

A Guide to Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)

What are Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)?

EIAs are **a tool to help you analyse and make more considered decisions** about changes to service delivery, policy and practice. An EIA will help you to identify how specific communities of interest may be affected by decisions and to consider any potential discriminatory impact on people with **protected characteristics** .

EIAs can also help to improve or promote equality by encouraging you to identify ways to remove barriers and improve participation for people with a protected characteristic.

Why do we need to do Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)?

EIAs provide important **evidence** of how we have considered the implications of service and policy changes and demonstrate how we have met our legal Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

The three main elements of the Public Sector Equality Duty are:

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination
- Promoting equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

In fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty we must ensure that we demonstrate that we have followed a number of key principles (based on previous case law)

We need to provide evidence that we have given due regard to any potential discriminatory impact on people with protected characteristics in shaping policy, in delivering and making changes to services, and in relation to our own employees.

We must always consider whether a service change, decision or policy could have a discriminatory impact on people with protected characteristics, not just any impact that is the same as it would be for everyone else.

The EIA process is also an opportunity to identify improvements to our services, policies or functions. It can help us to make better decisions and ensure our services and policies are inclusive and accessible.

Please see guidance for a full definition and further details.

When do we need to do Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)?

- Whenever you plan to **change, introduce or remove** a service, activity or policy.
- At the VERY BEGINNING of any process of:
 - ✓ Budget setting
 - ✓ Service review (including changes to employment practice)
 - ✓ Planning new projects and work programmes
 - ✓ Policy development and review
 - ✓ Procurement or commissioning activity

Who should do it?

Overall responsibility for EIAs lies at a **service** level. A lead officer should be appointed from the service area that is making a proposal and all decisions should be approved by the senior management team in that service.

Those directly affected (partners, stakeholders, voluntary groups, communities, equality groups etc) should be engaged with as part of the process.

How should we do it?

Our EIA process has two stages:

Stage 1 - initial screening assessment

Stage 2 - further assessment and evidence