

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.

Equality Impact Assessment	
1	Title of Function or Policy to be assessed: South Staffordshire Council's 'Viewpoint' Residents' Panel
2	Date: 10 th October 2008
3	Name of Lead Officer: Jamie Angus
4	EIA Team Kieran Smith Jamie Angus
5	Director/Head of Service/Service Manager: Steve Winterflood, Deputy Chief Executive
6	Existing, new or review: New
7	Set out the aims/objectives/purposes/outcomes of the function or policy, and give a summary of the service provided: The Council's Residents' Panel provides the Council with an opportunity to consult and engage with regularly with an established group of residents regarding various policies or plans. The results of the Panel's surveys will often lead into new or changes of strategies and policies.
8	Linked policies, functions: Are there any other functions, policies or services which might be linked with this one for the purposes of this exercise? No
9	Who is it intended to affect or benefit (the target population): The Panel is intended to benefit both the Council and local residents. The views of the Panel provide the Council with data and evidence that can be used to help gauge residents perception of how the Council is performing and how various services are perceived. The Panel also allows up to 1,000 local residents the opportunity to highlight any issues that they feel the Council should be addressing.

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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10	Within this table, state whether the policy or function will have a positive or negative impact across the following factors and provide any comments.			
		Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Comments
	Age	Y	Y	The Panel is recruited via householders and therefore rarely includes younger people from the ages of 16-24
	Disability	Y	N	At present, the Panel has around 20% of its members who define themselves as having a disability or long standing illness
	Gender	Y	N	At present, the Panel has a gender make-up of around 55% male and 45% female. This number can fluctuate depending on response rates and the 'refresh' of the Panel every twelve months.
	Race	Y	Y	In the last survey, 98% of the respondents defined themselves as White, which is fairly representative of the District when considering the 2001 census information. However, BMG Research who host the survey have not provided a sufficient breakdown/ definition of 'white' and 'non-white'.
	Religion/belief	N/a	N/a	
	Sexuality	N/a	N/a	
11	<p>What evidence do you have for the statements you have made above?</p> <p>Age: The membership of the Panel consistently returns statistically significant numbers of responses from the following age groups 25-44; 45-64 and 65+.</p> <p>Disability: Please see above. Also note that postal survey's are also offered in other formats, for example large print, upon request.</p> <p>Gender: Please see above.</p> <p>Race: Please see above</p> <p>Religion/belief: n/a</p> <p>Sexuality: n/a</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: n/a</p>				
<p>Race: Liaise with BMG Research to ensure that a more statistically sound breakdown of race/nationality is provided.</p>				
<p>Gender: n/a</p>				
<p>Age: Liaise with the relevant officers to enable Viewpoint questions to be asked of those under the age of 24 through the various consultation channels already in place.</p>				
<p>Religion/belief: n/a</p>				

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Sexuality: n/a

13. Briefly explain how the policy or function contributes to Community Cohesion by answering the following questions:

- 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?

The Residents' Panel allows a number of local residents to register their opinions and perceptions of the services the Council provides, or may choose to provide in the future.

The results of the survey can help assist other data analysis to help the Council provide improved and more accessible services.

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

The Viewpoint Panel is, by definition, a consultation tool.

Consultation with internal colleagues takes place regularly when compiling the surveys.

Chief Officer:

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.

I agree to review the Action Plan after 12 Months with the relevant Equality representative.

Signature of Chief Officer:



Steve Winterflood,
Deputy Chief Executive
South Staffordshire Council
13th October 2008

Completion of the Toolkit:

Kieran Smith
Corporate Policy Officer
South Staffordshire Council
13th October 2008