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Appendix 1



# Carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment

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### What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to improve the work of the MPA by making sure it does not discriminate and that, where possible, it promotes equality. It is a way to make sure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of their work

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on equality target groups and take action to improve services, policies, strategies and projects. It involves anticipating the consequences of policies and projects on the target groups and making sure that, as far as possible, any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

### Where does an EIA come from?

Equality Impact Assessments originate from the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 as well as the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG), both of which place legal obligations on local authorities and public sector organisations to carry out needs / impact assessments.

The GLA Group adopted the ESLG as a result of the Best Value Review of Equalities and in 2001 the MPA signed up to achieve level 5 of the ESLG. The Equality Standard is a Best Value Performance Indicator and as such is audited in the same way as any other BVPI.

The Equality Standard has been developed as a tool to enable authorities to mainstream gender, race and disability into policy and practice at all levels. The Standard provides a framework that has been extended to anti-discrimination policies for age, sexual orientation and religion or belief within the GLA Group and MPA.

The MPA is also required under the Greater London Act 1999 'to have regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity for all persons irrespective of their race, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion.'

The MPA process is therefore aimed at assessing the impact of policies, strategies or projects across the six equality groups.

### What are the equality target groups?

The MPA, as well as other GLA Group organisations, defines equality target groups as: women; black and minority ethnic people; young people and children; older people; disabled people; lesbians; gay men; bisexuals; trans people and people from different faith groups.

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The equality areas, or strands as they are commonly called, are gender, race, disability, age, faith and sexuality. The strands are inclusive of all people.

### What is meant by 'impact'?

The MPA will look at two possible impacts in its assessment:

(a) A negative or adverse impact:

An impact that could disadvantage one or more equality target groups. This disadvantage may be differential, where the negative impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another. It should be noted that some negative impacts may be intended. The EIA provides an opportunity to assess this.

For example: An event that was held in a building with no induction loop facilities would have a negative or adverse impact on some attendees with a hearing impairment.

(b) A positive impact:

An impact that could have a positive impact on one or more equality target groups, or improve equal opportunities and /or relationships between groups. This positive impact may be differential, where the positive impact on one particular group of individuals or one equality target group is likely to be greater than on another.

For example: A targeted training programme for black and minority ethnic women would have a positive differential impact on black and minority ethnic women, compared with its impact on white women and all men. It would not, however, necessarily have an adverse impact on white women or men.

### Who is responsible for carrying out EIAs?

Each Policy Lead and unit as a team will take responsibility for identifying which policies, strategies or projects will need to be assessed. It is helpful to include into the team

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responsible for completing the Initial Screening Form a diverse range of individuals. At least one person in the team should have attended EIA Training.

On Joint projects and initiatives with other organisations, officers should raise the issue of the need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. The lead organisation in the group project has the responsibility to initiate an EIA.

### When should an EIA be carried out?

An impact assessment should be carried out when:

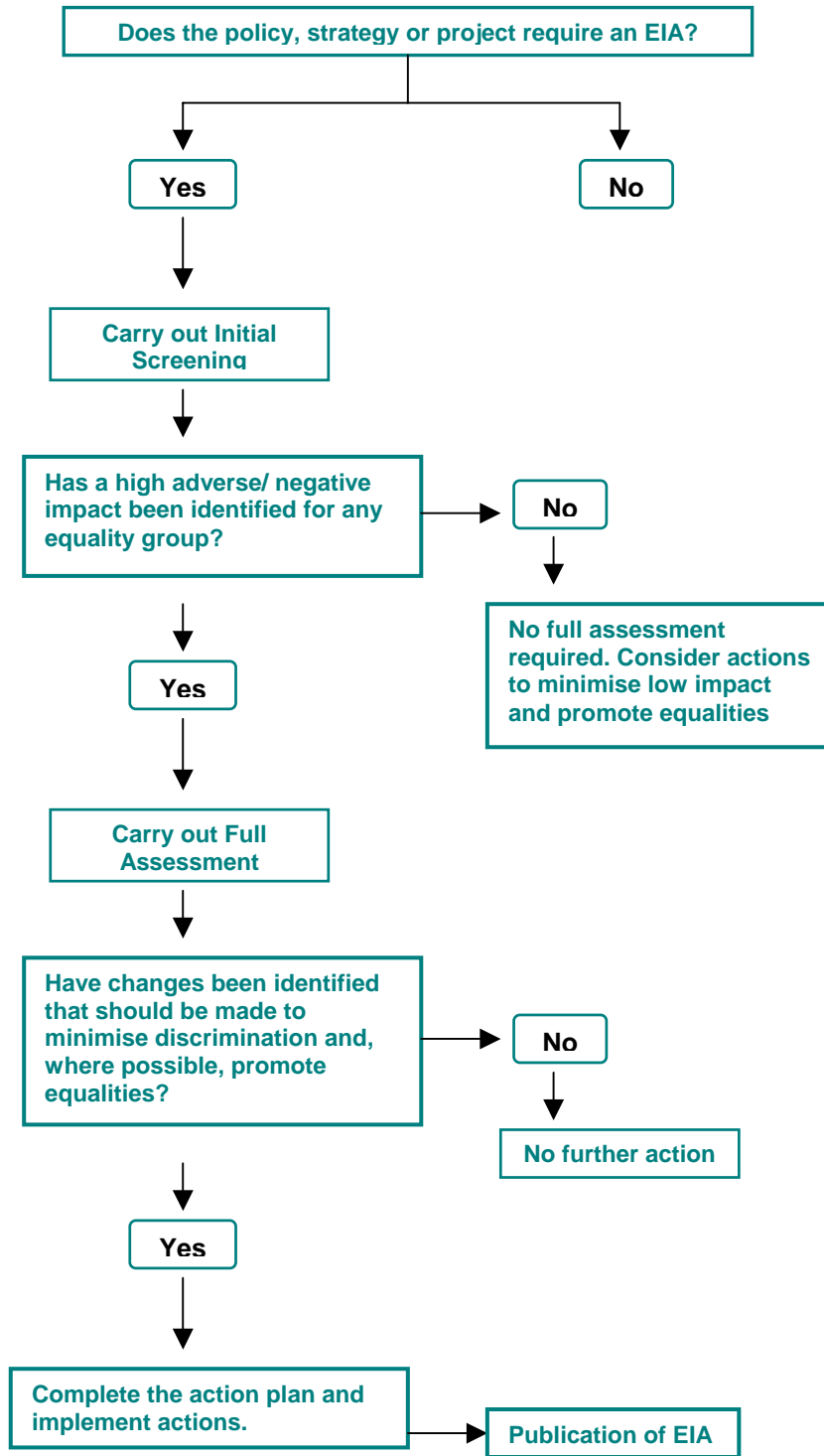
- (a) Developing a new policy, strategy or project
- (b) Reviewing existing policies
- (c) Policies, strategies or projects have been identified by relevant Committees or by SMT as specifically requiring an EIA

All project managers are responsible for incorporating equalities into their projects or strategies and for assessing the equalities impacts. This should be a continuous process, starting at the very beginning of the project. If there is any doubt as to whether a policy, strategy or project requires initial screening, managers should contact the Race & Diversity Unit for advice.

The EIA consists of two parts:

- (a) The initial screening process
- (b) The more thorough full assessment if the initial screening has identified an adverse / negative impact.

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**Initial Screening**

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This part of the EIA form should be completed during the development or review of a policy, strategy or project before approval is obtained from the relevant committee or SMT.

Once part 1 has been completed, a full assessment is only required if:

- a) Any equality target group was identified as being disadvantaged or negatively impacted by the policy/strategy/project
- b) The impact was assessed as of high significance
- c) The impact was not intentional and/or illegal, i.e. discriminatory under anti-discrimination legislation

It may be useful to go through part 2 of the impact assessment form even if the impact is of low significance, as this would enable a thorough assessment of the policy/strategy/project.

The aim is to try to take the perspective of the service users and staff when carrying out an EIA. The process is not an exact science and will be challenging. Completing an EIA is similar to a risk assessment as it involves predicting and assessing the implications of a policy, strategy or project on a wide range of people with different needs. This should also not be carried out in isolation but with the support and advice of others. Effective consultation with stakeholders is a key ingredient in conducting EIAs.

At the screening stage, you should be assessing obvious negative / positive impact or gaps in knowledge about likely impact. It should be a relatively short process which makes use of previous consultation results, personal knowledge & experience, research & reports, internet searches, internal & external specialist advice, staff with previous experience of similar policies, strategies or projects, etc.

In question 7 it should be noted if there is a lack of data or information concerning a particular area but this should not be a reason to stop the process. If the likely impact on a particular group is unknown then action needs to be taken to acquire this information.

## Full Impact

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This part provides an opportunity to assess the evidence for a possible negative impact. It ensures that research and consultation with the equality target groups has been carried out and leads to an action or improvement plan aiming to minimise the negative impact and, where possible, maximise the positive impact.

Copies of all full EIAs should be retained on file with a copy sent to the Race and Diversity Unit. The public will be able to examine completed EIAs if they request to see them and information about EIAs is available on the MPA's website.

### **Resources**

The Race & Diversity Unit will be happy to provide advice and support to individuals or teams in carrying out their EIA. The Unit can also provide useful support documents and links to other organisations involved in impact assessment work as well as equal opportunity and anti-discrimination organisations. A list of useful contacts and relevant research reports is being developed to assist in the EIA process.

### **A final note**

#### **What is a 'function' or 'policy' of the MPA?**

The Home Office and the CRE have defined a policy as 'any practice or written document which sets out a course of action, guiding principles or procedure which is adopted and implemented by the Authority. This includes any decisions taken or recommendations made at meetings which may lead to action to implement.'

A 'function' is any activity of the MPA. A policy is any prescription, whether formal or informal, written or customary, on how a function should be carried out. As such it will include policies, strategies, guides, manuals and common practice, decisions that could lead to the formulation of a policy or practice.

### **Diversity**



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Diversity in the work place is an understanding that there are differences among employees and that these differences can be an asset to work being done more efficiently and effectively. A method of achieving this kind of working environment will be to primarily consider what cultural filters an organisation possesses and to accept these differences in people so that each person is treated and valued as a unique individual. Diversity includes virtually all ways in which people differ, not just the more obvious ones of gender, race, ethnicity or disability (*Constructing Excellence*).

### Equal Opportunities

Equal opportunities is the provision of equal rights for both men and women whatever their age, race, gender, faith, sexual orientation and disability in all areas such as employment and services.

Equal opportunity can affect people in many ways, for example:

- ❖ Women being paid less for doing the same job as a man
- ❖ People with disabilities perceived as unable to carry out duties as well as able-bodied people.
- ❖ Women being favoured more in certain roles despite a man having the same qualifications, experience and capabilities to carry out the role(s) and vice versa.

### Diversity vs. Equal Opportunities

The main distinctions are that:

- ❖ Equal Opportunity is externally initiated, legally driven, has a quantitative focus, is problem focused, assumes assimilation and is reactive.
- ❖ Diversity is internally initiated, business-needs driven, has a qualitative focus, is opportunity focused, assumes pluralism and is proactive.

### Examples of Equality Target Groups

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Age	The definition of age groups will need to be sensitive to the policy under consideration. For example, in relation to employment policies the middle aged are often a vulnerable group & pensionable age is different for men and women.
Gender	Men (including boys), Women (including girls) and Transgender people.
Disability	Persons with a disability as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 such as those with hearing impairment, visual impairment, physically disabled, learning disability or mental health problems.
Racial group	Chinese, Irish Traveller, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black African, Black Caribbean, White, Turkish, Greek Cypriot, mixed ethnic group, any other ethnic group/nationality.
Faith / Religion	Buddhist, Christianity (Protestant, Catholic), Hindu, Islam /Muslim, Jewish, Sikh, other religion or people of no religious belief.
Sexual orientation	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, or heterosexual.