

Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Template

This document provides guidance when completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA template can be found at the end of this document.

The Research Councils are committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or our responsibilities as an employer. As public authorities we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

What is an Equality Impact assessment (EIA) and why do we need to complete one?

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is an approach designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation.

The EIA will help to ensure that:

- we understand the potential effects of the policy by assessing the impacts on different groups both external and internal
- any adverse impacts are identified and actions identified to remove or mitigate them
- decisions are transparent and based on evidence with clear reasoning.

When might I need to complete an EIA?

Whether an EIA is needed or not will depend on the likely impact that the policy may have and relevance of the activity to equality. The EIA should be done when the need for a new policy or practice is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. Depending on the type of policy or activity advice can be sought from either your HR team, your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, your Peer Review Policy team or their equivalents.

Ideally, an EIA should form part of any new policy, event or funding activity and be factored in as early as one would for other considerations such as risk, budget or health and safety.

Who is responsible for completing and signing off the EIA?

Depending on the nature of the policy, event or funding activity, the responsibility of who should complete the assessment, who should be consulted, and who should sign off the EIA will vary. Ultimate responsibility on whether an EIA is required and the evaluation decision(s) made after completing the EIA lies with the Senior Responsible Officer, budget

holder, project board or the most relevant senior manager.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage because of their protected characteristic. The different groups covered by the Equality Act are referred to as protected characteristics: disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age.

Discrimination is usually unintended and can often remain undetected until there is a complaint. Improving or promoting equality is when you identify ways to remove barriers and improve participation for people or groups with a protected characteristic.

Building the evidence, making a judgement

In cases of new policies or management decisions there may be little evidence of the potential effect on protected characteristic groups. In such cases you should make a judgement that is as reliable as possible. Consultation will strengthen these value judgements by building a consensus that can avoid obvious prejudices or assumptions.

Consultation

Consultation can add evidence to the assessment. Consultation is very important and key to demonstrating that organisations are meeting the equality duties, but it also needs to be proportionate and relevant. Considering the degree and range of consultation will safeguard against 'groupthink' by involving a diverse range of consultees. These are the key considerations, to avoid over-consultation on a small policy or practice and under-consultation on a significant policy or an activity that has the potential to create barriers to participation.

Provisional Assessment

At the initial stages, you may not have all the evidence you need so you can conduct a provisional assessment. Where a provisional assessment has been carried out, there must be plans to gather the required data so that a full assessment can be completed after a reasonable time. The scale of these plans should be proportionate to the activity at hand. When there is enough evidence a full impact assessment should be prepared. Only one EIA should be created for each policy, as more evidence becomes available the provisional assessment should be built upon.

Valuing Differences

EIAs are about making comparisons between groups of employees, service users or stakeholders to identify differences in their needs and/or requirements. If the difference is disproportionate, then the policy may have a detrimental impact on some and not others.

'You are looking for bias that can occur when there are significant differences (disproportionate difference) between groups of people in the way a policy or practice has impacted on them, asking the question "Why?" and investigating further'.¹

Evaluation Decision

There are four options open to you:

1. No barriers or impact identified, therefore activity will **proceed**.
2. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the evidence shows bias towards one or more groups
3. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias, or
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in **extreme cases** or where **positive action** is taken). Therefore you are going to **proceed with caution** with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.

In most cases, where disproportionate disadvantage is found by carrying out EIAs, policies **and practices are usually changed or adapted. In these cases, or when a change has been justified** you should consider making a record on the project risk register.

¹http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/s/n/Acas_managers_guide_to_equality_assessments.pdf

Equality Impact Assessment

| Question | Response |
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| 1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed | SEAMLESS: Transforming Community Health Continuous Pressure Monitoring Workshop This will be held as an appreciative inquiry event in two parts - in person on 16 th -17 th September 2024, and online on 2 nd October 2024. |
| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event | The SEAMLESS: Transforming Community Health Continuous Pressure Monitoring Workshop is an opportunity for participants to influence the development and design of a new 'Intelligent Sensing Device' which uses pressure monitoring technology to support the self-management of posture, mobility, and pressure ulcer risk in the community. It aims to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a new sensing technology that meets the needs of the community setting. • a user interface that can communicate relevant information to individuals, carers and clinicians. • a data management system for care providers and industry partners. |
| 3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) | Consultation with the SEAMLESS: Transforming Community Health Steering Committee and Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) Group, as well as meeting facilitators The Collective. |
| 4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event? | For the event: delegates, speakers and the research project stakeholders. For the outcomes: Anyone can be affected but the primary focus is on older people and disabled people although it can impact on mothers during childbirth. |
| 5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event? | The SEAMLESS: Transforming Community Health research project PI and Steering Committee, as well as The Collective will monitor and review the event for EDI compliance. |

| Protected Characteristic Group | Is there a potential for positive or negative impact? | Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used | Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy) |
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| Disability | Yes | Individuals with disabilities, particularly those with limited mobility, are the primary beneficiaries of this research. | We are engaging with a diverse range of individuals with disabilities in the design and evaluation stages of the project to ensure the device is accessible and meets their needs. We are building accessibility |

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| | | | <p>into the design of the event. For the in person event on 16th-17th September, the conference room is on the ground floor of the hotel and is wheelchair accessible. For accommodation, we have reserved wheelchair accessible rooms. PPIE contribution is built into the design of the event with PPIE representation on the core planning group. The need for additional breaks and adjusted start and finish times is built into the programme. The in-person part of the event will be followed by an online event to ensure accessibility for those not able to attend in person.</p> |
| Gender reassignment | N/A | No specific impacts identified. The project should be inclusive of individuals undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment. | Maintain an inclusive approach in participant recruitment and ensure that materials and communications are sensitive to gender identity issues. |
| Marriage or civil partnership | Yes | An issue was identified around the use of continuous pressure mapping in double beds (it is commonly used in single beds). | Ensure that the project is inclusive and supportive of individuals in all types of relationships. |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Yes | Pregnant individuals may have specific needs related to mobility and pressure sore risk. | Consider the specific needs of pregnant individuals in the design and application of the technology. |
| Race | Yes | The project aims to address the specific challenges faced by members of the BAME community in identifying early stages of tissue damage. | Actively recruit participants from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, particularly from BAME communities. Following the design of the new technology, ensure that materials and support are culturally sensitive and available in multiple languages if necessary. |
| Religion or belief | N/A | No specific impacts identified. Religion is not a subject matter for discussion at the workshop. Ensure that the project is respectful of religious beliefs and practices. | Accommodate religious practices and ensure that participation does not conflict with religious observances. |
| Sexual orientation | N/A | No specific impacts identified. Sexual orientation is not a subject matter for discussion at the workshop. | Ensure an inclusive environment where individuals of all sexual orientations feel welcome and |

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| | | | valued. |
| Sex (gender) | Yes | It is possible there may be a gender imbalance within delegates however this is beyond our control. | We have tried to ensure parity in the delegate list and registration is open to all. |
| Age | Yes | Older adults are more likely to have limited mobility and are at higher risk of pressure sores. We do not limit age in our workshop. We have encouraged the participation of early and mid-career researchers, to be inclusive and to provide an opportunity to encourage this sector of researchers. | Ensure the technology is designed to be user-friendly for older adults, with clear instructions and support available. Ensure older adults are involved in the co-production process to tailor the device to their needs and that there is representation at the workshop. |
| Other (caring responsibilities) | N/A | Caring responsibilities have been addressed. We are holding the in person meeting over two days so that the hours are manageable with school days. We have members of our committee with a range of caring responsibilities and we are considerate to their needs throughout the process of planning and considerate to delegates with difficulties on the day. We are following up with an online event for those that were unable to attend in person to ensure greater inclusivity. | |

Evaluation:

| Question | Explanation / justification | |
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| Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | It is unlikely the proposed activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people. | |
| Final Decision: | Tick the relevant box | Include any explanation / justification required |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed . | ✓ | |
| 2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups | | |
| 3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias | | |
| 4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. | | |

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| Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events: | Yes |
| Date completed: | 4.7.24 |
| Review date (if applicable): | EDI will be further reviewed through the evaluation of the event and at completion of delegate feedback survey. |

Change log

| Name | Date | Version | Change |
|------|----------------|---------|--------|
| | When published | 1 | |