

PART B – Equality Analysis Form

As a public authority we need to ensure that all our strategies, policies, service and functions, both current and proposed have given proper consideration to equality and diversity.

This form:

- Can be used to prompt discussions, ensure that due regard has been given and remove or minimise disadvantage for an individual or group with a protected characteristic
- Involves looking at what steps can be taken to advance and maximise equality as well as eliminate discrimination and negative consequences
- Should be completed before decisions are made, this will remove the need for remedial actions.

Note – An Initial Equality Screening Assessment (Part A) should be completed prior to this form.

When completing this form consider the Equality Act 2010 protected characteristics Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity and other socio-economic groups e.g. parents, single parents and guardians, carers, looked after children, unemployed and people on low incomes, ex-offenders, victims of domestic violence, homeless people etc. – see page 11 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

1. Title	
Equality Analysis title: Digital Inclusion	
Date of Equality Analysis (EA): August 2023	
Directorate: F&CS	Service area: CIDS, Customer Services
Lead Manager: Helen Barker	Contact number: 01709 254530
Is this a: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strategy / Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Service / Function <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
If other, please specify	

2. Names of those involved in the Equality Analysis (Should include minimum of three people) - see page 7 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance		
Name	Organisation	Role (eg service user, managers, service specialist)
Helen Barker	RMBC	Head of Customer Services
Phil Rushton	RMBC	Customer Service Manager
Steve Eling	RMBC	Policy and Equalities Manager

3. What is already known? - see page 10 of Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance
<p>Aim/Scope (who the Policy/Service affects and intended outcomes if known)</p> <p>In June 2021, SLT were presented with a report detailing the intention to establish a Rotherham Place Digital Inclusion Programme to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle inequalities within our communities that digital exclusion contributes to • Work with the third sector to develop and support community engagement and a sustainability model • Maintain and build the Digital Inclusion Partnership • Identify and capitalise on social accountability across health and social care • Establish a temporary 'digital inclusion group' to support the above outcomes and ensure all interested parties and organisations are involved • Work with partners to improve and expand their digital offers • Identify and pool potential match funding to support the programme and future sustainability • Increase the take up of online services across the borough and sustain and grow digital engagement to the benefit of all
<p>What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)</p> <p>Digital Inclusion Stakeholder Group</p> <p>The programme has a governance structure based on this group. It is made up of members of various organisations across Rotherham to ensure all types of residents are represented by the programme. This is an open group and new members are always welcomed if we feel we lack representation at any time. Current organisations represented are :</p> <p>RMBC (including leads from Communities and Libraries) NHS Rotherham AGE UK RNN Group Barnardos VAR Rotherfed</p>

Equality and diversity is at the heart of the Digital Inclusion programme. Research suggests that digital exclusion is more prevalent amongst groups who are elderly, disabled, and from BAME and socially deprived communities.

Phase 1 of the Digital Inclusion Programme (Knowledge Gathering) was completed in 2022.

- An independent research specialist was appointed (Attain) to produce a Rotherham place baseline review which involved:
 - National and Rotherham population level analysis
 - Consultation with residents:
 - 454 online surveys received
 - 67 postal surveys returned (500 sent out)
 - 9 focus group sessions held across the borough in areas with high levels of deprivation and groups where English isn't the first language.

The findings of the Digital Inclusion Rotherham Place Review identified that:

- Groups most at high-risk groups of digital inclusion:
- Older People
- Deprivation
- LTC / Learning Disability
- Disadvantaged Young People

Common barriers to digital inclusion:

- Internet availability in venues such as sheltered housing.
- Language
- Residents wanting more one to one support to help them use their own devices and be more aware of internet safely.
- Age –increasing age increases the need for digital support, but there are also pockets of younger people who are at risk of being digitally excluded
- Based on the survey responses around 54% of residents need some form of digital support

Phase 2 of the Digital Inclusion programme (Delivery) is in progress

The Digital Inclusion working group will use the findings of Phase 1, to co-design a strategy that sets out the key areas of focus, improvement aims and objectives, delivery approach, and measurable outcomes.

The Digital Inclusion Strategy and Actin Plan were co-produced with all members of the stakeholder group and also engaging with residents of Rotherham

This strategy will underpin a place-based approach to:

1. Intervention work with high-risk groups and wards, focussing on areas of deprivation to bring communities together through activities and initiatives that enable targeted support
2. Creating the structural foundations for tackling digital inclusion at scale through partnership and collaboration; working together to resource provision and plug any gaps.

- 3. Establishing a social movement to drive the digital enablement of residents who want to become digitally competent, providing co-ordinated borough wide support and more bespoke offers where appropriate to specific customer groups and communities
- 4. Measuring impacts and outcomes using a governance framework that ensures accountability to the Rotherham Together Partnership.

The programme has been presented to The Rotherham Place Board and the Rotherham Together Partnership where on both occasions the programme was met with overwhelming support.

Are there any gaps in the information that you are aware of?

In terms of digital inclusion/exclusion, there is a wide range of national research but less is known (at a local level) about the impact this has on specific customer groups in the Rotherham area.

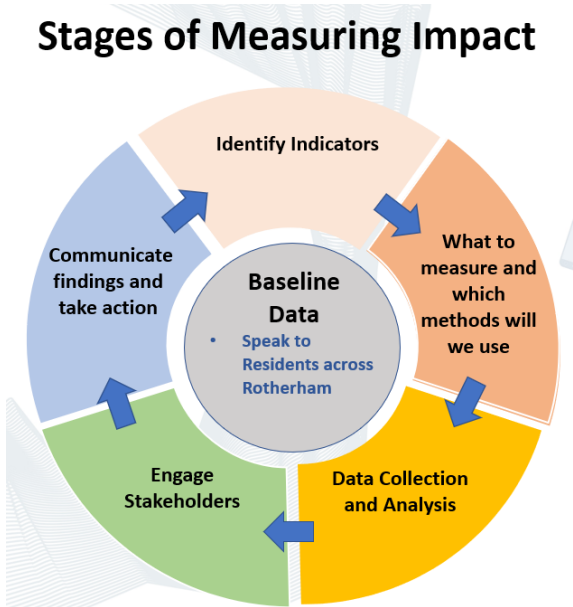
During our research phase we went into the community to meet as many people as possible. Of course, it wasn't possible to meet all people, and even though the official research phase has been completed, due to the nature of the programme we will never stop speaking to people in the community, and following a test and learn approach, ensure the help we are giving is what is needed.

What monitoring arrangements have you made to monitor the impact of the policy or service on communities/groups according to their protected characteristics?

The Digital Inclusion Stakeholder group will always oversee monitoring the programme.

A key part of the programme is to ensure we are constantly measuring the impact of the programme.

Our Measuring Impact strategy can be looked at with the following image :



The programme cannot be successful if we aren't constantly measuring our impact across all residents of Rotherham.

The Digital Inclusion programme will be recruiting 2 Digital Support Officers in the second half of 2023. They will be community-based roles, again ensuring our work is reaching all communities across Rotherham. Although based at the council, these roles are for the whole of Rotherham and can be used as a resource by organisations across Rotherham.

The Digital Inclusion Team will:

- Continue to attend Community reference group meetings and encourage feedback from members about issues/challenges for their specific communities/customer groups
- Continue to work with the stakeholder group and work with other organisations to gain their thoughts and views on the way services are delivered
- Make best use of any local or national data that highlights areas of concern, best practice elsewhere, changing behaviours, new technologies that might help specific customer groups.
- Publish Impact data / case studies to all stakeholders continuing reviewing the programme to identify any opportunities to improve
- Review this EIA on an annual basis in line with the annual review of the Customer Access Strategy

Engagement undertaken with customers. (date and group(s) consulted and key findings)	See Section entitled ' <i>What equality information is available? (Include any engagement undertaken)</i> '
Engagement undertaken with staff (date and group(s)consulted and key findings)	Ongoing as part of review processes

4. The Analysis - of the actual or likely effect of the Policy or Service (Identify by protected characteristics)

How does the Policy/Service meet the needs of different communities and groups? (Protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Sex, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Civil Partnerships and Marriage, Pregnancy and Maternity) - see glossary on page 14 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance)

The Digital Inclusion strategy forms the framework for the way this programme will tackle the digital divide for all communities and groups.

The strategy and action plan we coproduced with residents across Rotherham advocate the benefits of being online and it is these benefits this programme will we see increase across Rotherham:

Finding a job

- More jobs now are only advertised online and the process to apply is often online only
- More employers require some level of digital skills

Keeping in touch

- Talk to friends and family through video or telephone calls, messages, or emails

Shopping

- It can be cheaper and more convenient to buy things online
- Find better deals for the things you need using comparison sites to find an energy supplier, mobile phone package and makes it easier to switch

Knowledge and learning

- The internet can help you find information, learn new skills, learn a new language, or keep up to date with news and events from around Rotherham and the world

Health

- Book and manage health appointments online 24/7
- View and manage your personal health information
- Improved access to health services and information

Entertainment and lifestyle

- Watching online TV services for your favourite box sets
- Tips and tricks for your hobbies, including finding recipes
- Buy tickets to events

Financial

- Online banking, apply for and access Council/Government services (including Benefits)

Travel

- Book holidays, check-in at the airport and get your NHS Covid Pass
- Travel around using a Sat Nav or online maps

By improving access to technology or increasing their digital skills, this programme can meet the needs of all communities and groups across Rotherham.

Does your Policy/Service present any problems or barriers to communities or Groups?

Research suggests that some customers and communities are more likely to find it difficult to access services in the same way that others might take for granted. For example, national data finds that digital exclusion is more evident amongst the elderly, disabled, and individuals from BAME and socially deprived communities.

The strategy acknowledges these challenges and puts the programmes focus on these high-risk groups of digital inclusion.

Does the Service/Policy provide any positive impact/s including improvements or remove barriers?

The common barriers to digital inclusion:

- Internet availability in venues such as sheltered housing.
- Language
- Residents wanting more ‘one to one’ support to help them use their own devices and be more aware of internet safely.
- Age –increasing age increases the need for digital support, but there are also pockets of younger people who are at risk of being digitally excluded
- Based on the survey responses around 54% of residents need some form of digital support

The programmes entire focus is to remove these barriers for all residents across Rotherham and enable them to receive the benefits of being online.

The delivery phase has started and activities already underway (August 2023):

RNN Digital Champions

We are working with Rotherham College to utilise their digital students and their required work experience to become digital champions in the community. We are starting a small pilot. We will match suitable students with groups. This will be informal, and the idea is for them to join a group and to offer help to anybody with anything technology based. They won’t be delivering courses. They will respond to whatever each individual needs help with

Good Things Databank Pilot with the libraries

Good Things Foundation offer free sims to organisations through their Databank programme. This is a scheme we want to promote and help organisations utilise. Working with the libraries, we will start a pilot scheme. We also want to encourage other organisations to sign up to utilise this.

ICT Classes and Employability classes for residents

Free training courses on specifics subjects for individuals like Excel and Word are important for individuals to upskill themselves ready for employment. These are available across Rotherham, and we will work with the deliverers to ensure what they offer is fit for purpose and to help them be advertised throughout Rotherham.

Recruitment for 2 community based Digital Support Officers has started with expected start dates of October 23

What affect will the Policy/Service have on community relations? (may also need to consider activity which may be perceived as benefiting one group at the expense of another)

Strong and collaborative community engagement is essential in delivering this programme.

It is members of the community that this programme is designed to help.

The strategy and action plan makes communities the heart of everything we do, in fact community members actively were involved in the develop of these documents.

This will continue throughout the programme. Its important we continually talk to the recipients of our help to ensure its the right help in the right place.

The 2 new Digital Support Officers will have a fantastic impact as they will be exclusively working in the community.

Please list any **actions and targets** that need to be taken as a consequence of this assessment on the action plan below and ensure that they are added into your service plan for monitoring purposes – see page 12 of the Equality Screening and Analysis Guidance.

5. Summary of findings and Equality Analysis Action Plan

If the analysis is done at the right time, i.e. early before decisions are made, changes should be built in before the policy or change is signed off. This will remove the need for remedial actions. Where this is achieved, the only action required will be to monitor the impact of the policy/service/change on communities or groups according to their protected characteristic - See page 11 of the Equality Screening and Analysis guidance

Title of analysis: Digital Inclusion Equality Analysis
Directorate and service area: Finance & Customer Services
Lead Manager: Helen Barker, Head of Customer Services
Summary of findings:

Action/Target	State Protected Characteristics as listed below	Target date (MM/YY)
Recruitment of 2 x Digital Support Officers	ALL	10/23
Phased rollout of National Databank across libraries of Rotherham	ALL	10/23
RNN Digital Champions in the community to start again	ALL	09/23

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

6. Governance, ownership and approval		
Please state those that have approved the Equality Analysis. Approval should be obtained by the Director and approval sought from DLT and the relevant Cabinet Member.		
Name	Job title	Date
Helen Barker	Head of Customer Services	11 th August 2023
Phil Rushton	Customer Service Manager	11 th August 2023

7. Publishing	
The Equality Analysis will act as evidence that due regard to equality and diversity has been given.	
If this Equality Analysis relates to a Cabinet, key delegated officer decision, Council, other committee or a significant operational decision a copy of the completed document should be attached as an appendix and published alongside the relevant report.	
A copy should also be sent to equality@rotherham.gov.uk For record keeping purposes it will be kept on file and also published on the Council's Equality and Diversity Internet page.	
Date Equality Analysis completed	11 th August 2023
Report title and date	Rotherham Digital Inclusion Programme Equality Analysis August 2023
Date report sent for publication	
Date Equality Analysis sent to Performance, Intelligence and Improvement equality@rotherham.gov.uk	