

## Equality & Diversity Impact Assessments

<b>Directorate / Service / Department:</b>	Finance
<b>Person responsible for the assessment:</b>	Nicola Stephenson (Performance) Julie Ryan (Training & Development) Jonathan Parkin (Overpayments & Appeals)
<b>Name of (proposed) policy / function:</b>	<b>Appeals</b> New: Existing: ✓
<b>Process area Identifier (PID) / Name:</b>	N/Ap
(1)	Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the policy / function:  To provide a high quality service for customers who disagree with decisions made by the Benefit service.
(2)	Are there any associated objectives of the policy / function?  To reconsider decisions regarding benefit To provide statements explaining decisions to the customer To process appeals and take appeal cases to the Tribunal To ensure that legislation/regulations are correctly applied.
(3)	Who is intended to benefit from the policy / function and in what way?  Customers who access the benefit service – by the service ensuring the customer is satisfied with the decision about their benefit claim. Also, by ensuring legislation is applied correctly with regard to the Benefit Assessment will benefit both the Authority and the customer.
(4)	What outcomes are expected from this policy / function?  The overall outcome is that benefit assessment decisions are either upheld or revised appropriately.
(5)	What factors / forces could contribute to / detract from the outcomes?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full compliance and application of legislation</li> <li>• Adequate staff training</li> <li>• Ensuring standards and quality are maintained</li> <li>• Updated and fully functional IT software/systems</li> </ul>

(6)	<p>Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy / function?</p> <p>Barnsley MBC, Barnsley residents who are claiming or have claimed housing/council tax benefits, Welfare Rights, Citizens Advice and the Tribunal Service.</p>
(7)	<p>Who implements the policy and who is responsible for the policy / function?</p> <p>Chris Armitage, Benefits Manager.</p>
(8)	<p>Is there any monitoring data available (e.g. results from consultations, surveys, focus groups)</p> <p>There was no previous research or reports available containing diversity information.</p>
(9)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact on <b>ethnic groups</b>? <b>Yes</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>All appeals are looked at regardless of ethnicity. The publicity materials / appeal form is only available in English; this has potential to impact on certain non-English speaking groups.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>
(10)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to <b>gender</b>? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>The function does not treat men or women differently.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> No evidence just discussions with the Appeals Principal Officer.</p>

(11)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to <b>disability? No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>People with disabilities are treated in accordance with their needs and requirements. The appeals team can arrange for an officer to visit the customer's home to explain the benefit decision for those who find the written statements difficult to understand or customers with visual impairments.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Principal Officer confirmed and described a recent scenario.</p>
(12)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to <b>sexual orientation? No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>The function would only be aware if the customer indicated this on the Benefit Claim form, which appeals staff would have access to. There have been no cases referred as an outcome of a civil partnership since the legislation was introduced in December 2005.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>
(13)	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to <b>age? No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>An individual's age is one element that the Appeals Team would consider but at no differential impact. In some cases, dependant on the circumstances of the individual, it would be appropriate for the Division's visiting team to see the customer to explain the benefit decision, in addition to providing the written statement.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>

<p>(14)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to <b>religion or belief</b>? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> The function would not normally be aware of this. If they were and it did have an impact on the case, then it would be taken into account.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>
<p>(15)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact on people due to them having <b>dependants/caring responsibilities</b>? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> The function has no differential impact on people with dependants or caring responsibilities. The team would take into carer's responsibilities in appeal cases.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussions with Appeals Officer</p>
<p>(16)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact due to their <b>offending past</b>? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> In most cases, the team would be unaware of a customer's offending past. However, in appeals of Temporary Absence, due to being on remand, the appeals officer would know. Dependent on the circumstances, this would be taken into account and looked at favourably, for example a late notification of a change in circumstance.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>
<p>(17)</p>	<p>Are there any concerns that the policy/function could have a differential impact on <b>Trans</b> people? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i> This information is unknown. If officers were made aware of this it would be of no consequence to the case.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i> Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>

(18)	<p>Could the differential impact identified in 8-16 amount to there being the <b>potential</b> for adverse impact in this policy or function? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>We found the service to have slight differential impacts on some groups of the community, but only in accordance with legislation and this does not amount to there being an adverse impact in the function.</p> <p><i>What existing evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?</i></p> <p>Discussion with Appeals Principal Officer.</p>
(19)	<p>Are the differential impacts caused by unlawful discrimination? <b>No</b></p> <p><i>Please explain:</i></p> <p>The function satisfies all current legislative requirements.</p>
(20)	<p><b>Findings</b></p> <p>We found there was no negative impact on the individual equality target groups. The identity of some groups is unknown and the appeals application form/benefit forms do not ask customers to reveal this information, for example: religion or sexual orientation.</p> <p>The service provides an appeals leaflet, which is available via the Internet or from our customer service offices, located central and throughout the borough. The informative leaflet and the appeals form would benefit from being reviewed; they are both almost 3 years old.</p>
(21)	<p><b>Action Points</b></p> <p>Review appeals leaflet and form.</p> <p>The leaflet should contain information about alternative formats and be made available/or offer to be available in the community languages.</p>
<p>Completed by: N Stephenson <span style="float: right;">Date: 5/4/06</span></p>	