

Warwick District Council

Equality Impact Assessment

Introduction and Forms

Toolkit for conducting EIAs – part 1



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Guidance notes are available as a separate document

1. Introduction

1.1 What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of the council's strategies, policies, services and functions on its customers and staff.

Equality Impact Assessments can anticipate the equality consequences of particular policy/service initiatives and ensure that as far as possible, any negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community are eliminated, minimised or counterbalanced by other measures.

Equality Impact Assessments are therefore essentially about service improvements and can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to customers by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

This toolkit has been produced to help managers undertake comprehensive and robust Equality Impact Assessments of all their core services or functions, strategies, policies, procedures and practices.

Please note that throughout this document the term 'policy/service' will be used to abbreviate for 'functions, strategies, policies, procedures and practices'.

The Equality Impact Assessments forms which includes an Initial Screening - Form A1 and an EIA Report and Action Plan - Form A2 can be found on pages 8-14. The forms are followed by a step-by-step guidance on 'Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment' on pages 15-21.

You can use the toolkit to assess whether the policies that guide your work, the procedures you operate and the day-to-day working practices you have developed are likely to have a positive or negative impact on different groups within our diverse community. Having made this assessment you can take action to **prevent** direct and indirect discrimination and **promote** positive and harmonious community relations.

The following definitions might help:

Strategy: a plan outlining what we wish to achieve and broadly how we plan to do this

Function: these are broad areas of activity, duties and powers, usually defined by national legislation (statutory) but also by local choice (non-statutory)

Policy: formal, publicly recorded decisions of the Authority, detailing the way in which functions will be carried out.

Procedure: The activity at the core of employment practice or service delivery, i.e. the way in which a function is actually carried out, the impact of professional decisions, or custom and practice.

1.2 Why undertake Equality Impact Assessments?

It is good practice and necessary if we are to deliver our own ambitious equalities agenda for the Council

Equality Impact Assessments will help us drive forward the equalities agenda locally and with our partners. The benefits of impact assessments include:

- Helping to identify whether we are excluding certain groups from our policies/ services; helping to identify any unmet need
- Helping to identify direct or indirect discrimination
- Assisting us in considering alternative policies or measures or other ways of providing a service that might address any adverse impact
- Helping to mainstream equality into our policies and practices
- Helping us to target resources more effectively

Although Equality Impact Assessments are not a statutory requirement, they are still a relevant tool to evaluating the service you deliver meets your customer' need

The new Equality Bill, April 2009 brings together the three existing equality duties on race, disability and gender into new single Equality Duty. The new single Equality Duty will cover:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Age
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion/Belief
- Pregnancy and maternity explicitly
- Gender re-assignment

The new Equality Duty will require all public authorities to have "due regard" to:

- The need to eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The council must assess which of its policies and services are relevant to the various equality strands, and set out how they will:

- Monitor policies/services for any adverse impact on equality

- Assess and consult on the likely impact on proposed policies/services
- Make sure the public have access to information and services
- Train their staff in relation to the various duties

We want to ensure that our policies and practices do not discriminate against any group within our community and that we use every opportunity to promote equality of opportunity and good community relations. Our EIAs will also help and support us in the delivery of our work towards achieving an excellent status within the new Equality Framework for Local Government and delivering on our Single Equality Scheme.

Equality Impact Assessments will help us deliver other priorities

The work we do on EIAs will feed into and enhance a wide range of other priorities including:

- Service and business planning – actions identified within EIAs will feed into a range of Council plans at all levels including service/business plans, directorate service strategies, the Corporate Performance Plan and our various statutory plans.
- LAA partnership working - the outcomes of EIAs will support our work on narrowing the gap and feed into the Sustainable Communities Strategy, the LAA, local Community Plans and our work with key partners on the Warwickshire Public Service Board.

1.3 Who is responsible for Equality Impact Assessments?

Equality Impact Assessments should be an integral part of policy development and in line with the statutory requirement, the Council must conduct EIAs as soon as a relevant new policy, function or service is considered. The ownership and responsibility for an EIA lies at Head of Service level. Service Managers and frontline staff are important in the assessment process as they will not only be involved in implementing the necessary actions identified following an assessment but also helping to integrate and mainstream equalities into service planning.

For some assessments, particularly smaller ones, it may be more appropriate to have a 'virtual team' with one or two people taking responsibility for it, but drawing on the knowledge and expertise of others as and when necessary. To avoid duplication try and undertake an EIA as part of a review; for example, if you are reviewing your service plan, an EIA could be undertaken at the same time.

1.4 Who are the target equality groups?

There are a range of different equalities groups and you may want to consider the impact of the policy on the following:

- Different ethnic groups including white minorities
- Faith groups and faith issues
- Different sexes, including transgender
- Disabled and non-disabled people
- Gay men, lesbians and straight people
- Different age groups, for example older and younger people

Equality Impact Assessments can be used to focus on specific equality strands to help promote equality of opportunity for a particular group. For instance, certain sections of the community may be known to experience more disadvantage than others. They may be adversely affected by a policy or service or omitted from the benefits of the policy or service. This list is not meant to be exhaustive; your experience in a particular area of work might mean that you additionally look at other diversity issues.

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area	Chief Executive
Policy/Service being assessed	Human Resources
Is this is a new or existing policy/service?	Existing
If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment	2003
EIA Review team – List of members	CB, EP
Date of this assessment	Sept 2010
Signature of completing officer (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)	
Name and signature of Head of Service (to be signed after the EIA has been completed)	

A copy of this Equality Impact Assessment Report including relevant data and information should be saved in the Equality and Diversity Folder on the shared drive.

Form A2

Equality Impact Assessment

Please Explain

Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining			
(1) What are the aims and objectives of policy/service?	<i>Why have this policy / service?</i>		
(2) How does the policy/service fit with the council's wider objectives?	<i>Reference to CBIP and the sustainable community strategy themes</i>		
(3) What are the expected outcomes of the policy/service? Who is intended to benefit from the policy/service and in what way?	<i>What do you expect to achieve by doing this?</i>		
(4) Does this policy/service have the potential to directly or indirectly discriminate against any particular group? Please identify all groups that are affected and briefly explain why	RACE YES/NO	AGE YES/NO	GENDER YES/NO
	<i>Please expand boxes to explain why</i> RELIGION/BELIEF YES/NO	DISABILITY YES/NO	SEXUAL ORIENTATION YES/NO
	Other – please specify		
(5) Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service?			
(6) How does the policy/service contribute to promotion of equality?			

(7) Does the policy/service have the potential to promote good relations between groups?	
Stage 2 - Information Gathering	
(1) What type and range of evidence or information have you used to help you make a judgement about the policy or service?	
(2) What consultation/ information has been used? What new consultation, if any, do you need to undertake?	
Stage 3 - Making a Judgement	
(1) From your data and consultations is there any adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group? Is there any evidence of needs not being met? e.g. language or physical access barriers; lack of appropriate resources or facilities	
(2) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?	
(3) What actions are going to be taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact?	
(4) Is there any positive impact? Does it promote equality of opportunity between different groups and actively address discrimination?	

Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review & Monitoring					
If No Further Action is required then go to – Review & Monitoring (1) Action Planning – Specify any changes or improvements which can be made to the service or policy to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.	EIA Action Plan				
(2) Review and Monitoring State how and when you will monitor policy and EIA Action Plan					
	Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments

Once complete please save a copy of this EIA into the central drive **L:/Equalities & Diversity/EIA/year/relevant service area**

Please annotate your policy with the following statement:

'An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on (**date of assessment**) and will be reviewed on (**date three years from the date it was assessed**').'.