

Revised internal process for issuing Social Fund Applications Packs

Equality Impact Assessment

December 2011

Equality impact assessment for Revised internal process for issuing Social Fund Applications Packs

Introduction

1. The Department for Work and Pensions has carried out an equality impact assessment on the proposal to introduce a revised internal process for issuing Social Fund Application packs to customers, assessing the proposal in line with the current public sector equality duties.
2. This process will help to ensure that the Department has paid due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups; and
 - foster good relations between people from different groups.
3. The equality impact assessment will show how the Department has demonstrated it has paid due regard when developing new services or processes to on the grounds of the protected characteristics. These are; race, disability, gender, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief and marriage and civil partnerships (in terms of eliminating unlawful discrimination only).

Brief outline of the policy or service

4. Currently customers request Social Fund application packs through two routes: a dedicated Social Fund application pack line and the Social Fund enquiry line. Staff working on the Social Fund application pack line have access to a limited amount of information and can not respond to all customer information requests. This means customers sometimes need to make an additional call to the Social Fund enquiry line to obtain the required information prior to requesting a Social Fund application pack. From February 2012 the Social Fund application pack line will close and customers will use the Social Fund enquiry line to request Social Fund application packs. This will reduce customer frustration and reduce the number of customer contacts.
5. The internal process for issuing application packs is cumbersome and lengthy, involving a handover to another contact centre for administration staff to collate the packs and issue them to customers. From February 2012 the person who takes the call will issue the pack immediately, meaning that customers will receive the application pack quicker and the process will be more efficient.

6. The new process will be implemented through the established change process and affected staff will be redeployed within their current location according to their skill levels and grade.

Consultation and involvement

7. When designing the revised internal process for issuing Social Fund application packs internal stakeholders were consulted to understand the impact of the change using the internal impact analysis process.
8. Future consultations with the local and national TUS is planned in December 2011.

Impact of the revised internal process for issuing social fund applications packs

9. There is no impact on customers. For customers able to use the telephone, they will be able to call one number to obtain all the information they require to make a Social Fund application, they will also receive their claim pack quicker due to the revised internal process. For customers unable to use the telephone then they will be able to access claim packs through a range of third parties as they can currently. No impact on any specific customer group with protected characteristics of disability, race or gender has been identified.
10. There is no impact on staff. All those working on the Social Fund application line and those who issue the Social Fund application packs will be redeployed locally according to their grade and skill levels, with the appropriate training. Social Fund enquiry line staff will be trained in the new process before it is implemented. There is no adverse impact on staff in any specific group on the grounds of disability, race or gender.

Monitoring and evaluation

11. It is not possible to pilot the new process because of the telephony changes required.
12. The revised internal process will be evaluated one month after implementation and then every quarter to check for any impact not identified in the design.
13. The evaluation will be completed by a Lean expert inline with Lean principles.

Next steps

14. The revised internal process will be launched in February 2012.
15. This equality impact assessment will be regularly reviewed as the process is implemented.

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