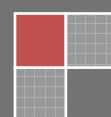


2010

EIA

A resource for practitioners

Equality Impact Assessments have been developed as a tool for ensuring that the protected equality characteristics, social inclusion and community cohesion issues can be considered when drawing up or reviewing policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services, the carrying out of functions and the employment practice of the organisation.



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What is an EIA?

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been developed as a tool for ensuring that the protected equality characteristics, along with social inclusion and community cohesion issues, can be considered when drawing up or reviewing policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services, the carrying out of functions and the employment practice of the organisation.

They should help organisations to:

- determine how strategies, policies and practice or new proposals will impact or affect different communities, especially those groups or communities that experience inequality, discrimination, social exclusion or disadvantage
- measure whether policies or proposals will have a negative, neutral or positive effect on different communities
- make decisions about current and future services and practice in fuller knowledge and understanding of the possible outcomes for different communities or customer groups
- develop ways of monitoring and reviewing the effects of new or changing policies or proposals if they are introduced.

Equality impact assessment is the process of assessing the impact of existing or proposed policies and practices in relation to their consequences for disability, race, gender and other protected characteristics.

It includes looking for opportunities to achieve a positive impact that may have been missed or that could be better exploited, as well as the detection of actual or potential negative impact for any of the groups covered by equality legislation.

Impact assessment is an ongoing process, not something that happens just once at the start or end of policy development, and should develop and evolve along with the policy.

Equality impact assessment is not something to be applied only to 'formal' policies. It is – or should be – as much an overall approach and way of thinking as it is a set of formal arrangements. Therefore, you should give at least as much thought to the management, decision-making and governance structures associated with EIAs as to the tools and templates you may wish to develop for the conduct of full assessments of the impact on disability, race, gender or other protected characteristics.

The assessment is not an end in itself. Its purpose is to achieve improvements for people, so most good equality impact assessments are likely to require action to be taken to bring about greater equality. The outcome of such action needs to be monitored and reviewed as part of the ongoing equality impact assessment process.

Assessing impact on disability, race, gender and other protected characteristics is a positive process which should lead to real and practical improvements in relation to policies and practices. How the impact is assessed will vary, but this should be part of the run-of-the-mill and routine elements of developing policy and putting it into practice.

The nature and detail of the equality impact assessment process will vary from assessment to assessment, but it should not be seen as inherently difficult or as an activity apart from other policy development and assessment work.