# Equality Impact Assessment
## Part 2 – Form

**AUDIT** SCOTLAND

## Introduction

Before carrying out this assessment, you will have had an initial discussion with a member (or members) of the Equality and Human Rights Steering Group about whether you thought an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is required (see EIA Part 1 - "Prompt").

Obviously, you decided to carry out an EIA, and the reasons you gave for doing it is a good place to start discussing the EIA itself.

You should carry out this assessment with the same person (or persons) that you had the initial discussion with, if at all possible, as this will give your discussion some context and consistency.

## Process

Before completing the short form (overleaf), you will find this easier to do if you discuss in more detail why you thought an EIA was needed in the first place, and talk in more detail about what this means for the policy, practice or decision, as well as any actions you need to take.

Before completing the form, you need to consider our specific duties under the Equalities Act. In summary these are:

- Assess the impact of applying a proposed new or revised policy, practice or decision

- Consider relevant evidence relating to people with a protected characteristic, where this is appropriate

- Be able to demonstrate the evidence you have considered when making your decision

- Take into account the findings of any assessment on the potential impact of a new or revised policy, practice or decision

- Publish the results of any assessments made into the potential impact of a new or revised policy, practice or decision

- We review and where necessary revise any updated policy, practice or decision, ensuring on going compliance with equality duties

- Simply considering whether to assess a policy, practice or decision is not in itself an assessment.

### You should also think about the following:

- When considering whether or not to carry out an EIA in the first place, you thought about which issues or groups would or could be affected by the policy, practice or decision. Can you be more specific about this?

- Do you need further information about these areas, for example more data? If so, what exactly?

- Would it be helpful to contact any of the groups involved? You don't have to, but you can choose to involve others you think may be affected. Who would that be?

**Policy, practice & decisions**

It is important to note that legislation requires us to consider the potential impact of revised or new policies, practices as well as decisions.

Policies are clear, simple statements of how we intend to conduct our services, actions or business. They provide guiding principles when we're making decisions.

Procedures describe how each policy will be put into action.

**If you decide you do need more information, then you need to gather it before completing this assessment.**

- Taking everything into consideration, including any evidence you have gathered, will or could the policy have a differential impact on particular equality groups, either positively or negatively?

- If so, you need to discuss what you need to do to ensure the policy is robust.

- What will you do now? Your analysis should allow you to say whether you will:

  – Make no major change as you feel the policy is robust

  – Adjust the policy to take into account the potential impact of the policy

In some (rare) cases you could also consider continuing the policy even though it has the potential for adverse impact or stopping the policy altogether for the same reasons.

In each of these cases, you must be able to explain clearly why you have taken your decision.

## Next steps

Let your line manager know that you have carried out this EIA and let your Equality and Human Rights Steering Group representative have a copy of the completed form. This is mainly for information but also to allow the group to monitor EIAs and follow up any points that the group may have. A representative from the group will confirm that the EIA has been successfully completed. The form will also be published, where appropriate, on SharePoint and/or our external website.

# Equality Impact Assessment form

(see guide on previous page to help complete)

| Equality Impact Assessment form |
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| **Date of assessment** |
| February 2021 |
| **Title of policy or practice (or decision) to be created (or changed)** |
| Change in working practice: Hybrid Working (Office/Home) |
| **What is the policy or practice (or decision) intended for?** |
| Audit Scotland's response to Covid-19 resulted in all staff members working from home since 17 March 2020. As we move out of the pandemic and the vaccine is rolled out, we recognise the need to change our working practice in the longer term.<br><br>During this time we have recognised an opportunity to offer a more flexible way of working in the longer term. When we can reopen the offices, Hybrid Working will be offered to all colleagues which means they can choose the location they wish to work from (working from home and / or the office).<br><br>This assessment aims to identify any specific groups who may be affected by this change in working practice. |
| **In relation to the general equality duty and the protected characteristics, which issues or groups do you think would or could be affected and how? Be specific** |
| As this new way of working will apply to all staff we expect it to have an impact on all equality groups (persons who share a relevant protected characteristic).<br><br>We recognise that as well as the equality groups, other factors may be impacted, including, but not limited to: colleagues who home share / have restricted space / restricted connectivity, new colleagues, colleagues who are carers and colleagues who are living with unsupportive family members or in an unsafe environment.<br><br>We also recognise that this change creates opportunities that could have a positive impact on all equality groups and those impacted by other socio-economic factors. |

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### Did you need to obtain further information? If yes, how did you do that?

Yes, we asked all business group leads to respond to a set of questions to provide us with further information on what staff groups might be disadvantaged or benefit and why.

We also asked existing staff networks for similar feedback:

Carers Support Group

Disability Confident Working Group

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Group

Stonewall Working Group

Equality and Human Rights Steering Group

### Please summarise the relevant evidence you considered

We collated the feedback from the business and working groups and used this to produce the Understanding Different Needs Assessment.  We discussed the points raised in this and the potential issues/mitigations, positive impacts and further support requirements.

### What do you conclude is the potential impact on these areas?

The key areas we identified as potentially having an impact are as follows:

- Loss of vital support networks/feeling isolated/increased risk of mental health conditions
- Juggling increased caring responsibilities
- Unknown and unmet needs
- Concerns over health issues and susceptibility to Covid-19
- Working with colleagues in new and different ways
- Lacking the correct equipment and/or space to work effectively and safely from home, with Teams being the main platform, including an unsupportive, unsafe home environment.

Positive impacts:

- More inclusive workplace as barriers are removed for protected groups
- Improved work/life balance
- Reduced travel - time and expenses
- Wider talent pool for recruitment

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**What will you do now?**

In addition to maintaining the levels of support we currently have in place, we have also identified potential further support measures to be considered:

- Mental Health in the Workplace training for ALL Line Managers
- More frequent (mandatory) management development training to help ensure all line managers are confident in supporting individuals from all backgrounds and ensuring they understand the requirement for reasonable adjustments where needed.
- Focused Pulse Surveys - to obtain real time feedback from staff
- Covid-19 Safe Workplace arrangements for all three offices, including Office Guides detailing all safety measures that are in place
- Consideration to be given of the best use of office space to ensure the offices continue to provide the necessary meeting facilities to support increased number of Teams meetings.
- Periodic Display Screen Equipment risk assessments to ensure needs are identified and met
- Roll out of laptops (other technology solutions, such as mobile phones) to all colleagues to minimise the use of shared equipment
- Practical solutions to be considered to provide safe working from home solutions for staff, including those with limited space
- Consider further alongside our mainstreaming equality outcomes once confirmed for 2021.

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