

Guidance on how to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

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Guidance on how to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

1. What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool that helps the MPA identify the potential impact of a policy or way of working on different groups of people. These groups might be based on age, disability, gender identity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. EIAs ensure that the MPA does not discriminate or unintentionally disadvantage individuals while providing an opportunity to consider ways to promote equality.

2. Why do we do EIAs?

We conduct Equality Impact Assessments as part of our normal business planning process because it helps us improve service delivery and make the best use of resources. EIAs are examples of an evidence-based approach to policy-making and can promote efficiency savings; see the advice sheet at Appendix B for more information on *evidence*. EIAs are an essential part of the Met Forward process but are also very important for many other business decisions. EIAs are also part of how the MPA meets its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

3. What are 'policies'?

For the rest of this document, reference will be made to the 'policy' or to 'policies'; this is to make explaining things simpler. The majority of MPA strategies, projects, policies or everyday decision-making activities will require an EIA of some sort. Managers will decide when to conduct EIAs based on some simple questions (see tip at 4 below) and must state how they have reached their decision; sometimes they will decide to focus on areas with greatest relevance for equalities. Look at the advice sheet at Appendix B for more information on *relevance*. More detailed guidance for managers can be found at Appendix C.

4. When do we do EIAs?

EIAs should be started at the very beginning of a process and not at the end. EIAs are never effectively 'finished' so long as the policy they refer to is still being used. EIAs should be looked at again when a policy has been in use for some time or when it is due to be reviewed; this should be at least once every three years.

Tip: When do we do EIAs? – questions to ask: Does the policy affect employees or the wider community? Is it a major policy with a significant effect on service delivery? Will it affect how other organisations operate (e.g. the MPS)? Does it involve a significant commitment of resources? Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities? If the answer is 'yes' to any of the above you need to conduct an EIA.

5. Who's responsible for doing an EIA?

Anyone who makes decisions on what a policy should look like, how a function is carried out, what activities should be done, or how services are delivered will be responsible for conducting an EIA. This is usually the lead

person who 'owns' the policy. The person conducting an EIA must have a detailed understanding of the policy area and must be in a position to ensure changes are made where they are needed. Usually this is the person responsible for developing the policy who has the full support from senior management. Ideally, individuals should not attempt to conduct an EIA on their own but should involve others right from the start; where possible, you should gather a group of three or more people together. A group approach will make the task easier and result in a far more effective EIA being carried out. Such a group could contain a diversity officer, someone from another team, or partners (e.g. police colleagues where a scrutiny or oversight EIA is being conducted).

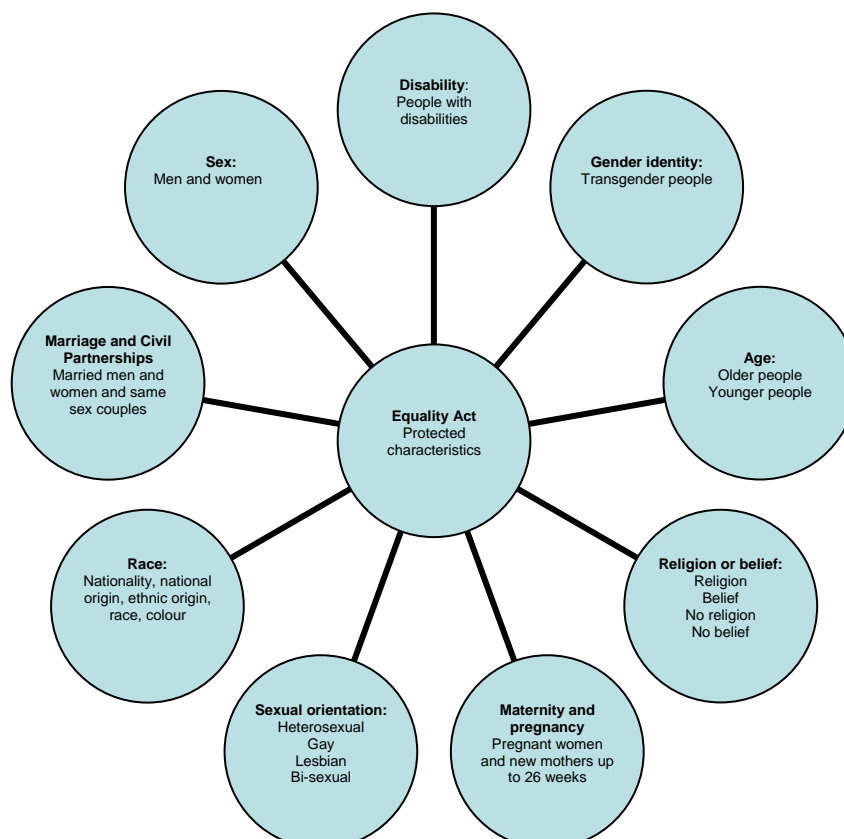
6. How do I start?

You should start by setting up an EIA group for the policy for which you are responsible. If you yourself have not received any EIA training then you should find someone who has who can be a member of your EIA group.

You should start with a blank piece of paper and ask yourselves the following questions about your policy:

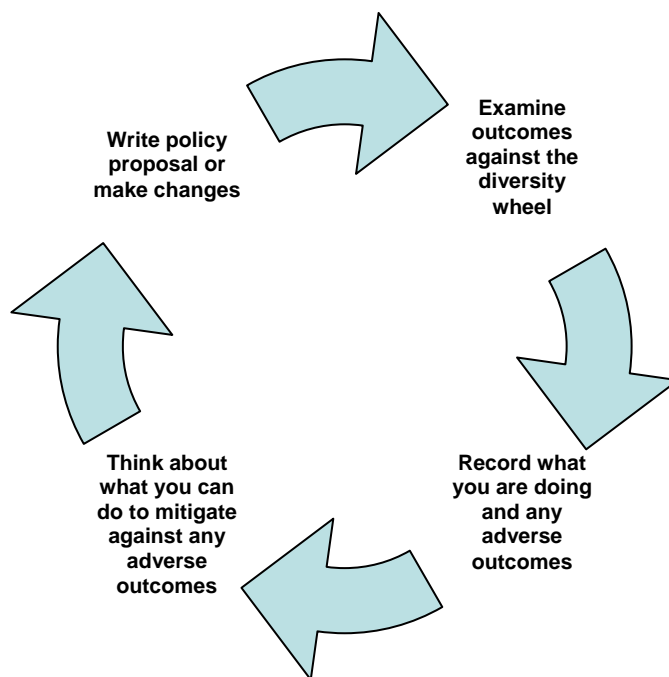
- 1) What is the aim of your policy?
- 2) What outcomes do you want?
- 3) Would you receive a different outcome if you were from a particular group? (see the diversity wheel below)
- 4) Would this outcome be adverse?
- 5) Can you, and how would you, mitigate any adverse outcome?

The diversity wheel:



Use your group to discuss each aspect of your policy in relation to each group or sub-group on the diversity wheel. Consider any possible adverse impacts or any opportunities to make a positive impact; look at the advice sheet at Appendix B for more information on *impact*. Think about how you might change your policy to mitigate any adverse effects; you can go back and make changes or plan to gather more data and conduct consultation where you think this is needed. Look at the advice sheet at Appendix B for more information on *data collection* and *consultation*.

The equality impact assessment process:



7. The assessment form:

The assessment form is where you explain what you have done during your EIA (a copy of the form is at Appendix A). These are published documents so you should always imagine that the reader knows very little about what you are describing. You should make full use of the opportunity to record what you have discovered during the process and how you have reached your decisions using the commentary box on the EIA form. You should also write some brief notes in respect of each of the groups on the diversity wheel, even where you think your policy has no impact. You will also want to record what your next steps will be on the action plan page.

8. Links with other EIAs:

Some of the EIAs that you will want to complete will be about MPA processes and will be linked to the actions of partners such as the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). Where this is the case, the outcomes of the partners' EIAs will be of interest to you when you take another look at the EIA you originally conducted. Findings from partners' EIAs may influence or change your own EIA outcomes.

An example of this would be a Met Forward project about better community consultation. Your EIA might suggest that this has a positive impact on all community

groups. What if when the MPS consult during their EIA they find a major negative impact for a particular community group? This would inform your next review of your own EIA; you could as a result decide to co-opt a community member onto your programme board.

9. Action plans:

Action plans are how we explain what we are going to do about the things we have discovered by conducting the EIA. There should be at least one action for every EIA, and that is to review the EIA; this can be when the policy is scheduled to be reviewed or when it reaches a certain milestone. Other actions may be to gather more information or consult more widely about the effects of the policy. You can also give details of when you are expecting feedback from EIAs that you have required others to conduct and how this might link into your own EIA review. Use your action plans to provide updates on your EIA.

An example of an action would be to examine the effects of a policy after it has been in place for some time and where you have been able to collect some data. A 'must' for your action plan is the next review date for your EIA.

10. Possible EIA outcomes:

There are four possible outcomes of an EIA:

Outcome 1: No major change: the EIA demonstrates the policy is robust and there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

Outcome 2: Adjust the policy: the EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. Adjust the policy to remove barriers or better promote equality.

Outcome 3: Continue the policy: the EIA identifies the potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to promote equality. Clearly record the justifications for continuing with it. For the most important and relevant policies, compelling reasons will be needed.

Outcome 4: Stop and remove the policy: the policy shows actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped and removed or changed.

11. Quality Assurance:

As well as providing guidance prior to conducting an EIA, diversity officers can sometimes help by being part of your EIA group. Diversity officers will also check recently completed EIAs; officers from the Department of Audit and Risk Assurance will provide further quality assurance. The status and condition of EIAs will be the subject of reports to SMT who will take an interest in the number of EIAs being undertaken and their outcomes. Guidance on the role of senior management in the EIA process is given at Appendix C.

12. Training

Training will be delivered on a regular basis for new staff and to provide refresher training for existing staff. Training will also be provided for senior management team members. Advice on EIA training is available from the HR unit



Metropolitan Police Authority

Equality Impact Assessment Form

1. Name of the strategy, policy, or project:

2. Officer(s) & Unit responsible for completing the assessment:

3. What is the aim or intended outcome of the strategy, policy or project?

4. Would you receive a different outcome if you were from a particular group and would this outcome be adverse or beneficial?

Diversity group	Comments
Age	
Disability	
Sex	
Race	
Religion or Belief	

Sexual Orientation	
Gender Identity	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	
Maternity and Pregnancy	

5. Can you, and how would you, mitigate any adverse outcome?

6. Use the action plan to describe the actions you will undertake as a result of this EIA

7. Submitted for quality assurance and peer review Yes/No

8. Signed by MPA lead:

9. Approved by Chief Executive:

10. Published on the MPA website Yes/No

Please return a hard copy and electronic copy (including commentary and action plans) to the Head of Equalities and Engagement once completed. The original signed hard copy & an electronic copy should be kept within your unit for audit purposes.

Commentary:

Write here how you arrived at your conclusions, the evidence you considered and anything that you discounted. Say how you determined relevance for equalities. Describe the information you have gathered, who you have consulted, and whether you have identified any gaps in the information you have. Discuss what the research has revealed about any potential for direct or indirect discrimination, the effect on relations between groups, and any opportunities to promote equality. Describe any steps you have taken to mitigate against any adverse impact(s) and any changes you may have made to the policy.

Advice Sheet

Evidence:

The way MPA business is managed should be shaped by evidence-based policymaking. This means using evidence to design policy that you know will work. EIAs provide a clear and structured way to collect and assess such evidence. Evidence gathering can help you look at the wider impact of a policy or a decision including the relationship with other policies and impact assessments. You will also need to look at the gaps in your evidence and decide how these will be filled.

Relevance:

Relevance is important because it can allow you to prioritise your equality impact assessments. The weight that you give to equality should therefore be proportionate to its relevance to any policy. This allows you to commit resources where there is likely to be the most benefit. However, most decisions will have some relevance for equality; if you ignore one in order to fully equality impact assess another then you should state your reasons, including how you plan to use any future resources.

Consultation:

The EIA should be form part of any involvement and consultation activities associated with the actual policy. Managers should:

1. Plan to involve people affected by the policy at the pre-policy development stage.
2. Attach the draft EIA with any consultation document and ask for input
3. Ask open questions to elicit a full response
4. Examine the results of related earlier consultations
5. Examine any consultations that partner organisations already have conducted
6. Always provide feedback to those consulted

Data collection:

Lack of data is never an excuse for not assessing impact – some data will almost always be available and where data aren't available they must be actively gathered. Data being used to conduct EIAs should ideally be shared and pooled in a database for easy access by others. Tailored data collection may however be necessary for certain EIAs. As well as internal equality data, you may also need to draw on local, regional and national research. Above all, you need to consider how you can build equalities into your data collection systems.

Impact:

The equality impact of a policy can be high or low. However an impact may affect a small number of people to a significant extent, or a large number of people to a lesser extent; in both cases there may be a 'high' impact. This is like identifying forms of risk where there are two variables that determine the seriousness of the effect. Policies introduced specifically to promote equality or tackle the adverse effects of current policies may still need to be impact assessed. This is because there is still the potential for discriminatory activity, an adverse impact or a missed opportunity to promote equality. This is because there is the potential for one group to be adversely affected while there is a positive affect on others.

Guidance for managers

This guidance is for managers who are the 'lead' persons responsible for developing a policy and conducting an EIA. This is to be read in addition to the general guidance on pages 3-6 and the advice sheet at Appendix B. As mentioned at the beginning of this document, EIAs are part of the way the MPA meets its obligations under the Equality Act. All managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with these obligations.

Managers' first concern will be how relevant their policy is for equalities; *relevance* is described on the advice sheet at Appendix B. Most policies will have some relevance for equalities and it is the manager's job to decide on a proportionate response; that may involve prioritising EIAs for those policies with greatest relevance. Prioritising is helpful where there are many assessments to be done. While this is a sensible approach when new to the process, ultimately managers should ensure that they incorporate the EIA approach into their business plans so that they become an integrated part of the business planning process.

The initial process described above is sometimes referred to as 'screening' and can result in a decision not to conduct any detailed research or consultation because the policy has only low *impact*; impact is described more fully on the advice sheet at Appendix B. Any decision not to proceed with an EIA because the policy has only a low impact or because there are resource issues, should be fully described on the assessment form. Where resources are the reason then managers should indicate when they plan to conduct the EIA. Managers should at all times try to identify and record the risk of not conducting a full EIA or not prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

Finally, managers should develop an awareness of their role in identifying all policies that may require an EIA. In the case of projects such as those that form part of Met Forward, the requirement is more obvious and EIAs are closely tied to the project initiation process. EIAs are no less important throughout the rest of the Authority's business however. If managers are in any doubt about when to conduct an EIA they should contact one of the diversity officers for advice.

Guidance for senior management

Senior managers will want to be assured that the MPA is complying with its obligations under the Equality Act. SMT will determine what reports it requires on the completion of EIAs and the outcomes from quality assurance processes. They will be especially interested in any risks that have been identified, how the EIA work has been prioritised, and whether there are any gaps in the business planning process relating to equality and diversity. EIAs are a way of publicly demonstrating that the MPA is meeting its equality and diversity obligations; the Chief Executive will sign completed EIAs and these will be published on the MPA website.