

EQUALITY SCREENING

Equality Impact Assessment guidance should be considered when completing this form.

POLICY/FUNCTION/ACTIVITY	LEAD OFFICER
Runnymede Borough Council - Modified Housing Benefit Scheme	Ed Bowen

A. What is the aim of this policy, function or activity? Why is it needed? What is it hoped to achieve and how will it be ensured it works as intended? Does it affect service users, employees or the wider community?

Council Tax Support There is an equivalent disregard in Council Tax support for pension age and working age residents. As those policies are reviewed periodically, this report is focusing just on Housing Benefit.

The Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 make provision for the first £10.00 of income from War Widows (Widowers)/War Disablement Scheme and the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme to be disregarded in any benefit assessment. The cost of this disregard is fully reimbursed to the Council.

The Social Security Administration Act 1992 gives the Council discretion to disregard any amount it chooses in addition to the statutory provision in accordance with its approved Modified Scheme.

The impact is on the wider community as disregarding any War Widows (Widowers)/War Disablement above the first £10 has to be funded by the local authority.

B. Is this policy, function or activity relevant to equality? Does the policy, function or activity relate to an area in which there are known inequalities, or where different groups have different needs or experience? Remember, it may be relevant because there are opportunities to promote equality and greater access, not just potential for adverse impacts or unlawful discrimination.

The Protected Characteristics are; Sex, Age, Disability, Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity.

Some of the disregarded incomes are payable to veterans and others are payable to survivors. They are payable to anyone meeting the qualifying conditions for a payment, regardless of Race, Religion and Beliefs, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity. The disregard is applied to anyone receiving it, regardless.

However, Age is likely to be relevant to the entitlement to a pension, as it is paid predominantly to those who lived through the second world war.

The numbers affected are too low to allow any meaningful assessment of the data to establish whether there is a disproportionate effect of the disregard compared to the claim population as a whole.

If the policy, function or activity is considered to be relevant to equality then a full Equality Impact Assessment may need to be carried out. If the policy function or activity does not engage any protected characteristics then you should complete Part C below. Where Protected Characteristics are engaged, but Full Impact Assessment is not required because measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented that would mitigate the impact on those affected or would provide an opportunity to promote equalities please complete Part C.

C. If the policy, function or activity is not considered to be relevant to equality, what are the reasons for this conclusion? Alternatively, if there it is considered that there is an impact on any Protected of Characteristics but that measures are in place or are proposed to be implemented please state those measures and how it/they are expected to have the desired result. What evidence has been used to make this decision? A simple statement of 'no relevance' or 'no data' is not sufficient.

The disregard is applied to anyone in receipt of the specified incomes regardless of Protected Characteristics.

Some of the protected characteristics are not recorded or relevant in Housing Benefit assessment and have no impact on allowing the income disregard.

The proposal is to retain current disregard which will maintain Housing Benefit awards unchanged for current claimants and ensure equal treatment for new claimants in the same circumstances

This screening assessment will need to be referred to the Equality Group for challenge before sign-off.

Date completed:

Sign-off by senior manager: