

South Staffordshire Council Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)

Introduction

As functions or policies are reviewed, or new ones developed, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) should be carried out to address the following legislation:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000;
- Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act 2006;
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975; and
- To help implement the Employment Equality Regulations on Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief and Age.

EIAs can help South Staffordshire Council to meet the various stages of the Equalities Standard for Local Government and increasingly service inspections are asking questions about the findings of EIAs.

An EIA is a process to determine whether a policy or function has any *"differential impacts"* that could have an adverse (negative) implication on the basis of a person's race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion/belief or age. It is a method to ensure that a function or policy will not create any barriers that could prevent access to services or employment opportunities.

Explaining the toolkit

Equality Impact Assessment	
1	Title of Function or Policy to be assessed: Concessionary Travel Scheme
2	Date: 3 rd July 2008
3	Name of Lead Officer: Phil Hardy, Electoral and Concessionary Services Manager
4	EIA Team Phil Hardy and Tony Ward
5	Director/Head of Service/Service Manager: Phil Cooper, Director of Finance
6	Existing, new or review: Existing scheme updated as at April 2008 incorporating change in legislation to introduce the national All-England bus pass. Subject to further review in 2008/09 depending on the outcome of the Rural Transport Review, being led by the Deputy CE.
7	Set out the aims/objectives/purposes/outcomes of the function or policy, and give a summary of the service provided: Concessionary services are responsible for the delivery of concessionary travel under the Transport Acts, as amended. The concession provided is the statutory national bus pass which is available on application to all eligible persons aged 60 and over or qualifying disabled persons living within South Staffordshire.

If you have any queries or comments about Equality Impact Assessments or about the toolkit, please contact:

Kieran Smith, Policy and Partnerships, 01902 696537

Or email: k.smith@sstaffs.gov.uk

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	<p>We provide - either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the national statutory bus pass or companion pass (if qualify on disability grounds), or • as an alternative we offer our own travel tokens that can be used on local buses and taxis. An amount of your tokens can be used to have a Senior rail card or you could chose to just have a rail card as long as you are aged 60 or over. A rail card will give a third-off the cost of most rail travel. 																														
8	<p>Linked policies, functions: Are there any other functions, policies or services which might be linked with this one for the purposes of this exercise?</p> <p>Rural Transport Review will report to Council this year with options that may impact on the Scheme</p>																														
9	<p>Who is it intended to affect or benefit (the target population):</p> <p>As from April 2008 the national All-England bus pass has to be offered to all eligible persons within the District. An eligible person is someone who is aged 60 or over or has a disability that meets one or more of the seven categories as defined within the Transport Act.</p> <p>Staffordshire County Council administers the statutory bus pass scheme on behalf of the authorities for which there is separate scheme documentation available on our website: http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=12989</p> <p>Our scheme provides older and disabled passengers, including blind passengers, an option of choosing to take South Staffordshire Council's own plastic travel tokens in lieu of a bus pass. The tokens are accepted with participating bus operators within the District and local taxi firms; those both licensed by this Council and adjoining Districts. Blind and partially sighted applicants are entitled to double the amount of tokens.</p>																														
10	<p>Within this table, state whether the policy or function will have a positive or negative impact across the following factors and provide any comments.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 25%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">Positive Impact</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Negative Impact</th> <th style="width: 45%;">Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Age</td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> <td></td> <td>Targeted group is the over 60s as per the Transport Act</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Disability</td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> <td></td> <td>7 categories of disability detailed in the Transport Act</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gender</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>The scheme is not gender orientated.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Race</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>We provide the information in different languages and formats on demand, as stated in all our documentation</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Religion/belief</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>The scheme is not religion/belief orientated.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexuality</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>The scheme is not sexually orientated.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Comments	Age	YES		Targeted group is the over 60s as per the Transport Act	Disability	YES		7 categories of disability detailed in the Transport Act	Gender			The scheme is not gender orientated.	Race			We provide the information in different languages and formats on demand, as stated in all our documentation	Religion/belief			The scheme is not religion/belief orientated.	Sexuality			The scheme is not sexually orientated.
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11	<p>What evidence do you have for the statements you have made above?</p> <p>The Transport Acts</p> <p>Our application form – see website</p>
<p>12. From evidence given at Q.11 what actions, if any, will you need to take against each of the following equality strands:</p>	
<p>Disability:</p>	
<p>Race:</p>	
<p>Gender:</p>	
<p>Age:</p>	
<p>Religion/belief:</p>	
<p>Sexuality:</p>	
<p>13. Briefly explain how the policy or function contributes to Community Cohesion by answering the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will it provide equality of access to services, information and employment? • Does it or could it celebrate diversity? • Will it or could it promote good relationships within and between communities? • How will it help to prevent social exclusion? • Will it help to reintegrate those who have become excluded? • How will it provide good quality, inclusive services? <p>The scheme is brought together for the over 60s as the scheme is freely open to anyone over this age who permanently lives within the District to apply and they all get the same benefits regardless of age, religion/belief, sexuality, gender and race.</p> <p>The scheme is widely publicised and full details are included on our website.</p> <p>http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=12989</p> <p>The Transport Acts define and give guidance on disability based on 7 categories which we apply to this client group regardless of age, gender etc. See webpage link above.</p>	

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14. Consultation:

Describe what consultation has been undertaken on this function or policy, who was involved and the outcome.

Annual consultation with users of tokens asking for their comments on the scheme. The results of this year and last year's consultation are available on our website as a link, see below:

<http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=14151>

Meet with Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City on a regular basis with other districts within the county. The County Council administer the county bus pass scheme on behalf of the five Districts that are part of the scheme. The county as a whole have decided to waive time restrictions to the bus pass operation within the county so as to be more inclusive of our customer base.

Rural Transport Review – options for change may impact the scheme. This will have a period of public consultation possibly by focus groups of the Residents Panel. This will follow the stake-holders forum to consider the Consultants various options. Any changes to the scheme would then require Council approval.

Discussions have taken place in 2008 with a mental health organisation about the exclusivity of mental handicap and mental illness within our scheme. We take a more liberal approach based on interpretation of the national guidance than some Districts e.g. Lichfield DC. Revised wording on website and guidance to staff. We advertise annually within the Age Concern magazine that is freely distributed to all pensioners within the County.

Companion bus pass came about from discussions at bus pass meetings with other Districts and the County/Stoke during 2007 to take effect from the introduction of the national standard bus pass in April 2008. Our criteria are based on Stoke's scheme and will be reviewed after the end of the first year of operation. This allows a disabled user to apply for a companion pass to enable a carer to accompany them free of charge on buses locally. The three categories of severely disabled for which someone has to meet one of the categories are blind; in receipt of higher rate care component of Disability Living Allowance or higher rate carers allowance. The recipients have welcomed this.

Director/Head of Service:

I am satisfied with the results of this EIA
I have seen the Councils (3) Equality Schemes or Equality Action Plan and am satisfied with the contribution it can make.

Signature of Director:



Director of Finance
3rd July 2008

Completion of the Toolkit:

Approved by the DRG 22nd July 2008

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