

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) – Joint Complaint Handling Code

(updated August 2023)

EIAs are about making sure our plans do not inadvertently disadvantage anyone. It is important that we take time to consciously reflect on the issues below, and to take action necessary to make sure this doesn't happen.

An equality impact assessment is a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

<p>What is the purpose of the policy/project?</p>	<p>We are seeking to improve BinJ complaint handling through the introduction of a single complaint standard for non-statutory complaints. The draft Code is now in place and we will consult with BinJs, representative groups and the public on it in September – November 2023.</p>
<p>How is it seeking to achieve this?</p> <p>How will it work? 'Walk through' the process or practices and consider what barriers emerge and what support is on hand.</p>	<p>By introducing a Joint Complaint Handling Code LGSCO is setting clear expectations of how non-statutory complaints should be handled. This transparency and predictability of process should make it easier for anyone who wishes to complain about council services to do so.</p> <p>Changes to internal and external guidance and process documents need to be in an accessible format including the complaint handling code and the consultation document where required.</p> <p>The consultation will be carried out online. It will be available through links from the LGSCO and HOS website, both of which meet accessibility requirements and support screenreader use. The consultation will be on MS Teams platform, which supports screenreader use.</p> <p>People who cannot complete the consultation online will be able to contact both LGSCO and HOS by telephone for support (signposted to on the websites and in associated publicity). Call handlers will work through the online questions with callers, completing the online form on their behalf.</p> <p>The consultation will be promoted to BinJs through direct contact with Link Officers and Chief Executives.</p>

	<p>Information can be provided in an alternative format on request. It will also be promoted to a number of BinJ representative groups (CIPFA, LGA etc.) in order to support both promotion and sector representation. Trade press activity will also take place.</p> <p>Clearly it is impractical to attempt to reach the whole population of England in regard to the consultation, and as such the Citizen’s Advice Bureau and Shelter have been chosen as representative bodies who can both promote the consultation to the public and respond on behalf of citizens. The consultation will also be promoted to the public through the LGSCO and HOS websites and relevant communication channels.</p> <p>The Complaint Handling Code is designed to make access to the complaints system easier. However we will need to monitor for any significant changes in the demographics of people making complaints to ensure we have not unintentionally excluded a group of people with protected characteristics by putting in unanticipated barriers which may prevent them from complaining.</p>
<p>Who benefits and how?</p>	<p>The project aims to benefit local people who wish to hold their local authority to account through the complaints process.</p> <p>The complaint handling code includes a focus on the need to proactively identify people who may need reasonable adjustments and should make it easier for people to raise complaints and navigate their local complaints process.</p> <p>The project also aims to improve BinJ interaction with our processes which should make it easier for caseworkers to progress investigations.</p>
<p>How will any disadvantage be mitigated?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of telephone support to assist in consultation completion where required. • Provision of documents, including the Complaint Handling Code, in ‘easy read’ or other accessible format where requested. • Promotion of the consultation through a range of organisations and charities including representative charities. • Monitoring for any changes in demographics make up of complainants.

<p>What are any 'associated aims' attached to the policy?</p> <p>Policies and practices rarely operate in isolation. An impact in one area may have a knock-on effect in others, so this question is about identifying these.</p>	<p>Introduction of the Complaint Handling Code will have a potential impact on the reporting of BinJ statistics through annual letters etc. It will also have an impact on investigation activity at LGSCO. These are addressed through Business Plan item 3.7 2023 / 24 and relevant work is underway.</p>
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The EIA question as part of the business planning process is an initial look. It is something that you should keep under consideration throughout the life of the project. You may consider consulting those who are going to be impacted to better evidence the impact.

We have the following **staff networks** who you may want to consult about your policy/project, where appropriate:

- [Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Group Network](#)
- [Disability, Carers and Impairment Network](#)
- [LGBTQ+ Network](#)
- [Menopause Network](#)

Useful links

Link to our guidance on the PSED: [LGO Intranet | Equality Act 2010](#)

Link to previous good examples:



EDI WPA Good Examples.docx

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