Equality Impact Assessment

Part 2 – Form

AUDIT SCOTLAND

Introduction

Before carrying out this assessment, you will have had an initial discussion with a member (or members) of the Equality and Human Rights Steering Group about whether you thought an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required (see EIA Part 1 - "Prompt").

Obviously, you decided to carry out an EIA, and the reasons you gave for doing it is a good place to start discussing the EIA itself.

You should carry out this assessment with the same person (or persons) that you had the initial discussion with, if at all possible, as this will give your discussion some context and consistency.

Process

Before completing the short form (overleaf), you will find this easier to do if you discuss in more detail why you thought an EIA was needed in the first place, and talk in more detail about what this means for the policy, practice or decision, as well as any actions you need to take.

Before completing the form, you need to consider our specific duties under the Equalities Act. In summary these are:

- **Assess the impact of applying a proposed new or revised policy, practice or decision**
- **Consider relevant evidence relating to people with a protected characteristic, where this is appropriate**
- **Be able to demonstrate the evidence you have considered when making your decision**
- **Take into account the findings of any assessment on the potential impact of a new or revised policy, practice or decision**

- **Publish the results of any assessments made into the potential impact of a new or revised policy, practice or decision**
- **We review and where necessary revise any updated policy, practice or decision, ensuring on going compliance with equality duties**
- **Simply considering whether to assess a policy, practice or decision is not in itself an assessment.**

You should also think about the following:

- When considering whether or not to carry out an EIA in the first place, you thought about which issues or groups would or could be affected by the policy, practice or decision. Can you be more specific about this?
- Do you need further information about these areas, for example more data? If so, what exactly?
- Would it be helpful to contact any of the groups involved? You don't have to, but you can choose to involve others you think may be affected. Who would that be?

Policy, practice & decisions

It is important to note that legislation requires us to consider the potential impact of revised or new policies, practices as well as decisions.

Policies are clear, simple statements of how we intend to conduct our services, actions or business. They provide guiding principles when we're making decisions.

Procedures describe how each policy will be put into action.

If you decide you do need more information, then you need to gather it before completing this assessment.

- Taking everything into consideration, including any evidence you have gathered, will or could the policy have a differential impact on particular equality groups, either positively or negatively?

- If so, you need to discuss what you need to do to ensure the policy is robust.

- What will you do now? Your analysis should allow you to say whether you will:

  - Make no major change as you feel the policy is robust

  - Adjust the policy to take into account the potential impact of the policy

In some (rare) cases you could also consider continuing the policy even though it has the potential for adverse impact or stopping the policy altogether for the same reasons.

In each of these cases, you must be able to explain clearly why you have taken your decision.

Next steps

Let your line manager know that you have carried out this EIA and let your Equality and Human Rights Steering Group representative have a copy of the completed form. This is mainly for information but also to allow the group to monitor EIAs and follow up any points that the group may have. A representative from the group will confirm that the EIA has been successfully completed. The form will also be published, where appropriate, on SharePoint and/or our external website.

Equality Impact Assessment form

(see guide on previous page to help complete)

Date of assessment
June 2020

Title of policy or practice (or decision) to be created (or changed)
Change in working practice: Working from home

What is the policy or practice (or decision) intended for?
In our response to Covid-19, we implemented significant changes in our working practices very quickly. Since 17 March 2020, all members of staff have been working from home. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future and may be how we work in the longer term.

In relation to the general equality duty and the protected characteristics, which issues or groups do you think would or could be affected and how? Be specific
Since all staff are affected, we expected it to have an impact on all protected characteristics. We recognised that as well as the defined protected characteristics, other factors impact on working from home. This includes, but is not limited to, caring responsibilities, home schooling, home environment, socio-economic disadvantage and so on.

Did you need to obtain further information? If yes, how did you do that?
Yes, we asked all business group leads to respond to a list of questions about the issues and groups affected, how staff are being supported and what more could be done to meet diverse needs. We also asked existing staff networks to respond to a similar list of questions: • Carers Support Group • Disability Confident Working Group • Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group • Stonewall Working Group • Equality and Human Rights Steering Group We asked respondents to consider the impact on people with protected characteristics but also the other factors impacted by working from home such as home schooling, caring responsibilities, home environment and socio-economic disadvantage.

Please summarise the relevant evidence you considered.
We collated information across all the responses and organised it by issue and groups affected.

What do you conclude is the potential impact on these areas?
As part of this exercise, we also gathered views about what more the organisation could consider doing to support staff.

What will you do now?

We have summarised key areas for further consideration:

- **Alleviating workload pressure**

Building upon the mitigating measures already taken, we need to look ahead to: consider the deadlines for 20/21 audits e.g. deadlines which are not back to the 18/19 ones but an incremental improvement on the 20/21 ones; when the forward work programme is published to have a lower volume of work; consider raising the threshold to trigger statutory reports.

Share a simple visible representation of deliverables across the organisation so that there is a shared understanding of workflow and, consequently, corporate priorities.

- **Alleviating challenges to well being**

Active recognition of the impact on productivity for those staff with caring/home schooling responsibilities (teams are encouraged to have an open and honest conversation at the start of each audit or project to agree what is manageable and realistic for each team member).

Re-open offices/permit working on client premises, on an exceptional basis, where there is strong justification.

Where a colleague feels unable to express concerns to a line manager, provide a confidential help line eg with Human Resources, a safe haven resource, or counsellor.

Provide additional support and training, as appropriate, to line managers, in resilience and in identifying serious mental health concerns.

- **Alleviating obstacles to effective working from home**

Further invitations to re-assess requirements based on homeworking station assessments will be issued to all staff in July 2020, now we know homeworking is for an indefinite period.

Guidance on how to use IT better, eg how to indicate 'not to be disturbed'.

Recognise that effective working is also about relationships. Management Team to encourage informal communications to take place, such as 'picking up the phone' to a friend from the office.

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