

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure that it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The Council has a legal duty to comply with equalities legislation and this template enables you to consider the impact (positive or negative) a strategy, policy, project or service may have upon the protected groups.

		Positive impact?			Negative impact?	No specific impact	What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated? (action) THIS SECTION NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED AS EVIDENCE OF WHAT THE POSITIVE IMPACT IS OR WHAT ACTIONS ARE BEING TAKEN TO MITIGATE ANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS
		Eliminate discrimination	Advance equality	Good relations			
Gender	Men						
	Women						
Gender Reassignment							
Race	White						
	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups						
	Asian/Asian British						
	Black/African/Caribbean/Black British						
	Gypsies / travellers						
	Other ethnic group						
Disability	Physical						
	Sensory						
	Learning Difficulties						

	Mental Health					
Sexual Orientation	Lesbian, gay men, bisexual					
Age	Older people (50+)					
	Younger people (16 - 25)					
Religion or Belief	Faith Groups					
Pregnancy & maternity						
Marriage & Civil Partnership						
Socio-economic Background						
Carers						

Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment is to improve the work of the Council by making sure it does not discriminate against any individual or group and that, where possible, it promotes equality. The assessment is quick and straightforward to undertake but it is an important step to make sure that individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work on people in Woking and take action to improve strategies, policies, services and projects, where appropriate.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a legal duty to properly assess equalities issues. Officers and Members need to understand how different people will be affected by the decisions they make and that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

The Equality Duty has 3 aims. It requires the Council to have **due regard** to the need to:

- **eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;**
- **advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and**
- **foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**

Having **due regard** means consciously thinking about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. This means that consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by the Council – such as how they act as employers, how they develop, evaluate and review policy, how they design, deliver and evaluate services and how they commission and procure from others.

The first part of the duty means ensuring any decisions/actions are not prohibited by the Equality Act 2010.

Having due regard to the need to **advance equality of opportunity** involves considering the need to:

- remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- meet the needs of people with protected characteristics; and
- encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is low.

Fostering good relations involves tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people who share a protected characteristic and others.

The assessment examines the consequences of strategies, policies, projects and services on protected groups to make sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised. Every strategy, policy, service and project needs to be assessed to see whether there is:

1. An impact that will have a **positive effect** on a protected group, or some protected groups, or improve equal opportunities and /or relationships between protected groups. The positive impact can meet one or more of the aims of the equality duty. The positive impact on one particular protected group can be greater than on another.
2. **A negative or adverse impact** where the impact could disadvantage one protected group, or some protected groups. The negative impact on one protected group can be greater than on another.
3. No **specific impact** on any of the protected groups.

NB: In order to have an adequate audit trail of decisions made, the final column in the table, stating what the impact will be, needs to be completed. Please give example(s) of the positive impact or what actions are being taken to mitigate any negative impacts.

The duty covers the following eight protected characteristics:

- gender
- gender reassignment
- race

- disability
- sexual orientation
- age
- religion or belief
- pregnancy and maternity

The duty also covers **marriage & civil partnership**, but only for the eliminating unlawful discrimination aspect of the duty. The other two aspects of the duty do not apply to this protected characteristic.

As a major part of the Council's work is targeted at the more vulnerable sections of the local community, the Council has decided to include **Socio-economic background** and **Carers** as categories in the impact assessment process.

Take each one of the protected groups and consider the likely impact on people from these groups. The following are areas that you may want to consider:

- publicity, including design, distribution, accessible communications issues
- physical access
- location, geography
- poverty and social exclusion issues
- safety
- harassment
- direct discrimination: does the strategy, policy, project or service intentionally exclude a particular equality category? Is this justified?
- indirect discrimination: does the strategy, policy, project or service affect some equality categories disproportionately? Is this justified? Is the policy, project or strategy or its outcomes (such as the services provided) likely to be equally accessed by all? Are there barriers that might inhibit or restrict access to the service for some people? Are you aware of any public concern about possible discrimination in the operation of the service or project?
- monitoring and evaluation
- what will change as a result of the work?
- consultation, involvement and engagement, have you asked local communities what services they need and how they want them provided.
- timing
- representation in decision-making positions
- training, do staff have the necessary skills, information and understanding to deal fairly and equally with all customers.

You also need to consider at this stage if the strategy, policy, project or service will positively benefit an equality group, improve relations between groups, or promote equal opportunities generally. For example, does it promote better understanding between non-disabled and

disabled people? Does it improve understanding of different faiths? Does it celebrate diversity? Does it meet the needs of a particular group? Does it reduce discrimination or the effects of discrimination?

Equality Impact Assessments are designed to be a challenging process, but they are not intended to be over complicated or about 'getting it right'. It is not an exact science and officers should take a common sense approach. Officers need to be prepared to make changes to the project, policy, strategy or service that the assessment identifies as necessary. It should not be a last minute check.

It is particularly important that officers realise they have a legal duty to properly assess equalities issues and record the process they went through in making this assessment.

For further information or guidance please contact Refeia Zaman on ex: 3479.