



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

Equality Impact Assessment is the process by which organisations examine their activities in order to minimise the potential for discrimination. The process is also used to monitor interventions designed to have a positive impact on a particular group.

2. AIMS

Discrimination can occur due to unforeseen reasons. It can be the case that certain groups are unintentionally overlooked or excluded by not specifically considering their needs. By undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment, overall quality is improved, the potential for discrimination is reduced and staff awareness is raised.

3. CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 Policies and Practices

Policies and practices exist at many levels and should be Equality Impact Assessed whenever they are revised or when new ones are introduced. A rigorous process of assessment should be followed for each policy or practice using all the available evidence and gathering more if required.

3.2 Groups

Legislation already forbids discrimination in what is commonly referred to as the 'Six Equality Strands.' In general terms, this means that 'public bodies' such as Wallington High School for Girls cannot discriminate on the grounds of disability, gender, race (or ethnicity), religion and belief, sexual orientation or age.

4. RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCTING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

The group responsible for developing a policy, plan or strategy is also responsible for undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment. The assessment should be done as a group exercise, with the completion of a template thereafter. See attached guidelines. All key members of the group that have developed the proposal should be present when conducting an Equality Impact Assessment. A sound understanding of the proposed policy, plan or strategy is essential to enable it to be assessed effectively.

Conducting an Equality Impact Assessment does not require specialist knowledge or expertise, although sometimes it may be helpful to invite people with specialist expertise to the assessment.

When conducting the assessment the group should use the template / checklist to help them to consider potential impacts, then suggest recommendations to improve the impact and identify where further evidence may be required. The template should be used in a group exercise involving people with different perspectives (normally no less than 4) and it should never be completed by one person alone. Each member of the group conducting an Equality Impact Assessment should be given a copy of the template / checklist to write their ideas on.

5. UNDERTAKING AN EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (GUIDANCE)

5.1 Step 1: Identify Population Groups

The group should identify the different population groups who may be affected by the proposal. These may include:

- The intended target group(s);
- Other groups who may receive the intervention;
- Groups who may be affected unintentionally (positively or negatively);
- People who are excluded from benefiting from the proposal.

It is essential to formally consider the six equalities strands as is required by legislation. These are noted on the template/checklist and are:

- Race;
- Disability;
- Gender;
- Sexual Orientation;
- Age;
- Religion or Belief.

Please note that not all of these groups will be relevant for every proposal. Group members should jointly define the relevant groups for the specific proposal and write them on the checklist as a reminder.

You may also consider groups of people not mentioned above but that you think may be particularly affected. It may be possible that you are proposing something aimed at a particular group and therefore will be excluding others.

5.2 Step 2: Impacts

Using its knowledge of the proposal, the group should then consider possible impacts. The template / checklist is intended to help the group think broadly about the indirect and unintended effects of the proposal as well as the direct intended ones. Impacts do not have to be limited to the examples shown below but these should stimulate discussion. The group should identify both positive and negative impacts.

Group members should work individually for ten minutes or so to make a note of what sort of impact they think the proposal will have and use the spaces on the template / checklist to write down their ideas. The group should then discuss these ideas collectively. Some proposals will have impacts on the whole population and you should note these when you find them. The group should try to specify whether the impact will be positive or negative or whether there is uncertainty and further investigation is required. The group should also identify which population groups will bear each impact.

It is important not to make assumptions about people's needs but equally important to ensure that common needs are addressed. It would be impossible to note all the issues in detail and the following should act as key prompts to stimulate discussion.

5.3 Examples of Key Issues for Consideration (where appropriate and relevant)

5.3.1 Race and Religion

- Have you made appropriate arrangements for ensuring that interpreters and translations can be arranged without undue delay?
- Are the language and images used in promotional material inclusive and representative?
- Are staff / students aware of the needs and rites of specific cultural / religious groups?

5.3.2 Disability

- Is written information available in alternative formats such as Braille or on audio CD?
- Are the premises where the service is delivered accessible to wheelchair users?
- Are staff aware of the multitude of disabilities and the importance of not making assumptions?
- Are the kinds of language used in promotional material inclusive and representative?

5.3.3 Gender

- Have arrangements been made to ensure that the needs of carers, usually but not exclusively women, are not overlooked?
- Are the language and images used in promotional material inclusive and representative?
- Have the needs of trans-gendered people been taken into account?

5.3.4 Sexual Orientation

- Are the needs of gay, lesbian and bi-sexual people accounted for?
- Is the language employed in the proposal assuming heterosexism?
- Are the language and images used in promotional material inclusive and representative?
- Could you do more to make the proposal more inclusive?

5.3.5 Age

- Have the needs of younger people been taken into account?
- Have the needs of older people been taken into account?
- Are the language and images being used in promotional material inclusive and representative?
- Could you do more to make the proposal more inclusive?

This is not an exhaustive list and is provided as an example to aid stimulating discussion.

5.4 Step 3: Further Evidence

Having identified impacts, the group should identify any uncertainties that may affect the recommendations. What else do you need to know about the impacts, or to monitor impacts that arise after the proposal is implemented? If the group needs to know more it should be noted and consideration given to the evidence which needs to be gathered and questions to be answered.

5.5 Step 4: Recommendations

Having identified the impacts, the group should identify ways in which the proposal should be amended, or other action taken, to maximise positive and minimise negative impacts. The group should agree these suggestions or recommendations.

The Equality Impact Assessment findings should be recorded by the group on a template / checklist and returned to the Headteacher. The final copy of the template / checklist should be formally reviewed and agreed by the group. It is best practice to do this immediately and also to review at six months that recommendations have been implemented.

This Policy conforms to the Wallington High School for Girls Equality Impact Assessment – Date _____

Created: January 2010

To be reviewed: 2015 (or as legal requirements change)

