

What is a Community impact Assessment (CIA)?

A community impact assessment (CIA) is a way of assessing how what we do affects people with [protected characteristics](#) and other equality groups and considering how we can mitigate any unlawful or negative impacts. We can then take action to address any potential disadvantages to any equality group

When to conduct a CIA

A CIA must be undertaken before and at the time that a policy is under consideration, in the development of policy options and in making a final decision. The requirements of the law will not be fulfilled by conducting a community impact assessment after a decision has been made.

If you are developing anything new, reviewing what you do, proposing to discontinue a service or reduce funding, you should make sure that CIAs are built into the planning stages before decisions are finalised and agreed.

Why do we need to do CIAs?

The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have “due regard” or to consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making, in the following areas:-

- Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic (link) and those who do not
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

Assessing the potential equality impact of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can show ‘due regard’.

The requirement to show ‘due regard’ will be proportionate to the likely impacts of any proposed changes. For example, in cases where a decision may affect large numbers of vulnerable people, many of whom fall within one or more of the protected groups, the due regard requirement is very high, and requires analysis of all of the information used to inform your decision with the specific requirements of the Equality Duty in mind.

The council’s CIA process provides a systematic method of ensuring that the requirements of the Equality Duty are met.

How to conduct a CIA

Before you start, you should note that conducting a CIA is not just about completing a form. This is a holistic process where you will identify which equality groups your proposals will affect, how groups may be affected or disadvantaged by your proposals

and what you can do to reduce or eliminate any negative impacts, and also highlighting any positive impacts. The paperwork should be used as a guide and completed once the CIA has been conducted.

Part 1 and 2:

The first part of the process is to complete the basics which include the title of the impact assessment, date and CIA team. Please note that it is good practice to involve the manager responsible for the area under review, a member of the service with expert knowledge

As part of this step you will also need to indicate what you are impact assessing, placing an 'x' in the relevant area.

At this stage you need to set out the aims/objectives/purpose of the area that you are impact assessing, summarising the changes that you are proposing, what policies and functions are linked to this and who the proposals are likely to impact.

Part 3 and 4:

Analysis of the information you have gathered should identify whether your proposals are potentially discriminatory against people with a protected characteristic or other equality groups. You need to assess whether your proposals will mean that particular groups might not be getting the outcome they need or might be disadvantaged as a result of your proposals.

Consideration needs to be given to:

- groups experiencing positive outcomes which need to be highlighted
- whether your proposals provide an opportunity to enhance relationships between equality groups or whether there is a negative impact

Please consider the following questions for each of the equality strands:

- Will people not be getting the outcome they need?
- Will people be disadvantaged as a result of your proposals?
- If the impact is negative, how will it be reduced or eliminated?
- If you are unable to eliminate, reduce or mitigate negative impacts, are your proposals potentially discriminatory?
- Will the proposals mean that people will experience positive outcomes? Highlight any positive impacts
- Are the proposals likely to impact on community cohesion?
- Is there potential to enhance relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not?
- Identify areas where there is potential to foster good relations

Part 5 and 6:

You will need to consider how the proposals contribute to community cohesion and inclusion. Please consider the following:

- 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?

You will also need to find out what people think about your proposals. You may be able to use information already gathered through, for example, customer or staff satisfaction surveys or other customer or staff feedback.

Where your proposals have a direct impact on people with a protected characteristic, you must ensure that you consult with them about your proposals. Consultation must provide the people who you are consulting with clarity about what is being proposed to enable them to respond on the practical impacts of any proposals from their perspective. It is important that all responses are taken into account and considered carefully before any decisions are made.

Action Planning and Review

Once you have identified the impacts that your proposals are likely to have, you need to decide what you are going to do to reduce or eliminate them.

This means preparing an action plan which will detail the impacts, what you are going to do about them, who will be responsible for making sure the actions happen, realistic timescales for each action and where the actions will be monitored.

If you are unable to reduce or eliminate impacts, it is important that you record why and how this decision was reached.

Approval, sign off and publishing

When you have completed your community impact assessment, you should send it to your Head of Service for approval. You must ensure that Senior Managers and Elected Members are aware of the findings in your CIA and that these form part of the decision-making process and are included in your service plan.

Once this has been signed off please send it to Corporate Business and Partnerships they will check it and arrange for it to be published on the Council website.