



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCREENING GUIDANCE

MANAGERS GUIDELINES

January 2012



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYDDODOL SICR

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been developed to assist managers in completing initial screening on a policy, procedure, project, strategy, service or function (now referred to as an initiative) for which they have responsibility to identify whether a comprehensive and robust Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) needs to be carried out.

1. WHAT IS AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT?

EqIA's allow us to assess and record the likely impact of initiatives on individuals and groups in the workforce or in the community.

EqIA's help the Council meet the requirements of the equality duties and identify active steps that can be taken to promote equality.

Carrying out an EqIA involves systematically assessing the likely (or actual) effects of initiatives on people in respect of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, or non belief, sexual orientation, Welsh language and carers. This includes looking for opportunities to promote equality as well as positive or negative impacts.

2. DO I NEED TO WORRY ABOUT EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS?

If you have responsibility for an initiative i.e. policy, procedure, project, strategy, service or function the answer is **YES**.

3. WHEN SHOULD I THINK ABOUT CARRYING OUT AN EqIA?

If you are

- **Planning** new initiatives (including corporate plans, annual business plans and the annual budget)
- Where **changes** to existing initiatives are proposed, and when **conducting** expenditure reviews and programme evaluations
- Where there are proposals to **withdraw from** or **discontinue** an existing initiative
- Where the Business Planning process has identified **relevance to** or **implications for** equality

The EqIA process also applies to all projects for which Rhondda Cynon Taf is the lead agency in a multi agency partnership.

4. WHAT IS THE SCREENING PROCESS?

Screening is used to decide whether the initiative you are responsible for has a high or medium negative impact on any of the protected groups and will require a full EqIA.

Not all initiatives are relevant, e.g. some technical procedures or internal policies may have no bearing on equality & diversity issues and therefore will not have any impact at all.

The Screening form is designed to make the process as easy as possible and to ensure that any information gathered at the screening stage can be used if a full EqIA is required.

5. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY IMPACT?

When we assess our initiatives, there are two possible impacts we may identify:

A Negative or Adverse Impact

This is where it is identified that an initiative (or some aspect of it) may disadvantage one or more sections of the community. The adverse or negative impact may present different disadvantages depending on the section of the community affected and may be more disadvantageous for some than others. A negative impact may be entirely unintentional and only become apparent when research or consultation takes place.

A negative impact may also occur when an initiative is removed or no longer continued. Therefore an EqIA screening should also be conducted during decision-making about whether to end an initiative.

A Positive Impact

This is where it is identified that an initiative (or some aspect of it) may have a positive impact on one or more sections of a community, or improves relationships between different sections of the community. Again this may have differing effects and may be more advantageous to some than others.

Positive impacts assist the Council to meet its obligations under the General Equality Duty and it is important that you also include this information on the screening form.

Definitions of Impacts (applies to Positive & Negative)

High Impact – the initiative is likely to have a substantial affect on a group or groups of people

Medium Impact - the initiative is likely to have some affect on a group or groups of people

Low Impact - the initiative has little affect on a group or groups of people or if negative the affect can be justified or removed or lessened by immediate action

Justification of Negative Impact

There may be some occasions when a negative impact can be justified, this will be determined in a number of ways some of which are identified below:

- For Health & Safety Reasons
- Where the negative impact is temporary and there is no possibility of reducing or removing the impact (e.g. actions are restricted by other rules/regulations)
- Where the overall positive impact outweighs the negative impact

This list is not exhaustive; advice on whether a high or medium negative impact can be justified is available from the Equality & Diversity Team.

If there is any possibility that the negative impact is directly or indirectly discriminatory then it **cannot** be justified and actions must be taken to remove any discriminatory elements if this is not possible then the initiative must be stopped.

N.B. If a High or Medium **Negative** Impact cannot be justified, a Full EqIA **MUST** be carried out

6. HOW IS AN EqIA SCREENING CARRIED OUT?

The Council has developed an EqIA screening questionnaire that should be completed whenever screening is required.

When assessing the impact an initiative may have, the most important thing to consider is not how many people may be affected by the impact, but what the consequences of **not** addressing the impact may be for those affected.

It is also important that your decisions are evidence-based and that you are able to show how you have arrived at your decisions. Evidence could include local statistics, monitoring reports or consultation results that show what groups/communities or staff might be affected by the initiative and the specific barriers or disadvantages it might present to them. You will have the opportunity to refer to these in the questionnaire as you complete it.

7. WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

The officer with responsibility for the development of, amendment to, or cessation of the initiative, should take responsibility to ensure that the EqlA screening is carried out.

Completing the EqlA screening questionnaire involves thinking about the likely impact of an initiative on different sections of the community and should not necessarily involve only one officer. The opportunity should be taken to discuss the assessment with colleagues, lead officers or project team members to ensure that appropriate support and advice is received.

The EqlA screening should make use of:

- Officer and team knowledge of the issue
- Previous consultation results
- Analysis of complaints, comments, evaluations and monitoring
- Research and reports
- Internet/library searches
- Advice from both internal and external specialists
- Staff with previous involvement with a similar initiative

The best way to find out if there are any potential negative or positive impacts is to use data already in existence and/or to talk to people and organisations that the initiative is likely to affect.

Questions you should ask yourself include:

- What evidence/research have you based your decision/conclusions on?
- Is there any other evidence you need to consider?
- Is there anyone else in the Council that could help?
- Have you consulted those affected?
- Do you need to consult anyone else?
- If so how and when?
- What equality issues have you taken in to account?
- Are there any negative or adverse impacts?
- If so can you justify them? Or can you address them?

You should document the actual or likely impact, along with evidence used to explain how any conclusion is reached.

The officer responsible for the completion of the EqlA screening should identify whether a full EqlA needs to be carried out.

If you have any questions about the EqlA screening process or on how to complete the questionnaire, please contact the Equality & Diversity Team for advice (01443) 424075 or equality@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk

8. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE NEXT?

When you have completed the EqIA screening questionnaire, you need to complete the screening assessment section. You should then have your assessment signed off by an appropriate Head or Service or Service Director and send a copy of the completed assessment to the Equality & Diversity Team.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

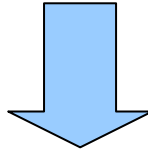
Further details can be obtained from:

The Equality & Diversity Team
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale
CF40 2XX
Tel: 01443 424075
e - mail: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

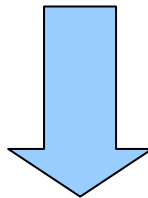
Rhondda Cynon Taf Equality Impact Assessment Screening Flowchart

Identify the initiative (i.e. policy, procedure, project, strategy, service or function being considered...)

- Is it a new initiative?
- Is it an initiative that has been changed or revised?

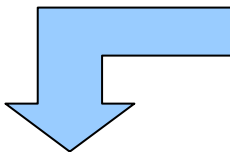


'Screen for relevance' using form and guidance

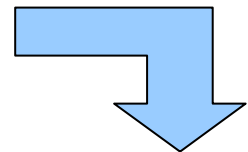


High or Medium Negative Impact that cannot be justified is identified?

YES



NO



Undertake a Full Equality Impact Assessment using the report template and guidance and send a copy of completed EqlA to the Equality & Diversity Team

Have screening form signed off by appropriate officer, send copy to Equality & Diversity Team and keep for reference if changes to the initiative are planned in the future.