

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

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
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1.1	Name of policy/decision/service/project/programme being assessed	Domestic Abuse Policy Housing Customer Services
1.2	Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/decision/service/project/programme	<p>Swindon Borough Council is committed to promoting a zero tolerance of domestic violence and abuse. The policy sets out the responsibilities of the council as landlord and the responsibilities held for the wider residents within Swindon Borough in relation to domestic abuse, the support available and how domestic abuse is managed in line with the duty of care the authority holds.</p> <p>The Council believes that all forms of Domestic abuse are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Domestic abuse often has consequences for the housing of victims and their families who will frequently turn to Council Housing Services for help. This policy aims to ensure that all staff, partner agencies and contractors understand domestic abuse and give a consistent service when offering guidance and support.</p> <p>The vision sets a clear expectation for Housing Services in Swindon of how the council will respond to reports of domestic abuse from council tenants and seek to support people who are affected by it. It will also include guidance for other staff within the Housing Service who may come into contact with the public and residents of Swindon Borough and be likely to identify domestic abuse.</p> <p>To accompany the Vision, we have a strategy which sets out help and support that can be accessed and how partners work alongside the council to help and support survivors of domestic abuse linking into the Community Safety Partnership and the responsibilities that sit with the landlord in respect of council tenants and the wider household.</p> <p>The final copy of the strategy will be subject to the appropriate level of corporate and political scrutiny before being approved for publication.</p>
1.3	Who is affected by the policy/decision/service/project/programme? (e.g. employees/service users/supplier/contractor)	<p>It will affect all residents living within the Borough regardless of their background.</p> <p>The intended policy will set a framework to safeguard individuals, families and communities in relation to domestic abuse and the impact of domestic abuse.</p>
1.4	What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this proposal? (e.g. with	A draft version of the policy has been written, in line with national legislation, which was updated to include financial abuse. It has been subject to public, staff, partner, and stakeholder engagement.

	<i>relevant groups and stakeholders)</i>	Consultation with Tenants Scrutiny Panel will be undertaken. There will also be consultation with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
1.5	What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Swindon Borough Council will regularly review the EqIA, in line with legislative changes or good practice, or if the policy impacts any group directly.

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)
Disability	Negative	<p>Different approaches and mechanisms may be required for engaging with and representing, people with a range of disabilities depending on their individual needs.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication methods. • Accessibility – venue, location, transport. • Range of support needed to participate. • Hearing Loops and Interpreters. • Disability awareness training for employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a range of appointments, e.g. at home, at the office, at a library. • Consider different support needs, e.g. liaise with support workers, make referrals to support agencies. • Include interpretation services where needed. • Use text type telephones. • All staff to receive disability awareness training.

Gender Reassignment	Negative	<p>Trans people should be able to disclose their gender identity without fear of prejudice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making it clear you have a Trans policy and process. • Awareness training for employees. 	Swindon Borough Council does not have a trans policy – consider introducing a hate crime policy.
Marriage or Civil Partnership	Neutral	The policy recognises that Domestic Abuse can occur through several intimate relationships and is not limited to persons within a marriage or civil partnership.	All couples or partners, regardless of gender, should be able to access services.
Pregnancy and Maternity	Negative	<p>Pregnancy is recognised as a factor to domestic abuse which may lead to an increase or escalation in abuse. Including risks to unborn children.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible hours of the service/project. • Is there access to private area for breastfeeding mothers? 	<p>It is recognised that Domestic Abuse applies to pregnancy and maternity and must be applied fairly, equally, and consistently by the Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible with timings and appointments. • Introduce private area for breastfeeding, if requested.
Race	Negative	<p>People with insecure immigration status may be reluctant to report domestic abuse for fear of deportation or reprisal.</p> <p>Local support services may have differing capabilities around translation and interpretation.</p>	Having a female available in dealing with female victims of certain communities has been identified as most likely to achieve the best service. This cannot be guaranteed and therefore could hinder the safeguarding and investigation.

		<p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the BME communities that our service/project affects. • Language(s) spoken/understood. • Culture, such as hygiene, clothing, physical activities, mixed gender activities. • What access support can we offer? 	<p>Regular review of ASB activities undertaken in respect of the policy and perpetrator/victim to ensure that this group is not being disadvantaged.</p> <p>Work with Community Safety Partnership on individual cases.</p>
Religion or Belief	Negative	<p>Relationship dynamics may be different in diverse cultures, and people within certain cultures may be more likely to suffer particular types of abuse.</p> <p>This could have several effects including victims being more reluctant to report or resistant to their partner being arrested.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The diversity within the communities that our service/project affect. • Prayer times, mealtimes, food (some religions do not eat meat), cultural habit or belief, religious holidays such as Ramadan. 	<p>Be flexible with appointments, e.g., home visits offered to suit the tenant.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness training for employees. 	
Sexual Orientation	Negative	<p>Domestic abuse where the victim is LGBT+ may take on specific forms that others are not subject to. The potential impact of some of these types of abuse, such as 'outing' and their use as a control tactic should not be underestimated.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGB people should feel safe to disclose their sexual orientation without fear of prejudice. Make it clear you recognised civil marriage and partnerships. Awareness training for employees. 	<p>Provide ongoing awareness training for employees.</p> <p>Swindon Borough Council Equality policy.</p>
Sex (gender)	Neutral	<p>Some local services may provide limited or no support to male victims.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on men and women. Childcare/care of other dependants. Mixed/single gender groups/activities. Timing of services/projects. 	Be flexible with appointments.
Age	Negative	Older people may rely on a partner for care needs (or provide care for their partner) which may make	Accept correspondence in different formats, e.g. email, written, WhatsApp messages, telephone call.

		<p>reporting more difficult.</p> <p>Older people may also be 'used to' abuse and not perceive themselves as being a victim – this could be partially mitigated by ensuring that promotion/publications around domestic abuse are inclusive of different age groups.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way younger and older people access services may be different. • Use of technology. • Childcare/care of another dependant. • Timings/flexibility, such as work patterns. • Transport arrangements. • Venue location. 	<p>Offer a range of appointments, home visits.</p>
<p>Children in Care and Care Leavers</p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>There is no evidence to suggest this will impact on any specific person based on this characteristic.</p> <p>Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way younger and older people access services may be different. • Use of technology. • Childcare/care of another dependant. • Timings/flexibility, such as work patterns. • Transport arrangements. • Venue location. 	<p>Accept correspondence in different formats, e.g. email, written, WhatsApp messages, telephone call.</p> <p>Offer a range of appointments, home visits.</p> <p>Cover transport costs for court.</p>

Section Three- Evaluation

3.1	Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	No. The policy provides a transparent framework that SBC will follow to ensure decisions on domestic abuse and procedures that follow are carried out in line with the policy.
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Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified; therefore, activity will proceed.	✓	The policy provides a transparent framework that SBC will follow to ensure decisions on domestic abuse and procedures that follow are carried out in line with the policy.
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/Not required
Date Completed	
Review date (if applicable)	

Change Log

Name	Date	Version	Change Made

Responsibilities			
Name of person leading this EqIA	Stuart Hook	Date Completed	07/06/2024
Names and roles of people involved in the consideration of impact	Stuart Hook Sally Nelson	Andrew McDonald	
Name of Director signing EqIA	Chris Stratford	Date Signed	14-06-2024