

Equality Impact Assessment / Equality Analysis

(Version 4)

Item name	Details
Title of service or policy	Business Rates – Discretionary Relief Policy
Name of directorate and service	Financial Services – Revenues
Name and role of officers completing the EqIA	Amanda Dalton-Jones – Revenue Manager
Date of assessment	26/2/2025

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 people and different groups within our community. The main aim is to identify any adverse impacts (i.e. discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community, and to identify areas where equality can be better promoted). Equality impact Assessments (EqIAs) can be carried out in relation to services provided to customers and residents as well as employment policies/strategies that relate to staffing matters.

This toolkit has been developed to use as a framework when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) or Equality Analysis. **Not all sections will be relevant – so mark N/A any that are not applicable.** It is intended that this is used as a working document throughout the process, and a final version will be published on the Council's website following relevant service lead approval.

1.1 Identify the aims of the policy or service and how it is implemented

Key questions	Answers / notes
<p>1.1 Briefly describe purpose of the service/policy e.g.</p> <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 	<p>The service is delivered by the Business Rates team. The policy covers our administration and delivery of awarding discretionary reliefs to businesses within the Local Authority.</p> <p>The policy is held within the team.</p> <p>The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance on reliefs available to businesses that meet certain criteria – to reduce business rates liability making it easier for them to operate and contribute to the local community.</p>
<p>1.2 Provide brief details of the scope of the policy or service being reviewed, for example:</p> <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? 	<p>This is a review of our existing policy – a consolidated and simplified view.</p> <p>It is a requirement that Local Authorities have one to refer to as it's regarding Local Authority Discretionary decisions, which should be documented.</p>
<p>1.3 Do the aims of this policy link to or conflict with any other policies of the Council?</p>	<p>No</p>

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2. Consideration of available data, research and information

Key questions	Data, research and information that you can refer to
<p>2.1 What equality focussed training have staff received to enable them to understand the needs of our diverse community?</p>	<p>Corporate courses on equality. There are 4 Business Rates Officers and 1 Business Rates Team Leader. All have completed online or face to face equality training within the last 3 years.</p>
<p>2.2 What is the equality profile of service users?</p>	<p>Businesses and sole traders of various size, within the Local Authority. Although there have been no requests for information to be translated into other languages or into an alternative format, the team is ready to provide information in alternative formats on request. Discretionary relief is considered for charities and amateur sports clubs, promoting these types of organisations.</p>
<p>2.3 Are there any recent customer satisfaction surveys to refer to? What were the results? Are there any gaps? Or differences in experience/outcomes?</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>2.4 What engagement or consultation has been undertaken as part of this EIA and with whom? What were the results?</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>2.5 If you are planning to undertake any consultation in the future regarding this service or</p>	<p>This Equality Impact Assessment and the simplified policy will be presented to the IEAG at the next opportunity as part of the consultative process to ensure it is accessible to all.</p>

policy, how will you include equality considerations within this?

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:

- Meets any particular needs of equalities groups or could help promote equality in some way.
- Could have a negative or adverse impact for any of the equality groups

Key questions	Examples of what the service has done to promote equality	Examples of actual or potential negative or adverse impact and what steps have been or could be taken to address this
3.1 Issues relating to all groups and protected characteristics	<p>Relief recipients are required to uphold the Council's values and have due regard to equality issues. They must make their services accessible (physically & financially) to all residents.</p> <p>Membership is open to all sections of the community and should not be exclusive or restrictive and have due regard to equality issues and actively encourage members from all groups and under-represented groups.</p>	N/A
3.2 Sex – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on women and men.	N/A	N/A
3.3 Pregnancy and maternity	N/A	N/A

3.4 Gender reassignment – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on transgender people	N/A	N/A
3.5 Disability – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on disabled people (ensure consideration of physical, sensory and mental health needs/differences)	This simplified version of the policy will be of benefit to all residents as it will be easier to understand.	N/A
3.6 Age – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on different age groups	N/A	N/A
3.7 Race – identify the impact/potential impact on across different ethnic groups	N/A	N/A
3.8 Sexual orientation – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, questioning people	N/A	N/A
3.9 Marriage and civil partnership – does the policy/strategy treat married and civil partnered people equally?	N/A	N/A
3.10 Religion/belief – identify the impact/potential impact of the policy on people of different religious/faith groups and also upon those with no religion.	N/A	N/A

<p>3.11 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 (this is not a legal requirement, but is a local priority).</p>	<p>The policy proactively encourages businesses to seek membership fees that will not disadvantage people due to socio economic levels. It states, “Where membership is required, it is accessible to all residents and concessions are available to certain groups, for example those on a low income or your people under 18”.</p> <p>Also “Any membership fees are set at a level that does not exclude the general community”.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>3.12 Rural communities* identify the impact / potential impact on people living in rural communities</p>	<p>Section 7 of the policy advises that discretion will be considered if a business can demonstrate it is essential to the community and any reduction or withdrawal of the service or facility will have a serious detrimental effect on the rural settlement. This discretion could positively impact residents in rural communities and encourage businesses to set up in rural locations.</p>	<p></p>
<p>3.13 Armed Forces Community ** serving members; reservists; veterans and their families, including the bereaved. Public services are required by law to pay due regard to the Armed Forces Community when developing policy, procedures and making decisions, particularly in the areas of public housing, education and healthcare (to remove</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>

disadvantage and consider special provision).		
<p>3.14 Care Experienced ***</p> <p>This working definition is currently under review and therefore subject to change:</p> <p>In B&NES, you are ‘care-experienced’ if you spent any time in your childhood in Local Authority care, living away from your parent(s) for example, you were adopted, lived in residential, foster care, kinship care, or a special guardianship arrangement.</p>	N/A	N/A

*There is no requirement within the public sector duty of the Equality Act to consider groups who may be disadvantaged due to socio economic status, or because of living in a rural area. However, these are significant issues within B&NES and have therefore been included here.

** The Equality Act does not cover armed forces community. However, the Armed Forces Bill (which came in on 22 Nov 2022) introduces a requirement to pay ‘due regard’ to make sure the Armed Forces Community are not disadvantaged when accessing public services.

***The Equality Act does not cover care experienced people. B&NES adopted this group as a protected characteristic in March 2024 alongside over 80 other Local Authorities. Although we have data for care leavers and children/young people who are currently in the care of B&NES we do not have wider data on disadvantage experienced through being in care.

4. Bath and North East Somerset Council Equality Impact Assessment Improvement Plan

Please list actions that you plan to take as a result of this assessment/analysis. 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
This revised policy would benefit from feedback via the IEAG as it is a discretionary policy (by necessity) and therefore the process around implementation needs to be transparent and robust (or words to that effect)	To take the revised policy and EqIA to the IEAG at next opportunity to gain feedback	Date to be issued from Equality Officer	Amanda Dalton-Jones	TBA

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 Equality Team (equality@bathnes.gov.uk), who will publish it on the Council’s website. Keep a copy for your own records.

Signed off by: Carl Thomas-Roberts

(Divisional Director or nominated senior officer)

Date: 5th March 2025