

Revised; 26/01/2017

Equality Impact Assessment and Community Planning

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) defines Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as:-

“A tool that helps public authorities make sure their policies and the ways they carry out their functions, do what they intended to do and for everybody”

EIA helps to:-

- fulfil Legal requirements
- meet business needs
- and ethical considerations

EIA helps ensure that fairness and Best Value is obtained, by scrutinising policies, functions and funding decisions at an early stage, so issues can be addressed efficiently.

Under the Equalities Act 2010 (EA) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), Councils have a legal duty when exercising their functions to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination,
- to advance equality of opportunities for Protected Equalities Groups and
- foster good relations between such groups and others.

Each of these elements must be examined when carrying out an EIA.

EIA therefore provides an opportunity to:-

- reflect on how we have done things
- identify ways of doing things better for service users
- Increase transparency and accountability

EIA provides evidence that public authorities such as the Council, the police and NHS and fire and rescue have had “due regard” to the general duty. Without this, individual organisations and partnerships’ decisions can be overturned in court. Equalities impacts should be assessed as early as possible when considering a proposal and must form part of policy development process itself; they should not be used as a justification for decisions that have already been taken.

To get the best of EIA it should be used as a planning, review and performance management tool.

Partnerships

Public sector partners who are involved in partnership working are responsible for meeting the PSED under the EA within their partnership role. Partnership activity is one of their functions and is therefore covered by the PSED.

As public bodies are members of the West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, the partnership as a whole is under obligation in relation to the PSED. In practice, this means that initiatives or joint work conducted under the remit of the Community Planning Partnership will be subject to the requirements of the equality duties, including carrying out EIA

The Single Outcome Agreement ('SOA') has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment, which will be reviewed annually. The SOA will be replaced by a Local Outcome Improvement Plan in October 2017. Relevant equalities performance indicators should be included in each partnership's performance report. Partners should review findings and take appropriate action on adverse impact, in terms of future planning and delivery of programmes.

Guidance and examples

The council has developed a guide and a toolkit on EIA, which is available in the [equality and diversity section](#) of the Council' public website; this also includes examples of completed EIAs; appropriate training is available to partner organisations on request.

Advice and Support

You can address enquires to policy development officer based in the community planning and policy team community.planning@west-dunbarton.gov.uk