



# Equality Impact Assessment & Guidance 2010

Cheshire East Council

Appendix C

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## 1. Purpose of this template

This toolkit has been developed to help you place equality and diversity at the centre of your day-to-day thinking at work. It will help you assess the likely and actual impact of policies & practices on different sectors of the community and target action where it is needed most. If used effectively, this should help to put right inequalities, increase public confidence and serve all sections of the community according to their circumstances and needs.

Every member of the organisation involved in policy making or implementation, will be expected to take account of equality issues and expected to follow the guidance in impact assessing policies and report results as appropriate.

The guidance will be reviewed regularly in order that we can develop and improve it as experience is gained, therefore, if you have any queries for suggestions on how we can improve this guidance please contact:

Equality and Inclusion Team  
01270 685867  
[equalityandinclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk](mailto:equalityandinclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk)



## 2. What do we mean when we talk about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion?

Equality is about respect and not treating an individual or group of people unfairly. It is about giving people an equality of opportunity to access services and to fulfil their potential. Diversity is a part of equality, it's about all the ways in which people differ and recognising how differences is a natural part of society. Inclusion is giving consideration and a voice to all the visitors, communities and groups in Cheshire East with regards to designing and delivering services and employment opportunities. The table below identifies what the new legislation refers to as "Protected Characteristics."

Age	Age includes everyone, however; specific focus may be centred on children, young people and older people's needs.
Carers	Carers may be as young as 7 or 8 years, looking after a disabled parent or other siblings. Carers can be older people themselves, perhaps in their 80's looking after a partner or friend of similar age. Carers come from diverse cultural and religious communities. Anyone looking after a person with an illness or disability, whatever their situation, is considered a carer with equality rights to help, support, information and services
Disability	A person with a disability is someone with a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Examples include long term illnesses including cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis and heart conditions; hearing or sight impairments, or a significant mobility difficulty; and mental health conditions or learning difficulties.
Gender	Gender has traditionally been seen to be about women's rights – this is now not the case. Gender issues may include things like maternity, adoption and paternity rights, and pay gap issues among other things.
Race	Race includes issues such as ethnic origin, race and colour. It means that for example language barriers are a race issue. Certain groups such as gypsies/travellers are protected under this protected characteristic
Religion & Belief	It is unlawful to discriminate against people because of religion or similar belief. Religion or belief is defined as being any religion, religious belief. This does not include any philosophical or political belief unless it is similar to religious belief.
Sexual Orientation	Under the law you shouldn't be discriminated against because of your sexual orientation or "perceived" sexual orientation – including orientation towards someone of the same sex (lesbian/gay), opposite sex (heterosexual) both sexes (bisexual) or possible change in orientation due to gender reassignment.
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	A person, family, group or community who face disadvantage and barriers to social mobility due to social and economic restraints that mainstream society do not. E.g. where you live may impact on educational or status advancement, deprived communities (including white), single parents.

### **3. What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)?**

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a way to make sure individuals and teams think carefully about the likely impact of policies or procedures, strategies, functions and services, to identify any unmet needs, and to provide a basis for action to improve services where appropriate.

It systematically assesses and records the actual, potential or likely impact of a service, policy or project – or a significant change in a service, policy or project - on different groups of people.

This toolkit goes further than identifying the impact of policies, services and procedures. It also assesses whether people's needs are being met and if the legislative requirements are being met.

All managers and project leaders are responsible for incorporating equalities into their projects, plans or strategies and for assessing the equality impact. This should be a continuous process, starting at the very beginning of the project.

### **4. Nine steps to take when carrying out Equality Impact Assessments**

1. Identify the purpose and aims of the policy, service or function or any proposals being made
2. Consider any information, data or research that is already available in relation to equalities and what this tells you
3. Make an assessment of the impact or effects on different Communities

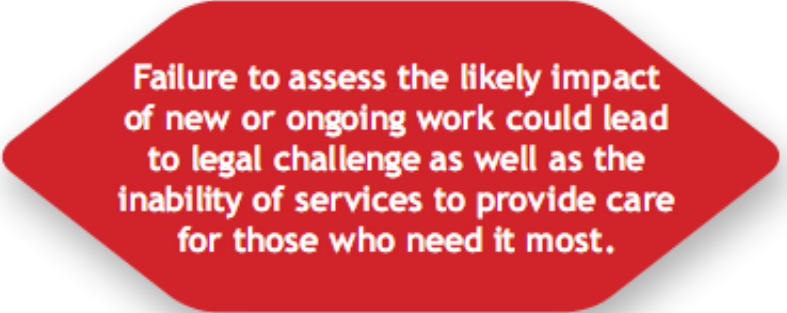
4. Consider whether there is anything which could be done to remove any adverse impact or effects, or to further promote equality, social inclusion or community cohesion
5. Consult those affected for their views and ideas
6. Identify any change and/or decide whether or not to go ahead with your policy, procedures, proposals, or changes to services
7. Decide how you will monitor and review your policy, proposals or other changes
8. Where necessary, add the main objectives from your impact assessment to your service plan, action plan etc
9. Write up your assessment and publish it on the council's website via the Corporate Equality and Inclusion Team.

### **5. Why are we doing Impact Assessments?**

Local Authorities have a responsibility under Equality Duties to assess both their existing and new policies and functions, and to set out how they will monitor any possible negative impact any against protective characteristic

They also have to consult on proposed policies and train their staff about this law, and have a positive duty to promote good relations between communities.

In addition, Cheshire East Council will be working towards the Equality Framework for Local Government which will require the authority to impact assess for race gender and disability, and demonstrate commitment to addressing the needs of and impact assessing around sexual orientation, age, transgender, religion and belief .



Failure to assess the likely impact of new or ongoing work could lead to legal challenge as well as the inability of services to provide care for those who need it most.

## 6. its not just about compliance – the moral and business case

There are many additional aspects to the impact assessment process. As well as it being the right thing to do for moral reasons, there is a clear business case for mainstreaming equality.

A business that is seen to be putting the principles of Equality and Inclusion into practice, both in the workforce and in the products and services it offers to customers, is more likely to project a positive public image in the community

(Business Case for Diversity, Women & Equality Unit, DTI).

**Organisations with a diverse workforce are likely to:** better reflect and understand the community it serves provide a better, more tailored service to meet individual needs.

## Reduction in discrimination and unfair treatment can lead to:

a positive knock-on effect on grievances and relations in general within the organisation

- reduced absenteeism
- enhanced employees' attachment to the organisation
- reduced labour turnover
- increased labour productivity.

The impact assessment process also has potential effects on:

- Public perception of the Council
- Inspection and audit scorings

## 7.Equality Impact Assessment process

Initial screening involves a process of identifying and prioritising what policies, procedures or strategies will be assessed, then scoping their potential impact on service users, employers and the wider community.

Initial screening should be carried out at the initial planning and development stages of the project, strategy or policy development.

Some large projects will be made up of many different activities, some of which are in themselves projects. As part of the screening, these activities should be listed and if any of them are projects in themselves, the project lead should consider whether they need to undergo a separate EIA screening.



## 7.1 ‘Dos’ and ‘don’ts’ for the EIA process

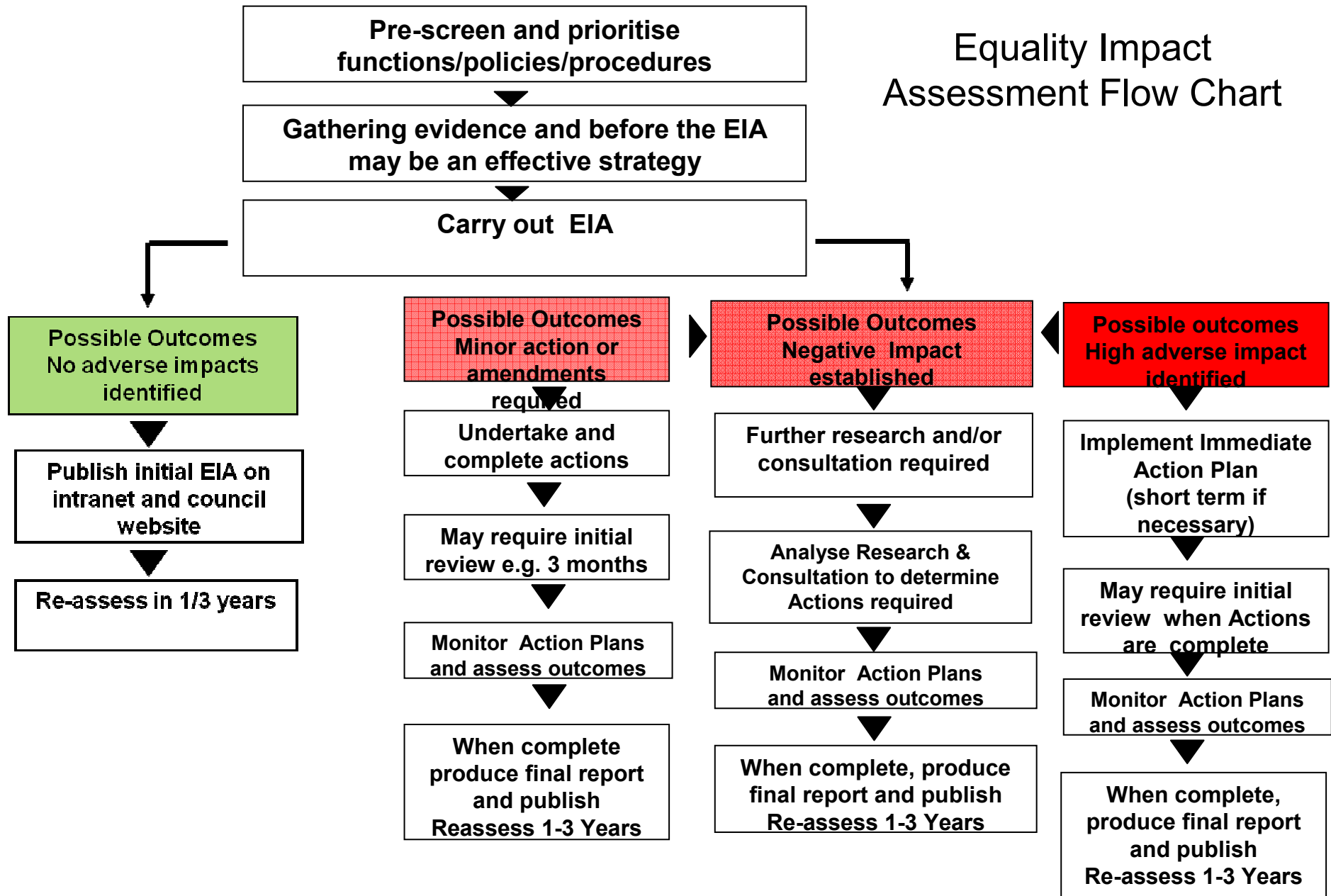
Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Do treat the exercise as a challenge.</li> <li>•Do build contracts and relationships with colleagues in other departments and even from other councils, to assist and challenge the process.</li> <li>•Do involve the right people.</li> <li>•Do use plain English.</li> <li>•Do build in specific tasks and topics for individuals to share information, progress and so on, with a timetable and targets.</li> <li>•Do focus on finding real improvements in your service, procedures or policies rather than trying to get the form completed and off the desk</li> <li>•Do know your customers their needs the barriers they face and focus on improving the service they receive.</li> <li>•Do make sure you have enough information to assess all the strands and where possible break data down into individual groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Don't even think about the impact assessment form and/or template until the end of the assessment.</li> <li>•Don't treat as a form filling exercise; think of it as the final audit trail of a service improvement , think of it as the final audit trail of a service improvement exercise.</li> <li>•Don't panic</li> <li>•Don't try to complete the EIA on your own.</li> <li>•Don't be daunted by the consultation element. Find out if the research or data already exists or consult directly with the representatives of relevant groups or specialist organisations</li> <li>•Don't use the process as a last minute check. Develop plans that include time to make changes to a project, strategy or policy as identified by the EIA</li> <li>•Don't focus on race faith; look at the demographics in your area. There may be issues such as age or sexuality that are important in the wider community</li> <li>•Don't put it off – do a little at a time and it won't seem an overwhelming task.</li> </ul>

## 7.2 Tips and general guidance

Equality Impact Assessments are designed to be a challenging process, but they are not intended to be over complicated or about 'getting it right'. It is not an exact science and Managers should take a common sense approach

- Managers need to be prepared for changes to the policy, procedure or function that the EIA identifies as necessary. It should not be a last minute check.
- The aim should be to try to take the perspective of some one outside of the council, such as a potential beneficiary or user, when carrying out an EIA.

# Equality Impact Assessment Flow Chart





The form does not need to be completed by one person in isolation. Neither does the EIA form require completion all in one go.

Completing the form is similar to doing a risk assessment. It involves predicting and assessing what the implications of a policy, procedure or function will be on a wide range of people with different and varied needs. This can be a difficult thing to do and it is not intended that Managers complete the form without the support and advice of others. Completing the form with a colleague or critical friend, who can provide a different perspective, will help.

Do not spend too long on the initial screening. At the screening stage, you are just trying to assess obvious negative or positive impacts or, importantly, gaps in our knowledge about likely impact.

The screening should make full use of the following:

- professional knowledge of the issue and/or personal experience
- previous consultation results
- analysis of previous complaints, comments, evaluations and monitoring
- research and reports
- library searches
- internet searches
- advice from internal and external specialists
- staff with previous involvement of direct implementation of a similar policy, procedure or function

It is particularly important that Managers realise they have legal duties to assess the impact of policies, procedures and functions.

If the likely impact on the different equality target groups is not known, then action is needed to acquire that information.

The best way to find out if a policy or project is likely to impact negatively or positively on equality target groups is to find out if research or data already exists or to directly consult representatives of those groups or relevant specialist organisations.

Following the completion of an EIA, an action plan is required to outline any changes required to mitigate against any adverse impacts.

## **8. Partnership projects**

The Council aims to be an exemplary organisation in relation to equality and to champion equality across Cheshire East. The statutory requirements to assess the impact of policies and functions apply to partnerships and contractual relationships.

The EIA procedures apply to all projects and policies where the Council is the lead agency in a multi-agency project or a key delivery partner. The council is the lead agency if the project or policy was initiated by the council and the monitoring, evaluation and strategic overview of the implementation lies with the council, even if the council is not the operational lead.

On joint projects and initiatives where the council is not the lead organisation, the council representatives should raise the issue of the need to carry out an equalities assessment in order to comply with the legislation. The council should carry out an EIA screening before deciding to participate in the partnership project or initiative.

## 9. How will compliance and progress be measured?

The Council is committed to principles laid out in the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG). The EFLG provides us with a framework to measure progress against equality objectives. A key part of progressing through the Equality Framework involves carrying out equality impact assessments on existing and new policies, procedures and functions.

## 10. Whose responsibility is it to complete the impact assessment process?

Everyone who works within the Council has a responsibility to adhere to the principles of Equality and Inclusion. This means that every manager, policy writer, policy implementer, project manager and event organiser must consider the practical and implied issues that may arise for people. It's strongly recommended that you do not undertake an EIA on your own, and a 'critical friend' approach is often useful.

## 11. Data Collection

Data is vital to give us an understanding both of the numbers and groups of people affected by the Council's service provision. While we may have a feeling that there may be some kind of impact, for the impact assessment process, it is necessary to back up our beliefs with factual information. If we want to find out if a policy is likely to impact negatively or positively on sections of the community we should first discover if data or research already exists. It is important to consider both qualitative and quantitative data – qualitative data is obtained through opinions / perceptions / experience of service users and providers, while quantitative data is about facts and figures.

Data collection plays an important role in the initial impact assessment. Indeed it may be identified that no data exists to back up a theory about a policy so a logical action from the initial impact assessment would be to put an effective monitoring system in place for the policy.

Useful information sources include:

- complaints & comments
- service user profiles/stats
- customer satisfaction surveys
- results of previous consultations/focus groups/surveys
- inspectorate and review reports
- front line employee's comments
- issues raised with or by elected Members
- staff surveys
- other local authorities and public service providers
- partner organisations and stakeholder forums
- library/internet searches

## 12. Consultation

Consultation is one of the key elements to carrying out a meaningful impact assessment. It is imperative to hear the views of all sections of the community which may be affected by policies. It is especially important to consult with groups which you believe may suffer a potentially negative impact. Different methods of consulting are more effective for some groups than others and consideration needs to be given as to when and where consultation will take place. For further advice regarding consultation methods or tools, please contact the Equality and Inclusion Team.

## Appendix 1

Department/Service		<b>Equality Impact Assessment Form Template</b>		
Ref <b>See Appendix 1</b>		Officer responsible for the assessment		
Name of policy procedure function being assessed		Start date of assessment		
Are there are any other policies or procedures associated or linked with this one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>			
Briefly describe the aims, objectives and outcomes of the policy / procedure / function				
Who is intended to benefit from this policy –procedure – function?				
What factors could contribute to or detract from the outcomes?				
Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy – procedure- function? (Please consider key equality groups)				
Who is responsible for the policy – procedure – function?				
<p>To take us forward in:</p> <p>(a) eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;</p> <p>(b) advancing equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;</p> <p>(c) fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it</p>				

Please identify any impact (Positive / Negative) this policy, procedure, function or service will have on the following protected characteristics:			
Age - Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Carers – Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Disability - Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Gender (Including pregnancy and Maternity, Marriage)?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Gypsies & Travellers - Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Race – Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Religion & Belief- Is there an Impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Sexual Orientation -Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Transgender - Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:

Other socio-economic disadvantaged groups (including white individuals, families and communities) Is there an impact?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Please give details of any other potential impacts of this policy (i.e. Poverty & deprivation, community cohesion, environmental)	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments/Actions:
Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments:
Does this policy – procedure – function have any effect on good relations between the council and the community	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments:
Do you require further data/information/intelligence to support decision making?	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	Comments:  (please note if you answer yes or no you will still be required to complete the Data Methods/Collection to Support Decision Making Section)
Please specify any question(s)/issues/concerns/actions identified as a result the assessment. What needs to be done?	Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>		

<b>Data Methods/Collection to Support Decision Making</b>		
Please indicate what methods of research, information and intelligence will be/have been used e.g. consultation, reports, comparisons with similar organisations	Internally	Externally
Please state who will be/who was involved/engaged/consulted	Internal (Staff/Members/Service/Dept)	External (stakeholders/service users/partners)
Please indicate any significant expected costs & resource requirements for completing the data collection		

## **Developing Your Action Plan & Making Changes**

Having completed the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of your Equalities Impact Assessment, you are likely to have identified a number of areas where improvements could be made. The action plan will:

1. Outline what you are doing and how you are going to do it - developing your Action Plan
2. Measures progress towards implementation (you should complete this on a quarterly basis)
3. Measure the impact of the changes you have made or to set a benchmark that can be measured against future assessments.

## Developing the Action Plan

The first step is to draw up your action plan. The following explains what needs to go into each of the boxes:

Completing the Action Plan

<b>Ref:</b>	(See Appendix1)
<b>Action:</b>	Issues arising from the EIA requiring a form of intervention to address disparities in service/function
<b>Responsible Persons</b>	Those member/s of your team who will be responsible for making these changes.
<b>Action Deadline:</b>	The date by which the action will be completed. This should be realistic and achievable.
<b>Tasks</b>	The changes that you propose to make to address the issues that you have identified
<b>Progress</b>	Monitor progress both positive and problematic identifying any potential barriers that may hinder completion e.g. Time, Internal or External factors,

Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) Action Plan: Making Changes					
REF	Action	Responsible Person/s	Action Deadline	Tasks	Progress
Please state the date the policy/procedure/function will be reassessed? (generally 1-3 yrs)			Comments/Date:		

Signed (Service Manager) ..... Date.....

Signed (Head of Section) ..... Date.....

Once you have completed this section please email it to the Equality and Inclusion Team. The Equality and Inclusion Team will convene a quarterly meeting of the Fairness and Inclusion Group (FIG) who will quality check our EIA's to ensure we have considered everyone. We plan to send approximately 2-5% of our completed EIAs Forms to the (FIG).



## Quarterly Progress and monitoring

Having drawn up your Action Plan, it is important to monitor progress in implementing the different actions. Please complete the following progress report. This will help to ensure that you keep to the time-scales you have outlined and to seek advice from the Equality and Inclusion Team where you are experiencing problems with implementation of particular actions. (simply cut and paste information from the Action Plan)

	Action	Progress	Completed

Once you have completed your progress report, please email it to the Equality and Inclusion Team. Make a copy of the progress report template so you can present an update in three months time.

Once you have completed your quarterly progress report, please email it to the Equality and Inclusion Team

## Equalities Impact Assessment - Monitoring Impact Report

Having implemented each of the tasks outlined within your Action Plan, it is important that you measure the impact of these changes to see whether they have improved the accessibility of your policy and/or service.

Completing your Monitoring Impact Report

Action - The changes that you have made to remove the gaps you have Identified (simply cut and paste these from the action plan).

Impact - What has been the overall impact of making the particular changes? Could include wider community involvement in policy development or greater use of service by diverse communities.

Outcomes - What are the concrete results of having changed your policy or service? Could include improved service use, reductions in complaints or increased satisfaction. These will be based on detailed data and should outline how the changes have brought about improvements for different communities and groups.

Ref	Action	Impact	Outcome	Review Date

Once you have completed your impact report, please email it to the Equality and Inclusion Team. The Equality and Inclusion Team will prepare an annual report for Corporate Management Team and Cabinet on our progress.

## Appendix 2

### Service Reference Index

Service Reference Index			
Safer & Stronger – <b>SSC</b>	Regeneration – <b>REG</b>	Planning & Housing – <b>PAH</b>	Legal & Democratic Services – <b>LAD</b>
Children & Families – <b>CHI</b>	Adults – <b>ADU</b>	Health & Wellbeing – <b>HWB</b>	Human Resources & Organisational Development – <b>HROD</b>
Policy & Performance – <b>PAP</b>	Corporate Improvement - <b>CI</b>	Environmental – <b>ENV</b>	Borough Treasurer & Head of Assets – <b>BTA</b>