

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:

Any proposals to introduce or add to a service	Any proposals to adopt policy priorities, strategies and plans
Any proposals to remove, reduce or alter a service	Changes to staffing structure where groups of employees are likely to be negatively affected
Any new policies or changes to policies	Any proposals in relation to procured or commissioned services

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 2 – Full Equality Impact Assessment

1. 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.

The council has reviewed its contract specification to ensure that it is specifically designed to support some of our most vulnerable people in society with advice and assistance around debt, benefits, financial inclusion and housing rights advice. This contract will therefore, by design, support many households who also fall within one or more of the protected characteristics.

In addition, a key focus of our specification is a requirement for the supplier to regularly review their policies and working practices to ensure that no aspect of the service discriminates against anyone with a protected characteristic. This includes, for example, ensuring that clients have access to sufficient interview room space to accommodate their children, and those with disabilities, and also those who wish to be accompanied by an advocate, etc. In addition, there will be opportunities for home visits should clients be unable to access services due to disability or illness; and provision of translation services, etc.

There is also a requirement for the supplier to provide equalities data to supplement contract monitoring against our proposed targets and outcomes.

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.

The council has consulted with members of our Housing and Support Forum, and with the wider Voluntary and Communities Sector in general. Our Housing and Support Forum is comprised of a range of advice and support agencies working across Cheltenham, including social housing providers, the statutory sector and the voluntary sector. A key focus of our consultation has been to gain an understanding of whether the priorities we have set out in our contract specification is aligned with our Housing,

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, and if not, whether we should focus our priorities elsewhere.

Following consultation, it can be confirmed from the feedback received that this service is supported.

2. 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
AGE	Older people (60+)	Positive	The council will require a central, physical presence within the town, enabling older people to access services in person. This may be more preferable than accessing services online or by phone.	
	Younger People (16-25)	Positive	Online and phone services will be available, which may be more preferable than accessing services in person.	
	Children (0-16)	Positive	Provision of adequate interview room space to enable households to attend with their children, where necessary.	
DISABILITY A definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available here . <i>See also carer responsibilities under other considerations.</i>	Physical disability	Positive	Premises will be assessed on their accessibility for disabled people. In addition, there will be a requirement for the supplier to carry out home visits in the event that advice cannot reasonably be provided in any other way.	
	Sensory Impairment (sight, hearing)	Positive	Special provision would be expected to ensure households are able to receive advice services, and are supported as necessary – e.g. help with form filling, etc.	
	Mental health	Positive	Special provision would be expected to ensure households are able to receive advice services, and are supported as necessary – e.g. help with form filling, etc.	
	Learning Disability	Choose an item.	Special provision would be expected to ensure households are able to receive advice services, and are supported as necessary – e.g. help with form filling, etc.	

GENDER REASSIGNMENT		Neutral		
MARRIAGE & CIVIL PARTNERSHIP	Women	Neutral		
	Men	Neutral		
	Lesbians	Neutral		
	Gay Men	Neutral		
PREGNANCY & MATERNITY	Women	Positive	Provision of adequate interview room space to enable households to attend with their children, where necessary	
RACE* Further information on the breakdown below each of these headings, is available here . For example Asian, includes Chinese, Pakistani and Indian etc	White	Positive	Any necessary special arrangements, such as translation services, are expected as part of the contract specification.	
	Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	Positive	Any necessary special arrangements, such as translation services, are expected as part of the contract specification.	
	Asian	Positive	Any necessary special arrangements, such as translation services, are expected as part of the contract specification.	
	African	Positive	Any necessary special arrangements, such as translation services, are expected as part of the contract specification.	
	Caribbean or Black	Positive	Any necessary special arrangements, such as translation services, are expected as part of the contract specification.	
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			expected as part of the contract specification.	
RELIGION & BELIEF** A list of religions used in the census is available here	See note	Neutral		
SEX (GENDER)	Men	Neutral		
	Women	Neutral		
	Trans Men	Neutral		
	Trans Women	Neutral		
SEXUAL ORIENTATION	Heterosexual	Neutral		
	Lesbian	Neutral		
	Gay	Neutral		
	Bisexual/Pansexual	Neutral		
Other considerations				
Socio-economic factors (income, education, employment, community safety & social support)		Positive	This service is specifically focussed on improving outcomes for households who are likely to be on a low income, helping them with benefits, and/or to manage debt, as well as providing debt prevention advice through financial inclusion support; and to help them with their housing rights and any breaches of these rights by their landlord.	
Rurality i.e. access to services; transport; education; employment; broadband		Neutral		
Other (e.g. caring responsibilities)		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](#)

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3. 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
None 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.

4. 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 if you have any questions.

5. Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change