

Equality Impact Assessment

Title of service or policy	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/2021	
Name of directorate and service	Finance – Welfare Support	
Name and role of officers completing the EIA	Damian Peak – Welfare Support Manager	
Date of assessment	14/10/2019	

Equality Impact Assessment (or 'Equality Analysis') is a process of systematically analysing a new or existing policy or service to identify what impact or likely impact it will have on different groups within the community. The primary concern is to identify any discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community. Equality impact Assessments (EIAs) can be carried out in relation to service delivery as well as employment policies and strategies.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or Equality Analysis on a policy, service or function. It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, with a final version including the action plan section being published on the Council's and NHS Bath and North East Somerset's websites.

1.	Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented.	
	Key questions	Answers / Notes
1.1	Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the service/policy is delivered and by whom • If responsibility for its implementation is shared with other departments or organisations • Intended outcomes 	The scheme is to be used to decide the level of Council Tax Reduction that will be provided to council tax payers of Banes of working age who have a low income. The Service will be delivered by the council's Welfare Support team. The intended outcome is to carry forwards the vast majority of rules which apply to the 2019/20 scheme. However the intention is to also make some small changes which will remedy some of the unintended effects which a small minority of the current rules have. These effects can sometimes have unfair and unreasonable consequences on council tax payers.
1.2	Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it a new service/policy or review of an existing one? • Is it a national requirement?). • How much room for review is there? 	It is a review of an existing policy. It is a national requirement to have a policy, but the council only has scope to exercise discretion in relation to people of working age. Any changes to the scheme must be agreed by full council and a public consultation exercise must be conducted on any proposed changes. If the changes are agreed then the scheme may only be changed from the following financial year.
1.3	Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?	The aims of the policy are to target support to those who need it most, and to take a holistic approach to solving people's complex social and financial problems and to focus resources on helping people to achieve sustainable employment and

		financial stability. The aims of the policy also link to the recovery and billing processes for council tax, to ensure that customers are billed timeously and correctly and can easily understand their obligations to pay council tax. There is a further link between one of the proposed changes and this is in relation to a possible application of additional council tax premiums being charged on long term empty properties.
2. Consideration of available data, research and information		
<p>Monitoring data and other information should be used to help you analyse whether you are delivering a fair and equal service. Please consider the availability of the following as potential sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demographic data and other statistics, including census findings ● Recent research findings (local and national) ● Results from consultation or engagement you have undertaken ● Service user monitoring data (including ethnicity, gender, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation and age) ● Information from relevant groups or agencies, for example trade unions and voluntary/community organisations ● Analysis of records of enquiries about your service, or complaints or compliments about them ● Recommendations of external inspections or audit reports 		
	Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
2.1	What is the equalities profile of the team delivering the service/policy?	(taken from EIA done in 2013 and edited to give less detail). There are currently 25 staff employed within Welfare Support. The staff profile is similar to that of the organisation as a whole (approximately two thirds of these are female and the workforce is fairly well spread across all age groupings). Similar to the organisation as a whole, BME staff and staff who have declared a disability are under-represented compared to the local community profile.

2.2	What equalities training have staff received?	An introduction to equalities is included within the Corporate Induction programme for new staff, and there is also a half day equalities training course particularly targeted at operational staff and a half day course for managers which some staff have attended.
2.3	What is the equalities profile of service users?	This proposal affects a wide range of customers from all backgrounds.
2.4	What other data do you have in terms of service users or staff? (e.g results of customer satisfaction surveys, consultation findings). Are there any gaps?	None
2.5	What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?	A 6 week public consultation was undertaken from 22.08.2019 to 03.10.2019. A summary of the results of consultation are included as an annex to this EIA document.
2.6	If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or policy, how will you include equalities considerations within this?	It will depend on the type of changes which the council will introduce to the scheme. If there are going to be radical changes the consultation process is likely to start with customer surveys for current claimants and view-finding exercises with partner organisations who are likely to have contact with residents who may be impacted on any changes to the scheme. This would also involve gathering views on how the council can best capture the views of under-represented members of the community who may be disproportionately affected by any changes.

3. Assessment of impact: 'Equality analysis'

	Based upon any data you have considered, or the results of consultation or research, use the spaces below to demonstrate you have analysed how the service or policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or helps promote equality in some way. Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equalities groups 		
		Examples of what the proposed changes will do to promote	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be

		equality (as compared to current scheme)	taken to address this
3.1	Gender – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	The proposed changes to the scheme do not impact specifically on gender, but they do remove potentially unfair treatment where it depends on which member of the couple makes the claim for council tax support.	Not applicable
3.2	Pregnancy and maternity	None identified in respect of pregnancy/maternity.	None identified in respect of pregnancy/maternity.
3.3	Transgender – – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	None identified	None identified
3.4	Disability - identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration both physical and mental impairments)	<p>One of the proposed changes is that cases where a partner of a CTS claimant receives the support component of ESA the couple will benefit from more support. Under the current rules this only applies where the LCTS claimant receives the support component of ESA.</p> <p>One of the additional proposed changes is to provide some protection to council tax payers where an additional charge in excess of the 100% payable on long-term empty properties would usually apply. A reduction will be applied so that the amount of council tax payable will remain at 100% whilst the property is undergoing disabled adaptations when the council has agreed to pay a Disabled Facilities</p>	None identified

		Grant.	
3.5	Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups	The proposed change to introduce the ability to write off council tax support paid in error will apply to both Pension and Working-age claimants .	None identified
3.6	Race – identify the impact/potential impact on different black and minority ethnic groups	None identified	No issues identified
3.6	Sexual orientation - identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbians, gay, bisexual & heterosexual people	None identified.	No issues identified
3.7	Marriage and civil partnership – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?	None identified	No issues identified
3.8	Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	None identified	No issues identified
3.9	Socio-economically disadvantaged – identify the impact on people who are disadvantaged due to factors like family background, educational attainment, neighbourhood, employment status can influence life chances	Non identified	None identified
3.10	Rural communities – identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities	None identified	No issues identified
3.11	Other factors		The condition that the council has to have agreed to pay a Disabled Facilities grant before the reduction referred to in 3.4 applies might be considered as too draconian. It might

			be that the Revenues Manager or Welfare Support Manager may have to make a decision in principle if a DFG award is delayed pending an assessment by an occupational therapist.
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4. Bath and North East Somerset Council & NHS B&NES Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment. These actions should be based upon the analysis of data and engagement, any gaps in the data you have identified, and any steps you will be taking to address any negative impacts or remove barriers. The actions need to be built into your service planning framework. Actions/targets should be measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed.

Issues identified	Actions required	Progress milestones	Officer responsible	By when
The cost of writing off council tax support paid in error is difficult to predict, and should be monitored carefully. However the use of a specific code for this purpose will enable the council to monitor the demographics of customers where the council has made errors in their awards, and will also serve as a useful performance management	Officers must work with IT to design a new write off code so that revenue foregone can be monitored regularly.	Submit enhancement request to IT by 01.11.2019 to start testing new code.	DP	01.12.2019

tool.				

5. Sign off and publishing

Once you have completed this form, it needs to be 'approved' by your Divisional Director or their nominated officer. Following this sign off, send a copy to the Equalities Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council's and/or NHS B&NES' website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by:

(Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

Date: