

Equality Impact Assessment DSHS Contact Centre service requirements, Procurement

Name of EIA: Contact Centre service requirements for ITT DSHS

Aims and objectives of policy/project/practice you are assessing

(To include: what are your division's specific responsibilities in relation to the policy? Why is it needed? What do you hope to achieve through it?)

In September 2005, the Government announced that Digital Switchover will take place between 2008 and 2012. Digital Switchover is the process of changing the television broadcasting network to digital. It will involve converting the current analogue television network, as well as encouraging the public to convert or upgrade their TV and recording equipment so they can receive digital television. This will be done TV region by TV region.

To help ensure that everyone can switch more easily to digital TV, the Government has announced that the BBC will manage a Help Scheme for people who need it most. In order to deliver against this responsibility the BBC has set up a subsidiary, Digital Switchover Help Scheme Ltd, to deliver this function.

The Help Scheme is focused on providing practical assistance and support for people who:

- are aged 75 or over
- get or could get attendance allowance, constant attendance allowance, mobility supplement or disability living allowance
- are registered blind or partially sighted

Over seven million households in the UK will be eligible to receive help. Eligible people will be able to:

- choose a set-top digital box and receive help to install and use it
- choose a digital TV recorder or a digital TV with recorder (for an extra charge) or
- ask for advice on the options from different service providers

Most people will need to pay £40 for help – this includes:

- help to choose the right equipment
- provision of easy-to-use equipment suitable for people with specific needs (e.g. to receive audio description broadcasts)
- help with installing the equipment in the home
- fitting a new aerial where we can (if needed)
- a simple demonstration of how everything works and
- someone to call for help while getting used to things

It is free if eligible people also get:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance or
- Pension Credit

Main Scheme procurement team

The procurement team will identify the diversity related requirements for delivery of appropriate contact centre service provision in order to meet the specific impairment or other relevant needs of eligible people and customers of the DSHS.

These requirements form part of the Schedule of Scheme Requirements that bidders will be expected to demonstrate how they will meet these in the development of their target operating model (TOM) in their tender offers. Bidders will be evaluated against these accessibility-related service requirements

These requirements will ensure that the service is appropriate to the needs of eligible people and customers

List the main activities of the policy/project/practice

- The Contact Centre is the primary point of contact for all communications, regardless of form or format, for all Applicants, Eligible Persons, Authorised Nominees and Customers
- Confirm eligibility of non solicited applicants
- Provides a seamless service to:
 - receive, handle, process and respond to all forms and formats of incoming communications from Contacts; and
 - prepare, process, make and send all forms and formats of outgoing communications to Contacts
- Schedule and confirm appointments for customers and field staff
- Handle monies payable by customers

Relevant Equality Objective(s) (please see Scheme Action Plans for list)

DES

- Obj I, I – To assist the ‘most vulnerable beneficiaries’ (older and disabled people) to make the switchover to digital TV. The BBC to continue to work with DCMS, BERR and Digital UK on the Digital Switchover Help Scheme.
- Obj ii – The BBC, through its subsidiary DSHS Ltd, to identify an appropriate provider(s) to deliver the Digital Switchover Help Scheme. The BBC to reflect disability equality in the Invitation to Tender and the scheme’s Schedule of Service Requirements to ensure the successful organisation is fully accessible to all scheme users. Prospective bidders to be assessed against accessibility-related service requirements.
- Obj I ix – The BBC to advise on minimum standards for ensuring accessibility and inclusiveness for most vulnerable groups.

- Obj 3, iii – The BBC will work with Digital UK to assure basic minimum standards of accessible communications which are appropriate to different media platforms, as some standard routes may present barriers to some groups for example subtitling and audio description.
- Obj 3, iv – The BBC will work with Digital UK to provide, wherever practicable, specific forms of communication which are relevant and appropriate for relevant audiences, for example those with sensory impairments or learning difficulties.

RES

- Obj 3 – To ensure that all digital switchover and Help Scheme related information and modes of communication are appropriate, flexible and accessible for target audience
- Obj 3, 3 – BBC will work with Digital UK to assure basic minimum standards of accessible communications, including translations and interpretation options, which are appropriate to different media platforms, as some standard routes may present barriers to some groups
- Obj 3, 4 – BBC will work with Digital UK to provide, wherever practicable, specific forms of communication which are relevant and appropriate for relevant audiences (see also 4.3.2)

GES

- Action plan 3, Obj 3, iii – BBC will work with Digital UK to assure basic minimum standards of accessible communications which are appropriate to different media platforms, as some standard routes may present barriers to some groups.
- Obj 3, iv – BBC will work with Digital UK to provide, wherever practicable, specific forms of communication which are relevant and appropriate for relevant audiences (see also 3.3.5).

Please list those stakeholders you think will be directly affected by the policy/project/practice

Eligible people, customers, carers, authorised nominee, Power of Attorneys, 3rd sector organisations

Are you targeting a particular audience? If so, which group?

The target audience for provision of DSHS services is aimed at:

- persons aged 75 and over
- persons with cognitive or learning difficulty impairments
- persons who are blind or who have visual impairments
- persons who are deaf or who have hearing impairments
- persons with dexterity and mobility impairments
- persons with other specific impairment and other relevant needs
- persons who fall into more than one of the above

I) Use the table overleaf to detail:

- a) Where you think that the policy/project/practice could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups and specify which groups in particular i.e could it disadvantage them.
- b) Where you think that the policy/project/practice could have a positive impact on any of the groups or contribute to promoting equality, equal opportunities or improving relations within equality target groups
- c) Where the impact is unclear or unknown

GUIDANCE: A negative or adverse impact is where there is a likely differential impact such as disadvantage/discrimination/ignored or unmet needs.

In some cases the negative impacts may be justified. For example a meeting is held in a hall which, although it is further to come for one BME community (who mainly live in one part of a town), is the only hall which is fully accessible and available with a crèche – therefore enabling disabled people and those with children to attend and participate.

GUIDANCE: An impact that will have a positive impact on an equality target group, or some equality target groups, or improve equal opportunities and/or relationships between groups. For example, a targeted training programme for black and minority ethnic women would have a positive differential impact on black and minority ethnic women. It would not, however, necessarily have an adverse impact on white women or men.

Disabled people

Impact is unclear or unknown: N/A

Positive impact – it could benefit (please detail which groups):

- persons aged 75 and over
- persons with cognitive or learning difficulty impairments
- persons who are blind or who have visual impairments
- persons who are deaf or who have hearing impairments
- persons with dexterity and mobility impairments
- persons with other specific impairment and other relevant needs
- persons who fall into more than one of the above

Negative impact – it could disadvantage (please detail which groups):

- BME disabled people

Reason/Evidence:

Positive:

- The diversity related requirements for contact centre operations are as follows:
- Confirm with all Eligible Persons, Authorised Nominee's and Customers the most accessible and preferred formats of communications at the earliest opportunity and use it throughout the customer journey until it changes
- Contacts via Textphone

- Contacts via email
- Contacts via SMS
- Processes in place that if there is no information regarding preferred format then send out default large print format – contact centre
- Processes in place to transcribe incoming comms for braille, audio, BSL video content
- Ensure that all written communications relating to the options pack and appointments are available in the determined 10 languages for the region
- Ensure that all inbound and outbound communications are available in the determined 10 languages for the region
- Processes in place to transcribe all incoming comms for the 10 languages that relate to: Options pack; inbound and outbound telephone communications; installation and user instructions; all written comms relating to options pack and appointments; community targeted comms and communication leaflets; all comms relating to complaints and appeals
- Comply with provisions of the Welsh Language Act 1993 in relation to all MarComs and contact centre
- Ensure that call centre agents are asking Eligible Persons about their access requirements as part of telephone scripts
- Ensure there is a free phone number for textphone
- Check that calls are not routed through IVR processes
- Ensure that records are kept of textphone conversations
- Process in place to telephone communications with the EP/Customer reflects their specific access requirements
- Ensure that textphone calls can be routed to another textphone for internal purposes
- Ensure that textphone calls can be routed to another textphone in the case of warm transfer to an alternative provider
- Ensure that a pre recorded message is available for textphone callers outside set operating times
- Ensure process in place that confirms with the customer where exactly they would like equipment delivered
- Ensure that process in place for delivery staff to identify when a customer will find it difficult to remove packaging that the packaging will be removed on behalf of the customer by field staff
- Ensure that all written communications relating to complaints, internal review appeals processes are available in accessible formats
- Ensure there are processes in place to book appointments with 3rd party support providers
- Where the customer has opted to receive a reminder of an appointment, ensure that that reminder is made in a communication form that meets the specific impairment or any other relevant needs of the customer
- Confirm with the customer details of the assistance it has requested (including any 3rd party support)

- Offer Customers the option to create a security reference or mechanism (for example, a password) which Field Staff must give on making a visit to such Customer's Home so as to enable the Customer to verify the identity of such Field Staff
- Arrange an appointment after an installation has taken place but a digital signal is not able to be obtained.

Possible negative impact:

- There may be BME disabled people who may require a more specialised service e.g. blind people who may require information in a language other than English or deaf BME people who need to communicate via textphone in a language other than English. Little is known about the volumes or the impact of service delivery on this group.
- There may also be some issues with transferring textphone calls internally and to Assistance Providers

People from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds

Impact is unclear or unknown: N/A

Positive impact – it could benefit (please detail which groups):

- 10 most used languages will be identified for each ITV region that will help identify that highest volume of BME backgrounds in each region. This will be determined using information gathered in partnership with the successful bidder, DWP, Digital UK and DSHS.

Negative impact – it could disadvantage (please detail which groups):

- Those BME groups that fall outside of the 10 determined languages for each region.

Reason/Evidence:

- Bidders will be asked how contact centre operations will meet the needs of BME eligible people and customers who call via the contact centre.

Men/Women/Trans people

Impact is unclear or unknown: N/A

Positive impact – it could benefit (please detail which groups):

- Females who may not be confident to allow male field staff to attend/enter their home.
- Females from BME backgrounds may not want male field staff to enter their home

Negative impact – it could disadvantage (please detail which groups): N/A

Reason/Evidence:

- DSHS has specified that the contact centre will need to schedule for installation only services appropriate 3rd party support provision.

Other groups, including people of different ages; sexual orientation; faiths

Impact is unclear or unknown: N/A

Positive impact – it could benefit (please detail which groups):

- Person aged 75 years or over

Negative impact – it could disadvantage (please detail which groups):

- Older people who are under the age of 75 years

Reason/Evidence:

- There is a requirement that where non eligible people are in need of help they will be signposted to the relevant organisation e.g. Digital UK or Digital Outreach UK.

2) If you have indicated that there is a positive impact on any group, you may proceed with the policy/project/practice BUT please indicate below how you will document or share this information.

The Schedule 2 document of the draft ITT was finalised on the 17 November 2007. During the development of the schedule it was effectively a living document. Subject matter experts including 2 diversity experts, procurement managers and commercial lawyers had an important part in developing and improving the requirements. The schedule was available on a shared drive for all colleagues in DSHS to access.

The requirements also took into account the findings from the focus group research (representative of the target group) which formed the development of the Codes of Services Standards.

3) If you have indicated that the impact is unclear or unknown and you are satisfied that there is no additional evidence available, you can proceed with the policy/ project/practice. However, please monitor its implementation and review/reassess in 3–6 months using the post-project review box at the end of this form.

4) If you have indicated there is a negative impact on any group, is that impact:

- a) Legal (i.e it is not discriminatory under anti-discriminatory legislation)
- b) Justified
- c) Level of impact (see guidance box below)

If the negative impact is (possibly) discriminatory and cannot be justified and/or it is of high impact you **must complete section two of this form** ie. **conduct a full assessment**. If not, but there is still a potential negative impact of low significance, please complete the rest of the initial EIA below and consider carefully if completing section two would still be helpful in making a more thorough assessment.

GUIDANCE: In measuring impact, the Equality Commission guidance advises that due consideration should be given to proportionality and relevance.

A preliminary consideration of levels of impact should focus on:

- the degree of relevance to all 3 aspects of the duty.
- what is proportionate in terms of the response required – this is usually about numbers (i.e. are you talking about detriment to just 3 people or 30,000?).
- the degree of likely impact (for example, serious disadvantage – complete loss of a TV signal for a long period OR moderate inconvenience – having to walk for 5 more minutes to a new Paypoint to pay for a licence)

The judgement then comes in considering all these together and deciding what is high or low.

5a) Could you change or amend the policy/ project/ practice to minimise or remove any negative impact that is of low significance? Explain how:

(Please use the action sheet at the end of the assessment to detail specific timetabled actions.)

More research and involvement of disabled BME people will help to identify specific needs in respect of contact centre operations and all other DSHS operations. However, in the absence of this, consideration should be made to any request to meet specific needs.

Providing call centre services to those people whose first language is one of the 10 identified languages for each ITV region and if they have a speech impairment or hearing impairment but are textphone users. The issue here is how language translation services will incorporate work in respect of textphone users.

5b) Could you improve the policy/ practice/ project so that it does have a positive impact? Explain how.

(Please use the action sheet at the end of the assessment to detail specific timetabled actions.)

- Outline what type of support disabled BME eligible people and customers may require
- Plan in each ITV region how these support needs will be met.

6) Equality impact assessment action plan

Please list below any timetabled action/s that will be taken as a result of this impact assessment and indicate who will be responsible for this.

Issue: Understand and meet the needs of disabled BME eligible people

Action required:

- Ensure that the new service provider will capture diversity monitoring data on eligible people, applicants and customers.
- Monitor on a monthly basis over 6 months period for Border for any trends related the unfulfilled needs of disabled BME people and put in place operational processes to meet these needs in time for the next ITV region.
- Revisit focus group research to determine if there is information that will help provide a better service to disabled BME applicants.

Lead: Rob

Resource implications: None, as the SP will need to provides appropriate metrics

Diversity role needed to ensure relevant data is being collected and analysed

Date by: June 08

Achieved

Issue: Non-eligible people older people under the age of 75 years

Action required:

- Ensure that there are adequate processes in place at the contact centre to signpost non-eligible applicants onto other switchover organisations who can help

Lead: Service Provider

Resource implications: Call centre agents will need adequate training

Date by: April 08

Achieved:

Issue: Customers with different language needs other than the 10 predetermined languages for each ITV region

Action required:

- Have in place a process to help applicants and customers who may need language support where the languages are outside the 10 predetermined for each region

Lead: Service provider/Rob

Resource implications: Additional language resources may be needed if volumes suggest impact is high

Date by: April 08

Achieved:

Issue: Textphone calls may need to be routed internally within a contact centre, or transferred to an Assistance Provider seamlessly

Action required:

- Ensure that the requirement for routing textphone calls internally is met and is done in a seamless way by the new service provider – this may not be needed until customers receive installation services

Lead: Rob/Service provider

Resource implications: Additional technology in the Call Centre to enable any person to take textphone calls

Date by: July 08

Achieved: