

## **Decision Making Tree - Equality Impact Assessment**

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process by which organisations examine their activities in order to minimise the potential for discrimination. They can help ensure that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues can be considered when drawing up policies or proposals which affect the delivery of your services.

The process is also used to monitor interventions designed to have a positive impact on a particular group.

### **What are the aims of an EIA?**

Discrimination can occur due to unforeseen reasons. It is also often the case that organisations sometimes unintentionally overlook or exclude certain groups by not specifically considering their needs. By carrying out an EIA you can obtain a profile of how your policies, services or activities will affect different equalities groups. The potential for discrimination is reduced when undertaking EIA's and awareness among staff who may have little or no experience is raised. Most importantly, your organisation will be complying with legislation by identifying and designing-out discrimination.

### **Who has to carry out an EIA?**

The Equality Act 2010 requires all public bodies to carry out EIA's. They have proved to be so effective in practice that the principles have been extended to cover the nine protected characteristics:-

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

### **The Process**

There are effectively two different levels of impact assessment. The first is the Initial Screening which should be carried out in all cases. Depending on the result of the Initial Screening you may then need to move on to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

## Appendix D – Part A

### Stage One – Initial Screening

By carrying out an initial screening you will be able to determine whether a full Equality Impact Assessment is needed. It should identify positive, neutral or negative impact.

Screening must be done during the development or design of the policy and before it goes to any group or committee for approval. If it is going to the Board for approval, then it is a requirement of the Board that a full EIA is carried out where the policy is found to be relevant to equality and diversity.

Screening is a short easy process which makes use of statistics, consultation outcomes, results of ethnicity monitoring, complaints, analysis of PALS, audit reports, research information, and reviews demographic data. If there is no data, take action to collect the evidence of likely impact and revisit the document (it could be through PPI, research, consultations, desk research/interview, public health data).

When screening a policy or undertaking a full assessment you can involve your team, other colleagues or partners in the sector and together consider the full implications of the policy and improvements to be made.

Before you start screening do the following:

- Be clear about policy aims, purpose, objectives and outcomes and beneficiaries
- Use the evidence/data you have. However, if you have none or require additional information to make an informed decision, the put monitoring in place/gather some data to support the process
- Ask the following questions and in conjunction with the evidence/data you have, your knowledge, expertise, partnership input, past experiences or research about how your policies have affected certain groups, national information about how some groups are affected by our activities/policies/decisions.

Once you have screened the policy or activity to establish if it has any relevant to equality and diversity, answer the questions below to find out whether an EIA is needed:

Questions to be used during the Screening Process	Yes	No
1) Does/will the policy or activity affect the public directly or indirectly?		
2) Have there been or likely to be any public concerns about the policy or proposal?		
3) Does the evidence/data show an existing or likely differential impact for the different strands of diversity? Age, gender, disability, race, religion, sexuality		
4) Do/will people who belong to the different strands of diversity have different needs, experiences, issues or priorities in relation to this policy or activity (use evidence)		

## Appendix D – Part A

5) Could the policy or activity affect how services, commissioning or procurement activities are organised, provided, where and by whom?		
6) Could the policy or activity affect our workforce or employment practices?		
7) Have complaints been received from different equality groups about the effect of this policy, proposal or our activities in general (having no complaints does not always mean there is no issue – always advisable to find out)		
8) Does the policy involve or will it have an impact upon eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between diverse groups		
9) Is there likely to be an adverse/negative impact or risks to the organisation, for users, equality groups and staff if the policy or activity is implemented in its current format?		

Nil impact (no yes's) – The process stops here.

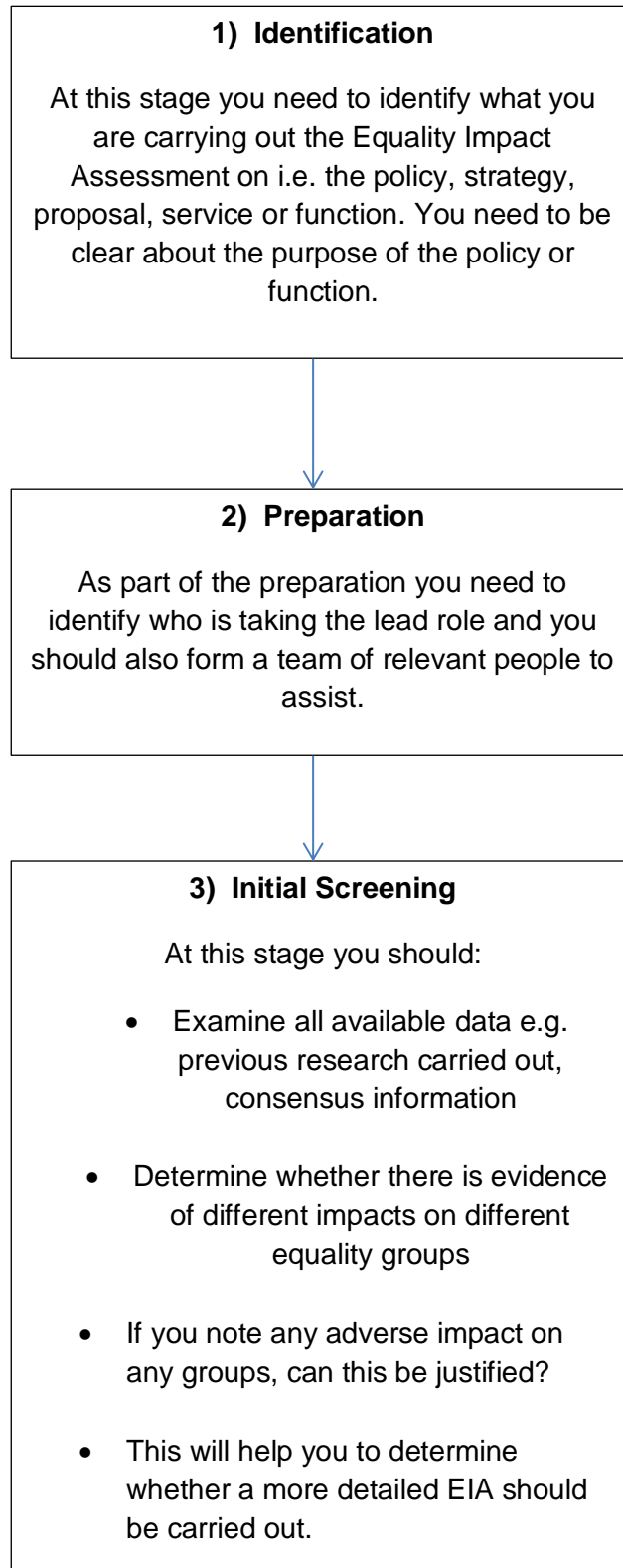
Low impact (1 to 3 yes's) – A full EIA is required but is not an immediate priority, you can prioritise for later on in the year.

High impact (4 to 9 yes's) - A full EIA is required immediately. The EIA should be carried out in consultation with affected groups.

## Stage Two – Completing the Equality Impact Assessment

If the initial screening reveals that there may be a negative impact on any particular group, then you should carry out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) using the Equality Impact Assessment Form (Appendix D – Part C) and EIA Guidance Sheet (Appendix D – Part B).

### Step by step guide to an EIA



**4) Gather further data and research**

At this stage you should consider all of the information used for the initial screening and then identify and gather other relevant information. You may need to consider new mechanisms for gathering data.



**5) Consultation**

At this stage you should involve all relevant stakeholders, this might include service users, other community groups etc. It is important that you explain to people what you are doing and think about accessible ways of consulting with people. You might use focus groups, postal questionnaires etc.



**6) Assess impact**

You should now consider all of the data you have gathered including findings from the consultation to assess the impact. You should assess whether there is, or is likely to be, a positive impact or negative impact for different groups. You should assess and determine the nature of this negative impact.



**7) Eliminate or reduce negative impact**

Once you have determined the nature of the impact, you should examine why it has occurred or is likely to occur. You will then be able to explore ways to reduce or eliminate the negative impact.





**8) The Action Plan – Monitor & Review**

This is where you develop an action plan to implement what is needed and set up arrangements for monitoring and review.



**9) Publish results**

It is important that you make the results of the EIA available so you should consider how you will publish the results. It is also important to identify the people that need to know the results.