



**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Stage 1: Title and aims of the activity (“activity” is an umbrella term covering policies, procedures, guidance and decisions).	
Service	Corporate Services
Section	Corporate Communications
Title of the activity etc.	Communications Budget
Aims of the activity	<p>This EIA concerns the Communications budget within Customer, Communication and Improvement. The budget funds the delivery of the Communications Strategy mainly through a staff resource.</p> <p>The strategy ensures that communications on behalf of the council continue to meet the needs of our residents and other stakeholders.</p> <p>The Communications budget will fund the Corporate Communications Team to ensure people feel informed and engaged in the work of Aberdeenshire Council.</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with services to communicate key messages about service delivery</li> <li>• Working with senior management to promote the strategic direction of the council</li> <li>• Ensuring communications help protect the reputation of Aberdeenshire Council</li> <li>• Engaging with communities on issues that affect them</li> </ul> <p>The Communications Team has four temporary members of staff for which funding is secured from other services or externally. Apart from the Communications Officer (Older People) which has a positive impact on a group with protected characteristics the other posts would not have an effect on the outcome of the EIA.</p>
Author(s) & Title(s)	Consultation & Engagement Officer <span style="background-color: #cccccc; display: inline-block; width: 100px; height: 15px;"></span> Communications Budget

Stage 2: List the evidence that has been used in this assessment.	
Internal data (customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).	Employee Survey (Leadership, Management and Communications) 2012: The survey asked a series of questions relating to communications within the organisation. This evidence supports the continued investment in internal communications.

<p>Internal consultation with staff and other services affected.</p>	<p>Consultation with members of Corporate Communication team members and consultation with senior management team which identified the requirement for continued investment in Communications to support services delivering key messages across all audiences.</p>
<p>External consultation (partner organisations, community groups, and councils).</p>	<p>This budget supports the work of services as they communicate key messages externally. Where there are communications regarding sensitive matters (e.g. funding reductions, changes in service delivery) the service involved would be expected to consider consultation as part of its own EIA.</p> <p>The Budget Simulator (online tool where members of the public can set the budget) will provide feedback on where they believe the local priorities are.</p> <p>Engagement events with Area Managers and the Aberdeenshire Youth Parliament are further opportunities to explore views in regard to the general views of budgets.</p>
<p>External data (census, available statistics).</p>	<p>Customer satisfaction levels are monitored as part of a monthly reputation tracker, including the level of satisfaction with the delivery of council services.</p> <p>The Corporate Communications Team continually monitors media approaches and publications, and interactions via social media.</p>
<p>Other (general information as appropriate).</p>	<p>Communications plans will be developed by the communications team to support key projects within services. The communications budget funds the ability for the team to develop these plans and support services.</p>

Stage 3: Evidence Gaps.	
Are there any gaps in the information you currently hold?	<p>This is a strategic document that looks at the overall approach to communications. The communication budget covers this approach.</p> <p>We were aware that young people are a traditionally difficult group to engage with regarding budgets.</p>

Stage 4: Measures to fill the evidence gaps.		
What measures will be taken to fill the information gaps before the activity is implemented? These should be included in the action plan at the back of this form.	Measures:	Timescale:
	Briefing Packs provided to the CLD Worker (Youth) who has then briefed the youth parliament who are then consulting with young people in their area. This information will be collated and submitted as part of the budget engagement process. Any information specific to the Communications budget would be fed to the Head of Service.	November 2013

Stage 5: Are there potential impacts on protected groups? Please complete for each protected group by inserting "yes" in the applicable box/boxes below.				
	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unknown
Age – Younger			Yes	
Age – Older	Yes			
Disability			Yes	
Race – (includes Gypsy Travellers)			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Gender – male/female			Yes	
Pregnancy and maternity			Yes	
Sexual orientation – (includes Lesbian/ Gay/Bisexual)			Yes	

Gender reassignment – (includes Transgender)			Yes	
Marriage and Civil Partnership			Yes	

**Stage 6: What are the positive and negative impacts?**

Impacts.	Positive (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)	Negative (describe the impact for each of the protected characteristics affected)
Please detail the potential positive and/or negative impacts on those with protected characteristics you have highlighted above. Detail the impacts and describe those affected.	The communications team leads a dedicated communications plan to support a strategy relating to health and well-being services for older people. This involves campaigns and promotion relating to services for older people. The budget for this is provided by Housing & Social Work.	

**Stage 7: Have any of the affected groups been consulted?**

If yes, please give details of how this was done and what the results were. If no, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating steps?	Consultation with older people’s groups was conducted by the Older People’s Strategic Outcomes Group (OPSOG) in the development of a strategy for older people and funding was secured through the Change Fund.
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**Stage 8: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce negative impacts?**

These should be included in any action plan at the back of this form.	Mitigating Steps	Timescale
	None identified	


**Stage 9: What steps can be taken to promote good relations between various groups?**

<p>These should be included in the action plan.</p>	<p>These will be identified as part of the development of project-based communications plans and any impacts on the Communication Budget.</p> <p>An example of this is the communications plan supporting the changes to welfare reform. There were key messages that had to be communicated to all residents which will include people with protected characteristics. A range of methods were used such as video messages, infographics etc.</p> <p>When the Communications team are working on specific projects such as changes to waste services a project EIA should be conducted (by the service with input from the supporting Communications Officer) in the early stages which will include the communications plan devised to ensure key messages reach all audiences as appropriate.</p>
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Stage 10: How does the policy/activity create opportunities for advancing equality of opportunity?

The budget will support the communications team in the development of project-based communications plans designed to increase awareness and opportunities among affected groups.

Stage 11: What equality monitoring arrangements will be put in place?

These should be included in any action plan (for example customer satisfaction questionnaires).

The overall budget will not change, but equality considerations will be considered as part of the development of project-based communications plans with services. The monitoring that would be carried out for communications support to service changes will be built into the plans.

Stage 12: What is the outcome of the Assessment?

Please complete the appropriate box/boxes	1	No negative impacts have been identified –please explain.
	The Communications budget is an over-arching budget which supports how the council and its services communicates with all of its audiences. As the remit of the team is so broad, it is more appropriate to consider any negative or positive impacts as and when the communications team develops communications plans and budgets for individual, services-led projects.	
	2	Negative Impacts have been identified, these can be mitigated - please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen.
	3	The activity will have negative impacts which cannot be mitigated fully – please explain. * Please fill in Stage 13 if this option is chosen

\* Stage 13: Set out the justification that the activity can and should go ahead despite the negative impact.

Stage 14: Sign off and authorisation.

Sign off and authorisation.	1) Service and Team	Corporate Services, Customer Communication and Improvement, Corporate Communications.	
	2) Title of Policy/Activity	Corporate Communications Budget	
	3) <b>Authors:</b> I/We have completed the equality impact assessment for this policy/activity.	Name: <input type="text"/>	Name:
		Position: Consultation and Engagement Officer	Position:
		Date: 16/10/2013	Date:
		Signature:	Signature:
		Name:	Name:
		Position:	Position:
	Date:	Date:	
	Signature:	Signature:	
4) Consultation with Service Manager	Name: Head of Customer Communication and Improvement <input type="text"/>		
5) Authorisation by Director or Head of Service	Name: <input type="text"/>	Name:	
	Position: Director of Corporate Services	Position:	
	Date:	Date:	
6) If the EIA relates to a matter that has to go before a Committee, Committee report author sends the Committee Report and this form, and any supporting assessment documents, to the Officers responsible for monitoring and the Committee Officer of the relevant Committee. e.g. Social Work and Housing Committee.			Date:
7) EIA author sends a copy of the finalised form to: eia@abdshire			Date:
(Equalities team to complete) Has the completed form been published on the website? YES/NO			Date:

Action Plan					
Action	Start	Complete	Lead Officer	Expected Outcome	Resource Implications
Further general budget information from communities via engagement events held by local Area Managers	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	[Redacted]	Further details about local priorities to feed into the budget setting process.	Officer support developing briefing pack and analysing and reporting results.
Youth engagement	Oct 2013	Nov 2013	[Redacted]	Further details about local priorities to feed into the budget setting process.	Officer support developing briefing pack and analysing and reporting results.
Communication Plans 2014/2015 ensuring services include the comms plans for their projects within the project EIA.	Oct 2013	ongoing	[Redacted]	That the work of the comms team supporting projects and services is captured with EIAs	Communication team members to ensure that their plans are captured as part of the project EIA process.