

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Revised June 2009



(Equality target groups are those which cover the 6 equality strands: race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religious belief)

Part 1 Aims & implementation of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

This section is the title of what is being assessed, responsible officers, purpose, where it fits within the council's wider aims and how it supports the legislation to eliminate unlawful discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities. *(please refer to the guidance for additional information)*

1.1 What is being assessed

Electoral Services – Registration of Electors

1.2 Officer(s) and section or service responsible for completing the assessment

Clive Joynes – Elections & Local Land Charges Manager

1.3 What is the main purpose or aims of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

Existing function which allows all eligible electors to be able to register in a convenient manner, with a view to ensuring that no eligible person is barred from voting should they wish to participate.

1.4 Who is affected by the service, policy, procedure, practice or project? Who is it intended to benefit and how?

All persons eligible to register as an elector.

1.5 Has the service, policy, procedure, practice or project been promoted or explained to those it might affect directly or indirectly?

Voter Registration Forms are posted to all properties on an annual basis to allow eligible electors to update their details. The reverse of the form contains information on the Registration of Electors.

1.6 How does the service, policy, procedure, practice or project contribute to better community cohesion?

Being able to participate in elections allows eligible members of the community to participate in the process that decides how the local area is governed and thus propagates an enhanced sense of belonging.

However, it should be noted that legislation dictates those nationalities that are able to participate in the electoral process, so not every member of the Island population will be able to participate. Persons under the age of 18 will also be excluded from the process, again by way of legislation. The Isle of Wight Council makes separate provision for younger people by way of the Isle of Wight Youth Council, which is provided by another Service Area.

1.7 How does the service, policy, procedure, practice or project fit in with the council's wider aims?

The One-Island Visions are:

- Drive the sustainable regeneration and development of the island
- Improve the health and well-being of the island communities

- Create safer and stronger communities
- Improve outcomes for children and young people
- High performing and cost effective council

The Elections function contributes to Creating Safer and Stronger Communities by allowing residents to influence who governs them, thus making them feel more involved in, and so more likely to take an interest in their community.

This function also contributes to a High Performing and Cost Effective Council as we ensure that all aspects of the function are carried out within budget and timescales.

1.8 What is the relevance of the aims of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project to the equality target group and the council's duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity?

This function does not discriminate any groups of individuals, other than where prescribed by legislation as previously outlined (i.e. by age or nationality)

1.9 How is, or how will the service, policy, procedure, practice or project be put into practice and who is responsible for it?

This is an existing function, largely defined by legislation. Whilst the legal responsibility lies with the Chief Executive in his role as Electoral Registration Officer, in practice the service is delivered by the Elections and Local Land Charges Manager, who reports to the Head of Democratic Services.

Part 2 Consideration of data and research

To conduct the assessment, you will need information about service users and staff that provide the service. This section is to help you identify the sort of information that will be needed to help you assess whether there may be barriers to different equality groups who access your service, policy, procedure, practice or project. *(please refer to the guidance for additional information)*

2.1 List all examples of quantitative and qualitative data or any consultation information available that will enable the impact assessment to be undertaken

This is a Statutory Function, whose delivery is, to a large degree, controlled by legislation, and which also allows for a number of measures to be taken (particularly in Polling Stations) to assist certain groups of electors.

The most recent consultation, which covered the whole of the Island, was the Polling Places and Districts Review 2008. This consultation included issues related to physical access to Polling Stations.

The Isle of Wight Council ran a wide-ranging media campaign aimed at getting people registered as electors, and increasing turnout at the election prior to the June 2009 European and Local elections.

2.2 Equalities profile of users and beneficiaries

All persons eligible to register as an elector.

2.3 Evidence of complaints against the service, policy, procedure, practice or project on the grounds of discrimination

None.

2.4 What does the consultation, research and/or data indicate about the negative impact on the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

That this function does not discriminate any groups of individuals, other than where prescribed by legislation as previously outlined (i.e. by age or nationality)

2.5 What does the consultation, research and/or data indicate about the positive impact on the service, policy, procedure, practice or project

That certain measures are put in place to assist some groups of potential electors, such as signature waiver forms for electors who wish to vote by post or proxy but who are unable to write.

Part 3 Assessment of impact

Now that you have looked at the purpose etc of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project (part 1) and looked at the research (part 2), this section asks you to assess the impact, positive and negative, of the service, policy, procedure, practice or project on each of the 6 strands of diversity covered in the Authority’s single equality scheme.

3.1 Complete this section with the following information – relating to all of the identified groups: (please refer to the guidance for additional information)

	Reason, evidence, comment					
	Race	Disability	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Age	Religious Belief
Barriers, negative impact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Whilst we do not discriminate on grounds of Race, we are required by legislation to limit a persons ability to Register and Vote according to their Nationality. Only UK, Irish, European Union or qualifying Commonwealth citizens are eligible to register.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Blind / Partially Sighted electors are able to apply for a postal / proxy vote even if they are unable to write by way of a “Signature Waiver”. Those with learning difficulties may not understand the process, and those with mobility impairments may not enjoy full access to some buildings. In these cases legislation provides some solutions, such as assistance for electors, and all polling stations have suitable access arrangements.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All electors may only vote once they attain the age of 18, so whilst younger people cannot vote, this is due to legislation and not local policy. The Isle of Wight Council makes separate provision for younger people by way of the Isle of Wight Youth Council, which is provided by another Service Area	
Neutral impact			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Positive impact						

Part 4 Measures to mitigate disproportionate or adverse impact or improve on neutral or positive impacts: (please refer to the guidance for additional information)

4.1 If there is any negative impact on any target equality group identified in part 3, is the impact intended or legal?

Legal

4.2 Specify measures that can be taken to remove or minimize the disproportionate or adverse effect identified in part 3. if none were identified, identify how disproportionate or adverse effect could be avoided in the future

Blind / Partially Sighted electors are able to apply for a postal / proxy vote even if they are unable to write by way of a "Signature Waiver". Those with learning difficulties may not understand the process, and aids such as Easy to Read guides and Makaton symbol guides are available.

4.3 If there is no evidence that the service, policy, procedure, practice or project promotes equality, equal opportunities or improves relations within equality target groups, what amendments can be made to achieve this?

N/A

4.4 If a neutral or positive impact has been identified, can that impact be improved upon (continuous improvement)?

N/A – The Service should be completely neutral in its approach.

4.5 How will any service, policy, procedure, practice or project be implemented?

This is an existing function which allows all eligible electors to be able to register in a convenient manner, with a view to ensuring that no eligible person is barred from voting should they wish to participate

4.6 As 4.5 above please identify training requirements

Ongoing training to keep up to date with national developments in legislation and local developments in policy implementation.

Part 5 Conclusions & recommendations

This section ensures that what ever we are impact assessing, whether it be a service, policy, procedure, practice or project that ensure that we abide by the general and specific duties to promote race, disability and gender equality. *(please refer to guidance for additional information)*

5.1 Does the service, policy, procedure, practice or project comply with equalities legislation?

Yes – within the limits set by legislation on who is able to Register and / or Vote.

5.2 What are the main areas requiring further attention?

Continuous review of systems to ensure that they provide a convenient and accessible service.

5.3 Summary of recommendations for improvement

Monitor points 4.6 & 5.2 above.

5.4 What equality monitoring, evaluation, review systems have been set up to carry out regular checks?

This Equality Impact Assessment will be reviewed annually.

5.5 When will the amended service, policy, procedure, practice or project be reviewed?

This Service will be reviewed annually.

Part 6 Action / improvement plan

The table below should be completed using the information from the equality impact assessment to produce an action plan for the implementation of the proposals to:

1. Lower the negative impact, and/or
2. Ensure that the negative impact is legal under anti-discriminatory law, and/or
3. Provide an opportunity to promote equality, equal opportunity and improve relations within equality target groups, i.e. increase the positive impact

Please ensure that you update your service/business plan within the equality objectives/targets and actions identified below:

Area of negative impact	Changes proposed	Lead officer	Timescale	Resource implications	Comments
Race	None				
Disability	None				
Age	None				
Religious and Philosophical belief	None				
Gender	None				
Sexual orientation	None				
Geographical location	None				
All of the above	None				

Part 6 continued – Equality Impact Assessment – Summary report

The results of equality impact assessments must be published. Please complete this summary and the publish your report using the Equality and Diversity pages of the Intranet. Your summary information and a copy of your completed report will then be made available to the public on the Council’s website.

Date of assessment	10 th September 2009		
Officer’s name	Clive Joynes	Role	Elections & Local Land Charges Manager
Service, policy, procedure, practice or project that was impact assessed	Registration of Electors		
Summary of findings	No further action required.		
Summary of recommendations and key points of action plan	None.		

Groups that this policy will impact upon

Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gender	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Age	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>