

# Equality Impact Assessment

The purpose of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is to improve the work of Orkney Islands Council by making sure it promotes equality and does not discriminate. This assessment records the likely impact of any changes to a function, policy or plan by anticipating the consequences, and making sure that any negative impacts are eliminated or minimised and positive impacts are maximised.

1. IDENTIFICATION OF FUNCTION, POLICY OR PLAN	
Name of function/policy/plan to be assessed	UK Government's welfare reform programme
Service/service area responsible	Corporate Services
Name of person carrying out the assessment and contact details	Leslie Rendall, Revenues Manager, Extension 2104, email: <a href="mailto:leslie.rendall@orkney.gov.uk">leslie.rendall@orkney.gov.uk</a>
Date of assessment	9 November 2012
Is the function/policy/plan new or existing? (Please indicate also if the service is to be deleted, reduced or changed significantly)	The reform of welfare benefits is a UK government review of the welfare state and involves replacing a wide range of working age benefits with a single Universal Credit payment.

2. INITIAL SCREENING	
What are the intended outcomes of the function/policy/plan?	The UK government's aims are to make the UK benefits and tax credit systems fairer and simpler by creating incentives to work, protecting the vulnerable in society and delivering fairness to those claiming benefits and to the taxpayer.
State <b>who</b> is, or may be affected by this function/policy/plan, and <b>how</b>	Recipients of welfare benefits as the benefits that they receive will change; Housing bodies affected by the removal of direct payments of Housing Benefit; Council services by the reform of Housing Benefit and introduction of the Scottish Welfare Fund.
How have stakeholders been involved in the development of this function/policy/plan?	Nationally the reforms are being progressed through both the UK and Scottish legislative process that has been preceded by national consultation, parliamentary debate and liaison with national bodies such as the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities. Locally the reforms are being co-ordinated through the Orkney Community Planning Partnership.

<p>Is there any existing data and/or research relating to equalities issues in this policy area? Please summarise.</p> <p>e.g. consultations, national surveys, performance data, complaints, service user feedback, academic/consultants' reports, benchmarking (see equalities resources on OIC information portal)</p>	<p>The UK Government published a Universal Credit Impact Assessment in October 2011 and Equality Impact Assessment that can be accessed via the Department for Work and Pensions website link at <a href="http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/universal-credit/">http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/universal-credit/</a></p>
<p>Could the function/policy have a differential impact on any of the following equality strands?</p>	<p>(Please provide any evidence – positive impacts/benefits, negative impacts and reasons)</p>
<p>1. Race: this includes ethnic or national groups, colour and nationality</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>2. Sex: a man or a woman</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>3. Sexual Orientation: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>4. Gender Reassignment: the process of transitioning from one gender to another</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>5. Pregnancy and maternity</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>6. Age: people of different ages</p>	<p>Yes – the introduction of Universal Credit impacts only on those applicants that are of working age. Within these reforms there are Housing Benefit restrictions to single applicants aged under 35 years. Reform of Pension Credit to include housing costs will also take place but is thought not to have a negative impact on those claiming.</p>
<p>7. Religion or beliefs or none (atheists)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>8. Caring responsibilities</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>9. Marriage and Civil Partnership</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>10. Disability: people with disabilities (whether registered or not)</p>	<p>Yes – Disability Living Allowance will be replaced with a new benefit entitled Personal Independence Payment. Locally, the reduction in Housing Benefit due to under-occupancy will affect tenants who may have been allocated disabled adapted properties that are too large for their household size. Those with disabilities may also require additional support to assist them to navigate through the range of welfare</p>

	reforms that may affect them, including financial advice.
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### 3. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Does the analysis above identify any differential impacts which need to be addressed?	Yes – those in receipt of working age benefits will be affected whilst those above working age will largely be unaffected by the welfare reforms. The UK Government describes the range of reforms as the most radical overview in over 60 years.
How could you minimise or remove any potential negative impacts?	The reforms have received Royal Assent under the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and there is no scope to address any differential impacts other than in the provision of additional advice and support mechanisms and to ensure that the reforms are implemented effectively and on time.
Do you have enough information to make a judgement? If no, what information do you require?	Yes

### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND PLANNED ACTION

Is further work required?	Yes
What action is to be taken?	The welfare reform programme is being phased in between 2011 and 2017. The work of the Orkney Community Planning Partnership will be required to ensure that the effects of change are being addressed locally. The Council also requires to be kept informed and take appropriate decisions during this period of change.
Who will undertake it?	The Orkney Community Planning Partnership; Executive Director of Corporate Services and the Council.
When will it be done?	The process will be ongoing between now and 2017.
How will it be monitored? (e.g. through service plans)	Through the Orkney Community Planning Partnership; through progress plans; by internal and external audit process; reports to Policy and Resources; and through the risk management process.

Signature

Date: 9 November 2012

Name LESLIE RENDALL

**Please sign and date this form, keep one copy and send a copy to Corporate and Community Strategy. It should also be emailed to Corporate and Community Strategy.**