

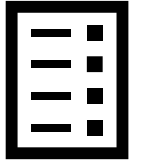
# Guidance for considering care experience in Equality Impact Assessments

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# Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)



Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are an anticipatory process that supports local authorities to predict possible issues and take appropriate action such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and maximising any potential for positive impact.

EIAs operate as a mechanism to aid the practitioner or policy maker to look through the heart and mind of those with protected characteristics to reduce stigma, discrimination and provide equity and equality for those accessing their services.

## Asking the right questions

EIAs/equality analysis are designed to **determine the extent of any differential or adverse impact on under-represented groups**. In other words, it should ask questions such as whether any group is being:

- discriminated against
- placed at a disadvantage because of the policy or function

## Considering alternatives to adverse impact

If there is an adverse impact, alternative policies must be considered to:

- promote equality of opportunity
- eliminate discrimination
- promote good relations among diverse groups

It should also be used as **a tool to support continuous improvement across the organisation**

It will help to demonstrate compliance if you:

Ensure you have a written record of the equality considerations you have taken into account

- ✓ Ensure that your decision-making includes a consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on particular protected groups
- ✓ Make your decisions based on evidence
- ✓ Make your decision-making process more transparent

# This guidance:

- Provides a definition of care experience for practitioners.
- Outlines why it is important to consider care experienced individuals in EIAs.
- Provides a foundation to support local authorities to explore how they can strengthen their existing EIA processes to include care experience and guide their employees to consider care experience in their EIAs.
- Explores the implications of care experience and provide real examples of the differential impact of policy decisions on care experienced individuals.
- Explores why it is important to engage with care experienced individuals to inform an EIA.
- Provides some good practice examples/case studies.

# Implications of care experience

## Lack of trust

Care experienced individuals may have a deep-rooted mistrust in systems or institutions, born out of their experiences with the care system. This could result in hesitancy or difficulty in seeking out and accessing necessary services, leading to delays in receiving important support or care.

## Social networks

Social networks often play a vital role in an individual's ability to access services or support. They can provide valuable information, resources, and emotional support. Care experienced individuals might lack these networks due to broken familial relationships or frequent relocations. This can make navigating systems more challenging and isolating.

# Implications of care experience

## Family guidance

Individuals who have grown up in care often lack the family guidance that many take for granted. This could be advice on filling out forms, understanding services available, or having the support of a family member when facing an intimidating process. The absence of this support can hinder their ability to access and navigate services.

## Digital connectivity

Care experienced individuals can face significant challenges when it comes to social mobility. The hurdles they encounter in education, employment, housing, and other key areas can limit their ability to advance socially and economically. This lack of social mobility can create a vicious cycle that hinders access to services and opportunities.

# Evidence - monitoring

- A critical part of an EIA is evidence and consultation, which should be reviewed throughout a project.
- **Local authorities should regularly research and evaluate their services and that of their partners' demographics. Considering current reporting and how to embed 'care experience' into existing systems.**
- By identifying the proportion of care experienced individuals who access their services, authorities can gain a more accurate understanding of the reach and impact of their initiatives and that of their partners.

# Engagement

Understanding the needs and experiences of care experienced individuals leads to more effective, tailored interventions and greater user satisfaction.

Engaging care experienced individuals in the policy and service development process can be highly beneficial. It's crucial that authorities look beyond their services to focus on where the referrals come from and are those policies taking account of the care experience.

# Engagement ideas

Care Experienced  
Advisory Group

Surveys and  
interviews

Focus groups

Promote co-  
production

Consider  
intersectionality and  
diversity of care  
experienced  
community

# Example: public transport

- Financial circumstances are often precarious and care experienced individuals can lack the support of a family that can assist with transportation.
- When public transport becomes less accessible or more costly, care experienced individuals may face serious challenges. These could range from getting to work or school, to accessing necessary healthcare services, to socialising - all of which are crucial for well-being and development.
- This disparity is further magnified by policies that offer substantial travel discounts to students but exclude care leavers who are not in education but are managing households.
- In some cases, the severe constraints faced by care leavers may push them towards fare evasion out of necessity, choosing between basic needs such as food or travel. This could not only risk criminalisation, but also contributes to further stress, stigma, and exclusion.

# Example: public transport

- Local authorities must recognise and advocate these unique challenges and make accommodations accordingly.
- This might involve extending student travel benefits to care leavers or introducing transportation subsidies for this group. It could also mean re-evaluating penalties to include alternative resolution interventions such as a requirement to meet with a health and wellbeing officer for fare evasion, considering the individual's circumstances.
- By taking these steps, we can prevent further disadvantaging care experienced individuals, and ensure they have equitable access to opportunities for growth and development, thus actively working to bridge the gap between them and their peers.

# Thank you

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