

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Template – Part 1

Policy title and purpose (brief outline):	Welsh Government Nation of Sanctuary Refugee & Asylum Seeker Plan
Name of official:	Elaine Hepple
Department:	Equality Team
Date:	9 March 2018
Signature:	

1. Please provide a brief description of the policy/decision.

For example what is the overall objective of the policy/decision, what are the stated aims (including who the intended beneficiaries are), a broad description of how this will be achieved, what the measure of success will be, and the time frame for achieving this?

The Welsh Government published a Refugee & Asylum Seeker Delivery Plan in March 2016. In April 2017, the National Assembly for Wales Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee published their *“I used to be someone”; Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Wales* report which made a number of recommendations to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) in Wales. Recommendation 1 was that the Welsh Government should review and consult on a revised plan.

The new plan has been developed in line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 ‘five ways of working’ and co-produced in partnership with organisations outside of the Welsh Government. It has also been aligned to reflect the priorities in Prosperity for All. This will help to tackle the inequalities and poverty experienced by refugees and asylum seekers, ensure equality of opportunity and support them to more easily access resources and mainstream services.

The decision to rename the plan as the Welsh Government Nation of Sanctuary Refugee & Asylum Seeker Plan reflects the Welsh Government’s commitment to supporting the aims and objectives of the Sanctuary movement and to delivering better outcomes and improve integration for RAS.

2. We have a legal duty to engage with people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (please refer to Annex A of the EIA guidance) identified as being relevant to the policy. What steps have you taken to engage with stakeholders, both internally and externally?

Equality team officials held a series of engagement events with refugees and asylum seekers themselves in autumn 2017 and used these as the basis for the development of the plan. The actions have been developed by series of meetings with policy colleagues and the external organisations who offer support and advice to RAS. It was an iterative process to refine the actions and to ensure that they are deliverable.

The consultation will be available online and a series of direct consultation work shops will be conducted by the Asylum Rights Programme. We will also encourage the Welsh Refugee Coalition and others to discuss these proposals with those they support.

We are considering whether to hold further direct engagement events with RAS during the consultation period.

3. Your decisions must be based on robust evidence. What evidence base have you used? Please list the source of this evidence e.g. National Survey for Wales. Do you consider the evidence to be strong, satisfactory or weak and are there any gaps in evidence?

The existing Welsh Government Refugee and Asylum Seeker delivery plan contained eight action areas which were intended to deliver outcomes to improve the experiences of RAS in Wales.

In the development of that plan, officials, used the available data and sources of information to ensure that the policy proposals were evidence based.

The Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee (ELGCC) launched an inquiry into refugees and asylum seekers in Wales in 2016, largely in response to the refugee crisis exacerbated by the conflict in Syria.

The Committee published their inquiry report, entitled *"I used to be someone"*, in April 2017. The Committee made 19 recommendations for the Welsh Government to implement in order to improve the lives of RAS. We have used the evidence submitted as part of the Committee Inquiry, supported by direct engagement with 120 refugees and asylum seekers, and co-production with the Welsh Refugee Coalition to ensure these proposals are fit for purpose. Therefore, we believe the plan is based upon robust evidence of needs.

Asylum policy is the responsibility of the Home Office and many of the actions which would improve the lives of asylum seekers and refugees are not within the competence of the Welsh Government. Through discussion with the providers of services which are devolved to the Welsh Government, the accessibility and quality of these services to refugees and asylum seekers should be improved.

The consultation process will help to improve and/or enhance the proposals and highlight any further gaps or inconsistencies that may be identified during the process to ensure far reaching and effective delivery.

Nevertheless, there is a dearth of quantitative data relating to refugees and asylum seekers in Wales. One of the proposals in the plan includes establishing a data and evidence group to try to improve data collection and sharing in future.

It is important to note any opportunities you have identified that could advance or promote equality.

Impact

Please complete the next section to show how this policy / decision / practice could have an impact (positive or negative) on the protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 (refer to the EIA guidance document for more information).

Lack of evidence is not a reason for *not* progressing to carrying out an EIA. Please highlight any gaps in evidence that you have identified and explain how/if you intend to fill these gaps.

4.1 Do you think this policy / decision / practice will have a positive or negative impact on people because of their age?

Age	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reasons for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Younger people <i>(Children and young people, up to 18)</i>	X			The proposals include various actions which will positively impact upon young people. In particular, (but amongst others), ensuring social services are equipped to support young asylum seekers and ensuring these individuals can access the advocacy they require.
People 18-50	X			All proposals will contribute to the overarching aim of continuing to support and help refugees and asylum seekers by addressing equality of

				opportunity and mainstreaming their needs and requirements.
Older people (50+)	X			As above.

4.2 Because they are disabled?

Impairment	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Visual impairment	X			No impact identified, though health impact assessments may improve diagnosis and support. Although not specified in the plan, the 'Welcome to Wales' proposal will include screen-reader technology to support those with visual impairments.
Hearing impairment			X	No impact identified.
Physically disabled	X			Improved access to health care services should ensure that the needs of this group are correctly identified and addressed.

Learning disability	x			Health impact assessments will improve diagnosis and support and help distinguish between difficulties caused by unfamiliarity with the language and other developmental factors.
Mental health problem	X			Access to specialist mental healthcare support) should improve diagnosis and support. (e.g.: PTSD)
Other impairments issues			X	No impact identified.

4.3 Because of their gender (man or woman)?

Gender	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Male			X	While the proposals do not focus specifically on gender they are intended to have a positive impact on both genders.
Female	X			The plan includes several actions which will ensure domestic abuse and sexual

				violence survivors can access the support they require.
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4.4 Because they are transgender?

Transgender	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
	X			While the Welsh Government does not control asylum accommodation, we have requested that the UK Government provides separate accommodation for LGBT individuals.

4.5 Because of their marriage or civil partnership?

Marriage and Civil Partnership	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Marriage			X	The proposals do not address partnership status and it is anticipated that the policy will have a negligible impact.
Civil Partnership			X	As above.

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4.6 Because of their pregnancy or maternity?

Pregnancy and Maternity	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Pregnancy	X			It is anticipated that the proposals which facilitate access to healthcare will have a positive effect on pregnant RAS women.
Maternity (the period after birth)	X			As above in relation to maternity.

4.7 Because of their race?

Race	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Ethnic minority people e.g. Asian, Black,	X			The proposals will have a positive impact. RAS are from ethnic communities and will benefit from actions in the plan designed to facilitate their access to mainstream services and support

				integration
National Origin (e.g. Welsh, English)			x	No impact identified.
Asylum Seeker and Refugees	X			The plan has been developed to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers; all the actions in it will have a positive impact by addressing inequalities and poverty, ensuring equality of opportunity and enabling RAS to access resources and mainstream services
Gypsies and Travellers			X	The proposals will have no impact on Gypsies and Travellers.
Migrants	X			Migrant Roma if presenting as asylum seekers, will directly benefit from many of the actions in this plan.
Others			X	No impact identified.

4.8 Because of their religion and belief or non-belief?

Religion and belief or non – belief	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Different religious groups including Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Hindus, Others (please specify)			X	No impact identified.
Belief e.g. Humanists			X	No impact identified
Non-belief			X	No impact identified

4.9 Because of their sexual orientation?

Sexual Orientation	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence)/ How might it impact?
Gay men	X			While the Welsh Government does not control asylum accommodation, we have requested that the UK Government provides separate accommodation for LGBT individuals.

Lesbians	X			As above.
Bi-sexual			X	As above.

4.10 Do you think that this policy will have a positive or negative impact on people’s human rights? Please refer to point 1.4 of the EIA Annex A - Guidance for further information about Human Rights.

Human Rights	Positive	Negative	None / Negligible	Reason for your decision (including evidence) / How might it impact?
Human Rights including Human Rights Act and UN Conventions	X			<p>The proposals support in particular the realisation of Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights /Human Rights Act, as Refugees and Asylum Seekers will be able aided to improve and enhance their private and family lives through equality of opportunity brought about by the proposals.</p> <p>A respect for fundamental human rights as well as equality is built into all Welsh Government work and the new</p>

				<p>proposals.</p> <p>Many refugees and asylum seekers have fled from war, torture and persecution, so Articles 3,5,10 and 11 are also supported. Article 14, protection from discrimination will be aided by the actions which encourage inclusion and integration.</p> <p>A separate Child Rights Impact Assessment has been conducted.</p>
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If you have identified any impacts (other than negligible ones), positive or negative, on any group with protected characteristics, please complete Part 2.

Only if there are no or negligible positive or negative impacts should you go straight to part 2 and sign off the EIA.



Equality Impact Assessment – Part 2

1. Building on the evidence you gathered and considered in Part 1, please consider the following:

1.1 How could, or does, the policy help advance / promote equality of opportunity?

For example, positive measures designed to address disadvantage and reach different communities or protected groups?

When implemented, the actions contained within the draft plan should make considerable progress towards advancing equality of opportunity for Refugees and Asylum Seekers as the actions enable them to access the help, guidance and services to which they are entitled.

The document is drafted to demonstrate clear links between each of the commitments and the Welsh Government's Strategic Equality Plan.

1.2 How could / does the policy / decision help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation?

The proposals should help to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation by encouraging cross Government Departments and external stakeholders to contribute to and monitor specific related actions.

Accessing the services outlined in the plan, RAS will better integrate into society and alleviate negative perceptions about them. Relationships between themselves and the general community should be improved,

1.3 How could/does the policy impact on advancing / promoting good relations and wider community cohesion?

The proposals will help Refugees and Asylum seekers to access both specialist advice and support and mainstream services which will ultimately help them to lead better lives and adopt a better standard of living.

Factors such as having more confidence in knowing what is available and how to access these services will encourage RAS to take ownership of their own and their families' lives so that they are able to better integrate into society. This will inevitably have a positive effect on community cohesion which in turn positively impacts upon the longer term benefit of developing strong future relations and realising equality of opportunity.

The plan contains specific actions relating to promoting good relations between communities and community cohesion.

2. Strengthening the policy

2.1 If the policy is likely to have a negative effect ('adverse impact') on any of the protected groups or good relations, what are the reasons for this?

What practical changes/actions could help reduce or remove any negative impacts identified in Part 1?

There are no negative impacts identified in part 1.

2.2 If no action is to be taken to remove or mitigate negative / adverse impact, please justify why.

(Please remember that if you have identified unlawful discrimination (immediate or potential) as a result of the policy, the policy must be changed or revised.)

Not applicable.

3. Monitoring, evaluating and reviewing

How will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy?

List details of any follow-up work that will be undertaken in relation to the policy (e.g. consultations, specific monitoring etc).

The Welsh Government Nation of Sanctuary plan will be updated/revised following the consultation period which is planned to take place March –June. Once the final proposals are published, it will be subject to monitoring and Ministerial reporting.

Officials will continue to monitor any equality impacts that arise as a result of the publication of the proposals.

The results of all impact assessments where the impact is significant will be published on the Welsh Government's website.

4. Declaration

***Please delete as appropriate:**

The policy *does / does not have a significant impact upon equality issues

Official completing the EIA

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Department:

Equality Team, Equality & Prosperity Division

Date:

March 2018
Signature:
Head of Division (Sign-off)
Name:
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Job title and department:
Deputy Director, Equality & Prosperity Division, Communities and Tackling Poverty.
Date:
March 2018
Signature:
Review Date:

