace rather than travel to a physical location.  However, some older members of the public may not have the necessary technology or skills to access or contribute to online books of condolence. | Minor – positiveMinor - negative |
| **Marital Status** | No different impact identified for these groups | None |
| **Sexual Orientation** |
| **Men & Women Generally** |
| **Disability** | For people with certain disabilities, e.g. sight impairment or mobility issues, online books may provide easier access. | Minor – positive |
| **People with and without Dependants** | Online books may better meet the needs of those who cannot travel to a physical location due to caring responsibilities. | Minor - positive |

**2(a) Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Section 75 Category** | **IF Yes, provide details** | **If No, provide details** |
| Religious Belief |  | No opportunity identified |
| Political Opinion |  | No opportunity identified |
| Racial Group | Whilst our corporate information on the website can be translated using the Browsealoud assistive software, the Council could possibly do more to make those from racial minorities, newcomers to the area aware of council business, including books of condolence. |  |
| Age | Older people who cannot access recordings can be provided with telephone assistance. |  |
| Marital Status |  | No opportunity identified |
| Sexual Orientation |  | No opportunity identified |
| Men & Women Generally |  | No opportunity identified |
| Disability | Anyone who is unable to travel to a physical location will find it useful to access books of condolence online. |  |
| People with and without Dependants | The ability to contribute to books of condolence online may facilitate people who have caring responsibilities. |  |

**Equality Action Plan 2021-2025**

Does the activity/policy/project being screened relate to an action in the [Equality Action Plan 2021-2025](https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75/action-plans-equality-and-disability)? Yes/No If yes, specify which action.

No

**2(b) DDA Disability Duties (see Disability Action Plan 2021-2025)**

Does this policy/activity present opportunities to contribute to the actions in our [Disability Action Plan](https://www.lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk/council/publications/equality-section-75/action-plans-equality-and-disability):

* to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
* to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life?

Yes

If yes, give details/specify which action.

Online provision will provide enhanced access to books of condolence for those who are unable to attend a physical location to sign.

**3 To what extent is the activity/policy/project likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Good Relations Category** | **Details of likely impact. Will it be positive or negative?** [if no specific impact identified, say none] | **Level of impact –** **minor/major\*** |
| Religious Belief | No direct impact on good relations for any of these groups identified in relation to the proposed changes. |  |
| Political Opinion |  |
| Racial Group |  |

\*See Appendix 1 for details.

**4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?** [

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Good Relations Category** | **IF Yes, provide details** | **If No, provide details** |
| Religious Belief |  | No specific good relations opportunities identified |
| Political Opinion |  |
| Racial Group |  |

**Multiple identity**

**Provide details of any data on the impact of the activity/policy/project on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.**

Consideration was given to the potential implications of the proposed activity for the different equality categories.

We do not anticipate any particular impacts on grounds of multiple identity from the proposed project.

**Part 3. Screening decision/outcome**

Equality and good relations screening is used to identify whether there is a need to carry out a **full equality impact assessment** on a proposed policy or project. There are 3 possible outcomes:

1. **Screen out** - no need for a full equality impact assessment and no mitigations required because no relevance to equality, no negative impacts identified or only very minor positive impacts for all groups. This may be the case for a purely technical policy for example.
2. **Screen out with mitigation** - no need for a full equality impact assessment but some minor potential impacts or opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified, so mitigations appropriate. Much of our activity will probably fall into this category.
3. **Screen in for full equality impact assessment** – potential for significant and/or potentially negative impact identified for one or more groups so proposal requires a more detailed impact assessment. [See Equality Commission guidance on justifying a screening decision.]

**Choose only one of these** and provide reasons for your decision and ensure evidence is noted/referenced for any decision reached.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Screening Decision/Outcome** | **Reasons/Evidence** |
| Option 1  **Screen out** – no equality impact assessment and no mitigation required [go to Monitoring section] |  |
| Option 2  **Screen out with mitigation** – some potential impacts identified but they can be addressed with appropriate mitigation or some opportunities to better promote equality and/or good relations identified [complete mitigation section below] | It has been concluded that there is no need to carry out a full equality impact assessment on the proposal to provide online books of condolence on the Council website.  The proposed changes are likely to be slightly beneficial for a number of groups.  However potential for minor negative impact was identified for those who are unable to access the recordings – see Mitigation section below. |
| Option 3  **Screen in** for a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)  [If option 3, complete timetabling and prioritising section below] |  |

**Mitigation (Only relevant to Option 2)**

**Can the activity/policy/project plan be amended or an alternative activity/policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?** If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative activity/policy and ensure the mitigations are included in a revised/updated policy or plan.

It is recognised that whilst providing online books of condolence will benefit some groups, this may not be accessible to everyone. The Council will therefore be prepared to make alternative arrangements for anyone who cannot access the books online, e.g. an officer can input the comments for someone who cannot access the book.

**Timetabling and prioritising for full EQIA (only relevant to Option 3)**

If the activity/policy has been **‘screened in’** for full equality impact assessment, give details of any factors to be considered and the next steps for progressing the EQIA, including a proposed timetable.

Not Applicable.

Is the activity/policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities? Yes/No. If yes, please provide details.

**No**

**Part 4. Monitoring**

Following consideration and equality screening, it is identified that there may be some issues in accessing online books of condolence for certain Section 75 groups. For example, older people who do not have access to the internet. It may be necessary for arrangements to be made to facilitate the contributions of those who cannot access online books.

Effective monitoring will help a public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the activity/policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and activity/policy development.

**What will be monitored and how? What specific equality monitoring will be done? Who will undertake and sign-off the monitoring of this activity/policy and on what frequency?** Please give details:

The new arrangements will be reviewed on an annual basis. The following will be monitored:

* The number of people accessing the online books.
* Public experience on using the virtual book.

Monitoring will be undertaken by the Corporate Communications team and will be signed off by the Head of Corporate Communications & Administration.

**Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Position/Job Title** | **Date** |
| Screened by: Frances Byrne | Head of Service, CCA | 29.07.22 |
| Reviewed by: | Equality Officer | 12.08.22 |
| **Approved by:** Frances Byrne | Head of Service, CCA | 15.08.22 |

Note: On completion of the screening exercise, a copy of the completed Screening Report should be:

* approved and ‘signed off’ by a senior manager responsible for the activity/policy
* included with Committee reports, as appropriate
* sent to the Equality Officer for the quarterly screening report to consultees, internal reporting and publishing on the LCCC website
* shared with relevant colleagues
* made available to the public on request.

Evidence and documents referenced in the screening report should also be available if requested.

**Appendix 1 – Equality Commission guidance on equality impact**

\*Major impact:

1. The policy/project is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
2. Potential equality matters are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
3. Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
4. Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
5. The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
6. The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Minor impact

1. The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
2. The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
3. Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
4. By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

No impact (none)

1. The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations;
2. The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Revised Template @ April 2022