



Northumberland County Council

Equality Impact Assessment Template

To be completed for all key changes, decisions and proposals. Cite specific data and consultation evidence wherever possible. Further guidance is available at: <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=3281>

Duties which need to be considered:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

PART 1 – Overview of the change, decision or proposal

1. Title of the change, decision or proposal:

Budget proposals for 2015-16 and 2016-17 (overall impact assessment)

2. Date of equality impact assessment:

Draft 22 December 2014 {updated 13 January 2015}

3. Brief description of the change, decision or proposal:

Budget proposals for 2015-16 and 2016-17. This impact assessment assesses the overall impacts of the package of proposals put forward. All individual budget savings proposals have been screened for potential equality implications, and where this has identified potential equality impacts, specific impact assessments are being carried out – except in cases where the final decision on whether to proceed with the saving will be taken after the budget round. In those cases, impact assessments will be carried out before final decisions are taken, and could potentially lead to decisions that some savings should not be made in their currently-proposed form, but should be achieved in other ways.

4. Name(s) and role(s) of officer(s) completing the assessment:

Steven Mason, Executive Director of Resources
Daljit Lally, Executive Director of Wellbeing and Community Health Services

Stephen Corlett, Senior Manager (Policy)
Keith Thompson, Rights Team Manager

5. Overall, what are the outcomes of the change, decision or proposal expected to be? (E.g. will it reduce/terminate a low-priority service, maintain service outcomes at reduced cost, or change the balance of funding responsibility for a service which will remain the same?)

The budget proposals will include savings of £44,240,000 over two years, with impacts on most of the Council's services, and a planned increase in Council Tax of 1.99% in 2015/16 and 1.99% in 2016/17.

6. If you judge that this proposal is **not** relevant to some protected characteristics, tick these below (and explain underneath how you have reached this judgement).

Disability Sex Age Race Religion Sexual orientation

People who have changed gender Women who are pregnant or have babies

Employees who are married/in civil partnerships

[Double-click this link to modify the form to match this list](#)

The characteristics checked above are not relevant because:

Impact assessments carried out to date on the specific proposals have identified no reason to believe that overall budget allocations will have any differential impact on the treatment of employees who are married or in civil partnerships. However further equality impact assessments linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will be carried out where necessary, and will consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts. It will remain in principle possible for the allocation of savings to be reviewed after the setting of the Council budget if these assessments show that there is evidence of a relevant differential impact on this group.

The impact of the budget reductions is likely to affect some employees from protected groups. Northumberland County Council's policies will be followed to ensure equitable treatment of all staff.

No adverse impacts have been identified for people who are married or in civil partnerships. Northumberland County Council's Policies will be followed to ensure equitable treatment for employees who are married or in civil partnerships.

PART 2 – Relevance to different Protected Characteristics

Answer these questions both in relation to people who use services and employees

Disability

Note: “disabled people” includes people with physical, learning and sensory disabilities, people with a long-term illness, and people with mental health problems. You should consider potential impacts on all of these groups.

7. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by disabled people, about disabled people’s experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

All significant Council services within all Groups are used by disabled people. Managers of individual services are expected to ensure that they understand specific issues which arise for disabled users, and to make reasonable adjustments to address any identified barriers to access.

Most adult social care services are specifically designed to support disabled people, and disabled children are among those most likely to have special educational needs or to be “children in need” requiring social care. Services provided by each of the other Groups also include some which focus on supporting disabled people, such as concessionary transport schemes. There are proposed savings in all of these service areas.

Any disabled staff affected by the proposals will be supported through the process and any reasonable adjustments required will be made. Discussions will take place to identify any new adjustments or support required depending on the outcome of the process.

8. Could disabled people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

Yes. Disabled people are more likely than others to depend on local authority services to support their quality of life and their ability to live independently, so any major reduction in public spending has the potential to have a particular impact on disabled people.

The withdrawal of funding for non-statutory support schemes will have a clear impact on disabled people, for example but given the magnitude of the overall savings required, Members may judge that the impact of this proposal is acceptable.

Other savings proposals will have mixed impacts on disabled people. Savings achieved through more rigorous social care commissioning may in some cases lead to changes in valued services, but may also have some benefits in enabling people to live more independently. Changes to supported public transport and to special educational needs arrangements are intended primarily to improve efficiency, but could have some impact on disabled people’s experience of services, though assessed needs will continue to be met. Impacts of other proposals have been considered in individual EIAs, or will be considered before final decisions are made. Again, Members may judge that the overall impact of these proposals is acceptable given the very challenging overall financial position.

If the proposals result in redundancies there is some evidence that disabled staff may face additional barriers in securing alternative employment. To overcome adverse impact NCC offers a Guaranteed Interview Scheme. This ensures that all disabled members of staff who meet the essential requirements for a post will be shortlisted for interview; they will not be required to meet the desirable requirements. Reasonable adjustments will be made for disabled staff that need to be relocated.

9. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of disabled people to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No major and widespread impact of this kind is anticipated, though some changes, for instance affecting public transport, might have some impact on some people. EIAs on individual savings proposals have considered (or will consider) this issue.

10. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards disabled people? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No major and widespread impact of this kind is anticipated, though some changes, for instance affecting public transport, might have some impact on some people. EIAs on individual savings proposals have considered (or will consider) this issue.

11. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that disabled people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant risks of this kind have so far been identified, though the issue will be considered in more detailed EIAs of those proposals on which further work is planned after the budget has been set. The development of safeguarding arrangements focused on identifying harassment or victimisation of disabled people will continue to be an important priority for the Council.

12. If there are risks that disabled people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

Potential adjustments have been/will be considered in EIAs on individual savings proposals.

13. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for disabled people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Programmes of change currently taking place, particularly in adult care services, such as improved commissioning, service delivery through a mix of agencies and making greater use of the support available to people from their families and communities have the potential to create positive impacts, at the same time as reducing costs.

It is Council policy that disabled staff will be offered a guaranteed interview for posts that they meet the essential requirements for (it is not necessary for disabled staff to meet desirable requirements for selection for interview). This policy will be publicised to affected employees at all. The Managers Guide -Supporting disabled staff and the Disability Staff Group will be promoted to staff as sources of advice and support.

Sex

14. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by males and females, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Patterns of usage of specific services vary, but in general Council services are used by women more than by men. For instance social care services for older people are disproportionately used by women, because of their greater longevity and higher rates of disability; and many children's services may still be more significant in their impact on women because of the continuation of traditional assumptions about the gender balance of child-care responsibilities.

EIAs on specific savings proposals have considered/will consider more closely the gender balance of their users.

15. Could males or females be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

Because of the pattern of usage of Council services, it is likely that any substantial reduction in Council budgets will disproportionately disadvantage women. Members may judge that the impact of this proposal is acceptable. Although the proposals will have some impact on non-statutory services, funding for the refuge is being maintained therefore we do not anticipate any disproportionate impact on the women using that service.

Women also make up substantially more than half of the Council's directly employed workforce, and the position is likely to be similar across organisations providing services commissioned by the Council, so any reductions in employment, direct or indirect, as a result of budget savings are likely disproportionately to affect women.

Detailed issues have been/will be considered in EIAs on specific savings proposals, and will be examined further in the course of implementation, where relevant.

16. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of males or females to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No significant issues of this kind have so far been identified in impact assessments of specific proposals. However the need for further impact assessment to support decisions during implementation of the proposals will be considered, and this issue will be further examined where relevant.

17. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards males or females? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No significant issues of this kind have so far been identified in impact assessments of specific proposals. However the need for further impact assessment to support decisions during implementation of the proposals will be considered, and this issue will be further examined where relevant.

18. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that males or females will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant issues of this kind have so far been identified in impact assessments of specific proposals. However the need for further impact assessment to support decisions during implementation of the proposals will be considered, and this issue will be further examined where relevant – for instance the safety of women and girls will be an important consideration in planning the detail of changes to transport arrangements.

19. If there are risks that males or females could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

The Council has only a limited ability to mitigate the overall impact of budget reductions on women, which is largely a consequence of the wider economic situation, and of decisions taken nationally about how to respond to this. However in considering the specific proposals in the 2015/16 and 2016/17 budgets, Members will need to take into account the potential detrimental consequences of budget savings for equality between the sexes. More specific opportunities for reducing disadvantage to women (or possibly, in some cases, to men) have been/will be considered in EIAs for specific savings proposals.

20. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for males or females linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Specific opportunities to create positive impacts in the course of making changes required to achieve savings have been/will be considered in assessing the equality impact of each specific proposal.

Age

21. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different age groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

The age profiles of users of services vary significantly between services. In particular, children's services are especially relevant to children and young people, and to adults in the age range most likely to have dependent children, while adult care services are particularly relevant to older people. One of the distinctive features of

Northumberland as an area is that it has a higher than average proportion of older people in its population, and projects a higher than average increase in this proportion over the coming decade – a change which will affect most Council services.

22. Could people of different age groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

Yes. Because of the overall pattern of Council expenditure, there are likely to be particularly significant impacts on children and young people and on the oldest age groups. Because savings proposals have to an extent been focused on service areas where levels of service are not tightly constrained by statutory duties, there is a possibility that some young people in their late teens may be disproportionately disadvantaged. Given the nature of the Council's statutory responsibilities, and taking into account the scale of savings required and other Council priorities, Members may take the view that this cannot reasonably be avoided. In developing detailed plans for implementing savings in services for young people, solutions will be sought which minimise adverse impacts.

23. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different age groups to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

This issue will need to be considered carefully in developing some specific proposals, including proposals for public transport and for the future of services for young people age 16+. It is currently anticipated that it will be possible to achieve savings in those areas without unacceptable impacts in this area, but if more detailed impact assessments conclude otherwise, the overall balance of savings will be reviewed.

24. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different age groups? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

As with participation in public life, and in the context of the same savings proposals, this issue will need to be considered in the course of preparing detailed proposals.

25. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different age groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant issues of this kind have so far been identified in impact assessments of specific proposals. However the need for further impact assessment to support decisions during implementation of the proposals will be considered and this issue will be further examined where relevant.

26. If there are risks that people of different age groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

Detailed work on the implementation of savings, particularly those affecting young people over compulsory school age, will aim to minimise these risks.

27. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people of different age groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Specific opportunities to create positive impacts in the course of making changes required to achieve savings have been/will be considered in assessing the equality impact of each specific proposal

Race

Note: For the purposes of the Act 'race' includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins.

28. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people of different racial groups, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Because of the demographic make-up of the County, none of the Council's services spends a substantial proportion of its budget in ways which have a clear differential impact on specific racial groups. The diverse and dispersed nature of the County's minority populations mean that statistics on service usage are not easy to interpret, but there is no current reason to believe that take-up of major services is disproportionately low in any racial group, though there can at times be issues about the availability of culturally appropriate services, because of the lack of substantial groups of potential users for these. There are also some specific issues about support for gypsies and travellers, and about the response to increases in recent years in economic migration to the County, particularly from Eastern Europe – where relevant, these have been/will be considered in the EIAs for specific budget proposals.

29. Could people of different racial groups be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No significant differential impact on specific racial groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

30. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people of different racial groups to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No significant differential impact on specific racial groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

31. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people of different racial groups? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No significant differential impact on specific racial groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

32. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people of different racial groups will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant differential impact on specific racial groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

33. If there are risks that people of different racial groups could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

It does not currently appear likely that there will be disproportionate disadvantage to any group, but this issue has been/will be considered further in EIAs for specific savings proposals.

34. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people of different racial groups linked to this change, decision or proposal?

This issue will need to be considered in planning the implementation of specific budget proposals. The continuing development of personal budgets across a range of adult and children's services offers a specific opportunity to empower people to arrange culturally appropriate forms of support.

Religion or belief

Note: In the Equality Act, religion includes any religion. It also includes a lack of religion. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief or a lack of such belief.

35. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people with different religions or beliefs, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

In some Council services, particularly in education, but also to some extent in care services, religious organisations provide significant services. In some cases, these organisations give preference to adherents of a specific religion. The overall impact of current arrangements is likely to be that people of some particular faiths are in some circumstances slightly advantaged compared to those of other faiths or who are not religious.

36. Could people with different religions or beliefs be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No issues have currently been identified, though the question will be considered during further development of individual savings proposals.

37. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people with different religions or beliefs to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No significant differential impact on specific religious or belief groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

38. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people with different religions or beliefs? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No significant differential impact on specific religious or belief groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

39. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people with different religions or beliefs will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant differential impact on specific religious or belief groups has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts.

40. If there are risks that people with different religions or beliefs could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No significant differential impact on specific religious or belief groups has been identified in preparing the budget. If further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals identify differential impacts, they will need to consider whether there are reasonable steps that could be taken to reduce these.

41. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different religions or beliefs linked to this change, decision or proposal?

Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider this issue.

Sexual Orientation

Note: The Act protects bisexual, gay, heterosexual and lesbian people.

42. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by people with different sexual orientations, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

We have limited information about differences in overall usage of services by sexual orientation. It is probable that lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people, and in particular gay men, are less likely to be parents making use of children's services than other groups, and it has been suggested that LGB people may also be likely to have more limited sources of family support than other groups if they need care, and might therefore have disproportionate need for publicly-funded care services. Sexual orientation also can affect health and therefore care needs – for instance LGB people are statistically more likely to have mental health or substance misuse problems, and gay men remain more at risk of HIV infection than heterosexual men, though numbers of people requiring support for that reason remain low in Northumberland. Otherwise, differences in the experiences of people of different sexual orientations are likely in general to be concerned with the culture of services, and in some cases of other users of services, rather than being directly connected with levels of spending.

43. Could people with different sexual orientations be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

Most budget proposals currently appear unlikely to have a differential impact, though it will be important to consider this issue in developing detailed proposals for some specific savings, particularly those affecting youth services, which may have a particular role in supporting young people who are troubled about their sexuality.

44. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of people with different sexual orientations to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No significant differential impact on people of different sexual orientations has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts. This may be particularly relevant to savings in services for young people.

45. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards people with different sexual orientations? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No significant differential impact on people of different sexual orientations has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts. This may be particularly relevant to savings in services for young people.

46. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that people with different sexual orientations will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant differential impact on people of different sexual orientations has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will need to consider whether there is a possibility of differential impacts. This may be particularly relevant to savings in services for young people.

47. If there are risks that people with different sexual orientations could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

If EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals identify differential impacts, they will need to consider whether there are reasonable steps that could be taken to reduce these.

48. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for people with different sexual orientations linked to this change, decision or proposal?

No specific opportunities linked to budget savings have so far been identified; this issue will need to be considered where relevant in developing detailed proposals, particularly in services for young people.

Gender Reassignment

Note: The Act provides protection for transsexual people. A transsexual person is someone who proposes to, starts or has completed a process to change his or her gender.

49. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by transsexual people, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Numbers of transgender people are believed to be very low as a proportion of the users of any Council service. While there are a wide range of barriers to access that can arise for people in this protected group, as a result either of prejudice or of rules and systems based on the assumption of fixed gender, it seems unlikely that any Council services will incur spending on meeting the needs of this protected group which is sufficiently significant in relation to overall budgets to affect the overall budget settlement for any Council Group, and none of the services affected by savings proposals has been identified as likely to have a significant differential impact on this group.

50. Could transsexual people be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

No significant differential impact on transsexual people has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider this issue. It would in principle be possible to reconsider the balance of savings if these specific EIAs revealed issues which could not be addressed within them; however this does not appear likely to be necessary.

51. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of transsexual people to participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

No significant differential impact on transsexual people has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider this issue. It would in principle be possible to reconsider the balance of savings if these specific EIAs revealed issues which could not be addressed within them; however this does not appear likely to be necessary.

52. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards transsexual people? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No significant differential impact on transsexual people has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider this issue. It would in principle be possible to reconsider the balance of savings if these specific EIAs revealed issues which could not be addressed within them; however this does not appear likely to be necessary.

53. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that transsexual people will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant differential impact on transsexual people has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider this issue. It would in principle be possible to reconsider the balance of savings if these specific EIAs revealed issues which could not be addressed within them; however this does not appear likely to be necessary.

54. If there are risks that transsexual people could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

No significant differential impact on transsexual people has been identified in preparing the budget. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider this issue. It would in principle be possible to reconsider the balance of savings if these specific EIAs revealed issues which could not be addressed within them; however this does not appear likely to be necessary.

55. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for transsexual people linked to this change, decision or proposal?

This issue will need to be considered in carrying out further EIAs required to support the implementation of specific budget proposals.

Pregnancy and Maternity

Note: the law covers pregnant women or those who have given birth within the last 26 weeks, and those who are breast feeding.

56. What do you know about usage of the services affected by this change, decision or proposal by pregnant women and those who have children under 26 weeks, about their experiences of it, and about any current barriers to access?

Some specific Council services are particularly relevant to pregnant women and women with young babies. No general issues have been identified, though there are specific issues which need to be considered in the case of some savings proposals. These include in particular proposed savings in spending on Children's Centres, and savings in services for young people which may provide support to teenage mothers.

57. Could pregnant women and those with children under 26 weeks be disproportionately advantaged or disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal?

In the case of the services identified above, there is a possibility that this group could be disproportionately disadvantaged.

58. Could the change, decision or proposal affect the ability of pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks participate in public life? (e.g. by affecting their ability to go to meetings, take up public appointments etc.)

There is a possibility that some proposed savings, for instance in public transport, could have some impact. Detailed EIAs on individual savings have considered or will consider this issue.

59. Could the change, decision or proposal affect public attitudes towards pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks? (e.g. by increasing or reducing their presence in the community)

No significant risk has been identified. However further detailed EIAs on individual savings will where relevant consider this issue.

60. Could the change, decision or proposal make it more or less likely that pregnancy women or those with children under 26 weeks will be at risk of harassment or victimisation?

No significant risk has been identified. However further detailed EIAs on individual savings will where relevant consider this issue.

61. If there are risks that pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks could be disproportionately disadvantaged by the change, decision or proposal, are there reasonable steps or adjustments that could be taken to reduce these risks?

This issue will need to be considered where relevant in carrying out detailed EIAs required to support the implementation of specific budget proposals

62. Are there opportunities to create *positive* impacts for pregnant women or those with children under 26 weeks linked to this change, decision or proposal?

This issue will need to be considered where relevant in carrying out detailed EIAs required to support the implementation of specific budget proposals

Human Rights

66. Could the change, decision or proposal impact on human rights? (e.g. the right to respect for private and family life, the right to a fair hearing and the right to education)

Human rights issues have been considered in EIAs of specific budget proposals, and no unacceptable implications have been identified. Where necessary, further EIAs linked to the implementation of specific budget proposals will consider potential human rights issues. It would in principle be possible to review the overall balance of the budget savings if these specific EIAs revealed human rights issues which could not be addressed within them; however this does not appear likely to be necessary

PART 3 - Course of Action

67. Based on a consideration of all the potential impacts, tick one of the following as an overall summary of the outcome of this assessment:

<input type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis has identified risks or opportunities to promote better equality; the change, decision or proposal will be adjusted to avoid risks and ensure that opportunities are taken.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis has identified risks to equality which will not be eliminated, and/or opportunities to promote better equality which will not be taken. Acceptance of these is reasonable and proportionate, given the objectives of the change, decision or proposal, and its overall financial and policy context.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The equality analysis shows that the change, decision or proposal would lead to actual or potential unlawful discrimination, or would conflict with the Council's positive duties to an extent which is disproportionate to its objectives. It should not be adopted in its current form.

68. Explain how you have reached the judgement ticked above, and summarise any steps which will be taken to reduce negative or enhance positive impacts on equality.

It does not appear possible to achieve substantial budget savings without some detrimental effect on people in protected groups, because one of the functions of many public services is to provide additional support to disadvantaged groups. However there are opportunities to make budget savings in ways which minimise these impacts, and which contribute to making changes in services which have some positive aspects for protected groups.

The Council's approach will continue to be to address equality and human rights issues at a number of levels:

- This impact assessment will support the Council's decisions about the budget for each Group, the overall level of the budget, and the specific savings proposals included in the final budget.
- Further EIAs have taken place on each savings proposal included in the Council's budget, other than proposals which will be developed more fully following further consultation and review, and proposals which were assessed at a screening stage as having no significant potential impact on equality or human rights -- for instance because they are concerned purely with improving technical efficiency.
- Where the intention is to develop proposals more fully after the budget has been set, or where there are significant further decisions to be taken in the course of implementation of any of the budget proposals, the need for further EIAs will be considered. If any of these identifies a potential need to revise either budget decisions within a Group budget or the overall balance of savings between Groups, this will be considered through the Council's usual decision-making processes.

Where the Council has specific statutory duties to individuals in protected groups –for instance its duties to disabled people under social services legislation – it will continue to fulfil these duties, even if the overall impact requires changes to the budgets which have been set for specific services or Groups (though the first options considered will usually be budget adjustments within a Group)

PART 4 - Ongoing Monitoring

69. What are your plans to monitor the actual impact of the implementation of the change, decision or proposal on equality of opportunity? (include action points and timescales)

Monitoring arrangements have been/will be considered in EIAs for specific budget proposals and service changes. The Council carries out an annual strategic equality analysis within each Group, which provides a regular overview of significant equalities issues across services, including any issues which emerge as a result of budget changes

PART 5 - Authorisation

70. Name of Head of Service and Date Approved

Once completed, send your full EIA to: Irene.Fisher@northumberland.gov.uk. A summary will then be generated corporately and published to the Council's website.