

# Equality Impact Assessment Form for Discretionary Grants Programme

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Created by Claire Pullen 28 January 2021

**Title of EqIA (policy/change it relates to):** Discretionary Grants Policy

**Date:** 2 February 2021

**Team Department:** Community Wellbeing and Partnerships

**Focus of EqIA (*What are the aims of the new initiative? Who implements it? Define the user group impacted?***

***How will they be impacted?***: To administer a Community Grants Programme in a fair, consistent and transparent manner to help take forward the council's corporate priorities in sustainability, engagement and collaboration with the community, economic growth and digital innovation. Officers within the Community Wellbeing and Partnerships Team will manage the programme with administrative support. All residents in East Herts benefit.

- Ensure digital inclusion and the use of new technology, assets and innovation
- Provide activities to support Dementia Friendly East Herts, East Herts Social Prescribing Service (non-medical community based health solutions) and people who are tackling addictions
- Enable all residents to take care of their mental health, achieve a healthy weight and stay active, but especially those affected by Covid 19
- Respond to the adverse effects of Covid and aid recovery
- Support residents experiencing loneliness or who are socially isolated or who find it difficult to interact with the community
- Help residents come together to tackle an identified problem

- Create safer and resilient neighbourhoods
- Use outdoor spaces and community buildings effectively, maximising their potential
- Benefit people or groups that don't normally participate
- Reconnect residents to local history and enhance pride in place
- Bring different generations together
- Engage with people from different faiths and black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, supporting them to develop cultural opportunities they can enjoy participating in
- Reduce the carbon footprint of an asset or organisation
- Enable a new activity or existing activity to expand
- Increase usage of community buildings and outdoor spaces, making it as convenient as possible for more people to get involved in leisure
- Create fit-for-purpose halls that are managed proactively to meet the needs and interests of local residents (community hub)

## 1. Review of information, equality analysis and potential actions

Please fill in when appropriate to the change. If it does not apply, please put N/A

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	<b>What can you do?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• Eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> </ul>
<b>Age</b>	Population projections show the numbers in all age groups are growing in the district, in particular those aged 60+ years. Overall, 25% of grant funded projects typically benefits older or vulnerable people. Of the revenue grants awarded in 20/21, 88% benefitted people with long term conditions and vulnerable groups who are typically from the older population	The small grants process has been described by successful applicants between the ages of 40 and 70 as “an easy process,” “a straight forward application” “... a simple way to encourage great mustard seeds to come forward and flourish” There has been fewer comments about people having difficulties with the online form.	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer have discussed whether a person’s age will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case but noted that it was important to recognise that people in the older age groups, and especially those on low income, may be less likely to be able to access the digital world	Provide a named officer who can help and continue to improve online application process. Provide a paper copy if requested  Continue small grants programme for individuals and informal groups with a simple online application  Continue to advise organisations that support older people about the opportunity to apply and send publicity to relevant partnerships
<b>Disability</b>	Some 8,700 people are living with a disability	Successful applicants working with people	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the	Continue to advise organisations that work with people with

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	around 3,200 people have a learning disability nearly 1,400 people have dementia plus as above Overall, 25% of grant funded projects typically benefits older or vulnerable people. Of the revenue grants awarded in 20/21, 88% benefitted people with long term conditions	with long term disabilities say their services couldn't happen without grant support and that digital exclusion and loneliness is a real problem	Equality and Diversity Officer have discussed whether any mental or physical barriers will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.	disabilities and long term conditions about the opportunity to apply and send publicity to relevant partnerships
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No reliable data at this time	Feedback from people with this protected characteristic has not been obtained	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed whether an applicant who identified as transgender, or who has undergone gender reconstructive surgery 'GRC', will be impacted in eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Whilst Age	Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic – building rapport and trust  We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on gender reassignment by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a

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			UK has published in their 2020 'Transgender Issues and Later Life' report that GRC can have an impact on national insurance contributions, tax liability, benefits and pensions, Officers do not find this characteristic to be a hindrance to accessing a community grant.	list of protected characteristics
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	No reliable data at this time	We have not asked for feedback	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed whether a person's pregnancy or maternity status will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.	Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic and individuals  We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on pregnancy and maternity by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics

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<b>Race</b>	<p>The white British population is the largest ethnic group in East Herts but the proportion of non-white British people in the district is steadily growing from the 10% recorded at the time of the 2011 Census . It is recognised that there is a low participation from groups / individuals with these protected characteristics in applying for grants</p>	<p>public engagement highlighted a need to reflect an increased focus on developing a cultural offer in rural communities, as well as among residents from more diverse religious, black and minority ethnic backgrounds. One of HCC's Equality and Diversity Officer considered trust as one of the factors in accessing local authority grants</p>	<p>This means there is a need to take positive action and ensure that individuals and groups supporting individuals with this protected characteristics can access the grant fund</p>	<p>Add new action to grant priorities Engage with people from different faiths and black, asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, supporting them to develop cultural opportunities they can enjoy participating in</p> <p>Increase signposting and targeted support to help grass roots organisations in completing applications</p> <p>Add statement to grants publicity that faith groups and black and minority ethnic groups are welcome to apply; designing communications to increase BAME groups confidence to apply</p> <p>Engage with BAME groups to understand the barriers to applying for a grant - building</p>

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	<b>What can you do?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• Eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> </ul>
				<p>rapport and trust</p> <p>Create publicity campaign that includes inclusive images of people with protected characteristics and raise awareness about grants among organisations supporting people with this protected characteristic</p>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	<p>The existing eligibility criteria states that The council will not provide a grant for promotion of a particular religion or political belief</p> <p>In the past applications from religious organisations have been successful when the project is about improving a hall that is used for physical recreation, cultural, social and community</p>	<p>Volunteers have told us that church halls and other facilities run by faith groups are important venues for cultural activities and health and social care services such as foodbanks and that grant giving would enable more faith groups to engage with this type of welfare work</p>	<p>The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed the situation where a faith group that consists of people who predominantly belong to one ethnic background and Islamic faith will have a need for an occupational requirement recognised. This means that whilst an application for a grant may be ineligible if the proposed project solely promotes a specific political or</p>	<p>Separate the eligibility criteria into two statements</p> <p>The council will not provide grants that have the sole aim of promoting a particular religion</p> <p>The council will not provide grants to organisations with beliefs that are challenging internal departments' decisions or are contradictory to the council's core values or whose sole aim is to promote a political belief</p>

<b>Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010</b>	<b>What do you know?</b> Summary of data about your service-users and/or staff	<b>What do people tell you?</b> Summary of service-user and/or staff feedback	<b>What does this mean?</b> Impacts (actual and potential, positive and negative. Clearly state each)	<b>What can you do?</b> All potential actions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advance equality of opportunity,</li> <li>• Eliminate discrimination, and</li> <li>• Foster good relations</li> </ul>
	benefit and where the project is to benefit the wider community with a secular aim. It is recognised that there is a low participation from groups / individuals with these protected characteristics in applying for grants		religious belief (ie a request to fund prayer mats), their application will be eligible if it has a wider community benefit (ie a request to fund a street festival to celebrate Eid	<p>Add statement to publicity that faith groups are welcome to apply where their project has a wider community benefit</p> <p>Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic – building rapport and trust. This would contribute to social cohesion</p> <p>Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic</p> <p>Publicise discretionary grants in a way that encourages increased uptake by all faiths equally</p>
<b>Sex/Gender</b>	There is no data to suggest affecting one gender over another	No data at this time. We do not ask successful applicants to provide a breakdown of their beneficiaries	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed that there was no data to suggest there is an impact	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on gender by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of



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		according to gender		protected characteristics
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	An estimated 6% of our population are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Questioning (LGBTQ) plus.  It is recognised that there is a low uptake from this category and groups with this characteristics are under represented	No reliable data at this time We do not ask successful applicants to provide a breakdown of their beneficiaries according to sexual orientation	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed whether a person's sexual orientation will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not found this to be the case.	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on sexual orientation by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics  Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic and individuals
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	No information at this time	We have not asked for feedback	The Housing and Health Projects Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer discussed whether a person's marital status or partnership status will be impacted by the eligibility, assessment or allocation of community grants. Officers have not	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on marriage and civil partnerships by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics

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			found this to be the case.	Foster relationships with groups supporting people with this protected characteristic and individuals

### Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations

The council is committed to ensuring that individuals or groups of individuals from the under-represented protected characteristics group are encouraged to apply for a grant and are supported to feel that grants are “for them.” At all times, it aims to take an inclusive approach and ensure that any individual or group that wants to is able to fully participate in applying for a grant. An independent audit (Dec 2019) concluded that there is satisfactory assurance that there are effective controls in place and good decision-making processes.

The policy prioritises projects that deliver in areas of deprivation in East Herts (Appendix 4). This takes into account how less economically deprived areas are considered in the grants making process. It is acknowledged that all protected characteristics are economically impacted in different ways and the process takes steps to prioritise or allocate more points within the assessment process (Appendix 2)

This impact assessment was updated in 2021 with discussions with one of Hertfordshire's Equality and Diversity Officers, who identified that within the eligibility for grants, the requirement for 'open door membership' should not act as a barrier to groups who may have an occupational requirement to recruit internally within a protected characteristic, under Schedule 9 exceptions to the Equality Act 2010. This could be relevant to any protected characteristic, especially if considered under positive action. This means that the "open door membership eligibility criteria could prove restrictive for organisations that require or strongly prefer a proportion of their beneficiaries to have a specific characteristic. It is proposed therefore that the wording for this criteria is adjusted to explain that the occupational requirement provides an exception to this, and allows positive action in this situation. (See action in Table 4 below)

Information about grants is available through the council's ebulletin and is promoted on social media and via elected Members, parish and town councils and printed parish and resident newsletters. Traditional flyers are also produced on occasion and distributed to libraries, leisure centres and village halls. Information on deadlines and priorities is available on the website.

Announcement about deadlines is done via emails to Members, external partners and database of known community and voluntary organisations. Members are asked to refer organisations to the scheme.

## 2. List detailed data and/or community feedback which informed your EqIA (if applicable)

<b>Title</b> (of data, research or engagement)	<b>Date</b>	<b>Gaps in data</b>	<b>Actions to fill these gaps: who else do you need to engage with?</b> (add these to the Action Plan below, with a timeframe)
East Herts Cultural Strategy Survey	Nov 2020	We recognise that some actions, projects and funding bids will benefit from detailed evidence gained through gap analyses and empirical research. Such future work will be carried out by the partners coming together or by the partners' pooling financial re-sources to fund external expertise.	Contact Faith groups, single gender membership groups and groups supporting the LGBTQ community to build relationships and trust, working within the Council's emerging Equalities and Diversity strategy
Survey of successful applicants to small grants programme	January 2021	9 replies were received out of 17 so a good response rate	The small grants programme will be reviewed on an annual basis

## 3. Prioritised Action Plan (If applicable)

NB: These actions must now be transferred to service or business plans and monitored to ensure they achieve the outcomes

<b>Impact identified and group(s) affected</b>	<b>Action planned</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Requirement for applicant to have "open door policy" is restrictive for organisations that require or strongly prefer a	Amend eligibility criteria to the following: The body applying has an open door membership policy and provides services that are	Organisations that are impacted by this requirement feel more able and encouraged to apply	That applications are received	By end of March 2022

<b>Impact identified and group(s) affected</b>	<b>Action planned</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
proportion of their beneficiaries to have a specific characteristic.	accessible to people from all backgrounds. However to promote positive action, this criteria allows organisations who have an occupational requirement to recruit within a protected characteristic to do so, under Schedule 9 exceptions to the Equality Act 2010.			
The eligibility criteria stating that the council will not provide a grant for the promotion of a particular religion or political belief has been identified as overly restrictive to faith groups	Amend the grants policy as below  The council will not provide grants that have the sole aim of promoting a particular religion The council will not provide grants to organisations with beliefs that are challenging internal departments' decisions or are contradictory to the council's core values or whose sole aim is to promote a political belief	Organisations that are impacted by this requirement feel more able and encouraged to apply	That application are received by faith groups	By end of March 2022
The eligibility criteria stating that the council will not provide a grant for the promotion of a particular religion or	Add statement to publicity that faith groups are welcome to apply where their project has a wider community benefit	Organisations that are impacted by this requirement feel more able and encouraged to apply	That application are received by faith groups	By end of March 2022

Impact identified and group(s) affected	Action planned	Expected outcome	Measure of success	Timeframe
political belief has been identified as overly restrictive to faith groups				
Long standing under-representation by faith groups and groups supporting people from BAME backgrounds	Work with the communications team to create inclusive messages and images for social media; add welcome statement to publicity messages	<p>Individuals and groups supporting people with these protected characteristics feel welcome and encouraged to apply for a grant</p> <p>Increasing diversity in grant making will give the council access to the widest possible range of volunteers with a range of skills and talents</p>	That an application is submitted that proposes a project to benefit people with these protected characteristics	By end of March 2022
Long standing under-representation by faith groups and groups supporting people from BAME backgrounds	Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic – building rapport and trust. This would contribute to social cohesion	Better understanding of the barriers and how these can be mitigated	That an application is submitted that proposes a project to benefit people with these protected characteristics	By end of March 2022
Long standing under-representation by faith groups and groups supporting people from BAME backgrounds	Consult and obtain feedback from people with this protected characteristic – building rapport and trust. This would contribute to social cohesion	Better understanding of the barriers and how these can be mitigated	That an application is submitted that proposes a project to benefit people with these protected characteristics	By end of March 2022

<b>Impact identified and group(s) affected</b>	<b>Action planned</b>	<b>Expected outcome</b>	<b>Measure of success</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Lack of information on whether individuals from certain protected characteristics are benefitting from council grant giving	We will monitor how grant giving is impacting on protected characteristics by including a new application question that asks applicants to identify who their main beneficiaries are out of a list of protected characteristics	Better understanding of which groups are mainly benefitting from council grants alongside general population	That applicants have completed question	By end of March 2022

**EqIA Sign-off:** (for the EQIA to be final an email must be sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

**Lead Equality Impact Assessment officer: Corinne Crosbourne**

**Date: 2/2/21**

**Directorate Management Team Rep or Head of Service: Jonathan Geall, Head of Housing and Health**

**Date: 2/2/21**

**Author of Equality Impact Analysis: Claire Pullen, Housing and Health Projects Officer**

**Date: 2/2/21**