

Equality Impact Assessment:

C&L/AD/13 Violence Against Women: Women's Aid

Purpose of the Equality Impact Assessment:

The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requiring public bodies to give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations

Consideration must be given to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act. Assessments should 'consider relevant evidence relating to persons with relevant protected characteristics in relation to such assessments of impact'.

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) is to ensure that policies, functions, plans or decisions (hereafter referred to as 'policy' do not create unnecessary barriers for people protected under the Act, and that negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and opportunities for positive impact are maximised.

Screening is a short exercise to determine if a policy is relevant to equality and whether a full equality impact assessment (EQIA) should be carried out.

Title/description of the policy	C&L/AD/13 Violence Against Women: Women's Aid
Name of the person(s) carrying out the assessment?	Fiona Palin, Head of Adult Services Rosemary Mackinnon, Principal Policy Officer, Equality
Service and Department	Care and Learning, Adult Services
Date of assessment	18 February 2016
What are the aims and objectives of the policy/function/strategy?	<p>The council currently funds the 4 Women's Aid groups in Highland to provide refuge and outreach support services for women and children across Highland. The funding helps run the refuges and to provide support to women to live safely in Highland communities.</p> <p>The saving proposal is a 6% reduction in this funding. The reduction will mean that Women's Aid organisations will have to raise funds to maintain services at the same level or will have to reduce services to remain within budget. The impact is minimised as the saving is spread across 4 Women's Aid groups.</p>
Who may be affected by the policy	4 Women's Aid groups across Highland and the women and children supported by their activities. All groups are part of the Highland Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference approach.

	The funding supports women and their children subjected to violence against women who are living in refuges and supports women in the community living in or escaping from violent relationships.	
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of the policy?		
<i>Which parts of the public sector duty is the policy relevant to?</i>		
1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination	✓	Women's Aid services address issues of discrimination, prejudice and stigma
2. Advance equality	✓	Opportunities to remove or minimise barriers or disadvantage, including steps to promote equality and meet different people's needs.
3. Promote good relations	✓	Services raise awareness of Violence Against Women issues between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
<i>What existing sources of information have you gathered to help identify how people covered by the protected characteristics may be affected by this policy or service?</i>		
Eg Consultations, national or local data and/or research, complaints or customer feedback. Are there gaps in available data?	Highland Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) MARAC Annual Report 2013 Responding to Domestic Abuse , Highland Community Planning partners, 2014 Domestic abuse- pregnancy and the early years , Highland Community Planning Partners, 2013 Equally Safe , Scottish Government, 2014 Greenan, Violence Against Women: A Literature Review (2004), Scottish Government	

Screening: Which of the protected characteristics is the policy relevant to?

Tick and briefly describe any likely equalities impact (positive/negative/neutral).

This can be copied over from screening sheets

Characteristic	Positive	Negative	Neutral	comments
Gender		✓		Women's Aid services are gender specific, but affect women of all ages, all faiths, all ethnicities, disabled women, etc
Age		✓		
Disability		✓		

Religion or Belief		✓		
Race		✓		
Sexual Orientation		✓		
Gender reassignment		✓		
Pregnancy/maternity		✓		
Marriage and Civil Partnership*				

Other groups? As well as the protected groups, are there vulnerable groups e.g. Looked after Children, Homeless people, Carers etc. Please note below:

Violence Against Women is experienced by all social groups, but some circumstances may increase risk to women (or make them more vulnerable to other forms of it). This includes, age, alcohol or drug use, disability, mental ill health, homelessness, poverty, and being involved in prostitution. There may also be issues related to living in a rural community may make it more difficult for women to come forward.

Assessments:

<p><i>Is there any evidence of, or potential for, negative impact? Does the policy contribute positively to the promotion of equality on any particular group?</i></p>	<p>Age - VAW affects women of any age. Impacts on families and children. Young women are at high risk of all forms of abuse, yet often this can be overlooked or minimised, particularly in their teenage years. In 2013, there were 504 children in households where high risk domestic abuse was reported in Highland.</p> <p>Disability- Disabled women may experience communication or physical barriers to getting help or away from an abuser, or be isolated because of their impairment.</p> <p>Gender- Violence Against Women is an overarching term, often also called 'gender based violence' that includes domestic abuse, and other forms of violence that predominately affect women and are most commonly perpetrated by men.</p> <p>Gender Reassignment-There is limited information about transgender people's experiences of domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence. However, transgender people are particularly at risk of violence and harassment, in both public spaces and the home.</p>
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	<p>Pregnancy/Maternity- A third of domestic abuse begins or escalates during pregnancy.</p> <p>Race- Minority ethnic women may face barriers such as racism and language difficulties and may also fear being accused of bringing shame and dishonour upon the family. 5% of Highland MARAC referrals from a BME background (2013).</p> <p>Religion and Belief- Religious or associated cultural beliefs may present barriers to seeking support.</p> <p>Sexual Orientation- Women are also at risk in same sex relationships, For lesbian or gay women, it may be difficult to disclose abuse.</p>
Justification – if negative impact is identified, can this be justified?	It should be possible for the 4 Women’s Aid groups to adapt services in line with the budget cut. This is dependent on other funders not looking for savings. The saving relates to Housing Support funding and not to funding to support children or MARAC support services.
Mitigation - can the potential for negative impact on particular groups be removed or minimised?	
Are there actions identified to advance or promote equality? Please detail.	

This proposal was withdrawn during the budget discussions at Council on 25 February 2016.

Please provide details of arrangements to monitor and review the policy and any mitigating actions or actions to promote equality.

Please state where the EQIA will be published: The assessment will be published on the Council website.

Equality Impact Assessment Sign off: For completion by Director or Head of Service

1. Please check if you are satisfied that the following elements of the EQIA have been considered:

- Gathering information
- Consultation and involvement
- Assessing impact for all protected characteristics

- Mitigating actions identified (if required)
- Opportunity to promote equality
- Arrangements to monitor and review
- Publication arrangements

2. a) Are you prepared to sign off the EQIA? YES ✓ NO

b) If "NO" provide details of why and next steps

Name Fiona Palin

Position Head of Adult Services

Date: 19th February 2016