

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment Stage 1

Equality Impact Assessment Guidance

1 Introduction

This guidance sets out information on the equality duty and the council's equality impact assessment (EqIA) process, including the templates. The aim of the EqIA is to identify and analyse adverse impacts on any part of the community and identify appropriate action. The Equality Act (2010) Section 149 creates the single public sector Equality Duty and specific duties which are set out in secondary legislation. The Duty covers race, disability, and gender (existing duties), plus age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment (in full) – collectively referred to as the protected characteristics. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership with regard to eliminating discrimination. In essence we are required to have due regard to the need to achieve the three equality aims listed in 1.3.2.

2 The General Equality Duty

Those subject to the equality duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization 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.

These are referred to as the three arms or aims of the general equality duty. Further information in the guidance has been provided on the advancement of equality, the advancement of equality involves:

- Removing or minimizing disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.ⁱ

3. Equality Impact Assessments

The council is no longer required to undertake equality impact assessments we do however have to assess and analyse the effect of our policies and practices and how we further the equality aims and publish these. EqIAs provide a useful method to do this. Corporate Management

Team have agreed that wherever a policy/function or service is reviewed, changed or developed the two stage EqIA process should be applied.

4. Undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment

Stage 1

Whenever a policy/service or function is reviewed, changed, developed, removed an initial equality impact assessment set out as stage 1 will need to be undertaken. This is a screening template and will help establish whether a full assessment is needed. This should be done at an early stage of the process so that it is part of policy development. The EqIA will need to be agreed with the appropriate director and should be included on the decision making report along with commentary on the assessment in the main body of the report.

Stage 2

This is the full EqIA and seeks to identify the equality considerations that have been taken into account any mitigating actions proposed and ensures decisions are based on evidence. The EqIA will need to be agreed with the appropriate director and should be included on the decision making report, along with commentary on the assessment in the main body of the report.

Guidance notes have been included where appropriate on the template attached, please speak to the Policy and Performance team should you require any support or guidance.

Stage 1: Equality Impact Assessment

1. What are the main aims purpose and outcomes of the Policy and how do these fit with the wider aims of the organization?

The affordable energy strategy aims to reduce the severity and numbers of households living in fuel poverty in the borough. Households in fuel poverty can under-heat their home or struggle to pay their fuel bills. Living in a cold home has a negative impact on the health of adults and children and reduces the educational attainment of children.

Reducing fuel poverty will encourage good health and wellbeing. Reducing fuel bills will support residents to have more money to spend on other things.

2. How do these aims affect our duty to:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization 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.**

The changes would have no impact on eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The potential new actions listed in the action plan will not impact of equality of opportunity between people with a protected characteristic and those without.

The changes will have no impact on good relations between those with a protected characteristic and those without.

3. What aspects of the policy including how it is delivered or accessed could contribute to inequality?

All actions chosen from the action plan will be designed to be accessible to all except where the funders eligibility criteria limits access. Most eligibility criteria favour those with low incomes or being in receipt of means tested

benefits. The winter warmth criteria favour people with certain health conditions and it is possible that a larger number of these may also have a disability.

4. Will the policy have an impact (positive or negative) upon the lives of people, including particular communities and groups who have protected characteristics ? What evidence do you have for this?

The policy may have a slightly more positive impact of the lives of people with disabilities compared to the rest of the population. Living in a warmer home will benefit the health of any occupant but may have a greater positive benefit on people with physical disabilities. It will not have a negative impact on people with protected characteristics. Improving home energy efficiency, increasing income and reducing fuel costs will not harm residents.

If the answer to the second question has identified potential impacts and you have answered yes to any of the remaining questions then you should carry out a full EQIA set out as stage 2 below.

Stage 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Name of Policy/Service/Function
Purpose
What are you trying to achieve with the policy / service / function?

Who defines and manages it?
Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?
What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?
How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?
Evidence
How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?

How satisfied are your customers and how do you know?
<i>Include evidence such as customer satisfaction results and other statistics</i>
What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?
<i>Do we have data through MOSAIC that could be applied?</i> <i>Please speak to policy and performance if you need any assistance finding this</i>
What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?
Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?
Are you using partners, stakeholders, and councillors to get information and feedback?

Impact
Are some people benefiting more – or less - than others? If so, why might this be?
Actions
If the evidence suggests that the policy / service / function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?
Is it discriminatory in any way?
<i>For example would it only be accessible to certain groups i.e. to get the service you have to apply in writing or it is only accessible at certain times</i>
Is there a possible impact in relationships or perceptions between different parts of the community?
What measures can you put in place to reduce disadvantages?

Do you need to consult further?
Have you identified any potential improvements to customer service?
Who should you tell about the outcomes of this analysis?
<i>Director/CMT/Cabinet Member/Communities/Councillors</i>
Have you built the actions into your Service Plan or Policy Implementation Plan with a clear timescale?
<i>Evidence of how you will take action and by when</i>

When will this assessment need to be repeated?
<i>When will the policy/service or function be reviewed, when will actions be implemented?</i>

¹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, *The essential guide to the public sector equality duty*, p5, 2011