



A Guide to filling in Manchester City Council's Impact Assessment Form

If you get funding from Manchester City Council and are facing a cut you should have received an impact assessment form to complete. This is your opportunity to let them know how the proposed cuts will affect your organisation and your service users and it is very important that you fill it in fully. This guide will help you to do that.

It must be filled in before **26 January 2015** but preferably well before that. A copy of the form can be found on the Cuts Pages on Manchester Community Central:

<https://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/policy-and-influence/voluntary-sector-cuts>

Why fill in the Impact Assessment Form?

As well as contributing to MCC's understanding of the full impact of the cuts that they are proposing, a good impact assessment will help you in:

1) **Campaigning, lobbying and responding to consultation**

The information you put in an impact assessment form is exactly the same information you can use to convince councillors and others why the services you provide should not be cut. You can use the information to: write emails to councillors; write press releases; fill in the cuts consultation forms etc.

2) **Developing a negotiating position**

You can use the information in formal negotiations with Manchester City Council about the level of cut and what will have to change as a result.

3) **Understanding the consequences of the cut for your organisation**

An impact assessment helps you to think through all the consequences of a cut and can be used as a basis for a discussion with staff and trustees about what will need to happen if the service is cut.

Do's and Don'ts

- ✓ Do include evidence wherever possible
- ✓ Do include all the significant impacts
- ✓ Do put the most important things at the beginning of each section
- Don't try and collect new evidence, use the evidence you've already got
- Don't use it as a rant
- Don't over-claim

General guidance on the form

There is no guidance from Manchester City Council on how to fill in this form.

The form should be thought of as an initial attempt to estimate the impact of cuts.

Have a look at some examples of completed impact assessment forms on Manchester Community Central. There's no such thing as a perfect impact assessment form but they should give you lots of ideas.

You should probably do a separate impact assessment form for every cut you are facing unless they are all for the same service.

www.manchestercommunitycentral.org

If you forget to add something you can just send it in later as long as it's before the deadline.

You can attach additional evidence with the impact assessment form but reference it on the form, ideally with a page number. It's unlikely that whoever is reading the form will read lots of attachments if you don't let them know which specific bits to read.

Preparing to fill in the form

1. Do the numbers

Using the agreed budget that you have with Manchester City Council (assuming you have one) decide where you are going to make the cuts. If you are facing a range of possible cuts or multiple cuts then work out where you are going to make the cut for each option e.g. 10% cut, 20% cut.

In deciding on the cuts, the aim is to maintain a decent level of service, that is safe and effective, with adequately supported staff and volunteers. You may be tempted to maintain front-line staffing at the expense of everything else, cutting management, training, volunteer expenses. Don't take this approach in choosing an option for the impact assessment form. Choose a balanced option. You are not making a binding commitment; you can decide to take another option if and when your funding is cut.

Tip: Do not use your reserves to mitigate impact even if you intend to do this at some point in the future.

Record the reasons why you chose a particular option as this will help you to fill in the section on mitigation.

2. Direct impact

Brainstorm a list (preferably with other people) of all the impacts on organisation, staffing and services. The question you are trying to answer for each option you have devised is 'what will the project/service no longer be able to do?'

The tendency here is often to underestimate the impact, to forget all the things that staff and volunteers do. You may find it helpful to get copies of their job descriptions or recent monitoring reports or anything else that describes the breadth of work undertaken.

Now think about what services will be cut and by how much. Remember the aim is to maintain a safe and effective service. Volunteers still need to be trained, staff still need to attend meetings, monitoring forms still have to be filled in. Come up with a reasonable option and record why you have chosen this option as this is what you'll use in the mitigation section.

Finally think about the organisational impact. The question you are trying to answer here is:

'what will the organisation no longer be able to do?'

The project/services that are being cut make a contribution to organisational costs and organisational activities and often one project supports another through sharing staff, volunteers, and premises.

Think through all of the impacts, come up with a reasonable option and record why you have chosen this option rather than other options for use in the mitigation section.

3. Stakeholder impact

It's easy to miss important impacts if you try and do it on your own. Organise a small meeting. You need a variety of perspectives. The meeting is a brainstorm to help you to create

- a) A list of your main stakeholders e.g. users, carers, local community, community of interest, statutory organisations, other voluntary organisations, trustees, volunteers, staff
- b) a list of the main impacts on each stakeholder with detail about each one
- c) a list of the main supporting evidence you have for each of the impacts you have identified, if there is any

The list of impacts for each section of the form (below) will help you to think about all the different kinds of impact.

When you are building a list of supporting evidence think broadly, you can include: monitoring reports, management reports; user feedback; stakeholder feedback; comments books; staff feedback; minutes of meetings; case-studies; letters/emails from other agencies; evaluations; and any other data sources.

Tip: If you don't have all the evidence then it's fine to make your best estimate.

Keep the meeting small and invite a few people who value the service and have a range of perspectives, whoever you think will help you to get a full and rounded view of all the benefits of the service.

Some of the types of people you might consider inviting are: trustee; service user; present or former staff member; worker from an external organisation who refers to the service; volunteer; carer.

As soon as the meeting is finished write up a table of all the impacts that you identified, who they impact on and alongside each impact the evidence for it.

4. Collect stakeholder impact evidence

To write the assessment you will need to gather together all the data you have on the impact of your organisation on stakeholders.

Read through all the evidence thoroughly and organise it so you can find what you need quickly. Having all the evidence on hand will make writing much quicker.

5. Writing

There is no word count but quality is much more important than quantity. Hit them between the eyes with your best stuff but also make sure they know everything else that will be lost.

Write a series of clear statements and quantify the impact where you can. If you have supporting evidence then make reference to it. For example

My organisation will have a reduced capacity to attract external funding as we have to reduce the hours of our fundraiser by 50% losing approximately £100k in service provision over the next 5 years based on our previous track record (Annual Reports 2012 to 2013).

Tip: In each section put the most important impacts first. These are the most serious impacts and especially those that impact directly on Manchester City Council or other Statutory Providers, where they will incur extra expense.

Guidance on each part of the form

The suggestions are not comprehensive and you may well think of other things that you should include.

Tip: Focus on the most serious impacts especially ones that put the viability of your organisation or other services that your organisation runs at risk.

Organisational impact

Describe the impact for each cut option e.g. 10%, 20%.

Most services, as well as providing a direct service to clients, also make a contribution to core costs in both money and in kind. Do not cover staffing in this section as this is covered in the next section.

Include knock-on effects e.g. if the reduction in funding means that the chief executive has less time to fundraise).

A. Describe direct monetary impact of losing part/all funding. Include costs for:

- a. Redundancy
- b. Legal or other advice
- c. Withdrawal from contracts e.g. rental of premises
- d. Management time for dealing with impact of cuts

B. Describe the impact of losing part/all of the contribution from the funding to the costs of

- a. Utilities
- b. Premises
- c. Rental of equipment
- d. Purchase of capital equipment
- e. Volunteer Expenses

C. Describe the impact of losing part/all of contribution in-kind (this is usually staff time) on

- a. Shared direct services that will have to continue (e.g. reception, telephone answering, joint projects)
- b. Shared Support Services (e.g. marketing, care-taking, fund-raising)
- c. Shared Management Function (e.g. HR, partnership working, policy, H&S, campaigning)

Describe the knock-on impact on other services, where they will have reduced ability to see clients but record the detail of the impact in the "customer" section.

Finally, you may want to include the impact on the organisation of losing staff experience, knowledge and commitment.

Tip: In each section put the most important impacts first. These are the most serious impacts and especially those that impact directly on Manchester City Council or other Statutory Providers, where they will incur extra expense.

Staffing impact

Describe the impact for each cut option e.g. 10%, 20%.

A. List the roles, what each role does, and the level of impact in terms of hours or posts for:

- a. Staff
- b. Volunteers/activists
- c. Trustees

- d. Secondments
- e. Apprenticeships

Include the knock-on staffing impacts, so where another service other than the one that is directly funded, is no longer viable.

Customer impact

Describe the impact for each cut option e.g. 10%, 20%.

By customer it is assumed that MCC means the primary users of services rather than the many other stakeholders that benefit from most services.

- A. Describe the characteristics of the primary users of services.**
- B. Describe the services that will be lost, what they do, what exactly will be the reduction in function and how many primary users will be impacted.**
- C. Using the data that you have gathered together, describe the main and most serious impacts on primary users, quantifying where appropriate. You might include both short-term and long-term impacts on:**
 - a. Income
 - b. Health/illness
 - c. Self-esteem and confidence
 - d. Employment
 - e. Housing
 - f. Isolation
 - g. Safety
 - h. Citizenship
 - i. Education
 - j. Community Cohesion
 - k. Equality
 - l. Social Inclusion

Where possible reference the data that you use.

Referencing a case-study can be a very useful way of illustrating the multiple impacts of your service and what will be lost.

Funding cuts from other sources impacting this service

List here cuts from other MCC grants or contracts or external funding sources that will impact on your organisation. Detail what they are and briefly describe the impact.

What mitigation have your (sic) considered

Using the notes that you kept in preparing to fill in the form, briefly describe how you minimised the impact of the proposed cuts in choosing each of your cut options.

Equality impact

Describe the impact for each cut option e.g. 10%, 20%.

The aim in this section is to describe disproportionate impact of a cut on people with a 'protected characteristic':

- Race
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Disability

- Age
- Religion and belief

A. Describe the most serious consequences that the cuts will have for people with one or more of these protected characteristic in:

- Increasing discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Reducing equality of opportunity
- And reducing the opportunity to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and others

Any other information

Describe the impact for each cut option e.g. 10%, 20%.

There a very wide range of impacts that could be included in this section. Concentrate on the impacts that are of most direct concern to MCC.

These include:

- Direct impacts on MCC services where they will have to take on clients that you will no longer be able to support
- Direct impacts on other statutory services where they will have to take on clients that you will no longer be able to support
- Employment of Manchester residents, especially those who are NEET (not in education, employment or training), or have mental health problems or are in some other way disadvantaged in the employment market
- Services for people with long-term conditions including those that reduce social isolation
- Safeguarding issues, where the withdrawal of your service will lead to increased danger to children or vulnerable adults
- Secondary impact on MCC or other statutory services. These may include:
 - Knock-on impacts from the removal of a service e.g. because a social work service will no longer be able to refer to your service they will have to take on the work themselves
 - Increased referral or need for services e.g. greater use of A&E
- Reduction in carers services that mean that the people they care for are more likely to use statutory services
- Reduction in community safety where cutting the service you provide will lead to a higher level of crime
- Economic growth where cuts in your service will mean a reduced opportunity for maintaining or creating enterprises or in stimulating cultural interest in the city
- Lynchpin services that play a critical role in a geographical community, a community of interest or a sector and where a cut in the lynchpin services will have multiple impacts on other organisations
- Reduction in volunteering in the city

Macc offers a range of support to organisations, we can help you look at how your organisation will be affected and how this will impact on your organisation and service. You can contact us on 0333 321 3021, or email: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org

About Macc

Macc is Manchester's local voluntary and community sector support organisation. We exist to encourage support and develop voluntary and community groups and individuals to have a real influence over the places and communities in which they live. We do that by:

- supporting voluntary and community groups to develop and improve
- lobbying, campaigning, influencing and representing the voice of groups
- supporting local people to get involved with groups through volunteering, giving and employment

Macc provides a number of services that support the voluntary and community sector in the city of Manchester:

- **Capacity Building Team** - supports and strengthens voluntary and community groups in the city. We provide training, telephone support, online resources and face to face meetings to assist groups in building their skills, knowledge and practice.
- **Policy and Influence Team** - supports a strong, collective voice from Manchester's voluntary and community sector. Our aim is to ensure that the voluntary and community sector has opportunities to influence public affairs and is supported and engaged in order to make the most of its contribution to the life of the city. We share information, linking organisations and providing opportunities for people to come together and network. We build relationships between the voluntary and community sector with other sectors including the private and public sectors, working with elected members, officials, the City Council, NHS, GM Police, business leaders and other relevant stakeholders.
- **Volunteer Centre Manchester** - helps people who live in Manchester to find suitable and relevant volunteering opportunities. We also support voluntary and community groups to find, manage and support volunteers.

All our services can be accessed through our Manchester Community Central website www.manchestercommunitycentral.org which includes a wide range of free resources, news, events, job and volunteering opportunities from across the city.

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