

Equality Impact Assessment

Guidance Notes

*“How to carry out your
Equality Impact Assessment”*

Introduction

The Equality Impact Assessment (Equality Impact Assessment) process is integral to meeting the requirements of the Single Equality Scheme which incorporates the legislative drivers in relation to Race, Disability and Gender.

The Trust is required to complete Equality Impact Assessments and publish so that members of the public and staff can easily access and read them. By doing this, the Trust demonstrates that it takes its responsibilities for the general and specific duties seriously of the relevant legislation, and that it intends to ensure that equality and diversity is integrated to the culture and function of the organization. An Equality Impact Assessment applies to **policies, procedures and practices (PPP)**, where formally described and written or undertaken as custom and practice.

There are a number of benefits to the Trust staff and patients by carrying out the Equality Impact Assessment. It will assist the organization to mainstream equality and diversity issues and promote a culture where everyone considers the equality relevance and impact of their actions and decisions on others, which engenders respect and diversity.

What is an Equality Impact Assessment?

Equality Impact Assessment is a systematic assessment of the impact of prescriptive activities on different equality target groups.

The Equality Impact Assessment consists of two parts:

- (a) The initial screening process
- (b) The more thorough full assessment if the initial screening has identified an adverse/negative impact.

What is the purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment?

The Equality Impact Assessment is an assessment of whether the Trust is prescribing or instructing an activity that may or will exclude or disadvantage any particular group. We are required to look at the range of impact on Race, Disability and Gender, but should also take into consideration, and impact upon groups such as: women; black and minority ethnic people; young people and children; older people; disabled people; lesbians; gay men; bisexual people; trans people and people from different faith groups. The strands of Equality & Diversity are gender, race, disability, age, religion or faith and sexual orientation; these are inclusive of all people. These are '**equality target groups**'.

Why do we need to know?

There is a legislative and moral driver to undertaking the impact assessment. If one group are inadvertently disadvantaged by the implementation of a procedure, then the Trust could be acting unlawfully. For example; if a new environment was structured to prevent any wheelchair users from gaining access, this would be specifically disadvantaging all wheelchair users.

It is by understanding the culture of the people who are; employed, the potential workforce and the population, who are served by the Trust, the organisation can benefit. By

anticipating the needs of the staff and the population served, the way in which the service operates can be tailored, leading to the most effective and efficient deployment of all our resources. Some of the benefits could be seen in improved performance, relationships both within and external to the organisation, and a sustainable workforce.

"We RECOMMEND that as part of health impact assessment, all policies likely to have a direct or indirect effect on health should be evaluated in terms of their impact on health inequalities, and should be formulated in such a way that by favouring the less well off they will, wherever possible, reduce such inequalities"¹

When should an Equality Impact Assessment be carried out?

An impact assessment should be carried out when:

- (a) Developing a new policy or practice
 - (b) Reviewing existing policies and practices
 - (c) Policies and practices that have been identified by Equality & Diversity Steering Group or other relevant Committees, the Senior Management Team and/or Board as specifically requiring an EIA.
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Who should do the Equality Impact Assessment?

The **nominated lead for the development of the specific activity** is responsible for the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment by someone involved in the development process of that activity.

Sufficient information and/or research should be obtained as a part of the development process. This should include relevant information and data to evidence any decision that may be made in relation to the impact of the policy on the target groups.

What 'impact' do you need to consider?

(a) A negative or adverse impact:

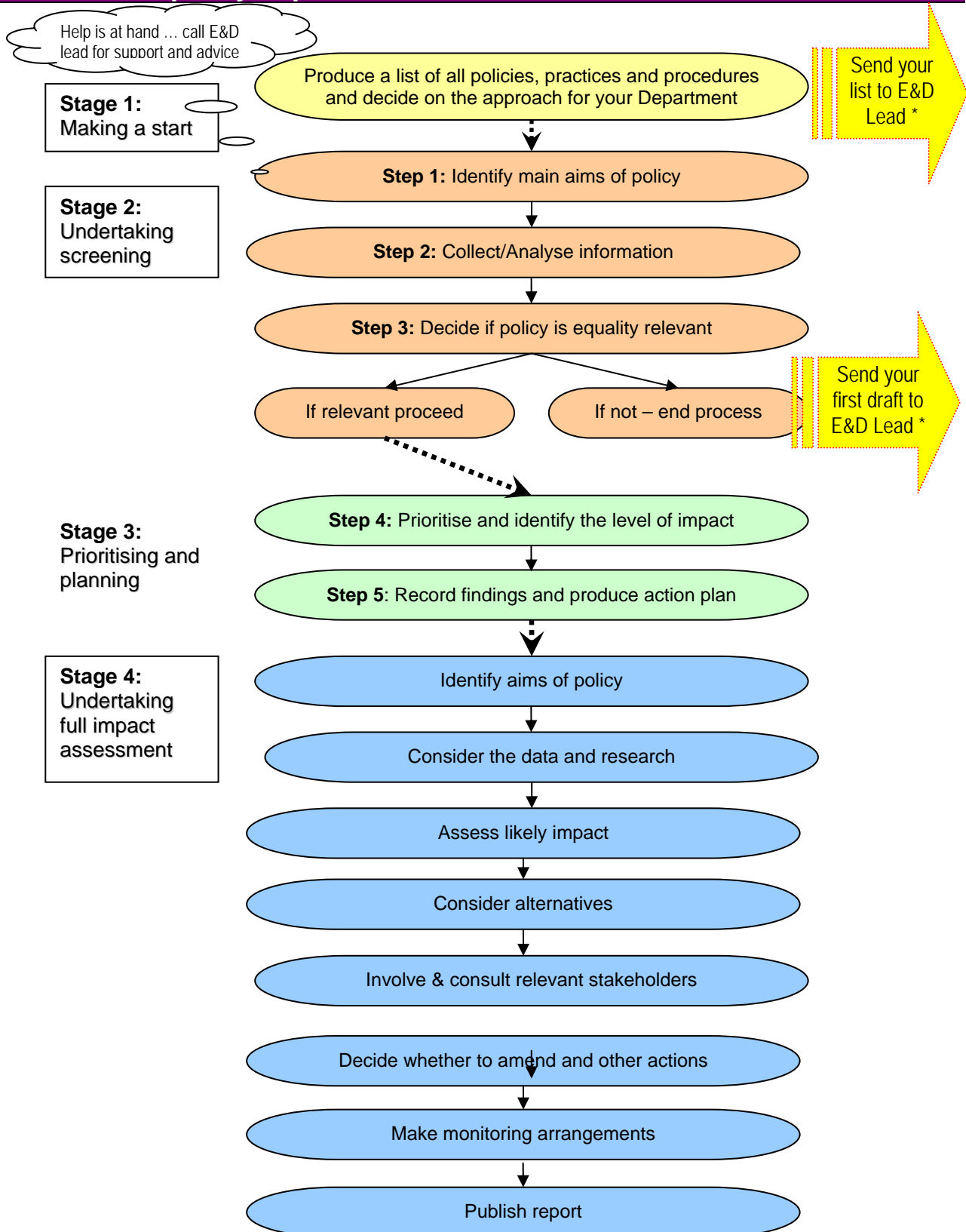
As a result of the action or inaction, it could disadvantage one or more of the equality target groups. For example a decision to provide all information only in written English may have a negative impact on blind and visually impaired people.

(b) A positive impact:

As a result of the action or inaction, it could have a positive impact on one or more equality target groups. This may improve equal opportunities and/or relationships between groups. For example: A targeted training programme for black and minority ethnic women would have a positive impact on black and minority ethnic women. This may be as compared with its impact on white women and all men. It would not, however, necessarily have an adverse impact on white women or men.

¹ Acheson report - September 1998 ~ An Independent Inquiry into Inequalities in Health

Equality Impact Assessment – Process Flow Chart



Getting Started

The first stage of the process requires a list of your key functions, policies, procedures, projects and strategies. It is useful to consider all of the functions of your department and then identify the policies, procedures, and working practices that apply to each of them.

Once you have an accurate and up-to-date list consider how your department will approach the task. The scale of your business activity and number of policies and procedures will help to determine the initial resource required for screening. It will be difficult to determine accurately how much resource is needed for full impact assessment until screening has been undertaken and a decision regarding which policies and procedures are equality relevant.


As the number of existing policies will be considerable, a systematic prioritisation should be carried out using the guidance below. Where responsibility is shared with another department it would be approached by either undertaking a joint screening or decide who has lead responsibility.

Following the prioritisation, and plan of how this is going to be achieved should be made and monitored for progress. The E&D lead has a key role in monitoring as well as providing support and guidance in developing the list and plan of action.

You should forward the list, using the format below, to the E&D Lead for monitoring purposes, and note the date that it was sent.

List of Relevant Policies, Procedures and Practices

Department/Team/Locality

Policy/ procedure/ practices	Responsibility (Department(s) & Lead Person	Priority 	Has screening been completed (Yes/No)	Equality relevant (Yes/No/Unsure)	Date to E&D Lead	Action/Comments
High Relevance :-is very equality relevant and should be assessed as a priority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is significant evidence of adverse impact or potential for adverse impact ▪ The policy is Trust wide or public facing ▪ The policy has consequences for or affects significant number of people ▪ The policy has the potential to make a significant contribution to promoting equality 						
Medium Relevance :- is somewhat equality relevant and should be assessed within the timescale of the Equality Scheme but before the low relevance policies or processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There is some evidence to suggest adverse impact or potential for adverse impact ▪ The policy is Trust wide or cross department but mainly internal ▪ The policy has consequences for or affects some people ▪ The policy has the potential to make a contribution to promoting equality 						
Low Relevance :- might be equality relevant and should be assessed within the timescale of the Equality Scheme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is anecdotal evidence or little evidence to suggest adverse impact • The policy operates mainly within a department • The policy has consequences for or affects few people • The policy many have the potential to contribute to promoting equality 						

Below are some 'prompting questions' to help you get started.

Some prompting questions:

- Does the policy /procedure/practice break 'equalities' law?
- Does it comply with service related legislation)?
- Does it promote fair access to services?
- Does it implement equality aspects of national guidance?
- Does it address equality standards?
- Does it indirectly discriminate on grounds of race, gender, disability age, sexual orientation, religion, belief, and so on?
- Is there evidence or reason to believe that some racial groups could be differently affected?
- Does it promote equality amongst all sections of the community and celebrate diversity?
- Does it create an environment in which equality of opportunity can operate and is the responsibility of all employees?
- Does it tackle areas of inequality within its scope of responsibilities?

Undertaking Screening

An impact assessment should be central to any process of developing anything that will affect the way people carry out their work, or which is related to the function of the organisation. It should be done as early as possible.

The aim is to try to take the perspective of the service users and staff when carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment. The process is not an exact science and will be challenging. Completing an Equality Impact Assessment is similar to a risk assessment as it involves predicting and assessing the implications of a policy or practice on a wide range of people with different needs. This should also not be carried out in isolation but with the support and advice of others. Effective consultation with stakeholders is a key ingredient in conducting Equality Impact Assessment

Screening is undertaken and recorded on the 'Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening Form' (Appendix 1)

Step 1 | Identify main aims of policy

The first stage of impact assessment involves screening the policy to identify if it is relevant to some or all of the grounds of equality. This helps to identify the main aims of the policy, along with details on how the policy will be implemented, which groups it is likely to affect and what the likely outcomes will be. It is useful to consider what the outcome of the **PPP** is expected to be. *For example, the complaints policy is intended meet the required legislation and guidance, and to give patients and the general public and opportunity to provide feedback, to enable the organisation to respond appropriately and continuously improve where necessary.*

This should be based on information gained from regular consultation with those likely to be affected by the proposed policy, or who have an interest in it (e.g. Equality & Diversity Steering group, Patients and Public Involvement Forum, Integrated Partnership Forum, Human Resources, Integrated Governance etc.).

Step 2 Collect and Analyse Information

At this stage it should also be identified if the policy is required to meet any statutory requirements or forms a part of the Trusts Strategy. A decision can then be made on whether the policy or activity is relevant to the duty to promote equality. If it is not seen as relevant, there is no need to progress to a full impact assessment.

Guidance from the Department of Health will not have necessarily been assessed for the impact it might have on equality or diversity. The Trust must not disregard any equality impact identified, because of potential conflict with the guidance.

Assessments should be carried out in an open and transparent way. There should be systems in place for identifying what information was used and how it influenced any decision. There is also a requirement to publish the results of impact assessments and the process of obtaining the results is open to public scrutiny.

Screening is usually based on data you already have, and may only produce estimates or signs of unequal treatment, but it should be undertaken in all cases, to allow you to decide which sort of assessment is then required.

You may not need to gather information on all the target groups if it is not proportionately relevant. However, it is important to ask the question of whether that group might be affected and if there is a potential for that, you should consider what information you might need, whether it is available, and what you might do if you think you need it and it isn't available.

Step 3: Prioritise and identify the level of impact

At this step you may think about the extent of the impact you will have identified. For example, you might have evidence that indicates the religious beliefs of 0.01% of the Trust require a facility for prayer during the working day. A policy which doesn't accommodate for a prayer room at each station could have a negative impact, but the impact is low because of the number of people it is likely to affect. Arrangements can be identified to address this need on a needs basis, and should not be ignored, but an action to manage the negative impact might be appropriate.

At the screening stage, you should be assessing obvious negative / positive impact or gaps in knowledge about likely impact.

It is a relatively short process which makes use of previous consultation results, personal knowledge & experience, research & reports, internet searches, internal & external specialist advice, staff with previous experience of similar policies and practices.

An absence of data or information concerning a particular area should not be a reason to stop the process. If the likely impact on a particular group is unknown but relevant then action needs to be taken to acquire this information.

Step 3^a: Decide if policy is equality relevant

Your findings should be recorded in an open and transparent way. The perspective of the people who will be affected by the policy should be a main informant of the findings rather than the views and opinions of the person completing the assessment.

Evidence to support the findings is essential. This evidence can be a range of information and research. In the absence of local Trust data, national data should be considered representative of the organisation, and where it is considered not representative, the reasons for this must be clearly stated.

Step 3^b: Record findings and produce action plan

This stage provides an opportunity to assess the evidence for a possible negative impact. It ensures that research and consultation with the equality target groups has been carried out and leads to an improvement plan aiming to minimise the negative impact and, where possible, maximise the positive impact. The EqlA improvement plan lists any recommendations that have been identified to improve the policy or practice as a result of the EqlA along with the resources and timescales needed to achieve them.

Prioritising & Planning

This part is where you have identified that there is a likelihood of high negative impact on one or more of the target groups. At this stage you will need to consider the timetable for action and what that action will look like.

Consultation involves engaging with representatives from equality target groups who are likely to be affected by the policy, strategy or project. This could include engaging with staff and members, staff associations or trade unions, other public bodies or voluntary and community groups. It is important to ensure sufficient time and resources are dedicated to the consultation process to encourage full participation, particularly by those we have traditionally failed to reach.

Full impact assessment

Once initial screening has been completed, a full assessment is only required if:

- a) Any equality target group was identified as being disadvantaged or negatively impacted by the policy/practice
- b) The impact was assessed as of high significance
- c) If a new policy is relevant to the duty to promote equality

This will enable the Trust to see if the policy is likely to have any adverse effects and to either make changes to the policy or consider other measures to mitigate those effects.

There are various steps that need to be completed in order to carry out a full impact assessment, namely:

- Identify policy aims
- Consider the data and research
- Assess the likely impact on each of the grounds of equality
- Consider the alternative policies
- Involve and consult relevant stakeholders
- Make a decision on the policy
- Make arrangements to monitor and review the way the policy works
- Publish the results of the assessment

Procedure for East of England Ambulance Service

1. Advice & Support:

If you need further advice and guidance whilst undertaking this process, the first point of this support will be the Equality & Diversity Lead.

2. First Screening Scrutiny:

Once you have completed your screening form, this should be sent to the Equality & Diversity Lead; this is an initial first stage for an objective and expert scrutiny.

It should be noted that whilst the scrutiny may highlight areas that should be reviewed, it is done without a detailed understanding of the context of the policy² and therefore the feedback should then be considered with that understanding and if changes are made, that is done entirely at the discretion of the author of the Equality Impact Assessment.

Following this step, it will be returned to the author who will make a decision about encompassing the feedback and revising the form.

3. Approval of Equality Impact Assessment & Policy*:

An Equality Impact Assessment requires Executive Approval. The relevant Director has accountability for the effective completion of the assessment, and approval for publication.

4. Monitoring & Recording :

The completed and approved Equality Impact Assessment (not the policy) should be electronically sent to the Equality & Diversity Lead where publication will be initiated. The progress of the Trust in completing Impact Assessments is monitored and reported via the Equality & Diversity Lead.

5. What if the information leads to the thought that a Full Impact Assessment is needed?

The Equality & Diversity Lead should be advised and copies of the related documents forwarded electronically. This will be taken for consideration at the Equality & Diversity Steering Group; and a plan for how this process will be undertaken.

Publishing the results of Equality Impact Assessments is a key component of establishing accountability and maintaining public confidence. It will demonstrate that the Trust's is committed to promoting equality and monitoring, assessing and consulting on the effects of its policies and practices.

² *Policy in this context is the generic term that refers to any prescriptive activity either written or implied

Please refer to the guidance notes "How to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment"	
Document Reference:	Document Title:
Assessment Date:	Document Type:
Responsible Director:	Lead Manager:

Step 1: Identify main aims of policy

Describe the main aim, objectives and intended outcomes of the proposed project/policy

Aim:
Objectives:
Intended Outcomes:

Step 2: Collect and Analyse Information

Has any previous work or research been done on equality issues in the area of the proposed project/policy? If so, what were they?

You should ask relevant questions in relation to all the strands equality & diversity, but information gathered should be relevant to your needs that will inform your decisions around the topic you are reviewing. If you identify a need for information that is not available you should consider and plan with the relevant others how this information could be obtained. ³			
	Do you have enough information?	Yes	No
Gender (including transgender)	What else do you need to know?		
	Do you have enough information?	Yes	No
Race	What else do you need to know?		
	Do you have enough information?	Yes	No
Disability	What else do you need to know?		
	Do you have enough information?	Yes	No
Sexual Orientation	What else do you need to know?		
	Do you have enough information?	Yes	No
Age	What else do you need to know?		
	Do you have enough information?	Yes	No
Religion & Belief	What else do you need to know?		

³ Refer your need for information and proposal to the Equality & Diversity Steering Group using a copy of this page with your information before proceeding to ensure all similar requests can be coordinated

Step 3: Identify the level of impact

To help you think about this, you should complete the High, Medium, Low table and give reasons/comments for where:

- (a) The policy/strategy/project could have a positive impact on any of the equality target groups or contributes to promoting equality, equal opportunities and improving relations within equality target groups.
- (b) The policy/project/procedure could have a negative impact on any of the equality target groups, i.e. disadvantage them in any way. **If the impact is high, a full Equality Impact Assessment should be completed.**

Equality target	a. Positive impact			b. Negative impact			c. If NONE how did you evidence this?
	Low	None	High	Low	None	High	
Gender (including transgender)							
Race							
Disability							
Sexual orientation							
Age							
Belief and Religion							

Step 3^a: Decide if policy is equality relevant

Does the proposed project/policy have an explicit focus on inequalities, human rights and diversity? If so, how?

Is there a risk that the proposed project/policy may unintentionally mask or cause a negative impact on equality and diversity?

Is there a risk of adverse impact? If yes, please list the specific risks. If no, please explain the basis of your judgement.

Step 3^b: Record findings and produce action plan

If there are any potential or actual risks, what action will be undertaken to mitigate the specified risks, or to minimise the adverse impact. Within what timescales will this be done, what are the implications on resources and who will be responsible?

Findings	Proposed action	Timescale	Implications on resources	Responsible lead

Please state how the policy, procedure or process will be monitored for inequalities that may arise after the implementation:

Summary:

On the basis of the information/evidence/consideration so far, do you believe that the proposed project/policy will have a positive or adverse impact on equality or diversity? (please circle one)

Positive Impact		Adverse Impact	
Yes	No	Yes	No

Basis for your judgement:

Has a significant adverse impact been identified that requires a Full Equality Impact Assessment?

YES	Some Impact Identified Local Actions set out to resolve the impact ⁴	NO
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Name of the project/policy lead completing this assessment:

Name:	Job Title:
Signature:	Date:

Please email this completed draft document to the Equality & Diversity Lead for initial feedback and monitoring.

This form must accompany all policies and procedures when sent to Trust Board Committee or Group for approval the following summary should be the used as the covering front sheet

⁴ Please ensure that the arrangements for monitoring the implementation and outcomes are stated in the executive summary

Executive Summary Page for Equality Impact Assessment:	
Document Reference:	Document Title:
Assessment Date:	Document Type:
Responsible Director:	Lead Manager:
Conclusion of Equality Impact Assessment:	
Recommendations for Action Plan:	
Risks Identified:	
Approved by a member of the executive team:	
YES	NO
Name:	Position:
Signature:	Date:
This whole document should be stored with the master document and a final approved copy must be sent to the Equality & Diversity Lead at Bedford Office	