

SP23 Equality Impact Assessment – Registration Service income streams – service users

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Section one – information about the service and service change

Service affected	Registration Service
Please provide a short description of the service / policy/project/project phase	The Registration Service is responsible for recording key life events for the people of Hampshire in line with the correct legal procedures. Its statutory functions include the registration of births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships occurring within Hampshire, alongside other statutory obligations such as conducting Citizenship ceremonies, licensing venues where civil marriage and civil partnerships may be solemnised, and being the custodian of registers (birth, death and marriage) dating back to 1837. It also has a part to play in combating fraud and protecting the public, particularly in helping to prevent forced and sham marriages. The Service registers

	<p>approximately 8,000 births and 10,000 deaths every year and delivers nearly 5,000 ceremonies.</p> <p>As well as upholding its statutory obligations, the Registration Service also offers a number of 'choose to use' services such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of alternative ceremonies including renewal of vows; welcoming, commitment and private Citizenship ceremonies • The 'Tell Us Once' service for all customers attending to register a death • Commemorative certificates
<p>Please explain the new/changed service/policy/project</p>	<p>The Registration Service is required to continue to increase its income and develop new income streams to contribute to the Council's Savings Programme to 2023 (SP23).</p> <p>Changes to statutory services at a national level are expected to result in additional income for the Service through a) an increase in marriage certificate sales due to the introduction of the marriage schedule system and b) changes to the way EU nationals will be required to give notice of marriage in the future.</p> <p>The implementation of the marriage schedule system, and the resulting switch to an electronic register, means that Churches are no longer able to issue marriage certificates as part of the marriage ceremony. Instead, couples who have solemnised their marriage in a Church/Religious Building must apply to their local Registration service who will issue the requested marriage certificates for an associated fee.</p> <p>Additionally, new or improved service offerings will be introduced and are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • live ceremony streaming • priority virtual Citizenship ceremonies • the expansion of Register Office ceremony availability. <p>Income modelling will be conducted ahead of any implementation to ensure that Hampshire Registration expands the right services and/or introduces new services at a rate that generates income whilst remaining competitive.</p>

Engagement and consultation

The County Council's *Serving Hampshire Balancing the Budget* consultation (2021-2023) will seek residents' and stakeholders' views on strategic options for funding the Authority's budget gap. Where applicable, detailed proposals for making savings will be subject to further, more detailed 'stage two' consultation before any decisions on service specific changes are made.

Has any pre-consultation engagement been carried out?

(Delete as appropriate)

No

Describe the consultation or engagement you have performed or are intending to perform.

Describe who was engaged or consulted. What was the outcome of the activity and how have the results influenced what you are doing? If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

No targeted engagement of service users will be conducted as the Registration Service is intending to expand the service offering rather than reduce or stop services. Whilst income modelling will take place to ensure that the right services (i.e. the most cost effective services for growth) are introduced and/or expanded, this will be undertaken using existing service data and will not require direct consultation with customers.

Annual benchmarking is already well-established across the South East region and findings from this, along with any insights gleaned from the customer feedback system, will be considered alongside the income modelling work to help inform the decision-making process and ensure that the services being delivered are of a high standard and likely to meet customer expectations.

Following implementation, Registration will need to consider promotion of any new services whilst at the same time monitoring uptake and flexing plans accordingly.

Section two: Assessment

Table 1 Impact Assessment

Protected characteristic (see EIA Guidance for considerations)	Positive	Neutral	Negative - low	Negative - Medium	Negative - High	Affects staff, public or both?
Age			X			Public
Disability			X			Public
Gender reassignment		X				Public
Pregnancy and maternity		X				Public
Race		X				Public
Religion or belief		X				Public
Sex		X				Public
Sexual orientation		X				Public
Marriage & civil partnership	X X					Public
Poverty			X			Public

Rurality			X			Public
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Table 2 Geographical impact

Does the proposal impact on a specific area?

Area	Yes / no	Area	Yes / no	Area	Yes / no
All Hampshire	Yes	Fareham		New Forest	
Basingstoke and Deane		Gosport		Rushmoor	
East Hampshire		Hart		Test Valley	
Eastleigh		Havant		Winchester	

Section three: Equality Statement

Table 3 Consideration of and explanation for neutral or low negative impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having neutral or low negative impact
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Age	<p>Low Negative – There may be a greater emphasis on accessing online/virtual services as part of the new and/or improved services introduced. This could disadvantage members of the public who are unable to access digital content or who feel less confident accessing the Service in this way. This could include older people. According to ONS figures on internet usage in 2019, 99% of adults aged 16 to 44 in the UK were identified as being recent internet users as compared to 83% of adults aged 65-74 and 47% of adults aged 75 years and over. 47% of adults aged 75 years and over had also never used the internet.</p> <p>Until the full extent of plans for any new/improved services are known it is difficult to truly gauge the impact these changes could have on this protected characteristic, however, it is expected that it would be either low negative or neutral. This is due to the fact that some of these services would be ‘choose to use’ and so customers could opt-in or out depending on their own personal preferences around accessing content digitally. Any impact would also be mitigated by ensuring that user experience and accessibility is considered in all cases where changes are being made so that online content is as clear and easy to navigate as possible. Furthermore, any proposed changes would not result in the halting of other contact methods, such as telephone or face-to-face, which customers could still use in lieu of digital methods.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that one proposed new service – live ceremony streaming – would be delivered directly by staff and so customers choosing this service would benefit from the use of this digital facility without having to navigate the technology themselves.</p> <p>In contrast to the statement made above regarding the potential negative impact on this protected characteristic, older people with decreased mobility (or those with young families or caring responsibilities) may in fact experience an improved customer journey due to the increased availability of online/virtual services removing the need to travel to a physical office in some circumstances. This could therefore also have a positive impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Disability	<p>Low Negative – There may be a greater emphasis on access to online/virtual services as part of the new and/or improved services introduced. This could disadvantage members of the public who are unable to access digital content or who feel less confident accessing the Service in this way. This could include people with disabilities. According to ONS figures on</p>

	<p>internet usage in 2019, 22% of adults who self-asses as having a disability in line with the Equality Act definition had either never used the internet or had not used the internet in more than three months. This dropped to 5% of adults who do not self-assess as having a disability in line with the Equality Act.</p> <p>Until the full extent of plans for any new/improved services are known it is difficult to truly gauge the impact these changes could have on this protected characteristic, however, it is expected that it would be either low negative or neutral. This is due to the fact that some of these services would be ‘choose to use’ and so customers could opt-in or out depending on their own personal preferences around accessing content digitally. Any impact would also be mitigated by ensuring that user experience and accessibility is considered in all cases where changes are being made so that online content is as clear and easy to navigate as possible. Furthermore, any proposed changes would not result in the halting of other contact methods, such as telephone or face-to-face, which customers could still use in lieu of digital methods.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that one proposed new service – live ceremony streaming – would be delivered directly by staff and so customers choosing this service would benefit from the use of this digital facility without having to navigate the technology themselves.</p> <p>In contrast to the statement made above regarding the potential negative impact this could have, some people with disabilities may in fact experience an improved customer journey due to the increased availability of online/virtual services which could even have a positive impact on this protected characteristic.</p>
Gender reassignment	Neutral – There is no evidence that this protected characteristic would be disproportionately affected by proposals to expand the service offering. Any new/improved services would be made available to all relevant customers regardless of any protected characteristics they hold.
Pregnancy and maternity	Neutral – There is no evidence that this protected characteristic would be disproportionately affected by proposals to expand the service offering. Any new/improved services would be made available to all relevant customers regardless of any protected characteristics they hold.
Race	Neutral – There may be a greater emphasis on access to online/virtual services as part of the new and/or improved services introduced. This could disadvantage members of the public who feel less confident accessing the Service in this way. This could include people for whom

	<p>English is their second language as they may find it more challenging to understand/follow online instructions. According to the 2011 Census, 96.8% of people in Hampshire speak English as their 'main language', which is higher than the percentage for England as a whole (92.0%).¹</p> <p>Until the full extent of plans for any new/improved services are known it is difficult to truly gauge the impact these changes could have on this protected characteristic, however, it is expected that it would be neutral. Any impact would be mitigated by ensuring that user experience and accessibility is considered in all cases where changes are being made so that online content is as clear and easy to navigate as possible. Any proposed changes would also not result in the halting of other contact methods, such as telephone or face-to-face, which customers could still use in lieu of digital methods.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that whilst some may find it more difficult to access information virtually/online, others may actually experience an improved customer journey by accessing the Service in this way.</p>
Religion or belief	Neutral – There is no evidence that this protected characteristic would be disproportionately affected by proposals to expand the service offering. Any new/improved services would be made available to all relevant customers regardless of any protected characteristics they hold.
Sex	Neutral – There is no evidence that this protected characteristic would be disproportionately affected by proposals to expand the service offering. Any new/improved services would be made available to all relevant customers regardless of any protected characteristics they hold.
Sexual orientation	Neutral – There is no evidence that this protected characteristic would be disproportionately affected by proposals to expand the service offering. Any new/improved services would be made available to all relevant customers regardless of any protected characteristics they hold.
Poverty	Low Negative – There may be a greater emphasis on accessing online/virtual services as part of the new and/or improved services introduced. This could disadvantage members of the public who are unable to access digital content or who feel less confident accessing the Service in this way. This could include people from lower socioeconomic groups as some poorer households may not be able to afford equipment and/or regular access to the internet.

¹ Hampshire Facts + Figures (April 2020) / figures taken from the 2011 Census

	<p>Hampshire has 40 neighbourhoods (out of 1,005 in total) which are categorised as being in the 20% most deprived areas in England.²</p> <p>Until the full extent of plans for any new/improved services are known it is difficult to truly gauge the impact these changes could have on this group, however, it is expected that it would be either low negative or neutral. This is due to the fact that some of these services would be ‘choose to use’ and so customers could opt-in or out depending on their own personal preferences around accessing content digitally and/or their personal budget. Any impact would also be mitigated by ensuring that user experience and accessibility is considered in all cases where changes are being made so that online content is as clear and easy to navigate as possible. Furthermore, any proposed changes would not result in the halting of other contact methods, such as telephone or face-to-face, which customers could still use in lieu of digital methods.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that one proposed new service – live ceremony streaming – would be delivered directly by staff and so customers choosing this service would benefit from the use of this digital facility without having to navigate the technology themselves. Furthermore, the live streaming of ceremonies will enable ceremonies to be more inclusive and have a broader reach by allowing guests who may not otherwise have been able to attend in person to be part of the event. This could include scenarios where couples opt to hold a smaller ceremony in the Register Office to reduce costs and could therefore actually have a positive impact on this group.</p> <p>The anticipated expansion of Register Office ceremony availability as part of the new business model is also expected to benefit those couples who may not be able to afford to hold their wedding/civil partnership in an Approved Venue as an increase of in-house provision will give couples more flexibility when it comes to selecting a date and time for their ceremony.</p>
Rurality	<p>Low Negative – There may be a greater emphasis on accessing online/virtual services as part of the new and/or improved services introduced. This could disadvantage members of the public who are unable to access digital content or who feel less confident accessing the</p>

² Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019.

	<p>Service in this way. This could include people who live in rural areas as these areas tend to have a higher incidence of non-internet use, have reduced availability of standard or superfast broadband, and possible poor mobile phone signal.</p> <p>Until the full extent of plans for any new/improved services are known it is difficult to truly gauge the impact these changes could have on this group, however it is expected that it would be either low negative or neutral. This is due to the fact that some of these services would be 'choose to use' and so customers could opt-in or out depending on their own personal preferences around accessing content digitally. Any impact would also be mitigated by ensuring that user experience and accessibility is considered in all cases where changes are being made so that online content is as clear and easy to navigate as possible. Furthermore, any proposed changes would not result in the halting of other contact methods, such as telephone or face-to-face, which customers could still use in lieu of digital methods.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that one proposed new service – live ceremony streaming – would be delivered directly by staff and so customers choosing this service would benefit from the use of this digital facility without having to navigate the technology themselves. This could therefore actually have a positive impact on this group.</p> <p>In contrast to the statement made above regarding the potential negative impact on this group, those living in rural areas may in fact experience an improved customer journey due to the increased availability of online/virtual services removing the need to travel to a physical office in some circumstances. This could therefore also have a positive impact on this group.</p>
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Table 4 Explanation and mitigation for medium and high impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having medium or high negative impact	Is there a Geographical impact? If so, please explain -use list below to identify geographical area(s)	Short explanation of mitigating actions

N/A			
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Table 5 Consideration of and explanation for positive impacts

Protected characteristic	Brief explanation of why this has been assessed as having positive impact
Marriage & civil partnership	<p>Positive – The anticipated expansion of Register Office ceremony availability as part of the new business delivery model will provide extra choice for those not wishing to marry/form a civil partnership in an Approved Venue. In-house ceremonies can provide couples with more flexibility when it comes to deciding how they would like to celebrate the formation of their marriage/civil partnership and can also reduce costs.</p> <p>The live streaming of ceremonies is also intended to enhance the customer’s experience as it will enable ceremonies to be more inclusive and have a broader reach by allowing guests who may not otherwise have been able to attend in person to be part of the event. Therefore this is expected to have a disproportionately positive impact on those getting married or forming a civil partnership by providing them with an enhanced service offering.</p>

Box 1 Please set out any additional information which you think is relevant to this impact assessment:

Until the income modelling exercise has been concluded and decisions taken regarding which new services will be introduced and/or which existing services will be expanded upon, it is impossible to definitively state what the likely impact on service users will be. Once this – and the implications of any national changes – become clearer, further, more detailed EIAs may need to be undertaken with appropriate consideration and action taken in respect of any conclusions drawn.

Box 2

If appropriate, (i.e., it is immediately evident that a full EIA is not necessary) please provide a short succinct assessment to show that due regard has been given and that there is no requirement for a full EIA:

N/A

