



## **Equality Impact Assessment**

**Carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will help the Council to meet its Public Sector Equality Duties (Equality Act 2010).**

The duties which need to be considered when making decisions are to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Failure to assess the equality impact may increase the risk of making an unfair decision which could potentially be discriminatory. It also prevents us from identifying opportunities to promote equality and therefore leaves the Council open to potential legal challenge.

Using this EIA template will help to ensure that a decision is made in a fair way, based on evidence. It provides a clear and structured method to assess the potential impact on protected groups.

For more information how to complete this form please refer to the Guidance which can be found at [S:\Customer Service and Improvement\Improvement\Pub\2. Equality Sharing File\2. Equality impact assessments](#)

<b>Title of policy or proposal</b>	Digital Strategy
<b>Briefly describe the aims of the policy change, decision or proposal, the likely outcomes, and the rationale for it</b>	<p>The Digital Strategy aims to utilise digital technologies to enhance service delivery, boost efficiency, and engage residents effectively.</p> <p>It focuses on improving the user experience by making services more accessible, intuitive, and inclusive. The strategy emphasises the importance of data-driven decision-making, digital inclusion, and continuous improvement.</p> <p>It also highlights the need for collaboration across departments and with external partners to achieve these goals.</p> <p>Ultimately, the strategy seeks to create a smart, well-connected, and inclusive district that meets the needs of all residents and businesses</p>

**Consider the potential impact on any member of staff or member of the public with the following protected characteristics:**

Age, Disability, Gender identity/Gender reassignment, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation, Women who are pregnant or have recently had a baby.

Also, for issues affecting staff, consider employees who are married or in a civil partnership.

<p><b>What information is already held, or have you obtained through consultation or engagement activity?</b> (For each protected characteristic: What do you know about our employees, service users or anyone else who potentially could be affected by the proposal? Who has been consulted? If you have gaps in your evidence or data, you may need to carry out targeted engagement activity and/ or consider information from local or national research.)</p>	<p>Consultation was sought with residents via the <b>Citizens Survey</b> July 2025. A total of 511 responses were received (442 online and 69 paper copies).</p> <p>The demographic profile of survey respondents broadly aligns with the district's 2021 Census data for sex. However, the survey sample is over-representative of older age groups, particularly those aged 65 and over, and under-representative of individuals under 60. Respondents identifying as having a disability (either limited a little or a lot) are also over-represented compared to the district population. In terms of ethnicity, the survey is marginally under-representative of ethnic minority groups, with a slightly higher proportion of White British or Irish respondents than the district average.</p> <p>The survey received response representation from across the district. Dronfield recorded the highest response rate at 23.7% (Clay Cross (12.3%), Wingerworth (9.6%), Eckington (9.0%) and Killamarsh (7.4%).</p> <p>The survey results show strong support for the Council's digital strategy. Key points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital Ambition 1 – 'Easy, engaging and inclusive': 86.3% agreement.</li><li>• Digital Ambition 2 – 'Simple, stable and secure': 91.9% agreement.</li><li>• Digital Ambition 3 – 'Well-used and used well': 93.3% agreement.</li><li>• Digital Ambition 4 – 'Collaborate, share, innovate': 92.0% agreement.</li></ul> <p>Concerns include digital exclusion, loss of human contact, and accessibility for elderly and disabled residents.</p> <p><b>Staff</b> – Service Managers Forum and Senior Management Team were consulted in April and May 2025 and feedback included in the draft versions of the strategy.</p> <p><b>Elected Members</b> - the strategy was an item on the Services Scrutiny Committee agenda in July 2025. Recommendations were incorporated into the strategy,</p>
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	and it will be brought back annually for monitoring its effectiveness.
<b>After considering the information, which protected groups may potentially be affected?</b> (Delete those not likely to be affected)	<b>Age</b>
	<b>Disability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical/mobility impairment</li> <li>• Sensory: hearing/visual or speech</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Learning disabilities</li> <li>• Non-visible conditions such as epilepsy/diabetes</li> </ul>
<b>Using the information you have, give details of any potential positive and negative impacts on protected groups likely to be affected by the policy change, decision, or proposal</b> (For each protected characteristic where there could be a potential impact, consider the following: Could people from any protected groups be positively or negatively affected? Could anyone's ability to take part in public life be affected? Could this policy change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards any protected group? Could any groups become more or less likely to be at risk of harassment or victimisation because of this policy change, decision, or proposal? Are there opportunities to create positive impacts?) <i>(remember that the law permits disabled people to be treated equally or better than other groups to enable reasonable adjustments to be made).</i>	<p>Some negative perceptions from the Citizens' Survey:</p> <p><u>Digital Exclusion</u>: Some respondents are concerned that increased reliance on digital services excludes those who lack digital skills or access, particularly the <i>elderly and people with disabilities</i>, potentially leaving vulnerable groups behind which may create barriers to essential services.</p> <p><u>Challenges Faced by the Elderly</u>: The <i>elderly</i> are cited as a group disproportionately affected by digital-only approaches. Comments highlight that older people are often not tech-savvy, feel excluded, and may struggle to engage with online systems.</p> <p>Positive impacts on older people and those with disabilities:</p> <p><b>Age/Disability:</b></p> <p>A positive impact for individuals with physical disabilities is the Council's commitment to ensuring its website complies with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard, achieving a benchmark accessibility score of no less than 90%. This requirement is embedded within the strategy's action plan. Further improvements to accessibility are also being pursued, such as the consistent use of alt text for images shared via social media and email communications.</p> <p>By enhancing our digital offer, it also positively affects people with mental health issues such as social anxiety as it will lead to more services being available online for those user's needs.</p> <p>The strategy considers the needs of older residents and customers. Consultation findings highlighted that individuals aged 65 and over were the least likely to engage online, often due to a lack of confidence or digital skills. To address this, the strategy includes a targeted digital literacy plan aimed at improving access and capability among vulnerable age groups.</p>

<p><b>Give details of any actions that can be taken to promote equality or to lessen any potential adverse impact on protected groups.</b></p>	<p><u>Digital Inclusion</u>: The strategy emphasises the importance of digital inclusion, ensuring that all residents, regardless of age, gender, race, ability, or disability, have access to digital services. It aims to provide digital equity by offering more effective digital options and supporting those who struggle to access digital services. It is important to be clear the digital strategy is a mechanism to enhance our digital offer, our other provisions such as face to face contact and telephone remain unaffected by the strategy.</p> <p><u>Identifying and Supporting Vulnerable Groups</u>: The strategy includes a plan to identify target groups who are most likely to be digitally excluded, such as older adults, low-income households, people with disabilities, and those with low digital literacy. It aims to understand the specific barriers these groups face and implement measures to address them.</p> <p><u>Digital Literacy Programmes</u>: The strategy plans to signpost digital literacy programs and leverage funding and grants to ensure all residents can access and benefit from digital services. Partnerships with local non-governmental organisations will help reach vulnerable populations.</p> <p><u>Support Services</u>: The strategy includes providing support services to help residents navigate digital services and build confidence in undertaking online transactions. This support will be given on an individual basis, where customers interact with staff to become more digitally confident.</p> <p><u>Lobbying for Affordable Internet Access</u>: The strategy plans to lobby the government and regional authorities to ensure everyone has access to affordable and reliable internet services and digital devices.</p> <p><u>Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation</u>: The strategy includes a framework for continuous monitoring and evaluation of its impact, ensuring that the needs of protected groups are met and any potential adverse impacts are addressed.</p>
<p><b>What plans are there to monitor and review the actual impact of the policy change, decision, or proposal on equality of opportunity?</b></p>	<p>The strategy will be on the services scrutiny agenda for review annually and part of the digital transformation working group to ensure actions are being taken and implemented.</p> <p>The actual impact will be monitored through the Citizens Survey/Residents Survey consultation process and through a suite of metrics, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of residents accessing digital services</li> <li>• % of users reporting improved confidence or digital literacy</li> <li>• Accessibility compliance scores (e.g. WCAG 2.1</li> </ul>

	AA ≥ 90%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representation of vulnerable groups in digital engagement</li> </ul>
When will follow up review be done?	Annually
Based on a consideration of all the potential impacts, mark one of the following as an overall summary of the outcome of this assessment:	
	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
X	<b>The equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal will be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure that opportunities are taken.</b>
	The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated, and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate, given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal, and its overall financial and policy context.
	The equality analysis shows that the change, decision, or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination or would conflict with the Council's positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form.
<b>Explain how the judgement above was reached and action plan what will be taken to reduce any negative or to enhance any positive impacts on equality</b>	Based on the strategy's aims, no services will be taken away from the council such as human/ face to face contact (as outlined as a concern by resident feedback), it will be enhanced through a more robust digital offer, which is in keeping with the fast moving world of digital and will provide more opportunities for residents to have more services accessible to them, when they want and need to access them, unrestricted from traditional working 9-5 hours, which is a benefit to equality perspectives.

<b>Name(s) and job title(s) of person (people involved in) carrying out this assessment</b>	David Vickers, Communications Marketing and Design Manager, Amar Bashir, Equalities Officer.
<b>Authorising Director or Assistant Director</b>	Jayne Dethick, Director of Finance and Resources
<b>Date authorised</b>	09/10/2025
<b>The completed equality impact assessment <u>must</u> be attached to the report that will be considered by the decision maker or decision makers to enable them to give due regard to the impact of the policy, decision, or proposal on protected groups. Also send a copy to <a href="mailto:Amar.Bashir@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk">Amar.Bashir@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk</a></b>	