

Equality Impact Assessment [version 2.12]



Title: Community Meals Service – Frozen meal provision	
<input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> Strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other [please state]	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New <input type="checkbox"/> Already exists / review <input type="checkbox"/> Changing
Directorate: People	Lead Officer name: Christopher Monaghan
Service Area: Adult Social Care	Lead Officer role: Community Meals Manager

Step 1: What do we want to do?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment is to assist decision makers in understanding the impact of proposals as part of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. Detailed guidance to support completion can be found here [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

This assessment should be started at the beginning of the process by someone with a good knowledge of the proposal and service area, and sufficient influence over the proposal. It is good practice to take a team approach to completing the equality impact assessment. Please contact the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) early for advice and feedback.

1.1 What are the aims and objectives/purpose of this proposal?

Briefly explain the purpose of the proposal and why it is needed. Describe who it is aimed at and the intended aims / outcomes. Where known also summarise the key actions you plan to undertake. Please use plain English, avoiding jargon and acronyms. Equality Impact Assessments are viewed by a wide range of people including decision-makers and the wider public.

The Community Meal Service provides a well-being check and hot ready to eat food to customers, many of whom are unable to cook for themselves. We currently deliver about 95,000 meals a year covering all areas of Bristol to meet the nutritional needs of people across the Bristol community.

Supporting the vulnerable people in the community reduces the need for formal care support, this has significant impact on reducing care costs in Bristol. There is currently a care crisis, with a lack of carers to meet the communities care needs. The service reduces the need for care support through offering a welfare check freeing up resources for other people in need.

Current customers require a range of specific meal requirements to meet their needs, including customers with protected characteristics. Dietary needs include:

- Diabetic
- Low fat/reducing
- High fibre
- Vegetarian
- Vegan
- Gluten free
- Low salt
- Soft & pureed food
- Religious requirements i.e., Halal and Kosher
- Culturally diverse meals i.e., Afro-Caribbean

The existing frozen meals contract is due to end September 2024. Therefore, we now wish to start the process to identify a suitable supplier who can provide premade frozen food which will be cooked in a regeneration oven by the Meals Service and delivered to customers throughout Bristol City.

This EqIA is therefore seeking authority to start the process of procuring a frozen meals supplier for the Community meals service.

The meals service is currently supplied by Apetito, who the council has a long-standing relationship as they have provided meals to the Community meals service for over 30 years. The reasons behind using Apetito for such a long time is based on the fact that they have a larger range of meals than other suppliers, meaning that the service can meet the needs of a larger range of people in the community. Alternative providers of frozen meals do not provide the range of meals specifically required for dietary needs. Apetito are also the cheapest supplier meaning the service can keep the meals to a reasonable price, so people with limited money can still access the service. With rising food poverty in Bristol, this service is supporting food equity by providing a hot and nutritionally balanced meal.

The procurement process to be used is the Eastern Shires purchasing organisation framework, which is a professional buying organisation, so other companies will be able to bid for the contract. There are limited companies that provide frozen meals meaning competition is low. The new contract will be for 1 year with an option for 2 x 1-year extensions.

As of February 2024, there are 375 customers on the service who may be affected by this proposal. 178 customers are referred to us through social services and the remaining 197 are private customers (either self-referral, from a family member, neighbour, friend).

The current age of clients are as follows:

AGE OF CLIENTS:	
85+	175
75-84	121
65-74	48
18-64	31
0-17	0

Their dependency on the service, which is based on information supplied by them are as follows:

DEPENDENCY LEVELS:	
Low	248
Medium	72
High	55

Based on this, without this service and provision of food, 375 residents in Bristol may struggle to find alternative means to receive a hot meal and a well-being check.

The meals service does not only provide meals for the older demographic, but also supports social care services by providing meals for people with mental health needs (such as OCD, hoarding and Agoraphobia), Disabled people with Learning Difficulties and people with conditions or actions such as alcoholism and drug use and self-neglect.

1.2 Who will the proposal have the potential to affect?

<input type="checkbox"/> Bristol City Council workforce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Service users	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The wider community
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commissioned services	<input type="checkbox"/> City partners / Stakeholder organisations	
Additional comments:		

1.3 Will the proposal have an equality impact?

Could the proposal affect access levels of representation or participation in a service, or does it have the potential to change e.g. quality of life: health, education, or standard of living etc.?

If 'No' explain why you are sure there will be no equality impact, then skip steps 2-4 and request review by Equality and Inclusion Team.

If 'Yes' complete the rest of this assessment, or if you plan to complete the assessment at a later stage please state this clearly here and request review by the Equality and Inclusion Team.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	[please select]
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Step 2: What information do we have?

2.1 What data or evidence is there which tells us who is, or could be affected?

Please use this section to demonstrate an understanding of who could be affected by the proposal. Include general population data where appropriate, and information about people who will be affected with particular reference to protected and other relevant characteristics: [How we measure equality and diversity \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/equality-diversity)

Use one row for each evidence source and say which characteristic(s) it relates to. You can include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data e.g. from national or local research, available data or previous consultations and engagement activities.

Outline whether there is any over or under representation of equality groups within relevant services - don't forget to benchmark to the local population where appropriate. Links to available data and reports are here [Data, statistics and intelligence \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/data-statistics-intelligence). See also: [Bristol Open Data \(Quality of Life, Census etc.\); Joint Strategic Needs Assessment \(JSNA\); Ward Statistical Profiles.](#)

For workforce / management of change proposals you will need to look at the diversity of the affected teams using available evidence such as [HR Analytics: Power BI Reports \(sharepoint.com\)](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/hr-analytics-power-bi-reports) which shows the diversity profile of council teams and service areas. Identify any over or under-representation compared with Bristol economically active citizens for different characteristics. Additional sources of useful workforce evidence include the [Employee Staff Survey Report](#) and [Stress Risk Assessment](#)

Data / Evidence Source [Include a reference where known]	Summary of what this tells us
One City Food Equality Strategy 2022-32 https://www.feedingbristol.org/resources/a-one-city-food-equality-strategy-for-bristol-2022-2032/	This data highlights that there is ongoing food insecurity across Bristol. This especially affects people from poorer areas, people from different cultural backgrounds and Disabled people. It also highlights that people are not eating healthy and nutritionally balanced meals. Through procuring frozen meals and delivering them to all areas of Bristol we can support to reduce food insecurity by providing

	<p>nutritionally balanced meals to vulnerable Bristol residents -Meals include culturally appropriate foods and foods meeting dietary needs.</p> <p>The Food Equality Strategy outlines five priority areas for achieving food equality in Bristol:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair equitable access: We need to ensure that residents can access food that is appropriate for their dietary needs, is culturally appropriate, and affordable. • Choice and security: We want to live in a city where everyone can make decisions about their relationship with food and are free from the anxiety and stress of food insecurity. • Skills and resources: We want to enable residents to foster a healthy food culture, have confidence in their ability to access and use food to meet their needs, as well as the facilities and fuel to cook with. • Sustainable local food system: We want the local food system to prioritise resilience and sustainability in food production, food waste management, distribution, economy, and environmental resilience. • Food at the heart of decision-making: We must ensure that food needs and equality are considered in all decision-making – whether developing social support models, new businesses or planning new housing.
<p>One city Food Equality Action Plan</p>	<p>This data highlights that to tackle food inequality there needs to be multiple solutions to meeting the nutritional</p>

<https://www.feedingbristol.org/resources/a-one-city-food-equality-action-plan-2023-26/>

needs of the Bristol community. The community meals service through procuring frozen meals and delivering them can help to meet some of the targets outlined in the strategy. Community Meals is working with public health to support this initiative.

To achieve the goals set out in the Bristol One City Food Equality Strategy, we need a realistic plan with specific actions that a range of stakeholders across the city can feel empowered to take forward. This is what the Food Equality Action Plan is: a pathway of practical steps to help achieve food equality for Bristol.

Like the Strategy, the Food Equality Action Plan was co-produced by a range of stakeholders, communities, and individuals. This means people from various sectors and backgrounds contributed their views to create this document. Alongside key statutory organisations, the VCSE sector and grassroots groups, communities at risk of food inequality were asked what they thought needed to happen to achieve food equality and accomplish the goals of the Strategy.

The Service, I Could Not Do without It...": A Qualitative Study Exploring the Significance of Meals on Wheels among Service Users and People Who Refer Them to the Service

<http://bitly.ws/PPhZ>

This data highlights the impact that the service has on the community and supporting vulnerable people to remain independent in their own homes. It also reduces the impact on formal health and social care services saving money. Through procurement of frozen meals, we can continue to support the vulnerable people in the community and support both informal and formal care structures in place.

Meals on Wheels (MoWs) is a social care service providing daily meals and social contact to adults who need support to live in the community. Considering the rising number of adults who need help with shopping for food and preparing meals in England, MoWs could be essential for these individuals; yet little is known about the experiences of MoWs service users and

	<p>people who refer them to MoWs (“referrers”), with the service. The aim of this study was to explore different dimensions of the MoWs service from the perspectives of MoWs service users and referrers.</p>
<p>Bristol Quality of Life Survey – 2022/23</p> <p>Microsoft Power BI</p>	<p>This data highlights the increase in people buying less healthy food. Increase in people having moderate to high food insecurity. Increase in people accessing food banks.</p> <p>Through the procurement of frozen meals and delivery of these meals to people in the community we can help to reduce these issues supporting the improvement of quality of life.</p>
<p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a750301e5274a59fa716b6e/3b_Reducing_social_isolation-Briefing.pdf</p> <p>Social isolation can have physically and emotionally damaging effects resulting in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depression • poor nutrition • decreased immunity • anxiety • fatigue and • social stigma <p>Socially isolated older adults have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • longer stays in hospital • a greater number of GP visits and • are more dependent on homecare services. 	<p>This data highlights the impact social isolation has on health and impact on services.</p> <p>Through procurement and delivery of frozen meals the service reduces social isolation by having a regular check in with people in the community helping people remain independent in their own homes for longer.</p>
<p>Additional comments:</p> <p>Without procuring the frozen meals a significant number of people in the community will be at risk of food insecurity, it will give a higher chance that they will not be able to remain in their homes and will require more expensive formal care solutions.</p> <p>The Meals service has been working with public health to support the food equality strategy to meet the nutritional needs of the community.</p> <p>The service doesn’t have a great deal of quantifiable data for the service, but they are currently working with Liquid Logic and web design to start asking for needs based on, for example, their identity as a Disabled person.</p>	

2.2 Do you currently monitor relevant activity by the following protected characteristics?

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Disability	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender Reassignment
<input type="checkbox"/> Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy/Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Race
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Orientation

2.3 Are there any gaps in the evidence base?

Where there are gaps in the evidence, or you don't have enough information about some equality groups, include an equality action to find out in section 4.2 below. This doesn't mean that you can't complete the assessment without the information, but you need to follow up the action and if necessary, review the assessment later. If you are unable to fill in the gaps, then state this clearly with a justification.

For workforce related proposals all relevant characteristics may not be included in HR diversity reporting (e.g. pregnancy/maternity). For smaller teams diversity data may be redacted. A high proportion of not known/not disclosed may require an action to address under-reporting.

To provide the correct meals to the customers we take information around race and religion, so we are providing culturally appropriate food to our customers. Through the referral process gender and age information is also given.

We gather information around Disability if it impacts our ability to deliver the meals or if further support is required from the drivers, this information is currently not collected by the computer system we use, so cannot be quantified currently.

We do not request information around sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership or pregnancy as this has limited impact on how we deliver the meals and what meals we provide. We currently just request the information pertinent to operational needs.

2.4 How have you involved communities and groups that could be affected?

You will nearly always need to involve and consult with internal and external stakeholders during your assessment. The extent of the engagement will depend on the nature of the proposal or change. This should usually include individuals and groups representing different relevant protected characteristics. Please include details of any completed engagement and consultation and how representative this had been of Bristol's diverse communities.

Include the main findings of any engagement and consultation in Section 2.1 above.

If you are managing a workforce change process or restructure please refer to [Managing a change process or restructure \(sharepoint.com\)](#) for advice on consulting with employees etc. Relevant stakeholders for engagement about workforce changes may include e.g. staff-led groups and trades unions as well as affected staff.

During selection of supplier, we will request a sample of the suppliers' meals. We will then involve existing customers from a range of back grounds (some referred through social services, some privately) to sample the food. They will complete a questionnaire which will help inform us if the food met their needs or not.

2.5 How will engagement with stakeholders continue?

Explain how you will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the course of planning and delivery. Please describe where more engagement and consultation is required and set out how you intend to undertake it. Include any targeted work to seek the views of under-represented groups. If you do not intend to undertake it, please set out your justification. You can ask the Equality and Inclusion Team for help in targeting particular groups.

Any information in regard to change and the meals service will be passed on via letters delivered by the drivers. We also produce a 3 monthly newsletter highlighting changes while sharing information about the service. We can produce this literature in large print as well as looking at translation services if requested by the service user. We often look to next of kin and carers to support with passing on relevant information about the person who draws upon the services and support, so we are aware of their communication needs. The support network of the person who draws upon the services and support is vital in making sure we are meeting their needs. We can also speak directly to the person who draws upon the services and support to pass on relevant information around service changes. This can be done through the drivers or through the customer service advisors in the office. We make customers aware of the different ways they can communicate to us about the service.

Meetings with community leaders can be carried out to see if the meals service can support their communities both from a cultural and religious standpoint. A number of meetings have taken place with community leaders and with cultural support services such as Dhek Bhal (a South Asian community service). There has been limited uptake of the meals service as a result of meeting with different cultures and communities, but ongoing meetings will continue to see if the needs of the specific community's change, and we are able to support in the future.

Questionnaires can be produced to make sure we are providing the service that is required from our customers, with potential to make changes to service after feedback. We do request feedback about the service, but a questionnaire will usually be produced when significant changes are made to the service (Such as changing food providers), so we can quantify its impact on the service and the people that use it.

Step 3: Who might the proposal impact?

Analysis of impacts must be rigorous. Please demonstrate your analysis of any impacts of the proposal in this section, referring to evidence you have gathered above and the characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010. Also include details of existing issues for particular groups that you are aware of and are seeking to address or mitigate through this proposal. See detailed guidance documents for advice on identifying potential impacts etc. [Equality Impact Assessments \(EqIA\) \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3.1 Does the proposal have any potentially adverse impacts on people based on their protected or other relevant characteristics?

Consider sub-categories and how people with combined characteristics (e.g. young women) might have particular needs or experience particular kinds of disadvantage.

Where mitigations indicate a follow-on action, include this in the 'Action Plan' Section 4.2 below.

GENERAL COMMENTS (highlight any potential issues that might impact all or many groups)

We currently cannot cater for every race or religion as the suppliers of the food have a limited culturally appropriate range. There is currently not the demand from certain cultures to use the meals service due to their beliefs and how they support their communities with providing food.

Charging of the meals is required to ensure the service can continue to run to meet the demand of existing customers and potentially new customers. The service receives a subsidy from the council to ensure it continues to run – however this is not enough to cover all costs. Therefore, payment from the customers is required. They are informed of this cost prior to signing up.

Customers are required to pay for the meal and therefore may have a financial burden on the customer. This could affect all people with protected characteristics.

There may be other protected characteristics disproportionately impacted by this proposal however due to a lack of data, this cannot yet be confirmed at this time.	
PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS	
Age: Young People	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Age: Older People	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	Customer may have limited monies/pensions so could impact their ability to purchase meals
Mitigations:	Customers can request for financial support through care direct to help pay for the meal. We do not include VAT for customers referred to us through social services.
Disability	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	The meals service cannot supply specific meals to meet the variety of dietary needs a Disabled person may have.
Mitigations:	A number of meals tailored to dietary needs are available, if there is demand for meals to meet a dietary need we can speak to Speech and Language therapists to support with alternative melas ideas.
Sex	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Sexual orientation	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Pregnancy / Maternity	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Gender reassignment	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
Race	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	Unable to provide culturally appropriate food.
Mitigations:	Signposting to other culturally appropriate services. Engagement with community groups to see if we could meet some of their food needs.
Religion or Belief	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	Certain cultures do not want meals delivered to their house they want to eat in a community setting.
Mitigations:	Discussion with community group to see how meals service can be adapted to meet cultural needs around eating together
Marriage & civil partnership	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	
OTHER RELEVANT CHARACTERISTICS	
Socio-Economic (deprivation)	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Potential impacts:	Customer may have limited monies/pensions so could impact their ability to purchase meals
Mitigations:	Customers can request for financial support through care direct to help pay for the meal. We do not include VAT for customers referred to us through social services.
Carers	Does your analysis indicate a disproportionate impact? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Potential impacts:	We reduce the impact on carers by providing a welfare check and meals at lunch time reducing the need for informal or formal support to be offered during the middle of the day.
Mitigations:	
Other groups [Please add additional rows below to detail the impact for any other relevant groups as appropriate e.g. asylum seekers and refugees; care experienced; homelessness; armed forces personnel and veterans]	
Potential impacts:	
Mitigations:	

3.2 Does the proposal create any benefits for people based on their protected or other relevant characteristics?

Outline any potential benefits of the proposal and how they can be maximised. Identify how the proposal will support our [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to:

- ✓ Eliminate unlawful discrimination for a protected group
- ✓ Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't
- ✓ Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't

The meals service can reach a large volume of people with a variety of protected characteristics. It is the role of the service to support the vulnerable members of our society to have a meal and welfare check everyday helping them remain independent in their own homes. The service also reduces the need for formal and informal care, supporting both the health and social care sector.

Step 4: Impact

4.1 How has the equality impact assessment informed or changed the proposal?

What are the main conclusions of this assessment? Use this section to provide an overview of your findings. This summary can be included in decision pathway reports etc.

If you have identified any significant negative impacts which cannot be mitigated, provide a justification showing how the proposal is proportionate, necessary, and appropriate despite this.

Summary of significant negative impacts and how they can be mitigated or justified:

We cannot meet everybody's food needs in the community and still run a viable business. It is too expensive and time consuming to create bespoke meals for everybody's needs.

Summary of positive impacts / opportunities to promote the Public Sector Equality Duty:

We meet a large range of peoples needs in the community with a large range of food that can meet medical needs as well as cultural needs for certain backgrounds.

4.2 Action Plan

Use this section to set out any actions you have identified to improve data, mitigate issues, or maximise opportunities etc. If an action is to meet the needs of a particular protected group please specify this.

Improvement / action required	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Procurement of Frozen meals with a large variety of requirements that meet protected characteristics. Such as textured meals vegetarian, kosher, halal etc.	Chris Monaghan	7 Months
Questionnaire and feedback from customers on food provided by potential new suppliers	Chris Monaghan	7 Months


4.3 How will the impact of your proposal and actions be measured?

How will you know if you have been successful? Once the activity has been implemented this equality impact assessment should be periodically reviewed to make sure your changes have been effective your approach is still appropriate.

Once changes have been implemented a review of the impact will be monitored. This can be carried out bi-weekly followed by 3 monthly monitoring, plus discussions with customers, staff members and Team managers to see what changes if any need to be addressed.

Step 5: Review

The Equality and Inclusion Team need at least five working days to comment and feedback on your EqIA. EqIAs should only be marked as reviewed when they provide sufficient information for decision-makers on the equalities impact of the proposal. Please seek feedback and review from the [Equality and Inclusion Team](#) before requesting sign off from your Director¹.

Equality and Inclusion Team Review: <i>Reviewed by Equality and Inclusion Team</i>	Director Sign-Off: 
Date: 8/3/2024	Date: 11 March 2024

¹ Review by the Equality and Inclusion Team confirms there is sufficient analysis for decision makers to consider the likely equality impacts at this stage. This is not an endorsement or approval of the proposal.