

IMPACT NEEDS REQUIREMENTS ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

Assessing the Needs of Your Community

Revised September 2006



Key Stages of Impact Needs Requirement Assessment

1. Identify the aims of the policy and how it is to be implemented

- What is the intention of the policy/service/unit and why?
- How is the policy to be implemented? And who is responsible for it?
- How does the policy fit into the wider objectives of the authority?
- How does the policy relate to policies of other public authorities?

2. Outline Assessment

- Use the prompts on the form at this stage.

2iii. **Adverse Impact:** One way of thinking about this, is can we identify actual and potential inequalities in the outcome of the policy/service delivery?

2iv. **The Impact on Community Relations:** does this service/policy have the potential to set up one group against another, or make one group feel another group is getting preferential treatment or advantage, or marginalise certain groups for example: deaf people?

2vii. **Budgetary Significance:** this can be of significance to the provider or owner of the budget or to the recipient of the budget allocation

3. Who are the main stakeholders?

The Disability Duty requires user/stakeholder involvement from the outset; some services will need to create user groups; seek views as well as starting the process.

- Who is intended to benefit and in what way?

Staff:

Staff who deliver the service to users

Users:

Anybody who uses your service egg: the community, staff as users, elected members as users, referrals from other departments, schools etc.

Stakeholders

Likely to include partners, organisations and community groups egg: voluntary organisations, other HCC departments, other Blue lights, other local authorities, health authorities, business links etc

Public:

Likely to be include Community links; church halls; sports centre, local shops / pub / take-away / contractors etc

Others:

Other interested parties egg: auditors, inspectors, the media etc.

When involving people in the development/review of your policy or service consider the following:

- People from all equality groups are given the opportunity to participate in the policy planning process, and that their views are taken into account
- You do not use formal consultation too often or keep using the same groups
- The process is well managed, properly timetabled, has clear aims, and is clearly explained to the people involved

- You publish the results of these processes and can clearly demonstrate how this feedback will influence policy decisions

4. Commissioned/Partner Services/Policies

This relates to any contracting of services or links with organisations to ensure that services they provide on your behalf do not discriminate concerning disabled people etc. Check contracts and agreements and their practice standards e.g. have they taken disability equality into consideration in the way they do things including recruitment, information/communication.

5. Consider relevant data and research

- Surveys
- Statistical information including Census information
- Consultation activity and results
- Government advise/research
- Academic publications
- Specially commissioned research, if necessary
- SAP data
- Any service delivery data, including services delivered through other agencies (partners).
- Do we know of any complaints/criticisms from particular group/groups?

Assessing the Impact:

Sections 6 and 7 are all about identifying and assessing the impact or the outcome of the policy on one or more groups. It is not about whether the impact was intended, but its effect and what can be done to address any adverse differential impact.

6. Does the policy have a positive or negative impact?

What does your data tell you and what are the gaps? For example, you need to consider whether any disparities between groups amount to adverse impact on other groups, or unlawful discrimination. The following questions may be helpful for determining differential impact of a policy/service, you can apply these questions to each of the equality targets groups you have identified on your spreadsheet as having a differential impact, including:

- Do we know that there are a proportion of potential service users who are not using this service? Does this highlight any unmet need?
- Do we have any other data which suggests a differential impact?
- Do we have any anecdotal evidence which suggests a differential impact?
- Could the policy result in a differential impact?
- If so, what effect could this differential impact have on the community as a whole?
- If there is a differential impact, is it an adverse one, and for which group(s)?
- Is the policy directly or indirectly discriminatory?
- If the policy is indirectly discriminatory, is it justifiable under the legislation?

- How can we address this issue and promote equality through this process?

It is important to consider the impact on all groups and not to assume that if we identify an on one it will equally apply to others. The question of what we don't know is as important as what we do (gaps) and how we find out.

7. If you have identified a differential impact . . .

This section is about equality of outcomes. Having identified in the previous section a differential impact the next step is to assess whether it is an adverse impact. If there is an adverse impact on one or more groups, do you intend to put in place any compensatory measures.

Some differential impact is deliberate and legitimate and takes the form of positive action. Its aim is to compensate for adverse differential impact, this is particularly relevant to the Disability Equality Duty:

“The need to take steps to take account of a disabled person's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons.”

Examples of this can include:

Providing a dedicated car parking space for a disabled user because they can't make use of public transport. None disabled users might also want a parking space but wouldn't experience the same disadvantage as the disabled person, they would be inconvenienced but not excluded for the service.

Providing translation services e.g. BSL or a community language that enable a person or group of people to participate where if that translation were not provided they would be excluded from participation.

Other examples of positive action include:

Events to encourage job applicants from from groups of people who are under-represented in the organisatio workforce, including activities to reduce skills defiiicits which present a barrier to those groups applying for certain jobs.

Can any adverse impact be justified as part of a wider strategy, in which case is it lawful?

When considering the policy/service, the following questions should be considered:

- How can we promote equality through this process?
- What are the consequences for the affected groups, and for the authority, of not adopting the option more favourable to equality?
- What are the costs of implementing each option?
- How should cost factors influence the choice between options?

8. Identifying Issues/unmet needs:

- Are they issues not identified in section 6?

For example:

- Have you identified areas where little or no information is available?
- Are there areas of services delivery for which take up is not monitored?

- Are these cross cutting issues?

9. Further User/staff/stakeholder involvement:

If there is insufficient data or knowledge about any of the equality target groups you will need to undertake further user involvement. You may also have identified through earlier involvement that there are other groups that this policy or service provision impacts upon and whom you now need to involve in the policy/service development/review.

10. Monitoring

- How do you intend to find out the effect this policy/services or the changes to this policy/service have on disabled and community groups?
- How will you measure the take-up of this service by disabled or community groups?
- Undertaking an Impact Assessment should not be regarded as a one off exercise, it needs to be integrated into departmental/service planning processes.
- The actions identified in this process need to be reviewed annually and further improvements/changes made where necessary.
For example: monitor the take-up of alternative formats or languages.

11. Learning & Development

- Are there particular learning needs identified that will enable the policy/service to be more effective
- Are there relevant training needs identified by staff through the PMD process
- Are there learning needs identified through complaints/criticisms from service users

For example training staff in the gathering of equalities monitoring data will improve the quality of data about service users.

12. Improvement Plan

The proposed actions identified throughout this process need to be summarised in the Improvement Plan. These actions need to be prioritised and given a realistic timescale. One option is a three year plan given that an EIA is reviewed after three years

The Positive Duties

The action plan should consider if and how the steps you are taking will:

- Promote good relations
- Promote Equal Opportunities
- Promote positive attitudes
- Promote participation in Public Life
...Of all equality target groups.

These requirements are part of the General Duties of Equalities Legislation and it is good practice to note how we are progressing in relation to each of these areas. They are not explicitly covered within the Equality Impact Assessment Process.