# Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) Screening Form – V2 Template – November 2024

A successful EQIA screening will look at 5 key areas:

1. **Identify the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option to be assessed.**

A clear definition of what is being screened and its aims.

1. **Gathering Evidence and Stakeholder Engagement**

Collect data to evidence the type of barriers people face to accessing services (research, consultations, complaints and/or consult with equality groups).

1. **Assessment and Differential Impacts**

Reaching an informed decision on whether or not there is a differential impact on equality groups, and at what level.

1. **Outcomes, Action and Public Reporting**

Develop an action plan to make changes where a negative impact has been assessed. Ensure that both the assessment outcomes and the actions taken to address negative impacts are publicly reported.

1. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Stating how you will monitor and evaluate the **Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option** to ensure that you are continuing to achieve the expected outcomes for all groups.

## Section 1: Identify the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option

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| **Name of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option to be screened** | Electoral Registration and Elections |
| **Reason for change in Policy or Policy Development** | Reviewed and updated following changes to legislation |
| **List main outcome focus and supporting activities of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option** | To give all residents of the district fair, equal and accessible access to the democratic process at both a national and local level and to ensure all details are accurately recorded on the register of electors in accordance with the law. |
| **Name of officer completing assessment (signed and date)** | Jane Bailey  December 2024 |
| **Assessment verified by (signed and date)** | Anna Goodall  December 2024 |

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| **If applicable, please provide further details about the name and description of policy being analysed**  *Briefly summarise the policy including any key information such as aims, context etc; note timescales and milestones for new policies; use plain language – NO JARGON; refer to other documents if required*  In further detail: Maintain the Register of approximately 76,000 Electors, including additions, deletions and modifications of electors. By processing Individual Electoral Registration forms and undertaking reviews where necessary. Delivery of Canvass Communication letters to approximately 44,000 households in the district, followed by personal canvass of non-responding properties on an annual basis. This allows us to produce accurate registers including amendments by statutory deadlines.  We are also required to manage the registration for other types of electors including Anonymous, Overseas, Service, Crown Servants, Local Connections and EU Citizens.  Maintenance of over 14,000 postal votes, including the statutory renew process every 3 years.  Preparation, conduct and successful operation of inclusive, fair and well-run Elections for Parish/Town, District, County, Parliamentary, Police & Crime Commissioners, Parish Polls and Referendums. Liaise with candidates and agents, hire polling stations, organise equipment and staff, and publish statutory notices, issue poll cards, issue and open postal votes, organise and undertake verification and counting of the votes.  Responsible for communication and publicity to raise awareness of joining the register and engagement in the electoral process.  Implement boundary reviews as directed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England and undertake polling districts and polling places reviews. |

## Section 2: Gathering Evidence and Stakeholder Engagement

The best approach to find out if a policy, etc. is likely to impact positively or negatively on equality groups is to look at existing research, previous consultation recommendations, studies or consult with representatives of those groups. You should list below any data, consultations (previous relevant or future planned), or any relevant research or analysis that supports the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option being undertaken.

**Reminder** – protected characteristics include age, disability, race and/or ethnicity, religion or belief (including lack of belief), gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

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| **Name any research, data, consultation or studies referred to for this assessment** | **State if this reference refers to one or more of the protected characteristics** | **Do you intend to set up your own consultation? If so, please list the main issues that you wish to address if the consultation is planned; or if consultation has been completed, please note the outcome(s) of consultation.** |
| Equality Act 2010 | Under the Equality Act 2010, Returning Officers in GB have a duty to anticipate the needs of disabled voters and make reasonable adjustments to remove substantial disadvantage for those voters. |  |
| The Elections Act 2022 | The Elections Act 2022 introduces changes to further assist disabled voters at polling stations. |  |

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| **If applicable, please provide further Information about stakeholder engagement or detail used for customer analysis**  *Note relevant consultation; who took part and key findings; refer to, or attach other documents if needed; include dates where possible* |

## Section 3: Assessment and Differential Impacts

Use the table below to provide some narrative where you think the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Optionhas either a positive impact (contributes to promoting equality or improving relations within an equality group) or a negative impact (could disadvantage them) and note the reason for the change in policy or the reason for policy development, based on the evidence you have collated.

Please note that:

* a Positive Impact could benefit an equality group and a negative impact could disadvantage an equality group
* for reasons of brevity race is not an exhaustive list – please edit the list if appropriate to reflect the complexity of other racial identities
* a definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 is available on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010)
* there are too many faith groups to provide a list, therefore, please input the faith group e.g., Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Hindus, etc. Consider the different faith groups individually when considering positive or negative impacts

| **Protected Characteristic** | **Specific Characteristics** | **Positive Impact** | **Neutral** | **Negative Impact** | **Socio Economic/Human Rights Impacts** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sex or Gender | Women |  | No known impact. |  |  |
|  | Men |  | No known impact. |  |  |
|  | Transgender |  | No known impact. |  |  |
| Race | White |  | -No known impact.  -Where the law allows documents can be supplied in other languages.  -Canvassers supplied with translation materials to explain the canvass requirements and processes.  -We work with the traveller and diversity team to encourage registration of residents of traveller sites.  -Voter ID was introduced for in person voters from May 2023. Electors wearing face coverings can request that their identity is checked in private, and areas at each of our polling stations have been identified for this to take place. |  |  |
|  | Mixed or Multiple Ethnic Groups |  |  |  |
|  | Asian |  |  |  |
|  | African |  |  |  |
|  | Caribbean or Black |  |  |  |
|  | Other Ethnic Group |  |  |  |
| Disability | Physical disability |  | No known impact, however  -We consult disability groups when considering polling district and polling places reviews.  -We carry out disability access audits to ensure that polling stations are wheelchair accessible, ramps and doorstops are provided where needed.  - We provide all polling stations with wheelchair accessible polling booths.  - We provide large print ballot papers for reference, tactile voting devices and magnifiers to assist visually impaired voters to enable them to mark their ballot paper independently. Alternatively, assistance can be provided by the Presiding Officer if require, or a voter can bring a companion to assist.  -We ensure that polling stations have adequate lighting and provide extra lighting where required.  - Alternative voting arrangements are available if a voter is not able to attend a polling station – postal or proxy votes can be arranged prior to polling day and waivers can be applied if a voter is not able to provide a consistent signature.  - The Elections Act 2022 introduces changes to further assist disabled voters at polling stations. We already cover many of the requirements but (1)The rules around who can assist an elector to vote have changed, companions must be over 18 years old but do not have to be eligible to vote and they will not be required to show photo ID. They must only assist and must not influence how an elector votes.  (2)Polling station staff wear badges so that they are easy to identify. (3)Pencil grips are available to assist voters with conditions that make holding the pencil difficult. (4)we have expanded our polling station staff training around accessibility to ensure that staff are aware of barriers faced by disabled voters and are confident/competent to assist when required. |  |  |
|  | Sensory Impairment (e.g. sight, heading) |  |  |  |
|  | Mental health |  |  |  |
|  | Learning disability |  |  |  |
| LGBT | Lesbians |  | No known impact. |  |  |
|  | Gay Men |  | No known impact. |  |  |
|  | Bisexual |  | No known impact. |  |  |
| Age | Older people (60+) |  | No known impact but due to changes in legislation electors are now required to provide Dates of Birth and National Insurance Numbers as part of applying to register to vote, absent vote and voter authority certificates. This can add a barrier in care homes as residents/care home staff do not always have access to this information.  As an alternative there is an option to provide documentary evidence, however residents often do not have this type of evidence either.  Finally, voters can ask someone of good standing to attest to their identity, but attestors can only attest for 2 individuals per year and must be registered to vote in the same district themselves.  We work closely with Care homes to offer support during canvass to ensure that residents who are eligible are able to vote.  These issues have also been raised with relevant electoral groups. |  |  |
|  | Younger people (18-25) |  | No known impact.  Only persons aged 18 years and over are legally entitled to vote. However, 16/17-year-olds are encouraged to register and are held on the register as attainers. Attainers will appear on the electoral register as an elector and are automatically entitled to vote from their 18th birthday.    The potential introduction of Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) and the extension of the voting age to 16 is thought to boost student voter engagement.  16- and 17-year-olds can already vote in Scotland and Wales and pilots are currently taking place in Wales for AVR. |  |  |
|  | Children (0-16) |  | No known impact. |  |  |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | Women |  | No known impact. |  |  |
|  | Men |  | No known impact. |  |  |
|  | Lesbians |  | No known impact. |  |  |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Women |  | No known impact. |  |  |
| Religion and belief | See below |  | No known impact.  -A polling station venue (eg. church hall) may deter some voters from attending to cast their vote.  -Voter ID was introduced for in person voters from May 2023. Electors wearing face coverings can request that their identity is checked in private, and areas at each of our polling stations have been identified for this to take place. |  |  |

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| Summary of Protected Characteristics most impacted | NA |
| Summary of Socio-Economic impacts | As part of the Elections Act 2022 and to further assist voters we have introduced electronic devices to the My Fenland Team at 3 locations across the District. These allow customers, without internet access to apply online to register to vote, apply for an absent vote and for a voter authority certificate with assistance from My Fenland colleagues. |
| Summary of Human Rights impacts | The registration/democratic process is open to all eligible residents in the District. |
| Summary Explanation of the scoring against the protected characteristics | The registration/democratic process is open to all eligible residents in the District. |

## Section 4: Outcomes, Actions and Public Reporting

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| **Screening Outcome** | **Yes, No or not at this stage** |
| Was a significant level of negative impact arising from the project, policy or strategy identified? | No |
| Does the project, policy or strategy require to be amended to have a positive impact? | No |
| Does a Full Impact Assessment need to be undertaken? | No |

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| **If applicable, please state the overall outcome of the assessment, impacts and customer analysis**  NA |

## Section 5: Monitoring outcomes, evaluation and review

The Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) screening is not an end in itself but the start of a continuous monitoring and review process. The relevant Service responsible for the delivery of the Policy, Project, Service Reform or Budget Option, is also responsible for monitoring and reviewing the EQIA Screening and any actions that may have been taken to mitigate impacts.

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| Arrangements for Monitoring | Monitoring is ongoing following feedback from Candidates & Agents, polling/canvass staff & officers, members of the public and advice from the Cabinet Office/Association of Electoral Administrators. This ensures that we satisfy the needs and requirements of our customers and legislative duties. |
| Timing of the current review | December 2024 |
| Next scheduled review | December 2025 |

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| **If applicable, please provide details of the arrangements for future monitoring:**  *Note when analysis will be reviewed; include any equality indicators and performance against those indicators*  NA |

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| **If applicable, please provide details of any supporting data/ research linked to monitoring arrangements** (both FDC & Partners)**:**  NA |

## Legislation

**Equality Act (2010) – the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties)**

The 2010 Act consolidated previous equalities legislation to protect people from discrimination on grounds of race, sex, being a transsexual person (transsexuality is where someone is changed, is changing or has proposed changing their sex – called ‘gender reassignment’ in law), sexual orientation (whether being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual), disability (or because of something connected with their disability), religion or belief, having just had a baby or being pregnant, being married or in a civil partnership and age.