

*Buckinghamshire County Council
Equalities Impact Assessment Proforma*

Title of strategy / policy / service being assessed:	Creating a single specification for equalities advice across Aylesbury Vale, Chiltern, Wycombe and South Buckinghamshire Districts.
Contact Officer & Telephone Number:	Angie Sarchet, Cohesion & Equalities Manager 01296 382756
Date assessment completed:	May – June 2010
Signature and name of Head of Service signing off this impact assessment and equalities improvement plan.	Name: Rebecca Carley
	Signature:
	Service: Localities & Safer Communities
<p>PURPOSE:</p> <p>To develop an equalities improvement plan based on an assessment of whether the strategy/policy or service is or could have a differential impact on particular groups of people due to their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic origin (including gypsies & Roma travellers) • Gender (including transgender) • Impairment (physical, sensory, learning disability, mental health or long term limiting illness) • Age • Religion/belief • Sexual orientation (defined as people from the lesbian, gay or bisexual communities) • Or as a result of living in a rural community, lower socio economic group or being a new group to this country (migrant worker, refugee or asylum seeker) • Caring responsibilities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To assess whether the adverse impact constitutes illegal discrimination (see separate EIA guidance notes) and identify the actions to remedy this. If the discrimination is legal, to consider whether action is necessary to mitigate the effect on other groups. 2) To record any unmet needs/requirements identified as result of carrying out this assessment, even where these are not directly relevant to the assessment (see guidance notes for explanation). 3) To put in place arrangements to monitor, analyse and report the ongoing effect across the groups identified. 4) To consider if and how different groups of people could be involved in monitoring the outcomes and/or contributing to further development of the strategy/plan/function/objective/target. 5) To ensure that all equalities actions arising from the above processes are mainstreamed into the relevant service/business plan.
More detailed guidance has been produced to accompany this proforma see intranet under A to Z>Equalities together with details about free training sessions.	

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Section A. To Assess or Not to Assess

To determine whether an EIA is required, please read the questions below and indicate your answer by putting an X in the box to the right of the “Yes” or “No” at the end of each question.

Does the service affect the public or staff directly?	Yes	X	No	
Does it affect how other services are provided?	Yes	X	No	
Is there information e.g. survey data or complaints that suggests that it is affecting particular groups of people?	Yes	X	No	
Does it have employment implications?	Yes	X*	No	

*Indirect employment implications as there are two organisations who are receiving substantial funding from the three councils involved and, should they be unsuccessful in winning the contract, could mean they would have to make staff redundant.

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Section B. Reviewing the design	
Questions to consider	The Findings
<p>1. Why is the strategy/policy or service necessary? What are the key aims and objectives? What outcomes is it designed to achieve and for whom?</p>	<p>The Project has been evolving since May 2007 when the first meeting with statutory sector partners was held to discuss the current activity of the Buckinghamshire Race Equality Councils (RECs), developments in the area of equalities (new legislation and research) and the statutory sector’s future relationship with and funding of the REC organisations. The overall direction of the travel for the specification has been to secure the following outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear statement of the requirements for advice and support to local people to contribute to reducing inequality and building community cohesion • A broader based service that covers all parts of the county • To protect direct service delivery in line with the requirement upon the local authorities to achieve efficiency savings across all budget heads <p>Within the County Council's administration area there are Race Equality Councils in Wycombe (WREC) and Chiltern (CREC) and one Equality and Human Rights Council in Aylesbury Vale (AVE&HRC). The County Council funds the three organisations, albeit at differing levels, and Aylesbury Vale and Wycombe District Councils fund their local organisations.</p> <p>Discrimination is illegal on a range of protected characteristics (currently set out in legislation as ethnicity, disability, age, gender (including transgender), religion or belief, or through not having a particular religious belief, sexuality (defined as people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).</p> <p>In broad terms, under existing legislation, we have legal duties to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote equality of opportunity • Eliminate discrimination (on the grounds of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion or belief) • Promote good relations between people (on the grounds of race, disability and gender) • Eliminate harassment and victimisation (on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual

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orientation and religion/belief)

- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled people to ensure they can have similar outcomes to non disabled people
- Encourage disabled people to participate in public life

The existing provision in the county focuses largely on race equality. The provision of race equality advice does not include South Bucks and the services provided in Chiltern do not include casework support.

It is apparent that there has been relatively little real collaboration between the three RECs to date, despite the creation of the Bucks Equality Consortium which has met regularly for 12/18 months. This has continued to mean that there is little consistency in the nature or volume of service provision across Aylesbury, Wycombe and Chiltern, which are partly a result of variations in capacity and partly a result of their individual historical development.

For the coming four years the three funding organisations have a set a number of priorities, through their Sustainable Community Strategies, to make a difference to the lives of all who live and work in the area and these include:

- Working with communities and partners to tackle disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity
- Encouraging people and communities to help themselves

Activity delivered through this contract will contribute to achieving the following key outcomes for local people:

- Improving the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people
- Tackling social and rural isolation throughout the county
- Reducing the fear of crime amongst local people
- Increasing the confidence of communities
- Enabling people from different backgrounds get on well together
- Making it easier for people and communities to support one another
- Making it easier for communities to work together with service providers to identify and provide

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local solutions for local issues

- Helping service providers to deliver services in the right way, at the right time, to the right people

The **overall aim** of the Equalities Services Contract is to support improvement in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Buckinghamshire.

The **specific aims** are to ensure that:

- Any resident who is experiencing disadvantage or discrimination as a result of their ethnicity, disability, age, gender (including transgender), religion or belief, or through not having a particular religious belief, sexuality (defined as being people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual) can access relevant and appropriate information, advice and guidance
- Service providers from a range of sectors are able to improve their understanding of the priorities and concerns of different communities to assist them in decision making, policy development and service provision
- Service providers from a range of sectors work together to keep abreast of changes in the make up of local communities in order to develop appropriate methods of engagement, fair access to services and to enable people from different backgrounds to get on well together
- There is raised awareness across all communities about people's rights and responsibilities in relation to tackling discrimination and enabling people from different backgrounds to get on well together, and how this can be achieved
- New and existing communities have the confidence and opportunities to work together, and with service providers, to improve their local area and the services being provided

The **contract objectives** are:

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	<p>Advice & Information</p> <p>To provide relevant, appropriate and accessible information, advice and guidance to any Buckinghamshire resident about disadvantage or discrimination as defined within existing equalities legislation¹</p> <p>Casework</p> <p>To provide advice, support and advocacy to individuals who are experiencing discrimination, harassment and/or victimisation as defined within existing equalities legislation.</p> <p>To provide immigration / nationality advice to those individuals who are unable to access advice independently.</p> <p>Policy and Service Development</p> <p>To ensure that the concerns and views of communities of interest are communicated to relevant key partnership meetings across the county to inform decision making.</p> <p>Challenge</p> <p>Identify and provide evidence of the impact of barriers to and opportunities for residents accessing and engaging with public sector services and communicate these to the organisations in question.</p> <p>Education & Awareness Raising</p> <p>To provide an ongoing programme of activities and campaigns aimed at challenging stereotypes, educating and raising awareness of discrimination and inequalities in Buckinghamshire together with examples of how people can work together to address these issues.</p> <p>To work in partnership with other voluntary and community sector organisations and the statutory agencies to develop and maintain up to date information about changing community profiles so that appropriate engagement activity, policy and services are developed to meet identified needs</p> <p>Work in partnership to enable people from different backgrounds to get on well together</p> <p>To assist service providers to engage with communities of interest and build relationships of mutual trust</p>
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¹ Prohibited grounds for discrimination as currently set out in legislation relate to a person's ethnicity, disability, age, gender (including transgender), married/civil partnership status, religion or belief, or through not having a particular religious belief, and/or sexual orientation (defined as people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual).

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	<p>and understanding</p> <p>To enable service providers from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors to regularly share information about the changing make up of their service users</p> <p>To encourage and enable new communities to participate in existing forums to inform policy and service development and delivery</p> <p>Communities of interest are supported to participate in networks and work with a range of groups and service providers to promote understanding and cohesion across the county, for example, Bucks BME Advisory Group and Hate Crime Incident Forums.</p> <p>The intended outcomes from the contract are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advice, information and guidance services available in relation to discrimination on protected characteristics (currently set out in legislation as ethnicity, disability, age, gender (including transgender), religion or belief, or through not having a particular religious belief, sexuality (defined as being people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual)• Local residents know that advice, guidance and information is available• Local residents can easily access information about what constitutes discrimination• Advice, information and guidance services are provided in partnership to avoid duplication• People are encouraged to report hate crime and other types of discriminatory incidents and issues causing tensions within communities e.g. abusive comments, spitting and graffiti and made aware of the support available• Service providers have a better understanding of the unmet need and barriers different groups of people experience in accessing services independently and how to mitigate their impact• Service providers have opportunities to engage with different communities• There are local networks of a range of service providers who regularly share information about the changing make up of their service users
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- Communities of interest are supported to participate in networks and work with a range of groups and service providers to promote understanding and cohesion across the county, for example, Bucks BME Advisory Group and Hate Crime Incident Forums
- Services are able to engage with new communities to build relationships and understanding of needs
- An ongoing programme of activities and campaigns aimed at challenging stereotypes, education and raising awareness of discrimination
- An ongoing information campaign showing how local people have made a difference
- People from different backgrounds have the opportunities to work together to make a positive difference in their local area
- People from different backgrounds are confident in their ability to engage with service providers
- People from different backgrounds feel they are respected and valued
- New communities know where to access information about services and their rights and responsibilities
- New communities are supported to engage in local community life e.g. volunteer mentors, introductions to local organisations/forums, signposting to learning opportunities, including English for Speakers of Other Languages where appropriate
- People who are new to the area find it easy to play an active part in the life of their local community

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<p>2. Consider your answers at question 1. How have the needs of different groups of people, where relevant/appropriate, been taken into account? What does needs assessment data tell you about who should be benefitting from the strategy/policy or using the service? What else do you know about people's needs or views? What information do you have from consultations/focus groups, national or local published research reports, satisfaction surveys, service monitoring data, benchmarking with other providers, demographic data or other information that has been used to formulate the design and delivery of the strategy/policy/ or service. Also refer to the council's "Research" information on the website.</p> <p>If you identify a gap in information, for example, about the needs of a particular group of people, include this as an action point in the equalities</p>	<p>The County Council uses A Classification of Residents and Neighbourhoods (ACORN) data to determine which of its services are likely to be most needed across the county and whether existing services are being accessed by those people who would ordinarily be expected to do so. The officer project group's decision to engage with voluntary and community sector organisations, as opposed to individual residents was premised on the fact that Buckinghamshire has a significantly higher proportion of "Wealthy Achievers" and significantly lower proportions of people within the "Moderate Means" and "Hard Pressed" categories. It was considered that the voluntary and community sector organisations provided the best opportunity to understand the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups within the county. (This view was also informed by the research undertaken by Halo during the development of the sustainable community in the summer of 2009.)</p> <p>The aim of the consultation was to ensure that existing provision was not duplicated in a new specification and existing expertise was identified together with any unmet need.</p> <p>Over 1800 organisations were contacted in October 2009 and invited to complete a questionnaire (available for completion on line, in hard copy or over a telephone) with information sought on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who services are currently provided for• Training and development needs to improve service provision• Advice and signposting in relation to discrimination and immigration• How equal opportunities were promoted <p>By the time the consultation closed in late January 2010, 119 questionnaires had been completed. Respondents identified learning more about the needs of disabled people as a priority. Identifying expert knowledge amongst respondents showed that there was very little known about the needs in relation to people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual. Analysis of the responses also shows that the Race Equality Councils and the Citizens Advice Bureau are seen to be organisations most of the respondents would seek advice/refer people on to if matters relate to discrimination, harassment or immigration. A sizeable proportion of organisations (20%) would not know where to refer such people and some would not recognise discrimination. This suggested a need for awareness raising generally. Local councils and the race equality councils were the most frequently cited organisations that would be approached for advice on promoting equal opportunities.</p> <p>Two focus groups were also held (Wycombe and Amersham) and attendees were asked to indicate their</p>
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improvement plan.	<p>priorities for inclusion in the service specification using a priority ranking tool, they were also asked to look ahead and consider what barriers and bridges might influence the successful operation of the new service.</p> <p>The workshop in Wycombe identified the following priorities:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Top ranking: Casework: including individual advocacy/representation, advice and signposting (web based), multi lingual advice and signposting (face to face), multi lingual advice and signposting (telephone based), dispute resolution, outreach service provision</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">2nd ranking: Immigration advice</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">3rd ranking: Establishing and providing support to discriminatory incident forums</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">3rd ranking: Translation and interpretation services for the community, Participation in key strategic partnership meetings, Providing training to statutory and voluntary sector agencies</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">4th ranking: Maintaining/establishing networks of identity based interest groups and group advocacy Organising community events Assessing statutory agencies</p> <p>At the Amersham Workshop casework was agreed as the being the highest priority in the services to be provided although there was a difference of views as to how the service should be provided. One view was that it should be primarily 24 hour telephone based service with an assessment of the need for a face to face appointment as it was felt that most enquiries could be dealt with over the telephone. There should also be a web portal linking into a range of resources to accommodate those who were more able to use this channel. However, the view was also expressed that there had to be walk in face to face provision available as well as this was the preferred method of engagement by black and minority ethnic groups.</p> <p>Other areas identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representation – the voluntary sector minority groups• Networking and maintaining interest groups• Provision of equality training• Having channels into different communities
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- Carrying out health checks of other organisations

There were mixed views in relation to the provision of immigration advice. Views expressed in favour of it not being included in the specification as it was felt that there was effective advice available through local solicitor networks and through national agencies. Conversely, the view was expressed in favour of this service being included so that those who could not afford the services of a local solicitor could still access the advice needed.

The discussion then looked at what the service might look like in two or three years. It was felt that the new specification was likely to need a consortium approach to deliver it and that this takes time to develop. There was also concern at what level of knowledge would be needed and whether the service was primarily about signposting or resolution of issue. The role of the new contract should be more about raising people's awareness of their rights and, where people felt they were being discriminated against, signposting them to resources to support them in challenging the discrimination. This also needed to particularly link in with the resources available on a national basis.

Discussions on measuring performance concluded that it should be more meaningful and go past the typical process/operational measures, for example, days of operation etc. It was suggested that emphasis should move to one of measuring impact, for example:

- Greater awareness and acceptance of diversity
- More cohesive and integrated communities
- Reducing inequalities
- Reduction in hate crime
- Developing and sharing resources i.e. training materials
- Demonstrating how equality is embedded into other areas of pieces of work

The group then discussed what barriers might prevent the new service operating in the way it was envisaged. The main issue was around people working in a protectionist fashion rather than resolving how they can work together on this issue but still retain their sovereignty in other aspects

All those who took part in the consultation were invited to attend a meeting in February 2010 where the analysis of the responses and conclusions drawn were fed back and discussed. There was discussion about whether the provision of immigration advice should be included in the future specification given that

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mixed views had been expressed in the consultation but the consensus was that it should be included. There was also some criticism about the indicative amount of funding and what the funding organisations were expecting to be delivered.

There have also been a series of meetings and ad hoc discussions since May 2007 with the three organisations currently being funded, the Bucks Equality Network, the BCC BME Employee Forum, the Community Cohesion & Equalities Forum, Thames Valley Police, Encompass, Voluntary Impact Bucks, the BCC Cohesion and Equalities Steering Group and elected members.

The Communities & Local Government's draft guidance on Cohesion Guidance for Funders (Feb 2008) and the subsequent report on the consultation response (Dec 2008) was considered together with the guidance issued by the Equality & Human Rights Commission in October 2009 "*Cohesion & Equalities: Guidance for Funders*".

The four districts which make up the county council's administrative area are very different in terms of social demographic make up and levels of affluence. The consultation process highlighted the need for services to be provided to people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and the need for better information about the needs of disabled people and a lack of "expert" knowledge about discrimination and the needs of local people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual. The Councils' aims to improve the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged people also needed to be taken into account when deciding the distribution for the County Council's funding and, therefore, is based on analysis of the following 5 indicators:

- Race - BME population (census)
- Disability - Long term limiting illness (census)
- Moderate means and hard pressed groups (two least wealthy groups) (Acorn data)
- Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks 1-3
- General population weighting (census).

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Questions to consider	The Findings
<p>3. Are other organisations responsible for delivering the strategy/policy or service? If yes, how have you incorporated the council's cohesion and equalities priorities into the procurement process or contractual arrangements? How is compliance monitored? What steps have you taken to reduce the council's legal liability where services are being delivered on our behalf? If not relevant, go on to question 4.</p>	<p>The contract specification includes provision around accessible service provision, monitoring of service users by social demographic groups (including their satisfaction with service received). The service provider is required to ensure and have evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where staff will be recruited to deliver services, advertised, open and competitive interviews must be held, and posts filled only through the results of these interviews. All staff must be issued with a statement of principal terms and conditions of employment and job descriptions. • All staff and volunteers working with children and vulnerable adults meet the requirements of the Independent Safeguarding Authority • If working with vulnerable adults, there is a Protection of Vulnerable Adults policy and procedure. Employees and volunteers working with vulnerable adults must be trained in the protection of vulnerable adults. • If working with children, that there is a Child Protection policy and procedure. Employees and volunteers working with children must be trained in child protection. • People entitled to use the service will not be treated less favourably on the grounds of gender (including transgender), marital status/civil partnership, race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), national or ethnic origin, disability, religion or belief or through not having a religious belief or through being lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual. <p>To enable the local authority to monitor that there is no discrimination in service access and provision and to ensure that good relations are promoted, there are a range of performance-monitoring requirements included in the contract, including:</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring:</p> <p><u>Information, Advice and Guidance Services</u></p>

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- Details of service accessibility
 - Hours of opening
 - Location (including access by public transport)
 - Outreach provision
 - Language provision e.g. Punjabi, Urdu, Mirpuri Punjabi, Gurmukhi Punjabi, Polish, Pashto, Tamil, Gujarati, British Sign Language, Textphone
- The number of enquiries from members of the public;
- The number of cases dealt with directly, including
 - the nature of the case
 - the service provider involved
 - service user profile (in line with protected characteristics)
 - service user profile by ward
 - paid / volunteer hours involved;
- The organisations to which individuals are signposted and the number of referrals.

Six monthly monitoring:

Promotion

- Evidence of methods and activities used to promote awareness of services to existing communities;
- Evidence of methods and activities used to promote awareness of services to new communities;
- Evidence of methods and activities used to encourage new and existing communities to engage with local decision making forums e.g. Neighbourhood Action Groups, Older People's Action Group;
- Evidence of activities and campaigns aimed at challenging stereotypes, education and raising awareness of discrimination (including encouraging hate crime and tension reporting)
- Evidence of campaigns and promotion of opportunities aimed at encouraging people from different backgrounds to work together

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	<p><u>Evidencing unmet need and the barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet needs and barriers identified through analysis of evidence gathered through the provision of information, advice and casework, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ groups of people affected ○ the impact this is having on them ○ the service provider involved <p>c. Annual monitoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conduct and analyse an annual satisfaction survey of service users to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Satisfaction of services users with the accessibility of advice, information and guidance services ○ Satisfaction of service users with the support they have received ○ Confidence of service users taking repeat issues up directly with a service provider ○ Confidence of service users to take up new issues independently with other service providers • Report on changing make up of local communities
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Section C. Reviewing the implementation/delivery

<p>4. Does the strategy/policy need to be communicated to the public/our employees or does accessing the service depend on information being communicated to the public? If yes, how will this be achieved? Consider the information we already</p>	<p>In order for people to be able to use the services, it needs to be provided through a wider range of mediums and locations and needs to be meet people’s language and other access needs. Section 3 details the monitoring information required around service accessibility and promotion of services.</p> <p>The contract specification sets out requirements in relation to access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premises and any proposed venues for delivering services and activities must be appropriate for purpose, accessible and compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Equality Act 2006 and must maintain a safe and clean working environment in compliance with health and safety at work legislation.
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<p>have about how our residents prefer us to communicate with them and consider the ways that different groups of people generally find out information. How do you or how will you ensure that communication is appropriate to meet the different communication needs of different groups of people? If not relevant, go to question 5.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information, advice and guidance services should be available in business hours with a mixture of cover for some day, weekend and evening hours. • Evening and weekend working should be developed in response to need (it is envisaged that the successful bidder will provide some outreach services, going out to where people are at times that enable them to access services). • Services should be accessible by local telephone access (local rates) available during business opening hours, and appropriate methods of taking messages both during the day and out of office hours. Where a telephone answering machine is used after hours, recorded messages will be responded to the next business working day. • Services should be accessible by e-mail to be dealt with by the next working day in a reasonable period of time. During staff absences either an out of office message with alternative contact details to be used or a nominated member of staff to access and deal with any enquiries. • Services should be developed using web based access giving details of directly provided and signposted services • Diagnostic web based tools should be developed, such as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to enable people to identify who they need to speak to or other relevant sources of information
<p>5. Is delivery of the strategy/policy or service dependent upon particular buildings, open space or mode of transport being used by the public? If yes, what facilities and transport access arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the needs of different</p>	<p>See information set out in questions 3 and 4</p>

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<p>groups of people have been addressed? See the EIA guidance notes for suggested issues that you need to think about. If not relevant, go to question 6.</p>	
<p>Questions to consider</p>	<p>The Findings</p>
<p>6. Review any processes people need to go through to be able to use the service or to benefit from the strategy/policy. For example criteria that are applied to determine eligibility for receiving the service and the completion of forms. Do these processes/criteria effectively prevent groups of people of people from using the service or benefiting from the strategy/policy?</p> <p>(Ideally you should be aiming to only keep those processes and criteria that are essential to implementation/delivery, for example, because they are a legal requirement.)</p>	<p>This will be an issue for the contractor to resolve. Through the monitoring information being gathered, the local authorities will monitor for any discrimination and raise concerns with the contractor.</p>

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<p>7. What particular skills and knowledge will relevant staff need to ensure that the strategy/policy is properly implemented or that the service is delivered appropriately to meet people's individual needs?</p>	<p>Staff will need a good understanding of equalities legislation and the local barriers and unmet need that different communities in Bucks experience. They will need to provide services and information that are accessible and be able to communicate with people with a diverse range of needs.</p>
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Section D. Assessing for differential impact and discrimination

<p>Consider the answers given in questions 1 through to 7 and assess whether the strategy/policy or service results, or could result, in adverse impacts on different groups of people. Essentially you are looking to identify and deal with any actual or potential unfairness, disadvantage or discrimination. (See the guidance notes for a more detailed explanation.)</p> <p>If you consider that there is an adverse impact, or the potential for an adverse effect, state whether these adverse impacts constitute illegal discrimination or not, and state whether these are justifiable or legitimate. You are required to give your reasons for this.</p>	<p>It could be argued that there is adverse impact on people from black and minority ethnic communities because, in effect, the current funding to provide race equality advice services is being used to cover a larger geographic area and to provide support to a wider range of people. However, in widening the geographic area and the range of methods of providing the service, some people will now be able to access a service previously unavailable to them if they did not live in Aylesbury, Chesham or Wycombe. Also, the requirement to formally identify and provide evidence of the impact of barriers to and opportunities for residents accessing and engaging with public sector services and communicate these to the organisations in question will provide challenge to existing organisations and encourage them improve their own service provision and compliance with equalities legislation. This will also benefit those people who live in the more rural communities as well as those who are disabled. In recognition that the consultation process identified language and immigration as key issues for the BME communities, the contract specifies a range of minority languages that services need to be available in and also specifies the provision of immigration advice where people are unable to access this independently. There is also a requirement that the Bucks Black and Minority Advisory Group receive administrative support from the contractor, this will help to ensure that the needs of these communities are not overlooked.</p> <p>There are currently no local advice services that deal with inequality as it relates to gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion or belief. The consultation process identified specific needs in relation to disability and sexual orientation and will mean that the contract will have a positive impact for people within these social demographic groups. The local authorities are funding (as a separate project) the establishment of faith networks, with the first already operational in Wycombe. The work on gender inequality in the county continues to focus on sexual and domestic violence and occupational</p>
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	<p>segregation. Attempts to establish a gender network has been unsuccessful although there have been local groups established through the Women’s Institute and also through Prevent funded projects. Carers are already catered for through Carers Bucks who are funded to provide a range of support and advice services to Carers, including young carers.</p> <p>Since the specification was drafted the Equality Act 2010 was passed. The specification will, therefore, need to be revised to take account of this.</p>
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If you have identified an adverse impact that constitutes illegal discrimination, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.

If you have identified an adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider whether actions can be taken to mitigate its affect on particular groups of people. This arises out of the duty to promote good relations between people of different groups and is in keeping with the Council’s approach to “Strong & Cohesive Communities in Bucks”.

Ensure that these actions are listed in the attached equalities improvement plan.

If you do not have the authority to take the action required, you will need to alert the relevant service manager to your findings.

Section E. Ensuring continuous improvement

Questions to consider	The Findings
<p>9. What measures will you be using to monitor the impact of the strategy/policy or service over the next three years?</p> <p>The council is committed to mainstreaming equalities, ensuring that it is integrated into our performance management frameworks and subject to continuous improvement through performance monitoring. We also have legal duties to ensure we are not discriminating against groups of people in the provision of goods, services and facilities or in our role as an employer.</p> <p>You should only expect to carry out an equalities impact assessment every three years (unless you are introducing a significant change in the interim). You</p>	<p>The performance monitoring of this contract has been extensively covered elsewhere in this assessment.</p>

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will, therefore, need to have information systems in place that will enable you to analyse and interpret information to:

- Show the numbers of particular groups using the services and what outcomes they experience
- Show under-use of a service by an equalities group
- Show over-use by an equalities group
- Reveal discrimination
- Demonstrate that services are not discriminatory
- Measure the effectiveness of service changes
- Identify the need for new or changed services

Please refer to the council's monitoring guidance (see website – add link?) to decide what type of monitoring is appropriate and what information you will need to gather.

Also consider whether you need have some targeted actions with particular groups of people to address the issues identified above. **Please ensure that these are listed in the attached equalities improvement plan.**

Section F. Opportunities for community cohesion or promoting good relations between different groups of people

Community cohesion and equalities are priorities for Buckinghamshire County Council.

Community cohesion is the outcome of understanding and respect between different communities and a sense of identification with a wider community. In essence it's about promoting a sense of connection, trust and belonging both within geographical communities and across groups of people. It is at risk where illegal discrimination exists, or is perceived to exist, when stereotypes and disinformation go unchallenged and where lack of knowledge about, or experience of, different groups of people leads to fearfulness and segregation.

Equalities in Buckinghamshire are at risk when we fail in our duty to provide an appropriate and professional service that takes account of the different needs of groups of people as a consequence of their colour, culture and ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, religion/belief or sexual orientation or as a result of living in a rural community, lower socio economic group or being a new group to this country and/or

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county (migrant worker, refugee or asylum seeker).

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Questions to consider	The Findings
<p>10. Consider what opportunities and risks to the Council's community cohesion and equalities priorities could arise, for example:</p> <p>(a) Are there ways in which your service could bring different groups of people together, for example to develop future provision through consultation exercises?</p> <p>(b) Are there ways in which existing groups could interact with the service, for example, as part of ongoing monitoring of service provision?</p> <p>(c) Could the way you provide the service bring different groups of people together to use the service?</p> <p>(d) Does the way in which your service is provided have the potential to lead to resentment between different groups of people? How can you compensate for perceptions of preferential or differential treatment? Consider the role, or potential role, of the media and extremist groups when formulating your communication actions.</p> <p>(e) If the improvement plan identifies addressing a gap in the service for a particular group of people, have you also addressed the potential for perceptions of preferential treatment for the group? How will you ensure that people will understand the need for the actions proposed as a result of this impact assessment?</p> <p>Ensure that the actions you identify are put into the attached equalities improvement plan.</p>	<p>These issues have been addressed as part of the contract specification and the monitoring of the delivery of services.</p>

EQUALITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Please list all the equalities actions and targets that result from the Equalities Impact Assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These also need to be integrated into the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equalities Targets/Actions	Officer responsible	By when
Revised the contract specification to take account of the recently passed Equality Act 2010	Angie Sarchet	June 2010

Once the challenge process has been completed, please return the agreed Equalities Impact Assessment Form (signed by your Head of Service) and equalities improvement plan, to Angie Sarchet, Cohesion & Equalities Manager, Room 404, County Hall or via email to asarchet@buckscc.gov.uk and also copy to your service equalities representative (see "Equalities" on the intranet for an up to date list of service representatives).