Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
Proforma

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An EqIA is a tool to assess whether a decision, policy, service or function pays 'due regard' to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This Duty requires public bodies to:

- Eliminate discrimination

- Advance equality of opportunity

- Foster good relations

The Equality Duty covers the following **9 protected characteristics**:

Age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership. In addition, this EqIA process includes; **care experience, rurality, socio-economic status** and the **armed forces community.**

The EqIA process has two stages:

- **Screening EqIA:** This checks whether a decision, policy, service or function pays due regard to the Equality Duty; to provide any high-level advice or take immediate action; to determine if a full EqIA is required.

- **Full EqIA:** Sometimes called Equality Analysis, this looks at a decision, policy, service or function with supporting data, information, research and evidence from consultation/engagement. The EIA covers the nine protected characteristics as   well as rurality, socio-economic status, care experience and armed forces personnel/ veterans. A full EqIA includes an action plan.

Where an EqIA relates to a Council Member Decision it should be included as an appendix to the committee report.

Equality Impact Assessment – Screening

1) Decision/Policy/Service/Function

Policy – Westmorland and Furness ICT Strategy 2024 - 2029.

2) Background and summary of Equality Advice

The ICT Strategy has three focus areas (listed below). The equality impacts of these three priorities are explored in this equality impact assessment.

Supporting our customers, utilising existing and emerging technology to both understand our customers' needs and expectations, and to ensure customers can access our services in a way that best suits them.

We will:
- Provide the ICT tools needed to understand our customers' needs to support service delivery, commissioning and decision making across all service areas
- Utilise the expansion of digital inclusion across the Westmorland and Furness area to increase digital engagement with the Council's services
- Ensure our customer facing applications are fully accessible and support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards
- Ensure information we hold on our customers is respected and well managed in line with our legal obligations by implementing a 'data protection by design and default' approach

Supporting our workforce, working with staff to ensure that ICT services are designed and delivered in the best way to enable colleagues to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

We will:

- Identify suitable devices and workplace software to maintain secure collaborative working
- Create a cultural where ICT Business Partners work with Council teams to the develop ICT services needed
- Define an approach to emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), that drive effectiveness and efficiency
- Engage with staff to ensure that cyber security awareness is cultivated throughout our organisation

Westmorland and Furness ICT service, expertise and knowledge of the team will be developed and utilised to provide the Council with protective, innovative and cost-effective ICT.

We will:

- Provide the Council with the ICT needed to deliver its target operating model of Community Focus, Easy Access, Effective Services, Enabling Processes and Supporting Technology
- Govern ICT centrally to ensure alignment with the Council's target operating model
- Increase the use of platform-based integration, automation and AI solutions to streamline processes
- Provide safe, secure systems that are reliably available to staff, Councillors and customers
- Use ICT to support the Council's ambition to become carbon neutral
- Ensure we store and use data we hold about our employees, partners and customers well, and in line with statutory guidance
- Support transformation across the Council
- Manage our cyber risk by ensuring we have the right cyber security skills and knowledge, aligned to the Central Digital and Data Office and National Cyber Security Centre best practices
- Rationalise the number of systems used by the Council to provide the best service with the fewest systems, reducing costs and increasing data integration
- Provide agile infrastructure enabling new services to be created quickly or existing services scaled on demand

3) Consultation

Engagement sessions have taken place with the following groups and stakeholders to gain initial feedback and ideas on approach to development of the Customer Strategy and its content:

Corporate Management Team (CMT), Senior Leadership Team (SLT), All W&F Councillors, ICT Service Management Team, Cabinet, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, Trade Unions

4) Equality screening

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Age	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design the services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure all ages are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of age and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Disability	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impacts - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support	Ensure all disabilities are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure work equipment is suitable/accessible.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		decision making for people with protected characteristics. Fully accessible customer facing applications that support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards will make our information and services available to all. Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of disabilities and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Gender reassignment	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics	Ensure gender reassignment is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of gender reassignment and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Marriage or civil partnership	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service**	Ensure marriage or civil partnership is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of marriage or civil partnership and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a		
Pregnancy or maternity	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure pregnancy and maternity is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of pregnancy and maternity and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Race	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support	Ensure race is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		decision making for people with protected characteristics Fully accessible customer facing applications that support the latest equality, diversity and inclusion standards will make our information and services available to all. Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Explore language interpretation where required Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of race and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Religion or belief	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics	Ensure religion or belief is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of religion or belief and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Sex	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service**	Ensure sex is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Consider language/reference to individuals in documents. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects /	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a	solutions are considerate of sex and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Sexual orientation	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure sexual orientation is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of sexual orientation and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
Care Experience	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used	Ensure care experience is considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of care experience and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
People in rural areas	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce**	Ensure people in rural areas are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure alternative routes of engagement for those with limited/no ICT access. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
		Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of people in rural areas and undertake an Eqia where needed.	
Socio-economic inequality	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure socio-economic inequalities are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. Ensure alternative routes of engagement for those with limited/no ICT access. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of socio-economic inequality and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N

Equality protected characteristic	Impact Y/N	Describe impact (if Yes)	Measures to address impact (if Yes)	Full EqIA needed Y/N
Armed-forces personnel/veterans	Positive Y Neutral Y Adverse N	**Supporting our customers** Potential positive impact - New ICT tools to help us understand our customers' needs could be used to design services and support decision making for people with protected characteristics Adverse impacts – n/a **Supporting our workforce** Adverse impacts – n/a **Westmorland and Furness ICT service** Adverse impacts – n/a	Ensure armed forces personnel / veterans are considered when developing and implementing ICT Strategy, as well as its aims and objectives. 'ICT tools' to understand customers' needs to be designed to identify the needs (when different) of people with protected characteristics. Ensure any ICT Strategy workstreams / policies / projects / solutions are considerate of armed forces personnel / veterans and undertake an Eqia where needed.	N
General (other considerations)				

5) Full EqIA required (evidence of substantial impact)?   ~~Yes~~ ☐   **No** ☐

Full Equality Impact Assessment template

Section 1: About the Decision, Policy, Service or Function

Name and relevance of Decision/Policy/Service/ Function being assessed to the PSED	
Job Title of Officer completing EIA	
Department/service area	
Telephone number and email contact	
Date of Assessment	
Objectives of decision/policy/service/ function. Which objectives relate to the PSED?	
Key stakeholders and consultees	

Section 2: Information Gathering

What **relevant** information, evidence, data and research have you used to build up a picture of the likely impacts of your decision/policy/service/function on the protected characteristic and other groups listed below.

Information source	Location of information (give a link here if applicable)	What does the data/information tell us?

Add rows as necessary.

Section 3: Assessment of impact

From the information above identify the impacts on each of the groups below of your proposal.

Equality group	Positive (tick)	Adverse (tick)	Neutral (tick)	What is the impact?	Mitigating actions proposed (to address adverse impact)
Age					
Disability					
Gender reassignment					
Marriage and civil partnership status					
Pregnancy and maternity					
Race					
Religion and/or belief					
Sex					
Sexual orientation					
Care Experience					
People in rural areas					
Socio-economic status					
Armed-forces personnel/veterans					

Section 4: Action Planning

What is the negative/adverse impact or area for further action	Actions proposed to reduce/eliminate the negative impact	Who will lead on the actions?	Resource implications/ resources required	When? (target completion date)	Monitoring Arrangements

Add rows as necessary.

Section 5. Outcome of Equality Impact Assessment (tick appropriate box)

No major change needed - the analysis shows the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination.	☐
Adjust the policy/service/function - alternatives have been considered and steps taken to remove barriers or to better advance equality.	☐
Complete the action plan.	☐
Adverse impact(s) identified but continue - this will need a justification or reason. Complete the action plan.	☐

Section 6. Review

Date of next review of the Equality Impact Assessment	Who will carry out this review?