

Equality Impact Assessment – A Guide for Schools

This guidance supports the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and it is intended to support schools in identifying the potential impact of a school provision, criterion or practice whether existing, revised or new on the school community.

The template and guidance are designed to assist schools in ensuring that their activities best meet the needs of the school community and fulfil the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

A template for the EIA can be found at

http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/ASK8/File/Inclusion_Achievement/Singapore_Equality_Scheme/SES10_-EIA.doc

Starting Out...

Before you begin your impact assessment it is important to identify the aims of the provision, criterion or practice and how it is implemented. Also you must think about the information that you will need to answer the key questions.

- This may have already been considered but it is really important to be clear about the aims and objectives of the provision, criterion or practice.
- How will we put it into practice, and who will be responsible for it?

Data to support the Assessment

- What data is currently available or will be collected to give an indication of the provision criterion or practice's impact?
- Does this data relate disproportionately to any of the above groups?
- How will this data be monitored and reviewed? Who is responsible for this?

Consultation

Consultation is an important part of the EIA process and is required both at distinct stages as well as being on-going throughout the impact assessment. You will need to consider both what past consultation has told you as well as conducting consultation on the issues you have identified throughout the assessment. Steps must be taken to ensure you consult with key groups.

The following questions may be of assistance in guiding consultation:

- Who are the main stakeholders and what do they want from this provision, criterion or practice?
- How do we ensure that those affected or with a legitimate interest in the provision, criterion or practice are consulted?

- How do we communicate information about the provision, criterion or practice?
- Will information be accessible to people with limited English, disabilities, literacy problems or people who face other communication barriers?
- What steps can we take to ensure disabled people, people from minority ethnic or religious communities, or other equality target groups have fair access to the consultation process?
- Have previous attempts at consultation with particular groups been unsuccessful? If so, what can we learn from past experience?
- If meetings are to be held, where will they be held and at what time of the day? Have issues of physical access been accounted for?
- If we are targeting 'seldom heard' groups e.g. Gypsies and Travellers what steps can we take to consult in places where they are comfortable?

The Impact Assessment

There are two parts to the equality impact assessment, the first is screening and the second is the full impact assessment if there are any adverse impacts found.

Step 1 Screening

There are two key questions. You need to answer them with regard to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The questions are:

- Does/could this provision, criterion or practice have a negative impact on one or more of the dimensions of equality? If so, how can we change or modify it, or minimise its impact, or justify it?
- Does/could this provision, criterion or practice have the potential for a positive impact on equality, by reducing and removing inequalities and barriers that already exist? If so, how can we maximise this potential?

Once you have screened the provision, criterion or practice, identifying any equality considerations, you will need to complete a full equality impact assessment. If there are no equality considerations you must state why this is.

Step 2, Full Impact Assessment –

Identifying the aims of the provision criterion or practice and how it is implemented

- This may have already been considered but it is really important to be clear about the aims of the provision, criterion or practice.

- What are the overall aims and objectives?
- How will we put it into practice, and who will be responsible for it?

Assessment of impact (with regards to each of the protected characteristics).

- Using the information which has been gathered, the next step is to assess whether there is likely to be an impact, whether direct or indirect, upon relevant groups or communities.
- If the results are that one or more group appears to benefit less, is there justification for this?
- Does the provision criterion or practice aim to promote equality for a discriminated against group?
- Are there any parents/carers, staff, governors or other key stakeholders that may not get what they want from the provision, criterion or practice?

Consider alternative measures or adjustments.

- Considering whether there are ways of mitigating adverse impact and alternative ways of achieving the same goals is an important part of the assessment. Mitigating an adverse impact can either mean lessening the impact or providing an alternative if it is not possible to reduce it.
- What are the options? - What are their implications for promoting equality as well as their cost and resource implications?
- Will the alternatives help promote equality of opportunity, improved treatment and access, social inclusion or community cohesion?
- How will people know about the new way(s) of delivery so that they can benefit?
- Does the school have any statutory obligations, which would be breached if any of the options were chosen and implemented?

Monitor for adverse impact in the future and publication of results of such monitoring

Having adopted the provision, criterion or practice, arrangements need to be put in place to monitor it regularly either as part of existing monitoring arrangements or as a separate timetabled exercise. It may be that issues arise in the implementation of, for example, a policy that could not have been foreseen during the development process and it will only be when the policy is fully implemented, and with appropriate monitoring arrangements, that the real impact of the policy can be assessed.

The following questions may help guide monitoring:

- Who will be responsible for monitoring?
- What has to be monitored?
- Are there monitoring procedures already in place which will generate this information?
- What indicators or targets will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision criterion or practice?
- In what format will monitoring information be published?

Publication of results of the EIA

Finally, results of the impact assessment should be published and monitored with the results presented in an accessible and user-friendly way. Overall it is recommended that impact assessments should be proportionate to what is required and also transparent.

It is important to publish the results of the impact assessment so that there is a public record of the process undertaken as well as to inform the people you consulted in the process of how their views informed the final decision.

This will ensure feedback to all those who may have been involved in the process and build confidence and trust in the process.

The outcome of Equality Impact Assessments can be published on school websites.

Action planning guide

When developing an action plan, targets need to be:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time bound

In order to be effective they must also be owned and managed by the leadership and the whole school. It is also important that they are monitored and reviewed.

