

# Equality Impact Assessment

## Introduction

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is a method for assessing the effects or impacts of a council policy or function on removing barriers to equality.

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty which requires public authorities to try and eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it and promote equality and good relations across a range of protected characteristics.

The protected characteristics are:

Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment
Marriage and civil partnership	Pregnancy and maternity	Race
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	Sex	Sexual orientation

An EqIA should be completed with the full range of protected characteristics considered during the initial stages of developing new strategies, policies, functions or services, prior to starting a procurement exercise and before decisions are made.

Examples of when an EqIA should be completed are:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any proposals to introduce or add to a service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any proposals to adopt policy priorities, strategies and plans</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any proposals to remove, reduce or alter a service</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Changes to staffing structure where groups of employees are likely to be negatively affected</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any new policies or changes to policies</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Any proposals in relation to procured or commissioned services</li></ul>

## Stage 1 - Equality Screening

Whenever a policy/service or function is reviewed, changed, developed or removed an initial equality impact assessment 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.

## Stage 2 – Equality Impact Assessment

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

## STAGE 1 – Equality Screening

### 1. Identify the policy, project, function or service change

#### a. Person responsible for this EqIA

Officer responsible: Jayne Gilpin

Service Area: Revenues and Benefits

Title: Head of Revenues and Benefits

Date of assessment: 30/10/2024

Signature: Jayne Gilpin

#### b. Is this a policy, function, strategy, service change or project?

Policy

If other, please specify:

#### c. Name of the policy, function, strategy, service change or project

Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2025/26

Is this new or existing?

**Already exists and is being reviewed**

**Please specify reason for change or development of policy, function, strategy, service change or project**

**There is a legal requirement to review and approve a scheme prior to each financial year**

#### d. What are the aims, objectives and intended outcomes and who is likely to benefit from it?

Aims:

To set the council tax support scheme for working age people for 2025/26. The scheme reduces council tax bills for households on low income and sets out the eligibility rules and procedures.

Objectives:

To approve the scheme for 2025/26 and uprate income bands within the scheme in line with welfare benefits to ensure support continues at the same level. The introduction of a new income disregard for Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments will ensure that a payment from this scheme is not treated as income thereby reducing entitlement to council tax support council tax support does not reduce should a recipient such a payment.

Outcomes:

Working age households eligible for support will continue to receive a reduction on their council tax bill in 2025/26

Benefits:

Eligible working age households on low income will receive reduction to their council tax bills. Support is currently provided to around 4,500 working age households at a cost of just under £6.9million.

<b>e. What are the expected impacts?</b>	
Are there any aspects, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could have an impact on the lives of people, including employees and customers.	<b>Yes</b>
Do you expect the impacts to be positive or negative?	<b>Positive</b>
Please provide an explanation for your answer:	
<p>The scheme is being reviewed and needs to be approved by Council prior to each financial year but no significant changes are being proposed for 2025/26. Each year Income bands are uprated in line with welfare benefits so that recipients continue to receive the same level of support after the amount of benefits they receive increases. For 2025/26 a new disregard will be introduced so that Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments are not treated as income when calculating entitlement. This is likely to impact on a very small number of customers. None of the changes will have a negative impact is in a positive way.</p> <p>The scheme is a means tested benefit so if a recipient has an increase in income above the annual increase to the income bands then they will see a reduction in benefit.</p>	

**If your answer to question e identified potential positive or negative impacts, or you are unsure about the impact, then you should carry out a Stage Two Equality Impact Assessment.**

<b>f. Identify next steps as appropriate</b>	
Stage Two required	<b>Yes</b>
Owner of Stage Two assessment	<b>Jayne Gilpin</b>
Completion date for Stage Two assessment	<b>30/10/2024</b>

**Please forward this completed form to [add email address] and move on to Stage 2 if required.**

## STAGE 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment

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### 2. Engagement and consultation

The best approach to find out if a policy etc, is likely to impact positively or negatively on equality groups is to look at existing research, previous consultation recommendations, studies or consult with representatives of those equality groups.

#### a. Research and evidence

List below any data, consultations (previous, relevant, or future planned), or any relevant research, studies or analysis that you have considered to assess the policy, function, strategy, service change or project for its relevance to equality.

A consultation is conducted each year as part of the annual review of the scheme. Consultation on the proposals for the 2025/26 scheme was undertaken between 25<sup>th</sup> August and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

The scheme is constantly being monitored for its effectiveness. Any customer feedback and issues that occur are recorded for consideration in the annual review.

Research is undertaken as part of the review to understand how other schemes differ and their effectiveness. Consideration is also given to feedback from any surveys done by other organisations

#### b. Consultation

Has any consultation be conducted?

Yes

Describe the consultation or engagement you have conducted or are intending to conduct. Describe who was consulted, what the outcome of the activity was and how these results have influenced the development of the strategy, policy, project, service change or budget option.

If no consultation or engagement is planned, please explain why.

A consultation exercise was undertaken between 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2024 and 6<sup>th</sup> October 2024 seeking views on whether the Council should continue to ensure that the most vulnerable residents receive 100% support, and whether Armed Forces Compensation Scheme payments should be disregarded.

### **3. Assessment**

#### **a. Assessment of impacts**

For each characteristic, please indicate the type of impact (positive – contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group, neutral – no impact, negative – could disadvantage them).

Please use the description of impact box to explain how you justify the impact and include any data and evidence that you have collected from surveys, performance data or complaints to support your proposed changes

Protected Characteristic	Specific Characteristic	Impact	Description of impact	Mitigating Action
<b>AGE</b>	Older people (60+)	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	There is a separate national council tax support scheme for people of pension age
	Younger People (16-25)	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Children (0-16)	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>DISABILITY</b> A definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available <a href="#">here</a> .  <i>See also carer responsibilities under other considerations.</i>	Physical disability	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Sensory Impairment (sight, hearing)	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Mental health	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Learning Disability	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</b>		Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>MARRIAGE &amp; CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</b>	Women	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Men	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Lesbians	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	

	Gay Men	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>PREGNANCY &amp; MATERNITY</b>	Women	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>RACE*</b> Further information on the breakdown below each of these headings, is available <a href="#">here</a> . For example Asian, includes Chinese, Pakistani and Indian etc	White	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Asian	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	African	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Caribbean or Black	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
		Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>RELIGION &amp; BELIEF**</b> A list of religions used in the census is available <a href="#">here</a>	See note	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>SEX (GENDER)</b>	Men	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Women	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Trans Men	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	

	Trans Women		There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</b>	Heterosexual	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Lesbian	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Gay	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
	Bisexual/Pansexual	Neutral	There are no specific impacts to this group as a result of the proposed scheme for 2025/26.	
<b>Other considerations</b>				
<b>Socio-economic factors</b> (income, education, employment, community safety & social support)		Positive and negative	The scheme is means tested and based on household income. As household income increases the amount of support will reduce.	The income bands are being increased in line with welfare benefits but if household income increases above the level then the amount of council tax support will likely reduce.
<b>Rurality</b> i.e. access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband		Neutral		
<b>Other (e.g. caring responsibilities)</b>		Neutral		

\* To keep the form concise, race has not been included as an exhaustive list, please augment the list above where appropriate to reflect the complexity of other racial identities.

\*\* There are too many faith groups to provide a list, therefore, please input the faith group e.g. Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus, etc. Consider the different faith groups individually when considering positive or negative impacts. A list of religions in the census is available [here](#)



#### 4. Outcomes, Action and Public Reporting

a. Please list the actions identified through the evidence and the mitigating action to be taken.

Action	Target completion date	Lead Officer
No actions have been identified		

b. Public reporting

All completed EqIA's are required to be publicly available on the Council's website once they have been signed off. EqIA's are also published with the papers for committee and full council decisions.

Please send completed EqIA's to [email address]

#### 5. Monitoring outcomes, evaluation and review

The Equalities Impact Assessment is not an end in itself but the start of a continuous monitoring and review process. The relevant Service or Lead Officer responsible for the delivery of the policy, function or service change is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing the EqIA and any actions that may be taken to mitigate impacts.

Individual services are responsible for conducting the impact assessment for their area, staff from Corporate Policy and Governance will be available to provide support and guidance, please email xxxx if you have any questions.

#### 6. Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Jayne Gilpin	30/10/2024	1.0	