



Policy, Finance and Development Committee	Tuesday, 29 March 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Equality Assessments (EA's)**

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information regarding Equality Assessments (EA's).

2. Recommendations

That Members note the contents of the report regarding how to access EA's.

3. Information

3.1. What is an Equality Assessment?

An Equality Assessment is a tool for identifying the potential impact of the council's strategies, policies, services plans and functions on its customers and staff.

Equality Assessment's can anticipate the equality consequences of particular policy/service initiatives and ensure that as far as possible, any negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community are eliminated, minimised or counterbalanced by other measures.

Equality Assessments are therefore essentially about service improvements and can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to customers by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community.

A toolkit has been produced to help managers undertake comprehensive and robust Equality Assessments of all their core services or functions, plans, strategies, policies, procedures and practices.

Please note that throughout this document the term „policy/service“ will be used to abbreviate for “functions, strategies, policies, plans, procedures and practices”.

Equality Assessments are a relevant tool to evaluating the service we delivered to meet customer' need.

The Equality Act 2010 brings together the three existing equality duties on race, disability and gender into new single Equality Duty. The new single Equality Duty covers the 9 protected characteristics of:

- Race;
- Gender;

- Disability;
- Age;
- Sexual Orientation;
- Religion/Belief;
- Pregnancy and maternity explicitly; and
- Gender re-assignment.

The Equality Duty requires all public authorities to have “**due regard**” to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Council must assess which of its policies and services are relevant to the various equality strands, and set out how they will monitor policies/services for any adverse impact on equality.

For this we use an Equality Assessment form which includes an Initial Screening an EA Action Plan section has been circulated to all staff responsible for carrying out equality assessments.

A Toolkit is also used to assess whether the policies that guide our work, the procedures we operate and the day-to-day working practices we have developed are likely to have a positive or negative impact on different groups within Oadby and Wigston. Having made this assessment officers can take action to **prevent** direct and indirect discrimination and **promote** positive community relations.

A selection of relevant Equality Assessments from 2009 to 2015 are posted on the Council’s website.(see the link attached).A schedule of Equality Assessments is also regularly updated by the Council’s Community Engagement Officer. Access to this is by request. Not all Equality Assessments are required to be published under Equality Guidance. They are accessible by request.

In carrying out Equality Assessments good practice includes an assessment of needs and impact on other communities of interest which include (but is not exclusive to):

- gypsy and traveller communities;
- people with caring responsibilities;
- asylum seeker and refugee communities;
- migrant workers and other new arrivals;
- looked after children;
- deprived or disadvantaged communities (i.e. inequalities in health or education); and
- social inclusion and community cohesion.

3.2. Who is responsible for carrying out Equality Assessments?

EA’s should be an integral part of policy development and in line with the statutory requirement, the Council must conduct EA’s as soon as a relevant new policy, function or service is considered. The ownership and responsibility for an EA lies at Head of

Service level. Service Managers and frontline staff are important in the assessment process as they will not only be involved in implementing the necessary actions identified following an assessment but also helping to integrate and mainstream equalities into service planning.

EA's will help us drive forward the equalities agenda locally and with our partners. The benefits of equality assessments include:

- Helping to identify whether we are excluding certain groups from our policies/ services; helping to identify any unmet need
- Helping to identify direct or indirect discrimination;
- Assisting us in considering alternative policies or measures or other ways of providing a service that might address any adverse impact;
- Helping to mainstream equality into our policies and practices; and
- Helping us to target resources more effectively.

A list of all Equality Assessments published by the Council can be found at the following link below.

https://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/equality_impact_assessments

There are a total of 23 EA's that have been completed against Policies and published. Further completed EA's will be published shortly. New EA's will be completed and published as per the guidance outlined in this report.

Most notably, where a substantial change has taken place with regard to a change of policy, service, planning etc it should undergo an initial review and in some cases a full review.

To support this three staff training days are planned for 2016. These are focussed on the authors of Equality Assessments.

The dates are: April 5th, April 7th and April 14th 2016.

Background Documents:-

The Equality and Human Rights Commission Information Guide on Equality Impact Assessments:

http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/PSD/equality_impact_assessment_guidance_quick-start_guide.pdf

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Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AC)	No significant implications.

Equalities (VQ)	As contained in the report.
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