

## Appendix 2

### RMBC - Equality Analysis Form for Commissioning, Decommissioning, Decision making, Projects, Policies, Services, Strategies or Functions (CDDPPSSF)

<b>Under the Equality Act 2010 Protected characteristics</b> are Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity. Page 6 of guidance. Other areas to note see guidance appendix 1	
<b>Name of policy, service or function. If a policy, list any associated policies:</b>	IPSC Update report on Bereavement Services including the Agreement between Dignity Funerals Ltd and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
<b>Name of service and Directorate</b>	Bereavement Services, Culture Sport & Tourism, Regeneration and Environment Services
<b>Lead manager</b>	Zoe Oxley - Head of Operations and Business Transformation
<b>Date of Equality Analysis (EA)</b>	25.08.2021
<b>Names of those involved in the EA (Should include at least two other people)</b>	Ashleigh Wilford - Superintendent Registrar & Bereavement Services Manager Chris Willis – Bereavement Services Assistant Manager
<b>Aim/Scope</b> The aim of this equality analysis is to ensure that any relevant protected characteristic has been considered in the decision-making processes highlighted in the update report to Improving Places Select Commission.  The key points highlighted in the report to IPSC will affect Bereavement Services users, Registration Services users and the wider general public accessing municipal cemeteries and crematorium.  As a result of this equalities analysis, actions will be identified for the Council and Dignity to ensure plans are in place to carry out any further consultations with the relevant affected groups and to incorporate the findings into future developments.	
<b>What equality information is available? Include any engagement undertaken and identify any information gaps you are aware of. What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?</b>  Equality information available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access issues identified for those of an elderly or physically disabled nature at some cemetery sites</li><li>• Customer feedback obtained through monitoring of complaints, requests for service and compliments</li><li>• Religious requirements identified through focused meetings with specific religious communities and faith leaders</li><li>• Feedback from a public survey conducted on the provision of an environmentally friendly burial service in Rotherham</li></ul>	

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- Consultation and close working with cemetery friends' groups to establish community needs
- Consultation with Dignity on the provision of future burial space, incorporating access needs of the elderly and physically disabled
- Feedback from the results of a pilot to introduce digital autopsies in Rotherham
- Information obtained in a previous equalities assessment of the work carried out by the Managing the Deceased Workstream partners.
- Customer surveys conducted by Registration Services.

#### Gaps:

- Further consultation work to be undertaken with disability groups and religious groups on the development of future burial provision plans to establish specific requirements.

#### Monitoring arrangements:

- Monthly performance meetings between Dignity and Bereavement Services
- Quarterly internal officers' meetings to review operational processes
- Quarterly project liaison group meetings to address contractual issues
- Customer surveys
- Regular engagement with community groups and service users
- Managing the Deceased Workstream group. Currently in sleeper cell mode

#### **Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)**

Dignity has recently recommenced customer satisfaction surveys for all users of the burial and cremation services on offer. The results of these surveys will be made available for scrutiny in next year's annual report.

Customer complaints, requests for service and compliments are logged by Dignity and analysed by Bereavement Services at monthly performance meetings. Problem areas can be identified, and individuals and groups can be consulted with as part of the rectification process. Key findings are often related to access and religious requirements.

A customer survey was carried out early 2021 in relation to the provision of environmentally friendly burials by Rotherham Council. Religion and beliefs were taken into consideration in the proposals and feedback was obtained from service users across the borough. A pilot scheme is now in the planning stages.

A Muslim Community Liaison Meeting has been established to look at the specific needs of the community. Religious/Race requirements have been paramount in discussions, with religious and procedural awareness training being commissioned to aid with

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	<p>understanding and community relations. Access requirements for disabled and aging service users was also taken into consideration.</p> <p>Rotherham’s faith leaders and religious groups have been consulted with throughout the Covid-19 pandemic on any procedural changes and the effects that may be felt by their groups. These communication networks are utilised for other developments e.g., the introduction of Digital Autopsies in Rotherham.</p> <p>Funeral Directors have been consulted with throughout the Covid-19 pandemic on any procedural changes and the effects that may be felt by their business and their service users. These communication networks are utilised for other developments e.g., the introduction of Digital Autopsies in Rotherham.</p> <p>“Friends of” groups have been established at most of the municipal cemeteries, made up of the public, community support staff, councillors, and Council officers. These are valuable for discussing the needs of the local community and planning to address any issues identified. Identifying access issues for the elderly and disabled has been a key finding.</p>
<p><b>Engagement undertaken with staff about the implications on service users (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)</b></p>	<p>Monthly performance meetings are held between Dignity and Bereavement Services staff, where customer comments are analysed, and services provided are measured against key performance criteria. The resulting discussions and proposed actions will take into consideration the needs of certain protected characteristics and user groups. Primarily religious requirements and access needs are recurring topics.</p> <p>An internal Council officers group meet quarterly to review the findings of the performance meeting and to review operational processes and procedures. Any issues arising in relation to equalities and the resulting impacts on service users are discussed. As a result of these meetings, Dignity has completed an EIA of their own service.</p> <p>A project liaison group, consisting of Council and Dignity officers, meet quarterly to review contractual obligations and the findings of the internal officers meeting. A number of equalities related issues have been addressed, including religious requirements of</p>

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	<p>various faith groups.</p> <p>The Managing the Deceased Workstream group that was established to manage the emergency response to Covid-19 met regularly to ensure no delays were experienced in the deceased pathway. As part of identifying risks and establishing mitigation a comprehensive EIA was completed to assess any impacts on the protected characteristics. Faith leaders were regularly consulted with on their communities' requirements.</p> <p>Registration Services staff had to undertake additional training to effectively deliver changes to the death registration process as dictated by the Covid-19 pandemic. The impact of these changes on service users were assessed through customer surveys and any alterations made accordingly.</p> <p>A pilot has been undertaken in Rotherham to deliver a digital autopsy service. As part of the evaluation process, professionals have been consulted for their feedback. It has been recorded as a benefit for certain religious groups due to its non-invasive nature and reduced delays for burial.</p>
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**The Analysis**

**How do you think the Policy/Service meets the needs of different communities and groups?**

Age:

A larger proportion of cemetery users are of an older age range and are therefore, less able mobility wise.

The maintained condition of the pathways and roads in the cemeteries is an identified key performance target and is regularly inspected by Dignity and Bereavement Services to establish any problematic areas. Identified areas for improvement could prove to be a barrier for elderly service users to gain access to the sites. A 5-year programme for maintenance and improvement has been created which will improve access for this identified group.

Feedback on services provided can be established through customer surveys, recorded complaints and direct work with regular site users and friends' groups that provide invaluable information from the local communities. Most of the friends group members are of a retired age and are therefore able to have a voice and direct access to Council officers.

Plans for development of the cemetery sites identified in the report to IPSC, will take into

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consideration access for users of all ages but will focus on the availability to move around the site for those less able than others. This will include suitable vehicle access, easy walking distance to water taps, and flat unencumbered pathways.

The younger age range have also been considered with play facilities provided for in a "pocket park" area in the developments at the cemetery site at Wath.

Work has begun to look towards the restoration of the Council owned chapels with the local communities. A lot of the proposed ideas for their use has incorporated the need for a community focussed resource, providing a useable space for the younger generation to use for activities and training and a space for the older generation to meet regularly and run events.

#### Disability:

A lot of the same identified issues for the protected characteristic of age highlighted above, relate to those with a physical disability which may impede on their ability to access cemetery sites.

The 5-year programme for maintenance will ensure that disability access is improved for those with mobility issues and wheelchair users, by focussing on repairs to the roadways and footpaths.

As above the planned developments for sites identified in the report will ensure that suitable disabled access is provided at each site and that the Equality Act 2010 is complied with.

More work will need to be done to consult with local disability groups on the proposed development plans and to encourage participation in friends of groups. This should aid in the highlighting of problems at the existing sites and assist with the restoration of the chapels, considering disability requirements.

The recommended customer surveys along with the monitoring of complaints, requests for service and compliments will also allow people with a disability to comment on their needs.

#### Religion or Belief:

The development plans for cemeteries identified in the report to IPSC will take into consideration religious and belief requirements for service users. Consultation work is underway with members of the Muslim community in relation to the developments at East Herringthorpe through the Muslim Community Liaison Group. The local Qibla group will also be consulted with in relation to the direction the graves will face and the depth they are dug to.

Religious awareness training has been commissioned to allow a better understanding between members of the Muslim community, Council and Dignity staff. This will be run in the community and involve representatives from the different branches of Islam.

Bereavement Services/Registration Services awareness training has been commissioned to allow members of the Muslim community to better understand the processes required in arranging a short notice burial, which is a part of their religious requirements.

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Alternative beliefs have been taken into consideration with the proposed pilot for an environmentally friendly burial section at the cemetery on Greasbrough Lane. This would allow multi faith burials, but take into account service users requests for a more ecological burial with natural and simplistic materials and markers being used.

Faith groups have been consulted with over the pilot to introduce digital autopsies in Rotherham, with religious representatives commenting on families preferring the non-invasive procedure, allowing greater dignity for the deceased and their families.

Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity:

Although the key points identified in the report to IPSC do not directly affect these protected characteristics, customers views and concerns relating to these characteristics can be captured through the following channels:

- Recommended customer surveys
- Monitoring of complaints, requests for service and compliments
- Participation in friends of groups and organised events
- Direct access to Council officers

#### **Analysis of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service:**

##### **Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Group?**

Currently the roads and pathways at some of the cemetery sites could potentially provide access issues for the elderly, youngsters in pushchairs, physically disabled and pregnant women.

##### **Does the Service/Policy provide any improvements/remove barriers?**

The access issues identified above have been surveyed and a plan of action for the required repairs has been produced in the 5-year maintenance plan by Dignity. This should greatly improve access for service users and will be monitored.

The introduction of digital autopsies in Rotherham has been positively received and is providing a greater sense of dignity to grieving families of all religions and beliefs with its non-invasive methods.

##### **What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations?**

Community relations will be improved by:

- Improvements to existing cemetery sites identified in the 5-year maintenance plan, which will increase access for the elderly and the physically disabled.
- Engagement with the council and Dignity through involvement in friends' groups and cross border working with similar groups. Age related, disability and religious needs can be identified through this communication channel.
- Community events organised by local people in conjunction with the Council and

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friend's groups.

- Consultation on cemetery developments, listening to the requirements of the community and giving a sense of inclusion.
- Working with the Council and friends' group to provide community assets through the restoration of the disused chapels. These could be a valuable resource for activity groups people from all the protected characteristics.
- Building a better relationship with service users from all the protected characteristics, through honest communication allowing a greater understanding of the decision-making process.

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**Equality Analysis Action Plan**

**Time Period 2021/22**

Manager: Chris Willis – Bereavement Services Assistant Manager...Service Area: Bereavement Services...Tel: 07557313017

**Title of Equality Analysis: Bereavement Services**

<b>Action/Target</b>	<b>State Protected Characteristics (A,D,RE,RoB,G,GI O, SO, PM,CPM, C or All)*</b>	<b>Target date (MM/YY)</b>
<b>Consultation with disability groups regarding access to existing cemeteries and future developments</b>	<b>A, C, D</b>	<b>02/22</b>
<b>Consultation with religious groups regarding the layout of identified cemetery expansions</b>	<b>RE, RoB</b>	<b>02/22</b>
<b>Name Of Director who approved Plan</b>	<b>Zoe Oxley</b>	<b>Date 26/08/21</b>

\*A = Age, C= Carers D= Disability, S = Sex, GR Gender Reassignment, O= other groups, RE= Race/ Ethnicity, RoB= Religion or Belief, SO= Sexual Orientation, PM= Pregnancy/Maternity, CPM = Civil Partnership or Marriage.