

Lancaster City Council's Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Form

What is an equality impact assessment?

An equality impact assessment is a way of understanding the impact that a new way of doing things might have on members of our community, in particular people from protected groups. This could be a new service, practice, policy, strategy, project or decision.

Protected groups include age, disability, faith, religion or belief, gender (including marriage, pregnancy and maternity), gender reassignment, race and sexual orientation (including Civil Partnership).

Please note: the impact on rural communities and people on low incomes must also to be considered.

Why do I need to carry out an equality impact assessment?

Part of the council's core purpose is to *'provide a range of customer focused services and offer value for money and meet the needs of people who live, work and visit the district' and to 'maintain a cohesive community by ensuring we understanding the needs of our communities and provide equality of access to our services and employment opportunities'*.

It is therefore important that we collect and use information about our community to help us to understand how service changes and decisions might impact on the local community.

Our corporate *Ethos* makes it clear that in our stewardship role the council has a responsibility for *'ensuring the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the local area'* and that in terms of social justice that *'the values of local government are founded on equality and meeting community needs'*.

Therefore we should consider how everything we do will impact on the communities that we serve. This should lead to more informed decision making, more customer focussed, cost effective, efficient services for local people.

When delivering services and employment, the council has a general equality duty to consider the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other unlawful conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

How do I carry out an equality impact assessment?

A simple form has been developed to assist services with carrying out equality impact assessments.

The form provides a consistent approach to equality impact assessment, however, it is more important that we consider how everything we do will impact on the local community and that action is taken to mitigate impact. The form provides a way of recording this.

The council's 'getting to know our communities' data will help services to assess potential impact on protected groups. This provides both local and national statistics and is available on the Elsie equality and diversity page (via HR).

All councils have to produce similar information, therefore it may be useful to do a web search rather than starting from scratch.

An example of a completed form is also available on the Elsie equality and diversity page (via HR).

When do I need to carry out equality impact assessment?

Equality impact assessment should take place when considering doing something in a new way.

For example:

- A change in a current service or introduction of a new service
- The review of a current policy/strategy or the development of a new policy/strategy
- The start of a new project or when making a decision.

A decision making flow chart is available on the Elsie equality and diversity page (via HR).

An equality impact assessment form will need to be completed as an appendix to decision making committee reports eg Cabinet, Council.

Please note: the outcomes of your equality impact assessment should be used to inform your reports.

Please refer to the report writing guidelines on Elsie or contact democratic services for advice on this.

Who should carry out equality impact assessment?

An equality impact assessment should be carried out by the officer leading on above examples.

Who can I contact for support and guidance?

Equality impact assessment support is available from the HR and Organisational Development Team.

Equality impact assessment form

An equality impact assessment should take place when considering doing something in a new way.

Please submit your completed form as an appendix to your committee reports for monitoring and publishing purposes to ['report clearance'](#) (please refer to report writing guidance).

Please keep your answers brief and to the point. Consideration needs to be reasonable and proportionate.

Please also remember that this will be a public document – do not use jargon or abbreviations.

Section 1: Details

Service	People and Policy
Title and brief description (if required)	Introduction of sexual harassment and secondment policies, and revision of Honoraria and Acting Up, Dignity Equity and Inclusion and Employee Volunteering
New or existing	New and existing
Author/officer lead	Laura Collins, HR Policy and Strategy Lead
Date	15.11.2024

Does this affect staff, customers or other members of the public?

Yes Please complete the rest of the equality form.

No Please return the equality form as above.

Section 2: Summary

What is the purpose, aims and objectives?

Sexual Harassment – to ensure we are compliant (from a HR policy perspective) with the new duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment

Secondment – to ensure we have a policy for a long-established process of employee secondments

Honoraria and Acting Up and Volunteering – to update policies and standardise format

Dignity Equity and Inclusion – to combine diversity and equality policy and dignity at work policy to set out a zero tolerance approach to bullying, harassment and discrimination

Who is intended to benefit and how?

1. Existing members of staff and applicants– improving and developing our employment offer, ensuring our policies continue to be in line with legislation and best practice.

2. Line Managers – providing a policy framework which is compliant and relevant and can assist them in managing people processes.
3. Lancaster City Council – attracting and retaining talent in our workforce ensuring that policies link to other wider underpinning strategies such as the people plan and fair work charter aims.

Section 3: Assessing impact

Is there any potential or evidence that this will or could:		
• Affect people from any protected group differently to others?	Yes*	No
• Discriminate unlawfully against any protected group?	Yes*	No
• Affect the relations between protected groups and others?	Yes	No
• Encourage protected groups to participate in activities if participation is disproportionately low (won't always be applicable)?	Yes	No
• Prevent the council from achieving the aims of its' Equality and Diversity Policy?	Yes	No

If yes, please provide more detail of potential impact and evidence including:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A brief description of what information you have and from where eg getting to know our communities data, service use monitoring, views of those affected ie discussions or consultation results? - What does this tell you ie negative or positive affect? 	
Age including older and younger people and children	N/A
Disability	<p>*All HR policies constitute a “provision, criterion or practice” which, even if applied equally to all members of staff, could disproportionately impact those with protected characteristics and therefore amount to discrimination for the purposes of the Equality Act.</p> <p>With these policies in mind, disability is relevant. In particular, a disabled employee’s ability to co-operate with the formal processes.</p> <p>There is of course a legitimate aim being pursued in having each of these policies in place and ensuring that reasonable adjustments are made and the capability of the employee is taken into account, this will be sufficient.</p>
Faith, religion or belief	The DEI policy presents an opportunity for conflict between espousing protected views and other protected characteristics i.e. gender reassignment. We will consider it important to ensure that all protected characteristics are set out and set the expectation for respectful communication between colleagues, whilst also recognising that beliefs can be protected even if they offend others.
Gender including marriage, pregnancy and maternity	See above

Gender reassignment	See above
Race	N/A
Sexual orientation Including Civic Partnership	N/A
Rural communities	N/A
People on low incomes	N/A

Section 4: Next steps

Do you need any more information/evidence eg statistics, consultation? If so, how do you plan to address this?

No

How have you taken/will you take the potential impact and evidence into account?

There is a legitimate aim in having a DEI policy, and that is to set the expectation for respectful interaction between colleagues. We consider that the balance is struck fairly in the policy and that it is reasonable to expect respectful conduct between staff members.

How do you plan to monitor the impact and effectiveness of this change or decision?

Policies to be reviewed in line with regular cycle of review every two years.

Thank you for completing this equality impact assessment form, please submit your completed form as an appendix to your committee reports for monitoring and publishing purposes to [‘report clearance’](#) (please refer to report writing guidance).