

Equality Impact Assessment

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Title of policy:	Resource Intensive and Vexatious Customer Framework – Service Instruction
Department:	Strategic Planning
Date:	24/9/11
1: What is the aim or purpose of the policy <i>This should identify “the legitimate aim” of the policy (there may be more than one)</i>	
The Resource Intensive and Vexatious Customer Framework is intended to facilitate the efficient and effective use of MFRS resources by providing advice and guidance to staff to enable them to deal with unacceptable and unnecessarily time consuming contact with customers whilst ensuring that those customers who need advice, assistance and intervention receive the services they need.	
2: Who will be affected by the policy? <i>This should identify the persons/organisations who may need to be consulted about the policy or procedure and its outcomes (There may be more than one)</i>	
Staff who deal with members of the public and other customers. People who place unreasonable demands on the Service and its staff, act aggressively towards staff or make persistent and/or vexatious contact that utilises MFRS in a disproportionate way.	
3. Monitoring <i>Summarise the findings of any monitoring data you have considered regarding this policy. This could include data which shows whether the policy is having</i>	

the desired outcomes and also its impact on members of different equality groups.

What monitoring data have you considered?

Consideration was given to how many individuals are currently being dealt by the Service who would be likely to fall within this framework, the level of resource required to deal with them and whether there are any common or prevalent characteristics. In addition, consideration was given to previous examples of such customers and how many the Service may have to deal with in the future.

What did it show?

People considered to fall within the definition of resource intensive and vexatious customers include:
People who make persistent complaints
People or organisations who make vexatious Freedom of Information requests
People who are dealing with MFRS over a specific issue and who demand more time and resources than is considered appropriate.

For example in September 2011 there are:
c6 individuals/organisations who disagree with a judgement the Authority has made about them and continue to engage with the Authority after all procedures have been exhausted/organisations;
c3 individuals/organisations who make persistent requests for information about a single FRS issue;
c3 individuals/organisations who make persistent/vexatious Freedom of Information requests;
1 persistent individual/organisation who has made persistent complaints about several different matters, each time, exhausting the procedures

Each one of these individuals/organisations will result in numerous letters, phone calls, face to face meetings and provision of information that requires many hours to compile. Each case may involve several officers including the Clerk to the Authority and principal officers.

Although monitoring details have not been kept, because this group of people/organisations have not previously been considered together, the officers concerned indicate that the majority of those who could be classed as resource intensive and vexatious customers are white men.

4: Research

*Summarise the findings of any research you have considered regarding this policy.
This could include quantitative data and qualitative information; anything you have obtained from other sources e.g. CFOA/CLG guidance, other FRSs, etc*

What research have you considered?

Similar frameworks from other organisations

What did it show?

Other organisations experience similar problems and features from other frameworks have been used to compile the MFRS framework

5. Consultation

Summarise the opinions of any consultation. Who was consulted and how? (This should include reference to people and organisations identified in section 2 above) Outline any plans to inform consultees of the results of the consultation

What Consultation have you undertaken?

Interviews with staff concerned

What did it say?

Discussions with MFRS staff confirmed that a very small number of customers cause a disproportionate amount of work through persistent, vexatious, unreasonable or aggressive contact intended to cause disruption.

6. Conclusions

Taking into account the results of the monitoring, research and consultation, set out how the policy impacts or could impact on people from the following protected groups? (Include positive and/or negative impacts)

(a) Age

It is expected that all the individuals dealt with under this framework will be adults.

(b) Disability including mental, physical and sensory conditions)

There is a risk that individuals with some disabilities could behave in a way that could be misunderstood by staff and wrongly included within this framework.

(c) Race (include: nationality, national or ethnic origin and/or colour)

The majority of existing cases involve white men although this is not intentional and will not necessarily always be the case.

(d) Religion or Belief

There is no differential impact expected as a result of Religion/Belief

(e) Sex (include gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership and pregnancy or maternity)

The majority of existing cases involve white men but we do not expect this policy to have any differential impact to anyone because of their gender.

(f) Sexual Orientation

It is not expected that a customer's sexual orientation will have an impact on whether or how this framework is implemented.

(g) Socio-economic disadvantage

It is not expected that socio-economic disadvantage will have an impact on whether or how this framework is implemented.

7. Decisions

If the policy will have a negative impact on members of one or more of the protected groups, explain how the policy will change or why it is to continue in the same way.

If no changes are proposed, the policy needs to be objectively justified as being an appropriate and necessary means of achieving the legitimate aim set out in 1 above.

It is considered that this framework provides consistency and reduces the risk of dealing with people in an unequal way. Any potential negative impact has been identified and addressed within the document to avoid this occurring.

Furthermore as the use of this procedure can only be authorised by a Director and its use evidence based we do not think that any customer will receive less favourable treatment because of any of the protected characteristics.

8. Equality Improvement Plan

List any changes to our policies or procedures that need to be included in the Equality Action Plan/Service Plan.

Action Planned	Responsibility of	Completed by

For any advice, support or guidance about completing this form please contact the DiversityTeam@merseyfire.gov.uk or on 0151 296 4237

The completed form should be emailed to the Diversity Team at the above address for inclusion on the Diversity Action Group Agenda

