



NORTHAMPTONSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Policy

SERVICE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Title	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)
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Action	By all NFRS Personnel
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Executive Summary	<p>This document gives guidance on the management of Equality Impact Assessments (EIA)</p> <p>The aim is to ensure any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised</p>
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29.1 **Introduction**

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service are committed to mainstreaming equality and diversity in all that we do. To do this there are many legal and statutory requirements that we have to meet including compliance with the Race, Disability and Gender equality duties. Part of these requirements obliges Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). The purpose of an EIA is to improve the work of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service by ensuring it eliminates discrimination promotes equality of opportunity and promotes good relations between different groups. The process is carried out by systematically analyzing a proposed or existing policy, service, practice, procedure or function to identify what effect or likely effect will follow from its implementation for different groups in the community. The aim is to ensure any negative consequences are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for promoting equality are maximised.

29.2 **Strategic aims and objectives**

Our strategic aim is to ensure that the service fulfils its legal obligation and achieve improvements for all members of our community in particular those whose, gender, race, sexuality, disability, faith or age may have a negative impact upon their lives. Objectives of the policy include making sure that EIA`s are undertaken and include:

- Involving service users in service developments
- Training relevant staff in the EIA process
- Publish and share results

29.3 **Policy aims and objectives**

The aim of the policy is to provide a consistent framework for ensuring that all existing or proposed policies, services, practices, functions and procedures are subject to an EIA. In particular by using this process the service should:

- Identify any negative impacts and how they can be addressed
- Identify any positive impacts and how they can be fully exploited
- Recognise EIA`s as a continuous process of improvement

29.4 **Scope**

Essentially anything that we do that involves people should be considered for an EIA which means any policy, service, practice, function or procedure. This may apply to an internal or external practice, low level or high level decision making.

29.5 Definitions

1. **An EIA** means undertaking an assessment to determine if there are any impacts upon specific groups relating to issue of equality and diversity
2. **Diversity Strands:** The diversity strands refers to: Age, Sexual orientation, Race, Gender, Disability and Faith/Religion
3. **An Adverse Impact:** An impact as a consequence of the policy, service, practice, function, procedure that could disadvantage one or more diversity strand
4. **A Positive Impact:** An impact that could have a positive impact on one or more diversity strands eliminate or minimize discrimination, or improve equal opportunities and/or relationships between groups
5. **A Neutral Impact:** There is neither a positive or negative impact on any diversity strand

29.6 Organising

Accountability

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service have ultimate responsibility for the EIA Policy. The Equality and Diversity Officer has the responsibility to ensure that the service follows this policy and associated processes.

Responsibility

Essentially whoever has ownership for that policy, service, practice, function or procedure should undertake the EIA.

Equally everyone has responsibility for bringing to the attention of management any impacts that they become aware of as they implement the policy, service, practice, function or procedure.

29.7 Planning and implementing

All policies, services, practices, functions and procedures should be subject to an EIA; this is in accordance with legal requirements. This is to ensure that both staff and service users are not subject to any unlawful discrimination and receive equality of opportunity in all that the service does.

The EIA should focus on outcomes and improvements for people of diverse groups. They should also demonstrate that any issues that arise are addressed by the service and are monitored/reviewed to ensure the long term impact of the policy, service, practice, function or procedure.

Staff are expected to use the service standard EIA form to ensure consistency.

Approx 90% of all policy/service/practice/function/procedure will not need a full EIA but all should be subject to initial screening. The

service also has produced guidance notes to help staff undertake this. By using this policy and the guidance notes the service will be able to assess all that it does and determine if different groups are disadvantaged and if so prompt the service to remedy the situation which should include the setting of equality objectives. Where there is a positive impact this should be showed as good practice.

If no negative impact is found then a full EIA will not be required, if a low level negative impact is highlighted and can be resolved easily then this may also be a case not requiring a full EIA. You will need to discuss this with the Equality and Diversity Officer. If the initial screening highlights a major negative effect then a full EIA will need to be carried out. This will involve consulting and involving those groups from whom the EIA has highlighted as being disadvantaged by the policy, service, practice, function or procedure.

29.8 A full EIA

This may be required if the policy is a major one in terms of scale significance or that there is a clear indication that the policy, service, practice, function or procedure will have a major impact upon a diversity strand.

A full EIA requires consultation, which must be carried out with relevant public bodies, voluntary, community, trade union and other interest groups with legitimate interest in the matter. Consultation and engagement with groups and individuals should begin as early as possible. Relevant data should support this process. The service does not have to implement all proposals or actions from the consultation process but does have to explain why these have not been adopted or seen as viable options.

The service must be publishing the results of the impact assessments in report form and this should be in a systematic and consistent manner.

29.9 After an EIA

The EIA form should be fully completed and signed off, the Equality and Diversity Officer will do this. It will then be forwarded to the Policy and Service information Manager.

The policy, service, practice, function or procedure can now be undertaken.

29.10 Links to business plans

The outcomes of the EIA should be used to inform each services business plan and be linked to service delivery. As far as reasonably practicable the EIA should provide the basis for creating equality objectives and performance indicators which will drive improvements and change in delivery equalities. Clear objectives should be set to demonstrate progress and change. Monitoring should be planned showing performance indicators and timescales.

Appendix 1

Conducting an equality impact assessment in ten steps

- Step 1** Identify the policy, service, practice, function or procedure you need to undertake
- Step 2** Complete a screening form and consider whether it is likely to negatively affect any of the diversity strands
- Step 3** If no negative effect is highlighted - forward form to Equality and Diversity Officer - (If a negative effect has been highlighted complete a Full EIA)
- Step 4** Introduce the policy, service, practice, function or procedure you need to undertake
- Step 5** Collect data to highlight the acknowledged negative impact
- Step 6** Devise an action plan on how to lessen/remove any negative impact
- Step 7** Forward to Equality and Diversity Officer to seek consultation
- Step 8** Consider actions and changes - implement and complete where necessary
- Step 9** State where the assessment will be published
- Step 10** Equality and Diversity Officer to sign off

Reviewing performance and audit

This framework will be reviewed in two years time or earlier if changes in the law require this. The auditing of this document will be in accordance with the procedure detailed in the Service policy framework.

Legislative framework

- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relation Act 1976
- Race Relation Amendment Regulation 2003
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2004
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Sex Discrimination (gender reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Employment Act 2002
- Religion and Belief Regulations 2003
- Sexual Orientation Regulation 2003
- Age Regulation 2006