



EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Guidance and Checklist

2006

SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2006

Section One: Policy Details*

Name of Policy	
Lead Officer (Name/Position)	
Review Team (Names/Positions)	

*Policy could include strategy, project or application: see guidance below.

What are the main aims of the policy?	
What are the intended outcomes of the policy	

Section Two: What are the Likely Impacts of the Policy?

Will the policy impact upon the whole population of south Ayrshire <i>or</i> particular groups within the population (please specify)	
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Considering the following Protected Characteristics, what likely impacts or issues does the policy have for the group. List any likely positive or negative impacts:

Race: Issues relating to ethnic minorities, including gypsy travellers and migrant workers	
Gender: Issues specific to women or men	
Disability: Issues relating to disabled people	
Age: Issues relating to older people or children and young people	
Religion or Belief: issues relating to a persons religion or belief (including non-belief)	
Sexual Orientation: Issues relating to a persons sexual orientation e.g. lesbian, gay , bi-sexual, heterosexual, transgender	
Marriage and Civil Partnership: Issues relating to people who are married or are in a civil partnership.	
Other groups (please specify)	

Section Three: Evidence Used in Developing the Policy

In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been collected from involvement, engagement or consultation? <i>Who</i> did you involve, <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> ?	
In assessing the impact set out above what evidence has been collected from research or other data. Please specify <i>what</i> research was carried out or data collected, <i>when</i> and <i>how</i> this was done.	
Have you identified any gaps or uncertainties in our understanding of the issues or impacts that need to be explored further?	

On the basis of the above assessment should the policy go ahead or is further work needed first?

Yes policy should go ahead
 No policy should be subjected to more development work

Any comments?

Section Four: Performance monitoring and reporting

Considering the policy as a whole, including its equality and diversity implications:

When will the policy come into effect?	
How long will the policy have effect?	
When will the policy be reviewed?	
Which committee will have oversight of the policy?	
Will any additional staff training be required to put the policy into effect? (please specify)	
Impact assessment agreed on (date)	
Content agreed by Head of Service (Name/position)	

South Ayrshire Council
Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment Guidance

What is Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment (IA)?

IA is an open process by which the Council or any other public body can assess and demonstrate the likely impact of its policies, projects or procedures on different groups that make up the population of the area. It is an evidence based approach that can be used to help the Council meet its best value duties and its equality duties.

Why carry out impact assessment?

IA is now a statutory responsibility for public bodies. It was introduced by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000; is required under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, Gender and Age Equality legislation and regulations and now the Equality Act 2010 which received Royal Assent on the 8th April 2010. It To quote from the DDA

A public authority must include in its Disability Equality Scheme a statement of the authority's methods for assessing the impact of its policies and practices, or the likely impact of its proposed policies and practices, on equality for disabled persons.

The Council therefore has to demonstrate that it has arrangements for IA in place and is putting them into effect. It is also a tool that can help the Council meet its best value objectives, not only in relation to equalities but also to support evidence based policy development.

What the impact assessment is designed to show?

IA is a self-assessment process that is carried out when developing or reviewing policies. The purpose is both to ensure that an authority's decisions and activities do not disadvantage any particular group within the population, and also to identify how they might promote equality of opportunity. It should therefore show the likely impact of any policy on different groups and the evidence used by the Council in making the assessment.

What should an IA contain?

A good IA should contain details of the:

- Aims and intended outcomes of the policy
- Likely impacts on different groups
- Evidence from consultation, research or other sources that was used in the assessment
- Any further engagement, consultation or research that is needed
- How the policy will be taken forward, managed and monitored.

Who should carry out an impact assessment?

Any officer developing a new policy should be aware of the duty and arrange to carry out an IA before the policy goes to committee. The procedure should not be onerous and, if the policy has been:

- well thought out in advance
- has clear aims and outcomes and is
- based on sound evidence,

then the IA should be completed quickly.

At the outset it is recommended that the IA checklist should be completed by at least two people – the main author of the policy and an external assessor from another service or department (or even from outside the Council) who is familiar with IA. This will help ensure a degree of scrutiny in the process.

When should IA be applied?

In theory all policies, strategies and procedures of the council should be impact assessed. The most practical approach is to assess new policies, strategies or other major developments as they are being developed or as they come up for review. The best approach is to consider the likely impacts of a new policy as it is being developed – make this part of the policy development process.

IA should certainly be applied as a priority:

- If you believe that the policy you are developing will have significant implications for people living in South Ayrshire and you need to spell out what those implications could be;
- If the policy is likely to have a particular impact on one or more groups living in South Ayrshire;
- If the policy has major strategic importance for a service or the Council
- If you believe that an existing procedure or practice might disadvantage some individuals or particular group.

There may be other cases where IA is necessary or could be helpful.

- Grant applications to the Scottish Executive, Communities Scotland or other funding bodies may require IA to be carried out. A funding application will certainly be stronger if it can demonstrate that equalities implications have been taken into consideration; and IA is an effective way to demonstrate this.
- Project management may benefit from an IA, particularly if external funding is being sought.

IA Should be an Open Process

The process of IA should be open to scrutiny. Ideally, an IA is carried out early in the policy development process, and the results shared with stakeholders, both partner organisations and community groups involved in the development of the process, for their comment and possibly revision. This will help strengthen the policy making process.

The finalised IA statement should be made public, by presenting to the appropriate panel as part of a report, and thereafter publishing it on the Equality and Diversity section of the Council's website. To allow this to happen, a copy of the IA should be provided to the Strategic Office, who will ensure their consideration by the Member Officer Group on Equality and Diversity.

Helpful hint: The Scottish Executive is subject to the same requirement to publish Impact Assessments for its policies and strategies as the Council. If the policy you are developing relates to a Scottish Executive initiative, such as regeneration or community safety then it might be helpful to ask the Scottish Executive for a copy of the IA they have prepared on the initiative. The same applies to Communities Scotland or government agencies.

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Completing The IA checklist

(The checklist is available as a word document so that individual boxes can be expanded as required.)

Section One: Policy Details

Name of policy: give the name of the policy, strategy, project, funding application or other initiative.

Lead officer: the lead officer should be the officer who is responsible for developing the policy. The Review Team should be the team carrying out the IA. This should include at least one person involved in developing the new policy and one person from another service or department who has *not* been involved in developing the policy. If wider expertise is needed it may be helpful to consider inviting one or two other others to join the assessment including representatives from outwith the Council if appropriate.

Aims and Outcomes: give a brief summary of the aims and expected outcomes of the policy. The aims and intended outcomes should include reference to other relevant documents such as the Departmental Service Plan, Council Business Plan, Community Plan, or Scottish Executive documents.

Section Two: What are the Likely Impacts of the Policy?

In this section the checklist should be used to identify the main impacts that the policy could have on different groups.

The first question asks whether the policy will affect the whole population of part of the population. (*The Council's Youth Strategy, for example, is aimed at primarily at young people*)

This section gives the opportunity to spell out any impacts or issues that the policy raises for specific groups. The groups listed relate to the new statutory requirements of equalities legislation: race, gender, disability, age. For each group identify any particular impact or issue that the policy has for the group. Impacts could be positive or negative. A new policy may set out to improve service provision for a particular group, but it might also have unintended consequences for other groups or it might face particular challenges in relation to a particular group. (*For example in the Youth strategy, under gender, it was identified that there is a low take up of sports opportunities among girls. The strategy has identified this an issue and will seek to address it.*)

Impact assessment is not a precise science and it will not be possible to identify all the possible consequences of a policy. Circulating the draft to stakeholders, both partners and community groups might help to identify unforeseen impacts.

There may be other people not listed in the checklist that are relevant and should be mentioned. For example policies may have particular implications for rural areas; if this is the case it would be worth identifying under 'other groups'.

Section Three: Evidence Used in Developing the Policy

Section three provides the opportunity for the respondent to set out the evidence on impacts that has been collected in the development of the policy.

First, in the development of the policy; who has been consulted or involved in its development? Both the relevant equalities legislation and the duty to achieve best value demand effective consultation and engagement. This question allows the policy maker to describe how this was achieved. *(The Youth Strategy for example has been developed in the context of involvement of young people over many years and makes a commitment to establish new structures to take forward this engagement. The recent development of rural service priority areas has involved consultation in particular localities on local priorities and needs.)*

Auditors will expect to see evidence of engagement with relevant groups where policies are targeted those groups. For example if a policy has been developed for a group of people with a particular disability, have people from that group been involved in its development?

Similarly this is an opportunity to set out the data or research that has been used, whether local or national, in the development of the policy. It may be worth mentioning any relevant government guidance that has influenced the development of the policy.

Gaps

Few policies are developed in the context of perfect information or understanding of an issue. The checklist offers an opportunity to mention these gaps and set out, if necessary, whether steps can be taken to remedy these and fill in any gaps. *(For example in the development of the Council's Race Equality Scheme 2005 it was clear that we did not have the ability to engage fully with small and dispersed populations in South Ayrshire. The RE scheme dealt with this by including a commitment to improve engagement in order to get better information and understanding of needs in the future.)*

Section Four Performance Monitoring and Reporting

This section allows the respondent to describe how the policy will be taken forward. This will act as a record for future reviews, monitoring, and for identifying any training requirements. Finally it is recommended that, when completed, the IA is signed off by the relevant Head of Service.

It is recommended that a copy of the completed IA is kept on an open file in a way that it easily accessible both to auditors and the public upon request. In addition, a copy of the completed assessment should be sent to Peter Linton, Performance and Change Manager, Chief Executive's Department (details below).

Comments on this policy

Equality and Diversity IA has been formally used in South Ayrshire Council since 2006. If you have any questions or comments please contact Peter Linton, Performance and Change Manager, Policy, Performance and Communication on 01292 612702 or at peter.linton@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Revised 26th April 2010