

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations Review 2018



STAGE I: What is being assessed and by whom?

What is being assessed - including a brief description of aims and objectives?

Plymouth City Council has conducted a review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations from 1 October 2018 to date. This review is a mandatory process comprising a number of specified steps set out in Schedule A1 to the Representation of the People Act 1983. Local Authorities must comply with a number of legislative requirements regarding the location and accessibility of Polling Districts and Polling Places. Organisations involved in administering elections are to make reasonable adjustments to enable people sharing a relevant protected characteristic to exercise their vote.

By conducting this assessment, a better understanding of the potential impact of the review process on residents with protected characteristics have been gained. The assessment ensures that the review is conducted in an inclusive manner and complied with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 outlines the specific legal duties on public sector to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Sources:

Parts 3 of the Equality Act 2010

Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/equality-and-human-rights-law-during-an-election-period.pdf>

https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/237194/Accessibility-report-call-for-evidence.pdf

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/electoral-administrator/polling-place-reviews>

Our aim:

Plymouth City Council aims to make voting as accessible to everyone as possible. In conducting a review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations, Plymouth City Council will continue to ensure that due regard is paid to the access needs of all voters, including those with protected characteristics. In doing so, Plymouth City Council will follow the guidance of the Electoral Commission and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

STAGE 1: What is being assessed and by whom?	
	Our objectives: 1. No barriers to voting for people with protected characteristics 2. Everyone can vote on their own and in secret
Responsible Officer	Glenda Favor-Ankersen, Head of Electoral Services
Department and Service	Electoral Registration Office
Date of Assessment	September 2018

STAGE 2: Evidence and Impact				
Protected Characteristics (Equality Act)	Evidence and information (e.g. data and feedback)	Any adverse impact?	Future Actions	Timescale and who is responsible?
Disability and Health	<p>Mental Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2015 there were over 26,200 people in Plymouth estimated to have a common mental health issue including depression, anxiety, and obsessive compulsive disorder. In 2015 over 11,700 Plymouth residents aged 18-64 years were estimated to have more than one mental health issue, a figure that is projected to decrease to around 11,500 by 2030. <p>Dementia and Memory Loss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2014, 3,251 people over the age of 65 were estimated to be living with dementia in Plymouth. By 2030 it is 	<p>People with disabilities will have important views and helpful suggestions as to the accessibility of Polling Stations which must be captured by the review. The review is anticipated to have a positive impact on those groups.</p> <p>Mental health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May not understand that their vote and opinions matter May not have the confidence to share their views May appear to be angry or aggressive as a result of their confusion, fear or embarrassment May need support and specific reminding of opportunity to share their views as part of the review May need representation from support groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For each of the following groups, it is recommended that the review calls on views from representative support groups and charities. Communication and Engagement campaign to promote the review Consultation with disabled voters, local charities and organisations to ask what we can do to support elections for everyone; capture experiences of people with disabilities 	<p>5 November 2018 to 14 December 2018 - publishing of the review's consultation on our website</p> <p>Emmanuelle Marshall</p> <p>May 2020 implementation of the Review's recommendations</p> <p>Glenda Favor-Ankersen, Head of Electoral Services</p>

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	<p>expected that this number will have risen to 4,855</p> <p>Physical Disability (including visual impairment, speech and language impairment, hearing impairment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people are living with a disability now than in the past because we're living longer and improved medical treatments are enabling more people to manage long-term health problems. There are higher levels of long-term health problems or disability, and lower levels of reported 'good' or 'very good' health in Plymouth compared to England • According to the 2011 Census, 10.0% of Plymouth residents reported having a long-term health problem or disability that limits their day-to-day activities a lot and has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months. The England value was 8.3%. The 2011 Census also reported fewer Plymouth residents thought their health was 	<p>Memory Loss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May need support and specific reminding of opportunity to share their views as part of the review. • May need representation from support groups. <p>Some polling stations face challenges in meeting the physical access needs of disabled people.</p> <p>Physical disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty entering and exiting a polling station • Mobility difficulties inside a polling station <p>Visual impairments, vision loss and blindness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be able to read the proposals for change and maps • May experience challenges reading information on our website. <p>Speech and Language disorders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be able to find or say the words they want to in order to communicate their needs • May not have the confidence to cast their vote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with disability organisations to provide information in accessible formats • Use historical information collected from Presiding Officers detailing any advice/help offered to people with disabilities so we can track how many people we have helped to vote and note any issues/procedures we could improve. • Assess options to improve reach and target people with disabilities through use of social media and third sector networks • Invite third sector partners to polling stations visits • Capture experience of staff – able to spot a need/able to help/resources /space/venue 	

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	<p>'good' or 'very good', compared to England.</p> <p>Learning Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall prevalence of learning disabilities in Plymouth was 0.51% in 2014/15, a value higher than England (0.44%). Data from the same source indicates that in 2014 Plymouth had rates of children with learning disabilities known to schools of 25.3 per 1,000 pupils compared 33.7 per 1,000 in England; and rates of adults (18 to 64 years) with learning disabilities receiving long-term support from Plymouth City Council of 5.3 per 1,000 population compared with 3.7 per 1,000 in England. <p>Chronic Illness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In England, an estimated 15 million people suffer with a chronic illness. Cancer, heart disease, stroke & respiratory disease account for most deaths in Plymouth. Together they account for 54% of deaths in the city, 	<p>Hearing impairments, hearing loss and deafness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are British Sign Language users may not have English as a first language. They may struggle to understand signs, posters and instructions written in English. They may have a lower comprehension of complicated instructions written in English. <p>Intellectual disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May experience limitations; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In learning Thinking Solving problems Making sense of the world Developing everyday life skills Communicating with others May experience challenges reading or understanding the review process May not have the confidence to share their views <p>Learning Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May experience challenges including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problems with reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capture ways to improve communications from feedback – channels/ messages/use of adapted resources/customer care and help 	

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	<p>1,324 out of a total 2,453 registered in 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rates for deaths from all four diseases combined are higher in Plymouth than in England (56.6 compared to 52.7 per 10,000 population) <p>Autism The prevalence of autism in the UK population is estimated to be at 157 per 10,000 populations (1.6%) (Baron-Cohen '09)</p> <p>Estimates suggest that up to 80% of those with ASD (Autistic Spectrum Disorder) do not have learning disabilities (Elsabbagh et al 2012) From these figures, it is estimated that 2,700 people living in Plymouth have ASD. The number of adults with the diagnosis of ASD is unknown but likely to be large.</p> <p>The above average level of disability in Plymouth suggests that PCC will be placed under greater pressure than the majority of other Councils.</p> <p>Feedback provided via an Electoral Commission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spoken language Writing Reasoning ability Coordination, behaviour, and interactions with others may also be affected. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May experience challenges accessing information on our website. May experience challenges understanding the voting process May not have the confidence to share their views <p>Chronic Illness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May show no external symptoms May have fluctuating symptoms and needs within short periods of time <p>Autism/ (ASD):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May show no external symptoms May experience challenges when trying to communicate their needs Will have different needs to anyone else with Autism 		

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	<p>questionnaire on the 'Experiences of people with disabilities at the 8 June 2017 UK Parliamentary general election' highlight some key actions and recommendations which can be found via accessing opening the hyperlink below.</p> <p>Data obtained from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Plymouth report 2017. https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Plymouth%20Report%20October%202017.pdf</p> <p>Data also obtained from Integrated Care Community Needs Assessment. https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/IntegratedCommissioningCommunityNeedsAssessment.pdf</p> <p>Chronic Illness data obtained from Thrive Plymouth https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/publichealth/thriveplymouth/aboutthriveplymouth/chronicdiseases</p>			

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Age	<p>Age discrimination occurs when someone is treated unfairly because of their age or because they are part of a specific age group.</p> <p>People are living longer and one in three people in our community is aged over 50. It is estimated that Plymouth's population will increase by over 16,000 by 2030 and the largest increase will be seen in those aged 75 years and older (54.6 per cent)i.</p> <p>Older people are particularly vulnerable to social isolation and loneliness. A half of people aged 75 and over live alone (ONS, 2010). An estimated one in six pensioners in the poorest fifth of the population is socially isolated. Older people are less likely to use modern technology than younger people, which can also impact on social isolation as well as being a potential barrier in the workplace. Over 90% of men and 81% of women use the internet frequently at aged 50 but this drops to a third of men and 14% of women by age 80iii.</p> <p>Young people are less likely to vote and are often put off by existing mechanisms for engaging</p>	<p>The way information is accessed may vary between groups of different age. Solely providing information by digital means may prevent some segments of this population from accessing information.</p> <p>For many residents, participating in the polling process is synonymous with attending a polling station. This can be a means of socialising that some residents prefer to postal voting.</p> <p>Old age also brings about physical challenges that are described in the disability paragraph of this report. Those may prevent individuals from accessing polling stations and must be mitigated against.</p>	<p>Access to PDPR information must be facilitated for all age groups. Information on the review will be shared not only on the internet and via social media, but also made available at our library and in the One Stop shop.</p>	<p>November 2018 publishing of the public consultation.</p> <p>September 2019, publishing of the review's outcomes.</p> <p>Glenda Favor-Ankersen, Head of Electoral Services</p>

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	<p>local communities. Young people report lower levels of knowledge about politics than other age groups, are less likely than other age groups to participate in political activities, to be on the electoral register, and to vote. The average age of councillors, candidates and MPs is over 50iv. The proportion of young people (18-24) who voted in 2017 was more than in 2015 but is still less than other age groups.</p>			
Faith, religion or belief	<p>The 2011 census recorded that Christians were still the largest faith community although their numbers had declined significantly since the previous census in 2001. While a majority of people still identify with some religion, our society is becoming more secular: more people than ever before identify with no religion. Some smaller faith communities are growing rapidly, principally because of migration. Islam is the religion with the second largest number of followers and there are small but significant numbers of Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Jews and Ba'hai. Other belief systems with small numbers of followers</p>	<p>Many of the existing polling stations in Plymouth are located in Christian churches or church halls. This may have an impact on residents of other faiths who may not feel welcome or may not want to enter such places.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As much as practicable, ensure that polling stations are located in venues that are secular. • Ensure that churches are used only when strictly necessary, and with awareness of the potential impact on the local community. 	<p>May 2020 implementation of the Review's recommendations</p> <p>Glenda Favor-Ankersen, Head of Electoral Services</p>

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	include Humanists, Pagans and Spiritualists. Some of our smaller faith communities do not have easy access to space in which to worship or to celebrate other religious rituals and occasions. Islamophobia is an ongoing problem which may increase in the current international climate. This can also impact other communities such as the Sikh community.			
Gender, including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	<p>Key issues affecting women include the gender pay gap, issues related to pregnancy and maternity and sexual harassment and violence including domestic abuse. Men are less likely to attend university, have a shorter life expectancy and are also affected by domestic abuse, although to a lesser extent than women.</p> <p>Overall 50.6 per cent of our population are women and 49.4 per cent are men: this reflects the national figure of 50.8 per cent women and 49.2 per cent men.</p> <p>There were 3280 births in 2011. Birth rate trends have been on the increase since 2001, but since</p>	<p>The review is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on any of the issues related to gender, marriage, pregnancy or maternity.</p> <p>Accessibility of polling stations should be the same for families with young children (possibly with pushchairs) as for any other residents.</p>	Where practicable, ensure that our polling station locations are push chair friendly.	<p>May 2020 implementation of the Review's recommendations</p> <p>Glenda Favor-Ankersen, Head of Electoral Services</p>

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	2010 the number of births has stabilised. Areas with highest numbers of births include Stonehouse (142), Whitleigh (137) and Devonport (137). Of those aged 16 and over, 90,765 people (42.9 per cent) are married. 5,190 (2.5 per cent) are separated and still legally married or legally in a same-sex civil partnership.			
Gender reassignment	The Equality Act 2010 states that “a person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.” This means that this person is protected by the law even if they have not undergone surgery or received treatment. Recent surveys have put the prevalence of transgender people between 0.6 and 1% of population (some very recent reports have upped this to 2%). Over the last 8 years the prevalence of transgendered	The review is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on any of the issues related to gender reassignment.	N/A	N/A

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	people in the UK has been increasing at an average rate of 20%+ per annum in adults and 50% for children.			
Race	<p>Our community is slowly becoming more diverse. Whilst the proportion of our community that are White British remains higher than the UK average it is decreasing. At the time of the 2001 census 97 per cent of our population was White British. By 2011 this had decreased to 93 per cent.</p> <p>Local population growth between the 2001 and 2011 census had been driven by migration from outside the UK (63 per cent), most commonly from newly admitted EU countries. We are a dispersal area for asylum seekers: around 300 people will be accommodated in the City at any given time.</p> <p>Our Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities are very diverse. The Polish, Chinese and Kurdish communities are amongst the largest. The census records that there are at least 43 main languages spoken in the city, and nearly 100 different languages</p>	The review is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on any of the issues related to race.	N/A	N/A

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	are spoken in our schools. We have a small resident Gypsy and Traveller community.			
Sexual orientation including civil partnership	<p>The 'protected characteristic' of sexual orientation as stated in the Equalities Act 2010 refers to those individuals who are attracted to those of the opposite sex, the same sex or either sex. There is evidence demonstrating that individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and/or any other sexual orientation (LGB+) experience discrimination and marginalisation in their daily lives compared to their heterosexual counterparts. There are no definitive data on sexual orientation at a local or national level. A recent estimate from the 2015 ONS Annual Population Survey (APS) suggests that 1.7 per cent of the UK population is LGB: if this figure was applied to Plymouth it would mean that there are approximately 3,649 LGB people in the city.</p> <p>There are 464 people in a registered Same-Sex Civil Partnership.</p>	The review is not anticipated to have an adverse impact on any of the issues related to sexual orientation.	N/A	N/A

STAGE 3: Are there any implications for the following? If so, please record 'Actions' to be taken		
Local Priorities	Implications	Timescale and who is responsible?
Reduce the gap in average hourly pay between men and women by 2020.	None	N/A
Increase the number of hate crime incidents reported and maintain good satisfaction rates in dealing with racist, disablist, homophobic, transphobic and faith, religion and belief incidents by 2020.	None	N/A
Good relations between different communities (community cohesion).	None	N/A
Human Rights	The Human Rights Act 1998 conveys the right to participate in free elections and the right not to be discriminated against. The review of Polling District and Polling Stations intends to have positive implications on the exercise of this human right. The actions taken during the review of our polling stations and polling district intend to remove or minimise any barriers to access for residents, thus preventing disenfranchisement.	November 2018 (consultation) until May 2020 (implementation)

STAGE 4: Publication			
Director, Assistant Director/Head of Service approving EIA.	Giles Perritt	Date	26/02/2019