Warwickshire County Council Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

The purpose of an EIA is to ensure WCC is as inclusive as possible, both as a service deliverer and as an employer. It also demonstrates our compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

This document is a planning tool, designed to help you improve programmes of work by considering the implications for different groups of people. A guidance document is available here.

Please note that, once approved, this document will be made public, unless you have indicated that it contains sensitive information. Please ensure that the form is clear and easy to understand. If you would like any support or advice on completing this document, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team on 01926 412370 or equalities@warwickshire.gov.uk

Service / policy / strategy / practice / plan being assessed	Tackling Social Inequalities Strategy
Business Unit / Service Area	People, Strategy and Commissioning
Is this a new or existing service / policy / strategy / practice / plan? If an existing service / policy / strategy / practice / plan please state date of last assessment	New strategy
EIA Review team – list of members	Kate Sahota (Lead Commissioner) Tanya Khera-Butler (Commissioner)
Do any other Business Units / Service Areas need to be included?	Children and Families Business & Customer Services Education Public Health

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Does this EIA contain personal and / or sensitive information?	No
Are any of the outcomes from this assessment likely to result in complaints from existing services users, members of the public and / or employees?	No

1. **Please explain the background to your proposed activity and the reasons for it.**

Warwickshire had previously published a Child Poverty strategy 2015-18. There has been a corporate recognition that we need to develop a new strategy to take this work forward. The recent COVID-19 pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated the inequalities that exist, further demonstrating the need for a new strategy. There is likely to be further inequalities due to the impact of Brexit.

The Tackling social inequalities strategy is underpinned by the findings of the place-based JSNAs and supported by engagement with key stakeholders, including over 250 practitioners from 50 organisations across Warwickshire. Practitioners included social workers, health professionals, family support workers, teachers, advocates and debt, housing, and employment specialists. The main focus of the engagement was to understand the issues facing those living in hardship and the barriers to overcoming those issues. In addition, a local community organisation completed in-depth interviews with members of the public on the key themes around hardship.

 The strategy is an important step in tackling the causes of and addressing the impact of social inequalities in Warwickshire. It will help us to identify who is most in need of support and help us target the support we offer. By taking a public health approach to tackling social inequalities, we will use the principles of proportionate universalism. This approach recognises the gradient of need to ensure services are targeted to different levels of need but remain equitable. Our aim is to help our residents to have a decent and secure life, recognising that everyone has a role to play in tackling social inequalities across the system. The strategy will be supported by a long term, sustainable delivery plan over the next decade to 2030.

The strategy closely aligns to and supports other strategic ambitions and priorities in Warwickshire, in particular Warwickshire County Council's Council Plan 2025, Coventry and Warwickshire's Health and Care Partnership, the Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2020 – 2025, and our COVID-19 Recovery Plan. Whilst WCC leads on the strategy and its development, the delivery will be supported by partnerships with our district and borough councils, the voluntary and third sector, local employers, the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Coventry and Warwickshire Health and Care Partnership.

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2. Please outline your proposed activity including a summary of the main actions.

A working group with key stakeholders from across WCC was initiated in August 2020 to shape the development of the strategy and continues to meet on a monthly basis. The working group will be superseded by the strategy working groups described below.

The engagement work supporting the development of the strategy is described in section 3, and has involved service users, practitioners and key stakeholders.

Using the initial engagement to develop a draft strategy, further engagement with key stakeholders will be sought before finalising the strategy through Corporate Board, Cabinet and the Health & Wellbeing Board.

We are proposing that the Tackling social inequalities strategy will run for 9 years to 2030, with three-yearly refreshes. This approach considers the ever-changing climate, with reference to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the longer-term impacts of this.

The strategy will be delivered through working groups, established to support and implement each of these priorities. The working groups will report into a corporate governance structure that is currently being developed. Each working group will develop their own EIA. These groups will monitor progress using an agreed set of indicators. Implementation of the priorities will also be supported by £300,000 for 2021/22 and £250,000 funding each year for two years thereafter.

The first three yearly refresh (2023/24) will be informed by a planned Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, due to take place from May 2023-Oct 2023.

3. Who is this going to impact and how? (customers, service users, public and staff)

It is good practice to seek the views of your stakeholders and for these to influence your proposed activity. Please list anything you have already found out. If you still need to talk to stakeholders, include this as an 'action' at the end of your EIA. **Note that in some cases, there is a duty to consult, see <u>more</u>.**

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After engagement with 250 practitioners (from over 50 organisations) and focused interviews with residents we have identified three strategic priorities, these are supported with sub-priorities to guide the action plans that will be developed during the next phase of delivery.

Priority One: To develop the workforce and culture to enhance awareness of social inequalities	
How will this be achieved?	**Upskilling practitioners to increase their skills and confidence in identifying and supporting residents facing financial hardship** We will provide practitioners with bespoke training to equip them with skills and confidence to identify and support residents experiencing, or at risk of, financial hardship. This may include shadowing opportunities with frontline services tackling social inequalities such as Citizens Advice and Foodbanks. **Develop effective, accessible communications and signposting to services** We will work with the Family Information Service to ensure practitioners and residents have access to up to date / timely information on services available. This will include provision of information in different formats and languages. **Poverty-proofing services to increase accessibility and reduce stigma** We will work with our services to collectively reduce stigma and tackle social inequalities. This will include working with schools to identify and overcome the barriers that children and young people experiencing social inequalities can face during the school day. **Promote corporate social responsibility and social value** We will deliver a countywide social inequalities awareness campaign to challenge prejudice and discrimination at an institutional, social and personal level. This will include best practice guide and tackling social inequalities pledges for local businesses.

Priority Two: Improving access to goods, resources, services and communities, both physically and virtually

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How will this be achieved?	**Accessible and affordable transport to access goods, resources, services and communities** We will support residents to overcome barriers to accessing goods, resources, services and communities, such as improved access to a range of flexible travel options and improved affordability of travel. **Improving access to digital technology and the skills to use these technologies** We will support residents with the technology they need in order to access goods, services and communities. This will include access to technology, broadband and digital skills development. **Improving advocacy and support for groups more at risk of experiencing social inequalities** We will provide additional support to those residents with additional risks for experiencing social inequalities, such as those from BAME groups, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions, to reduce their risk of entering or remaining on a low income. **Maximising take-up of the Pupil Premium for schools** We will work with our partners to increase the number and proportion of eligible parents/carers claiming free school meals and the associated pupil premium funding for schools.

Priority Three: Maximising and managing income

How will this be achieved?	**Supporting Warwickshire residents to access employment that pays the Real Living Wage** We will work with residents to identify, promote and secure opportunities for employment that will pay them at least the Real Living Wage. We will work with employers to encourage them to implement the Real Living Wage as a minimum. **Supporting the development of the local economy and jobs market** We will work with our partners and residents to develop the local economy and jobs market to increase the opportunities available for residents to access employment. **Developing financial skills training through schools, colleges and developing independence programmes**

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We will work with our education settings (from primary school upwards) to establish an effective curriculum that will develop the financial skills of children and young people.

Providing emergency, flexible funds to support those most in need
We will work with frontline services and practitioners to develop a robust pathway for residents where emergency funds would overcome immediate issues and reducing the likelihood of residents entering persistent hardship.

We propose continuing with our engagement with practitioners and residents as part of the working groups to deliver the priorities. This engagement will help define and shape the activities we need to undertake in order to achieve our priorities.
This is likely to require targeted engagement work to ensure we are meeting our duties as part of the PSED.
We will use the EIA tool to ensure with engage with and hear from a representative pool of people as part of the working groups.
EIA will be undertaken in development with programmes of work deriving from the strategy.

P**lease analyse the potential impact of your proposed activity against the protected characteristics.**

N.B Think about what actions you might take to mitigate / remove the negative impacts and maximize on the positive ones. This will form part of your action plan at question 7.

	What information do you have? What information do you still need to get?	Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Age	Children are more likely than any other age group to be living in poverty. In 2018/19, 30% of	The strategy will work in conjunction with Child Friendly Warwickshire programme of	None

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	children in the UK were living in relative low income after housing costs, compared to 21% of working age adults and 16% of pensioners. Young workers have been most economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, as they were most likely to be furloughed or be made redundant.	work to ensure there is a particular focus on reducing the impact of poverty on children and young people.	
Disability Consider • Physical disabilities • Sensory impairments • Neurodiverse conditions (e.g. dyslexia) • Mental health conditions (e.g. depression) • Medical conditions (e.g. diabetes)	Feedback from practitioners has indicated people with disabilities struggle to secure paid employment with a fair wage, sustain employment and access support services if required. In the UK, 25% of disabled individuals are in the bottom poorest quintile based on disposable household income compared to 19% of non-disabled individuals.	This issue has been identified as one of the key priorities of this strategy - **Advocacy for groups with additional risks for poverty** We will provide additional support to those residents with additional risks for poverty, such as those from BAME groups, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions, to reduce their risk of entering or remaining in poverty.	None
Gender Reassignment	No information available	As part of the development of our data capture, we will seek to capture information on this cohort to support the development of our priority work	None
Marriage and Civil Partnership	In the UK, 17% of those classified in a couple are in the bottom poorest quintile based on household disposable income compared to 25% of	This issue has been identified as one of the key priorities of this strategy - **Advocacy for groups with additional risks for poverty**	None

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	single people. Moreover, 33% of those who are single with children are in the bottom poorest quintile.	We will provide additional support to those residents with additional risks for poverty, such as those from BAME groups, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions, to reduce their risk of entering or remaining in poverty.	
Pregnancy and Maternity	No information available	As part of the development of our data capture, we will seek to capture information on this cohort to support the development of our priority work	None
Race	The data shows that median salary income is different depending on race. In the UK, 18% of White people are in the bottom poorest quintile based on disposable household income. In comparison 32% and 31% of Asian and Black people are in the bottom poorest quintile, respectively.	This issue has been identified as one of the key priorities of this strategy - **Advocacy for groups with additional risks for poverty** We will provide additional support to those residents with additional risks for poverty, such as those from BAME groups, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions, to reduce their risk of entering or remaining in poverty.	None
Religion or Belief	No information available	As part of the development of our data capture, we will seek to capture information on this cohort to support the development of our priority work	None

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Sex	In the UK, 18% of men are in the bottom poorest quintile for disposable household income compared to 20% of women. Conversely, 23% of men are in the richest top quintile compared to 20% of women. An estimated 48% of single parent households are in poverty, compared to 24% of couple families. Most single parent households (89%) are headed by women.	This issue has been identified as one of the key priorities of this strategy - **Advocacy for groups with additional risks for poverty** We will provide additional support to those residents with additional risks for poverty, such as those from BAME groups, those with learning disabilities or mental health conditions, to reduce their risk of entering or remaining in poverty.	None
Sexual Orientation	No information available	As part of the development of our data capture, we will seek to capture information on this cohort to support the development of our priority work	None

4. **What could the impact of your proposed activity be on other vulnerable groups e.g. deprivation, looked after children, carers?**

Action plans

As discussed above vulnerable groups have been identified as one of the key priorities.

5. **How does / could your proposed activity fulfil the three aims of PSED, giving due regard to:**
- the elimination of discrimination, harassment and victimisation

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- creating equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
- fostering good relationships between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not

> The Tackling Social Inequalities Strategy is creating equality of opportunity by removing the inequalities gap for disadvantaged individuals.
>
> Our strategy priority of workforce and culture training to promote poverty awareness will aim to foster good relationships between groups, this strategy will tackle prejudice for disadvantaged groups using this platform.

6. Actions – what do you need to do next?

Consider:

- Who else do you need to talk to? Do you need to engage or consult?
- How you will ensure your activity is clearly communicated
- Whether you could mitigate any negative impacts for protected groups
- Whether you could do more to fulfil the aims of PSED
- Anything else you can think of!

Action	Timescale	Name of person responsible
Develop working principles for each of the working groups to ensure all protected characteristics are considered when delivering detailed action plans.	June 2021	Kate Sahota
Seeking local data to reinforce local needs so our priorities can be shaped accordingly.	Ongoing and reviewed annually	Kate Sahota

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Ongoing monitoring of Benefits / indicators will need to consider protected characteristics.	Ongoing and reviewed annually	Kate Sahota
The EIA will be reviewed in line with any new developments arising from responses to the engagement and from the discussions of the working groups.	Ongoing and reviewed annually	Kate Sahota

7. Sign off.

Name of person/s completing EIA	Kate Sahota Tanya Khera-Butler
Name and signature of Assistant Director	Becky Hale, 20.5.2
Date	20th May 2021
Date of next review and name of person/s responsible	1st November 2021 Kate Sahota

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