

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form: Initial impact assessment

If an officer is undertaking a project, policy change or service change, then an initial impact assessment must be completed and attached alongside the Project initiation document.

EqIA Titular information:

Date:	9.12.2020
Service:	Assessments
Project, policy or service EQIA relates to:	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2021/22
Completed by:	Nicky Thomas
Has the EQIA been discussed at services team meeting:	Yes
Signed off by:	Simon Price
Sign off date:	

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1. Policy, Project or service information:

This section should be used to identify the main purpose of the project, policy or service change, the method of delivery, including who key stakeholders are, main beneficiaries and any associated aims.

What is the purpose of the project, policy change or service change , its expected outcomes and how does it relate to your services corporate plan:

To have an agreed Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2021/22 to support some of our most financially vulnerable residents.

Outline how you are delivering your project, policy change or service change. What governance arrangements are in place, which internal stakeholders (Service managers, Assistant Directors, Members etc) have/will be consulted and informed about the project or changes:

There is a legal requirement for WBC to have a CTRS and many services/groups are involved in its creation and sign off.

The service (Assessments) carries out the initial review and is then guided by Lead Member, Service AD and Finance on a steer on what the scheme should look like. Modelling of any changes to be considered is carried out to give both a financial and customer impact. There is a legal requirement for a public consultation to take place prior to any decision on what scheme to adopt. Ultimately a scheme is proposed and signed off at Full Council in January.

Those involved in the process are Lead Member, AD Housing, Income & Assessments, Head of Finance, Director of Resources & Assets, Senior Specialist – Assessments, Specialist L3 – Assessments.

This policy also goes through RALT, CLT, Group, O&S and finally Full Council.

Outline who are the main beneficiaries of the Project, policy change or service change?

Any resident of WBC that experiences financial difficulties and struggle to pay their council tax liability, due to low income.

Outline any associated aims attached to the project, policy change or service change:

To fulfil our vision ‘a great place to live, learn, work and grow and a great place to do business’ and our priority to “*Ensure our borough and communities remain safe for all*”. To deliver the requirements set by central government.

2. Protected characteristics:

There are 9 protected characteristics as defined by the legislation:

- Race
- Gender
- Disability
- Gender re-assignment
- Age
- Religious belief
- Sexual orientation
- Pregnancy/Maternity
- Marriage and civil partnership:

To find out more about the protected groups, please consult the EQIA guidance.

3. Initial Impact review:

In the table below, please indicate whether your project, Policy change or service change will have a positive or negative impact on one of the protected characteristics. To assess the level of impact, please assign each group a Positive, No, Low or High impact score:

For information on how to define No, low or high impact, please consult the EQIA guidance document.

If your project is to have a positive impact on one of the protected groups, please outline this in the table below.

For details on what constitutes a positive impact, please consult the EQIA guidance.

Protected characteristics	Impact score	Please detail what impact will be felt by the protected group:
Race:	No	Scheme and charging processes apply equally to all. Could be complicated to understand changes/scheme for claimants whose first language is not English particularly since the move to on-line claim forms. Already mitigated with use

		of translation tools, such as google translate, since the last full EqIA, and will continue, no change.
Gender:	No	Scheme and charging processes apply equally to all. Already mitigated with use of Section 13a Hardship Scheme since the last full EqIA, and will continue, no change.
Disabilities:	Positive	All previous mitigations stand. However, due to the proposal to disregard Carers Allowance in 21/22 this will be a positive move for those with carers responsibilities, giving them more weekly income as the whole amount they receive will not be used as income in the calculation of their CTR entitlement.
Age:	No	Pensioners claiming localised council tax support are fully protected from any changes under our local scheme by Government legislation; Other age groups - Already mitigated with use of other support available such as Local Welfare Provision, S13a and Discretionary Housing Payments. Will continue, no change
Sexual orientation:	No	None
Religion/belief:	No	None
Gender re-assignment:	No	None

Pregnancy and Maternity:	No	Already mitigated with use of other support available such as Local Welfare Provision, S13a and Discretionary Housing Payments. Can also refer to child charities such as “First Steps” with help towards costs. This mitigation will continue, no change
Marriage and civil partnership:	No	None – treated the same within the CTRS

Based on your findings from your initial impact assessment, you must complete a full impact assessment for any groups you have identified as having a low of high negative impact. If No impact, or a positive impact has been identified, you do not need to complete a full assessment. However, you must report on this initial assessment and it must receive formal approval from the Assistant Director responsible for the project, policy or service change.

Initial impact assessment approved by....

Date:....

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