

Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments

Directorate / Service / Department:	Finance
Person responsible for the assessment:	Julie Ryan (Training & Development) Peter Stones (Fairer Charging) Rita Silcock (Fairer Charging)
Name of (proposed) policy / function:	Fairer Charging New: Existing: ✓
Process area Identifier (PID) / Name:	N/Ap
(1)	Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / function: To provide a high quality, comprehensive, impartial and confidential advice and representation service – dealing with Benefits & Home Care charges.
(2)	Are there any associated objectives of the policy / function? To ensure that the residents of Barnsley receive the benefits they are entitled to.
(3)	Who is intended to benefit from the policy / function and in what way? The residents of Barnsley, particularly the elderly and disabled, by way of benefit take-up. Plus Carers of the elderly and disabled, by way of benefit take-up (Carers Allowance) BMBC – By way of Home Care revenue
(4)	What outcomes are expected from this policy / function? Extra money/benefits being paid to the residents of Barnsley Extra revenue for Social Services, due to Home Care Services

<p>(5)</p>	<p>What factors / forces could contribute to / detract from the outcomes?</p> <p><u>Contribute to :</u> Full compliance with legislation Robust policies and procedures Compliance with policies and procedures Ensuring standards in quality are maintained Staff training Monitoring of service provided, to ensure all the above are maintained</p> <p><u>Detract from</u> By not having the above factors, that would detract from the outcomes Industrial Action (ie strikes, withdrawing use of own car to visit clients) – less visits made per day. Clients’ unwillingness to use the service to its full potential</p>
<p>(6)</p>	<p>Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy / function?</p> <p>BMBC (eg: Social Services, Fairer Charging), the residents of Barnsley, DWP / Pension Service, Citizens Advice Bureau, Utilities (Gas/Electric companies)</p>
<p>(7)</p>	<p>Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy / function?</p> <p>Mike Bradley, Head of Fraud, Visiting and Benefits Maximisation</p>
<p>(8)</p>	<p>Is there any monitoring data available? (e.g. results from consultations, surveys, focus groups)</p> <p>There was no previous research or reports to refer to.</p>
<p>(9)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact on ethnic groups? NO <i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>The majority of referrals to the Fairer Charging team (FCT) come via Social Services (ie from the client’s Social Worker). The FCT may not be aware that the client is from an ethnic group, unless the social worker deems it relevant, for example if there is a language barrier. The staff from FCT, however, do have access to the National Interpreting Service for these cases.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>Discussions with 2 members of staff from the FCT and viewing their manual and referral forms</p>

<p>(10)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to gender? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>There would be no differential impact due to the gender to an individual. All referred clients are visited, regardless of gender. However, the FCT do take account of any special requests that the client may make eg. On some occasions, elderly ladies who live alone, request a female officer, as they feel more confident/relaxed.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>Discussions with 2 members of staff from the FCT.</p>
<p>(11)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to disability? YES</p> <p><i>Please explain</i></p> <p>In quite a high percentage of cases, the clients are disabled, and subsequently the FCT are used to dealing with people with disabilities. The referrals include information about any disabilities the client may have, which the FCT need to be aware of.</p> <p>One member of the FCT is herself deaf, and can use sign language, therefore she will visit the clients who are deaf.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>Discussions with 2 members of staff from the FCT & the referral form</p>
<p>(12)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to sexual orientation? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>The impact here is in relation to same sex couples. Officers would generally be aware if an individual was in a civil partnership, because basic information regarding a 'partner' is requested on the referral form. Full information regarding income/capital is then collected when a financial assessment is done – for the both the client and partner.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>Referral & Assessment Forms, and information from FCT</p>

(13)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to age? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> Every referral is acted upon, regardless of age. However due to the nature of the service, dealing with the more ‘vulnerable’ groups (elderly and/or disabled) which are mainly referred by their Social Workers, it may be necessary to have other people present when the FCT visit – ie Social worker, member of the family or neighbour.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Referral & Assessment Forms, and information from FCT.</p>
(14)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to religion or belief? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> Clients are not asked to reveal this – there is no requirement.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Written documentation proves this is not asked.</p>
(15)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact on people due to them having dependants/caring responsibilities? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> In the majority of cases, the client would have no dependants or caring responsibilities, as they themselves are the ones who are cared for. However, for the odd occasion that this may apply, the FCT would make arrangements to undertake the financial assessment to suit the client.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Information from 2 members of staff from the FCT.</p>

<p>(16)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to their offending past? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>This information would not be open to the financial assessor, unless the Social Worker deemed it relevant for the officer, as a Health & Safety issue. For example, if the client had committed offences of violence/aggression, this would be passed on to the officer. The officer would then tailor their visit to suit – i.e. not visit alone, either by taking another officer along, or ensuring that the Social Worker would be present.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>Discussions with 2 members of staff from FCT.</p>
<p>(17)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact on Trans people? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>In most cases, the officer would not be aware, unless the Social Worker had noted it on the referral, if they deemed it important for the officer to know.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>From Referral & Assessment Forms & discussions with 2 officers from FCT.</p>
<p>(18)</p>	<p>Could the differential impact identified in 8-16 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact in this policy or function? NO</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>All referrals to the Fairer Charging Team are acted upon. The financial assessments are undertaken within the limits of relevant Regulations and legislation.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>No complaints have been received with regards to adverse impact for any particular group.</p> <p>The customer service satisfaction survey undertaken in 2005.</p>
<p>(19)</p>	<p>Are the differential impacts caused by unlawful discrimination? No</p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>The function satisfies all current legislative requirements.</p>

(20)	<p>Findings</p> <p>The Fairer Charging team has it's own procedural manual, and this is currently being updated in line with the Service Delivery Plan. The Code of Conduct procedures are shortly to be updated to incorporate the officers from both the Fairer Charging Team and the Benefits Visiting Team.</p> <p>The services of the Fairer Charging Team, appear to be promoted through various avenues eg: Welfare Rights, Benefits Service, Social Services etc. When referrals are received and financial assessment visits arranged, the FCT take in to account each individual's circumstances that are relevant. This ensures that the service given is professional, friendly and equitable.</p>
(21)	<p>Action Points</p> <p>Establish progress on code of conduct and procedures.</p>
<p>Completed by: Julie Ryan Date: 31st March 2006</p>	