

# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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## Deciding what needs to be assessed

In theory all policies, decisions, services, projects and programmes should be impact assessed. The most practical approach is to assess as the proposal is being developed or as processes, services and policies come up for review making the EQIA part of the development process. Do not be put off by the list below, it does not mean that long and detailed assessments are required every time you are engaged in one of the activities. However, it does mean that you should always consider the equalities implications of your proposals.

### Policy

- New policy development
- Substantial revision of an existing policy or process
- Any change which may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group

### Decision

- Key decision
- Decision for management board/cabinet
- Budget change decision

### Service

- New service
- Service review, including the decommissioning of services
- Any service change which may have a disproportionate impact on a particular group

### Projects and programmes

- All, at planning stage

Further information: [Equality Impact Assessments - a user's guide](#)

## Section One

	Question	Response
1.1	<b>Name of policy/decision/service/project/programme being assessed</b>	Parental Leave Policy for Members
1.2	<b>Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/decision/service/project/programme</b>	<p>The objective of the policy is to ensure that insofar as possible Members are able to take appropriate leave at the time of birth or adoption, that both parents are able to take leave, and that reasonable and adequate arrangements are in place to provide cover for portfolio-holders and others in receipt of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) during any period of leave taken.</p> <p>We believe that new parents need certainty about what leave and support they will get as councillors. Having a policy in place gives councillors a clear idea about what will happen if they have a baby or adopt a child whilst in office, and includes provisions about what will happen with other colleagues covering their work whilst they are off.</p>
1.3	<b>Who is affected by the policy/decision/service/project/programme? (e.g. employees/service users/supplier/contractor)</b>	The policy will affect any councillor who is having or adopting a baby or who is the partner of someone who is having or adopting a baby
1.4	<b>What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this proposal? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b>	<p>Swindon Borough Council is committed to ensuring that Swindon is a town where families are supported to develop and flourish. There is at present no legal right to parental leave of any kind for people in elected public office. This applies to MPs as well as councillors, and has been the subject of lengthy debates. Discussions are ongoing about changing the law to enable compulsory provision.</p> <p>Consultation has taken place at the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Member Development Advisory Group, Cabinet and Full Council as well as individual representations made by councillors.</p>
1.5	<b>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	There are no plans to formally monitor the impact from the introduction of the Policy. However, informal feedback will be sought from Members as and when the Policy is used. If necessary, the Independent Remuneration Panel would then be instructed to review the Parental Leave Policy prior to it being submitted to Cabinet and Council for consideration.

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## Section Two - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact? Is the impact neutral?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the proposal)
<b>Disability</b>	Positive	Improved provision for any new parents should contribute towards increasing the diversity of experience, age and background of our councillors. We hope that the provisions will also assist with retaining experienced councillors and making public office more accessible to individuals who might otherwise feel excluded from it.	
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Positive	As above	
<b>Marriage or Civil Partnership</b>	Positive	As above	
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	Positive	As above	
<b>Race</b>	Positive	As above	
<b>Religion or Belief</b>	Potential for negative impact	The present-day doctrines of the world's major religions and their denominations vary vastly in their attitudes towards the LGBT+ community with some contra views existing particularly in Abrahamic religions.	We recognise and respect the differing views however failure to accommodate the LGBT + community in this policy would make it discriminatory. The Equality Act 2010 gives protection on the grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Reassignment making any form of discrimination illegal.

<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Positive	See above.	
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Positive	See above.	
<b>Age</b>	Positive	See above.	
<b>Children in Care and Care Leavers</b>	N/A		

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### Section Three- Evaluation

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?</b>	<p>No – the intention behind introducing the Policy is to remove potential barriers to people entering public life. It will also enable existing councillors to continue in public life without feeling like they need to stand down because of parental leave reasons.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that the term ‘maternity’ may exclude some people. For simplicity, and in line with legislation, the term ‘maternity’ will still be used in our forms and systems, but where used this term includes all pregnant parents.</p> <p>The Policy also clarifies who qualifies for Paternity Leave.</p>
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No.	Final Decision	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1.	No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed.	Y	Introducing a Parental Leave Policy for Members will remove barriers.
2.	Stop at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3.	Adapt or change the event in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4.	Barriers and impact have been 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 proceed with caution with this knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

## Section Four – Record Keeping

Will this EqIA be published* (*EqIA's should be published alongside relevant event paperwork including cabinet papers:	Yes
Date Completed	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2024
Review date (if applicable)	

## Change Log

Name	Date	Version	Change Made

Responsibilities			
<b>Name of person leading this EqIA</b>	Vicki Yull	<b>Date Completed</b>	01/03/2024
<b>Names and roles of people involved in the consideration of impact</b>	The Independent Remuneration Panel	Cabinet	Full Council
<b>Name of Director signing EqIA</b>	Chief Legal Officer	<b>Date Signed</b>	19/03/2024