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# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT POLICY

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## 1. Introduction

1.1. The Standards Commission for Scotland is aware of and complies with its duties under the Equality Act 2010. In its decisions and operations, the Standards Commission has regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

1.2. The Standards Commission uses Equality Impact Assessments (EQIA) as a tool to help it to anticipate the needs of diverse groups when making decisions about policies, procedures and service delivery. It enables the Standards Commission to ensure its decisions accords with its values.

1.3. Conducting an EQIA will help the Standards Commission to:

- Think about equality in the early stages of planning, which will improve service delivery and employment practice.
- Ensure that no one is excluded from the delivery of its services and implementation of its policies.
- Anticipate the consequences of its actions and consider the effects of our decisions on different communities, individuals or groups.
- Identify whether an activity is likely to affect groups of people in different ways.
- Ensure that its decision-making includes a consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on particular protected groups.
- Make its decisions based on evidence.
- Meet its duties under the Equality Act 2010.

## 2. The Equality Act 2010

2.1. The Equality Act 2010 provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. The Act places general equality duties on public sector employers to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2.2. The following groups are defined in the Act as ‘equality groups’ who have a ‘protected characteristic’:

- Women and men;
- People belonging to all racial, cultural and ethnic groups;
- Disabled people;
- People of different age groups;
- People who are gay men, lesbian, bisexual and heterosexual;
- People who have a religion or belief;
- People who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment;
- People with dependents and caring responsibilities; and
- Women who are pregnant and on maternity leave.

### 3. Undertaking an EQIA

3.1. The Standards Commission should undertake an EQIA at the early stages of planning a business activity that will impact on its policies, procedures, business activities and the service it delivers.

3.2. EQIA will be conducted when the Standards Commission:

- develops a new strategy, policy or procedure;
- is intending to make a substantive change to a strategy, policy or procedure;
- undertakes a project;
- reviews how a service or function is delivered;
- procures contracts; and
- undertakes activities where the public or stakeholders are involved / in attendance; and
- organises an event or exhibition.

3.3. Any Member or member of staff of the Standards Commission can undertake an EQIA. Standards Commission Members should be advised that an EQIA has been undertaken and its outcome, when being asked to approve any new project, strategy, policy or procedure or when being asked to agree to any substantive changes to any existing project, strategy, policy or procedure. An EQIA must be undertaken for the procurement of any contract with a value of £5,000 or more.

3.4. The activity being assessed might also require consultation and involvement of equality groups, as there may be occasions when only the group that the activity is likely to affect will be able to advise on the most appropriate action to redress any imbalance.

3.5. The Human Resources Committee is responsible for monitoring Equality Impact Assessment quality, impact and usage to ensure that diversity and inclusivity forms part of the Standards Commission’s decision-making processes.

- 3.6. When conducting an EQIA, staff and Members will consider:
- Is the activity likely to have consequences for any of the protected groups?
  - Is there any reason to believe that the groups could be affected differently?
  - Could there be different needs for different groups?
  - Could the activity indirectly affect an equality group?

For example, the Standards Commission will consider whether someone could be disadvantaged because an event is held at a particular time. When considering a protected characteristic, the Standards Commission take account of all groups. For example, whether a procedure to be followed at a Hearing could affect someone with a disability such as autism, hearing loss, mobility or visual impairment.

- 3.7. Staff and Members undertaking EQIAs should consult with others, including external organisations if they do not have the information they require.
- 3.8. Once possible impacts have been identified, the Standards Commission will consider what actions it could take to address or mitigate the impact where it is likely to be adverse.
- 3.9. The EQIA should be recorded on a standard form.



Data control and version information				
Date	Action by	Version Updated	Current version	Brief Description
30/06/2020	LJ	N/A	2020 V1	Introduction of Policy