

# EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

October 2018

## THE COUNCIL'S EQUALITIES STATEMENT

This Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce.

We will also work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of ethnic origin, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment, religious beliefs or non-belief, use of Welsh language, BSL or other languages, nationality, responsibility for any dependents or any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

The Council is required to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people
- encouraging people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The protected characteristics are:

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • Age                            | • Race                           |
| • Disability                     | • Religion, Belief or Non-Belief |
| • Gender Re-assignment           | • Sex                            |
| • Marriage and Civil Partnership | • Sexual Orientation             |
| • Pregnancy and Maternity        | • Welsh Language*                |

\* The Welsh language is not identified as a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, however in Wales we also have to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis as well as promoting and facilitating the use of the Welsh language.

Further advice on completing impact assessments can be found on the equalities pages of Corporate Policy Unit Portal.

## THE EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>NAME OF NEW OR REVISED PROPOSAL*</b>	Welsh Government High Street and Retail Rate Relief Scheme 2019/20
<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	Corporate Services
<b>SERVICE AREA</b>	Corporate Finance – Business Rates
<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>	John Carpenter
<b>DATE FOR NEXT REVIEW OR REVISION</b>	Not applicable as one-off scheme

**\*Throughout this Equalities Impact Assessment Form, ‘proposal’ is used to refer to what is being assessed, and therefore includes policies, strategies, functions, procedures, practices, initiatives, projects and savings proposals.**

The aim of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is to ensure that Equalities and Welsh Language issues have been proactively considered throughout the decision making processes governing work undertaken by every service area in the Council as well as work done at a corporate level.

The Council’s work across Equalities, Welsh Language and Human Rights is covered in more detail through the [Equalities and Welsh Language Objectives and Action Plan 2016-2020](#).

When carrying out an EIA you should consider both the positive and negative consequences of your proposals. If a project is designed for a specific group e.g. disabled people, you also need to think about what potential effects it could have on other areas e.g. young people with a disability, BME people with a disability.

There are a number of supporting guidance documents available on the [Corporate Policy and Business Support Portal](#) and the Council’s Equalities and Welsh Language team can provide advice as the EIA is being developed. Please note that the team does not write EIAs on behalf of service areas, the support offered is in the form of advice, suggestions and in effect, quality control.

Contact [equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@caerphilly.gov.uk) for assistance.

## PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL

<b>1</b>	<p><b>What is the proposal intended to achieve?</b> <i>(Please give a brief description and outline the purpose of the new or updated proposal by way of introduction.)</i></p> <p>The Welsh Government (WG) has decided to fund a High Street and Retail Rate Relief Scheme from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020 which is aimed at helping certain retail business rate payers. WG has not carried out an equality impact assessment (EIA), hence the need for this assessment.</p> <p>WG is offering specific grant funding to each local authority in Wales and has issued a Guidance document which contains the requirements that need to be followed in administering the scheme. This rate relief scheme has to be adopted by each local authority wishing to award the relief and in this Authority's case a report is to be taken to Cabinet proposing the adoption of the WG scheme.</p>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Who are the service users affected by the proposal?</b> <i>(Who will be affected by the delivery of this proposal? e.g. staff members, the public generally, or specific sections of the public i.e. youth groups, carers, road users, people using country parks, people on benefits etc. Are there any data gaps?)</i></p> <p>If this proposal is adopted, it will affect certain business rate payers that would otherwise have had to pay a higher amount in business rates for the financial year 2019/20.</p> <p>A ratepayer may apply for relief of up to £2,500 on a business rates bill for the financial year 2019/20 if they are a retailer occupying qualifying premises with a rateable value of £50,000 or less in the financial year 2019/20, subject to State Aid limits.</p> <p>Properties that benefit from the relief will be occupied retail properties and must be wholly or mainly being used as a shop, restaurant, café or drinking establishment that is wholly or mainly providing a service to visiting members of the public (properties must be reasonably accessible to the public).</p> <p>WG has also laid down other conditions in its Guidance document, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of relief will be calculated on a daily basis and limited to the amount of rates actually payable.</li><li>• If a property is occupied after 1 April 2019 the ratepayer will be eligible for this relief.</li><li>• If a property is vacated after 1 April 2019 the amount of relief will be reduced proportionately.</li><li>• Ratepayers occupying more than one property may apply for High Street and Retail Rate Relief on each of their eligible properties, subject to State Aid limits.</li><li>• Properties already receiving mandatory charitable rate relief are not eligible for High Street and Retail Rate Relief.</li><li>• Properties owned, rented or managed by a local authority are not eligible.</li><li>• State Aid 'de minimis' rules apply.</li></ul>

## IMPACT ON THE PUBLIC AND STAFF

<b>3</b>	<p><b>Does the proposal ensure that everyone has an equal access to all the services available or proposed, or benefits equally from the proposed changes, or does not lose out in greater or more severe ways due to the proposals?</b> <i>(What has been done to examine whether or not these groups have equal access to the service, or whether they need to receive the service in a different way from other people?)</i></p> <p>For those ratepayers who completed an application form and received rate relief under the 2018-19 Scheme, and are eligible for rate relief under the 2019-20 Scheme, it is proposed that rate relief is applied directly to eligible ratepayers' bills. In these cases, an application form will not need to be completed for 2019-20.</p> <p>An application form will need to be completed in cases where a ratepayer did not receive High Street rate relief last year but meets the 2019-20 Scheme eligibility criteria.</p> <p>Those ratepayers that may be eligible to apply for this relief, and have not completed and returned an application form in 2018/19 will be sent an application form this year. Officers of the Authority will make the business community aware of the WG Scheme through its usual channels, such as its website, social media and the 'Newslines' publication.</p> <p><b>Actions required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Award this relief to ratepayers who completed an application form and received rate relief under the 2018-19 Scheme, and are eligible for rate relief under the 2019-20 Scheme;</li><li>• Issue an application form to ratepayers that appear to be eligible to apply for this relief in 2019/20 but have not made an application previously;</li><li>• Publicise the WG Scheme through the Council's usual channels.</li></ul>
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**4** **Is your proposal going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?**  
*(Has the service delivery been examined to assess if there is any indirect effect on any groups? Could the consequences of the policy or savings proposal differ dependent upon people's protected characteristics?)*

<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>Positive, Negative, Neutral</b>	<b>What will the impact be? If the impact is negative how can it be mitigated?</b>
<b>Age</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Disability</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Race</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Religion &amp; Belief</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Sex</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	Neutral	The proposal is not aimed at a specific group within the eligible ratepayer group. No evidence has been identified to suggest that the WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.

**5** **In line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. (No.1) Regulations 2015, please note below what effects, if any (whether positive or adverse), the proposal would have on opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.**  
*(The specific Policy Making Standards requirements are Standard numbers 88, 89, 90, 91, 92 and 93. The full detail of each Standard is available on the Corporate*

*Policy Unit Portal. Although it is important that what is outlined in the proposal is available in Welsh and English, please consider wider impacts on Welsh speakers.)*

The application form will be bilingual and so there should be no negative impact. We will ensure that the application process will comply with Standards 71, 72, 72A, 74 and 75 of the council's Compliance Notice.

## INFORMATION COLLECTION

**6** **Please outline any evidence and / or research you have collected which supports the proposal? This can include an analysis of service users.**  
*(Is this service effectively engaging with all its potential users or is there higher or lower participation of uptake by one or more protected characteristic groups? If so, what has been done to address any difference in take up of the service? Does any savings proposal include an analysis of those affected?)*

All ratepayers (service users) who appear to the Council to be eligible to apply for relief under the WG scheme will be identified by data analysis of the business rates database to ensure take-up of the assistance available under the scheme is maximised. Beyond this, no detailed analysis has been undertaken.

## CONSULTATION

**7** **Please outline the consultation / engagement process and outline any key findings.**  
*(Include method of consultation, objectives and target audience. What steps have been taken to ensure that people from various groups have been consulted during the development of this proposal? Have you referred to the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance?)*

WG developed this rate relief scheme and has laid down guidance containing various criteria which must be satisfied; therefore the Council was not at liberty to carry out a consultation on its development.

The Council's Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language) has been consulted and the Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance considered.

## MONITORING AND REVIEW

**8** **How will the proposal be monitored?**  
*(What monitoring process has been set up to assess the extent that the service is being used by all sections of the community, or that the savings proposals are achieving the intended outcomes with no adverse impact? Are comments or complaints systems set up to record issues by Equalities category to be able analyse responses from particular groups?)*

	<p>As this is a WG scheme, the Council will be required to provide certain information to WG about the number of ratepayers receiving this relief and the amount of relief awarded. This information may be used by WG to inform future policy decisions regarding the provision of this type of rate relief.</p>
<b>9</b>	<p><b>How will the monitoring be evaluated?</b>  <i>(What methods will be used to ensure that the needs of all sections of the community are being met?)</i></p> <p>As above, WG may use information reported to them by each local authority to inform future policy decisions regarding the provision of this type of rate relief.</p> <p>No evidence has been identified to suggest that the implementation of this WG scheme would have a differential impact on this group.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Have any support / guidance / training requirements been identified?</b>  <i>(Has the EIA or consultation process shown a need for awareness raising amongst staff, or identified the need for Equalities or Welsh Language training of some sort?)</i></p> <p>No</p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>If any adverse impact has been identified, please outline any mitigation action.</b></p> <p>N/A</p>
<b>12</b>	<p><b>What wider use will you make of this Equality Impact Assessment?</b>  <i>(What use will you make of this document i.e. as a consultation response, appendix to approval reports, publicity etc. in addition to the mandatory action shown below?)</i></p> <p>It will be used to support the proposal to adopt the WG scheme going before Cabinet in April 2019.</p>

<b>13</b>	<p><b>An equality impact assessment may have four possible outcomes, through more than one may apply to a single proposal. Please indicate the relevant outcome(s) of the impact assessment below.</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Please tick as appropriate:</b></p> <p><b>No major change</b> – the impact assessment demonstrated that the proposal was robust; there was no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Adjust the proposal</b> – the impact assessment identified potential problems or missed opportunities. The proposal was adjusted to remove barriers or better promote equality. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Continue the proposal</b> – the impact assessment identified the potential problems or missed opportunities to promote equality. The justification(s) for continuing with it have been clearly set out. (The justification must be included in the impact assessment and must be in line with the duty to have due regard. Compelling reasons will be needed for the most important relevant proposals.) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><b>Stop and remove the proposal</b> – the impact assessment identified actual or potential unlawful discrimination. The proposal was stopped and removed, or changed. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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<b>Completed by:</b>	John Carpenter
<b>Date:</b>	March 2019
<b>Position:</b>	Finance Manager (Revenues)
<b>Name of Head of Service:</b>	Nicole Scammell