

Equality Impact Assessment Form (EQIA) for Discretionary Grants Programme

Updated by Simon Barfoot August 24th 2023 based on previous version created 28 January 2021

Title of EQIA (policy/change it relates to): Discretionary Grants Policy

Date: 24 August 2023

Team Department: Community Wellbeing and Partnerships

Focus of EQIA (*What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted?*)

How will they be impacted? To administer a Community Grants Programme in a fair, consistent and transparent manner to help take forward the council's corporate priorities in sustainability, engagement and collaboration with the community, economic growth and digital innovation. Officers within the Community Wellbeing and Partnerships Team will manage the programme with administrative support. All residents in East Herts benefit.

- widen access to arts and culture through using health and wellbeing especially among those who haven't participated in the past
- involve residents in delivering community health and wellbeing projects including food banks and similar projects which benefit those most in need
- encourage communities to identify a local physical and/or mental health and wellbeing issue and address it together

- promote environmental sustainability activities which encourage individual and community changes of attitude and behaviour
- help community buildings and venues to become more environmentally sustainable
- bring different generations together
- enable young people and families to take care of their mental health, achieve a healthy weight and stay active
- support residents experiencing loneliness, isolation, domestic abuse, cost-of-living challenges, or those who find it difficult to interact with the community
- support those that the council doesn't typically engage with very well or those who prefer face-to-face contact
- use outdoor spaces and community buildings more effectively, maximising their potential
- provide activities to support Dementia Friendly East Herts
- create safer and resilient neighbourhoods which promote community belonging.

Updated Community Grants EQIA for August 2023

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	What do people tell you? Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	What does this mean? Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	What can you do? All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance equality of opportunity, • Eliminate discrimination, and • Foster good relations
Age	Population projections show the numbers in all age groups are growing in the district, in particular	The small grants have worked well, however with the reduced funding available for 2023/24 it is	Consideration of whether a person's age will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community	Provide a named officer who can help and continue to improve online application process.

	<p>those aged 60+ years. Overall, 25% of grant funded projects typically benefits older or vulnerable people. Of the revenue grants awarded in 20/21, 88% benefitted people with long term conditions and vulnerable groups who are typically from the older population. Whilst this has been a good focus, it was timely to also prioritise young people, families and vulnerable individuals of different ages. The 2023/24 agreed priorities reflect this.</p>	<p>helpful to consolidate the grants into one fund with grants awarded between £500 and £3000 to meet a wider range of need and age profiles.</p>	<p>grants has taken place. Officers have not found this to be the case but noted that it was important to recognise that people in the older age groups, young people and families and especially those on low income including single parent household families, may have a range of needs and sometimes older people can be at risk of digital exclusion.</p>	<p>Provide a paper copy if requested Consolidate small grants programme into single grant range opportunity for individuals and informal groups via standard application form and assessment process. Continue to advise organisations that for groups and organisations across the age range including older people about the opportunity to apply and send publicity to relevant partnerships</p>
Disability	<p>In 2021, around 7,300 (4.9%) compared to 8700 (6.1%) in 2011 people are living with a disability Overall, 25% of grant funded projects typically benefits older or vulnerable people. Of the revenue grants awarded in 20/21, 88% benefitted</p>	<p>Successful applicants working with people with long term disabilities say their services couldn't happen without grant support and that digital exclusion and loneliness is a real problem</p>	<p>Discussions concerning whether any mental or physical barriers will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.</p>	<p>Continue to advise organisations that work with people with disabilities and long-term conditions about the opportunity to apply and send publicity to relevant partnerships</p>

	people with long term conditions			
Gender reassignment	No reliable data at this time	Feedback from people with this protected characteristic has not been obtained	Discussions concerning whether an applicant who identified as transgender, or who has undergone gender reconstructive surgery 'GRC', will be impacted in eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Whilst Age UK has published in their 2020 'Transgender Issues and Later Life' report that GRC can have an impact on national insurance contributions, tax liability, benefits and pensions, Officers do not find this characteristic to be a hindrance to accessing a community grant.	Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic – building rapport and trust We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on gender reassignment by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics.
Pregnancy and maternity	No reliable data at this time	We have not asked for feedback	Discussions whether a person's pregnancy or maternity status will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.	Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic and individuals. We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on pregnancy and maternity by including a new application

				question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics.
Race	In 2021, 92.3% of people in East Hertfordshire identified their ethnic group within the "White" category (compared with 95.5% in 2011). In 2021, 2.8% of East Hertfordshire residents identified their ethnic group within the "Mixed or Multiple" category, up from 1.6% in 2011. The 1.2 percentage-point change was the largest increase among high-level ethnic groups in this area. 2.7% identified their ethnic group within the "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh" category compared with 1.9% in 2011. People who identified their ethnic group within the "Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African" category increased from	Public engagement highlighted a need to reflect an increased focus on developing a cultural offer in rural communities, as well as among residents from more diverse religious, black and minority ethnic backgrounds. One of HCC's Equality and Diversity Officer considered trust as one of the factors in accessing local authority grants.	This means there is a need to take positive action and ensure that individuals and groups supporting individuals with these protected characteristics can access the grant funding.	Add new action to grant priorities Engage with people from different faiths and black, Asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds, supporting them to develop cultural opportunities they can enjoy participating in Increase signposting and targeted support to help grass roots organisations in completing applications Add statement to grants publicity that different faiths and black, Asian and ethnically diverse are welcome to apply; designing communications to increase different faiths and black, Asian and ethnically diverse confidence to apply Engage with different faiths and black, Asian and ethnically diverse to understand the barriers to applying for a grant – building rapport and trust

	<p>0.7% in 2011 to 1.3% in 2021.</p> <p>It is recognised that there is a low participation from groups / individuals with these protected characteristics in applying for grants.</p>			<p>Create publicity campaign that includes inclusive images of people with protected characteristics and raise awareness about grants among organisations supporting people with this protected characteristic.</p>
Religion or belief	<p>The existing eligibility criteria states the council will not provide a grant for promotion of a particular religion or political belief In the past applications from religious organisations have been successful when the project is about improving a hall that is used for physical recreation, cultural, social and community benefit and where the project benefits the wider community with a secular aim.</p>	<p>Volunteers have told us that church halls and other facilities run by faith groups are important venues for cultural activities and health and social care services such as foodbanks and that grant giving would enable more faith groups to engage with this type of welfare work</p>	<p>Discussions concerning this situation where a faith group consists of people who predominantly belong to one ethnic background and Islamic faith will have a need for an occupational requirement recognised. This means that whilst an application for a grant may be ineligible if the proposed project solely promotes a specific political or religious belief (i.e., a request to fund prayer mats), their application will be eligible if it has a wider community benefit (i.e., a request to fund a street festival to celebrate Eid.</p>	<p>Separate the eligibility criteria into two statements The council will not provide grants that have the sole aim of promoting a particular religion The council will not provide grants to organisations with beliefs that challenge internal departments' decisions or are contradictory to the council's core values or whose sole aim is to promote a political belief. Add statement to publicity that faith groups are welcome to apply where their project has a wider community benefit Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic –</p>

	It is recognised that there is a low participation from groups / individuals with these protected characteristics in applying for grants			building rapport and trust. This would contribute to social cohesion Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic Publicise discretionary grants in a way that encourages increased uptake by all faiths equally
Sex/Gender	There is no data to suggest affecting one gender over another.	No data at this time. We do not ask successful applicants to provide a breakdown of their beneficiaries according to gender.	Discussions concerning this indicated there was no data to suggest there is an impact.	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on gender by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics.
Sexual orientation	An estimated 6% of our population are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning (LGBTQ) plus. It is recognised that there is a low uptake from this category and groups with these characteristics are underrepresented	No reliable data at this time We do not ask successful applicants to provide a breakdown of their beneficiaries according to sexual orientation	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed whether a person's sexual orientation will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on sexual orientation by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic and individuals

Marriage and civil partnership	No information at this time	We have not asked for feedback	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed whether a person's marital status or partnership status will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on marriage and civil partnerships by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic and individuals
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Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations

The council is committed to ensuring that individuals or groups of individuals from the under-represented protected characteristics group are encouraged to apply for a grant and are supported to feel that grants are “for them.” At all times, it aims to take an inclusive approach and ensure that any individual or group that wants to be able to fully participate in applying for a grant. An independent audit (Dec 2019) concluded that there is satisfactory assurance that there are effective controls in place and good decision-making processes.

The policy prioritises projects that deliver in areas of deprivation in East Herts (Section 7). This takes into account how less deprived areas are considered in the grants making process. It is acknowledged that all protected characteristics are economically impacted in different ways and the process takes steps to prioritise or allocate more points within the assessment process (Section 4)

This impact assessment was updated in 2023 using previous officer experience, current insight and data information. This built on previous Equality Officer discussions which identified that within the eligibility for grants, the requirement for 'open door membership' should not act as a barrier to groups who may have an occupational requirement to recruit internally within a protected characteristic, under Schedule 9 exceptions to the Equality Act 2010. This could be relevant to any protected characteristic, especially if considered under positive action. This means that the "open door membership eligibility criteria could prove restrictive for organisations that require or strongly prefer a proportion of their beneficiaries to have a specific characteristic. It is proposed therefore that the wording for this criterion is adjusted to explain that the occupational requirement provides an exception to this and allows positive action in this situation. (See action in Table 4 below)

Information about grants is available through the council's ebulletin and is promoted on social media and via elected Members, parish and town councils and printed parish and resident newsletters. Traditional flyers are also produced on occasion and distributed to libraries, leisure centres and village halls. Information on deadlines and priorities is available on the website.

Announcement about deadlines is done via emails to Members, external partners and database of known community and voluntary organisations. Members are asked to refer organisations to the scheme.

2. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EQIA (if applicable)

Title (of data, research or engagement)	Date	Gaps in data	Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with? (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
East Herts Cultural Strategy Survey	Nov 2020	We recognise that some actions, projects and funding bids will benefit from detailed evidence gained through gap analyses and empirical research. Such future work will be carried out by the partners coming together or by the partners' pooling financial resources to fund external expertise.	Contact Faith groups, single gender membership groups and groups supporting the LGBTQ community to build relationships and trust, working within the Council's emerging Equalities and Diversity strategy

3. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
Requirement for applicant to have "open door policy" is restrictive for organisations that	Amend eligibility criteria to the following: The body applying has an open-door membership policy and	Organisations that are impacted by this requirement feel more able and encouraged to apply	That applications are received	Continues to be implemented since March 2022 adoption.

<p>require or strongly prefer a proportion of their beneficiaries to have a specific characteristic.</p>	<p>provides services that are accessible to people from all backgrounds. However, to promote positive action, this criterion allows organisations who have an occupational requirement to recruit within a protected characteristic to do so, under Schedule 9 exceptions to the Equality Act 2010.</p>			
<p>The eligibility criteria stating that the council will not provide a grant for the promotion of a particular religion or political belief has been identified as overly restrictive to faith groups</p>	<p>Amend the grants policy as below The council will not provide grants that have the sole aim of promoting a particular religion The council will not provide grants to organisations with beliefs that are challenging internal departments' decisions or are contradictory to the council's core values</p>	<p>Organisations that are impacted by this requirement feel more able and encouraged to apply</p>	<p>That applications are received by faith groups</p>	<p>Continues to be implemented since March 2022 adoption</p>

	or whose sole aim is to promote a political belief			
The eligibility criteria stating that the council will not provide a grant for the promotion of a particular religion or political belief has been identified as overly restrictive to faith groups	Add statement to publicity that faith groups are welcome to apply where their project has a wider community benefit	Organisations that are impacted by this requirement feel more able and encouraged to apply	That applications are received by faith groups	Continues to be implemented since March 2022 adoption
Representation by different faith groups and black, asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds	Work with the communications team to create inclusive messages and images for social media; add welcome statement to publicity messages	Individuals and groups supporting people with these protected characteristics feel welcome and encouraged to apply for a grant Increasing diversity in grant making will give the council access to the widest possible range of volunteers with a range of skills and talents	That an application is submitted that proposes a project to benefit people with these protected characteristics	Continues to be implemented since March 2022 adoption
Long standing under-representation by faith groups and black, Asian	Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic - building	Better understanding of the barriers and how these can be mitigated	That an application is submitted that proposes a project to benefit	Project grants have been supported since March 2022, demonstrating fulfilment of these

and ethnically diverse backgrounds	rapport and trust. This would contribute to social cohesion		people with these protected characteristics	protected characteristics. Unsure as to completion of this objective as main grants postholder left organisation in August 2022.
Long standing under-representation by faith groups and black, asian and ethnically diverse backgrounds	Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic – building rapport and trust. This would contribute to social cohesion	Better understanding of the barriers and how these can be mitigated	That an application is submitted that proposes a project to benefit people with these protected characteristics	Project grants have been supported since March 2022, demonstrating fulfilment of these protected characteristics.
Lack of information on whether individuals from certain protected characteristics are benefitting from council grant giving	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on protected characteristics by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics	Better understanding of which groups are mainly benefitting from council grants alongside general population	That applicants have completed question	Continues to be implemented since March 2022 adoption

EQIA Sign-off: (for the EQIA to be final an email must be sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: No Officer in post currently

Date: 24/8/23

Directorate Management Team Rep or Head of Service: Jonathan Geall, Head of Housing and Health

Date: 24/8/23

Author of Equality Impact Analysis: Simon Barfoot, Healthy Lifestyles Programme Officer

Date: 24/8/23